WILCANNIA ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY HERITAGE STUDY
PART A : ABORIGINAL THEMATIC HISTORY
CENTRAL DARLING SHIRE AND
WILCANNIA LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL
October 2018
Acknowledgements

Funding for this project was obtained from the OEH Heritage Division Local Government Heritage Planning Studies 2017-18

Hannah Corbett, project Officer for NSWALC wrote the funding application for this project.

The project funding was obtained by Central Darling Shire Council and is being managed by Michael Boyd General Manager (more recently Greg Hill General Manager) and Liz Vines, heritage advisor.

The project is being supervised and assisted by Jenny Thwaites, CEO Wilcannia LALC and Sarah Martin from OEH Heritage Division

The Wilcannia Local Aboriginal Land Council Board instigated the application for funding of this project and have worked on the project throughout.

Community members working on the project include Steve Harris, Murray Butcher, Cyril Hunter, Waddy Harris, Badger Bates, Muriel Riley, Ngearie and Scratchy Cattermole, Colleen Wilson, Bob Wilson, Ron Kinsela, Grace Kinsela, Norma Dutton, Frances Dutton, Junee Jones, Teddy Bear Kerwin, Leah Ebsworth, Colin Harris, Buddy Bates, Betty Williams, Maureen and Dulcie O'Donnell, Tanya Lawson, Alice Whyman, Darren Whyman, Boblo Johnson, Roger Whyman and Nola Whyman, and David Clark.

This report uses the spelling “Barkandji” to conform to the Barkandji Native Title Claim determination 2015. There are many ways of spelling Barkandji which are correct.
PART A : ABORIGINAL THEMATIC HISTORY OF
WILCANNIA

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY ................................................................................................................ 4

2. TRADITIONAL BARKANDJI CULTURE .......................................................................................................... 5
   2.1 BARKANDJI LANGUAGE ......................................................................................................................... 5
   2.2 BARKANDJI KILPARA AND MAKWARA MOIETY SYSTEM ................................................................. 6
   2.3 BARKANDJI MATRILINEAL TOTEMS OR “MEATS” ............................................................................. 8
   2.4 BARKANDJI KINSHIP SYSTEM .............................................................................................................. 9
   2.5 BARKANDJI WAYS OF BELONGING TO COUNTRY .......................................................................... 10

3. NGIYAMPAA TRADITIONAL CULTURE ................................................................................................... 11
   3.1 NGIYAMPAA LANGUAGE AND CULTURE .......................................................................................... 11
   3.2 NGIYAMPAA BELONGING TO COUNTRY ........................................................................................... 12

4. BARKANDJI HUNTING, FISHING AND GATHERING OF FOOD ............................................................. 13

5. BARKANDJI BURIAL PRACTICES ........................................................................................................... 18

7. THE FIRST EUROPEANS: THOMAS MITCHELL THE EXPLORER REACHES WILCANNIA IN 1835 -
   “THE SPITTING TRIBE” ................................................................................................................................. 19

8. THE OVERLANDERS REACH WILCANNIA ............................................................................................. 20

9. THE EARLY PASTORAL PERIOD 1850’S - 1870’S (“THE TIME THEY USED TO SHOOT EM” ............ 20

10. THE LATER PASTORAL PERIOD : 1880’S - 1970’S ............................................................................ 28

11. BRIEF BACKGROUND HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF WILCANNIA (FROM MCDougALL VINES
   2017) ................................................................................................................................................................ 32

12. THE WILCANNIA FRINGE CAMPS ......................................................................................................... 35
   12.1 EARLY FRINGE CAMPS ....................................................................................................................... 35
   12.2 MENINDEE ABORIGINAL STATION OR ‘MISSION’ .......................................................................... 37
   12.3 THE 1940’S TO 1970’S FRINGE CAMPS ON THE DARLING RIVER ............................................. 39
   12.4 THE MALLEE ....................................................................................................................................... 39
   12.5 THE WILCANNIA ABORIGINAL RESERVE (THE MISSION) ............................................................. 41
   12.6 THE MISSION SCHOOL AND THE SISTERS OF MERCY ................................................................ 42

    ALWAYS WILL BE ABORIGINAL LAND” ..................................................................................................... 42
   13.1 BARKANDJI HOUSING CO-OP 1980 .................................................................................................. 42
   13.2 LANDRIGHTS AND THE BUY BACK OF WEINTERIGA STATION - “ALWAYS WAS ALWAYS WILL BE
       ABORIGINAL LAND” ................................................................................................................................. 43
   13.3 HANDBACK OF MUTAWINTJI NATIONAL PARK .............................................................................. 44
   13.4 BARKANDJI NATIVE TITLE DETERMINATION ................................................................................. 44
   13.5. LOCAL DECISION MAKING - WHATS GOING ON ........................................................................ 44
1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This thematic history report is a milestone in the Wilcannia Community-Based Aboriginal Heritage Study funded through the Office of Environment Heritage Division Local Government Heritage Planning Studies 2017-18 funding round.

A community-based heritage study for Wilcannia’s built heritage has recently been completed (Vines 2017), however this report focusses on the built heritage of Wilcannia. This Community-based, Aboriginal Heritage Study (“the Study”) will ensure Wilcannia’s Aboriginal heritage is also identified, understood, and properly managed.

There is an expectation among communities for local Councils to identify, respect and protect all aspects of local heritage, and the community of Wilcannia is no exception. No comprehensive Aboriginal Heritage Study has been conducted in Wilcannia and much of the history, connections, and cultural/social values of key heritage places remain with local elders. Furthermore, ‘Steamers Point’ Plan of Management states that more recording needs to be done as the current boundary misses important sites.

The Study is needed to:

1. Ensure Aboriginal heritage values and cultural/historical knowledge is recorded and passed on to future generations before it disappears along with the passing of elders,

2. Provide Central Darling Shire Council (“Council”) with a greater understanding of the cultural/social values of local Aboriginal Heritage and help inform Council decision making and planning/development processes with respect to Aboriginal Heritage;

3. Provide culturally appropriate guidance to Council on the management and conservation of Wilcannia’s Aboriginal Heritage, including strategies for known sites and Aboriginal Places, as well as environmental areas/landscapes that are of cultural significance.

The Study will benefit a number of key stakeholders including:

1. The local Aboriginal population and Barkandji Traditional Owners who make up eighty five percent (85%) of Wilcannia’s population and who are connected through history and culture to a number of key places and sites in and around the town,

2. The Central Darling Shire Council, which has a legal responsibility to manage and protect all heritage in the LGA and ensure community cohesiveness and wellbeing is maintained and promoted.

Expected Outcomes of the Study:

The proper identification, protection and management of Aboriginal heritage is vital to ensure the continuation and survival of this finite and valuable resource for future generations of not just Aboriginal people, but all Australians.

Significant Project Outcomes include:

1. All known Aboriginal heritage sites, places and landscapes will be identified and assessed by the Aboriginal Community (“the Community”)

2. A Report on the history and cultural/social values of heritage items will help strengthen understandings of Aboriginal heritage and improve relations between Council and Community

3. Management strategies/recommendations included in the Study document will act to guide Council and improve the overall management and conservation of Wilcannia’s Aboriginal heritage
4. Updated Local Environmental Plan, as per the Heritage item values and management strategies identified in the Study will ensure impacts to Aboriginal Heritage are considered as part of local planning/development approval processes.

5. Community-led approach will ensure the heritage items and values identified during the study reflect those of the Community, an indirect outcome of which is an increased sense of Community ownership in local heritage processes.

6. Aboriginal community will gain information on the history and values of Aboriginal heritage items for their own purposes, including a culturally appropriate document or 'cultural map'.

The Central Darling Shire is the largest Shire in NSW, yet it has the smallest population with around two thousand people. Included within the Local Government Area ("LGA") are the traditional lands of a diverse range of Aboriginal groups, each with their own history, culture, and traditions.

Considering the size and remote nature of the LGA and the fact that the proposed Community-based, Aboriginal heritage Study ("the Study") will be the first of its kind in the LGA, it was decided to limit the focus of the study to Aboriginal heritage in and around Wilcannia. The project will, subsequently, act as a pilot study to inform and guide similar Studies in other towns across the LGA; i.e. Menindee and Ivanhoe.

As a community-based Aboriginal heritage study the project will not only involve the local community, but also produce a document or 'cultural map', which will help to inform and support community aspirations around the continued protection and conservation of Wilcannia's Aboriginal Heritage, including future heritage-based projects and intergenerational learning. To achieve this the report will be like a story book of places with related photos and oral history. However, the document is also expected to raise Council's awareness and understanding of Wilcannia's Aboriginal Heritage and it's management needs. To further support Council's planning and decision-making processes the project will also produce an additional document providing preliminary recommendations around the management and conservation of Aboriginal heritage items.

To achieve the proposed documents, the Study will prioritise the cultural/social values of Wilcannia's Aboriginal Heritage and focus on the following:

1. Thematic history of Wilcannia’s Aboriginal History (Part A)
2. Research and fieldwork describing the identified heritage items, including a series of oral history interviews with the last remaining elders (Part B)
3. Condition survey for each heritage item identified during the Study, including recommendations on conservation and management (Part B)
4. Heritage assessment and statement of significance for key heritage items. (Part B)

2. TRADITIONAL BARKANDJI CULTURE

2.1 Barkandji Language

Wilcannia is approximately in the middle of Barkandji country, and is surrounded on all sides by Barkandji speaking people. The people from along the Darling River or "paaka" and varying distances either side from near Bourke down to Wentworth all recognised the Barkandji language as their primary language, but they were divided into sub-groups that were identified with different dialects of this one language (Hercus 1982 & 1993). The Barkandji language is very different from all the neighbouring languages including the adjoining Ngiyampaa/Ngemba to the east, the Kulin and Murray River languages to the south, and the Yardli and Thura-Yura language groups to the
The unifying aspect of the Barkandji language can be illustrated by the example of the term “wiimpatja” used by all Barkandji speaking people to describe people and in particular themselves. All Barkandji are “wiimpatja” and non-Barkandji are usually described by the equivalent word in the language of those being described.

The Barkandji language group was sub-divided into dialects each extending over a defined area, including Kurnu, Naualko, Paaruntji, Wilyakali, Pantjikali/Wanyiwalku, Southern Barkandji, Parrintji, Maraura and Thangakaali (Figure 1 & 2 from Hercus 1982, 1993). There are also some references to the dialect group above and below Menindee being called Mailpurlgu (Mathews 1908:306-7) or Milpulko (Howitt 1904 [1996]). The dialect groups are named in various ways; some having the root “palku” meaning language (Mailpurlgu, Naualko & Wanyiwalku, sometimes spelt Wanyipalku); or after the type of country (Pantjikali - creek country, Paaruntji - Paroo River country) (Hercus 1993); or in other ways not currently understood (for example Kurnu). These were the big divisions within the Barkandji system.

Figure 1: Branches of the Barkandji Language Group (after Hercus 1993)

```
BARKANDJI LANGUAGE GROUP

NORTH EASTERN DIALECTS          WESTERN DIALECTS         SOUTHERN DIALECTS
  Naualko                        Wilyakali                     S. Barkandji/
  Kurnu                          Pantjikali/                    Maraura/
  Paaruntji                      Wanyipalku                    Parrintji
                              Thangakaali
```

The differences between Barkandji dialects vary from a minor difference in accent or tone to distinct structural differences, however all Barkandji are able to understand each other. The main division is between the northeastern group (Kurnu, Paaruntji, Naualko) and the rest of the dialects. Kurnu and Paaruntji are practically identical and shared 90% of vocabulary with the others but there was a difference in accent and tone. The main differences between the northern dialects and the rest were structural, for example in Kurnu and some Paaruntji the initial consonant of personal pronouns changes with tense (Hercus 1982 &1993).

Within the dialects very few words are different and most people understand the differences. For example, the word for eaglehawk in Kurnu is warriku, but in other dialects it is bilyara, or kanau, but most people would understand all these versions. When a person spoke their dialect most Barkandji would understand them, especially if they were from neighbouring dialects.

2.2 Barkandji Kilpara And Makwara Moiety System

The Barkandji were divided into two distinct classes or matrilineal moieties, named Makwara and Kilpara (Mathews 1898:242, Howitt, 1904:98-100, Radcliffe-Brown 1918:248, 1923, 1930, Elkin 1930:203-205 1/2/6, 1931, 1938 etc.). You could only marry someone who belonged to the opposite moiety to your own. Makwara had a special relationship (or moiety totem) with Eaglehawk, and Kilpara had a special relationship with Crow (Elkin 1930, Tindale 1938-39). Tindale’s Maraura Barkandji informant Peter Bonney emphasised the importance of the Kilpara
Figure 2: The Barkandji Language Area showing Barkandji Dialect Groups within dashed lines (Hercus 1993)
and Makwara moiety system and that children inherited their moiety (Kilpara or Makwara) and their totem or "meat" from their mother. The Barkandji matrilineal moieties came about in the Dreamtime when the various laws and customs regulating social organisation were "given out" by the ancestors. Thus:

"the world was created by beings whom they call Nooralie – beings that existed a very long time ago ... (which) had the form of the Crow and the Eagle. There was continual war between these two beings, but peace was made at length. They agreed that the [people] should be divided into two classes – the Mak-quarra or Eaglehawk, and the Kil-parra or Crow ... Out of [this] final agreement arose the two classes, and hence a law governing marriages amongst those classes (Smyth Vol 1,1878:423-4).

2.3 Barkandji Matrilineal Totems or “Meats”

Makwara and Kilpara were divided into matrilineal social totems (Radcliffe-Brown 1930:227, Berndt & Berndt 1964:43,). The common Barkandji term for this is wanga meaning “meat”, indicating that the person and his or her totem are “one flesh”. The Wilyakali Barkandji man Will Gibson explained that you would ask a person “mina wonga [ng]emba? meaning “what meat you?” (Elkin 1930:205 1/2/6), or as Hero Black, Kurnu Barkandji, said in 1945, “minna wangga gimba” - “what meat (totem) are you?” (Reay 1945). This can be summarised as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moiety</th>
<th>Moiety Totem</th>
<th>Wanga (meat) or Social Totems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kilpara</td>
<td>Crow (Waku)</td>
<td>emu, black duck, crow, black kangaroo etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makwara</td>
<td>Eaglehawk (Wariku/pilyara)</td>
<td>red kangaroo, eagle, pelican, teal duck etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were also rules governing marriage and social relationships and obligations between the meats as well as the moieties. A Kilpara could not marry just any Makwara, for example, but there were certain rules to follow concerning the relationship of the various meats. Therefore Hero Black said he "was a sand goanna man and could marry a bandicoot or [red] kangaroo woman, an emu man could marry a [red] kangaroo, but not a bandicoot woman" (Reay 1945). Howitt also agrees that “there was a limitation as to the totem marriage: for instance in the Wilyakali, Muckwara-eaglehawk married Kilpara-bonefish; Muckwara-dog married Kilpara-padimelon; and so on” (Howitt 1904:194). Boultee (1898) says “Muckwara Tirrlta [thalta red kangaroo] can only marry a Kilpara Kulthe [kulthi emu], the offspring would follow the mother and be a Kilpara Kulthe”. The "meats" are divided up amongst the two moieties on the basis of opposites, e.g., eaglehawk and crow, red and black kangaroo, wood duck and black duck etc.

Barkandji people still understand this system and some of the oldest people in the community today married and lived according to these rules. Elsie Jones said:

"my grandmother and my mother were emu, so I’m emu and Kilparra too, because what meat you are comes from your mother’s side ..... so, my daughters’ children and my sisters’ daughters’ children are emu too. But my son’s daughter gets her meat through her mother’s side. My Granny explained the strict rules and laws to me ... she couldn’t eat emu because her meat was emu, and she couldn’t marry anyone who was emu or any of the other meats on the Kilparra side (Jones 1989)."
2.4 Barkandji Kinship System.

The Barkandji have a complex kinship system that was recorded in detail for the Wilyakali Barkandji by the anthropologist Elkin in 1930 (Figure 29, Elkin 1938:43). Elkin also describes the complex relationship between the kinship system and the matrilineal moieties Kilpara and Makwara and associated wanga or “meat” (Elkin 1938: 42-44, Elkin 1940:373). He also points out the kinship system is not only used:

> in arranging marriages, but also provides patterns of behaviour for all life’s situations, the patterns being represented or codified by the various types of relationship......a certain relationship demands that the two persons concerned perform certain duties, or make certain gifts, often mutual; and it may also prescribe that certain things might not be done” (Elkin 1938:69).

Many of the patterns of behaviour that exist in current Barkandji communities can be traced back to this kinship system, for example men are obliged to take wild meat to certain kin, and young people are obliged to address their older kin in prescribed ways, or do chores for them, bring them firewood or whatever, because of the rules and regulations in place today. One example of this continuing kinship system is the brother/sister like relationships and obligations between parallel cousins, particularly mother’s sisters’ children. Badger Bates explains the relationship with his mother’s sisters’ children, compared to his mother’s brother’s children:

> Well, that’s closer, that’s why I still call Ray and Cyril (MZS) brother,... They (MZ and MZC) were the ones who helped rear us up...... Cousin Edie (MZD) and Amy (MBD), (Amy because Granny took her because the mother died). We always had someone older we looked up to. I was with Joe O’Donnell (MZS) and that’s why I’m different, he was the person I looked up to. Johnny (Badger’s older brother) was always with Ray and Cyril (MZE). Christopher (Badger’s MZE), he looked up to Bobbie Hunter (Christopher’s MZS), Blue-Eye (Badger’s younger brother) looked up to Percy Hunter (MZS) [M = mother, Z = sister, S = son, D = daughter, C = children]. (Martin 1998).

These relationships can be seen amongst the younger generations although there is an increasing tendency to regard cross and parallel cousins as the same. One effect of the strong close relationships between parallel and cross cousins is the prohibition of marriage between first cousins (Beckett 1988).

Another element is the close relationship a person has with their mother’s sisters who are like mothers (classificatory mothers) with obligations to “look after” sister’s children. This may involve minding, feeding, giving a bed to such children or longer term adoption where necessary, or giving advice or a home to older children. The younger generation of women tend to carry out these obligations towards either their sisters’ or brothers’ children, the relationships and obligations being of ongoing major importance.

Kinship terms are used very widely in the community, both Barkandji terms and English terms used in an equivalent or broader sense. Barkandji kin terms still used include Wituka, Kanytja, Kukutja, Kambitja, Ngamaka, and Parlitja. Sometimes these kin terms have been adopted as people’s names, for example Granny Kate Bugmy nee Whyman was known as Kanytja Kate, used in the sense of grandmother and Jack Mitchell was known as Parlitja (younger brother) since he was a small child. Equivalent English terms include Gran, Pop, Mum, Dad, Auntie, Uncle, Sis, Brother or Bruz, and Cousin or Cous. Auntie and Uncle are used for “real” Aunties and Uncles, as well as more distant relations and non-blood relations, and are also used as respect terms for community elders who may or may not have a blood or other kin relationship. First cousins are commonly called Brother or Sis, and their wives/husbands also Brother or Sis. A woman who helped rear a child up might be called Auntie or Mum; even if the birth mother had the major role, you can have several “mums”. The kinship system still widely affects the status of children from other
relationships. For example a child will regard his mother’s husband as a father-figure, regardless of his relationship with his "own" biological father (you can have several “dads”).

The kinship system is also demonstrated by the arrangement of houses in areas such as the Mallee at Wilcannia. In 1974 the architect Myers said about housing in the Mallee, Wilcannia:

The distribution of tents and iron sheds is in accordance with Barkantji customs- the clusters being an expression of kinship affinities within the larger tribal group, note that for this necessary clustering the whole of the Mallee area is used - what appears as “empty” ground being in fact the required “neutral” ground to allow privacy for each family group (Memmott 1991:141).

Twelve years later (1986) another socio-spatial analysis of housing in Wilcannia found the situation essentially unchanged, the Mallee was largely occupied by “the descendants of Granny Moisy ... together with affines and some of their kin”, and a smaller descent group of Wanyiwalku affinity. Other areas in the town had similar descent group “enclaves”, with the exception of the few isolated households in the white dominated part of town (ibid 1991:269). It is likely that at least some of the vandalism of government housing in Wilcannia directly results from the inappropriate design, placement and allocation of housing thus conflicting with the very real needs people have for kin groupings and distance from non-kin. Much of what is interpreted by outsiders as nepotism in housing allocation by Land Councils etc. relates to these kinship needs.

2.5 Barkandji Ways of Belonging to Country

The name Barkandji comes from the word "barka " meaning Darling River so the Barkandji are the people belonging to the Darling River. The country of Barkandji language speakers extends along the Darling River from approximately Bourke down to Wentworth, and the lower end of the Paroo and Warrego rivers, and river-less country stretching out to the west and east of the Darling River. Although geographically complex, the approximate boundaries of the Barkandji Language Group are well known to Barkandji people today. However, individuals may only know, or know best, the area they have grown up in or the area they know from their own family history. People old enough to have worked and lived on pastoral stations in Barkandji country and travelled the country retain mental maps that memorise every bend in the river, every creek, hill, lagoon etc. Knowledge about country is often retained as oral history about where ancestors were born, died and worked, or where historic or mythological events occurred. Country is also recognised by mythological story lines that describe the country, for example the travels of the two Ngatyi. This knowledge about country is an example of the continuity of cultural knowledge. In 1844 the guide Toonda surprised Sturt's party by “drawing in the sand a plan of the Darling for 300 miles of its course, also of the Murray a good distance both above and below its junction [with the Darling]. He drew all the Lagoons on the Western side and gave the name of each, by comparing afterwards the bends he drew with Major Mitchell’s chart, they both agreed” (Browne in Finnsiss 1966:30).

Newland who lived at Marra Station on the Darling River near Tilpa in the 1860's says:

The various tribes had their own country clearly defined, that again, was sub-divided among the individuals...each bend in the river or creek was named, as well as every hill, plain, or the smallest water, so that, once knowing these names, there was little difficulty in fixing a boundary (Newland 1887-8:31).

The Louth policeman Lewis writing to R.H. Mathews said the Kurnu Barkandji:

they are what we would call divided into Counties, and are confined to their certain districts unless they receive an invitation to enter another’ (Lewis 1897 & 1898).

These statements show that even at this stage in Barkandji history people had to have permission or an invitation before entering anyone else’s territory.
Beckett shows the strong tendency for Barkandji to remain in their country (Wilcannia, Menindee, Bourke and Wentworth/ Dareton), and for the Ngiyampaa-Wiradjuri to remain in theirs (ibid : 125-126) after the 1949 movement of Menindee Mission to Murrin Bridge. However, he also picks up the trend in 1964 for young people to move into other communities where they have kin but there is also a pool of eligible marriage partners who are not too closely related (ibid: 130). This trend continues today owing to the fact that young people may be related to nearly everyone in their small home town, “they’re all my cousins”. However, they will often return home after “settling down” with a suitable partner.

The archaeology and ethnography of Barkandji country indicate that people frequently congregated in these larger groups where resources were plentiful. They did this to avoid periods of drought and scarcity in their own country, and also to take advantage of easy and plentiful resources such as fish in the Darling River during freshes and the variety of foods found at places like the Menindee Lakes (Sturt 1849, Mitchell 1839) and Lake Victoria (Eyre 1841-44) after floods, as well as the social opportunities presented by large groups of people.

3. NGIYAMPAA TRADITIONAL CULTURE

3.1 NGIYAMPAA LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The Ngiyampaa people are the nearest neighbours to Wilcannia and today many people living in Wilcannia are descended from Ngiyampaa, especially the families originating in country to the east of Wilcannia such as Cobar, Mt Grenfell, Ivanhoe, Keewong, Paddington, Trida, Carowra Tank, Mossgeil, Marfield and Neckarbo. Donaldson (1984) discusses the various ways of naming used by the Ngiyampaa which helps explain the confusion that often surrounds the written descriptions of the Ngiyampaa speaking people. Ngiyampaa essentially means “the language” or “the lingo” and originally referred to the language spoken by Wangaaypuwan (often spelt Wongaibon), Wiradjuri and Wayilwan. In addition speakers of the Ngiyampaa language were divided into different groups which spoke slight variations in language described by the word used by each group for “no”. In this context the western-most group called themselves Wangaaypuwan, wangaay being the word for “no” and puwan meaning having or committed to using wangaay. Neighbours regarded in the same way were the Wayilwan (Wayilwan/Weilwan) from the Bogan, wayil meaning “no” and wan “having”; and the Wirraathurray (Wiradjuri), wirraay meaning “no” and thurray or tyurray meaning “having”(ibid.). Because most people from the Wangaaypuwan group now call themselves Ngiyampaa, this name will be used throughout the rest of the report instead of Wangaaypuwan. The group to the south of the Barwon/Darling around Brewarrina say their name a little differently: Ngemba, but it is also part of the same large Ngiyampaa language speaking group (Ngiyampaa or Wangaaypuwan, Wayilwan, Ngemba and Wiradjuri). In 1943 two anthropologists who visited Menindee Mission describe some of this according to the way the people there thought; “a Wangaaypuwan would often identify himself as a Ngiyampaa and vice versa...[and] although culturally [similar to] the Wiradjuri possessed a slightly different dialect. The Wangaaypuwan was also [close to] the Wayilwan whose dialect was somewhat broader” (Berndt & Berndt 1943).

The Ngiyampaa were divided into two matrilineal moieties in the same way as Barkandji. However, the matrilineal moieties of the Ngiyampaa were divided into four sections (Radcliffe-Brown 1930 : 230), with descent of moiety through the mother and alternate descent of section. This means you inherit your mother’s moiety and the opposite section in that moiety to your mother, or your mother’s mother’s section (see also Howitt 1904 [1996]). The section names were different for male and female. The moieties were also divided into totems which are inherited directly from the mother and also influenced relationships. This is summarised below (Cameron 1902:83-4, Howitt 1904[1996]:213-16, Beckett 1959:201-204);
Figure 3: Ngiyampaa Moiety, Sections and totems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moiety</th>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>Totems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngeilbumarra</td>
<td>Ipai (Ipatha Female)</td>
<td>Mallee-hen, Emu, Opossum etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kumbo (Butha Female)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukumurra</td>
<td>Murri (Matha Female)</td>
<td>Black-duck, Bandicoot, Red Kangaroo etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kubbi (Kubbitha Female)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 NGIYAMPAA BELONGING TO COUNTRY

The Ngiyampaa were divided into different groups according to the type of country they lived in. They were divided into *pilaarrkilalu* (belah tree people) from the eastern area around Keewong, Trida and Carowra Tank, *nhiilyikiyalu* (nelia tree people) from the western area around Neckarbo and Marfield Stations, and *karulkiyalu* (stone country people) from the northern area around Cobar (Donaldson 1984). Much of this is country that has no natural permanent water and Aboriginal people used all sorts of wells and soaks but often had to get water from the roots of trees such as the needlewood in the dry seasons (Cameron 1885). Bob Harris confirmed this in an interview in 1993:

*I used to work around Keewong and Paddington Stations and we’d often talk in the old language. The Ngiyampaa aren’t river people but they lived between the rivers and were divided into three main groups. My group is the *pilaabuyali* (*pilaarrkilalu*), that means the belah people, that’s what I belong to. My mother was one of the *garubuyali* (*karulkiyalu*), that’s the stone people, garu means stone. *Nilya people* (*nhiilyikiyalu*), they were named after the tree, and that’s the three groups that lived around Cobar, Carowra Mission where we were, and Ivanhoe, that’s how it goes together. Manny Johnson, he spoke Ngiyampaa, same as me and a lot of Baakindji I can understand but not talk it* (Taylor and Undy 1994:29).

The smallest land tenure of the Ngiyampaa who “had the usual system of division into hordes, each owning its own territory, called its *ngurumba*. The boundaries of each *ngurumba* were well known to all in the neighbourhood. At the meetings of the groups for the purpose of initiating the young men, the men of each horde, as they made their entry on to the ceremonial ground, used to shout out the names of the more important spots of their own territory” (Radcliffe-Brown 1923:424). Every man “owned” a series of swamps, all of which would be adjacent to one another. He shouted their names as he came onto the ceremonial ground and he might sometimes be addressed by the name of the most important one. He was not the sole “owner” but he had the right to hunt in them and to give others permission to do so, whereas hunting in another man’s swamp necessitated giving the owner half the kill. In the only two cases (the informant) could cite, his own and that of his wife’s brother, the swamps had been acquired from the father-in-law; however, he added that swamps could be acquired from one’s father or mother’s brother. This information suggests that there were no distinct patrilineal hunting grounds, but father’s, mother’s brother’s and wife’s father’s were one (Beckett 1959:206).
4. BARKANDJI HUNTING, FISHING AND GATHERING OF FOOD

All the Barkandji people shared methods of obtaining and preparing food and the making of huts, nets and other necessary materials that set them aside as belonging to one cultural group, although there was also some variation throughout the region. Frank Fletcher (then about 70 years old) of the Maraura Barkandji, provided the following information, when interviewed by Tindale at the Swan Reach Reserve in 1932:

*his own countrymen made neither baskets nor mats. He learned the way to make them because he came to live amongst his (second) wife's people who did make them.*
The big duck net was used in the Maraura country for trapping ducks. It was set near the entrance to a lagoon between tall gum trees. A party of natives would drive the ducks from the lagoon and as they flew towards the net they were caused to swoop down by throwing up bark boomerangs and by whistling to imitate an eagle or hawk. When the ducks were moulting and unable to fly they were speared by means of reed spears patti (paathi) armed with wooden tips.

Rush grass baskets, of pangur rush were made into nets and used as gill nets. (they) also made dragnets..... They ground "nardoo" in big stone dishes 1 foot long and hollow, a smaller stone being used in the hand, the nether stone was called "ngeika."...... Opossum skin rugs were sewn with sinews. To make them soft "marks" were made on them by rubbing with a flat stone called "battinga".

The heavy javelin (so called “King” spears) were made from long shafts of mulga wood, of which plenty grew between Broken Hill and... [Menindee].... The play stick .... known as a puyu birra was used being thrown through a thin bush to correct the rotary motion of the throw into a linear motion along the ground. In the Maraura tribe the dead were buried straight out on their backs and were wrapped in fish nets or possum rugs. (Tindale’s Murray River Notes 1930-52 Vol. 1 : 16 - 25).

Peter Bonney also gave details of Maraura culture when interviewed by Tindale at Swan Reach Reserve in 1938:

In the Maraura country people did not make baskets. They had kangaroo skin cloaks, opossum skin rugs which were scored with diamond shaped marks by rubbing the ?skin with a stone. Gill nets were used in fishing. (Tindale 1938-9:35-45).

Barkandji did not make the enormous range of beautiful reed baskets and mats that the lower Murray people are still well known for, but depended heavily on net making. Nets were used to catch fish, birds, emus, and kangaroos; and even to scoop tiny fish fry and shrimps from floodwaters. An extraordinary amount of energy was put into the making of a whole range of nets of various sizes, meshes and materials. Plant fibre was collected streamed in ground ovens, scrapped, chewed, twisted, spun and knotted, creating nets that Europeans admitted were of the highest possible quality. Although net making technology appears to have been used in the Pleistocene, in the Holocene it became a major feature of the Murray-Darling basin economy (Balme 1995). Enormous amounts of time and energy were spent making nets that were used in the super-efficient exploitation of available resources. Use of large nets implies a greater degree of sedentism and larger group sizes during the making of nets and use of nets. Large nets were too big to carry and had to be carefully stored if a group wished to travel far (Martin 1999b). Nets were also an important trade item, for example the lower Murrumbidgee people made Typha (cumbungi) nets as alynch pin of their trade and exchange network (Beveridge 1889). Grinding dishes for seed preparation were important to the Barkandji, in contrast to most Murray people who depended more on roots than seeds for staple foods. The Lake Victoria EIS indicated that there is a richness of seed grinding equipment at Lake Victoria that contrasts with the lack of such material along most sections of the Murray River and has more in common with sites along the Darling River and the country on both sides of the Darling River (Hope 1998).

More details about Barkandji economy are provided by Krefft who camped at the Murray-Darling junction (present day Wentworth) for several months in 1858:

For river or lagoon fishing, when the water is clear, they have a three-pronged spear, with which they strike the fish, either from their canoes or from logs in the water, Sometimes they fish at night.... when a fire is lit in the bow of the canoe to attract the fish. They also have iron spears... they would dive... running it through every fish... sometimes five or six fish have been speared during the sixty or eighty seconds they remain under the water.

