



# Acciona Tall Tree Wind Farm

Preliminary Heritage Assessment

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# Acciona Tall Tree Wind Farm

## Preliminary Desktop Heritage Assessment

0629242



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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms	Description
Acciona	Acciona Energy Australia Global Pty Ltd
ACHRIS	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System
ATSHIHP Act	<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i>
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
Burra Charter	The Australia International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (2013)
CHL	Commonwealth Heritage List
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
CHS	Cultural Heritage Sensitivity
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Commonwealth)
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth)</i>
ERM	Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GW	Gigawatts
ha	hectare
HHA	Historic Heritage Assessment
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
Heritage Act	<i>Heritage Act 2017</i>
HO	Heritage Overlay
HV	Heritage Victoria
kV	Kilovolt
NHL	National Heritage List
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
MW	Megawatt
PHA	Preliminary Heritage Assessment
PV	Photovoltaic
RNE	Register of the National Estate
VAHR	Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register
VHI	Victoria Heritage Inventory
VWHI	Victorian War Heritage Inventory
VHR	Victorian Heritage Register
WHL	World Heritage List
WTGs	Wind turbine generators

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd has been engaged by Acciona Energy Australia Global Pty Ltd to prepare a Preliminary Heritage Assessment for the Tall Tree Wind Farm project. This report used a 5 km buffer around the Project Area to ensure the information and advice is as accurate as possible. This analysis comprised a desktop review and assessment of potential impacts from activities associated with the construction of a proposed wind farm and transmission line, on both First Nations and historic heritage places and areas of archaeological potential. The impact assessment relates to the proposed micro-siting corridor of the wind farm.

## FIRST NATIONS HERITAGE

There are five Aboriginal places registered on the Victorian Heritage Register (VAHR) within the Project Area. Of the five registered Aboriginal places, two are artefact scatters; BAM – 1 (7721-0339), BAM 2 (7721-0340) and three are Low Density Artefact Distributions (LDADs); Shelford 1 Collection (VAHR 7622-0221), Native Hut Creek (VAHR 7722-1101), and Native Hut Creek 2 Collection (VAHR 7722-1115). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

No intangible heritage values were identified as part of this Preliminary Heritage Assessment. Only Traditional Owners may provide or disseminate their cultural knowledge. Consultation with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC) would be required to ascertain these values (in the form of a Cultural Values Recording).

The conclusion of this Preliminary Heritage Assessment has found that a mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) would be triggered for the proposed Tall Tree Wind Farm development.

WTOAC are the registered Aboriginal Party for the land on which the Project Area is located. WTOAC must be consulted as part of the CHMP process.

## HISTORIC HERITAGE

There is one registered historic heritage place within the disturbance footprint. This place is a Victorian Heritage Inventory site, *VHI Taylors (sic) Road, Meredith – Section of Cobble Road* (H7722-0038) located in the northeast portion of a proposed transmission line. There are no Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) places, Commonwealth Heritage Sites, or Heritage Overlays (HO) within the disturbance footprint.

Within a 5km buffer zone for the Project Area there are a total of 31 HOs, three VHI sites and one VHR site.

The conclusion of this Preliminary Heritage Assessment has found that a Historic Heritage Assessment should be carried out on registered historic heritage places located within the disturbance footprint (*VHI Taylors (sic) Road, Meredith – Section of Cobble Road* (H7722-0038)). Alternatively, these areas could be avoided by the development to ensure no harm to these places.

## RECOMMENDATION 1 - FURTHER ASSESSMENT REQUIRED

### FIRST NATIONS HERITAGE

- *Mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP)*

Based on the results of this assessment, a mandatory CHMP will be required.

Any CHMP should be prepared by an adequately qualified Heritage Advisor, in consultation with First Peoples State Relations and the Wadawarrung Peoples. The CHMP would outline the long-term management of First Nations places affected by the Project. This CHMP should include an Unexpected Finds Protocol that outlines steps to manage the discovery of unknown First Nations heritage during the development. It should also include cultural awareness training and induction for ground disturbance works by a suitably qualified heritage advisor for First Nations heritage objects. This induction should be conducted prior to any ground disturbing works being carried out.

- *Cultural Values Recording (Intangible cultural heritage)*

A Cultural Value Recording should be conducted to ascertain the intangible heritage values for the Project Area. This should be done by direct consultation with Wadawarrung with guidance by a qualified Heritage Advisor or anthropologist.

### HISTORIC HERITAGE

- Further assessment may not be required if registered historic heritage places and areas of archaeological potential are avoided by the proposed works.
- Should avoidance not be possible then a Historic Heritage Assessment should be carried out on any registered historic heritage places or areas of archaeological potential impacted by the wind farm and transmission corridor. The assessment should be guided by the *Guidelines for Conducting Historical Archaeological Surveys and Guide to Preparing a Heritage Impact Statement for State Heritage Places* (Heritage Victoria 2021). The assessment should be conducted by a qualified historic heritage advisor and archaeologist in consultation with Heritage Victoria. If impacts were to occur to sites of historical archaeological significance, a consent application to Heritage Victoria would be required.
- Preparation of an Unexpected Finds Procedure and Historical Heritage Induction, and inclusion of these in the Project's Construction Environmental Management Plan is recommended for the Project



# 1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd (ERM) has been engaged by Acciona Energy Australia Global Pty Ltd to prepare a Preliminary Heritage Assessment (PHA) for the proposed works of the Tall Tree Wind Farm herein referred to as 'the Project' located near Meredith, Victoria. This report presents the results of a PHA of the Project.

## 1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### 1.1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Project is a proposed renewable energy development located within the Golden Plains Shire, south of Meredith, north of Teesdale and west of Lethbridge in Central West Victoria. The Project is situated within the proposed Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), located approximately 85 km west of Melbourne, and approximately 23 km north-west of Geelong. The Project also abuts Bamganie State Forest to the north-west (Figure 1-1).

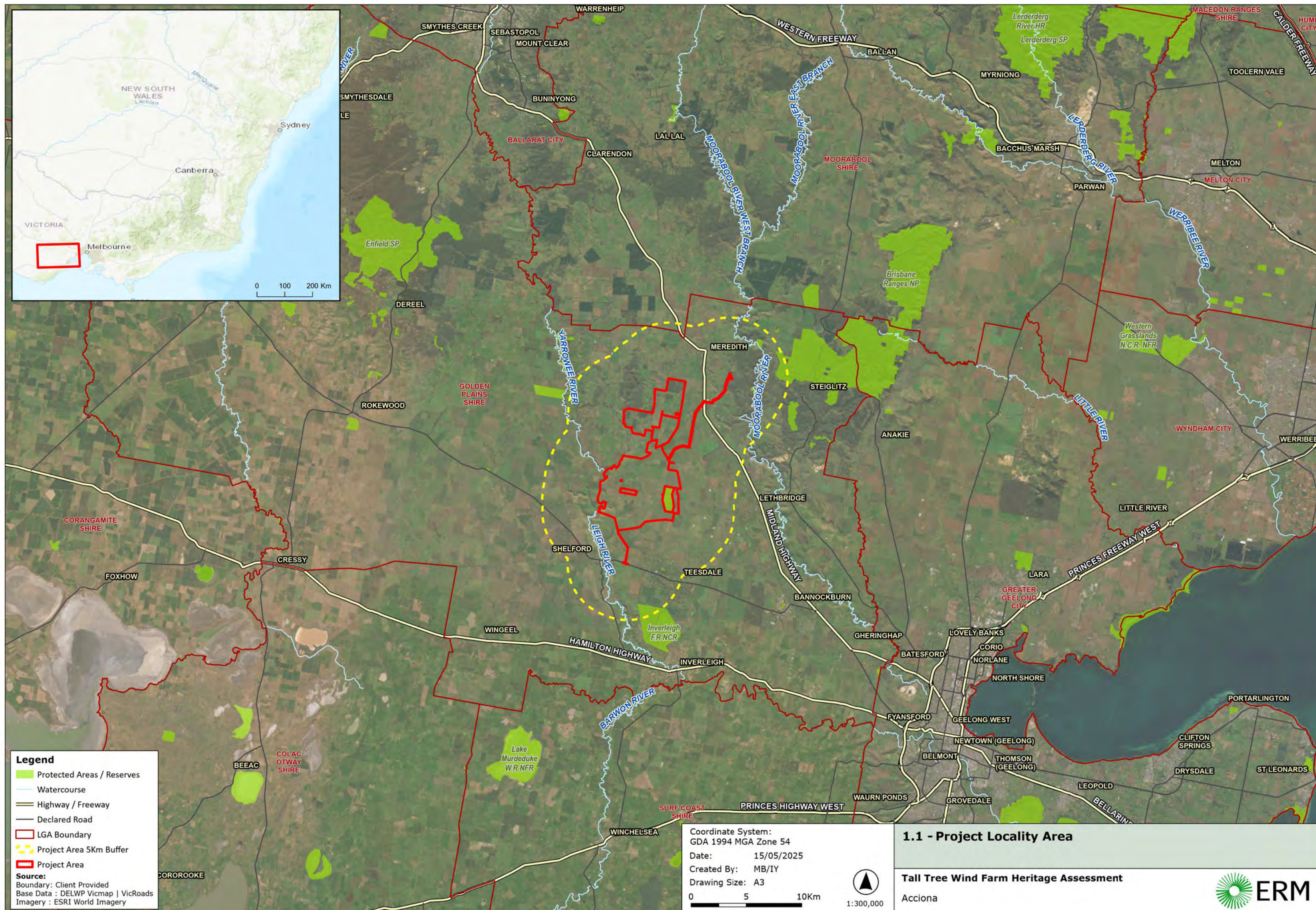
The Tall Tree Wind Farm site (Project Area) has an area of 5119.44 hectares (51.19 km<sup>2</sup>). It will accommodate up to 53 wind turbine generators (WTGs) with 330 MW generation capacity. The development will also include a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with up to 800 MWh storage capacity.

This Project Area also includes an overheard transmission corridor, the location of which will be informed through engineering design, environmental investigations, and stakeholder feedback. The final easement will generally be up to 60 m in width and cleared of tall trees and avoid any existing structures to facilitate maintenance access in operations.

The Project is targeting construction commencement in 2027 for approximately 24 - 36 months.

The proposed Wind Farm outline is shown in Figure 1-2 that includes the current proposed impact footprint and a micro-siting corridor.







### 1.1.2 DESCRIPTION

The Project consists of the following key components:

#### **Up to 53 WTGs, each comprising:**

- Three blades mounted to a rotor hub (up to a hub height of 169 m) on a nacelle above a tubular steel tower, with a blade tip height (blade length plus hub height) of up to 250.5 m AGL.
- A gearbox and generator assembly housed in the nacelle.
- Adjacent hardstands for use as crane pads, assembly and laydown areas.

#### **Electrical infrastructure comprising:**

- One (1) 220kV electrical substation, including control room, transformers, circuit breakers, switches and other ancillary equipment.
- A BESS of up to 800 MWh (approximately two and a half hours of storage).
- Underground internal 33 kV electrical reticulation connecting the WTGs to the onsite substations (where practicable, these are generally following site access tracks).
- A 220kV overhead or underground transmission line of up to 11.3 km from Lower Plains Road and a new electrical switchyard to the east of Taylor Road to provide connection to the existing Moorabool to Elaine 220 kV transmission line. The final transmission line easement will be up to 60 m within the 100 m corridor.

#### **Ancillary infrastructure:**

- Operations and maintenance (O&M) facilities including office, carpark and warehouse.
- Internal access tracks (combined total length of approximately 134.2 km) connecting the WTGs and associated Project infrastructure with the public road network.
- Decommissioning of one temporary meteorological monitoring masts and installation of up to four permanent meteorological monitoring masts for power testing. The permanent monitoring masts will be located close to a WTG location and will have a maximum height of approximately 170 m AGL.

#### **Temporary elements:**

- Two temporary construction site compounds, comprising site buildings and facilities for construction contractors / equipment, site offices, car parking and amenities for the construction workforce.
- Two concrete batching plants to supply concrete for WTG footings and substation construction works.
- Earthworks for access tracks, WTG platforms and foundations.
- Two hardstand laydown areas for the storage of construction materials, plant, and equipment.
- Up to four temporary meteorological monitoring masts. The temporary monitoring masts will be located close to a WTG location with a maximum height of approximately 170 m AGL.
- A borrow pit to source raw material required for construction.
- The transport, storage and handling of fuels, oils and other hazardous materials for construction and operation of wind farm infrastructure; and

- Beneficial reuse of materials from within the development footprint during cut and fill and WTG foundation excavation works for use in access track, hardstands and foundation material.

