



Massey Ferguson mechanical seeder located in the north-eastern corner of the project area.

HISTORIC HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

COBBORA SOLAR FARM

WARRUMBUNGLE AND DUBBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

MARCH 2025

Report prepared by

OzArk Environment & Heritage

for AECOM on behalf of Cobbora Solar Farm Pty Ltd.

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HISTORIC HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT COVER SHEET

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Acknowledgement

OzArk acknowledge the traditional custodians 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.

ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

| | |
|------------------|--|
| BESS | Battery Energy Storage System |
| DCCEEW | NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. DCCEEW contains the Environment and Heritage Group including Heritage NSW |
| DPHI | NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. DPHI contains the Planning agency |
| EIS | Environmental Impact Statement. A required document for major projects documenting all potential impacts to the environment, including heritage, that may arise due to the development |
| EP&A Act | <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> . Act that institutes a system of environmental planning and assessment for the State of New South Wales |
| EPBC Act | <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> . Commonwealth legislation that governs matters of national and world heritage significance |
| Heritage Act | <i>Heritage Act 1977</i> . Provides for the protection and conservation of historical places and objects or cultural heritage significance and the registration of such places and objects |
| Heritage Council | The Heritage Council makes decisions about the care and protection of heritage places and items that have been identified as being significant to the people of NSW |
| Heritage NSW | Government department tasked with ensuring compliance with the Heritage Act |
| HHAR | Historic Heritage Assessment Report |
| HHMP | Historic Heritage Management Plan. The instrument developed following project approval that regulates the management of historic cultural heritage |
| LEP | <i>Local Environmental Plan</i> . Outlines development controls with an LGA |
| LGA | Local Government Area |
| SEARs | Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements issued by DPHI |
| SHI | State Heritage Inventory. Includes locally significant items either listed in LEPs or on state agency Heritage and Conservation Registers. Also includes the SHR |

| | |
|-----|---|
| SHR | State Heritage Register. Heritage list maintained by Heritage NSW that lists all state significant places. Is part of the SHI |
| SSD | State Significant Development |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OzArk Environment & Heritage has been engaged by AECOM Australia Pty Ltd on behalf of Cobbora Solar Farm Pty Ltd in its capacity as trustee for the Cobbora Solar Farm Trust (the Proponent) to complete a *Historic Heritage Impact Assessment Report* (HHAR) for the Cobbora Solar Farm (the project). The project is located approximately 20 kilometres (km) southwest of the township of Dunedoo and 55 km east of Dubbo in Central Western New South Wales within the Warrumbungle and Dubbo Local Government Areas.

The Cobbora Solar Farm will be a large-scale photovoltaic (PV) generation facility with the capacity to generate up to 700 megawatts of electricity from PV solar panels and would also include a battery energy storage system and associated infrastructure for its management and connection to the national electricity market.

This project is a State Significant Development (SSD-29491142) under Part 4 Division 4.7 of the *Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979*. This HHAR has been undertaken to meet the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements.

A previous heritage assessment over much of the project area was undertaken by EMM in 2012 for the Cobbora Coal project and 13 historic items were assessed as having local heritage significance. None of these items are located within the project area.

In 2022, pedestrian surveys of the project area were undertaken by OzArk and a draft HHAR was prepared for the project. The 2022 assessment identified four historic items within the project area at that time, these included HS01 (mechanical seeder), HS02 (Laheys Creek cemetery), HS03 (Cobb & Co Stopping Place), and HS04 (House and outbuildings). The project was put on hold and was recently sold to the Proponent in July 2024. Since then, several project upgrades have taken place including a reduction of the project area (removal of the southern portion). As a result of this refinement, two of the previously identified heritage items, HS02 (Laheys Creek Cemetery) and the HS03 (Cobb & Co Stopping Place), are now located outside of the project area.

This report reviews the two previously identified historic items, HS01 and HS04, which remain within the project area, with HS04 within the development footprint. Assessment of the recorded items against the current Heritage NSW guidelines and the Burra Charter resulted in these two items being assessed as having no heritage significance. Therefore the *Heritage Act 1977* (Heritage Act) does not apply. Harm to HS01 and HS04 is possible without reference to the Heritage Act.

Recommendations concerning the historic values within project area are as follows.

1. All the proposed works must remain within the development footprint as shown on **Figure 1-3**. Any works proposed outside of this area may require additional assessment.

2. The Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will include a stop works procedure for unexpected finds related to historic heritage. An example of an *Unanticipated Finds Protocol* is presented in **Appendix 1**.

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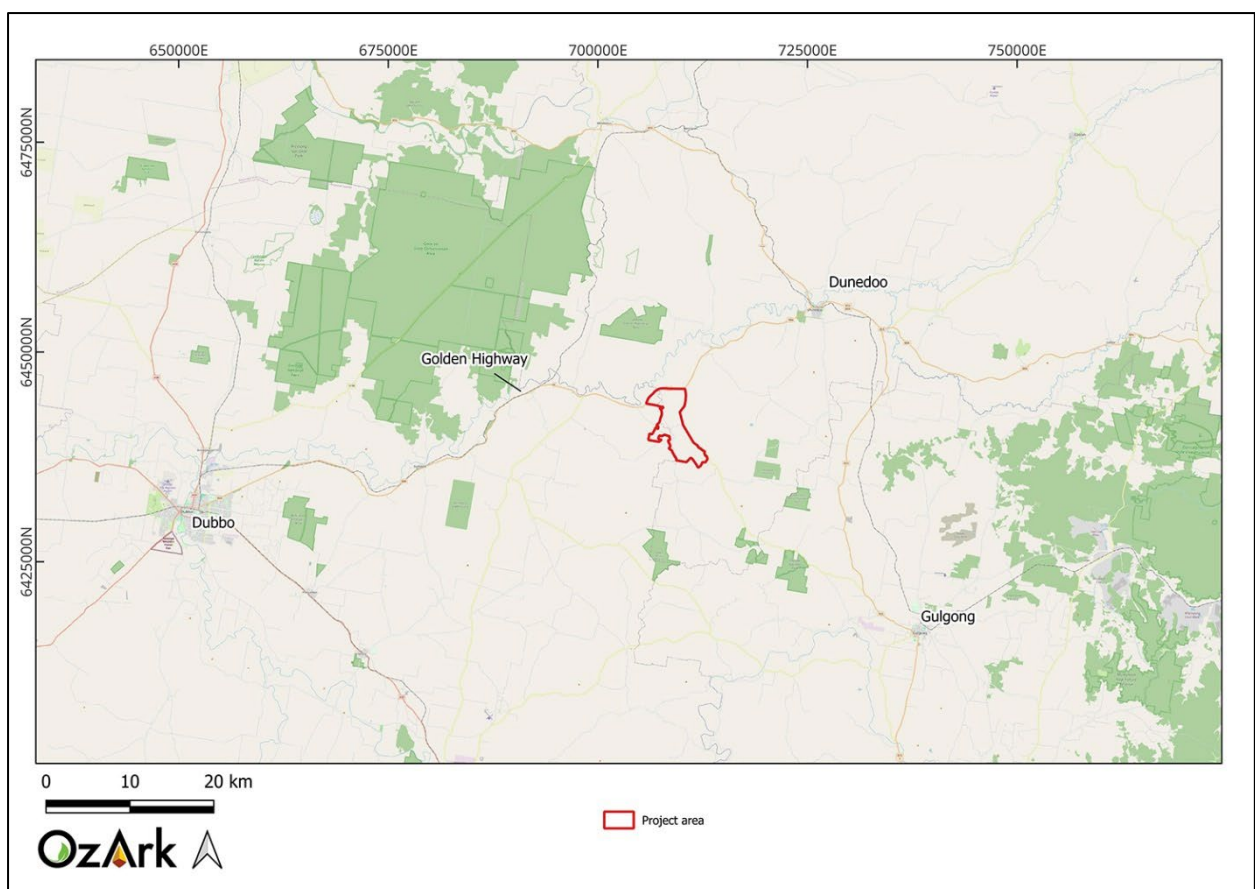
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

OzArk Environment & Heritage (OzArk) has been engaged by AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM), on behalf of Cobbora Solar Farm Pty Ltd in its capacity as trustee for the Cobbora Solar Farm Trust (a wholly owned subsidiary of Pacific Partnerships Pty Ltd; the Proponent) to complete a Historic Heritage Assessment Report (HHAR) for the proposed Cobbora Solar Farm (CSF, the project). The project area is located approximately 20 kilometres (km) southwest of the township of Dunedoo and 55 km east of Dubbo in Central Western NSW, within the Warrumbungle and Dubbo Regional Local Government Areas (LGAs) (**Figure 1-1**).

