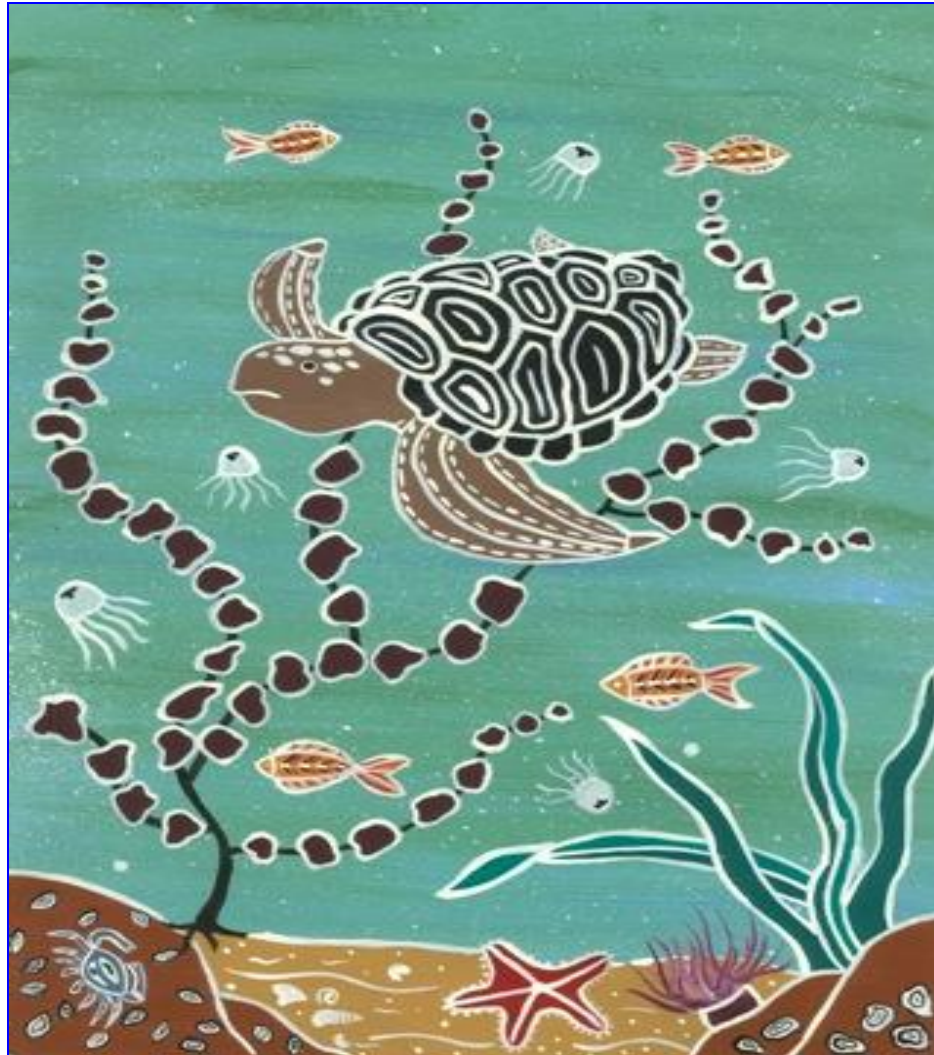


GAROOWA

COASTAL SEA COUNTRY REPORT.

PORT STEPHENS - GREAT LAKES MARINE PARK 2011



Painting by Debbie Fenwick, © 2011

"Aboriginal people have used the waters around the Port from the first sunrise." Norm Newlin

GAROOWA COASTAL SEA COUNTRY REPORT CONTENTS.



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FOREWORD

The story of Aboriginal people's occupation and use of coastal resources is not widely understood by everyone. Sure, there is plenty of evidence that Aboriginal people were here before colonisation. And from that evidence we can all gain an insight into the way Aboriginal people lived - their culture. But there is a better way; and that's to sit down together and if you're lucky, you'll begin to learn what a unique culture Aboriginal People have. Aboriginal people are here, living amongst us, with stories and knowledge to share with those of us willing to listen and form friendships. Perhaps even more importantly, elderly Aboriginal custodians and knowledge-holders see their role as one of passing on culture and skills to younger generations.

The Garoowa Coastal Sea Country Report provides an invaluable insight into Worimi people's link with the Port Stephens - Great Lakes Marine Park. But looking after the area has certainly not been an easy task. In their country Worimi people have long encountered the ways of the white man, but to survive and indeed prosper through these times, Worimi people have had to be both resilient and adaptable. Their culture has evolved with these challenges for more than 200 years whilst sea, river and land (country) has remained a vital part of their life and a haven for other Aboriginal peoples who found themselves here.

This report is but a small attempt to give voice to this culture and provides an insight to a people often overlooked and a way of life often forgotten in today's society. Thanks go to DECCW's Parks and Wildlife Group for providing essential funding through their Park Partnerships Program to enable research to be undertaken.

Thanks also to the Worimi Knowledgeholders Aboriginal Corporation for recognising and accepting the opportunity to engage with us State government folk in the management of the Marine Park.

And the greatest of thanks go to those generous people who have consented to be interviewed. This report will be of great benefit not only to the NSW Marine Parks Authority, but most importantly to the Worimi and other Aboriginal people too. We look forward to engaging in further talks in relation to the Garoowa report recommendations.

Max Haste

Manager

Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park.

INTRODUCTION.

The Garoowa Coastal Sea Country Report, Port Stephens -Great Lakes Marine Park 2011 is the result of the Aboriginal Park Partnerships Funding Program in agreement with the Worimi Knowledgeholders Aboriginal Corporation and the Marine Park Authority- Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, NSW.

The aim; to gather information in order to commence meaningful discussions supporting Aboriginal people's cultural aspirations and to improve management practices within the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park (PSGLMP). Through the partnership funding the Garoowa Coastal Sea Country Report provides a step forward towards reaching this goal. It's hoped that continued consultation between Aboriginal people, the New South Wales Government and Marine Parks Authority (MPA) occurs as part of an essential move towards marine species and habitat recovery that involves a respect for sea and river country and the rights of Aboriginal people.

The overall Garoowa project has sought to hear from Aboriginal people and other historical families connected to the PSGLMP and surrounding areas. Through a series of interviews five generations of history are relayed. These stories reveal past and present sea and river practices with opinions on what needs to happen within the PSGLMP. As a result of colonisation Aboriginal communities have faced enormous hardships but have continued to persevere, adapt and look after sea, river and land country. By the beginning of the 20th century we learn inter-race work relations were more common because of the hard work needed to support families. The interviewees' deep knowledge, connections to each-other and the common thread of sustainability are well worth considering.

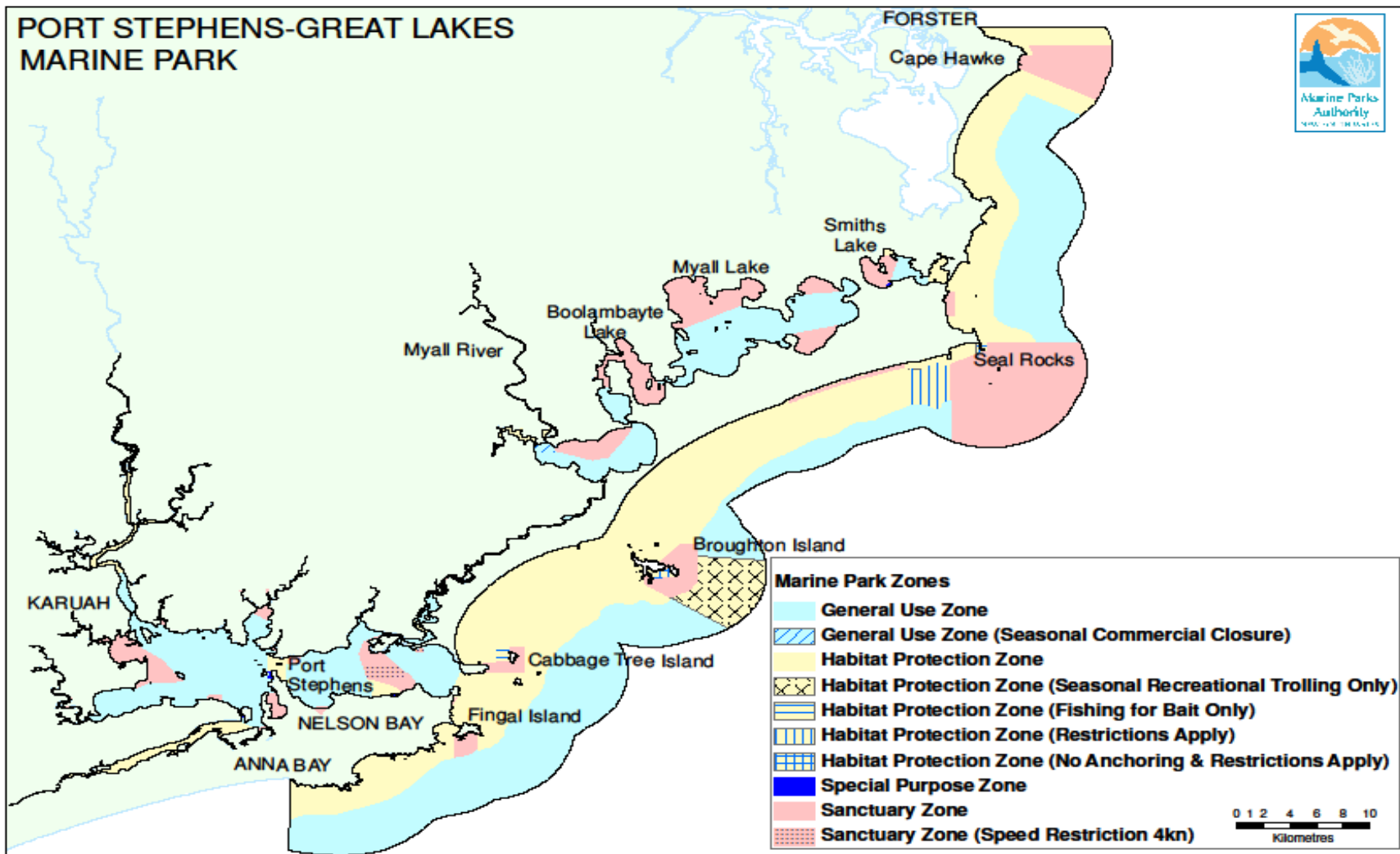
Worimi and other Aboriginal people know their cultural responsibility is to look after Garoowa and lands. Connections are seen as maintaining a relationship with the returns being; self respect, knowing the right ways to behave and take care of country. A strong sense of place is the basis of social and emotional well being and physical health is taken care of with knowledge passed on through the generations. Throughout the mapping project interviewees shared individual ideas on improving the management of the PSGLMP with education, environment and culture. Numerous concerns relate to government imposed restrictions that have undermined Aboriginal people roles and relationships to country. The complexities exist in government finding ways of working with Aboriginal communities to balance population needs and the environments as there is obviously a need for ongoing consultation to shape future natural resource management policy.

Report recommendations relate to Government adopting an egalitarian and inclusive PSGLMP management approaches to do justice to Worimi and other Aboriginal people who are part of Aboriginal Corporations, Aboriginal Land Councils, community and family groups. In producing the Garoowa Report the greatest respects are paid to the skilled salt and freshwater Aboriginal people who continue to look after our community and families by bringing home a good feed of fish.

Historical Map of Traditional Worimi names for the area of the Port Stephens harbour, the Karuah River and part of the Myall Lakes, Worimi country continues on in the Northern areas of the PSGLMP. Map Date- Unknown



Study Area: The area encompassed by the report covers the entirety of the Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Park. *MPA.2007.*



ORAL HISTORY AND OBSERVATIONS

Oral history passed down through the Worimi peoples, some historical documents dating back to the 1800's and recordings of significant Indigenous sites provide solid evidence of the continued occupation of Aboriginal people in what is now known as the Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park and its boundaries. Over thousands of years the coast and unique catchment areas, made up of different environmental systems have provided healthy habitats for numerous aquatic vegetation and marine species to reproduce. Rivers, sea currents and tides allow for the movement of; marine life, mammals, fish, crustations and plants, all of which have sustained Aboriginal communities. On the Tomaree Peninsula several recorded Aboriginal sites are now underwater reflecting the passage of time and environmental changes. The PSGLMP covers areas where river and marine habitat and lands is respected for their life-giving value and harvested by Aboriginal people who fish, hunt, collect and carry out these and other significant cultural practices. Sharing family knowledge through the generations teaches the right way to look after land and sea country and the skills needed to do this, today we know this as natural resource management.

Indigenous people have also witnessed gradual changes occurring through human interaction with the environment. Population booms along coastal areas in New South Wales have affected marine systems and this is of growing concern for traditional custodians who are willing to work on solutions with government.

In the Port Stephens Council, Tourism Plan 2010 Diagnostic Report, tourism has rapidly progressed through easier access to the area.

“Improvements to the Pacific Highway in the 1970's resulted in the area 'booming' with the development of caravan parks, motels and holiday apartments. The area became popular with retirees, attracted primarily by the scenic beauty of the area, relaxed lifestyle and fishing.”

Rand, J and associates, Simpson, D. associates. Page, 8. 2010.

In the 1970's Port Stephens covered a wider area that has now been re-distributed by the Australian Electoral Commission into Great Lakes boundaries. The Marine Park overlaps both the Port Stephens and Great Lakes Local Government areas. Besides tourism for more than a century, marine life has been harvested commercially and sold to Newcastle, Sydney and overseas markets. Unfortunately, increased global populations demanding more sea foods, advances in fishing equipment to secure quicker catches and faster transportation methods and other factors have lead to the depletion of marine species within New South Wales. In order to work towards more sustainable practices the PSGLMP was established in 2005.

Throughout the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park, zones are now in place, these being; general use, special use, habitat protection and sanctuary. The Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park, Zoning Plan User Guide 2007, offers a clear explanation on the Marine Park concept. *“The PSGLMP Zoning Plan enhances conservation of marine habitats and species by providing various levels of protection whilst allowing for multiple use.”*

Information can be found on markers, signage, maps, and in booklets to help people to learn which areas can be utilised. Although it is currently a grey area as to how much marine species recovery time is needed we do know from many local accounts that a significant decline in the availability of marine species has occurred within the last thirty years.

As local people's income is strongly linked with tourism more planning is needed to support sustainable practices by local and state Government. Although the Garoowa Report indicates tourism and population growth, and some commercial fishing practices within Port Stephens harbour as risk factors to maintaining healthy marine species and habitat no offence is meant to those living or visiting the PSGLMP areas but highlighting these issues can result in community awareness and sustainable practices being adopted.

Within the Port Stephens Local Government area population projections are expected to increase from 65,000 residents to 117,746 by 2031 and currently visitors to the Port Stephens reach more than 600,000 a year. Rand, J and associates, Simpson, D, associates. 2010, Pages, 4, 7, 8. These projections beg Government and residents to consider and collaborate in order to manage the influx of visitors within the PSGLMP and surrounding country. Several eco-tourism businesses are already working within the Marine Park and widespread education is crucial. As initiatives developed by the Worimi Knowledgeholders Aboriginal Corporation and other community groups are often subject to grant availability, the challenges are enormous but it's hoped through working together the PSGLMP and surrounding country will be given more than a minimal chance of survival.

METHODOLOGY

People are such good sources of information when it comes to gauging changes in the environment related to their daily observations and practices. This is the methodology used in compiling the Garoowa Report. The Garoowa Report supports the knowledge of traditional Worimi, other Aboriginal, and non-Indigenous people from historical families. These people, as knowledge-holders, some in their seventies, can take us back to the beginning of the 20th century. Many of the stories relayed through the Garoowa Report reflect concerns over the depletion of marine species and habitat occurring within our waterways and the difficulties for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people to support their families. We respect interviewees who have passed on some of the skills to their younger relatives who actively hunt, gather and fish within the PSGLMP. Although people involved in the project have provided many locations of significance, the Garoowa project has not involved recording and registering Indigenous sites. Many of these are documented and further work is still being done to ensure the protection of significant sites. Some ceremony and customs information has been omitted to respect people's privacy.

The Garoowa Report should not be viewed as a complete picture of Aboriginal culture. The Garoowa Report does provide an invaluable opportunity for a number of people to reflect on their lives and changing times. Through these yarns we learn of

Aboriginal people's resilience to continue on with culture as the balance of culture and conservation are interlinked. The non-Indigenous people from historical families that participated are to be thanked for their willingness to share their experiences and ideas. Interviewees reveal some ingenious modifications in equipment used to catch seafood.

In working on the Garoowa Report relevant publications and unpublished documents provide information on historical fishing and gathering techniques. The report contents have been cross referenced by Aboriginal researchers and educators who have spent many years studying Newcastle, Port Stephens and Great Lakes area information. Aboriginal people who view historical accounts find inaccuracies such as; tribal boundaries, language, cultural practices and events, an example of this is where some Worimi people were previously thought of as Garingai, the latter's tribal area is located several hundred kilometers to the south. When viewing historical information one must consider the writers of the day held ethnocentric views believing they were of superior race. Broome. R. 1982. Page 87. As a result records contain one sided accounts and these have influenced readers. But modern researchers often find holes and contradictions in the historical information. Many observations of Aboriginal people were made over short periods of time, language barriers were prevalent and tense race relations lead to little understanding of Aboriginal people and their culture. Today writers are more interested in gathering the historical records along with direct information from Aboriginal people whose oral traditions help to create a better picture of Australia's history and Indigenous people's ways. Aboriginal people who read the old historical records are very interested in the materials related to their families but are generally offended by the historical writers' descriptions of their ancestors.

"...the written records pertaining to Aboriginal people in the Forster-Taree area in the nineteenth century are extremely partial and fragmentary. There is little exaggeration in saying that Aboriginal people are virtually invisible in the local post-contact landscape as described in archival records, in settler reminiscences, and in local histories. An illusion is created that they had vacated this landscape, leaving it as an open field for intensifying white occupation. This is an illusion that heritage practitioners should be careful not to perpetuate." Byrne D, Nugent M, 2004. Page 11.

