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GEOLOGY AND GEOPHYSICS

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RECORD No 1962/14

GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN RECONNAISSANCE GRAVITY SURVEY USING HELICOPTERS. QUEENSLAND 1961



by G. F. LONSDALE

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1. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

During the period 16th August to 30th September a survey was conducted over a part of the Great Artesian Basin in south-western Queensland by the BMR Helicopter Gravity Party.

The surveyed area, shown on Plate 1, comprises the following 4-mile sheet areas: BEDOURIE, BIRDSVILLE, MACHATTIE, BETOOTA, CANTERBURY, CONNEMARA, and BRIGHTON DOWNS - a total of nearly 50,000 square miles.

Gravity readings were taken on an approximate 7 x 7 mile grid as part of the reconnaissance helicopter gravity coverage of the sedimentary basins of Australia.

Throughout this report the individual 4-mile sheet areas will be denoted by capital letters, e.g. BEDOURIE, whilst locations will be shown in small type, e.g. Bedourie.

2. GEOLOGY

The geology of the Great Artesian Basin has been discussed by A.J. Flavelle in the Preview Report for this survey and details will not be repeated here.

However, attention is drawn to the major features of interest included on Plate 2, compiled from BMR 4-mile geological maps and the 'Geological Map of Queensland' prepared jointly by the Geological Survey of Queensland and the University of Queensland.

The surface geology consists of Mesozoic, Tertiary, and Quaternary rocks generally showing little evidence of tectonic activity except gentle folding. These beds lie unconformably on Palaeozoic and Precambrian rocks showing more intense deformation. These latter rocks include both acid and basic intrusions. They crop out beyond the north-western margin of the survey area north and west of the BOULIA sheet where they form the exposed portion of the Boulia Shelf.

Two main geological units are present in the survey area: the Boulia Shelf and the Great Artesian Basin. The Boulia Shelf is known from bore-hole evidence to continue south-east beneath a thin Mesozoic cover into the surveyed area. These Mesozoic sediments are part of the Great Artesian Basin which increases considerably in thickness to the south and east beyond the margin of the Boulia Shelf.

A number of gentle NNE-trending anticlines have been mapped in the Mesozoic and Tertiary rocks of BETOOTA and CANTERBURY, including the elongate Betoota and Curalle Anticlines.

Where the Boulia Shelf is exposed, the dominant trend is north-west to north. From known geology this trend may be expected to continue into the survey area beneath the more recent sedimentary rocks. An important structure likely to follow this trend into the survey area is the Toko Syncline, whose position is shown on Plate 2.

3. HELICOPTER UTILISATION

Initially two helicopters were engaged on the survey, a Bell 47J and a Bristol Sycamore, both chartered from Ansett-ANA. On 4th September the Sycamore was wrecked at Glengyle, and as no replacement was available the party was reduced to single-helicopter operation during the remainder of the survey.

In a total of 66 helicopter days, 226 hours was flown, of which 166 hours was flown in the Bell helicopter. Included in the 66 helicopter days, a total of 15½ days unserviceability and two days lost because of bad weather. Over the remaining 48½ helicopter days there was an average of 4.7 hours flying per day.

4. GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

The BEDOURIE, BIRDSVILLE, MACHATTIE, and BETOOTA sheets were flown from the base camp at Glengyle Homestead and from fly-camps established at Bedourie, Birdsville, Coorabulka No. 10 Bore, and Durrie Downs Homestead.

The remaining sheets - CANTERBURY, CONNEMARA, and BRIGHTON DOWNS - were flown from the base camp at Davenport Downs Homestead with fly-camps at South Galway, Currawilla and Brighton Downs Homesteads. These places are shown on Plate 3.

During the survey, 974 new stations were established. In addition, ties were made to 36 stations established during previous BMR surveys, including both road surveys in the area and helicopter surveys in the neighbouring areas of SIMPSON DESERT NORTH, MOUNT WHELAN, and SPRINGVALE. A further four stations read by Mines Administration Pty Ltd on the eastern margin of SIMPSON DESERT SOUTH were reoccupied. A gravity tie was also made to the BMR Pendulum Station at Birdsville.

5. GEOPHYSICAL EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURE

Three gravity meters were used during the survey. World-wide 35 was used throughout the period, Worden 140 was used from the commencement of the survey until 2nd September and was then replaced by Worden 61. Six Askania microbarometers were used to determine the altitudes of the stations established. Normally only two (or three in the case of two-helicopter operations) microbarometers were used.

Regarding the use of these instruments in the field and the subsequent computations, the system used was that described in "Standard Helicopter Gravity Procedure" (Hastie - in preparation).

Bouguer anomalies based on a density of 1.9 g/cm³ were calculated. These values were plotted on maps which were then contoured. Follow-up flights were planned where it was found necessary to investigate the anomaly pattern further.

6. RESULTS

Plates 4 to 10 show the Bouguer anomalies of the individual 4-mile areas. These maps are only preliminary; more accurate loop closure and plotting are necessary before the final contours can be drawn. Thus, at this stage, accurate contour ties have not been made to the maps of the surrounding areas.

Plate 3 shows the preliminary anomalies of the surveyed and surrounding areas drawn on a scale of 40 miles to the inch. Attention is drawn to the major features of interest revealed by the survey. These features are listed below, the feature numbers being shown on Plate 3.

Feature No.	Name of Feature	Description of Feature
1.	Toko Syncline	Deep 'low' in NE of BEDOURIE
2.		Sharp gradient flanking SW side of Feature 1.
3.		Uniform gradient from SW of BEDOURIE to NE of BRIGHTON DOWNS.
4.	Annandale Gravity Depression	Deep depression centred on Annandale.
5•		High! fingering NW 45 miles W of Birdsville. Feature not closed owing to insufficient information.
6.		Similarly unclosed 'high' 25 miles W of Birdsville.
7.		Small 'low' 20 miles N of Birdsville
8.		Depression in NE of BETOOTA
9.	Betoota Anticline	NNE-elongated 'high' 6 miles SE of Betoota.
10.	Curalle Anticline	NE-elongated ridge NW of centre of CANTERBURY with a S-extending spur in the SW.
11.		NNW-trending gradient in SE of CANTERBURY.
12.	•	Suggested NW trend in contours in WINDORAH.
13.		Depression extending from the NE into the N of CONNEMARA.
14.		Depression extending from NE into the NE of CONNEMARA.
15.		Suggested NW trend in contours in NE of MANEROO.
16.		Depression noted in traverse along railway in SE of WINTON.

The Bouguer anomaly picture of the Boulia Shelf is characterized by a north-north-west-trending series of elongated gravity 'highs' and 'lows', and is in contrast to that of the deeper part of the Great Artesian Basin, farther south-east, which has lower anomalies with no such obvious trends.

The margin of the Boulia Shelf is well delineated by gravity feature No. 3 - a relatively steep gradient approximately following the -5 milligal contour from the north-eastern corner of BRIGHTON DOWNS to the south-western corner of BEDOURIE, indicating that the Shelf is separated from the deeper part of the Great Artesian Basin by a fairly steep and uniform slope, probably a monoclinal flexure.

North-west of feature 3, and following the north-north-westerly trend of the Boulia Shelf, a gravity 'low' (feature 1) indicates the position and south-western extent of the Toko Syncline. This is shown to have its minimum Bouguer anomaly value some 10 miles south of Sandringham Homestead and to terminate approximately 20 miles south-south-west of Bedourie.

