

6.7 Aboriginal heritage

An Aboriginal heritage assessment for the proposal was completed by OzArk (2011a and 2011b). The original assessment (OzArk 2011a) was completed for the four design options identified by Roads and Maritime during the initial options analysis (see Section 2.4). A supplementary assessment (OzArk 2011b) was later completed for the proposal. A supplementary letter from OzArk (dated August 2012) summarised the consultation and assessment of Aboriginal heritage for the proposal. The two reports and the cover letter are included in Appendix H.

6.7.1 Methodology

The study area for the Aboriginal heritage assessment is defined as the area within 500 metres of the proposal.

Review of existing information

A number of studies completed in the Wagga Wagga region were reviewed. A search of the OEH Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database was completed on 8 December 2010 for an area of dimensions 10 kilometres by 10 kilometres, centred on the four options initially assessed (see Figure 2.3 in Section 2.4.2).

Aboriginal community involvement and field survey

Aboriginal community consultation was conducted in accordance with the Procedure for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation and Investigation (PACHCI) (Roads and Maritime 2011a). The surveys of the four options involved 11 Aboriginal community representatives. The subsequent field survey of the proposal involved one Aboriginal community representative.

The supplementary field survey was conducted on 11 August 2011. The purpose of the investigation was to:

- Assess the proposal impact footprint for Aboriginal heritage.
- Identify in the field two AHIMS sites (56-1-0096 and 56-1-0098) that were previously recorded in the study area.

The area was surveyed on foot by three people including:

- An OzArk archaeologist.
- An Aboriginal community representative.
- Roads and Maritime Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisor.

GPS was used to define the boundaries of the proposal in the field, and to navigate to the site coordinates provided by the AHIMS database.

The surveys were conducted at spacings of 15 metres to 20 metres between the surveyors. All exposures were inspected for Aboriginal artefacts and/or features. All mature trees of scar bearing age were inspected for Aboriginal scars.

Ground surface visibility was generally in the order of zero per cent to 35 per cent due to grass cover. Exposures such as vehicle tracks and eroded creek banks were clear of vegetation and had a visibility of 90 to 100 per cent.

6.7.2 Existing environment

The study area is within the southern boundaries of the Wiradjuri tribal and linguistic group (Tindale 1974, cited in Ozark 2011a). In December 1829, Wiradjuri men guided Charles Sturt along the Murrumbidgee River through the Wagga Wagga area. The party camped at a number of sites in the area, including a site 10 kilometres north of the study area.

The landscape of the study area is likely to have been suitable for Aboriginal occupation. The semi-permanent watercourses with elevated spurs, particularly in the southern portions of the study area, may have provided conditions and resources conducive to settlement (OzArk 2011a).

The review of existing information for the initial survey (OzArk 2011a) identified 24 previously located Aboriginal sites on land surrounding the study area. Artefact sites (open sites, isolated finds, and open sites with potential archaeological deposits) constitute the majority of site types (54.2 per cent), with culturally modified trees (carved or scarred) representing 45.8 per cent of the currently registered site types.

Sites of Aboriginal heritage recorded in the study area included:

- Site #56-1-0096 (L-IF-1) – a record of a quartz flake artefact, which could not be located during the field survey on 11 August 2011. The artefact was originally found on a track subject to vehicle use, stock movement and water runoff, and it is considered most likely that the quartz flake has been disturbed from its position on the vehicle track.
- Site #56-1-0098 (L-ST-1) – a record of a scarred White Box tree, which was found four metres from the point indicated by the AHIMS coordinates. The tree's scar, whilst damaged, bears an axe mark (probably steel) and is regarded as an Aboriginal scar.
- Site #56-1-0051 (LN5) – a modified tree, which is located about 60 metres north-east of the proposal.

In addition to these sites the OzArk (2011a) survey identified:

- A scarred tree of probable Aboriginal origin (site KB-ST1) - a Yellow Box tree about 20 metres in height, bearing two scars on the lower trunk.
- A sensitive archaeological landform (site KB-SAL1) – the high ground surrounding an intermittent north-west flowing drainage feature. The landform includes the probable Aboriginal scarred tree (KB-ST1).

6.7.3 Potential impacts

The proposal avoids, and would be unlikely to directly impact any sites of Aboriginal heritage.

Site #56-1-0096 L-IF-1 was originally recorded about 40 metres from a section of the proposal involving substantial cut. As well, a stockpile site is proposed 40 metres north and downslope of the site. If the artefact has been disturbed from its recorded site there is some potential for it to now be located closer to the proposal. It is possible that the artefact could have been directed towards the proposal through vehicle, stock or pedestrian disturbance. There is therefore some potential for the artefact to be located downslope of the original recording location, within a radius of

five to 35 metres.

Site #56-1-0098 (L-ST-1) is located more than 125 metres east of the proposal, and would be unlikely to be affected by the proposal.

Site #56-1-0051 (LN5) is located 15 metres east of a proposed construction access road. It is located outside the proposal and would be unlikely to be affected by the proposal.

Sites KB-ST1 and KB-SAL1 are located outside the proposal, on the southern side of the bend in Camp Access Road, and would not be affected by the proposal.

The assessment (OzArk 2011b) concludes that the proposal would be unlikely to affect any AHIMS sites provided management measures are implemented to avoid sites #56-1-0098 (L-ST-1) and #56-1-0096 (L-IF-1).

6.7.4 Safeguards and management measures

Impact	Environmental safeguards	Responsibility	Timing
Aboriginal heritage - damage to, or loss of, AHIMS sites #56-1-0098 (L-ST-1) and #56-1-0096 (L-IF-1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Aboriginal heritage management plan will be prepared as part of the CEMP. The plan would include the <i>Standard Management Procedure: Unexpected Archaeological Finds</i> (Roads and Maritime 2011b). • A 40 metre buffer will be established around site #56-1-0096 (L-IF-1). • The locations of the sites #56-1-0098 (L-ST-1), #56-1-0096 (L-IF-1) and #56-1-0051 (LN5) will be marked as no-go areas on all relevant site plans and work instructions, and physically on site. • Temporary exclusion fencing will be erected at the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Along the eastern boundary of the proposal, west of sites #56-1-0098 (L-ST-1) and #56-1-0096 (L-IF-1). - Along the southern boundary of the stockpile site located north of site #56-1-0096 (L-IF-1). - Around the modified tree located near the existing bridge – site #56-1-0051 (LN5). • Exclusion fencing will be appropriately secure. Installation and removal of the barriers will be undertaken so as not to cause harm to the immediate area surrounding the sites. • All crews will be inducted before works commence regarding the nature of the Aboriginal heritage resource in the study area and the penalties for breaches of the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i>. 	Project manager and contractor	Pre-construction
Aboriginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction vehicles will be confined to 	Project	Construction

Impact	Environmental safeguards	Responsibility	Timing
heritage - impacts on potential unknown sites of Aboriginal heritage significance	the limits of the proposal. In the event of an unexpected find of an Aboriginal heritage item (or suspected item), all works in the vicinity of the find must cease and Roads and Maritime Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisor and the Senior Environmental Officer will be contacted immediately for advice on how to proceed. Steps in the RTA Standard Management Procedure: Unexpected Archaeological Finds (RTA, 2011b) must be followed.	manager and contractor	