

Yabba National Park

The Yabba Falls Scenic Reserve was gazetted in the 1920s, predating all national parks in the Conondales region. A year or two back, Imbil-based geographer Ian Stehbens made a very detailed submission for a national ark around Yabba Falls, Kingaham Falls and the gorges associated with each. Ian sought support from NPAQ who were impressed not just with the country involved but with the background work he had put in. He sought wider support, from the Royal Geographical Society who spent a weekend exploring there last August, and he sought support from us, Conondale Range Conservation, from Hinterland Bush Links and from SCEC, the Sunshine Coast Environment Council.

Looking at other state forests surrounding Ian's proposal it was plain that many would have been on the verge of transitioning into national parks had Campbell Newman not axed the SEQFA. Both Conondale NP to the south and Wrattens NP to the north had several small outliers already converted to NP under the SEQFA. And given that the government had a commitment to a substantial increase in national parks, it was plain that the area around Yabba Falls provided an enormous opportunity.

NPAQ had Tyler Hood research and write up a lengthier proposal and conducted a number of flora and fauna surveys of the area in conjunction with Birds Queensland and others.

As well as providing connectivity between NP outliers, the proposed Yabba NP would provide a north-south link between the bulk of Wrattens NP to the north and that of Conondale NP to the south. The generally east-west alignment of the proposed addition extends NP towards the Bunya Mountains to the west.

It mostly entails conversion of a number of state forests or parts of state forests into national parks although it excludes all areas where plantation licences apply. It includes only one privately owned freehold property which would need to be purchased although it does include some freehold Queensland. It lies at the corner of Gympie Regional Council and Somerset Regional Council.

We envisage the name incorporating it into the there has been confusion from the township of link to any town or locality. Creek, and is a rich link to

Eco Tourism

In recent years we have to the Conondale National specifically. The inclusion Falls, would not only as well as supporting the enterprises in areas either

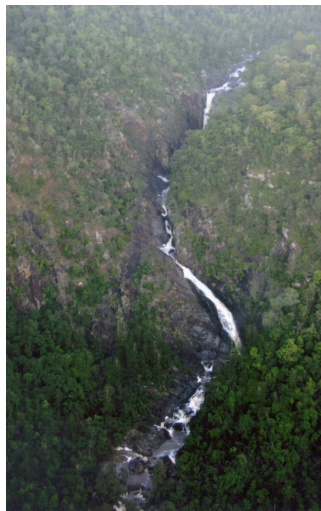
Honouring commitments

Some two decades ago, (the SEQFA) between the government, the timber industry and the conservation movement. There was a considerable amount of money put up by the state government by way of industry adjustment, and all parties agreed.

That Queensland could reach a Forest Agreement which was applauded by both major conservation interests as well as the Queensland Timber Board was no mean feat. The comprehensive regional assessment which underpinned it recognised the increasing reliance of industry on the plantation-based softwood industry. The output of the massive plantation plantings of both native hoop pine and exotic pine were being welcomed by the construction industry which meant a reduction in the demand for hardwood timber sourced from native forests.

Just as this government reinstated the Vegetation Management Act we hoped it would also return to honour commitments given in the SEQFA. This proposal would go a long way towards that.

We strongly endorse this proposal and commend Ian Stehbens for his initial, incredibly-detailed and well-researched proposal for National Park recognition of Yabba and Kingaham falls and gorges. We are very grateful for the vision and involvement of Hinterland Bush Links for seeing the "bigger picture" in promoting connectivity and the support and assistance offered by the Sunshine Coast Environment Council. We congratulate NPAQ for so enthusiastically throwing their considerable experience and expertise behind this proposal and advancing it to this point.



The name Yabba relates to Yabba Falls and Yabba indigenous history.

opportunities

seen a massive expansion in the numbers of visitors Park, the Mary Valley generally, and Kenilworth more of the area of this proposal, and particularly Yabba spread this impact but would provide new experiences local economy. There is opportunity for eco-tourism adjoining or in close proximity to the proposed Park.

of the SEQFA

we celebrated what we understood was an agreement

Presidential Ponderings

One thing that's really stood out to me as we talk up the Yabba National Park proposal is the way the South east Queensland Forest Agreement has seemed to have floated off into the mists of time.

