

*Connell Wagner Pty Ltd
ABN 54 005 139 873
116 Military Road
Neutral Bay
New South Wales 2089 Australia*

*Telephone: +61 2 9465 5599
Facsimile: +61 2 9465 5598
Email: cwsyd@conwag.com
www.conwag.com*

Cumberland Plain Woodland Assessment

***M7Hub Estate Masterplan, Old Wallgrove
Road***

Prepared for:

***Macquarie Goodman Management Pty
Ltd***

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1. Introduction

1.1 Proposed Development

This report has been prepared to assess the impact on native vegetation along the frontage of Old Wallgrove Road on the site known as the M7 Business Hub ("the M7 Hub"). This site comprises a large parcel of land zoned for employment development situated at the corner of Wallgrove and Old Wallgrove Roads, Eastern Creek (Figure 1). The report includes a seven part test to determine the impact of removal of a small area of Cumberland Plain Woodland regrowth.

As part of the development of the M7 Hub, a number of developments have been approved including a large Coles Myer National Distribution Centre ("NDC") on the southern side of Old Wallgrove Road (DA 283-11-2004i). A new development is proposed immediately adjacent to the NDC which known as the proposed Coles Meyer Chilled Distribution Centre ("CDC") which is shown in Figure 2.

Access to the NDC has been approved from Old Wallgrove Road. This has included removal of vegetation classified as Cumberland Plain Woodland along Old Wallgrove Road. An "eight part test" for that vegetation removal was carried out by Anne Clements & Associates Pty Ltd in November 2004 which concluded that the removal of 0.11 hectares of isolated Cumberland Plain Woodland would not represent a significant impact on this endangered ecological community.

As a result of the site planning, it is now proposed that the access to the NDC and CDC will be from a point along Old Wallgrove Road further to the west and that a new electrical easement to an approved substation be installed. This will necessitate the removal of 0.45 hectares of Cumberland Plain Woodland although 0.15 hectares previously identified for removal would be retained (refer Figure 3 which details vegetation that has been removed and vegetation proposed to be removed). There would thus be a net loss of approximately 0.3 hectares.

Consequently, there will be a need to modify the development approval for the Coles facility. This report has been prepared to assess this modification which involves clearing of vegetation along Old Wallgrove Road.

This report also addresses the wider implications of development along the Old Wallgrove Road frontage to the M7 Hub including road widening. It is noted that there is no vegetation along most of the frontage of Old Wallgrove from the M7 junction to the area where the Coles sites are located. A small stand of vegetation which has been identified as Cumberland Plain Woodland exists on part of this road frontage (refer Figure 4).

1.2 Background to the Assessment

The M7 Hub site has been subject of a wide variety of environmental assessments as follows:

- Anne Clements & Associates, *Flora Assessment, Brickworks – Wallgrove Road Eastern Creek* (August 2004).
- Anne Clements & Associates, *Assessment of Impact of Proposed Electricity Substation: Brickworks Development, Wallgrove Road Eastern Creek* (30 November 2004).
- Anne Clements & Associates, *Assessment of Impact of Proposed Distribution Centre, Wallgrove Road Eastern Creek* (10 November 2004).
- Anne Clements & Associates, *Assessment of Impact of Proposed Coca Cola Industrial Development and Proposed Industrial Subdivision: Brickworks Development, Wallgrove Road Eastern Creek* (February 2005).

- Anne Clements & Associates, *Assessment of Impact of Proposed Kimberly Clarke Industrial Facility, Wallgrove Road Eastern Creek* (February 2005).
- Anne Clements & Associates, *Search for Pultenaea microphylla on Coles Meyer Site and Adjoining Old Wallgrove Road to the north, Eastern Creek* (March 2005).
- Anne Clements & Associates, *Vegetation Management Plan: Brickworks - Wallgrove Road Eastern Creek* (December 2005).
- Ambrose Ecological Services Pty Ltd, *Proposed Kimberly Clarke Warehouse & Associated Infrastructure, Old Wallgrove Road Eastern Creek: Fauna Survey and Assessment* (February 2005).
- Ambrose Ecological Services Pty Ltd, *Proposed Coles-Meyer Distribution Centre, Old Wallgrove Road Eastern Creek: Fauna Survey and Assessment* (February 2005).
- Ambrose Ecological Services Pty Ltd, *Proposed Coles-Meyer Ltd Chilled Distribution Centre, Old Wallgrove Road Eastern Creek: Fauna Survey and Assessment* (March 2005).
- Ambrose Ecological Services Pty Ltd, *M7 Business Hub, Corner of Wallgrove and Old Wallgrove Roads Eastern Creek: Fauna Survey and Assessment* (May 2005).
- ERM, *SEPP 59 Lands – Wallgrove Road, Ecological Assessment* (December 2003).
- Blacktown City Council, *SEPP 59 Eastern Creek Precinct Plan (Stage 3)*, 14 December 2005.

