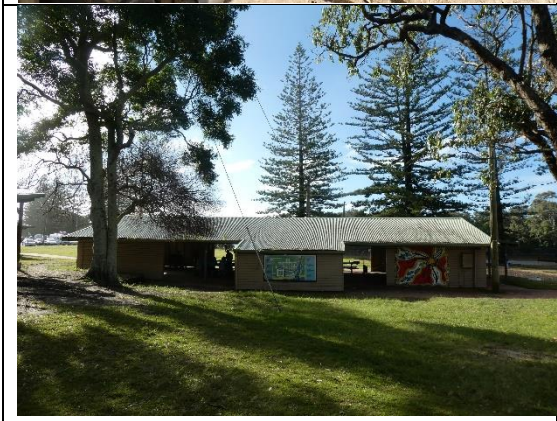


# Heritage Advisor Annual Report 2020-21

## Byron Shire Council



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Prepared by  
CLARENCE HERITAGE  
for Byron Shire Council

## **1. General Overview**

2020-21 saw high rate of activity in the development sector with an associated demand for advice on developments affecting heritage items, or within heritage conservation areas. Work was provided in the following key areas:

- 8 visits to Council
- 11 pre-Development Application assessments (similar to 13 in previous year)
- 48 Development Applications (more than double the 21 applications in previous year) as part of statutory management of development in relation to heritage items and Conservation Areas in the shire.
- 22 conservation/general advice meetings to assist in heritage management. (nearly double the 13 in previous year)
- Assistance and support to owners with grant applications under the Local Heritage Places grants
- Attendance at Heritage Panel meetings.
- Use of conservation incentives clause to promote heritage conservation.
- Preparation of heritage Assessment of several places for proposed inclusion as potential heritage items.

## **2. Site Visits and Advice**

I have carried out **66** site visits up to mid-April 2021, (compared to 41 in the previous year) and provided advice on a range of heritage matters outlined above. The take up of pre DA, and conservation advice is shown in the site visit table and shows increasing awareness of the availability of the free heritage advisory service and prior approval requirements. These meetings commonly address

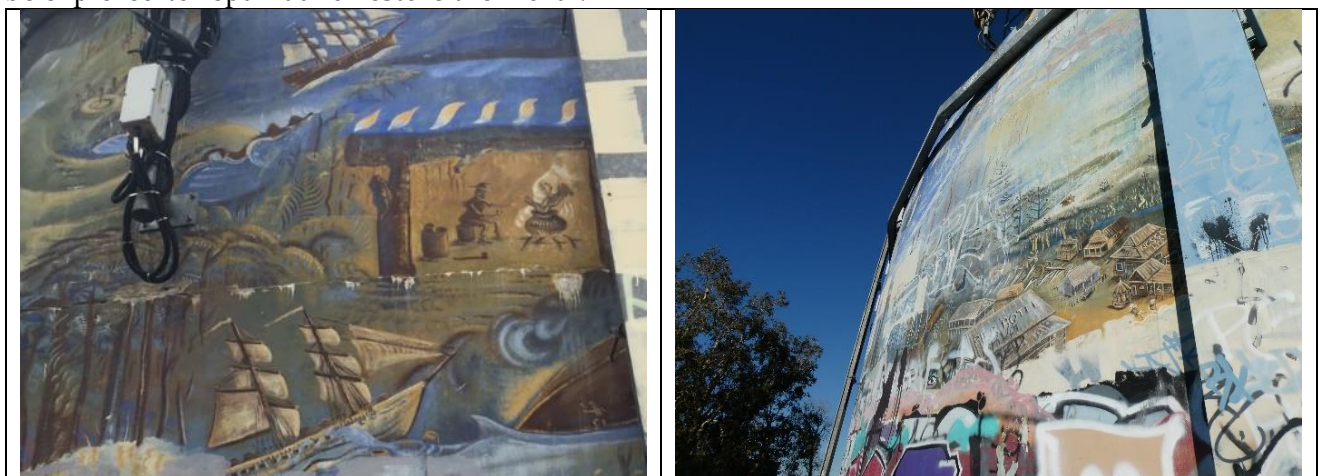
- questions about heritage listing and what it means,
- the use of correct materials approaches for conservation works,
- appropriate use of traditional heritage colour schemes,
- The exemptions clause which allow a range of 'minor' works and maintenance which can be authorised by written advice through a 'no fee' application.
- Advice on alterations and additions are which are permissible with consent.
- Discussion of pre DA proposals to identify any potential issues.

## **3. Pre DA Advice**

11 pre DA proposals were discussed in relation to heritage items or Conservation Areas. The free heritage advisory service and early advice is strongly encouraged as it helps to identify issues and explain the consent processes before any work is carried out and before applicants embark upon the preparation of detailed plans. Pre DA/ISEPP discussions included the NAB Bank in Mullumbimby which retains a high degree of original fabric to both the exterior and interior. Minor alterations were discussed to potentially isolate the residence in the future from the ground floor offices with no impact on historic fabric.



Discussion were held at **Byron Bay Water Tower** and telecommunication equipment and associated recommendations for conservation of the 1988 bicentennial mural , both of which are heritage items in Byron LEP. The mural has been painted over with graffiti on the lower level but some upper level elements are still intact. Grants could be explored to repaint and restore the mural.





