



# Discovering Bawley Point

A paradise on the NSW south coast



  
bawley  
BUSH COTTAGES

# The Bawley Coast

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# Introduction

A holiday on the Bawley Coast is still just like it was for our grandparents in their youth. Simple, sunny, lazy, memorable. Regenerating. This publication gives an overview of the Bawley Coast area, its history and its present. There is also information about our coastal retreat, Bawley Bush Cottages. We hope this guide improves your experience of this beautiful piece of Australian coast and hinterland.

Here on the Bawley Coast geological history, evidence of aboriginal occupation and the more recent settler past are as easily visible as our beaches, lakes and cafes. Our coast remains relatively unspoiled by many of the trappings of town life. Recreation, sustainability and environmental protection are our high priorities.

Landcare, dunecare and the protection of endangered species are examples of environmental activities important to our community. We are proud that Bawley Point marks the northern boundary of the Batemans Marine Park, of the complex ecology of our island Nature Reserves, of the long history of aboriginal occupation and our local aboriginal-heritage reserve, of our coastal and hinterland National Parks, of the peaceful, pristine Clyde River to the west and delighted by our environmentally important, intermittently open-to-the-sea, lakes. Most of all we are grateful for some 20km of the best surfing, swimming, sunbaking, diving, fishing and picturesque beaches on the entire New South Wales south coast, perhaps the world! We are happy to share our good fortune with you and we hope the memories you take home are good ones. Enjoy!

## *Bawley Bush Cottages—the publishers of this e-book*

Bawley Bush Cottages is a 36 acre retreat of natural forest and clearings beside Bawley Point's coastal lagoon "Lake Willinga". There are five separate cottages of different sizes and a multi purpose "function room" that also allows accommodation. Details are available on [bawleybushcottages.com.au](http://bawleybushcottages.com.au).

The owners' vision for Bawley Bush Cottages is a beautiful, essentially Australian, retreat that not only complements the local environment but features the use of local natural materials, as well as water and energy saving technologies.



**Bill Powell and Pip James, owners of Bawley Bush Cottages**

# Our history

## Geological heritage

From the layered sedimentary rocks in the cliff to the south of Merry Beach you can easily see our area's geological history for the last 600 million years. This period covers almost all the species explosions and extinctions on earth. Each layer tells its own story to the experts. It is interesting to walk across the flat rocks and see older, discrete igneous and other rock types and fossils embedded in the younger sedimentary layers being eroded away by the sea. The discrete rocks landed there after being gouged out by glaciers and then dropped by floating, melting icebergs onto what was then a silty bottom. To find out more about these processes join the annual ANU Open Week guided fossil walks or see the people at the local information centre who can help you engage a personal or group guide.

## Aboriginal heritage

Aborigines are believed to have used this area for the last 20,000 years. Some evidence for this, in the form of middens of discarded shellfish, is lost because sea levels rose 140m between the last ice-age low of 18,000 years ago and 5000 years ago. There is alternative local evidence for this age in rock workings and regional art sites. Dune-side middens built up over the last 5000 years of stable sea levels are readily visible at most headlands, particularly at Nundera and Murramarang. These tell stories. For example: men and women ate in separate areas. The larger shellfish were eaten by men with remains being found in one pile, remains of the smaller ones, eaten by women and children, are found in another pile. Stone tools traded by original people with provenance from distant parts of Australia have been found in significant numbers here and many are in Australian museum collections. Over the last 40 years many anthropology/archaeology students have earned their graduate and post graduate qualifications studying local evidential material. The NSW National Park Service protects and interprets the Murramarang Aboriginal area which contains the largest midden on the south coast. National Parks publishes a walking guide (from NP Ulladulla (Tel:4455 2116) or i-Centre (Tel: 4457 1350).



Murramarang beach, Bawley Point, looking out to Brush island. Used with kind permission Michelle Cuthbert (c)

## Settlement

The earliest European settlement here was called Murramarang. It is believed that this was the name local aborigines used to describe their people when white people first entered the district. A homestead, Murramarang House, with its three distinct gables was built with the assistance of convict labour in the 1830s. It was the centre of agricultural activities. It still stands, privately owned, in its original location and protected by a heritage order, just 400 metres south of Voyager Crescent on Murramarang Road.