Figure 1-1: Map showing the location of the project.



1.2 BACKGROUND

A heritage assessment of much of the project area was undertaken by EMM in 2012 for the Cobbora Coal project and 13 historic items were assessed as having local heritage significance (EMM 2012). None of these items are located within project area.

In 2022, pedestrian surveys of the project area were undertaken by OzArk and a draft HHAR was prepared for the project (OzArk 2022). The project was put on hold and was recently sold to the Proponent in July 2024. Since 2022, project upgrades have taken place including a reduction of

the project area (removal of the southern portion). These changes were necessitated by EnergyCo purchasing 280 ha south of the project area to build Elong Elong Hub and through further design work.

As a result of this refinement, two previously identified heritage items are now located outside of the project area

(**Figure 1-3**). This HHAR has been prepared in response to the revisions.

1.3 PROPOSED WORK

The project will be a large-scale photovoltaic (PV) generation facility with the capacity to generate up to 700 megawatts (MW) (AC) of electricity from PV solar panels and would also include a battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated infrastructure for its management and connection to the national electricity market. The project would connect to the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWORZ) grid infrastructure via up to four onsite grid substations which would connect to the Elong Elong Energy Hub.

Key features of the project would include:

- Construction and operation of a 700 MV (AC) solar farm
- Installation of a BESS
- Installation of up to four substations, comprising:
 - One substation connecting the BESS to the Elong Elong Energy Hub
 - Up to three substations connecting the solar farm to the Elong Elong Energy Hub (four potential substation locations have been assessed in the HHAR, which will be reduced during detailed design)
- Supporting facilities and infrastructure, including internal roads, upgrades to external access roads (if required), underground and overhead cabling, waterway crossings, staff office, meeting facilities, operations and control room, workshop, amenities, accommodation, car parking, storage facilities, fencing and landscaping.

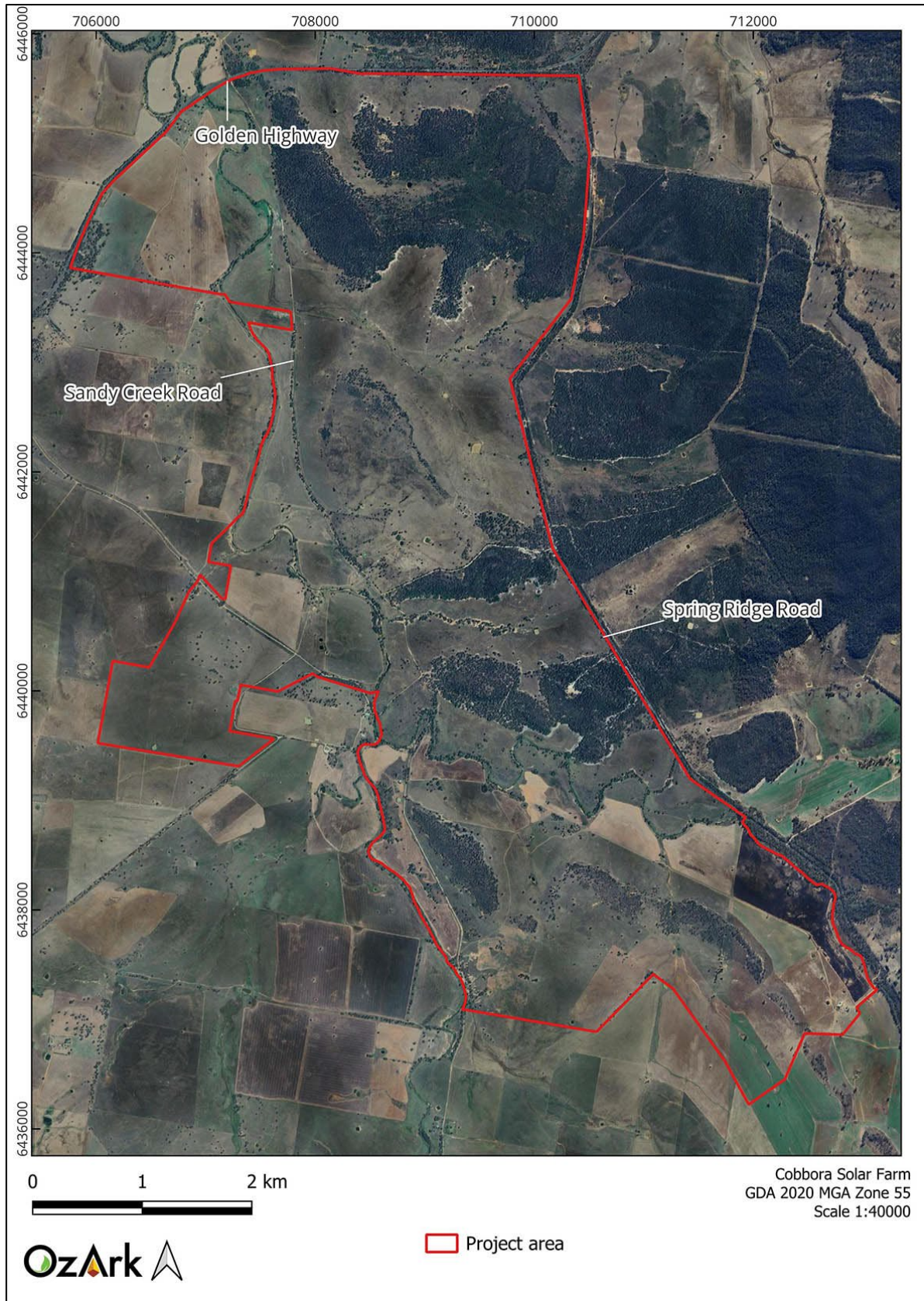
1.4 PROJECT AREA

The project area describes the area in which all impacts associated with the project will be located. The project area covers approximately 3,000 hectares (ha).

The project area is located to the south of the Golden Highway and west of Spring Ridge Road and includes part of Sandy Creek Road. Several ephemeral watercourses associated with the Talbragar River are within the project area, including the named waterways Sandy Creek and Laheys Creek (**Figure 1-2**).

The project area is currently used for grazing and cropping and is zoned RU1 Primary Production under both the Warrumbungle Shire Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2013 and the Dubbo Regional LEP 2022. There is also a small area which is not zoned under either of the LEPs.

