MURWILLUMBAH MANAGEMENT AREA EIS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT No. 3

ABORIGINAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY MURWILLUMBAH MANAGEMENT AREA

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and
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1996

Murwillumbah Management Area EIS

Aboriginal Anthropological Study Murwillumbah Management Area

Prepared for the State Forests of New South Wales and the Traditional Aboriginal Owners

To investigate the cultural values to Aboriginal people of Murwillumbah Management Area State forests and places therein through community-based research in order to provide for appropriate management to protect potential and identified sites and places of cultural significance.

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Views and interpretations presented in the report are those of the author and not necessarily those of the State Forests of New South Wales. The recommendations of the report are the opinion of the author.

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1. Introduction

The research was undertaken at the request of the State Forests of NSW and with the agreement of the Tweed-Byron and Ngulingah Aboriginal Land Councils. The funding for the research was provided by State Forests and represents a considerable investment in the Aboriginal heritage of the region.

This study continues the program of investigations and research into the Aboriginal archaeological and anthropological values of the Murwillumbah Management Area. The objectives of this study were to, first, conduct a program of literature searches combined with community-based interviews with people who have links with the forest; second, to identify sites and places of Aboriginal significance; and third to conduct field work in order to check the research findings. Further planned work in relation to this will address the management implications of the research findings, and the setting up of appropriate consultation mechanisms with the Aboriginal community in relation to management.

Documentary research was undertaken by Mrs Kevie Reed. The field work and interviews were undertaken by Mr Ron Heron. Aboriginal sites identified by artefacts were notified to State Forests and are not included in this report except in as far as they reflect on the anthropological evidence.

A description of aspects of traditional life is included so as to assist in the evaluation and understanding of some of the sites documented and others that may be documented in the future.

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3. Document Research

3.1. The Value of Documentary Sources

There are many documentary sources that are available to researchers but their value has to be seen in the context of what Bowdler describes as:

> *In Australia, the aborigines did not have writing, and so prehistory might be said to have stopped here in AD 1788: Although the British brought with them all of the apparatus of literacy, and from the earliest of times of white settlement we have copious documentation of the doings of the immigrants, this did not mean that either Aborigines in New South Wales became fully literate nor that pre history ground to a halt all over Australia. There are similarities to the protohistory period in Western Europe; in the study of aboriginal society in the late eighteen century we can draw on the written observations of literate first fleeters... These kinds of sources are exactly like the observations of Julius Caesar on the Celts, including the tendency to present what were to them bizarre and primitive rites without the understanding that they might be part of a complex religious structure* (Bowdler 1983a:32).

Having said that, it is still vital that the documentary research is conducted for the following reasons:

- documents may provide prompts to Aboriginal informants;
- documents may assist to substantiate or refute Aboriginal claims;
- documents that are so perverted that they are of no use need to be revealed for what they are.

However, all documentary research needs to be considered to be no more than a starting point and it is essential that all documents are referred back to the community for comment and analysis. This report should be referred back to the local Aboriginal communities for comment and correction.

There is a need for this wide-ranging research as little has been done to collate documentation that relates to the land occupied by the Bundjalung People. Much of the source material has been 'interpreted' by non-Aboriginal people. Many of the records that relate to this area are only to be found in locations outside this region.

3.2. Prior Research

The history of research into the archaeology and anthropology of Aboriginal life has been primarily one of non-Aboriginal people studying, theorising and even exhuming Aboriginal people and their culture. It is only over recent times that Aboriginal people have (had been allowed to) recorded and documented their own culture.

> *All research has elements of cultural bias and tends to reflect the times in which they were written. When the British first settled in Australia in 1788 they brought with them not only the paraphernalia of their civilisation but also certain invisible luggage in the shape of attitudes, prejudices and values that would account in large part for their subsequent relationships with the Australian Aborigines* (Ferry 1979:1).

In many ways the development of the documentary evidence is a reflection of changes in community attitudes, which in turn are affected by the research. This provides an environment in which changes can be expected but the speed of change is restrained. Thus, writing should be examined in the context of the society at the time that it was written, but subsequent users of the information should be aware of the bias that may exist.

Some of the culturally-tainted sources are a good source of data that is not available from any other source.

The Bundjalung area does not have the famous sites or publicly-known galleries of rock art that some other Aboriginal tribes have, and this is reflected in the quantity of research undertaken in this area. Effective research into Bundjalung culture has increased in the last two decades as a result of pressure from some academics and the requirement of Environmental Impact Statements.

3.3. Effects of the invasion

The first effect that European arrival would have had on the Bundjalung people would have been the arrival of their diseases. It is known that the impact of the diseases in the 1840s killed about 40% of the population. The reactions of the Bundjalung to these events are hard to evaluate. It is known that Aboriginal people generally believed that illness and the resulting death was caused by 'witchcraft'. If they, through the trading and social contact trails, had learned of the association between Europeans and death they would naturally have assumed that European people had very significant powers. Furthermore, as some of these diseases affected European people (to a lesser degree), that they were willing to use these powers on their own people would have led to the conflicting desire to avoid the Europeans and the desire to gain the knowledge of the magic so that they could protect themselves against it as well as use it against their enemies.

Conversely, if the knowledge of the disease was not associated with Europeans then there would be dispute and recriminations with other Aboriginal groupings with mutual claims of witchcraft. This would have led to increased warfare and less contact between groups as people tried to stay in their own areas so as to take the best advantage that spiritual links with the land afforded.

What can be certain is that regardless of the interpretation of the cause of the deaths there would have been massive social dislocation in the communities. Social links with their rights and obligations would have disappeared or been modified. More individual family groupings would have been required to perform spiritual necessities such as initiation. In some cases, within whole classes of the population or family groups, the spiritual knowledge and understanding would have been simplified.

In the context of sites, the impact of and outbreak of disease coinciding with the use of a particular sacred site would have resulted in the impression that 'bad spirits were present', and further ceremonies at that location were unlikely to occur. Sam Lever (Pers. Comm.) identified an example of such a site in the Tweed that was never used again after the occurrence of disease. When the European accounts of large gatherings of Aboriginal people are examined, a picture of "battles" occurring prior to the ceremonies develops. This was to ensure that all built-up tension and ill-will was dissipated before ceremonies were attempted. Oral evidence supports this conjecture. For example, there is evidence that one of the last ceremonies that occurred in this district was marred by a fight between two clevermen from different family groupings. It is known that this ceremonial ground was never again used for ceremonies.

4. The effect of the Physical Environment

The factors that affect the location of sites include:

- Fauna
- Flora
- Water
- Social ties
- Shelter
- Stone
- Tools
- Religious/spiritual beliefs

4.1. The Impact of the Geology

One of the major factors that influenced traditional Aboriginal life was geological formations and their influences can be summarised as:

- the formation of the topographical features explained by the Dreamtime stories and used to reinforce the laws and culture;

- the formation of the terrain, affecting transportation, location of water, the availability of rock shelters and art sites, and the potential for the extraction of mineral resources; and

- the type and availability of fauna and flora which are dependent on the geological formations.

4.2. Climatic Change

If change is a constant feature of life then it is exemplified in the climatic changes that have occurred. The two major effects of climatic change have been the drying out of the continent and the rise and fall of sea levels in response to ice age activity. It is this later point that has had the greater impact on Aboriginal life and the physiography of the study area, and causes the greatest impact on the research.

> *Environmental reconstruction is playing an increasingly important role in assessing the lifeways of prehistoric peoples in any given area. As the extent of the relationship of the Australian Aboriginal People to the land is revealed, so also is their intricate knowledge of the exploitation of its resources* (Hunter 1985 Assignment 4:4).

> *The pre- Holocene cooler, more arid conditions could have included a shift in the resource base to include some species which presently have their southern distribution limit to the north of the shield volcano landform* (Hunter 1985 Assignment 4:24).

4.3. The Effect of Changing Sea Levels

One of the major problems encountered by the archaeologist trying to determine the length of Aboriginal occupation is the effects that climatic changes have had on sea levels. The coastal margins and the lower reaches of the rivers have been identified as the most densely populated parts of the region. According to Byrne:

> *Aboriginal people congregated in large or small groups depending on the availability of food, social and religious factors. Population densities are estimated at an average of one person per 0. 4 - 2.6 square kilometres for the coast and one person per square kilometre for the foothills ... The key zones of concentration were the estuaries, the immediate coast and the river valleys* (Byrne 1989:7).

During this time sea levels varied from a low of 140 metres at 17 000 years BP. The levels consistently rose from this period until 6 - 6500 years BP when they stabilised (Byrne 1989:3). The changing outfall levels of the rivers caused the

rivers to create new profiles, with rapid erosion of the flood plain. Therefore some of the richest potential sites would have been eroded, with the zone of erosion extending back up the river. When the sea level rose, the coastline and the lower reaches of the river would have been drowned and subject to sedimentation causing the river to rapidly deposit alluvial material, creating a new profile. These areas would have had the greatest density of population and would have occurred "*where the majority of pleistocene occupation sites are*" (Bowdler 1983a:37).

Given these changes, the oldest sites that are likely to have survived and not be covered in alluvial sediment are those in the mountains or on the higher ridges lower in the catchment. Therefore, in a scientific sense, the Caldera complexes of the Murwillumbah Management Area are potentially a unique source of Aboriginal sites.

4.4. People and Populations

The size of the population determines the scale of impact created by Aboriginal people by the creation of sites and artefacts. Estimates have been and continue to be made as to the size of the Aboriginal population. The one constant feature of these estimates is the upward revision in their numbers. Most commonly quoted is Byrne's reassessment which is stated in Section 4.3.

The conjecture that Aboriginal people did not live in the forest would obviously impact on the total population figures for the region. Without clear patterns of seasonal movement and family usage of the land, it is difficult to assess the accuracy of the population figures derived from historical accounts.

