Allam Property Group

M

82 Chapmans Road, Tuncurry

LGA: Great Lakes

Archaeological Due Diligence Assessment

17 August 2023

McCARDLE CULTURAL HERITAGE PTY LTD

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MCCARDLE

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Report No: J202358 DD	
Approved by:	Penny McCardle
Position:	Director
Signed:	
Date:	17 August 2023

This report has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services described in the contract or agreement between McCardle Cultural Heritage Pty Ltd (MCH), ACN: 104 590 141, ABN: 89 104 590 141, and the proponent. The report relies upon data, surveys, measurements and specific times and conditions specified herein. Any findings, conclusions or recommendations only apply to the aforementioned circumstances and no greater reliance should be assumed or drawn by the proponent. Furthermore, the report has been prepared solely for use by the proponent and MCH accepts no responsibility for its use by other parties.

CONTENTS

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

McCardle Cultural Heritage Pty Ltd (MCH) has been engaged by Allam Property Group to undertake an Archaeological Due Diligence Assessment for the proposed residential development located at 82 Chapmans Road, Tuncurry.

The project of a Quaternary geological formation consisting of gravel, sands, clay, 'Waterloo Rock', marine and freshwater deposits (Newcastle 1:250,000 Geological Map Series, 1966). There is an absence of raw materials used for stone tool manufacturing within the project area and surrounds. There are no soils data sets available for the project area. In terms of fresh water sources, the project area is located approximately 330 metres east of Wallamba River (7th order) and no other fresh water creeks are in the vicinity of the project area. As water is necessary for survival, the project area may be considered under-resourced in terms of water availability and was unlikely to have been suitable for camping. Rather it was the areas in closer proximity to Rivers and reliable fresh water sources that were favoured for camping. The project area has been cleared a number of times, undergone at least one ploughing event for improved pasture, grazing and the construction of two dams and a shed in the far northern end as well as bushfires.

A search of the AHIMS register has identified 9 known Aboriginal sites currently recorded within two kilometres of the project area and include 9 shell middens with artefacts and one shell midden (Figure 2.4). There are no registered sites or Aboriginal Places within the project area. Considering the AHIMS results, local and regional archaeological investigations as well as the environmental context, given that fresh water was necessary for survival and the project area is located over 300 metres from a major river and there are no other fresh water sources in the surrounding area, indicates the project area and immediate surrounds may have been used no more than hunting and gathering opportunities rather that large-scale long-term camping. Evidence of such past Aboriginal land uses manifest in the archaeological record as low-density shell middens and/or artefact scatters and isolated finds.

The project area, consisting of a low-lying flat landform, was surveyed as one survey unit based on landform elements (following McDonald *et al* 1984). The survey identified that the project area had been previously cleared, there was evidence of ploughing (eroded ridges and furrows), a shed constructed on fill in the far northern end of the project area and a dam located in the middle of the western open paddock. Additionally, machinery tracks from slashing and geotechnical excavated test pits exposed sections of the ground surface.

Being very low-lying, the project area was waterlogged and subject to regular waterlogging and localised flooding following rain., Vegetation consisted of grass in the open paddocks, a row of regrowth trees and scrub that separates the western and eastern open paddocks. Additionally, a re-growth open woodland is located in the south western part of the project area. There are no suitable elevated landforms or a reliable fresh water source nearby that would have supported camping by past Aboriginal people.

As no sites or PADs were identified in the project area, there are no impacts to the archaeological record, and the following recommendations are provided:

1) The persons responsible for the management of onsite works will ensure that all staff, contractors and others involved in construction and maintenance related activities are made aware of the statutory legislation protecting sites and places of significance. Of particular importance is the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2019, under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974;

2) An Unexpected Finds Procedure (Appendix B) will be implemented during all works,

3) Should any Aboriginal objects be uncovered during works, all work will cease in that location immediately, the Unexpected Finds Procedure followed and the Environmental Line contacted.

GLOSSARY

Aboriginal Place: are locations that have been recognised by the Minister (and gazetted under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*) as having special cultural significance to the Aboriginal community. An Aboriginal Place may or may not include archaeological materials.

Aboriginal Site: an Aboriginal site is the location of one or more Aboriginal archaeological objects, including flaked stone artefacts, midden shell, grinding grooves, archaeological deposits, scarred trees etc.

Artefact: any object that is physically modified by humans.

Artefact scatter: a collection of artefacts scattered across the surface of the ground (also referred to as open camp sites).

Assemblage: a collection of artefacts associated by a particular place or time, assumed generated by a single group of people, and can comprise different artefact types.

Backed artefact: a stone tool where the margin of a flake is retouched at a steep angle and that margin is opposite a sharp edge.

Background scatter: a term used to describe low density scatter of isolated finds that are distributed across the landscape without any obvious focal point.

Core: a chunk of stone from which flakes are removed and will have one or more negative flake scars but no positive flake scars. The core itself can be shaped into a tool or used as a source of flakes to be formed into tools.

Debitage: small pieces of stone debris that break off during the manufacturing of stone tools. These are usually considered waste and are the by-product of production (also referred to as flake piece).

Flake: any piece of stone struck off a core and has a number of characteristics including ring cracks showing where the hammer hit the core and a bulb of percussion. May be used as a tool with no further working, may be retouched or serve as a platform for further reduction.

Flaked piece/waste flake: an unmodified and unused flake, usually the by-product of tool manufacture or core preparation (also referred to as debitage).

Harm: is defined as an act that may destroy, deface or damage an Aboriginal object or place. In relation to an object, this means the movement or removal of an object from the land in which it has been situated

In situ: archaeological items are said to be "in situ" when they are found in the location where they were last deposited.

Retouched flake: a flake that has been flaked again in a manner that modified the edge for the purpose of resharpening that edge.

Typology: the systematic organization of artefacts into types on the basis of shared attributes.

ACRONYMS

ACHA	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment
ACHMP	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan
AHIMS	Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System
AHIP	Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit

AHIMS SITE ACRONYMS

ACD	Aboriginal ceremonial and dreaming
AFT	Artefact (stone, bone, shell, glass, ceramic and metal)
ARG	Aboriginal resource and gathering
ART	Art (pigment or engraving)
BOM	Non-human bone and organic material
BUR	Burial
CFT	Conflict site
CMR	Ceremonial ring (stone or earth)
ETM	Earth mound
FSH	Fish trap
GDG	Grinding groove
HAB	Habitation structure
HTH	Hearth
OCQ	Ochre quarry
PAD	Potential archaeological deposit.
SHL	Shell
STA	Stone arrangement
STQ	Stone quarry
TRE	Modified tree (carved or scarred)
WTR	Water hole

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

McCardle Cultural Heritage Pty Ltd (MCH) has been engaged by Allam Property Group to undertake an Archaeological Due Diligence Assessment for the proposed residential development located at 82 Chapmans Road, Tuncurry.

The assessment has been undertaken to meet the Heritage NSW, Department of Premier & Cabinet Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW and the brief. The purpose of a due diligence assessment is to assist proponents to exercise due diligence when carrying out activities that may harm Aboriginal objects or Aboriginal places and to determine whether that should apply for a consent to harm Aboriginal objects or Places through an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIP).

The purpose of this due diligence report is to demonstrate that all reasonable and practicable measures have been undertaken to prevent harm to any Aboriginal objects and/or place within the project area. This report has met the Heritage NSW Due Diligence requirements and considered the relevant environmental and archaeological information, the project land condition, the nature of the proposed development activity and impacts, as well as preparing appropriate recommendations.

1.2 THE PROJECT AREA

The project area is located at 82 Chapmans Road, Tuncurry. Including Lot 11 DP615229, the location of the project area is shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2.

Figure 1.1 Location of the project area

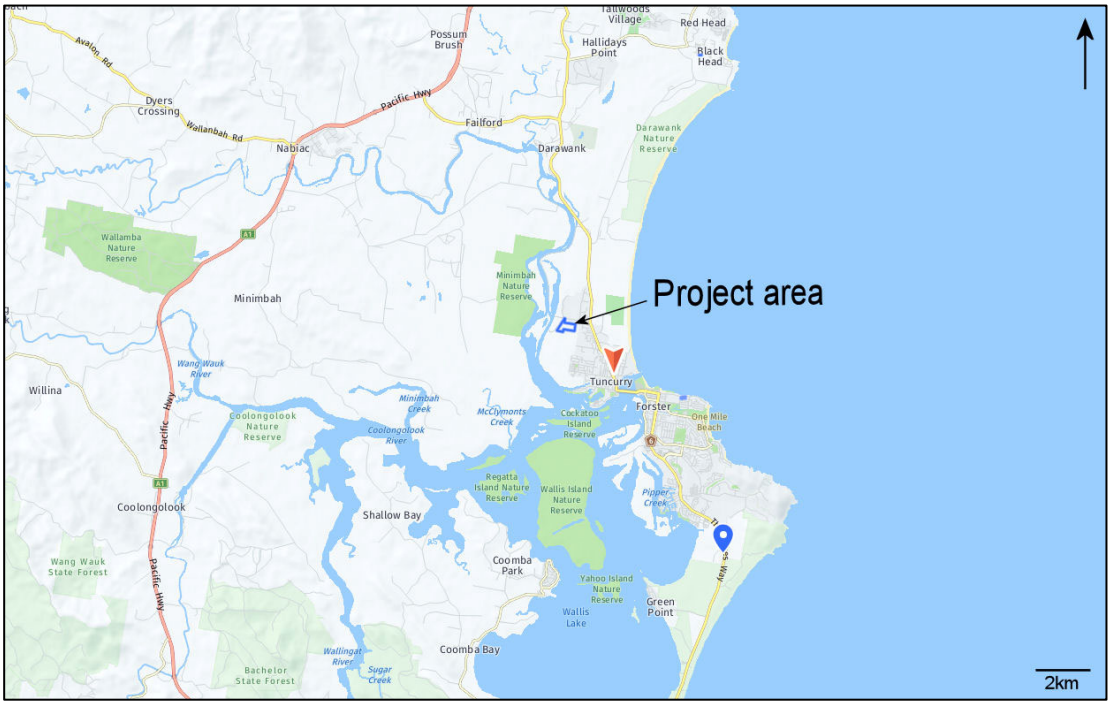


Figure 1.2 Aerial photograph of the project area (Nearmap 2023)

1.3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The project is a proposed residential development. Works typically associated with such developments include clearing and demolition of existing structures, site remediation, bulk earthworks including construction of dwellings and roads, services reticulation: WW, PW, NBN, electrical and gas and landscaping.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE DUE DILIIGENCE ASSESSMENT

The objectives and primary tasks of this due diligence assessment were to:

- undertake a search of the Aboriginal Heritage Management System (AHIMS) and other relative registers;
- undertake research into the environmental and archaeological contexts of the project area;
- develop a predictive model of site location for the project area;
- undertake a field survey of the project area;
- assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on any identified Aboriginal sites or potential archaeological deposits (PADs) identified within the project area;
- assess the significance of any identified Aboriginal objects or sites identified within the project area;
- complete and submit site cards to AHIMS for any Aboriginal sites identified; and
- provide appropriate recommendations.