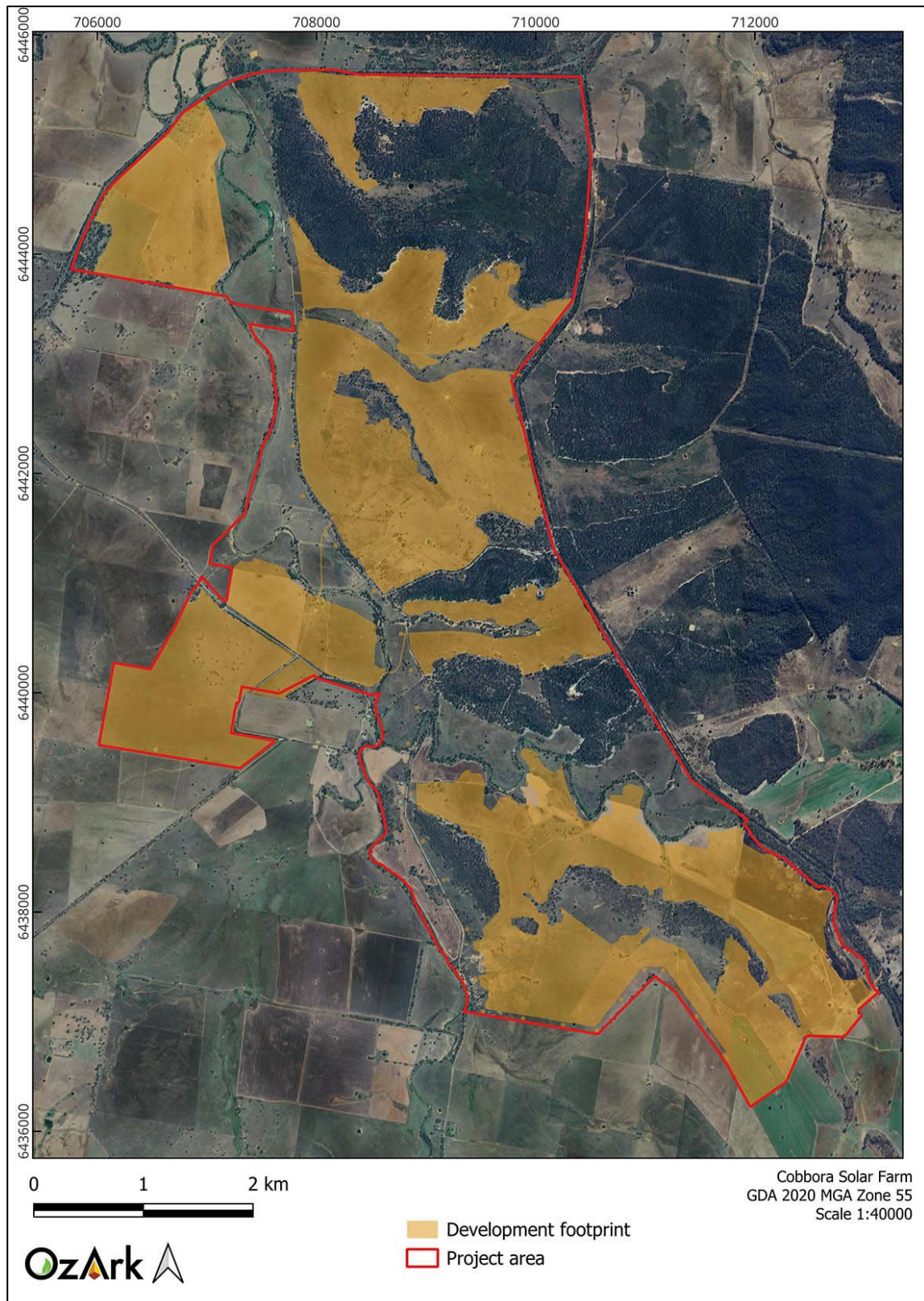
Figure 1-2: Aerial showing the project area.



1.5 DEVELOPMENT FOOTPRINT

The development footprint describes that portion of the project area where ground disturbing activities are proposed. The development footprint encompasses an area of approximately 1,600 ha, shown on **Figure 1-3**.

Figure 1-3: Aerial showing the project area and development footprint.



2 HISTORIC HERITAGE ASSESSMENT: INTRODUCTION

2.1 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Cultural heritage is managed by several state and national Acts. Baseline principles for the conservation of heritage places and relics can be found in the *Burra Charter* (Burra Charter). The *Burra Charter* has become the standard of best practice in the conservation of heritage places in Australia, and heritage organisations and local government authorities have incorporated the inherent principles and logic into guidelines and other conservation planning documents. The *Burra Charter* generally advocates for a cautious approach to changing places of heritage significance. This conservative notion embodies the basic premise behind legislation designed to protect our heritage, which operates primarily at a state level.

Several Acts of parliament provide for the protection of heritage at the various levels of government.

2.1.1 Commonwealth legislation

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), administered by the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water provides a framework to protect nationally significant flora, fauna, ecological communities, and heritage places. The EPBC Act establishes both a National Heritage List and Commonwealth Heritage List of protected places. These lists may include Aboriginal cultural sites or sites in which Aboriginal people have interest. The assessment and permitting processes of the EPBC Act are triggered when a proposed activity or development could potentially have an impact on one of the matters of national environmental significance listed by the Act. Ministerial approval is required under the EPBC Act for proposals involving significant impacts to National/Commonwealth heritage places.

Applicability to the project

It is noted there are no Commonwealth or National heritage listed places within the project area, and as such, the heritage provisions of the EPBC Act do not apply.

2.1.2 State legislation

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) established requirements relating to land use and planning. The main parts of the EP&A Act that relate to development assessment and approval are Part 4 (development assessment) and Part 5 (environmental assessment). The Minister responsible for the Act is the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

The EP&A Act currently provides the primary legislative basis for planning and environmental assessment in NSW.

The EP&A Act includes provisions to ensure that the potential environmental impacts of a development or activity are rigorously assessed and considered in the decision-making process.

The framework governing environmental and heritage assessment for the project is contained within the following parts of the EP&A Act:

- Part 4: Local government development assessments, including heritage. May include schedules of heritage items
- Division 4.7: Approvals process for state significant development.

Applicability to the project

The project will be assessed under Division 4.7 of the EP&A Act.

As the project is a State Significant Development (SSD-29491142), if approved, Section 4.41 of the EP&A Act would apply and provides a defence for any investigative or other activities that are required to be carried out for the purpose of complying with any environmental assessment requirement.

Section 4.41 of the EP&A Act also notes that permits under the *Heritage Act 1977* (Heritage Act) are not required for approvals under Part 4 Division 4.7.

2.1.2.1 Heritage Act 1977

The Heritage Act established the Heritage Council of NSW. The Heritage Council's role is to advise the government on the protection of heritage assets, make listing recommendations to the Minister in relation to the State Heritage Register (SHR), and assess/approve/decline proposals involving modification to heritage items or places listed on the SHR. Most proposals involving modification are assessed under Section 60 of the Heritage Act.

Automatic protection is afforded to 'relics', defined as 'any deposit or material evidence relating to the settlement of the area that comprised New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement, and which holds state or local significance' (note: formerly the Act protected any 'relic' that was more than 50 years old. Now the age determination has been dropped from the Act and relics are protected according to their heritage significance assessment rather than purely on their age). Excavation of land on which it is known or where there is reasonable cause to suspect that 'relics' will be exposed, moved, destroyed, discovered, or damaged is prohibited unless ordered under an excavation permit.

Applicability to the project

There are no SHR listed items within, or near, the project area. As such, no places or objects within the project area are currently protected by the Heritage Act.

2.1.1 Local Legislation

2.1.1.1 Local Environmental Plans (LEPs)

The project area is administered by the Warrumbungle LEP 2013 and Dubbo Regional Local LEP 2022.

The LEPs includes a schedule of heritage conservation areas and items that require either development consent or exemptions for projects that may impact conservation outcomes (Section 5.10). The objectives set out in Section 5.10 of the LEPs state:

- a) To conserve the environmental heritage of Warrumbungle/Dubbo Regional local government areas
- b) To conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings, and views
- c) To conserve archaeological sites
- d) To conserve Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal places of heritage significance.

Section 5.10(3)(a) (i) and (ii) set out the circumstances when a Development Application is not required when there is an impact to heritage items. Exemptions to consent are related to works that are of a minor nature or works that will not adversely impact the heritage values of a place.

Applicability to the Project

Items of local heritage significance that are listed in LEPs are protected by the conditions set out in Section 5.10 of the LEPs. There are no items of listed local heritage significance within the project area, however, there are 13 items surrounding the project area, as discussed in **Section 3.3.2**.

2.1.1.2 Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements

The Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for SSD-249491142 were issued by Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure with the requirement to 'assess the impact to historic heritage having regard to the *Guidelines for Preparing a Statement of Heritage Impact*'. The assessment of historic heritage values has followed the appropriate guidelines and was informed by the field survey and desktop database searches.

2.2 ASSESSMENT APPROACH

The inspection and assessment of heritage significance follows the:

- *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (Burra Charter). The International Council on Monuments and Sites.
- *Investigating Heritage Significance. A guide to identifying and examining heritage items in NSW*. Heritage Council of NSW 2021.

