



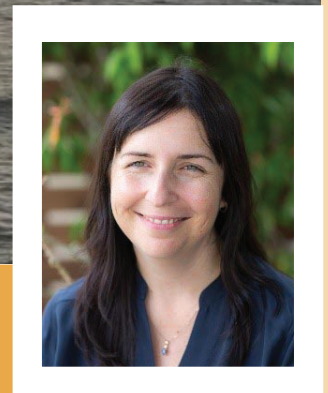
VIRTUS HERITAGE

**E-NEWS EDITION 12,
AUGUST 2022**



Acknowledgment of Country

Virtus Heritage is committed to the spirit of reconciliation and acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and the Traditional Custodians of the states and territories of Australia. We recognise the Traditional Owners of the lands we work within. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging in maintaining the culture, country and their spiritual and historical connections to the lands and waters.



Welcome

By Dr Mary-Jean Sutton

Resilience and renewal are the themes of this biannual newsletter. We have survived two floods and the continuing rainfall in Northern NSW, and with the support from our clients, communities and partners, our team is stronger than ever. With the support of our clients, communities and partners, we have achieved over 70% increase in annual revenue and continued growth in our team, welcoming an additional three new team members to permanent positions, retaining our present team and increasing Indigenous representation in our team.

In this edition you can read about our some of our continuing projects in historical archaeology and Aboriginal cultural heritage, in the Mid Coast region and the outcomes of some of our recent grants with partners, including the Bandjalang Aboriginal Corporation and Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council respectively. We welcome new team members, Garth Thompson (Graduate Archaeologist) based in Sydney and Tyler Beebe (Senior Archaeologist) based in Newcastle.

Thanks for taking the time to read our newsletter.

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PROJECTS

Exploring Biripi Country

Manning River Cultural Mapping and Survey

Martin Wright & Elle Lillis

In February 2021, the NSW Government announced that it would be proceeding with the development of a strategic business case for the establishment of a permanent entrance to the Manning River. As part of this process, Virtus Heritage was engaged by Rhelm, on behalf of Transport for NSW, to prepare an Aboriginal Archaeological Baseline Assessment (AABA) Report as part of a Preliminary Environmental Investigation (PEI).

On 12 November 2021, Virtus conducted a cultural mapping workshop at Biripi ACMC Aged and Community Care Marrangbah Cottage with Biripi Elders and Knowledge Holders, to identify sites, features, and cultural values in the study area both tangible and intangible. Lee Davison (Aboriginal Community and Heritage Partner, TfNSW) and Elle Lillis, Harry Rees Parkes and Kelly Kent from Virtus Heritage facilitated the workshop, utilising GIS programs, paper maps and open discussions to share and record information. The workshop was a wonderful cultural exchange with the Biripi Elders and Knowledge Holders. The Virtus team were privileged to hear family memories and stories over a cuppa and record sacred and significant places and values on Biripi Country. The results of the cultural mapping have been used to inform the AABA and all recorded information from the workshop will be given to Elders and Knowledge Holders' nominated keeping place (for example with the LALC, AIATSIS and/or family members).