1.5 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The following overview of the legislative framework, is provided solely for information purposes for the client, and should not be interpreted as legal advice. MCH will not be liable for any actions taken by any person, body or group as a result of this general overview and MCH recommends that specific legal advice be obtained from a qualified legal practitioner prior to any action being taken as a result of the general summary below.

Land managers are required to consider the effects of their activities or proposed development on the environment under several pieces of legislation. Although there are a number of Acts and regulations protecting Aboriginal heritage, including places, sites and objects, within NSW, the three main ones include:

- National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974, as amended)
- National Parks and Wildlife Regulation (2019)
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979)

1.5.1 NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE ACT (1974, AS AMENDED)

The National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974), Amended 2019, is the primary legislation for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in New South Wales. The NPW Act protects Aboriginal heritage (places, sites and objects) within NSW and the protection of Aboriginal heritage is outlined in s86 of the Act, as follows:

- "A person must not harm or desecrate an object that the person knows is an Aboriginal object" s86(1)
- "A person must not harm an Aboriginal object" s86(2)
- "A person must not harm or desecrate an Aboriginal place" s86(4)

Penalties apply for harming an Aboriginal object, site or place. The penalty for knowingly harming an Aboriginal object (s86[1]) and/or an Aboriginal place (s86[4]) is up to $550,000 for an individual and/or imprisonment for 2 years; and in the case of a corporation the penalty is up to $1.1 million. The penalty for a strict liability offence (s86[2]) is up to $110,000 for an individual and $220,000 for a corporation.

Harm under the National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974, as amended) is defined as any act that destroys defaces or damages the object, moves the object from the land on which it has been situated, causes or permits the object to be harmed. However, it is a defence from prosecution if the proponent can demonstrate that;

1) harm was authorised under an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) (and the permit was properly followed), or
2) the proponent exercised due diligence in respect to Aboriginal heritage.

The 'due diligence' defence (s87[2]), states that if a person or company has applied due diligence to determine that no Aboriginal object, site or place was likely to be harmed as a result of the activities proposed for the Project Area, then liability from prosecution under the NPW Act 1974 will be removed or mitigated if it later transpires that an Aboriginal object, site or place was harmed. If any Aboriginal objects are identified during the activity, then works should cease in that area and

Heritage NSW, Department of Premier & Cabinet notified (DECCW 2010:13). The due diligence defence does not allow for continuing harm or as defence to s.86(1) or (4).

The archaeological due diligence assessment and report has been carried out in compliance with the Heritage NSW (DECCW 2010) Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW.

1.5.2 NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE REGULATION (2019)

The National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2019 provides a framework for undertaking activities and exercising due diligence in respect to Aboriginal heritage. The Regulation (201909) recognises various due diligence codes of practice, including the Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW, but it also outlines procedures for Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) applications and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements (ACHCRs); amongst other regulatory processes.

1.5.3 ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & ASSESSMENT ACT 1979 (EP&A ACT)

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) establishes the statutory framework for planning and environmental assessment in NSW and the implementation of the EP&A Act is the responsibility of the Minister for Planning, statutory authorities and local councils. The EP&A Act sets up a planning structure that requires developers (individuals or companies) to consider the environmental impacts of new projects. Under this Act, cultural heritage is considered to be a part of the environment. It provides for the identification, protection and management of heritage items through inclusion of these items into schedules off planning instruments, such as Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) or Regional Environmental Plans (REPs). This Act requires that Aboriginal cultural heritage and the possible impacts to Aboriginal heritage that development may have, are formally considered in land-use planning and development approval processes.

This Act has three main parts of direct relevance to Aboriginal cultural heritage. Namely, Part 3 which governs the preparation of planning instruments, Part 4 which relates to development assessment provisions for local government (consent) authorities and Part 5 which relates to activity approvals by governing (determining) authorities. Planning decisions within Local Government Areas (LGAs) are guided by Local Environmental Plans (LEPs). Each LGA is required to develop and maintain an LEP that includes Aboriginal and historical heritage items which are protected under the EP&A Act and the NPW Act. The Project Area is located within the Great Lakes LGA and falls under the 2014 LEP.

1.5.4 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

The project area is located within the Great Lakes LGA. Schedule 5 of the LEP 2014 details the included environmental heritage items covered by the plan. No Aboriginal sites or places are identified within proximity to the project area.

1.6 ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A due diligence assessment relates to the physical identification of Aboriginal objects, sites and places. Community consultation is only required once Aboriginal objects, sites or places have been identified and an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) is deemed necessary. Section 5.2 of the

Heritage NSW (DECCW 2010) Due Diligence Code of Practice for the protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW specifically states that;

> *'consultation with the Aboriginal community is not a formal requirement of the due diligence process' (2010:8).*

1.7 QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATOR

Dr. Penny McCardle: Principal Archaeologist & Forensic Anthropologist has 22 years experience in Indigenous archaeological assessments, excavation, research, reporting, analysis and consultation and 19 years in skeletal identification, biological profiling and skeletal trauma identification for NPWS, NSW Police and the NSW Department of Forensic Medicine.

- BA (Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology): Indigenous archaeology, University of New England 1999
- Hons (Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology): Physical Anthropology, University of New England 2001
- Forensic Anthropology Course, University of New England 2003
- Armed Forces Institute of Pathology Forensic Anthropology Course, Ashburn, VA 2008
- Analysis of Bone trauma and Pseudo-Trauma in Suspected Violent Death Course, Erie College, Pennsylvania, 2009
- Documenting Scenes of War and Human Rights Violations. Institute for International Criminal Investigations, 2018
- PhD, University of Newcastle, 2019

1.8 REPORT STRUCTURE

The report includes Section 1 which outlines the project, Section 2 presents the environmental and archaeological context, Section 3 provides the results and discussion and Section 4 presents the Impact Assessment, Section 5 discusses the mitigation measures and Section 6 provides the management recommendations.

2 ENVIRONMENTAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The archaeological due diligence process and assessment requires that the available knowledge and information in relation to the environmental and archaeological contexts are considered. The purpose of this is to assist in identifying whether Aboriginal objects, sites or places are likely to be present within the project area based on archaeological predictive modelling and in what condition they may be found in given the environmental impacts, both natural and anthropogenic.

2.1 LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Past site location and land use are closely linked to the environment including the landform, geology, geomorphology, soils, waterways and associated resources. The environmental context is important to identify potential factors relating to past Aboriginal land use patterns.

The project of a Quaternary geological formation consisting of gravel, sands, clay, 'Waterloo Rock', marine and freshwater deposits (Newcastle 1:250,000 Geological Map Series, 1966). There is an absence of raw materials used for stone tool manufacturing within the project rea and surrounds. There are no soils data sets available for the project area.

In terms of fresh water sources, the project area is located approximately 330 metres east of Wallamba River (7th order) and no other fresh water creeks are in the vicinity of the project area. As water is necessary for survival, the project area may be considered under-resourced in terms of water availability and was unlikely to have been suitable for camping. Rather it was the areas in closer proximity to Rivers and reliable fresh water sources that were favoured for camping.

In relation to land uses and associated impacts, Heritage NSW (DECCW 2010) defines disturbed lands as land that has been the subject of human activity that has changed the lands' surface and, or subsurface, these changes being changes that remain clear and observable. This definition is based on the types of disturbances classified in The Australian Soil and Land Survey Field Handbook (CSIRO 2010) and Table 2.1 provides a scale formulated by the CSIRO of the levels of disturbances and their classification, which will assist in determining the level of disturbance across the project area and its impact on potential cultural material that may be present.

Table 2.1 Land use scale (CSIRO 2010)

Minor disturbance		Moderate disturbance		Major disturbance	
Cleared and/or grazed at some time, but apparently never ploughed		Cleared and/or grazed at some time, with ploughing also attested		Severe disturbance to natural soil profiles; complete-to-near complete topsoil loss/disturbance	
0	No effective disturbance; natural	3	Extensive clearing (e.g., poisoning and ringbarking	6	Cultivation: grain fed
1	No effective disturbance other than grazed by hoofed animals	4	Complete clearing: pasture native or improved, but never cultivated	7	Cultivation: irrigated, past and present

2	Limited clearing (e.g., selected logging)	5	Complete clearing: pasture native or improved, cultivated at some stage	8	Highly disturbed: e.g., quarry, road works, mining, landfill, urban

Regionally, following European settlement of the area in the 1820s, the regional landscape has been subjected to a range of different modifactory activities including extensive logging and clearing, agricultural cultivation (ploughing), pastoral grazing, residential developments and other construction works. The associated high degree of landscape disturbance has resulted in the alteration of large tracts of land and the cultural materials contained within these areas.