These assessments have provided a significant level of knowledge of the existing environment of the M7 Hub site and, particularly, the existing significance of remnant vegetation and fauna on the site. Fauna assessments undertaken for the NDC and CDC concluded that there would not be a significant impact on threatened fauna species from vegetation removal in the area that has been assessed for the vegetation removal for the Coles facilities.

1.3 Significance of Vegetation to be Removed

The above assessments have included assessment of the area of vegetation that is to be removed under the revised access to the NDC and CDC, as well as that along Old Wallgrove Road. These assessments have concluded that the vegetation that is located on the northern border of the M7 Hub is not of high conservation priority largely as it is relatively small and isolated from other stands of remnant vegetation (refer Figure 4).

In addition, the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation has indicated that:

“when considered in the context of the entire Eastern Creek Precinct, the DEC does not consider that this area of vegetation has a high conservation priority” (DEC, comments to DA 283-11-2004i).

However, as the vegetation to be removed is an endangered ecological community, an assessment is required to be carried out under Section 5A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (“the EP&A Act”) to determine if a development or activity is likely to have a significant effect on threatened species, populations or ecological communities. This is commonly referred to as a “seven part test” (previously known as an eight part test).

The following section therefore sets out the assessment under the TSC Act. This assessment has considered the reports cited above and, for brevity, the results and conclusions of those reports are not repeated here except for the ERM report which notes in relation to the vegetation along Old Wallgrove Road:

“The high ecological value along Old Wallgrove Road will be significantly impacted by the widening and development of Old Wallgrove Road. This, together with the isolation of the

area, will reduce its viability as a sustainable and manageable conservation area. This area is thus not proposed for retention. Removal of this area will be compensated against (sic) replanting along the Reedy Creek corridor.” (SEPP 59 Lands, Wallgrove Creek, page iii)

It is noted that this report was considered in the formulation of the Precinct Plan for the SEPP 59 areas. The vegetation along Old Wallgrove Road was not identified as a biodiversity conservation area (refer Figure 17 of the Precinct Plan). This Precinct Plan has now been adopted by the Blacktown City Council.

1.4 Summary of Conclusions

The assessments carried out in this report have been aimed at assessing the significance of the remnant Cumberland Plain Woodland Vegetation contained along the Old Wallgrove Road frontage to the M7 Business Hub. As well as the proposed modifications to the Masterplan the assessment has also considered the development of the M7 site along this frontage.

The assessments have concluded that the proposed development of the Old Wallgrove frontage to the M7 Hub and modifications to the Masterplan will not result in a significant impact on the endangered Cumberland Woodland community and would not have a significant impact on the environment. The vegetation in the area between the proposed Coles Meyer access track and Wallgrove Road (adjacent to the M7 Motorway) is fragmented and not considered to be of conservation priority as noted in previous reports (ERM, 2003).

2. Seven Part Test

The seven factors to be considered under Section 5A of the EP&A Act are set out below together with a discussion of the potential impact as a result of the proposed vegetation removal.

- (a) **in the case of a threatened species, whether the action proposed is likely to have an adverse effect on the life cycle of the species such that a viable local population of the species is likely to be placed at risk of extinction,**

This section is not applicable as Cumberland Plain Woodland is listed as an endangered ecological community not a threatened species.

- (b) **In the case of an endangered population, whether the action proposed is likely to have an adverse effect on the life cycle of the species that constitutes the endangered population such that a viable local population of the species is likely to be placed at risk of extinction,**

This section is not applicable as Cumberland Plain Woodland is listed as an endangered ecological community not an endangered population.

- (c) **in the case of an endangered ecological community or critically endangered ecological community, whether the action proposed:**

- (i) is likely to have an adverse effect on the extent of the ecological community such that its local occurrence is likely to be placed at risk of extinction, or**

The clearing of approximately 0.3 ha of the Cumberland Plain Woodland for the access road to the chilled distribution centre is not likely to adversely effect the extent of the community such that its local occurrence is likely to be placed at risk of extinction. The area to be cleared is part of a larger patch of Cumberland Plain Woodland located along the northern boundary of the Coles Myer site.

