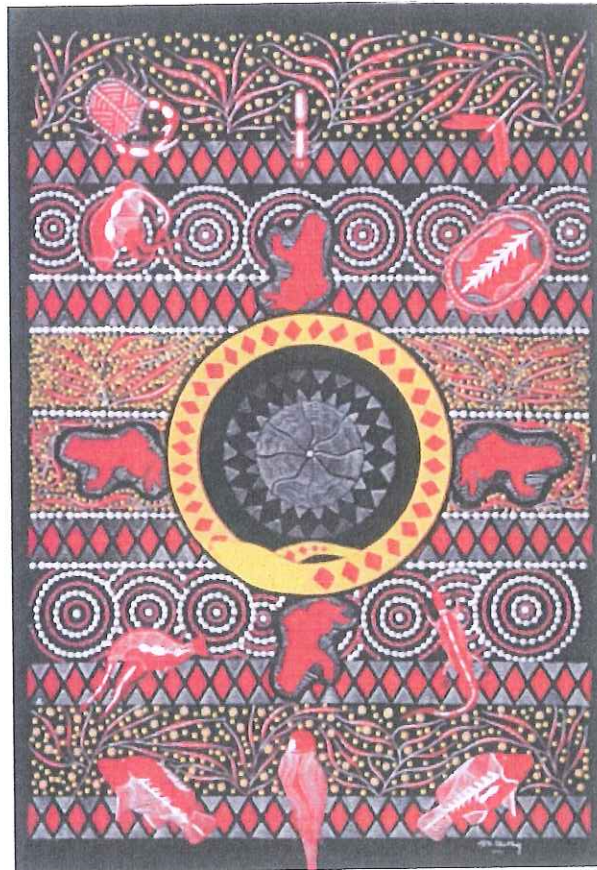


Brewarrina Shire

Community-based Aboriginal Heritage Study

Created with the help of the local Aboriginal Communities



Tex Skuthorpe: The Rainbow Serpent

for

**The Aboriginal Communities (Ngyiampaa/Ngembah, Morrowari,
Yuwaalaraay) and the broader community of the Shire,
the Brewarrina Shire Council and
The Heritage Section of the Department of Heritage**

Compiled and Edited by Dr Laila Haglund

2012

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Created with the help of the local Aboriginal Communities

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2012

A Dedication to the Aboriginal Communities in Brewarrina Shire

This study builds on stories from the past and present, stories for coming generations to treasure. Much has been lost and many old ways of doing things are given little or no place now. But some knowledge has been kept and treasured against terrible odds. What we have here is presented with gratitude and admiration. For thousands of years Aborigines had a tradition of caring for country. It was good for them and good for the country. This magnificent tradition needs to be brought back and practised by all. The country needs it.

Copyright to components of the material in this publication is held by the Ngyiampaa/Ngembah, Morrowari, Yuwaalaraay and Wongaibon people, by some individual members of Aboriginal groups who have contributed information, various institutions, libraries,

researchers and individuals who allowed access to their holdings or research reports, the Brewarrina City Council and Laila Haglund.

Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without permission.

In the first instance enquirers should contact Brewarrina City Council.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Unless other sources are mentioned, the photographs included were taken by Laila Haglund. For other illustrations included attempts were made, so far generally unsuccessful, to contact the author, usually through the publisher. We are hoping that the acknowledgment of the source will be seen as an acceptable alternative. This is after all a report to the Aboriginal communities and not a commercial publication.

As noted in the introduction, the three Land Councils and Working Parties in Brewarrina Shire were each contacted by letter prior to commencing this study, to explain what was planned and to ask for approval and assistance, which has been provided to the extent allowed by floods and resulting communication problems!

The Office of Environment and Culture (OEC) opened access to its database of Aboriginals heritage sites recorded in the Shire. Printed sources of information are listed in the Reference section. The contributions of individuals are acknowledged in the Introduction.

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Chapter 1.0 Introduction

Brewarrina Shire Council applied to the NSW Heritage Council for a grant to conduct a community based Aboriginal Heritage Study. The request was granted and an agreement signed. The cost was to be shared equally by the BSC and the report was to be completed by 15.4.2012.

The funding was very limited, so costs had to be kept as low as possible. Laila Haglund, Heritage Advisor to the Shire, was put in charge of the project. BSC staff would help as needed.

The first step was to contact Aboriginal organisations in the Shire by letters and invite them to take part. The organisations contacted include the Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Working Parties elected to represent the communities of Brewarrina, Goodooga and Weilmoringle. These deal mainly with local practical issues but also with social and cultural concerns.

For a start the Ngemba Working Party invited Laila Haglund to a meeting to explain the project. Members showed cautious interest and a formal letter invited her to carry out the study and promised cooperation. Other groups and individuals gradually agreed to take part.

The Heritage Office had in a brief for the study suggested aspects that might be covered in the study if possible:

- a historical context;
- a description of the composition of the Aboriginal communities;
- a legislative context;
- a review of existing and relevant literature, site records, Native Title Claims and previous studies of Aboriginal traditions and history in the Shire;
- an analysis of site records and local land use history to help identify areas that may or are likely to retain Aboriginal sites that have not been recorded;
- an investigation completed with the help of the Aboriginal community to find what land or places may have social and contemporary significance;
- an assessment of present Shire practices with regard to finding out about sites of Aboriginal significance and a discussion of what could or should be done.

What can be suggested in terms of management - and management by whom - is uncertain. The role of government bodies in management of Aboriginal concerns is uncertain. There is a tension between what the various Aboriginal groups desire or may desire, and what government bodies have been used to consider their role.

This study is not meant to be a survey of archaeological sites like those carried out to build the AHIMS register of Aboriginal sites. It is more concerned with places that are significant to Aborigines now, places where their people lived, worked, enjoyed life or suffered, places of memory and emotional value. Brewarrina Old Mission, Angledool Aboriginal Station, Goodooga Reserve, Weilmoringle and Denawan are well-known, but others may be important to certain families. Places important to members of the communities are now frequently on land managed by Aboriginal organisations.

The study is concerned with heritage of many kinds: languages, spiritual knowledge, creative works such as writings, paintings, craft work, music, dance, storytelling, documentation and teaching. There is a big pool of talent to draw on in the Aboriginal communities.

Members of the Aboriginal communities may be reluctant or unable to talk about or mention certain cultural matters known to them. Traditional restrictions must be respected, such as rules about knowledge to be held only by women or only by men or only by persons of a certain status or only by certain families or relations. It can be difficult to find out what kind of knowledge is held, as many seem to feel that it is less rude just to pretend not to know something than having to say: I know but cannot tell you. By tradition good manners are important and an interviewer may offend simply by asking (through ignorance) questions that should not be asked.

Some hesitate to share their knowledge because of past bad experiences - their own or told to them. In several cases known to the communities, outsiders have asked for cultural information and have managed to get Aboriginal participation in projects, promising shared copyright and payments. They have then refused to acknowledge Aboriginal intellectual ownership and have not provided fair payment. Such behaviour leaves a nasty aftertaste and a simmering suspicion of other outsiders.

All the groups have a strong tradition of preserving and sharing retained cultural knowledge and teaching youngsters, but also sharing it with trusted outsiders. All such sharing has to be within the limits mentioned above and decreed by social rules. Another important aspect, not always understood by outsiders, is that the understanding of a story and tradition has at least four different levels. An important story can be told to outsiders at the first, very general level, and this is probably what most early recorders such as Mathews and Langloh-Parker got and what you find in collections of Aboriginal stories. But to get to the higher levels of meaning in a story would take quite a lot of thinking, hard work and conferring with Elders (Sveiby & Skuthorpe 2006)

Such sharing and teaching is a long tradition - and it has been kept going by the strong personalities of many Elders as became very clear during the mapping of culturally valuable plants (see DNR 1999-2006, to be discussed later).

For some individuals this sharing is, understandably, difficult to do. What they have managed to retain is so very special, a treasure particularly theirs. Having lost so much, it seems important to keep this "in the family" rather than squander it on outsiders or risk that it gets distorted or misused.

1.1 Study group

The Coordinator, Dr. Laila Haglund, has worked as an archaeologist for some 50 years, mainly in Australia but also in Europe and the USA. Three years of work as Heritage Advisor to the BSC dealt mainly with non-Aboriginal and physical historical heritage aspects such as buildings and other constructions, but the background history to this settler heritage was obviously much influenced and coloured by the interaction of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations.

This study has relied heavily on advice from Aboriginal colleagues, members of the Aboriginal communities, and, when building on research reports, on interpretations made by the original researcher and by later commentators.

Floods, and complications resulting from these, meant that a lot of information had to be collected from earlier studies and published data, and then discussed with Elders and other community representatives - if and when available - to check the present

day relevance and present cultural practices. Most of the consultation planned for the final draft could not take place because of the recent floods.

Much information, including maps and pictures, has been quoted from published works. Permission to use these has been sought but it has not been possible to contact all authors.

With so many organisations and interested groups or persons scattered through the Shire, and frequent access problems because of repeated and extensive flooding, the organisation of work had to be quite loose. Key persons in the Aboriginal community or persons that are much involved with the Aboriginal community who could (at times) be contacted and asked for advice include:

Aboriginal Elders and representatives:

Michael Anderson
Jenny Barker
Josephine Byno
Elizabeth Dennis
Trish Frail
Fred Hooper
Dixie Skuthorpe
Jenny Stewart

June and Roy Barker
Dorothy Byno
Les Darcy
Ruby Dykes
Christine Hooper
Ron and Vivianne Mason
Brad Steadman

Researchers, Residents and Officials

Brewarrina Shire Council Office staff
Jillian Comber, formerly Heritage Advisor to BSC
Pat and George Cross of Mehi Station
Mary Dallas, Consulting Archaeologist
Philip Felton, retired Welfare Officer
Heather Finlayson, Nurse Administrator, Brewarrina Hospital
Hospital Staff: Helen Ferguson, Graham Boulton (Aboriginal Liaison Officer)
Angus Geddes, property owner
Brett Henderson, Principal, St. Patrick's School, Brewarrina
Cliff Hull who grew up here
Liana Liego, teacher, formerly at Brewarrina Central School
Judith Littleton, Consulting Archaeologist
Isabel McBryde, Archaeologist
Wayne Neal, Councillor
Carol Norton, Librarian, and her husband Paddy
Vern Kesby, property owner
Pauline Hertslet, property owner

1.2 Aims and Objectives

This study cannot claim to speak for the whole community, but does try to show due respect for Aboriginal culture, past and present.

It has looked at and tried to consider:

- how to collect and make available to the communities what has been written about their culture in the past. Some of this knowledge is still held by a few trusted Elders who are trying to keep it alive. Much was lost to present generations when their ancestors lost access to land, plants and animals. At times whole communities were moved away from their land and lost contact with their significant places. Traditional knowledge was often kept from younger generations due to their family's

fear that the children would be removed from their parents and moved to institutions if the children were seen to identify with Aboriginal culture;

- how to find out what information can be open to everybody and what needs to be restricted for personal or cultural reasons but still kept alive, perhaps as restricted records;
- how to find out what, or how much of the information found can be seen as reliable or properly interpreted. Most persons who did cultural recordings in the past were Europeans, spoke different languages and belonged to very different cultures. Some are likely to have misheard or misunderstood what they were told;
- how to create links and guidelines for Aboriginal organisations and persons to work together to understand and care for cultural aspects and values;
- how to get the whole community, including the very young, to want to be part of and care for such cultural concerns.

Unfortunately these points could not all be dealt with, but they were discussed with Aboriginal persons who saw some of them as matters for their own organisations to manage without outside interference.

1.3 Work Plan

As Aboriginal concerns about their intellectual property rights were clearly and understandably strong, the initial work concentrated on finding, copying and summarising what was already available in print. This would enable a discussion of strategies and rules.

Some broad summaries of cultural information cover the Darling/Barwon River area generally as the researchers or original recorders had tabulated data for the area rather than for certain groups within it. The groups have been seen as sharing much in terms of cultural traditions (see Sullivan 1970).

But more detailed studies had been done of Ngiyampaa/Ngemba and Yuwaalaraay cultures, so separate and more detailed summaries could be prepared for them (see Dunbar 1943-4, Langloh-Parker 1905, Sveiby & Skuthorpe 2006). For the Moorawarri Jimmie Barker had provided information in his life history (Mathews 1977). Some draft chapters were shown to Elders June and Roy Barker and Ruby Dykes for review before finalising them.

Except in direct quotes this report uses the spelling of Aboriginal names developed by recent linguists, see Chapter 4. Other spellings are commonly used, for example on a map in the Brewarrina Aboriginal Cultural Centre (Map 2). Yet other spellings are used on some published maps showing the interpretations of tribal areas made by various researchers.

Culturally sensitive areas still seen as relevant by the different language or tribal groups in the Shire were defined for a study of culturally valuable plants (DNR 1999-2006 and Chapter 4). These definitions have been used in this study and discussions with community members and BSC staff. Summaries and maps collected for this vegetation study formed starting points for the discussions to follow and helped trigger memories held by Elders and members of the communities involved so that they could be shared and preserved.

A couple of sites with historical and as well as present cultural and emotional values, and their importance, had with the help of local Aborigines been studied in detail. They are the present Goodooga Reserve, described and discussed by Stephanie

Smith (2000) and the former Denawan Reserve studied by Rodney Harrison (2004). These studies show what can still be done. Similar studies could be planned for other places in the Shire, for example the Old Mission at Brewarrina.

M.Gill (1996) has written detailed comments on the Weilmoringle people.

1.4 Constraints and Opportunities

Major Constraints:

- problems of access

To carry out a community based study you have to be able to meet up with members of the community and the members with each other. You also need such contact to be frequent and repeated to allow understanding and trust to build. Extensive, repeated and sometimes persistent flooding in 2010 - 2012 (the time in which this study was to be completed) caused major problems for the study as well as for the communities in the Shire. Severe flooding at the end of the study period prevented proper consultation regarding the final draft chapters. For long periods most roads were closed and some remain closed. Some communities were isolated for weeks or months and some residents were evacuated at times or simply found it best to move away for long periods, often outside the Shire. Some persons and families have not yet returned.

It has been impossible to organise representative meetings of the main communities or even to try to meet up in smaller groups, as for example on market days, as these might suddenly have to be cancelled because of rain and floods. Months of fieldwork time has been lost, time that was needed to build contact, interest and trust. It has also been impossible to organise getting drafts to the various communities to discuss before finalising this report. We can but hope that the various communities will see the information collected here as something to build on.

The early lack of trust was understandable for both recent and historical reasons - but where contact and trust was established, much interest and generosity has been shown by members of the Aboriginal communities.

- patchy information

Records compiled in the early days of European contact and settlement tend to be very patchy. They often reflect the sex of the recorder (mostly male) and his or her particular interests. They also depend on what Aboriginal people of the period were willing, unwilling or unable to tell and show an outsider who might not understand or approve.

Early male recorders of traditional culture (professionals and interested laymen) mostly talked to the men in a group. They often took for granted - as is still often the case - that men made the important decisions and held most of the important cultural knowledge. Few imagined that the women might have a large and complex culture relating to their lives and activities as well as having important roles going beyond this or shared by men.

With regard to archaeological sites and culturally important places listed in what started as 'the NPWS Aboriginal Sites Register' (now AHIMS, see Chapter 2), this register shows that such recordings have mostly been made during archaeological surveys and investigations as required for development proposals. Some sites have been protected and avoided as a result of such investigations, but others have been destroyed for some development. (According to legislation, destruction requires a

formal legal consent to destroy, but official records are not complete, so we do not always know what was done.)

Listed sites are often in a line along the route of a proposed road or power line or form a patch, often within the proposed development area. There is often good reason to expect that more sites would be found outside such study corridors or patches, if looked for.

Only a few sites have been listed at the request of Aboriginal residents. There has been, and may still be, a fear that heritage sites might be trashed or disturbed by landowners or vandals if they became generally known.

Importantly, the fact that some Aboriginal groups and persons were moved from their home lands to places not familiar to them, created great gaps in personal knowledge of important places and the stories attached to them.

- **opportunities**

Recent work on the remarkable Aboriginal Museum at Brewarrina (set just above the fish traps) and on its surroundings mean that it can again become a focal point for Aboriginal pride.

The building was planned by an award-winning Russian architect in response to imaginative but traditional concepts held and described by some local Elders. The building and the displays inside owe much to Aboriginal concepts and contributions, notably by Les Darcy and June and Roy Barker. The building is designed to reflect the traditional Aboriginal view of the Universe.

We understand that its library holds a number of important documents, still to be formally catalogued and studied. The teaching displays inside are concise and representative but we understand that there are also collections of artefacts in storage that remain to be studied and catalogued.

Funding made available in recent years has been directed to maintenance of the building and its surrounds as well as its educational importance.

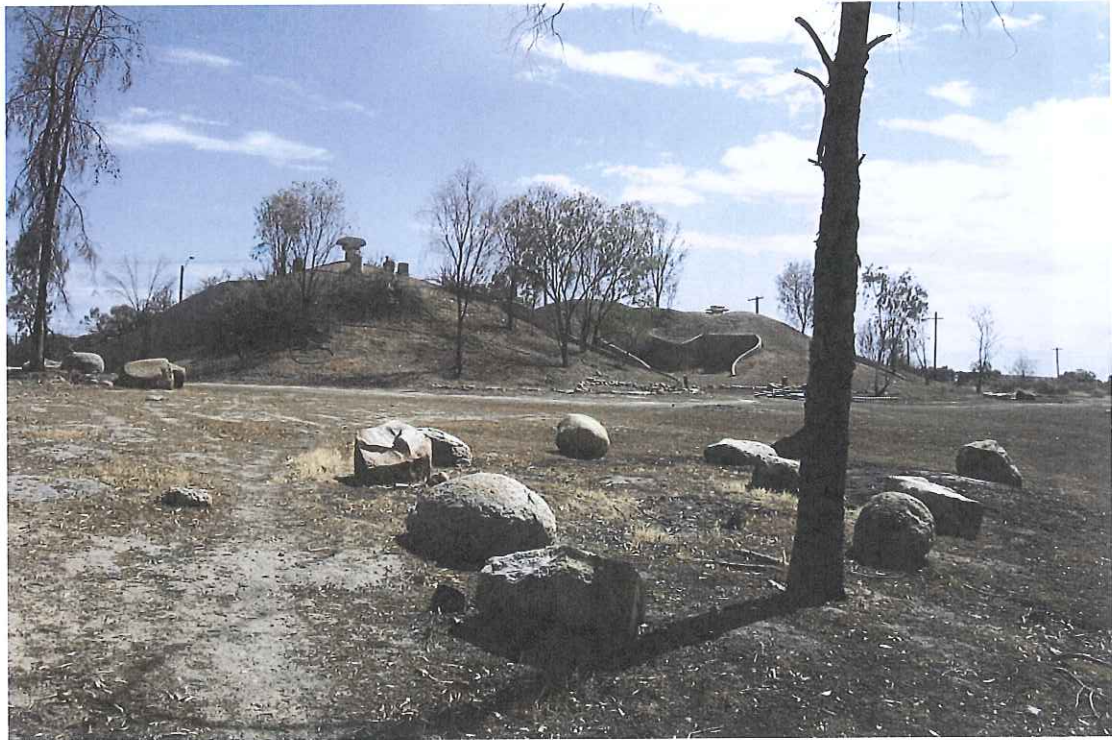
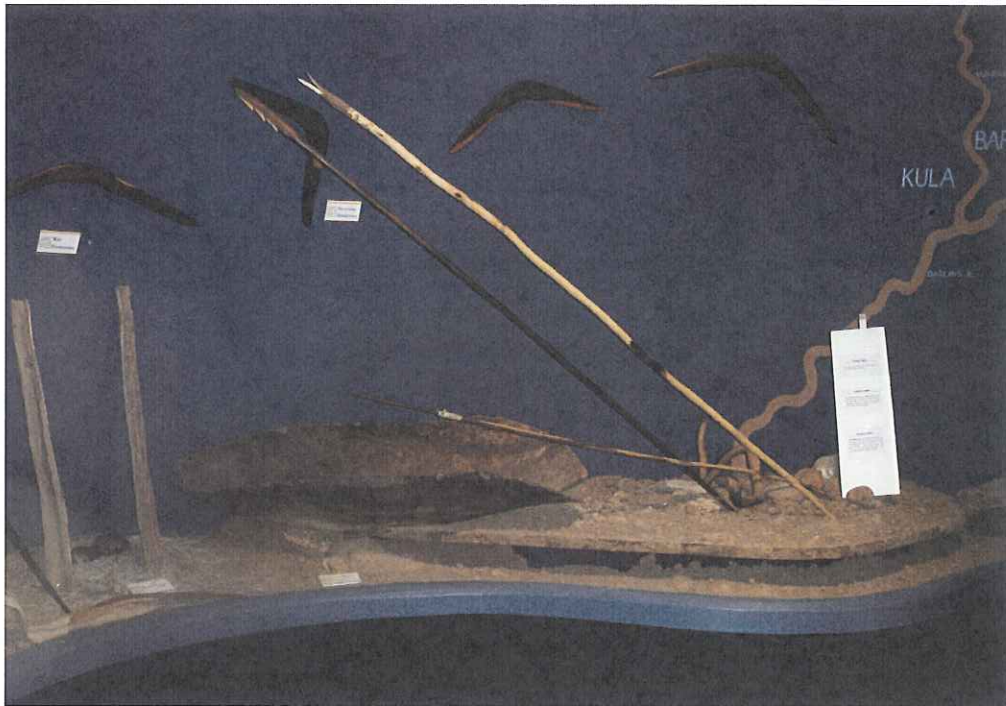


Fig.1 Brewarrina Aboriginal Museum

The museum (inside earthen mounds as seen above) has a beautiful story-telling area and telling displays of Aboriginal life in the distant as well as the recent (and often tragic) past, for example life on government reserves.





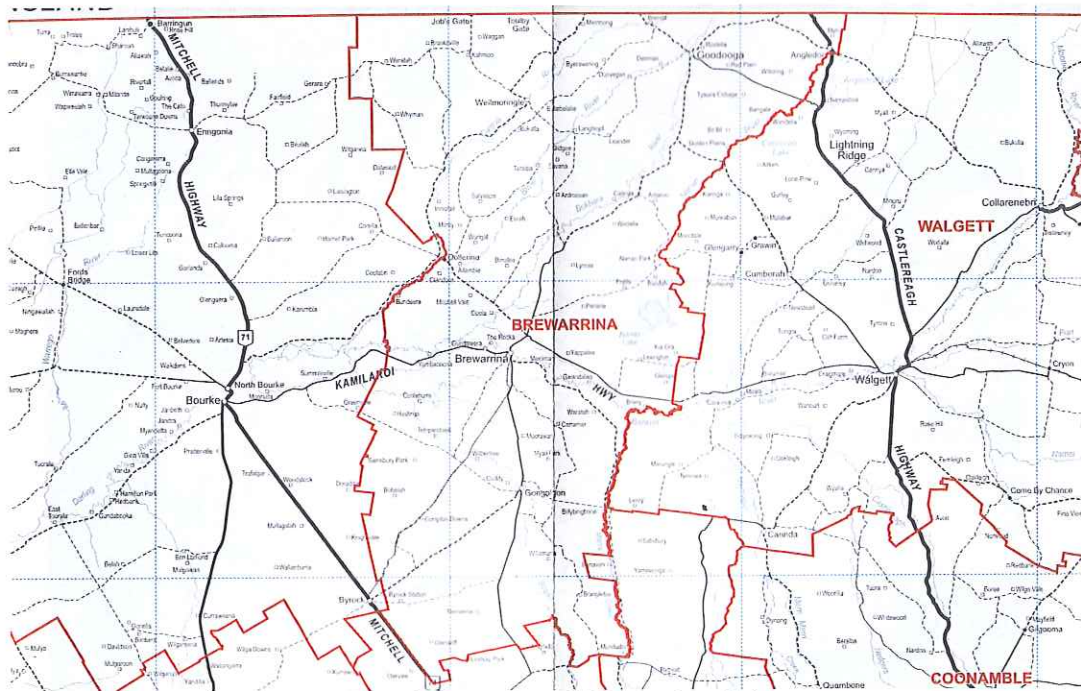
Figs. 2-3 Displays in the Museum

The work on the museum, its surrounds and the nearby famous fish traps, the **Ngunnhu**, has stimulated much debate and discussion as well as bringing well documented traditions back to more general attention. This should all make it easier to communicate to non-Aboriginals and Aboriginals both, and especially to the younger generations of Aborigines, some of the greatness of Aboriginal culture as it developed over thousands of years.

Chapter 2 The Study

2.1 The study area and its inhabitants

Brewarrina Shire covers some 20,000 square kilometres, extending south from the Queensland border (map 1). It forms a part of the enormous Darling River system. This includes many tributaries, past and present, as well as former channels of the river. Aboriginal people along the Darling itself took their name from the river ("Barka" or "Paaka") and were - and still are - the Paakantyi or Barkindji (the spelling varies between recorders), the People of the River. Their lands extended the whole length of the river from its junction with its main northern tributaries near what is now Bourke down to the Murray - Darling junction.



Map 1. Location of Brewarrina Shire

The Shire extends over and cuts across the traditional borders of several Aboriginal groups (maps 2-4). The larger groupings are sometimes called language groups, sometimes tribes. The word tribe is used by anthropologists to describe groups of people who share a language (or speak a dialect of it), cultural traditions and a sense of identity. A tribe can consist of several smaller groups that may cluster or have clustered in different parts of the tribal area and think of themselves as belonging to named groups that share a certain dialect and certain marriage patterns, ceremonies and lifestyles. But the word tribe has attracted unpleasant associations and is now gradually being replaced by 'People' (in Ngemba 'Mayi') or 'Nation' or 'language group', felt to be more acceptable concepts.

Boundaries shown on maps seem to be defined partly by landforms and rivers but are also defined by traditional patterns of access to the variety of resources present during the year. Patterns of fair division and responsible usage had been built up over many generations - there was a long tradition of caring for the land. The Darling River and its many tributaries were essential features of economy and cultural traditions. (Gammage 2011). Tribal areas were also defined by sites identified as sacred, as being part of their creation stories and links to nature. Such significant sites could be shared by different groups.

