



**Visual Impact Assessment
For
Wyee Point LES**

Prepared by:

RPS Harper Somers O'Sullivan Pty Ltd

241 Denison Street,
Broadmeadow NSW 2292
PO Box 428, HAMILTON NSW 2303

T: 612 4961 6500
F: 612 4961 6794
E: enquiries@rpsoso.com.au
W: www.rpsoso.com.au

Job No: 25757
Date: October 2009

Prepared for:

Lake Macquarie City Council

Box 1906
Hunter Region Mail Centre 2310

Document Status

<i>Version</i>	<i>Purpose of Document</i>	<i>Orig</i>	<i>Review</i>	<i>Review Date</i>	<i>Format Review</i>	<i>Approval</i>	<i>Issue Date</i>
1.0	Draft	HB	DH	01.10.09	JH 11-11-09	D Holloway	12-11-09

Disclaimers

This document is and shall remain the property of RPS Harper Somers O'Sullivan Pty Ltd. The document may only be used for the purposes for which it was commissioned and in accordance with the Terms of Engagement for the commission. Unauthorised copying or use of this document in any form whatsoever is prohibited.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Site Description.....	1
1.2	Objectives and Methodology	5
2.0	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL	6
3.0	THE EXISTING REGIONAL VISUAL ENVIRONMENT	7
3.1	Regional Landscape	7
3.2	Description of the Subject Site.....	8
4.0	LAKE MACQUARIE SCENIC QUALITY GUIDELINES	10
4.1	Landscape Setting Unit.....	10
4.2	Significant Features, Viewing Points and Ridgelines.....	12
4.3	Visual Accessibility	15
4.4	Scenic Management Zone.....	15
5.0	IMPACT ASSESSMENT.....	18
5.1	Recommendations.....	18
6.0	CONCLUSIONS	20
7.0	REFERENCES	21

FIGURES

Figure 1-1: Locality Map	2
Figure 1-2: Property Descriptions	3
Figure 1-3: Zoning	4
Figure 4-1: Map of the Morisset Hospital Heritage Precinct	14

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Site Photos

1.0 INTRODUCTION

RPS Harper Somers O'Sullivan (RPS HSO) has been commissioned by Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) to prepare a visual impact assessment for a Planning Proposal to rezone land for residential development at Wyee Point. The rezoning applies to approximately 600 lots off Saddlers Way. Most of the lots are contained in a 'paper subdivision' dating from 1885 and have never been developed. The site is commonly referred to as Ramsgate Estate.

Wyee Point is located in the south of the Lake Macquarie Local Government Area (LGA), adjoining the Wyong LGA. Wyee Point is approximately 60 kilometres from the central business district of Newcastle and 25 kilometres from Wyong town centre. The location of the land to be rezoned is shown in Figure 1-1: Locality Map.