- (ii) is likely to substantially and adversely modify the composition of the ecological community such that its local occurrence is likely to be placed at risk of extinction,**

Modification to the ecological community will be restricted to the clearing of the area required for the access road and the electrical easement. Weed and erosion control measures will be implemented to minimise any impacts on immediately adjacent areas of Cumberland Plain Woodland that could lead to modifications to the composition of these areas. The action proposed is not likely to substantially and adversely modify the composition of the ecological community such that its local occurrence is likely to be placed at risk of extinction.

- (d) **in relation to the habitat of a threatened species, population or ecological community:**

- (i) the extent to which habitat is likely to be removed or modified as a result of the action proposed, and**

An area of approximately 0.3 ha of Cumberland Plain Woodland habitat will be removed as a result of the proposed action. The implementation of weed and

erosion control measures during construction will protect adjacent areas of habitat so that these areas will not be modified as a result of the access road.

(ii) whether an area of habitat is likely to become fragmented or isolated from other areas of habitat as a result of the proposed action, and

The area of Cumberland Plain Woodland along the Old Wallgrove Road frontage and particularly within the northern part of the Coles Myer site is currently isolated from other areas of native vegetation as the local area has been highly modified due to past and current land uses. The proposed access road would result in the fragmentation of the already isolated and relatively small area of Cumberland Plain Woodland on the Coles Myer site. The access road will be approximately 30 metres wide, therefore the degree of fragmentation is not considered to be great.

(iii) the importance of the habitat to be removed, modified, fragmented or isolated to the long-term survival of the species, population or ecological community in the locality,

The area of habitat of Cumberland Plain Woodland is not considered to be important to the long-term survival of the ecological community in the locality. The Precinct Plan for the SEPP 59 area did not propose this area as a biodiversity conservation area (Blacktown Council, 2005) and the report on which the proposals for conservation area within Precinct Plan was based indicated that future development of this area would necessitate removal of all of this vegetation. In a letter from the Department of Environment and Conservation dated the 19 January 2005 in relation to the site, it was stated that: "...when considered in the context of the entire Eastern Creek Precinct the DEC does not consider that this area of vegetation has a high conservation priority...". The extent of removal of 0.3 hectares represents around 0.001% of all extant Cumberland Plains Woodland on the Cumberland Plain.

(e) whether the action proposed is likely to have an adverse effect on critical habitat (either directly or indirectly),

No critical habitat will be affected as a result of the clearing of Cumberland Plain Woodland for the access road.

(f) whether the action proposed is consistent with the objectives or actions of a recovery plan or threat abatement plan,

There is currently no recovery plan for Cumberland Plain Woodland. A recovery plan for the Cumberland Plain's endangered ecological communities is currently being developed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. There are no threat abatement plans relevant to the proposed clearing for the access road.

(g) whether the action proposed constitutes or is part of a key threatening process or is likely to result in the operation of, or increase the impact of, a key threatening process.

The action proposed constitutes a key threatening process – Clearing of Native Vegetation.

