

**STAGE TWO**

**Eurobodalla Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study**



**STORIES ABOUT THE EUROBODALLA  
BY ABORIGINAL PEOPLE**

**Prepared by**

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**Prepared for**

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Department of Environment and Conservation  
Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority  
Local Aboriginal Land Councils  
Elders Groups & Aboriginal Community Members**

*Warning: contains reference to people who have passed away.*

Trisha Ellis' family talked about a ceremonial cave where the old people communicated with their ancestors. People use to go to Bendethera to drink the water, which filtered through limestone rocks. The water is thought to have healing qualities. '**Ginn's Cave**' is near Bendethera, as recorded in the Moruya Examiner in the 1890s [Trisha Ellis 29.5 / 4.2.2006].

#### 4.23 BERGALIA, COILA, TURLINJAH & TUROSS HEAD

The Bergalia, Coila, Turlinjah and Tuross Head areas hold a variety of cultural heritage values for Aboriginal people, both past and present. Work related places, camping and living places, recreation and birthplaces as well as ancient ceremonial places. There was an Aboriginal Reserve set aside for William Benson in 1880 in the Turlinjah area. During this time Aboriginal children attended Turlinjah Public School. The area was still being used into the 1940s. It is believed that 'Black Hill', north of Coila Lake, is a place of early conflict between European settlers and the local Aboriginal residence. Oral accounts of the 'Black Hill' area describe a number of scenarios including a potential massacre and a mass burial of people struck by Yellow Fever. The area holds a high level of significance to Aboriginal people today; some of whose ancestors lived in the area.

Nell recalls Peter and Veronica Duren working at the **Bergalia Dairy farm** during the 1940s. Peter would be up at 4 am milking the cows, whilst Veronica was a housemaid. During the war, a German Spy also worked there, he mapped the area and recorded a number of Aboriginal place names. Ronnie Cheshier brought the map home from Papa New Guinea after the German spy was captured. The old map is now at the Moruya Historical Society Museum. Nell was told the area around **Bergalia House** was where Aboriginal corroborees were once held [Nell Greig 19.12.2005].

During the mid 1950s Doris Moore worked at Kevin and Phyllis Beashel' s farm, Bergalia, whilst Agnes, Doris's sister worked on the adjoining farm owned by Frank and Mona Beashel. Doris worked for the Beashel family for over two years between the ages of 15 – 17, cooking, cleaning and general farmhand work. She was paid 3 pounds / week and loved to eat fresh cream, rhubarb and vegetables. She learnt to ride a horse and recalls making purchases at the Bergalia Store, close by the highway [Doris Moore, 14.12.2005].

Trisha's mother liked to collect resources from behind Bergalia. She was told of how Aboriginal families camped in the Bergalia and Turlinjah area. Turlinjah, south of the Smarts Bridge, an Aboriginal camp was located. It was called **William Benson Reserve**. He was given the land for the term of his natural life in appreciation of his service to the local non-Aboriginal family. Later the remnants of the Moruya people (13) were placed there until Wallaga Lake Reserve was gazetted in 1891 [Trisha Ellis 4.2.2006].

Joseph Chapman was born on **Turlinjah Island** in 1898. Joseph Chapman was Les Simon's maternal grandfather. Joseph Chapman's mother was Annie Bolloway, and father Henry [Harry] Chapman. Families were moved from the Batemans Bay, Mogo and Moruya area to

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the **Turlinjah Reserve**. Land at Turlinjah was granted to Henry Richard Chapman, the son of 'Sally Gundry' [Les Simon 30.11.2005].

During her life Amelia 'Millie' Anne Andy, born in Tilba in 1928, spent time at Turlinjah, as recorded in census records. During the late 1940s Maureen's father Walter 'Roy' Davis and paternal grandfather, Walter 'Wally' Davis worked cutting cedar in the Turlinjah area [Maureen Davis 19.12.2005].

