

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
Talbingo West Master Plan  
Lot 35 DP878862 Miles Franklin Drive, Talbingo  
Project No 23113 – June 2023



# VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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Talbingo West Master Plan

Lot 35 DP878862 Miles Franklin Drive,  
Talbingo

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PREPARED FOR

**Ironstone Development Group Pty Ltd.**

PREPARED BY

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## Document Tracking

Document Status		Report					
File Location		T:\Projects\23113 Talbingo West Masterplan, Miles Franklin Drive, Talbingo\VIA\VisualImpactAssessment_B					
Project No.		23113			Date		
					May 2023		
Rev No.	Author	Author			Approved		
		Name	Signature	Date	Name	Signature	Date
A	Draft Visual Impact Assessment	KP		May 2023	DN		May 2023
B	Visual Impact Assessment	KP		June 2023	DN		June 2023

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The visual impact assessment has been prepared by Site Plus Pty Ltd (Siteplus) on behalf of Ironstone Development Group Pty Ltd to form part of the Concept Development Application for the Talbingo West Master Plan. The assessment process was supported by the examination of:

- Aerial photography,
- Contour maps, and a
- Detailed field inspection.

View locations (viewpoints) from the locality surrounding the site were assessed at a local (within 2km of the project area) and sub-regional (between 2km – 5km) setting.

Talbingo lies about 40km south of Tumut, just off the Snowy Mountains Highway (Refer to Figure 1.3 – Regional Context Overview). Talbingo is a holiday destination with the attraction of water and winter sports.

The proposed development includes single and double storey detached dwellings, terrace houses, shop-top apartments with ground level commercial uses and a hotel. A primary objective of the proposed development is to provide short and long term tourist accommodation and a base for visitors to the Snowy Mountains areas to experience the outdoor environment, local cultural and community events and heritage sites.

This report responds to the development application requirements of Snowy Valleys Council to understand the visual impact of the proposed development with respect to the current built and urban form of Talbingo and its surrounding areas.

The visual impacts were assessed from the following viewpoints:

- Elevated areas to the south east of the project site
- Areas to the north west (northern bank of Tumut River) facing the project site
- Travelling on Snowy Mountains Highway
- Travelling on Miles Franklin Drive
- Areas within Talbingo Village

Locations with opportunities for views to the site were examined in relation to the existing built and landscape form and potential changes to this existing context by the proposed development.

Whilst opportunities exist to see glimpses of the site from a number of places in the local and sub-regional surrounds, the subject site is most visible from its immediate vicinity and from Boundary Road which runs along the northern banks of Tumut River.

The proposed development will visually impact on the area due to the change to new residential and commercial uses from the current landscape character of light cattle grazing and scattered remnant native trees. It is considered that the moderate visibility of the site set at the bottom of a hill and along a quiet road in addition to the design of the development (optimising existing topography and considering the rural surroundings) allows the proposal to complement and respect the existing and envisioned surrounding character of the western part of the Talbingo township. The establishment of native planting that will line streetscapes and gardens (as proposed in the OzArk Heritage report) will ameliorate initial visual impact. The visual impact of the completed development is likely to be acceptable for the area.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

Siteplus has been engaged to undertake a Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed development of West Talbingo Village described as Lot 35 DP 878862 Miles Franklin Drive as part of the Concept Development Application package. This report provides information on potential view impacts for future reference.