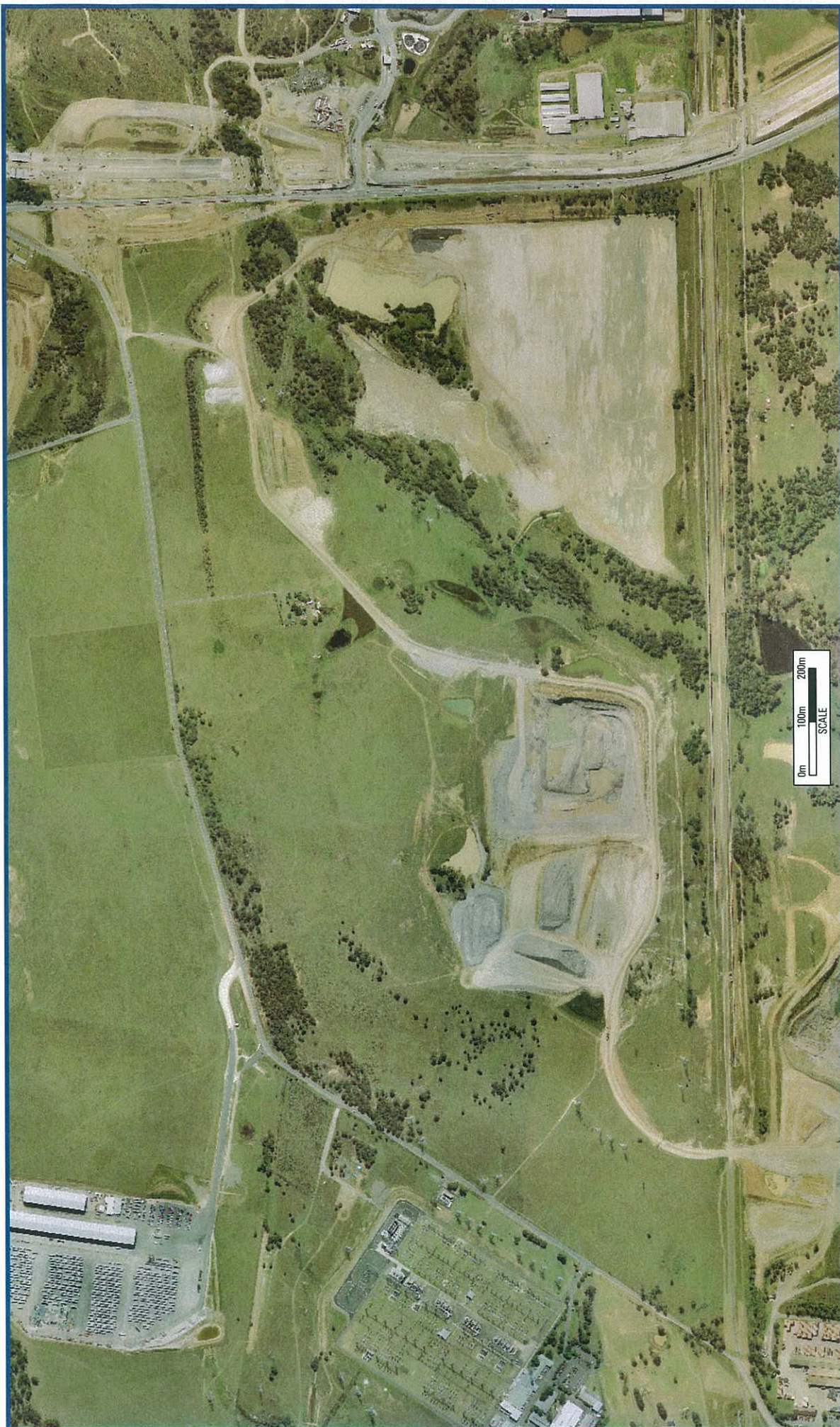
3. Conclusion

The significance of the vegetation in the SEPP 59 lands, which includes the vegetation assessed in this report, has previously been assessed by ERM (2003). The total Cumberland Plains Woodland on the total SEPP 59 site has been estimated at 146 hectares which comprises around 0.5% of all extant Cumberland Plains Woodland on the Cumberland Plain (ERM, 2003:12)

This report considers the removal of around 0.3 hectares of this Cumberland Plains Woodland which represents around 0.001% of all extant Cumberland Plains Woodland on the Cumberland Plain.

Taking into consideration the above factors it has been concluded that the modifications to the Masterplan will not result in a significant impact on the endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland community of the Old Wallgrove Road frontage to the M7 Hub. This vegetation is isolated and not considered to be of conservation priority. It is also noted that there are areas along Old Wallgrove within the 20 metre setback that would be suitable for revegetation. This would assist in offsetting any impacts of the removal of the above vegetation.

