

CHINCHILLA PETRIFIED WOOD LOCALITIES

Petrified wood is a popular ornamental material used mainly for decorative pieces (bookends, clock faces, ashtrays etc) and for lapidary purposes as polished specimens, slabs, cabochons, tumbled stones and spheres. In the Chinchilla area, petrified wood occurs in abundance and is much sought after by lapidary enthusiasts for its quality and colours.

In accordance with the *Fossicking Act 1994*, three landowners in the Chinchilla area have given a “general permission” to the Mining Registrar, Brisbane for fossicking at specific sites on their properties by holders of Fossickers Licences issued by this Department. Individual written permission is thus not required to visit these sites but certain conditions apply and these must be complied with.

Access

The town of Chinchilla is about 300km west-northwest of Brisbane on the Warrego Highway.

Site 1 (“Yarnham”)

Travel from tourist information centre, west along the Warrego Highway, passing golf course on left hand side and then turn left off highway at 3.9km mark. Cross rail line, then grid, and follow Jahnkes Road as it turns to the right and runs parallel to the rail line. At the 4.4km mark you will be at the entrance to “Yarnham” station, cross grid and travel another 1km to “Yarnham” homestead where final directions to the collecting

area can be obtained from the landowner (Ronald & Sally Thompson Telephone (07) 4662 7311). This site is a gravel pit and is worked intermittently.

Site 2 (“Greenswamp”)

Travel from tourist information centre, west along Warrego Highway, at the 0.2km mark turn left on to overpass and travel straight along Heeney Street. At the 1.7km mark veer right into Tara Road (towards airport). At the 6.2km mark turn right into Greenswamp Road, you will see the fossicking site on the right at the 9.7km mark.

Do not park across or block the access gate adjacent to the collecting site.

Site 3 (“Lallalindi”)

Travel from “Greenswamp” west along Greenswamp Road crossing Charleys Creek at the 1km mark. Turn right into Sturgess Baking Board Road at the 3.3km mark. The fossicking site is on the right at the 3.8km mark.

Alternatively, travel from tourist information centre west along Warrego Highway. Turning left into Sturgess Baking Board Road, cross rail line and travel a distance on 8km to fossicking site, located on the left side of road.

Geology

Sedimentary rocks of the Kumbarilla beds of Jurassic to Lower Cretaceous age, which are part of the Surat Basin sequence, underlie the

Chinchilla area. These include mainly sandstones and other fine-grained sediments that are generally deeply weathered. Most of the petrified wood is found in unconsolidated gravels capping low ridges of the Kumbarilla beds; these are probably remnants of earlier erosion episodes of the sediments although some may have been transported.

Fossicking

Petrified wood (also referred to as silicified wood or fossilised wood) is material formed by the replacement of wood by silica (SiO₂). The original form and structure of the wood is preserved in the process. Generally the silica is in the form of opal or chalcedony (jasper, agate) and colours are often variegated mostly shades of grey, brown, cream, yellow, red and pink.

The yellow and red colours are sought after. The material has a Mohs’ hardness of 6.5-7, and occurs as fragments in various sizes, some well worn and others irregular shapes and sections of trees with little or no abrasion evident.

The exact process of how the wood is petrified (becomes stone) after being embedded in sediments is not well understood. Particular questions remain as to how the silica is placed in contact with the wood in the first instance, and how the wood tissue is preserved in such fine detail.

Scientific studies of the genesis of agate and petrified wood have been undertaken in

Germany in recent years and whilst the scientific community agree on some aspects of the silicification process the latest theories are not yet universally accepted. Little if any research has been conducted on the petrified woods from this area and the species of trees present are unknown. Apart from petrified wood good specimens of petrified palm have also been collected from the Chinchilla area.

Material is easily collected from the ground surface or in drainages. Some shallow excavation in suitable areas may also prove productive.

Requirements

Fossicking requires a Fossickers Licence, which can be issued for varying periods upon payment of the relevant fee at Departmental District Offices, or locally in Chinchilla.

Chinchilla Tourist Information Centre, Warrego Highway
Telephone: (07) 4668 9564
Facsimile: (07) 4668 9587.

Licences are also available from other agents at various locations throughout the State (see list on the Department's website).

The holder of a Fossickers Licence must comply with the conditions of the "general permission" given by the landowner for entry at all times.

Conditions of "general permission"

- permission is given only to holders of a Fossickers Licence
- camping is prohibited
- visitors need to be self sufficient in supplies including water

- visitors must not interfere with any stock, or improvements
- children must be supervised at all times by an adult
- gates must be left as found
- vehicle access is restricted to existing roads and tracks
- visitors must not interfere with any wildlife or flora
- all rubbish must be removed
- excavations should be made safe and refilled

In addition, the owners of the property "Yarnham" require fossickers to call at the homestead and notify their presence before beginning to fossick. An entry fee to fossick is also payable to them.

The landowner of the "Lallalindi" site (Donald & Lorraine Bell) requires all fossickers to phone them on Telephone (07) 4668 9193 prior to arrival. A fee is also payable at the Chinchilla Tourist Information Centre.

The landowner of the "Greenswamp" site (Kel Gaske) requires payment of a fee which is also payable at the Chinchilla Tourist Information Centre.