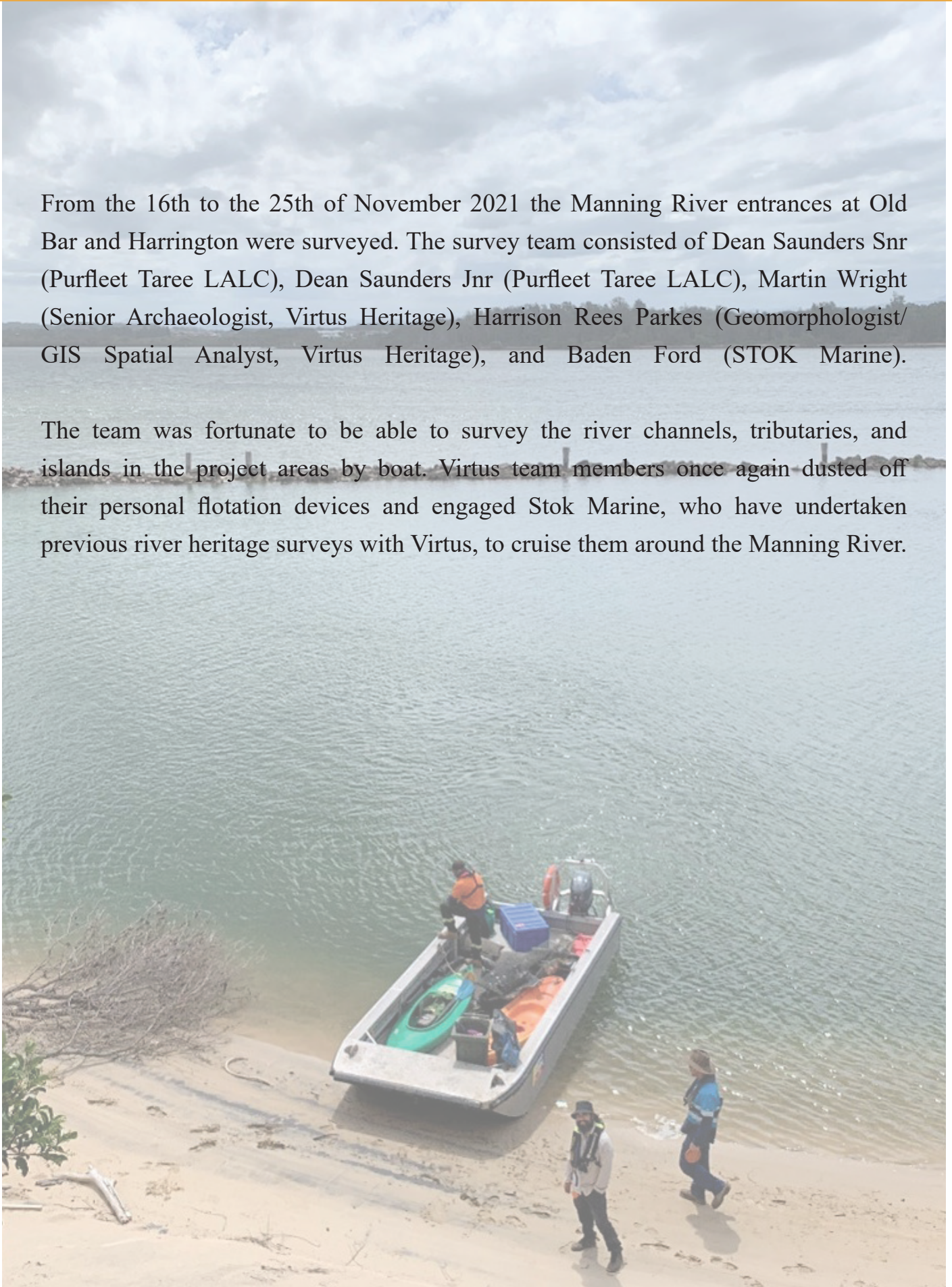


[Image: 01. Old Bar Beach – Martin 01

PROJECTS

From the 16th to the 25th of November 2021 the Manning River entrances at Old Bar and Harrington were surveyed. The survey team consisted of Dean Saunders Snr (Purfleet Taree LALC), Dean Saunders Jnr (Purfleet Taree LALC), Martin Wright (Senior Archaeologist, Virtus Heritage), Harrison Rees Parkes (Geomorphologist/GIS Spatial Analyst, Virtus Heritage), and Baden Ford (STOK Marine).

The team was fortunate to be able to survey the river channels, tributaries, and islands in the project areas by boat. Virtus team members once again dusted off their personal flotation devices and engaged Stok Marine, who have undertaken previous river heritage surveys with Virtus, to cruise them around the Manning River.



PROJECTS

Old Bar

The Manning River entrance at Old Bar, Farquhar Inlet, is an area of cultural significance to the Biripi. The landscape here ranges from large sand dunes and long stretches of beach to sandy islands, swampy inlets, residential areas, and areas of modern farmland and oyster cultivation. The mouth of the southern channel has moved over time as evidenced by patches of river cobbles that occur across the landscape.

