

Search is on for evidence of Hunter's originals

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A SEARCH for evidence of the first people to inhabit the Hunter will be made in September when an archaeological survey for aboriginal artefacts and sites is undertaken on the Merriwa Plateau.

The survey will cover the area travelled by the Kamorloi people, believed to be the first to come to the Hunter over the Liverpool Ranges, long before the arrival of white settlers.

It is hoped the area will yield much information about the 'pre-history' of the Hunter, and property owners in the Merriwa area are being asked to help.

Ms Annmaree Lloyd, the archaeologist who will undertake the study on behalf of the Wanaruah Land Council, said a number of open camp sites and artefacts, such as stone tools, had already been found on the plateau.

Searches would also be made for grooves in sandstone made by aborigines grinding tools to a sharp point, and hearth or burial sites.

The plateau was one of the few remaining areas in the Hunter that had not been disturbed by mining, and it was important to search for these things and record them be-

fore any more development took place, Ms Lloyd said.

One of the priorities was to encourage more property owners to contact the Land Council and give permission for Ms Lloyd to study on their land.

As the land council could only claim Crown land and had no right privately owned land, there was no danger of farmers losing their paddocks if a site were to be found on them, she said.

The search for sites and artefacts will be undertaken by Ms Lloyd between September 28 and October 8.

— Dominic Hughes