Appendix H

New South Wales Archaeology (2010)
*Historical Heritage Assessment*
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

New South Wales Archaeology Pty Ltd has been commissioned by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) to undertake an Historical Heritage Assessment of a proposed realignment of the Princes Highway at Dignams Creek near Cobargo, south east NSW. The works would replace the narrow Dignams Creek Bridge and sections of the existing Princes Highway on either side of the creek that have poor vertical and horizontal alignment. The Dignams Creek realignment is proposed to improve safety and efficiency.

An initial draft assessment for proposed works was prepared in 2009. Since that time the design of the proposed highway upgrade has been refined and includes additional areas of proposed impact located to the southwest of the original study area. Accordingly this report is a revision of the earlier draft document, amended to include the further areas of proposed impact.

This report will inform the RTA whether the proposed works are likely to affect heritage items within the study area and whether Statements of Heritage Impact (SOHI) or excavation permits will be necessary under the NSW Heritage Act, 1977.

1.2 Objectives and Methods

This project aims to provide an assessment of the historical heritage status of the proposal area. Accordingly the current project aims to:

- Document prior work and results which have been undertaken at the site;
- Conduct a full archaeological surface survey;
- Record potential heritage items identified in the course of field survey;
- Identify the need or otherwise for additional subsurface investigation;
- Formulate a series of management recommendations ensuing from the above in relation to the proposed works.

This project has been managed by Julie Dibden, New South Archaeology Pty Ltd. A field investigation for heritage items within the study area has been conducted by Julie Dibden, Rebecca Parkes and Andrew Pearce, NSW Archaeology Pty Ltd. The survey, while comprehensive, was also focused on areas of potential identified through interviews with locals, historical research including parish maps, features marked on topographic maps, extant structures, exotic tree plantings and other obvious cultural modifications that might be indicative of archaeological sites.

Variables recorded during the field survey included the following:

- Site type or feature such as building, ruin etc;
- A general description including the number of features, overall dimensions, materials etc.;
- Architectural features such as materials, orientation, function etc.;
- Artefacts present including types, density and location;
- An estimate of age and/or period of use/occupation;
- Site condition including integrity, previous impacts, geomorphic processes etc.;
- Subsurface potential including an estimate of potential nature, depth and integrity of deposit within individual features an in surrounding areas.

1.3 Previously Recorded Heritage Items

Searches have been conducted for previous heritage listings in and around the Dignams Creek study area; these have included all of the relevant heritage registers for items of local through to world significance.

There are no previously recorded heritage items on the Australian Heritage Database, the State Heritage Inventory or the Register of the National Trust listed as being present within the study area.

However, a search of the RTA Heritage and Conservation Register (5 January 2009) revealed that the Dignams Creek Bridge is listed under Section 170 of the Heritage Act, 1977. A summary of this listing is provided in Section 7.1 of this report. Full details of the site card can be found in Appendix 1.
1.4 Results

There are eleven potential heritage items identified within the Dignams Creek proposal area (Figures 11, 12, 13 and 14), including one previously recorded item (DC1 – Dignams Creek Bridge), which is listed on the RTA Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Register. The other items comprise sections of old road alignments (DC2 - old Princes Highway, including road alignments, culverts, drainage channels and bridge remains, DC3 - old Bermagui Road, DC10 - remains of a secondary creek crossing and associated road alignment and DC11 - old Princes Highway, including road alignment, culvert, drainage channels and possibly related tracks), the sites of the two public schools (DC4 - first public school at Dignams Creek and DC5 - second public school at Dignams Creek), the site of the community hall (DC6) and the site of the residence, sheds and silage pits on Portion 246 (DC7 - private residence, DC8 - site of the dairy and machinery shed and DC9 - silage pits).

The sections of old road alignments and associated bridge and culvert remains are generally in fair to good condition; however, as a whole they offer only limited research potential. The sites of most of the other heritage items have been subject to prior ground disturbance and similarly offer very limited research potential. The only possible exceptions to this includes the site of the second Dignams Creek Public School (DC5), which may offer good excavation potential across the area where the school house once stood, and the large depression associated with DC7, which is likely to be the remains of a well or toilet pit associated with the old Salway house on Portion 246.

1.5 Statutory Context

Section 139 of the NSW Heritage Act specifically provides protection for any item classed as a relic. A relic is defined as "... any deposit, artefact, object or material evidence that –

a) relates to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement; and

b) is of State or local heritage significance.

(Heritage Act 1977, Heritage Amendment Act 2009 No 34).

Section 139 of the Act disallows disturbance of a relic unless in accordance with an 'excavation permit' from the Heritage Council.

A permit must be obtained to disturb or excavate land where it is known (or there is a reasonable cause to suspect) that such action will or is likely to uncover a relic. An excavation permit can be applied for under section 140 of the Act. Excavation permits are generally only applicable to relics situated below the surface.

Section 146 of the Act requires that the discovery of a previously unknown relic be reported to the Heritage Council within a reasonable time of its discovery.

Section 170 of the Act requires all state government instrumentalities to establish and maintain a Heritage and Conservation Register that lists items of environmental heritage. The register is to include items which are, or could potentially be, the subject of a conservation instrument, and which are owned, occupied or otherwise under the control of that instrumentality.

Given that the Dignams Creek Bridge (DC1) is listed on the RTA Heritage and Conservation Register it is protected under Section 170 of the Heritage Act, 1977.

The other potential heritage items identified in the proposal area at Dignams Creek during the field survey (DC2-DC11), do not satisfy state or local heritage significance criteria which would warrant heritage listing.

1.6 Recommendations

The recommendations as listed below are based on the survey results and an assessment of the heritage significance of the items recorded, a consideration of the nature of the development and legislative constraints (please read Section 11 for a full listing of recommendations).

1. There are no heritage constraints that would act to preclude the proposed realignment of the Princes Highway at Dignams Creek.

2. There are no constraints with regard to items DC3 (Old Bermagui Road), DC4 (Site of the first public school), DC6 (Site of the community hall), DC7 (Site of the residence/post office), DC8 (Site of the dairy and sheds), DC9 (Silage pits) and DC10 (Remains of a secondary creek crossing); these items do not meet the criteria for heritage listing. They are either of low significance generally or are significantly disturbed by previous impacts.
3. With regard to item DC7 (Site of the residence/post office), while the site as a whole presents limited research potential and does not warrant heritage listing, there is an option to undertake salvage excavation of the well/toilet pit associated with the house site if impacts are proposed in this area. In this instance an ‘excavation permit’ would be necessary under Section 140 of the Heritage Act (1977).

4. In the event that impacts are proposed at DC1 (Dignams Creek Bridge) then additional work and approval including a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) will be necessary.

5. With regard to DC2 and DC11 (north east and south west sections of the Old Princes Highway), they do not warrant heritage listing, however, any proposed impacts should be mitigated through strategic avoidance of representative samples of the existing road alignment (i.e. partial impacts only) if at all feasible. No further archaeological investigations are warranted.

6. In the event that impacts are proposed at DC5 (Site of the second public school) then a program of archival recording and salvage excavation could be given consideration. In this instance an ‘excavation permit’ would be necessary under Section 140 of the Heritage Act (1977) in order to undertake such works.

Acknowledgments

Gratitude is extended to the following people for their assistance in this project:

Barbara and Vernon Pretty, property owners
Jim and Shannon Russack, property owners
2. INTRODUCTION

The RTA is finalising a design for the proposed realignment of the Princes Highway, at Dignams Creek (Figure 1). The proposed works would include realignment of the Princes Highway from a westerly point located ca. 1.8 kilometres southwest of the Dignams Creek Road to a point located 6.2 kilometres south of the Bermagui Road in the east. The works would replace the narrow Dignams Creek Bridge and existing sections of the highway that have poor vertical and horizontal alignment. The Dignams Creek realignment is proposed to improve safety and efficiency.

This report will inform the RTA whether the proposed works are likely to affect heritage items within the study area and whether Statements of Heritage Impact (SOHI) or excavation permits will be necessary under the NSW Heritage Act (1977).

This study has included the following components:

- A review of historical heritage registers to determine whether or not heritage items present in the proposal area are listed.
- A review of local histories, reports and other relevant documents in order to provide a contextual framework to the study and the heritage management process.
- Oral history research through interviews of local residents.
- A review of impacts relating to the Dignams Creek realignment proposal aimed at determining the potential nature and extent of impacts to any heritage items which may be present.
- A field survey of the proposal area aimed at locating historical heritage items and assessing archaeological potential where relevant.
- Documentation of survey results.
- An assessment of survey results.
- A site significance assessment.
- The formulation of management and mitigation recommendations ensuing from the above.

This project has been managed by Julie Dibden, New South Wales Archaeology Pty Ltd. The report writing and field survey has been conducted by Julie Dibden, Rebecca Parkes and Andrew Pearce, New South Wales Archaeology Pty Ltd.
Figure 1. Indicative location of the proposed activity area (1:100,000 topographic map Cobargo Sheet 8925 Ed. 1).
3. PROPOSED IMPACTS

The following information describes the nature of the proposed impacts and why they are necessary. It also outlines how potential impacts would affect the landscape and heritage resource.

The Princes Highway is a critical motorway of local and state economic and social importance and is subject to high usage by private and commercial traffic. It is the major north-south transport route connecting Sydney to the NSW South Coast and also provides an important alternative to the Hume Highway route linking NSW and Victoria.

The Dignams Creek realignment is proposed to improve safety and efficiency in that section of the Princes Highway that has a narrow bridge and poor vertical and horizontal alignment.

Generally, impacts associated with the realignment include the construction of a new bridge, excavation of road cuttings, fill deposition, and formation of gutter, verge, and road margins.

3.1 Potential Impacts of the Proposal to the Historical Heritage Resource

The proposed realignment works and replacement of the narrow Dignams Creek Bridge may occupy an area measuring approximately 3.8 kilometres in length. These works have the potential to disturb or destroy any heritage items that might be located on or directly adjacent the proposed route.
4. STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study has included the following components:

- A review of historical heritage registers to determine whether or not heritage items present in the proposal area are listed.
- A review of local histories, reports and other relevant documents in order to provide a contextual framework to the study and the heritage management process.
- Oral history research through interviews of local residents.
- A review of impacts relating to the Dignams Bridge realignment proposal aimed at determining the potential nature and extent of impacts to any heritage items that may be present.
- A field survey of the proposal area aimed at locating historical heritage items and assessing archaeological potential where relevant.
- Documentation of survey results.
- An assessment of survey results.
- A site significance assessment.
- The formulation of management and mitigation recommendations ensuing from the above.

4.1 Literature Review

The following information sources were accessed for this study:

- Historical heritage inventories including the NSW State Heritage Register and Inventory, the National Trust Register, the Register of the National Estate, the National Heritage Register, the Bega Valley Local Environment Plan 2002 (as amended) and the Eurobodalla Shire Council Rural Local Environmental Plan 1987 (as amended).
- Narira and Noorooma parish maps.
- Wandella and Central Tilba 1:25,000 topographic maps.
- Secondary sources relevant to the history of the area.

4.2 Field Survey and Methodology

The project aims to provide an assessment of the historical heritage status of the proposal area. Accordingly the study aims to:

- Document prior work and results which have been undertaken at the site;
- Conduct a full archaeological surface survey;
- Record potential heritage items identified in the course of field survey;
- Identify the need or otherwise for additional subsurface investigation;
- Formulate a series of management recommendations ensuing from the above in relation to the proposed road works.

The initial field survey was carried out on the 5th January 2009. A subsequent programme of field work took place on 3rd December 2010 in order to assess an additional proposed impact area located south west of the original survey (see Figure 2).

The survey was focused on areas of potential identified through interviews with locals, historical research including parish maps and old photographs, features marked on topographic maps, extant buildings, exotic tree plantings and other obvious cultural modifications that might be indicative of archaeological sites.

Site recordings included the following variables:

- Site type or feature such as building, ruin etc;
- A general description made including the number of features, overall dimensions, materials etc.;
- Architectural features such as materials, orientation, function etc.;
- Artefacts present including types, density and location;
- An estimate of age and/or period of use/occupation;
- Site condition including integrity, previous impacts, geomorphic processes etc.;
• Subsurface potential including an estimate of potential nature, depth and integrity of deposit within individual features and in surrounding areas.
5. LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

A consideration of the landscape is necessary in archaeological work in order to characterise and predict the nature of human occupation across the land. Additionally, geomorphological and humanly activated processes need to be defined as these will influence the degree to which archaeological sites may be visible and/or conserved. For example land which is heavily grassed will prevent the detection of archaeological material while land which has suffered disturbance may no longer retain artefacts or stratified deposits. A consideration of such factors is necessary in formulating site significance and mitigation and management recommendations.

The following sections provide information in regard to the landscape context of the study area.

5.1 Local Context

The study area is located north east of Cobargo on the South Coast of NSW (Figures 1 and 2). The study area is located within the coastal lowlands system consisting of rolling to undulating terrain (Gunn et al. 1978).

During the Pleistocene the area now occupied by the study area and its immediate environs was situated some distance from the sea. For most of the period after 100,000 years Before Present (BP) sea levels were lower than current levels. Between 25,000 BP and 15,000 BP sea levels were 110 m - 130 m lower and the coast was situated approximately 25 -30 km to the east of the study area (National Heritage Consultants 2003).

The Dignams Creek study area is now located approximately nine kilometres from the coast and less than three kilometres from Wallaga Lake. The sea level assumed its present position at approximately 6,000 years BP with the flooding of the adjoining bedrock landforms by Post Glacial rising seas.

It is suggested that between ca. 4,500 and 1,500 BP sea levels fluctuated and at times (ca. 4,100-3,200 BP) were as much as 1.7 m higher than present (Baker and Haworth 2000a & 2000b). With rising sea levels during the early to mid Holocene the inland drainage depressions such as Dignams Creek were inundated by sea water. A subsequent process of embayment and various processes of tidal and fluvial deposition created the present coastal landforms including the local lakes and swamps.

5.2 Climate

The climate of the area is described as meso-thermal with a relatively evenly distributed rainfall (Coddington 1983). Summer temperatures in Cobargo range from 14 - 26º on average while winter temperature ranges from 0 - 17º (Brierley et al. 1997). Annual rainfall totals average 975 mm and ranges from 362 mm to 2171 mm (as recorded since 1930) (Brierley et al. 1997).

