



# The Commissariat Store and Moreton Bay Penal Settlement

Teacher Pack

Year 5 History  
Australian Curriculum

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Version 3.0



**The Royal Historical Society of Queensland**

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Commissariat Store Museum: 10am to 4pm Tuesday to Friday

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**RHSQ**

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# Introduction

From 1824 to 1842, the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement established its reputation as one of the most horrid and cruel places in the known world. Almost two hundred years on, little physical evidence remains of the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement; the heritage-listed Commissariat Store on William Street, the Windmill on Wickham Terrace and sections of the jetty still in place at the Dunwich Causeway on Stradbroke Island are the only surviving vestiges of Brisbane's dark convict past.

The Commissariat Store Museum brings convict history to life with hands-on activities and interactive exhibitions. For teachers looking to enrich their History Program, the museum is the perfect destination.

This Teacher Pack complements the Commissariat Store Museum Education Program. It has been designed to support school teachers by providing a detailed overview of the key factors that shaped daily life in the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement from 1824 to 1842. A number of student activities and lesson suggestions have also been included for use in the classroom.

We hope you and your students enjoy your visit to the Commissariat Store Museum.

## Visiting the Museum

### Education Program

<b>Length:</b>	1 – 1 ½ hours This can be tailored to the individual requirements of your class
<b>Availability:</b>	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
<b>Size of Group:</b>	60 students maximum, at least 2 adults per group
<b>Cost:</b>	\$5 per student, accompanying parents and teachers free
<b>Travel:</b>	Because of the construction next door, organised coaches cannot drop off groups at Queen Wharf Road, or at William Street. They can drop off at George Street, and then you will need to walk across Queens Park, and then cross the dedicated crossing opposite our entrance at William Street.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	Please check the Risk Management Plan for the Commissariat Store Museum available on our website at the following link: <a href="http://www.commissariatstore.org.au/#education">http://www.commissariatstore.org.au/#education</a>

**To book a school tour please contact the Commissariat Store Manager on 07 3221 4198.**

# Program Outline

## Ground Floor

Students will travel back in time to explore the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement in 1838. Models at 1:72 scale help students understand the physical layout of the settlement and the design of buildings of the convict period. Students will also be able to get an idea of the location of buildings in the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement relative to Brisbane today. Heading outside, students will learn about the history of the Commissariat Store and hear about the brutal murder that took place here in 1828.

## Floor One

On this floor, students will be shown a selection of convict artefacts and are encouraged to find particular items relating to the convict period. Five display cases on this floor contain items from the Royal Historical Society's collection. Two trunks contain items for "hands-on" use, including convict shackles.

The St Helena Prison features in the exhibitions. It is important to note that convicts were never imprisoned at St Helena.

## Before Your Visit

Lesson suggestions and student activities have been included in this pack and can be used before or after visiting the museum. It is recommended, however, that students have a general understanding of convict history and the Commissariat Store before they arrive as this will enable them to participate more productively in the tour activities.

You might even like to give your students a convict identity before you visit the museum. See Appendix 1.

# Curriculum Links

The Commissariat Store Museum Education Program and the following supplementary activities have been developed in line with the Australian National History Curriculum for Year 5 students and the key concepts of **sources, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy, and significance**.

In addition, the Education Program responds to the following ACARA Content Descriptors:

- 1 The economic, political and social reasons for the establishment of British colonies in Australia after 1800 (ACHASSK106)
- 2 The nature of convict or colonial presence, including the factors that influenced patterns of development, aspects of the daily life of the inhabitants and how the environment changed (ACHASSK107)
- 3 The impact of a significant development or event on an Australian colony (ACHASSK108)
- 4 The role that a significant individual or group played in shaping a colony (ACHASSK110)

## Student Outcomes

By the end of the Program, students will be able to:

- Describe the factors for the establishment of the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement;
- Describe the daily experiences of convicts and officers living in the settlement;
- Identify the causes and effects of change on the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement; and
- Identify significant individuals who shaped Queensland's convict past.

Completing the supplementary activities gives students an opportunity to further develop historical inquiry and skills, specifically relating to source analysis.

# Background Information for Teachers

Most of what we know about the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement comes from the official government records. This is supplemented by first-hand convict accounts of the period which must be used cautiously, given the likely bias underpinning these works.

The following information presents the key primary and secondary source material in an easily accessible format. A number of student orientated activity suggestions have been included that can be easily incorporated into a teaching unit. If you plan to undertake the Commissariat Store Museum Education Program, some of the following information will be covered during your visit.

## Establishment of the Settlement

The Moreton Bay Penal Settlement of New South Wales was established in 1824 as a place of secondary punishment.

In 1819, Commissioner Bigge was sent from England to report on the state of the Colony of New South Wales. He recommended new settlements be established on the coast for convicts who committed new offences. This also had the effect of removing the most dangerous criminals from Sydney Cove.

In 1823, Surveyor-General John Oxley explored the Moreton Bay area and recommended it for settlement. He also named the Brisbane River after then governor of New South Wales, Major-General Sir Thomas Brisbane. In September of the following year, Oxley and Lieutenant Henry Miller, first Commandant of the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement, along with 29 convicts, sailed to Moreton Bay on the *Amity*. They arrived at Redcliffe and after finding fresh water they selected it as the site for the new settlement. However, after a few months the Redcliffe site proved unsatisfactory; the soil was poor and the first crops failed and there was not enough building timber. In May 1825 the settlement was moved to the Brisbane River.

Over the next 17 years, the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement would develop its reputation as 'one of the most horrid and cruel places in the known world'.

### Activity



Create a timeline of Brisbane's history from 1824 to the present day. Include key events and key people (for example, the establishment of the settlement at Brisbane, and Commandant Patrick Logan). Put yourself on the timeline too!