The effort made in this report and other projects will gradually lead to a more accurate picture spearheaded by Aboriginal people in future publications. An example where further work could occur is in the wider areas surrounding the PSGLMP. These areas have not been extensively discussed as cultural mapping activity has been directly tied to the PSGLMP itself for the purposes of informing government on zoning issues. Within the Garoowa Report there are many mentions of "surrounding areas" and "boundaries" highlighting the bigger picture for Aboriginal people. For Aboriginal people helping government to understand their role and responsibilities in maintaining connections to look after land and seas is crucial. In order to bridge the gap Worimi Custodian Carol Ridgeway Bissett created and developed a draft document called "The Ga-roowa (Coastal Sea Country) Memorandum of Understanding between, Marine Park Authority, Traditional Owners, Custodians, Knowledge Holders- Worimi Nation and the local Aboriginal community

for the Port Stephens and Great Lakes Marine Park” (known as the MOU). Through community consultation the MOU was accepted by the Aboriginal community living in Worimi country. A subsequent draft MOU with additional ideas and people’s information has been handed over to the Marine Park Authority. Carol Ridgeway Bissett explains Worimi people’s connections.

“The Worimi People view land and sea country, as one living entity, interconnected through many diverse environmental systems which includes rivers, creeks, streams, wetlands, waterholes, springs, the ocean, all wildlife and species and natural resources. Land to Worimi people is Earth Mother. Land is the basis of our culture, history, heritage, language, beliefs, rituals, religion, spirituality, ceremonies, customs, story telling, values, law, lore, social organisation and identity.”) Ridgeway Bissett, C.2007

The Port Stephens- Great Lakes Aboriginal community is currently waiting on the NSW government and the Marine Park Authority to formally adopt the MOU to address past, present and future inequitable policies that have and continue to disadvantage Aboriginal people in the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Areas.

Aboriginal People’s knowledge of fresh water springs.

The availability of fresh water springs and their locations allowed Aboriginal people to move easily through country. The water places, consisting of springs, waterfalls and fresh water swamps are located in the surrounding areas of the PSGLMP. Camps are found close to water sources. The locations of these sacred water places have been passed down through Worimi families.



LOOKING BACK -Colonisation, problematic policies with no consultation.

Since Australia's colonisation Indigenous people have struggled to maintain their lands, seas, culture, intellectual property rights and independence. Government policies were frequently implemented without consultation or consideration of Indigenous people's rights. Throughout the years Indigenous people have fought against many oppressive policies and attitudes. As a result of Aboriginal peoples' determination to stand up for their rights discriminatory policies have been overturned with Land Rights, Reconciliation and Native Title helping to shift the scales of justice. But current government policies still present many hurdles.

In order to understand why Aboriginal people assert their rights to be consulted and that government work in partnership within the PSGLMP and surrounding lands we need to go back to earlier times. It is very important to look back at Australia's past and the period of colonisation as there has been much written on the establishment of Australia as a new British colony but for the Indigenous people the invasion of their lands was catastrophic.

The colonisation of Australia began with the coming of the first fleet in 1788 and in 1790 the second fleet arrived. Beforehand no negotiations had taken place with Australia's Indigenous people to see if they wanted foreigners to establish an overruling government or create colonies.

"The economic development of the nation proceeded with little regard for the interest of traditional owners of Australia's resources, even though indigenous custodianship over those resources had survived thousands of generations...; '...and the environmental degradation which has followed many unsustainable development policies and practices, has caused continuing grievances to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. " Sutherland, J. 1993, Page 7.

As the colony expanded from Sydney into the Upper and Lower Hunter regions, legal, illegal and unscrupulous methods were frequently adopted and deemed as necessary to free up the land. Aboriginal people stood in the way defending their mother lands and were massacred in their thousands across Australia. Magistrates had varying levels of success meting out punishment due to sketchy accounts of the incidents and the interests of the colonies development repeatedly dominated actions and outcomes. In the Australian Home Companion, 1859, specific mention is made of the problems occurring at Seal Rocks, Myall Lakes and Port Stephens.

"The AA Company and the illicit distillation at the lake and on the river banks have thinned the ranks of the athletic and graceful blacks'...mere outcasts to the host that once roamed all along the coast from Seal Rocks to the lakes to Port Stephens." Garland, H.K, Wheeler, J. 1982. Page. 56.

The Indigenous people who survived the early colonisation years passed on horrific massacre stories and these are still talked about by Worimi and other Aboriginal communities today. In Bruce Elder's 2003 publication, 'Blood on the Wattle, Massacres and Maltreatment of Aboriginal Australians Since 1788', there are historical records which provide evidence of just how widespread the mistreatment of Aboriginal people has been. Australian Agricultural Company's Acting Agent Robert Dawson gives us a window to look through into the past. In 1826 a million acre grant was awarded to the AA company and this resulted with Dawson facing the task of expanding the company's timber production, whilst handling staff made up of convicts and freed men. Dawson was also given the position of local magistrate and can now be seen as one of the first colonisers who tried to mediate solutions between opposing forces.

"I have long been of the opinion that wherever a location of a country is commenced in the usual way, no means can be devised of preserving the aborigines from final destruction." Dawson, R. 19.13. Page, 162.

During Robert Dawson's time in the Port Stephens-Great Lakes areas he tried to provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal people who were taken on as knowledgeable guides helping surveyors with mapping, working as timber workers and skilled fishermen.

Well into the 20th century governments continued to rule over all Australian's but in relation to Indigenous people specific policies such as the Protection and Assimilation policies, segregation and missions have resulted in tremendous trans-generational trauma. These policies were also legislated without Indigenous people's agreement. From an Aboriginal perspective government policies have eroded away at Indigenous people's land/ sea custodianship, freedoms to practise culture and manage environments. Aboriginal communities have continuously lobbied government to change its policy approaches and within the Garoowa Report interviews and the recommendations these concerns are reflected in relation to the PSGMLP.

TENACITY AND ADAPTATION

The Aboriginal people who survived colonisation adapted to the changing times and continued on with their culture. Aboriginal people have not relinquished their rights to their land and seas. Employment was found in developing industries such as the saw mills, Pindimar's Ice works factory, Pindimar's Shark canning factory established in 1927, in the substantial Oyster Farm industry and people worked as self-employed commercial fisherman. During the earlier periods Aboriginal people who lived in the Stroud and Allworth areas found employment working in the livestock industry, the men as sheep drovers while women took on roles as house maids and cooks. Aboriginal people also supplemented settlers diets with fish, wild meats and bush foods. Other Aboriginal people looked after their own farms but struggled to keep these from being taken over by settlers. Goodall. H. 1996. Page 141. Some Aboriginal people who were living in and around Forster areas gained employment as agricultural workers. Byrne and Nugent. 2004. Page 31. It is very clear that Aboriginal

people's crucial knowledge of their area was a great asset to employers. Aboriginal people made up the workforce shortages numbers and where possible have stayed with their lands. In the Garoowa interviews we begin to understand how some of these connections occurred but as time and people pass on so too does some of the intimate details. Although we have interviewed a number of older people their younger people continue to hunt, gather, fish and collect foods to provide for their families within the PSGLMP. For generations custodians have taken up the challenges in working with government, on advisory boards, in education and other fields in order to re-address the ways policies are developed.

Hawkes Nest Beach Poem by Norm Newlin-2000

"How often did I walk these wind blown dunes as a child to stand on this Pacific shore and dig for pipis in the sand, get wet, laugh and look forward to that meal of pipis.

Shells were in abundance, large boilers, scallop, abalone and small ones by the score, driftwood piled high, the beach was a treasure trove for children and adults.

Sandpipers built their nests on the beach beyond the high water mark, the game they played when we got too near, was to pretend they had a broken wing.

When I look at this beach forty years on it's a bloody mess what the sand miners didn't do the four wheel drivers have.

Progress has just about bugged our environment my kids are lucky but how much will be left for theirs." Poet. Norm Newlin, 2000. Page 21.

TRADITIONAL METHODS AND TOOLS.

The following traditional methods information has been provided through families passing on their knowledge, some of which has been documented in Port Stephens, Great Lakes historical records. Much has been written about Aboriginal communities' extensive knowledge of their environment that was crucial to people's survival. Many collective skills were needed and carried out when the only supermarket around was the natural environment. Shared responsibilities have meant the load was not too hard to carry and joy has been found in working together.

Tools

Fashioned from natural materials tools have been used for a variety of tasks. Evidence found in surface study and excavations of the Anna Bay Middens reveals intricate shell tools used to catch seafood.

The Birubi sight is so significant that fourteen years of surface and excavation studies occurred on the 1200 year old midden. 13 years of surface collections documented

by Len Dyall-1964-1977 and he received assistance from Boris Sokoloff during excavations that occurred in 1978-1979.

Birrooyee (hooks)

90



Figure 9.1. Awl made of macropodid fibula. (Actual size). The surface shown uppermost is slightly concave.

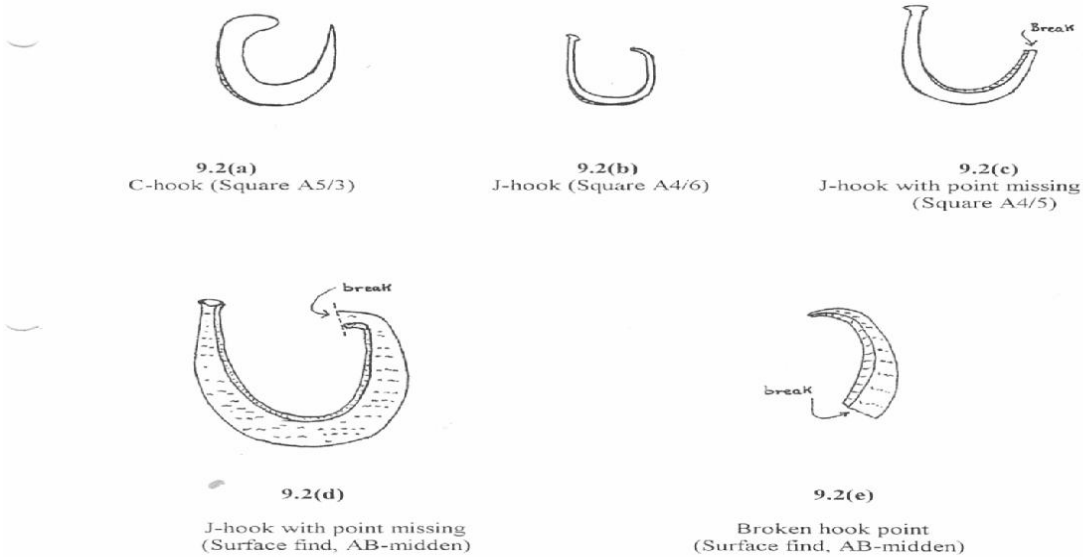


Figure 9.2. Shell fishhooks from Birubi. (Shown at actual size).

Fish hooks.

Various types of traditional fishhooks were made of shell. Midden fishhooks drawings by Dyall L. K 2004.

Common shells used for fish hooks were: oyster shell (*Crassostrea commercialis*) turban shell (*Strophodontes*), ear shell (*Notahaliotis ruber*), mud oyster (*Ostrea sinuata*) and pippa (*Plebidonax deltoidea*) were commonly used. Sokoloff, B. 1976. pages 31, 37.

TOOLS



Handcrafted tools were cut from numerous rock areas, quarries and are widely found throughout Australia. From the smallest of flint knives (above) to big axe heads that were secured with fibre to wooden handles (below) these tools allowed Aboriginal people to carry out their daily tasks.

The stone tools were located along the Karuah River-2010 by Indigenous people on a Doo-wa-kee Culture and Heritage Survey's site training project.



Photos courtesy of Doo-wa-kee Culture and Heritage Surveys.

Fishing Lines.

Yirrawarn (lines) Aboriginal people used grass tree fibre for lines and would cut the leaves off and roll them with charcoal on their thighs to lengthen and strengthen it. Only women would use these lines for fishing. Kurrajong tree were also used for lines and nets.

Spears.

Some spears were made from Gymea Lily stems for big catches such as whales, turtles, shark and sea mullet. Smaller spears made from grass trees were commonly used for other fish. The spearheads were secured with grass tree fibre or Kurrajong fibre being wound around the spear and secured with tree sap. Spears would be heated up on the fire and straightened. In modern times Aboriginal people have talked about using bamboo.

Mooting: prongs were made from Iron Bark and were three or four pronged. Other prongs were made of shell, flint or quartz. (Sokoloff, B. 1976. Page,35.)

Gymea Lily



Traps were made out of Kurrajong fibre.

Rocks traps

This method involves placing rocks in tidal areas, generally in a circle. As the tide came in so to do the fish as the tide turns water flows out but the fish are caught. There are a number of registered Aboriginal sites where double traps ensured enough fish would be caught. These were also maintained, two examples of these are mentioned in John Bagnall's story and a double trap located on Broughton Island is still visible today to the trained eye. Unfortunately some traps have been disturbed as unknowing people have moved some of the rocks.

Branches were also used in narrow water ways to trap fish. The branches would be put in place when the tide was in and as the tide emptied out these fish would be; trapped, speared and collected. Traps in fresh water such as the Old Rocky Point trap saw people harvesting eels. Fresh water tortoises were also found in the fresh water swamps.

Burrin – Nets

Fishing nets used by women were made of two types of brackychiton and native Hibiscus bush. Nets were hand woven and interviewees give examples of many different techniques used in making and maintaining nets.

Free Diving

This is an ancient skill used by Aboriginal people who hunt for lobsters and abalone. Knowing the currents and having strong swimming abilities is vital. Young kids who are active and play frequently in the waters develop their strengths and knowledge as they grow up in order to handle the waters for hunting. Free diving is still practiced today.

Fishing trees

Large trees located near the shoreline were commonplace. Hand and toe hole grooves were cut out with tomahawks to make easy climbing. Once a person was up high enough they could spot where the fish were running and also where other families were fishing in canoes. One of the trees at Soldier's Point's Pearson Park was also a favourite tree house for Ridgeway kids until it was removed in the 1980's.

Another historical Blackbutt tree used for fish spotting was saved from vandals at Corlette and has been given to the Newcastle Museum for safety reasons. The tree is over four hundred years old and has toe holes cut out that people used to climb to spot fish that were running.

Canoes

There are many registered Aboriginal sites which are found within the areas of traditional Worimi areas where Blackbutt trees on the Port Stephens side of the harbour and Red Gum on the Great Lakes side of the Harbour were used for canoe making. Stone and wood axes were used to cut the shape out of the tree for the canoe. This exercise took several hands to help out. People cut the bark at the time of the year when the sap would be running. Once the bark was removed a fire would be lit to burn off excess rough bark and this would begin the shaping process. The bark would then be placed on hot sand which would help to seal the bark to avoid leaks. This was a traditional way of caulking the canoe. The canoe would then be taken off and coral pea and lawyer vines would be used to tie the canoe ends up. These sturdy handcrafted canoes were able to fit several people at a time. The canoe sizes as described by historian William Scott were, "...*generally 15 feet long, and with a fair beam...*" and made to travel throughout the many rivers and harbour. Bennett, G. Page 39, 1982. Possessions for hunting and gathering were placed onboard. An account 1913 by Australian Agricultural Company Chief Agent and later local magistrate Robert Dawson provides more information on Aboriginal people travelling on the waterways.

"They always put a flat stone or two in the centre of the canoe, and placed on it several firebrands, which they could warm themselves with when the weather is cold and they also cook their fish and oysters for subsistence in the canoe." Dawson, R., 1913. Page. 160.

Canoe tree locations are spread through the surrounding areas of the PSGLMP. Some trees are located very close to shore making it easy to shift the canoes into the water once they have been completed. Other canoe trees are to be found on designated, culturally significant hills.

Canoe Tree , Knight, A, 2009, Case Study Aboriginal site complex.





Paddles were made from native pear wood with the use of stone tools. Handles were around 5 feet and around 8 inches wide. Native Pear or (*Xylomelum pyriforme*) Paddles used by Aboriginal people-Myall Lakes. Enright W.J August, 1932, *Journal Mankind*, page, 103. Woody pear seeds are also used for food.

Shelters

Some large gum trees with hollows were used as natural shelters when it rained. Huts were made from four wooden tea-tree upright poles and laid across for the roof. Branches and brushes were laid across the top, tee tree bark was a common material used to shelter people. Rock caves provided families with permanent shelters.

Plants

Within the Port Stephens and Great Lakes Shire there are innumerable plants located in the areas surrounding the PSGLMP. These provide knowledgeable gatherers with a well balanced diet. Plants are also used for medicines. Plants continue to be used for a variety of uses today. We have not covered these extensively within the Garoowa report and we ask that people do not try to eat or use plants as some similar looking plants can lead to serious illness.

Melaleuca- Quinquinervia a multipurpose Tree is found in areas surrounding the PSGLMP close to the coast. Tea Tree nectar-gives energy, bark is used for making shelters and leaves for medicine. This variety of Tea Tree flowers throughout March and the scent is easily detected. Flowers are gathered and sucked on or are dipped in mugs with hot water making a sweet drink.



Melaleuca Quinquinervia. Caution: Please do not use bush plants randomly as they may be harmful to

The Melaleuca Quinquinervia demonstrates Aboriginal peoples' diets vary depending on what is in season and where available food sources are located. The area where this variety of Tee Tree (paper bark) is located is well worth examining as Aboriginal people gather it and other foods around Anna Bay.

Aboriginal people's hunting and gathering of foods from the sea and shores around Birubi.