It's true that it was almost twenty years ago, but you'd think that an agreement that a Courier Mail editorial of 17 September 1999 labelled as an "Impressive Compromise on Forests", might stand the passage of time better than it has.

The editor praised the deal saying that "the Beattie government has successfully secured a forestry agreement between the disparate interests of the timber industry and conservation groups. In an unprecedented move, key conservation bodies, unions and timber industry groups have all backed the agreement which involved all sides making concessions".

The \$80 million deal would have seen a 25 year phasing out of logging in Crown native forests in favour of plantations.

Courier Mail senior writer Matthew Franklin echoed that praise, memorably writing that "sometimes in politics people forget that you can achieve great outcomes without leaving blood on the floor."

The Agreement held until the short-lived government of Campbell Newman took the axe to it. Perhaps a consequence of the savage pruning of the state's public service that was also a hallmark of the same government meant that memories of the Agreement went out the door with them.

It doesn't seem like twenty years ago that Greg Wood hatched the unbelievably ambitious notion of hiring a train from Queensland Rail to take 600 forest supporters to a rally in King George Square held opportunistically while the state Labor party held its annual conference in the Crest Hotel high above.

A few weeks back, the very day after we'd met Queensland's Environment Minister Leanne Enoch to discuss the Yabba NP proposal, over refreshments in the Masonic temple in Brisbane following the memorial service for John Sinclair, I met her again.

On the latter occasion, I just happened to be talking with Greg Wood and it seemed like too good a moment of serendipity not to bring to the minister's attention, the passion of Sunshine Coast forest supporters that would see a train full of paying greenies heading for the smoke to vote with their feet. With no prompting whatsoever, Greg rose to the challenge and

brought the day back to life, two decades later, for the current minister.

Twenty years is a long time in politics.

Farewell Wyn Boon



After a long association with the Conondales, as Ranger and Senior Ranger, Wyn Boon is poised to take up a position with WA Parks and Wildlife Service at Cape Arid NP (300,000 ha) with

the Ranger base and house 125 km east of Esperance.

He's very excited about the move, noting that "there is a huge list of 1,100 flora species recorded with associated diversity of fauna. Fire management is a big management item with wild fires a frequent problem - mainly through lightning strike from December to April. Other than that, it will see fauna surveys, working visits to the some of the 300 offshore islands forming the Recherche Archipelago and hopefully on days off some navel gazing awaiting the appearance of southern right and hump back whales in the waters of Yokingup Bay."

Wyn came to the Conondales during the mid 90's with expansion of Conondale NP (NP 477 and 1100) from 2000 ha to 7,000 ha. He arrived in December 1993 fresh from 9 months on Stradbroke Island and prior that Atherton Tablelands. Based initially at Kondalilla NP, he later took over the reins from the late Eric Glassop as Senior Ranger for the Kenilworth and Blackall Range areas as the Conondale NP expanded further to some 35,500ha .

He reflects that he "feels very privileged to have been part of the transition to NP management and part of the team involved therein. As per any such position - it is the sum effort of all people involved - QPWS staff, Forestry, HQP, QFES and other government agencies, yourselves - the CRC team and other conservation bodies - Hinterland Bushlinks, SCEC and then the general public, neighbours and tourists that make the whole experience valuable and worth having a go for."

Conondale Range Conservation would like to thank Wyn, not only for the work that has gone with his various positions, but for his dedication, his friendliness and approachability.

We wish him all the best in his new role.