The team surveyed Farquhar Inlet, including the south channel, Oyster Arm, Luthrie Inlet, Scotts Creek and islands by boat as well as spending a couple of days surveying stretches of Old Bar Beach on foot, where they investigated a number of previously recorded middens and surveying around Farquhar Park, an Aboriginal Place and area of significance identified during the cultural mapping workshop. The Farquhar Inlet area is rich in resources with the team witnessing plentiful rock oyster and other shellfish, the occasional wallaby, goannas, and numerous fish (and fishermen).



Harrington

The Harrington entrance to the Manning River, Harrington Inlet, has undergone greater development than the southern entrance. The township of Harrington spreads across the northern bank of the river while to the south, the village of Manning Point occupies part of the southern bank. The channel is dotted with oyster racks and fishermen frequently use the wharves at Manning Point.

The team used the boat to survey both banks of the river, Sheather Creek, and the islands that sit within the river. The team also spent time walking the length of Harrington and the beach area north of the township as well as the river and beach sides of Manning Point. Here too, there are plentiful resources with the team observing kangaroos, sting rays, dolphins, and copious amounts of rock oyster, whelks, and pipis. Recent flooding in the area was also apparent with debris strewn across the landscape. Despite the various impacts the area has undergone, evidence of Aboriginal occupation is still visible in the landscape with the team finding a number of shell middens during their survey.

Walking and boating through Biripi country was a great privilege and a valuable experience for Martin and Harry. The knowledge gained from the survey and the cultural mapping workshop is a valuable contribution to the overall project and will help inform the decision-making process.



PROJECTS

Ground-Penetrating Radar Surveys at Auckland Airport Northern Runway Development

Dr Emma St Pierre

May 2022

Virtus Heritage was engaged by CFG Heritage on behalf of the Auckland International Airport Ltd to conduct GPR surveys within the Auckland Airport Northern Runway Development. The survey area is located north of the Auckland Airport, Māngere, on a sand dune and bluff adjacent to the Manakau Harbour. Previous archaeological investigations of sites in the area by CFG revealed the presence of features including midden, pits, terraces, ovens, postholes and a number of burials.



PROJECTS



GPR surveys were undertaken over 9 days in May, 2022 by Dr Emma St Pierre and Elle Lillis, and assisted by Nigel Denny from Te Ākitai, and Brendan Kneebone and Kirstin Roth from CFG Heritage.

Data was collected in 12 grids covering an area over 1 hectare and a variety of landforms, including areas previously excavated by CFG Heritage. Data analysis is ongoing so watch this space.



PROJECTS

Yooroonah Tank Barrier

Gina Scheer & Pauline Fowler

In April and May this year, Virtus Heritage were engaged by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Northern Tablelands Area to prepare an Archaeological Landscape Management Plan (ALMP). The subject of the ALMP- the Yooroonah Tank Barrier - is partially located in the Cathedral Rock National Park. The tank barrier is also situated on land that was a historical travelling stock route and on its eastern end it crosses the Armidale Road.



Figure 1: This is the top section of the site, including a lookout spot in the rocks and part of the timber pole barrier (burnt timber) extending across the ridge and north of the old Ebor Road.



Figure 2: View to west of the 8 concrete tetrahedra at the edge of the marsh.



Figure 3: 2004 photograph of entrance to tunnel showing wooden frame and slats.



Figure 4: View from the 2022 Assessment of entrance to tunnel, with no wooden elements in place.

The Yooroonah Tank Barrier is listed on the State Heritage Register, Item No. 01803, endorsed in November 2009 and updated in 2015. The tank barrier is the most intact survivor of similar WW2 barriers, and it incorporates a rock lookout, rows of timber poles, a tunnel under the old road which was to be detonated, a set of concrete tetrahedra, and the archaeological remains of the construction area and workers housing. The site has been damaged by bushfires, most recently in 2019. At this stage, the ALMP will assist NSW NPWS as part of their heritage asset management for the Yooroonah Tank Barrier.



PROJECTS



Tank barriers were a little known but fundamental factor in Australia's defence against Japanese invasion, which was anticipated after the January 1942 bombing of Darwin. Tank Barriers were located in about 50 locations throughout NSW, in coastal beach areas such as at Stockton and under inland roads, such as this site at Yooroonah near Ebor, and nearby at Tenterfield where two such sites were located. The Tenterfield site crosses the Mount Lindesay Highway and is a heritage item and popular tourist site, where signage helps explain the layout and composition of the tank barrier.