### **1.2 Project Overview**

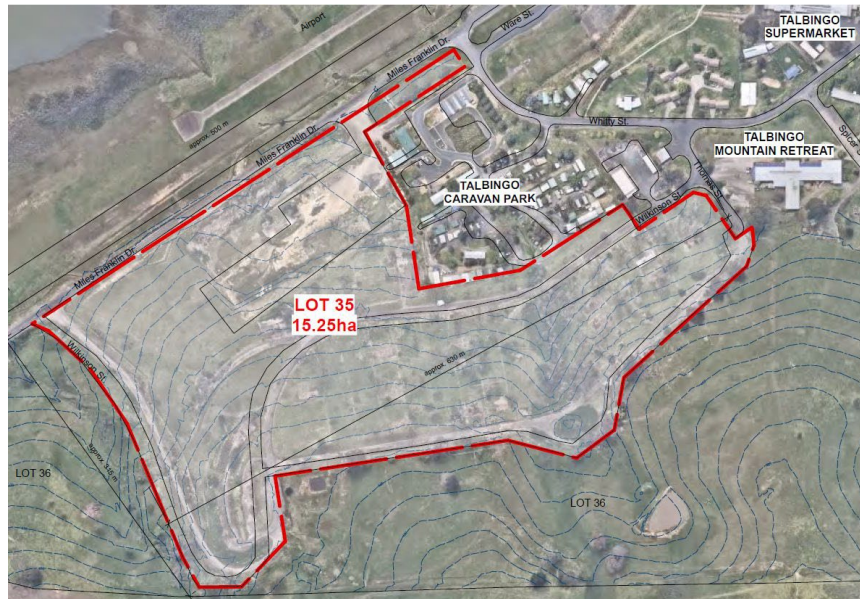
Ironstone Development Group proposes to develop the site (Lot 35 DP 878862) along Miles Franklin Drive, Talbingo in the Snowy Valleys Local Government Area. The land is currently vacant and used for light cattle grazing. The proposed development, to be established over time, will provide residential, mixed use and tourist accommodation within a vibrant village atmosphere and will assist in addressing anticipated future need for accommodation and services in the region as visitation by tourists and demand for holiday homes progressively increases. The proposal will also support local businesses and jobs and assist in incrementally addressing an ongoing decline in population which has occurred in the region recent years.

Being a significant development within a rural setting Snowy Valleys Council requested for a Visual Character Assessment to be prepared and to be submitted as part of the Concept Development Application.

This report provides information on the potential visual impact of the development of a tourist, mixed use and residential precinct. Maximum building heights have been set in response to the DCP requirement for pitched roofs. The hotel, shop- top housing and terrace houses are all three level buildings. The built forms are envisaged with their architectural features in response to their urban design position on the site, whether near the lake frontage or further up the hill. These heights have been established by the architect with a maximum building feature height of 18m for the hotel component, 11.5m for the mixed use component and 8.5m for the residential component as per the Master Plan Concept drawings prepared by Robert Harwood Architects.

The location of the subject site is shown in Figure 1.1 and the proposed layout (including maximum building height limits) of the site is shown in Figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.1 Subject Site**



Source: Robert Harwood Architects 2023

**Figure 1.2 Site Layout Plan. Noting maximum building roof feature heights (buildings are a maximum of three levels)**



Source: Robert Harwood Architects 2023

### 1.3 Site Context

The subject land is located at Lot 35 (15.25ha) Miles Franklin Drive 500m west of the existing Talbingo supermarket. The site is located approximately 3km to the west of the Snowy Mountains Highway.

The existing Talbingo township is located to the north-east with existing residential development of detached homes, holiday homes, lodges, a general store, petrol station and tourist amenities. Most buildings date from the late 1960s or are



peripheral developments of the original township 750m further north which was flooded to make way for the Jounama Pondage.

Talbingo Airstrip and Jounama Pondage are located to the north-west of the site. Talbingo Shopping Centre is located approximately 350m to the east of the site. Adjoining the site to the north west is the Talbingo Mountain Retreat (holiday accommodation). Open grazing land adjoins the subject site to the south and south-west.