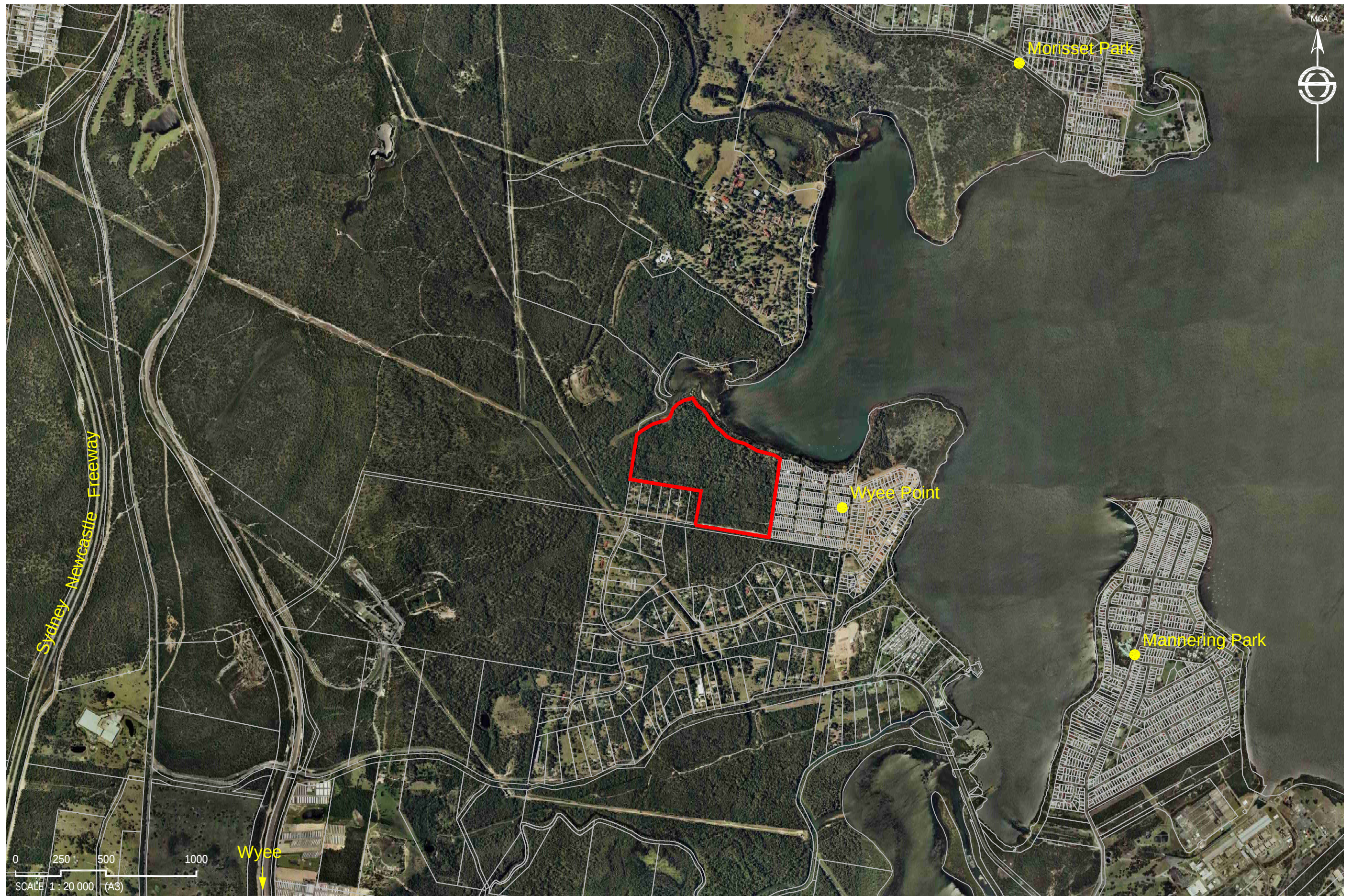
1.1 Site Description

The subject site is approximately 38 hectares in size and is bounded by existing residential development to the east, Lake Macquarie to the north, conservation lands to the west and a combination of rural living and conservation to the south. Rural living allotments abut the south-west boundary of the site, while a combination of rural living and conservation zoned lands are located further south, on the opposite side of Brigade Street.

The subject site is comprised of the following allotments, the majority of which are part of an unformed 'paper subdivision'.

- More than 600 lots in Sections A-V of DP 1596
- Lot 1 DP 124592

Property Descriptions are shown in Figure 1-2. The north of the subject site is currently zoned part 7(1) Conservation (Primary) and 6(1) Open Space under Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2004 (LEP). The southern part of the site is zoned 10 Investigation under the LEP. There are also two small parcels in the north-eastern corner of the site zoned 7(3) Environment (General) and 5 (Infrastructure) as identified in Figure 1-3.



TITLE: **FIGURE 1-1
LOCALITY MAP**

LOCATION: **WYEE POINT**

DATUM: **N/A**
PROJECTION: **MGA**

DATE: **13TH AUGUST 2009**
PURPOSE: **SITE LOCATION**

AUTOCAD REF: **25757-2A**
VERSION (PLAN BY): **LOCALITY D.H / E.C**

Copyright
"This document and the information shown shall remain the property of RPS Harper Somers O'Sullivan Pty Ltd. The document may only be used for the purpose for which it was supplied and in accordance with the terms of engagement for the commission. Unauthorised use of this document in any way is prohibited."

