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CULTURAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT, PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

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Mr John Oliver  
Project – Development Manager,  
Sandy Shores Developments Pty Limited  
PO Box 5178  
Wollongong NSW 2520

Dear John,

**Sandy Beach - Hearn's Lake Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment – Additional  
Aboriginal Community Consultation**

This letter is to advise that the Department of Planning DGR's for additional Aboriginal community consultation on the above project, have been completed. The outcome of this consultation is detailed below.

An advertisement calling for expressions of interest from Aboriginal stakeholders was placed in the Coffs Coast Advocate on the 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2008. The advertisement noted the previous consultation which had been undertaken and identified the area subject to assessment. A single written response was received [see attached] from the Bagawa Birra Murri Aboriginal Corporation. This local Aboriginal community organisation was also suggested by Roger Mehr, Archaeologist with the Coffs Harbour Office of the Department of Environment and Climate Change as appropriate knowledge holders for the area and he assisted with additional contact details.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, I spoke with Arlene Hope, Research Historian with the Bagawa Birra Murri Aboriginal Corporation. I also emailed Dennis and Fay Haslam, CEO and Secretary of that organisation to advise them on the content of our conservation. Arlene Hope advised me on her extensive research into the Aboriginal and early settler histories of the region and that there are a number of Aboriginal families who hold knowledge and who feel they have not been adequately represented by local Aboriginal organisations in the past. I advised Arlene on the results and recommendations of the Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment as detailed in our report entitled "Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment Lots 21 and 22 in DP1070182 Sandy Beach North, NSW" dated December 2004.

It has been agreed that the Bagawa Birra Murri Aboriginal Corporation will be represented throughout the course of the recommended further archaeological investigation and will assist in the development of the Interpretation Plan for the open camp site recommended for preservation and conservation.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Dallas  
19.5.08

Attachments:

1. Bagawa Birra Murri Aboriginal Corporation Expression of Interest dated 2.5.2008 signed by Arlene Hope.
2. Bagawa Birra Murri Aboriginal Corporation Correspondence confirming telephone conversation between Arlene Hope and Mary Dallas 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008



**Bagawa Birra Murri  
Aboriginal Corporation**  
No. 7050

Research Historian  
36 Skinners Close  
Emerald Beach NSW 2456  
Phone / fax 66560966  
[bagawa.aunts@bigpond.com](mailto:bagawa.aunts@bigpond.com)

Attention Peter Darby

Fax 66509039

Dear Peter

I have been asked to inform you that the Bagawa Birra Murri Aboriginal Corporation are stakeholders in the Hearne's Lake Area

We have Report 1 out called Footprints of the Ulitarra which includes a brief out line of our documentation of the area

We are most concerned that honourable Archaeologists working in this area have not been given correct information which is a huge problem for them because with out correct information they can only report what they have been told  
This is not just a problem here it is also State wide which I have raised with Paul Lynch Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Please ring me on 66560966 if I can be of further assistance I will be in Sydney from Tuesday to Friday next week

Thank you for your help in these matters

Arlene Hope Research Historian BBMCA

*Arlene Hope*

P.s Please confirm you have received  
to bagawa aunts. [bigpond.com](mailto:bigpond.com)  
*alt.*



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No. 7050

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19-5-2008

Attention : Mary Dallas

Re Fax to Peter Darby

Dear Mary

This is to confirm our conversation this morning. Many thanks for getting back to the Bagawa Birra Murri Aboriginal Corporation and the confirmation that we will be consulted on the project during the process.

I have posted the Report part 1 of the Foot Prints of the Ulitarra and Oorrara The Orara.

A complimentary copy of Yarmugay in Bagawa Country from the Bagawa Aunts.

I have met Fay and Dennis Haslam, this morning at Pet Porpoise Pool

[they're a sponsor for our Yarmugay Booklet] where I got a spare copy of the Oorrara for you.

Details you may need I am the research Historian fro the Gumbula Julipi Elders As well as the tradition Owners the Bagawa Birra Murri Aboriginal Corporation.

Sue Hoskins BBMAC Chairperson phone 66584878 also the Chairperson of Gumbula Julipi Elders the Elders contact.

Dennis Haslam is our ECO Fay is our Secretary to lessen my work load which I appreciate very much, their new phone contact no is 0266564568

Dennis has informed me that the Reports are \$50 plus Oorrara \$35.

I will invoice you as Dennis is not up and running until about Wednesday.

The BBMAC was set up originally as the Bagawa Birra Murri Aboriginal Women's Council because we had men speaking in correctly on Women's sites. As we discussed this morning due to problems with Site workers with advice from Canberra we have now become the Bagawa Birra Murri Aboriginal Corporation and therefore will address any sites in Bagawa Country

From Woolgoolga to Nymboida to Eastern Dorrigo Orara Upper Orara to Coffs Harbour to Bongil Bongil in the south Clan Country.

I personally with the Bagawa Aunts handed a letter to the Minister Of Aboriginal Affairs Mr Paul Lynch on the serous matters concerning Site workers. We have meet and also raise this matter with Roger Mehr DECC

Thanking you for help in these matters

Arlene Hope on behalf of the BBMAC

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## 1.0

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background to Study

This report presents an Aboriginal heritage assessment of land located on the mid-north coast of NSW at Sandy Beach to the north of the existing Sandy Beach township and approximately 3km south of Woolgoolga. Two parcels of land on either side of the Pacific Highway have been investigated for this assessment. The land to the east of the Pacific Highway is the subject of a Masterplan [John Holland in prep] and is proposed for residential development. This land and the land to the west of the Pacific Highway is part of a larger area which is the subject of a Draft DCP. The land to the west of the Pacific Highway is referred to as the Robinson property and is not currently proposed for development.

The study was commissioned by Sandy Shores Developments Pty Limited. The current study follows an earlier archaeological study undertaken in 1983, of a slightly larger area, to provide more current assessment and to inform the Sandy Beach North Masterplan and possible future development proposals.

The assessment has included a fully comprehensive archaeological survey, background research into the Aboriginal history and prehistory of the mid-north coast region, specifically around Sandy Beach and the north Coffs Harbour region, and consultation with the Coffs Harbour local Aboriginal community.

### 1.2 Study Aims

- To initiate consultation with the Coffs Harbour and District Local Aboriginal Land Council (CHLALC), the Garbi Elders and the Gumbalar-Jullipi Elders.
- To incorporate into the assessment process of the site the views and recommendations provided by the CHLALC and the Elder groups.
- To undertake a background search of the Department of Environment and Conservation (incorporating the former NPWS) Aboriginal Sites Register in order to determine whether Aboriginal sites have previously been recorded upon and/or within the immediate vicinity of the subject land.
- From a targeted review of known archaeology of the region, to prepare a predictive model describing the archaeological sensitivity of the study site and to predict the potential for unrecorded sites to occur within the subject land.
- To undertake a physical inspection of the study site to identify and record any Aboriginal sites that may be present and assess their significance.

- 
- To provide an assessment of the potential for undetected sites to occur within the survey area and to identify those areas of the subject land possessing potential archaeological sensitivity and to detail the types of sites expected.
  - To prepare a report detailing the results of the Aboriginal consultation, field survey and assessment of heritage sensitivity and to formulate a specific set of management options and recommendations directed toward providing an appropriate framework to direct future management of any sites located and/or areas possessing potential archaeological sensitivity within the subject land.

### 1.3 Statutory Protection for Aboriginal Heritage

Two pieces of legislation provide the primary context for Aboriginal heritage management in New South Wales. These are the *National Parks & Wildlife Act (1974)* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979)*. The principal implications of these statutory controls within the context of the current development proposal are outlined below.

#### 1.3.1 National Parks & Wildlife Act

The *National Parks & Wildlife Act (1974)* provides statutory protection for all Aboriginal 'relics' (consisting of any material evidence of the indigenous occupation of NSW) under Section 90 of the Act, and for 'Aboriginal Places' (areas of cultural significance to the Aboriginal community) under Section 84. Aboriginal relics are afforded automatic statutory protection in NSW whereby it is an offence (without the Minister's consent) to:

*'damage, deface or destroy Aboriginal sites without the prior consent of the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service'.*

The Act defines a 'relic' as:

*'any deposit, object or material evidence (not being a handicraft for sale) relating to indigenous and non-European habitation of the area that comprises New South Wales, being habitation both prior to and concurrent with the occupation of that area by persons of European extraction, and includes Aboriginal remains'.*

The protection provided to Aboriginal relics applies irrespective of the level of their significance or issues of land tenure. However, areas are only gazetted as Aboriginal Places if the Minister is satisfied that sufficient evidence exists to demonstrate that the location was and/or is, of special significance to Aboriginal culture.

The majority of Aboriginal heritage assessments undertaken in NSW are generally conducted in the context of development proposals and largely focus upon archaeological survey and assessment without identifying and assessing historical and social significance of areas to Aboriginal people and assessing the impacts of development on all heritage values. To this end, in January 2003, the amendments passed by Parliament in December 2002 to the NPW



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Act that govern the protection of Aboriginal heritage will come into force. The amendments can be summarised as:

- Amending the term 'relic' to 'Aboriginal object';
- Inclusion of desecration in the offence provisions under Section 90;
- Removal of 'knowingly' from Section 90 and the insertion of a defence provision relating to due diligence and reasonable precaution;
- Amending the name of Section 90 Consents to Heritage Impact Permits; and
- Inclusion of Aboriginal Heritage in the stop-work order provisions of Section 91AA.

### 1.3.2 Environmental Planning & Assessment Act

In contrast with the NPW Act, the EP&A Act is designed more specifically to cater for heritage issues within the context of new development projects and is closely linked with the process of preparing environmental impact studies. This act has three main parts of direct relevance to Aboriginal cultural heritage. Namely, Part III which governs the preparation of planning instruments, Part IV which relates to development assessment process for local government (consent) authorities and Part V which relates to activity approvals by governing (determining) authorities.

Part III deals primarily with development planning in which sites and places sacred or significant to Aboriginal communities are to be assessed and taken into consideration in initial studies. The Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) has produced guidelines on the preparation of planning instruments such as State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP's), REP's and LEP's that explicitly list Aboriginal sites and places of significance as values which should be assessed as part of initial planning studies.

Part IV deals with decisions to be made within the context of development applications. As a component of this legislative section, an Environmental Impact Study will under Section 90 (1) 9b include consideration of the potential impacts a proposed development may have on Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The NPWS is an approving body under Part V of the EP&A ACT and will require formal consideration of a variety of cultural and community factors. These may variously include potential impact to significant anthropological, archaeological, cultural and historical values, and these will typically be addressed through a Review of Environmental Factors (REF).

## 1.4 Report Outline

This report presents the following:

- A summary of the project (**Section 1.0**).

- 
- A description of the environmental setting of the study area and the landuse practices that have served to modify the subject land during the historic period (**Section 2.0**).
  - A review of the local Historical context pertinent to the subject site. This section includes a history of Aboriginal people in the area, their associations with the European settlers and their recorded material culture. (**Section 3.0**).
  - A review of the local and regional Aboriginal archaeological context pertinent to the subject site. This section also includes a prediction for the types of Aboriginal archaeological evidence that may be resident within the study area (**Section 4.0**).
  - The methods employed to survey and record the subject land and the results of the site inspection (**Section 5.0**).
  - A discussion of the principal conclusions; an evaluation of archaeological sensitivity relative to the proposed development impact; and, provision of management recommendations that detail advice on the nature and scope of further Aboriginal archaeological requirements within the context of the proposed development. (**Section 6.0**).
  - References used in this report (**Section 7.0**)

## 1.5 Aboriginal Consultation

The study area falls within the boundaries of the Coffs Harbour and District Local Aboriginal Land Council (CHLALC). This organisation is the appropriate Aboriginal community body to consult on matters relating Aboriginal cultural heritage within the current context. The Land Council also represents the Gumbalar-Jullipi and Garbi Elders who have associations with this part of the coast.

Consultation regarding the proposed road was initiated with the CHLALC prior to the field survey of the land. Discussions were initiated with Mr Chris Spencer and Mark Flanders, Sites Officers of the Land Council. Mr Ken Nader, a Gumbalar-Jullipi Elder, Mr Richard Pearce, a representative of the Garbi Elders and Mr Mark Flanders accompanied the archaeologists on the field investigation and provided additional information on the history of the Aboriginal people in the area.

The CHLALC reviewed a draft copy of this report and have provided a formal report in support the Archaeological assessment [see **Appendix 8.1**].

## 1.6 Authorship

Dan Tuck undertook the historical research and wrote the Aboriginal History section of this report.

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Mary Dallas managed the project and wrote the remaining sections of the report. Paul Irish assisted in the field survey and provided input on site assessment and site management.

## 1.7 Summary of Results and Recommendations

The archaeological survey identified an artefact scatter and an area of potentially artefact bearing deposit on slightly elevated areas of ground at the southern end of Hearn's Lake on the land to the east of the Pacific Highway. The artefact scatter is dispersed over an area of 50x500m which has been subject to some degree of disturbance relating to timber clearance and stump removal. The artefact scatter is coded SBN 1 and is assessed to be the disturbed remains of a camp site. The site is located in an area proposed to be retained as a conservation area, accessed by and fringed by pedestrian walkways. It is recommended the site is managed for preservation, conservation and interpretation within the development context. The site should be protected by the installation of a suitable top soil and grass cover. Management, conservation and interpretation should be prescribed within an Interpretation Plan for the Conservation Area to ensure long term outcomes for the site.

The area of PAD [potential archaeological deposit], coded PAD1, has been identified in the southern portion of the land on the eastern side of the Pacific Highway. The surface visibility in this area is minimal, however it represents a likely Aboriginal site location, being elevated above the surrounding low lying and potentially wetter land. The area should be the subject of a preliminary test excavation program to determine the presence or absence of Aboriginal cultural remains prior to development. The test excavation would also provide an assessment of significance and degree to which any identified remains might represent a constraint to the proposed development in the area. The archaeological test excavation should be done under a s.87 Department of Environment and Conservation [DEC] Preliminary Research Permit and undertaken in consultation with the CH&DLALC and Garbi Elders.

An artefact scatter [coded SBN 2] and an isolated stone artefact [coded ISF 1] were identified on the land to the west of the Pacific Highway. There are no current development proposals for this area. The following recommendations are made in the event of future development proposals. SBN 2 is located on a broad spur traversed by a dirt road in a disturbed context. The topsoil in this area is minimal, surface visibility is extensive and there is little or no further archaeological research potential at this site. It is recommended an application for a s.90 DEC Heritage Impact Permit is made for this site. The artefacts do not represent significant finds and it is unlikely the CH&DLALC will require a collection of the artefacts. ISF1 is located within 50m of Double Crossing Creek and as such is within a creek conservation area. No further action need be taken with respect to the isolated artefact.

