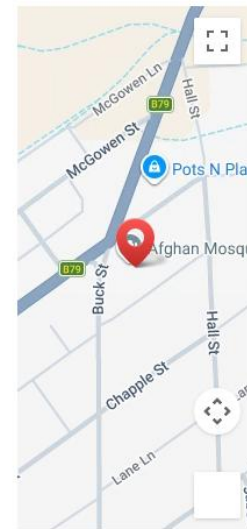


Location 1: Broken Hill Mosque



Broken Hill Mosque, New South Wales

Reading 1: Where Is Broken Hill?

Broken Hill is a regional city in Far West New South Wales. It is close to the border between New South Wales and South Australia. The city is approximately 1,150 kilometres from Sydney by road and about 520 kilometres from Adelaide by road. This means Broken Hill is much closer to Adelaide than it is to Sydney.

Broken Hill is located at approximately **32° south latitude and 141° east longitude**. Latitude and longitude are imaginary lines used to locate places on Earth.

Broken Hill stands on the traditional Country of the **Wilyakali people of the Barkindji Nation**. Aboriginal people have cared for this land for countless generations. Their continuing connection to Country is an important part of the geography and history of the area.

Broken Hill developed as a mining city after silver, lead and zinc were discovered in the area during the 1880s. Mining attracted workers, businesses and transport services. According to the 2021 Census, 17,706 people lived in the locality of Broken Hill.

The surrounding environment is **semi-arid**, meaning it usually receives little rainfall but is not a complete desert. Bureau of Meteorology records for Broken Hill Airport show an average annual rainfall of about **248 millimetres**. The average maximum temperature is approximately **33.9°C in January** and **15.6°C in July**.

These dry conditions made transporting people and supplies difficult during the nineteenth century. Camels, which could travel long distances in hot and dry environments, became very useful.

Key terms

- **Regional city:** a city located outside a capital-city area.
- **Country:** in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context, the lands, waters, skies, culture and relationships to which people belong.
- **Semi-arid:** having low rainfall and dry conditions.
- **Latitude:** a measurement showing how far north or south a place is.
- **Longitude:** a measurement showing how far east or west a place is.
- **Census:** an official count that collects information about Australia's people and homes.

