



The Wollombi Valley Arts Council Inc is a not for profit incorporated body under the auspices of NSW Ministry for the Arts



The Aboriginal Arts & Culture sub-committee

was formed to enhance public appreciation, understanding & preservation of the many thousands of art sites along the Wollombi

This committee is a strong supporter of the Wollombi Cultural Centre where it meets on a regular basis



**The Aboriginal Arts & Culture sub-committee
members include representatives of many NSW tribal areas**

Arthur Fletcher, Chairman (& WVAC Vice President), Wonnarua man

Andrew Snelgar, manager Yarnteen College

Garry Jones, artist & co-ordinator of the seminar "Heritage of the Wollombi "

Claude Aliotti, WVAC President, producer film "Yengo of the Sandstone Country"

Bru Furner, Binghai Team

Dr. Tom Boleyn, Binhai Team

Peter Williams, Ngemba artist and dancer

Peter McDonough, artist

Paul Selwood, past WVAC President, artist

Paul Gordon, mgr Yarnteen Camp

The Wollombi Valley

is one of the most significant Aboriginal areas in NSW

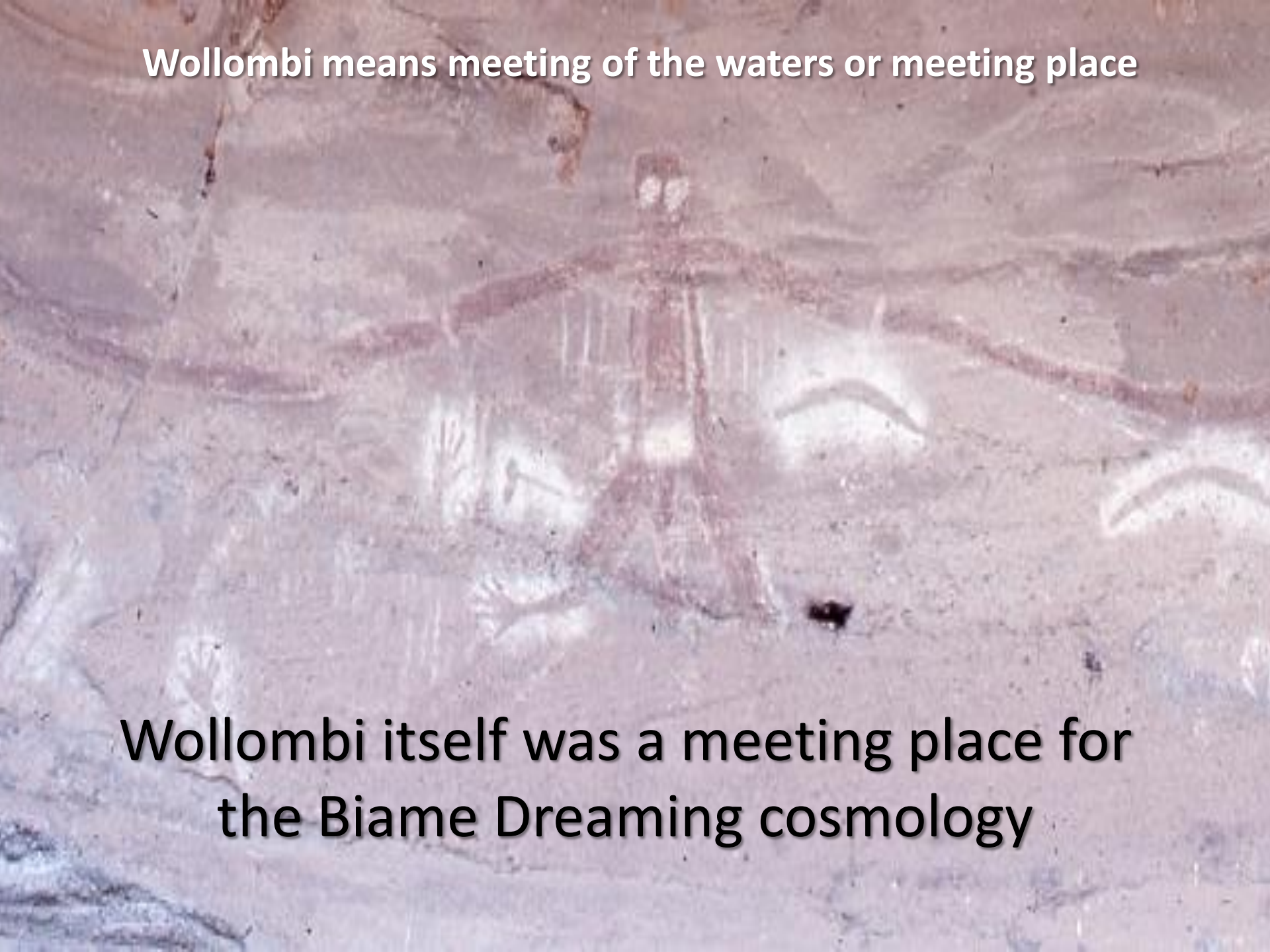
with the valleys and ridges surrounding

Mt Yengo

having over 3,000 (three thousand) identified art sites

Wollombi has been a place of pilgrimage for many thousands of years because of the importance of Mt Yengo in the creation cosmology of Aboriginal people in south eastern Australia

Wollombi means meeting of the waters or meeting place



Wollombi itself was a meeting place for the Biame Dreaming cosmology



which included such tribes as the Darginjung, the Dharug, the Awabakal the Gurringai, the Wonnarua, the Eora, the Gungahlin the Wiradjuri and the Gamilaroi

The rich hunting and fishing supported a large population of locals and visitors



All the caves were used for shelter and all the water courses were habitation areas and consequently are important archaeologically