FIGURE 1 LOCATION MAP



0m 100m 200m
SCALE

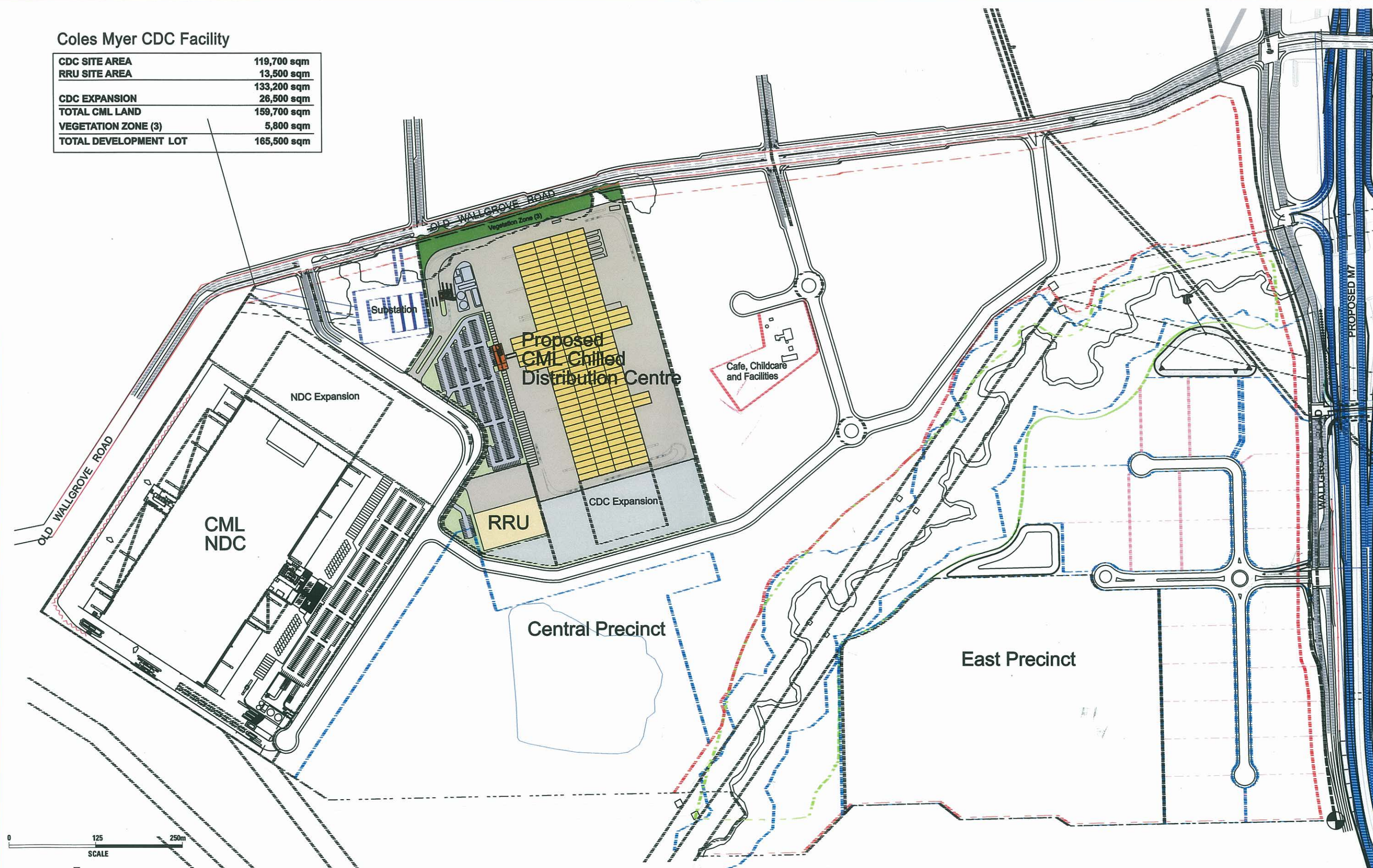
ASSESSMENT OF REVISED ACCESS ROAD TO COLES FACILITIES
M7 BUSINESS HUB, WALLGROVE ROAD, MINCHINBURY



FIGURE 4
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF SITE

Coles Myer CDC Facility

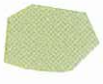
CDC SITE AREA	119,700 sqm
RRU SITE AREA	13,500 sqm
	133,200 sqm
CDC EXPANSION	26,500 sqm
TOTAL CML LAND	159,700 sqm
VEGETATION ZONE (3)	5,800 sqm
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT LOT	165,500 sqm



ASSESSMENT OF REVISED ACCESS ROAD TO COLES FACILITIES
M7 BUSINESS HUB, WALLGROVE ROAD, MINCHINBURY

FIGURE 2
PROPOSED CML CHILLED
DISTRIBUTION CENTRE - OPTION 1B

Legend

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
|  | Existing Trees as surveyed by Hard & Forester dated 18 Aug 2004 |  | Proposed to be removed for Coles Chilled Distribution Centre |
|  | Existing Trees to remain |  | Potential revegetation area |
|  | Existing Trees already removed for:
1. CML DA-283-11-2004i &
2. Substation | | |
|  | Approved for removal by CML DA-283-11-2004i | | |