## Climate & Environment

The subtropical climate of Moreton Bay was an important factor in the establishment the settlement. Indeed, the scorching heat and suffocating humidity made 'even light labour oppressive'. This contributed to Moreton Bay's reputation for hardship and severity.

Prior to convict settlement, the area surrounding the Brisbane River was described as a 'garden of Eden'. The riverbanks were a jungle of 'trees, vines, flowering creepers, staghorns, elkhorns, towering scrub palms, giant ferns' and 'beautiful rare orchids'. The river abounded with fish and wildlife. However, large areas of land were cleared over time to make room for the growing settlement.

### Activity

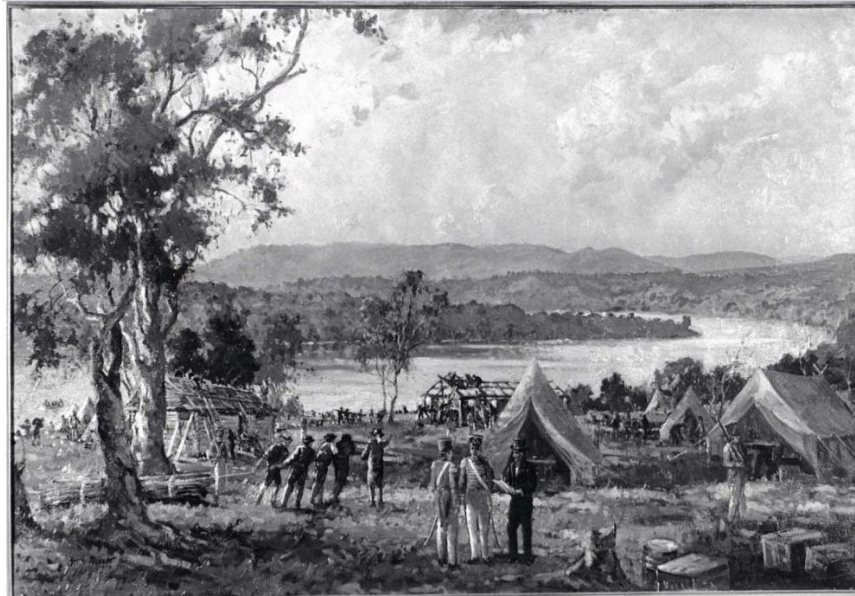


Imagine you are travelling through time and you have just landed at the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement in 1825. Write an email or create a video diary to tell your family and friends what it is like. What can you see? How has the environment changed since the convicts arrived?

## Daily Life of Convicts

### Housing

When Lieutenant Henry Millar first arrived at the site of the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement, 'not a moment [was] to be lost in constructing huts for the soldiers and convicts.' As a result, buildings were initially constructed of timber slabs.



**The first settlement at Brisbane showing convicts building slab huts in 1825**

Painting by John Allcott, 1928

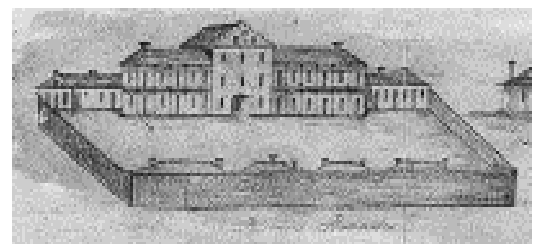
Courtesy of the Australian Pioneers Club

The construction of the more permanent convict barracks was completed in 1828 and was designed for 200 prisoners, though at times would have housed some 1000.

*The building where the prisoners slept (the barracks) was divided up into wards for the different classes...the beds the poor fellows had to lie on were merely movable boards six feet long and two feet wide, and these were supported by ledges one higher than the other, so as to cause a slant from the head downwards to the feet. Also at the higher end a piece of timber rounded off and nailed there served as a pillow.*

Constance Campbell Petrie, *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland* (London: Angus & Robertson Publishers, 1983), 247.

Although more established, the conditions at the barracks were still rudimentary and convicts enjoyed little comfort. In fact, the settlement was never supplied with straw mattresses so it is likely that convicts slept in hammocks or on the floor prior to the construction of their wooden beds.



**Moreton Bay Convict Barracks, 1832**

Public Buildings at Moreton Bay by William Looker

Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales



## Clothing

Convict 'slop' clothing was provided by the government. Each article of clothing was painted back and front with the number of the convict. According to the regulations, each male convict was issued with two shirts, two frocks (a type of jacket), two pairs of shoes, and two pairs of trousers per year. Trousers unbuttoned at the sides so they could be removed over leg irons. First class prisoners were issued with blue jackets to distinguish themselves from the grey jackets of the general convict population. The wives and children of convicts were also entitled to slop clothing from the public stores.

Interestingly, winter clothing was not provided at Moreton Bay until 1836 when the Commandant and the settlement's surgeon convinced the government that the weather necessitated it.



**Jail gang in convict clothing, c. 1830**

Engraving attributed to Charles Hullmandel  
Courtesy of the National Library of Australia

## Activity



What did convicts look like? Based on the descriptions from the convict profile (Appendix I), draw your chosen convict. Make sure to include convict clothing!

## Food

Convict rations were basic and unappetising, consisting mainly of maize meal and salted beef, which was 'unpleasant, sometimes rotten and often uneatable'.

*The settlement produces chiefly corn, which grows in great abundance...and is the main support of the prisoners. The rations allowed to these unfortunate sufferers being per day one pound of salt beef, a pound and a half of corn meal made into cakes or small loaves, twelve ounces of which is made into a sort of porridge called [hominy], and one ounce of sugar; and this comprises each man's rations*

J. Harrison and J. G. Steele, eds., *The Fell Tyrant* (Brisbane: Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 2003), 40.

As a reward for their good behaviour, first class prisoners received one ounce of tobacco in addition to their rations.