The Toko Syncline is bounded by steep gravity gradients to the south-west (feature 2) and east, indicating that the Syncline has steep margins with some faulting. A fault in the position of feature 2 has been inferred from geological evidence as an extension of the Pulchera Fault in MOUNT WHELAN (Reynolds, Olgers, & Jauncey, 1961).

On earlier maps drawn on the basis of some road traverses, a depression joining two gravity 'lows', features 16 and 7, was suggested. The additional gravity information indicates that this feature is not continuous although gravity 'lows' 16, 13, 8, 7, and 4 follow the line of the suggested depression. The relation between features 16 and 13 is not known, owing to insufficient gravity coverage, but features 13, 8, 7, and 4 are separated by gravity saddles. Of these gravity 'lows', feature 4 - the Annadale Gravity Depression - has the minimum Bouguer anomaly value.

At Betoota a north-north-east elongated gravity high (feature 9) is associated with the Betoota Anticline. This gravity 'high' appears to swing north and later north-north-west to produce the saddle separating the two gravity 'lows', features 8 and 13.

The southward-extending gravity spur of feature 10 coincides with the Curalle Anticline. Farther north, the gravity feature develops into a north-east elongated ridge which continues into JUNDAH and suggests that the Curalle Anticline may be an extension of the Longreach Spur (shown on Plate 2).

West of Birdsville, two gravity 'high' features trending north-north-west (features 5 and 6) are also probably associated with areas of uplift and suggest a structurally high area farther south in PANDIE PANDIE. Feature 6 appears to swing north-east to form the gravity saddle separating the gravity 'lows', features 4 and 7. Feature 5 continues in a north-westerly direction towards SIMPSON DESERT SOUTH.

The north-westerly trend in the gravity anomaly contours south of feature 3 has been noted in features 5, 6, and 9. It is also apparent in feature 11 (a fairly steep gradient trending north-west in the south of CANTERBURY) and is suggested in features 12 and 15 (north-west-trending gradients in WINDORAH and MANEROO) which require confirmation by further gravity work. The north-westerly trend may be produced by horizontal density changes in the pre-Mesozoic basement or late Mesozoic-Quarternary rejuvenation of basement fault structures.

7. REFERENCES

FLAVELLE, A.J.

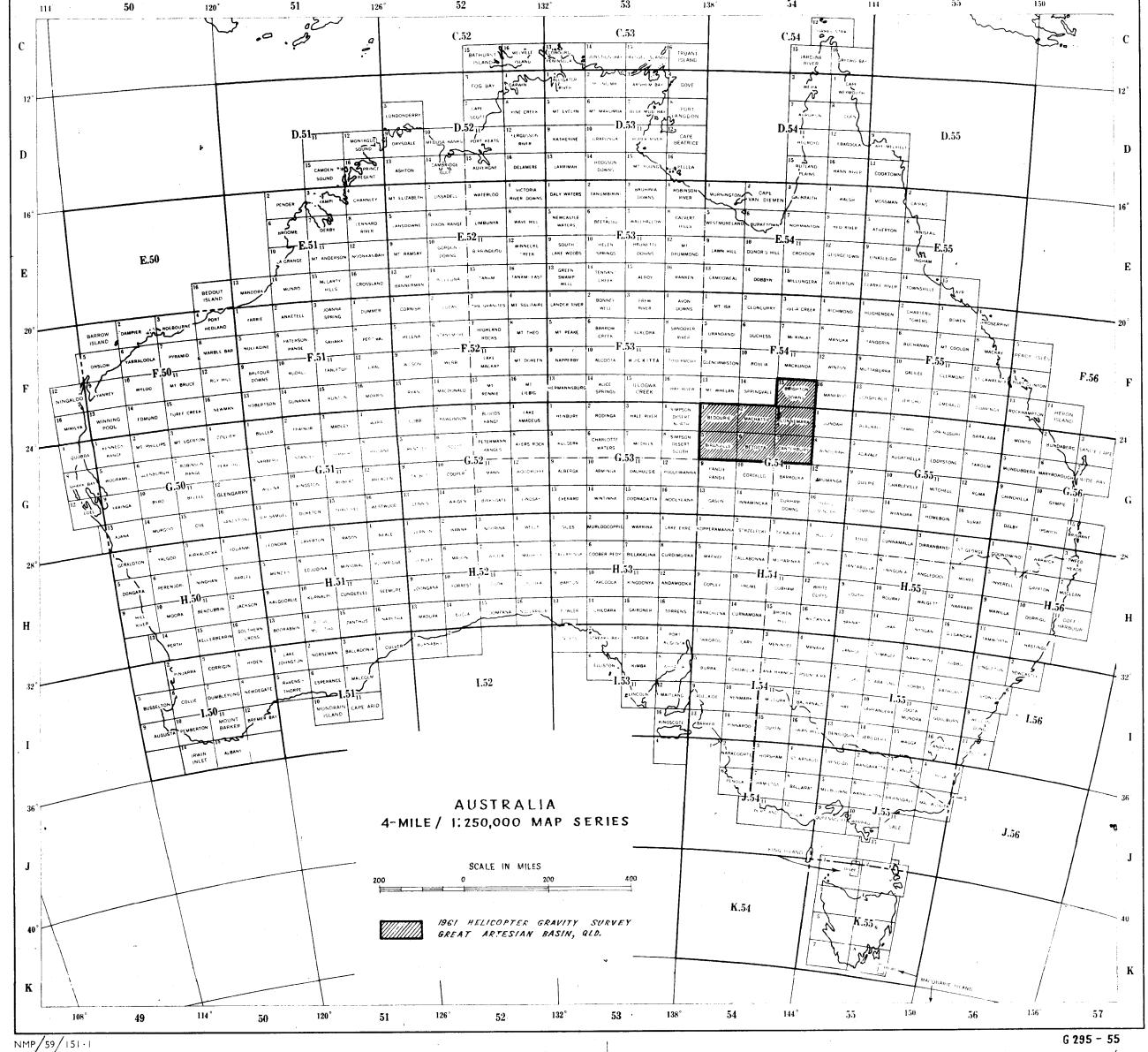
1960

Great Artesian Basin helicopter gravity survey 1961, Preview Report (unpubl.).BMR.

