

# HARDEN UP QUEENSLAND

## CASE STUDY: Tropical Cyclone *Eline*, 4 February 1898

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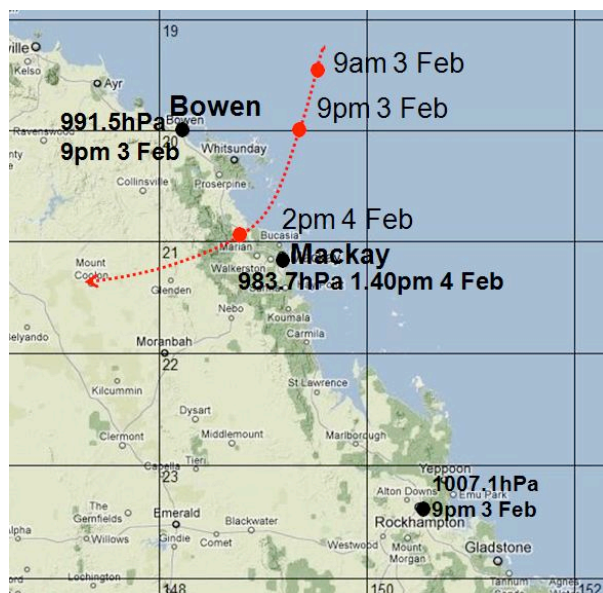
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Tropical Cyclone *Eline*, named by Clemente Wragge and pronounced *Eleenie* crossed the coast north of Mackay on 4 February 1898. The Queen's, Riverview and Belmore Arms Hotels were unroofed and their verandas were blown away. The Courthouse was blown down, two churches, the blacksmith's shop, the Brewery, a stable, a shop and the Newspaper office were wrecked and another church was forced off its blocks. A store, a wharf, the Railway offices and many houses were damaged. Two houses collapsed. Other buildings lost balconies, roofing iron and outhouses were blown down. The 24 hour rainfall in Mackay to 9am 5<sup>th</sup> was 12 inches (305 mm). Floods shortened the path of the Pioneer R to the sea by 4.8 km (its present course). Lowest bar reading was 984 hPa. All the buildings on Flat Top Island were destroyed except the lighthouse.

Throughout Thursday (3<sup>rd</sup>) afternoon and night the wind steadily increased in violence By 6am Friday 4 February there was a southerly gale at Mackay with the bar 1006.1hPa Shortly after 8am the damage started and at 9am the bar was 990.6hPa with sheets of iron blowing around and dangerous to be out. About noon a building collapsed. Between noon and 1.30pm the storms was at its peak and galvanised iron flying in all directions with buildings collapsing and being unroofed in quick succession. At noon the bar was 986.8hPa and at 1.40pm 983.7hPa. The old Royal Hotel was unroofed, and the residence of Mr Morley (newly built) collapsed. Along Victoria Street many verandas were blown off, houses were unroofed, and two nearly new buildings collapsed. At 2.30pm the wind began to show signs of abating.

### Rainfall

The heaviest 24 hour rainfall total was 303.5mm at Mackay in the period to 9am 5 February. *Eline* after landfall became a rain depression over Central Queensland and the largest 24 rainfall total of 208.8mm was recorded at Bogantungan to 9am 5 February.



**Figure 1** The possible track of *Eline* shows it passing to the east of Bowen at 9pm 3 February from its low pressure at that time and closest to Mackay around 1.40pm 4 February which recorded it lowest pressure at that time.