Our three coastal holiday villages, Bawley Point, Kioloa and Merry Beach, were first occupied in the 1880s to house timber workers exploiting pristine spotted gum, turpentine, red-gum, ironbark and stringybark forests. Soon horse-drawn timber railways moved logs from forests to headlands for export by sea to Sydney. The timber was used in shipbuilding, general construction and wharves. There were sawmills at Bawley Point headland, Kioloa and Pebbly Beach that operated until the 1920s. Ruins of the Bawley mill and its loading gantry at Bawley Point, steel hauling rings at Nuggan and a boiler at Kioloa remain as evidence of those days. Kioloa timber-workers' hardwood cottages, originally built in 1911 and 1912, and now renovated and in use, can be seen lining the avenue at the ANU's Coastal campus. Rotational logging continues today in local state forests.

Bawley Point Guesthouse was the first holiday destination here. It opened in 1925 on the headland before being relocated in 1932. It put Bawley Point on the tourism map (operating continuously until it closed in 2002). By the 1950s camping grounds, caravan parks and holiday shacks had appeared.

Buy Bruce Hamon's book *They Came to Murramarang* at the newsagency to learn more of our history.



Children enjoying Willinga lake. It is open to the ocean in this photo.



# Wildlife

## Kangaroos and wallabies

A wide variety of wildlife can be seen in our area. Most commonly you will see eastern grey kangaroos, the dark brown and smaller swamp wallabies and medium-sized red-necked wallabies. Reliable places to see kangaroos are Kioloa oval, Pretty Beach, and alongside roads such as Bundle Hill Road or Forster Drive. Dusk is a good time to find them.



Eastern grey kangaroos. Used with kind permission Bob Milo InSight Fotographics. (c)

## Whales, dolphins and seals

In May-July and September-November whales pass by the Bawley Coast on their annual migrations. They can sometimes be seen in very close but best viewing places are from the headlands. Look for spumes. At the beaches and headlands it is not uncommon to see seals, penguins and dolphins.



A Southern right whale mother and calf close to shore at Gannet beach, Bawley Point, Winter 2010. Used with kind permission of Michelle Cuthbert. (c)

## Forest species

Forest species such as possums (brush-tailed and ring-tailed), gliders (greater, yellow-bellied, feather-tailed) all live here and are best seen by spotlighting at night.

## Birds

There are very many birds, the largest ones being sea eagles, ospreys, swamp harriers, black swans on the lakes and yellow-tailed black cockatoos. Migratory and seasonal birds include shearwaters, noisy friarbirds, white-winged choughs and the screaming channel-billed cuckoos. We also have a large population of parrots, ducks, cormorants, kingfishers and bower birds. Seen less often are the glossy black cockatoo (with red tail) which feeds only on casuarina nuts, *critically endangered* hooded plovers on the beaches and the *vulnerable* sooty oyster-catcher which you will see in pairs feeding on the rocky headlands.



Kookaburra. Used with kind permission Bob Milo InSight Fotographics. (c)



Glossy black cockatoos eating casuarinas nuts at Bawley Bush Cottages.



A hooded plover. Used with kind permission local shorebird volunteers.



Lorikeets are common in the Bawley coast area. Used with kind permission Bob Milo InSight Fotographics. (c)



# Activities

## Forest and mountains in our South

The Murramarang National Park containing patches of old growth forest lies to our south. You can drive on gravel roads through this area, or, starting from the Pretty Beach carpark, you can walk south along a stunning variety of untouched beaches or up to the top of Mt Durras. Mt Durras used to be settled and remnants of the Evans family farm purchased in 1980? by National Parks are still visible. At 283m high Mt Durras is the closest



A burrawang, which is a type of cycad. An ancient forest species, this local burrawang is *macrozamia communis*.

“mountain” to the sea on the entire NSW coast equalled in beauty of aspect only by the 80m high most easterly point of Australia at Byron Bay. It is possible to make a day of it by walking from the Pretty Beach carpark via Mt Durras to Pebbly Beach, world famous for its pictures of surfing kangaroos. But arrange to be picked up from Pretty Beach for transport back.