CLIENT:
JOB REF: **25757**

241 DENISON STREET BROADMEADOW PO BOX 428 HAMILTON NSW 2303
T: 02 4961 6500 F: 02 4961 6794 www.rpshso.com.au

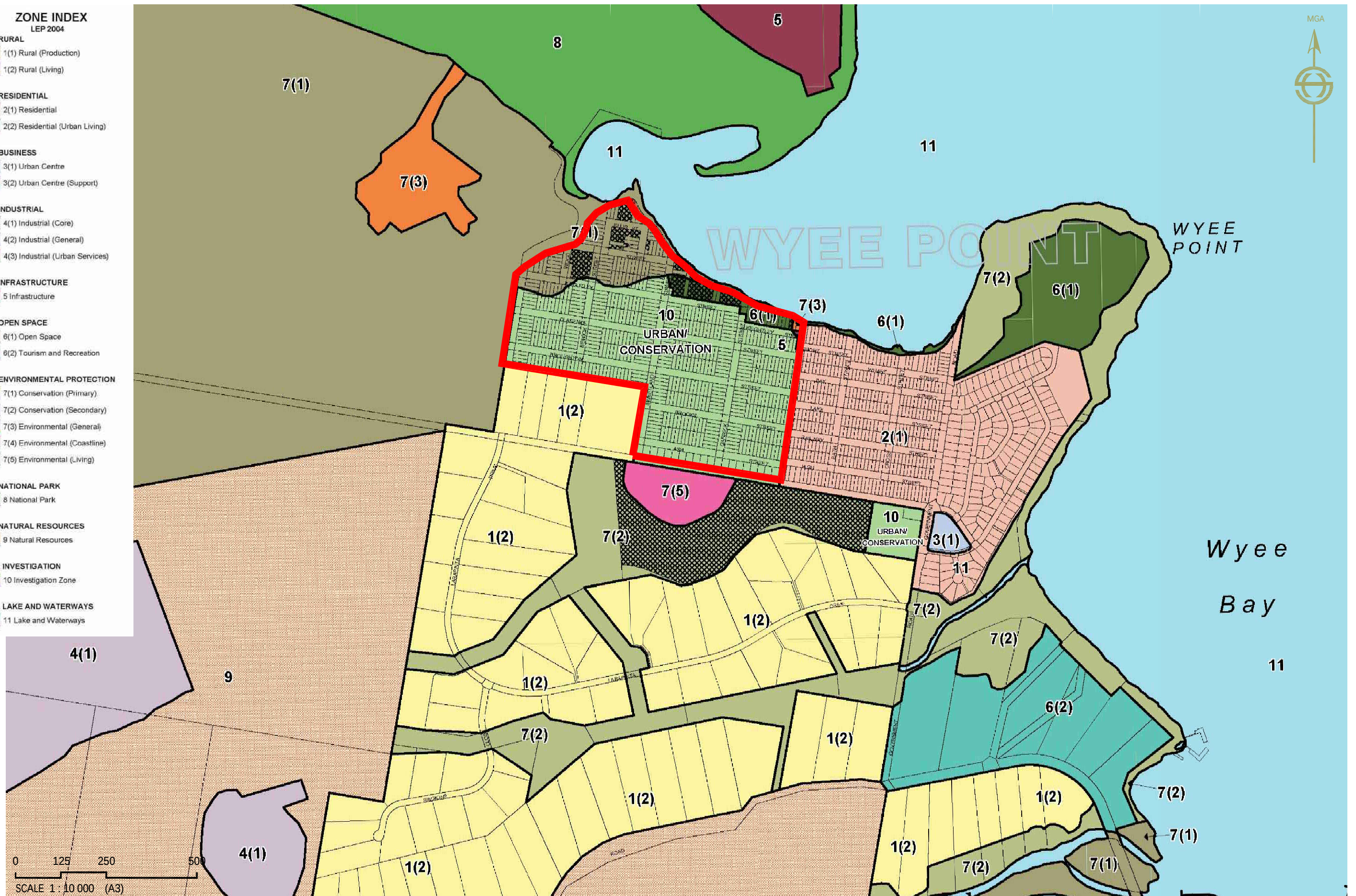
creativepeople
making a difference

RPS **HARPER SOMERS O'SULLIVAN**



ZONE INDEX LEP 2004

1. RURAL
 - 1(1) 1(1) Rural (Production)
 - 1(2) 1(2) Rural (Living)
2. RESIDENTIAL
 - 2(1) 2(1) Residential
 - 2(2) 2(2) Residential (Urban Living)
3. BUSINESS
 - 3(1) 3(1) Urban Centre
 - 3(2) 3(2) Urban Centre (Support)
4. INDUSTRIAL
 - 4(1) 4(1) Industrial (Core)
 - 4(2) 4(2) Industrial (General)
 - 4(3) 4(3) Industrial (Urban Services)
5. INFRASTRUCTURE
 - 5 5 Infrastructure
6. OPEN SPACE
 - 6(1) 6(1) Open Space
 - 6(2) 6(2) Tourism and Recreation
7. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
 - 7(1) 7(1) Conservation (Primary)
 - 7(2) 7(2) Conservation (Secondary)
 - 7(3) 7(3) Environmental (General)
 - 7(4) 7(4) Environmental (Coastline)
 - 7(5) 7(5) Environmental (Living)
8. NATIONAL PARK
 - 8 8 National Park
9. NATURAL RESOURCES
 - 9 9 Natural Resources
10. INVESTIGATION
 - 10 10 Investigation Zone
11. LAKE AND WATERWAYS
 - 11 11 Lake and Waterways



TITLE: FIGURE 1-3
CURRENT ZONING

LOCATION: WYEE POINT

DATUM: N/A
PROJECTION: MGA

DATE: 13TH AUGUST 2009
PURPOSE: CURRENT ZONING

AUTOCAD REF: 25757-2A
VERSION (PLAN BY): ZONING D.H / E.C

Copyright
"This document and the information shown shall remain the property of RPS Harper Somers O'Sullivan Pty Ltd. The document may only be used for the purpose for which it was supplied and in accordance with the terms of engagement for the commission. Unauthorised use of this document in any way is prohibited."

CLIENT:
JOB REF: 25757

241 DENISON STREET BROADMEADOW PO BOX 428 HAMILTON NSW 2303
T: 02 4961 6500 F: 02 4961 6794 www.rpshso.com.au

creativepeople
making a difference

RPS HARPER SOMERS O'SULLIVAN

1.2 Objectives and Methodology

The objectives of the visual assessment include:

- To identify and describe the existing landscapes of the area likely to be affected by the Planning Proposal.
- To determine the suitability of the Planning Proposal with regard to possible impacts on significant landscapes.
- If appropriate, establish controls that will influence future development to ensure that scenic values are protected and maintained.

The methodology has been designed to reduce subjectivity in assessment of potential impacts, to provide sufficient data to allow for verification of the results, and to satisfy the requirements of the *Lake Macquarie City Council Scenic Quality Guidelines* (adopted on 22 March 2004). The report is structured as follows.

- A description of the proposal is provided in Section 2.0.
- Section 3.0 contains a description of the existing visual environment and a viewpoint analysis to identify locations likely to be affected by development. The selected viewpoints are locations where impacts are most likely to be evident, such as roads and settlements.
- Section 4.0 is an assessment of the site in relation to the *Lake Macquarie City Council Scenic Quality Guidelines*.
- Section 5.0 is an assessment and summary of the visual impacts of the Planning Proposal.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The Planning Proposal relates to 38 hectares of land at Wyee Point. The northern boundary of the site has frontage to Lake Macquarie. To the east is existing development at Wyee Point with five parallel east / west orientated streets that are built to the boundary of the subject site, being Short Street, Bay Street, Lake Street, Railway Street and High Street. The road network for the Planning Proposal is likely to integrate with the road network in the east, although it is unlikely that every street will have connectivity.

