

Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, Lion Island, Long Island and Spectacle Island Nature Reserves

NEW SOUTH WALES



A centre for biodiversity within the Sydney metropolitan area, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and adjacent island nature reserves are home to many plants and animals and provide a bush retreat for many people.

Covering an area of approximately 15 000 hectares, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park with its diverse vegetation, sandstone escarpments and picturesque waterways welcomes more than two million visitors a year.

The national park has been a conservation area since 1894 and includes Barrenjoey Head and West Head. Nearby, in the lower reaches of the Hawkesbury River, are the Lion Island, Long Island and Spectacle Island Nature Reserves, which contribute to the National Heritage significance of the area through outstanding biodiversity.

A diverse range of vegetation, from open forest and woodland to swamps and warm temperate rainforest, provide homes for a variety of plants and animals, including more than 1000 native plant species, 100 moths and butterflies and uncommon native animals such as the spotted-tailed quoll, the southern brown bandicoot and the eastern bent-wing bat.

Lion Island, adjoining the National Park, supports the largest and most successful breeding colony of little penguins in the Sydney region.

Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park gives Australians a strong sense of our cultural history, with sites that display evidence of Indigenous occupation over at least 7400 years. Two local clans, the Garrigal people from around Broken Bay and the Terramerragal people from the Turrumurra area, occupied Ku-ring-gai.

Traditional rock engravings and paintings dating back 600 years, grinding grooves, stone arrangements and over 800 documented burial and occupational sites within the Park provide a significant connection to our Indigenous heritage.

In the early 19th century, European settlers used the Ku-ring-gai area for timber and boat building. They also collected materials for producing important resources such as soda ash, salt and shell lime.

The section of Pittwater within Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park was closely associated with the writing of the Australian constitution. In March 1891 the Drafting Committee of the first Constitutional Convention revised the draft constitution aboard the paddle steamer *Lucinda* when it lay at anchor in the basin. Although this 1891 draft was not implemented, it later served as the starting point for the Constitutional Convention of 1897–98.

Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park is where the Hawkesbury River meets the sea. It holds secretive, winding creeks, sheltered beaches, hidden coves and wide expanses of deep blue water. Stunning landscapes, including drowned river valley estuaries, steep sandstone cliffs and plateaus dominate the area. These landforms date back to the early Jurassic and late Triassic periods making them approximately 190 to 225 million years old. Long, Lion and Spectacle Islands are remnant peaks from before water levels rose.

Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park is the earliest reserve established primarily for nature conservation. In the 1880s Eccleston Du Faur successfully lobbied the New South Wales Government to protect its native flowers from the threat of expanding settlement.

National Heritage List: 15 December 2006