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# Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council



## CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES INSPECTION REPORT

Rankin Drive Bangalow, NSW 2479

27 June 2022

**REPORT PREPARED BY TBLALC CULTURAL HERITAGE UNIT**

**SITE INSPECTION COMPLETED BY TBLALC**

**TBLALC Senior Cultural Heritage Sites Officer Warren Phillips**

**TBLALC Conservation Planning Officer Maurice Gannon**

**and**

**Clarence Kelly representing the the Bundjalung of Byron Bay**

**Aboriginal Corporation (Arakwal)**



*Aboriginal people have deep spiritual and cultural connections with the land and have inherent responsibilities to ensure that those connections are maintained for future generations.*

## PURPOSE

There are numerous Federal, State and Local Government statutes, regulations, policies and guidelines that are applicable to the assessment of, and protection of, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (ACH). The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NPW Act), administered by the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), is the primary legislation for the protection of ACH in New South Wales.

Part 6 of the NPW Act provides specific protection for Aboriginal Objects and declared Aboriginal Places by establishing offences of harm, for which significant penalties apply. Harm includes desecrating, destroying, defacing or damaging an Aboriginal Object or Aboriginal Place and, in relation to an Object, moving it from the land on which it has been situated.

The Tweed and Byron regions are abundantly rich in ACH. Extreme and extensive damage to the ACH of the region has occurred over many years, including very recently. The regions are also areas of rapid population growth and development. Therefore, the potential for ongoing harm to ACH is real and ever-present.

This report was prepared by the Cultural Heritage Unit (CHU) of the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council (TBLALC). It summarises the findings resulting from an on-site inspection supported by desktop analysis, review of the TBLALC CHU databases and records, access to and consultation with Aboriginal community and knowledge-holders and informed awareness of Aboriginal history, traditions and lore.

The site inspection considers both the tangible and intangible ACH of the site. TBLALC assesses the potential for harm and provides advice on avoidance, mitigation, and compliance with relevant legislation and codes of practice.

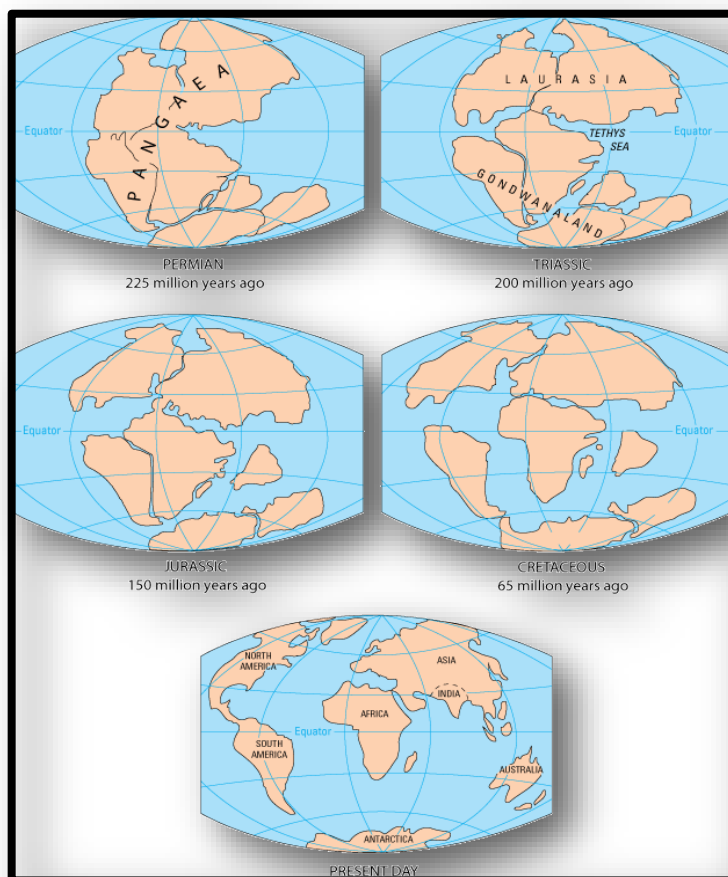
This report does not confer approval to harm ACH. The authority for such an approval rests solely with the Director General of the DECCW and the process of applying for and obtaining such an approval is very detailed and substantive.

