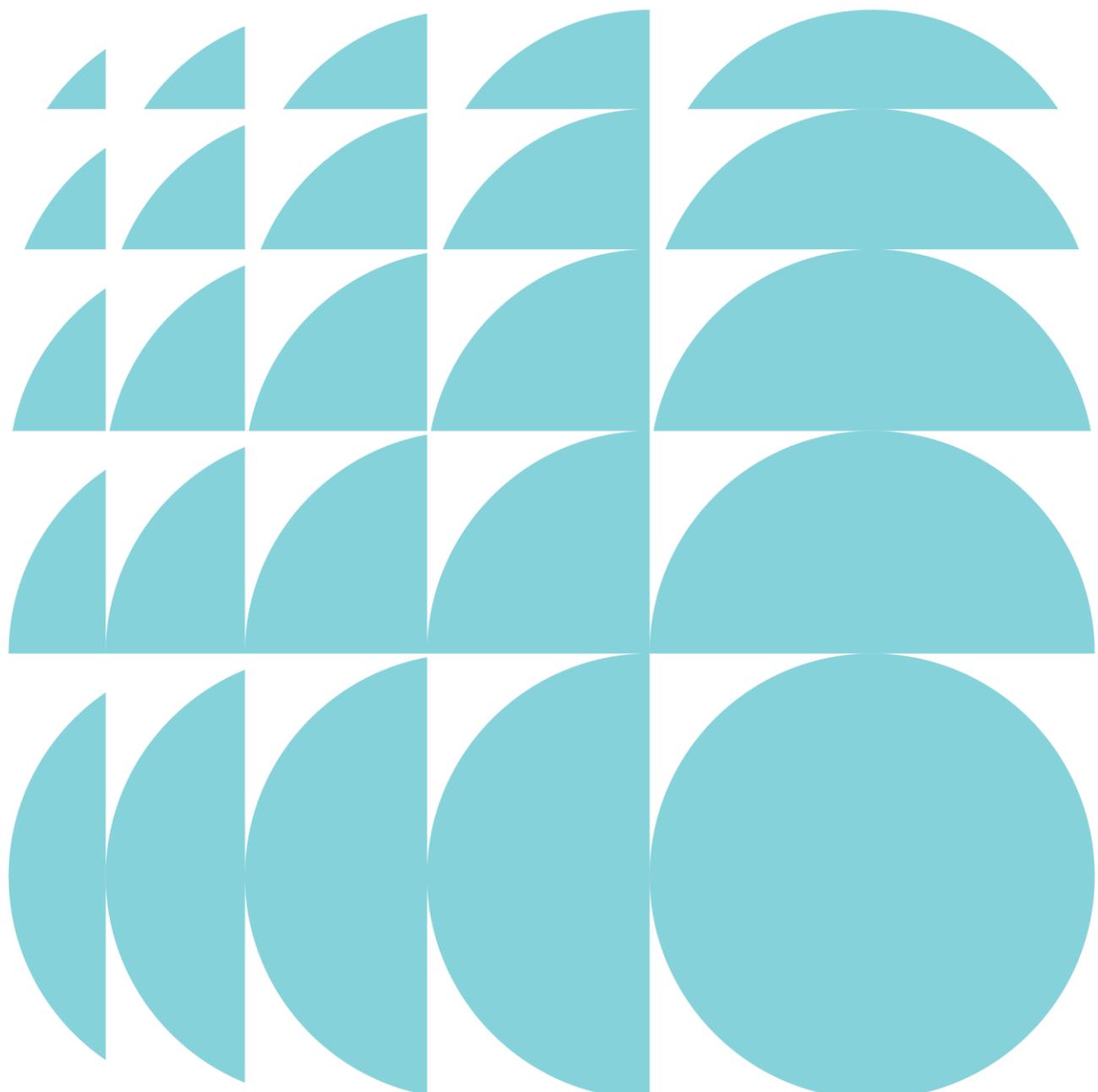


**SSD Scoping Report**

New Wee Waa High School  
Mitchell Street, Wee Waa

Submitted to NSW Department of Planning,  
Infrastructure and Environment  
For School Infrastructure NSW, on behalf of NSW  
Department of Education

7 June 2021 | 2210246



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7 June 2021

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23 April 2021

JD

DW

2.0 DRAFT

10 May 2021

JD

DW

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14 May 2021

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4.0 FINAL (Update for SINSW comments)

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**A** Aboriginal Due Diligence and Historic Heritage Assessment Report  
*OzArk Environment & Heritage*

## 1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared on behalf of NSW Department of Education – School Infrastructure NSW (SINSW), the proponent for the proposed New Wee Waa High School at 105-107 Mitchell Street, Wee Waa.

Since the proposed development is for the purpose of a ‘new school’, under Clause 15(1), Schedule 1 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011* (SRD SEPP), it is considered State Significant Development (SSD) regardless of its Capital Investment Value, for the purposes of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act).

This Scoping Report requests the Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) be prepared and provided for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed development. To assist with preparation of the SEARs, this Scoping Report describes the site and project, identifies the relevant strategic and statutory context, summarise the results of any early community engagement, identifies the scale and nature of the impacts of the project, and outlines the proposed approach to assessment and community engagement.

## 2.0 Background

A commitment was made to build a new high school at Wee Waa on vacant land adjacent to the Wee Waa Public School.

This high school will replace the existing Wee Waa High School which is located at the north-eastern periphery of the town of Wee Waa, on the southern side of the Kamilaroi Highway. High school students are currently collocated on the site of the Wee Waa Public School following their relocation from the existing high school site in 2020.

SINSW are anticipating operation of the new school to commence in late 2022.

## 3.0 Site and Context

### 3.1 Site Context

The site is located centrally in the town of Wee Waa, within Narrabri Local Government Area. Wee Waa is located in the New England region of upper central NSW and sits adjacent to the Namoi River, approximately 40km north-west of Narrabri and 570km north-west of Sydney. The town has a population of approximately 2,000. Wee Waa and its surrounding rural area has a strong history of agricultural production, particularly cotton. The key transport connection to the town is the Kamilaroi Highway which runs north-east through the centre of the town, connecting to western NSW and Narrabri in the east. A site context map is provided at **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1** Site Context NSW (left) and local (right)

Source: SHAC

### 3.2 Site Description

A legal description of the lots and land ownership of the site is provided in **Table 1**. The site's area is approximately 6.03 hectares and it is roughly L-shaped. It has a frontage of approximately 390m to Mitchell Street along the southern boundary (which is part of the Kamilaroi Highway), a 190m frontage to Charles Street along the western boundary and a 100m frontage to George Street along the eastern boundary. Mitchell Street is a key movement corridor, particularly during harvest season when B-Double trucks and combine harvesters need to pass through Wee Waa and past the site.

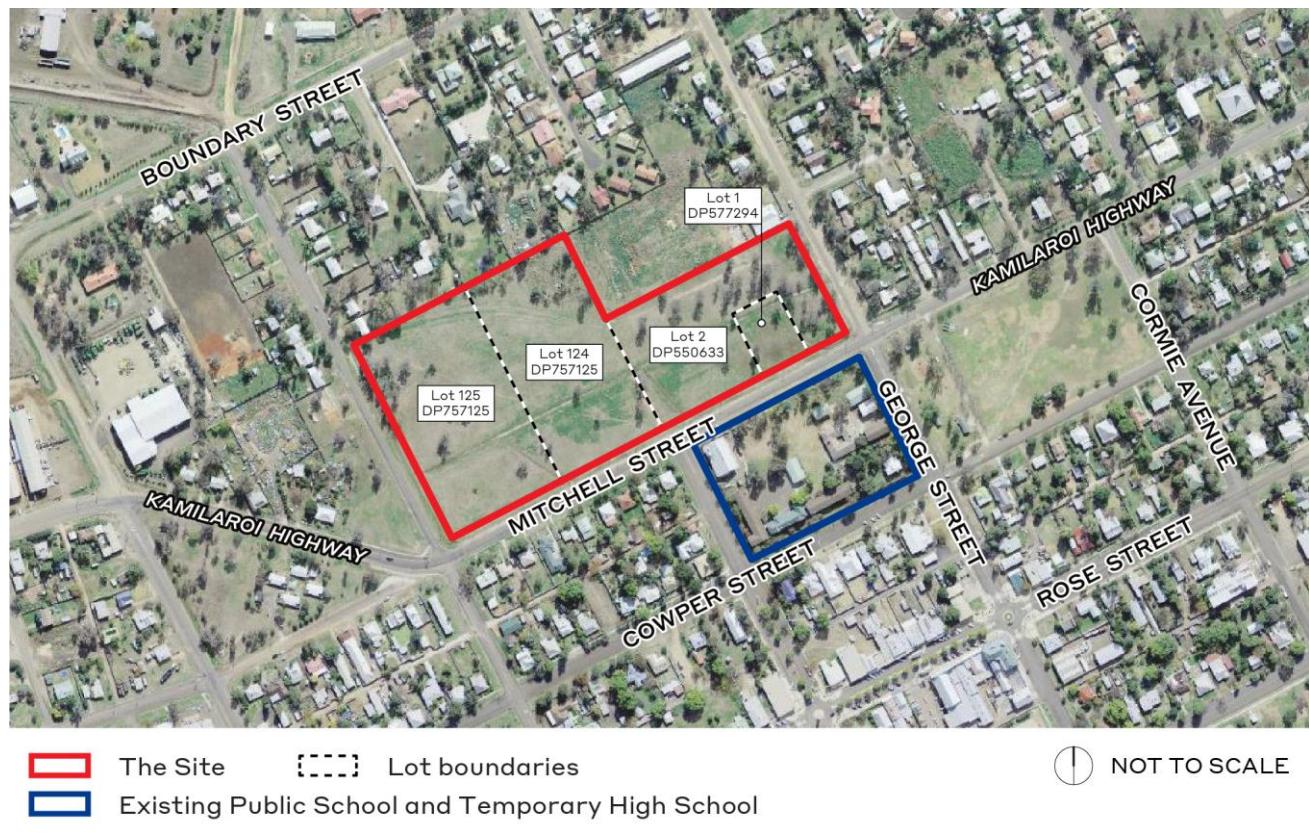
The site is predominantly level at 192 AHD, with no existing improvements or development. There is an established stand of mature Eucalypt Trees in the north-eastern portion of the site, with more sparsely scattered trees throughout the site, with another smaller dense stand along the western boundary in the north-western corner. The remainder of the site is flat grassland. There is some 'black soil' highly reactive ground soil within the site which requires further geotechnical and contamination investigation, which is currently being undertaken. There are existing stormwater channels that drain across the site – the primary one being from George Street to Charles Street through the centre of the site. Three smaller channels feed the primary channel from Mitchell Street.

Three of the four allotments are Crown Land, with the fourth owned by the NSW Department of Education. A lease currently exists over the Crown Land to permit site investigation works to be undertaken, expiring in February 2022. SINSW are currently in the process of acquiring the Crown Land parcels.

**Table 1** Legal description of the site

Allotment	Owner
Lot 2 DP 550633	NSW Department of Education
Lot 1 DP 577294	Crown Land
Lot 124 DP757125	Crown Land
Lot 125 DP757125	Crown Land

An aerial photograph of the site, allotments and the public school/temporary high school site is shown at **Figure 2**.



