

Addendum to December 2015
FLORA AND FAUNA ASSESSMENT

For Planning Proposal to amend the minimum lot size
from 40ha to 2ha

Breadalbane Road, Collector

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Ref. 14009_4

1 Introduction

This addendum has been prepared in response to comments provided by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) to Upper Lachlan Shire Council (Council) in relation to this application. The proposal is to change the minimum lot size of an approximately 130ha parcel of land from 40ha to 2ha.

The comments provided by OEH, after undertaking a site assessment by walking the boundaries of the site, are provided in Attachment 1 and are summarised as follows;

- The understorey is considerably more native dominant than described in the Flora and Fauna Assessment for many parts of the land.
- That there are several patches of Boxgum Woodland that should be better mapped.
- There is potential for secondary grassland to occur over much of the non-pasture improved sections of the land.
- Site inspections were undertaken in early spring when exotic species would dominate survey results.
- The adjoining crown reserve block along the southern boundary is high conservation value woodland and a buffer should be provided from the development of house sites.
- The potential for woodland birds to occur on the land is underestimated, there is an existing wildlife atlas record for the vulnerable Varied Sittella.
- Multiple mature trees with hollows were observed which would provide potential breeding habitat for a number of bird species.

The OEH comments recommend that the extent of Boxgum Woodland EEC be mapped accurately and an assessment of the understorey be assessed at an appropriate time of year.

Responses to each point are provided in the following section and the recommendation to map Boxgum Woodland on the site has been taken. This map is provided in Attachment 2.

2 Responses to OEH comments

- *The understorey is considerably more native dominant than described in the Flora and Fauna Assessment for many parts of the land.*

The Flora and Fauna Assessment does not discuss the understorey any further than commenting that few understorey species occur. This is because very little understorey is present at the site. As the proposal is a planning proposal to change the minimum lot size and does not include any spatial design parameters any future development of the site – such as a subdivision or identification of tracks, house sites and associated infrastructure will require a flora and fauna assessment that considers its design, at this stage a more comprehensive study of vegetation would be undertaken.

- *That there are several patches of Boxgum Woodland that should be better mapped.*

Boxgum woodland has been mapped and is included in Attachment 2.

- *There is potential for secondary grassland to occur over much of the non-pasture improved sections of the land.*

This is true however no areas of native dominant grassland were recorded on the site during site visits for the initial flora and fauna survey or site surveys since that report was produced. The current land management practices on the site are not conducive to recovery of native grassland.

- *Site inspections were undertaken in early spring when exotic species would dominate survey results.*

This is true and in light of the comment subsequent site visits have been undertaken to clarify the validity of initial surveys. These visits have not changed the view presented in the initial report however weather conditions leading up to surveys have been wet and would still favour exotics. The initial report recommends that any future development of the site must consider flora and fauna and ecological conservation impacts and be accompanied by a flora and fauna assessment. Such an assessment will consider more specific impacts including subdivision design and locations of direct impacts.

- *The adjoining crown reserve block along the southern boundary is high conservation value woodland and a buffer should be provided from the development of house sites.*

This is a valid point and will be considered in the design of any future development.

- *The potential for woodland birds to occur on the land is underestimated, there is an existing wildlife atlas record for the vulnerable Varied Sittella.*

The flora and fauna assessment has described the habitat and identified that birds including woodland birds will use the site. Several have also been included in the threatened species assessment. As the assessment can only consider the impacts of the proposal, and the proposal is not a specific design but a change in minimum lot size over a much larger area than woodland bird habitat on the site, to complete an assessment at this stage of the planning process would not provide adequate protection for woodland birds. Such an assessment will be effective if deferred to the subdivision design stage when specific direct impacts can be assessed and specific buffers to habitat and corridors created.

- *Multiple mature trees with hollows were observed which would provide potential breeding habitat for a number of bird species.*

Arboreal habitat was considered in the initial flora and fauna assessment and as discussed above, a specific assessment of this habitat will be much more effective if deferred to the subdivision design stage when specific direct impacts can be assessed and specific buffers to habitat and corridors created.

3 Revised Conclusions and Recommendations

Following a review of the initial Flora and Fauna Assessment and additional site visits and vegetation mapping in light of the OEH comments, it is considered the conclusions of the initial report remain valid. That the proposal to change the minimum lot size from 40ha to 2ha will not have a significant impact on biodiversity values of the site, particularly threatened flora, fauna and communities.

