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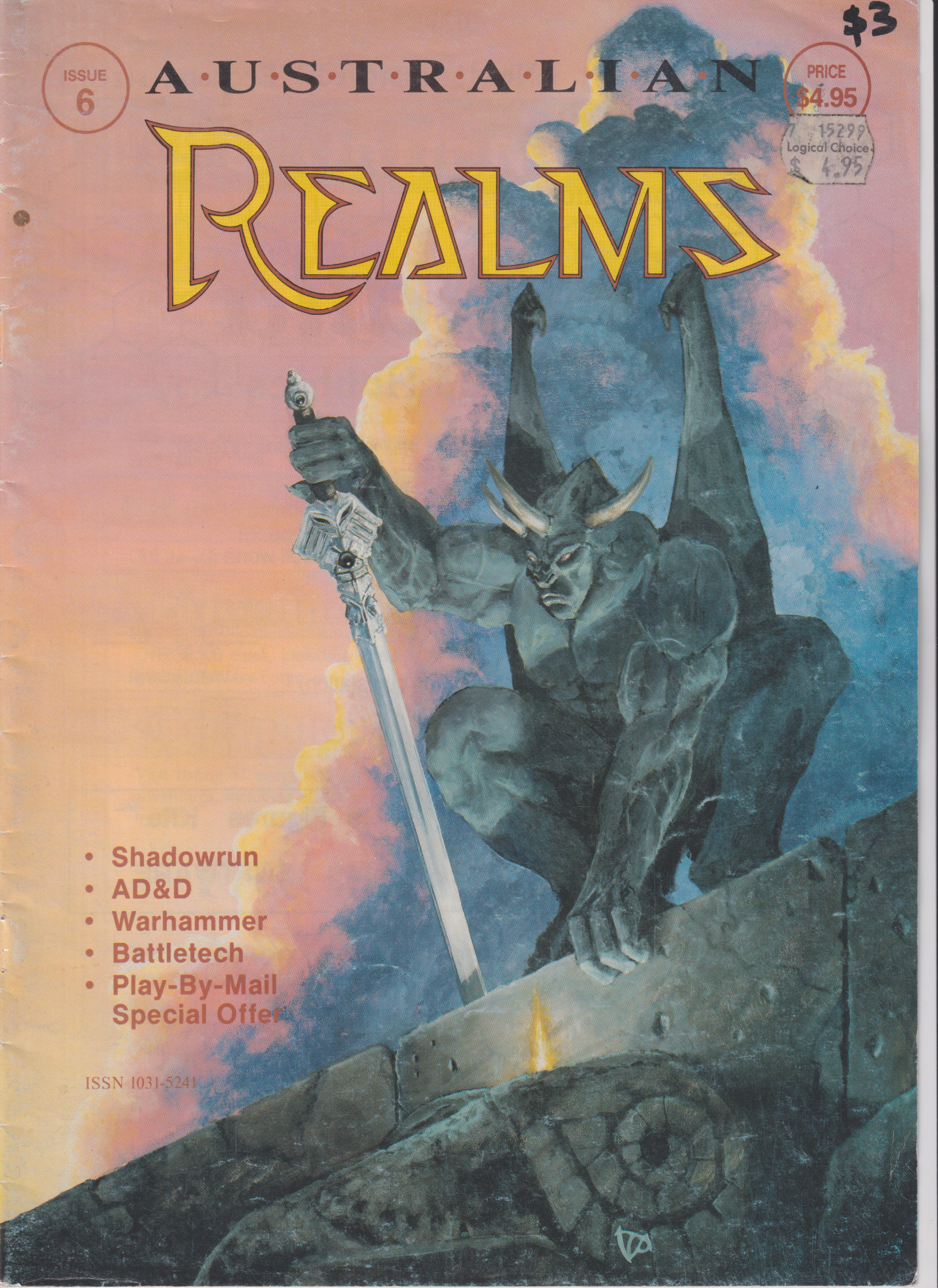
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# SHADOWRUN<sup>®</sup>

## IN AUSTRALIA

**An in depth look at how future Australia has  
suffered and reacted to the events of the  
awakening world of *Shadowrun***

**by Colin Taber**

### **Australia in Asia**

During the 1990's Australian Trade and Foreign policy lean towards incorporating Australia into an economically and security united south-east Asia. All through the 90's the area undergoes huge economic growth. This program of integration sees beneficial elements in all societies concerned, eventually cultural suspicions start to evaporate.