There are recorded corroboree grounds along the Wollombi Brook

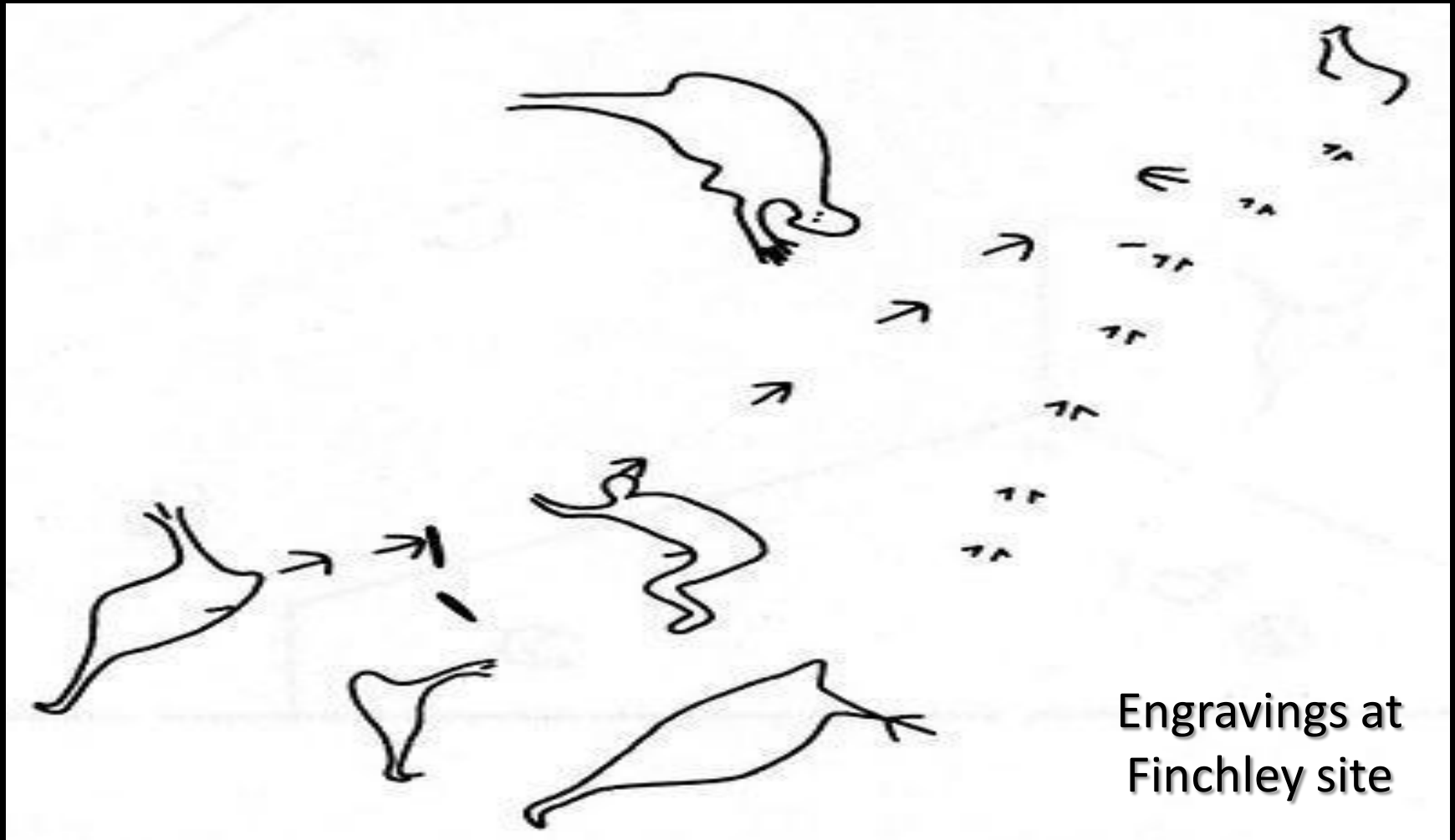


**as well as innumerable sites containing rock art and hand stencils
of high cultural significance & ceremony
to Aboriginal people today**



**The Department of Planning
requires Councils to consider
the special significance and
values of areas
in determining
appropriate zoning**

**This is particularly the case for the E3 zoning
proposed for the Wollombi Valley in the Draft LEP**



Engravings at
Finchley site

**We urgently request a zoning for Wollombi
that will protect and preserve these
Neolithic World Heritage sites**



Tiddalik the frog

Some sites on private land are already under serious threat if not irreparably damaged or destroyed by ignorance subdivision and or development

**We are very concerned that, it seems, Clause 10 (v)
of the General Development Principles
which currently places a restriction on development
that could “materially affect” the preservation of
“any identified site containing Aboriginal archaeological relics” & “places”**



**has been
removed and omitted
in the Draft Cessnock LEP**

A photograph of a person climbing a large, gnarled tree. The person is silhouetted against a bright sky. In the background, a mountain range is visible under a clear sky. The foreground is filled with the dark, intricate branches and leaves of the tree.

**the removal of Clause 10 v
Would not be consistent with**

State Environmental Planning Policies

The Burra Charter

The NPWS Act

The Museums Act

The 30 days Interim Aboriginal Heritage Act

The Australian Heritage Commission

or other legislation

**requiring consent authorities to assess
the significance of Aboriginal places**

Far too many times we have witnessed developers
(often relying upon unqualified people not practising Aboriginal lore)