5.3 Geology and Soils

The study area is situated on Late Ordovician aged Greywacke/Pelite bedrock. Soils are generally skeletal (Gunn 1978). Alluvial flats adjacent to Dignams Creek contain much deeper soil profiles; the degree to which sedimentation on flats is derived from post settlement alluvium is unknown (see below).

5.4 Landforms and Water

The study area is predominantly located within the catchment of Dignams Creek; it includes a number of landforms including crests, simple slopes, flats and drainage depressions. Dignams Creek is a fourth order stream which flows eastward from the southern slopes of Gulaga Mountain and divulges into Wallaga Lake. The tidal zone of Wallaga Lake extends along Dignams Creek to a point immediately to the east of the study area.

Removal of woodland and forest from river valleys both in southeast Australia and elsewhere caused a profound change to the system states of many rivers (Brooks and Brierley 2002). We know these system changes resulted in major alluviation and change in lower floodplains eg in the Bega River catchment (Fryirs 2002; Fryirs and Brierley 2001) and also sediment storage and channel changes in the upper catchments (Brierley and Fryirs 1998).

River courses in upland catchments such as Dignams Creek and other minor courses originally contained ‘chain of ponds’ rather than defined creek channels. European land clearance resulted in high levels of erosion which ultimately caused such water courses to develop continuous stream channels (Brierley et. al 1997).

5.5 Geomorphology and Soils

Soils throughout much of the proposal area are skeletal with bedrock shale present close to the surface. However, in lower landforms adjacent to the creek alluvial deposits are expected to be much deeper.
The flats through which the Dignams Creek channel passes and the generally abrupt nature of the change in angle onto adjacent creek line slopes/valley sides suggests alluvial sediment infilling of the channel floors (aggradation). Some of this sedimentation may be quite recent and reflect instability on adjacent slopes following woodland clearance in the last 200 years.

The adjoining slopes are sufficiently steep to cause sediment movement as creep downslope under gravity. Terracettes (small terraces on slopes) and occasional areas of sheet erosion are seen on some slopes indicating creep is active. These processes will act differentially on particular slope elements. The depth and nature of the soil profiles, soil consolidation and depth to clay B-horizons will be substantial determinants of creep rates in relation to slope angle.

The steeper slopes above creeks will probably be most active, especially where ephemeral creek flow is removing sediments from the slope base. The spur crests are likely to be relatively more stable although sediment transfer down the crests cannot be discounted. These processes can cause artefact assemblages in soil deposits to gradually disperse through time as a function of sediment creep and net sediment transfer off the crests and downslope towards creeks.

Figure 2. Study area in its topographic context (Wandella 8925-3N 3rd ed. and Central Tilba 8925-3N topographic map: GDA).
6. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

6.1 Pre-European History

Prior to European occupation the Aboriginal people of the Bega Valley practiced a hunting, gathering and fishing economy. Robinson (in Mackeness 1941:335-336) discussed the economy of the Bega Valley people as follows:

“…the zamia (is common) on the ranges…the nuts are collected in large quantities and by the Blacks called Bunggon. The Cabbage Palm…is another article of subsistence…The Phascomolys (Wombat) and the fish are the chief support of the natives, the latter are taken in Weirs, Eels and other fish in ponds are stupefied by an infusion of bark”.

Robinson (1844) noted that fish weirs allowed large numbers of people to come together for sustained periods of time, as they provided an abundant source of food. Observations from the Bega region indicate that Aboriginal people relied heavily on coastal resources such as fish and shellfish and that camps were located on coastal dunes or in forests within close proximity to the coast (Sullivan 1982).

According to Wellings (1966: 7) the Imlays, who were famous for their whaling activities, were regarded as ‘safe people’ by the Aborigines. Aboriginal people were employed by the Imlays in both their agricultural and whaling ventures on the far south coast. It is likely that by the late 1830s to early 1840s Aboriginal people began to find both employment and other advantages by forging close relationships with individual European men and women. Lambie (cited in Bayley 1942) reported in 1842 that ‘a good many’ Aboriginal people were employed on coastal properties, hoeing and reaping maize, and sheep washing. Referring to Aboriginal people employed by the Imlays in whaling, Lambie (cited in Bayley 1942) stated that after the season ‘they all returned to their tribes in the bush’. It is possible that similarly, Aboriginal people in the Cobargo area alternated between farm and ‘bush’ life in these early years.

While Aboriginal people did not readily give way to the Europeans, following occupation Aboriginal people adapted to the new settler economy running their own farms, businesses and contributing significantly to pioneering in the area; they established a valuable place within the new society (Rose 1990: 41). Many local Aboriginal and European families forged close and mutually beneficial relationships as the land was cleared and turned to agricultural production.

European settlement of the far south coast caused immense disruption and change to Aboriginal social and economic life and relationships to country. Nevertheless, in the early days of settlement Aboriginal groups had continued access to some lands and maintained many cultural and social traditions (Chittick & Fox 1997:191). After occupation the people continued to pursue a rich cultural life, both ‘traditional’ and adopted. For example, the first Wallaga Lake school teacher found it difficult to interest the Aboriginal men in adult education because they were engaged by Cricket Clubs for the season (Rose 1990: 41). European bean growers of Bega Valley were concerned also because given commitments to cricket; it was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit Aboriginal pickers.

The largely successful efforts to peacefully accommodate Europeans and to adapt to the new society was systematically destroyed for Aboriginal people by the Aborigines Protection Board which in 1884 adopted the policy of concentrating people on settlements (Rose 1990:42). However, despite the devastating consequences of that policy, the Yuin remain a vibrant people and “…still maintain and practice ethical, moral and custodial roles in relation to their sacred places in the landscapes” (Mullet 1996: 17).

6.2 Alienation of Lands within New South Wales

When New South Wales was settled as a British Colony in 1788, all lands became the property of the Crown. A major component of the colonial process was the creation and maintenance of spatial order (Jeans 1966: 205). The alienation of land was controlled at the discretion of the colonial government, initially under direction of the Colonial Office in London. Grants, in the first instance, were offered to officers and civil servants as both reward and incentive to relocate. This was later extended after Governor Phillip was instructed to grant land for farming to discharged soldiers, free settlers and convicts who had served their term (Shaw 1970: 11). As the population and demand for land increased, measures were adopted by both the government and settlers to enable the spread of settlement and an increase in agricultural production. With a further increase in the population of settlers and livestock numbers after 1800, the demand for land continued to grow.

In 1822 J. T. Bigge filed his Report to the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales. Bigge had been dispatched to the Colony in 1819 by the British government to establish, among other things, if the Colony was achieving its aims as a penal settlement and to consider its development and commercial viability. Bigge recommended an increase in land grants, but only to those who could contribute to
an increase in pastoral production (Molony 1988: 45). convict labour was intended to assist with the maintenance of pastoral properties granted under such a system.

Governor Macquarie continued to grant land to cater for the needs of increasing livestock numbers. Although alienation was not allowed without survey, by 1821 about 340,000 acres of land grants could not be located, as their issue had outpaced the ability of surveyors to accurately determine their placement (Perry 1965: 44). The three-man survey department was not able to cope with the demands made on it, and the number of uncompleted surveys of the country beyond the immediate vicinity of Sydney began to mount. This situation became more problematical in 1825 when officialdom declared that the area to be settled was to be divided into counties and parishes and, in 1826, temporarily restricted land that could be granted to the first nineteen counties created around Sydney, which became known as the ‘Limits of Location’. The southern boundary of the nineteen counties was the latitude of Batemans Bay (Ellis 1997: 27; Gibbney 1989: 17-19).

In order to allow occupation of new lands, satisfy demand and maintain some control on the spread of settlement, in 1827 the government introduced ‘tickets of occupation’ to allow graziers rights over the lands they occupied (Carter 1994: 9,10). These were replaced in 1828 by grazing licences. From that time, through a variety of means, there was a spread of both official and unofficial settlement, and Crown Lands began to be broken up into smaller portions. Grants and sales, either directly or at auction, permitted the alienation of land. However, demand outstripped supply. ‘Squatters’ began to occupy large tracts of land outside the settled districts beyond the control of the colonial government (Cannon 1988: 9; Carter 1994: 10-12). In order to wrest back control, various regulations were introduced to allow land to be leased or licensed for a fee to depasture stock. Sales as a result of improvements to land occurred later, along with sales at auction for a set minimum price per acre. Access to and availability of land, along with insufficient capital for many prospective landowners restricted expansion. The majority of suitable land remained in the hands of a wealthy few.

By 1850, settlement had spread throughout New South Wales and Victoria (Shaw 1970: 45) and at that time 3,000 squatters had the use of over 70 million acres of Crown Land (Jeans 1966: 212). It was during this period that political support increased for small rural landholders. Support came from a number of groups, including:

• land owners seeking to restrict the squatters and capitalise on their own investments;
• tenant farmers seeking access to rural land;
• successful gold-miners with capital to invest in land;
• independent shopkeepers who resented the squatters use of Sydney wholesalers; and
• agitated politicians fearful of the growing power of the ‘squattocracy’.

In 1861 Sir John Robertson, the Minister of Lands, introduced legislation (Crown Lands Occupation Act 1861 and Crown Lands Alienation Act 1861) to allow selection of land by any person under certain conditions, at a set price of one pound per acre. One quarter of the purchase price was required with the balance deferred as long as certain conditions were met. This legislation set minimum and maximum sizes for portions as well as orientation and boundary proportions. Selection could also take place prior to survey. The intention of this legislation was to allow access to land on fair and easy terms and promote closer settlement throughout the colony. Despite these intentions, the legislation failed in that loopholes and indiscriminate practices allowed the original landholders to maintain control of much of their original ‘runs’ (Carter 1994: 21). By 1874 “… desert farms are everywhere visible to the traveller …” (Jeans 1972: 213). Nevertheless, the policy of closer settlement continued and by the 1890s large land holdings had gradually given way to a myriad of smaller farms. As a result of World War I, the first half of the twentieth century saw Soldier Settlement land programs in place throughout Australia.

The modern landscape not only reflects a sequence of occupation and activity through a number of phases of ownership, improved technology and changing farm management practices, but evidence of the legislative and administrative controls governing alienation and land use.

6.3 Exploration and Pioneers

The first Europeans to enter the Bega area were the shipwrecked sailors of the Sydney Cove who walked from Point Hicks to Wattamolla Bay, near Sydney. In February 1797 the Sydney Cove, an East India Company ship captained by Gavin Hamilton and en route from Calcutta, was wrecked at Preservation Island after developing a leak while rounding Tasmania. A longboat crew then set out for Sydney but was subsequently wrecked at Port Hicks. They continued their journey on foot and in the course of their travels passed through the local region. Upon arrival in Sydney in May 1797 they reported the discovery of a large double bay and flat plains where the natives were friendly. This in turn prompted Surveyor George Bass to undertake a journey south to investigate their claims. He set out in a whale boat called Elizabeth, and his accounts indicate that in the course of his explorations he made his way up a river at Barmouth Creek, which has often been interpreted to be the mouth of the Bega River at Tathra (Bayley 1942; Codrington 1979; DPWNSW, CEB 1980). Nonetheless, the
descriptions of the location and nature of the creek indicate that it was not the Bega River but rather the Pambula River that he sailed up (Evans 1987). During the same journey Bass also inspected Twofolds Bay and noted its considerable advantages as a suitable seaport. It was not however for another thirty years that European settlers would make significant inroads into the region.

In the late 1820s the Bega area was occupied by squatters who made an overland traverse from the Monaro via Cobargo. The area was perceived to be fertile and suitable for agriculture. The country was undulating, sparsely treeed, blanketed in long grass and well watered (Bayley 1942). It is highly probable that the vegetation structure which existed at the time of initial European contact was a result of Aboriginal land management practices. Early commentators also remarked upon the abundance of emus, kangaroos, koalas and ‘wild fowl’, which then provided both Aboriginal and Europeans with food, but now, are largely absent from the region.

Overall, settlement south of Wollongong was more sporadic than that to the north. Within the limits of location title to land was allowed in lots of 640 acres to one square mile. Beyond the limits squatters rights were allowed. Initially the north bank of the Clyde River was the southern boundary of the limits of location. In 1827 to 1828 surveyors were sent south of the Clyde River; the region around Moruya was explored and surveyed from Braidwood across and along the Deua/Moruya River and from Batemans Bay south. As a result of these surveys the limits of location were moved in 1828 to the north bank of the Moruya River (Magee 2006: 4-5).

Cattle were brought into the district in 1830 at which time conflict between Aboriginal people and the cattlemen and their stockmen is recorded to have occurred (Bayley 1942). By the early 1830s land on the Monaro and both to the south and north of Bega was occupied by squatters and their cattle. As elsewhere, the first squatters to arrive took up the best land in terms of its fertility and proximity to water. This land would also have been favoured land occupied by Aboriginal people. By 1834 Governor Bourke upon visiting the district reported that the use of the land was already contributing significantly to the wealth of the colony (Bayley 1942).

As drought tightened its grip across southern New South Wales in 1829 William Duggan Tarlinton, a farmer from the Braidwood district, went in search of new lands and found a route through Yowrie to present day Cobargo. Following on from this discovery he set out again that year with John Campbell, Harry Badgery and Thomas Cowper, and together they pushed south from Cobargo and set up squattages in the Bega Valley; Cowper and Badgery then settled there in 1833 (Codrington 1979; DPWNSW, CEB 1980). At that time the Bega valley was outside the limits of location of the Nineteen Counties, and as such was regarded fair game for squatting to whoever ventured there to claim land. Roads out of the valley consisted simply of rough bridle tracks over the mountains to Braidwood (Codrington 1979).

Following the droughts of 1833 there were increasing numbers of settlers from the Braidwood district who made their way to the coast in search of land. Among them were the well-known families such as Erington and Tarlinton, who established runs near Cobargo. In time the number of squatters increased, by 1835 there were the Imlays at Warragaburra and then Yarranning, Walkers at Warragaburra and Kameruka, Lyntott at Double Creek and Polacks at Brogo. During the 1830s and 1840s the Imlay brothers held properties which extended from Bittangabee, south of Eden, to the Murrah and Cobargo (Wellings (1966: 6). During the Imlays occupation of the area, cattle, sheep and fine horses were bred and exported to other Australian settlements, and as well, to New Zealand and England. Fruit and vegetables were also produced in abundance and shipped elsewhere.