What is certain is that in the early days of European occupation the Aboriginal population rate was falling. This was in part due to the introduced diseases. Byrne estimated that "*the smallpox epidemic in 1829-31 killed 40% of the population*" (1989:5). It is likely that the more realistic estimates of Aboriginal population are those in the higher range of estimates. Accurate estimations of the population are not possible and any meaningful estimate would require more extensive analysis of the Bundjalung genealogies than have ever been undertaken. For the purposes of this report it is sufficient to say that population distributions cannot be adequately assessed from the existing published data.

4.5. Aboriginal people and rainforests

Archaeologists and anthropologists have theorised that Aboriginal people did not use the rainforest or at least rarely used it. According to the scientific method, theories cannot be proved, only disproved. Therefore, to be a valid theory the evidence would need to support the theory beyond all possible doubt. In addressing this important issue Sandra Bowdler wrote:

> *Did Aborigines live in the New South Wales rainforests? Did Aborigines make use of the rainforests? The answers, as far as they can be constructed from present evidence, are ambiguous, particularly with reference to the first question* (1983b:59).

What needs to be considered is on what basis is the assumption that Aboriginal people did not use the rainforest. It would be difficult to assess this question on the basis of what has been uncovered by field work to date. The only written evidence that is of any use is that found in the diaries of pioneers who moved through the forest. The more commonly quoted of these have been analysed by Collins (1994) and are all positive except in the case of the Tweed. This apparently unexplained difference may be accounted for in the explanation that a range of resources were available to the different clans. Aboriginal informants have described the Wiabal people as being the people of the mountains and the swamp, whereas the Tweed people may be described as the people of the river and coast. In addition to rainforest type and distribution in an historic context, there is also the problem of what is the botanical definition of a rainforest. It would be dangerous to assume that the labelling of a particular flora group as rainforest species by a non-expert was necessarily correct. An incontrovertible labelling would need to be done by a botanist, and is beyond the scope of this report. However, for the purposes of this report the areas that will be considered rainforest are those areas that are presently rainforest, and those areas that have the environmental potential to have supported this forest type in the past.

Sandra Bowdler (1983b:61) separates her discussion into three sections; Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania. The latter classification defines a discrete natural geographical location, isolated from the mainland and with a distinct climate, flora and fauna which provided a rational division. The division between Queensland and New South Wales is one of convenience only and represents an historical political decision. Such a division is rejected because the implied cultural, kinship and environmental divisions do not exist. The area was populated by the Bundjalung people, with a common linguistic, cultural and kinship identity. Bowdler says *"what we might expect in New South Wales then could be occupation of tropical-subtropical types, but not of cool temperate forests, with a continuum between"* (1983b:61). According to Bowdler:

> *the first immigrants came from south east Asia, they were probably coastally adapted, and therefore probably colonized the continent by moving around the coast and up the major river system ... that more arid or resource poor areas were colonized considerably later than well-watered coastal region* (1983a:37).

It is now conceded by anthropologists that Aboriginal people lived in the tropical forests north of the State border and the historical data indicates that there were very close contacts between the people of this area and those to the north. These visitors from the north would have had the intellectual knowledge to comfortably live in the rainforest. If the improbable situation existed that Bundjalung people did not originally have the knowledge of the local flora, they

would have soon learned. Furthermore, the common conjecture of archaeologists is that there was a sudden increase in the population about five to six thousand years ago and had the area been under-utilised the people to the north would have soon moved into the area. This would not have required the hostile push in to the territory, but could have been achieved through the process of marriage and the custom of marrying a sizeable distance away and staying in the 'brides' kinship group for some time. Almost half the Aboriginal people interviewed in the Lismore area readily state that they have kinship connections to Queensland (Pers. Comm.) and that this connection normally consists of at least one grandparent.

The general question of what is the nature of the vegetation now is not as relevant as the vegetation cover at the time of Aboriginal usage. Analysis of this type would require the combined research and analytical skills of archaeologists, and soil and pollen specialists. An example of such comparative work "... *which has established a long pollen sequence for the Atherton Tablelands and has found significant changes between rainforest and sclerophyll* " (Kershaw in Bowdler 1983b:61).

Such research would enable an accurate picture of the forest at the time of the creation or discarding of artefacts. Results from this research would not only be useful in archaeological analysis but also as a tool that foresters could apply to their modelling of forest types and distributions in response to climatic changes.

This is of course a simplified discussion only to raise the issue that, as yet, we do not even know what the populations are, let alone the size of these populations. According to Bowdler what is certain is that:

> *There are suprisingly few archaeological sites recorded from the State Forests of the north coast, considering the amount of land they include, the large Aboriginal population densities said to have occurred in pre-European times, the number of archaeological sites known to have occurred in areas which are not in the State Forests, and considering also the relatively large number of natural sites sacred to modern Aborigines which have been recorded in the forests.*
>
> *The number of archaeological sites recorded from the State forests of the north coast seems to be low absolutely as well as relatively. A number of factors need to be examined. If the archaeological population was high in pre-European times, it is to be expected that the archaeological sites would be abundant* (Bowdler 1983a:61).

When Hunter examined the resources that would have been available to Aboriginal people in the study area she found that:

> *Warm temperate rainforest is close to its northern limit in this area with a number of species typical of this rainforest sub-form reaching their northmost limit on the slopes of the McPherson Range on the northern and north-western side of the caldera rim* (1985 Assignment 4:18).

> *Perhaps of even more relevance is the positioning of the landform on the faunal Torresian-Bassian (tropical-temperate) overlay, with subsequent distribution of animal species from both zones in the area* (Gilmore in Hunter 1985 Assignment 4:18).

Comparison of vegetation data to other areas may provide information as to the extent that Aboriginal people sought to change their environment by the use of fire, resources that would have been available to Aboriginal people in particular areas and hence the motivation for usage of that part of the land.

4.6. Duration of Aboriginal Occupation

The length of known occupation of the Bundjalung area is considered in academic circles to be about 6,000 years. This is based on the proven age of the Sealands Rock Shelter of 6,300 BP and a cave near Kyogle of 6,1 00 BP. Archaeologists appear to have failed to appreciate the significance of a 25,000 year old rock shelter referred to as Bushranger's Cave, in the Numinbah Valley, Lamington Plateau (Northern Star, June17, 1989). This site, in relative proximity to the study area, has the close cultural contacts that can be proven through the shared dreaming and the social contacts that are exemplified by the Bunya Festival.

Further archaeological research would have to be undertaken if a more realistic date is to be ascertained for the area. From an archaeological point of view, ideally, dating would utilise:

> *caves and rockshelters, and these are important to the archaeologists ... The cave or rock shelter is usually a permanent feature of the landscape. So Aborigines may have used it over and over again as a campsite. Over the millennia, deposits build up inside the cave, and thus is formed a layered record of past Aboriginal visits, which the archaeologists can excavate, layer by layer, to arrive at a long sequence of Aboriginal history* (Bowdler 1983a:40).

Bowdler describes a cave in the Terania Basin *"as exceedingly significant for their research potential, as they are the only stratified rock shelter sites in rainforest anywhere in New South Wales as far as I know"* (1983a:45).

In the north of the Wiabal area and the upper reaches of the Tweed, caves are more common and the use of caves is better documented. The number of caves existing traditionally allowed for some caves to be used for *"special purposes"* (M.J. Roberts Pers. Comm.).

This is a reflection of the limited time that was able to be allocated to the region and the reluctance of Aboriginal people to disclose their whereabouts due to vandalism and excavations (M.J. Roberts Pers. Comm.; J. Nayutah Pers. Obs). This report, the authors and all of the informants do not support the excavation of any caves for this purpose.

5. The Foundation of Aboriginal Values

5.1. Mythology in Aboriginal Society

Considerable time and effort has been spent over the years in the classification of Aboriginal sites and the significance that is attached to them. The basic methodology generally applied is one derived from a western - scientific - Christian approach. This approach evolved with the development of western culture through the process of industrialisation and specialisation.

In this approach, the object of study being too complex to study is progressively segmented until it reaches a small enough size to be comprehended. This approach may work with inorganic structures where the sum of the parts equal the whole. However, in organic systems this approach is increasingly shown to be a failure.

This can be contrasted with Aboriginal society where a layered approach is more appropriate. In this approach, there is a layer of the Dreamtime with ancestral beings (human and totemic), ceremonies and associated sites, and secular activities all superimposed on the landscape. This layering is not heretical, rather just a variation of the depth of Aboriginal activity that relates to an area. Divisions did not exist between the landscape, the Dreamtime story, the ceremonies and associated activities. Spirituality was life and a seven day a week activity for the duration of life. The year was punctuated by the seasons that dictated the placement of the populations and the ceremonies that had to occur. This is not to say that man and the animals lived in peace and harmony, rather that they co-existed in a tension between the various powers and held in place between them.

With this understanding of some of the complexities of traditional life, examination is needed to establish how traditional Aboriginal life fitted in to the law, the land and the environment. The basic data is encompassed in the Dreamtime, and the stories are the channel in which it has been communicated for time immemorial.

Aboriginal people had a complex and dependent relationship with the environment, based on rights and responsibilities to their land. The laws that related to the natural world were designed to create a sustainable future for the family, clan and nation. One of the basic Bundjalung laws can be translated as *"don't be greedy."*

Respect, as an aspect of traditional life, has been better sustained than most values. The respect extended not only to people but also to the land and the foods that grew on it. In the context of land and food, respect included the performance of certain rights and obligations.

6. Regional mythology

The mythological origins of the Bundjalung are explained by the "Three Brothers Story":

> *In ancient times, three brothers and their wives and grandmother were coming up the coast in their canoes. They stopped for a rest on the shore at a place now known as Evans Head. After they had collected some food and rested, the brothers decided to paddle further up the coast.*
>
> *But they could not find their grandmother. She had gone somewhere and they for some reason, did not wait for her. They launched their canoe and just as they were halfway to Bullinah (now called Ballina), their grandmother came back and saw that they had left.*
>
> *She went up to the top of Goanna Headland and called out to the water. The water rose and these were the first waves made on the North Coast. The brothers and their wives struggled to keep their canoes from sinking in the great waves. They went ashore at Bullinah and there they stopped.*
>
> *They set up their camp and went back looking for their grandmother. They took a long time to find her. She returned with them to Bullinah. The brothers decided they had to populate the land. They would leave each other, so one brother went north, one south and the other to the west.*
>
> *It was through these brothers that this area was populated, and the laws were passed on* (Nayutah & Finlay 1988:35-8).