**Figure 2 Aerial Photograph of site**

Source: Ethos Urban

### 3.3 Surrounding Development

The following key development surrounds the site:

- To the north:** A large 1.3 hectare privately owned residential property adjoins the site in the north-east, with a residence fronting George Street and open space in the west of the site. Otherwise to the north of the site is generally low-density, single-storey residential dwellings to Boundary Street.
- To the east:** Across George Street are low-density, single-storey residential dwellings. Across the George Street/Mitchell Street intersection is Dangar Park, Wee Waa's primary public open space.
- To the south:** Directly across Mitchell Street is Wee Waa Public School (the site of the current temporary high school). Also across Mitchell Street are several blocks of low-density, single-storey residential dwellings. The Wee Waa commercial centre is located approximately 250m down Church Street to the south-east.
- To the west:** Across Charles Street are several low-density, single-storey residential dwellings. A tractor and agricultural machinery sales centre is also located in the adjacent block across Charles Street.

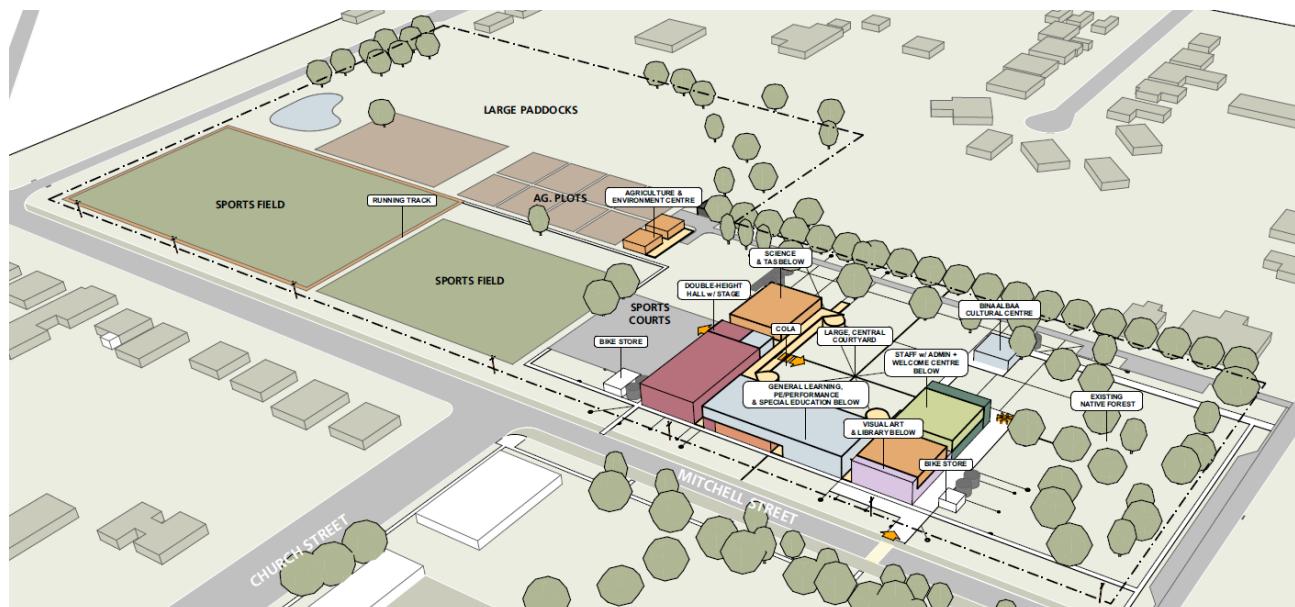
The only surrounding item of heritage significance is the "Pioneer Tree" of local significance, located at the corner of George Street and Cowper Street, approximately 150m south of the south-eastern corner of the site.

## 4.0 Description of the Proposal

The SSD Application will seek consent for the construction of a new high school with a capacity of 300 students. Specifically, it will seek consent for:

- Site preparation, earthworks and remediation as required.
- Construction of the following:
  - A new two-storey school building.
  - A multi-purpose gymnasium/hall.
  - A Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA).
  - Two grass sport fields with a perimeter running track and two asphalt playing courts.
  - An Agricultural and Environment Centre with two agricultural plots and large animal paddocks.
  - An Aboriginal Education Community and Learning Centre.
  - Internal vehicular access road from George Street running east-west through the site.
  - Hard stand car park comprising approximately 10 staff/visitor spaces and 2 emergency vehicle spaces.
  - Bicycle storage.
- Augmentations to the road network to ensure road safety, including:
  - Road strengthening for a dedicated bus drop off/pickup area/curb to rear parking along George Street.
  - A new pedestrian crossing on Mitchell Street.
  - Extension of existing 40km/hr school zone.
- Tree removal within the footprint of the new building, sports fields and agricultural plots, as required.
- Retention of the established Eucalypt Stands.
- Installation of landscaping, additional tree planting and fencing to integrate with the design of the new school.
- Installation and augmentation of associated services and stormwater infrastructure to service the new school.

The indicative site layout is shown at **Figure 3**. Further description of the new school building is provided below.



**Figure 3** Indicative site layout

Source: SHAC

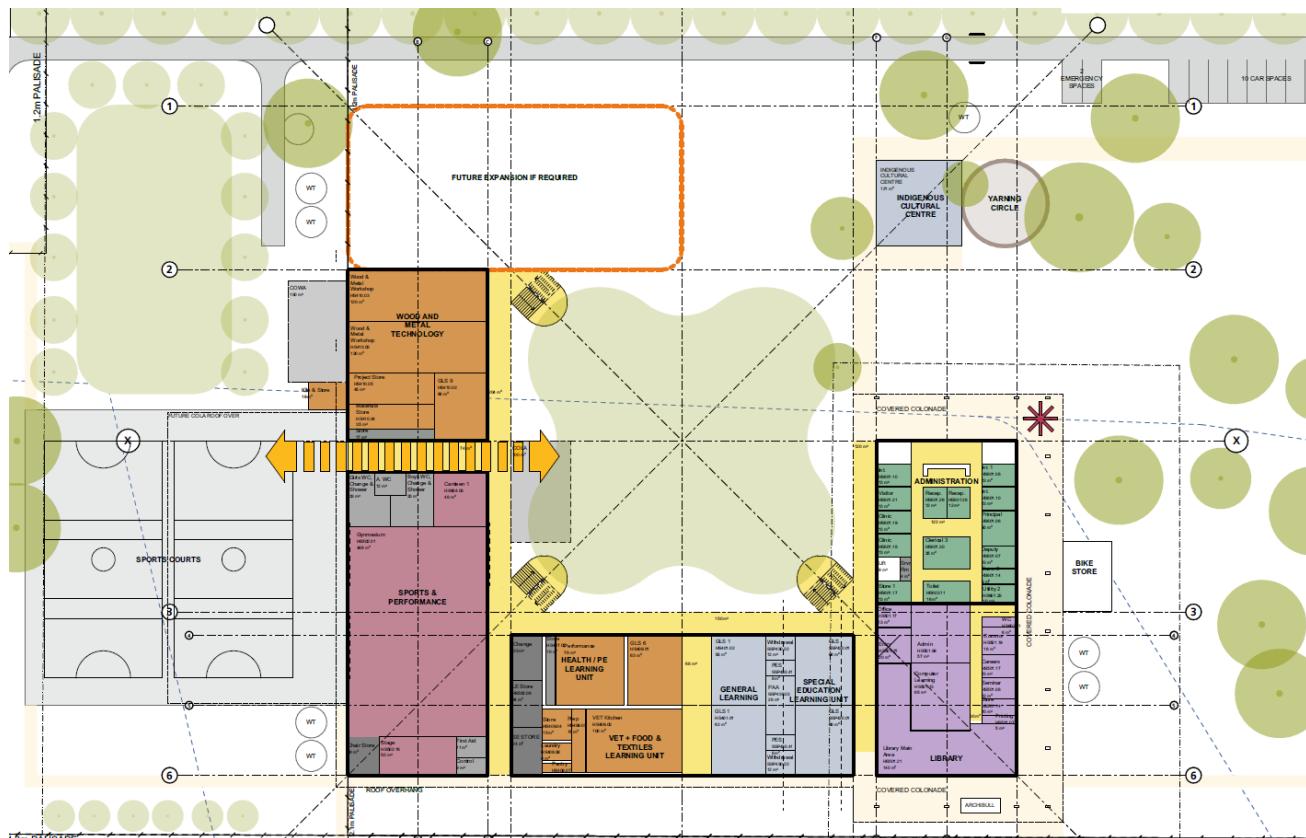
## 4.1 New School Building

The proposed new school building will be two-storeys in height, arranged in a U-shape along Mitchell Street in the eastern portion of the site. The building will provide a primary street address to Mitchell Street, with primary pedestrian access to the east of the building from Mitchell Street.

Ground level will comprise a double-height multi-purpose gymnasium/hall in the south-western corner, with the single storey elements comprising wood and metal technology, VET/food and textiles, Health/PE, general learning and special education spaces. The eastern portion of ground level will provide a library and dedicated administration area. Roof overhang and covered colonnades will surround most of the building frontages. The indicative Ground Level layout is shown at **Figure 4**.

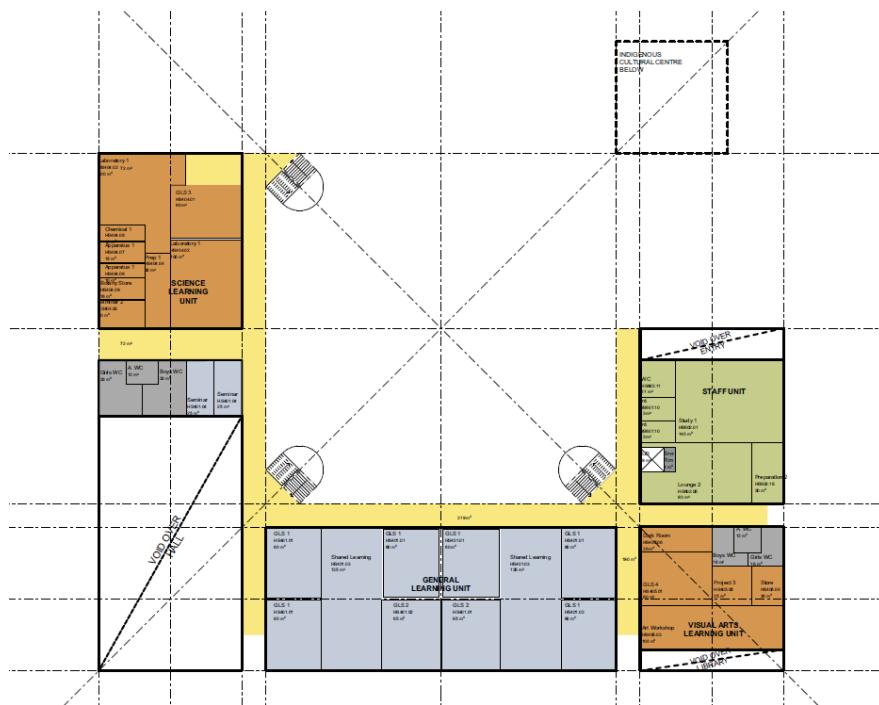
Level 1 will include science learning, general learning, visual arts and staff units. The indicative Level 1 layout is shown at **Figure 5**.