1. In which part of New South Wales is Broken Hill located?

2. Which Australian state is located near Broken Hill?

3. Approximately how far is Broken Hill from Sydney and Adelaide by road?

4. Is Broken Hill closer to Sydney or Adelaide?

5. Who are the Traditional Custodians of the Broken Hill area?

6. What does the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concept of **Country** include?

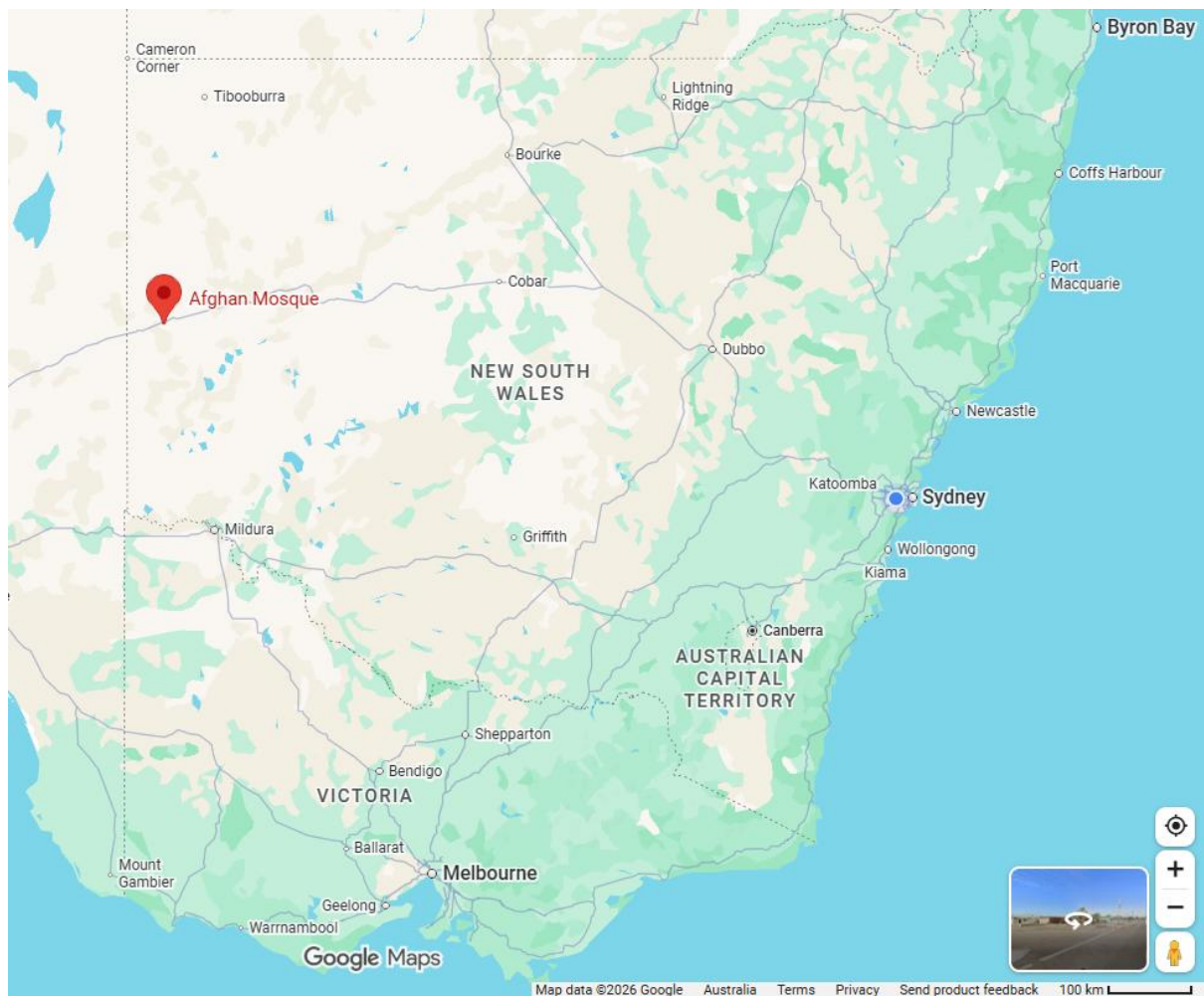
7. Which three valuable minerals were discovered near Broken Hill?

8. According to the 2021 Census, how many people lived in Broken Hill?

9. What does **semi-arid** mean, and how much average annual rainfall does Broken Hill receive?

10. Explain how Broken Hill's location, climate and natural resources influenced its development.

Map:



Planning a trip to Broken Hill Mosque:

[illegible]

Photo:



