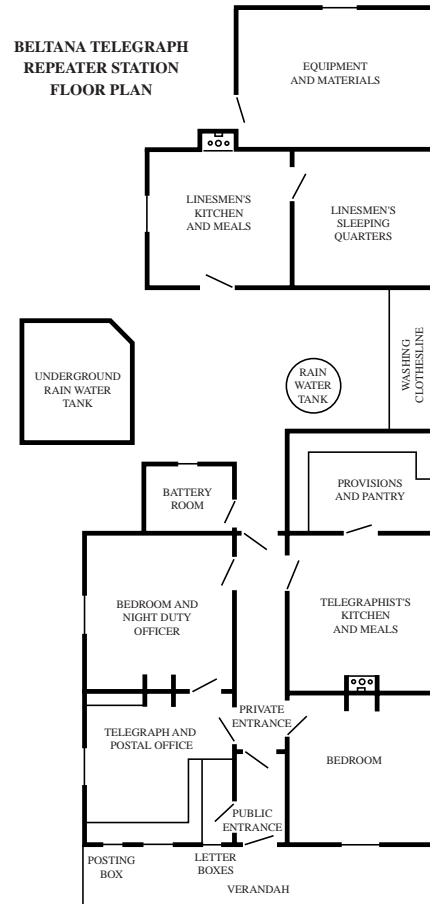# History of Beltana Telegraph Station

Beltana township was not surveyed until 1873 and in 1872 temporary repeater station rooms were built of galvanised iron on the bank of the Warioota Creek quite near to the present repeater station building. A permanent telegraph office was built in 1875. The battery room had two banks of 80 glass electricity cells. Each cell yielded 1.5 volts giving approximately 120 volts per bank. One bank was used for receiving and the other for sending messages. The telegraph office was staffed by the chief telegraphist, an assistant and four linesmen. People would come to the office to send telegrams and the assistant would deliver any telegrams that came to the office for people in the township. The copper mining companies at Sliding Rock and Blinman made good use of the telegraph for keeping in touch with the price of copper in London.
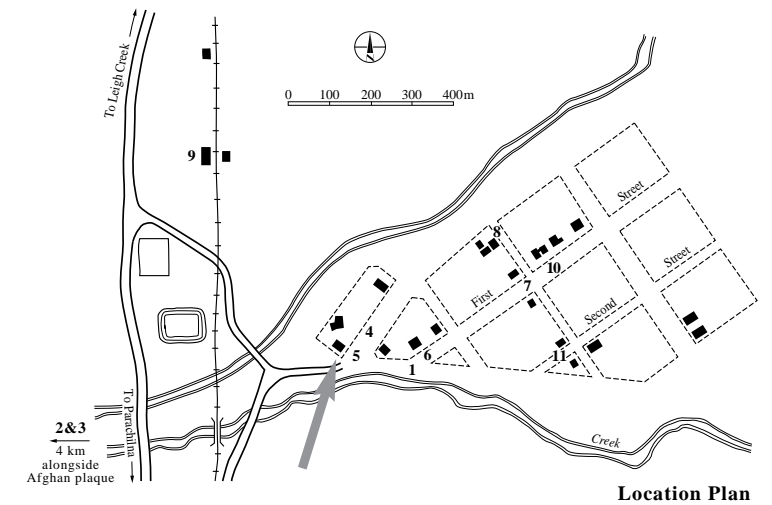
Native pine trees from Warraweena Station were used for telegraph poles for the line. Before the Overland Telegraph was installed, it took sixty days to deliver messages from England to Australia by sea, but a telegram could arrive within 3 or 4 hours. Each telegram was relayed in morse to its destination.

In 1876 Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone. On Easter Monday in 1878, voice contact was made by telephone between Strangway Springs and Beltana. Initially the telephone was only in commercial use but by the turn of the century telephones were being installed in private homes.

BELTANA TELEGRAPH REPEATER STATION FLOOR PLAN

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

LINESMEN'S KITCHEN AND MEALS

LINESMEN'S SLEEPING QUARTERS

UNDERGROUND RAIN WATER TANK

RAIN WATER TANK

WASHING CLOTHESLINE

BATTERY ROOM

PROVISIONS AND PANTRY

BEDROOM AND NIGHT DUTY OFFICER

TELEGRAPHIST'S KITCHEN AND MEALS

PRIVATE ENTRANCE

TELEGRAPH AND POSTAL OFFICE

BEDROOM

PUBLIC ENTRANCE

POSTING BOX

LETTER BOXES

VERANDAH

In 1913, the status of Beltana Telegraph Station/Post Office became 'non official' and soon Morse Code was discontinued. This Postal and Telegraph building was sold in 1940 and the Post Office and telephone switchboard became part of the local shop. After the closing of the railway through Beltana 1956, the Railway Station became the local General Store, and post office facilities moved to the railway station. During this time the telephones were connected to an automatic exchange and the switchboard became a museum piece.

MORSE CODE

A ·—	J ·———	S ···
B —···	K —·—	T —
C —·—·	L ·—··	U ··—
D —··	M ——	V ···—
E ·	N —·	W ·——
F ··—·	O ———	X —··—
G ——·	P ·——·	Y —·——
H ····	Q ——·—	Z ——··
I ··	R ·—·	

1 ·————	6 —····
2 ··———	7 ——···
3 ···——	8 ———··
4 ····—	9 ————·
5 ·····	0 —————

(Full stop) ·—·—·—
(Comma) ——··——

To Leigh Creek
To Parachilna
Creek
First Street
Second Street
Street

0   100   200   300   400m

2&3
4 km alongside Afghan plaque

Location Plan

FIS 16416 2000