Under Governor Gipps’ Imperial Wastelands Act of 1842 squatters had been allowed to take up ownership of one square mile around a constructed homestead south of the Moruya River and to lease additional land that would remain for later public auction. (Magee 2006: 10). As the County of Dampier was opened south of the river in 1848 there was increased conflict over rights to land (Gibbney 1989; Magee 2006). Settlement continued to grow over the following years and the township of Bega was surveyed by Samuel Parkinson in 1851, with the population initially settled on the north bank (DPWNSW, CEB 1980). Overall however the settlement was patchy due to the rugged nature of the local terrain. Even in 1850, some four years after the proclamation of the County of Auckland, from the Bega River south to the Victorian border, the settlement along the far south coast amounted to little more than occasional homesteads, shepherds huts, bridle tracks and stockyards (HO DUAP 1996).

In 1861 following the passing of Sir John Robertson’s Crown Lands Alienation Act and Crown Lands Occupation Act the Bega-Cobargo district was within the permissible areas of settlement and anyone could select between 16 and 130 hectares of land prior to survey by paying 25% of purchase and residing there for three years before paying the balance plus interest. This resulted in numerous new selectors and multiplying farm numbers across the district; it was during this period that most of the present dairies were selected and by the1870s there was a small dairy industry growing in the Valley with cheese production also developing (Codrington 1979). Dairying has been one of the key industries for the area, particularly cheese and butter production. Other important food production industries have included pigs, maize, sorghum and fishing (HODUAP 1996).
6.4 Mining

Prospecting and mining have been pursued up and down the coast since the 1850s. Gold and silver were the primary types of mining activities undertaken and there were reasonably substantial mining operations at locations such as Moruya, Nerrigundah, Tilba Tilba and Wolumla. Difficulties with access and processing of ore deposits were common and most of the mining activities had wound down by the early twentieth century (HO DUAP 1996).

The first report of gold in New South Wales was at Fish River between Rydal and Bathurst in 1823 by James McBrien, a Land Department Surveyor. At that time mining was not a priority for the colony, however following the emigration of settlers to the gold rush in California in 1849 the government realised the need to identify substantial gold deposits at home to reverse the migration. A reward was offered for the discovery of payable gold and in April 1851, John Lister and William Tom made the first report of payable gold at the junction of Lewis Ponds and Summer Hill Creeks, Ophir near Bathurst. Thus began the Australian gold rush which provided the first impetus for substantial growth in the country, and within the next ten years population grew in New South Wales from 197,265 to 350,860. The gold rush also affected demography with a substantial increase in non-Anglo immigrants such as those from Germany, France, America, and China. Initial finds were alluvial deposits, although with time reef gold was also identified and mined. From 1851 to 1948 New South Wales contributed 8.5% of Australia’s gold production (Department of Mineral Resources 1994: 3-4).

Alexander Waddell, a tenant farmer, and Henry Hicken, a blacksmith, left Moruya for the Ophir goldrush in 1851. They returned empty-handed, however having noted the similarities in soils at Ophir to those in the Moruya region they began prospecting along the Moruya River on Sundays. Through their Sunday expeditions they discovered gold on Sweeney’s Flat near the junction of the Deua and Araluen rivers and reported it to the Colonial Secretary on 1st August 1851, which in turn led to the discovery of the Araluen goldfields, which remained active for about 60 years. Araluen was one of three main gold fields in Australia. Estimates suggest that there were between 3,000 and 15,000 people working at Araluen and that at is peak there were 39 hotels. The shallow workings were soon exhausted and machinery was brought in to work to a depth of 60 feet. Dredging between 1905 and 1925 produced 4000 ounces but was eventually stopped due to the cost of overheads (Gibbney 1989: 52; Magee 2006: 16; Moruya and District Historical Society 1979: 2-3).

Other gold finds in the region included Mt Gulaga in 1853, Mogo in 1858, Merricumbene in 1859 and Nerrigundah in 1861 (Gibbney 1989: 57). Mining at the Bimbimbie gold fields at Mogo continued for over fifty years. There is a reference in the Sydney Morning Herald on 25th August 1857 to 20 to 30 diggings at Bimbimbie, while in 1871 there is said to have been 40 to 50 men working the diggings. In 1902 the crusher there failed due to a lack of water and by 1913 the mines had closed due to a lack of funds (Moruya and District Historical Society 1979: 3). Nerrigundah, which was commonly referred to as The Gulph, was probably the largest field on the far south coast. It was discovered in 1851 when the area was initially identified by John Hawdon, it was not officially reported though until 1861. By this time there were already some 200 to 300 diggers and an accompanying township had been established. (Moruya and District Historical Society 1979: 4)

Gold at the bigger fields, such as Nerrigundah and Araluen, was largely played out by the end of the nineteenth century (Magee 2006: 16). Mining at some of the smaller fields however continued on and off well into the twentieth century.

6.5 Dairying

The dairy industry is an important part of the history and heritage of the far South Coast, and there are numerous empty, dilapidated and ruined dairy buildings across the region that pay testimony to the industry that once flourished at both small and large scales. Initially cattle were bred primarily for beef and the 1840s saw a stock supply that exceeded demand with cattle subsequently being boiled down for tallow, with tallow and hides becoming the main export aims of the local pastoral industry (Codrington 1979).

In the mid 1860s there was an outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia in cattle, which significantly reduced the numbers of beef cattle in the area. Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, a notable pastoralist based at Bodalla, replaced his lost beef stock with dairy cattle and took control of the breeding program undertaken by his tenants. It was then in the 1870s that the cattle characteristic of the South Coast, such as the Illawarra Shorthorn, Friesians and Jerseys, were introduced at Comerang and Bodalla. A similar shift to dairying took place at Kameruka in the late 1870s and Robert Lucas Tooth introduced new equipment such as the Babcock tester (Codrington 1979; DPWNSW, CEB 1980).

Following technological innovations such as refrigerated shipping, centrifugal cream separation and the Babcock tester in the 1880s the dairy industry continued to grow and co-operative dairies became more common. The popularity of dairying was also increased by the end of the drought in 1886. During the late 1890s more and more private dairies were established and the cheese and butter production really developed as
a whole. Soon there were substantial dairy factories and creameries established, a number of which operated as co-operatives. By 1902 there were 162 farmers supplying cooperatives in the Bega Valley, who in turn provided over half of the cheese in New South Wales. Most of these early factories no longer exist as they were replaced by brick and concrete buildings in response to the regulations of the Dairy Industry Act of 1915. By 1904 Tooth was running a total of fourteen dairy farms in the Bega-Bemboka valley. As dairying became more popular large milking sheds were built and experiments were undertaken with different blends of milk to improve butter and cheese quality (HO DUAP 1996).

The twentieth century has seen further technological developments such as milking machines but it has also seen obstacles such as drought, flooding and competition from other Australian dairying regions. While dairying continues to be an important part of the local economy many of the smaller dairies have closed down over the last half a century or so (Codrington 1979; DPWNSW, CEB 1980). By 1942 there were only seven cheese factories left, three of which were co-operatives (HO DUAP 1996).

An offshoot from dairying was the use of whey to fatten pigs and a bacon factory was built by Mort at Bodalla in 1873. Following Mort’s death in 1878 his holdings were subdivided into thirteen leasehold farms with the cheese and bacon factories remaining with the family (HO DUAP 1996).

6.6 Timber Getting

Timber-getting has always been an important component of the South Coast industry. Timber has been vital for construction of buildings, fences, bridges, wharves, mines and so forth. It was not until the late nineteenth century however that the industry formally developed as contracts were obtained to supply railway sleepers. Sleeper getting then became the primary form of logging on the South Coast (HO DUAP 1996). The establishment of mills from the 1870s onwards attracted timber cutters and carters to the area; the transport of logs on timber jinkers subsequently had a heavy toll on the local roads well into the early twentieth century (Gibbney 1989).

6.7 Roads and Transport

Due to the nature of the local topography, with creeks and rivers dissecting through some quite mountainous terrain, coastal shipping proved to be one of the best means of communication and transport for the South Coast and its hinterland. A local railway was not built along the south coast; instead long distance transport was reliant on the steamer services from Eden, Merimbula and Bermagui through to Sydney (HO DUAP 1996).

The road route from Wollongong to Eden was established by 1858, at which time it appeared on the Post Office Department Map for the area. Nevertheless, it would appear that the route at the time comprised relatively rough roads and tracks that often proved impassable due to flooding. “The Main South Road” was declared through the Local Government Extension Act of 1906; this road corresponded approximately to that of the existing Princes Highway. During these early days however, the local councils struggled with the upkeep of the road (RTA 2009).

Following the official opening and naming of the Princes highway in 1920 the route was proclaimed a State Highway under the Main Roads Act in 1928, which meant that it fell under the jurisdiction of the Main Roads Board cum Department of Main Roads. From 1925 onwards the State was focused on improving roads to deal with the high speed automobiles that were becoming increasingly popular. Between 1932 and 1939 works were undertaken to improve the highway between Nowra and Batemans Bay, which included numerous deviations and 22 concrete bridges. The focus then shifted to the road south from Batemans Bay to the Victorian border. Work on the road between Batemans Bay and Mogo were interrupted however by World War II, with a recommencement of works in 1946 (RTA 2009).

From the 1930s onwards tourism played an increasingly important role in the development of Narooma and Bermagui, which in turn increased pressure for improvements to local roads. The increase in tourism was thus paralleled by improvements to the Princes Highway and the growth in the use of private motor vehicles. While game fishing has also encouraged the development of such tourism, commercial fishing has also had a significant impact on local economies and trade networks (RTA 2009).

6.8 Dignams Creek

The Dignams Creek study area is located on the boundary of the Noorooma and Narira Parishes in the County of Dampier, with the creek itself forming the boundary between the two. Similarly, the creek forms the boundary between the Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Shires.

Parish Maps

Some of the earliest records available for Dignams Creek are the parish maps for the Noorooma and Narira Parishes (Figures 3 and 4). These maps show that by the 1890s the Salways had selected a series of portions of land along the creek and that W. Penrith had selected land at the eastern end of the study area (Figure 5). The
Noorooma Parish Map also clearly shows the location of a travelling stock reserve referred to as R5 and a small water reserve on the northern banks of the creek.

Figure 3. Extract from the 3rd edition Noorooma Parish Map ca. 1888 (Department of Lands).

Figure 4. Extract from the 2nd edition Narira Parish Map c. 1895 (Department of Lands).
Figure 5. Extract from the 4th edition Noorooma Parish Map ca. 1898 (Department of Lands). Red line marks the approximate location of the northeast section of the study area which was surveyed in 2009. Yellow dotted line marks original alignment of the highway, blue dotted line marks an additional road loop in the vicinity of the first school.

Figure 6. Extract from the 2nd edition Narira Parish Map ca. 1895 (Department of Lands). Red line marks the approximate location of the southwest section of the study area surveyed in 2010. The alignment of the road at this time is shown.
Figure 7. Extract from the 10th edition Noorooma Parish Map c. 1935-1949 (Department of Lands). Green line shows the original highway alignment, blue line marks the second phase and the purple line marks the highway alignment established during the 1930s-1940s.

The 1898 map (Figure 5) shows that while the highway alignment still essentially followed the same route as that depicted on the 1888 map, an additional loop of road and some duplication of the highway had been added on the northern side of the creek. This loop appears to be an access route for the first public school at Dignams Creek (see below). Part of his loop eventually became the highway alignment (Figure 6), which has continued more or less unchanged until the present day. The 10th edition parish map is perhaps the most informative with regard to changes in the alignment of the Princes Highway. On this particular edition, which dates to the period 1935-1949, there are three main phases that can be discerned. These three phases are highlighted in Figure 7, where the green line shows the original highway alignment, the blue line marks the second phase that dates to the turn of the century and the purple line marks the highway alignment established during the 1930s-1940s. Additional information of note that can be gleaned from these parish maps is the location of the second Dignams Creek Public School, which appears for the first time on the 5th edition Narira Parish map, which dates to ca.1926 (Figure 8).
Dignams Creek School
The original Dignam’s Creek School opened in March 1877, at which time it operated as a half time school with Tilba Tilba. The first school was located on the northern side of the creek near the cutting past the Dignam’s Creek bridge. The school was then moved in 1916 to the southern side of the creek, where pine trees still mark the site (Anon. 1996).

By 1881 enrolments had increased sufficiently to enable the school to be classified as a public school, which required a minimum enrolment of 25 students. It briefly operated again as a half time school between July 1889 and July 1890. It again operated as a half-time school between December 1907 and February 1909, at which time it was combined with Illawambra. The school then had provisional status again until August 1923. There are no records for the school from August 1933 until July 1936, during which time it is assumed that the school was closed. It operated as a half-time school in 1936, then in 1937, following the closure of the Fox Hill School, it became a provisional school once again (Anon. 1996).

Dorothy Lament (nee Went) recalls attending the school in the 1930s, when the school was accessed by a gravel path bordered by flowers, leading up from the road under two arches covered in vines (Anon. 1996: 194). Mr Frank O’Neill was appointed to the school in March 1938 and worked there until October 1942, when the school was closed and moved to Wandella. He recalled cycling from Cobargo to Dignam’s Creek on the rough gravel road, which was often corrugated. He also recalled that the Parents and Citizens Association built the tennis court at Dignams Creek in the first year of his appointment. During his appointment the Main Roads Board had numerous local men employed on the widening and realignment of the road between Tilba and Brogo. The administration centre for those works was at Dignam’s Creek and half the enrolments were the children of men working on the roads. The remainder comprised children of local dairy farmers (Anon 1996: 196-199).

Dignams Creek Bridge
The existing bridge at Dignams Creek is a reinforced concrete beam bridge that complied with the Department of Main Roads construction standards for the 1930s, which were designed to tackle the new needs of motorised transport (i.e. wider and stronger bridges). The bridge was built in 1935 to replace the timber truss bridge that had been washed away in the floods of January and February 1934; only one abutment and one span was left standing. Following the flood planning began for a new bridge and in the meantime a by-track was established; this temporary crossing was inadequate for the traffic in the local area and within a year the new concrete bridge was completed (RTA 2009). There are no maintenance records for the bridge from 1935 to 1975 however the steel pipe handrail was replaced by a standard guardrail in 1982. Otherwise the bridge has been found to be in satisfactory condition (RTA 2009).
The timber bridge (Plate 1) that was washed away in 1934 was a McDonald Truss bridge built in ca. 1890 (RTA 1998). This style of bridge was designed by John A. McDonald, who was the Engineer for Bridges with the Public Works Department between 1889 to 1893 (RTA 1998: 41). Jim Russack (Pers. Comm.), who has spent much of his life at Dignams Creek, relates a story of George Searle using his horses to pull out the remaining timbers of the bridge following the floods in 1934. He also suggests that there was some form of ford that predated the timber bridge and that as far as he knows the existing bridge is in the same location as the truss bridge it replaced.

