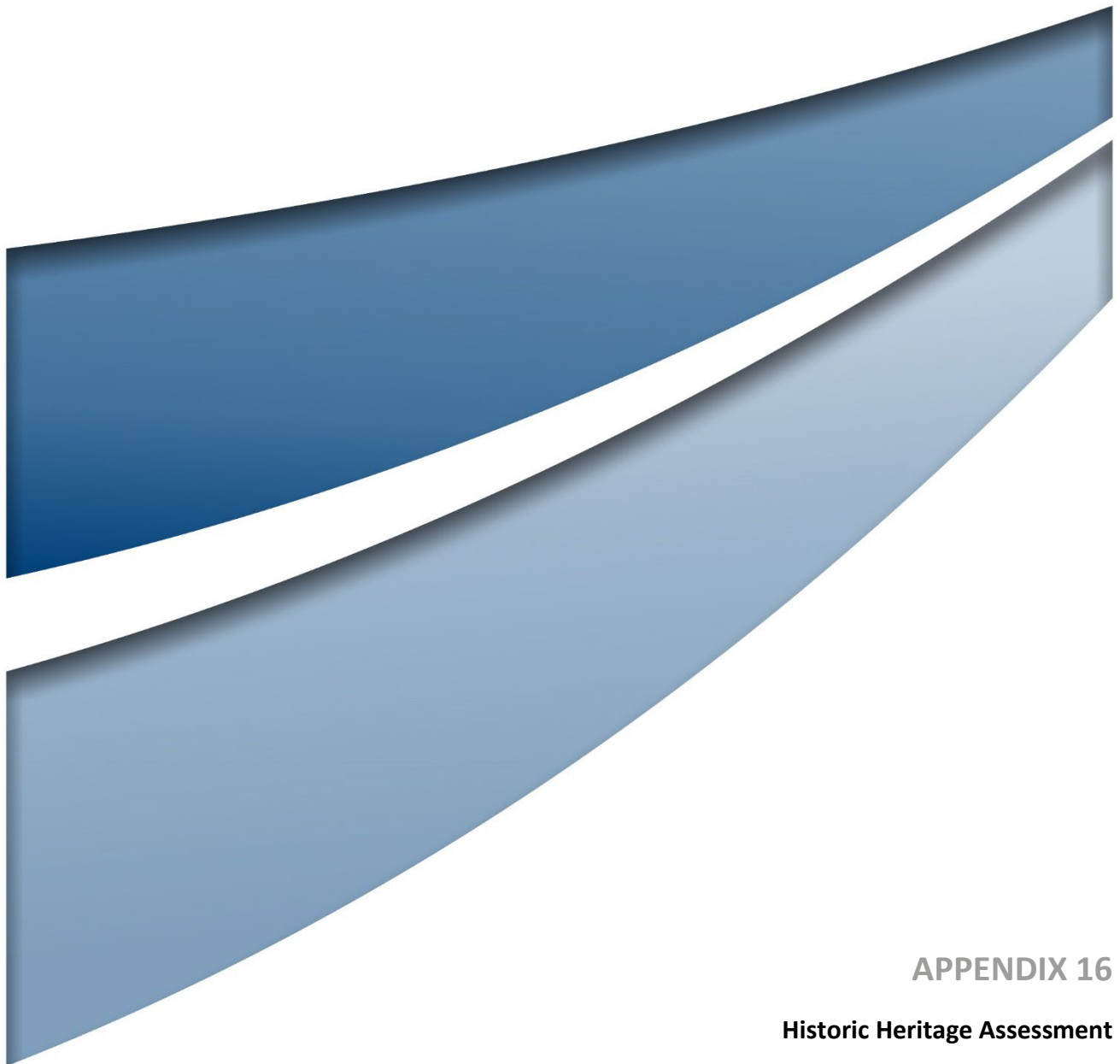




APPENDIX 16

Historic Heritage Assessment

This report has been prepared for Richmond Valley Solar & BESS Pty Ltd (ABN 43 672 993 869) a wholly owned special purpose vehicle of Ark Energy Projects Pty Ltd and the Proponent of the Project. Richmond Valley Solar & BESS Pty Ltd will herein be referred to as Ark Energy or Ark Energy Projects.

RICHMOND VALLEY SOLAR FARM

Historical Heritage Impact Assessment

FINAL

May 2024

RICHMOND VALLEY SOLAR FARM

Historical Heritage Impact Assessment

FINAL

Prepared by
Umwelt (Australia) Pty Limited

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Report No. 23252/R07
Date: May 2024



QMS Certification Services

This report was prepared using
Umwelt's ISO 9001 certified
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Acknowledgement of Country

Umwelt would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the country on which we work and pay respect to their cultural heritage, beliefs, and continuing relationship with the land. We pay our respect to the Elders – past, present, and future.

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Document Status

Rev No.	Reviewer		Approved for Issue	
	Name	Date	Name	Date
V1	Karyn Cook	24/01/2024	Jessica Henderson-Wilson	24/01/2024
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

Ark Energy Pty Ltd (Ark Energy) proposes to develop the Richmond Valley Solar Farm in Myrtle Creek approximately 7 km east of the town of Rappville in the Northern Rivers region of NSW (the Project). The Project is classified as State Significant Development (SSD) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Project is required under the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) were issued on 21 September 2022. Ark Energy has engaged Umwelt to prepare the EIS and supporting technical assessments including this Historical Heritage Impact Assessment (HHIA)..

1.2 Project Description

1.2.1 Terminology and Definitions

The Project Area referenced throughout this report comprises the broader envelope in which the Development Footprint and a portion of the Road Upgrades Area that traverses through the Project Area.

The Road Upgrades Area represents where anticipated road widening, sealing and intersection treatments are proposed.

The Development Footprint referred to in this report represents the potential disturbance footprint of the solar arrays, BESS, substation and associated infrastructure. It also represents where ground disturbance may occur as part of the Road Upgrades Area.

1.2.2 Description of Project and Construction Activities

The site for the proposed Richmond Valley Solar Farm is in Myrtle Creek in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales (**Figure 1.1**). It is approximately 7 km east of Rappville and 25 km south of Casino, with the villages of Ellangowan to the north and West Bungawalbin to the east (**Figure 1.2**). The Project Area is located at 420 Avenue Road, Myrtle Creek NSW, consisting of 10 cadastral lots encompassing an area of approximately 1,475.3 ha on the north and south sides of Avenue Road.

The Project involves the construction, operation and decommissioning of up to 500 megawatts (MW) of solar DC PV generation, inverters, BESS with a power capacity of 275 megawatts and an energy storage capacity of up to 2,200-megawatt hour (MWh) over eight hours and approximately 2 km of transmission line to connect the Project from the switching substation to the National Electricity Market (NEM). Subject to detailed design, the primary components of subsurface development that will impact the Project Area include vegetation clearance, levelling works, installation of solar farm panels (up to 730,000 bifacial solar panels on ground-mounted single axis tracking framework), site substation and BESS, transmission lines between solar farm elements, temporary construction facilities, internal roads, civil works, fencing and other required electrical infrastructure.

The Project would involve road upgrades to establish safe access for the Project. The Road Upgrades Area includes the intersection of Main Camp Road and Summerland Way leading into the access point for the Project Area. The Road Upgrades Area of Avenue Road extends from the intersection of Main Camp Road

and into the Project Area. Road upgrades are anticipated to include selective road widening, sealing and intersection treatments.

The Project covers an area of approximately 1,475 ha and the solar farm and associated infrastructure is proposed to have a Development Footprint of approximately 803 ha and the road upgrade Development Footprint is proposed to be approximately 11 ha.

Construction is anticipated to commence shortly after approval, with the construction period estimated to be up to 24 months. The solar farm is expected to remain operational for approximately 30 years. Although the Project will be monitored and controlled remotely during operation, some routine maintenance will be periodically performed on-site.

Further details of the staging and construction of the Project are contained within the EIS and have been used in preparing this assessment.

1.3 Purpose of this Assessment

This HHIA has been prepared by Umwelt in accordance with the SEARs issued by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE now Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)). No SEARs advice relating to historical heritage was received from Heritage NSW.

The SEARs issued for the Project (SSD 41020244) require that the EIS includes:

Heritage – including:

- *Assess the impact to historic heritage having regard to the Heritage NSW Manual*

This report includes:

- The identification of listed heritage items located within or in proximity to the Project Area.
- A summary of items, buildings, structures, or other elements of potential historical heritage significance (i.e., those which are not listed) located within or in proximity to the Project Area.
- The identification of any areas of historical archaeological potential within the Project Area.
- An assessment of the likelihood, extent, and nature of potential impacts to any listed or unlisted items of heritage significance located within or in proximity to the Project Area.
- Appropriate measures to avoid, manage and/or mitigate any identified impacts.

1.4 Methodology

This HHIA has been undertaken in accordance with guidelines set out in the (Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs & Planning), including:

- Archaeological Assessments.
- Assessing Heritage Significance (updated 2023).

- Statements of Heritage Impact (updated 2023).
- Heritage Terms and Abbreviations.

This HHIA has also been prepared with consideration of the best practice principles contained in the:

- The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013 (Australia ICOMOS. 2000) (the Burra Charter).
- NSW Heritage Branch (now Heritage NSW), Department of Planning, 2009, Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and 'Relics'.
- NSW Heritage office (now Heritage NSW), Department of Planning, 2006, The Historical Archaeology Code of Practice.

A field inspection of the Project Area was undertaken by Umwelt in July 2023 to confirm the setting and context of the Project Area, and to identify if any unlisted items of heritage significance are located within the Project Area.

1.5 Limitations

This report focuses on an assessment of historical heritage within the Project Area. Aboriginal cultural heritage and archaeology is assessed in a separate report .

A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) (Moir,2024), which considers the visual amenity and landscape characteristics of the Project Area and its surrounding context, has been prepared as a stand-alone report for the Project by. Discussion of visual impacts within this report is limited to a consideration of impacts to historical heritage items only and relies on the findings of the LVIA.

