



# Moonimba Quarry Rockshelter and Ngimboung Cave, Moonimba Range

## Short Report

Navin Officer Heritage Consultants Pty Ltd

July 2017

### Introduction

Navin Officer Heritage Consultants (NOHC) on behalf of Pacific Complete and Roads and Maritime Services completed a desktop assessment and a survey to locate a previously recorded site, Ngimboung Cave (AHIMS ID 13-1-0034), as a precautionary exercise prior to the intensification of quarrying at the Moonimba Quarry, known for the purpose of the Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade as the Moonimba Borrow Site.

A heritage assessment and full survey for the expansion of the Moonimba Quarry has previously been completed by Everick Heritage Consultants (Everick 2014). One new site, a culturally modified tree, was identified in the Everick assessment. As Ngimboung Cave was mapped outside of the study area no site inspection took place as part of the 2014 assessment.

During NOHC's survey, the quarry owner, Noel Newman, directed NOHC to a previously unrecorded rockshelter. This rockshelter has been named the Moonimba Quarry Rockshelter for the purposes of this assessment.

NOHC was also asked to complete a desktop study and survey of the Moonimba Forbidden Place (13-1-0145). In 2014, Everick Consultants described the Moonimba Forbidden Place (13-1-0145). The report included the following:

*One of the sites (AHIMS Site ID 13-1-0145) was classified as restricted. Everick contacted the OEH and site recorder Mr Claude McDermott regarding this site. Mr McDermott advised that the restricted site was the Moonimba Forbidden Place, a Ceremonial Site and Story Feature which was recorded during a joint oral history project between the Bandjalang Peoples and the Parks and Wildlife group titled 'The use of the landscape and natural features for Cultural Practices by the Bandjalang People'. While the location of the site as recorded on AHIMS was disclosed to the Consultant, no further information was obtained, as the data generated by the project was restricted to the Bandjalang Peoples and the Parks and Wildlife Group Land Managers. As illustrated in Figure 4, the site is located less than 400m from the boundary of one of the proposed quarry pits. An access track is also immediately within the vicinity of the site. Everick consulted with Bogal LALC regarding the site, neither Mr Lance Manton (Bogal LALC CEO) nor Sites Officer (Bogal LALC Sites Officer) had any cultural knowledge of the site, or the associated dreaming story.*

This site has restricted access on AHIMS. The process for finding the relevant information has been undertaken by Everick. NOHC do not believe any further information other than what is included in the report can be obtained.

### Background

The Ngimboung Cave was originally recorded in 1977. The cave was described as:



*embedded into the southern walls of a granite [sandstone] outcrop that rises approximately 188 metres above sea level...the cave is of natural feature which is embedded into the rock face...the entrance to the cave is approximately 4 metres from ground level with an opening of approximately 2/3 metre in diameter (Figure 1).*

The recorder was unable to enter the cave and, as such, there is no recorded description of its interior. The cave is listed as a mythological/ceremonial site on the AHIMS register.



**Figure 1:** Original photograph of the cave from the 1977 AHIMS site card

## **Aboriginal Consultation**

Phone and email contact to Bogal LALC was made to advise them of the assessment being completed and invite a representative to participate in the field survey. An initial email and phone call was made on the 14 July 2017.

On the 18 July 2017, a follow up phone call was made. Bogal LALC was advised of the assessment. Bogal LALC indicated that no representatives were available to participate in the survey but advised that the LALC had no concerns with NOHC completing the ground truthing exercise.

## **NOHC Fieldwork Personnel**

Nicola Hayes and Julia Maskell (NOHC archaeologists) undertook the survey on 19 July 2017.

## **Results**

### **The Ngimboung Cave**

The Ngimboung Cave was not able to be re-found during this assessment. An area of the sandstone escarpment where the cave is likely situated was surveyed, however, this area was severely overgrown and the exact recorded location of the Ngimboung Cave could not be reached (Figures 2 and 3).



The Ngimboung Cave was recorded in 1977 with the following AGD coordinates:

Zone 56 525200.6779800

These coordinates convert to GDA:

Zone 56 525303.6779989

The cave is mapped to be located on Lot 215 DP755603 (Figure 4), an adjacent property to the Moonimba Borrow Site that is located on Lot 193 DP755603. The location of the cave relative to the NOHC's end survey point on the escarpment is mapped in Figure 5. The sketch map provided with the AHIMS site card also corresponds roughly to this location.

