

GLENCORE

**Glendell Mine  
Modification 4**

RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

May 2019

Appendix 3

Extract from the Mount Owen Continued  
Operations Project ACHAR 2013

down of important responsibilities, teachings and knowledge from one generation to the next was irrevocably interrupted. The death of the young resulted in smaller communities since births could no longer replace those lost. The inability to produce future generations was further hampered by the spread of sexually transmitted diseases which left a large number of Indigenous adults infertile and increased the number of miscarriages and still births. Fawcett (1898: 153) lamented that *'half a century of British debauchery, disease, and vice and their accompaniments, have almost wiped [the Wonnarua] out altogether. A few years and their land will know them no more'*.

With the loss of their land and lifestyle, the Wonnarua were forced to rely ever more on European settlers. According to Umwelt (2011) the traditional way of life for the Wonnarua, including the continuation of their ceremonies, had all but gone by the 1870s and they began to increasingly adopt the ways of Europeans. Initially, Aboriginal farm labourers and itinerant workers were sought after but this declined from the middle of the 1870s for a variety of reasons, including the introduction of wire fencing (which reduced the number of required farm hands) and the arrival of more white workers in the region.

Others settled on religious or government run reserves or missions. From the 1860s, reserves became increasingly popular in New South Wales as they were perceived as a means of controlling and attending to the welfare of Indigenous populations. The missions also provided Colonial authorities with the opportunity to *'civilise'* Aboriginal people by teaching them the English way of life, from customs and beliefs to daily activities and language [Nolan 2012, p. 24]. Seldom does such civilisation come at such a high price.

From 1890, many of the local Indigenous population, including *Wonnarua, Awabakal, Worimi and Darkinung* people, resided at the St Clair mission. Founded by Reverend J S White, the sixty acre property was established in Carrowbrook, between Muswellbrook and Singleton (Nolan 2012). There the residents farmed the land whilst maintaining some traditional aspects and rituals of their culture. In 1905, the Baptist run Aborigines Inland Mission took over the site and the continuation of traditional ways was no longer acceptable (Gray 2010). In 1918, the site came under the control of the Aborigines Protection Board and was renamed the Mount Olive Reserve. Under the new managers, adherence to strict rules was expected and any breaches resulted in removal (Umwelt, 2011). The reserve remained operational until 1923 when it closed, forcing its residents to move elsewhere. Many of these twice dispossessed people chose to settle around the township of Singleton and the surrounding region.

#### 4.13 Comment on 'Massacre Sites'

Conflict between Aboriginal people and white settlers is a common thread in Australia's early colonial history. The Hunter Valley is no exception, with widespread conflict being reported into the 1830's. In 1826, the perceived threat from Aboriginal people in the Hunter Valley was such that settlers petitioned Governor Darling for military protection. Darling's responded to the settlers that:

*'Vigorous measures among yourselves would more effectively establish your ascendancy than the utmost power of the military...I strongly recommend you to take measures for your own defence, and you may be satisfied that in any exertion you make, you shall receive every necessary support (Darling quoted in Reynolds 1996: 39-40).*

Indeed, *'white violence in New South Wales was virtually unchecked and unpunished until the infamous Myall Creek massacre in 1838; then seven men were hanged for the murder of twenty-eight friendly natives of both sexes and various ages, in retaliation for an alleged 'outrage'. 'We were not aware that in killing the blacks we were violating the law ... as it has been so frequently done before,' argued the defence. Certainly it was frequently done again, and the aborigines were soon driven from the more fertile parts of the continent'* (Shaw, 1960: 23-4).

Sir George Gipps tried to protect Aboriginal people from the time he arrived in NSW in 1838; as he was strongly influenced by the anti-slavery lobby in England such as the Exeter Hall group in London, however *'... there was a strong feeling in the colony that the settlers were not receiving the protection they were paying for. Men spoke of the massacre of Faithfull's overlanding party on the Ovens, and of the ravages on practically every outstation north of the Namoi. They attacked this new Governor [Gipps], who seemed so filled with the humanitarian ideals of Exeter Hall that he believed every squatter cruelty incarnate and every native an outraged idealist living in primitive tranquillity. This feeling reached its climax with the famous Myall Creek trials. A party of shepherds had undoubtedly perpetrated a loathsome crime in this case and massacred almost thirty unoffending natives, but the colony fairly quivered when seven of them were found guilty, and Gipps insisted on hanging them. Hitherto, squatters and shepherds had shot natives as they would wild ducks, if they were not afraid to do so; but now, with the law invoked to enforce the utmost penalties, nobody quite knew where he stood. Gipps even ordered enquiries into the case of Major Nunn, one of his own police-officials, who was charged with undue cruelty in quelling native unrest [at Waterloo Creek]; and it seemed that the natives were always in the right as far as the governor was concerned. There was some degree of truth in this, but it must be admitted that Gipps desired both to protect the settlers and to safeguard the natives ...'* (Roberts, 1970: 87).