Evidence of the relationships between the clans of the Bundjalung people, the language and the land that constitutes their clans' holdings is found in the following story:

> *The dialects of the Bundjalung tribes came from the birds. All the birds of the land flew to the top of Brown Mountain on the other side of Bonalbo. They gathered to decide what direction they would fly.*
>
> *The green parrot flew there from Evans Head. The dollar bird flew from Tooloom and the Turkey came from Mount Warning. While the birds were meeting and chattering a big silver, brown bird flew up the gorge singing Boog, Boog, Boog. He gave all the birds on the mountain a fright and they flew away.*
>
> *The Dollar bird came back over towards Tooloom calling Gizabel (Kitabal) and the people over that way became the (Gizabel) people. The old turkey flew back to Mount Warning and stood on a rock and called Knarabul and so that is the name of the people that way. The pretty green parrot as he flew back from the mountain, flew over Casino and Lismore where the silver-brown bird, a sparrow hawk speared him. He stopped to rest by a pool of water. That pool of water still has the red stain in it and it is why the green parrot has red wings and why the green parrot gave the Bundjalung their dialect.*
>
> *The Brown Satin Bird, if you listen will call Gulliwell. That is how the Gulliwell people on the big dry valley near Kyogle got their dialect.*

> *All the tribes have different dialects and they all came from the birds so says an elder, a lady from the Gizabel people today, who is keeper of the legend* (Becker n.d.:26).

From this story it can be seen that the Bundjalung clans identify themselves by dialect, and that each dialect is identified by and belongs to a specific piece of land. Thus, it is a reasonable conclusion that the people belong to that land and have both rights and obligations to the land.

6.1. Land

As Professor W.E.H. Stanner stated:

> *No English words are good enough to give a sense of the links between an Aboriginal group and its homelands. Our word "home" does not match the Aboriginal word that may mean "hearth", "country", "everlasting home", "token place", "life source", "spirit center" and much else all in one word. Our word "land" is too spare and meagre..... the Aborigine would speak of "earth" and use the word in a richly symbolic way to mean his "shoulder" or his "side"..... To put our words "home" and "land" together into "homeland" is a little better but not much. A different tradition leaves us tongueless and earless towards this other world of meaning and significance* (1969:44).

From this we can deduce that the linkage to the land can not be described purely by European words and grammar. What is required is a conceptualisation of the relationship according to the dictates of Aboriginal tradition. The Dreamtime, the oral tradition and the passage through the unending cycle of birth, life and death describe some of the parts of the complex conception.

6.2. Water

Water, even in the moist coastal margins of Australia, was a fundamental requirement of life that was treated with the respect that this imparted. Most important of all were (and still are) permanent sources of water. Water and traditional law are a feature of the Dirrangun Story from the Clarence valley. As told by Della Walker:

> *How the old woman, the old Dirrangun, how bad she was to her Balugan, a nice handsome young man. She was a wicked woman and very cruel. She even planted (hid) the water from this Balugan so she could have it all to herself. She covered the waterhole with baldey grass and bark. Now when the Balugan started to get thirsty, he noticed that there was no drinking water about and he suspected that the mother in law had stolen it for herself.*

He set off with his two hunting dogs to find the water. The dogs scared a big guruman (Kangaroo) and ran off after it. When the Balugan called his dog back he say that they had water dripping from the hair on their mouths. He followed the dogs until they led him to the waterhole. Then he started to clear it, pushing the bladey grass and bark away. He was all worked up and savage, so he struck his bilar (spear) in the mountain releasing all the water.

The old woman was trying to block the water. The Balugan called out to her 'You must be punished for your selfishness old woman, let the water you stole wash you away from this place'. The water gushed out of the hills, and the streams started to flow over the rocks. Dirrangun was swept away but she fought bravely against the river. She spread her legs against the current but the water swept on to become creeks. The old woman was washed right down to Yamba. The Balugan turned her in to a budjegar (fig tree). If you row down to Yamba you may still see the old Dirrangun waving her branches as you pass by (Walker in Heron 1991:78).

There are other contemporary stories which relate to restrictions on the use of water and the differing rights that could be attached to water. Mrs Walker relates that in the 1940s a young Aboriginal man from the Clarence on holiday in Lismore went swimming with some local boys in a stretch of the river, despite warnings from the local Elders.

Shortly afterwards, he became delirious and was admitted unconscious to Lismore Hospital. When he failed to improve with treatment, his parents concluded that he was being punished for swimming in an area prohibited to strangers by local Aboriginal tradition (Walker in Heron 1991:72).

Heron says that the young Aborigine recovered from the experience only after treatment by the Elders according to Aboriginal tradition, using herbs from the Whian Whian (1991:72). To this day, some informants will not use this area of the river for either fishing or swimming.

Steele identifies two permanent springs in Lismore as increase sites:

The (sacred) spring at Wilson's park became a djurebil, and it was forbidden to touch the water that flowed from it. Other djurebil in the Lismore area include a spring at North Lismore which was djurebil for the echidna (1984:17).

These two springs are also important as two of three springs in Lismore that relate to the marriage laws, a fundamental aspect of kinship and so traditional life and mythology, highlighting the importance of these springs. Another permanent water source in the district was described as an area *"where my mother taught me how to gather turtles and other things"* (Mrs O'Brien Pers. Comm.).

In the Whian Whian the supply of water has been changed by two major factors: the construction of the Rocky Creek Dam; and the faster run-off rates that have resulted from forestry operations. These distortions make it more difficult to assess the peaks and lows in the supply of water but some features of the supply

side do remain constant. This leads to the significance of the "Water Tank" in its facilitating the use of the northern slopes of Peats Mountain and the pathway.

Two other permanent water supply points in another part of the forest are also identified as being of great significance, but are subject to a total restriction on the disclosure of the significance and location. At this time it is not foreseen how forestry operations will affect them, and the informants have expressed a wish for confidentiality to be maintained (Anonymous informant by request).

Water is a common location for women's sites and the management area is no exception to this type of site. There is a women's site located in the area but no further information can be disclosed as it is not "men's business", due to the traditional restriction on men of knowledge of women's business. If any action needs to be undertaken to protect the Aboriginal values of the site it will become the subject of a confidential report and management recommendations (Anonymous informant by request). This site is outside the forest boundary.

Aboriginal people believed that actions could be undertaken that would affect the rainfall and thus the supply of water. An example of this is the "Rain Cave" at Evans Head, which the interference with is believed by some Aboriginal people to be the cause of floods in the early 1970s.

6.3. Trees

The landscape of traditional life was dominated by trees; the other areas comprising beaches, swamps, and relatively small areas of grasses created by burning.

Byrne claims that:

> *Most spectacular, they used fire to hunt animals and to encourage open woodland and grassland at the expense of closed forest. In some areas, the natural vegetation pattern may have been entirely altered by Aboriginal firing* (1989:4).

Early European accounts would suggest that this occurred in only a few and very limited parts of the study area. The logical conclusion is that Bundjalung people valued the fauna and flora that existed and made no concerted effort to substantially replace rainforest with grasslands within the State forests that are the subject of this report.

Trees did more than dominate the sense of sight; they featured in food, shelter, tools and even the law.

Most commonly recognised is the use of trees for food, even though only one of the trees has been turned into a commercial crop by non-Aboriginal people - the

Macadamia. Many other common trees were used. An example of the ease in which Aboriginal people found food in the area is indicated by McLeay, who states that:

> *Ralph* [an Aboriginal person] *cut the tops off a lot of young Bangalow Palms ... By splitting them open, the white embryo leaves can be taken out and they are delicious and nutritious* (n.d.:15).

This is not to say that Aboriginal people did not have to take care in their dealings with some of the trees. The giant sting tree causes severe irritation and pain when contact is made with the leaves (McLeay n.d.:16-7), but, due to their closeness and long association with the forest, the Aboriginal people knew that the cure was to cut a piece of the bark and inner material and use this to treat the area (M.J. Roberts Pers. Comm.).

Not only could trees cause physical pain but also, according to traditional belief, they could be used to inflict damage on others. In this area the Hoop Pine (Gummigal) was used in a way that "pointing the Bone" was used in others areas.

> *If you had an enemy or had cause to resent any person, you plucked a leaf from the pine tree, and pointed the leaf at what tribe you wanted to point it at, or person as the case may be- and blood would run out of their mouths* (Roberts in Norledge nd).

Therefore, it was the power of a tree combined with an incantation that fulfilled the sentence imposed by law.

It is known that there are several places in the Bundjalung area that are described as increase sites for babies. It was the belief of Aboriginal people that pregnancy was caused by the entry of an existing spirit into the women's body at a particular place.

> *Another island in the Richmond, near Cabbage Tree Island, was a djurebil inhabited by a spirit who caused women to have babies. Women desiring a baby would camp under a cabbage- tree palm; if she wanted twins or triplets she would camp under a palm that had two or three heads* (Steele 1984:11).

Thus the stories were written in the landscape and the trees that covered them. Changing the skyline by the removal of trees will result in a loss of the visual cues of the stories.

6.4. Animals and Birds

Animals both shaped and made possible traditional life. Most commonly thought of as food, they were this and a lot more to traditional people. The relationship with animals started with Dreamtime and helped to shape the land. At the centre of traditional Bundjalung beliefs is the battle between the Goanna

and the Snake. They formed the Evans River as they fought, and the Headland was formed by them.

