

Environmental Assessment Report

Lot 5 DP 262213, Ropes Creek Industrial Estate Concept Plan & Concurrent Project Application for Employment Lands and Stage 1 Industrial Development

Submitted to
Department of Planning
On Behalf of the Proponent Jacfin Pty Limited

November 2010 ■ 10003

Volume 1 of 2

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This report has been prepared by: Jennie Buchanan

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Date 16/11/10

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Date 16/11/10

Statement of Validity

Prepared under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 (as amended)

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In respect of Concept Plan & Concurrent Project Applications

Applicant Name	Jacfin Pty Ltd
Land to be developed	Lot 5 DP 262213
Proposed development	Ropes Creek Employment Precinct and Stage 1 Warehouse Buildings

Environmental Assessment	An Environmental Assessment (EA) is attached
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Certificate	I certify that I have prepared the content of this Environmental Assessment and to the best of my knowledge:
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- It is in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and Regulation.
- It is true in all material particulars and does not, by its presentation or omission of information, materially mislead.



Signature	
Name	Jennie Buchanan
Date	November 2010

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Executive Summary

Purpose of this report

This Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) is submitted to the Minister for Planning pursuant to Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). This is to fulfil the Environmental Assessment Requirements issued by the Director General for the preparation of an Environmental Assessment for the establishment of an Employment Precinct and construction of two warehouse buildings (Stage 1).

The report has been prepared by JBA Urban Planning Pty Limited, for the proponent, Jacfin Pty Ltd and is based on supporting technical documents provided by the expert consultant team.

The Site

The site is legally described as Lot 5 in DP 262213 and is owned by Jacfin Pty Ltd. It has an area of 105 hectares and is located within the Blacktown Local Government Area (LGA) and within Precinct 6 (Ropes Creek) of the Western Sydney Employment Area.

The site comprises cleared grazing land. Other than high voltage transmission lines, which traverse the site to the west and south west from the adjoining Transgrid Substation, there are no permanent structures on the site.

Ropes Creek forms the western boundary of the site. Two natural drainage lines also run through the site.

Access to the site is from Old Wallgrove via right of way which is registered as an easement on Lot 302 DP1133621 (owned by Jacfin Pty Ltd) and Lot 4 DP 262213 (owned by the NSW Department of Planning).

The Proposal

The Ropes Creek Employment Precinct Concept Plan Application seeks approval for the following:

- Establishment of a new employment precinct comprising approximately 81 hectares of developable land;
- Location and design of new regional and local roads;
- Indicative project staging; and
- Design Guidelines for future Project Applications.

The concurrent Project Application seeks approval for the construction of Stage 1 of the Ropes Creek Employment Precinct, including:

- Subdivision;
- Bulk earthworks;
- Installation of services;
- Construction of a temporary and permanent access roads; and
- Construction of two warehouse buildings with associated offices, car parking and landscaping.

Relevant Legislation, Strategies and Environmental Planning Instruments

The following legislation and environmental planning instruments are relevant to the proposed development:

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979;
- Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995;
- National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974;
- Rural Fires Act 1997 (NSW);
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005;
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Western Sydney Employment Area) 2009;
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007;
- State Environmental Planning Policy No. 64 – Advertising and Signage; and
- State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 – Remediation of Land.

The proposed development is generally consistent with the above Acts and Instruments. In particular it is consistent with *State Environmental Planning Policy (Western Sydney Employment Area) 2009* in that:

- The development complies with the prescribed zoning of the land;
- The proposed road linkages are consistent with the RTA's Erskine Park Link Road design and the SEPP (WSEA) road layout;
- The Concept Plan establishes appropriate development principles for the site which will ensure the development occurs in a logical, environmentally sensitive and cost-effective manner; and
- The proposal conserves areas of high or potentially high bio-diversity value.

Environmental Assessment

Traffic Assessment

Halcrow has undertaken a traffic impact assessment of the proposed development and has found that the resultant traffic generation is consistent with that predicted in MPO6_0166 (Erskine Park Link Road Concept Plan) and that the proposed development can be easily accommodated within the surrounding road network.

Halcrow has reviewed the design of the carparks for the Stage 1 warehouses and considers that they will comply with the relevant Australian Standards and will suitably cater for B-double truck access.

The number of parking spaces proposed is consistent with that recommended by the RTA and the designs are suitably flexible to accommodate a higher level of on-site parking if required.

Contamination

Consulting Earth Scientists (CES) has undertaken a desk top review, a site investigation and soil samples (Phase 1 Investigation). CES found that with regard to soil contamination, the site is suitable for the proposed industrial/commercial development without need for any remediation works to be carried out.

