Moreton Island

Geography[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Moreton_Island&action=edit&section=1)]

The island covers an area of approximately 186 square kilometres (72 sq mi), and extends for 37 kilometres (23 mi) from north to south and is 13 kilometres (8.1 mi) at its widest point.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-naq-8) [Cape Moreton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Moreton), at the north eastern tip of the island, is the only rock outcrop on the island.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-imb-9) It was named *Cape Morton* by Captain [James Cook](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Cook) in May 1770, and was at that time assumed to be part of the mainland. The current spelling came about because of a clerical error later.

The highest point on the island is named [Mount Tempest](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mount_Tempest&action=edit&redlink=1), which at 280 metres (920 ft) [AHD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Height_Datum)  is reputedly the highest, stabilised, coastal [sandhill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandhill) in the world.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-imb-9)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-discover-10) Close to Mount Tempest is another large sandhill—Storm Mountain at 264 metres (866 ft) [AHD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Height_Datum) . High parabolic dunes are found along a central spine.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-tgc-11) Behind the beaches are many sand blow-outs where disturbances in natural dune vegetation has permitted high winds to blow sand inland.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-tgc-11)

Moreton Island has a few freshwater lakes. A number of perched and window lakes have formed on the island over many years. As the water table beneath the Island fills with rain water large lakes are formed, with Blue Lagoon being the largest and most popular on the Eastern side of the island. Honeyeater Lake, renowned for its birdlife is the smaller sister lake to Blue Lagoon. Dolphin Lake near Tangalooma named because it resembles a wild dolphin. The smallest and most impressive is Lake Trusiak near Bulwer named after Polish island adventurer George Trusiak.

Four small settlements exist on the western side of the island. The northernmost of these is [Bulwer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulwer%2C_Queensland) near the north western corner of the island, whilst [Cowan Cowan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cowan_Cowan) is approximately 4.5 kilometres (2.8 mi) further south. Approximately 6 kilometres (3.7 mi) further south lies the private [Tangalooma Island Resort](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tangalooma%2C_Queensland%22%20%5Co%20%22Tangalooma%2C%20Queensland). This former whaling station features the Tangalooma Marine Education and Conservation Centre (TMECC) and is known for its dolphin feeding and [wreck diving](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wreck_diving). Tangalooma is the main access point to the island with regular passenger ferry and vehicular barge services. The island's main airstrip is 1,000 metres (3,300 ft) long and lies between Cowan Cowan and Tangalooma. The other settlement is [Kooringal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kooringal%2C_Queensland%22%20%5Co%20%22Kooringal%2C%20Queensland) which is located near the southern tip of the island. This township has its own 500 metres (1,600 ft) airstrip and was serviced by a vehicular barge that ran to [Amity Point](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amity_Point%2C_Queensland) on [North Stradbroke Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Stradbroke_Island) until April 2009 when the barge was sold off due to limited business and high operation costs. A new vehicular barge called the Amity Trader now services the same route.

[Fort Cowan Cowan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Cowan_Cowan), an old [World War II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II) bunker and fortification complex that was used to protect the approaches to Moreton Bay, is located north of Cape Cowan Cowan. The bar between the two islands is known as [South Passage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Passage_%28Queensland%29) and is dangerous to cross in high seas.

History[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Moreton_Island&action=edit&section=2)]

Moreton Island is the traditional home of the Ngugi tribe.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-b150s-5) The islands contains numerous [shell middens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shell_midden), indicating Aboriginal occupation of the island for at least 2000 years.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-discover-10) While James Cook named the main headland on the island Cape Morton on the 17 May 1770,[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-b150s-5) Those that came after him wrongly used "Moreton" it was [Matthew Flinders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Flinders) who, on 31 July 1799, named the island.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-12) Castaways [Thomas Pamphlett](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Pamphlett), [John Finnegan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Finnegan_%28explorer%29) and [Richard Parsons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Parsons_%28convict%29) traversed the island in March and April 1823 before heading to the mainland via Stradbroke Island.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-imb-9) The Ngugi, who comprised an estimated 100 people, together with the [Nunukul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nunukul%22%20%5Co%20%22Nunukul) of [North Stradbroke Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Stradbroke_Island), clashed with whites establishing a presence on their islands, usually over matters related to native women. Between July 1831 and December 1832 some 30 to 40 of both groups were wounded or killed. In one sortie arranged by Captain Clunie of the [17th Regiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Leicestershire_Regiment), a score of Ngugi, surprised by a dawn ambush, were shot down at a fresh water lagoon near the southern end of Moreton Island.\*[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-13)

European residents settled on the island in 1848, after the *Sovereign* shipwrecked on the island and a [pilot station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilot_station) was established at Bulwer.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-imb-9) This pilot station was operated until 1909. The clipper [*Young Australia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Rover_%28clipper%29) was wrecked on Moreton Island in 1872.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island#cite_note-bruzelius-14)

# **Ngugi people**

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The **Ngugi** are an [Aboriginal Australian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aboriginal_Australian) people, one of three [Quandamooka peoples](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quandamooka_people%22%20%5Co%20%22Quandamooka%20people), and the traditional inhabitants of [Moreton Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreton_Island).

