

# HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT



*Fairy Meadow Ambulance Station*

Nos 7-9 Squires Way, Fairy Meadow

University of Wollongong, Innovation Campus

July 2022 | J5425

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**Cover Image:** View of the site opposite the heritage item.

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Preamble**

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has been prepared in conjunction with a REF for the construction of a new ambulance station within the University of Wollongong Innovation Campus at 7-9 Squires Way, Fairy Meadow, New South Wales.

The site is located within the City of Wollongong. The principal planning control for the site is the *Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009 (LEP 2009)*. The site is not listed as a heritage item or located within a Heritage Conservation Area as defined by Schedule 5 Parts 1 and 2 of the *LEP 2009*. It is, however, located within the vicinity of one heritage item, 'Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel,' Huts 201, 204 and 210, 9 Squires Way (Item No.: 61075) I6467) listed by Schedule 5 Part 1 of this plan. This item is also an item of State Significance listed under the auspices of the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*.

Under Part 5.10 of the *LEP 2009*:

(4) Effect of proposed development on heritage significance

The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause in respect of a Heritage Item or heritage conservation area, consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the item or area concerned. This subclause applies regardless of whether a heritage management document is prepared under subclause (5) or a heritage conservation management plan is submitted under subclause (6).

(5) Heritage assessment

The consent authority may, before granting consent to any development:

(a) on land on which a Heritage Item is located, or

(b) on land that is within a heritage conservation area, or

(c) on land that is within the vicinity of land referred to in paragraph (a) or (b), require a heritage management document to be prepared that assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the Heritage Item or heritage conservation area concerned.

The most appropriate heritage management document in this instance is a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS).

This statement has been prepared at the request of Health Infrastructure NSW.

### **1.2 Authorship**

This HIS was prepared by Anna McLaurin B.Envs.(Arch.), M.Herit.Cons. MURP, and James Phillips, B.Sc.(Arch.), B.Arch., M.Herit.Cons.(Hons), of Weir Phillips Heritage and Planning.

### **1.3 Limitations**

As the site is not subject to any statutory heritage listings, an assessment of significance was not provided for as part of this statement.

No Aboriginal or historical archaeology was carried out on the site.

The buildings on the site were viewed from externally only.

### **1.4 Methodology**

A site visit was carried out in 2021. Unless otherwise stated, the photographs in this statement were taken by the authors on this occasion.



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This HIS has been prepared with reference to the Heritage NSW publication *Statements of Heritage Impact* (2002 update) and with reference to the Council planning documents listed under Section 1.5 below.

**1.5 Documentary Evidence**

**1.6 Documentary Evidence**

Borst Architects. 2002. 'Statement of Assessment, Proposed Options, Nissen-Type Huts Wollongong Innovation Campus'. Prepared for University of Wollongong. Balgownie, NSW.

Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty Ltd. 2002. 'Assessment of Heritage Significance.' Unpublished report prepared for University of Wollongong. PDF file.

Colin Brady Architecture & Planning. 2002. 'Assessment Study of European Heritage, Brandon Park, Fairy Meadow.' Unpublished report prepared for University of Wollongong. PDF file.

Decker J, and Chiei, C, 'Quonset Hut: Metal Living for a Modern Age' (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005),p. 2

Extent Heritage Advisors. 2020. 'European Heritage Assessment', Health and Wellbeing Precinct Innovation Campus, Prepared for University of Wollongong. Sydney. PDF File.

McCosh, F. 1997 'Nissen of the Huts: A biography of Lt Col. Peter Nissen', DSO. Bourne End: B D Publishing.

Wollongong City Council, 2003-2004, Development Application Files DA/2003/1411.

**1.7 Heritage Listing Sheets**

Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel: Huts 201, 204 and 210, Squires Way Fairy Meadow NSW 2519. State Heritage Inventory Database No.: 5055121 (SHR listing).

**1.8 Planning Documents**

Wollongong Development Control Plan 2009.

Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009.

**1.9 Site Location**

The site is located on the western side of Innovation Way Squires Way between Elliot's Road to the north and Puckey Avenue to the south within the northern portion of the University of Wollongong Innovation Campus. The site is identified as Lot 2 of D.P. 1172135. Refer to **Figure 1** which illustrates the site location in red and the heritage item in the vicinity hatched blue.

