



# **Mt Gilead Stage 2**

**First Nations Cultural Heritage**

**Summary Report**

**July 2022**



## **Acknowledgement of Country**

We respect and acknowledge the Dharawal people, their lands and waterways, their rich cultural heritage and their deep connection to Country, and we acknowledge their Elders past and present. We are committed to truth-telling and to engaging with Dharawal people to support the protection of their culture and heritage. We strongly advocate social and cultural justice outcomes and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

## **Cultural warning**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this report may contain images or names of First Nations people who have passed away.

# Report register

The following report register documents the development of this report, in accordance with GML's Quality Management System.

Project	Issue No.	Notes/Description	Issue Date
19-0457A	1	Draft Report	1 July 2022

## Quality assurance

The report has been reviewed and approved for issue in accordance with the GML quality assurance policy and procedures.

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## Cover image

Ring tree (11), which presents cultural connections between the MGS2 and other places at the regional level.

# Executive summary

Lendlease Communities (Figtree Hill) Pty Ltd (Lendlease) engaged GML Heritage Pty Ltd (GML) to prepare a First Nations heritage and culture interviews report for the Mount Gilead Stage 2 (MGS2) area. GML has also been engaged to provide an assessment for historical heritage within the MGS2 area.

The proposal for the MGS2 land is twofold: conservation of significant natural habitats for a range of cultural and environmental purposes, and residential development within available areas.

The preparation of First Nations and historical heritage documents for the MGS2 lands has culminated in the preparation of four key documents, two are considered restricted because of Aboriginal traditional and cultural factors:

- Mt Gilead Stage 2, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Report (GML July 2022)
- Mt Gilead Stage 2, Community Engagement: Heritage and Culture Interviews (GML July 2022)
- Mt Gilead Stage 2, Historical Archaeological Assessment (GML October 2021)
- Glen Lorne Archaeology Project, Archaeological Research Design (GML and Sydney University July 2021)

This report synthesises and summaries the outcomes from the two First Nations reports (above). These two reports contain extensive details of Aboriginal connection and traditions, places, sites and values, which cannot be presented as public information.

The aim for this report is to therefore present an overview of these 'restricted' reports, whilst addressing the requirement for public dissemination of information suitable to inform the planning process.

The report identifies through social and archaeological landscape assessment many social, cultural, aesthetic and scientific connections with the MGS2 area. The outcomes will be used by Lendlease to assist in the development of a MGS2 masterplan. It will also form part of the Environmental Assessment for the study area prepared under Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW).

## Community engagement

The MGS2 project has implemented Aboriginal community consultation adhering with the Heritage NSW guideline (OEH 2010) *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents*.

For this project we sought to better understand the First Nations heritage of the Mount Gilead region, beyond the tangible evidence (archaeology). During the formal Aboriginal party registration process for the project we asked groups and individuals to submit responses on their cultural connections to the area. Any interested groups were then invited to participate in social/cultural values interviews. Seven groups responded, expressing interest in being interviewed and talking about their connections to the area.

From the information provided by participants, seven key themes have been identified. The themes relate to the responses provided by the participants and include connections to Country and broad experiences, spanning traditional, historical and contemporary periods:

- Cultural Connectedness;
- (Re)Connecting to Country;
- Art Sites and their Significance;
- Trade and Ceremony;
- Bush Tucker, Hunting and Resources;
- Significant Places in and around MGS2; and
- Current and Future Heritage Conservation.

Each of these themes is discussed in the report (Section 4), with selected quotes from participants which demonstrate the themes. The outcomes have been used to both understand First Nation's cultural connections with this place, and underpin the proposed First Nations heritage management (Section 6).

## **Archaeological investigations**

Our work has involved extensive on Country investigations—we have taken a cultural landscape approach and sought to understand this place within a wider context. Archaeological investigations across the MGS2 area have been ongoing for over 50 years, with the first survey and recording in 1972. Over the ensuing years the archaeological record has been enriched and expanded, to include a total of 165 separate (but interrelated) items (including PAD areas). For the current project ten separate inspection events across the MGS2 area, including one formal archaeological survey, have been completed. The recorded suite of First Nations heritage includes:

- 7 shelters with rock art (some with associated archaeological deposits);
- 45 cultural trees, including 11 scarred trees, 26 ring trees, and 8 other significant trees;
- 7 grinding groove sites;
- 34 separate stone artefact sites (lithics), 16 zones with potential archaeological deposit (PAD) in an open context, and a further 36 PADs in shelters;
- 8 locations associated with views to regional features of significance;

- 14 waterholes and 1 spring; and
- 3 other cultural items/places.

The location of Aboriginal sites and values (referred to as Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, or ACH) is restricted and cannot be identified in a public document. Therefore in this report we present these sites, places and connection using 'masked' mapping. This outlines the broad spatial relationship of the items without disclosing their precise locations. The masked mapping for all ACH is shown in Figure ES1, NB the mapping applies a buffer around the ACH.

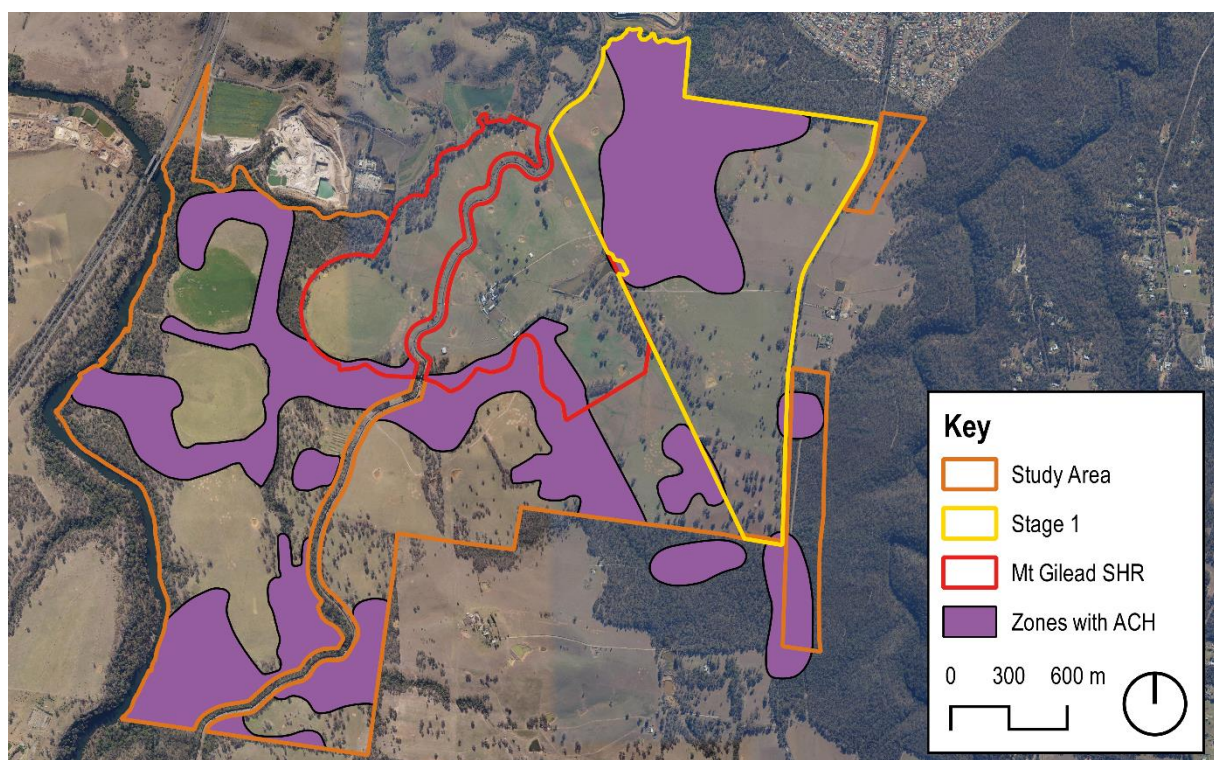


Figure ES1 Indicative locations of all ACH 'sites', 'places' and connections identified inside the MGS2 area. This figure reflects a 'masked' overview of ACH, which intends to provide an appreciation of zones with higher densities of Aboriginal site, places and connections. The boundary line is indicative and forms a buffer around areas with densities of sites and/or connections.

## Synthesis

Following the archaeological work and community engagement, we have worked with local First Nations people to understand the physical archaeology record, intangible associations with Country and develop new connections (a re-connection) with this place. These connections have identified regional and local wayfinding associations, which connect the MGS1 and MGS2 areas to the landscape between the Nepean and Georges Rivers, and also across Western Sydney.



At the local level we have been able to identify places and movements through the MGS2 area. In Figure ES2 we have annotated the eight identified locations from which regional views can be seen (pink circles). We have identified a series of movement corridors including: the Nepean River (orange line in the west, left); Georges River (orange line in the east); two crossing locations on the Nepean River (green circles); Appin Road (yellow line in the east); the ridgeline route (yellow line in the west); and the local wayfinding routes (red lines) associated with movement from Appin Road in the south, through the hilltop with the Fig tree, and locations in and around Woodhouse Creek.

All of these movement corridors are inferred on the basis of the physical evidence recorded, combined with local social knowledge provided by Aboriginal people. It can be assumed these corridors were associated with traditions and movement routes within the Late Holocene, notably the last 1,000 years. Examination of earlier associations would require archaeological materials derived from excavation, combined with reliable dates (carbon) associated with archaeological sites.

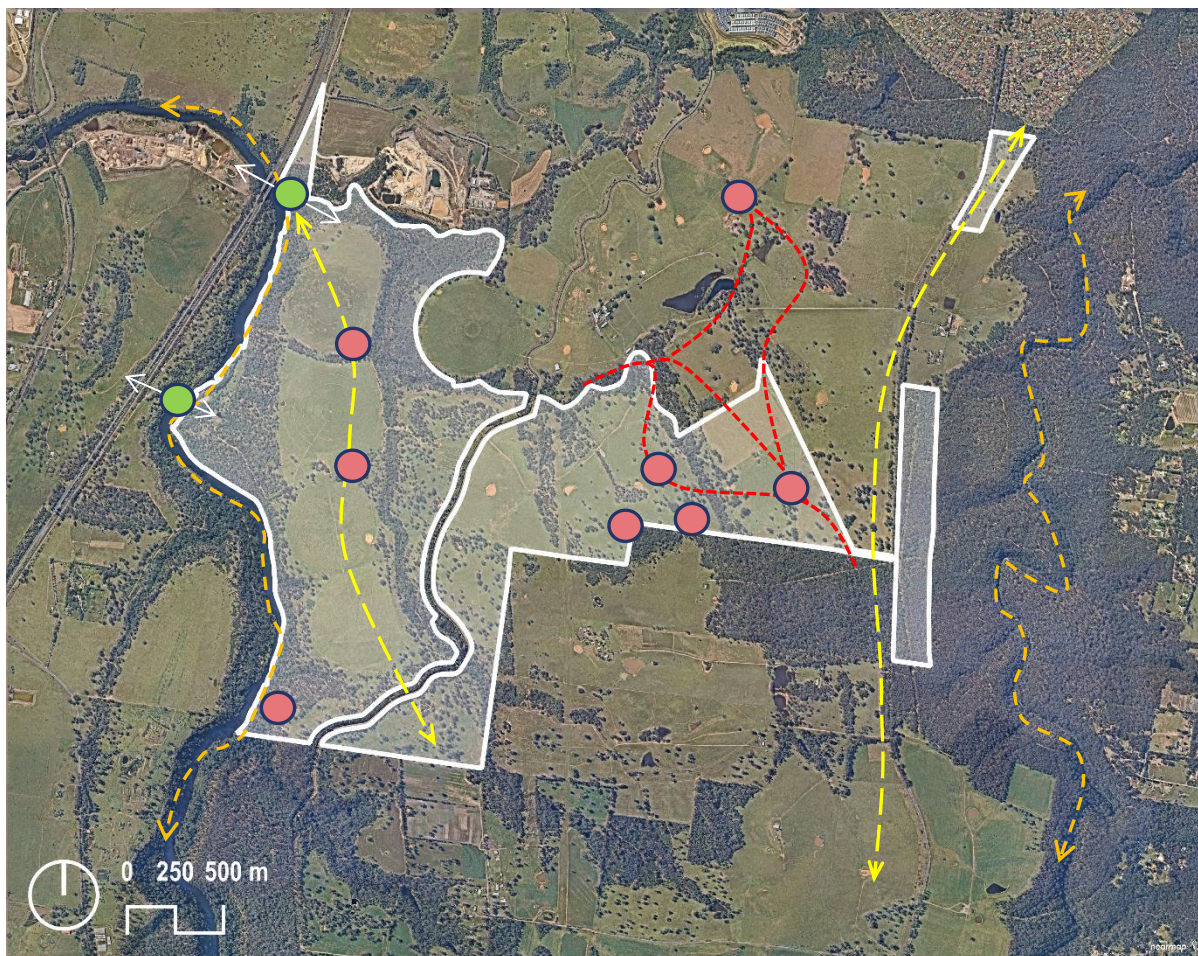


Figure ES2 Summary of traditional connections and movement within and through the MGS2 area.

## **Heritage management**

Heritage management and planning considerations for future land use (conservation, biobanking and urban development) are presented in Section 6. A number of key principles and guidelines will assist with recognising, conserving and interpreting key elements of First Nations heritage and culture in and around the MGS2 study area.

Section 6 presents heritage management and planning considerations which are based on both the NSW statutory framework, and the outcomes from community engagement through the work. These include:

- future engagement with First Nations people;
- conservation of ACH values;
- biobanking;
- urban development;
- future heritage investigations; and
- place specific heritage management.

Implementation of the ACH recommendations should result in good conservation outcomes, further understanding of place, as well as re-connection and future education opportunities.



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# 1 Dharawal Nguru

## **Dharawal Nguru**

*Dharawal country is flourishing  
And colourful like a beautiful dancing girl  
Trees stand tall and proud up in here,  
With green rolling valleys,  
The water is clear, as is the sky.  
The earth wraps its arms around me  
Caring for me, protecting me.*

*Dharawal nguru is flourishing  
And colourful like a beautiful gali midjang  
Gundu-lali stand tall and proud up in here,  
With nurunnurun rolling valleys,  
The nadjun is clear, as is the sky.  
The nguru wraps its arms around me  
caring for me, protecting me.<sup>1</sup>  
(Red Room Poetry, 2020)*

Australia is home to the oldest continuous culture on earth—65,000 years of uninterrupted heritage, extending from the deep past to the present, and into the future. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' view of heritage transcends time into what is widely described as the Dreaming.

The heart of the Dreaming is that every part of the life force—the creation beings, the land, the sea, humans, fauna, flora and natural phenomena—is inextricably and eternally connected to every other part.<sup>2</sup> The Dreaming can be mapped onto micro-environments on specific tracts of land that Aboriginal people call 'Country'.<sup>3</sup> First Nations peoples have been caring for Country since time immemorial, and use the term to describe their deep connection and responsibility for looking after *her* health and wellbeing. Country is 'not



only our mother, the source of our identity and our spirituality, it is also the context for our human order and inquiry.<sup>4</sup> When people talk about Country it is spoken of like a person, 'we speak to Country, we sing to Country, we worry about Country, and we long for Country'.<sup>5</sup> It is a holistic knowledge system that is lived daily, connects animate with inanimate, and embraces the past, present and future.

Elder Merv Penrith explains:

'Culture is in the trees, in the bush, in the waters, mountains, the animals and the birds. It's all there for the teaching. How can it be gone when all these things, all this oneness, all this creation is still around us? For thousands and thousands of years our Elders have brought our people through.'<sup>6</sup>

As Dharawal historian Les Bursill notes, 'this unity and harmony must be respected, ensured and maintained'.<sup>7</sup>

This report provides an approach which combines and emphasises these connections with Country, as they have been expressed to us by local Aboriginal people.

## 1.1 Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Red Room Poetry, Zetland NSW, 2022, 'Poetry in First Languages', viewed 22 June 2022 <<https://redroompoetry.org/projects/poetry-first-languages/2020/poetry-first-languages-dharawal-2020/>>.

<sup>2</sup> Bursill, L D, M & Jacobs, M 2015, A History of the Illawarra Volume 1: Before Colonisation, vol. 1, Dharawal Publications, Yowie Bay.

<sup>3</sup> Nicholls, C 2014, 'Dreamtime' and 'The Dreaming' and Introduction', The Conversation, January 23 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Abbot, K 2004, 'Return to the Heart', *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*, vol 28, no 2.

<sup>5</sup> NSW, G A 2020, Draft Connecting with Country: A draft framework for understanding the value of Aboriginal knowledge in the design and planning of places, NSW Government, Sydney.

<sup>6</sup> Bursill, L D, M & Jacobs, M 2015, A History of the Illawarra Volume 1: Before Colonisation, vol. 1, Dharawal Publications, Yowie Bay.

<sup>7</sup> Bursill, L D, M & Jacobs, M 2015, A History of the Illawarra Volume 1: Before Colonisation, vol. 1, Dharawal Publications, Yowie Bay.

## **2 Mount Gilead Stage 2—introduction**

### **2.1 Preamble**

Greater Macarthur has been identified as Growth Area by the NSW Government and will provide for 15,000 new homes to the broader south Campbelltown region. Lendlease's landholding at Gilead has been identified as a Priority Precinct and will make the first contribution to housing supply in the region of approximately 3,500,300 new homes, retail centres and education facilities. Importantly, it will secure key conservation outcomes including the establishment of linked koala and fauna corridors between the Georges River and Nepean River.

To facilitate both the housing and conservation outcomes for the site, a Planning Proposal is being prepared to rezone the under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts, Western Parkland City) 2021. The Planning Proposal will establish the Urban Development Zone for land capable of development and introduce a C2 Environmental Conservation zone for land containing key fauna habitat to be retained as well as land that native habitat bushland is to be reconstructed.

This report specifically addresses First Nations heritage and has been used to shape and inform the Planning Proposal and associated development outcomes.

#### **2.1.1 The Mount Gilead Stage 2 study area**

The Mount Gilead Stage 2 (MGS2) study area is located between the Hume Highway and Appin Road, south of Campbelltown, NSW, and is part of the wider Macarthur region. The Stage 2 area abuts the Mount Gilead Stage 1 (MGS1) area, and encompasses land from the Nepean River to Appin Road (Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2). MGS2 consists of five properties including Lot 2 in DP 1218887, Lot 2 in DP 249393, Lot 1 DP603675, Lot 2 DP603674 and part of Lot 5 in DP 1240836 that have a combined area of 495ha.



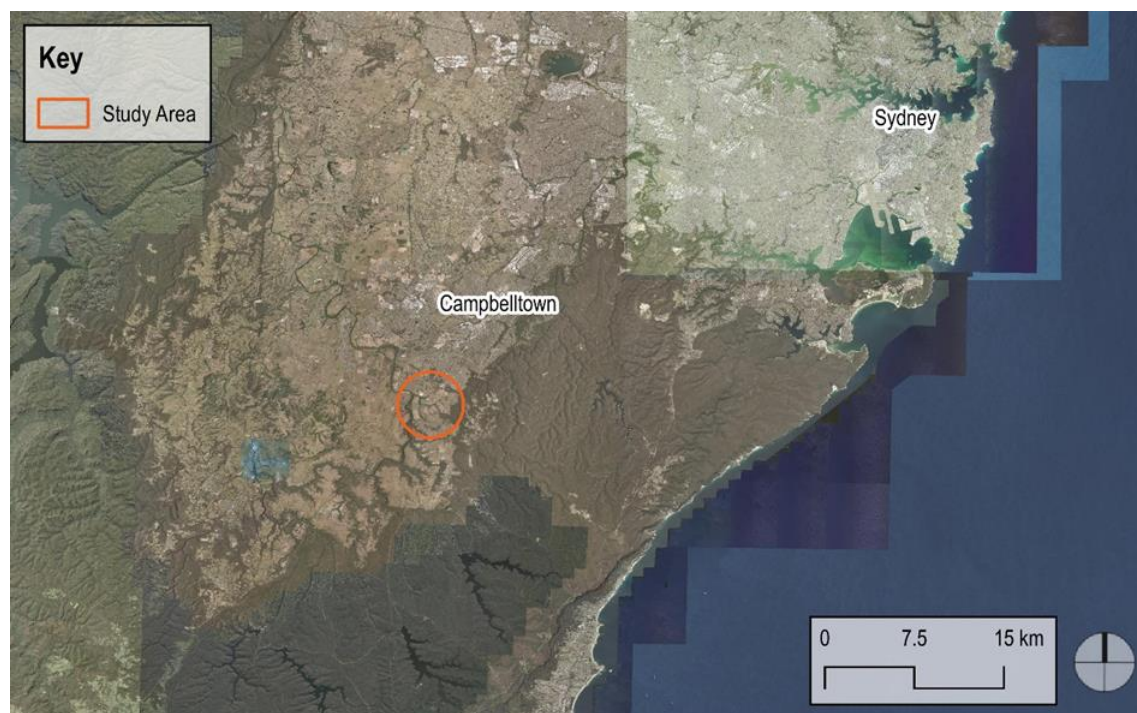


Figure 2.1 Approximate location of the Mount Gilead project area in relation to Sydney. (Source: © Google Maps with GML overlay, 2021)

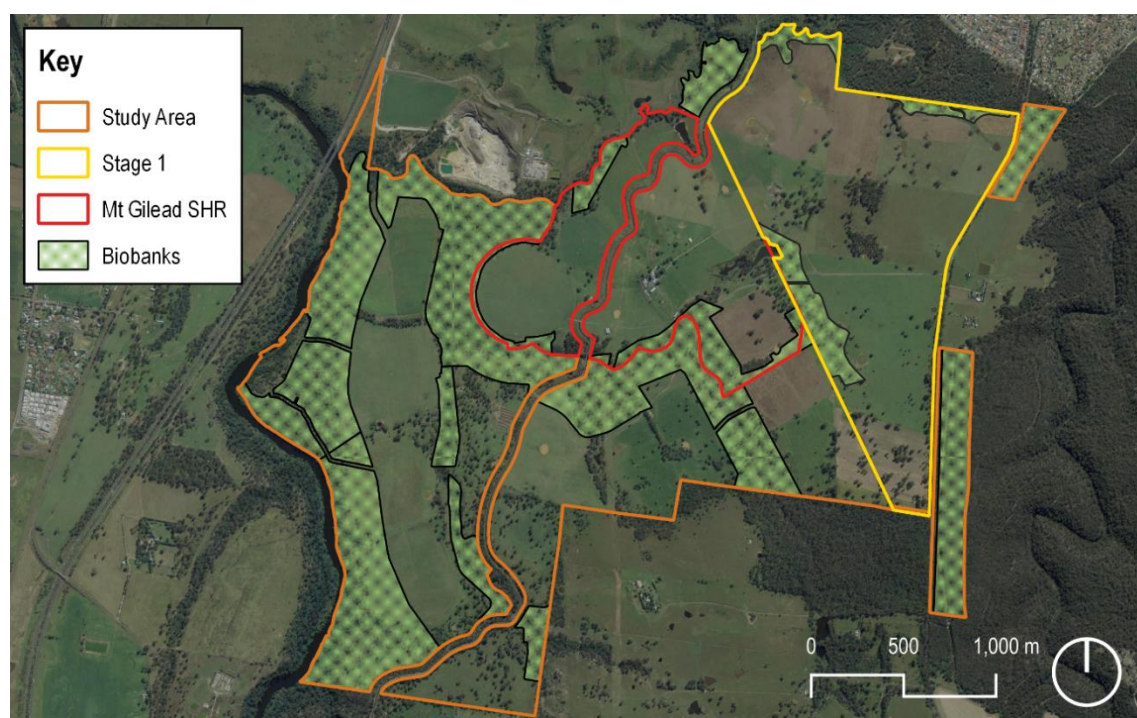


Figure 2.2 The MGS2 study area, showing conservation (biobank lands), the development areas, MGS1 area, and the SHR curtilage for the Mt Gilead homestead.