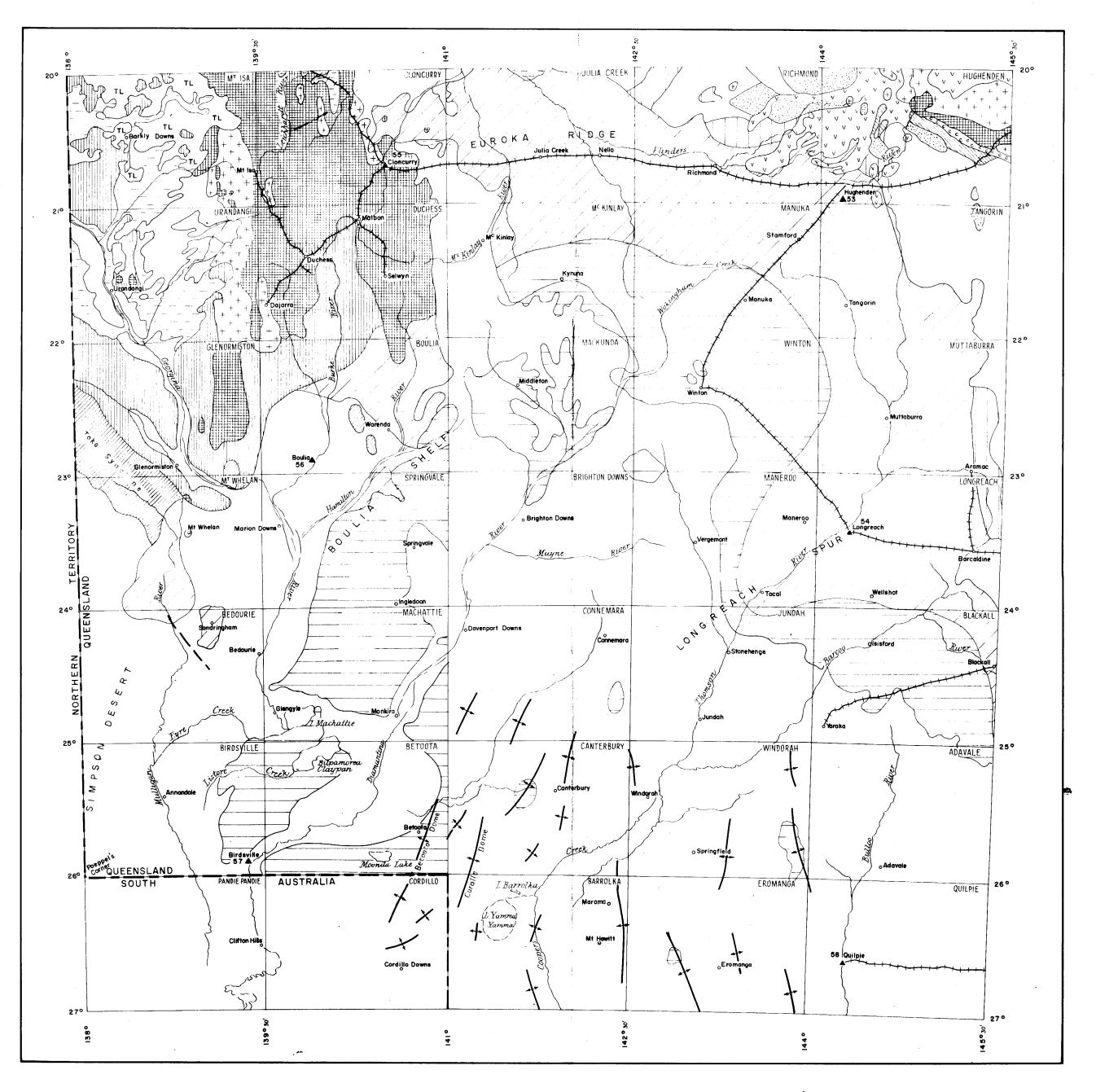
REYNOLDS, M.A., OLGERS, F, 1961

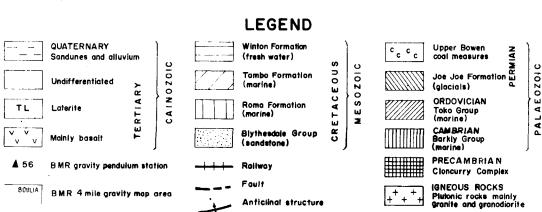
Geology of the Bedourie, Machattie, Birdsville, and Betoota fourmile sheet areas in western Queensland.

Bur. Min. Resour. Aust. Rec. 1961/54.



G 295 - 55



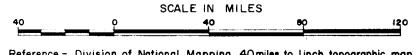


COMPILED SEPTEMBER 1961

REVISED NOVEMBER 1961

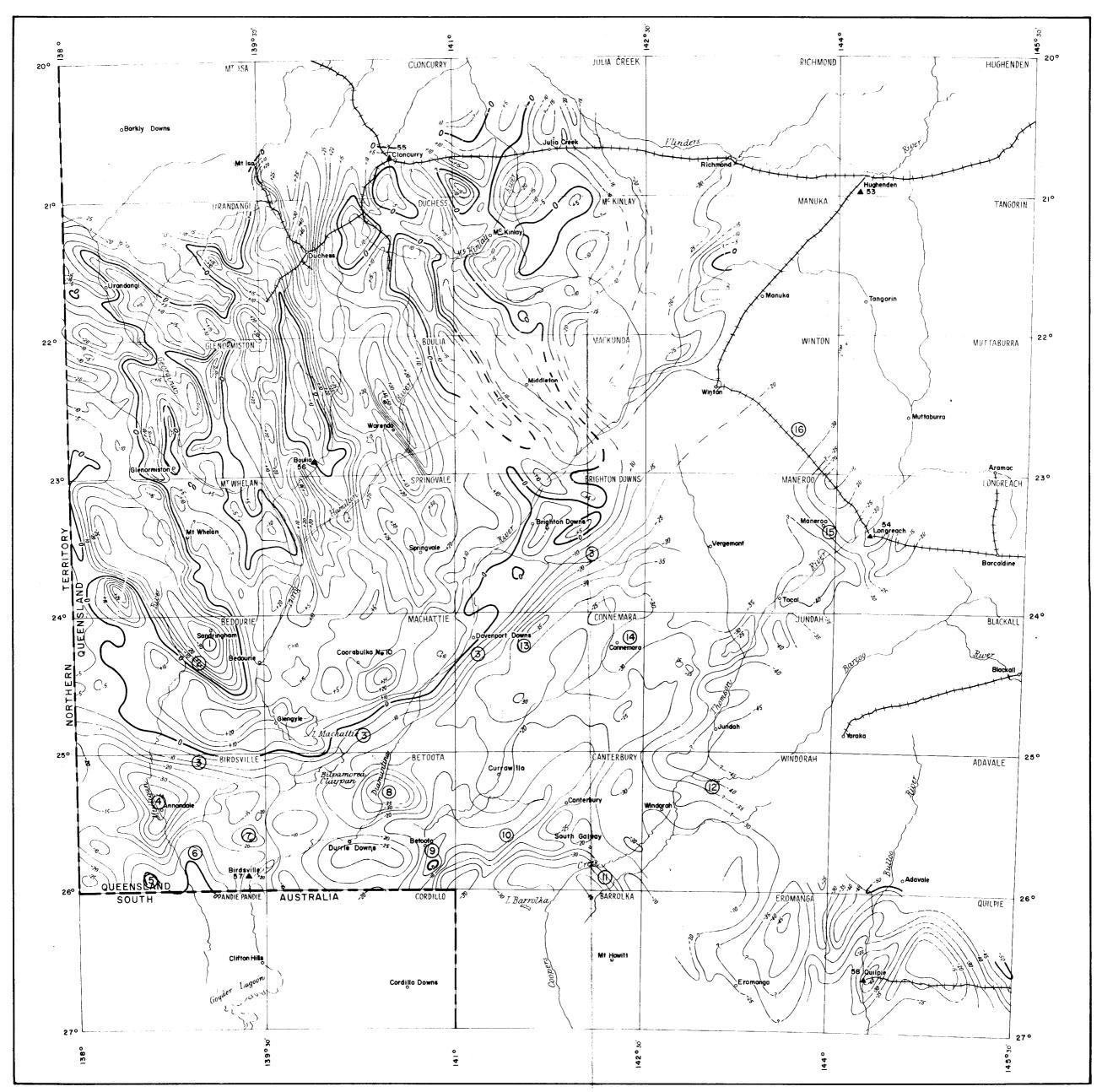
GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN
S.W. QUEENSLAND

GEOLOGY

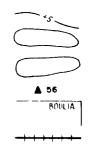


Reference - Division of National Mapping 40 miles to linch topographic map.

