

1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the project, providing a brief outline of its scope, location and need. It also outlines the purpose and structure of this environmental assessment report.

1.1 The project

The Pacific Highway Upgrade Program is a joint commitment by the Australian and New South Wales (NSW) governments to improve the standard and safety of the Pacific Highway between Hexham and the Queensland border.

The Australian and NSW governments are providing \$3.6 billion as part of the Nation Building Program and Building Australia Fund to continue the upgrade of the Pacific Highway over the next five years to mid 2014. Included in this program is the proposal by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) to upgrade a section of the Pacific Highway at Glenugie on the mid-north coast of NSW.

The proposed Glenugie upgrade is about seven kilometres in length and is located between Franklins Road and Eight Mile Lane, about 14 km south of Grafton. The proposed Glenugie upgrade is referred to as 'the project' in this report.

The project is part of the larger Wells Crossing to Iluka Road Pacific Highway upgrade (23 km south of Grafton to 56 km north of Grafton). The preferred route for the Wells Crossing to Iluka Road upgrade was announced in September 2006 and is documented in the *Preferred Route Report* (RTA 2006a). The route options development process is described in the *Route Options Development Report* (RTA 2005). The concept design for the Wells Crossing to Iluka Road upgrade was announced in January 2009 and is documented in the *Wells Crossing to Iluka Road Concept Design Report* (RTA 2009a). Further information on the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program and the Wells Crossing to Iluka Road upgrade is available on the RTA web site www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific (click on Wells Crossing to Iluka Road).

The principal driver for the project is to improve the road safety of this section of highway by eliminating several lower standard curves and replacing the existing two lane configuration with a four lane divided road. The project would also add to the safety and travel efficiency benefits provided by other recent Pacific Highway upgrades. Furthermore, construction of the project would generate employment, benefiting the local and regional economy.

The Wells Crossing to Iluka Road upgrade has been declared to be a project to which Part 3A of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) applies. It has also been declared as critical infrastructure under the EP&A Act. The project, being part of the Wells Crossing to Iluka Road upgrade, also falls within these declarations. A preliminary environmental

assessment report has been prepared for the project under Part 3A of the EP&A Act (RTA 2009b). The Director General, Department of Planning issued the Director General's Requirements for the Part 3A environmental assessment on 16 April 2009.

1.2 Project location and study area

The project follows the preferred alignment for the Wells Crossing to Iluka Road Pacific Highway upgrade for the section between Franklins Road and Eight Mile Lane at Glenugie. The northern end of the project, located just to the south of Eight Mile Lane, is located about 68 km north of Coffs Harbour and 15 km south of Grafton. The regional context is shown in **Figure 1-1**. The project is shown in **Figure 1-2** and **Figure 1-3**.

The study area for the environmental assessment encompasses the existing Pacific Highway alignment and the proposed upgrade route for the project (refer to **Figure 1-2**). The project runs generally parallel to the eastern side of the existing Pacific Highway through Glenugie State Forest. Both the existing Pacific Highway and the project cross Glenugie Creek, an intermittent stream, at a point about 1.5 km north of Franklins Road. The project crosses a number of other minor, unnamed intermittent streams. Scattered rural and rural residential developments occur north west and south east of the study area.

1.3 Structure of the environmental assessment report

The RTA is seeking project approval for the project under Part 3A of the EP&A Act. This environmental assessment has been prepared in response to the requirements issued by the Director General of the NSW Department of Planning on 16 April 2009. The environmental assessment report is divided in two volumes, with volume 1 having the following structure:

- Introduction (Chapter 1) - provides a broad overview of the project and a general description of the study area.
- Strategic justification and project need (Chapter 2) - provides the strategic context and outlines the need for and objectives of the project.
- Project alternatives and design options (Chapter 3) - reviews the alternatives considered in developing the project.
- Project description (Chapter 4) - describes the route alignment, project components, design standards and construction activities.
- Assessment process (Chapter 5) - outlines the statutory requirements and explains the steps in the assessment and approval process.
- Consultation (Chapter 6) - describes the consultation undertaken and identifies the corresponding issues raised.
- Environmental assessment (Chapters 7, 8 and 9) - identifies the environmental issues, the potential environmental impacts and the impact mitigation and management requirements.
- Draft Statement of Commitments (Chapter 10) - outlines how the environmental impacts of the project will be avoided, minimised,