The subject site is covered with remnant vegetation, as evident in the aerial provided in Figure 1-1: Locality Map. The Planning Proposal is to rezone the subject site to part 7(1) Conservation (Primary) and part 2(1) Residential. It is assumed that the land already zoned 6(1) Open Space and 7(1) Conservation (Primary) is unlikely to be rezoned for residential purposes and is therefore likely to become 7(1) Conservation (Primary) zone. It is also likely that a vegetation corridor will also be retained through the centre of the site in a north/south orientation, connecting with the foreshore in the north of the site and the conservation lands to the south of the site. To the east and west of the vegetation corridor will be land zoned for housing.

3.0 THE EXISTING REGIONAL VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Regional Landscape

The western suburbs of the Lake Macquarie area nestle between the lake itself in the east and the Watagan Mountain ranges to the west. The south-west of Lake Macquarie LGA is characterised by residential suburbs, which focus on the waterfront and are surrounded by vegetated landscapes. Many of the residential pockets are quite small in size. Wyee is one such suburb, while others in the area include Mannering Park, Bonnells Bay and the larger settlement of Morisset which is identified as an emerging regional centre.

Lake Macquarie is the focal point within the landscape of the LGA, being one of the largest coastal saltwater lakes in Australia. Lake Macquarie provides 174km of foreshore. Much residential development is focused around the foreshore. Remnant vegetation interspersing between suburbs helps to break down the visual dominance of residential development, so that overall, the character of the lake is predominantly natural. The natural qualities of the landscape are particularly evident in the south and west of the lake, with more built up areas apparent in the north and east. Wyee Point is located on the south-west foreshore of Lake Macquarie. The surrounding landscape is gently undulating and is generally characterised by creeks flowing towards Lake Macquarie.

To the east of the subject site is an area is not developed, partly cleared of vegetation and interspersed with walking tracks. This area on the point at Wyee Point is characterised by a small hill, peaking at approximately 25m AHD. The existing settlement of Wyee Point is located to the south-west nestled within a small bay. The subject site adjoins the western boundary of the settlement. The high point of the township is located in the south-west corner of the settlement, at just over 30 AHD. The subject site shares this small peak. Therefore, the existing residential area and the proposed development on the subject site is partly screened from the east by the hill on the point.

To the north, across the bay from Wyee Point settlement is the Morisset Hospital site (approximately 550m north of the subject site), the Lake Macquarie State Recreation Area (approximately 1.4km north-north-east of the subject site) and the settlement of Morisset Park (approximately 2.2km north-east of the subject site). Locally significant roadways include Government Road, which provides access to Wyee Point from Huttleys Road in the south. Being a relatively isolated settlement, Wyee Point is not visible from significant roads.

3.2 Description of the Subject Site

The study area is 38 hectares in size. The site contains predominantly native bushland. Refer to Figure 1-1: Locality Map for details.

Land Use Character

The subject site contains approximately 600 lots off Saddlers Way. Most of the lots are contained in a 'paper subdivision' dating from 1885 and have never been developed. The site is covered with native bushland that has been subject to land clearing and bushfire and subsequent vegetation regrowth.

Ground surface disturbance has been caused by a considerable number of well-used dirt walking tracks and two areas used by motorbikes, recreationally. One was cleared over an area of approximately 50 metres by 20 metres while the other consisted of a well marked and used track (e.g. Plate 1).

In some sections of the subject site it is possible to distinguish the layout of some roads pertaining to the original Ramsgate Estate. These appeared as areas largely devoid of trees, though dense shrub growth was still present, with the roads width marked by low embankments and gutters. These gutters were heavily eroded in some instances.

Vegetation

Travers Environmental (2009:20) a number of vegetation communities as occurring within the subject site. The subject site adjacent to the shoreline of Lake Macquarie comprises a low lying often inundated landscape with vegetation comprising a Swamp Oak Woodland and Salt Marsh. The foreshore contains native vegetation, introduced exotic species and evidence of soil disturbance from humans and animals.

Away from the shoreline Scribbly Gum Open Forest – Dry Understorey; Scribbly Gum Open Forest – Moist Understorey; Forest Red Gum Woodland; Swamp Mahogany – Smooth-barked Apple – Scribbly Gum Woodland; and Swamp Mahogany Woodland occur (Travers Environmental 2009:20). Across the wider site a small number of old trees (*Angophora* sp.) are present, however, in general the trees are predominately younger. The second storey vegetation varies from dense to sparse with density associated more often with the south north trending drainage lines. In general the vegetation communities within the site reflect the low lying swamp areas around the shoreline of the lake and the creek.

Travers Environmental also surveyed the habitat on the subject site. A large number of hollow bearing trees were located on the site.

Slope

The subject site comprises Doyalson and Wyong soil landscape. The Doyalson is an erosional landscape. The Wyong is an alluvial landscape generally associated with the shoreline and the foreshore of Lake Macquarie within the site.