A variety of fruit and vegetables were grown in the government gardens at Moreton Bay, including: cabbage, carrots, pumpkins, potatoes, peas, bananas, oranges, apples, mangoes, and grapes. However, this produce was usually reserved for the Commandant and officials. In the later years of the settlement when crops were abundant, prisoners were rewarded with vegetables.

## Health

Sickness and injury were daily realities at the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement. Overcrowding of prisoners, an inadequate diet, and bad hygiene were the key factors contributing to poor health. Epidemics of dysentery, trachoma and malaria contributed to the 220 deaths at the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement. Improvements in diet and living conditions at Moreton Bay gradually led to better health.

In addition, primary sources report that convicts often injured themselves to avoid hard labour: 'I have known them actually cut off their fingers to avoid having the labour to perform'. Whether this practice was common, however, is unclear given the likelihood that they would have returned to labouring following treatment of their injury. Convicts were also admitted to hospital after severe floggings

The construction of the general hospital was completed in 1826 and was staffed by a surgeon.

## Language

In order to communicate without being understood by the authorities, convicts used a variety of slang words known as 'flash language'.

Common flash words included:

<b>banded</b>	hungry	<b>leary</b>	wide awake and alert
<b>bit</b>	money	<b>mang</b>	to speak or talk
<b>buffer</b>	a dog	<b>mizzle</b>	to run away
<b>chum</b>	a fellow prisoner in jail	<b>monkey</b>	a padlock
<b>conk</b>	the nose	<b>mug</b>	the face
<b>crabshells</b>	shoes	<b>patter</b>	to talk
<b>croak</b>	to die	<b>pipes</b>	boots
<b>darky</b>	night time	<b>rump'd</b>	flogged
<b>drag</b>	a cart	<b>seedy</b>	poor, ragged in appearance, shabby
<b>flesh-bag</b>	a shirt	<b>slop</b>	tea
<b>galloot</b>	a soldier	<b>snooze</b>	to sleep
<b>gams</b>	the legs	<b>thimble</b>	a watch
<b>knuckle</b>	to pick pockets	<b>woolly-birds</b>	sheep
<b>lamps</b>	the eyes	<b>wrinkle</b>	to lie
<b>lag</b>	a convict under the sentence of transportation	<b>yarn</b>	to tell an amusing story about your life; spinning a yarn

## Activities



Write a secret letter to another convict in your class using flash language.



Talk like a convict for the day! Make up a few 'flash' words of your own and see if your friends can guess what they mean.

## Labour

As a place of secondary punishment, the work convicts undertook at Moreton Bay Penal Settlement was particularly gruelling. Convicts worked each day from sunrise until sunset with only two breaks: one hour for breakfast and one hour for dinner.

Men sentenced to the chain gang undertook the hardest labour under the harshest possible conditions: working in the fields, harvesting crops, and splitting stone and timber. This work was made harder given they had to do everything by hand:

*The use of the hoe and the spade shall be as much as possible adopted... the use of the plough shall be given up and no working cattle are to be employed in operations, which can be effected by men and hand carts.*

Regulations for Penal Settlements No. 3, 1 July 1829 in J. G. Steele, *Brisbane Town in Convict Days, 1824-1842* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1975), 121.

First class prisoners, who achieved this status on account of their good behaviour, did not have to wear leg irons and were employed in the 'lighter and least laborious operations'. They worked as gardeners, overseers, storemen, cooks, and officers' servants. First class convicts with trades and skills worked in the lumber yard, as 'blacksmiths, carpenters, cabinet makers, coopers, wheelwrights, and barbers'.

The Commissariat Store, the Windmill on Wickham Terrace and sections of the jetty still in place at the Dunwich Causeway on Stradbroke Island are the only remaining evidence of convict labour from the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement.

## Punishment

Given Moreton Bay Penal Settlement was established as a place of secondary punishment for repeat offenders, the nature of the punishment was particularly severe. Convicts could be sentenced to hard labour in leg irons, flogging, solitary confinement, or the treadmill, or a combination of these for misconduct.

### Leg irons

The most common form of punishment at Moreton Bay was the wearing of heavy leg irons. Tom Petrie describes how leg irons were worn:

*The chains were some two feet long between the legs, and in the middle of each was a small ring with a string through it, which, being connected to the prisoner's belt, kept the irons from dragging on the ground during motion...Prisoners wearing chains had a particular way of walking, and you would see the poor fellows released after six months or so, going along as though they still wore them.*

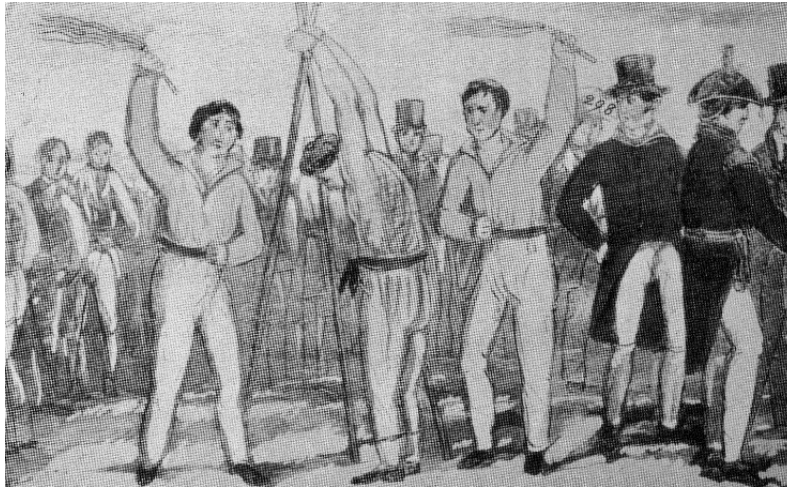
Constance Campbell Petrie, *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland* (London: Angus & Robertson Publishers, 1983), 244-245.

Convicts wearing leg irons were subject to the hardest labour and worked in groups called chain gangs.