On maps of tribal groups their names may show rather different spellings, showing a recorder's interpretation of what was heard. It took some time for Europeans to work out how to write new sounds that did not quite fit the sounds of their own languages. There have been various attempts to map tribal areas, mostly tentative, based on the memories held by a group and on what the recorder understood of what was said.

One set of spellings is shown on a tribal map in the Aboriginal Museum (see map 2). Variants used in records are given in chapter 4. They may be useful when trying to find more information about a people in literature and research reports.



Map 2. Names used on the tribal map in Brewarrina Aboriginal Museum

Some common spellings for the three major language groups east of the river are:
 The Ngiyampaa or Ngemba on the Barwon River (seen as related to the Wiradjuri of the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee);
 the Moorawarri or Muruwari or Murawari on the Culgoa and northwards;
 the Gamilaroi or Kamilaraay or Camilaroi on the black soil plains of the Namoi, Gwydir and Upper Barwon.

Sub-groups speaking dialects of major languages live within the Shire:
 the Euahlayi or Yuwalaraay or Ualarai on the Narran River, and
 the Weilwon or Wailwan on the Macquarie River.

A couple of maps have been used a lot. These show not only different spellings but also some variation in the boundaries. The European invasion disrupted the life and organisation of these groups, moving some of them about and killing some off. Boundaries that were quite clear in the past when the different groups were secure in their traditions and patterns of movement through the land, could become blurred when groups got moved about by the authorities or pushed around by settlers, and then had to try to explain and describe their former areas and boundaries from memory or from what they remembered being told by older generations.'

[illegible]

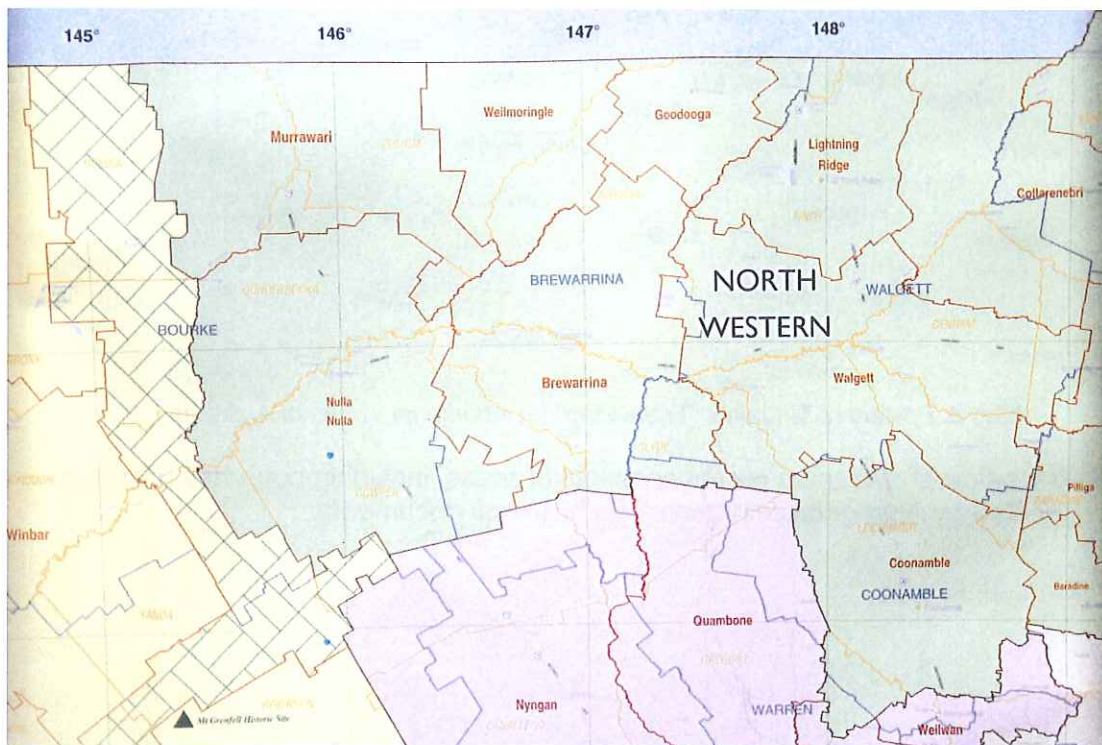
Map 4 below shows more recent concepts of areas, including boundary changes suggested by Aboriginal comments and historical documents.

A map of the Wiradjuri Nation, showing various clans and their territories. The map is color-coded and includes labels for several clans: Dharawal, Gungahiri, Koona, Mandandanji, Barngam, Margany, Budjari, Koonja, Bigambul, Barranbinya, Guna, Muruwar, Wandjiwalgu, Barundji, Kamilaroi, Wiljiali, Wongaibon, Wailwan, Barkindji, Barindji, Wiradjuri, Danggali, Yitha Yitha, Kureinji, Madi Madi, Meru, and Nari Nari. The map also shows major rivers like the Murrumbidgee, Campaspe, and Macintyre, and towns like Bourke, Dubbo, Bathurst, and Murrumbidgee. The map is titled 'Wiradjuri Nation' at the top.

However, Tex Skuthorpe, who got his knowledge from his grand-parents, traditional Nhunggal law givers, comments that nobody really knows how many "tribes" there were or just where their tribal boundaries were. What Skuthorpe calls Nhunggal country is what is generally shown as Yuwaalaraay country - if not just lumped with the Kamilaroi. Tindale in the 1930s interviewed people about tribal boundaries some hundred years after the original groups in the area had disappeared. He had to rely

on the memories of their descendants and on early settler sources (Sveiby & Skuthorpe 2006: 218).

In addition to tribal boundaries, administrators and politicians now have to consider and work with Local Aboriginal Land Councils. There are several within the Shire and the boundaries do not always closely follow tribal boundaries as drawn on old maps



Map 5 : Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983: Aboriginal Land Councils relevant to the Brewarrina Shire (from map issued by the Office of the Registrar September 2007).

Administration has become complicated! Three Land Councils are represented within Brewarrina Shire, with offices in Brewarrina, Goodooga and Weilmoringle. There are also three Working Parties, with offices in the same locations.

For this study the language group areas are as defined by Aboriginal participants for a study of culturally valuable plants. Brief summaries of their areas are given below, but more detail is given in Chapter 4.

The Barranbinya people have almost disappeared. They lived from above Brewarrina down to about Bourke, an unusually small territory. It has been suggested that the small size may partly explain their rapid disappearance after white settlement.

Importantly, they were probably some of the first Aboriginal people in the northwest to meet up with white explorers and pastoralists. Their area with its plentiful water for stock and good grazing would have been very desirable and would have been amongst the first to be "selected". They then had nowhere else to go to avoid pastoralists and introduced diseases. When told to move away to give space to stock they said "Baal" (no) - they simply had no choice.

It took but a few bad incidents - the Hospital Creek Massacre being the worst - and some new diseases for them to dwindle and disappear. But their story is strongly remembered (see Chapter 4).

Mathews (1908) recorded one of their stories and that version is given here as a memorial:

The Emu and the Crow.

The Emu and the Crow were man and wife and lived in a gurli, or hut. One very wet day they remained indoors, and the emu who was always addicted to kicking his legs about, lay on his back on the floor to pass the time, and kept kicking at the roof. After a while he struck a weak spot and made a hole, through which the rain beat into the gurli. He was too lazy to go and repair the damage but sent the crow, his wife, out in the wet to patch the breach in the roof. The emu continued his play of kicking upwards, and presently made another hole in the roof, which the crow had likewise to go out and repair. This continued for some time until the crow became exasperated, and taking a piece of bark, scooped up some hot coals from the fire, and threw them on the emu's chest, as he lay on his back disporting himself by kicking at the roof of the gurli. This burnt his breast so severely that even to present day there is a callous, dark patch on the breast of a cock emu. Moreover, emus continue the old habit of kicking upwards with their legs when they are rolling themselves in the sand or elsewhere to clean their feathers.

The language disappeared with the people. A small remnant (about 140+ words) was recorded by Lynette Oates with the help of a Moorawarri Elder, Mrs Emily Horneville, who remembered visiting Barranbinya people and talking to them in their language. As is well known, Aborigines are by tradition excellent linguists, quick to pick up a new language. In the past most members of a tribe would understand and speak several languages as well as their own. Jimmie Barker's mother could speak five languages well but knew something of other languages.

Yuwalaraay (Euahlayi): Their traditional lands lie between Bokhara River and the Big Warrambool, reaching south to the Barwon River and north into Queensland. They are part of the Gamilaroi language group whose traditional lands extended east from this to the Great Dividing Range. The area west of Bokhara River to the Birrie River is share country with Moorawarri People.

Pastoralist kept moving into their areas setting up large sheep and cattle holdings. For some time they tended to let Aborigines stay on the land but living as workers on their stations. Such labour was cheap and the Aborigines had much local knowledge to contribute. But life could for the workers still be harsh and severely restricted, in European terms amounting to controlled poverty.

In some cases working relationships were good and real friendships developed as described for example by K. Langloh-Parker, wife of the owner of Bangate Station. She took Aboriginal culture very seriously and was therefore trusted, told much about it (to allowable levels) and invited to take part in some ceremonies.

But as times and economy changed the Aborigines were moved off many stations and onto mission stations or government reserves as described in later chapters.

The **Moorawarri** traditional lands lie above the country of the Barranbinya, between the Bokhara (or Paroo?) and the Warrego Rivers, extending north into Queensland to just south of Cunnamulla. They are known as the people of the Birrie, Culgoa and Warrego Rivers. A number of clans, also called estate groups, share the language. Jimmie Barker, a Moorawarri Elder, knew the language well and helped to get it recorded, preparing many precious tapes while working with Janet Mathews.

Groups living on the borders of the Moorawarri area used words not used by those in the central areas, having adopted words from neighbouring groups.

Barwon River below the junction with the Culgoa was called Bama. From this junction and north to the Queensland border it was called Ngarndu.

Birrie River and Brewarrina derive their names from the word "bri " which means acacia in both Moorawarri and Euahlayi (Yuwalaraay).

The coming of pastoralists and their grabbing land and power forced also many of the Moorawarri off their lands to cluster in small groups or on reserves or mission stations. As other Aboriginal groups in the Shire they suffered deprivations, loss of opportunity for traditional practices and ill health. Numbers went down - an influenza epidemic in 1919 caused the death of many.

The traditional lands of the **Ngilyampaa Mayi** (mayi meaning people) lie south of the Barwon and Bogan Rivers and southward to the Lachlan River and Willandra Creek. The Gunderbooka and Booroondarra Ranges were generally seen as the western boundaries, and to the east the boundaries were the open plains, grassland and mallee between the Willandra and Sandy Creeks. Their main living area seems to have been on the Cobar Peneplain and some open plains and mallee to the south-east. They are sometimes described as "*Garul gyalu*", the Stone Country People or kaliny-tyalapaang- kialu, 'dry land people' who only visited rivers in times of severe drought or for ceremonies or trade with neighbours (who were: Barranbinya to the north, Wayilwan to the southeast, the Wiradjuri to the south and the Paakantyi to the west) .

It is clear that the Darling River formed an important cultural dividing line with less contact and sharing across the line. Groups living along the river or west of it were more closely connected.

2.2 Concepts of Time and Time Periods

Time concepts

Present day western ideas of time mostly see it as running in a line, every event part of a sequence. This would have made little sense in traditional Aboriginal thinking. The past remains - it is the environment you live in. Everything has always been and will continue to be - and for people the transformations throughout life can lead to a better understanding of the past. An innovation is just a discovery of a feature that was always there (Sveiby & Skuthorpe 2006:6-7).

You come from a spiritual state, you go through apparent transformations marked by ceremonies that prepare you for and let you enter different stages in life which amount to different stages of understanding and after death enter/return to yet another spiritual state of understanding. Natural events dominate such patterns. This is a complex way of thinking and not exclusive to Aboriginal culture.

But for the sake of communicating Aboriginal history, we need to present our story also in terms of linear and geological time. We have to keep to two ways of thinking. This means that for this study we need to use two ways of thinking of the land and its history: one using traditional Aboriginal concepts, the other using findings of recent scientific research into aspects of the past and present.

For discussing history we have made a first broad division into time periods.

Time periods

Early Times - from the beginning of time to the formation of the Australian continent as we know it. The period when Baiame, the maker, began planning and creating everything, transforming the landscape and forming the creatures and plants within it.

Traditional Times - a long period during which the Aborigines learned about their land and about what had been and was being created for them to use and nurture. They learned and developed the rules that Baiame expected them to follow - and that would be good for them and the country.

Contact Times - from about 1790 AD and first contact with Europeans to 1967 when new legislation started changing the status of Aborigines in Australian Society.

Recent Times - from 1967 and onwards, a period of much change, some for the better.

2.3 Concepts of Aboriginal Heritage

This includes a wide range of aspects of culture, tangible and intangible: places where they have lived and live, places that have good memories or bad ones, places that are linked with stories or memories of persons or happenings. But it is not only places that have been used and which may still bear marks of use such as scarred trees, quarry sites and art sites or artefacts that were made for practical use, for ceremonies, for decoration or for pleasure.

Heritage includes all aspects of life: language, stories, games, music and song, designs and ceremonies, rules about life and how to bring up children, beliefs and knowledge about what has been created in the past but also what is being created now and will be created in the future. This is all seen as being part of Aboriginal culture and heritage.

Heritage includes memories as well as community dreams about the future. Aboriginal history has not stopped flowing; there have been abrupt and often cruel changes forced on the communities, but ways were somehow found to cope with these.

In the past and over a long time, Aborigines developed ways of living that varied to suit what the land and the creator beings had to offer. Communities were formed. As mentioned earlier, the larger ones with much in common are usually called tribes. A tribe shared access to an area or areas, a language (that might have dialects) and customs that would be shared within sub-groups, usually called bands or clans. But these labels have been applied by outsiders trying to understand Aboriginal society.

Aboriginal understanding focused on different matters: links with nature, patterns and rules relating to individual and family relationships and rights of access. Each tribe had a strong bond, physical and spiritual, with a certain area given them by the creator spirits to love, use and care for.

This ancient order and special link with certain areas was disrupted by the strangers who invaded the land. Coming from other continents they had no spiritual links with

the land and usually neither understood or could imagine how strong were the links between Aborigines and their land.

Members of some communities and sometimes whole communities were forcibly moved from their land and onto land with which they had no special links and to live with and next to groups with different customs and who might be seen as enemies or at least as potentially dangerous. This caused pain and confusion.

This study describes cultural traditions belonging in the area of Brewarrina Shire, but the modern divisions and land boundaries have little connection with the old patterns. As Shire boundaries can cut right across old tribal and linguistic boundaries, we have to bring together information from several groups.

Because of the way research and recordings were done in the past, some aspects of culture have been listed as typical and probably generally shared by most or all the different groups in the Shire. However, a couple of researchers and early recorders got to know and get involved with individual tribes and we can therefore put them in focus and give some idea of the cultural aspects and teachings belonging to the Ngiyampaa/Ngemba, Moorawarri and the Euahlayi = Yuwalaray groups. But they also had much in common with each other and with other groups.

2.4 Creation of the country

Using information from science we know that sometime during very **Early Times** an inland sea covered much of eastern Australia and that there were active volcanoes along the eastern margin of the continent. Some of these volcanoes continued to be active for quite some time. Some spewed out lava that cooled and became rock that could be used by Aborigines to make sharp cutting tools, some made layers of rock move up or down, heating the rock so it hardened and became strong and tough, useful for making grinding and chopping tools.

In those early days, in Yuwaalaraay language the *Burruguu* the Creative Ancestors travelled about and created landscape features, sun, moon and stars and all living creatures and plants. They were superhuman but behaved rather like humans, sometimes fighting and quarrelling and could make mistakes. They were not gods, but are thought of and called Ancestors. There are and were many important stories about their work. Work finished they returned to the *Warrambuul*, the skyworld where they lived.

Some stories tell about local places, others about the landscapes or about places no longer remembered or identified. Many stories are shared over wide areas - by the Ngiyaampaa/Ngemba, Moorawarri, Wiradjuri, Yuin and Pitjantjara and perhaps by tribes further away. Stories and ceremonies linked with them could travel over long distances to be kept alive by different communities. They created mental maps of the country as well as maps of how to live.

For the northern NSW the most important Ancestor was Baiame, the law-maker. He laid out the rules about social relationships to be followed by all the animals. And there was no real difference between a person and an animal. Both were made of the same material as the earth. They were equals, except that in the *Burruguu* animals that obeyed the law were turned into people. This is how they got their totems - they were originally animals but were rewarded by being turned into people.

Those who remained in animal form were the ones that had broken the law. One of the laws told that there were certain places where they could not go. Some animals

who broke this law by going to such places were turned into hills, mountains and valleys.

Everything is somehow 'alive'. Every rock, landform, plant and animal has its own consciousness, just as people.

Note that stories about the Creative Ancestors use several different names for them as they were recorded in different languages. The Guthi-guthi in the story below is surely the Baiame known in stories from Brewarrina Shire area!

" the creation story of the Ngijaampaa country:

A long, long time ago, in the beginning, when there were no people, no trees, and no plants whatsoever on this land, Guthi-guthi, the spirit of the Aboriginal ancestors, lived up in the sky. He wanted to create a special land for people, animals and birds to live in. So Guthi-guthi came down to the earth and started to create this land for the people. He first set the borders in place and the sacred sites, which are the birthing places of the Dreamings, where all the Aboriginal Dreamings come from.

Guthi-guthi then put one foot on Gunderbooka Mountain and another one at Mount Grenfell, and he looked out over the land and he could see that the land was bare. There was no water in sight, there was nothing growing. Guthi-guthi knew that Weowie, the water serpent, was trapped in a mountain called Mount Minara. So Guthi-guthi called out to him, but because Weowie was trapped right in the middle of the mountain, he couldn't hear him.

Guthi-guthi went back up into the sky and he called out once more. Once again Weowie didn't respond so Guthi-guthi came down with a roar like thunder and banged on the mountain and the mountain split open. Weowie the water serpent came out and where the water serpent traveled he made waterholes and streams and depressions in the land.

Once all that was finished, Weowie went back into the mountain to live and that's where Weowie lives now, in Mount Minara. After that, Guthi-guthi wanted another lot of water to come down from the north, throughout the country. He called on old Pundu, the Cod, to drag and create the river known as the Darling River today. So Cod came out with Mudlark, his little mate, and they set off from the north and they created the big river. This river flows down from the north and flows right through the country into the sea.

This is how this country was created. The first two tribes put in our country were Eaglehawk and Crow. From these two tribes came many tribal people, and many other tribes.

Stories relating directly to the Brewarrina area describe **how the Barwon - Darling River was formed**: Jimmie Barker was told by the Ngemba that Baiame once travelled from west to east accompanied by his pack of Mirijula or spirit dogs. As he walked one dog would move away from him and run in a slightly easterly direction. A little later another dog would run off on his own. All but four dogs went on their separate ways and moved towards the east. The remaining four dogs always stayed together and accompanied Baiame to his destination. When they were approaching the sea they all rested and waited for the return of the other dogs. It is believed that the path that Baiame trod is now the valley of the Darling River and the route that the four dogs trod is now the winding Barwon River (the uppermost part of the Darling).

The tracks of the dogs that moved separately are the tributaries of the Darling and Barwon Rivers respectively.

Baime is said to have started his walk at Byrock Water Hole, a very important place.



Fig.4 Byrock Waterhole

Stories about the **Ngunnuh**, the famous fish traps, take us into **Traditional Time**. These fish traps are important both for their depth of history and for the skill and planning shown in their construction. The fish traps have become almost a code word for Brewarrina and they need to have their story told here, as an introduction to the world of Brewarrina.

Back in the mid to late 1800s both R.H. Mathews and Langloh-Parker recorded what they were told about the traps by the local elders. They were told the stories because they were trusted to treat them with respect. Both were also told some of the rules for their use and maintenance, as laid down by Baime.

Langloh-Parker was told that the fish traps were built by Baime and his two sons, also giants. Some hollows in the rocks at the edge of a fish trap are understood to be a Baime foot-print. (There were more at Byrock Waterhole and at Lake Narran.) They were told that

"the fish traps happened because there was no food or water and the Ngemba were starving. They were sitting by the Barwon wondering what to do. Baime decided to help and with his two sons Booma-ooma-nowi and Ghinda-inda-mui, he collected stones and big boulders and showed the Ngemba how to set them to form a big net. Days of rain followed and the Barwon flooded bringing with it thousands of fish. The old men rushed to herd the fish into the pens and trap them. The rain also brought birds, turtles and other wildlife back to the Barwon.

The grateful people put on a corroboree for Baime that night. Taking a coolamon Baime showed some of the old people how to call rain.

(There was a tradition of known rain-makers in the Brewarrina area, though there are none left now.)

Baiame also showed the people the King and Queen rocks. The Elders were advised to use them as platforms for allocating time and place for different families to catch fish. The Ngemba became the custodians of the Ngunnhu and families had a responsibility to maintain the traps.

The fish traps meant that the Ngemba had a reliable food supply and less need to be nomadic. But they were also expected to share their place and fish with other groups."

Baiame also ruled that during the "fishing festival" times when there was a lot of fish, the shore would form a common camping ground where various groups could camp in peace with each other and share the riches provided by the river.

There were strict rules about what groups could camp and when, and from what set of traps they could gather fish, though the holders of such rights could grant another group access to their own trap, on request.

The traps are a complicated arrangement of four sets of stone fish traps and walls built on a several hundred metres long rock bar in the Barwon, close to the heart of the town itself. It has clearly been an important place for thousands of years. With flood and use damage and repeated repairs, details of the patterns have changed a bit but the basic character appears to have been kept.

Each trap formed a major tear-shaped pen with the curved outer wall facing upstream and containing smaller subdivisions that also had names. The rocks were tightly placed, creating dry stone walls about 80-90cm high and about a metre broad at the base narrowing to half a metre at the top where a line of larger rocks made the structure stronger. Each set of traps stretched right across the river.

R.H.Mathews (1898), wrote a detailed article about the traps, describing their use.

Being a professional surveyor he also prepared detailed drawings, giving exact measurements. Les Darcy owns one set (which has been consulted in relation to recent repairs. The pictures below have become quite famous and often reproduced.



Fig.5 Ngunnhu as they used to be...

Mathews^{1*} describing how they worked:

"During the early spring months or at any time when there was a fresh in the river, the fish travelled upstream in immense numbers. The stone pens or traps had their open ends towards the direction from which the fish approached.....as soon as a sufficient number had entered the labyrinth of traps the openings were closed up by means of large stones which had been placed alongside ready for use. If the opening was too wide to be thus blocked by stones, a number of natives posted themselves across it to prevent the egress of the fish.

The natives then entered the pens and splashed water with their hands or feet, thus frightening the fish into the smaller enclosures where they might be more easily caught. Any unusually large fish which might be in the 'haul', were killed as speedily as possible, because they at once commenced swallowing the smaller ones collected in the pens. These 'big-fellow' fish were generally speared by the young men as they first entered the enclosures, before they had time to do any damage.

It appears from the foregoing description that the fish, in coming up the river, were intercepted by the outliers or 'wings' of this maze which stretched from bank to bank; they entered the large enclosures from which they were chased into smaller and smaller pens, much in the same way as sheep are driven into 'catching pens' at shearing time, or cattle into 'killing yards'. In driving the fish through different yards, some were killed by spear or club as opportunity offered, but on arrival at the smallest pens all the fish were caught and killed. The larger fish were speared, or killed by a club, but the smaller ones were caught by hand, the fisherman passing his fingers through the gills and inserting a cord on which he carried as many fish as could be dealt with in this manner.

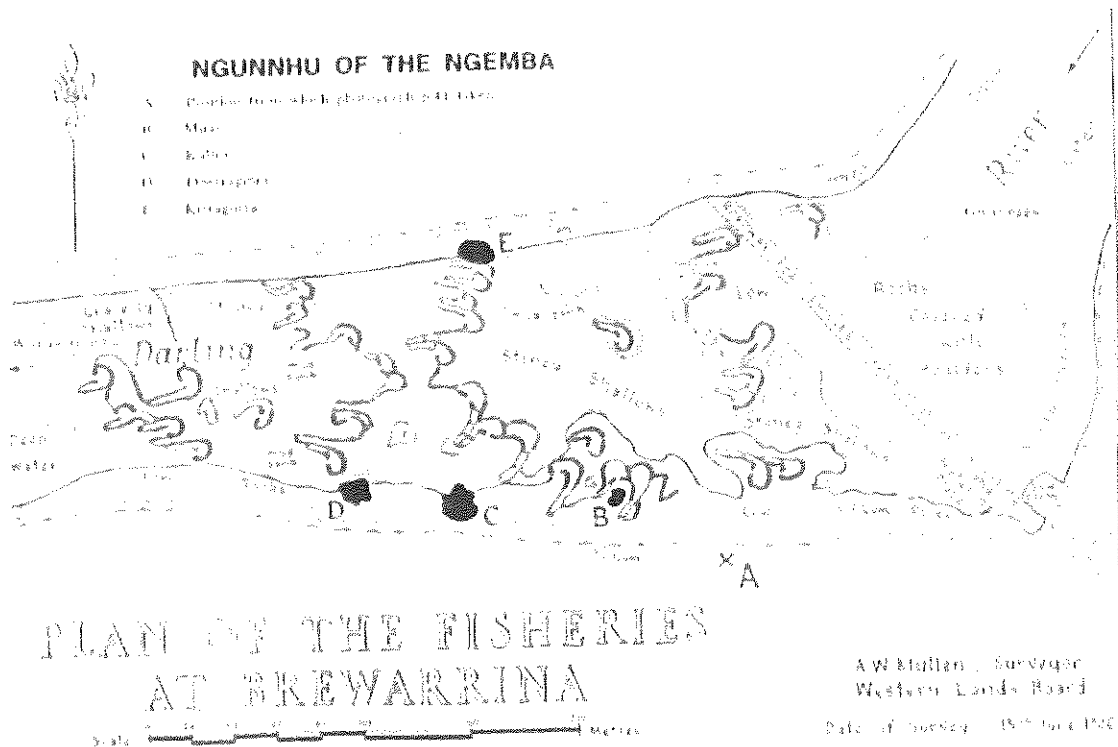


Fig.6 Ngunnhu in 1906. Gurrungga is the large waterhole above the traps and Wirruwirumba the last of the rapids below them. The large rocks are significant and they are named as shown on the plan. There are grinding grooves on a rock shelf near Muar. The roadway across, made by early settlers, is no longer there.