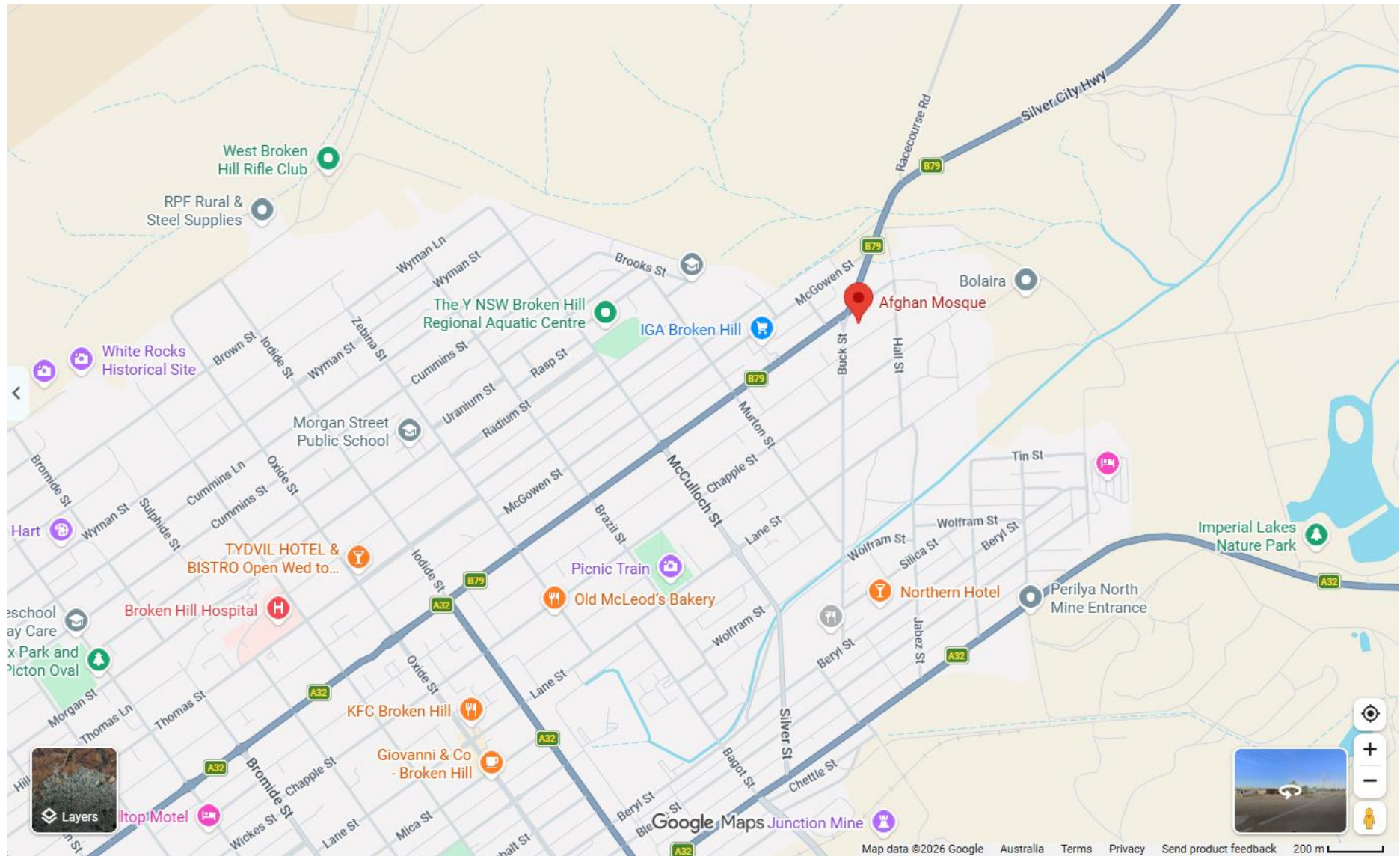
Broken Hill 2021 Census Data:

Religious affiliation, top responses	Broken Hill	%	New South Wales	%	Australia	%
<i>All people</i>						
No Religion, so described	8,585	48.8	2,644,165	32.8	9,767,448	38.4
Catholic	3,161	18.0	1,807,730	22.4	5,075,907	20.0
Not stated	1,736	9.9	548,340	6.8	1,751,052	6.9
Anglican	1,543	8.8	960,305	11.9	2,496,273	9.8
Uniting Church	1,067	6.1	172,132	2.1	673,260	2.6

Note: 'No Religion, so described' does not include those who reported Secular and Other Spiritual Beliefs such as Atheism, Agnosticism and Own Spiritual Beliefs.

Language used at home, top responses (other than English)	Broken Hill	%	New South Wales	%	Australia	%
<i>All people</i>						
Filipino	70	0.4	30,853	0.4	90,853	0.4
Tagalog	66	0.4	51,616	0.6	131,195	0.5
Italian	52	0.3	64,039	0.8	228,042	0.9
Malayalam	32	0.2	20,890	0.3	78,738	0.3
Arabic	28	0.2	227,243	2.8	367,159	1.4
English only used at home	15,480	88.0	5,457,982	67.6	18,303,662	72.0
Households where a non-English language is used	332	4.5	856,911	29.5	2,295,688	24.8