making false statements that the Wollombi Valley
has no significance to Aboriginal people

It is an offence to destroy any site - identified or not!



This issue is far too important to Aboriginal people and future generations of Australians to allow it to be swept into the obscure recesses of a development control plan or any other guideline or instrument that is not publicly enforceable

An LEP is an “environmental planning instrument”



**as defined by the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 and
third party enforcement rights apply to ensure
that planning assessment of important issues is transparent and accountable**



**Removing these provisions from the LEP reduces protection of Aboriginal sites and places
thus removing a principal mechanism of transparency and accountability**
– the ability to challenge the adequacy of a development assessment in Court
Applying these provisions prevents liability by upholding the law

In summary



We deplore the failure of Cessnock City Council to recognise the Aboriginal significance of the Wollombi Valley in its current Draft Cessnock LEP 2009



We urge Cessnock Council to re-instate Clause 10 v



We feel the E3 would offer better protection for Aboriginal sites on private land and we could then support it with Clause 10 v re-instated

We do not believe the RU2 zone [even with Clause 10 v re-instated]
would offer the same protection



as it seems to permit mining, extensive agriculture,
sawmills and most disturbingly
"any other development not specified in (draft) item 2 or 4"

Any pressure of subdivision and increased population could translate into a potentially serious threat to the Aboriginal sites of the Wollombi Valley which are of World Heritage significance



Thank you for listening



Wollombi Corroboree 1990