Geotech

In addition to a Phase 1 Assessment CES also undertook a Geotechnical Assessment of the site so as to inform earthworks and engineering design on the site. The investigation found that the ground condition of the site generally comprises topsoil, underlain by alluvial and residual soils over shale bedrock of the Wianamatta Group. The subsurface soils will require subgrade improvement through lime stabilisation or subgrade replacement at suitable levels for pavement bearing.

Groundwater was encountered on the site at depths of between 2.1m and 5.3m below ground level. During construction, seepage will be controlled by conventional sump drainage at the toe of excavations. During operation this drainage will be connected to the site building drainage.

Acoustic Assessment

Wilkinson Murray has undertaken an Acoustic Impact Assessment for the precinct and Stage 1 warehouses. Noise measurements were taken during the week commencing 19 July 2010 to determine existing background noise levels at the nearest residential receivers and to establish appropriate noise goals for the development.

With regard to construction noise, the proposal will comply with the established noise goals except during initial earthworks in the north-western corner of the Precinct which have the potential to affect the acoustic amenity of dwellings within Erskine Park. In order to minimise this impact, Wilkinson Murray recommends mitigation measures be incorporated in the Construction and Environmental Management Plan for the development of the north-western corner of the Precinct. A commitment requiring this to occur for each project is included in the Statement of Commitments at Section 7 of this report. It is noted that the Stage 1 project applications are located at a sufficient distance away from the residential properties in Erskine Park so as to not require specific mitigation measures during earthworks.

The assessment undertaken by Wilkinson Murray established that operational noise generated in the employment precinct is unlikely to exceed the noise goals established for the project. Notwithstanding this, a commitment has been made requiring the submission of an acoustic assessment, with each project application, to demonstrate that the development will comply with the noise goals established for the precinct.

Wilkinson Murray has assessed the proposed two warehouse developments and notes that noise mitigation measures are not necessary due to the significant separation distance from the nearest residential receivers.

Bushfire

Australian Bushfire Protection Planners (ABPP) has undertaken an assessment of the proposed development. ABPP's recommendation of providing setbacks of 24 metres from the Ropes Creek E2 zone and 10m from the east-west E2 zones has been incorporated into the design of the Concept Plan. These setbacks will ensure that there is adequate defendable space in the event of a bushfire.

Development lots which include areas of defendable space and are adjacent to the E2 zones will need to demonstrate compliance with the recommendations of ABPP in terms of landscape maintenance, building design and construction, fire fighting access and emergency planning.

With regard to the Stage 1 Project Application, ABPP notes that the buildings are suitably located with adequate defendable spaces. Suitable access for fire fighting operations is provided, however the buildings will need to provide onsite static water supply for structural fire suppression systems.

Services

The site can be serviced to accommodate the proposed employment precinct. Water, electricity and gas lines will be located in the temporary access road and will be connected to existing services in Old Wallgrove Road. Sewer connections will be obtained from existing infrastructure within the Eastern Creek Industrial Estate until such time as a sewer pumping station is established within the Ropes Creek Employment Precinct.

Stormwater and Flooding Assessment

Browns Consulting Engineers (Browns) has undertaken a stormwater and flooding assessment of the precinct. Browns has formulated a Stormwater Management Plan which will ensure that 100 year ARI flows are maintained at pre-development rates within the site catchment, to ensure no increase in peak flows in Ropes Creek upstream or downstream of the Precinct.

The Management Plan provides for the construction of bio-retention basins which will treat stormwater to ensure the precinct meets the targets set for the site.

Browns has designed drainage infrastructure to be installed within the Stage 1 development which is consistent with the Stormwater Management Plan. Browns has confirmed that the proposed Stage 1 development will not result in any increase peak flows at Ropes Creek and that stormwater quality targets will be achieved.

Visual Impact Assessment

A Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared for the precinct which concludes that it has a low visual sensitivity. This is due to the fact that the visual catchment of the site is dominated by electricity pylons and associated infrastructure which extend across the site to the Transgrid Substation to the east of the site, the low elevation of the site, the future industrial use on surrounding land and the lack of residential uses immediately adjacent to the site.

The introduction of Design Guidelines, which include provisions relating to built form, external materials and landscaping, will further minimise visual impacts associated with the development and accordingly no further mitigation measures are required.

Flora & Fauna Assessment

Whelans Insites has assessed the proposed development for potential flora and fauna impacts. Following a desktop study and site investigation Whelans Insites determined that:

- Vegetation on the site is significantly degraded due to the historical use of the site for grazing;
- The site does not contain any threatened flora;
- The vegetation along Ropes Creek and along the tributary in the south-western corner of the site comprise highly disturbed examples of weed infested Alluvial Woodland (EEC) ;
- No threatened fauna species have been recorded on the site or on adjacent lands;
- The site presents limited habitat opportunities, which are generally restricted to the Ropes Creek corridor, the on-site dams and a few hollow bearing trees.

