



VIRTUSHERITAGE

E-NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2020



Welcome

Dr Mary-Jean Sutton

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter.

2020 is our tenth birthday, from beginning the company in the spare room of our house in inner city Newcastle, through part time writing my PhD to today, we have grown into a company with eight permanent team members based in Northern NSW, Hunter Valley, Queensland and New Zealand providing services in archaeology, cultural heritage management, history, geophysics, interpretation, design, GIS and mapping. We have maintained relationships with long term collaborators over the past decade that provide support on projects in geomorphology, geophysical services, environmental management and historical and Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Like for many of our clients, partners and communities, 2020 is proving to be one of our busiest and most challenging years. The COVID-19 pandemic on the back of flooding in northern NSW, the bushfire crisis and increasing national and international political and racial tensions and economic uncertainty has affected cultural heritage and how it is communicated, assessed and managed. The First Nation communities we work with are particularly vulnerable in this crisis. We are implementing a COVID safety plan and discuss in the newsletter how we are adapting services in this crisis.

We are constantly inspired during this time by how our community partners are facing these challenges. We are also continuing to provide support to our communities struggling in this time within and outside our Reconciliation Action Plan commitments. We continue to advocate on some of the recent national cultural heritage issues, including the abhorrent destruction of rock shelters in Western Australia, during National Reconciliation Week for stronger cultural heritage protection, accountability and transparency through national associations and forums.

Our newsletter focuses on gratitude, resilience and hope. As a company we are continuing, like many others, to be resilient, diversify and demonstrate patience and flexibility to meet the concerns of communities and the uncertainties surrounding projects during this period. We are grateful for the support of many of our clients and partners. The newsletter includes continuing projects and successful grants in 2020, with partners including Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation and Ipima Ikaya Aboriginal Corporation and celebrates outcomes and achievements over the last six months.

As part of the newsletter, we discuss our company's successful completion of four bushfire post disaster recovery surveys and assessments in Northern NSW with Bandjalang Aboriginal Corporation, Yaegl, Githabul and Ngullingah Jugun native title corporations for NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. We thank these communities for the trust they put in us to assist them with these surveys and the privilege to walk with them on country, which is healing from unprecedented destruction and trauma. These surveys have reminded us that country and communities are strong and resilient and heal. In this period of uncertainty, we should never forget hope and the power of kindness. We should take stock from history, that even in the most challenging of times, communities do prevail and emerge stronger and more united after periods of crisis and remain hopeful.

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Post Fire Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Project

DPIE - Emergency Bushfire Recovery Grants

Dr Emma St Pierre

Virtus Heritage are proud to have been involved in the preparation of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Values Reports for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Post Fire Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Project. These assessments were undertaken to record the cultural health of sites and areas within National Parks (NP), National Reserves (NR), State Forests (SF) and State Conservation Areas (SCA) that were affected by the devastating 2019-2020 bushfire season. The project was funded by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.



Virtus worked in partnership with four Native Title and Traditional Owner groups across more than 20 national parks and conservation areas. These included the Bandjalang Aboriginal Corporation at Bungawalbin NP and SCA, Bora Ridge, Bundjalung NP and SCA, Banyabba NR, Mount Marsh and Gibberagee; Western Bundjalung Traditional Owners at Washpool NP, Gibraltar NP, Timbarra NP and Wombat Creek NP; Yaegl Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation at Bundjalung NP, Yuraygir NP, Chatsworth Hill SCA, Gibberagee SF and Ashby; and Githabul Traditional Custodians at Tooloom NP, Border Ranges NP, Mount Clunie NP, Mount Nothofagus NP, Yabba NP and Captains Creek NR, NSW.





Sites that were visited or were identified for assessment included artefacts scatters, middens, scarred trees, rock shelters, bora grounds, story places and sites of special gendered significance. Many sites within areas investigated were unable to be re-located and it is possible some of them, particularly vulnerable scarred trees, were destroyed during the fires. A common theme expressed by Traditional Owners was that the entire country is considered a cultural landscape and archaeological sites are interconnected with natural features and resources, such as flora and fauna, and intangible places, such as the sky. Waterways and their health were highlighted as

being particularly integral to cultural values.

It was frequently noted that many sites were already impacted by human interference prior to the fires and that Traditional Owners want the opportunity to care for country in culturally appropriate ways, including through traditional fire management.

We thank all Traditional Owners and their families for the privilege to help them care for country and sharing their cultural knowledge with us. We also thank NSW NPWS for the opportunity to be involved in the post bushfire natural disaster recovery for cultural heritage.