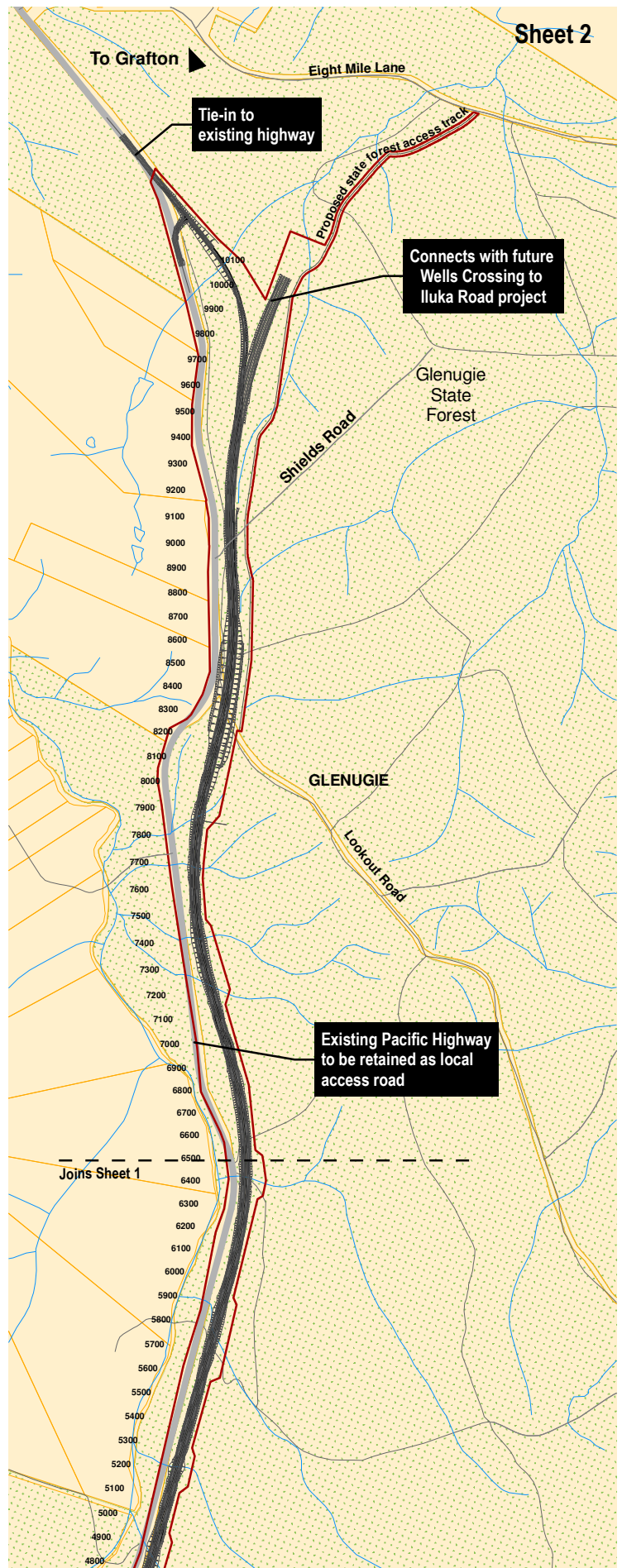
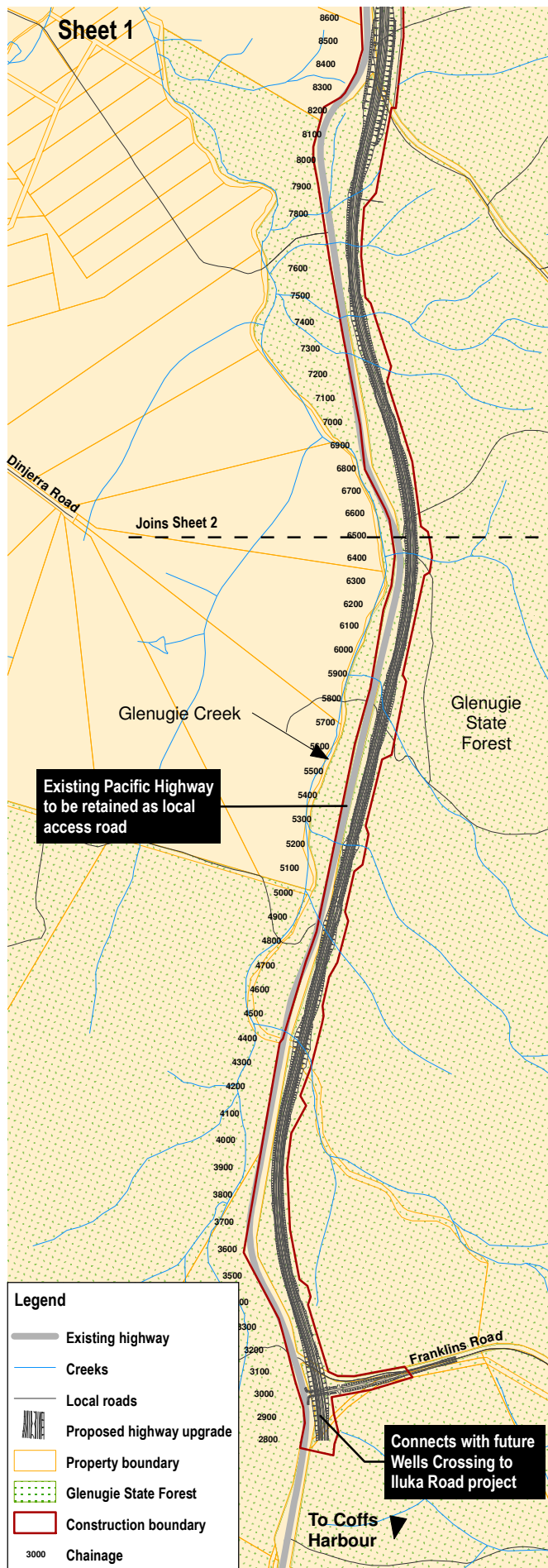
- managed, mitigated offset and/or monitored.
- Justification and conclusion (Chapter 11) - justifies the project and summarises the environmental issues.
- References (Chapter 12).