Whelans Insites found that the proposed development is unlikely to generate adverse impacts of any relevance or concern. This is because areas of potential 'bio-diversity value' are located within the E2 zone along Ropes Creek which will be retained and protected under the current scheme. New habitats will be formed with the introduction of bioretention basins on the site. The proposed development is thus likely to improve 'biodiversity values' at this location.

Development in the north-western corner of the Precinct will result in the loss of a few hollow bearing trees. In order to mitigate this impact, Whelans Insites has recommended that a Hollow-bearing Tree Protocol be implemented. A commitment to do this is included in the Statement of Commitments at **Section 7** of this report.

Heritage Assessment

Godden Mackay Logan (GML) has assessed the site for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Heritage Significance. The site is not listed as a heritage item and is not located within a Heritage Conservation Area.

Following a desk top study and a site inspection, GML concluded that, due to the historic use of the site for stock grazing and the fact that there is little recorded development on the site, the site has little or no historical archaeological potential, other than for generic or incidental evidence associated with its agricultural use..

With regard to Indigenous heritage significance, GML undertook a desk-top review, consulted with the local Aboriginal Community and undertook a field study. The study found the site contains six previously recorded sites comprising four artefact scatters, one isolated artefact and one Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD). Four (4) of these were relocated during the field investigations. Eighteen (18) previously unrecorded artefacts were also located during the field survey.

GML considers that due to the existence of previously identified sites and the artefacts located during the current investigation the Precinct is sensitive for Aboriginal archaeological material and more artefacts may exist on the surface or in subsurface deposits. GML has therefore recommended that:

- An Aboriginal Heritage Management Plan be prepared for the precinct dealing with Stages 2 onwards; or
- That an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Assessment be submitted with each future project application.

A commitment to this effect is included in the Statement of Commitments at **Section 7** of this report.

With regard to the Stage 1 Project Application GML has recommended that:

- The previously located artefact be collected and agreement be reached with the local Aboriginal community to find a suitable safe location for the storage of the artefact; and
- initial earthworks within the Stage 1 area be monitored by a representative from the local Aboriginal community down to artefactually sterile layers.

A commitment regrading the above is included in the Statement of Commitments at **Section 7** of this report.

Economic and Social Benefits

The proposed development of the Ropes Creek Employment Precinct on the site is expected to generate the following economic and social benefits:

- Generation of between 1,600 and 3,250 new jobs within Western Sydney;
- Investment of up to \$290,280,000 in the NSW economy;
- Construction of sections of the new Regional road network;
- the proposal will generate \$14,634,000 (\$180,000 per developable hectare) in regional infrastructure contributions; and
- Preservation of the Ropes Creek corridor.

1.0 Introduction

This Concept Plan and concurrent Project Application are submitted to the Minister for Planning pursuant to Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act). This is to fulfil the Environmental Assessment Requirements issued by the Director General for the preparation of an Environmental Assessment for a Concept Plan and concurrent Project Application for development on Lot 5 DP262213, Ropes Creek (the site).

The proposal involves the redevelopment of the site for employment purposes and the construction of two warehouse buildings (Stage 1) with associated roads and services. A photomontage of the proposed Warehouse 1 is provided at **Figure 1**.

The report has been prepared by JBA Urban Planning Consultants Pty Limited, for the proponent, Jacfin Pty Ltd and is based on supporting technical documents provided by the expert consultant team.

This EAR describes the site, its environs and the proposed development, and includes an assessment of the proposal in accordance with the Director-General's Environmental Assessment Requirements under Part 3A of the EP&A Act (Refer **Appendix A**). It should be read in conjunction with the information contained within and appended to this report.



Figure 1 – Photomontage Warehouse Building 1

Source: MNIA Architects

1.1 Background

Western Sydney Employment Area (WSEA)

In December 2005, the NSW Government announced the creation of the Western Sydney Employment Area (WSEA) covering approximately 2,450 hectares near the intersection of the M4 and M7 Motorways. The WSEA incorporates 10 precincts covering current and future employment lands in Blacktown, Penrith, Holroyd and Fairfield Local Government Areas (LGAs) which were at the time subject to a variety of planning regimes and different zones.

In August 2009, the State Environmental Planning Policy (Western Sydney Employment Area) 2009 (WSEA SEPP) was gazetted, which provides consistent zoning and development control provisions to facilitate development of the WSEA for the purposes of employment and industry. The WSEA and its associated Precincts are illustrated in **Figure 2**.

