

Boorabee and The Willows

Northern Tablelands, New South Wales

Declared an Indigenous Protected Area in March 2010



“The land is the way we can regain some of our culture. Boorabee and Willows will give them (youth) knowledge of their own land, give them ownership again.”

Trevor Potter, Ngoorabul leader

Boorabee and The Willows cover 2900 hectares, providing a home for one of Australia’s most iconic species — the koala.

The traditional owners of Boorabee and The Willows, the Ngoorabul people, recognise the koala as a totemic species.

The place name Boorabee itself is derived from the Ngoorabul word for koala ‘boor-bee’.

Today the Ngoorabul community continues this close relationship — maintaining a high-degree of respect for the koala by helping preserve the marsupial’s habitat and monitoring its population.

Both Boorabee and The Willows have deep spiritual significance for the Ngoorabul people. There are nine recorded cultural sites on the properties, with many others known to traditional owners.

Willows’ most famous landmark — the Severn River gorge — has its own creation story told to younger people and visitors to connect them to the land.

The story tells of a greedy, giant cod fish named Goodoo and the powerful magic man Biamme who punished the fish for its greed – in the process creating the gorge and the cod fish who live in the river today.

Conservation of bush food and medicine is also important to the Ngoorabul. Boorabee and The Willows contain endangered white box, yellow box and Blakely’s red gum woodlands.

The Ngoorabul continue to use their ecological knowledge to gather species on the properties including witchity grubs, black orchids and mookrum berries. Yellow belly and cod fish are caught in season, providing an important, healthy food for the community.

The Ngoorabul will use traditional fire management to provide a framework for their conservation activities.

Learning about fire from both elders and scientists including its effect on different habitats will empower the community and maintain Ngoorabul traditions and culture.

The Glen Innes Local Aboriginal Land Council purchased The Willows in 1987 after a successful application to the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council.

About 10 years ago the Indigenous Land Corporation helped Boorabee Aboriginal Corporation purchase three adjoining properties – Rosemont, Canoon and Boorabee.

The purchases led to the creation of the IPA, which the Ngoorabul hope will result in sustainable land management, new business and job opportunities while maintaining Ngoorabul culture and identity.

Like all Australia's Indigenous Protected Areas, Boorabee and The Willows are part of the National Reserve System — our nation's most secure way of protecting native habitat for future generations.

Declared in March 2010, Boorabee and The Willows are managed under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category VI, as a protected area with sustainable use of natural resources.

For more information about Indigenous Protected Areas, visit www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa

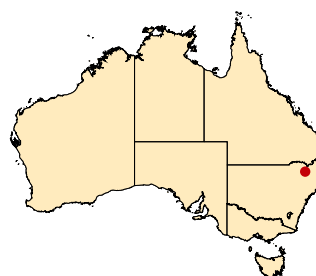


Photo Credits: The photographs used are courtesy of the Boorabee and The Willows Indigenous Protected Area and Parks Australia. Front – koala. Back – (Left) Boorabee volunteer. (Right) grass tree. (Middle) Severn River gorge. (Bottom) Severn River gorge.

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