TBLALC's objectives are:

1. to ensure ACH is appreciated, respected, protected and preserved;
2. to inform you of ACH in the region and the actual and potential ACH on the site;
3. to inform you of the applicable law and potential risks involved in any proposed project; and
4. to provide advice and recommendations as to how you should go about minimizing your risks of legal breaches.



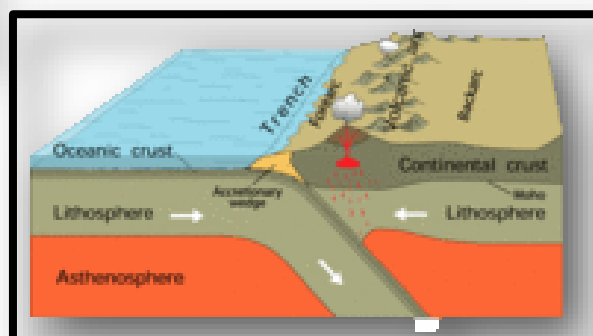
## LANDSCAPE



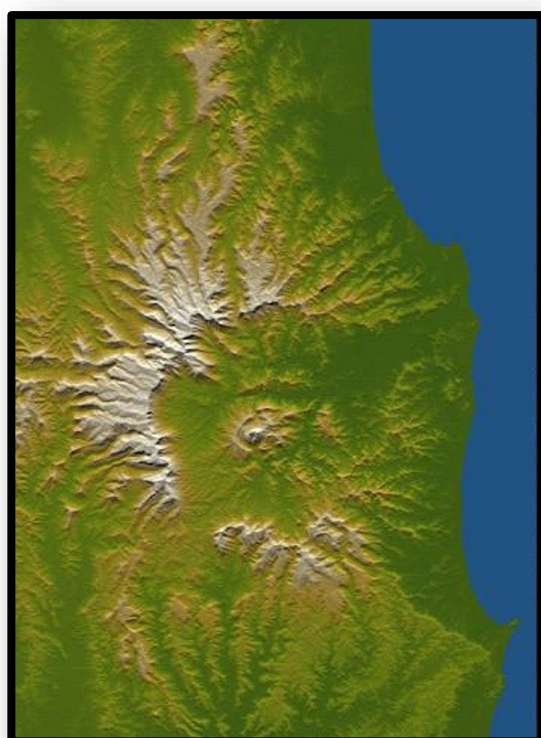
This process also caused metamorphism (cooking as squeezing) to form new minerals and rock types such as greywacke, argillite, greenstone and quartzite. These massive tectonic, volcanic and erosion and deposition processes continued during the next 140 million years as Australia rifted away from Antarctica.

The Australian continent has been tectonically stable for an exceptionally long time. About 370 to 290 million years ago a volcanic mountain chain extended along the Gondwana coast. The eroded sediments from the volcanic chain were deposited and settled differentially into coarse sands and finer silts and muds on the seafloor off the Gondwana coast.

Over the next 50 million years the oceanic plate was being subducted beneath the continental plate. The pressure and heat of the tectonic plate movements compressed and cooked the sediments and folded and thrust them upwards to form mountain ranges. The sediments were also penetrated by lavas that erupted onto the deep ocean floor. In some places innumerable siliceous skeletons of microscopic animals called radiolaria formed sediments of marine origins.



Source: NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory. California Institute of Technology. Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) from the space shuttle Endeavour.



Australia is the only continent without any current volcanic activity but it hosts one of the world's largest extinct volcanoes, the Tweep Volcano. Rock dating methods indicate that the Tweep Volcano eruptions lasted about 3 million years, ending about 20 million years ago. Twenty million years of erosion has left this landform deeply eroded yet very recognizable, appearing as a caldera with a central peak. The central peak is the erosional stub of the volcanic neck; the central pipe that carried the magma upward. It is surrounded by ring dikes, which are circular sheets of magma that solidified and now form erosion-resistant ridges. The central peak is named Wollumbin (Mt. Warning). The topography of the northern rivers region is a record of this enormous shield volcano and the landscape evolution that has occurred since its creation. Low relief uplands interspersed between deeply eroded canyons form a radial pattern that clearly defines the shape and extent of the original volcanic dome.

