

How can mother die
Shortly after his birth
1929 Lawrence (1894-1985)

Engineering Heritage Australia

National Engineering Oral History Program: Biographical Notes

Dr Ian George Dewar Cameron (1929 -)

Civil Engineer

- Birth & Family:** Born 4 June 1929, Brisbane. First child of William Dewar Cameron (1893 – 1964) and Vida Margaret (nee Hutton) (1894 – 1985). Ian's mother died shortly after his birth. Siblings Elizabeth ('Betty' 1931).
- Schooling:** Star of the Sea, Southport, Buranda State School, Church of England Grammar School (1938-1946)
- Qualifications:** Bachelor of Engineering Civil (1st Class Honours), 1951
- Memberships:** The Institution of Engineers (1952), Queensland Council of Professions, Institute of Arbitrators Australia, Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers (London), Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers.
- Awards:** 1951 Institution of Engineers Chapman Medal, Life Fellow of QIT (1987), Fellow, Australian Academy of Technological Sciences & Engineering (1990), Honorary Fellow IEA (1991), Engineer of the Year – IEA Qld (1993), Honorary Doctor of QUT (1996), Engineering Hall of Fame- IEA Qld, (2003).
- Work History:** Ian Cameron completed his education at the Church of England Grammar School in Brisbane. While at school he met Graham McNamara who was to join him as a Cadet with the Queensland Department of Main Roads and later in private practice. During his period with the Main Roads Department he was responsible for the construction of bridges throughout Queensland. He was able to develop a range of innovative procedures, which led to major cost savings for the Department. He was responsible for the introduction of pre-stressed concrete; this had been the subject of his Bachelor of Engineering Thesis in 1951. Following his thesis on prestressed concrete he was asked by the Department of Main Roads to design a bridge in this new medium. This bridge over the Tenthill Creek on the Gatton - Mt Sylvia Road was constructed to Ian's design and under his construction supervision. It is believed to be the first, or one of the first bridges using this technique in Australia.
- In 1960 he went into private practice with Graham McNamara establishing the consulting engineering firm of Cameron & McNamara. The firm grew rapidly establishing offices throughout Queensland, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Darwin, Port Moresby, Lac, Goroka, Honiara, Vila & Suva. The practice was one of the first in Australia to introduce computers. Ian was the Managing Director of Cameron & McNamara for twenty years (1960-1980).

Cameron was actively involved with the Institution of Engineers for the whole of his working life and Chairman of the Queensland Division in 1969. In 1988 Cameron McNamara Pty Ltd merged with Kinhill Limited of Adelaide to form the largest consulting practice in Australia. From 1969 to 1988 Cameron was elected to the boards of three public companies; Carricks Limited, Evans Deakin Ltd and the Austral Group Ltd. He retired from the consulting engineering practice in 1991 and concentrated on the arbitration of construction disputes. He had been operating as an Arbitrator on a restricted basis for twenty years prior to this but retirement gave him more time for this work.

Cameron has also been involved in further education, being appointed Chairman of Council of the Queensland Institute of Technology for four years (1983-1987). He was made a Life Fellow of the Institute in 1988 and he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of the Queensland University of Technology in 1996. He has written three historical books: *125 years of State Public Works – 1859 to 1984* (1986), *Green & Pleasant Land, They Came of Bold & Roving Stock* (1996).

In recent years his interest in Landcare has increased and he has been the Chairman of the Pullen Pullen Catchment Group Inc, near where he lives in semi-rural Pullenvale, an outer Brisbane suburb.

Prepared by Lesley Jenkins, August 2004 from oral history interview conducted on 11 May 2004