The management recommendations for the above finds have been discussed with the CH&DLALC. The CH&DLALC<sup>1</sup> have expressed their preliminary support for this management approach. The CH&DLALC have been commissioned to prepare a formal report on their

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Flanders, pers. comm. 9.12.04

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interest in the subject lands and future site management. Their report is presented in **Appendix 1**.

The following recommendations are based upon the legal requirements and automatic statutory protection provided under the terms of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act of 1974 (as amended)*, where;

*it is an offence to knowingly damage, deface or destroy Aboriginal sites or relics without the prior consent of the Director General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service,*

in conjunction with;

the results of the Aboriginal Archaeological assessment prepared for the subject land as documented in this report; and,

the results of the consultation with the CHLALC, The Garbi Elders and the Gumbular-Julipi Elders conducted throughout the course of the study.

It is recommended that:

- I The liaison established with the CH&DLALC and the Gumbalar-Jullipi Elders and Garbi Elders should be maintained in the future. Specifically, within the context of implementing the Aboriginal Management Options [see below].
- II A copy of this report should be forwarded to the Chairperson of the CH&DLALC at the contact address below.  
  
Coffs Harbour & District Local Aboriginal Land Council  
  
PO Box 6150 Park Beach Plaza  
  
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

#### 6.2.2 Archaeological Management Options

It is recommended that:

- III Further archaeological surface survey of the Lot 22 is not required. If future development is proposed for Lot 21, further survey and archaeological monitoring should be undertaken in consultation with the CH&DLALC.
- IV An application for a DEC Section 87 Preliminary Research Permit to undertake archaeological test excavation at PAD 1 in Lot 22, should be submitted to the Director-General of the Department of Environment and Conservation prior to the commencement of any future proposed land use alteration. The application needs to be supported by the CH&DLALC. The test excavation will determine the presence or absence of Aboriginal cultural remains in this area.
- V SBN 1 should be managed for preservation within the proposed Conservation Area. Suitable topsoil and ground cover be placed over SBN 2 to ensure long term

- 
- conservation. These works should be undertaken under the supervision of the CH&DLALC.
- VI An Interpretation Plan should be developed for the Conservation Area which identifies and celebrates the Aboriginal Heritage of the area. The Plan should be developed in consultation with the CH&DLALC.
- VII Two copies of this report should be forwarded to the  
Manager,  
NSW Department of Environment and Conservation  
Northern Aboriginal Heritage Unit.  
PO Box 914  
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450



**Figure 1.1 Aerial Photo over Hearn's Lake and Sandy Beach North Study Area - View to Southwest** [Source - NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation 2000 - [www.dlwc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dlwc.nsw.gov.au)]

## 2.0 Study Site Context

### 2.1 Study Site

The study area is situated on the Mid North Coast of NSW, approximately 1 kilometre south of Woolgoolga at Sandy Beach within the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area. The study area comprises:

- approximately 40ha on the western side of the Pacific Highway described as Lot 21 in DP 1070182[also referred to as the Robinson property]
- approximately 50ha described as Lot 22 in DP 1070182 on the western side of the Pacific Highway

The site is bound in the east by the Coffs Coast Regional Park, in the south by the existing residential subdivision of Sandy Beach, in the west by Graham Road and in the north, generally, by Double Crossing Creek and the southern reaches of Hearn Lake. The Pacific Highway bisects the site [see **Figures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3**].

The proposed development layout for Lot 22 on the eastern side of the Pacific Highway is shown on **Figure 2.4**. The land on the western side of the Pacific Highway is not at this time proposed for development.

### 2.2 Local Environmental Context

The Aboriginal experience of the study area and the physical or archaeological remains of that experience are strongly related to the natural environment. The natural environment of an area influences not only the availability of local resources, such as food and raw materials for stone and wooden artefacts, but also determines the likely presence and/or absence of various archaeological site types. Resource distribution and availability (such as the presence of drinking water, plant and animal foods, raw materials of stone, wood and vegetable fibre used for tool production and maintenance) is strongly influenced by the nature of soils, the composition of vegetation cover and the climatic characteristics of a given region. The location of different site-types (such as middens, open camp-sites, axe grinding grooves, engravings etc.) are strongly influenced by factors such as these, along with a range of other associated features which are specific to different land systems and bedrock geology.

The information which is outlined below is considered to be pertinent to the assessment of site potential or the potential past Aboriginal land-use practices or the relative sensitivity of an area to contain archaeological sites.

The study area is located on the coastal plain in the eastern portion of the Hearn Lake catchment. The western portion of the study area rises to between 10 and 20m a.s.l. and is at the lower foothills of the Coast Range. The eastern portion of the study area comprises

leeward side of the current coastal fore dunes and Hearn's Lake. Apart from the foothills the study area is relatively low lying and is characterised by the plastic mottled clays and sand podzols of the Coffs Harbour and Newport Creek Soil Landscape<sup>2</sup>. The more elevated portions of the study area are underlain by Permian Greywacke, slates and siliceous argolites belonging to the Coramba Beds. Shallow gravelly top soils on orange clays are visible in section in road cuttings, excavation spoil and eroded surfaces.

Hearn's Lake is one of three small estuary systems to the North of the Mid North Coast centre of Coffs Harbour. The neighbouring estuaries are Woolgoolga Lake and Moonee Creek. The estuaries are Marine *Habitat Protection Zones* according to the *Solitary Islands Marine Park Zoning Plan* (2002).

The following table summarises some of the characteristics and features of Hearn's Lake.

Table 2.1 Hearn's Lake

Estuary	Hearn's Lake
Settlement	Sandy Beach located to south of Estuary mouth
Catchment Area	9 kms <sup>2</sup>
Entrance Characteristics	Intermittently/mechanically opened and untrained. Currently closed, causing siltation and grass growth.
Physical Features	Large tracks of steeply sloped terrain dominate upper Lake catchment. Double Crossing Creek, main feeder creek.
Estuary Vegetation	Predominantly Mangrove, large stands of Melaleuca.
Aboriginal Association	Hearn's Lake is well known for estuary fishing, King prawns and crabs. No commercial activities in this estuary. Aboriginal associations relate to these resources and corkwood harvesting.

The mouth of Hearn's Lake is currently closed. The main feeder creek is Double Crossing Creek which drains the Coast Range and its east west trending ridgelines and enters Hearn's Lake in the northern portion of the study area. Overland drainage flow is somewhat restricted by the Pacific Highway in all but peak flows. The storm water from adjacent residential subdivision is piped onto the study area. Two cut drains direct this flow to Hearn's Lake from the eastern side of the Sandy Beach settlement and is directly discharged on the Robinson property of the western side of the Pacific Highway.

<sup>2</sup> Conacher Travers Draft 2004



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The coastal fore dunes, comprising Coffs Coast Regional Park, on the eastern boundary of the study area, have been sand mined. Access to the fore dune mining areas was in part, gained by dirt road through the eastern portion of the study area. This area currently supports a predominantly Banksia, Casuarina and Melaleuca forest, but it has been previously cleared. The trees are regrowth and it has been used as grazing land.<sup>3</sup> A number of dirt roads and tracks traverse the low lying areas in the eastern portion of the study area.

The low lying and poorly drained soils surrounding Hearn's Lake support Melaleuca, and sedges dominate the waterlogged soils immediately fringing the Lake.

The elevated portions of the study area contain forest communities which include Red Mahogany, Swamp Mahogany, Bloodwood, Turpentine and Angophora. In the more elevated portions of the study area on the western side of the Pacific Highway, which is largely cleared for grazing or transmission line easement, these communities are represented in small stands.

Much of the western portion of the study area has been cleared for grazing. Much of the timber is regrowth. Garden beds inclusive of introduced species are associated with the existing residence, farm buildings, yards and sheds in the Robinson property on the higher portions of the site. A few mature trees occur sporadically throughout the cleared areas.

A gravel access road traverses the more elevated areas in the Robinson property and a number of dirt roads traverse the lower lying portions. Other land use disturbances relate to transmission line and dam construction, ploughing and recent scrub clearance.

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<sup>3</sup> Conacher Travers 2004, aerial photographic interpretation.



Figure 2.1 Study Locality

Moonee Beach 1:25,000

## Property Plan

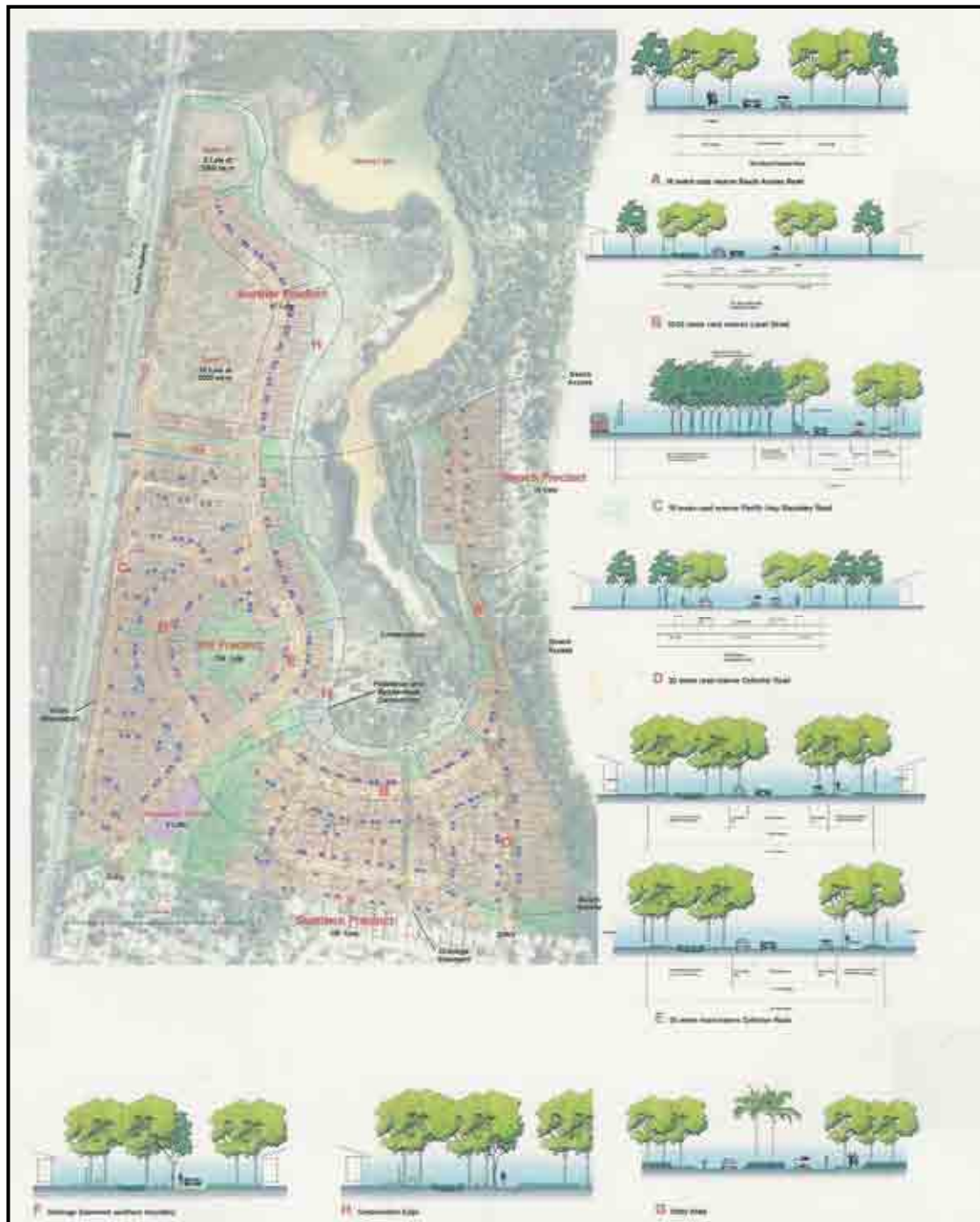


Figure 2.3 Proposed Development of Lot 22 in DP 1070182

Draft Masterplan



**Figure 2.4. Lot 22 in eastern part of study area. View north over western side of Hearn's Lake.**



**Figure 2.5. View to western side of Hearn's Lake showing grass and reed growth along the Lake margins**



**Figure 2.6. View to southeast over elevated grazing land from south western corner of the Robinson land west of Pacific Highway.**



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## 3.0 Aboriginal History

### 3.1 Introduction

The following history is a brief introductory history of the Aboriginal occupation of the Mid North Coast of New South Wales. It is a summary of a review of contemporary and modern historical documentary resources, and from the results of research conducted specifically for Aboriginal heritage projects in this area [Dallas & Tuck 2003, 2004].

This history is presented chronologically, with subdivision based on key localities, events and people. While the history is presented chronologically, a number of broad Aboriginal cultural and social research themes are addressed, including the following:

- Aboriginal history (pre & post-contact)
- European exploration, exploitation and settlement
- Conflict & co-existence
- Disease & displacement
- Cultural survival

### 3.2 Aborigines of the Mid North Coast

The Aboriginal history of the Mid North Coast is remembered by the people, recorded in historical documents, and imprinted on the land. Physical evidence of the Aboriginal occupation and use of the area is found throughout the region. In the vicinity of the broader study area, Aboriginal archaeological sites have been recorded at Red Rock, Station Creek, Corindi, Woolgoolga, Sandy Beach (Bare Bluff), Sapphire Beach and Moonee Beach.<sup>4</sup>

There is considerable debate about the nature, territory and range of the pre-contact Aboriginal language groups in New South Wales. This is largely because by the time colonial diaries, missionaries and proto-anthropologists began making detailed records of Aboriginal people in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Aboriginal populations had been reduced in number and dispersed by European settlement activity, and traditional groups had been broken up and reconfigured.

#### 3.2.1 The Gumbaingirr

There is general agreement that the Aboriginal people who occupied and/or made use of the area adjacent to Coffs Harbour were the *Gumbaingirr*.<sup>5</sup> Within the language group, there were at least four dialectic divisions.