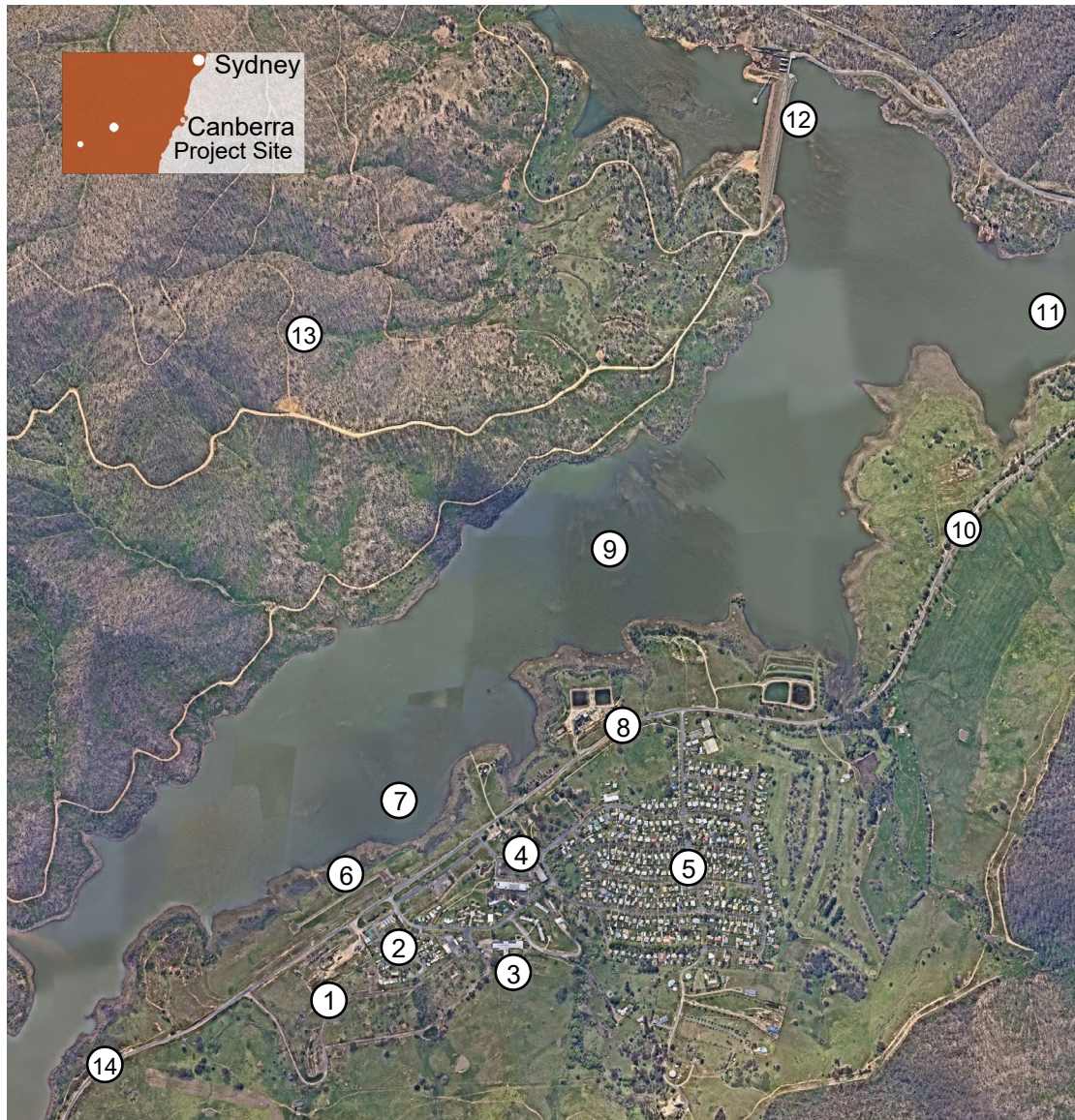
The subject site has a street frontage to Miles Franklin Drive to the north-west. Wilkinson Street and Yan Street cross through the subject site.

Talbingo is located approximately 80km south-west of Canberra and 320km south-west of Sydney.

The subject site is cleared with existing predominantly grassed vegetation and scattered remnant native trees. The site slopes towards Miles Franklin Drive, the airstrip and Jounama Pondage to the north-west.

Figure 1.3 shows the proposed site and its context.

Figure 1.3 Regional Context Overview



Source: [www.nearmap.com.au](http://www.nearmap.com.au) & Siteplus 2023

- |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Subject Site              | 8. Miles Franklin Drive        |
| 2. Talbingo Caravan Park     | 9. Tumut River                 |
| 3. Talbingo Mountain Retreat | 10. To Snowy Mountains Highway |
| 4. Supermarket               | 11. Jounama Creek              |
| 5. Talbingo Village          | 12. Jounama Dam                |
| 6. Talbingo Airstrip         | 13. Bago State Forest          |
| 7. Jounama Pondage           |                                |

## **2.0 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The visual impact assessment of the proposed future residential, mixed use and tourism development has been undertaken through observation, evaluation of the existing landscape character, and analysis of the visual impact which could be caused by the proposed development. Visual impacts relate to changes in the views experienced by people observing a landscape.

### **2.1 Purpose and Methodology**

This report determines the visual impacts of the proposed Concept Master Plan development and the anticipated change in the existing and envisioned site context and character.

It adopts the rationale that when the site is not visible, the visual impact is nil; when a small proportion of people view the site, the visual impact is lower than when a large proportion of people view the site; and where the site is viewed for short periods of time, the visual impact is relatively lower than when the site is viewed for extended periods of time.