As a result of Len Dyle and Boris Sokoloff's archaeological surface and excavation at Birubi midden the following fish skeletons were identified: bream (black), drummer (black), estuary catfish, estuary cod, flathead, flounder, groper, kelpfish, kingfish, leatherjacket, ling, luderick, morwong, mullet, mulloway, red rock cod, salmon (Australian), shark, snapper, stingray, sweep, tailor, tarwhine, teraglin, tetradonts, trevally, whiting, wirrah cod, wrasse and Port Jackson shark.

A listing of edible shellfish excavated at Birubi: sandy beach species, cockle, cockle — southern, pippi, sand snail. Others: abalone, barnacle, cartrut, chiton, elephant snail, limpets, mussels, nerita, topshells, tritons, turbans — green, turbans heavy, Estuarine species: Australian horn, cockle—Sydney, hercules club, oyster — floating oyster—rock. Miscellaneous: frilled venus, scallop, An "edible shellfish" are those with a maximum dimension of at least 1 cm (or 2 cm for mussels). Barnacles (actually crustacea) are listed here for convenience.

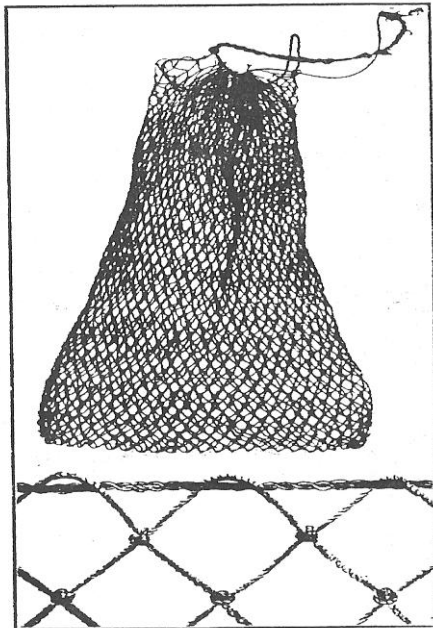
Other species identified were: Australian wentletrap, brooch, brown mitre, brown, trough, gay fanshell, hollow cardita, horsehoof, latticed platter, mulberry, orange jingle, pear, helmet, ramshorn, shining wedge, slipper limpet, tapestry shell, and violet snail.

Dyall L. K 2004. The Birubi midden excavations included a number of plant and animal remnants showing Worimi people's dietary needs depended on both land and sea foods.

Handmade bags

Commonly woven and used by women on the Northern Coast of New South Wales. These natural fibre bags were essentially used to carry tools, belongings and precious babies. The bags doubled as fishing nets.

Below: A Dilly Bag made of plant fibre. Enright W. J. December, 1932. Page 137.



Above: A Northern N.S.W. Dilly Bag.
Below: Enlargement of Portion to Show
Twine and Knots.

In the PSGLMP surrounding areas there are several types of carrying bowls that are used. Large bowls can be cut from gum trees with axes and can vary in size. Another method is to cut away tree nubs, these are light to hold. Lighter still are freshwater Tea Tree baskets tied with vines. Sheets of Tea Tree are very good to wrap food in and on.

WORIMI GATTANG FISHING LANGUAGE

The list of Gattang words have been passed on through Worimi families and researched for accuracy by Bissett, Ridgeway, C. 2009. Most Aboriginal words are written phonetically. Below are common words in Worimi's Gattang language in relation to people, equipment, bait, fish, birds and the waterways.

Fisherwoman- Makorobin	Brolga- Native Companion- Bitten, Boun- boun
Fisherman –Makorban	
Canoe- Coo-ey-ung or Koo-yuk	Pelican –Doon-Ge-ra or Karog-karog
Canoe paddle- Wol-loo-ng	Curlew- Bo-aw-al
Fishing Spear Shaft – Teekurah	Young Swan young swan- Wor-ree-a
Fishing spear- Kul-la-ra	Black Cormorant Gun-gul-bn
Point of spear – Mi-ee	Small Diver or Shag- cormorant-Tacoma
Fishing line- Yir-ra warn	Sea Gull- Ngow-woe
Fish Hooks-bone Bir-roo-ye	Mutton bird Nirriitti
Women's nets used as a bag Kee-noon	Home of the mutton bird Niritba
	Young Mutton Bids and eggs Ku-po-pee
Coastal and Sea Birds- living in the area or hunted.	Black Duck- Kur-run-gai
Adult swan Kol-wun-nung	Wild duck or drake- Pyrr-ah-mah
Swan – Koolwa-nnung	Musk Duck –Benalla
Eagle or Hawk – Wurrip-ag	Teah – Ber-ri-ma
Black Eagle Hawke – Cowal	Ibis-Tamboi
Eagle-Porowi	Black Swan- Kunbul
White breasted Fish Hawk-Ganget	Shellfish
	Drift Oyster- Makai

Mangrove Oyster-Pir-ri-ta
Small Shellfish -Bir-ra-ba
Mud Crabs Ghinny- Ghinny
Cuttlefish Korowa- Talag
Shrimps- Pun-noo-ng or Bee-ralt
A shell- Kulleeng
Cockle Shell –Pur-ra-mai
Oysters But-teenahs, Ditir-ra-bween,
Nin-nung, Tarrahwarng
Mud Oyster Mogkoi
Rock Oyster –Mun-Bon-Kan
Red Sea Slug- Kunjewai or Bunkun
Seaslug or blubber Bunbug
Shellfish Crab Tee-Rah
Crayfish- No-nnung or wir-rah

Fish

Whiting-Kar-no-burra
Large Mullet – Wot-ta-wong
Mullet- Mi-poo-yoo or Gheerool
Flathead-Neen-airng
Jewfish- Ga-ra Wurra
Catfish Bo-ata
Water silver with school of fish –
Tuckcurry
Snapper- Kurrang-cum Gar-ra

Large Snapper –Ngo-lo-ko-nung or
Golokonug

Small Snapper- Mut-tau-ra

Bream- Tu-rea

Black Bream -Yu- rea

Stingray –Belarn, Bullroast, Crokithe

Bait- Yilen

Mangrove Worm- Cobra

Food or Bait- Tereido or Numara

Cunjevoi or Kun.

Fortescue Fish - Kr-oo-ba

Freshwater eel- Kanim

Grouper- Graa-bun

Torpedo Fish- Kurepoontoo

Marine animals

Whale Gon-Gon or Ghan-Ghan

Black Whale- Tor-og-un

Sacred Whale- Bera-Buk-Kin

Dolphin- Coop-rar

Shark Goo-ee-wee, Kurra-ko-yong,
Toorar-ele

Fish Bir-koo-yee, Ma-Karo'Piece of
fish- Makoro-a

Turtle- Coorah-Cumarn, Yoon-oong

Tides

Froth or foam- Kurrag

Ebb tide- Bar-ra-coopa

Sand- Man-noong

Low Tide- Wit-tung

Sandy flat place- Cooram

Flood Tide- Wock-er-coopa

Mud-Mullhin

Great or many flood tides Kil-Loong-Mund

Saltwater- Gir-um-bit

Waves- Ghull-ui

Ocean tide or Strong, violent, rushing tide -Koribibi

Coastal Sea country- Garoowa

Sea sand- Poonah

Surf or waves Bokatog

Mangrove seed –Boalug

Mangrove Go-on

Water rat - Bootowo

THE GAROOWA INTERVIEWS WITH KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

LIVING COUNTRY AND IT'S PEOPLE

Living knowledge is the key to looking after sea country. Here we begin to see just how closely linked people have been with their environment in the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park areas. The people interviewed take us back to quieter times and we learn of their daily practices. Many share their ideas on what's needed to repair, or restore the Marine Park habitats and species. In viewing these stories you'll realise there are many more to come. You'll find a number of the older generation have been targeted for this project but many of their younger relatives carry out hunting and gathering practices within the Marine Park. It is very important to note that although we cover some shorelines, rivers and sea country, surrounding lands have always been home to Aboriginal people.

PORT STEPHENS-GREAT LAKES INTERVIEWS

Standard questions were asked to culturally map areas of significance to Aboriginal people. Deviations have occurred to explore and draw out knowledgeholders stories. In some cases people choose to answer all or some of the questions. The questions were very useful in gathering knowledge but also promoted family discussions on Marine Park issues. Through the process the PSGLMP maps were often discarded as they did not name all of the bays. Often people found it easier to use their memory maps and described their surroundings. The results of the interviews show how important all areas are to Aboriginal people within the PSGLMP and boundaries.

1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors, family hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food canoed or boated? What types of marine species were sought?
2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?
3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practices been affected, how?
4. What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue with your cultural practices and look after heritage and where?
5. What about commercial/tourism industries if rezoning were to occur. Which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine species?
6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognised in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

Raymond Feeney- Karuah resident.

Former Oyster farm Worker and Fisherman.

78 year old Ray recollections stretch back to when he was a young boy.

Questions 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors, family hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food, canoed or boated? What types of marine species were sought?

There were only a few houses on the mission at that time. Everyone knew everyone else most people had boats and fished. We would also fish along the banks of the river. We'd fish in Little Swan Bay, Reedy Creek, Number One Cove for bream and flathead there. (These areas are zoned as Sanctuary zones.) We'd fish a lot at the Karuah Bridge and you could catch big jewfish there, every kind of fish.

We fished on the Karuah River bank with hand lines and on the boats across the river we'd get mullet too. We'd also fish at Tarlee; sometimes we'd go over to Soldiers Point. There were plenty of fish but not now. This time of the year (February) we'd get plenty of whiting. We learned what to do from watching the older people. We kids used to go and watch them how they held a line and went to strike and pull them in.

We'd also go into Mosquito Creek and get mud crabs. You'd bend a bit of wire, pop it down the hole, and feel for them than pull them up. We'd go up the creek in a boat to go and get them.

We'd also catch blue swimmer crabs in the river when our lines were in the water they'd be sucking on our bait. You'd have to pull up the line really slow than haul them up in the scoop. Blue swimmers crabs would want the mullet or mullet gut bait. You could throw in a pot too for them.

I remember when people would use twine nets that were about 4 inches or 3 and $\frac{3}{4}$. They'd be about 100 yards long. People would make their own nets from twine but they'd have to dye them to stop them from rotting. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people would do this. They'd go and collect bush wood bark from the Iron Bark tree. You'd put the net in a 44 gallon drum and you'd use the bark to dye nets. You had to do that or it would rot. When I was young we'd go in a boat along the shore and start putting the net out. One end would be set on a pole on shore than you'd keep feeding out the rest of it as the boat moved. You'd go about 10 to 15 feet off shore. When we finished you'd set the other end on a pole. When you'd go and get the fish we'd always get a lot of mullet and black fish like this.

Commercial fishermen would also use these nets and Aboriginal people would get licences. It wasn't hard to get one. They'd just go to the Fishing Inspector. I saw some Aboriginal men commercial fishing that had licences when I was ten. The commercial fishermen would fill a couple of boxes up of fish that would get trucked from Tea Gardens to Newcastle and sold at the Fish Markets. Aboriginal people would get paid the same as other white fullas.

We'd use a wormer and dig 'em, they'd be too much mud in Karuah but you could get them in mostly at Soldiers Point.

We'd also go to Tanilba Bay, Tailors Beach all around Little Swan Bay and the station at Soldiers Point.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

We still fish in and around Karuah.

3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practices been affected, how and where?

Exemption licences here are given out by the Karuah Land Council and some still fish.

4. What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue with your cultural practices and look after heritage.

I don't worry about things anymore because I'm old.

5. What about commercial/tourism industries. If rezoning were to occur which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine species?

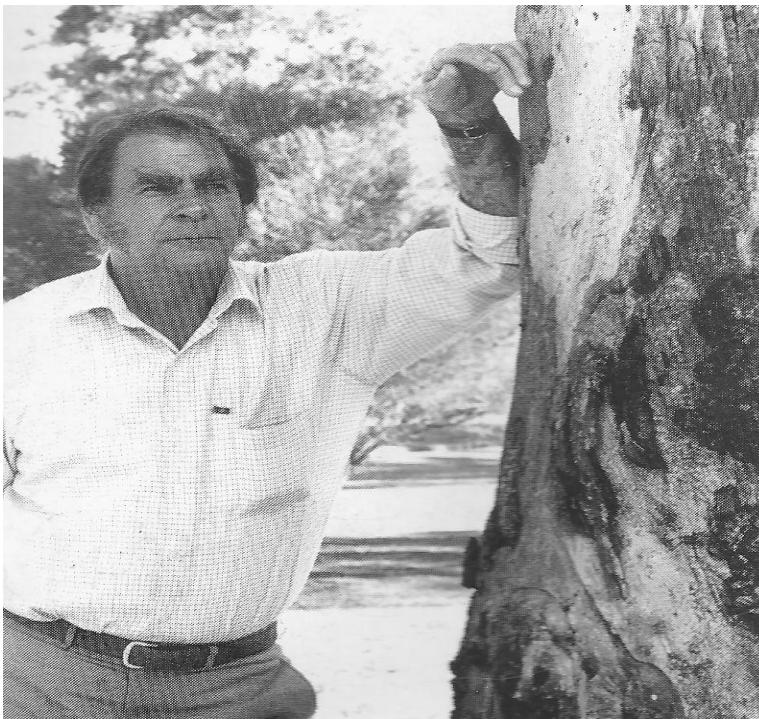
Restocking the harbour would be ok.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognised in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species.

Any fisheries licences should be free for us. People should be able to fish.

Norm Newlin Aged 77, Poet.

“Aboriginal people used the waters around the Port from the first sunrise.”



1. Looking at the area the Marine Park covers please tell us what you know about the past and present practices of Aboriginal people?

Aboriginal people would go all over the Port and we'd eat all of the seafood you see now in the shops but what you don't see in the fish shop are periwinkles and whelks and nippers. Fish and all sorts of fish, people used to get about in bark canoes. In my time people were using more modern wooden boats, in a dingy there would be one

person rowing but what you'd call a fishing boat with a stern and that had a net. Two people rowed.

You had a finer mesh for garfish and mullet and for ordinary fish a net would be about an inch square. But if people were fishing individually they'd use a handline because the Port used to have some big fish in it at one time snapper and flathead, bream, a lot of sharks and a lot of turtles too. Some of the turtles would be bigger than the dining room table that would get around Middle Island.

People used to go for blue swimmer crabs and go to Bundahbah Creek for mud crabs and around Corrie Island on the sand with high tide you'd dig up the sand and get them. You'd dig 'em up and grab 'em quick from behind.

People used to make lobster pots out of bendy Tea Tree wood and cane growing wild in fringes of what used to be rain forest at the time. We grew up around Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens but had a lot of holidays at Soldiers Point.

At Tea Gardens in the waterways there were a lot of fisherman that fished for the sea mullet that were travelling with the westerly in late March and April and they'd be big hauls there. I remember old, old Aboriginal blokes would say the sea mullet would come in from Stockton all around the Port. Over the years they got bigger but they began to drop off because of too much fishing. The mullet were full of roe. People probably didn't realise how much damage they were doing at the time.

Than they'd be prawning in the dark moon, blokes would be on the lookout sitting on three sticks like a tripod usually made of Tea Tree. Black and white fullas would use these than they'd go with a boat, net and scoop.

Small populations but damaging practices to Aboriginal heritage sites.

Well there were timber workers at Tea Gardens. In 1824 the Australian Agricultural Company was given a big grant of 1.5 million that went all the way up to Forster and Karuah in 1926 when they mapped it. One of the middens they mapped at Corrie Island was estimated to be 1/3 miles long and that tells you Aboriginal people have lived here and utilised the harbour for a long time. At Corrie Island the AA company took the shells for the lime kilns.

This practice saw the AA and other companies gathering the midden shells and they'd take them to Tea Gardens to the lime kilns. They'd make lime which went off to Sydney for building. You'll find there are places in Australia where there are lime kilns and in the inland rivers where you get fresh water mussels the same thing happened. Where there were middens this went on until they had taken everything destroying the middens. Around 20 or 30 years ago I realised Tea Gardens school was built on a remnant of a midden.

When I was growing up the only Aboriginal people were all family. When I was growing up population numbers were only small because of the war years but when

the yanks came into Nelson Bay they had all the high speed boats and barges which probably disturbed the fish no end.

I was only a baby when the ice works and shark factory was happening. Most of the able people around the port were fisherman and they just sold out the back of the boat and you'd live off what you caught.

Grannie Becky was Rebecca Johnson who died in 1938 when she was living at Tea Gardens but she used to live at place called Violet Hill. And they fished in the Myall Lakes at the turn of the 20th century. They'd have row up to Bulahdelah for shopping supplies. It'd probably take the day if the wind was right to get there and back.

We went up to the Myall Lakes for holidays and we'd stay in a stringy bark hut we'd go prawning and fishing there. We'd go around Mungo Brush too. We'd walk from (Bulahdelah) Tamboi and walk to Mungo to get pippis. We'd use our feet start twisting from side and than we'd quickly scoop them up, we'd do this at the beach at Hawks Nest too. There were old, old whale bones there and if fresh whales washed up people would have eaten them in the old days.

We used to catch beach worms at Mungo and we'd get a pippi shell and ease the lip up so you didn't break it, get a dead mutton birds drag it on the sand than and we'd pull up the worm with the pippi. You have to be quick otherwise you snap 'em. You can roast em or boil 'em or make curry out of them.

Poddy mullet would be caught with pickle bottles that had wide mouths. You'd set them up on the beach than watch the poddy mullet get in, you'd run and block the entrance. We'd use taylor, octopus, bream loved octopus and nippers too.

We used to eat, swan, ducks, red bill, fresh water birds and water hens. We'd shoot em and make soup out of them, blues cranes, parrots and wonga pigeons. For some of the water birds you had to get up the river and creep amongst the reeds.

We'd hunt for kangaroo's, wallaby. For the kangaroos you'd walk out on rainy day because they'd be eating the sweet grass or in the afternoon when they come out for a feed. Rainy days were best and we'd eat rabbits too.

Norm's Mum Violet Newlin born in 1901.