Parcels included in the Yabba NP proposal

Parts of Imbil SF1 (excluding plantation lease areas)	Yabba Falls Scenic Reserve
Parts of Imbil SF2 (excluding plantation lease areas)	Diaper SF
Yabba SF	Squirrel Creek SF
Elgin Vale SF (excluding plantation lease areas)	Mt Stanley Forest Reserve
State-owned freehold land (part of)	Outliers of Wrattens National Park
Kingaham Camping reserve	Outliers of Conondale National park
Jimna SF (excluding plantation lease areas)	One small privately –owned freehold parcel
State-owned Electrical reserve (part)	

Meeting with Minister about Yabba NP



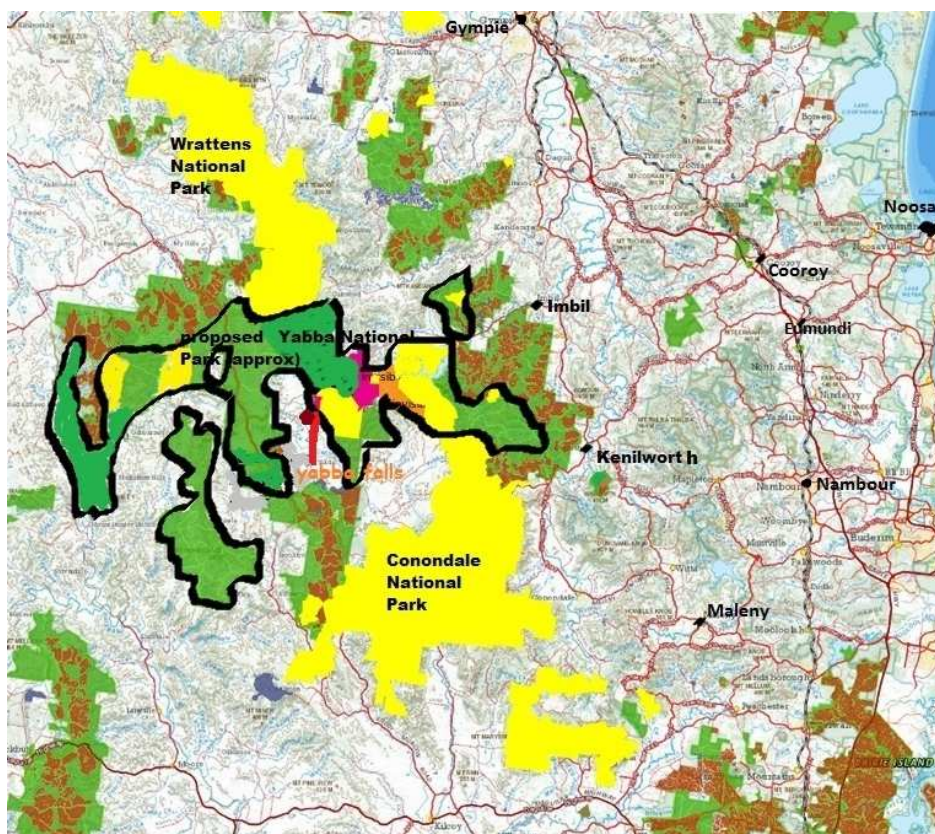
Ian Mackay, Narelle McCarthy, Susie Duncan, Leeanne Enoch, Beverly Hand

Mid-March saw the Queensland Cabinet descend on the Sunshine Coast for its “Governing from the Regions” initiative and it seemed like a great chance to meet Environment Minister Leeanne Enoch to talk about the Yabba National Park proposal and to put local faces to some of those involved.

It had been only a few weeks since NPAQ had formally submitted the proposal to the department. But we saw considerable benefit in a personal meeting. We were greatly honoured to have Kabi elder Beverly Hand join us, along with Narelle McCarthy of SCEC and Susie Duncan of Hinterland Bush Links.

Bev was very powerful in conveying the significance of the country within the Yabba National Park proposal, both culturally and environmentally. Susie and I were also able to communicate the importance of caring for this country which is still relatively intact, despite the utilisation of natural resources in the region while Narelle provided a timely reminder of the government’s commitment to increasing the extent of the conservation estate.

As a result of the meeting, we believe that the minister has a deeper understanding of why this region should be protected within a national park, complementing her reading of the NPAQ proposal which she had at hand. She listened carefully to what we presented, and we expect that she will be in touch soon regarding the government’s next move on this proposal.