## 2.1.2 The rezoning process

The State Government commenced investigations into the development capability of Greater Macarthur in 2014 with the Greater Macarthur Land Release Investigation Preliminary Strategy and Action Plan. Since its release, strategic planning for Greater Macarthur has continued to be refined for the region with a high-level structure plan and key planning principles adopted as part of *Greater Macarthur 2040 An Interim Plan* (Greater Macarthur 2040). Greater Macarthur 2040 identified precincts that resulted in an amendment to *State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006*. As part of the declaration of precincts, the Gilead North Precinct was identified as a priority for Government to progress detailed planning for in response to the key planning principles.

Since then, Lendlease has worked with the NSW Government through the Technical Assurance Panel Process between 2021 to 2022 to resolve positions on key matters that will shape the development and conservation outcomes for the Gilead Precinct. On this basis, Lendlease has worked to prepare a structure plan to define appropriate development and conservation outcomes for the Gilead Precinct.

The structure plan has been informed by this First Nations heritage report that is part of a suite of technical studies that have been used to prepare a Planning Proposal that will put in place an Urban Development Zone and Conservation Zone and development controls by an amendment to *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Western Parkland City) 2021*. As part of the Planning Proposal, the technical studies have been used to identify design principles to be used to inform the next stages of detailed planning and development delivery.

Once Gilead is rezoned, as necessary, technical studies will be further refined to lock in specific place-based outcomes that will be engrained within the Development Control Plan and infrastructure within Planning Agreements with Campbelltown City Council and the Minister for Planning.

## 2.1.3 Cultural heritage assessments

Lendlease Communities (Lendlease) engaged GML Heritage Pty Ltd (GML) to prepare a First Nations heritage and culture interviews report for the MGS2 area. GML has also been engaged to provide an assessment for historical heritage within the MGS2 area. The MGS2 area is a large component of the wider lands now owned by Lendlease, and forms a component of a larger cultural landscape research project (called the Glen Lorne project), which is being undertaken by GML, Lendlease and the University of Sydney.

The proposal for the MGS2 land is twofold: conservation of significant natural habitats for a range of cultural and environmental purposes, and residential development within available areas.

The preparation of First Nations and historical heritage documents for the MGS2 lands has culminated in the preparation of four key documents, two are considered restricted because of Aboriginal traditional and cultural factors:

- Mt Gilead Stage 2, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Report (GML July 2022)
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## 2.1.4 Summary report aims

This report synthesises and summaries the outcomes from the two First Nations reports (above). These two reports contain extensive details of Aboriginal connection and traditions, places, sites and values, which cannot be presented as public information.

The aim for this report is to therefore present an overview of these 'restricted' reports, whilst addressing the requirement for public dissemination of information suitable to inform the planning process.

The report identifies through social and archaeological landscape assessment many social, cultural, aesthetic and scientific connections with the MGS2 area. The outcomes will be used by Lendlease to assist in the development of a MGS2 masterplan. It will also form part of the Environmental Assessment for the study area prepared under Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW).

The broader scope of work for the MGS2 Aboriginal/First Nations culture and heritage assessment involves five stages:

1. Commencement of the formal Heritage NSW Aboriginal consultation process, adhering with the process as outlined under the *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010*.
2. Synthesis of available Aboriginal heritage background information for the MGS2 area to present a current understanding of the area. The MGS2 area has been subject to extensive Aboriginal archaeological survey, which has created a substantial database of information.



3. An initial social (intangible) values consultation and assessment with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) who have identified they hold a specific connection with the MGS2 area, should they wish to be consulted.
4. A targeted archaeological survey in areas where physical (tangible) values, sites, places and/or connections may be present.
5. Present all gathered information in the format of an initial Aboriginal Heritage Report (AHR), with GIS based mapping, which outlines key areas and aspects of identified Aboriginal culture and heritage. The report will provide key principles and guidelines for development of the MGS2 masterplan, with the aim of recognising, conserving and interpreting key elements of Aboriginal heritage and culture.

## 2.2 Best Practice: Context

Australia's waters, land, and seas, collectively referred to as 'Country', are alive with a profusion of heritage places. These places are imbued with the essence of the ancestral beings that created them. It is through these places that family descent and kinship connections flow. It is this connection that gives owners' rights, responsibilities and duties to Country. This is often described as being a Traditional Owner, Traditional Custodian or Native Title Holder. Typically, senior members of the community have the authority to speak for Country.

Culture and heritage are critical to First Nations people and axiomatically connect with concepts of Dreaming and Country. Places of heritage significance extend from the deep past to the present and future. They include enduring cultural landscapes, objects and artistic expressions, and more recent urban areas, built and contemporary features such as missions, protest routes and monuments. First Nations people may not have ancestral connections to the latter but their connection through lived experience is significant and should be recognised. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge and understand that First Nations heritage:

- encompasses tangible values (stone tools, bone, woven and wooden implements, shell middens, culturally modified trees, rock art sites, ceremonial places and fringe camps);
- encompasses intangible values (Dreaming stories, Song Lines, oral traditions, ceremonies, social practices and lived experience); and
- extends from the deep past to the present and future.

## 2.2.1 Why Best Practice?

The current heritage legislation for managing Aboriginal culture and heritage in NSW, the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NSW), is inadequate and outdated. It does not adequately recognise the interconnectedness of culture and Country, as described above and in the preamble of this report. It also does not recognise or respect the rights of Aboriginal peoples to control and manage their culture and heritage. These sentiments are echoed in numerous reports by authoritative voices and peak bodies, including the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council.<sup>1</sup>

In 2018, the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill was developed which proposed a more bespoke system of cultural heritage assessments for projects. The Bill recognised that Aboriginal social/cultural values should be integrated into the consent process in a more meaningful way and intangible cultural heritage provided greater recognition. However, these changes are yet to be formalised.

Therefore, employing best practice standards and approaches not only ensures that results produced are of a high standard—ethically, socially and culturally—but also:

- recognises and respects the views of First Nations peoples;
- encourages a proactive approach to heritage conservation and management where current heritage legislation falls short;
- supports collaboration and co-design with First Nations individuals and groups; and
- identifies and understands heritage and culture more holistically, aligning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander epistemology.

The following current and key best practice guidelines provide the most appropriate standards and frames to support engagement with First Nations community groups and individuals, and a greater understanding of their heritage and culture:

- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (UN General Assembly, 2007);
- Dhawura Ngilan: A vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage in Australia (Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, 2020);
- Connecting with Country (Government Architect NSW, 2020);
- The Uluru Statement from the Heart (2017); and
- The Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 2013 (the Burra Charter).

## **2.2.2 NSW First Nations/Aboriginal Heritage Conservation and Management Guidelines**

GML follows a number of Aboriginal heritage assessment and management guidelines and policies that are specific to the NSW jurisdiction. These are:

- Guide to Determining and Issuing Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permits, 2009;
- Operational Policy: Protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, 2009;
- Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010;
- Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW, 2010 (the Due Diligence Code);
- Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales, 2010 (the Code of Practice); and
- Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW, 2011.

## **2.2.3 The Burra Charter Process**

Broadly, the Burra Charter process (Article 6) is a national charter that establishes principles and conservation of cultural sites in Australia. It is the key set of guidelines that heritage authorities employ and provides the basic principles and procedures to be followed in the conservation of heritage. It outlines a three-stage process for the assessment and management of heritage. The three stages are:

1. Develop an understanding of heritage significance.
2. Develop policy that is appropriate to the significance.
3. Undertake management in accordance with the policy.

The Burra Charter's explanations for heritage provide the basis for definitions used in this report. The Burra Charter's Indigenous Practice Note provides further guidance for applying the Burra Charter to Aboriginal heritage.

In this report, we have used the following definitions and subscribe to their meanings:

### **Article 1.1—Place**

Place means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions. 'Place' includes locations that embody spiritual value (such as Dreaming places, sacred landscapes, and stone arrangements), social and historical value (such as massacre sites), as well as scientific value (such as archaeological sites). In fact, one place may be all of these things or may embody all of these values at the same time.

### **Article 1.2—Cultural Significance**

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places, and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

#### Article 1.10—Use

Use means the functions of a place, including the activities and traditional and customary practices that may occur at the place or are dependent on the place.

#### Article 1.11—Compatible Use

Compatible use means a use which respects the cultural significance of a place. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

#### Article 1.16—Meanings

Meanings denote what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses to people.

#### Article 5—Values

Conservation of a place should identify and take into consideration all aspects of cultural and natural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one value at the expense of others.

#### Article 6—Burra Charter Process

The cultural significance of a place and other issues affecting its future are best understood by a sequence of collecting and analysing information before making decisions. Understanding cultural significance comes first, then development of policy and finally management of the place in accordance with the policy. This is the Burra Charter Process.

#### Article 8—Setting

Conservation requires the retention of an appropriate setting. This includes retention of the visual and sensory setting, as well as the retention of spiritual and other cultural relationships that contribute to the cultural significance of the place. Places of significance to Indigenous people require a holistic approach to 'setting'. 'Setting' may encompass the broadest of experiential factors including a sense of 'intrusion' occasioned when people of the 'wrong' gender, age or level of initiation trespass on defined areas, as well as auditory and visual intrusion. For some Indigenous peoples, nature and culture are indivisible. The social significance and spiritual significance of a place for Indigenous people may be wholly or partly dependent on the natural environment that the place forms a part of, including aspects such as biodiversity, and totemic and resource species.

#### Article 12—Participation

Conservation, interpretation and management of a place should provide for the participation of people for whom the place has significant associations and meanings, or who have social, spiritual or other cultural responsibilities for the place.



#### Article 13—Co-existence of cultural values

Co-existence of cultural values should always be recognised, respected and encouraged. This is especially important in cases where they conflict.

#### Article 24—Retaining associations and meanings

##### 24.1—Significant associations

Significant associations between people and a place should be respected, retained and not obscured. Opportunities for the interpretation, commemoration and celebration of these associations should be investigated and implemented.

##### 24.2—Significant meanings

Significant meanings including spiritual values, of a place should be respected. Opportunities for the continuation or revival of these meanings should be investigated and implemented.

#### Article 25—Interpretation

The cultural significance of many places is not readily apparent, and should be explained by interpretation. Interpretation should enhance understanding and engagement, and be culturally appropriate.

## 2.3 Statutory Context

In NSW, Aboriginal heritage is protected under four Acts:

- the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NPW Act) (NSW);
- the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EPA Act) (NSW);
- the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) (Cwlth); and
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 (ATSIHP Act) (Cwlth).

Under the NPW Act, statutory protection is afforded to 'Aboriginal objects'. A proponent is expected to assess and make a plan for the management of all Aboriginal objects.

The EPBC Act establishes the National Heritage List, which includes natural, Indigenous and historic places that are of outstanding heritage value to the nation. Under the EPBC Act there are penalties for anyone who takes an action that has or will have a significant impact on the Indigenous heritage values of a place that is recognised in the National Heritage List. The EPBC Act does not apply to the MGS2 area.

The ATSIHP Act can protect areas and objects that are of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The ATSIHP Act allows the Environment

Minister, on the application of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person or group of persons, to make a declaration to protect an area, object or class of objects from a threat of injury or desecration.

### **2.3.1 National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974**

The NPW Act provides statutory protection for all Aboriginal 'objects' (consisting of any material evidence of the Indigenous occupation of New South Wales) under Section 90 of the NPW Act, and 'Aboriginal places' (areas of cultural significance to the Aboriginal community) under Section 84 of the NPW Act. Aboriginal objects and places are afforded automatic statutory protection in New South Wales whereby it is an offence (without the Minister's consent) to harm an Aboriginal object or declared Aboriginal place.

The NPW Act defines an Aboriginal object as:

any deposit, object or material evidence (not being a handicraft made for sale) relating to the Aboriginal habitation of the area that comprises New South Wales, being habitation before or concurrent with (or both) the occupation of that area by persons of non-Aboriginal extraction, and includes Aboriginal remains.

The protection provided to Aboriginal objects and places applies irrespective of the level of their significance or issues of land tenure. A site of traditional significance that does not necessarily contain material remains may be gazetted as an 'Aboriginal place' and thereby protected under the NPW Act. However, areas are only gazetted if the Minister is satisfied that sufficient evidence exists to demonstrate that the location is, or was, of special significance to Aboriginal culture.

A strict liability offence applies for harm to or desecration of an Aboriginal object or declared Aboriginal place. The definition of 'harm' includes destroying, defacing, damaging or moving an Aboriginal object or declared Aboriginal Place. The strict liability offence of harming Aboriginal objects has a number of defences. The two defences relevant to the proposed development are the statutory defence of due diligence through complying with an adopted industry code, or compliance with the conditions of an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP).

### **2.3.2 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979**

The EPA Act provides a statutory framework for the planning and assessment of development proposals. It provides for the identification, protection and management of heritage items through their inclusion in schedules to planning instruments such as Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) or Regional Environmental Plans (REPs). Heritage items in planning instruments are usually historic sites but can include Aboriginal objects and

places. The EPA Act requires that appropriate measures be taken for the management of the potential archaeological resource by means consistent with the practices and standards adopted in meeting the requirements of the NPW Act.

## 2.4 Authorship

This project has been undertaken by the following people. Each person's role and affiliations are detailed.

Table 2.1 Project investigators and contributors.

Person	Affiliation	Role
Dr Tim Owen	GML	Project director and author
Dr Charlotte Feakins	GML	Aboriginal community engagement and social values assessment
Talei Holm	GML	Archaeologist and author
Hannah Morris	GML	Archaeologist and author
Drew Kennedy	GML	Archaeologist and author
Angela So	GML	Historian
Andie Coulson	GML	Archaeologist and author

## 2.5 Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Council, N S W A L, INformation Sheet Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Reform New Government Model, 2013.

Ellsmore, S, Protecting the Past, Guarding the Future: Models to reform Aboriginal Culture and Heritage management in NSW, 2012.

Hunt, J, Cultural Vandalism: Regulated Destruction of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in New South Wales, report prepared for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, College of Arts and Social Sciences, 2020.

## **3 Understanding the place**

### **3.1 Mount Gilead Stage 2 in 2022**

MGS2 has been subject to significant clearing and used for agricultural grazing. Intact stands of vegetation are generally contained within the creek lines that traverse MGS2 area including the Menangle Creek, Nepean Creek and Woodhouse Creek and along the Nepean River. Outside of these areas, vegetation consists of pastureland and scattered paddock trees.

Access to MGS2 is provided by a battle axe handle on the eastern side of Lot 2 in DP 1218887 that connects to Appin Road. Access to MGS2 is also provided via an easement over land to the east that will be formalised through public roads being delivered by Lendlease as part of their Figtree Hill development.

Rural properties boarder the southern boundary of MGS2 including Beulah Reserve which contains that is a State Heritage Item and is also a registered as a BioBank. The Nepean River forms the western boundary of the Site with Menangle Creek forming the majority of the northern boundary of the Site.

A minor portion of MGS2 (Lot 2 in DP 249393) has frontage to the Hume Highway and is accessed from Medhurst Road. This piece of land will be used to provide a second access point to the Site.

The Upper Canal is a State Heritage Item that traverses MGS2 from South to North and there are a series of electrical transmission line and gas pipeline easements that traverse the central park of MGS2 from North to South.

MGS2 sits to the south and west of the Mt Gilead Homestead complex that is a State Heritage Item and is contained within Lot 1 in DP 1218887.

### **3.2 Environmental context**

The project area's 'environment' forms a component of the Dharawal traditional lands and Country. Understanding the environment through the geology, soils, landforms, water and ecology is important to understand the context of long-term Aboriginal connections to the land. Combining basic environmental information with the history and contemporary connections starts to provide an understanding of the local and regional cultural landscape.



Describing and mapping the landscape contextualises the physical data, and underpins intangible connections inherent in most Aboriginal cultural landscapes. An overview of the baseline datasets for geology, soil, landforms, water, the climate and ecology has been presented in the restricted report. A summary of these items is provided here.

### **3.2.1 Geology and soils**

The project area is located predominantly across Hawkesbury sandstones with some possible expressions of the Wianamatta group shales, both of which were formed in the Triassic period. Underlying this is the Narrabeen Group.

Sandstone outcrops occur through and across the study area; deeper gorges and expressions are carved into the basal layer. Surface expressions of sandstone are frequently found on the upper slopes and slopes above creek corridors. Bedrock is generally found at a shallow depth, often within 300mm of the surface. However, given the variability in the erosional landscape pattern, the depth of soils fluctuates considerably between the two rivers east and west of Mount Gilead.

Three soil landscapes are associated with the study area, although two predominate (Figure 3.1). The most common soil landscape is the residual Blacktown soil unit, found across 80% of the landforms, away from the major creeks and Nepean River. The thick colluvial Hawkesbury unit is found along the Nepean River, originating from the crumbling sandstone cliffs, and along the lower reaches of Woodhouse, Nepean and Menangle Creek, all in locations associated with steep open gorges and sandstone bedrock exposures. Finally, a fluvial landscape, Theresa Park, is found in association with parts of Menangle Creek.

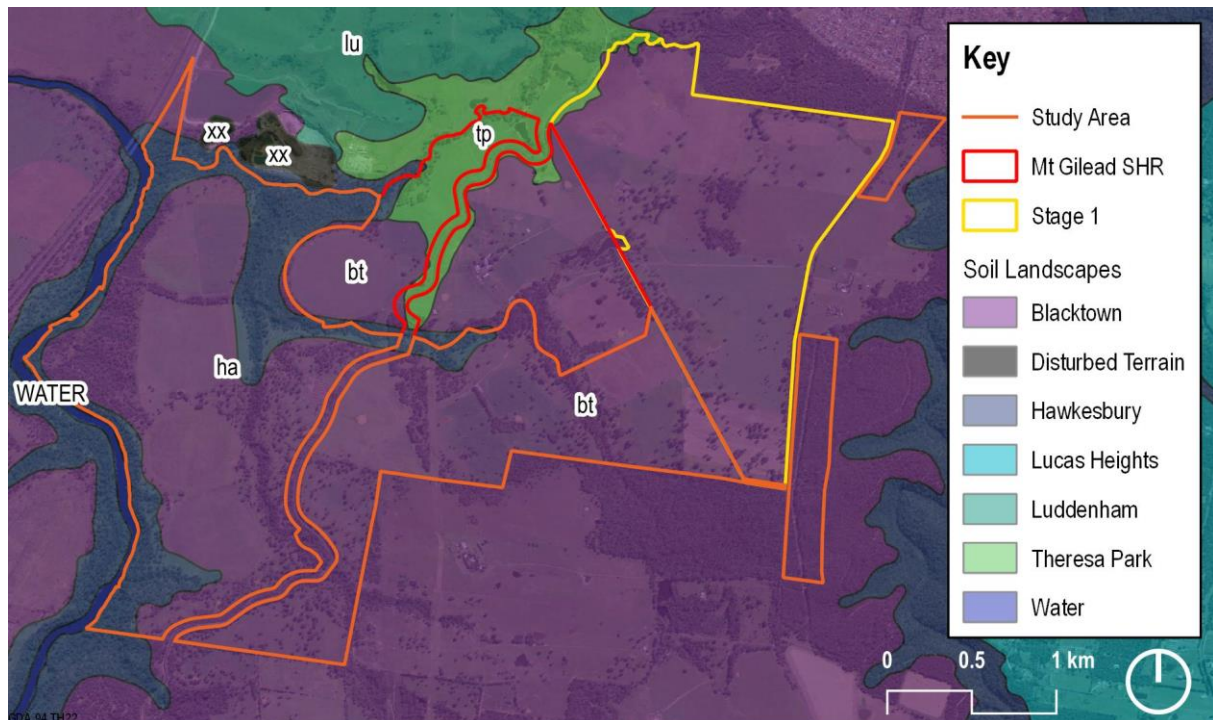


Figure 3.1 Soil landscape across study area. (Source: Six Maps, 2016, with GML additions).

### 3.2.2 Water sources

The availability of water has significant implications for the range of resources available and the suitability of an area for human occupation. Two large rivers flow north either side of the study area: the Nepean River on the west, and the Georges River to the east. A complex network of high order creeks and springs, which are moderately spaced, crosses the study area (Figure 3.2 ).<sup>1</sup> Sources of water include the following watercourses.