There used to be a grocery boat that would go around the Port and we'd jump on that and go and stay at the Point for holidays and stay with Aunty Louie. Although my mum married a non - Aboriginal bloke we still came under the welfare board. I didn't know that but at the time there was a great fear they'd take us away after dad left us. So mum would get us and off we'd go to the Point. At Tea Gardens when the wind was right we'd get a blanket and make a sail with sticks and sail over the point. We used to go around the back beach with Aunty Louie at low tide and you'd walk out at the mud flats and scarp off about 4 or 5 inches of mud and scrap the clay up. We'd dig it up put it in the bucket and we'd whitewash around the fire place at it would come up beautiful.

We eat the sweet berries called five corners shrub and the ground cover ten corner's, than pigeon berries and pig faces, wild cherry and lily pilly. We had plants that helped with illness too. Ink berries you'd poultice out of the leaves than wash the sore in the water and it would get rid of them.

What should be done to improve the ecology of the harbour and waterways?

I think they should have bag limits for people to catch a feed. They should ban commercial nets in the harbour altogether and set limits. More education needs to happen because people need to learn to use common sense. Aboriginal people who went mud crabbing would put the females back if they had eggs on their back. Now people would not know how to look for those.

Trevor Holbert - Former Oyster Farmer

Member of a Soldiers Point historical family.

2011-Aged 74



1. Trevor Can you take us back to when your family came here, what was your family doing and what did they know of Aboriginal people?

My great grandfather came from Sydney he had about 12 or 15 years on square rigged sailing ships then he married an Irish girl from the colony and moved here to Port Stephens. He did fishing and oystering. My grandfather was named the Oyster King in New South Wales in 1908, the Holbert family were well involved in oyster farming. He was oyster farming prior to 1908 and he was fishing too.

Well there was close contact because when the Holbert family moved into Limekilns at Corrie Creek the Aboriginal people were still walking around in what you could say were tribes. Dad used to tell me stories where you could walk to front the verandah at Limekiln and it would be clear going and you could see out into the water. Next morning you might see about 10 or 15 little mia mia's (little huts with sticks) where they'd moved down overnight and set their little tents up near one another and they'd be getting possums out of the trees. Back in those times it wouldn't have been bark they would have moved ahead a bit to tarpaulin. They would have moved past canoes into row boats. When I was bigger the Manton's all worked at Pindimar canning factory the ice works was the same business. They'd go for the sharks get the liver out of them they'd make emulsion out of it and give to the kids. They'd catch

big buggers, my word, in Port Stephens I've seen enough now to do me a life time, tiger sharks and white pointers. We used to see a few when we went fishing they did decrease, but they're still there, don't worry. When they had the canning factory in Pindimar I was about 12 years of age and I started to work with dad fishing.

Back in those times there was no co-op or anything like that when my grandfather was oyster farming all the fish and oysters and everything used to go to Sydney on the ship which used to come in every week. It was a north coaster owned by the North coast steam navigation company. They'd moor up at Pindimar for a few days and the fisherman would have their own boxes insulated with saw dust and they'd winch and lift the box out and put it in the ship. Everyone had their boxes with their names on them. If grandma wanted needles and sewing cotton she used to write a letter and give it to the skipper of the ship when he went into Sydney. The ships were all named after northern rivers. Grandfather and all of my family never had motor cars. The road over at Tea Gardens would only have been a track; the very first link to Newcastle would have been the old Fords service bus. He was the first to get that going.

The fish were very thick in Port Stephens and around Karuah because the white fellas had access mainly to old cotton nets. Even when you got it about 6 months later it would be rotten and be gone. Not like the nets you've got today. The nets that have been used in the last 40 years in Port Stephens, Wallis and Myall Lakes have been much more effective in catching fish. Fish would have been just as thick when cotton nets were being used. They would have been 3 and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches of nets which would have caught, mullet, flathead, bream and were well over the legal limit. Back in those times we pegged the nets because they didn't have good boats and there are not many fish that would have run into cotton net.

I used to go over to the mill at Tea Gardens with dad to get timber to build something on the house. Mainly it was people living there who worked there.

There were always a lot of Aboriginal people working with us and with the other farms about 30 or 40 people. Same families Ridgeways, Russell's, Manton's and Lilleys. Well they knew what they were doing in a boat. They were just good at their job. You know you could put a white bloke on from off the street and it might be a month before he could poke the punt around with the pole, the Aboriginal people were born to that. They were good in grading oysters and culling them. That's basically what oyster farming is all about handling them.

5. Is there anything that you think is damaging the PSGLMP or practices that are taking too much out of the system?

No well I've finished fishing now. But the Marine Park is too big; it's just about crippled the commercial fishing totally. I'd have no objection at all to the Marine Park if it wasn't for the size it is. The area from Tea Gardens to Nelson's Bay was keeping about 30 fishermen employed. But the pound net could be taken away and than you start to get back to a level and you could still have a good lot of fish in Port Stephens

up in Tilligerry Creek. If you use the pound net all the time you would deplete all of the stock. I worked a pound net for 20 years. I've been told that the first pound net in Port Stephens was made out of wire netting over on Long Point. You know where the old ship hulks are at Wobbegong, Uncle Carl put the first pound net in. There was all sorts of fish; garfish, tailor, bream and he caught them in big quantities for those times. So the pound nets have been around for a long while.

Are you saying the marine Park's impact is too much on the commercial fishermen but if people changed their nets things would improve?



I'd say so.

Black Swan- a common food for Aboriginal people and historical families.

Aboriginal name: *Kunbul*

Scientific name: *Cygnus atratus*

Habitat: *Black Swans prefer larger salt, brackish or fresh waterways and permanent wetlands, requiring 40 m or more of clear water to take off. Outside the breeding season, Black Swans travel quite large distances. Birds fly at night and rest during the day with other swans.*



Name: *adult swan and all swans*

Aboriginal name: *Kool'-Wun-Nung and Wor'-Ree-A'*

Scientific name: *Cygnus atratus*

Ridgeway Bissett, C. 2009

John Bagnall- Jack of All Trades

Former Commercial fisherman and historical family member.

2011-Aged 74. Bagnall's beach is named after John's family.

1. Can you take us back to when your family came here, what was your family doing and what did they know of Aboriginal people?

In 1867 my grandmother Celia Jane Grudge was born and lived in the Myall Lakes area and married a Bagnall and moved to Frost road. She would have had a great deal of information but she is not here anymore. Some of the family lived at the Myall Lakes and along old Frost Road. We worked as commercial fisherman in the harbour. We'd go to most bays up to Middle Island and my Uncle Cecil used to work at the mouth of the Myall River. He worked the Myall Lakes for prawns and my grandfather used to row there too. We used to work Rocky Point back as far as the Urala. (Stockton Beach) We used to row the boat and pull traps and that sort of stuff.

2. As a kid growing up what are the sorts of things were happening in the area and what did you see Aboriginal people doing?

Generally Aboriginal people were throughout the community. Specifically what they were doing was pretty hard to determine, if you saw them today you wouldn't see them tomorrow. When we'd go fishing someone would be there. That's the reason I was trying to track down more history on my Grandmothers side. My second cousins grandmother was Aboriginal and other people in my family married Aboriginal people too. From what I can gather we were always part of the community. Aboriginal people worked conventionally fishing in my younger days traditional style had gone by except when collecting shells and mussels.

Up the Myall Lakes. Aboriginal people were doing conventional netting with white people. They'd catch bream, mullet and of course prawns by stringing a net across the mouth of Myall River and leave it set. Because they (the fish, prawns) all come out of the lake at dark at least and they'd put a string net right at the top and a back up net. The net would have been around 100 metres across you used to tie it off row to the other side with a spreader pole either side. People would be sharing catches and put it through the market. In those days people shared.

In the area we'd shoot and eat birds too, mostly cook them in soups. The black swan, the little coot and the wonga pidgeon that came down and feed on the Cabbage Tree Palm berries at Christmas time. We used to eat the wood and teal ducks, blue crane, snipe and rosella these would make good soups.

We'd eat berries at Rocky Point. We'd eat black pudding berries, lily pilly, wild cherries and the wild raspberries which is a ground cover.

3. How were people collecting shellfish?

Hitting them with a rock and belting them along at Rocky Point. We used to do that a lot. That midden out there was probably made (with a laugh) by our family. My Aunty had a poultry farm out here during the war years and we used to get conch, periwinkles and other shell fish cook them up and eat them. We probably learnt that from Aboriginal people. The conch we'd boil them bust them half way down, take the tongue out than eat the solid part of the tongue. And of course there was a heap of abalone there on that side of Rocky Point.

Rocky Point Turn Off – eel traps. I was told in my old man's generation less than one hundred years ago there were eel traps near the Rocky Point turn-off in the swamps where the marshy reeds are. There would be two swamps that Aboriginal people would use. People would block one off and harvest from the other one that was allowed to run. When it was depleted they'd close it off and alternate.

When the yanks (during the Second World War) came and did the road the eels trap couldn't be used anymore as the swamps were blocked. If you look at the area you can still see how big the swamps are you've got the sand dune ridge at the back of the middens and it goes into swamp there are two sections of swamp there.

There was a rock fish trap at Soldiers Point too. People told us about it, it's about one foot higher than the low tide – the fish would come in with the tide and the trap would catch the fish.



Midden with old fire place and shells

Whales at Stockton Beach. I was told a story that less than one hundred years ago that every year on this end of Stockton Beach Aboriginal people would get a whale and get stuck into the blubber. They'd go into Tilligerry creek, eat other things, cover themselves in mud to stop the sandflies and then come back for more whale. They'd eat it raw.

Net fishing. Our family were commercial fisherman and around the area we used to drop a net in, do a circle, and mum used to walk the inside area to stop the garfish from getting out than we'd pull it smaller and smaller until we scooped them up. People used to make some of their own lines and mend them too. We used to row from One Mile Beach up to Rocky and pull pots (lobsters). The lobsters at Fishermans Bay are small in July and September, they must breed there in certain times of the year. We used to do a lot of rock and lobster fishing. There are a whole heap of wobbegong sharks – dad would use a four gallon drum cut the bottom out install a glass bottom hold it in the water and you could see quiet clearly to the bottom and that enabled him to spear the wobbegong and we'd eat them.

4. What do you think needs to happen to improve things in harbour?

Understanding the cycles is the key.

The hardest part is gathering the knowledge you need. If I had a good fishing spot I wouldn't tell you (laughs). First you've got to collect the knowledge when the movement of fish happens and understand the climatic changes because you can go out on any beach and when you've got a green current it's coming from Queensland and when you've got a blue current it's coming from the bottom that's cold current. You can go out in a boat the water goes from a light green straight into a blue and that's why that's cold. So when you get the cold water that moves offshore and the warm water that extends further out you'd get a great lot of fish coming in. As for the movement of fish round about August for the travelling fish you'd get the westerly winds. They'll be bream, luderick (black fish) coming north. As they go up the small group normally head off into the harbour and do the loop then head back out and up again. Re-jigging the bag limits should fit with the different fish cycles but remembering one fisherman might be catching for the family.

Zoning.

I don't agree entirely about locking up areas for people to stop going there as I believe things go with weather patterns. When the water temperature is up later in the year the grass would grow on the bottom and the fish would turn up to eat, then the bigger fish would turn up to eat those, that's the food chain. The movement of fish mullet, bream, luderick there are certain times of year that they are prolific and jewfish too of course. You get a lot of them. I don't think it helps a great deal for locking areas up you should restrict what goes on there on bag limits. A license could say single person where the limit would be less than if it's marked fishing for a family.

5. What species do you think needs re-stocking?

We'll there'd be bream, whiting, jewfish, mullets, flathead (they're biting now).

I'd support artificial reefs as we have a heavier population that needs to be fed. If we had artificial reefs that would help to bring the fish back and oysters could be grown not for commercial use but for fish fodder.

Vernon and Kevin Ridgeway.

Fisherman and Oyster farm laborers.



Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food, canoed or boated? What types of marine species were sought?

Our family and ancestors have lived and fished everywhere in and around the harbor, the beaches, Islands and rivers. Stockton all the way around, Anna Bay beaches, into the harbour and over the other side, many, many places and into some of the Myall Lakes, looking on the Marine Park map all of these places.

Our family has always been here fishing for family or working in fishing and Oyster farming. We've worked for the Diemars, Phillips, Holberts, Armstrong, Millers and Lyalls at Karuah. Lot's of those leases are gone now and the harbour has been

cleaned up but we still work opening up the oysters. We've worked in sheds, on punts, in the paddocks and fixing the racks. Great Grandfather James did this so did our Dad George and some of our brothers and sisters. Dad was a boat builder and built the Soldiers Point boat shed.

Oyster Paddocks were about 10 by 12 feet where we'd have the young oysters in there and we'd set traps for the fish. In the corner we'd build a trap out of baton and wire and we'd catch jewfish and bream because the fish would go in to eat the oysters. We'd eat these fish. Stingrays and fish would be after the oysters on the racks too and you couldn't stop them. When we were working you had to be careful of stingrays we'd step on lots of nummy rays too which would give you a shock. But they don't hurt.

We'd get oysters off the rocks and the mangroves to eat. We always had the fire going at home to cook our food.



Photo of Vernon and Kevin's father George Ridgeway (Pop) with Lease Holder Brian Diemar

Hard Work- George Ridgeway and back left Grant Russell



We've fished on boats all around the place and on land with hand lines, by finning, used wire and wire spears, handlines and now rods. When we look at the map our family has been everywhere because this is our home. Aboriginal middens and sites we've registered also show our heritage here. We've fished on sand spits, motored or rowed to Tea Gardens, Corrie Island everywhere on the other side. We'd drift along fishing at Soldiers Point all the way around the back. Our Nanna used to fish at Middle Island with Aunty Ettie.

We've rock fished at Anna Bay, Boat Harbour and Boulder Bay.

We've caught all kinds of fish, bream, whiting, black fish, flathead, garfish, leatherjacket, small sharks, jewfish, mullet, groper. We'd cook them on the fire where we caught them or took them home. We'd make traps out of boards and chicken wire and put them out in the harbour to catch leatherjackets with bait. The next day we'd

use milk bottles with bread or dough to catch bait or use other fish. We'd put dough on our lines and go to Oakey Island and catch bait.

Periwinkles, we'd take a tin with us, get the periwinkles from the rocks at the point and cook them in the tin on fires with salt water. Periwinkles are too small to hook on as bait. Vernon: At Mary's Bay I wrapped the mullet in clay and cooked them on the fire so you wouldn't have to worry about scaling them.

We've mud crabbed and got blue swimmer crabs with nets in deeper holes or on our hand lines. Blue swimmers are all around the point and the harbour. We've gone into Fame Cove and we used to shoot Kangaroos for food too. Mud crabbed at Fennighams and in the creek areas and in Tilligerry Creek too.

We've been prawning all around at Pearson Park and over Lemon Tree. Worming for blood worms too all around the point at Fenninghams, Oakey, Bull Island, front beach, caution corner Mud Island (across from Taylors beach), and Mambo. Blue swimmers where the racks were at Salamander Bay. We'd go over the other side at Piggy. We'd go worming around the Point.

Lobsters and abalone; where you find them our family have free dived for these some places are at Rocky Point and Fishermen's Bay.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

Yes some but it's hard now.

3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practices been affected, how and where?

It's a lot harder to catch fish as there are not a lot around like years ago. The zoning has made us feel worried about getting into trouble. We can read the marine park map and zones.

4. What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue with your cultural practices and look after heritage?

Restocking of the harbor is what Fisheries should be doing.

5. What about commercial/tourism industries if rezoning were to occur? Which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine species?

Again restocking through Fisheries and more education. Bag limits are ok.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognised in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

The Government needs to know that this is our home and we've always been here in the whole area not just some bays. Aboriginal people should not pay for a license.

Mud crab

Aboriginal name: *Ghinni-Ghinni*

Scientific name: *Scylla serrata*

Habitat: *The mud crab is a marine and estuarine animal. It can be found along the entire Queensland coast in sheltered estuaries, tidal flats and rivers lined with mangroves. They are usually found in shallow water but berried females occur well offshore. They favour a soft muddy bottom, often below tide level. In Australia, mud crabs inhabit tropical to warm temperate waters from Exmouth Gulf in Western Australia to the Bega River in New South Wales. Mud Crabs are omnivorous scavengers and are also cannibalistic, eating other crabs as well as barnacles, bivalves and dead fish.*



Name: *A crab*

Aboriginal name: *Tee'-Rah*

Ridgeway Bissett, C. 2009

Graeme Russell- National Parks and Wildlife Joint Coordinator for the Worimi Conservation Lands



Questions 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food, canoed or boated? What types of marine species were sought?

When they first built the Karuah Bridge it became a hot spot for fishing. I would have only been 4 years old. We lived in Karuah near the beach where the river starts mum would take us there and there would be the old fullas just sitting on the bank throwing their lines out probably ten feet, not winding it up to throw them in the channel and mate they'd be catching the fish, bream and flathead. Around the Karuah area probably the most popular fish would be these. Flathead mostly as all this is really muddy and you have the stringy weed and all among into the upper branch they'd lay their eggs there. Coming down into Karuah where the water gets a bit deeper you'd get more bream and snapper. The higher up you'd get the smaller the snapper. You'd go from salt to fresh water. My mum and dad had a boat they'd row to Bundabah that was a place we'd always go fishing. There is about ten feet deep of water and you could go in there and fish all day. They'd row to Soldiers Point to see Aunt Charlotte and Uncle George, where we'd stay for a few days.

Most of the things that I know are from my family teaching me and us doing things together when I was growing up. Every since I was a kid things were passed down from my Uncles. The family at the time worked for Phillips Oysters and we were

situated up there in Oyster Cove. There were a lot of mud flats and fish get up there in those areas. I watched the older boys do things.

