

Historical Heritage Impact Assessment Addendum Report - Hut site, Nyangay pastoral holding (PEC-E-H4)

EnergyConnect (NSW – Eastern Section) Buronga to Wagga Wagga, NSW

Executive Summary

In 2021 Navin Officer Heritage Consultants developed the Historical Heritage Impact Assessment (HHIA) to support the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for EnergyConnect (NSW – Eastern Section).

In the course of the historical research carried out for the HHIA an early hut site PEC-E-H4 was identified. This former historic hut site was part of the early establishment of Nyangay pastoral holding. Access to the property was not available during the main field survey program for the EIS. To mitigate and manage potential heritage impacts during the construction and operation of the proposal, mitigation measure NAH4 was included in the EIS, which recommended that PEC-E-H4 be subject to heritage survey and assessment when access was available. The assessment is required to confirm its current status as either standing, ruins and /or archaeological deposit and to assess its significance.

Following public exhibition of the EIS, a submission was received from the Heritage Council of NSW which requested that the further survey and assessment of PEC-E-H4 be completed prior to determination of the proposal, with the additional information from the heritage survey submitted as part of the response to submissions phase. This Historical Heritage Impact Assessment Addendum Report (herein referred to as the Addendum Report) fulfils the requirements of mitigation measure NAH4 and the request for the additional information required by Heritage Council of NSW to be included as part of the response to submissions phase. This Addendum Report provides the results from a field survey of the early hut site (PEC-E-H4), which was carried out on March 8th, 2022.

The field survey confirmed that there are no extant remains of the hut or tank that were noted on the historic plans. A small scatter of domestic debris, consisting predominantly of glass and ceramics was noted nearby but outside of the proposal's disturbance area. The range of material is consistent with a domestic hut occupied from early to late nineteenth century and is likely to be a rubbish disposal area associated with the dwelling. This material was highly fragmented and entirely within an area that has been previously cleared for farming and the existing transmission line that parallels the proposal area. Based on the findings of the heritage survey of the early hut site (PEC-E-H4), it has been assessed as having low archaeological potential.

The artefact scatter's location in relation to the proposal's disturbance area and the existing transmission line easement would be noted and managed (NAH3) and the unexpected finds protocol applies to the adjacent project area (NAH5). NAH4 as reported in the HHIA has now been completed.



1.0 Introduction

In 2021 Navin Officer Heritage Consultants developed the HHIA to support the EIS for EnergyConnect (NSW – Eastern Section). This Addendum Report supplements the HHIA and provides further assessment of the historic early hut site on the Nyangay pastoral property identified in the HHIA as PEC-E-H4. Assessment of this site was not possible during the original field survey program due to property access issues.

1.1 The proposal

EnergyConnect (NSW – Eastern Section) (herein referred to as the proposal) extends for approximately 540 kilometres between the existing Buronga substation to the existing Wagga Wagga substation. The proposal is located within the Wentworth Shire, Balranald Shire, Murray River, Edward River, Hay Shire, Murrumbidgee, Federation, Lockhart Shire and Wagga Wagga LGAs in regional western NSW.

Transgrid is seeking approval under Division 5.2, Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act) to construct and operate the proposal. The proposal has been declared as Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI) under Section 5.13 of the *Environmental Protection and Assessment Act, 1979 NSW* (EP&A Act).

The proposal was also declared a controlled action on 30 September 2020 and requires a separate approval under the (Commonwealth) *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The proposal is subject to the bilateral assessment process that has been established between the Australian and NSW governments.

1.2 Purpose of this Addendum Report

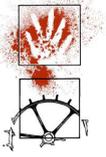
This Addendum Report supplements the HHIA. The purpose of this Addendum Report is to document the results of the heritage survey of historic heritage site PEC-E-H4, and to identify and assess the potential impacts of the proposal on this site, a former historic hut potentially dating to the 1830s on the Nyangay pastoral property. This Addendum Report also responds directly to the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the proposal, mitigation measure NAH4 in the HHIA and the feedback received from the Heritage Council of NSW on the HHIA during public exhibition of the EIS, as provided below:

Heritage Council of NSW noted that as the Nyangay Pastoral Holding hut site has been identified through desktop research only, the Historic Heritage Impact Assessment stated that an archaeological survey will occur when access is available to investigate the structure and identify any potential for impact. Heritage Council of NSW noted this additional information should be provided for comment during the response to submissions stage.