Civil unrest occurs world-wide during the 90's, the Australasian region is rocked late in the decade. The ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) member nations are too involved in their own development to allow too much dissent. Any opposition that is deemed a threat to law and order is firmly crushed. Meanwhile Australia ignores events almost completely in the easy going manner that makes it unique.

### **Events at Home**

Australia and New Zealand, after nearly a decade of removing trade barriers to each others exports sign the Tasman Free Trade Agreement in Christchurch during 1996. This creates a joint domestic market of 20 million people, helping the two nations to enter the long awaited boom years.

With growing prosperity comes discussion, Australian republicans push their cause harder during 1998. The debate as a whole picks up pace, republicans want a republic declared on the centenary of federation in 2001. Public opinion slowly swings for the move.

Late in 1999, Australia and New Zealand both gain associate status with ASEAN, the first stage of a membership application. Australia feels it has an obligation to pursue 'very' close ties with Asia as 'Fortress Europe' become a reality with the introduction of the Ecu as the single currency in most European Community (EC) states. The media calls it a herding of prey from the predatory Yen of Japan.

### **The Twenty First Century**

The centenary of federation in 2001 sees Australia declared a republic. The date is celebrated but Australia is still divided on the subject (approx. 23-77). Much of the planned debate had never received an airing due to more 'sensational' events world-wide. In any event, the debate and celebration has once again skipped over the questions of reconciliation with the aboriginal population. There are some protests about the treatment of aboriginals, but the media, which is concentrated in a couple of corporations' hands, sensationalises the events, potraying the protesters as violent and disorganised.

With the dawn of the new millennium begins the resource rush in the United States, such a rush does not materialise in Australia as the US floods world markets with its exports. The glut pushes prices down marginally, eventually causing the closure of many small Australian mines unable to compete profitably. The turmoil generated by the collapse of commodity prices sees many large Australian mining companies merge. These newly merged consortiums are able to survive the crisis due to the huge resources at their disposal.

### **Australia & the World**

*"First the Europeans lock us out, then our government locks us into ASEAN and now the US stabs us in the back!"* - Australian Opposition MP.

Ties with the ASEAN nations are tightened, most of the agreements reached are made public as the Australian community at large feels isolated from Euro style nations. Australia, with faltering steps, prepares to embrace Asia.

*"Dad, where is the European Community?"*

*"North west of South East Asia, too far away to worry about, son."*

- A much asked question at homes across Australia.



### The Lone Eagle Incident

In 2010 Australia is horrified at the incident which sees a multiple nuclear warhead missile launched at Russian targets by Amerindian 'terrorists' who gained control of a missile silo installation in middle America as a protest against the granting of mining rights to Corps in their reservations (refer *Shadowrun*).

In the same year the VITAS plague arrives in Australia as it races around the globe. Many outback communities are completely wiped out. Total population loss is 22%, the joint population of Australia and New Zealand plunges from 26 million to 20.5 million. ASEAN nations are hit much harder than Australia due to a lack of medicines and facilities, this sees Australian and New Zealander military ships and aircraft being closely co-ordinated with that of ASEAN nations to get aid to badly affected areas.

As the turmoil from VITAS subsides, Australia launches a protest motion at the UN against the United States Congress' passing of the Re-education and Relocation Act. The Act will see Amerindians rounded up and interned in prison camps, the protest is unheeded. It becomes obvious that the US, the major fund source of the UN, is exerting pressure to stop the discussion. In the aftermath of VITAS it seems that human rights and environmental considerations are no longer the common concern that they were.

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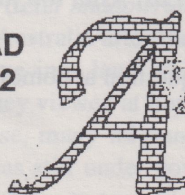
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UGE hits in 2011, babies across the world are born with one of two 'mutations'. Eventually the children are dubbed 'Elves' and 'Dwarfs'. The year sees instability world-wide, the results in the Australasian region see the Papua New Guinea government collapse followed by large scale civil unrest in the Philippines. PNG is administered by Australia via a UN mandate.