## LANDSCAPE (Cont.)

Erosion is most extensive on the eastern side because the eroding streams drained directly to the ocean and therefore had the steepest gradients. This asymmetry of erosion has been extreme enough that the volcano has been hollowed out by the east-flowing drainage, forming an erosional caldera. Calderas usually form as the result of collapse where magmas retreat within an active volcano. If collapse occurred here erosion may have removed the evidence but it produced a similar landform. This combination of volcanic activity and erosion and deposition processes over a vast area and enormous time span has resulted in the landforms and environmental features that define the area today.

The metamorphism and folding and uplifting of the marine sediments formed the Neranleigh–Fernvale basement rocks. The tectonic plate movements gave rise to the Burringbar and Condong Ranges. The erosion and deposition and folding of sediments generated the Clarence Moreton Basin. The more recent volcanism of the Tweed Shield Volcano created the Lamington Volcanics and lava flows the remnants of which remain at Kingscliff, Cudgen, Fingal, Banora, Cook Island and throughout the Tweed Valley.

The underlying country rock of much of the Tweed region is therefore made up of the Neranleigh-Fernvale beds, a somewhat unusual rock type of partially metamorphosed sediments - meta-sediments - and the volcanics of the Wollumbin shield volcano. These source rocks have been altered over millions of years by the combined effects of erosion, deposition and climatic and sea-level changes that produced ancient stream channels and geological remnants of earlier coastlines (paleo shorelines).

The in-situ chemical weathering of the of Pleistocene (Ice Age) country rock (up to 1.8 million years in age) results in the development (pedogenesis) of the volcanic soils and the poorly sorted, rocky, sandy and silty soils that make up the land surface today. More recent sedimentary deposits which, of course, dominate the coastal erosional and depositional environments, are Holocene in age (Present to 10,000 years). The Pleistocene and Holocene epochs, together make-up the Quaternary Period, which is the Period that includes human habitation.

Many of the rock types created by these tectonic, volcanic and geomorphic processes, such as quartzite, chert, silcrete, flint, quartz, obsidian and garnet, are the specific types that were used by Aboriginal people for stone tool making. For example, chert is formed by the silicification of beds of the deep sea sediments made up of the microscopic skeletons of marine organisms, mentioned earlier. Obsidian, at the other extreme, is formed by very rapid cooling of felsic volcanic lava.

All land has an ancient history. In the northern rivers regions of NSW we are extremely fortunate to be able to also relate the geological, geomorphological and environmental history with the human cultural history of the area. Aboriginal cultural heritage is a current, living and unbroken human relationship with country.

This is the landscape in which we live.





## BRIEF ETHNOHISTORY OF THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES OF THE TWEED AND BYRON

Aboriginal 'territories' were defined and maintained by languages and dialects. Ngandowal was spoken by people around the Tweed, Minyungbal south to Byron and Nyungbal around Ballina.

Within these language groups there were also clan groups occupying certain areas:

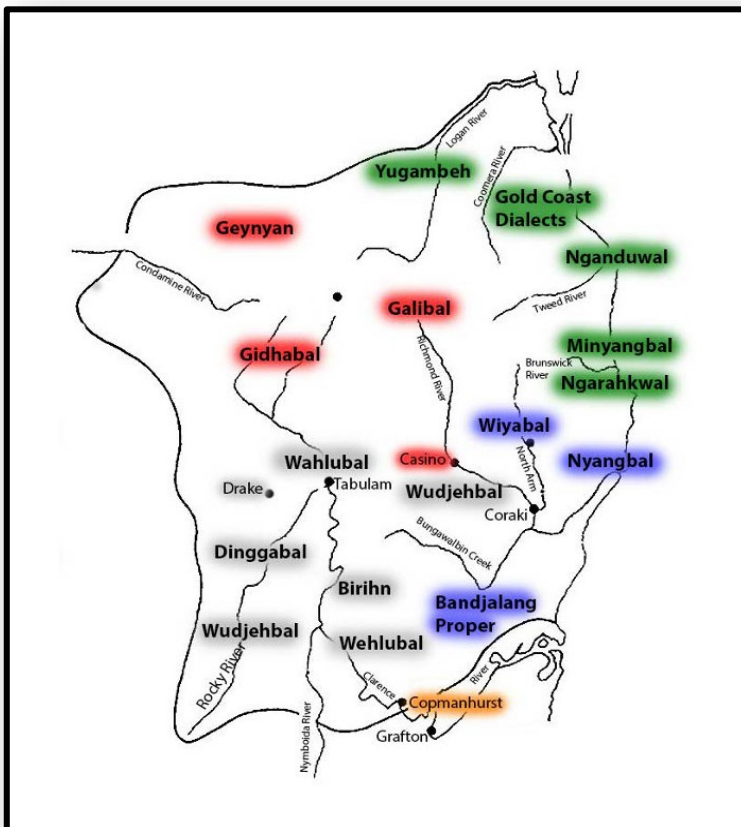
- The Goodjingbarrra were a clan group that lived along the coast between the Tweed and Brunswick Rivers. 'Goodgen' means 'red' and the territory of the Goodjingburra clan was, amongst other things, a source of ceremonial ochre.
- The Tul-gi-gin people lived around the North Arm; and
- The Moorang-Moobar people lived around the Southern and Central Arms around Wollumbin (Mt Warning).