Based on historic aerial photography and Nearmap (2019 – 2023), the project area has been subject to a range of both moderate and high landuses disturbances and impacts. As show in Figure 2.1, by 1937 the project area has been cleared and primarily used for pastoral purposes (grazing), involving the wholesale clearance of native vegetation, at least one ploughing event for the introduction of pasture grass, and re-growth trees located through the middle and south western section. No further aerial photographs are available until 2019 and as such land uses during those 82 years remain unknown but are likely to have included continued ploughing and grazing which was typical of that era.

Figure 2.1 1937 aerial photograph of the project area (ICMS Map 2301)

The aerial photograph of 2019 (Figure 2.2), shows that the part of the project area had been cleared again with two dams in the project area and thicker vegetation in the south west and a structure in the far north.

Figure 2.2 February 2019 aerial photograph of the project area (Nearmap)

Figure 2.3 shows that in later 2019, part of the project area was impacted by bush fires in the south western section and the eastern side. The 2023 aerial photograph (Figure 1.2) shows no additional changes to the landscape. These landuses and how they impact on the landscape and deposits are discussed below.

Figure 2.3 November 2019 aerial photograph of the project area (Nearmap)

Early vegetation clearing included the uprooting of trees by chaining which disturbed or destroyed that may be present near, or underneath trees and vegetation (Wood 1982). Alternatively, timber was harvested manually, using axes and hand saws and generally, only the trees that were wanted for timber were felled (selective logging). However, after the 1950s, there was an increase in mechanisation in the logging industry, and clear-felling became widely practised whereby the best logs were removed for processing, but nearly every other tree was bulldozed and burnt, and had increased impacts to the landscape.

Farming and agricultural activities also disturbed the landscape. Pastoralism activities result in disturbances due to vegetation clearance and the trampling and compaction of grazed areas which accelerate the natural processes of sheet and gully erosion, which in turn can cause the horizontal and lateral displacement of artefacts. Furthermore, grazing by hoofed animals can affect the archaeological record due to the displacement and breakage of artefacts resulting from trampling (Yorston et al 1990). Pastoral land uses are also closely linked to alterations in the landscape due to the construction of dams, fence lines and associated structures. As a sub-set of agricultural land use, ploughing typically disturbs the top 10-35 centimetres of topsoil (Koettig 1986, Personal obs.) depending on the method and machinery used during the process. Ploughing increases the occurrence of erosion and can also result in the direct horizontal (up to 18 metres per plough run) and vertical movement of artefacts, thus causing artificial changes in artefact densities and distributions (e.g., Roper 1976; Odell and Cowan 1987; Lewarch and O'Brien 1981). Ploughing activities are typically evidenced through 'ridges and furrows' however a lengthy cessation in ploughing activities dictates that these features may no longer be apparent on the surface.

Excavation works required for developments, including but not limited to business, residential, industrial, works depots and associated infrastructure and utilities, require excavation, cut and fill methods. These direct impacts to the land and associated cultural materials that may be present are easy to see and understand. Any form of construction or resource exploitation that involves the removal of, relocation of or compaction or soils sediments or minerals, requires the modification of the topography, thus displacing and/or destroying any cultural materials that may have been present (Wood 1982). Theses significant disturbances have results in none of the original topsoils remining in situ.

In terms of everyday land uses, vehicular movements on sites have been well documented and based on several experiments (DeBloois, Green and Wylie 1974, Gallagher 1978), have shown that vehicle movements over an archaeological site are extremely destructive to the site through compaction and movement, thus altering the spatial relationship and location of the artefacts. Based on general observations it is expected that the creation of dirt tracks for vehicle access would also result in the loss of vegetation and therefore will enhance erosion and the associated relocation of cultural materials.

Additional disturbances would have derived from natural processes. The patterns of deposition and erosion within a locality can influence the formation and/or destruction of archaeological sites. Within an environment where the rate of erosion is generally high, artefacts deposited in such an environment will be eroded downslope after being abandoned (Waters 2000; Waters and Kuehn 1996). If erosion occurs after cultural material is deposited, it will disturb or destroy sections, or all of, archaeological sites even if they were initially in a good state of preservation. The more frequent and severe the episodes of erosional events the more likely it is that the archaeological record in that area will be disturbed or destroyed.

Additionally, bioturbation processes such as the redistribution and mixing of cultural deposits occurs as a result of burrowing and mounding by earthworms, ants and other species of burrowing

animals. Artefacts can move downwards through root holes as well as through sorting and settling due to gravity, and translocation can also occur as a result of tree falls (Balek 2002; Peacock and Fant 2002; Canti 2003; Stein 2003:). Experiments to assess the degree that bioturbation can affect material have been undertaken. In abandoned cultivated fields in South Carolina, Michie (summarised in Balek 2002:42-43) found that over a 100-year period 35% of shell fragments that had been previously used to fertilise the fields were found between 15 and 60 centimetres below the surface, inferred to be as a result of bioturbation and gravity. The ways in which earthworms can affect cultural deposits includes: creating false artefact concentrations and stratigraphy (for example biomantles) by moving artefacts downwards through the soil; indirectly displacing larger artefacts as they burrow through the soil; burying artefacts through the deposition of faecal material on the surface; and blurring natural and cultural boundaries. They can also destroy remains of seeds and organic materials as they eat them (Fowler et al. 2004:462; Stein 1983:280-281).

The project area is located within an environment that provided limited resources. Without a fresh water supply to enable camping, the project area may have been utilised for more transitory activities such as travel and hunting and gathering on the way to reliable water and associated subsistence resources. Such past Aboriginal land uses are manifest in the archaeological record as a background scatter of discarded artefacts (such as isolated artefacts and/or very low-density artefact scatters). In relation to modern alterations to the landscape, the previous large-scale clearing, ploughing, grazing, dam construction, shed in the far north and associated infrastructure, dams, fencing and tracks can be expected to have had moderate to high impacts upon the archaeological record at those locations.

2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

A review of the archaeological literature of the region, and more specifically the local area and the results of an AHIMS search provide essential contextual information for the current assessment.

While the Aboriginal occupation of Australia is currently accepted as beginning approximately 65,000 years ago (Clarkson et al. 2017), the Aboriginal occupation of the Hunter Valley has been dated to approximately 20,000 years (Brayshaw 1987:100). Radiocarbon dates obtained from charcoal at a site in Glennies Creek, north of Singleton, found that artefacts within the deposit dated to approximately 20,200 years before present (BP). Despite this Pleistocene period site, most of the archaeology in the Hunter region has been dated to the Holocene period.

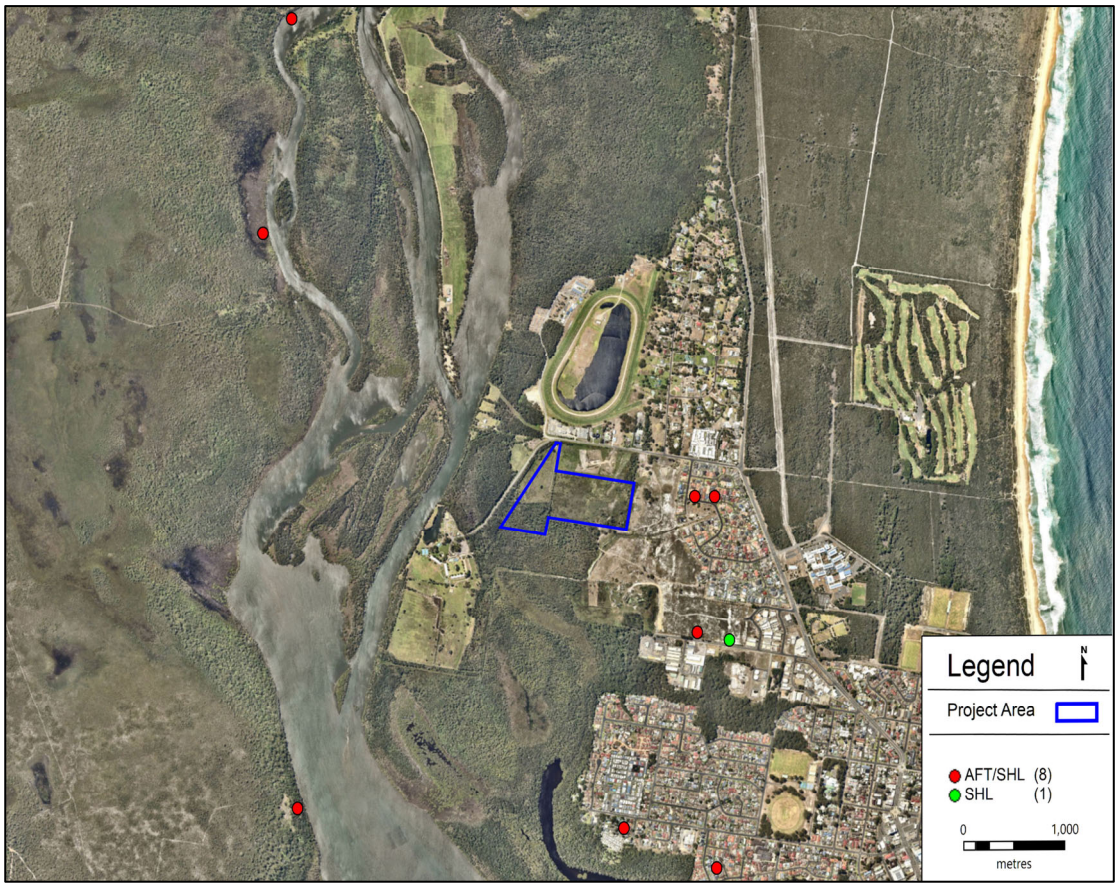
There are many types of evidence past Aboriginal occupation across the landscape which form the archaeological record of a region. Places which show evidence of Aboriginal occupation of an area are archaeological sites. These sites contain numerous site features, and some contain more than one features. The Aboriginal heritage information management system (AHIMS) provides information of the known archaeological sites in NSW.