- The Nepean River, a major regional watercourse, forms the western border of the study area. All creeks in the study area eventually flow into the Nepean River. The river has formed a deep and wide valley, which today cannot be forded (due to catchment water management). Historically (before 1950?) the river could be forded in two places—one in the northwest and one in the central west of the study area. The northwestern ford has been identified in Aboriginal oral accounts.
- Menangle Creek is a fourth order creek that forms the northern border of the study area. This creek has an origin to the east of the Mt Gilead Stage 1 area. Nepean Creek and Woodhouse Creek flow into this watercourse. The valley for this creek falls up to 20m with a very steep slope leading to the water. Today the

banks of the creek are choked with lantana and other dense species, so access to the channel is difficult.

- Nepean Creek is a third order creek with a source to the southeast. The creek flows north through the centre of the study area, joining with Woodhouse Creek near the northern centre of the study area. The valley for this creek is generally deep and wide, forming very steep to precipitous slopes which can drop 20m. The exposed sandstone bedrock shelves form numerous small shelters. The water channel has formed four main pools, several deep enough to swim, which retain water for a considerable period after rain. These have been recorded as waterholes during the current investigations.
- Woodhouse Creek is a third order creek with a source to the southeast, near that of Nepean Creek. It has a meandering and unusual path, flowing initially northwest, and then due west. Initially its valley is broad with moderately inclined, lightly vegetated slopes. These yield to deeper expressions with a 20m to 30m drop, sometimes precipitous and sometimes cliffed. There are many shelters along the valley, at a variety of levels above the water channel. The water channel has formed 10 main pools, several deep enough to swim in and which retain water for considerable period after precipitation.
- Three first and second order creeks drain from the ridgeline that runs parallel with the Nepean River. These commence as shallow depressions in the landform but soon become very steep, narrow gorges with drops of up to 10m into the channel. Access to these watercourses is difficult because of the extent of lantana and other vegetation.
- The study area also contains one and possibly two ephemeral natural springs associated with the ridgeline that runs parallel with the Nepean River.

The study area is well serviced in terms of access to fresh water for drinking. The Nepean River may also have been served as a regular transport corridor, navigated by bark canoe.

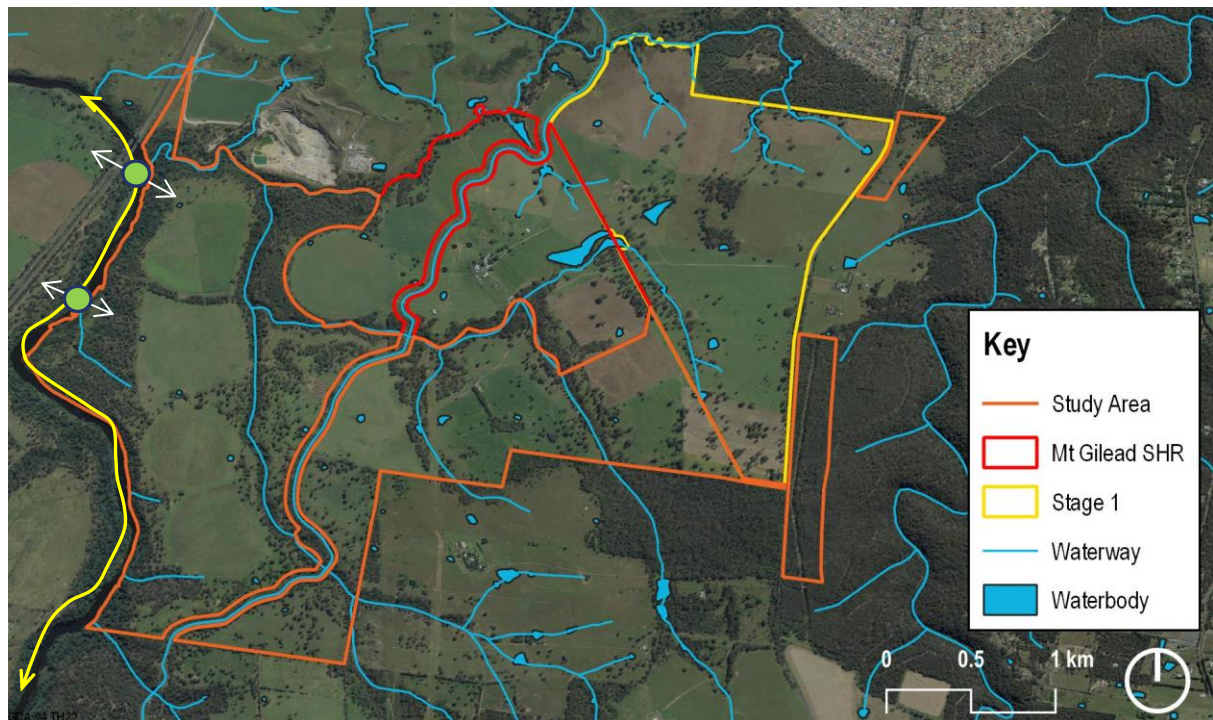


Figure 3.2 Hydrology in and around the project area. The two potential crossing places on the Nepean River are annotated with green circles. The Nepean River is also identified as an Aboriginal movement corridor (yellow arrow). (Source: Six Maps, 2022, with GML additions)

### 3.3 The erosional landform pattern

The Mount Gilead Stage 2 area presents a considerable variety of landforms in a relatively small area. The lowest part of the landscape is 70m AHD, whereas the highest is 200m, resulting in high relief (130m). Two elevated broad ridgelines extend north to south on the eastern and western side of the study area (Figure 3.3). The ridgeline on the eastern side is now associated with the corridor for Appin Road. The ridgeline on the west forms the high ground above the Nepean River. This ridgeline is broad and has a very gently inclined slope. These two ridgelines likely acted as Aboriginal movement corridors (and have been identified as such by the local Aboriginal community).

Most landforms abutting these two ridgelines are gently inclined (3–10% gradient) to moderately inclined (10–32%), creating an erosional landform pattern of undulating to rolling hills (Figure 3.4) (after Speight 1990).<sup>2</sup>



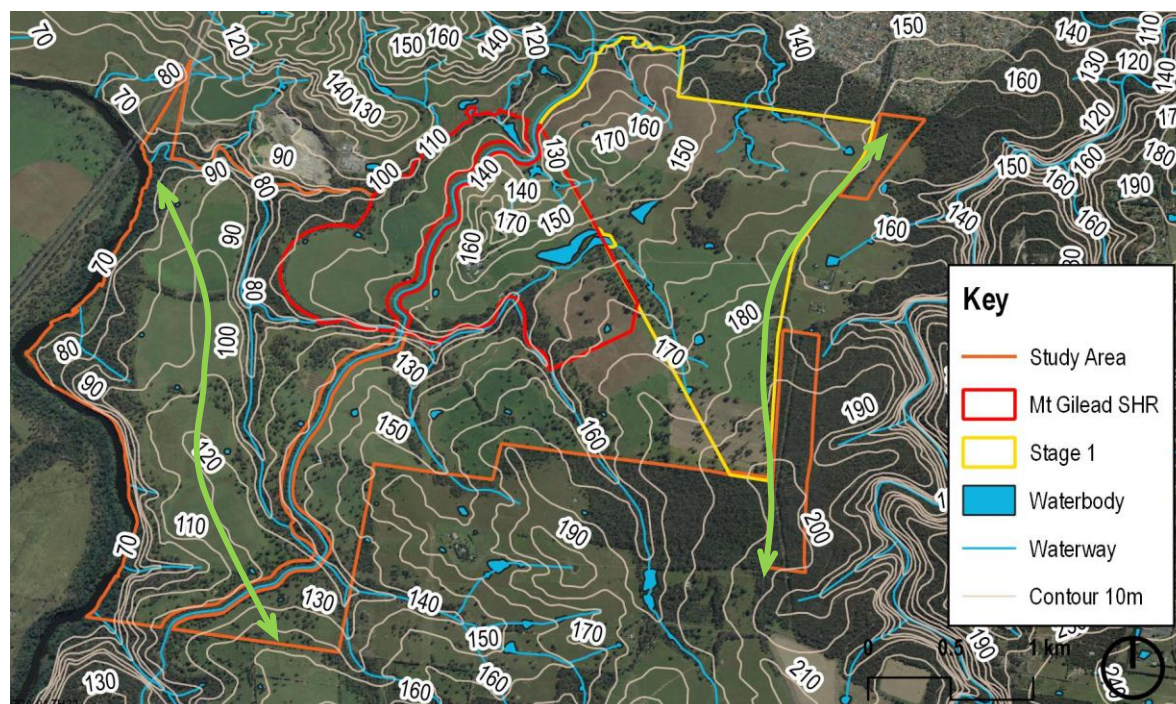


Figure 3.3 Contour map of the study area. The two major ridgelines on the eastern and western sides are shown in green. (Source: Six Maps 2022, with GML additions)

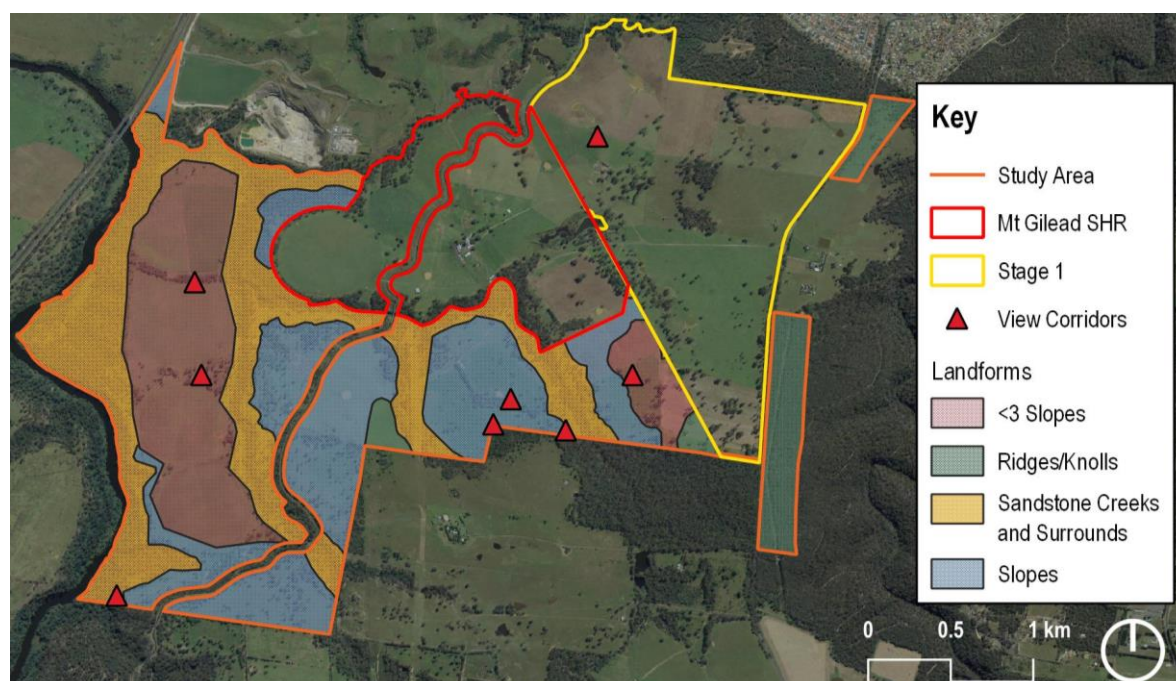


Figure 3.4 Landforms in study area. Key locations with view corridors are identified by the red triangles. (Source: SIX Maps 2022, with GML additions).

## 3.4 Previous heritage investigations

Mount Gilead is in the southwest of the Cumberland Plain. The Aboriginal history of the Cumberland Plain extends back into the Pleistocene, with archaeological evidence dated to around 40,000 years ago in Parramatta.

Representatives of the local Aboriginal communities have identified areas along the western border (part of the Nepean River) and remnant native woodlands outside of the southeastern corner of the study area as being used as open hunting and fishing grounds.<sup>3</sup> The ridgelines that run north to south, both adjacent to the Nepean River, and along what is now Appin Road, were probably major Aboriginal travelling routes, linking key places and traditions. Regionally the archaeological record combines features identified in both the Cumberland Plain and Woronora Plateau, including stone artefact sites, engraved sandstone grinding grooves, smaller shelters in the deeper gorges, some with art, and remnant culturally modified trees, such as a 'Canoe Tree'.<sup>4</sup>

This rich archaeological record, comprising places, sites and features, is the culmination of 40,000 years of occupation. The physical evidence associated with the archaeological record entangles with the intangible cultural landscape, including social memory of place, and traditions. These connections are slowly being re-formed, as current Aboriginal traditional owners reengage in a meaningful way with large landscape areas and projects that provide access to Country. Assessments such as that undertaken for the current study area provide small additions to the cultural understanding and knowledge, which when combined with other assessments, can allow for meaningful regional reconnections.

The MGS2 study area has been subject to eight prior Aboriginal archaeological assessments, including two extensive archaeological surveys, the most recent in 2016. An extensive program of archaeological test excavation was completed in 2019 within the MGS1 area. A summary of these projects and their primary outcomes is provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Prior heritage studies associated with the study area.

Study & Year	Connection with the Project Area	Key Heritage Outcomes
Sydney Prehistory Group, 1972	The Sydney Prehistory Group undertook a survey for Aboriginal art sites across the wider Illawarra. This work recorded hundreds of Aboriginal art sites.	Four Aboriginal art sites were recorded within sandstone rock shelters, all along Woodhouse Creek. One of the sites could not be identified, although the location of the recorded art has been confirmed by an analysis of records.

Study & Year	Connection with the Project Area	Key Heritage Outcomes
	Their survey within Mount Gilead appears to have been limited to the creek corridors, and focused on recording shelters with art.	We note that the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) registrations for these sites varied in spatial accuracy. Where incorrect, the AHIMS record has been updated.
Greer and McIntyre, 1982 <sup>5</sup>	Archaeological survey adjacent to the Nepean River, proposed for sand extraction. The survey examined the downslope landforms, which are associated with sand banks abutting the Nepean River.	Chert pebbles were identified, but not classified as Aboriginal objects. The area subject to survey was later sand mined and is regularly inundated during larger flood events (such as in March 2021).
Heffernan and Klayer, 1992 <sup>6</sup>	Survey of proposed pipelines as part of the Macarthur Water Quality Project. The survey route was to the immediate east of the Sydney–Moomba gas pipeline.	Aboriginal heritage sites were identified in connection with landforms around Woodhouse Creek. Three shelters with potential archaeological deposits (PADs) were described. Five sites with artefacts were identified on the sloping landforms above the creek: three separate ‘isolated’ finds, and two areas with a low density of artefacts.
Caryll Sefton, 2001 <sup>7</sup>	Survey of landforms directly adjacent to the Nepean River, which included the landforms on the western boundary of the Stage 2 area.	A large sandstone shelter, with a single stone artefact, was recorded 200m north of the small gully, on the northern side of Leaf Creek. The recorded location of this site is incorrect in AHIMS.
Navin Officer, 2006 <sup>8</sup>	Detailed archaeological survey covering the whole Stage 2 area, with examination of the creek corridors and raised landforms around the fluvial corridors. Sites which had been previously recorded were reinspected.	The survey recorded eight artefact scatters, 11 isolated finds, one rock shelter with Aboriginal art and five rock shelters with Aboriginal art and PADs (including those previously recorded). In total 41 areas of PAD were identified—three in an open context, 38 in rock shelters.
Navin Officer, 2013	Further archaeological survey, which recorded an additional eight Aboriginal sites. Six were inside the Stage 2 area.	The survey recorded two artefact sites, one scarred tree, and three further areas with PADs.
Eco Logical Australia, 2015 <sup>9</sup>	Review and synthesis of prior archaeological data for the Stage 2 area.	The work included archaeological survey, which did not identify further Aboriginal sites. A due diligence report was prepared for the site, outlining the



Study & Year	Connection with the Project Area	Key Heritage Outcomes
		nature of heritage connections with the place.
Virtus Heritage & Cultural Heritage Connections, 2016	<p>Preparation of an ACHAR for the MDP Balance Lands which included all of the MGS2 area.</p> <p>A pedestrian archaeological survey was undertaken for the entire MGS2 area with Aboriginal parties who had registered for consultation.</p> <p>Extensive reporting on the condition of all Aboriginal sites and areas with PADs was provided.</p>	<p>The work culminated in the recording and reassessment of 60 previously recorded Aboriginal sites, including areas with PAD. Two further scarred trees and 12 additional artefact sites were recorded beyond those identified in ELA 2015.</p> <p>An Aboriginal cultural assessment of all archaeological sites was provided in the report.</p>
Virtus Heritage & Cultural Heritage Connections, 2017 <sup>10</sup>	Archaeological test excavation across the Stage 1 area. Although not inside the Stage 2 study area, this work provides a crucial understanding of soils and landforms and their archaeological potential.	
GML Heritage, 2021 to date	Archaeological test and salvage excavations within the Stage 1 area.	<p>Extensive program of archaeological test excavation, followed by selected salvage of some archaeological deposits that could not be conserved. Salvage excavations were mainly along Menangle Creek.</p> <p>A total of 924 artefacts were recovered. Several raw material types were encountered: silcrete, indurated mudstone/silicified tuff (IMST) and quartz.</p>

## 3.5 AHIMS records

A search of Heritage NSW's Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database of an area 9.8 km (north to south) by 11.3 km (east to west) was undertaken between April and September 2020. The search identified 236 recorded Aboriginal sites, which are predominantly PADs, artefacts and art sites.

Some of these sites are complexes with more than one feature. For our analysis we examined all of the site features recorded, which means the 236 sites equate to 261 separate site features. An overview of the AHIMS results is presented in Table 3.2.



AHIMS data is considered restricted and not presented in this public report. Further detailed analysis of the AHIMS records is provided in the restricted report.

Table 3.2 Results of the AHIMS search considering all registered site features.

Site Feature	Frequency	Percentage
Aboriginal Ceremony and Dreaming	1	<1
Artefacts Sites, which comprise:	104	40%
<i>Artefacts (more than 2)</i>	46	18%
<i>Isolated Artefact (1 only)</i>	41	16%
<i>Isolated Artefact &amp; PAD</i>	2	1%
<i>Artefacts (associated with an art site)</i>	15	6%
Art Sites, which comprise:	65	25%
<i>Art (Pigment or Engraved)</i>	44	17%
<i>Art (Pigment or Engraved) &amp; Artefact(s)</i>	13	5%
<i>Art (Pigment or Engraved) and Grinding Grooves</i>	4	2%
<i>Art (Pigment or Engraved) and PAD</i>	2	1%
<i>Art (Pigment or Engraved), Artefact(s) and Grinding Groove</i>	2	1%
Grinding Groove Sites, which comprise:	21	8%
<i>Grinding Groove</i>	14	5%
<i>Grinding Groove and Waterhole</i>	1	<1
<i>Grinding Groove (in association with an art site)</i>	6	2%
Culturally Modified Trees	7	3%
Areas Described with Potential for Archaeology, but presenting no other evidence	63	24%
PAD	58	22%
PAD & Habitation Structure (a shelter)	1	<1
PAD (in association with an artefact or art site)	4	2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>261</i>	<i>100%</i>

## 3.6 Methodology for investigation

### 3.6.1 Understanding First Nations Social/Culture Values

At present, understanding the First Nations social/cultural values of a place typically provides information that is missing from the established or recorded understanding of that place. In NSW, the exclusion of statutory protection for social/cultural values in the assessment of places or 'sites' rests with the long-established and colonial system of Aboriginal heritage being primarily focused on tangible heritage, ie archaeology. This attitude has been validated and legitimised by the NPW Act—hence the need for its reform.

The recognition of Aboriginal heritage values more broadly, however, is supported and enshrined in numerous key best practice heritage frameworks and guidelines, outlined in the previous section, and perhaps most notably by the Burra Charter (articles 1.1, 1.2, 1.16, 5, 12, 13 and 24). The understanding and recognition of Aboriginal cultural values is slowly being adopted in mainstream heritage practice in NSW, aligning with the proposed changes in cultural heritage legislation. This shift is part of a period of renaissance of Aboriginal culture in NSW that has seen a stronger footing for First Nations rights, with practical steps being taken to redress the past. In the context of this understanding, and in light of calls for truth-telling and self-determination, it is important for First Nations social/cultural values to be heard, considered and integrated into all aspects of place-making and future planning.

### 3.6.2 Community engagement

For this project we sought to better understand the First Nations heritage of the Mount Gilead region, beyond the tangible evidence (archaeology). During the formal RAP registration process for the project (adhering with the OEH 2010 *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents*), we asked all RAP groups to submit responses on their cultural connections to the area. Any interested groups were then invited to participate in social/cultural values interviews. The interview questions were provided in our communication (Table 3.3). A total of seven groups responded, expressing interest in being interviewed and talking about their connections to the area. The interviews were carried out in November and December 2021 via Zoom video call. Each interview lasted one hour. One further interview was undertaken in person in June 2022.

During the interview process, many participants shared historical, lived experience and contemporary connections to the area, providing a more diverse range of responses than

originally anticipated. Therefore, a semi-structured interview approach was soon employed that incorporated the formal interview questions, where relevant. Semi-structured interviews are effective for engaging in deeper conversation and when trying to understand a participant's feelings, thoughts and beliefs about a particular topic. This approach allowed us to better engage with the participants and supported them in sharing a range of experiences, beyond the scope of the set questions.

Each interview was recorded (with permission) and consequentially transcribed. The transcript was then emailed to the participant for their review, comment and amendment. Once all transcripts were reviewed, amended and/or approved by the participants, they were synthesised into a cohesive narrative under a number of key themes. These themes are outlined and discussed in the following section.

This process has elevated our understanding of this place and why it is important to the local Aboriginal community. The formal interview process has been supplemented by a process of ongoing consultation with local Aboriginal people, who have provided insight into traditional connections. A combination of this information has been used to re-connect with this cultural landscape and present the outcomes and mapping described through both reports.

Table 3.3 Formal interview questions.