- *Assessing heritage significance. Guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW criteria.* Department of Planning and Environment 2023.

2.3 HISTORIC HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The assessment applies the guidelines established in *Investigating Heritage Significance. A guide to identifying and examining heritage items in NSW* (Heritage Council 2021).

The historical heritage assessment, including field investigations, meets the following objectives:

- Objective One:** To identify whether historical heritage items or areas are, or are likely to be, present within the project area
- Objective Two:** To assess the significance of any recorded historical heritage items or areas
- Objective Three:** Determine whether the proposal is likely to cause harm to recorded historical heritage items or areas
- Objective Four:** Provide management recommendations and options for mitigating impacts.

2.4 DATE OF HISTORIC HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

The field survey for the historic heritage assessment was undertaken by OzArk over one week from 27 June 2022 to 1 July 2022. Additional survey was undertaken by OzArk on 11 and 12 August 2022.

The fieldwork survey was undertaken by:

- Fieldwork Director: Chelsea Jones (OzArk Senior Archaeologist, BA [Hons] the University of Queensland).
- Senior Archaeologist: Stephanie Rusden (OzArk Senior Archaeologist, BS University of Wollongong, BA University of New England)
- Archaeologist: Brendan Fisher (OzArk Archaeologist, BA Archaeology, The University of Sydney)
- Archaeologist: Barry Kerton (OzArk Project Archaeologist, BA, BSc and MA [advanced] Australian National University)
- Archaeologist: Dr Yekun Zhang (OzArk Archaeologist, B Arts Archaeology & Anthropology, M.Sc Archaeological Science, PhD Archaeology).

2.4.1 Reporting

The reporting component of the heritage assessment was undertaken by:

- Report author: Dr. Bernadette Drabsch (OzArk Heritage Consultant, BA Ancient History, BNHI Hons and PhD Design/Archaeology, University of Newcastle)
- Reviewer: Ben Churcher (OzArk Director and Principal Archaeologist; BA (hons) University of Queensland, Dip Ed. University of Sydney).

3 HISTORIC HERITAGE ASSESSMENT: BACKGROUND

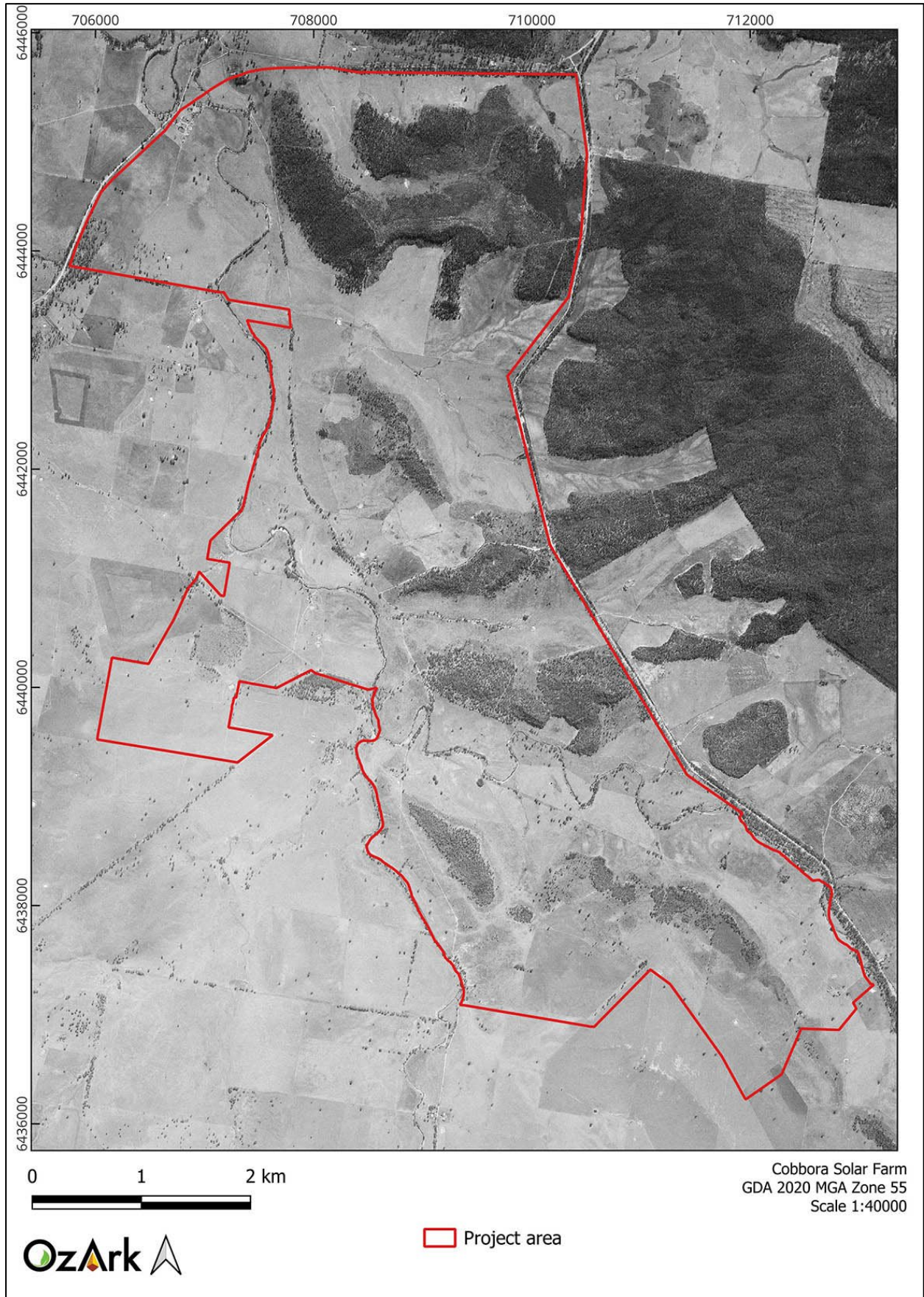
3.1 LANDSCAPE

The topography of the project area is characterised predominantly by slopes and drainage lines. The slopes range from low to moderate gradients and have been cleared of most vegetation. The topography of the project area would not have hindered colonial settlement, and the lack of steep slopes indicates that the area was suitable for agriculture and grazing activities.

Soils within the project area are classified as Soloths, Solodic Soils, and Red Brown Earths. These soil types have relatively low fertility which would have influenced the types of agriculture and grazing that has been carried out since colonial occupation. The proximity to readily available water sources, as provided by Sandy Creek and Laheys Creek, indicates that the project area would have been a suitable location for permanent occupation by colonial settlers, with suitable water supplies to support a local agricultural industry within the area.

Vegetation before land clearing within the project area would have comprised of black cypress pine (*Callitris endlicheri*) and broad-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus fibrosa* ssp. *Fibrosa*) along the ridges. The Eucalypt species were likely cut and used to construct residences and sheds for the colonial occupants, and incorporated into fencing, shelters, and cattle runs to manage stock. Land use in the region is typically cattle and sheep grazing with some cropping. The broad flat areas which very gently slopes down to the creeks have been cleared and ploughed regularly over many decades. The clearing of trees along watercourses has exacerbated erosion and increased salinity in some areas. Salt scalds are present in some low-lying areas in the north-western portion of the project area. An aerial from 1964 (**Figure 3-1**) shows that there has been little change in land use across the project area over the past 61 years.

Figure 3-1: 1964 historic aerial imagery of project area.



3.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COBBORA DISTRICT

Situated in the central west region of NSW, British exploration of the broader Cobbora district began during the early 1800s. The prospect of the area for grazing cattle and sheep motivated an influx of British settlement to the area, contrary to the 'limits of location' set by the colony. Agricultural practices of cropping and particularly sheep and cattle farming have continued to underpin the primary industry of the Cobbora area. Originally utilised as a crossing along the Talbragar River along the route between Mudgee to Mendooran, the town of Cobbora was not proclaimed until 1886 (City Plan Services 2018 and EMM 2012). For most of the 19th century, the town of Cobbora was considered a regional centre; up until the railway was constructed to Dunedoo in 1910 (Coolah Shire Council 1980 as cited in EMM 2012).

