



Central Coast Council

Environment and Planning Committee

**ATTACHMENTS PROVIDED UNDER
SEPARATE COVER**

Tuesday 6 May 2025

Central Coast Council
ATTACHMENTS PROVIDED UNDER SEPARATE COVER to the
Environment and Planning Committee

To be held Function Room 2, Level 2,
2 Hely Street, Wyong
on Tuesday 6 May 2025
Commencing at 7:00 PM

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Acknowledgement of Country

We respect and acknowledge Traditional Owners of the Central Coast, their lands and waterways, their rich cultural heritage and their deep connection to Country, and we acknowledge their Elders past and present. We are committed to truth-telling and to engaging with relevant Traditional Owner organisations to support the protection of their culture and heritage. We strongly advocate social and cultural justice and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Cultural warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this report may contain images or names of First Nations people who have passed away.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the
Traditional Custodians
of the land on which
we live, work and play.

We pay our respects to Darkinjung country,
and Elders past and present.

We recognise the continued connection to
these lands and waterways and extend this
acknowledgement to the homelands and
stories of those who also call this place home.

We recognise our future leaders and the
shared responsibility to care for and protect
our place and people.





Report register

The following report register documents the development of this report, in accordance with GML's Quality Management System.

Job No.	Issue No.	Notes/Description	Issue Date
22-0430	1	Draft Report	9 June 2023
22-0430	2	Revised Draft Report	18 July 2023
22-0430	3	2 nd Revised Draft Report	20 August 2024
22-0430	4	Final Report	14 November 2024
22-0430	5	Revised Final Report	20 December 2024

Quality management

The report has been reviewed and approved for issue in accordance with the GML quality management policy and procedures.

It aligns with best-practice heritage conservation and management, *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* and heritage and environmental legislation and guidelines relevant to the subject place.

Indigenous cultural and intellectual property

We acknowledge and respect the inherent rights and interests of the First Nations in Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to be acknowledged and attributed for their contribution to knowledge but also respect their rights to confidentiality. We recognise our ongoing obligations to respect, protect and uphold the continuation of First Nations rights in the materials contributed as part of this project.

Cover image: General view of Terrigal from the road to Avoca by Alfred Coffey, 1918. (Source: National Library of Australia)

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Group on lookout above Pretty Beach, c1910s.

Source: Central Coast Library Service.



1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Central Coast Council commissioned GML Heritage Pty Ltd (GML) in December 2022 to prepare a thematic history of the Central Coast Local Government Area (LGA).

The Central Coast Council was formed from a merger of the former Gosford City Council and Wyong Shire Council in 2016. Both former councils had thematic histories for their respective areas.

The new thematic history is intended to unite the two existing histories, and revise and update them to ensure identified themes are relevant, accurate and reflect major processes and factors affecting the Coast.

This thematic history is based upon the two existing well-researched and detailed histories for Wyong and Gosford and supplemented and updated with additional primary and secondary research and graphics.

1.1.1 Key Objectives

The objectives of the Draft Central Coast Thematic History are:

- To prepare a new thematic history to reflect the course and pattern of Aboriginal occupation, land use and the development of the Central Coast as it exists today.
- To specifically include Aboriginal occupation, history and heritage, landscape heritage, the impact of post war and modern (post-1960) development and all other relevant aspects of cultural and natural heritage.
- To examine, identify and characterise what is unique about the Central Coast in a thematic context.
- To create specific local themes relevant to contemporary communities, that have regard to the 36 NSW State Themes.
- To explain the major factors that have influenced the history and heritage of the Central Coast and shaped its distinctive character in an engaging, 'contemporary' and usable format.
- To provide a thematic history that can ensure the historical development and unique character of the Central Coast can be reflected in Council's subsequent studies recommended by the Central Coast Heritage Gap Analysis and Action Plan.
- To identify gaps in the current heritage schedule for the Central Coast, and to ensure where possible, that all identified historic themes are represented.



1.2 What is a thematic history?

A thematic history provides a broad historical context for understanding the patterns and forces that shaped an area over time. It provides a framework through which the development of a type of place or area can be understood through historical themes, which are identified by research and analysis. Research and identification of themes can relate the specific history of areas or items to a wider context, providing comparative information on their relative importance.

Thematic studies are a well-recognised tool in heritage practice; they are used to provide a structured and systematic approach to assist in the evaluation and management of individual elements and are especially useful in analysing repetitive groupings of similar elements. Historic and typological themes can be used at the national, state or local level and across similar and related types of places.

A thematic history links to State and National Heritage Themes. The NSW thematic framework was developed in 2001 by the NSW Heritage Council. It identifies 36 themes and is applied to a range of heritage reports such as thematic histories.

This history identifies locally distinctive themes to structure Central Coast's historical narrative. A theme can unite a variety of actions, events, functions, people and dates.

It helps to prevent overemphasis on a particular type of item, period or event of history.

The thematic history is NOT intended to be a detailed account of all aspects of the history of the Central Coast LGA, nor to replace the extensive local, scholarly, genealogical or published histories that provide detailed historical accounts focused on specific subjects and utilise extensive primary historical sources. The history aims to help readers understand and appreciate why an area like the Central Coast LGA has developed into its current form. It identifies and explains a selection of locally distinctive themes that help us understand the area and its historic physical fabric.

The Central Coast LGA has had a strong First Nations community since Deep Time. This history provides a high-level summary of the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the region, it does not provide commentary on native title determinations. GML recommends for Council to undertake a comprehensive Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment to provide more information on the history, heritage and culture of the First Nations people of the LGA.

The thematic history will inform future programming in accordance with the Central Coast Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS). The LSPS entails a range of studies to inform a new Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP) for the Central Coast.



1.3 What is unique about the Central Coast Council LGA?

The Central Coast Council governs the sixth largest urban area in Australia, covering an area of 1,681 square kilometres.

This thematic history is guided by the 36 themes in the NSW state thematic framework and a comparison of themes identified in the two existing thematic histories for the area. However, as noted by Heritage NSW, 'Not all themes are relevant throughout the state ... [and] local themes will not necessarily fit neatly into the state thematic framework.'¹

The thematic history aims to identify those key themes that capture the unique aspects of the Central Coast LGA and its development through time.

While many local government areas can lay claim to themes such as convicts, agriculture and pastoralism, this history aims to ask: what are the unique and distinguishing factors that shaped the Central Coast LGA?



