



WHITEHAVEN COAL MINING PTY LTD

ABN: 65 086 426 253

Belmont Coal Project

via Gunnedah

Aboriginal Heritage Assessment



Prepared by

Archaeological Surveys & Reports Pty Ltd

August, 2007

**Specialist Consultant Studies Compendium
Part 4**

Aboriginal Heritage Assessment

of the

Belmont Coal Project

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This investigation was performed for R.W. Corkery & Co. Pty Limited (RWC) on behalf of Whitehaven Coal Mining Pty Ltd for the proposed Belmont Coal Project, an open cut coal mine that would be located approximately 25km north of Gunnedah in central northern NSW. A transport route would link the Belmont Coal Project with the Whitehaven Coal Handling and Processing Plant and Rail Loading Facility on the outskirts of Gunnedah.

The scope of works was to conduct an archaeological investigation of the Project Site and transport route with the assistance of a representative of the Aboriginal Community, and to identify any Aboriginal sites and relics that might be present. The results of the investigation were to be presented in a report, which was to include an assessment of the significance of any cultural relics or places identified, an appraisal of the options and opportunities arising from the discoveries, and clear recommendations for the management of those cultural resources.

The investigation commenced in 2002 when officers of Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) were consulted and assisted in the fieldwork. In 2007, representatives of Red Chief LALC were consulted again in relation to recommendations provided in 2002. At this time, representatives of the Bigundi Biame Gunnedarr Traditional People were also consulted and an advertisement inviting comments from Aboriginal stakeholders placed in the "Namoi Valley Independent". The coordinator of the Gunida Gunyah Aboriginal Corporation responded to the advertisement.

Seven sites were recorded within the Project Site and transport route corridor, however only three, two artefact scatters and an isolated artefact would be impacted upon by the Project. Other sites that would be avoided or do not fall within the potential impact zones comprise four scarred trees.

Both the Red Chief LALC and Bigundi Biame Gunnedarr Traditional People are in agreement as to the appropriate strategy for the management of the sites and have recommended the following.

- Any surface excavation within 20m of a north-south oriented drainage line (within which three of the Aboriginal sites were identified) should be monitored by representatives of Red Chief LALC.
- The scarred trees should not be disturbed in any way.

Archaeological Surveys and Reports Pty Ltd has considered the recommendations and agrees with them. In addition, it is recommended that the scarred trees be marked by white posts set vertically at five metre intervals around the tree, and that the location and the description 'Culturally Sensitive Area - Aboriginal Scarred Tree' should be marked on all master plans and maps of the Project. The salvage of the artefacts identified is supported.

Under the provisions of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, all earthmoving contractors and operators should be instructed that in the event of any bone or stone artefacts, or discrete distributions of shell, being unearthed during earthmoving, work should cease immediately in the area of the find, and the Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council, and Bigundi Biame Gunnedarr Traditional People, and Cultural Heritage Officers of the DECC, informed of the discovery. Work should not recommence in the area of the find, until those officials have inspected the material and permission has been given to proceed. Those failing to report a discovery and those responsible for the damage or destruction occasioned by unauthorised removal or alteration to a site or to archaeological material may be prosecuted under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, as amended.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This investigation was performed for R.W. Corkery Pty Limited (Corkery) on behalf of Whitehaven Coal Mining Pty Ltd (Whitehaven Coal), the Proponent. This investigation and report has been completed to provide an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed Belmont Coal Project on Aboriginal heritage and to meet the Director-General's requirements issued by the Department of Planning for the preparation of the Environmental Assessment for the Project. The proposed activities are permissible under the Gunnedah Local Environment Plan (LEP 1988), Zone 1(a) – Rural (Agricultural Protection) Zone.