3.2.1 Occupation of Laheys Creek

During the late 19th century, a series of pastoral holdings along the Guntawang to Mednooran Road established the area of Laheys Creek. The nomenclature of Laheys Creek is inherited from former convict Michael Lahey who held 'Uamby' Station along the Cudgegong River during the 1850s. Laheys Creek also became the location of many of Henry Lawson's (Australian writer and bush poet) short stories.

In 1849, James and Catherine Falconer moved to Laheys Creek to lease five square miles of grazing land. The land was passed on to his eldest son Robert in 1868 and then to Robert's son again in 1877. Notably, John Robert Falconer was also the listed publican for the 'Bushman's Home' at Laheys Creek. The Falconer family cemetery, also known as Laheys Creek Cemetery remains in the area today. This private cemetery can be distinguished from others in the region by a large sandstone monument. At least 40 people are buried in this cemetery, although only five are marked with headstones (Cameron 1993). The individuals buried here include many of the Falconer family members, and possibly Henry Lawson's aunt. The Falconer family contributed to the development of the mail route in the 1860s and consequently the settlement of the Cobbora area, prior to the Cobb & Co service (EMM 2012).

In 1881, Laheys Creek established a local post office following Robert Falconer petitioning for the small town to attain one due to the distance to Cobbora's local post office. The petition received 34 signatures, which was enough for the Postmaster-General of the Colony of NSW to provide postal services to the small town. This post office eventually closed in 1890 and was transferred to the neighbouring property township of Spring Creek as this area was beginning to expand rather than Laheys Creek (Cameron 1993).

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 project area. The results of this search are summarised in **Table 3-1**.

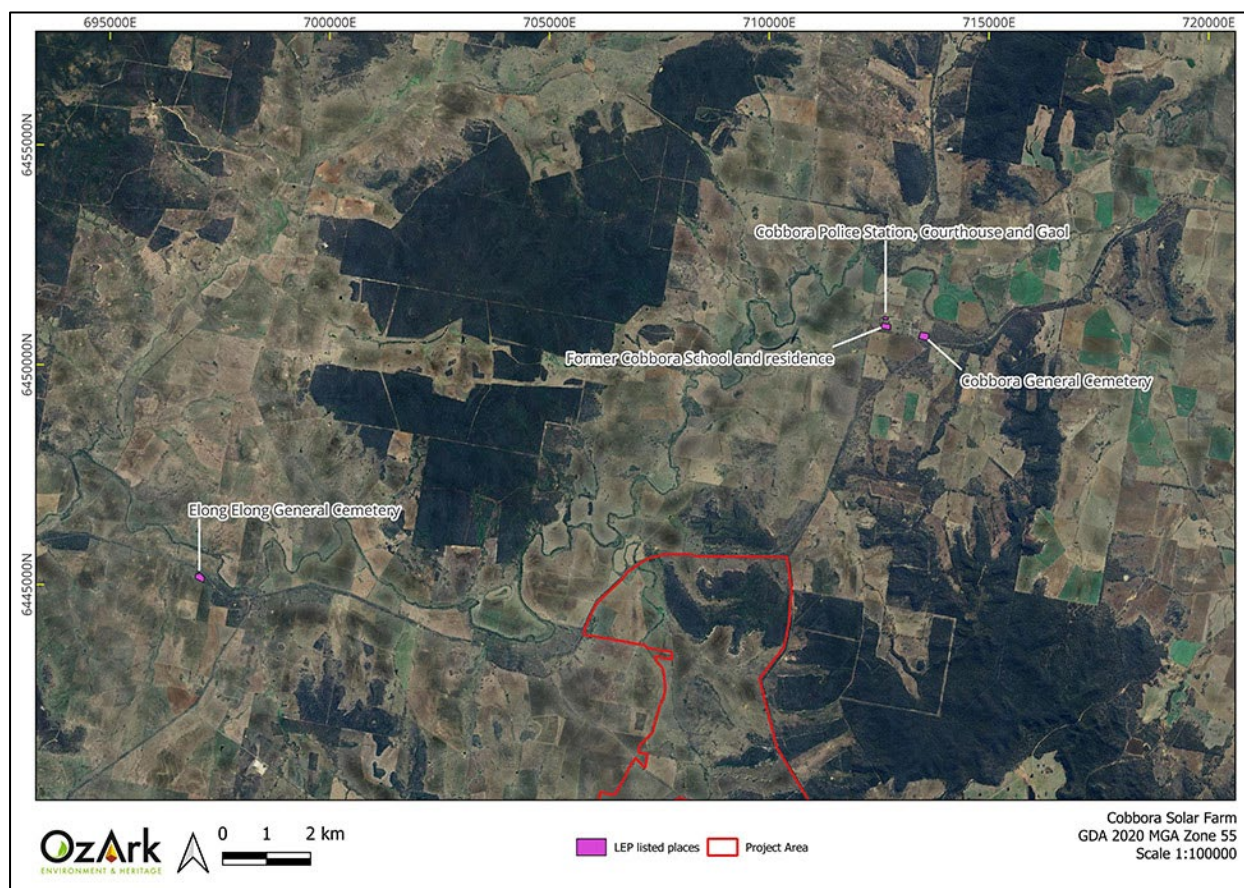
Table 3-1: Historic heritage: desktop-database search results.

| Name of database searched | Date of search | Type of search | Comment |
|---|----------------|---|--|
| National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists | 29/01/2025 | Dubbo and Warrumbungle LGAs | No places listed on either the National or Commonwealth heritage lists are located within the project area |
| State Heritage Register | 29/01/2025 | Dubbo and Warrumbungle LGAs | No places listed in the state heritage inventory (SHI) are located within the project area |
| State Heritage Inventory (Local Environmental Plans/state agency registers) | 29/01/2025 | Dubbo Regional LEP of 2022 and Warrumbungle LEP of 2013 | None of the locally listed places are near the project area. |

A search of the national, state, and local heritage databases, including the Dubbo Regional and Warrumbungle Local Environmental Plans (LEPs), returned no records for historical heritage sites within the designated search areas. However, there are four LEP listed items located within 8 km of the project area (**Figure 3-2**). These items, which are outside of the project area, are detailed in **Table 3-2**. The closest item is approximately 6 km from the project area.

Table 3-2: Registered historic heritage items near the project area.

| Item ID | Item Name | Description |
|---------|---|--|
| I2 | Former Cobbora School and Residence | Located within the defunct township of Cobbora, the building contains mid-Victorian gothic style brickwork combined with a timber frame. Item located approximately 6 km northeast of the project area. |
| I3 | Cobbora General Cemetery | Located on the eastern side of the defunct township of Cobbora, this cemetery represents the large general cemeteries in the Coolah Shire. Typical features of this cemetery style are large iron gates at the entrance, along with large sandstone monuments. Item located approximately 6 km northeast of the project area. |
| I4 | Cobbora Police Station, Courthouse and Gaol | One of the remaining dwellings in Cobbora, this building is typical of Victorian Government brick buildings. The main features of this building include tuck-pointed windows with sandstone detailing. The building was one of the first buildings constructed in Cobbora around 1830 and remained in use until the town was bypassed by the railway through Dunedoo. Item located approximately 6 km northeast of the project area. |
| I21 | Elong Cemetery | Located off the Golden Highway, this cemetery contains burials of prominent individuals of the district. Some burials date to the Victorian period. Item located approximately 8.7 km west of the project area. |

Figure 3-2: Listed historic heritage items near the project area.

