



## **The Growing Tree** (green) – Sydney

The Growing Tree is by far the largest freehold in Australia, both in population and in territory controlled. In territory controlled is quiet likely one of the biggest in the world, (Though this is difficult to confirm).

(It is the freehold I have the most information on – it's recruitment from Perth has left me a lot of contacts there, (indeed most of my other information is coming from those contracts in Sydney)

### Territory and Population

The Growing Tree's territories are large. It's *Grand Holding* is in Sydney, however it's claims holdings and courtiers all the way from Rockhampton in Queensland, to Mount Gambier in South Australia, including Melbourne, and Brisbane, with the exception of the ACT, (up until recently, at least).

The Growing Tree is also by far the most populous freehold in the country. It has well over 2000 members, (Some speculation goes up in to the region of 5000, but I, and my sources within the Tree consider this unlikely). This is due in part to its very aggressive recruiting across the nation, resulting in large immigrations from areas not under it's control, including Perth. The majority of these immigrant recruits come from areas without strong (or any) local freeholds. When local leadership/organisation is present, they tend to send ambassadors, to the freehold to size them up, or offer alliance. There are very few freehold that aren't visited by an ambassador at least quarterly, with most having one present all year round.

The territory is divided in to 3 Kingdoms, or Branches as they call them, each ruled over by seasonal monarchs.

Sydney ruled by the High Kings and Queens, who are responsible for the Tree as a whole as well as the other holdings within NSW.

Brisbane Branch, ruling the area in Queensland, including the Gold coast.

Melbourne branch, controlling the holding in Victoria as well as Mount Gambia holding in South Australia.

As well as the seasonal monarchs of the Branches, most cities and larger towns are presided over by a Duke, or a Earl (respectively). These positions are court nobles and are not rotated with the seasons. The smaller towns generally only have a couple of courtiers forming a presence there, watching over a safe-house. The Tree encourages its members to move in to the cities, where they can receive better support from there courts.

### **History:**

The Growing Tree is by no means the first freehold in Sydney, freeholds there have existed since the first fleet (if not before). It was forged by the consolidation of a number of New South Wales freeholds, following the foundation of Australia as a nation.

It's expansionistic tendencies saw it grow over the coming years, absorbing existing freeholds, and sending emissaries to create new holdings as new towns grew or

were built.

In 1930, Brisbane and the Gold coast joined during the great depression, with the idea of combining resources. This was a popular move amongst the Queensland courtiers, there kings were required to humble themselves slightly, by swearing loyalty to the High Kings and Queens of Sydney, but all in all life continued as before, but with a fair bit more resources at their command. Things have changed a fair bit since then, though there are still two surviving monarch from the agreement. (The Autumn and Spring Kings). The new King and Queen, joint the freehold after the agreement, and are very loyal to the ideals of the Growing Tree.

The growing tree continued to expand throughout the years. Reaching a stopping point at Rockhampton in the north.

Melbourne Branch was created in 1990,

Previously the Freehold of Melbourne, known as the Old Stump, was the oldest freehold in the country, dating back to the foundation of the city in 1835. (it's former territory is marked in dark green)

In the early parts of 1990, all 4 monarchs died, in as yet unexplained circumstances, fighting with in the freehold for leadership broke out. At this time, Sydney had 4 ambassadors in Melbourne one from each court, who had obtained polarity and position within the Old Stumps court structures. After a couple of months, these Ambassadors managed to rally what was left of their courts behind them and restored order within the city, quiet likely with the help of some reinforcements from the Growing Tree proper. They were already ruling the courts, by the time the High Kings and Queens crowned them and created Melbourne Branch.

There does however still exist, in the words of the Summer King of Melbourne branch "A despicable band of loyalists and privateers abusing the honoured name of the Old Stump"

Freeholds though out the east continue to fall under the sway of the Growing Tree. The latest to joint was the Mount Gambia Freehold in South Australia, in June 1994.

### **St Vincent's Paradise** (red) – Adelaide

Adelaide is looking scared right now,

They have 4 ambassadors from the Growing Tree, 1 from each court, spread across their territories, and they've seen Mount Gambia join the tree just last year.

Melbourne has at least 50 Summer courtiers from Sydney proper in addition to the native members, and Adelaide seems to think they are for them. (Something I personally doubt, Growing Tree is yet to use its military strength to conquer (overtly at least))

There are 5 major holdings in Vincent's Paradise, Whyalla, Port Lincoln, Port Augusta, and Adelaide. However, the Main Holding as it were is on the water.

Large portions of the freeholds member live on the water, with each of the four great courts holding court on their own "flag ships".

Indeed with their current tension, summer has by far the largest presences wharf-side. Rumour has it that the rest of the freehold is actually making ready to wholesale ship out. This seems quiet unlikely, though not impossible.

There are roughly 200 changelings in Vincent's Paradise, evenly distributed amongst the courts. Each of the 5 land holdings are run by seasonal nobles, with a Count running Adelaide, and a Viscount running each of the other 4 holdings. The Raining Count/viscount for a holding rotates with the seasons, matching the reigning monarch.

### **Falling Stone** – Canberra (Blue)

Not taking into account it's apparent recent destruction at the hands of the Fae, The Falling Stone was a grand freehold, at well over 300 Changelings, it had more changelings per capita than any other major city. While it couldn't rival the might of the Growing Tree in numbers, it made up for that in the skill and talent of its members. The home base of a number of known entitlements, it was once joked that the wyrd manipulation ability of the Falling Stone was more than the rest of the nation combined. (This is absolutely untrue, but makes for a nice story).

The Falling Stone did have a rather antagonistic relationship with the Growing Tree, It's Summer Monarch Long John, is said to have executed no fewer than eight of the Trees ambassadors.

The founding of the Freehold predates the founding of the city in 1913 by at least 30 years. Information from within the freehold is scarce as my few contracts there are no longer responding, and my contacts with-in the Growing Tree know very little.

### **Other Freeholds:**

There are other freeholds around.

A small seasonal freehold at coober pedy, another at Ceduna.

A couple in Hobart.

To the north (including Queensland) the directional courts hold sway, except on cape york, and in a couple of other tropical regions where the few changeling swear to the 2-season courts.

These smaller freeholds I know of only in passing, they may no longer exist, or may have been absorbed by larger freeholds