6.5. Increase Sites (djurbihi)

In the Bundjalung area there are sacred sites variously referred to as increase sites or djurbihl,

> *at which ceremonies were performed connected with the increase of certain foods (sometimes other things like babies). Such ceremonies were carried out by a senior initiated man of a particular family, though women could also perform some rites. A pool, a grove of trees, a cave or a stone arrangement would be the place* (Oakes in Ryan 1979:189).

One of the other sites that Oaks identifies is "*a djurbihl for porcupine on the North Lismore quarry hill*" (cited in Ryan 1979:189). Steele, identifies two increase sites.

> *The* (sacred) *spring at Wilson's Park became a djurebil, and it was forbidden to touch the water that flowed from it. Other djurebil in the Lismore area to include a spring at North Lismore which was djurebil for the echidna. ...Another djurebil, referred to in a legend by Lyle Roberts, a member of the Wyrallah clan. This tree containing many possums and it was owned by a young man. His uncle who was not of the possum totem, stole the tree and carried it away, but one of the possums escaped and told the young man. The man retaliated by drowning his uncle in the river* (1984:17).

One of the other methods that was applied to the sustainable use of animals was the total exclusion of spilling blood on certain hills and mountains within the region. This was a rule that could be described as being part of the sacred law of the clans.

Grace Roberts, a Wiabal woman, states that:

> *Aboriginal families still have their totems, and it is important to them that each family member knows of this, for if the possum is the family totem, then all the family members must refrain from eating possum. And so it is with all other fauna used as totems* (Becker n.d.:25).

Difficulties that were experienced by Aboriginal people in this circumstance have continued to this day. An example of this is to be found in a section of the Leycester Creek (S. Roberts Pers. Comm.); to some families in the Wiabal clan it is taboo for fishing and swimming, to others it is not (B. Smith Pers. Comm.).

6.6. Summary

The constructed landscape became a sight of fundamental importance to the peopling of the Nation.

Many aspects of traditional life were controlled by the totemic relationships that Aboriginal people had with other people, and the land and all that was on it.

The extent of the division between man and other animals does not have the same clarity in Aboriginal society as is found in the "western societies". Association with animals starts with conception, continues through birth and may even affect marriage. The mythology of the Bundjalung people is full of examples of the transformation of people to plants and animals, and vice versa. Normally the transformation is part of a larger story and the place where it occurred becomes the law of the group that relates to the story. Therefore, by this means a society that did not have a written language wrote its law in the land.

Birds can be found as the name of the clans of the Bundjalung and even today they are widely believed to be messengers that variously bring both good and bad news. In the context of secular issues, animals played a more significant role in the food production activities of men than women. It was men that produced the estimated 15% of food that came from meat, and for this reason the relationship between men and the prey animals was stronger than that between prey animals and women.

This relationship with animals could also exist as a partnership, and the relationship between man and his hunting dog is recorded in the mythology.

From this comes an indication of the complex physical and spiritual relationship with the environment and the resources that it provided. These relationships dictated what people could eat and the ceremonies that they had to perform as part of their obligations. As totemic identification played a part in the selection of marital partners (M.J. Roberts Pers. Comm.), the impact entered all parts of the individual's life. The spiritual relationships that existed with the environment through increase ceremonies were believed to be able to influence even the climate. Aboriginal people believed that rainfall could be influenced by the performance of certain ceremonies.

The relationships that exist with the environment deserve closer examination than this paper has been able to provide, as well as more research within the community. What can be said, however, is that all relationships in traditional societies were inter-linked and based on sustainablity and survival through co-operation. This co-operation could be with individuals, families, clans or even in the spiritual co-existence with the environment of which the people were a part of. This is the basis of the totemic system that dominated traditional life.

7. The Cycle of Life

Aboriginal people's law was an understanding of the origins of the earth with all of its forms, fauna and flora. It was an understanding of humanity and the individual's place within society. The law related the individual with the past, the present and the future. Law was written in the land, recited in ritual song, dance and art. Knowledge of the law was the heritage of Aboriginal people. Through their interactions with others and the environment, Aboriginal people developed their understanding of the cycle of life.

7.1. Conception and Birth

Aboriginal understanding of conception and birth starts from the land and starts the process of linking the individual with certain sites that lasts until death.

> *According to tradition the Alccoring (totem ancestors of the tribe) left 'spirit children' behind when they disappeared from the physical world, to carry on the human race and these children are being continually re-incarnated. At each rebirth the sex and totem change. At the death of the person and after the final burial rites have been observed, that person returns to the place of the spirit children. There, he or she awaits further appearances in the flesh* (Nayutah & Finlay 1988).

Recorded in the documentary evidence are several birthing sites including Cabbage Tree Island and Tatham (Steele 1984:11). At these (and other) places, women who wished to have a child would spend time, and through the processes according to Aboriginal beliefs would have a child.

Through these processes people are tied to the country, and in particular to certain sites in the country, acquiring in the process certain rights and responsibilities.

7.2. Initiation and Bora Grounds and education

One of the most important events in the life of Aboriginal people was initiation, a ritual that marked the passage of boys into men. The ritualistic nature and the importance of the event in the lives of the young men provides a clear indication that many men gathered to perform and witness the event. The men had to be of the correct cultural status both in the context of their own initiation and in their relationship with the candidate. Lyle Roberts recounted some of the initiation as:

> *One night that I can remember in particular, there had been a Corroboree, and when it had ended we heard some strange noise through the night and that was what we called the "Nathangully Gerrallging ".*

I was then a youth, and the next thing I saw was a couple of big men who came to us as youths and told us we had to come with them and told us if we refused to do so the penalty was DEATH, not only for us but for the mothers of us youths and for their fathers.

We took with us the usual Ti-tree bark sheets. These were used the same as you would use blankets, to sleep on, and even to cover sometimes.

Strangely enough the bark of the Ti-tree is quite warm, or it was to us then.

After we had our Ti-tree bark, we were told to keep our eyes on the ground, we were compelled to look down. There were two big fires to be seen, but before we got near the fires, the men put their hands over our eyes and we were blindfolded Then after a while we were told to sit down, but not to laugh and we were threatened- "If you laugh your head will be spilt open with an axe ". And those men sounded as if they meant it. But whether they meant it I shall never know. But when we did at last look, we saw men - naked men dancing, playing jokes with one another. I can tell you it was very hard not to be able to laugh for their antics were comical but to laugh was more than we dared to do.

Yet it was this ... which commenced our ceremonies of the rites of initiation. We could hear from the camp, the wailing and crying from the grandmothers and the mothers of the sons. But we youths could not return to them, but had to remain where we were taken to the place away from the camp.

Food would be sent to us by our mothers and fathers. For every young man or youth there was an older man in attendance. "The Watchman" and I think that he could be called that, gave the order that we were not to go near the camp, or look on any person that was of course a girl. And when you spoke to your own sister, you must either, turn your back or look sideways, when you spoke to her. It was the custom for the sister to place anything she had to give her brother on the ground, and he would pick it up.

When the time came to bring the youths who had been through the Ceremony of Initiation back to the camp, there would be a big fire at the camp and when this fire was blazing at it's best, on it was thrown many green branches. And back at the place in the bush that the youths had been taken, they were told to get ready to march back to the camp and to where the fire was lighted in the camp area. When they came to where the fire was, they would circle around the fire, their mothers and sisters would be crying for them. Then when the fire had died down, the youths who were initiated were told to jump on the green bushes that had been placed on the fire and stand on it for about 10 minutes. Then their grandmothers, mothers and sisters would come to them there and throw the ashes on their back. The young men were now back to tribal life (Roberts in Norledge n.d.).

Initiation required that there would be sufficient food to feed those that attended the ceremony and therefore were timed to coincide with the seasonal surpluses. Initiation or some similar ceremonies were not confined to males. The passage of the stages of life also was to be found in the life of women. The passage into puberty and passage into the *"grey stages "* of life were marked by ceremonies.

Males were born into a world of the women's camp, and for the first years of their life they were almost exclusively reared by them. This care was not left to the mother alone as all of those classified as an Aunt or Grandmother joined in

the duties of raising the child. This was a time of play where they would learn many of the basic living skills.

At a certain age the males of the group would take over the day to day responsibility of teaching the young boys, particularly those with whom they had a particular relationship with, so that one day they could be initiated.

Initiation amounts to a ritualised death, and rebirth as a man with a new set of rights and obligations. This is a continuation of the cycles of life that is such a basic concept in nature and societies based on natural law. From this basic level of matriculation the education process would start anew, working towards and ending with the next level of initiation. This continued throughout the four stages of initiation until after the fourth level the male took on the rights and responsibilities of a cleverman, at this stage, provided that the correct blood line existed.

What needs to be understood is that not all males would necessarily progress through all or even any stage of initiation. Initiation marked the passage in to manhood and had to occur before marriage or any other of the roles of the warrior could be taken on. Equally, not all males within a family group that did go through the process of initiation would necessarily be taught about all of the stories or sites. This is supported by the association of certain clevermen with certain sites even during the early years of European occupation of the area. To ensure the continuation of knowledge there was a continuous process of training and training other's initiations and the initiation of others.

7.3. Marriage

Marriage in traditional times was subject to strict laws that were encoded and passed down in the Dreamtime stories. Some of these stories continue to be told in public to this day.

This demonstrates that even in the Dreamtime the action of the Hero's breaching of the marriage laws was not to be tolerated. Such laws made it difficult even in the short term for marriages to occur within the clan due to the wide definition that was applied to incest. Elkin makes the point that the desirability of marriage from another area was due to the general prohibition of contact with one's mother in law, usually referred to as *"mother in law avoidance"* (Elkin 1979:60) and its impact on the social life of the individuals.

7.4. Burials

One of the areas in which there is the greatest contradiction in the historical record is the area of burial and mortuary rites. Oakes states that:

> *two men died at the Bahmnngin camp above the North Lismore cemetery. There was a tallow wood tree a few yards west of the cemetery fence ... they placed him in the fork of the tallow wood tree .... Not long afterwards another man died and they scooped out a grave near the fence* (cited in Ryan 1979:201).

