

## St Alban's, Boggabilla, NSW

St Alban's Anglican Church in Boggabilla plays a very valuable role as part of an extensive parish in the far north of New South Wales.



Aerial view of Boggabilla

Boggabilla has a population of about 650 people and lies at the junction of the Newell and Bruxner Highways on the Macintyre River. Its name means 'full of creeks' in the language of the Kamilaroi traditional owners, who maintain a significant presence in the district. The Kamilaroi are an Indigenous Australian nation inhabiting north-eastern New South Wales and south-western Queensland.



The Kamilaroi are one of the four largest Indigenous groups in Australia, traditionally occupying over 75,000 square kilometres. Bianca Gardiner-Dodd is a Kamilaroi woman and artist with cultural ties to Bundjalung through her husband and children. Here is her work, **Eternal Forces**.



Local Customs House Museum

White settlement in Boggabilla began in the 1840s and land was quickly taken up on account of the very fertile, well-watered black soils. It was declared a town in 1863. Goondiwindi, across the Macintyre River in Queensland, is close by and the local Customs House Museum recalls pre-Federation times when the movement of goods was taxed between States. It has a lively Face Book page and looks well worth a visit. The nearest large NSW town, and the centre of local government, is Moree 115 km away.



St Alban's Church stands serenely on a large, tree-studded block not far from the north-south Newell Highway. With its steep iron roof, white walls and pointed windows it is very characteristic of so many small churches seen throughout the Australian landscape.



Many of these, like St Alban's, date from the late 19th or early 20th century, built to meet the needs of closer rural settlement, with country people far less mobile than they are now.

Boggabilla's first rector, the Reverend William John Gerard, is said to have served in the district from 1901. The church was built in 1907 and dedicated that year, before being moved to its present site in 1915. Below is an image of the church before it's recent renovation.



Boggabilla is now a Parochial District within the Anglican Diocese of Armidale. The District encompasses, besides St Alban's, the communities of North Star, Yetman, Croppa Creek and Poppinguy, which are scattered within the large Moree Plains Shire. We understand that services alternate between these places and thus help to bring their communities together.

The Moree Plains are a rich agricultural region, producing wheat, cotton, other broad-acre crops and sheep and cattle. In 2021, floodwaters from the Macintyre River isolated Boggabilla but stopped short of reaching the town itself.

As the junction of two major highways Boggabilla, although small in size, is an important traffic through-point and also welcomes visitors. Perhaps its best-known tourist attraction is the delightfully named Wobbly Boot Hotel, made famous by iconic Australian Country and Western Singer, Stan Coster.



AUSTRALIAN ANGLICAN  
CHURCH CALENDAR

Its rousing chorus goes:

In the town of Boggabilla by the Macintyre River  
Where the ducks are plenty and the fishing's beaut  
Come and wallow in the leisure of the ease and the pleasure  
'Cos time means happy at the Wobbly Boot.