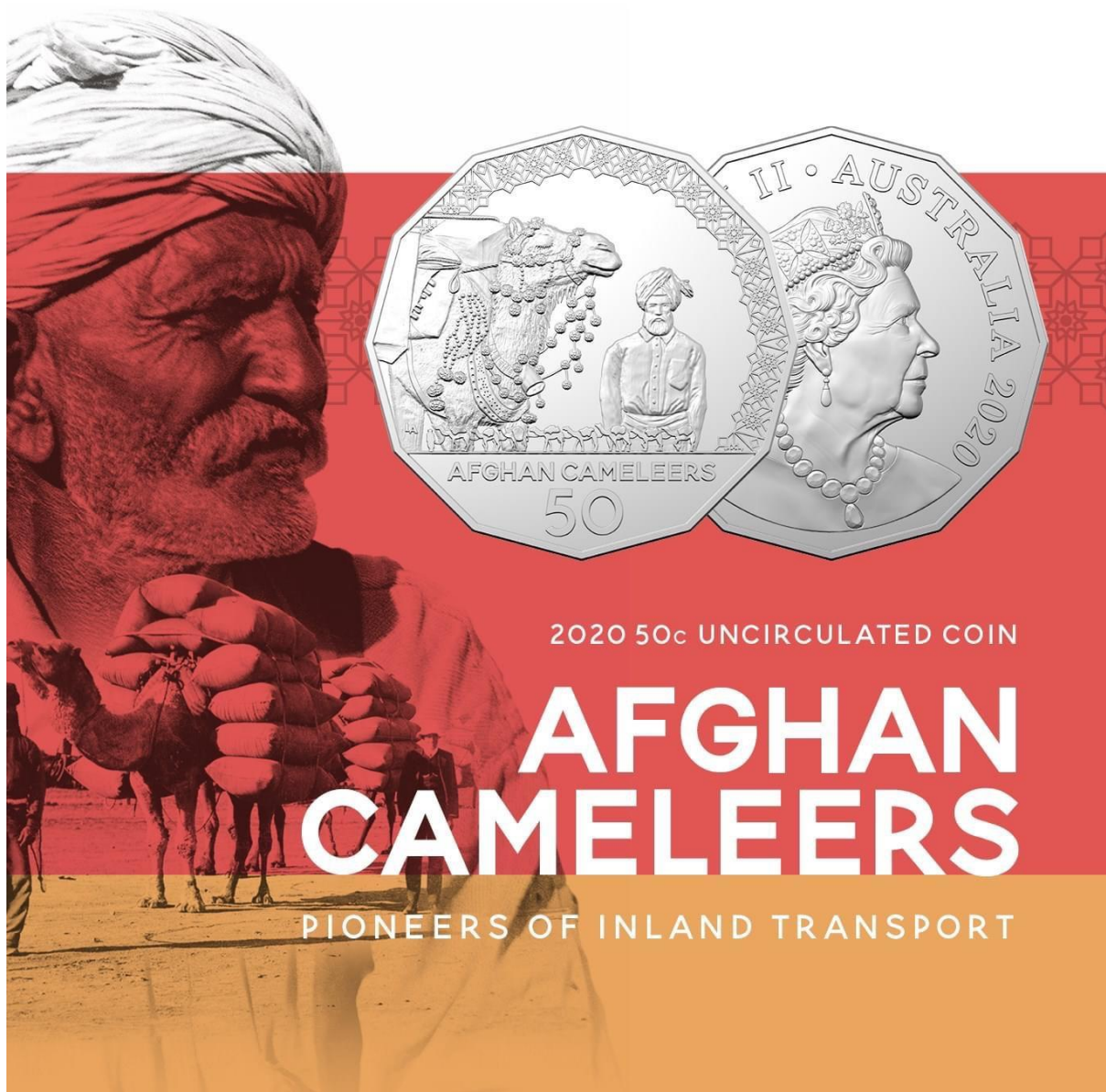
Compose three bar graphs:



Measure the distance from:

1. Imperial Lakes Nature Park to Afghan Mosque:
2. Picnic Train to Afghan Mosque:
3. White Rocks Historical Site to Afghan Mosque:
4. Broken Hill Hospital to Afghan Mosque:
5. Junction mine to Afghan Mosque:

Reading 2: Muslim Cameleers in Australia



From the 1860s to the early twentieth century, thousands of cameleers travelled to Australia. A **cameleer** is a person skilled in caring for, loading and guiding camels.

The cameleers were often called “Afghans” at the time. However, this name did not accurately describe everyone in the group. The men came from different regions, including Afghanistan, Baluchistan and areas of British India that are now part of Pakistan and India. They belonged to different cultural, language and ethnic groups. Many, but not all, were Muslims.