Proposed Yabba Falls National Park

Conondale Range Conservation presents
Kenilworth Poets Breakfast
Saturday 5th October 2019 8am to 11am behind Kenilworth Hall
Entry \$5 - Hosted by local performance poet Ian Mackay
Hot Breakfast and great beverages - more info Ian 07 54460124



Vale Les Hall



We were saddened by the recent death of Dr Les Hall. By way of tribute, I have lifted sections from his bio when he received the Qld Natural History ward back in 2015. "Les was born in Lismore, NSW and began caving with the New South Wales Speleological Society in

1960 which started his interest in bats. He was employed by CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research and a visit to caves on the Nullarbor Plain led a lifetime study of bats

In 1974 he joined the University of Queensland, in the Department of Anatomy and later the Department of Veterinary Anatomy. This gave him the opportunity to further his interest in bats (and other native mammals) and he gained his PhD in 1988 with a thesis on bandicoots.

However, most of his publications are concerned with the biology, behaviour and ecology of bats: he authored three family accounts in the *Fauna of Australia*; seven species accounts for *The Mammals of Australia* and 13 for the later 3rd Edition of this book, and many journal articles.

In addition to his scientific papers, Les wrote many popular articles in journals such as *Australian Geographic*, *Australian Natural History*, *BBC Wildlife*, *Geo*, *Nature Australia*, *Wildlife Australia*. He wrote the chapter on "Bats" in *the Wildlife of Greater Brisbane*, and co-authored the "Bats" in *Wildlife of Tropical North Queensland*. He has written four books which have all been very popular and successful. His book *Bats. A Wild Australia Guide*, (2009) won a prestigious Whitley Commendation in 2010.

After retirement he developed a strong involvement with environmental community groups in Maleny. Les was an enthusiastic and popular teacher in his professional career. He has successfully supervised 27 postgraduate students and many of these have gone on to achieve significant roles in biology and conservation. Through his own research and that of his postgraduate students, Les has greatly increased our scientific knowledge of bats. His research on flying foxes has enabled him to provide scientific facts to counter some of the widespread misinformation on this group of animals."

Les wrote a wonderful article on Bats for CRC's book, "Walking on the Wilder Side ... in the Conondales" He has spent many long nights chasing bats in the Conondales. His studies on bats were often in conjunction with Zoology staff or his students.



Vale John Sinclair



With sadness we note the recent death of John Sinclair. One could write a book about John's battles for K'gari (Fraser Island) and indeed John himself had been working on one at the time of his

death. Among the many tributes that appeared in the days and weeks after his death, I noted this succinct one from the Environmental Defenders Office.

Remembering Dr John Sinclair AO, the dedicated conservationist who helped protect Fraser Island from mining for future generations.

Dedicated conservationist Dr John Sinclair AO, famous for advocating to protect Fraser Island from sandmining and logging has died.

In the 1970s, John Sinclair with his solicitor Mr Stephen Comino took a legal case which went to the High Court of Australia and which overturned the decision of a Mining Warden to grant a mining lease on Fraser Island (Sinclair v Mining Warden at Maryborough (1975) 132 CLR 473). The Fraser Government's decision to cancel export licences for mineral sands resulted in the preservation of Fraser Island in its natural state and enabled its listing as World Heritage.

John Sinclair was an outstanding leader of the conservation movement for over 40 years. From time to time EDO Qld lawyers were privileged to provide legal advice to John. He will be sorely missed. His achievements and passion will continue to provide inspiration to all of us to protect the values of our precious World Heritage Sites.

John's memorial service was held in the Great Hall of the Masonic Temple in Ann Street Brisbane on Saturday March 16 and was attended by hundreds. It was a moving service which included stories of his life from his family and friends including the Butchalla dancers from K'gari.



Photo of 'me and my hero' on one of the cruises to raise funds for research in Great Sandy Strait (fighting Colton Coal Mine) - CRC Member Liz Diggles

Is the popularity of Booloumba Creek threatening it?

In November last year Booloumba Creek was highlighted on Channel 7's 'Queensland Weekender' following which there has been a substantial increase in visitation, by both campers and day trippers. Locals living along Booloumba Creek Road have reported a whole host of problems which, although not beginning with the airing of the show, have certainly increased following it.

There are road issues, some Council matters, some police. There are behaviour issues, both within the campgrounds and particularly around the creek crossings.

We joined with residents in meeting with QPWS staff to discuss many of the issues and it proved to be most productive. Better communications have ensued with Sunshine Coast Council, QPWS as well as the police.

