Colonial Queensland was an active participant in international exhibitions, cultural milestones of the late 19th century. In the years between separation (1859) and federation (1901) Queensland took part in 16 international exhibitions as an official exhibitor (that is, with official displays and officially appointed representatives) and in another 15 as an unofficial exhibitor. This study examines various aspects of Queensland’s involvement in these events and covers new ground as little has been known of Queensland as a world exhibitor.

First the motives for exhibiting are examined, by comparing the wholehearted support for British exhibitions with the sparing support for Australian exhibitions, including the one held on home ground in 1897. Of the 16 exhibitions in which Queensland participated officially, in 10 it exhibited as part of a British colonial group, at British request. Moreover, 8 of these 16 exhibitions were held in Great Britain, including 7 in London. This support for Britain and British interests at exhibitions reflected the colony’s economic dependence, which increased as the century progressed. Exhibitions effectively chart the course of this dependence, and also of Queensland’s more ambiguous relationship with its sister colonies.

Then the mode of exhibiting is examined — the selection, presentation and handling of exhibits. These exhibits were dominated by economic concerns rather than a desire to represent colonial life fully. Exhibition commissioners, the selectors of exhibits, were drawn from Queensland’s economic elite and their exhibits reflected its varying needs for British investment in the major productive industries: agriculture, pastoral and mining. The presentation and handling of exhibits were unadventurous and amateurish by world or even Australian standards. Yet Queensland could be relied upon to put on ‘a good show’, and will be remembered for its pioneering use of photography and for adding the mercury fountain to the ‘novelties’ devised especially for exhibitions.

In the next five chapters, the major section of the study, the exhibits are examined more closely to construct a microcosm of Queensland environmental, cultural and economic history. The flora and fauna exhibits illustrate both the exploitative view of nature that was central to Western civilisation and the interest in natural history so keen in the 19th century. Likewise the Aboriginal (including human) exhibits show the racial attitudes of the time and provide insight into race relations in the colony. The mineral and mining exhibits portray in gilded splendour a materialism and a pride in technological achievement, while the agricultural and pastoral exhibits show the great optimism in the future of the colony as ‘an earthly paradise for the farmer’. Other exhibits, such as maps, newspapers and educational exhibits, plotted the advance of Western civilisation in Queensland.

Finally the impact of Queensland’s involvement in exhibitions is examined. In general, exhibitions did not fulfil their stated goals of attracting investment and population into the colony, nor did they extend its trade. Moreover, exhibitions brought few cultural benefits and no substantial legacy in buildings or public collections. They were, however, ‘a first-class advertisement’ for the colony and helped to shape its image at home and abroad.

Judith Marilyn McKay, Queensland Museum, PO Box 3300, South Brisbane, Queensland 4101, Australia; received 14 October 1997.
ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

QSA=Queensland State Archives; JOL=John Oxley Library; ADB=Australian Dictionary of Biography; QPD=Queensland Parliamentary Debates; V&P of the QLA=Votes and Proceedings of the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

Full names of exhibitions are given in Appendix I; abbreviated names are used elsewhere. The English term ‘exhibition’ is generally used in preference to the French ‘exposition’ or the American `world’s fair’. Unless otherwise stated, ‘exhibition’ refers to an international exhibition rather than an intercolonial or local exhibition.

INTRODUCTION

The Great Exhibition of 1851 heralded a new era, in which a series of grandiose ‘Universal Exhibitions’ or ‘World’s Fairs’ would mark the ‘progress’ of Western civilisation, not only in Europe and North America but also in colonial outposts. The significance of these self-congratulatory events was recognised at the time, as the popular newspaper the Australian Town and Country Journal wrote in 1870:

... in the history of human progress when comprehensively written, the series of international gatherings commenced in 1851, will occupy an important place among the causes which are contributing to the onward movement of the nineteenth century.

The theme of progress underlies exhibition rhetoric, for each exhibition marked civilisation’s advance since the previous world’s gathering, and the scale and cost of exhibitions also steadily progressed as each strove to be ‘the greatest’ the world had ever seen. An essay on exhibitions began: ‘Progress is the law of life, and Exhibitions ... the outcome and the forebears of that very progress’. Progress in the 19th century meant a quest to excel, to be productive, to make grand discoveries, to control the forces of nature, to conquer the globe and transplant advanced civilisation to its farthest reaches. Implicit in this doctrine of continuous progress was a trust in technological and material advance as the key to such progress, and an unquestioned assumption of the earth’s ability to sustain its onslaughts. International exhibitions lost much of their impulse after the Great War when world optimism was damaged by the destructive capacity of advanced technology, and many began to question the benefits of progress.

Although a history of exhibitions might begin with the Old Testament story of King Ahasuerus who ‘shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom... even a hundred and four-score days’, and then trace their evolution through the trade fairs of the Middle Ages, the exhibitions studied here were an invention of the industrial civilisation of the 19th century. They provided a medium for advertising a nation’s wares and for ‘showing off’ the technological and scientific, and to a lesser extent, cultural achievements of the era. Exhibitions also facilitated comparison of nations and races, giving visible reality to the triumph of Western civilisation over indigenous races in an era of unprecedented imperial expansion.
This is a study of how colonial Queensland, a British outpost at the antipodes, showed its ‘progress’ to the outside world at exhibitions. For a young colony looking for population and capital to develop its vast and varied resources, the proof of progress was a fact of survival and largely shaped the colonists’ image of their adopted land. The ultimate proof of progress was to play host to an international exhibition, but Queensland did not join the race until relatively late, in 1897. Hence I focus mainly on Queensland’s courts (as the various national or thematic sections of exhibitions were called) at international exhibitions elsewhere, and on the propaganda that accompanied these courts. Besides the official exhibits shown within courts, I also look at exhibition amusements organised by private entrepreneurs operating within the sphere of popular entertainment.

Exhibitions are a microcosm of the world, and conversely, as an apologist for Melbourne’s first great event claimed, ‘the world itself is an enlarged edition of the Exhibition’. Exhibitions offer insights into the larger world of colonial Queensland — into the political, economic, social and cultural fabric of a frontier colony. Moreover, exhibitions played a part in attracting colonists and investment to Queensland, promoting trade, shaping cultural identity and, more remarkably, pre-empting official policy on indigenous people at a national level. And leading players on Queensland’s historical stage, acknowledged for their contributions to politics, economic development, science, immigration and Aboriginal welfare, were also enterprising exhibitors: among them Richard Daintree, James Garrick, Frederick Manson Bailey, Robert Logan Jack, George Randall and Archibald Meston.

Yet little has been known of Queensland’s involvement in exhibitions. Geoffrey Bolton, Ian Sanker and Peter Quartermaine have looked at the photographic enterprise of Richard Daintree (Fig. 2) and his work as Queensland’s Agent-General in London, but these studies underestimate the extent of his exhibition work spanning a total of six exhibitions and (in my view) his greatest achievement in erecting Australia’s first exhibition building in London. The only other published research on Queensland at internat-

FIG. 1. The state opening of the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace, London, on 1 May 1851, ‘a sight the like of which has never happened before’. (National Library of Australia)
ional exhibitions is a paper by Marc Rothenberg and Peter Hoffenberg on all the Australian colonies at Philadelphia in 1876 and my brief account of a painting shown by Queensland at the first Melbourne exhibition. In addition, studies on mining, investment and agriculture in Queensland make passing mention of its spectacular mineral exhibits at London in 1886 and of its later agricultural exhibits, while a thesis by Peter Schlencker on the National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland outlines the (limited) role of that body in organising Queensland's contributions to international exhibitions in the years 1879-81. Since Queensland's involvement in exhibitions has been neglected as a field of enquiry, my study covers new ground. The field proved so rich that I had to limit my study to the colonial era (to 1901) and to international, as distinct from intercolonial exhibitions which warrant further studies. The chapters on the exhibits, in particular, are based on primary sources hitherto unexplored by Queensland historians.

A 19th-century observer saw exhibitions as a 'real and forcible' tool for education and propaganda: '...for they are in the nature of an ocular demonstration ... in a sceptical age like this people only believe what they see'. Contemporaries often referred to exhibitions as 'object lessons', a means of instructing the masses through their eyes at a time when the masses were only partly literate. Exhibitions, like the public museums that also developed in the late 19th century, are proof of this faith in visual instruction. But people drew sharp distinctions between exhibitions and museums: museums were 'unattractive', even 'dry-as-dust'; whereas exhibitions were topical, competitive, 'showy' and above all, ephemeral. Their blend of entertainment, education and spectacle gave exhibitions a powerful advantage over museums in shaping public perception. Contemporaries also noted that visitors went to exhibitions more to be amused than instructed, as Victoria's Executive Commissioner for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition warned: 'take away the show element and you largely take away the interest of the Exhibition'.

The profitability too, he might have added, for the commissioners for Melbourne's later centennial exhibition found that only by adding amusements 'of a trivial nature' could they hope to cut their rising deficit, and by the 1890s it was accepted that no exhibition could succeed without a range of amusements and 'novelties'. My study records the 'showy' and sensational side of exhibitions, as well as their more sober offerings, for the sensational exhibits offer perhaps the most revealing insights into contemporary society. I dust off the era's opulent and often ingenious display devices — the trophies, obelisks, models, dioramas, panoramas and tableaux — which so attracted exhibition-goers. The visual excitement of these exhibitions has been underplayed by recent commentators and the 19th-century craft of exhibiting all but forgotten.

It was during the 19th century that printed and visual materials became accessible for mass circulation, hence exhibitions have left behind a vast stock of literature, from catalogues and jury reports to propaganda pamphlets and commemorative volumes. A major task of my study has been locating the more relevant items, which are widely scattered — even some of Queensland's exhibition publications are held only in interstate...
and overseas libraries. There is also a sizeable quantity of recent literature, for since the 1970s there has been an upsurge of interest in exhibitions. But, as Robert Rydell warns in his excellent historiographical essay in The Books of the Fairs (on which I draw here), 'the quantity is deceptive and the quality uneven'.

Particularly useful as compendiums of world exhibition activity during the 19th century are John Findling and Kimberly Pelle's Historical Dictionary of World's Fairs and Expositions and the bibliography cited above, The Books of the Fairs, both published within the last decade. These list many of the lesser known exhibitions in which Queensland was invited to participate but which are missing from earlier accounts, apart from George Collins Levey's remarkably comprehensive entry in the 11th edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1910). Levey, who began his career as a professional exhibition organiser in Australia, also provides information on organisational aspects of exhibitions, drawing from his own experience. The best book-length historical survey is John Allwood's The Great Exhibitions (1977), although this continues the 19th-century tradition of descriptive and celebratory writing about exhibitions.

Since this book was published a new school of more analytical writing has emerged which sees exhibitions not as 'glittering occasions' but as recorders and shapers of late 19th-century society and its attendant materialism, racism and inequalities. Robert Rydell and others have focussed on the racist underpinnings of exhibitions and how non-whites were represented to legitimise imperial and white rule — I seek to place these studies in a local context in Chapter 4. Some have focussed on other themes, such as the role of women in exhibitions, the genesis of modern consumer culture in exhibitions, or the parallels between exhibitions, museums and department stores, while Paul Greenhalgh in Ephemeral Vistas takes a broad thematic view of exhibitions. Indeed the scope for thematic studies is as 'universal' as the exhibitions themselves. In addition, there are many recent studies on individual exhibitions (these are listed in Section B of the bibliography), but they concentrate on the largest exhibitions, in which Queensland took little or no part.