Figure 1.1 Central Coast Local Government Area. (Source: Central Coast Council Annual Report 2021/2022)



1.4 Previous thematic histories

Australian theme	NSW theme	Local theme for City of Gosford (Gosford Thematic History by Dr Terry Kass, 2016)	Local theme for Wyong Shire (Wyong Shire-wide Heritage Review by Nicole Secomb, 2010)
1 Tracing the natural evolution of Australia	Environment—naturally evolved	Topography	Landscape and topography—a framework for history
2 Peopling Australia	Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures	Persisting on their native soil	Old and new inhabitants
	Convict	Spreading down the Hawkesbury Settling the best land	Slow beginnings
	Ethnic influences	Peopling the City of Gosford	
	Migration	Peopling the City of Gosford	
3 Developing local, regional and national economies	Agriculture	Spreading down the Hawkesbury Surviving on the land Diversifying rural land use	Primary industry
	Commerce	Making towns Servicing Brisbane Water	Town growth 'The scenery is picturesque and the climate quite remarkably healthy'— Sydney's playground
	Communication	Connecting Brisbane Water	Lines of communication
	Environment—cultural landscape	Diversifying rural land use Changing the shape of Gosford	Slow beginnings



Australian theme	NSW theme	Local theme for City of Gosford (Gosford Thematic History by Dr Terry Kass, 2016)	Local theme for Wyong Shire (Wyong Shire-wide Heritage Review by Nicole Secomb, 2010)
	Events	All themes	All themes
	Exploration	Finding Brisbane Water	Slow beginnings
	Fishing	Harvesting the bounty of the sea	
	Forestry	Cutting the forests	Slow beginnings Timber
	Health	Looking after others	
	Industry	Building ships Working in Brisbane Water	Primary industry (industrial activity)
	Mining	Working in Brisbane Water	Mining and utilities
	Pastoralism	Settling the best land	Primary industry (farming)
	Science	Being creative	
	Technology	Being creative	Lines of communication
	Transport	Connecting Brisbane Water Building ships	Lines of communication
4 Building settlements, towns and cities	Towns, suburbs and villages	Making towns Retreating to holiday havens	Subdivision: a sense of community Town growth
	Land tenure	Settling the best land Diversifying rural land use	Subdivision: a sense of community Town growth



Australian theme	NSW theme	Local theme for City of Gosford (Gosford Thematic History by Dr Terry Kass, 2016)	Local theme for Wyong Shire (Wyong Shire-wide Heritage Review by Nicole Secomb, 2010)
5 Working		Making towns	
	Utilities	Servicing Brisbane Water	Subdivision: a sense of community Town growth
	Accommodation	Housing for everyone	Subdivision: a sense of community Town growth
	Labour	Working in Brisbane Water Building ships	Primary industry Mining and utilities Timber
6 Educating	Education	Educating young and old	Town growth
7 Governing	Defence	Defending the nation	
	Government and administration	Governing Brisbane Water	Town growth
	Law and order	Governing Brisbane Water	Slow beginnings
	Welfare	Looking after others	
8 Developing Australia's cultural life	Domestic life	Housing for everyone	
	Creative endeavour	Being creative	
	Leisure	Retreating to holiday havens Having fun	Town growth 'The scenery is picturesque and the climate remarkably healthy'— Sydney's playground



Australian theme	NSW theme	Local theme for City of Gosford (Gosford Thematic History by Dr Terry Kass, 2016)	Local theme for Wyong Shire (Wyong Shire-wide Heritage Review by Nicole Secomb, 2010)
	Religion	Servicing Brisbane Water	Subdivision: a sense of community Town growth
	Social institutions	Having fun Servicing Brisbane Water	Subdivision: a sense of community Town growth
	Sport	Having fun	'The scenery is picturesque and the climate remarkably healthy'— Sydney's playground Town growth
	9 Marking the phases of life	Birth and death	Marking life's milestones
	Persons	All themes	All themes



1.5 Community consultation

In preparing this thematic history GML has consulted the Central Coast Library's local studies and family history librarians. GML also attempted to contact members of local historical and family history societies, Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, local Aboriginal community groups as well as specific individuals recommended by the client via email, telephone and in person.

The Draft Central Coast Thematic History was placed on public exhibition from 11 December 2023 to 11 February 2024 providing all stakeholders the opportunity to review and comment on the document. Council undertook additional consultation with key stakeholders during the public exhibition period. In May 2024 the client provided GML with a consolidated table of submissions for review as well as feedback from the supplementary consultation with key stakeholders.

See Appendix 1 for the Community Participants.

1.6 Research and literature review

GML has undertaken an extensive review of key research collections and resources including a literature review of books, reports, studies and select vertical files from the Central Coast Library Local Studies Collections at Gosford and Tuggerah and

other archival repositories. This included an inspection of published secondary sources (including some of the material listed in the two previous histories) and an extensive desktop survey including:

- University of Newcastle Living Histories;
- Trove (National Library of Australia);
- NSW Land Registry Services;
- Museum of Australia;
- State Library of NSW;
- Museums of History NSW (State Archives Collection);
- NSW Spatial Portal;
- NSW Heritage Office Library;
- Australian Bureau of Statistics archived reports; and
- Ancestry.com.au (directories and census collections).



1.7 Thematic framework

GML has identified the following themes for inclusion based on a review of the two thematic histories and additional historical research and literature review.

Local theme for Central Coast	Key Stories	Associated NSW theme
Aboriginal Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early European contact/observations • Early records of Aboriginal people • Aboriginal policy • Continuity of Aboriginal occupation of Central Coast • Aboriginal people comprise fifth largest population group in Central Coast • Origin of place names with meanings 	Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures Events Science Land tenure Persons
Coast and Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural history of the LGA • How the natural environment has informed the location and form of development in the LGA • Various environments including coast, estuarine, rivers, lakes, plateau, valleys, mountains • Hawkesbury River and Broken Bay • Principal waterways such as Tuggerah Lakes, Lake Macquarie, Brisbane Water • Central Coast's biodiversity • More than half of the LGA is in national park and state forest ownership, e.g., Strickland State Forest, Dharug National Park • Council's land portfolio includes approximately 600 ha of bushland primarily for the purpose of preserving natural and heritage values 	Environment – naturally evolved Environment—cultural landscape Events Science Land tenure Leisure Persons



Local theme for Central Coast	Key Stories	Associated NSW theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental management issues—bushfires, floods, pollution, coastal erosion, sedimentation 	
Isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploration Isolation of the area Brisbane Water Police District Early land grants Early cemeteries Crown land Convicts Bushrangers Early industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convict Environment—cultural landscape Events Exploration Forestry Industry Transport Towns, suburbs and villages Land tenure Accommodation Labour Government and administration Religion Birth and Death Persons
The Industrial Spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timbergetting, State Forests Citrus orchards, e.g., Mangrove Mountain, Narara Ship building (Brisbane Water) Oysters (Hawkesbury River etc) / oyster shell collecting for lime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture Commerce Environment—cultural landscape