Plate 1. Dignams Creek Bridge, built circa 1890 (Mitchell Library: BCP 02271). This photo presumably dates to around the turn of the century as it predates the Memorial Hall that was built after World War I. Note the houses visible above the road to the right and the partially hidden structures in the central distance that relate to the first school site.

Additional information regarding the Dignams Creek Bridge and the associated sections of the Princes Highway are shown in Figure 9, which shows part of a plan that was approved in 1936. This plan details various phases of changes to the road including the existence of an older crossing point to the west of the existing bridge. This alignment is echoed on the southern side by the remains of an old post and rail fence. Additional evidence for such a road can be seen in Plate 1, where traces of a track are shown leading to the southwest off the road opposite the house. This older crossing was presumably that which the timber truss bridge replaced, which is depicted in the 1887 plans of Mrs G. Salway’s properties (Figure 10). In that plan the road borders the eastern edge of the water reserve and is depicted as simply a ‘crossing’ at the creek angling to the southeast to join with the road alignment on the opposite side.

Dignams Creek Memorial Hall
The hall at Dignams Creek was initially built as a war memorial commemorating World War I (Plate 2). There was a plaque at the hall commemorating the names of locals who had served in the wars. When the hall was dismantled in 1978 that plaque was removed to Cobargo. The Memorial Hall was also used as a community hall for dances and as a polling booth for elections and there was reportedly a hut on the southern side of the hall. During its final years of use the hall was rented by the Prettys to store seed. When the hall was eventually dismantled it was a communal effort by various families in the district with those who participated keeping the materials retrieved (J. Russack and B. Pretty, personal communication).
Figure 9. Plan (approved 1936) of the proposed variations to the road alignments at Dignams Creek.
Portion 246

The land currently owned by the Prettys (purchased in 1953) includes Portion 246 on the northern side of the creek and to the east of the Princes Highway. This land was originally selected by the Salway family in the late 1800s and is shown as part of that family’s holdings in 1887 (Figure 10). The photo of the original Dignams Creek Bridge (Plate 1) shows a residence on this property that was located adjacent the road. The building at the rear was reportedly built ca. 1870, which was around the time that it was originally settled (B. Pretty, personal communication, January 2008). It was selected by George Salway and a slab house was constructed on the land. The house was built with hand split joists and slabs and later clad in weatherboard (J. Russack, personal communication, January 2009). An additional slab building was built adjacent at the turn of the century; this building had a corrugated iron roof (B. Pretty, personal communication, January 2008). Both buildings are visible in the photo of the truss bridge, which tends to confirm that the photograph dates to the turn of the century. Both structures also appear on the road plans from 1936 (Figure 9), which indicate that the
Princes Highway Upgrade - Dignams Creek, near Cobargo, NSW - Historical Heritage

building closest to the road was the larger of the two. This is confirmed by the recollections of Jim Russack, who lived in the house from 1964 to 1967. He recalls a building behind the house that he described as a shed, which was also referred to as the ‘gunya’. When the Russacks first moved to Dignams Creek in 1949, Henry Salway, a corn grower who also ran a mill, was living in the house on Portion 246 (J. Russack, personal communication, January 2009). At that time the Russack family moved into the old post office building on the Glencoe property to the east of Portion 246. The post office at Glencoe had ceased operation by this time and postal services were being conducted from an alternate location (EJE 1997). Barbara and Vernon Pretty recall that when they arrived in the district in 1953 the house on Portion 246 had been operating as the post office and that this service was subsequently moved to the Russell’s property (B. and V. Pretty, personal communication, January 2009).

The house itself was home to various families over the years. In addition to Henry Salway and Jim Russack, it was occupied by the Gannons, Baylitz family and the Waklings. The Baylitz family were bean growers who lived there during the 1940s. They then sold the place on to the Waklings, who were the first seed growers at Dignams Creek. Jim and his family were the last ones to live in the house. After they moved out the house was dismantled and moved to Brogo and the area as a whole was ‘cleaned up’ (J. Russack, personal communication, January 2009).

In addition to the slab buildings there was a large depression to the west of the house that was referred to by the Russack’s as the ‘Bear Pit’. This feature measured around 2’ deep and 4’ wide and was thought to potentially have been an old toilet pit or well. To the east of the house there was a machinery shed and dairy and a series of silage pits. One of the silage pits was a drive through pit and the remainder could be driven into but not through; they have all since been filled in. The remains of the dairy were also pulled down when the place was cleaned up and the flagstones were removed and reused elsewhere; the machinery shed blew down and the area similarly cleaned up (B. Pretty, personal communication, January 2009).

Agriculture/Industry at Dignams Creek

According to local oral history there were a number of different agricultural and industrial activities that took place in and around Dignams Creek. Sleeper extraction and dairying were the main industries up until the 1950s. Around which time the farms began to diversify with beans and grain grown for private and commercial purposes (J. Russack, personal communication, January 2009).

In terms of timber getting there was an old timber mill site located up past where the Paynes used to be (c.500m up Dignams Creek Road). This mill was built by Warren Monk and Bill Donnelly and was steam driven. It was associated with the first logging in the area after the sleeper getting period. The next phase of logging was for pulp wood and it took place around the 1950s (J. Russack, personal communication, January 2009).

There were various dairies at Dignams Creek including one at Glencoe, the Pretty’s, the Kotvois’s and the Russell’s. The Glencoe dairy was leased and run for a time by Tom Carney, who had the cream run for Dignams Creek, which was in operation up until about 1948. The dairy was certainly out of operation when the Russacks moved to Dignams Creek and all dairying had effectively stopped by the 1950s (J. Russack, personal communication, January 2009).

Much of the commercial bean growing in the area was to produce seeds, partly because the district was relatively disease free and thus produced high quality seeds. Of note was the fact that a hybrid mare seed was grown at the Glencoe property and there was a seed cleaning plant at Bodalla. There was also a formal Dignams Creek seed producers group that was associated with the Bega group, with seeds produced between 1950 and 1957. The Prettys however continued to grow beans on their property and did so up until around the 1980s.
7. PREVIOUS HERITAGE LISTINGS

7.1 Heritage Database Site Searches

Searches have been conducted for previous heritage listings in and around the Dignams Creek study area; these searches have included all of the relevant heritage registers for items of local through to world significance. Details of these searches are provided below.

*Australian Heritage Database*

This database contains information about more than 20,000 natural, historic and Indigenous places. The database includes places in:

- the World Heritage List
- the National Heritage List
- the Commonwealth Heritage list
- the Register of the National Estate

and places under consideration for any one of these lists. A search of this database (January 2009) revealed that there are no items listed as being in or adjacent the Dignams Creek study area.

*State Heritage Inventory*

The **NSW Heritage Databases** contain over 20,000 statutorily-listed heritage items in New South Wales. This includes items protected by heritage schedules to local environmental plans (LEPs), regional environmental plans (REPs) or by the State Heritage Register.

The information is supplied by local councils and State agencies and includes basic identification details and listing information. Consequently listings should be confirmed with the responsible agency.

A search of this database (5 January 2009) revealed that there are two items listed at Dignams Creek, details of these items are provided in Table 1 below. It should be noted that neither of these items are located within the proposal area at Dignams Creek. The post office referred to is that at Glencoe, which is on the Russack property and is located outside the study area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottin Family Graves</td>
<td>Morts Folly Road</td>
<td>Dignams Creek</td>
<td>Eurobodalla</td>
<td>Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dignams Creek Post Office (Former)</td>
<td>9473 Princes Highway</td>
<td>Dignams Creek</td>
<td>Eurobodalla</td>
<td>Local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. State Heritage Inventory search results

*National Trust of Australia (NSW) Register*

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) is a non-government Community Organisation which promotes the conservation of both the built and natural heritage (for example, buildings, bushland, cemeteries, scenic landscapes, rare and endangered flora and fauna, and steam engines may all have heritage value). The Trust has approximately 30,000 members in New South Wales.

Following its survey and assessment of the natural and cultural environment, the Trust maintains a Register of landscapes, townscapes, buildings, industrial sites, cemeteries and other items or places which the Trust determines to have heritage significance and are worthy of conservation. Currently there are some 11,000 items listed on the Trust’s Register. They are said to be ‘Classified’.

The Trust’s Register is intended to perform an advisory and educational role. The listing in the Register has no legal force. However, it is widely recognised as an authoritative statement of the heritage significance of a place. The Trust does not have any control over the development or demolition of the Classified Places or Items in its Register.

While the National Trust Register does not provide any statutory obligations for protection of a site as such, the acknowledgment of a place being listed on the Register as a significant site lends weight to its heritage value. Also, the fact that the actual data for sites may be minimal does not diminish the significance of a place. In fact, many sites were listed with only basic data added, especially in the early developmental stages of the Register.

The Trust, over the last few years has been upgrading the information for places listed, with criteria for assessment for listing based on the Australian Heritage Commission Criteria of assessment for entry to the
Register of the National Estate. A search of the National Trust of Australia (NSW) Register (19 January 2009) revealed that there are no items that are listed as being present in or adjacent the Dignams Creek study area.

**RTA Heritage and Conservation Register**

The RTA Heritage and Conservation Register is established in accordance with Section 170 of the Heritage Act, 1977 to record all the heritage items in the ownership or under the control of the RTA. The RTA Heritage and Conservation Register has two main roles:

- To meet the RTA's statutory requirements
- As an essential tool in total asset management, by listing and providing information on those RTA assets which have heritage significance.

Information in the Register has been prepared according to NSW Heritage Office guidelines and corresponds with information in the State Heritage Inventory, maintained by the NSW Heritage Office. A search of the RTA Heritage and Conservation Register (5 January 2009) revealed that the Dignams Creek Bridge is listed under Section 170 of the Heritage Act, 1977. A summary of this listing is provided below. Full details of the site card can be found in Appendix 1.

**Dignams Creek Bridge – Item Number 4309630, Princes Highway, near Cobargo 2550.**

The bridge has historic, aesthetic and technical significance locally, and is an excellent representative example of concrete beam bridge construction on the South Coast of NSW. It is one of a group of bridges, including Victoria Creek and Wonboyn River bridges, that were constructed in response to the urgent need occasioned by the destruction of earlier timber bridges by flood. The bridge and its site help to demonstrate the difficulties of maintaining transport links on the South Coast through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and in response to environmental conditions. Since its construction in 1935, this robust and high level bridge has provided reliable service, demonstrating the enduring value of the design and construction standards developed in the 1930s. With the other bridges built under similar circumstances in the area, the Dignams Creek Bridge essentially determined the alignment of the present Princes Highway, having been built before the DMR's program of road improvement reached this area. The bridge is a visually pleasing and neatly constructed structure of impressive size and constitutes an excellent example of the concrete beam bridge form of the 1925-1948 period (RTA 2009).

7.2 Historical Themes

A historical theme is a way of describing a major historical event or process that has contributed to the history of NSW. Historical themes provide the background context within which the heritage significance of an item can be understood. Themes have been developed at National and State levels, but corresponding regional and local themes can also be developed to reflect a more relevant historical context for particular areas or items.

In the table below (Table 2) there is a summary of themes that are applicable to the Dignams Creek proposal area and surrounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Australian Theme</strong></th>
<th><strong>NSW Theme</strong></th>
<th><strong>Local Theme</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peopling Australia</td>
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Table 2. National, state and local historical themes that are applicable to the study area and surrounds.
7.3 Predictive Statements

While the table above lists a wide variety of themes that are important contextually to the history and heritage of the Dignams Creek proposal area, the themes of direct relevance to this project can be broken down into the following broad categories:

- Agriculture/Pastoralism
- Domestic life
- Transport/Communications
- Social Institutions

Agriculture/Pastoralism

Dignams Creek appears to have first seen concentrated agricultural settlement from the 1860s onwards. The primary landowner within the study area during the late nineteenth century was the Salway family, who ran a dairy on Portion 246 and grew various crops including corn.

There is a high potential within the study area for heritage items associated with agriculture and pastoralism, particularly in the paddocks on the northern side of the creek and to the east of the existing highway. Examples of items that are likely to occur include fence posts, post holes and other evidence of portion boundaries and paddocks; dairies, yards and sheds or traces thereof; silage pits; domestic dwellings (see below) and pieces of farm machinery. Other elements of the pastoral landscape that might be evidenced include tree plantings and ploughlands.

Given the extent of subsequent disturbance from the removal of structures and cleaning up of such sites and, the effects of flooding over the paddocks adjacent the creek, there is only limited potential for in situ archaeological remains associated with this theme.

Domestic Life

The study area and in particular Portion 246 has been the focus of domestic life for around 100 years (circa 1870s-1970). Two slab houses were built adjacent the road on Portion 246, the first was a smaller building constructed c.1870 and the second was a larger structure with a corrugated iron roof that was built around the turn of the century. Both buildings are visible on the turn of the century photographs of Dignams Creek and both were dismantled and removed in 1978/79 (V. Pretty, personal communication, January 2009).

While there is a high potential for remains such as artefacts, structural elements, gardens and so forth associated with this domestic site, given the fact that the buildings have been removed and the site cleaned up there is only limited potential for in situ archaeological remains associated with this theme.

Transport/Communications

Perhaps the most important historical theme with regard to the Dignams Creek study area is that of transport. A major road alignment that has been in use for around 150 years or more passes directly through the proposal area and there are various ancillary roads that lead off this to join up with Bermagui, Nerrigundah and Mount Dromedary. As such, there is a high potential for heritage items and or archaeological remains associated with this theme.

Potential items that might be present include road cuttings, bridges, culverts, drainage channels, other earth works, road markers and signs and old cars and carts. Given the extent of road maintenance and upgrade works and agricultural activity in the area, the potential for relatively undisturbed sites is variable. Nonetheless, moderate to high potential remains for relatively well preserved sections of the old road alignments to exist.