3.3.2 Previous studies within the project area

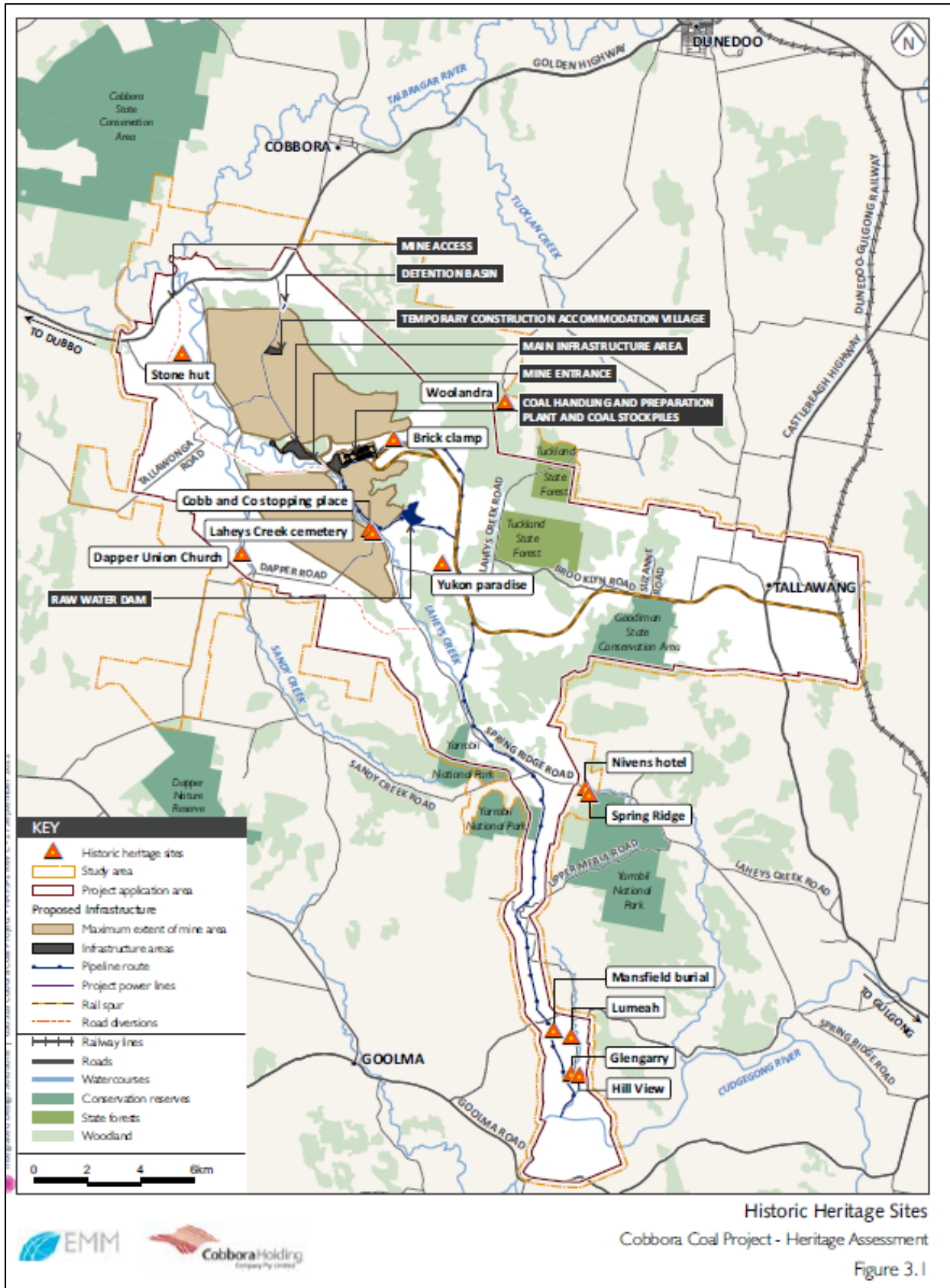
In 2012, EMM undertook a historic heritage assessment for the Cobbora Coal Project. The assessment identified 13 items assessed as having local heritage significance surrounding. Two of these items are within the project area. These are detailed in **Table 3-3** and shown on **Figure 3-3**.

Table 3-3: Local historic heritage items identified by EMM (2012).

| Number | Item Name | Description (EMM 2012) | Location | Related Listings |
|--------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Laheys Creek Cemetery | Contains four graves. It is linked to one of the earliest families in the district | Outside project area. | Nil |
| 2 | Dapper Union Church | Established circa 1910 and was the church attended by many local farming families. It was built using bricks from the local area | Outside project area | Nil |
| 3 | Cobb & Co Stopping Place | The archaeological site of a potential Cobb & Co Stopping Place, which may offer information on horse-drawn transport in the local area | Outside project area | Nil |
| 4 | Two-roomed Stone Hut | An uncommon example of local building techniques using sandstone | Outside project area | Nil |
| 5 | Brick Clamp | The archaeological site...has the potential to offer insights into brick making in rural areas | Outside project area | Nil |
| 6 | Mansfield Burial | Small ring of stone under a tree...a good example of burial practices in rural areas | Outside project area | Nil |

| Number | Item Name | Description (EMM 2012) | Location | Related Listings |
|--------|----------------------|---|----------------------|--|
| 7 | Nivens Hotel | Representative example of a hotel from the 19 th century...can provide information on recreation practices | Outside project area | Mid-Western Regional Council LEP and SHI |
| 8 | Yukon Paradise House | 1920's house | Outside project area | Nil |
| 9 | Spring Ridge House | Good example of a 1930's Californian bungalow with unusual and extant interior fittings | Outside project area | Mid-Western Regional Council LEP and SHI |
| 10 | Glengarry House | Intact 1920's house | Outside project area | Nil |
| 11 | Lumeah House | Good example of a 1910 house with exterior decorative detailing | Outside project area | Nil |
| 12 | Hill View House | Good example of 1930's bungalow | Outside project area | Nil |
| 13 | Woolandra House | Intact example of 1910 house | Outside project area | Nil |

Figure 3-3: Historic heritage sites identified by EMM 2012.



The August 2022 survey undertaken by OzArk extended beyond the project area (refer to **Figure 4-1**). OzArk (2022: 35) recorded two additional historic items during the survey, a mechanical seeder (HS01) and a dilapidated house and outbuildings (HS04), both of which were assessed as not meeting the criteria of local or state heritage significance.

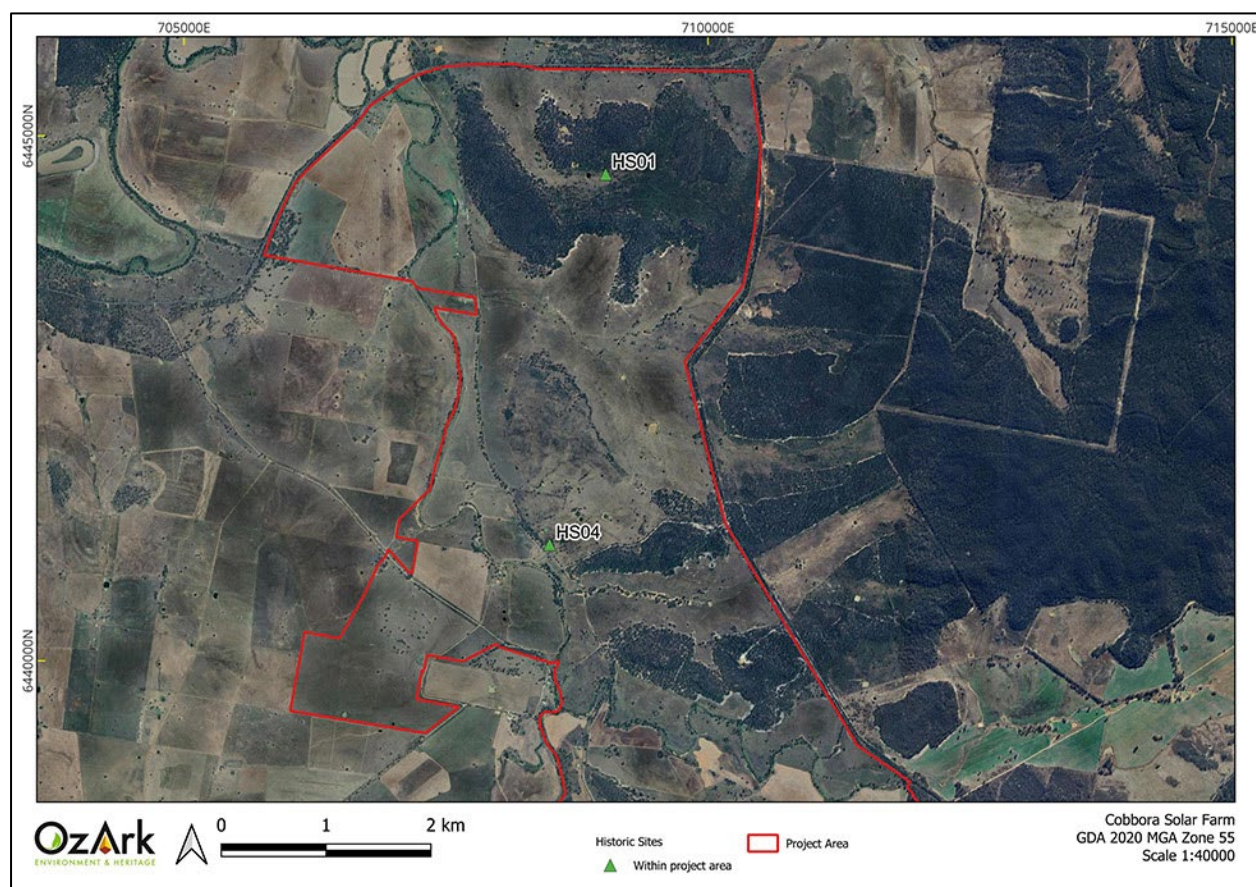
Two previously recorded historic heritage items were ground-truthed during the 2022 survey. Laheys Creek Cemetery (HS02) was assessed as holding social and cultural connections to the local people of the Cobbora and the Cobb & Co Stopping Place (HS03) was assessed as having the potential to yield archaeological information on transportation in rural areas during the late nineteenth century (OzArk 2022). These more significant places are outside the project area.