My old native informants told me that none were left in the yards, because if they got away they would warn all their fellow-fish not to go into such a trap in the future. One old man stated that the same rule was followed when netting emus when he was a boy. Great care was taken to prevent the escape of an emu from the net lest he tell the other birds about the ingenuity of their enemies.

To enable the fishing operations to be proceeded with it was necessary that the walls of the pens should be a little way out of the water, because when the water rose above the tops of the traps the fish could easily swim over them. But when the pens in the lower portion of the river floor were submerged, those situated at a higher level, referred to in an earlier paragraph, could be availed of.

When the river was falling these conditions were reversed - when the higher yards became dry, the lower ones were resorted to. In very uneven portions of the river there were several grades, to meet the exigencies of the rise and fall of the river. The water of the Darling River is never clear, but always has a greyish hue, owing to the light-coloured clays along its banks.....During long periods of dry weather, however, a good deal of grey matter held in solution sinks to the bottom and the stagnant water becomes somewhat clearer.

In times of flood it is muddy and of slightly reddish shade, due to the storm water draining in from surface soils of that colour. Owing to this sudden change in the character of the liquid, the fish often flee before the advancing turbid stream, which appears to nauseate them. When such a fish-laden current reached the Ngunnhu at Brewarrina, the aborigines had the 'upstream' ends of their traps ready for action."

In another article also Matthews mentions that there was a tradition of maintaining and renewing the fish traps in preparation for use and that the area formed a

common camping ground for various tribes during fishing seasons. Peace was kept and each group or sub-group had claim to some trap or pen.

2.5 Saving traces of the past

Aboriginal Peoples having a part of their traditional area within the Shire were listed in 2.1 above. Work opportunities, facilities and family history mean that many of their members now live outside the Shire, or at least outside the tribal area, but most still know their tribal roots.

Traces of Aboriginal life in the past can still be found in the landscape: Scarred trees (perhaps the source of wood or bark for canoes, rafts, coolamons and tools) and trees with toe holes for climbing; burials, notably in sand-hills; chipped or ground stone tools and quarry sites from which they came; remains of hearths and cooking pits; wells; fish traps and middens, just to mention some examples. Such traces are gradually disappearing, partly through natural decay, partly being removed by past land use and modern development.

But they could to some extent be protected by Heritage Legislation - if recognised, reported to relevant authorities and seen as significant to Aboriginal culture and history. The traces can be difficult to notice, recognise and record - you need to know what to do and whom to contact. And the record has to be made known to whoever is intending to do something that may damage the place or the item and this is often where things go wrong - the connection is not made.

At present there is a lot of discussion and consultation relating to what can and should be done and this will probably continue for quite some time.

2.6 Existing Heritage Legislation

Legislation relating to 'historic heritage', 'history' being seen as covering the period from first European arrival on the continent (and which therefore must also include Aboriginal history) is the concern of the Department of Planning (Heritage Branch), now the **Department of Heritage**. This department and the Brewarrina Shire Council jointly funded the work on this study.

The situation becomes complicated - and often confused - because locations and items relating to Aboriginal culture and history are also the concern the National Parks and Wildlife Service, within what became the **Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC)**, now the **Office of Environment and Culture (OEC)**, and within this the concern of the **Country, Culture and Heritage Division (CCHD)**. For this report it was necessary to get access to the **AHIMS** (Aboriginal Heritage Information System) register, held and organised by this office. ***Getting places onto this register and having access to this register so that a potential developer can be warned in time, may help to protect Aboriginal sites, but both the listing and the access are difficult and time consuming.***

Destruction of a site is often due to lack of information.

One document is of general importance to the whole question of preservation and care, the **Burra Charter**. This sets the standards for heritage conservation practices. It is not law, but conscientious archaeologists, historians and administrators try to stick to its principles. It details criteria against which the heritage significance of an item can be assessed. These criteria include: aesthetic value, historic value, scientific value and social value.

These criteria have been adopted by State and Commonwealth Government heritage management agencies and are used to assess the heritage significance or importance of an item to all Australians.

There should be a copy of this charter in every Shire, Land Council and Working Party Office as well as in Public Libraries.

Protective legislation:

The **National Parks and Wildlife Act (NPW Act) of 1974** as amended protects all Aboriginal Sites within NSW and is managed by the **DECC (now OEC)**.

Part 6 of the Act provides protection for "Aboriginal objects" defined as "any deposit, object or material evidence (not being a handicraft made for sale) relating to the Aboriginal habitation of the area that comprises New South Wales, being habitation before or concurrent with (or both) the occupation of that area of non-Aboriginal extraction, and includes Aboriginal remains."

Section 90 (in Part 6) states that it is illegal to knowingly destroy, deface or damage an Aboriginal object without first obtaining the written consent of the Director-General.

The Act ensures the protection of all traditional (pre-contact) Aboriginal sites or places, whether or not they are listed on the AHIMS register. Traditional Aboriginal "objects" are therefore automatically protected and do not have to be listed.

Post-contact places such as a Mission or a cemetery can be protected under **Section 84** (in Part 6): The Minister may, by order published in the Gazette, declare any place specified or described in the order, being a place that, in the opinion of the Minister, is or was of special significance with respect to Aboriginal culture, to be an Aboriginal place for the purposes of this Act.

Present patterns relating to development proposals tend to involve, as a preliminary precaution, engaging a qualified and preferably experienced archaeologist to consult with the Aboriginal community/traditional owners and to carefully survey the proposed development area, assisted by representatives of the local Aboriginal people, to check for items and information relating to Aboriginal concerns. It may be quite a tricky job. Past land use and present vegetation patterns may obscure such evidence and it can be difficult to find Aboriginal assistants with the right connections and background, particularly in areas where there has been much influx from other areas. Few may be able to ask relevant questions of the Aboriginal community or identify ancient objects or traces of past activities.

A search of registers and existing consulting reports relating to the general area is likely to be essential.

In this context it is worth mentioning that officials may use "heritage-speak", words that have a defined meaning, legal or customary.

Some examples of standard terms used:

"Place" a particular area of known Aboriginal cultural attachment and relationship.
Criteria used for recognizing an Aboriginal place may be that the land:
- contains Aboriginal burials;

- is identified by stories or by known use in ceremonies;
- has been an Aboriginal Reserve, mission or a post- (European) settlement living area;
- is known from written records as the location of some important event in Aboriginal life (battle, massacre etc);
- has areas containing Aboriginal objects, combinations of features important in Aboriginal life and economy;
- contains archaeological sites important because of their relation to Aboriginality;
- contains places significant to Aboriginal society and culture after 1788.

Note: The term "Aboriginal Place" can in NSW have a precise legal meaning if so declared under the NSW N.P.W. Act of 1974.

"**Site**" is a term used in recording locations with (usually) some visible evidence of traditional use or occupation (or that is known to have contained such evidence). The definition has been messed up and complicated by attempts to make it standardised - does/should a single Aboriginal stone artefact count as a site?

Some **Site Categories** seem useful:

Closed sites - rock shelters, caves

Open sites - found in the open, not in rock shelters or caves.

But the archaeological material found in closed sites often continues some distance outside a shelter and may well continue all the way down the slope to the nearest watercourse. Past Aborigines had no reason to fit the precise definitions of future archaeologists.

Some **Site Features** can be described more precisely:

Pit ovens (for cooking)

Earth Mound/Fire Hearth

Burial (used also for human remains lacking evidence of burial ceremony)

Artefact (usually stone, bone or shell - but can be of clay, fibre, bark etc)

Fish trap

Ceremonial arrangements

Conflict sites - may be known only from records

Shell Midden

Quarry (Stone or Ochre)

Camp Site (may have artifacts, hearths)

Water hole

Rock well (often with cover)

Grinding grooves or hollows

Modified trees (scarred, carved or for canoe making)

Stone arrangements

In addition to **AHIMS**, a couple of Statutory Registers can be of importance here:

the **Local Environmental Plan (LEP)**: Usually includes at least some items of Aboriginal cultural value. The present LEP (which is being updated) includes ten items but for one of these there is no information of its location. This means that it cannot be protected under the LEP. It is described as a mythological site and may therefore be important enough to have been listed on some other register.

the **Register of the National Estate**, now the **National Heritage List**: set up to list significant natural or cultural heritage places in Australia. The Ngunnhu and the Narran Lakes area are both listed.

the **National Trust Register**: It is a non-government community organization and its aims are to:

- acquire, protect and preserve, for the benefit of the public, lands, buildings, works, structures and articles of beauty or of natural, historical, scientific or cultural interest;
- to protect the natural features of, and conserve wildlife on, any of these lands owned or managed by the Trust;
- to encourage and promote public appreciation, knowledge and enjoyment of these things.

the **State Heritage Register**: to get a site listed on this register, the site must first be approved by the New South Wales Heritage Council. A listing controls activities such as alteration, damage, demolition and development. An owner who wishes to do any such thing must first get approval from the New South Wales Heritage Council. This will consider whether the proposal would adversely affect or diminish the significance of the place.

If the owner does not first get a permission and the place is under threat, the Heritage Council can recommend to the Minister that an Interim Heritage Order be placed on the listed item to prevent such a threat. This order is in force for twelve months and the owner can during this time apply for approval to undertake the alteration or demolition. In Brewarrina Shire such application could be submitted via the Shire's Heritage Advisor.

If an item is listed as of State Significance approval may not be granted.

At present the Ngunnhu is the only site listed for the Shire.

2.7 Aboriginal Heritage in the Shire

Settlers and authorities pushed individuals and groups out of their own areas and into others where they often did not know the land, its resources and its important stories. The knowledge of boundaries and important places could get blurred or lost. Some groups were reduced to small numbers by illness, violence or hunger. Individuals and groups from outside the area were at times moved in by force and sometimes placed with strangers, perhaps potential enemies.

Much of the physical evidence is small and hard to notice - little flakes of stone; or fragile - bits of bone or shell, scars on trees that are getting old and dying.

Some knowledge is or was, held in memory and perhaps held only by persons who had a right to know because of their sex, age status or family connection with a place. Some of these places and at least hints of such secret knowledge are listed on the AHIMS and this is one reason why access to the register is restricted and may be difficult. It is sometimes OK for outsiders to know that a location is important but not to know its story. but without the story, how can you explain why it is important?

Development proposals normally have to go to a Shire Council for consideration. Ideally the relevant council officer and relevant Land Council and Working Party staff should be able to check grid references for a proposed development against a register

to see if any Aboriginal sites might be affected. But this register could contain and therefore expose secret or restricted knowledge. It would also be difficult, time-consuming and expensive to organise such access for every time a proposal came in.

Council staff tend to assume that the Aboriginal organizations have the relevant knowledge. But their staff also change and tend to consist of relatively young and agile people able to move around in the landscape. They may not have been trusted with the relevant knowledge and may not know when there is a need to talk to Elders about the land in question, or may be hesitant to bother them with questions.

When surveys are done, reports usually go to the Shire Council, the relevant Aboriginal organizations and the DECC and/or the Heritage Office. They are read (we hope), filed away but rarely shared with the Aboriginal community in general, and rarely accessed when council staff changes. Sites are found, listed and often forgotten unless the archaeologist manages to find and read the relevant reports.

A number of survey reports are listed in the references. It is possible that Land Councils and Working Parties were given and still have copies of some. Interested members may wish to enquire.

Another reason why Aboriginal groups may be unwilling to allow open access to site information is fear that vandals (and possibly white landowners/potential developers) may destroy sites if they hear about them. This has happened and may still be happening.

As mentioned, there is now an on going and, probably, long process of consultation about how best to solve these problems.

For this study OEH allowed access to the AHIMS list of registered sites in Brewarrina Shire. A close look at this register suggested that information for the Shire is very patchy, often incomplete or inexact. Some recordings may be duplicated. And some original reports have been lost by the OEH. The Brewarrina Shire copies, if existing, are hidden in storage.

However, counting the recordings that had sufficient detail to be categorised, the count was:

Open camp sites: 109 (usually means that more than one stone artefact or domestic item such as grind stones was seen) plus **24** cases of finding an isolated artefact. An artefact by itself could have been dropped or thrown away as blunt or not needed, but it is often an indication that there are more artefacts nearby, perhaps even a camp site.

Scarred trees: 154 (the scars may be simple toe-holds, scars from taking bark or wood for shields or coolamons etc, or for canoes or to cover shelters.) There are two references to carved trees. One was noted as "not found."

Burials: 14 locations - and for some it is noted that there were several burials.

Mythological sites: 2 listed but more have been discussed in other documents and some are referred to in this report. Rights to knowledge of exact locations may be controversial.

Contact/ Mission sites: 3 listed, but more exist and some are discussed in this report.

Bora and ceremonial sites: 2 listed, but more have been mentioned in documents seen and in this report.

Midden sites: 5 listed.

Axe grinding groove sites: 2 listed but more known (e.g. at Ngunnhu).

Quarry sites: 4 mentioned and documented. May also have grinding grooves.

Waterholes/wells: 3 waterholes listed. There are obviously more; their significance is more difficult to establish.

Fishtraps: 4 listed. More existed. Some are mentioned in the literature but often described as lost or largely destroyed.

Littleton and Hudson (1997) who surveyed the Barwon 4/Stock-route area and the Old Park, specifically concerned with looking for burials. The maps showing her results are included as Maps 6 and 7 below.

Littleton looked at many of these reports, and from them and her own surveys could outline patterns of where sites can be expected in the Shire and what may be expected to be found in them:

Site Predictions:

Open camp sites: Scatters of stone artefacts, often associated with baked clay from fire places and sometimes with food remains (fragmented shell, burnt animal bone). These were places where everyday activities occurred (cooking, eating, toolmaking and maintenance of stone). They are expected to occur on higher eroding surfaces - higher to avoid flooding - and eroding because this makes the remains show up on the surface.

Middens: Dense accumulations of shell in a dark organic deposit. They are sometimes associated with hearths and stone artefact scatters. These are places where people dumped food remains after eating. They are likely close to river banks on the floodplain but may be hidden by clay deposited by floods.

Meeting places - places for ceremonies such as initiation or for corroborees.

Burials: Usually located on high, sandy ground. They may be isolated burials of individuals or special burial grounds used by groups of people.

Scarred trees: Usually found where there has been little or no clearing. Scarring can be for many purposes: shelters, canoes, containers, shields, burial markings, honey collection, possum hunting etc. Trees may scar naturally, so if there are no axe marks, one looks for certain features: Is the scar regular in shape, does it stop above ground, is it unlikely to be due to a branch coming off.

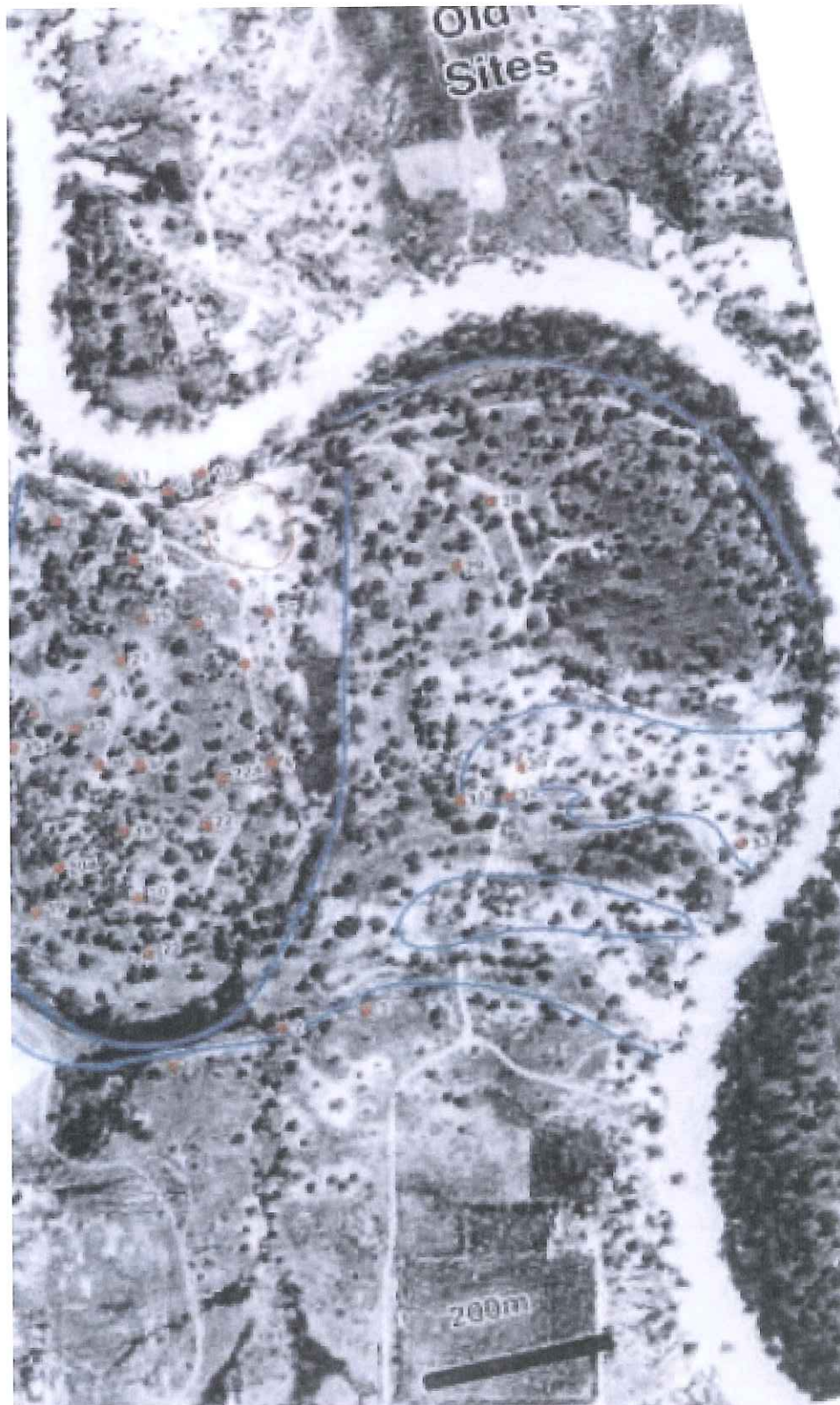
Contact sites: Evidence suggests Aboriginal use after European settlement.

Grinding grooves: From sharpening stone tools; may occur on boulders or loose slabs at quarry sites or camp sites.

But traditional life had many aspects that did not leave physical traces. Some have lived on in memory and as treasured knowledge. From present memories, early recordings and recent research we can cobble together some knowledge of past traditional life. Some of the results will be shown in later chapters.



Map 6 Littleton: Barwon 4 sites



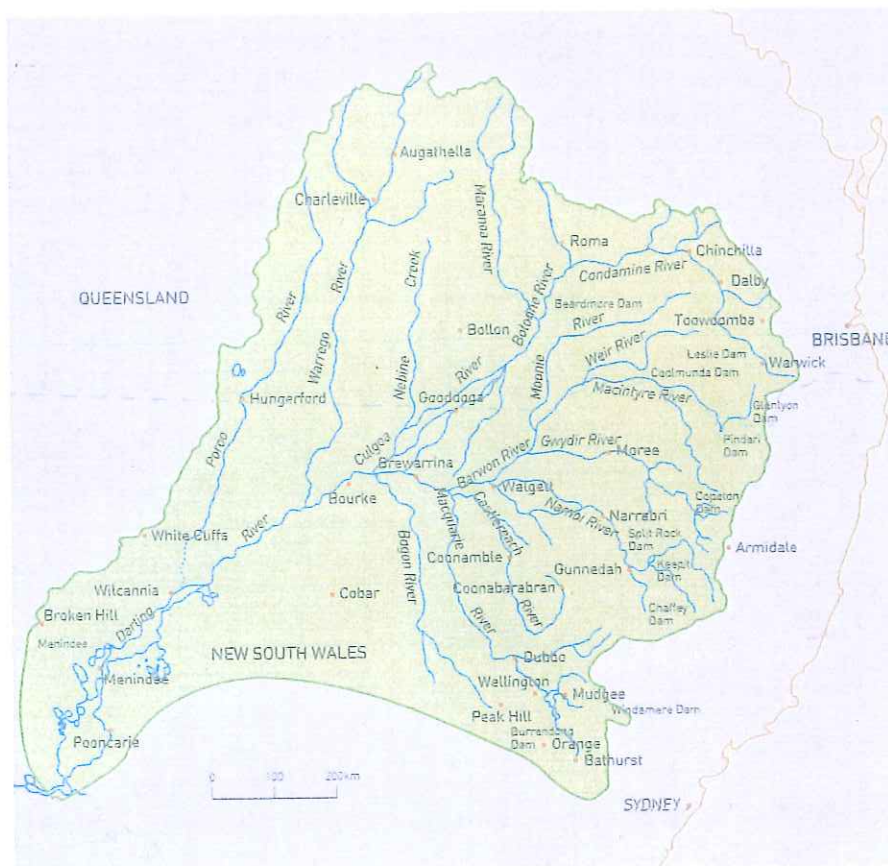
Map 7 Littleton & Hudson: Old Park sites

Chapter 3 The Landscape and its resources - some scientific views

Using information from science we know that sometime during very **early times** an inland sea covered much of eastern Australia and that there were active volcanoes along the eastern margin of the continent. Some of these volcanoes continued to be active for quite some time. Some spewed out lava that cooled and became rock that could be used by Aborigines to make sharp cutting tools, and some made layers of rock move up or down, heating the rock so it hardened and became strong and tough, useful for making grinding and chopping tools.

3.1 The formation of the landscape

The Darling River system covers an enormous area. The river and its tributaries start in well-watered ranges in southeast Queensland and northern New South Wales, only to continue south through hundreds of kilometres of dry plains and hills in Queensland and New South Wales, bringing life and nourishment, before joining the Murray River.



Map. 8 The Darling Basin

River channels have changed over time and will keep on changing. Some old channels are now dry or run but rarely. But for Aboriginal people in the area it was the centre of their lives for thousands of years. They were **the People of the River**.

The river system starts in highlands, but for much of its way south both river and tributaries cut through low hills and extensive plains. The Darling Basin, this low-lying part, contains rock outcrops as well as material eroded from the highlands to the east.

The Barwon, interpreted as the upper part of the Darling, cuts through an extensive low-relief alluvial plain. The areas of low relief are mainly in the form of isolated rock outcrops and ancient weathering surfaces of silcrete.

Within the Darling Basin there are some very old rocks, more than 100 million years old. The story is complicated and scientists are still working it out. For things that happened so long ago we have not got precise dates, only estimates that count in thousands or millions of years. The oldest rocks cropping out in the Brewarrina area are Palaeozoic, that is more than 250 million years old - examples being shists, phyllites and quartzites of the Girilambone Group and the Red Hill granite intrusion.

At Brewarrina shists and phyllites (metamorphosed sand and mud) crop out in the banks and channel of the Barwon. More gravel and sands were laid on top of this bedrock layer. They became the younger sandstones and shales (younger meaning about a million years old...). Weathering of these rocks has produced deep profiles. These may be capped by resistant silcretes and ferruginous (red, iron rich) crusts. On these crusts lie the materials coming from the highlands to the east.

The great Artesian Basin that lies below the river system was formed during the Mesozoic era, some 250 to 65 million years ago. Those were the days of many plants and animals that have died out long ago. By about 45 million years ago Australia had begun to move north, breaking away from a super continent called Gondwana and separating from what is now Antarctica and New Zealand. It is still moving (by about 5cm a year). And as Australia moved north and became isolated, the country became drier and drier even if there were some wetter periods e.g. between 30,000 and 50,000 years ago when the climate was a bit cooler and more humid than now. Then, around 18,000 years ago the climate became warmer and very dry.

Changes were dramatic. Wind and water flattened the surface and leached the soils of nourishment. Even 20,000 years ago the landscape was very different. Large areas of land that the Aborigines of that time could see and use are now covered by sea. Land bridges that linked Australia with New Guinea and Australia with Tasmania were broken by the sea.

In Australia plants and animals developed in directions very different from those in other parts of the world.

Some of the many very large animals roaming around in the distant past, though much larger than the emus, kangaroos and lizards we can see now, probably were their ancestors.

Their bones have been found in very old rocks and deposits and they have been given names: Genyornis newtoni, a flightless bird, Diprotodon, the largest extinct marsupial, Sthenurus, Protemnodon and giant kangaroos (Megalania), giant goannas (Pallimnarchus and Quinkana) and giant crocodiles. They died out but their family lines may have carried on for long enough for the more recent descendants of some of them to have been hunted or at least seen by Aboriginal ancestors. There are hints of this in some archaeological sites and in some of the creation stories.

At present the Brewarrina area has a semi-arid climate with cool to mild winters and mild to hot summers. Mean minimum and maximum temperatures range between 4°C and 18°C in winter (July) and between 20°C and 36°C in summer (January). Rainfall is unevenly distributed throughout the year; mean annual rainfall ranges from

a minimum of 29mm in winter to a maximum of 52mm in summer. The higher rainfall tends to be in the summer when monsoonal weather patterns develop over northern Australia.

Widespread flooding of the floodplain happens when there is heavy rainfall in the catchment. This may cut roads and isolate the town, townships and properties as happened e.g. in 1974 with a flood height of 10.68m, and has been happening repeatedly in 2011 and 2012.

For long periods the climate seems to have been warmer and wetter than now. Australia has also had several ice ages, though probably not as severe as further north in the world. A major effect of ice ages was that seashores shrank away as the sea lost a lot of water when this became locked up as ice that was sitting on land elsewhere in the world. Some areas were then left dry and people would of course move into the areas of fertile land now opened up for them and would have learnt to use new and rich food resources.

But, when after thousands of years, ice melted and the sea moved back in, these coastal people had to move back inland, into areas that was no longer theirs because it had by then become the tribal land of other groups. As such times were probably also warmer and drier, deserts were probably growing and so people may have been trapped between expanding seas and expanding deserts. It must have been difficult for all concerned. This happened long ago and probably several times. Some stories seem to show memories of these times.