This conclusion however, relies on the understanding that any proposal to subdivide the lands or develop the lands in other ways must be accompanied by a flora and fauna assessment that specifically considers the design and impacts of the development.

Having received the OEH comments, in order to strengthen the recommendation in section 11 of the initial report is recommended that it be updated with the following recommendation:

Any future development of the site must consider flora and fauna and ecological impacts and be accompanied by a development specific flora and fauna assessment that, at a minimum, specifically addresses the following;

- *Potential impacts of the development on the Endangered Ecological Community White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland.*
- *Potential impacts of the development on threatened woodland birds.*
- *At a minimum, avoidance of direct impact to areas within 30m of vegetation described as higher conservation value in the attached map.*

Impacts must be avoided where possible and any residual impact mitigated and offset to an acceptable level.

4 Attachments

- 1 OEH Comments
- 2 Boxgum Woodland Map



Office of
Environment
& Heritage

EF14612364

General Manager
Upper Lachlan Shire Council
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Dear Jacqui,

Planning Proposal to amend the minimum lot size from 40 ha to 2 ha Breadalbane Road, Collector

I refer to your email dated 26 May 2016 inviting the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) to make a submission on the above pre-gateway planning proposal to amend the minimum lot size for subdivision for the area north of Collector.

OEH has reviewed the supporting documentation provided by Kingsdale Consulting. It is understood that under consideration was a much larger area that has been refined to target area of 130 hectares described as Area (O) in the report.

OEH staff carried out of a site inspection of the land in June 2016, while all the proposal area could not be accessed, it is agreed from the environmental viewpoint much of the land does have lower biodiversity values. However, sections of the EEC Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum woodland was observed to be present and the ecological report does under estimate the occurrence of this community on the land.

OEH does not have enough information to consider whether impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage values have been adequately addressed. As there are a number of Aboriginal sites in the surrounding area we recommend that an archaeological assessment and is undertaken as part of the planning process to identify the Aboriginal cultural heritage values that occur within the project area.

It is noted that the preliminary flood assessment concludes that the land subject to the planning proposal shown at Annexure O is not flood prone. Any development of the site should be considered in accordance with the NSW Government's Flood Prone Lands Policy as set out in the Floodplain Development Manual (2005). It is noted the site also sits outside of the flood plain as described in the recent Collector Flood Study, 2014 so limited information exists on the flood risk for the site. Council should satisfy itself on the adequacy of the preliminary flood report in this regard.

More detailed comments on biodiversity, Aboriginal cultural heritage and flooding issues are provided in **Attachment 1**.

Sincerely

15 July 2016

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A/Senior Team Leader Planning
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ATTACHMENT 1

BIODIVERSITY

OEH has reviewed the *Flora and Fauna Assessment Breadalbane Road Collector December 2015 Mr Pat Guinane, Environmental Consultant* prepared to accompany the planning proposal.

The report is not considered adequate to make informed judgement on the ecological values of the site.

Mr John Briggs OEH botanist undertook an assessment of the site from walking the boundaries. His conclusion is that:

- The understorey is considerably more native dominant than described in Flora and fauna assessment report for many parts of the land.
- That there are several patches of the Yellow and Blakely's red gum that this meets is the EEC community definition under the NSW scientific committee determination that should be better mapped to allow protection.
- There is potential for secondary grassland to occur over much of the non-pasture improved sections of the land.

The site assessment for the report was undertaken in September early spring when the exotics would be at their height.

Identification Guidelines for White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland (Box-Gum Woodland) OEH provide guidance on this that:

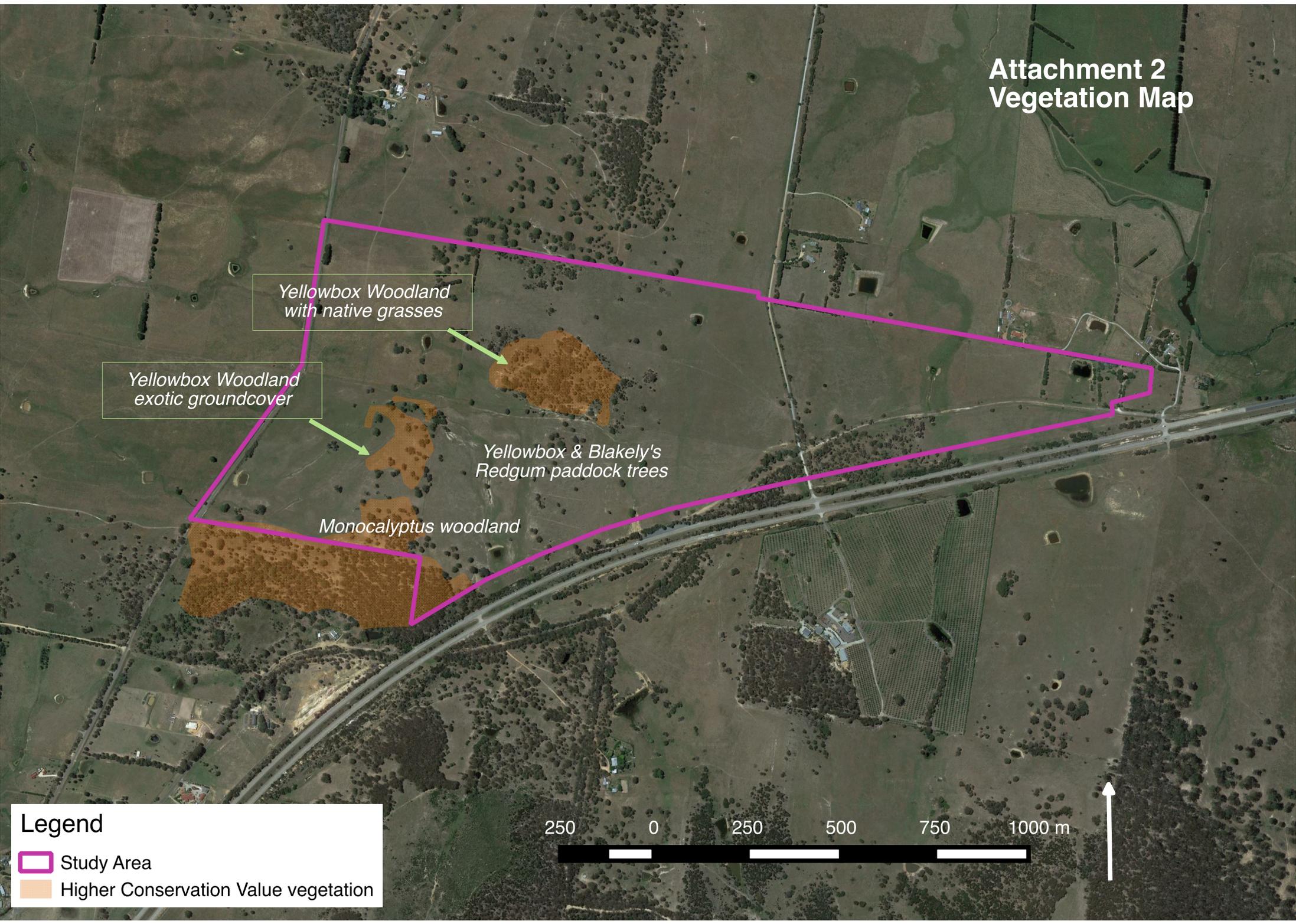
In most locations the understorey will vary considerably depending on the season, management history and rainfall in preceding months. Care in assessing a site is required when a flush of annual exotic species obscures native perennial species. Reassessment of the site after the annuals have died is desirable. Ideally sites should be assessed in both spring and in autumn so that seasonal native species such forbs and grasses can be more readily identified.

Other matters that should be further considered are:

- The adjoining crown reserve block along the southern boundary is high conservation value woodland and a buffer should be provided from the development and house sites.
- There is potential for woodland birds to occur on the land is also under estimated. There is an existing Wildlife Atlas record for land for the vulnerable Varied Sittella.
- Multiple mature trees with hollows were observed on site which would be potential breeding habitat for a number of birds species

Recommendation That the extend of box woodland ECC be mapped on site accurately on site and the assessment of the understorey be assessed at appropriate time of year.

Attachment 2 Vegetation Map



Legend

-  Study Area
-  Higher Conservation Value vegetation

250 0 250 500 750 1000 m