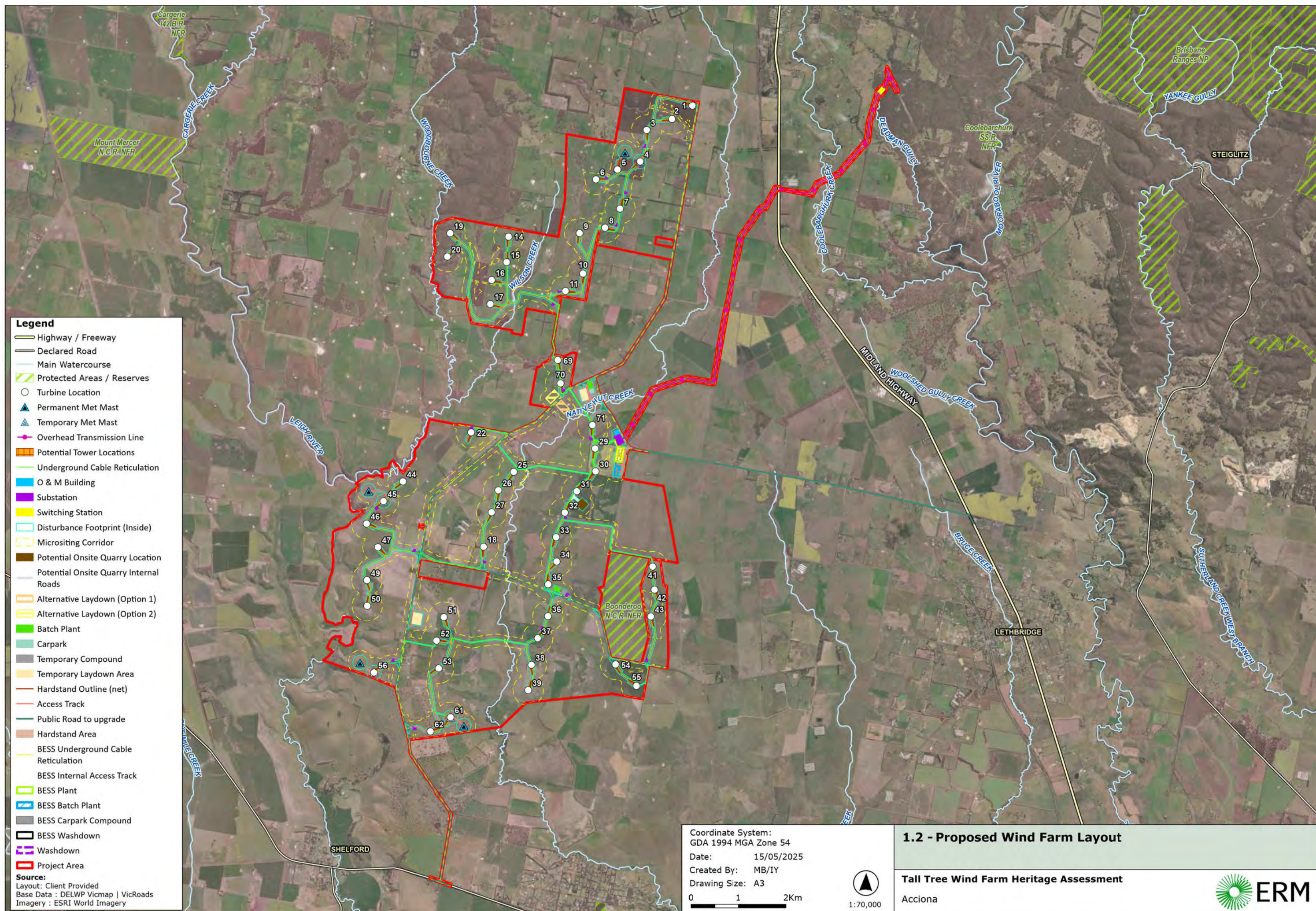
The Project Area will be rehabilitated after decommissioning of the site.

**TABLE 1-1 DETAILED PROJECT COMPONENTS**

Project Component	Description	Quantity
Project Footprint		
Project Area	Total area to which the Application applies (not including transmission line route options)	5119.44 ha
Disturbance Footprint	The area of land that is directly impacted by the Project including: all temporary and permanent disturbance areas; and all areas where vegetation may be removed during project construction and operation. This is also referred to as the 'clearing corridor' for which the conceptual area of proposed ground disturbance is assessed in this EIS. The clearing corridor is buffered by a 100 m 'micro-siting corridor' which is regarded in technical assessments but is not considered as the total disturbance area.	Up to 769.13 ha
Permanent Disturbance Footprint	The area of land that will be subject to permanent alteration as a result of the Project's infrastructure until decommissioning. This is generally associated with areas for the WTG hardstands, met masts, BESS, O&M facilities, substations, switchyard and internal roads. These areas will not be suitable for agricultural use.	Up to 740.08 ha
WTGs		
Rotor diameter	Up to 183 m	53 WTGs
Blade length	Up to 91.5 m	
Uppermost blade tip	Up to 250.5 m	
Hub height	Up to 169 m	
WTG hardstand	Approx. 3 ha of disturbance per WTG required for construction.	
Ancillary Infrastructure		
New 220 kV transmission line	Towers up to 70 m high, spaced approx. 500 m (subject to terrain), with up to 60 m easement	15 km
Underground 33 kV lines	Trenching for underground electrical lines will be approx. 0.65 m wide per circuit by 1.0 m deep.	109 km
Substation	250 m x 250 m + 15 m batters and 50 m Asset Protection Zone (APZ) all sides	1
Switchyard	150 m x 150 m + 15 m batters and 35 m APZ all sides	1
800 MWh BESS	150 m x 150 m + 15 m batters and 35 m APZ all sides	1

Project Component	Description	Quantity
O&M Facility	100 m x 100 m + 15 m batters and 50 m APZ all sides	1
Carpark	100 m x 100 m + 15 m batters	1
New internal access tracks and drainage	Approximately 10 m wide formation including 6.5 m roadway plus shoulders and drainage as required.	55.76 km
Transport route and site access	Main site access off Meredith-Shelford Road or Lower Plains road. Upgrades may be required at several locations along the route.	N/A
Semi-permanent meteorological masts (with concrete footings for mast and guy wires)	Sensor height at 170 m on approximately 3 m x 3 m concrete foundation.	Up to 4
<b>Temporary Facilities</b>		
Concrete batching plants	100 m x 200 m + 15 m batters	2
Laydown Areas	100 m x 200 m + 15 m batters	2
Borrow pit	200 m x 200 m + 15 m batters	1
Construction compound (site office, car parking and storage areas)	100 m x 100 m + 15 m batters	2
Temporary meteorological masts (with concrete footings for mast and guy wires)	Sensor height at 170 m on approximately 3 m x 3 m concrete foundation.	4
APZ requirements	Min. 35 m all sides of buildings	N/A
<b>Other Project elements</b>		
Duration and start of construction phase	Commencing mid-2027 for approximately 24-36 months	
Construction hours	Monday to Friday: 7.00 am to 6.00 pm. Saturday: 7.00 am to 1.00 pm; and No works on Sunday or public holidays.	
Construction workforce	Up to 270	
Duration of operation phase	30 years	
Operational workforce	Approximately 10-12 long-term service and maintenance jobs will be created during Project operation.	
Decommissioning	30 years after commissioning	







## 1.2 AIMS AND SCOPE

This PHA aims to identify potential Project risks and constraints relating to identified historic and cultural heritage values. The scope of this assessment comprises the following:

- identify First Nations cultural heritage and historic heritage, including potential historical archaeology values.
- assess the potential impacts on the identified and potential historical and cultural heritage values.
- provide recommendations and mitigation measures to assist Acciona in developing the Project design to avoid or minimise potential impacts and mitigate significant risks to heritage values; and
- identify the statutory requirements and provide 'next steps' for approvals pathways (as required).



## 2. METHODOLOGY

This PHA examines cultural and historic heritage values within the Project Area. It has been prepared using the following methodology:

- Register Searches

Review of relevant statutory (Commonwealth, State and Local government) and non-statutory heritage database and mapping systems to identify the existing registered historic heritage values within the Project Area.

- Desktop review.

The desktop investigation included a comprehensive review of existing background information to gain a contextual understanding of the cultural landscape associated with the Project Area.

Review of background information included:

- heritage register and database searches;
- assessment of environmental information, historic land use data, available ethnographic information;
- digitised historical parish maps available from the National Library of Australia and the State Library of Victoria collection;
- historic aerial photographs available from the National Library of Australia, Landata and MapShare;
- publicly available heritage studies and reports;
- archival information held by the National Library of Australia (Trove) and the State Library of Victoria; and
- publicly available heritage studies and reports, particularly the Golden Plains Shire Thematic Environmental History.
- Information was sourced utilising readily available (public) data, through key Commonwealth, state and local database and register searches:
  - Australian Heritage Database [Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL), National Heritage List (NHL), World Heritage List (WHL), and Register of the National Estate (RNE)];
  - Victorian Heritage Database [Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) and Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI)];
  - Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS);
  - VicPlan information service and online map viewer (Local Planning Schemes Heritage Overlays); and
  - Colonial Frontier Massacres Database (University of Newcastle);
- Mapping areas of known and potential cultural heritage, including discussion of heritage receptors of sensitivity (predictive modelling);
- Identification of potential heritage constraints based on anticipated project activities; and
- Preparation of preliminary mitigation measures and recommendations for management of heritage values within the Project Area.

This report has been prepared in accordance with current leading practice guidance, including:

*Burra Charter: The Australian ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance 2013.*

The Australian ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) Charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance (the Burra Charter) sets a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance including owners, managers and custodians. The Burra Charter was first adopted in 1979 at the historic South Australian mining town of Burra. Minor revisions were made in 1981 and 1988, with more substantial changes in 2013. The Charter provides specific guidance for physical and procedural actions that should occur in relation to significant places.

With regard to places of First Nations cultural value, the Burra Charter advises that cultural significance can be assessed through the application of four principal values: social, historical, scientific, and aesthetic.

The Australia ICOMOS Charter developed a series of Practice Notes to supplement and provide practical advice on aspects of the Burra Charter and its application. These cover a wide variety of topics, and the following Practice Notes in particular are used as reference tools for this assessment:

- The Burra Charter and Archaeological Practice;
- The Burra Charter and Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management;
- Intangible Cultural Heritage & Place; and
- Heritage and Sustainability 1 – Built Heritage.

A copy of the Burra Charter and Practice Notes can be accessed online at <http://icomos.org/australia>. *Dhawura Ngilan: A vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage in Australia*

The Federal Government has identified Dhawura Ngilan (Remembering Country): A vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage in Australia as the current leading practice guide in the management of Indigenous (First Nations) cultural heritage matters. In October 2019, Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand, board members, and officials met in Canberra to discuss Indigenous heritage, hosted by the Australian Heritage Council. A commitment was made to create a Vision document that would present a united voice for Indigenous Australians' heritage aspirations for the next decade through prioritisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as shared Australian history and heritage.

Dharwura Ngilan is underpinned by the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), which recognises that the affected Indigenous community can decide who represents them, consistent with FPIC; and they are provided with adequate information and time to consider any information in a decision making that may affect their cultural heritage.

#### *Australian Natural Heritage Charter*

The Australian Natural Heritage Charter is a distillation of best practice conservation principles for Australia, based on the consensus of a broad range of experts. It aims to assist everyone with an interest in natural places to establish their natural heritage values and manage them. It can be applied to a wide range of places whether terrestrial, marine or freshwater. It offers a framework for making sound decisions for managing and restoring natural heritage places based on the ecological processes which occur in natural systems. It also provides a process that can be used to support and implement local, state and territory, national and international policies, agreements, strategies and plans. It does not replace statutory obligations.

## 2.1 TERMINOLOGY

Unless it is a direct reference to a piece of legislation, guidance document or other, where the use of the term 'Aboriginal' is appropriate, the report will use 'First Nations' or 'First Peoples'. The Wadawurrung Peoples will be explicitly referenced with regard to their Country.

## 2.2 LIMITATIONS

ERM acknowledges that this report has the following limitations within which the findings need to be interpreted carefully:

- No consultation with First Nations Peoples/Registered Aboriginal Parties has been undertaken by ERM to inform this report;
- No physical site inspection of the Project Area was undertaken;
- Limited historic mapping is available due to lack of digitisation of archival material; and
- Historic aerals were limited to 1960s aerals with some being unavailable at the time review.

## 2.3 AUTHORSHIP

ERM Heritage Consultants Cinzia Latina and Sophia Hanger have prepared this report with the support of ERM Principal Heritage Consultant, Mark Dowdell. ERM Technical Consulting Director Shelley James completed technical review. ERM Partner, Jenny Luk, completed a quality control review.

### 3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

#### 3.1 STATUTORY CONTROLS

The Project Area is affected by a number of statutory controls for the planning and management of cultural heritage and archaeological resources. Table 3-1 summarises the key Commonwealth and Victorian legislation relevant to the assessment, and the requirements under each as they apply to the Project.

**TABLE 3-1 STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY HERITAGE CONTROLS**

Legislation	Description
<b>Commonwealth Legislation</b>	
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act)	<p>The EPBC Act provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities, Commonwealth marine environments, and heritage places, which are defined in the EPBC Act and referred to as matters of national environmental significance (MNES). The MNES of direct relevance to heritage considerations of the Project are World Heritage Properties and National Heritage Places.</p> <p>The CHL and NHL were established under the EPBC Act. The Register of National Estate (RNE) established previous legislation is now retained as a non-statutory database.</p> <p>The EPBC Act is administered by the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).</p>
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i> (ATSIHP ACT)	<p>The ATSIHP Act protects areas and/or objects which are of significance to Aboriginal people and enables the Australian Government to protect cultural heritage under threat of destruction, if state or territory laws have failed to protect it. The Act can, in certain circumstances, override state and territory laws and it can be implemented when the relevant state or territory laws are lacking or not enforced. A significant area or object is defined as one that is of particular importance to Aboriginal people according to cultural tradition. The Act must be invoked by or on behalf of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person or organization (or their representative). The ATSIHP Act is administered by DCCEEW.</p>
<i>Native Title Act 1993</i>	<p>Section 211 of the <i>Native Title Act 1993</i> (Cth) allows for holders of native title rights and interests in relation to land or waters to be exempted from laws which restrict their ability to exercise their native title rights, including rights to hunt, fish, gather and take part in cultural and spiritual activities.</p> <p>The Native Title Act is administered by the Attorney-General's Department, the Native Title Tribunal, and the Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians.</p>
<b>Victorian Legislation</b>	
<i>Heritage Act 2017 and Heritage Regulations 2017</i>	<p><i>The Heritage Act 2017</i> provides protection and conservation for all Victorian historic heritage sites and items that are at least 75 years old, including underwater heritage. The Act sets out procedures to identify items of state heritage significance, and of historical archaeological value. It also establishes the processes for obtaining approvals for changes to those places, enforcing compliance, and other administrative procedures. It also creates offences and other enforcement measures to protect and conserve heritage.</p>



Legislation	Description
	<p>If an item has statutory heritage protection at a state level in Victoria, it will be recorded in the VHR and VHI. All historical archaeological sites in Victoria are protected by the provisions of the Act.</p> <p>The Act is administered by Heritage Victoria (Department of Transport and Planning).</p>
<i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i>	<p>The <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> was enacted to provide protection of Aboriginal (First Nations) cultural heritage sites in Victoria. The Act prohibits the wilful destruction or disturbance of any Aboriginal cultural heritage site, place or object, whether on private or public land.</p> <p>The Act also allows for different First Nation organisations, groups, and bodies to connect and better enforce and preserve policies regarding Aboriginal Heritage. It does this through the establishment of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR), Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) and cultural heritage permit processes.</p> <p>The Act is administered by First Peoples – State Relations.</p>
<i>Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018</i>	<p>The <i>Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018</i> give effect to the Act and prescribe standards, set out the circumstances in which a CHMP should be prepared and set out the various fees and charges. The Regulations should be read in conjunction with the Act.</p> <p>The Regulations are administered by First Peoples – State Relations.</p>
<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>	<p>The <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> provides a framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria. The Act sets out procedures for preparing and amending the Victorian Planning Provisions and planning schemes. It also sets out the process for obtaining permits under schemes, settling disputes, enforcing compliance with planning schemes and permits, and other administrative procedures.</p>
<b>Non-Statutory Heritage Registers and Listings</b>	
<i>Register of the National Estate (RNE)</i>	<p>The RNE is an archive of information of more than 13,000 natural and cultural heritage places throughout Australia. The RNE was closed in 2007 and is no longer a statutory list. The RNE is maintained on a non-statutory basis as a publicly available archive and educational resource.</p> <p>Content of the remaining RNE archive and how it relates to current legislation may have changed or been superseded since archival. What remains of the RNE is located on Australian National Database and is utilised as a repository of information that may not have an application or protection under current legislation.</p>
<i>National Trust of Australia (Victoria)</i>	<p>The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) has been gathering information about heritage places in Australia for more than three decades and has a list of heritage places including individual buildings, precincts, natural environment places and culturally significant artefacts. These listings do not attract any legal protection for a place, nor do they put the owner of a listed place under any legal obligation.</p>
Victorian War Heritage Inventory (VWHI)	<p>The VWHI contains information and images related to Victoria's war history including memorials, avenues of honour, memorial buildings, former Defence sites and places of commemoration.</p>

## 4. UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE

### 4.1 GEOGRAPHIC REGION

The Project Area is located near the Midland Highway between Ballarat and Geelong and is in the local government area (LGA) of the Golden Plains Shire. The geographic region consists of predominantly agricultural properties.