### Dawn of the Sixth World

24 December 2011 - people from Australia's outback start streaming into the coastal and inland cities. The flood brings with it horrifying accounts of attacks and many badly wounded citizens. Some aborigines are among the refugees, also seeking safety, but many have headed inland to traditional tribal lands. Elders of aborigine communities have names for some of the creatures responsible for the attacks, across the nation in scores of cities, the animals are named as Bunyips. Other creatures from the Dreamtime are described. Contact by radio with small outback communities is lost as one by one the stations and towns are overrun, and the inhabitants cut down. The Australian military tries to save communities but always arrive too late, some units are themselves attacked and many never return.

Australia is in shock, an estimated one million citizens are dead. In the outlying suburbs, at the edges of the remaining cities, strange things are stalking the night. The military starts guarding city limits, plans are authorised for the building of what is officially called 'the Perimeter' but dubbed by the media as Australia's 'Bunyip proof fence'. A cull of Dreamtime animals roaming the Exclusion Zone is authorised. Australia loses control of all but the coastal plains, much of Victoria and the larger inland centres.

It becomes apparent that many aborigines are still living in the more comfortable climes of Lost Australia, using their knowledge of the Dreamtime, they are able to avoid and defend against the wild animals which have returned to the continent. It seems the creatures of the Dreamtime tolerate the presence of aboriginals, whereas they will attack 'foreign' Australians on sight; seemingly the very land is fighting against the government. The lost land is viewed as an Aborigine nation, though not yet having any official set-up or any fixed border. The only border is now between city states and that marked by the Bunyip proof fence.

### The Mining Consortiums

The new breed of mining companies and consortiums that have come to dominate large scale open pit mining and oil field drilling are compared to the corps of the 1980's. They spare no expense and are largely built on paper profits. Many of these groups are partially controlled by the American corps responsible for the resource rush. These are ruthless organisations who find their revenue sources at risk due to exhaustion of existing deposits and the loss of access to their mines in the 'Lost Australia' region; they start to search for alternate mineral deposits. The few mines still operating are fenced off and



have military troops patrolling their perimeters. Examples of such centres are Mt Isa, Broken Hill and Kalgoorlie.

Australia, smarting from a loss of mining revenue due to abandonment of the interior, looks for alternative revenue sources. Dirk Ores and Baron Mining are among several companies who request permission to test drill for oil near Heard Island in the Indian Ocean. The consortium's annual report gives the impression that the drilling is well within Australian territorial waters - in reality much of the drilling takes place well outside this zone.

### ASEAN Growth

During 2014 ASEAN is expanded in an effort to promote regional security. Australia upgrades its associate status to full membership. Most ASEAN nations have suffered loss of control over large portions of their territory due to the encroachment of the wild, and the activities of separatist groups. The ASEAN member list now reads; Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam and Cambodia.

### Antartica Oil Rush

The Australian economy is evaluated showing that major portions of it are now things of the past - mining and agriculture are the heaviest affected areas. The government tries to play down the figures publicly, but privately is panic stricken. When oil is discovered in March 2015 across several large deposits in the Southern Ocean between Heard Island and Antarctica, approval is given by the Australian government even though the reserve is in international waters. Some of within the area specified as part of the Antarctica world park. The government has decided that no other nation or global body can penalise it, so it gives the go ahead. This action by Canberra is attributed to its reaction to a 25% slump in Gross Domestic Product.

The first two rigs are positioned off Antarctica in 2016, they are labelled by a supportive media as 'megarigs' - they are many times stronger and somewhat larger than standard sea rigs due to the allowance made for pack ice. The oil starts to flow in 2017 from the first two rigs, one more is being positioned. World environmental group Greenpeace is

outraged at what is happening. Warning of environmental disaster the organisation condemns the Australian Government inaction.

### Accidents

The Greenpeace icebreaker, 'Newbreed', is lost at sea on its way to the megarigs to gain media attention. All hands are lost, international attention is focused on the incident temporarily, but official comment writes the incident off as misadventure. Off the record it is believed that a convoy of consortium ships was due in the area at the same time. The media corps have large financial interests in the oil project, so coverage of the 'accident' is brief.

In 2018 Australia is horrified as the space plane 'America' disintegrates in orbit, falling to earth and showering Longreach with debris. The town was one of the few remaining islands of Australia inland, the catastrophe kills three hundred and signals the withdrawal from inland Australia. By 2040 the Australian nation will be pushed back to the coast and the Victorian rural zone.