References to Minyungbal, Ngnadowal, Goodjingburra, Tulgigin, Moorang-Moobar and Githabal (variously called Minjangbal, Minjung, Minywoa, Gendo, Gando Minjang, Gandowal, Ngandowul, Cudgingberr, Coodjingburra, Gidhabal and many alternatives) are all references to the Bundjaung people.

Wollumbin is the central landmark in Bundjalung territory. It has mythical, spiritual and cultural significance to the Bundjalung and other Aboriginal people.

A very large number of sites containing physical evidence of past Aboriginal land use remain in the Tweed and Byron regions: middens, bora grounds/ceremonial grounds, fish traps, burials, innumerable artefact scatters, stone tools, caves, scarred trees, cultural places, story places and campsites. Aboriginal people currently living in the region have unbroken lineages, with Elders and knowledge holders who are the custodians of ancient knowledge and teachings and the carriers of oral histories and stories of Aboriginal cultural practices prior to non-Aboriginal settlement.



## BRIEF ETHNOHISTORY (Cont.)

The earliest historical report of European observation of the Aboriginal population of northern coastal NSW was made by Captain James Cook on May 15, 1770, who, 25 kilometres south of the Tweed River “discovered smoke in many places and saw a group of natives”. The first direct contact was made by the explorer Lieutenant John Oxley on October 31, 1823: “200 Aboriginal men approximately five kilometres from the mouth of the Tweed River”.

There is conjecture about the total populations of Aboriginal people prior to the arrival of Europeans. Allison Smith, daughter of the first pilot at Tweed Heads, stated: “At that time [early 1870s] hundreds of natives camped within the present town site”. Of course there was no census and it is a known fact that Aboriginal populations were decimated by introduced diseases both before and after direct contact. N. C. Hewitt in the Tweed Daily 1923 Supplement quoted Henry Barnes of Dryaaba Station saying, “Some disease came amongst the blacks about 1858 and nearly one third of them on the coast died.” In October 1923, a writer, ‘Old Hand’, in the Northern Star stated, “Dysentery occurred among the blacks in 1865 and carried off hundreds of victims.” It is also a fact that massacres took place and historical records of such events were understated, to say the least.

The earliest reports record groups of hundreds of Aboriginals camped in the area. Records dating from the 1860’s describe gatherings of the Tul-Gi-Gin and Moorung-Moobar people of up to 600 people in semi-permanent camps on the banks of the Tweed River.

Aboriginal people did not ‘trespass’ on each other’s country but the coastal people moved more ‘freely’ across common territory. These limited historical records tempt the conclusion that territorial boundaries were more significant where resources were less abundant. The region is resource rich and resource zones were guarded. Seasonal events, such as the bunya-nut feasts, would result in large gatherings, sometimes drawing people from distant territories. Complex and strict rules governed trespass. Territory and interactions were likely linked to ceremony and ceremonial sites.

There was regular trade and interaction between both local and broader territories and so there was travel and gatherings for trade and seasonal and ceremonial events. Travel across territorial boundaries established pathways, campsites, tool-making sites, meeting and gathering places and ceremonial locations across the landscape.

