



ACT Heritage Council

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2 (BLOCK 29 SECTION 23, HUME)

At its meeting of 2 April 2020 the ACT Heritage Council decided Aboriginal Places HA12 and HAC2 were eligible for registration.

The information contained in this report was considered by the ACT Heritage Council in assessing the nomination for e Aboriginal Places HA12 and HAC2 against the heritage significance criteria outlined in s 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

BACKGROUND

Aboriginal Places HA12 and HAC2 are located within Hume Block 29, Section 23 which is currently Unleased Territory Land. [Information under 'Background' has been declared restricted in accordance with s 54 (1) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.] HA12 and HAC2 have been noted by archaeologists and Representative Aboriginal Organisations (RAOs) to have intact, dense and diverse artefact assemblages and to have been intermittently used campsites located along the broad Jerrabomberra Valley system. HA12 and HAC2 are on elevated terraces; and the terraces are an important landform in Hume known to contain many Aboriginal places with high artefact densities. (AASC and CHMA 2008a; pp 2, 3, 49, 50)

Two additional places which also occur on Hume's elevated terraces – HID1395 and Hume 5 – are mentioned throughout this document. These places are not under assessment for this nomination, but they provide useful context through which to discuss research processes and illustrate the richness of the artefact concentrations of Hume's elevated terraces. HID1395 was studied along with HA12 and HAC2 in 2008, therefore its attributes contribute to conclusions drawn for HA12 and HAC2. While representative portions of HA12 and HAC2 have been flagged for conservation in-situ (within the conservation zones assessed here), artefacts associated with HID1395 have been salvaged and are in the custodianship of ACT Heritage. Hume 5 was studied in 2012 as part of an ACT Heritage Grant (HG11/19), as a probable contact site due to the discovery of a culturally modified glass artefact there; it was consequently nominated to the ACT Heritage Register. Of note, within proximity to Hume 5, is a place noted in several studies as likely to contain the highest density of artefacts on the Hume elevated terraces – this area remains unstudied and could influence the boundary of Hume 5. (AASC and CHMA 2008a; pp 9; CHMA 2012; pp 71, 72)

Southern Cross Heritage Solutions (SCHS) was commissioned by the ACT Government to identify and record the heritage values of Hume and adjacent areas within Tuggeranong and Jerrabomberra (SCHS 2000). In the course of this study, twelve European places were identified and a total of 19 Aboriginal places (isolated artefacts, artefact scatters and 2 scarred trees) plus several areas of potential archaeological sensitivity (PAD's) were located at Hume resulting in the case for further study as development in Hume has progressed. (AASC and CHMA 2008a; pp 20)

Of most relevance to this assessment, is the 2008 study for Stages 2 and 3 of the Hume Resource Recovery Estate (HRRE) by Australian Archaeological Survey Consultants (AASC) and Cultural Heritage Management Australia (CHMA). This study involved test pitting and trenching of HA12, HAC2 and HID1395 resulting in recommendations to conserve in-situ, within conservation zones, part of the artefact assemblages of HA12 and HAC2. At this time Hughes and Sullivan (2008) also described the geomorphology of Hume leading AASC and CHMA (2008a) to further articulate the elevated terraces and note them as being the land forms with the greatest artefact densities; compared to the densities recovered from other identified landforms – the higher and lower dissected plains (AASC and CHMA 2008a; pp 1-3, 6-7).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12, HAC2 AND HAC2

HISTORY

Aboriginal Places HA12, HAC2 and HID1395

AASC and CHMA (2008a) articulated the attributes of the artefact assemblages of HA12, HAC2 and HID1395 leading to the case for the two conservation zones, as follows:

The average artefact densities of the sites were considered to vary considerably. At HID1395, the average density is around 35 artefacts/m². At HAC2 it is 56 artefacts/m² and at HA12 it is 80 artefacts/m². The average artefact densities recorded at these three locations are among the highest artefact densities recorded at sites in the ACT region. The consultant is only aware of two previously identified sites [in the ACT] where artefact densities have been demonstrated to be potentially higher.

The artefact assemblage of the study area as a whole, and the three artefact assemblages in particular, are rich and diverse, both in terms of the variety of stone material types and artefact types represented. Eight different stone material types are represented in the artefact assemblage of the study area. The parent sources for some of these stone materials are likely to be situated within the local area (eg. tuff, hornfels and quartz). However it seems very likely that some of these stone materials have been procured from sources outside the region and imported into the local area (ie fine grained siliceous, black chert and silcrete). With regard to the stone artefact types, nine different typologies are represented in the assemblage, including some rarer tool types including microliths, blades and scrapers.