## Batemans Marine Park

In 2006 the NSW government gazetted a Marine Park all the way from 1km north of Brush Island and 5km from shore to 120km south. There are mapped (see i-Centre) No Take zones accounting for 20% of the Park in which recreational fishing is forbidden but the important thing is there is now almost no commercial fishing in the Marine Park. Marine ecology is now recovering from years of overfishing. Brush Island and Belowla Island, Nature Reserves in the north of the park, have been managed by National Parks successfully to eradicate rats enabling endangered colonies of sooty oystercatchers and penguins to recover from serious egg predation. Landing on these islands is prohibited but on a boat trip around them you may see seals, penguins and a variety of sea birds.

## Fishing opportunities

Boat-based fisherman say that inshore catches, especially of flathead and snapper, have significantly improved since establishment of the Marine Park. Launch your boat at either Bawley Point or Kioloa boat ramps. Report your intentions to Kioloa Marine Rescue ph 4457 1109, Channel 73(VHF) or 91 (27Mhz) and leave your mobile phone number. The most productive land-based fishing is off rocks at Nuggan Head, Bawley Point, and Merry Beach/Snapper Head and south of Pretty Beach. Rock fishing is very dangerous, take precautions. Common species caught are pacific salmon, tailor, black-



fish and bream. Bawley Point gantry, once used for loading timber onto vessels moored offshore is a high, relatively safe place for supervised kids to fish, great for squid and sometimes productive for ocean species. Beach fishing can be productive on any beach at the right time. The closest lake fishing by power boat is in Durras and Burrill Lakes. Fishing licences, advice and bait at Bawley Point and Kioloa shops. Prawning improves with each "dark" between November and February. Closest spots are Lakes Willinga (near the inlet) and Meroo. You may be interested in diving, snorkeling and/or abalone collecting (bag and size limits for abalone; catches are actively policed).

### **Views and an impressive tree near Termeil**

Early last century Termeil was a hive of hotels and timber workers' shacks. An icon of the area is the "Big Tree", now in the Murramarang National Park, a giant spotted gum which escaped death by logger. It can be visited by driving down the 18 mile peg road which is to the east off the Highway about 3km south of Termeil. Take the second left (before power lines) and then turn right. There is a great view of the surrounding area from Ingold's Knob, accessible from the Old Highway. Turn off the Prince's Highway beside the Termeil service station. There are more great views from the Old Coach Road.

### **The Clyde River**

Our Bawley Coast area is naturally bordered to the west by the Clyde River which rises south-west of Nowra. Authorities say it is the cleanest river in the state. If planning a visit you could consider packing a picnic and allowing a day to take in one or all of Pigeon House Mountain, Brooman, Yadboro, Shallow Crossing and Mt Mogood. Pigeon House (719m) is about 40 minutes drive from Bawley Point. Named by Captain Cook in 1770, it can be climbed from the carpark in about 2 hours (including return). Yadboro is a great riverside camping and BBQ spot (toilet facility). Shallow Crossing is roughly where the Clyde becomes tidal, below this point bass change sex to female and breed. Note that sometimes the crossing is impassable due to tides. Mt Mogood (392m), past Shallow Crossing, is great for anyone unable to climb Pigeon House Mountain. You can drive up a steep pinch in a 2wd car to the top and get a spectacular view of the hin-



**Humpback whales passing by.** Used with kind permission Tim Jamison. (c)

terland forests. A good road trip is to drive from Bawley through Shallow Crossing onto Nelligen and Batemans Bay

## Beaches and surf breaks

The Bawley Coast area has some great beaches and surf breaks. Many south coast beaches are smaller than north coast ones and, having less frequent, less strong rips, are generally less dangerous for swimmers. However no beach can be considered safe. None of our beaches are patrolled by life-savers. Swimmers must watch out for rips. The tell-tale sign of a rip is stiller green water and/or a foamy trail on the water's surface where the current is flowing. Use this link for more information on [beach safety](#). Do not swim when surf is big or there is an obvious wash running along the beach. The most consistent surf break here is at Sandmines, which is south of Brush Island farm. Park at the carpark on Murramarang Road and walk 250m up the path to the south-facing beach.



Aerial view of Brush Island.



Bawley reserve overlooking Bawley Beach.