...the women are very expert with hook and line, and with a sort of flat net fixed to a bent
stick about 6 or 8 feet in length, similar to a dredge; this of course, is only fit for shallow lagoons, the outlets of which, when the flood waters begin to fall, are enclosed with sticks or basket-work to prevent the fish escaping, thus creating a considerable reserve for the following months. ... The principal fishes used as food by the natives are the Murray Cod,...; Silver Perch,...; Cat Fish,...; and Manor ..... and another species of so-called Perch... for catching water-fowl, in particular ducks.... A large net, sometimes 20 feet deep by 100 feet long, is spanned across a creek or river, ... the net completely immersed.... some two or three miles higher up the creek, (they) start the birds, which... follow the bend of the creek... as soon as they are nearing the net, another native ...gives a peculiar whistle - similar to a species of hawk- throwing a flat piece of wood or a boomerang among the startled birds, which immediately stoop to the level of the water's edge: quick as lightning the net is raised, the ducks get entangled in its meshes... from 50 to 100 ducks taken...

Other kinds of food which the lagoons or river supply are tortoises,... muscle shells ....large mounds of which may be traced upon the river banks at intervals for hundreds of miles.... the large crayfish.... prawns...(also eat) insects, frogs, lizards, snakes, birds and smaller mammals....The emu is still hunted... by hunters carrying bushes in their hands... as soon as they are within range their spears are thrown.... The large kangaroos... are hunted by a number of men with their dogs, the time being chosen after a heavy shower of rain, when the large animals sink deep into the chalky soil.... A species of burrowing kangaroo rat (Bettongia...) and a sort of bandicoot.... are dug out occasionally. The kangaroo rat, ... is common in the scrub, and its burrows often cover a couple of acres... the natives.... sink a shaft... from ten to twelve feet deep... A pointed stick to loosen the earth, a sort of scoop.... a kangaroo skin... are all the digging utensils they require.

The Quandong, and a root the size of a radish....(and) “Pigface” (are eaten). (Krefft 1865:366-371).

At Tintinallogy Station between Menindee and Wilcannia, Morey records that in the 1850's the Barkandji had:

stout nets .... about 80 feet in length by about fifteen or sixteen feet in depth. The upper part had long stout pieces of rope attached on either side. They selected a narrow place where the banks were steep, with trees growing close to the sides, having ... boughs suitable to receive those ropes, where they slung the net, taking care to weight it to sink a foot or two in the water. A black on either side had charge of the ropes, while others, hidden about thirty to forty yards from the net, had pieces of bark shaped roughly into boomerangs and waited... the ducks invariably sailed along the channel of the river, and when passing the hidden men the boomerangs were thrown over the mob, and the throwers gave shrill whistles imitating sparrow hawks, causing the ducks to swoop at great speed, only to be caught in the net that covered them as it fell.... I have also seen on the Darling stout nets for catching emu... the meshes of the emu net... were as thick as the ordinary clothes line, and the ropes for fastening them up about as thick as a man's little finger. The work of making these nets falls on the women, tho' I have seen men rolling the prepared fibre on their thighs to make string. It was the women's work to gather suitable aquatic plants, split up the stalks into rough shreds and chew them until sufficiently clean and pliant to work into rope. Then came the labour of working this into meshes of the size required.... It took months to build up a duck or emu net, and no wonder they were carefully looked after (Morey n.d.:103-104).

The methods of preparing the plants for net-making at Lake Cawndilla are described by Brock:

The rushes are put into a deep hole, which has been well heated. With the rushes are put in a salsolaceous plant, which contains a great quantity of moisture, the whole is then well covered in, and the steam arising from the plant saturates the rush, and after being thus subjected, it becomes extremely tough, and gets torn abroad, and is then twisted, which is done with the ball of the hand on the thigh (Brock 1844 [1988]:52).

Morey also described the use of aquatic flags and bulbous roots along the Darling between
Wilcannia and Menindee during a drought period:

These roots they baked and then pounded them between flat, water worn stones, and mixed the flour with water into a thick paste and baked, or ate it in the form of gruel. All day and night too, the sound of this pounding could be heard" (Morey n.d:103).

A similar diet was described by Sturt when Cawndilla Lake was dry in 1844:

At this period they subsisted on the barilla root, a species of rush which they pound and make into cakes, and some other vegetables; their greatest delicacy being the large caterpillar (laabka), producing the gum-tree moth, an insect they procure out of the ground at the foot of those trees, with long twigs like osiers, having a small hook at the end. The twigs are sometimes from eight to ten feet long, so deep do the insects bury themselves in the ground (Sturt 1849:135).

We don’t have any descriptions of the Barkandji using the many lakes near Wilcannia, but Sturt noted that the Menindee Lakes when filled by floods formed "temporary reservoirs" holding "immense numbers of fish... which may thus be considered a providential provision for the natives, whose food changes with the season" (Sturt 1849:135). Mitchell described one method of fishing used in a deep broad reach of the river at Menindee in 1835:

they fished daily in different portions of it... The king stood erect in his bark canoe, while nine young men, with short spears, went up the river, and as many down, until, at a signal from him, all dived into it, and returned towards him, alternately swimming and diving; transfixing the fish under water, and throwing them on the bank. Others on the river brink speared the fish when thus enclosed, as they appeared among the weeds, in which small openings were purposely made that they might see them. In this manner, they killed with astonishing despatch, some enormous cod-perch; but the largest were struck by the chief from his canoe, with a long barbed spear (Mitchell 1839 Vol I:268-9).

The heavy exploitation of seeds, notably Panicum grass seeds, was a feature of semi-arid NSW, especially along the Darling River and its tributaries, as indicated by the vast number of broken grinding dishes found in archaeological sites. Mitchell describes harvesting of grasses along the Darling north of Wilcannia:

the grass had been pulled and piled in hayricks ... extending for miles … All the grass was of one kind, being a new species of Panicum. ... Not a spike of that kind of grass was left, the whole of the ground where it lay some what resembling a harvest field (Mitchell 1839 Vol I: 237).

Frederick Bonney recorded the lives of the Aboriginal people living on the first pastoral stations at Wilcannia, Mount Murchison (Karania) and Momba between 1865 and 1880 (Bonney 1884 and c. 1866-84 MS). He describes aspects of hunting and collecting as well as the full range of weapons and utensils used, illustrated with drawings, in his unpublished manuscript. An extract dealing with seed grinding gives details of this important aspect of Barkandji food preparation:

Two flat sandstones are used for grinding all kinds of edible seeds, the larger one called the "yelta" is oblong in shape slightly concave on the upper side and usually convex on the lower...and about 4" thick. The small stone called “raka” is circular in form ... about 6” in diameter, the lower face of it flat and the upper slightly convex so as to fit comfortably into the palm of the hand which works the raka stone.....?... and ? the surface of the yelta grinding into meal the seeds laid upon it. The seeds are generally ground wet, water being added with the hand - as with grinding the meal becomes pasty and stiff - a woman may often be seen squatting on the ground in camp grinding the seeds in this manner - eating the meal.... as she proceeds with the grinding - taking it up to the mouth up from the yelta stone by rubbing the forefinger around the edge of it - all seeds are generally eaten in this liquid state and uncooked - the friction of the two surfaces of sandstone makes this food very gritty. The yelta and raka are valuable articles in domestic use - but this tribe has the good fortune to have on the top of some of the hills in their country - a stratified sandstone - one very
suitable for making these grindstones, slabs of even thickness being abundant (Bonney c. 1866-84 MS).

Seeds that were ground up included several kinds of grass, portulacca, gum tree, pigweed, nardoo, mulga, and small leaved saltbush. Vegetables and fruits included portulacca roots, fruits and stalks and leaves, cress, clover, wild spinach, marshmallow leaves and flowers, the stems of the large rush, the Marsdenia (wild Banana) leaves, flowers, fruits and leaves, the quandong, wild orange, mulga apple and wild tomato, mistletoe fruits and various gums. Animal foods recorded by Bonney included Paddy melon, rock wallaby, wild cats, dingo, goanna, porcupine, wild turkey, brolgas, ducks, emu, eggs, frogs, and grubs (ibid).

An early description from Sturt’s 1844 journey of the favourite Barkandji kangaroo delicacy munku still prepared today demonstrates how unchanged Barkandji ways of preparing, cooking and sharing food are:

Nadbuck took out the stomach and after blowing it up he put into it the Liver torn into small bits, the heart and the Lungs. He then, with his hand, scooped out all the blood from inside the Kangaroo and poured [it] into the stomach, tied up the opening and set it by the fire to roast. This is a great delicacy and is eaten only by the old men. (Browne 1844 in Finnis 1966:26).

Extensive use of traps, weirs, and dams dramatically increased the available food resources, including fish, yabbies, mussels, shrimps, waterfowl and aquatic plants. Stone fish traps were found along the Darling river in areas with suitable rock outcrops. These are the best-known non-coastal stone fish traps in semi-arid Australia and examples still surviving include the Brewarrina fish traps. However, traps were also known to exist at many locations along the Darling including the junction of the Warrego, near Louth, the Tilpa fish traps, fish traps above Wilcannia including the Falling Star Site, The Island at Steamer Point, and below Wilcannia at The Strip, Billilla Rocks, and Christmas Rocks at Weinteriga (originally known as Stony Waterholes). Stone fish traps were organised with different levels to work at different water heights and were often keyed to let smaller fish through. The artificial Wilcannia Weir and Weir 32 at Menindee are still used in the traditional manner for fishing, with people moving rocks around to get the right level and to form enclosures to trap the fish. However, in the past wooden, brush and woven basket traps were far more common, although seldom noticed and recorded by early settlers. These were placed strategically across creeks, billabong entrances, lake entrances etc. trapping fish after flood peaks and enabling people to keep fish at hand for months at a time.

Earthen dams, dikes and canals were also constructed on the floodplains in the region, again rarely documented. Dams were used to prevent floodwaters from flowing back into the main rivers (Beveridge 1889), thus creating artificial swamp ecosystems that are highly productive. Sturt (1849:105) describes a dam constructed on the Darling River Anabranch to hold back water; "they had made a weir, through the boughs of which the current was running like a sluice; but the further progress of the floods was stopped by a bank that had been gradually thrown up athwart the channel."

Fire was a major tool of land management used by Barkandji at the contact period. The discontinuation of Aboriginal fire practices brought about immediate change to the vegetation and was possibly a major factor in the extinction of some animal species as well. It has been shown that Aboriginal firing varies from natural firing in both intensity and frequency, with specific methods for different ecosystems and cultural areas. After his trips to the Darling River the explorer Mitchell stated:

Fire, grass, kangaroos, and human inhabitants, seem all dependent on each other for existence in Australia; for any of these being wanting, the others could no longer continue” (Mitchell 1848:412).
5. BARKANDJI BURIAL PRACTICES

As early as 1833 Sir Thomas Mitchell noticed a distinct change in cultural practises as he entered Barkandji county near Wentworth. He gives the change in burial practices as an example:

The graves had no longer any resemblance to those on the Murrumbidgee and Murray, but were precisely similar to the places of interment we had seen on the Darling, being mounds surrounded by, and covered with, dead branches and pieces of wood. On these lay, the same singular casts of the head in white plaster, which we had before seen only at Fort Bourke. It is indeed curious to observe the different modes of burying, adopted by the natives on different rivers (Mitchell 1839 Vol. II:113).

In 1835 Mitchell described burials on the left bank of the Darling between Wilcannia and Menindee:

On the tops of some of those [sand] hills, I observed what appeared to be the tombs of the natives. They consisted of a circular trench of about 30 feet in diameter, the grave being covered by a low mound in the centre; and they were always dug in the highest points of hills… it was on the summit of the hill where I fixed our depot on the Darling, that we saw the numerous white balls and so many graves... the balls were shaped as in the accompanying wood-cut [Figure 5], and were made of lime. Beside them were... casts also in lime or gypsum, which had evidently been taken from a head, the hair of which had been confined by a net, as the impression of it, and some hairs, remained inside…. A native explained... the meaning of the white balls, … a dead body was laid in that position in the earth, where these balls were placed above (Mitchell 1839: 253-4).

… a small hill overlooking the river... On this hill, were three large tombs of the natives, of an oval shape, and about twelve feet in the greater axis [Figure 6]. Each stood in the centre of an artificial hollow, the mound, or tomb, in the middle, being about five feet high; and on each of them were piled numerous withered branches and limbs of trees (Mitchell 1839:262).

A very detailed description of a Barkandji burial ceremony near Wilcannia is given by Bonney, graves were covered by a low mound of earth, with timber and green boughs laid over them. Some had a low brush fence built around with an opening on one side "to let the wind in" and egg-shaped balls of plaster placed over them. Some had a hut built on top; the graves being attended to, swept, and whitewashed by women for a period of time (Bonney 1884:134-136)

Figure 5 : Kopi Balls and Widows Caps (Mitchell 1839:253).
Figure 6: Burials on a Sandhill between Wilcannia and Menindee (Mitchell 1839: Pl 16).

7. THE FIRST EUROPEANS: THOMAS MITCHELL THE EXPLORER REACHES WILCANNIA IN 1835—"The Spitting Tribe"

Thomas Mitchell led the first exploring party to reach Wilcannia and gave the Barkandji their first unpleasant taste of what was to come. Mitchell travelled via the Bogan to the Darling River near Bourke and then down the river to Wilcannia then Menindee, reaching it in July 1835.

From Menindee he turned back and retraced his steps after his men murdered a woman and her child and wounded at least one man on the banks of the Darling River. Mitchell describes what happened in his book; one of his men was attacked by King Peter who tried to get hold of a water kettle the man was carrying, King Peter was shot and wounded and then a woman with a baby was shot as a group of Barkandji attacked Mitchell's men. However, Mitchell does not believe this story as he comments "it was then that I regretted most bitterly the inconsiderate conduct of some of the men" (Mitchell 1839 Vol I: 275). Mitchell's biographer D.W.A Baker notes that Mitchell recorded a quite different story in his journal told to him later by his personal servants. The woman had not been killed by a shot fired into the advancing mob, she had been wounded and lay with her legs in the water, while a Barkandji man on the other side of the river tried to get her to swim across. One of Mitchell's men fired at him but apparently missed. They then shot and killed the helpless woman as she lay on the river bank (Baker 1997:92).

Mitchell was constantly harassed by Barkandji on both the 1835 trip to the northern Darling and down to Menindee, and the 1836 trip up the Darling which was aborted largely because Mitchell felt he was about to be attacked. Mitchell's trips were characterised by people demanding goods ("incorrigible covetousness") (Mitchell 1839 Vol I:301) in exchange for use of land, water, food, etc.; and retaliating if not satisfied by burning the grass around Mitchell's camps, burning green boughs and shaking them in defiance, preparing attacks, and even spitting at them. Mitchell characterised the people by such terms as the Spitting Tribe, the Fire Throwers, and (if they left him alone) "inoffensive". Mitchell's problem was that he did not understand what his men were doing behind his back. Mitchell could not understand why so many people were demanding
goods, not realising that he had to pay because he had to properly negotiate permission for use of water, grass, land to camp on etc., and in addition his men were using women behind his back and breaking all the rules.

Mitchell's comments show that the Barkandji groups he met occupied “different portions of the river” (Mitchell 1839:304), and that they owned the resources in their territories including the water in the river. The exclusive possession enjoyed by the Barkandji and the need to obtain permission before using any of their resources is demonstrated by the following comment about the "Spitting Tribe" from the river near Wilcannia:

_The Spitting tribe desired our men to pour out the water from their buckets, as if it had belonged to them; digging, at the same time a hole in the ground to receive it when poured out; and I have more than once seen a river chief, on receiving a tomahawk, point to the stream and signify that we were then at liberty to take water from it, so strongly were they possessed with the notion that the water was their own_” (Mitchell 1839 Vol I:304)

8. THE OVERLANDERS REACH WILCANNIA

As soon as overlanders started taking their rights to use land, water and grass for granted the Barkandji tried to defend their rights. This situation worsened and finally ended in 1841 with the Rufus River massacres which were a series of battles carried out at strategic places in Barkandji territory from the Murray-Darling Junction to the Rufus River/Lake Victoria, and to Salt Creek near the SA border (Martin 1997, Hope & Gottschutzke 1998).

Robert Salisbury was one of the first overlanders to drive a large mob of cattle down the Darling River past Wilcannia and was also attacked by Barkandji:

_The blacks were very numerous but I had a good party of men ... we were very much annoyed with the blacks for as they had partly routed the first party (killing two thirds of the cattle) they tried us very hard.... I never got four hours sleep out of the twenty four hours but just towards the latter end the Blacks tried to give me a sleep to make up for it, for going down to the river one day for a drink ..... one threw a nullah nullah at me - a stick with a nob at one end - which caught me in the back of the head and I had a good sleep for two days and had it not been for my own little black boy Jackie that would have been the last of me - but he saw the blackfellows and gave the alarm to my men (Salisbury 1871)._  

9. THE EARLY PASTORAL PERIOD 1850’S - 1870’S (“the time they used to shoot em”)

Grannie Moysey described the 1850’s and 1860’s in Kurnu Barkandji country to the north of Wilcannia when her grandmother was young as: “the time they used to shoot em, shoot the people... this old uncle of ours used to run away [from the men with guns] and live in the big cane grass swamp.” She also said remembering those times “other people, ain’t they taking this country over - well where’ll we be? Why they taking it? ......Yala kiira nginana [our proper country]... Other people going to come and shoot us down to take this country” (Hercus Tape 1749b 1969).

In 1862 the area north west of Momba/Mt Murchison on the Darling River near present day Wilcannia was still frontier country. The Crown Lands Commissioner Sharp reports from Cumpedore near Tilpa on his attempt to find the bodies of two white men reportedly killed by the Paroo people;

_report the return ... this day from the Paroo without having been able to discover any portion of the remains of Messr. Curlewis and McCullogh. We were informed that the Blacks have destroyed everything, some by burning them, and others by putting them in water holes_” (Sharp 1862).
Frederick Bonney who was based at Mt Murchison homestead (Photo 1) and then Momba homestead from 1865 to 1881 bluntly states in his notebooks that in this period “natives killed by settlers - shot like dogs” (1866-1915 MSS). Mt Murchison/Momba Station was the very large original station that included the location that was to become Wilcannia township, later split into separate stations. In 1865 it was known as Mt Murchison, in 1881 it was all known as Momba (Figure 10). The original Mount Murchison Station homestead block was also known as Head Station or Karannia, the Barkandji name for the area just north of Steamer Point, near where the Paroo river comes in and where the original head station was located (not where Mt Murchison homestead is now). Bonney may have originally lived at “head station” on the river near the location of Wilcannia, but then moved to the new head station where Momba Station is based now between Wilcannia and Peery Lake.

Figure 7 is a very early posed photograph of a group of Aboriginal people and others outside the original Mount Murchison homestead with pencilled annotations (some illegible) identifying the non-Aboriginal people in image: “Dec. 12th, 1865; F.B. (?) Clayton; Byrne of Bowillie (?) JP I (?); Howard storekeeper; By Pickering travelling photographer." [Photographer possibly Charles Percy Pickering]. The house to the left seems to have bark tile roof, and the smaller building on the right, possibly the very first house, has sheets of bark for the roof. In the middle the building with a white roof may be a large tent.

Figure 7: "Mount Murchison Homestead, River Darling" dated 1865. Photo by Pickering. This complex was upstream from Steamer Point (not where Mt Murchison is now).

Figure 8: Map of Momba Station (red boundary) and Wilcannia in 1881, at this stage it included Karannia (also known as Mt Murchison) (LPI Historical Records Viewer). Inset close up of the Wilcannia area.
Figure 9: Barkandji family group on the banks of the Darling River, Momba Station, New South Wales, ca. 1875, photo by Frederic Bonney nla PIC/8131/54 LOC Album /nla.obj-147337048

Figure 10: Barkandji People at Momba 1875 -Bonney Photograph nla.obj-147337440-1.jpg
Bonney recorded extensive detail about the lives, language, culture and personalities of the Aboriginal people at Momba and left us with the famous series of photos from Momba taken in the 1860’s to 1881 period. He does not elaborate about the way the station was set up except for his comment above. Frederick Bonney not only respected and looked after the people camped on Momba, but he sympathised with them, worked with them, and respected them. The Bonney papers and photographs are a treasure of information about the Aboriginal people living there between 1864 to the 1880’s. People are named (by European names, nicknames and proper Barkandji names) and they are quoted and their stories acknowledged, as are the gifts they gave Bonney. Bonney published a paper in 1884 but long after he had returned to England to live he campaigned for the better treatment of the Aboriginal people, and he tried to educate the public about the complexity of Aboriginal culture (Bonney 1884, Bonney MSS 1866-1915, Lindsey 1983). Bonney lists about 44 Aboriginal people as living at Momba and Tarella around the 1870-1881 period, and one group photo from the same period shows a total of 38 people. Some of the people from Momba have been traced, and we have been able to pinpoint descendants of some of the people Bonney describes. It is clear from the Bonney records that people moved backwards and forwards following traditional pathways between the Yancannia, Momba, Mt Murchsion, Tarella, Wonnaminta, Poolamacca and Gnalta/Mutawintji areas from the 1860’s through the 1880’s (Bonney MSS 1866-1915).

A correspondent writing from Langawirra in 1867, then an outstation of Woytchugga Station on the western side of Wilcannia,:

The black population … their services form the main stock and stay of many of the back stations. Indeed, but for their help as shepherds, stockmen, or trackers, the squatters would often suffer loss and inconvenience; for the country here and there will baffle the best of our white bushmen. A half ration of tea, sugar, flour, and meat, with a trifle of tobacco occasionally, is all the remuneration the poor blackfellow requires. Wherever I have been they appear to be well contented with their lot, and kindly treated on the whole; but, I regret to say, cases have come to my knowledge where they have been subject to harsh and cruel measures at the hands of their employers. Such conduct is deserving of the severest reprehension. (The Argus (Melbourne, 24 May 1867, page 6).

The very early pastoral period of the Wilcannia area is very poorly documented and we have to use descriptions from other nearby areas of the Darling River such as the reminiscences of
Edmund Morey who squatted at Tintanology on the Darling and Talywalka Creek between Wilcannia and Menindee. Morey describes how he took up his run on the Darling in 1850:

Wanting fresh runs for our cattle, my neighbour Mackinlay and I decided to look around the Darling. Before starting, a neighbour, Alexander McCallum... wished to go with us, for his run was small and his flocks would soon need more room. We gladly received him, for with three of us, watching at night would become easier .... Settlement on the Darling has then extended about eighty to one hundred miles up, and the higher we reached the more open the country became ... leaving wide areas of pastoral country...

... our objective was Lake Menindee.... as we neared Menindee... we had camped on a fine open knoll overlooking a large waterhole in the river, and my companions had gone for the horses, when three natives came slowly towards our camp each holding a bough.... It was early morning and cold and these men has short 'possum skin cloaks on, two of them exposing their arms, but the third man kept his hand hidden..... I soon felt sure these fellows were only awaiting a chance to attack me.... he partly opened his 'possum skin cloak and I saw a couple of inches of the handle of a nulla-nulla.

....I shouted to them to be off, and as they moved very slowly and reluctantly away, I dropped their dog and this sent them off in double quick time.

A day's journey .... brought us to Captain Sturt's Depot, situated on the west bank of the Darling on fine open country with outlook all around. This so-called depot... [was] simply a big shelter from the heat, made of gum saplings leaning against a framework of round stuff and not water-tight certainly...... Wheel tracks of a cart going in a N. westerly direction were still quite visible

...we examined the country on both sides of the river and were struck with its pastoral capabilities.... we soon had the satisfaction of seeing Lake Menindee, which we judged to be about 18 miles round, and such a body of water sparking in the sun's morning light was a charming picture on that comparatively waterless land. The channel which connected it to the river was short and less defined than we expected. Around the lake was a border of about thirty yards of native clover ...Contrary to expectation we saw no natives, nor any canoes fastened to the bank... the most noticeable feature of the country to the west and north of Menindee, was the number and size of dried up lakes and the danger of attempting to ride over them.... it was evident the country was under drought conditions...Having seen all we wanted.... we made a rough division of the country into three runs and drew lots. McCallum had first choice and took the Menindee block, MacKinlay drew second pick and chose Pamarmaroo, and the third lot fell to my share, now known as Tintanalogy - tho' this is not the proper pronunciation of the native name of the place where I afterwards fixed my head station. The native’s name sounded more like “Dhindonalloga” or “Dhindanallaja” .... It was not until a year since I stocked the station, I came to see the best part of it, including Lake Terrawana, nearly thirty miles back from the river...

My station on the Darling was for several years the outside one...... Mackinlay and I arranged to muster and join forces in taking the stock to our new stations.... In these days outside squatters were not troubled or hampered in any way by the New South Wales or Victorian authorities, and so long as we paid our rents we were allowed to make the best of our respective positions.

On reaching the lower boundary of my new run, we separated our cattle, MacKinlay driving his on to Paramamaroo, while I rode on ahead ... fixed on a fine open rising ground having a slope to the river where a water hole, giving promise to permanency, made the spot suitable in every way for working a station ..... My party consisted of four hired men, viz., Stockman, cook, my black boy Billy, and two hands ....

Small lots [of Aboriginal people] came in occasionally, and.... Billy could quite understand them.....[and] acted as interpreter... These blacks seemed friendly .... only the men came in at first, but in a few weeks women made their appearance and I noticed that some brought in
from the east big bundles of clover which they steamed in ovens and then ate. This stained their teeth green and gave them a strong but not unpleasant odour; otherwise it appeared to be a healthful food......

The natives were not numerous, or rather, they did not show up in numbers on the frontage of my run for the first two years of my occupation of it...

My stockman having bolted, the black boy Billy looked after the cattle..... a couple of mounted men came up the river.... and I engaged the younger one, Joseph Smith, as stockman and set the elder man, known as “Long Bill” to add to the yards. I record these particulars for both men afterwards were killed when blacks attacked my station.

An unpleasant adventure .....befell me... we came across tracks of galloping cattle ... then found the tracks of natives on either side of the running mob..... a sandridge... appeared to have a hollow near the middle and two arms for extremities, and towards this trap the cunning [blacks] had evidently tried to drive... the cattle. Behind one of the arms a thin column of blue smoke arose, and it was then pretty certain the blacks had managed to kill one or more beasts.

We had no firearms.... we would gallop down the ridge into the camp with a shout when I quite expected the blacks would bolt.... This plan succeeded, for there was only three gunyahs and a small lot of natives who appeared to be making merry.... this took them by surprise so much they bolted .... planted themselves in the thicket bushes... they broke off stiff boughs and met my horse with rough but efficient spears..... Putting spurs to my horse, I had time to take a hurried view of the camp.. and could see in each gunyah a miniature butcher’s shop with stocks of beef piled on each other.... three hides lying near the gunyahs, two bore my brand and the third had MacKinlays .... Smith... had time to break all the spears in camp and throw some nulla-nullas and in fact most of their belongings on to the fires. Smith further said that while examining the hides he caught sight of a black hidden in a bush close by and picking up a spear, lunged it into him and the fellow bolted. I thought no more of this at the time, but... this act cost Smith his life, for it was a woman he speared and she died.

[during 1852] news reached me of the murder of my men on the Darling, and of the blacks getting possession of the station and looting it. This was a most serious matter for I could not leave Euston... and some weeks elapsed before I could go myself. On my way up the Darling I ... learned that it was in revenge for Joe Smith killing a lubra that the blacks attacked the station

... the news of these murders soon reached my neighbour MacKinlay and others down the river, and a small party rode to the station and buried the bodies of the dead men. They also put together and locked up station gear not taken away by the blacks...

..... [after this] I reluctantly accepted an offer made by a sheep owner... who gave me two flocks of sheep in exchange for [Tintanallogy] (Morey n.d:68-115.)

Morey carefully avoids mention of any action taken by the whites after the killing of the stockmen, but it is likely that many Aboriginal people were killed in turn. The Murray Pioneer newspaper on the 2/12/ 1927 describes this event or one similar on or near MacKinlay’s run. This story is said to have been told by an old Aboriginal man named Wertengulla who was 85 years old in 1927. He remembered MacKinlay and a party of seven men arriving on the Darling with cattle, and says the tribes bolted into the bush at the approach of MacKinlay and his cattle, and hid in terror but eventually had to come to the river into the arms of the cattlemen. Wertengulla said “we helped with the cattle, and often told the white men where they would find lost stock”. However, Mackinlay, like Morey left the Darling station to his men and went back to the Murray. According to this story MacKinlay told his men “that if they interfered with the blacks he would flog them”. But after he left a stockman named Antonio Silvestor, took a young girl and raped her. Her mother Poonorroo ran in trying to help her daughter but he tied her to a tree and cut her throat. Many people saw the murder and looked for revenge. One day a young stockman was milking a cow and an older man
mending a saddle when they were speared. This story states that Silvester and another man went for help and returned with an inspector and five troopers, and the stockmen and police searched the area for weeks and “every native man, woman and child were shot. Eleven hundred people were shot”. This story either describes Morey’s station or another similar event on MacKinlay’s station next door, or the two have combined over the years. Even the description of the young man being spearing while milking fits. It is certain that Morey has left out the fact that many Aboriginal people were killed in retaliation, but the newspaper report has most likely exaggerated the number of people who were killed. The truth probably lies between the two stories (Martin 2001).

W.H. Tietkens (n.d.) describes the beginning of the takeover of the Yancannia Station with its permanent waterholes to the north of Momba;

\[(in)1865\text{ Yencanya Station had just been formed}…. \text{I met for the first time the black fellow in his wild and savage state. I was out one morning on foot (quite unarmed) looking for one of our horses that had stayed away}…. \text{When the silent tread of a savage and a rustling of boughs attracted my attention and somewhat startled me, and looking around I was aware of a young warrior with all his panoply of paint and feathers, close to me. He had a handsome coronet of feathers from the red and white cockatoo and carried an alarming 6 barbed spear, shield and boomerang. I confess to feeling for a few minutes that my position was a helpless one but I am sure it was not noticed, he came right up to me at last and patting his painted breast said “Monkey Uppa” [Uppa=ngapa or “I” in Paakantyi linked to an intransitive verb, possibly maan.gaa to hide, to plant oneself (Hercus 1993), indicating that he had been hiding and watching Tietkens before making himself known]. I replied “that is all right” … I made known to Mr Monkey that I was looking for horses and the fellow kindly enough took me to them. I had picked up a few words of the language of these people for it is very similar to that spoken by the blacks on the Darling so that I could make myself understood a little to these people and having found the “yarramans”…. I popped Monkey on one of them barebacked, mounting one myself started for the station at a good hard gallop where I rewarded Monkey with a stick of tobacco, and he went back to where he had left his spears and other implements – this same savage afterwards gave the station people some trouble, he speared a shepherd and headed a party of his tribe against the station – their arranged programme was to burn the station down and kill the whites but the station people though only a small body of men were of the right metal and the blacks retreated less in number than when they advanced, Monkey was shot in the early part of the engagement.

We started westward from Yencanyah… camped at Pingwilpi spring, a beautiful spot.[then] Torowoto Swamp…. On return to Yencanya we learnt that the blacks had again mustered in considerable force to avenge their fallen comrades and to burn and destroy the station and its inhabitants. The breech loading rifle and revolvers had again sent them off with serious loss.

[a few months later on a trip to] Cobham Lake… we were in country infested with blacks and during the day I had observed the tracks of several of them. [at] Yantar Lake …. We had an engagement with a large body of natives – It appears that some Salt Water blacks had joined the local tribe with view of hunting us out of their territory … a large body of blacks were camped upon the North and North West shore of the lake – Their long row of camp fires were easily discernible through the timber and all night long they made the night hideous with their war chants and corroborees. We kept watch until day break when a body of them were observed coming towards our camp under cover of the timber near the creek, we fired upon them when they immediately rushed in but they were met with a second salute which steadied a good many of them; but about a dozen charged into the camp and were soon engaged with our men, Sawers and myself, stood by the store tent, and kept them away from the provisions, which they were evidently determined to secure. They got such a very rough handling that they retreated to the lake. One of our men got a nasty flesh wound from a spear….
The Salt Water blacks soon after this left the neighbourhood much to our relief. With the Yantara tribe we were soon on good terms though among them were men whose reserved and sullen demeanour would occasionally break out in acts of violence and plunder, men whose natures were savage and who never will be influenced by their fellows, or overtures from the white usurpers of their wide domains.