1.1 Scope

The scope of works to conduct an archaeological investigation of the land on which the proposed mining and associated activities would be undertaken ("the Project Site") and the land on which a road is to be constructed to transport coal from the Project Site to an established coal haulage route on Hoad Lane, Blue Vale Road and the Kamilaroi Highway ("the transport route") with the assistance of a representative/s of the Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), to identify any Aboriginal sites and relics that might be present. The results of the investigation were to be presented in a report, which was to include an assessment of the significance of any cultural relics or places identified, an appraisal of the options and opportunities arising from the discoveries, and clear recommendations for the management of those cultural resources.

1.1.1 Report Objectives

The objectives of this report are to describe the archaeological investigation of the Project Site and transport route to record the archaeological relics and sites that were identified. Further, the report documents the participation of the Red Chief LALC in the field survey, and their recommendations as to the future management of the sites identified during this investigation. In addition, the report includes a discussion of the results of the investigation in the context of other known sites in the area. Finally, the report includes a statement as to the recommendations for the development and operation of the Project.

1.1.2 Report Format

The report is presented in the following format:

- i Executive summary
- ii Contents

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Aboriginal consultation
- 3. The environmental context
- 4. The archaeological record
- 5. Models for site location
- 6. The survey

7. The results
8. Discussion: The results
9. Discussion: Potential cumulative impacts of the Project
10. Significance assessment
11. Management options
12. Recommendations.

1.2 THE SURVEY AREA

1.2.1 The Project Site

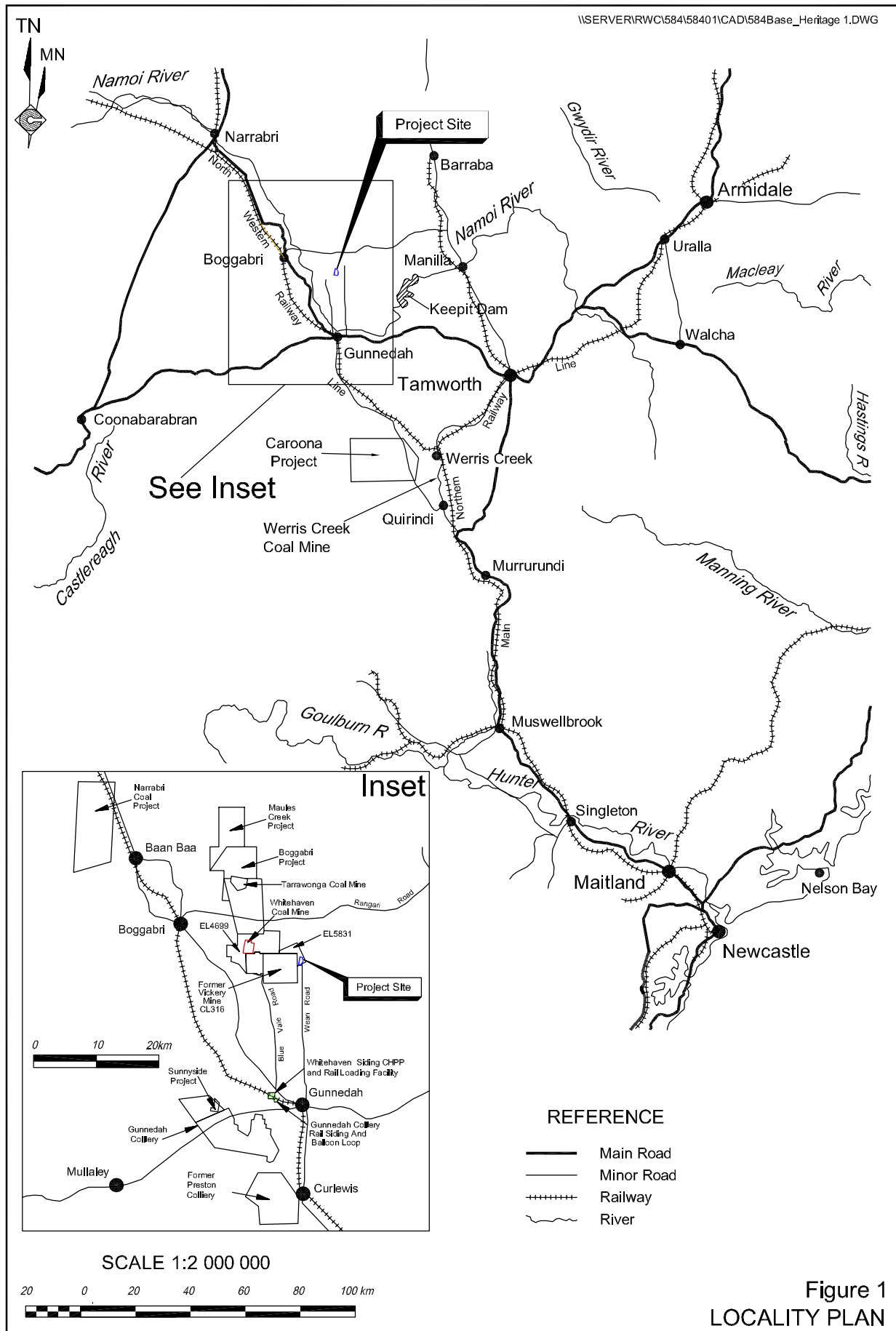
The Project Site, comprising parts of Lot 30 DP754950 and Lots 1 and 2, DP787417, in the Parish of Tulcumba, incorporates the “Belmont” property and parts of the “Glenroc” and “Roseberry” properties. The Project Site is located on Wean Road to the immediate east of Vickery State Forest, approximately 25km north of Gunnedah. The Project Site covers an area of 366ha and includes an open cut area (114.1ha), two out-of-pit overburden emplacements (81.4ha), a coal handling and processing area (1.5ha), site facilities area (2.0ha) and various internal roads, soil stockpiles and water management structures (36.5ha).