Finally, as Professor Henry Reynolds comments 'with the explosive expansion of settlement in the 1830s and 1840s there was a commensurate growth in the scope for vigilante violence. The hanging of seven stockmen in 1838 for their part in the Myall Creek massacre was a dramatic assertion of the letter of the law, but it failed to undermine attitudes already deeply entrenched, and gradually the 'original and customary course of things was permitted to return', and the whole matter 'fell into its true and old form'. From his desk in Sydney Gipps lamented: 'all we can do now is to raise, in the name of Justice and humanity, a voice in favour of our poor savage fellow creatures, too feeble to be heard at such a distance.' There was pessimism in Whitehall as well. The powerful Under-Secretary of State for Colonies, James Stephen, noted in a minute to Lord Glenelg: 'there has been much bloodshed on either side. The causes and consequences of this state of things are alike clear and irremediable, nor do I suppose that it is possible to discover any method by which the impending catastrophe, namely the elimination of the black race, can be averted' (Reynolds, 1987: 40).

Unfortunately, there is very little specific historical information about the location and extent of any areas where mass killings may have occurred within the vicinity of the Project Area. The historical literature is largely silent on this matter in the vicinity of the Project Area. The reasons for this lack of empirical data are varied, reasonably widely reported in the literature, but are largely beyond the scope of this discussion.

During the fieldwork and workshops undertaken for this ACHAR, there were numerous comments from RAPs about the potential for human remains to be present within the Project Area, and in particular the Ravensworth Massacre Site is thought by many to be in the vicinity of the Project Area.

This issue has been addressed in other projects undertaken in close proximity to this ACHAR, and in particular by Umwelt (2004) in the archaeological values assessment for the Glendell Open Cut Mine, which is immediately to the south-west of the Project Area, and all within what was once Ravensworth Estate.

The following section is from the Umwelt (2004) report to the DEC specifically in response to queries about potential or existing massacre sites in the vicinity of the historic Ravensworth estate, adjacent to the Project Area.

#### **4.14 Ravensworth Massacre Site (#37-3-0390)**

*At the time of the preparation of the Glendell Report (2003-2004) the site card for the Ravensworth massacre site was missing and discussions with the Aboriginal groups involved in the assessment failed to obtain any information in relation to the site. The site card, however, was later found by Steve Brown (NPWS) and information from the site card indicated that the recording of the site originated from a reference to the massacre in the book 'Waterloo Creek' written by Roger Milliss in 1992. The primary references were obtained from the Mitchell Library in order to obtain, if possible, further detail in relation to the nature and location of the Ravensworth Massacre Site.*

*The primary references provided the following details:*

- (1) 28 August 1826: Aborigines killed two whites at Alcorn's hut within Bridgman Farm, on Fal Brook, one mile upstream from Dulwich (James Glennie) and a quarter of a mile from Chillcotts hut;*
- (2) The Aborigines that took part in the attack are said to have headed in the direction of the mountains;*
- (3) The Sydney Gazette (9 September 1826) noted that the Aborigines were part of a 'mountain tribe' making them 'very difficult to capture or subdue';*
- (4) On the morning or afternoon of the third day a pursuing party caught up and shot and killed between two and 18 Aborigines using muskets;*
- (5) The Aborigines that were shot are said to have been pursued from Bridgman Farm for 20 miles or more; and*
- (6) Scott and MacLeod (3 October 1826) mention a black woman that was taken prisoner (HRA XII: 612).*