The theme of communications and in particular postal services are also closely linked to the Dignams Creek study area. It appears that various locations served as the local post office over the years, including the above-mentioned house on Portion 246. As discussed above, there is only limited potential for archaeological remains associated with this structure.

Social Institutions

The theme of social institutions appears to be well attested to within the Dignams Creek study area. In particular there are the sites of the two public schools and that of the community hall that are documented in the local history. None of these buildings remain extant but there is still moderate to high potential for archaeological evidence such as structural remains and/or artefactual evidence to be present for these sites.

Given the extent of subsequent disturbance from the removal of structures and cleaning up of such sites and, potential disturbance associated with changes in the road alignment, there is only limited potential for in situ archaeological remains associated with this theme.
Summary

It is worth noting that the available history for Dignams Creek as a whole and the study area in particular is relatively sparse. Accordingly, the predictive statements provided above, are only a guide to the most probable forms of heritage that might occur or be otherwise evidenced within the proposal area. As is always the case with historical archaeology, there is also a possibility that field survey might result in the identification of new themes that are presently unaccounted for in the historical sources.
8. SURVEY RESULTS

8.1 Survey Overview

There is one previously recorded heritage item within the study area at Dignams Creek. The item in question is the Dignams Creek Bridge, which is listed on the RTA Heritage and Conservation Register. A total of ten other potential heritage items were identified during the survey, these items comprise the following:

- The old Princes Highway, including road alignments, culverts, drainage channels and bridge remains: northeast section (recorded during the 2009 field survey)
- The old Bermagui Road
- The site of the first public school at Dignams Creek
- Remains of the second public school at Dignams Creek
- The site of the Dignams Creek community hall/war memorial
- Remains of a private residence/post office
- The site of an associated dairy and machinery shed
- Silage pits
- Remains of a secondary creek crossing and associated road alignment
- The old Princes Highway, including road alignments, culverts and drainage channel remains, in the southwest section of the proposal area (recorded during the 2010 field survey)

8.2 Heritage Item Descriptions

Below are descriptions, GPS locations and photographs relevant to the ten items recorded in the study area at Dignams Creek. For ease of reference each site has been assigned a code (e.g. DC1 – Dignams Creek 1). The location of each item and parts thereof are shown in Figures 11, 12, 13 and 14.

Dignams Creek 1 – Dignams Creek Bridge (RTA Heritage Item Number: 4309630)

WGS 84 GPS Coordinates: 767988E 5972548N

This is a reinforced concrete beam bridge that was constructed in 1935 in response to the urgent need for a bridge to replace the timber truss bridge that had been washed away by the floods in 1934 (RTA 2009). The bridge is a relatively high level crossing that comprises five spans (Plate 3). The deck of the bridge has two end spans and three central spans that are continuous. The piers each consist of two columns with cross beams at low and headstock level. The abutments are also of concrete with vertical faces and return walls, with pier -like corner posts (for additional information refer to Appendix 1).

The only major alteration to the bridge since its construction appears to be the guardrail, which was fitted in 1982 to replace the steel pipe hand railing that was originally installed (RTA 2009). The bridge appears to be in good condition and is a good example of its type.

Plate 3. Dignams Creek Bridge, looking north (Extract from RTA 2009).
Figure 11. Aerial overview of site locations (Google Earth 2009).
Dignams Creek 2 – Old Princes Highway: road, culverts, drainage channels and bridge remains: northeast section as recorded in 2009 field survey.

WGS 84 GPS Coordinates: 767530E 5972389N – 230850E 5973191N

The Main South Coast Road, which later became the Princes Highway, has undergone a series of changes to the road alignment within the study area at Dignams Creek. The result of these various modifications is that traces of older road alignments, including both the highway and ancillary roads, are evidenced by road cuttings, associated drainage channels and bridge and culvert remains. An overview of these works, including the location of Dignams Creek 3 is provided in Figure 12.

In the south of the northeast part of the old road alignment, on the northwestern side of the existing highway (Plate 4), the alignment extends between 767530e 5972389n and 767568e and 5972419n. This section of road is about 8-10 metres west of the current highway; it is approximately 7 metres wide and is cut in between 30-60cm on both the eastern and western sides. The road is no longer in use and is heavily overgrown; it borders the edge of the site of the second Dignams Creek Public School (DC5).

Plate 4. Section of the old road alignment near the second Dignams Creek school site, facing southwest. Dotted lines mark the edges of the road cutting.

Immediately to the east of the existing Dignams Creek Bridge there are the remains of an older creek crossing. On the southern side (768004e 5972548n) there are the remains of a wooden pier just visible at the creek’s edge (Plate 5). The pier remains comprise the stumps of two posts and the two cross beams that braced the pier. On the opposite side of the creek (768040e 5972575n) the earthworks associated with the northern abutment for this bridge are still extant (Plate 6). Remains of the abutment are visible as a low earth ramp leading to the creek edge. There are no obvious signs of stonework or timber that might have formed the abutment itself.

Plate 5. Remains of the pier on the southern side of the creek, looking southwest.
Figure 12. Aerial overview of old road remains (Components of DC2 and DC3) locations in the northeast section of the proposal area, as recorded in 2009 (Google Earth 2009).
Plate 6. View to the south along the earthwork ramp of the old bridge abutment. Poplars at the southern end mark the approximate termination of the earthworks.

Based on the photo of the timber truss bridge at Dignams Creek (Plate 1) it appears that these could be the remains of that bridge. The earthworks on the northern side appear to be of similar dimensions to the ramp and abutment shown in Plate 6, while the low placement of the bottom cross beams on the southern pier fit with the pier remains described above. If these are the remains of that bridge it would appear that the majority of timbers from the southern pier have been lost and that the stonework from the southern and northern abutments have been removed or washed away; indeed there is no clear remaining evidence of the southern abutment. It is understood that the majority of the timber bridge was washed away and that the remnants of the bridge were largely removed prior to construction of the existing concrete bridge (RTA 2009; J. Russack, personal communication, January 2009). This would explain the limited extent of bridge remains, while the earthworks associated with the southern abutment for the existing bridge, which is less than ten metres to the west, would explain the absence of any remains of the original abutment. It is also possible that these remains relate to the temporary crossing that was established while the concrete bridge was being constructed. In either case, it appears on the basis of the aerial imagery that there are traces of an older road alignment to the east of the existing bridge (Figure 12).

Figure 7. Section of old road alignment adjacent the old school site (DC-4), looking southwest. Note camphor laurel tree marking location of DC7 and poplar trees at old bridge abutment.

Figure 8. Section of the old road cutting with adjacent drainage channel, looking southeast.
Sections of the old road alignment are visible to the northeast of the existing bridge, on the southern side of the highway. These include part of a road cutting (Plate 7 - 768077e 5972821n) adjacent the site of the first Dignams Creek Public School (DC4), that is visible intermittently for approximately 400m, up until the point that it is cut by the existing highway (768167e 5972845n). Another more substantial road cutting (Plate 8) winds around to the south from 768273e 5972766n to 768344e 5972706n; this section is cut approximately 1m in on the western side and there is a drainage channel that parallels the road a short distance to the west of the cutting. The road then appears to swing around to the north to 768386e 5972749n, however based on the evidence in the parish maps this section of road appears more likely to be part of an ancillary road from the north, rather than a section of the old Princes Highway.

Sections of the older road alignment continue along the southern side of the Princes Highway around towards the intersection with the old Bermagui Road (DC3). A couple of hundred metres to the west of this intersection there are traces of two road alignments parallel to one another. These are marked in Figure 12 as alignments A and B. Alignment A is a relatively shallow and ephemeral road cutting that appears to correspond to the earliest known alignment of the Main South Coast Road, while alignment B corresponds to a more substantial road cutting (up to 1m deep) with a drainage channel running around the upslope side. Alignment A becomes clearly visible around 768791e 5972803n, while alignment B appears to be a continuation of the cutting discussed above and can be clearly identified at 768744e 5972801n.

To the east of the intersection with the old Bermagui Road the old road alignment crosses a small creek where there are remains of the stone abutments for a small bridge (769063e 5972905n). This crossing is believed to have been burnt out in the fires of 1966/1967 (J. Russack, personal communication, January 2009); on the basis of the parish maps the current Princes Highway alignment would have been in use by this time.

The most northern sections of old road alignments extend along the northern side of the Princes Highway. Alignment A continues as a shallow cutting from 769094e 5973003n through 230778e 5973154n to 230838e 5973151n, where it rejoins the existing highway at the northern limits of the study area, adjacent the boundary of Gulaga National Park. Alignment B begins in approximately the same location and continues as a 6-7m wide cutting, cut in around 1m on the southern side and built up on the northern side; it has a drainage channel paralleling it on the southern side, similar to what was noted on other sections of road described above. The road extends around in a curve to 230850e 5973191n. There is a single concrete pipe culvert with an associated earth spear drain at 769124e 5973141n; the culvert has no formal headwalls.

Dignams Creek 3 – Old Bermagui Road

WGS 84 GPS Coordinates: 768891E 5972803N

Adjacent the driveway to the Russack property (9473 Princes Highway) and paralleling their western boundary there is a section of the old Bermagui Road that is visible as a 1m deep and 6m wide road cutting that leads down through the R5 Travelling Stock Reserve to Dignams Creek. This road used to extend across the creek and beyond to Bermagui and it was a major route for transporting pigs through from Eurobodalla to the port at Bermagui (J. Russack, personal communication, January 2009). The road had effectively gone out of use by sometime into the early twentieth century, Mr. Russack indicated that it was no longer in use by the time that motor vehicles began to use the highway.

Plate 9. Approximate location of the site of the first Dignams Creek Public School (DC4), looking southwest.
Dignams Creek 4 - The site of the first public school at Dignams Creek
WGS 84 GPS Coordinates: 768066E 5972825N – NB. Approximate location only – see below

The first Public School at Dignams Creek was on the northern side of the creek and operated from 1877 until 1916, when it was moved to the site on the southern side, adjacent Dignams Creek Road (Anon 1996). The approximate site of the first school is known from oral history and photographic evidence to have been on the crest at the eastern end of Portion 57, however the exact location is not clearly marked on any of the available maps. On the basis of the information contained in the available photographs from the turn of the century (Plates 1 and 15) and the traces of the old road alignment north of the house site on Portion 246, it would appear that the site has largely been destroyed by the existing alignment of the Princes Highway. That is, the road now cuts through where the school would once have stood. Nevertheless, there is a roughly level area of ground in this general location that may correspond to part of the school complex (Plate 9). Essentially though there are no clear structural or artefactual remains to evidence the school that once stood in this area.

Dignams Creek 5 - Remains of the second public school at Dignams Creek
WGS 84 GPS Coordinates: 767521E 5972443N

The second Public School at Dignams Creek operated between 1916 and 1942. It was situated at the junction of the Dignams Creek (Nerrigundah) Road and the Princes Highway (Main South Coast Road). The site of this school is now heavily overgrown, however there are traces of the school complex present in the form of tree plantings and a leveled area of earthworks.

At the junction of the Dignams Creek Road and the Princes Highway there is a section of old road (part of DC2) leading southwest along the western side of the highway. There is also a trace of an old pathway leading uphill to the west between two pine trees. This is presumably the remains of the path referred to by Dorothy Went (Anon 1996: 194). Beyond the path there is a single camphor laurel tree and a large earth platform. The platform measures approximately 30m x 15m. It is cut in ca. 50cm on the southern side and built up to a similar height on the northern, eastern and western sides (Plate 10). This feature is presumed to be the tennis court that was built by the P&C association in 1938 (Anon 1996: 197).

A further three pine trees are growing in a line just to the north of the platform and form a boundary between the old road and a roughly level area where the school house was presumably located (Plate 11). This location for the school appears to be confirmed by the available photographic evidence, which has the school situated slightly upslope of a row of at least three pine trees (Plate 12). It is unclear whether this photo was taken before or after the tennis court was built, however given the location of the pine trees behind the school it appears that the photograph was taken facing east and that the tennis court would have been situated further to the right.

While the site as a whole is quite overgrown with regenerating bushland, the site of the tennis court and the schoolhouse appear to be otherwise relatively undisturbed. There is good excavation potential across both areas, although it is likely that the school site would provide the greatest research potential in terms of structural and artefactual remains.

Plate 10. Site of the tennis court at DC5, looking northwest. Dotted line marks edge of the southern cutting for the platform.
Plate 11. General view of the Dignams Creek second Public School site (DC5), looking southwest, arrows mark locations of three of the remaining pine trees.


**Dignams Creek 6 - The site of the Dignams Creek Community Hall/War Memorial**

WGS 84 GPS Coordinates: 768022E 5972670N – NB. Approximate location only

The Dignams Creek Community Hall (Plate 2) was built following World War I and served as a war memorial with a roll of honour, and as a hall for community activities such as dances and polling booths. The hall was dismantled in 1978 and the materials from the building removed. The site of this structure is clearly shown on the 1938 plans for this section of the Princes Highway (Figure 9).

Today the location of the hall corresponds to a heavily modified area of land directly adjacent the Princes Highway (Plate 13). There is evidence of considerable mechanical disturbance and it appears that the location has been used on a regular basis as a storage area for road base and other materials associated with road construction and maintenance.

Given the extent of disturbance the site displays very low excavation potential.
Dignams Creek 7 - Remains of a private residence/post office, Portion 246
WGS 84 GPS Coordinates: 768074E 5972696N

Directly opposite the site of the old hall is the site of the residence on Portion 246. This is where the two slab/weatherboard buildings constructed by the Salways were located (Plate 1). Both buildings were dismantled around 1978-1979 during a clean up of the land by the current owners, the Prettys. As such, the site has undergone considerable disturbance associated with that process of cleaning up.

The location of the residence, which also served for a time as a post office, is marked today by a single camphor laurel tree (Plate 14). Immediately to the south of this there are traces of a possible building platform that is about 7m across and to the west there is a large shallow depression measuring ca. 2m across. It is presumed that the depression is the feature that was referred to as the ‘Bear Pit’, which may have been an old toilet or well, while the apparent platform may be the site of one of the slab structures.

Given the extent of disturbance at the site there is only limited excavation potential as a whole, however it is likely that the ‘Bear Pit’ feature has very good excavation potential.