The visual impact assessment methodology involves the following stages:

- Desktop study of surveys, aerial photographs, locality maps and literature reviews;
- Review of the proposed multi use development within their existing context;
- Identification of key viewpoints;
- Detailed field inspection and site analysis;
- Determination of scenic quality of the site;
- Determination of visual absorption capacity of the site;
- Determination of visual impact rating of the site; and
- Recommendation of mitigation measures.

### **2.2 Field Investigation**

A field investigation has been undertaken to enable Siteplus to develop a detailed understanding of the existing landscape character surrounding the site. A site visit to validate the results of the desktop study of potential viewpoints was conducted during February 2023. The objectives of the visits were:

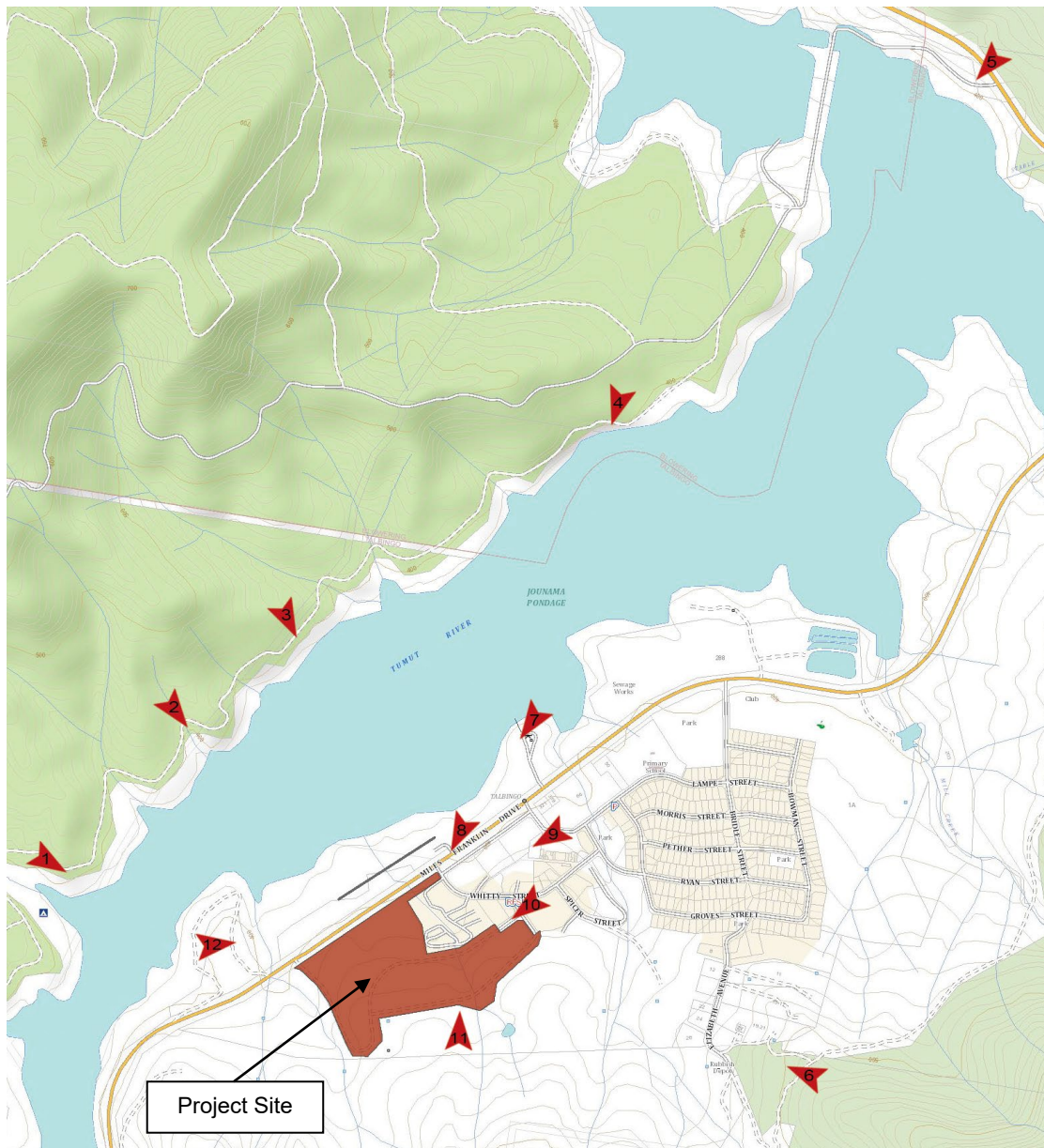
- Examination of existing landform, elevations and characteristics surrounding the proposed development site.