Recent writing has other significant gaps for my purposes. Most of it is European or American-centred and has little to say about the involvement of colonies (particularly white colonies) in exhibitions; as Rydell says, 'systematic inquiries into colonial expositions can be counted on one hand'. John Mackenzie in Propaganda and Empire has looked at the involvement of colonies in the British imperial exhibitions, which began with the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886, but the contribution of colonies to earlier events has not been fully explored. It should be noted that the expectations of imperial powers (usually the exhibition organisers) and colonies at exhibitions were quite different. Imperial powers used exhibitions to maintain their domination of world trade, while colonies were expected to show 'useful' natural products ripe for exploitation. Exhibitions reflected the inter-dependence of the world economy, over which the imperial powers held the purse strings. For imperial powers exhibitions were a show of national prestige, but for colonies like Queensland they were a drain on already stretched treasuries — the price they paid for their progress to be underwritten by Europe.

Also absent from recent writing on exhibitions is an investigation of their display techniques, though the devices they borrowed from earlier forms of popular entertainment are recorded by Richard Altick in The Shows of London and by Mimi Colligan in a thesis on Australian panoramas and waxworks. This lack of interest in exhibition techniques is puzzling in view of the recent interest in late 19th-century shop display and the central importance of hi-tech display to today's exhibitions. My study offers insights into these neglected aspects of exhibitions.

The international exhibitions held within Australia have not received the attention they deserve. Of the nine Australian exhibitions held during the colonial era, six have been studied to some degree, notably the Sydney exhibition of 1879-80 which is the subject of a MA thesis by Linda Young. Graeme Davison has assessed the significance of Australia's 'Big Show', the Melbourne centennial exhibition of 1888-89 (Fig. 3), recording the intense intercolonial rivalry that underlay its planning as a national celebration. Davison has also placed the major Australian exhibitions in a world context, but as yet there is no survey of all the Australian exhibitions, nor of the (fiercely independent) involvement of the Australian colonies in overseas exhibitions. Given the current international interest in the racist underpinnings of exhibitions, it is surprising that the role — or lack of role — of Australian Aboriginal people in exhibitions has been over-
FIG. 3. The opening of Australia’s ‘Big Show’, the Centennial International Exhibition, in Melbourne’s Exhibition Building, on 1 August 1888. (Graphic, 15 Sept. 1888)
looked, apart from a recently-published paper by Valda Rigg on the representation of Aboriginal culture in colonial New South Wales. Most surprising is that both historians and anthropologists have failed to study the pioneering ethnological court at the Sydney exhibition, which preceded the famous ethnological displays at the Chicago exhibition of 1893 by over a decade.

The use of exhibitions to promote mining in Australia has also been overlooked, though Richard Aitken has looked at the celebration of gold mining in Victoria. Yet the Australian colonies mounted some of the world’s most spectacular displays of mineral wealth, and two of the nine Australian exhibitions of the colonial era were held in gold-mining centres: Coolgardie in 1899 and Ballarat in 1900-01, followed in 1901-2 by Bendigo’s Victorian Gold Jubilee Exhibition commemorating the discovery of gold there in 1851. Here I begin to fill in some of these gaps in our knowledge of Australians as world exhibitors, and I call attention to Australia’s extraordinary Aboriginal and mineral exhibits. And I make a belated visit to the Queensland International Exhibition of 1897, perhaps the most neglected of all the Australian exhibitions. Overshadowed by the larger exhibitions in the south, Queensland’s own show was relegated to history as soon as it closed and hardly rated a mention at the time of its recent successor, World Expo ’88.

In the following chapters I examine various aspects of colonial Queensland’s involvement in international exhibitions. In the first chapter I look at the priorities that determined involvement in exhibitions, comparing the varying degrees of support for events held overseas, in sister colonies and on home ground. In the second chapter I look at the selection of exhibits to show what signified colonial progress at exhibitions, and I assess the presentation and handling of exhibits. In the next five chapters, the major section of the study, I focus more closely on the exhibits and on attitudes, issues and events surrounding the exhibits. These exhibits are dealt with by type: the third chapter deals with flora and fauna exhibits; the fourth chapter with Aboriginal (including human) exhibits; the fifth chapter with mineral and mining exhibits; the sixth chapter with agricultural and pastoral exhibits; and the seventh chapter with exhibits that marked the triumph of Western civilisation. The representation of Aboriginal culture underscores the whole thesis since the march of progress was heightened by showing its very antithesis — by adding a glimpse of ‘barbarism’. In the eighth chapter I assess the economic and cultural impact of Queensland’s involvement in exhibitions, while in the appendices I set out the facts of that involvement, drawing on a multitude of official and other sources.

**EXHIBITION ADMINISTRATION.** Some explanation of the mechanism of involvement in exhibitions is a necessary preamble to this study. For London’s exhibition of 1862, when Queensland showed for the first time as a separate colony, the policy and mechanism for government involvement in exhibitions were established, to be followed by administrations of all political persuasion throughout the colonial era. First the government would decide whether to participate officially in an exhibition, usually after an exchange of cables with sister colonies, then commissioners would be appointed to collect and despatch exhibits and to oversee the interests of the colony at exhibitions. There were two categories of commissioners: local and overseas. Local commissioners, as the selectors of exhibits, had greater impact on exhibitions, whereas overseas commissioners (in 1899-1901 called ‘honorary representatives’) were generally appointed later in the planning process and acted more as publicists for the colony — as a contemporary observed, their duties were more ‘of a nominal and ornamental nature’.

For the exhibitions at Paris in 1878, Sydney in 1879-80 and Melbourne in 1880-81 the government appointed the newly-formed National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland as local commissioners. (The National Association organised Brisbane’s First Intercolonial Exhibition of 1876 and its succeeding annual agricultural exhibitions.) In turn the National Association appointed a committee for each of these exhibitions from its council members. However, the Colonial Secretary held the right of veto over expenditure, which led to friction and eventually the abandonment of this arrangement. Commissioners and executive commissioners were mostly unpaid but had the services of a paid secretary, from 1879 to 1881 the secretary of the National Association. Exceptions to the rule were Richard Daintree and Angus Mackay, both paid for their exhibition work in the 1870s, and the salaried public servants who took over exhibition organising from the 1890s.

Commissioners could claim ‘reasonable’ exhibition expenses, which at times became a matter of controversy. The commissioners advertised widely in newspapers (Fig. 4) and the Queensland
CENTENNIAL INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.
MELBOURNE, 1888.

QUEENSLAND COMMISSION.

The Commissioners earnestly call attention to the great importance of a full display of Queensland Products—Manufactured or Raw.

Intending Exhibitors are requested to signify their intention without delay.

H. COUR TENAY LUCK,
Secretary.

Treasury Buildings,
Elizabeth-street, Brisbane.

FIG. 4. Calling for exhibits. (Boomerang, 14 Apr. 1888)

Government Gazette, and sent circulars to municipalities, divisional boards, chambers of commerce, agricultural societies and other likely exhibitors to seek support throughout the colony. Sometimes local agents or committees were appointed to collect from particular towns or districts, and usually included the district’s ‘more influential’ public servants, such as police magistrates, land commissioners, gold wardens and customs officials. These agents and committees had no official status and, like the commissioners, were unpaid. Government financial assistance was intended for transit, rather than purchase, of exhibits for it was assumed that colonists would have the ‘spirit of enterprise’ to freely contribute exhibits which could, if required, be sold on their behalf after exhibitions. But despite this policy, exhibits often had to be purchased or commissioned.

Following the British precedent of partial and indirect government involvement in international exhibitions, the Queensland Government did not hold any exhibition under its immediate sanction. Though the Departments of Mines and Agriculture oversaw government involvement in exhibitions from the late 1890s, the Queensland International Exhibition of 1897 was initiated and financed by a public company. If the government was undecided on the appropriate level of participation, as was the case with the Calcutta exhibition of 1883-84 and the Adelaide exhibition of 1887-88, notices were placed in the Government Gazette and in newspapers to solicit the interest of colonists. Hence involvement in exhibitions was an indication of public as well as government priorities.

CHAPTER I

‘ONE WITH BRITAIN HEART AND SOUL!’

In December 1901 Queensland’s Agent-General in London, Sir Horace Tozer, was dealing with requests for Queensland to take part in the forthcoming international exhibitions at London, Cork and St Louis. He had overseen Queensland’s displays at the Glasgow exhibition earlier that year and, in 1899, at the Greater Britain Exhibition. ‘Generally there seems to me a tendency to overdo these Exhibitions ...’, commented Tozer, for within the last few years Queensland had borne an unfair share of maintaining ‘the general Australian advertisement’ at such events. The time had come, he concluded, to hand over exhibition undertakings to the new Commonwealth of Australia.32 During the 50 years that elapsed from the Great Exhibition of 1851 until the inauguration of the Commonwealth, the colonists of Moreton Bay and Queensland had received formal requests to take part in no less than 63 international exhibitions,33 almost half of them in the 1880s when world exhibition activity reached its peak (see Appendix 1). It was not feasible for a young colony far removed from the centres of civilisation to take part in more than a selection of these events, and their relative merits had to be assessed ‘in the light of business’.34

A large proportion of the funds that Queensland could spend on exhibitions was taken in packing, freight and insurance, even more costly for exhibits brought from remote parts of the colony. Since this precluded sending custodians with the exhibits until the 1870s, exhibits consigned to earlier exhibitions were often ‘neglected’ or ‘mislaid’. Moreover, there was considerable risk of loss or damage during transit over such long distances, damage from mould or (in the case of cereals) weevils being often encountered, and on two occasions (on voyages to London in 1871 and 1872) exhibits were lost in shipwrecks. Also, the time available to prepare exhibits was restricted by the months lost in communications and transit by sea, taking from one to three months between Australia and Europe during the years in question. In this chapter I look at the priorities that determined Queensland’s involvement in exhibitions, comparing the varying degrees of support for exhibitions held.
overseas, in sister colonies and on home ground. I contend that economic dependence on Britain determined where Queensland exhibited and (as I argue in Chapter 2) what was exhibited. I also record the intercolonial jealousies that thwarted united Australian effort at exhibitions.

After two minor appearances as part of New South Wales (in 1851 and 1855), Queensland was invited to take part in another 61 international exhibitions in the years between separation (1859) and 1901. But these exhibitions, of which 33 were held in Great Britain, Ireland, India or British colonies, were just a British-biased sampling of world activity, for John Findling and Kimberly Pelle’s *Historical Dictionary of World’s Fairs and Expositions* lists 204 exhibitions for these years, of which only 60 were held on British soil. Queensland was further biased towards Britain and British interests in selecting from the exhibitions on offer (see Appendix 2). Of the 16 international exhibitions in which colonial Queensland participated officially (that is, with official courts and officially appointed commissioners): in 10 Queensland exhibited as part of a British colonial group administered by a ‘Royal Commission’ and indirectly by the British Colonial Office; 8 were held in Great Britain, including 7 in London, ‘at the heart of the Empire’, and one in Glasgow, the second city of the Empire; and only 4 were held in Australia — and participating in the one on home ground was obligatory. In addition, of the 15 international exhibitions in which Queensland participated unofficially (that is, without official courts): 10 were held on British soil, including 4 in London and only 3 in Australia. In comparing overseas and Australian exhibitions, it should be noted that participation in the former incurred much greater expenses, risks and difficulties than did participation in the relatively few events held in Australia.