The building will frame a central outdoor area and will be the focus of educational activities at the site. An area to the north of the proposed building is identified for potential future expansion.



**Figure 4** Indicative Ground Level layout

Source: SHAC



**Figure 5 Indicative Level 1 layout**

Source: SHAC

## 5.0 Strategic and Statutory Context

The EIS will provide a comprehensive assessment against all the relevant strategic plans and statutory provisions. A summary of the key relevant state, regional and local plans and policies is provided in this section.

### 5.1 State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011

The *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011* (SEPP SRD) identifies development which is declared to be State Significant. Clause 15 of Schedule 1 of the Policy provides that the following development is SSD:

#### 15 Educational establishments

- (1) **Development for the purpose of a new school (regardless of the capital investment value).**
- (2) *Development that has a capital investment value of more than \$20 million for the purpose of alterations or additions to an existing school.*
- (3) *Development for the purpose of a tertiary institution (within the meaning of State Environmental Planning Policy (Educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities) 2017), including associated research facilities, that has a capital investment value of more than \$30 million.*

Since the proposal is for the purposes of a new school, it is SSD.

### 5.2 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The EP&A Act establishes the assessment framework for SSD. Under Section 4.38 of the Act the Minister for Planning is the consent authority for SSD. Section 4.12(8) requires that a development application for SSD is to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the form prescribed by the Regulations.

### 5.3 SEPP Educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities 2017 (ESEPP)

Part 4 of the ESEPP contains specific development controls relating to schools. The EIS will provide a compliance assessment against all relevant controls, including an assessment against the design quality principles in Schedule 4.

## Permissibility

Clause 35(1) of the ESEPP states that “*Development for the purpose of a school may be carried out by any person with development consent on land in a prescribed zone*”. The site is zoned R1 General Residential under the *Narrabri Local Environmental Plan 2012*, which is a “prescribed zone” under the ESEPP. Therefore, development for the purposes of a school is permissible at the site.

## Traffic Generating Development

Under Clause 57 of the ESEPP, the consent authority is required to refer the proposal to Transport for NSW (TfNSW) since it is a new school with direct vehicular and pedestrian access to at least one road.

## 5.4 Other Relevant State Plans and Policies

The following other state policies and legislation that are relevant to the site will also be considered in the EIS.

### SEPP 55 Remediation of Land

SEPP 55 applies to the site. As part of the EIS documentation, a Phase 1 Contamination Investigation will be undertaken. If required, a Phase 2 detailed investigation and remediation action plan will also be provided, pending the outcomes of the Phase 1 assessment.

### Draft SEPP Remediation of Land

The draft Remediation of Land SEPP will supersede SEPP 55, but is not expected to substantially alter the fundamental requirements of contamination assessment and remediation under SEPP 55. Some minor changes to the classes and certification of Category 1 and 2 remediation works are proposed.

### SEPP 64 Advertising and Signage

SEPP 64 will be considered and applied to any proposed signage as part of the EIS documentation and assessment.

### SEPP (Koala Habitat Protection) 2021

The Koala SEPP applies to the site and the consent authority must be satisfied that the land is not core Koala habitat. It is not expected that the site comprises any core Koala Habitat. This will be confirmed by an ecologist during EIS documentation.

### Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016

The *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* requires that an SSD application must be accompanied by a biodiversity development assessment report (BDAR) unless a waiver is granted in circumstances where the proposed development is not likely to have any significant impact on biodiversity values. A BDAR waiver will be sought for this development as discussed at **Section 6.5**. SINSW are in the process of procuring an ecologist to provide the required analysis to accompany the BDAR Waiver.

### Roads Act 1993

The relevant approvals will be sought for any required road upgrades and new driveways/crossovers. The proposed measures will be provided with the EIS and referred to Transport for NSW during assessment as required.

### Heritage Act 1977

The site is not mapped as a heritage item or as being located within a heritage conservation area under the *Narrabri Local Environmental Plan 2012* (NLEP). In addition, the site is not mapped as being located adjacent to heritage items under the NLEP 2012.

### National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

An Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment is provided at **Appendix A** and found no relics or artefacts on site. The assessment suggests that the site has low archaeological potential. A complete Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report will be provided with the EIS.

## New England North West Regional Plan 2036

The New England and North West Regional Plan 2036 is the primary strategic planning document applying to the site. The proposed development is consistent with the plan's vision for Narrabri LGA and particularly Wee Waa as centre. An assessment of the proposed development's consistency with the strategic plan will be provided in the EIS.

### 5.5 Local Plans and Policies

The relevant local plans and policies that apply to the proposed development are summarised in **Table 1**.

**Table 2 Summary of consistency with local plans and policies**

Plan	Comments	
<b>Local Planning Instruments and Controls</b>		
Narrabri Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040 (LSPS)	The LSPS sets the strategic land use vision for Narrabri LGA and Wee Waa over the next 20 years. The LSPS will be considered in the EIS.	
Narrabri Shire Council Local Environmental Plan 2012 (NLEP)	Clause 2.3 – Zone	The site is zoned R1 General Residential.  While <i>educational establishments</i> are not permissible in the R1 zone under the NLEP, the provisions of the ESEPP prevail and allow development for the purposes of a school to be permissible in a <i>prescribed zone</i> , which includes all R1 General Residential zoned land.
	Clause 4.1 – Minimum lot size	A minimum lot size of 500sqm applies to the site.
	Clause 4.3 – Height of Buildings	Not adopted. No maximum building height applies to the site.
	Clause 4.4 – Floor Space Ratio	Not adopted. No maximum FSR applies to the site.
	Clause 5.10 – Heritage Conservation	The site is not listed as an item of heritage significance. The nearest item of heritage significance is the "Pioneer Tree", of local significance, located at the corner of George Street and Cowper Street, approximately 150m south of the south-eastern corner of the site.
	Clause 6.1 – Earthworks	The EIS will seek consent for any earthworks associated with the proposed SSD.
	Clause 6.2 – Flood planning	The site is not located on land identified as Flood Prone under the NLEP. However, in accordance with the Wee Waa Levee Risk Management Plan the site would be inundated under all AEP and extreme floods modelled. Therefore, flooding will be considered in the EIS assessment.
Narrabri Shire Council Development Control Plan	Clause 11 of the SEPP SRD states that development control plans do not apply to SSD. Nonetheless, the proposal will consider the relevant controls of the Narrabri Development Control Plan where appropriate.	

## 6.0 Overview of Likely Environmental and Planning Issues

### 6.1 Built Form and Design Quality

The EIS will be accompanied by a Design Report, Architectural Plans and a Design Verification Statement relating to the design quality principles of the ESEPP. The Design Report will explain the design concept of the new school and how it responds to the surrounding locality. It will include, but not be limited to, site context and analysis plans, floor plans, sections, elevations, shadow diagrams, materials and finishes and perspectives. The majority of the school's built form will comprise a two-storey U-shaped built form as described in **Section 4.1**.

Key considerations will include mitigation of urban heat through provision of built and landscaped shading elements, as well as views and visual privacy to and from surrounding residences etc.. Consultation, as relevant, will be undertaken with the NSW State Design Review Panel to ensure a high quality and appropriate built form outcome is provided at the site.

### 6.2 Stormwater and Flooding

There are existing open/natural stormwater channels traversing the site, which is very flat (surface falls around 0.1%). There is also no formal drainage network surrounding the site and more broadly throughout the town. As such, stormwater will be a key consideration in the siting and design of the building and other school uses. The existing stormwater channels intersect the area identified for sports fields, and will therefore need to be rerouted. The EIS will be accompanied by a stormwater and flooding assessment and the design will respond to the recommendations made in this assessment. SINSW have engaged with Council to determine appropriate discharge methods and locations.

### 6.3 Landscape Design

Since the new school will comprise significant open landscaped areas, including sports fields and agricultural plots, the EIS will be accompanied by a Landscape Report and Landscape Plans. To manage the urban heat island effect and provide appropriate shading opportunities, particularly during summer months, the landscape plan will carefully consider planting and locating canopy trees appropriately. The landscape plan will also seek to offset the removal of any trees required to facilitate the footprint of the new school.

### 6.4 Aboriginal and Historic Heritage

An Aboriginal and Historic Heritage Assessment has been undertaken for the Due Diligence stage of the project and is provided at **Appendix A**. The assessment finds that based on visual inspection, no Aboriginal objects or historic items were identified at the site. It is expected that no Aboriginal objects or intact archaeological deposits, or items of historic significance, will be harmed by the proposal.

In addition to the Due Diligence study, preliminary consultation regarding the project has been undertaken with the Aboriginal Education Consultancy Group, Wee Waa High School's Aboriginal Education Officer and the Wee Waa Local Aboriginal Land Council. The project architect has also met with a local Registered Aboriginal Party.

Further details will be provided with the EIS, including an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report outlining consultation in accordance with the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010 (DECCW).

The project also seeks to develop a Connection with Country through engaging with Aboriginal groups, describing the works proposed, and discussing opportunities to reflect Country in the project through design, landscaping, approaches to curriculum and the like. Consideration will be given to the Draft Connecting with Country framework prepared by the Government Architect NSW (GANSW).

Engagement with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group would inform this process and for ongoing discussion as the design is developed and throughout the life of the project. Other Aboriginal Groups engaged with during the development of the ACHAR can also be included.

## 6.5 Vegetation removal, Ecology and Flora/Fauna

There are scattered Eucalyptus trees across the site, including a dense stand to the east of the site and also along the western boundary. These stands will be retained within the proposed development.

The proposal will however require the removal of some of the existing, more isolated trees on site. Since the ecological impact of the limited tree removal is expected to be minimal, a BDAR Waiver may be sought. SINSW are currently procuring an ecological expert to assess if there is any significant vegetation on the site. If no significant vegetation or habitat is identified for removal, then a BDAR Waiver Request will be lodged shortly after this Scoping Report.

## 6.6 Transport and Access

The proposed school is situated on a major arterial road that runs east-west through the centre of the town, forming part of the Kamilaroi Highway which connects far western NSW to Narrabri through Wee Waa. The street is also used for harvesting transport several times a year, with B-Double trucks and combine harvesters passing the school.

A preliminary travel mode survey undertaken for staff and students of the existing school indicates the following:

- Staff travel:
  - 94% drove and parked (on-street).
  - 6% dropped off.
- High School student travel:
  - 45% dropped off.
  - 20% travelled by bus.
  - 15% walked.
  - 20% drove and parked (on-street).

With existing parking accommodated on street, some parking will be proposed within the site. Other key considerations for the Transport Impact Assessment and EIS include upgrades to the surrounding road network, in particular to make Mitchell Street safe for pedestrian crossing, the final location and extent of bus drop off, and sustainable travel options to be implemented in a Travel Plan. Consultation with Council is underway to discuss required road safety upgrades.

## 6.7 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

The EIS will provide an assessment of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design features of the proposed development. The assessment will consider the four CPTED design quality principles of territorial enforcement, surveillance, activity/space management and access control.

## 6.8 Construction Management

A preliminary construction management plan will be prepared with the EIS. The plan will indicate construction access and staging as well as the management of any construction related environmental impacts such as dust and sediment, noise, traffic and the like.