Aboriginal Archaeological Due Diligence Assessments of proposed Solar Farms in NSW

KDC - Providence Asset Group

Elle Lillis and Dr Emma St Pierre

Earlier this year Virtus Heritage was engaged by KDC on behalf of Providence Asset Group to prepare Aboriginal archaeological due diligence assessments for four Solar Farm Projects at Guyra, Gunnedah, Tamworth and Finley, NSW. The proposed projects are for the development of solar grid-connected PV farms. All the site visits were undertaken by a Senior Archaeologist from Virtus (and by Vanessa Hardy from Cultural Heritage Connection on behalf of Virtus Heritage at Finley), along with representatives from relevant Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) including the Guyra LALC, Red Chief LALC (Gunnedah), Tamworth LALC and Cummeragunja LALC (Finley).

The proposed solar farm sites at Gunnedah and Finley have been impacted by clearing, intensive agriculture and other land use practices, and are highly disturbed. No Aboriginal objects or sites were observed in the project areas, and given the lack of any undisturbed soils, were deemed to have a very low potential for archaeological deposits. Therefore, no further heritage assessment was recommended prior to the commencement of works which could proceed with caution as per the Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW.



The Solar Farm at Guyra is located between two ephemeral creek lines, a favourable location in the landscape for Aboriginal occupation and resource procurement. Although the project area has been

stripped of vegetation for pastoralism and agriculture a potential archaeological deposit (PAD) was identified during the site inspection, and it was recommended further archaeological assessment be undertaken

prior to works commencing.

As with the other project areas, the Westdale (Tamworth) site had previously been subject to intensive cultivation practices that have heavily impacted soils and diminished the likelihood



Tamworth Scar Tree

for potential archaeological deposits. One potential scarred tree, TQS-ST1, was located during the survey and subsequently assessed by an aboriculturalist in consultation with Tamworth LALC. The tree was determined to be

aged between 250 and 300 years old and the scar to be of Aboriginal origin and between 150 and 250 years old. It is intended that the design of the proposal will be altered to avoid impacts to the scarred tree. Virtus Heritage

was pleased to be involved with these renewable energy projects and would like to thank the representatives of the Aboriginal LALCs that provided cultural comments.



Denmans Cottage, Hill End

Excavation reveals family domestic life

Gina Scheer

The excavations at Denman's Cottage, Reef Street, Hill End, undertaken for NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service in June and November 2019 were in accordance with Section 60 permits obtained from NSW Heritage, S60/2018/180 and s65a/2019/007. The November works focussed on the underfloor areas in the rooms of Denman's Cottage.

We introduced this project in the February 2020 Newsletter. This article discusses the small artefacts discovered and removed during the underfloor excavation programme. There were over 1000 artefact entries in the catalogue with a quantity of 2,228 individual fragments counted. The catalogue includes all materials encountered - animal bones, metal, ceramic, stone, glass and plastic. The catalogue and analysis took place in May 2020 and will be submitted by NSW NPWS with the Excavation Report to NSW Heritage.

Eight rooms with underfloor areas were excavated plus the southern portion of the verandah. A slate writing board (a surface find) and slate pencil were located in the verandah.

Not surprisingly, the rooms with fireplaces, Rooms 1 and 3, had more artefacts than in the remaining rooms. There were many coins, over 20 in number, scattered throughout the cottage, which either



supports the commercial use of the building as a hotel for many years, (not likely), or the more likely scenario is that the house has been a family residence for over 100 years.

Artefact types include faunal remains from rodents and sheep, cow, rabbit and chicken bones. There were clothing and leather offcuts, women's toiletry items such as hair pins and cosmetic containers, smoking paraphernalia, personal hygiene lotions, pills and mouth care used by men or women, ceramic fragments from dining ware and tea sets as well as one or two vases or statuettes. Also fragments of glass bottles used for drinking and medicine/pharmacy, as well as building offcuts of lino, window glass, lead and metal flashing and



many many nails. There were quite a large number of children's toys from late 19th to early 20th century periods, notably found in the rear rooms possible where children slept and played.

A total of 86 artefacts were uncovered from the front part of the hallway which has the main entry from verandah. It separates Rooms 1 and 2. Underfloor artefacts included a casein hair pin (c.1899-1909) - many were found here at Denmans - an 1860 penny, nails with terminus ante quem (TAQ) of 1820 and 1890s and a 1910 sixpence. These are far earlier dates than for Room 1 and slightly earlier than Room 2. Dateable items from Room 2 include a 1911 sixpence, a 1919 half penny, the 1926-27 era tube of lanolin, a 1955 sixpence and a 1973 or earlier Scouts button.