What could Queensland gain from these exhibitions? Reporting on its first display, at London in 1862, the commissioner Matthew Henry Marsh wrote:

> I think the Exhibition has done wonders in bringing the Colony into notice. Within my knowledge, it has induced great numbers to emigrate to Queensland, many of them with considerable capital...
The goals of attracting investment capital and population at exhibitions were voiced throughout the colonial era, until at the Glasgow exhibition, Agent-General Tozer appealed to the capitalists and 'unfettered sons of the British Isles ... to assist in the further development of Queensland's unoccupied and unexplored millions of acres'. It was assumed that most of the capital wanted in the colony would come from London and the population from the British Isles — except for indentured labourers from the Pacific Islands and India, and Chinese miners who needed no inducement from exhibitions. Queensland also sought new markets for its products at exhibitions, but until the 1890s exhibition propaganda focussed on the need for 'labour' and 'capital' to develop the export industries of the future. With its vast tracts of 'unsettled' land, Queensland still wanted population after other Australian colonies had ended assisted immigration, and the cost of opening up its remote territory was comparatively high.

In his recent study *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism*, Luke Trainor shows that economic dependence underlay the relationship between Britain and the Australian colonies. International exhibitions provided a means of extending the economic ties, by promoting trade and emigration and presenting new opportunities for investment in the colonies. It can be no coincidence that exhibition activity throughout the British Empire quickened in the 1880s as Britain sought to 'consolidate' its domains into a self-sufficient economic and political unit. In initiating the first of the British imperial exhibitions, the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886, the Prince of Wales sought to strengthen the 'Bond of Union between ... all parts of the Empire'. This exhibition was planned as a necessary 'first step towards ... federating the Empire', and came at a 'fortunate' time when the movement for imperial federation held currency in Britain. The exhibition ode, written by the Poet Laureate, Lord Tennyson, called on the 'sons' of Britain to:

> ... be welded each and all,  
> into one Imperial whole,  
> One with Britain heart and soul!  
> One life, one flag, one fleet, one throne!

Though the proposed federation of the Empire was opposed in Australia and eventually shelved, the imperial economic nexus was consolidated to a degree which, Trainor argues, largely determined the course of Australian politics in the depressed years of the 1890s. Significantly, it was at this time that Queensland made its grandest-ever display for another imperial show, the Greater Britain Exhibition. The prospectus for this exhibition stressed the economic advantages of the Empire (and the exhibition), reminding the colonies that 'trade always follows the flag'. As John Mackenzie records, imperial exhibitions continued to be held in Britain until the mid-20th century, and their propagandist content became more overt.

The British colonies were poorly represented at London's Great Exhibition of 1851: 'The notice given was too short; the undertaking was hurried; the project was quite new, and not thoroughly understood'. Within the meagre showing by the Australian colonies (Fig. 5), the Moreton Bay district was represented only by a sample of timber from Wide Bay and by some cotton woven into muslin. The colonies had more chance to
Thereafter, the mother country made many calls on the colonies to offer 'worthy' or 'suitable' displays at exhibitions. Queensland contributed courts at Paris in 1867 and 1878, Vienna in 1873 and Philadelphia in 1876, where the British colonies exhibited as a large block. In securing space at the Vienna exhibition (Fig. 6), the Agent-General Richard Daintree urged that '... if Queensland is to be represented ... at all, it should be in the most worthy manner possible'. But Queensland, like other Australian colonies, was barely able to fill its space at Vienna, where the Australians' bags of wool and cans of beef and mutton were made 'standing jests' by German newspaper correspondents intent on discouraging their countrymen from emigrating. At the Philadelphia exhibition, which marked the centenary of the American victory over British domination, the British Empire made its grandest display yet shown outside Britain, to teach the recalcitrant Americans that the Empire was 'now firmly joined in the closest bonds of friendship'. The Empire was the single largest foreign exhibitor, occupying half the Main Building. Here a third of the space for the British colonies was taken by the Australian courts, of which Queensland's was said to have attracted the 'largest share of attention and admiration'.

At Paris in 1878 the British Empire occupied nearly a third of the space reserved for foreigners, putting on a 'magnificent' show for the Prince of Wales who personally directed the British block and lent his priceless gifts from India (Fig. 7). Recalling this exhibition, Queensland's commissioner Arthur Hodgson wrote that the Australian colonies 'made a display of which England might well be proud', contributing to the show of 'Anglo-Saxon energy ... industry and skill'.

respond for the Paris exhibition of 1855, and in March 1854 the New South Wales commissioners resolved to appoint collectors for Moreton Bay. In the following October, when their exhibits were forwarded to Sydney, the local collectors complained that:

... notwithstanding the general mortification that was felt at the non-representation of Moreton Bay at the London Exposition in 1851, the northern squatters have been equally neglectful on this occasion. 42

The London exhibition of 1862 featured the British colonies for the first time 'in their true proportions' and Queensland, the youngest colony, now became a world exhibitor in its own right. 43
By participating in these events could Queensland expect population or capital to flow from Europe or America? According to the well-known commentator on colonial life and sometime exhibition organiser, R.E.N. Twopeny, the Australian courts at these exhibitions were but 'insignificant atoms in the International molecule, passed over unnoticed by many' and brought none of the benefits of a London exhibition (such as he was proposing). Queensland's emigration scheme from Germany had proved so difficult to operate in the face of Prussian obstruction and unscrupulous shipping agents that it was temporarily suspended in February 1874, soon after the Vienna exhibition. By this time emigration from France was also seen as impractical and Queensland failed to gain a firm footing in the emigration trade from Continental Europe in succeeding decades. Besides, the tide of emigrants from America had long ended by the 1870s and they had gone to the Victorian goldfields, not to Queensland. Britain, on the other hand, could gain both prestige and trade from impressive shows of the British group in Europe and America. The Vienna exhibition, for instance, offered British industrialists a chance to 'acquaint' Eastern Europe with their machines, railways and bridges. But what could a display of raw products from Queensland achieve at Vienna? Queensland's most tangible gain from the Philadelphia exhibition was a much-criticised collection of labour-saving machinery brought back by commissioner Angus Mackay to show local colonists the wonders of American technology. Clearly, Queensland's courts at these exhibitions were less of direct benefit to the colony than the price it paid for its progress to be underwritten by Britain. Arguing in favour of Queensland's participation at Paris in 1867, the parliamentarian Robert Herbert cautioned:

... if this colony should make a bad show beside the other colonies, at the Paris Exhibition, it would cause a bad impression on the minds of all Englishmen, who are sure to be there.

Queensland's grandest displays were reserved for London. In September 1870 the government took up an offer from Richard Daintree, the former Government Geologist of Northern Queensland, to show his minerals and photographs at the forthcoming London exhibition of 1871. By April 1872, when he was appointed Queensland's Agent-General, Daintree was already mounting 'a full display' of the colony's resources for the next London exhibition, and at his urging a special annexe was erected in the exhibition grounds in 1872 (Fig. 8). Queensland's annexe, a simple timber pavilion situated in the Eastern Annexe ground at South Kensington, was Australia's first exhibition building to be erected in London. It was maintained in 1873 and 1874, giving Queensland the most conspicuous presence of all the British colonies at London's series of annual international exhibitions. (Queensland was the only British colony to erect and maintain its own building at these events.) Here in the imperial capital, wrote Daintree, there could be 'no better or cheaper method' for publicising Queensland. He presented the annexe as a portfolio of investment opportunities for the emigrant and the capitalist and in 1873 published his illustrated guide, Queensland, Australia, 'for the use of intending emigrants'.

FIG. 8. The Queensland annexe at London's annual international exhibitions, here in 1872. Timber exhibits filled the western end of the annexe, while in the foreground is a model of the emigrant ship, the Polonaise (centre), and corals (right). (John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland)
187 COLONIAL QUEENSLAND AT INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

FIG. 9. The state opening of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in the Royal Albert Hall, London, on 4 May 1886. The opening ceremony, witnessed by subjects from all over the Empire, was described as 'a feast of Imperial unity'. (Graphic, 8 May 1886)

Fig. 10. Sir James Garrick, Queensland’s Agent-General and Executive Commissioner for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. He and other colonial commissioners were knighted for their services to the exhibition. An able and popular Agent-General, Garrick was said to be Queensland’s ‘best exhibit’ in London. (John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland)

early as October 1871, before Queensland built its annexe, Daintree had lobbied for a ‘joint Australian Court’ in London, but the other colonies were unable to agree on united action before the series of exhibitions were discontinued in 1874.

Daintree’s pioneering displays were surpassed in 1886 when Queensland took part in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, a showcase in London for the products and resources of the British Empire (Fig. 9). Queensland appointed commissioners as early as January 1885 and their efforts were spurred on by a warning from the Agent-General, James Garrick, that ‘much’ was expected of the Colony at this event (Fig. 10). Here the Australian colonies strove to out-do one another in the splendour of their courts and later

Garrick, as Queensland’s Executive Commissioner, reported that his court was ‘as much admired as any’ for ‘no effort was spared to do justice to the Colony’. Besides the court, boasting the largest collection of exhibits yet shown by the colony, Queensland set up a full-sized gold battery in a special enclosure in the exhibition’s South Promenade to convince British investors of its mineral wealth. This was in turn surpassed in 1899 by the colony’s magnificent display at the Greater Britain Exhibition, so important that the Departments of Mines and Agriculture were appointed as its organisers, instead of local commissioners. Queensland’s court at this exhibition filled the Queen’s Palace building, taking up a space of 30,000 square feet (Fig. 11). Its collection of ‘unlimited’ resources was intended as an ‘object lesson’ for ‘Imperialists and Little Englanders’ alike to restore confidence in the
colony as a field for investment following the economic difficulties of recent years. The colony was, it was claimed, now on a more steady path of progress, and its loyalty was blazoned by hundreds of Union Jacks suspended from the roof of the court and by a portrait of Queen Victoria which took 'the place of honour' at the entrance. Queensland's display was applauded as 'one of the finest' ever shown by an Australian colony.62

The considerable costs of these displays in London were never seriously questioned, for it was assumed they were of great benefit to the colony and would 'recompense the Government abundantly'.63 When Executive Commissioner Garrick far exceeded his budget for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, which eventually cost Queensland up to £15,000,64 he was forgiven, for his government colleagues agreed that 'money was never more properly expended'.65 Likewise the government agreed that the colony 'got excellent value' for the £17,484 spent later on the Greater Britain Exhibition, which included £758 for exhibiting space alone since this was a commercially-run event.66 Expenditure on exhibitions elsewhere was, however, not so unanimously applauded and reached nothing like the levels spent in the imperial capital. I focus more closely on these London exhibitions in later chapters.