Local theme for Central Coast	Key Stories	Associated NSW theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dairies Poultry farming and piggeries Vegetable farming (postwar) Commercial fishing, prawning Sandstone quarrying e.g., Gosford Quarries Manufacturing in the twentieth century – Garnet Adcock and the Jusfrute factory (1921), Sara Lee (1970), Margins Cordials (1906), Nanna’s (1969) Coal mining—associated with power stations e.g. Chain Valley Bay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events Forestry Industry Mining Pastoralism Transport Labour Persons
Between Two Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great North Road Simpson Track M1/Pacific Highway Maitland Road Homebush to Waratah railway line Electrification of railway line in stages, Sydney to Gosford, Gosford to Newcastle Bridges (road and rail)—e.g. Hawkesbury River Railway Bridge, Mooney Mooney Bridge, twin bridges on F3, Mill Creek Bridge (Gunderman), Entrance Bridge, Toukley Bridge, Rip Bridge Ferries/punts across rivers and lakes Coastal steamers Local roads in the twentieth century and importance of the car Warnervale Airport, Wyong Norah Head Lighthouse and shipwrecks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Environment—cultural landscape Events Transport Utilities Birth and Death Persons
Playground for Two Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holidays at the beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commerce



Local theme for Central Coast	Key Stories	Associated NSW theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest houses, holiday homes, weekender cottages, hotels, motels, and resorts, holiday camps • Influx of Sydneysiders on weekends and holidays • Scenic highway along coast • Service industries along main roads, support for road transport and travel to Central Coast, e.g. service stations, Oak milk bar at Peats Ridge • Popular beachside resorts, e.g. Terrigal, Avoca, Pretty Beach, and The Entrance • Popular holiday activities e.g. fishing, boating • Tourism – coast and waterways / nature-based recreation and attractions • Recreation and attractions, e.g. Old Sydney Town, Australian Reptile Park, Glenworth Valley, Calga Springs • Employment of tourism officer by Gosford Council in 1960s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Environment—cultural landscape • Events • Transport • Towns, suburbs and villages • Accommodation • Labour • Creative endeavour • Leisure • Persons
Country Charms with Urban Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towns/villages formed around transport hubs or industry hubs, e.g. Gosford, Woy Woy and Wyong • Coastal towns vs rural towns • Early commerce and community stores • Retail development – shopping strips such as Mann Street, Gosford, and Pacific Highway Wyong versus big shopping centres such as Erina and Tuggerah • Creative endeavours • Schools • Local government e.g. Erina Council, Gosford Council and Wyong Shire • Law and order • Health and medicine • Subdivisions and estates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commerce • Education • Environment—cultural landscape • Events • Health • Industry • Towns, suburbs and villages • Utilities • Accommodation • Government and administration



Local theme for Central Coast	Key Stories	Associated NSW theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Population growth pre-World War Two 	Law and order Domestic life Creative endeavour Leisure Religion Social institutions Persons
Tree and Sea Changers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commuting to Sydney via train and car to work, increase in population buying cheaper houses on Central Coast Warnervale Town Centre, Warnervale City Centre, land release areas e.g. HomeWorld and Greenfield residential development in northern part of LGA Influence of motor car Gentrification Gosford Wyong Urban Structure Plan, 1970s Ageing population/retirement population and large number of retirement living and retirement villages in Central Coast Families Downsizers Effects of COVID-19—people looking for space/room to grow Projected population growth—Central Coast population of 328,000 in 2020 expected to grow substantially to 417,500 by 2036 Pressures on maintaining distinct environmental areas and landscapes Semi-rural fringe and bushland becoming urban residential areas Gosford city centre revitalisation and high-rise developments 	Migration Environment—cultural landscape Events Technology Transport Towns, suburbs and villages Utilities Accommodation Government and administration Welfare Domestic life Leisure Religion Social institutions



Local theme for Central Coast	Key Stories	Associated NSW theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Loss of early beach shacks and weekenders for large architect designed houses, part-time residences	Birth and Death Persons



1.8 Recommendations

This Thematic History consolidates the two existing Histories and identifies themes which are relevant, accurate and reflect major processes and factors affecting the Central Coast LGA. The following recommendations consider how the Thematic History could provide the basis for future stages of work.

Further Research

The thematic history has highlighted the important historical patterns and forces that shaped the Central Coast in its distinct historical and geographical formation. Some key areas for further intensive research are as follows:

- Aboriginal history and heritage studies;
- Rural and remote communities;
- Postwar housing c1940–1960; and
- Planning and suburbanisation post 1960s.

Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage Assessment

During the preparation of this thematic study and review of stakeholders' submissions, it was noted that a comprehensive Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage Assessment is required. This assessment would provide more information on the history, heritage and culture of the First Nations people of the LGA.

Local Aboriginal Community groups should be consulted from the beginning of the development of this assessment and be provided with the opportunity to co-write and regularly review this assessment. This is to ensure for historical and cultural accuracy, that their voices are clearly communicated, and the local Aboriginal groups consent with this information being shared with the broader public.

Heritage Study

In reviewing prior thematic histories, heritage studies and specific places, it was noted that places of significance on the State Heritage Inventory are catalogued by previous local themes, have a numeric bias towards building from the Late Victorian and Interwar periods and have a variable quality of site history and significance assessment across the breadth of listings. Additionally, there is a paucity of items listed in some localities, e.g. Umina, and in rural and remote areas of the LGA.

A Heritage Study would capture potential heritage items not yet identified that relate to the history and development of the Central Coast LGA to the present time; and update existing inventory sheets to accurately reflect the history of listings and their significance.



1.9 Authorship

This report was prepared by Léonie Masson (Associate, Historian) and Angela So (Senior Heritage Consultant). Strategic advice and review were provided by Minna Muhlen-Schulte (Associate/Team Leader, Interpretation and Design) and Sharon Veale (CEO).

1.10 Acknowledgements

GML would like to acknowledge Rebecca Cardy (Senior Heritage Officer, Central Coast Council), Peta James (Senior Strategic Planner, Central Coast Council), Deanne Frankel (Section Manager, Strategic Planning Projects, Central Coast Council), Geoffrey Potter (Central Local Studies Librarian) and Michelle Goldsmith (Family History Librarian) for their assistance with this project.

1.11 Endnotes

¹ Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2022, *New South Wales Historical Themes*.