By 1872 the Aboriginal people of Yancannia gave the owners “very little trouble” and “a few of them [were] very useful” (Reid in Shaw 1987:104).

Brougham gives a little bit of detail about his time at Gnalta and Mootwingee Stations;

[at] Gnalta 1909 wild oranges at Dauboney Well… and at Mootwingee they were small but had the scent of an orange… Away at the back of Gnalta that is where you see the pick of the black boys ride (ibid:16A)…. there was one old black fellow camped at the station in his own humpy who was expert at carving anything you gave him….. Emu eggs, boomerang, or any weapons of the black fellows (ibid:no page number) [this was Sam Bonnie who married Fanny Bates].

In a very short time small mammals such as the bilby disappeared from this region. The greater stick-nest rat, pig-footed bandicoot, bilby, and a bettong species were listed as being already extinct or nearly extinct by the 1850’s on the Murray (Krefft, 1865), only 10 -15 years after the arrival of the first sheep and cattle. Krefft attributes these disappearances as being due solely to the presence of sheep and cattle, presumably the destruction of habitat and competition for food. However, some small mammals may have disappeared because of the disappearance of Aboriginal land management practices such as firing (Martin 1999b). The destruction of food plants also had an irreversible effect on Aboriginal people who depended on plants for a major part of their diet. The Panicum grass seeds that were so important to Barkandji people on the Darling River soon disappeared from the menu, as it was eaten by sheep and the fragile seeds heads trampled. The extinction of species led to the disappearance of people’s totems (such as stick nest rats), which must also have had an enormous effect on the social structure of Barkandji people.


A range of government records including Police Records, Census records and Aborigines Protection Board (APB) records give some clues about the history of Aboriginal people in the later pastoral period. The 1884 Wilcannia Police records mentions sending 12 blankets to Mootwingee, giving an estimate of the Aboriginal people living there. In 1884 12 blankets were sent to Culpaulin on the Darling River below Wilcannia, 6 to Billilla across the river from Culpaulin, and 12 blankets to Momba adjacent to Wilcannia (Wilcannia Police Duty Book 9/6014). Panga, one of Bonney’s main informants on Barkandji culture was still living at Momba in 1891 (Barrier Miner 14 December 1891: 4).

Evidence shows that Aboriginal people were still employed at Mount Murchison in 1892, as the Broken Hill paper reports: “A man named Daniel Heydon, aged 39 years, has been found drowned by an aboriginal working at Mount Murchison station, River Darling” (Barrier Miner 23 April 1892, page 3).

The 1886-88 Board for the Protection of Aboriginal People Returns do not list separate stations, but indicates there were 114 Aboriginal people in the Wilcannia District (Appendix 3). Pastoral records are few but the figures quoted in Shaw (1987:237) suggest that numbers of Aboriginal people living on Tarella station between Wilcannia and White Cliffs, rapidly reduced in the late 1800’s. The amount of money spent on Aboriginal people on Tarella was £69/6/1 in 1881, £19/7/7 in 1896 and nothing in 1901.

Unfortunately the 1891 census figures for the Wilcannia District are missing, and this includes Momba and Tarella as well as the Darling River stations. The 1901 census (Appendix 3) indicates that Aboriginal people were still living out on stations, although not spread out over as many and
often different stations to the ones listed in 1891. It is clear that by 1901 the Momba people described by Bonney (1866-1884 MSS) had moved out with the exception of one woman staying at the Momba Travellers Hut. This confirms that there was a radical change in living conditions at this time, and the police state that people were unable to find work on the stations because of the effects of the 1901 drought. The effect of the 1901 drought is also confirmed by the 20/6/1901 APB Minutes noting correspondence from Brougham at Poolamacca recommending that 'meat be added to the rations during the winter or until the end of the drought' (Table 4).

The APB minutes between 1890 and 1901 indicate that the only stations in the Far North West receiving any help from the APB were Poolamacca and occasionally Sturts Meadows, and the fringe camps at Milperinka, Tibooburra, Wanaaring and Wilcannia.

After 1901 there is a reasonably good record of people in the Births deaths and Marriages Register and this has provided most of the family tree information. Oral history begins to provide more detailed history in this period and particularly from the 1920's.

Some pastoral stations, particularly before wire fencing was introduced around 1875, employed many Aboriginal people who undertook a wide range of work including shearing, boundary riding, lambing, dogging, and from the 1880’s rabbiting. Withers indicates that Aboriginal people were employed on Cuthero Station between Menindee and Pooncarie for wages and keep equivalent to white employees;

\[\text{Boundary riders were engaged at one pound a week and keep, and ten aborigines were recorded on the Cuthero books from 1870 and 1883 - Bony Blackfellow, Sam Bony, Ned, Jack, Jemmy, Joey, Old Black Jack and Young Black Jack, Polia Tommy, Moorara Dick and Murdock the Black, who all received fifteen shillings a week and their keep. In March 1871, Bony, Old Jack and Young Jack were engaged to lamb at one pound a week, while Moorara Dick, Polia Tommy and a white shepherd named Thomas Hall were engaged for the same work for fifteen shillings. They helped the shepherds to protect their flocks from wild dogs, and ... [undertook] hand lambing..... [that] stopped when the ewes were running free in large fenced paddocks}^{1}\]

\[\text{New Aboriginal names appeared on the books in 1883, including Rob Roy, Johnny, Billie, Tolorno Dick and Tolorno Joey and the still reliable Bony. They bought regular supplies of soap and tobacco and occasionally some clothing}^{1}\] (Withers 1989:75-6).

Many of the pastoralists’ fences were built by Aboriginal labour, a station owner from the Mungo area east of Pooncarie remembered “The best fencing contractor I knew in the 1920’s was an Aboriginal woman called Cigarette Mary” (Donaldson 1996). At Tooralie near Louth and all around Wanaaring the family of Eliza Knight (a sister of Grannie Moysey) undertook much of the fencing and yard building work into the 1970’s (Martin 2012), Badger Bates and many other Wilcannia people remember when they were young fencing all around the Wilcannia area in the 1960’s, including on Mt Murchsion, Cobrilla, Annalara etc. just north of Wilcannia (Badger pers.com).

Arthur Clark, a son of Grannie Mosey, described his young life in the 1920’s at Albemarle between Wilcannia and Menindee “when up to 400 men were on the payroll, and on other stations to. He was an all-round man: builder, fencer shearer, contractor at various kinds of work” (Hardy 1976). Not only the men worked in shearing sheds and with horses. The women “were very handy in the woolshed at shearing time.... [they] did all the piece picking and the men [were] on the tables and picking up. The pickers were excellent at their job and all had a good eye, male and female” (Brougham n.d.). Another example of the work women did, Mary Riley was a gun shearer (Willy Riley pers. comm). Elsie Jones in Donaldson 1996 described the hard work women did:

\[\text{In the 1920's my grandmother, Sarah Cabbage, used to go up to Bililla and do the washing. We used to walk along with her, me and my little brother, Jack, and Grandfather. Grandfather would carry the swag and a couple of hillies. Granny used to stay there for a while, perhaps two or three days, and when that was finished we used to walk back to Menindee [about 100 km] (Donaldson 1996).}\]

Renie Mitchell said “some black people worked on snagging camps, and Watty Clark and the Whyman boys cut wood for steamers...[the] rabbits - we'd muster them like sheep - all coloured rabbits - would put a netting around and chase them in with our buntis ... skin them, dry skins and
Families living out on stations often had substantial camps where they lived for years. One such camp is described on Billilla Station south of Wilcannia in 1917. This camp consisted of Peter [Cabbage?], [Menindee?] Pluto, Tom Bugmy and his wife Katie Bugmy (nee Whyman), Pollie, Fannie [Brown?] and Gracie [Brown/Whyman?], and others not named including two babies photographed and a number of other children “very shy, but … clean” (Kenyon 1917). The Menindee Police Records also indicate that Sarah Cabbage and Tommy Cabbage were at Billilla for the September quarter of 1917 (Martin 2001). The photos show the substantial camp of Tom Bugmy “the horse breaker”, including tent houses, a large brush wind-break, iron hand-made houses and a buggy (Figure 12). There are two individual photos of Gracie, probably Grace Whyman nee Brown, and a baby (Figure 14). There is also a photo of Fannie Brown. Fred Brown’s wife, and another baby (Figure 13). A later photo of Tom Bugmy breaking in a horse was taken by the Leckie family at Annalara just out of Wilcannia (Figure 15).

Figure 12: The camp of “Tom Bugmy the Horse Breaker” at Billilla Station, 1917. Photo from AIATSIS Officer Collection. Kenyon Photo.

Figure 13: Gracie (Gracie Whyman nee Brown?) at Billilla in 1917. State Library of Victoria. Kenyon Photo.
Figure 14: Tom Bugmy Breaking in Horses at Annalara Station near Wilcannia. Photo courtesy of the Leckie Family. Possibly 1930 era.

Figure 15: Mary Riley Shearing at Tarella Station, probably 1950’s
11. Brief Background History of the Town of Wilcannia (From McDougall Vines 2017)

The township of Wilcannia was proclaimed in June 1866 and it was incorporated as a municipality in February 1883. River steamers reached Mount Murchison, the pastoral station which is now the site of Wilcannia in 1859. By 1868 the population was 150 and a number of buildings had been erected (probably in timber). These included a Commercial Bank, a court house and lock-up, three public houses, three or four stores, a brewery, bakery, two butchers, two blacksmiths, a wool scour and a cordial factory. With the expansion of the township, new stone buildings appeared, built of local stone obtained from quarries nearby. Necessary supplies were brought in by paddle steamer (river heights permitting), bullock dray or camel trains. As the town grew, services were expanded, and Wilcannia was an important regional centre. By 1870 there was one doctor residing in the town and ‘The Wilcannia Times’ newspaper commenced publication in 1873.

From the 1870s to the 1890s, Wilcannia became Australia’s third largest inland port and the leading port on the Darling River. It was also especially important as a crossing point for stock moving south to the Melbourne market. A punt for carrying livestock operated at the end of Cleaton Street and it was not unusual for several thousand sheep to cross in a day. In 1879 the Red Lion brewery (no longer standing) was built at the northern end of Reid Street. Its great claim to fame was that it was the first brewery which the famous beer baron Edmund Resch built in Australia. In 1887 alone, 26,550 tonnes of wool and other goods were loaded onto 222 steamers at the Wilcannia wharf. Known as ‘Queen City of the West’ in the 1880s, it boasted 13 hotels and the population quickly grew as Wilcannia became a service centre for prospectors exploiting the region’s gold, copper, silver and opal resources. The town became a transport hub with several mail coach companies providing links to Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney via intermediate towns such as Booligal, Hay, Silverton, Burra and Cobar. Wilcannia was an essential link in the movement of livestock from the north to the southern markets. Several Stock and Station Agents operated, including that of E L B Dickens and his brother Alfred, sons of Charles Dickens. Edmund Dickens went on to represent the region in the NSW Parliament during the years 1889-94.

Wilcannia’s peak was in the 1880-90s when the pastoral industry was booming and with the discovery of gold near Milparinka. When theopal fields of White Cliffs were discovered in the 1890s, trade increased again as Wilcannia became the central supply depot for the opal miners and the major recipient of their revenue. In 1896, a lift bridge was constructed that extended Myers Street (also known as the Barrier Highway) over the Darling River.

The prosperity of this time soon declined with a number of dry years from 1900 and depression hit the pastoral industry. The river level dropped considerably, thereby reducing access to the wharf and the river boat trade fell away. With the expansion of railway networks across the state, the town was bypassed by rail services between Bourke and Broken Hill despite Dickens’ efforts in Parliament, and Wilcannia lost its status as a regional commercial centre. Road and rail replaced river as reliable transportation methods. The town continued to decline in the early twentieth century, although it did retain some regional government administrative functions. Wilcannia today reflects a vanished way of life on the western rivers of New South Wales. …The main historic themes relating to the settlement and growth of Wilcannia evolve out of the spread of remote rural pastoral and mining activities in NSW during the 1860s-1890s, leading to the rise of the river steamer transportation system as an essential part of the economic growth of the region and the creation of a government administration centre as the population of the region increased.

…Pastoral stations were established along the Darling River from the 1840s, reaching Wilcannia in the 1850’s-1960’s, after exploration and the influx of squatters taking up land. The success of pastoralism in the region depended on favourable climatic conditions, and overstocking and lack of reliable labour in such remote areas made success problematic. The series of droughts and the financial depression of 1890s - 1900 were devastating for pastoralists. Small settlements were soon established along the rivers, particularly along the Darling and Murray, to supply the teams which were
overlanding stock through the region. Initially, Wilcannia was important as a crossing point for stock associated with the pastoral industry, particularly for stock moving south to the Melbourne market. The original crossing point for the punt/ferry was at the low bank at the bottom of Cleaton Street.

The water transportation system began with the construction of steam driven paddle steamers on the Murray in the mid-1850s. The river trade was beneficial for supplying both the goldfields and pastoralists and moving products such as wool to markets. River steamers were reaching as far up the Darling as Mount Murchison (later the site of the Wilcannia) by 1859, to supply the outback country opened up on either side of the Darling. Regular trade was affected by river levels, but Wilcannia was navigable for longer than other more northern ports, such as Bourke.

The Wilcannia wharf was built by around 1870 and from the 1870s to the 1890s, Wilcannia became Australia’s third largest inland port and the leading port on the Darling River. In 1887 alone, 26,550 tonnes of wool and other goods were loaded onto 222 steamers and barges at the Wilcannia wharf. From 1870 onwards, there was the additional cargo of copper from Cobar and other mining activity in the region. White Cliffs opal mining began in the early 1890s – and miners were supplied from Wilcannia.

The success of the river trade was of course dependent on high rivers and good rainfall – drought years were disastrous in all ways. Wilcannia’s importance as an inland trading port and its prosperity came to an end with a succession of dry years from the 1890s - 1900 causing depression hit the pastoral industry. The river level dropped considerably and access to the wharf was reduced: the river boat trade fell away.

In 1896, a lift bridge was constructed that extended Myers Street (also known as the Barrier Highway) over the Darling River. Previously the ferry had been at the river crossing at the end of Cleaton Street.

Overland transport was also important to Wilcannia with horse, mule and bullock wagons providing transportation services from the river port. During the 1870s and 1880s Wilcannia became a coaching centre for prospectors exploiting the region’s gold, copper silver and opal resources. Camel trains were also an important method of moving goods from the river port of Wilcannia to the more inhospitable areas further inland.

The town had established road links with Broken Hill and Silverton to the west - through mining and other commercial activities – including Edmund and Emil Resch’s brewing enterprises and Alfred and Edward Dickens’ stock and station agency. And a road followed the river to Bourke.

As road traffic increased with motorised transportation, the river trade became less and less important, and had ceased by 1935.

As the railway networks across the state expanded, despite local member Edward Dickens’ efforts in Parliament, Wilcannia was bypassed by rail services. In 1919 the line between Bourke and Broken Hill was opened and the link to Sydney completed in 1927, and Wilcannia lost its status as a regional commercial centre. Road and rail replaced river as reliable transportation methods from the 1930s.

As Wilcannia became established as the regional centre for the Central Darling/Western Rivers district, a series of Government services were housed in more substantial institutional buildings. The buildings were designed in Sydney by Government Architect James Burnett and the stone for these structures was quarried close by. The Wilcannia Courts, Police Station and Gaol complex was complete by the end of 1881. The Post Office and attached residence was located at the corner of Reid and Myers Streets, and also housed the telegraph link with Menindee (first functioning in 1877). These buildings remain and are an essential indicator of Wilcannia’s former significance as a centre of State government administration during the late nineteenth century. They also demonstrate the state government’s intention to maintain control of the remote areas of NSW.
In 1888, Wilcannia was the centre of a newly established electoral district [550,000 sq km in extent, covering pastoral stations and mining settlements] for the Legislative Assembly of NSW parliament. Edward Dickens was elected by a two-to-one majority as the first parliamentarian for this electorate and went on to represent the region during the years 1889-94. (McDougall Vines 2017:)

Paddle Steamers at Wilcannia - “Princess Royal” moored to river bank (rhs)
(Source: National Library of Australia, Record No. 24475115)

Wilcannia centre-lift bridge (built in 1896) & a paddle steamer on darling river, 1935
(Source: National Library of Australia, Record No. 3506822)

Afghan cameleers loading camels in Wilcannia, 1904
(Source: National Library of Australia nla.pic-vn3357480-v)
12. THE WILCANNIA FRINGE CAMPS

12.1 EARLY FRINGE CAMPS

The town of Wilcannia always had fringe camps although the details are seldom recorded. In 1876 Constable Harper arrested at Wilcannia a man named Harry Giles, charged with "shooting and wounding with intent to murder on Tommy, an Aborigine of NSW". Tommy died a short while later, Harry was remanded for eight days (Wilcannia Police Duty Book 9/6014), it is recorded in the newspapers that he was given 3 years hard labour for the manslaughter of Tommy (The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser 24 October 1876, page). Importantly it was recorded that Tommy was shot at the "blacks camp" and that the "blacks were camped near the public-house" in the town (The Sydney Morning Herald 23 October 1876, page 5), indicating that there was a fringe camp in 1876 in Wilcannia.

The patchy Aboriginal Protection Board reports list 18 Aboriginal people living in Wilcannia in 1894, 1897 and 1909. In the 1901 census 22 Aboriginal people are listed as living in Wilcannia, including 17 living in tents in the "blacks camp" and M.A. (Mary Ann?) Smith and her two daughters living on the town common. Two others were living in the town (Appendix 3). The Aborigines Protection Board minutes from 1893 to 1901 consistently list rations, clothing and medical attention given to the Wilcannia Aboriginal people, plus tents, and an iron hut for Mary Ann and her daughters.

Figure 15: Wilcannia 1925 – members of Quayle family, Andrews family and Non-aboriginal friends at Wilcannia, tents in background, possibly at an event such as the annual show (NSW SL)

Eliza Knight is recorded as living in Wilcannia in 1919 where she had her youngest daughter Rita (Births Deaths and Marriages Register), and her other younger children would also have been with her. Her sister Annie Knight/Keagan (later Granny Moysey) was living in Wilcannia around 1922 when she cut out the canoe tree in Union Bend before travelling with her family down river to Albemarle station and then Pooncarie. Granny Moysey’s son Arthur Clark and his wife Gertie nee Whyman/Brown were camped at Steamers Point in the 1920’s, as Gladys Lawson was born in 1926 when her family were camped at Steamers Point (Tanya Lawson pers. comm.). Eva Knight/Black (daughter of Eliza Knight) and Karl Leppard’s children Eileen, Elsie and Fred were
also born at Steamers Point, Elsie in 1928. In around 1925 the Lawson family moved to Wilcannia from Menindee and set up camp on the river bank.

Figure 16: House on the River Fringe Camp Wilcannia, taken in 1935-1937 (Rev. Ted Roberts Collection State Library of NSW, 937270). This is likely to be the Lawson family house and the woman has been identified by June Jones as her aunt Ruby Lawson/Mitchell. The bond store is across the river on the left.

In Dec 1930 the sum of £7 0/4 was distributed among nine adult and five aborigine children at Wilcannia under the Aborigines Protection Board (Barrier Miner 2 December 1930: 3).

The following article gives a description of the fringe camp on the east side of the river:

“WILCANNIA ABORIGINES

About 40 aborigines still live in the Wilcannia district and most of these are camped about a mile below the town on the eastern bank of the River Darling. One of the occupants of the camp is engaged on Government relief work, while some of the others work on stations near Wilcannia. Ten of the remainder get Government rations. Norman and his wife Salina are the interesting couple of the camp, and it is claimed by Selina that she remembers ‘Burke and Wills going through the district (Barrier Miner 30 October 1930, p 2).’ ”

Selina passed away in Wilcannia in 1933, she was the wife of Norman Lindsay, a well-known Miikitja or cleverman:

“Lena Lindsay, a full blooded aboriginal, and known as the “Queen of the Paroo,” died at Wilcannia a few days ago. Her age is not known, but she stated to many people that she was in the district when the Burke and Wills expedition passed through. (Barrier Miner 11 April 1933, p 2).”

In 1933 it is recorded that 48 Aboriginal people were “Camped near Wilcannia” (Barrier Miner 4 April 1933, page 4). The Wilcannia fringe camp numbers swelled when visitors from the north west or other sections of the Darling River arrived:

“ABORIGINES MOVING ABOUT
Aborigines are again on the move according to reports received by Superintendent Gibson from police in the district. A large number recently left Tibooburra for White Cliffs, but they have apparently tired of that place for they are now at Wilcannia where they are receiving Government rations (Barrier Miner 1 July 1932, p. 1)."

In 1935 an Aboriginal man from Wilcannia was interviewed by the Broken Hill paper: “The Wilcannia man mentioned that many of the [Aboriginal people] at the river town are still engaged on station work, but that jobs were not plentiful” (Barrier Miner 2 May 1935, page 6).

12.2 MENINDEE ABORIGINAL STATION OR “MISSION”.

This summary of the history of Menindee Mission is taken from Menindee Ties to the Land (Martin 2001). Old Menindee Mission was opened in September 1933 and in 1949 it was closed and moved to Murrin Bridge near Lake Cargelligo. It is considered here because of its significant impact on the history of Wilcannia, as people were forced to leave Wilcannia and go there, but many escaped back to Wilcannia very quickly, and as time went on more and more people left Menindee Mission and settled in Wilcannia.

Its official name was The Menindee Aboriginal Station, but it is commonly referred to by Aboriginal people as the Old Menindee Mission (“old” to differentiate it from the “new” Menindee “Mission” which later grew on the Reserve near the Railway bridge or “Viaducts”). About 270 Aboriginal people were brought by train from the Carowra Tank Aboriginal Station (or Mission) north of Ivanhoe and dumped on a bare sandhill about 12 km north of Menindee township and on the eastern side of the river. Carowra Tank is situated about 80 km north-east of Ivanhoe and was named after the large man-made tank or ground dam which supplied the water for people and stock. The people at Carowra Tank in 1933 were mainly Ngiyampaa, and also Wiradjuri, and Wayilwan from a bit further north-east, east and south-east. There were however several families from widely scattered locations including some Barkandji; the Kirbys who were Yita Yita/Nari Nari from the Lachlan River near Oxley; and even some from Queensland. Other people were also gathered from various camping places along the Darling River, notably the Pooncarie Reserve or “Mission”, White Cliffs and Wilcannia.

William Fergusan, who founded the Aborigines’ Progressive Association (Horner 1974), and the brother of Duncan who lived at Menindee Mission, describes the haphazard method of selection of the Menindee site:

> the officers of the Board drove these two old fellows out to the sandhill and said, “How will that do?”. They said “That will do us”. They drove back and reported that it was all right. That was the method of selection (2/12/1937 Minutes of the Select Enquiry).

An Aborigines Protection Board letter dated 5/10/1933 advises the Department of Education “that owing to the failure of the water supply at Carowra Tank, it became necessary to close the Station, and transfer it to a new site on the River, six miles north of the town of Menindee. The transfer was completed on the 29th [of September].” On arrival at Menindee Mission “droves of people came out to see us; they thought we were wild blackfellows, all painted up and naked, down from those deserts. They got disappointed, because here we were, just the same as they were”.

Carowra Tank is in country that has no natural permanent water and Aboriginal people used all sorts of wells and soaks but often had to get water from the roots of trees such as the needlewood in the dry seasons (Cameron 1885). The natural basin or drainage area at Carowra Tank was probably a source of water for Aboriginal people before white contact but by 1884 it formed part of a travelling stock route and the process of enlarging the basin into a large ground dam had begun. This stock route probably followed an already marked out pathway used by Aboriginal people (Kabaila 1996). As the stations became more developed and over-grazed Aboriginal people began gathering at Carowra Tank and in 1908 it was made a Reserve.

In the 1920’s many Aboriginal families found it harder to find work on the stations for a number of
reasons including drought, low wool prices, the cutting up of large stations, and the return of men from World War I (Kabaila 1996). This lead to a larger and more permanent population at Carowra Tank and in 1924 tin huts, a school and managers residence were built. In 1926 it was named Carowra Tank Aboriginal Station (see Kabaila 1996 for a plan of the Station and a description of a range of artefacts found there in 1996, including stone tools, pieces of glass, pottery, ceramic and metal). The population kept growing and by 1932 there were 92 children, only 48 of which could be packed into the tiny school tin hut (ibid.) The 27 girls in the 1933 needlework class is listed in Table 6, and includes Biggs, Bugmys, Charles, Clarke, Harris, Johnsons, Kings, Kirbys, Murrays, Parkes, Pettits, Shepherds, Smiths, and Williams.

In 1933 for the first time the tank dried up and left the people without water. According to Mrs Doris Sloane “my father was working on a station near Trida. When the tank got dry they trucked us back to Menindee. The old fella [Geordie Murray] said ‘tank gone dry’ so they trucked us off. Old Geordy he was a clever old man”. Many people still believe today that Geordie Murray made the tank dry up after the Aborigines Protection Board stole his granddaughter Grace when he was out hunting (Martin 2001).

At Carowra Tank, after loading up and setting alight to what remained of people’s houses and shelters, “three lorry loads of people each with its trailer load of goods behind” went to Conoble railway siding, carrying approximately 270 people (Our Aim 26/10/1933). The families that were moved from Carowra Tank to Menindee Mission include Smiths, Kings, Biggs, Harris, Charles, Johnson, Parkes, Murrays, Pettit, Shepad, Buttons, Keewong, and many others.

Tibby Briar nee Johnson remembered:

I was only a little girl when they moved our people, but I remember. They put us in cattle trucks and trucked us out of Carowra Tank, down to the railway, then put us on the train to Menindee. Old Geordie, our clever man, was with us. I said to him “the whitefellas have got us now, Popy. The old law is gone now”. And old Geordie said to me “I tell you what, if I was as clever as I used to be, there’s be no whitefellas left” (Briar 1989).

Barkandji people from Pooncarie were also forced to move. amy Quayle, the daughter of Grannie Moysey’s son Walter Clark, remembered;

There was a good few living down at Pooncarie when I was a kid. There was the O’Donnells, there was the Johnsons; and Dad’s family used to travel up and down in a boat... you know they had two or three big boats, they used to travel from Bourke down to Pooncarie, old Grannie Moysey, and the eldest ones of her family. But then they moved the whole lot of the Pooncarie mob up to Menindee. In them days, they just shifted Aboriginal people as if we was cattle. I was only a kid when they shifted us up from Pooncarie to Menindee Mission, but I remember. We missed Pooncarie.... of course we did. It was the old, original place. I still think about Pooncarie today. I think more about Pooncarie than I do about Menindee! Yet Menindee was better in a way: I mean, a bit better set up” (Donaldson 1996).

People were taken from Wilcannia and White Cliffs to Menindee Mission. In August 1936 the Wilcannia Police Duty Book states; “Constable Buck, White Cliffs Police, arrived this station per hired motor car, conveying Molly Bates and family to Wilcannia en route to Menindee Station”. In October 1936 “Constable Buck arrived this station by private motor car conveying Aborigines from White Cliffs en route to Menindee Aboriginal Station”.

Barkandji people began to escape from Menindee Mission immediately, and many started to move to Wilcannia in the 1930’s. Like a lot of other Barkandji, Amy Quayle quickly escaped from Menindee Mission to resume her old life of freedom travelling up and down the river:

I ran away with Grannie Moysey, I was about 8 or 9. She had a sulky with a horse and only Emily [her youngest daughter Emily Clark] was with her. Grannie settled Wilcannia at Mukuli Bend, then others came to Wilcannia and she moved closer to town. ... she didn’t like the idea of living on a mission... we went back to Menindee to visit the family. I got a job
Menindee Mission was very unpopular with Barkandji people and in the 1937 enquiry the matron Agnes Park gave evidence indicating that there was “a lot of tuberculosis” as well as colds, pneumonia and sores. She indicated that there was no telephone line between Menindee and the Mission and therefore no direct connection with either Menindee or the Broken Hill hospital. Her instructions were to send only “the extreme surgical cases” to Broken Hill hospital and to nurse the rest herself. Three cases in 1936/7 were reported by Agnes Park and William Ferguson where the family, and in one case the Matron herself, had paid for sick people to be sent to Wilcannia rather than Broken Hill (Harold Bugmy, Nancy Biggs and Grace Whyman). It is clear that not only the people themselves but the matron as well were very dissatisfied with the treatment (or lack of it) at the Broken Hill hospital. Agnes Park states that some families had left the mission “to be near the doctor at Wilcannia” (Minutes of Evidence for the Select Committee Enquiry into the Aborigines Protection Board 2/12/1937).

Another example of people moving back to Wilcannia from Menindee Mission:

In 1936 Alf and Topsy [Barlow] caught the mail truck to Menindee Mission (travelling down the east side of the river). They stayed there about 3 months. Molly Bates got sick and was taken to Broken Hill. Uncle Dougal McFarlane arrived with their donkey cart and they came back to Wilcannia (through Menindee Town, Pamarmaroo to Wilcannia). They got the news that Molly had died and the kids were taken away (Bert, Hector, Wilki) (Peter Thompson Notes 1990).

12.3 THE 1940’S TO 1970’S FRINGE CAMPS ON THE DARLING RIVER

As people moved out of Menindee Mission and Brewarrina Mission, the fringe camps at Wilcannia grew. People also moved from White Cliffs to Wilcannia at this time, as evidenced by the Catholic Church baptisms of well-known Barkandji family members in Appendix 3, largely at White Cliffs in the 1930’s and then mostly at Wilcannia in the 1940’s. The fringe camps were located mainly on the eastern side of the Darling River but also on the western side near Steamer Point, and Wowser Bend. These fringe camps were located on the river to be close to water, fishing and yabbying, and also shade from the large trees on the river bank. The camps were spread along the river bank for a distance either side of town (see part B for more details).

12.4 THE MALLEE

In 1950, 1951 and 1956 the river had record breaking floods and the fringe camps along the river were flooded out. People moved to higher ground on the western side of the river, mainly in the area back from the river known as the Mallee, but also at Steamers Point. Tents were supplied during the 1956 flood and many people began to build tin houses and settle down at the Mallee. This was repeated in 1974 when there was another very high flood.

Because people placed their tents, huts and houses where it suited them instead of along streets, the arrangement of houses in the Mallee demonstrated the kinship system. In 1974 and in 1986 studies found that the distribution tents/houses reflected kinship relationships and the empty spaces were neutral ground between kin groups (Memmott 1991:141 & 269), and more recent houses in the Mallee still follow this pattern to some extent.
Figure 17: Grandfather Hero Black, Gladys Black and Evelyn Black camped on the west side of the river in November 1950. The Australian Women's Weekly, 18 November 1950: 32, 33

Figure 18: typical hut in the Mallee, later 1950’s or early 1960’s (photo taken by Jeremy Beckett). Possibly Peter McFarlane’s hut?
12.5 THE WILCANNIA ABORIGINAL RESERVE (THE MISSION)

In May 1953 the fourteen new houses on the Reserve or “mission” were finally completed. The “new housing settlement for aborigines at Wilcannia” was officially opened and “provides modern accommodation for aborigines who formerly lived in bag huts and humpies” (Barrier Miner Thu 7 May 1953). These tiny houses were all lined up on both sides of a street, providing an uncomfortable social experience for people who had previously chosen to live next to family and kin and self-managed their distance to neighbours who were not close kin. The rent for the houses was also an issue for families who had to exist on seasonal and non-permanent work for income. For the first six months there was no water connected and the people still had to get water from the river, which was now even further away than it had been in the riverbank camps. There was no electricity to begin with.

Figure 19: “Mission house circa 1980 NAA A8598, AK27/2/80/74. Amy Quayle’s house (Steve Harris pers comm).