2.2.1 ABORIGINAL HERITAGE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (AHIMS)

It must be noted that there are many limitations with an AHIMS search including incorrect site coordinates due to errors and changing of computer systems at AHIMS over the years that failed to correctly translate old coordinate systems to new systems. Secondly, AHIMS will only provide up to 110 sites per search, thus limiting the search area surrounding the project area and limiting a more comprehensive analysis and finally, few sites have been updated on the AHIMS register to notify if they have been subject to a s87 or s90 and as such what sites remain in the local area and what sites have been destroyed, to assist in determining the cumulative impacts, is unknown.

A search of the AHIMS register (Appendix A) has identified 9 known Aboriginal sites currently recorded within two kilometres of the project area and include 9 shell middens with artefacts and one shell midden (Figure 2.4). There are no registered sites or Aboriginal Places within the project area.

Figure 2.4 Location of AHIMS sites



2.2.2 HERITAGE REGISTER LISTINGS

The National Heritage List, the Commonwealth Heritage List, the Australian Heritage Database, Australia's National Heritage List, The National Trust Heritage Register State Heritage Inventory the and the relevant Local Environmental Plan have no Aboriginal objects, sites or places listed.

2.2.3 SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The most relevant investigations from across the regional area indicate differing results and observations based on surface visibility and exposure, alterations to the landscape (including mining, industrial and residential development), proximity to water sources and geomorphology. The following summary is derived from a review of the most relevant investigations (Dean-Jones 1988; L. R. Fife and Associates 1995; Therin 2000, 2004; Collins 2002; Roberts & Yettica 2004; MCH 2008, 2017,2021a-d; Doo-wa-kee et al 2011; Artefact 2017; ERM 2013; RPS 2021) and provides a regional archaeological context in terms of site location and distribution.

Archaeological assessments have been conducted in the Forster area since as early as 1995 but did not always consistently record all data about sites, and information gaps mean that it is not always possible to accurately assess key features such as distance to water and landform. The earlier predictive models utilised for these assessments cited middens, artefact scatters, and isolated artefacts as those site types most likely to occur in the Forster area. These predictions were based on known site types previously identified in the wider surrounding region and an understanding of how landforms were utilised in the Aboriginal past. Undisturbed dunes were regularly identified as having archaeological sensitivity, with the potential for intact subsurface deposits to be present, specifically locations in close proximity to reliable water and the ocean and associated subsistance resources. Raw material types utilised for artefacts included mudstone, silcrete and chert. The majority of sites were subject to past disturbance, such as vegetation clearance, ploughing, fencing, stock grazing, road construction, tracks, sand mining and erosion. Vegetation clearance significantly contributed to the loss of culturally modified trees across an area, although one scarred tree (a swamp mahogany with one scar) was identified during the 1995 assessment of Seven Mile Beach at Forster by Collins. It was also noted that the visibility of surface expressions of artefacts and midden deposits were opportunistic, in that past disturbances such as erosional forces increased the visibility that made their identification during survey more likely. The general rule was that a greater amount of cultural material was likely to be present in related subsurface contexts, where there was adequate stability and in close proximity to water and food resources. Based on information gained from previous studies within a five kilometre radius of the project area, it can be expected that:

- the likelihood of locating sites increases with proximity to water and the ocean;
- the likelihood of finding large sites increases markedly with proximity to water and the ocean;
- a wide variety of site types are represented in the project area with open campsites and isolated artefacts by far the most common;
- lithic artefacts are primarily manufactured from mudstone and silcrete with a variety of other raw materials also utilised but in smaller proportions;
- sites in proximity to ephemeral water sources or located in the vicinity of headwaters of upper tributaries (1st order streams) have a sparse distribution and density and contain little more than a background scatter;
- sites located in the vicinity of the upper reaches of minor tributaries (2nd order streams) also have a relatively sparse distribution and density and may represent evidence of localised one-off behaviour;
- sites located in the vicinity of the lower reaches of tributaries (3rd order creeks) have an increased distribution and density and contain evidence that may represent repeated occupation or concentration of activity;
- sites located in the vicinity of major tributaries (4th and 5th order streams/rivers) have the highest distribution and densities. These sites tend to be extensive and complex in landscapes with permanent and reliable water and contain evidence representative of concentrated activity; and
- sites located within close vicinity at the confluence of any order stream may be a focus of activity and may contain a relatively higher artefact distribution and density.

These findings are consistent with models developed for the area.

2.3 SYNTHESIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

When assessing sites in terms of distance to water, in the Hunter Valley there is a clear pattern of past land uses whereby the majority of high-density sites are situated within 50 metres of reliable fresh water (high order) and reduce in both numbers and densities with a decrease in stream order. Thus, it is apparent that archaeological sites are most concentrated in number and size within 50 metres of reliable fresh water.

As is to be expected, the majority of sites within 50 metres of water are present on elevated landforms in association with creek lines whilst slopes and crest/ridge formations are also common site locations, although with an absence of reliable fresh water, were used for more transitory activities. Due to the importance of water in the grinding process, it is not surprising that sites of this type are situated close to water. Based on information gained from previous studies, both regionally and locally, and the environmental context, within a two-kilometre radius of our project area, it can be expected that:

- the likelihood of locating sites increases with proximity to available water;
- the likelihood of finding large sites of high densities increases markedly with proximity to reliable water and decreases with a reduction in stream order;
- main site types are shell middens, artefacts scatters and isolated finds;
- a variety of stone artefact types will be located though the majority will be flakes, flaked pieces and debitage;
- a variety of raw materials utilised in stone tool manufacture will be represented, though the majority of sites will be predominated by mudstone and silcrete;
- flakes, broken flakes and flaked pieces are the most common artefact types recorded;
- the likelihood of finding scarred trees is dependent on the level of clearing in an area; and
- the majority of sites will be subject to disturbances including human and natural.

2.4 MODELS OF PAST ABORIGINAL LAND USE

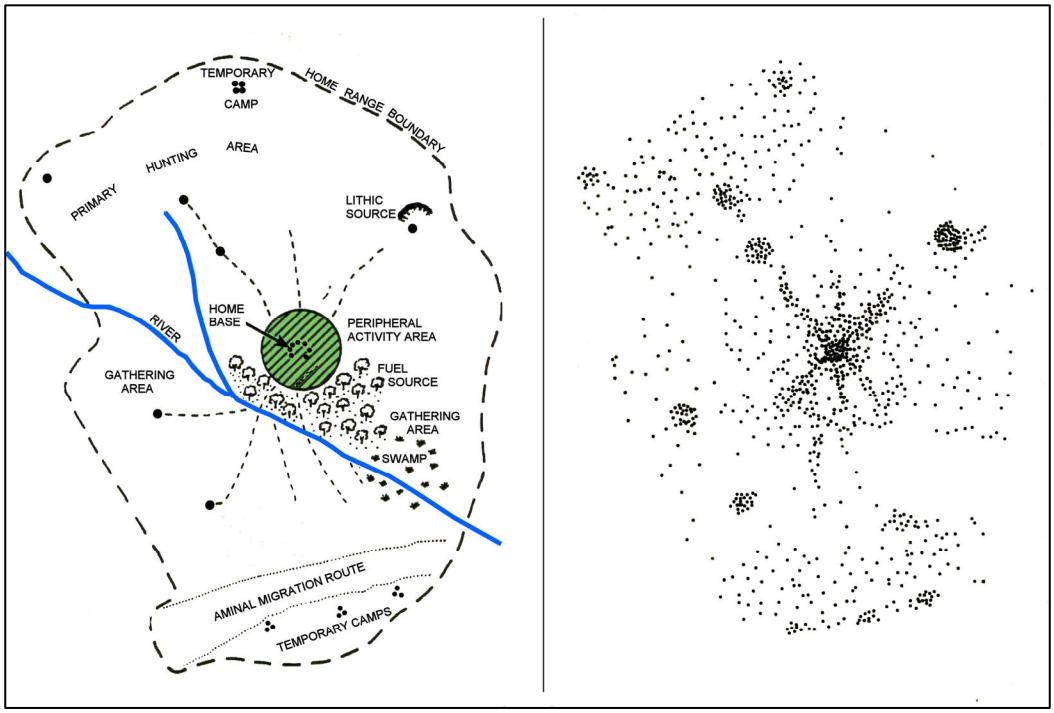
The main aim of this project is to attempt to define both the nature and extent of occupation across the area. As a result, the nature of the analysis will focus on both the landform units and sites. The purpose of this strategy is to highlight any variations between sites and associated assemblages, landforms and resources across the area treating assemblages as a continuous scatter of cultural material across the landscape. In doing this, it is possible to identify variation across the landscape, landforms and assemblages that correspond with variation in the general patterns of landscape use and occupation. Thus, the nature of activities and occupation can be identified through the analysis of stone artefact distributions across a landscape. A general model of forager settlement patterning in the archaeological record has been established by Foley (1981). This model distinguishes the residential 'home base' site with peripheral "activity locations".

Basically, the home base is the focus of attention and many activities and the activity locations are situated away from the home base and are the focus of specific activities (such as tool manufacturing). This pattern is illustrated in Figure 2.5. Home base sites generally occur in areas with good access to a wide range of resources (reliable water, raw materials etc). The degree of environmental reliability, such as reliable water and subsistence resources, may influence the rate of return to sites and hence the complexity of evidence. Home base sites generally show a greater

diversity of artefacts and raw material types (which represent a greater array of activities performed at the site and immediate area). Activity locations occur within the foraging radius of a home base camp (approximately 10 km); (Renfrew and Bahn 1991).