## 6.9 Noise and Vibration

The EIS will be accompanied by a noise and vibration assessment that will ensure operational noise from the school is of an appropriate level at surrounding sensitive receivers (residential dwellings). The assessment will also consider construction noise and will provide mitigation measures to minimise the impact of construction noise to surrounding residents. The assessment will also consider noise intrusion from Mitchell Street into the school building.

## **6.10 Ecological Sustainable Development (ESD)**

An ESD report will be provided with the EIS, which will consider the principles of ESD and how they relate to the project, as well as detailing the project's sustainability strategy and the design measures to be incorporated into the project. The report will also outline any voluntary certification/rating targets or equivalencies for energy and water use.

## **6.11 Contamination and Geotechnical**

A Preliminary Site Investigation and Geotechnical Assessment will be provided with the EIS. The Preliminary Site Investigation will be undertaken in accordance with SEPP 55 and detailed investigations will be undertaken if necessary, to determine any required remediation. The site contains some highly moisture-reactive black soil, which is common to the New England region of NSW. This will require attention during structural and geotechnical design of the new buildings and landscaping, and means that the existing subgrade soil cannot be used as bulk fill.

## **6.12 Waste Management**

A Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plan and an Operational Waste Management Plan will be provided with the EIS, to detail proposed waste and recycling practices and procedures during demolition, construction and operation.

## **6.13 Social and Economic**

The EIS will consider the social need and impacts of the proposed new school, in relation to the immediate community and the broader region. Economic impacts will also be considered in the EIS. There are expected to be positive social impacts associated with the co-location of the new high school near the existing public school, centrally in the town. Therefore, it is requested that social impacts be considered as part of the main EIS document and a complete, separate Social Impact Assessment not be required for the development. In accordance with DPIE's Social Impact Assessment Guideline, *'the SIA should be targeted and proportionate to the nature and scale of the project's social impacts, and to its locality'*. As such, a short, targeted social impact statement will be provided with the EIS.

## **6.14 Accessibility, Fire Safety and BCA**

The new school will be designed to meet the relevant standards of the National Construction Code, including the Building Code of Australia (BCA), fire safety standards and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. The design will be reviewed by qualified consultants and their recommendations included in the design.

## 7.0 Consultation and Community Engagement

### 7.1 Early consultation

An extensive program of preliminary consultation has been undertaken with the school, local community, Narrabri Shire Council and other stakeholders. A Project Reference Group (PRG) has also been established to inform the early planning of the project. A summary of the key meetings undertaken to the time of writing of this Scoping Report is provided in **Table 3**.

**Table 3 Summary of Preliminary Stakeholder and Community Consultation**

Stakeholder	Date	Meeting Purpose / Outcome
Wee Waa High School & Public School Principals	14 Dec 20	Principals introduction and project status
Narrabri Shire Council	14 Dec 20	Mayor and General Manager Briefing on background and current status
Narrabri Shire Council	8 Feb 21	Mayor and General Manager project update
Project Reference Group	9 Feb 21	PRG #1 project kick off meeting
Aboriginal Education Consultancy Group	9 Feb 21	AECG Wee Waa President introduction and project status
Wee Waa HS Aboriginal Education Officer	10 Feb 21	AEO introduction and project status
Wee Waa Local Aboriginal Land Council	11 Feb 21	CEO introduction and project status
Narrabri Shire Council	11 Feb 21	Directors Infrastructure and Planning Project briefing, proposed alternative site, services, traffic, statutory planning
Project Reference Group	3 Mar 21	PRG #2 Project update, overview of Educational Rationale & SINSW inputs
Wee Waa Local Aboriginal Land Council	3 Mar 21	CEO Project update
Narrabri Shire Council	3 Mar 21	Mayor and General Manager Project update
Narrabri Shire Council	3 Mar 21	Directors Infrastructure and Corporate Planning Project update, traffic, statutory planning, draft Masterplan review
Wee Waa HS Principals	18 Mar 21	Masterplan review
Narrabri Shire Council	19 Mar 21	Planning pathway
Wee Waa HS Principal, DEL, AEGC, P&C	24 Mar 21	School operations and performance overview, status of health concerns and actions taken, early planning update
Wee Waa Local Aboriginal Land Council	30 Mar 21	Project update and introduction to Heritage and Agriculture consultants
Narrabri Shire Council	30 Mar 21	Project Update, presentation of transport strategy
Wee Waa HS Principal, DEL, AECG, P&C	31 Mar 21	Project Update
Project Reference Group	31 Mar 21	PRG #3 Project update

### 7.2 Proposed consultation

A draft Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy has been prepared, which will be finalised and undertaken during the EIS stage of the project. SINSW seek to work collaboratively with stakeholders to create a learning environment that serves future needs and makes the community proud. The objectives for community engagement are to:

- Promote the benefits of the project
- Build key school community relationships and maintain goodwill with impacted communities
- Manage community expectations and build trust by delivering on our commitments
- Provide timely information to impacted stakeholders, schools and broader communities
- Address and correct misinformation in the public domain
- Reduce the risk of project delays caused by negative third-party intervention
- Leave a positive legacy in each community.

Future consultation with the following stakeholders will be undertaken as required:

- Project Reference Group
- Executive Steering Committee:
- School communities for the Wee Waa High school community
- Local members of Parliament
- Narrabri Shire Council
- NSW Government agencies including:
  - Transport for NSW
  - Roads and Maritime Services NSW
  - NSW Environmental Protection Authority
  - NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
  - Fire and Rescue NSW
  - NSW Environmental Protection Authority
  - NSW Rural Fire Service
  - NSW Health
  - GANSW
- Service providers including:
  - NBN Co
  - Jemena
  - Essential Energy
  - Sydney Water
- Local Media
- Local business
- Local public institutions
- Wee Waa Aboriginal Land Council
- Local community
- Nearby public schools
- Private schools within the locality

## 8.0 Conclusion

This Scoping Report has been prepared to request SEARs for the development of a new high school in Wee Waa. The report has described the site and project, identified the relevant strategic and statutory context, summarised the results of early community engagement, identified the scale and nature of the impacts of the project, and outlined the proposed approach to assessment and community engagement.

Construction of the new Wee Waa High School is considered an urgent priority to provide a new school for students currently collocated on the Wee Waa Public School site.

As such this Scoping Report formally requests the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) be prepared and provided for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed development. We trust that the information detailed in this report is sufficient to enable the Secretary to issue SEARs for the preparation of an EIS.

## Appendix A



View of the study area facing north.

## **ABORIGINAL DUE DILIGENCE & HISTORIC HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**WEE WAA HIGH SCHOOL**

WEE WAA, NSW

JUNE 2021

Report prepared by  
OzArk Environment & Heritage  
for NSW Department of Education



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Enquiries should be addressed to OzArk Environment & Heritage.	

### **Acknowledgement**

OzArk acknowledge Traditional Owners of the area on which this assessment took place and pay respect to their beliefs, cultural heritage and continuing connection with the land. We also acknowledge and pay respect to the post-contact experiences of Aboriginal people with attachment to the area and to the elders, past and present, as the next generation of role models and vessels for memories, traditions, culture and hopes of local Aboriginal people.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

OzArk Environment & Heritage (OzArk) has been engaged by the NSW Department of Education (the proponent) to complete a heritage assessment for the proposed Wee Waa High School (the proposal). This report assesses both Aboriginal cultural heritage values and historic heritage values that may be impacted by the proposal. The proposal is in the Narrabri Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA).

The proposed project location is on a seven hectare (ha) parcel of land located at Lot 125 DP757125, Lot 124 DP757125, Lot 2 DP550633 and Lot 1 DP577294 on Mitchell Street, Wee Waa NSW.

The visual inspection of the study area was undertaken by OzArk Project Archaeologist, Taylor Foster on 31 March 2021. Standard archaeological field survey and recording methods were employed. No representatives of the Aboriginal community were present for the survey.

No Aboriginal objects or historic items were recorded during the visual inspection.

The undertaking of the Due Diligence process resulted in the conclusion that the proposed works will have an impact on the ground surface, however, no Aboriginal objects or intact archaeological deposits, or items of historic significance, will be harmed by the proposal. This moves the proposal to the following outcomes:

### Aboriginal Heritage

*Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit application not necessary. Proceed with caution. If any Aboriginal objects are found, stop work and notify Heritage NSW (131 555 or info@environment.nsw.gov.au). If human remains are found, stop work, secure the site and notify NSW Police and Heritage NSW.*

To ensure the greatest possible protection to the area's Aboriginal cultural heritage values, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) The proposed work may proceed at Mitchell Street without further archaeological investigation under the following conditions:
  - a) All land and ground disturbance activities must be confined to within the study area, as this will eliminate the risk of harm to Aboriginal objects in adjacent landforms. Should the parameters of the proposal extend beyond the assessed areas, then further archaeological assessment may be required.
  - b) All staff and contractors involved in the proposed work should be made aware of the legislative protection requirements for all Aboriginal sites and objects.
- 2) This assessment has concluded that there is a low likelihood that the proposed work will adversely harm Aboriginal cultural heritage items or sites. However, during works, if

Aboriginal artefacts or skeletal material are noted, all work should cease and the procedures in the *Unanticipated Finds Protocol* (**Appendix 2**) should be followed;

- 3) Inductions for work crews should include a cultural heritage awareness procedure to ensure they recognise Aboriginal artefacts (see **Appendix 3**) and are aware of the legislative protection of Aboriginal objects under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and the contents of the *Unanticipated Finds Protocol*.
- 4) The information presented here meets the requirements of the *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*. It should be retained as shelf documentation for five years as it may be used to support a defence against prosecution in the event of unanticipated harm to Aboriginal objects.

### **Historic Heritage**

As no items of historic heritage significance have been identified in the study area, the proposed works may proceed without further investigation with the following recommendation:

1. This assessment has concluded that there is a low likelihood that the proposed work will adversely harm historic heritage items or sites. However, during works, if historic materials are noted, all work should cease and the procedures in the *Unanticipated Finds Protocol* (**Appendix 4**) should be followed.