- Identification of existing locations (viewpoints) from where the proposed development can be seen.
- Gathering of photographs from the key viewpoints to assist in the assessment process.

View locations (viewpoints) from within the locality surrounding the site were assessed at the sub-regional and local settings. These viewpoints were identified on a map (Refer Figures 2.1). Images illustrating the views of the site are included in this report (Refer Figures 2.2 – 2.13).

**Figure 2.1 View Point Locations**



Source: [www. https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au](https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au)

**Table 2.1 Viewpoint Location Details**

Viewpoint Location Details	
Viewpoint Location	Direction of view
1 – Boundary Road	East
2 – Boundary Road	South East
3 – Boundary Road	South East
4 – Boundary Road	South West
5 – Yellowin Access Road	South West
6 – Extension of Elizabeth Avenue	North West
7 – Sewage Access Road (off Miles Franklin Drive)	South West
8 – Miles Franklin Drive	South West
9 – Footpath near Talbingo Shopping Centre	South West
10 – Wilkinson Street	South West
11 – Yan Street	North
12 – Track south west of airstrip	East

## 2

### 2.3 Scenic Quality

Descriptions of the scenic quality have been qualified in the following categories:

- **High** – Areas with a diversity of landscape elements or areas with visually prominent features of land form which may include escarpments, ridge lines, visually significant stands of vegetation, geological formations, rivers, beaches, parks, villages, city skylines or streetscape. Views from an elevated position are also usually of high scenic value.
- **Moderate** – Land form or built features which tend to be common throughout the area and are not outstanding in visual quality.
- **Low** – Areas with features of minimal diversity or variety.

The proposal has been designed to provide low density dwellings to abut the Talbingo Cavavan Park, the Talbingo Lodge and several streets with holiday home bungalows in streets to the south west of the Talbingo tourist centre shops.

The proposed development is designed to the configuration and topography of the site. The three level hotel and shoptop housing buildings are located at the low area of the site abutting the airstrip with a backdrop of higher land toward the rear open grazing lands. This allows these larger buildings to present a low, unobtrusive building profile viewed from the public and private domain. The one and two storey residential dwellings will be located further up the slope. Extensive space has been provisioned for soft landscaping to surround the building structures. The character of the existing township and surrounding landscape will not be diminished as the proposed development has been carefully designed to optimise site opportunities within

these rural surroundings and will aid its development and integration into surrounding character.

The scenic quality that is presented as a consequence of the proposed development can be reasonably considered as being acceptable for its context. This indicates that it has a **moderate scenic quality** rating.

### 2.4 Visual Absorption Capacity

Visual absorption capacity can be described as an estimation of a landscape's ability to absorb a new development without creating a significant change in visual character and quality. One of the main factors influencing visual absorption capacity is the contrast between existing landscape character and the proposed development. The visual absorption capacity can be qualified in the following categories:

- **High** – Existing landscape and built environment able to absorb development with no or minimal obstruction to significant views or desired character.
- **Moderate** – Existing landscape able to absorb some development with moderate obstruction to significant views and desired character.
- **Low** – Existing landscape unable to absorb development without a high degree of obstruction to significant views and desired landscape character.

The site of the proposed development is positioned in an area which has previous residential use for Snowy Hydro worker accommodation (Refer to OzArk Heritage Report) and is compatible with residential tourist and residential dwelling development close by. The size and bulk of the proposed development extends the historical evolution of the township from when the current development area was established subsequent to flooding of the historic towncentre in the 1960s. The proposed uses are therefore in keeping with the surrounding landscape character.

The subject site is located within a valley and is only visible from a few viewpoints along the northern banks of Tumut River within the local and sub-regional surround (within a 1km – 3km radius) and from within its immediate vicinity. The proposed development was carefully designed (taking existing topography into account), and integrates into the existing landscape.

Although the proposal will be visually notable from the existing surrounding development, it is considered to integrate into the area due to its positioning along the lower points and along the lower embankment of a hill. Proposed landscaping, sympathetic urban design of roads, pathways, lighting and built form, material and finishes will further help the development integrate with the surrounding context.

The proposed development would adapt into the area and would not negatively contrast with the existing and envisioned holiday destination character of the area. This indicates that the proposed mixed-use and residential development has a **moderate visual absorption capacity** rating.