Heritage Council of NSW also noted that design finalisation will attempt to avoid/minimise direct impacts to the item, including options for siting the tower and access track and supported this approach.

1.3 NOHC Fieldwork Personnel

This Addendum Report was prepared by senior heritage consultant and archaeologist, Ngaire Richards who also prepared the HHIA that was appended to the EIS for the proposal. Ngaire has a Bachelor of Arts Informatics (Hons) from the University of Sydney and over 10 years' experience working as a heritage consultant.



2.0 Background to PEC-E-H4 (Hut site, Nyangay pastoral holding)

GDA2020 MGA Zone 55: 286795.6139823

Site PEC-E-H4, is a former historic hut site located on part of Nyangay pastoral holding and was identified through a thorough review of archival maps as being located in the heritage study area for the HHIA. Access to this part of the proposal construction impact footprint was not possible during the historic heritage survey completed during the preparation of the HHIA and therefore the physical status of the hut and its remains could not be confirmed at the time that the original report was completed. A historic heritage survey of the location which was identified as the location for PEC-E-H4 in the HHIA was completed on 8th March 2022 to enable an assessment of the site and its heritage significance and potential to be undertaken.

The Nyangay pastoral holding (Holding no. 43) is located in the central division, approximately 40 kilometres south of Hay, west of the Cobb Highway (Figure 2-1). The site lies in the Edward River Council, just south of the boundary with the Hay Shire Council.