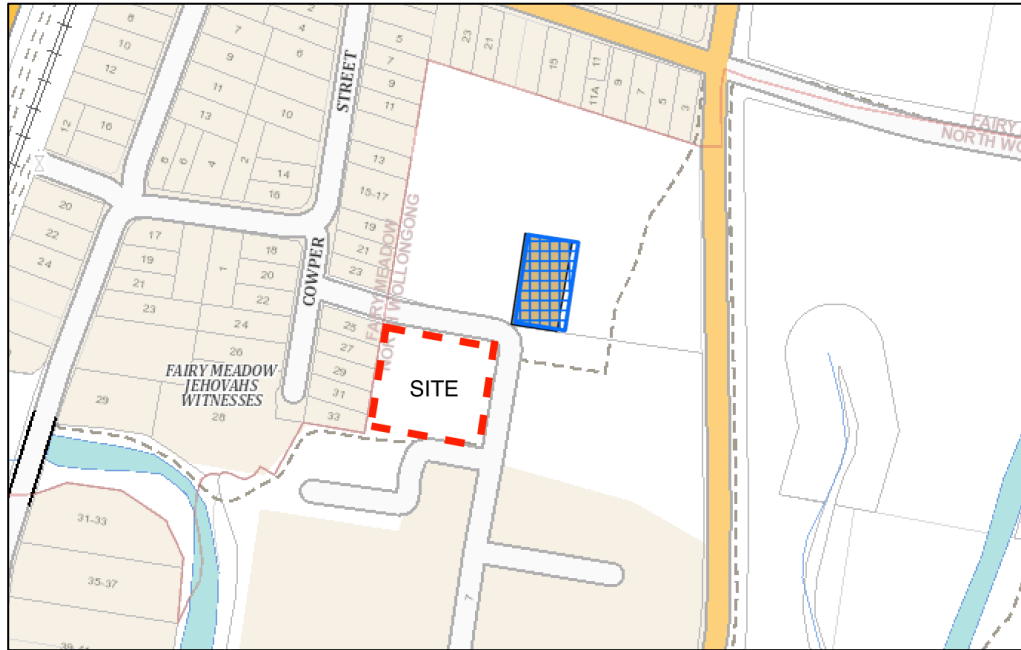


Figure 1 Site Location in relation to the heritage item.

Source: NSW Planning Portal; annotations in red by WP Heritage and Planning.

## 2 THE SITE

Given that the site is not subject to any heritage listings, it is only briefly described for the purposes of this assessment. For the following, refer to Figure 2, an aerial photograph over the site.



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph over the Site showing the site and heritage item.

Source: SIX Maps 2022; annotations by WP Heritage and Planning.

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The **site** is rectangular in shape. It is located on the southwestern side of Innovation Way within the University of Wollongong Innovation Centre Campus.

The site is in open public space generally flat, utilised as sports grounds/parkland. There are disparate tree plantings along the boundaries of the site.

Figures 3 to 8 illustrate the site from the public domain.