Exhibitions often came at times when Queensland could ill afford to participate. In 1866, as the colony prepared exhibits for the forthcoming Paris exhibition, it faced a financial crisis due to the involvement of government finances with the failed Agra and Masterman's bank, and a crippling drought lasting from 1865 brought trade almost to a standstill. William Thorpe has shown that despite the euphoria that followed the first major gold strike at Gympie in 1867, Queensland's economy remained depressed until late 1872, when the colony was already maintaining its own annexe at London's annual exhibitions. Late in 1875, as more exhibits were prepared for the Philadelphia exhibition, another severe drought began and the cotton crop 'failed utterly'. This was followed by a commercial recession and trade remained depressed until early 1880, by which time Queensland had taken part in exhibitions at Paris in 1878 and Sydney in 1879-80—exhibitions, it seemed, were 'pretty well played out'.67 Thorpe has further shown that the 1880s, generally regarded as a boom time in Australia,
were not unbroken years of prosperity in Queensland. In 1883, 1884 and 1887 unemployed 'mechanics' demonstrated for restrictions on immigration, while in 1884 a depression in north Queensland gave impetus to the northern separation movement. In 1885, as more exhibits were prepared for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, another drought caused widespread stock losses and disrupted goldfields, wool prices fell sharply and an industrial depression brought further unemployment. Moreover, the perceived prosperity of the 1880s was artificially maintained by extensive public borrowing which by the end of the decade gave Queensland the highest per capita public debt of any British colony.

By 1891 British investors were losing faith in a colony where progress had been pushed forward with 'unwise haste'. The withdrawal of credit followed a series of bad seasons and in 1892, when called on to participate in the forthcoming Chicago exhibition, Queensland entered its most serious depression ever, culminating the following year in a banking crisis after its worst floods ever recorded. In April 1892 the government was forced, 'reluctantly', to withdraw from official participation at Chicago. The economy was still far from buoyant and the annual debt interest repayment had risen to more than £1 million by 1899 when the colony sent its grandest-ever display to the Greater Britain Exhibition. This was on the eve of the devastating drought at the turn of the century which caused a deficit of £500,000 by 1901 and was still not over when Queensland took part in the Glasgow exhibition. Such were the vicissitudes of life in a colony troubled by drought, deluge and debt. Despite the perennial inconvenience of exhibitions, only once, at Chicago, did colonial Queensland withdraw from an exhibition for economic reasons.

The demands made on the colony for exhibitions were paralleled at a personal level by the deeds of its exhibition commissioners, of whom 80% were 'Anglo-Colonials' born in Great Britain or Ireland (see Appendix 3). Many of the overseas commissioners were returned colonists: men who had typically gone out to the colony young, made good, then retreated 'home' to Britain to lives of gentility; or former colonial administrators for whom the return to London was inevitable. The first category were mostly absentee pastoralists, merchants and mining magnates, some representing banks, mining companies and other financial enterprises operating in Queensland. The best known of these

FIG. 12. Arthur Hodgson, Queensland's long-time exhibition commissioner, in 1868. He was later knighted for his services to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. (John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland)
Queensland's returned 'pioneers' also gathered in London for the Annual Queensland Dinners at which they toasted 'The Queen and a United Empire' and savoured the annual musical rendition of 'The Old Bullock Dray'. The doyen of these 'pioneers' was Sir Arthur Hodgson (Fig. 12), a well set up Darling Downs pastoralist and advocate for Queensland from pre-separation days, who was a commissioner for the colony at no less than seven overseas exhibitions. In 1886 Hodgson was knighted for his services as a Royal Commissioner and as general secretary to the Reception (official entertainments) Committee of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, of which he was also a guarantor. Though well respected in English society (his daughters married into the aristocracy), Hodgson was less popular in Queensland when he commented on colonial matters. 'It is not worth while wasting paper on this dotardly Pure Merino', wrote the outspokenly anti-imperial newspaper, the Boomerang, in response to Hodgson's patriotic ramblings read at the Colonial Institute. There were mixed feelings about opinionated, anti-democratic 'absentees' who had 'made money by picking Queensland's eyes out'.

Besides contributing to exhibitions, the British colonies were drawn into a high-flown scheme to bring 'The Empire under one Roof' in a permanent museum (Fig. 13). Following several earlier unsuccessful proposals to establish a colonial museum in London from exhibition collections, the Prince of Wales revived the idea in mid-1886 during the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, lest its treasures also be dispersed, and fixed on an Imperial Institute as the principal fund-raising project for the Queen's golden jubilee. His assumption that the colonies would leave their exhibits in London for the proposed institute and contribute to its foundation and maintenance costs met with a cautious response. By January 1887, when the public appeal for funds was launched throughout the Empire, the institute was to be, in the Prince's words, 'an emblem of the unity of the Empire' and was to house British as well as colonial exhibits. Officially promoted as an intelligence bureau for colonial emigration and trade, the institute was seen with some scepticism in Australia as another step towards imperial federation and 'a business arrangement ... for making the colonies dumping grounds for British manufactures'. When Queensland's contribution of £2,029 to the Imperial Institute was finally approved by Parliament in December 1887 the leader of the Opposition, Boyd Morehead, a native-born Australian, objected to colonial taxpayers having to pay 'one...
the colonies were aggrieved enough by the ‘injustice’ of their treatment by the British officials to send a memorial to the Colonial Office. At the Colonial and Indian Exhibition were stored in London until the institute was officially opened in 1893 at South Kensington, though some of the exhibits were borrowed for Melbourne’s exhibition of 1888-89. Queensland’s court at the institute was maintained with little enthusiasm, as a colonial visitor observed: ‘It was the most forlorn and Godforsaken portion of the Institute’. Most of Queensland’s exhibits from the Colonial and Indian Exhibition were stored in London until the institute was officially opened in 1893 at South Kensington, though some of the exhibits were borrowed for Melbourne’s exhibition of 1888-89. Queensland’s court at the institute was maintained with little enthusiasm, as a colonial visitor observed: ‘It was the most forlorn and Godforsaken portion of the Institute’. Its contents had become obsolete ‘museum specimens’ by 1903 when Agent-General Tozer reported that the court was ‘hardly ... worthwhile maintaining’. Lacking popular support and vastly over-scaled, the institute itself became, as John MacKenzie puts it, ‘a mausoleum of imperial hopes, an expensive liability’. By 1899 the institute was in such financial collapse that the British Government had to take it over.

Colonial loyalties were sometimes sorely tested at exhibitions. At Paris in 1855, the Australians were disappointed to find that the British officials had relegated their exhibits to a meagre corner in a dim gallery. Again at Paris in 1867, the colonies were aggrieved enough by the ‘injustice’ of their treatment by the British officials to send a memorial to the Colonial Office. At Philadelphia in 1876, it was reported that an ‘insolent air of superiority ... marked all the relations of the British Commissioners ... to their colonial confreres’. Commissioner Angus Mackay arrived at Philadelphia to find that Richard Daintree’s approved plan for the Queensland court had been altered ‘by no means for the better’ to allow English carpets to be hung on the walls. Mackay, who succeeded in removing this ‘unsightly’ intrusion, complained that Professor Thomas C. Archer, the British Joint Executive Commissioner for the exhibition, showed himself ‘totally oblivious of the existence of Australia, and indeed all the colonies’.

At the Colonial and Indian Exhibition the Australians considered that their wines did not receive fair treatment from the British exhibition officials. In particular, Australian wine-growers were aggrieved by a monopoly over the supply of their wines to the exhibition’s refreshment contractors, the lack of a dining room selling exclusively colonial wines and inadequate sampling facilities in the exhibition’s bars. This dispute intensified colonial mistrust of the so-called ‘South Kensington gang’ who managed this and the preceding London exhibitions, a mistrust widely shared in London as newspapers made allegations of the gang’s ‘princely hospitality’, self indulgence and improper connections with exhibition contractors. In October 1886, following public calls for a ‘clean sweep’ of the South Kensington officials, Sir Philip Cunliffe-Owen, the focus of colonial resentment, was forced to resign from the management of the Imperial Institute. While the Australian colonies kept up a show of untroubled loyalty at the exhibition they were alarmed by the French invasion of the New Hebrides and by British acquiescence in the crisis. This invasion brought not only a stronger French presence in the Pacific, but also deported French criminals. The imperial government’s failure to defend the rights of its colonial subjects in the Pacific sparked Australian protests at the Colonial Conference held in London in 1887.

By 1888 when the centennial exhibition opened in Melbourne, Queensland was seen as the most radical of the Australian colonies over its refusal to share in maintaining an imperial naval squadron in Australian waters. (Queensland was the last of the Australian colonies to ratify the imperial naval defence agreement made at the previously mentioned Colonial Conference, not ratifying the agreement until 1891.) More recently, Queensland had rejected the imperial Governor-nominee Sir Henry Arthur Blake, notorious for his ‘pacification’ work in Ireland (Fig. 14). This had followed a series of showdowns between the Nationalist Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, and the Governor, Sir Anthony Musgrave, culminating in Musgrave’s sudden death in October 1888. Queensland’s defiance was still an issue of ‘national’ debate when Thomas MacDonald-Paterson, one of the colony’s executive commissioners at the exhibit-
ion and a member of the Opposition, addressed an exhibition luncheon in Melbourne on 29 November 1888, the day after the Victorian Parliament had condemned the actions of its sister colony. In his speech MacDonald-Paterson could not resist an opportunity to applaud Victoria's 'loyal' stand, and added that he believed most Queenslanders were 'in complete sympathy' with Victoria. When news of the speech reached the north, MacDonald-Paterson was promptly asked to resign his exhibition appointment: 'such public utterances' were 'incompatible' with his official post. Despite his protests, his appointment was cancelled on 12 December. The Boomerang of 22 December gleefully com-
mented on the incident in a poem entitled 'To a Queensland Commissioner' (p. 8):

You have earned the 'sack' Mr. MacDonald-P.  
You have failed to perceive how the 'National' tide 
Sets — hourly stronger, more deep and wide — 
A blunder is worse than a crime, don't you see?  
So get off the stage, Mr. MacDonald-P.

The tide of discontent did not turn until after the arrival of a more popular Governor, Sir Henry Norman, in May 1889. In 1899, when Queensland mounted another show of loyalty at the Greater Britain Exhibition and despatched troops to fight an imperial war in South Africa, its sugar industry faced ruin as a result of trade treaties between Great Britain and Continental countries which favoured European bounty-fed beet sugar. Ironically, the exhibition purported to promote trade and strengthen the bonds of 'good feeling' within the Empire. While showing its sugars at the exhibition Queensland was actively supporting the Anti-Bounty League to urge Britain to remove the 'objectionable' bounties so adverse to colonial interests.