Map of Central Coast, 1836.
Source: Central Coast Local Studies Library.



2 Aboriginal Country

The following theme was written within the limits of the scope of a thematic history. It is based on a select range of historical documents. It provides a high-level summary of some of the key places and people associated with Aboriginal cultural heritage on the Central Coast.

The content is based on written historical record, typically produced by non-Aboriginal people, and may not accurately represent Aboriginal knowledge, traditions and practices. This theme needs to be complemented by future projects that record and listen to the oral histories and traditions of the Aboriginal community groups living on the Central Coast, contemporary Aboriginal expressions of culture and connections to the area today, and the archaeological record.

Introduction

The correct names for the Aboriginal people, their territory and the language of the Central Coast region are the subject of ongoing debate. This is a contentious issue for the Central Coast Council, the Aboriginal community groups and other residents. It will require further discussion and cannot be resolved in this

thematic history. The importance for this Thematic History is to acknowledge the First Nations people's connection to the Central Coast and their continuing role in its development.

This history acknowledges that today Aboriginal people who identify as Guringai, Darkinjung/Darkinoong and/or Awabakal recognise the Central Coast as being part of their Country.

At the present time, the Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) formed under the *NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* is known as the Darkinjung LALC. The Darkinjung LALC boundary extends from 'Catherine Hill Bay to the North, Hawkesbury River to the South, Pacific Ocean to the East and Watagan Mountains to the West'.¹

The 1994 Wyong Shire thematic history states 'The Wyong district were occupied by three Aboriginal language groups, the Kurringgai, Darkingung and Awabakal tribes'.² The 2010 Wyong thematic history states that the Central Coast region 'is generally accepted' as 'home to the Darkingung Nation'.³ The 2016 City of Gosford thematic history states: 'Gosford City was originally occupied by the coastal Guringai (Ku-ring-gai) people, whilst Darkingung people occupied the area west of Mangrove Creek'.⁴



These statements within the three thematic histories for the Central Coast are based on multiple studies. Anthropologists, linguists, archaeologists and historians have been working on this debate and drawing varied conclusions since the nineteenth century.⁵ Even the name Guringai and whether it is the correct name for one of the Aboriginal language groups that live in this region is disputed.⁶

The current names of Aboriginal groups and languages are a late construct, recorded by European observers during the contact period of Australia. These observers do not acknowledge that names and language can change over time and that this is what the names were at the time of inquiry. Nor that some names were lost due to invasion, displacement, and death.

In 2021, Dr Laurence Allen acknowledged the debate about the names for Aboriginal people of the Central Coast in his PhD, 'A History of the Aboriginal People of the Central Coast of NSW to 1874'. He suggests:

...the names of the small family clans on the Central Coast (since lost) would have been the only collective names used, and in all probability, there would have been no name in their language for the people as a whole, the Central Coast region or, in fact, the language itself.⁷

Just like today, Aboriginal people would have moved within and outside of their Country before and after colonisation. Boundaries

were fluid and would have changed over time. The different language groups would have interacted with each other through trade, marriage, ritual and war. Based on where the different family groups were located—in the hinterland, at the foothills and plateaus, by the Hawkesbury River, by Brisbane Water, on the coastal plain or along the coastline—they would have managed different landscapes and have access to different resources.

Before European settlement

The southern boundary of the Central Coast region is the Hawkesbury River or Dyarubbin. For over 50,000 years, Aboriginal people have lived close to Dyarubbin. The Dyarubbin provides physical and spiritual nourishment for Aboriginal people through its rich resources and ceremony spaces with potential connections to Dreaming stories or songlines. Aboriginal people would have likely followed the waterways, walking up the hills, down the valleys and to the coast.⁸

To the north of Mangrove Creek, a tributary of Dyarubbin, archaeological excavations have revealed that Aboriginal people were living mid-way on the sides of hills and the valley bottoms over 7,000 years ago.⁹ Most of their earlier camps were submerged when sea levels rose about 4,000 years ago.

Archaeological surveys and excavations of the Central Coast region have been carried out since the early 1930s. A



considerable number of sites have been found along the coast and further inland.

Archaeologists believe the Mangrove Mountain was an area of great significance. Archaeological evidence suggests Aboriginal people travelled to exchange basalt (blanks and finished artefacts) for other items, including non-basalt materials. F.D. McCarthy identified extensive ridgetop engravings sites along Flat Rocks Ridge and other connecting ridges near Mangrove Mountain. He hypothesised that this area was a ceremonial site and potentially also visited by the Darug from the Cumberland Plains.¹⁰

Other archaeological sites include habitation sites (open and within a shelter), rock engraving and stencils art sites, axe grinding grooves sites, middens, culturally modified trees, stone arrangements, and stone artefact scatters.¹¹ (Figure 2.1) Several Aboriginal burial grounds were found at MacMasters Beach on 17 June 1898.¹² These sites provide evidence of a widely used landscape prior to European people arriving in Australia, as well as trade and interaction with neighbouring Aboriginal groups.



Figure 2.1 Photograph of Aboriginal hand stencils, found in a rock overhang during the construction of the Mangrove Creek Dam, 1978–1982. (Source: Gostalgia, local history from Gosford Library)



Aboriginal groups who lived near the coast subsisted mainly on fish and shellfish. Extensive shell middens once existed along the coastline. These middens were collected by European people for making lime. Beached whales would result in major gatherings to feast on that unexpected bounty from the sea. Inland Aboriginal groups would be invited to the coast for the feast and during mullet season.

Coastal Aboriginal groups would also eat small animals and vegetables, especially in the winter months when fewer fish were available. They collected the seeds of Lillypilly and Tamarind trees plus wild potatoes, blossoms, Blueberry ash berries, sweet blue *Dianella* berries, Warrigal spinach and hearts of the Cabbage tree palm. They also ate the seeds of the Burrawang palm after leaching out the toxins. In leaner times, coastal Aboriginal people broke up into smaller groups but stayed in the same area and rarely moved inland.¹³

Aboriginal groups who lived further inland, at the foothills and plateaus, would hunt terrestrial and arboreal animals such as kangaroo and wallabies, possums, reptiles and a broad range of birds and their eggs including duck, emu, parrot, pigeons and brush turkey. Along inland rivers, creeks and swamps, they would have caught eels and rodents.