*This evidence implies that the Aboriginal people that took part in the attack came from the mountains and were returning to the mountains when the reprisal attack (massacre) took place. The account by Scott and MacLeod (HRA XII 1826: 612) also suggests that at least one woman was included in the Aboriginal group attacked. If the Aboriginal attackers had travelled 20 miles (approximately 32 kilometres) in the direction of the mountains (or even into the mountains) they could have travelled in a northerly or easterly or (less likely) southerly direction from Bridgman Farm. There are no mountains in a westerly direction (and no significant range to the south). A westerly direction would have taken the fleeing Aborigines and their pursuers up the valley rather than into the mountains. If the Aboriginal people that attacked the hut at Bridgman Farm travelled towards the mountains they would have travelled away from the area now proposed for the Glendell Open Cut. Thus, the massacre site is highly unlikely to be located within the Glendell ML or within the Ravensworth Estate. Even if*

*the Aboriginal people had travelled in an easterly direction they would have passed through the area of the present Glendell ML and the Ravensworth Estate by the time they had travelled 7 miles, rather than the 20 miles they were reported as travelling prior to the pursuing party catching up with them.*

*On the basis of these conclusions the site recorded as the 'Ravensworth Massacre Site' cannot have been within the area now defined as the Glendell ML or within the Ravensworth Holdings and that the name given the massacre site is misleading in this regard. It is also noted, however, that during the settlement period many Aboriginal and white people in the Ravensworth area lost their lives during frontier attacks and reprisals and that some of these people may have been buried within the Glendell ML.*

*The information provided by the primary sources does not discuss how the dead (Aboriginal or white) were disposed of. It is highly likely that the deceased white people were buried within the Ravensworth Estate at this time and it could be assumed that they were buried somewhere in the vicinity of the Ravensworth Homestead and buildings, rather than within the Glendell ML to the south, however, this cannot be entirely precluded. As those killed were generally convicts it is unlikely that records have been kept of their burial locations. There is no known cemetery within the area of the former Ravensworth Estate (Hunter 1997:31).*

*In relation to the Aboriginal people that were killed in the Ravensworth area, there was no anecdotal evidence located of how their bodies were disposed (except for one person actually executed by the police who was buried and then later exhumed and thrown in the river). They may have been buried/burned where they were killed by their attackers or their bodies may have been left where they fell. In the case of the Aborigines it is probable that they were collected by relatives and buried in an area dictated by custom if that was still possible under the circumstances, or somewhere where it was safe to perform the appropriate ceremonies if that was not possible.*