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<sup>4</sup> Cane, 1988: 4

<sup>5</sup> Ryan, 1964; McBride, 1978; Tindale, 1974. Other spellings include *Kumbainari*, *Kumbainggiri*, *Koombangbary*, *Coombangree* and *Coombagoree*

Prior to European settlement, the *Gumbaingirr* appear to have occupied an area that extended from Nambucca Heads in the south, to the Clarence River in the North, and from the coast in the east, to the eastern fall of the Great Dividing Range in the west.<sup>6</sup> The language group featured a range of sub-groups including extended family clans. Of these groups there are several that were referred to as 'tribes' by early European settlers including the Bellingen, Nimboi and Woolgoolga Tribes.<sup>7</sup> The *Gumbaingirr* people and culture have been described and discussed by a number of early Mid North Coast visitors and early anthropologists.<sup>8</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> century Colonial Surveyor Clement Hodgkinson, a Mid North Coast visitor in the 1840s, commented on the impressiveness of the *Gumbaingirr*, describing one Aborigine he had met from Bellinger as:

*'... pre-eminently remarkable from his tallness and Herculean proportions'.<sup>9</sup>*

Later, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, A. C. McDougall, described the *Coombangree* tribesmen near the coast as:

*'a much finer race, but more treacherous than those near the Dividing Range. Some of the men were 6'2" to 6'3" tall and were well proportioned'.<sup>10</sup>*

Neighbouring Aboriginal groups included the *Banjellang* (*Banjalang*) to the north, the *Jeigera* to the northeast, the Yugambal and Nganyawana to the west, and the *Daingati* (*Djagandi*) and *Ngaamba* to the south.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.2.2 Lifestyle and Resources

Prior to European settlement, the varied landscape of the Mid North Coast (which included forests, open grasslands, swamps, rainforests, estuaries, headlands and open beaches) combined with a mild climate to provide an ideal living environment for the *Gumbaingirr* Aborigines. The rich resources of the area, and the way in which they were utilised by Aborigines, are detailed below.

Food resources available to the Aborigines of the Mid North Coast included marsupials, such as Kangaroos and wallabies, birds such as ducks, bush turkeys and emus, and reptiles such as snakes and lizards. A Mrs Bundock who wrote extensively about the early history of the Mid North Coast in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, noted that the Aborigines of the area procured

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<sup>6</sup> Tindale, 1974; Yeates, 1993a: 8

<sup>7</sup> Tindale, 1974

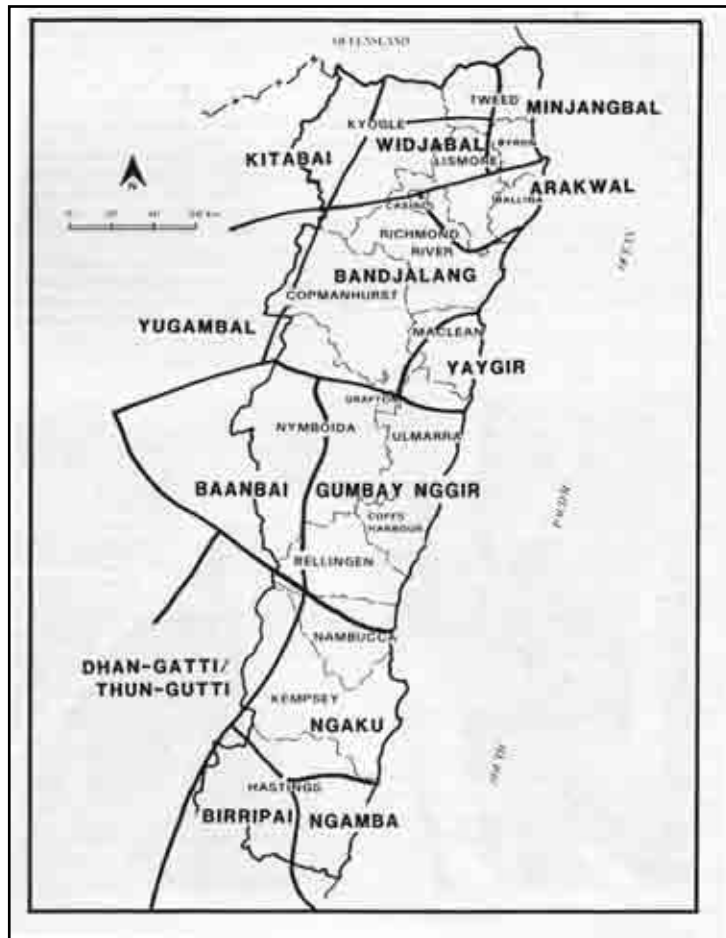
<sup>8</sup> eg: refer Ryan, 1964; Enright 1937-40; Tindale, 1974

<sup>9</sup> Hodgkinson, 1845

<sup>10</sup> McDougall, 1900

<sup>11</sup> Yeates, 1993a: 8; Hagan in Navin Officer, 1996: VI-2





**Figure 3.1: Aboriginal Tribes of the North Coast (NSW NPWS, 1987a: 6)**

possums, kangaroos, wallabies and bandicoots, porcupines (echidnas), snakes, and flying foxes:

*‘...together with any kind of birds they could get; a good deal of fish in the summer and large mussels from the lagoon’.*<sup>12</sup>

Food remains found in midden deposits at Moonee Beach to the south of the study area bear witness to local Aboriginal food gathering and feasting and include shellfish, the bones of kangaroos, red-necked wallabies, dingoes, and wedge tailed shearwaters.<sup>13</sup>

There are several historical accounts of Aborigines hunting marsupials in the Mid North Coast region including the following from MacFarlane in *Aboriginal History No. 4*:

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Ryan, 1964: 136

<sup>13</sup> Rogers, 1977: 16

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*'The kangaroo is extremely fleet of foot and difficult to capture under Aboriginal conditions. The black man is alert but must resort to subtle means in order to entrap the wily marsupial. It is grass fed and can be viewed on the open pastures in droves to upwards of twenty in number. The hunters armed with sticks and boomerangs, arrange to surround the unsuspecting animals from an unseen circle, gradually closing in on the flock till the latter discover that they are in trouble, and bound off alarmed in various directions. In their endeavour to avoid the hunters they must, naturally, pass within shot of the missiles of the darkies who having a broadside target, bring to earth the leaping denizen of the forest'.*

Even though land clearing has removed many of the old growth Eucalypt trees in the immediate study area, ethno-historical records indicate that the Aborigines of the Mid North Coast made use of a variety of tree species for the production of canoes and the manufacture of tools and implements.

- Coastal timber was used for the manufacture of clubs and spears and bark from select Eucalypts was used for the production of canoes and shields.<sup>14</sup>
- Leaf sheaths of the Bangalow Palm were fastened at each end and utilised as water and honey carriers. Known as 'pitchie-ban', these carriers were produced by the women.<sup>15</sup>
- Bark fibres from the Hibiscus trees that grew along creek lines were woven by Aboriginal women to produce fishing nets, which were cast over shoals of mullet.<sup>16</sup>
- Babies were wrapped in soft tea-tree bark and slung in woven fibre bags.

In addition to providing the raw materials needed to produce products that were utilised in everyday life, trees also provided access to the birds and animals that made use of them. Tree climbing using steps gouged by hatchets, allowed aborigines to access a variety of foodstuffs including wild honey, possums, flying foxes koalas and bird eggs.

Charles Grant Tindal, of Ramornie Station on the Clarence River, writing to his mother in England in 1844, noted that the Aborigines of the Mid North Coast:

*'... examine the bark of the trees for the marks of opossum claws. If the marks are fresh they get up the tree by cutting notches with their tomohawks big enough to receive a toe. When they find out the hollow branch where the animal is, they drive it down to the bottom with a long stick'.*<sup>17</sup>

Another method of tree climbing was by means of a pliable vine rope, which allowed the climbers to 'walk' up the trunks of rough barked trees such as Bloodwoods to heights of 80 to 100 feet.<sup>18</sup>

Mark Flanders (pers.comm) Sites Officer with the CH&DLALC has indicated that these toe holds are also found on Paper Bark trees.

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<sup>14</sup> McBride, 1978

<sup>15</sup> Mrs Bundock c1896 quoted in Ryan, 1964: 183

<sup>16</sup> Yeates, 1993a: 10

<sup>17</sup> Letter from Charles Tindal to his mother dated 20 April, 1844 quoted in Ryan, 1964: 130

<sup>18</sup> Yeates, 1993a: 10; Dawson, 1866: 18

The honey of native bees was one of the most sought after tree top foodstuffs. R. L. Dawson provided a description of Aborigines obtaining honey in 1866:

*'At Bellevue, I first saw blacks robbing a bee's nest. One man extracting large pieces of honeycomb from a hole he had cut high up in the trunk of an ironbark tree while his comrades below dexterously caught the luscious morsels on in small sheets of bark as he dropped them from his lofty perch'.<sup>19</sup>*

Honey had many uses, one of which was as a mildly intoxicating drink:

*'The Coombangree tribe make a native drink called Cooloni, out of water, sweetened with honey, mixed with the underbark of the young stringybark tree, mashed into a soft pulp. A grass called by them Chuckie Chuckie, is soaked in this mixture, and then the juice sucked out of it'.<sup>20</sup>*

The forested areas beyond the beach dune ridges also provided Aboriginal people with a range of bush foods including the wild cherry or Lilli pilly. The Lilli pilly bush grew in profusion in semi-shaded gullies particularly on rainforest margins along the coastal plain. The Lilli pilly berry was a nutritious delicacy for coastal aborigines and is reflected in the name Woolgoolga that appears to be a corruption of the Aboriginal word for the berries, *Wei-gul-gas*.<sup>21</sup> There are many species of Lilli pillies, with the cherry red fruit producing variety favoured by Aborigines in the Coffs Harbour region being *Syzygium australis*. Other important bush foods included Bangalow Palms, native grapes, and Roly-poly trees.

The coastal *Gumbaingirr* had access to a variety of fish stocks both in the coastal waters and in the back-dune lagoons and feeder creeks.



**Figure 3.2 Hearnese Lake, Woolgoolga (1929)**

[Source - SLNSW GPO 1 - 15339]

<sup>19</sup> Dawson, 1866: 18

<sup>20</sup> MacDougall in *Science of Man*, 22 August 1900: 117

<sup>21</sup> Yeates, 1993a: 13

Along the coast, fish were speared from canoes and caught in casting nets. One method of net fishing involved a 'drive' along shallow creeks and flats where Aborigines advanced in line abreast to a netted end point.<sup>22</sup> Estuarine and marine resources collected and caught in the area included salmon and mullet, clams, crayfish, oysters, cockles (pippis) and crabs.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the traditional fish catching methods of spear, net and line, there is at least one rare ocean-shore fish trap in the Coffs Harbour LGA. The Arrawarra stone fish trap, to the north of the study area, though modified by Europeans in the mid 1900s, was constructed and used by Aboriginal people up until c1900.

Aboriginal informants have described the operation of this trap suggesting that the trap was baited with shellfish and fish scraps with fish entering from the ocean side, which was then blocked. At low tide, men entered the traps with sticks and nets and retrieved the catch.<sup>24</sup>

In the fresh water reaches of creeks, the poisoning of fish with smart weed, or *Bumbil Bumbil*, was one method used to capture fish. Poisoning involved diving into the water and rubbing bunches of the weed together (his eyes and mouth shut to prevent his own poisoning). Once poisoned, the stricken fish floated to the surface where they could be easily retrieved.<sup>25</sup> Another bush poison used for stupefying fish was a lather produced from the *Cutiga* tree which was utilised in the same way as the *Bumbil Bumbil* poison.

Other resources obtained from freshwater creeks and lagoons included fresh water eels, lobster, mussels and wild fowl.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.2.3 Camping & Seasonal Movements

It has been suggested that seasonal resource dictated migrations were not as necessary, and therefore not as common, on the North Coast as they were in less equable climates. Historic recollections however, indicate that there was at least some seasonal movement and some local relocation in any given year.

Late Autumn and early winter appear to have been the most popular times along the Mid North Coast coastal strip, when the Mullet were running and the native Lilli pillies were fruiting. Favoured camping grounds appear to have been along the numerous creeks throughout the region, with nearby areas utilised as burial sites.<sup>27</sup> One author has mentioned that:

*'Up river Blacks occasionally made winter month visits to the coast in the vicinity of Red Rock where they spent there time quietly till the spring denoted that return to the old haunts was desirable.'*<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Yeates, 1993a: 12

<sup>23</sup> Hodgkinson in Ryan, 1964: 142

<sup>24</sup> Yeates, 1993a: 13. The Arrawarra fish traps are identified in the Coffs Harbour LEP (2000) as an item of *regional* heritage significance.

<sup>25</sup> Smart wee or *Bumbil Bumbil* is *Polygonum hydropiper*; *Science of Man*, 22 April 1901: 46

<sup>26</sup> Hodgkinson in Ryan, 1964: 142

<sup>27</sup> Yeates, 1993: 14

<sup>28</sup> MacFarlane in Ryan, 1964: 156

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The *Bagawa* tribe, who were based in the Bucca Creek-Nana Glen area, are reported to have spent the winter months on the coast around Moonee, returning to the upland reaches in the summer.<sup>29</sup>

It has been suggested that, whether inland in summer or on the coast in winter, Aboriginal camps on the Mid North Coast were apparently relocated approximately monthly to allow the resting of favoured sites and to take advantage of different foodstuffs.<sup>30</sup> The type of accommodation depended on location and season. Temporary camps appear to have been fairly rough and ready as MacFarlane noted that:

*'The... Aborigines... were a gregarious race, and we found them in tribal groups, camped usually in dense or sheltered scrub clumps, their camps merely low lean-to or an arched projection of bark supported on slender brushwood rods or twigs, just sufficient to accommodate a few occupants from the rigours of the weather. The roofing was generally the light outer bark of the small leafed tea-tree, quite rain proof and texture akin to delicate paper. It also served for the camp flooring and was immune from damp'.<sup>31</sup>*

In contrast to the temporary camps, in some areas there were relatively significant and semi-permanent settlements witnessed, such as the 'villages' on the Clarence River, which featured semi-circular bark huts and lean-tos.<sup>32</sup> Captain Perry, who anchored off the North Beach at the mouth of the Clarence River from 20-27 May 1839 recorded Aborigines huddled in a 'village' at the head of the estuary where they had 'considerable command of fishing'.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.2.4 Ceremony & Mythology

Though there are many sites along the Mid North Coast and in the Coffs Harbour area that have great spiritual significance to the Aboriginal Community, the ceremonies, folklore and mythology of the *Gumbaingirr* are generally not well understood.

Having said this, we do know that there are a number of highly significant Aboriginal places in the Coffs area including Muttonbird Island (associated with a dreamtime story of the moon falling into the seas), South Headland (Corambirra Point – an increase site for the Red-browed finch), Korora Bay (a Black goanna increase site), Macauley's Headland (Gumgalia mythological site) and St Mary's Waterhole (a women's site associated with pregnancy).<sup>34</sup>

### 3.2.5 Material Culture

Most of the artefacts which reflect past Aboriginal use of the area and survive in the archaeological record are stone tools, stone being the most durable of the materials used by Aboriginal people and therefore the most likely to survive.