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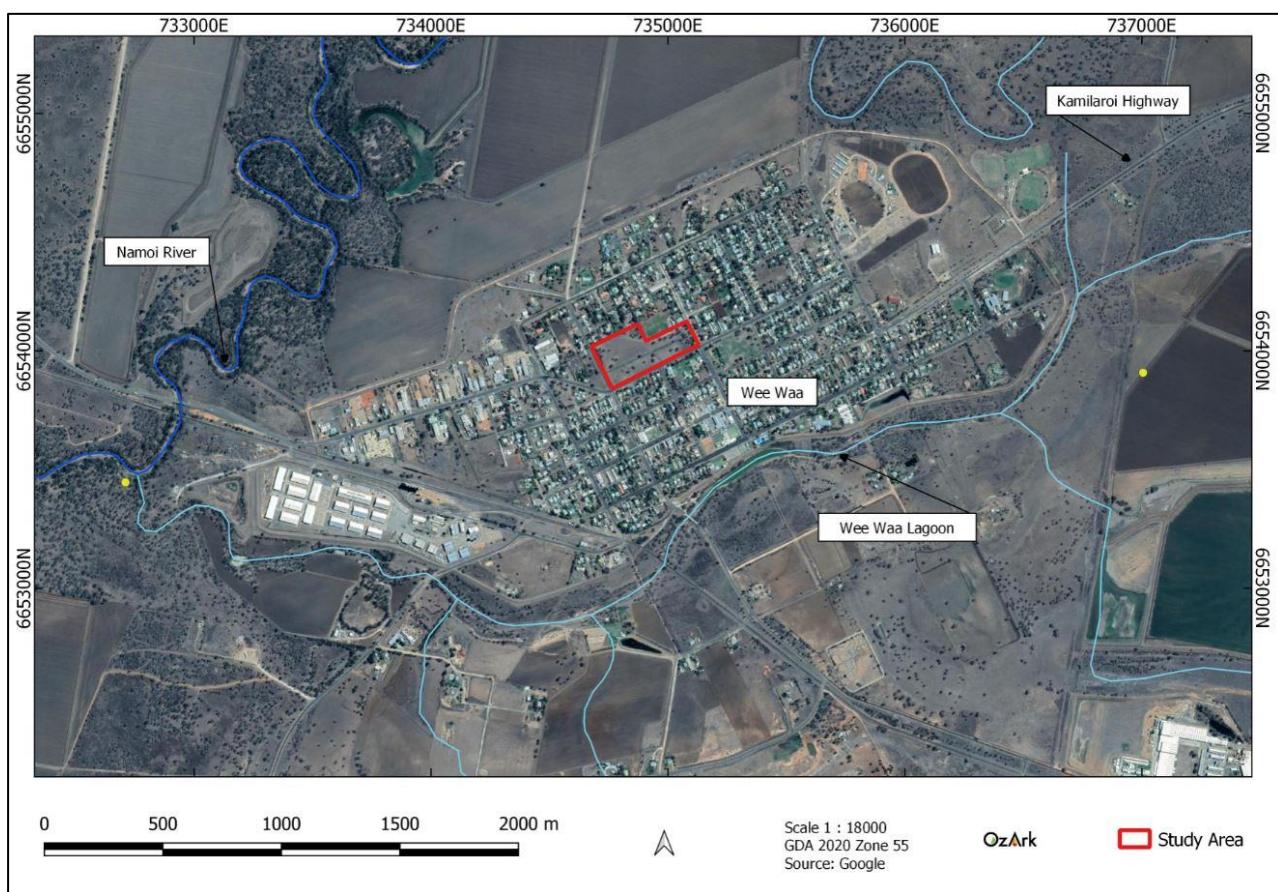
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

OzArk Environment & Heritage (OzArk) has been engaged by the NSW Department of Education (the proponent) to complete a heritage assessment for the proposed Wee Waa High School (the proposal). This report assesses both Aboriginal cultural heritage values and historic heritage values that may be impacted by the proposal. The proposal is in the Narrabri Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA) (Figure 1-1).

**Figure 1-1. Map showing the location of the proposal.**



### 1.2 PROPOSED WORKS

NSW Department of Education are looking at providing a new high school at Wee Waa due to health and safety concerns at the current site. The new site will also meet current and future education and enrolment needs. The new facilities will be delivered in two stages – a pop up school will be provided in demountable buildings whilst planning, design and delivery of the new permanent school is progressed. The new school will contain:

- 15 permanent teaching spaces
- Administration / Library / Staff facilities
- Hall

- Library
- Play / recreation space.

### **1.3 STUDY AREA**

The proposed project location is on a seven hectare (ha) parcel of land located at Lot 125 DP757125, Lot 124 DP757125, Lot 2 DP550633 and Lot 1 DP577294 on Mitchell Street, Wee Waa NSW. The study area is shown on **Figure 1-2**.

### **1.4 ASSESSMENT APPROACH**

#### Aboriginal cultural heritage

The desktop and visual inspection component for the study area follows the *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales* (Due Diligence; DECCW 2010). The field inspection followed the *Guide to Investigating, Assessing and Reporting on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in New South Wales* (OEH 2011).

#### Historic heritage

This assessment applies the Heritage Council's *Historical Archaeology Code of Practice* (Heritage Council 2006) in the completion of a historical heritage assessment, including field investigations.

Figure 1-2: Aerial showing the study area.



## 2 ABORIGINAL DUE DILIGENCE ASSESSMENT

---

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The National Parks and Wildlife Regulations 2009 and 2019 (NPW Regulation) made under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act) advocates a Due Diligence process to determining likely impacts on Aboriginal objects. Carrying out Due Diligence provides a defence to the offence of harming Aboriginal objects and is an important step in satisfying Aboriginal heritage obligations in NSW.

### 2.2 DEFENCES UNDER THE NPW REGULATION 2009

#### 2.2.1 Low impact activities

The first step before application of the due diligence process itself is to determine whether the proposed activity is a “low impact activity” for which there is a defence in the NPW Regulation. The exemptions are listed in Section 80B (1) of the NPW Regulation (DECCW 2010: 6).

Under the due diligence guidelines, the activities of the proponent are not considered a low impact activity.

#### 2.2.2 Disturbed lands

Relevant to this process is the assessed levels of previous land-use disturbance.

The NPW Regulation Section 80B (4) (DECCW 2010: 18) define disturbed land as follows:

*Land is disturbed if it has been the subject of a human activity that has changed the land's surface, being changes that remain clear and observable.*

*Examples include ploughing, construction of rural infrastructure (such as dams and fences), construction of roads, trails and tracks (including fire trails and tracks and walking tracks), clearing vegetation, construction of buildings and the erection of other structures, construction or installation of utilities and other similar services (such as above or below ground electrical infrastructure, water or sewerage pipelines, stormwater drainage and other similar infrastructure) and construction of earthworks.*

The proposed works are not in an area where the land's surface has been changed in a clear and observable manner and the due diligence process must be applied.

In summary, it is determined that the proposal must be assessed under the Due Diligence Code. The reasoning for this determination is set out in **Table 2-1**.

**Table 2-1: Determination of whether Due Diligence Code applies.**

Item	Reasoning	Answer
Is the activity a Part 3A project declared under section 75B of the EP&A Act?	The proposal is assessed under Part 5 of the EP&A Act.	No
Is the activity exempt from the NPW Act or NPW Regulation?	The proposal is not exempt under this Act or Regulation.	No
Do either or both of these apply: Is the activity in an Aboriginal place? Have previous investigations that meet the requirements of this Code identified Aboriginal objects?	The activity will not occur in an Aboriginal place. No previous investigations have been conducted.	No
Is the activity a low impact one for which there is a defence in the NPW Regulation?	The proposal is not a low impact activity for which there is a defence in the NPW Regulation.	No
Is the activity occurring entirely within areas that are assessed as 'disturbed lands'?	The proposal is not within areas of high modification.	No
Due Diligence Code of Practice assessment is required		

## 2.3 APPLICATION OF THE DUE DILIGENCE CODE OF PRACTICE TO THE PROPOSAL

To follow the generic due diligence process, a series of steps in a question/answer flowchart format (DECCW 2010: 10) are applied to the proposed impacts and the study area, and the responses documented.

### 2.3.1 Step 1

Will the activity disturb the ground surface or any culturally modified trees?

**Yes, the proposal will impact the ground surface and may impact culturally modified trees.**

The proposed works include the construction of a 15 permanent teaching spaces and a number of other facilities. These works will have a direct impact on the ground surface. There are also a number of trees within the land parcels that may be impacted by the proposed works. Therefore, the due diligence process must proceed to visual inspection in order to determine if any Aboriginal objects are present.

### 2.3.2 Step 2a

Are there any relevant confirmed site records or other associated landscape feature information on AHIMS?

**No, there are no previously recorded sites within the study area.**

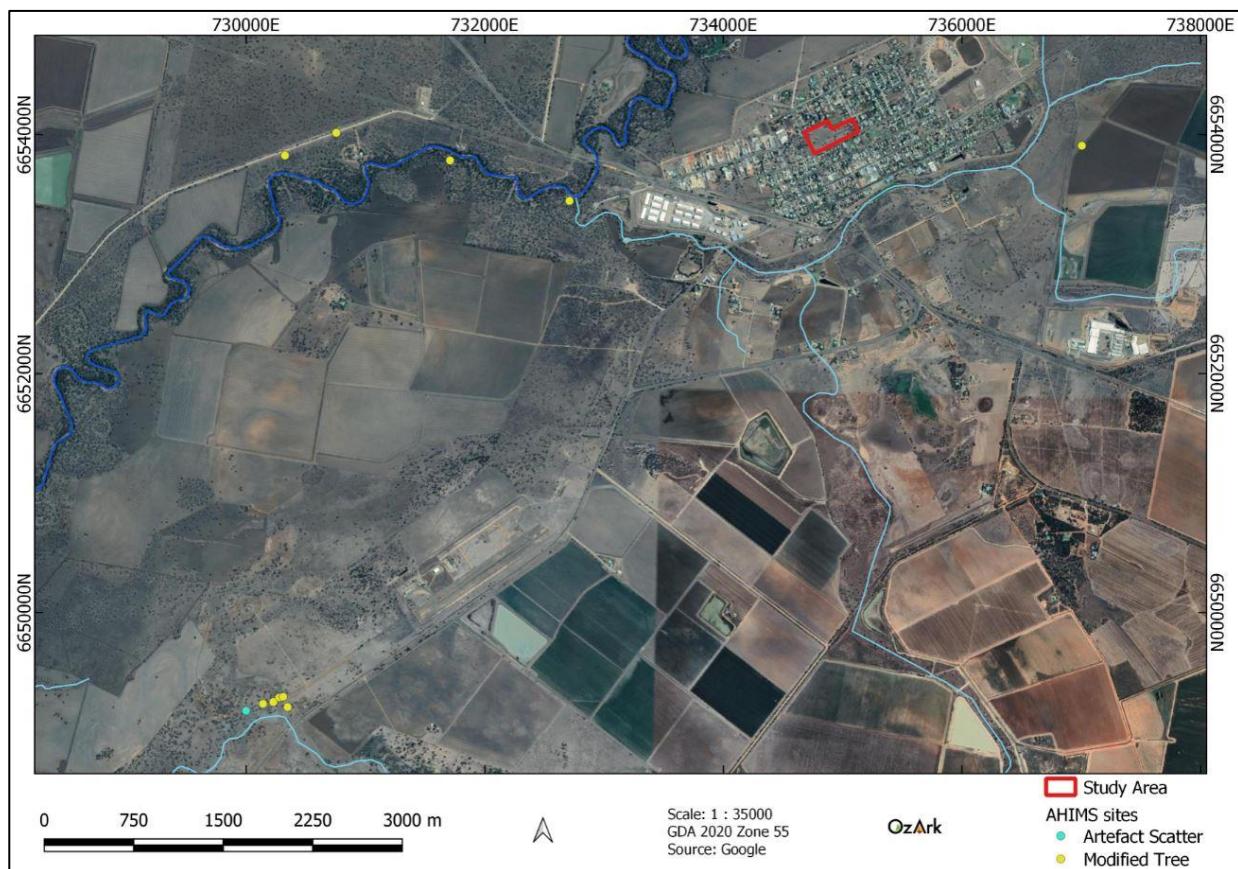
A search of the Heritage NSW Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database on 18 March 2021 returned 11 results for previously recorded sites within a 10 kilometre (km) radius centred on the study area (GDA Zone 55 Eastings: 729945–739960, Northings: 6648500–6659665 with no buffer).

