



2.12. CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cultural heritage (both European and Aboriginal) can be a deeply emotive issue that provides knowledge of our ancestry and a sense of belonging for many people. Cultures have clashed violently in the Mitchell River in the past, but this in no way needs to indicate our future.

There are many documented heritage sites within the catchment. The non-indigenous sites are mostly found within and around old mining centres, such as Chillagoe, Irvinebank, Mt Carbine and Maytown. Sites related to mining activities are numerous. These include mining camps, smelters, roads and buildings - many in a state of decay. Registered heritage sites that are also registered contaminated sites provide an obvious point of conflict for respective managers. Issues such as siltation and acid mine drainage from historical sites can polarise arguments for site rehabilitation and site preservation requirements.

Most of the formally recorded Aboriginal sites also occur near these mining centres and include shelters, rock art and utilitarian evidence of indigenous inhabitants. The distribution of recorded Aboriginal sites near mining centres perhaps reflects the fact that discovery of sites by Europeans is more likely to have occurred around areas of intensive European activity. Hard rock artefacts are also more durable, and evidence of inhabitation is likely to last longer than in some other areas where tools, art and other objects were constructed of less resilient material. But by no means is the wealth of human heritage in the Mitchell River catchment confined to sites of archaeological

preservation. Many areas of cultural importance include dreaming paths and story sites.

There are numerous living heritage sites within the Mitchell River catchment. Aboriginal people in the Mitchell still respect many sacred sites and places of cultural importance. The links between Aboriginal people and their country continues, and provisions in future land management need to be made, such as allowing for burial sites on homelands.

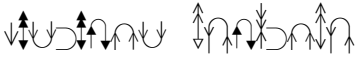
Major causes of difficulty in cultural heritage management are stakeholders' varied backgrounds and views of cultural heritage. What may be viewed as a rotting ruin by one stakeholder may be viewed as a culturally significant site by another. There will also be different views on public access being restricted or promoted to some heritage sites. Poor documentation and problems of information access abound, sometimes giving rise to conflict between cultural groups. The integrity of existing and new information may also be questionable. Historical attitudes often cloud debate and prohibit constructive exchange of ideas.

Cooperative management provides the best avenue to ensure that our cultural heritage is retained. Functioning stations such as Rutland Plains have earned recognition as being of historical importance. Many old mines have been re-evaluated and re-activated. Information about local cultural heritage is being collected and children are being involved in school programs to ensure the passing on of this information.



Figure 20 The Kowanyama Aboriginal Lands and Natural Resource Management Office has been an active member of the MRWGM. They aim to educate their people of their traditional culture and encourage them to incorporate it into their present-day lives.





Goal:

*To preserve past cultural sites and history,
and maintain present living cultures
for the future*

Objectives:

- To improve an understanding and awareness of history and heritage values in the Mitchell River Watershed
- Maintain the living indigenous and non-indigenous culture of the Mitchell River Watershed
- Ensure heritage sites are managed and protected
- An agreement be formed between all land managers regarding the use of culturally significant land

Strategies:

Education

CH1 Prepare educational material and programs on the history and heritage sites of the Mitchell River Watershed

Information and Communication

CH2 Prepare information packages to encourage respect and protection of heritage and historical sites

CH3 Develop a database open to community reference on the known heritage sites within the catchment

Improving Resource Management

CH4 Develop management plans for heritage sites

Adopting a Cooperative Approach

CH5 Involve all land managers in the management of sites of cultural significance

Outcomes:

Achievement of these strategies will result in the following outcomes:

- Management plans prepared for most heritage sites
- Living cultures maintained
- Involvement from the whole community to protect and respect heritage values of the Mitchell River catchment.



Strategy CH1

Prepare educational material and programs on the history and heritage sites of the Mitchell River Watershed

Actions	Stakeholders	Performance Indicators	Priority	Cross Reference to
Research and collate information on history and heritage sites of the Mitchell River Watershed to be managed locally	Lgov, EPA, MRWVG, Historical groups, Aboriginal groups		★	CH3
Collate local information into interpretive form	MRWVG, EPA, Land managers, Local museums, Aboriginal groups	Booklets, videos, brochures	★★	CH2 TR2
Distribute reliable, quality information to schools, councils, tourism operators and have available for field days and MRW promotion	Local schools, Lgov, MRWVG,	All stakeholders receive information, Monuments, signs erected	★★	
Approach schools and TAFE for inclusion of Mitchell River history and culture into curriculum	QDE, TAFE QLD, Aboriginal groups		★★	

Strategy CH2

Prepare information packages to encourage respect and protection of heritage and historical sites

Actions	Stakeholders	Performance Indicators	Priority	Cross Reference to
Provide information packages to target varied audiences	EPA, Aboriginal groups	Newspaper articles, school kits	★	CH1
Develop interpretive signs at existing high use heritage sites	MRWVG, EPA, Aboriginal groups, Lgov	Signs at all regularly visited sites	★	CH1 TR1

Strategy CH3

Develop a database open to community reference on the known heritage sites within the catchment

Actions	Stakeholders	Performance Indicators	Priority	Cross Reference to
Gather information for formation of database	Lgov, Aboriginal groups, museums, EPA	Some information from every museum and SC in MRW	★★	CH1
Encourage stakeholders to plan the future management of their heritage sites	Aboriginal groups, elders, Landholders, Lgov		★★	
Provide database to Local Government and state agencies to assist with planning	Lgov		★★★	
Define cultural heritage information as culturally sensitive and those which can be accessed by the public	EPA, Aboriginal groups	Lists of the categorised sites/ information	★★	CH4

Strategy CH4

Develop management plans for heritage sites

Actions	Stakeholders	Performance Indicators	Priority	Cross Reference to
Encourage landholders to map their cultural heritage sites	Landholders, EPA, Aboriginal groups		★	
Define cultural heritage sites as culturally sensitive and those which can be accessed by the public	EPA, Aboriginal groups	Lists of the categorised sites	★★	CH3
Develop specific management plans for areas of risk to the public, eg, toxic sites, mine shafts	EPA, DME	Specific plan for each public risk site	★★	
Research funding opportunities for heritage management	Funding bodies, MRWVG, EPA		★★	

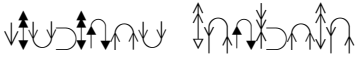
Priorities Achieved By:

★ 1 - 2 years

★★ 2 - 3 years

★★★ 3 - 5 years





Strategy CH5

Involve all land managers in the management of sites of cultural significance

Actions	Stakeholders	Performance Indicators	Priority	Cross Reference to
Provide assistance to landholders to manage heritage sites on their land	Landholders, EPA, MRWVG		★ ★	CH4
Facilitate workshops to develop management plans for sites, identifying who is responsible for continued management	EPA, Aboriginal groups, Land managers	3 workshops in initial year, 1/year thereafter	★ ★	CH4

Priorities Achieved By:

★ 1 - 2 years

★ ★ 2 - 3 years

★ ★ ★ 3 - 5 years