The ALMP developed by Virtus provided updated information available for the site, to date, has mapped the area to confirm places of importance and places of no importance and has set out a number of heritage management policies addressing conservation, restoration, access etc. Detailed mapping of the remaining features at the Yooroonah Tank Barrier was undertaken during a three-day field. The results of this mapping, in comparison to original reports on feature counts undertaken in 1996, shown a significant degradation of the site, in particular the wooden features.

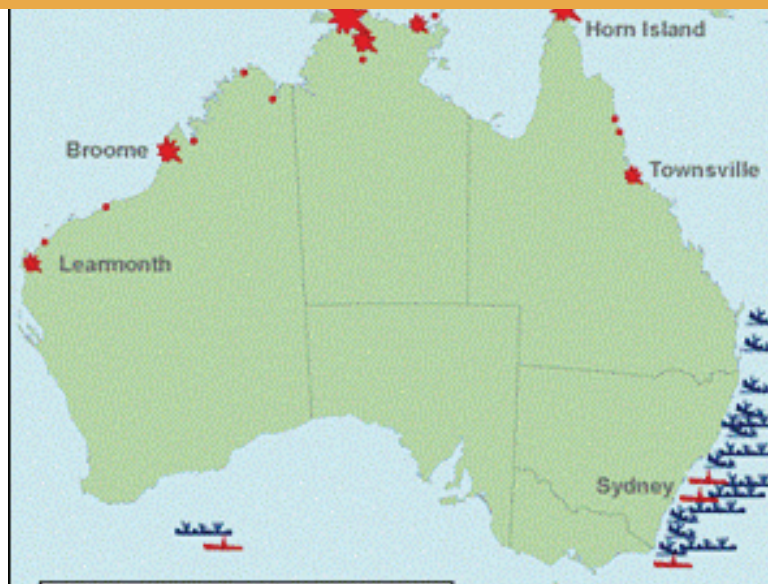


Figure 5: Map of Australia showing places of attack on land and sea. (Australian War Memorial, Australia under attack 1942-1943.)

The project was completed with advice from a structural engineer relating to the tunnel and to road access. One of the key issues which has stopped public access for the site relates to public safety as the site is located on a bend in the Armidale Road with very poor visibility for oncoming traffic. During the course of the project, significant communications with Transport for NSW and other stakeholders regarding a change in site access has been completed, with works to be undertaken over the next 18 months to 2 years. Community consultation has been a key part of the project including with the former staff members of the University of New England and with the Nashos, a local community group in Armidale, with meetings arranged through the NSW NPWS Ranger, Nerida Holznel. Their information and assistance at the site was invaluable.



Figure 6: Nerida Holznel, Harold Heffernan, Pauline Fowler, Gina Scheer and Barry Dawson.

PROJECTS

Men's and Women's Cultural Sites Survey

Dirawong Reserve

In collaboration with Bandjalang Aboriginal Corporation



Our team was privileged to work with the Bandjalang Aboriginal Corporation undertaking men's and women's surveys for cultural sites survey and environmental management advice at their spiritual lands within the Dirawong Reserve, Evans Head NSW.

PROJECTS



The project was funded by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and as a result of the surveys, numerous cultural places were revisited and recorded as well as new sites found eroding out of the soils in the Reserve. Sites which included workshop sites for stone tool manufacture, middens with occupation deposit and caves that demonstrate the ancient connection of Bandjalang people to their country to the present day. The project is the first archaeological survey of the Dirawong Reserve. Mary-Jean, Pauline, Simon, Martin, Harry and Jac had a wonderful time being on country with Tara, Uncle Warren, Uncle Tony, Afzal, Harry and Ian on country. We are working together on the final report and site recording information over the coming months. We all feel incredibly blessed to have been part of such an important project to protect Bandjalang cultural heritage.



PROJECTS



Fingal Headland Drone 3D Model

Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council and Virtus Heritage were proud to share for National Archaeology Week, a 3D model of Fingal Headland an outcome of cultural and archaeological surveying funded by Heritage NSW ACH grant funding. TBLALC have a cultural and statutory responsibility to protect, engage and promote cultural heritage values and landscapes within the Tweed-Byron region. The 3D model is available to view through our facebook page.