### Flogging

Flogging was a standard punishment for convicts at Moreton Bay and was carried out using a 'cat-o' nine-tails'. Prisoners were 'stripped naked and tied to the triangle by hands and feet, so that they could not move'. As they were being flogged, an overseer would count

aloud the number of lashes. The other convicts at the settlement were made to witness the spectacle as a means of discouraging bad behaviour. Convicts received to between 25 and 200 lashes, depending on their offence.



**A convict being flogged at the triangle**

Front piece from *The Fell Tyrant*.

## Treadmill

The treadmill, which was attached to the Windmill in 1829, was not only a form of mass punishment but served as a useful way to grind grain quickly. The treadmill was 12 metres long and had steps 22 centimetres wide. Prisoners were able to hold on to a handrail while they climbed the 'everlasting staircase'.

*You would hear the "click, click" of their irons as they kept step with the wheel, and those with the heavier irons seemed to have "a great job" to keep up. Some poor wretches only just managed to pull through till they got off at the far end, then they sat down till their turn came to go on again. They all had to do so many hours, according to their sentence; an overseer kept the time, and a couple of soldiers guarded them.*

Constance Campbell Petrie, *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland* (London: Angus & Robertson Publishers, 1983), 244.

## Solitary confinement

Sixteen solitary cells were built at the Convict Barracks between 1827 and 1829. Each cell was just over two metres long and one metre wide, and had small vents for light and ventilation. Prisoners were kept chained up in these rooms for long periods at a time.

## Escaping Moreton Bay

Many convicts tried to escape the brutal conditions at Moreton Bay; however, few were successful. Around 500 convicts absconded from Moreton Bay with over 700 events recorded, indicating that some convicts ran away more than once. In their attempt to escape, however, convicts were recaptured, returned of their own free will unable to survive in the bush, or were never heard of again.

The primary source evidence also suggests that incentives were offered to the local indigenous people to capture and return absconders:

*I am happy to be able to state, for His Excellency's information, that we are on very good terms with the natives...a few days ago they brought me in two bush rangers that had absconded from the settlement.*

Captain Bishop to Colonial Secretary Macleay, 14 March 1826 in J. G. Steele, *Brisbane Town in Convict Days, 1824-1842* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1975), 57-58.

On returning to the settlement, absconders were punished with 50 to 200 lashes. Accounts of convicts who successfully escaped Moreton Bay are few, but include James Davis, David Bracewell and John Sterry Baker. These men were taken in by Aboriginal tribes and lived in the bush for many years.

## Governance

Isolated from the colonial administration, new penal settlements were appointed with a Commandant who was responsible for 'every department on the settlement'. Every person, free or convict, was subject to his orders. These orders were enforced by British soldiers stationed at the settlement.

One of the most well-known Commandants at Moreton Bay was Captain Patrick Logan who was in command from March 1826 to October 1830. Logan had a reputation as a harsh disciplinarian who relied upon flogging as primary means of punishment. Indeed, Logan believed that convicts could be made to work only by fear of punishment; 'a little severity was absolutely necessary'. In the eight months between February and October 1828, he imposed sentences totalling 11,100 lashes.

Despite his reputation for cruelty, Logan did make a significant contribution to the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement. He planned and oversaw an ambitious building program that included the construction of the hospital and prisoners' and military barracks.

In 1830, shortly before his return to Sydney, Logan was killed by unknown attackers during an exploration expedition in the Brisbane Valley.

Whether Logan was a tyrant or a capable administrator who did his best given the terrible conditions at Moreton Bay is still being debated by historians.



**Captain Patrick Logan, c.1825**

Courtesy of the Mitchell Library,  
State Library of New South Wales

### Activity



Choose a personality from the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement (such as Lieutenant Henry Miller or Captain Patrick Logan) and write a short biography. Make sure to include the important dates and key events of the person's life. Use the Australian Dictionary of Biography (<http://adb.anu.edu.au>) to do your research.

## Women

From 1827 to 1837, one hundred and thirty-five women were sent to Moreton Bay Penal Settlement. They lived and worked in the Female Factory and were assigned to 'wash and mend the clothes and air the blankets of the prisoners'. Female prisoners were 'kept under

strict confinement' to prevent them from interacting with the men in the settlement, who greatly outnumbered them.

Flogging of female convicts was strictly prohibited. Punishments included solitary confinement, restriction of rations, and leg irons, and having their heads shaved.

## Children

At any given time, there were a number of children at the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement. These were not only the children of convicts, but of the civil establishment and military. By 1827, there were enough children at Moreton Bay to require the establishment of a school. The school had an average of 16 students in 1826 and 32 in 1829.

A school building was never constructed at Moreton Bay and instead classes took place in the officers living quarters (1827), in a small hut near the wharf (1829) and in a room at the northern end of the convict barracks (1838).

The curriculum centred on reading, writing and arithmetic with the addition of sewing for the girls. Between 1827 and 1837, pupils were often taught by soldiers and may have been exposed to strict discipline.

To entertain themselves, it is likely children mixed with the convicts:

*[We were] off out among the prisoners watching them as they made nails, and all the other various articles, without a thought to [our] lessons...I only thought of playing in those days...My brothers, like myself, were in great favour with the convicts, as they used also to bring food and tobacco to them. The prisoners would do anything for us.*

Constance Campbell Petrie, *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland* (London: Angus & Robertson Publishers, 1983), 246.

## Activity



Compare your life to a child from the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement

	My Life Now	Life Then (1826 – 1842)
Clothing		
Food		
House		
School		
Entertainment		



## Free settlement

The number of convicts at the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement reached its peak in 1831 with over 1000; however, by 1832 the government started considering abandoning the outpost due to increasing costs. Attitudes and beliefs regarding transportation as an effective means of punishment were also changing around this time. The number of convicts at Moreton Bay slowly declined and in May 1839 the bulk of the convict population was recalled to Sydney. By 1840, a small number of convicts remained with the task of maintaining government property and livestock. On 11 February 1842, Moreton Bay was officially declared open for free settlement.