Importantly, the analysis of the data obtained from the sub-surface investigations show that the sub-surface artefact deposits associated with the three concentrations of artefacts in the study area ... have been subject to only low to moderate levels of prior disturbance and are still relatively intact (AASC and CHMA 2008a: pp 2, 3).

Further to the above regarding the intactness of the assemblage, there is:

[E]vidence of the vertical movement of artefact deposits through the soil profile, mainly through bioturbation and / or pedogenesis, but there appears to be very little in the way of horizontal movement of the artefacts. As such, it is still possible to identify features such as napping [sic] events, blade production etc. This factor certainly increases the research potential of the site (AASC and CHMA 2008a: pp 48).

Aboriginal Places in the ACT

As noted in the previous section, at the time of study AASC and CHMA (2008a) were aware of only two other places in the ACT where artefact densities had been demonstrated to be potentially higher than at Hume (HA12, HAC2 and HID1395). These places are noted as BPAD1 in Forde, Gungahlin with 110 artefacts/m² and Pialligo. While high artefact densities were recovered at Pialligo, differences in methodology make direct comparison with HA12, HAC2 and HID1395 difficult. Pialligo has been documented in ethnographic records as being a known base camp for the local Aboriginal population. (AASC and CHMA 2008a: pp 46, 47)

Subsequent to the identification of Bonner and Pialligo, several other places in the ACT with comparatively high artefact densities have been noted. The assemblages of these places are predominantly flaked artefacts, containing diagnostic elements characteristic of the mid to late Holocene and correlating with the introduction of micro blade technology and the intensification of site numbers in south-eastern Australia. The artefact assemblages of the places suggest they were focal points for Aboriginal activity in the ACT and the places are in the suburbs of Forde, Macgregor, Kenny plus Hume. Hume includes HA12, HAC2, HID1395, and Hume 5 plus several other places.

Aboriginal Association with HA12 and HAC2

The AASC and CHMA (2008a) study of HA12, HAC2 and HID1395, compared the Hume places with Pialligo as a known base camp to conclude the Hume places were intermittently used camp-sites. The most recent study in Hume – of Hume 5 – by CHMA (2012) also affirmed the likelihood that the Hume places were intermittent camp-sites.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2

Contrasting the artefact assemblages of Pialligo and Hume, AASC and CHMA (2008a) note:

The density of artefacts identified at the three artefact concentrations [HA12, HAC2 and HID1395] are comparatively high, and the composition of the artefact assemblages of these concentrations are diverse in respect to artefact types. This indicates that the Aboriginal activity undertaken in these areas were relatively intensive and that a range of activities were being undertaken. However, the consultant does not believe that these artefact concentrations are representative of base camps. This is for two main reasons.

The first is that the artefact densities are possibly not high enough to be representative of base camp activities. As previously mentioned, Pialligo is a known base camp, and tens of thousands of artefacts have been recovered from this site. The average densities for Pialligo are not really known, however, excavations undertaken at other suspected base camp-sites shows that densities are generally in excess of 200 artefacts/m². This is considerably higher than those recorded for the study area.

Secondly, and probably most significantly, the resource base in the general vicinity of Hume does not seem to be sufficient to sustain base camp occupation. Virtually without exception, base camps tend to be located in areas where there is an abundance of resources that that are regularly available and easily accessible. Not surprising when you consider 10s or 100s of people would need to be sustained over a relatively long period of time (months). For example the Pialligo site is located on a series of elevated sand ridges, in a broad open valley context, adjacent to the Molonglo River, and in close proximity to an extensive swamp. At this location water was abundant and reliably available and there was presumably a large range of aquatic, terrestrial and avian food resources available for harvesting.

In contrast the sites in the study area are located in a smaller valley system, on the margins of what would have been, and still is an ephemeral, or at best semi-permanent creek line (Dog Trap Creek). There is a swamp (Red Gum Swamp) located within 300 – 500m of the sites in the study area, but again this swamp is comparatively small (AASC and CHMA 2008a: pp 49).

