

Heritage – Summary of Key Outcomes

No Aboriginal or European sites were located on the proposed Buronga Peaking Power Plant site during the course of the literature and database review or the field survey.

There are no cultural heritage constraints to the Buronga Peaking Power Plant development.

15.1 Introduction

As part of this Environmental Assessment, an assessment of cultural heritage at the Buronga Peaking Power Plant site was conducted by Navin Officer Heritage Consultants. This chapter provides a summary of the report which is presented in full in **Appendix G**. The assessment addressed the local and regional archaeology and Aboriginal and European cultural heritage.

The assessment has been prepared in accordance with the draft *Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment and Community Consultation* (DEC 2005).

15.2 Methodology

The cultural heritage assessment encompassed the following:

- Literature and database review to determine if known Aboriginal and/or European historical sites were located within the area under investigation, to facilitate site prediction on the basis of known regional and local site patterns, and to place the area within an archaeological and heritage management context; and
- Fieldwork involved inspection of the entire study area on foot across the study area examining areas of visible and micro-topographic features. All areas of significant ground surface visibility were surveyed. An assessment of landscape disturbance and archaeological sensitivity/potential was made of the subject area.

Background research was used to determine if known heritage sites were located within the area under investigation, to facilitate site prediction on the basis of known regional and local site patterns, and to place the area within an archaeological and heritage management context.

Field survey of the proposed peaking power plant site was carried out in August 2007 which is described in detail in **Appendix G**.

15.2.1 Consultation

The Buronga study area falls within the boundaries of the Dareton Local Aboriginal Land Council (DLALC) and Barkindji Elders community group. Attempts to contact the Dareton LALC were unsuccessful. Navin Officer Heritage Consultants were subsequently advised by the Department of Environment and Climate Change archaeologist based at Buronga, that the Land Council may not currently be operational. DECC advised that contact should be made with the Barkindji Elders group.

Ms Evelyn Crawford of the Barkindji Elders Aboriginal community group was contacted prior to the conduct of fieldwork. The nature and purpose of the assessment were discussed and a representative was invited to participate in the field survey for the project. Subsequently, Mr Ray Lawson represented the interests of the Barkindji Elders in the project and participated in the field survey. The field results and potential management strategies were discussed with Ray Lawson during and at the conclusion of the field survey.

Mr Lawson did not have any concerns regarding the development of the study area. A *Record of Aboriginal Participation* can be found in the full report in **Appendix G**.

A public notice was placed in the *Sunraysia Daily* newspaper in November 2007 asking for expressions of cultural heritage interest in the Buronga Peaking Power Plant project. No responses were received in relation to this public notice.

15.3 Environmental Context

15.3.1 Geology and Hydrology

The Murray Darling Basin is characterised by a relatively flat, low-lying landscape with shallow aeolian deposits overlying the clay sediments of the fluvial and marine periods (Hope 1999).

The complex geomorphology of the area provides important evidence of the influence of climatic and tectonic changes in the region during the Quaternary. The palaeo channels of the area are important in the study of the mechanics of fluvial deposition. Studies of ancestral rivers and lakes in the regions have demonstrated how rivers have adjusted to different flow regimes in the past.

Certain hydrological features distinguish the Buronga-Gol Gol area within the Murray Darling Basin. Pleistocene formed lakes now no longer active within the study area include Lake Gol Gol and Gol Gol Swamp (Bonhomme Craib & Associates 1999). These former lakes are associated directly with the Murray River and are characterised by lunettes on their eastern fringes. Consisting of crescent-shaped clay and or sand basins they provide for an environment suited for the preservation of archaeological deposits.

15.3.2 Previous Land Use and Disturbance

The existing TransGrid 220kV Buronga Switching Station and its immediate surrounds are located on mostly flat, low-lying ground, cleared of most vegetation with scattered box and Casuarina woodland. The switching station site has been levelled and the station plant, switchbays and auxiliary buildings then constructed on an imported crushed rock platform elevated above the surrounding ground. Part of the ground outside the existing switching station has been disturbed through levelling, and shallow drainage channels have been excavated to direct water away from the switching station.