Virtus Heritage Internal Conference 2022 Yamba, Yaegl Country

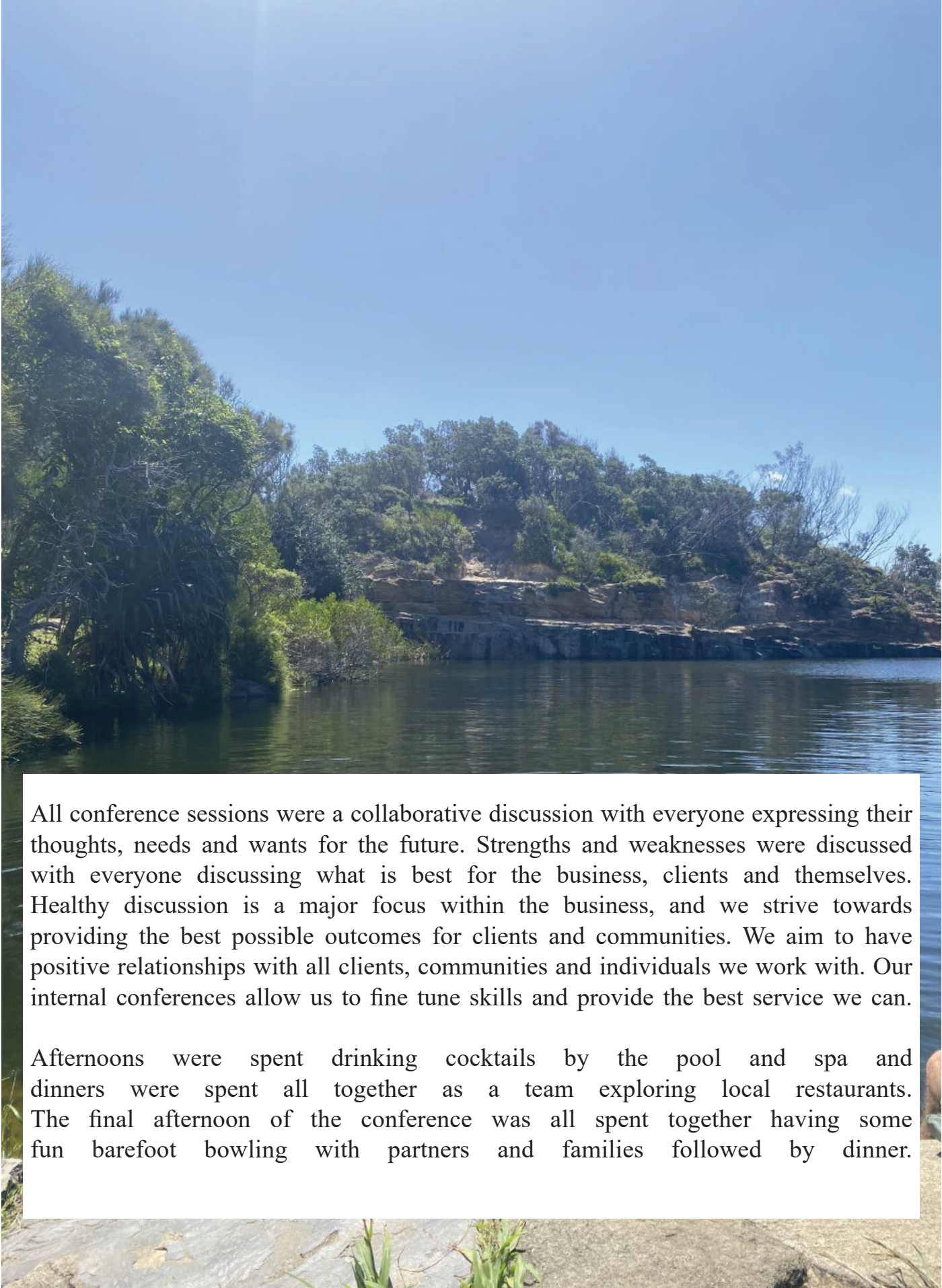
In February 2022, the Virtus Heritage team travelled to Yamba for our annual internal conference where we stayed at Angourie Resort. Over the following three days our team spent fine tuning their skills which included conference sessions on productivity and efficiency, reporting and marketing. Team bonding was a focus of the conference, getting everyone together in one space to discuss how we can collaboratively better the business.