The Bundjalung territory was replete with cultural sites. From the earliest days of interaction with white settlers corroboree sites, bora rings and ceremonial sites were well documented.. Many have been destroyed but the region, fortunately, is still rich in cultural material and other sites. Aboriginal people frequently used the coastal dunes as burial sites and cemeteries. There are numerous recorded Aboriginal burial sites around the Tweed and Byron region. The known sites and physical evidence represent a fraction of what would once have been present.

Rights of passage and ‘directions’ were established by levels of initiation, stories, traditional knowledge, songs and dances. The stories relate to ‘country’; not just descriptive landscapes but also the animals and plants, the rocks, soils and waters and ancient histories and ancestral experiences. These pathways formed a network of ‘songlines’ and ‘story places’ that connected and traversed the entire continent and, in some cases, beyond. This is why the knowledge holders of Aboriginal communities are so profoundly respected. They are the repositories of ancient lore.

## BRIEF OUTLINE OF ABORIGINAL LAND USE IN THE TWEED AND BYRON REGIONS

Aboriginal land use is classically described as 'subsistence'. A more current perspective would describe it as 'sustainable'. Resource use and people movements were determined in large part by seasonal resource availability and social customs. Living along the banks and in the catchments, estuarine outlets and wetlands of the Tweed, Brunswick, Richmond and Clarence Rivers, 'subsistence' involved the gathering of fresh and saltwater fish, shellfish and crustaceans. The roots of the Bungwahl fern was gathered from wetlands as a staple food item. Other animals were also hunted, particularly further inland, including wallabies, bandicoots, possums, flying foxes, echidnas, snakes, goannas and lizards, freshwater fish, ducks, pigeons and other birds. Edible and fruit and berry bearing plants were also harvested, as was wild honey.

The temperate and timbered environments also provided abundant resources for habitation structures and stone tool making. Sophisticated techniques, including nets, weirs, fish traps and spears were used in fishing. Nets were also used for hunting kangaroo. Bangalow palm leaves were used to make containers and the bark and trunks of various trees were used to make canoes.

Prior to the establishment of large-scale timber getting in the mid-1840s, the Bundjalung people had relatively little contact with the European settlers. Change was sudden and rapid: extensive dispossession and decimation of the Aboriginal population began with the establishment of large-scale timber getting industry in 1844. Although there are several records of violent and bloody conflicts Aboriginal people, with their unique skills and knowledge of the country assisted the timber getters and were rewarded with steel axes, flour, sugar, rum, tobacco and tea. As cedar resources diminished freehold land was opened to white settlers in the 1860s. Sugar cane, banana growing, dairying and commercial fishing industries started to develop and rail links were established by the late 1800's. Of course Aboriginal people were also used as labourers in timber getting and land clearing.

Land clearing, devastation of habitats and resources, destruction of sacred and ceremonial sites, disease, dispossession and seizure of Aboriginal women gave rise to violent conflict and Aboriginal people were forced into reserves and missions. Fortunately for the Bundjalung people coastal estuaries, dunes, beaches, swamps and lakes (in addition to mountains) weren't good farmlands and therefore there was some degree of relative 'refuge' on the coast.

Adrian Piper (1983) noted, between 1865 and 1875 the solid social fabric and economic [Aboriginal] structure collapsed as the basis of a viable society. The last recorded Booral ceremony took place on the Upper Tweed in about the mid eighteen seventies. This is significant for it emphasises how devastating the impact of farming into the Tweed Valley really was. The ritual life is perhaps the strongest and most enduring element of any society, yet in the Tweed Valley it barely survived fifteen years of contact with farmers. With the loss of both traditional land and the ritual essential to Aboriginal society the Tweed Aborigines became refugees in their own land.