For the purpose of this report a review of the geographic region has been chosen that includes the Project Area and a 5 km buffer, see Figure 5-1 and Figure 5-2.

### 4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

#### 4.2.1 BIOREGION

The Project Area spans both the Victorian Volcanic Plains and the Central Victorian Uplands bioregions. The Victorian Volcanic Plain deposits formed an extensive flat undulating basaltic plain with stony rises, old lava flows, numerous volcanic cones and old eruption points and is dotted with shallow lakes both salt and fresh water. The Central Victorian Uplands area characterized as herb-rich Foothill Forest and Shrubby Foothill Forest ecosystems dominated by Grassy Woodlands, much of which has been cleared. Lower lying valleys and plains are dominated by Valley Grassy Forest and Plains Grassy Woodland ecosystems.

These landscapes have been extensively modified and cleared for agricultural and infrastructure purposes. Stony rises and stony ridges are likely to exist within the Project Area and are often used by Aboriginal peoples as vantage points in the landscape to rest and knap stone tools for hunting. Detailed mapping such as LiDAR would be required to map in detail the presence of stony rises in the Project Area.

#### 4.2.2 SOILS

The Central Victorian Uplands bioregion is characterised by Lower Palaeozoic deposits giving rise to dissected uplands at higher elevations, amongst granitic and sedimentary (with Tertiary colluvial aprons) terrain with metamorphic and old volcanic rocks which have formed steeply sloped peaks and ridges. These less fertile hills support Grassy Dry Forest and Heathy Dry Forest ecosystems (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2004).

The Victorian Volcanic Plains bioregion is dominated by Cainozoic volcanic deposits. Soils are generally shallow reddish-brown to black loams and clays. They are fertile and high in available phosphorous. Dark saline soils occur around the margins of some lakes. The soils are variable, ranging from red friable earths and acidic texture contrast soils on the higher fertile plain to scoraceous material, and support Plains Grassy Woodland and Plains Grassland ecosystems. Calcareous sodic texture contrast soils grading to yellow acidic earths, on the intermediate plain, and grey cracking clays on the low plains, support Stony Knoll Shrubland, Plains Grassy Woodland and Plains Grassy Wetland ecosystems. (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2004).



### 4.2.3 HYDROLOGY

The Project Area intersects with a number of major waterways, drainage lines and rivers:

- The west boundary of the Project Area runs parallel to the Leigh River and Woodbourne Creek, which flows into Wilson's Creek along the west boundary line of the Project Area;
- Wilson Creek runs through the north-western part of the site;
- Native Hut Creek runs directly through the middle of the bottom portion of the Project Area; and
- Coolebarghurk Creek runs through the eastern Project Area (under the transmission corridor).

Apart from those major waterways running through the Project Area, smaller unnamed waterways are present throughout.

The Central Victorian Uplands bioregion is known to have wetland formations which include inland salt marshes, permanent and intermittent freshwater and saline/brackish lakes, permanent freshwater ponds and marshes and inland, subterranean karst wetlands (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2004).

### 4.2.4 CLIMATE

The Project Area is located mostly within the Victorian Volcanic Plains bioregion, with some overlap with the Central Victorian Plains bioregion. The Victorian Volcanic Plains bioregion is characterised by a mean 450-840mm of rainfall per annum, with a relatively even distribution throughout the year. The Central Victorian Uplands bioregion shares climatic similarities to the Victorian Volcanic Plains bioregion, in that rainfall averages approximately 400-700mm per annum (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2004).

### 4.2.5 FLORA AND FAUNA

The Central Victorian Uplands bioregion is dominated by eucalypts, with a large shrub layer and ground layer rich in herbs, grasses, and orchards. The tree canopy coverage is approximately 15% of Swamp Gum (*Eucalypts ovata*) and Manna Gum (*Eucalypts viminalis*).

The Victorian Volcanic Plains bioregion is dominated by a woodland overstorey of Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*) over a medium shrub layer.

Flora and fauna along with a permanent water supply resources are key to human occupation with the region. Animals such as kangaroos and wallabies and edible plants would have provided First Nations people with valuable food resources and would be found in proximity to key water courses in the Project Area such as Native Hut Creek, Wilson Creek and its surrounding waterways/water sources. The varied food resources across each of the bioregion would have provided an incentive to move between the regions in search of unique cuisine to fulfil their dietary needs. The changing seasons in particular would have affected the availability of particular flora and fauna resources which would have been well known by First Nations peoples.

## 4.3 CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

### 4.3.1 VICTORIA'S FRAMEWORK OF HISTORICAL THEMES

Victoria's *Framework of Historical Themes* (State of Victoria, Heritage Council of Victoria, 2010) was developed as a tool to understand what is distinctive about Victoria's history and heritage. It has been applied to assist in the identification and assessment of heritage values within the Project Area. Table 4-1 presents the historical themes and sub-themes relevant to the Project Area.

TABLE 4-1 VICTORIAN HISTORICAL THEMES

Victorian Historical Theme	Sub-Theme
Peopling Victoria's places and landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.1 Living as Victoria's original inhabitants</li> <li>• 2.2 Exploring, surveying and mapping.</li> <li>• 2.3 Arriving in a new land.</li> <li>• 2.7 Promoting Settlement</li> </ul>
Connecting Victorians by transport and communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.3 Linking Victorians by rail</li> </ul>
Transforming and managing the land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.1 Living off the land</li> <li>• 4.3 Grazing and raising livestock.</li> <li>• 4.4 Farming</li> <li>• 4.5 Gold Mining</li> </ul>

### 4.3.2 ETHNO-HISTORY

Relevance to Table 4-1:

- **2.1 Living as Victoria's original inhabitants**
- **4.1 Living off the land**

The Project Area is located on the traditional lands for the Wadawurrung people. The presence of Indigenous peoples in the region is believed to have spanned the last 45,000 years (Rowe, 2021: 67). This is evidenced by various archaeological finds including weaponry, stone axe heads, grinding stones and other objects (Rowe, 2021: 72).

Wadawurrung country extends over approximately 7800 km<sup>2</sup>, and included the Bellarine Peninsula to the east, the Otway forests to the west, and Mount Emu and Mount Misery to the north (Rowe, 2021: 67).

The Wadawurrung comprised of 25 clans that moved around the landscape in search of food (Rowe, 2021: 67). Shellfish was a perennial staple, and resources such as yam, berries, seeds, eels, and bird's eggs were exploited seasonally (Rowe, 2021: 69). The Wadawurrung supplemented their diet with animal foods including snakes, lizards, kangaroos and tortoises (Rowe, 2021: 69). Locations such as the Barwon River, Armstrong Creek, Lake Connemare, Reedy Lakes and Swan Bay were major sources of subsistence (Rowe, 2021: 68).

The arrival of Europeans in the Greater Geelong area had a devastating impact on the Wadawurrung people. The European colonists "dispossessed them from their traditional land use practices, food gathering and customs, and... with the introduction of European diseases, the local population... was decimated" (Rowe, 2021: 81).

### 4.3.3 EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE REGION

Relevance to Table 4-1:

- **2.2 Exploring, surveying and mapping.**
- **2.3 Arriving in a new land.**
- **2.7 Promoting Settlement**
- **3.3 Linking Victorians by rail.**
- **4.3 Grazing and raising livestock.**
- **4.4 Farming**
- **4.5 Gold Mining**

The Golden Plains Shire is located within the Western District of Victoria, located between Geelong and Ballarat. The Shire's economy is dependent on its agricultural, mining and manufacturing industries.

The initial exploration of the region was motivated by the "emergent world markets and Great Britain's hunger for raw materials" alongside personal prospects for migrants to "serve the growing colonial economy" (Huddle, 2004:222).

The first influx of overstraiters and overlanders settling in the region as pastoral squatters begun in the 1830s (Heritage Matters, 2009:52). They were particularly pleased by the region's pastoral prospects for sheep grazing. Large pastoral companies begun to monopolise the land in the region such as the Derwent Company funded from Van Diemen's Land and The Clyde Company, established in Scotland (Heritage Matters, 2009:52).

The 1850s was marked by the discovery of gold in and around Ballarat which was to significantly alter the development of the region and Victoria at large. Gold discoveries led to the erection of small townships across Western Victoria such as Linton (45km north-west of the Project Area), Smythesdale (39km north-west of the Project Area), Scarsdale (38km north-west of the Project Area), Corindhap (21.5km west of the Project Area), (Rokewood 23km west of the Project Area) and Steiglitz (11km east of the Project Area), which remedied the increasing need for goods and services (Heritage Matters, 2009:52).

The Golden Plains Heritage Study Stage Two comments on the impact of Gold in the region:

*The extraordinary influx of people, including more women and children, created a more diverse and democratic society. It caused a need for law and order, the provision of professional services such as doctors and midwives, the development of service industries such as retailers, hotels and banks, infrastructure such as schools, churches and cemeteries, and dwellings of all types. More permanently, towns were laid out in grids according to government regulations, such as Inverleigh and Meredith, and the irregular organic settlements of the goldfields, such as Scarsdale, were regularised (Heritage Matters, 2009:52).*

Meredith township (2.7km north-east of the Project Area and within the buffer zone) is one of the Shire's most prominent towns and established as a result of surrounding gold discoveries. Surveyed in 1851 and 1852, Meredith became a critical stop-centre between the Ballarat goldfields and Geelong. Primarily, it helped serve and support the Steiglitz gold town to the south-east and the rural settlement of Lethbridge (3.5km east of the Project Area) (Heritage Matters, 2009:10). The development of the Meredith Railway station in 1862, strengthened



Meredith's importance as a "civic and commercial centre servicing mining communities as well as surrounding pastoral properties" (Victorian Heritage Database). The town included several stores, hotels, churches, a hospital, Shire Offices and Meredith State School. Post-Gold Rush, Meredith remained central to the surrounding pastoral district and became renowned for its Merino wool. The later establishment of the Midland Highway (declared a highway in 1933) (Country Roads Board, 1933) strengthened Meredith's position as a stop-centre on the historic travel route between Ballarat and Geelong (VicPlaces).

Proclaimed a township in 1854, Lethbridge was one of the earliest settlements established along the route between Geelong and Ballarat (Golden Plains Shire, 2010:9). The growth of the township was supported by its bluestone quarries which became a major industry. Many Buildings in Lethbridge, including the Lethbridge Railway Station, were constructed from its local stone. Like Meredith, the establishment of the Geelong-Ballarat railway solidified Lethbridge's place as an important stop-point along the route between Geelong and Ballarat. The erection of the Lethbridge railway station (1862) led to the re-configuration of the township in order to focus commercial and residential activity along the railway (Golden Plains Shire, 2010: 9).

By the 1860s, there was a notable decline in surface mining. This caused diggers to abandon the gold fields and seek pastoral land. Yeoman farming, the farming of small pieces of freehold land, was soon sought after. This was encouraged by The Land Selections Act of the 1860s which supported the more permanent and concentrated use of land (Heritage Matters, 2009:52). This marked a second pastoral influx in the region, leading to the development of small farmsteads and the extension and expansion of homesteads already established (Heritage Matters, 2009:52).

The coming of the Geelong-Ballarat Railway line, 1858-1862, further supported transport and trade in the region, and confirmed its place as a pastoral centre point in the colony. The construction of the railway encouraged other developments such as bridges and permanent roads which improved major routes from Geelong to Ballarat, Hamilton and Warrnambool, Port Fairy and Portland (Heritage Matters, 2009:52).

The Closer Settlement Act of 1904 encouraged the intensification of settlement in the region by allowing the government to repurchase land and reopen it for selection. After World War I (1914-1918), this settlement scheme was used to offer work and land to returned soldiers (Huddle, 2004:235).

The region was economically impacted by the Second World War (1939-1945) and the subsequent decline in mining and demand for Australia wool (Heritage Matters, 2009:52). Small schools scattered about the district were centralised and secondary education began to be promoted. This led to the search for employment beyond agricultural industries. Improvement in vehicles saw less reliance on smaller towns for shopping, services and recreation. Population decline led to another wave of Soldier Settlement including land in Meredith (Golf Hill, Larundel, Morganghurl runs), Meredith-Ballan (Beremboke run), Shelford (Gumley, Wurrok South, Mount Gow and Warrambeen runs) and Lethbridge and Bannockburn Road (Tall Tree run) (Huddle, 2004:235). It is possible this settlement scheme occurred in the project area and within the buffer zone.

#### 4.3.4 PROJECT AREA: LAND USE HISTORY

Relevance to Table 4-1:

- **2.2 Exploring, surveying and mapping.**
- **2.3 Arriving in a new land.**
- **2.7 Promoting Settlement**
- **3.3 Linking Victorians by rail.**
- **4.3 Grazing and raising livestock.**
- **4.4 Farming**

Since colonial settlement in the mid-19th century, the Project Area appears to have been used continually for agricultural purposes. The Project Area had been classified within the Parishes of Meredith (northern tip of transmission line option), Coole-Barghurk (North-Eastern section), Bamganie (North-Western section) Burtwarrah (South-Eastern section), and Carrah (South-Western section) (Figure 4-1) and located within the Golf Hill, Native Creek, Moranbourke, and Native Creek no.2 pastoral holdings (Figure 4-2).