Social/Cultural Values	Description
Ancestors, stories, and storylines	Can you describe your family's history and connection with Mount Gilead and/or the region? Do you know of local and regional stories, and storylines in this area? How did you learn these? Would you be willing to share these with us? Are there common themes associated with stories in the region? Do these connect across a bigger area? How and why is it important for you to know and connect with ancestors who owned, lived in and used the Mount Gilead area? Was Appin Road a ridgeline route? And does it relate to a specific song line or name?
Art and art sites	Do you know about the art sites at Mount Gilead? Have you visited these sites? Do you know about any stories connected to the art sites? How would you like to see these places and sites protected? Would you like to see them interpreted in the future? Do you know about the regional art sites, such as Bull Cave? What do these sites, places and art mean to you and your family? Do you visit these places? If you know about art within Mount Gilead and regionally, how do you view these connections? How important are the Mount Gilead art sites? How do you think Aboriginal people in the past saw and used these art sites?
Trade, ceremony and marriage	Are you able to tell us about local and regional trade, both within the broader area or between clans? What were people trading? What value did traded goods have? How far did these networks

Social/Cultural Values	Description
	<p>extend? Was trade linked with other aspects of tradition, such as ceremony or marriage? Are you able to tell us about traditional cultural ceremonies connected with this region? Who was involved in the ceremony? At what times of year did it occur? Were there rules and regulations around it? What places were used? What resources were needed? Can you tell us about local marriage rules, lore, and procedures?</p>
People, birth and family	<p>How does your family hold a connection to this area/region? How has this connection changed over your lifetime? How have Aboriginal people connected with Country in the recent past? Are there certain local places and/or events which are particularly important to Aboriginal people? How do you see yourself and your family connecting into the future? What do you see as the opportunities for Aboriginal connection with the Mount Gilead project?</p>
Dispossession and return	<p>Do you recall when your family first left the area? Are there stories about this? Where did your family move to? How did they retain or hold memory of this place? How and when did your family return to the area? What did this mean to your family?</p>
Living at Mount Gilead and/or the local area today	<p>With specific reference to Mount Gilead, are you or your family a direct connection? Are there stories, photographs, images or other connections between your family and this place? If you and your family moved to the Mount Gilead area, when was this? And why did it occur? How did the local Aboriginal community grow and form a vibrant community? Can you describe this community and the local groups formed? Do these relate to the Aboriginal community today?</p>
Hunting, resources, and bush tucker	<p>Who in your family accessed this land/area for traditional purposes, such as hunting, food, medicine or other resources? How did they enter the land? Was there a relationship with the non-Aboriginal landowner? Do you have stories about these activities? How important were they to your family? What can you tell us about land management within the broader area? What fire/land management practices were used in the area? What animals were hunted in this area? What purpose were these animals hunted for? Can you recall which plants were used for eating in the area? Can you recall which plants were used for medicine in the area? Can you describe your cultural connections to the waterways within the area? Were the freshwater rivers used for more than just food sources?</p>



### 3.6.3 On Country investigations

The process of archaeological and cultural landscape investigating into MGS2 area has been extensive and ongoing. Engagement and understanding of the cultural landscape has required extensive time on Country, time spent with key local Aboriginal people. Survey, visits, inspections, discussions and engagement with this Country has been undertaken through both the MGS2 project, and concurrent with other projects including the MGS1 archaeological salvage process, the return to Country project, the Mt Gilead Stage 2 historical archaeological assessment, and the wider Glen Lorne historical archaeology research project.

To date a total of nine separate inspections/visit events have been undertaken (eg Figure 3.5) with different Aboriginal groups/individuals:

- Inspection 1—3 December 2019, focus on Woodhouse Creek
- Inspection 2—4 August 2020, inspection across the open field areas, and banks with sandstone exposures
- Inspection 3—29 September 2020, inspection of conservation lands east of Appin Road, Fig tree, shelters on Woodhouse Creek
- Inspection 4—20 October 2020, Glen Lorne area, focus on Nepean Creek
- Inspection 5—4 November 2020, tributary creeks to Woodhouse Creek, areas around the Upper Canal away from the creeks with several cultural trees
- Inspection 6—13 November 2020, historical archaeology survey along all main creeks and locations with historical archaeology potential. Survey identified numerous Aboriginal heritage items
- Inspection 7—22 December 2020, focus on Stage 1 area and connections with wider Country
- Inspection 8—29 March 2021, north of Woodhouse Creek, eastern side of Nepean Creek (north), and southern side of Menangle Creek
- Inspection 9—25 October 2021, formal five day survey
- Inspection 10—1 June 2022, reconciliation week event, and inspection of area in the southwest of the MGS2 area

Inspection 9 was the formal pedestrian archaeological survey which occurred over a five day period (25 October to 29 October 2021). Fifteen RAPs participated in the field survey each day, along with a representative from Indigeco, Lendlease, and at least one member from GML. An average of 20 persons were present each day. The survey inspections

landforms within the study area and also across the biobanking conservation areas (Figure 3.6).

The survey provided the ability to inspect any area within the MGS2 area. Each day a general plan for inspection was presented, but RAPs could inspect any landforms or locations within that wide survey zone. Given the number of participants, survey routes were wide and allowed for a very expansive approach to the survey. This flexibility resulted in the identification of many Aboriginal sites and values which had not previously been recorded.

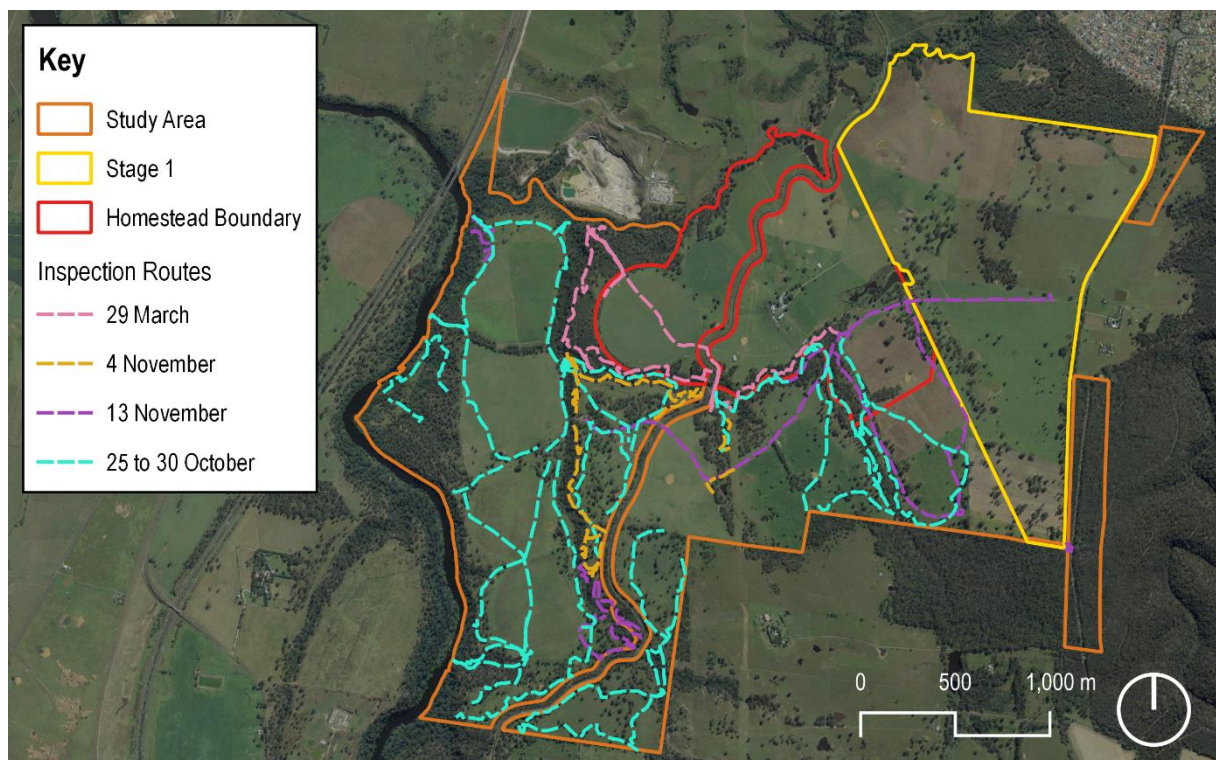


Figure 3.5 Mapped transects walked during four of the nine inspections

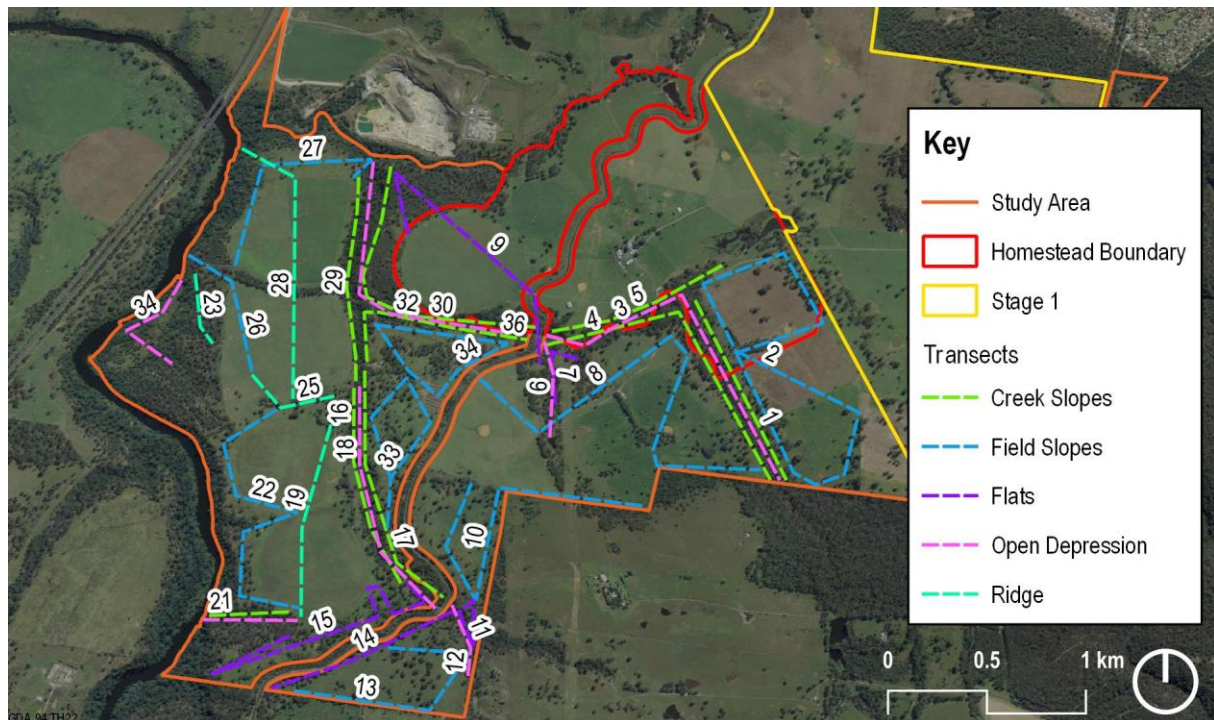


Figure 3.6 Transects walked during the formal archaeological survey (Inspection 9)

## 3.7 Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Summerfield, M. 1991 *Global Geomorphology: An introduction to the study of landforms*. Longman Scientific and Technical. England.

<sup>2</sup> National Committee on Soil and Terrain et al. 2009, *Australian Soil and Land Survey: Field Handbook*, third edition, CSIRO, Clayton, South Victoria, p 26.

<sup>3</sup> AHMS, Greater Macarthur Investigation Area, Aboriginal and Historic Heritage Gap Analysis, report for Department of Planning and Environment, 2017 p 37.

<sup>4</sup> AHMS, Greater Macarthur Investigation Area, Aboriginal and Historic Heritage Gap Analysis, report for Department of Planning and Environment, 2017 p 37.

<sup>5</sup> Greer, S and McIntyre, S, An Archaeological Survey of a Proposed Sand Extraction site at 'Mt Gilead', Menangle, NSW, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> Heffernan, K a K 1992, 'Archaeological Survey of Alternative Pipeline Easements: Appin-Rosemeadow, Macarthur Water Quality Project, NSW'; Heffernan, K a K 1992, 'Archaeological Survey of Alternative Pipeline Easements: Appin-Rosemeadow, Macarthur Water Quality Project, NSW'.

<sup>7</sup> Sefton, C 'AHIMs Card 52-2-2239'.

<sup>8</sup> Navin Officer, Mount Gilead Campbelltown, NSW Cultural Heritage Assessment, report prepared for Manidis Roberts Consultants, May 2006.

<sup>9</sup> EcoLogical Australia, Mount Gilead Urban Investigation Area Aboriginal and Historic Heritage Due Diligence Assessment, report prepared for Lend Lease, April 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Virtus Heritage and Cultural Heritage Connections, Mount Gilead Project (MDP Lands) Test Excavation Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment, Campbelltown Local Government Area, report prepared for Lendlease Communities (Mt Gilead) Pty Ltd, 2017.



## 4 The First Nations people

### 4.1 Dharawal Country

MGS2 (study area) is located within the jurisdiction of the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC). At the time of colonial invasion, the study area was located near the 'boundary' between three linguistic groups—the Tharawal ('coast' people), Dharug ('woods' people) and Gandangarra people ('mountain' people). These boundaries were fluid and, with permission, people from different linguistic groups could move through each other's territories.

Dharawal people have cared for and occupied their Country for many thousands of years. This Country extends from Botany Bay to the Shoalhaven River and Nowra, and inland to Camden. The Superb Lyrebird (*Menura novaehollandiae*) is recognised as a traditional totem of the area.

European invasion in January 1788 had a devastating impact on the lives of First Nations people in the Mount Gilead area, and Australia more broadly. Europeans introduced diseases, violently killed First Nations people, and invaded their traditional lands. However, the atrocities afflicted on First Nations people were not limited to a single event.

Since European colonisation, First Nations people have experienced historical and ongoing extreme hardships, ranging from the loss of traditional culture and homelands, relocation onto missions and reserves, denial of citizenship rights and the forced removal of children, in the name of protection.<sup>1</sup> For Aboriginal people, colonisation means massacre, violence, disease and loss.

Despite the past and ongoing impacts of colonisation, First Nations individuals and communities are resilient and maintain strong connections to their culture and Country—kinship systems, customs, language, traditions and traditional lands. The information and experiences shared by participants in the following sections are testament to their strength and resilience, and the strength and resilience of First Nations people more broadly. It also highlights the importance of Country and the positive effect that (re)connecting to Country can have on people's health and wellbeing.

A detailed historical account is provided in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR). In that report, the post-invasion history will be presented across themes of conflict, adaptation and resilience.

## 4.2 Social/Cultural Values Interviews: Key Themes

This section presents the key themes from the social/cultural interviews with representatives from the seven RAPs (Table 4.1). From the information provided by participants, seven key themes have been identified. The themes relate to the responses provided by the participants and include connections to Country and broad experiences, spanning traditional, historical and contemporary periods:

- Cultural Connectedness;
- (Re)Connecting to Country;
- Art Sites and their Significance;
- Trade and Ceremony;
- Bush Tucker, Hunting and Resources;
- Significant Places in and around MGS2; and
- Current and Future Heritage Conservation.

Each of these themes is discussed below, with selected quotes from participants which demonstrate the theme. In this document we have removed details of the person providing each statement.

Table 4.1 Key themes from RAP responses.

Social/Cultural Values Interview Themes	Description
Cultural Connectedness	Diverse connections to Country, to First Nations communities and to ancestors.
(Re)Connecting to Country	Opportunities to learn about Country, connect to Country and re-connect to Country.
Art Sites and their Significance	The meaning and significance of art sites in the area.
Trade and Ceremony	Mount Gilead as a 'cross-over' site among neighbouring groups.
Bush Tucker, Hunting and Resources	Bush tucker, hunting and local resources across a range of lived experiences and traditional contexts.
Significant Places in and around MGS2	Significance of Mount Gilead and the broader area.
Current and Future Heritage Conservation	Management and conservation of Mount Gilead.

## 4.3 Cultural Connectedness

The seven representatives who participated in the interviews discussed their strong connections to Country, to First Nations communities and to ancestors. All participants recognised that their identities, and connections specifically to Dharawal Country, are diverse and complex:

"I am from out at Coonamble, Wailwan is my tribe group, but my nation is Gomeroi."

"I'm a Traditional Owner of the south-east coast, we descend from around eight of the local ancestors in the current south coast native title claim."

"I grew up on Wreck Bay... that's about an hour and a half south of Wollongong, but my family are the Dharawal people, the Wodimen from the mountain side."

"I'm Aboriginal and always identified as Aboriginal. My Dad is Ngunnawal so I am Ngunnawal... My Mum and Dad camped in Camden, Appin and the surrounding area for quite some time."

"Yeah, look on my father's side Nagamba, which is far western New South Wales, Brewarrina. Unfortunately, my grandmother was part of the stolen generation, and she moved down to Sydney at a young age, so my family established a life down here in Sydney. My mother's side is Kuring-Gai, which is part of the Hawkesbury River and I've been lucky enough to have been born on Country here on Darug Country, so I guess I identify as the three things, but I'm only identified as Darug nation, living here and practicing culturally."

All participants recognised and acknowledged the Dharawal Elders. Most participants expressed some connection to Dharawal Country, either through growing up and living in the area and/or through the work they have carried out in the Mount Gilead area:

"The Slater family of 14 moved to Airds, Campbelltown in 1970. Only a handful of five Indigenous families moved in the area at the same time as our family. ... We were a proud Indigenous family of Elders, Aunties and Uncles who passed down stories of the Dreaming and the old way of living on Country. We had a spiritual connection. Having connected with the other Indigenous communities connecting to the lands in which we live on. We were shown Bulls Cave at Kentlyn and the women's wash at Kentlyn."

"My connection is from living there as well as being Aboriginal, we connect to the land that you're born on or live on. Like when someone's mother from another country gives birth in Australia, they are Australian as they're born in Australia."

"And my connections are with the work that I've done."

Several participants shared connections to the area through their families and historical accounts:

"My father, and my father's father, used to be a black tracker, he used to black track through there and down the back of Appin Road, towards Wilton and that was in the ... 1840s."

"The local Koori kids would get together and just, you know, go and explore. You know what I mean, it's built into us, you know, all of us. We just had that connection to bush, as kids you know, you just explore, we went to Kentlyn, Ruth Simmos beach at Macquarie Fields, we would go there, all the waterways... we would go looking for yabbies, push our bikes, something as simple as that but we always had that connection to Country... we were stuck together as Aboriginal families. You know, a little community like Airds... we are around today, we just had that connection. And we were told things in the bush... we had that connection."

"They were around 1920s–1930s, something like that. Because before then they were living in humpies... We didn't go to those lengths, they were actual homes. I've known people to live in humpies and that prior to that in certain parts of Campbelltown but around this site I'm not sure about. Our family was around 1920s–1930s."

"My family's connection is as Dharawal people of the Cubbitch Barta plain who belong to this area that we are on. My family moved onto the property of John and Elizabeth Macarthur after the massacre in 1916, which is on the other side of the river from here. They stayed there right up until 1973".

Several participants described their connection to Country as spiritual and/or innate:

"We had the connection to country, the bush, the waterways, and creeks, its within our people."

"I believe my Aboriginality is my connection."

"I come from that spiritual, not tangible aspect of it."

"I feel my connection to Country, no matter where I am."

"Before we were actually taken out on site we knew Country, we knew about the spiritual connection that we had, but more than just a spiritual connection, we were taught about the physical place, so we were introduced to what the landscape and its natural resources were significant for us."

Also, some expressed the notion of connections to Dharawal Country as being shared:

"My connection to the Mount Gilead area comes from a neighbouring tribe's perspective.... having worked with the Chalker family a little bit and getting knowledge and understanding, and through marriage and other aspects, Mount Gilead has a cultural wellness to me as a shared Country that our people would have traded with the Tharawal, the Gundangara people of that area and so I come from that connection and basically that's part of that Country that I hadn't seen before and it's a real privilege to open my eyes up to some things that I hadn't seen before and I could imagine my people, the Darug people, traded with the Tharawal people..."



"To keep the stories going and flowing and at the end of the day we are all connected... we are here to be as one, to be connected and not to have conflict when bringing up certain things about Aboriginality, we are all the same and all the stories are through mother earth and that's what is highly significant and tangible."

Two participants shared their account of practising culture in the Campbelltown area:

"We would draw on the caves ourselves, we walked the bush, we would eat gum off the trees, and we would go yabbing."

"We would spend a lot of time on the Nepean River because my grandfather and my father were great fishermen."

Several participants respectfully declined to provide cultural knowledge based on their connections to Dharawal Country:

"I'm a little bit uncomfortable talking about them stories from my level of knowledge, it wouldn't be right you know and that's out of respect for culture and the Elders... I'm sure if you talk to the Elders they'll be happy to share their stories of men's and women's business, but I'll leave the stories up to our senior knowledge holders."

"It's culturally wrong for me to talk about one place, because you need to give the context of all of Dharawal country."

## 4.4 (Re)Connecting to Country

Most of the participants discussed how cultural heritage work provides an opportunity to learn about Country, connect to Country and re-connect to Country. Many shared examples of their experiences of working on the Mount Gilead site and broader area, including spending time with, and learning from, Elders such as Aunty Glenda Chalker. All participants, and/or their family members, have been involved with the Mount Gilead project work, some since 2012:

"...back in 2016, that was the first original one, that was with Glenda Chalker and a whole bunch of others. We found heaps of historical stuff out there, consisting of ceramic old bottles, milk bottles which had no markings on them. We also came across the birthing tree that was northeast of the footprint of the area and that overlooks the old 1810 windmill, which is still out there today, and just before the women's site, which is the weaving site."

"I was taught from other ancestors, through the grapevine, you know what I mean? Initially it was through Glenda and people like that. That has given me the major talks through there and certain sectors of the site that she talked about."

"So working down on Mount Gilead for this project for years is connecting to my history there, and when my family were originally living down that way for camping, camping out

around those areas and my sister living there, so my connection through her and her kids and also my connection, because I lived there. I have my own personal history.”