Figure 2.2 This c1817 painting by Joseph Lycett depicts Aboriginal people cooking and eating a beached whale. While Lycett mainly painted Aboriginal people from the Newcastle region, they are representative of similar scenes and activities in the Central Coast region. (Source: National Library of Australia)



Figure 2.3 Aboriginal people hunting kangaroos by Joseph Lycett, 1817. (Source: National Library of Australia)

Inland Aboriginal people also collected fruits, berries, flowers and nectars in the summer and roots, tubers, bulbs and rhizomes in the winter. Foods collected include nectar and roots from the Giant Lily, roots of the Kurrajong tree and fruit of the Geebung.¹⁴

Inland Aboriginal groups would occasionally travel to the coast, possibly only once a year, to eat fish and sea plants in addition to whale feasting and mullet season. The coastal Aboriginal groups would also occasionally travel inland for gathering food sources.¹⁵

Aboriginal people from the Central Coast region used a hunting spear plus a multi-pronged fish spear, along with woomeras, shields, clubs, digging sticks, coolamon boomerangs, hatchets and dilly bags. Women looked after fishhooks and lines. Local Aboriginal people constructed huts out of bark propped up on a suitable tree or shrub, as a A-frame structure or as a large conical dome. They also lived in rock shelters.¹⁶

Historians generally state that prior to European settlement, 12 clans lived within the Central Coast region. They could be allocated to the following areas: Kincumber Peninsula, the Patonga area, Erina Wamberal and Terrigal, Gosford, Somersby, Ourimbah Creek Valley, Lower Wyong River and Jilliby Creek valleys, Upper Wyong River valley, Tuggerah Beach, Norah Head, Cooranbong, and Mangrove Kulnurra.¹⁷ FC Bennett wrote in late 1960s that no more than 12 family groups were in the Central Coast region with a maximum of 30 people per group. He claimed: 'This represents a top population of 360 people.'¹⁸

This number is challenged by Dr Allen. He undertook a detailed analysis to estimate population of the Central Coast region, based on densities of the Sydney region, historical observations of Sydney's coastline and other evaluation tools. Dr Allen estimates a possible population of around 2,800 Aboriginal people across the current Central Coast LGA and approximately 1,500 people living near its coastline in 1788. However, by 1823,



when formal settlement of Brisbane Water had begun, the local Aboriginal population was down to a few hundred.¹⁹

Early contact

In 1770, Captain Cook recorded sighting smoke upon the shore at Cape Three Points, about two to three kilometres from land. Cook most likely saw campfires used for cooking.²⁰

The earliest exploration parties of Broken Bay were led by Governor Arthur Phillip in 1788, first landing at Pearl Beach. William Bradley, who accompanied Phillip, recorded his observations of the local Aboriginal people as they sailed along. The Aboriginal people were friendly and would interact with the European explorers when they came ashore.²¹

The European explorers were in search of land suitable for agriculture, which was found further along the Hawkesbury River near Windsor. Combined with the desire to restrict occupation on the north side of the Hawkesbury River by the colonial government, this area remained undeveloped and isolated.

In 1796, David Collins wrote about an exploration party who ran aground at Port Stephens. The local Aboriginal people led the Europeans back to Sydney and told them about a white woman living with Aboriginal people. This woman was identified as an escaped convict, Mary Morgan. A search party for her travelled

along the northern arm of Broken Bay to Cape Three Points. During this expedition, the search party came across a large sea fed lagoon that ran parallel to the coast. Historians believe this is a record of the first European encounter of Tuggerah Lakes. The search party returned to Sydney without finding Mary Morgan.²²

While few European people went to settle in the Central Coast region, the local Aboriginal people were still severely impacted by their arrival. Europeans brought with them diseases including smallpox, syphilis and influenza. Despite the limited contact, the smallpox plague severely affected Aboriginal people living at Broken Bay within six months of European people's arrival, similar to Aboriginal people living in other areas of Sydney. David Collins wrote:

In the year 1789 they [the Aboriginal people] were visited by a disorder which raged among them with all the appearance and virulence of the small-pox. The number that it swept off, by their own accounts, was incredible.²³

When visiting Broken Bay, Collins found 'in many places our path was covered with skeletons'.²⁴ Captain John Hunter wrote of his surprise of not seeing many Aboriginal people as he travelled along the shore of Port Jackson and Broken Bay. He noted seeing no more than 30 Aboriginal people at Broken Bay. As he continued to explore the coastline, he began to see more bodies



of Aboriginal people that had died from smallpox, and encountered a young woman sick from smallpox.²⁵

While no direct reports on the consequences of this disease exist for the Aboriginal groups that live north of Broken Bay, they most likely would have also been affected by smallpox. However, as European people struggled to settle across the Central Coast region, this probably made it possible for the local Aboriginal groups to maintain their traditional lifeways.

As more European people came into the region, Aboriginal people survived, either through integration or resistance. James Webb, the earliest settler and the grantee of Woy Woy, is reported to have employed some Aboriginal men and women on his property in 1823.²⁶ On the other hand, Aboriginal people drove some early settlers away.

Early censuses of Aboriginal people

In 1827, the first census of Aboriginal people in the Brisbane Water district was undertaken by the District Magistrate Willoughby Bean. Bean reported only 65 Aboriginal people belonging to five separate 'tribes' (probably family groups) in the district.²⁷ He counted 15 at Broken Bay, 15 at Tuggerah Beach, 15 at Wyong, 10 at Narara and 10 at Erina.²⁸ This is in contrast to the 1826 census created by the Newcastle Magistrates Allman and Brooks, who counted 200 members of the 'Tugrah Beech

Tribe' and their 'chief' known as 'Chuge'.²⁹ While Bean most likely understated the number of local Aboriginal people, it is also possible that they, most likely the older people, would have deliberately avoided the blanket distribution as a form of resistance towards the colonial government.³⁰ During this period, it was still possible for the local Aboriginal groups to retreat to areas that Europeans were not interested in cultivating such as the hinterland, swamps, wetlands and dense forests.

Conflict

Bean reported about an ongoing dispute between a Wyong settler William Cape and the local Aboriginal people in 1828. The local Aboriginal people had been taking Cape's corn and Cape responded by shooting at them. As a result, the local Aboriginal people retaliated with violence. They also invited people from the north (Bean believed to be from the Hunter's River, Wollombi and Sugarloaf areas) to intimidate Cape. Bean estimated that over 200 Aboriginal people confronted Cape on one occasion and 180 on another. Two Aboriginal men who were arrested by the District Constable admitted they intended to capture and burn Cape.³¹ While Bean did not condone the violence, he did believe that Cape provoked the local Aboriginal people and was a difficult neighbour.