Based on the premise that these sites served as a focus of a specific activity, they will show a low diversity in artefacts and are not likely to contain features reflecting a base camp (such as hearths). However, it is also possible that the location of certain activities cannot be predicted or identified, adding to the increased dispersal of cultural material across the landscape. If people were opting to carry stone tools during hunting and gathering journeys throughout the area rather than manufacturing tools at task locations, an increased number of used tools should be recovered from low density and dispersed assemblages.

Figure 2.5 Foley's model (L) and its manifestation in the archaeological record (R), (Foley 1981).



2.5 MODEL OF OCCUPATION FOR THE LOCAL AREA

Work throughout NSW has aimed to understand the nature of Aboriginal occupation and to identify the nature of past Aboriginal land uses. This theme often aims to identify and explain archaeological patterning in site type, content and distribution. General theories have been developed outlining the relationship between land use patterns and the resulting archaeological evidence. A number of models developed for the region have been reviewed (McBryde 1976; Koettig 1994; Dean-Jones and Mitchell 1993; Rich 1995; Kuskie and Kamminga 2000; McDonald and White 2010). All models state that the primary requirements for repeated, concentrated or permanent occupation is access to reliable fresh water. Brief and possible repeated occupation may be represented in areas that have unreliable access to ephemeral water sources, however, these areas will not contain high archaeological evidence or potential (Goodwin 1999).

Kuskie and Kamminga (2000) established a general model of occupation strategies based primarily upon ethnographic research. Used as a starting point, it makes a general set of factors that are

consistent with other studies (e.g., McDonald and White 2010, Nelson 1991). The model distinguishes between short-term or extended long-term occupation and makes some predictions about the likely location of different foraging and settlement activities. Combining this information with a review of assemblage contents from a sample of excavated sites within the region, a baseline of settlement activities may be determined (Barton 2001).

The model provides a number of archaeological expectations that may be tested. For example, the presence of features requiring a considerable labour investment (e.g., stone-lined ovens or heat-treatment pits) are likely to occur at places where occupation occurred for extended periods of time. The presence of grindstones is also a reliable indicator of low mobility and extended occupation as seed grinding requires a large investment of time and effort (Cane 1989). In most ethnographic examples, seed grinding is an activity that takes place over an entire day to provide adequate energetic returns (Cane 1989; Edwards and O'Connell 1995).

Where group mobility was high and campsites frequently shifted throughout the landscape, artefact assemblages are not expected to contain elements such as grindstones, heat-treatment pits, ovens and the diversity of implements frequently discarded at places of extended residential occupation. It may also have been the case that the location of particular activities could not be predicted by tool users, adding to the increased low-density scattering of artefacts over the landscape. Also, if individuals were opting to carry a number of stone tools during hunting and gathering activities and maintaining these tools rather than manufacturing new tools at each task location, the ratio of used tools to unworn flakes in these assemblages should be high. Table 2.2 has been adapted from Kuskie and Kamminga (2000).

Table 2.2 Site descriptions (Kuskie & Kamminga 2000).

Occupation Pattern	Activity Location	Proximity to water	Proximity to food	Archaeological expectations
Transitory movement	all landscape zones	not important	not important	• assemblages of low density & diversity • evidence of tool maintenance & repair • evidence for stone knapping
Hunting &/or gathering without camping	all landscape zones	not important	near food resources	• assemblages of low density & diversity • evidence of tool maintenance & repair • evidence for stone knapping • high frequency of used tools
Camping by small groups	associated with permanent & temporary water	near (within 100m)	near food resources	• assemblages of moderate density & diversity • evidence of tool maintenance & repair • evidence for stone knapping & hearths
Nuclear family base camp	level or gently undulating ground	near reliable source (within 50m)	near food resources	• assemblages of high density &diversity • evidence of tool maintenance, repair, casual knapping • evidence for stone knapping • heat treatment pits, stone lined ovens • grindstones
Community base camp	level or gently undulating ground	near reliable source (within 50m)	near food resources	• assemblages of high density & diversity • evidence of tool maintenance, repair, casual knapping • evidence for stone knapping • heat treatment pits, stone lined ovens • grindstones & ochre • large area >100sqm with isolated camp sites

2.6 PREDICTIVE MODEL FOR THE PROJECT AREA

An archaeological predictive model is established to identify areas of archaeological sensitivity so it can be used as a basis for the planning and management of Aboriginal heritage. It involves reviewing existing literature to identify basic site distribution patters. These patterns are then modified according to the specific environment of the project area to form a predictive model for site location within the current project area. A sampling strategy is then used to test the model and the results of the survey used to confirm, refute or modify the model.

Land-systems and environmental factors are commonly used factors in predictive modelling based on the assumption that they provide distinctive sets of constraints and opportunities that influenced past Aboriginal land use patterns. As land use patterns may differ between zones (due to different environmental conditions), this may result in the physical manifestation of different spatial distributions and forms of archaeological evidence. The predictive model presented here is based on landform units, previous archaeological assessments conducted within the region, distribution of known sites and site densities and traditional Aboriginal land use patterns. Also taken into consideration are land use impacts (both natural and anthropomorphic) that may have resulted in a disturbed landscape and associated archaeological record.

Considering the AHIMS results, local and regional archaeological investigations as well as the environmental context, given that fresh water was necessary for survival and the project area is located over 300 metres from a major river and there are no other fresh water sources in the surrounding area, indicates the project area and immediate surrounds may have been used no more than hunting and gathering opportunities rather that large-scale long-term camping. Evidence of such past Aboriginal land uses manifest in the archaeological record as low-density shell middens and/or artefact scatters and isolated finds.

Non-indigenous settlement and land uses have significantly impacted the investigation area, most noticeably from clearing numerous times, ploughing for pasture grass, grazing as well as shed and dam construction and natural factors (bushfires). These land uses would have impacted on the archaeological record by removing any cultural materials that may have been present in the project area.

The presence of past Aboriginal people and their use of the landscape are undeniable and evidence is seen in the cultural materials that have survived both natural and human landuses since colonisation of the area in the 1800's. Whilst it is clear Aboriginal people lived across the landscape, the evidence will have been impacted and/or destroyed through such land uses.

The site types that may have been be present within the project area prior to excavation works for the house, concrete slab at the back and drainage along the southern border within the project area, include very low-density shell middens, artefact scatters and, or isolated artefacts, all of which are described below.

- **Artefact scatters**

Also described as open campsites, artefact scatters and open sites, these deposits have been defined at two or more stone artefacts within 50 metres of each other and will include archaeological remains such as stone artefacts and may be found in association with camping where other evidence may be present such as shell, hearths, stone lined fire places and/or heat treatment pits. These sites are usually identified as surface scatters of artefacts in areas where ground surface visibility is increased due to lack of vegetation. Erosion, agricultural activities (such as ploughing, grazing) and access ways can also expose surface campsites. Artefact scatters may represent evidence of;

- Large camp sites, where everyday activities such as habitation, maintenance of stone or wooden tools, manufacturing of such tools, management of raw materials, preparation and consumption of food and storage of tools has occurred;
- Medium/small camp sites, where activities such as minimal tool manufacturing occurred;
- Hunting and/or gathering events;
- Other events spatially separated from a camp site, or
- Transitory movement through the landscape.

Artefact scatters are a common site type in the locality and the broader region. There is potential for very low-density artefact scatters to occur within the project area However, there is also the potential for such sites to be impacted on through past land uses.

- **Isolated finds**

Isolated artefacts are usually identified in areas where ground surface visibility is increased due to lack of vegetation. Erosion, agricultural activities (such as ploughing) and access ways can also expose surface artefacts. Isolated finds may represent evidence of;

- Hunting and/or gathering events; or
- Transitory movement through the landscape.

Isolated finds are a common site type in the locality and the broarder region. There is potential for isolated artefacts to occur across the project area and across all landforms. There is also the potential for such sites to be impacted on through past land uses.

- **Shell middens**

Middens result from seasonal camping and exploitation of oysters and freshwater mussels. Extended camping results in the deposition of a feature that is distinguishable from a natural shell layer. This includes the inclusion of burnt or blackened shell, non-molluscan fauna, dis-articulated bivalves, charcoal, burnt wood, hearth stones, stone artefacts and stratification. Middens are usually found on the coast and on the shorelines of estuaries, lakes and inland rivers. Although sometimes identified on ridges, these middens tend to be less extensive than those close to the resource base. Smaller lenses of shell deposition also occur close to water. Shell middens may represent evidence of;

- Large camp sites, where everyday activities such as habitation, maintenance of stone or wooden tools, manufacturing of such tools, management of raw materials, preparation and consumption of food and storage of tools has occurred;
- Medium/small camp sites, where activities such as a small meal was cooked and/or consumed;
- Hunting and/or gathering events;
- Other events spatially separated from a camp site, or
- Transitory movement through the landscape.

Artefact scatters are a common site type in the locality and the broader region. There is potential for very low-density shell middens to occur within the project area However, there is also the potential for such sites to be impacted on through past land uses.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To comply with the due diligence requirement that a visual inspection of the project area be undertaken, an archaeological survey across the project area was undertaken by MCH archaeologist Dr. Penny McCardle on 17th August 2023. The survey focused on areas of high ground surface visibility and exposures (erosional features, tracks, cleared areas).

3.1 SURVEY UNITS

The project area, consisting of a low-lying flat landform, was surveyed as one survey unit based on landform elements (following McDonald *et al* 1984). The survey identified that the project area had been previously cleared, there was evidence of ploughing (eroded ridges and furrows), a shed constructed on fill in the far northern end of the project area and a dam located in the middle of the western open paddock. Additionally, machinery tracks from slashing and geotechnical excavated test pits exposed sections of the ground surface. None of the exposed soils from the geotechnical test pits spread across the project area included any shall midden material or stone artefacts.