All around Soldiers Point around the front and back beach- poddy mullet was caught with empty milk bottles with bread in there and as the fish went in we'd catch them. We'd also find a piece of wire from the buddled up oyster sticks that came from the mill. We'd twitch it around and make a whip and walk through the water and whip it with the wire and pocket them then go fishing. The other way was to get sheets of iron and cut nice small square fins. We'd have about three of them and walk around finning for the poddy mullet. The Northern side of Soldiers Point where the wharf is that's a favourite fishing area.

Worm Forks made it so much easier because you could get the blood worms when you wanted them. The targeted fish were whiting and bream. People would sell worms sometimes to get money for tucker.

Cromarty Bay (Mary's Bay) Flathead and sand whiting were caught; we'd anchor off the next point for blue swimmer crabs. We had an old clinker built boat. My Uncle George Ridgeway built the boats, the proper fishing boats were about fifteen feet long. When we were kids we'd make tin canoes out of corrugated iron. We used to get sheets of corrugated iron and cut a vee out of the front section and fold it over and peg the back of them up to stop water getting in. We used to paddle around in them.

Oysters and relationships. Aboriginal people's knowledge worked in well with the bosses they'd do things for us and we did things for them. The main employment for Aboriginal people was Oyster farming and the Forestry commission. The Oyster sticks and racks were all laid down by our mob. Aboriginal people worked on the Oyster farms and they loved it, working outdoors and on the water. They had a very good eye for judgement. I mean when you are on the oyster farms some of my relatives used to say of a morning you know we'd better get out something is coming. They'd know there was bad weather coming. So we had to get out and work. I remember the old man would say to Brian or Vic Diemar and they'd say go and get a bag and I'd shovel you some.

We'd go inside the big creek looking for mud crabs. Sometimes when you'd get a really low tide like a zero tide out we'd walk out near the Islands. Fenninghams Island was one of the main areas for mud crabbing where fisheries are at Taylors Beach. We'd get dropped off by the boat than walk into the scrub until you came to the edge of the creek and all you'd be doing is looking across the other side and the next day you could come back and get them here. We used to just pull them out of the holes.

Lemon Tree was another area that Aboriginal people used culturally. Most of the times in those days there were big fish in the bay.

Periwinkles and whelks as kids we'd gather these around the mudflat and boil them up. We'd use a can of sea water and start a fire and cook them. We kids did this for fun just like white fullas would bake a cake.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

Fishing in those days it was going to the supermarket. You didn't go to the shop to get your food you went out and caught it.

3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practices been affected, how and where?

Some of the places where we'd go are in pink as Sanctuary Zones now. So, yes some has been affected. I can see them by looking at the map.

4. What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue with your cultural practices and look after heritage?

Many of the areas are in Pink and I think they should remain off limits. Don't forget the fish didn't disappear over night.

5. What about commercial/tourism industries if rezoning were to occur. Which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine species?

Because of the problems with commercial trawlers for several decades we have had to go to the shop much more often these days. For example mullet would come from the sea and head into the harbour to breed but outside of the heads commercial fishers would wait and get them all outside of the heads. And the fishermen that were over in Shoal Bay where after the mullet and bream that come from the sea and into the harbour to spawn. The fisherman at Shoal Bay set figure 8 nets. Once it was set the fish couldn't get out and they were catching everything. Fish full of roe ready to spawn and the little fullas that were following them. There is little left to catch a feed now because of generations of overfishing. So we use the supermarkets much more than before.

Recreational Fishing started by fishing groups having tournaments and inviting other states coming in. Those competitions lasted for three or four weeks, year after year that's why we've got little fish left.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognised in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

The whole area needs restocking bream, whiting and beaky (garfish). I think there should be a bag limit for everyone to make it proper although Aboriginal people only take what's needed and they should be allowed to keep fishing in their old places.

Some of these are zoned as Sanctuary zones. As its family information passed down and we didn't make the fish go away by our practices. Worimi people's livelihood was fishing to look after families. We could have permits given through Land Councils or the Worimi Knowledge Holder Aboriginal Corporation but they shouldn't have to pay for a licence as these are our rights.



School of Fish- Photo courtesy of DECCW.

Debbie Fenwick. Artist, Salamander Bay.

Mapping and fishing information provided by Valenia Woods, and her grand-children Stephen, Kristie, April Fenwick.

Questions 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where you ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food, canoed or boated? What types of marine species were sought?

When I was growing up around the Soldiers Point areas in the 60's, 70's and onwards we used to go worming for blood worms with my family aunties and uncle. From our home at Soldiers Point we'd go right around to the back beach to the wharf where my pop built the boatshed with the wormo. You'd have to be quick to grab them. I'd do this is with my Aunty Bev, Uncle Sal, mum and dad and we'd use them for fishing or sell some to people that came past our house. Our family used to go to Rock's Awash over towards near Tahlee where they'd get bream. We'd go fishing

with all the boys, cousins, getting prawns with nets. We'd try to scoop them up all along the back beach at night one would stand on the edge with a torch the other with the net, all of the young ones my cousins, friends and brother.

We would also go for blue swimmers by line or pots. We didn't have a measurement in those days we knew which sizes to get and no females. We'd go along the bluff and out the front of home. We had a special big boiler and we cooked them in it. We went out when we needed them. We'd go all along these areas including Mary's Bay by foot or boat. For the firewood we'd go up the hill with the wheelbarrow. We also went fishing at the back beach with Aunty Bev. We used these areas as we could get there on foot and they were close to home. There was always plenty of fish around but not now.

Later on we moved out to Anna Bay and I'd go fishing at One Mile with mum and dad. We'd catch beach worms and tie an old rotten fish to a line and stick and move it on the sand and when the head of the worm come up than we'd use a pippi for him to bite at than grab him by the head. We kept the pippis in a jar with salt and keep them next time we went fishing. You could catch bream, squire and whiting with these. We'd get the pippis by digging our feet into the sand at Birubi and Stockton Bight. We'd also go fishing in the boat straight out, all around and get whiting and whatever we could get. Sometimes we'd see mullet running, you'd think they were dead as they'd float and we'd see that a lot and my brother and I would try to catch them, sometimes we'd get them. In boats we'd drift or use the anchor too.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

Our family still use these and other areas this is just what I remember. But in the Marine Park zoned areas there is confusion over traditional fishing permits and the process.

3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practices been affected, how and where?

We'd had some problems getting permits because we have to prove we are Aboriginal as some of us are light coloured. Photo ID would be good so others don't use it.

4. What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue with your cultural practices and look after heritage?

We'd like to go back to our old ways and not have to worry about getting arrested because of zoning. We always had a fire going to cook all our food now we are very limited and we can get in trouble for going to some of the zones.

5. What about commercial / tourism industries if rezoning were to occur which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine species?

That's a hard one, everyone needs to think about the future as when we were young there was plenty but not anymore.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognised in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

In schools there could be more information about Aboriginal people. Where are things taught in the schools on fishing here? Classes should have information on bag limits, and zones to get this all clearer for everyone. Our kids should also be taught our ways in school.

Immediate family locations where past and present cultural activities occur.

Soldiers Point Area- Oakey Island, One Tree Island, Rabbit Island, Middle Island, Rocks Awash, Cromarty Bay, Salamander- Wanda Beach, Taylors Beach, Tanilba Bay, Fenninghams Island, Cabbage Tree Island, Fame Cove, North Arm Cove, Piggy Island- Pindimah, Corrie Island, One Tree Island, Tea Gardens, Windy Woopa- Jimmy's beach, Snapper Island, Carrington, Anna Bay, One Mile, Stockton Big Beach, Birubi, Tomaree Headland, Zenith Beach, Shoal Bay Beach and Nelson Bay.

John Ridgeway, 71. Fisherman

Questions 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food, canoed and boating? What types of marine species were sought?

I'm going to start up at the Branch that's where we used to fish for a lot bream, flathead and mullet with Hippy Manton and Phillip his son. We used to go up fishing at night a lot. We used handline and net for mullet with a ¾ mesh net. Hippy had a commercial licence he used to send 'em down to Newcastle at the markets.

Then we come down the river to Limeburners Creek where two jets crashed years ago that's a good spot for fishing for bream, flathead and jewfish. Then you come down a little bit further around the corner to a place called Clay Bank on the north side of the river just down from where Ally Evens used to live. The Clay Bank was good for jewfish and you used to catch a few flathead and bream. That place is a couple of hundred yards from the new Karuah Bridge and you come a little bit further

to Mosquito Creek for bream. They used to get up on the flats and with the first two metre tide up was the best time to catch them. You'd see their backs were out of the water. We used to catch and kill 'em for a feed, sometimes we'd used an old handsaw that we'd cut and bits of asbestos too.

You come down about 200 yards to a place called Aspurey's wharf. We used to set rabbit traps there. It was a good place for rabbits. We'd just skin 'em and put 'em in the fry pan and on the coals.

We come down further about 400 yards to a place called the double sign board that was one of our main fishing spots. We used to row from the mission to there and it was a wonderful place for bream and flathead. Straight across on the western side straight out from the Karuah mission there was a reef that was a wonderful place for squire, flathead and had good bream, very big bream. And we used to fish off the mission wharf. When Old grandfather Manton, was alive he used to dive off that wharf at the age of 70, 80 years old, 365 days in the year. He'd do it for a swim then he'd walk back.

Now at the wharf there was Herb Lilley. He used to be a commercial fisherman and he used to go out and catch a lot of jewfish. What he used to do before he sold them was tie them to piers on the outside of the wharf. He'd put on a long line from pier to pier with the rope through the mouth and gills and let them swim there, he'd do that to keep them alive before sending them to market. He'd have about 20 to 30 jewfish.

Now we come down the north shore to Jack in a box where there used to be a little tin hut. The Lyall's Oyster farmer used to cull his oysters in there. That's how it got it's name because of the little hut.

When I was little I used to see lot of kids from the Tahlee Bible College and they'd walk through the bush right up to the Karuah River than get a boat to the Karuah school. There were two families at least. On the shores was a lovely place for bream and whiting, still is a good spot. There was a few oyster leases made of stone then. If we come over on the southern side on Little Swan Bay where all the white Lilley's lived that was a good place for mullet, flathead and bream, there's a lot of mud in there and Reedy Creek goes in there. We used to walk to the Hunters farms to get pears. It was nothing for us to walk miles years ago. From Number One right up to the other side of Karuah on all of the hills we used to roll boulders down there for fun.

If we go back from Karuah Mission and half way to the new bridge there was a place called Duck swamp and we used to go out and get Poddy mullet. We'd jump in the creek and make it real muddy and we used to wash 'em like that (gestures with sweeping arms) and we'd throw 'em in the sugarbag and put 'em in the fridge on ice. We used to skate on the mud on our guts for fun.

Come around into Big Swan Bay where the Phillips used to have their oyster depot. Most of the Aboriginals worked there in the early days, that's where they started off in Bundabah. It's a good place for all fish and for blue swimmer and mud crabs.

Cabbage Tree Island- straight out from Tanilba Bay pop would get Cabbage Tree palms to make chairs with. It was known for squire there. I'll finish off in Tanilba Bay itself. It was a wonderful place for whiting and blue swimmers.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

Yes.

3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practices been affected, how and where?

The pink zones have interfered with Little Swan Bay, Number One Cove, Reedy Creek, 12 mile, in Big Swan Bay and from the new Karuah Bridge up to Allworth.

4. What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue with your cultural practices and look after heritage?

They shouldn't have taken this away from Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people should be able to go back to these areas.

5. What about commercial/tourism industries if rezoning were to occur which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine species?

We have concerns over commercial fishing where too much is taken.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognized in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

There are getting less and less fish in every generation so they need to look at reducing the commercial fishing licences. There should be more patrolling to keep an eye on commercial fisherman. Bag limits should cover you and your family.

Neville Lilley 70- Fisherman. Tanilba Bay

Questions 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food canoed or boated? What types of marine species were sought?

My family has one hundred years of fishing and oyster farming connections here.

John has talked about many of the places we'd been as family groups and I'll pick it up from Tanilba Bay. Wherever you find weed you'll find a lot of fish, oysters and a lot

of bream. I live at Tanilba bay. Between Little and Big Swan Bay straight along there we used to do a lot of hauling, plenty of worms there too. Coming around into Tilligerry, crabs, flathead into the pink zone Tilligerry nature reserve, Taylors Beach there were are stacks of fish; mullet, bream, blackfish and whiting. Along that stretch towards Cromarty there used to be a stack of fish there. Today commercial fisherman run their lines and rip the guts out of the area. We fished everywhere as it was part of our staple diet. Around Fame Cove and the Creek there were some beautiful big oysters there at the rocks. Bundabah, there is a creek with black fish and you'd set the net with a pole on one end and zig zag up the creek, there's no comparison with how we did it compared to what commercial fisherman do today because we used roe and the length of the net was so much smaller. **Note:** Neville also made mention of Soldiers Point area which has been culturally mapped by Vernon and Kevin Ridgeway, Debbie Fenwick and Graeme Russell.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

Yes the zones have effected what we do we'd like to get back into those areas but we can't.

3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practices been affected, how and where?

Yes but we did the right thing before. We do teach our kids and grandkids what to do and how to preserve species. We have an understanding with our family circle to do things the right way.

4. What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue with your cultural practices and look after heritage?

We are lacking in our diet and some of us have diabetes and we need to eat the right foods. Our seafood's are the right foods. It would be a part of closing the gap that we need access to our traditional foods.

5. What about commercial/tourism industries if rezoning were to occur which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine species?

I think the tourists should enjoy what we have here. I support bag limits for people. I think a DVD would be good for people to view before they secure a recreational licence. In the waterways people should stick to the limits to reduce harm to fish and dolphins and the environment in general with the wash. More policing would help. Unused oyster leases that were handed back should be cleaned up completely.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognized in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

My son talks about teaching the young people. We need this to happen in the schools with Aboriginal facilitators. An education kit would be really good.

Lorraine (Dates) Lilley, 69. WKHAC Board Member

Interviewed with husband Neville Lilley.

1. Questions 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food, canoed, boated? What types of marine species were sought?

I grew up in Raymond Terrace and we'd come down to Nelson and Shoal Bay. When I was 20 we went down to Halifax Park with my grandmother Dates and she later told us she had a vision that she used to dive for lobster on Tomaree when she was about 12. The boy's job was to get a pile of rocks and watch out for the sharks in case they came. At Raymond Terrace when I was very small my grandfather used to make nets for commercial fisherman. My grandfather had a ministry at Karuah and we'd go back there every two weeks. Someone used to pick us up or if it was us kids we'd go on the bus.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognized in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

My kids teach their kids what to do and if you look at crabs they don't take female crabs and big flathead if they are a big breeding female they won't touch them.



Mourning Cuttlefish- Photo courtesy of DECCW

Sisters Debbie Noakes-Tea Gardens and sister Roselyn Wilson- Hawkes Nest. Nee -Newlin.

Fisherwomen

Questions 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food, canoed or boated? What types of marine species were sought?

As long as we can remember we have always fished. We use to walk down the moor, to the river. While we walked to the river with my Grandmother Ma (Violet May Newlin (nee Feeney), she taught us to track flathead on the out going tide at the moor as there use to be large sand tracts left by the receding tide.

We also gather conch for eating and bait from the sand and mangrove areas. We'd get the periwinkles and oyster from the surrounding rocks.

Plants-There'd be pig faces (a wax like plant with a dark pink to a red flower), 3 and 4 corners (a tiny little green berry) and yams off the moor to snack on while we were fishing down there.

We were taught to recognise different land marks on the water and land, as to locate the best fishing. We were taught about how to care for the beach and the rivers and

the areas we used. If we were not catching anything there we would walk across to Limekilns and try our luck there. We normally caught bream, flathead, whiting and blue swimmers there. Then when we got older we were allowed to go night fishing down there with my Dad (John Newlin) and our Uncles (Freddie, Charlie and Terry).

We fished day or night along the river from the Singing Bridge that now stand up past Witt Island, and go prawning with hand held scoop nets along this stretch, as these were in easy walk places. These were used for bait and eating

The best blackfish spot (Ma's favourite) was at the Tea Gardens Baths (which is no longer there). At the east side there is a deep hole and plenty of rocky outcrops, so you throw your lines in that area.

We would drive as far as we could take the cars to Pig Station and walk the rest of the way, with gear in hand to fish for mud crab at Wobbegong creek. When I was a child the woman and kids would do the crabbing and the men would get the dogs and go hunt for a roo for tea. When they got a roo they would return and help with crabbing.

We would also go fishing from the bridge anywhere along the river to the South side of Yacaaba Heads. Winda Whopper was a good spot for flathead and whiting.

We gathered;

- Green weed on the moor
- Worms for beach fishing on the sand bank on the bay side of the bridge.
- Pippis for fishing and eating at the big beach (Bennett's beach)

We were all taught to rock fish at Yacaaba Heads and also taught beach fishing there to Treachery Beach.

We would go and catch prawns up at the lakes, men trawled for the prawns by walking through the water dragging a net between them. When they thought they had a good catch they would drag the net up on the bank and open it and we all gather them as quickly as we could and cook them straight away. The women would have a fire going with a large half a 44 gallon drum on the boil.

When we all headed over to the Nelson Bay and Soldiers Point to visit relatives Dad would always tell us as he was rowing all our mob are over there. He was taught as a child to only take what you need.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

We still use all these areas to catch a feed. You only take enough to feed the family.

My sister Roslyn and her Mob do the beach and river fishing. My Mob and I mainly fish the river and Jimmy's Beach to Winda Whopper. We still go up to the Lakes for a night to prawn and have a get together.

What we caught and gathered in and along the Myall River: flathead, bream, whiting, blackfish, beakies (garfish), squid, jewfish, leatherjacket, mullet, taylor, oysters, periwinkles and prawns. And occasionally we would catch a shark. My older brother George was 13, when he caught his first shark in the river just in front of the police station.

What we caught and gathered from the beach and rocks: flathead, whiting, bream, jewfish, snapper, leather jackets, blue swimmer crabs, mullet, taylor, pippis, periwinkles, conch and oysters.