The land owned by Jacfin Pty Ltd, and the subject of this application, is located within Precinct 6 of the WSEA known as "Ropes Creek". Precinct 6 has a total area of 190 hectares and the potential to generate up to 3,800 jobs (assuming 20 jobs per hectare). The site comprises approximately 105 hectares of this Precinct. The site is predominantly zoned IN1 General Industrial under the WSEA SEPP with E2 Zones along Ropes Creek and across the site.

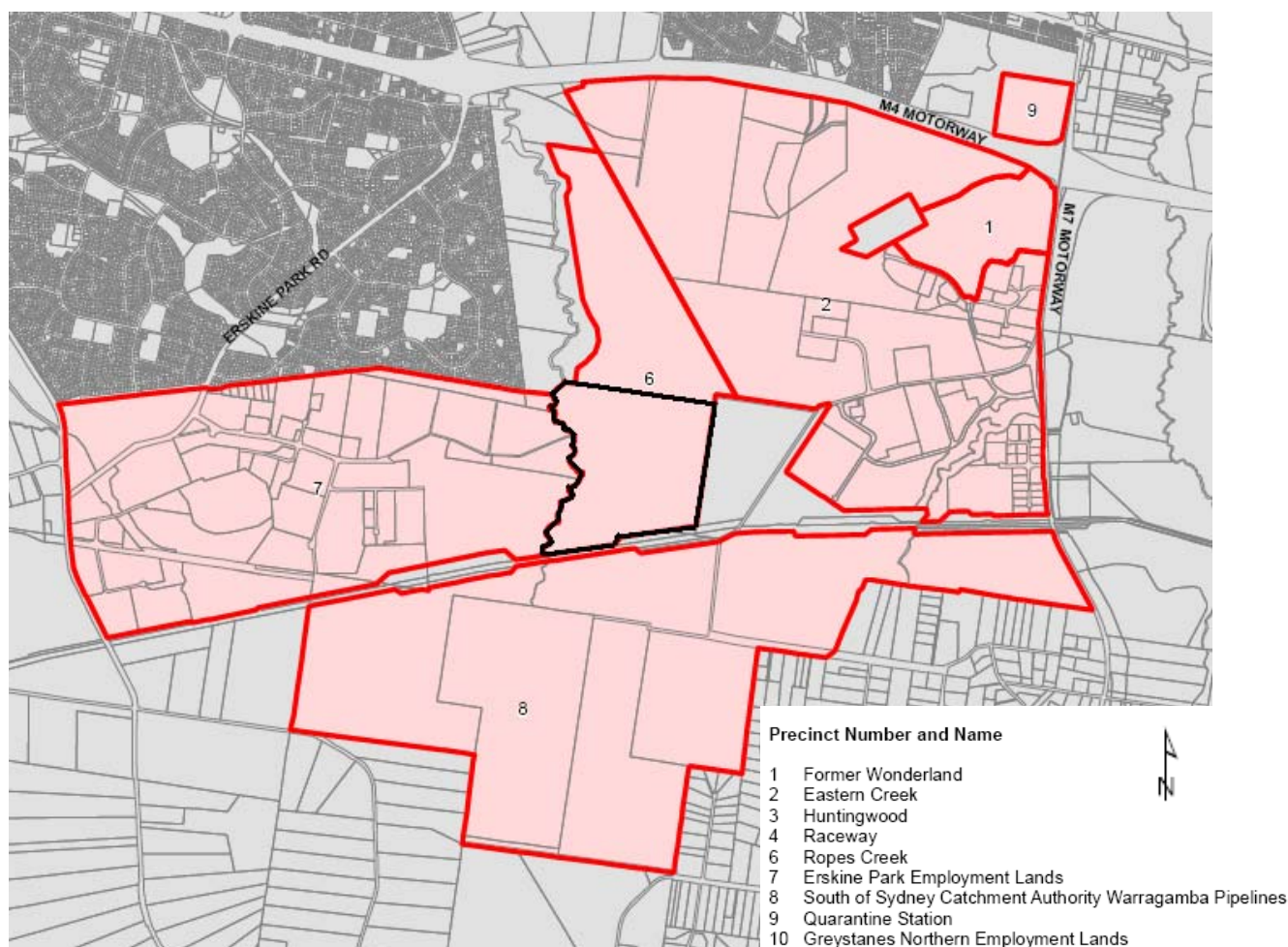


Figure 2 - Western Sydney Employment Area
Source: Department of Planning (SEPP WSEA)

Link Road Network

The WSEA SEPP identifies as a “Transport Infrastructure Route”, an alternate north-south link to the west of Old Wallgrove Road connecting Precinct 6 to the east-west Erskine Park Link Road, and to Archbold Road and the M4 to the north. The WSEA SEPP (Clause 26) includes provisions requiring referral of any application for development of land on or in the vicinity of a transport infrastructure route to the Director-General of the Department of Planning for his consideration as to the compatibility of the development with the proposed route concerned. The site in the context of the proposed WSEA Link Road network is shown in **Figure 3**.