The National Museum of Australia reports that at least **2,000 cameleers** reached Australia between the 1860s and the 1920s. More than **20,000 camels** were imported during this period. Many men came on contracts lasting two or three years and later returned to their homelands. Others remained in Australia.

Camels were well suited to inland Australia. They could:

- travel across dry and sandy ground
- carry heavy loads
- travel long distances between water sources
- cope with high temperatures
- eat plants found in dry environments.

Camel teams carried food, water, mail, tools and building materials. They also transported wool and minerals. They supplied mines, cattle and sheep stations, construction camps and isolated towns. Some cameleers assisted explorers and helped construct inland telegraph and railway routes.

Their work helped connect distant Australian communities before trucks and extensive railway networks were available. Some camel tracks later became roads. The cameleers' knowledge, labour and transport skills therefore contributed to the development of inland Australia.

Key terms

- **Cameleer:** a person who cares for and guides camels.
- **Camel train:** a group of camels travelling together and carrying loads.
- **Inland:** an area located away from the coast.
- **Isolated:** far away from other settlements or services.
- **Transport route:** a path used to move people or goods between places.
- **British India:** the parts of South Asia ruled by Britain before India and Pakistan became independent countries.

Questions

1. What is a cameleer?

2. During which period did the cameleers travel to Australia?

3. Why was the name “Afghans” not accurate for all the cameleers?

4. Identify three regions or countries from which the cameleers came.

5. Approximately how many cameleers reached Australia between the 1860s and the 1920s?

6. Approximately how many camels were imported during this period?

7. Give three reasons camels were well suited to inland Australia.

8. Identify four types of goods carried by camel teams.

9. Which communities and industries received supplies from the cameleers?

10. Explain two ways the cameleers contributed to the development of inland Australia.

Reading 3: Cameleers in Broken Hill



Broken Hill grew rapidly after valuable deposits of silver, lead and zinc were discovered in the 1880s. The new mining settlement needed enormous amounts of food, water, equipment, timber and other supplies. The surrounding dry environment made this a difficult transport task.

Muslim cameleers established a **camel camp** on the northern edge of Broken Hill. A camel camp was a place where cameleers lived, cared for their animals and prepared for journeys. Camps were commonly located outside the main town because they needed enough space for camels and equipment.

Camel teams connected Broken Hill with other settlements, railway stations and properties where sheep or cattle were raised. Before motor vehicles became common, their work was important to the movement of goods across the region.

The cameleers often experienced unfair treatment and racial discrimination. Some laws and social attitudes separated them from European Australians. Even though their work

was essential, their contribution was not always properly recognised. Their camps on the edges of towns showed both their need for working space and their separation from other residents.

The cameleers also brought their cultural traditions and Islamic faith with them. Muslims pray facing the **qiblah**, which is the direction of the Kaaba in Makkah. A permanent prayer place allowed the Broken Hill cameleers to worship together and maintain a sense of community far from their homelands.

Key terms

- **Camel camp:** a place where cameleers lived, worked and kept their camels.
- **Mining settlement:** a community that develops near a mine.
- **Discrimination:** unfair treatment based on characteristics such as culture, religion or background.
- **Islam:** the religion followed by Muslims.
- **Qiblah:** the direction of the Kaaba in Makkah, towards which Muslims pray.
- **Community:** a group of people connected by place, culture, beliefs or shared experiences.