Queensland was less ready to cooperate with its sister colonies at exhibitions. Of the nine international exhibitions held in Australia during the colonial era, Queensland participated officially in only four (including one on home ground) and unofficially in three. Queensland had little option in joining with its sister colonies at Australia's first international exhibition, held in Sydney in 1879-80. This exhibition marked Australia's entry into the 'race of progress among the nations' and directed world attention to civilisation's advances at the antipodes. Queensland's court was declared a 'grand success' and won extra points for its 'energetic' Executive Commissioner, Gresley Lukin (Fig. 15), as the first court to be completed in time for the exhibition's opening on 17 September 1879. Lukin, a well-known Brisbane journalist and a founder of the National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland, had laboured hard for the court's success since his appointment in February 1879. Already by September, however, there had been grumblings in Parliament about the probable cost of the exhibition, particularly from members of the government 'sub-section' angered by Lukin's journalistic activities. In February 1880 Lukin had to resign from his official post due to insolvency, but this did not stop an outcry over his expenditure when the exhibition closed. Though unpaid for his labours (which no doubt contributed to his financial plight), Lukin's personal expenses as a commissioner were considerable, including six trips to Sydney and over four months' stay, sometimes accompanied by his family, at a Sydney hotel. The government considered his £650 claim for personal expenses far from 'moderate' and criticised him for having purchased or commissioned most of his exhibits.
FIG. 16. The Central Avenue of the Melbourne exhibition of 1880-81, looking south. The entrance to Queensland's court is in the left foreground, recognisable by its huge pearl-shell trophy. (Australasian Sketcher, 23 Oct. 1880)
with public funds instead of borrowing them from public-spirited colonists. The complete exhibition accounts were tabled in Parliament in July 1880, following scrutiny by the Auditor-General who found that Lukin had exceeded the parliamentary vote for the exhibition by some £2,000. Yet the total £8,777 spent on the Sydney exhibition was but a fraction of what the colony spent on London exhibitions, for which exhibits too had to be purchased.

Such parsimony towards Australian exhibitions caused Queensland to vacillate over participation in Melbourne's event opening later in 1880, even though most of the Sydney exhibits could be (and later were) sent on to Melbourne at relatively little cost. Maybe there were feelings of resentment towards Melbourne, as Queensland had proposed to hold its own international exhibition the same year but had to abandon the proposal when it became apparent that foreign exhibitors would not contribute to both events. Queensland's decision to mount a court at Melbourne in 1880-81 (Fig. 16) was not made until March 1880, less than seven months before the exhibition opened. Likewise Queensland's court at Melbourne's centennial exhibition of 1888-89 was only a last-minute decision. This, the largest international exhibition to be held in Australia before Brisbane's World Expo '88, was the climax of celebrations to mark 100 years of British settlement: 'a most useful landmark in the march of Australian progress'. At first Queensland declined to take part, prompting Victoria to urge its sister to reconsider its decision and uphold 'the federal feeling' at such a momentous event. In December 1887, following criticism in Parliament of the 'very supine manner' in which the government was treating the exhibition, it was finally agreed to mount a court. By this time most of the display space was already taken, leaving Queensland with a court of only 5,150 square feet, less than half the size of Tasmania's. Though Queensland's commissioners managed to secure exhibits within six months, it was generally agreed that the cramped court was unworthy of the colony or even, chipped the Boomerang, 'a disgrace' (Fig. 17). Additional display space had to be found elsewhere in the exhibition complex, in the general courts and also in a separate Queensland conservatory. Even then, many of Queensland's exhibits, particularly the minerals, could not be shown at all and were returned to Brisbane in their unopened cases.

Queensland was reluctant to contribute to the other international exhibitions held in Australia during the colonial era, being only unofficially represented at Adelaide's jubilee exhibition of 1887-88 and Tasmania's exhibitions of 1891-92 (at Launceston) and 1894-95 (at Hobart), and totally absent from Coolgardie's (1899) and Ballarat's (1900-01) exhibitions (see Appendix 1 for the official names of these exhibitions). There were good reasons, however, for Queensland's lack of enthusiasm for these relatively small events. Adelaide's came too soon after Queensland's costly display at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition and exhibitors were unwilling to lend again, and besides, South Australia had just reneged on its share of the Australian upkeep of New Guinea (following the proclamation of a British protectorate in 1884). Tasmania's exhibitions came about the time of Queensland's most serious depression (which also forced its withdrawal from Chicago), Coolgardie's coincided with the Greater Britain Exhibition, and the invitation to Ballarat's minor affair came 'too late'. Unlike canvassing for population and capital at London exhibitions, the events held in sister colonies could bring no great benefits. The Queensland Punch noted sceptically:

There is an impression that we get some vague indirect sort of return for the expense of keeping the colony before the public at these Southern shows...

Nor was Queensland more willing to co-operate with its sister colonies at exhibitions overseas in order to intensify the Australian impact and share the substantial costs of exhibiting. There was no point in cooperating with fellow competitors for largesse from London. Victoria, in an attempt to organise a united court at Paris in 1867, staged Australia's first intercolonial exhibition in Melbourne in 1866-67 as a preview of the exhibits bound for Paris. At the Melbourne exhibition, Queensland's exhibits were left unpacked until the afternoon before the opening, when Victoria's Government Botanist, Ferdinand Mueller, came to the rescue and hurriedly set up the Queensland court out of friendship with an exhibitor from Rockhampton, Anthelme Thozet (a botanical collector for Meuller). The Melbourne officials were equally negligent later in forwarding Queensland's exhibits on to Paris: they were carelessly packed, exhibitors' names were lost and some exhibits never left Melbourne. Consequently, the 'great dissatisfaction' felt by many Queensland exhibitors made them wary of exhibiting again
FIG. 17. The cramped Queensland court at the Melbourne exhibition of 1888-89, too small to show all the colony's exhibits. Flower paintings by Ellis Rowan can be seen on the far wall, behind the mineral exhibits. (National Library of Australia)

and the government would not participate in the next intercolonial exhibition, held in Sydney in 1870 preparatory to the London event of 1871, without a 'guarantee' from New South Wales that Queensland's exhibits would be safely despatched to London.

At Paris in 1867 the Australian colonies made a token 'facade' of united action, in the form of a colonnade of their wool bales (Fig. 18) making a 'unique' entrance to all the Victorian, Queensland and South Australian courts. For the Philadelphia exhibition of 1876, Victoria again attempted to organise a united court, but only Tasmania was willing to cooperate overseas in what was seen as a scheme of 'aggrandisement' to show Victoria's manufacturing superiority over its sister colonies. Along with Western Australia, Queensland declined even to take part in the Victorian Intercolonial Exhibition held in Melbourne in 1875 as a 'Colonial rehearsal' for Philadelphia. The Victorian commissioners eventually had to abandon their scheme with much regret:

... each Australian colony will indulge in a rivalry with its neighbours, which, although friendly and amicable, may somewhat militate against the effect which might have been expected from the efforts of a combined Australia.

Queensland would not cooperate later in proposals to erect separate Australian pavilions at the Paris exhibitions of 1878 and 1889, though the colony had no intention of participating in the latter anyway following an official boycott by Britain (and other European monarchies) because this exhibition marked the centenary of the French Revolution. Intercolonial jealousies again thwarted a united court at London in 1886. For Chicago's exhibition of 1893 New South Wales made a valiant stand to 'carry out the spirit of Federation' at an exhibition, proposing that the Australian colonies exhibit under the 'supreme control' of its Executive Commissioner. Finding
little support for the proposal, Queensland again opted to act independently until its eventual withdrawal from Chicago. There New South Wales, the only Australian colony to exhibit officially, occupied its own pavilion called 'Australia House' and assumed its 'proper rôle, as the mother Colony and the gracious standard-bearer of Australia' as news broke of the bank failures in eastern Australia. A plea by Victoria for a joint Australian court at Paris in 1900 went unheeded when most of the colonies withdrew from the exhibition, leaving only Western Australia to exhibit officially. Finally at Glasgow in 1901 the two mining giants, Queensland and Western Australia, competed fiercely for the attention of British investors. United action at exhibitions, then, was as unattainable as attempts to establish reciprocal trade agreements among the colonies.

Intracolonial jealousies also surfaced at exhibitions, particularly the enduring resentment felt by north Queensland towards the south. The Rockhampton district contributed a large assortment of exhibits for the Paris exhibition of 1867, including about 350 timber samples collected by the local botanist, Anthelme Thozet. Thozet also collected samples of Aboriginal foods to accompany a booklet, *Roots, Tubers, Bulbs and Fruits, used as Vegetable Foods by the Aborigines of North Queensland*, prepared especially for the exhibition. Distressed later to find that some exhibits, including Thozet's booklet, never reached Paris and that his timber and Aboriginal food samples were shown under the name of 'a Brisbane pet', Walter Hill, the Rockhampton exhibitors accused the Queensland commissioners of 'shabbiness'. Arthur Hodgson, the commissioner who had set up the court at Paris, responded that the blame more justly lay with the Melbourne exhibition officials who had so shamefully neglected Queensland's exhibits (though the Queensland commissioners were also to blame for not making better arrangements there).

Another quarrel with the north erupted in 1886 when the Townsville Chamber of Commerce wanted its pamphlet, *Statistics for the Municipality and District of Townsville for the Year 1866*
up to the Year 1885, to be distributed in the Queensland court at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. The pamphlet had been written by William Coote, the energetic secretary of the Northern Separation League, and included a paragraph on the league’s current scheme to collect 10,000 signatures for a petition to the Queen. Much to the frustration of the separationists, Agent-General Garrick refused to distribute the pamphlet in the court, claiming it lacked government approval, but this did not deter them from despatching their petition to London in July 1886, during the exhibition, and campaigning in Britain. In 1887 the Colonial Office rejected the separationists’ case, declaring that the issue had to be resolved by the Queensland Parliament.105

Finally in 1897 Queensland held its own (and until 1988, only) international exhibition. From its genesis in a public meeting on 2 September 1895, it was clear that this would not be a state-sponsored event. Indeed the initiative came from the veteran Australian exhibition organiser, Jules Joubert (Fig. 19), an early champion of the Sydney international exhibition and later promoter of exhibitions in New Zealand, India and more recently, at Launceston (1891-92) and Hobart (1894-95). His claim to be able run exhibitions ‘on the soundest of principles’ with neither deficits nor ‘red tape’106 made good sense in Queensland at a time of restraint in government spending. With the support of some of Brisbane’s leading businessmen, the Queensland International Exhibition Company was formed on 26 September 1895 to implement Joubert’s scheme. Its capital, of £10,000 in £1 shares, was largely contributed by Brisbane citizens each holding one or two shares, but Joubert himself was sensible enough to hold shares only at the company’s formation.107 As General Manager of the exhibition Joubert then hired Brisbane’s existing Exhibition Grounds and Building at Bowen Park from the National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland, and purchased ‘temporary’ annexes from his recent Hobart exhibition. But the success of his Brisbane exhibition was soon jeopardised by its lack of government patronage which proved discouraging to outside exhibitors. Moreover, the Queensland Government left it too late to arrange the appointment of a Royal Commission in Britain to secure international standing and wide publicity for the event, an advantage enjoyed by other Australian exhibitions.