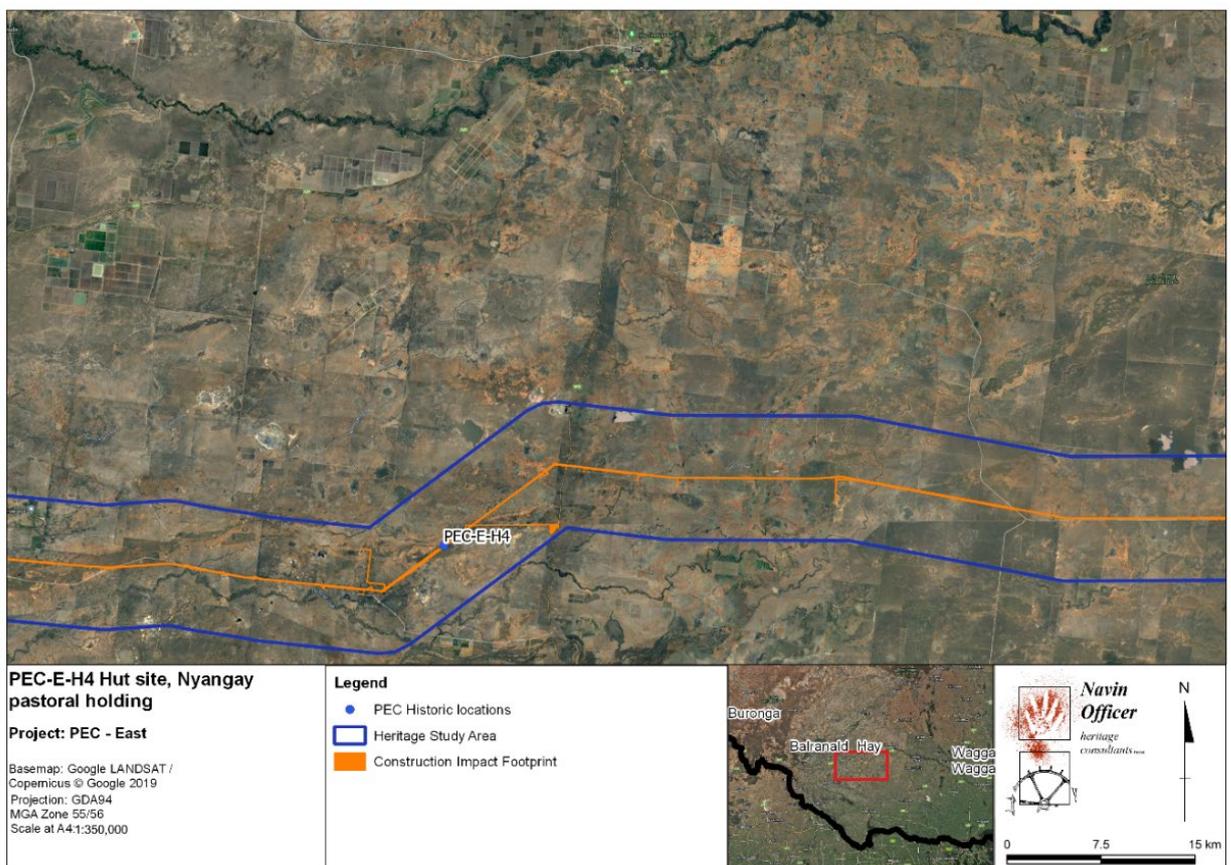


Figure 2-1 Location of PEC-E-H4, Nyangay pastoral holding Hut site

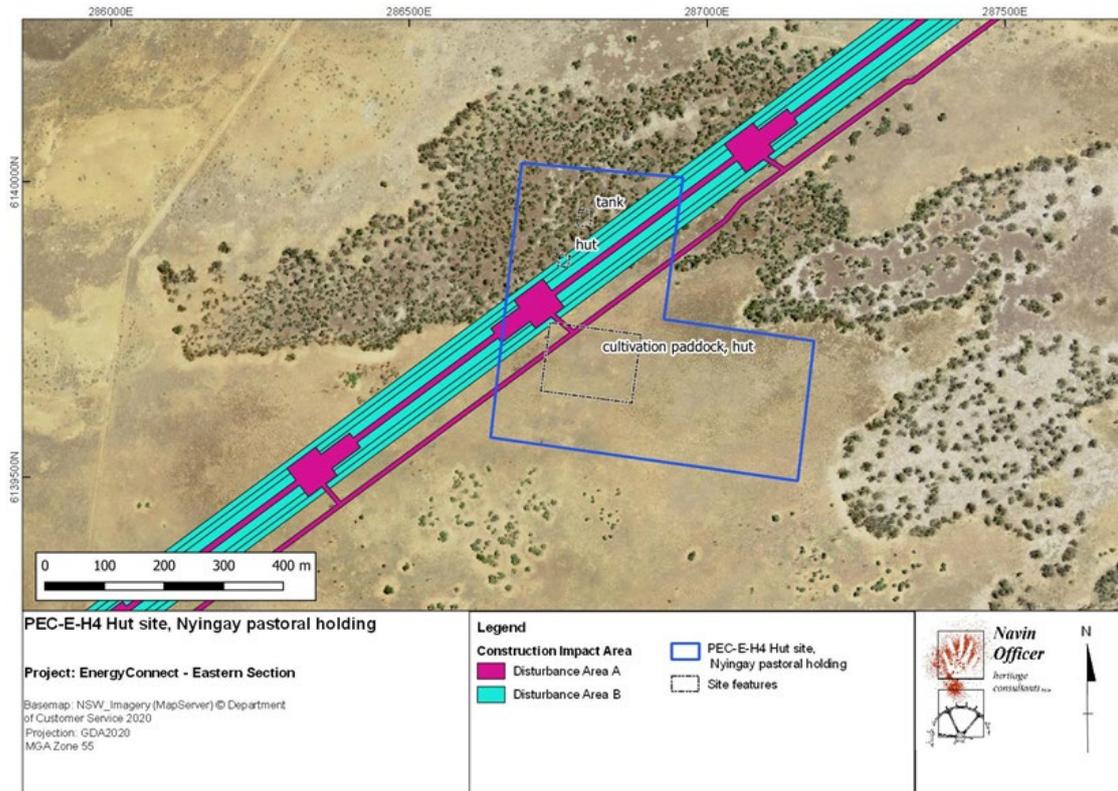
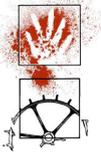


Figure 2-2 The location of PEC-E-H4 as deduced from archival sources prior to field verification and expected relationship to the construction impact area

2.2. Historical information

A review of the Nyangay pastoral map (undated, however likely c1880s), showing the Nyangay [sic] & Bald Hill Runs identified the site of two huts, a tank and cultivation paddock on the Bald Hill Run (Portions 5 and 12, Parish of Quandong, County of Townsend).