Room 3 had artefacts with identified dates clustering around the periods 1890s and then the 1940s. A fragment of a kaolin smoking pipestem was found in front of the fireplace, with manufacturers name, Thomas Davidson, Glasgow. Many such pipes were shipped to Australia between c.1861 to c.1891. There were many buttons below these floorboards, including fancy glass buttons, small collar studs and clothes fasteners, common from 1860 and 1890. Later dateable items were the Muriel Astor black cosmetics container (for rouge or powder) with a c.1932 date. A used metal key from a sardine can, and two opened rusted tins also show Room 3 was much used for meals, or meal preparation, as well as fireside activities.



Muriel Astor cosmetics container c.1932 found in Room 3

Room 4 did not include a fireplace and yet there was still a very mixed assemblage. Once the floorboards were numbered and removed, a c.25cm hole in the rock foundation wall (western wall) was visible and explained why most of the larger, butchered bone fragments were located here, dragged under the house by rodents. Behind one of the skirting boards (skirting B), there were interesting finds of four coins, buttons, beads and five hairpins. The possibility of a piece of furniture in place with items falling off it was discussed as the reason for the high number of items located behind this skirting. A rather lovely slender ivory calligraphy pen and a

mechanical pencil, post 1939 in date along with numbers of slate pencils were interesting writing finds only located in Room 4.

Room 6 was a purpose built hallway, as opposed to Hall / Room 5 which was thought to have been part of the original front room of Denman's Cottage. This underfloor deposit did not contain a large quantity but did reveal larger discarded items – the timber handle of a tool, cork stoppers from bottles, a long metal spike or nail 160mm long and a wedge pointed nail with flattened head, 113mm long with a terminus ante quem of 1820s. The later small dateable artefacts

confirm flooring was laid before 1922, as later dates include a 1922 Australian penny and torn pages from newspaper including part of an advertisement for radio station 2UE, dating between 1925 and 1966.

There was one fragment of a child's tea set, a toy saucer fragment with a puppy in a brown basket. It had part of basemark underneath "(Made in) Japan". A complete similar saucer was found nearby in Room 8 and these child's size items are thought to date c.1950s-1960s.



Ivory calligraphy pen found in Room 4

Denmans Cottage, Hill End...Continued

Excavation reveals family domestic life

Gina Scheer

Unlike Rooms 1 through to 6, which all had an open sub-floor space and foundation stumps of c. 200mm in height, there was no underfloor space or gap in Room 8 or in Room 10. The joists were pressed into the ground and the floorboards themselves appeared to be lying on the ground surface.



View to south of the Room 8 sub floor space, Room 10 in background

A total of 109 artefacts (309 individual items) were located in the removed underfloor deposits of Room 8. Included were a used lead bullet and an unused one, the metal heel of a work boot, fragments of bottle glass, plastic clothes pegs, fragments from the statuette of a blonde haired girl, the head of a large metal fork and plastic hair combs. There were also 22 buttons, 23 marbles, a teaspoon, a thimble, and a child's tea set items of 2 cups, a tea set lid and saucer. These tea set items match items in Room 10.



Childrens tea set found in Rooms 8 and 10



Check out our website at virtusheritage.com.au



Childrens toy soldier c.1920s



Thimble found in Room 8



Selection of buttons found in Room 8

Finally, Room 10 is a later constructed walkway (hall) linking Room 8, 7 and 9 at the rear of the house. Within this small area, the underfloor deposit had built up around the bearers and finds included a 1908 half penny and 21 marbles. There were also toys with a c.1920s date and included a plastic toy comb and a lead headless toy soldier riding a horse.

The artefacts encountered can best be described as dating from mid-19th century (c.1860s) to late 20th century (1970s and also 2000s) and are items consistent with domestic residential occupancy including families. These finds add considerably to our knowledge of the cottage and its residents.



Fragment of kaolin smoking pipestem found in Room 3

Ballina Coastal Pathway

Reconnecting Ballina & Lennox Head

Bernadette Allen

In our previous newsletter, Virtus Heritage introduced two new projects being undertaken for Ballina Shire Council – the Coastal Recreational Pathway and the Shared Pathway East – both intended to formalise pathways to connect Ballina to Pat Morton Lookout, increasing public amenity and accessibility, and to establish erosion controls to protect the natural environment. AHIP applications were submitted for both projects due to known and potential Aboriginal cultural heritage within the pathway alignments, and in close proximity to the pathways.

AHIPs have now been received by Ballina Shire Council, with the Archaeological Research Design and Methodology prepared by Virtus Heritage to accompany the applications endorsed by the registered

Aboriginal parties (RAPs) and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department).