Australia's climate, and notably rainfall, has for a long time been heavily influenced by the El Niño/La Niña Southern Oscillation, ENSO, a global pattern of oceanic and atmospheric temperature fluctuations in cycles of about 10-15 years.

Modern technology can help us date some events and objects within a time range of up to 40,000 - 50,000 years ago. Evidence found so far shows Aboriginal presence in different parts of the country at least 40,000 years back - and probably much earlier.

Geologists have worked out a **pattern of major changes** relevant to the Darling Basin, using events in the Willandra Lakes area as a model (Bowler et al. 1976)

- About **100,00 to 45,00** years ago: A long period of dry lakes. The weather was rather cooler and drier than now.
- About **45,000 to 33,000** years ago: Lakes were filled with fresh water, clear and overflowing. Strong westerly winds piled sand into lunettes (= dunes looking like crescent moons). Aboriginal people were definitely in the area.
- About **33,000 to 26,000** years ago: Lakes were full of fresh water and were probably overflowing. This was the start of a major cold period. (There was glaciation in the Australian Alps.)
- About **26,000 to 19,000** years ago: Lake levels were dropping and dunes with much clay mixed into the sand were formed.
- About **18,000** years ago: A period of high water levels; the last period of lunette formation.
- About **17,500** years ago: Major drying of the lakes.
- About **16,000** years ago: Most lakes were now dry.
- About **15,000 to 10,000** years ago: Fairly dry conditions.
- About **10,000 to 5,000** years ago: Fairly humid conditions
- About **5,000** years ago: Conditions had become similar to what they are now.

Looking at the archaeological evidence in the Lakes area can give us clues to what was happening elsewhere. When the lakes were full and the water fresh, there was plenty of food in the general area.

The size of the fish caught and eaten suggests that people were spearing large cod. The size ranges of smaller fish caught suggest that they were also making and using nets way back in time. Food was cooked on open fires or in ground ovens using cooking stones or lumps of baked clay - a very old tradition! One cooking pit at Lake Mungo was dated as 30,000 years old. By 16,000 years ago seeds were definitely being ground for food. So dampers probably have a long tradition!

Making tools of stone also goes back a very long time, and so does the importance of ceremonies, particularly for burials. Ceremonies held groups together over time and gave life meaning. They could be shared and they could vary over time, just as in more recent times and perhaps for similar reasons.

3.2 The soils

Soil types help determine what can grow and so determine what there can be to eat. A landscape with such vast areas of plain, but also with quite high and rocky areas and long low ridges, offers quite a variety of soil types and resources. Soil science can be very complicated but here we will use common labels rather than specialist scientific terms.

The soils were mostly deposited and worked on by wind, rain and floods. Some of the material came from weathering local rocks, some has been carried over long distances. The alluvial plains of the river and its tributaries carry grey and black cracking clays and in some places, especially higher levees, there are brown and red duplex soils. There are sandy soils on source-bordering dunes and patches of red earth along the Darling River. Red earths, called 'hard red earths' as they are often stony or gravelly, are found in slightly undulating country. They are loamy with some clay content. Rocky soils, loamy or sandy and areas of red duplex soils occur on higher hills and ranges.

The soil types, soil management and land use can influence both the amount and the quality of the water reaching the rivers and they may also influence the underlying groundwater system. Eroded soil can reach the rivers as part of the run-off; dissolved salts may rise to the surface and may, like chemicals used in farming, end up in the rivers through rain and floods.

Much of the area is now grazing lands and soil qualities has been much affected by this. Erosion occurred also before the land clearing by settlers, but it was clearly increased by this.

3.3 The vegetation

Vegetation is influenced also by climate changes, and there have been many such changes over the long period of human life in the area. As the continent drifted northward over the last 50 million years, southern Australia became more arid. Gradual change in climate, and the leaking of nutrients from ancient soils, have created a tough vegetation that can cope with low soil moisture and poor soils.

There have been many vegetation changes over time and it has been argued that we don't know which may relate to Aboriginal land use and which are the result of more recent clearing and farming practices.

But in a recent book (2011) and an article titled: "The biggest estate on earth: how Aborigines made Australia", Professor Bill Gammage of the ANU states, and it is worth quoting his first paragraphs:

*"Aboriginal people worked hard to make plants and animals abundant, convenient and predictable.
By distributing plants and associating them in mosaics, then using these to lure and locate animals, Aborigines made Australia as it was in 1788 when Europeans arrived.
Where it suited they worked with the country, accepting or consolidating its character, but if it didn't suit they changed the country, sometimes dramatically, with fire or no fire.
"No fire" because a conscious decision not to burn also regulates plants and animals. They judged equally what to burn and what not, when, how often, and how hot. They cleared undergrowth, and they put grass on good soil, clearings in dense and open forest, and tree or scrub clumps in grassland.
A common management system can be recognised in enough dispersed places to say that the system was universal - that Australia was, as the title says, a single estate, and that in this sense Aborigines made Australia."*

After settler arrival large areas were cleared for cropping and others partially or selectively cleared for pasture by ringbarking or chaining. Native vegetation has been reduced and large areas of former woodland with an understorey of grasses and herbs have been replaced by shrub-land. The influx of millions of sheep and cattle along with feral animals such as goats and rabbits, and increased numbers of kangaroos, have severely increased grazing pressure, leading to increased erosion, soil compaction and exposure of subsoil that doesn't easily revegetate. Many plants that were of cultural value to Aborigines now have nowhere to grow.

Vegetation communities now typical of the Shire include shrub-lands, semi-arid eucalypt woodlands and large areas of grasslands.

Along rivers and around lakes, on regularly flooded land there may be a strip of woodland dominated by River Red Gums or Black Box. But the semi-arid eucalypt woodlands are far more extensive, usually dominated by Poplar Box, often also White Cypress Pine or Gum Coolibah or Silver-leaved Ironbark. Below these there may be for example Mulga, Ironbark, Gidgee and Budda and a grassy or shrubby understorey.

On low-lying alluvial plains and dry lakebeds there may be chenopod shrub lands dominated by saltbushes and other low shrubs. Taller shrub land with wattles, emu-bushes and hop-bushes occur throughout the Basin, often as patches of regrowth after past clearing or disturbance. Extensive grasslands (mainly Mitchell grass) cover plains north from the Barwon River and east of the Culgoa.

The list above is very general and simplified.

For a study of plants of known cultural value to Aborigines, a great many vegetation communities were defined, showing their intimate knowledge of the country. A list of headings is given below but the original descriptions lists also plants common to each community (DNR 1999-2006). Plants were also listed in categories of use

(Tables 1 - 11) but some possible uses, gleaned from popular publications, are discussed later as part of descriptions of traditional cultural practices.

The detailed list of vegetation communities starts with (headings in italics):

Barren (little of no vegetation e.g. claypans, scalds and modern development) but goes on with:

Black Box and/or Coolibah (tree, shrub and pasture layers with an over-storey of mostly Black Box);

Bloodwood/Mulga (small area of open woodland with tree, shrub and pasture layers);

Brigalow (tree, shrub and pasture layers);

Canegrass (no trees and few shrubs);

Chenopods (dominant shrub lands that may have some over-storey of Black Box);

Coolibah/Belah (tree, shrub and pasture layers. Upper canopy mostly dense);

Coolibah/Other (tree, shrub and pasture layers, wide variety);

Gidgee (tree, shrub and pasture layers, with gidgee generally dominant);

Grasslands (range from treeless plains to open woodland with < 20% tree and shrub canopy);

Grey Mallee (restricted habitat and distribution. They are small trees with some other associated trees, bushes and vines);

Heather Bush (very scattered tree layer with shrubs);

Leopardwood/Gidgee/Saltbush (< 20% woody canopy, low shrub and pasture);

Lignum (the shrub may have a tree over-storey or grow on open floodplain with grassland);

Mulga (small trees in dense groves with few other species);

Pine/Carbeen/River Red Gum (large trees with mostly well developed shrub layer and a good pasture layer);

Poplar Box/Belah (well-defined tree, shrub and pasture layers);

Poplar Box/Coolibah (tree, shrub and pasture layers);

Poplar Box/Gidgee (woodland with tree, shrub and pasture layers);

Poplar Box/Ironwood (woodland with tree, shrub and pasture layers);

Poplar Box/Mulga/Pine (woodland with tree, shrub and pasture layers);

Poplar Box/Pine/Other (a wide variety of trees, shrubs and pasture species);

Poplar Box/Silverleaf Ironbark (dominated by these species but has shrubs and grasses);

Red Box/Poplar Box/Mulga (woodland with tree, shrub and pasture layers);

Spinifex (either dominant or has open woodland over-storey and scattered shrubs);

Water surfaces, natural and artificial.

Modified landscapes are listed as: *Settlement* (major urban or settled areas);

Crops and annual pasture (mostly < 20% wooded but generally cleared);

Standing Dead Timber (largely dead trees following ring barking, grasses and burrs).

Categories of use defined for different species listed as being of cultural value are tabulated below. Symbols inserted in the tables below show documented use by that group!

Table 1: Plants listed as used in making or storing fires

	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngilyampaa/ Ngemba
Belah	Casuarina cristate	x		#
Bimble Box or Boxwood or Poplar Box	Eucalyptus populnea	x	o	
Brigalow	Acacia harpophylla		o	
Budda or Sandalwood	Eremophila mitchellii	x		

Cypress Pine, White	<i>Callatris glaucophylla</i>	x		
Emu Bush	<i>Eremophila longifolia</i>			#
Gidgee	<i>Acacia cambagei</i>		o	#
Grass, Curley Mitchell or Wheat	<i>Astrabia lappacea</i>	x		
Grass, Spinifex	<i>Triodia mitchellii, breviloba</i>		o	#
Grass, Spinifex	<i>Triodia mitchellii, pubivagina</i>			#
Grass, Spinifex	<i>Triodia scariosa, . scariosa</i>			#
Hop Bush, Narrowleaf	<i>Dodonea viscosa</i>		o	
Ironwood	<i>Acacia excelsa</i>		o	
Native plum or Sandalwood	<i>Santalum lanceolatum</i>	x		
Needlewood	<i>Hakea leucoptera</i>		o	
Western Bloodwood	<i>Eucalyptus terminalis</i>	x		
Yarran	<i>Acacia homalophylla</i>			#

Table 2: Plants listed as having ceremonial uses

Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngilyampaa/ Ngemba
Belah	<i>Casuarina cristata</i>	x	o	#
Bimble Box or Boxwood	<i>Eucalyptus populnea</i>	x		#
Budda or Sandlewood	<i>Eremophila mitchellii</i>	x	o	#
Butterbush or Mallee Willow or Butterwood Tree	<i>Pittosporum phylliraeoides</i>	x	o	#
Cypress Pine, Black or Native Pine	<i>Callatris endlicheri</i>			#
Cypress Pine, White	<i>Callatris glaucophylla</i>	x	o	#
Dillon Bush, Native Grape	<i>Nitraria billadierei</i>	x		
Dogwood or Eurah or Swamp Wilga	<i>Eremophila bignoniflora</i>	x	o	#
Emu Bush	<i>Eremophila longifolia</i>	?	o	
Gidgee	<i>Acacia cambagei</i>	x	o	#
Gooma Bush	<i>Bertya cunninghamii</i>			
Hop Bush, Narrowleaf	<i>Dodonea viscosa</i>		o	
Mulga	<i>Acacia aneura</i>			#
Table 2.cont.				
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngilyampaa/ Ngemba
Native Tobacco	<i>Nicotiana species</i>	x	o	#
Needlewood	<i>Hakea leucoptera</i>	x	o	#
Needlewood, Hooked	<i>Hakea tephrosperma</i>	x		
Paddymelon	<i>Cucumis species</i>	x	o	#
Pigweed	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>	x	o	#
Pitchuri	<i>Duboisia hopwoodii</i>	x	o	#
Punty Bush	<i>Senna artemisioides, subsp. filifolia</i>	x	o	#
Quandong	<i>Santalum acuminatum</i>			
River Red Gum or Ghost Gum	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	x	o	#
Roly Poly	<i>Salsola kali</i>		o	
Teatree or Swamp Paperbark	<i>Melaleuca trichostachya</i>	x	?	?
Umbrella Mulga or Shrub Mulga	<i>Acacia brachystachya</i>			#

Warrior or Blackcurrent Bush	<i>Apophyllum anomalum</i>			#
Whitewood	<i>Atalaya hemiglauc</i>			
Wilga	<i>Geijera parviflora</i>	x	o	#

Table 3. Plants listed as used for decoration

Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngiyampaa/ Ngemba
Bush Tomato or Bush Potato/ Nightshades	<i>Solanum species</i>	x	o	#
Cypress Pine, White	<i>Callatris glaucophylla</i>	x	o	#
Hop Bush, Narrowleaf	<i>Dodonea viscosa</i>		o	
Medicine Bush or Spotted Fuchsia	<i>Eremophila maculata</i>	x		
Mulga	<i>Acacia aneura</i>	x		#
Pigweed	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>	x		
Table 3.cont.				
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngiyampaa/ Ngemba
Slender Pigweed	<i>Portulaca filifolia</i>	x		
Punty Bush	<i>Senna artemisioides</i> subsp. <i>filifolia</i>	x	o	#
Quandong	<i>Santalum acuminatum</i>	x	o	
Quinine Bush or Bitterbark	<i>Alstonia constricta</i>	x		
Sandhill Wattle	<i>Acacia ligulata</i>	x		
Teatree or Swamp Paperbark	<i>Melaleuca</i> <i>trichostachya</i>	x	o	
Turpentine Bush	<i>Ermophila sturtii</i>	x	o	#

Table 4. Plants listed as relating to habitat:

Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngiyampaa/ Ngemba
African Boxthorn or Berry Bush	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	x		
Beefwood	<i>Grevillea striata</i>		o	
Belah	<i>Casuarina cristate</i>	x	o	#
Bimble Box or Boxwood or Poplar Box	<i>Eucalyptus populnea</i>	x	o	#
Black Box or Swamp Box	<i>Eucalyptus largiflorens</i>	x	o	#
Bluebush or Blueberry Bush	<i>Maireana species</i>			#
Bulrushes or Cumbungi	<i>Typha species</i>		o	#
Butterbush or Mallee Willow or Butterwood Tree	<i>Pittosporum</i> <i>phylliraeoides</i>			#
Cactus Pea	<i>Bossiaea walkeri</i>			#
Camel Melon	<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>		o	#
Congoo Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus dumosa</i>			#
Cypress Pine, Black or	<i>Callatris endlicheri</i>			#

Native Pine				
Cypress Pine, White	<i>Callatris glaucophylla</i>	x		#
Darling Pea	<i>Swainsona greyana</i>	x	o	#
Desert Broombush	<i>Templetonia egena</i>			#
Dillon Bush, Native Grape	<i>Nitraria billadierei</i>	x		#
Dogwood or Eurah or Swamp Wilga	<i>Eremophila bignoniflora</i>	x	o	
Duckweed / Waterweed	<i>Azolla filiculoides</i>	x	o	#
Ellangowan Poison Bush or Dogwood or Turkey Bush	<i>Myoporum deserti</i>	x		
Emu Bush	<i>Eremophila longifolia</i>		o	
Flat Mallee-pea	<i>Templetonia sulcata</i>			#
Gidgee	<i>Acacia cambagei</i>		o	
Grass, Canegrass	<i>Eragrostis australasica</i>		o	#
Grass, Curley Mitchell or Wheat	<i>Astrabia lappacea</i>		o	#
Grass, Kangaroo or Wild Oats	<i>Themeda australis</i>	x	o	#
Grass, Kerosine	<i>Aristida browniana</i>		o	
Grass, Mitchell or Plains or Budgerigar	<i>Astrebis species</i>	x	o	#
Grass, Mulga	<i>Thyridolepis mitchelliana</i>	?	?	?
Grass, Neverfail or Wire	<i>Eragrostis setifolia</i>	x	o	#
Grass, Spear	<i>Stipa species</i>		o	#
Grass, Spinifex	<i>Triodia mitchellii</i> , var. <i>breviloba</i>	x	o	#
Grass, Spinifex	<i>Triodia mitchellii</i> , var. <i>pubivagina</i>	x	o	
Grass, Spinifex	<i>Triodia scariosa</i> , subsp. <i>scariosa</i>			#
Grass, Tall Oat or Kangaro	<i>Themeda avenacea</i>		o	
Table 4. cont.				
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngiyampaa/ Ngemba
Grass, Wallaby	<i>Danthonia species</i>		o	#
Grass, Warrego Summer	<i>Paspalum jubiflorum</i>		o	#
Grass, Windmill or Blow-away	<i>Chloris truncata</i>	x		
Grass, Wire	<i>Aristida</i>		o	
Grey Wattle or Black Wattle	<i>Acacia salicina</i>			#
Gruie or Colane or Emu Apple	<i>Owenia acidula</i>	x		
Hop Bush, Narrowleaf	<i>Dodonea viscosa</i>		o	
Ironbark, Mugga	<i>Eucalyptus sideroxylon</i>			#
Ironbark, Silverleaf	<i>Eucalyptus melanophloia</i>		o	#
Kurrajong	<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>	x	o	#
Lignum	<i>Muehlenbeckia florilenta</i>		o	#
Miljee	<i>Acacia oswaldii</i>			#
Mulga	<i>Acacia aneura</i>	x		#
Myall	<i>Acacia pendula</i>	x	o	#
Native lime	<i>Eremocitrus glauca</i>			#
Native plum or	<i>Santalum lanceolatum</i>	x		

Sandalwood				
Needlewood	Hakea leucoptera	x	o	#
Needlewood, Hooked	Hakea tephrosperma			#
Nelia	Acacia loderi			#
Nepine or Nipan or Native Passionfruit	Capparis lasiantha	x		
Nitre Bush	Chenopodium nitrariaceum	x		
Pointed Mallee	Eucalyptus socialis			#
Prickly Wattle or Gunderbluey Wattle	Acacia victoriae	x	o	#
Punty Bush	Senna artemisioides subsp. filifolia		o	#
River Cooba or Black Wattle	Acacia stenophylla	x	o	#
River Red Gum or Ghost Gum	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	x	o	#
Roly Poly	Salsola kali	x	o	#
Roly Poly-thorn, burr, prickly	Scierolaena muricata	x	o	#
Rosewood or Boonery	Alectryon oleifolius	x		#
Sandhill Wattle	Acacia ligulata	x		
Snotty Gobble or Coolibah Misteltoe	Diplatia grandibractea		o	
Spiny Mallee Pea	Templetonia aculeata			#
Supplejack	Ventago viminalis		o	
Teatree or Swamp Paperbark	Melaleuca trichostachya	x	o	
Umbrella Mulga or Shrub Mulga	Acacia brachystachya			#
Wait-a-while Bush	Acacia colletioides			#
Warrior or Blackcurrant Bush	Apophyllum anomalum			#
Waterlily	Ottelia ovalifolia	x		#
Table 4. cont.				
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngilyampaa/ Ngemba
Waterlily	Nymphoides crenata	x	o	#
Western Bloodwood	Eucalyptus terminalis		o	
Wilga	Geijera parviflora	x	o	#
Yarran	Acacia homalophylla			#
Yorell or Pointy Leaf Mallee	Eucalyptus gracilis			#

Table 5. Plants used for implements:

Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngilyampaa/ Ngemba
Beefwood	Grevillea striata	x	o	#
Belah	Casuarina cristata	x	o	#
Bimble Box or Boxwood or Poplar Box	Eucalyptus populnea	x	o	#
Black Box or Swamp Box	Eucalyptus largiflorens	x	o	#
Brigalow	Acacia harpophylla	x	o	#
Broombush	Melaleuca uncinata	x	o	#
Budda or Sandalwood	Eremophila mitchellii	x	o	#
Bulrushes or Cumbungi	Typha species	x	o	#
Bush Tomato or Bush	Solanum species	x		

Potato or Nightshades				
Camel Melon	Citrullus lanatus			#
Carbeen	Eucalyptus tessellaris	x	o	
Common Reed	Phragmites australis	x	o	
Congoo Mallee	Eucalyptus dumosa			#
Coolibah	Eucalyptus coolabah (microtheca?)	x	o	#
Cypress Pine, Black or Native Pine	Callatris endlicheri			#
Cypress Pine, White	Callatris glaucophylla	x	o	#
Dogwood or Eurah or Swamp Wilga	Eremophila bignoniiflora	x	o	#
Gidgee	Acacia cambagei	x	o	#
Gooma Bush	Bertya cunninghamii	x		
Grass, Canegrass	Eragrostis australasica	x	o	
Grass, Mitchell or Plains or Budgerigar	Astrebia species		o	
Grass, Mulga	Thyridolepis mitchelliana	?	?	?
Grass, Nut	Cyperus species	x	o	#
Grass, Spear	Stipa species		o	
Grass, Spinifex	Triodia mitchellii, var. breviloba	x	o	#
Grass, Spinifex	Triodia mitchellii, var. pubivagina	x	o	
Grass, Tall Oat or Kangaro	Themeda avenacea		o	
Grass Tree	Xanthorrhoea australis	x		
Grass, Wallaby	Danthonia species		o	
Grass, Warrego Summer	Paspalum jubiflorum		o	
Grass, Wire	Aristida species		o	
Table 5. cont.				
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngilyampaa/ Ngemba
Grey Wattle/ Black Wattle	Acacia salicina	x	o	#
Gruie or Colane or Emu Apple	Owenia acidula	x		#
Gum Tree, Inland Red Box	Eucalyptus intertexta			#
Hop Bush, Narrowleaf	Dodonea viscosa	x	o	#
Ironbark, Mugga	Eucalyptus sideroxylon			#
Ironbark, Silverleaf	Eucalyptus melanophloia	x	o	#
Ironwood	Acacia excelsa	x	o	#
Kurrajong	Brachychiton populneus	x	o	#
Leafless Cherry or Ballart	Exocarpus aphyllus	x	o	#
Leopardwood	Flindersia maculosa		o	#
Miljee	Acacia oswaldii			#
Mulga	Acacia aneura	x	o	#
Myall	Acacia pendula	x	o	#
Native lime	Eremocitrus glauca			#
Needlewood	Hakea leucoptera	x	o	#
Needlewood, Hooked	Hakea tephrosperma	x	o	#
Pigweed	Portulaca oleracea	x	o	#
Pointed Mallee	Eucalyptus socialis			#
Prickly Wattle or Gunderbluey Wattle	Acacia victoriae		o	#

Quandong	<i>Santalum acuminatum</i>	x	o	#
River Cooba or Black Wattle	<i>Acacia stenophylla</i>	x	o	#
River Red Gum or Ghost Gum	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	x	o	#
Roly Poly	<i>Salsola kali</i>	x	o	#
Roly Poly-thorn, burr, prickly	<i>Salsola kali</i>	x	o	#
Rosewood or Boonery	<i>Alectryon oleifolius</i>	x		
Screw Pine or Mallee Pine	<i>Callatris preissii</i> , subsp. <i>verrucosa</i>			#
Stinging Nettle	<i>Urtica incisa</i>			#
Supplejack	<i>Ventago viminalis</i>	x	o	#
Teatree or Swamp Paperbark	<i>Melaleuca trichostachya</i>	x	o	
Turpentine Bush	<i>Ermophila sturtii</i>	x	o	#
Umbrella Mulga or Shrub Mulga	<i>Acacia brachystachya</i>		o	#
Wait-a-while Bush	<i>Acacia colletioides</i>			#
Warrior or Blackcurrant Bush	<i>Apophyllum anomalum</i>	x	o	#
Whitewood	<i>Atalaya hemiglauc</i>	x	o	#
Wilga	<i>Geijera parviflora</i>	x	o	#
Yarran	<i>Acacia homalophylla</i>	X	o	#
Yorell or Pointy Leaf Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus gracilis</i>			#

Table 6. Plants used as seasonal indicators

Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngiyampaa/ Ngemba
Cypress Pine, White	<i>Callatris glaucophylla</i>	x	o	#
Gidgee	<i>Acacia cambagei</i>	x	o	
Gooma Bush	<i>Bertya cunninghamii</i>	x		
Grass, Kangaroo or Wild Oats	<i>Themeda australis</i>			#
Grass, Neverfail / Wire	<i>Eragrostis setifolia</i>			#
Grass, Spear	<i>Stipa species</i>			#
Grass, Wallaby	<i>Danthonia species</i>			#
Grass, Warrego Summer	<i>Paspalum jubiflorum</i>			#
Kurrajong	<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>	x		
Leafless Cherry or Ballart	<i>Exocarpus aphyllus</i>	x	o	#
Leopardwood	<i>Flindersia maculosa</i>	x		
Milk Thistle, Sow Thistle or Prickly Lettuce	<i>Lactuca serriola</i>	x		
Milky Weed or Caustic Weed or Flat Spurge	<i>Chamaesyce drummondii</i>	x		
Myall	<i>Acacia pendula</i>	x		