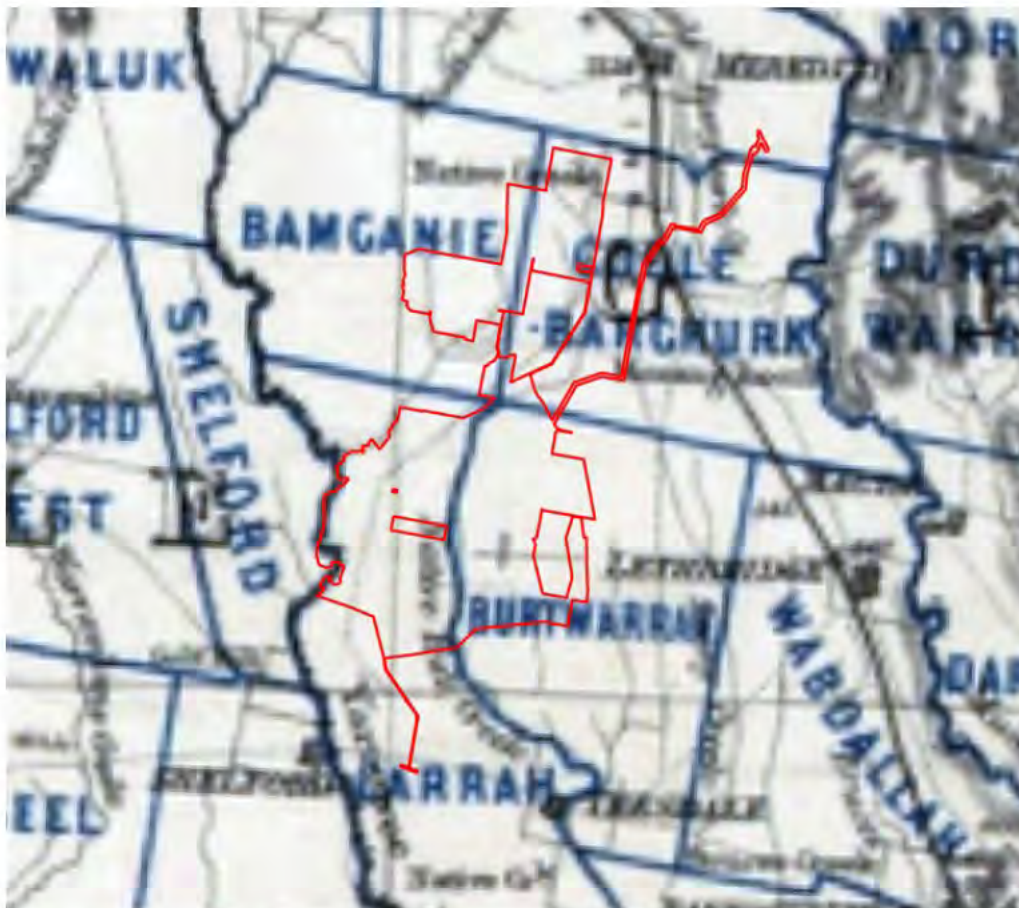


FIGURE 4-1 MAP OF VICTORIA SHOWING PARISH DIVISIONS. PROJECT AREA OUTLINED IN RED (SOURCE: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA)

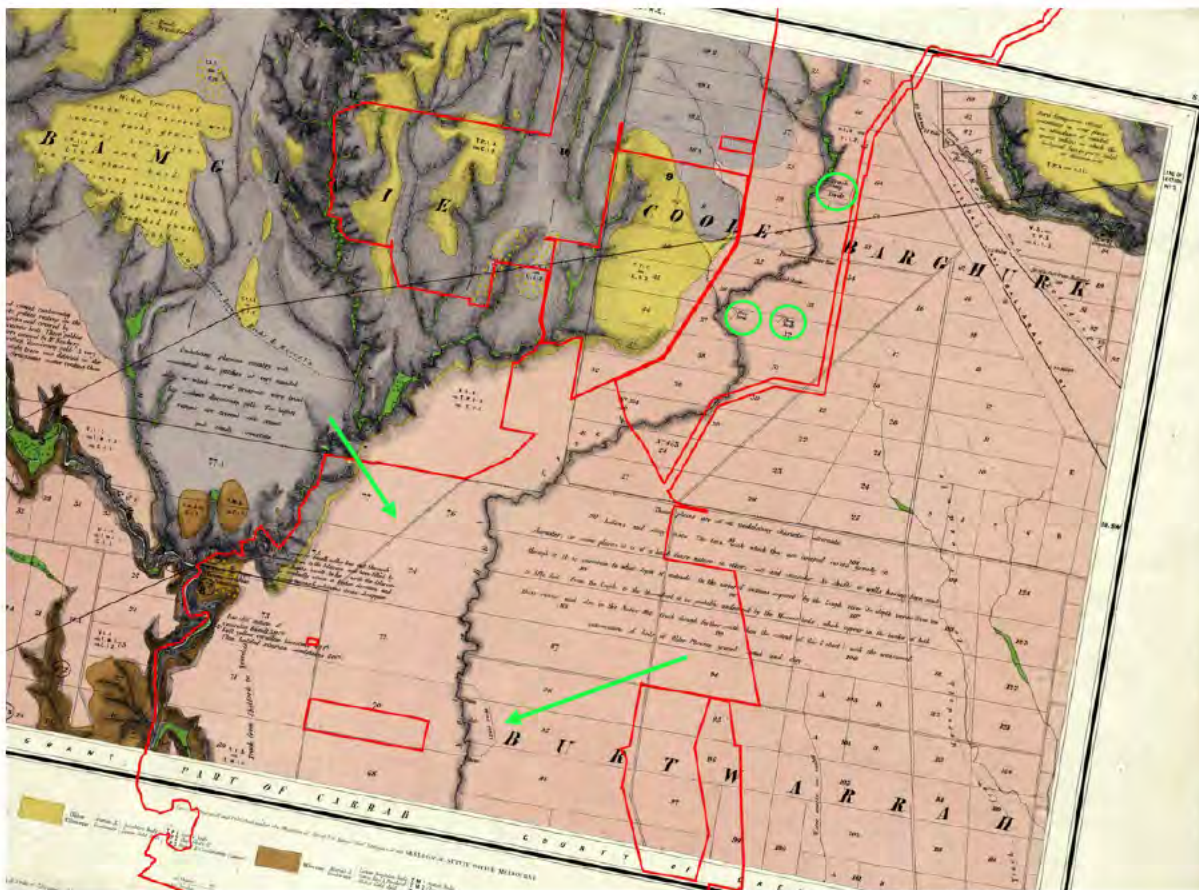




**FIGURE 4-2 MAP SHOWING THE PASTORAL HOLDINGS OF THE PORT PHILLIP DISTRICT 1835-51 (SOURCE: THE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA)**

Land in the district was divided and sold from the 1840s. This is reflective of the 1847 Act which allowed tenants of Pastoral Runs to purchase freehold portions of up to 650 acres within their run (Branch, 1978:4). A Geological Survey from 1867 (Figure 4-3) shows a large portion of the northern and central Project Area. The plan identifies a "hut" and a "wire fence" within the Project Area to the east of Native Hut Creek that is enclosed by two dams. There are no additional built structures labelled on this map. The lower, eastern section of the Project Area is referred to as "plains... of undulating character, alternate hollows and stony rises" which also suggests that no built structures had been erected in this portion of the Project Area at this time. The Transmission Line runs in close proximity to 'sheep yards' and is directly adjacent to 'brush sheep yards.' These 'yards' would have consisted of fences and gates for sheep handling activities. These yards are to the west of the Transmission Line. A portion of these "plains" makes up Boonderoo Nature Conservation Reserve (Geological Department, 1867) which is not included in the Project Area. The Meredith-Shelford Road is illustrated however not labelled.





**FIGURE 4-3 GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF VICTORIA. PROJECT AREA OUTLINED IN RED. ARROWS INDICATING LOCATION OF MEREDITH-SHELFORD ROAD AND THE "HUT" AND "WIRE FENCE." (SOURCE: THE PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE OF VICTORIA)**

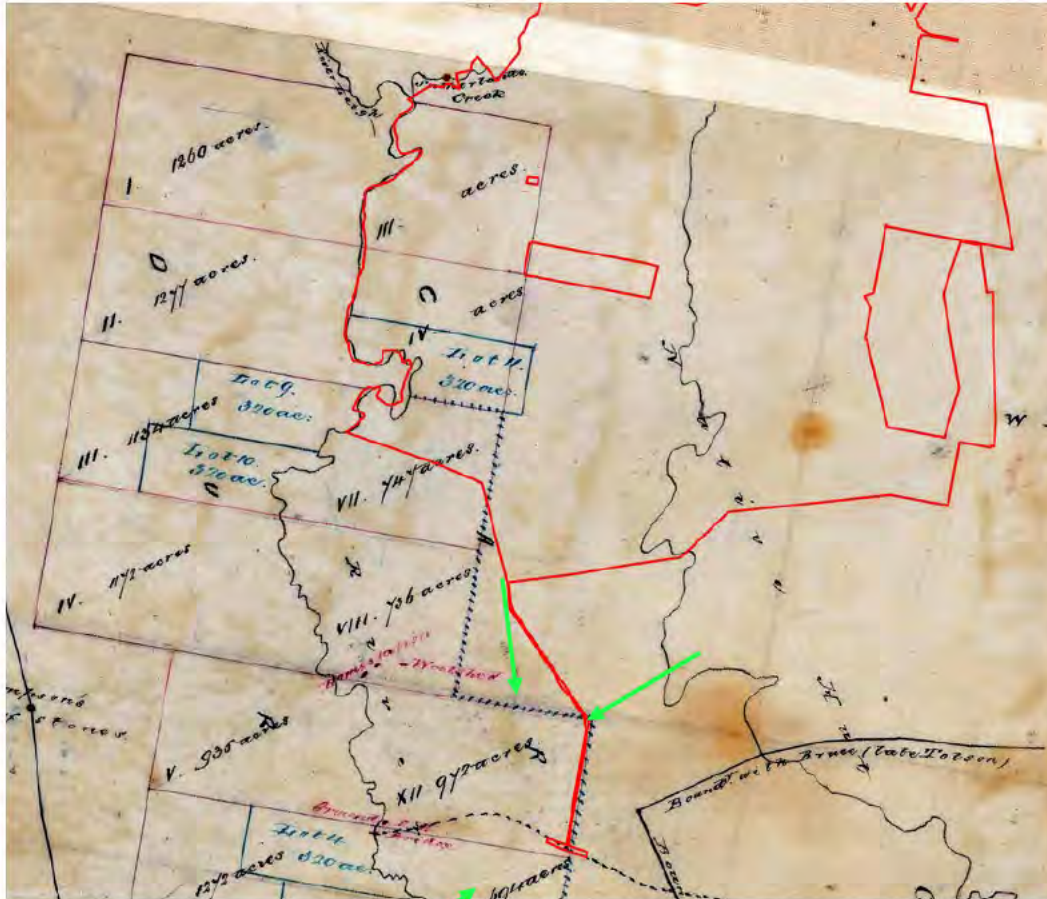
A "sketch of land" from the same year (Figure 4-4), shows a significant portion of the central and southern portions of the Project Area as "applied to purchase" by the Clyde Company next to parcels of land already in their possession. Vertical boundary lines to the east and west are labelled "boundary line with Austin", "boundary line with Thompson", and "boundary line with Bruce." There is no boundary to the north and north-east, implying that the Clyde Company was also in possession of land to the north of the Project Area.

The Clyde Company was one of the major land tycoons of the region. At this time, the company was managed by George Russell, a prominent pioneer of the district who maintained a stronghold over land in the region. Alongside brother Phillip Russell, Russell had set out to survey land from Van Diemen's Land across to Victoria, traversing as far as the Leigh Valley in the 1830s. Russell soon occupied a run of land from the Moorabool Valley to Shelford (Heritage Matters, 2009:52). He drove cattle over from Tasmania in the 1830s. In 1835, the Clyde Company recorded 36,000 acres and 6000 sheep (Heritage Matters, 2009:57). By 1854, this had increased to 26,000 sheep, 80 cattle, 18 horses and 640 acres of purchased land (Heritage Matters, 2009:66). He continued to manage the Clyde Company up until 1858 when the land begun being sub-divided and sold (The Argus, 1888:8). This could have been due to the mass migration and settlement in the 1840s and a second wave of migration in the 1850s after the discovery of gold which challenged landholders', such as Russell and the Clyde company's hold on land (Heritage Matters, 2009:59). This is reflected by subsequent Parish Plans which list



land under "George Russell" or "Golf Hill Estate", which was Russell's personal pastoral station and residence.

There are several built structures delineated on the "sketch of land" (Figure 4-4) that are located directly to the south of the Project Area such as a "home station", "woolshed", "bridge", "hut", "sheep station". No built structures are listed within the Project Area however it is possible that similar structures associated with agriculture, including remains, could be located within the Project Area.



**FIGURE 4-4 GOLF HILL PASTORAL RUN. SKETCH OF LAND APPLIED TO PURCHASE BY THE CLYDE COMPANY, 1867. PROJECT AREA IN RED. ARROWS INDICATING HOMESTATION, WOOLSHED, BRIDGE, HUT AND SHEEP STATION (SOURCE: THE PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE OF VICTORIA)**

An article published in the Geelong Advertiser (23 October 1877:3) advertised "valuable grazing freeholds" in the Parishes of Coole Barghurk, Burtwarrah and Wabdallah in 1877. It outlines built structures that were for sale in Wabdallah including a "blue stone dwelling house with store and post office attached," "weatherboard dwelling house, store and outoffices." Whilst it cannot be confirmed whether these structures were located within the project area, this also reveals the possible types of structures that may have been erected on the land of the Project Area during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Burtwarrah Parish Plan (Figure 4-5), published in 1878, depicts the lower eastern portion of the Project Area. It does not record any built structures within this section of land. All allotments are labelled under the possession of "George Russell" excluding a single allotment owned by Robert Sutherland to the very north, including allotments previously listed under the



"Clyde Company" in Figure 4-4 a decade beforehand. As mentioned previously, an article in The Argus recorded that the Clyde Company had begun to be sub-divided and sold, Russell clearly purchasing these allotments individually. It is noted that a significant portion of this section of Project Area lies within what is labelled as the Golf Hill Estate (second portion) whilst the transmission line options transgress "Tall Tree Estate."