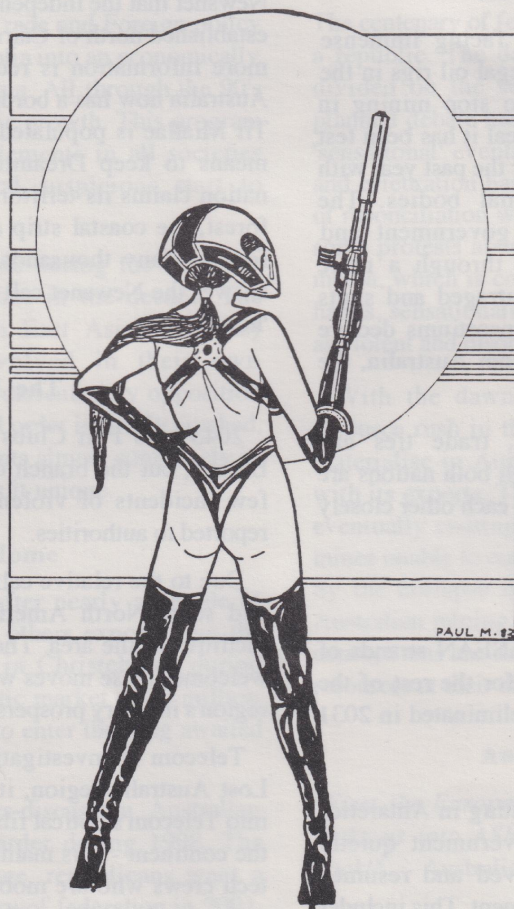
By the end of 2019 three rigs are pumping oil from the continental shelf of Antarctica to waiting processing megatankers which are specially strengthened to deal with pack ice. The megarigs each house over 500 staff and luckily have had few problems with the climate, the only recurring dilemma is fracturing pipe valves due to the extreme cold. Minimal spillage has occurred, the consortiums involved and the government are quite happy with their environmental impact record.

### Goblinisation

Goblinisation occurs during 2021, one in ten people worldwide go through the transformation as Orks or Trolls.

This causes widespread turmoil and unrest, shortly after the process began another wave of VITAS sweeps the Earth. One in ten people die from the new VITAS plague (refer *Shadowrun*).

The oil rigs of Antarctica are isolated from the VITAS deaths, but have to deal with violent disturbances due to the goblinisation of staff. An above average number of staff are affected, with one in three going through the transformation. Many deaths are reported, on one station 400 crew die. Worse occurs on the two other rigs, Orks take control, ignoring safety measures. Within a week one





megarig is an inferno while the other is pouring crude oil from its loading facilities into the ocean. It takes three weeks to stop the flow, but the damage done to Antarctica is immense.

2022-24 sees goblinisation and VITAS push ASEAN over the edge, violence against the newly emerged races, old feuds are rekindled and anarchy rules. It is estimated that of ASEAN's 423 million people, nearly 80 million are killed by VITAS and unrest.

Many of the awakened races are expelled from urban area, pushed into their own communities. This separation helps the return of peace. Large numbers of refugees from New Zealand are assimilated into Australia as the North Island is divided between cunning Maoris taking back what was theirs and warring Orks.

### A Free Corporate State

The Australian government, after facing immense pressure due to the oil spills by the illegal oil rigs in the world park, order the consortiums to stop mining in Antarctica. One of the consortiums reveal it has been test drilling for minerals in the continent for the past year with as yet no protest from international bodies. The consortiums essentially ignore the government and threaten to direct their oil revenue through a more receptive government. Canberra is outraged and shuts down supply to the megarigs. The consortiums declare their operations a separate and free from Australia, the world's first corporate state.

Britain withdraws from the EC, trade ties are strengthened with Australia even though both nations are much changed since last they dealt with each other closely (refer *London Soucebook*).

### The Crash of '29

The computernet virus attacks the ASEAN strands of the net, damage is widespread as it is for the rest of the globe. The virus plagues the net until eliminated in 2031 (refer *Shadowrun*).

The megarigs in 2030 are still operating in Antarctica without Australian supplies, the government quietly apologises to the consortiums involved and resumes supplying food stuffs and hi-tech equipment. This includes the supplying of mining bases on the continent itself.