Table 7. Plants used to prepare/maintain shelters

Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/	Moorawarri	Ngiyampaa/
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		Gamilaroi		Ngemba
African Boxthorn or Berry Bush	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	x		
Belah	<i>Casuarina cristata</i>	x		
Bimble Box or Boxwood or Poplar Box	<i>Eucalyptus populnea</i>	x		#
Black Box or Swamp Box	<i>Eucalyptus largiflorens</i>			#
Bluebush or Blueberry Bush	<i>Maireana</i> species		o	
Boobialla or Western Boobialla or Native Myrtle	<i>Myoporum montanum</i>	x	o	#
Broombush	<i>Melaleuca uncinata</i>	x		
Congoo Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus dumosa</i>			#
Coolibah	<i>Eucalyptus coolabah</i> (microtheca?)	x		#
Dogwood or Eurah or Swamp Wilga	<i>Eremophila bignoniiflora</i>	x		
Gidgee	<i>Acacia cambagei</i>			#
Grass, Canegrass	<i>Eragrostis australasica</i>	x	o	#
Grass, Kangaroo or Wild Oats	<i>Themeda australis</i>			#
Grass, Kerosine	<i>Aristida browniana</i>		o	
Grass, Mitchell or Plains or Budgerigar	<i>Astrelia</i> species		o	
Grass, Mulga	<i>Thyridolepis mitchelliana</i>	?	?	?
Table 7.cont				
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Nginyampaa/ Ngemba
Grass, Neverfail or Wire	<i>Eragrostis setifolia</i>			#
Grass, Spear	<i>Stipa</i> species		o	#
Grass, Spinifex	<i>Triodia mitchellii</i> , var. <i>breviloba</i>		o	
Grass, Tall Oat or Kangaro	<i>Themeda avenacea</i>		o	
Grass, Wallaby	<i>Danthonia</i> species		o	#
Grass, Warrego Summer	<i>Paspalum jubiflorum</i>		o	#
Grass, Wire	<i>Aristida</i> species		o	
Gum Tree, Inland Red Box	<i>Eucalyptus intertexta</i>			#
Hop Bush, Narrowleaf	<i>Dodonea viscosa</i>		o	
Lignum	<i>Muehlenbeckia florilenta</i>		o	
Myall	<i>Acacia pendula</i>	x	o	
Nelia	<i>Acacia loderi</i>			#
Pointed Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus socialis</i>			#
River Red Gum or Ghost Gum	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	x	o	#
Roly Poly	<i>Salsola kali</i>		o	
Rosewood or Boonery	<i>Alectryon oleifolius</i>			#
Supplejack	<i>Ventilago viminalis</i>		o	
Warrior or Blackcurrant Bush	<i>Apophyllum anomalum</i>	x		#
Wilga	<i>Geijera parviflora</i>	x	o	#
Yarran	<i>Acacia homalophylla</i>			#
Yorell or Pointy Leaf Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus gracilis</i>			#

Table 8. Plants with spiritual association

Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngiyampaa/ Ngemba
Belah	<i>Casuarina cristata</i>	x	o	#
Bush Tomato or Bush Potato or Nightshades	<i>Solanum</i> species	x		
Cypress Pine, Black or Native Pine	<i>Callatris endlicheri</i>			#
Cypress Pine, White	<i>Callatris glaucophylla</i>	x	o	#
Dogwood or Eurah or Swamp Wilga	<i>Eremophila bignoniiflora</i>	x		
Emu Bush	<i>Eremophila longifolia</i>		o	
Myrtle tree or Native Lemon	<i>Canthium oleifolium</i>	x		
Native orange	<i>Capparis mitchellii</i>	x		
Native plum or Sandalwood	<i>Santalum lanceolatum</i>	x		
Needlewood	<i>Hakea leucoptera</i>	x	o	#
Needlewood, Hooked	<i>Hakea tephrosperma</i>			#
Nelia	<i>Acacia loderi</i>			#
Paddymelon	<i>Cucumis</i> species	x	o	#
Pointed Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus socialis</i>			#
Quinine Bush or Bitterbark	<i>Alstonia constricta</i>	x		
Table 8. cont.				
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngiyampaa/ Ngemba
River Red Gum or Ghost Gum	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	x	o	#
Roly Poly	<i>Salsola kali</i>		o	
Saltbush, Old Man	<i>Atriplex nummularia</i>	x		
Teatree or Swamp Paperbark	<i>Melaleuca trichostachya</i>	x	o	
Warrior or Blackcurrant Bush	<i>Apophyllum anomalum</i>			#
Wilga	<i>Geijera parviflora</i>	x		

Table 9. Plants for women's concerns

Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngiyampaa/ Ngemba
Budda or Sandlewood	<i>Eremophila mitchellii</i>	x		
Butterbush or Mallee Willow or Butterwood Tree	<i>Pittosporum phylliraeoides</i>	x	o	#
Dogwood or Eurah or Swamp Wilga	<i>Eremophila bignoniiflora</i>	x		
Emu Bush	<i>Eremophila longifolia</i>			#
Kurrajong	<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>	x		
Leopardwood	<i>Flindersia maculosa</i>	x		
Milk Thistle, Sow Thistle or Prickly Lettuce	<i>Lactuca serriola</i>	x		
Milky Weed or Caustic Weed or Flat Spurge	<i>Chamaesyce drummon</i>	x		
Mulga	<i>Acacia aneura</i>		o	
Myrtle tree or Native Lemon	<i>Canthium oleifolium</i>	x		

Native orange	Capparis mitchellii + C.loranthifolia	x	o	
Native plum or Sandalwood	Santalum lanceolatum	x		
Pitchuri	Duboisia hopwoodii		o	
River Red Gum or Ghost Gum	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	x		
Roly Poly	Salsola kali	x		
Roly Poly-thorn, burr, prickle	Sclerolaena muricata	x		
Saltbush	Atriplex holocarpa	x		
Saltbush	Atriplex spongiosa	x		
Supplejack	Ventago viminalis	x	o	
Wilga	Geijera parviflora	x		

Table 10. Plants with other, unlisted uses

Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngiyampaa/ Ngemba
Bimble Box or Boxwood or Poplar Box	Eucalyptus populnea		o	
Cottonbush	Maireana aphylla	x		
Table 10. cont.				
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi/ Gamilaroi	Moorawarri	Ngiyampaa/ Ngemba
Grass, Curley Mitchell or Wheat	Astrabia lappacea		o	
Grass, Kangaroo or Wild Oats	Themeda australis		o	
Grass, Windmill or Blow-away	Chloris truncata	x		
Grey Wattle/ Black Wattle	Acacia salicina		o	
Medicine Bush or Spotted Fuchsia	Eremophila maculata	x		
Native plum or Sandalwood	Santalum lanceolatum	x		
Pitchuri	Duboisia hopwoodii			#
Quandong	Santalum acuminatum			#
Saltbush, Bladder	Atriplex vesicaria	x	o	#
Saltbush, Climbing	Einadia nutans		o	
Saltbush, Old Man	Atriplex nummularia	x		
Umbrella Mulga or Shrub Mulga	Acacia brachystachya		o	
Warrior or Blackcurrant Bush	Apophyllum anomalum	x		

Table 11 below lists **plants used as food or medicine**. As details of preparation and purpose are held only by persons who are allowed, it was agreed that names of plants could be listed, but not details of restricted knowledge. Persons who wish to know more about traditional uses should consult an Elder for advice. The information shown here was provided by Elders June and Roy Barker. The Reference section lists books that illustrate and describe the various plants and how they can be used. Some information is also available online.



Fig.7 Emu Bush in educational plantation at Byrock Waterhole.

Table 11: Bush Tucker/medicine plants - scientific and language names - used for identification

Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi / Gamilaroi name(s)	Moorawarri name(s)	Ngiyampaa / Ngemba name(s)
Acacias	Acacia species			
African Boxthorn or Berry Bush	Lycium ferocissimum			
Beefwood	Grevillea striata	Mabuu	Parla-parla or Mambu	Mumbo
Belah Belah	Casuarina cristata Casuarina pauper	Murrugu/ Balaa	Wawurn	Billar or Pilaarr Billar or Pilaarr
Bimble Box or Boxwood or Poplar Box	Eucalyptus populnea	Bibil	Marlanj or Maia	Mulli or Kirraal
Black Box or Swamp Box	Eucalyptus largiflorens	Guulibu	Pupula or Kuraltirrari	
Black Orchid or	Cymbidium caniculatum	Garrii		
Bluebush or Blueberry Bush	Maireana species	Buubiyala	Paral or Pararl	
Boobialla or Western Boobialla or Native Myrtle	Myoporum montanum	Gii		
Broombush	Melaleuca uncinata	Biibaya		
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi / Gamilaroi name(s)	Moorawarri name(s)	Ngiyampaa / Ngemba name(s)

Budda or Sandelewood	<i>Eremophila mitchellii</i>	Gururuwi	Bayarra or Buda	
Bulrushes or Cumbungi	<i>Typha</i> species	Burarra	Ngarra-ngarranta	Thirriil
Bush Tomato or Bush Potato or Nightshades	<i>Solanum</i> species	Gumi	Kiirrbau	Putu
Butterbush or Mallee Willow or Butterwood Tree	<i>Pittosporum phylliraeoides</i>	Miyaimiiaay or Guwirra	Payara or Bibling	Tharii
Cactus Pea	<i>Bossiaea walkeri</i>			Ngurnynytya
Camel Melon	<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>	Ngayuuu		
Claypan Butter	??			
Common Reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Dharil	Ngarra-ngarranta	Thirriil
Coolabah Apple or Apple Tree	<i>Angophora melanoxylon</i>	Bulamin	Bulamin	
Coongo Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus Dumosa</i>			Mali
Coolibah	<i>Eucalyptus coolabah</i> (microtheca?)	Gulabaa	Pakurra or Purunkar (caterpillar bag: Bundabunda) (food: Thalimukari) (honey; Pali-mukari)	
Cottonbush	<i>Maireana aphylla</i>	Bagilluu		
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euanlayi / Gamilaroi name(s)	Moorawarri name(s)	Nginyampaa / Ngemba name(s)

Crowfoot	Erodium crinitum	Dhawaarii	Wama-wama or Muma-muma	Matha Stalk: Maayal
Cypress Pine, White	Callatris glaucophylla	Gurraay or Gurraai	Paaiylinj or Baylin	
Dark Sago Weed	Plantago drummondii			
Desert Broombush	Templetonia egena			Ngurruynytya
Darling Lily or Narran Lily or Warrego Lily or Bogan Lily	Crinum flaccidum	Dhaygalbarrayn	Purranpura	
Desert Cow Vine	Ipomoea diamantinensis	Giban		
Dillon Bush or Native Grape	Nitraria billadierei	Bibu		Muugialla
Ellangowan Poison Bush or Dogwood or Turkey Bush	Myoporum desertii	Burrulbiyan		
Emu Bush	Eremophila longifolia	Ngawil	Pawyl or Kuwirnpulu	Tika
Eucalyptus: lerp	Eucalyptus species			Maluman
Flat Mallee Pea	Templetonia sulcata			Ngurruynytya
Fungi, not named				
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi / Gamilaroi name(s)	Moorawarri name(s)	Ngiyampaa / Ngemba name(s)
Gidgee	Acacia cambagei	Gidjirr or Gigjirr	Murukaru or Muwurru	Karriwan

Gooma Bush	<i>Bertya cunninghamii</i>	Midgi	(blossom Ngurtu)	
Grass, Barley	<i>Astrebia pectinata</i>	Yaamarra		
Grass, Canegrass	<i>Eragrostis australasica</i>	Wilgi		Wilki
Grass, Curley Mitchell or Wheat	<i>Astrebia lappacea</i>	Ganalay		Guumum or Nhuna
Grass, Fairy	<i>Sporobolus caroli</i>	Dhunbarr		
Grass, Kangaroo or Wild Oats	<i>Themeda australis</i>			Guumum or Nhuna
Grass, Kerosine	<i>Aristida browniana</i>			
Grass, Mitchell or Plains or Budgerigar	<i>Astrebia species</i>	Ganalay	Wirruwinj	Guumum on Nhuna
Grass, Mulga	<i>Thyridolepis mitchelliana</i>			
Grass, Native Millet	<i>Panicum decompositum</i>	Guli		
Grass, Native Millet	<i>Echinochloa inundata</i>	Guli		
Grass, Neverfail or Wire	<i>Eragrostis setifolia</i>			Guumum or Nhuna
Grass, Nut	<i>Cyperus species</i>			
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euanlayi / Gamilaroi name(s)	Moorawarri name(s)	Ngiyampaa / Ngemba name(s)
Grass, Spear	<i>Stipa species</i>			Guumun or Nhuna
Grass, Spinifex	<i>Triodia mitchellii</i> ,	Turrinj		Mukarr

(gum producing)	breviloba				
Grass, Spinifex (seed producing)	Triodia mitchellii, var. pubivagina	Turrinji			
Grass, Spinifex	Triodia scariosa				Mukarr
Grass, Tail Oat or Kangaro	Themeda avenacea				
Grass Tree	Xanthorrhoea australis	Dhalan			
Grass, Wallaby	Danthonia species				Gunnun or Nhuna
Grass, Warrego Summer	Paspalidum jubiflorum				
Grass, Windmill or Blow-away	Chloris truncata				
Grass, Wire	Aristida species				
Grey Wattle or Black Wattle	Acacia salicina	Dhulan	Marnji		Kupaa
Gruie or Colane or Emu Apple	Owenia acidula	Guwi	Kuwaaru or Kurumani		
Gunderbluey Wattle, Prickly Wattle	Acacia victoriae				Mutimari
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi / Gamilaroi name(s)	Moorawarri name(s)	Ngilyampaa / Ngemba name(s)	
Hop Bush	Dodonea species				
Hop Bush, Narrowleaf	Dodonea viscosa	Yilay	Thirin		Gidya
Ironbark, Silverleaf	Eucalyptus melanophloia	Dhiinyaay	Kuruman		

Ironwood	<i>Acacia excelsa</i>	Dhan.gayan.gan	Kurukum	
Kurrajong	<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>	Nhunggaa	Muunu	(coarse leaf) (fine leaf) Yaama or Kukurr Yumma
Leafless Cherry or Ballart	<i>Exocarpus aphyllus</i>	Midged or Mirrii	Kunpuru	Pinti
Leopardwood	<i>Flindersia maculosa</i>	Bagala	Kurinj	
Lignum	<i>Muehlenbeckia florienta</i>		Wirrara	Thutirr or Wiiryarrkal
Lignum. Flowering	<i>Eremophila polyclada</i>	Bargay		
Mallee Fringe-Lily or Pupu Tucker or Yam	<i>Thysanotus baueri</i>			Tharramulan or Pupuhaam
Medicine Bush or Spotted Fuchsia	<i>Eremophila maculata</i>	Ngarran		
Miljee	<i>Acacia oswaldii</i>			Mithiirr
Milk Thistle or Sow Thistle or Prickly Lettuce	<i>Lactuca serriola</i>	Balamba		Bulamba or Yuluumaay
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi / Gamilaroi name(s)	Moorawarri name(s)	Ngiyampaa / Ngemba name(s)
Mint Weed or River Mint or Penny Royal	<i>Mentha species</i>	Ngawingawi or Ngawilngawil	Paraw	
Mulga	<i>Acacia aneura</i>	Malga	Pirrii	Malka
Myall	<i>Acacia pendula</i>	Maayaal	Milara	Buri

Myrtle tree or Native Lemon	Canthium oleifolium	Maaara or Marra	Maripari	
Nardoo	Marsilea drummondii	Bal	Thawinj-thawinj	
Native banana or Bush banana	Marsdenia australis	Gaaguluu or Gudagaa	Muntliinh	Thuupagaa or Yandaparika
Native carrot	Geranium retrorsum	Dhalayndjaa		
Native carrot	Daucus glochidiatus		Bidigao	
Native lime	Eremocitrus glauca	Gayngayn or Gayn.gayn	Maripari	Kakarratir
Native orange	Capparis mitchellii + C.loranthifolia	Bambul	Pampul	Mukil
Native plum or Sandalwood Plum	Santalum lanceolatum	Ngamanbira or Ngamanbirra	Guru or Emuup	Kuttawu gum: Thukkabella
Native Spinach or Warrigal Spinach	Tetragonia tetragonoides	Galangalaan	Galangalaan	
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi / Gamilaroi name(s)	Moorawarri name(s)	Ngiyampaa / Ngemba name(s)
Native Tobacco	Nicotiana species	Byagaa	Piyiika or Piirika	
Needlewood	Hakea leuoptera	Bin gawin gal	Kuntuws	Thinkn
Needlewood, Hooked	Hakea tephrosperma			Kultupa
Nelia	Acacia loderi			Nhilyi

Nepine or Nipan or Native Passionfruit	Capparis lasiantha	Guwibirr or Burriigan	Ngabaan	Naypan
Nitre Bush	Chenopodium nitrariaceum			
Common Sneezeweed or Old Man's Weed	Centipeda cunninghamii		Wupi	
Paddymelon	Cucumis species	Baaya	Wampila	
Pigweed	Portulaca oleracea	Ganhnan	Thurral	Wirrangurra
Pointed Mallee	Eucaalyptus socialis			Mali
Prickly Pear or Spiny Pest-pear	Opuntia stricta			
Prickly Wattle or Gunderbluey Wattle	Acacia victoriae	Ngaduwi		
Punty Bush	Senna artemisioides subsp. filifolia	Bandi		Purrurr or Puntti
Quandong	Santalum acuminatum	Guwadhnaa	Kuwarti	Kwanda or Kuwanhtaa
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi / Gamilaroi name(s)	Moorawarri name(s)	Nginyampaa / Ngemba name(s)
Quena or Bush Tomato	Solanum esuriale	Buluuburr or Bulumburr	Gumyg	Putuu or Putu
River Cooba or Black Wattle	Acacia stenophylla	Guurulay	Marnkari	Margee or Billibar
River Red Gum or Ghost Gum	Eucaalyptus camaldulensis	Yarran	Kuruwa	Wunba or Kangun
Roly Poly	Salsola kali	Bindayaa	Tiriliy	

Roly Poly - thorn, burr, prickly	Sclerolaena muricata	Bindayaa		
Rosewood or Boonery	Alectryon oleifolius	Bunbar or Bunnary	Kampil	Yarray or Yarraayipian
Saltbush	Atriplex species		Marrangkal	
Saltbush, Bladder	Atriplex vesicaria			
Saltbush, Climbing	Einadia nutans			
Saltbush, Creeping	Atriplex semibaccata			
Saltbush, Mealy	Atriplex pseudocampanulata			
Saltbush, Old Man	Atriplex nummularia	Binamayaa	Weilmoringle	
Saltbush	Atriplex holocarpa	Ningil		
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi / Gamilaroi name(s)	Moorawarri name(s)	Ngiyampaa / Ngemba name(s)
Saltbush	Atriplex spongiosa	Ningil		
Saltbush, Ruby	Enchylaena tomentosa	Burra		
Saltbush, Thorny or Spiny	Rhagodia spinescens	Bandiyal		
Sandhill Wattle	Acacia ligulata	Girranbiyan		
Shamrock	Trigonella suavissima			
Silver Wattle or	Acacia decora	Dhaniyaa		

Western Golden Wattle					
Snotty Gobble or Coolibah Mistelfoe	<i>Diplatia grandibractea</i>	Baan	Thuppie	Muuramil	
Snotty Gobble	<i>Amyema lucasii</i> or <i>Amyema miraculosum</i> or <i>quandang</i>			Maathi Pukaa	
Spiny Mallee Pea	<i>Templetonia aculeate</i>			Ngurrnytya	
Stinging Nettle	<i>Urtica Incisa</i>				
Sugarwood	<i>Myoporum platycarpum</i>				
Supplejack	<i>Ventago viminalis</i>	Ganayanay	Witrla		
Tar Vine	<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i>	Wudhugaa	Pin		
Teatree or Swamp Paperbark	<i>Melaleuca trichostachya</i>	Nguu or Maangii	Wumbul		
Common name(s)	Scientific name	Euahlayi / Gamilaroi name(s)	Moorawarri name(s)	Ngiyampaa / Ngemba name(s)	
Turpentine Bush	<i>Ermophila sturtii</i>		Pirruwa		
Umbrella Mulga or Shrub Mulga	<i>Acacia brachystachya</i>		Pirril	Mithirr	
Warrior or Blackcurrant Bush	<i>Apophyllum anomalum</i>	Gubigala or Wiyiaara	Kurruwal or Kurruil	Warriar	
Waterlily	<i>Otteleia ovalifolia</i>	Gurragurra			
Waterlily	<i>Nymphoides crenata</i>	Gabira	Wuranpurru		
Western Bloodwood	<i>Eucalyptus terminalis</i>	Gawuwildha			

Whitewood	Atalaya hemiglauca	Birraa	Purtpal	Balkan
Wilga	Geijera parviflora	Dhil	Timpuru	Wiga
Yam (land)	Parsonsia eucalyptophylla	Garagaloo	Gargaloo	
Yam (land, tuber)	Parsonsia eucalyptophylla	Gugumadharraa	Kimay	
Yam (swamp)	Triglochin species	Milaan	Kimay	Kunoowa
Yarran	Acacia homalophylla			Yarra
Yorrell, Pointy Leaf Mallee	Eucalyptus gracilis			Makany

3.4 Animal populations

Information in this section comes mostly from a comprehensive study of the Darling River published by the Murray-Darling Commission and available in the Brewarrina Library. Much of the information in this section has been borrowed or summarised from the studies published in that volume.

The paragraphs below give a bare summary of what we know has been around and what is still here. Early explorers commented on the rich animal life of the area. In the early 1800s Sir Thomas Mitchell, John Gould, John Gilbert and Gerard Krefft collected and described species new to them; Captain Charles Sturt wrote about kangaroos, possums and rodents. Krefft even had the foresight to record information on their habits. Many of the species described are now extinct or lost to the area.

Animals, large and small, were of course hugely important to Aboriginal people. They were part of everyday life as well as of the stories sustaining the communities. Their meat provided food, their fur, bones and teeth were used for clothing and bedding, as raw materials for everyday use as well as for ceremonies and decorations. Animals were named and part of stories and myths that explained and ordered life and which made clear their close kinship to humans.

Some of the traditional ways of capturing and using them, as well as traditional rules about who could kill or eat certain species are described in a later chapter.

3.4.1 Mammals:

Over the last 200 years a hundred or more native species of mammals have been recorded in the Darling Basin. About a quarter of these are now lost to the Darling Basin. Introduced species and habitat changes seem to be the main causes of such extinctions, hitting especially smallish species in a weight range of 35gm to 5.5 kg. Fifty of the surviving species are marsupials, but rodents and bats are also strongly represented.

Of the monotremes the echidna, generally called porcupine (and much appreciated as food), occurs all over but the platypus only on the eastern fringe of the Basin. The echidna occurs in all habitats because its prey, ants and termites, occur almost everywhere. Clearings where trees have been cut and left to rot probably helped their spread.

Kangaroos, grey and red, are found over much of the area. They need green grasses and forbs in their diet and they don't breed when there is a drought on. But when rain brings green herbage, they can move out and spread over wide areas.

The three large species of kangaroo and the wallaroo have probably increased in numbers (to a point of now being culled) since European settlement. This increase could in part be due to the spread of improved pastures and watering points for stock. Several smaller species occur but their spread is patchy and numbers smaller.

Koalas are now rare, partly because of hunting in the last centuries and partly because the environment they need is shrinking, and but they may occur along the Darling in River Red Gum country where they can find their preferred food. The common Brushtail Possum is widespread but possums and gliders who need more forested habitats are uncommon; vegetation changes have left just a scatter of suitable locations.

Three species of bettong may have become locally extinct. Effects of their extinction may have had quite a dramatic effect on the environment as bettongs are considered to be "eco-engineers". They help to move and propagate fungi and some plants and through surface scratchings and warrens they help to allow water to penetrate firm surface soil.

Small rodents that were once common are now rare or extinct. Some of them were definitely eaten in the past. Their loss could also be environmentally significant, as they may have distributed some plant seeds and so helped improve the vegetation.

The ecology of bats is poorly known but several species are broadly distributed. They tend to prefer areas that are at least lightly wooded.

The dingo is the only carnivore classed as native although it is known to have been introduced. This introduction happened far enough back in time to give the dingo time to be seen as a part of the environment. It is seen as a danger to sheep and cattle so its existence is now to somewhat suppressed.

3.4.2 Reptiles and amphibians:

This group includes a wide range of snakes, skinks, frogs, toads and turtles. All are well adapted, each to a particular environment - and there is a wide range of both species and suitable environments within the Darling Basin. New species keep being identified but some known species are seen as endangered. All the species within the Basin are now protected and more attention is paid to protecting their habitats. Frogs are particularly sensitive to changes in water supply and habitat. Rain is greeted with a grateful and noisy chorus!

As mentioned earlier many animal species developed from ancestors present in Gondwana. Others developed from ancestors that came from south-east Asia after the collision of the huge tectonic plates supporting Australia and Asia some ten to fifteen million years ago. Most Australian snakes have Gondwana ancestry. Other species, such as pythons and boas, are found mainly in northern and eastern Australia, which suggests that their ancestors were fairly recent immigrants. Amongst the lizard species the geckos occur widely but legless lizards are found only in Australia. Goannas do occur also in Africa, southeast Asia and Melanesia but some 80% of the species are restricted to Australia. Most Australian turtles are Gondwanan and so are the Tree Frogs and the Australian Southern Frogs.

Turtle species live in the Darling and its tributaries as well as in billabongs, oxbows and associated wetlands and from these they get their food. Mating occurs in the water but their eggs must be laid on land, above high water mark, to survive.

The borders of rivers, if undisturbed, are often rich in vegetation providing moist environments that suit a diversity of frog and reptile species that feed on plants, insects - and each other.

Tree hollows, crevices and hollow limbs provide homes for many skinks, geckos, monitors and dragons as well as tree frogs. Spaces under the bark are also used. Logs and rocks provide homes for many frog and reptile species. Some species build burrows or settle in deserted ones.

On the floodplains the soil may crack when dry and so open a way to below ground habitats and to shelter during the heat of the day. Less clayey soil may allow long burrows to be dug.

In woodlands there can be many micro-habitats to support a wide range of frogs and reptiles.

In tussock grasslands shelter can be found by burrowing at the base of the tussocks whilst the spaces in between can provide insect prey. Grasslands with hummocks of *Spinifex* occur in non-flooding areas. They support a wide variety of animal species. Tussocks are important because they offer different micro-climates so reptiles can move around to regulate body temperature. The *Spinifex* spikes keep many predators away. Insect prey such as ants and termites may occur in large numbers. Low-lying areas with Canegrass are important to several reptiles and burrowing frogs.

Rocky areas are inhabited by a range of reptiles and their prey, mainly smaller animals, as they provide shelter, microclimates for temperature regulation and food.

Wetlands, temporary and permanent, natural or created by artificial water storage or by watering points for cattle or sheep, provide homes and, in dry periods, refuge, for a range of adaptable species including turtles and frogs. Frogs are common at ground tanks (and may become a nuisance by blocking water flow in troughs). A frog refuge may turn into a deadly trap if found by predatory reptiles such as the Red-bellied Black Snake and De Vis' Banded Snake. The Carpet Python tends to feed on slightly larger creatures such as Brushtail Possums.