Reverend L E Threlkeld who operated an Aboriginal Mission north of Lake Macquarie also noted that Aboriginal people were provoked. About 60 Aboriginal people from the Tuggerah Beach Tribe and Newcastle Tribe lived on his land. While the people around his house were safe, he described how European people were forcefully taking Aboriginal girls. Threlkeld would hear the girls screams and see marks of the butt-end of muskets on the heads of the males who attempted to stop the abductions. Threlkeld wrote:

It is not a matter of surprise that a few Europeans are yearly speared by the Aborigines, but it is wonderful that more of the English are not destroyed, considering the numerous aggravations given, and the many opportunities the Aborigines have of secretly taking vengeance on them.³²

These activities demonstrate the conflict between Aboriginal people and the incoming settlers, while also highlighting the relationship between the Central Coast Aboriginal groups and their neighbours. Not only were a variety of social interactions demonstrated but contact with neighbouring groups also appeared to involve organising a coordinated effort in resisting the white settlers.

The 1830s and 1840s were a period of heightened conflict between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the Brisbane Water. Attacks on the European population were numerous, with

Aboriginal people from the Brisbane Water district working with Aboriginal people from the Newcastle and Sydney regions. Several Aboriginal men were tried before the NSW Supreme Court for intimidation, stealing shirts and food, and other similar offences.

Many homes were robbed. One raid began with an attack at Currangbong, where a group of Aboriginal people demanded tea and bread. The same group then moved to Cape's farm at Wyong, taking food and clothing, and then returned to Currangbong to steal tins of milk from Manning's dairy. Next came a series of 'attacks' on farmers and assigned convicts. During October and November 1834, three groups totalling between 80 to 90 Aboriginal men attacked Alfred Jaques in Ourimbah and robbed his house.³³

The men carried guns, as well as the traditional spears and waddies. Many threats were made against the settlers, but few spearings and no deaths occurred. Jonathan Warner, visiting Magistrate to Brisbane Water, pursued the marauding groups of Aboriginal men for several weeks but was unable to apprehend them. In October 1834, Warner wrote to the Governor appealing for a party of mounted police to be sent to his district for about a month so that he might capture the ringleaders.

With the military at hand, relative peace returned to the district, but the raids began again when they were withdrawn at the end



of 1834. Following a series of robberies and other activities, Warner drew up a list of 18 Aboriginal men, all of whom came from Wyong, Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Beach, and offered a reward for their capture. However, he did not manage to arrest any of them until early January 1835.

A reward of forty pounds was also offered for those responsible for the rape and robbery at the farm of John Lynch. By the middle of 1835, 16 men had been committed for trial for robberies at Wyong, Brisbane Water and Lake Macquarie.

Many of those tried received a sentence of 'death recorded', meaning a formal sentence of death, without the intention of the sentence being carried out.

The original intention was to send the eight Aboriginal who had received the sentence of 'death recorded' to Van Diemen's Land. Instead, they were confined on Goat Island in Sydney Harbour. As an act of mercy, the Governor commuted the sentence to the lesser time of two years labour on Goat Island.

Time of peace

Peace appeared to return to the Brisbane Water and Lake Macquarie regions for some years following the events of 1835. The removal of these men from the local family groups had an impact on the Aboriginal population, as well as an outbreak of

measles in 1835 and influenza around 1837. Some sick Aboriginal people were cared for at Hospital Gully near Mangrove Creek.³⁴ Several settlers reported this decline during this period, including Sarah Mathew who, in the mid-1830s, described her encounter with a group of local Aboriginal people.

Our camp is surrounded by a number of the natives ... they are so happy, too, it is a pleasure to see them... They are rapidly diminishing in number; and most probably another generation will see their entire extinction in at least this part of the colony.³⁵

Despite this, some Aboriginal people continued to live together, possibly on the outskirts of European settlement. It was reported in *The Gosford Times* in 1928 that a large Aboriginal camp was located at Davistown. Alfred Settree would regularly visit this camp in the 1830s.³⁶ In a paper presented by Charles Swancott for the Brisbane Water Historical Society in 1953, Swancott reported on an Aboriginal camp near McMasters Beach in the 1830s and 1840s. In about 1840, Anne Pickett nee Humphreys from the Kincumber area adopted an Aboriginal baby from this camp, after the baby's mother was killed. The baby lived with the Pickett family for the rest of her life.³⁷

In 1842, John Mann visited Brisbane Water, eager to meet the local Aboriginal people. His record indicates Aboriginal people were still living a traditional lifestyle at this time. Mann paid an



Aboriginal man to show him how they would climb a 70- to 80-foot tree, which he did by cutting small notches up a tree. Mann was later guided from his accommodation by local Aboriginal people known as Emu and Mary Anne to Ourimbah, and then to the junction of Wyong Creek and Tuggerah Lake. At this final location, a corroboree had been planned in honour of an Aboriginal group visiting from Wollombi.

At Tuggerah Lake, Mann noted the abundance of wildlife and Emu took the opportunity to catch fish, birds and collect swan eggs. When they arrived at Wyong Creek, another older Aboriginal man, Long Dick, had already set up a camp. The tents were created from sheets of bark and lined with dry grass. Later, another older Aboriginal man called Jew Fish arrived by canoe with a large quantity of fish. The fish were thrown onto the shore, collected by Long Dick and cooked over a fire. They also cooked 'opossums, bandicoots, snakes and iguanas'³⁸ and swan eggs.

The next morning, Mann participated in a kangaroo hunt. He was impressed with the accuracy and efficiency of the Aboriginal people's use of spears and boomerangs to kill the kangaroos. Twenty kangaroos were caught. Mann watched them skin and cook the kangaroos and was fascinated by the skinned tails:

The sinews attached to each joint have much the appearance of thick skeins of white floss silk, or perhaps spun glass. They

can be separated into single threads, which are then used by the blacks[sic] in making their cloak.