“I’d only seen ring trees on the internet. I’ve heard about that from Wiradjuri Country and that but I’ve never actually been up close and personal... It’s special to me as an Aboriginal person to put my hand on it and reconnect with that sense of Aboriginal spirituality that when my people would have done this, you know how many hundreds of years ago and just to put my hand on it and feel the vibe and establish that reconnection.”

“I’ve heard about the Country through cultural talks but to finally get out there and experience it, there’s things I haven’t seen in my 20 years of actually doing site work which sort of gave me goosebumps and makes me rethink a lot of things after being out there, it’s a special country... I’ve been happy to get out there and walk on that Country.”

“I think we’ve surveyed it about four or five times before it got to this point it is now for all sorts of different reasons”.

“I know more about my Country on the ground than through stories because they weren’t telling me.”

#### During survey work:

“It was nice to be able to connect with the land, the water, the landscape, and the people we were out doing the survey with... it was a learning experience and educational for all of us really. Even though the land’s going to be chopped up and divided, we’re still getting to be part of it by being invited to participate on the land, to connect to the land, by being on the land and to meet other Aboriginal people as well, because it’s bringing people from all over together.”

“Barry [Gunther] brought his artefacts and showed them to us and things like that, and told stories sitting around for lunch, so it was a learning experience and educational for us all really.”

“I think this work is the best occupation in the world. For me, you know to especially learn about my culture and as I understand it, the first time I heard about ring trees was out on Mount Gilead, I learnt this from Tim [Owen] and a couple of other elderly Aboriginal men that were out there... I was blown away by the ring trees.”

“It’s so beautiful and it’s so nice that we get to experience it... because we don’t normally get to go in on these private properties obviously.”

“Being an Aboriginal man and as a father, I’ve got three sons and a daughter, I would love for them to come out to site with me and learn these things... it’s so important that they need to be out on site and they are getting it straight from the horse’s mouth, like the horse’s mouth are you archies [archaeologists] and the Elders coming together and teaching these young kids these things.”

One participant noted that more opportunities for permanent work through Lendlease would benefit the next generation:

“I think it’s there for them to learn, and all they need to do is be taught by those who know and like I said it’s a great relationship between archaeologists and the Elders... young fullas are coming through the middle and getting advice from both sides... so that they can be trained up to get more knowledge. This would be a great initiative for Lendlease to allow this to happen.”



Figure 4.1 One of the ring trees identified within the MGS2 study area.

## 4.5 Art Sites and their Significance

When responding to questions about local art sites, in particular Bulls Cave at Kentlyn, most participants knew the site and emphasised its significance:

“The bull cave drawing related to Aboriginal occupation in the area.”

“[Graffiti] didn’t stop the heritage nomination going ahead and being presented because it is still significant.”

“It’s pretty significant site, it’s of national significance I believe.”

Two participants noted that the sites are not isolated:

"All of that area out there, it's not isolated... Mount Gilead's not isolated in relation to all of it, there is a sacred place out there."

"They have stories, just that we haven't had that be able to connect all those stories"

One participant shared their connection with art sites in the Wedderburn and Appin area:

"We would spit and make ochre and draw on caves."

Additional art sites within the MGS2 study area were also discussed by several participants, such as shelters with handprint stencils and depictions of animals (

Figure 4.2):

"The story behind the stencils is depending on how much exposure of the hand is show, it tells how much knowledge that person holds, it you see a single hand and it only exposes the hand it shows only a bit of knowledge. The more knowledge you had the stencil goes right down to the elbow."

The feelings associated with seeing these cave paintings was also noted by some participants:

"Every time I go out on site there was cave paintings there as well, and that was phenomenal, I'm beside myself, it's like a different feeling... These things are traditional feelings, cultural... these things are record breaking every day."





Figure 4.2 An example of a charcoal figure (rock art) recorded within one of the shelters within the MGS2 study area.

## 4.6 Trade and Ceremony

Some participants expressed the likely significance of the Mount Gilead area as a 'cross-over' site for trade and exchange among people around the Nepean River, Wiradjuri country, and the South Coast:

"The Mount Gilead area itself is extremely significant for the connection between that sort of cross-over area."

"The networks would have been vast, because I think it's highly significant that was a ceremony, a trade route, they all got together and traded, and we know that and it's just that song line, it goes down south, it goes to the Blue Mountains, it's from the seas, into La Per [La Perouse LALC], into Parramatta, to the Liverpool Gandangara, all of them boundaries."

“It’s highly significant around there because that would have been a song line, a meeting place, trade, and everything there and it was highly significant.”

With regards to trade, one participant noted:

“What I’ve been told through culture... we exchanged brides, different resources, we had silcrete quarries out here up the ridge and ochres, food resources, such as fish from the river traded to inland tribes.”

One participant discussed trade more broadly:

“The Wiradjuri mob would come over and so yeah, the stone tools that are there, we’ve got, I know they traded in a particular type of red chert, that came up from Moruya, I know they traded it from there and I know they traded it from back over near the Blue Mountains. They put the grey cherts there from up over the Blue Mountains and from up over there, the grey cherts from there near Lithgow and that, and the ... black chert and silcrete, dark black silcrete that was heated up in fires and stuff to split better, heat treated ones and they would come from the Snowy Mountains, so when we see those types of objects out on country, sometimes we know where they come from to map it out, we know that trade route.”

Some participants shared knowledge of trade that had been passed onto them by local Elders:

“Different material for stone making, like they traded different quartz, and whatever suited the area back in those days, they needed certain tools to trade, and when it is traded, and brought in it’s known as a manuport, once they had that from the local area that silcrete and a diverse number of rocks were used in the area, plus the quartz.”

One participant noted how cultural ceremonies were a common place for trade to occur:

“We’d have to get together for barter and exchange, there’d be a lot of exchange, but also knowledge and passing on of knowledge... trade wasn’t only for stone tools or other materials, there was also a source of knowledge and information.”

Further,

“When people used to get together it wasn’t a small thing, it was quite a big thing. It could have been seasonal, when a certain flower comes out such as a wattle coming into springtime and when certain edible plants are available, so there would have been large gatherings.”



Figure 4.3 A ground stone implement, quartzite, identified at the MGS2 study area.

## 4.7 Bush Tucker, Hunting and Resources

A number of participants discussed bush tucker, hunting and local resources across a range of lived experiences and traditional contexts:

"My dad was taught to hunt the wild food by his father, my grandfather, but when he was young, before he got with my Mum, he travelled around doing droving from a young age."

"We lived with the land, that way and lived near creeks and running water... you know the waterways is what gives us water, gives us food... it's the highway for Aboriginal people when they travelled so they always had water and food."

"Our family lived on bush tucker, taught by our elders. We would eat gum from the trees and porcupines and would catch crawbobs from the creeks and waterholes."

"My uncle, uncle Leslie, he is one of the elders of the Carroll boys, he used to hunt over that area [Camden/Appin], he used to like small things. He used to eat echidna, he liked echidna so much that my dad found one and we had it as a pet, when I was about four or something, and my uncle Leslie because he saw it as food, him and his blackfulla mate... they cooked up the pet echidna and so that didn't end that well."



"I'll keep it brief because everything was a natural resource, you only have to look at acacia trees, they have five or six different uses. Different plant species have many different uses from medicinal to edible and Mount Gilead covers a lot of that. You have chocolate Lillie growing there which was used for men's business, medicine business, you know acacias and gums were used for respiratory illnesses, but they were also exploited for tool making, shelter making, you name it... you have different ecosystems down there too, you have the riparian zone, you have your ferns and all that type of stuff, and they were different edible plants altogether and then you have aquatic animals and reeds, and as you get up into the plains you have more of your grasses and your edible roots and yams, then you get into your gums and your forest plants... a lot of these plants you just couldn't pick up, they'd have to be prepared, sometimes they'd be soaked in water and some of them can be quite toxic if you have them in large amounts. A little bit of knowledge can be dangerous, so sharing the right knowledge is more important."

"It's [echidna] almost like a delicacy... as long as you don't puncture the poison sack."

"My dad, he was more for the small prey not the like big kangaroos and stuff, like where are you going to store them? ... but my dad wasn't so much into traditional food, he liked rabbit and I remember him taking my brother Shane and I out with him while he was out setting the traps and stuff for them. He would take them from their burrow too. So, he kind of liked whitefella food, that was introduced, like the sheep and unusual things though, like boiled sheep meats."

"What they used to sort of do was light the grass up and that would push all the animals towards you and make them visible basically so they could go and hunt them. That was one way we used to do it with a torch. That's the best way anyway, light the floor up and they all come out, whether it's rabbits, or foxes or whatever."

"Possums were another staple of our diet out there... emu... you know the list goes on and on and on and on you know. I'd really need a good couple of hours to go into each individual plant and then I'd still wouldn't be able to cover them all."

"You have different ecosystems down there too, you have the riparian zone, you have your ferns and all that type of stuff, and they were different edible plants altogether and then you have aquatic animals and reeds, and as you get up into the plains you have more of your grasses and your edible roots and yams, then you get into your gums and your forest plants, so yeah. There's lots and lots of stuff out there."

## 4.8 Significance of Mount Gilead

Many of the participants shared their understanding of the significance of Mount Gilead and the broader area, and the significant places within the MGS2 area:

"The surrounds of Campbelltown have a spiritual connection and are rich archaeological deposits of tool artefacts... Aboriginal occupation is highly visible within the landscapes,



Appin wash pools, Appin's women's and children's only [Minerva Pool] and Appin massacre."

"I mean to have rare pockets of land that hasn't been touched or destroyed or they are in their natural state as would have been prior to Europeans coming here, it's a very special place. The significance of rock shelters that are out there and you know the art works in them and also the ring trees."

"The story of what happened at Appin goes through here [MGS2 area] and is all now currently being pulled together for the state heritage nomination."

One participant shared their view that Appin Road is a song line:

"From Liverpool Gandangara boundary, out to Tharawal, that Appin Road would be, I strongly believe, a song line pathway."

One participant strongly expressed the significance of Mount Gilead and provided detail about it being a cross-over zone:

"See the Mount Gilead area itself is extremely significant, extremely, extremely significant for the connection between that sort of cross-over zone. So, you've got the Nepean River that runs down on that sort of southern side, and that's a really significant sort of place, so the Nepean River was one of the areas for women's business, so that's where a lot of the women would be taken to for their initiations and things like that and there's a big rock shelter there that has Molgana (?) fishing women's hand stencils in it with the little finger removed. Molga (?) means they've gone through that initiation stage where they take off the little finger and give that to the rivers, the Nepean to feed the fish stocks. So bidji means the place of the grandmothers, so that's all Bidjigal country, so they were the people, so if you think about bidji meaning grandmothers, you've got the Bidjigal people, you've got the people of people of the grandmothers, so that's grandmothers peoples come over into Cammeraygal, and that's the people of the stingrays and then you go over into Sydney Harbour which is my great, great, great grandmother's country and she was the xanthorrhoea, the kangaroo tail, she was that plant and that was her place, and she was Bugatti (?), that's in our language called gatti, the kangaroo tail and that's the gatti [inaudible], the people of the kangaroo tail, burra is fish, murra is big mouth and gal the people, so people of the big mouth fish is Parramatta, Burramattagal. Yeah, these are all of the language things that we've been taught, some of the names like I said, they still hold it, yeah the significance of it. So when you're going down there into the Nepean group, the Nepean area you're going into the Bidjigal's places, the places for grandmothers and those rock shelters that are there, they tell that story quite well, that archaeology once the Aboriginal narrative that are connected to it, provide an insight into being able to read country properly."

During the field survey sandstone caves were visited, some of which contained art:

"It's a very special place. The significance of the rock shelters that are out there and you know the art works in them".

Similarly, ring trees were identified:

"I'd never actually been up close and personal and seen one of these ring trees and I was totally amazed by them and to have so many out there."

"With the ring trees, it's sort of like a connection to, oh I think it's a few kilometres away, to other they line up and I was just blown away."

"It's highly significant with them, I believe them ring trees, you know because they're pointing, and with Gandangara at Liverpool and Deerubbin, Bargo Picton pathways to the Mountains. I really believe it was ceremonial... it's a part of being out there together, being on country and the significance of it, to witness those ring trees, which we haven't done before."

"The significance of them ring trees, you know and we seen one, they were beautiful, it had like you know the tree, the branch with loops and loops and it had a little perfect circle in the middle and below that, it looked like a tear-drop, so that's significant, you know. And its, I believe it might have been pointing to that Minerva pools, you know, they said [inaudible] down Wollongong you know, where's it pointing to, the fig trees on the hill? Is it jesting to that beautiful big tree that's a thousand years old in the creek bed? You know and the shelters there, and there's a little creek stream there and with the open shelter, it was mirror caves, like it was mirrored, it was like a mirror reflection, and yet that water was black, yeah, you know. Mirror cave we called it because it had that mirror, like you shine a mirror all over the cave, you know and it would reflect from the water, and yet the water was black."

"I lost count of how many we found down there, that was pointing and they said they'd point to the fig tree on the hill, and I know... back in the day if they had babies that died, stillborn and all that, they would bury them on the base of a tree, they would, it's significant. So, is it like a burial ground out there."

"I just know it's highly significant, and that would have been, I can't stress enough the importance to say that it's ceremony, it's highly significant just because of them ring trees, and as I said, there's the fig tree, there's the Minerva pool, that's women's and I reckon they would be pointing to that Minerva pool, that's women's business, you know. And look at it now, the works been destroyed and vandalised and our connection is not there because, there's guys go there now, you know when we were told and took down there many years ago to them areas and it's just like, you know how we are living now, the graffiti. So, I hope these ring trees, you know and the significance of the Mount Gilead area now, I know they're putting houses there, I have been a part of that project, and it's a shame you know, these ring trees, what's going to happen to them? The big scar trees out there."

Additionally, several large trees on site hold special significance for many participants. A large fig tree, which sits on the top of a hill, is believed to be a women's birthing tree, and as noted by one participant:

“It’s highly significant just because of them ring trees, and as I said there’s the fig tree.”

The significance of the large fig tree was noted by other participants:

“Fig Tree hill, that’s an important place.”

Another tree identified on the field survey raised questions:

“... was this tree in the middle of the creek... it was so majestic... I wonder in the dry season, would they put that like a smoke signal? So, just the size of it, and the majestic of it, it wouldn’t be anything else because back in the day and we were told you know that with Aboriginal families, when they passed... that they would put the dead in the scar of a tree and pack it, so no animals would get to the body... I was thinking could it be that, but I’m thinking no not in a creek bed. So, it has me puzzled.”



Figure 4.4 An example of a ring tree identified within the MGS2 study area. (Source: GML Heritage, 2021)

## 4.9 Current and Future Heritage Conservation

Many participants expressed their support for conservation of Country, culture and heritage now and into the future:

"I'd like to see myself and my family still be connected to that area of Country and greater Western Sydney through passing on things that I've learnt and growing up things that have been passed on by my Elders. I'd like to keep this connection to Country going... I'd like the wider community to acknowledge that connection to Country, that it is still Aboriginal land, we still have Traditional Custodians out there and have done for thousands of years... Support our up and coming generation and keep that connection going, I think it's extremely important, or it will get lost otherwise."

"Protection is a hard one, because if you do put stuff up that's just opening up the gates to people that want to come in and explore further... we don't want to see them go, we want to try and work around it if we can. The management plan for it is really tough, I must say."

"It's pretty much down to the trees that we found, you know preserving them and the usual record of them and artefacts found. You guys are pretty good with making sure they don't just get discarded or anything like that... they get buried again, or taken care of prior because I actually prefer when there's a safe spot for them to be reburied and the artefacts and stuff, that's what I prefer."

"The wildlife, it's not just culture, it's the animals as well and making sure the natural waterways obviously don't get polluted because it all goes into main water, so that's my concerns."

Several participants discussed their ideas around management of Country, and the use of cultural sites across the Mount Gilead landscape. These ideas and opinions varied between individuals. Some individuals discussed a more restrictive or limited approach for protecting sites from over-tourism and vandalism:

"Sort of like a monument about the sensitive areas and that would be guarded off, you know fenced off very securely where no one could get in and do some graffiti work or anything like that... education and understanding is a slow process but it's the only way we are going to move forward with people and I mean non-Indigenous people to understand, you know take it in, process it and it should be, with things like this it should be like a monument. And for people to appreciate and to understand. You know like I said it's just a slow process, but what's most important is that they have to allow themselves to appreciate these things and to understand the Aboriginal culture...and they understand that we're all the same, but we're not, and yeah. It's a long process."

"Well look in the past, we have come across stone grooves that are in very public domains and unfortunately, we've had to plant blackberry bushes over them, and you know that's a very natural approach. I'd hate to see it sealed up with a cage or wire fence or something like that. But if you were to protect it, I'd suggest some type of planting or something around it that could act as a barrier or something like that, you know keep it with the natural environment. You know once you go putting up fences and that it just loses its whole spirituality and it defeats the purpose. So, we have plants and native

plants that have thorns and spikes that act as natural barriers that could be used eventually.”

Some participants shared ideas on interpretation of cultural sites:

“I think for me personally, I think show it, because it’s our history, you know what I mean, and how better can people get to know you and accept you than to be part of the community and to be part of the community is sharing and sharing history. It’s like when you go up to the Northern Territory other than like the Ayers Rock thing when I went up there because I wanted to learn more about the culture and heritage and up there. When you go up there, it’s like oh my god, just so amazing you know, because they don’t talk English, they’re walking down the street talking in their own language, it’s like wow. So, sharing is what I believe.”

“But education and understanding is a slow process but it’s the only way we are going to move forward with people, and I mean non-Indigenous people to understand. You know take it in, process it and it should be, with things like this it should be... like a monument and for people to appreciate and to understand.”

“Taylor had a lovely little sign that said Figtree Hill, and the sideline from the entrance is to the tree. And what we are discussing now is putting that in language. Welcome to Figtree Hill in language.”

Future opportunities for the local Aboriginal community to participate on the Mount Gilead projects, now and in the future, were also discussed:

“Junior site officer that’s on there for training, I had to fill out two of those forms for my boys to come out to work, so that I could show them, so that they can be trained up to get more knowledge. This would be a great initiative for Lendlease to allow this to happen... get the juniors out here, they are working... they are learning while they are out there, and it does line their pockets up too and makes them feel proud... I think it’s there for them to learn. And all they need to do, need to be is taught by those who know. And like I said, there is a great relationship between archaeologists and Aboriginal elders... there is more understanding than not. So, that’s the way I feel. When they come together like that, young fellas are coming through the middle and getting advice from both sides. And putting it into their own thoughts and as they go, when they go away from these people, they are gathering their own thoughts, and they’re thinking their own patterns, their own take on.”

“I think it’s through education. And also, part of what we’ve been talking about with Mt Gilead is there’s a lot of consolation layers. Giving it back to us and letting us look after it. Let us look after the outsides. Having someone on site all the time, looking after them and being about to go to the school and talk about it.”

“What I think is really good is opportunities like this where people get this opportunity to tell their story... I think it’s just really important that oral histories like this actually become embedded in the models, I think that we need to be able to share history and



heritage beyond the framework of just engaging for the sake of being a Registered Aboriginal Party.”

## 4.10 Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Commission, A H R, 2022, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders: Australia's First Peoples', <<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islanders-australias-first-peoples>>.

## **5 Cultural heritage sites, places and connections**

### **5.1 Preamble**

Archaeological investigations across the MGS2 area have been ongoing for over 50 years, with the first survey and recording in 1972. Over the ensuing years the archaeological record has been enriched and expanded, to include a total of 165 separate (but interrelated) items (including PAD areas). Details on some of these sites and places is restricted. The locations of all sites is considered restricted and not presented in the public version of this report. The detailed (unrestricted) version of the report contains specific location information, and an inventory of the items.

This section provides a summary of the cultural items, and mapping which outlines those locations with concentrations of cultural heritage items. Examples of each site type are also provided. A detailed inventory of all items has been prepared for the restricted report, with all new sites being entered on AHIMS.

### **5.2 Aboriginal cultural heritage items**

Following site type designations under AHIMS, Aboriginal sites and places at MGS2 area have been classified under seven groups:

- Pigmented art—shelter sites within the open depression of the creek corridors, with expressions of pigmented art
- Cultural Trees
  - Scarred trees—trees with bark removed for cultural manufacturing or use purposes
  - Ring trees—wayfinding trees, with limbs or trunks that have been culturally manipulated
  - Other cultural trees—other trees identified as holding cultural value
- Grinding grooves and patches—ground marks on sandstone bedrock indicating Aboriginal use
- Artefacts

- Stone artefacts—artefacts made from imported stone that present evidence for Aboriginal modification and/or use
- Contact period artefacts—items made of materials imported to Australia post 1788 showing signs or connection with Aboriginal use and/or people
- Potential Archaeological Deposits—locations with potential for buried artefacts and hearths, described as either closed landforms (inside shelters), or open landforms (on flats or slopes)
- View Places and Corridors—locations identified with views to important items and places either within or viewable from the MGS2 area
- Waterholes—deeper pools within the creek corridor open depressions capable of holding and retaining water for long period post rainfall
- Other items identified with ACH

A summary of the recorded items, referred to as Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (ACH), is provided in Table 5.1, the overarching spatial relationship of these items is shown in Figure 5.1. This is followed by an example for each site type, 'masked' mapping of general locations, and comment on the distribution and nature of the item.