Please note that the landowner has the right to terminate the permission and may direct visitors to leave the land immediately for non-compliance with conditions as set out above.

Remember if you intend to fossick elsewhere outside the "general permission" areas, the landholder's written permission must be obtained first.

Good specimens can also be readily found beside roads in the area, but remember collecting is only permitted from the ground surface in road

reserves and digging is not allowed.

Camping

Camping is not permitted on these properties.

Services and Accommodation

Visitor requirements are well catered for in Chinchilla, which has a variety of shops and services including food stores. Ample accommodation is available in motels, caravan parks and hotels.

Code of conduct

In addition to the conditions of the "general permission" a person fossicking under a Fossickers Licence must comply with the requirements of the Fossicking Act and Regulation to maintain safety, hygiene and a high standard of behaviour during their visit.

For further information:

The Mining Registrar

Brisbane District Office

Podium 2, Ground Floor

Cnr Main and Vulture Streets

Woolloongabba Qld 4102

(PO Box 1475)

Coorparoo Qld 4151

Telephone (07) 3238 3733

Facsimile (07) 3405 5346

Website: www.dme.qld.gov.au

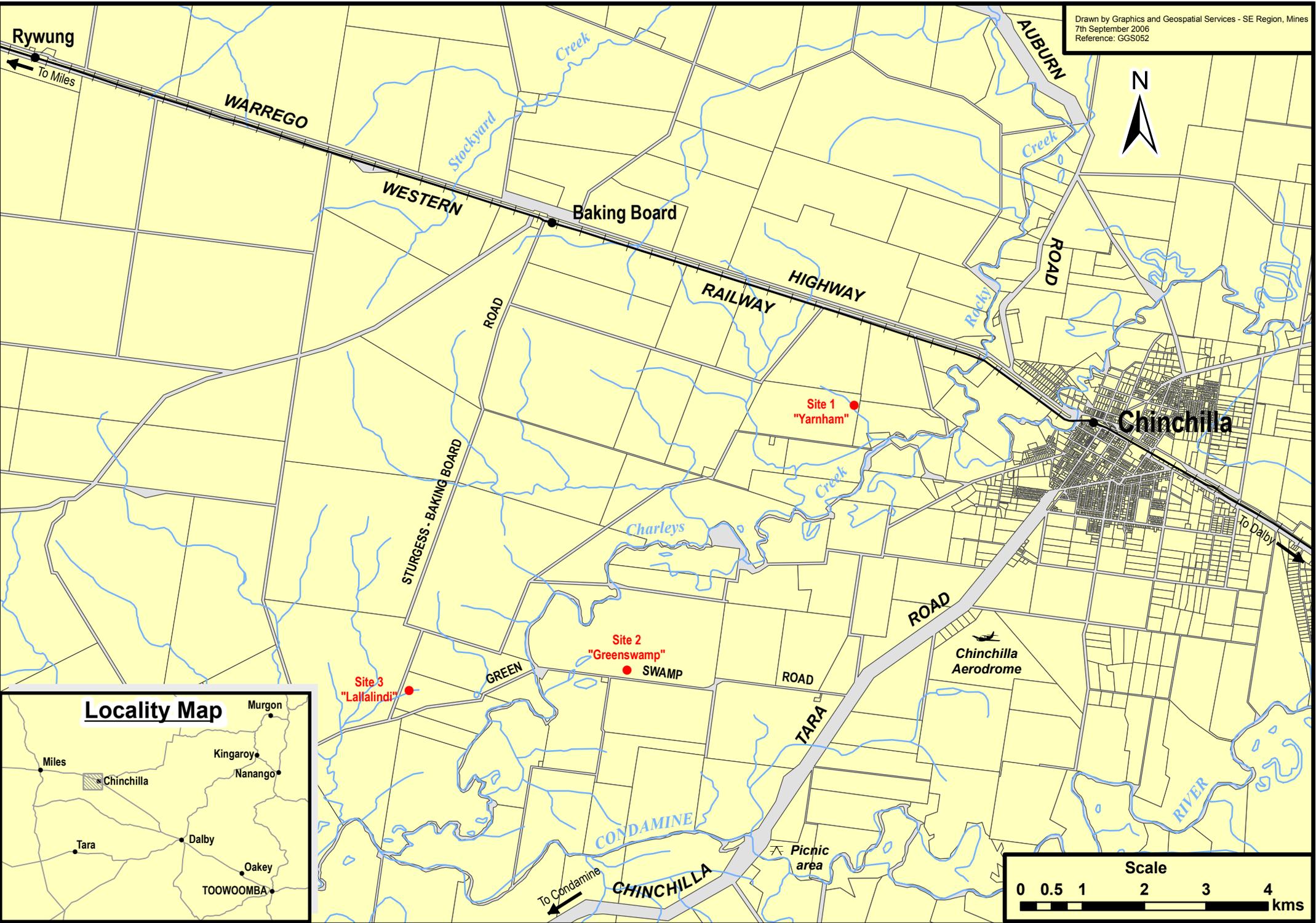
Chinchilla Tourist Information Centre, Warrego Highway, Chinchilla Qld 4413

Telephone: (07) 4668 9564

Facsimile: (07) 4668 9587

Email: chninfo@bigpond.com

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Rywang
To Miles

To Dalby

To Condamine

Locality Map