Being very low-lying, the project area was waterlogged and subject to regular waterlogging and localised flooding following rain., Vegetation consisted of grass in the open paddocks, a row of regrowth trees and scrub that separates the western and eastern open paddocks. Additionally, a re-growth open woodland is located in the south western part of the project area. There are no suitable elevated landforms or a reliable fresh water source nearby that would have supported camping by past Aboriginal people. Examples of the project area are provided in Figures 3.1 to 3.5.

Figure 3.1 Far northern part of the project area facing south

Figure 3.2 Middle of the western open paddock facing south

Figure 3.3 Middle of the western open paddock facing north

Figure 3.4 Middle of the western open woodland regrowth area

Figure 3.5 Western end of the eastern open paddock facing east

The effectiveness of the survey for both obtrusive and unobtrusive archaeological sites, is determined though ground surface visibility and exposures across the project area. Ground surface visibility is used to define the degree to which the surface of the ground can be observed and can be influenced by natural processes, such as the nature and type of vegetation cover, erosion, or land use practices (e.g., ploughing or grading). Existing exposures (visible at the time of the survey) are described in terms of the natural erosion processes responsible for its creation and any other contributing or primary processes (e.g., ploughing, stocking, machinery cutting, vehicle tracks, any ground disturbances). As shown in Table 3.1 the total effective coverage for the project area is 8,586m², or 5.25% reflecting the low surface visibility due to vegetation cover.

Table 3.1 Effective coverage for the investigation area

SU	Landform	Area (m2)	Vis. %	Exp. %	Exposure type	Previous disturbances	Present disturbances	Limiting visibility factors	Effective coverage (m2)
1	low-lying	163,550	15%	35%	erosion, tracks, geotech pits	clearing, ploughing, grazing, shed, dam	erosion, geotech pits, machinery tracks	vegetation	8,586
Totals		**163,550**							**8,586**
								Effective coverage %	**5.25%**

The level and nature of the effective survey coverage is considered satisfactory to provide an effective assessment of the project area. The coverage was comprehensive for obtrusive site types (e.g., grinding grooves and scarred trees) but somewhat limited for the less obtrusive surface stone artefact sites by surface visibility constraints that included vegetation cover and minimal exposures.

In relation to land uses and the associated impacts on the landscape and any cultural materials that may have been present, the project area has been subject to clearing, ploughing, grazing, dam and shed construction as well as geotechnical excavation test pits, and as indicated in Table 3.2, these disturbances range from moderate to high.

Table 3.2 Land use scale (CSIRO 2010) and land uses in the project area

Minor disturbance		Project area	Moderate disturbance		Project area	Major disturbance		Project area
0	No effective disturbance; natural		3	Extensive clearing (e.g., poisoning and ringbarking		6	Cultivation: grain fed	
1	No effective disturbance other than grazed by hoofed animals		4	Complete clearing: pasture native or improved, but never cultivated	yes	7	Cultivation: irrigated, past and present	
2	Limited clearing (e.g., selected logging)		5	Complete clearing: pasture native or improved, cultivated at some stage		8	Highly disturbed: e.g., quarry, road works, mining, landfill, urban	small parts

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY

No sites or areas of potential archaeological sensitivity were identified in the project areas during the survey and this is due to the impacts from previous land uses across the project area (clearing, ploughing, grazing). Additionally, being located at a distance from reliable fresh water and resources (over 300 metres), indicates the project area may have been utilised for more transitory activities rather than camping. Evidence of such past Aboriginal land uses manifests in the archaeological

record as a background scatter of discarded artefacts, which would have been disturbed through past land uses.

In view of the predictive modelling and the results obtained from the effective coverage and disturbance rating, it is concluded that the survey provides a valid basis for determining the probable impacts of the proposal and formulating recommendations for the project. The survey results demonstrate the absence of Aboriginal objects within the project area. The results are consistent with those obtained from other studies in the local area in similar environmental contexts. The results indicate a number of possible past Aboriginal land use within the project area;

- No Aboriginal occupation
- Ground disturbances having disturbed or removed evidence

3.3 CONCLUSION

It is well established that proximity to water was an important factor in past occupation of the area, with sites reducing in number significantly away from water with most sites located within 50 metres of the tributaries. The project area is located over 300 metres form Wallamba River (7th order) and associated subsistence resources. The project area, being very low-lying and prone to waterlogging with no elevated landforms present, was unsuitable for camping but may have been utilised for transitory movement or hunting/gathering activities only.

In relation to modern alterations to the landscape, previous large-scale clearing, at least one major ploughing event, grazing and construction works associated with the dam, house and geotechnical investigations can be expected to have had moderate to high impacts upon the archaeological record. Natural factors such as erosion and bush fires would also have impacted on the archaeological record, all of which would have displaced or destroyed cultural materials and the likelihood of in situ cultural materials is very low.

4 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

The archaeological record is a non-renewable resource that is affected by many processes and activities. As outlined in Section 2 and Section 3, the various natural processes and human activities have impacted on archaeological deposits through both site formation and taphonomic processes.

4.1 IMPACTS

The Heritage NSW Code of Practice for the Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales (2010:21) describes impacts to be rated as follows:

1) Type of harm: is either direct, indirect or none
2) Degree of harm is defined as either total, partial or none
3) Consequence of harm is defined as either total loss, partial loss, or no loss of value

As no sites or PADs were identified, there are no impacts on the archaeological record.

5 MITIGATION AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Specific strategies, as outlined through the Heritage NSW Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales (DECCW 2010b), the Guide to Investigating, Assessing and Reporting on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in NSW (OEH 2011), and the Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW (DECCW 2010c), are considered below for the management of the identified site(s) within the project area.

5.1 CONSERVATION/PROTECTION

Conservation is the first avenue and is suitable for all sites, especially those considered high archaeological significance and/or cultural significance. Conservation includes the processes of looking after an indigenous site or place so as to retain its significance and managed in a way that is consistent with the nature of peoples' attachment to them.

As no sites or PADs were identified conservation/protection is not required.

5.2 FURTHER INVESTIGATION

An Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) is no longer required to undertake test excavations (providing the excavations are in accordance with the Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigations in NSW). Subsurface testing is appropriate when a PAD has been identified, and it can be demonstrated that sub-surface Aboriginal objects with potential conservation value have a high probability of being present, and that the area cannot be substantially avoided by the proposed activity.

As no sites or PADs were identified further investigations are not justified.

5.3 AHIP

If harm will occur to an Aboriginal object or Place, then an AHIP should be sought from Heritage NSW, Department of Premier & Cabinet as a defence to that harm. If a systematic excavation of the known site could provide benefits and information for the Aboriginal community and/or archaeological study of past Aboriginal occupation, a salvage program, and, or community collection, may be an appropriate strategy to enable the salvage of cultural objects.

As no sites or PADs were identified an AHIP is not required.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 GENERAL

1) The persons responsible for the management of onsite works will ensure that all staff, contractors and others involved in construction and maintenance related activities are made aware of the statutory legislation protecting sites and places of significance. Of particular importance is the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2019, under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974;

2) An Unexpected Finds Procedure (Appendix B) will be implemented during all works,

3) Should any Aboriginal objects be uncovered during works, all work will cease in that location immediately, the Unexpected Findsa Procedure followed and the Environmental Line contacted.

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APPENDIX A

AHIMS Search Results

AHIMS Web Services (AWS)
Search Result

Your Ref/PO Number : Tuncurry

Client Service ID : 808447

Penny Mccardle

Po Box 166

Adamstown New South Wales 2289

Attention: Penny Mccardle

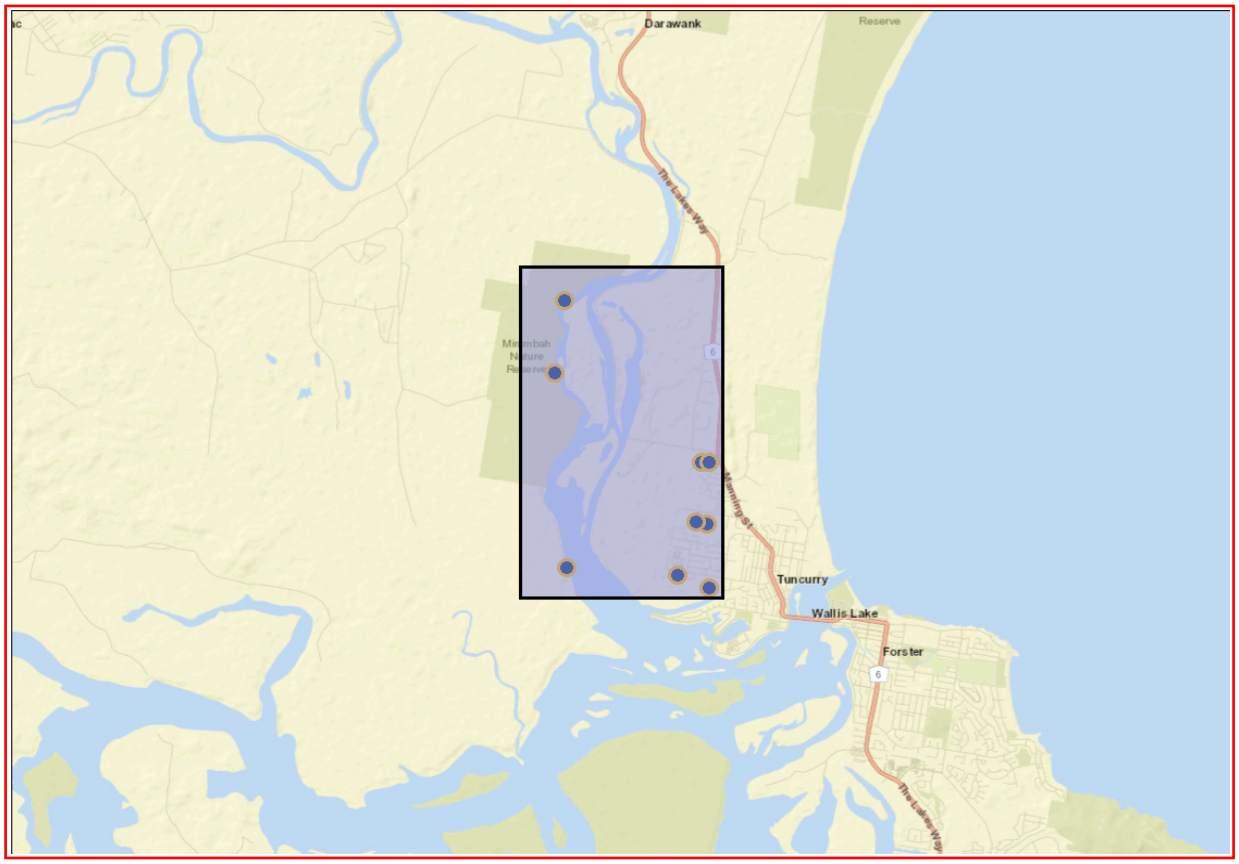
Email: penny@mcheritage.com.au

Date: 10 August 2023

Dear Sir or Madam:

AHIMS Web Service search for the following area at Datum :GDA, Zone : 56, Eastings : 449000.0 - 452000.0, Northings : 6439850.0 - 6444850.0 with a Buffer of 0 meters, conducted by Penny Mccardle on 10 August 2023.

The context area of your search is shown in the map below. Please note that the map does not accurately display the exact boundaries of the search as defined in the paragraph above. The map is to be used for general reference purposes only.



A search of Heritage NSW AHIMS Web Services (Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System) has shown that:

9	**Aboriginal sites are recorded in or near the above location.**
0	**Aboriginal places have been declared in or near the above location. ***

If your search shows Aboriginal sites or places what should you do?

- You must do an extensive search if AHIMS has shown that there are Aboriginal sites or places recorded in the search area.
- If you are checking AHIMS as a part of your due diligence, refer to the next steps of the Due Diligence Code of practice.
- You can get further information about Aboriginal places by looking at the gazettal notice that declared it. Aboriginal places gazetted after 2001 are available on the NSW Government Gazette (https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/gazette) website. Gazettal notices published prior to 2001 can be obtained from Heritage NSW upon request

Important information about your AHIMS search

- The information derived from the AHIMS search is only to be used for the purpose for which it was requested. It is not be made available to the public.
- AHIMS records information about Aboriginal sites that have been provided to Heritage NSW and Aboriginal places that have been declared by the Minister;
- Information recorded on AHIMS may vary in its accuracy and may not be up to date. Location details are recorded as grid references and it is important to note that there may be errors or omissions in these recordings,
- Some parts of New South Wales have not been investigated in detail and there may be fewer records of Aboriginal sites in those areas. These areas may contain Aboriginal sites which are not recorded on AHIMS.
- Aboriginal objects are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 even if they are not recorded as a site on AHIMS.
- This search can form part of your due diligence and remains valid for 12 months.

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AHIMS Web Services (AWS)

Extensive search - Site list report

Your Ref/PO Number : Tuncurry

Client Service ID : 808447

SiteID	SiteName	Datum	Zone	Easting	Northing	Context	Site Status **	SiteFeatures	SiteTypes	Reports
38-2-0102	LEO-1	GDA	56	451616	6441000	Open site	Valid	Shell : -, Artefact : -	Midden,Open Camp Site	
	Contact	**Recorders**	Mick Leon,MCH - McCardle Cultural Heritage Pty Ltd,Ms.Penny Mccardle					**Permits**	4197	
38-2-0087	WALLUMBA RIVER 2	AGD	56	449600	6440100	Open site	Valid	Shell : -, Artefact : -	Midden	
	Contact	**Recorders**	Glen Morris					**Permits**		
38-2-0027	Chapman's Road;	AGD	56	451700	6441700	Open site	Valid	Shell : -, Artefact : -	Midden	1370
	Contact	**Recorders**	Pam Dean-Jones					**Permits**		
38-2-0028	Chapman's Road;	AGD	56	451600	6441700	Open site	Valid	Shell : -, Artefact : -	Midden	1370,104503
	Contact	**Recorders**	Pam Dean-Jones					**Permits**		
38-2-0040	Twin Doplhins C.P.;No:3;	AGD	56	451250	6440000	Open site	Valid	Shell : -, Artefact : -	Midden	1333
	Contact	**Recorders**	Warren Bluff					**Permits**		
38-2-0041	South St. Tuncurry;No:4;	AGD	56	451720	6439800	Open site	Valid	Shell : -, Artefact : -	Midden	1333
	Contact	**Recorders**	Warren Bluff					**Permits**		
38-2-0062	Gereeba Channel;# 1;	AGD	56	449550	6444150	Open site	Valid	Shell : -, Artefact : -	Midden	1333
	Contact	**Recorders**	Warren Bluff					**Permits**		
38-2-0063	Gereeba Channel;# 2;	AGD	56	449410	6443050	Open site	Valid	Shell : -, Artefact : -	Midden	1333
	Contact	**Recorders**	Warren Bluff					**Permits**		
38-2-0179	Banksia Garden Shell Midden 1	GDA	56	451778	6440961	Open site	Valid	Shell : -		
	Contact	**Recorders**	MCH - McCardle Cultural Heritage Pty Ltd,Ms.Penny Mccardle					**Permits**	4197	

**** Site Status**

Valid - The site has been recorded and accepted onto the system as valid

Destroyed - The site has been completely impacted or harmed usually as consequence of permit activity but sometimes also after natural events. There is nothing left of the site on the ground but proponents should proceed with caution.

Partially Destroyed - The site has been only partially impacted or harmed usually as consequence of permit activity but sometimes also after natural events. There might be parts or sections of the original site still present on the ground

Not a site - The site has been originally entered and accepted onto AHIMS as a valid site but after further investigations it was decided it is NOT an aboriginal site. Impact of this type of site does not require permit but Heritage NSW should be notified

Report generated by AHIMS Web Service on 10/08/2023 for Penny Mccardle for the following area at Datum :GDA, Zone : 56, Eastings : 449000.0 - 452000.0, Northings : 6439850.0 - 6444850.0 with a Buffer of 0 meters.. Number of Aboriginal sites and Aboriginal objects found is 9

This information is not guaranteed to be free from error omission. Heritage NSW and its employees disclaim liability for any act done or omission made on the information and consequences of such acts or omission.

APPENDIX B

Unexpected finds procedure

Unexpected finds procedures

Unexpected find protocols have been developed to provide procedures for unexpected finds including Aboriginal objects and the discovery of human remains. These protocols must be followed throughout all stages of the development.

Unexpected Aboriginal objects

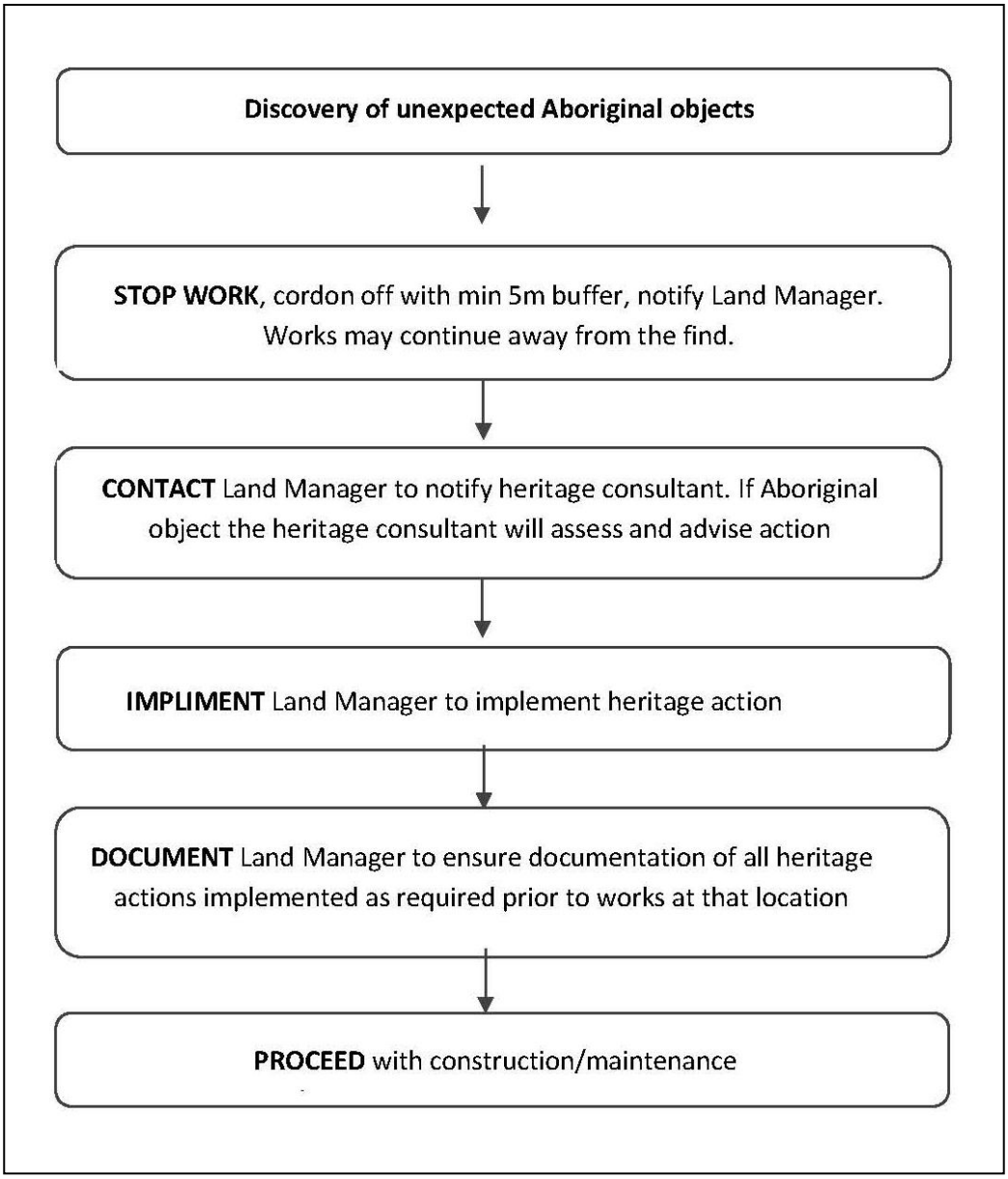
Should unexpected Aboriginal objects be uncovered during any stage of the development, Figure 1 illustrates the protocols. Unexpected Aboriginal objects may include, but not limited to, isolated artefacts, artefact scatters, scarred trees, hearths and shell middens (descriptions of such objects are provided).