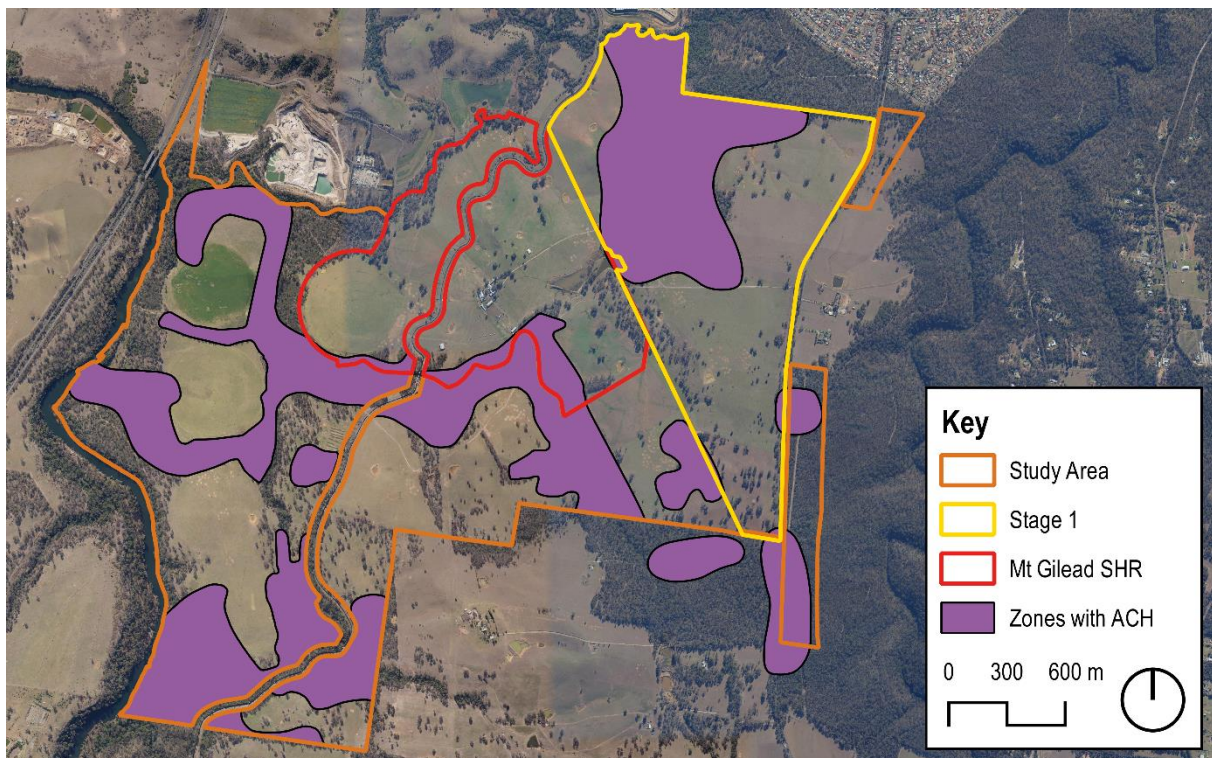


Figure 5.1 Indicative locations of all ACH 'sites', 'places' and connections identified inside the MGS2 area. This figure reflects a 'masked' overview of ACH, which intends to provide an appreciation of

zones with higher densities of Aboriginal site, places and connections. The boundary line is indicative and forms a buffer around some areas with densities of sites and/or connections.

Table 5.1 Overview of all ACH, grouped by site type.

Site Type	Frequency	Primary Associations
Art	7 shelters with art	Located in the creek corridors, five art sites are in Woodhouse Creek, one is on in the Nepean Creek, and one is above the Nepean River.
Cultural trees	11 scarred trees 26 ring trees 6 pine trees A eucalypt tree A fig tree (in MGS1 area)	There is no general patterning associated with the scarred trees. They are found in several different landform contexts.  The ring trees are more commonly associated with the landscape around Woodhouse Creek. There are some clusters and lines of trees. We understand that some trees mark specific sites (eg the art sites), some define walking routes or pathways.  The other trees are cultural items identified by the local Aboriginal community as holding specific values.
Grinding grooves	3 grinding groove sites 3 grinding hollow sites 1 grinding patch	Grinding groove sites follow the regional predictive model. Grinding hollows are located in the larger watercourses.
Artefact (& PADs)	2 closed landform stone sites 14 single (isolated) artefact sites 18 artefact sites 16 open landform PADs 36 close landform PADs	Stone artefact sites are commonly found on the lower slope above the open depression of the creek. Numerous zones with PAD have been identified.  Given there is frequently little correlation between surface artefact expressions, and subsurface archaeological deposits, a future program of test excavation is required to understand the nature and distribution of lithic sites.
View places	8 locations	Several higher spots provide views west and northwest, notably to the Blue Mountains. Local views to the Nepean River were also identified as important.
Waterholes	14 waterholes 1 spring	Located in Woodhouse Creek and Nepean Creek.
Other items	3 items	Associated with one of the art sites and its waterhole.



## 5.3 Cultural heritage sites and places

### 5.3.1 Art sites

Woodhouse Creek contains four of the seven art sites, including the two largest sites. All art sites are located within the open depression of the creek, inside sandstone rock shelters. Both black charcoal and red pigmented art is present, sometimes both inside the same shelter. Themes for the art focuses on animals, hand stencils, human and anthropomorphic figures. Three of the four art sites on Woodhouse Creek are marked by ring trees, which are located on near the top of bank above each art location.

In most instances the art is in a good condition, albeit fading. Most shelters with art have good rock integrity, no rubbish and little vandalism. 52-2-0022 ST is presented as an example of an art site (Figure 5.3 to Figure 5.12). Following recording of the art panels we have enhanced the images for red and black spectrums, using the program iDStretch.

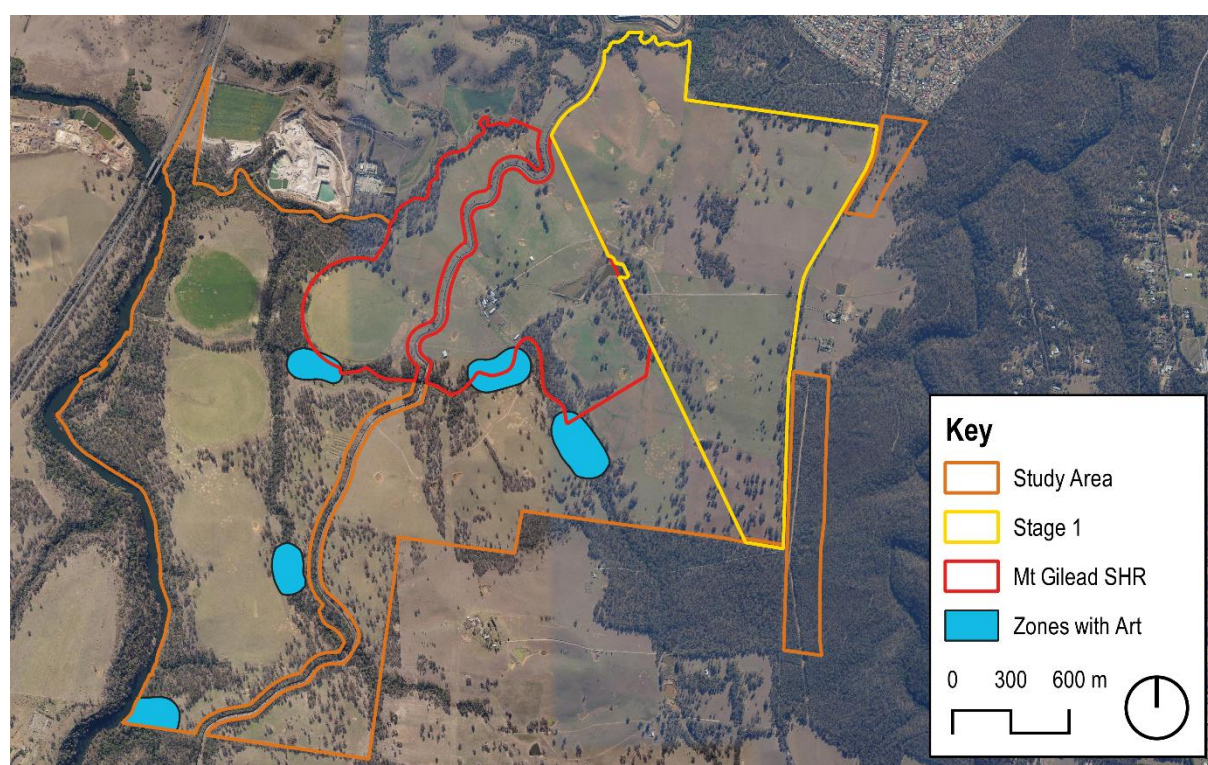


Figure 5.2 Indicative locations of the art sites.





Figure 5.3 View to ST. The location of art inside the shelter is indicated by the person pointing inside the shelter. The red handprint is positioned on the external central rock face (red circle).



Figure 5.4 Floor of the shelter. The rock platform adjacent to the scale could have been used for grinding a red pigment—this would necessitate archaeological excavation/investigation to clarify.

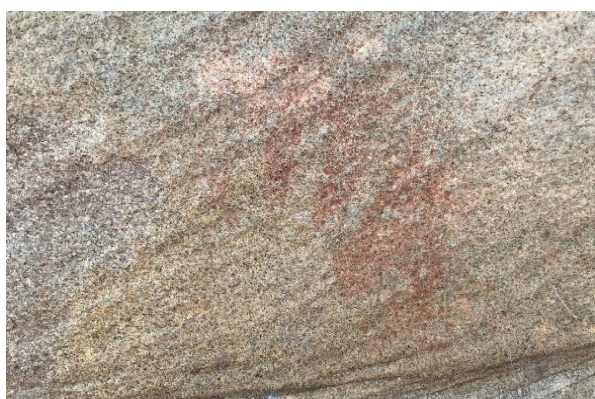


Figure 5.5 Red stencil art of a smaller left hand. It is possible that the 'pinky' (fifth) finger has been partially removed.

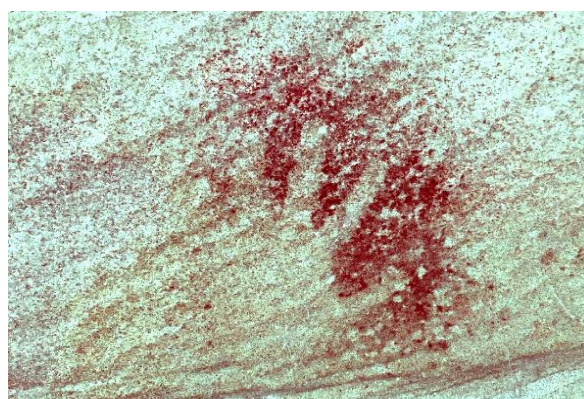


Figure 5.6 Enhanced art image.



Figure 5.7 Charcoal art panel possibly showing a bird.

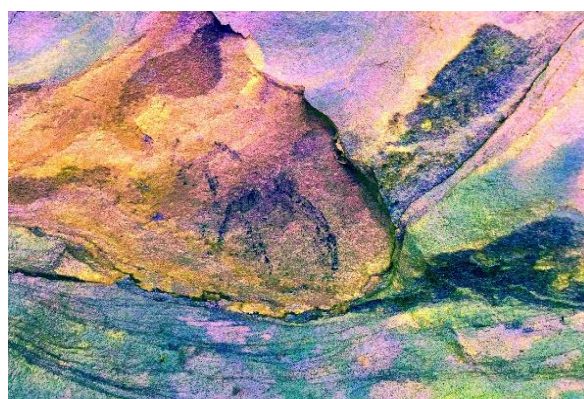


Figure 5.8 Enhanced art image.





Figure 5.9 Charcoal art panel possibly showing an emu footprint.

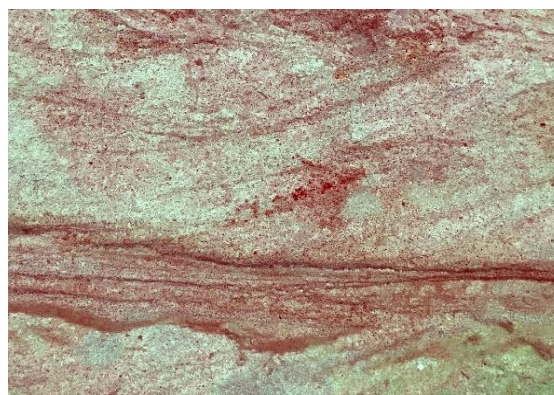


Figure 5.10 Enhanced art image.



Figure 5.11 Charcoal art panel possibly showing unidentifiable items.



Figure 5.12 Enhanced art image.

### 5.3.2 Cultural trees

The region contains a high number of culturally modified and attributed trees. Within the MGS2 area these predominantly comprise scarred trees and ring trees (Figure 5.13). Other types of cultural trees are present, but information on these is culturally restricted. The majority of ring trees are located along the margins of Woodhouse Creek, and appear to provide direction (wayfinding) to specific sites on this creek, and routes along the creek, in one instance avoiding a key with specific cultural sensitivity. Scarred trees have been recorded across the extent of the MGS2 area, and do not appear to have a particular focus or distribution pattern.

All cultural trees have been examined by an arborist to confirm species, the health and immediate management needs for each tree. Scarred tree 966 (Figure 5.14) and ring

tree 11 (Figure 5.15) are presented as examples of these site types (noting we have removed the location and orientation (wayfinding) images which are detailed in the unrestricted report.

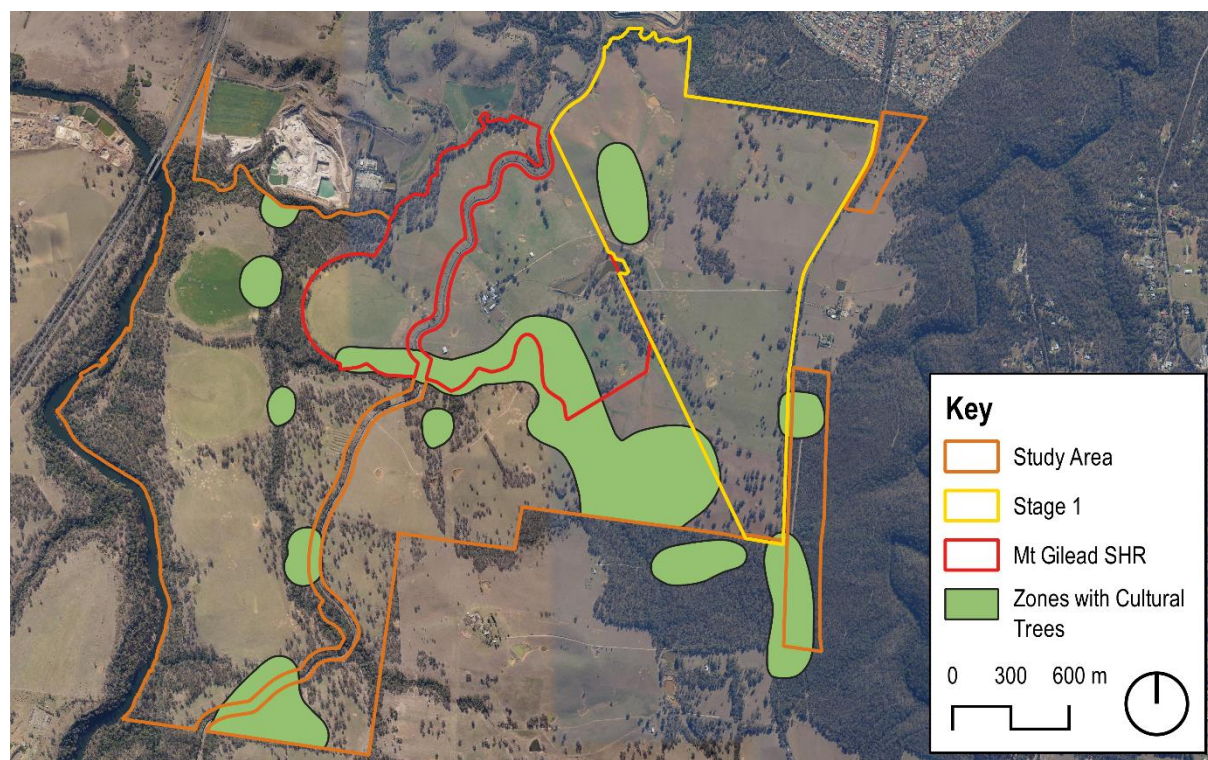


Figure 5.13 Indicative locations of cultural trees (scarred trees, ring trees, and other trees).



Figure 5.14 Inventory card of ST 966


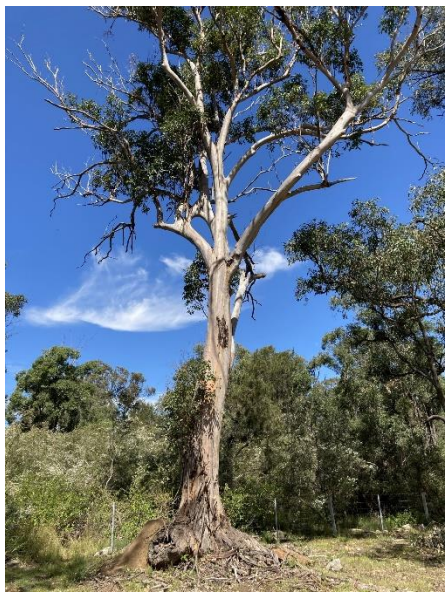
AHIMS	52-2-4534	
Species	Broad leaf iron bark ( <i>Eucalyptus fibrosa</i> ), 20m tall	
Scar dimensions	1.0m * 0.27m	
Scar shape	Oval, with a rounded base and pointed top.	
Aspect	West	
Distance from ground	0.80m	
Regrowth	0.1m	
Cultural interpretation	Wood taken for a shield or bowl.	
Health of tree	It has fair health and fair structure	

Figure 5.15 Inventory card of RT 11

AHIMS		
Species	Grey gum, <i>Eucalypt punctata</i>	
Tree height	25m	
Description	Two rings, one above the other, made from a side branch. Rings are oblong shape	
Approximate ring size	1m and 0.3m	
Distance off ground	10m	
Orientation	100 to 120 degrees (True North) Corridor created has the same orientation as Ring Tree 24.	
Cultural interpretation	Possible association with the Minerva Pools, and Art site 52-2-0796.	
Health of tree	It has poor health and a fair structure	

### 5.3.3 Grinding grooves and hollows

Prior to the current work no grinding grooves, patches or hollows had been identified. We undertook predictive modelling (based on a wide regional model) which identified this site type was most likely to be associated with low order creek systems, and could be found in association with shallower slopes. Application of this model resulted in the identification of four of the seven sites sites—the other three were located within the open depression of Woodhouse Creek, and in one instance inside a high sandstone shelter (Figure 5.16). The inventory card for 2020-01 grinding grooves is provided as an example.

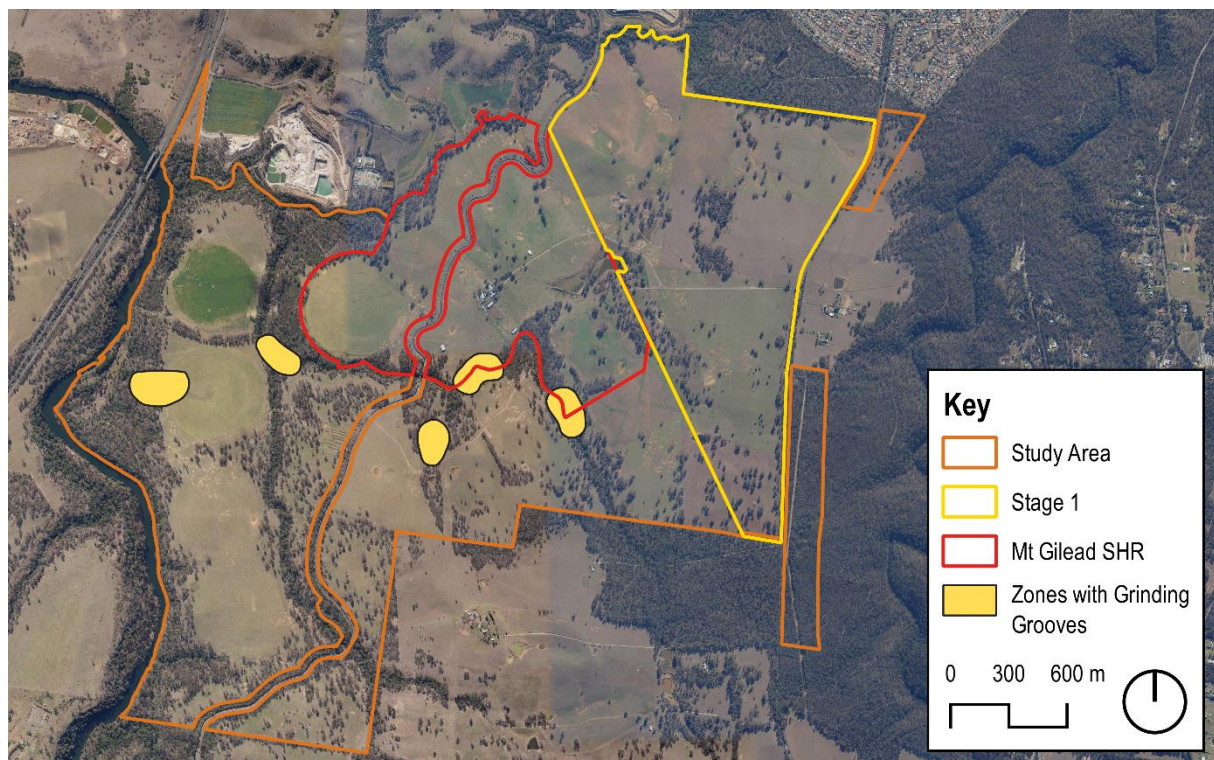


Figure 5.16 Indicative locations of grinding grooves and hollows.

An ephemeral overgrown creek, which flows from south to north into Woodhouse Creek, contains a number of sandstone boulders on the margins of its open depression (Figure 5.17). One boulder has a series of parallel U shaped grooves, synonymous with Aboriginal grinding grooves (Figure 5.18). We have recorded three grooves on this platform, although there could be more. The grooves measure:

- 17cm (long) \* 7cm (wide) \* 2cm (deep)
- 12 cm \* 5cm \* 2cm
- 15 cm \* 6 cm \* 2cm





Figure 5.17 Location of the grinding grooves within an overgrown first order creek.



Figure 5.18 The three grinding grooves which extend to the edge of the sandstone platform.