Plate 13. General location of the Dignams Creek Community Hall (DC6), looking west.

Plate 14. Site of the residence on Portion 246 (DC7), looking north.
Dignams Creek 8 - The site of a dairy and machinery shed, Portion 246
WGS 84 GPS Coordinates: 768126E 5972687N – NB. Approximate location only

A short distance to the east of DC7 is the site of the old dairy and associated machinery shed (Plates 15 and 16). These buildings were dismantled and or fell down during the second half of the twentieth century. The materials from the buildings, including the flagged stone floor of the dairy, have subsequently been removed and the area has undergone a similar process of cleaning up to that which took place at the site of the old residence (DC7).

There are no obvious structural or artefactual remains present in this location and given the extent of disturbance associated with the cleaning up of the area there is only very limited excavation potential.

Plate 15. Photo of Dignams Creek, 1913 (Anon 1996: 194). Arrows from left to right mark locations of the first school, residence on Portion 246 and the associated sheds and dairy.

Plate 16. Approximate site of the dairy and machinery shed on Portion 246 (DC8), looking west towards the location of DC7 and DC6.
Dignams Creek 9 - Silage pits, Portion 246  
WGS 84 GPS Coordinates: 768172E 5972659N

Just over 50m to the southeast of DC8 there are a series of at least three filled in silage pits that are visible as subtle earthworks highlighted by long green grass (Plate 17). These are the silage pits referred to by Barbara Pretty.

There are no other structural or artefactual remains visible in this location. While there is some potential for excavation in terms of determining the dimensions of the pits, it is doubtful whether any other pertinent information might be obtained through such a course of action.

Plate 17. Location of the silage pits (DC9), looking south. Note the existing bridge in the distance on the right and the older road alignment adjacent to the left, marked by the poplars.

Dignams Creek 10 - Remains of a secondary creek crossing and associated road alignment  
WGS 84 GPS Coordinates: 768219E 5972474N

Leading southwards from DC10 there are ephemeral traces of an old road leading down to a creek crossing (Plate 18). The crossing appears to be at a natural fording point across Dignams Creek, while the associated road alignment appears to be part of a secondary track providing access between the northern and southern sides of the original Salway property.

There are no other structural or artefactual remains obvious in this location and the site displays very limited excavation potential.

Plate 18. General view of the creek crossing (DC10), looking south.
Dignams Creek 11 - Old Princes Highway: road, drainage diversion ditch and culvert: southwest section as recorded in 2010 field survey
WGS 84 GPS Coordinates: 767179E 5972016N – 767254E 5972045N

Dignams Creek 11 is a section of the Old Princes Highway with associated culvert and drainage diversion ditch located in the southwest section of the proposal area, south of the second school site (Figure 14). There are also two additional sections of track, at least one of which may have formed a component of the Old Princes Highway. These were recorded during the second field survey conducted in relation to refinements in the design of the proposed highway upgrade and are located in the southwest sector of the proposed realignment. As indicated in relation to Dignams Creek 2, over time the Old Princes Highway underwent changes to its alignment and this had resulted in a series of now disused road sections which include both the highway and ancillary roads. In the south western section of the study area the evidence of this is comprised of road cuttings, an associated drainage channel and the remains of a culvert.

The section of the Old Princes Highway that comprises one component of Dignams Creek 11 (Plate 19) runs for a distance of ca. 120 metres (Figure 14). Its northern most point is located at the very edge of the current highway, and thereafter it curves to the south where it terminates in an area of relatively recent mechanical disturbance. This disturbance may have occurred during the construction of the present highway. This portion of the former road has been cut and benched along a curved section of a simple slope landform. For most of its length a drainage diversion ditch is emplaced above this part of road (Plate 20).

Plate 19. View of the old Highway alignment (DC11), looking south.

On the western edge of this section of the Old Princes Highway, at 768185e 5972025n, is a stone culvert headwall (Plate 21: Figure 14). This is of dry stone construction, made from local metasedimentary rock, and is arranged in two sections that buttress either side of the drain which originally ran under the road. This drain is now exposed as a ditch in the former road. Each section of the headwall is slightly curved from a facing edge around into the drain aperture (Plate 22). This culvert is in reasonable condition, although trees are now growing in and around it. The remainder of this section of road has numerous trees recolonising it.

Two further tracks are located in the vicinity of the section of road detailed above. One section corresponds to a track which is marked on the current topographic map [Wandella 8825-2N 1: 25,000] (766934e 5971754n – 767091e 5971923n), and while presently blocked due to a series of tree falls, it appears to be the most recent track in use and does not have tree regrowth. It is possible, given its alignment, that the eastern section of this track was formerly an alignment of the old highway.

The third section of former track is located downslope below the portion of the old highway detailed above (767145e 5971921n – 767113e 5972092n). It is a straight stretch of track with regrowth trees along its length that appear to be of a similar age to those present in the nearby section of the Old Princes Highway. It is unknown if this track is an old alignment of the Highway, or possibly the remnants of an access track that linked with the old highway. All three tracks appear to have converged at 767145e 5971921n, although at this point the Old Princes Highway is no longer extant due to the prior mechanical disturbance.
Plate 20. Drainage diversion ditch above the old Highway alignment (DC11), looking north.

Plate 21. Road culvert DC11, looking east.
8.3 Discussion

There are eleven potential heritage items identified within the Dignams Creek proposal area (Figures 13 and 14), including one previously recorded item (DC1 – Dignams Creek Bridge), which is listed on the RTA Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Register. The other items comprise sections of old road alignments (DC2 and DC11 - old Princes Highway, including road alignments, culverts, drainage channels and bridge remains, DC3 - old Bermagui Road and DC10 - remains of a secondary creek crossing and associated road alignment), the sites of the two public schools (DC4 - first public school at Dignams Creek and DC5 - second public school at Dignams Creek), the site of the community hall (DC6) and the site of the residence, sheds and silage pits on Portion 246 (DC7 - private residence, DC8 - site of the dairy and machinery shed and DC9 - silage pits).

The existing Dignams Creek Bridge is a previously listed heritage item and as such is protected under the Heritage Act, 1977.
The sections of old road alignments and associated bridge and culvert remains are generally in fair to good condition; however, as a whole they offer only limited research potential. The sites of most of the other heritage items have been subject to prior ground disturbance and similarly offer very limited research potential. The only possible exceptions to this include the site of the second Dignams Creek Public School (DC5), which may offer good excavation potential across the area where the school house once stood, and the large depression associated with DC7 (the bear pit), which is likely to be the remains of a toilet pit or well associated with the Salway house on Portion 246.

Figure 13. Location of the identified potential heritage items at Dignams Creek – north eastern section (Wandella and Central Tilba topographic maps).
Figure 14. Location of the identified potential heritage item DC11 at Dignams Creek – south western section (Wandella 8825-2N 1:25 000 topographic map).
9. STATUTORY INFORMATION

The NSW Heritage Act (1977)

Overview
The purpose of the NSW Heritage Act 1977 is to ensure that the heritage of New South Wales is adequately identified and conserved. In practice the Act has focused on items and places of non-Indigenous heritage to avoid overlap with the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Act, 1974, which has primary responsibilities for nature conservation and the protection of Aboriginal objects and places in NSW. In recent years, however, the Heritage Council has targeted these other areas, working with relevant state agencies such as NPWS to identify gaps in the protection of Aboriginal and natural heritage places (for example the Cyprus Hellene Club was protected under the Heritage Act as a place of historic significance to Aboriginal people amongst other values).

The Heritage Amendment Act 1998 came into effect in April 1999. This Act instigated changes to the NSW heritage system, which were the result of a substantial review begun in 1992. A central feature of the amendments was the clarification and strengthening of shared responsibility for heritage management between local government authorities, responsible for items of local significance, and the NSW Heritage Council. The Council retained its consent powers for alterations to heritage items of state significance.

The Heritage Act is concerned with all aspects of conservation ranging from the most basic protection against damage and demolition, to restoration and enhancement. It recognises two levels of heritage significance, State significance and Local significance across a broad range of values.

Generally this Act provides protection to items that have been identified, assessed and listed on various registers including State government section 170 registers, local government LEPs and the State Heritage Register. The Interim Heritage Order provisions allow the minister or his delegates (local government may have delegated authority) to provide emergency protection to threatened places that have not been previously identified. The only ‘blanket’ protection provisions in the Act relate to the protection of relics which warrant State or local heritage listing.

The Heritage Council of NSW
The role of the Heritage Council is to provide the Minister with advice on a broad range of matters relating to the conservation of the heritage of NSW. It also has a role in promoting heritage conservation through research, seminars and publications. The membership of the Heritage Council is designed to reflect a broad range of interests and areas of expertise.

Interim Heritage Orders
Under the provisions of Part 3 of the Act, the Minister can make an interim heritage order (IHO). A recommendation with respect to an order can come from the Heritage Council, either based on a request for the Minister, or the Council’s own considerations. The Minister can also authorise Local Councils to make IHOs within their area. An interim conservation order may remain in force for up to 12 months, until such time as it is revoked or the item is listed on the State Heritage Register. A heritage order may control activities such as demolition of structures, damage to relics, places or land, development and alteration of buildings, works or relics.

The State Heritage Register
Changes to the Heritage Act in the 1998 amendments established the State Heritage Register which includes all places previously protected by permanent conservation orders (PCOs) and items identified as being of state significance in heritage and conservation registers prepared by State Government instrumentalities. Sites or places which are found to have a state level of heritage significance should be formally identified to the Heritage Council and considered for inclusion on the State Heritage Register.

Heritage Agreements
Under Section 39 of the Act, the Minister can enter into an Agreement with the owner of a heritage item listed on the State Heritage Register to ensure its conservation. Such an Agreement can cover a range of responsibilities including financial or specialist assistance and can be attached to the title of the land.

Development consent
Section 57(1) of the NSW Heritage Act (1977) states that when an interim heritage order or listing on the State Heritage Register applies to a place, building, work, relic, moveable object, precinct, or land, a person must not do any of the following things except in pursuance of an approval granted by the approval body under Subdivision 1 of Division 3 of that Act:
a) demolish the building or work;
b) damage or despoil the place, precinct or land, or any part of the place, precinct or land;
c) move, damage or destroy the relic or moveable object;
d) excavate any land for the purpose of exposing or moving the relic;
e) carry out any development in relation to the land on which the building, work or relic is situated, the land that comprises the place, or land within the precinct;
f) alter the building, work, relic or moveable object;
g) display any notice or advertisement on the place, building, work, relic, moveable object or land, or in the precinct; or
h) damage or destroy any tree or other vegetation on or remove any tree or other vegetation from the place, precinct or land.

Under Section 60 of the Act, an application for approval shall be made to the approval body, the Heritage Council of NSW, in the approved form and shall be accompanied by such fee as may be prescribed.

Environmental Planning Instruments

Part 5 of the Act gives the Heritage Council the authority to request that an environmental planning instrument be prepared covering certain lands. It also directs that the Heritage Council shall be consulted by others when preparing a draft planning instrument affecting land to which an interim heritage order applies or which includes an item listed on the State Heritage Register. In addition it gives the Heritage Council the authority to produce guidelines for the preparation of such planning instruments.

Protection of Archaeological Relics and Deposits

Section 139 of the NSW Heritage Act specifically provides protection for any item classed as a relic. A relic is defined as "... any deposit, artefact, object or material evidence that –

a) relates to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement; and
b) is of State or local heritage significance.

Section 139 of the Act disallows disturbance of a relic unless in accordance with an "excavation permit" from the Heritage Council.

Section 146 of the Act requires that the discovery of a previously unknown relic be reported to the Heritage Council within a reasonable time of its discovery.

Heritage and Conservation Registers

Section 170 of the Act requires all state government instrumentalities to establish and maintain a Heritage and Conservation Register that lists items of environmental heritage. The register is to include items which are, or could potentially be, the subject of a conservation instrument, and which are owned, occupied or otherwise under the control of that instrumentality.

Exemptions

In NSW important items of the state’s environmental heritage are listed on the State Heritage Register. Any major works proposed for State Heritage Register items need to be assessed and approved by the Heritage Council to ensure that the heritage significance of the item will not be adversely affected. The changes should respect and retain those qualities and characteristics that make the heritage place special.

The assessment process can waste the time and resources of both the owner and the Heritage Council if the works are only minor in nature and will have minimal impact on the heritage significance of the place. The Heritage Act allows the Minister administering the Act, on the recommendation of the Heritage Council, to grant exemptions for certain activities that would otherwise require approval under the NSW Heritage Act.

There are two types of exemptions that can apply to a heritage item listed on the State Heritage Register: - standard and specific exemptions, as follows:

1. Standard Exemptions

Typical activities that are exempted include building maintenance, minor repairs, alterations to certain interiors or areas and change of use. Standard exemptions apply to all items listed on the State Heritage Register and came into force on 23 October 1998. They are granted under Section 57(2) of the Heritage Act 1977.
The purpose of standard exemptions is to clarify for owners, the Heritage Office and local councils what kind of maintenance and minor works can be undertaken without needing Heritage Council approval. This ensures that owners are not required to make unnecessary applications for minor maintenance and repair.

The exemptions only reduce the need to obtain approval from the Heritage Council, under Section 60 of the Heritage Act, to carry out works to a heritage item listed on the State Heritage Register. Local councils may require additional development and building approvals.

2. Site specific exemptions

The Minister on the recommendation of the NSW Heritage Council can approve specific exemptions for a particular heritage item.

A permit must be obtained to disturb or excavate land where it is known (or there is a reasonable cause to suspect) that such action will or is likely to uncover a relic. An excavation permit can be applied for under section 140 of the Act. Excavation permits are generally only applicable to relics situated below the surface.

Environmental Planning & Assessment Act (1979)

The Act and its regulations, schedules and associated guidelines require that environmental impacts be considered in land use planning and decision-making. Environmental impacts include cultural heritage assessment.

There are three main areas of protection under the Act:

- planning instruments allow particular uses for land and specify constraints. Part III governs the preparation of planning instruments. Both Aboriginal and Historic (non-indigenous) cultural heritage values should be assessed when determining land use;
- Section 90 lists impacts that must be considered before development approval is granted. Part IV relates to the development assessment process for local government authorities. Impact to both Aboriginal and Historic (non-indigenous) cultural heritage values are included; and
- State Government agencies that act as the determining authority on the environmental impacts of proposed activities must consider a variety of community and cultural factors in their decisions, including Aboriginal and Historic (non-indigenous) cultural heritage values. Part V relates to activities that do not require consent but still require an environmental evaluation, such as proposals by government authorities.