- The topography of the Doyalson landscape comprises undulating rises with local relief to 30 metres and slope gradients of generally <10% (Murphy, 1993:49). The broad crests and elevated terraces tend to be long with gently inclined slopes and are the dominant landform elements. Surrounding the Doyalson landscape are broad drainage lines with minimal if any rock outcropping (Murphy, 1993:49).
- The topography of the Wyong landscape consists of poorly drained, deltaic floodplains and alluvial flats. Local relief averages to <10 metres with slope gradients of <3% (Murphy, 1993: 81). Commonly situated in the landscape are levees, meander scrolls, oxbows and swamps. Low lying and slightly elevated terraces are infrequently present (Murphy, 1993: 81).

The topography found onsite is similar to that described in the soil landscape mapping, with gentle slope gradients ranging from approximately 6.5% in the east of the site to just over 2% in the west of the site. The survey units used for the archaeology report for this Planning Proposal, show that the site is characterised by mid slopes in the south of the site, which progressively becomes lower slopes, terrace and then foreshore, as the site falls northwards toward the lake. Refer to Figure 7-1: Survey Units in the *Cultural Heritage Survey and Assessment* prepared by RPS HSO for the Wyee Point LES for details.

There is a slight ridge along the eastern boundary of the allotment, a broad and gentle depression through the centre of the site and another small ridge to the west of the depression. All of these landscape features are aligned in a generally north-south orientation with the whole site draining north into the lake. The most elevated part of the site is located at the top of the eastern ridge peaking at just over 34m AHD. The western ridge peaks at 28m AHD.

Land continues to rise to a peak of 40m AHD within the zoned lands on the opposite side of Saddlers Way. The topography then slopes southwards, draining into Cobra Creek. The conservation lands are surrounded by rural residential development, particularly to the south and west of the peak. A vegetated horizon is one of the main characteristics that give Lake Macquarie its natural appearance.

4.0 LAKE MACQUARIE SCENIC QUALITY GUIDELINES

4.1 Landscape Setting Unit

Wyee Point Landscape Setting Unit is located in the south-west of the Lake. The unit comprises the 'foreshore, north from Wyee Point to Bluff Point and Bardens Bay unit indented in several deep narrow bays' (p41). The subject site is located within one of these bays to the east of Wyee Point itself. Cobra Creek and outfall of Lake Mannering empty into the lake at the southern end of the unit.

The land use in Wyee Point Landscape Setting Unit is residential, recreational, institutional (Morisset Hospital) and a caravan park. As a result, the landscape character within this Unit consists of a residential edge interspersed with natural landscape. The Planning Proposal for conservation and residential rezoning of the subject site is not inconsistent with these land uses and landscape character.

The Scenic Quality Guidelines identify observation points within the Wyee Point Landscape Setting Unit to be Morisset Park, road access at the foreshore, as well as wharfs and baths.

- The subject site is visible from the settlement of Morisset Park, with a distance of approximately 2.25km across the water between the two sites. The views are framed by the point at Wyee Point and Bird Cage Point in the middle distance, so that the subject site is not a prominent or extensive portion of the vista. Morisset Park has direct views across the water toward Mannering Park, which is much more urban in nature than Wyee Point. Therefore, the subject site is not part of any visually prominent views within Morisset Park.
- Road access at the foreshore is provided at Wyee Point, Morisset Park and Brightwaters. The subject site will not be visually prominent from existing development at Wyee Point, with the dominant views being northwards across the Lake. As discussed previously, the subject site is not visually prominent from Morisset Park, while Brightwaters is further north-east of the subject site (4km) with views screened by Bluff Point. Therefore, the Planning Proposal will not have a significant impact on views from road access at the foreshore.
- There are baths on the foreshore of the Morisset Hospital site to the north of the subject site. The dominant vista from the baths between the north-eastern and north-western aspects, is approximately a 90 degree panorama. The undeveloped land to the south of the Morisset Hospital site screens views between the subject site and the baths.

There are also baths on the southern side of Bluff Point, to the east of Morisset Park. The distance across the water between the subject site and these baths is 2.7km. Like, the settlement of Morisset Park, the views between the baths and subject site are framed by the point at Wyee Point and Bird Cage Point in the middle distance, so that the subject site is not a prominent or extensive portion of the vista. The baths have direct views across the water toward Mannering Park. Therefore, the subject site is not part of any visually prominent views from the baths.

The impact of the Planning Proposal on observation points within the Wyee Point Landscape Setting Unit is minimal due to the intervening landscape and distance between some points. Furthermore, the site is not part of the dominant vista from any of the identified observation points. Retaining vegetation along the foreshore of the subject site within a conservation zone and appropriately landscaping residential zones may further reduce the impact of the Planning Proposal on views from observation points within the Wyee Point Landscape Setting Unit. It is also likely that hollow bearing trees will be retained on the site, wherever practical. This will also help to 'break up' any views into the site.

Wyee Point is shown on Map 7 as being within a High Landscape Setting Unit. The landscape characteristics and scenic quality objectives for high rating units are provided below.

Landscape Characteristics

Landscapes are predominantly natural. The landform and vegetation types and patterns are highly diverse. Water, either the Lake or the sea, is generally a strong visual component of the landscape. Views of the lake from the foreshore are diverse and indented with forested hillside backdrops. Hinterland landscapes are rugged forested hillside or scenic rural valleys.