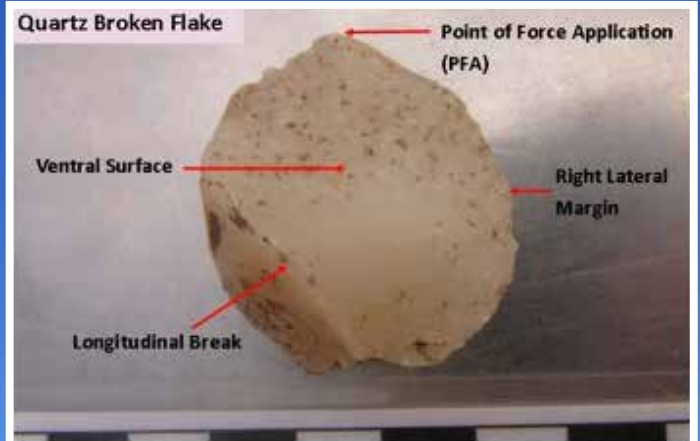
AHIP approved works have now commenced at both pathway locations with the participation of all RAPs. Mitigation measures in place include the inspection of pathways during construction, with the provision for community collection of any artefactual or cultural material identified. Triggers are also in place which would activate the requirement under the AHIP for controlled manual salvage, to capture and record the integrity of any Aboriginal sites or features which may be present.

An ecological assessment of the pathway alignments identified a cluster of banksia trees which would be affected by the proposed Coastal Recreational Pathway route, and were deemed desirable to retain. Consultation with RAPs and Council led to a proposed realignment to avoid these trees, and an AHIP variation has been lodged with the Department seeking approval of this realignment. During this investigation for realignment, a new site was identified by RAPs - a previously unrecorded artefact scatter. Pathway construction will not impact this site, but will actually afford protection of this site by diverting foot traffic which currently passes very near to this scatter. A site card is being prepared for lodgment and registration with the Department's AHIMS.

Fieldwork will continue in stages over the next few months, with the formalisation of the pathways expected to be completed and open to the public by the end of the year. Virtus Heritage and Ballina Shire Council are working with registered Aboriginal parties to develop culturally appropriate signage to be erected along the pathways to inform the broader community of the sensitivity and significance of the area for Aboriginal people, and the location's importance as a continued connection to Country.



