

## **Aboriginal rock art in the Sutherland Shire**

The Sydney-Hawkesbury area is recognised as one of 17 traditional rock art areas in Australia. In Dharawal country, rock engravings on large flat sheets of sandstone are numerous, with an excess of 60 engravings sites in Sutherland Shire alone.

The rock engravings are usually simple outlines, typically depicting various types of animals of the local area, marsupials, fish, reptiles, and also human figures, all generally life-sized. Shelter art consists mainly of charcoal drawings, but red or white drawings are not uncommon. As is true for rock engravings, shelter art usually depicts local animals and also human figures. Hand stencils make up the balance of the shelter art, usually in red or white, with some shelters featuring dozens of stencils of both adults' and children's hands. There are some examples within the Shire of hand stencils of children as young as 2 or 3 years old.

The Port Hacking area has the special feature of containing many full sized engravings of whales and killer whales: on the Jibbon Headland; overlooking South West Arm near Maianbar Road; and on Burraneer Point. These engravings are consistent with the Dreaming Stories of the local Dharawal speaking people in which whales, killer whales, dolphins and porpoises occupy a central role.

**This information is to be used in the 'Guide book' for guides' reference only. Before publishing it or hanging the information on the wall, consult Bruce Howell as he will make changes to this information.**