Questions

1. Which three valuable minerals were discovered near Broken Hill?

2. During which decade did Broken Hill begin growing rapidly?

3. Why did the growing mining settlement need a transport service?

4. What is a camel camp?

5. Where was the Broken Hill camel camp located?

6. Why were camel camps usually located outside the main town?

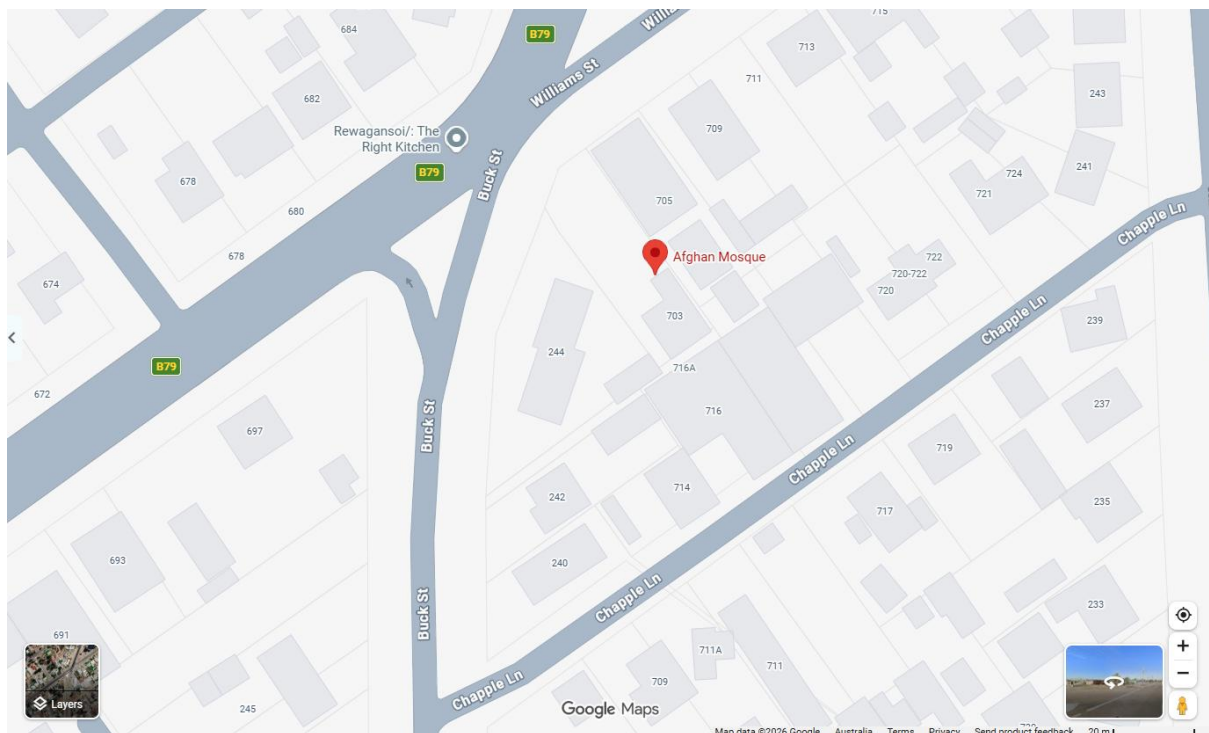
7. Which places did the camel teams connect with Broken Hill?

8. What is discrimination, and how did it affect the cameleers?

9. What is the qiblah?

10. Why was a permanent prayer place important to the Broken Hill cameleers?

Reading 4: Establishing the Broken Hill Mosque



The Broken Hill Mosque is located in **Buck Street, North Broken Hill**, near the site of the former camel camp. It was established by Muslim cameleers during the late nineteenth century.

Historical sources do not give exactly the same construction date. Broken Hill City Council states that the mosque was built in **1887**. Heritage information also connects the mosque site with land used by the cameleer community during the early 1890s. When historical sources disagree, it is important not to pretend that the evidence is certain.

For this reason, a careful report can state:

The Broken Hill Mosque was established by Muslim cameleers in the late nineteenth century. Broken Hill City Council gives 1887 as its construction date, while other heritage evidence connects the site with the early 1890s.

The mosque provided a permanent place for daily prayers and religious gatherings. It also created a shared community space for men who were living and working far from their original homes.

Its construction shows that the cameleers were not temporary figures with no community life. They created places that supported their religious beliefs, cultural identity and relationships with one another.

Broken Hill City Council describes it as the only surviving outback mosque in Australia built by cameleers. This makes the building an important part of Australia's Islamic, migration and transport history.

Key terms

- **Mosque:** a Muslim place of worship and community gathering.
- **Historical source:** an object, building, image or document that provides evidence about the past.
- **Evidence:** information used to support an explanation or conclusion.
- **Cultural identity:** a person's or group's sense of belonging to a culture.
- **Migration:** the movement of people from one place or country to another.
- **Outback:** remote inland areas of Australia.