By the 1840s, squatters had begun occupying land in the Riverina, moving into less favourable country to the west of Wagga Wagga. Nyingay (which appears to be the earliest spelling) was a "back block", located between the Murrumbidgee and Billabong Creek, to the south of the holdings of Mungadal and Eli Elwah which had Murrumbidgee River frontage.

At the time of the introduction of the *Crown Lands Occupation Act 1861*, the Nyingay squatting run was held by Dr. Thomas and Gideon Lang. The Lang brothers were pastoralists who purchased a number of holdings in the area from the late 1840s, including the neighbouring runs of Mungadal (in 1848), Pevensey (1849) and Eli Elwah (*The Riverine Grazier*, 10/11/1893, p. 2; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 10/8/1849, p. 4.). In 1864, the run was converted into a lease (*New South Wales Government Gazette*, 12/1/1864, p. 82).

In 1867, the Nyingay station was offered by the Lang's for sale by private contract, with 12,000 sheep included. Improvements noted on the property included "a house, with store, men's hut, out-station huts, and two first-rate wells and dams complete, &c" (*The Argus*, 18/4/1867, p. 3.) It was purchased by Mr Michael Curtain for £13,200 (*The Ballarat Star*, 2/5/1867, p. 2.).

While previously regarded as little value, by the mid-1870s Nyingay was considered of almost equal worth to the stations with river frontages on the Murrumbidgee because of its rich pasturage. A newspaper article mentions that a "large and comfortable" residence had been erected (*The Riverine Grazier*, 4/8/1875, p.2).



An undated (post-1884) plan of the Nyangay holding indicates the hut site was within the leasehold area. Parts of Portion 5 and Portion 12 are shaded yellow, indicating the site was within a proposed Improvement Purchase. Improvements indicated by notations on the map included 2 huts, a tank, and a cultivated paddock (Figure 2-3).

By 1878 Mr Curtain had died (*The Riverine Grazier*, 16/11/1878, p. 4), and on the 1880 map of the parish of Quandong, the landholders of Portion 44 (78 acres), formerly that part of Portion 12 with improvements, are shown as P.B. & R. J. Curtain, the Trustees of the late M. Curtain (Figure 2-5).

Portion 44 was sold to Patrick Bonaventure Curtain and Robert John Curtain of Bald Hill Run as improved Crown lands in 1886. The partnership of P.B. & R. J. Curtain as sheep farmers was dissolved in 1891, and the title of the property was transferred to Patrick Bonaventure Curtain who continued the business (*New South Wales Government Gazette*, 29/5/1891, p. 4030). He applied for an extension of the pastoral lease on Nyingay in 1894 (*The Riverine Grazier*, 24/4/1894, p. 2).

In 1899, Portion 44 was purchased by Dalgety and Company Limited, and was sold in 1917 to grazier Robert (Roy) Carstairs Simson of the neighbouring Mungadal Station (Certificate of Title (CoT) Vol. 805 Fol. 177).