### 5.3.4 Lithic sites and areas with potential

Similar to most Aboriginal cultural landscapes, the MGS2 area contains number of stone artefact (lithic) sites. Consultation with the local Aboriginal community and application of predictive modelling for the region (including consideration of the outcomes associated with MGS1 salvage excavations) has identified the majority of stone based sites are connected with shallow sloping platforms along and adjacent to the margins of the main creeks.

Prior survey has recorded numerous areas with potential archaeological deposits (PADs) in both closed (shelter) and open landform locations. We have further assessed landforms across the MGS2 area and identified a number of further zones which could be archaeological tested to confirm whether they hold an archaeological deposit.

The record of stone within MGS2 has presented the full range of anticipated raw materials, including silcrete, IMST, quartz, and quartzite. The majority of recorded lithics in closed sites are associated with deposits on the floors of shelters, which generally hold high integrity. Those lithics identified in an open context have been recorded as a consequence of localised disturbance. On shelter site contains a deposit which could include materials used by Aboriginal people post-1788 (in addition to lithics, shell and animal bone).

We have provided two examples of lithics, from one open site (MGA 30, Figure 5.20 and Figure 5.21) and one closed site (MGA 28, Figure 5.22 and Figure 5.23).

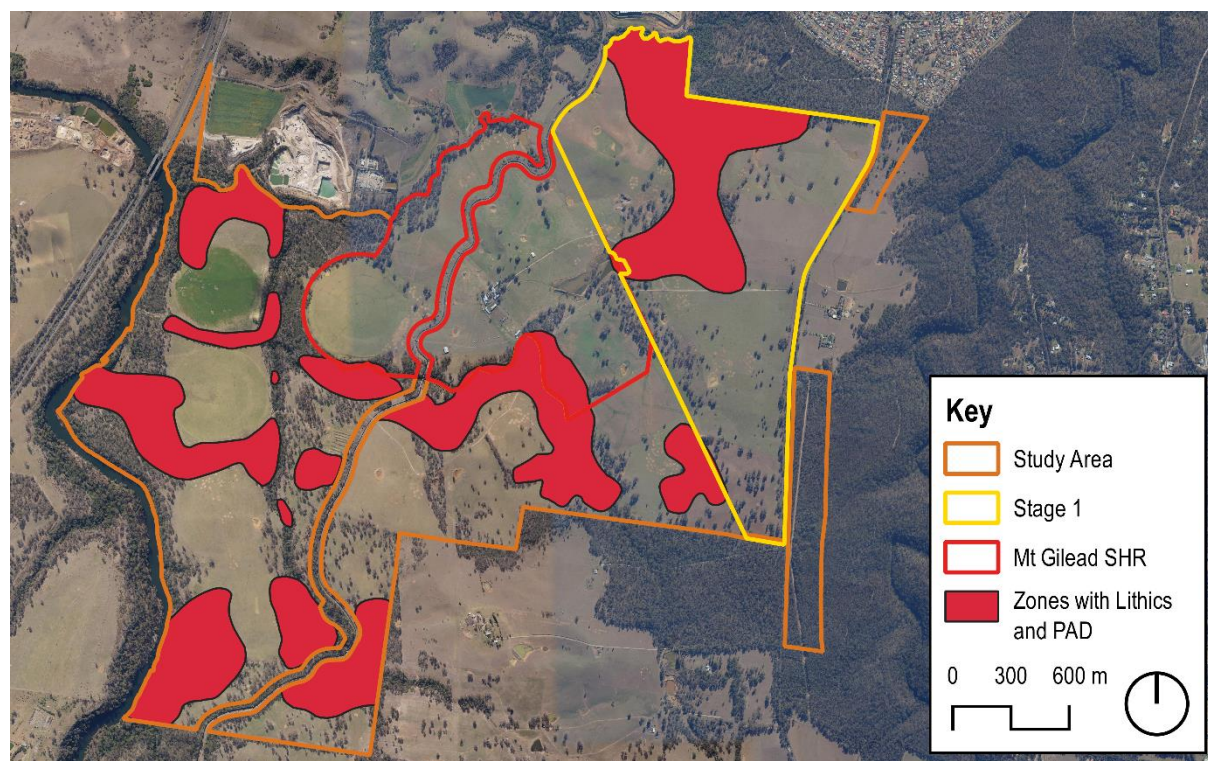


Figure 5.19 Location of stone artefact sites and PADs.



Figure 5.20 MGA 30 and PAD 48. Landscape context is an open field with a very shallow deposit, positioned on the margin of an ephemeral watercourse. The impacts of disc ploughing can be seen on the bedrock. The PAD zone extends beyond the dam to the trees in the background.



Figure 5.21 Lithics observed consequent of the eroding soils adjacent to exposed bedrock. These include yellow and red silcrete flakes, and IMST flakes.





Figure 5.22 View into the shelter MGA 28 (& PAD 47) with deposit. This shelter also contains panels with art.



Figure 5.23 Assortment of cultural artefacts within the deposit. The assemblage included lithics, shell, bone, a clay pipestem and a shell button. Further details of the investigation into the phasing of the post 1788 artefacts is presented in the unrestricted report.

### 5.3.5 Cultural view lines

During the field surveys eight separate locations were identified which present aesthetic view 'lines' or 'corridors' to locations with cultural importance under local traditions; seven of these locations are located inside the MGS2 area. The views can be described as either distant, notable to mountain ranges in the Blue Mountains (described in further detail at Section 2.2 of the restricted report), or local views to nearby hills and along the Nepean River. The view places are described in Table 5.2 and shown in Figure 5.24. The annotated view from location 01 is presented in Figure 5.25 (wide) and Figure 5.26 (narrow).

Table 5.2 Locations identified with local and regional (near and far) views to items with cultural connection

View Place	View Direction	Description & Associations
1	Northwest	Local high point in the central south of the study area, upslope from Woodhouse Creek. Expansive views to the north and west to Munmi, Mt Banks, Mt Hay, Mt Wilson.
2	All directions, west and northwest	The view corridor from the fig tree in MGS1 area. Views are to the Blue Mountains, and also a locally significant hill at 324 degrees.

View Place	View Direction	Description & Associations
3	Southwest and northwest	On the ridgeline walking route adjacent to the Nepean River. View SW to the razorback range. Views NW to the Blue Mountains.
4	Northwest	On the ridgeline walking route adjacent to the Nepean River. View NW to Blue Mountains.
5	Northwest	Located on a slope above Woodhouse Creek, this location has low level views to two peaks in the distance (Mt Banks and Mt Hay).
6	North	Views across the fields to Campbelltown, with distant views to the Blue Mountains.
7	West	View west, low across the Nepean River.
8	Northwest	Similar view corridor to View 01, but located on the middle field slopes. View to Munmi, Mt Bank, Mt Wilson & Mt Hay.

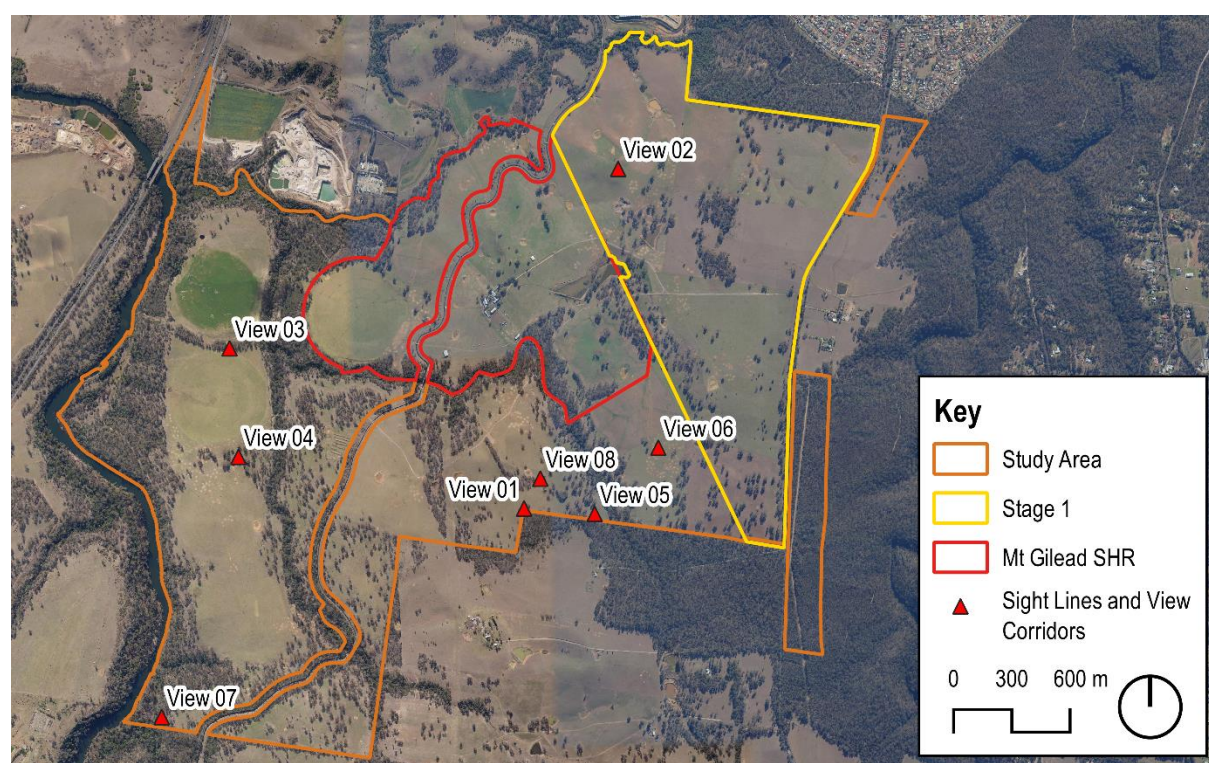


Figure 5.24 Locations which have been identified with view corridors.





Figure 5.25 View corridor 01. Wide landscape perspective of the view NW.



Figure 5.26 View corridor 01. Narrow view NW with the peaks in the Blue Mountains clearly identifiable.

### 5.3.6 Waterholes and springs

Waterholes in creeks are locations where natural pools have formed within the bedrock. These locations retain water for a period following precipitation and thus can be important sources for water and food. Beyond their function as water storage, some waterholes can hold specific cultural value associated with intangible traditions and



practices. A total of 14 water holes have been recorded on Woodhouse and Nepean Creeks (Table 5.3 and Figure 5.27). The majority had a similar size, extending over 10m to 20m in length, with a depth up to 1m.

Natural springs are upwellings of water from bedrock, which can have temporary or permanent flows. As well as being a source of water, they may have significant connections with intangible values (for instance they have been identified with traditions and the movement of spirits below ground). A single ephemeral spring has been identified in the west of the MGS2 area.

Table 5.3 Summary of waterholes in the Woodhouse and Nepean Creek systems.

Waterhole	Description & Associations
1	Woodhouse Creek. Located in the main channel, the channel is positioned below art site (52-2-0023). Ring tree 07 points over the pool to the art site. Grinding grooves 2021-03 is located 90m downstream.
2	Woodhouse Creek. Located in the main channel. Positioned below the closed shelters of MG PAD04 and MG PAD05. Art site (52-2-0024) is located on the southern bank above this pool. Ring tree 08 points across the pool to the art site.
3	Woodhouse Creek. Located in the main channel. Positioned below the closed shelter of MG PAD03. Ring tree 09 'directs' around the creek corridor at this location.
4	Woodhouse Creek. Located across the main channel, the source of iron stone ochre comes from sandstone on the margins of this waterhole. When the creek is not flowing, water seeps from the rock and colours the pool a rich orange to red.
5	Woodhouse Creek. Located across the main channel, this pool forms the reflective surface for the mirror cave. The pool extends around in front of art site (52-2-0020) and thereby forms a major feature within this part of the MGS2 cultural landscape.
6	Nepean Creek. A series of shallow open pools, which are bound by high and steep sided slopes. The area is extremely sheltered and tranquil—it is difficult to access from the adjacent creek slopes.
7	Nepean Creek. Located in the main channel, this pool is positioned below art site MGA 20 (52-2-4327).
8	Woodhouse Creek. Located in the main channel. Positioned below the closed shelter of MG PAD2.
9	Nepean Creek. Located in the main channel, this pool is overlooked by the shelter with grinding patch 2021-02.
10	Nepean Creek. Located in the main channel, this pool is located near 2016 Mt Gilead Site 4 AFT (52-2-4511).

Waterhole	Description & Associations
11	Woodhouse Creek. Located in the main channel, the waterhole is positioned below the closed shelter MG PAD20.
12	Woodhouse Creek. Located in the main channel, the channel is positioned below the sight line of ring tree 15
13	Woodhouse Creek. Located in the main channel, the channel is positioned below the closed shelter MG PAD22.
14	Woodhouse Creek. Located near the confluence with Nepean Creek.
Spring	On the shallow slopes of a field, which drain south to an unnamed creek that flows into the Nepean River. Associated with MG PAD 55 and artefact site 52-2-4306 (MGA 11).

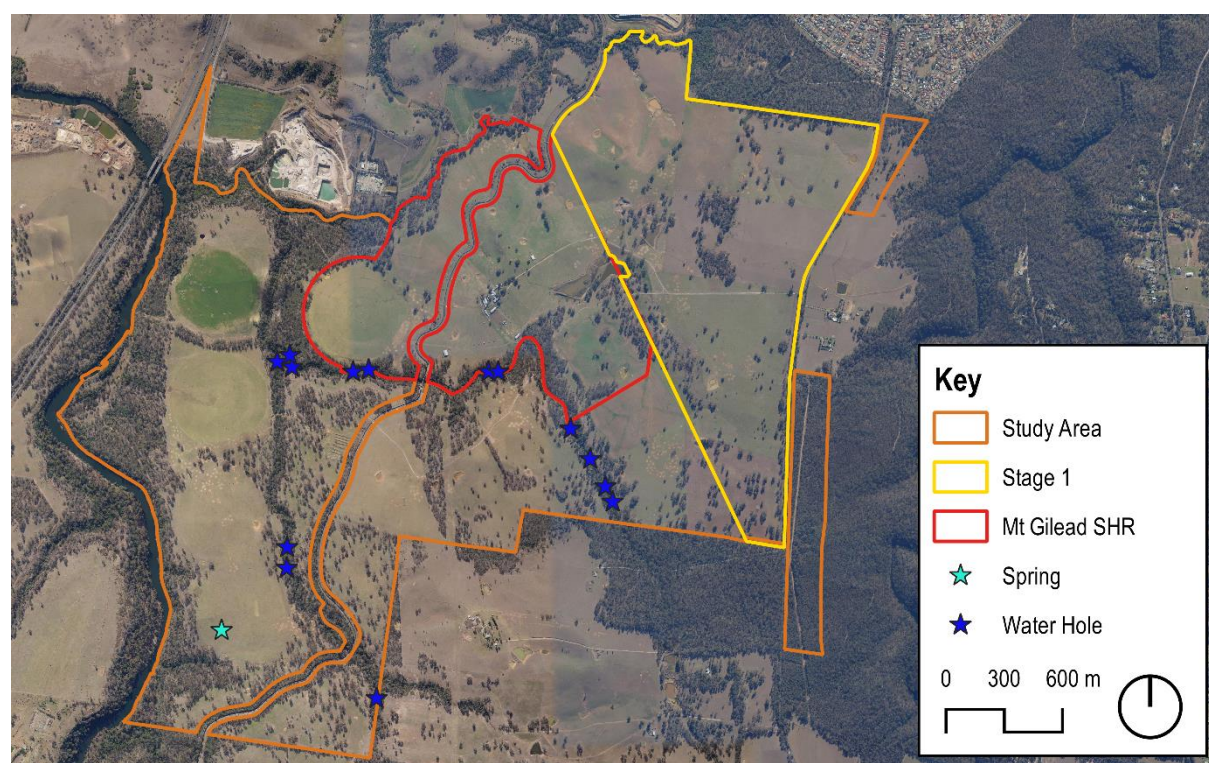


Figure 5.27 Waterholes and springs on Woodhouse Creek and Nepean Creek.

## 5.4 Understanding and interpretation

The Aboriginal cultural landscape of the MGS2 study area has been described as 'connected' at both a local and regional level. Local Aboriginal people have provided some insight into their cultural and traditional connections with Country. A description

and some interpretation of these connections is provided in the restricted report. These details are considered culturally restricted and this cannot be provided in full in this public version. However we have provided information on some aspects which can be used to understand the requirements for future management, conservation and investigations into local ACH.

### **5.4.1 Regional wayfinding**

Regional 'movement' and 'wayfinding' by Aboriginal people is associated with the cycle of life, creation, ancestral associations, and the wider east coast Aboriginal spirituality. The whole Appin to Campbelltown region, situated between the two rivers, forms a part of that connection. This connection is evidenced through some places and values described inside the MGS2 area (and parts of MGS1).

Cultural features that have been described as important and a part of local tradition include three main watercourses: the Nepean River, the Wollondilly River, and the Georges River. Munmi (Mt Cloudmaker) and the 'razorback range' have also been identified on several occasions. A flow of law through Country, from the south coast of NSW through this place, north towards Mt Yengo, has also been identified as important.

The places described above have been mapped and are shown in Figure 5.28. It is clear that these items have a general northwest alignment from the Mount Gilead Stage 2 study area.

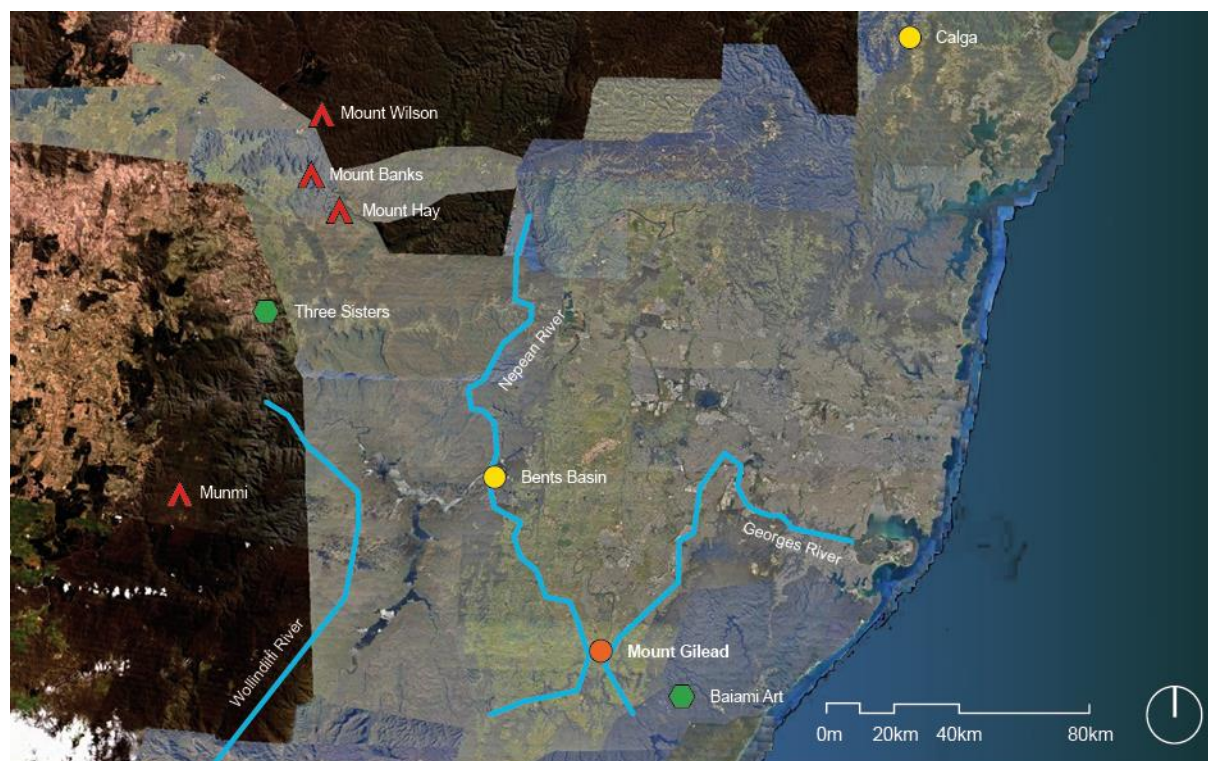


Figure 5.28 The Mount Gilead Stage 2 study area in a regional context with other important Aboriginal places and features.

Further to the local oral traditions, the understanding of the connection to the regional items is tentatively suggested through the interpretation of the alignment from some of the ring trees. This mapping and interpretation is not presented in the public version of this report. Some trees appear to provide 'local' wayfinding (described in the restricted report), and some could present direction to items at the regional level. When viewed as a group of items the direction lines appear to present some gross patterning. Trees may be viewed on a divide between the two main creek lines: Woodhouse Creek and Nepean Creek. Tentatively, we suggest that the trees on Woodhouse Creek appear to provide local patterning, whereas those on Nepean Creek could be indicating or pointing to places and items regionally. This duality may be associated with the concentration of 'sites' along Woodhouse Creek, whereas Nepean Creek is associated with movement through and viewing Country.

Considering only the trees which do not appear to present direction to specific local features (which are mainly on Nepean Creek, on landforms east of Woodhouse Creek) there is a general alignment towards the west to northwest—the direction of the key features in the Blue Mountains. A second series of alignments appears to indicate a north to south alignment. This alignment concurs with regional knowledge of connection to creation, song lines and rivers.



## 5.4.2 Local wayfinding

When viewed as a group of items, at the local level there appear to be confluences or focus on locations either side of Woodhouse Creek. We have described three patterns which appear to be evident through the physical record. These interpretations are based on multiple discussion with local Aboriginal individuals, bringing together several different streams of oral records and physical evidence. A limited description is provided here, along with a summary graphic which describes these movement corridors without identifying sites, places or specific items.

The fig tree in the MGS1 area is identified as a culturally important place and tree, with specific significance. Several ring trees in the local area (east from Woodhouse Creek) point in the general direction of the hilltop and this tree. Southwest of the fig tree there is a basic alignment northward between two ring trees. Cultural information was provided describing a link between one of these ring trees and the fig tree.

Movement from the Appin Road travelling route, into the Woodhouse Creek cultural corridor is described and directed by a series of ring trees, which provide navigation to locations which were described as 'family' or 'living' areas—these raised flat landforms hold archaeological potential for deposits associated with such activities.