Though it was never a large settlement, the convict presence significantly impacted the landscape and future development of Brisbane. Officials who had come to Moreton Bay Penal Settlement stayed on to become key figures in colonial Queensland, as was the case with Andrew Petrie and the Petrie family. Former convicts who had received their ticket-of-leave also returned to the settlement as free men.

# Student Activities

## Post Visit Evaluation

Your convict name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years you were sentenced to:

Crime committed: \_\_\_\_\_

Write three things you learned today.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Describe an artefact or image you saw at the museum. Draw it.

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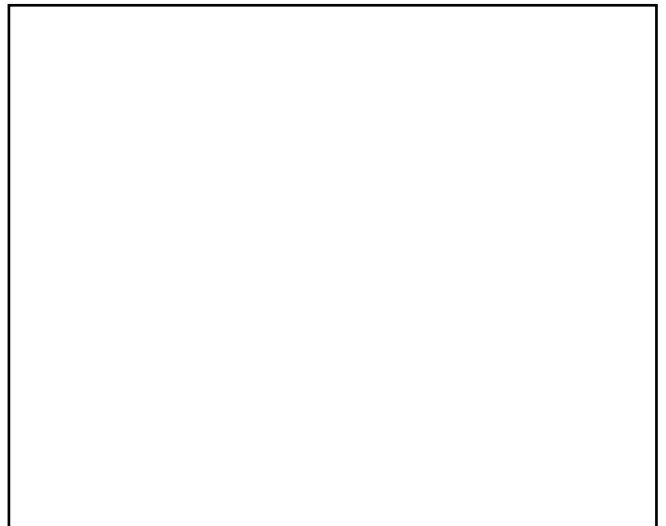
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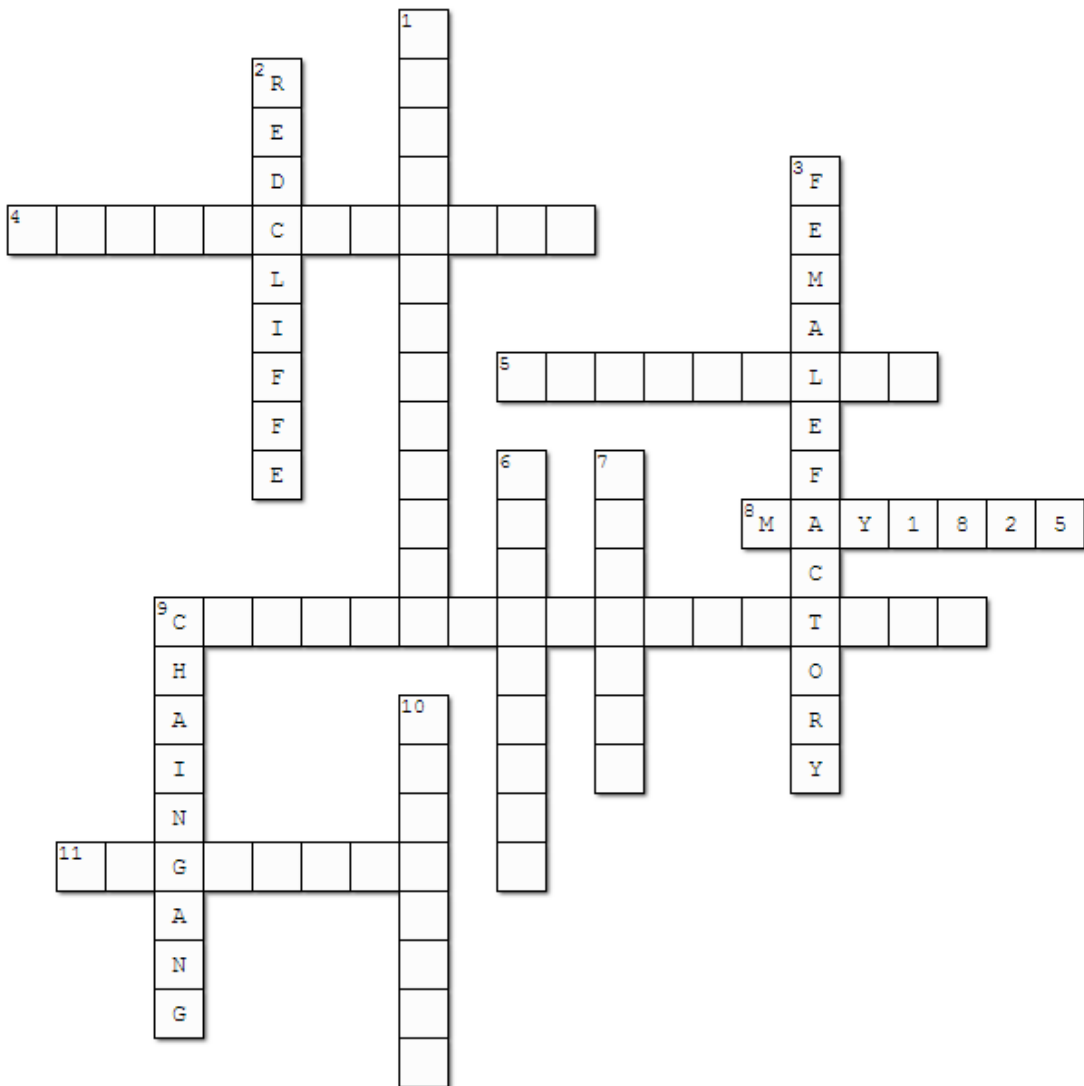
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What was your favourite part of the museum and why?