Where we still go fishing, Bay side of the Myall River (down the Moor), Lime Kilns, The Myall River, Bennett's Beach, Jimmy's Beach, Winda Whopper, Yacaaba Heads, Big Gibber, Little Gibber, Sand Point, Treachery Beach, Yagon, Lemon Tree, Mungo Brush and the Myall Lakes, North Arm Cove, Karuah River, Barnes Rock, Taylor's Beach and Soldiers Point).

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognized in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

We would like to see more training for Koori people to become Marine, Beach and Fisheries Rangers/Inspectors/Officers.



Debbie and Roselyn's Brother George Newlin.first shark catch at aged 13.

David Fenney - Karuah Aboriginal Land Council Coordinator.

Question 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locates areas of historical importance where your ancestors hunted fished, been diving, gathered food, canoed or boated? What types of species were caught?

When I was growing up back than we had a lot of family to feed, father and kids would get in the boat and we'd go so we could get something to eat. We'd row all the way from Karuah, to Little Swan Bay and up to Allworth.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

One thing I do agree with the old fullas is that we did fish everywhere but over in Little Swan Bay it's not in picture and we can't get into there anymore (because of the Pink Sanctuary Zones). I used to fish there with old Pop Manton and we used to row up there and that was how a lot of food was coming onto the mission when we were kids.

Now as you go up the river past there (Reedy Creek) you have more pink zones. I remember going up there a lot of times with pop, dad and my uncles and we just can't seem to go back there where fish were abundant to us. We'd stop and gather plant food along the way. It's a shame that we can't still do those things culturally even if we don't fish every day we still need to for cultural events.

We'd also go to Number One Cove- and catch schools of mullet in nets and with sticks, (to hit the water and round up the fish) there'd be bream and flathead too.

Most of the blue swimmers we used to catch just off the mish (Karuah Mission).

We went right up to Allworth, mainly the catches are mullet, bream, flathead, and mud crabs back then we used to use the big wire. It would be a couple of feet long and we'd pick 'em out like that. People would row everywhere and also go to the Tilligerry Ceek area for mud crabs.

Near the mish (mission) we used to gather things on the side of the river banks, periwinkles, whelks, mussels, and oysters that we used to get in bunches of mangroves.

Hawks Nest-east of Jimmy's Beach into the river side they'd be mangroves and you'd be able to walk to that area. We get shellfish around there and you walk from there. At Hawks Nest there were lot's of pippis none there now. We'd use a drum and put the pippis in there. We'd have enough feed for the day, we'd bring back some to feed a few families.

3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practises been affected, how and where?

Because of the zones people don't go out as much any more and it stops the cycle of people able to go out. Aboriginal people's diet is suffering, there are health problems as we're depending more on the supermarket. People aren't as healthy now. It's hard for older people to show things because of the restrictions, to show and teach our culture a lot of our kids. If we had the same emphasis as in the past we'd be able to get out there and show the ways of how we did it. We'd not just go out there for a day but we'd camp and tell stories and pass things on, that's how we used to live but because of government restrictions we are limited now.

4. What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue your cultural practices?

It's important that people be able to access sites. Here we've done up recreational fishing fee exemption certificates. These are for people proving Aboriginality and who are members of the Karuah Aboriginal Land council (KALC). People apply and then get a little ID card and it is stamped by the KALC. It has an exemption number on it which we'd have in our computer if Fisheries ring. We have 280 people with these here, it covers children too. Worimi Aboriginal Land Council and other land Councils in New South Wales use these. In the last three years about 30 or 40 members have been pulled up by Fisheries and asked if they have a licence and they've shown their card. It has their name, number, and is signed by the Land Council or has a stamp. Fisheries would then ring up and check it with us. When I do the new ones up we'll take a copy over to Fisheries so they know what it looks like and it covers people within KALC's boundaries.

5. What about commercial/tourism industries if rezoning were to occur which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine Species?

No more commercial nets inside the harbour. It's not the Aboriginal persons fault the fish are gone. It's that we're getting so big in the area everyone wants a fish. We need more education on how we look after the waters and the species. I still see people getting undersized fish. I reckon they should extend the zones further outside the heads so the commercial fishers go out further to give the fish a chance to get in and out of the harbour. Fish finders: Where's the enjoyment of catching a fish if you use a fish finder. Everyone should fish without them and be lucky to get a fish not say I've got them every time because of a fish finder.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognised in order for cultural practises to continue?

We need to make sure that we've got local area Managers within Fisheries and National Parks to work beside other Managers and with staff. Aboriginal Managers can identify the problems of cultural significance, not just because of legal reasons or

because of politics. We need to change that mindset in National Parks and Fisheries. We need an Aboriginal component there with more Aboriginal people talking about the marine park. We need Aboriginal people who can look and understand legislation and say how things should be done, like the Worimi Knowledgeholders Aboriginal Corporation and the people in the group that are paving the way. We need to be able to make people understand, decisions and relay what's happening and to help the Aboriginal community.

Farley's Oysters-Karuah



Richard Farley-Oyster farmer

Farley's Oysters and Worimi Knowledge Holders Aboriginal Corporation Board member. Karuah

1. Please locate areas of historical importance for Aboriginal, are these places still used today? On every bend there'd be big rocks where'd you'd find oysters, in these areas that's where the middens are. Aboriginal people would go along and eat the oysters. Aboriginal people have always been here and all the way up the Karuah River to Allworth.

Later, Aboriginal people were working in the oyster industry, fishing and timber industry. These were the only industries around here at the time but mainly oystering and fishing. When I was growing up there was no racism in those times everyone was the same and you had to call everyone Aunty and Uncle. I've worked as a commercial fisherman for 45 years and as a Oyster farmer. When I was growing up my family told me years before they (the Lime burners) dug all the middens up and they had barges and they'd get all the shell out of the barges and cook the shell up to make the lime.

We'll start over in Little Swan Bay and Reedy Creek. As a kid growing up I'd go over there with the old fullas and we'd row the boat right around. And we'd wait for the real big tides to see by the moon on the water. I'd be the fulla rowing and the uncles would sit up the back and we'd go into the creek. We'd have a big bit of wire. We'd come to the mud crab holes and than we'd just hook them out. At the end of the day we only took what we needed. We wouldn't take them for everyone but for our families. Aborigines didn't take hundreds may ten or twelve for the whole family. We'd go to Reedy Creek because it was close and we'd also walk up and down the creeks and hook 'em for dinner. I can remember when I was 12 and 13 and my Uncles would say shhh and they'd know that to listen for and we'd go around the bend and the next minute they'd be like a train the mullet, they'd be thick, roaring and jumping over one another. And when they'd teach you to look in the dark the water would be full of foam. Well them days are gone, they will come back if it's managed properly.

We'd row around and we'd get up these creeks at high water and use mangrove sticks and we'd push these pointy sticks in the mud and we'd leave enough of a gap for the water to run through when the tide would rush out. The mangrove sticks would let all of the water out and the fish would get stuck behind these sticks, and we'd just pick 'em up as the tide would go out because these creeks would go dry. We'd get a lot of flathead, bream and mullet, that's what we did around in Reedy Creek but now it's a Sanctuary zone. I don't think enough explanation has been given and they need to review it. We can't do this (use the same hunting techniques) in any other place because that's the spot.

In Karuah River fish congregate together before they go up near the new bridge and down here there is 80 foot of water near the old Karuah Bridge. Just below the big Shelly Island that's where all the fish congregate near the Island and as soon as you get the westerly winds they all travel out into the harbour and outside the heads. The old fullas used to teach us how to look for them here and the fish used to flick their body and you'd see the scales shining. But now with the modern equipment some fisherman just put a net out like a figure six and they are catching all the muddy fish.

2. Looking at the Marine Park zoning what daily practices are effected due to the Marine Park?

When you get up to the new bridge every bend is sacred to Aboriginal people. Into the Branch River and Big Pippin there are many sites for us and these are now sanctuary zones. When it comes to ceremony I can't teach it if we're not allowed

there. There are old fish traps there. Every inch of the river is sacred. You're not allowed to use nets above the new bridge and yes the fish have increased but that's our traditional grounds and when it's an important day like NAIDOC, an old Aunty has died or we have a special occasion we can't go and get a few mullet for our family. I've gotten a permit before to do this but it was for the daytime and some of these fish are around in the night, again with the moon. This issue needs to be sorted so we aren't passed from one government agency to another to get a permit. You just want to ring up one person not ten. We should be able to go at any time but at certain times it is more important so we need permits for certain times of the year with the moon. There could be on a central register at the Marine Parks, Fisheries offices and a person working on that. I do believe young people should be able to get traineeships in Fisheries. It's extremely hard for Aborigines to live under white mans law. I want to be able to pass on the knowledge I've been taught to the young fullas. Young fullas have a right to learn the right ways and their culture. I'm involved with taking out and teaching a lot of young fullas.

I'll get to the dolphins now. They are very important in our culture. Down at Jimmy's Beach areas they'll have their babies and they'll bring 'em up the river and at the bends there are deep holes and the dolphins get into the deep holes to get the fish. The parents will round the fish in, get under them in the deep holes and blow and shower this fish up for the babies. Even the eagles get into it and feed. They'd stay for 12 months with the babies then they'll go out and than come in summer and they'll play and feed. I know I'm going to upset a few fullas but the dolphin boats really need to back off and give them more room. I think most of the dolphin people are good. I know dolphins come in front of the moving boats though and you can't change that. Jet skies need to be totally banned, because dolphin and swans get hurt and jet skis are starting to come here to the river. The turtles breed up the Karuah River and in the deep water too.

When we used to go rowing we used to get a bit scared in the dark and one night we ran a-ground onto something. My family said get out and light a fire for a cuppa. My Uncle went out, me and him one foot in the boat and one out because we were a bit scared in the dark. Well the fire got lit, the billy was boiled land we had a cuppa. Later when we went to push off with our feet but there was nothing there, nothing because it wasn't a sandbar we'd boiled the billy on but a big turtle! *Richard Laughs*

Looking at the last five years since the Marine Park came in have you seen a decrease in the amount of commercial fisherman?

Yes, but what it's doing is leaving the ones left to take more. Sometimes there are illegal activities with people putting nets on shore when it should be a metre offshore. I've seen this all the way down from Carrington, Tahlee all the way to Pig Station. The fisheries haven't got enough men to deal with it. It's gonna be hard because some commercial fisherman go overboard with their traps and nets. I was a commercial fisherman for 45 years and I know all of the tricks. Fisheries records show bigger amounts being caught but that's because they are using better equipment now and the boats have got motors in them. We used to have to row so

did the fisherman at Tea Gardens, and sometimes the fish would beat them. But the worst problem now is that they are catching all the fish as they travel back out the northern side. They've got to stop the setting of any type of net. I've seen the nets all on the northern side. You shouldn't need to set nets, you should be able to shoot a net off to catch a fish but as the cost of living rises they've had to take more in order to survive. We need to work more with other groups to sort this out.

I work all the way up the river. I've got oysters at Corrie Island and in the river I work right up. I've been doing it since I was fourteen with my dad, grandad, uncles, brother. I do it by myself. I do have a couple of boys that help me at the moment as I've got a broken leg. We've got a concrete truck coming today because we've got to put cement on the racks. I've got a couple of young boys from the mission that will come and help. My pop got the leases first. The changes that have gone through the industry over the years is unbelievable. The river is very important to us as the oysters spawn down the river now in February and March. As you come up the river the bigger they are because of the water temperatures. So our people would just follow 'em up and eat them.

4,5,6. What changes need to be made to protect culture and heritage, what about commercial/tourism industries if re-zoning occurs which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve marine species? How do Indigenous people get their ideas across to government?

Permits for Aboriginal people in sanctuary zones could go through Aboriginal Corporations with a central person in the Marine Parks/ Fisheries dealing with this and having a list of Indigenous permits. We need Fisheries traineeships for Aboriginal people. No beach-set netting in the Karuah River or Port Stephens harbour. The Dolphin tours proximity to dolphin limits extended and a cap on operators-no more allowed. No jet skis in the river or the harbour.

Hector Saunders.

Commercial Fisherman-Karuah



Ryan, Hector, Vanessa Saunders with grandchild Durrell Fenney.

Questions 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where you ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food, canoed or boated? What types of marine species were sought?

I've lived only here for thirty years but I've learnt a lot here from the old people. The creeks are the main part where Aboriginal people have always been, see all these parts through here on the map. Tilligerry Creek all the way up there all Aboriginal food, bream and flathead. They eat a lot of Cobra (mangrove worms) and they get mud crabs up there. Cobra is the main part of Aboriginal food. The mangroves are the main parts and all these parts in the river. But they are dying the crabs out too because of the pollution. (Looking at the maps) These creeks here, that's where Aboriginal people used to get all of their feed. They'd don't go there all the time maybe go there for two weeks than travel on. Like people call walkabout. Up around Allworth every year for fifteen years I worked up there for three months cause all the fish go up there it's nice and warm on the rocks, mullet, bream, blackfish, jewfish. When they bought in the Marine Park I couldn't understand why they closed it down when I only worked there for three months and want it open from Allworth to the convict wall. I used to camp up there on the banks and stay with my nets I wouldn't hurt nobody. That's where I reared all my children up and fished up there. I never cleaned it out up there.

We used to eat all different kinds of birds parrots, ducks and water wrens. We used to just chase them in the weed and catch them. Aboriginal people still eat some of these things today, goannas and kangaroos. All up there, all around they are all Aboriginal tucker places. Up the top of the Karuah River that catches a lot of pollution now from things they put on people's land. Some of the fish get big sores. Is it from all of the farms?

I used to live in Karuah and I used to come all over these places with the Fenneys and Mantons. We had a boat and would come over this way. We used to go all up that way Reedy Creek and Swan Bay. Same food as Allworth mainly all the creeks were all our food areas. These go to the other side of Allworth right up to the top. All the old people have always been here. They get the witchetty grubs too that grow up in the trees along the banks.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

I have a commercial fishing licence but I'm not a greedy fulla. I go and get my wages and that's it. I sell at the co-op in Newcastle. I could go 4 days and just make enough to look after the family. I teach the young fullas. You give the fish enough time. I use a mash net I just shoot it out it takes ten minutes a shot. As soon as it hits the water it goes down and you use a paddle and hit the water like the old Aboriginal people did, the sound bounces in their ear. Fish only have small eardrum, then the fish go in the net than you pick it straight up and put it in the boat. So your going in a circle too. Some people go 7 days a week, I go 4. I have a net I shoot out from the back of the boat than haul in. I am teaching my son Ryan the business.

There are a few other Aboriginal people who have commercial license too. I think they are in the same predicament as me with the Marine Park.

3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practices been affected, how and where? What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue your cultural practices?

I think the maps are difficult for all Aboriginal people as they are so used to going and doing their thing and they only take the food they need. They don't go in and drain the thing out. I've been fishing here for thirty years and I've fished all of it the whole area all of this side and way over to Nelson Bay. I have a commercial fishing licence I'm in zone four which starts from the north and goes to the central coast.

4. What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue with your cultural practices and look after heritage and where?

I don't think we should have to get permits. Well, it seems to be getting better for the last couple of years. Stuff is getting better for people catching a feed in the river. But you know what I really love is what the old people always taught me things run in a cycle. You've got to wait for your turn. Rivers fill up. They were talking about picking fish up with their hands and they were floating past. Every since I've been a kid the

creek are for little fish and it takes a couple of years to grow that's been going on for years. Up here in the northern creeks there are thousands that get up here, 12 Mile Creek up there, thousands of them. They stay there in the warmer the water, they grow quicker there that's what the thing is about the creek they go in and won't come out. These mullets in the winter time are mashing (full and travelling) that's when we get them.

5. What about commercial/tourism industries if rezoning were to occur which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine species?

They should really stop the beach fishing because that's where they are killing them. The fish come in the heads and go around. They use beach haulers around Jimmy's Beach, they're pretty big nets. The boats go out and straight around and catch them coming in or going into the rivers.

After five years they could open it up again, but you've got to give the fish a chance to get out and spawn. No sooner do they hit the road and than they are caught. They are blaming the inside fisherman but they should close the beach fishing down for three or four years. They can catch a ton in one go I can catch maybe four or five boxes. You might shoot around and get none. With a 3 ¾ net I don't do any harm as the small fish go straight through and you only catch the big fish.

You've got to watch things too. You can get some turtles. If one gets caught in the net I throw em out because they cry a lot you know like babies. Sometimes people use illegal nets and set them in the creek and leave them overnight. Nets that are 2 inch ones, every little small fish will get caught and die. A big fish will just bounce off it but all the little ones get caught.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognized in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

I agree we should have more Aboriginal staff in Fisheries but some say they can't get along in there. I've known fullas that were there but got out of there. Fisheries do come around and patrol here. Here young ones do come and talk and then off they go fishing. The kids still go fishing here. Aboriginal people need their rights to go in the creek here. We've got an exemption card but they don't go in those sanctuary zones because Fisheries keep saying they'll fine them \$400. Your gonna get chased out if you go in the pink or yellow areas.

The young people growing up now they just know it's in their nature to do the right thing. A lot of young fullas go fishing here and they all come through and ask me things. I always tell them do this but don't do that otherwise you'll get fined always and have you drivers licence with you. If you go anywhere here up and down the coast people will tell you they shouldn't have a permit. Even the white people are growling up here not being able to fish where they used too.



Barry Lilley. Mallabula.

Questions 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food and canoed or boated?

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

It's mainly up here around Swan Bay and Pipeclay Creek where we used to get all of the mud crabs but that's all closed off. We were going up there and digging them out of the mud. We'd use witches hats you'd put a bit of mullet head in and that was it. We were getting monsters up there about four kilo crabs. Mostly Swan Bay and Tilligerry Creek are my stomping ground.

3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practices been affected, how?