A detailed inspection of a dwelling present within the Project Area (known as Melaleuca) as well as associated buildings was not undertaken due to access restrictions. As the buildings are located outside of the development footprint, and as the dwelling and associated buildings are understood to be contemporary, a detailed inspection and assessment of these buildings was not required.

1.6 Authorship

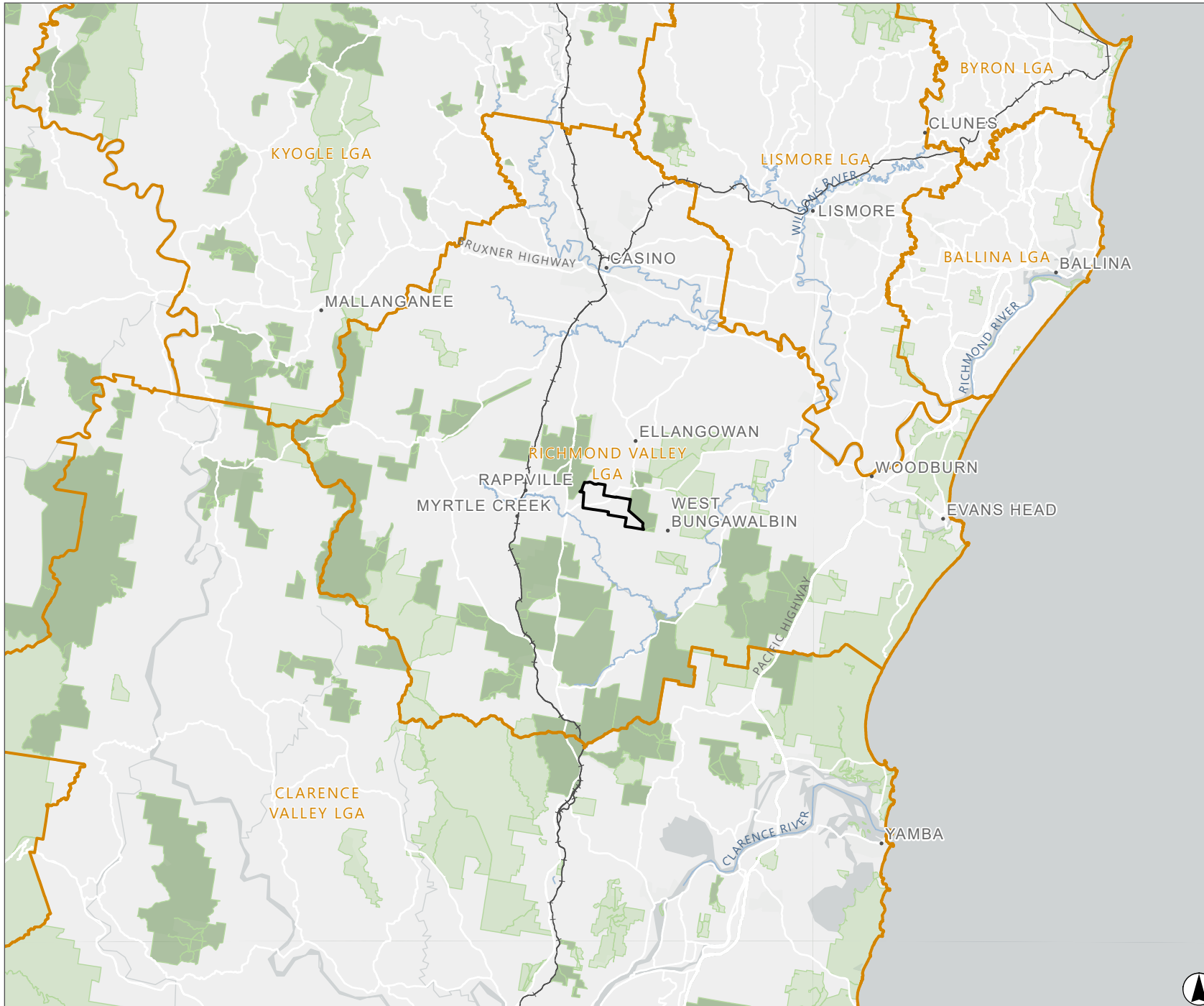
This report has been prepared by Melissa Moritz, Senior Heritage Consultant. Technical review has been undertaken by Karyn Cook, Principal Heritage Consultant. Project figures were prepared by Melinda Beadman, GIS Consultant.

FIGURE 1.1

Locality

Legend

-  Project Area
-  Local Government Area Boundary
-  NPWS Reserve
-  State Forest
-  Roads
-  Watercourse
-  Railway



0 10 20
Kilometers

Scale 1:600,000 at A4
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56

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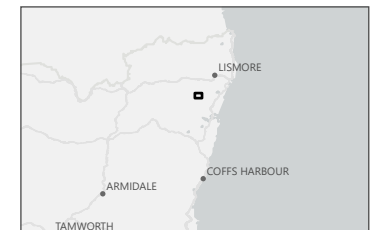
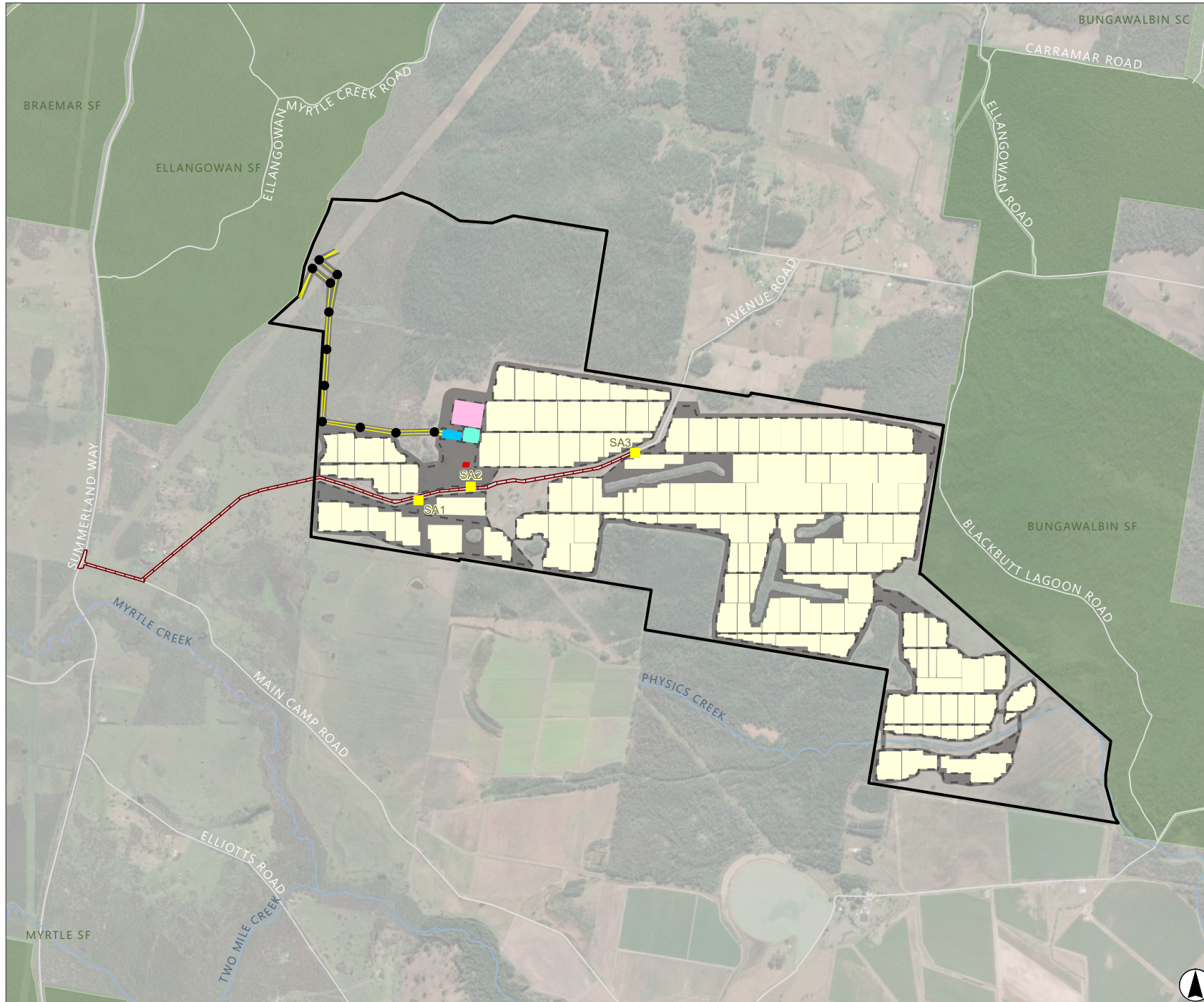
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FIGURE 1.2

Project Layout

Legend

- Project Area
- Development Footprint
- Road Upgrade Area
- Transmission Poles
- Access Points
- Access Tracks
- Transmission Lines
- Substation
- Switching Substation
- O&M Facility
- BESS
- Solar Array Blocks
- NPWS Reserve
- State Forest
- Roads
- Watercourse



Scale 1:45,000 at A4
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2.0 Statutory Context

2.1 Statutory Listings

2.1.1 Commonwealth Legislations and Policies

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is the Australian Government's environment and heritage legislation. This Act is triggered by developments or actions that will have a significant impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), including world heritage areas, Commonwealth marine areas, nationally threatened species and communities and migratory birds. The EPBC Act includes a process for the assessment of proposed actions that have, or are likely to have, a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance. These actions require approval from the Commonwealth Minister, Environment and Heritage.

A national heritage system was established in January 2004 under the EPBC Act. This led to the introduction of the National Heritage List, which recognises and protects places of outstanding heritage to the Nation, and the Commonwealth Heritage List, which includes Commonwealth owned or leased places of significant heritage value.

No National or Commonwealth listed heritage items, places or assets are located within the Project Area.