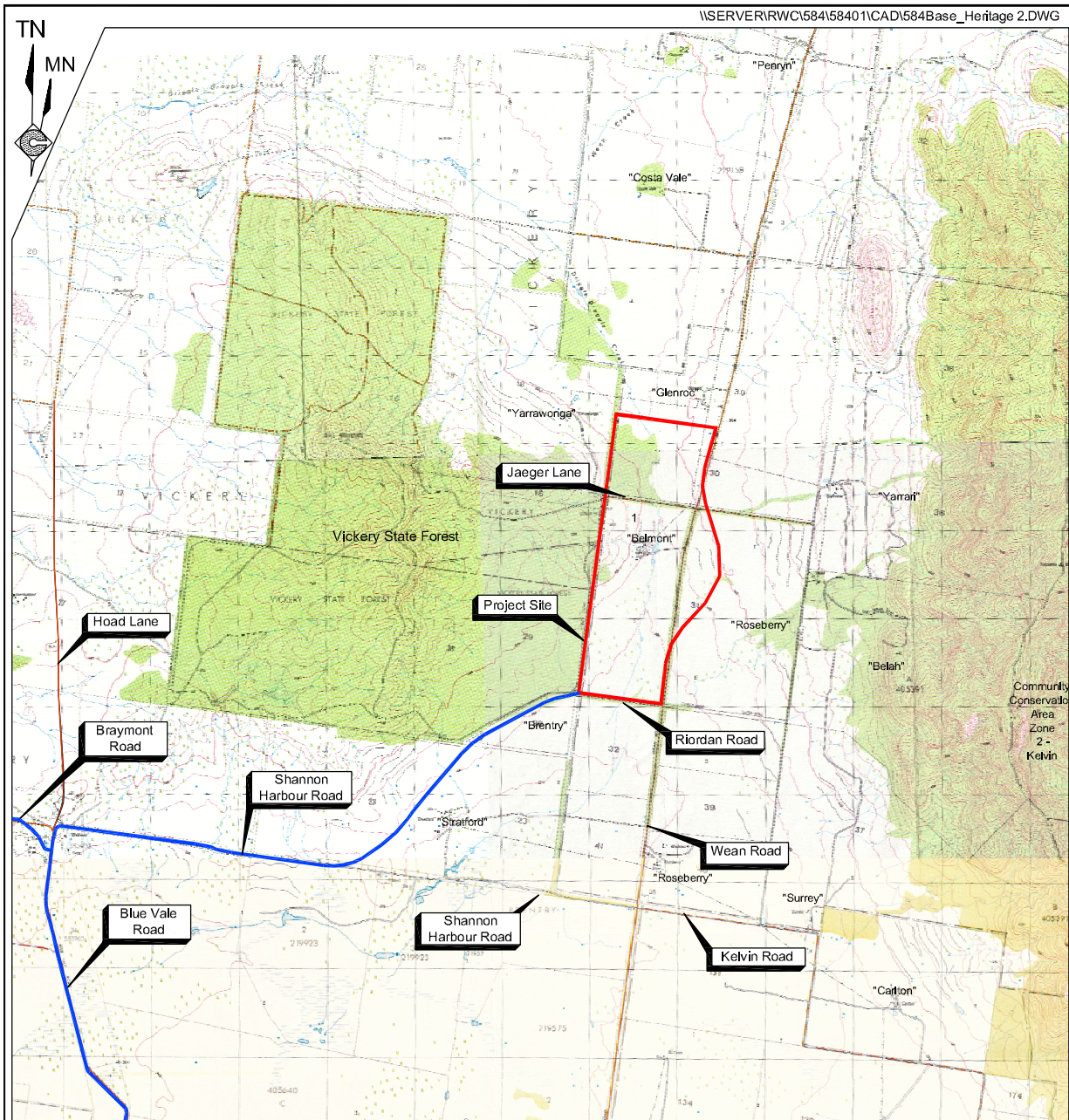
The Project Site represents the area of potential maximum surface disturbance associated with all mining related activities. **Figure 1** places the Project Site in its regional context while **Figure 2** places the Project Site in its local setting. **Figure 3** is an aerial ortho-photograph showing the land use in greater detail, and **Figure 4** shows the proposed Project Site layout.