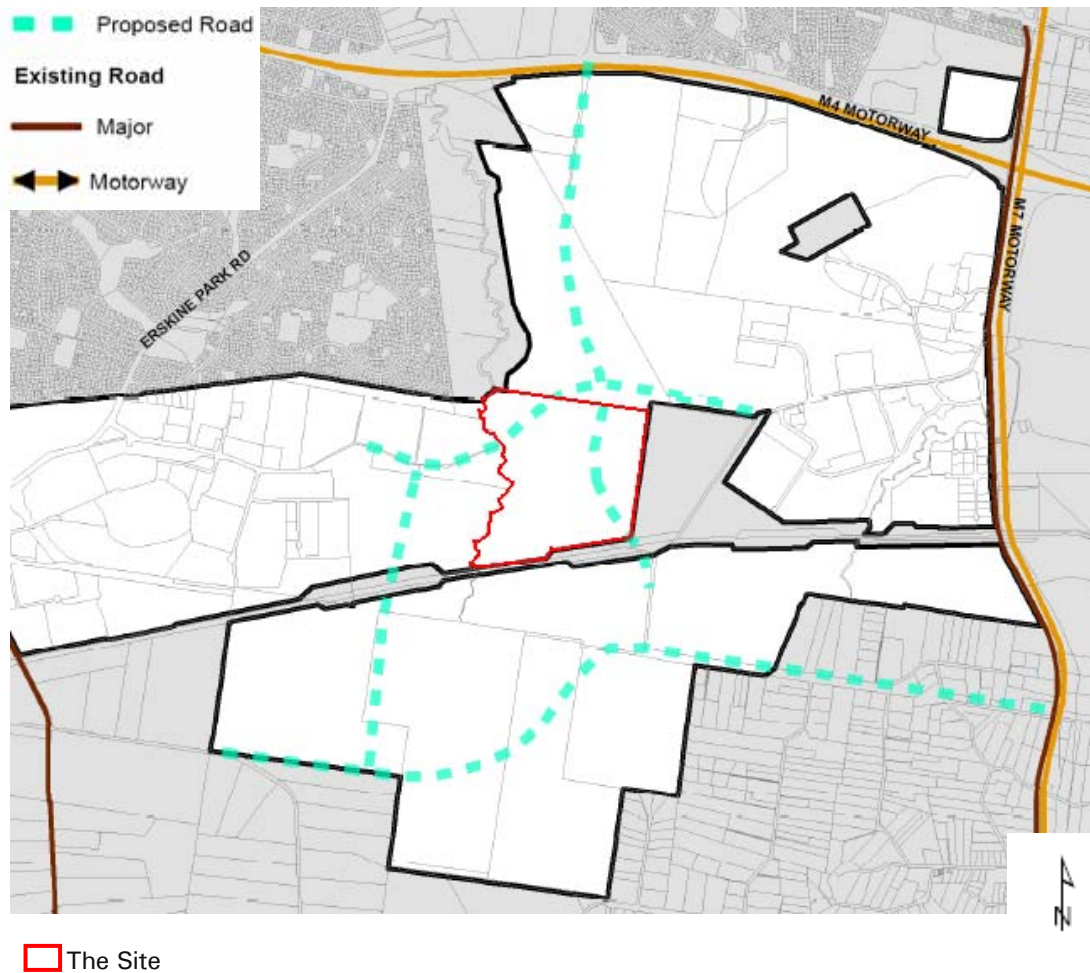


Figure 3 - Western Sydney Employment Area Link Road Network
Source: Department of Planning (WSEA SEPP)

Erskine Park Link Road Network Concept Plan

Concurrent with the gazettal of the WSEA SEPP, the Minister for Planning approved the Erskine Park Link Road Network Road Concept Plan (MP06_0166). **Figure 4** shows the approved road alignment in blue, as can be seen the link road will now run, in the most part, parallel with the northern boundary of the site. The approved Link Road Concept Plan alignment has been incorporated into the concept plan drawings for this application.