Scenic Quality Objectives

To preserve the scenic views and places as major contributors to the value, amenity and identity of Lake Macquarie by:

- maintaining the dominance of the natural landscape,*
- retaining natural vegetation,*
- protecting and managing the viewsheds from scenic routes and viewpoints, and*
- protecting prominent landscapes and scenic features from visible new development.*

The subject site is located in a predominantly natural area, with the exception of the existing settlement on the eastern boundary and rural residential development to the south. The landform is undulating. The site has frontage to

Lake Macquarie and therefore, the water is a strong visual component of the landscape. As described views to and from the site are diverse due the numerous bays and points around the foreshore. For example, parts of the subject site are screened from the water and eastern foreshore by a small hill on the undeveloped point at Wyee Point.

Forested backdrops surround existing development at Wyee Point, the subject site and the rural residential area. A forested hillside is directly south of the subject site, providing a vegetated backdrop that will help to maintain the dominance of the natural landscape, particularly along the horizon, fulfilling one of the scenic quality objectives for a high rating unit such as Wyee Point.

The proposed rezoning is also likely to conserve the foreshore and a corridor of vegetation through the subject site. If hollow bearing trees were to be maintained where practical, retaining natural vegetation in these three key locations will help to maintain the dominance of the natural landscape and minimise the impact of vegetation clearing and residential development on the surrounding viewshed. The use of appropriate landscaping would augment the vegetation in conservation areas, and help to screen residential development, reducing the visibility of the Planning Proposal, particularly when viewed from the lake. Being a relatively isolated community, Wyee Point is not visible from other scenic routes or viewpoints.

4.2 Significant Features, Viewing Points and Ridgelines

Section 2.1.2 of the Scenic Quality Guidelines identifies the significant features of the City of Lake Macquarie. Features that are regionally significant are to be protected to the fullest extent. The list of significant sites, viewing points, and ridgelines includes:

- **Significant sites** – Two feature sites are located in the vicinity of Wyee Point, being 10 (Morisset Hospital Conservation Management Plan Area) and 11 (Bird Cage Point – Morisset).

The Morisset Hospital Grounds and Farm is addressed in Part 4.9 of Council's Development Control Plan (DCP), which states that the site has heritage significance. The Hospital Grounds cover 1300 acres of land on the shores of Lake Macquarie that was reserved as an Asylum for the Insane on 25 August 1900. Building began in 1906, with the first ward occupied in 1909. Other wards followed with the number of patients growing to 1,490 people in 1960. During the 1930s a prison for the criminally insane was also constructed within the grounds.

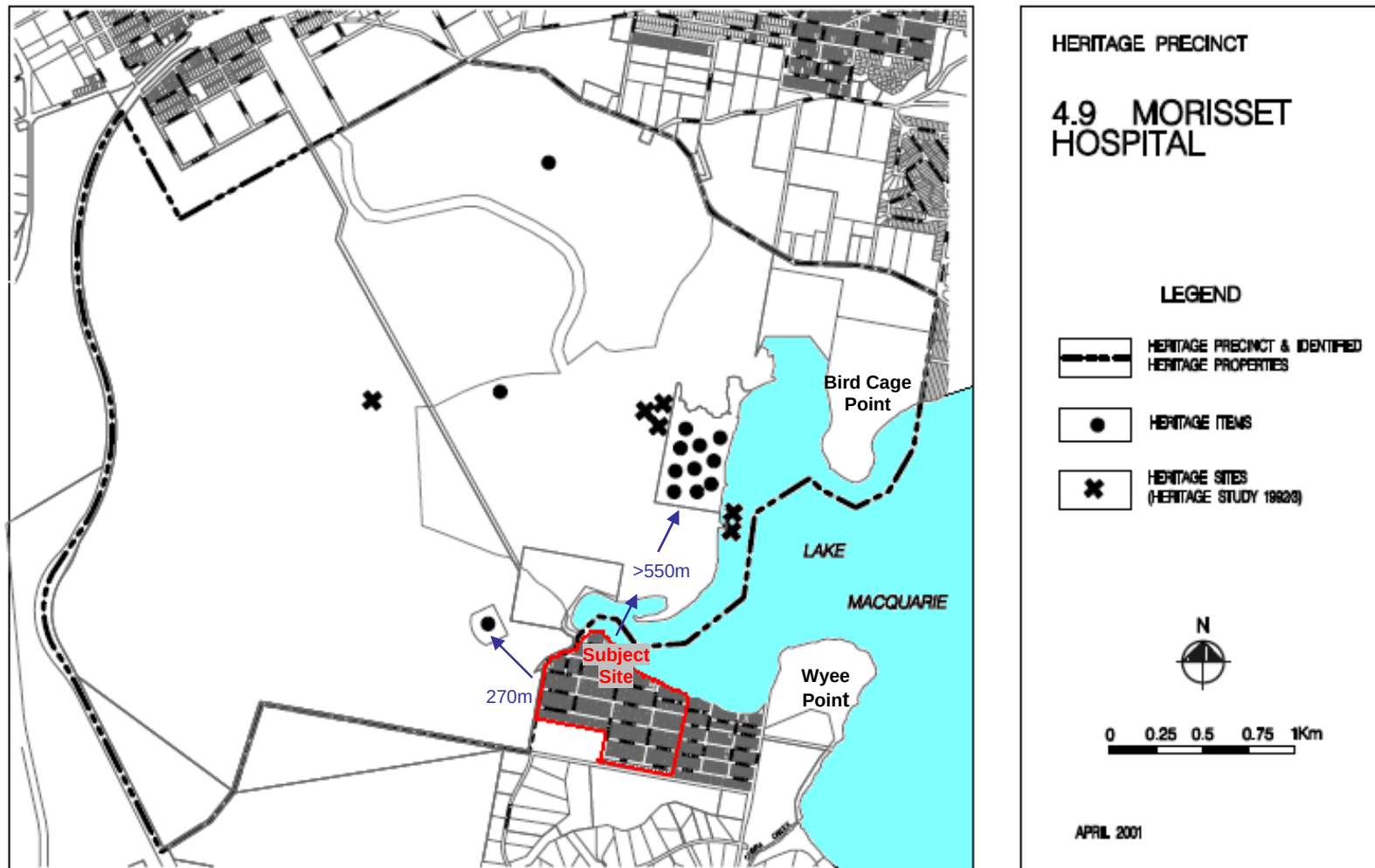
The DCP states that the significance of the site derives from the fact that it 'combines the idyllic concept of natural beauty as a catalyst for mental healing, a Nineteenth Century ideal of labour as a healing instrument, and isolation of the abnormal'. Significant items within the site include 26 buildings (out of almost 100 across the site), as well as trees and vegetation groups, vistas, a dam, jetty, the farms and native fauna. Significant items and sites are shown on the map of the heritage precinct, shown in Figure 4-1 of this report. The heritage precinct and associated properties identified in the DCP abut the subject site, although the subject site is over 550m from heritage items to the north and approximately 270m from the prison for the criminally insane in the west. Existing remnant vegetation screens the views between the subject site and heritage items to the north and west. Furthermore, the dominant vistas from the buildings and heritage items in the north are eastwards across the Lake rather than southwards to the subject site. Therefore, the visual impact of the Planning Proposal on these items will be minimal.