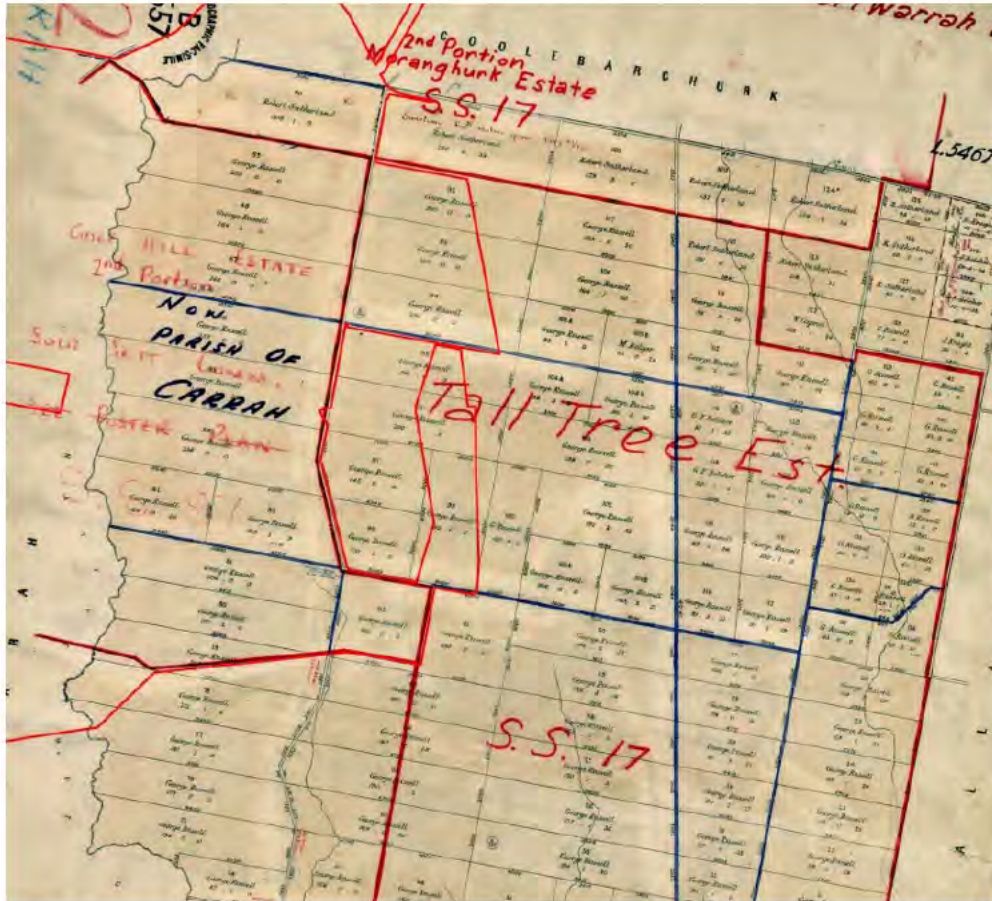


FIGURE 4-5 BURTWARRAH PARISH PLAN, 1878. PROJECT AREA IN RED.

Russell, on behalf of the Clyde Company in the 1840s, built a cottage donned "Golf Hill Homestead" within the Golf Hill Estate which was later demolished for a grander homestead in the 1870s (Victorian Heritage Database). It is understood to be one of the "earliest pastoral settlements in Victoria and one of the most influential through its long-term owner, George Russell" (Victorian Heritage Database). The Victorian Heritage Database entry for Golf Hill Homestead confirms that the Golf Hill Estate, or at least portions of it, was indeed subdivided post-Second World War as part of the Soldier Settlement Scheme. The homestead and associated outbuildings remain extant and is located within the Project Area buffer zone, approximately 2.5km south east of the nearest proposed turbine for the project (Turbine 62), and 2km east from the Meredith-Shelford Road access route.

Whilst there are no local heritage overlays *within* the Project Area, there is a significant number of listings, like Golf Hill Homestead and Outbuildings, within the buffer zone. These include homesteads, stations, churches, schools, railway station, bridge and hotels which mostly represent the built fabric of the mining and pastoral pursuits of the surrounding townships in the 19th century. The *Clyde Company Station (former)*, 37 Spiller Road,

*Lethbridge (H079)* and the *Moranghurk Homestead and Outbuildings (H0266)* alongside Golf Hill, are of particular significance as important historic stations in the region.

Whilst The Clyde Company Station, Moranghurk Homestead, and the Golf Hill Homestead are not located within the Project Area, their proximity affirms that the land within the Project Area was once part of particularly significant, historic pastoral stations. This suggests that remnants of outbuildings and associated structures and objects may be present.

The Parish Plan of Coolebarghurk, 1878, (Figure 4-6) shows land in the very northern section of the Project Area under ownership of Robert Sutherland as part of the Moranghurk Estate, associated with the aforementioned Moranghurk Homestead within the Project Area buffer. Robert Sutherland was an early pioneer who took up Native Creek Station (The Argus, 12 January 1888:7). No built structures are depicted in this section of the Project Area. This parish plan illustrates and labels the Geelong and Ballarat Railway and depicts Taylor Road (parallel) however does not label it. This means Taylor Road and the Geelong and Ballarat Railway route are at least 147 years old. The Transmission Line crosses the railway tracks in a near-perpendicular alignment. A portion of this road is listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory as *Taylor's (sic) Road, Meredith – Section of Cobble Road (H7722-0038)*. According to the Victorian Heritage Database, a section of cobble road on Taylor Road, Meredith is "thought to be part of the original track to Buninyong goldfields in 1853." This reflects the significance of Meredith as a key township on the Geelong-Ballarat travel route. The northern section of the northern transmission line intersects with this historic road, and it is therefore located within the Project Area.





FIGURE 4-6 THE PARISH OF COOLEBARGHURK. PROJECT AREA IN RED. (SOURCE: THE PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE OF VICTORIA)

A map of Victoria showing pastoral stations from 1927 confirms that there were no significant homesteads or outstations located within the Project Area however there were several in surrounding areas including the Golf Hill Homestead shown to the south of the Project Area.





FIGURE 4-7 MAP OF VICTORIA SHOWING PASTORAL STATIONS, 1927. PROJECT AREA IN RED. (SOURCE: THE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA)

The Bamganie Parish Plan from 1966 (Figure 4-8) shows further subdivision into various owners. A built structure identified in close proximity to the Project Area is a state school to the west of the central-western portion of the Project Area. Current aerial imagery has confirmed that this no longer exists, or possibly, that it was reserved but never built upon. Further investigation such as a site visit would be required to determine this.

The Carrah Parish Plan from 1967 (Figure 4-9), shows the land from the central and southern portions of the Project Area also having been divided into smaller allotments by various landowners. These include the Union Fidelity Trustee Co. of Australia & H.M McKellin Ex & Ex of J.M Mc Kellin, W.L Sergent, S.H Levy, and H.M. Clarke. A "G. Russell" also appears on allotment 65. No built structures are recorded within this portion of the Project Area at this time.



FIGURE 4-8 BANGANIE PARISH PLAN, 1966. PROJECT AREA IN RED. GREEN ARROW INDICATING LOCATION OF STATE SCHOOL (SOURCE: THE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA)





FIGURE 4-9 PARISH OF CARRAH, 1967. PROJECT AREA IN RED. (THE PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE VICTORIA)

### AERIAL IMAGERY ANALYSIS

For buildings, as a general principle, a generation (or approximately 25–30 years) of use and interaction should pass before a place or object is considered 'heritage'. Items which can be dated over 75 years old have the potential to be classified as historical archaeological sites under the *Heritage Act 2017*. Aerial imagery is therefore reviewed in order to identify buildings or items that fulfil this criteria that may be located within the Project Area.

The earliest aerial imagery available for the Project Area is dated 1968 and 1969. Therefore, the buildings or items that are identified on these aerial images are at least 55 and 56 years old. When compared with satellite imagery from Google Earth, it was confirmed that seven clusters of structures that were identified on the historic aerials remain extant. Seven clusters of structures that were identified within the Project Area on current Google Earth satellite imagery could not be confirmed on the available historic aerials. Whilst we cannot currently confirm the build date of the seven clusters of structures that remain extant, it is possible that they were erected over a generation ago and may have archeological sites around them that date to over 75 years in age.

In the cluster west of Meredith-Shelford Road, east of the Leigh River and south of Wilson Creek, one structure's outline changed between the 1968/69 aerials and current satellite imagery. It appears to be a shed that has had its roofline extended.



The 1968/69 aerials imagery shows a small, solitary structure to the east of Deans Road and northwest of Meredith-Shelford Road. This structure is not visible in current satellite imagery, but there are visible remnants. It is unclear if the remains are rubble or changed vegetation due to the structures impact on the land.

These structures are vastly spread across the Project Area, mostly likely associated with agricultural land surrounding them such as homesteads, outbuildings, silos, and agricultural infrastructure.

Due to the scope of this project, the analysis of aerial 1968 and 1969 imagery are confined to the Project Area. Areas such as these showing occupation back to 1968 and 1969 may exist elsewhere within the Project Area.

TABLE 4-2 AREAS OF POTENTIAL HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE PROJECT AREA

1968/69 Aerial	2023 Aerial	Location
		West of Meredith-Shelford Road, east of Deans Road and south of Meredith-Mercer Road.
		West of Meredith-Shelford Road and north of Green Tent Road.

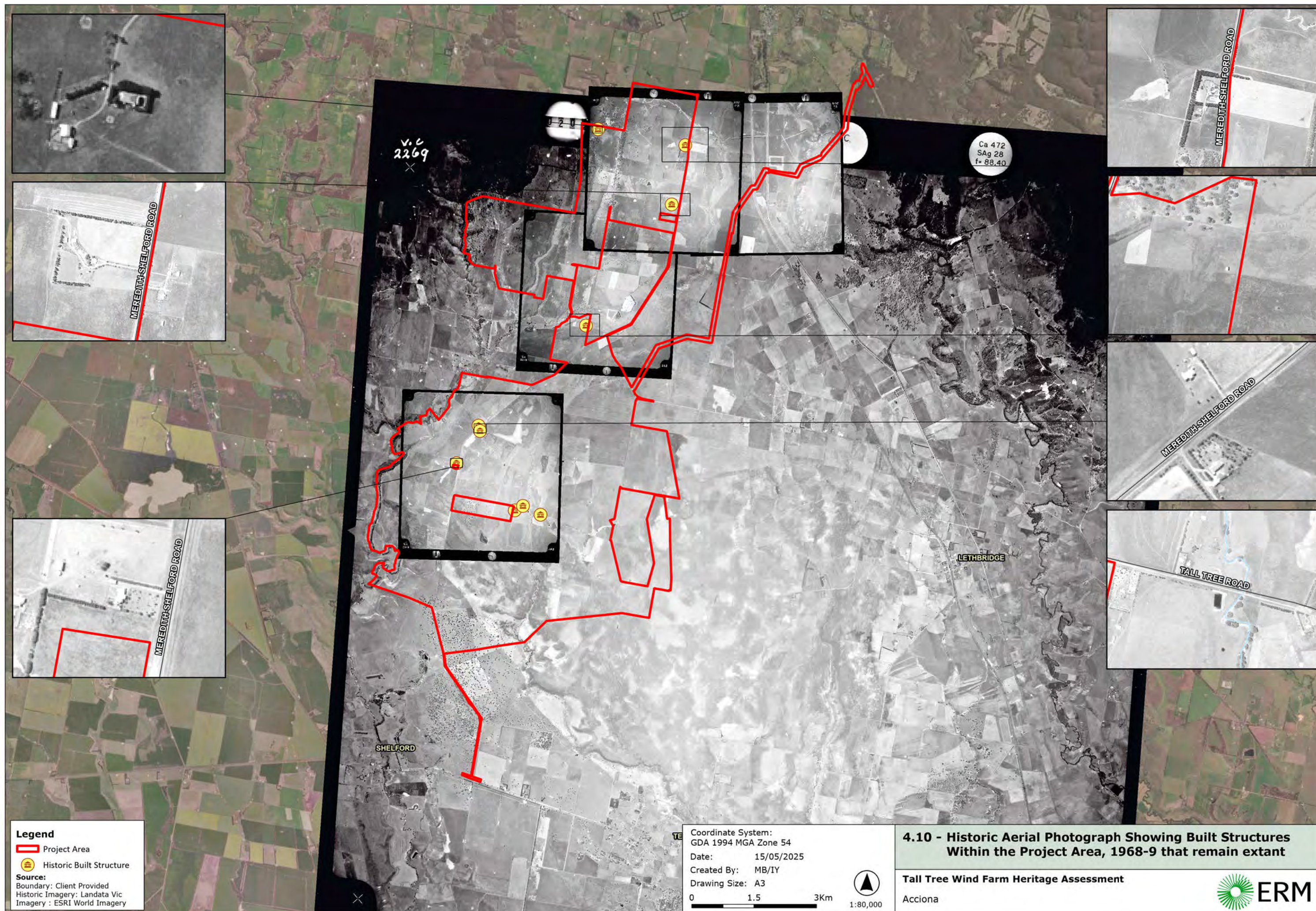
1968/69 Aerial	2023 Aerial	Location
		South of Deans Road, North of Meredith-Shelford Road.



1968/69 Aerial	2023 Aerial	Location
		East of Deans Road, northwest of Meredith- Shelford Road.
		West of Meredith-Shelford Road and south of Hendersons Road

1968/69 Aerial	2023 Aerial	Location
		West of Meredith-Shelford Road, east of the Leigh River and south of Wilson Creek.
		North and south of Tall Tree Road, east of Meredith-Shelford Road.







5. HERITAGE DATABASE SEARCH RESULTS AND PREDICTIVE MODELLING

5.1 ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

A search was carried out of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR) via ACHRIS on 8 April 2024 (ACHRIS access number 13361) by Cinzia Latina (Heritage Consultant) and then Mark Dowdell (Principal Heritage Consultant) on 28 March 2025 (ACHRIS access number 14861), results are presented below.