The description of the different burial methods may indicate one of three possibilities, the simplest of these is that methods changed in response to the theft of bones for the museum trade in artefacts.

Other possibilities are suggested in an account of the burial of "w*alk about Mary who 'died' and was buried as a woman of 17 years"* (Oakes in Ryan 1979:201). She was placed in a shallow grave, covered with earth and sticks and then a fire was lit on the top. One argument that could be used to explain the technique is that the ground was hard and that the fire would keep the dingoes away. The other reason, that tends to get more support from other historical accounts, is that the grave was shallow to allow the escape of the spirit and that the rising heat and smoke would help the spirit to ascend. Supporting this conjecture is the fact that it appears more powerful people were placed in the air upon their death. This still leaves the question as to whether this was out of respect for the person or from a greater fear of the spirit of that powerful person.

Steele (1984), in addressing the question of status, recounts the death and burial rites of the wife of a prominent member of the community. The woman, who had been in the prime of her life, had a ceremony that lasted the full night and part of the following day, involving many people. She was carried until, *"where securing a suitable tree in the dense bush* (they placed her) *in the fork of a tree about 2 feet from the ground, then they built an umbrella over her head".* This can be contrasted with another account in which, *"the funeral of an old man at Tucki was attended by only four men. They buried the body in a hole, and covered it with earth"* (Steele 1984:15).

The account by McQuilty in Ryan (1979:200), of the burials at North Lismore details the removal of the remains after a period of time. Elkin, in his discussion on the subject, indicates that there are many possible reasons for this action: that an inquest had been conducted; that the proper mourning rituals had been conducted; that the body had been intended to be re-buried at another point in the clan land; or that the burial in the tree was temporary until the opportunity arose to relocate the corpse (Elkin 1980).

In the case of elders of high levels of initiation there may have been some concept of continuation of the spirit due to an association with the area; indications exist that this situation has occurred in North Lismore. The details and nature of this information were requested to be treated as confidential by the informant.

The implication of the research into burials indicates that the style of burial is not a reliable indicator of the age of the burial as different methods were concurrently used. The appearance of pre-burial rites may indicate the prominence or power that the individual had in the society.

The pattern of the known burials in the Lismore district indicates that there is a preference for burials to occur on the hills. Yet in the more mountainous areas of the study area the determining factor appears to have been the availability of soft ground.

In addition to the burial sites located at Curry Creek (Collins 1994), Blakebrook (McQuilty Tape 1955), Modanvale (S. Roberts 1994 Pers. Comm.) and Kerrong (R Howell 1994 Pers. Comm.) there is documentation to indicate the burial of Aboriginal people on the hill above the cemetery (Oakes in Ryan 1979:201).

7.5. Aboriginal Boundaries

The Bundjalung nation is a group of clans that are united by having languages from a common origin and vocabulary. The boundaries of the Bundjalung nation are generally described as being: *"along the East Coast of Australia from the Albert River region (Queensland) to the southern reaches of the Clarence River (New South Wales) ... its western boundary being the great dividing Range"* (Keats 1988:13).

Exact definition of the external boundaries of the Bundjalung area is not required in this report as the oral and documentary evidence places the study area well within its boundaries.

The Bundjalung people were united by the language of the nation, custom, law, Dreaming and the sharing of resources. This report focuses on the anthropological aspects of Aboriginal studies, seeking to identify the regional framework in which Aboriginal society did, and significantly still does, operate. The usual approach is to consider these societies dispossessed of culture as well as of land, to do otherwise would cause complications for those who have an economic interest in the land in question.

Recognition of continuing traditional values leaves little choice but to recognise the role of kinship and the systems of rights and obligations in land.

Aboriginal people are now trying to unravel the mess that results from the murder and massacre of Aboriginal people. Some groups that were considered to have been wiped out are now identified as having existing members living, and it may yet occur that others who were considered to have survived may not have done so.

According to Collins:

> *Aboriginal systems of kinship and alliance worked to link widespread groups in complex patterns of material and marital exchange. The result of this is that Aboriginal people in often distant localities may affiliate with local areas and it is possible that there may be individuals in other parts of Northern NSW and Southern Queensland with traditional links to the study area* (1990:18).

Within a more contemporary time frame there has been a migration of Bundjalung people to Sydney and other cities. Although some of these people have lost contact with their relatives, they have not lost the sense of belonging that comes from the connection with this land.

Many of the lost generations of stolen children are still to come home. It is not known how many children from this area were taken but it is known that many of their records were destroyed.

The people that are qualified to determine questions of kinship associations are the Elders. There is a growing body of younger Aboriginal people who are now rediscovering the heritage of their forefathers and in the process creating the Aboriginal renaissance.

7.6. The Clans

The debate as to clan boundaries is pertinent to this report as the study area covers the traditional area of more that one clan. Examination of methodologies that should be employed in this work (the study and definition of clan boundaries) are included in the following sections.

7.6.1. Sources of Information - Traditional Boundaries

There are three approaches that may yield information as to the traditional boundaries: language; topography; and information as to the location of sites. Language appears to provide the best regional information, with sites and geography refining the more exact locations.

7.6.2. Dialects

Crowley (1978) The Middle Clarence Dialects of the Bundjalung is an infrequently-used source, but a highly relevant document for this project. It provides the basis of the dialect comparison needed to create a language-based map of the Bundjalung area. Crowley's data is based on a review of the historical data and his own observations. His research is a scientific analysis that appears not to be tainted by the cultural prejudices common to other research.

That this approach for the purpose of boundary examination has a sound cultural basis is illustrated by the story told by Grace Roberts (Becker n.d.:25). This story outlines how the clans got their names from the calls made by birds, providing a link between geography, dialect and people.

Dialects provide a rough outline of the traditional boundaries that can be further refined by natural boundaries, sites, rights and obligations.

7.6.3. Natural Boundaries

Many authors have used distinctive landforms as the basis for defining traditional boundaries. For example, Keats (1988) adjusted Crowley's boundaries to take into account the topography of the region.

However, what constitutes a natural border can suffer from cultural bias. Some non-Aboriginal writers considered that rainforests and swamps were avoided by Aboriginal people except in exceptional circumstances, and then for only short durations. To Aboriginal people a rainforest or swamp would not have been anything more than a resource, unsuitable as a boundary as it would be difficult to accurately assess on whose land a person was on. Whereas locally, dominant ridges would have provided a clear and indisputable boundary. The desirability of this to a culture based on peaceful clan coexistence, was to ensure that time and resources were not wasted in pointless boundary disputes by warfare. This reasoning is supported by the significant correlation of watershed/river catchment areas to that of traditional boundaries.

7.6.4. Sites, rights and obligations

Keats describes boundaries as being of two types: open and closed (1988:15-30). The implication of this is that, apart from any physical difficulty of entering into a territory, there were certain restrictions as to the locations and obligations involved in crossing tribal boundaries. According to informants, message sticks were used to inform the 'owners of the land' of the impending arrival of the visitors (M J Roberts 1993 Pers. Comm.).

The description of a boundary as being open does not imply that free and unrestricted access was possible, but rather that the rules were relaxed. The first reason for this is that these territorial boundaries were not as physically well-defined, and second, as the resident clan could expect visitors from that direction there were fewer difficulties in controlling /assisting such groups. These points are general supported by oral evidence and by some of the ethnohistories.

The observations of McWhinney (n.d.) (letters to RRHS), when applied to the context of closed and open boundaries, can be used to explain the use of traditional footpaths and the rules that appear to have been attached to them.

Thus, the emergence of large bodies of armed men appearing through the 'back door', *that is, by crossing a closed boundary,* would have been an invitation to assume that the purpose was for stealing women *or some other unlawful purpose.*

The oral evidence gathered supports and refines these general propositions. When questioned about the relationship between water catchments and land ownership, the Wiabal informant sang a song learned from his grandfather. In the translation of this song the 'ownership' of a particular creek is claimed. Questioning revealed that the creek ran all the way to the watershed and that all of it (the land) was claimed.

The informant further stated that along with ownership was a co-existing obligation to ensure the water did not become polluted. Examples of the implications of these obligations included the removal of dead animals from the water and the necessity to camp away from the water to ensure the continued purity of the water. In these camps, Aboriginal people would bring water away from the creek for use in cooking preparations and the unused parts of animals would be kept away from the water.

The evidence gathered from this informant indicated that when travelling to the territory of another clan, the observations of McWinney (n.d.) as to the mode of travel was not far from accurate. Thus, the proposition that a canoe could be used to transport warriors into the middle of another clan's territory is false because to do so would be to arrive unannounced and could be misinterpreted with dire consequences. However, in some cases elderly people and young people would be transported in this manner.

7.7. Aboriginal Pathways

According to Byrne:

> *Human settlement is never random. People have definite reasons for being in certain places at certain times. These reasons give rise to a settlement pattern. Aborigines congregate in large and small groups depending on the availability of food, social and religious factors* (1989:5).

These social and/or religious exchanges involved considerable numbers of people and in particular would involve Elders, young men and girls of marriageable ages, and initiation candidates (Collins 1990).

In answer to the question of the movement of Aboriginal people within the Wiabal area, the informant responded that *"tribal people lived in four seasons"* (M J Roberts Pers. Comm.). This is to say that they moved around the clan area according to the supply of foods, feeding on surpluses and resting the area the rest of the year.

Some of the associations and links with other clan and tribal areas depended on the availability of a suitable pathway on which to travel. Evaluation of these pathways would have included the strain that the path would place on the travellers. In this situation it was often the combination of climate and geology that created the need to travel, but it was the topography that dictated the route that people took. The tributaries of the Wilsons and Leycester systems, carving into the lava flow, created a birds-foot drainage pattern that dissected the undulating volcanic plateau. This resulted in a series of ridges that fanned out in the area above Lismore and that are generally joined at the escarpments bordering the southern rim of the Mount Warning and Nimbin volcanic complexes.