The impact of European settlement appears to have been less disastrous for these animals than for most other natives, but some frog and some reptile species may be endangered. Vegetation clearance is probably what has had the worst effects.

Reptiles and frogs were always important to the people here. Larger species such as goannas and snakes - especially pythons, lizards, turtles and their eggs - were (and still are?) eaten. Frogs, tadpoles and small geckoes were used as bait.

But many species provided more than food: pieces of bone could be used for tools and animal fats had medicinal and practical uses. Some species were also part of the totemic systems of some tribes. Frogs and reptiles shown in rock art are evidence of their roles in belief systems.

3.4.3 Waterbirds and their wetlands:

Waterbird species mostly cannot be pinned down as belonging to particular areas. Through their ability to fly great distances, they share an impressive heritage of freedom to range widely, to move to preferred areas when and if it suits them. Some move internationally with changes of season - some waders leave the Northern Hemisphere when winter is on its way and fly all the way to breeding grounds in Australia. Others move nationally to where conditions suit them, perhaps to a lake being filled by floods. They may start life in one wetland and end it in another - or even in a city park. Many become experts at getting food out of garbage cans.

They also show a wide range of adaptations - physical and in habits - in their ways of catching food. Spoonbills scythe the water, shutting their large bills around shrimps and small fish. Pink-eared ducks suck up water, pumping it through fine combs on either side and so catching tiny creatures. Pelicans tend to herd their prey into shallows to catch them in their large bills. Darters with long, snake like necks, hunt fish under water. They have an eighth vertebrae at right angle to the rest - and so they can shoot out their dagger like bills to spear fish within range.

Some species breed in large colonies. In open areas such as marshlands their young are targeted by birds of prey but the sheer size of such colonies help to ensure that sufficient young survive. Narran Lake, mentioned below, is a famous example.

They spend most of their life on wetlands fed by major rivers. Some important wetlands are protected by international agreement. Brewarrina Shire has one such "Ramsar" area on the Lake Narran to the east. As mentioned, this area was of great importance also to the Aboriginal population as shown by traditional tales as well as by numerous remains of old Aboriginal camp sites with fish bones, bird bones, mussel shell and tools left behind after good meals.

Waterbirds were a very nutritious and much loved food and Aborigines had many ingenious ways of catching such birds as will be described in a later chapter. They also harvested the eggs of swans and other species.

There are many traditional stories about areas and places that show them to be and to have been very important. Some were also seen as dangerous and to be avoided.

3.4.4 Fish

Australia was separated from Gondwana so long ago that local development of freshwater fish followed its own lines. Most fish species such as basses and cods, grunters, catfishes, rainbow fishes, hardyheads and gudgeons evolved from marine ancestors.

Until about six million years ago much of the south-western Darling Basin was covered by salty marine waters, the Murryan Gulf. But as sea levels dropped, more and more of the ocean floor was exposed. The Murray and the Darling Rivers together carved a channel from their confluence to Lake Alexandrina. As the sea level dropped towards its present level, rainwaters coming down the channel very slowly and gradually made the estuaries less saline and so, over a long time, the fish had time to adapt to live in fresh waters.

All recently introduced species belong to families that evolved in freshwater. Thirty species of fish have been recorded in the Darling River (and of these seven are introduced). Apart from the "bony herring" that occurs also in Papua New Guinea, the other native species are found only in Australia.

The Darling River system has three types of rivers classified according to their over sea height level: montane rivers, slope rivers and lowland rivers. Rivers in Brewarrina Shire belong to the last group (below 300m).

Native fish species in lowland rivers include various hardyheads, Murray jollytail, various gudgeons, crimson spotted rainbow fish, river blackfish, Murray cod, golden perch, redfin perch, Hyrti's tandan, freshwater catfish, silver perch and spangled perch. Introduced species are represented by goldfish, carp, tench and gambusia.

Two different food webs support these fish. One relies on algal growth in the water, sunlight allowing it to develop on submerged rocks, logs, stream banks and plants. Shrimps and small fish graze on this growth and then become prey for Murrey cod and golden perch. A second food web is based on nutrients and carbon in plant litter that is washed in from the floodplains. They are eaten by midge larvae and shrimps that become prey for small and medium-sized fish that in turn are eaten by larger predators and by fish-eating birds.

Fish with similar diets have been put together in five groups though fish may move from one group to the next as they grow! But fish may also adapt to the food available, having become adapted to cope with changes in an environment which is unstable and where changes are common.

1. Those who live on decaying plant material tend to have special adaptations of mouth and guts to allow them to shred long leaves and digest fibrous materials.
2. Small omnivores who feed on large range of food types up to about 4mm in size which may include small insect larvae.
3. Large omnivores who can digest larger items from a wide range of resources: insect larvae, shrimps, some algae and plant materials.
4. Small carnivores that prey on zoo plankton, small crustaceans, aquatic insects and larvae of up to 6mm.
5. Large carnivores which can swallow large shrimps, yabbies, large insects, worms, molluscs and small to medium sized fish.

Clearing and cultivation have increased the amount of sediment and inorganic nutrients washed into the rivers as well as changing run-off patterns, the amount of sunlight hitting the water as well as increasing erosion.

Introduced species threaten native species by direct predation or by interference with nests or spawning habitats. They also compete for the food available. Carp damage river habitats and may be associated with the presence of an internal parasite, anchor worm, in native fish. Redfin Perch may carry a viral disease that is fatal to some native fish.

The importance of fish to the Aborigines is shown by the Ngannuh at Brewarrina. Several other fishtraps were constructed within the Shire, as at Angledool. But most are by now lost or largely destroyed for lack of maintenance.

Traps were not the only method used to catch fish and other methods and tools are described in a later chapter.

3.4.5 Comment:

As described above, animal species have developed and changed over a long time. Sites such as Lightning Ridge and White Cliffs are now mining the opalised remains of marine and estuarine fauna such as crocodiles from the Age of the Dinosaurs some 110 million years ago. Fossilised bones of megafauna (extinct large animals, some being huge ancestors of present fauna) have been found in several places, usually accidentally, exposed by erosion or by farmers or developers who had some reason to dig deep into the ground.

At Wellington Caves there are fossilised remains of woodland fauna from some five million years ago.

The Cuddie Springs deposits near Brewarrina have been tested by archaeologist and may contain evidence of human interaction with megafauna at some 30,000 years ago. The findings are still disputed but seem quite possible.

Chapter 4: Aboriginal tribes and groups in the Shire, past and present

4.1 Introduction: The Peoples

As noted in Chapter 2, the tribes or peoples known to have or have had their traditional area, or a part of it, within the Shire are: the Barranbinya, Ngiyampaa/Ngembba, Moorawarri, Yuwaalaraay/Euahlayi, Wailwan and Nhunggabarra*. Work opportunities, facilities and family history mean that many members now live outside the Shire or at least outside the tribal area but generally still know their tribal roots and try to maintain contacts**.

* The Nhunggabarra may be a clan in the Yuwaalaraay tribe but see Sveiby & Skuthorpe (2006: 5; 18-23; 56; 65; 77; 85; 94; 120; 123; 162; 218-220; 23--29; 217). References to their land are to areas generally mapped as Yuwaalaraay. The relationship seems unclear.

**The spelling of names given above seems to be that now commonly used by linguists and writers but many variations can be found on maps, in books and in articles. The most common are listed below:

Barranbinya: Burrunbinya, Burranbinya, Barrumbinya, Barren-binya, Burranbinga and Parran-binye

Ngiyampaa: Ngiyambaa

& Ngembba: Ngeumba, Ngiemba, Ngiamba, Ngiumba and Ngai-amba

Moorawarri: Muruwari, Marawari, Marraa'Warree, Maruwari, Moorawarree, Moorawarrie, Morewari, Morowari, Murawari, Murawarri, Murri, Murueri, Muruworri and Muruwarri

Yuwaalaraay: Euahlayi, Yuwaalayaay, Yualeiai, Yalaroi, Jewalaroi, Jaiwalarai, Juwalarai and Ualarai

Wailwan: Weilwan, Wailwun, Waljwan

Wongaibon: Wangaaypuwan, Wangaaybuwan, Wong-hi-bone, Wonghi, Wonjibon, Wonghibone, Wong-hi-bon, Wonaibon.

Settlers and authorities pushed individuals and groups out of their own areas and into others where they often did not know the land, its resources and its stories. The landscape was much changed by development, many clues and details embedded in the mental maps held in songs and stories were destroyed or changed. Knowledge of boundaries and important places could then get blurred or lost. Some groups were reduced to small numbers by illness, violence or hunger. Individuals and groups from outside the area were at times moved in by force and often placed with strangers, perhaps potential enemies.

But from memories held by Elders, from past recordings and recent research some knowledge and understanding of past traditional life can be cobbled together to give broad pictures of tribal areas and recent history.

4.2 The Barranbinya

Barranbinya lands have been heavily modified by settler activities. The Barranbinya people are largely gone by now but they were located in the western part of the Shire and extended westwards towards Bourke. R.H. Mathews, writing in 1902/3, stated that their territory extended from above Brewarrina down to about Bourke, comprising the lower portions of the Bokhara, Bogan and Culgoa Rivers for some distance above their respective junctions with the Darling.

Their lands have been seen as an unusually small territory. They were probably a river people depending on the abundant supply of fish and invertebrates from the Barwon for survival, and supplementing this through gathering plants and hunting.

Their land adjoins the fish traps. There is no record of their involvement in the construction but they may have taken part in this and shared duties of maintenance and access to their use. Maybe they had no need for a larger territory.

The Warraweena family is thought to represent their last descendants. As described in Chapter 2, their land was rich in resources and therefore a natural target for settler activities. It adjoined the Darling/Barwon stretch of river with its fish traps and reliable water supply. The Barranbinya seem to have been closely associated with the river. As noted, their territory was small. This fact and introduced diseases to which they had no resistance, and settler activities such as pushing them out of good grazing land with water access and causing tragedies such as the infamous Hospital Creek Massacre, probably hastened their disappearance.

European impacts on Aboriginal life are outlined in chapter 5 but the massacre is so much part of the Barranbinya story that it should be brought in here. There are various versions of what happened and there was probably more than one spate of killings, perhaps in different places, but in telling getting linked with those at Hospital Creek, the best known site.

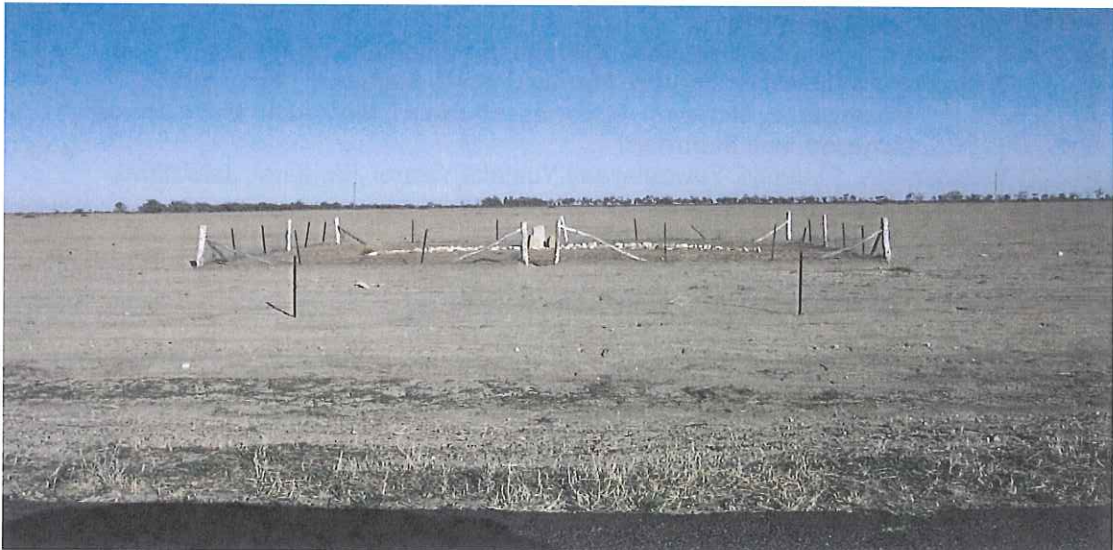


Fig.8 Hospital Creek memorial

Researchers who have gone through available sources (which mostly disagree on details) have concluded that there were probably at least three cases that can be called massacres as well as some occasional killings. Such stories of course spread widely from group to group and were repeated again and again. One storyline has it that a white stockman took an Aboriginal woman away from her man and refused to give her back. As a revenge members of the tribe killed the man and woman as well as slaughtering some cattle - and were themselves slaughtered as punishment.

Another version outlines an agreement by cattlemen to herd together Aborigines from the area and to then kill them off to stop them from interfering with cattle. (Some of the sources available are noted at the end of this section of this chapter.)

Ruby Dykes, daughter of Essie Coffee (the Bushqueen), was told this version by her mother:

"Apparently the tribe was experiencing a sick spell and the Elderly and the young were hungry and weak because of a sickness they all had picked up. So a couple of the stronger men were sent hunting and they came upon a couple of stray calves lagging behind. The hunters speared the calves and took them back to the camp at Hospital Creek. They had a feast and over a couple of days their strength returned and they decided to move on. As they were rounding up their weapons and tools they were taken by surprise and attacked because a station hand had found two calf heads by a fence on his outing to search for stray stock. Everyone was killed, the elderly, women and children. Even though they put up a bit of a fight, the guns and the other weapons were too much for them and the tribe ended up being slaughtered and their bodies left to rot there in a mass grave at Hospital Creek."

Con Bride, who led the group of settlers riding out from Quantambone Homestead to Hospital Creek, gave his version to a reporter, G.M. Smith, who published his report in The Sydney Mail 12.9.1928. It is here quoted (from the transcript used for the 1999 - 2006 study "Utilising Aboriginal Knowledge in Western NSW Plant Conservation"):

"Pioneers of the West - the Massacre at Hospital Creek.

I suppose there are still some old timers like myself, and some a bit older perhaps, who will be interested in this brief record of some of the pioneers who followed so closely on the steps of Mitchell and Oxley, the explorers of that great stretch of country west and northwest of Dubbo - by G M Smith.

Hardy and enterprising men they were who went out to blaze the tracks for the coming generations and to settle what is now known as the Western Division of New South Wales. One can easily appreciate the rough and risky task which lay before them in taking up and stocking new country on which there were then such large tribes of blacks.

Among the early settlers of that splendid pastoral country were the Readfords of Warren, on the Macquarie River and the Skuthorpes of Gulargambone, on the Castlereagh River. Those families among others had rough times in settling the country between Dubbo and what is now Bourke, on the Darling. Of course, the Australian natives were never as hostile as the Maoris of New Zealand, or the Red Indian of America; but friction between the black race and the whites who came to stock their hunting grounds was inevitable. At that early date the black police had not been organised to protect whites in the new settlements, as they were in later years, after the natives had murdered some of the whites and burned their homes. The white man had to hold their own with the Aborigines as best they could, and as far as I could learn on my arrival there a few years later, they did it with credit to themselves and as little cruelty to the natives as possible in the circumstances. The early days were quite fresh in the memory of most settlers in that locality when I arrived and learnt much regarding the hardships of the pioneers.

The pioneers who settled the western rivers and plains had a rough times and much difficulty in stocking that country and lifting the natives out of a state of savagery into something approaching civilisation, but the men who pioneered that other vast tract of country stretching away north of the Barwon River to the Warrego and Paroo Rivers in Queensland in my opinion had a much harder row to hoe, because of the fact that their work lay much farther out from civilisation. Of those enterprising men there were many: but the two who stood out were William FORRESTER, better known as "Red Bill" and Con BRIDE. The Forresters were of the Narran River Country, the Bride family of the Namoi River. "Red Bill" and Con were expert cattle men and good judges of the country, and in their young days had been engaged in stocking up new areas for various squatting firms and capitalists in Mudgee, Bathurst

and the Hunter District. Con Bride took up and stocked a number of stations north of the Culgoa, the Barwon and the Birrie; and Forrester's operations were further to the north.

The men had had a deal of experience among the natives in their time, and knew how to keep them in their place. They had learnt early in the pioneering days that it was easier to teach an aboriginal to fear you than to love you. They were always very civil to the natives on first acquaintance and remained so as long as it suited the natives to be the same; but at the first sign of hostility they were prompt to deal with the blacks in a way that they were not likely to forget. Of course the pioneers were always well armed with such weapons as they had at the time. I never had the pleasure of meeting "Red Bill" Forrester, but was told that he had perished for want of water somewhere out in the droughty regions while exploring for pastures new just previous to my arrival there.

I met Con Bride just before he died on a station called "Quantambone". It was one of the large cattle stations on the Barwon when I came on to it a few years previously, having a frontage of 15 (?) miles to the river and carrying nearly forty thousand head of well bred cattle, from which I had taken several large lots to the Melbourne markets, in my overlanding days.

A long drought wiped out more than half the herd. Then a Victorian firm bought the run and the remaining stock. They intended to run sheep. The first thing they did was to build a new homestead on the Cato Creek and make an outstation of old Quantambone where they put a married couple in charge. Then they divided the country into sheep paddocks except within 10 miles of the lower end of the run which they reserved for the reduced herd of cattle.

These were put in my charge as I was a cattleman. But I had some trouble in keeping them on the end of the run, especially the bulls, which wanted to roam all over the run as of old. They looked on the sheep fences with extreme contempt, and went over and through them as they liked.

On one occasion I missed a bull which my black had also failed to find. I remembered that his run was usually at the top end in the pre drought days so I decided to go up there to look for him. While there a man with a couple of horses arrived and stayed for the night. I thought he was a cattleman - a drover or cattle buyer. In the course of conversation he said he had been to the Temora gold rush and had spent some time there but with no luck. He was now making his way back to the Flinders River in Queensland, but as he was not feeling well had decided to go up the Namoi River, where his people lived and have a spell.

"This reminds me of old times, camping at the old homestead" he said. "Then you have been to Quantambone before" I asked. "Rather" he replied. "It was I who first took up the run over 20 years ago." Then I knew I had met Con Bride for the first time. I had heard a lot about him, especially regarding his shooting of a lot of blacks on the Hospital Creek, on Quantambone. It always went by that name on account of the wounded natives.

I asked him about the massacre - for that was what most of those on the river called it: and they reckoned that Con Bride was too severe on the darkies. "Well", said Con, "that was one of the worst affairs I ever had with the natives in all my experience and the one I most regret. But the natives brought it on themselves, my mind is easy about that. I often had to spill a little native blood in self defence in my early days, but I never did it without strong provocation.

In this case I had to take strong measures as it meant that either I or the black man must rule. I suppose you know the Hospital Creek? It crosses the plains a few miles out from Cato Creek. Strictly speaking it is not a creek - only a chain of ponds formed by the overflow from the Narran Lake, which at high flood flows across the plains into the Bokira Creek. There were fine holes in it which held water well in dry times and nice shady timber round them, making a good camping ground for the cattle. But it was also a good camping ground for the blacks, who went there in hundreds to live on the cattle. They had been spearing the cattle for some time before I became aware of the fact. When I saw cattle on the run with spears sticking in them you can guess my state of mind and when I saw some near the creek dead and the meat stripped off the bones and found skeletons all round about the watering places.

I decided to act. It seemed to me that their way of spearing was to get up the trees early in the morning with their spears and lie in wait for the cattle at the hole. The beasts that were speared very badly died close about the water, while those that were more lightly injured carried the spears for miles out of the run. Few of them ever recovered after being speared.

I tried to get the blacks to shift camp but they didn't understand me, or pretended not to - which was very likely, as I could speak the native lingo pretty well. So I rode to the station as quickly as possible and brought one of my black boys to talk to them in their own lingo. When he explained what I wanted them to do they said "Baal" which in their language means "No". They evidently didn't want to shift, as they were doing too well where they were: but I went back home and started one of my white stockmen up to the next station with a few lines to the manager to send me all the assistance he could spare in men, arms and ammunition. The demand was only reasonable in those days, as the white settlers had to keep plenty of arms and ammunition for self protection and to assist each other in cases of need.

Next day I was pleased to see two white stockmen and half a dozen black boys, all well armed, ride up. You may be sure I lost no time in getting all my own force under arms and we rode out to the blacks camp nearly twenty strong. When we got within two hundred yards of the camp I halted my small force. Then I took one of the boys and rode up to their camp. When the boy told them that I wanted them to shift the old darkies got very angry and said "Baal" as before. I took the boy back to the others and said: "Now boys we will fire shots over their camp. They might take fright and clear out." That volley caused great commotion in the camp and they all ran up in a bunch, like lot of wild ducks, but there was no stampede such as we were expecting.

I noticed that they were all arming with spears and woomeras and when they made a move forward I feared a rush on our small force by their hundreds so we fired a volley into them, and a dozen or more fell, this caused a halt. Then they gathered around the wounded ones. Apparently they could not understand what had happened and we took advantage of the confusion to send another volley whistling over their heads. That settled the matter. A general stampede took place across the plain towards the Culgoa, whence I suppose they had come.

When I saw them in retreat I rode away to the station to give them a chance to attend to their wounded and retreat in order. Next day we all rode out as before to the camp, and all we could see there was a lot of empty bough gunyahs. That affair got me a bad name down below with the people who had never to deal with the natives in their wild state. Had they been in my place probably they would have spilt more blood than I did.

Some went as far as to say that I should have been put on trial for what I did, but the Government was well aware of the fact that the work we did outback could not be done with white gloves on and therefore were not too ready to take action in such cases but depended on the humanity of the white settlers to spare the natives as much as possible.

Con never recovered from the illness that forced him to stay at Quantambone that night, and soon afterwards died on the very station that he had pioneered in his younger days and was laid to rest within cooe of the old homestead. Later that same old homestead was set apart by the Government as a Mission Station. It is quite likely that those now living there do not know that Con Bride, the enemy of their people in the early days of settlement, is resting in their midst.

I was only once at Quantambone after old Con died and I saw where they buried him a few hundred yards from the old homestead with nothing to mark the place. Should I ever visit Brewarrina again I will make it my business to ride up to the old station to see the blacks' mission and also to see if I can locate Con's grave.

Con Bride gave a detailed description of his part in the event. Commentators suggest that he toned down his version quite a bit to make himself look less of a bastard.

Some sources mentioning massacres in the area:

Barker 1972

Frank Clune, 1936: "Roaming round the Darling", pp.118-129.

B&D.H.S. 1982 (p.79f)

B&D.H.S. 1992 (p.86f and p148f)

The History of Bourke, Vol.2, p.34; Vol.3, p.172; Vol.5, pp184-188; Vol.8, p.12; Vol.9, pp.156-157; Vol.11, pp.8-9, p.197; Vol.12, pp.9-10; Vol.13, p.10

4.3 The Ngiyampaa Mayi

The land of the **Ngiyampaa Mayi** (people) was extensive and their boundaries are described in chapter 2. In this big area there were several groups with different dialects. The spelling Ngiyampaa is that used by recent linguists but some of the people prefer to call themselves just the **Ngemba**. Some Ngemba state firmly that they 'speak Ngemba the *'Weilwan'* or the *'Wangaaypuwan'* way' - to distinguish their dialect from others in the central western region. The listing of named groupings relates to divisions made on the basis of patterns of speech.

The **"Wangaaypuwan"** part shows that the group spoke the **Ngiyampaa/Ngemba** language the Wangaaypuwan way (wangaay meaning 'no' and puwan meaning 'having') in contrast to the neighbouring **Wayilwan** group who for 'no' and 'having' use the words 'wayil' and 'wan'.

The name Ngemba was used by Tindale on his famous map (map 3) and is still used on many maps and documents. This spelling recognises that some speakers of the language, notably to the north of Cobar, tend to pronounce iya as the English 'e' and p/b sounds like an English 'b'. (Note here that Tindale's diaries, held at the South Australian Museum, seem to suggest that he did not do much actual consultation with local Aborigines to establish tribal boundaries. He tended to assume that natural features - that seemed to him suitable - would be the boundaries.)

It is thought that the language differences mentioned became stronger in the times when people became separated and isolated on different reserves and missions.

Southern groups mostly went to Keewong, Carowra Tank, Menindee and Murin Bridge while those to the north went to Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett.

The people traditionally identified themselves also according to the country or Ngurrampaa (camp-world) in which they lived. According to Billy Coleman, an Elder around the 1900s, The Pilaarrkiyalu or Belar Tree people lived in dry country between Sandy and Willandra Creeks. The Nhilliyikiyalu or Nelia Tree people lived in Nelia shrublands north and south the Sandy Creek flood-out.

The Karulkialu (*Garul gyalu*), the Stone Country people lived between the Bogan River and Gunderbooka Range. They had important associations with the natural rock waterholes at Byrock and the land around Gunderbooka (or Gundabooka) Range. In their language the Darling River may have been called Callawatta. There was also the Kaliyarrkiyalu, the Lachlan River people.

The Ngiyampaa/Ngemba people shared the Bora initiation centred on Baiami, the Creator and Law Giver and his son Daramulan, creators of the fish traps. The Elder Steve Shaw could dictate an account of the Bora ceremony owned by the Stone Country people.

In his work as creator Baiami walked through the country from the Byrock Waterhole area via Mt. Drysdale, Cobar, Gunderbooka, Wuttagoona and back to Brewarrina leaving foot prints in various places.

According to Paul Gordon "*Wuttagoona was the place where he assembled the animals after creation. The emu, kangaroo and porcupine did not return and became features in the landscape with the emu becoming Mt. Grenfell.*" Both animal and mountain are particularly important to the people who have been much encouraged by the fact that the Mt. Grenfell Historic Site has been handed back to traditional owners.

Stories from the Darling River area make it clear that there were close connections in culture, mythology and languages between the various groups east of the Darling River but much less across the river. Tribal interaction westward may have been wary (at times perhaps hostile) and limited. This could lead to tragedies when such disparate groups were forced together by white officials.

Note however that their neighbours, the Paakantyi (Barkindji), living to the southwest along the river, also had traditional connections with the Gunderbooka Range. The groups may also have been connected through marriage links. But the Paakantyi language of was structurally very different and more closely akin to languages further west.