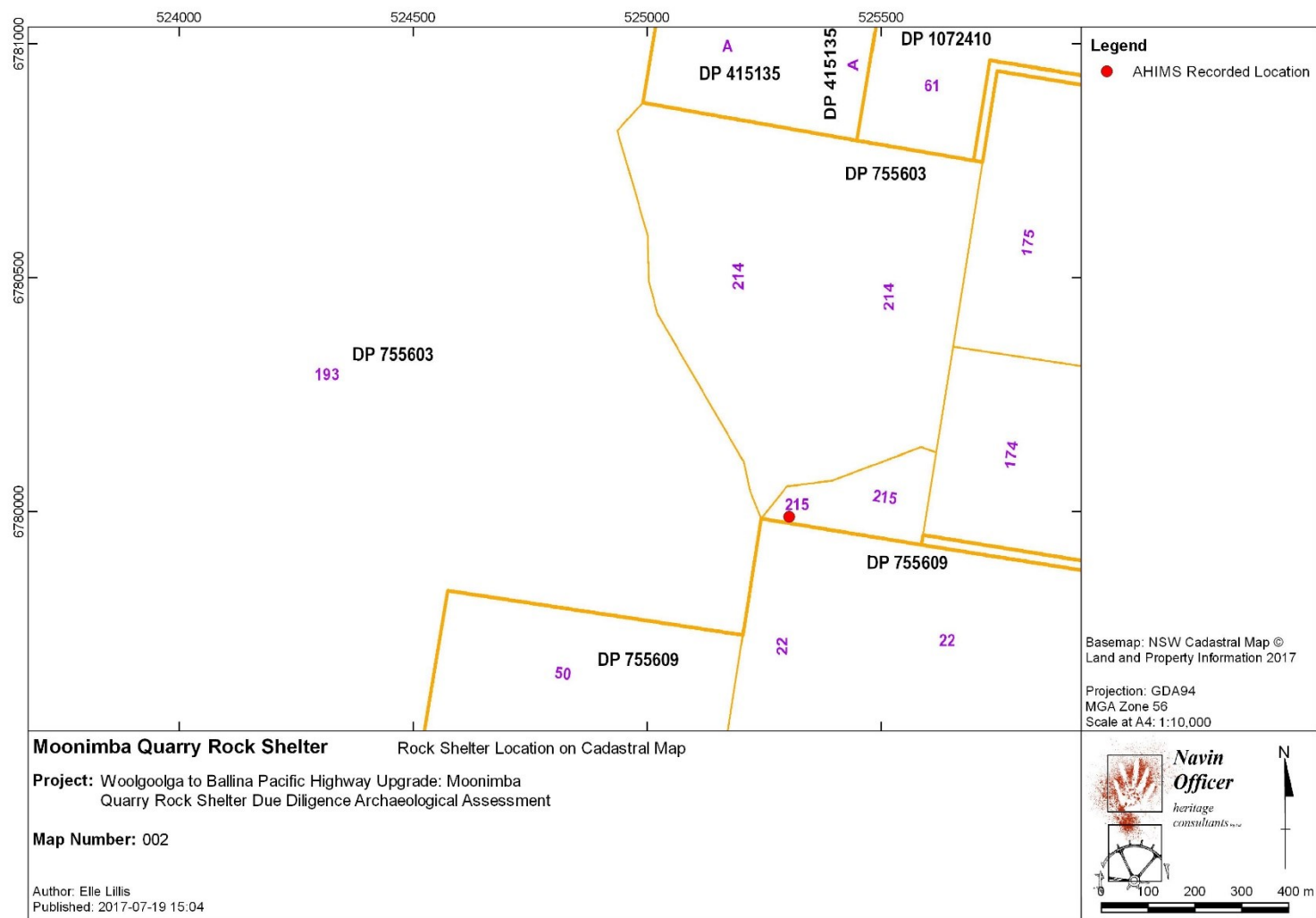


**Figure 2:** The general location of the sandstone escarpment

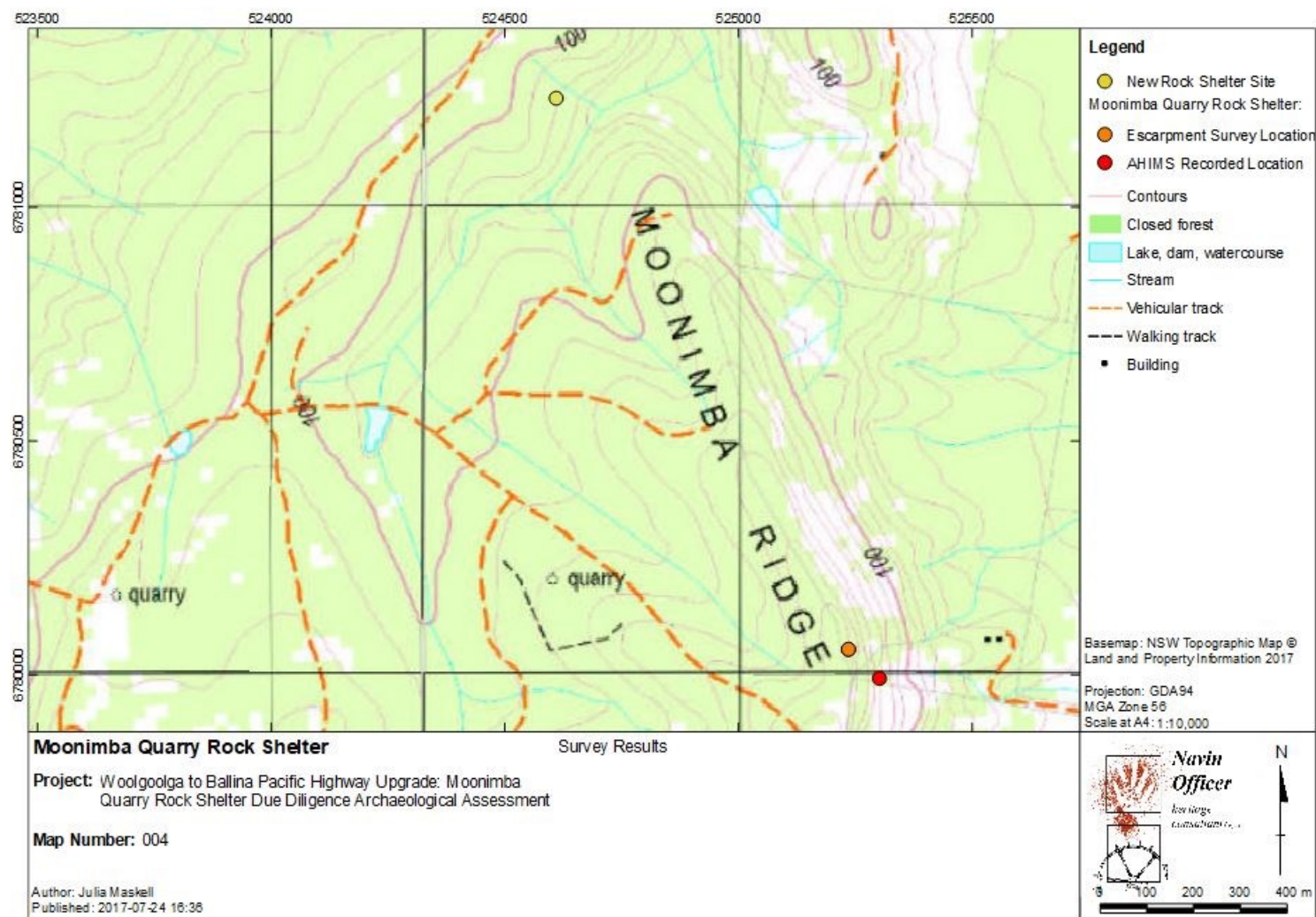




**Figure 3:** The general location of the sandstone escarpment, severely overgrown



**Figure 4:** AHIMS recorded location of Ngimboung Cave on a cadastral basemap showing approximate location



**Figure 5:** AHIMS recorded location of Ngimboung Cave and NOHC survey point





## **Moonimba Quarry Rockshelter**

GDA Zone 56 524611.6781232

The Moonimba Quarry Rockshelter is a previously unrecorded Aboriginal site (refer to Figure 5). The site is located on the south-western side of an unnamed creek 800 metres north of the quarry borrow pit. The rockshelter is approximately 45 metres in length and approximately 4 metres wide, with an overhang of approximately 3 metres. The height of the shelter varies between approximately 2 and 7 metres (Figure 6).



**Figure 6:** Moonimba Quarry Rockshelter looking south

The base of the shelter is a rock shelf at both the northern and eastern ends. A deposit of guano, bat excrement, of an unknown depth is present in the middle of the shelter. This deposit is approximately 10 x 4 metres and potential archaeological deposit (PAD) could exist below to an unknown depth (Figure 7). There is significant rock fall at the entrance to the shelter and it is also possible that PAD could be present below this rock fall.