## 2.5 Visual Impact Rating

The visual impact rating can be determined by comparing the scenic quality of a site with its visual absorption capacity. This cross referencing ensures that the viewer's emotional response to scenic quality is considered with respect to the capacity for change.

The ratings shown in the table below are described as:

- **High** – Developments within this rating are likely to have a significant visual impact upon the scenic quality of the surrounding landscape character.
- **Moderate** – Developments within this rating will have a visual impact upon a limited area at a local scale.
- **Low** – Developments within this rating will not have significant visual impact.

**Table 2.2 Visual Impact Rating**

Visual Impact Rating				
		Scenic Quality		
Visual Absorption Capacity		Low	Moderate	High
	Low	Moderate	High	High
	Moderate	Low	Moderate	High
	High	Low	Low	Moderate

From the matrix shown above the visual impact rating for the site is **moderate**. This means that the proposed development will be visible from the surrounding area, however, would integrate into the existing surrounding rural, residential and touristic area and would also be consistent and typical of the envisioned holiday destination character.

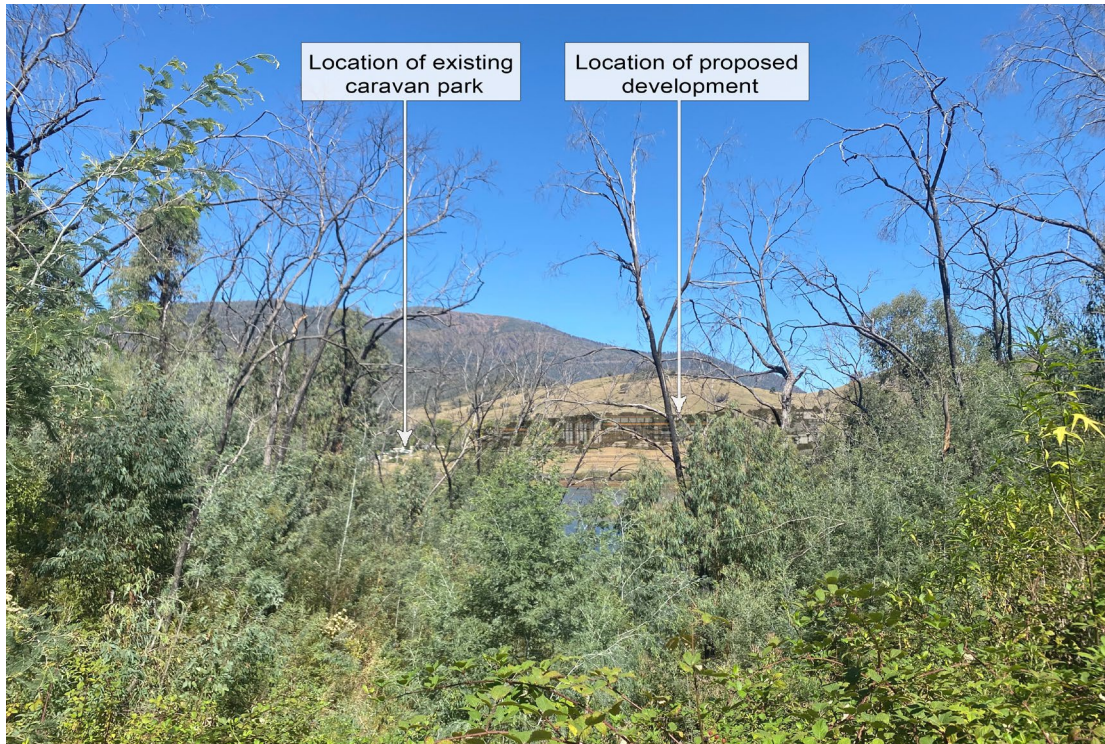
In conjunction with the proposed landscaping and other mitigation measures, as described in this report, the visual impact will not be significant for the area.



## 2.6 Viewpoint Images

**Figure 2.2 – Viewpoint 1**

View from Boundary Road along the northern bank of Tumut River looking south east towards project area. The existing Talbingo caravan park and Talbingo airstrip can be seen in the distance. The proposed future development will be visible behind the airstrip in the distance.