Geology after BMR 4-mile maps and geological map of Queensland.



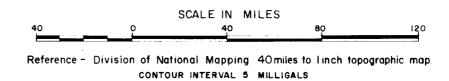
LEGEND



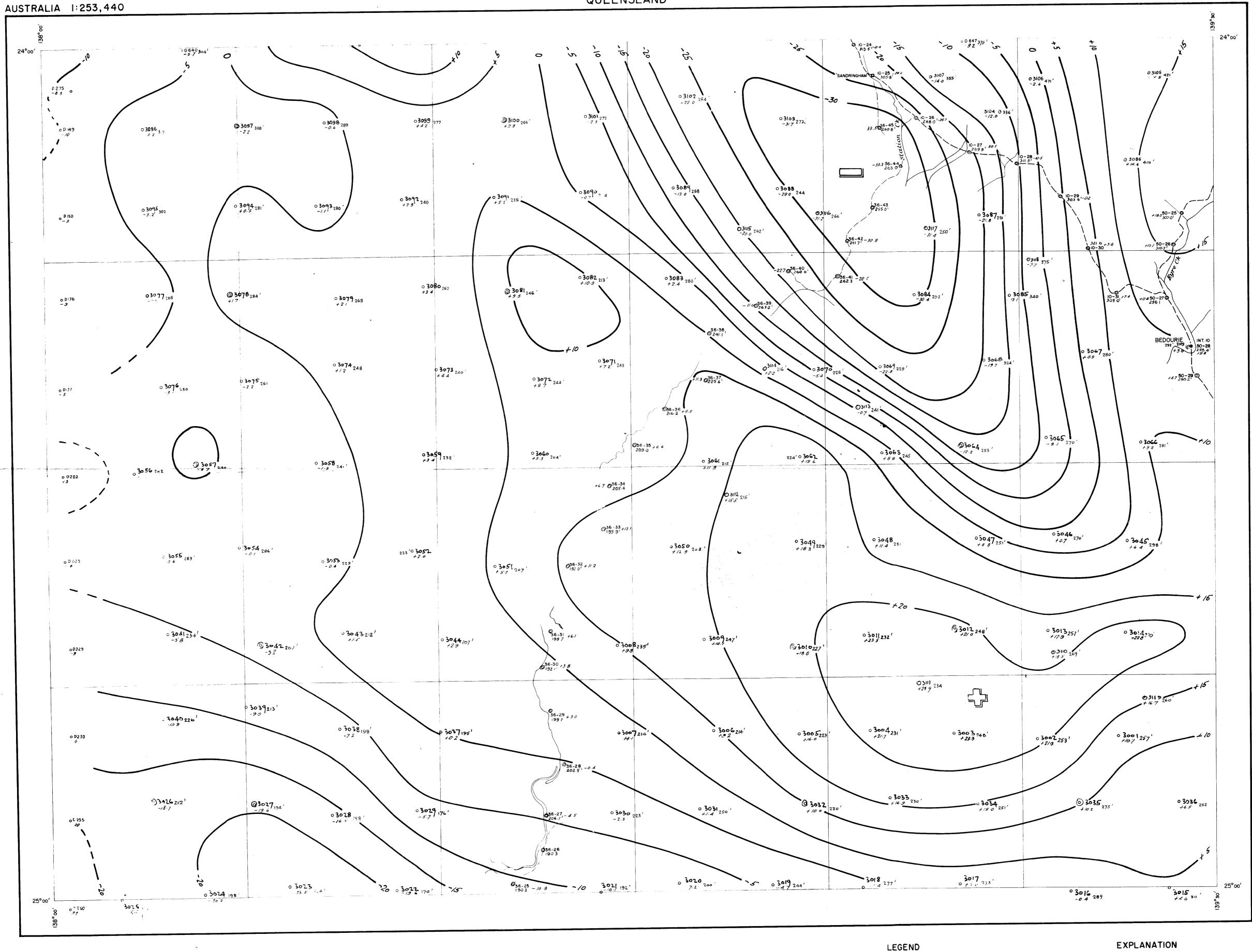
Isogals, values in milligals
Gravity high anomaly
Gravity low anomaly
BMR gravity pendulum station
BMR 4 mile gravity map area
Railway

RECONNAISSANCE GRAVITY SURVEY (1957-1961)
SW QUEENSLAND

BOUGUER ANOMALIES



GEOPHYSICAL BRANCH, BUREAU OF MINERAL RESOURCES, GEOLOGY AND GEOPHYSICS G 371-1-1





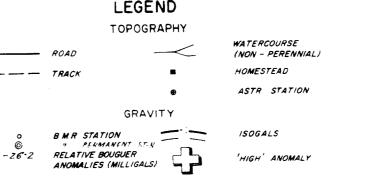
DES. NTH BEDOURIE

DEPT OF THE INTERIOR GRAVITY SURFACE CONTROL MAP AND B M R GRAVITY FIELD SURVEY RELIABILITY: PLANIMETRIC - SKETCH GEOPHYSICAL - GRAVITY RECONNAISSANCE REFERENCE TO AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL 4-MILE MAPS

MAP DATA

RECONNAISSANCE GRAVITY SURVEY (1958) GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN, QLD BOUGUER ANOMALIES SCALE IN MILES

