

# Case study

## *The Droving Days* – capturing Paroo’s history

### Margie Brown’s research into Paroo’s past has informed a distinctly Queensland story for her new book, *The Droving Days*

#### What

The pastoral industry plays a significant role in the history and continuing lifestyle of South West Queensland communities.

A Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) grant from Paroo Shire Council supported author Margie Brown to research the rich history of the region’s pastoral industry, its changing management practices after the 1960s, the importance of the stock routes and the growth of its townships.

The project involved recording oral histories with station owners, pastoral workers and business owners in districts including Cunnamulla, Thargomindah, Eulo, Quilpie and Winton.

Visits to the State Library of Queensland in Brisbane helped Margie access public records.

Margie’s research provided an extensive amount of information to inform the narrative of her book.

Margie is the author of *Cocky – A Rare Breed*, which tells the story of war hero, larrikin and champion racehorse trainer Charles William ‘Cocky’ Easton.

#### Outcomes

- Margie was able to hone her research and recording skills through the oral history interviews conducted during the book’s development.
- Research uncovered new stories and images about the period which will be used in the production of a DVD to accompany her book. This will provide a collection of historical facts about the community, the pastoral industry and the history of droving for future generations.
- An independent book publisher in New South Wales has shown interest in publishing the final book.

#### Where and when

July to December 2018,  
South West Queensland  
and Brisbane

#### Investment

\$2940 – [Regional Arts Development Fund \(RADF\)](#)

RADF is a partnership between the Queensland Government and Paroo Shire Council to support local arts and culture in regional Queensland.

In 2018-19, Arts Queensland invested \$2.08 million in the RADF partnership across 58 councils statewide to support local talent and arts experiences.



**PAROO**  
SHIRE COUNCIL



## Reflections and learnings

Margie commented on some of the challenges she experienced undertaking this type of research:



*The lack of a single information source pertaining to the development of the pastoral industry in the Paroo district from the 1860s and in particular post-1960s.*



*The time involved in securing diverse government, public or private sources of information relating to land management practices, property ownership, rainfall records, droving tracks, markets and changing lifestyles over many years.*



*Difficulty accessing records from the Mitchell Library in Sydney. Queensland residents are not permitted online access to library records; therefore must present in person to view information.*

## Tips for others



*Personal stories are so important to provide a local perspective.*



*Research your topic thoroughly as there are always different perspectives to any one story.*



*Local families provide a rich source of stories and images not available in public records.*



*Don't give up; take a break and stay committed.*

## Key stats



Engaged over 30 people



Conducted 10 oral history recordings



Identified 30 images relating to the pastoral industry



Identified more than 50 historical images of the Cunnamulla and Eulo townships, community life and its legends and heroes

## Find out more

[Paroo Shire Council Regional Arts Development Fund](#)



Mob of sheep drinking at the bore.  
*Image courtesy of Cunnamulla Historical Society.*



Woolshed dances were important social occasions.  
*Image courtesy of Cunnamulla Historical Society.*



The Cunnamulla Railway Station opened in 1898 and rail supported the growth of the town and the pastoral industry.

*Image courtesy State Library of Queensland.*