2.1.2 State Legislation

2.1.2.1 Heritage Act 1977

The *Heritage Act 1977* (Heritage Act) is administered by Heritage NSW. The purpose of the Heritage Act is to ensure cultural heritage in NSW is adequately identified and observed. The Heritage Act is the primary item of state legislation affording protection to items of environmental heritage (natural and cultural) in NSW. Under the Heritage Act 'items of environmental heritage' include places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects, and precincts identified as significant based on historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural, or aesthetic values. State significant items are listed on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR) and are given automatic protection against any activities that may damage an item or place or affect its heritage and/or archaeological significance.

The Heritage Council of NSW, appointed by the Minister, is responsible for heritage in NSW, as constituted under the Heritage Act. The Council is a cross-section of heritage experts, with the Heritage NSW being the operational arm of the Council.

No State listed heritage items are located within the Project Area.

2.1.2.2 Relics Provision of the Heritage Act 1977

The Heritage Act affords automatic statutory protection to 'relics' which form part of archaeological deposits (except where these provisions are suspended by other prevailing legislation). The Heritage Act defines a 'relic' as any deposit, object, or material evidence that:

- relates to the settlement of the area that comprises NSW, not being Aboriginal settlement, and

- is of state or local heritage significance.

Sections 139-145 of the Heritage Act prevent the excavation or disturbance of land known or likely to contain relics, unless in accordance with an excavation permit. Section 60 excavation permits are required to disturb relics within SHR items/places, while Section 140 permits are required for items/places that are not listed on the SHR.

Based on the outcomes of this assessment, no areas of historical archaeological potential are located within the Project Area. As the project is designated as SSD, no consent for the Project is required under the Heritage Act.

2.1.2.3 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EPA Act) governs strategic planning and development assessment processes undertaken by State and Local Government in NSW. The Act requires that Local Governments prepare planning instruments (such as Local Environmental Plans [LEPs] and Development Control Plans [DCPs]) in accordance with the Act to provide guidance on the level of environmental assessment required.

2.1.2.4 Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012

The Project Area falls within the Richmond Valley LGA and is therefore subject to the planning provisions of the *Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012* (LEP).

Part 5 Clause 5.10 of the LEP provides the statutory framework for heritage conservation including the conservation of:

- the environmental heritage of Richmond Valley
- the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings, and views
- archaeological sites
- Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal places of heritage significance.

There are no heritage items listed in the Richmond Valley LEP 2012 located within the Project Area.

2.2 The Burra Charter (The Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (2013))

The Burra Charter is a set of best practice principles and procedures for heritage investigations and conservation. The charter was developed by the Australian group of the international professional organisation for conservation; the International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). Although it is not a statutory document, the Burra Charter provides a best practice standard for heritage management in NSW and Australia. The policies and legislative guidelines of the Heritage Council of NSW and Heritage NSW are consistent with and guided by the Burra Charter.

2.3 Relevant Heritage Listings

To inform this assessment, searches of all relevant historical heritage databases were undertaken. This includes searches of:

- The Commonwealth Heritage List.
- The National Heritage List.
- The State Heritage Register.
- Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Registers (where publicly accessible).
- relevant Local Environmental Plans (LEPs).

As a result of these searches, it has been identified that:

- no heritage items or places listed on the Commonwealth or National Heritage Lists are located within the Project Area
- no State listed heritage items are located within the Project Area
- no items listed on any s170 Heritage and Conservation Registers (NSW State agency heritage registers) are located within the Project Area
- no items listed on Schedule 5 of an LEP are located within the Project Area.

The nearest local heritage item to the Project Area is the 'Main Camp Homestead & Surrounds' (Richmond Valley LEP Item I143) (Main Camp Homestead). This is located 790m south of the Project Area, on Main Camp Road. Another local heritage item 'Hindmarsh's Grave' (Richmond Valley LEP Item) is located approximately 2.4 km north of the Project Area.

The closest State listed heritage item to the Project Area is SHR Item #01487 'High Conservation Value Old Growth forest'. This is a group listing of several areas of the identified natural heritage item and is located across the wider Richmond Valley region. The nearest gazetted area of this SHR group is located approximately 940m east of the Project Area and the next closest gazetted area being approximately 5km east, with other areas located at greater distances all directions from the Project Area.

Figure 2.1 shows the location of the local and State heritage in relation to the Project Area.

2.3.1 Heritage Items in the Vicinity

Main Camp Homestead and Surrounds

Main Camp Homestead is located at 840 Main Camp Road, approximately 800 south of the Project Area and is described as:

Main homestead - c 1930 high set large weatherboard house with several rooms infilled underneath. At least one of these appears to be a store room. Hipped iron roof extends over the verandahs which encircle the house. The rear and part of the western side verandah has been enclosed. Timber steps lead to the front door. Brick chimney intact. Original joinery in windows and doors. Yard surrounded by a post and rail fence. Grounds contain mature trees including a very large camphor, tennis court and swimming

pool. Just to the west of the house is a iron shed with a turn table iron gate. This may have led to a school building which has now been demolished.

Round Stockyards - a set of round stockyards stands to the rear of the main house. The sides are high (approx 2 metres) with five rails. Its exact purpose is unknown. They will need to be maintained if they are to remain as an important part of the Main Camp story.

Old stockyards - many posts and rails in the old stockyards have been replaced but the image shows some of the very old posts still in use. They would have a diameter of about 1 metre.

Tea tree industry - a more recent office building remain as a reminder of the operations of Main Camp Holdings and near the road are various pieces of equipment used by the tea tree industry. (NSW SHI 2007)

The following Statement of Significance is available on the NSW State Heritage Inventory (SHI) entry for Main Camp Homestead:

The Main Camp property is historically significant for its early settlement, association with Cunningham Henderson and its later roll as the site of one of the areas large tea tree plantations. Parts of the property, particularly at the current house site are likely to have archaeological potential and the cook's cottage, stockyards (particularly the round stockyards) and tea tree equipment are of significance. The c1930s homestead is listed on the shire's LEP. (NSW SHI, 2007)

The information available for the Main Camp Homestead is limited to that listed above on the SHI entry. It does not identify if any views or vistas to and from the heritage item are contributing to its overall heritage significance.

Hindmarsh Grave

The Hindmarsh Grave heritage item is located approximately 2.4km north of the Project Area and is described as:

Located on a grazing property this isolated grave is not visible from the Myrtle Creek - Ellangowan Road. The grave consists of a concrete bed with a ledger slab to which a marble tablet is attached which simple says" In loving memory of Alexander Hindmarsh Died 1849 Aged 5 years." It is surrounded by a sturdy concrete and iron rail fence.

The following Statement of Significance is available on the NSW State Heritage Inventory (SHI) entry for the 'Hindmarsh Grave'

This isolated grave is historically significant being associated with an early settler, Walter Hindmarsh, and his extended family. The grave belongs to Alexander Hindmarsh whom died in 1849, aged 5 years, and is one of the earliest graves on the Richmond River

High Conservation Value Old Growth Forest

The NSW SHR inventory form for the High Conservation Value Old Growth (HCVOG) Forest includes the following description of the heritage item:

All those parts, pieces or parcels of land containing HCVOG forest within National Parks and Nature Reserves and State Forests (excluding easements and leases) in the Upper North East Region as described below:*

(i)depicted in the Geographic Information System theme in ESRI grid format called "hcovog1_prtctd" in the sub-directory called "Protected_HCVOG" on the CD-ROM, lodged with Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and having the volume label "991221_1516 (21 December 1999)"; and

(ii)further described in the corresponding metadata on the CD-ROM. but excluding those pieces and parcels of land subject to the easements and leases described below:

(i)depicted in the Geographic Information System theme in ESRI ArcInfo coverage format called "easement and leases" in the sub-directory called "Heritage Office OG/Tenure" on CD-ROM lodged with the Heritage Office and having the volume label "001117 1805" (17 November 2000) and provided by State Forests of New South Wales; and

(ii) further described in the corresponding metadata on the CD ROM.

**The Upper North East Region is the area as described in section 1.4 of the Forest Agreement for the Upper North East Region, New South Wales Government, 5 March, 1999.*

National Parks (24):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>1. Bald Rock National Park</i> | <i>13. Maryland National Park</i> |
| <i>2. Barool National Park</i> | <i>14. Mebbin National Park</i> |
| <i>3. Basket Swamp National Park</i> | <i>15. Mount Jerusalem National Park</i> |
| <i>4. Boonoo Boonoo National Park</i> | <i>16. Mount Nothofagus National Park</i> |
| <i>5. Border Ranges National Park</i> | <i>17. Mount Warning National Park</i> |
| <i>6. Bundjalung National Park</i> | <i>18. Nightcap National Park</i> |
| <i>7. Butterleaf National Park</i> | <i>19. Nymboi- Binderay National Park</i> |
| <i>8. Capoompeta National Park</i> | <i>20. Nymboida National Park</i> |
| <i>9. Chaelundi National Park</i> | <i>21. Richmond Range National Park</i> |
| <i>10. Guy Fawkes River National Park</i> | <i>22. Warra National Park</i> |
| <i>11. Gibraltar Range National Park</i> | <i>23. Washpool National Park</i> |
| <i>12. Indwarra National Park</i> | <i>24. Yuraygir National Park.</i> |

Nature Reserves (19):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>1. Burnt Down Scrub Nature Reserve</i> | <i>6. Mount Hyland Nature Reserve</i> |
| <i>2. Chambigne Nature Reserve</i> | <i>7. Mucklewee Mountain Nature Reserve</i> |
| <i>3. Cudgen Nature Reserve</i> | <i>8. Tabbiemoble Swamp Nature Reserve</i> |
| <i>4. Limpinwood Nature Reserve</i> | <i>9. Toonumber Nature Reserve</i> |
| <i>5. Moore Park Nature Reserve</i> | <i>10. Woodford Island Nature Reserve</i> |

11. Captains Creek Nature Reserve

12. Couchy Creek Nature Reserve

13. Demon Nature Reserve

14. Mann River Nature Reserve

15. Morro Creek Nature Reserve.

16. Mount-Neville Nature Reserve

17. Sherwood Nature Reserve

18. Tallawudjah Nature Reserve

19. Uralba Nature Reserve

Contained within the following Local Government Areas: Ballina, Byron Bay, Coffs Harbour, Copmanhurst, Glen Innes, Grafton City, Guyra, Kyogle, Lismore, Maclean, Pristine Waters, Richmond Valley, Severn, Tenterfield, Tweed.