Aunty Elsie Jones gave Memmott a list of the first householders in the “Mission” houses:

1. Jack and Amy Quayle
2. Hero and Gladys Black
3. Bert and Nhunni Hunter
4. George and Alice Dutton
5. Jim and Maggie Whyman
6. Frank and Jean Payne
7. Liza and Frank Johnson
8. Jim and Eadie Bates
9. Laurie and Ethel Quayle
10. Muriel Charles and Roy Harris
11. Bill and Annie Harris
12. Frank and Ruby Bugmy
13. Elsie and Bob Jones
14. Les and Gladys Lawson

Memmott notes that these houses were poorly designed for the climate, structurally unsound and built on clay which was occasionally flooded. Conflicts between the supervisor and tenants,
between tenants themselves (partly due to the army barrack-like positioning and closeness of the houses), and problems paying rent meant that there was a steady turnover of new families.

12.6 THE MISSION SCHOOL

St Theresa’s Mission School sits within an area reserved for the Catholic Church on the Darling River. It is protected from floods by a perimeter levee bank. The Roman Catholic church brought the Sacred Heart Mission from Menindee in 1954 and re-established it here as a Mission School. The Mission comprised a school room and a house for two teaching nuns, and the school room was used as a church on Sundays (McDougall Vines 2017).

The school is still very popular and new teaching buildings and Principal’s house have been built recently.

Figure 20: Nuns Teaching at the Mission school 1970


13.1 BARKANDJI HOUSING CO-OP 1980

The Prime Minister Malcolm Frazer opened the Bakandji Housing Co-op in 1980, this was a landmark Aboriginal housing business where houses were designed and built by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people. They were made from concrete blocks made by Wilcannia people. The history of Barkandji Housing Co-Op has been studied a number of people as it details the determination of Wilcannia people to be independent, and the determination of government to prevent this at any cost. Paul Memmott devotes an entire book “Humpy, House and Tin Shed” to the early housing and the Barkandji Housing Co-Op and details the way the project was constantly pressured by government officials who changed the design of the houses from suitable for the climate to unsuitable (Memmott 1991).
13.2 LANDRIGHTS AND THE BUY BACK OF WEINTERIGA STATION- “always was always will be Aboriginal land”

In 1986 the first station bought through the Land Rights Act funds was bought by the Western Regional Land Council for the Wilcannia Local Aboriginal Land Council. Weinteriga Station is managed by the Wilcannia LALC and provides employment, income, and a place to connect to country for the Wilcannia people. Yoeval Station on the eastern side of the river across from
Wilcannia was also bought by the Western Regional Land Council for the Wilcannia LALC. Smaller areas such as the Aboriginal Reserve on the eastern side of the river and The Mallee housing settlement were handed to the Aboriginal Lands Trust and then Wilcannia LALC.

13.3 HANDBACK OF MUTAWINTJI NATIONAL PARK

In 1983 a blockade of Mootwingee National Park by Mutawintji Land Council prevented access until National Parks agreed to start negotiating return of ownership to Barkandji and Malyangapa wiimpatja (people) and set in place joint management of the park. This was the first time Aboriginal people in NSW blockaded a National Park and demanded the right to management their cultural heritage an acknowledgement of their connection to the land. In 1997 the National Parks Ownership Bill passed through parliament enabling return of parks to traditional owners (to be leased back to National Parks but jointly managed). In 1998 Mutawintji National Park was handed back to the traditional owners who were largely based in Wilcannia (Beckett, Hercus and Martin 2008). This was the first park in NSW to be handed back and was a ground-breaking change in the relationship between traditional owners, National Parks and the NSW government. People from Wilcannia played a major role in the writing of the legislation and the first handback.

The newer Paroo Darling National Park just to the north of Wilcannia is also jointly managed with National Parks under an MOU enabling a joint management committee to have input into the management of the park and the Wilcannia community to participate more fully in the park.

13.4 BARKANDJI NATIVE TITLE DETERMINATION

In 1997 the Barkandji Native Title claim was lodged, and it was finally determined in 2015, the first Native Title determination in NSW away from the coast, and the largest determination in NSW to date. This determination recognizes Barkandji people as the traditional owners of their land, but it has not resulted in the handback of land that already has a use, only some un-used crown land may be given back. It does however enable Barkandji people to negotiate over developments and changes to land use. One of the main results of this determination is the ongoing campaign by Barkandji people to save the Barka or Darling River from the over-allocation of water and water theft on the Upper reaches of the system. The Native Title claim does give limited rights to water for the Barkandji people, and they are fighting for this acknowledgement and their share of cultural water.

13.5. LOCAL DECISION MAKING -WHATS GOING ON

Wilcannia today is a vibrant community with its own radio station, newsletter, schools, café, shops etc. and it is looking forward to using the Local Decision Making model to sustain its culture and heritage and to drive change and economic sustainability.

Wilcannia is widely known for its artists (Gibson 2013), language, music, dance and determination to remain a cultural hub, and people are working to create a Barka Cultural Centre at the former Knox and Downs store location. This site was chosen because of its history and remaining built heritage but also because its prime location on the main corner in town, on the highway, and near the river and bridge.
WILCANNIA ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY
HERITAGE STUDY
PART B: ABORIGINAL CULTURAL SITES
CENTRAL DARLING SHIRE AND
WILCANNIA LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL
October 2018
11. WILCANNIA RIVER FRINGE CAMP NEAR THE MISSION SCHOOL AND DOWN TO UNION BEND (EAST SIDE OF RIVER MISSION FRINGE CAMP) ................................................................. 36
12. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT ........................................................................... 65
   12.1 Steamers Point ................................................................................................................ 65
   12.2 Burials Projects .............................................................................................................. 65
   12.3 The Mission Fringe Camp Significant Places ............................................................... 66
   12.4 Union Bend Significant Places ..................................................................................... 66
   12.5 The Wilcannia Weir ...................................................................................................... 66
   12.6 The Mallee Significant Vegetation .................................................................................. 66
   12.7 Wilcannia Cemetery (is on LEP) ................................................................................... 67
   12.8 Significant Traditional Story Places and fishing Places on the River south of Wilcannia........ 67
   12.10 Lake Woytchugga Traditional Story site and burials, middens, artefacts, stone tool quarries and flaking areas ............................................................... 67
   12.11 Management of the Barka or Darling river and its waterway, floodplains and fresh water aquifers. 68
13. REFERENCES .......................................................................................................................... 69
14. APPENDICES .......................................................................................................................... 76
   14.1 Appendix 1– Timeline .................................................................................................... 76
   14.2 Appendix 2 – list of some Barkandji totems (From Martin 1998) ..................................... 78
   14.3 Appendix 3 –Numbers Of Aboriginal People In The Wilcannia District ......................... 81

1. TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL CULTURE SITES OF THE WILCANNIA AREA

   1.1 Previous Archaeological Work In The Area

A search of the NSW NPWS Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) register for the Wilcannia area indicates that a total of 74 of sites have been recorded around the township of Wilcannia over a long period of time (Database and Figures 1, 2, 3)). The area chosen for this survey was from The Strip Fish Traps to the south, through Wilcannia, Wilcannia Common and Woytchugga Lake, and up the river to the Falling Star site on Murtee Station. There are many other sites recorded on AHIMS further away from Wilcannia but this survey does not consider them in any detail.

Some of these sites have been recorded by NSW NPWS Sites Officers Badger Bates and Mark Sutton, others by local archaeologists Peter Thompson and Edna Hunter, Sarah Martin, and others as part of development assessment surveys such as the sewerage pond survey. Archaeological survey and coverage of the area has been uneven and site recording has focussed on areas where a development is occurring or known to have burials and a high density of sites, notably the lunette and edges of Woytchugga Lake (Database and Figure 1). Several very significant places around Wilcannia were recorded in the 1970s by Howard Creamer and Ray Kelly for the Sacred Sites Survey for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Sites recorded on AHIMS around Wilcannia include open campsites (some including burnt food remains such as shell and animal bone), burials, silcrete quarry, stone arrangement,
fish trap, and scarred trees including canoe trees. The canoe trees at Wilcannia are very significant because in many cases it is known when they were cut out and who cut them.

A series of archaeological sites well known to the local community and of contemporary and historic significance are located from Streamers Point and downstream towards the town, between the golf course and the river. The sites were recorded by Eugene Stockton in 1973. He noted glass artefacts and other historic materials indicating a contact and historic camping area. Also “bone middens” with in-situ faunal remains, ovens, rock outcrops showing signs of quarrying, and extensive artefact scatters (Database and Figure 2). Badger Bates recorded as series of canoe trees and coolamon trees at Union Bend and Wowser Bend in 1984 (AHIMS), and these have just been re-assessed. The white sandhill behind the Caravan Park contains burials, burnt faunal remains and stone artefacts, first recorded by Eugene Stockton in 1973 and later recorded by Badger Bates and Jeanette Hope in 1984 (AHIMS).

Lake Woytchugga has a range of archaeological sites well known to the local community, including burials, ovens and artefact scatters on the eastern lunette, scarred trees, and quarries on the western side where silcrete rock outcrops (Database and Figure 1).

Figure 1: AHIMS sites recorded around Wilcannia Area prior to this survey (Note many of the sites recorded in the 1970’s and 1980’s have inaccurate grid references because of the poor maps available then and lack of GPS).
Wilcannia has a complex system of landforms including the Darling River (Barka) with its lakes, billabongs and creeks, the Paroo River, the Talyawalka Creek, the floodplains and floodplain sandhills, and higher red country and hills such as 10 Mile Hill and Mount Murchison. This results in a wider variety and density of archaeological material than areas of the Darling river that have less complex landforms. The Talyawalka Creek channels and lakes represent the ancestral mid and lower Darling River before it adopted its modern
channel somewhere between 10,000 and 7,000 years ago (Bowler et al. 1978, Balme 1995). The Talyawalka is the northern section from above Wilcannia to Menindee; it crosses over from the eastern side of the Darling River to the west side below Menindee, and the section below Lake Tandau is called the Darling River Anabranch. They both consist of the main channel and series of lakes and interconnecting creeks, and especially in the northern section there are many distributaries and minor anabranches. The Talyawalka system has many ancient Pleistocene middens, campsites and burials as well as more recent material along it (Balme 1995), so the Wilcannia area has both ancient and modern archaeological sites.

1.2 What Is Cultural Significance?

All Aboriginal cultural sites have significance as evidence of traditions and the occupation, ownership and use of the land by Aboriginal people. These sites may have extra significance assigned to them if they are found to very old (for example Lake Mungo), or particularly interesting for some reason (the rock art sites at Mutawintji for example). If these sites are easily accessible, they may gain importance as an educational resource. The significance assigned to such sites may also reflect the numbers of sites in an area, for example if the site in question is the only one known in the area then people may consider it more significant.

The presence of cultural sites has significance in the preparation of Native Title applications and Land Claims under the Land Rights Act. Although it is often difficult to demonstrate a direct connection between people today and archaeological sites, the presence of a large number of archaeological sites provides evidence of continuous occupation. There are cases in Western NSW where a direct connection can be shown, for example the pigment art sites at Mt Manara which have a body of traditional and historic information recorded, including names of Barkandji people who put the handstencils on the walls. At Wilcannia many of the canoe trees and scarred trees were cut out by known members of families still existing in the town, again showing continuity.

The concept of sites of cultural significance is complex and multi-layered:

There are many ways to divide, assess, analyse and determine significance. The divisions are not exhaustive or proscriptive. They also overlap; these are not hard or quantifiable values. Some places, indeed most, will have more than one value…

The significance of a place to a local community may not be as easy to define…One of the key social values places may have is their role in establishing and maintaining a community’s sense of place and belonging.

… heritage places are not significant by their nature; they are given value by human beings. Their value rests in their perception by the community. Significance is wholly a human artefact or concept; as such it is as fluid, complex and dynamic as society’s multilayered and changing value system (Pearson & Sullivan 1995).

Some of the complexities involved with the concept of “significance” are discussed below;

i. Different sites will have different degrees and types of significance to different Aboriginal people. There have been many attempts to assign labels to different kinds of significance, such as traditional, historic and contemporary. Many of the sites discussed in this report will have all these three kinds of significance to Aboriginal people, which may be recognised by different people depending on their association with the area and their amount of knowledge of that area.

The NSW NPWS (Aboriginal ownership) Amendment Act 1996 recognises that:

land is of cultural significance to Aboriginal people if the lands are significant in terms
of traditions, observances, customs, beliefs, or history of the Aboriginal people of the area.

The Australian Heritage Commission has developed more detailed and sensitive criteria for defining places valued by communities for cultural reasons (Pearson & Sullivan 1995);

a. a community landmark or signature
b. strong symbolic qualities defining a community
c. spiritual or traditional connection between past and present
d. represent/embodies important community meanings
e. association with events having a profound effect on a community
f. symbolically represents the past in the present
g. represents attitudes, beliefs, behaviours fundamental to community identity
h. essential community function leading to a special attachment
i. longevity of use or association, including continuity to the present

ii. The significance of a site can change over time, relevant examples of this being Lake Mungo and Lake Victoria where the work of scientists, Aboriginal researchers and elders, and media coverage has resulted in new kinds of significance being placed upon these sites in addition to traditional and historic significance. This is a continuation of a traditional cultural trait, as culture adapts and changes over time, it is never static.

iii. The idea of sites with definite boundaries is difficult to apply to many archaeological sites, and rarely fits into the concept of traditional knowledge where a system of pathways with nodal points is a slightly better description. These nodal points are invariably mythological sites or site complexes of outstanding significance, but it is difficult to assign significance to the pathways. Aboriginal people do not recognise individual sites so much as landforms and signs that can be followed and understood.

iv. All Aboriginal cultural sites are of significance to Aboriginal people but the kind and degree of significance will vary from site to site and depending on the type of site, and the strength of association the people consulted have with that place. Therefore significance relates to the perceived cultural significance of the site and whether people have particular knowledge and association with the place. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the Aboriginal people with the closest ties with the area involved be consulted.

1.3 Types of Traditional Aboriginal Culture Sites Found Around Wilcannia

i. Burial Sites

Many burials have been recorded around Wilcannia, mostly on high sandy ground near the river or on the north-east side of Lake Woychugga. Burials have been recorded near the river at Five Mile Point, Union Bend, the White Sand Hill, near the Golf Club, Kalyanka, Barradale, Murtee and Mount Murchison (Database). There are historic records of burials being found in the town, for example in Myers Street near the old bridge. Many burials have also been recorded along the Talywalka system including the lakes to the north east of Wilcannia.

Burial sites are always of major concern to Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal people of
Western NSW traditionally took great care with their burial ceremonies and sometimes carried the bones of dead relatives for long distances before burying them in the right place (bundle burials). There are many early written records describing intricate burial ceremonies and the caring for graves afterwards and each cultural group had different ceremonies and styles of burying.

It is traditionally of vital importance that burials are not disturbed and exposed. One main reason why the bones must always be covered up is that the bones and spirits of dead people are dangerous, and the bones (particularly "bone dust" or powdered bone) can be used as a poison to kill people. According to Aboriginal beliefs the body must be brought to the right place, its place of belonging, and buried carefully in order for the spirit to rest. After this the spirit can change back into its totemic form or follow the ancestral pathway into the sky. The burials should not be disturbed after this, the bones must stay in their country and not be moved. If the burial is moved the spirit will be unable to rest and could become dangerous.

These traditions continue today, and Aboriginal people feel a strong relationship with their ancestors and are deeply hurt by any damage to burial sites or disrespectful behaviour towards their ancestors remains. These feelings do not depend on a demonstrated direct biological connection between the burials and the current community. The relationship between burials and people today is interpreted in terms of kinship and land tenure laws, which is radically different to the purely biological European way of looking at ancestors.

Burial sites in Barkandji country may have special items such as kopi widow’s caps, kopi grave markers, cylcons, or remains of burial huts.

ii. Rock Art Sites

Although there is no rock art in the area considered in this survey immediately surrounding Wilcannia, the town is literally surrounded by major rock art sites and these have great significance to the Wilcannia community. Much of the contemporary art practice carried out in Wilcannia has been influenced by this rock art and its associated stories.

Rock art is of special significance is are often associated with mythological or ceremonial centres, and it may depict special stories and events. At some sites it is known that the art has been carried out by ancestral beings of great importance, for example the Euiriowie rock engravings north of Broken Hill are said to have been made by the Seven Sisters (Elkin 1949). People may have an historical connection with an art site, for example at Mt Manara elders know of a cave that has their grandmother’s hand stencil in it. The art at Mutawintji National Park is of special significance to the traditional owners and stories were handed down about this art by family elders including George Dutton, Granny Quayle, Alf Barlow, Walter Newton (Beckett 1957-8, 1958, 1978,1993, 2008).

On a contemporary level art sites are particularly important to Aboriginal people because of their beauty and the information they portray about traditional life (for example the kinds of ochre used, the different methods used, styles and motifs, and the artefacts such as boomerangs, spears, nets etc shown).

A major area of art to the west of Wilcannia is centred on Mutawintji and the surrounding ranges such as Koonawarra and Nuntherungie, and closer to Wilcannia the Scopes Ranges, Spring Hills, Moona Vale, and Peery Lakes. These areas contain a number of very important rock engraving sites, as well as pigment art featuring stencilling and a minor component of painting and drawing.

The hills at Moona Vale (which can be seen from 10 Mile Hill just out of Wilcannia) contain a significant complex of sites located where the creek cuts through a sandstone ridge, thus forming what may have been a permanent waterhole and soak prior to land degradation. The main art site is unusual as it has a number of stencils of European artefacts including
shear blades, clay pipes and possibly wire netting. The ridgetop on both sides of the creek has extensive stone arrangements including stone mounds and pathways. There are also very large campsites along the creek flats. This site is well known to the Wilcannia Aboriginal community and there have been visits to the site by the Wilcannia schools. There is also an engraving site located near the entrance to the gorge and rockholes on Moona Vale. The nearby station K-LINE also contains pigment arts sites in rockshelters. There are also rock engravings and pigment art sites on the western side of Peery Lake, Paroo Darling Park, 70 km to the north of Wilcannia.

A major area of art to the east of Wilcannia is centred on the Cobar Pediplain, especially the hilly country on the western side including Gunderbooka, Winbar, Mt Grenfell, Wuttagoona, Neckarboo, and Mt Manara. This art consists of spectacular pigment art with painting and drawing as well as stencilling. This style of rock art can be visited at Mt Grenfell Historic Site between Cobar and Wilcannia or Gunderbooka National Park.

iii. stone arrangements.

These have important religious and ceremonial functions, and even if the details of these functions are not known people feel they are very significant and often do not like young people or in some cases woman to go near the sites. There is a concentration of stone arrangements on the western side of the Bulloo overflow and down towards Peery Lakes and White Cliffs. These usually consist of pathways and circles marked by stones and/or small mounds of stone. Stone cairns or stone mounds are a particular type of stone arrangement and are found over a wide area to the west of the Darling-Warrego Rivers. They are mainly found on ridge tops and can be confused with European made trig points etc.

Stone arrangements are not usually found next to the Darling River, but there is a large stone arrangement near Steamer Point on the edge of Wilcannia (Table 1). This is made up of small mounds of stones scattered over a large area, and it is also associated with large silcrete boulders that have had flakes removed, possibly as part of a ceremony.

v. Scarred Trees. Scarred trees have contemporary significance to Aboriginal people as they are indicators of traditional culture and also make useful interpretation sites for educational or cultural heritage tours. Canoe trees are especially spectacular examples of Aboriginal culture. Scarred trees are especially important in cases where the history of the scar is known, such as the canoe tree at Union Bend Wilcannia cut out by Granny Moysey in around 1922. This tree is of particular significance to Granny Moysey’s family and kin, which includes many people in Wilcannia and surrounding areas.

Other kinds of scarred trees such as trees where possums or honey have been cut out may not be as obvious as canoe or container trees but are also significant especially if something is known about the history of the scars.

Some of the scars that are found around Wilcannia include:

- Canoes and “Drag-alongs”

Early pictures of canoes show a range of sizes were used, longer ones for groups of people and smaller ones for individuals. Small canoes were also used by women to carry food collected from the swamps and billabongs, or the river when it was low, such as birds eggs, mussels and roots. These small canoes sometimes called ‘drag-alongs’ (Gubba Woods pers. comm.) were pushed along in the shallow water of swamps and billabongs by the wading women, as they collected food, they placed it in the “drag-along” floating on the water, and then it was carried by several women back to camp. Scars over 2 meters appear to be canoe scars, with the exception of long narrow scars that may be burial coffin bark removal scars. Most canoe scars on the Darling River are River Red Gum, but there are several canoe scars on a Black Box trees recorded at Wilcannia, and north of Wilcannia, (for
example Toorale National Park), Coolibah trees were also used to cut out canoes. The largest canoe scar recorded so far on the Darling River (near Louth) is nearly 5 metres long (Martin 2010). Some scars have definite steel axe marks, indicating that they were made in the post-European period, but is usual that axe marks have weathered away and you cannot tell whether it was cut out by a steel axe or a stone axe. The northern Kurnu Barkandji near Toorale used:

the gum tree canoe (koombahla-booltaroo) and the box-canoe (koorkooroo-booltaroo). They were made of bark somewhat “bowed” at either end, where would be placed a lump of clay [to prevent water spilling in] and were propelled by long pole (werkka), pulled with long firm strokes. The sides were kept apart by sticks (yerkaka)… and a third lump of clay (koony-kahn-go, or fire-place). More of this very handy clay was used for caulking… (Teulon in Curr 1886:201-2).

The explorer Mitchell describes Kurnu Barkandji in canoes near Fort Bourke in 1835:

Two natives appeared at a distance in one of the long reaches, fishing in two small canoes. On observing our boats they dashed the water up, paddling with their spears, and thus scudding with great rapidity to the right bank, where they left their canoes… These vessels were of the simplest construction: so slight indeed, that it seemed to us singular how a man could float in one, for it was merely a sheet of bark, with a little clay at each end: yet there was a fire besides in each, the weather being very cold. A native, when he wishes to proceed, stand erect, and propels the canoe with the short spear he uses in fishing: striking the water with each end alternatively, on each side of the canoe, and he thus glides very rapidly along (Mitchell 1939 Vol1:223).

- Coolamons and Shield Trees

Cutting bark coolamons or dishes out of tree trunks or large limbs leaves round to oval and long oval scars of various sizes. Bark shield scars are similar but not so varied in size.

- Scarred Trees with wooden artefact removal scars

Wood for wooden artefacts and bowls was removed from tree trunks, limbs and roots. The types of wooden artefacts used by Barkandji that may have been made this way include shovels for digging yams, tubers, grubs and small animals, returning and non-returning boomerangs, a variety of bunthi or clubs, woomeras, and parrying shields (Dunbar 1943,1944, Teulon in Curr 1886:192). While this type of scarred tree is not usually recorded in NSW (Long 2005), on Barkandji country it is part of a continuing cultural practice as people continue this practice to illustrate the method to younger family members, and to make artefacts for sale. Spears, digging sticks, clap sticks and some types of clubs (bunthi) were made from saplings. Boomerangs and bunthi were also made from roots of trees, and boomerangs were also made from bent limbs of Mulga, Gitji, River Red Gum, Coolibah or Black Box (Badger Bates pers. comm.).

Wooden coolamons can also be cut out of an elbow of a hollow limb.

- Possum Holes, Honey Trees or other Food Retrieval Scars

These scarred trees have a hole cut into a hollow trunk or limb to remove food from the hollow, such as goanna, possum, bird or bird eggs, or honey. Sometimes the hole is cut into an older bark removal scar, as it is easier to cut into the trunk where the dead wood is thinner. If the hole is high up the tree there may be toe hold marks below where steps have been cut to help the man climb up.

- Root anvils

Trees where people camped or fished often have markings on the large exposed roots made by people resting pieces of wood while they worked them into finished artefacts such as
boomerangs or nulla nullas. These are known as root anvils, and have been recorded around Wilcannia, and are still used by people making artefacts.

- **Marked Trees**

Trees were marked with axes, either on the bark or on a scar with bark removed, as a form of communicating certain events. In the historic period trees where marked with steel axes, for example the trees at the Webster Family cemetery near Menindee had the initials of three of the Webster children cut into it, and another tree had a slab of bark removed and the exposed face of the trunk flattened for some unknown reason. A tree at Wilcannia has been recorded as a canoe tree, but there are some letters cut into the face, now mostly weathered away, which may indicate it was used as a survey tree after the canoe had been cut out.

- **Toe hold trees**

These are trees with scars made by people cutting toe-holds to help them climb up the tree to get a possum, bird, goanna etc. There is a toe hold tree downstream from Jim Sammon’s house which was cut out by members of Granny Moysey’s family in the 1950’s.

**vi. Ring Trees**

Branches of saplings were tied in a certain way to communicate events. These are known in western NSW as “ring trees” as the mature tree has branches grown together forming a ring.

**vii. Quarries.**

Unlike most areas along the Darling River, the Wilcannia area has numerous exposures of stone suitable for quarrying, including at Steamers Point and at Lake Woytchugga. Important quarries were associated with mythology and there were laws and customs regulating who could visit the quarries. Much of this information has been lost but some fragments still remain. For example, Yambacoona Hill near Brewarrina is known as an important grindstone quarry where ancestors piled up grindstones which could be used by anyone visiting the Brewarrina fish traps (Langloh Parker). The quartz outcrops around Broken Hill are known to be the fat from the Marnpi or Bronzewing pigeon (Warrell 1995), and this stone was taken to the Menindee Lakes for ceremonial purposes (Pardoe and Martin 2001). The Mt Wood (Tibooburra) ielira blade quarries are an example of quarries that must have extraordinary powers since the blades were traded from Tibooburra right up into Arnhem Land where they have ceremonial significance. The significance of the Mt Wood quarries has not been recorded but it is possible that there is still knowledge about this amongst Aboriginal people along the trade route. The flaked silcrete boulders at the Wilcannia Steamers Point Stone Arrangement and at Lake Woychugga may have had special significance relating to traditional stories and ceremonies.

**viii. Stone fish traps.** The fish traps at The Strip downstream from Wilcannia have been recorded and are on AHIMS. These consist of large rock walls, smaller rock walls, natural rock holes, and a freshwater spring. Other places where fish traps are known to have existed near Wilcannia include the Island upstream from Steamers Point, Degoumois Point, and possibly the Falling Star site. Stone fish traps may also have been located where the town weir is now located, the rocks near the Mission fringe camp, and the rocks near the cemetery.

The most famous stone fish traps on the Darling River are the Brewarrina fish traps which were made by the ancestor Payame (Baiame). The Brewarrina fish traps are still used today, and the Aboriginal communities at Wilcannia and Menindee use the rock walled weirs near the towns as fish traps in the same way as the ancestors showing continuity of tradition. There were many other fish traps along the Darling but many of them were dynamited to let paddle steamers through when the river was low. It is probable that these other fish traps
also have a mythological significance, as well as being of economic importance to Aboriginal people.

ix. Ovens

Heat retainer hearths or ovens have been used in the Murray-Darling Basin over a very long period of time from at least 31,000 BP until now, and a form of oven is still in use among Barkandji people of the Darling River today. They are widespread both in space and time are found both in the Darling and Murray riverine systems and in the semi-arid non-riverine landforms either side.

Heat retainers are used around the world, including in Australia, for a range of purposes, for cooking meat (particularly large animals and fatty meats), cooking a range of plant foods particularly those that contain complex carbohydrates that need long cooking to make them easy to digest, to increase storage life of foods by dehydration and denaturing enzymes that promote rancidity, for medicinal uses and saunas, detoxifying poisonous compounds in plants, fuel saving, for processing plant fibre, and for large scale cooking to cater for large groups of people including those gathered for ceremonies (Martin 2006).

Frederic Bonney describes the use of stone heat retainers at Momba Station, Wilcannia, in his notebook:

vegetables [and kangaroo] are cooked in their ground ovens (windoo) which are made thus, a hollow is scooped out of the ground and the bottom covered with hot stones, over the stones a layer of small boughs, often those of the eremophila (Kultchia), on the boughs the vegetable is placed and over it another layer of boughs and the whole covered with earth, which completes the oven. Moisture is added by removing a little of the covering and pouring water among the boughs – stones for this purpose have to be carried sometimes’ (Bonney 1866-1915).

Figure 4: Sketch traced from Bonney’s notebooks c. 1866-1884 (left) showing cooking in pit ovens with stone heat retainers. Layers in the oven are 1. soil, 2. leaves 3. food 4. leaves 5. hot stones

x. Mounds

The black earth mounds on the eastern riverine plain around Hay, Balranald, Swan Hill etc, are considered significant because they are such spectacular examples of Aboriginal economic and social systems. The mounds on the Hay Plain are considered especially significant because of the very high probability of them containing burials, or having burial clusters close by. The mounds are a result of using the same area over and over for cooking meat, fish, and plants in ovens using baked clay heat retainer, leaving mounds of whole and broken heat retainer, ash, charcoal, burnt plant materials, bone and shell, and stone artefacts. Small mounds have been found near Wilcannia on the Paroo system, and also a small mound at Union Bend which has been recorded as part of this project.

Xi. Middens

Middens are found on the edge of the Darling River bank and on high levees and terraces behind. They have been recorded at Steamer Point and Lake Woychugga, and along many areas of river bank around Wilcannia. Middens tend to have a high percentage of shell, often whole or broken, and in lenses or packed into hearths. Middens contain different shellfish depending on the type of environment. Two species of freshwater mussel shell are found in middens along the Darling, Paroo and the Talyawalka, the river mussel (Alathyria jacksoni), and the billabong or lake mussel Velesunio ambiguus. The river mussel is larger and oval shaped, and has a thicker shell, and prefers cool, flowing water, and high oxygen levels. The
lake or billabong mussel is smaller, thinner shelled and rounder in shape, and prefers still or slow flowing water and can tolerate higher temperatures and lower oxygen levels, and it can bury itself in mud during dry periods (www.murrayusers.sa.gov.au).

Clusters of whole freshwater snail shell (*Notopala sublineata*) are also found in some of the middens along the Darling River. This snail is listed as virtually extinct as a result of changes to the flow patterns and water quality of the rivers. Middens with substantial numbers of whole snail shells provide evidence that Aboriginal people used these snails for food and bait in addition to the larger mussels. Aboriginal people find the evidence of snail shells in middens a tangible link with a past environment known otherwise only from oral history of people collecting these shellfish for food and bait.

Middens can also contain fish bones such as cod and perch backbone, and yabby gastroliths (little round stony “buttons”) that can give details of distribution, sizes, growth rates etc. over a long period of time. Middens may contain substantial amounts of bone, including fish bone, bird bone, mammal bone and teeth, yabby gastroliths, turtle shell etc., which tell us about the foods eaten and the past environments. Fish otoliths are small bones found in the fish head that can be identified to species and if whole can give an idea of fish size.

**Xii. Stone Artefacts**

A range of whole and broken up grinding dishes and topstones, as well as bowl shaped mortars and rounded pestles, have been recorded in many locations around Wilcannia. Most grinding equipment is made from sandstone, however some is made from quartzite, and some pestles are made from silcrete cobbles. The flat faces and silica sheen on many of the grinding dishes and topstones indicates that soft silica rich grass seeds were being ground. The mortars and pestles indicate that hard seeds such as nardoo or Acacia seeds were also pounded up and ground, and they may also have been used for pounding roots.

Flaked stone artefacts are the most common type of cultural material along the Darling River and are found in all landforms. Artefacts include flakes and blades, some retouched into particular types of tool, and the cores that the flakes and blades were removed from. Tool types include large wood working choppers, adzes or chisels including tulas for fine wood working, flake tools with round edges, notched edges and straight edges, pirri points, and a range of microblades and microblade tools.

Microblades, and microblade cores are made from the very fine ‘chert’-like silcrete occurring as outcrop around White Cliffs and Peery Lake. Non-blade small artefacts and larger artefacts are more commonly made from the kind of silcrete with medium sized grains, such as found at Steamer Point and Lake Woytchugga. You can see the grains in this silcrete, and it is usually brown, grey or beige in colour.

**1.4 Traditional Story Sites of Significance**

There are many traditional story sites of significance to Aboriginal people in Wilcannia.