We used to camp around these areas too. I'd go with my dad all the time when he had his (commercial) licence. He was using shallow mesh for mullet and flathead. He'd use a 3 1/2 inch. He had a few different sorts of nets it would be about one hundred a hundred and fifty metres. He used to look after his gear, hang 'em up make sure they didn't rot to get the most use out of them. In about 20 minutes you'd

run around the racks, dropping the net in. Dad would hit the rocks and the sound would move the fish in. Dad used to sell to a lot retired people around here or in Newcastle at the Co-op or Tea Gardens too.

Mainly we'd fish up here in Tilligerry Creek and Swan Bay before they'd start running out to sea that's where we used to go. You got your flathead, whiting and bream. Dad used to catch some monster flathead.

How big?

About a metre long.

It's like what you were saying yesterday (to another family member) it's hard to pick up a bream down there (Nelson Bay) it's the same up here. It's hard to catch a feed. Those old fullas would have noticed the changes and the decline too.

My dad and pop just had the old fishing boats I used to do a lot of rowing but we had both (motors too.) We go to Tanilba Point too and you'd see 'em (the fish) jumping.

Yeh, well the blue swimmers they mainly used to get up in this area around Swan Bay and up there in Tilligerry Creek they could be abundant. The seasons have seemed to change it's hard to predict now. You used to be able to know when they were there. Not now, it's all changed.

The oysters, we just used to help ourselves on the old posts we wouldn't worry about getting 'em off the rocks. The old posts were from what the oyster farmers had left behind.

About five or six years ago I saw about half a dozen turtles dead in the mangroves. I spotted them when walking on the shore from Oyster Cove, Tilligerry Creek than I saw a few floating dead. We put 'em in to in to see what was going wrong with them but we didn't get anything back from them. (Fisheries)

5. What about commercial/tourism industries if rezoning were to occur which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine species?

Well I've seen the professionals come in here just dragging for whiting and they're taking all the babies and they keep dragging for more. They're from when they closed down Lake Macquarie and their coming up here and you should see some of the gear they use, a mile of net and the fish have got no chance. The size of the mesh means they get too many small things. They're down there everyday these boys, you see 'em at Lemon Tree Passage ramps and they'll have two or three boats and the amount of gear they use is unbelievable. Maybe they should just pull em up for a year or two and let the stocks come up. Do they duck into zones where they're not supposed to be? It's hard to say unless you are out there following them but they do get up here with a mile of net running out at Tilligerry. The way the bream used to be here and you just don't see it anymore, even going out and getting pan sized bream

is hard. The blue swimmers don't get much of a chance as there are traps everywhere, are the commercial boys running more traps than they're supposed to? When you go up Tilligerry Creek they've got them on both sides.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognized in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

I'd love to get back into worming, even if you could get your twenty worms to catch a bucket of whiting. Worms are the go, but a family member got caught and got a fine. We should have rights to go and dig some bait.

I'd love to get back up Pipeclay Creek to get muddies. Camping too and taking our kids out.



Flathead-Photo Courtesy DECCW

Sharon Taylor-Educator

East Seaham

Grand dad was born at Dubbo and dad was born on the banks of the Darling River at Moree. Dad was taken away and wound up in a family that moved to Raymond Terrace. He was only little about four or five that would have been in the late 1940's. Grandad Wilson followed dad and moved to the Terrace too.

Questions 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where you ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food, canoed, boated? What types of marine species were sought?

We have the Williams River, the Hunter River and the Seaham Weir. As a child we always went to Limeburners Creek, as a family we did that. We used to stay there and we had an old hut and of course we went up to Karuah and Mungo. We went everywhere. We used to go up to a place called Mosquito Creek just north of the bridge it's all marshy and swampy there. We used to go there for mud crabs and we used to go to tin city at Stockton to my brother's place there and do beach fishing. For us it's always been part of our life and it was our family get together. We'd do it weekly all the time where we'd go depended on what season. It also came back to what kind of vehicle we had and if we had to rely on family member to help us get around. Nine times out of ten they'd be fifteen of us in the car, people everywhere. Personally I love the rivers, they remind me of my dad's country, that's the time of reconnection and respect and family traditions to make sure they're not being forgotten. With our seafood it gives us a chance for our spirits to reconnect.

When dad grew and we were little we went to live in Humpy's on the old Pacific Highway- today it's via Rangers Road to get to where we were with other family, Aunty Mitten Callagan (John Ridgeway's sister) now its Water Board land. In the old peoples language it was called five mile. There was my Nan and Pop and my aunties. My Aunty Mitten was telling me about other families too I was five at the time. We were outcasts and we all lived together. As many of my families have passed on it has been really hard to get my story. I do wonder how my mum and dad survived. Dad and Grandpa Cook worked in the timber mill in the forest just around Allworth, Limeburners Creek and Clarence Town areas.

We always used the waterways to measure distance when we talked about getting around and to places. That's how we distinguished our travel with our waterways and creeks and everyone knew how long it took to get around. When I was really little we lived at Five Mile north of Raymond Terrace. We'd always shop at the big shop at the Terrace and we used to walk out of the bush to get the old horse and sulky. Every couple of months we used to get a hawker who'd come out with their wares; he'd have pots and pans, tin and material. The family always spoke kindly of the Indian people who came.

We used to use the old hand lines a lot. We had a basic hand line, a bit of stick and the old fishing line and an old rusty hook. I remember the old crab traps, we used to get old chook wire and make crab traps mum used to save meat and put in. It was always such an adventure. We'd always talk about how big and deep they were gonna be and who'd get what nipper. We always had sense of pride.

We'd go out to Karuah and Limeburners we'd have a great feed of oysters while we were going fishing. People used to talk about cobra and we used to go prawning in the river. For the prawns mum used to go to the second hand shops and get old stockings and would sow them together. We'd go prawning with them, and we had little torches to see them. With the stocking we'd go and spread it out. It would be held down with rocks and sticks at the opening of the stocking. And the prawns and sometimes fish would get caught. But the fish would make holes in the stockings and we'd get upset. Mum had a boiler going and we'd put the prawns in and it was the

best taste. Back in the olden days we used to walk on the side of the river we'd see all of the baby prawns so we knew where the big prawns were. We'd know we'd have to chuck the small things back otherwise we'd get growled at by Aunty. Even before the measurements came out we knew because our family we'd tell us.

Sharks. I couldn't tell you how many images we have of the sharks. We'd see the sharks fins coming in the Hunter and Williams River- mum used to bring the baby sharks up until they got bigger. We used to make campfires along the way using cow pats to kept the mosquitos away.

We'd catch mullet, flathead, bream, all of that. The jewfish would be full of worms so we'd leave those. I remember one night we did have one for dinner they cut it up into small cubes to get rid of the bad parts.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

We've had children and I've show my children how to do all of these things fishing and the prawning. We now take the grannies fishing they're 3, 4 and 5. We still go to the same the places. At East Seaham we're right there near the Wallaroo National Park and we have a dam with yabbies which we catch and release with my grandkids today, we put in our yabby traps there. We're not sure how many yabbies are in there.

3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practices been affected, how?

Where we go we're ok.

4. What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue with your cultural practices and look after heritage and where?

Well we've always been there and we need to look after things too and we need to maintain our places as well.

5. What about commercial/tourism industries if rezoning were to occur. Which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine species?

Take only what you need and think about the future.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognized in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

Unless you watch NITV a National Indigenous television station you don't get any of our cultures. I think in fishing shows that people watch that we should be there and in

magazines with our traditions, contemporary practices and talking about the impacts on our environment and what our ideas are. We could even be in the local rag.

It's about sharing our knowledge but not about giving our culture away so we can share but keep our places sacred. We can be with other people non-Indigenous people too and teach them. In the media we can show our connections. We are the living history of our elders and their elders. We are trying to maintain and get back what we have.



Karuah Rivers Mighty Rock Oysters.

Photo Courtesy Doowakee

Glenn Richard Jonas – Environment Protector

Allworth

Questions 1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food and canoeing? What types of marine species were sought?

I was born at Allworth, a tiny village that sits beside the Karuah River in 1953. I am an Aboriginal man. I was taken away from my Aboriginal family when I was three years old and raised in a white family until I was sixteen when I left home. My brother, who is twelve years older than me took me and my sister back to Allworth many times and I was always vaguely aware of my Aboriginality. I identified as an Aboriginal in 1979 when I was twenty six and began the journey to where I am today.

My ancestors on my grandfathers side were Aboriginal and they lived their lives in the Karuah Valley. My Family all lived at Allworth which is where the saltwater meets the freshwater. We always knew that area as grandfather's country and great country it was too. My father was the best fisherman, he would always get a feed of fish, even when the when others would catch nothing. He knew that river like an old friend and he built his own boats using fitches from the mill, shaped by hand, nailed together

then waterproofed with soft tar lifted from Bucketts Way Road on a hot day. Those boats were so heavy I couldn't row them but I caught lots of fish with my dad- flathead, bream, taylor, luderick, jewfish, whiting and blue swimmer crabs. My grandmother was a tiny woman but she caught the biggest jewfish from the bank one evening on a set line. The fish almost dragged her in. She fought for it for a long time before help arrived, it weighed about 45 kilos on the Northern bank.

My great Uncle Dick (Richard) lived a traditional life at Allworth. His home was a bark hut beside the river on the Northern Bank. He was well known for his love of the river and his desire to look after it. I don't know what he would think about things the way they are now with a coal mine in the catchment wanting to discharge toxic waste into it. I feel close to Uncle Dick. I share the name Richard and I have been involved for over ten years in the fight to protect the river from the coal industry. Whenever I'm near Allworth and the river I feel I am home. That's our country and it's deep in my soul and heart. Most of my family have passed on now and lay in Booral cemetery which I visit often. If I have a problem I ask myself what would grandfather have done? I usually find a solution. I thank my brother Bill Jonas for walking the path I now follow. His work with the people is my inspiration.

Here is part of a song I wrote. So who am? I'm Worimi.

"From where I sit up on Curtis Hill I can almost see to the ocean and the line of the river's like my family tree, disappears into the distance. If I shut my eyes I can still see them there just like yesterday, before strangers, brought the changes that took it all away. So who am I? I'm Worimi and I know my dreaming, I am the earth, the river, the sky I'm Worimi, Worimi.

Stan Bell- Aged 80. Lives at Nelson Bay.

Stan with his catch of rabbits.



1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food and canoeing? What types of marine species were sought?

Stan was born in Newcastle and grew up there and his ancestors are from Stroud. Stan spoke about fishing, hunting and gathering in areas immediately surrounding the PSGMLP. At Glen William, Clarence Town and Dungog Stan gathered mushrooms, berries and wild lemons. Stan also hunted for rabbits, kangaroos and native birds in those areas. At Nelson Bay, Fenninghams Island, Tanilba Bay, Lemon Tree Passage, Karuah and up the river to Allworth Stan fished. Stan fished for

squid, whiting, shark, bream, flathead, leatherjacket, blue swimmer and mud crabs. Stan used to prawn with a net and a torch at night with family and friends and they'd cook them on the beach right where they were caught.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

Stan's family wishes to continue doing these traditional activities. Stan's daughter and grandson have carried on with these practices and support looking after the environment which is part of Aboriginal people's heritage and culture.

Diana Stephenson- Stroud.

Photo :Diana conducting a wedding ceremony.



1. Looking at the Marine Park Reserve Maps please locate areas of historical importance where your ancestors hunted, fished, have been diving, gathered food, canoed and boated? What types of marine species were sought?

When I was young our family always went on holidays to Lemon Tree Passage to fish and we enjoyed swimming. We used to camp in a tent on the beach and we used to fish on a boat and go to the small Islands to have picnics. We fished at night off the wharf. My Aunty Kitty used to hold the top fishing spot and caught very large flathead, you don't see those big sizes today. Those days are gone because of overfishing and by commercial fishing that decimated the area maybe that is changing now because of the regulations. We also used to go fishing at Karuah us kids would be get scared because dad used to want to bring catches of shark into the boat. We decided they could fish without us when they were after shark as long as we could play in the Karuah Park or swim in the closed area near the water and we were happy. Other Koori kids from the mission played with us and we had great fun jumping from the rocks into the water. Karuah was a quiet place and we loved it. Now I live along the banks of Mammy Johnson River where we used to fish and swim and collect mussels from along the river banks.

2. In your time are these the same places your family still use and what do you do today?

Now I bank, rock and beach fish but due to the zoning I can't fish close to my home anymore.

3. Looking at the Marine Park zoning have your daily practices been affected, how?

Our ways have been affected by the zones and I hope the government uses this report to reconsider as we do have rights as Aboriginal people. Now though I'd be worried about the water quality we need extensively organised monitoring programs. The Allworth area was a great place to fish to look after our families.

4. What changes would need to be made through zoning of specific areas for you to continue with your cultural practices and look after heritage and where?

We need some of the zones to shift in order to use our traditional areas.

5. What about commercial/tourism industries if rezoning were to occur which areas need to be subject to greater protection in order to conserve or replenish Marine species?

In our area we are very concerned about mining and waste and the potential for it to pollute and compromise our river and the health of the environment. Aboriginal people know how important it is to protect and look after marine species and habitats and that is what I and my family try to stand up for.

6. What ideas do you have to make Indigenous people's views recognized in order to continue cultural practices and to highlight how to replenish shell fish, fish stock and other sea life or plant species?

Aboriginal people need opportunities to get together and talk through many issues about the PSGLMP. Departments need to come together and work with us. We need more community consultation and information.

Aboriginal people's Interviews - Northern areas of the PSGLMP.

Aboriginal people who were interviewed in the Northern areas of the PSGLMP were supplied with the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park Maps and were informed of zoning applications within the Marine Park. A list of questions was read to interviewees in the northern areas of the PSGLMP, in and around Forster. These questions were developed by the Marine Park Authority Manager as a guide to promote meaningful discussions on the Marine Park, the areas of significance for Aboriginal people, as a tool to learn the positive or negative impacts on Aboriginal people with current zones and to give government a more informed picture to make

decisions in the lead up to future rezoning. Through following the questionnaire northern area interviewees were not asked about traditional hunting, fishing and gathering techniques but the absence of this information does not suggest knowledge is lacking. Some interviewees chose not to impart what they considered to be private knowledge, others deviated from the questions. Several interviewees used the process to put their own questions and concerns to the MPA/DECCW in relation to the PSGLMP and Aboriginal people's rights. As a result of interviewees concerns the Garoowa Report recommendations have included the need for widespread, ongoing consultation and community information and negotiation forums.

Questions on the Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park zoning plan.

Q.1. Does the existing zoning plan effect your use of the marine park in any way?

- How
- What degree of impact (slight, moderate, severe impact)

Q.2. What you like to do that you can't now do legally because of the zoning plan?

Q.3. How would you like to see things change?

Q.4. Where does this need to happen? Everywhere or just at specific locations?

Q.5. Are you aware of culturally important sites or activities that you think could be protected in some way by the zoning plan?

Q.6. What do you think needs to be done and how?

Q.7. Would it concern you if the zoning plan did not change?

Q.8. Do you know of other stories or information related to the marine park and indigenous people that you would like to see the marine park authority use in some way?



Photo courtesy DECCW

Eva Leon –Knowledge Holder

Forster

Areas I have been fishing in; North Arm Cove and Karuah. At Bundabah I used to go through with brother Dave to fish for bream, Tea Gardens (with Uncle Dave) conch, Jimmy's Beach to get worms then used them for bait and fished off the Singing Bridge, we'd also get conchs there. At the Singing Bridge also caught many whiting big! Hawks Nest caught sting ray. Nelson Bay, at Salamander Bay, Gladys Leon and husband had a house there. Fingal Beach- Harry and Stephen (Leon) fished the rocks for bream.

Bula swam and fished, Big Gibber- bream and whiting. Treachery Head -picnic, Seal Rocks celebration of Lighthouse Opening, Blueys – Boomerang - Lizzy Beach whiting, 7 Mile Beach- pipis, bream, tailor (years ago), worms, Janey's – black fish, tailor, bream, Goat Track – mutton fish, tailor, drummer, bream and pippis. That Myall place- Boombah, big crowd, turnoff at Bula to go there, Boolambayte Creek I know.

Areas of Importance to you and your family?

7 Mile Beach- Janey's Beach-Booti- walked all along there looking for pippis, Aunty Bip (my Sister Betty) taught Todd Ridgeway to catch worms.

Singing Bridge Tea Gardens Area.

Karuah near Bridge was good for fish.

Tahlee - important historical buildings – churches-Gordon Baggis knows.

Families in each area

Uncle Dave Leon taught to catch worms, blackfish at Karuah.

Grandson has family and mates out Smith's.

Alma's mother (Maude Cunningham) used to cook johnny cakes, cooked fish on coals at the camp on 1 Mile Beach and different ones. Made designs on a plate, putty first, put wiring design with different colours and sold to tourists, abalone- ashtrays.

Bait- Limpets.

Periwinkle- used a jam tin to collect water in and made fire- cook them and picked them out with pin or needle to eat. We used to eat pig face all the time and lilly pillys.

Prawns- many mullet, cunjevoi bait, crabs caught with coat hanger.

And Grandfather- green card, caught black fish and made soup.

Ideas

No bag limits in those days – we shared amongst families, should be the same. What we didn't eat we shared, like some pippis. There could be time limits on areas.

Should any areas be closed?

Not sure you should be allowed to go any time you like.

Whale Dolphin Cruises show the good things.

What happens to the money paid for fishing licence?

Perfect spot near my boat for fish nursery, no mussels anymore, reintroduce them.

Dumped old tyres- do a project.

What stops you doing activities?

Not good to let large boats anchor in sensitive spots.

Speed boats stir up fish and weeds.

No seafood like old days only prawns now, used to get heap of pippis – made curried, fritters, people from Sydney probably took them with rake and nets but we're not allowed – staple food!

Where have you seen the changes?

Mainly to beaches.

Canoes are taking over everywhere, they frighten fish! They should have limit on how close they come.