The following Statement of Significance is available on the NSW SHR inventory form for the 'High Conservation Value Old Growth Forest':

High Conservation Value Old Growth forest is ecologically mature eucalypt forest showing few signs of human disturbance. The upper canopy trees are no longer growing in height or spreading their crowns and show signs of old age. High Conservation Value Old Growth forest represents the best examples remaining of such forests (NSW SHI, 2017).

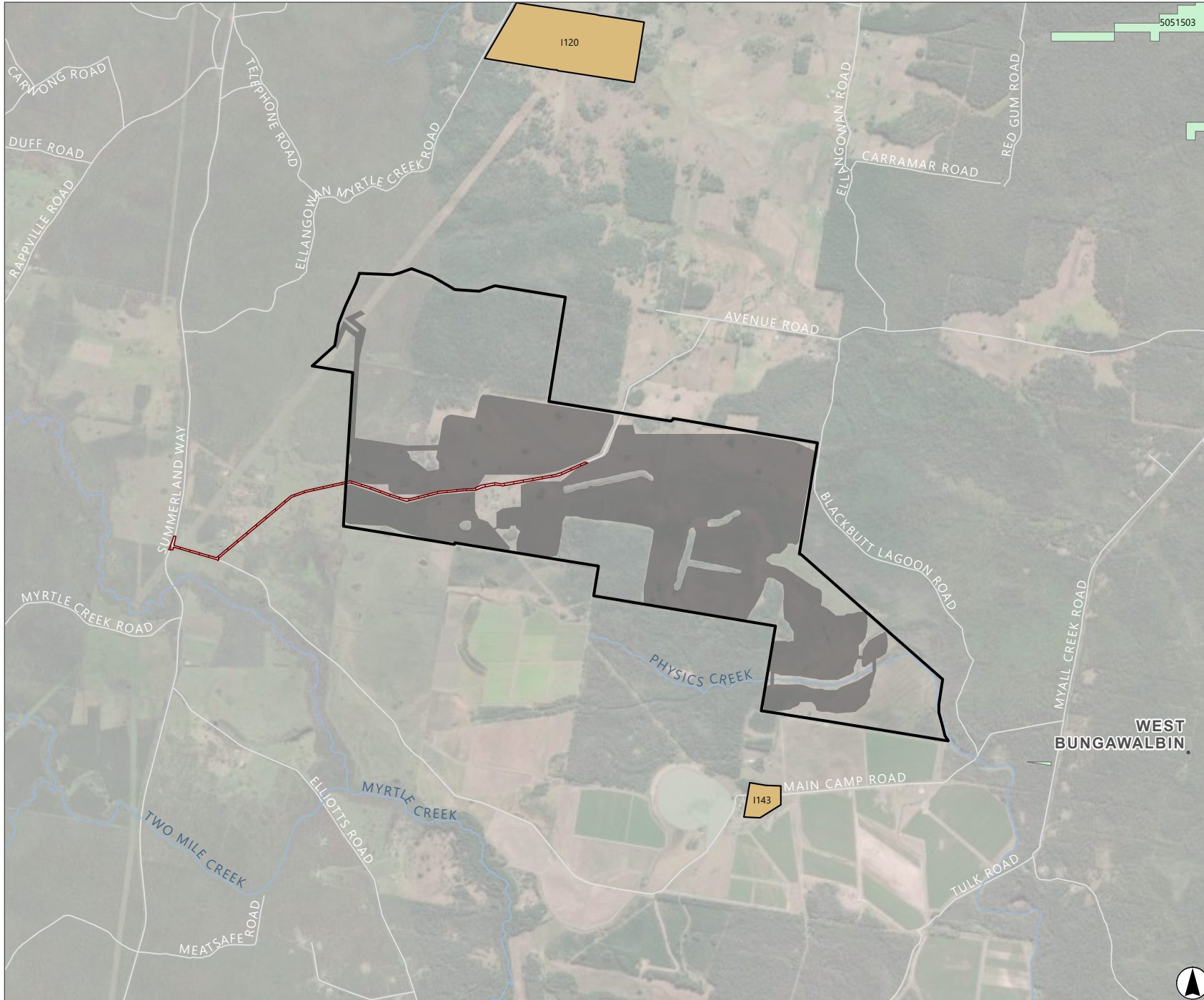
The information available for the SHR Item is limited to that listed above on the SHI entry. No significant views or vistas to and from the heritage item are identified in the NSW SHI entry.

FIGURE 2.1

Heritage Context

Legend

-  Project Area
-  Development Footprint
-  Road Upgrade Area
-  Roads
-  Watercourse
-  State Heritage Register Curtilage
-  EPI Heritage
-  Item - General



Kilometers

Scale 1:60,000 at A4
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56

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3.0 Historical Context

The following section provides a concise history of the region as it relates to the development of the Project Area. A thematic history for the Richmond Valley region was prepared in 2007 by B. J Stubbs and provided a detailed overview of the development of the Richmond Valley.

3.1 Early Settlement of the Region

The coastline of the Richmond Valley was chartered by Captain James Cook on his voyage on *Endeavour* in May of 1770, during which he named Mount Warning, Cape Byron and Point Dander. However, he was too far offshore during this period of early exploration to notice key features such as the Evans and Richmond Rivers and their entrances to the coast. It was not until Captain Henry Rous' exploration of the coastline in 1828 that the Richmond and Tweed Rivers were charted. During this period, Rous entered the Richmond River from the coast and ventured 20 miles up stream near the present town of Broadwater (Stubbs 2007).

Pastoral settlement in the Richmond Valley region began in the early 1840s, more than a decade after Rous' expedition as the area sat well outside the focus of settlement for the colonial government. Additionally, the region is some distance north of the 'Limits of Location' and 19 Counties, Governor Darling's approximately 400 km semicircular line which districted the spread of pastoral settlement outside the reaches of the colonial government administration in Sydney. It took a few years before this restriction was ignored and it was estimated that almost half of the colony's sheep were grazed illegally on 'crown land' beyond the boundary or without formal ownership at the edge of the 19 Counties (State Library NSW).

Those using the land were referred to as 'squatters' which unlike today, was used to describe 'a person of high social prestige who grazed livestock on a large scale – often having no legal title to the land beyond being the first European to settle on it' (State Library NSW). The expanding colony in the 1830s, and a need to feed growing numbers gave a push for the settlers to increase this 'squatting' as the demand for meat increased. Squatters' runs were initially ephemeral camps scattered through the landscape near permanent water sources, however these became more established as the success of such runs increased.

In 1836 'squatter's rights' were created, allowing farmers temporary occupancy beyond the official line for an annual payment of £10. This pattern of pastoral land use and early squatters establishing significant pastoral runs included the early pastoral runs of the Richmond Valley Region, however due to the nature of squatting, it is difficult to ascertain where early pastoral runs were located from historical records, particularly for the Project Area.

Despite possible earlier establishment of runs, the first recorded structures in the region were in 1841 by the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Port Macquarie District. During his first visit to the area he encountered Mr Clay and Mr Stapleton's Cassino Run. On their run they had constructed:

A weatherboard house, slab huts, a stockyard and piggery and had sown several acres of maize and wheat. The road to Grafton, Oakes united, was almost a perfect line (Stubbs 2007:7)

A precise date for establishment of Cassino Run is not known however for the construction of such buildings and formation of such a well-worn track, it is likely that they had been there for several months prior to Oakes' visit in Autumn of 1841. The location of this run is believed to be on the north bank of the River near the existing township of Casino, however the location of Casino, both the town and the run are

difficult to differentiate on early maps of the region. Given the description provided of the proximity it is unlikely to be located within the Project Area.

In 1843 instruction was given to Assistant Surveyor James C. Burnett to survey the Richmond River. This was not only in response to Rous's expedition up the river in the late 1820s (Stubbs 2007) but also in attempts by the Government to maintain some level of control over the pastoral occupation of the region which had occurred in defiance of the Limits of Location, with the establishment of Cassino Station and later pastoral runs. During his survey, Burnett saw that occupation of the Richmond River was well advanced, with two huts constructed at the mouth of Richmond River and several stations and out-stations running further upriver. This included:

- Ward Stephens 'Runnymead', and an outstation that would later become 'Stilton Run'.
- Pagan, on land that would later become Stilton Run.
- Dr Dobie's 'Stratheden'.
- Captain Hamilton's 'Hilon'.
- Clark Irving's 'Cassino Run'.

In addition to these pastoral runs, Burnett noted two tracks leading south to the Clarence River, one from Casino and the other from Pagan's station at what is now Burdock's crossing (Stubbs 2007).

3.2 Development of the Project Area

The changes to the rules and regulations in 1847 for the occupation of Crown Land, had a direct impact in the shaping of Richmond Rivers region, including the Project Area. Like elsewhere in NSW, those who were previously squatting on Crown land were granted pastoral leases for their stations or runs, without competition. Within the 6-month period allowed for claiming leases, 10 pastoral leases were claimed by 1848 (Stubbs 2007). It is likely that one of these leases included the land within the Project Area, however the history of pastoral holdings prior to the 1860s was complicated and numerous changes occurred to ownership and boundaries. Based on the 1860 and 1923 historical maps for the region and records of changing homesteads in the area (Stubbs 2007), it is most likely that the project area was located within the run originally owned by Yabsley or as part of an outstation of Ellangowan run owned by Clarke Irving. However, as indicated by Stubbs (2007) due to the undocumented and frequently changing boundaries of the early homesteads in the area, this cannot be confirmed.