1.2.2 The Transport Route

Subsequent to the investigation of the Project Site it became necessary to survey several options for the transport of coal between the Project Site and the established coal haulage route of Hoad Lane, Blue Vale Road and the Kamilaroi Highway. The preferred option and transport route for the Project would exit the southwest corner of the Project Site via a purpose-built road, aligned adjacent to the southeastern boundary of Vickery State Forest on the “Brentry” property and across the “Stratford” property, before connecting with Shannon Harbour Road. Shannon Harbour Road is presently a closed road, but would be upgraded without any substantial removal of native vegetation (approximately 20 trees (GCNRC, 2007a)). The transport route would continue westwards along Shannon Harbour Road to its intersection with Hoad Lane, 300m north of Hoad Lane intersection with Blue Vale Road. The transport route would follow Hoad Lane/ Blue Vale Road, along the established coal haulage route used by the Whitehaven and Tarrawonga Coal Mines. Blue Vale Road terminates at the Kamilaroi Highway and the transport route would continue along the highway before entry to the Whitehaven Coal Handling and Processing Plant (CHPP) at the Siding Access Road. In addition to the road upgrades described the development of the Belmont Coal Project would require the relocation of Wean Road onto the “Roseberry” property.

Figure 5 presents the location of the section of the transport route between the Project Site and Hoad Lane.