HELICOPTER GRAVITY SURVEY 1961 SKETCH MAP ONLY



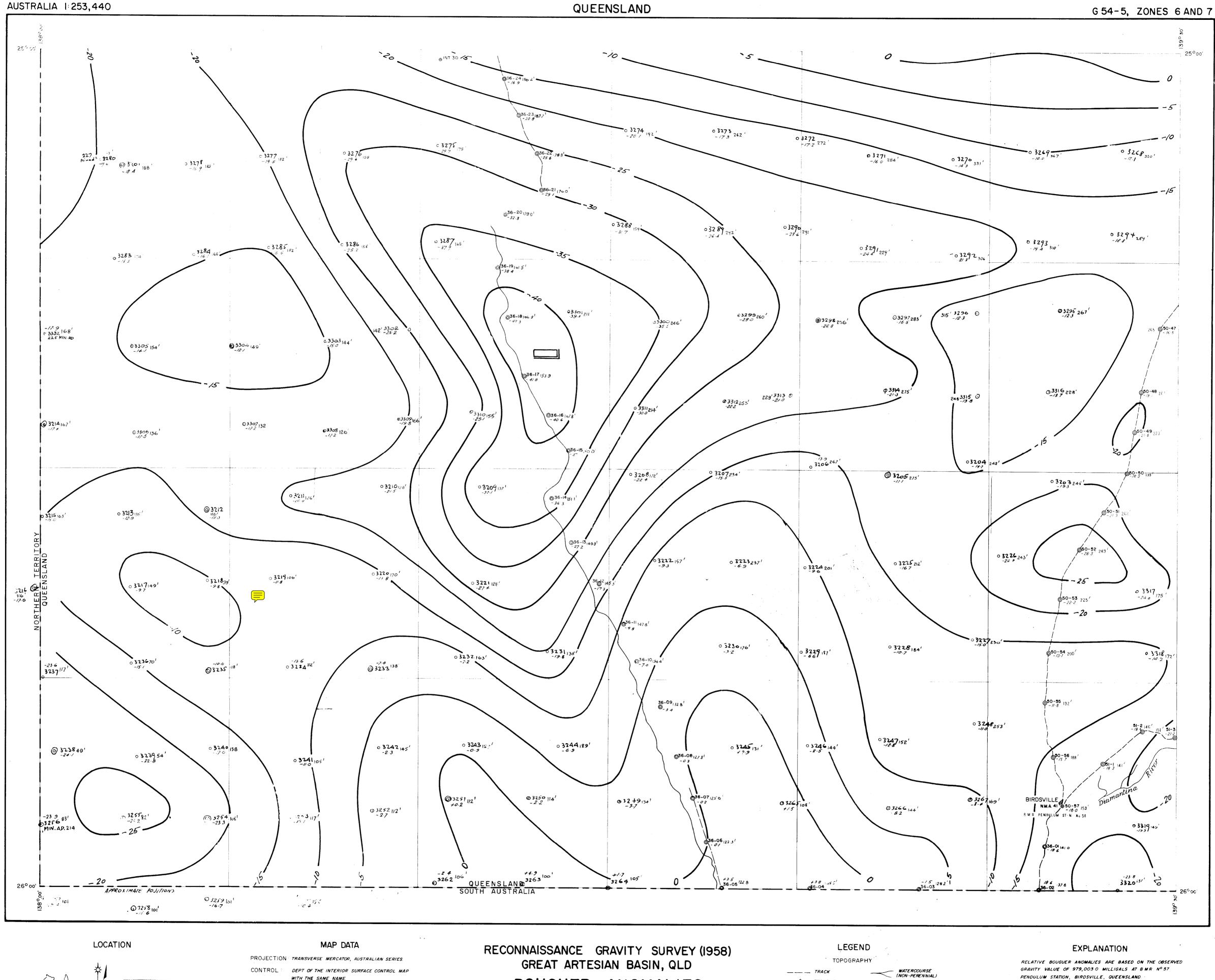
ELEVATION

RELATIVE BOUGUER ANOMALIES ARE BASED ON THE OBSERVED GRAVITY VALUE OF 979,003-0 MILLIGALS AT B M R Nº 57 PENDULUM STATION BIRDSVILLE, QLD.

FOR THE CALCULATION OF BOUGUER ANOMALIES 1.9 g/cm3 HAS BEEN ADOPTED AS AN AVERAGE ROCK DENSITY ELEVATION DATUM - M.S.L., QUEEN LAND

NOTE TOPOGRAPHY AND CULTURAL FEATURES SHOWN ONLY TO LOCATE GEOPHYSICAL DATA

LOCATION



BOUGUER ANOMALIES

HELICOPTER GRAVITY SURVEY 1961

SKETCH MAP ONLY

SIMPSON BEDOURIE MACHATTIE

DESERT STH BIRDSVILLE BETOOTA

SIMPSON

REFERENCE TO AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL 4-MILE MAP SERIES

COMPILED FEBRUARY 1960.
REVISED FEBRUARY 1962

DEPT OF THE INTERIOR SURFACE CONTROL MAP

GEOPHYSICAL - GRAVITY RECONNAISSANCE.

AND BMR GRAVITY FIELD SURVEY.

RELIABILITY: PLANIMETRIC - SKETCH.

TOWNSHIP

ASTRÔNOMICAL FIXATION

RELATIVE BOUGUER

ANOMALY (MILLIGALS)

GRAVITY

BMR STATION 51-N - 150GALS

LOW ANOMALY

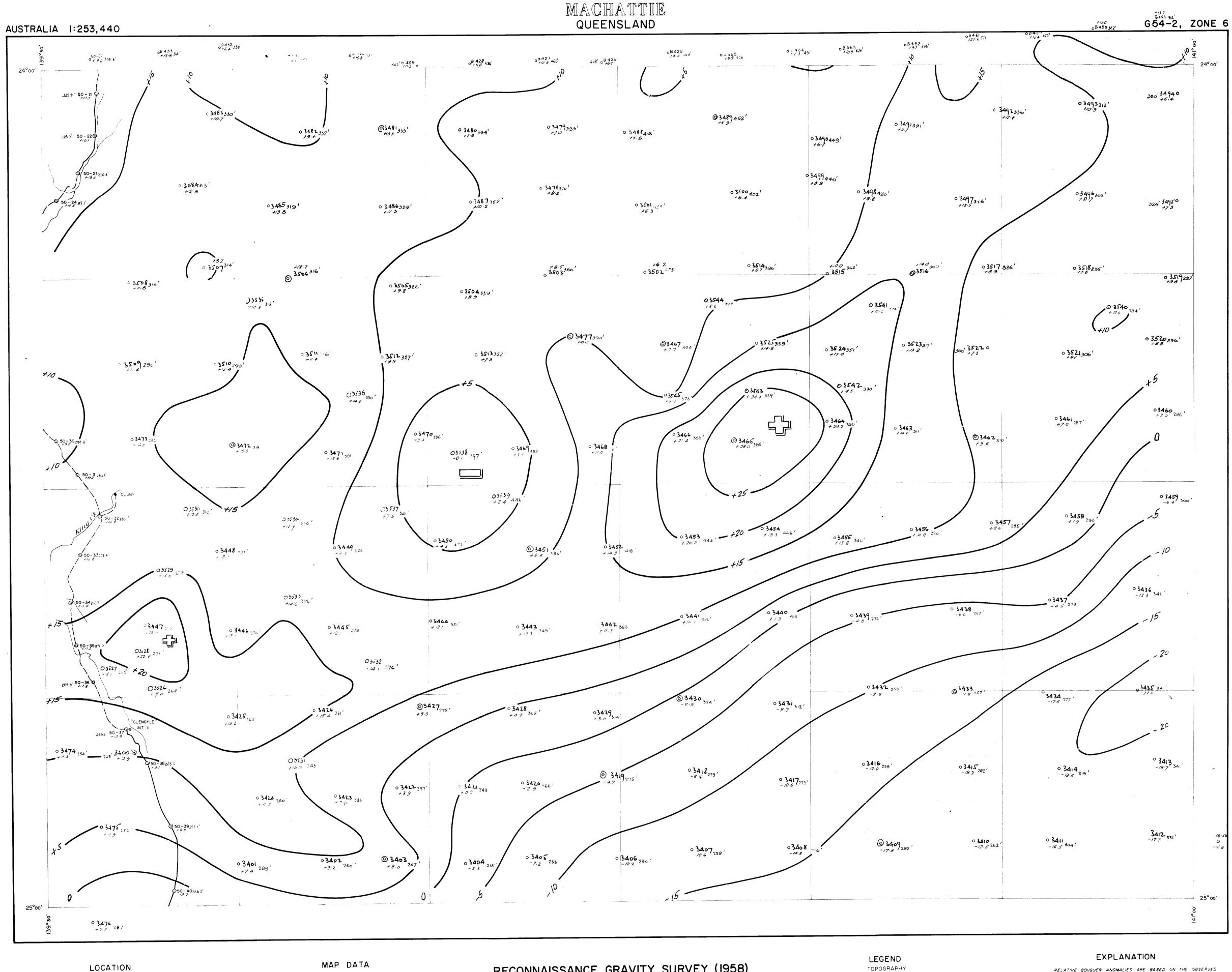
FOR THE CALCULATION OF BOUGUER ANOMALIES 1.9 g/cm 3 HAS.