FIG. 19. The veteran Australian exhibition organiser, Jules Joubert, who was General Manager of the Queensland International Exhibition of 1897. (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales)

What the government did provide were a series of three official courts proclaiming the success of its policies on mining, agriculture and education (the mining court was destined for another showing overseas), and Aboriginal amusements offering both spectacle and propaganda. The government also contributed to the costs of freight and display space for district exhibits, especially exhibits from the north. (The Sydney and Melbourne exhibitions, by contrast, received substantial government support — for their buildings, exhibits and for making-good their deficits.) When the Queensland International Exhibition opened on 5 May 1897 (Fig. 20), its Chairman of Directors, the Brisbane merchant Thomas Finney, could boast that it had been achieved ‘without a penny’ of direct government support and this was why its opening ceremony lacked the ‘pomp and circumstance’ of the state openings of the Sydney and Melbourne events.108 The Brisbane exhibition also lacked much of the usual exhibition rhetoric, being without a cantata or even an ode. With its electric installation late for the opening (which left exhibits plunged in
darkness) and many of the overseas exhibits also late, the exhibition proved a disappointment to most visitors, though its mining court and bush-house were acclaimed its best attractions. Exhibits from sister colonies were conspicuous by their absence, with only New Zealand contributing an official court, and in the absence of many foreign exhibits ‘the lion’s share’ of display space was taken by British manufacturers (or their local agents) who showed everything ‘from a needle to a steam engine’.

Faced with increasing financial problems, the directors appealed to the government for belated support to keep the exhibition open after the first month. The government agreed to purchase the annexes for £1,000, a fraction of the £3,500 the exhibition company claimed it had spent on them, and more live entertainments were offered. But attendances remained low until the final week when Brisbane’s annual agricultural exhibition (held in conjunction with the international event) brought an influx of country visitors to town. By the time the international exhibition closed on 14 August, the total attendances for its three-month duration were only 220,814, of which 72,000 were during the three days of the agricultural exhibition. When one compares the more than a million attendances at Sydney’s and Melbourne’s exhibitions, including the two million-odd at the 1888-89 exhibition, it is not surprising that a contemporary dismissed Brisbane’s as a ‘ghastly show’. (Its ratio of attendances to the colony’s population was 45%, whereas the ratios for the Sydney and Melbourne exhibitions were over 150%. It should be conceded, however, that Brisbane’s event was disadvantaged by its remoteness from much of the colony’s population and by the decentralised railways which do not converge on Brisbane.) There was no ceremony to mark the passing of Brisbane’s exhibition and Joubert seems to have left the city quietly, his exhibition career all but over. The Queensland International Exhibition Company went into voluntary liquidation in November 1897, still owing rent to the National Association and adding to the association’s financial troubles, which resulted in its surrender of the Exhibition Building to the government soon afterwards.

In this chapter I have shown how colonial Queensland’s involvement in exhibitions varied from wholehearted support for London exhibitions to more sparing support for Australian exhibitions, including the one on home ground. This support for Britain and British interests at exhibitions was the price that Queensland paid for economic dependence, which by the end of the 1880s produced a huge public debt. But British attempts at this time to ‘consolidate’ the Empire sparked a nationalist response in Queensland and its defiance became a ‘national’ issue during the Melbourne exhibition of 1888-89. The economic crisis of the early 1890s, however, tightened the bonds of dependence and suppressed nationalist sentiment, and at the end of the decade the colony made its grandest-ever display in London. Participation in Australian exhibitions brought none of the perceived benefits of London exhibitions, while cooperation with sister colonies at overseas exhibitions proved unattainable. Hence exhibitions effectively chart the course of Queensland’s increasing dependence on Britain, and also its more ambiguous relationship with its sister colo-
CHAPTER 2

'RAW PRODUCTS OF NATURE IN BULK'

Colonial Queensland soon became identified at exhibitions with its vast storehouse of natural products and the produce of its staple industries. These exhibits were remarkably consistent during 50 years in the predominance of raw products over local arts and manufactures. With its tropical exotica and minerals, Queensland's court at Melbourne in 1880-81 was 'a museum of curiosities' (Fig. 21) compared with the other Australian courts that could boast a veneer of culture and the products of burgeoning manufacturing industries. Applying for space for the colony at the forthcoming Chicago exhibition, the Premier Sir Samuel Griffith wrote that 'the exhibits from Queensland will probably consist for the most part of raw products of nature in bulk'. In this chapter I look at the selection of exhibits to show what signified colonial progress at exhibitions and what was hidden from view. The exhibits provide glimpses of a frontier society: white, materialistic, masculinist and brash, and economically dependent on Britain. I also
look at the presentation and handling of exhibits, which by world standards were unadventurous and even amateurish. Yet Queensland's courts were applauded for their distinctiveness befitting 'the push and vigour' of a young colony, and were never criticised for their want of interest or for the blatant commercialism (or 'shoppiness') that often marred the displays of industrialised nations.

Economic dependence on Britain determined not only where Queensland exhibited but also what was exhibited. The exhibits reflected the varying needs for British investment as the century progressed: cotton was dominant in the 1860s; sugar, wool and minerals in the 1870s and 1880s; then minerals became increasingly dominant so that by the end of the century Queensland's contributions to exhibitions were essentially large collections of minerals. Since British investment in Australia was directed to the production and transport of raw materials and foodstuffs for the imperial market, there were good reasons for showing these rather than manufactures that might have been seen as competing with British goods.

At the Brisbane preview of Queensland's first display at London in 1862, Dr William Hobbs explained that he and his fellow commissioners had aimed chiefly 'to collect those articles ... that are usually classified as Raw Materials, and many of which can be produced in this colony in almost unlimited quantities'. Thereafter Queensland was represented at exhibitions as a 'young giant', the youngest of the Australian colonies by some years, so richly endowed by nature that the colonists were preoccupied with 'picking up the riches ... at their feet' and 'bringing the raw material into marketable shape' instead of making progress in arts or manufactures. In 1885 Queensland's commissioners for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition explained that their 'chief object' was 'to prove to the world the immense metallic, mineral and agricultural resources' of their colony, adding that 'in the machinery line the colony will probably take a back seat'. Later reporting on Queensland's court at this event, the commissioners wrote:

To the casual observer the ... court may not be so attractive ... as those of older and more wealthy communities; but it will assuredly demonstrate to the capitalist ... the magnitude of our mineral wealth, and of our unequalled resources in almost every field of investment ... and which now only await development at their hands.

In 1892 Queensland's proposed commissioners for the Chicago exhibition recommended that their exhibits 'eliminate ... all machinery and nearly all manufactured goods'. Finally at Glasgow in 1901 the British Australasian (the newspaper read by Australians in Britain) remarked that: 'The Queensland collection is practically one of minerals; no attempt is made to represent the various interests of the State as a whole'. Hence Queensland's displays at exhibitions conformed to what was expected of an economically dependent and under-developed colony, unlike Victoria's, which, with their preponderance of arts and manufactures, were likened to British displays (Fig. 22).

Queensland's exhibition commissioners were appointed above all to represent the economic concerns of the colony. Of the 163 commissioners appointed throughout the colonial era and often to successive exhibitions (see Appendix 3): 56 had known financial interests in the pastoral industry, 35 in the mining industry, 16 in agriculture, and 35 were involved in business or finance (as company directors, bankers, merchants, agents or accountants). Of the latter category, many were directly involved in the transfer of British capital to public and private enterprise in the colony. In addition, three of the commissioners were shipping magnates or agents involved in the transfer of people and commodities. These 'Distinguished Persons', as commissioners were sometimes called, represented the colony's ruling class as well as its economic elite: no less than 61 were one-time members of Parliament in Australia (that is, in Queensland or New South Wales), 34 were one-time senior public servants in Queensland, 15 were legal practitioners (including judges), and 6 were one-time governors, acting or lieutenant governors or governors' secretaries. The commissioners also represented the colony's intellectual elite, for many were members of its leading scientific societies: the Philosophical Society and its successor the Royal Society, the Acclimatisation Society and the Royal Geographical Society. Others were trustees of the Queensland Museum or accredited members of learned societies overseas. Further, as I have noted in Chapter 1, 80% of commissioners were British-born and at least 60, as members of the Royal Colonial Institute, were avowed imperialists.

The selection of commissioners varied only according to the economic concerns of the day: until the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 commissioners with pastoral interests predomi-
naed, but from the Melbourne exhibition of 1888-89 the mining men became so numerous that they took over Queensland’s show at the Greater Britain Exhibition and later at Glasgow. Significantly, of the 163 commissioners, only 5 were manufacturers, a mere fraction of the band of manufacturers who ran Victoria’s exhibitions. Even scarcer were any commissioners specifically representing cultural concerns, such as artists, writers or architects, as were appointed by sister colonies. Queensland’s commissioners, then, represented material progress and ruling values. In the words of the commissioners for the Philadelphia exhibition, they ‘carefully avoided entering into either the political or social aspects’ of the colony, but aimed, rather, to promote its ‘vast avenues ... for the investment of capital and the employment of labour’.121 And like Matthew Swinburne, a Darling Downs pastoralist appointed a commissioner for the Greater Britain Exhibition, they shared a ‘boundless faith’ in the future of the colony and were ‘ever ready’ to sing its praises.122

By consistently representing a resource-rich frontier, Queensland’s commissioners ran the risk of damning their colony as ‘half-civilised’ (as oriental races were often damned at exhibitions), for Michael Adas has shown that technological and scientific achievement was central to the 19th-century gauge of human progress.123 It was to the machinery annexes that exhibition-goers went to see the most striking evidence of advanced civilisation. Surveying the mammoth steam engines at the Great Exhibition, Queen Victoria was overcome with admiration for ‘the greatness of man’s mind, which can devise ... such wonderful inventions’124 (Fig. 23). On the other hand the art galleries at exhibitions were testing-grounds of national taste and cultural

FIG. 22. The Victorian court at the Sydney exhibition of 1879-80, with a predominance of arts and manufactures. (John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland)
FIG. 23. British blast engines in the industrial department of the London exhibition of 1862. Here, wrote the Australian exhibition organiser, John George Knight, were machines 'so entirely the creations of intense thought, that they appear almost to think themselves'. (Illustrated London News, 20 Sept. 1862)

attainment, especially at Paris exhibitions where French and British artists vied for supremacy. Human achievement was often accorded an official position of supremacy at exhibitions. At Paris in 1867 the exhibits were arranged in concentric galleries that 'progressed' from raw products in the second outermost gallery to fine arts near the central courtyard. Similarly the original classification system at Philadelphia placed raw products at the base, with categories ascending according to the application of human skill. At Melbourne in 1880-81 gold medals were reserved for arts and exhibits showing the 'application of new and useful principles' or 'great skill in manufacture, invention or design', hence raw products, even those that had received a First Order of Merit, were ineligible (much to Queensland's dissatisfaction).

By showing raw products over arts and manufactures at these events, how could Queensland attest its place in the onward march of progress, especially to prospective investors or immigrants? These raw product exhibits portrayed Queensland as a land of opportunity with resources to sustain any number of investors or immigrants — resources enough to 'raise a dead speculator from his grave', claimed the exhibition propagandist Horace Earle. But these raw product exhibits signified more than potential wealth, for they showed how Queensland's colonists could exploit its vast resources with the aid of science and technology. Other exhibits such as maps and photographs recorded civilisation's advance by way of towns, artesian bores, railways and telegraphs, etc., while books, newspapers and educational exhibits testified to cultural progress. All these were proof that colonists were transforming 'a land by civilisation's step untrod'. Stark contrasts were drawn at exhibitions between the 'barbarism' of Australia's first Aboriginal inhabitants deemed incapable of exploiting its resources, and the civilisation of 'progressive' colonists. I look more closely at these exhibits in later chapters.