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<sup>29</sup> Holder, 1984: 20

<sup>30</sup> R. L. Dawson in Ryan, 1964: 155

<sup>31</sup> MacFarlane in Ryan, 1964: 154

<sup>32</sup> Ryan, 1964

<sup>33</sup> *Clarence River Historical Records*, Volume 1: 209

<sup>34</sup> Yeates, 1993: 14-15; NSW NPWS, 1987a: 20; Dallas & Kelly, 1994: 7

Aboriginal stone artefacts have been collected in the district since early settlement by interested amateurs and have been recorded by archaeologists during survey and excavation over the last 30 years or so. In the vicinity of the study area, stone artefacts have been recorded at numerous locations including major stone-working sites at Look-At-Me-Now Headland at the north end of Moonee Beach.

Commissioner Fry, sent to the North Coast by the Colonial administration in 1841, commented on the relatively simple tool kit of the Mid North Coast Aborigines attributing this to the relatively simple means by which the main foods, fish and honey, were obtained. The chief stone implements in the local tool kit included axe heads and knives fashioned from suitably shaped water worn stones from local creeks and shorelines.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.3 The Arrival of Europeans and Early Settlement

Captain James Cook was possibly the first European to sight the Coffs Harbour area of the Mid North Coast. Cook sailed along the Mid North Coast on 15 May 1770 noting the '*small rocky islands between us and the land*' and naming the Solitary islands.<sup>36</sup> Escaped convicts Mary and William Bryant later recorded taking refuge on offshore Muttonbird Island in 1791.

Perhaps the earliest recording of Aborigines on the Mid North Coast was at Yamba by Matthew Flinders on 11 July 1799. Flinders noted in his journal an Aboriginal village on the southern headland, populated by Aborigines who were the 'finest' he had seen.<sup>37</sup>

The major river systems of the Mid North Coast, such as the Clarence and Richmond, attracted early European settler interest. Conversely, the absence of a major river in the Coffs Harbour area served to postpone European interest and settlement in the vicinity of the study area. The Coffs area was not settled until the late 1840s.

The first mid North Coast town to be established was at Grafton, which was well situated on the Clarence River. As a consequence, it is likely that the Aboriginal people of the Coffs area fared somewhat better than those nearer the major settlement areas whose populations were decimated by introduced European diseases and dislocated by early European settlement activity.

Among the first Europeans to investigate and survey the greater Coffs Harbour area was Surveyor Clement Hodgkinson who made several trips to the district in the 1840s, including a visit to Bellinger in 1842. Hodgkinson brought several *Yarrahappinni* Aborigines with him to facilitate access through the country of the Bellinger Aborigines. Armed with his Aboriginal companions and gifts of tobacco, Hodgkinson conducted successful reconnaissance along the Bellinger River, meeting groups of local Aborigines including 'Belligen Billy', and passing through the area 'without difficulty'.<sup>38</sup> Hodgkinson was interested in the Aboriginal people he

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<sup>35</sup> McBryde, 1978

<sup>36</sup> Yeates, 1993a

<sup>37</sup> Flinders, 1799.

<sup>38</sup>

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encountered, and during his 1842 visit recorded that in the vicinity of the Bellinger River population numbers at that time approached 300. By 1845, after further work, Hodgkinson recorded that the *Gumbaingirr* people numbered between 1200 and 1500 in total.

The subsequent incursion of the Europeans who followed, as the Mid North Coast was opened up, was not so peaceable and their arrival heralded a new era of tense relations between Europeans and Aborigines in the region.

Timber getters had begun to ply the major rivers of the Mid North Coast from the 1840s, and by the 1850s were well established on Nambucca and Bellinger Rivers. There was at least some cedar getting at Coffs Creek by Walter Harvey and George Tucker in 1865.<sup>39</sup> The camp set up by Harvey and Tucker is one of the earliest known semi-permanent settlements in the Coffs Harbour area.<sup>40</sup> Timber getters often utilised the services of Aboriginal bushmen who had the knowledge and skills to rapidly identify Cedar trees. R. L Dawson noted:

*'When searching for cedar in the dense brush of the Richmond we always took a blackfellow with us, his bushcraft and keen vision enabling him to find the valuable trees much more quickly than we ourselves could'.<sup>41</sup>*

It is perhaps not surprising that on the Mid North Coast by the 1850s, conflict had arisen between timber getters and the Aborigines whose lands they were exploiting, and reports of several 'outrages' against sawyers, committed by regional Aborigines, began to arise.<sup>42</sup> It is likely that, as was the case elsewhere, much of the so-called atrocities attributed to the Aborigines were responses to the disturbance to their lands and the poor treatment that they, (particularly the women), received at the hands of the timber getters.

The passing of the Robertson Land Act (1861) led to the break up of many large pastoral holdings throughout NSW and encouraged the arrival and spread of free settlers. Among the first places to be settled along the Mid North Coast after the passing of the Act were the prime agricultural and grazing areas, headlands, river frontages and fertile valleys. These were similarly the most sought after places of the Aboriginal inhabitants and this competition for land and resources led to additional tensions between new European settlers and the traditional owners.

The effects of closer settlement on the Aboriginal people of the Mid North Coast from the 1860s were devastating. The establishment of towns and the clearing and fencing of rural properties altered traditional movements of Aboriginal groups and Aboriginal people were forced to the fringes of the areas being settled. In addition, Aboriginal populations were devastated and greatly diminished by the introduction of European diseases. In the vicinity of

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<sup>39</sup> Coffs Harbour Historical Society Inc, 2001: 7

<sup>40</sup> Coffs Harbour Shire Council, 1987: 5

<sup>41</sup> Dawson c1866: 28

<sup>42</sup> Yeates, 1993a: 16



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Coffs Harbour, it has been suggested that European disease, probably measles, killed large numbers of local Aborigines after the commencement of closer settlement.<sup>43</sup>

The regional hostilities had eased by the late 1800s and a new era of European-Aboriginal relations had commenced. Devastated by the aforementioned dislocation and depopulation due to small pox, neglect and violence against them, and with reduced access to traditional food resources and reserves, Aboriginal groups became more dependant on Europeans to provide them with food, clothing, shelter and employment.<sup>44</sup>

Increased dependence on Europeans and the trappings of white culture is demonstrated in a number of historical accounts that recollect the change in traditional aboriginal culture and accoutrements. MacFarlane wrote that:

*'The quart pot (diggan diggan) speedily superseded the wood kooliman as a water carrying receptacle'.<sup>45</sup>*

Similarly, regional historian Mrs Bundock, writing in c1896 noted:

*'... amongst the work done by women was the making of water vessels, called 'pitchie-ban. They were made of the sheath of the leaf stalk of the Bangalow Palm and held about half a bucket if a large one. The young women cannot make or do any of the things their mothers did. I asked a young woman lately to make me some 'pitchies'. She said 'I'll tell my mother', and when I said 'don't be lazy, make them yourself,' she laughed and answered – 'Never I been make 'em always tin can'.<sup>46</sup>*

She further added that:

*'The young men too, do not climb or uses spear as their fathers did. They work spasmodically on the stations and like riding and work amongst the cattle; but drink and gambling are their curses and they will gamble away their clothes and blankets in the depths of winter'.<sup>47</sup>*

*'Many of the early settlers on this river (the Clarence) were cedar getters, and they found that the blacks were constantly watching them from the surrounding scrub and would rush and seize their axes if they left them even a few yards away, taking the chance of a shot from the exasperated owner of the disappearing tool'.<sup>48</sup>*

While traditional lifestyles continued in some or the more remoter areas of the Mid North Coast, many remnant bands of Aborigines began to congregate on the fringes of white settlement they were afforded access to food, blankets &c and where they sought some autonomy and protection. Aboriginal people worked as labourers, 'usefuls', servants, and as nursemaids to the children of settlers in the 1800s, other Aboriginal people engaged in jobs such as bullock mustering, erecting fences and clearing selections.<sup>49</sup> Others, as skilled

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<sup>43</sup> England, 1978

<sup>44</sup> Kohen, 1985

<sup>45</sup> MacFarlane in Ryan, 1964: 183

<sup>46</sup> Bundock, 1896

<sup>47</sup> Bundock in Ryan, 1964: 184

<sup>48</sup> MacFarlane in Ryan, 1964: 183

<sup>49</sup> England, 1978

bushmen and exceptional horsemen, worked with the district police forces as Black trackers, pursuing bushrangers and runaways.<sup>50</sup> Generally, work was not paid but rather Aborigines received rations of flour, sugar, tobacco and rum. Not surprisingly, this change in dietary habits from an array of nutritious bush foods to a limited sugar and starch rich diet contributed to the general decline in Aboriginal health and well being.<sup>51</sup>

Despite many Aborigines engaging with European settlers in the late 1800s, some aspects of traditional life, including ceremonial celebrations and tribal conflicts continued in the region well into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A tribal conflict at North Beach in Coffs Harbour, between around 1,700 Clarence and Macleay district Aborigines was recorded in the late 1800s.<sup>52</sup> Despite more cordial Aboriginal and white relations towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were episodes of disturbing violence on occasion that harkened back to the tumultuous times in the c1860s. A massacre of Corindi area *Gumbaingirr* Aborigines occurred at Red Rock in the late 1800s.<sup>53</sup>

### ***The Moonee/Woolgoolga Areas***

The European settlement of the area north of Coffs Harbour in the vicinity of the study area was precipitated by two events in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Firstly, the release of land for conditional purchase on the coast in the 'Parish of Moonee' (proclaimed 1881), and secondly, the discovery of gold in the Orara Goldfields, to the west and northwest of the study area.

With the release of land in the Parish of Moonee in 1881, people began to move into the area north of Coffs Harbour, with a significant proportion moving from the already established Bellinger and Clarence River Districts. Generally the families that moved into the Moonee Parish were engaged in farming and agriculture, or the timber trade, and included such names as the Sares, Pullmans, Campbells, Jordans, Riecks and Skinners. Of these some of the better known include James Skinner who purchased 100 acres to the immediate west of Look-at-me-now Headland, and engaged in farming and growing cane, and Herman Rieck who established a farm at what became Sapphire.

The village of Woolgoolga, originally known as Woogoolga was officially gazetted in 1888. The name was changed to in 1966. By the end of the 19th century timber milling and the cutting of cedar were important in the area although Woolgoolga was never a major timber milling centre. Apart from the timber activity there were a number of attempts to farm a variety of crops. By the 1890s there was a jetty near the town which was being used by the local sawmills and there was some sugar farming in area. The area proved unsatisfactory for sugar cane. By the turn of the century bananas were being grown but it was not until around the 1930s that they were grown with any success. Further north are the beach side settlements of Mullaway, Arrawarra, Corindi Beach and Red Rock, all of which have strong cultural associations for the contemporary Aboriginal community.

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<sup>50</sup> Yeates, 1993a: 17

<sup>51</sup> Dr Rudolf Poch in McBryde, 1978: 267-280

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Yeates, 1993a: 16

<sup>53</sup> Kijas, 2001: 30; Cane, 1988

At the time when settlement was being established in the Moonee area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was still a considerable Aboriginal population in the area. Benjamin Holder, descendant of James Skinner, noted in his history of the Moonee Creek Settlement, that:

*'There quite a number of were a number of Aboriginals camping in the Moonee area in those early days, and the majority of them were quiet and shy. The only times they came near the settlement was when they came to ask for flour, tobacco or tea. Latter, about a dozen or so used to help out on the farm. The Aboriginals had day shelters over near the sand dunes on the north end of Moonee Beach. Their main camps were back towards the hills. One camp was near where the Coffs Harbour gun club now is, which is typical of the low hills and slopes used for the main camps'.<sup>54</sup>*

In 1885/86, the Aboriginal campsite near the Coffs Harbour Gun Club was the scene of 'a small conflict' between two opposing Aboriginal groups. One of the tribesmen, a Tommy Two-head, was wounded and taken in by the Skinners during the skirmish. Tommy died two days after the battle and was buried on the Skinners property, just south of the Moonee Creek sawmill. At around the same year, the Skinners also witnessed a corroboree at the Gun Club site that was followed by an initiation of two young tribesman at a Bora ground, 'high on a hill approximately half a mile west of the "Emerald Beach Water Tower"'.<sup>55</sup>

Among the Aborigines who frequented the Moonee area and were remembered by the Skinner family was an elder known as *Billy of Bagawa*. Holder noted:

*'Billy had a brass ring off a ship, and Gabriel Skinner fastened a small chain to it, and Billy was proud to wear it on display'.<sup>56</sup>*

The Cedar industry slowed in the 1880s and the growth of cash crops such as sugarcane and bananas, which had been grown on the Mid North Coast with varying success since the c1860s, became more important to the communities in the vicinity of Coffs Harbour. Aboriginal people, along with Chinese and Punjabi labourers, contributed significantly to the operation of these industries, collectively supplying cheap, seasonal labour. It was reported in 21 January 1886, for example that:

*'At Mr Small's Mill, a great mob of blacks are busy stripping the cane...and work in connection with the mill is in full swing'.<sup>57</sup>*

Other rural industries that Aboriginal people gained employment in were tomato and potato picking as well as railway construction and the gold mining industry.<sup>58</sup> For example, local Aborigines supplied wild bees honey sourced from the forests surrounding the gold fields.<sup>59</sup>

The Government Census of 1891 informs us that there were 299 people living east of the range at that time – and one Aborigine. The census indicates that this person lived at Coffs

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<sup>54</sup> Holder, 1984: 20

<sup>55</sup> Holder, 1984: 21

<sup>56</sup> Holder, 1984: 21

<sup>57</sup> Quote from the *Clarence & Richmond River Examiner* in Yeates, 1993a: 36

<sup>58</sup> Kijas, 2001: 30

<sup>59</sup> England, 1979: 17

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Creek with a Mr Alfred Toole.<sup>60</sup> This is clearly not accurate picture of the Aboriginal population at the time, as around Coffs (as was the case in many towns), disposed Aborigines had established rough camps on the outskirts of town.<sup>61</sup> Camps established in the vicinity of Coffs Harbour included one on the south bank of Coffs Creek (near the current swimming pool) and another on the south side of the harbour near the current Deep Sea Fishermen's Club.

