

**Fraser Island was the first item listed on the Register of the National Estate. However within Fraser Island that are items individually identified as part of the National Estate. This Backgrounder describes two of them, the Sandy Cape Light Station and Bogimbah.**

## **Sandy Cape Lightstation**

Registered on the National Estate Register: 13/09/1977

**Significance:** Sandy Cape Lightstation, consisting of the lighthouse precinct and the powerhouse precinct is significant as being the second lightstation to be built in Queensland, after the 1859 separation from New South Wales.

It is also important for its association with the development of maritime aids along the Queensland coast, resulting from the rapidly increasing steamer trade in the 1860s to 1870s (Criterion A.4).

The lighthouse, built in 1870, is significant for its construction technique, using bolted prefabricated segments of cast iron imported from England, and along with Bustard Bay Lighthouse marks the beginning of a new trend in lighthouse construction in Australia (Criterion F.1).

Sandy Cape Lightstation, sited along a ridge overlooking the sea and surrounded by the Fraser Island National Park, is significant for its aesthetic appeal. The lineal development of the lightstation has been dictated by the ridgeline, which emphasises the landmark quality of the complex (Criterion E.1).

The grave site is significant for providing material evidence of the difficulties faced in the early period of European settlement, and illustrates the isolation and harsh living and working conditions of the lighthouse keepers' and their families, who constitute an early maritime community (Criterion A.4).

**Description:** The Sandy Cape Lightstation is located in a relatively remote area at the northern end of Fraser Island, surrounded by the natural vegetation of the National Park. Sandy Cape itself is a prominent headland running down to a low sandy point with irregular sandhills covered with vegetation. The northwestern boundary of the lighthouse reserve is marked by the sea, with a track leading up from the beach to the lightstation.

The lightstation contains the following two precincts, these being the non residential precinct (lighthouse, workshop, office, shed powerhouse, garage inflammable liquid store and bulk fuel store), and the residential precinct (Head Keeper's Cottage, Assistant Keeper's Cottage, fowl yard and shelter).

An item of importance in the vicinity of the lightstation, but which does not fall within a precinct is a small grave site to the south of the lightstation, consisting of several stone headstones surrounded by a low picket or paling fence.

The remains of a World War Two bunker are located in a gully some distance from the lightstation.

The lightstation is generally linear in layout, with buildings located along a sandy ridge running approximately north-west to south-east. The two keepers' residences flank the lighthouse and its associated buildings, while service buildings such as the power house, garage and bulk fuel store are located in a separate grouping about 80m to the south-east of the lighthouse. The areas immediately surrounding the buildings are cleared and grassed or paved, but natural vegetation completely surrounds the station.

The 26m high lighthouse is circular in plan, constructed of cast iron plates with splayed flanges at the base. The tower is conical in elevation, being approximately 7m diameter at the base, reducing to a diameter of approximately 4m at the lantern room. Access to the main tower is by an external iron staircase supported on brackets. The level beneath this is accessed by a door at ground level. The balcony is of cantilevered iron construction with a simple iron balustrade similar to that of the external staircase. The degree of detailing of window and door surrounds is an important feature of the lighthouse.

The building is original in plan with very little alteration to original finishes and details externally. Generally the internal structure of the

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lighthouse is original in plan. The original Chance Brothers lens has been replaced, possibly in the late 1930s. A spiral staircase, constructed of iron, with open work cast iron treads, abuts the external walls of the building. A cast iron catwalk in the lantern room is supported on ornate iron brackets.

The two keepers' quarters replaced earlier timber framed and weatherboard quarters in 1935. These buildings seem to be of a similar style to the quarters at Lady Elliot Island, the product of a general government design. Many of the service buildings are apparently of the same age, possibly constructed in the mid 1930s at the time that the residences were replaced. The majority of these are of similar construction with the exception of the more recent buildings such as the power house and inflammable liquid store.

The workshop, office and garage are all timber framed, lined with painted fibro cement sheet with cover battens. It has a gabled corrugated fibro cement roof with stainless steel gutters and timber framed double hung sash windows.

On 10 December, 1859, Queensland became a new colony after separation from New South Wales. Over 5,000km were acquired by the new colony, of which a large proportion was comprised of the hazardous and island dotted Great Barrier Reef. For all these hazards, Queensland had only one light, the Cape Moreton lighthouse which had been built in what was then New South Wales in 1857. The Sandy Cape Lighthouse, built in 1870 was the second lighthouse, after Bustard Head (built in 1868) to be constructed by the Queensland authorities.

The Sandy Cape area, including the lightstation grounds, is considered to be of significance to the Aboriginal community. The National Estate value of this component of the place's heritage has yet to be formally assessed.

**The integrity** of the lighthouse is high. No major architectural elements have been added to or removed from the building internally or externally, with the exception of the addition of aerials and other small equipment on the external balcony. The original Chance Brothers lens has been replaced, possibly when the lighthouse was converted to electrical operation. The two keepers' quarters are in good condition, with very little alteration apparent to external or

internal features. The integrity and condition of the older service buildings is good and they are in a well maintained condition.

### References:

Danvers Architects (1994). **Conservation Plan Sandy Cape Lightstation Queensland**. Prepared for Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Canberra.

**Lighthouses: Do We Keep the Keepers?** (1983). Report from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure. AGPS, Canberra

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Reid, G.,(1988). **From Dusk Till Dawn. A History of Australian Lighthouses**. Department of Transport and Communication. MacMillan, Sydney.

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## Bogimbah Mission Site

[Registered](#) on the National Estate Register: 13/09/1977

Approximately 314ha, Fraser Island, 15km west-north-west Happy Valley, comprising that area of land within a circle of radius 1km centred at AMG point: 9547-Happy Valley-048022

The Bogimba Mission has particular spiritual importance for the Badtjala, the Aboriginal descendants of the traditional owners of Fraser Island. The Bogimba Mission was the last place at which Badtjala people were gathered following European occupation of the island and many of the immediate ancestors of present day Badtjala lived there and are buried in the mission cemeteries.

The nominated place encompasses the area in which the Bogimbah Mission and associated cemeteries were located. The mission was initially a Government station (1897-1901) and then became a mission (1901-04).

**Condition and Integrity:** The mission infrastructure was physically completely dismantled and removed in 1904. All that remains are parts of a road and two cemeteries. The cemeteries have not been precisely located.