Figure 4 – Approved Erskine Park Link Road Network (blue) and original SEPP WSEA Alignment (black)
Source: NSW Department of Planning

1.2 Project Team

An expert consultant team has been formed to deliver the project and includes:

Key Issue	Consultant
Proponent	Jacfin Pty Ltd
Legal	Allens Arthur Robinson
Planning / Urban Design	JBA Urban Planning
Architecture	MNIA Architects
Landscape	Clouston Associates
Civil Engineering	Brown Consulting Engineers
Contamination / Geotech	Consulting Earth Scientists
Heritage	Godden Mackay Logan
Acoustics	Wilkinson Murray
Traffic	Halcrow
Bushfire	Australian Bushfire Protection Planners
Survey	RPS

2.0 Site Analysis

This section of the report provides a description of the site and an analysis of the site constraints and opportunities. The Concept Plan drawings at **Appendix B** provide graphic illustrations of the site constraints and opportunities.

2.1 Site Location and Context

The site is located within the Blacktown Local Government Area (LGA) and within Precinct 6 (Ropes Creek) of the Western Sydney Employment Area. The site's regional context is shown in **Figure 5**.

Ropes Creek forms the western boundary of the site and also the boundary between the Blacktown and Penrith LGAs as shown in **Figure 6**.

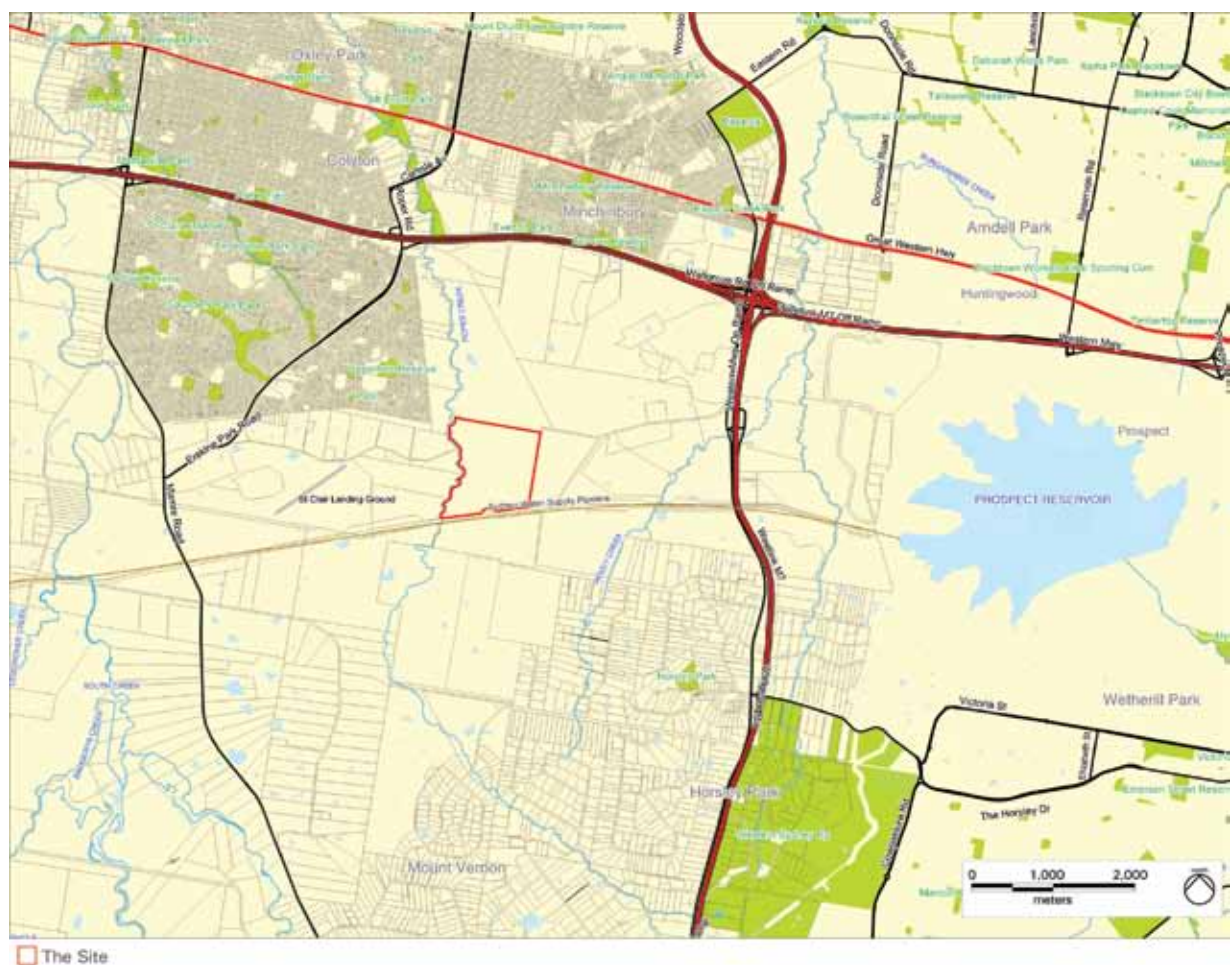


Figure 5 – The site's regional context



Figure 6 – Site Locality Plan

2.2 Land Ownership and Legal Description

The site is legally described as Lot 5 in DP 262212 and is approximately 105 hectares in area. The site is owned by Jacfin Pty Ltd. A survey plan of the site is included at **Appendix C**.