This insistence on showing raw products was more a conscious choice than a reflection of conditions in the colony. The historian Geoffrey Bolton asserts that in 1870 when exhibits were sought for the forthcoming London exhibition, Queensland was 'lamentably short' of artists and its 'artistic output was mainly confined to the discreetly amateurish watercolours of a few enthusiastic ladies'. There is no evidence to support this assertion. Among those active at the time were Auschar C. Chauncy and Joseph Augustus Clarke, both professionally trained in Europe, and the visiting Sydney artist Joseph Backler, portraitist of Governor Blackall. And among the so-called 'enthusiastic ladies' was Eliza Hodgson, a pupil of the Sydney artist Conrad Martens and wife of the long-time exhibition commissioner Arthur Hodgson, though her work was never shown publicly. Of course in later years there were many more artists who could have represented the colony's cultural progress, yet the only local artists to have a consistent presence at international exhibitions were Anthony Alder and Oscar Fristrom, the former more in his capacity as a taxidermist and artist. Only once, at Melbourne in 1888-89, did Queensland show enough art works to attract the praise of art critics,
FIG. 24. Victoria’s bush hut and surveyors’ camp at the Paris exhibition of 1878. This recreation of colonial life was probably the inspiration of George Collins Levey, secretary to Victoria’s commissioners for the exhibition. (International Exhibition at Paris, 1878. Report of the Commissioners for Victoria;)

but their praise was reserved for the works of a visiting flower painter from Victoria, Ellis Rowan, already well known to Melbourne audiences.127

Nor did Queensland lack skilled artisans, as proved by its fine exhibits of local joinery and furniture at international exhibitions, though these were intended to show the beauty of Queensland’s timbers more than the skills of its artisans. Other Australian colonies, by contrast, were proud to show the work of their artists and artisans at exhibitions. Victoria’s court at Vienna had some ‘conspicuous’ landscapes by Eugen von Guérard, which proved that in its ‘haste to get riches’ it did not ‘ignore ... those pursuits which have an educating and refining influence on the mind’.128 Later Victoria could boast ‘a very creditable picture gallery’ in its court at the Greater Britain Exhibition. Queensland’s lack of art exhibits could be seen as a tactical oversight, for the exhibition organiser R.E.N. Twopeny observed that ‘no parts of the International Exhibitions were so well attended as the Art Galleries’ and these were what caught the eye of Brisbane’s Nehemiah Bartley when he visited the Sydney and Melbourne events.129 Public interest in genre pictures was seemingly insatiable and caused heated debate over the awarding of art prizes at the Melbourne exhibitions.

Likewise, Queensland’s constant plea that its manufactures were ‘of necessity’ deficient compared with those of its ‘elder sisters’130 was not entirely accurate, for even country towns had a range of manufacturing industries, from breweries to foundries, which supplemented imported goods more than is so today. Already by the 1870s Queensland foundries, such as John Walker and Company of Maryborough and Smellie and Company of Brisbane, were competing with southern and British firms to supply the massive sugar and mining machinery needed increasingly in the colony. Manufacturing expanded rapidly in the 1880s when Queensland’s factory workforce almost trebled to 16,000, representing a more rapid increase than occurred in the southern colonies during this decade. The manufacturing sector continued to expand in the 1890s, particularly in Brisbane, prompting the introduction of factory legislation in 1896 and 1900.

Also absent from Queensland’s courts was a balanced representation of everyday life in the colony. The domestic domain, the contributions of women and other disenfranchised groups, and the colony’s simmering inter-racial tensions were kept peripheral to the march of progress. The photographs of Queensland’s pioneering exhibitor, Richard Daintree, were said to give a ‘new chum’ a foretaste of life in the colony but as Ian Sanker notes, the photographs show that Daintree ‘was more interested in geology, scenery and industry, than in people’.131 Women and children are almost totally absent from Daintree’s record of life in the colony where, he wrote, the evils of English society ‘do not obtain’ and ‘pauperism is unknown’.132 Yet other nations attempted to portray everyday life at exhibitions. Among the most popular exhibits at the Great Exhibition were a series of ‘ethnographical’ figures ‘illustrative of foreign costumes and manners’. At Paris in 1867 the first of the so-called cultural exhibits were introduced, The History of Labour which traced human labour from prehistoric times to the present, and a section
FIG. 25. Queensland’s pioneer hut at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886. Here a gold battery was operated under the supervision of the engineer J.N. Longden (standing in the centre, presumably), and alluvial gold washing was demonstrated by a Queensland miner, Henry Aldridge (standing above). (John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland)

called Social and Moral Problems. Later at Philadelphia tableaux of the American frontier, including a New England farmer’s log-house and a Western hunter’s camp, were recreated to show the progress of American civilisation over the past century. At Paris in 1878 many nations offered tableaux of (albeit idealised) ‘peasant’ life in their pavilions on the Rue des Nations (an innovation of this exhibition) and ethnic amusements in association with their kiosks and cafés in the exhibition’s pleasure grounds.

Here Victoria was the first Australian colony to use a full-sized replica of a bush hut and surveyors’ camp to give visitors a ‘peep’ at colonial life (Fig. 24). Victoria’s hut, disguising a cellar of colonial wines, had live cockatoos chattering from perches under the eaves and was surrounded by a garden of Australian plants. At the Melbourne exhibition of 1880-81 South Australia was the next to recreate a pioneer hut, as part of a more ambitious Australian ‘bush scene’ incorporating animals and life-sized figures of colonists and Aboriginal people. At the Colonial and Indian Exhibition New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland all had pioneer huts, but Queensland’s was an over-sized structure devoid of any homely props. Instead it housed an operating gold battery and inside its walls were covered with plans, maps and photographs of the colony’s goldfields, and its noise level was anything but homely (Fig. 25). Significantly, none of these pioneer huts made any acknowledgment of women — the 19th-century Australian bush tradition was strongly masculinist.

The Colonial and Indian was the only exhibition at which Queensland’s commissioners made a concerted attempt to represent (albeit male) pioneer life. Besides the pioneer hut, they showed a series of stockmen’s saddles, pack-bags, whips and boots, a bullock dray, a model of a bushman’s hut made by the Bowen gardener William Shann and a model of a stockyard made by the Central
Queensland pastoralist Frederick Archibald Blackman. Also at this exhibition, pioneer life was described in an essay written especially by Price Fletcher, the agricultural editor of the *Queenslander* newspaper, one of a series of 15 'popular' essays edited by Fletcher for this event. Titled *Hints to Immigrants: A Practical Essay upon Bush-Life in Queensland*, Fletcher's essay offered 'practical' advice on all aspects of colonial life from selecting land to making bush furniture from packing cases and flour bags. (Regrettably, the advice was not accompanied by actual exhibits.) Later at the Queensland International Exhibition no attempt was made to represent colonial life or the early history of the colony.

Women were conspicuously absent from Queensland's courts, yet they were often officially recognised at exhibitions. Philadelphia had the first separate women's pavilion to be erected at an international exhibition, while the Sydney and Melbourne events had separate 'Ladies' Courts', but all these made only token recognition of women through handicrafts. More substantial recognition came later at the Chicago exhibition which set up a Board of Lady Managers early in the planning process. Apart from organising a Women's Building designed by a woman architect and housing the most extensive women's exhibits ever assembled, the Lady Managers planned an International Congress of Representative Women to address such 'great themes' as women's suffrage, moral and social reform, even dress reform. Chicago's Lady Managers sought cooperation from all quarters of the globe and in March 1892 wrote to Queensland to request that a women's commission be appointed to secure 'a full and representative exhibit of the artistic, industrial, educational and philanthropic work' of its women. Premier Griffith was unwilling to grant this request when Queensland had already withdrawn from the exhibition, and the colony's only response was to forward reports on women's philanthropic work. (New South Wales, by contrast, appointed a women's commission and had a court in the Women's Building at Chicago.)

It is hardly surprising that women were excluded from Queensland's exhibition displays when they were also excluded from its major productive industries (pastoral, mining and sugar). As Kay Saunders and Katie Spearritt point out, the role of women in Queensland was not as contributors to productive wealth, but as contributors to population increase. Queensland women consistently contributed the highest crude birth rate of all the Australian colonies. There were no women among Queensland's 236 exhibition commissioner appointments, though female exhibition commissioners were not unknown elsewhere, and there is no evidence that women's organisations in Queensland were ever approached to collect exhibits. Local women were not properly represented at an exhibition outside Queensland until the First Australian Exhibition of Women's Work, held in Melbourne in 1907. The neglect of women at exhibitions was a sore point for an anonymous correspondent to the *Queenslander* newspaper who enquired in September 1895 whether a women's section, or even a women's committee, was to be included in the forthcoming Queensland International Exhibition. A women's committee later ensured that a women's court was included, but its cramped space and predictable handicraft exhibits confirmed the subordinate status of Queensland's women, outside the male preserves of politics, well-paid employment or even legal protection.

Moreover, Queensland's courts at overseas exhibitions made no special gestures to women visitors throughout the colonial era, despite the constant demand for young female emigrants to meet the colony's shortage of domestic labour and to redress the gender imbalance outside the towns. Given that departing emigrants were repeatedly assured of 'the husbands waiting for them in sunny Queensland', one might ask why some fine representations of colonial manhood — some wax figures — were never shown in the courts to lure female visitors to greener pastures. Queensland's modest stall at London's Women's International Exhibition of 1900 was not officially planned but the inspiration of an energetic emigration agent, August Larsen, who was later threatened with dismissal for his pains when one of the emigrants recruited at the exhibition claimed he had 'misrepresented' her future prospects in the colony. Larsen's experiment was not repeated at the Glasgow exhibition, which had a large women's section.

Though Queensland rarely represented cultural and domestic life at international exhibitions, local agricultural exhibitions often included classes for fine arts and 'Women's industries' (or sometimes sewing was subsumed into 'Clothing' or 'Schools' work') (Fig. 26). Queensland's First Intercolonial Exhibition of
1876 also included a class for 'Apparatus and application of liberal arts'. The National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland's later exhibitions in Brisbane had well-contested classes for furniture and artisans' work, and in the 1880s and 1890s fine arts sections were added, requiring the addition of an art gallery to Brisbane's (first) Exhibition Building in 1887. Likewise the Queensland International Exhibition had sections for fine and applied arts as well as the women's court. It seems, then, that such non-commodity resources could be acknowledged at home, but were not important enough, or good enough, to be shown elsewhere.