Popular family spot, Gannet Beach, Bawley Point. Used with kind permission Bob Milo InSight Fotographics. (c)

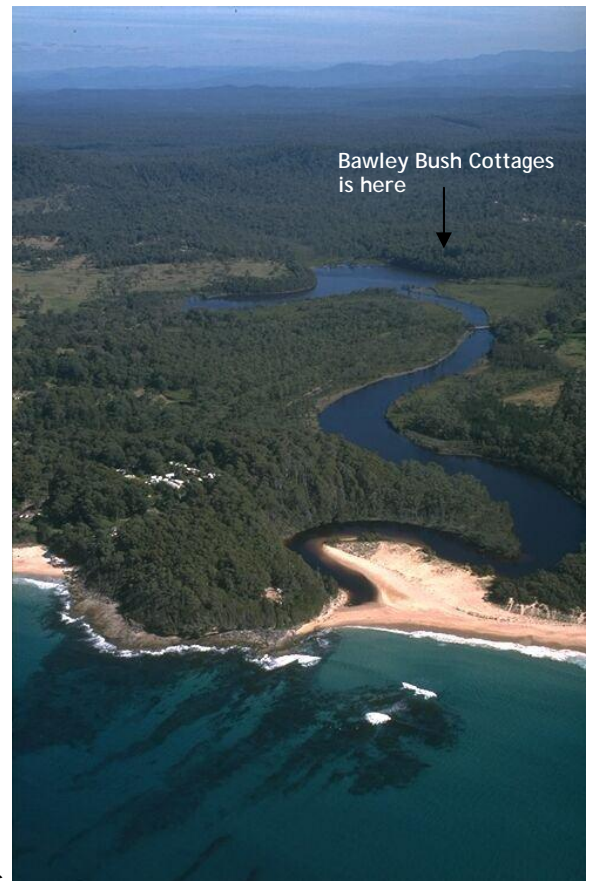


Local surfer. Used with kind permission Bob Milo InSight Fotographics. (c)



## Lakes

Our area has four of the 99 ICOLLS (Intermittently Closed and Open Lakes and Lagoons) that exist along the NSW coast. From the north these are Lakes Termeil, Meroo (the largest), Willinga and Murramarang (the smallest). These lakes are all subject to being closed off to the sea by storms causing a sandy beach berm to build up, thereby stopping tidal flow. As rainfall runoff causes the lakes to fill they become more and more tannin-stained because of the ti-tree species in their catchments and less and less saline. Fish and sea-grass species are fully adapted to salinity changes. Bird life cycles between wading and swimming and diving ones. When the lakes eventually fill they overflow washing the beach berm away in a spectacular flood of water, sand and fish. The lakes then become tidal and seeded with new life until the berm is once again formed and the cycle recommences. During their higher fresh water phases Meroo, especially, and Willinga are great places to peacefully kayak in.



Aerial shot of Willinga lake, Bawley Point. The lake mouth is closed here.



Black swans on Willinga lake, Bawley Bush Cottages.

## Bush walks/camping

There are good walking opportunities in our coastal National Parks. Free coastal camping is possible in the Meroo National Park near Termeil and Meroo lakes. There are composting toilets at Termeil and Meroo Points.



## Education facilities

In 1974 Joy London, a local large landholder who had lived in Kioloa since 1928, donated 384 hectares to the Australian National University for educational purposes. This was a wonderful perpetual gift consisting of ocean frontage, dunes, farmland and forest. Today the busy campus can accommodate up to 90 students coming here for short courses, seminars and field studies. Construction of a large multi-purpose lecture/arts facility started in 2010. Each January the campus has an open week with a variety of events including activities like rockpool walks and nighttime sky gazing.

Flannel flowers. Used with kind permission Christa Drysdale ©.

## Venue, games, playgrounds

Community room, tennis courts and an indoor games room for hire at Kioloa. Booking details are advertised there or can be obtained from the Visitor's Centre. Playgrounds are at Bawley Beach Reserve, Kioloa Community Centre (and caravan parks for guests).



Children enjoying the playground at Bawley reserve, adjoining Bawley beach.



## Mobile telephone reception/internet

Our community is seeking solutions to poor mobile reception and limited internet services. In the meantime if your equipment can't connect, you might find one of the following helpful:

- the internet computer at the newsagency (\$5 for 30 minutes)
- traveling to prominent rises or headlands for mobile reception.

The best local Telstra 3G reception is on the hill on Murramarang Road near the Bawley Shops.

