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# Moreton Bay History

Following are some of the more interesting and important factors that affected Moreton Island.

## 1770

Captain James Cook named "Morton Bay" after the Scottish Earl of Morton on the 17 of May.



## 1793

In translations of Captain James Cook's journals "Morton Bay" was misspelled as 'Moreton Bay'.

## 1823

The first 'white visitors' arrived on Moreton Island; 3 convicts on leave from Sydney were caught in a storm and blown off course. After approx. 21 days at sea they beached their boat on Moreton Island and were helped by the local Aboriginal tribe (Ngugi). These 3 men were nursed back to health by the locals and then transferred to Stradbroke Island to the South and finally canoed back to the Mainland of Brisbane.

## 1825

The Moreton Island Aboriginal tribe (Ngugi) were ravaged by smallpox introduced by "white visitors".

## 1833

There was a massacre of the local Aboriginal tribe (Ngugi) between locals and some soldiers stationed on Stradbroke Island to the South. It is believed that the massacre took place on the eastern side of the island. The beach where the massacre was to be believed to have taken place was named 'Spitfire beach', as the aboriginals believed that the white man were spitting fire when guns were used against them.

## 1848

The township of Bulwer was established on Moreton Island as a pilot station. This township was named after Edward Bulwer Lytton ~ a British MP. This township was a small community and even included a school until the end of December 1909.

## 1850

The last of the local Aboriginal tribe (Ngugi) were forced to relocate to Stradbroke Island. Where descendants of the Ngugi tribe still live to this day.

## 1855

Brisbane increased in importance and this also increased the amount of shipping to & from this 'settlement' (which was to become the capital of the State, Queensland)

## 1855

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A ship carrying a cargo of sugar named 'Venus' was wrecked on a shoal North West of Combuyuro Point, this shoal was subsequently named "Venus shoal".

**1857**

The NSW Government built the Cape Moreton Lighthouse, it was 23 meters high and was built of local sandstone by 35 good behaviour civil prisoners.

**1858**

The Cape Moreton Lighthouse started operations! It was manually operated by oil lamps and clockwork mechanisms and stood 95 meters high. At one stage the community held 5 families with as many as 15 children attending the Cape Moreton School. Now the light is electric and only two staff are needed to keep it operative.

**1859**

Queensland became independent from New South Wales.

**1863**

Land sales at the township of Bulwer commenced.

**1865**

The navy left goats and pigs on Moreton Island for any shipwrecked survivors. (National Parks have since eradicated the goat population and are still trying to eradicate the feral pig problem).

**1883**

A grave was established South of Bulwer for a child who died at sea. This grave with a sandstone headstone was surrounded by a wrought iron fence.

**1890**

A telegraph line was constructed to link Moreton Island to the mainland. It ran from Bulwer south, then by underwater cable to Amity to connect with the already existing line there. It was later extended to Cowan Cowan and to the Cape Moreton Lighthouse however abandoned in 1952.

**1895**

The second grave was established beside the above mentioned for another child who died at sea, this grave had a marble headstone and a picket fence.

**1899**

A lighthouse was built at Cowan Cowan.

**1914**

World War 1 started and Cowan Cowan was established as a defence base. A signal station was built also a jetty and 2 naval ships were stationed at Cowan Cowan.

**1918**

At the end of World War 1 a gun was placed at the Cowan Cowan defence base.

**1930**

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2 ships were scuttled on the beach at the township of Bulwer.

**1930's (mid)**

2 ships beached approx. 8km north Koorringal.

**1943**

Approx. 900 troops were station on Moreton Island, during this time they constructed both Rous Battery road & Middle road. A naval station and a jetty were also constructed at Tangalooma.

**1950**

A Sydney based company "Whale Products Pty Ltd" was established and the site of Tangalooma was chosen for a whaling station.