Ngiyampaa/Ngemba people kept camping and working on and near stations until the 1950s and 1960s. They were more or less forced to do this by the ever greater pressure on their water and traditional food resources caused by increasing pastoral and agricultural activities. Such places included Keewong, Paddington, Trida, Marfield, Roto, Yathong, Neckarboo and Tiltagara as well as some stations further north and west of Cobar. The groups became known by the name of the station on which they camped: The Keewong Mob, the Trida mob, the Marfield Mob etc. Those who still tried to live in traditional style had to walk increasing distances to find their food and water.

Here should be mentioned some of the tragic events relating to this pattern though they really belong in Chapter 5:

Carowra Tank increasingly became a focal point for them, probably because it was so large. By 1907 an Aboriginal Reserve was gazetted here. By 1919 AIM had established a Mission there and in 1927 it became an Aboriginal Protection Board (APB) Station. This meant that additional Aborigines were rounded up and brought to the 'Mission'. By 1933 the total population was recorded as around 270 persons.

The APB feared that the tank would not provide water for so many and decided to move the whole population to a new Mission established at Menindee, to the west. People were moved to Conoble train station by truck and then to Menindee by train. Most of the community had never seen a train and became terribly agitated.

The Menindee reserve was established in 1933. In addition to the people from Carowra, the APB moved people from Pooncarrie, Menindee township and Wilcannia to the new Mission.

For a start there was no housing - this had to be built. There were few provisions and little money, the reserve being terribly under-resourced, so life was hard.

And, even worse, the people from Carowra Tank were Ngiampaa but were now forced to share the place with Paakantji people from the Darling River. Traditional relations between the two groups were hostile and disputes and brawls common.

Both groups disliked living on the sand-hills, knowing that such areas were by tradition likely to be burial grounds where one should not live. And human bones were being continually uncovered by the wind. Nobody knew what people had lived there in the past.

Dust from bones of dead people was known as a traditional poison. And the dust from the sand-hills blew through the camp, getting into food when it was cooking and into the tea. The early death rate at Menindee was quite high, averaging one a month, and many persons died from tuberculosis. As a result there was great fear.

In 1949 the remaining people from Carowra Tank were moved to the Reserve at Murrin Bridge. But the period at Menindee has stayed in Ngiampaa memory.

However, though scattered so widely, the descendants of the Ngiampaa/Ngemba maintain contact with the country of their ancestors.

Biggs, Harris, Hall, Smith, Williams, King, Johnson and Parkes are some of the family names found in these groups. The Ngiampaa/Ngemba people would also use the name of the station they lived on, for example Cobar Williams, Kitty Keewong, Red Tank Jack and so on.

Language does change over time, so it seems worth including the word list given by Dunbar (1945). Ngemba is taught at Brewarrina Central School.

louse	cāp-pā	spider	mūrā-mār
large (big)	biddi	raggs	many hand
lizard (small)	tein-dā-rā	syāh-kār	
mulga	māl-kā	tsōka	Also a suffix,
man	māl		indicating a bad
man (stranger)	tsōi-cōlō		smell (such as
men	mūrāc		Gūndibooks, stink
me	ngātrē' knāi		house)
mouth	ngāndā	swan (black)	yā gōōi
mother	gāncē	sweetheart (lover)	kāp-pī
meat (flesh, un		stick	gāker
cooked)	tāngar'	stone	cūrrā
my or mine	tē	standing up	mārrā
meat (cooked)	wick-i'-tāngar'	shield	tsōman
native companion	bārd-gā	straight	pīn-tul
no	wong-i'	smoke	bāhū
nose	māra-tha	spear (war)	mār-a
nulla nulla	pāndi'	(game)	th-rēi
numbers	one, mucker: two,	sheep	thāmā
	bāl-a-gar'	sick	mārri'
net bag	gā-ti'	teeth	mārri'
nest	mā-thē'	tongue	tsōl-ai
nephew	tsā-rā-ti'	testicles	bārā
opossum	will-er'	thigh	pī-u'
one (another)	māk-er	thigh bone	pī-u'-wā
pleiades	gān-ting gāllā	track, footprint	yāppā
plenty	māthū us nāth-ā	tomahawk	wāk-er
pony	pāi umb-u-lār (or	throwing stick (for	
	mān-das')	spear)	māmār-ah'
plover	pāl-tārā-tārā	thunder	māmār-bārā
pot (it) in	cāra-gai	tail, animal	thān
pot (it) in (violently,		urine	gū-le'
stab)	cāra gullī	urate (to)	gū-e' gidyē'
pathway or track		water	cūll-e'
through scrub	tānna kōlō	who	ngāndā
rectum	nyer'	whose	ngāndā'-kār'
red	gā-a-tri'	what	māyā'
right	yit-er	what for	māyāndā
run	yūnnu nē'	woman	mārringā'
spirit (ghost), evil	mand-a	wife	mār'-mār
stone	vān-ān-dra'	whiteheaded	buck-i'-in-gā'
spider	mūrā-mūrā-grā'	white	buck-in-gāhā
suffixes	bone, meaning covered	walk	yāndā
	with, such as	whistling hawk	pīp-pī-chē
	lōpū, a leather	walk (a long way)	yān-ān-nē
	bōpū bone, leathery,	wagtail	tyrē-tyrē
	covered with	you	yānd
	feathers	yours	yāndā
	grā-plural, more than	yam stick	kōm-ai
	one-many, such as	yes	nāh-er

G. K. DUNBAR.

Ngiyampaa descendants are scattered quite widely by now. In the 1980s descendants of the Wayilwan speakers lived in the vicinity of Bourke, Brewarrina, Coonamble and Walgett while some Wangaaypuwan speakers settled in places including Menindee, Ivanhoe, Murrin Bridge and Wagga Wagga.

The Ngiyampaa Mayi being such a large nation with many sub-groups that could gather for ceremonies and trade, had relatively little need for contacts outside their own area. They met up with other tribes mainly for ceremonies and there was little intermarrying until after the move of some people to Menindee.

But they do still try to maintain contact and revisit their important places. And some are actively involved in working with researchers, teachers and government agencies to document and preserve language, heritage, culture and history.

Losing the late Elder Bob Harris was seen as a major blow. He and his wife both used to return to the country as often as they could, and he shared and taught his skills: painting and making artifacts as well as his knowledge of bush foods and medicine. But his work has been continued by his son Max Harris and other Elders, e.g. Elaine Ohlsen and Brad Steadman.

4.4 The Moorawarri

The **Moorawarri** People, between the Culgoa and Warrego Rivers, the people of the Birrie, Culgoa and Warrego Rivers, were according to Jimmie Barker divided into eight estate groups. He named these Nandugari (gari meaning "belonging to"), Gandugari, Gangugari, Baragari or Bandagari, Dinandu, Dinigada and Brinundu. Each was associated with a different part of the country. He described how two kinsmen taught him about them with the help of maps drawn in the dust:

The area of Nandugari (Lower Culgoa people) covered an area starting about 40 miles up river from the junction and then going west from this along the Darling River to North Bourke.

The Dinandu were a very small group who lived near the Barwon River just before it joined the Culgoa. Another very small group, the Brinundu, lived near the northern border.

The North Culgoa people were called the Gandugari and their boundaries followed the Culgoa River past Weilmoringle and north to the Queensland border to the west of Toulby Gate, having Birrie River as an eastern boundary.

(As mentioned earlier, the land between the Birrie and Bokhara Rivers was share country with the Yuwaalaraay people.) The Gandugari way of speaking Moorawarri was rather different and easy to recognise.

The Gangugari, Jimmie's mother's group, lived near North Bourke at Ford's Bridge, Yantabulla, Enngonia and south to a small place called Dry Lake.

The Baragari or Bandagari lived above Yantabulla and to the Paroo River while a small group called the Dinigada lived in an area centred on the Ledknapper Tank and which had its border at Boneda.

(Jimmie mentioned that Moorawarri living in areas bordering on other groups adopted words from neighbouring languages (Galali, Gu:mu, Baranbinya, Guwamu - spoken north of Weilmoringle - and Ngemba). He suggested that Guwamu became mixed with Moorawarri.)

The country was rich in important resources but important also through spiritual aspects such as stories, totems and laws that were shared and that bound the Moorawarri to their clans and gave them a sense of ownership of the country. Their belief in spiritual beings such as *Pitangulu*, *Mudaguddah* and *Bida-Ngula* gave meaning to the landscape all about them: plants, animals and places:

Pitangulu (Bida-Ngulu), creator of all things, a supreme being. His symbol is a circle surrounded by rays (a forehead of fire); he has human form but lives in the sky. He gathers fires and takes them into the sky, giving people stars to light the night; speaks with a booming voice when thunder is heard. He created men and women, giving them a *duwidi* - living spirit - which had connection with dreams. He also gave people their totems, *bidjuru*, which were the spirits of animals. The superior totemic groups were the emu, kangaroo and goanna, representing birds, animals, reptiles.

His son, *Ngulu-Bida* was believed to have come down to live with the Moorawarri for some time. Neither had a wife.

Burial grounds were guarded by the *Jugi* or the *Mirijula*, the spirit dogs of the Moorawarri and the Ngemba.

Brena:di were bad spirits that had broken Aboriginal laws. They caused deformities in human, animal and plant life.

Mudaguddah lives in a waterhole on Culgoa River down from the Weilmoringle homestead; he makes a frightening sound when floods are coming. (The importance and knowledge of *Mudaguddah* extends well beyond Moorawarri territory.)

These stories and traditions are still taught and are essential to life as a Moorawarri.

Jimmie Barker listed some places as special to the Moorawarri:

Tinnenburra (from *Dininburu* = some edible berries)

Yantabulla, Enngonia, Maranoa, Barrington, Hungerford (though this is not in the Moorawarri area) and gave the meaning of some place names:

Gombalie (a place to bathe), scene of one of the last tribal fights (against the Badjiri and Galali). Many were buried here.

Wirrawarra (fallen fire)

Thurrulgonia (pigweed excreta)

Maranoa (Maranguwa - put out hand)

Talyealye eating place (M. word but not in M. area.)

Kerribree Creek (Giribiri), dancing place. Large corroborees held on banks of creek.

Cuttaburra (burra = very big)

Weilmoringle (Old Man saltbush)

Enngonia - Irishman's misinterpreted gunyah as "camp" so called it Eringunyah. It was a popular gathering place due to large sand hill.

He noted also that the Barwon below Culgoa River was Bama and the Culgoa north of the junction and to the border was Ngarndu..

Many Ngiyampaa/Ngemba and members of some other tribes moved into Moorawarri areas in the late 1800s. Moorawarri and Yuwaalaraay were always close and shared some stories as did the Ngiyampaa/Ngemba. All three understood and spoke each other's languages.

But traditions were kept, remembered and taught by generations of strong Elders though their numbers have been sadly diminished. Well known names include King Billy Bailey, Granny Ellis, Robin 'Quartpot' Campbell, Jimmy Barker, Jimmy Kerrigan, Emily Horneville and Essie Coffee. Of these Robin 'Quartpot' Campbell who grew up at Denawan, is known as one of the four Weilmoringle rainmakers and the maker of a documentary film "Memories of a Morowari - Old Fella Now"; Jimmy Barker as the recorder of his language as well as of much cultural knowledge; Emily Horneville as one of the last fluent speakers of the Moorawarri and one who put much effort into

helping Lynette Oates to get it recorded while Essie "the Bushqueen" Coffey can be seen as the grandmother of Aboriginal film-making. She made two documentaries "My survival as an Aboriginal" and "My Life as I live it now" both teaching traditional Moorawarri ways of life.

This tradition of teaching has been continued by Roy and June Barker, Uncle Musso, the Byno sisters, Ruby Dykes, the late Les Shillingsworth and his brother Bruce Shillingsworth.

Many Moorawarri still live on or near their country and may still hunt, fish and gather bush foods and medicine in the traditional way, as well as using certain plants for spiritual cleansing.

Elders are putting much effort into keeping aspects of culture when possible.

4.5 The Yuwaalaraay (Euahlayi

The **Yuwaalaraay** People, though distinct from the Gamilaraay, their eastern neighbours, are part of the Gamilaraay language group. They share with the Gamilaraay a belief in the Creator, Baiame, as well as kinship names and structures and the traditions of the Bora ceremony. And they are linked with the Western Gamilaraay by a Dreaming tied to the Milky Way and by ceremonies and trade. They know themselves as the "people of the Narran River", a river that with its large and highly significant lake "*Dtharrawaa*" is central to their area as well as to their culture. The "*Dtharrawaa*" Dreaming is still told:

"Baime and his two wives Diring-ooloo (mother nature) and Gunnum-bielie (bearer of the spirit children) during a journey of creation rested near what became Angledool homestead. The land was then flat and barren. Travelling north he pushed his walking stick into the ground to bring water. This spot is known as Gurria Spring.

Water from this spring formed a soak. His wives who had been gathering foods brought these to the spring to be washed. Two crocodiles, known as Gurria, had been following them and now came out of the soak and swallowed the women to gain their powers. One ran southwest, the other southeast and meeting up just north of Barwon River. Their bellies had left tracks in the ground; the western becoming the Gharwah (Narran River) and the eastern a gully extending from Weetalibah Crossing through Coorcoran Lake, Morella Plains, Weewarra Plains and Wild Plains becoming the Big Warrambool.

Baiami, coming back to Gurria Spring, realised that his wives had been taken by the Gurria. He went in search of the Gurria, zigzagging between the two gullies left by them, leaving his footprints. These can still be seen in the ridge spurs running west-east between Narran Lake and the Big Warrambool. When he caught up with the Gurria he speared one of them. In his deathroll this formed Narran Lake and the small lake to the north. The other crocodile ran northeast followed by Baiami and was speared and killed at Weetalibah forming the Coorcoran and Angledool Lakes in its deathroll.



Fig.9 Gooregal Spring (from M.Menin, understood to be Gurria Spring?)

Baiami cut the two Gurria open to retrieve the bodies of his two wives. They were made whole again by the power of Gheedjar (black ants). The whole region is known as Warren-gullie (place of many waterholes)."

(Note that this story was told to Michael Anderson by his great uncle Jack McCrae. It can also be found on the internet told by the Elder Ted Fields Snr. and in "Australian Legendary Tales" collected by K. Langloh Parker. A somewhat different version is told by Tex Skuthorpe (Sveiby & Skuthorpe 2006.) Here the event took place at *Coorigal Springs* where Baiami's two helpers *Nullawa* and *Ganhanbilli*, who had been gathering food all day, got very hot and could not, although they knew it was forbidden, resist a dip in the water, so they jumped in and were immediately seized by two garriyas (crocodiles). The rest of the story is much the same, the black ants cleaning off the slime and bringing them back to life.

Tex made the point that this story also tells of how humans first broke the law. The women could not resist the temptation to bathe in the pond and were punished for their act. Baiame also broke the law by killing the two crocodiles. He killed two lives to save two. He then used innocent ants to clean the slime. They were turned white as punishment for taking part in the crime.

To compensate for their disobedience women must lose their children and to compensate for Baiame's crime men have to go through initiation. A boy starts his initiation as an ignorant and innocent child. When he has accomplished the initiation walk he is a man, and the mother must mourn the loss of her child. The first test of the initiation is to show that he can resist temptation.

At *Coorigal Springs* there was an important initiation site that he was shown by the Elders. Traces of the spring and the initiation site are still visible. The small pond of the story, now dry, is some 20m in diameter and surrounded by scattered dry brush on a red-tinged dry plain. The crocodiles went with them into a small opening somewhere - and a hole leading into the ground is visible between two

small rocks at the bottom of the pond. This leads into an underground channel to the Narran River far away. The hole and the channel are now clogged by silt.

Langloh-Parker (L-P 1905:64) described the preparation of the initiation ground (see also Sveiby & Skuthorpe 2006: 66): *'They cleared a big circle, round which they put a bank of earth, and from the circle was cleared a path leading to a thick scrub; along this path were low earthen embankments, and the trees on both sides had their bark stripped off, and carved on them the various totems and multiplex totems of the tribes. Such carvings were also put on the trees of the Bunbul, or little Boorah ring, where the branches were in some instances lopped, and the trunks carved and painted to represent figures of men, amongst whom were supposed to be the sons of Byamee's* wives.'* (* Langloh-Parker's spelling, see wordlist below)

The stretch between the first small circle and the second larger circle was marked by two rows of stones forming a path, a couple of metres wide. It led from the first circle, the place where the boys assembled and dressed up for the initiation ceremony. This circle is now invisible, covered by scrub.

The carved trees are long gone, but parts of the old track are still visible and one can follow the remains of the stone rows to the second, much larger circle. Onlookers would have lined the path on both sides, trying to distract the boys and make them look up - their first test. They must not fall for the temptation to look up or show any emotion. They would walk past the pond to the second circle where the men waited in the centre. This circle, some 80m in diameter, was in 2006 still an open space with some sparse burr vegetation, the floor being hard packed soil.

The Narran Lake is the centre of their Dreaming (told in chapter 2) and a major meeting place where trade and ceremonies helped to renew links to country and culture and to cement relationships with surrounding groups. All groups were allocated specific traditional camping areas. To the north their area extends into southern Queensland. It extends west to the Bokhara River, south to the Barwon River and east to the Big Warrambool. An important Dreaming that connects the Yuwaalaraay with the western Gamilaraay, relates to the latter.

As told by Michael Anderson:

"Long before the creator Baiami made the country the Euahlayi live in, the Euahlayi spiritual ancestors lived in a place called Bulima (literally sky camp). Bulima was situated on either side of the Warrum-boorool (literally big river in the sky). If you go to Nineteen Mile Plain north of Brewarrina and west of Narran Lake which we know by another name which is sacred to the Euahlayi and can't be said out loud, and lie on your back facing the sky, when night comes you can see Bulima and Warrum-boorool expressed as the Milky Way. This time of the spiritual Bulima came to an end when a cataclysmic event occurred which caused the universe to tip upside down. All the pieces of dirt and dust that made the Warrum-boorool in the spiritual Bulima fell into space. These clods of dirt and dust became planets and stars. Baiami and his wives in their desire to restore order and life to the universe created life on earth in the likeness of the spiritual Bulima, with the only difference being that life here takes a physical form. The Big Warrambool is the physical form of the spiritual Warrum-boorool with the people living on either side of its banks. Like the spiritual Warrum-boorool, the Big Warrambool also divides the country and its people, on the west live the Euahlayi and on the east live the Gamilaroi and like their spiritual ancestors each can only take a wife or a husband from the other side of Warrum-boorool."

Another connection between the groups was made through a trade in pitjuri. This was not grown in Gamilaraay country but came from nations further west. It was usually kept in small woven baskets and was important to the conduct of ceremonies. Getting it might mean long and difficult journeys. This trade in pitjuri was of major importance to build and keep cultural and spiritual links between the Yuwaalaraay and Gamilaraay with peoples to the west. Fish caught in fish traps at Collarenabri formed another important link bringing people together for ceremonies and trade. These traps, once very large and important, have been almost totally destroyed since white settlement.

(Tex Skuthorpe counts himself as a **Nhunggabarra** man who got most of his traditional learning from his grandmother Violet who was born in 1876 but also from a number of other Elders. **Nhunggal Country**, the land he was taught about, appears to be largely what is mapped as Yuwaalaraay country. He comments that by his time of learning most of the Nhunggabarra were decimated or scattered. The relationship Nhunggabarra and Yuwaalaraay may have been that of a clan in a tribe.)

Yuwaalaraay neighbours to the west are and were the Moorawarri and Barranbinya with the Weilwan to the south and Ngiyampaa to the southwest.

Quite a lot is known about traditional Yuwaalaraay culture partly through the detailed recordings made by K. Langloh-Parker, already in the late 1800s - early 1900s. She was the wife of the owner of Bangate Station and she published several collections of stories as well as a detailed and careful study of the culture (Langloh Parker 1905). As noted elsewhere, she was told stories in great detail, but probably to the first level that could be made generally known, but not given a deeper level of understanding.

She gave a lot of detail about social organisation, kinship and marriage rules and about important beliefs and rules of behaviour. Some of these points are discussed in Chapter 6.

In her study of the Yuwaalaraay People Langloh-Parker included a word list, reproduced on pp.79 - 83 for comparison with wordlists prepared by more recent linguists. As Tex Skuthorpe has noted, there are two dialects: Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay which are seen as part of the Gamilaraay language group and grouped together in a dictionary (Ash, A et al. 2003). The language is taught to the children in Goodooga Central School.

The willingness and efforts of Elders (over many years) to teach younger generations and researchers about their language, beliefs and dreamtime stories have been of huge importance. They have helped their cultural survival - such faithful dedication invites respect.

The Darrawaa Elders Project is committed to documenting traditional values and teaching younger generations. The University of New England has a Gamilaroi Resources Project (which includes Euahlayi aspects).

Some respected Elders and teachers in more recent times include Greg Fields and Willie Wallis, Ted Fields Senior and Junior and Jason Wilson. The linguist John Giacom of Walgett has studied the language and prepared word lists.

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GLOSSARY

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- Galladhera*, a drink ; water sweetened with honey.
- Gandher*, a solitary one.
- Garraghar*, uncle.
- Gaskyachar*, grandmother on father's side.
- Garrava*, a son-in-law, or one who could be a son-in-law.
- Garravahar*, a daughter-in-law, or one who could be a daughter-in-law.
- Gashar*, husband or wife, or one who might be so.
- Gashar*, fatherless girl.
- Gashy*, a miniature netted hammock for carrying babies in.
- Gashah*, a woman's costume ; a belt.
- Gashagah*, forehead band.
- Gashy*, an attack.
- Gashy*, an attack.
- Gashahar*, (chrobore) native opera.
- Gashar*, stage.
- Gashar*, yam stick.
- Gashar*, sacred stone.
- Gashar*, codfish.
- Gashar*, silver beam.
- Gashyay*, water cure spirit.
- Gashar*, quandong, wild peach.
- Gashar*, river box. An *Eucalyptus*.
- Gash*, tree, *Quercus aculeata*.
- Gashahar*, topmost pages.
- Gash*, pink-breasted grey parrot.
- Gashahar*, small green parrot.
- Gashar*, poison stick or bone.
- Gashahar*, poison stick or bone, smaller than *gashar*, used against women.
- Gashar*, spirit-busted deer.
- Gash*, taboed woman's camp.
- Gashar*, taboed woman.
- Gashar*, wild passion fruit ; a *Capparis*.
- Gash*, an arrow.
- Gashar*, for box.
- Gash*, leaf.
- Gashahar*, a game.
- Gashahar*, wrestling.
- Gashy Gashy*, cold west wind.
- Gash*, yam.
- Gashar*, redbreast bird.
- Gashar*, an bill.
- Gashahar*, plain turkey ; bentard.
- Gashar*, yam.
- Gashahar*, east wind.
- Gashar*, riddle.
- Gashar*, a dirge.
- Gashar*, a camp, or nest.
- Gashar*, sorrow, funeral dirge.
- Gashar*, a taboed camp.
- Gash*, water.
- Gashahar*, largest ant hill.
- Gash*, sandalwood shrub.
- Gash*, catfish.
- Gashahar*, laughing jackass.
- Gashar*, snail.
- Gashar*, pink lizard.
- Gash*, pine.
- Gashahar*, storkman's wood.
- Gashahar*, tiger bark ; a quinine.
- Gashar*, bandit.
- Gashahar*, give to all.
- Gash*, magpie.
- Gashahar*, kind be.
- Gashahar*, a swimmer be.
- Gashahar*, strong to stop you.
- Gashar*, men's name for boorah spirit.
- Gashahar*, women's name for boorah spirit.
- Gashahar*, boorah messenger.
- Gashahar*, five or six emus.
- Gashar*, fourteen or fifteen emus.
- Gashahar*, light blooded.
- Gashahar*, dark blooded.
- Gashahar*, belonging to the orchard country.
- Gashar*, doves.
- Gashar*, shinglebark lizard.
- Gashahar*, yam.
- Gashar*, river.
- Gashahar*, pelican.
- Gashar*, white diver.
- Gashahar*, much wind.
- Gashahar*, wild lime.
- Gashar*, good, pretty.
- Gashahar*, a hairless red deer.

Afaka, man's divisional family name

Afaka, woman's divisional family name

Afaka, spirit

Afaka, a spirit with a lamp of fire

Afaka, a spirit

Afaka, man's divisional family name

Afaka, man's divisional family name

Afaka, woman's divisional family name

Afaka, a spirit

Afaka, a spirit

Afaka, a spirit

Afaka, a spirit

Afaka, a spirit

Afaka, a spirit

Afaka, a spirit

Afaka, a spirit

Afaka, man's divisional family name

Afaka, woman's divisional family name

Afaka, a temporary companion

Afaka, a friend of childhood in after life

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4.6 The Wangkumara

The **Wangkumara** were not originally part of the Shire area but history made them so for a time. Their traditional lands were in what became the southwest corner of Queensland and the far northwestern corner of New South Wales. As they in the 1800s and 1900s were pushed further south by the settlers they ended up in the area round Tibooburra and Milparinka. In 1937 the Tibooburra group were forcibly moved to the already overcrowded Brewarrina Mission. Here they were unhappy, seeing themselves as badly treated by the manager. In 1939 at least eighty of them walked off the mission and decided to walk the long way home. They were stopped by the Warrego River which was in flood. Gradually most of them ended up in Bourke.

Their language is no longer spoken fluently, but it is actively encouraged by a Wangkumara community now living in Bourke. The Muda Aboriginal Corporation runs a language revival programme and the language is taught in two of the schools.

The impacts of white settlement on Aboriginal life and the story of this time is outlined in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5. European Impacts

The story is complicated and a **Time Table** for Aboriginal History and Brewarrina Shire from 1790 onwards has been added at the end of this chapter.

5.1 First contacts with Europeans

It did not take long for the newcomers, mostly Europeans, to start trying to spread inland from the coast and the effects were felt by inland Aborigines well before any white persons actually arrived. Diseases moved through populations that had never been exposed to them before and so had not built up any resistance to them.

Smallpox is the example best known; it raged through populations even far inland as a real plague. Its scars were seen by early explorers on people living on the Bogan River and at Bourke, at that time far away from direct European contact (comments by Sturt 1833 and Mitchell in 1935). But there were other diseases including many venereal complaints, initially spread by physical contact with new arrivals.

