

## Reserves

During Governor Macquarie's reign, Aboriginal Reserves were set up throughout the country to in the early 1900's, to segregate the Aborigines. The Aborigines of the Tweed were placed on Ukerebagh Island and mainly left to look after themselves. In 1977, the authorities decided the land could be sold for development and the Aborigines were relocated on the mainland under the Assimilation Scheme. Many settled at Fingal Head and South Tweed Heads.

## Today

The Aboriginal culture in the Tweed is now highly valued and of great interest to both locals and visitors to the area. It is estimated that there are now (2007), approximately 4,000 Aboriginal people living in the Tweed Valley.

**A Bora Ring or Bora Ground** is a sacred site where traditional Aboriginal initiation ceremonies are performed. They are mostly found in South East Australia and are recognised by a circle of foot-hardened earth surrounded by raised embankments. The appearance of the site varies from one culture to another, but is often associated with stone arrangements, rock engravings or other art works.



**The Bora Ring** on the site shown above is of great spiritual and cultural significance in linking the Minjungbal people spiritually to their ancestors. It was last used traditionally in 1910.

- Here, young boys were transformed into men.
- The ceremony leading up to it, involved learning sacred songs, stories, dances and traditional lore.
- Many different clans assembled to participate, often coming from as far as *Wollumbin*/(Mt.Warning).
- Women were prohibited from entering the Bora.

## Restoration of Bora Ring

A local Aboriginal woman, named Margaret Kay (1905-1967), was instrumental in the preservation of the Bora Ground at South Tweed Heads. She established a little museum filled with local artefacts at the front of her house, and continued to devote her energies to this site until her death. The museum was opened to all the local children and community. Due to her efforts, Tweed Shire Council formally recognised the significance of this area in 1961. The Bora Ring and 125 hectares of surrounding bushland, including Ukerebagh Island, are now reserved for preservation of Aboriginal Relics. The local community acknowledged Margaret Kay's efforts with the construction of the Minjungbal Museum & Cultural Centre, where her collections are currently displayed.

Reference: Information compiled from Historical publications available from Tweed Shire Council Libraries



Research and design – Marguerite Buckley 2007

Produced by North Coast Area Health Service – Health Promotion  
In association with Bugalwena Health Service



Every effort has been made to ensure the information contained herein is correct.  
In the case of any errors noted please contact 02 6674 9500

# MINJUNGBAL ABORIGINAL 'WALK ON WATER' NATURE WALK

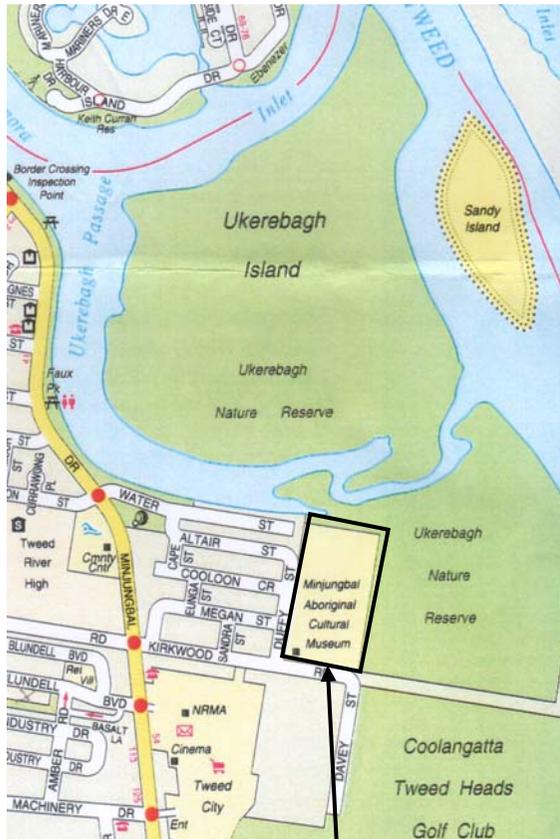


## STAY TRIM & KEEP FIT WITH EASY EXERCISE

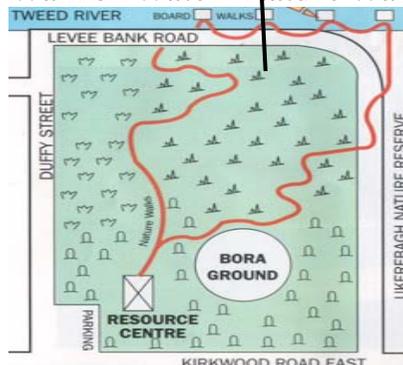
The series of brochures on Historic Walks of Tweed Shire are for information purposes only. Please consult your doctor or health professional before undertaking any historical walk to ensure the activity is appropriate for you.

## Minjungbal Cultural Centre

Located 5km South of Qld/NSW Border. Turn East into Kirkwood Rd, South Tweed Heads beside Tweed City Shopping Centre.



## “Walk on Water” Nature Walk



## Track is located behind the Cultural Centre MINJUNGBAL “WALK ON WATER” NATURE WALK

This 30-45 minute walk can either be taken with or without a guide. The boardwalk and track passes a sacred Bora Ring and cuts through natural bushland to mangroves growing along the Tweed River. There are information boards along the track explaining the flora, fauna, bush tucker and culture of the Minjungbal people.

**At certain times of the year mosquitoes and midges can be a problem on the track. Wear protective clothing and/or apply insect repellent.**

To book a guide, it is advisable to call a couple of days in advance. Ph. 0755242109 (minimal cost applies for guide).



*Minjungbal Aboriginal Cultural Centre, 2007*

## Minjungbal Aboriginal History

The Minjungbal people were the first people to live in the Tweed. It is thought that the name of the tribe was ‘Moorung-Moobar’ and the language Minjungbal, a dialect of Bundjalung.

The Commissioner of Crown Lands estimated in 1844 that there was a population of 5,000 Aborigines between the Tweed and Moreton Bay.

## A Strong, Tall & Healthy Tribe.

The Minjungbal people were reported ‘to be of much better physique than many other tribes because of the abundance of fresh food and water. They were tall, strong, healthy, and had more time for leisure and crafts than other tribes. They were physically active and walked everywhere. Dwellings were waterproofed and had additional partitions for communal living. Containers, utensils, rope and nets were used and showed a high level of workmanship.

## Arrival of Europeans

Following the arrival of early Europeans to the area, the traditional lifestyle of the Tweed Coast Aboriginal people was destroyed when the Europeans felled trees for timber, cleared the rainforest for agriculture and fenced the countryside. The European settlers to the area guarded their fresh waterholes with guns. The effect of these changes, plus the effect of introduced diseases, caused a rapid decline in the number of Tweed Valley Aborigines.

Many of the loggers, farmers and military used the Aborigines as a source of cheap labour, while the women worked as cleaners and childminders in exchange for sugar, tea and flour.

From the 1860’s – 1890’s, over 61,000 Islanders were brought into Queensland by the Government as another source of cheap labour to get the sugar industry going. Many stayed on after 1904 when the labour trade ended.