NOTE TOPOGRAPHY AND CULTURAL FEATURES SHOWN ONLY TO

BEEN ADOPTED AS AN AVERAGE ROCK DENSITY

ELEVATION DATUM - M.S.L QUEENSLAND

LOCATE GEOPHYSICAL DATA.





PROJECTION: TRANSVERSE MERCATOR, AUSTRALIAN SERIES.

DEPT OF THE INTERIOR GRAVITY SURFACE CONTROL MAP AND BMR GRAVITY FIELD SURVEY. RELIABILITY: PLANIMETRIC - SKETCH

GEOPHYSICAL - GRAVITY RECONNAISSANCE

DEPT OF THE INTERIOR GRAVITY SURFACE CONTROL

RECONNAISSANCE GRAVITY SURVEY (1958) GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN, QLD BOUGUER ANOMALIES SCALE IN MILES HELICOPTER GRAVITY SURVEY 1961 SKETCH MAP ONLY

TOPOGRAPHY WATERCOURSE (NON - PERENNIAL) HOMESTEAD GRAVITY HOGALS - 26-2 RELATIVE BOUGUER
ANOMALIES (MILLIGALS) HIGH ANOMALY 175 ELEVATION LOW ANOMALY

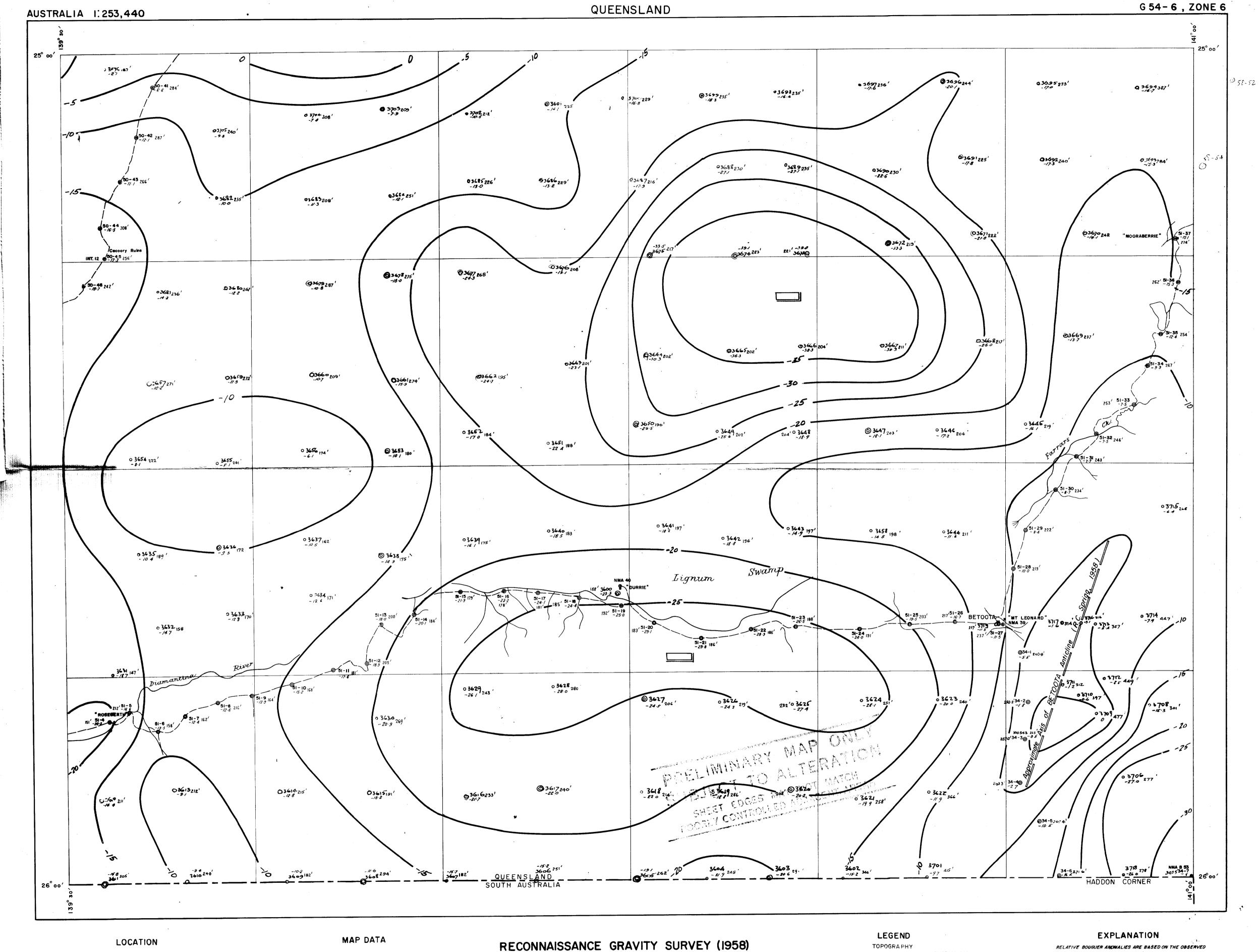
RELATIVE BOUGUER ANOMALIES ARE BASED ON THE OBSERVED GRAVITY VALUE OF 979,003 0 MILLIGALS AT 8 M P Nº 57 PENDULUM STATION BIRDSVILLE, QLD.

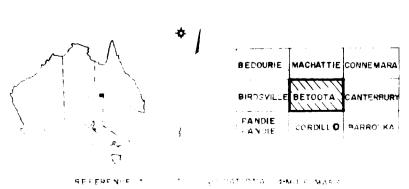
FOR THE CALCULATION OF BOUGUER ANOMALIES 1.9 ; HAS BEEN ADOPTED AS AN AVERAGE POCK DENSITY ELEVATION DATUM - MSL, QUEENSLAND.