Questions

1. Where is the Broken Hill Mosque located?

2. What important historical site was located near the mosque?

3. Who established the Broken Hill Mosque?

4. During which historical period was the mosque established?

5. What construction date is provided by Broken Hill City Council?

6. With which period does other heritage evidence connect the site?

7. Why should a writer mention both dates when reporting on the mosque?

8. What religious and community purposes did the mosque serve?

9. What does the construction of the mosque reveal about the cameleers' community?

10. Why is the Broken Hill Mosque important to Australia's history?

Reading 5: The Mosque's Design





The Broken Hill Mosque has a simple and practical design. It does not have the large dome or tall minaret seen at some mosques around the world. Instead, it reflects the building materials, skills and resources available in a remote Australian mining settlement.

The main building is constructed from timber framing covered with **corrugated iron**. Corrugated iron is a sheet of metal shaped into repeated ridges. It was commonly used in Australian buildings because it was strong, fairly light and easy to transport.

The mosque includes a main prayer room and a smaller adjoining room. Its simple rectangular shape is similar to many other buildings constructed in Broken Hill during the late nineteenth century.

An important internal feature is the **mihrab**. A mihrab is a niche or small recess in the wall that shows the qiblah. At Broken Hill, the mihrab is located in the north-western wall because Makkah lies north-west of Broken Hill. Worshippers faced this direction when praying.

The site also provided for **wudu**, the washing Muslims complete before prayer. This feature shows that the mosque was designed for Islamic worship, even though its external appearance was plain.

The design demonstrates how people adapt buildings to a particular environment. The cameleers created a recognisable Muslim prayer place using materials common in outback Australia.

Key terms

- **Corrugated iron:** metal sheeting shaped into ridges to make it stronger.
- **Mihrab:** a niche in a mosque wall that indicates the direction of prayer.
- **Wudu:** washing performed by Muslims before prayer.

- **Minaret:** a tower connected with some mosques.
- **Adapt:** to change something so that it suits particular conditions.
- **Architecture:** the design and construction of buildings.

Questions

1. How is the design of the Broken Hill Mosque described?

2. Which two features found on some mosques are absent from this building?

3. Which materials were used to construct the main building?

4. What is corrugated iron?

5. Why was corrugated iron commonly used in Australian buildings?

6. Which two rooms are found in the mosque?

7. What is a mihrab?

8. Why is the mihrab located in the mosque's north-western wall?

9. What is wudu, and when do Muslims perform it?

10. How does the mosque's design show adaptation to the outback environment?

Reading 6: Spiritual, Cultural and Geographical Significance

The Broken Hill Mosque is significant in several connected ways.

Spiritual significance

For the Muslim cameleers, the mosque was a place to worship Allah, read or recite the Qur'an and pray together. It helped them continue their religious practices while living far from their countries of birth.

The mosque also connected Broken Hill with Makkah. Muslims throughout the world face the Kaaba in Makkah when they pray. The qiblah direction therefore creates a spiritual connection between a local place and an important global place.

Cultural significance

The mosque preserves evidence of one of Australia's early Muslim communities. It shows that Muslim history in Australia reaches back much further than many people realise.

It also represents the cameleers' cultures, skills and experiences. The building helps Australians remember people whose contribution was sometimes ignored in older accounts of Australian history.

Geographical significance

The location of the mosque is connected to the physical and human geography of Broken Hill. The dry climate created a need for camel transport. Mining created a demand for workers and supplies. The camel camp was placed near the growing settlement but outside its main centre.

The mosque therefore provides evidence of how the **environment, transport, industry, migration** and **settlement** of Broken Hill were connected.

Heritage significance

The mosque is rare because many other outback cameleer mosques have disappeared. Its survival allows people to study an actual place rather than relying only on written descriptions.

Key terms

- **Spiritual significance:** importance connected to faith, worship and religious belief.
- **Cultural significance:** importance to the identity, traditions or history of a group.
- **Geographical significance:** importance created by a place's location, environment and connections.
- **Heritage significance:** importance inherited from the past and worth protecting.
- **Industry:** organised economic activity, such as mining or transport.
- **Settlement:** a place where people establish a community.