Government controlled reserves were also established, for example, on the shores of Back Creek, an arm of the Bellinger, known as the Yellow Rock Reserve. Other missions and reserves established for *Gumbaingirr* people after 1883 included the Bellbrook Reserve (c1883), Burnt Bridge (c1898) and Nymboida (c1910).<sup>62</sup> Generally Aboriginal Reserves were not pleasant places to live and many people sought work and moved away from such reserves to less controlled areas. In addition to the reserves, some Aboriginal groups and families established their own settlements such as those set up at Urunga, Bellingen, Red Rock, Corindi and Nambucca.<sup>63</sup>

### 3.4 Aborigines in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Today

Aboriginal people lived in a variety of contexts on the Mid North Coast in the early twentieth century. Some lived and worked amongst the white community, some lived on unofficial farms and camps, and others lived on the official reserves and missions.

After WWI however, soldier settlers (supported by the Lands Department), took up much of the successful farmland in the region resulting in the further dislocation of Aboriginal people. Soldier settlement, which did not extend to Aboriginal servicemen, coupled with other social factors such as the depression, ensured that Aboriginal people were encouraged, through forced migration in many instances, to move to, and concentrate on, the official reserves. In 1837 for instance, Aborigines at Urunga were forced onto trucks and relocated to the Burnt Bridge Reserve north of Kempsey.<sup>64</sup>

This situation changed after WWII however, when a buoyant economy and unprecedented growth allowed for Aboriginal people to leave the missions and reserves and move back into the major regional towns. The Coffs Harbour District was an attractive place for Aboriginal people because the town itself had never been a place of forced confinement, Aboriginal people had maintained their association with the place and there was work available there.

During the mid 1900s, Aborigines were working in the Coffs District in a variety of occupations.

Aboriginal archaeologist and long time district resident Ron Herron, mentioned in a 1999 interview:

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<sup>60</sup> Census, 5 April 1891 - District No. 7: Macleay; Sub-District: Fernmount; Counties of Raleigh & Fitzroy.

<sup>61</sup> Yeates, 1993a: 17

<sup>62</sup> NSW Department of Planning, 1989a: 22

<sup>63</sup> NSW Department of Planning, 1989a: 22; Kijas, 2001: 30

<sup>64</sup> Kijas, 2001: 29

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*'In the area around Coffs – bananas was the main thing. You had Aboriginal people working in the timber mills. The odd aboriginal man would work hauling mullet with a white fisherman who had a license. Council often employed a few aboriginal people- road works or whatever.'*<sup>65</sup>

Gumbaingirr elders Mr Kenny Craig, whose father had managed a banana farm, and Mr Gerald Flanders have also referred to another industry that they and other local Aboriginal people were involved in, this being the collection of *corkwood*, under license in the 1960s. Corkwood was used in a variety of pharmaceuticals and was sourced in a number of areas along the coast. After local collection, in Hessian bags, which were often weighted to get a better price for the yield, the young shoots and leaves of the corkwood was sent to Dorrigo for processing.<sup>66</sup>

Some of the Aboriginal workers and their families lived in the general community while others lived in houses provided by the Government. By the 1950s the Aboriginal Welfare Board had built eight houses for Aboriginal families in Coffs Harbour at the corner of Woolgoolga Road and Arthur Street. By 1956 there were 60 people living in the eight houses which were locally known as the 'the mission' and more families still living at a temporary establishment on Crown Reserve land in Duke Street.<sup>67</sup>

Gumbaingirr Aboriginal people with an association or ancestral connection with the Coffs Harbour area continue to live and work in the Coffs Harbour district today. Other Aboriginal people who have an association with the area have moved to the district from elsewhere.

Recent ABS census data indicate that the current population within the Coffs Harbour Region who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is around 32,529 people. This amounts to around a 30% increase in the indigenous population since the last census in 1996.

The reason for the increased figures is difficult to determine but probably involves a combination of inward migration to the region, 'natural increase' (births), a greater willingness for people to identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander, and regional residents discovering their Aboriginality in the post-Stolen Generations Inquiry environment.

Located 10 km north of Woolgoolga, at 170 Red Rock Rd, Corindi Beach, is the Yarrawarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre, established by the Gumbaingirr tribe who are the traditional inhabitants of the area. The complex is essentially a conference centre, albeit with a unique twist. There is a range of activities available for visitors (a minimum of five people is preferred), including a bush-tucker walk, a visit to local Aboriginal sites, basket-making, a history walk (through ancient middens, ochre quarries, campsites, stone and tool workshops, mythological and ceremonial sites), a beach walk in the Solitary Islands Marine Park, screen printing, clay modelling, a plantation tour, Gumbaingirr language basics, organic bush-tucker tastings and meals at the bush-tucker cafe, a display of Aboriginal artefacts, arts, crafts,

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<sup>65</sup> Interview with Ron Herron, Nimbin 18 April 1999 in Kijas, 2001: 32

<sup>66</sup> Kenny Craig, pers. comm. 9 July 2003

<sup>67</sup> Yeates, 1993b: 104-107

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books and CDs, a nursery of medicinal plants, an undercover picnic-barbeque area and a camping ground with amenities. Special packages are available for school groups.

After a long struggle for recognition and rights, the Coffs Harbour regional Aboriginal community, like similar communities along the Mid North Coast, is a vibrant and growing community represented and promoted by community elders, the Local Aboriginal Land Council, the Galambila Aboriginal Health Service and the Yarrawarra Aboriginal cultural Centre.

## 4.0 Aboriginal Archaeological Context

### 4.1 Introduction

Evidence of Aboriginal usage of the area before the arrival of Europeans is documented mostly through Aboriginal oral tradition and the numerous recorded archaeological sites. These include mythological, ceremonial and burial sites, open campsites, coastal middens, and scarred trees. The way that people used these sites can be partly understood through archaeological research, combined with Aboriginal oral tradition and the historical records of early Europeans in the area. It is clear that not all campsites were used in the same way. For example, middens range from enormous multi-occupation sites used sporadically or continuously through over a thousand years, to small campsites consisting of one or two shellfish species that may have been the result of one isolated occupation. Sites also vary in their content of animal, fish and bird bone and the types of stone artefacts represented. Burials were obviously not random, but often appear to have been within open sand bodies and in some middens.

This section provides a discussion of the recorded Aboriginal sites in the region.

### 4.2 Regional Archaeology

Archaeological research has been carried out in the northern rivers district of N.S.W. for a number of decades, however there have been relatively few systematic and extensive surveys since the conclusion of McBryde's regional study<sup>68</sup>. The earliest date on an Aboriginal occupation site in the region is 6,400BP from the Seelands Rockshelter near Grafton which was excavated by McBryde. The last period of sea level fluctuations ended c.6,000 years ago. Prior to this the mouth of the Clarence, for example, would have been around 20km east of the present coast<sup>69</sup>. Mounded midden on the Lower Macleay has been dated near to this time at 5,100BP while on the Clarence McBryde dated extensive midden in terraces at Woombah to 3,260BP<sup>70</sup>.

Byrne<sup>71</sup> reviewed the archaeological work undertaken in the northern region of NSW and within the Ulmarra Shire and compared this area with other coastal areas. Dealing with the floodplain areas of the Clarence he concluded that there is little factual basis for reconstructing land use patterns in these areas. He warns that there is a danger of overestimating the importance of the highly productive oyster beds in the lower estuaries at the expense of the food resources in the hinterland coastal ranges or upper floodplains. The latter would have included bird and small terrestrial animals and sites associated with their exploitation, such as open camp sites, are less visible than the midden mounds along the

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<sup>68</sup> McBryde 1974, see also below)

<sup>69</sup> Byrne 1986:36

<sup>70</sup> McBryde 1982

<sup>71</sup> Byrne 1989 and 1985 respectively



lower estuaries. Whereas in other parts of NSW the most commonly recorded site type is an open camp site this type of site is relatively rare in the northern region<sup>72</sup>. Byrne attributes this to the lack of systematic site surveys and not a real scarcity of such sites. This has been borne out by the increasing number of open occupation sites being recorded during more recent systematic archaeological survey, and is particularly so for the Coffs Harbour region. Moreover, the well known large estuarine middens at the coastal end of the floodplain at Woombah on the Clarence or at Ballina on the Richmond actually represent fairly minor amounts of food over the period that each of these sites have been calculated to have been occupied [e.g. McBryde<sup>73</sup> estimates the Woombah midden which contained an estimated 74,000kg of oyster meat would have only sustained a group of 24 people for a few days a year over the 2,900 years the site is calculated to have been occupied]. McBryde suggests fish and other vertebrates played a more important role in the diet than shellfish.

In the Coffs Harbour Region the majority of recorded sites are in fact open occupation sites consisting of stone artefact scatters, whereas the shell midden deposits tend to be less extensive or deep being clustered along the mouths of creeks draining the relatively proximate coastal ranges or small pipi middens along the coastal beaches. Terrestrial resources of the littoral rainforests fringing this part of the coast would also have been within easy reach. Along the coastal strip between Coffs Harbour and the Clarence River the majority of sites are open occupation sites containing artefact scatters. The artefact scatters tend to be found on elevated ground above swamplands and marsh along the creeks and estuaries. The middens tend to be located close to the ocean often along the fore dunes, but also in association with freshwater resources.

Models of Aboriginal settlement patterns have tended to reflect this coastal focus of archaeological work. McBryde<sup>74</sup> postulated a seasonal movement of groups, occupied in winter hunting in the foothills of the hinterlands and in spring and summer fishing and collecting shellfish on the coast and estuaries when these resources were at their seasonal best. Belshaw<sup>75</sup> argued for a semi-settled pattern of Aboriginal occupation in the northern rivers region. Coleman<sup>76</sup> argued that most movement would have been parallel to the coast and they involved large groups. The movements were for ceremonial purposes or for the settlement of disputes rather than as McBryde and Belshaw thought, to take advantage of the seasonal abundance of foods. Coleman sees the coastal alignment of tribal territories, which were relatively small and densely settled, as forming a block to movement by groups inhabiting the inland-foothills territory. In a review of ethnographic material Coleman found that observed movements appeared to be parallel to the coast. These movements involved large groups of people, but were made to attend gatherings for fighting, initiation etc, rather than for the seasonal exploitation of food resources. It has also been argued by Dallas &

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<sup>72</sup> Byrne 1989

<sup>73</sup> McBryde 1982

<sup>74</sup> McBryde 1976

<sup>75</sup> Belshaw 1978

<sup>76</sup> Coleman 1980

Morris<sup>77</sup> that the emphasis given to seasonal factors and food resources as the cause of Aboriginal mobility has somewhat overshadowed the significance of ceremonial and ritual life on the north coast as an equally compelling source of population movement. Such an emphasis has diminished the extensive interaction between groups in terms of ceremonies, rituals and marriage. Throughout Aboriginal Australia, ritual life provided a central feature of existence and identity. The initiation ceremonies for young men, for example, provided the vehicle for them to gain the secret/sacred knowledge of the truth about tribal mythology and cultural traditions.

The evidence of Mathews gathered in the late 19th century provides us with some detail of the richness of ceremonial life on the mid-north coast. He repeatedly records that once it was decided to hold an initiation ceremony messengers would be sent out to consult all the neighbouring tribal groups about where and when it should be held and who should attend and participate (See Mathews, Bandjalang (1897: 29), Gumbaingirr (1898: 55) and Dhan-gadi (1900/01:35) cited in Dallas & Morris 1994). Elaborate procedures and protocols surrounded the arrival of the different contingents.

There have been few large scale systematic surveys in the region. Most have been small area surveys, conducted primarily on the coastal plain as part of environmental review. Site location patterns suggested by these surveys tend to support the proposition that the rivers and coastal plain was the focus of Aboriginal occupation. Occupation of the forested hinterland is not as well understood. Bowdler<sup>78</sup>, in a study of Aboriginal sites on the Crown timber lands of the north coast, found that there were relatively few sites recorded in the forest environment. This was interpreted to be the result of minimal archaeological investigation, rather than an actual low site density in forest lands. Recent surveys of the forests have located a wide range of site types and this interpretation was confirmed by the results of a survey carried out by Navin and Officer in 1989. Over fifty sites [at a frequency of one site every 1.6km on a straight line transect] were located in forested hinterland areas from Coffs Harbour to Grafton, including open artefact scatters, shelter art sites and a silcrete quarry<sup>79</sup>. They identified areas along stream flats and on elevated ground above wetlands or the floodplains to be the most archaeologically sensitive. There was also a tendency for sites to be located on flat areas of ridgelines or spurs.

Rich<sup>80</sup> however, investigating the Coffs Harbour water supply augmentation in the Bellinger and the Bobo rivers located no sites and argued that the negative results suggested that the coastal ranges and valley systems may not have been occupied permanently but on a sporadic basis.

Archaeological studies have also been conducted by a number of people within an academic research framework. McBryde<sup>81</sup> produced the first regional study of Aboriginal prehistory (in

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<sup>77</sup> Dallas & Morris 1994

<sup>78</sup> Bowdler 1983

<sup>79</sup> Navin & Officer 1989

<sup>80</sup> Rich 1989

<sup>81</sup> McBryde 1974

Australia) in the Clarence valley. In this study a range of sites were investigated. These included middens, quarry sites and a series of rock shelter sites along the Clarence River and its tributaries.

A rock shelter site at Seelands, on the south side of the Clarence near Grafton, yielded radio-carbon dates for the basal deposits to 6400±300 B.P. This remains the oldest evidence of human occupation so far located on the northern N.S.W. coast. The site contained large numbers of stone artefacts. These reflected a change in stone technology from an early core and flake tradition, dominated by uniface pebble tools in the lower levels of the deposit, to a variety of smaller artefacts such as backed blades and edge ground tools in the succeeding levels. McBryde considered the site to be a representation of an inland hunting site which was probably occupied in winter by people who moved there from summer camps on the coast. This model has been since been challenged (see above). McBryde's investigation of a rock shelter at Blaxlands Flat, some 25 kilometres south of Grafton yielded dates of between 1,030 B.P. and 1,280 B.P. from wood and charcoal fragments associated with a number of Aboriginal burials located in the shelter.

In the late 1970's McBryde<sup>82</sup> co-ordinated a number of investigations of the northern river systems. Byrne's 1983 report to the N.S.W. National Parks and Wildlife Service (N.P.W.S.) on the 'Aboriginal Archaeology of North East N.S.W.' contains a synthesis of information pertaining to the region. This report has recently been published in booklet form by the Dept. of Planning, Grafton (Dept of Planning: 1989).

Several surveys by N.P.W.S. staff<sup>83</sup> have been carried out in the northern rivers region. These were primarily concerned with recording sites of traditional significance to local Aboriginal groups, such as ceremonial and mythological sites. A number of increase sites in the area from Coffs Harbour south to South West Rocks were also recorded during the course of these surveys. The surveys also recorded a number of secular sites.

A number of surveys and studies have been carried out in the region within a commercial contracting framework. These studies have included surveys of coastal areas<sup>84</sup> and inland areas<sup>85</sup> (see Section 6.0 for further references).