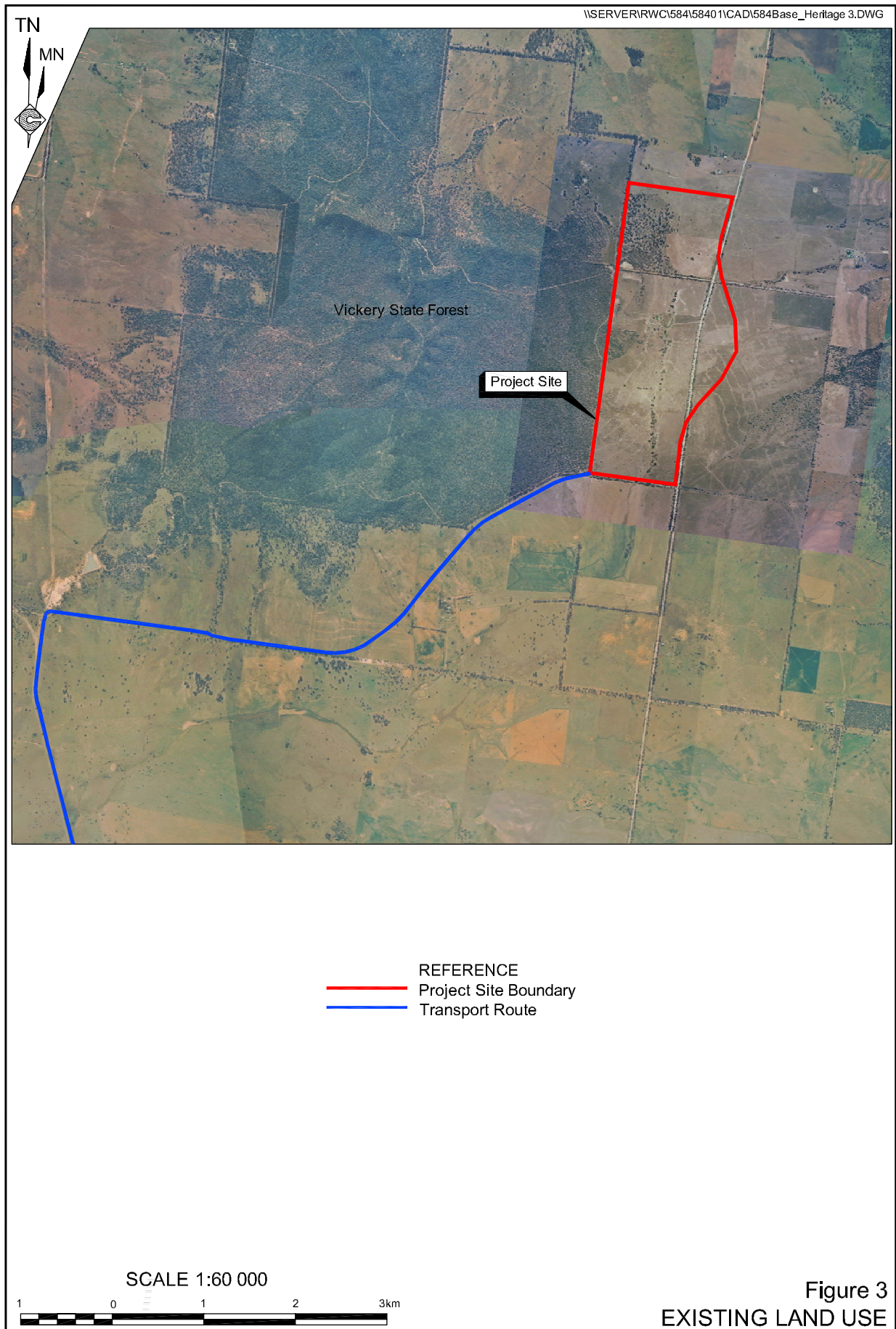
REFERENCE
 ——— Project Site Boundary
 ——— Transport Route