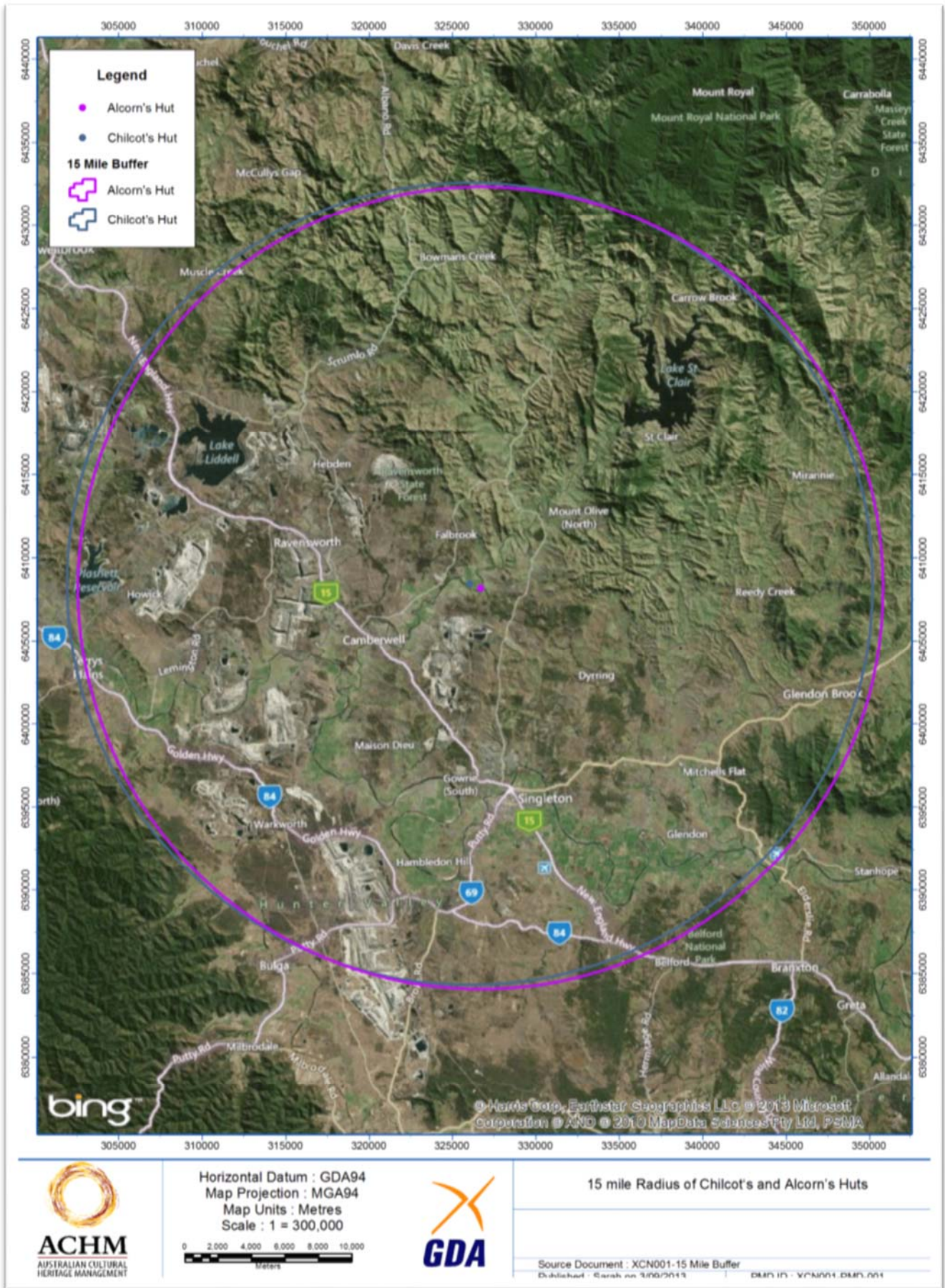
The available historic evidence and analysis by Umwelt (2004) does not dispute that a mass killing of Wonnarua people took place in late 1826, however the conclusions drawn indicate that the murders reported in the book 'Waterloo Creek' (Milliss 1992) occurred some 20 miles (32 kilometres) from the Ravensworth Estate. Many Wonnarua people hold the view that there were numerous unreported and undocumented killings in the vicinity of Ravensworth estate in the early days of white settlement. While these views are important and deeply held, it is also difficult to establish the recorded history of these widely held oral histories. Compounding the difficulty, there is no other primary recorded historical evidence documenting any other killings in the immediate vicinity of the Project Area. Consequently, there is currently no known 'massacre sites' within the Mount Owen Continued Operations Project Area, nor is there any particular likelihood of this type of place being identified within the Project Area.

Using the historical evidence to map the huts mentioned (i.e. Alcorn's and Chilcot's huts) and utilising a more conservative 15 mile radius, it is possible to construct a map which shows an approximate area where the killings reported by Milliss (1992) *cannot* have occurred. We can hypothesize that it was not possible for this particular set of events to have occurred anywhere within the mapped circle, nor therefore in the Project Area. The historic evidence suggests that this event (Milliss 1992) took place at least '20 miles' from Alcorn's and Chilcot's huts, well outside the zone mapped below (See Map 4-1, below).

However, we cannot deny the deeply held views of the Wonnarua people that many other killings in the early days of settlement occurred in the area, the majority of which went unreported. Sadly, we cannot know conclusively where these other events may have taken place, and are now forced to rely on an incomplete historical record to inform our research.

*The Mount Owen project team advises that one knowledge holder group holds the belief that a massacre site exists outside the Project Area, on Bowmans Creek, as advised by their Elders. Discussions are continuing with this group to determine appropriate measures such as further research and/or identification and acknowledgement processes for this place.*





Map 4-1: The 1826 killing of Wonnarua people was reported in the book 'Waterloo Creek' (Milliss, 1992) to have occurred at least 20 miles from Alcorn's and Chilcot's huts. The area mapped (circle) has a radius of 15 miles. The historical evidence suggests that these events cannot have occurred anywhere within this zone. The Project Area is well within this zone.