At **Bawley Bush Cottages** there is some mobile phone service, particularly for Optus and Vodafone customers. Try the top of the hill if reception is a problem. Bawley Bush Cottages offers free wireless internet to guests. If unable to access this, guests can have limited ADSL internet access from the office at no charge. The office also has a fax but only very limited photocopy facilities. Commercial copying and faxing is available at Bawley Newsagency.

## Annual events

The ANU usually has an open week with various events in the first week of January) each year. Bawley Point has an Iron Man event on the second Sunday of January each year. Also in January there is the Kioloa Fair. Local vineyard, [BawleyVale Estate](#) have events such as jazz in the vines during school holidays and on weekends. A local music festival, Bawleystock, is often held in October. The local tourism information office at the Bawley newsagency will be able to give you specific information. (Tel: 4457 1350).



Left: Bawley Iron Man events  
Right: Musicians at Bawleystock

Used with kind permission Bob Milo InSight  
Fotographics. (c)



# Shopping, café, restaurants

## *Shops*

Bawley point has a shopping centre with an ATM, free parking, a public telephone and post box. There are convenience stores at Merry Beach (with ATM) and Termeil (with ATM). Chain and boutique stores and restaurants are available in Ulladulla, Milton and Batemans Bay.

The BP service station, Termeil, (Tel:4457 2552) at the corner of the Princes Highway and Bawley Point Road has fuel, an ATM, a convenience store with liquor department; open 7am-6.30 pm, 6am-10pm in January.

The Bawley Point shopping centre is on Voyager Crescent at Bawley Point. It has:

**IGA supermarket** (Ph 4457 1361) open seven days from 7.30am-6.00pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sundays. It has a butchery section, fresh fruit and veges and an ATM.

**Bawley Point Pharmacy** (Tel: 4457 2990) open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm and Saturday 9am-2pm. In summer holidays also open Sundays 9am-12pm. At other times there is also a rostered chemist open until 5pm on Sundays in either Ulladulla or Milton. You usually have to drive around to work out which one is open. There is no late chemist in the district.

**Bawley Bakery** (Tel: 4457 1499) open 8am-5pm Mon-Fri (closed on Tuesdays). In school holidays open on Tuesdays as well as 8am-1.30pm Sat and Sun. Supplies fresh bread daily, some cakes and pastries, milk and drinks.

**Bawley Bait and Tackle** (Tel: 4457 1384) opening hours vary, other than in summer holidays when they open seven days 8am-5pm. Supplies some hardware, bait, fishing gear, gas bottle refills, camping supplies and tick prevention products for pets, mosquito repellents and fishing licenses.

**Bawley Newsagent and Tourism information centre.** (Tel: 4457 1350) open seven days, Mon-Fri 7.30am to 6pm, Sat 7.30am-3pm, Sun 7.30am-2pm; summer holidays open seven days 7.30am-5.30pm. A "general store" type business supplying newspaper, magazines, books, stationery, gifts, swimming gear including cozzies, rashies and wetsuits, snorkeling and surfing equipment, spear guns, children's toys, lotto and postal services. Also provides faxing, photocopying and internet access as well as DVD rental.

**Bawley Takeaway** (Tel: 4457 1359) Burgers, fish and chips, sandwiches. Pizzas in early evenings of weekends (until 6.30pm). Sell fresh seafood on weekends such



as prawns and Clyde River oysters. Open Tues-Sun 9am-4pm, closed Mondays. In summer holidays open seven days 9am-7pm. Has outdoor tables.

**Linda's for Hair** (Tel: 4457 1394) open Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri 9am to 5pm, Sat 9am-1pm. Popular with locals and tourists alike, Linda del Riego is a local identity.

**Bawley Point Liquor Barn** A liquor outlet (Tel: 4457 1311) operates seven days from 10am-6pm, weekdays, until 6.30pm Friday and Saturday.