Alan Mongta lived in a bark hut at Turlinjah with his parents in the 1940s. His father cut sleepers along Western Boundary road, when the picking season at Coopers Island had finished. The hut at Turlinjah was on its own, not part of an Aboriginal camp. Alan's father built the hut from stringy bark and off cuts from the mill. Lionel Mongta's father was in the area too. You can still see the old nail in a tree, on the highway at Turlinjah where a post box once hung for the bread delivery [Alan Mongta 25.11.2005].

There were always koori families camped at Turlinjah, north of the bridge, east of the highway. Linda remembers the children playing in the mud; making mud cakes and decorating the cakes with the gold pieces found within the mud [Linda Cruse 1.3.2006].

In the early 1960s Trisha attended **Turlinjah School** when living at Coopers Island. She caught the bus into Turlinjah daily; her Nan and Aunties would take her to the bus stop by the highway [Trisha Ellis 4.2.2006].

Lionel Mongta recalls an Aboriginal camp being located behind the Turlinjah School during the 1940s [Lionel Mongta 2.1.2006].

In 1930, before Linda was born, her parents lived next to **Coila Creek** in a shack, near where the service station is today. Her father fished on Coila Lake. He sold the fish he caught here and also fed the family. They camped for a while with a Chinese man. When there was no fish at Coila Lake, Benjamin, with the assistance of the Chinese man, would carry his boat over the headland to Tuross Lake in search of fish. The Chinaman once said to Linda's sister Noelene, who was 4 at the time, 'better you laugh than cry' [Linda Cruse 1.3.2006].

**Coila Lake** is part of our traditional fishing grounds, especially for prawning [Vivienne Mason 5.1.2006].

The Connell family moved from the Nerrigundah area to Black Hill, on the north side of Coila Lake. The family lived in an old house that Ernest Connell 'fixed up' and worked at Coopers Island picking seasonal vegetables. Margaret remembers fishing and prawning in Coila Lake and walking to Bingi through the bush and across the paddocks. The Connell family lived here for two years from 1948, before moving to Coopers Island where they continued to work [Margaret Carriage 31.5.2006].

There is a bora ground south west of Coila Lake. Trisha's Nan was told that the flat lands around Coila Lake were associated with men's ceremonies, and that women are not permitted to enter / use the area. Women are to stay in the **Black Hill** area, on either side of the rise, in mountains. Black Hill is the rise immediately north of Coila Lake [Trisha Ellis 4.2.2006].

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Trisha's mother Patricia Connell came to Black Hill as a child with her parents Ursula Rose Connell and Ernest John Richard Connell 'Pop Connell'. Their intentions were to visit family living in the area, however they stayed, living and working in the Turlinjah, Nerrigundah and Coila area. They lived in a house on Black Hill. Trisha recalls Pop Connell being a hard workingman trapping rabbits amongst other things. Trisha often went trapping with him. He sold the meat at the Butchers and the pelts elsewhere. He also shot kangaroos, to feed his family. Old people used fish traps in the area [Trisha Ellis 4.2.2006].

Les was informed that a burial site exists in the Coila Lake area [Les Simon 30.11.2005].

It is believed that conflict between Aboriginal people and European settlers took place in a gully, north of Coila Lake. It is thought that an associated burial ground also exists. Spirits are sometimes seen and heard when one passes through the area [Trisha Ellis 4.2.2006].

A burial site, possibly for Aboriginal people, who died of Yellow Fever in the late 1800s, is located north of Coila Lake. Spirits are often seen in the area. Ted Thomas knew about this site and told Dave about it [Dave Tout 25.1.2006].

Lionel knows of Bora rings located in the Tuross area. The area is within farmland now [Lionel Mongta 2.1.2006].

Ronnie's father and eldest brother taught Darryl, Ronald and Glen how to make spears out of the garara stick; they have been spearing in the **Tuross River**, there are good shallow sections there [Vivienne Mason 1.6.2006].

'The whole of Tuross is an Aboriginal site....' [Trisha Ellis 1.6.2006].

The Spaulding family had a dairy farm at Tuross Heads. Dave lived and worked here whilst other families who worked on the farm camped on Horse Island [Dave Tout 25.1.2006].