The authorities in charge, at first based in Sydney, tried to regulate and control the spread of colonists (see map 9 below). The difficult terrain they met when moving westwards and fear of "savages" was at first a big and useful barrier, but authorised explorers were sent out to discover routes through the country and to assess its usefulness.

In the Darling River region the first Aboriginal contacts with the invaders came in the 1820s. The explorers Cunningham and Sturt reached into the areas of the Darling River tributaries. Sturt reached the Darling in 1829 (at what is now Bourke). Mitchell made wide surveys in the Namoi, Gwydir, Balonne and Maranoa areas. In 1835 he followed the Darling from Bourke to Menindee, in 1836 reaching the Murray - Darling junction. In 1846 Roderick Mitchell traced the Darling - Barwon course (B&D.H.S. 1982). But white settlement in some areas preceded officially approved exploration.

The first settlers arrived in the Brewarrina area about 1841 and in 1845 an estimate of some 3,000 Kooris was recorded. These were the Barranbinja people.

The location of Brewarrina was first known as Walcha Hut. Major Druitt took up Turrawa (Quantambone) in 1840 and was by 1848 the owner of Gnoonoo Gnoonoo (B&D.H.S. 1982). Brewarrina Town was laid out south of the river in 1862 by the surveyor J. Glen Wilson. Captain Randell travelled up the Darling by steamer in 1861 and described the fisheries.

By the late 1830s Aborigines living in fertile lands had generally lost access to their sacred sites and to their food sources. They were in a social and spiritual crisis and felt forced to carry on resistance warfare.

The Rev. William Ridley who made a trip along the Barwon River is reported in the Sydney Morning Herald 13th December 1855 speaking of "many aborigines being slain". Another report in the Northern Star 28th July 1914, writes of a massacre in 1859 of some 300 people. By 1915 dispersal policies or actions by settlers and Native Police apparently resulted in only three Barranbinja persons remaining in the area.

PLAN OF THE DIVISION OF THE UNSETTLED CROWN LANDS INTO SQUATTAGE DISTRICTS IN 1847



No.	District	Number of Runs
1.	Macleay River	33
2.	New England	132
3.	Liverpool Plains	184
4.	Bligh	148
5.	Wellington	122
6.	Lachlan	215
7.	Murrumbidgee	237
8.	Manero	172
9.	Clarence River	56
10.	Gwydir	103
11.	Darling Downs	60
12.	Lower Darling	12
13.	Moreton Bay	39

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Map 9 The Nineteen Counties

The warfare raged from Port Philip to the Darling Downs from 1835 - 1842. Here some of the fiercest fighting took place on the northern slopes and plains of New South Wales. Such stubborn resistance gave the Gamillaraay people a war-like reputation. Official expeditions were mounted by a Major Nunn to literally hunt down

Aboriginals. And on behalf of settlers, private persons then kept hunting down Aborigines. The attitudes and actions of the police varied.

The massacre at Myall Creek in 1839 is famous, but as a rare example of a case where such cruelty was punished by the authorities. Killings and massacres kept happening, mostly kept quiet or not punished. An example from the Brewarrina area is commemorated at Hospital Creek (see Chapter 4). The Aborigines were caught between being seen as potentially useful, employable as shepherds, domestics and labourers, or, especially by cattle farmers, as a nuisance to preferably be got rid of.

5.2 Pastoral expansion and establishment of reserves for Aborigines

Support for the Aboriginal people developed gradually and with many checks and barriers. Protective regulations were often deliberately or simply stupidly ignored or misused.

In Britain Earl Henry Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, did realise that the situation was unfair. In the 1840s he tried to get Aboriginal property rights recognised in New South Wales. This would happen by setting aside "small tracts of land...to be cultivated either by them, or for their advantage." This was not a move popular with the settlers, nor was it practical as it did not recognise or understand Aboriginal life-styles.

As Yagan, a Victorian Aborigine, commented in 1843: "The wild blackfellows do not understand your laws, every living animal that roams the country and every edible root that grows in the ground are common property. A black man claims nothing as his own but his cloak, his weapons and his name. He does not understand that animals or plants can belong to one person more than to another."

In 1850 Governor Fitzroy, following Grey's idea, created 35 Aboriginal Reserves. About 20 of these were in the Darling headwaters areas. Two of them recognised Aboriginal traditional concerns: the Brewarrina Fisheries and Boobera Lagoon near the McIntyre, which both had mythological as well as economic importance.

William Colburn Mayne, the first Commissioner of Crown Lands for the pastoral district of Wellington, NSW, from 1846 to 1852, had successfully recommended to the Government "that an area one square mile should be reserved on the river bank at a place called "Fishery" in order to preserve the fish traps built by natives." The Reserve over the Fisheries stopped whites from taking fish there, a rule respected by Aborigines and whites as late as 1906 (Heather Goodall 1996). But no reserves were set up along the lower Darling at this time - here white invasion had not yet become so overwhelming.

Gold was discovered in the early 1850s and rural conflicts faded somewhat for a period, because so many people rushed to the gold fields that the Aborigines who were still living in the settlement areas were needed as station labour.

Land Commissioners praised Aboriginal pastoral workers and in some areas good relations developed between landowners and their workers - though the money aspects usually favoured the former, at least until award wages became the rule.

In Brewarrina Shire Katie Langloh Parker, wife of the owner of Bangate Station on the Narran River (Yuwaalaraay country), became very interested in and friendly with Aborigines on her station. She had, when a little girl, been saved from drowning by

an Aboriginal girl. She wrote a careful study of the Euahlayi (Yuwaalaraay) - as well as collecting and publishing many of their traditional stories in the first volume of "Australian Legendary Tales". She also wrote about the early smallpox epidemics. She was trusted by the Aborigines because she respected their traditions, being careful to stick to what she was told and not to put in her own interpretations as did some early anthropologists. She particularly admired the medical knowledge held by some members of the community.

White - Aboriginal relations in the Dennawan area and on the Weilmoringle station are other examples - cooperation developing after a period of intense resistance and violence.

As noted, the push for land slowed down for a time. But the white population had grown fast during the gold rush. And in 1861 New South Wales got new laws encouraging free selection of land, so the pastoral invasion took off again, heading down the Darling and beyond. For Aborigines the continued association with their traditional lands depended on what the white landowners would accept or want to use in the way of station labour. Some information about this period comes from notes kept by white settlers and some from Aboriginal oral history.

Brewarrina Town was established in 1861, with the first land sale in 1862, and Bourke was established in 1862, showing the sudden and rapid burst of pastoral development in the area. This meant competition for space and resources, forcing changes in Aboriginal lifestyle. Traditional foraging and land use became difficult or impossible. Pastoralists needed large areas where their herds could graze without interference. Aborigines had to become used to and to depend on new foods, tools and ways of coping. Some did this by becoming employees on stations, working as stockmen, timber cutters and carpenters or as domestics. Those who did not get or want such employment could suffer badly from lack of nourishment and shelter as fewer and fewer areas were left for them to live in and get food from.

The presence of Aborigines was often by the pastoralists seen as a nuisance, a threat to the herds and maybe also to their families, particularly when the depression in the 1890s meant that many stations were no longer viable and could not afford to keep Aboriginal labour.

Also townspeople were often uncomfortable about having Aborigines living nearby. A policy was developed to move Aboriginal people who were living on or near station areas to reservations or "missions" where they would be controlled, supervised and kept out of the way. Such feelings continued for quite some time. For example: In 1935 the Brewarrina Municipal Council, concerned about the increasing numbers of Aborigines in the town, ordered the police to use their powers to remove 'humpies' that the Kooris had built near the Bourke road, and also to enforce the 'curfew' more strictly. There was in fact no legal 'curfew', but Council decided they were entitled to enforce one (meaning that Aborigines were allowed in town only during the daytime). This resulted in the Kooris being harassed in the streets and being intimidated, especially the ones from the Mission.

The **Brewarrina Aboriginal Mission** was established in 1887 on the northern bank of the Barwon River, 10 miles east of Brewarrina, on land resumed from the property Quantambone (see next chapter). Missionaries were to establish a ration station to entice the residents of an Aboriginal camp at Brewarrina out of town. The Aboriginal Welfare Board was in control. At the same time the Aboriginal people in the **Barwon 4 Reserve** (unmanaged reserve reputedly notified 1842, 1850 or 1885?), originally

640 acres on both sides of the river, now 722 hectares) near the Fisheries on the northern bank of the Barwon River would leave the town to expand on the southern bank (McGuigan 1984, Menin 1996). Kooris remained at Barwon 4 but some moved to the Mission when a school was established there. (Note that Portion 19, Parish Goonoo, County Narran, remains LALC land). Later some of the Koori children attended school in town. Some Koori pastoral workers lived in a camp close to Quantambone homestead and worked at the station. If more workers were needed men were sent from the Mission. The women were employed as domestics on the station.

Reserves and Missions were often distant from their familiar places and traditional lands, cutting their access to places to which they had traditional and spiritual links. Such moves were usually organised by government agencies. As such agencies kept changing roles and staff, record keeping at times became confused or simply not done. In some cases the story of the moves of people and of the places set up for them could become very complicated and difficult to trace.

As demand for land grew after 1860, the old square mile reserves disappeared, but this increased the pressure on the Aborigines and other reserves were created between 1869 and 1884. These were mostly on the coast or along the Murray and Murrumbidgee. People on the Darling were still living in pastoral camps.

5.3 The establishment of Welfare Boards and Missions

Until 1881 the Colonial Secretary, the Police and the Lands Departments were the main government agencies dealing with Aboriginal people. But then a number of organisations were formed, by the founders meant to improve life for the Aborigines. Some of the support for such organisations was probably based on a general desire to control Aboriginal presence and activities. The sequence of organisations is long and complicated, reflecting changing attitudes in the broader community. Brewarrina and Bourke are adjoining Shires and shared problems relating to how to deal with the Aboriginal population - which had little interest in shire boundaries. Some information quoted here was collected by Plim (2007) for a report prepared for to Bourke Shire Council.

The Aborigines Protection Association

A Committee to Aid the Maloga Mission was formed by Daniel Matthews in 1878 as a private organisation. To expand its role to establish more reserves, it changed its name in 1880 to The **Association for the Protection of Aborigines**. It was funded by public donation and as a group the members believed that Aborigines were not doomed to extinction and that they should be compensated for the dispossession of their land. They thought Aborigines should be moved from the fringe camps growing up round towns and cities. Being Christians they believed that setting up missions would help to improve the lives of Aborigines in NSW [Horton 1994 (1):27-28].

Their campaigning led the Government to appoint a **Protector of Aborigines**, Mr. George Thornton MLC, but his efforts, or lack thereof, have been criticized.

In 1883, after further lobbying by the Association, the Executive Council of the NSW Parliament established the **Board for the Protection of Aborigines (BPA, 1883 - 1940)**. The Board had six members, appointed by the Governor and chaired by the Inspector General of Police. Meetings were held weekly and made 'recommendations concerning the general protection of the State's Aboriginal population.'

The Board subsidised the Mission Stations but they continued to be administered by the Association until a lack of public financial support made it hand over actual management to the Board in about 1892-3. However, the Board did little to improve the status of Aborigines in the community, contrary to the hopes the Association had held for its missions and reserves.

Recommendations for the management of the Aboriginal station at Brewarrina were for example issued in February 1895. A local board was to be established and have representatives elected by the BPA Board. This should include the local police superintendent. Its duties would be to:

- inspect the station at least monthly and report back to the Board with recommendations;
- inquire into complaints made about the station;
- advise the manager about discipline, work to be done and other matters relating to management and to
- countersign requisitions for stores and expenditure.

But the Board had no statutory power until **The Aborigines Protection Act, 1909** (Act No.25) was signed and the Board reconstituted. It was then supposed to look after all matters affecting the interest and welfare of Aborigines, and to protect them against injustice, imposition and fraud. How poorly this was done is clear from Jimmie Barker's account of his experiences on the Brewarrina Mission (1977) and from the accounts by many others who have lived there and retain strong memories.

George Thornton, the Protector to the Aborigines, had wanted small holdings to be established for Aboriginal farmers, but the Board also wanted reserves that could function as buffer zones to decrease contact between Aborigines and whites. So between 1885 and 1894, the Board set up 85 reserves. Of these 47 were a validation of Aboriginal occupation or a response to Aboriginal requests for land. On the Darling tributaries reserves were established on the basis of advice from employers or local officials. Aborigines were not consulted. This began a period of severe restrictions on land accessible to Aborigines.

The **Aborigines Protection Amending Act of 1915** extended the powers of the Board to 'assume control and custody of Aboriginal children ... in the moral or physical interest of the child.' Changes to the powers of the Board included the appointment of Inspectors of Aborigines and abolition of the local committees and guardians. Further restrictions on Aboriginal people's activities and movements were imposed by amendments to the Act in 1918 and 1936.

But in 1937 a Parliamentary Select Committee was set up to investigate the administration of Aborigines. This recommended that the Public Service Board should investigate the work of the BPA Board. Changing attitudes led to recommendations that Aboriginal people should be assimilated into the general community and move away from the reserves, stations and homes into which they had been forced. Housing programs and education and training schemes were also proposed.

The old Board was in 1940 replaced by the **Aborigines Welfare Board (1940 - 1969)**. In 1946 this had, for the first time, two Aboriginal representatives, Bill Ferguson and Walter Page. Their terms expired in 1948. Fergusson was replaced by H.S. Groves, but Page's seat remained vacant and both Aboriginal positions were,

according to the Board's annual report, vacant in 1960. Aboriginal membership fluctuated.

The **Crown Lands Act** in New South Wales, from **1884** on (but implemented mainly in the 1890s Depression), had thrown many Aborigines out of work. Many of the new reserves on the Darling tributaries were just small parcels of land where Aboriginal people were already living in pastoral camps.

Aboriginal people continued to resist arrangements that they saw as unsuitable and did at times refuse to move as ordered. Interference from the Board increased.

And after the First World War the creation of new settlements for returned soldiers caused increased demands to revoke Aboriginal reserved lands. Aboriginal returned soldiers found that they were refused Soldier Settlement Blocks and that their children could not enrol in schools that were racially segregated.

There was a loss of Aboriginal reserves between 1914 - 1927, the cycle of change leading from pastoral camp through reserve to revocation. As reserves were revoked the Aborigines were forced to move. The Board maintained a few reserves (though intensifying controls on Aboriginal life), but most were abandoned. As Aborigines were thrown off the old reserves there were some regrets about leaving accumulated family associations such as family memories and graves. Many then moved into towns if they could or to unauthorised and unsupervised campsites around towns.

By the mid-40s there had been a gradual decrease of numbers of Aborigines living on stations and increase in numbers of those living on Reserves. Though a Government assistance of £3,000 to acquire a home had been approved, post-war shortage of materials and of land to buy created difficulties. The Board's powers were expanded and it became authorised to buy land, build houses and sell or lease them to families till they could buy.

By 1968 the Board claimed that many advances had been made. J. Morgan and L. Darcy were then Aboriginal representatives on the Board, the last, as the Board was abolished and replaced by the Aborigines Welfare Directorate in the Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare which later became the Aboriginal Services Branch in Youth and Community Services.

5.4 The 1967 Referendum

The referendum of 27th May 1967 asked voters to say "yes" or "no" to the question

"DO YOU APPROVE the proposed law for the alteration of the Constitution entitled - An Act to alter the Constitution so as to omit certain words relating to the People of the Aboriginal Race in any State and so that Aborigines are to be counted in reckoning the Population?"

It would give Aborigines rights as citizens to be included in the census count by repealing Section 127 of the Constitution which read:

In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted.

The argument for this section had been that Aborigines had been too dispersed and communications too poor.

It would also give the government the power to legislate for Aborigines by removing the words '*other than the aboriginal race in any State*' from paragraph xxvi of Section 51:

The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have the power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to:

The people of any race other than the aboriginal race in any State for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws.

The Federal Office of Aboriginal Affairs was created in 1968 with Bill Wentworth as the first Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. In 1975 it was upgraded to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

They were not given the vote in 1967 since they it already, at least in theory, in some cases as far back as 1864. Though officials were sometimes hazy about this.

The referendum yes vote opened avenues for government grants and subsidies to flow also to Aborigines and their organisations. This became particularly important in relation to education and healthcare.

Time Table for Aboriginal History and Brewarrina Shire from 1790 onwards

Starting the count at **1770 AD**:

29.4.1770 A.D Captain Cook meets Aborigines in Botany Bay.

1790s Small pox epidemic was brought inland by travelling Aborigines from coastal nations. People from Eora (Sydney Aborigines) came with axes and glass to trade for possum skins.

1813-15 European settlement in the Bathurst area. They were welcomed, given gifts and invited to corroborees. European settlement grew, sacred sites were settled on, game was driven away from the hunting grounds and vegetation was destroyed.

1825 onward: Areas of land set aside from sale for the creation of Aboriginal settlements (reserves, missions and stations). Main aim being to suppress Aboriginal traditional society, law and custom but to at the same time to "protect" the people from getting killed off.

1828-9 Captain Sturt met up with Aborigines in the Bourke area, noting that they were living well on the wildlife of the river but ravaged by smallpox. He was favourably impressed and noted their clean and well swept camps.

17.3.1836 Thomas Mitchell's exploration expedition starts with a corroboree at Orange. The expedition traveled along part of the Lachlan, Murray and Darling Rivers through Australia Felix to Portland Bay and returned to Wagga.

1837 A British House of Commons committee on Aborigines recognised that they had "an uncontrovertible right to their own soil, a plain and sacred right.... Their land has never been taken away from them without the assertion of any other title than that of superior force".

1838 Governor Gipps orders a prohibition on the indiscriminate massacre of natives by the military.

mid 1840's Protector of Aborigines established in NSW. Police were to protect them as much as white settlers and were to reduce firearms held by whites.

1848 to 1866 The Board of National Education states "it was impractical to provide any form of education for the children of the blacks."

1851 NSW introduces the Vagrancy Act.

1856 NSW obtains self-government from Britain. It was stipulated that a percentage of income from Crown land sales was to be spent on the Aborigines but about all they got was a blanket on Queen Victoria's birthday. Previously, from early colony days until then, 16% of returns from the sale of Crown Lands was to be spent on behalf of the Aborigines of NSW.

1861-2 The Robertson Land Act encouraged free selectors to take up land resulting in a great increase in the number and density of farms.

1867 NSW brought in the Liquor Act (*"An Act to prohibit the supply of intoxicating Liquors to the Aboriginal Natives of New South Wales."*)

1874 The Maloga Mission was established on the Murray for the estimated 9000 surviving Aborigines in NSW.

1880 Association for the Protection of Aborigines formed. This influenced the State Government to take action.

1883 Aboriginal Protection Board established. This set up many Aboriginal Reserves over the next 30 years. These were to be "at sufficient distance from towns to reduce contact with white society to a minimum", segregation being a key concept in the Aborigines Protection Policy.

1891 By now there were 78 reserves. From about 1900, most of the reserves were revoked or alienated.

1892 Aborigines Protection Association turns over the management of Mission Stations to the Board (Cumeragunja, Warangesda, Maloga and Brewarrina).

1901 The Commonwealth Constitution stated, "in reckoning the numbers of people, Aboriginal natives shall not be counted". The Commonwealth could legislate for any race except the Aborigines. So the states kept their power over Aboriginal Affairs. Aborigines were recognised under the Flora and Fauna Act.

1908 Invalid and old age pension provided social security to some Aborigines.

1909 Establishment of the *NSW Aborigines Protection Act*.

1910 Aborigines Protection Act now operational, giving the Board control over Aborigines on stations and reserves but not on missions. It became illegal for Aborigines with one white parent to live on reserves.

1915 to 1918 Amendments to the Aborigines Act gave the Aborigines Protection Board greater powers to remove children for training as domestic servants.

1918 *Commonwealth Electoral Act (No.27)* excludes Aboriginal people from being on the Electoral Roll or voting.

1924 Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association (AAPA) formed.

1927 AAPA delivers a petition on Aboriginal concerns to the Premier.

1934 Australian Aboriginal League formed.

1936 *Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act No.32* gives additional powers to the Board.

1936 The Wangkumara people forcibly deported to Cherbourg Mission in Queensland.

1936 A Policy of Assimilation adopted with powers to forcibly transfer Blacks to Missions to train them to be White...

1936/7(?) Wangkumara people put in trucks and taken to Brewarrina Mission.

26.1.1938 Day of Mourning protest held in Sydney in parallel with the Australian celebration of 150 years of British Colonisation. Leaders were J.T.Pratten and

W.(Bill) Ferguson, tireless workers for Aboriginal rights. The APA Journal "Australian Abo Call: the voice of the Aborigine" published from April on.

26.1.1938 Aboriginal people from Western NSW were trucked into Sydney and threatened with starvation unless they played their role in a re-enactment of the events of 26th January 1788.

1938 Public Service Board starts an Inquiry into the Aborigines Protection Board.

September 1939 World War II starts. Aboriginal people join the armed forces and fight overseas. Many die.

1940 *"Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act (No. 12)"* reconstitutes the Board as The Aboriginal Welfare Board (AWB). Responsibility for Aboriginal Education transferred to the Department of Education. This took control over reserve school buildings. (A 1943 amendment provided for two Aborigines to sit on the Board, one to be full-blood, one to be half-caste.) First appointments were W.Ferguson and Walter Page.

1941 The Child Endowment Act amended to include some Aborigines except those that were nomadic or dependent or under control of the state (missions and reserves).

1946 Indigenous soldiers returned home but still had no citizenship rights.

1946-48 Aboriginal children now require medical certificate to attend public schools.

1948 *Commonwealth Nationality and Citizenship Act (No.83)*: All Aborigines now British subjects and Australian citizens.

1949 The Commonwealth Electoral Act extended the right to vote to Aboriginal ex-servicemen.

1940s to 1960s Aborigines legally obliged to carry identification cards, called "Dog tags", at all times.

1950s - 1960s Aboriginal children could go to local schools if the community allowed.

1952 P. Felton Welfare Officer of the AWB for the west of NSW.

1953 Commonwealth Parliament sets up A Select Committee on Aboriginal Voting Rights.

1956 Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship (AAF) formed. United Aborigines Mission is to turn Brewarrina Mission into a Pastoral and Agricultural Training Centre.

1957 AAF hold meeting at Sydney Town Hall launching a campaign for a referendum to change the Australian Constitution.

1960 AFF calling for full citizenship rights

1962 *Commonwealth Electoral Act* amended. All Aboriginal people given the right to vote.

1962 The Drinking Prohibition Act repealed.

1965 Federal Government adopting a policy of Integration of Aborigines.

2.5.1967 National Referendum amending the Constitution. There was a record 90.8% referendum vote and an 89.34 yes vote. This meant all Aboriginal people were to be counted in the national census. The Federal Government could now share responsibilities for Aboriginal Affairs with State Governments.

1968 The basic wage applied to all.

1969 Aboriginal Welfare Board Abolished. Children no longer forcibly removed from their families.

1971 School Principals in NSW could no longer exclude Aboriginal children because of opposition from the community.

7.7.1971 Aboriginal flag, designed by Harold Thomas, first flown in Adelaide on National Aborigines Day.

1971 Whitlam Government introducing a policy of self-determination and multiculturalism

26.1.72 - 20.7.72 Aboriginal Tent embassy set up outside Parliament House.

1972 Aboriginal Teachers Aides (later Aboriginal Education assistants) established in public primary schools to assist Indigenous students. Extended to high schools in the 1980s.

1974-1986 Aboriginal Resettlement Programs established by the Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Aboriginal families assisted to resettle to get improved housing, employment, health and education opportunities.

1974 The Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act (Amended 1995), gave full legal equality to Indigenous people.

1975 An Aboriginal Children's Service established in NSW for the care and placement of Indigenous Children.

20.2.75 The Australian Senate unanimously declared:- 'The Senate accepts the fact that the Indigenous people of Australia, now known as Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, were in possession of this entire nation prior to the 1788 First Fleet landing at Botany Bay and urges the Australian Government to admit prior ownership by the said Indigenous people and introduce legislation to compensate (them) for dispossession of their land.'

1975 Census establishes an Australian Aboriginal Population of 160, 000.

28.4.1977 NSW Anti-Discrimination Act came into force.

1980 Link Up (NSW) established to help trace families and organize reunion and support for forcibly removed children.

1982 Torres Strait Islanders begin the "Mabo" case, establishing traditional ownership of their land.

1982 First policy for Aboriginal education in NSW: particular emphasis on early childhood education.

1983 NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act passed and Land Councils established. Note that NSW Aboriginal Land Rights are not the same as Native Title.

1984 Voting now compulsory.

1987 Aboriginal Child Placement principle included in NSW welfare legislation.

26.1.1988 Bicentennial of British colonisation of Australia. Peaceful protest by many Aborigines.

1989-90 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) formed by amalgamating the Federal Departments of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Development Commission. This was to deal with health, housing and social issues as well as enterprise and skills development. ATSIC had administrative staff as well as with elected councillors.

1990 A decade of Landcare attempting to deal with land degradation throughout Australia, seen as mainly due to agricultural practices since European settlement. Indigenous land management experience and expertise became involved.

3.6.1992 The Mabo case successfully concluded, refuting the doctrine of 'Terra nullius' ('unoccupied land'). This led to subsequent legislation regarding native title.
1993 Wik and Thayorre people claimed native title to pastoral lease on Cape York Peninsula.

1993 Federal Native Title Act set up processes to validate past land grants, to determine if Native Title still exists and to provide compensation and negotiation. From April on there was to be a (Commonwealth Development Employment Program CDEP with a 2 million grant for Aborigines.

1994 Cathy Freeman became an Australian sporting hero with victory in the Commonwealth Games 400 meters. She carried the Aboriginal and Australian Flags in her Victory Lap.

2004 The late Ted Simpson elected as Mayor of Brewarrina, the first Aboriginal Mayor. He had however been a Councillor since the late 1980s. Other Aboriginal Councillors, past or present, include Ron Mason and Jenny Barker.

26.5.2009 Aboriginal Sorry Day, to be celebrated yearly. A speech was read in the Parliament by the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, formally apologising on to the Aborigines, "on behalf of the Australian people, for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians."