Work must stop immediately in that location, the objects cordoned off with at least a 5m perimeter surrounding the object(s) with high visibility fencing/barrier and the Land Manager notified immediately. The Land Manager will then contact the heritage consultant who will assess the object(s) and recommend appropriate mitigation measures, inlcuding contacting the Environmental Line if required. The Land Manager is to implement all reasonable mitigation measures recommended by the heritage consultant and in accordance with Heritage NSW regulations and the NSW NPW Act.

If additional works are required, such as an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) with or without est excavations) or an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) (with collection or salvage excavations), the Land Manager is to arrange for the heritage consultant to undertake those works in accordance with all Heritage NSW requirements, procedures and Code of Practice. The methodology for undertaking additional works will be dependant on a number of factors including, but not limited to, site/object type and disturbances. Due to the unknown nature of unexpected objects, methodologies for furthe investigatiosn (if required) of unexpected Aboriginal objects will be determined during consultation with Heritage NSW.

Provided these heritage unexpected finds protocols have been followed, construction/maintenance works in that location may proceed.

Figure 1. Unexpected finds protocol flow chart



Discovery of human remains

Human skeletal remains are of the highest significance and importance to Aboriginal people, and all care, respect and dignity will be extended by all parties should human remains be uncovered.

If human remains or unidentified bone are uncovered during any stage of the development and maintenance activities, the appropriate State legislation will be followed. All human remains fall under the *Coroners Act 2009* in the first instance. If they are identified as Aboriginal and older than 100 years old, they will fall under the *NSW NPWS Act 1974* (as amended). If they are identified as Aboriginal and 100 years or less, they will remain under Police derestriction under the *Coroners Act 2009*. Figure 2 outlines the required protocols should human remains be uncovered.

Should any human remains or unidentifiable bone be found, work is to stop in that area immediately and an area of 15m cordoned off surrounding the remains/bone in high visibility fencing. The Land Manager is to be notified immediately.

The Land Manager will contact the heritage consultant and local NSW Police immediately, who will then contact the NSW Forensic Services who will determine if they are:

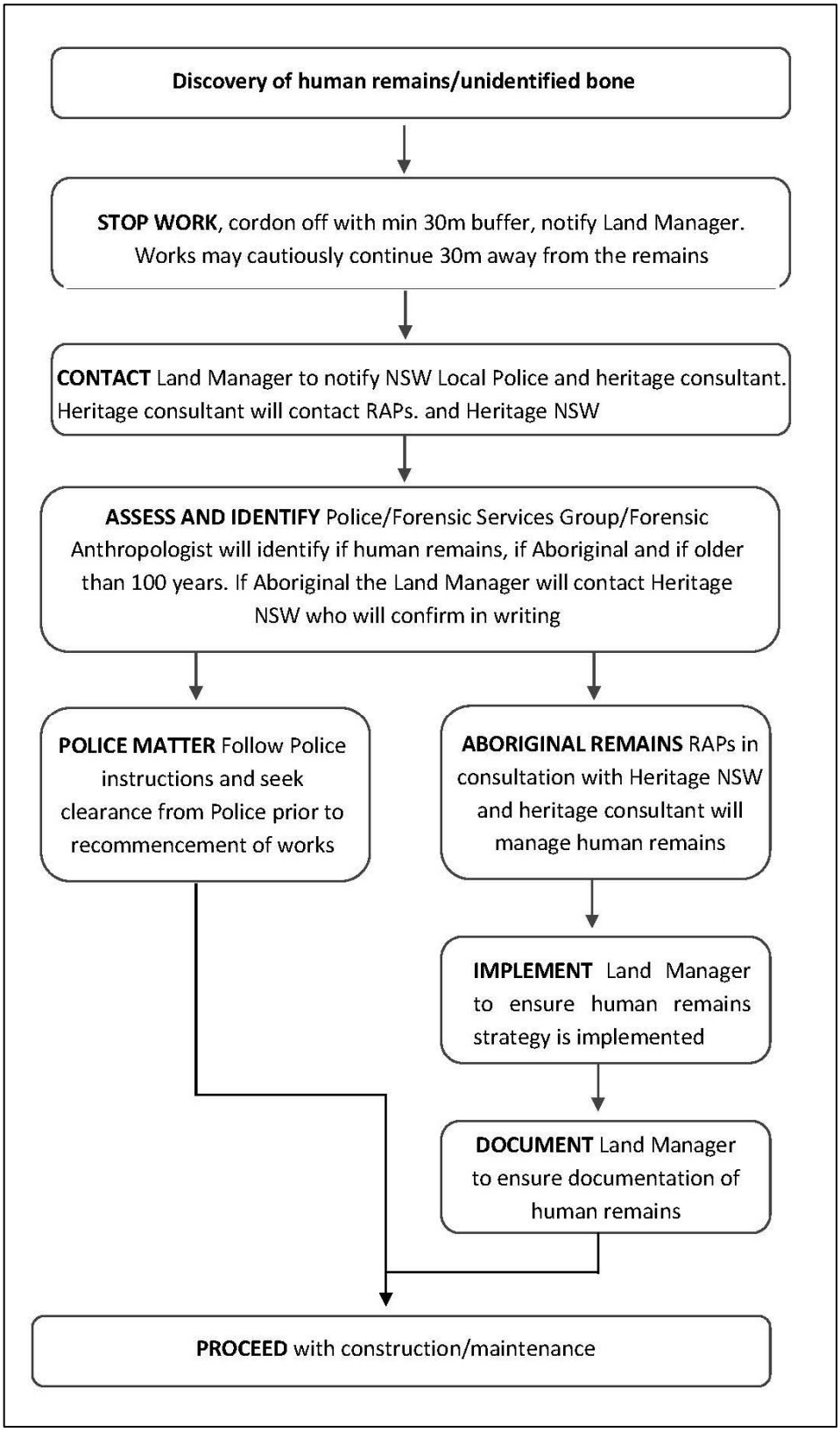
1) Human;
2) Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal;
3) If Aboriginal, determine antiquity (older or younger than 100 years)

If it is determined the remains are Aboriginal and older than 100 years old, the Police will notify the Land Manager who must contact the Environmnetal Line and Heritage NSW immediately. Heritage NSW, in consultation with the relevant Aboriginal community and the heritage consultant will develop a human remains management strategy and the Land Manager is to ensure this strategy is implemented. The Land Manager must also document the human remains management strategy and the heritage consultant will provide a letter of clearance prior to any works recommencing at that location.

If the remains are determined to be a Police matter, Police instructions will be followed and clearance to recommence works should be sought from the Police.

Provided the human skeletal protocols have been followed and documented, and a clearance letter from the heritage consultant has been obtained, construction/maintenance works may proceed in that location.

Figure 2 Human remains protocol flow chart



Verification of all Aboriginal objects (sites)

All potential Aboriginal sites will be verified by the heritage consultant in the first instance, and Heritage NSW if required.

The purpose of the verification process is to determine whether or not the objects in question are in fact Aboriginal objects to ensure appropriate management measures be implemented.

The verification process will include the following provisions:

1. A heritage consultant may assess the scientific status of the Aboriginal object (site) and provide evidence and justification for significance;
2. If it is an Aboriginal object the Environmental Line will be contacted and the site reported;
3. An AHIMS site card will be completed for each Aboriginal object (site); and
4. Management recommendations specific to each Aboriginal object (site), will be determined by Heritage NSW.

Surface Artefact scatters

Also described as open campsites, artefact scatters and open sites, these deposits have been defined at two or more stone artefacts within 50 or 200 metres of each other and may include archaeological remains such as stone artefacts, shell, and sometimes hearths, stone lined fire places and heat treatment pits. These sites are usually identified as surface scatters of artefacts in areas where ground surface visibility is increased due to lack of vegetation. Erosion, agricultural activities (such as ploughing) and access ways can also expose surface campsites. Artefact scatters may represent evidence of;

- Camp sites, where everyday activities such as habitation, maintenance of stone or wooden tools, manufacturing of such tools, management of raw materials, preparation and consumption of food and storage of tools has occurred;
- Hunting and/or gathering events;
- Other events spatially separated from a camp site, or
- Transitory movement through the landscape.

If a potential artefact scatter has been identified, the Unexpected Finds Protocol must be followed immediately.

Examples of artefact scatters (MCH)

Surface Isolated finds

Isolated artefacts are usually identified in areas where ground surface visibility is increased due to lack of vegetation. Erosion, agricultural activities (such as ploughing) and access ways can also expose surface artefacts. Isolated finds may represent evidence of;

- Hunting and/or gathering events; or
- Transitory movement through the landscape.

If a potential isolated find has been identified, the Unexpected Finds Protocol must be followed immediately.

Examples of isolated artefacts (MCH)