The historic items recorded by OzArk in 2022 within the project area are detailed in **Table 3-4** and shown on **Figure 3-4**.

Table 3-4: Historic heritage items in the project area recorded by OzArk 2022.

| Site ID | GDA 2020 Zone 55 coordinates | Type of heritage item | Statement of Significance |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| HS01 (Mechanical seeder) | E 709025 N 6444636 | Moveable | No historical significance |
| HS04 (House and outbuildings) | E 708489 N 6441108 | Building | No historical significance |

Figure 3-4: Location of historic sites recorded by OzArk 2022 (northern project 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). A field survey for the historic heritage assessment occurred concurrently with the Aboriginal heritage survey from 27 June 2022 to 1 July 2022. Additional survey was undertaken by OzArk on 11 and 12 August 2022.

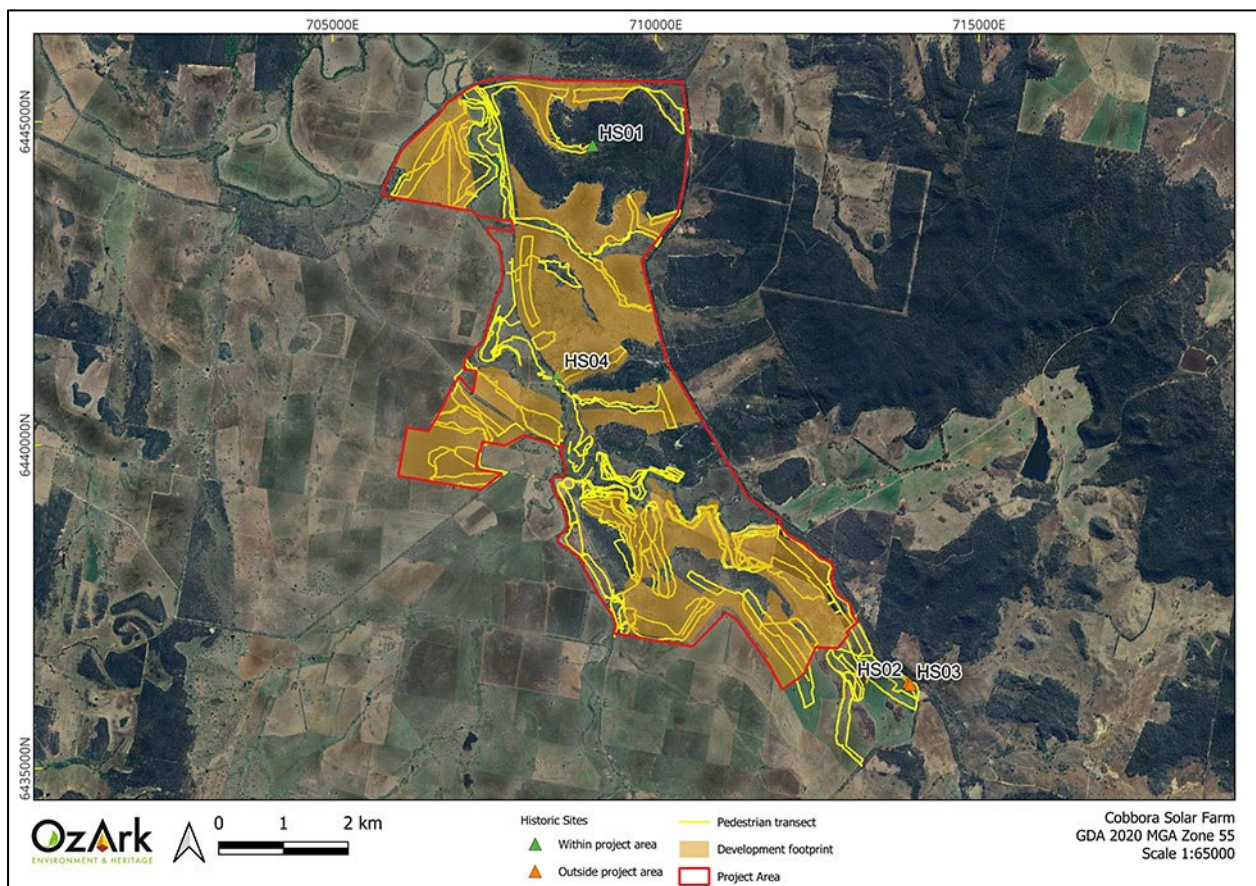
The survey participants were divided into two teams to maximise coverage of the project area. Team 1 (T1) included five survey participants and Team 2 (T2) included four survey participants. Transects were generally spaced evenly between the five survey participants for T1 transects and the four survey participants for T2 transects.

Pedestrian coverage across the project area is shown on **Figure 4-1**.

Since the 2022 survey was undertaken, the project area has been revised, avoiding two of the recorded historic sites: HS02 (Laheys Creek Cemetery) and HS03 (Cobb & Co Stopping Place). These sites will not be impacted by the project and require no further assessment.

Historic sites HS01 (Mechanical Seeder) and HS04 (House and outbuildings) remain within the project area and are assessed within this report.

Figure 4-1: Field survey pedestrian transects.



4.2 HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEMS

Two historic heritage items were recorded within the project area. To avoid confusion, these items will retain the numbering of the OzArk 2022 report. These items are (HS01) Mechanical Seeder and HS04 (House and outbuildings). Details of these are presented below.

HS01 – Mechanical Seeder

Site type: Moveable heritage

GPS coordinates: GDA 2020 MGA Zone 55 E 709025 N 6444636

Location of site: Located 1.7 km southwest of the Golden Highway and Spring Ridge Road intersection, and 4.4 km northeast of the Golden Highway and Sweeneys Lane intersection. Sandy Creek is 1.4 km to the west (**Figure 4-2**). HS01 sits within an exclusion zone, outside of the development footprint.

Figure 4-2: Location of HS01 - Mechanical seeder.



Description of site: The item consists of a Massey Ferguson mechanical seeder Sunshine 500 model (**Figure 4-3**), possibly dating to the 1950s. The seeder is an early model of the Massey Ferguson Sunshine 500, which is a series still in production today (**Figure 4-3**).

Figure 4-3: View of HS01 – Mechanical seeder.