The archaeologists then ask the question as to the purpose of the camp-sites at Hume. They conclude their intermittent use and location along the broad Jerrabomberra Valley suggests that, as per image 2, they were utilised by Aboriginal people as they travelled between the ACT and Monaro and between Pialligo and Lanyon (Lanyon is also thought to be an important focal place of Aboriginal activity). (AASC and CHMA 2008a: pp 49)

Regarding dating the use of HA12, HAC2 and HID1395 by Aboriginal people, AASC and CHMA (2008a) assess it as follows:

The characteristics of the artefact assemblage of the sites indicated that the occupation of these locations was probably restricted to the period between 5000 to 200 years ago. This timeframe corresponds to a period of apparent intensification of occupation within various parts of Australia. It also appears to be roughly contemporaneous with the formation of the alluvial sand deposits in which the artefact material is located. It was not clear as to whether the artefacts were discarded and incorporated into the sediment as it progressively accumulated (ie the artefacts are potentially in situ) or that they were discarded on the present surface and have subsequently worked their way down through the upper soil profile. [The consultant] is of the opinion that the sand bodies were at least partially formed prior to initial Aboriginal use of the area, and that it was the sand bodies that were (to a large extent) the reason why these areas were selected as preferred camp locations (AASC and CHMA 2008a: pp 48).

European heritage at Hume

Europeans were in the vicinity of the Limestone Plains from 1820 and squatters and graziers had moved into the area by the mid-1820s to take advantage of the excellent grazing country. The land on which Aboriginal Places HA12 and HAC2 (plus HID1395 and Hume 5) are located was originally part of John Palmers Jerrabomberra Estate, then part of the Woden Estate owned by Francis Mowatt from 1832 to 1837, as shown in image 3 on Dixon's 1837 map. From 1837

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2

to 1856 the Woden Estate was owned by Dr James Fitzgerald Murray, Terrence Murray, Thomas Rutledge and finally Martin Byrne. In 1871 the land on which the Hume places are located was subsumed by Robert Campbell into his extensive Duntroon Estate. When the County of Murray was proclaimed the land on which the Hume places are located was within the former Portion 12, Parish of Queanbeyan in the County of Murray, as seen in image 4. (CHMA 2012: pp 60, 61)

Compellingly, at Hume, as has been noted, there appears to be evidence of contact between Aboriginal people and European colonists at Hume 5. CHMA (2012) assessed this contact as likely to have occurred in the mid to late 19th Century when the land was either under the ownership of the Murray or Campbell families. Archaeological evidence appears to suggest that contact was associated with the resident of a small European dwelling located at Hume 5 which, if built during the Murray era was likely a settler's cottage, and if built during the Campbell era was probably a shepherd's hut. Therefore, at Hume it appears Aboriginal association with the country endured until at least the middle of the 19th Century. (CHMA 2012: pp 64).

DESCRIPTION

In *Geomorphological and Geoarchaeological Investigations at the Hume Resource Recovery Estate, Hume, ACT* Sullivan and Hughes (2008) describe the geomorphology of Hume as follows:

The present day Dog Trap Creek has cut a deep (up to 6 m) but relatively narrow channel (no more than 30m wide) into Pleistocene alluvium which accumulated in an older, wider channel (up to 100m wide) along the northern side of the valley floor. The creek was almost certainly much smaller before the local hydrology was altered by European land use involving initial tree-clearing with associated periods of increased runoff.

The 1.5 - 2 km wide valley floor to the south of the creek is formed on bedrock mantled with Pleistocene colluvium/alluvium and capped with a thin layer of Holocene alluvium. The older material is referred to as colluvium/alluvium because it is not clear from the limited exposures whether it is primarily slope-moved material (i.e. colluvium) or coarse textured alluvium transported along former drainage lines of which no traces survive. Its texture and structure indicate that it consists of both poorly sorted and angular gravelly slope wash and finer alluvial sediments.

In the vertical banks of Dog Trap Creek banded alluvial sediments with varying amounts of gravel are exposed. These sediments are mainly grey in colour but some mainly finer textured units are mottled red-yellow-grey. This includes a widespread unit less than 1 m below the ground surface. This unit is highly cemented and in places is very indurated (i.e. rock hard). Except perhaps for the uppermost half metre or so, this alluvium is Pleistocene in age.

The valley floor where the archaeological excavations were carried out consists of a slightly dissected plain. As noted above, this surface has formed on bedrock capped with Pleistocene colluvium/alluvium. Remnants of the highest original land surface occur along the southern boundary of the study area (Terrace 3) and on two rises mentioned in Section 1.2 above (Terraces 1 and 2). A broad, shallow non-incised drainage zone crosses the plain through the centre of the study area and following heavy rain this diffuse drainage line feeds runoff into the large dam The slight fluvial dissection that has resulted in the subdued rises and drainage lines probably occurred during the late Pleistocene.

The whole plain in this area, including the remnant higher surfaces, is capped with a thin layer (generally no more than 300 mm thick) of unweathered sandy sediment (the topsoil) which gives way sharply to the underlying harder, more clayey, gravelly and weathered subsoil which is the Pleistocene colluvium/alluvium referred to above. The topsoils across virtually the entire area have been cultivated repeatedly. The stone artefact assemblages recovered by the AASC team all came from this unweathered uppermost sandy sediment layer.