In 1975 and 1976 the Sites of Significance survey team were shown a number of important traditional story places by Auntie Elsie Jones and Auntie Gertie Johnson. These include the Falling Star site in the Darling River on Murtee Station, the Mudlark (Diri) site in the river on riverside Station, and other sites further away from Wilcannia including Billilla Rocks, Surveyors Lake Rocks, Jacks Lookout, Mount Manara, and Bamlu Bend. Other people who gave information included Auntie Alice Bugmy, then living in Broken Hill, who also talked about the significance of Mount Manara, and William Bates who showed the team the Five Mile Point Burials.
Most of these stories have not been recorded in detail in this report as the stories are owned by particular families, and unless they have given permission they are not detailed here.

1.5 Aboriginal Historic Cultural Sites of The Wilcannia Area

Historic sites are especially important to people associated with such sites and their descendants, for example Missions or Reserves, historic camping places, places where people were born or died, places where particular events occurred.

Historic artefacts around old camping places which look like old rubbish may have major importance to people who lived there and their descendants. Many times visiting these old camping places it is little rusted and often crushed household items or even handmade toys that bring tears to people’s eyes as they recognise their own things or things belonging to now passed relations or friends. These artefacts are like a book or map to people who know the place, bringing back memories of who lived where and which children played under what trees. The importance of such sites is that they reaffirm people’s relationships and belonging to country, the two main concerns of Aboriginal people.

Historic sites include scarred trees and these are of major importance if it is known who actually made the scars, for example the big canoe tree at Union Bend Wilcannia which was cut out by Granny Moysey.

Birth places are also of great significance, and there are still people alive today in Western NSW who were born out in the bush. A birth place indicates a person’s association with country, language, culture and descent group. Birth places may have no obvious marker but the family will know the spot by the presence of a tree, bush, or rock, or a landform such as the bend in the river. There are birth places known by families at Wilcannia relating to births from the 1920s to 1970s, including Steamer Point, between Steamer Point and the hospital, the Mission fringe camp, and at Union Bend on both sides of the river.

2. STEAMERS POINT ABORIGINAL PLACE

2.1 Stone Arrangement

This survey filed mapping has determined that the stone arrangement is about 95% outside the boundary of the gazetted Steamers Point Aboriginal Place. This was unintended and needs to be corrected. This stone arrangement is a very significant and may relate to the ceremonies that were recorded being carried out at Karrania by the earliest European Settlers. Similar stone arrangements are found around White Cliffs and further north, but are very rare on the Barka (Darling River). It is recommended that the boundary of the Aboriginal Place be enlarged to include all of this site and a suitable
buffer zone. This was also recommended by the Paroo Darling Joint Management Committee in 2015. The stone arrangement has been affected by roads cutting through it and people driving off roads in wet weather. Logs where also dumped on the edge of the stone arrangement before being put into the Darling River several years ago.

2.2 Steamers Point Island

Additional oral history done for this survey has shown that the island in the Barka or Darling river channel placed on AHIMS in 2014 was not the one referred to by Aboriginal people. The Island near the entrance of the Kalyanka Creek (Paroo channel) is the one referred to in the traditional story of the Thirri, and as a fish trap and swimming place. This has been corrected on AHIMS. This is also not included in the boundary of the Aboriginal Place, and it is recommended that the boundary be enlarged to include this significant story site.

2.3 Wowsers Bend Canoe Trees and Scarred Trees

These five canoe trees were first recorded on AHIMS by Badger Bates in 1984, and were re-recorded in 2017 by Sarah Martin and Jodie Edge from OEH, and Samantha Hamilton (a conservation expert from Melbourne), to update the GPS readings and report on the condition. All trees are in reasonable condition but need monitoring for termites and for health effects that may result from low river levels and poor water quality. Signage needs to be put in place for interpretation and teaching purposes and for protection from accidental damage.

Figure 6: Jodie Edge at one of the Wowser Bend Canoe Trees

2.4 Steamers Point Ngatji Site

The river channel at Steamers Point that is the location of the story about the Ngatji and the Steamer is also not in the Aboriginal Place boundary. It is recommended that this also be included in the Aboriginal Place.
3. WHITE SANDHILL NEAR THE CARAVAN PARK

3.1 The White Sandhill Traditional Site

The White Sandhill was first recorded as a burial site (also with artefacts, oven material, fragments of burnt animal bone and shell) in 1984 by Badger Bates, Aboriginal Sites Officer for NPWS. Jeanette Hope, an archaeologist working for NPWS also visited this site at the time. The reason why the site was visited then was that a member of the public had reported that sand quarrying had disturbed the burials. Prior to that in 1973 it was recorded by Eugene Stockton as a site with artefacts, middens and ovens (see Database).

In July 2018 community members including Leah Ebsworth noticed that there were some exposed fragments of burials near the track. The police collected some of these to be sent away for forensic examination, but the Broken Hill OEH Senior Heritage Officer was able to identify these as very old Aboriginal burial remains and returned the envelope with the fragments to the Wilcannia LALC before they were sent away. Leah Ebsworth helped record this site and remembered when she was very young that burials had been found there and an archaeologist came to record them.

See recommendations about protection of this site.

3.2 The White Sandhill Historic Sites

Stevey Harris Talking about the Huts and Playing on the White Sandhill as a Kid (2018)

Old Rene Parker, and Old Evelyn Whyman and all those people, they all had houses over the Sandhill.

[Roy] Hunts used to live on the end here see, and they used to have big sheds and bough sheds at the back, and I think that’s where all their kids learnt the guitars. Cause I remember they had a big white house, they painted it white, it was a tin shack but it was real white. It was on the flat type of thing cause as I said roads been here and there and everywhere and he had that block there. And right down on the river, at the end of that fence, that’s where Aunty Ada and Uncle Teddy Brodie used to live. And then I remember Maureen and them was up this way more on that fence, and I’m sure Lulu and them lived over a bit further, Lulu and Clarrie.

I remember, see this road that runs straight through here, Pappy and Enda used to live in them old DMR huts on the side there [near the sandhill]. Pappy Biggs and Edna Young.

Yeah that was our little pad there we used to go straight past that little tree there and straight past the gate and down then to the white Sandhill. Uncle Tom Pluto used to live in there at one of those box trees, he had just a little tent thing, little tarp type of thing, more or less just laid in there, but he had his food in there and his water and that type of thing. Near one of them box trees there, and I think that’s where old – they used to walk over here, old Teddy Brodie and Aunty The Sandhill, oh it was the bestest place ever to play, we had plenty of berries to eat and things. Those berries, the big red ones, prickly ones, the prickly bush, big spikey one, ones that stick into you – the big ones, they get big red berries on them, I got one growing in my chook pen, and you know who got it all, Amy mind you. She give me that bush and I was going to cut it out but no I can’t do it cause that old girl give me that years ago when it was only little. But no we played cowboys and Indians here.
Stevey Harris at Cousin Amy Quayle’s Tucker Tree by the Bridge

We at Cousin Amy’s tree now, I’ll call it Cousin Amy’s because she used to always cook us dinner here at this big tree. and the hollow that’s in it, it’s a lot smaller now than in back those days, we’d be able to fit in there. She put all her cookin stuff in there, grid irons, tucker bag, and things, and cook us up our dinner and things, chops, flaps, whatever, old johnny cake, and feed us and move us back to school. But it’s a lot smaller now, that hollow, I wouldn’t be able to fit in there now!

She used to cook up, we’d have our fire here, mainly on pension days too. And maybe a couple of days after. She’d just have a fire here and knock us up a johnny cake, go to town, send someone to town to get some flap, from the old butcher shop, when we had an old butcher shop, and she used to griddle up here for us, feed us then she’d hunt us back to school. Give us a bit of money and stuff and we’d go back to school.

And then they’d sit around here and have their yarn up, and a couple of flagons I suppose. Oh there’s be old Jessie Kerwin, Teddy Boy Brodie, Irene, all old friends, yeah. Old mates.

It was very good, very handy too. Save us walking all the way over to the Mission. Long walk then. Yes we’d have a great time.

4. THE SANDHILL AND IRON POLE BEND CAMPS

4.1 Nana Maureen O’Donnell talking about her Old House at the Sandhill Fence-line Camp on edge of high ground near existing fenceline on Jim Sammon’s block, east of White Sandhill):

We moved up to the Mallee there cause floodwaters pushed us out, but then we wanted to live on the river so we come back to the river and we lived down there on Max’s block for years [now owned by Jim Sammon], and we lived there for a long time, going down that fenceline, and then old Auntie Charlotte lived up higher, up further on the bank, they wasn’t right on the bank, they was sort of right on that flat. And we lived down there and old Nanna Bodie and old Uncle Ted Brodie, they lived somewhere along that fence too, they lived not far from us there. But mainly it was us and the kids had to walk to school from there, back of the white sandhill, yeah my kids had to walk past there. And Charlotte and them used to live up there further, we all lived close together and we all got on good together. We had just a tin hut same as we built ourselves, it was pretty nice too, it catered for all of us, and he built it himself. When we used to build a house there used to black beetle borers, and they used to bore when the trees was fresh and we’d just put the house up the borers would come in and bore holes in it everywhere and we had to get stuff to get rid of them. They loved that freshly cut trees. We used to build our own house and make it comfortable. You could live pretty
comfortable in it if you’ve got lights and an open fire place to cook on, you’re right! See that 
water pipe stinking out of the ground, that put in by my husband, we had a pump on the river 
and water was carried in the pipe to near the house.

Yeah we waited until the water got right to our front door and it started to come in and he said its time to move so away we’d go again. It might have been the 74 flood, probably I reckon it would have been, because the 56 flood was the big one. I remember taking them cars across with Alfie doing the big barge thing when the big 56 flood was on, that Talyawalka and that was all out, and Alfie had a barge, I was only young then, I wasn’t married although I got married when I was 16 or 17, and he used – to cross the Talyawalka, he had a big army barge, big duck they called it, and he used to take the people across and cars across and I used to be with him. And I think that was the 56 flood.

And then this one here, when we moved down here, the water – we used to watch the water 
and every day it got closer and closer, one morning we got up and it was right at the door and 
he said time to move again! So we moved a fair bit, that’s when we moved, that time I think 
we moved behind Old Mrs Pearce’s place and we lived in a big tent and a caravan.

After that we moved back down there near the bridge, that was our last place. Cause we liked 
on the river you know so when the flood’d come we’d move and when it was gone we’d come 
back again That’s where I lost my husband, and then we moved from there up to that tin hut, 
little tin hut Uncle Jim used to live in next door to – Barbie and them was living there – Barbie 
Clark. Well they used to live there but then they went to Albury to live and they lived there for 
a little while then, but then they were in that movement thing you know, where they moved 
people around. And they moved down there and Colin and them moved down there.

But I’m not good on years, when you live your life and your busy all the time, you just know 
things and you don’t put dates to them, a lot of old people can but I’m not good on them, just 
count the seasons like when the floods was on.

4.2 Betty Williams talking about living behind the Sandhill when she was a Kid

Hello My name is Betty Williams and I am a Barkandji lady. And I used to live on the river 
bank of Wilcannia, on the Darling River, and you come over the hill, the sandhill, near the 
caravan park, we used to walk over that hill when I was young. And then when the flood was 
on, the creeks were filled right up, we used to swim across that creek to go to school. And 
when we used to get to the creek we’d take our little clothes across the creek, in a little 
plastic bag – No! we never had no plastic bags in that day! We’d hold them up in our hand
and swim across with one hand, leave our clothes on one side, and we’d have a change of
clothes and we’d go to school. We’d take our soap and wash ourselves in the creek, cause
we never had no water [piped]. My old grandmother she reared me up way down near Jim
Sammon, in the creek, she had a lot of guinea pigs. When I was young my Nan taught me
how to put the bricks in the fire and hotten em up and wrap em in a towel, and that was our
hot water bottle. And it was really
lovely cause we used to have
everything, but then we just went and
my Nan left, we all left the bend then,
cause my old Nan passed away then.

We used to go home, make a fire,
then we’d cook our supper on the old
grid iron, we’d griddle up on the grid
iron on the nhikis. In those days you’d
have a little fire going all the time in
the little tin shack, and your water
was always boiled, and you had
everything to eat. We used to eat a lot
of things, there was goannas in the
hole, go to the river, never be short of
food. And you know what in those
days then my Mum had a lot of
children and there was only just two
little rooms, and we just all bunked in
together and we didn’t have a nice
comfortable bed, we used to have
little cyclone things, and that’s all I
have to say ! thank you!

4.3 Badger Bates and Muriel Riley at Granny Moysey’s Camp Iron Pole Bend

Badger Bates and Muriel Riley got out
their old family photo
taken in about 1955
and visited the very
same tree shown in
the photo. The photo
shows Badger and
Muriel’s mother Emily
Bates nee Clark lying
on the bed, and Mavis
Jones sitting beside
her. The children
playing with the old
tub are Muriel and her
young brother Adrian.
Such a long time ago,
but the big old black
box tree has not
changed much. There
are two tin huts behind the tree, and a high table with cooking pots on it. You can also see the
wire in the tree that they used to hang meat on. Granny and Grandfather Moysey, Badger and
Johnny lived at the two tin huts. When Gussy Dangar and Emily Bates and the kids came in
from Mt Murchison Station, they stayed at the huts as well. A smaller hut can be seen on the left, and this is where Grandfather Jack Smith, an old Ngiyampaa man from Carowra Tank lived. Badger told some stories about living at the tree, and about how they got water from the river using a windlass and carried the water buckets back to camp on sticks balanced across their shoulders.

One time when they had no food, Granny Moysey found a ten pound note blown up against the fence nearby and said “Look here, God saved our kids, now we can buy food for them”. We mostly lived on fish, yabbies and turtles from the river and One Mile Billabong, and flour, tea, sugar, potatoes and onions from Knox and Downs store. We also watered plants like tomato and pumpkin, rock melon and watermelon that came up from the seeds we threw on the little rubbish tip near the hut. Sometimes we went walking for miles and miles back from the river hunting emu, kangaroo, echidna, goanna or rabbits for meat to feed everyone. On weekends my cousins William Bates, Norman O’Donnell, Bruce Harris, Cyril Hunter and Christopher Payne would come across from the Mission and the camps on the river near the Mission School and stay with us, and we would go fishing and yabbying or hunting with Granny (Interview by Sarah Martin 2014)

4.4 Aunty Eliza’s Camp with Canoe and Toehold Tree, down from the Iron Pole Bend

It’s a Black Box tree, and someone cut a canoe, long time ago, and then in the scar, I’m pretty sure it was my poor brother Johnny, he cut the four toe-holds to get up the tree. See where they cut the regrowth away for wood, and they cut in to get up, there was cocky or something in the hollow, and I reckon who would have done this was my poor brother, cause he could climb. I’m sure my brother had something to do with this tree, and Ray Hunter and Percy and them. I’m sure this was the tree that my brother cut. Yeah, the end of the canoe tree was there, see, near the toehold, but it was a canoe tree. They cut the regrowth or wood, cause it was dry, and here see this scar there, old scar. This might have been one the boys cut, they cut one here somewhere, I’m sure it was on this side.
And we used to camp just there too, around this tree, I remember there was two trees away from the flat, where we used to camp, one of our camps, this one Aunty Eliza and them used to camp. Between these two trees there, out from trees, you’d get morning shade off this gum tree, Aunty Eliza and them would, and evening shade off the box tree.

It was good livin around here when I was small, we mightn’t of had much to eat, but sometimes we was really tucked up but there was fish, mussels, we used to eat mussels if we got real hungry. A couple of big floods washed all the traces away (from Bates and Martin 2010).

5. UNION BEND CULTURAL PLACES

5.1 Granny Moyseys’ Canoe Tree at Union Bend

This is a very significant single Aboriginal cultural heritage feature in Wilcannia and is great importance to almost all Aboriginal people living in Wilcannia and Barkandji people living elsewhere, which is why we have put photos of it in with different people to emphasise how important it is. This canoe was cut out by Granny Moysey in about 1922, and this information was passed down to the community through her daughter Nhunni Hunter, who witnessed it being cut out when she was about 8 years old. It is likely that Granny Moysey and her family were camping nearby when she cut the canoe out and this area is still today a popular
fishing spot with descendants of Granny. It is also likely that her older sons helped cut the canoe out under her instruction. Granny handed down the knowledge of how to cut canoes out, and the last canoe cut out around Wilcannia was cut out by her grandson Uncle Ray Hunter in around 1970 at Wowsers Bend.

This tree was first recorded and put on AHIMS in 1984 by Badger Bates, and last year we had a conservator come from Melbourne look at it and provide some guidelines as to how to look after it (Samantha Hamilton 2018). The tree is healthy now, but its long-term health is endangered by lack of water due to over-allocation of Barwon-Darling water upstream, and poor water quality, particularly the excess salt in the water that has been coming down the river in recent times. It could also be affected by too much water if the proposed new weir is built downstream of the tree and the tree gets too much water for too long.

**Badger Bates talking about the canoe tree in 2009**

This one here, Granny cut a canoe tree out here, and there's another one on that side of the river down around Nine Trees. Old Aunty Nhunni Hunter, Poor Old Billy Kennedy, Norma Dutton and Footer, and Deidre Clark came here one day, and I recorded this tree in 1983 when I first started with National Parks. We stopped at this tree and Aunty Nhunni said “Badger. Old Mumma cut this tree”, Old Granny Moysey, that’s her Mumma, cut this tree. Cut it to cut that canoe out there see, and then they rode this canoe right down to Pooncarie, and Granny and them had a house boat, and when they got to Pooncarie, this one was done then when they got down there, and then they cut another one and they brought it back, a big long one. They had a canoe, and a house boat, a little house boat. And they used to carry all the gear in the house boat. And then you know the river’d go three miles in and come back to a bend and it’s a mile across, and the kids’d walk with their dogs hunting, take goats along, they had pet goats and that. They’d cut across from bend to bend, and they’d go hunting, kangaroo dogs and 22’s they had. Aunty Nhunni remembered, she was born in 1914, so when they went down to Pooncarie round about the 1920’s. Yeah, it would have been about that time because Mum was born at Cuthero Station not far from Pooncarie. So it adds in Aunty Nhunni was only young, she mightn’t of been 8. But they used to go with the dogs and old Granny and them used to be in the boat, and they’d tow the canoe behind, and some kids if they got tired they rode the canoe along. But they’d cut from here, and see straight across there, now this bend go around here for about 5 kilometres, but if you cut straight across there, you’d go about two mile around, but if you walk straight across there and the bends there, and if you went back over this way towards the south east, in there that’s the Five Mile Bend, but you got to go right around the river, and its about 25 kilometres right around the river from this spot. But like here when you come down the river and walk straight across here about 1000 metres, you hit the river, that’s how they used to do it. Aunty Nhunni remembered this, and she did bring me to this tree in back in 1983 (from Bates & Martin 2010).

Just downstream from this canoe there is a very old canoe tree (also recorded on AHIMS by badger in 1984) that has been dead for a long time. It is interesting to be able to compare these two trees, the oldest one may have been cut out before the town of Wilcannia existed.
5.2 Union Bend Ngatji Waterhole

The tip of Union Bend near the bore is an important story site and community place. The large deep waterhole at the tip of the bend is a Ngatji or rainbow serpent waterhole and is associated with a story that links it with Ngatji waterholes further upstream. This waterhole is used by the community for fishing and swimming and the bank of the waterhole near the bore is used for community picnics. This community use is linked to the fact that it is a Ngatji hole, i.e. deep waterhole that never goes dry, or at least never went dry in living memory until the recent lack of water in the Barka, or Darling river. The fact that the bore was placed near here is not a surprise to older members of the community, but a logical part of the Ngatji story.

5.3 The Brown Family Camp

Nanna Ngearie Cattermole talking about the Brown family camp 1 May 2018 and mussels 20 sept 2018

Nanna Ngearie took us to the Brown Family camp near Union Bend where they lived after they moved from Granny Kate Bugmy’s camp on the east side of the river. She pointed out an old button some pieces old plate and some old mussel shells scattered on the ground. She said:

There’s some mussel shell, they’d make a fire and put them in there in the shell, put them in the ashes … otherwise you can just open them up and put em in the billy and cook em up and eat em.

We get them down in the river, the mussels are down in the river there, when they fishing they get them in shrimp tins and that. They’d get em all and bring them up home and cook them in the ashes and that. Everyone they’d get em when they went down fishing, they’d bring them up home and cook them up in the ashes there. Open them up then and take the centre out, the meat, that’s why you get a lot of shells lying around.

I never tasted them cooked in the ashes but I suppose they taste OK, more like a fish. The old people used to eat them like that, yeah, they used to get them when they go fishing, if couldn’t get fish well they’d get the mussels, they’d bring them home and cook them up in the ashes.
Or boil them up, or make curry with them too, they were nice. They'd open them up and put em all in a big pot then and make a stew then, or curry or something, that was alright. The one in the middle of the shell, all of that, cook it all up, make a stew with it or curry out of it,

We used to get lots of them at that time yeah. We used to live on them, we'd go fishing and if didn’t get any fish well they'd take the mussels home with them there

They used to use them for bait, for fishing, to catch perch and yellow belly and the cods, yeah. Its what they used to use that for fishing and that if they couldn’t get any shrimps or anything they’d use the insides then and put them on their line

Don’t see many around now they all gone!! They gone now. People used to like them in the river days.

You get them on the river there on the other side of the bridge down there, down the bend there, right down along the river, there’s a sandy bank there you know, that's where you get the mussels in the sand there. When they fishing they get em and take home then and put em in the ashes and cook em up. That’s why you find a lot of shells along the river

We used the big ones, yeah, there’d be a bit of meat in them! They used to get the big ones and some of the little ones and that too, they used to cook them up, in the ashes cook them up and have a feed. They used to say “you want to try em?”

Don’t see em today though, they all gone now!!! Don’t see anything like that in the river now, and the fish, you get the yabbies too, used to get the yabbies and cook them up, have a good feed of them, take em home and boil em up. They was alright, they were good.

Oh donkey's years now since I had a good feed of yabbies! Been that long yeah, no-one seem to bother about em now. They got a couple along there near the Mission there, they put their nets in there and got some big yabbies, some big ones, they were good, they cooked em up then and taken them home to eat em… now there’s no water running over the old weir now, she’s stopped now

We used to eat the shrimps if we couldn’t get the yabbies yeah, in them days we used to eat anything, yeah they are alright too. You used to get some big shrimps, yeah, you’d get all the big ones and cook em up too, they were nice too, they used to say when we was kids “you want to come and try these here out?” They were alright. You don’t see much of that now, you know yabbies and that.

Nothing there now the old river’s gone. Very dry. Nothing coming down at all now. Nothing at all. Want the big rains to come back, one day we might get it.

5.4 Cemetery Bend Mound

This traditional camping place at the downstream end of Union Bend near the cemetery was recorded by this survey in 2018 and put on AHIMS. Mounds like this are more common on the riverine plain around Hay, Balranald and on the Murray River near Swan Hill. They are not common on the Darling River. The area consists of a low mound of ashy soil with charcoal, heat retainer, mussel shell, and stone artefacts, and results from lots of cooking in ovens in the one spot.

5.5 Union Bend Traditional Camping Place

This consists of a low sandy rise on the northern side of Union Bend that has been used for thousands of years for camping on as also as a burial place. A part of it has been recorded and is on AHIMS, but the area is large and has a wide variety of artefacts, ovens, midden, burials and possibly a cremation noted in 2003 (Martin 2003).
6. THE WILCANNIA RESERVE HOUSING KNOWN AS THE “MISSION”

6.1 Living on The Mission : Stevey Harris talking about growing up on the Mission.

Well Mum and Dad was there, they got married on Menindee Mission, and that’s where they had most of their children, nine, seven or nine of them, and after all that finished they moved back to Wilcannia, and that must have been in the 50’s, 40’s, 50’s, and then they had another five children! Five of us where born here then.

I think they lived right down near Yoeval, past Yoeval that way near a creek, it was over that side [east side of river]. Maybe the houses was built in the 50’s, the Mission ones, there was 14 of them, and I think we was the first ones to get one.

See what I can remember with the Mission, there was Briars, there was Jones’s, and there was Johnsons, or O’Donnells, and then there was Mum, and then Mrs Martin, and old Dougal and Peter used to live there, and right on the end used to be Mrs Johnson, Davo Johnson’s mother, Liza. And then across the other side of the road, on the other seven, there was the Hunts used to live there, then there was Parkers, then there was Youngs, then there was Bates’s, then there was Mitchells, then Old Granny Quayle, and Cousin Amy Quayle. In those days, it was switched around a lot with the houses, I remember a lot of people that used to live in the Mission, even old Jimalo and Alice, Tibby Briar, and the Mitchell mob, and O’Donnell mob, like Aunty Florrie. But the main ones that stayed in their houses was Mrs Jones, Mum, Mrs Martin, and Old Edie Bates, and Cousin Amy. They was the main ones.

Oh it was great, it was fun living on the mission because in those days a lot of the river that did live along the river bank it was our play area. We never used to go to town, we used to go and help people along the river, like go cart them water or do something, no-one ever worried about thieving. It was really good, the only things that we pinched was fruit, because we didn’t have fruit trees. On the Mission the only one that had fruit trees was old Elsie Jones, and she had a fence around the house. But the trees they had growing around the back, we used to wait until it got a bit late and we’d go around and we’d climb up a tree and then …cause they was the only ones that had fruit. All I can remember in our old back yard was an old fig tree, that’s all we had, just a fig tree.

Old Rogers had a cow yard down near Aunty Gerties, and old Uncle Jimmy Clark he was the main man, Jimmy Clark used to be the old milker for him. He used to bring us milk up every
morning and drop it off at Mum’s, little churn thing. So we used to have fresh milk before we walked to school. We used to hide money that was our old father’s tobacco tin.

But then in those days old Pop Anderson had the biggest orchard across from the hospital there, growing a lot of fruit trees, but us young fellas wasn’t allowed up there. We called him Pop Anderson, so he had the biggest orchard, you know where the big tank is, and the golf course, the big tree there, the big tank, all that area. It was a lovely big orchard, I’ll tell you what, he had everything, and all he had was just and old hut. And he used to supply, this house where Chris Elliot’s living in, used to be a shop years ago, and an old Mr Anderson used to own that, but I don’t think they were related. And that old man supplied that shop with fruit and veges.

We used to come down to the riverbank and play with those kids cause they was our relations. We helped them out, especially like on pay day for em, we used to look for a picture price, cause pictures was Saturday night and Wednesday night, they was the only two nights. But we wasn’t allowed to go on Wednesday night because of school. Saturday night was the best time to go. And I can remember, like, its was a bit like today, it got crowded, but in a much better way, cause like Mum had mostly all boys right, nine, and who’d she get there for the weekend, all the boys, like she had Norman O’Donnell, she had Dean Kennedy, she had Munhi Kennedy, she had Paully Bates, she had … they’d all come there and you know we didn’t mind. Or Mum didn’t mind, so you know it was really good.

To go fishing well we had to earn it, in a way, cause they wouldn’t let us go on our own. We used to do a little bit of work around the house, and then Mum’d say “Oh well, so we’d grab our bag and shrimp buckets and away we’d go, we used to go down that way over the sandhill. And it was the same with old Elsie Jones, we had to earn it, we had to go and help clean the church out, you know the church that’s still standing. Darling old girl, she used to say like this here, righto, you, you you, I need you to come up and help me with the church. Clean it out see. So we’d go up there and we’d be wiping stuff down and cleaning it down, and she’d say “now sit down and youse listen” she said “you done a good job now and you’ll hear God moving things around”. And we were believing her you know, and we’d sit there, must have been the pigeons in the roof and you can hear little noises, it started to get a little bit creepy, “that’s God moving stuff around now”. So we’d come back, she’d pick some oranges, some limes, and some oranges, and put em a bag, pack our stuff up and we used to head down that way, there’s a bit of a sandy bank down there. And things like that there, we done things to go anywhere, because we couldn’t just jump up and go with this one, go with that one. It was fun, it really was fun. Everyone helped everyone out, you know, You could hear old Dorri at night time, old girl used to be too late on the Mission, and when the sun was going down “Maxine, Edna” she’d be on the flat singing out, they’d come running

Well, it was alright living up there in the Mission houses, we didn’t live – we wasn’t well off either, ourselves, because sometimes we had to use lamps, sometimes we used to use candles too. You know that there, we used to have water bags, we used to keep cool by watering the ground down too. We didn’t have no coolers and teles and things like that there. Old wireless done us, if you wanted to listen to anything on the wireless that’s all you had. Nothing else.

No, rent wasn’t a problem, not really. Because see most of these people that lived on the bank, when the river was low anyway they use to use the Mission houses to take 44 drums up there and fill em up, on trailers, I remember old Ray and Maureen over here they used to come up to Mum’s all the time and they’d fill their drums up there and it used to last em a few weeks I suppose. You know they had to do things, they couldn’t just sit there and say can you go up there and fill that drum up for me or anything like, they jumped in the car and put them drums in the ere and went up and done it themselves you know. And then the older ones, like we used to come down and help em out, cart water and go and fill a bucket up for them you know cause the older people couldn’t get down the bank and things like that there.
It was very good to help one another out anyway, you something to do. Used to be fun for us cause we’d jump in the river too at the meantime

Because everyone knew everyone else and everyone sort of helped one another out. You if you were short a bit of flour or bit of tea you’d just go over to aunties and get it and they’d send you a little cup full over and yeah always like that. Always shared, if you didn’t have it they had it for you if you sent to the house. And that’s the way we lived. And I find like today it does happen with a lot of younger people today, like if you’ve got any wild meat and things they ask you. Now its very hard to get wild meat now, specially with all this law changed, you know you got to have gun license and not like before, just jump in an old car with your rifle and away you’d go no worries you know.

I think a lot of the men had work, well station work was mostly the main thing for a lot of the younger blokes, and a lot of the women just mostly stayed home, like that was after, but what about before my time like when they down the stations, the old girls. But the young ones after that like when they come back to here, they sort of never done much, might of done a bit of cleaning around a shop or something like that.

There’s too many people things went through them houses. Like Aunty Tibby lived there, Jimlo lived there, old Lenny and Jessie, they kicked off in that house over where Junee is, and then they ended up in this house here, and then they ended up in that house there with old Snowy. The real original ones that was there, was the Martin’s house, the Harris’s house, the Jones’s house, and the Quayles. They are the real McCoy ones that are still in the houses.

7. THE MALLEE

7. 1 The Mallee Plant Traditional Resource Area

The section of mallee vegetation on the north-west edge of town does not refer to the section of town called The Mallee, although of this part of town was built on the edges of the mallee (hence the name) . It is recommended that strategies be put in place to protect the mallee vegetation because it contains significant food, medicine and artefact making plants. Some of the significant plants found in the mallee are mukirli (wild orange), quandong, leopardwood, whitewood, mallee. It also contains a rare plant of significance, a Blue Mukirli, which is a rare variety of Mukirli (wild orange) that has larger and nicer fruit and few if any prickles, and a blue hue to the fruit and leaves.

7.2 The Mallee Camping Areas

Cyril Hunter talking about moving to the Mallee during Floods and People Moving to Wilcannia from the West

When everyone moved from down this way [on the river], Mum and them went back up in the Mallee, cause their brother didn’t move, the oldest Fella Arthur Clark, he built his house in the Mallee and he did not move, him and his family. These mob did move up there. The Barlows came along after, the Barlows mainly lived up in the Mallee. When the Barlows come brother Bobbi must of hooked onto Dori. They moved in from where ever they come from, from the stations, see there was a lot of droving them days. Yeah Bob Wilson that’s how come he came to be in Wilcannia, driving cattle, and this is how far he got, they trucked the cattle off on bloody steamers or what-ever and then he stayed, he fell in love with Cousin Rita. Just same as these Barlow mob come along, and none of them moved, they died here see. Same as old Peter and Dougal McFarlane, they come along and they settled in this town, from droving trips, and they was Dori’s mob, two old fellas.
A number of significant places were visited during this survey, some recorded before (see Database), and others not recorded before. The places visited during the survey are:

Mukurli Bend, this is place Granny Moysey and her family returned to when they returned from Pooncarie, probably about 1930. It has a cluster of old mukirli trees (wild orange) and some midden material.

Scobes Waterhole is a fishing place and camping place.

Scobes Waterhole Coolamon Tree was also recorded during this survey and placed on AHIMS

Nine Trees is another fishing place and camping place that features in the oral history.