## *Local cafes and restaurants*

### **Bawley Beach Café**

A great local café for daytime coffee and lunches and evening pizzas. It's friendly and the coffee and pizzas are seriously good. Open Wednesday to Friday from 10am, weekends from 9am. Open in the evenings Thursday to Saturday. In the summer holidays after Christmas the café is open daily with bookings essential for the evenings. BYO. (Tel: 4457 1058) [www.bawleybeachcafe.com](http://www.bawleybeachcafe.com)



### **Merry Beach Café**

A friendly cafe that is part of the convenience store. There is outdoor seating and some indoor seating. Sandwiches, wraps, chips and burgers as well as coffee and drinks. Open 7am-4.45pm Mon-Fri; in summer holidays open 6am-6pm (Tel: 4457 1010)

### **Merry Street Bar and Restaurant**

A bistro that also does drinks and bar food from 2pm as well as breakfasts on the weekends. Expect to pay about \$30 for a main meal and \$20 for breakfast. Good food, reasonable prices and very friendly service. Licensed, no BYO. Open seven days in summer holidays, from 6pm weekdays and from 8am weekends After summer holidays ends, closed on Mondays. Bookings essential. (Tel: 4457 2020).

### **Bawley Takeaway**

A traditional Australian takeaway with plenty of outdoor seating. Burgers, fish and chips, sandwiches, coffee and drinks. See listing under "Shops" section.

## *District restaurants*

There are a number of well regarded restaurants within 30 minutes drive of Bawley Point. **Rick Stein at Bannisters** at Mollymook has a fantastic position with terrific ocean views and menus by Rick Stein (Tel: 4454 1933). Bannisters Lodge also has the "Pool

Bar" which is less formal and more affordable. It's open to the public from 6pm, except on Mondays. Enjoy pizzas, wine and cocktails overlooking the hotel pool out to sea. There is often live music on weekends. [www.bannisterspointlodge.com.au](http://www.bannisterspointlodge.com.au)

**Bacchus** at Milton (Tel: 4455 3449) has great modern Italian food and is very good value, as is the **Tipsy Fig** at Milton (Tel: 4455 3383). **Cupitt's** at Milton (Tel: 4455 7688) is in a historic stone building in a working vineyard with great views, and an open fire in winter. There is also wine tasting Wed-Sun or by appointment, for wines grown and made on the property. Rosie Cupitt is the coordinator of the south coast Slow Food Convivium. She is a real foodie, ask her about it. Fantastic rural and lake views...a place to linger.

South of the Bawley Coast there is [On the Pier](#) at Batemans Bay (26 minutes, travel 50m on the turnoff to Canberra from the highway and then turn left) which has an excellent wharf/riverside location and good seafood (especially the platter for two \$120). Main course \$25+, (Tel: 4472 6405). In Batemans Bay on North Street we also highly recommend the more casual **The North Street Café and Bar** (Tel: 4472 5710). The tappas style and waterside [Barkala Kitchen and Bar](#) is also well worth visiting. (Tel: 4472 1888). [Monet's Cafe Restaurant on the Waterfront](#) has great atmosphere and service, an excellent chef and overall the best food in Bateman's Bay. 5 Orient Street, Batemans Bay in the St George Arcade. (Tel: 4472 5717).

Further south, [The River at Moruya](#), (40 minutes drive south) has now lost the Chef's hat it won in 2006 but we highly recommend it for its food and ambience. Make it part of a longer day out; Moruya has a great market on Saturday mornings. Licensed, mains are around \$30 and the wine list is expertly chosen. (Tel: 4474 5505).

## *Vineyards and berry farm*

### **Bawley Vale estate**

This vineyard on Murramarang Road just up from Willinga Road picked its first vintage in 2005 and it produces award winning wine. Please try some. Cellar door sales available. The vineyard often has wine dinners and jazz in the vines at holiday times (Tel: 4457 2555)

### **Fern Gully Winery**

The south coast's longest established winery is Max and Glenda Staniford's *Fern Gully Winery* on the Highway just north of the Termeil turn-off (see signs on Highway). Call in and say g'day to Max. Cellar door sales available.

### **Clyde River Berry Farm**

While in the Clyde River/Brooman area in summer we recommend stopping off at Ron and Robyn's berry farm to pick yummy blueberries (December and January).



## *Massage and beauty*

Renee Andersen is a qualified masseur and beauty therapist (Tel: 4457 2627) [bawley-massageandbeauty.com](http://bawley-massageandbeauty.com)

Toni Sim offers beauty and waxing services, in Kioloa (Tel: 4457 1536)



Willinga lake beach adjoining Willinga headland.

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## *Tourism information centre*

Brochures, directions, accommodation bookings etc are available from friendly people at the visitors' i-Centre, at the newsagency, Bawley Point shops (Tel: 4457 1350).