There is a rich and sustained *Gumbaingirr* history and cultural association over the wider region. For example, a number of natural mythological sites have been recorded/reported in the Coffs Harbour region. These include a Bat Increase Site near Hungry Head, a Stingray Increase Site on the northern side of the Bellinger River, a Dingo Increase Site on Mt. Coramba and a Black Goanna Increase Site near Kororo. Look-At-Me-Now Headland north of Moonee Beach is also considered to be an important mythological site associated with the Ulitarra story. Macauleys Headland is also associated with important myths.

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<sup>82</sup> McBryde 1978

<sup>83</sup> Kelly and Donovan 1976 & Donnelly and Morris 1979

<sup>84</sup> Callaghan 1982; Brayshaw 1987; Brayshaw & Byrne 1993; Byrne 1985; 1988; Dallas & Kelly 1994; Dallas & Morris 1994; Godwin 1982, 1984, 1987a; Navin 1990; Rich 1989a.

<sup>85</sup> Godwin 1986, 1987b; Dallas & Watts 1997; Navin & Officer 1989; Navin & Officer 1990; Navin Officer 1996; Navin & Cundy 1990; Rich 1989b, 1989c.

Two bora/ceremonial grounds are known to have existed in the region. The Urunga bora ground **NPWS Site # 22-1-8**, recorded by Creamer and Kelly in 1974, was located some 'three miles north/west of the old mission'. The mission being a large historic Aboriginal camping ground **NPWS Site # 22-1-39** spread over 4ha. in an area which is now an Army Barracks and the Coffs Harbour Swimming Pool. Another bora ground **NPWS Site # 22-1-27** was located approximately 20km south of Coffs Harbour. Mr. Dick Kelly<sup>86</sup>, a local Aborigine, described the site as consisting of two rings, one mounded and about 50cm high, and another 'meal' ring, where the initiates waited, 500m due east of the main ring. This site is now destroyed. Some of these sites have subsequently been salvaged or destroyed or are currently under further investigation.

The Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation recently undertook monitoring works for the Moonee Beach Sewerage Scheme and recorded a number of middens and open camp sites to the north of the present study area.

Two carved trees **NPWS Site # 22-1-8** were reported in rainforest approximately 15km south-east of Coffs Harbour, in what is now Pine Creek State Forest. Both the trees are known to have been carved in the early 1900's and were possibly associated with a 'keppara' or bora ground. These sites are no longer locatable and have probably been destroyed. Another carved tree, a bloodwood, **NPWS Site # 21-6-103** is/was located on a ridge in the Nambucca State Forest. Such sites are now very rare and a more likely occurrence is scarred trees. A scarred tree **NPWS Site # 22-1-53** is located on Moonee Creek near the township.

To date, a number of archaeological studies have been carried out in the Moonee area. McBryde<sup>87</sup> carried out an investigation of **NPWS Site # 22-1-19** [Moonee Beach 1 site] a 'tool factory' and midden site located in a sand dune blowout in the vicinity of Look-At-Me-Now Headland. It was probably the most extensive site of its type in the region. McBryde<sup>88</sup> described the site as extending for a quarter of a mile south along the sand dunes behind the beach. Originally recorded by North<sup>89</sup>, it was described as being roughly 6 acres in extent, being 400yds x 70yds. Artefact bearing midden deposits were located in wind-eroded high dunes immediately behind the lower beach fore dune. This site was the southern of two such sites, the other being **NPWS Site # 22-1-26** on the next headland to the north. The site had been vandalised by amateur collectors over many years [Unsystematic collections are illustrated in **Figures 3.2** and **3.3**] and was ultimately destroyed by sand-mining activities. The collections by North and by members of the Coffs Harbour Historical Society have been deposited in the South Australian Museum.

McBryde undertook a systematic sample collection in 1965 and 1967 and again in 1972 immediately prior to sand mining. The collections are in the Australian Museum. She aimed for a representative sample but noted, during the 1967 collection, the absence of edge-ground

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<sup>86</sup> cited in Navin 1991

<sup>87</sup> McBryde 1967, 1972

<sup>88</sup> ibid 1967:1-2

<sup>89</sup> North 1964 pp633-642

implements although they had been reported by North. The 1972 investigation noted increased erosion and site depletion and included small test excavation of midden deposit from a part of the site. The stone artefacts are described as belonging to a 'pebble tool industry' and include uni-facial pebble choppers, large cores, broken blocks or roughly worked stone and flake, suggesting the site was a tool manufacturing site. Brayshaw<sup>90</sup> inspected the collections and calculated a density of artefacts at 100-1,000 per square metre. Many of the pebble tools were made on greywacke which can be obtained from periodically exposed Pleistocene gravel beds at coastal headlands, such as at the Emerald Beach and Moonee Beach sites or from sources in the high country behind Coffs Harbour in the gravel beds of Kangaroo Creek [McBryde pers. comm. 2003].

Navin [1991] conducted a survey in Moonee township to the north of Moonee Beach Road. She found no sites. Dallas & Tuck [2003] identified two open camp sites, two isolated artefacts and associated Potential Archaeological Deposit [PAD] in the elevated cleared land behind the fore dunes at Sapphire Beach. These sites and PADs are currently under investigation and have been found to contain extensive artefact bearing deposits.<sup>91</sup>

#### 4.3 Aboriginal Sites in the Coffs Harbour/Woolgoolga Area

The Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System [Aboriginal Sites Register] managed by the DEC, listed 3 Aboriginal sites, located within a 5km radius of the intersection of Graham Drive and the Pacific Highway at Double Crossing Creek. Two of these sites [DEC Site # 22-1-25 and #22-1-44] are located north of Woolgoolga and the third is located at the north end of Fiddamans Beach [DEC Site # 22-1-26] south of Bare Bluff and the township of Sandy Beach.

The paucity of known sites in this area is a result of the relative lack of archaeological survey along this part of the coast. For example in the coastal strip between Coffs Harbour and Moonee Beach over 40 sites have been recorded<sup>92</sup>.

It is also known that a number of known sites described in archaeological survey reports or very recently discovered have not yet been entered onto the DEC AHIMS Register of Aboriginal sites. A recent survey of lands undertaken by Collins<sup>93</sup> to the immediate north of the current study area located a number of artefact scatters<sup>94</sup>. It is understood these sites are located outside the current study area along Double Crossing Creek and north of Hearnese Lake Road and north of the Caravan Park. In 1983 Lilley undertook an archaeological study

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<sup>90</sup> [Brayshaw & Byrne 1993]

<sup>91</sup> Mark Flanders pers. comm. 2004

<sup>92</sup> see Dallas and Tuck 2002.

<sup>93</sup> Collins in prep. as part of investigations for the Draft DCP for Sandy Beach North

<sup>94</sup> Mark Flanders citing Collins in prep [pers. comm.] Chris Spencer pers.comm. 13.12.04

over an area of land that included the current study area [see below]. He identified three shell middens and an isolated stone artefact on the land to the north of Hearn's Lake Road. It is not known at this time whether the recently recorded sites identified by Collins are the same as those identified by Lilley, extensions or continuations or newly identified discrete sites.



Figure 4.1 Nearest Known Aboriginal Sites

Moonee Beach 1:25000

● DEC Site 3 22-1-26    ○ Unregistered sites [identified by Lilley 1983]

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#### 4.3.1 Lilley's 1983 Archaeological Study

Lilley's 1983 study covered the current study area and included a parcel of land to the north of Hearn's Lake, inclusive of the Caravan Park, and north of Hearn's Lake Road<sup>95</sup>. Lilley's survey included:

- a brief vehicular reconnaissance;
- concentrated pedestrian survey in the identified potentially sensitive areas of the Hearn's Lake margins, the mouths of Double Crossing Creek, and an unnamed creek along the northern boundary of his study area, and the dunes on the northern side of Double Crossing Creek; and,
- sampling by irregular vehicular transects and spot checks of eroding or exposed surfaces<sup>96</sup>.

He identified no Aboriginal sites within the current study area. He identified three scatters of shell and an isolated stone artefact in the lands to the north of Hearn's Lake Road<sup>97</sup>. The approximate locations of these sites are shown on **Figure 4.1**. The isolated artefact is described as being damaged<sup>98</sup> and on the edge of a small dam, although no dam is mapped at the identified site location<sup>99</sup>. Lilley also noted that Fr. Eugene Stockton, a friend of the owner and a well respected amateur archaeologist had inspected the area of the isolated artefact during the construction of the dam. It is possible the artefact was collected at that time. The precise location of this artefact is therefore in doubt and would require further field survey to verify if it remains *in situ* at the dam or is in some other location.

The shell scatters identified by Lilley were described as small isolated scatters of Triton shells [*Cabestana spengleri*] which are found at the low water margin of rocky coasts. Lilley assessed these scatters as 'dinner-time' camps<sup>100</sup> which he describes as commonly comprising single-species remains. He noted none of the sites were *in situ*, citing post-contact land use resulting in disturbance to the stratigraphic context, and none would be affected by the then development proposal.

Lilley's study included consultation with Ray Kelly, Senior Aboriginal Sites Officer of the then National Parks & Wildlife Service, Northern Region Office<sup>101</sup>. Ray Kelly and Dick Kelly, the son of the late Harry Kelly of Urunga, a Gumbaingirr Elder who continued to live at Yellow Rock after the Mission there had been disbanded, inspected the area of the development proposal and provided information on the study area and. Dick Kelly identified the area around

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<sup>95</sup> Lilley 1983:Figure 1

<sup>96</sup> Lilley 1983:p5.

<sup>97</sup> Lilley 1983:Figure 2

<sup>98</sup> Lilley 1983:p6.

<sup>99</sup> see Moonee Beach 1:25,000 Topographic and Orthophoto Map.

<sup>100</sup> Lilley 1983:p6.

<sup>101</sup> Lilley 1983:Appendix A : Ray Kelly's Report on Field Work at Sandy Beach. P.13

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the Caravan Park as an increase site, although he could not recall the tribal name of the place. Lilley does not refer to this oral evidence and appears to disregard it<sup>102</sup>.

#### 4.4 Predicting the location of unrecorded sites

Using the site distribution conclusions above, as well as general archaeological knowledge and an understanding of land use history in the area, it is possible to make predictive statements about the likely distribution of surviving unrecorded Aboriginal sites.

##### **Open middens**

Open middens are generally located within several hundred metres of shellfish resources along rocky shores, ocean beaches or estuarine mudflats. Despite their recorded heavy disturbance by limeburners, sand mining and amateur collecting, unrecorded middens may exist across the study area as degraded deposits, perhaps associated with open artefact scatters. Such sites are known to be located on dry elevated landforms along the coast. Shellfish were often transported to more sheltered inland camping sites.

##### **Open campsites**

Open campsites (stone artefact scatters) may occur almost anywhere that Aboriginal people lived and travelled in the past. The cultural activity represented by these sites may be associated with hunting or gathering activities, domestic camps, or the manufacture and maintenance or discard of stone tools.

##### **Burial/s**

Burial sites in this area most often occur in midden deposits, or in sand dunes. Most have come to light through erosion or deliberate excavation of deposits, and have generally been removed. Whilst burials tend not to be numerous, it is possible that they may be found across the study area, in the sandy subsurface deposits.

##### **Scarred Trees**

Scarring can result on a tree where bark or wood is removed to manufacture coolamons, containers, shields or canoes or to create foot holds to enable extraction of game or honey. The necessary age of scarred trees and the level of land clearing and development within the study area makes it unlikely that scarred trees will be located.

##### **Isolated Finds**

Isolated Finds are artefacts that occur without any associated evidence for prehistoric activity or occupation. Isolated finds can occur anywhere in the landscape and may represent the random loss, deliberate discard or abandonment of artefacts, or the remains of dispersed artefact scatters. These could be expected to occur across much of the study area.

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<sup>102</sup> Lilley 1983:p6



## 5.0 Aboriginal Site Survey

### 5.1 Methods and Procedures

The investigations reported here have involved a standard archaeological field survey, recording and assessment. Where topography and vegetation cover has permitted, parallel transects spaced between 5-10m have been employed to cover the survey area on foot.

To facilitate comparison and assessment of the observations made in various areas of the subject land, three survey units have been defined on the basis of topographic features such as elevation and the water bodies. These form the basis of the reporting and discussion presented in the following sections.

#### 5.1.1 Recording Site Location, Size and Environmental Context

All items of Aboriginal cultural heritage located during the course of the field survey were to be plotted onto the Moonee Beach 1:25,000 topographical map. Maps of differing scale, including aerial photography have also been used to facilitate the location of pertinent field observations. Generally, reporting has been concerned with site content, topography (whether sites, features or areas of potential sensitivity are located on slopes or creek flats etc), context (whether sites are exposed on vehicle tracks, erosion gullies etc), vegetation, ground exposures, nature of ground visibility and disturbance. The site located during the survey has been recorded on Standard DEC Standard Site Recording Forms and forwarded to the NSW DEC inclusion on the AHIMS Aboriginal Sites Register.

The distinction between site categories (open campsites vs. isolated finds etc) and the definition of areas of potential sensitivity is determined according to the following categories:

- Isolated Finds consist of single artefacts that are located more than 50m apart.
- Sites comprise open artefact scatters that consist of two or more artefacts situated within 50m of each other.

The following attributes of each stone artefact were recorded:

- Artefact Type: This category records the presence of flakes, flaked pieces and cores etc.
- Raw Material: Raw materials may include silcrete, indurated mudstone or tuff and quartz, etc.
- Dimensions: Maximum length, width and thickness of finds are to be recorded.
- Other: Comments include the presence of cortex and retouch etc.

Frequently used criteria inclusive of landform, aspect, topography and subsurface integrity have also been employed in this study to define open areas of Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD).

## 5.2 Archaeological Site Survey

Physical inspection of the study area was undertaken on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2004 and was completed in fine weather. The survey was undertaken by Mary Dallas and Paul Irish of Mary Dallas Consulting Archaeologists and Mark Flanders Aboriginal Sites Officer of the CH&DLALC, Mr Ken Nader, a Gumbalar Jullipi Elder and Mr Richard Preece, representing the Garbi Elders.

All areas of the subject land were inspected on foot. The existing Robinson residence, sheds and house yards in the western portion of the study area were not inspected. The observations recorded during the site inspection are reviewed below and are also presented in tabular form in **Section 5.4**. This data provides a context for discussion of the results presented in **Section 6.0**.

### 5.2.1 Field Observations

#### Survey Unit I – Lake margins

This Unit comprises the low margins of Lake Hearn which support low heath, Melaleuca, Casuarina and Callistemon, and sedges and rush grasses. These areas are poorly drained, relatively flat and vary in extent according to water levels in the Lake.