Residents are keen to point out that most visitors are respectful of the environment, but it is being damaged by a small percentage. Some drivers of 4WD's, for example, have posted videos on You Tube of gung-ho behaviour at creek crossings with some even admitting that they drive repeatedly through the creek to wash their vehicles after a visit to Fraser Island!

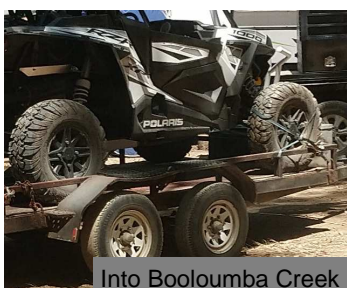
Concern about the behaviour of some visitors isn't restricted to locals; many campers report that it has marred their camping experience also, with most reporting a reluctance to intervene fearing aggressive responses as both alcohol and drugs would appear to be a feature.

Conondale Range Conservation shares the local's concerns and commends them for their positive approach to what is a multi-faceted problem. We applaud the facebook page, for example, that has been set up to help keep front and centre the fact that Booloumba should be a nature-based experience rather than a place to get wrecked.

As the coast's population continues to grow we've always supported the need for people to connect with Nature and numerous studies show significant benefits from this. The establishment of a number of new campgrounds around Kenilworth and their recent rise in popularity bear this out. However, it seems some people have a totally different approach to connecting with country and their behaviours have no place in national parks. The problems aren't limited to Booloumba of course, the coastal dunes of Double Island Point and Fraser Island experience some pretty aberrant behaviour from 4wds especially during peak times.

We'll stick with our neck of the woods though.

Congratulations to those residents recognising a problem (or a whole set of problems) and setting out constructively to improve things.



Into Booloumba Creek

Creek Crossings

Two wheel drivers, are you fed up with having to walk in to the Conondales?

The Conondales, specifically the Booloumba Creek campgrounds, Andy Goldworthy's Strangler Fig Cairn and the Great Walk all experience a form of vehicular apartheid.

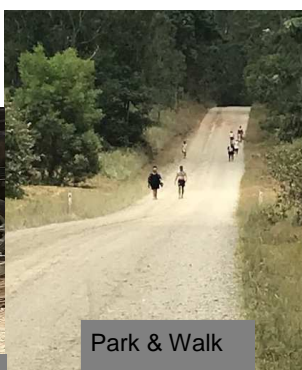
The approach to the campgrounds, and the attractions mentioned, includes two creek crossings which signage advises are suitable for four wheel drive vehicles only. Those with two wheel drive vehicles, which invariably have lower clearance, have to park their vehicles, ad hoc fashion, along the roadway and walk the last few kilometres in.... the "wade and walk" entry to the Conondales.

But it's worse than that! Often as they wade through the creeks, they have to contend with drivers of four wheel drives crossing the creeks in what could only be described as gung-ho fashion. Some go for the biggest bow-wave, others post their achievement on You-tube.

The fact that drivers of two wheel drive vehicles are discriminated against has nothing to do with National Parks or the QPWS who manage them. The road is maintained by Sunshine Coast Council and for reasons best known to themselves they seem content with the raw deal they foist on drivers of more modest vehicles. There is hope though, in that there is a road easement which courses around the bend in the creek and could provide an access that would completely eliminate the need for the creek crossings.

If Council were to construct a road along the easement, it would not only end the vehicular apartheid and provide access for all, it would remove the hazards entailed in parking and unloading, including children, along a narrow road while vehicles continue to traverse just a few metres away.

Construction of that road, as a matter of priority, should be what people refer to these days as a "no brainer".



Park & Walk



Congested & dangerous parking of 2WD

First BioBlitz Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve

You can't know, let alone manage, what you don't see, hear, count and document. This is the underlying reason for conducting a BioBlitz. It is an event that aims at finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time. What is the biodiversity of the studied area? How many species of animals, insects, fungi, plants, etc. are there?