SCALE 1:75 000

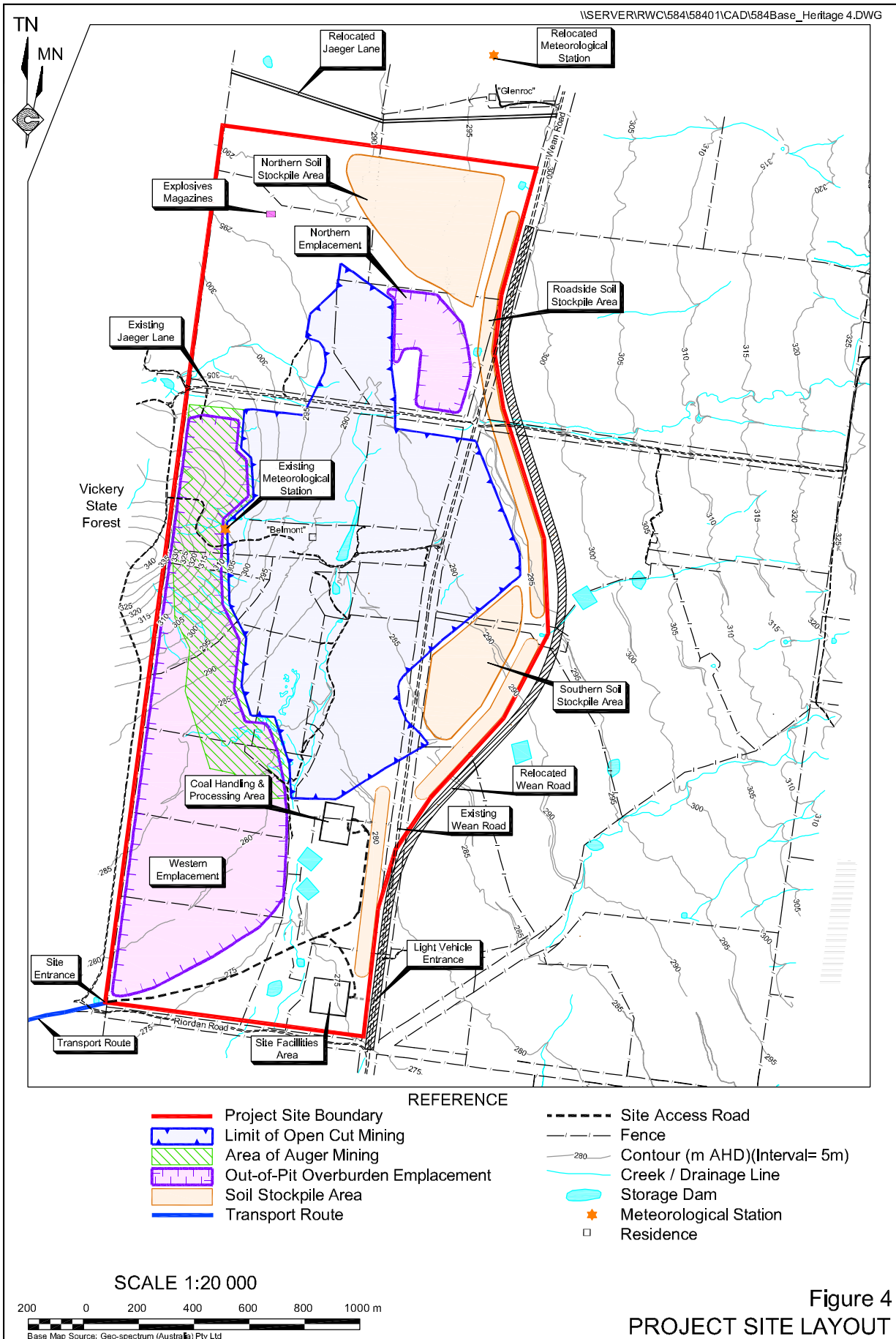


Figure 2
 LOCAL SETTING

Note: A Colour Version of this figure is available on the project CD



Note: A Colour Version of this figure is available on the project CD



Note: A Colour Version of this figure is available on the project CD