Questions

1. Identify the four types of significance explained in the reading.

2. Which religious activities did the cameleers perform at the mosque?

3. How did the mosque help the cameleers while they lived far from their countries of birth?

4. How does the qiblah create a connection between Broken Hill and Makkah?

5. What does the mosque reveal about Muslim history in Australia?

6. Whose cultures, skills and experiences does the building represent?

7. Why did Broken Hill's dry climate create a need for camel transport?

8. How did mining influence the development of camel transport and the mosque?

9. Which five geographical factors are connected through the mosque?

10. Why does the mosque have heritage significance?

Reading 7: From Working Mosque to Museum

As railways, roads and motor vehicles expanded, camel transport became less important. The number of working cameleers declined, and the Broken Hill Mosque eventually stopped operating as a regular place of worship.

The building was not forgotten. Members of the Broken Hill Historical Society helped restore and protect it. In **1968**, it opened as a museum. Today, it is generally described as a former mosque and a museum rather than an active congregational mosque.

The museum contains objects and information connected with the cameleers. These items help visitors understand how cameleers travelled, worked and practised their religion. The mosque building is itself an important **primary source** because it was created during the period being studied.

Preserving the site allows different stories to be told together:

- the story of the Wilyakali Country on which Broken Hill stands
- the development of Broken Hill as a mining city
- the movement of people and goods through inland Australia
- the contribution of Muslim cameleers
- the early history of Islam in Australia.

A heritage place can change its use while keeping its significance. The Broken Hill Mosque no longer has exactly the same role it had in the nineteenth century, but it still teaches visitors about faith, work, migration and community.

Key terms

- **Museum:** a place that cares for and displays objects and information.
- **Restore:** to repair a place while protecting its important historical features.
- **Primary source:** an object, building, image or document created during the time being studied.
- **Congregation:** a group of people gathered for worship.
- **Preservation:** protecting something from damage or loss.
- **Historical society:** an organisation that researches and protects local history.

Questions

1. Which transport developments caused camel transport to become less important?

2. What happened to the number of working cameleers?

3. Which organisation helped restore and protect the mosque?

4. In which year did the mosque open as a museum?

5. How is the building generally used and described today?

6. What kinds of objects and information does the museum contain?

7. What can visitors learn from the museum's collection?

8. Why is the mosque building considered a primary source?

9. Identify three stories that preserving the mosque allows people to explore.

10. How has the mosque's use changed while its significance has remained?

Reading 8: Protecting the Mosque for the Future

Old buildings can be damaged by weather, insects, rust, fire, vandalism and a lack of maintenance. Corrugated iron may rust, timber may weaken and important objects may be lost if they are not properly cared for.

Heritage management involves making careful decisions about how a significant place should be protected. Workers may need to repair damaged materials, control pests, improve security and record the condition of the building.

However, restoration must be completed carefully. Replacing too much original material can remove evidence of the building's past. Heritage workers therefore try to retain original features whenever it is safe and practical.

The mosque must also be interpreted respectfully. It is not only an old building or tourist attraction. It is connected to Islamic worship and to the lives of real people. Information at the site should use accurate language, explain the varied origins of the cameleers and avoid presenting them as one identical group.

Visitors also have responsibilities. They should:

- follow the site's rules
- avoid touching fragile objects
- behave respectfully in a place associated with worship
- place rubbish in bins

- learn from reliable sources
- avoid damaging or removing anything.

Protecting the mosque allows future generations to investigate an important Australian place and understand its many layers of significance.

Key terms

- **Heritage management:** planning and action used to protect an important place.
- **Original feature:** part of a place that survives from an earlier time.
- **Interpretation:** the way information about a place is explained to visitors.
- **Vandalism:** deliberate damage to property.
- **Reliable source:** a trustworthy source supported by accurate evidence.
- **Future generations:** people who will live in the future.

Questions

1. Identify four dangers that could damage an old building.

2. What can happen to corrugated iron and timber over time?

3. What is heritage management?

4. Identify three actions workers can take to protect the mosque.

5. Why must restoration be completed carefully?

6. What do heritage workers try to retain?

7. Why should the mosque be treated as more than an old building or tourist attraction?

8. What information about the cameleers should be presented at the site?

9. Identify four responsibilities visitors have when visiting the mosque.

10. Why is it important to protect the mosque for future generations?