MOTE TOPOGRAPHY AND CULTURAL FEATURES SHOWN ONLY TO LOCATE SEOPHYSICAL DATA

REFERENCE TO AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL 4-MILE MAPS







REVISED FEBRUARY 1962

PROJECTION: TRANSVERSE MERCATOR, AUSTRALIAN SERIES

CONTROL: DEPT OF THE INTERIOR GRAVITY SURFACE CONTROL
MAP WITH THE SAME NAME

DETAIL: DEPT OF THE INTERIOR GRAVITY SURFACE CONTROL
MAF AND BMR GRAVITY FIELD SURVEY

GEOPHYSICAL - GRAVITY RECONNAISSANCE

RELIABILITY PLANIMETRIC - SKETCH

RECONNAISSANCE GRAVITY SURVEY (1958)
GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN, QLD
BOUGUER ANOMALIES

SCALE IN MILES
HELICOPTER GRAVITY SURVEY 1961
SKETCH MAP ONLY

LEGEND

TOPOGRAPHY

WATERCOURSE
(NON-PERENNIAL)

ASTRONOMICAL
FIXATION

GRAVITY AND GEOLOGY

BMR STATION
FERMANENT STATE

150GALS
HIGH ANOMALY

217 ELEVATION

LOW

1

FORM-LINES AT 100 "T INTERVALS BASED ON BASAL

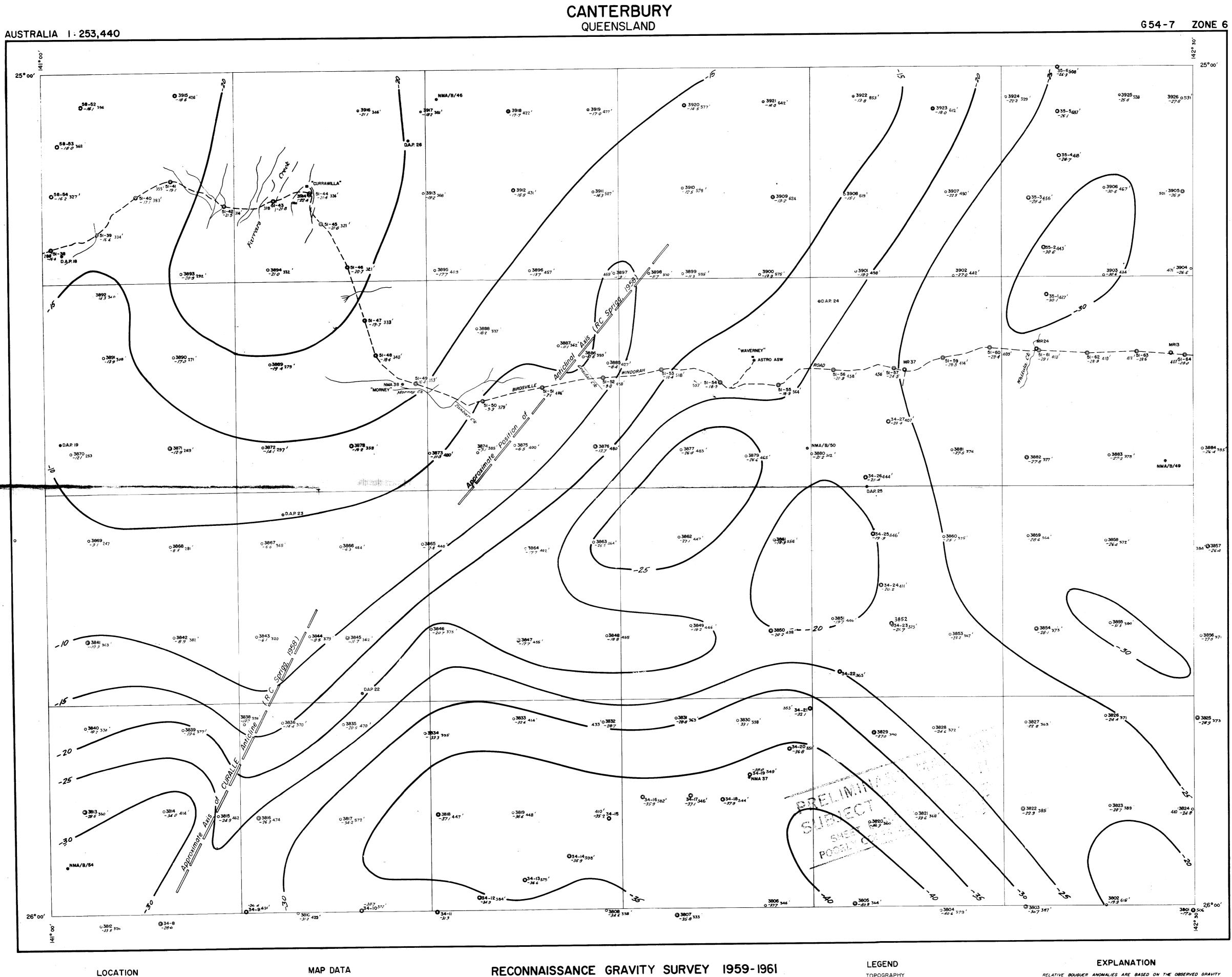
TERTIARY PHANTON GORIZON OF WODENER AND PRINNSCHWEILER, 1958)

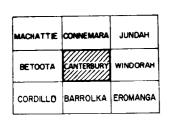
RELATIVE BOUGUER ANOMALIES ARE BASED ON THE OBSERVED GRAVITY VALUE OF \$79,003.0 MILLIBALS AT B.M.R No 57 PENDULUM STATION, BIRDSVILLE, QLD.

FOR THE CALCULATION OF BOUGUER ANOMALIES 1.9 g/cm³ HAS BEEN ADOPTED AS AN AVERAGE ROCK DENSITY.

ELEVATION DATUM -- M.S.L., QUEENSLAND.

NOTE TOPOGRAPHY AND CULTURAL FEATURES SHOWN ONLY TO LOCATE GEOPHYSICAL DATA.





PROJECTION: TRANSVERSE MERCATOR, AUSTRALIAN SERIES.

CONTROL MAR. HELICOPTER SURVEY 1961 FROM 669-50-1 RELIABILITY: PLANIMETRIC - SKETCH GEOPHYSICAL - GRAVITY RECONNAISSANCE

RECONNAISSANCE GRAVITY SURVEY 1959-1961 GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN, QLD