The Minister administering the EPA Act 1979 may make various planning instruments such as regional environmental plans (section 51) and local environment plans (section 70). The Minister may direct a public authority such as a Local Council, to exercise certain actions within a specified time, including the preparation of draft Local Environmental Plans and appropriate provisions to achieve the principles and aims of the Act (section 117).

These planning instruments may identify places and features of cultural heritage significance and define various statutory requirements regarding the potential development, modification and conservation of these items. In general, places of identified significance, or places requiring further assessment, are listed in various heritage schedules that may form part of a Local Environmental Plan (LEP) or a Regional Environmental Plan (REP). Listed heritage items are then protected from certain defined activities, normally including demolition, renovation, excavation, subdivision, and other forms or damage, unless consent has been gained from an identified consent authority. The consent authority under a LEP is normally the local Shire or City Council.

The Act, as amended, provides for the listing of heritage items and conservation areas and for the protection of these items or areas through environmental planning instruments (like LEPs and REPs) at the local government and State planning levels. These statutory planning instruments usually contain provisions for the conservation of these items and areas as well as an assessment process to reduce the impacts of new development on the heritage significance of a place, building or conservation area.

Given that the Dignams Creek Bridge (DC1) is listed on the RTA Heritage and Conservation Register it is protected under Section 170 of the Heritage Act, 1977.

The other potential heritage items identified in the proposal area at Dignams Creek (DC2-DC10) do not warrant State or local heritage listing and as such are not protected under Section 139 of the Heritage Act, 1977.
9. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

The information provided in this report and the assessment of significance of potential heritage items provides the basis for the proponent to make informed decisions regarding the management and degree of protection which should be undertaken in regard to the sites located within the study area.

9.1 Significance Assessment Criteria

The NSW Heritage Office and Planning NSW have defined a set of criteria and methodology for the assessment of cultural heritage significance for items and places, where these do not include Aboriginal heritage from the pre-contact period (NSW Heritage Office & DUAP 1996, NSW Heritage Office 2001, Heritage Council of NSW 2008).

The Heritage Council of NSW recognises only the following four levels of significance for heritage in NSW:
- Local
- State
- National
- World

These four levels refer to the context in which a heritage item is important and does not refer to a ranking of significance. A heritage item may have significance at more than one level; items of local significance are by far the most common in New South Wales and make the greatest contribution to our living historic environment (Heritage Council of NSW 2008).

The following heritage assessment criteria are those set out for Listing on the State Heritage Register. In many cases items will be significant under only one or two criteria. The State Heritage Register was established under Part 3A of the Heritage Act (as amended in 1999) for listing of items of environmental heritage which are of state heritage significance. Environmental heritage means those places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects, and precincts, of state or local heritage significance (section 4, Heritage Act 1977).

An item will be considered to be of State (or local) heritage significance if, in the opinion of the Heritage Council of NSW, it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Criterion (a) an item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area) – known as historic significance;
- Criterion (b) an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area) – known as historic associations;
- Criterion (c) an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area) – known as aesthetic or technical significance;
- Criterion (d) an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons– known as social significance;
- Criterion (e) an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area) – known as research potential or educational significance;
- Criterion (f) an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area) – known as rarity;
- Criterion (g) an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s cultural or natural places or cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local areas) – known as representative significance.

An item is not to be excluded from the Register on the ground that items with similar characteristics have already been listed on the Register. Only particularly complex items or places will be significant under all criteria.
In using these criteria it is important to assess the values first, then the local or State context in which they may be significant. In instances where a heritage item is complex and/or comprises numerous elements a hierarchy of significance may be useful in assigning significance to individual elements or areas of a site as different components of a place may make a different relative contribution to its heritage value. For example, loss of integrity or condition may diminish significance. In some cases it is constructive to note the relative contribution of an item or its components. Table 3 below provides a guide to ascribing relative values for components of an individual item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Justification</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Rare or outstanding item of local or State significance.</td>
<td>Fulfilis criteria for local or State listing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High degree of intactness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Item can be interpreted relatively easily.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High degree of original fabric.</td>
<td>Fulfilis criteria for local or State listing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates a key element of the item’s significance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alterations do not detract from significance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Altered or modified elements.</td>
<td>Fulfilis criteria for local or State listing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elements with little heritage value, but which contribute to the overall significance of the item.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>Alterations detract from significance.</td>
<td>Does not fulfil criteria for local or State listing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficult to interpret.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invasive</td>
<td>Damaging to the item’s heritage significance.</td>
<td>Does not fulfil criteria for local or State listing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Significance grading.

9.2 Significance

The sites recorded during this survey have been assessed against the State Heritage Register criteria and have been guided by the NSW Heritage Office update Assessing Heritage Significance (2001) and the Heritage Council of NSW update Levels of Heritage Significance (2008). A statement of significance for each site is provided below in Table 4; a brief description of the reasoning behind the significance assessment is included in the table. Further details regarding the heritage assessment are also discussed below in terms of the thresholds for each significance category and individual site details where appropriate. It is noted that significance ratings for research potential are based on the surface evidence and it is possible that the significance rating ascribed to potential heritage items may be revised pending the results of further archaeological investigations.

One of the items recorded during this survey is already listed on the RTA Heritage and Conservation Register as having local significance, the item in question is the Dignams Creek Bridge (DC1). Full details of this item are provided in Appendix 1. It has previously been assessed to have significance at a local level in terms of historical associations, its aesthetics and landmark qualities and its representativeness of an urgent replacement of a flood damaged timber bridge and as a concrete beam bridge of the South Coast.

All the other recorded items in the study area are assessed to be of little heritage value primarily due to the relative high levels of previous impacts which have significantly diminished their original fabric. While these sites can be linked to events of some importance in the immediate local area, they have all been subject to considerable disturbance. As such, the lack of integrity to these sites precludes heritage listing.
The site of the second Public School (DC5) presents a slightly different scenario. In this case there are clear remains of the tennis court, access path and tree plantings as well as what appears to potentially be the relatively undisturbed site of the school house. Given that there are physical remains of the school and the fact that the school can be directly linked to the local community and members of that community who were students there, and it had some importance in the development of settlement at Dignams Creek, this item is assessed as having some moderate value, but this is considered to be insufficient to warrant heritage listing at a local level.

Table 4. Significance assessment of potential heritage items recorded at Dignams Creek.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC1: Dignams Creek Bridge</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>This item is assessed as having significance at a local level against criteria ‘a’, ‘c’ and ‘g’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC2: Remains of the Old Princes Highway</td>
<td>Originally assessed to be of local significance. Following review of draft report this has been revised. Does not meet the criteria for heritage listing</td>
<td>This item is not assessed to have significance against any of the criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC3: Old Bermagui Road</td>
<td>Does not meet the criteria for heritage listing</td>
<td>This item is not assessed to have significance against any of the criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC4: Site of the first public school</td>
<td>Does not meet the criteria for heritage listing</td>
<td>This item is not assessed to have significance against any of the criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC5: Site of the second public school</td>
<td>Originally assessed to be of local significance. Following review of draft report this has been revised. Does not meet the criteria for heritage listing</td>
<td>This item is assessed as having some limited significance at a local level against criteria ‘d’ however it does not warrant heritage listing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC6: Site of the community hall</td>
<td>Does not meet the criteria for heritage listing</td>
<td>This item is not assessed to have significance against any of the criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC7: Site of residence/post office</td>
<td>Does not meet the criteria for heritage listing</td>
<td>This item has some limited research potential but that potential is not sufficient to warrant statutory listing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC8: Site of dairy and sheds</td>
<td>Does not meet the criteria for heritage listing</td>
<td>This item is not assessed to have significance against any of the criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC9: Silage pits</td>
<td>Does not meet the criteria for heritage listing</td>
<td>This item is not assessed to have significance against any of the criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC10: Remains of a secondary creek crossing</td>
<td>Does not meet the criteria for heritage listing</td>
<td>This item is not assessed to have significance against any of the criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC11: Remains of the Old Princes Highway</td>
<td>Does not meet the criteria for heritage listing</td>
<td>This item is not assessed to have significance against any of the criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. MITIGATION AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The aim of this study has been to identify potential heritage item, to make an assessment of significance and thereafter, to give consideration to the management of those items within the context of the proposed development. In the following section strategies that can be considered for the mitigation and management of development impact to the recorded items are listed and discussed.

10.1 Management and Mitigation Strategies

Further Investigation

The current field survey has been focused on recording physical evidence present on visible ground surfaces. Further archaeological investigation entails subsurface excavation undertaken for the purposes of identifying the presence of artefact bearing soil deposits and archaeological features, and their nature, extent, integrity and significance.

Such a strategy is pro-active and enables the proponent to properly manage archaeological deposits prior to development activity occurring. Subsurface investigation provides a level of surety in regard to the archaeological status of a place so that informed management decisions can be duly made. In the case at hand further investigation in the form of subsurface excavation is not considered to be warranted. All identified potential heritage items are assessed to have very limited research potential and/or, other than the bridge, do not meet the criteria for heritage listing. While the second school site (DC5) is assessed as potentially having some research potential it is not sufficient to warrant further investigation.

Conservation

The only item identified during this survey that might warrant conservation is the current Dignams Creek Bridge (DC1). This item is representative of an urgent replacement for a flood damaged timber bridge and of concrete beam bridges on the South Coast. Similar, albeit smaller bridges occur at Victoria Creek, to the north and Wonboyn, to the south, so while the Dignams Creek Bridge would ideally be conserved, in the context of the local region there are other examples of this type.

Unmitigated Impacts

Unmitigated impacts to an item can be given consideration when it is assessed to be of insufficient significance to warrant heritage listing and where there is low potential for archaeological deposits in situations where conservation is simply not feasible.

In the case at hand, if necessary, unmitigated impacts are a suitable management strategy in regard to all recorded potential heritage items other than the bridge.

It should be noted that while the ‘Bear Pit’ at the residence/post office site (DC7) appears to be relatively undisturbed and is likely to relate to a toilet pit or well associated with that site, salvage excavation is not considered to be warranted in this instance. Ordinarily a feature such as this would form an important component of archaeological investigations, however that would normally be the case in the context of a broader program of survey and excavation at a site complex. Given that the majority of this particular site has been destroyed through the process of house removal and paddock clean up, the overall context for this feature has been lost. As such the research potential of this feature is significantly lowered.

Nevertheless, in the event that impacts are proposed at this site, the RTA might wish to consider the option of undertaking a program of salvage excavation at this feature prior to the commencement of road works.

Mitigated Impacts

Mitigated impact usually takes the form of partial site destruction only (ie conservation of part of the site) and/or salvage prior to destruction. Such a management strategy is appropriate when items are assessed to have associated archaeological deposits and/or are assessed to have sufficient research potential to warrant heritage listing and when avoidance of impacts and hence conservation is not feasible.

Mitigated impacts in the form of salvage excavation is appropriate in regard to the following item if it is to be impacted:

- DC5 – site of the second public school at Dignams Creek

While the site is not of sufficient research potential to warrant further investigation, in the event that impacts are proposed at this locale archival recording and salvage excavation would help to serve as a form of mitigation to those impacts.
As discussed above, this item is assessed to be unlikely to contain deposits that would warrant conservation.

Mitigated impacts in the form of partial destruction only is also appropriate with regard to the following items:

- DC2 and DC11 – the old Princes Highway, including road alignments, culverts, drainage channels and bridge remains

As discussed above, these items are not of sufficient significance to warrant heritage listing. However limiting the extent of impacts, as much as is feasible, is recommended.

Summary

A summary of recommended management and mitigation strategies relating to the identified items is provided in Table 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Recommended management strategy</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC1: Dignams Creek Bridge</td>
<td>Avoid if possible</td>
<td>Avoid impacts to this item. In the event that impacts are proposed then additional work including a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) will be necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC2: Remains of the Old Princes Highway</td>
<td>Mitigated impacts</td>
<td>Mitigation should take the form of partial impacts only; where possible sections of old road alignment should be avoided. No further archaeological investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC3: Old Bermagui Road</td>
<td>No constraints</td>
<td>No further archaeological investigation. Unmitigated impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC4: Site of the first public school</td>
<td>No constraints</td>
<td>No further archaeological investigation. Unmitigated impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC5: Site of the second public school</td>
<td>Avoid if possible/Mitigated impacts</td>
<td>In the event that impacts are proposed consideration could be given to undertaking a program of salvage excavation and archival recording.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DC6: Site of the community hall</td>
<td>No constraints</td>
<td>No further archaeological investigation. Unmitigated impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC7: Site of residence/post office</td>
<td>No constraints</td>
<td>No further archaeological investigation. Unmitigated impacts OR mitigation of impacts via salvage excavation of the well/toilet pit feature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC8: Site of dairy and sheds</td>
<td>No constraints</td>
<td>No further archaeological investigation. Unmitigated impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC9: Silage pits</td>
<td>No constraints</td>
<td>No further archaeological investigation. Unmitigated impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC10: Remains of a secondary creek crossing</td>
<td>No constraints</td>
<td>No further archaeological investigation. Unmitigated impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC11: Remains of the Old Princes Highway</td>
<td>Mitigated impacts</td>
<td>Mitigation should take the form of partial impacts only; where possible sections of old road alignment should be avoided. No further archaeological investigation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Summary of recommended mitigation and management strategies.
11. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made on the basis of:

- The results of the investigation as documented in this report.
- An assessment of significance of the identified potential heritage items.
- Consideration of the type of development proposed and the nature of the proposed impacts.
- Requirements under the NSW Heritage Act (1977).
- The management and mitigation strategies outlined in Section 10 of this report.

It is recommended that:

1. There are no heritage constraints that would act to preclude the proposed realignment of the Princes Highway at Dignams Creek.

2. There are no constraints with regard to items DC3 (Old Bermagui Road), DC4 (Site of the first public school), DC6 (Site of the community/memorial hall), DC7 (Site of the residence/post office), DC8 (Site of the dairy and sheds), DC9 (Silage pits) and DC10 (Remains of a secondary creek crossing); these items do not meet the criteria for heritage listing.