Porcupine Bend is another fishing place

Five Mile Point is another fishing place and is associated with Five Mile Bend Billabong, people got the yabbies from the billabong and brought them to the river to use as bait. The Five Mile Sandhill nearby is a burial site that was recorded in 1976 with William Bates and the Sites of Significance survey team. This was checked during the survey.

The Basin is another fishing place and Ngajti waterhole.

The Island is next to the Basin and is a Thirri story place that was recorded with Auntie Elsie Jones by the Sites of Significance Survey in 1976.

The Strip Fish Traps were recorded and placed on AHIMS in 2010. These have always been used as fish traps and for fishing, and they continue to be used today for fishing. There is also a fresh water spring in the middle of the rock outcrop.

Main Wall of the Strip Fish Traps
9. RIVER SITES TO THE NORTH OF TOWN

Two significant places to the north of the town and common were visited during this survey, one recorded before (see Database), and the other not recorded before. The places visited during the survey are:

- The Falling Star Site

Murray Butcher showed us this site in the riverbed to the north of Wilcannia. It was first recorded by Aunty Elsie Jones with the Sites of Significance team in 1976, and registered on AHIMS as a traditional story site. Aunty Elsie told the story again for her book “The Story of the Falling Star” (Jones 1989). The place where the falling star hit the ground in the dreamtime can be seen in the rock. This survey has updated the location of the site and will update the AHIMS database accordingly.

- Degoumois Point

This point on a bend in the river has a large number of coolamon or shield trees, a midden with ovens and artefacts, and the riverbed has an unusual outcrop of stone and ochre. There is also one of the Thirri story islands. It has been recorded and will be placed on AHIMS.

10. IMPORTANT PLACES IN TOWN

10.1 The Wilcannia Bridge (Old Bridge)

The old Wilcannia bridge has been used throughout its history to cross from the fringe camp and reserve into town, also a place where people gathered to talk, an area of reduced conflict or truce between the races, and occasionally an area of conflict. Significant to the history of the Wilcannia port and the paddlesteamers, as the bridge had a lifting mechanism to let the paddlesteamers through.
10.2 Knox and Downs

Knox and Downs was a store that boasted it had everything for sale you could want. It was important for everyone in Wilcannia and on the stations all around Wilcannia. It was important for Aboriginal people as well as non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people went shopping there, worked there, made friends there, kids wondered at the flying fox and strange things like giant wheels of cheese, and the adults gathered outside under the verandah to chat, gossip and watch the world go by. Stories from Wilcannia Aboriginal people often start with the phase “I was standing on the corner of Knox and Downs when ....”. It was the focal point of town. In 2002 it burnt down and this has been a sad thing for Wilcannia. A couple of years ago a group was set up to try and get funding to turn Knox and Downs into the Baaka Cultural Centre, which will showcase Barkandji culture, language, dance, music, and also the whole shared history of Wilcannia, the pastoral history the paddle steamers, the Afghan cameleers and the Chinese market gardeners.

10.3 The Weir

Throughout its history Aboriginal people have been making fish traps made in the rocks of the weir, the location of the traps change around to suit the water conditions, mainly used by teenagers and indicative of the continuing cultural practices of Wilcannia people. There is also an ochre site below the weir, on the town side of the river.

10.4 The Rocks

The rocks in the river bed near the Mission fringe camp are used as a crossing place to town, as a playing and swimming area for children, and may have originally also been a fish trap.

10.5 The Cemetery

The Wilcannia Cemetery has great significance to all Aboriginal people living in Wilcannia, and for many Barkandji people and family and kin living elsewhere. This is where family lies at rest, and where people come back to connect with their ancestors, family, kin and friends. It is a place of sorrow but also a place of comfort. Aboriginal people who move away from Wilcannia are often brought back by family to be buried with their ancestors and family.

This is a continuation of an ancient cultural practice of bringing people who died away from their home back to their country to be buried on their land and with their family. In ancient times people were carried back as neatly packed “bundles” to their country, and these types of burials can still be seen around the Wilcannia area today.
11. WILCANNIA RIVER FRINGE CAMP NEAR THE MISSION SCHOOL AND DOWN TO UNION BEND (EAST SIDE OF RIVER MISSION FRINGE CAMP)

The fringe camp on the east side of the river near the Mission school and down to Union bend has been nominated by the Wilcannia LALC to be considered for Aboriginal Place gazettal. As part of this project we collected oral history from members of the community and recorded some canoe trees and coolamons trees, places where people camped along the river, and places with traditional or historic stories. This oral history is very significant because it documents who lived there, but more importantly it documents what was hard about those times (carting water, no electricity, primitive toilets etc,) and what was better about those times than today (no bills, extended families and friendships, freedom and pride). The stories talk about the close family ties and extended kinship groups, it talks about how everyone helped each other, and how every child was looked after. They emphasise a sense of freedom and pride, and the self-reliance and resilience of the people.

Uncle Bob Wilson told lots of stories about living on the river.

Yeah, this the hut Robert made the song about, Old Tin Hut on the Riverbank. And Karin used to say “when you lived in the Tin House on the riverbank” and I’d say “Karin it wasn’t a house it was a bloody hut!”

But night time, that’d be the best part of it you know, after sun-down, and everyone had one of those transistor radios, they were cheap, nearly everyone in the town had them, they were made in Japan see, nearly everyone had one of these transistors, and from sun-down, you could stand on the bridge up there and listen to em. The old bend would come to light, with the smell of johnny cakes cooking on the coals and kangaroo being grilled, and kids playing and these transistor radios going, you know, the whole river used to come to light.

There was none of that saplings or bushes, as I say that thing there wouldn’t last that long, it’d be cut down, and put under a clothes line, to stop the clothes from draggin in the dirt. It was all clear, you could see all the little tents and everything,

The only problem we had here was toilets, I used to dig a big hole you know, and out a rough turn-out there on it, and anyway oh big windy day it was, after the wind settled down I looked up and down at the school fence was this 1000 gallon old water tank, it had all the bottom and that out of it, and the wind must of blew it down the fence, and I said to Rit,
there’s a toilet there, and I went up and I rolled it right back and I put it over there, you can see it when I show you this photo, you can see the old toilet, over there I had it, and I got the tin and I cut a door out of it, and I put a nice seat on there you know, made it nice and comfortable, and you can see it in the photo.

Above: Bob Wilson and family where the Wilson’s hut was

I had a swing over there for the boys – big tree there see, swings on the tree there for the kids you know and I used to watch them when big mobs used to come down there, seemed to be the main place, those two boys of mine always had a big mob of kids here and they had swings all over there. I was sitting here one morning, I’d had breakfast see, and I had a big tyre on one of these swings see, and Robert put Geoff in that tyre and they screwed it round and round and round and let it go and I could hear this bloke ‘ahhhh” and I sat up and this tyre was just settling down and Geoff fell out, he couldn't stand up you know.

The Wilson swing tree
That tree was our Christmas spot. We had three Christmas's there. I'll tell you who was always with us Christmas time, one of the Buggamys, the oldest fella, he was always down had Christmas with us, we took 3 Christmas dinners there, and a couple up the other side of the bridge. But that was always a good fishing spot there.

I’ll show you the dunny tree, this hollow tree that they used as a dunny. Put a bag up at the front and a pan inside!

Rob and Geoff were playing all the time in the trees you know, anyway he came back, Geoff, and he was sitting down and Rit said “where’s Robert?” “oh he’s dead over there” oh we were frightened too “where, where?” “over here” and when we went over Robert was laying under the tree, fell off a big limb and knocked himself out!

Funny things used to happen here you know, these trees down here, the cops’d make a raid, and you’d see these blackfellas going everywhere see, up trees and that, and you’d see these coppers with a light say “come on get down out of there”

Down the river here, a lot of them old gum trees after floods the water used to get right under em aye, and eventually they’d fall, and all these trees down there after these heavy floods, and they were all washed out underneath see, anyway the cops made a raid on em, and they’d go searching under these trees with the lights see. And Dougy Young, he was right up in this, right up as far as he could get in this tree see, and this dog come along sniffing, must of spotted him up there see, [growls], “come on Dougy out of there!”
Nanna Maureen and Aunty Dulcie O'Donnell at the Mission Fringe Camp, Maureen’s Old House down-stream from the bridge and near Mission School

Nanna Maureen pointed out where their house was downstream from the Wilcannia bridge and found “part of our old tilley lights, or carbide lights, we used to have a lot of different lights around. We didn’t have power on. This is where we was, and down further was old Patsy Wilson, Patsy Hunter, and she used to get up every morning and sing real loud and it was so nice to hear her every morning, it’d just ring thru the bushes here. We used to have a wonderful time. We all used to be good friends, I seen all them kids reared up, you know, with my own kids. And Margaret Quayle lived somewhere down there too, my cousin, and she used to come to my place there. She was the most prettiest girl you ever seen you know, long black hair. She married Arthur Gray. I got a photo at home of me and Joany and Norma and all the kids in front of the house. Reggie Whyman and Lorraine Dutton lived on the other side over there in the bushes they wasn’t far from us, around that area. Patsy lived up this way and Margaret and them must of lived further down”.

Aunty Dulcie remembered “Granny Moysey used to live under the bough shed with us, we had a big bough shed and she used to live – stay under there, old Granny Moysey”.

Nanna Maureen agreed “she stayed with us here and she stayed with us over on the sandhill, she use to come and stay with us. She used to take it in turns going around people’s places, she used to go to Nanna Maggie’s, Nanna Nhunni and old Nanna Florrie’s, she used to do her rounds, stay with everyone, we’d all look after her.

I asked her to show me the real emu dance and she did …its nothing like they do today, her and the old daughters done it for me … Auntie Nhunni and Nanna Maggie, Nanna Ada, there were three or four of them and they used to come and sit with us in the night, and I said how do you do that dance and I was shocked cause its nothing like what you see today when you see people do it. I didn’t tell people because I didn’t feel I had the right to it, to me it was something sacred. She always used to live with us, and old Nanna Florrie I used to go and sleep with her sometimes. My old man used to go shearing and I used to lay down and talk to them and that.

Here we built a 3 room house, and we had two of them DMR huts, one each side with a verandah over the top of them. And the kids used to sleep in one and me and the old man would sleep in one, Joanne always wanted to sleep with us cause she’s be always out with her father. So we had them 2 DMR huts and 2 bedroom hut and a kitchen with an open fire place and we cooked on that.”

Aunty Dulcie said “I remember I had a single room where I had to push the tin out and stand the pole up to open the window, and I had one big hospital bed, them old hospital beds, in my room, and after that I moved into one of the huts, and Mum and Dad had the other hut on that side for their bedroom.

Nanna Maureen added “I had to keep my kids close, when my husband died we all slept on the same big bed for years and years, and today I still sleep on the edge of the bed, and I’ve got a big double bed at home, but I still sleep right on the edge, cause that’s where I’ve always been used to that. Cause after he died I kept the kids very close to me.
We had an old green kerosene fridge, kerosene lights and kerosene iron! Everything we had had to be kerosene, or shellite for the iron, shellite irons, or flat irons. I had an old washing machine you had to work by hand, pump it up and down like that, it only had one bar and you put the clothes in and had to stand there by hand and do this all day. I got sick of that so I went back to just doing it by hand. Most of our washing was done on the riverbank or we carted the water. I carted me own wood and water, I had to learn how to lift 44 gallon drums, lift water off the back of a trailer and lift them on, I done all that on my own after I lost my husband, even when he was alive cause he used to go shearing and that, so I had to run the household and I had to cart all me own wood and water, and life was very busy for me. I can’t understand why today people get bored, and they got electricity and all sorts of electric things and you don’t have to do half the things what I done, but I done it gladly to rear my family up, part of love for me to do them things for my family, to rear my kids up.

Aunty Dulcie described the nice big bough shed they had here, and a chook yard, they had ducks and chooks.

Nanna Maureen agreed “I always like my animals and my fowls and ducks and things, and we had a pig yard where we kept the pigs, they had babies and they wouldn’t move out of the house they used to play up every night to come into the house. Always had animals.

I did the cooking on an open fire, never had a stove. Camp ovens for dampers and stews and that, they were really nice, different altogether to what they is now in the flash pots and the flash fireplaces and things. They still like my dampers in the camp oven.

We didn’t have any help from the council, no sanitary service, garbage, running water. We had a long drop for a toilet, just a hole dug and a toilet built on top of it.

We bathed in the river or bath, we had no shower, you had to wash in the bath tub, big round bath tub, or bath your kids in that, and then you use it for washing your clothes in. There was no proper bathtub, no shower, no running water, we still had to cart the water in 44 gallon drums. I learnt how to lift them up and down full. I used to cart about 4 or 5 drums of water on the trailer full and drop them off and stand em up myself. It wasn’t an easy life but I still say it was good. You didn’t get time to get bored you know, survival was the main thing, looking after my kids and surviving, that’s exactly what I done.

But then you get used to them and I don’t think you could do without the power now. But I tell you what the other way of living wasn’t that bad, we were just used to it. It was part of life. You had to do it or go without.

I didn’t really want to move in the Mission anyway, I like my isolated living cause Dad and Mum never lived on a Mission, my husband he didn’t like a Mission, that’s why we were always out in the bushes.

I put me two oldest boys in over at Broken Hill at that boys camp down the north there where, its now a haven for women’s refuge, and I put em there for a week, we took em over, dropped them off and then we went to say goodbye to them before we went home, and they wouldn’t let us say goodbye them or talk to them so we come home and I couldn’t rest and I said no that’s no good for them that place. So next weekend we went and got them and brought them home again. And they were so happy and I was happy because a place where they don’t let you say goodbye to your kids well its not worth having them there. You don’t know what they going to do to them.

They wasn’t used to that see. We was used to our freedom here, at least we had our freedom when we lived in a tin hut. We didn’t have power trouble, we didn’t worry about where the next light money was coming from, the electricity bill, no rent, no television but we didn’t care. People used to sit down and talk to one another.
I can always see Aunty Elsie sitting underneath her fruit trees out the front there of her mission house. Well she had fruit trees there and she a chair out the front of her yard, and that's where she'd have a chair sitting and she'd sit there looking around. We used to go over there a lot, she'd make big dampers for us, she had a wooden stove in them houses and she'd make the big dampers and we'd go around there and sit around all night and talk, me and Monty and Doreen, and Janet until Janet went away nursing. And we all used to go over there and sit around. People used to say "they in another meeting", but it used to be good. That's how I caught my first fish with them, they was all laughing at me cause I had a big cotton line, ropy line, and they was laughing at me, the girls, for using that, and then I caught the biggest cod there with my old rope line, cotton line, and they couldn't get over it. But I used to be with them all the time. They've all been part of my life, I miss them all dearly."

Aunty Dulcie added “Dad used to go out and cut wood and sell it and we'd go emu egg hunting out on properties”.

Nanna Maureen agreed “we'd always do something you know, go and look for wild meat, get our tucker, so just surviving was good for us. We had a good reputation because we worked on a lot of the properties, Jelalie, and up the river, I can't think of that place, we worked up there for a while. They built us a new house there, I only had 3 then I think, 4 might have been, Carol I think was the baby. Everybody knew us, all we had to do was ring up and say look were coming out for the day and they'd have a bit of meat ready for us and we'd go and get our meat kangaroo or emu or whatever. Cause he worked all over the properties as a shearer and all you had to do was ring up and let them know we was coming and people were pretty good to us, cause we did a lot of contract mustering and fencing around

We'd go out we loved camping, they were the best times of our lives and we never used to drink when we was out camping, we'd all be sober, no grog, no alcohol. We'd have the best time of our lives. When we was broke we were better off because there was no drinking. He did work hard, my husband, he was a hard-working man, he always worked. He was a shearer and then he ended up at the council working here, doing what my father used to do, emptying the toilets and things like that.

All those white people over the river I was never worried about them, I was proud of who I was, always was always will be, I don't let white people put me down. When I left school, I was only young, thirteen, I was working on a property up the river, Purnawilla or somewhere, I was out there for about 3 to 6 months, and when I come in they gave me six pounds, and I said no white person will ever do that to me again. And from that day forth I stood up for my rights.

White people don't worry me what they think about us, I only got to prove to myself, to be happy in myself I've got to know myself I was doing the right thing. And my kids was the main things in my life. And I didn't start doing much until they was all able to take care of one another you know. I go to a lot of meetings now which I never used to do cause as I said my kids came first. And they still come first with me.

But it was a good life until we lost my husband. If we didn't lose him I'd probably be still here today. I lost my father and then him and so I moved over [to Broken Hill] to be with my Mum, and we were still in country cause that was my country too. I used to go over every so often in the school holidays and visit my granny over there, and Granny and my old Uncle Jimmy, Mum's only brother, in Broken Hill. I'd often go over there school time, travel on the bus over there.”
Aunty Ngearie Cattermole at Granny Kate Bugmy’s Camp and Coolamon Tree:

My grandmother Granny Kate Bugmy and all of us used to live here. And then the flood came up and we moved out then, we went up the other side of the river then up where the Mallee is.

Here’s some of the old cars that belonged to em. There was an old ute here Scratchy was looking at it and was going to come and get it but someone got it, he had his eye on it he was going to come and get that old ute, when he come back it was gone!

We had tin shacks and tents and that, tin shack with a kitchen and that, and tents and that. Look at the old bottles, and campfires.

Over that way that’s where Aunty Gertie was on the river there. Old Aunty Gertie, on the river bank more or less. We’d walk over the creek there to walk up to work and that to walk up to town or school you know, it was a fair hike, walkin up. I wouldn’t do it now, we’d cross over this creek here and when the river came up then we’d have to walk out this way right around the creek then up to town then, it was long hike then!

That way then where the other lot was, behind the school on the river bank there, right along there, Whymans and all them, and all them that was along there – we had some long walks in them days. That’s right they won’t walk now, we used to do a lot of walking in them days.

Yeah, you used to see a lot of them walking out there to the Talyawalka there and that, there was some camping out along around just out over there, out around the boys hut there you know, come out from the Mission there, you know where Clarky got his hut.

Left : Aunty Ngearie Cattermole at Granny Kate Bugmy’s camp, and below coolamon scar in the tree
Aunty Phyllo Whyman at Aunty Maggie’s Camp 1

Aunty Phyllo Whyman told this story in 2014 about living on the riverbank down from the Mission School with her mother Aunty Maggie, her father Uncle Jimmy Whyman, and some of her brothers Muddy and Rexie, and sisters:

I lived a happy life, although we lived on the river bank, we was happy. We didn’t have to worry about rent, we didn’t have to worry about electricity, We just had our money and we just had to buy food and that, and we was right. We worry now about whether we will have enough money to pay our electricity.

This Coolibah tree in this photo, that was our shady tree, this one here. This is the tree we used to come to sit under, and our hut was just over here to the south, just along here. We used to bring our beds out here in the shade in the evening, cause it was pretty hot, and it was real shady then this tree, more branches and that then. It was really shady and good, but some branches have broken off now.

Our hut had a bedroom and a veranda and a kitchen. A fireplace built on it for the winter. In the summer we’d cook outside. We used to like a veranda, you’d build on it, and you know, tin and that. We also had a bough shed built out. When the river was low we’d walk across to the tip and get the tin and bring it back, anything, we used to bring back.

Brother Jimlo had his house was over there, and Alice, yeah, it was near that tree, just on the other side of that tree. William and Margy Annes’ hut was this at this tree here, the family all lived in a group.

Before all this, the first start off, we was living in the Mission, and then we come here to the riverbank. At the Mission, there’s not much I can remember about that cause I was too young, but they took Mooey, Adrian and Blue Eye away from us there. It was heartbreaking.

Sort of like when Mum had Robbo Young and them here, I remember we was down here livin on the river, and then the welfare come looking for Robbo Young, and he run down the bank and he was dodging em along the river bank and they had to chase him up and down the riverbank. And we just all stood there crying, you know. They took him, took him and his brothers away.

At Boblo’s Hole, on the river near our old hut, we always used to go fishing, good fishing spot right along there. We call it Boblo’s Hole. Boblo and Sister Girl used to live down here in caravan here. We still always come here fishing too you know. That tree then –that’s where my brother Les went down there, for a swim. He dived in and took a fit and never came up, my younger brother, I was the youngest and he was next to me. That was on Christmas Day, so that was one Christmas that we didn’t have. They was diving around, yeah, then they had boats up and down the river then, old Bogeye Barraclough found him way down, caught up in a limb that fell into the river. A while ago I came down with the school, with all the little tiny ones from the Mission school. We bought em down here and had a picnic and I was telling em all about it you know and that. It was good. I said “don’t go to the river without a grown-up with you”. I said “my brother went in there swimming, and he was a man and he never come up, he got drowned”. So I said “don’t ever go to the river by yourself”.

Over there where Aunty Nhunni used to stay, the boys used to go out and drive the wild goats and that back, and they’d all get there then, Cousin Ray and Percy and Jimlo and Brother Les, Rexie, and they’d milk the wild goats, you know. Then, you know, you put the milk on and boil it up, it was nice.

Well, poor Patsy Wilson used to live in the tin hut straight down from the school there, Uncle Bob and Aunty Rita Wilson used to live there before they got the house in town. Patsy had Ashley there. She was in labour, Mum and them went down and delivered him, she learnt from Granny Moysey how to deliver babies. There are suckers there now, saplings.
Dori and Bobby Hunter and that lived at that tree over there. That’s how come Bobby, every
time we come home from school, he’d say “come on now, you want to learn the mouth organ
you know”, he learnt me and Colin how to play mouth organ. They used to be happy to have
a dance just with the guitar and the mouth organ. And that one string banjo he used to play,
it was out of a gallon tin. It was good. If Mum and Dad wanted smokes I’d say “yeah I’ll go”,
I’d go along and I’d pick up a mate, every
house I’d go along and end up six or
seven of us’d be in town, getting the
smokes, and when we come back they’d
all drop off and I’d be the last one then
getting home. So I wasn’t frightened to
walk anywhere cause I had all my friends.
We went from here, from this place here,
that’s when we went to Dareton fruit
picking, and when we come back that was
in 74, that’s when everybody moved up to
the Mallee, and when we come back they
was all in Army tents, so we pulled in up
there, in that big 74 flood. I had Thomas
down Mildura, and he was my baby when
we come back, and yeah we never moved
from there, from the Mallee then.
I told all them kids from the Mission
School, “we didn’t have luxury things but
we was happy”. We didn’t get sick much,
they used emu bush and that, Owen still
gets it and bottles it for us.
It was really great you know and we’d go
up to the claypan up here and have a big
game of rounders, sport. The Mission
Mob would play the Bend Mob and then
sometimes the Mission or the Bend Mob’d
play the Mallee Mob. Yeah it was fun, it
was good. Like I told them teachers “well we
didn’t have luxury but our luxury was being
happy and you know living on the river bank”. I said to the teachers “now we got worries
cause of our electricity bill, our rent just comin straight out of our pension, electricity bill gets
up high at times, and you know”. They said “how did you get light?” “ If we didn’t have a
lamp, I said , “our Mum used to make our own fat lamp”. Our Mum’d make them. We used to
have our light, she didn’t let us be in the dark. All the Mum’s used to do that.

Cyril Hunter Talking About Aunty Nhunni’s First House on the River
We used to live just here, I was about 10 then I reckon, nine or ten, like Mum and all her
family. We had a pad straight thru there, we’d run straight thru there. We didn’t worry about
the hike, we was sent to school and that was it, we didn’t care how far, as long as we was at
school. This is it where all the tinned meat [tins] are. Probably be old Percy’s or Bobby’s
[tins] - wouldn’t of been Bobby’s cause Bobby used to live that way. Just somewhere here
was where we used to live –round this area here.
We had the windlass down there on the river, we made a windlass, for the water. I was with
Johnny Bates. He swum in the river with a steel peg, he swum under the water and he
hammered it in to the bank. Tied the wire, threw it up, and we had a little thing running down
onto it. We used to send a bucket down, pull it up. We had 44 gallon drums there, we’d fill them up and get ashes, put it on the top, settle it all down

This first house was like, it had a big kitchen. Granny did not stay here with us when we was here, I think Granny was with ah – she wouldn’t go to no-one else specially Aunty Florrie, she never used to go with her, it was Mum or Aunty Liza, not Aunty Liza, Aunty Maggie. They were only the two that she’d go to. So I’d say she was with Aunty Maggie up there across that creek, at that time. They were little roamin things, they roamed around!

We had to pull the houses down, stack all the tins, they used to move em with horse and carts, if they didn’t have a T model ford or whatever, that would have been unregistered, no registrations in them days, well they would cart them up there in them cars. We used to sneak over with a T model Ford but we had it on the other side, where we used to stay too, live, up towards the White Cliff road. These are the sort of thing how they used to get around, with that horse and cart belonged to old Dougal. Cartin’ there things up and down. They’d give him a couple of dollars for it you know. He used to go with his horse and cart and cart water, 44 gallon drums of water. And that’s where they’d get their water, at old Gordo’s [Evans] in them days. There was an old whitefella, I don’t know what this name was, he used to let us go and fill those drums up. Where Gordo is there now. There was a shed behind it, old Munhi’s old father use to live there. We used to push a lot of 44 gallon drums home. Billy Kennedy and them used to live there. We used to push our water straight across, 44 gallon drums, and they was nothing to us boys.

This house had one room, two room was out this side, another room was at the back. Still and all it still had no verandah or nothing on it. We’d walk out the back way to go down to the river. Just an ordinary board and tin for the doors. Windows, we had windows oh yeh, windows was there, propped up, bit of board onto a tin. You know that’s the way we lived. No gauze or nothin, flies didn’t worry us. The breeze went straight through – cool breeze.

For the mosquitos we used to make smoke, we used to go with an old tin and get the cow dung. Mainly the cows used to go along the river so we’d go along the river and get the dung and bring back. That was our smoke. Darling old souls. Lived it hard you know but we survived, I’m 71 and still kickin around.

They went and got their groceries and away they went straight home to the camp. Hello what this is -that’d be a lighter or what? There was no lighters them days, only matches. Yeah, it look like one of them [old flint one]. Quite a lot of old time bully beef and all that... that’s an old plate yeah- she might of smashed the plate on Dad’s head!!! He was a nanya man though, Mum told him, left him and all this, and he kept following the family around. He was stubborn. He was a good old man and he didn’t take no for an answer

Yeah, he burnt them trees at the bridge there, the police went and asked him why did you burn that fire Bert? Well he said, look he said, would you like your kid to get bit by a snake? He never seen a snake there at all, he had these bees up in the tree, and he was after the honey. He burnt the tree but he got the honey alright, he never got the snake but he told the police that a snake went in the hole.
People had to move from the river because of the floodwaters. See that car track on the river there, that's how much water was in the river years ago, never went down, but the government started messing with it.

**Badger and Cyril at the windlass place near aunty Nhunni’s first house**

I think it [scar] was on that side of the tree, it must of grown over, a dish cut out. I don’t know who cut it out, some old people she [Granny Moysey] said. She showed us when we was small it, used to be but it grew over.

*Left : Badger Bates at the Coolamon tree Granny showed him*

Cyril showed us the windlass and pig pen, there is a steel post a the pig pen.

*Windlass see. We had it, this where we used to live down over there*

Badger added : they used to live over there [Nhunnis camp] and they had the pig pen over here cause the windlass was here and they used to water it [the pigs], and Auntie Ada was back over there. And that’s when me and Granny must of come back from Bourke and when we was there with them that’s when Cousin Isobel come back that time from Darwin, that’s where we was over there, I showed you before [Ada’s camp]. But this where the pig pen was here.

**Cyril Hunter talking about Aunty Nhunni’s second house on the River:**

This house it had 3 rooms in it. The kitchen part was up here, a room was on this side, and two rooms on this side. Yeah, kitchen was up this way, and rooms, 3 rooms, 2 was there and one that way. And old Granma she used to live, had her bed, in the kitchen. It had an open fireplace.

There was no veranda or nothing, no bough shed, we just used the tree for the shade. The old people loved the sun. Same as today, I love the sun, I’ll sit there, I don’t care how hot it is.

I was pretty young then, I wasn’t allowed to have a woman, was searching around. I didn’t sort of hang around in town here. I got out of it and went. Went to Bourke and all that looking around. Travelling just to meet me own people. I came back and I ran into Aggie Johnson and we had a house down over there. A big box tree straight around here, that road where it go, a big gum tree rather, like this, that’s where me and old Aggie used to live there.

*Get the water from the river in buckets, we walked down here, we had a pad right down there. But before we ever moved to here, we moved from way down there near Yoeval. We used to live way there, that’s when I was going to school then. We used to run to school from there, going along lighting fires in the morning when it was cold.*
Yeah, right along there, Bother Bobby used to live over there. Then Aunty Maggie she moved down further, straight up that open ground, see that box tree there that’s where Gladys Whyman, Daughter, her eldest daughter, that’s where she used to live, with old Cyril Hartnett, remember them? Cyril boy he was the baby then. And then you down a bit where Aunty Gerty used to live.

Left : Cyril at Aunty Nhunni’s second hut

Cyril Hunter talking about Aunty

Nhunni’s third house- formerly Auntie Florrie’s House at the Athol Pines:

And back this way Aunty Florrie used to live. Aunty Florrie when she moved she moved up into the town area and never come back, Mum moved into that house. We had our herd of goats there then, at the Athol pines. She moved to the Mallee, Aunty Florrie, and she gave that to her sister see. She never pulled it down, she didn’t want it pulled down, Aunty Florrie.

Same as Aunty Gertie. That was her pride and joy yeah. Account of Aunty Gertie’s husband, he got killed out there, out on the big flat out there driving drunk and that in an old car, one of them old T-models, used to be a big stump out there, that’s how he got killed, he rolled it. That’s why she wouldn’t move from down there. She moved alright but then Cousin Les, he moved in there, Les Lawson, him and old Cousin Gladys, they took over see, the daughter.

Cyril Hunter and Stevey Harris talking about Uncle Jimmy Clarks Camp and Car:

Aunty Bella and uncle Jimmy Clark lived here. His old car is just down here near this creek. What he used to go up to town, up to the Mission and park the car there, an walk an do the shoppin. They had ways to change the tyres, they had special spanners for them rims. We used to run along from the mission, I don’t know if it this one, no Uncle Bob Jones, we used to run along because it had the back on it, it had the back, we used to run along and jump on that. Brucey and all when we was
young. Johnny Quayle, he slipped off and hit his nose and busted his nose up, that's how his nose was crooked, yeah broke his nose. Well that’s how fast the car was going, they were flat to the board, just going on putt putt putt. Good fun them days

**Cyril Hunter talking about Aunty Ada’s house on the river:**

Bob Wilson, his missus was born down there, other side of that big creek, Cousin Rita. At Aunty Ada’s camp, there’s a big box tree, and there’s a wire in on that tree where they used to hang their clothes, they made a clothes line, that’s where she was born.

Old Aunty Ada and Uncle Ted Brody they used to live down there further to, and then Aunty Liza and Uncle Frank, they used to live not far from where we was living when we was going to school.

Cousin Rita’s mother, Aunty Ada, wire there see, that was a clothes line … bit of old bed… cyclone bed they used to call em, old people was mad on em, … old T model see …bit of a thing off a stove or what. Some of them used to have stove in their kitchen and all you know. But a lot of old girls loved the open fire

That’s where we brought Virgean and old Bob here

**Cyril Hunter talking about Johnny Bates Canoe Tree 1 :**

Johnny [Bates] used to live with us see, where we went he was with us. He used to be our climber on any tree for bird’s eggs and all, nest, he used to get the white cocky and all for us. He was the fellow who got this crane, Johnny, he climbed up the tree, cut this canoe out with the tommy hawk, put the rope around it, and he slipped down with it, with the rope, bark and everything was coming down with him, and Ray and us we were waiting and we grabbed the end of it to ease the bit of the weight, and we all got into it then and it fell down properly. We had these steel pegs, wire over them, turned the boat, so we can dry the inside, fire underneath, beautiful. When it was died out ready to use, before that, old Bill Rodgers cattle came and knocked it off and broke it. Oh the Old girl then, she went looking for Rodgers, she couldn’t find, I’ll kill one of your cattle she said, I’ll cut him right up and I’ll give you a piece of your own meat! Ohhh poor old girl. That tree fell down there, you can still see the scar on it. They were the days. But I was getting sick of them moving up and down, pulling houses down.