By the 1860s, Main Camp was further included in Clark Irving's selection (Heritage NSW), and the Project Area is approximately 800m north of the homestead building. It is unclear how far north the Main Camp pastoral property extended away from the homestead building, however it is possible that the activities extended north into the southern part of the Project Area; Historical records indicate that by 1905 the property encompassed 70,000 acres, adjoining Bungawalbin Station to the east of the Project Area and Main Camp Homestead (Russel 1906).

The 1905 Parish Map for the County of Richmond, Parish of Darke, shows that almost the entirety of the Project Area was included in Resumed Areas and set apart for Original Conditional Purchase. This enabled the subdivision of crown lands for sale of smaller allotments to new landholders in the region which is seen

in the 1907 Parish Map. Several smaller parcels of land owned by the C.B Middleton, A.S Middleton, R. Greenshot and J.C Whyte making up the Project Area at this point in time.

By the 1920s, the Middleton Family held the majority of the Project Area, however there is no information available regarding the use of the Project Area and whether there were any structures or houses built within the Project Area at this time.

Aerial imagery available for the Project Area in the 1960s shows the only structures at this time are the current residence and ancillary building group associated with the Melaleuca homestead. Comparison of the 1960s aerial with modern aerial imagery suggests that this structure is likely the existing house and ancillary structures, or replacement buildings have been located within the same general area within the property. This indicates that the existing buildings may have been constructed pre-1960 however it is unclear what level of change or modification to these structures has occurred. Oral history from the property owners support this, with the house believed to be pre-1950, with the ancillary structures (sheds, carports etc) having been built in the last 30 years to replace structure visible on historical imagery (pers. comms Ark Energy)

Other modifications to the Project Area visible in the aerial imagery from the 1960s include the digging of dams and terracing of some paddocks in the landscape.

The other two existing structures on the Project Area (a shed and sheep coral and shelter) are not visible in aerial imagery until the late 1990s, however their exact date of construction is unknown and is referred to as being dated from circa 1990s.



Figure 3.1 1860 Reuss & Browne's map of New South Wales and part of Queensland showing the relative positions of the pastoral runs, squattages, districts, counties, towns, reserves &

Source: National Library of Australia.

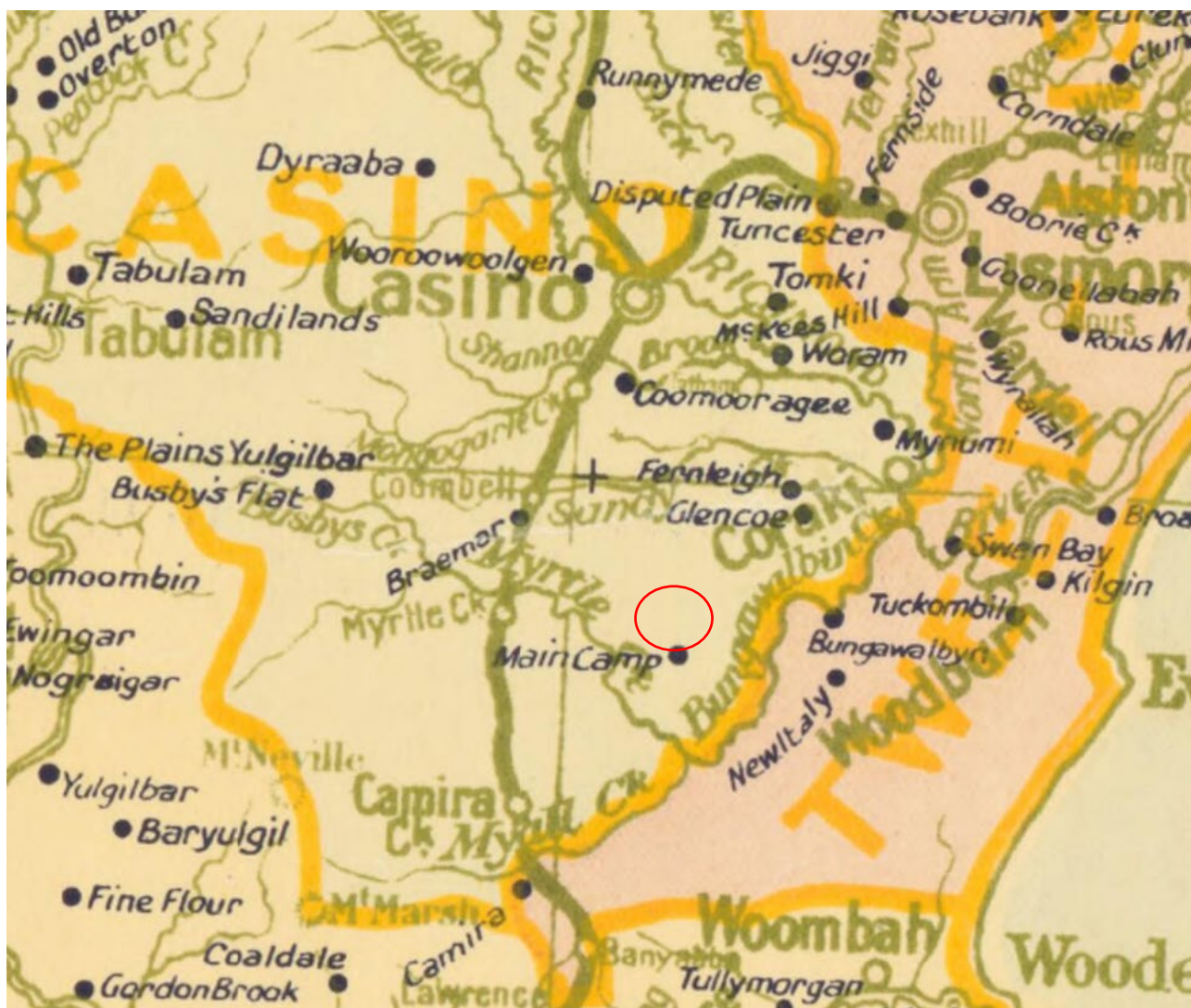


Figure 3.2 H.E.C. Robinson Pty Ltd. 1923, Map of New South Wales showing pastoral stations &c H.E.C.

Source: National Library of Australia.