It was the ridge lines that provided the lines of least resistance to the traveller (M J Roberts Pers. Comm.), vegetated by wet sclerophyll as opposed to the rainforests that dominated the valleys. Evidence of the relative ease of travel is mirrored in the accounts of the early years of European settlement. A description in Disputed Plains (McLeay n. d.) talks of a route that ran:

> *to Lismore then out through Modanville to Dunoon. On towards Dorroughby to the present Rocky Creek Dam site ... towards the Whian Whian State Forest.. Peats Mountain and on to the Night Cap* (n.d.:20)

At certain times of the year there would have been difficulties finding camps on or near the pathways that conformed with the accepted predictive model for camp sites: 'a flat well-drained area near water' (Dallas et al; 1990). Often the water could be found, providing the knowledge of hidden water was known. The fact that such knowledge has been passed down is supported by the ability of the Aboriginal clan to locate water that is unlikely to be found under other circumstances.

The third and major factor would have been the knowledge of the plants and animals in the areas through which the pathway traversed. The regional variations in flora and fauna that existed could have led to mistakes, leading to starvation or poisoning. The real danger of accidentally being poisoned by unknown plants leads to the practice of drinking directly from the water supply rather than using hands (M J Roberts Pers. Comm.).

Regular movements along the same pathways would reduce this problem. Yet in spite of precautions there would have been casualties from the stresses involved, evidenced by burial sites identified by the community that lay near the major pathways.

7.7.1. The Bunya Festival & Back

The Bunya Festival provides an indication of the distances that were sometimes involved in the associations between different Aboriginal groups. The fact that Aboriginal people would travel such long distances cannot be explained by the

availability of food alone. Rather, it was the availability of food that allowed a social gathering of such a scale. Steele discusses the festival and the return visits by Queenslanders in the 1880s with reference to the Bora ring at Tucki Tucki, stating that:

> *The ridge on which the bora ring stands extends in a north - south direction, and was the main route of aboriginals from the Richmond travelling to Lismore and beyond. Aboriginals from the Richmond and Clarence used to visit the Bunya festivals, in Queensland and return home with spears purchased there ... Evidently these visits which was a corroboree ground for Aboriginals from the bunya country who used to visit the Wrallah (Wigabal) clan every year in the 1880's* (1984:14).

The strength of the ties that were made at this time is indicated by the involvement of Queenslanders in the battles against the Tweed (battle at North Lismore).

Oakes states that: *"Scientists tell us that the Bunya Pines that grow away from the Bunya Mountains have resulted from seeds dropped by Dark people returning from the festivals"* (cited in Ryan 1979:188).

This claim has been disputed by some who allege that these trees were planted by European settlers. The truth of the matter is probably that the original trees were indeed brought back by Aboriginal people, and that the seedlings may have been planted by Europeans. The Bunya trees found at the base of the showground hill in North Lismore are associated with a number of important sites (R Heron Pers. Comm.). Furthermore, this site is located close to one of the main pathways that ran south to Tucki Tucki and north through Modanville, Dunoon, The Whian Whian, Barkersvale, Border loop and Rhoouth Downing and into Beaudesert. Therefore it is probable that the original trees in this locality were planted by Aboriginal people to be used as a food source in later years.

Another example of one clan giving a tree to another clan as a gift, as is found in Bundjalung National Park where the people from the Jabulum Clan (at Tabulum) gave a Karagong tree to the Banjalang Clan. The importance of the gift is that this tree was used to produce the fibres that were used in the manufacture of nets for fishing and other purposes. This tree is referred to as the Marriage Tree and was planted 60 years before the arrival of Europeans in Australia (M J Roberts Pers. Comm).

The Clans were dependent on maintaining relationships with other clans. One of the major resources required was the sharing of the genetic pool to maintain the long term viability of smaller clans. Information supplied also indicated that marriages were organised by elders and were used to help heal the rifts between clans (Collins 1990:8).

Conflict continued to exist between Wiabal and Tweed and is documented by Steele's account of a battle in North Lismore (1984:17). Care needs to be used in the evaluation of *these battles* because the original source, McQuilty (tapes 1955), talks about this battle being the prelude for a joint hunt and ceremony.

7.8. Mythology

It may be that in some cases the stories have disappeared into the fog of European invasion with its murder, massacre and dispossession. However, caution needs to be applied to this consideration. Access knowledge in traditional societies was based on the line of blood and subject to the individual earning the right to access. This was achieved through the process of the fulfilment of obligations and the processes of initiation. An obligation that was learned through initiation was that of the knowledge to whom the story could be passed to. There was often a need to convey some of the meaning to others outside the entitled group to avoid the possibility of the laws relating to the site being violated. The divisions went much further than the commonly-accepted divisions of men's and women's business.

The system worked well until the mass destruction of the kinship groups by the Europeans, their diseases, guns and axes. What appears to have happened is that it was not only the scale, but also the rate of destruction which affected the retention of knowledge. It appears that the continuation of collective knowledge of the culture is a continuum between the basic public knowledge and that held by the traditional clever men and women.

The ability of the individual members of the various Aboriginal communities to reveal information also reflects the rapid truncation of the initiation processes and, in the case of clans that have maintained their own identity, whether this identity continued along matrilineal or patrilineal lines, or both. Aboriginal people had a complex and dependent relationship with the environment, based on rights and responsibilities to their land. The laws that related to the natural world were designed to create a sustainable future for the family, clan and nation. One of the basic Bundjalung laws can be translated as *"don't be greedy."*

Respect, as an aspect of traditional life, has been better sustained than most values. The respect extended not only to people but to the land and the foods that grew on it. In the context of land and food, respect included the performance of certain rights and obligations including the totemic system that affected all. To be greedy was to waste food and this showed a lack of respect (M J Roberts Pers. Comm.). Thus, the Aboriginal concept of 'respect' is far more encompassing than in European understanding.

7.8.1. Classification of Sites

Flood *"defines a 'site' as any place where human activity can be identified"* (Flood 1983). She also defines 'sacred' as pertaining to religious or cultural significance. With these definitions in mind one can see a definite cultural link to specified sacred sites for those people who occupy that area. Sites were used by the people as ceremonial areas for events such as the initiation of young boys, marriage rites, or specified trade areas where sanctioned trade practices were carried out. Flood elaborates by saying that sacred sites do not have to have archaeological evidence of human activity in order to be considered sacred by the local people. The sites may be part of a Dreamtime story that is significant in the creation of a certain geographical area or prominent land mark. There are other reasons why sites may be sacred. They may have been the tools of discipline applied to children in order to ensure that they obey the adults. They may have used a specified area or land formation as a deterrent to stop children from playing near it, for fear that they would be punished by the spirits that occupied the site.

Some of the occupation sites exist as transit camps from the major journeys that the people undertook. Steele found that "*they would camp at Gundurimba for several weeks* (and) *proceed to Bexhill"* (1984:16). These camps were used for a relatively short time due to the rapid depletion of the food supply. Others were used by smaller groups and were hunting and gathering camps that were used over a longer period.

7.9. Mythological Sites

Mythology and the oral tradition are two factors that cannot be separated; mythology represents the continuation of stories about the past into the present to be continued into the future. Mythology provided an explanation of origins of the people and the laws that generations to come could live by in a successful and sustainable way. This was as true of the Bundjalung area as elsewhere in Australia; what is harder to determine is the relative quantity of the mythology and the associated sites that have survived.

7.9.1. Predictive Models

Predictive models have been traditionally used to try and assist in the possible location of sites within a large area where, in the view of some, a single and comprehensive survey is not feasible due to constraints of time, money or the nature of the area.

The use of predictive models requires that: the model be developed from accepted methodologies and uses the known existing data; and that the model be tested by ground-truthing the expected sites.

A basic predictive model in reflection to Aboriginal sites describes the occurrence of camp sites. In this model the majority of sites will occur on flat sections of ridge lines in proximity to water. This model has been well tested but has a number of flaws that need to be considered before it is applied. Topography, hydrology, flora and fauna cannot be considered to be consistent factors. Seasonal variations that occur even within a century will mean that some creeks may flow for forty years and others rarely flow for four. Landslip and creep may result in a down slope migration of sites over time moving the oldest, most significant and rarest sites away from the predictive location. This results in what can be considered a slumped horizontal stratification of the site. Changes in the climate can also result in changes in the flora and fauna.

Therefore, this simple predictive model, if properly applied, would include historical data relating to the rate of soil production, soil migration, and climate (temperature and rainfall), as well as to changes in rainfall. Previous surveys have not applied this high standard to the evaluation of the model.

Models that can be applied to other types of Aboriginal sites would assume that traditional people had an intimate knowledge of the terrain and so would know the location of all caves within their lands. Presumably, all the caves would have been used for shelter and should contain artefacts at some depth. The problem is that at some point the description of a cave meets with that of a rock over-hang. The question then becomes: what size over-hang is required to provide shelter, and after how much rain would the shelter cease to be effective?

When the test of change over time is applied to such sites the two following observations can be made: changes in vegetation caused by logging and other factors will affect the run off of water from the ground above; continuing deposition from the roof of the cave may hide artefacts or the depth that the cave previously had.

8. The significance of sites

8.1. Aboriginals today

Because of the post-contact history of the region, many sites have been destroyed or the stories lost. As a consequence, the remaining sites are an important link to the Aboriginal people's past which must be protected for the benefit of their descendants. A large part of the importance of the sites is the Dreamtime significance that may also be present. Because Aboriginal history, stories and legends are passed down through generations by way of oral traditions, art and dances, amongst other methods, there are no books as such that can be bought or loaned from libraries. This means that the only access Aborigines today have to their culture and history are the sacred sites which remain in local regions. These sites also may be part of the Dreaming of the

local regions and may include events that involve Ancestral beings during the time of creation. The loss of the remaining sites for Aboriginal people would be detrimental to their future in a cultural sense. This report is a recognition of the Aboriginal values that are attached to sites by Aboriginal people and an attempt by State Forests to manage the forests under their care with due regard to Aboriginal heritage.