## Language

The [Ngugi language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_language) was called *guwar*, a term that, by extension served as one of the names for the people, reflects their word for "no" (*gowarliosislipotinoionalop*).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTETindale1974183-1) It was mutually intelligible with the other Moreton bay languages: [Tom Petrie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Petrie), who had mastered the Brisbane area [Turrbal language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turrbal_language%22%20%5Co%20%22Turrbal%20language) could, according to his daughter's reminiscences, understand the speech of Ngugi people from the island.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPetriePetrie19044-2) According to Anthony Jefferies, Guwar is a variety of [Bundjalung](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yugambeh%E2%80%93Bundjalung_languages), the population being a residue of speakers of that language who, when the rest of the [Bundjalung](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bundjalung_people) were forced south as a result of the expansion of the incoming [Yugara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yugara%22%20%5Co%20%22Yugara), much of whose terminology was then adopted into Guwar.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJefferies2011-3)

## Country[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ngugi_people&action=edit&section=2)]

The Ngugi lands covered the entirety of Moreton Island, in their language *Mulganpin* (Moolgunpin)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPetriePetrie1904317-4) and covered some 70 square miles (180 km2).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTETindale1974183-1) A legend explains the bar at [South Passage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Passage_%28Queensland%29) of Moreton Island as the residue of an old woman's bones. She pursued a young man from [Swan Bay east of north Stradbroke island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Stradbroke_Island) after he had stolen a firestick from her campsite. He stole a canoe at [Amity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amity%2C_Queensland) to get over to Moreton Island, and, hot in pursuit, so did the old woman, with each landing, one after the other, at [Gunemba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Moreton%22%20%5Co%20%22Cape%20Moreton). The lad, like [Achilles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achilles) among the maidens of [Skyros](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skyros), hid himself among a band of youths undergoing initiation, but the old lady twigged, venturing into the [corroboree](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corroboree), and, catching him, bundled him into her dilly bag, to haul him back home. He managed to shake himself loose, grasp some bone skewers used for combing, and stab her blind. Having turned the tables, he then put her in a canoe and let it drift out on the tide to a sandbank where she died, and her remains formed the Bar which is a feature of that strait.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPetriePetrie1904134%E2%80%93135-5)

## Ecology[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ngugi_people&action=edit&section=3)]

Moreton island has a thin soil cover, which, on the higher ground to the north is interrupted by stretches of swamp land. Fresh water springs were abundant. Wildlife consisted of many varieties of bird, abundant crabs, numerous [bandicoots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandicoot), and large numbers of venomous snakes, among them, [death adders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acanthophis), [Tiger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_snake), [Black](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-bellied_black_snake), [Brown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_brown_snake) and [Carpet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morelia_spilota) snakes.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPonosov19743-6)

## Society[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ngugi_people&action=edit&section=4)]

The Ngugi are considered to be one of three [hordes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Band_society) of what are known collectively called the [Quandamooka people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quandamooka_people%22%20%5Co%20%22Quandamooka%20people).

In his archaeological survey over the years 1963-4, Ponosov detected some 72 sites of traditional indigenous habitation on the island.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPonosov19746-7) The population of Moreton Island predating European contact is estimated to have been approximately 100, living in groups of 15 to 20. At least five clusters of spacious native huts along the north shore as far as Comboyuro Point (*Gnahmoonbilla*)[[a]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-9) were observed by the earliest visitors.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTESteele198488,_90-10)

[Lancelot Threlkeld](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lancelot_Threlkeld), using reports from a castaway who had survived among the Moreton Bay blacks, argued in 1824 that they were far more advanced than the more southern tribes, dwelling in hut settlements that had the appearance of small villages.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEEvans199251-11) One important site for habitation was the southern side of the Cape Moreton headland, since this was the only area where outcroppings of sandy ironstone existed. These sites were quarried to manufacture stone implements,[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPonosov19742-12) some of which they traded with the [Nunukul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nunukul%22%20%5Co%20%22Nunukul) on [Stradbroke Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stradbroke_Island).[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTESteele1984-13)

In fishing for mullet, the Ngugi like other Moreton islanders would beat the inshore waters with sticks to enlist the aid of porpoises, who would drive the fish beachwards.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTESteele1984-13) They were also expert in catching [tailor fish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bluefish) (*punba/dai-arli*), again enlisting porpoises. The major catches were done when westerlies blew, and Tom Petrie describes one scene he witnessed:

The sea would be calm, and there would be no sign anywhere of a porpoise (*Talobilla*); the blacks would go long the beach jobbing with their spears into the sand under the water, making a queer noise, also beating the water with the spears. By-and-by, as if in response, porpoises would be seen as they rose to the surface making for the shore and in front of them schools of tailor fish. It may seem wonderful, but they were apparently driving the fish towards the land. When they came near, the blacks would run out into the surf, and with their spears would job down here and there at the fish, at times even getting two on one spear, so plentiful were they. As each fish was speared, it was thrown to shore, and there picked up by the gins. The porpoises would actually be swimming in and out amongst all this, apparently quite unafraid of the darkies. Indeed,they seemed rather to be all on good terms, and I have with my own eyes more than once seen a blackfellow hold out a fish on a spear to a porpoise, and the creature take and eat it. One old porpoise was well known and spoken of fondly.He had a piece of root, or stick of some sort, stuck in his hack, having evidently at one time run into something, and by this he was recognised, for it could be seen plainly The blacks told me it had been in him for years, and they declared that the great man of the island had put it there,thus making him the big fellow of the tribe of porpoises.I have seen this creature take fish from a spear, and the white men working on the island told me they often saw him knocking about with the blacks. At all times porpoises would be spoken of with affection by these Moreton Island blacks (the ngugi tribe), who said they never failed when called to drive in fish to them.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPetriePetrie190469%E2%80%9370-14)

Several Ngugi names survive behind European transcriptions of their language, for the Cape Moreton headland area: *Mijin Boowell*, *Gunemba*, *Boogaram-calleem*, and *Cangallioon*. It has been conjectured that these terms refer respectively to the [midjin bush and berry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austromyrtus_dulcis%22%20%5Co%20%22Austromyrtus%20dulcis), *canumba* (honey), *boogaram* ([bullroarer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bullroarer)) or *buggeree* (*bugara*), i.e., the braided string used to swing the bullroarer.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTESteele198489-15) The cape was a ritual centre for [bora initiation ceremonies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bora_%28Australian%29). Nearby, according to [Thomas Welsby](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Welsby) who visited the island in 1900 and collected local lore, there was a cave in which, were anyone to enter it and scratch his head, he would be killed by a stone dropping from the cavern ceiling.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTESteele198489%E2%80%9390-16)

A Ngugi headman had a repute for developing fresh [corroboree](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corroboree) dances and songs, which he would think out after retreating to a place of solitude, and then introduce on his return.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPetriePetrie190424-17)

Ngugi women had a reputation for making excellent [dillies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dillybag) ideal for keeping fish, which they wove from [mat-rushes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lomandra_longifolia).[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPetriePetrie1904107-18)

## Mythology[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ngugi_people&action=edit&section=5)]

In Ngugi legend, *Warrajamba* who among adjacent tribes was a [rainbow serpent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_serpent), shed his blood and formed a red sandhill at Cowen Cowen.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTESteele198492-19) There were two key sandhill sites around which a legend, "The Lightning's Playground," was told.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEAnderson20019-20)

Another dreamtime legend regarding the Ngugi's island was that a [black snake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pseudechis) and a [carpet snake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morelia_spilota_variegata) travelled in a hollowed-out chestnut tree canoe from the [Pine River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pine_River_%28Queensland%29), over to Moreton island, harried by a dog that swam menacingly alongside them. Since the black snake was ill, the carpet snake steered the craft. After a time there, they smiled on finding the [dingo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dingo) had died of exhaustion, but their canoe had been swept away, cutting them off from their homeland. Eventually, scouring the island they slipped into the bay opposite [Southport](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southport%2C_Queensland), and managed to reach the mainland and work their way home.[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPetriePetrie1904129-21)

## History of contact[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ngugi_people&action=edit&section=6)]

As part of a campaign of retaliation also involving the Nunukul, after reciprocal hostilities broke out over the setting up of British military stations on the islands, Captain Clunie despatched armed parties on punitive raids. Between July 1831 and December 1832, in several clashes 5 Europeans died, and an estimated 30-40 Ngugi and Nunukal people were injured or slain. In one such sortie soldiers of the [17th Regiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Leicestershire_Regiment) encircled Ngugi camped at the fresh water lagoon on the southern end of Moreton Island, and killed a score of them.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEEvans199220%E2%80%9321-22)

The last members of the Ngugi tribe were, according to Tom Petrie, *Bournbobian*, by then blind and known as Kitty, and *Junnumbin* (Juno), both sufficiently alert that they identified Petrie after a lapse of a half a century simply by overhearing his voice.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPetriePetrie1904119-23)

## Some words

*targan* (ghost of the sea)

Alternative names[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ngugi_people&action=edit&section=8)]

* *Mugee*[[b]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-26)
* *Wogee*
* *Gnoogee*
* *Guar, Gowar, Goowar, Gooar*
* *Gowrburra*
* *Chunchiburri*
* *Booroo-geen-merrie*[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-FOOTNOTETindale1974183-1)

Notes[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ngugi_people&action=edit&section=9)]

* 1. [**^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_ref-9) reportedly meaning "place where the woman died"[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTESteele198491-8)
	2. [**^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_ref-26) their word for people in general (*mahgee* or mugee*).*[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ngugi_people#cite_note-FOOTNOTESteele198488-25)