Throughout the last two years the team have had to communicate mainly through screens via zoom calls and emails as a means of communication so for some new team members the conference was the first time meeting everyone. Yamba was the perfect location for getting everyone together and spending time bonding as a team.

The internal conference started off with a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony by Yaegl Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. Dinner and drinks following allowed the team, their families and partners to mingle and get to know each other.

The first day of the conference included a motivational speaking session with Suzi Dent, this was a great way to kick off the conference and got the team in the right mindset for the following sessions. Following the conference sessions that afternoon the team all travelled shortly down the road to the blue and green pools where a few brave team members jumped into the pools while others supervised from below.

NOTICEBOARD



All conference sessions were a collaborative discussion with everyone expressing their thoughts, needs and wants for the future. Strengths and weaknesses were discussed with everyone discussing what is best for the business, clients and themselves. Healthy discussion is a major focus within the business, and we strive towards providing the best possible outcomes for clients and communities. We aim to have positive relationships with all clients, communities and individuals we work with. Our internal conferences allow us to fine tune skills and provide the best service we can.

Afternoons were spent drinking cocktails by the pool and spa and dinners were spent all together as a team exploring local restaurants. The final afternoon of the conference was all spent together having some fun barefoot bowling with partners and families followed by dinner.

NOTICEBOARD

Emma, our team member from New Zealand virtually joined us for the conference sessions as she stayed at a lovely hotel in New Zealand and participated via a zoom call in the conference sessions.

We are looking forward to all being together at the annual internal conference next year which is already in the works and being currently planned.



NOTICEBOARD

Supporting National Breast Cancer foundation

The National Breast Cancer foundation (NBCF) is Australia's leading non governmental funded research body. It aims to improve understanding of how breast cancer originates,



grows and spreads to enhance outcomes for all who are impacted. In support of the NBCF, Mary Jean has kitted our staff up with their own bright high visibility work wear. Each year Virtus Heritage has purchased products and given donations to this very worthwhile fund. A

number of staff were to participate in the Westpac Rescue Helicopter walk from Byron to Lennox, however, with the restrictions due to Covid the organisers were unable to run the event. Hopefully next year, we can participate in the great coastal walk, in our high vis wear and raise more funds for another beneficial cause.

In June we were very fortunate to come together as a team and complete some insightful oral history training with Dr Sally Babidge from the University of Queensland. As many of the team were coming into our Kingscliff office it was an opportunity to show off our bright high visibility NBCF shirts together. We may need to order in a specially cut high pink vis shirt for Trinity, front and centre, though she is wearing her high vis pink collar!



Staff Training and Professional Development Updates

Staff members of Virtus Heritage have been upskilling while gaining expertise and knowledge in a variety of course work and mandatory training this year. Numerous experts and a couple of Virtus team members have shared their knowledge and facilitated days in the Kingscliff office and out in the field training. Here is a summary of what courses have been completed by the team:

- Oral History Workshop with Dr. Sally Babidge, Department of Anthropology, School of Social Science from the University of Queensland (assisted by Tribute Mboweni, Graduate Student) on the ethnographic methodologies for cultural materials generation. Topics included Politics, observation, consent, interview techniques, notetaking and practice. The team in on this training included Mary-Jean, Kelly, Tas, Martin, Clare, Garth, Gina, Harry, Pauline and Caroline. This training was undertaken to assist us with cultural mapping projects.
- Expert Witness Training which looked at understanding the legal process, the role and expectations of expert witnesses. Additionally, the awareness of the rules and obligations of expert witnesses and how to frame and write expert advice in impact assessments. Mary Jean, Emma, Gina and Elle completed this training.
- Banaam Cultural Intelligence Training with the lovely team from Banaam in which we were very appreciative that they shared their insights, cultural knowledge and language with us. The team on this training were Tas, Pauline, Kelly, Caroline, Elle, Harry, Gina, Emma, Mary-Jean and Julian.

