

The Chicken or the Egg?

Charters Towers has fantastic architecture, as good as any in Sydney or Melbourne. Charters Towers is also bristling with towers, and has been since gold was discovered back in the 1800's. Right up until now it has been the "Town of Towers". Charters Towers has had more bell towers, clock towers, mining derrick towers, chimney towers, communication towers than any place I have ever seen.

Just out of the city centre is a hill about 2 kilometers around and it was and still is the epicenter of Charters Towers. This unassuming little hill has been given "the business" since "modern man" first laid eyes on it. Initially it was the gold mines and their towers, then the Pyrite factory and its chimney, then World War II communications towers. They blew all the other towers up at this stage as they were too obvious if we were invaded by the enemy. Then when the Americans came to help out, the mines were turned into bunkers to store ammunition and additional bunkers built. So the hill by now is more like ants nest with skewers sticking out of it.

In the 60's a seismograph station was built in the side of the hill, part of a worldwide network to predict earthquakes, or possibly to see if more holes could be dug and towers erected.

Come the 1980's and add some microwave towers, a few mobile phone towers, a couple of water tanks, a public toilet, a viewing platform and a newly started gold project and you have a really up-to-date modern sort of a hill. This is a hill to be proud of. Olaf the Viking could not have done a better job on this hill.

Just for interest one of the water tanks is painted blue with "THE WORLD" sign written on it in 5 meter high letters... is this a socio-political-economic statement or what the locals believe to be an alternate reality.

The Asians (or chinks as they were lovingly referred to in the good old days) got a pretty hard time from the local gold miners who had a pretty low level of tolerance for their lifestyle and customs. I am happy to report that the situation is now totally different. By way of example there is a Sushi Bar in town with a menu that includes amongst other delicacies the traditional Japanese dish... Fettuccine Carbonara.... can't beat that for tolerance.

Oh and on the way out of town we spotted one more tower. The Leaning Towers Pizza shop!

So getting back to the title, what came first in Charters Towers ... the towers or the name?

Prize for neatest correct answer.



Long forgotten gold lease



One of the newer towers