PRELIMINARY BOUGUER ANOMALIES SCALE IN MILES CONTOUR INTERVAL I MILLIGAL

TOPOGRAPHY

ASTR. STATION GRAVITY AND GEOLOGY LOW ANOMALY

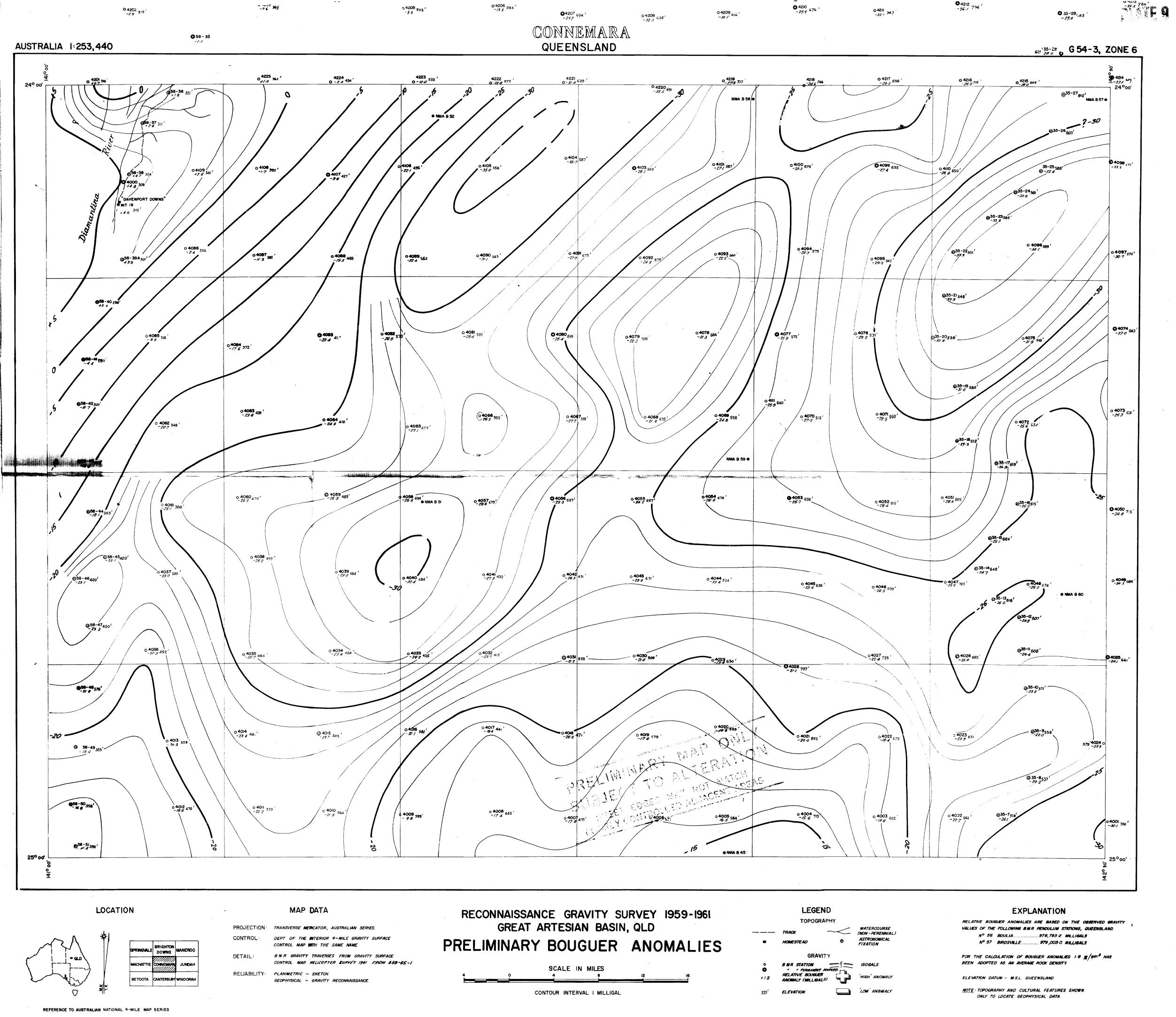
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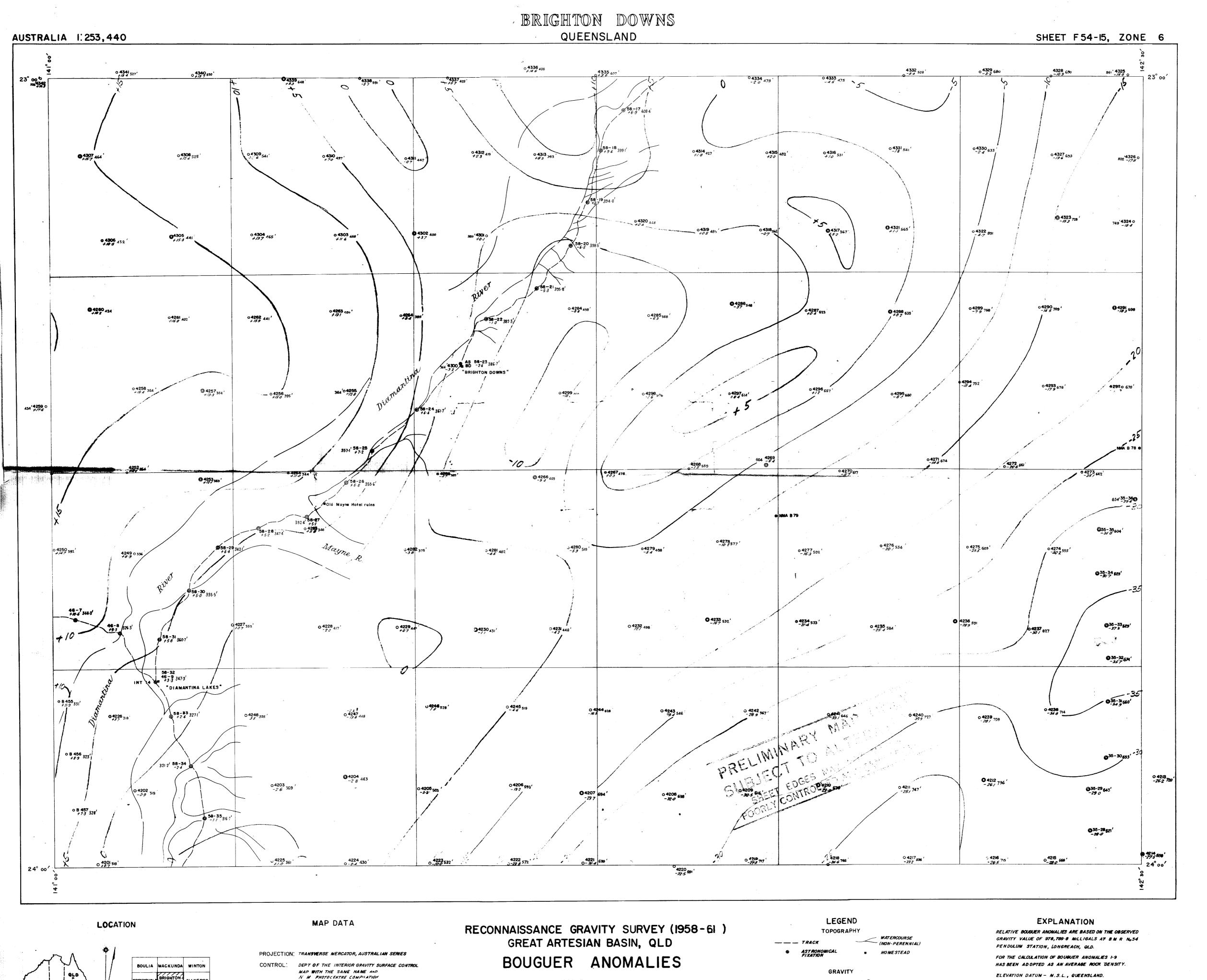
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NOTE TOPOGRAPHY AND CULTURAL FEATURES SHOWN ONLY TO LOCATE GEOPHYSICAL DATA

FORM-LINES AT 100 FT INTERVALS BASED ON BASAL
TERTIARY PHANTOM HORIZON (H WOPFNER AND BRUNNSCHWEILER, 1958)

REFERENCE TO AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL 4-MILE MAP SERIES





CONTOUR INTERVAL I MILLIGAL

REFERENCE TO AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL 4-MILE MAPS

BRIGHTON MANEROO

MACHATTE CONNEMARA JUNDAH

DEPT OF THE INTERIOR GRAVITY SURFACE CONTROL

MAP. BMR GRAVITY FIELD SURVEY AND 1961 WELICOPTER GRAVITY SURVEY

GEOPHYSICAL - GRAVITY RECONNAISSANCE

DETAIL:

RELIABILITY: PLANIMETRIC - SKETCH

B.M.R. STATION

LOW'

ELEVATION DATUM - M.S.L., QUEENSLAND.

NOTE: TOPOGRAPHY AND CULTURAL FEATURES SHOWN ONLY TO LOCATE GEOPHYSICAL DATA.