Within this localised landscape, there is a zone associated with two of the art sites that been described as holding some cultural (gender) restrictions. Several features have been identified that outline movement and the use of these areas. Further details are provided in the restricted report.

Presentation of the traditional cultural landscapes, which includes identified locations with key views to distant and regional places is provided in Figure 5.29. This should be considered as a summary of places and associations, with further detail being described in the restricted report.



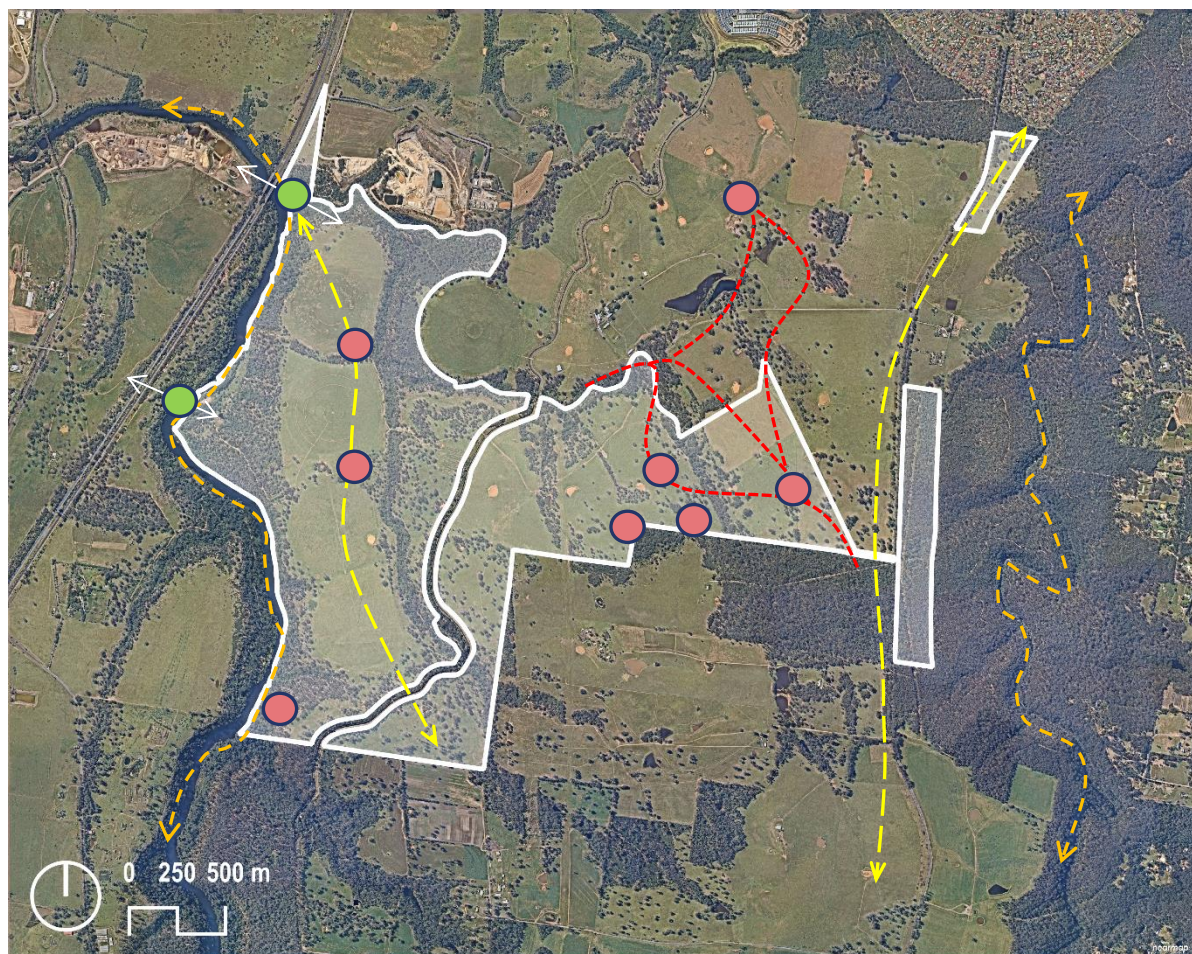


Figure 5.29 Summary of traditional connections and movement within and through the MGS2 area.

In Figure 5.29 we have annotated the eight identified locations from which regional views can be seen (pink circles). We have identified a series of movement corridors including: the Nepean River (orange line in the west, left); Georges River (orange line in the east); two crossing locations on the Nepean River (green circles); Appin Road (yellow line in the east); the ridgeline route (yellow line in the west); and the local wayfinding routes (red lines) associated with movement from Appin Road in the south, through the hilltop with the Fig tree, and locations in and around Woodhouse Creek.

All of these movement corridors are inferred on the basis of the physical evidence recorded, combined with local social knowledge provided by Aboriginal people. It can be assumed these corridors were associated with traditions and movement routes within the Late Holocene, notably the last 1,000 years. Examination of earlier associations would require archaeological materials derived from excavation, combined with reliable dates (carbon) associated with archaeological sites.

## **6 Heritage management and planning considerations**

The participants involved in the field survey, and who were interviewed as part of this project, have provided detailed information about their diverse connections to Dharawal Country, and heritage and culture more broadly. It has been identified that the MGS2 study area holds tangible and intangible values for the First Nations community. The investigations into this place represent the commencement for the process of recognition, (re)connection and hopefully the formation of an enduring association.

The importance of this place has been disseminated through seven key themes. These themes, and the detail therein, should be considered and discussed further during community engagement and the development of the MGS2 masterplan. A number of key principles and guidelines can also assist with recognising, conserving and interpreting key elements of First Nations heritage and culture in and around the MGS2 study area.

This section of the report presents heritage management and planning considerations which are based on both the NSW statutory framework, and the outcomes from community engagement through the work.

### **6.1 Planning considerations**

#### **6.1.1 Future engagement with First Nations people**

Lendlease intend that the MGS2 project continues to engage local First Nations people who have a connection and engagement with this region. This connection to land, family and heritage has great influence over First Nations health, happiness and empowerment and supports positive physical health outcomes, as does living or working on Country.<sup>1</sup> This sentiment was shared by most of the participants interviewed.

The current standard framework and process for community engagement, aligning with the statutory requirements for a future Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP), would likely stymie meaningful engagement and thus outcomes for the MGS2 project.

It is recommended that a MGS2 community-based approach for ongoing engagement is developed that aligns with current best practice standards and the objectives in Lendlease's Reconciliation Action Plan. This program could be based on the following considerations. Being involved in cultural work on Country supports the local Aboriginal community to strengthen their connection to culture and Country. Development of a

holistic approach to ongoing engagement and cultural work can be undertaken to address both the statutory need and the community-based approach.

## **6.1.2 Land use planning**

The process of land use planning has sought and must continue to consider tangible and intangible ACH. To facilitate this process the outcomes from the programs of First Nations heritage investigation have been summarised into a simple plan that identifies the land areas with the greatest concentration of heritage value and connection. This plan is shown as Figure 5.1 and has been combined with the Biobanking areas in Figure 6.1 (below).

The process of investigating and understanding of this cultural landscape has only just commenced, and both First Nations people and the heritage consultants, with whom they work, are reconnecting with this place. The work undertaken thus far has identified a number of important places, across multiple scales. Our work has confirmed that First Nations heritage associated with the MGS2 area is not limited to Western constructs of heritage (ie with fixed curtilages, boundaries and borders), but extends across the Sydney basin and beyond.

We currently understand that this landscape contains some places which hold special values for a multitude of reasons. Some places are important because of their type or location, eg some of the shelters and art sites, some places are important because they are men's or women's places, some are important because they were family zones. Some locations may hold high densities of buried archaeological evidence (which requires archaeological test excavation to uncover). Some places allow for understanding, connection, teaching and reading of the region's cultural traditions.

It is therefore important that future land use planning is able to conserve and retain as many of these places and their connections as possible. In terms of planning for future land use there are two possible avenues:

- conservation, which means retaining the place in its current undeveloped status; or
- continued or alternative land use, which means continued agricultural practice over pre-existing cleared land zones and/or new urban development.

It should be the aim of future land use planning to present an urban and landscape design that incorporates ACH. This process would allow First Nations people to raise awareness, support and present opportunities for intergenerational learning and training of younger generations during future heritage work.



Some of the mechanisms that consider ACH in future planning are presented below. However, many of the opportunities for future engagement with place, involvement in conservation, interpretation and learning cannot yet to determined. The management of many places needs to be given adequate time and consideration. As such, there is a need to develop specific management plans for items such as the cultural trees and art sites. Further engagement on Country at these places, during the preparation of management plans will support First Nations connection to Country and culture, and lead to greater community wellbeing. This action strongly aligns with the Lendlease Reconciliation Action Plan.

## Conservation of ACH values

The balance between development for future private housing lots, public infrastructure (roads and parks), retention of bushland areas (which in this instance means biobanking) and consideration for ACH has, and is, being considered during land use planning.

At the current time we have sought to present management for ACH at a high level, where land is divided into possible 'development' and 'biobanking' areas. Contrast between these two uses is presented in Figure 6.1, with around 60% of the zone with ACH being located inside a biobanking area. It should be noted that some of the biobanking boundaries have been extended or enlarged to encompass areas with ACH, eg landforms west of Woodhouse Creek. In other instances, essential future infrastructure has been moved to avoid some Aboriginal sites.

Aboriginal cultural heritage provides essential links between the past and present – it is an essential part of Aboriginal people's cultural identity, connection and sense of belonging to Country. The effective protection and conservation of this heritage is important in maintaining the identity, health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people.<sup>2</sup>

Conservation, recognition, protection and interpretation of ACH values within the MGS2 area requires a specific management approach, with many different aspects. These include:

- Continued engagement with First Nations people to determine what is important and how it should be managed—noting these aspects will change over time.
- Further investigations into ACH, through ongoing consultation and future archaeological investigations.
- Preparation of management plans for specific places or groups of Aboriginal places (Section 7.2).
- An allowance of time to provide First Nations people to (re)connect to places and determine the best outcomes for those places.

- Consideration of ACH during urban planning, biobanking, and urban development (discussed below)
- Development of place specific interpretation, which is led by the Aboriginal community. This may need to consider gender restrictions, and/or cultural access routes and requirements.
- Management and conservation of organic ACH elements, such as cultural trees that have died.
- Active management processes and education of the wider public to prevent deliberate vandalism of shelters and particularly art sites.
- Within new urban areas, consideration of intangible aspects such as view lines, movement corridors and stories of place.

## Biobanking

The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme (BOS) under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act* 2016, is a voluntary biodiversity offset scheme aimed at helping to address the loss of biodiversity values by habitat degradation and loss. Lendlease has entered into this scheme for both MGS1 and MGS2. The land areas allocated to biobanking are shown in Figure 2.2 and Figure 6.1. It is clear from the mapping presented, that a large proportion of the zones allocated for biobanking are directly associated with ACH values.

Whilst the biobanking scheme results in the regeneration and conservation of biodiversity, it does not necessarily represent a positive outcome for ACH. This is because land rehabilitation and permissible 'development' associated with biobanking actions may result in significant earthworks and new construction. These works can directly harm Aboriginal objects and places that are present, or could be present within the footprint and access routes of the works.

Therefore any biobanking actions need to be very cognisant of ACH. Biobanking management must identify both tangible and intangible ACH values, and detail how ACH will be managed during future works. Management for ACH therefore needs to be developed concurrently with any biobanking agreements.

Biobanking should also consider Aboriginal tradition, notably First Nations knowledge and connection with plants and land resources. Bush tucker, hunting and resources are important for strengthening First Nations connections to Country, culture and heritage. Plans for replanting should be developed with suitable members of the local Aboriginal community, identifying plant species and areas which can be dedicated to First Nations people, allowing for future access, use and education. The actions can be used to develop and provide space(s) where local Aboriginal people can remain connected and actively



care for Country. Such spaces could also provide an opportunity for future education and enterprise around ecology and bush tucker.

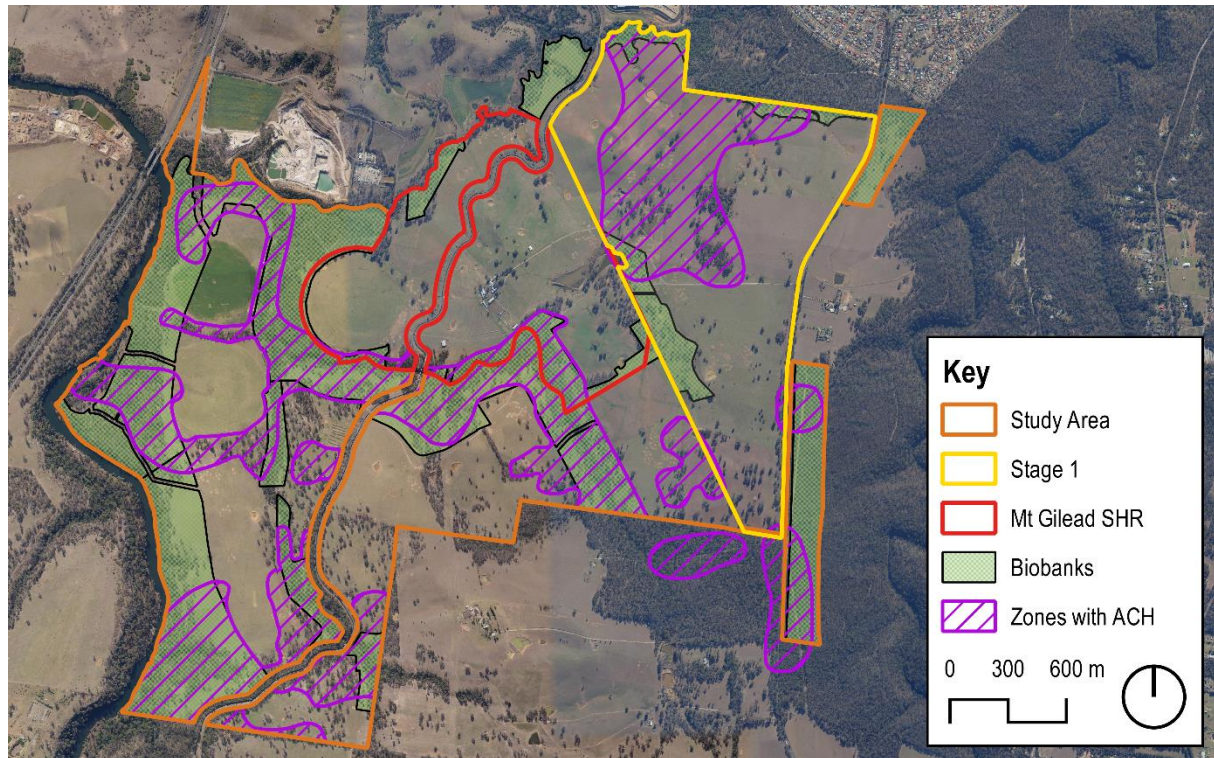


Figure 6.1 ACH within the MGS1 and MGS2 areas (Figure 5.1), combined with the Biobank zones (Figure 2.2)

## Urban development

Planning for urban development inside the development footprint involves consideration of many aspects, from lot and road layouts, engineering requirements, ground level changes, inclusion of existing infrastructure, to water management. ACH will also need to be considered, notably where either the ACH items/values are directly located within the future urban footprint, or where design elements could pose an indirect impact, eg alteration of water flow.

Some of the places and locations identified with ACH require further investigation to determine the nature and extent of the archaeological signatures, eg those areas with PAD.

Other aspects such as the view lines can be considered through development of urban areas which maintain and direct sight lines towards the northwest, eg street and house orientation. Consideration of how these view lines can be appreciated is also important, eg viewing locations can be planned within public open space (whether interpreted or

not). In some instances it may be necessary to limit future development heights, so that housing near the top of a slope does not block a view line.

Public open spaces (parks and walks) should be planned considering ACH. Such planning may need to allow time for First Nations people to consider how they might want places presented, accessed by the local community, or indeed whether some places are suitable for public interpretation. The presence of many different cultural trees, combined with art sites provides considerable opportunities for future interpretation directions. These should be developed in collaboration with relevant First Nations people and employing the *Connecting with Country* and *Designing with Country* frameworks.

### **6.1.3 Future heritage investigation**

Future heritage investigations will involve four connected aspects of work: archaeological investigations (test excavation); social investigations into some locations and values; development of place specific heritage management; followed by a heritage interpretation plan(s).

The MGS2 contains numerous zones which have been designated as holding potential archaeological deposit (PAD). Some are located inside biobanking areas, some in development zones. An Archaeological Research Design (ARD) will need to be prepared which outlines a program of archaeological test excavation (under the archaeological code of practice). The ARD needs to account for the outcomes from the MGS1 salvage works. There is evidence that trade occurred within the region through oral stories, which were explored during the interviews. This theme could be explored through the archaeological work.

Given the extent of the MGS2 area with PAD, it is envisaged that test excavation would require at least two phases, with a reassessment of archaeological potential between the phases. This is because the type of landforms present within the MGS2 area have not been subject to previous archaeological test excavation (in this region), and thus a prediction on the nature and extent of archaeology is difficult to present without some initial baseline data. Archaeological excavation can also provide an opportunity for education and intergenerational learning.

Further social research should be conducted to understand the nature of some potential women's and men's areas. Deeper consideration is needed to ascertain the location and stories connected to these places. In addition, Aboriginal art and art sites are particularly important for strengthening First Nations connections to Country, culture and heritage. The nature of the art in the shelters should be further investigated and, if appropriate, can be used to underpin interpretation, education and development themes.

Investigation into First Nations plant use within the MGS2 area could provide many avenues for engagement, education and interpretation.

## **6.2 Place specific heritage management**

The following recommendations are made for specific ACH site types.

### **6.2.1 Shelters with art**

All shelters with art should be conserved in situ and remain unimpacted through the development process. All shelters should be subject to a detailed recording and consequent development of a management plan in collaboration with the local First Nations community. The management plan will need to assess the condition and risks for each shelter, both the overall shelter and its sandstone, and the art inside each shelter. Plans for future management, including prevention of access, and/or interpretation should be included. Revegetation actions associated with biobanking could be used as a positive protection measure to obscure some obvious access routes.

### **6.2.2 Cultural trees**

It is the intention that all living cultural trees will remain in situ, irrespective of context inside or outside a biobank. The MGS2 project should develop a tree management plan which outlines actions for all trees, from conservation to interpretation, to management for dead trees.

The arborist report outlines key measures for all living trees, and these should be implemented to prolong the life of each tree. Interpretation for all trees should be discussed with the local First Nations community.

Some trees have died, and some of these are in a state of decay and under immediate threat. Consultation with Heritage NSW and with the local First Nations community should be undertaken so that these can be managed in a way that is respectful. This could involve removal and interpretation, to no action and allowing the tree to decay.

### **6.2.3 Grinding grooves and patches**

All of the grinding grooves and grinding patches are located inside biobanking areas. These should all be conserved in situ. Management does not require any specific action except prevention of accidental impact. Some locations may lend themselves to future interpretation, which could be determined by the local First Nations community.

## **6.2.4 Artefact sites**

Artefact sites (and PADs) will be categorised into impacted and not impacted. Locations inside future urban development footprints will be impacted, as will some locations within the biobanking zones (noting permissible development in these areas).

All locations which can be conserved in situ without development impact should remain unimpacted (noting that in some instances a program of archaeological test excavation may need to be implemented to confirm the nature and extent of sub-surface archaeology). Future management would not require any specific action except prevention of accidental impact.

If sites and/or areas with PAD cannot be conserved, they should be subject to archaeological test excavation to confirm the nature and extent of the archaeological deposit inside the PAD. Locations with significant archaeological deposits may need to be salvage excavated (under a future AHIP). Surface artefacts should be collected during a future community collection event (under a future AHIP).

Artefacts should be returned to Country following works, and a program for this return would need to be developed with the local First Nations community.

## **6.2.5 Waterholes**

The waterholes are located within the Woodhouse and Nepean Creek corridors. Maintenance and management of water flows through the creeks, with continued waterflow would retain the value. Each creek corridor should be retained in an as-is condition, and no alterations made to the creek in the location of each waterhole.

## **6.2.6 Movement routes**

The movement routes through the MGS2 cultural landscape (shown in Figure 5.29) are inferred on the basis of the physical evidence and consultation with local First Nations peoples. In some instances these routes could be considered through new urban design. Interpretation could include route marking in pavements and pathways. These considerations would be made during the development of a future interpretation plan.

## **6.2.7 Cultural view places and lines**

Recognition and retention of views across the MGS2 area and to regional landmarks requires a place specific approach. Key considerations are provided in Table 6.1. We



understand that in some instances these recommendations may be difficult to implement due to design and engineering considerations.

Table 6.1 Summary of heritage recommendations for each view line/place

Site Type	Primary Heritage Recommendation
View 01	This view place needs to be considered during future precinct planning, to maintain these sight corridors. Roads and pathways can be placed to act as lead lines to the views. The DCP could have building height control, and possibly uniform colours for building roofs.
View 02	This view place will be maintained as part of the open space of the development. Interpretation would be subject to Aboriginal community permissions.
View 03	Maintenance of this view place may be difficult, but the future urban design should consider street placement to maintain some view corridors.
View 04	This view place needs to be considered during future precinct planning, to maintain these sight corridors. Roads and pathways can be placed to act as lead lines to the views. The DCP could have building height control, and possibly uniform colours for building roofs.
View 05	This view place will be associated with a riparian corridor. Tree replanting will likely partially obscure the view.
View 06	Maintenance of this view place may be difficult, but the future urban design should consider street placement to maintain some view corridors.
View 07	This view place should not be affected as the location is within a riparian zone.
View 08	This view place needs to be considered during future precinct planning, to maintain these sight corridors. Roads and pathways can be placed to act as lead lines to the views. The DCP could have building height control, and possibly uniform colours for building roofs.

## 6.3 Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Abbot, K 2004, 'Return to the Heart', Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal, vol 28, no 2.

<sup>2</sup> OEH. Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW, 2011.