**Figure 5.1 Dry southern margins of Hearn's Lake. View southeast towards SBN 1 an open camp site.**



**Figure 5.2 Dry sedge along western margin of Hearn's Lake [Survey Unit I] View to south.**



**Figure 5.3 Low heath in north western margins of Hearn's Lake.**



**Figure 5.4 Dam on western margin of Hearn's Lake [Survey Unit I]**



**Figure 5.5 Unit I Hearn's Lake margins in south east corner of Lake.**

Much of the currently dry flats along the western margin appear to sustain periodic inundation. There are a number of walking tracks and dirt roads around the western side of the Lake and a dirt track around the eastern side. These surfaces show sandy or clay deposits. Other exposures relate to a dam constructed on the western margin. Melaleuca line the eastern margin and southern reaches of the Lake.

#### **Survey Unit II – Low lying grazing lands**

The central portion of the study area is low lying and poorly drained. This Unit is bisected by the Pacific Highway and some areas retain standing water after wetter periods. Much of the land is cleared for grazing. Timber clearance has in part been done mechanically and few tree stumps remain. Understorey shrubs and sapling have been regularly cleared in this Unit [Figure 5.6].

There are a range of vegetation communities across this Unit including Swamp Sclerophyll forest containing Melaleuca, Swamp Mahogany and Swamp Turpentine and Open Forest containing Melaleuca, Casuarina and Bloodwood.



**Figure 5.6 Windrows after under scrubbing in south eastern portion of study area.**



**Figure 5.7 Windrows after timber clearance in Unit II within Robinson Land.**

A number of dirt roads traverse the grazing land to the east of the Pacific Highway. Exposed surfaces show poorly drained churned fine clay soils. Other disturbances include the construction of yards and two drainage channels between the north side of Sandy Beach township and Hearn's Lake in the south eastern portion of the study area and the installation of telecommunication infrastructure trenches in the north west corner.

The cut drains are up to 3m wide and 1m deep. Exposed sections show dark sandy soils.



**Figure 5.8 Unit II on eastern side of Pacific Highway showing vehicle ruts through partially cleared area.**



**Figure 5.9 Westernmost cut drain, adjacent to Pumping Station, feeding storm water to Hearn's Lake.**

Surface visibility in this Unit was variable. The grazing lands and open forests east of the Pacific Highway provided generally reasonable exposure including cattle tracks, dirt roads and denuded areas of ground or with patchy grass cover. The grazing paddock between the drainage channels in the southern portion of this area had the lowest surface exposure. The grazing lands on the western side of the Highway showed a similar range of exposure. Areas totally cleared and developed as pasture had poor ground exposure, whereas the more open



forested areas, including regenerating stands of timber showed high levels of surface exposure.



**Figure 5.10 Telecommunication trenches in north western end of Hearn's Lake.**

This Unit includes the eastern portion of the Robinson property between the existing Sandy Beach township and Double Crossing Creek. A cleared transmission line easement traverses the Robinson property and contains a transmission line and underground services. Some of the paddocks within the Robinson property have been ploughed and seeded.



**Figure 5.11 Cleared transmission line easement and underground service trenching through Robinson property, view to north from southern boundary.**



**Figure 5.12 partly timbered grazing lands in Robinson property showing vehicle tracks and churned surfaces.**

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### Survey Unit III – Elevated Lands

This comprises elevated lands in the western and eastern portion of the study area. They are formed on sand on the leeward side of the fore dunes and gravely clays on the lower foot slopes of the Coast Range.

The foot slopes are located in the western portion of the study area to the west of the Pacific Highway. They drain north to Double Crossing Creek, and east to the Pacific Highway. These lands rise to 20m and contain the Robinson residence, sheds and yards and access roads. The slopes are generally steep to undulating. The only elevated level portions of this Unit are a narrow strip of land along the western boundary, the land on which the Robinson residence and yards have been constructed and a spur leading from the house yards to the north. Much of the land has been cleared for grazing, stands of largely regrowth timber occur in the south western corner and along the southern boundary of the property.



**Figure 5.12 View to south along western boundary of Robinson property showing scoured ground surfaces.**



**Figure 5.13 View to north east along spur below house yards in Robinson property.**

Surface visibility over the slopes are reasonable to good, being provided by patchy ground cover in the timbered area and erosion scars, tracks and dirt roads throughout the cleared

areas. An area along the southern boundary towards the southwest corner has been ploughed<sup>103</sup>.



**Figure 5.14 Location of ploughed area showing up cast bedrock gravels in foreground.**

The other elevated lands are in eastern portion of the study area along the leeward side of the fore dunes along the eastern site boundary and along the southern boundary. Leeward of the mined fore dunes is an elevated sandy knoll.

The uppermost elevations are flat and appear to be truncated. The remains of a mining road are also present through this area and it is likely previous clearance and adjacent mining activities have impacted upon this dune. The dune is currently stabilised by an open forest of Banksia, Melaleuca, Bloodwood, and Forest Red Gum. Much of the timber is regrowth. There has been some undergrowth clearing and a number of walking tracks have been formed across the dune.



**Figure 5.15 Top of dune along eastern study boundary**

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<sup>103</sup> Elijah Robinson pers. comm.





**Figure 5.16 Northern boundary fence traversing elevated dune on western side of Lake.**

A slightly elevated spur at the southern boundary of the site between the two cut drainage channels is also included in this unit. This spur is cleared and developed for grazing. There is little surface visibility and some introduced gravels [see **Figure 5.25**].

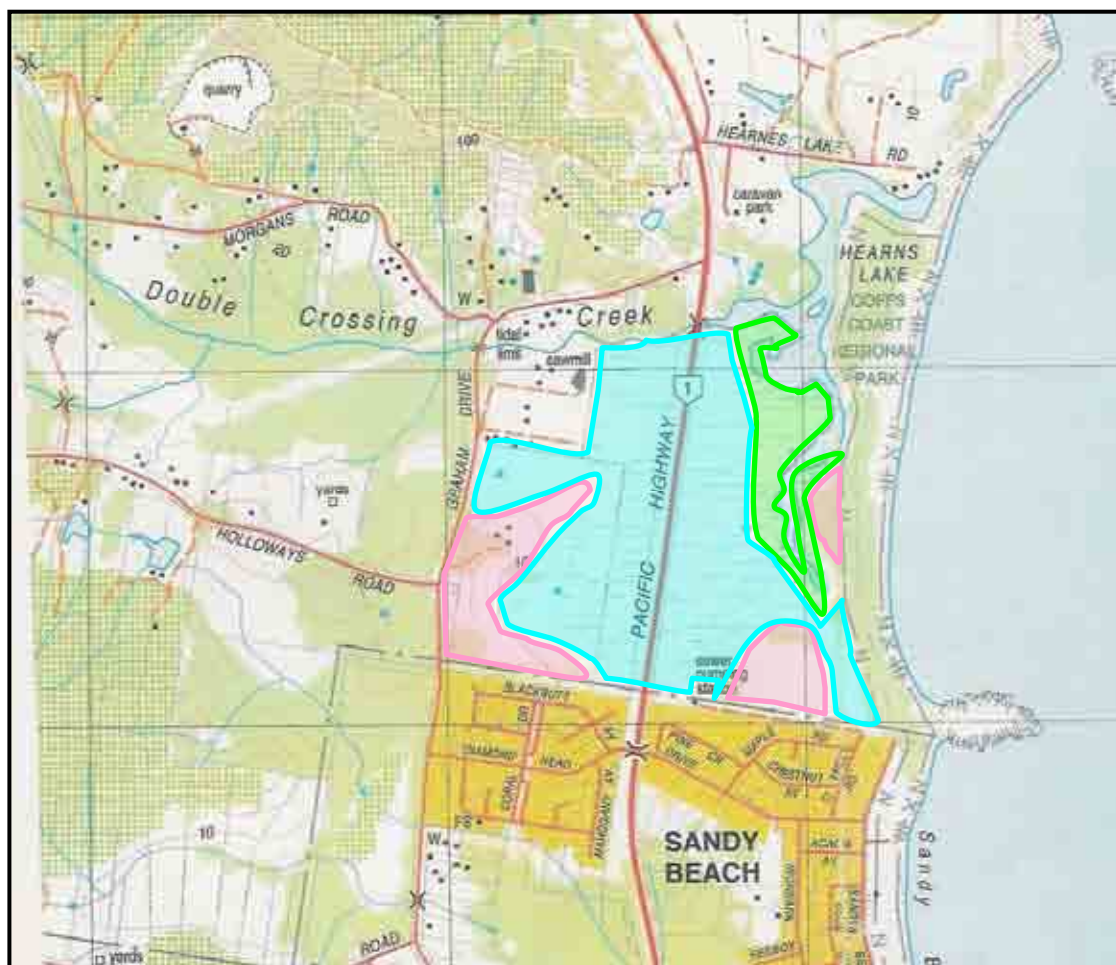
### 5.3 Survey Characteristics and Archaeological Visibility

The effectiveness of the archaeological field survey is to a large degree related to the nature and degree of surface visibility and the types of sites likely to occur in any given landform. Visibility was estimated for all areas of comprehensive survey within the study area. These estimates provide a measure with which to gauge the effectiveness of the survey. Ground surface visibility is a measure of the bare ground visible during the survey. Two variables were used to assess ground surface visibility, the frequency of exposure encountered and the quality of visibility within those exposures:

- percentage estimate of the average levels of ground surface visibility within those exposures. This is a net estimate and accounts for all impacting visual and physical variables including the archaeological potential of the sediment exposed.
- percentage estimate of the total area of ground inspected which contained useable exposures of bare ground;

The incidence of ground surface exposure within the study area was relatively low over the entire area. However it was possible to identify previous land disturbances causing alterations to land surfaces and sub surface deposits over virtually the entire study area.

Adequate levels of exposure [70-100%] were encountered on vehicle tracks and on erosion scars and scours associated with field drainage and ploughing. In other areas exposures related to patchy ground cover or denuded areas in grazing paddocks. Overall it is estimated that less than 25% of the total study area was available for inspection but that some 95% of the exposed land was surveyed in all three landform units.



**Figure 5. 17 Survey Units**      ○ Survey Unit I    ○ Survey Unit II    ○ Survey Unit III  
[enlarged Moonee Beach 1:25,000]

The following table summarizes the nature of ground visibility, archaeological sampling and estimates of effective survey coverage for the landforms defined by the Survey Units. These data provide a basis for the discussion and assessment of the results that are presented in **Section 5.4** and **Section 6.0**.

**Table 5.1 Survey Characteristics & Visibility**

Survey Unit & Area (approx. ha)	Site Survey Conditions & Main Archaeological Exposure Types	Site Sampling & Effective Survey Coverage (ESC)
Survey Unit I 15ha	The Lake Margins. Access roads, tracks, erosion scars and denuded ground surfaces.	Approx. 80% of Survey Unit I was inspected on foot. The margins include areas inundated in wetter periods. Ground exposure is reasonable to good comprising a number of minor erosion scours (up to 5m by 1m) and denuded [currently dry] surfaces. ESC within the order of approximately 1.8%.
Survey Unit II 60ha	Low lying grazing lands  Severe disturbance levels. Timber clearance, under scrubbing, access roads, tracks, erosion scars, localised ploughing, excavated drains, Telecommunication services, transmission line easement.  A cut drain provides exposed sections to the basal C-horizon. Other exposures include erosion scars, and denuded areas along fence lines, gates and at the base of trees.	100% inspected on foot. 10m parallel transects were surveyed across Survey Unit II. Ground exposure was variable depending on degree of pasture cover and extent of timber regrowth. Majority of areas provided reasonable visibility.  The nature and overall extent of ground exposure in this survey unit provides an ESC of 1.5%.
Survey Unit 111 15ha	Foot slopes  House, sheds, yards and access road construction. Localised ploughing. Erosion scars. Timber clearance, under scrubbing.  Elevated lands generally	100% inspected on foot. Ground exposure was variable depending on degree of pasture cover and extent of timber regrowth. Majority of areas provided reasonable visibility.  The nature and overall extent of ground exposure in this survey unit provides an ESC of .8%.

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## 5.4 Survey Results

### 5.4.1 Site Descriptions

Two [2] Aboriginal open sites containing stone artefact scatters and manuports [see **Figure 5.10**], was identified during the survey. The sites are coded SBN1 and 2. A number of isolated manuports were also identified. An area of potential archaeological deposit [coded PAD 1] was also identified. The site and PAD location is shown on **Figure 5.26**.

The finds have been recorded in detail, including site plans, on NSW DEC Standard Site Recording Forms which have been forwarded to the DEC AHIMS Register of Aboriginal Sites, and are briefly described below.

#### **SBN1**

GPS Reference: 56518993E 6665338N Map Name: Moonee Beach 1:25000

Environmental Context/Vegetation: Low lying grazing land on south western edge of Hearn's Lake. Lightly timbered, regrowth saplings.

Area of Scatter: 50x60m, max density 2x1msq

Area of Exposure [s]: patchy denuded surfaces on slightly elevated ground along edge of lake. Exposures relate to timber clearance, cattle tracks, patchy grass cover.

Type/Depth of Deposit: unknown depth, possibly up to 30cm grey to pale grey clay soil.

Content: 4 pebble tools, 5 split pebbles and 5 beach cobble manuports.

1. Bifacial Pebble tool, Greywacke, 167x83x51mm, 80-85% water worn cortex, flaked down one lateral edge with 4 off dorsal surface
2. Unifacial Pebble tool Grey/blue volcanic, 115x109x32mm, possible flake/split
3. Unifacial Pebble tool Greywacke, 102x65x32mm, 3 flakes off one end, 65% cortex
4. Unifacial Pebble tool Greywacke 135x75x60mm Flaked surface 85x75mm, 1 face, 80% cortex [see **Figure 5.20**]



**Figure 5.18 SBN 1 General location view to north. [see also Figure 5.1 View south to SBN 1 from the Lake margin]**



**Figure 5.19 SBN 1 Artefact sample including manuport.**



**Figure 5.20. SBN 1 Artefact detail.**

**Management:** This site is located within Lot 22 in a Conservation Area and is not directly affected by the proposed development. The site should be preserved within the Conservation Area by active site conservation. Measures such as introducing a layer of suitable topsoil and native grasses should be adopted. The proximity of the site to planned pedestrian walkways provides an opportunity for site interpretation.

## **SBN 2**

**GPS Reference:** 56518311E 6665570N **Map Name:** Moonee Beach 1:25000

**Environmental Context/Vegetation:** Access road along crest of spur trending north-south.

**Area of Scatter:** 1x1m, max density 2x1msq



Area of Exposure [s]: Exposures relate to vehicle use, timber clearance, cattle tracks, and patchy grass cover. Access road 3-4m wide, patchy denuded surfaces in paddocks adjacent to road.