**Figure 3: Looking west across the site from Innovation Way.**  
Google Maps



**Figure 4: Looking south over the site from Innovation Way.**  
Google Maps





**Figure 5: View of the site from the carpark outside the heritage items.**  
Google Maps

### **3 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **3.1 Summary of Statutory Heritage Listings**

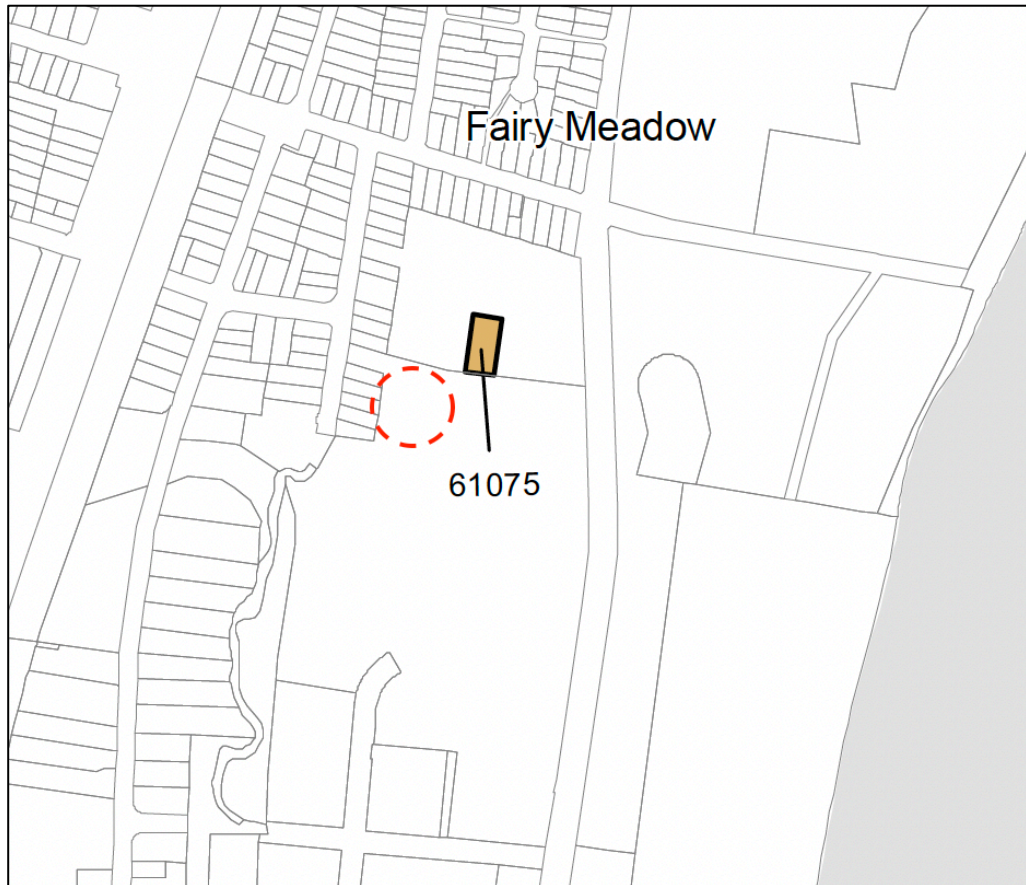
No. 7-9 Squires Way, Fairy Meadow:

- Is not listed on the State Heritage Register under the auspices of the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*.
- Is not listed as a Heritage Item by Schedule 5, Part 1 of the *Wollongong LEP 2009*.
- Is not located within a Heritage Conservation Area as defined by Schedule 5, Part 2 of the *Wollongong LEP 2009*.

#### **3.2 Heritage Items Within the Vicinity of the Site**

For the following, refer to Figure 6 a detail of the *Wollongong LEP 2009* Heritage Map showing the site and the surrounding area. In this plan, heritage items are coloured brown or green and are numbered. Conservation Areas (of which there are none in this detail of the plan) are hatched in red. The site is out lined in red.

‘In the vicinity’ has been determined by physical proximity to the site, existing and potential view corridors and the nature of the proposed works.



**Figure 6: Heritage Items in the Vicinity of the Site.**

*Wollongong LEP 2009; annotation by WP Heritage and Planning.*

Key:

The subject site is outlined in red.

### 3.2.1 NSW Heritage Act 1977

There is one Heritage Item listed on the State Heritage Register under the *NSW Heritage Act 1977* in the vicinity of the subject site:

- Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel: Huts 201, 204 and 210

This item is located to the east of the subject site. It is marked '61075' in Figure 6 above.

#### History

The State Heritage Inventory Listing Sheet (SHR listing) for this item provides the following history for this item, which has been significantly truncated for the purpose of this statement:

'Before European settlement in the Illawarra, the region was home to the local Wodi Wodi Aboriginal people of the Dharawal nation (NPWS, 2005). This Aboriginal community had a well-developed and complex society, and physical and cultural evidence of this remains today in the forms of burials, middens and other sites. The Aboriginal history has also been preserved through traditional knowledge and dreaming stories which have been passed down through the generations (WCC, c2012). Traditional stories tell of their arrival at the mouth of Lake Illawarra in canoes when the Ancestors were animals. They brought the Dharawal or Cabbage tree palm (*Livistona australis*) with them and are named for this sacred tree (NPWS, 2005).

Aboriginal communities first encountered Europeans in 1796.

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Red cedar (*Toona ciliata*) timber-getters operated in Illawarra escarpment (rain) forests as the first 'settler' industry in the area from the 1810s.

Dr Charles Throsby used the coastal Illawarra grasslands as cattle fodder in 1815 opening the area to European settlement. He focussed his herd behind the fresh water lagoon then situated at the junction of the current day Harbour and Smith Streets where he built a stockman's hut and cattle yards (DeTom Design, 2011, 17-18) and this was a meeting point for the first Illawarra land grantees in 1816 (WCC, c.2012).

The first settlement in the area now known as Wollongong was by Charles Throsby Smith, nephew of Throsby. He was one of the first to receive a land grant in the district and in 1822 was the first to settle on his 300 acre parcel. Smith's barn, located near Wollongong harbour, became the first school house in 1826 and then church building in 1828.