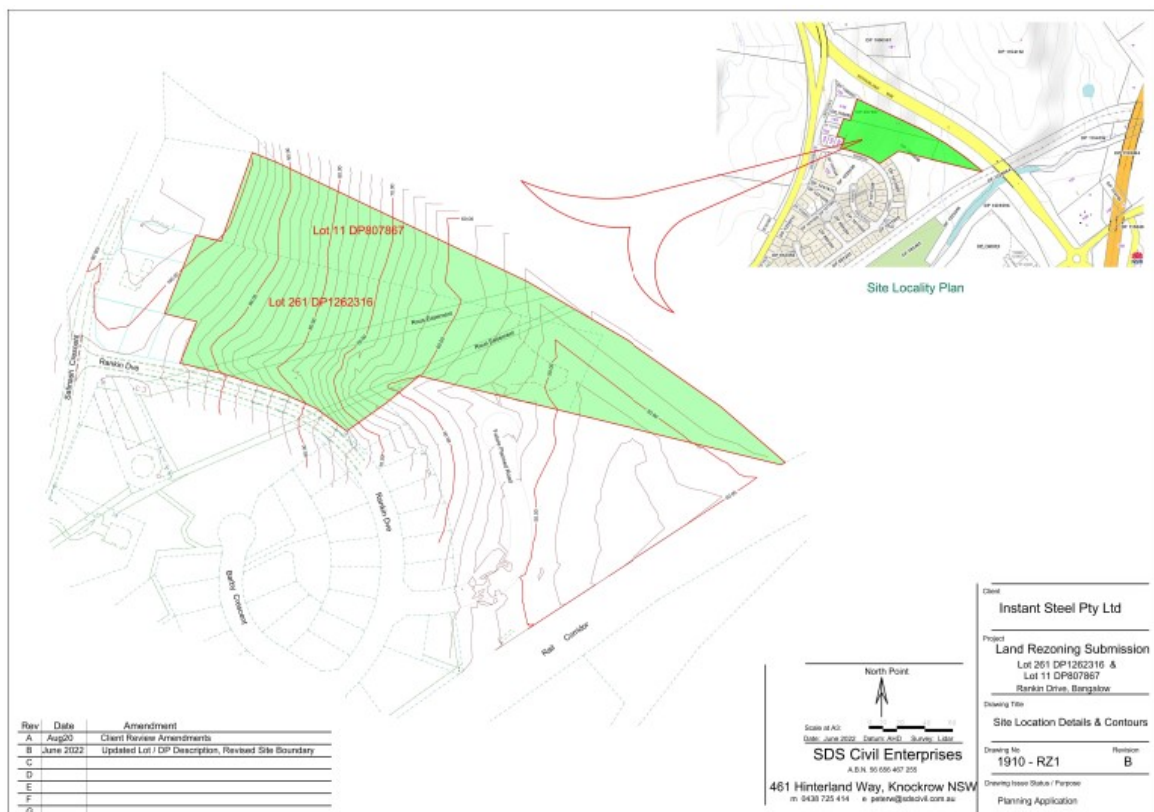
Fingal was established as an Aboriginal camp, 'the blacks camp', in the 1880s. Aboriginal life became more sedentary and was influenced by Christianity and Pacific Islander culture. The Aboriginal community of the Tweed Region is still strong and vibrant today with living descendants of the original people of the country. This is a strong, proud, sophisticated culture that literally comes from and belongs to this place and reaches back into prehistory,



## SITE LOCATION

This report applies to Lot 11 DP 807867 and Lot 261 DP: 1262316. Approximate central GPS location (GDA 94 MGA 56) is 551542E 6827531N.

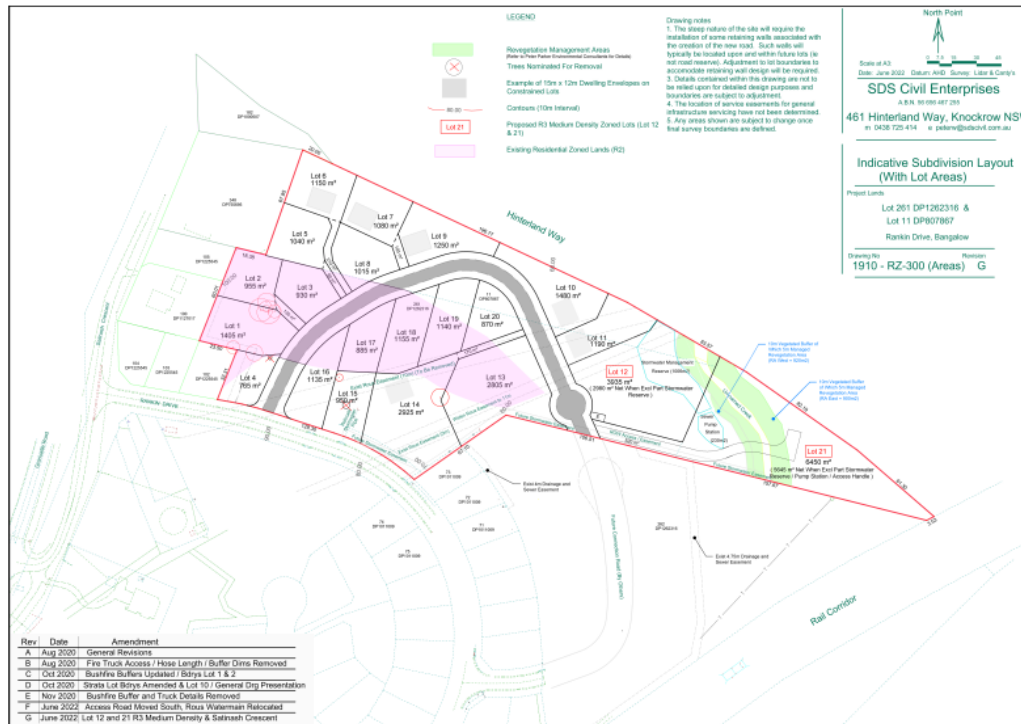
The lots neighbor each other and form a contiguous landholding between Hinterland Way, Pioneers Crescent and Rankin Drive Bangalow. The land descends from the northern elevated position of Pioneers Crescent towards the disused railway lines and Byron Creek.