Volume 2 contains the following appendices to the environmental assessment report:

- Appendix A - Director General's Requirements and checklist.
- Appendix B - Minister's Orders.
- Appendix C - Consultation issues checklist.
- Appendix D - Working paper: Ecology.
- Appendix E - Working paper: Cultural heritage.
- Appendix F - Working paper: Noise and vibration assessment.
- Appendix G - Framework Construction Environmental Management Plan.



Figure 1-1: Regional context



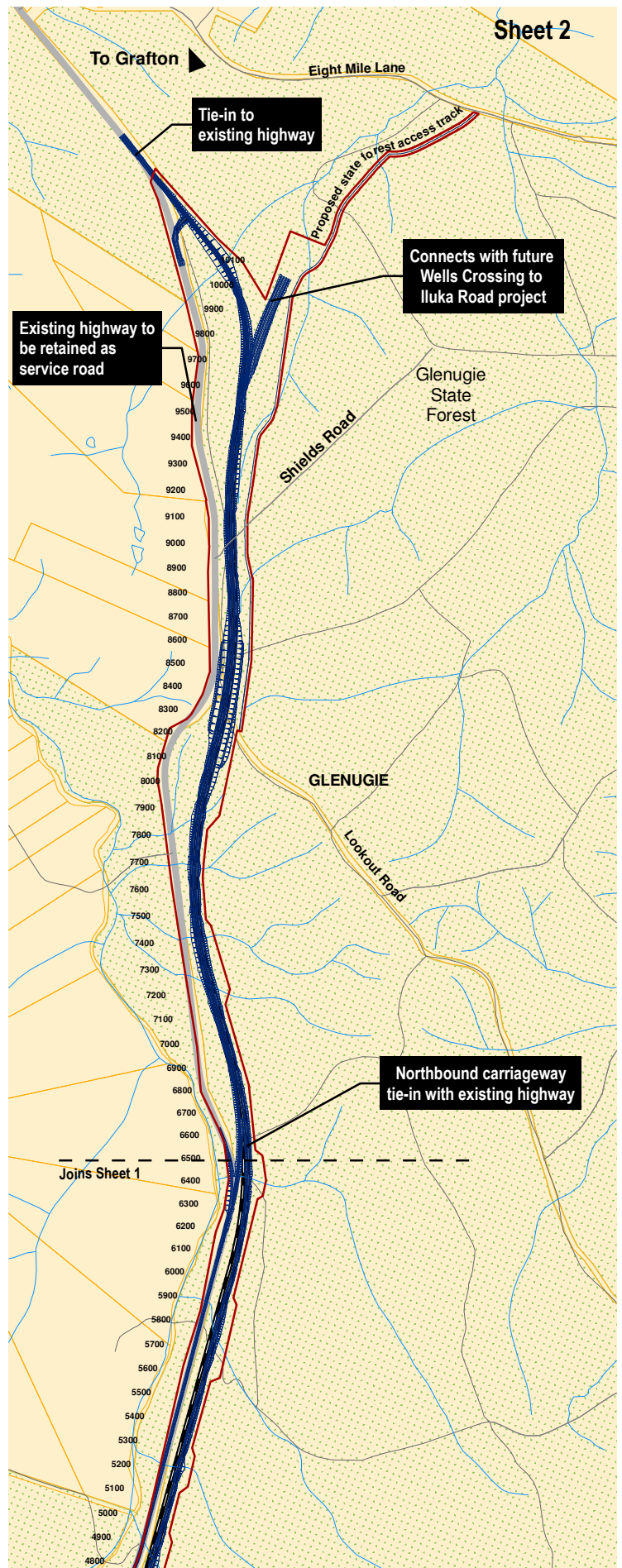
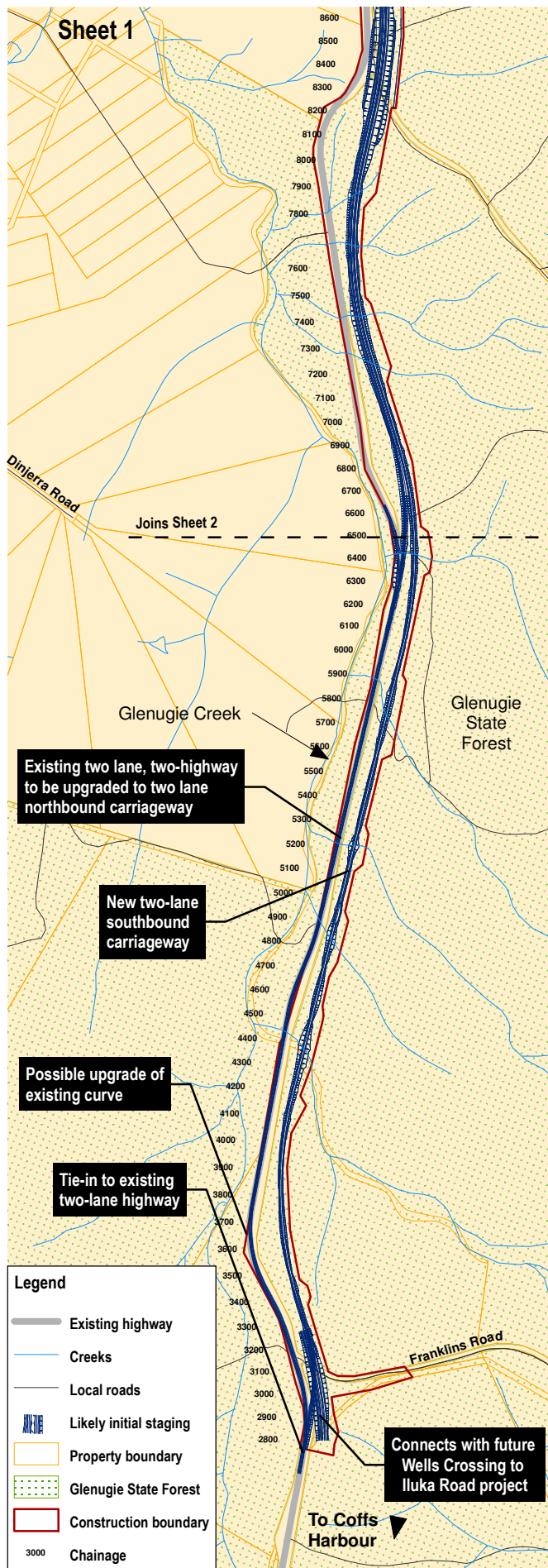


Figure 1-3: The project – Likely initial staging