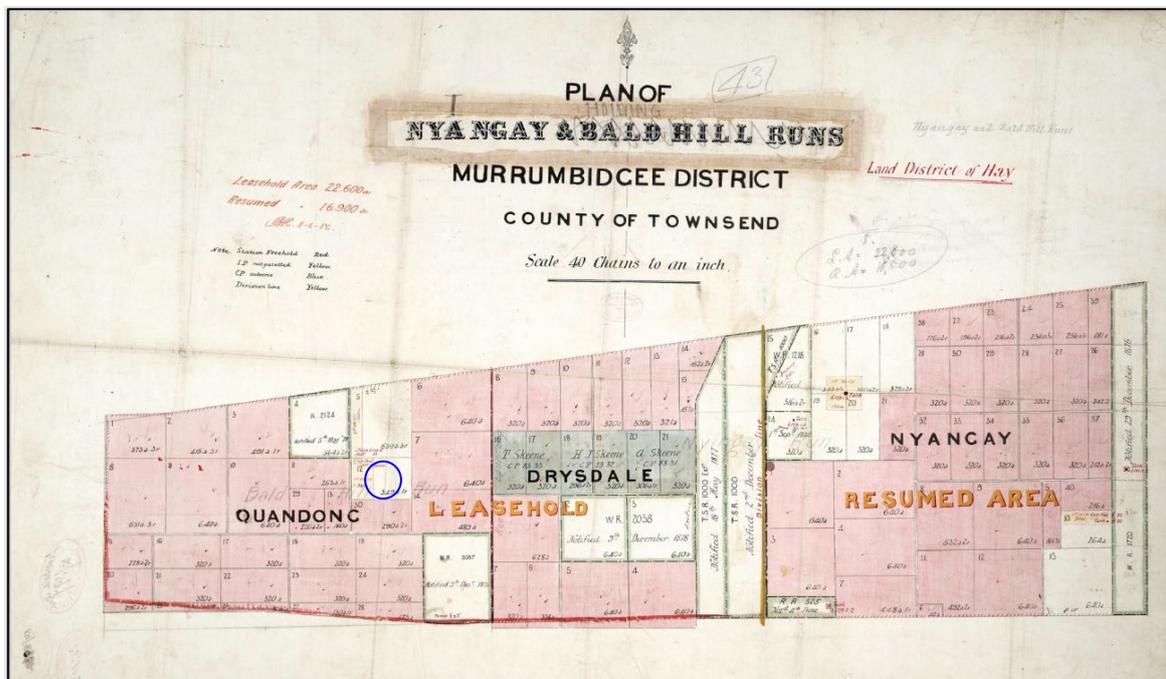


Figure 2-3 Undated plan of Nyangay [sic] Holding (formerly Nyingai & Bald Hill Runs) (Source: HLRV LRS). Item of interest marked by blue circle.

The location of PEC-E-H4 is circled in blue.

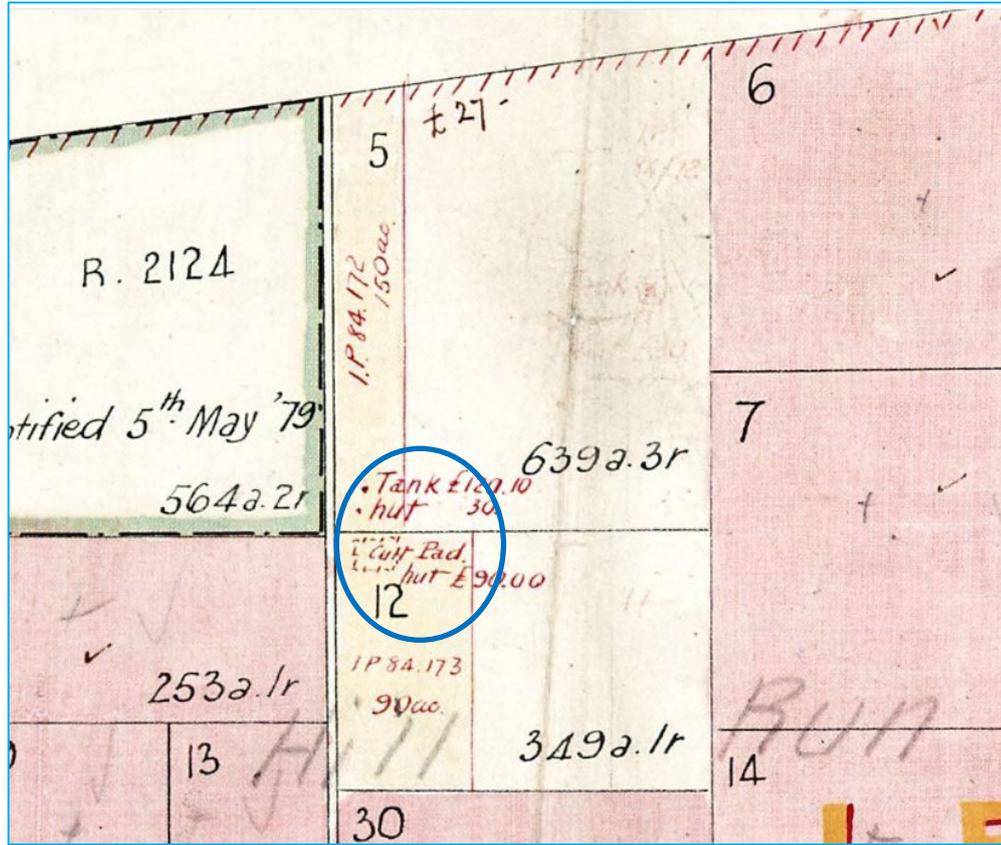
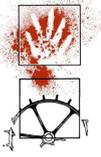