**Figure 2.3 – Viewpoint 2**

View from Boundary Road along the northern bank of Tumut River looking south east towards project area. The proposed development will be visible in the distance, however, it will integrate with in with existing landform as it is positioned along the lower part of the hill and does not project over the existing ridgeline. Proposed tree and shrub planting within the site and other mitigation measures (as described in section 4.0 of this report) will complement the proposed development and will assist the development to integrate with into the surrounding character.



**Figure 2.4 - Viewpoint 3**

View from Boundary Road along the northern bank of Tumut River looking south east towards project area. The proposed development will be visible in the distance through existing vegetation, however, it will integrate with in with existing development and landform. Landscaping within the site and other design measures (as described in section 4.0 of this report) will achieve the objective for the proposed development to successfully integrate with the surrounding area.





**Figure 2.5 - Viewpoint 4**

View from Boundary Road along the northern bank of Tumut River looking south west towards project area. The proposed development is hardly visible in the distance and integrates with the surrounding landform.



**Figure 2.6 - Viewpoint 5**

View from Yellowin Access Road (near Jounama Dam / Hydro Power Station) looking south west towards the subject site. The proposed development is hardly visible in the distance and integrates in with the surrounding character and landform.



**Figure 2.7 - Viewpoint 6**

View from an elevated position (Extension of Elizabeth Avenue) looking north west towards Tumut River and the area of the proposed development. The proposed development is not visible from this viewpoint as it is positioned below ridge line at a lower elevation.





**Figure 2.8 - Viewpoint 7**

View from the sewage access road (off Miles Franklin Drive) looking south west towards subject site. The proposed development will be visible in the distance, however, it will integrate with existing landform and existing development. Landscaping within the site and other mitigation measures (as described in section 4.0 of this report) will enable the proposed development to successfully integrate with the surrounding area.



**Figure 2.9 - Viewpoint 8**

View from Miles Franklin Drive looking south west along the road towards the subject site. The proposed development is clearly visible from this viewpoint. The image below demonstrates that the proposed development integrates with the existing character and landform of the area. Landscaping within the site and other mitigation measures (as described in section 4.0 of this report) will enable the proposed development to successfully integrate with the surrounding area.





**Figure 2.10 - Viewpoint 9**

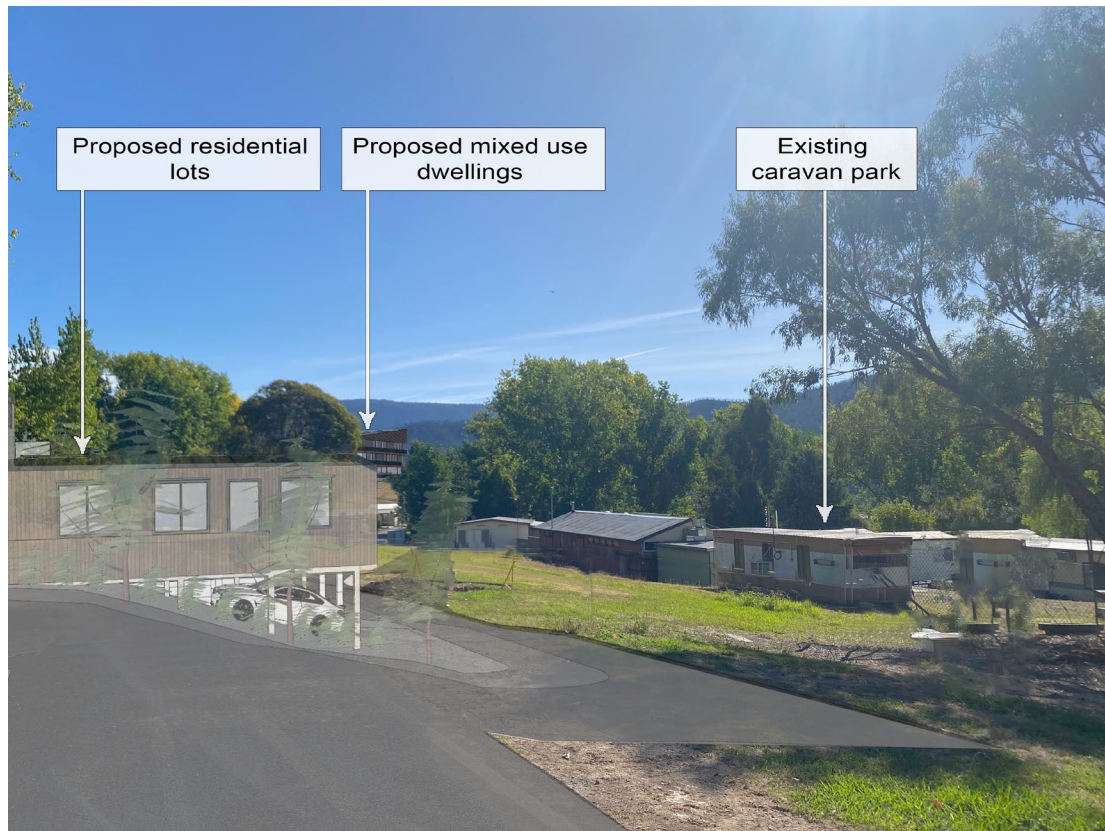
View from the footpath near Talbingo Shopping Centre looking south west towards subject site. The proposed development is visible in the background. It does, however, integrate with the existing character and landform of the area. Landscaping within the site and other mitigation measures (as described in section 4.0 of this report) will enable the proposed development to successfully integrate with the surrounding area.