FIGURE 3.3

Parish Map 1916

Legend

Project Area

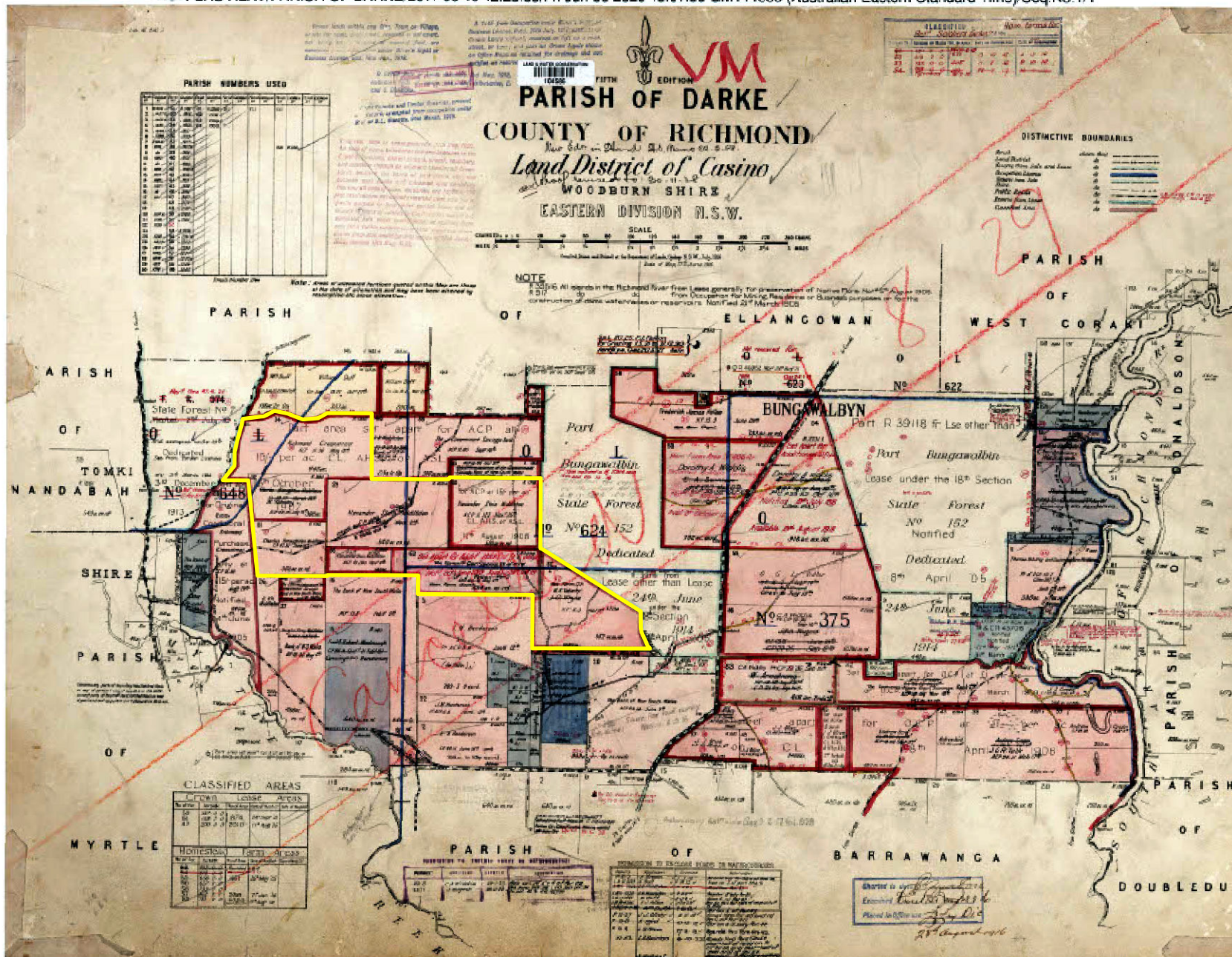


FIGURE 3.4

Parish Map 1928

Legend

Project Area

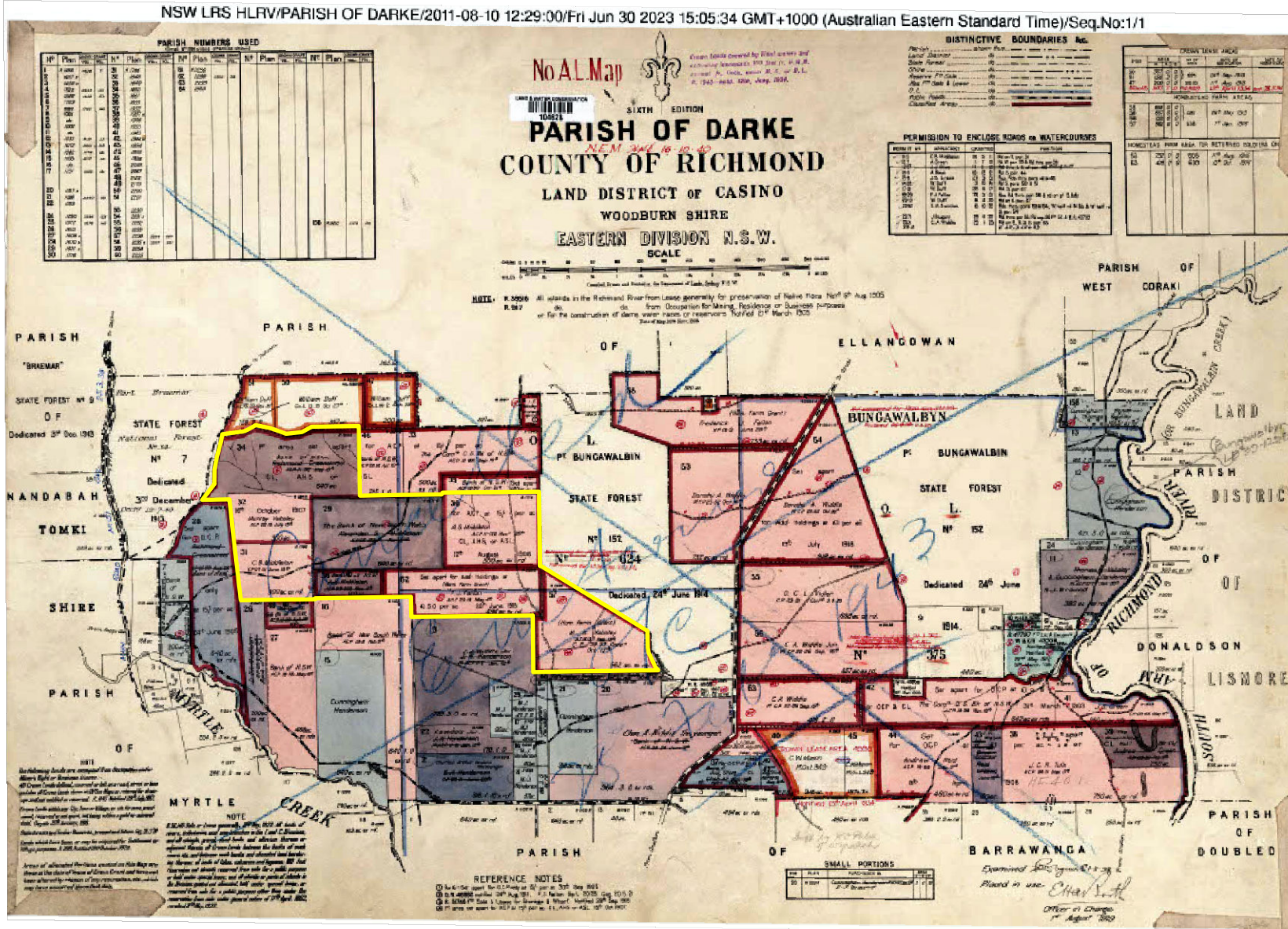
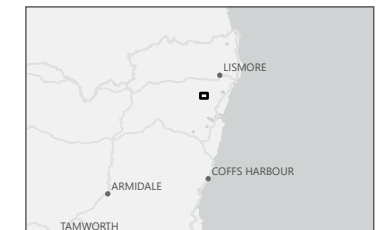
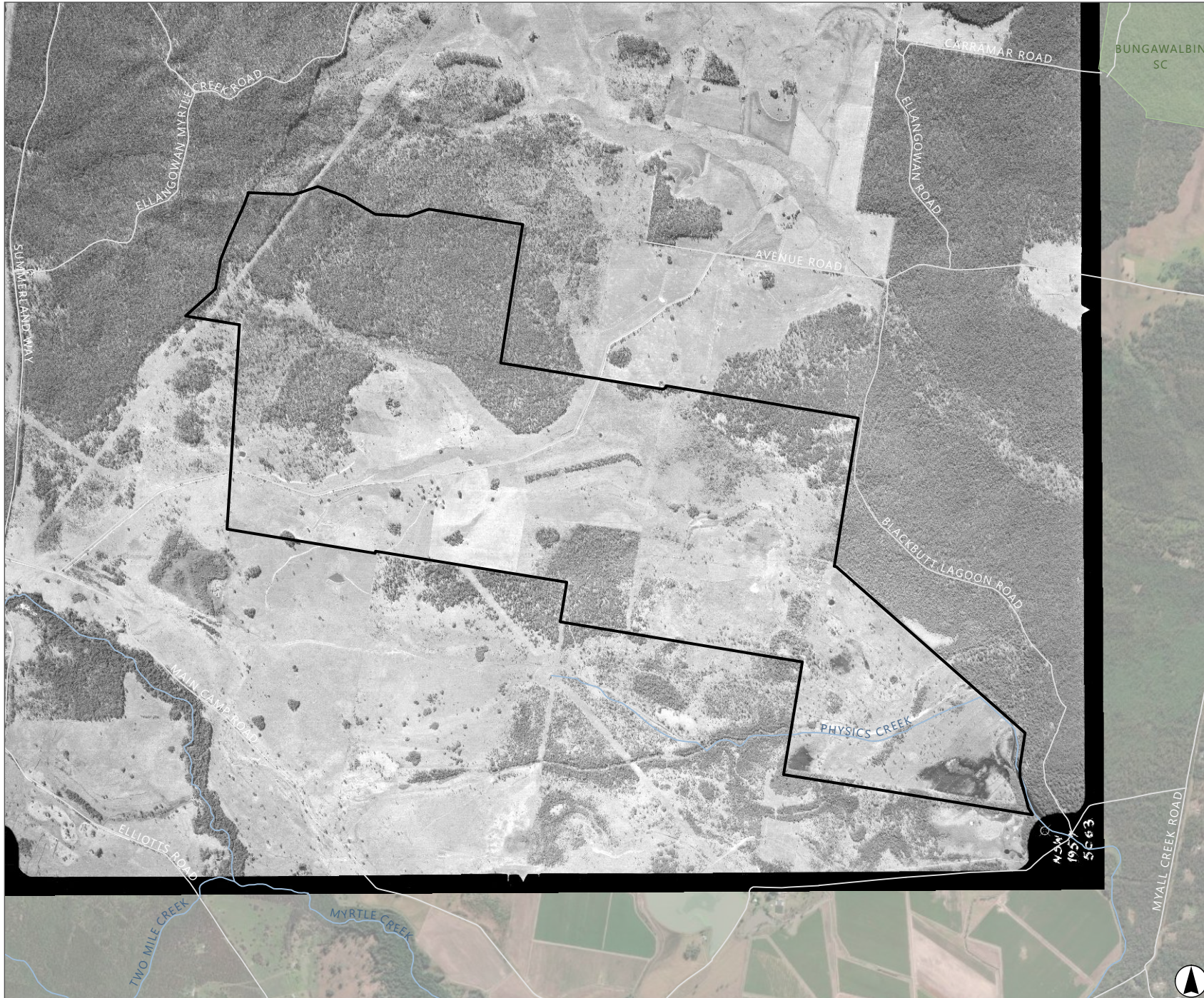


FIGURE 3.5
Historical Aerial - 1957

Legend

-  Project Area
-  NPWS Reserve
-  Roads
-  Watercourse



Scale 1:45,000 at A4
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56

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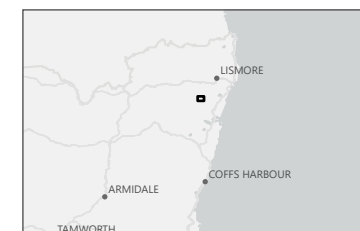
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FIGURE 3.5