The search yielded a total of 54 registered Aboriginal places (with 67 components) within 5km of the Project Area, comprising of Artefact Scatter (n=37) Low-Density Artefact Distribution (LDAD) (n=8), Object Collection (n=6), Scarred Tree (n=2) and Aboriginal Ancestral Remains (Burial) (n=1) (Figure 5-1).

A total of five Aboriginal place are located within the Project Area. These include artefact scatters (VAHR 7721-0340 & 7721-0339) and LDADs (7722-1101, -1115 and -0221).

The LDADs comprise of complete silcrete and quartzite flakes (VAHR 7722-1101, -1115 and -0221). Shelford 1 Collection (VAHR 7622-0221) is located on the southernmost point of the project boundary between a drainage line and Meredith – Shelford Road. Native Hut Creek 2 (VAHR 7722-1101) and Native Hut Creek 2 Collection (VAHR 7722-1115) are located directly to the left of Native Hut Creek, which flows directly through the centre of the Project Area.

TABLE 5-1 VAHR PLACES WITHIN THE PROJECT AREA

VAHR No.	Aboriginal Place Name	Component Type
7622-0221	Shelford 1 Collection	LDAD
7722-1101	Native Hut Creek 2	LDAD
7722-1115	Native Hut Creek 2 Collection	LDAD
7721-0339	BAM - 1	Artefact Scatter
7721-0340	BAM 2	Artefact Scatter

5.1.1 SUMMARY

The majority of VAHR places within a 5km buffer of the Project Area comprise of Artefact Scatter (n=37), LDAD (n=8), Object Collection (n=6), Scarred Tree (n=2), and Aboriginal Ancestral Remains (Burial) (n=1). VAHR places within the Project Area comprise of Artefact Scatters (n=2) and LDADs (n=3). Previously recorded places were predominantly located near water sources such as major rivers and drainage lines.



Scarred trees within 5km of the Project Area were very low in numbers, presumably due to the extensive amount of land clearance undertaken on the land over time. The Aboriginal Ancestral remains are located approximately 3.8km south of the Project Area. This Aboriginal Place is important to note as it is highly culturally sensitive and in close proximity to the Project Area.

All Aboriginal places within the Project Area are located next to water sources such as Native Hut Creek and an unnamed channel/drain.

The low number of registered Aboriginal places, in particular artefacts which are prevalent across Victoria, is likely due to the small number of archaeological assessments carried out in the region rather than a lack of archaeological sensitivity. Larger investigation, including subsurface testing would likely turn up higher density occupation site in close proximity to the major water source (including Native Hut Creek Water Frontage and Leigh River Water Frontage) in the Project Area.

### 5.1.2 INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

A search was carried out via the public records office, State Library, ACHRIS, and online search engines to try to locate any reports relating to intangible cultural heritage for the Project Area. No reports were located as part of this search. Intangible cultural heritage values have often been unrecorded as part of archaeological assessment in the past. The low number of technical archaeological studies in the Project Area also indicates a lack of study in general for both tangible and intangible heritage. Information regarding intangible cultural heritage, if it exists, will likely comprise of cultural knowledge, oral stories, memories and songlines kept by the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the land, the Wadawurrung Peoples. Only Traditional Owners may provide or disseminate their cultural knowledge, and consultation would be required if a study of intangible values is required (in the form of a Cultural Values Recording).

### 5.1.3 PREVIOUS STUDIES

A VAHR search identified a total of over 64 archaeological assessments that cover the Project Area with an approximate 5km buffer. A majority of these assessments are old surveys and desktop/due diligence reports (pre-2000).

The most relevant assessments discussed in detail below focus on those assessments that include aspects of or are in the immediate vicinity of the current Project Area. These assessments will have similar geological and geomorphological attributes.

**Andrea Murphy** (1997) undertook an archaeological site survey (1093) for Telstra's proposed optical fibre cable route installation, located directly through the current Project Area's southern portion extending directly down the same path as the access route. The proposed development would be located on a road reserve, a flat to undulating plain. The proposed development was deemed low impact. Soil profile consisted of red clays with a high content of quartz sand. Past land disturbance was identified as moderate to high due to land clearing for installation of services, roads, and fence construction. Murphy surveyed the land by vehicle reconnaissance and on foot with a survey coverage of 100%. Ground surface visibility (GSV) was deemed extremely poor (0% per square metre) due to thick grass coverage. Less than 5% of the cable route had good GSV (70-100% per square metre). A total of two isolated quartz and quartzite artefacts were located during the survey (VAHR 7721-0339 & -0340). The recommendation made relating to the artefacts were that prior to the commencement of the

Telstra works, Telstra must apply in writing to the Aboriginal RAP group for a permit to disturb the isolated artefacts. No non-Aboriginal historic archaeological sites were located.

**Justine Hobbs, Jasmine Scibilia and Helen Kiddell** (2010) prepared a CHMP (11143) for the Meridith Water Supply Pipeline Project located parallel to the Midland highway between Lethbridge and north of Meredith. A Standard Assessment was carried out over the Activity Area that identified three new Aboriginal places VAHR 7722-0821, Lal Lal Road 1 Meredith VAHR 7722-0822 and Meredith Mount Mercer Road VAHR 7722-0814. Two Historic heritage places were also identified during the survey, Green Tent Road bluestone foundations (H7722-0070) and Lal Lal Road bluestone and wood ruin (H7722-0071).

A Complex Assessment was carried out that included the excavation of a total of 337 test holes along 22 transects within the activity area. A total of six new Aboriginal heritage places were identified during the Complex Assessment, Lal Lal Road 4 Meredith VAHR 7722-0823, Coolebarghurk Creek VAHR 7722-0809, 'Midland Highway Meredith' VAHR 7722-0815, Midland Highway & Green Tent Road 1 VAHR 7722-0812, Lal Lal Road 2 Meredith VAHR 7722-0810 and Midland Highway & Green tent road 3 VAHR 7722-0813. An additional ground survey was carried out that identified two new sites, 'Lal Lal Road 2 Meredith' 7722-0810[VAHR] and 'Lal Lal Road 3 Meredith' 7722-0811.

Avoidance was recommended for VAHR 7722-0823, -0810, -0811 and -0812 while harm could not be avoided for VAHR 7722-0821 and -0809 with salvage recommended. No specific management measure was outlined for VAHR 7722-0813 and 7722-0815

**Tim Stone and Cornelia de Rochefort** (2015) prepared a CHMP (no. 13339) for Barwon Region Water Corporation for the proposed construction of a water pipeline, located inside the current Project Area. A total of 100% of the activity area was surveyed. Ground surface visibility (GSV) was deemed reasonably good and no surface Aboriginal cultural heritage was located during the survey. Standard assessment identified two landforms with potential for subsurface Aboriginal cultural heritage: a volcanic plain landform and a Tertiary sedimentary plain. Both are located within close proximity to large waterways (Leigh River and Native Hut Creek). Complex assessment comprised of two initial 1mx1m test pits (TPs) to establish stratigraphy (one on each identified landform) using a trowel and stopped when clay sediment was hit. All soil was hand sieved through 5mm mesh. A total of 137 shovel probes were then excavated across the proposed activity area at 20m intervals. Methods used for shovel probes were the same as the initial TPs. Stone artefacts were found in TP2, SP 78 (Native Hut Creek) and SP 28 (Leigh River). Two Aboriginal cultural heritage places (VAHR 7622-0205 and VAHR 7722-1101) were registered as LDADs due to these discoveries. Shelford 1 (VAHR 7622-0205) LDAD is a single, isolated silcrete stone artefact. Native Hut Creek 2 (VAHR 7722-1101) LDAD consists of two stone artefacts, one silcrete and one quartzite. Both LDADs were assessed as being of low scientific significance (albeit high cultural significance), with little research potential. In accordance with management conditions, the artefacts were given to the RAP for reburial once works have been completed.

**Matt Chamberlain from Heritage Insight** (2017) prepared a CHMP (no. 14703) for VicRoads for the proposed construction of road safety improvements on the Midland Highway between Bannockburn and Meredith, which overlaps the eastern extent of the current Project Area. This was a mandatory CHMP due to the nature of the activity being high impact and intersecting with an area of cultural sensitivity. Standard assessment observed that the area



was highly disturbed due to ancillary works done within the area, and that the potential for finding any archaeological material was deemed to be very low. Landform variations were noted due to the presence of shallow drains that marked the headwaters of draining lines flowing into nearby rivers, however Chamberlain believed that they did not represent any increase for archaeological potential. Standard assessment concluded that archaeological potential was extremely low, with the most likely site type to be found was LDADs. Complex assessment comprised of 116 total test pits (TPs). The soils over the majority of the Project Area were very shallow volcanic clayey topsoil with evidence of disturbance including modern rubbish. Area 4 (located closest to current Project Area) presented a slightly deeper soil profile and comprising a layer of finer silt. Two silcrete complete flake artefacts were found during complex and registered as VAHR 7722-1128 (Midland Highway Meredith LDAD) that is located to the north of the current Project Area. Consultation with the RAP group concluded that the LDAD would be removed from the site and then repatriated to the same area after the completion of works.

#### 5.1.3.1 SUMMARY

Of the 50 reports yielded as part of the VAHR search, three of the most relevant reports to the Project Area have been reviewed. These studies revealed that the most likely Aboriginal places present within the Project Area would be LDADs and/or artefact scatters. All of the reports concluded that the site discoveries are most likely near waterways with flat plains having a low likelihood of Aboriginal cultural places due to the intensive change in environment during post-colonisation activities such as land clearance for crops and road installations.

The main constraint of reviewing literature in the Project Area is the lack of recently published archaeological reports within the Project Area itself. The majority of studies were carried out in the decades prior to the year 2000 and comprise of surveys and desktop studies rather than rigorous site investigations that include subsurface assessment.

#### 5.1.4 PREDICTIVE MODELLING

The following statements provide a broad summary of identified archaeological site patterning across the geographic region:

- Artefact scatters and LDADs are the most commonly occurring site type within the Project Area and have a higher likelihood to occur near permanent water sources. Land clearance activities will have likely disturbed most of the land, impacting *in situ* artefacts.
- Silcrete and quartzite are the most common materials to be found based on previous artefacts found within the Project Area.
- Land clearance activities will have likely affected the potential for scarred trees to occur within the Project Area. The low number of scarred tree Aboriginal places within the 5km buffer around the Project Area supports this prediction.
- High density occupation and archaeological sensitivity is most likely to be associated with significant permanent watercourses and lakes, such as Native Hut Creek, the Leigh River or other waterways that flow through the Project Area.
- Moderate density and archaeological sensitivity are associated with transient occupation and were most likely to be associated with the minor creeks located within the Project

Area. These may comprise of moderate density stone artefact scatters where First Nations peoples have stopped to knap and rearm their tool kit.

- Stony rises and stony ridges can be found on volcanic plain and may be located within the Project Area. Stony rises can have a higher potential for archaeological material. LiDAR mapping should be reviewed in detail during the CHMP process to determine the location of Stony Rises.
- Engravings have a low to moderate likelihood to occur within the Project Area.
- Intact First Nations sites are most likely to be located in landscapes which have been subject to low to moderate historic disturbance. Agricultural lands were largely cleared for grazing and cropping and as such, may have affected the archaeological integrity of subsurface deposits. Ground disturbance such as land clearance and agricultural use does not however reduce the likelihood for First Nations cultural heritage to be present.

Based on these assertions, the prediction model assesses each area into rating scale of high (red), moderate (orange) and low (yellow) to display the archaeological sensitivity. These are shown in Figure 5-1.





## 5.2 HISTORIC HERITAGE

### 5.2.1 HERITAGE DATABASE SEARCHES

#### 5.2.1.1 WORLD AND NATIONAL HERITAGE

Part 3, Division 1 of the EPBC Act requires that actions that have, will have or are likely to have a significant impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) require approval from the Australian Government Minister for the Environment. The MNES that relate to heritage matters are World Heritage Properties, and National Heritage Places.

Section 341ZC of the EPBC Act addresses Commonwealth Heritage Places. This section requires the minimisation of adverse impacts to the heritage values of a National or Commonwealth Heritage Place. This could be direct impacts from physical disturbance or could also include secondary impacts in the event of activities that would impact on the visual aspect, cultural importance, landscaping and curtilage of an adjacent listed property. It is noted that 341ZC only applies to places legally gazetted as having Commonwealth/National heritage values by the Minister for the Environment.

The Australian Heritage Database was reviewed to identify World National and Commonwealth Heritage Places with the following results:

- There are no World Heritage Properties within the Project Area. The nearest World Heritage is the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens approximately 80km north-east from the closest point of the Project Area.
- There are no National Heritage Places within the Project Area. The nearest National Heritage Place is the Great Ocean Road and Scenic Environs (Place ID\_105875, Historic) approximately 40km south-east from the closest point of the Project Area.
- There are no Commonwealth Heritage Sites within the Project Area. The nearest Commonwealth Heritage Site is the Point Wilson Defence Natural Area (Place ID\_105276, Natural) approximately 36km south-east from the closest point of the Project Area.

#### 5.2.1.2 STATE AND LOCAL HERITAGE ENVIRONMENT

##### THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER

The Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) list is used to provide legal protection for objects and places which are significant to the history of the state of Victoria.

There are no VHR listed sites located within the Project Area.

There are two sites within the 5km buffer that is included on the VHR:

- Bridge Over Leigh River (H1452)
- Moranghurk (H0266)

##### THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE INVENTORY

The Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI) list is used to provide legal protection for known historical (non-Indigenous) archaeological sites in the state of Victoria.

There is one VHI listed site within the Project Area:

- Taylors (sic) Road, Meredith – Section of Cobble Road (H7722-0038)



There are 5 VHI listed sites within the 5km buffer:

- Lal Lal Road – Bluestone and Wood Ruin (H7722-0071)
- Green Tent Road, Bluestone Foundations (H7722-0070)
- Sheoaks-Steiglitz Road Historic Artefact Scatter (H7722-0031)
- House Site (H7722-0028)
- Meredith Survey Tree (H7722-0037)

### 5.2.1.3 LOCAL PLANNING SCHEMES - HERITAGE OVERLAYS

Areas of local heritage significance can be protected by a heritage overlay. This heritage overlay is part of a local planning scheme which is subject to the Council the site is located within. The guidelines for the heritage overlay are set out in Clause 43.01 of each planning scheme. Councils are responsible for issuing planning permits for changes or prospective impacts, both direct and indirect, to local heritage places. The relevant planning scheme to the Project Area is the Golden Plains Planning Scheme.