**Figure 2-1** shows all previously recorded sites in relation to the study area and **Table 2-2** shows the types of sites that are close to the study area.

**Table 2-2: Site types and frequencies of AHIMS sites near the study area.**

Site Type	Number	% Frequency
Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred)	10	90.9%
Artefact Scatter	1	9.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 2-1: Previously recorded sites in relation to the study area.**



The AHIMS data shows that the most common site type in the area are modified trees, which account for approximately 90.9% of sites in the area. The only other site type recorded in the area are artefact sites, which consist of the remaining 9.1% of sites. The AHIMS sites are in two main concentrations, both in relation to watercourses. Four of the sites are located between 2 km and 5 km west of the study area and are associated with the Namoi River. All four sites are modified trees. The second cluster consists of six sites located roughly 6.3 km south west of the study area and are associated with a minor unnamed water course. Five of the sites are modified trees, and one of the sites is an artefact scatter. The remaining site is a modified tree, located approximately 1.8 km east of the study area. Nine of the 11 sites are located within 200 m of watercourses. The remaining two sites are approximately 350 m from the closest source of water.

### 2.3.3 Step 2b

Are there any other sources of information of which a person is already aware?

**No, there are no other sources of information that would indicate the presence of Aboriginal objects in the study area.**

According to Tindale (1974), the current study area falls within the boundaries of Kamilaroi (also Gamilaraay) ethno-linguistic group (see also Austin et al. 1980). The Kamilaroi tribal area extends from Walgett, NSW to Nindigully, QLD and included areas near Talwood and Garah at Moree, Mungindi, Mogil Mogil, Narrabri, Pilliga, Gunnedah, Bingara, Tamworth, Quirindi, Bundella, Barraba, Gwabegar, and Come-by-Chance; on headwaters of the Hunter River (Tindale 1974). The current study area is located within the centre of the Kamilaroi tribal territory. It is acknowledged that use of the term 'tribe' and the delineation of 'tribal boundaries' on maps is problematic, although distinctive ethno-linguistic groups are known to exist.

Prior to European settlement, the Kamilaroi people practiced a hunting, gathering, and fishing economy with the Namoi River and the Gwydir River providing an abundance of resources. The Traditional Owners caught a variety of freshwater species including fish, eels, crayfish, yabbies, turtles, and mussels using fishing lines and nets made from reed fibres. Watercraft was manufactured from large slabs of bark cut from the native River Red Gum trees. Away from the freshwater sources, the Kamilaroi people hunted kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, possums, echidnas, emus, lizards, snakes, and frogs. Plant foods included grass seeds, wild orange, emu apple, melons, tubers, yams, and roots. It is highly probable that the vegetation structure which existed prior to European occupation was a result of Aboriginal land management practices such as controlled burning (Appleton 2009).

The surveyor-general Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell (1839) described two Aboriginal villages on the Moree plains. The first was located on the Gwydir River:

*Each hut was semi-circular, or circular; the roof conical, and from one side a flat roof stood forward like a portico, supported by two sticks. Most of them were close to the trunk of a tree, and they were covered, not as in other parts, by sheets of bark, but with a variety of materials, such as reeds, grass, and boughs. (Mitchell 1839: 77)*

The second village was located on a lagoon between Collarenebri and Bellata and comprised seven huts of substantial construction, neatly thatched with dry grass and reeds (Michell 1839: 121). By the late 1830s, many prime grazing sites along the Namoi River and Gwydir River had been taken up by European settlers, including James Cox at Moree, Thomas Simpson Hall at Wee Bella Bolla and John Fleming at Mundi Bundie (Elder 2003: 75).

Balme (1986) compiled a list of objects that likely comprised the toolkit used by Aboriginal people in the region from reports by Mitchell (1839), Oxley (1820), and Sturt (1834). Based on this list,

the toolkit used by Kamilaroi people is likely to have included bark containers for holding water and gathering food, throwing sticks for hunting, cloaks of kangaroo skin, wooden clubs for fighting, hafted stone axes, nets for catching fish and birds, spears and spear throwers, and fish traps constructed in major creeks and rivers.

The explorer and natural scientist Alfred William Howitt was an early pioneer authority on Aboriginal cultures. In *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, Howitt (1996 [1904]) discusses Kamilaroi social and political organisation, kinship, ritual practices, long distance trade and communication. Presbyterian minister Reverend William Ridley (1875) and surveyor and amateur anthropologist Robert Hamilton Mathews (1903) provided early linguistic descriptions of the Kamilaroi language. More recently, Austin and Tindale (1985) provided a translation of the Kamilaroi Dreaming story of the Emu and the Brolga, as recorded by Tindale in 1938; and Austin (1993) produced a Kamilaroi reference dictionary.

Prior to 1980 little or no systematic archaeological studies had been undertaken in the Moree-Narrabri region (Haglund 1984). In the interim, a number of archaeological studies have since been conducted, providing baseline data for placing past Aboriginal sites within a regional landscape context (e.g. Balme 1986; Pearson 1981; Purcell 2000).

Pearson (1981) worked primarily in the Upper Macquarie region; nevertheless, the proximity of the Upper Macquarie to the current proposal areas and general topographic similarities renders the findings relevant. Pearson divided the recorded archaeological sites into two main categories: occupation sites and non-occupation sites (including grinding grooves, scarred or carved trees, ceremonial, and burial sites). Analysis of site locations produced a site prediction model with occupation occurring in areas with access to water, good drainage, level ground, adequate fuel, and appropriate localised weather patterns for summer or winter occupation. Occupation sites were most frequently located on low ridge tops, creek banks, gently undulating hills, and river flats and usually in open woodland vegetation (Pearson 1981: 101). The location of non-occupation sites was dependent upon a variety of factors relating to site function. For instance, grinding grooves were found where appropriate outcropping sandstone occurred close to occupation sites. The location of scarred trees displayed no obvious patterning, other than proximity to watercourses. Pearson suggested that these patterns would differ on the drier plains to the west, towards Dubbo and beyond, where dependence upon larger, more permanent water supplies was greater.

The North-Central Rivers study undertaken by Balme (1986) examined site location in terms of site preservation. Balme (1986: 182) found that, other than historic impacts, site distribution was most affected by geomorphic processes affecting site preservation and leading to site exposure. There was little scope for the assessment of site chronologies as few datable contexts had been located. Balme concluded that sites recorded on AHIMS from ethnographic accounts were unlikely to be located in the current landscape. Balme (1986) reported that, of the 200 carved

trees reported in the area, only five remained *in situ* at the time of the study; 50 are known to be in museum and private collections, and the whereabouts of the remainder are unknown, with many suspected to be in private collections.

Balme (1986) undertook a study focused on the Moree plains area, including surveys of the four major landforms identified in the area: major river channels, minor channels, floodplain areas not frequently inundated, and frequently inundated floodplains. Aboriginal scarred trees and open camp sites were the most commonly recorded site types. Most were located close to water or on elevated areas more distant from water. Erosion had exposed many of the sites. Balme noted that open camp sites were poorly represented, probably due to sediment deposition during flood events, rather than reflecting a true absence of sites.

High levels of land use disturbance in the Moree region have also been implicated for the apparent paucity of Aboriginal sites in the region. Witter (2004: 139) describes the Barwon Basin Region, which includes the Moree plains, as one of the major regions of archaeological disaster in NSW. Extensive areas of black alluvial cracking clays occur throughout the region. The self-mulching action of these soils is likely to have disrupted evidence of Aboriginal camps sites and vast areas have been laser levelled for irrigation, obliterating the remaining archaeology.

In an assessment of the Pilliga and Goonoo State Forests, Purcell (2000) recorded 47 and 106 Aboriginal sites, respectively. Purcell (2000: 31) found that sites were more frequently located within alluvium landforms including creeks, swamps and chains of ponds surrounded by floodplains and terraces, and that 91.5 per cent of sites were recorded within 200 to 300 meters (m) of water. Purcell (2002) found that sites located in the Moree area were often on floodplain and alluvial landforms within a few hundred metres of water. In the Northern Outwash subregion, sites were found up to 750 m from water sources, with an average distance of 101 m.

In 2018 OzArk conducted a heritage assessment for the Wee Waa Sewage Treatment plant. During this assessment, no sites were recorded with the designated study area. Despite some impact area being located in proximity to the Wee Waa Gully/Lagoon, it was thought the lack of archaeological sites was due to the high levels of disturbance due to the construction of pre-existing sludge pits and associated infrastructure. No further landforms with archaeological potential were identified. All mature trees within the study area were inspected, however, no trees with cultural modifications were recorded.

The study area has not been previously assessed and information detailed in **Section 2.3.2** presents the only available information that specifically relates to the study area: an AHIMS search. There are no known cultural values or Aboriginal sites pertaining directly to the location of the proposed work. No Aboriginal community members accompanied the current visual inspection, however, Wee Waa Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) was contacted and stated that there are no known cultural values within the study area. Previous studies suggest that

distance to water strongly and previous land use strongly correlates with the presence of intact Aboriginal sites.

#### 2.3.4 Step 2c

Are there any landscape features that are likely to indicate presence of Aboriginal objects?

**No, the study area does not contain landforms with identified archaeological sensitivity.**

The study area is located within the Darling Riverine Plains bioregion. The region lies in a semi-arid climatic zone which is hot and persistently dry. Within this bioregion the study area is in the Namoi Alluvial Plains Mitchells Landscape. This landscape is characterised by fluvial sediments of back-plain and channelized back-plain facies on the Namoi River and its effluent streams. Soils consist of dark yellow brown to brown silty clay with patches of sand and carbonate nodules deposited from suspended sediments in floodwater. Vegetation often comprises of open grasslands with scattered eucalyptus types including coolabah, black box and bimble box. Much of the landscape has been extensively cleared, cropped, and grazed.

No prominent water courses are in close proximity to the study area. The closest source of water to the study area is the Wee Waa Lagoon, located 540 m to the southeast. The closest major water course is the Namoi River, located 1.1 km northwest of the study area. The study area is also located approximately 1 km southwest of Quinns Billabong. As there is a widespread correlation within NSW between Aboriginal sites and distance to water, it is assessed that the potential of Aboriginal sites being present, while still possible, is diminished due to the absence of water sources.

Although not required by the Due Diligence process, the proponent has elected to apply the precautionary principle and proceed to visual inspection of the study area (**Section 2.3.6**) in order to ground-truth the findings of the above desktop level assessment.

#### 2.3.5 Step 3

Can harm to Aboriginal objects or disturbance of archaeologically sensitive landscape features be avoided?

**There are no known Aboriginal objects or landscape features likely to be impacted the proposal.**

While there are no AHIMS sites within the study area, portions of apparently undisturbed land will be impacted by the proposed works, and a number of trees will be cleared. It is unclear whether the trees are mature aged from a desktop level. Therefore, the Due Diligence Code will proceed to visual inspection in order to ascertain whether any Aboriginal objects will be impacted by the proposed works.

### 2.3.6 Step 4

Does a desktop assessment and visual inspection confirm that there are Aboriginal objects or that they are likely?