A military presence was established in the area now known as Port Kembla in 1826. They were relocated to the area now known as Wollongong in 1830. They were replaced by a local magistrate in 1833. This activity was focussed around the harbour. In 1833 the area's first school was established (ibid, 2011, 17-18).

In 1834 land owner Charles Throsby Smith (nephew of Dr. Charles Throsby)'s land was nominated as the site for the township to be known as Wollongong (ibid, 2011, 17-18).

In 1834 Surveyor General Major Thomas Mitchell surveyed the town with the centrepiece of land devoted to the Church of England. As there was no crown land, Thosby-Smith sold his land to the Government and it was transferred to the church. The surveyed town was bounded by streets to be known as Harbour, Keira, Smith and Crown Streets (ibid, 2011, 18). The original township was bounded by Crown, Keira, Smith and Harbour Streets which remain major streets in Wollongong today (WCC, c2012).

The Illawarra District Council was formed in 1843. In 1859, two municipal councils were formed: Municipality of Wollongong which was proclaimed on 22 February, and Central Illawarra Municipality which was formed on 19 August 1859 (this took in the area from Unanderra to Macquarie Rivulet). North Illawarra Municipality was formed on 26 October 1868 and included the area from Fairy Creek to Bellambi. In 1947 The City of Greater Wollongong was formed by the amalgamation of the City of Wollongong, the Shires of Bulli and Central Illawarra and the Municipality of North Illawarra, under the Local Government Act, 1919 in the NSW Government Gazette 104 of 12 September 1947.

1880s expansion and the Illawarra Railway Line:

Wollongong expanded in the 1880s and the railway which finally linked the area to Sydney, encouraged movement away from Mitchell's plan. The relative isolation of the Illawarra ended in 1888 when the railway was finally introduced to link the area to Sydney. The town was transformed from a focus on the wharves to one on the railway and began to expand away from St. Michael's central position. The rail allowed the area to ship milk, coal and coke to Sydney city, expanding Wollongong city's potential enormously. By the turn of the century a smelting works and number of coke oven batteries were opened and the town's population rose from 1635 in 1881 to 3545 in 1901 (an average growth rate of 3.9%)(McDonald, 1989, in Davies, 2003, 14).

Balgownie Migrant Hostel:

The buildings numbered 201, 204, and 210 are remnants of the Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel. The Hostel was constructed in late 1950 and 1951 as a migrant workers hostel to meet the demand for housing created by a Commonwealth government policy for increased immigration. At the same time around the rest of the state there were numerous other hostels built to meet the demands brought about by the immigration policy.

The Balgownie Migrant Hostel was built by Concrete Constructions Pty Ltd, the contract being let in October 1950 and occupied in December 1951.

The first Nissen Hut was designed by Canadian Lieutenant Colonel Peter Norman Nissen in 1916. In WWII the Nissen Hut design was modified and extensively used in military activities.

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The British Nissen Hut was copied by Americans in the Quonset hut and evolved to become quite different by the end of WWII.

The buildings numbered 201, 204 and 210 were part of a large complex of huts divided into blocks around common dining room and laundry buildings.

The hostel was later renamed Fairy Meadow Migrant Hostel and continued operation until 1982.

The property was purchased by the University of Wollongong for student accommodation in June 1987. About 1989 the building known as 201 a former dining hall was converted for use as the Science Centre..<sup>1</sup>

## Description

The follow description has been sourced from the NSW State Heritage Inventory:

### Nissen Huts and Quonset Huts

Building 201 - Former Migrant Hostel Kitchen/Dining Room, then a university science centre and currently conserved, refurbished and used as a child care facility. The building has three parts: a single storey weatherboard clad kitchen area with clerestory ventilation; a 100ft. x 41ft. Quonset hut with curved corrugated steel roof/walls; a gable roofed corrugated steel clad extension

Building 204 - Former Migrant hostel Laundry Exchange, next the university library/ bookstore and now conserved and ready for occupation by unspecified university services. The building has two parts. The western section is a 25 ft x 43 ft Nissen hut. The eastern section c.1980 concrete block and metal deck structure.

Building 210 - Former Migrant Hostel staff residence, now conserved, refurbished and awaiting occupation by unspecified university services. This is a 21ft. x 53 ft. Quonset hut.

The site has since been converted for use as a childcare centre and a University of Wollongong used bookshop.