He used to across with the motor car bonnet, Old Johnny, he used to get them off the old motor cars and paddle across to the other side to get wood and come back with the wood and
all there. Even with a tin, a sheet of tin off a house, he’d make a little boat out of that and put
the wood in the back, he’d tow one behind him with the wood, he’d do all those sorts of
things, Johnny, height didn’t worry him, he’d just straight up – like a goanna. He was like
that, always climbing, jump limb to limb, now I can’t even jump on a ladder without I start
shaking.

**Badger Bates talking about Johnny Bates Canoe Tree 2:**

Johnny and them, same crew as the one down
there, they cut this one and I think they had a
 canoe spree. Johnny Bates, Percy Hunter, Ray
[Hunter] cut it out.

Johnny he was the main climber. They lifted this
one too and the bullocks did the same thing.

And somewhere, I can’t find it, I think we got it
across from Jim Sammons, there’s a big canoe
cut out of it, Bobby Hunter, Ronnie O’Donnell,
and I think might have been Cely Whyman, and
Percy might have been there, there’s a big one
across, one day I’ll take you and show you. And
Evelyn always say it was near the hospital, I
looked around the hospital, its the first big one,
the big one across from Jim’s, I reckon that was
it.(Johnny was Badger’s brother)

**Cyril Hunter and Badger Bates at Lynette’s Camp down near Union Bend:**

Cyril said Aunty Weiniss and them, and Jim
Lynette, and Ginger lived here, their mob.

Badger agreed: Ginger, that’s the kid, Colonel,
and Aunty Weiness, I don’t know what Aunty
Weiness name was, Doreen O’Neill and them, see

Badger pointed out large root anvil at base of tree
with marks from cutting out wooden artefacts. He
said: boomerangs, cutting boomerangs, look, see
the old marks, like Granny Moyseys [camp],
boomerang cutting. All around here look, they
used to be mad on cutting boomerangs,
boomerangs and nulla nullas, that’s it, no, its this
good this, we’ll bring that Harold down, you know.

Badger: here’s and old car spring, it broke, all the
wire tied to it and they strengthen it up with that
piece there see, a spanner. Yeah an old spanner,
they strengthen it up see, see this not off a motor car
this off a cart! Yeah that’s a cart spring there see it.
Yep this where they was, look old stove here, yep
bit of old stove. This off an old cart, this is it, that’s
good, thanks for that Cyril! Here’s the old Cobb and Co twitch off the old hut see, another one over there see. Yep right here this is where they was. Bit of old boot see.

Cyril: a dish look, bottom of the tub here, that’s the bottom, and a bit more off a cart, oh they were good them carts, cart, something off it here, horse and cart

Cyril : This is where we used to fish, “we’ll go to Lynette’s Log” Mum used to say, that’s why I knew where it was all the time, Lynette’s Log, round that corner there [upstream]

Badger: and that there, when the water up – see that place there, fish, heaps of fish there. And here, we always used to see …a big old fella walking around. Kurnki, ghost, he used to walk around here all the time.

Buddy Bates tells this story about living on the River with his Family:

We used to live in Broken Hill when Dad was working on the mines and when Dad finished the mines we came to Wilcannia to live on the river and we had a big army tent, an old caravan, and an old tin shack sort of thing on the side of the tent as a kitchen. There was me, Bonney, Ann, Daryl, Owen, Basil, I used to go to the Mission school, and Mum had Valda, anyway when we used to live on the riverbank we used to get buckets and walk down to the river, get water, go fishing, yabbying whatever we can get.

Anyway I remember one day there was an old stump near our camp and there was these real big bull ants, I think they call them army ants, anyway I was standing up there one day with trousers on and I didn’t feel this ant crawling up my leg jeans, I got bit on the arse and I teared it, they were all coming out lookin and what’s going on – I don’t know and I pulled my trousers [off], any way all the people come out lookin and seein what’s going on – cause they lived just down the track from us, cause we all lived not far from each other.

Anyway we had no power, no plumbing, water plumbing, we had to collect our water and put it in a big drum when we needed it, water we used to get it out of the drum and put it in the billy, turn it into the big bowl and wash ourselves, make fire and cook our food. I remember the old people used to get up early, cook porridge early in the morning. Them days they wasn’t two minutes porridge, they cook a long time. Get wild meat and cook on the grid iron in the camp, not a camp oven, the big pots on the open fire. We had no street lights, no lights, all we could see was fires all along the river. Us kids used to run across to one light to the other camp, run back to our own camp. Cause we had no power we used to go to bed early. When the sun went down we used to go to bed, sit down lay back amongst the stars, satellites, then when we’d get tired we’d just go to sleep. But then early in the morning we used to get up early, get ready for school, we used to walk to school cause we used to live just behind the school, and we used to walk home from school for dinner, walk back to school, walk home from school. It used to be nice and clean home, even around the camp it was always clean, no rubbish laying around. Not like today, it is
filthy when you walk down the streets, them old days was the good old days. Everyone used to live on the river, the grandparents, aunties, uncles, all the cousins, and everyone enjoyed themselves being there and living together.

**Colin Harris talking about his Hut by the River:**

I built a little tin hut there, me and the old girl and Crista was the baby then. I bought some timber off Knox and Downs a few timbers and a few sheets of iron, and I hammered them together, me and my mate, built up there, just a little what’s a name, cut it in half, this room and just a kitchen part and a little stove. Then the Shire they put taps right along the bend for all us people you know, here and there, save going down to the river.

I was working on the shire at the time we were putting in the curb and guttering in the mission there, old Snowy Clark and all them boys they done all them. And Margy she was pregnant and she had the baby girl here.

![Left: Colin Harris standing where his hut used to be and right Stevey Harris standing next to canoe tree near Colin’s hut](image)

Yeah, well I had couples with neighbours there, old Norman Kaye and my sister and old Duck Jones and Deirdre, them crew, Deirdre was working as a health worker. We was all on the shire then, big works going on curbing and guttering and footpaths. We dug all that, there was no backhoe then we done it all pick and shovel. Old Bob Wilson he was living in front of us over that sort of way.

Yeah, oh a lot of people on the river in them days. I was only young, but I still remember them. Fishing and that, yeah or we’d get in an old motor car and go for a shot. That’s all we had to do until we got that big grant for the Shire, they used to get it every year, that big grant, there were a lot of people working, all pick and shovel then, no machines, everybody was working then.
Oh I got out of my families thing, house, I was only young, I didn’t want to live with them, got my girlfriend, I was laying around with her there and I said “No I gotta get out of here” so I moved out, built a house and that was it. That’s what I done, that’s how I worked, it worked for me anyhow. They don’t do it today them fellas! What’s mucking them up here it’s the government mucking them up, they giving them pensions, bits of kids gettin pensions!

The river, its changed a lot. They getting it and taking it out up that way. This river used to be never empty, it used to be running all the time, one time when we was kids, yeah running all the time. Plenty of fish was in the river and all, plenty of water, but since they built that up there, that Cubbie years ago, that’s where all the water’s pumping out. See not only there, down around Moree and all them, cotton, all them there they pumping it out too. I think there’s 3 blokes, cotton farmers, they got caught, they was going to court over it, they pumping too much water out.

Well the old cockies along the river here, they hardly got any water! They on bore water, like here in town we on bore water, they pumping out down there [Union Bend] and mixing it up here in this big tank here. That’s what we living on. Never heard of it before. River, the water used to be running all the time, plenty of water here one time. Its dried up.

Just up from Colin’s hut place there is another big canoe tree, the scar looks very old, probably at least 100 years old.

**Uncle Boblo Johnson talking about Aunty Gerties Camps on the river:**

Well where we first used to live was down here ON the river bank. Right on the river bank, I was pretty young then but I remember that. Then we moved back here a bit. Yeah I grew up here. Families right along here on the river bank. The flood moved us from here to the Mallee then, yeah 1976 flood. The floodwater would of took all that we left. Yeah and then we moved up there to the Mallee and that was it. We had a tin shed and tents first and then after we moved into the first brick houses they built up the Mallee.
Nanna Alice Whyman visiting her old camp on the river near Boblo’s [Water] Hole:

We lived here on the river bank, river was up then, we used to have kerosene drums, empty ones, we used to carry them from the river up to the bank, do our washing, and the old girl had her line rigged up on these trees, them big thick trees, clothes line to hang your clothes and things out.

It looks different to me now, it was all flat, this here bushes and saplings wasn’t around then. I think that’s our tree there, yeah that’s right [see photo], and my mother in-law [Maggie Whyman] was under these trees aye, yeah just over there. Me and my old man had our camp here. Tin hut. We used to do our washing down there then. Somewhere along here, tin hut, yeah. Two rooms, one for the kids and one for me and my old man, and a kitchen. All in one.

No verandah, we used to make bough sheds, you know to cool off in the summer time. Yeah they would of chopped them saplings straight through to make bough sheds, to make you cool you know in the summer. They used them [gum] leaves there, stack them on the netting wire, chuck them up there, nice and cool too, how they do it. Old water bags aye, don’t see them things now, old water bags, they’d be hanging out side there aye and they’d cool off.

Kids used to be swimming most of the time when they was out of school. Its different altogether now. It was a good fishing spot yeah, we used to do a lot of fishing. Yes it looks very strange now. Its gotten bushy very quick here, look at these trees here.[my kids went] up here to the [mission] school here. Sister Mark her name was, Sister Vincent, yeah and sister Ignation or something like that, Sister Mark, good nuns, yeah.

And from my place there used to be Joycey and Ray, and then on there’d be Patsy and Percy, as you go along to town, you know, walkin to the bridge thee. Little lights you know right along there. And back up here used to be Aunty Gertie somewhere around the bend there. Tin huts aye, all along this river, lots of them from the bridge right back

Aunty June Jones at Bob and Elsie Jones Camp:

This is the tree here where our hut was, near the [school] principals place. We used to bring the kids from school down here to show em.

I can’t really remember much about this hut here, you know, I don’t know how old I was when we moved. I don’t know where we were when I was born, I don’t know whether we was in the Mission, or not. I was born 1950. Yeah, I’d have been about three when we moved, I can just sort of remember that hut.

We used to have a windlass, what do you call it, windlass, we used to go sometimes and watch our old father, mother sometimes, or Hunter girls, the older ones, they used to pull up buckets on a string, with the water in, and the river was much deeper then. Somewhere over there, we had it in. I remember that thing. They wouldn’t let us try it, the river was deep.
Was all huts, campers, right along. Right up there to the bend, used to be a big cow yard up there, out from Aunty Gerties there, old Rogers, aye, we used to go down there when we used to see him milking the cows.

I remember we used to have goats too you know. We’d get up early and milk em and drink the milk. I don’t know I suppose they would have had a garden at the hut too.

I went to the public school. This used to be the convent school, the old building aye?

We used to have to leave school at 15 and go and get a job. My first job was at Netallie Station, I left school that day and I got a job, Taylors used to be out there, Mary Taylor, she used to pick me up, she used to bring the kids into school, pick me up at the post office and take me out. I used to do the house cleaning and washing, and ironing, and ring the big bell for the old grooms around the place to come in and have their lunch. Yeah and she’d bring me back in about 3 o’clock. $3 a week I used to get, that was a lot of money yeah! $3. And this Court House pub over here, I was there for 5 years, I was showing off when I got a $20 note you know. I used to only get $15 for the week, doing all the rooms, washing and ironing, I got home and I got a payslip then and I got a $20 note in it, I was showing off! But we used to get a lot of things out of our little pays you know. Keep the home going with food.

Mum used to do the fishing, and Marjory, she’s mad on fishing, she don’t eat the fish but she’s mad on fishing. Janet used to be mad on fishing. I remember coming down carrying the hurricane lamp for them, you know early in the morning, their lines used to be back over there along the bank, my mother, Aunty Ernnie, old Amy, come right across past that school, they had all that thing over there then, big Ngatji was at Aunty Ernnie’s line, the Ngatji was there, she dropped that light aye! Little lamp that she had and run, “he’s there come on, he’s there at the line there, Ngatji!” We was runnin, screamin. It was dark see early in the morning, checking the night lines.

I sit at the Drop In Centre and tell the kids stories about things what we done… some’ll sit down and listen.

Maureen O’Donnell had the biggest hut up here, that was the last big camp on the bend, on the river aye.

**Aunty Tanya Lawson at Nanna Gladys Lawson’s house site at the bamboo:**

Where them bricks is, that used to be where our stove used to be. See up this end here was Mum and Dads bedroom, and then there was one big room where all the kids used to sleep.

There was only the bedroom (the main bedroom), the kitchen, and one big room for the kids, there was three. And out this part here, this thing here that’s where the laundry was. And out the back they built the old bough shed. That bamboo it was here for years aye. It was a flash
house. But our house had a front door, it had a back door, and you go out the back and you'd have all that bough shed, where we used to sit in the summer time. And over this way was the laundry and the bathroom, That laundry she had an old tub you know one of them old round ones, she used to do all the hand washing. And she used to cart the water from the river up there. Cause we had them big 44 gallon drums. Our father used to fill em up with river water and then he used to put that ash in it to settle all the mud. Make it all clear. That was our drinking water. And then he got a little pump thing then, he rigged up a thing to pump his water up.

I used go to the Mission school, the others they had to go to that other one you know, way up that way, that catholic school, they had to walk that way, I used to go up here to St Therese’s, across the flat.

That’s where out toilet was over that way, and then they moved the toilet from there to this tree here. Moved it around!

Over that way that’s where Nana Gertie used to live, just over there. All this used to be a big claypan this here. There was nothing on this see, cause we used to play rounders here every evening.

We had flowers and all growing. This was all painted white, aye, this little house. Yeah we had flowers growing here and all. They was good days them. And Munta they used to call him “man of the river” cause he used to go and get the fish, and yabbies and things you know. He was the fisherman. And he used to push that wheelbarrow around here with all them pussy cats in it.

The little house was made out of tin, tin and wooden frame, brick fireplace, yeah, we had a good stove you know in there! Cause she used to iron all our clothes you know, them old clothes irons, you put on the fire, to get em hot, you know them old ones, she had two of them, our clothes were always ironed and things. This is where we used to come out the front here see, this cement.
Yeah we still had to walk with water! That’s when we first moved in a town house see, and Brian you know, because you just turn the tap on and water you know, I don’t know how many baths he had in one day!!

Yeah we moved from here in 1970. Cause see Nanna Gertie was living over there, and when we moved she moved into our house, she moved in here then. And then the flood moved them aye. And she was living down by the tip there in them big army tents that time, yeah she moved in our house then.

After they had that last big flood no one came back, only Uncle Billy aye, he come and he lived; - cause this way was the road going straight through there see, and up there was a gate, and Uncle Billy had his house, he built it on the other side of the fence. Up at that gateway, that road used to go straight down that way. Its real wild down here now. Yeah it brings back memories. Cause old Billy Rodgers he had his cows down this way somewhere, remember down thru the creek.

We used to stay home, Mum used to go uptown, she used to walk, cause Dad used to work out in the bush, and we never used to see him for about six months, and she used to be home with all of us kids, and she used to walk up there, when the old bridge was there then. You remember that old bridge where you come off it and that white part, that gravel there, she come home all skunt up, see, she fell down. Tanya: yeah she used to walk all the time.

Too far now! In those days it never seemed that far, we young then

Yeah old Old Florrie was up here aye, at that thing there, old Ada used to live down there. If you go up this way you see an old car over there, that’s uncle Billy’s car, him and old Uncle Teddy, they were going to Lake Cargelligo see, and they got to this creek here, Uncle Billy done something and it wouldn’t go, and they come back here and they got my father you know, and he went down there and looked in it and he said well where’s the rotor button? Uncle Billy said is that what this here thing is? He had it in his pocket!

Uncle Waddie Harris talking about his new Camp on the river near the Mission:

Why I put that camp there on the river? Its about all the grandmothers, when I first met em about seven year old, when I went into town there with Mum and Dad, from off the waterhole from where I was, I realised to my grandmothers and uncles from my Mum’s side see, there was this frightened feeling I had, seeing my grandmother and my real people see, on this river. I went and I started crying, I got frightened, cause of all the different colours you know what was on the river. Granny with all the girls underneath and the tree still there, how important it was and how upsetting, a lot of the kids from the family, you know their Mum passed away, and all this stuff. That I realised that I’m talking to my real people, and how they was.

And I always wanted to come back to the river. And today, all the kids went to school there, and I remember I went there when we come to The Mallee, just behind me there, and I’m thinking I wonder if I’m allowed back over there you know, over where Granny [was], I want to go back over there where I seen Granny. Like I said coming in to see Granny at seven well, to me the river, I cried. Across from the bridge, Dad had to pick me up, I was seven year old, its still there. Every time I go over the bridge I thought about that story of meeting Granny. As I grew up Granny told me stories about the river. And I grew up to have my own family and that, and I kept going to Granny, like to tell me those here little things. And today to me it’s a good thing, that I never leave the river. I made a promise to the people that I’d be still around. Cause as I grew up that’s where I seen my old uncle Billy Whyman, carving the boomerangs, and also Granny, at the old tree, its still there, the roots of the tree, where the girls, where the farmer out here, McClure, where they give her a foot machine, sewing
machine, and Granny started sewing, she was sewing there. Yeah she made rugs, she used to make patches, she was mad on colours, and the old stuff she got, you know the stuff they give her, the nuns and that, salvation thing, yeah. I think she made me a rug, oh that’s right I said I got no rug, and she what I said the wool pack, bag see, but she said you want something on there so it wont be rough, and I said I want to be strong Granny. She said I think we’d better sew a thing over it! And she said you can do it. and I said yeah. So needle and cotton and my Dad had all sorts of needles to sew his own leather and that, leather leggings and whips, he used to do his own.

Next time I come in, well then I realised, when I come in from out there, we’d come in every month, or something like that, anyway, it sort of got real quick about Granny, that I wanted to get back and see her again, and I realised, and show them that I’m not frightened of them. I went and seen our lovely old grandmother, Granny, right there, right there amongst the people here, just over here. I’ll never forget her. I met her and took her some wood, got her some wood, and I’m about nine year old, and she had a walking stick and she smiled at me first, and she then wanted me to put it alongside of her. Save her getting up, had her bit of wood there. I always worried about her you know, I went on my own, they missed me, and that’s where I went there. And she told Badger to take me and show me the goanna track, cause he was older than me, that’s why I love Badger you know, respected him for that little bit what he showed me with the grandmother see. For both of us you know. That’s what I told my mob about Badger, “he’s my brother, I met the real woman, I went and met her, real grandmother”. That’s what I say, all the grandmothers that lived along the river, cause there was a hell of a lot. We’ll never ever count them up, cause it kept going

That’s how I wanted to go back there [to the river] just to put something there so the kids can have it. For the school there and kids to go down and sit down there, just a bit of space.

Yeah, I could have a lay down, a rest, I didn’t want to touch nothing there, I think the spirit of Granny, that she wanted me to leave as much as I can, but clear something for a caravan, another caravan there you know and like I said there’s only me now. I said I’m back with Granny. My aunty was very very pleased cause I went and asked Aunty, I wanted to find out off her first, and she told me about it, she said if I was you, son, I wouldn’t be in a hurry, she said like that because she had the same thinking about there’s no more water there, you know she was a bit thing about me, Aunty. And I said no I’m not in a hurry Aunty, but I said I want a place somewhere round about where you had your toilet there. I don’t want to block the track, where I remember the old other aunties and that, Aunty Maggie and all, it was their track, you know I didn’t want to block that off. I want it in that story, and Uncle Bill Whyman,
the fella who carved the boomerang, and that they still say, well Uncle Bill Whyman, he’s still there. Old man wouldn’t leave the river and stayed there much as he can, to try and get his river back for the other generations. You know our birdlife and that, so the kids can go and take a photo of the pelicans and you know. It gets sadder and sadder, the more I talk about it. You know cause it’s there, it’s there for good.

That’s what I wanted it to be, a memory. I told Aunty that the front part of it they had a flat piece to hold the tin together so it’s not sticking out, I said it gonna be built something like the one you were living in when I met you, I said same, Aunty, your house is still there I said. And I said you know what, I walked over to the suckers along the river where they were sort of thick there, and I’m looking at the rails and that there, wondering how I’m going to start it and put this shed over this caravan you know, and just like that she said put it there so no-one can’t pull it away. And I said to her I’m going to find steel, I’m going to build it steel and use cement, and if a flood come, and it floats away, we’ll be right, we got WATER!!! I said I’ll float with it! They said that’s a really good thinking. I said I want to put it there so Aunty can come and see her story there, and to really top it off I went to Menindee to see Aunty Pearly, you know she’s just as old as her, and she said son, I want to show you something. I said you going to make me cry, I said like that there, anyway she pulled out this old photo, black and white photo. She said is there any sunflowers down there son? And I said yeah there is! Which there was, sunflowers, yeah where she got her photo taken in amongst the sunflowers. This beautiful photo of her when she was a teenager. And it really made me..., so she sent Keithy down there to have a look to see if the sunflowers were there. And Keithy tears came out of his eyes. I drove onto him there see. And he said Unc, Mum talked to you about sunflowers. I said did you find em, he said “yeah”, not many about at the moment. And I remember those sunflowers, and the photos she had there of herself, they took a photo of her in amongst the sunflowers. That’s why I got sunflowers in around my hut here.

The old bucket there on my table, the old bucket there, we had to look at that bucket there and if its empty, or just a bit of water in it, a pint full, we’d pour it in there, and go down and fill it up. That’s the way it was. That’s the way the camp was down there. You know I left some water there if anyone wanted to sit down and have their memories, to be with their mob there, where they was last, and thing one another, so they could come back. Come back you know instead of living in this thing. And that’s why I never finished off yet, gonna get myself a bed and put in there. Just in case someone want to come and camp there. My Aunty, or have a night there you know. That sort of thing, and all around it I’d still want to finish off, put some shade there. Yeah shade, just a bit more room you know for the kids. They said how you going to get on with the flooding, I said walk through the mud like I done when I was a kid...

And today, how can I get through to my people, another generation, …. a bit more space from away where I grew up there, and like I said Parks is ideal around here for those here kids you know. Cause it’s all there, the story is all there. cause we’re losing all the animals what looked after the river see, we’re losing all those, the goannas and that, you don’t see now. I had to go way out further off the river there to have a look to see if I could find a goanna, see where they’re getting their water from. They are getting sick with the water we’ve got in our river, from the chemicals off the cotton, and all this stuff you know. I reckon it should be, but if we take it back, in bits and pieces, it’ll be a better thing for the kids to see, all of us you know. But we always cared for the kids.

That’s my dream, going back to my grandmothers, and where I been and learnt all this stuff and its very important. I’m trying to learn as much as I can, the kids, about the wood out there free and trying to make something of it you know. Do anything with it, the wood already – I said you don’t have to cut it, a lot of its old you know, the old trees save them and do something with em. You know, history. So I started carving on the bowls to get the history. I’ll show you a piece. The hospital come here the other day to have a look what I’m doing, just to show em. Anyway this is part of the river, I’m doing it about my people, you can see me
there, when they was happy, you know, when Murray done that thing down there, the blockade, yeah. What I done, is inside the bowl here, this is the fresh water, you’ll see the white marks, in the middle of it, and this tells the story about how important the water was to those real people, see, us, we still here, and the birds where they all thing and the old trees, are bright, yeah to tell the story you know. Where I been. A canoe there, where they working, and the water snuck onto em and everyone was all happy and yeah, see. And it just with charcoal off the creek, everything’s all there. I keep the story for them old people you know that lived along the river. All the rivers. Just birds are feeling it, our natural birds here, what us grew up with. See that’s what I try to do as much as I can to keep that story to tell the kids. That’s what that story’s about. We got to use whatever we can get to give back to the kids see, so they can keep it going.

So what’s going to happen with the river? Sad aye. Its very hard aye how they fall now, its very cruel. But I see in the people, the things, you know our law, there’s no law really, no more belief. The biggest belief and the proper one is the land. That’s the way I cope in this here, and I’m still seeing all the good things that we can all still do. This thing didn’t take it off me. This other bad spirit. Going back there and asking the old people.

Well I don’t know how many times they come here to me, yeah people you know, and I talk about it and give them all my details as much as I can, all about the river, my story about the grandmothers what they told me you know. And the old people, they say well what you do? and I say well still do my dance and still thing for the water and ask them when they going to give us some water, for the kids, and give us back our pride. I cried you know for the river, yeah, give the kids their water.

I don’t know I reckon that while we got some land, while we all still got a bit of land here, where we all is with the bits and pieces that they gave us to… and saying that we all own it and all this I think that we got to put a change in their somewhere, and get our message through. To get our message we all got to agree with it, we all gotta, all of us, all those here small communities, all those here places, and agree on one person to put this thing right through so everyone can hear it. And see how we get on. I think that all those here fellas what’s doing those things wrong that might thing them up, because they forgot about they family too. They forgot about that and they want to hear something from us out here. They are forgetting the main thing.

Like I said I try and give whatever, and I ask them why can’t we all, those here cotton fellas, so what about they kids you know. What they just want to kill us out? Take water off us? Yeah you can see it, it’s a war. Its about water, its killing people, it damages everything if we haven’t got water. That’s what I said about the fire and water, are the very very important thing to all the people, the Australian people, and if you got respect for it, and want to be a real Australian well, show it! Don’t hide. Don’t hide because we know what you’re doing. You’re hiding. We want some water back.

Aunty Norma Dutton talking about Pop Dutton’s hut on the River:

We lived just behind the [mission] school there. All the black fellas used to live along there. Yeah, they was all along there, and them was way down the river you know. It was good along the river.

This tree here, we used to live here, just straight down there, that’s where we used to live, just down on the river, right on top of the bank. All of us, Mum and Dad, we used to live with Mum and Dad, all the family. Yeah, kids, brothers and sisters. There was Jim, Evelyn, Georgie, Lorraine, me and Charlie, and brother Willy lived in Bourke all his life. And Eileen, we lost her when she was – she died when she was sixteen, I don’t know what happened to her, only brother Jim and brother Willy would have seen her, she was older than Evelyn, that’s the photo of her up there with cousin Girly.
It was good. The breeze, the breeze. Clean the little hut up and just sprinkle water round then and just make it fresh and cool. Didn’t have to pay big money like you have to pay now. Old clay pan dances, we used to have piano accordion, mouth organs, guitars. We used to, when we was young, if we didn’t dance with anyone they ask, we had to get home. Old Bert Hunter would MC. If someone asked for a dance if we used to say no, well there’s the road, we had to go home. Me and Maureen, we used to play one song Pride of Erin it used to be, and we like looking for one another, we grabbed one another to dance. We still talk about that when we meet.

We used to dress up in the night and go down the street and thought we was women, high heels shoes and everything. Sneak - we would leave our high heels down the road when we’d go to town. Yeah we used to have good fun. Yeah and there was no jealousy not like now. When you’d go to the claypan dances you know, you could dance with anyone, no jealousy, now they watch em like dogs aye? Jealousy is a curse.

Left: Norma Dutton with granddaughter Frances Dutton at Pop Dutton’s camp on the river

Yeah it was good, used to go down the river there and catch a fish. I gotta get my fish from Menindee now, Blacks [Dutton] got to send them. I like fishing too, can’t get down, I can get down the bank but I can’t get up it.

When the first flood you know, about 56 enit, they put us in army tents up here in the Mallee. Yeah I’m 76 this month - I’m the only one in the family hit the 70s. I have a photo of Mum [Aunty Ducky], I had a photo of Granny Bates too but I can’t find it. I get them cut out. Brother Jim, you seen that photo, that’s Cookie and them’s father. I got the book about my old dad, Pop Dutton.

**Aunty Norma Dutton talking about living at the fringe camp and the Mission in the 1960’s.**

In the 60s I lived on a flat in the caravan me and my kids, on the flat there near that box tree, its bushy here, first time I was down this way for a while. And Reggie Whyman and sister Lorraine Dutton, they had their little hut over there. They was the good old days.

I don’t know when we moved to the mission, I can’t think back I have been stressed too much. We have been in the mission for years though. We moved to the mission then the flood moved us from the mission up there to the Mallee.
Pop Dutton used to live there in that house [where Leah Ebsworth’s house is now], that’s where Charlie’s photo was taken, that one there, when there was no covered-in verandah like in the old days. That’s the photo of Charlie where that fire-bucket you know, he’s standing over the fire bucket.

Left: Norma Dutton with granddaughter Frances, Norma and her children had their caravan at the box tree in the background

Jerry used to stay there with em, Jerry Beckett. Yeah and then we had that house down there next to Robbie and Vicky’s, in between of Wayne’s house and Vicky.

I was out in the mission till about, in the 60s we lost Pop, in I think 68. We lived up here [in the Mallee] then. About 72 we was up the Mallee here when we lost Elaine then you know. From there we moved. I was down in that house straight across from Doreen’s then you know.
12. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

This survey has enabled the community to begin a conversation about how they would like their heritage to be managed. It is an important step, but the conversation has to be nurtured into the future. Adding places to the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) with significant Aboriginal cultural values gives increased recognition and protection.

12.1 Steamers Point

- Increase the size of Steamers Point Aboriginal Place to include the stone arrangement (Wilcannia LALC and Central Darling Shire to write to Heritage Division to request this).
- All of the enlarged Aboriginal Place (or new area with Stone arrangement pending gazettal of extra area) be put on the LEP.
- Create signage for Steamers Point with photos and stories about the history and cultural values of the place.
- Place bollards on the edge of roads and signage near sensitive places such as the stone arrangement and midden site near the Granny Moysey Camp 1.
- Complete a walk trail with signage from the centre of town to Steamers Point
- Monitor the condition of Wowser’s bend canoe trees, particularly for termite and other pest damage, and effect of lack of water or poor water quality on the health of the trees.

12.2 Burials Projects

- Burial Protection

Recommend continue with new project to visit and update all burial sites already recorded, (see Database), record any others known to the community, and provide management recommendations on the protection of each. Follow up funding and carry out protection works. It was beyond the scope of this project to visit all the burials around Lake Woytchugga and further up the river from the town and common. Possibly obtain funding from LLS.

- White Sandhill Burials.

The White Sandhill was first recorded as a burial site in 1984 by Badger Bates, Aboriginal Sites Officer for NPWS. In July 2018 community members noticed that there were some exposed fragments of burials near the track. The police collected some of these to be sent away for forensic examination, but fortunately before they were sent away, the Broken Hill OEH Heritage Division Senior Heritage Officer was able to identify these as very old Aboriginal burial remains and returned the envelope with the fragments to the Wilcannia LALC. It is recommended that the Wilcannia LALC hold a community meeting to decide what they want to do with remains picked up by police and how they want to cover the area with scattered remains and further protect it.

Fencing has been suggested but there is a history of fences being cut around Wilcannia (for example around Lake Woytchugga), and if fences are built then someone has to be responsible for maintaining them.

Other suggestions are bollards to direct traffic, and signage that explains the significance of the area. The White Sandhill registered site needs to be put on the LEP.

- Repatriation of Burials
Continue to work with OEH Heritage Division on the repatriation of remains held in Museums and other institutions.

- Up-skilling of Community

Continue to work with OEH Heritage Division and National Parks to train members of the community in recognising, recording and protecting remains, as well as repatriation protocols and processes.

12.3 The Mission Fringe Camp Significant Places

- Continue documenting oral history of the camp and other significant features in this area with the Heritage Division as part of the Aboriginal Place assessment
- Wilcannia LALC and community to create signage for Mission fringe camp with photos and stories about the history,
- Completion of the Aboriginal Place assessment by Heritage Division and community
- put the Mission Fringe Camp on LEP

12.4 Union Bend Significant Places

- Monitor the health of Granny Moysey’s Canoe tree and monitor termites and other pests
- Place signage near tree about its history and significance
- Monitor other significant places at Union Bend including fringe camping places and birth places, the old canoe tree, mound site, Ngatji waterhole, and large complex site with burials
- Place Union Bend on LEP with excision of the area of the powerline, pipeline and bore.