The next evening was the corroboree. Mann mentions the Aboriginal people went into the bushes as 'no white man is permitted to see the operation of decorating themselves'³⁹ Mann described the corroboree (Figure 2.4):

When darkness had closed around us the ceremony commenced. A clear space on this flat afforded a favorable spot for the entertainment. Drawn up in line these men, painted with pipe clay in all kinds of devices, with head gear of feathers, presented a weird appearance. In front stood the master of the ceremonies or fogleman, or 'fiddler' as they called him. He sang the song to which the dancers kept admirable time, which was well marked by the striking together of two small boomerangs. This enabled the performers to move in perfect time, their foot striking the ground as one thud.⁴⁰

Not all interactions between Aboriginal people and Europeans were peaceful during this time. Some settlers such as Cape and William Turner from Jilliby were hostile to local Aboriginal people, including shooting at them.⁴¹



Figure 2.4 Depiction of a corroboree by William Romaine Govett, painted in c1836. Govett worked as a surveyor who worked in the Hawkesbury region between 1829 and 1833. After returning to England in 1834, he created several paintings about the Country and life of Aboriginal people. (Source: National Library of Australia)

In 1845, the *Report from the Select Committee on the Condition of the Aborigines* was published. The Brisbane Water district magistrate wrote only 47 Aboriginal people were left—27 men, 13 women, four boys and three girls. He stated:

Their numbers have diminished during the last five years, to the extent of one-fourth of their original number; in the previous five years the deaths were more numerous.⁴²

The magistrate's count may not be completely accurate, as he claimed only four people were born from Aboriginal and European couplings. However, the number of Aboriginal people appeared to be declining. The magistrate attributed this to:

1st., to immoral habits and disease; 2nd., to the use of intoxicating liquors, and exposure to the night dews; 3rd., to the general intercourse subsisting between the aboriginal females, and the males of the white population, may be considered as the primary cause of there being no increase in their numbers; as a natural consequence, they are rapidly diminishing.⁴³

The magistrate also observed that the local Aboriginal people subsisted by catching fish and hunting small animals. Aboriginal people sometimes worked for local settlers, 'employed in driving cattle, as guides, and sometimes as messengers, and at times procured fish and other articles for the settlers'⁴⁴. In return, Aboriginal people received 'provisions, clothing and sometimes money'.⁴⁵

The magistrate described the local Aboriginal people:

The most friendly relations subsist between the Aborigines and settlers of this district - no hostility or collision has taken place within the last nine years... No property has been destroyed by them within the last nine years... Meetings of a hostile character amongst the Aborigines, rarely occur in this district.⁴⁶



He recommended that blankets continued to be issued, as well as medicine, food and accommodation.

It was identified on an 1864 historical plan that there was a 'Blacktown' along The Entrance Road in Erina. Blacktown 'was a term commonly used during the period for Aboriginal contact period encampments, and therefore is likely to refer to a place or series of buildings occupied by Aboriginal residents'⁴⁷. The place was recorded as comprised of six buildings with fences and enclosure. Its location was adjacent to an area marked 'swamp', 'located at the confluence with Erina Creek and at the interface where the upper freshwater part of the creek meets the lower tidal saltwater portion of the creek'.⁴⁸

It was claimed in 1874 that only 13 Aborigines were left in the district. A man who contemporary writers claimed was the last Brisbane Water Aboriginal man, Billy Fawkner, died in the 1880s.⁴⁹ This does not consider those who had merged into the ascendant white population, often by intermarriage. Aboriginal women survived by becoming partners, either in or out of wedlock, of white men, so that their descendants were of 'mixed' blood. Some of their descendants retained a consciousness of their Aboriginal ancestry and tribal lore, although the devastation of family groups had severely affected the chain of transmission throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Aboriginal Protection Board

By the 1880s, the largest concentration of Aboriginal people in the Sydney region could be found in Sackville Reach and La Perouse. Aboriginal people from all over New South Wales, including from the Central Coast region, lived at these two camps since the 1870s.⁵⁰

In 1883, the Aboriginal Protection Board (APB) was established in New South Wales, signalling the beginning of successive waves of intervention into Aboriginal lives. Protectionism, segregation, assimilation and self-determination are the core themes that characterised government policies towards Aboriginal people. La Perouse became an official reserve managed by APB by 1885, and Sackville Reach was one by 1889.⁵¹ In 1893, the St Clair Aboriginal Mission was established near Singleton and some Central Coast Aboriginal people lived here. No official reserves were established in the Central Coast itself, although several small groups still camped seasonally at Terrigal Lagoon, Ash Street and North Avoca Lake in the twentieth century.

In 1916, the well-liked and capable missionary Retta Dixon left the Sackville Reach Reserve to work at the St Clair Aboriginal Mission. Life at Sackville Reach quickly declined and it was nearly deserted by 1915.⁵² The last resident of the Sackville Reserve was Andrew (Andy) Barber, who enjoyed 'a wide popularity in the district'.⁵³ He died in 1943 and was buried in the Church of



England Cemetery, Windsor. By this time, only 32 of the 50 reserves (excluding stations) in New South Wales were occupied, with a total of 1,674 Aboriginal people living on them. The Sackville Reach Reserve was revoked in May 1946 and set aside for public recreation. Some Aboriginal people stayed in the Sackville area, while others moved on to other parts of Sydney and beyond.



Figure 2.5 Photograph of Andrew Barber, possibly at Sackville Reach.
(Source: Hawkesbury Library Service)

National Aboriginal policy

In response to the national consensus at the 1937 Commonwealth State conference, the NSW Aborigines Protection Board reconstituted itself around the new goal of assimilation. The board was renamed Aborigines Welfare Board in a legislation introduced in 1940. Under the *Aborigines Protection Act 1940*, an Aboriginal child found to be neglected under the *Child Welfare Act 1939* became a ward of the board. The child was removed from their families and rehomed in the board's institutions and State Corrective Institutions such as Parramatta Girl's Home. In the 1950s, Aboriginal children were placed in foster homes with non-Indigenous families.⁵⁴

In 1958, the Federal Council for Advancement of Aborigines was formed, later changed to the Federal Council of the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, to campaign for changes in the constitution and equal rights for Indigenous people. In 1962, the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* was amended so that all Indigenous people could enrol to vote at Federal election. In 1967, a referendum was passed with the overwhelming majority of Australians voting 'yes' to count Indigenous Australians in the census and the power for the Federal Government to create laws that benefited Indigenous people.⁵⁵



In 1969, the NSW Aborigines' Welfare Board was abolished, leaving over a thousand children in institutional or family care. Almost none of them were being raised by Aboriginal people, and fewer still by the child's own extended family.⁵⁶ The Aboriginal Community was frustrated by the lack of Federal Government action and formed the Aboriginal Tent Embassy outside Parliament House in 1972. In the same year, the Whitlam Government was elected and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was established. Self-determination was adopted as the federal policy for Indigenous people, while Indigenous activists pushed for treaty and self-government over their local and internal affairs over the next two decades.⁵⁷

Reconciliation and the National Apology

In 1991, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was established under the Aboriginal Reconciliation Act 1991. This organisation was replaced by Reconciliation Australia in 2001, as the national body promoting reconciliation in Australia. The body seeks to achieve national reconciliation in five areas—race relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, unity and historical acceptance. Reconciliation Australia encourages a range of organisations, such as workplaces, local government authorities and schools, to develop an Aboriginal Reconciliation Action Program (RAP) to contribute to reconciliation.