**No, there are no Aboriginal objects within the study area.**

The visual inspection of the study area was undertaken by OzArk Project Archaeologist, Taylor Foster on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2021. Standard archaeological field survey and recording methods were employed. No representatives of the Aboriginal community were present for the survey.

The survey was conducted by the field archaeologist walking the entirety on the study area. The surveyor started at the northeast end of the study area and walked transects on the eastern half of the study area with transects running east–west and spaced approximately 20 m apart. The surveyor then walked the western half of the study area with transects running north–south and spaced approximately 20 m apart. During the field survey, emphasis was placed on ground surface exposures and all trees within or directly surrounding the study area were inspected (**Figure 2-2**) shows images of the study area. Pedestrian transects are shown on (**Figure 2-3**).

No Aboriginal objects were recorded during the visual inspection.

**Figure 2-2: Views of the study area.**

	
1. View of the study area facing west.	2. View of erosion within the study area.
	
3. View of dense grass coverage within the study area.	4. View of culvert within southern end of the study area.
	
5. View of vehicle tracks within the study area.	6. View of drainage within the study area.

**Figure 2-3: Survey coverage within the study area.**

## Discussion

Ground surface visibility (GSV) was generally low–moderate through the entire study area (see **Figure 2-2**). The study area was densely overgrown with weeds in the northern most section, however, erosion scalds provided some visibility. Grass coverage and waterlogging covered the rest of the study area, however, ground surface exposure was still approximately 30%, with high visibility within those exposure. Soils generally consisted of a brown silty loam with sand. The study area is a flat, plain landform that has been moderately disturbed due to vehicle tracks and drainage lines that have impacted the study area. One large artificial drainage line runs southwest–northeast through the entire study area and connects to a culvert on either end. Three smaller artificial drainage lines extend north–south from this main drainage line and connect to culverts at the southern end of the study area. A large artificial drainage line also runs north–south through the western edge of the study area. A total of six culverts are within the study area. Two vehicle tracks are also within the study area, both running east–west. The study area, at the time of the visual inspection, was heavily waterlogged due runoff. Vegetation across the study area consisted of grass and some weeds. A number of relatively young trees are also present within the study area.

Little background stone material was present and no stone artefacts were identified within the area during the visual inspection. Further, no landforms were identified as having potential to

contain Aboriginal objects in subsurface archaeological deposits. Due to the levels of disturbance, it is believed that any artefact sites that might have been present have likely been disturbed and possibly displaced.

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

Due to levels of ground disturbance and lack of archaeologically sensitive landforms, no areas of Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD) were identified. The due diligence process has resulted in the outcome that no further investigation is required. The reasoning behind this determination is set out in **Table 2-3**.

**Table 2-3: Due Diligence Code application.**

Item	Reasoning	Answer
Will the activity disturb either of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the ground surface where archaeological deposits are likely</li> <li>mature, native trees that may be culturally modified.</li> </ul>	The proposed works would disturb the ground surface through excavation and construction. The ground surface was assessed as being unlikely to have archaeological deposits. The proposal will not impact mature, native vegetation.	No
Are there any relevant records of Aboriginal heritage on site (AHIMS or from other sources), or landscape features that are likely to indicate presence of Aboriginal objects?	AHIMS indicated no Aboriginal sites within the study area and no sites in the near vicinity. No landscape features in the study area indicate the likely presence of Aboriginal objects. The Wee Waa LALC were unaware of any cultural values in the study area.	No
Will the activity impact Aboriginal objects or landforms with archaeological potential?	There are no known Aboriginal objects present in the study area and landforms with identified archaeological sensitivity are not present.	No
Does the desktop and/or visual assessment confirm that Aboriginal objects will be harmed?	Desktop searches found no known items of Aboriginal heritage in the study area. It is assessed that there is a low likelihood of there being subsurface archaeological deposits within the study area.	No
AHIP not necessary. Proceed with caution.		

### 3 HISTORIC HERITAGE ASSESSMENT: BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The current assessment will apply the Heritage Council *Historical Archaeology Code of Practice* (Heritage Council 2006) in the completion of a historical heritage assessment, including field investigations.

#### 3.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF WEE WAA

The Study Area is located in the floodplain of the Namoi River in the town of Wee Waa within the Narrabri Shire Council. Colonial exploration of the northwest plains dates back to the early 1800s when a party led by John Oxley, became the first European to explore the north-western parts of NSW. Originally inhabited by the Kamilaroi Aboriginal People, the Wee Waa run was taken up by squatter George Hobler in 1837 and the settlement developed. A police station and court were established in 1847 and a post office was opened two years later. The town is the first built on the Namoi River and a prominent early producer of cotton in Australia.

#### 3.3 LOCAL CONTEXT

##### 3.3.1 Desktop database searches conducted

A desktop search was conducted on the following databases to identify any potential previously recorded heritage within the study area. The results of this search are summarised in **Table 3-1**.

**Table 3-1: Historic heritage: desktop-database search results.**

Name of Database Searched	Date of Search	Type of Search	Comment
National and Commonwealth Heritage Listings	1/4/21	Narrabri LGA	No results
State Heritage Listings	1/4/21	Narrabri LGA	No items listed on the State Heritage Register, however, four results returned for state agency registered items in Wee Waa.
Local Environmental Plan (LEP)	1/4/21	Narrabri LEP 2012	Four results returned for LEP listed heritage items in Wee Waa.

A search of the Heritage Council of NSW administered heritage databases and the Narrabri LEP 2012 returned eight records for historical heritage sites within the town of Wee Waa. Four of the sites listed are registered with state agencies on their s170 Heritage and Conservation Registers. These sites are not in close proximity to the study area and will not be impacted by the proposed works. These sites include:

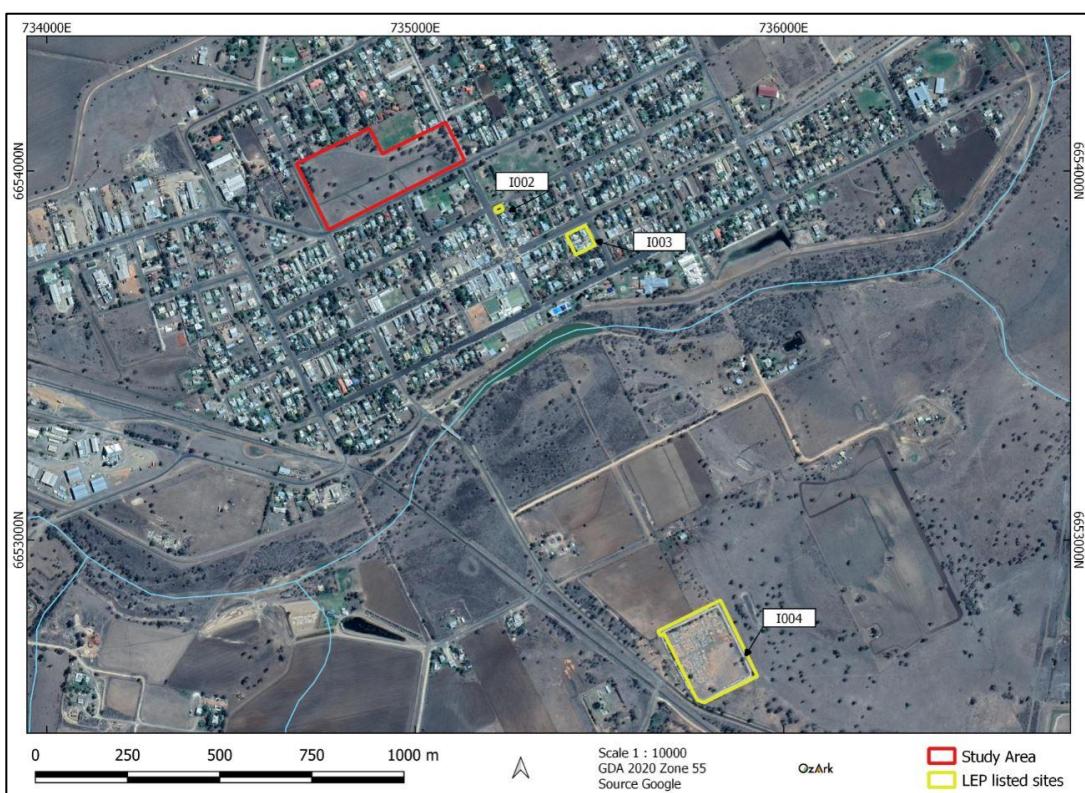
- Wee Waa Official Residence – a 19<sup>th</sup> century dwelling located on Rose Street. This item is important for in long and continuous associations with the police service in the local area

- Gunidgera Creek Regulator – constructed in 1975 soon after Jack G. Beale was the Minister for conservation. The item is of some significance as part of the Mollee, Gunidgera, and Weeta Weirs project
- Knights Regulator and Block Dam – an example of early water regulation structures dating to a period when artesian water was favoured over surface water. They represent an early effort to regulate the surface water and an early appreciation of its value. They are uncommon and good examples of their type
- Wee Waa Courthouse – also listed on the Narrabri LEP 2012.

Four of the returned results are listed on the Narrabri LEP 2012. These sites are not in close proximity to the study area and will not be impacted by the proposed works (see **Figure 3-1**). Three of the sites are currently locally listed and the listing for Drildool Cemetery has lapsed. The sites include:

- Wee Waa Courthouse (I003) – the site is significant for its contribution to the character of the town and for its fine, modest design, constructed in 1880. Wee Waa Courthouse has been associated with the provision of justice in the town since 1880
- Pioneer Tree (I002) – a cultural tree on Cowper and George Streets, Wee Waa
- Wee Waa General Cemetery (I004) – on Culgoora Road, Wee Waa, the cemetery has been in use since 1859
- Drildool Private Cemetery (lapsed) – on Buglibone Road, Wee Waa.

**Figure 3-1: LEP listed sites in relation to the study area.**



## 4 RESULTS OF HISTORIC HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Standard archaeological field survey and recording methods were employed in this study (Burke & Smith 2004).

The historical site survey was undertaken concurrent with the Aboriginal heritage inspection. Details of the survey methodology are presented in **Section 2.3.6**.

### 4.2 HISTORIC HERITAGE SURVEY RESULTS

During the survey, a number of historic items were identified (see **Figure 4-1**). These include two older, dilapidate, disused electricity poles—one in the north of the study area and one in the south—a freestanding fence post in the north of the study area, and a freestanding wooden structure consisting of four wooden posts in the north of the study area. The item appears to be a tank stand. A large amount of corrugated iron has fallen from the structure and lies in the surrounding weeds. The wooden fence post is located to the west of the structure and one of the wooden electricity poles is located to the south. An iron drum is located just north of the structure. The location of these items can be seen in **Figure 4-2**.

The wooden structure and the wooden posts/poles are assessed as having no historic significance. This assessment is derived from the fact that they are common, utilitarian objects without historic or aesthetic merit. As such the items are not protected by the Heritage Act and no further management is required for these items.