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## Settlement Crossword

### Across

4. The Commandant of Moreton Bay Penal Settlement from 1826 to 1830
5. The surveyor-general who was sent to find the site for a northern penal settlement
8.
9. The building that housed food and other supplies in the settlement
11. The name for the metal rings that convicts wore around their ankles

### Down

1. Moreton bay settlement was part of this state in Australia
2.
3.
6. This was a common type of punishment at Moreton Bay
7. What the convicts were given to eat

9.

10. The name of the city on the site of the Morton Bay Penal Settlement

## Looking at the Evidence

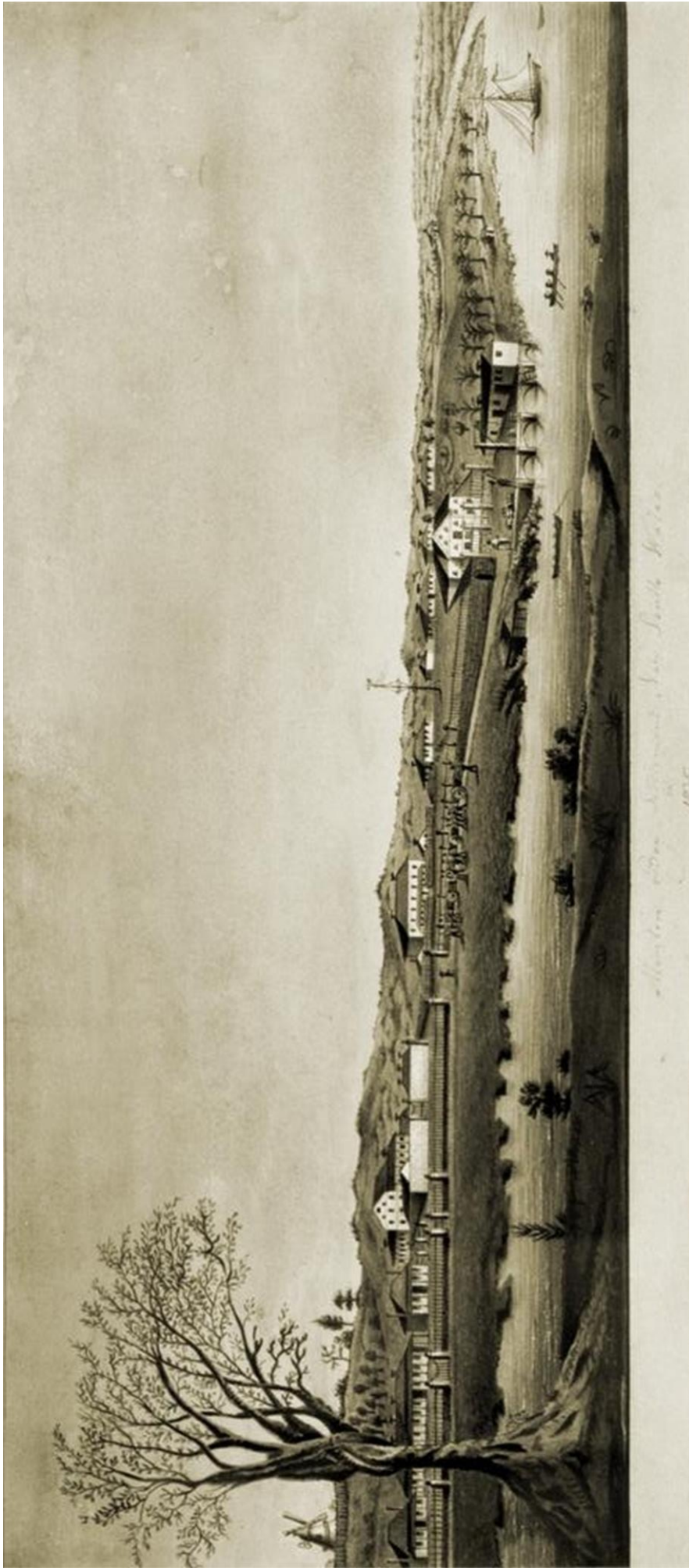
### Images of Moreton Bay

- 1 Look at the painting “View of Brisbane Watercolour” by Henry Boucher Bowerman
  1. What buildings can you identify in the painting?
  2. What people can you see in the painting? What are they doing?
  3. What do you think the artist might have wanted the audience to think or feel about Moreton Bay?
- 2 Look at the map “Brisbane in 1829”
  1. Use this map to identify the buildings in Henry Boucher Bowerman’s painting. Try and find the Windmill and the Convict Barracks. Can you spot the Commissariat Store?
  2. What did you learn from examining this map?
- 3 Look at the image “South Brisbane from the North Shore” by Thomas Baines
  1. What are some of the similarities and differences between this painting and Henry Boucher Bowerman’s painting?
  2. What buildings can you identify in the painting?
  3. What people can you see in the painting? What are they doing?
  4. What do you think the artist might have wanted the audience to think or feel about Moreton Bay?

### Stories of Moreton Bay

- 1 Read Source 1: Excerpt from the convict narrative *The Fell Tyrant* written by William Ross, sentenced to Moreton Bay from 1826 to 1832.
  1. What does William Ross think about the conditions at Moreton Bay Penal Settlement?
  2. Who do you think William Ross was writing for?
  3. What can you learn about Moreton Bay Penal Settlement from this source?
- 2 Read Source 2: Excerpt from the memoir of Tom Petrie, a boy who grew up in the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement.
  1. What does Tom Petrie think about the conditions at Moreton Bay Penal Settlement?
  2. What can you learn about Moreton Bay Penal Settlement from this source?
- 3 Read Source 3: Excerpt from the diary of missionary James Backhouse, who visited Moreton Bay Penal Settlement in May and April 1836.