**Figure 2.11 - Viewpoint 10**

View from Wilkinson Street looking south west through the residential component and towards the mixed use component of the proposed development. The image below demonstrates that the proposed development integrates with the existing character and landform of the area. Landscaping within the site and other mitigation measures (as described in section 4.0 of this report) will enable the proposed development to successfully integrate with the surrounding area.



**Figure 2.12 - Viewpoint 11**

View from Yan Street looking north through proposed residential lots towards Tumut River. The image below demonstrates that the proposed development integrates with the existing character and landform of the area. Landscaping within the site and other mitigation measures (as described in section 4.0 of this report) will enable the proposed development to successfully integrate with the surrounding area.



**Figure 2.13 - Viewpoint 12**

View from track south west of Talbingo airstrip looking east towards subject site. The proposed development is clearly visible from this viewpoint. The image below demonstrates that the proposed development integrates with the existing character and landform of the area. Landscaping within the site and other mitigation measures (as described in section 4.0 of this report) will enable the proposed development to successfully integrate with the surrounding area.





### 3.0 VISUAL IMPACT AT NIGHT

The lighting for security or other relevant purposes introduces an additional impact into the assessment of the proposed multi use and residential development. Lighting sources of existing street lights are already present in the area. The lighting of the proposed development will comply with the Australian Standard for lighting in commercial and residential areas and will aim to avoid impact on adjoining residents.

### 4.0 MITIGATION

The visual impact rating of the proposed development has been identified as **moderate**. Mitigation measures have been proposed by the architects to ensure the impacts are kept to a minimum including:

- The proposed development includes suitable landscaping in accordance with the existing character of European streetscape patterns and introduction of indigenous planting where appropriate.
- Building and urban design materials reflect textures and colours found in the immediate Snowy Valley context.
- Lighting design that minimises light spillage. Illuminated signage controls to be included in the site specific DCP.
- The design is sensitively scaled with massing and heights as outlined in a site specific DCP.
- The design demonstrates a concern for the surroundings with lower rise development positioned closer to the existing residential uses and a hotel building set against a backdrop of rising topography.
- The existing topography of the site is to be substantially retained and site features such as watercourses have been integrated into the design strategy.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The Visual Impact Assessment has:

- Reviewed available documentation (ie aerals, maps and the potential future development site);
- Analysed the potential future development site and its context;
- Assessed existing views in relation to the existing character;
- Assessed the scenic quality of the proposed multi use development from various viewpoints;
- Assessed the visual absorption capacity of the proposed multi use development from various views;
- Assessed the visual impact rating of the proposed multi use development from various views;
- Identified mitigation measures.

The findings of this Visual Impact Assessment report are that the proposed multi use development has a moderate Scenic Quality rating and moderate Visual Absorption Capacity rating which results in an overall **moderate** Visual Impact Rating.

This rating means the proposed development will be visible from a number of viewing locations. The most sensitive viewing locations will be views from areas directly surrounding the site. However, views towards the subject site would be of a development that is sensitively scaled in terms of its surroundings with lower rise development positioned closer to the existing residential uses and a hotel building set against a backdrop of rising topography. The shoptop housing components are moderately scaled, as are the terrace homes located towards the western boundary which are positioned well away from existing development. The visual impact of the proposal, located in this area, is consistent in character with the envisioned holiday destination character, and does not reduce the visual amenity of the area. It is considered in conjunction with the proposed mitigation measures the visual impact will be acceptable for Talbingo area.