

# YEAR 5, ACTIVITY 2

## GOLD AND TOWNSVILLE - PASSAGES

**Passage 1:** Editors and deputations from Mackay to Cooktown raised their voices in demands for what nobody could keep from calling 'the iron horse'. Long and tedious were the intrigues and quarrels over routes. Townsville and Bowen each had hopes of becoming the gateway to Charters Towers and the pastoral west. Bowen had the better harbour, Townsville had the better politicians, and was on the right side of the Burdekin. In 1877 a Liberal government decided to start the inland railway from Townsville...Five years later the line was open to Charters Towers, and in 1884 a southern branch filched the Ravenswood trade from Bowen; 1887 the rails stretched west from Charters Towers to Hughenden.

Geoffrey Bolton, *Thousand Miles Away*, page 161.

**Passage 2:** The town expanded rapidly, particularly after the Charters Towers goldfields became established. Buildings which had previously served more than one function became inadequate. Just as it was no longer considered appropriate for individuals to undertake multiple roles, so too buildings now were required to be more specialised.

Helga Griffin, *Frontier Town*, page 87.

**Passage 3:** The discovery of further goldfields at the Etheridge and at Charters Towers brought prospectors in ever-increasing numbers. The road from Townsville was "crowded with swagmen", while one visitor recorded that "Townsville reminded me of a goldfields town at the zenith of the Victorian golden times – streets crowded, teams loading, shopkeepers busy, prices exorbitant and sellers indifferent to customers.

Dorothy Gibson-Wilde, *Gateway to Golden Land*, page 111.

**Passage 4:** There can be no possible doubt that the railway to Charters Towers would prove the most remunerative line in the colonies, latest reports showing this goldfield to possess the finest quartz reefs, while every week adds fresh discoveries.

Brisbane Courier, October 8, 1877, page 3.