The Central Coast First Nations Accord was adopted by Central Coast Council on 13 December 2022. The accord is described by Council as:

...an important step on the journey of Reconciliation and developing a shared vision for our future with our local First Nations people. The Accord is a commitment to the First Nations People that Council will not only continue to support the principles of cooperation, but also listen to history and support Aboriginal people to realise their future.⁵⁸

The Central Coast LGA has one of the fastest growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations in New South Wales. In 2006, 6,455 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were in the LGA. By 2016, this number rose to 12,485 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.⁵⁹

The Central Coast LGA currently has the largest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in New South Wales. In the 2021 census, 17,047 people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander lived in the Central Coast LGA, 4.9% of the total LGA population (346,596). This group has a low median age, with 53.5% of the area's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population aged under 25 in 2021.

Many significant and dynamic Aboriginal organisations and peoples exist in the Central Coast region. The Darkinjung LALC has a membership of over 700 people. It is the largest private



landholder on the Central Coast.⁶⁰ The Barang Regional Alliance Ltd (Barang) is a non-profit Aboriginal organisation that works to support the Central Coast Aboriginal community. Barang acts as a conduit between all levels of government as a member of the Empowered Communities reform initiatives and the Local Decision Making reform program. Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services, Nunyara Aboriginal Health Unit and Bungree Aboriginal Association support the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the region. Local groups such as Wannangini Org, the Kurriwa Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) and Gudjagang Ngara li-dhi Aboriginal Corporation (GNL) facilitate and enhance education and Aboriginal cultural heritage management in the region. These groups, along with many non-Aboriginal people and organisations, are working to support the local Aboriginal community, and increase understanding and promotion of Aboriginal cultures.

Since the early 2000s, Darkinjung and Guringai women have been working together, along with the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, Australian Wildlife Walkabout Park, local activists and environmentalists, to protect a significant women's site at Calga. Located along the Peats Ridge songline, the Calga Aboriginal landscape is the highly sacred place where Daramulan came into being. Rock engravings at Calga depict Daramulan,

Baiame and Bootha in both human and anthropomorphic forms.⁶¹ This place was under threat from the expansion of a sandstone mine. In 2015, the NSW Land and Environment Court overturned the proposal based on the evidence of the Aboriginal women. The 2015 judgement 'is regarded as an historic landmark precedent in the way that Aboriginal cultural landscapes with tangible and intangible values are recognised and protected in law.'⁶² In 2019, the Calga Aboriginal cultural landscape was listed on the NSW State Heritage Register.⁶³ (Figure 2.6)



Figure 2.6 Photograph of cultural water pools on a sandstone platform, which also has engraved art, within the Calga Aboriginal cultural landscape site. (Source: GML Heritage)



Some notable historical individuals

Bungaree

Bungaree (some people believe him to be a Guringai man) arrived in Sydney from Broken Bay in 1790. (Figure 2.7) He became a guide, interpreter and intermediary for explorers and settlers across NSW. In 1789, he was one of three Aboriginal people employed on the HMS *Reliance* to sail to Norfolk Island. On this 60-day round trip, Bungaree met Lieutenant Mathew Flinders. Flinders was so impressed, he hired Bungaree. Travelling with Flinders on the HMS *Investigator* from 1802 to 1803, Bungaree became the first known Aboriginal person to circumnavigate Australia. Bungaree negotiated meetings and safe passages with coastal people encountered on the trip. He acted in this capacity again for other voyages and expeditions. Bungaree was part of the first official party of the Hunter River on the *Lady Nelson*, travelling through Newcastle and Wallis Plain, as their guide and interpreter.⁶⁴

In Sydney, Bungaree was well liked and well known to European settlers. More than 20 portraits of him exist. He was a brilliant mimic, imitating the walks and mannerism of past New South Wales governors. He was given clothes, including a military jacket and hat. Macquarie was a patron to Bungaree, giving him the title of 'King of the Broken Bay Aborigines' and the first

Aboriginal land grant at Georges Head. Macquarie provided a fishing boat, clothing, seeds and farming implements so Bungaree and a group of Brisbane Water Aboriginal people could 'settle and cultivate'⁶⁵ on this grant. Bungaree only stayed at George Head for a short period before returning to sea.



Figure 2.7 *Portrait of Bungaree, a native of New South Wales, with Fort Macquarie, Sydney Harbour, in background, Augustus Earle, 1826.* (Source: National Library of Australia)



Bungaree and his group eventually moved to the Governor's Domain (Sydney Domain). He was affected by age, alcohol and malnutrition. Bungaree died in November 1830 after a long illness and was buried at Rose Bay.⁶⁶

Biddy Lewis

Biddy Lewis, also known as Sarah Wallace, was born around 1803. She is the daughter of Matora, wife of Bungaree but she may have been Matora's granddaughter. Her death certificate identifies her father as 'Richard Wallace, Aboriginal' although some of her descendants believe her father was British.

Biddy was married to John Lewis, also known as John Ferdinand, a convict that she met in 1815. He was working on Bungaree's farm at George Head, where Biddy was living.

Biddy received a land grant of three acres on Marramarra Creek in 1835, although she and her husband may have already been living there for a year. Most of their seven surviving children were born on this farm.⁶⁷ Biddy and one of her daughters acted as a midwife for Aboriginal and European women that lived on both sides of the Hawkesbury River.⁶⁸

Biddy died in 1880 and was buried on Bar Island, at the mouth of the Marramarra Creek. Her descendants continue to live along the Hawkesbury River.⁶⁹

Charlotte Ashby

Charlotte Ashby was born in the mid-1820s. She was the daughter of Sophy/Booratora, the daughter of Bungaree and his first wife Matora, possibly an Awabakal woman. Charlotte's father was most likely James Webb, the first European settler of Woy Woy. The relationship between Charlotte's mother and father was short-lived and Charlotte was adopted by her stepfather John Smith.

Charlotte was 22 when she married a ticket of leave convict Joseph Ashby in 1845. She was baptised on the same day. She eventually had four children with Joseph. Charlotte left Joseph at some stage after their fourth child was born in 1853. From 1859, she had six more children and Joseph was not named as the father.⁷⁰

Charlotte was involved in five different court cases during her lifetime. In 1863, two of her young children were removed from her custody and she was ordered to send them by steamer to the Benevolent Society in Sydney. In 1869, she was accused of theft but found not guilty. In a third case, she took a man known as Thomas Deasey to court for assault and attempted rape when she was 60 years old. The jury found her testimony was insufficient to charge the defendant and Deasey was dismissed.