Manufactures also had a better showing at home than elsewhere. Richard Daintree could boast that Toowoomba and Drayton's exhibition of 1873 included 'excellent' agricultural implements from the Toowoomba Foundry. Such locally-made implements were shown at agricultural exhibitions throughout the colony, one of the keenest exhibitors in this class being the Brisbane agricultural implement maker Alexander McLean who exhibited from the 1870s until the turn of the century (later as A. McLean and Company). Among the varied displays of local manufactures at the Queensland International Exhibition were food and beverages, clothing and woollen goods, furniture, carriages, pottery, electrical equipment, even white ant exterminator. The most impressive of these local manufactures were shown by John Walker and Company's foundry and engineering works of Maryborough. Besides 'a mass' of sugar and mining machinery, the company showed a 56-ton (class B15) goods locomotive, one of its current
contract for 30 locomotives for the Queensland Railways. This locomotive, hailed as the 'finest specimen of a steam engine' in the exhibition, won Walker's a gold medal. But at exhibitions outside Queensland there was nothing to be gained by 'invidious comparisons' of local manufactures (intended for the home market) against those of more industrialised neighbours or suppliers. Such comparisons occurred when woollen cloths from the newly-established Queensland Woollen Manufacturing Company of Ipswich were first shown at the Sydney exhibition of 1879-80: they were 'not considered by the judges to have the perfection visible in the exhibits of the other colonial courts' (Fig. 27).

Queensland's courts at exhibitions lacked consistency of design, achieving a distinctiveness more from their exhibits. These were generally arranged with little artistry, as was observed at Paris in 1867 (Fig. 28):

... we are content to display our goods ranged in the most formal manner, as it with a sort of protest that they are too good to require any artificial recommendation ... we are content to be tidy and nothing more.

Order and tidiness ruled Queensland's displays at the London exhibitions of 1872-74 (Fig. 29) and at Vienna in 1873, Philadelphia in 1876 and Paris in 1878, where Richard Daintree's strictly 'geological' arrangement was used. Here the courts were divided into sections for the colony's different geological formations, each represented by photographs and, in cases beneath the photographs, mineral specimens and typical products, and all neatly captioned. Daintree's captions mounted onto the walls 'in white letters on a black ground' served as a catalogue to Queensland's annexe at the London exhibitions. Though lacking in artistry, these displays were readily appreciated by visitors more accustomed to 'picturesque confusion' at exhibitions. The London Graphic claimed a brief inspection of the annexe 'would afford a better idea of Queensland than is possessed by many persons who have lived in that country half their lives', while the Evening Standard found the annexe 'a perfect model of what such a display
should be'. Queensland's court at Philadelphia won an award for its 'systematic arrangement of exhibits' (Fig. 67).

Recalling Queensland's annexe at the London exhibitions, Joseph Beaumont, a resident member of the Royal Colonial Institute, wrote:

It was so arranged as to attract the attention, not only of those who were already well-informed or observant, but even of the ignorant ... In the Queensland Exhibition the interest was greatly helped by the numerous pictures, drawings, and maps, which attracted and even commanded the attention. Then, when the mind thus realised not only where the place was but something of what it was and what it was like, they had different productions presented in something like order, and order which pleased the mind, excited the fancy, and taught people what they did not know.

For Beaumont Queensland's displays were a welcome change from the collections of 'dingy and ill-arranged Colonial produce' so often seen at exhibitions: 'odd lots of dirty cotton, wool ... or bits of ores and stones — which one ought to appreciate and cannot'.

Queensland's later courts lacked the precision of Daintree's displays but retained their distinctive exhibits. Reporting on Queensland's court at Sydney in 1879-80, the Sydney Morning Herald wrote:

The decorations, if we may so style them ... are few and simple. They call for little remark, for the objects exhibited are in themselves so pleasing, as not to need much embellishment.

What most impressed the Sydney Mail about this court was its abundance of tropical products which gave it a 'distinctiveness' among the Australian courts. Later at Melbourne in 1880-81 the Argus reporter found the exhibits themselves were enough to impress:

... see how brightly the pearly mound of shells shines in the foreground; how impressive and solid the piles of copper and tin ingots look; how excellently the leathers adorn the walls, and how luxuriant seem the sheaves of natural grasses ...

The Queenslander added that here 'little attempt at display' had been made. The courts at London in 1886, Melbourne in 1888-89 and Glasgow in 1901 were presented with more finesse due to
the involvement of professional decorators, though their schemes were not always appropriate to the exhibits. At Melbourne the decorators chose a 'Moorish' (or 'Arabesque') facade for the court to add a touch of eastern exoticism (Fig. 30), causing the Boomerang to complain: 'The colony is misrepresented by a hideous copy of the front of a Moorish mosque — what has Queensland to do with Moorish mosques?' Worse still, it continued, this 'abortion' was directly opposite the entrance to the 'elaborate and tasteful' German court. At Glasgow the decorators used over 140 coloured electric lamps to illuminate the (mostly) mineral exhibits in 'pretty' rainbow colours. Some of the minerals were displayed in four 'specially-designed' octagonal cases capped by coloured domes, more befitting a display of luxury goods in a department store (Fig. 81). George Cornish, the assistant manager of the court at Glasgow, predicted that visitors would be drawn by the sheer 'beauty' of Queensland's show.

Of more vital concern to the colony was to secure its display space in one block. In 1875 Richard Daintree advised the Colonial Secretary that Queensland's participation in the forthcoming Philadelphia exhibition should be 'conditional' on 'all exhibits being together', otherwise the colony should 'not ... appear at all'. George King, Queensland's Executive Commissioner for the Melbourne event of 1880-81, wrote to the local officials:

Collectively our exhibits will make a very fair show, scattered however they would convey but a poor impression ... We lay considerable stress on the locality because our exhibits from their nature cannot be shown everywhere to equal advantage.

Later King advised that Queensland’s railway carriage (Fig. 55), which had attracted much attention at the Sydney exhibition, should not be sent on to Melbourne because it might not be shown there in a similar position beside Queensland's court. If relegated to the machinery annexe, King argued, 'the interest which attached to it in Sydney ... would not exist.' In 1891 a local committee advising the government on Queensland's participation in the forthcoming Chicago exhibition warned that the impact of the exhibits would be 'neutralised' if dispersed
amongst the exhibition’s various sections, as proposed by the Chicago officials, instead of shown ‘within one roof’.\textsuperscript{166} For the Greater Britain Exhibition the Agent-General, Sir Horace Tozer, insisted that all Queensland’s exhibits be shown together in one court instead of consigning the mineral exhibits to an international mining section.\textsuperscript{161} On only two occasions did Queensland permit its exhibits to be dispersed: at Melbourne in 1888-89 where the lack of space within its own court necessitated an overflow of exhibits into the general machinery, educational, fisheries and wool courts and a separate conservatory; and at the Queensland International Exhibition where the government contributed three separate mining, agricultural and educational courts (see Appendix 2).

Queensland’s display techniques were mostly unadventurous, making scant use of the era’s ingenious devices which could achieve wondrous illusions of reality. These devices included life-sized figures (modelled in either wax or plaster), dioramas and panoramas,\textsuperscript{162} though the latter were gradually superseded by photography in the late 19th century. Dioramas and panoramas were never used in Queensland’s courts, and only once was a wax figure used. This figure, shown at Melbourne in 1880-81 by the Brisbane experimental gardener Alexander Macpherson, was dressed in some of his collection of native fibres. Though Madame Tussaud’s Waxworks had popularised such figures in London and in other Australian colonies, they were still a novelty in Brisbane by 1889 when the new ‘Queensland Waxworks and Museum’ claimed to be satisfying ‘a long felt want’.\textsuperscript{163} The tropical climate would have restricted the use of wax figures locally, but this does not explain their absence from exhibits sent elsewhere. Queensland was slow even to use wax models of fruit, eventually used in 1897 at the Queensland International Exhibition, whereas other Australian colonies consistently exhibited wax fruit models from the 1860s.
Moreover, only occasionally were other types of models used, yet models were among the most prized products of 19th-century craftsmanship and were always admired at exhibitions. For Queensland's annexe at London in 1872 Richard Daintree commissioned a series of models showing different modes of tin dressing, but his example was seldom repeated. Apart from model lighthouses shown by the government at Melbourne in 1888-89 and later at the Queensland International Exhibition, the only building models shown by Queensland were the (then) Rockhampton architect Stanley H. Uther's models of a town hall and a hospital, shown at Sydney and Melbourne in 1879-81. One might ask why models of public buildings were never used to show British investors the results of the colony's massive expenditure on public works. Automatons, arguably the era's most ingenious and admired display devices, made a brief appearance in an 'automatic theatre' shown at Sydney and Melbourne in 1879-81 and an 'automatic boy' (called the The Successful Beggar) shown only at Melbourne, both supplied by the Brisbane cabinetmaker Peter Thomle.

Queensland was more adventurous in its pioneering use of photography which offered more than just an illusory reality for 'photographs', it was said, 'cannot lie'. When Richard Daintree's photographs were first shown in the early 1870s, photography was a still new medium for propaganda and claimed to show the colony's still largely unknown scenery with convincing accuracy. Daintree's photographs became the mainstay of Queensland's courts until the Melbourne exhibition of 1880-81 (Figs 27, 31), and were shown on home ground at Brisbane's annual agricultural exhibition of 1881 and much later at the Queensland International Exhibition. Not surprisingly, these photographs were 'universally admired' for their novelty, informative content and brilliant colour, and won several awards at exhibitions: at Vienna in 1873, Philadelphia in 1876, and posthumously at Paris in 1878 and Sydney in 1879-80. 'As effective advertisements of the colony, they are incomparable', enthused a reporter at the Sydney event. Photographs remained a feature of Queensland's courts, and at the Greater Britain Exhibition of 1899 lantern slides were also shown. By this time Queensland's emigration agents were also using...
lantern slides and the Queensland Agent-General's office was lending slides to schools, etc. in Britain.

Regrettably, Queensland was slow to use the products of its boldest-ever experiment in photography at exhibitions. In late 1898, on the pretext of supplying George Randall, Queensland's Emigration Agent and Lecturer in Great Britain, with 'more interesting and more instructive' campaign material, the Queensland Department of Agriculture took up cinematography using a Lumière camera. But the department's first series of films did not reach London in time for the Greater Britain Exhibition where they would have given Queensland a world first, as moving pictures were not shown at an international exhibition until a year later, at Paris in 1900. The difficulties encountered in operating a (then obsolescent) Lumière projector ensured that the films were not shown in 1901 at the Glasgow exhibition. In fact George Randall, who managed Queensland's court at Glasgow, was quite unexcited by the film experiment, so it was not until the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908 that Queensland first showed moving pictures at an international exhibition, by which time they were not such a novelty.

Besides its pioneering use of photography at exhibitions, Queensland was adventurous in the use of live exhibits sent especially from the colony. Live plants gave Queensland's court at Melbourne in 1880-81 'the general appearance ... of a museum and conservatory combined' (Fig. 21), while whole conservatories and aviaries of live plants and birds were among its 'chief attractions' at London in 1886 and Melbourne in 1888-89 (Figs 40, 42). A Queensland official explained that the conservatory and aviary at London were a deliberate attempt to avoid the 'dulness' of museum displays:

Visitors have enjoyed in these ... a combination of Kew Gardens and the 'Zoo' — a kind of grown-up kindergarten ... not a dull, dreary round of ... stuffed beasts and birds ... [with] long unintelligible Latin names.