Historical Aerial - 1963

Legend

-  Project Area
-  NPWS Reserve
-  Roads
-  Watercourse



Scale 1:40,000 at A4
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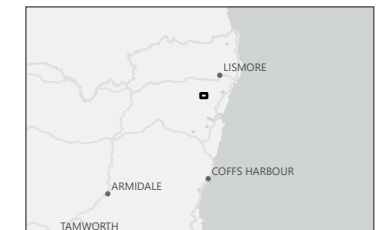
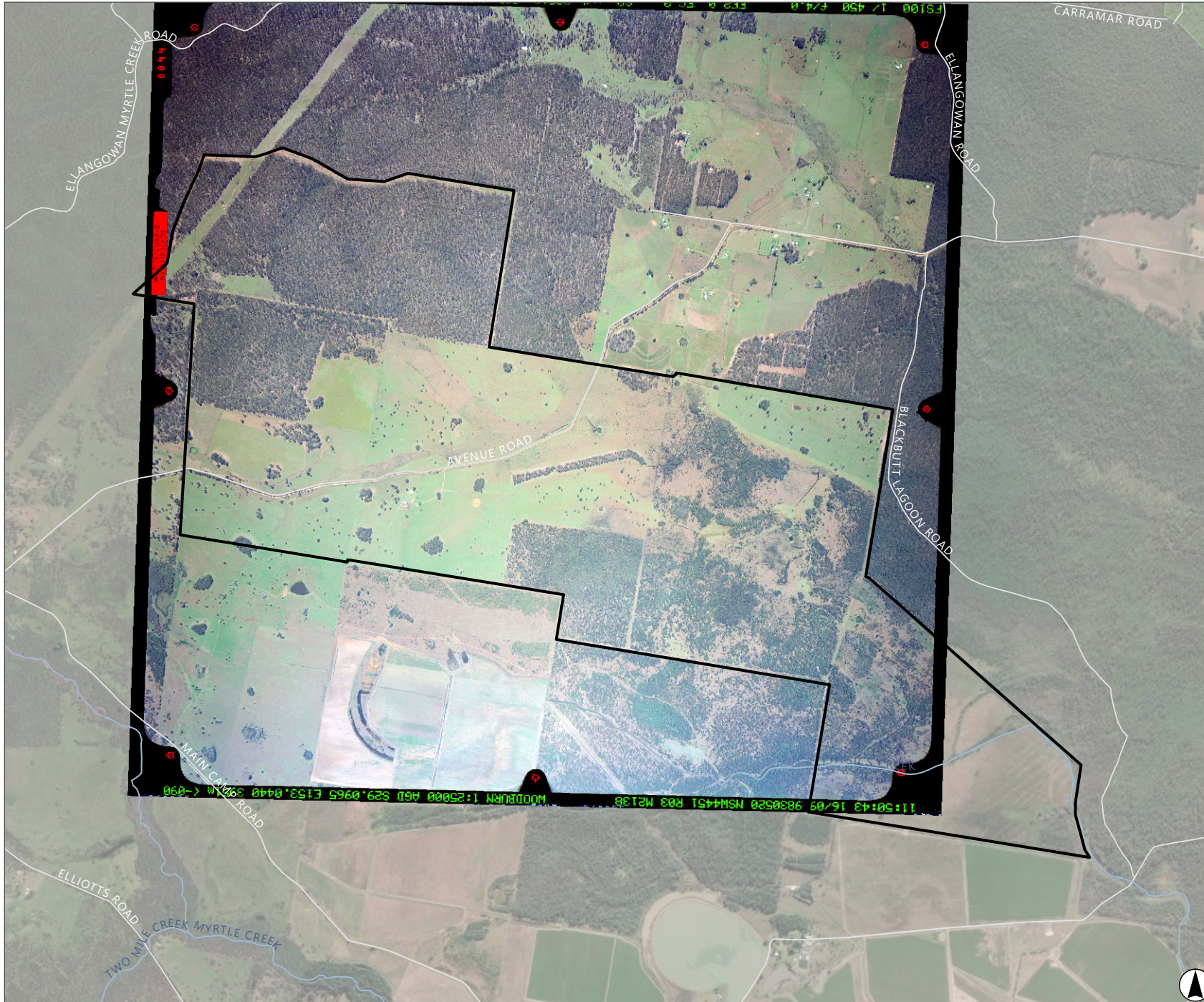
APPROVED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF Umwelt

FIGURE 3.7

Historical Aerial - 1997

Legend

- Project Area
- NPWS Reserve
- Roads
- Watercourse



Scale 1:40,000 at A4
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56

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4.0 Visual Inspection

The Project Area was inspected by Melissa Moritz, Umwelt Senior Heritage Consultant, and Alison Fenwick, Umwelt Archaeologist, in July 2023. The purpose of the inspection was to understand the context of the Project Area, and to confirm whether any structures or items of potential heritage significance were located within the Project Area. No items of potential heritage significance were identified during the visual inspection.

The Project Area is located in an area of gently undulating hills, rising to a crest in the north of the Project Area and a gentle undulating hill to the south of Avenue Road, sloping down to the southeast into an area of floodplain adjacent to Blackbutt Lagoon (outside the Project Area). It is an irregularly shaped area and is intersected by Avenue Road which runs east-west through the approximate middle of the Project Area.

The Project Area is characterised by low lying, mostly cleared agricultural land surrounded by densely vegetated State Forests and National Parks (Moir, 2024).

Within the Project Area there are several open grassed paddocks with some areas of mature tree stands. Evidence of terracing was visible during inspection in several paddocks. A variety of fences and access tracks are located within the Project Area. There are three groups of structures located within the being:

- A post-1950s house and associated sheds/ancillary structures known as Melaleuca Homestead. The Homestead is located on a rise roughly in the centre of the Project Area.
- A circa 1990s former sheep corral and shelter, located in the western portion, on the north side of Avenue Road. This consists of a series of timber and metal fences, with a small open sided rectangular shelter constructed of timber posts and beams with a skillion corrugated metal sheet roof.
- A circa 1990s shed, located in the western portion. The shed is surrounded by trees. It consists of a rectangular building built on a concrete slab and clad in corrugated sheet metal, with a gabled roof form and timber bargeboards to the gable ends.

The Road Upgrade Area includes Avenue Road and Main Camp Road between Summerland Way to the northernmost site access point for the Project. It consists of gravel surfaced roads, with a small number of access roads and driveways along their lengths. There is varying width to property setbacks along the length of the roads, with grass and other vegetation to the verges, along with unlined drainage channels of varying depths. There are limited other structural elements associated with the roads, with the exception of a few concrete culverts which appear to have been constructed in the late twentieth century.

The Project Area has limited views available due to the relatively flat terrain surrounded by gently undulating hills (Moir 2024). Some views to the Project Area at a distance (approximately 1 km) are available from the north with variations in terrain, with other views of the Project Area available from along Avenue Road and Summerland Way in localised sections where the roads transect the Project Area boundary.

Views to and from the Project Area from nearby heritage items 'Hindmarsh Grave' (I120 LEP) and 'Main Camp Homestead and Surrounds' (I143) are limited due to the undulating terrain of the surrounding landscape as well as areas of thick vegetation which provide screening to large areas of the Project Area.



Photo 4.1 Project Area, looking north from the driveway to Melaleuca property on Avenue Roa



Photo 4.2 Project Area, looking east from the southwest corner



Photo 4.3 Project Area, northwest corner
Showing typical vegetation in areas of the Project Area.



Photo 4.4 Project Area, looking east across the north of the project area.



Photo 4.5 Project Area, looking north from the southeast



Photo 4.6 Southern Boundary of the Project Area.

Photo taken looking southwest showing the dense vegetation to the boundary of the Project Area.



Photo 4.7 Shed located in the north of the Project Area



Photo 4.8 Post -1960s shelter and sheep corral, adjacent to Avenue Road



Photo 4.9 Melaleuca Homestead and associated buildings

Located atop a rise outside of the Development Footprint.



Photo 4.10 Road Upgrade Area, Main Camp Road

Looking west towards Summerland Way junction



Photo 4.11 Avenue Road, near junction with Main Camp Road



Photo 4.12 Example of concrete culvert on Main Camp Road and Avenue Road

5.0 Historical Archaeological Assessment

Historical archaeology in Australia generally relates to the study of the past using physical evidence in conjunction with historical sources. Historical archaeology is generally defined as comprising the period since European arrival in Australia in 1788. An archaeological resource is the physical evidence of the past and may comprise sub-surface evidence including building foundations, occupation deposits, features and artefacts. Archaeological resources are irreplaceable and have the potential to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of early history using information that is unavailable from other sources (DUAP 1996:2).

The historical archaeological potential is the likelihood that there may be physical evidence relating to early development and occupation present beneath the current ground surface of the Project Area.

5.1.1 Historical Archaeological Potential

Archaeological potential is defined as “the degree of physical evidence presents on an archaeological site, usually assessed on the basis of physical evaluation and historical research” (Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 1996).

Archaeological research potential of a site is the extent to which further study of relics likely to be found is expected to contribute knowledge about the history of NSW which is not demonstrated by other sites or archaeological resources. The archaeological potential of the Project Area, assessed using the following gradings:

- **Low Potential:** land use history suggests limited development or use, or there is likely or known to have been quite high impacts in these areas. However, deeper sub-surface features such as wells, cesspits and their artefact-bearing deposits, and deeply embedded footings or piles may survive at depth.
- **Moderate Potential:** land use history suggests limited phases of low to moderate development intensity, or that there have been impacts in this area. A range of archaeological remains may survive, including building footprints and shallower remains or deposits as well as deeper sub-surface features.
- **High Potential:** substantially intact historical archaeological remains could survive in these areas.

The assessment of potential is dependant on the extent of disturbance that has occurred in the area of the assessment. This has been considered in the following section.

5.1.2 Disturbance

In order to assess the extent of disturbance, the following classifications are used:

- **Low disturbance:** the area or feature has been subject to activities that may have had a minor effect on the integrity and survival of archaeological remains.
- **Moderate disturbance:** the area or feature has been subject to activities that may have affected the integrity and survival of archaeological remains. Archaeological evidence may be present; however, it may be disturbed.

- **High disturbance:** the area or feature has been subject to activities that would have had a major effect on the integrity and survival of archaeological remains. Archaeological evidence may be greatly disturbed or destroyed.

The historical overview presented in **Section 3.0** demonstrates that the Project Area has likely been subject to activities which would have resulted in localised disturbances within parts of the landscape. This includes vegetation clearing, timber getting, infrastructure installation (e.g. roads and drainage) and landform modification such as the constructions of dams or terracing of slopes.

5.1.3 Archaeological Potential of the Project Area

The Project Area has been subject to little development since the European settlement of the region in the early 1800s. Early land uses of the area are likely to have been associated with the timber getting and ephemeral land use by pastoral squatters in the 1840s. As outlined in **Section 3.0** the early pastoral settlement in the region included large runs, with few homesteads across the landscape, of which no records indicate early buildings to be located within the Project Area.

The first record of potential land use of the Project Area occurs in 1860s, following the selection of Main Camp Homestead. The location of this homestead is known to be located approximately 800m to the south of the project area and, although the Project Area may have been included in the boundaries of this pastoral property, it is unclear what activities may have extended into the Project Area. Based on understandings of pastoral and agricultural practices of the mid to late nineteenth century, it is likely that the Project Area was utilised for timber felling and pastures for the sheep, cows and horses recorded to have been raised as part of the Main Camp Homestead. Archaeological remains associated with these activities are likely to be limited to post holes of fences or ad hoc shelters for other squatters on the landscape. These would have been of a lightweight construction and often temporary in nature. This type of construction is unlikely to have resulted in any clearly identifiable footprint following their removal. If present, evidence of these structures would likely be limited to post-holes or footings, which would not reveal any new or significant information that would contribute meaningfully to an understanding of the Project Area or local area's history.