**Figure 4-1: Images of historic items recorded.**

	
1. View of one of the disused wooden electricity poles.	2. View of the wooden structure.

	
3. View of wooden structure with associated barrel and corrugated iron.	4. View of the disused fence post.

**Figure 4-2: Aerial showing the location of historic items recorded.**



## 5 MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

The undertaking of the Due Diligence process resulted in the conclusion that the proposed works will have an impact on the ground surface, however, no Aboriginal objects or intact archaeological deposits will be harmed by the proposal. This moves the proposal to the following outcome:

*AHIP application not necessary. Proceed with caution. If any Aboriginal objects are found, stop work and notify Heritage NSW (131 555 or info@environment.nsw.gov.au). If human remains are found, stop work, secure the site and notify NSW Police and Heritage NSW.*

To ensure the greatest possible protection to the area's Aboriginal cultural heritage values, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) The proposed work may proceed at Mitchell Street without further archaeological investigation under the following conditions:
  - a) All land and ground disturbance activities must be confined to within the study area, as this will eliminate the risk of harm to Aboriginal objects in adjacent landforms. Should the parameters of the proposal extend beyond the assessed areas, then further archaeological assessment may be required.
  - b) All staff and contractors involved in the proposed work should be made aware of the legislative protection requirements for all Aboriginal sites and objects.
- 2) This assessment has concluded that there is a low likelihood that the proposed work will adversely harm Aboriginal cultural heritage items or sites. However, during works, if Aboriginal artefacts or skeletal material are noted, all work should cease and the procedures in the *Unanticipated Finds Protocol* (**Appendix 2**) should be followed.
- 3) Inductions for work crews should include a cultural heritage awareness procedure to ensure they recognise Aboriginal artefacts (see **Appendix 3**) and are aware of the legislative protection of Aboriginal objects under the NPW Act and the contents of the *Unanticipated Finds Protocol*.
- 4) The information presented here meets the requirements of the *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*. It should be retained as shelf documentation for five years as it may be used to support a defence against prosecution in the event of unanticipated harm to Aboriginal objects.

### 5.2 HISTORIC HERITAGE

As no items of historic heritage significance have been identified within the study area, the proposed works may proceed without further investigation with the following recommendation:

2. This assessment has concluded that there is a low likelihood that the proposed work will adversely harm historic heritage items or sites. However, during works, if historic materials are noted, all work should cease and the procedures in the *Unanticipated Finds Protocol* (**Appendix 4**) should be followed.

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## APPENDIX 1: AHIMS SEARCH RESULTS

AHIMS Web Services (AWS)										Your Ref/PO Number : Wee Waa High School	
Extensive search - Site list report										Client Service ID : 577086	
SiteID	SiteName	Datum	Zone	Easting	Northing	Context	Site Status	SiteFeatures	SiteTypes	Reports	
19-2-0055	BBS; Wee Waa LALC; Namoi River stock routes 1	AGD	55	730112	6649065	Open site	Valid	Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred) : 1	Permits	99027	
19-2-0056	BBS; Wee Waa LALC; Namoi River stock routes 2	AGD	55	730162	6649103	Open site	Valid	Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred) : 1	Permits	99027	
19-2-0057	BBS; Wee Waa LALC; Namoi River stock routes 3	AGD	55	730195	6649109	Open site	Valid	Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred) : 1	Permits	99027	
19-2-0058	BBS; Wee Waa LALC; Namoi River stock routes 4	AGD	55	730232	6649023	Open site	Valid	Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred) : 1	Permits	99027	
19-2-0061	BBS; Wee Waa LALC; Namoi River stock routes 7	AGD	55	730026	6649050	Open site	Valid	Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred) : 1	Permits	99027	
19-2-0063	BBS; Wee Waa LALC; Namoi River stock routes 9	AGD	55	729884	6648992	Open site	Valid	Artefact: 8	Permits	99027	
19-2-0092	WEE WAA WEST TSR ST 1	AGD	55	736890	6653722	Open site	Valid	Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred) : -	Permits		
19-2-0093	Narrabri Local Aboriginal Land	Recorders	Mr. Patrick Gaynor	AGD	55	731593	6653599	Open site	Valid	Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred) : -	Permits
19-2-0094	WEE WAA WEST TSR ST 8	AGD	55	732595	6653260	Open site	Valid	Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred) : -	Permits		
19-2-0028	GR-ST-1	AGD	55	730210	6653640	Open site	Valid	Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred) : -	Scarred Tree		
	Contact	Recorders	Central West Archaeological and Heritage Services Pty Ltd						Permits		

Report generated by AHIMS Web Service on 18/03/2021 for Taylor Foster for the following area at Datum :GDA, Zone : 55, Eastings : 729945 - 739960, Northings : 6648500 - 6659665 with a Buffer of 0 meters. Additional Info : Archaeological Assessment. Number of Aboriginal sites and Aboriginal objects found is 11  
This information is not guaranteed to be free from error omission. Office of Environment and Heritage (NSW) and its employees disclaim liability for any act done or omission made on the information and consequences of such acts or omission.

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AHIMS Web Services (AWS)										Your Ref/PO Number : Wee Waa High School	
Extensive search - Site list report										Client Service ID : 577086	
SiteID	SiteName	Datum	Zone	Easting	Northing	Context	Site Status	SiteFeatures	SiteTypes	Reports	
19-2-0029	GR-ST-2	AGD	55	730640	6653830	Open site	Valid	Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred) : -	Scarred Tree		
	Contact	Recorders	Central West Archaeological and Heritage Services Pty Ltd						Permits		

Report generated by AHIMS Web Service on 18/03/2021 for Taylor Foster for the following area at Datum :GDA, Zone : 55, Eastings : 729945 - 739960, Northings : 6648500 - 6659665 with a Buffer of 0 meters. Additional Info : Archaeological Assessment. Number of Aboriginal sites and Aboriginal objects found is 11  
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## APPENDIX 2: ABORIGINAL HERITAGE: UNANTICIPATED FINDS PROTOCOL

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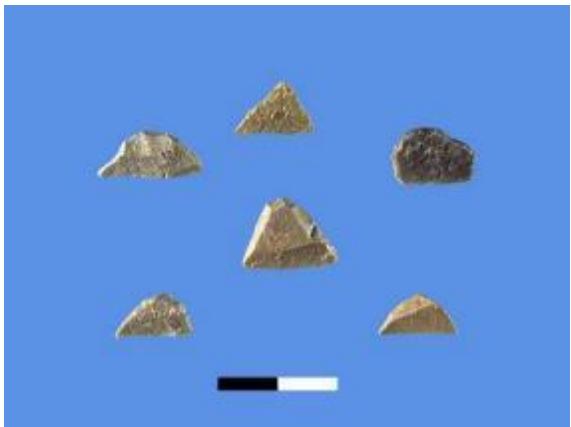
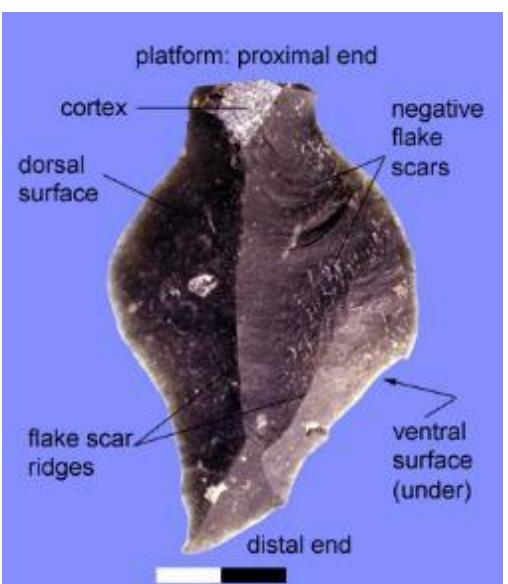
An Aboriginal artefact is anything which is the result of past Aboriginal activity. This includes stone (artefacts, rock engravings etc.), plant (culturally scarred trees) and animal (if showing signs of modification; i.e. smoothing, use). Human bone (skeletal) remains may also be uncovered while onsite.

Cultural heritage significance is assessed by the Aboriginal community and is typically based on traditional and contemporary lore, spiritual values, and oral history, and may also take into account scientific and educational value.

Protocol to be followed in the event that previously unrecorded or unanticipated Aboriginal object(s) are encountered:

1. If any Aboriginal object is discovered and/or harmed in, or under the land, while undertaking the proposed development activities, the proponent must:
  - a. Not further harm the object;
  - b. Immediately cease all work at the particular location;
  - c. Secure the area so as to avoid further harm to the Aboriginal object;
  - d. Notify Heritage NSW as soon as practical on 131 555, providing any details of the Aboriginal object and its location; and
  - e. Not recommence any work at the particular location unless authorised in writing by Heritage NSW.
2. In the event that Aboriginal burials are unexpectedly encountered during the activity, work must stop immediately, the area secured to prevent unauthorised access and NSW Police and Heritage NSW contacted.
3. Cooperate with the appropriate authorities and relevant Aboriginal community representatives to facilitate:
  - a. The recording and assessment of the find(s);
  - b. The fulfilment of any legal constraints arising from the find(s), including complying with Heritage NSW directions; and
  - c. The development and implementation of appropriate management strategies, including consultation with stakeholders and the assessment of the significance of the find(s).
4. Where the find(s) are determined to be Aboriginal object(s), recommencement of work in the area of the find(s) can only occur in accordance with any consequential legal requirements and after gaining written approval from Heritage NSW (normally an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit).

## APPENDIX 3: ABORIGINAL HERITAGE: ARTEFACT IDENTIFICATION

	
Retouched blades (scale = 1cm)	Flakes
	
Microliths (scale = 1cm)	Scraper (scale = 1cm)
	
Flake characteristics (scale = 1cm)	Core from which flakes have been removed (scale = 1cm)

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## APPENDIX 4: HISTORIC HERITAGE: UNANTICIPATED FINDS PROTOCOL

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A historic artefact is anything which is the result of past activity not related to the Aboriginal occupation of the area. This includes pottery, wood, glass and metal objects as well as the built remains of structures, sometimes heavily ruined.

Heritage significance of historic items is assessed by suitably qualified specialists who place the item or site in context and determine its role in aiding the community's understanding of the local area, or their wider role in being an exemplar of state or even national historic themes.

The following protocol should be followed if previously unrecorded or unanticipated historic objects are encountered:

1. All ground surface disturbance in the area of the finds should cease immediately, then:
  - a) The discoverer of the find(s) will notify machinery operators in the immediate vicinity of the find(s) so that work can be halted
  - b) The site supervisor will be informed of the find(s).
2. If finds are suspected to be human skeletal remains, then NSW Police must be contacted as a matter of priority.
3. If there is substantial doubt regarding the historic significance for the finds, then gain a qualified opinion from an archaeologist as soon as possible. This can circumvent proceeding further along the protocol for items which turn out not to be significant. If a quick opinion cannot be gained, or the identification is that the item is likely to be significant, then proceed to the next step.
4. Notify Heritage NSW as soon as practical on 131 555 providing any details of the historic find and its location.
5. If in the view of the heritage specialist or Heritage NSW that the finds appear not to be significant, work may recommence without further investigation. Keep a copy of all correspondence for future reference.
6. If in the view of the heritage specialist or Heritage NSW that the finds appear to be significant, facilitate the recording and assessment of the finds by a suitably qualified heritage specialist. Such a study should include the development of appropriate management strategies.
7. If the find(s) are determined to be significant historic items (i.e. of local or state significance), any re-commencement of ground surface disturbance may only resume following compliance with any legal requirements and gaining written approval from Heritage NSW.