NOTICEBOARD

Staff Training and Professional Development Updates

- St John Ambulance has provided Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Training for various staff. Martin & Harry underwent Extensive Remote and Isolated site first aid training in April. They were both fortunate to complete a Defensive 4WD driving at Ourimbah State Forest, NSW back in March too, that has them covered for some extreme driving conditions.
- Pauline Fowler facilitated a Drone Mapping Training Day in Fingal for Tas and Clara. It sounded like a beautiful sunny day out in the field. We look forward to seeing the drone back in action in another part of this incredible environment that we live in.
- Tas has completed her Adobe Indesign Advanced Course and is designing many documents and reports with her newfound skills. She also completed a Social Media Engagement Course through Tafe NSW.
- Garth, Harry, Martin, Pauline and Clare completed internal training with Mary-Jean focussing on site recording, landform sensitivity and significance assessments for Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments.
- Lastly Kelly Kent shared her extensive knowledge with the admin team and trained Tas, Clara and Caroline in Nitro PDF Merge documentation last month.

Virtus Heritage has some exciting news:-

We have passed our Stage 2 ISO 9001 Quality Assurance certification and audit; and A goal of ours has been to get the Work Place Health and Safety ISO 45001:2018 Certification, which we have now achieved. Our financial and personal commitments to quality and safety to keep/gain accreditations is substantial, and it is important not only for current projects but future projects and professional reputation and to keep all of us and our client's safe so we couldn't be prouder in this news.



Rising from the Embers Festival 2022

May 27th and 28th Pauline one of our senior Archaeologists and Tas from our admin team travelled to Newcastle for the annual Rising from the Embers Festival which is a collaboration between the University of Newcastle and Wollotuka Institute with major sponsors Hunter Local Land Services.



The event runs for two days, celebrating culture and community, land and water, with a goal of environmental stability and innovation. It is a great event for community and students to attend to discuss, learn and enjoy performances throughout the day by the talented singers and dancers.

NOTICEBOARD

The first day of the event consisted of high school and university students coming along to explore their future options and learn about what we and the many other stall holders do. The second day consisted of community coming to learn and enjoy the event with many families in attendance. Not only was it a great event for us to showcase who we are and what we are achieving as a company, it was wonderful to meet like minded companies and organizations with similar core values.

Virtus Heritage held a stall showcasing our latest works, we had an array of marketing materials on offer to look at including past newsletters, toolkits and coloring in pages for the children in attendance to enjoy doing. It was a wonderful event to attend as a company, sharing our stories with others, we look forward to attending next years Rising from the Embers festival.



Cemeteries Trust Presentation

Emma, Leweena, Mary-Jean, Dr Peter Mitchell and Simon Pearce participated in a presentation on the Unmarked Graves and Cemeteries Tool Kit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities to Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW on 23 February 2022. This tool kit was funded by the Commonwealth and we gained some positive feedback on the circulation of the tool kit and its importance to communities as a useful tool for researching and protecting unmarked graves and cemeteries.

Mary-Jean's Engineering Presentation on Coastal Areas

On Monday 18 July, Mary-Jean presented a seminar to the Engineers Australia's Coastal, Ocean and Port Engineering Panel (COPEP). The topic was Aboriginal Cultural Heritage of the NSW Coast – Considerations for coastal planning and design and presented to an audience predominantly of asset owners / project managers from local and state government or consultants specialising in coastal management and design of coastal infrastructure. Topics covered included cultural heritage values for the NSW coast, legislation, policy, approvals process and examples of projects and outcomes achieved and lessons learned.

NOTICEBOARD

Flood Recovery with Virtus Heritage

By Caroline Levings

Between the 25th of February and the 2nd of March 2022, a series of severe rain and flooding events impacted the east coast of Australia, stretching from the Sunshine coast in southeast QLD to the south coast of New South Wales. The Northern Rivers region of the Tweed, Brunswick, Richmond and Wilson River catchments areas resulted in severe flooding impacting whole towns and communities.

The Sydney Morning Herald, June 30, 2022 stated that over two days, 670 ml. of rain fell and contributed to record maximum water heights for towns in the Richmond catchment. A brief list of towns with their maximum floodwater heights include Murwillumbah 6.44M, Mullumbimby 5.71m, Kyogle 17.86m, Woodburn and Broadwater 7.72m. Lismore levee bank has a capacity height of 10.2 M with the extreme rainfall over the region the levee bank broke and rose to record height of 14.4m.