There are no Heritage Overlays within the Project Area.

There are 28 Heritage Overlays within the 5km buffer area (see Table 5-2).

**TABLE 5-2 HERITAGE OVERLAYS WITHIN 5KM BUFFER AREA**

HO Number	Overlay	Position
HO10	Moranghurk, 3320 Midland Highway, Lethbridge	East of Project Area
HO13	Iron Road Bridge Over Leigh River, Shelford-Bannockburn Road, Shelford	South-west of Project Area
HO25	Meredith Railway Station, Staughton Street, Meredith	North-east of Project Area
HO26	Meredith Shire Hall (former), 31 Staughton Street, Meredith	North-east of Project Area
HO27	Woodbourne Homestead, Boundary Road, Meredith	North of Project Area
HO31	Golf Hill Homestead and Outbuildings, 1718 Bannock-Shelford Road, Bannockburn	South-west of Project Area
HO36	Brachychiton populneus (Kurrajong), Steiglitz Cottage, 22 Staughton Street, Meredith	North-east of Project Area
HO55	Native Creek No. 1 Run (former) and Moranghurk Woolshed (former), "Morbrook" 1820 Meredith-Shelford Road	North-east of Project Area
HO58	Church of the Epiphany, 7 Wallace Street, Meredith	North-east of Project Area
HO62	Leigh Presbyterian Church, 1716 Bannockburn-Shelford Road, Shelford	South-west of Project Area
HO63	Primary School No. 379, 1727 Bannockburn-Shelford Road, Shelford	South-west of Project Area

HO Number	Overlay	Position
HO64	Methodist Chapel, 31 Thomson Street, Shelford	South-west of Project Area
HO94	Moranghurk (Balance), Midland Highway, Lethbridge	East of the Project Area
HO100	Meredith Heritage Precinct	North-east of Project Area
HO103	Shelford Heritage Precinct	South-west of Project Area
HO131	Former Free Presbyterian Church, 4450 Midland Highway, Meredith	North-east of Project Area
HO132	Meredith State School No. 1420 and Community House, 5 Wallace Street, Meredith	North-east of Project Area
HO133	St Joseph's Catholic Church, Lawler Street, Meredith	North-east of Project Area
HO134	St Andrews Uniting Church and Manse, 28-30 Wallace Street, Meredith	North-east of Project Area
HO135	Meredith Cemetery, Slate Quarry Road, Meredith	North-east of Project Area
HO156	Former Presbyterian Manse, 999 Inverleigh-Shelford Road, Shelford	South-west of Project Area
HO157	Leighburn Homestead, 1567 Bannockburn-Shelford Road, Shelford	South-west of Project Area
HO158	Presbyterian Manse, 31 Mercer Street, Shelford	South-west of Project Area
HO163	Gowan Brae, 1038 Bannockburn-Shelford Road, Teesdale	South-east of Project Area
HO164	Teesdale State School No. 2065, 30 Sutherland, Teesdale	South-east of Project Area
HO165	Former Teesdale Water Reserve, Learmonth Street, Teesdale	South of Project Area
HO166	Teesdale War Memorial, Cnr. Pantics Road and Bannockburn-Shelford Road, Teesdale	South-east of Project Area
HO167	Teesdale Presbyterian Church, 42 Pyke Street, Teesdale	South-east of Project Area

#### 5.2.1.4 NON-STATUTORY HERITAGE ENVIRONMENT

##### NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA ARCHIVE (VIC) - AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE DATABASE

There are no sites within the Project Area that are included in the Australia Heritage Database.

##### THE REGISTER OF THE NATIONAL ESTATE ARCHIVE - AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE DATABASE

There are no sites within the Project Area that are listed on the RNE.



There are eight sites within the 5km buffer area that are listed on the RNE as an Indicative Places:

- Mt Mercer Road Remnant Grassland (Place ID\_19710) Class: Natural (East of Project Area)
- Shelford – Cressy Road Remnant Grassland (Place ID\_19604) Class: Natural (South-East of Project Area)
- Moranghurk Homestead and Outbuildings (Place ID\_3509) Class: Historic (East of Project Area)
- Golf Hill Homestead and Outbuildings (Place ID\_3686) Class: Historic (South-West of Project Area)
- Iron Road Bridge over Leigh River (Place ID\_3685) Class: Historic (South-West of Project Area)
- Settlers Arms Hotel (Place ID 3684) Class: Historic (South-West of Project Area)
- Sutherlands Creek Engraving Area (Place ID\_3525) Class: Indigenous (East of Project Area)
- Steiglitz Historic Site (Place ID\_3519) Class: Historic (East of Project Area)

### 5.2.2 PREDICTIVE MODELLING

There is one known state registered VHI place within the Project Area (H7722-0038). *Taylor's (sic) Road, Meredith – Section of Cobble Road* (H7722-0038) is located within a proposed transmission line corridor in the northeastern portion of the Project Area. There is a high potential for remains of this place to be present in and around this location.

The historical context of the remainder of the Project Area indicates that it has been settled as early as the 1830s. The post-contact history of the Project Area has been purely agricultural/pastoral with little evidence of built development, excluding the state school site found in the central western portion of the Project Area that is no longer extant. Based on the land use history (Section 4.3.4), aerial mapping from 1968 and 1969 indicates seven historic features, possibly residences / homestead complexes are located within the Project Area. These seven areas are considered to be specific areas of archaeological potential in the Project Area. Areas of archaeological potential may exist outside of these specific areas but are difficult to ascertain through historic aerials alone and require in-depth review including a site survey to ascertain.

A summary of general site types of historic heritage places that may be encountered in the remainder of the Project Area are:

- Dwellings such as small hut /mudbrick structures; and
- Residential (homestead), farm and school sites.

If identified, the historical archaeological resource would most likely be associated with late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century pastoral or agricultural sites such as work sheds, dairies, stockyards, and labourers' quarters. The potential historical archaeological resource is detailed in Table 5-3

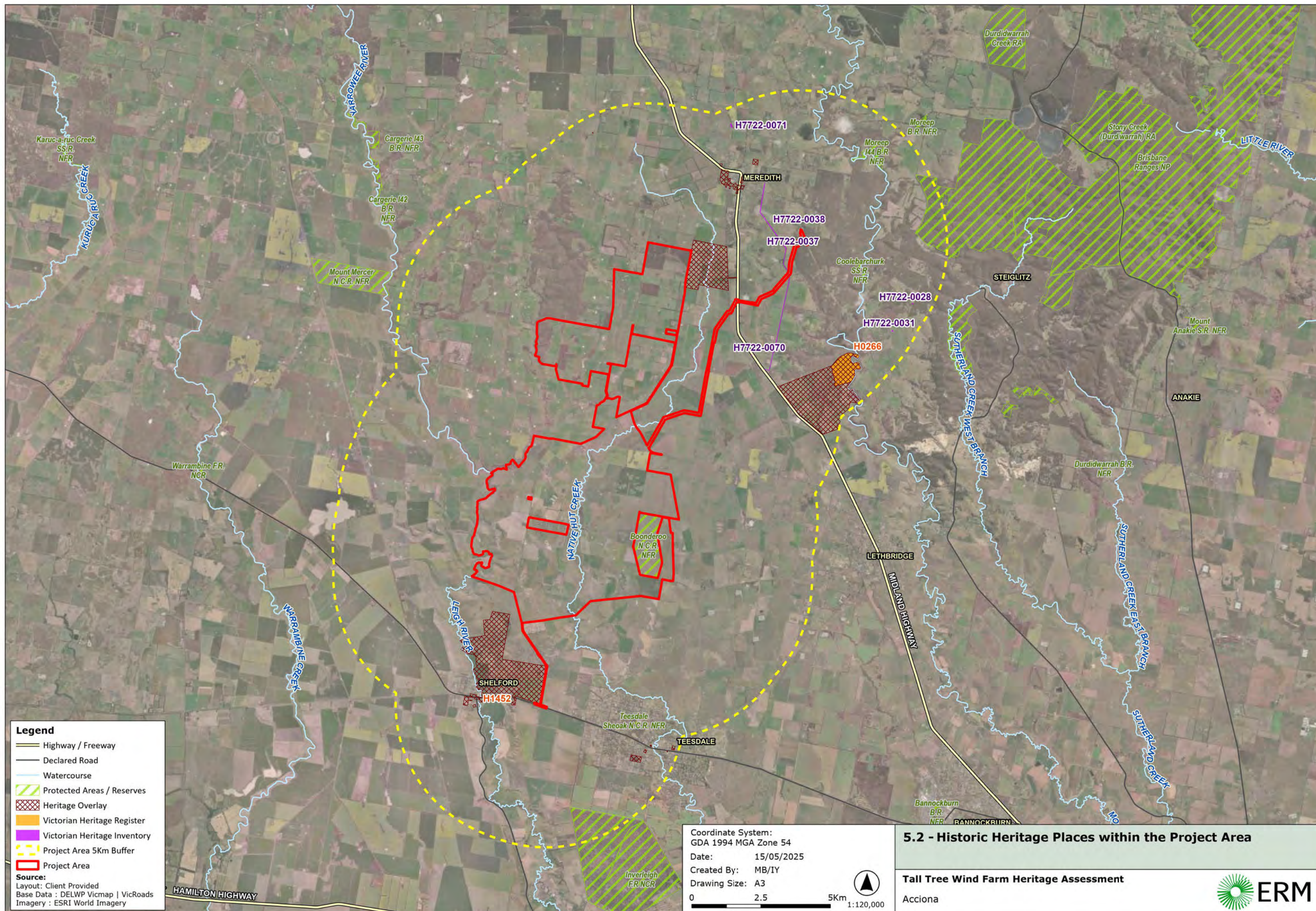
TABLE 5-3 SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Heritage site type	Description	Application to Project Area	Potential heritage significance
<b>Registered Historic Heritage Places</b>			
VHI/ VHR places	<p>One VHI place is located as being within the proposed impact area, <i>Taylor's (sic) Road, Meredith – Section of Cobble Road</i> (H7722-0038). Associated archaeological resources may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stone culverts.</li> <li>stone drainage.</li> <li>prior road surface (cobbed or otherwise)</li> </ul>	<p>This site type is known to exist within the proposed impact corridor for a transmission line. The VHI listing covers the current Taylor Road alignment, which is a public road. It is unlikely that the transmission line will cause impact to a public road. However, it must be noted that surrounding infrastructure associated with the cobbed road may occur in close proximity to the road.</p>	<p>State</p> <p>Moderate research value</p>
<b>General archaeological potential for the Project Area</b>			
Residences / homestead complexes that may date to 1945 or earlier	<p>A total of seven historic features, located within the proposed wind farm Project Area (5 km buffer zone).</p> <p>Associated archaeological resources may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence related to other possible outbuildings including labourers' quarters, stables, work sheds, etc. (footing, earthen packed surfaces, artefact scatters).</li> <li>Domestic assemblages or yard scatters associated with former living quarters.</li> <li>Wells, privy deposits and rubbish pits.</li> </ul>	<p>Based on early aerial photography, these features comprise building complexes that date to at least 1968/69 and may contain examples of built and archaeological heritage that illustrate early settlement in the region.</p> <p>Deeper sub-surface features and deposits such as postholes, dumps, foundations / footings, wells, cisterns and privies may remain in situ around these areas.</p>	<p>Local</p> <p>Low to moderate heritage value</p>
Pastoral and Agricultural Sites	<p>Pastoral and agricultural sites relate to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century settlement and the arrival of European graziers, agriculturalists, and associated industries. Associated archaeological resources may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental data/ecological samples.</li> <li>Evidence of land clearance such as tree boles and areas of burning.</li> <li>Post holes associated with paddocks and stockyard/ boundary fencing or lightweight</li> </ul>	<p>This site type and attributes are well represented across the Project Area.</p> <p>Later pastoral activities such as clearing, grazing, and land modification pens and yards for livestock, and vehicle movement, and environmental impacts (fires, floods, erosion) are likely to have impacted on above-ground structural features and would have had some degree of impact on a range of archaeological evidence.</p>	<p>Local</p> <p>Low research / scientific value</p>



Heritage site type	Description	Application to Project Area	Potential heritage significance
	<p>structures for agricultural purposes, such as timber shelters for storage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil deposits containing plough marks and agricultural furrows.</li> <li>• Tracks and former creek crossings (corduroy road or simple bridge), weirs or bunds or stone arrangement).</li> </ul>	<p>Sections of early tracks are likely to have been 'recycled' as current vehicular roads would have impacted on any in situ cart ruts or edge features that may have existed along the alignment.</p> <p>Deeper sub-surface features and deposits such as postholes, dumps, foundations / footings, wells, cisterns and privies may remain in situ.</p>	
Cemeteries	Burial grounds or formalised cemeteries are functional places that memorialise individuals at the location of, or in proximity to, their final resting place. Memorialisation occurs via the use of various types of monuments, headstones and / or markers.	While there are no listed cemeteries located within the Project Area, there is one located approximately 3km south of the project boundary.	Local High heritage value







## 6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This section provides a summary of the potential impacts to Aboriginal or historic heritage identified and includes a preliminary analysis of consequence. The sections below outline the metrics utilised to undertake the impact assessment.

### 6.1 CONSEQUENCE RATINGS

The following 'consequence ratings' in Table 6-1 are used to provide an assessment of the level of impact to the heritage item. The consequence ratings have been devised to illustrate the level of impact and provide a framework against which mitigation and management recommendations can be made.

**TABLE 6-1 CONSEQUENCE RATINGS**

Rating	Consequence or Impact to Heritage Value
5 – Major	Permanent detrimental impact to the heritage item would occur, beyond salvage and where replacement is not possible. The impact would cause irreversible negative impact to the overall heritage significance of the heritage item or place.
4 – Major	Permanent detrimental impact on one or more of the following would occur but may be reduced through mitigation measures: the significance, any of the values that contribute to significance, the functionality of the item or place, and / or the item or place's availability for access.
3 - Moderate	Some impact or change may occur that would require remedial action, and permanent impact would occur to one or more of the following: the significance, any of the values that contribute to significance, the functionality of the item or place, and / or the item or place's availability for access.
2 - Minor	Minor impact or change could be relatively and easily remedied or repaired, with no permanent negative impact to the heritage item's significance or heritage values contributing to significance, the functionality of the item or place, or the item or place's availability for access.
1 – Insignificant	Impact or change, if it occurred at all, would be of an extremely slight or minor nature.