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<sup>1</sup> *Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel*, Fairy Meadow. State Heritage Inventory Database No.: 5055121.





**Figure 7: View of the Nissen Hut.**



**Figure 8: View of the Nissen Hut utilised as a Bookshop.**





**Figure 9: Curtilage of the listing.**

**SHR.**

### 3.2.2 Setting

The former Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel is located within an open parkland setting. To the east of this item on the opposite side of Squires Way is Puckeys Estate Reserve, comprised of a She-oak forest, but also has sand dune and wetland areas, including areas along Para Creek. To the south opposite the playing fields are University of Wollongong Innovation Campus Student accommodation buildings. To the west and north of the site beyond the parkland setting are residential subdivisions.



**Figure 10: Puckeys Estate Reserve**



**Figure 11: Puckeys Estate Reserve with the Wollongong City skyline in the background.**





**Figure 12: View of the sportfields to the north of the site.**



**Figure 13: UNOW Student Accommodation.**





**Figure 14: An aerial view of the student accommodation to the south.**  
Source: Campus East Accommodation.



**Figure 15: Residential development to the north and west of the site.**

### 3.2.3 View Corridors

Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel is situated in open parkland and is visible from most angles. Due to the distance it is located from Squire's Road and the vegetation lining the road, the heritage item is not overtly visible from Squires Road. From Innovation Way within the University Campus, the subject site are visible in conjunction with one another see Figure 16 and Figure 17.

The site is visible to the south west of the site from different points outside of the former Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel, see Figure 18 to Figure 20. The area to the north of the item remains open parkland.



**Figure 16: View looking north along Innovation Way towards the heritage item (blue arrow) and the relationship with the site (red arrow).**  
Google Maps.



**Figure 17: View east along Innovation Way indicating the item (blue arrow) and site (red arrow).**





**Figure 18: View of the site from outside of the former Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel.**



**Figure 19: Looking west from the carpark outside of the former Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel.**



**Figure 20: Looking west from the carpark apex outside of the former Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel.**

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### 3.2.4 Significance

The State Heritage Inventory listing sheet (SHR listing) provides the following statement of significance for the site:

The Nissen hut (building 204) and the two Quonset huts (buildings 201 and 210) have historical significance as physical evidence of the Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel that was constructed at Fairy Meadow in 1950 and 1951 (and in use until 1982) as part of an Australia-wide post-World War II immigration program. This immigration program had wide ranging impacts upon the development and growth of Wollongong. The two Nissen huts and one Quonset are locally rare, as other buildings of the period have not survived at the other Wollongong migrant hostel sites set up at that time (in Unanderra and Berkeley). They are also rare on a Statewide basis as surviving Nissen and Quonset huts adapted for use at a former New South Wales migrant hostel site.

These structures have an historical association with author Mary Rose Liverani and with the community of migrants who started their Australian life at the hostel before moving on to become influential in the economic and cultural life of Wollongong.

The buildings have some technical significance relating to the adaptation of Nissen and Quonset huts which have been modified for use at a migrant hostel location.

The buildings and their location have social significance due to the community of past residents and their descendants who have strong emotional ties to the site and still live in the Wollongong district.’<sup>2</sup>

This statement is adopted for the purposes of this assessment.

## 4 THE PROPOSAL

It is proposed to construct a new ambulance station in the northwestern section of the University of Wollongong Innovation Campus. The new ambulance station to meet current building codes and the requirements of modern ambulance services.

The following works are proposed:

- A freestanding single storey ambulance station building with a skillion roof to facilitate the present-day requirements.
- Retain existing trees on boundary (remove one) new landscaping surrounding the station to screen it from the surrounding area.
- Two driveways, both off Innovation Way.
- Provide additional parking within the ambulance station area.
- The exterior is to be cladded in a dark grey and light grey Lysaght custom ORB Metal cladding.
- The roof is to be cladded in a light beige Lysaght custom ORB Metal cladding.

## 5 EFFECT OF WORK

### 5.1 Methods of Assessment

The following is a merit-based assessment. It does not consider compliance or otherwise with Council’s numerical controls except where non-compliance would result in a heritage impact.

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<sup>2</sup> *Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel*, Fairy Meadow. State Heritage Inventory Database No.: 5055121.

The following assessment is made with an understanding of the objectives and controls provided by the *Wollongong LEP 2009* and the *Wollongong Development Control Plan 2009*, in particularly Chapter E11: Heritage Conservation. Part 14 in this chapter contains the principal controls for development within the vicinity of a heritage item.

