




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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ADJOURNMENT

Dig Tree Reserve

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.53 pm): I wish to thank the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, which is the trustee for the Dig Tree Reserve, for the conference that it organised in Thargomindah and at Nappa Merrie in my electorate. The Burke and Wills dig trees stand on the bank of Cooper Creek in far south-western Queensland's Bulloo shire. The nearest towns are Innamincka and Thargomindah. The Dig Tree Reserve is located within the Nappa Merrie station, and each year approximately 30,000 people visit this area.

There are three significant trees at the Dig Tree Reserve: the dig tree, the face tree and Brahe's tree. Each of these trees was carved. Although some of the blazes are now slightly grown over, on close inspection some of the marks can be seen. At the conference historian David Phoenix, who is also the President of the Burke and Wills Historical Society, gave a presentation that asked some very pertinent questions about which particular tree is, in fact, the dig tree. His conclusion was that the real dig tree is probably the tree that everybody stands under to take a photograph of the other tree with the walkway around it. It is probably most appropriate to refer to the dig trees, as they all have an important and significant part to play in our early explorers' history rather than just one dig tree.

The Bulloo shire is also rich in our country's early explorers' history. It is the third largest shire in Queensland and can claim to have the largest number of identifiable expedition camp sites—16; camps 50 to 65—concentrated in one localised area of any Queensland shire.

The Bulloo Shire Council also holds the Conrick collection. I want to place on the record my personal thanks to Ken Manktelow, who now lives in Eulo, for arranging for this collection to be kept under the care and supervision of the Bulloo Shire Council. Mr Manktelow has done a great service to the history of this country. The Conrick collection is two boxes of plate negatives that are absolutely irreplaceable. They date back to the Burke and Wills period and the forming of Nappa Merrie in 1872. These black-and-white negatives are an amazing record of early outback history.

I particularly wish to thank Denver Beanland, a former member of this House, John Pearn, Ruth Kerr and the other members of the society who were instrumental in organising this conference. I also thank those who travelled from afar and the Burke and Wills Historical Society, the Bulloo shire, the Queensland Ambulance Service, David and Kim Coulton, the owners of Nappa Merrie, and everyone else who was involved at the conference and who attended for their passion to preserve our history and, in particular, the dig trees at Nappa Merrie.