Source ERM 2023

## 6.2 TYPE OF IMPACT

The following impact definitions (Table 6-2) have been utilised in the impact assessment to demonstrate the effect of the proposed works on identified heritage items. Table 6-3 below provides details of proposed project impacts at all locations where known heritage items have been identified in proximity to proposed works. Table 6-4 provides an overview of the potential impact areas in relation to First Nations and historic heritage in Project Area.

**TABLE 6-2 TYPES OF IMPACT**

Type of Impact	Description
Direct	Direct impact is defined as physical impact on the heritage site/value or its listed curtilage. Direct impact may result from construction activities, proposed road upgrades, or transportation of materials.
Indirect/Potential	Indirect or temporary impact may include temporary modification or temporary visual impact or to a heritage site/value, and/or its listed curtilage. 'Potential impact' is identified where a heritage site/value has been identified in proximity to works and has been flagged for further review.
No Impact	The heritage site/value will not be impacted by the proposed works.



### 6.2.1 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO HERITAGE VALUES

A high-level summary of potential impacts to historic heritage values that may occur as a result of Project construction, operation, and decommissioning activities is presented in Table 6-3 and Table 6-4. This summary includes preliminary mitigation measures that may be adopted or considered, noting that a comprehensive suite of additional measures will be informed by the impact assessment process.

**TABLE 6-3 IDENTIFICATION OF HISTORIC HERITAGE POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES**

Known Historic Heritage Item/Place	Identified Sites or Areas of Potential Heritage Sensitivity	Discussion of Potential Impact	Potential Consequence Rating	Next Steps and Mitigation Measures
Historic heritage places (registered)	Taylor (sic) Road, Meredith – Section of Cobble Road (H7722-0038).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The VHI site is located on an existing public road.</li> <li>Potential Impact - Construction of transmission towers or access tracks may take place in the vicinity of Taylor Road</li> </ul>	Indirect/potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid site extent of H7722-0038</li> <li>If this can not be avoided- prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment for the areas to be potentially impacted</li> <li>Engage with Heritage Victoria to qualify expectations.</li> <li>Prepare VHI permit.</li> <li>Preparation of Unexpected Finds Protocol</li> </ul>
Historic heritage places (unknown/potential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seven areas of built and archaeological potential identified during desktop assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indirect/ potential - Localised ground disturbance associated with construction may result in direct disturbance to cultural heritage or archaeological resources.</li> </ul>	Indirect/potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid areas of built and archaeological potential</li> <li>If this can't be avoided- prepare a Historic Heritage Assessment for the areas to be potentially impacted</li> <li>Engage with Heritage Victoria to qualify expectations.</li> <li>Prepare site cards for identified sites.</li> <li>Preparation of Unexpected Finds Protocol</li> </ul>

TABLE 6-4 IDENTIFICATION OF FIRST NATIONS POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES

Known First Nations Heritage Item/Place	Identified Sites or Areas of Potential Heritage Sensitivity	Potential Consequence Rating	Next Steps and Mitigation Measures
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Direct impact	[REDACTED]
First Nations heritage places (unknown) – Predictive modelling indicates First Nations CHS likely to be present in the Project Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity (CHS) (Wilsons Creek, Leigh River and Native Hut Creek)</li> <li>• Areas of CHS (minor named water ways)</li> </ul>	Direct impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid areas of CHS where possible</li> <li>• Avoid areas of high and moderate archaeological potential shown in Figure 5.1</li> <li>• Carry out detailed Lidar mapping of stony rises and stony ridges.</li> <li>• Avoid impacts to stony rises and stony ridges.</li> <li>• Prepare a CHMP for the impact area.</li> <li>• Engage with Traditional Owners and First Peoples State Relations</li> <li>• Cultural awareness training for construction staff</li> <li>• An Unexpected Finds Protocol should be prepared to support the construction or as part of the preparation of a CHMP</li> </ul>



## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 CONCLUSIONS

#### 7.1.1 HISTORIC HERITAGE

There is one registered historic heritage place within the disturbance footprint, VHI *Taylor's (sic) Road, Meredith – Section of Cobble Road* (H7722-0038) located in the northeast portion of a proposed transmission line. The VHI relates to remnants of a cobbled road along the current Taylor Road south of Meredith. It is unlikely that works pertaining to the transmission corridor will impact the public road and in turn VHI H7722-0038. It is advised the Project Layout avoid any ground works where the proposed transmission line crosses Taylor Road to prevent damage to VHI H7722-0038. Should the proposed works impact H7722-0038 then a Heritage Impact Assessment should be carried out to assess the impact and provide mitigation measures to minimise or avoid harm to the place.

A review of the land use history and historic aerials within the remainder of the proposed Project Area indicates that there are a total of seven locations where built features have been present since at least 1968. These locations may be an indication of earlier occupation dating to early 20<sup>th</sup> century and perhaps earlier (mid-19<sup>th</sup> century). For these reasons, the seven locations are considered to be areas of historical archaeological *potential*. The remainder of the Project Area is considered to have low potential for historic heritage places (built heritage and historical archaeological resources). A Historic Heritage Assessment may be carried out to ascertain the existence of unknown historic heritage in the Project Area.

#### 7.1.2 FIRST NATIONS HERITAGE

There are 54 registered Aboriginal places on the VAHR within a 5km buffer of the Project Area. Of these places, five are located within the Project Area.

The Project Area is located on Victorian Volcanic Plain and Central Victorian Upland land systems that include discrete landforms such as flat or undulating basaltic plain with stony rises, old lava flows, numerous volcanic cones and old eruption points and is dotted with shallow lakes both salt and fresh water. It includes forest and shrubby ecosystems dominated by Grassy Woodlands and lower lying valleys and plains. Stony rises, stony ridges and the land adjacent to water sources are focal points for Aboriginal occupation of the Project Area.

The registered places within the Project Area comprise of artefact scatters 7721-0339 and 7721-0340 and LDADs (7722-1101, 7722-1115, & 7622-0221) with artefacts made predominantly from silcrete and quartzite, located within close proximity to Native Hut Creek and an unnamed channel/drainage line. Native Hut Creek is a focal point in the landscape and would have supported short and long-term occupation by First Nations peoples in the past.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

There is also potential for unknown Aboriginal places to occur in the Project Area due to the proximity of valuable water sources and landform conducive to archaeological potential such as floodplains, stony rises and stony ridges that are prevalent within the Victorian Volcanic Plains.

Based on First Nations Heritage searches, there is a mandatory requirement under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018* to prepare a CHMP to mitigate the risk of harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage. It is an offence to harm heritage known or unknown as per Regulations 25 and 26 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. Under the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018*, a mandatory CHMP is required for an activity if:

- a) All or part of the activity area for the activity is an area of cultural sensitivity; and
- b) All or part of the activity is a high impact activity.

Specifically:

- Cultural Heritage Sensitivity - Regulation 25 (1) A registered cultural heritage place is an area of cultural heritage sensitivity;
- Cultural Heritage Sensitivity - Regulation 26 (1) a waterway or land within 200 metres of a waterway is an area of cultural heritage sensitivity;
- High Impact Regulation 46 (1)(b)(xxvii) a utility installation, (A) the works are a linear project that is the construction of an overhead power line with a length exceeding one kilometre or for which more than 10 power poles are erected; and
- High Impact Regulation 46 (1)(b)(xxvii) (xxx) land used to generate electricity, including a wind energy facility.

WTOAC are the registered Aboriginal Party for the land on which the Project Area is located. WTOAC must be consulted as part of the CHMP process.

### 7.1.3 INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

Intangible heritage values were considered for the Project Area, but no written record was located as part of the preliminary heritage assessment. Intangible heritage and cultural values have often been unrecorded as part of archaeological assessment in the past. The low number of technical archaeological reports in the region also indicates a lack of study in general for both tangible and intangible heritage. Information regarding intangible heritage, if it exists, will likely comprise of oral stories, memories and songlines kept by the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the land. Consultation with WTOAC, who are the Traditional Owners of the land on, which the Project is proposed. Only Traditional Owners may provide or disseminate their cultural knowledge, and consultation would be required if a study of intangible values is required (in the form of a Cultural Values Recording).



## 7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the desktop analysis ERM recommends the following measures to be undertaken by the Project proponent:

### RECOMMENDATION 1 - FURTHER ASSESSMENT REQUIRED

#### FIRST NATIONS HERITAGE

- *Mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP)*

Based on the results of this assessment, a mandatory CHMP will be required.

Any CHMP should be prepared by an adequately qualified Heritage Advisor, in consultation with First Peoples State Relations and the Wadawurrung people. The CHMP would outline the long-term management of First Nations places affected by the Project. This CHMP should include an Unexpected Finds Protocol that outlines steps to manage the discovery of unknown First Nations heritage during the development. It should also include cultural awareness training and induction for ground disturbance works by a suitably qualified heritage advisor for First Nations heritage objects. This induction should be conducted prior to any ground disturbing works being carried out.

- *Cultural Values Recording (Intangible cultural heritage)*

A Cultural Value Recording should be carried out to ascertain the intangible heritage values for the Project Area. This should be done by direct consultation with the Wadawurrung with guidance by a qualified Heritage Advisor or anthropologist.

#### HISTORIC HERITAGE

- Further assessment may not be required if registered historic heritage places and areas of archaeological potential are avoided by the proposed works.
- Should avoidance not be possible then a Historic Heritage Assessment should be carried out on any registered historic heritage places or areas of archaeological potential impacted by the Project. The assessment should be guided by the *Guidelines for Conducting Historical Archaeological Surveys and Guide to Preparing a Heritage Impact Statement for State Heritage Places* (Heritage Victoria 2021). The assessment should be carried out by a qualified historic heritage advisor and archaeologist in consultation with Heritage Victoria. If impacts were to occur to sites of historical archaeological significance, a consent application to Heritage Victoria would be required.
- Preparation of an Unexpected Finds Procedure and Historical Heritage Induction, and inclusion of these in the Project's Construction Environmental Management Plan for the Project Area

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## APPENDIX A – VAHR SEARCH RESULTS WITHIN 5KM BUFFER ZONE



VAHR No.	Aboriginal Place Name	Component Type
7621-0008	SHELFORD BURIAL	Aboriginal Ancestral Remains (Burial)
7621-0446	Leigh River West Escarpment, Shelford - AS1	Artefact Scatter
7621-0447	Leigh River West Escarpment, Shelford - AS2	Artefact Scatter
7621-0449	Leigh River East Escarpment LDAD	Low Density Artefact Distribution
7621-0450	Leigh River East Terrace, Shelford - AS1	Artefact Scatter
7621-0451	Leigh River East Escarpment, Teesdale - AS1	Artefact Scatter
7622-0205	Shelford 1	Low Density Artefact Distribution
7622-0221	Shelford 1 COLLECTION	Low Density Artefact Distribution
7721-0105	TEESDALE 1	Artefact Scatter
7721-0262	OLD SHELFORD TRACK FOUR	Artefact Scatter
7721-0263	OLD SHELFORD TRACK FIVE	Artefact Scatter
7721-0264	BAKERS RD ONE	Artefact Scatter
7721-0265	BAKERS RD TWO	Artefact Scatter
7721-0266	BAKERS RD THREE	Artefact Scatter
7721-0339	BAM - 1	Artefact Scatter
7721-0340	BAM 2	Artefact Scatter
7721-1197	Teesdale Sand Ridge 3	Artefact Scatter
7721-1411	Eagle Court LDAD	Low Density Artefact Distribution
7722-0222	SHEOAKS-STEIGLITZ ROAD 1	Artefact Scatter
7722-0225	SHEOAKS 1	Artefact Scatter
7722-0226	SHEOAKS 2	Artefact Scatter
7722-0231	THOMAS HICK COLLECTION	Object Collection
7722-0254	SHARPS RD BRIDGE SCARRED TREE	Scarred Tree
7722-0493	BRNP 001	Artefact Scatter
7722-0494	BRNP 002	Artefact Scatter
7722-0495	BRNP 003	Artefact Scatter
7722-0496	BRNP 004	Artefact Scatter
7722-0497	BRNP 005	Artefact Scatter
7722-0500	BARWON WATER 1	Artefact Scatter
7722-0501	SELWOOD PARK 1	Artefact Scatter
7722-0523	MEREDITH EDUCATION 1	Artefact Scatter

VAHR No.	Aboriginal Place Name	Component Type
7722-0524	MEREDITH EDUCATION 2	Artefact Scatter
7722-0525	MEREDITH EDUCATION 3	Artefact Scatter
7722-0526	MEREDITH EDUCATION 4	Scarred Tree
7722-0809	COOLENBARGHURK CREEK, MEREDITH	Artefact Scatter
7722-0809	COOLENBARGHURK CREEK, MEREDITH	Object Collection
7722-0810	LAL LAL ROAD 2 MEREDITH	Artefact Scatter
7722-0811	LAL LAL ROAD 3 MEREDITH	Artefact Scatter
7722-0812	MIDLAND HIGHWAY & GREEN TENT ROAD 1	Artefact Scatter
7722-0812	MIDLAND HIGHWAY & GREEN TENT ROAD 1	Object Collection
7722-0813	MIDLAND HIGHWAY & GREEN TENT ROAD 3	Artefact Scatter
7722-0813	MIDLAND HIGHWAY & GREEN TENT ROAD 3	Object Collection
7722-0814	MEREDITH MOUNT MERCER ROAD	Artefact Scatter
7722-0815	MIDLAND HIGHWAY MEREDITH	Artefact Scatter
7722-0815	MIDLAND HIGHWAY MEREDITH	Object Collection
7722-0821	MIDLAND HWY & GREEN TENT ROAD 2	Artefact Scatter
7722-0821	MIDLAND HWY & GREEN TENT ROAD 2	Object Collection
7722-0822	LAL LAL ROAD 1 MEREDITH	Artefact Scatter
7722-0909	Green Tent Ruin	Artefact Scatter
7722-1100	Moorabool River Meredith AS 1	Artefact Scatter
7722-1101	Native Hut Creek 2	Low Density Artefact Distribution
7722-1115	Native Hut Creek 2 COLLECTION	Low Density Artefact Distribution
7722-1128	Midland Highway Meredith LDAD	Low Density Artefact Distribution
7722-1251	51 Watson Street, Meredith LDAD 1	Low Density Artefact Distribution





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