The Euro Wars begin in 2031, engulfing Europe, central, northern & north eastern Asia in bitter conflict. The battles end in Europe in 2033 while it takes until 2043 until a stalemate is reached on all fronts of the Eurasian conflict (refer *Shadowrun*). Many people migrate from Europe to Australia after the desolation of the Euro Wars. They arrive in a land which hasn't resemble the documentaries they viewed at home for twenty years. The influx is immense, many migrants are used to populate the few rural areas still under government control, while some go to Antarctica to try and make their fortune. The exodus from Europe doesn't slow until 2043.

Australia is now starting to boom via revenue from the 'Corporate Colonies'. Australia benefits from ten mining communities in Antarctica, six of them being megarigs at sea. The biggest problem experienced is due to winter shutting off two ore loading ports for four months every year. By 2038 the population of the mining colonies has risen to 41,000. The mining corporations have complete control in developing the mining projects as they govern through their own Antarctic 'parliament' which consists entirely of consortium representatives; their only opposition comes from groupings of mining unionists. No protests are made to Australia about the mining in Antarctica as it is obvious that Australia is no longer in control of the situation; perhaps it never was.

### The Declaration

On November the 14th 2038 it is announced through Newsnet that the independent state of Tir Miallae has been established north of Cairns, inside the Exclusion Zone. As more information is received it becomes apparent that Australia now has a bordering neighbour on the mainland. Tir Miallae is populated by Elves, and is using magical means to keep Dreamtime creatures at bay. The new nation claims its territories to include the Daintree rainforest, the coastal strip and nearby plains bordering the forest. Many thousands of Elves leave their homes to answer the Newsnet call to join their brethren in the new 'homeland'.

### The Past Decade

2043 sees Poli Clubs arrive in ASEAN region from Europe, but the branch of purist groups never take off - few incidents of violence against awakened races are reported to authorities.

Due to the relative calm in the region, many European and some North American firms move their research facilities to the area. The loosely united ASEAN society welcomes these moves with attractive tax shelters and the region's industry prospers.

Telecom is investigating a user operating within the Lost Australia region, it appears that the user is tapped into Telecom's optical fibre network that still criss-crosses the continent - it is maintained by special teams of armed tech crews who are mobilised by helicopter to fix faults and upgrade the lines. Telecom's only clue to the identity of the hackers is the name of the group, Marega.

Australia's population is now over 38 million.

### Welcome home...

Australia today is a nation of the world, a member of the global Nuyen currency network. It is also tied in economically to Japan and the UCAS so prices are similar for all goods and services. Most large companies are partly owned by Japanese and UCAS corps. The Australia of the past lives on in its citizens, that especial cultural mix of a nation of convicts, migrants and diggers; some things never change. As the population has doubled and the



Dreamtime has encroached on rural areas, Australia is no longer a land of wide open space; the cities are overcrowded and sorrowfully polluted. English is the only official language, though Japanese is now mandatory for all school children and cityspeak comes naturally to others.

Social law and order has been retained, or at least the Australian easygoing version of it. Most violent crime is held in check by local police forces; anything goes in the Exclusion Zone. Two thirds of fatalities reported prove to be the result of attacks by Dreamtime creatures via fence breaks, sewers and other suspect methods of entry into populated centres. The nation sees itself as a country under siege. Many attempts have been made to cull the wild animals, bounty hunters often venture beyond the Bunyip Proof fence, but all measures have had limited success. Usually at the heart of these measure are moves to repopulate badly needed fertile rural areas.

Corporations in Australia have nothing like the power they exercise in UCAS, for this reason many of the relocated research facilities that moved to ASEAN territories have located in other member countries. Corps do have a completely free hand when it comes to Antarctica Free State. The communities there are populated largely from Australia and deal almost exclusively with Australia for supplies but are governed by consortiums via their 'parliament'. Any corp can come into Antarctica as long as it doesn't step on the toes of the established companies.

Throughout the industries in Australia there are frequently only two big players, these corps will often be involved in dirty trick campaigns against each other. Prime examples of such industries are mining, soft drink, fast food and tourism.