Under the auspices of Sunshine Coast Council, Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve (MCSR) conducted its first BioBlitz in order to establish a reliable dataset of the forest reserve. However, unlike the usual approach of staking out a 2-dimensional area for study, MCSR reached for the sky. The 'vertical BioBlitz' investigated the biodiversity of 5 of the tallest strangler figs (*Ficus watkinsiana* and *obliqua*) in the reserve.

A team of scientists from a number of different fields assisted by MCSR staff and dedicated volunteers braved wind and rain from Thursday, 28th to Sunday, 31st March to record what was found under, in and above these majestic trees. Professional tree climbers hoisted scientists into the canopy during the day while insect counts and bat recordings were conducted at night. Artists formed part of the exercise as well, including our member Leisa Gunton. They sketched their impressions of the forest and created intricate leaf prints while Jinibara Elders related stories to visitors and volunteers in the shelter of the marquee. A number of activities were available to the general public and it was great to see many children amongst them. Early birds, who didn't mind a 5.30 am start quietly observed and counted the number of pademelons in the forest. A few hours later the survey hub in the centre building, equipped with microscopes and computers, became a hive of activity with scientists busily entering data and investigating their finds. 'Is this a new species of dung beetle?', 'Has anybody seen the giant cricket?' 'Oh, look at this beautiful fungus!' Clearly, the mycologist was in heaven as the rain had brought out numerous fungi of all shapes and colours.

An early exiting find was the discovery of a micro bat species, the Eastern/common blossom bat (*Syconycteris australis*) which had never been observed here and is considered vulnerable in NSW. Let's hope it has found a safe haven at MCSR for years to come.

Now it is a matter of patience waiting for the scientists to evaluate and process their data. No doubt we can

look forward to a lot of valuable information to help protect the unique habitat and biodiversity that is the sub-tropical rainforest of Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve.



Mary Cairncross BioBlitz in action



Cooloola Bioblitz

After the great success of its inaugural event last year, Cooloola Coastcare will be conducting another Bioblitz from May 17 to May 19 at Rainbow Beach.

Organisers have identified specific habitats for close scrutiny by the various teams that range from the seashore to the high dunes, from the rainforest to the wallum heathlands and from the ferns to the mangroves.

It is a wonderful time of the year to be out exploring nature.

<https://www.cooloolacoastcare.org.au/projects/bioblitz>

Special wildlife reserves

Great news for private land conservation - the Queensland Parliament has created a new class of private protected area called a Special Wildlife Reserve. Like a National Park, these reserves are protected from logging, mining and gas development. They complement the successful existing class of private protected area, nature refuges, but provide greater protection. You can find out more at [DES website](#) and contact the Special Wildlife Reserve Team directly via swr@des.qld.gov.au. Don't hesitate to contact them if you think your land may qualify – it will ensure optimal conservation management into the future

Mapping Yabba National Park proposal

Mapping for the proposed Yabba NP may seem a straightforward enough task but it's proved to be far from it. For a start, the area involved lies on adjoining sections of a number of the old style paper maps but this is complicated further by the fact that many parts have undergone tenure changes over the last few years, so that coming up with a "fullest and latest" proved pretty challenging.

We were very grateful to have the services of Steve Burgess who has a good working knowledge of Queensland Globe who was able to produce a number of maps, both on small and larger scale.

And while detailed maps were needed to accompany the submission, it became apparent that this detail wasn't required when the wider public just needed to know "where is it?"

Initially we were proposing to government that the Conondale/ Wrattens area provided a great opportunity to fulfil its commitment to increasing the national park estate from around 8%, the lowest in Australia, as well as honouring commitments given in the SEQFA. At first we weren't drawing precise lines on maps but as time went on we realised that we probably needed to.

Ian Stehbens' initial proposal had been for a small national park around Yabba and Kingaham falls but the opportunity and timing were right to propose a "bigger picture" vision that folded in connectivity, honouring SEQFA commitments as well increasing protected estate. We were delighted that Ian, NPAQ (who've put in a huge amount of work in developing and researching this proposal and presenting it to government) and the other partners like Hinterland Bush Links, SCEC, Birds Queensland shared that view. Despite the bigger picture, the magnificent Yabba Falls (declared a scenic reserve before any national park in the Conondales) remains the centre piece of the proposal.