#### NSW Heritage Branch Model Questions

The assessment of heritage impacts has been undertaken in reference to the model questions given in the NSW Heritage Office's publication 'Statements of Heritage Impacts'.

Demolition of a building or structure	x
Minor partial demolition	x
Major partial demolition	x
Change of use	x
Minor additions	x
Major additions	x
<b>New development adjacent to a heritage item</b>	<b>✓</b>
Subdivision	x
Repainting	x
Re-roofing/re-cladding	x
New services	x
Fire upgrading	x
New landscape works and features	x
Tree removal or replacement	x
New signage	x

## 5.2 Effect of Work on Heritage Items in the Vicinity

The existing curtilage around heritage item in the vicinity is largely unaffected, allowing ongoing appreciation of heritage significance of the site. Visual impacts from the proposed development on the former Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel will be ameliorated to some extent by screening the proposed building by vegetation and setting the form of the proposed station back from Innovation Way to minimise visual encroachment on the curtilage of the item.

The visual impacts of the proposed development on identified heritage items in the vicinity of the proposed development are generally considered acceptable.



<b>Questions</b>	<b>Response</b>
<i>How is the impact of the new development on the heritage significance of the item or area to be minimised?</i>	<p>The proposed ambulance station is set back from the boundaries of Innovation Way to give as much landscaped curtilage as possible to the item diagonally opposite.</p> <p>The item will continue to be read and understood as remnants of the much larger former Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel. The open park space to the north, east and west to the site will be unimpeded.</p> <p>The simple material palette and neutral tones of the addition will help to ensure it does not dominate or detract from heritage items in the vicinity.</p>
<i>Why is the new development required to be adjacent to a heritage item?</i>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The proposed ambulance station can only be sited on certain locations owing to the requirements from NSW Health.</p>
<i>How does the curtilage allowed around the heritage item contribute to the retention of its heritage significance?</i>	<p>Open space to the north, east, and west of the item allows appreciation of the original migrant Huts from some distance.</p>
<i>How does the new development affect views to, and from, the heritage item? What has been done to minimise negative effects?</i>	<p>The proposed vegetation will further screen views towards the proposed Ambulance station from the former Balgownie Migrant Worker's Hostel buildings. The proposed ambulance station will also be partially screened from the item through the proposed boundary plantings around the site perimeter.</p> <p>Due to the low profile of the proposed Ambulance Station no views towards the former Balgownie Migrant Worker's Hostel buildings will be impacted. Views towards the northeastern part of the site from Innovation Way will still be extant, owing to the setback of the station from Innovation Way. Views from the other directions will remain unimpeded.</p>

<i>Is the development sited on any known, or potentially significant archaeological deposits? If so, have alternative sites been considered? Why were they rejected?</i>	No known archaeological deposits are located on site.
<i>Is the new development sympathetic to the heritage item? In what way (e.g. form, siting, proportions, design)?</i>	<p>The proposed Ambulance station is simple in form, finishes and detailing and, where visible, will clearly read as secondary, contemporary buildings in response to the parkland setting. This is an appropriate response given the character of the Migrant Hostel Complex.</p> <p>The design is consistent with other rural ambulance station designs across New South Wales.</p>
<i>Will the additions visually dominate the heritage item?</i>  <i>How has this been minimised?</i>	<p>No.</p> <p>The low profile of the station, coupled with the physical separation mitigates any visual domination of this item.</p>
<i>Will the public, and users of the item, still be able to view and appreciate its significance?</i>	Users of the items in the vicinity will be able to view and appreciate the item's significance. The

## 6 CONCLUSION

This Heritage Impact Statement has considered the proposal for construction of a new ambulance station building at No. 7-9 Squires Way, Fairy Meadow. The site is not listed as a heritage item but is located within the vicinity of a heritage item listed on the *Wollongong LEP 2009* and on the NSW State Heritage Register.

The existing curtilage around heritage item in the vicinity is largely unaffected, allowing ongoing appreciation of heritage significance of the site. Visual impacts from the proposed development on the former Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel will be ameliorated to some extent by screening the proposed building by vegetation and setting the form back from Innovation Way to minimise visual encroachment on the curtilage. The visual impacts of the proposed development on identified heritage items in the vicinity of the proposed development are generally considered acceptable.

The proposed works fulfil the requirements for works within the vicinity of Heritage Items as set out by the *Wollongong LEP 2009* and the *Wollongong DCP 2009*.