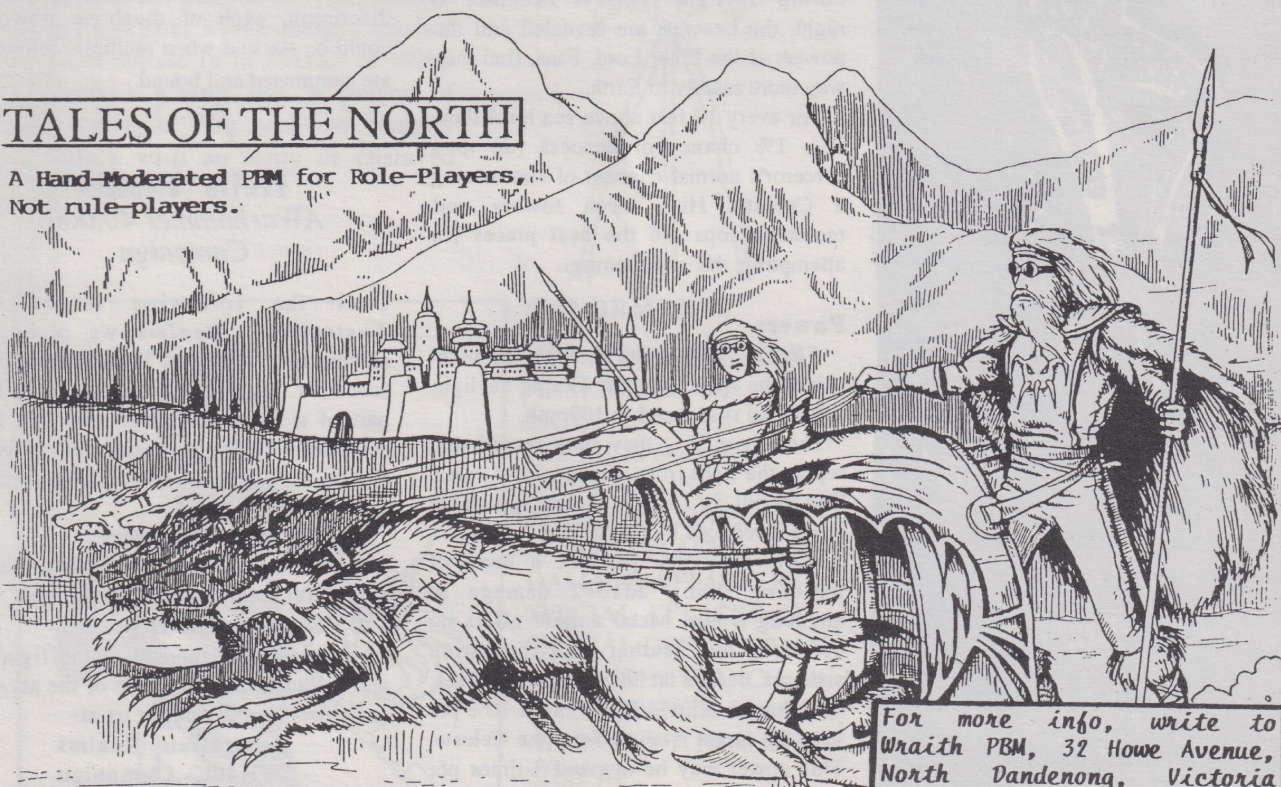
In Australia, corps hire security personnel from government approved agencies (often owned by the client in any case). This is particularly true of the mining industry which needs to protect its sites from the Dreamtime creatures. Guards are authorised and licensed to shoot, but if a wounding or fatality occurs it must be reported to and investigated by local police. Inappropriate uses of force can land the company in court with fines and gaol terms for the responsible executives. In practice, the local authorities rarely hear of fatalities, the incidents are reported to company executives and the corpses disposed of - Bunyips can carry the blame.

Since Europeans arrived on Australia's shores they have caused the extinction of hundreds of native species. Now, in the age of the returned Dreamtime, Australia has discovered that the very earth of the continent is fighting back. Huge dust storms blow over the cities, giant snakes - even the Rainbow Serpent - have been sighted and Bunyips terrorise rural communities. The Dreamtime has become reality and is exerting all the force it needs whenever the population is foolish enough to try and reclaim the lost land.

*Next issue, Part 2 - Dreamtime Magic.*

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