And thus evolved the rough map shown in this newsletter, to show where things fit in the region and in relation to existing national parks. The title says "approximate" and it is just that.



Heavy use of creek crossings causing erosion

Indigenous significance of Yabba country

Areas contained within this National Park proposal hold stories of the area's first peoples and their subsequent interactions with European settlers, interactions both good and bad, and the bunya trees of Yabba Creek play a central part. While first I approached this park proposal it was on the grounds of biodiversity conservation but the more I read, the more I came to appreciate the area's cultural significance. It became obvious that we needed to talk to an old friend, Kabi elder Beverly Hand, someone who has taught me much about indigenous culture as well as caring for country. We were delighted when Bev was able to join us when we met with the minister.

Long, long before white settlement, the fruiting of the Bunya pine, *Araucaria bidwillii*, played an important part in indigenous culture. While gatherings in the Bunya Mountains and Baroon Pocket near the Blackall Range in the Sunshine Coast hinterland are well- documented, similar gatherings also took place in Yabba territory, below Yabba Falls, home of the Kabi people.

Historian Dr Ray Kerkhove in the preface to his "The Great Bunya Gatherings, early accounts" makes the claim that "the Bunya Gathering was arguably the largest and most influential Indigenous gathering in Australia. It engaged a great slice of Australia, not only during its occurrence, but at all times. This is because even back at home, attendees were busy creating corroborees and crafts that would be shared at the event. They also looked forward to – or perhaps dreaded – the marriage arrangements, judicial decisions and ceremonies that would be made at that spot. Finally, they spent weeks to months simply journeying there and back – often conducting further 'business' (ceremonies etc.) en route."

The Royal Society of Queensland wrote in 1894 that "According to Dr. Lauterer... the Bunya pine is the "holy tree" of the aborigines"

Andrew Petrie, an early explorer and the father of Tom Petrie, had attended bunya gatherings at Baroon Pocket and had made representations to Governor Gipps (Governor of NSW of which Moreton Bay was then a part) as to the significance of the tree, suggesting restricting access to white settlers. Gipp's biographer writes that "Gipps's policy towards the Aborigines was humane, practical, and courageous." The best expression of official policy was set out in the report of the Aborigines committee to the House of Commons in 1837: its special suggestions for Australia were the reservation of lands so that Aborigines could continue as huntsmen" and this presumably lay behind , in 1842, his making the Bunya Proclamation to reserve the area for aboriginal people.

"It having been represented to the Governor that a District exists to the northward of Moreton Bay, in which a fruit-bearing tree abounds, called Bunya or Banya Bunya, and that the Aborigines from considerable distances resort at certain times of the year to this District for the purpose of eating the fruit of the said Tree:- His Excellency is pleased to direct that no Licences be granted for the occupation of any Lands within the said District in which the Bunya or Banya Bunya Tree is found.



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STILL... WATCHING
 OVER
 THE CONONDALES



The Marbled Frogmouth
 can now relax in the
 Conondale National Park
 It's taken 25 years!

Conondales 'Wilder Side' Books

Available at:

- *Kenilworth Information Centre
- * Barung Landcare, Maleny
- *Rosetta Books, Maleny
- *Berkelouw Books, Eumundi
- * CRC Mail Order or on line

www.exploreconondales.com

A must for any visitor to the Conondales, this book includes history, a comprehensive bird list, description of walks, recreation and maps of the area.

Plus lots of great photos.

Booloumba Creek Crossing Issues

It seems that our co-ordinated approach of contacting all the various Govt Depts, local, state and federal have produced some action. Along with local Booloumba residents who sent letters of concern and have had meetings with local council.

Its quite amazing, for years we've been trying to get something done about Booloumba Creek crossings, then Leisa decides to campaign for action and "its all starting to happen"!

Sunshine Coast Council have responded to our letter with news of a site visit on 26 March 2019 with Councillor Mckay, Group Executive Tom Jamieson and QPWS. Council have committed to further investigate the access issues.



The Eastern/common blossom bat (*Syconycteris australis*) was recently discovered at the Mary Caincross BioBlitz.

It has never been observed here before and is considered vulnerable in NSW.