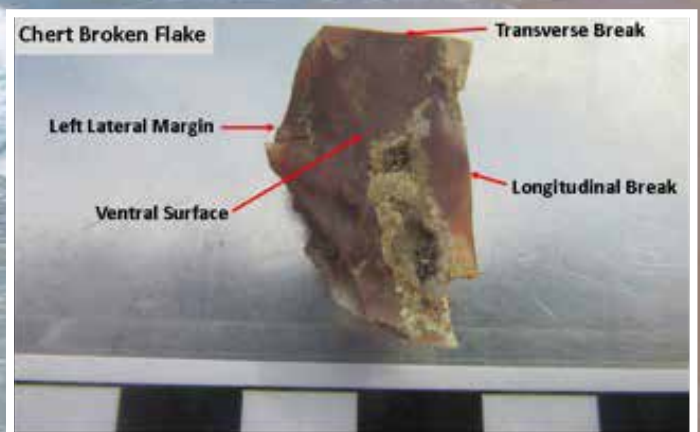
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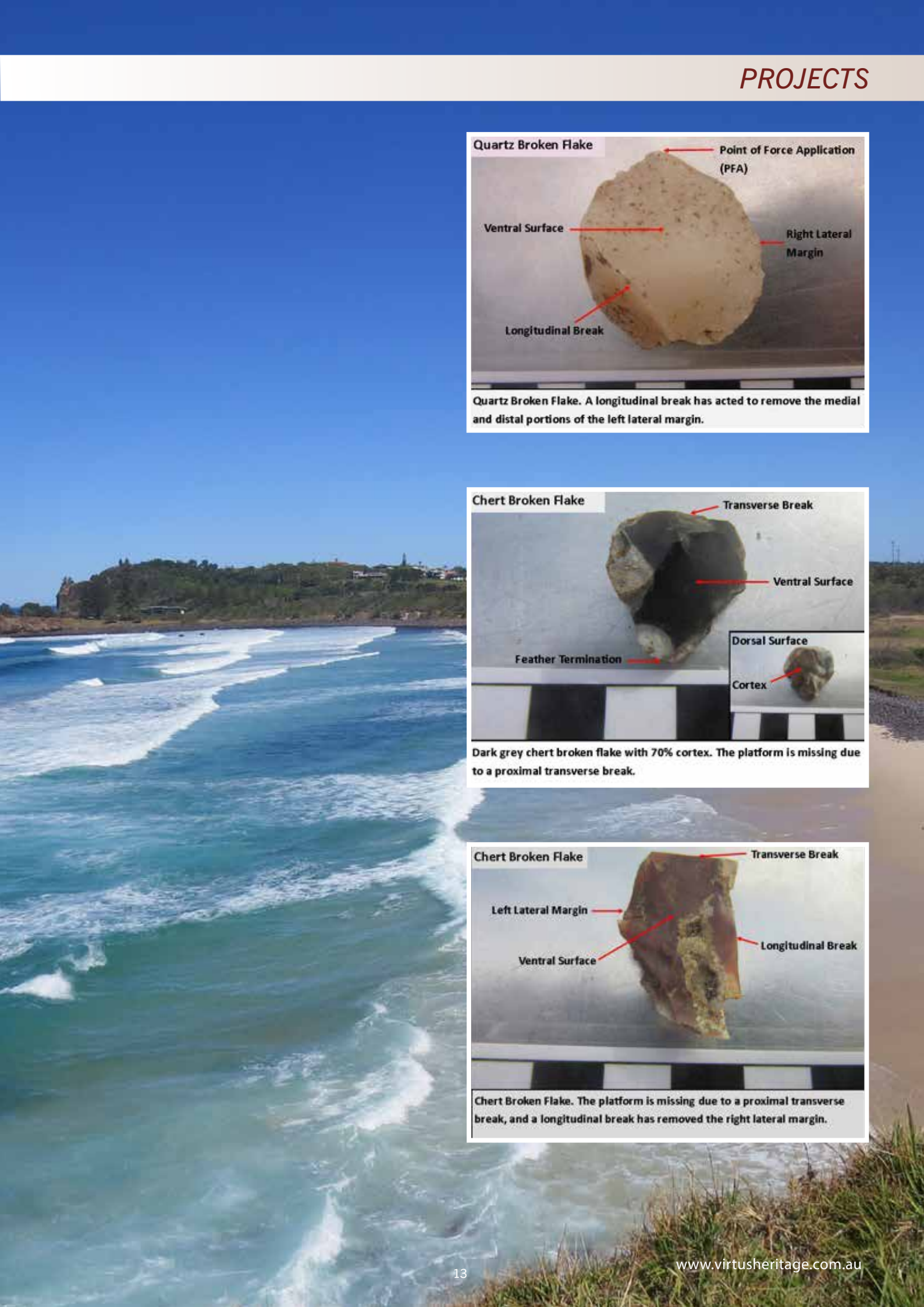
Quartz Broken Flake. A longitudinal break has acted to remove the medial and distal portions of the left lateral margin.



Dark grey chert broken flake with 70% cortex. The platform is missing due to a proximal transverse break.



Chert Broken Flake. The platform is missing due to a proximal transverse break, and a longitudinal break has removed the right lateral margin.