NOTICEBOARD

Devastating for so many in the community, including some of our family members and community partners, who lost their homes, businesses, property and livestock. During these challenging and difficult times, many of us lost phone and internet connections, and were unable to work for a period of time, some individuals directly affected by the floods and others' assisting flood victims in their recovery.

Our team were supported with internally funded flood recovery payments, and our team took supplies, food and books in a trailer to Lismore and helped with cleaning in their own time and food drops in Chinderah to assist those families and individuals that had lost everything within their homes and community.



NOTICEBOARD

New Staff Members

The past couple of months have been exciting for Virtus Heritage as we have welcomed a few new staff members. We would like to introduce you all to our newest team members of Virtus Heritage.

Garth Thompson

Joining our team in June was Garth Thompson based in Sydney. Garth is a recent Archaeological and Evolutionary Science graduate from the Australian National University. He is specialized in bioarchaeology and forensic anthropology with a focus on human evolution and skeletal morphology during his studies. As he starts his career as a graduate archaeologist with Virtus he is excited to work with our nation's Traditional Owners to do archaeology that creates connections between communities and the rich past they interact with every day. Garth is very passionate about bringing people together with archaeological practice.



Clare Anderson

Clare recently joined the Virtus team as a casual senior heritage consultant and will be bringing 15 years of experience in the identification and assessment of impacts to Aboriginal archaeology in NSW to a range of different projects at Virtus. In her previous role as Senior Principal at Niche Environment and Heritage, Clare was responsible for quality and compliance assurance of reporting outputs, mentoring early career consultants, the development and delivery of internal knowledge transfer, training, and digital recording systems. Clare managed projects of all scales across a range of sectors, from due diligence assessments of small subdivisions in the Sydney Growth Areas to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessments, Management Plans and survey and excavation programs for State Significant Development and Infrastructure Projects with referrals under the EPBC Act.

New Staff Members

Tyler Beebe

Tyler has close to 20 years' experience working as a professional archaeologist both in the United States and Australia. He has a background in the development and implementation of archaeological conservation strategies, including extensive knowledge of NSW and Commonwealth heritage legislation. He is recognised for his reliability, responsibility, and strong organisation and prioritisation skills.



Tyler holds Master of Arts (Cultural and Environmental Heritage) degree from Australian National University and received a Bachelor of Arts (cum laude) in Anthropology from Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota USA. After working for almost ten years as an archaeologist in America, Tyler and his family relocated permanently to Australia in 2014. Australian project highlights include two large archaeological salvage excavations for the Hume Highway By-pass around the villages of Tarcutta NSW and Woomargama NSW in 2010, salvage excavations associated with the Northwest Rail Link in Western Sydney in 2013, and excavations and the development of a cultural heritage management plan for the proposed raising of the Clarrie Hall Dam, Doon Doon NSW in 2020.

Tyler specialises in Aboriginal archaeology where his key skills lie in the areas of project management, archaeological site management and interpretation, archaeological excavation and survey, lithic artefact analysis, and the preparation of heritage management reports. However, while in America Tyler had the opportunity to work on numerous historic archaeological sites such as a mill/tannery complex, historic copper mines, and colonial farmsteads. Tyler prides himself on maintaining a productive and professional relationship with the Aboriginal community.

NOTICEBOARD

NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC week celebrations were held on Sunday the 3rd of July to the 10th, celebrating the achievements, history and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia. This year's theme was "Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!" which was asking for all Australians to support and secure institutional, structural, collaborative, and cooperative reforms. Whether it's seeking proper environmental, cultural and heritage protections, Constitutional change, a comprehensive process of truth-telling, working towards treaties, or calling out racism—it has to be done together.

Virtus Heritage attended the Sports and Health expo day for Tweed NAIDOC celebrations where we held a stall to show case some of our amazing cultural heritage partnerships. We organised activities for the children in attendance which included an archaeologist bowling competition and some colouring in competitions, the children all had chances to win some prizes. We all had a wonderful day celebrating.

We would like to thank Leweena Williams and TBLALC for inviting us to have a stall and a great day out.