HS04 – House and outbuildings

Site type: House and associated outbuildings

GPS coordinates: GDA 2020 MGA Zone 55 E 708489 N 6441108

Location of site: Located 257 m along Sandy Creek Road north from the Sandy Creek Road and Danabar Road intersection. The site is also 4.6 km to the south of the Sandy Creek Road and Golden Highway intersection, with Sandy Creek approximately 236 metres (m) to the southwest. The house, and outbuildings that are located to the northeast of the house, are within the development footprint. The outbuildings to the southwest are outside of the development footprint (**Figure 4-4**).

Figure 4-4: Location of HS04 - house and outbuildings.



Description of site: The site consists of a habitation structure (house) probably dating within the past 100 years based on its design, the inclusion of electrical components, and presence of fibro sheeting. The building features multiple rooms and a separated granny flat made of wood with a brick chimney and corrugated iron roof (**Figure 4-5**). Surrounding the house are numerous outbuildings, sheds, and farming paraphernalia.

Figure 4-5: View of HS04 – house and outbuildings.





3. View to the northeast of HS04 shows the wrap-around wooden veranda.



4. View to the east of HS-04 shows the separated granny flat building.



5. View of outbuildings to the northeast of the house.



6. View of outbuildings to the southwest of the house.

5 ASSESSMENT OF HISTORIC HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE—GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The assessment evaluates the heritage significance of the historic heritage sites identified within the project area in accordance with *Assessing heritage significance. Guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW criteria* (DPE 2023). A historic heritage site must satisfy at minimum one of the following criteria to be assessed as having heritage significance:

Criterion (a): *An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

Criterion (b): *An item has a strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

Criterion (c): *An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area)*

Criterion (d): *An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons*

Criterion (e): *An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

Criterion (f): *An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

Criterion (g): *An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local area's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments).*

Significance assessments are carried out on the basis that decisions about the future of heritage items must be informed by an understanding of these items' heritage values. The *Burra Charter. The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (the Burra Charter) recognises four categories of heritage value: historic, aesthetic, scientific, and social significance (Article 1.2, Burra Charter).

Items are categorised as having local or state level, or no significance. The level of significance is assessed in accordance with the geographical extent of the item's value. An item of state significance is one that is important to the people of NSW whilst an item of local significance is one that is principally important to the people of a specific LGA.

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORIC ITEMS

The guidelines for assessing heritage significance described in **Section 5.1**, have been applied to each of the recorded historic items below.

HS01 (Mechanical seeder)

Table 5-1 assesses HS01 against the assessment criteria established in **Section 5.1**.

Table 5-1: Assessment of heritage significance – HS01.

| Criterion | Comments | Significance |
|-----------|--|----------------------------|
| a | The item has not influenced the pattern or course of NSW or local history | No historical significance |
| b | The item has no known associations with an individual of importance to the locality or state, although the site has clear personal significance. | No historical significance |
| c | The item does not meet the threshold for aesthetic significance. | No historical significance |
| d | The item has no strong/special associations for a group of people in the local area. | No historical significance |
| e | While the site demonstrates facets of life in the local area, it does not have broader research potential in relation to local or state history. | No historical significance |
| f | The item does not represent a class, rural features that are endangered or uncommon in the state or local area. | No historical significance |
| g | The principal or defining characteristics of the item's class are not effectively demonstrated in this example. | No historical significance |

Statement of significance

This item is a common item in rural settings and does not have significant heritage values.

HS04 (House and outbuildings)

Table 5-2 assesses HS04 against the assessment criteria established in **Section 5.1**.

Table 5-2: Assessment of heritage significance – HS04.

| Criterion | Comments | Significance |
|-----------|--|----------------------------|
| a | The item has not influenced the pattern or course of NSW or local history | No historical significance |
| b | The item has no known associations with an individual of importance to the locality or state, although the site has clear personal significance. | No historical significance |
| c | The item does not meet the threshold for aesthetic significance. | No historical significance |
| d | The item has no strong/special associations for a group of people in the local area. | No historical significance |
| e | While the site demonstrates facets of life in the local area, it does not have broader research potential in relation to local or state history. | No historical significance |
| f | The item does not represent a class, rural habitation shelters, which are endangered or uncommon in the state or local area. | No historical significance |
| g | The principal or defining characteristics of the item's class are not effectively demonstrated in this example. | No historical significance |

Statement of significance

The residence is typical of many small rural dwellings and has no known historical, aesthetic, or technical values.

Table 5-3 details the assessed significance of recorded historic heritage items in accordance with the NSW Heritage Office guidelines and the Burra Charter.

Table 5-3: Historic heritage: assessment of significance.

| Site name | Level of significance |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| HS01 (Mechanical seeder) | Nil |
| HS04 (House and outbuildings) | Nil |

5.3 DISCUSSION

Two items of historic heritage were identified within the project area, HS01 (mechanical seeder) and HS04 (House and outbuildings).

The model of the mechanical seeder (HS01) is still in manufacture today and the item is rusted and in poor condition and it does not meet the criteria of local or state heritage significance.

The house and outbuildings (HS04) are not significant in terms of representativeness or aesthetic values and do not meet the criteria of local or state heritage significance.

6 MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION: HISTORIC HERITAGE

6.1 LIKELY IMPACTS TO HISTORIC HERITAGE FROM THE PROJECT

Table 6-1 details the anticipated impacts to historic heritage from the project.

Table 6-1: Historic heritage: impact assessment.

| Site name | Will this item be impacted? |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| HS01 (mechanical seeder) | No, located in an exclusion zone |
| HS04 (house and outbuildings) | Yes |

6.2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF HISTORIC SITES

Appropriate management of heritage items is primarily determined based on their assessed significance as well as the likely impacts of the proposed development.

In terms of best practice and desired outcomes, avoiding impact to any historical item is a preferred outcome, however, where a historical site has been assessed as having no heritage value, impacts to these items does not require any legislated mitigation.

6.3 MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION OF RECORDED HISTORIC SITES

The two historic heritage items identified during the OzArk 2022 field assessment, HS01 (Mechanical seeder) and HS04 (house and outbuildings) have been assessed as having no heritage significance and they are not protected under the Heritage Act.

HS01 is in an exclusion zone and will not be harmed.

HS04 is within the development footprint and will likely be demolished. As the structures have no heritage values or significant fabric, demolition of the house and outbuildings will not require further mitigation. The information in this report is a sufficient record of the current condition of these structures.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the impacts associated with the project and with regard to:

- Legal requirements under the terms of the Heritage Act
- Guidelines presented in the Burra Charter
- The findings of the current assessment
- The interests of the local community.

Recommendations concerning the historic values within project area are as follows.

1. All the proposed works must remain within the development footprint as shown on **Figure 1-3**. Any works proposed outside of this area may require additional assessment.
2. The Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would include a stop works procedure for unexpected finds related to historic heritage. An example of an *Unanticipated Finds Protocol* can be found in **Appendix 1**.

REFERENCES

- Burke & Smith 2004 Burke, H. and Smith, C. 2004. *The Archaeologist's Field Handbook*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Burra Charter 2013 International Council on Monuments and Sites 2013. *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*.
- Cameron 1993 Cameron, R. 1993. *Around the Black Stump. The History of Coolah – Dunedoo – Mendooran Area*. The Council of the Shire of Coolah.
- City Plan Services 2018 City Plan Services 2018. *Cobbora Land Use Planning Strategy Addendum to Warrumbungle Shire Land Use Strategy*. Submitted to Warrumbungle Shire Council.
- EMM 2012 EMM. 2012. *Historic heritage: Cobbora Coal Project*. Report to Cobbora Holding Company Pty Limited.
- Heritage Council 2006 *Historical Archaeology Code of Practice*. Heritage Council of New South Wales and the NSW Government Department of Planning.
- Heritage Council 2021 *Investigating Heritage Significance. A guide to identifying and examining heritage items in NSW*. Heritage Council of NSW 2021.
- OzArk 2022 OzArk Environment & Heritage. 2022. *Cobbora Solar Farm Historic Heritage Impact Assessment Report*. Report for AECOM on behalf of Marble Energy (unfinalized report).

APPENDIX 1: HISTORIC HERITAGE: UNANTICIPATED FINDS PROTOCOL

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 (131 555 or info@environment.nsw.gov.au) and DPHI Compliance (compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au) 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 DPHI.