3. With regard to item DC7 (Site of the residence/post office), while the site as a whole presents limited research potential there is an option to undertake salvage excavation of the well/toilet pit associated with the house site if impacts are proposed in this area. In this instance an ‘excavation permit’ would be necessary under Section 140 of the Heritage Act (1977).

4. In the event that impacts are proposed at DC1 (Dignams Creek Bridge) then additional work and approval including a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) will be necessary.

5. With regard to DC2 (Old Princes Highway: northeast section) and DC11 (Old Princes Highway: southwest section) any proposed impacts should be mitigated through strategic avoidance of representative samples of the existing road alignment (i.e. partial impacts only), if feasible. No further archaeological investigations are warranted.

6. In the event that impacts are proposed at DC5 (Site of the second public school) then a program of archival recording and salvage excavation could be considered. In this instance an ‘excavation permit’ would be necessary under Section 140 of the Heritage Act (1977).
12. REFERENCES


Bayley, W. 1942 *Story of the settlement and development of Bega*. No publication details.

Brierley, G. and C. Murn 1997 European Impacts on downstream sediment transfer and bank erosion in Cobargo catchment, New South Wales, Australia. *Catena* 31; pp 119 -136

Brierley, G. and K. Fryirs 1998 A Fluvial Sediment Budget for Upper Wolumla Creek, South Coast, New South Wales. *Australian Geographer* 29; 1; pp 107-124.


Ellis, N. 1997 Braidwood, Dear Braidwood A History of Braidwood and Districts. N. N. and N. M. Ellis: Braidwood, NSW.

EJE 1997 *Eurobodalla Shire-wide Heritage Study*. A report to the Eurobodalla Shire Council

Evans, N. 1987 Roads to Water: the history and story of Tathra, Kalaru, Wallagoot. Margaret and Norm Evans, Kalaru


Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1996 *Regional histories: regional histories of New South Wales*, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, Sydney.


Moruya and District Historical Society 1979, Mining: gold and silver on far south coast and adjacent inland areas of N.S.W.; and early history of maritime pilot station, Newstead, Toragy Point, Moruya Heads N.S.W., Moruya: Moruya and District Historical Society.


RTA 2006 *Bridge Types in NSW: Historical Overview*, RTA Environmental Branch: Sydney.


APPENDIX 1

Heritage listings at Dignams Creek
Dignams Creek Bridge

**Name of Item**: Dignams Creek Bridge

**Item Number**: 4309630

**Type of Item**: Built

**Item Sub-Type**: ****

**Address**: **** Princes Highway, near Cobargo 2550

**Local Government Area**: Eurobodalla

**Owner**: Roads and Traffic Authority

**Current Use**: Road Bridge

**Former Use**: Road Bridge

**Statement of significance**

The bridge has historic, aesthetic and technical significance locally, and is an excellent representative example of concrete beam bridge construction on the South Coast of NSW. It is one of a group of bridges, including Victoria Creek and Wonboyn River bridges, that were constructed in response to the urgent need occasioned by the destruction of earlier timber bridges by flood. The bridge and its site help to demonstrate the difficulties of maintaining transport links on the South Coast through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and in response to environmental conditions. Since its construction in 1935, this robust and high level bridge has provided reliable service, demonstrating the enduring value of the design and construction standards developed in the 1930s. With the other bridges built under similar circumstances in the area, the Dignams Creek Bridge essentially determined the alignment of the present Princes Highway, having been built before the DMR’s program of road improvement reached this area. The bridge is a visually pleasing and neatly constructed structure of impressive size and constitutes an excellent example of the concrete beam bridge form of the 1925-1948 period.

**Date Significance Updated**: 18 August 2005

**Description**
Princes Highway Upgrade - Dignams Creek, near Cobargo, NSW - Historical Heritage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designer</th>
<th>DMR - individuals unknown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Builder</td>
<td>****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction years</td>
<td>**** - 1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical description</td>
<td>This fairly high level crossing uses five spans to clear Dignams Creek on a winding section of the Princes Highway which brings curves to both abutments. The deck has end spans, with the central three spans being continuous. An expansion joint separates each end span. The deck form is of two longitudinal reinforced concrete beams integral with the deck, and curved down in its soffit to continuous support points. At deck level, the original railings have been replaced with guardrail continuous across the bridge and approaches, mounted on the bridge using neat plinths behind the kerb. Beneath the deck, the cross beam arrangement varies, with chamfers down to meet the bottom of the main beams where they are deeper. The piers have two columns each, with cross beams at low and headstock level. Their cross section has rounded corners, a detail carried up into the headstock area. Piers one and four have more complex detailing to handle the expansion joint, with space for bearings for the beams from each side. The expansion joint at the surface is of elastomeric filler, but at the sides a bottom plate is bent down at each location, leaving an untidy appearance. Each expansion joint also has what appears to be a vertical timber packer on centreline, presumably a repair artifact. The abutments have vertical faces with return walls, with pier-like corner posts with rounded edges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Condition and/or Archaeological Potential</td>
<td>The bridge appears in sound condition, with the minor exception of the untidy expansion joint detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifications and dates</td>
<td>The original railings were replaced with guardrail in 1982.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date condition updated</td>
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History

Historical notes: Dignams Creek Bridge on the Princes Highway is located between Tilba Tilba and Cobargo on the boundary of the Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Local Government Areas. Dignams Creek flows through the Bodalla State Forest and forms a significant tributary of the coastal Wallaga Lake. European settlement of the south coast occurred from the 1830s, as settlers sought new pastures for their cattle and sheep. Francis Flanagan took up Mullenderra and John Hawdon settled on the Monuya River. Several eminent Braidwood families established coastal runs following the 1833 drought, including the Elrington and Tarlinton families who established runs near Cobargo. (Regional Histories, 1996, p. 156; Gibney, 1980, p. 19) Foster built a homestead known as Noorooma near the current Narooma town site, on the banks of the Wagonga Inlet circa 1850; the town was surveyed in 1883. (Australian Encyclopaedia, 1963, Vol 6, p. 241) Thomas Mort and Robert Tooth, of the Sydney brewing family, established large holdings on the south coast in the mid nineteenth century and were both instrumental in the development of the dairy industry in the Bodalla area and Bega Valley. In the 1870s and 1880s smaller producers...
began to move over to dairy production in significant numbers. By the turn of the century south coast cheeses had become well known and over half of the State’s cheese came from the Bega Valley. Butter and cheese factories operated at many locations including Central Tilba, Tilba Tilba and Cobargo near the subject bridge. (Regional Histories, 1996, pp. 166-9) Massive clearing of woodland was undertaken for the dairy industry and the timber was utilised locally and also milled and shipped to the Sydney market. Mills sprang up around Narooma, Mogo, Batemans Bay and elsewhere from the 1870s. Timber cutters and carters flocked to the area for employment through the 1880s, and the timber jinkers carting logs to and from the mills took a heavy toll on the coastal roads into the 1920s. (Gibbney, 1980, pp. 111-3, 165) The discovery of gold, silver and quartz shaped the history of the south coast in the latter half of the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. Gold was mined to the north of the Wagonga Inlet, for a short period at the mouth of the Bermagui River, and on the slopes of Mount Dromedary into the 1920s, greatly encouraging the development of Tilba Tilba. (Regional Histories, 1996, p. 170-1, (Australian Encyclopaedia, 1963, Vol 1, p.494)

Because of the extreme difficulty posed by the coastal roads, shipping remained the main mode for long distance communication, dairy and timber transport into the twentieth century. No railway was built to the south coast. A regular steamer service between the south coast and Sydney was established in 1857-8 when several smaller companies amalgamated to form the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company, which closed only in 1948. The steamers operated through Eden, Merimbula and Bermagui, and later to the wharf constructed at Tathra. Roads were important chiefly for access to the ports. (Regional Histories, 1996, p. 170)

Both Narooma and Bermagui had become tourist resorts, known for their big game fishing, from the 1930s. The improvements to the coastal roads, in particular the Princes Highway, carried out from this time and the growth in use of the private motor vehicle have contributed much to the tourist industry in the area. Commercial fishing is an important industry, with a cannery established in Narooma in 1937. (Australian Encyclopaedia, 1963, Vol 6, p. 241 Vol 1, p. 494)

A road route linking the settlements on the south coast of New South Wales between Wollongong and Eden was well established by the mid nineteenth century, appearing on an 1858 Post Office Department map of postal roads. (DMR, 1976, p. 37) However, local media coverage, and local knowledge of the road suggests that far from being experienced as a single smooth road by the traveller, the early roads comprising the route, were difficult and hilly and many terminated at or near various coastal towns forcing travellers inland for journeys such as that from Nowra to Bega. Flooding of creeks and low-lying areas along the coast would frequently have broken communication routes, for example a bullock team was often needed to assist horse drawn coaches through the swollen Wandandian Creek to the north of Ulladulla (correspondence, Milton Ulladulla Historical Society, DMR, 1976, p. 37, Pers. Comm. Val Windley c/o Shoalhaven Historical Society, 7th July 2004).

The approximate route of the current Princes Highway was declared the ‘Main South Coast Road’ through the Local Government Extension Act of 1906, and the many small Municipalities along the road grappled with the vast task of its upkeep over the ensuing decades. An official opening and naming of the Princes Highway took place at Bulli in 1920 (DMR 1976, pp. 64 and map opposite). In 1928 the route was proclaimed a State Highway under the Main Roads Act, and was accorded due attention and expenditure by the Main Roads Board cum Department of Main Roads, which from 1925 had embarked on a statewide programme of
improving roads to a standard to suit high speed automobile traffic. In the period 1932-1939 extensive improvement works were undertaken between Nowra and Batemans Bay, including several lengthy deviations and 22 concrete bridges. Once this work was complete, the Department began work immediately on the 163 miles of the Princes Highway between Batemans Bay and the Victorian Border. The road was characterised by a variety of surfacing qualities, and long lengths of road with tortuous alignment. Work was commenced on the hilly section between Batemans Bay and Mogo, before proceedings were interrupted by the war. Work recommenced in 1946. (DMR 1976, pp. 160-1, 200)

The concrete beam bridge over Dignams Creek was constructed in 1935 in response to an emergency situation, before the main thrust of the reconstruction program reached the Tilba Tilba - Cobargo stretch of road. The bridge was constructed to replace a timber bridge of unknown construction date, which was washed away in flood in January 1934, with only one abutment and one span left standing. The timber bridge over nearby Victoria Creek to the north was also severely damaged in the floods of January and February 1934. A by-track was constructed near Dignam’s Creek and the planning of a new structure was immediately set in train, as it was considered impossible to wait until the major upgrade works had reached the area and determined the overall road alignment most desirable for future decades. While planning ensued, the public grew impatient; the National Roads and Motorists Association wrote to the Department of Main Roads in June 1934 voicing the concerns of local residents and tourists alike. The temporary crossing at Dignams Creek, and those at the sites of the other bridges damaged in the 1933-4 floods, were low and therefore often impassable when creek levels rose even slightly, holding up traffic. The NRMA urged prompt construction of permanent bridges, particularly considering the approaching Melbourne Centenary Celebrations, as the Princes Highway was a very popular route to Melbourne. The Dignams Creek Bridge was completed the following year, and so was a concrete beam bridge over Victoria Creek. (RTA File 1/145.122; RTA File 1/145.1733; RTA File 1/216.121)

The reinforced concrete beam bridge over Dignams Creek was constructed in conformity with the design principles governing the improvement works moving steadily south along the Princes Highway at the time. During the period 1925-1940 the Department of Main Roads adapted existing standards of bridge design to meet the requirements of improved motor vehicle performance - they were generally wider than previous bridges with an improved load capacity. The principal types of bridges constructed during the period were: reinforced concrete beam; concrete slab; steel truss on concrete piers; and timber beam bridges. Concrete was favoured in many instances because it was perceived to be a low maintenance material (DMR, 1976, pp.169, 170). Based on RTA bridge database records, reinforced concrete beam or girder bridges were the most common form of concrete bridge construction to 1948, with more than 160 extant, including the Victoria Creek Bridge. They have been very popular in NSW, and elsewhere, providing an efficient and often aesthetically pleasing solution to a wide range of crossing types.

No maintenance records exist for the Dignams Creek Bridge for the period 1935 - 1975. Subsequent inspections have found the bridge to be in satisfactory condition. Generally, expectations of road infrastructure, and traffic management on the Princes Highway in particular have changed since the Dignams Creek Bridge was constructed. In 1982 the steel pipe handrail system of the bridge was replaced with a standard guardrail system. (RTA File 1/145.1735)
### Listings

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### Assessment of Significance

#### Historical Significance

The bridge has historic significance locally. Like nearby bridges at Victoria Creek and Wonboyn River, the bridge was constructed due to the almost complete destruction by flood of the previous timber bridge crossing the creek, and thus is associated with the State theme of Environment - cultural landscape, demonstrating the difficulties of maintaining transport links on the South Coast through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since the replacement of the timber bridge at the crossing of this permanent and flood prone waterway could not wait for the main thrust of the Department of Main Road's Princes Highway improvement programme to reach the Eurobodalla - Bega Valley area, with other bridges built under similar circumstances in the area, the Dignams Creek Bridge essentially determined the alignment of the present Princes Highway. The bridge was nevertheless built to the bridge design and construction standards which had been developed by the Main Road Board and then Department of Main Roads through the 1920s and 1930s, and thus demonstrates the standards and expectations of roads in that period. This relatively high level and robust structure has provided reliable service for the seventy odd years since its construction.

#### Aesthetic Significance

Dignams Creek Bridge is a reasonably large structure for its type, with five spans and a total length of 67 metres. It forms a landmark on the Princes Highway. The bridge's pleasing detailing and neat construction result in the bridge being an excellent example of a concrete beam bridge.

#### Social Significance

****

#### Technical Significance

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<td>Good, although original pipe railings have been replaced.</td>
<td>Physically, Dignams Creek Bridge is an excellent representative example of its type. As an urgent replacement for a flood damaged timber bridge, Dignams Creek Bridge is also historically representative of concrete beam bridges on the South Coast.</td>
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#### Assessed Significance

Local

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<td>1980</td>
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<td>Written</td>
<td>Department of Main Roads</td>
<td>1976</td>
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### Study details

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- **Bridge Number**: 5981
- **CARMS File Number**: ****
- **Property Number**: ****
- **Conservation Management Plan**: ****