Bird Cage Point is located within the Lake Macquarie State Recreation Area, almost directly north of Wyee Point, with the two points jutting out toward each other. The subject site is approximately 1.4km south-east of Bird Cage Point. There is a line of sight between the two locations.

The planning proposal fulfils the scenic management objectives of the Guidelines because the development will not cause the loss of either the Morisset Hospital and Grounds or Bird Cage Point.

- **Significant viewing sites** – The subject site is not within the foreground or middle ground of any identified significant viewing points or routes. Therefore, the planning proposal fulfils the objectives of the Guidelines because the development will not impact on any significant views.
- **Significant ridgelines** – There are a number of ridgelines that increase the scenic amenity of the City of Lake Macquarie. While some of these have been modified or are interspersed with development, many maintain a continuous canopy of trees. The Morisset Peninsula – from Fishery Point Road Morisset to Balcolyn, Silverwater and Sunshine is identified as a significant ridgeline. The Morisset Peninsula ridgeline is located to the north of the subject site, further north of Bird Cage Point. The Planning Proposal will not impact on the appearance of this ridgeline and is therefore consistent with the Table 3 of the Scenic Quality Guidelines, which specifically addresses ridgelines.

Figure 4-1: Map of the Morisсет Hospital Heritage Precinct



4.3 Visual Accessibility

Section 2.1.3 of the Scenic Quality Guidelines presents the findings of a review of visual accessibility within Lake Macquarie. This analysis determines the parts of the landscape most regularly seen and most sensitive to change by ranking them from Level 1 (high viewing level) to Level 4 (very low viewing level). Wyee Road is identified as a Level 2 site, but is not located near Wyee Point, being over 2km west of the subject site. The road runs from Doyalson in the south, through Wyee, toward Morisset in the north. Wyee Point is not visible from the road. Therefore, Wyee Road is not applicable to this visual assessment.

Wyee Point itself is a Level 3 site, which has a low viewing level. Level 3 sites are assigned to minor roads and less visited places. Morisset Point is also a Level 3 site. Being Level 3 sites, Wyee Point and Morisset Point are classified in the guidelines as not particularly sensitive to change.

4.4 Scenic Management Zone

The Scenic Management Zone for a site is determined by overlaying the Landscape Setting Unit and the Visual Accessibility rating. As discussed previously in Sections 4.1 and 4.3 subject site is identified as having a High Landscape Setting Unit and Visual Accessibility of 3. Table 1 of the Scenic Quality Guidelines contains a matrix that reveals a scenic management zoning of B for Wyee Point. The Morisset Peninsula, to the north of the subject site and across Lake Macquarie is also identified as Zone B.

Zone B is assigned to those areas that are highly valued in the City for the maintenance of the scenic quality and identity of various localities. Appendix 5 of the Scenic Management Guidelines contains Scenic Management Zone Tables that identify objectives and strategies applicable to the each management zone. These are presented under particular landform types, being:

- Ridgelines and hillsides;
- Foreshore and coastline;
- Rural landscapes; and
- Forested hinterland.

The objectives and strategies for the various landform types within Scenic Management Zone B are as follows.

Ridgelines and Hillsides

The objectives for ridgelines and hillsides are to 'maintain the natural character of all ridgelines and a significant component of the hillsides while allowing some modification of existing conditions'. The proposed development has views toward the Morisset Peninsula Ridgeline in the north. The planning proposal complies with the objectives of Scenic Management Zone B, because it will not permit any development on the ridgeline.