The possible use of the extant sites is also an important reason to maintain and protect them. For young Aboriginal people today, who are re-acquainting themselves with their culture and traditional society, these sites are a great asset and a direct link to the past. It is important in this light to perpetuate the existence and possible use of sacred sites as stated above for the benefit of future generations of all Australians. Traditional Australian Aboriginal culture and religion was/is vastly different from European culture and religion. Rather, it is the land that is the sacred reality and that has the primary place in Aboriginal religion as the vehicle or medium of spiritual power (Charlesworth et al; 1990).

Thus, the core of Aboriginal religious belief is the oneness of the land and all that moved upon it (Broome 1982). This instinctive belief in a world in which humans, the landscape and the natural species were/are all part of the same ongoing life force was/is the basis of the intimate relationships existing between these three related aspects of Aboriginal religion (Broome 1982).

This relationship between Aboriginal people and their environment continues in contemporary Aboriginal culture. Sacred and/or significant sites provide a link to traditional life and belief for Aboriginal people of a particular territory, as well as facilitating the continuation and, perhaps, revival of their identity and culture. On the basis of traditional Aboriginal religious beliefs, to deprive Aboriginal people of their land is to deprive them of their culture. Since European invasion two hundred years ago, Aboriginal traditional culture has been dramatically altered or disrupted.

In spite of what has occurred, Aboriginal people have managed to maintain contact with their sites because the features of the land have been visible in many of the local towns and communities where the majority of Aboriginal people live. For example, the Wiabal people living in Lismore can remain in touch with the nearest of the Three Brothers simply by looking from Lismore Heights to the north. Similar situations occur with Mount Warning and the Mebbin.

This is not the only method in which Aboriginal people have remained in contact; for many years members of local communities supported themselves by the collection of Corkwood. This occupation appears to have peaked some time in the 1950s. The anecdotal evidence suggests that those involved and their families are a pool of traditional knowledge that the community can, and does, draw on.

Always there is a local and regional significance attached to certain places and sites. The stories that are attached to these places were always in two forms: the private form to which access was privileged and restricted, and the public form. The public form appears to have generally survived better than the private form, but this can be accounted for in part by the continuing reluctance to disclose the private form.

9. The Whian Whian

The Whian Whian forest has known regional and local significance. This significance relates to the Dreamtime, the arrival of the first Bundjalung people, and the execution of their traditional rites and obligations.

The Whian Whian is part of the body of the Three Brothers. This Brother can be seen clearly in the landscape with the head lying behind Nimbin. The Head is formed by Blue Knob with the Sphinx forming the nose. Moving towards the east, the Whian Whian forms the torso of the Brother. The details of the significance of the head need not be stated beyond its association with clevermen. The Terania Basin is associated with certain burials and the processes that surround initiation. An Initiation ring is recorded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service as being just south of the Big Scrub Flora Reserve.

The land around the Big Scrub Flora Reserve has been modified by both clearing and the construction of the Rocky Creek Dam. The dam is known to have covered at least eight burial sites and some other sites. The Brother continues across the Whian Whian and follows a ridge to the feet located at the area known as Broken Head.

The significance of the Three Brothers is that it represents the Bundjalung understanding of their origins, at least to those people with strong traditional ties to the study area. From these Brothers came the initiation ceremony and other corroborees. The fact that the Wiabal Clan identify with this brother as the father of their clan and the mother of the Brother as the grandmother of the clans, provides the underlying importance and significance of the area and the Whian Whian Forest in the context of this report.

Overlaying the origins is the continuance of the Clan for which there are a number of essential ingredients. The most basic of these needs are those for food and water. Jan Hunter (1985) documents some of the many uses for the plants found in the study area. These uses include tools, food and medicine; during the field work some of the bush foods were eaten and on two occasions members of the research team were treated with traditional medicines. The water provided by the catchment of the Wilsons River provides not only the local supplies but also the majority of the supplies down stream. The

recognition of the importance of water is reinforced by the fact that one of the best known Bundjalung sites is an increase site for water.

One of the needs in traditional societies was the need to travel and continue contacts with other communities. Contact was required to arrange marriages so that the traditional laws associated with marriage could be carried out, ensuring that people did not marry unless they were in the correct relationship. Again, the importance of the marriage laws has been passed down and relates to the general study area with its southern terminus in Lismore.

It is claimed that the Whian Whian Forest was a significant and essential element in the network of pathways. The examination of this claim was approached in a number of different ways. The first was an examination of the topographical maps of the area. As a result of the geological formations of the land and the fauna and flora that occupied it, Aboriginal people always tried to follow the line of least resistance in their travels. The Whian Whian with its continuation along what is now the Nightcap Trail and then up the Tweed Richmond water shed along the border loop is such a candidate.

As previously stated, the oral evidence of the community indicated this route and from an examination of the archaeological evidence it can be seen that there are significant locatable campsites along the route. When this was checked on the ground the area south of Rummary Park was chosen. In this area, all sites selected for examination showed evidence of Aboriginal occupation in spite of the disturbance caused by logging.

It could be argued that the pathway is of no more significance than a corridor that Aboriginal people travelled along. However, closer examination reveals that the regional nature of the path and the purposes of the travels imparts a much greater significance than this. Different groups of Aboriginal people were travelling to fulfil their spiritual and sacred obligations. These groups were meeting and as a matter of course would hold ceremonies and conduct corroborees. In this way the pathway could be considered as part of a pilgrims way, with the movement along and the conducting of ceremonies being part of the essential spiritual life. The logical extension of this argument is that any sites along the way, evidenced by secular artefacts, should be considered as part of the pathway, and that any degrading of such close sites would degrade the pathway further. The closest description that is used in Aboriginal research is that of a dreaming trail and this well may prove to be the most appropriate significance to assign.

One point of interest that does arise with the trail is the claim that the country between Peats Mountain and Minyon Falls is the home of a "*buyuny that will get you if you don't look out*"(Oakes in Ryan 1979:200). This is a device that was often used to ensure that people did not go where they should not. The fact that it is known of and the existence of a tape made by Mr Lyle Roberts (that is not allowed to be transcribed), all point to the existence of a special site that was

the exclusive domain of the local people. This means that its significance should be treated separately; however, it is difficult to assess what the location, extent and nature of the site is as there is a high level of resistance to discussion about it.

9.1. The Whian Whian State Forest

The Whian Whian has to be considered in the context of the Three Brothers Story. One of these brothers is the range of hills that runs from behind Nimbin, encompassing the Terania Basin and The Whian Whian, and following the range of hills out to Broken Head, which forms his feet. As the first of the Bundjalung people, father of the clan, bringer of the law and holder of the first initiation, the warrior is fundamental to the beliefs of the Wiabal. In the landscape, the Whian Whian is the chest and torso of this man of the Dreamtime, hero and father figure.

Superimposed on the sacred landscape is the physical aspect of traditional life. Aboriginal people were never sedentary people. They moved according to the dictates of resources, social obligations, and 'law of the land' obligations to maintain their land. The terrain in which their beliefs and stories are written also had a physical impact on the movement of people. The lines of least resistance were the ridge lines and these were used as pathways. The movement of Aboriginal people included movements within the clan areas and between the clans. The well-documented travel to the Bunya Mountain in Queensland and the reciprocal visits of the Queenslanders occurred along several routes. At some points this pathway is well defined as the geography of the area precludes any other choice. One of these sections is part of the Nightcap trail and oral evidence supports this conjecture. From Geebung Mountain there are a number of possible routes.

The pioneers of the European community were inclined to take full advantage of the existing system of Aboriginal pathways and normally had Aboriginal guides. McLeay documents the movement of a valuable horse to the races in Brisbane from near Lismore and documents the route as being:

> *out through Modenville to Dunoon. On towards Dorroughby turning up on old Tweed Road to the present Rocky Creek dam site. Turn sharp right towards Whian Whian State Forest. Past Rummery Park and Peats Mountain and on to the Nightcap- Down the Tweed Valley passing through Tyalgum, Dunbible and Condong Creek on to Murwillumbah* (McLeay n.d.:20).

Included in this list would be the ridgeline that runs south along what is now Nightcap Road, following the line past Lost Valley and south through Minyon drive and a line in between that would go through what is now Rocky Creek dam. The answer as to which was used is that all of them would be used, especially when a number of large groups were travelling north or south on inter-clan visits.

Visits to the coast at Ballina or Byron Bay would have utilised a pathway that existed through Minyon road.

9.1.1. Lost Valley and surrounds

Lost Valley is an area that Aboriginal people are extremely reluctant to talk about or visit. Aboriginal informants claim that Lost Valley is in pristine condition, and that the area has been lightly, if ever, logged. This would suggest that any sites in the area would be intact and undisturbed.

Aboriginal informants appear determined that the area should be protected. Similar terrain and seclusion in the nearby Terania Basin reveal various occupation sites, and according to deceased Elders were connected with burials and initiations.

Aboriginal sensitivities were demonstrated by political acts in this area of the forests. The indications are that any activities that impact on this area will meet with opposition from some sections of the Aboriginal community. There is no indication that key informants will change their attitudes to discussions on this area. Given the sensitivity of the area no ground surveys have been conducted in the valley.

Murray John Roberts identified a location where a natural or modified rock structure, hidden from view, formed a *"natural tank for water"* (Pers. Comm.). Located in an indistinct outcrop of rock, there is a hole that is covered by a boulder. This opens out into a large tank that even in a drought has a plentiful supply of clean fresh water. The importance of this water supply is that it is located near a large flat area in which artefacts have been found. The importance of this area is indicated by the passing down of its location through the generations of local Aboriginal people. It would be necessary to have knowledge of the general location of the site to find it, as a chance discovery of this site is remote given the unexpected nature of the site.