Areas that are special to you?

Pippis along 7 Mile is important to us.

Clean area, keep it clean, tidy, Aunty Lola Cunningham did that in Wallis lake.

Get notices up at all places so people know, a sign at each.

Use them exemption cards.

Worms and pippi restriction are not right- we know how much to take and what to do with surplus.

Comments

Xmas bells (flowers) - not many- should be protected. Walk out at 7 Mile mainly used for church services, flannel flowers, wild flowers protected.

People made cane chairs out of cabbage tree palms.

Aunty Fay used to ride Mrs Schubert's horse.



Kingfish- Photo Courtesy of DECCW

Donald Simon (Jnr)

1. The zone maps cover too much areas.
2. Sanctuary zone is stopping us from fishing there as my family has fished there for ages.
3. Remove permit for Worimi Aboriginal People.
4. For Worimi People coastal boundary be used.
5. Put sanctuary zone 1km each side of Dark Point Zone, but Aboriginals still allowed to fish.
6. No bag limits on some fish when fishing for families.
7. To be allowed to fish anywhere in Worimi coastal boundaries.

Donald goes fishing from Pebbly Beach down to Yagon Gibber. He has fished for many years, catching: bream, cod, drummer, mullet, groper and getting bait for jew fishing. He also fishes off beaches for tailor. Donald also loves to fish around Cape Hawk area and Seal Rocks. Donald also explained to me about the pippis is that you can never transfer them from beach to beach as they are like fish, they follow food source.

Des Simon – Fisherman

The following are Des's questions to DECCW.

1. What about the future and fishing in Wallis Lake? What plans do the Greens and Marine parks have in Wallis Lake?
2. How can they change permits when they are not supposed to be changing anything until 2012-2013?
3. How many lines can you have to go fishing in a boat?
4. How many fish traps can one person use?

Des also wanted to include further comment at a later date but this is to be finalised.



Noel Leon - Fisherman

Noel's questions to the Marine Park Authority/ DECCW and ideas are as follows.

1. Why can't we take pippis home?

2. How come Aboriginal people in the Northern territory get more than what we are getting?
3. I have been fishing in all those areas for the past 52 years and these zones are going to stop us.
4. I fish from Blackhead to Nelson Bay.
5. A lot of the sanctuary zones are covering areas where we fish for many years.
6. We can lift these permits off all Aboriginal people as this is where my family has fished for many generations.
7. The whole Worimi tribal area is covered by these zones.
8. Make sanctuary zones for white people but Koori people can still fish.
9. Keep white people out of sanctuary areas as they destroy the areas.
10. Aboriginal people must be allowed to fish in all areas.

Noel and his family have fished up and down the mid north coast over 50 years. Noel fishes for: bream, drummer, cod, tailor, jewfish and groper. Sanctuary zones are stopping him from fishing for the fish he loves.

Jason Martin - Fisherman



Jason's questions to DECCW are as follows.

1. Why are there no signs on land displaying where the sanctuary zones are in the water?
2. The sanctuary zones cover too much area.
3. We should be allowed to fish anywhere unless we are in a sanctuary zone.
4. Try and lift permit or provide benefits for Kooris of the area to fish more.
5. Sanctuary zones should be changed and not be so big.
6. Should put a 1km buffer area each side of Dark Point sanctuary zone, as long as Kooris can fish there or maybe even a fence around it.
7. Put more signs up showing where sanctuary zones are and signs needed at Dark Point.
8. There should be no zones shutting Koori people out.

Jason goes fishing from Tuncurry Beach to Seal Rocks. He loves fishing for: mullet, drummer, blackfish, bream, cod, groper and tailor. Most of these are caught when they are running off the rocks and beach.

Percy Simon-Fisherman



1. I have fished the marine park areas for many years.

2. The most important thing to me is how these sanctuary zones work and what is going to happen in the future.
3. Some permits may need to be lifted off Aboriginal people and work it out through meetings.
4. All areas need to be changed from their zoning.
5. There should be no bag limits for Aboriginal people.
6. With cultural sensitive areas, put fences up made of wood or steel.
7. All the pink and yellow areas need to be changed to allow Aboriginal people access.

Percy loves fishing around the rocks for: bream, drummer and blackfish. He also loves fishing in Wallis Lake for bream, flathead mullet and catching shellfish. His family have showed him how to hunt and catch food for generations and would like to pass this on to the next generation.

Greg Ridgeway - Fisherman



Greg's ideas are as follows.

1. The zoning by Marine Parks covers too much and my family has fished these areas for many, many years.

2. The zones stop us from fishing and they are put where our ancestors have fished for thousands of years.
3. The permits need to be taken off us so we can fish in the places our previous generations have fished and taught and also show the future generations where the Elders fished previously.
4. Cape Hawke and Seal Rocks are culturally sensitive places to the local Kooris.
5. Dark Point should have signs and fences put around it.
6. We should have our own permits on who can fish in some areas.
7. There is change that looks like it says that is where our ancestors fished but you can't now.

Greg fishes from One Mile Beach down to Seal Rocks, he chases: drummer, cod, screws, blackfish, parrot fish, bream, mullet and groper.

Greg and his family want to continue to fish as he has done for many years in these areas.



Snapper- Photo courtesy DECCW

Todd Ridgeway- Fisherman

Todd's ideas are as follows.

1. Those areas are where we always fished and want our kids and their kids to do the same.
2. These zones stop us from fishing there, why should we need a permit?
3. Lift the conditions of the permits where there is no fishing or permit is needed by Aboriginal people.
4. There are many places important to Aboriginal people, all places to me, including Cape Hawke and Seal Rocks.
5. Dark Point should have sanctuary zone but Aboriginals can fish there.
6. We should be allowed to dive in sanctuary zones but white people should pay a fee to Worimi people to fish.
7. Change yellow and pink zones to allow Aboriginal people to fish for food. Todd fishes from Tuncurry breakwall to Seal Rocks.

He likes fishing in the sanctuary zones and sees the permits as blocking him from fishing there. He loves catching: bream, cod, drummer, blackfish, mullet, snapper, flathead, groper, jewfish – he gets live bait.

GAROOWA COASTAL SEA COUNTRY REPORT, PORT STEPHENS-GREAT LAKES 2011 RECOMMENDATIONS.

There are hurdles but as a community we can work together.



Photo: Billy, James, Ridgeway, Phillip Manton and Hugie Ridgeway and friends.

The Garoowa Coastal Sea Country Report includes significant information to support Aboriginal people's rights, concerns, questions, suggestions in relation to the Marine Park Authority's (MPA) management of Worimi people's sea country. The Garoowa Report has been developed to gather information for government to understand some of the Aboriginal communities concerns in relation to the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park (PSGLMP). It's clear, throughout the process of researching and consulting with the Aboriginal community that there needs to be ongoing communications and opportunities provided by government in order to commence meaningful negotiations on PSGLMP management issues. Any future rezoning of the PSGLMP needs to be research based and supportive of Aboriginal people's rights to practice culture.

Many people involved in the Garoowa report have given their individual recommendations on the management of the PSGLMP and these are found within their interviews. Common ideas have been considered in developing the list of recommendations but they are not intended to be viewed as absolutes. Aboriginal people are entitled to have different opinions, ideas or interests allowing for the right to retain cultural practices.

The recommendations highlight the need for the NSW Government and the Marine Park Authority (MPA) to take on a partnership approach with Aboriginal people. The reasons are many; to respect the rights of Indigenous people to be included in decision making in Garoowa-coastal sea country, to reduce negative management practices and regulations that have hindered Aboriginal people's culture within the PSGLMP, to encourage collaboration on sustainable measures that need to be developed and implemented to recover and maintain Marine species and healthy marine habitats.

In writing the recommendations there is an acknowledgement of existing departments, committees, policies and programs that are in place throughout the PSGLMP but there is a need for the information to filter more extensively to the community and for Aboriginal people to be continually involved in processes that occur within country. With this in mind the following recommendations are to set up a number of forums.

No singular consultation process or project would be adequate to address the PSGLMP complexities. The Garoowa Report recommends that the Marine Park Authority management, its heritage and research units are asked to work more closely with the Catchment Management Authority (CMA), Department of Primary Industries-Fisheries, Port Stephens and Great Lakes Local Governments, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), Aboriginal organisations, corporations, family groups and individuals in order deliver the following forums and to fill the gaps in the overall management of the PSGLMP.

Recommendations

Overall Management

- The Marine Park Authority/ NSW government commences widespread negotiations with Traditional Owners, Custodians, Knowledge Holders- Worimi Nation and the local Aboriginal community in relation to the "The Garoowa (Coastal Sea Country) Memorandum of Understanding" and formally accepts the MOU agreement to introduce better management practices within the PSGLMP.
- That MPA-Local Area Management work with the above mentioned groups on following Garoowa Report recommendations. A series of public forums need to be held to work on PSGLMP issues as detailed in but not limited to the following recommendations.

Setting up the process for community forums to work through PSGLMP issues.

1. The appointment of additional MPA positions are needed to work on PSGLMP management processes. Funding also sought for MPA and Fisheries Indigenous traineeships and for Aboriginal consultants to assist with the following processes.
2. MPA obtains funds and gains the support of other government bodies and Aboriginal groups to set up an advisory board and hold forums throughout the PSGLMP. Roles are divvied up depending on the regulatory bodies' roles and the skill sets needed to run individual forums.
3. The Aboriginal community needs opportunities to talk about the usage of traditional areas in order to prepare for the forums. The following forums need to occur across all towns that surround the Marine Park as issues vary. There are four forum areas that are outlined below and these need to be given appropriate timeframes to carefully map the multitude of management issues
4. After the forums - program funding is again sourced and used in the development of programs as identified through the Garoowa Recommendations.
5. All parties review the programs and adapt them as needed.

1. PSGLMP BIO-DIVERSITY FUTURE REZONING FORUMS.

MPA, EPA, CMA and Local Government supply research information on the health of the PGSLMP and Aboriginal people share their ideas on the health of habitat and species. In preparing for the forums the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Estuary Management Plan 2000 is reviewed and updated by Councils to provide the public with accurate information to address environmental changes that have occurred over the past ten years.

Relevant parties discuss current monitoring programs and inform community of rare, threatened, endangered and vulnerable species. Any research in relation to the PSGLMP should be available to the community. The public will be given opportunities to understand the health of the Marine Park and gaps in research information can be identified and than filled to make more informed choices on possible rezoning when the overall state of the environment is known.

Discussions to occur on possible re-stocking of species.

Community concerns regarding commercial fishing practices are relayed and discussed with the NSW government departments. At forums relevant agencies share information on commercial licences buyback process as a number of interviewee concerns relate to commercial fishing within the PSGLMP. Another topic, reviewing commercial net sizes used within the bays and harbours.

2. PSGLMP TRADITIONAL RIGHTS AND PERMIT FORUMS.

In developing this report overarching concerns relate to Aboriginal people's traditional areas where fishing, hunting, gathering and other significant practices are hindered through the current zoned areas within the PSGLMP, particularly with the pink or yellow zones. Examples are the collection of shellfish, crabbing and worming. In an advisory role Aboriginal communities need to be consulted extensively about their rights to occupy and conduct activities freely to maintain culture without the threat of current laws, regulations and restrictions. There is a need for a forum that allows for Aboriginal peoples, cultural rights and responsibilities to be discussed, respected and included in future management and zoning policies.

Permits- Designated local Marine Park Authority contact people could be nominated to simplify the process of gaining Aboriginal permits for traditional areas and events. The simplified process should be developed with Aboriginal people and adopted by MPA. Issues to be explored; Aboriginal people's right to traditionally fish, hunt and gather, is there a need for a limited/unlimited activity permit system? Example of a topic to stimulate discussion, if hunting occurred within a Pink Sanctuary for x amount of months when the fish are in certain places, or it's the right time to catch them could a permit match these timeframe and factors. Also how to balance recovery of species with supporting culturally utilised areas for camping.

3. POPULATION GROWTH AND FUTURE IMPACTS IN THE PSGLMP FORUMS.

Forums run by MPA, the Port Stephens and Great Lakes Local Governments to work on a sustainable practices project. This area involves dealing with population increases and the impact of tourism to reduce the risks to the PSGLMP marine species and habitats. Examples to promote research and discussions; use of jet skis, is there a need to put a cap on dolphin tours operators and should fees be collected for PSGLMP research purposes, possible cap on recreational fishing competition participants and is there a need to reduce competition catches. Signage related to currents need to be updated and placed in dangerous waterways and includes respecting Garoowa.

4. MARINE WATCH HIGH RISK MONITORING PROGRAM FORUMS

There is a need to establish a comprehensive high risk monitoring program that covers the PSGLMP, with land, rivers and sea with pollution practices that are of concern located and mapped. Involvement is needed by the MPA, CMA, EPA, Port Stephens, the Great Lakes Councils and the community.

The forums allow community to pinpoint areas where they live that are likely to be damaged due to human activities, example marinas, farms, illegal fishing activities, illegal sea dumping of rubbish, seepages, toxic waste, run-off from commercial business, mining, farms, building sites and sewage.

There is a need for regulatory bodies to relay where water monitoring occurs and the relay the results in weekly newspapers. At present current monitoring is not widespread or consistent enough and often is subject to grant availability. Project funds need to be allocated for the High Risk Monitoring Program. In the Upper Branch, namely Allworth a number of interviewees have spoken about pollution concerns. Recently the Great Lakes Shire secured a grant for water monitoring there but an interagency approach needs to be taken to fill the gaps in water quality testing and monitoring programs within the PSGLMP

- An additional **Marine Watch Program** needs to be established to successfully monitor the whole of the PSGLMP. Community participation is vital as monitoring issues and information needs to be relayed to the Port Stephens and Great Lakes Local Government and the MPA.

Education – For recreational fisherman and visitors to the PSGLMP.

- The Garoowa Report recommends additional funds to employ Aboriginal people to work with MPA staff to develop a number of educational tools to promote, demonstrate and teach looking after Garoowa areas within the PSGLMP.

- A compulsory educational DVD needs to be developed and shown to each person as they apply for a recreational fishing licence. The DVD could have bag limits, species identification, sizing and sex identification, marine zone information and handling techniques. The DVD presented with Aboriginal people and MPA staff.

- MPA educational pamphlets could incorporate Indigenous people ideas on looking after sea and river country.

- There is a need for the development of a PSGLMP Education Kit, with more cultural lesson plans than are currently used by the MPA. To develop the package there needs to be monies secured to employ a kit project person who consults community, collaborates and writes the kit. Aboriginal people should be paid for their involvement.

- Additional funds are needed for ongoing presentation with MPA staff making inroads for local knowledgeable Aboriginal facilitators to co-present. The Aboriginal person may already be a MPA staff member, or they may be taken on for the project as a consultant and presenter to deliver the kits in schools and to the general public.

- Cultural awareness training for all MPA staff is necessary and needs to be facilitated by local Indigenous Knowledgeholders.

Tips for looking after Garoowa - sea-country.

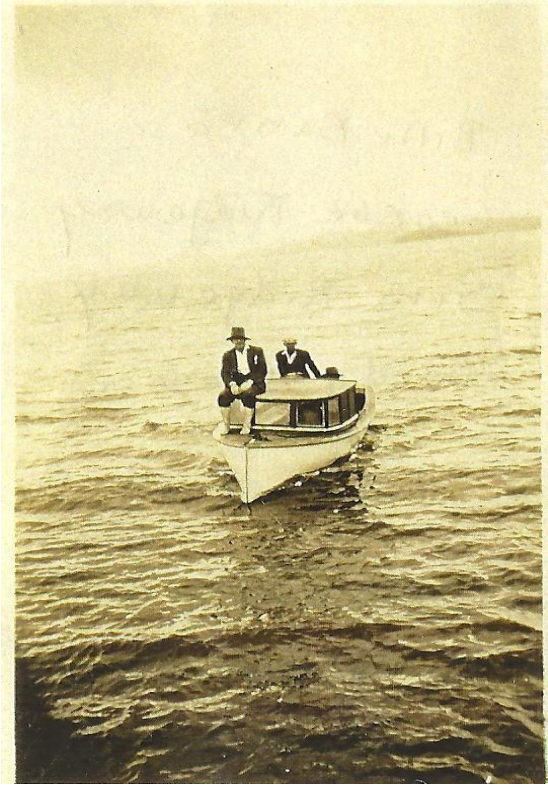


Photo Geoff, Jim Ridgeway and Gordy Gleeson.

In a number of MPA information pamphlet common tips are found on looking after the PSGLMP the following tips could be incorporated into future education materials.

To avoid damaging Aboriginal sites do not drive over sand dunes. If rising sea levels uncover sites please report this to the National Parks and Wildlife who liaise with Aboriginal people on cultural sites management and protection issues.

Garoowa needs your help to stay healthy and strong, throw back undersized fish and the biggest fish as they are breeders. Stick to the bag limits and think of taking only what your family need to eat today. The biggest reward is to leave our children's children a healthy marine habitat.

Please leave cars in car parks and use designated tracks to avoid crushing invertebrates. Invertebrates are important food sources for birds. Please report to National Parks and wildlife carers any injured animals.

Try to look after your hooks to prevent damaging undersize fish. Take home any old fishing lines to prevent harm to marine animals and boat propellers.

Learn more about your marine life. Read the Marine Parks Authority Recreational Fishing Guide, Zone Plan User guide and booklets. Surf the web or ring the MPA for more information. Participate in educational walks these occur during the school holidays.

Take your rubbish with you, cigarette butts and plastic bags choke turtles and other species.

Slow down on the waterways as many Garoowa dolphins have been injured from boat propellers and watercraft. Dolphins need space to feed and look after their young, respect their needs. If you sit quietly on the shores you will see dolphins pass close by.

Get involved in looking after our waters. Report any pollution to the Marine Parks Authority or your council offices.

Report suspect fishing or dumping activities to the Marine Parks Authority or Fisheries offices.

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