The four hectare area of the proposed peaking plant site is characterised by a small sand dune on the western side and a higher, more substantial dune on the eastern side. They are irregular in shape and follow an approximate northeast - southwest alignment. The dunes are separated by a shallow swale or depression, which may hold water after heavy rains.

The area has not been heavily disturbed apart from a farm dam that has been excavated in the south-eastern corner and some active rabbit warrens within the study area.

15.4 Archaeological Context

15.4.1 Study Area

A reconstruction of clan boundaries indicates that the study area fell within the tribal boundaries of the Kureinji people.

A search of the DECC AHIMS indicates that no Aboriginal sites have been recorded as occurring within or near the study area. The closest recordings are a scarred tree situated 2.5km south east of the study area and two burials, approximately 10km to the south.

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15.4.2 Predictive Statements

Unrecorded historic sites and features of heritage significance that may occur within the locality include:

- Archaeological sites such as the occupation remains of former dwellings including homesteads, houses and huts, will be distributed in close association with land settlement patterns, and correlated with favourable agricultural lands, trading nodes and transport corridors; and
- Transport and access routes such as bridle paths and stock routes of varying forms and ages, may survive as abandoned remnants adjacent to modern transport routes, or as alignments now followed by more modern or upgraded road and track infrastructure.

Old fence lines may occur along road easement boundaries and farmlands.

15.5 Historical Context

15.5.1 Buronga Region and Study Area

European travel through the study area first began during the late 1820's and 1830's as expeditions followed the uncharted Murray and Darling Rivers in an effort to discover an inland sea. In 1836, surveyor General Thomas Livingston Mitchell named and recorded the Gol Gol Creek using the Aboriginal name meaning 'Meeting Place'. Cattle herdsman travelling from New South Wales to Adelaide, along the Murray River route established the river junction campsite known as Hawdon's Ford. This settlement was later referred to as the Darling Junction. During 1844, Edward John Eyre undertook exploration of the Lower Darling to the Darling Junction, marking the beginning of settlement along the Murray River by squatters.

Around this time the settlement of Wentworth west of the river junction became a major port of exchange, existing as a business centre to the Murray River trade. The great flood of 1870 led to the major economic expansion of Wentworth and the town was proclaimed a municipality of 1879. Land allotments for the village of Gol Gol started to sell in 1871 and within ten years the suburban areas were beginning to establish.

Major landscape changes began in the twentieth century along the rivers to allow for the development of irrigation and horticultural activities such as orchards and vineyards. As a result of the irrigation works, Gol Gol's population continued to increase and in 1917 the township was considered a suburb of Mildura. At this time Mildura was gaining importance as a commercial centre and as a result small villages were establishing along the edges of the town and the river, including the village of Buronga situated at the Mildura bridge site on the opposite side of the river. In 1933 the Aboriginal mission at Pooncarie closed and the Aboriginal people were dispersed along the Murray River, setting up shelters outside Dareton and Buronga.

15.6 Assessment of Potential Impacts

15.6.1 Aboriginal Sites

No areas of archaeological sensitivity or potential were identified in the study area.

15.6.2 European Heritage Sites

No historical relics, sites or areas of archaeological potential were identified within the Buronga study area.

15.6.3 Conclusion

No Aboriginal or European sites were located within the proposed Buronga Peaking Power Plant Project site during the course of the field survey. There are no cultural heritage constraints to the peaking power plant development.

15.7 Mitigation Measures

Table 15-1 summarises the mitigation measures relating to the heritage assessment.

Table 15-1 Summary of Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures	Implementation of mitigation measures		
	Design	Construction	Operation
The Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would be developed and implemented to address cultural heritage issues. The CEMP would detail the management strategies to be followed in the event that an Aboriginal object or non Aboriginal archaeological relic is uncovered during construction.	✓	✓	