## CULTURAL SITES INSPECTION OUTCOMES

The context of the site inspection is a proposal for the rezoning to allow a number of residential blocks with a component in the eastern portion allocated for medium density. The land has been subjected to land clearing and modifications prior to acquisition by the current owner(s). The RTA used the area as a production base, machinery and personnel muster area the construction of Hinterland Way. Much of the area was heavily vegetated with camphor laurel trees with only a few native species.



During the site inspection no cultural materials or objects were observed in the proposed development area. The image to the right shows the track followed by Warren Phillips. Others present followed similar but independent tracks such that, effectively the entire area was traversed.





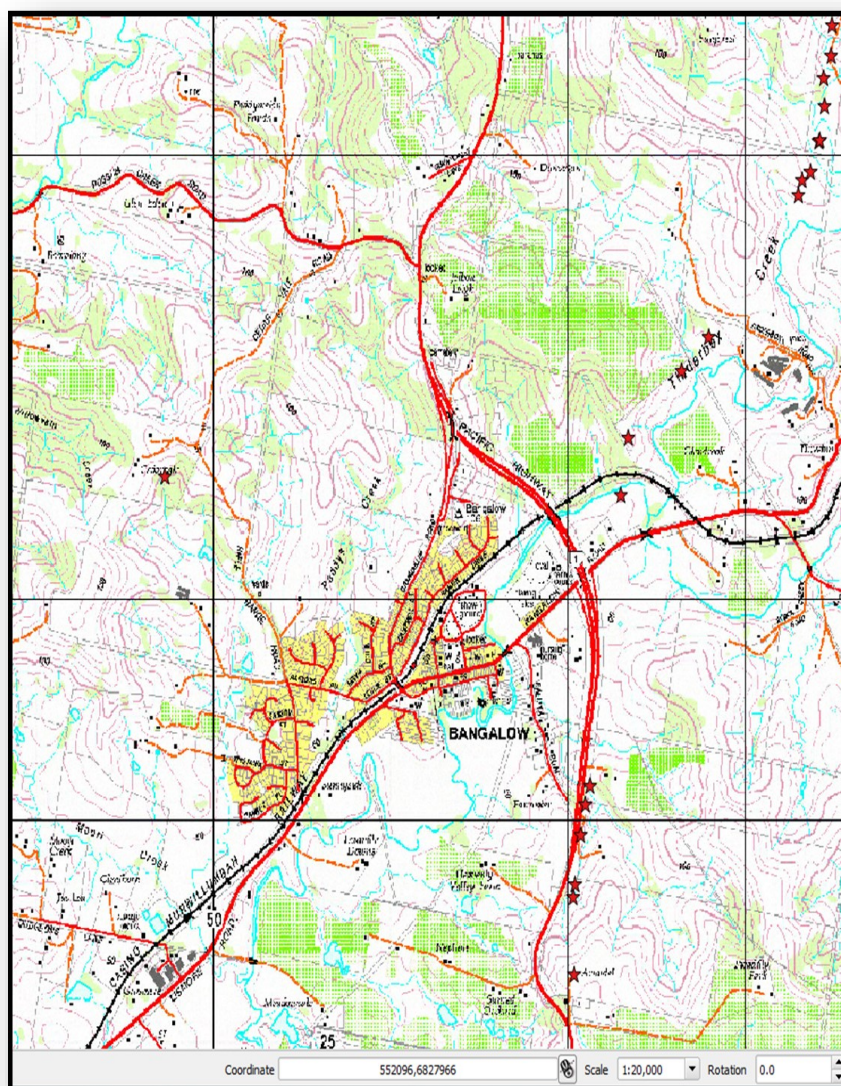
## CULTURAL MAPPING

Tweed Shire Council (TSC) in consultation with the local Aboriginal community through the Tweed Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council (TBLALC) and with assistance of the NSW Department of Environment and Heritage has established an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (ACHMP) to promote awareness and protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (ACH). The mapping developed as a part of this management plan identifies those areas where it is known there is ACH or there is a high likelihood, based on characteristics landscapes and knowledge, of the presence of ACH.

This level of ACH mapping has not yet been completed for the Byron Shire but, given the proximity of numerous registered sites and the abundant food and water resources much of the Byron Shire would definitely be mapped as 'known' and predictive' would certainly be mapped as 'predictive'.

The red stars show the locations of sites that have been recorded on the AHIMS database (described on the following page). Cultural mapping and AHIMS site registrations provide a site specific context in which the applicable legislative and regulatory requirements can be considered.

The alignment of red stars running toward the north eastern corner of the map shown below indicates a series of potential archaeological deposits (PAD's). They are more indicative of areas that have been closely examined than they are of an Aboriginal 'pathway'. What they really demonstrate is that there is an abundance of ACH in the region (and a fairly limited catalogue of research). This map demonstrates that a reasonable and rational level of caution should be exercised during any ground disturbing activity in the area.



Tweed Byron LALC CHU  
 PO BOX 6967  
 TWEED HEADS SOUTH New South Wales 2486  
 Attention: Warren Phillips  
 Email: sites@tblalc.com

Date: 23 January 2019

Dear Sir or Madam:

**AHIMS Web Service search for the following area at Lot : 182, DP:DP1000507 with a Buffer of 1000 meters, conducted by Warren Phillips on 23 January 2019.**

The context area of your search is shown in the map below. Please note that the map does not accurately display the exact boundaries of the search as defined in the paragraph above. The map is to be used for general reference purposes only.



A search of the Office of the Environment and Heritage AHIMS Web Services (Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System) has shown that:

<b>2</b>	<b>Aboriginal sites are recorded in or near the above location.</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Aboriginal places have been declared in or near the above location. *</b>

The Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database, compiled and maintained over many years by the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water (DECWW) Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), records a registered Aboriginal sites in the area. Two registered sites are located within a kilometre radius of the Lots that are the subject of this report.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- TBLALC has reviewed the proposal against its Aboriginal cultural heritage mapping database and cultural knowledge, undertaken a site visit and, based on this, considers that there is only a low likelihood of Aboriginal heritage Objects or materials being encountered in the course of the proposed works.
- TBLALC does not consider it necessary to engage an archaeologist for further assessment.
- TBLALC recommends that any approval include a condition advising the applicant of their stop work responsibilities should any cultural material be revealed as part of the development works.

### Procedure to be applied in the case of unexpected finds

- ⇒ In the event that any material is encountered that is even *suspected* to be of Aboriginal cultural origin or to *potentially* be human skeletal material, it must be left undisturbed, a wide buffer zone must be established and cordoned off and all work in the area must cease immediately.
- ⇒ The proponent is bound under State legislation (*National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974*) to inform the DPIE immediately of any cultural heritage objects found.
- ⇒ In the event that human skeletal material is encountered the NSW Police must be contacted immediately.
- ⇒ TBLALC appreciates that the assessments of whether material is of Aboriginal cultural origin or whether bone material is human skeletal material require specialist skills. Therefore, we suggest that we be contacted and consulted in the first instance. If any material that has been encountered is, in fact, Aboriginal cultural material or human skeletal material, Heritage NSW and / or the NSW Police Department will establish the conditions under which any further works may be undertaken.

*Please contact the TBLALC Cultural Heritage Unit (CHU) if we can be of further assistance.*