Figure 2-4 Detail of plan showing improvements on Bald Hill Run (Source: HLRV LRS)

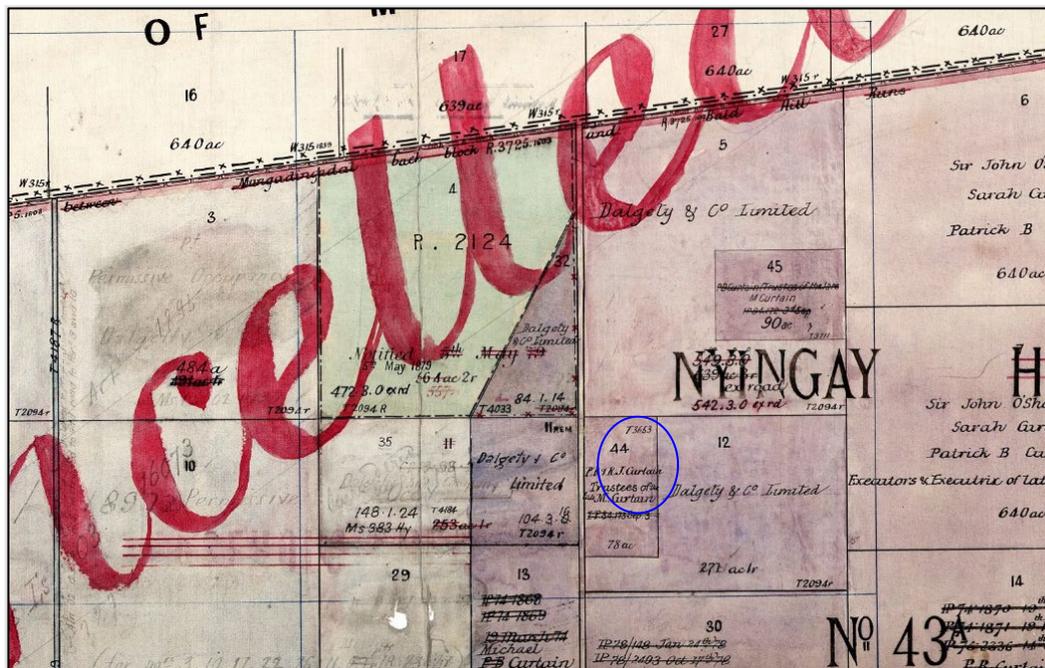
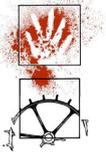


Figure 2-5 Detail of map of the Parish of Quandong, Sheet 1 Edition 1 (1880-1904) (Source: HLRV LRS.) The approximate location of PEC-E-H4 is circled in blue.



3.0 Field Survey Results

On the 8th March 2022 the location of PEC-E-H4 was surveyed by archaeologists Ngaire Richards and Amy Sandkuhl. Several representatives of the Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) involved in the concurrent Aboriginal heritage survey were also present; Anthony Jones and Tjinda Keefe of Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council, as well as Graham Martin of JLL property consultants.

