

CHAPTER ONEINTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis was to survey Mt Yarrowyck and so illuminate the prehistory of the mountain, which is situated on the uppermost margin of the western slopes of the New England Tablelands of N.S.W.

The first archaeological research in the New England region was undertaken by Dr Isabel McBryde (1974). Her study involved an extensive survey of the three zones comprising the northern tablelands, i.e., the coastal zone, the tablelands and the western slopes. McBryde recorded "all types of sites based on systematic exploration" (McBryde 1974, 15)". Her survey was performed by seeking the assistance of "local guides, visiting areas known by them to contain promising sites" (McBryde 1974, 19)". On the whole McBryde fully utilized the information on the whereabouts of sites that was provided by historical societies and the community in general. Consequently her research resulted in extensive recording and documentation of ceremonial sites (bora rings and carved trees), burials, rock art sites and occupation sites from the three zones. Her regional survey resulted in the accumulation of large quantities of data for the northern tablelands and consequently her contribution to Australian archaeology is invaluable. McBryde's research was not restricted to archaeological surveying. From both the coastal zone and western slopes, she excavated a number of occupation sites. With these studies she successfully demonstrated a methodology in keeping with her contemporaries in the analysis of stone tool types.

In the Clarence Valley (located in the coastal zone), McBryde used Radiocarbon dating to establish a basal date 6,500 B.P. The pattern of stone material associated with these data indicates a three stage technological sequence. Pebble tools occur before and after the Bondaian phase (McBryde 1974, 236).