Foreshore and Coastline

The objectives for foreshore and coastline are to 'maintain the dominant natural character of the foreshore and coastline areas while allowing some modification and rehabilitation of areas with diminished scenic quality'. The Planning Proposal is to rezone the subject site to part 7(1) Conservation (Primary) and part 2(1) Residential. Land on the foreshore of the subject site is currently zoned 6(1) Open Space and 7(1) Conservation (Primary). Under this Planning Proposal, the foreshore land is likely to be rezoned for ongoing conservation. As a result the remnant vegetation along the foreshore, which variably contains open woodland, mangroves and grassland communities, will be retained providing a visual screen between the Lake and the subject site. Rehabilitating foreshore vegetation may increase screening coverage, if required. Therefore, the planning proposal complies with the objectives of the Scenic Quality Guidelines because the vegetation along the foreshore will be retained, maintaining natural character and screening residential development, which will be setback further into the site. The maintenance of hollow bearing trees will also aid in screening any residential development.

Rural Landscapes

The objectives for the scenic management of rural landscapes are to 'maintain the rural character while allowing some development and modification in areas appropriate to the setting and overall landscape experience'. The subject site is typified by a forested hinterland rather than a rural landscape. See below for more details.

Forested Hinterland

The objectives of scenic management of forested hinterland are to 'maintain the significant role of bushland in the district whilst allowing for some modification and development involving clearing'. The Planning Proposal will most likely provide for a conservation zoning along the foreshore in which existing vegetation will be retained and rehabilitated where necessary. This will help to maintain the natural character of the site when viewed from the Lake and other areas of the Lake foreshore. Retaining vegetation when clearing the residential areas of the site and providing a landscape management plan that will intersperse vegetation throughout residential development will help to maintain the bushland characteristics of the site.

Urban Areas

The objectives of scenic management of urban areas are 'to maintain the desirable character of the area, while allowing some development'. The Planning Proposal fulfils this objective because it allows for an extension to existing development at Wyee Point, extending on the desirable character of this area.

Further compliance with the scenic management strategies are described in Section 5.0 below.

5.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The subject site contains native vegetation, which has been modified by past clearing activities and possibly bushfire. The site is located adjacent to existing residential development in Wyee Point, so there are opportunities for future residential development to integrate with existing development.

The site does not contain significant landscape features or ridgelines. Retaining vegetation within a conservation zone and where appropriate within the site would mitigate the impact of the planning proposal on the foreshore. The impact of residential development may be mitigated by landscaping and vegetation retention where appropriate.

The study site is located near the Morisset Park Hospital and Grounds and is located opposite Bird Cage Point, which are identified as significant sites in the surrounding landscape. The impact of the planning proposal on these items will be reduced by the intervening landscape and vegetation, which screens views and the fact that the subject site is not dominant within the vistas from these sites. Therefore the Planning Proposal will not significantly impact on any regionally significant views or landscape features.

Within the site, vegetation should be retained where possible, which will help to minimise the visual impact of development and provide continuity between the extended urban footprint and the surrounding forested and rural landscape. The site would extend upon the existing urban footprint of Wyee Point rather than creating new pockets of development. Therefore, development of the site would be consistent to the existing character of areas within this part of Lake Macquarie.

5.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made with the intention to reduce the visual impact of the Planning Proposal on the surrounding landscape.

- Vegetation along the foreshore, within the existing conservation zoned lands, should be rezoned for further conservation purposes. Vegetation should be retained within the conservation zone to act as a visual screen to residential development of the site. If necessary and appropriate, the vegetation should be rehabilitated to create adequate screening coverage along the foreshore.
- Prior to subdivision and development of the site, investigations should be undertaken to determine the extent of clearing required in residential

zones. Where possible, trees should be retained, particularly within road reserves, and hollow bearing trees. This will help to reduce the visual impact of clearing within the site following rezoning.

- A Landscape Management Plan should be provided prior to subdivision and development of any residential zones within the site. The landscape plan should particularly focus on maintaining the natural character of the foreshore and minimising the visual impact of residential development by providing screening and providing visual breaks. Landscaping of the road reserves will be particularly significant. Vegetation retention should also be considered where possible.
- The height of structures within any residential zones of the subject site should consider the level of the tree canopy in preparing development applications.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The Planning Proposal is consistent with the objectives of the Scenic Management Guidelines for Zone B because the retention of vegetation along the foreshore in a conservation zone will maintain the natural character of the site. The development will not impact on the appearance of any significant ridgelines. Residential development would be extension of the existing Wyee Point settlement and maintain the dominant character for the foreshore in the south-west of the Lake, of urban areas interspersed with natural vegetation.

It is considered that the Planning Proposal will have an acceptable visual impact on the surrounding landscape if the recommendations of this report are adopted.

7.0 REFERENCES

Google Maps

Lake Macquarie City Council, *Scenic Quality Guidelines*, March 2004.

Land and Property Information NSW, 2001, *Catherine Hill Bay Topographic and Orthophoto Map 1:25 000*, 9231-4S, Third Edition.

Land and Property Information NSW, 2002, *Swansea Topographic and Orthophoto Map 1:25 000*, 9231-4N Third Edition.

APPENDIX 1

Site Photos



Plate 1: Evidence of previous works for access into the site



Plate 2: Existing rural residential to the south west of the subject site



Plate 3: Right of carriageway from Saddlers Way into the site



Plate 4: Existing vegetation on the site



Plate 5: The only accessible point with views into the site is from Morisset Park