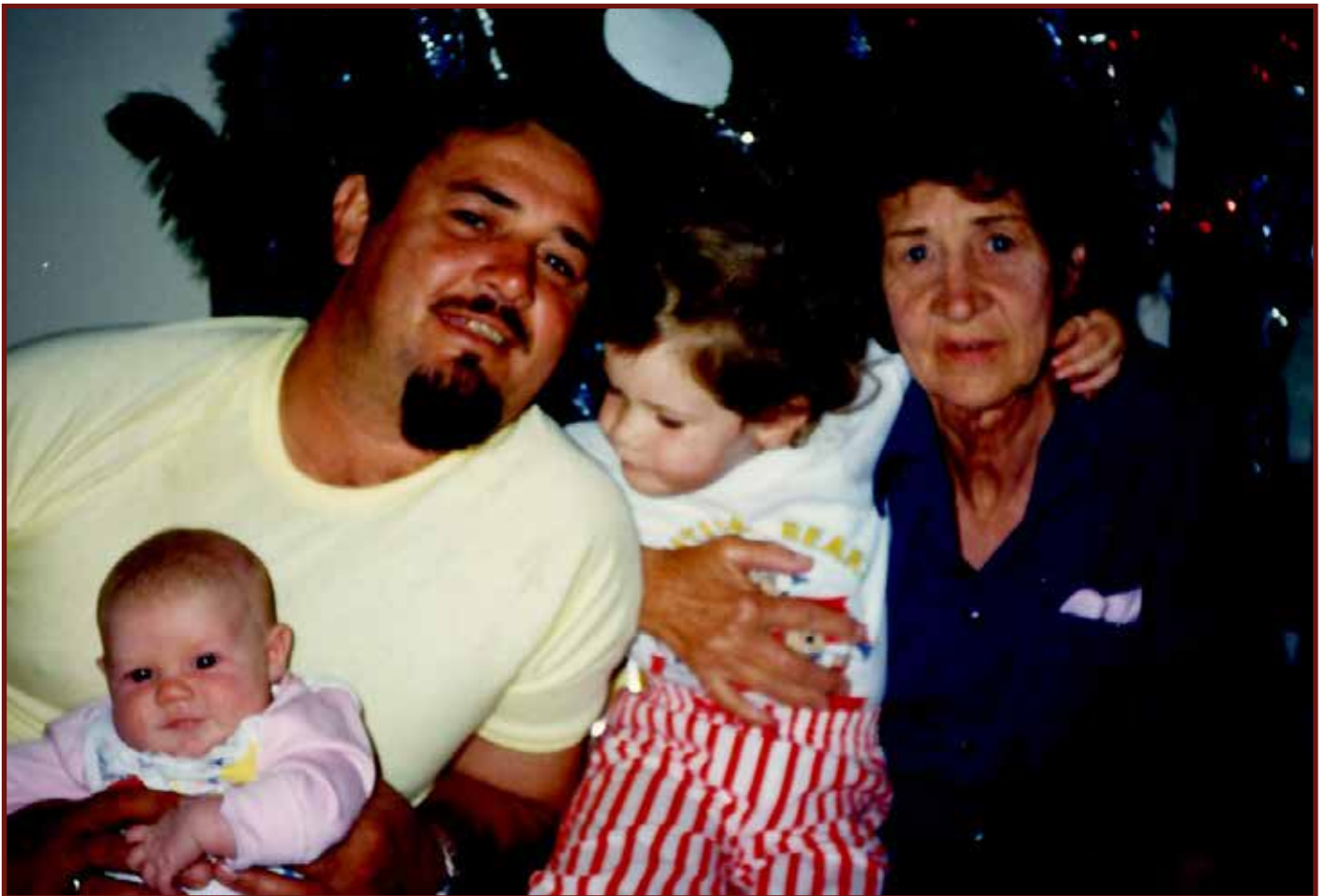




My Family History

Kelly Kent

The recognition, preservation and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture and heritage is core to our business at Virtus Heritage. We believe that this heritage is integral to community wellbeing and identity through the valued stories, places and material culture that we pass down to future generations.



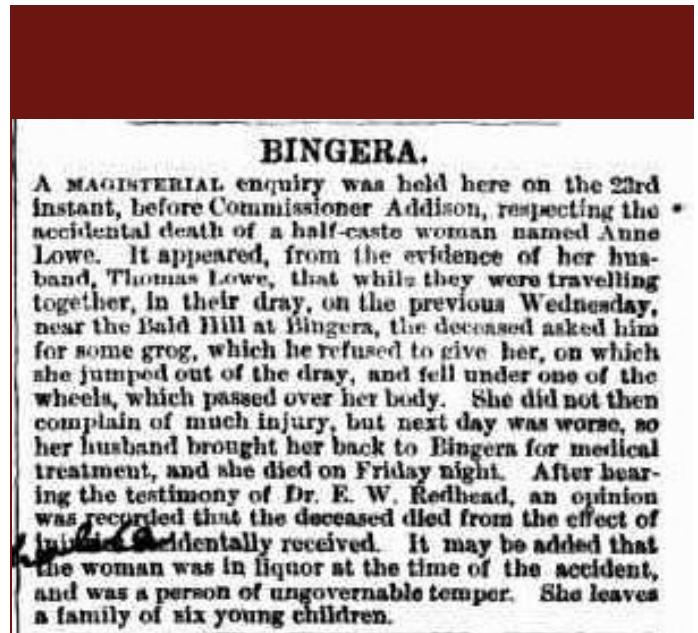
My father Keith and I have recently been on the search to find out more about our heritage. We had always wondered if my Dad and Nana were of Aboriginal heritage. My nana, Joyce, was an amazing woman who was always laughing and had so much character. We have found a lot about our heritage in the recent months.

Joyce's father Edward Edwards (1894-1964), a Murrawari man born in Goodooga, and her mother Martha Sullivan-Bramley, met while both were staying at a boarding house in Wynnum in Brisbane. Martha was only 15 when she gave birth to Joyce and Joyce was raised to believe her grandmother Mary-Ann Leahy was her mother, and Martha her sister. She found out the truth of her birth on her wedding day!

Edward Edwards' mother Mary-Ellen Lowe (1873-1963) was living in Texas, QLD when she passed away at the age of 63 due to burns she suffered from in a fire in her humpy. Her sister, Harriett Lavender (Lowe) (pictured) and my nana Joyce bear a resemblance. Edward's father Samuel William Edwards was an Aboriginal man, but little is known about his family history and we have applied to Aboriginal Affairs NSW to search for more information about his side of the family. We do know that Edward's maternal grandmother Anne Mary Taylor (Lowe) (1841-1869) died in 1869 aged 27 in a horse and carriage accident and her mother was a Kamilaroi woman.