Supporting the claims of the importance of the waterhole is a large campsite about 100 metres away and adjacent to the probable route of the pathway. The proximity of these two features and their obvious association call for both to be classified as one integrated site. Murray John Roberts (Pers. Comm.) indicated that he considered the site to be directly associated with this major Aboriginal pathway. The regional archaeology and anthropology tend to support this statement.

Three other camp sites have been identified in compartment 91, which suggests that either the area was extensively used or a combination of the terrain and extensive surveys led to the discoveries. These sites appear to have been associated with the use of the area as an occupation area rather than as an annexe to the pathway. The additional find of scarred trees on the lip of the

valley adds to the significance of this area, in that the sites, when considered as a whole, provide the potential to gain a better understanding of forest use.

9.2. Mount Warning

It is difficult, if not impossible, to find a Bundjalung person who does not consider Mount Warning (Wollumbin) to be an area of the highest significance. The only difference that does exist is which of the many stories attached to the mountain is the most important. This single mountain provides various Bundjalung people with a sense of identity and understanding of where they belong in the scheme of life.

A part of the Birds story is told by Jolanda Nayutah:

> *Once, a long time ago, turkeys could fly greater distances than they can today. Well, one turkey flew from Mt. Brown. He had joined a gathering of other birds talking, when a giant bird approached. All the birds, the turkey too, were so frightened they flew away quickly.*
>
> *The turkey flew all the way to Wollumbin, stopped on top of the great mountain to catch his breath, but as he rested, he was wounded in the head by a spear from a warrior.*
>
> *Because of his head wound, the turkey's flying ability was impaired.*
>
> *That is the reason why turkeys today can fly only short distances before they must rest; and if you look at Wollumbin you can see the mountain top has a small bend in it where the spear hit the turkey. The mountain tip is the point of the warrior's spear* (1988:25).

This leads Aboriginal people to not only have an understanding of the name of one of the dialects (from the sound made by the turkey) but also an understanding and explanation of the behaviour of the turkey.

The respect that this mountain is viewed with is reflected in the understanding of the spirit of the mountain as being the warrior or fighting chief of the mountain. The "*wounds they received in battles are the scars on the Mountainside, and the thunder and lightning are the results of their battles.* [it is said that from] *certain angles, you will see the face of the warrior chieftain the mountain outline*" (Nayutah & Finlay 1988a:43). This would have been as close as some Aboriginal people would have gone, as access to the top was restricted to only the fully initiated men. Wollumbin is a very sacred initiation site for men.

Lastly, but not least, is the understanding that Wollumbin forms the head of the eldest of the Three Brothers and the bringer of the Bora ceremonies. The significance of this can not be underestimated.

From this it can be concluded that the significance of the area is immense and impossible to calculate. What can be said with some certainty is that the area is of significance to many different people and in many different stories. Given the breadth of association with this mountain, it is difficult to assess the extent of the area that is considered to be significant and in need of protection. Mount Warning's management is one of regional significance and needs to involve a collective voice from the Elders of the region.

9.3. Mebbin

The geographical features of the area are the primary factor in land usage and the locations of sites. Bar Mountain in the National Park was a site associated with the initiation process and as such can be considered to be a sensitive area, to which information has been, and will be, restricted.

Hanging Rock is considered to be the north western corner of the traditional lands of the Wiabal Clan. It is known that this location is considered to be an increase site by these and some of the other Aboriginal groups that were associated with the study area. The location of this site at or near the junction of the different clan groups will increase the possibility that other groups of Aboriginal people will have a different significance assigned to the area. From a managerial point of view this does not matter as long as the area is treated as being significant and sensitive.

The "Pinnacle" is an area that was identified as being significant but this significance was not specified. It can be assumed that there will be open and other sites located in the area, probably with a high level of sensitivity.

One of the most certain features of this area is that the Tweed/Richmond divide was an extension of a major pathway that is an extension of the same path that can be traced from Evans Head to the Bunya Mountains in Queensland.

Two sites of significance that were identified as being in the Mebbin but were not located, are a women's site and a burial site.

The Mebbin is a situation where the significance of the sites is difficult to assess. Those sites which have come to attention in the research are primarily focused on the ridge of the Tweed and Richmond divide. As this area is primarily within the National parks system, the management of these sites is outside the control of State Forests.

10. General Conclusions and Recommendations

The report finds that it is impossible to study one part of Aboriginal life without touching on almost every other area. All are so closely interrelated and bound together by the Dreaming. It is possible to study one Aboriginal community without touching on any other and to come up with a coherent picture of life. Each Aboriginal community is fully its own entity, with its own laws, customs, land and sacred sites, dreaming stories and so on.

Social organisation is an enormous part of Aboriginal life and includes a sociospatical organisation, kinship, relationships, politics, leadership, life cycles and ceremonies. All of these aspects of social organisation are in accordance with the 'Dreaming' but differ in format from group to group, according to their different 'Dreaming Stories'.

Aboriginal systems work in a different way to the systems of non-Indigenous people and this makes it harder to define. Kinship is a complex way of relating to other Aborigines. It gives a sense of identity to the people because wherever they go and whatever they do, there are laws on how to behave in every relationship with any other person.

Behaviour, forms of address, duties and responsibilities are all layed down beforehand and this gives a sense of security to the individual, a sense that they have a place in the community and an important role to play. The kinship laws are long and complicated and are taught to children throughout their lives so they grow up knowing them.

The sacred sites are special to the people. By painting their Dreaming and taking responsibility for their sites, the people are keeping themselves alive by keeping their Dreaming alive. If they let their Dreaming die, they are letting themselves die.

This is how strongly the Aboriginal people believe in their interconnectedness with everything and this is why they protect their sacred sites. In their laws, if one sacred site is desecrated then every sacred site in Australia to do with that Dreaming will be damaged in some way. Their songs, artwork, dances and ceremonies are their way of keeping their Dreaming alive and in doing so keeping themselves alive.

The significance and power of the Dreaming can clearly be seen in the lives of Aboriginal people. It is the tie that binds them together and gives them the foundation for life. It touches on every aspect of their life just as every aspect of life overlaps with all others. The important social organisation which gives them an identity and their creative expression as seen in so many different forms as an expression of this identity are both inextricably linked to the Dreaming. Ceremonies and corroborees are social structures involving every creative

expression found in their culture and show the close interrelatedness of each area of life. This unique way of seeing and knowing everything is a circular plan of past, present and future that encompasses every part of life, both physical and spiritual.

10.1. Recommendations for the Management of Aboriginal Values

All land systems should be considered to have the potential to contain sites of significance to Aborigines. Forests also have values to Aboriginal people not contained in specific sites, for example they are generally held to be important for acquiring "bush tucker" and "bush medicines". To mitigate potential impacts on possible sites, and to provide an avenue for a voice in forest management, regular liaison must be maintained with Local Aboriginal Land Councils and other Aboriginal groups and/or individuals whose boundaries relate to the forests. There are many Local Aboriginal Land Council boundaries that overlap another Aboriginal clan who may have sites of significance in other Local Aboriginal Land Council boundaries.

Individuals within the Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal organisations have made their concerns to the authors that the disturbance and destruction of Aboriginal sites is not acceptable. Their main concerns were the ongoing destruction and desecration of their sites and culture. Most Aboriginal people view the destroying of their sites by governments as another form of genocide of their culture and heritage.

The District Forester must maintain on-going liaison with Local Aboriginal Land Councils that take in the EIS area regarding the Aboriginal value of the sites or forests in the Murwillumbah Management Area. In particular State Forests of New South Wales must:

- consult with Local Aboriginal Land Councils over harvesting plans where there are well-known historic associations;

- negotiate with the Far North Coast Regional Land Council on the best way of achieving a satisfactory assessment of State Forests;

- not carry out any program of public interpretation of archaeological and anthropological sites within forests without consultation with Local Aboriginal Land Councils;and

- seek to incorporate into its management strategy the findings of any future study specifically targeting Aboriginal values of/in the forests in the study area.

It is vital to maintain the Aboriginal liaison officers within State Forests. Their role in finding the appropriate people on discovery of a significant Aboriginal site is imperative. They liaise with all Aboriginal groups, organisations and individuals.

10.2. Recommendations relating to Forestry Operations

Roads that run on the top of the dominant ridgelines in State forests should not be extended, widened or re-routed. This would preserve existing sites from being destroyed on the many dominant ridges or Aboriginal pathways.

The water run-off from small gullies and creeks must not be changed as this would destroy the significance of many important Aboriginal sites, for example, womens sites.

Site-specific recommendations

	Buffer Zone	Site / Place
1	200m from the rim of Lost Valley	Aboriginal place of significance
2	100m from stone water tank near Lost Valley	Aboriginal significance
3	300m from the base of Peats Mountain.	Aboriginal anthropological and historical significance
4	200m from cliff face all along Mt. Jerusalem	Aboriginal Pathway, anthropological and historical significance

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APPENDIX 1

SITES LOCATED DURING SURVEY

Sites are listed by number (Site No.), Grid Reference (AMG, from 1:25,000 Topographic Map: Huonbrook 9540-1-N), and Site description. Please note that two '_' have been inserted in each of the grid references below to ensure that the exact location of sites are not revealed.

Site No.	Grid Reference	Site description
1)	531_30-6834_00	1 core artifact, gray
2)	531_70-6834_00	1 core artifact, gray
3)	532_80-6834_00	1 stone axe, brown
4)	532_00-6834_00	1 core artifact, brown
5)	534_00-6834_60	2 flakes, gray
6)	537_80-6835_50	1 artifact
7)	537_00-6835_00	White ochre
8)	533_50-6836_50	1 artifact
9)	533_90-6836_50	1 artifact, core
10)	531_80-6836900	1 scarred tree

11)	532_50-6837_30	2 artifact flakes
12)	536_50-6839_50	1 small core, brown
13)	536_00-6839_80	4 small artifacts
14)	536_50-6839_40	1 flake
15)	536_50-6838_50	Stone water tank
16)	535_80-6839_00	Grooves in rock
17)	532_50-6840_30	Mythological grave