12.5 The Wilcannia Weir

- Maintain existing weir and rocks for use as traditional fish traps,
- If a new weir is built, retain this weir to enable the continuation of this practice and to enable the knowledge to be handed on to younger generations

12.6 The Mallee Significant Vegetation

- This refers to the section of mallee vegetation on the edge of town, not the section of town called The Mallee, although that part of town is built on the edges of the mallee (hence the name)
- It is recommended that strategies be put in place to protect the mallee vegetation on the north western side of town because it contains significant traditional food, medicine and artefact making plants. It also contains a rare plant of significance, a Blue Mukirli, which is a rare variety of Mukirli (wild orange), which has larger and nicer fruit and few if any prickles, and a blue hue to the fruit and leaves.
- There should be no more development in the remaining area of mallee vegetation, monitor roads and rubbish dumping
- Put in place plans to propagate and grow around town rare plants such as the blue variety of mukirli (wild orange), the more common mukirli, and quandong.
- Place signage at entrance roads to explain how significant the vegetation is.
- Put the area of mallee vegetation on LEP
12.7 Wilcannia Cemetery (is on LEP)

- Recommend that all graves in the cemetery are permanently marked with approval of family,
- Recommend ongoing support for current project Paaka Thartu Karnu Wilcannia which is helping family make concrete and mosaic headstones.
- Investigate tree death at cemetery which was reported as a concern by the Wilcannia Aboriginal community,
- replanting of dead trees.
- Signage about the history of the cemetery
- Write and print history booklet (or ebook) for Wilcannia Cemetery like the one done for Bourke

12.8 Significant Traditional Story Places and fishing Places on the River south of Wilcannia

It is recommended that the following places south of Wilcannia township be placed on the LEP for their traditional and contemporary cultural values:

- Nine Trees Fishing Place
- Scobes Hole Fishing Place and Story Place
- Five Mile Point Fishing Place and Five mile Point Sandhill Burials
- The Basin Fishing Place and Story Place and The Island Thirri Story Place
- The Strip Fish Traps

12.9 Significant Places to the North of Wilcannia Township and Common

It is recommended that the following significant traditional story places be put on the LEP:

- The Falling Star Traditional Story Site Purli Ngankalana
- Degoumois Point Scarred trees, midden, and Island Thirri story site

12.10 Lake Woytchugga Traditional Story site and burials, middens, artefacts, stone tool quarries and flaking areas.

Although visiting Lake Woytchugga was beyond the scope for this survey, the previous documentation (see Database) of the archaeology this landscape indicates that it has very significant cultural values. In addition the traditional story as told by Aunty Elsie Jones and is curated by the Jones/Lawson family. It is recommended that the landscape of Lake Woytchugga, and in particular the lunette sandhill, the southern edge, and the creek inlet area, be put on the LEP

12.11 Making Cultural Information Available to the Wilcannia Schools and Community

- Reprinting of Elsie Jones book “The Falling Star” (or make it an ebook)
- Obtain rights from National Parks to continue to reprint (or ebook) the ‘People of the Paroo River. The Frederic Bonney Photographs’
• Encourage more printed and digital material and particularly films and videos to be made about the cultural life and history of Wilcannia.
• Add more Aboriginal cultural material on the CDS webpage or have a separate Wilcannia webpage.
• Continue support for the Barka Cultural Centre.
• Continue to do oral history interviews and photographic essays.
• Continue the use of visual arts to tell the stories of Wilcannia.
• Continue to create printed or digital material suitable for different ages in the Wilcannia schools.
• Ensure cultural signs and walks are suitable for school children as well as adults.

12.11 Management of the Barka or Darling river and its waterway, floodplains and fresh water aquifers.

One of the most significant messages of this survey is the damaging effect the more recent lack of water in the Barka or Darling River is having on the Aboriginal cultural values of Wilcannia and surrounds. It is damaging the tangible heritage, such as canoe trees and middens, by affecting tree health and causing and erosion and bank collapse for example.

It is also damaging the intangible heritage of the continuing cultural life of Wilcannia and ways of understanding and knowing the river, the ecology, the environment and the ancestral stories that connect the Barkandji people and their kin to the Barka.

The continuing cultural life of Barkandji people and their kin in Wilcannia depends on sufficient water flowing down the river and the water being of good quality. Since 2012 the river has been drying up far too often because too much water has been taken out for irrigation farms in the northern section of the catchment. The water quality has also been toxic far too often as a result of low flows or prolonged cease to flow events. Unless this situation improves, the cultural life of the town will be damaged beyond repair, affecting the tangible and intangible cultural values.

The context of the heritage places described in this report will disappear, for example what would the historic camping places along the river look like if all the river red gums and box trees along the banks of the river die? How do you interpret a shell midden if there are no longer any mussel shells in the river?

How does the Ngatji (Rainbow Serpent) survive and continue to look after the land and waters if there is no fresh river or aquifer waters for it to swim in?

It is recommended that an alliance of Central Darling Shire and all Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders in the Wilcannia and greater Central Darling Shire region plan an approach on how to get this message through to State and Federal governments.


Black, R. Lindsay. 1943. Aboriginal Art Galleries of Western N.S.W. Melbourne. Stevens.


Cameron, A.L.P. 1899. On some Tribes of Western N.S.W. Science of Man 2.


Donaldson, K. 1996. Draft Statement of Significance of the Willandra World Heritage Area to Aboriginal People of Western NSW. Western Regional Aboriginal Land Council.


Elkin, A.P 1930. Field Notebooks 1/2/3, 1/2/6, 1/2/8 Box 9; Notes 1/3/15 Box 11; Correspondence 1/9/3, 1/9/2, 1/9/4 Box 32 of Elkin Papers, Fisher Library Archives.


Gibson, L. 2013. We Don't do Dots. Aborigines, Art and Culture in Wilcannia, New South Wales. www.seankingston.co.uk


Hope, J. & Lindsay, R. 2010. The People of the Paroo River. Frederic Bonney's Photographs. Environment Climate Change & Water. NSW NPWS.


Howitt A. W. n.d. Howitt Papers, La Trobe Library, Melbourne.


McDougall & Vines, 2017. Wilcannia, NSW, Community Based Heritage Survey. McDougall & Vines Conservation and Heritage Consultants, for Central Darling Shire and OEH.


Martin, S. 1999c. Aboriginal Sites Of Significance In The Western Division Of N.S.W. A Planning Study For Network Design And Construction


Salisbury, R. I. 29/12/1871. Letters to his Father Mitchell Library MS 210


Tietkens, W.H. n.d. Reminiscences 1859-87 MS. State Library of South Australia


Warrell, L. 1995. *Three Pointy Little Hills: The Story of the Marnbi at the Pinnacles.* As told by the People of the Flinders Ranges in conjunction with members of the Broken Hill Aboriginal Community. Report to NSW NPWS.


OTHER RECORDS

Newspapers as referenced in text

NSW Aborigines Protection Board, Annual Reports

NSW Aborigines Protection Board, Minute Books

NSW Aborigines Protection Board, Letters

NSW Aborigines Welfare Board, Annual Reports

Minutes of the Select Committee Enquiry into the NSW Aborigines Protection Board 1937-1938

Department of Education Letters and Memos re Menindee and Carowra Tank

Police Extraneous Duty Book, Menindee 1897-1933
Police Extraneous Duty Book, Wilcannia, 1935-6
Francis McCabe Survey Map of the Darling River, 1851. NSW Records Office
Register and Index of Baptisms for the Wilcannia Parish

**Oral History Interviews**

21/3/2014 Phyllis Whyman interviewed by Sarah Martin
18/3/2014 Badger Bates and Muriel Riley interviewed by Sarah Martin
12/7/2018 Badger Bates interviewed by Sarah Martin
9/5/2018 Steven Harris interviewed by self
2018 Buddy Bates interviewed by self
2018 Betty Williams interviewed by self
22/5/2018 Murray Butcher interviewed by Sarah Martin
22/5/2018 Cyril Hunter interviewed by Sarah Martin and Steven Harris
10/5/2018 Boblo Johnson interviewed by Steven Harris and Sarah Martin
19/9/2018 Cyril Hunter and Badger Bates interviewed by Sarah Martin
10/5/2018 Ngearie Cattermole interviewed by Steven Harris and Sarah Martin
20/9/2018 Ngearie Cattermole interviewed by Sarah Martin
20/9/2018 Bob Wilson interviewed by Colleen Wilson, Steven Harris and Sarah Martin
18/9/2018 Colin Harris interviewed by Steven Harris
12/10/2018 Tanya Lawson interviewed by Steven Harris and Sarah Martin
12/10/2018 June Jones interviewed by Steven Harris and Sarah Martin
11/10/2018 Norma Dutton interviewed by Frances Dutton and Steven Harris
12/10/2018 Alice Whyman interviewed by Steven Harris and Sarah Martin
11/10/2018 Waddie Harris interviewed by Steven Harris and Sarah Martin
14. APPENDICES

14.1 Appendix 1 – Timeline

1820’s Small Pox, polio, measles, and tuberculosis Epidemics spread down the Murray River and up and down the Darling River - a story telling about this takes place at Peery Lake north of Wilcannia. Sturt describes people at Bourke suffering from smallpox or similar in 1835.

1841 Rufus River Massacres near Lake Victoria, perpetrated by overlanders and SA police

1845 -65 the Darling River was taken over by pastoralists and only the most arid and inhospitable land towards Tibooburra was not taken. Some Wiimpatja were able to find work with the squatters in return for being allowed to stay on their land and pitiful rations. Period of massacres and mass poisonings which lasted into the 1880’s. Decimation of the population by introduced diseases, particularly TB. Loss of traditional water sources off the river, these were taken over or destroyed by pastoralists.

1850’s to 1880’s work was plentiful, the gold rushes had taken up white labour. Wiimpatja worked as stockmen, fencers, labourers, shearsers, domestics, nannies etc. on the large pastoral stations in return for rations. Over 200 Wiimpatja camped at Poolamacca just north of Broken Hill and there were large camps at friendly stations along the Darling River.

1880 The Public Instruction Act NSW was enacted, allowing discretion about who could attend school, and leading to Aboriginal children being refused permission to attend public schools

1883 The Aborigines Protection Board was established

1890’s-1901 the crash of land values plus effects of overgrazing and the rabbit plague left many selectors and squatters bankrupt and lead to the “dispersal” of camps of people at favoured stations including Poolamacca. This coupled with unemployed miners and urban unemployed taking to the road to find work meant that work for Wiimpatja almost ceased to exist. Increased militancy amongst white workers and the white labour only stipulation lead to harassment of Wiimpatja workers.

Overgrazing and rabbits destroyed the traditional foods with the exception of fish etc from the river. Back country people were left with nothing to eat and many camped at Yancannia station

1919-23 cutting up of large pastoral leases into smaller blocks for returned soldiers was a blow for Wiimpatja

1919 One of the worst influenza epidemics known as the “Spanish Flu”, four elderly Aboriginal people died at Cultowa north of Wilcannia

1920’s to 1930’s the infamous APB Acts became more repressive and gradually enabled the control of every aspect of people lives

1930’s depression results in lack of work on stations and forcing people into fringe camps

1933 Saw the enforced resettlement of various groups of Barkandji people into Menindee Mission, including people from White Cliffs and Wilcannia, and the Pooncarie mob who still spoke their dialect as first language and lead very traditional lives. They were forced to live with Ngayampaa people from the scrub east of Ivanhoe who outnumbered them 4 to 1 and spoke an unrelated language. In time English became a lingua franca between the two groups and intermarriage became more common. This lead to a loss of language skills and disrupted the traditional social organisation including marriage rules. It was also very difficult
to visit country, maintain sites, conduct ceremonies and teach the young people on the Mission. The cultural divide between Aboriginal and white is demonstrated by the siting of the Mission on top of an old burial ground, so when the wind blew the bone dust got into houses, food, lungs, a situation that the occupants totally believed would kill them. Indeed the death rate was appallingly high and TB was widespread.

1938 People from Tibooburra, Wanaaring and the northern Darling River, including Barkandji, Malyangapa and Wangumarra were forced to go to the infamous Brewarrina Mission. This was run as a concentration camp where fathers could go to work but had to leave their children behind barbed wire to ensure their return. The sadness of all at this terrible place is well documented, together with the triumphs of those who managed to escape.

At both Menindee and Brewarrina the authorities controlled everything including food, work, mobility, association, and this was marked by the removal of many children to institutions. in distant places (some children from Menindee were taken as far as Tiwi Island).

1949 - closure of Menindee Mission and movement the Murrin Bridge, most Barkandji did not go to “the Lake” and many Nggiyampaa people also stayed, some stayed in Menindee and some moved to Wilcannia

1950’s -1970’s Government policy forces many families to split up and move to Sydney, Newcastle etc. for housing, education and work

1950 and 1951 Wilcannia fringe camps flooded

1956 Wilcannia people living along the riverbank were flooded out-- this led to building of the first “mission” houses in Wilcannia

1960’s onwards- shrinking of pastoral jobs due to award wages for Aborigines, loss of economic viability of wool and beef industries, plus mechanisation of farming

1980 opening of Barkandji Housing Co-op, a landmark Aboriginal housing business opened by Prime Minster Malcolm Fraser

1983 blockade of Mootwingee National Park by Mutawintji Land Council prevented access until National Parks agreed to start negotiating return of ownership to Wiimpatja

1984 loss of many jobs on the DMR from the Wilcannia Aboriginal community

1992 Return of remains of Mungo Woman to Aboriginal people at Lake Mungo. Signals new relationship between Wiimpatja and archaeologists

1997 National Parks Ownership Bill passed through parliament enabling return of parks to traditional owners (to be leased back to National Parks but jointly managed)

1997 First Native Title claims lodged on land by Wiimpatja

1998 Mutawintji National Park handed back to the traditional owners, first park to be handed back under this legislation

2015 Determination of the Barkandji Native Title Claim

2017 return of Mungo Man and 120 other ancestral remains to Mungo National Park
14. 2 Appendix 2 – list of some Barkandji totems (From Martin 1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Makwara</th>
<th>Kilpara</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tindale 1938-9</td>
<td>Peter Bonney</td>
<td>teal duck (kultau)</td>
<td>emu (kalti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frank Fletcher</td>
<td>pelican (nankuru)</td>
<td>black duck (ngalta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Maraura)</td>
<td></td>
<td>red kangaroo (talta)</td>
<td>crow (waku)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>eagle (kanau)</td>
<td>black kangaroo (kilpatja)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>silver bream (knamba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>evening star (pudli)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elkin 1930</td>
<td>Will Gibson</td>
<td>bandicoot (kukula/bulkanya)</td>
<td>emu (kalti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2/6 &amp; 1/2/8</td>
<td>Albert Bates</td>
<td>kangaroo (tarlta)</td>
<td>native cat (titjara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wilyakali/</td>
<td></td>
<td>goanna (bernu)</td>
<td>marsupial (kuruma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanyawalku)</td>
<td></td>
<td>mulga tree (malka)</td>
<td>carpet snake (kandu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dog (kuli)</td>
<td>black snake (tur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yellow belly (naamba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>frilled lizard (kani)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reay 1945</td>
<td>Hero Black</td>
<td>bandicoot</td>
<td>sand goanna (barnahba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Kurnu)</td>
<td></td>
<td>kangaroo (dharrta)</td>
<td>emu (kalti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dingo</td>
<td>padimelon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>eaglehawk</td>
<td>possum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bilby</td>
<td>carpet snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulttebe 1898</td>
<td>(Parkungi dialect)</td>
<td>eaglehawk (Bilyari)</td>
<td>emu (kulti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(river near Wilcannia)</td>
<td>kangaroo (Tirlta)</td>
<td>carpet snake (tur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bandicoot (Bookoonia)</td>
<td>bonefish (maniba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>wood duck (Cultapa)</td>
<td>lizard (birnae)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>black duck (alebury)</td>
<td>paddy melon (bowanyali)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>iguana (karni)</td>
<td>oppossum (verilperi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menindie Blacks</td>
<td></td>
<td>lizard or iguana (carnie)</td>
<td>whip snake (joorari)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Parkungy or Bolali dialect)</td>
<td></td>
<td>hawk (bilyara)</td>
<td>bonefish (manibari)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolali dialect)</td>
<td></td>
<td>bandicoot (booringa)</td>
<td>wallaby (boelberi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kangaroo (taaltari)</td>
<td>swan (koonwoora)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>duck (youlari)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howitt</td>
<td>Boulttebe</td>
<td>eaglehawk (bilyara)</td>
<td>emu (kulthi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>Language/Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904-98</td>
<td>Wilya (Wilyakali?)</td>
<td>kangaroo (tirlta)</td>
<td>carpet snake (turu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bandicoot (burkunia)</td>
<td>bone-fish (namba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>duck (kultapa)</td>
<td>padi-melon (bauanyal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>frilled lizard (karni)</td>
<td>wallaby (wongaru)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>opossum (yaranga)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dingo (kurli)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boultbee</td>
<td>eaglehawk (bilyara)</td>
<td>emu (kulthi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milpulko - Darling R.</td>
<td>kangaroo (turita)</td>
<td>carpet snake (turru)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>below Wilcannia</td>
<td>bandicoot (burkunia)</td>
<td>bone-fish (namba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>duck (uleburri)</td>
<td>iguana (birna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>padi-melon (bauanyal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>opossum (yerilpari)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>frilled lizard (karni)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>wallaby (muringa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.J. Freehan</td>
<td>eaglehawk (bilyara)</td>
<td>emu (kulti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paruini (Paaruntji)</td>
<td>kangaroo (thurita)</td>
<td>bream (munji)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bandicoot (burkannia)</td>
<td>carpet snake (tharu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>opossum (yeringi)</td>
<td>iguana (burna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lizard (karni)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>quoted in Howitt as</td>
<td>eaglehawk (biliara)</td>
<td>emu (kulthi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cameron, Barkinji.</td>
<td>kangaroo (turita)</td>
<td>snake (turr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>actually Paaruntji from</td>
<td>bilbae (kurtae)</td>
<td>lizard (karni)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J.D. Scott, in</td>
<td>turkey (tickara)</td>
<td>wallaby (murinya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cameron 1885</td>
<td>whistling duck (kultuppa)</td>
<td>iguana (buuna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bandicoot (barkunia)</td>
<td>native companion (kuntara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bulmer</td>
<td>eaglehawk</td>
<td>crow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Maraura)</td>
<td>lizard (karni)</td>
<td>bonefish (namba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>others</td>
<td>others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathews, R.H.</td>
<td>common magpie</td>
<td>crow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td></td>
<td>honey</td>
<td>plain turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>galah</td>
<td>emu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>native dog</td>
<td>bony bream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bandicoot</td>
<td>swan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>teal duck</td>
<td>wallaby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal</td>
<td>Animal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pelican</td>
<td>padamelon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bilbee</td>
<td>diver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kangaroo</td>
<td>opossum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>porcupine</td>
<td>shingleback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>native bee</td>
<td>curlew</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bronzewing pigeon</td>
<td>whip-snake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eaglehawk</td>
<td>iguana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lizard</td>
<td>native companion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpet snake</td>
<td>codfish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wood duck</td>
<td>brown duck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ibis</td>
<td>mallee hen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black duck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1: Board for the Protection of Aboriginal People. Returns of Aboriginal People 1886-NSW AO 5/18423.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>ABORIGINAL PEOPLE</th>
<th>DIED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAR WESTERN DISTRICTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourke</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louth</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wentworth</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal Lall Creek</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poonoarrie</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menindie</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silverton</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milparinka</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Census 1901 Wilcannia & White Cliffs. NSW AO City Microfiche 2/8452

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District/ subdistrict</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Householder</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Aboriginal People</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>Reid St</td>
<td>R. Bunworth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reid St</td>
<td>RD Hoare</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blacks Camp</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>M.A. Smith</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Cliffs</td>
<td>Momba</td>
<td>travellers hut</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cobrilla Station</td>
<td>James Larkin</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marra</td>
<td>Aboriginal Camp</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lilydale</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 Mile Point</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TABLE 3: MENTIONS OF WILCANNIA IN APB MINUTES SEPTEMBER 1890-JUNE 1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Rations</th>
<th>Clothing</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/5/1893</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complaint from “Cocoa”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/9/1895</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Police rec. rations for destitute woman &amp; kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/11/1895</td>
<td>Weinteriga</td>
<td>3 people</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Police rec. for 2 old &amp; inform &amp; 1 sick person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>4.14.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>0.10.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/11/1897</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Plus tent, old F &amp; kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/1/1898</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>4.11.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/4/1898</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>4.1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/6/1898</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Iron hut for F &amp; 2 kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/7/1898</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>3.7.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/10/1898</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>2.14.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plus medical attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/1/1899</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>2.16.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/4/1899</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>2.14.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/7/1899</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>2.6.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/9/1899</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>1.4.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mary Ann &amp; 2 kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/10/1899</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>2.14.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/1/1900</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>2.16.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/4/1900</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>2.14.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/5/1900</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Police rec. meat ration for Mary Ann &amp; 2 kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/7/1900</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>2.6.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.10.1900</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>1.19.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meat rations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1/1901</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>2.12.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meat rations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>2.1.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medical attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/5/1901</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>2.12.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Names</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>White Cliffs BCC</td>
<td>Cecil James Riley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>White Cliffs BCC</td>
<td>Margaret P. Quayle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Tibbooburra BCC</td>
<td>George Dutton snr Alice Bates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>White Cliffs BCC</td>
<td>Valda Bates Dorothy Barlow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>White Cliffs BCC</td>
<td>Arthur John Melrose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>White Cliffs BCC</td>
<td>Stella Rose Melrose Mavis Jean Quayle Margaret Joan Bates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Wilcannia BCC</td>
<td>Violet Bates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Wilcannia BCC</td>
<td>Alma Bates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Wilcannia BCC</td>
<td>John Bates (Gilbert and Emily Bates’ son) Mary Ann Bates Michael John Bates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Wilcannia BCC</td>
<td>John Alexander Quayle jnr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 5: FIGURES FROM COMBINED SOURCES INCLUDING LATER APB & AWB FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>1882</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1915</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1943</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milparinka</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibooburra</td>
<td></td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Gipps</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torrowangie/Poolamacca</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanaaring</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Cliffs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menindee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>210</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 6: POPULATION FIGURES FOR MENINDEE AND WILCANNIA (FROM BERNDT & BERNDT 1943)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MENINDEE</th>
<th>WILCANNIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>197</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLACE NAME</td>
<td>AHIMS ID</td>
<td>LEP/AP/SHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Murchison Wilcannia</td>
<td>25/3/0002</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Mile Point Burials</td>
<td>24/5/0001</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalyanka</td>
<td>24/05/0002</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mudlark (Diri)</td>
<td>24/5/0004</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia cemetery</td>
<td>24/05/0005</td>
<td>LEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Star Site (Bulli)</td>
<td>24/3/0001</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia 01</td>
<td>24/05/0006</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia 02</td>
<td>24/05/0007</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia 03</td>
<td>24/05/0008</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia 04</td>
<td>24/05/0009</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murree Station</td>
<td>24/05/0010</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia 05</td>
<td>24/05/0013</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia 06</td>
<td>24/05/0014</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Site Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia 07</td>
<td>24/05/0015</td>
<td>open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia 08</td>
<td>24/05/0016</td>
<td>open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia 09</td>
<td>24/5/0017</td>
<td>open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia 10</td>
<td>24/05/0018</td>
<td>open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Sandy Hill</td>
<td>24/05/0022</td>
<td>burials, artefacts, mussel shell, burnt faunal remains, heat retainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Bend</td>
<td>24/05/0023</td>
<td>two canoe trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whytchugga, wilcannia 01</td>
<td>24/05/0025</td>
<td>burials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woytchugga Creek Quarry</td>
<td>24/05/0031</td>
<td>silcrete quarry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Gully Burial, Lake Wytchugga</td>
<td>24/05/0024</td>
<td>burial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whytchugga Wilcannia 02</td>
<td>24/05/0026</td>
<td>burials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whytchugga Wilcannia 03</td>
<td>24/05/0027</td>
<td>scarred tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Whytchugga Wilcannia 04</td>
<td>24/05/0028</td>
<td>burials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wowsers Bend, Steamers Point</td>
<td>24/05/0029</td>
<td>5 canoe trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woytchugga Bridge site, Wilcannia Common</td>
<td>24/05/0030</td>
<td>open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Strip 6 TS6</td>
<td>24/5/0108</td>
<td>open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Strip 1 TS1</td>
<td>24/5/0104</td>
<td>open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Strip 2</td>
<td>24/5/0105</td>
<td>open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Campsite Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Strip 4 TS4</td>
<td>25/4/0106</td>
<td>x open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Strip 7</td>
<td>24/5/0109</td>
<td>x open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Strip 5</td>
<td>24/05/0107</td>
<td>x open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Common 9</td>
<td>24/5/0116</td>
<td>x open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Common 1</td>
<td>24/5/0110</td>
<td>x open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Common 6</td>
<td>24/5/0114</td>
<td>x open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Common 11</td>
<td>24/5/0118</td>
<td>x open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Common 10</td>
<td>24/5/0117</td>
<td>x open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Common 12</td>
<td>24/5/0119</td>
<td>x open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Common 2</td>
<td>24/5/0111</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Common 8</td>
<td>24/5/0115</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Common 4</td>
<td>24/5/0112</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Common 5</td>
<td>24/5/0113</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWP-1 sample 22-23</td>
<td>24/5/0081</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP 2</td>
<td>24/5/0082</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP-3</td>
<td>24/5/0083</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP-4</td>
<td>24/5/0084</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP5</td>
<td>24/5/0085</td>
<td>open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP-6</td>
<td>24/5/0086</td>
<td>open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP-7 samples 28-35</td>
<td>24/5/0087</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayitjuka North Blowout</td>
<td>24/5/0134</td>
<td>burials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Bend 1</td>
<td>24/5/0136</td>
<td>burials, scarred tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayitjuka North West Red dune</td>
<td>24/5/0137</td>
<td>burials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathaka One</td>
<td>24/3/0031</td>
<td>burials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS-OS-4 Wilcannia Sewerage</td>
<td>24/5/0092</td>
<td>open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxidations Ponds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Code</td>
<td>Site Name</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS-M-1</td>
<td>Wilcannia Sewerage</td>
<td>Oxidations Ponds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x midden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS-IF-2</td>
<td>Wilcannia Sewerage</td>
<td>Oxidations Ponds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x isolated find</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS-OS-2</td>
<td>Wilcannia Sewerage</td>
<td>Oxidations Ponds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS-IF-4</td>
<td>Wilcannia Sewerage</td>
<td>Oxidations Ponds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x isolated find</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS-OS-3</td>
<td>Wilcannia Sewerage</td>
<td>Oxidations Ponds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x open campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS-IF-1</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>24/5/0094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS-IF-3</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>24/5/0096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS-OS-1</td>
<td>Wilcannia</td>
<td>24/5/0088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24/5/0138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24-5-141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Strip Fish Traps</strong></td>
<td>24/5/0143</td>
<td>fish trap with rock walls and natural rock traps, artefact, hearth, shell, spring good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steamer Point 1</strong></td>
<td>24/5/0144</td>
<td>stone arrangement composed of many small mounds of stone, large silcrete boulders with flakes removed, rare to have stone arrangement near river, mostly towards White Cliffs and further vulnerable to vehicle damage and road making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steamer Point Mukirli Tree</strong></td>
<td>24/5/0150</td>
<td>within Steamer Point, Aboriginal Resource &amp; Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steamer Point—where the Ngatji sunk the steamer</strong></td>
<td>24/5/0145</td>
<td>conflict, story of the Ngatji sinking a partially paddlesteamer and a clever man in Steamer brought in to release the two drowned Steamer men from the Ngatji, also an ochre site, and place where the Mallee camps got their water from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steamer Point Granny Moysey Camp 1</strong></td>
<td>24/5/-147</td>
<td>part of Steamer artefact, earth mound, habitation structure, shell, stone quarry, marker tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Description</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steamer Point Granny Moysey Camp 2</td>
<td>24/5/148</td>
<td>Badger Bates Sarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steamer Point the Island fishtrap</td>
<td>24/5/0146</td>
<td>Badger Bates Sarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steamer Point Karl Leppard's Camp</td>
<td>24/5/0149</td>
<td>Badger Bates Sarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW SITES</td>
<td>Mission Fringe Camp</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sandhill Fringe Camp</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>historic artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Mallee Blue Murkirli</strong></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>resource and gathering, rare subspecies of Mukirli tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Mallee Fringe Camp</strong></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>River Camp Canoe Tree</strong></td>
<td>25-1-0151</td>
<td>small canoe scar on river red gum with wide regrowth indicating it is an old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>scar too big for usual survey tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>River Camp Canoe Tree 2</strong></td>
<td>25-1-0155</td>
<td>large canoe scar on river red gum, very wide regrowth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kantja Kate Coolamon Tree</strong></td>
<td>25-1-0152</td>
<td>box tree with oval shaped coolamon scar, wide regrowth indicating a very old scar,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Family Camp</td>
<td></td>
<td>historic artefacts, mussel shell, silcrete flakes, heat retainer, road runs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>thru camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Bugmy Camp</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>historic artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mukirli trees still living, need protecting, place where Granny Moysey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>came back to from Pooncarie with Amy Clark and younger children including</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emily Clark, possibly circa 1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukirli bend</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Mukirli (wild orange) trees, shell, artefacts, historic camping ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia cemetery bend mound</td>
<td></td>
<td>low mound of archaeological deposit, hear retainer, ash, charcoal, shell,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24-S-0153</td>
<td>artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Bend Ngatji waterhole</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Ngatji Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Pole Bend Ngatji waterhole</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Ngatji Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granny Moysey Camp 3 Iron Pole Bend</td>
<td>historic campsite with scarred tree (root anvil)</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliza Johnson camp, Canoe tree with toe holds</td>
<td>historic camp, canoe tree with toe holds cut into canoe scar</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Pole Bend Midden</td>
<td>shell, hear retainer, artefacts affected by erosion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Weir Fish trap</td>
<td>fish traps made in the rocks of the weir, changed around to suit the water conditions, mainly used by teenagers and indicative of the continuing cultural water flow and practices of Wilcannia people affected by silting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcannia Weir Ochre Site</td>
<td>ochre in river bank near weir, on town side</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

circa 1956 black and white photo of this camp shows two or three huts, and Emily Bates nee Clark, Mavis Jones, Adrian and Muriel Bates in the shade.
The Old Bridge

| The Old Bridge | n/a | LEP | used throughout its history to cross from the fringe camp and reserve into town, also a place where people gathered to talk, an area of reduced conflict or truce between the races, and occasionally an area of conflict. Significant to the history of the Wilcannia port and the paddlesteamers, as the bridge had a lifting mechanism to let the paddlesteamer thru | good condition but some of the lifting mechanism removed | needs an ongoing maintenance regime | 2017 McDougall Vines |

Scobes Waterhole Coolamon Tree

| Scobes Waterhole Coolamon Tree | 24-5-0154 | x | coolamon scar on one tree, also possible scar on second tree | good condition | monitor | Sarah Martin | 2018 Badger Bates |

oral history collected for Barka Cultural Centre project indicates that Knox and Downs provided employment and training for Aboriginal people, as well as place where Aboriginal people obtained supplies and interacted with non-Aboriginal people in a positive way. Support adaptive re-use as cultural centre

| Knox and downs Store | n/a | LEP | historic and social significance to Aboriginal community | poor condition | 2017 Cattermole snr |

<p>| Knox and downs Store | n/a | LEP | historic and social significance to Aboriginal community | poor condition | 2017 Cattermole snr |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Thereses Mission school</td>
<td>History of unofficial segregation in Wilcannia schools leading to the necessity of an extra school for the fringe camp and new government housing, history of the nuns providing education and some medical care to the fringe camp. First school to teach Barkandji language, a program begun by aunty Elsie Jones over 40 years ago who was a fluent Barkandji speaker and had a vision to teach the younger generations and keep the language alive.</td>
<td>2018 Steve Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Reserve or The Mission</td>
<td>14 houses built in 1953, now 12 modern houses, functioned as an addition to the hand made houses in the river fringe camp until the 1974 flood after which few people camped on the river, now a stand alone &quot;suburb&quot; of Wilcannia adjacent to Mission school.</td>
<td>2018 Steve Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthplaces</td>
<td>Information collected for this survey but is sensitive and not included in report, main places are Steamer Point (west side) and Union Bend (West and East sides), also Mission fringe camp, dates range from 1920s to 1970s</td>
<td>various see report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>