Harriet Lavender (nee Lowe)



News Article on Anne Lowe's death

I would like to thank Mary-Jean and Virtus Heritage for all she has done to help me find some of my family history and put me into contact with people who can help us. Mary-Jean has been nothing but helpful and supportive during this process and I appreciate all her assistance.

Although I have not grown up with my aboriginal culture, working at Virtus Heritage, consulting with Traditional Owners and participating in cultural heritage training makes me feel like I am learning and connecting more with my heritage and I can't wait to learn more! I know that my Dad and I would one day love to visit some of the places and graves of our ancestors and find out more about our cultural heritage.

Kelly Kent
Office Manager



Kelly Kent

Grants

We are excited to have assisted two communities with partners, including Simon Pearce (Principal Environmental Consultant, GHD) with successful grant applications:

- Wonnarua Nation with Protecting Our Places grant from NSW Environmental Trust, Protecting St Clair Mission and Acknowledging our Old People, Singleton, NSW to develop an environmental implementation plan and management plan and bush regeneration works; and
- Ipima Ikaya Registered Native Title Corporation with Commonwealth's Indigenous Advancement Strategy, for ethno-historical, management and interpretation for the Injinoo Cemetery and unmarked graves, Cape York, Queensland.

Educational Tool Kits

Virtus Heritage have completed their Educational Toolkit as discussed in our last edition for the Glenrock Hickson walking track community schools project providing simple, fun tools and exercises to teach the children to better understand Archaeology and what we do as Archaeologists.

The Awabakal nation and some of its community members assisted us greatly in this project for which we are very thankful.

Virtus Heritage are excited to be involved in more projects such as this one, creating fun and engaging educational resources for children. We thoroughly enjoy sharing our work and finds with our younger members of the community, all across the east coast of Australia.

COVID-19

Our company has a registered with NSW State Government our COVID-Safe Work Plan. Cultural mapping projects are utilising the new company drone and additional field equipment including ipads and software for streaming fieldwork to Elders and Land Councils remotely has been undertaken.

Training

Bernadette and Elle both completed defensive four wheel drive off road training in Newcastle and Gold Coast respectively. Elle took the new work Newcastle based company vehicle "Penny" the Prado for training and managed to drive her sideways off road and back on track during training. Read more about Penny on page 18.



Welcoming Harrison Rees Parkes

Virtus Heritage are proud to welcome Harrison Rees Parkes to the team.

Harrison is currently completing his final year of Bachelor of Science at the University of Newcastle, where he is completing a double major in Earth Science and Geography.

Throughout his degree, Harrison has gained experience in environmental impact assessments, fresh-water ecology sampling, and has specialised in environmental GIS and Remote sensing applications. He has gained experience in mapping the impact of sea level rise

on coastal communities and infrastructure, shoreface bathymetric profile changes along the NSW coastline, and remote sensing of coastal habitats including mangrove forests and seagrass meadows.

Harrison has a broad range of experience with GIS systems and applications and is passionate about expanding his GIS skills and abilities into the field of heritage consultancy.

Harrison is based down in Newcastle and is already a thriving member of our team in the region.



Welcoming Elaine Lin

Virtus Heritage are proud to welcome Elaine Lin to the team. Elaine has worked as an archaeologist since 2014 and has been involved in numerous Indigenous and historical investigations in New South Wales, ACT and Western Australia as well as working on overseas research projects conducting surveys, excavations, physical anthropological and geoarchaeological analyses. Her main scientific specialisation is soil micromorphology.

Elaine has experience managing combined Aboriginal and historical archaeological excavation programs in NSW, and

over time has developed excellent relationships with local Aboriginal community groups. She specialises in geoarchaeological analysis and interpretation of site formation processes, particularly of Aboriginal sites and cultural landscapes. She is interested in understanding human-environmental interactions in the past and in identifying processes which may have over time impacted on Aboriginal Places and sites. For more information about Elaine and her fantastic work experiences, please visit our website and check out her profile with the rest of the Team.



NOTICEBOARD

Publications

Over the past year members of Virtus Heritage have had a number of papers published in peer reviewed academic journals. Our research with Prof. Lawrence Conyers on working with community in Mapoon, Queensland and the use of GPR and magnetometry for the identification of unmarked graves, has been published in the journals *Archaeology in Oceania* and *Sensors*. Dr Emma St Pierre has also published a research article with co-authors in the *Turkish Journal of Earth Sciences*. This was based on work she did during her PhD research a lifetime ago, on palaeoclimate reconstruction through geochemical analysis of stalagmites from Sulawesi, Indonesia. See below for references.