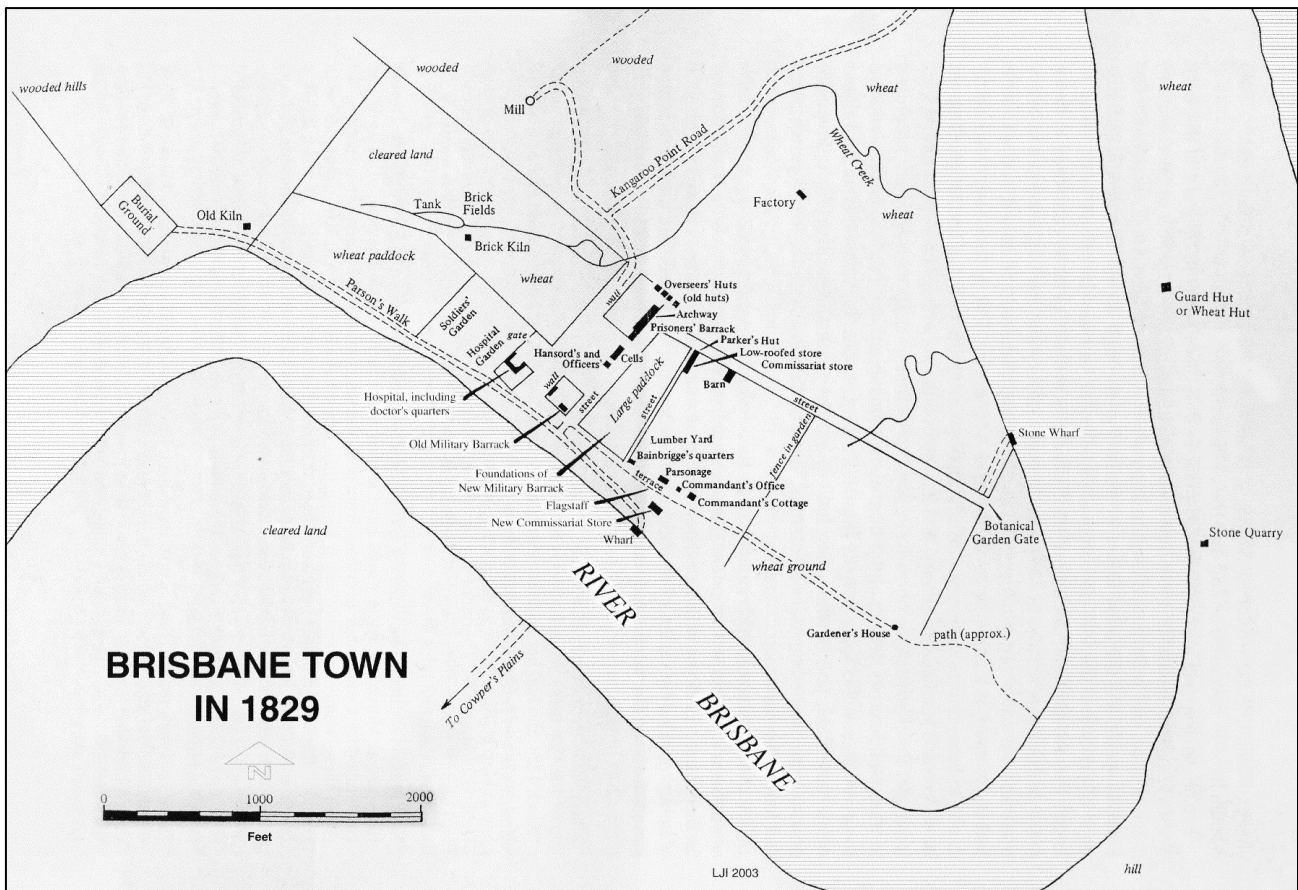
1. What does James Backhouse think about the conditions at the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement?
2. What are the similarities and differences between this text and Source 2?
3. What can you learn about Moreton Bay Penal Settlement from this source?



**View of Brisbane Watercolour**

Painted by Henry Boucher Bowerman, 1835

Courtesy of the John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland



### Brisbane Town in 1829

Steele, J. G. "Brisbane Town in 1829." *Queensland Heritage* 2, no. 5 (1971): 15-23.



### South Brisbane from the North Shore, Moreton Bay

Painted by Thomas Baines, 1868

Courtesy of the National Library of Australia

### Source 1

I was sent to work in the fields in breaking up hard ground, and the task that was measured out to me daily was more than the strength of my body could perform; I was therefore exposed to the will of a cruel overseer, who was invested with full power to bring me before the Commandant, who without asking him a second question, would not hesitate to award me one hundred lashes, and repeat the same punishment day after day

From J. Harrison and J. G. Steele, eds., *The Fell Tyrant* (Brisbane: Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 2003), 35.

### Source 2

Father also saw the unfortunate chained men on the treadmill working out their punishment. You would hear the “click, click” of their irons as they kept step with the wheel, and those with the heavier irons seemed to have “a great job” to keep up. Some poor wretches only just managed to pull through till they got off at the far end, then they sat down till their turn came to go on again. They all had to do so many hours, according to their sentence; an overseer kept the time, and a couple of soldiers guarded them. When they had put in their time they were marched back to the barracks.

From Constance Campbell Petrie, *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland* (London: Angus & Robertson Publishers, 1983), 244.

### Source 3

The treadmill is generally worked by twenty-five prisoners at a time, but when it is used as a special punishment, sixteen are kept upon it for fourteen hours, with only the interval of release afforded by four being off at a time in succession. They feel this extremely irksome at first, but notwithstanding the warmth of the climate, they become so far accustomed to the labour, by long practice, as to leave the treadmill with comparatively little disgust after working upon it for a considerable number of days.

From James Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies, 1843* in J. G. Steele, *Brisbane Town in Convict Days, 1824-1842* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1975), 219.