Type/Depth of Deposit: gravely basal clay surface. No potential for in situ buried deposit.

Content: 2 stone artefacts

1. Flaked Piece, pale grey volcanic, 50x67x18mm, flakes off dorsal surface, some cortex at distal margin,

2. Unifacial pebble tool, Greywacke, 109x90x55mm



Figure 5.21 SBN 1



Figure 5.22 SBN 1

Management: There are no current development proposals for the land at which this site is located. CH&DLALC would require the re-inspection of this area were future development proposed.

**ISF 1 Manuport Split Cobble**

GPS Reference: 56518460E 6666047 Map Name: Moonee Beach 1:25000

Environmental Context/Vegetation: Transmission line easement, timber clearance, service trenching. Disturbed context. [see **Figure 5.24**] Located 5m east of last power pole before Double Crossing Creek.

Description: red grey volcanic 135x80x50mm ca. 50% cortex

Type/Depth of Deposit: gravely basal clay surface. No potential for in situ buried deposit.



**Figure 5.23 ISF 2 Manuport Double Crossing Creek**



**Figure 5.24 Location of ISF 1 showing up cast clay and gravels.**

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Management: ISF 1 is situated within 50m of Double Crossing Creek. There are no current development proposals for this area. The CH&DLALC would require the re-inspection of this area were future development proposed.

## **ISF 2**

GPS Reference: 5651870E 666590N Map Name: Moonee Beach 1:25000

Environmental Context/Vegetation: Double Crossing Creek [south flank] eastern side of Pacific Highway. Timber regrowth, low shrubs.

Description: Split water worn pebble 165x80x60mm ca. 90% cortex

Type/Depth of Deposit: gravely sandy clay, exposure relating to telecommunication trenching, Coffee rock fragments located just outside [on the Lake side] of the eastern boundary fence at northeast corner.



**Figure 5.25 ISF 2 Manuport Split pebble**

Management: ISF 2 is located within 50m of Double Crossing Creek in the north western portion of Lot 22. within the Conservation Area. Requires no further action.

## **PAD 1**

GPS Reference: 56518900E 6665220N North Point  
56518800E 6665150N South west Point  
56519050E 6665000N South east Point

Map Name: Moonee Beach 1:25000



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Environmental Context/Vegetation: An area of 200x250m bound in the south by access road [and extension of Ti Tree Road and southern property boundary fence], in the east and west by drainage channels. Low lying grazing land on south of Hearn's Lake. Area of Low to moderate archaeological potential.

Area of Exposure [s]: patchy denuded surfaces in grazing paddock. Slightly elevated ground Exposures relate to timber clearance, cattle tracks, patchy grass cover, particularly around perimeter close to drainage channels. No cultural material noted.

Type/Depth of Deposit: unknown depth. Includes introduced materials possibly to fill localised low points.

Management: Requires archaeological test excavation under a DEC s.87 Preliminary Research Permit, in consultation with the CH&DLALC, to determine, in the first instance, the presence or absence of Aboriginal cultural remains. The results of the test excavation would determine the degree of constraint, if any such remains may represent to the proposed development.



Figure 5.25 Pad 1

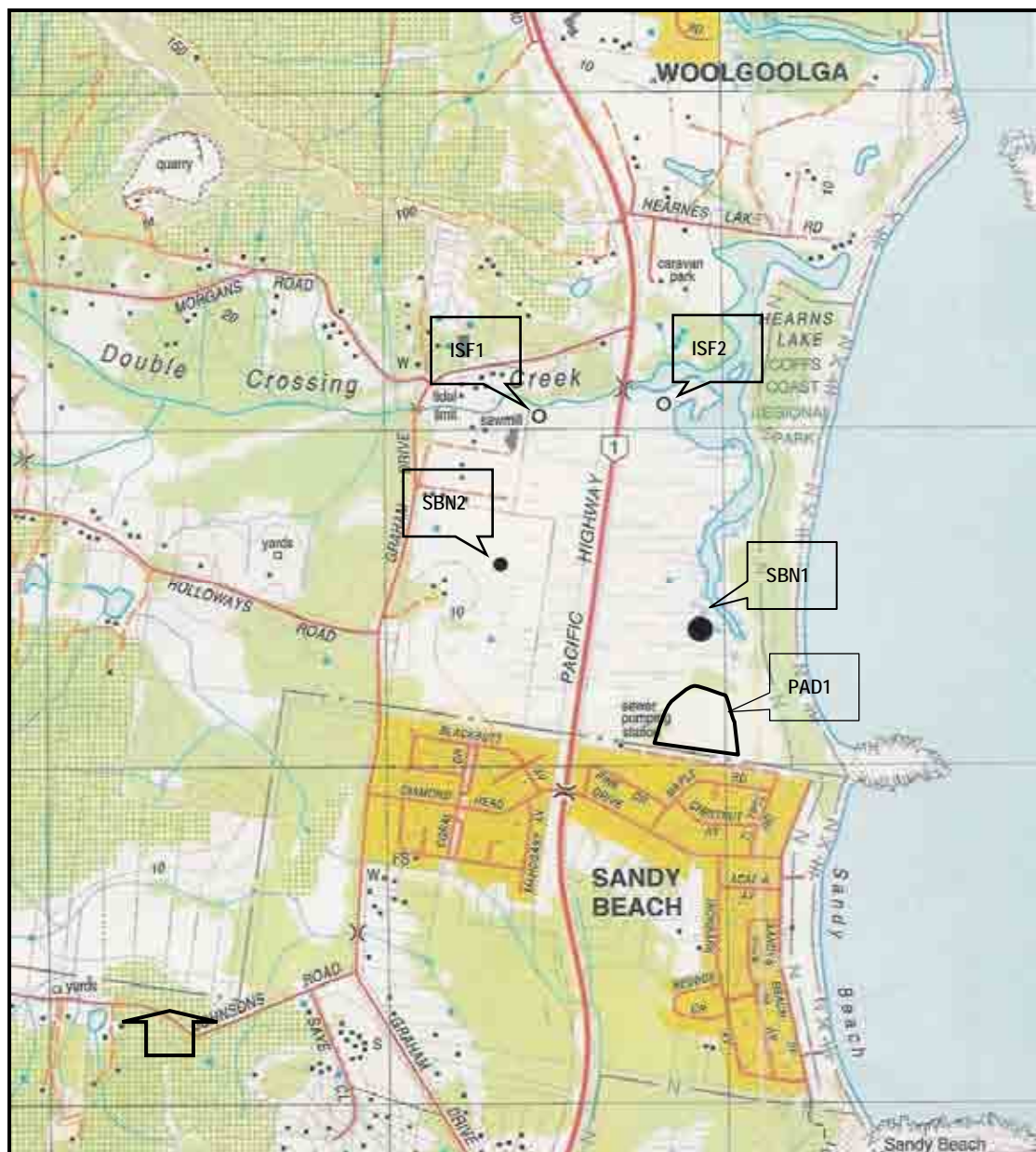


Figure 5.26 Aboriginal Site and PAD Locations

Monee Beach 1:25,000 [enlarged]

## 6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 6.1 Discussion

The pattern of site distribution in the Coffs Harbour region as shown by site survey and excavations in areas to the south of the study area strongly indicates major and complex sites are located adjacent to permanently watered areas such as wetland and swamp lands on dry elevated ground. Many of these sites contain evidence of the 'Pebble Core Tool' tradition of tool manufacture using stone resources in pebble form available within Gunbaingirr traditional territory, either in rocky exposures along the coast or in river gravels in the hinterland. The most extensive of these sites located to the south at Look-At-Me-Now Headland has been destroyed by sand mining. Smaller camp sites marked by low density artefact scatters may be located almost anywhere but are commonly associated with less well watered areas, intermittent watercourses and elevated ground above these watercourses. Coastal sites in the region have been severely impacted by sand mining and coastal residential development.

The significance of prehistoric sites can be assessed according to a range of criteria including:

- scientific or archaeological significance,
- significance to Aboriginal people,
- aesthetic value,
- representativeness, and
- value to the public as an educational or recreational resource.

Many sites will be significant according to several criteria and these will vary according to the nature and purpose of the evaluation.

Aboriginal significance is the value placed upon a site or site complex by the local or regional Aboriginal community. A site's significance can be the result of several factors including: continuing cultural links with an historic, archaeological or landscape feature, concern for the protection and custodianship of burials, and the value of sites as tangible links with the lifestyle and values of their ancestors.

There are two major components used in assessing scientific significance: the potential of a site or suite of sites for scientific research and excavation; and the representativeness of a site. Site representativeness is a measure of the degree to which sites in the area of investigation are characteristic of sites known elsewhere in the immediate and surrounding region.

The principle aim of cultural resource management is the conservation of a representative sample of site types from different environment areas. Sites with inherently unique features, or

which are poorly represented elsewhere in similar environment types, are considered to be archaeologically significant.

The scientific value of a site is most effectively classified according to its degree of archaeological significance within a geographic context. In this way a site can be of low, moderate or high significance within a local, regional or national context. A site that contains undisturbed cultural evidence, such as in-situ sub-surface material, has a high potential for research and future excavation and is therefore of major significance.

Campsites are most commonly assessed in terms of scientific and Aboriginal significance only, as they are not generally perceived to be significant in terms of the other categories listed above. Other than to record their locations, dimensions and contents, disturbed and small surface artefact scatters generally hold little scientific significance. However these sites may be interpreted and with signage represent an opportunity to educate local communities about Aboriginal culture.

The Aboriginal heritage assessment also identified an Aboriginal association with the area in historic times, namely, the extraction of corkwood for the pharmaceutical industry. Aboriginal workers, under license, collected the young shoots and leaves to supply local distributors. Mr Gerald Flanders noted that much of the supply was shipped overseas for drug manufacture<sup>104</sup>.



**Figure 6.1 Corkwood saplings within Lot 22**

Both the prehistoric Aboriginal occupation pattern and camp sites and the historic corkwood industry work would provide themes for interpretative signage within the context of the development proposal [see below].

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<sup>104</sup> Mr Kenny Craig also refers to this work [cited in Dallas & Tuck 2003]

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The subject land is situated on the coastal plain and includes the easternmost limit of the lower foothills of the Coast Range, to the north of the township of Sandy Beach. Hearn's Lake and the coastal beaches would have provided the Aboriginal owners with abundant shellfish, fish avifauna, and terrestrial resources such as swamp wallaby. The vegetation communities resident within the subject land is a result of repeated timber clearance and under scrubbing. Original patterns are likely to be denser forests with thick low shrubby understoreys. Access through the area is likely to have been gained by canoe or by walking tracks established after repeated burning of the scrub.

The archaeological survey identified two [2] open camp sites, SBN 1 and 2, and two [2] isolated pebble manuports, ISF 1 and 2]. An area of land judged to retain some, albeit low archaeological potential for buried archaeological deposit [PAD 1] was also identified. At these locations no other cultural features such as hearths or food remains are present. The evidence is indicative of sporadic or short duration use of forested areas away from the coast. There focus is likely to have been on the Lake and its feeder creeks.

**None of the finds are affected by the current development proposal.**

The area identified as retaining archaeological potential [PAD 1] is located within Lot 22 in area proposed for housing and will require archaeological test excavation, under a DEC s.87 Preliminary Research Permit to determine whether cultural remains are present and the degree of constraint, if any, they may represent to the development proposal. SBN 1 and ISF 2 are located within a proposed Conservation Area [see **Figures 2.3** and **5.26**]. These finds can be managed for preservation within this context.

SBN 1 will require additional conservation works. The area should be covered by suitable topsoil and native ground cover. This site and the historic use of the area by Aboriginal community members for corkwood harvesting should be the subjects of interpretive signage along the proposed walkway around Hearn. The precise location of the camp site SBN 1 should not be identified. The discrete location, content and wording of the interpretive signs should be developed in consultation with the CH&DLALC.

Lot 21 is not part of the current development proposal. ISF 1 is located within 50m of Double Crossing Creek and protected within the creek reservation from future development. SBN 2 is located along an internal access road within Lot 22. The CH&DLALC have indicated their preference for additional site survey and archaeological monitoring in this area as a prudent strategy to allow the identification and salvage of the items, were this area proposed for future development.

A report was commissioned from the CH&DLALC detailing Aboriginal views pertaining to the survey and the possible future development and is provided in **Appendix 8.1**.

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## 6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon the legal requirements and automatic statutory protection provided under the terms of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (as amended), where:

*it is an offence to knowingly damage, deface or destroy Aboriginal sites or relics without the prior consent of the Director General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service,*

in conjunction with:

The results of the Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment prepared for the site as documented in this report, including background research into Gumbaingirr culture history and the extant archaeological record for the Coffs Harbour/Moonee area; and the views of the Coffs Harbour & District Local Aboriginal Land Council.

### 6.2.1 Aboriginal Consultation

It is recommended that:

- I The liaison established with the CH&DLALC and the Gumbalar-Jullipi Elders and Garbi Elders should be maintained in the future. Specifically, within the context of implementing the Aboriginal Management Options [see below].
- II A copy of this report should be forwarded to the Chairperson of the CH&DLALC at the contact address below.

Coffs Harbour & District Local Aboriginal Land Council  
PO Box 6150 Park Beach Plaza  
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

### 6.2.2 Archaeological Management Options

It is recommended that:

- III Further archaeological surface survey of the Lot 22 is not required. If future development is proposed for Lot 21, further survey and archaeological monitoring should be undertaken in consultation with the CH&DLALC.
- IV An application for a DEC Section 87 Preliminary Research Permit to undertake archaeological test excavation at PAD 1 in Lot 22, should be submitted to the Director-General of the Department of Environment and Conservation prior to the commencement of any future proposed land use alteration. The application needs to be supported by the CH&DLALC. The test excavation will determine the presence or absence of Aboriginal cultural remains in this area.

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- V      SBN 1 should be managed for preservation within the proposed Conservation Area. Suitable topsoil and ground cover be placed over SBN 2 to ensure long term conservation. These works should be undertaken under the supervision of the CH&DLALC.
- VI     An Interpretation Plan should be developed for the Conservation Area which identifies and celebrates the Aboriginal Heritage of the area. The Plan should be developed in consultation with the CH&DLALC.
- VII    Two copies of this report should be forwarded to the  
Manager,  
NSW Department of Environment and Conservation  
Northern Aboriginal Heritage Unit.  
PO Box 914  
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

## 7.0

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Appendix

8.1 Coffs Harbour & District LALC Report