

LEX LOCI'S TRAVELS

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*An irregular one-pager from
The Public Land Consultancy*

Lex and the Palimpsest* On the Mildura Waterfront

Lex hadn't even heard the word until he went to Mildura. There they have two of them.

The first is their biennial 'Palimpsest' cultural festival – celebrating the multiple layers of Australian and international arts. The second is the wide band of public land along the River Murray. Here the cadastral map is nothing short of a surrealist artist's canvas. A somewhat confused surrealist artist.

The earliest layer of this palimpsest was inscribed at the behest of Squatter Jamieson, who in 1860 claimed a 640 acre [Preemptive Right](#) where the Mildura weir now stands. Then a three chain road reserve was imposed on the landscape, later to be named Cureton Avenue.

In 1881 the Mildura parish plan, together with all such plans along the Victorian side of the Murray, were adorned with another three-chain Reserve, this time for 'public purposes.'

In 1886 the Chaffey Brothers painted in the biggest blob on the entire Victorian title-map: a 250,000 acre [irrigation](#) colony. At later dates, authorities overlaid it with an impressive grid of government roads.

Then along came railway engineers, their geometric straights and curves authorized by the *Woomelang to Yelta Railway Act, 1900*. And in 1931 came water engineers, over-daubing the scene with footprints of treatment plants. Then in 1980 the High Court scribbled out and redrew [the border](#) with New South Wales...



Mildura is about to see yet another layer superimposed on this palimpsest. Or perhaps we should say the original, underlying, base layer is about to be re-exposed: the First People of the Millewa Mallee have lodged their Native title claim. Lex salutes them!



The Mildura Waterfront.

Some 100 cadastral parcels – Crown land, freehold land, road reserves, railway land – parcels whose status, size and shape bear virtually no relationship to the land's actual usage and management.

* *A manuscript or parchment on which later writing has been superimposed, effacing earlier writing. Something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form...*

**See you there!
Lex Loci**

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