## Ballad of “Moreton Bay”

One Sunday morning as I went walking,  
by the Brisbane's waters I chanced to stray,

I heard a prisoner his fate bewailing,  
as on the sunny river bank he lay:

"I am a native of Erin's island but banished  
now to the fatal shore,

They tore me from my aged parents and from  
the maiden I do adore.

"I've been a prisoner at Port Macquarie, Norfolk  
Island and Emu Plains,

At Castle Hill and cursed Toongabbie,  
at all those settlements I've worked in chains;

But of all those places of condemnation,  
in each penal station of New South Wales,

To Moreton Bay I've found no equal: excessive  
tyranny there each day prevails.

"For three long years I was beastly treated,  
heavy irons on my legs I wore,

My back from flogging it was lacerated,  
and often painted with crimson gore,

And many a lad from downright starvation  
lies mouldering humbly beneath the clay,

Where Captain Logan he had us mangled  
on his triangles at Moreton Bay.

"Like the Egyptians and ancient Hebrews, we  
were oppressed under Logan's yoke,

Till a native black who lay in ambush  
did give our tyrant his mortal stroke.

Fellow prisoners, be exhilarated,  
that all such monsters such a death may find!

And when from bondage we are liberated, our  
former sufferings shall fade from mind.

### Activities

- 1 Listen to a recording of “Moreton Bay”. Sing along!
- 2 Read the ballad “Moreton Bay”
  1. Why did this convict go to Moreton Bay?
  2. What does the author say about the conditions at Moreton Bay?
  3. Who was Logan? What are triangles?
  4. What happened to Captain Logan? Why were the convicts ‘exhilarated’?
  5. Why do you think this song was so popular in colonial Australia?
- 3 Imagine you are in a convict chain gang. Pick a tune you know and write a short song you and your fellow convicts can sing while you work. Perform your song to the class.

**Source:** "Moreton Bay" or "The Convict's Lament on the Unfortunate Death of Patrick Logan" in Hughes, *The Fatal Shore: A History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia, 1787-1868*, 443-44.

## A Letter from Moreton Bay

Imagine you are a convict at the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement. Write a letter home, telling your family about your life at Moreton Bay. How do you feel about the conditions? What is the food like?

*Date*

Make your letter look more authentic by scorching the edges or washing it with cold tea!

# Additional Resources

## Books

*Life in Convict Brisbane*. Department of Education, Queensland, 1983.

Materials designed for Years 5 to 9 providing a number of informative leaflets and wall charts to supplement a unit on convict Brisbane. Excellent illustrations.

Steele, J. G. *Brisbane Town in Convict Days, 1824-1842*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1975.

A scholarly collection of primary sources relating to the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement with limited commentary.

Petrie, Constance Campbell. *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland: Constance Campbell Petrie*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1992.

Easy to read memoir providing interesting insights into daily life at Moreton Bay Penal Settlement in the 1830s. The first half of this book also details Tom's relationship with the local indigenous *Turrbal* people and their customs.

Harrison, Jennifer, and J. G. Steele. *The Fell Tyrant*. Brisbane: Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 2003.

Convict narrative of William Ross who was sentenced to Moreton Bay Penal Settlement from 1826 to 1832.

## Websites

The State Library of Queensland – Convict Queenslanders

[www.slq.qld.gov.au](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au)

Online resource compiled from the convict transportation registers and newspaper archives. Select from 10 Queensland convicts and read about their story.

Sydney Living Museums – A Day in the Life of a Convict

[www.sydneylivingmuseums.com.au](http://www.sydneylivingmuseums.com.au)

Easy to navigate website providing a wealth of information on the daily lives of convicts. Includes a number of videos that bring the convict period to life. Please note, information on this site does not relate directly to the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement

My Place for Teachers

[www.myplace.edu.au](http://www.myplace.edu.au)

Online resource documenting the major historical developments in Australia by decade. Teaching activities available, including videos. Please note, information on this site does not relate directly to the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement

## Related Excursions

Looking to make the most of your visit to the Brisbane CBD Heritage Precinct? The Commissariat Store is centrally located and within walking distance of a number of popular locations including the Botanic Gardens, Parliament House, Queensland Museum, and South Bank Parklands.

Many schools include a visit to the Commissariat Store Museum with the walking tour offered by the Brisbane Urban Environmental Education Centre's (BUEEC). For further information, contact BUEEC on 07 3552 7111 or visit [www.urbaneec.eq.edu.au](http://www.urbaneec.eq.edu.au).

Other tours that can be linked with a visit to the Commissariat Store include:

Parliament House	07 3406 7562	<a href="http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au">www.parliament.qld.gov.au</a>
Old Government House	07 3138 8005	<a href="http://www.ogh.qut.edu.au">www.ogh.qut.edu.au</a>
Queensland Police Museum	07 3364 4013	<a href="http://www.police.qld.gov.au">www.police.qld.gov.au</a>
Queensland Museum	07 3840 7555	<a href="http://www.qm.qld.gov.au">www.qm.qld.gov.au</a>
Queensland Maritime Museum	07 3844 5361	<a href="http://www.maritimemuseum.com.au">www.maritimemuseum.com.au</a>
Newstead House	07 3216 1846	<a href="http://www.newsteadhouse.com.au">www.newsteadhouse.com.au</a>
Miegunyah	07 3252 2979	<a href="http://www.miegunyah.org">www.miegunyah.org</a>
Boggo Road Gaol Museum	07 3846 7423	<a href="http://www.boggoroadgaol.com.au">www.boggoroadgaol.com.au</a>
Museum of Brisbane	07 3403 6363	<a href="http://www.museumofbrisbane.com.au">www.museumofbrisbane.com.au</a>

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We hope you and your students can join us at the Commissariat Store Museum for an enjoyable and educational experience.

If you have any enquiries, please contact the Commissariat Store Museum Manager on 07 3221 4198.

The Museum is located at 115 William Street, Brisbane and is open from 10am to 4pm, Tuesday to Friday.

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