No extant (standing) remains of a hut were located during the field survey, however an area with historical debris was visible and likely relates to a rubbish disposal area associated with the original hut site. The historical debris material included a range of glass and ceramic fragments (see Figure 3-1) typical of the archaeological signature of a small early to late nineteenth century rural hut. The material was highly fragmented and includes broken glass of various colours, metal including part of a stirrup, household ceramics and fragments of a clay smoking pipe. There is obvious disturbance to the deposit from rabbit burrows.



Figure 3-1 Sample of the historic debris- including a variety of glass, ceramic and metal fragments.

The location of these remains is outside the proposal disturbance area and within the area cleared for the adjacent existing transmission line easement. Figure 3-2 shows the scatter and its proximity to the existing transmission line and the nearby creek. Figure 3-3 shows the historic artefact scatter and its relationship to the project area.



Figure 3-2 looking northward across the scatter of historic artefacts.

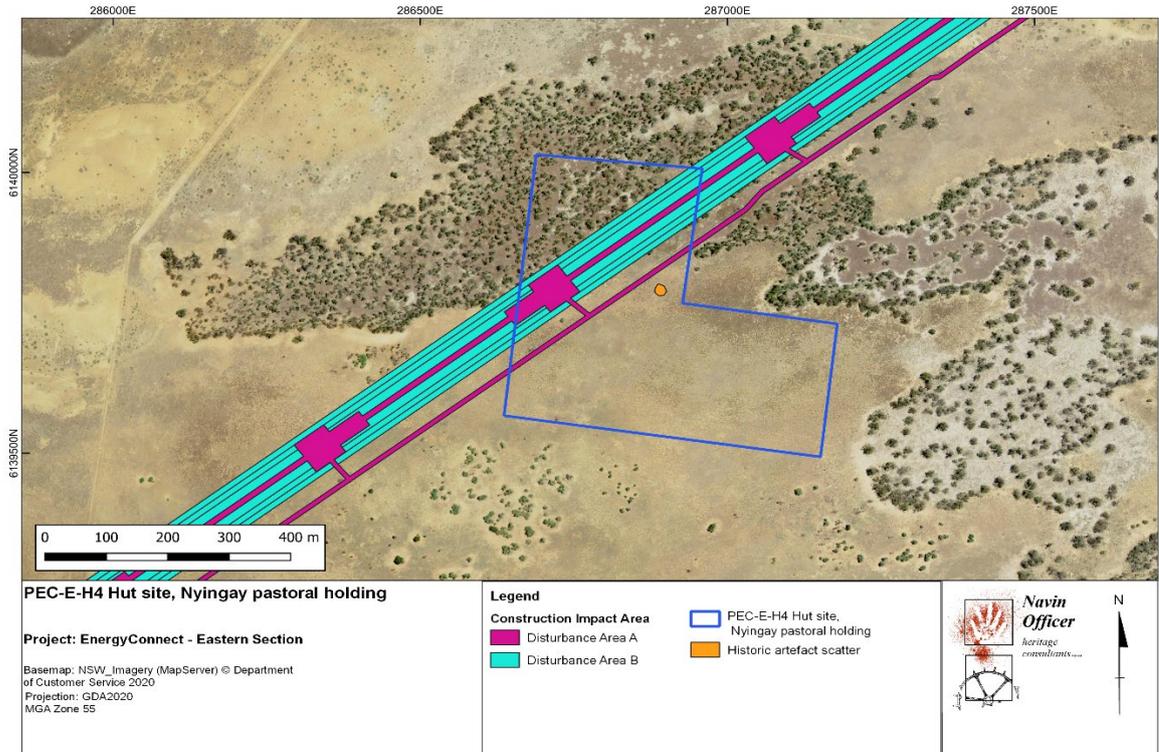


Figure 3-3 The historic artefact scatter in relation to the project area and with the original Nyingay pastoral holding boundary overlain.



4.0 Heritage significance PEC-E-H4

Survey of the location of the former hut site revealed that there are no longer any standing structures at PEC-E-H4. The location of the former hut site is however marked by a small scatter of domestic household debris consistent with a modest hut from the nineteenth century. The presence of the debris indicates the location of an area of archaeological potential.