2.3 Existing Development

The site comprises cleared grazing land. Three small farm dams are located on the site in the south west corner, the central section of the site and on the northern boundary.

High voltage transmission lines traverse the site to the west and south west from the adjoining Transgrid Substation. The associated easements vary in width from 125m to approximately 185m. The areas affected by the transmission line easements are shown on the survey plan at **Appendix C**. With the exception of the transmission lines and their associated stanchions, there are no permanent structures on the site.

An aerial photograph of the site at **Figure 7**. Photos of the site are provided in **Figures 8, 9 and 10**.



Figure 7 – Aerial photo of the site



View of the site looking towards the south-west from the northern boundary



View of the site looking towards the south along the eastern boundary



View of the site looking west towards the Ropes Creek from the northern boundary

Figure 8 – Panoramic photos of the site



Figure 9 – View from the north-east corner of the site along the ephemeral creek



Figure 10 – An existing dam located in the centre of the site

2.4 Site Access

Access to the site is currently via a right of way (registered easement on title) over Lot 302 DP1133621 (owned by Jacfin Pty Ltd) and Lot 4 DP 262213 (owned by The Department of Planning). A temporary dirt road is accessed off Old Wallgrove Road which runs parallel with the southern boundary of Lot 302 DP1133621. At the boundary with Lot 4 DP262213 the road heads south and into the north-east corner of the site. The access road is shown in **Figures 11** and **12**.

Old Wallgrove Road provides direct access to the M7 Motorway.

Under the Link Road Network Concept Plan a new east-west regional road is proposed along the northern boundary of the site linking Lenore Lane (Erskine Park) to the M7 via Old Wallgrove Road. The east-west regional road (the Erskine Park Link Road) will intersect with the north-south regional road at the mid-point of the northern boundary of the site. The north-south regional road will connect to the M4 motorway at Archbold Road.



Figure 11 – A photo of the existing site access road looking towards the west



Figure 12 – Location of existing access road

2.5 Topography

RPS has prepared a survey of the site (included at **Appendix C**). The site is characterised by generally flat topography gently sloping westwards towards Ropes Creek. An exception to this is the northern part of the site which rises to the highest point at RL 75 at the northern boundary as shown in **Figure 13**.