#### 4. Development Applications

Due to property prices, and pressure for development, infill development is an ongoing challenge to the retention of historic contributory, mostly timber dwellings, their scale, form and appropriate settings within the Heritage Conservation Areas, particularly if they are not individually listed. The careful retention of these buildings is important to retain the significance of these precincts and their collective values. All proposals result in a cumulative impact, therefore every positive action helps to reinforce the character whilst every unsympathetic work has a cumulative negative impact on the integrity of the whole.

Examples of non-listed buildings included a DA to relocate the dwelling, Dickibusch at 19 Campbell Street at Bangalow on the allotment to facilitate an infill block. Research and assistance from the Bangalow Historical society provided important information about the significance of this house. The property was bought by John Nestor Ferguson the auctioneer in Bangalow and the house built circa 1914. It was named "Dickibusch after the place where his son Lieutenant Thomas Karl Ferguson died 11/10/1916 aged 23. He was with 47th Battalion. AIF and is buried at Ridge Wood Military Cemetery in West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, 1 mile S.E. of Dickebus and 2.5 miles S.W. of Ypres. Increasing awareness of the significance of places is something that public forums can contribute to through the consultation on DAs and role of local historical societies.





## 5. Byron Shire Local Places Heritage Grants 2020-21

Heritage grants are an important incentive and are often the catalyst to carry out conservation works to heritage properties. The Local Heritage Assistance Fund supported **xxx** successful projects in 2020-21. Projects included **guttering, removal of graffiti, restumping, repainting, verandah restoration, and window joinery repairs**. All projects helped to raise awareness of appropriate materials, colour schemes, and approaches to conservation and cumulatively enhance the conservation within the shire. The grant fund of **\$15,000** supported a total value of projects of approx. **\$xxxx000** showing a multiplier of over **xx** times. Local awareness of positive support for heritage owners also contributes to better public awareness and the building of a positive image for Council in nurturing a supportive governance of heritage conservation.

Examples of completed projects 2020-21	
Byron Community Centre Reconstruction of verandah	
Repainting of exterior of building	
Former Masonic Hall, Antique store Bangalow	

## **6. Heritage Panel**

The Heritage Panel meets three times per year and discusses a range of current issues and matters which are part of the adopted Heritage Strategy. The Heritage Panel is positive forum which reflects a keen community interest and desire to highlight concerns, protect and promote heritage in the Shire. The allocation and distribution of funding for the 2020-21 heritage grant applications was considered by the Panel.

A notification of all Development Applications in relation to Heritage Items and within Heritage Conservation Areas is also sent by e mail weekly to panel members. The panel does not have a decision role in development applications meetings but members may make individual submissions.

Following the heritage field day in Brunswick Heads to consider the heritage values of the village area, Council has now resolved to prepare a formal report to consider a potential Heritage Conservation Area in this village...

Several additional items of significance have also been put forward through the panel and there are proposals to include these in future LEP amendments. See Item 8.

## **7. Aboriginal Heritage Study**

The Bundjalung of Byron Bay Arakwal people are the Traditional Owners and custodians for parts of the Byron Shire. The need for an Aboriginal Heritage Study of Byron Shire is a current gap in knowledge and considered to be a priority in terms of heritage studies. The AHMNs database can be used to search records of known Aboriginal sites in association with development proposals and works, however this is not necessarily comprehensive and collaboration with LALC to further record sites of Aboriginal cultural significance. Council has applied under Heritage NSW Funding Programme for 2020-22 for funding for an Aboriginal Heritage Study and awaits the result.

## **8. Non-Indigenous Heritage**

The heritage study which underpins the current LEP was conducted in 2004 and includes a fairly comprehensive inventory database. Additional potential heritage items have been put forward by the community and highlighted through the heritage committee, and any member of the community may write in to express interest in the protection of a place for assessment.

Places that have been suggested including from owners include:

- Carabene Farmhouse, Ewingsdale
- Brunswick Picture Palace
- Bingo Housie Building Brunswick Heads
- 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 25, Lismore Rd, Bangalow. Group of Workers Cottages associated with George Reading.

Council has endorsed the recommendations of the Heritage Committee to prepare a proposal for a future LEP amendment.

## **9. Heritage Interpretation Signage**

There is scope to enhance an understanding of the heritage places within the Shire with a suite of co-ordinated heritage interpretation signage. Samples could be prepared for a selection of buildings for the towns and villages and rural areas of the shire. This would require funding and grant sources could be explored together with tourism and economic development. This would be an excellent project for collaboration with the Heritage Panel and could draw on expertise of local community members.

## **10. Conclusion**

Byron Shire Council continues to show strong support and commitment to heritage conservation and recognises the intrinsic value of conserving heritage, both built and natural, to the identity of the shire.

It has been an objective to focus advice at the pre DA and Conservation stage to provide more proactive advice than reactive. Although the past year was dominated by Development Application review each application presents an opportunity to review the item, and provide individual recommendations to assist in future conservation.

Development is not a question of 'one or the other', but about managing change in positive manner which retains those values. I look forward to another year ahead of positive work and projects with the Shire.

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**CLARENCE HERITAGE**

Deborah Wray B.A Hons, M.P.I.A. M. ICOMOS

[clarenceheritage@gmail.com](mailto:clarenceheritage@gmail.com)

PO Box 1759, GRAFTON, NSW 2460 | M: 0427 425558 | P 0266 444 000