There have been few archaeological investigations of these early historical occupation sites associated with the large pastoral runs of early to late nineteenth century in western NSW. Unfortunately, the structures at PEC-E H4 identified from early historical maps have not survived. While a scatter of fragmented material consistent with an early to late nineteenth century dwelling was observed, it is within an area that has already been cleared and impacted by land use activities including farming and the clearing for the existing transmission line that parallels the proposal disturbance area. The archaeological debris that remains is assessed as having local significance under criterion e): *an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

Summary statement of significance

Nyangay grew from a squatters "back block", located between the Murrumbidgee and Billabong Creek in the 1830-40s to a substantial landholding within the region by the late nineteenth century. The archaeological site at PEC-E-H4 is associated with the once common modest domestic habitation site typical of early squatters runs. While such modest hut sites were once common, few have been retained and /or studied as conservation efforts have focussed on the substantial and often grand homesteads of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that superseded the modest beginnings of the early squatters.

Unfortunately, there remains no visible evidence of hut or tank structures. A visible surface scatter of domestic debris is the only physical indication of the hut's likely location. Given the disturbance from past land use and past and ongoing impacts from rabbits, the site has low potential to yield significant archaeological evidence to inform our understanding of life on a modest pastoral run before and during the transition to a successful and substantial property.

5.0 Impact Assessment

The visible remnant of PEC-E-H4 lies outside the proposal disturbance area (see Figure 3-3) and therefore will not be impacted by the proposal. Given that the precise location of the former hut and any associated structures cannot be determined, an unexpected finds protocol will apply.

Table 5.1 Summary of indicative impacts to historic sites

Site name	Description	Listed significance	Disturbance area	Impact to item	Will proposal impact the significance of an item?	Can significance be protected through mitigation
PEC-E-H4	Hut site, Nyangay pastoral holding	Not Listed #	Outside	No	No	Yes.

#Note archaeological deposits are protected irrespective of listing



6.0 Mitigation Measures

For a full list of all heritage mitigation measures related to the project please see the HHIA (NOHC 2021). The relevant mitigation measures to manage potential historical heritage impacts associated with PEC-E-H4 are listed in Table 6.1 .

NAH4 requires the physical inspection and assessment of PEC-E-H4. As this requirement has been met by this Addendum Report, that mitigation measure may now be removed from requirements. While the visible physical remains (the scatter of domestic household debris) are located outside the proposal disturbance area it is within the cleared easement of the adjacent existing transmission line and therefore it is recommended that NAH3 and revised NH4 (formerly measure NAH5) still apply. While it is extremely unlikely that subsurface evidence of the actual huts or other structure that may once have been associated with them remain within the proposal disturbance area it is appropriate that the unexpected finds protocol would apply (revised NH4 (formerly measure NAH5)).

Table 6.1 Mitigation measures relevant to PEC-E-H4

Reference	Mitigation measure	Timing	Applicable location(s)
NAH3	The locations of known heritage items in close proximity to the construction impact area and the relevant protocols to avoid and manage any potential harm to the items would be communicated to all relevant construction personnel prior to construction commencing in that area.	Pre-construction and construction	Transmission line and adjacent area
NAH4	PEC E H4 would be subject to heritage survey and assessment when site access is available. If the site is found to contain or has the potential to contain features of heritage conservation significance, the final construction methodology will be adjusted as far as practicable to avoid harm. If harm can be avoided, exclusion fencing would be installed to protect relevant parts of the site during construction. If parts of the site that contain or have the potential to contain features of heritage conservation significance would be subject to ground disturbance during construction, an archaeologist would recommend appropriate measure mitigation/management measures, which might include archaeological excavation and salvage (where appropriate). The archaeologist's recommendations would be implemented prior to the commencement of any activity that could harm the features of heritage conservation significance.	Completed No further action required	Transmission line
NAH5 NH4	If at any time during construction, any items of potential historic heritage archaeological significance, or human remains are discovered, they would be managed in accordance with an unanticipated discovery protocol that is aligned with the protocol in Appendix 1.	Construction	All locations.