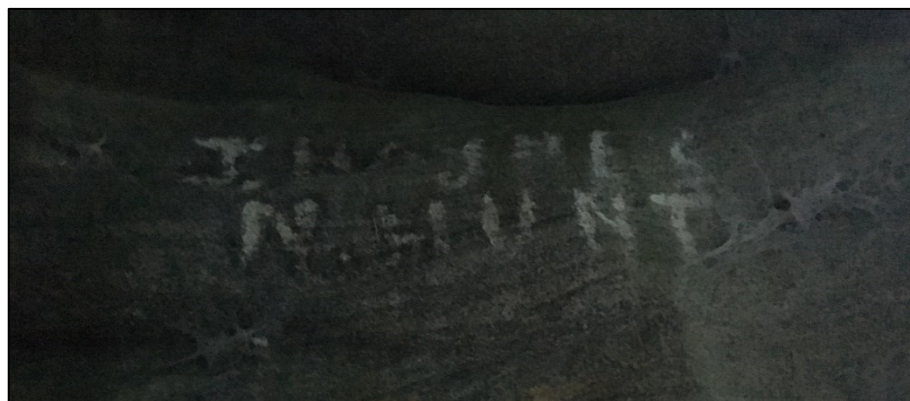


**Figure 7:** Moonimba Quarry Rockshelter with rock shelf and guano visible, looking north west

The shelter includes a number of painted and drawn graphics, including names and initials, and two figurative motifs. Most of the graphics have been created using a wet white pigment. There are also drawn orange initials ('BT'). Some of the initials appear to have been scratched into the rock face.

The two motifs have been applied using a wet white pigment. The consistent width of the constituent linear and infill elements indicate that the pigment has been applied with a brush approximately 20 to 25mm in width. The colour and consistency of the white pigment appears to be the same as that used to delineate at least two of the 'graffiti' names in the shelter, 'J.HAYNES' and N.HUNT' (Figure 8). It is considered likely that the names and the two figurative motifs are similar in age.

Considerable organic growth (such as a lichen or algae), is evident across some of the white pigment surfaces. Based on the type, condition and technique of application, it is hypothesised that the two figurative motifs may date from the mid twentieth century.



**Figure 8:** Moonimba Quarry Rockshelter with 'graffiti' examples





The two figurative motifs resemble a 'view from above' lizard and a side-on view of an anthropomorphic figure holding a spear (Figures 9 and 10). The lizard motif comprises simple linear limbs appended to continuous linear outlined body, tail and head, with dotted infill, including two eyes. Two short rays extend from the top of the head and resemble antennae. The anthropomorph is similarly constructed with simple linear limbs and feet attached to a linear outline body and head. The body includes a parallel linear angled infill, which is bisected by a central vertical line, resembling an 'X-Ray' style ribs and backbone. The round head outline contains three dashes which resemble eyes and a nose. Each of these motifs include stylistic elements which are characteristic, in a generalised manner, of Aboriginal rock art and of some modern Aboriginal painting. However, as a whole these motifs are not stylistically consistent with examples from Aboriginal rock art precincts across northern and central NSW.

In summary, the rock art in this shelter displays some stylistic traits which are evident in modern Aboriginal art, however the overall character of the motifs is inconsistent with pre-European Aboriginal, rock art traditions from surrounding regions. It is considered probable that these motifs date from the twentieth century. In the absence of information from the original creators of these motifs, it is possible to argue that they have been made to resemble Aboriginal art, based on a modern appreciation of popular Aboriginal art styles.



**Figure 9:** The two figurative motifs captured with torch lighting



**Figure 10:** The two figurative motifs captured with electronic flash

## Conclusion

The Ngimboung Cave was not able to be re-found. The escarpment where the cave is located is severely overgrown and the mapped location was not able to be reached by the survey team. The cave appears to be mapped outside of the quarry property boundary, approximately 420 metres east of the quarry borrow pit and the coordinates provided from the AHIMS search correlate to the sketch map in the site card.

A new Aboriginal site, the Moonimba Quarry Rockshelter, was recorded by this assessment, 800 metres north of the quarry borrow pit. The shelter includes a number of painted and drawn graphics, including names and initials, and two figurative motifs. It is considered probable that these motifs date from the twentieth century. The shelter has a rock shelf floor at the northern and southern ends with guano deposit in the middle of the shelter. Potential archaeological deposit may be present below the guano deposit, but the depth of any deposit is not able to be determined.

Both the Ngimboung Cave and the Moonimba Quarry Rockshelter appear to be located well outside the quarry area.

## Recommendations

1. A copy of this report should be provided to the Bogal LALC for their records.
2. The Moonimba Quarry Rockshelter should be registered on AHIMS as an Aboriginal site.
3. If any impacts to either the Moonimba Quarry Rockshelter or the Ngimboung Cave are planned a full cultural heritage assessment would be required. This would include the implementation of the NSW *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010*. The results of the full cultural heritage assessment would then need to be documented in an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR).
4. If impacts cannot be avoided it will be necessary to apply for an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) prior to commencement of ground disturbance activities.



## References

Everick Heritage Consultants Pty Ltd 2014 Cultural Heritage Assessment for the Moonimba Quarry.  
Report to Newmans Quarry and Landscaping Pty Ltd.