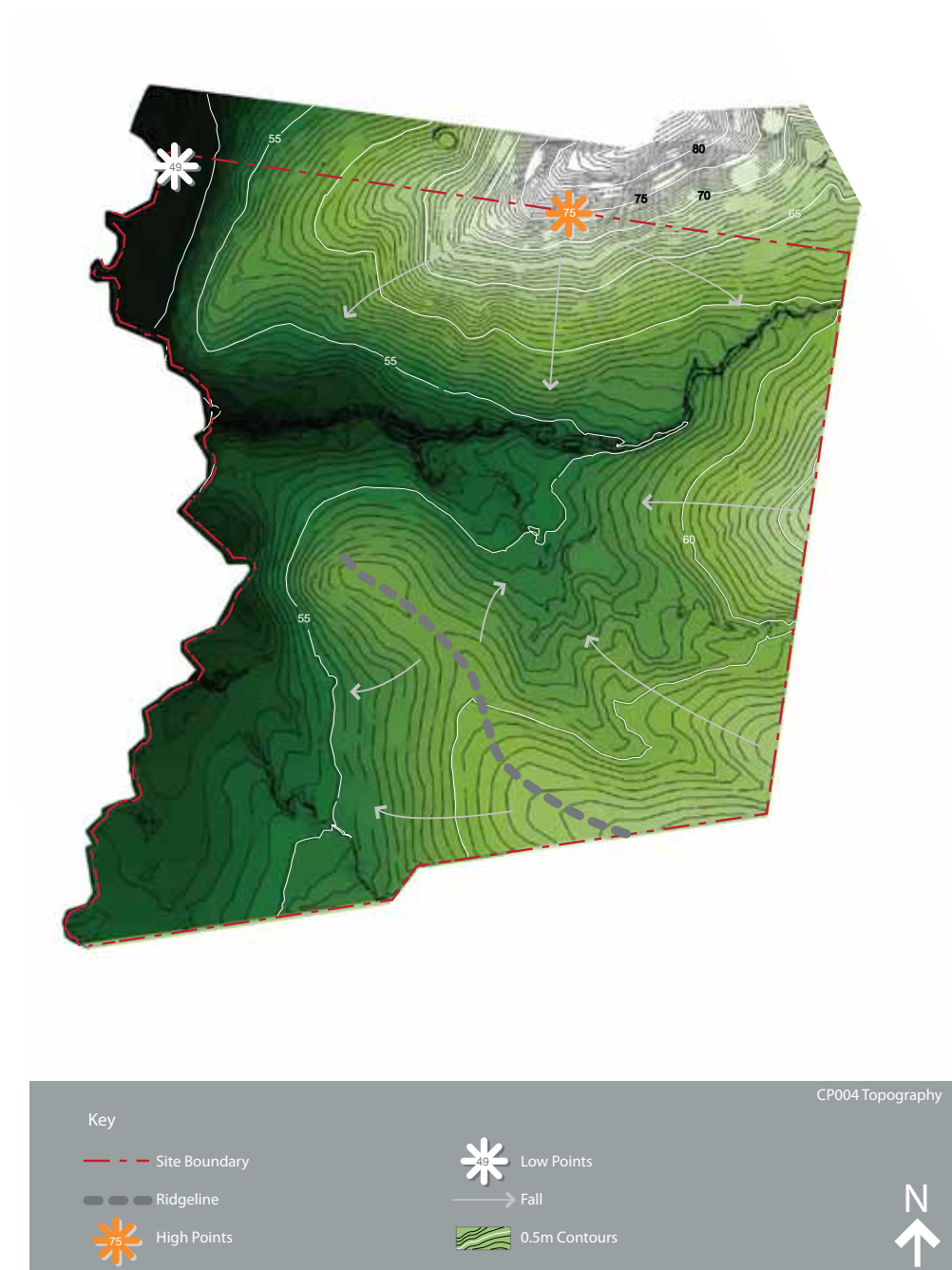


Figure 13 – Site topography

2.6 Vegetation & Conservation Zones

The site is traversed by two E2 conservation zones, one passing roughly east-west through the centre of the site and the other passing roughly southeast to northwest in the southwest corner of the site.

Within these corridors the limited vegetation is generally degraded and weed-infested and most of the E2 zone has been cleared and used for grazing, as is all of the land outside these areas.

The Ropes Creek riparian corridor forms another E2 Conservation Zone along the western boundary of the site. A flora and fauna survey of the site is included at **Appendix D**.

2.7 Ground Conditions

Geotechnical investigations (**Appendix R**) have revealed that the ground condition of the site generally comprises topsoil, underlain by alluvial and residual soils over shale bedrock of the Wianamatta Group.

Groundwater was encountered on the site at a depth varying between 2.1m and 5.3m below ground level.

A review of the site's history and soil testing has revealed that the site shows no sign of contamination (see **Appendix E**).

2.8 Surrounding Development

To the north of the site

To the north of the site is land owned by the Department of Planning (Lot 4 DP 262213 and is zoned IN1 under SEPP (WSEA). This land has a gradient up to the north and is occupied by powerlines and is subject to electricity easements. The land is generally clear of vegetation, see **Figure 14**.

To the north-east of the site is Lot 302 DP1133621 which is owned by Jacfin Pty Ltd. This lot covers an area in excess of 100 hectares and is also zoned IN1 and forms part of the Eastern Creek Employment Precinct.



Figure 14 – Department of Planning land to the north

To the east of the site

To the east, the site adjoins a Transgrid Substation which is shown in **Figure 15**.



Figure 15 – Transgrid Substation to the east

To the south of the site

To the south of the site is the Sydney Catchment Authority Warragamba Pipeline (SCA Pipeline) which is shown in **Figure 16**.

Beyond the pipeline is the Oakdale Precinct. On 2 January 2009, the Minister for Planning approved a Concept Plan for a warehouse, storage and distribution centre (See **Figure 17**) and a Project Application for construction of the first stage of that development. The Oakdale Central development includes upgrades to Old Wallgrove Road from the SCA Pipeline connecting through to the Eastern Creek Precinct and the M7. The Concept Plan, as approved, also includes provision for the upgrade of Old Wallgrove Road and the Old Wallgrove Road/ Wallgrove Road intersection to service the site to facilitate the Burley Road / Chandos Road link to Wallgrove Road and the M7.



Figure 16 – Sydney Water Pipeline on the southern boundary of the site