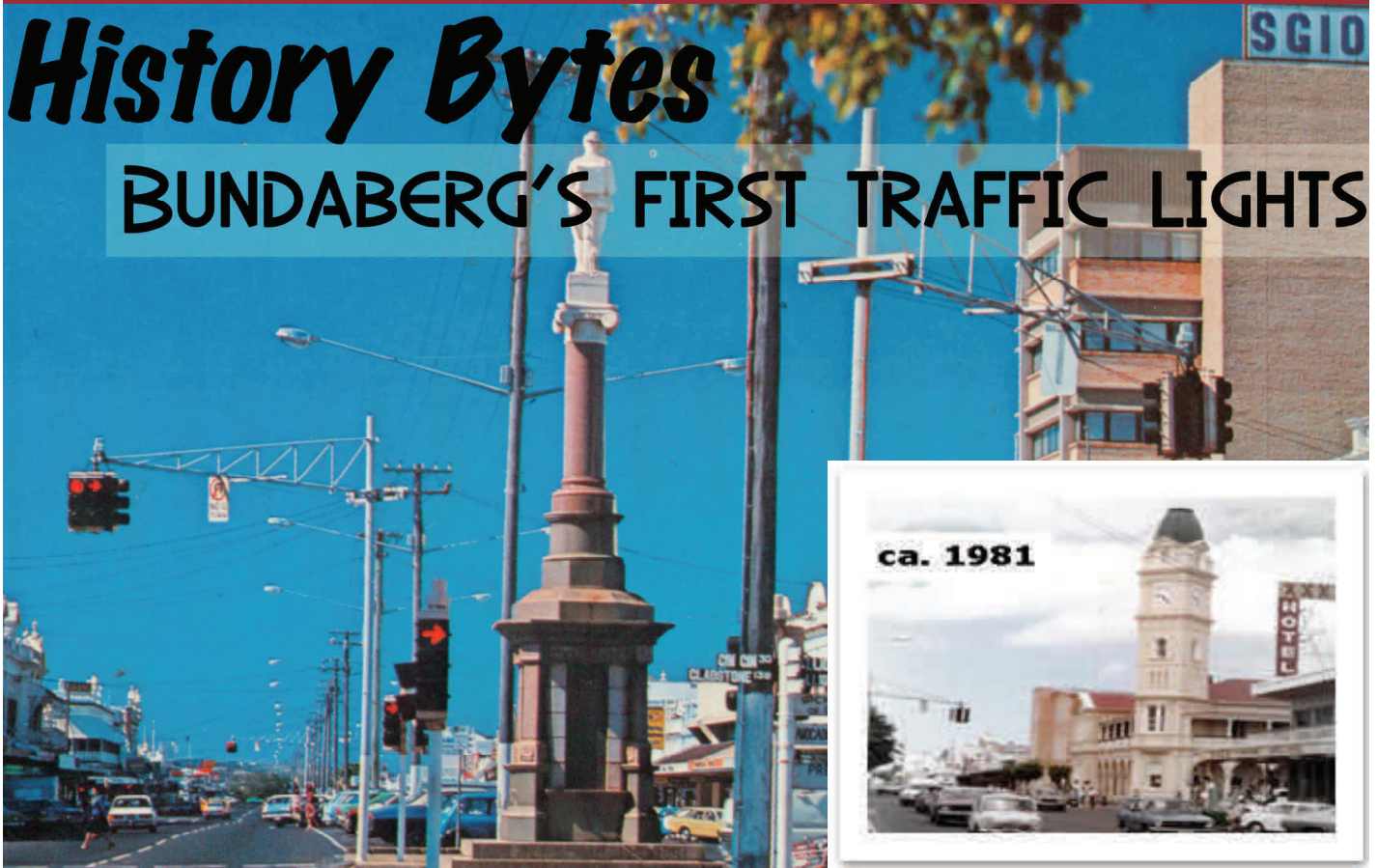


# History Bytes

## BUNDABERG'S FIRST TRAFFIC LIGHTS



Bundaberg received its first set of traffic lights in 1964. They were situated at the ANZAC Memorial intersection (Bourbong and Barolin Streets). Their eventual installation wasn't without argument or controversy.

In October 1962 a new right-hand diamond turn was introduced to the intersection. Two police officers were stationed there for 16 hours to assist motorists with the new rule after early confusion. The turn was regarded as problematic, but a solution was also proving difficult.

Further controversy was stirred, with the question of moving the monument elsewhere, and out of the way, being raised. The favoured site seemed to be Anzac Park, facing down Barolin Street. Interestingly a *News Mail* street poll found the majority in favour of moving the monument.

Bundaberg City Council invited State Traffic Engineer Mr K. Leitch, to Bundaberg in January 1963 to discuss Bundaberg's worsening traffic problems. One of the hottest topics was what type of turn should be used at the monument intersection, and more specifically whether a diamond turn was safe. Mr Leitch remarked that the monument itself was a traffic hazard. There was concern it blocked the view of motorists. Talk then turned to the installation of traffic lights at major

Bourbong Street intersections and who would pay.

Despite all the to-ing and fro-ing about the monument, turns, and lights, Bundaberg was about to get its first set of traffic lights. On 30 May 1964 the *News Mail* reported that "*Queensland's most complex set of traffic lights will become operative at Bundaberg next week*". The complexity arose due to the "characteristics of the intersection and the wide streets".

The lights were tested on Tuesday 2 June 1964 in order to ensure the electrics were working. Mr Leitch and a Mr Saxby were to come from Brisbane to turn the lights on and set their sequences. The lights would operate seven days a week from 7am to midnight, and would flash amber outside of these hours.

At about 2.00pm on Thursday 4 June 1964 the lights were switched permanently on. Large crowds watched to see how motorists would adapt, especially around the 5pm peak. Councillors, Mr Leitch, and police were happy with how the intersection worked.

**Peta Browne, Bundaberg Regional Libraries**

References: *Bundaberg News Mail*, various issues, 2 Oct 1962—5 Jun 1964.

Photos: Picture Bundaberg