The Melaleuca homestead consists of a group of pre-1960s buildings, however the date of construction is unknown from available information. The primary domestic and occupation activities likely occurred within the homestead precinct, noting the local topography this was likely contained to the hill crest where existing buildings are grouped.

Historical records do not indicate that any structures or outbuildings associated with Main Camp Homestead or other pastoral station would be located within the Project Area. No other historical land uses are recorded for the Project Area and it is considered unlikely that the Project Area has the potential to contain archaeological remains of significance.

6.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

This section assesses the likely impacts of the Project on the heritage items identified in **Section 2.3** in vicinity of the Project Area. No unrecorded items of heritage significance or areas of historical archaeological potential were identified in the Project Area, as set out in **Section 5.1.3**.

The impact assessment has been undertaken using the heritage impact gradings included in **Table 6.1**. The gradings have been developed in accordance with the Heritage NSW guidelines and the Burra Charter.

Table 6.1 Heritage Impact Gradings

Grading	Definition
Major Adverse	An action which will have a severe, long term and possibly irreversible impact on the heritage item. Major adverse impacts include the partial or complete demolition of a heritage item or addition of new structures in its vicinity that would destroy the visual setting of the items. The action will have a substantial impact on the fabric and or values of the heritage item. Actions of a major adverse impact cannot be fully mitigated.
Moderate Adverse	An action that will have an adverse impact on a heritage item. Moderate adverse impacts include the modification of a heritage item, including partial removal of significant fabric or elements, altering the setting of a heritage item or landscape and construction of new structures which alter the visual setting of the heritage item. Actions of a moderate adverse impact may be able to be reduced through appropriate mitigation measures
Minor Adverse	An action that will a minor adverse impact on a heritage item. This may include an action affecting only a small element of the heritage item, or a small or partial impact on the setting of a heritage place. The action may be temporary or reversible. Actions of a minor adverse impact are able to be minimised or reduced through use of appropriate mitigation measures.
Negligible Impact	Actions which do not affect the heritage values of a place, or do not affect significant elements, fabric, views, or the setting of a heritage item.
Minor Positive	An action which will bring a minor benefit to a heritage item, such as improving an item's visual setting.
Moderate Positive	An action which will bring a moderate benefit to a heritage item, such as the removal of an intrusive element or fabric, or a substantial improvement to the heritage items setting or reinstatement of obscured views.
Major Positive	Major positive impacts include actions which include a major benefit to the heritage item and add to or increase the heritage values of the item. This includes actions such as the reconstruction of significant elements, removal or substantial intrusive elements or structures in the curtilage or reinstatement of a heritage items visual curtilage or setting. This can also include the reintroduction of former uses of an item which are key to demonstrating its heritage significance.

6.1 Assessment of Heritage Impacts

6.1.1 Impacts to Heritage Items

6.1.1.1 Physical Impacts to Heritage Items

As identified in Section 2.3, there are no listed heritage items within the Project Area. As part of the review of the historical development and existing context of the Project Area, no elements or structures with heritage significance were identified within the Project Area. The closest heritage item 'Main Camp Homestead' is located approximately 800m away from the Project Area, and approximately 900 m from the Development Footprint. No works to the significant fabric of the Main Camp Homestead or any other heritage item in the vicinity of the Project Area would occur. The Project will therefore not result in any direct physical impacts to any listed heritage items.

6.1.1.2 Visual Impacts to Heritage Items

The Project will introduce a range of new structures into the landscape which is currently dominated by fields, remnant vegetation, and few dwellings and ancillary structures. This will alter the setting and the views across the Project Area as well as resulting in reduction in the inherent landscape characteristics of the wider landscape. However, the predominant areas of change are located away from the heritage items in the vicinity, and the broader landscape character in the vicinity of heritage items would not be affected by the changes proposed by the Project.

The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared for the Project included a detailed visual impact assessment for two heritage items within the vicinity of the Project Area, specifically for Hindmarsh Grave (I120) and Main Camp Homestead (I143).

The nearby heritage item Main Camp Homestead is located within vicinity of the Project Area, and sits within the wider pastoral landscape approximately 800 m south of the Project Area. There is potential for the proposed solar farm to change the character of the landscape to the north of heritage item, however the majority of the Project Area is separated from the Main Camp Homestead by an area of dense vegetation on the southern boundary of the Project Area. This vegetation would provide screening to the majority of the new elements in the landscape, with the exception of the southeast corner of the Project Area, where new solar panel arrays are proposed in an area of open flat paddock.

The statement of significance and description available for Main Camp Homestead does not identify any significant views associated with the heritage item and it is unlikely that any views of the Project Area from the homestead building would contribute to the overall significance of this heritage item. From available photos and aerial imagery, it appears that the key buildings (main house and former Cooks Cottage) associated with the 'Main Camp Homestead' are oriented with the main elevations associated away from the Project Area, with mature trees screening the north and partial east reducing visibility of the Project Area from these buildings. Although it is acknowledged that the development project will be visible from this heritage item, it would not change, or degrade, any identified significant views or vistas from Main Camp Homestead. Additionally, the immediate setting of this heritage item would not be subject to change as part of the Project.

The LVIA for the Project indicates that based on the topography alone, less than 50% of the Project's Development Footprint would be visible from the locally listed 'Main Camp Homestead', with this reduced by the screening vegetation currently present between the existing buildings and the Development Footprint (Moir, 2024).

Any visual impacts associated with the Project are likely to be minor and would not result in an adverse impact to the overall significance of the heritage item.

The heritage item 'Hindmarsh Grave' was also identified within the vicinity of the project, being located 2.4km to the north. Due to the topography of the surrounding landscape, the Project Area is generally not visible from this heritage item, with tiny areas of visibility (Moir 2024) in the southeast corner. The available information for this heritage item does not identify any significant views or vistas, and there is no association identified between the heritage item and the Project Area. Any changes to the views from this heritage item would not detract from historical significance of this site in the development of the Richmond River area. There would be no indirect, visual heritage impact to the Hindmarsh Grave resulting from the Project.

The visibility of the Development Footprint for heritage item Hindmarsh Grave is generally limited for the majority of this allotment, however the LVIA identified a small portion on the southeast of the allotment that would have up to 50% visibility of the Development Footprint.

The assessment for both heritage items in the LVIA identified that although the project will be partially visible from these heritage items, the potential for visual impact (as per the Department of Planning and Environment Large-Scale Solar Energy Guideline 2022 and Technical Supplement) is considered to be low.

A small part of the SHR Item #01487 'High Conservation Value Old Growth Forest' is located approximately 940 m from the Project Area. It is located within the southeast corner of the Bungawalbin State Forest, and is physically and visually separated from the Project Area by the thick screening vegetation of the state forest that prevents any views of the SHR item to the Project Area. No visual impacts would occur as a result of the Project on the 'High Conservation Value Old Growth Forest'.

All other heritage items in the vicinity of the Project are located sufficient distance from the Project Area that no visual impacts would occur.

Though it is acknowledged that the Project will result in changes to the rural landscape of the Project Area, the visual impact assessment prepared as part of the EIS for the Project has identified that the changes from the Project would generally have low potential for visual impacts to listed heritage items in the vicinity (Moir, 2024). These are unlikely to result in more than a minor visual impact to the Main Camp Homestead and no impacts would occur to other heritage items in the vicinity of the Project.

6.1.2 Impacts to Historical Archaeology

The construction of the Project would result in some ground disturbing works, such as leveling, installation of footings for new structures (including solar panels, onsite substation etc), underground cabling and formation of internal access tracks all contained within the Development Footprint set out in **Section 1.0**, and **Figure 1.2**.

As identified in **Section 5.1.3**, the Project Area has been assessed as having low potential to contain historical archaeological remains of early historical phases of land use. Although there are ground disturbing works proposed within the Project Area, it is anticipated that any archaeological remains, should they be present, would be limited to fragmented remains of structures that are unlikely to have any identifiable heritage significance. Direct impacts to historical archaeological remains of significance are therefore not anticipated in association with the Project.

7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

As identified in **Section 2.3**, there are no listed heritage items within the Project Area, and no potential heritage items were identified during the review of the available desktop information and site context and visual inspection of the Project Area.

As identified in **Section 6.1.1**, the Project would not result in any physical to heritage items within the vicinity of the Project Area. The Project would however result in minor indirect visual impacts on the Main Camp Homestead located approximately 800 m south of the Project Area and the Hindmarsh Grave, located approximately 2.4km north of the Project Area.

No other heritage items in the vicinity of the Project would be directly or indirectly impacted by the Project.

As identified in **Section 5.1.3**, the Project Area is considered to have low potential to contain archaeological remains and any remains are unlikely to have any heritage significance at a state or local level. The potential risk to any harm to any as yet unidentified archaeological resource is therefore assessed as low.

7.2 Recommendations

Table 7.1 presents the heritage related management and mitigation measures proposed for the Project based on the findings of this report.

Table 7.1 Management and mitigation measures

No	Management and Mitigation measure	Timing
1	An unexpected heritage finds protocol should be established and included in the environmental management policies for the project. This should include identification of contact persons within the Proponent team as well clearly identified steps to be implemented. All project team members and construction contractors should undertake a heritage-specific induction to support the use of this protocol.	During construction
2	In the unlikely event that unexpected historical archaeological material is discovered, all work in the area should cease and suitably qualified archaeologist should be consulted to determine an appropriate course of action. Depending on the extent and significance of the archaeological remains encountered, additional assessment and investigations, and consultation with Heritage NSW may be require prior to the re-commencement of works.	During construction

8.0 References

Crown Lands Occupation Act of 1861

Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1861

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