Sutton, M-J., Conyers, L.B., Pearce, S., St Pierre, E. and D. Nicholls Pitt. 2019.

Creating and renewing identity and value through the use of non-invasive archaeological methods: Mapoon unmarked graves, potential burial mounds and cemeteries project, western Cape York peninsula, Queensland. *Archaeology in Oceania*. DOI: 10.1002/arco.5205

Ezgi Ünal Imer, Ibrahim Tonguç Uysal, Emma St Pierre, Jian Xin Zhao and James Shulmeister. 2019.

Last Glacial Climate Oscillations and Sudden Environmental Changes Investigated in Stalagmites from Southwest Sulawesi, Western Pacific. *Turkish Journal of Earth Sciences*. DOI: 10.3906/yer-1905-20

St Pierre, E., Conyers, L., Sutton, M-J, Mitchell, P., Walker, C. and D. Nicholls. 2019.

Reimagining life and death: Results and interpretation of geophysical and ethnohistorical investigations of earth mounds, Mapoon, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, Australia. *Archaeology in Oceania*. Vol. 54: 90–106. DOI: 10.1002/arco.5179

Conyers, L.B., Sutton, M-J. and E. St Pierre. 2019.

Dissecting and Interpreting a Three-Dimensional Ground-Penetrating Radar Dataset: An Example from Northern Australia. *Sensors*. 19, 1239. doi:10.3390/s19051239

New Car ‘Penny’ the Prado



The team down in Newcastle have been thoroughly enjoying taking the new company car, Penny the Prado, out on some amazing adventures with the work we do.

She has already covered half of NSW with the dream to explore more beautiful and magical country.

Penny is happy that the Virtus Team decided to keep her pet gecko on the dash as she had become quite fond of it after the all their years together. The gecko has become a part of the family.

With the wind in her grills, Penny loves hitting the highway, driving up mountains, navigating sharp dusty bends, using her sixth sense to avoid large pot holes and driving through any kind of mud.



Reconciliation Action Plan Update

We are looking forward to the release of our latest RAP document later this month which will be available on our website.

We welcome Afzal Khan, Business Manager of Bandjalang Aboriginal Corporation as a new member to our Reconciliation Action Plan committee. Afzal is a Bandjalang Traditional Owner who grew up in Coraki with a strong connection to his culture and who is a passionate advocate for his families and communities cultural heritage conservation and management. Afzal is one of our recent community collaborators and partners and we continue to work together progressing grants and projects.

We are progressing our new Reconciliation Action Plan for 2020 – 2023 and elevating and strengthening our commitment to reconciliation and re-evaluating future opportunities within our plan to support and assist communities we collaborate and continue to work with on country. Xan and Mary-Jean are working closely with Reconciliation Australia to develop the new plan over the coming months.

During National Reconciliation Week, Mary-Jean, Elle and Jac were in the field or meeting rooms undertaking bushfire post disaster recovery surveys in Northern NSW with Traditional Owners or Bernadette, Julian and Jac were working with Aboriginal parties on site at Ballina. Mary-Jean initiated and assisted with other members of the Committee, the development of a statement with the EIANZ Board as part of her role on the Specialist Heritage Section condemning Rio Tinto's actions on the destruction of Juukan Gorge Rock Shelters in Western Australia and calling for progressing stronger heritage legislation. <https://www.eianz.org/eianznews/eianz-board-and-heritage-special-interest-section-statement>

Mary-Jean developed a statement for the National Inquiry into the destruction of 46,000 year old caves at the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region of Western Australia from Virtus Heritage supporting existing statements by ICOMOS calling out for stronger national heritage protection and respect of the cultural heritage values of Traditional Owners drawing on recent experiences on projects in Cape York and northern NSW. There are some good submissions posted already drawing on heritage concerns nationally that apply also locally and at the State level. https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Northern_Australia/CavesatJuukanGorge

We are proud to support NAIDOC activities for Coffs Harbour and District Local Aboriginal Land Council again this year. As NAIDOC week activities are now postponed for November, we will also be participating and facilitating in activities later this year with Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Leweena Williams, CEO of Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council and Mary-Jean continue to progress community grants and projects in Northern NSW, including a national unmarked graves tool kit to assist Indigenous communities nationally to capacity build skills and knowledge to manage the resting places of ancestors, working closely with partners on applications including Emma, Prof Conyers, Simon Pearce and Dr Peter Mitchell and Traditional Owners from Mapoon.



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