This sandy sediment is almost certainly Holocene to recent alluvium washed in from the hills to the south, especially during periodic floods. The landholder, Mr Brian Barron [of "Stonyhurst"], described to the consultants how during the major 1974 floods, sediment-charged water covered the entire area to about knee depth. Most of the water came in laterally from the south, not along Dog Trap Creek. Floods of this extent could account for the deposition of sandy alluvium on the remnant higher surfaces (Sullivan and Hughes 2008:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2

pp 3, 4).

As previously mentioned AASC and CHMA (2008a) followed on from Sullivan and Hughes' (2008) description of the geomorphology of Hume to document three distinctive landform features; higher dissected plain, lower dissected plain and three elevated terraces. AASC and CHMA (2008a) mapped these landforms as per image 5 and noted the areas with the highest artefact concentrations were on the elevated terraces – which are identified as 'terrace 1', 'terrace 2' and 'terrace 3'. (AASC and CHMA 2008a: pp 1, 26, 27)

HID1395 is located on elevated terrace 1. HAC2 is on elevated terrace 2 which is within 50m of Dog Trap Creek and is a small terrace measuring around 40m x 30m (1152m²), with a height of 1 metre above the surrounding terrain. HA12 (and Hume 5) are on terrace 3, which is the most dominant landscape feature in the area. Terrace 3 is approximately 400m long (north to south), commencing at the Monaro Highway and running north to a point around 50m south of Dog Trap Creek, its width varies from 50 meters and 150 meters. It appears to separate into two distinct features at a point around 100 meters south east of the [old] "Stonyhurst" homestead. Here, one arm of the terrace, on which HA12 is located, continues north towards Dog Trap Creek. The other arm continues north-east for a further 200 meters, terminating around 100 meters south-east of Dog Trap Creek. It is on this arm, that the "Stonyhurst" homestead and associated sheds are built and it is here that Hume 5 is located. (AASC and CHMA 2008a: pp 26, 27)

Soils of the Elevated Terraces

The soil profiles across the three elevated terraces are reasonably consistent. On terraces 1 and 3, the soil profile comprises a thin top humic layer (2-5cm) under-laid by a homogenous red sand down to a depth of 20 to 35cm. Below this is a gravel clay sub-soil. On terrace 2, the soil profile varies slightly, and consists of a thin top humic layer (2-5cm) under-laid by a brown silt / sand extending to a depth of 18cm. Below this is a homogenous red sand down to a depth of between 30 to 35cm. Below this are the gravel clay soils. The artefacts recovered from the test pits excavated on the three elevated rises were all confined to the soil profile above the gravel clays, indicating the gravel clays are all culturally sterile. (CHMA 2012: pp 27)

PHYSICAL CONDITION AND INTEGRITY

This assessment of the physical condition and integrity of HA12 and HAC2 is based on a site visit dated 1 August 2019.

Currently the landscape in which HA12 and HAC2 are located is degraded rural land additionally suffering the effects of drought. Further, Dog Trap Creek is more a deeply incised erosion gully, than a creek. Whilst the area is degraded and has been impacted by installation of the sewerage line for the proposed data centre, the conservation zones for HA12 and HAC2 are intentionally beyond the impact zone of these works and are considered stable. As noted previously, HA12 and HAC2 are relatively intact and have been noted as having research potential individually and as part of several places in the ACT known to have been focal points for Aboriginal activity.

Whilst AASC and CHMA (2008a) characterised the landscape and resource base of Hume in a particular manner; during the 2019 site visit, discussion regarding the features of the Hume camp-sites articulated the amenability of the site to Aboriginal people as they travelled through the landscape as follows;

In addition to being on the elevated sandy terraces, the Hume camp-sites were adjacent to what was possibly a permanent water supply with a stable food resource. Whilst today Dog Trap Creek is an erosion gully, at the time Aboriginal people were camping at Hume it was probably, a reasonably expansive, broad and relatively flat, swampy meadow, sustained by spring water. As such, the area likely contained a diversity of rushes and other plants known to have been used by Aboriginal people for food and fibre, such as the Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Cumbungi (*Typha domingensis and orientalis*). As a wetland habitat, the area would also have supported a diversity of waterfowl and other animal species, providing an additional food resource. Image 1, shows aerial imagery from 2019 demonstrating the general poor condition of the landscape, including the bare nature of the soil and excavation marks for the sewerage line

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2

SITE PLAN

This image has been removed, declared restricted in accordance with s 54 (1) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2

IMAGES

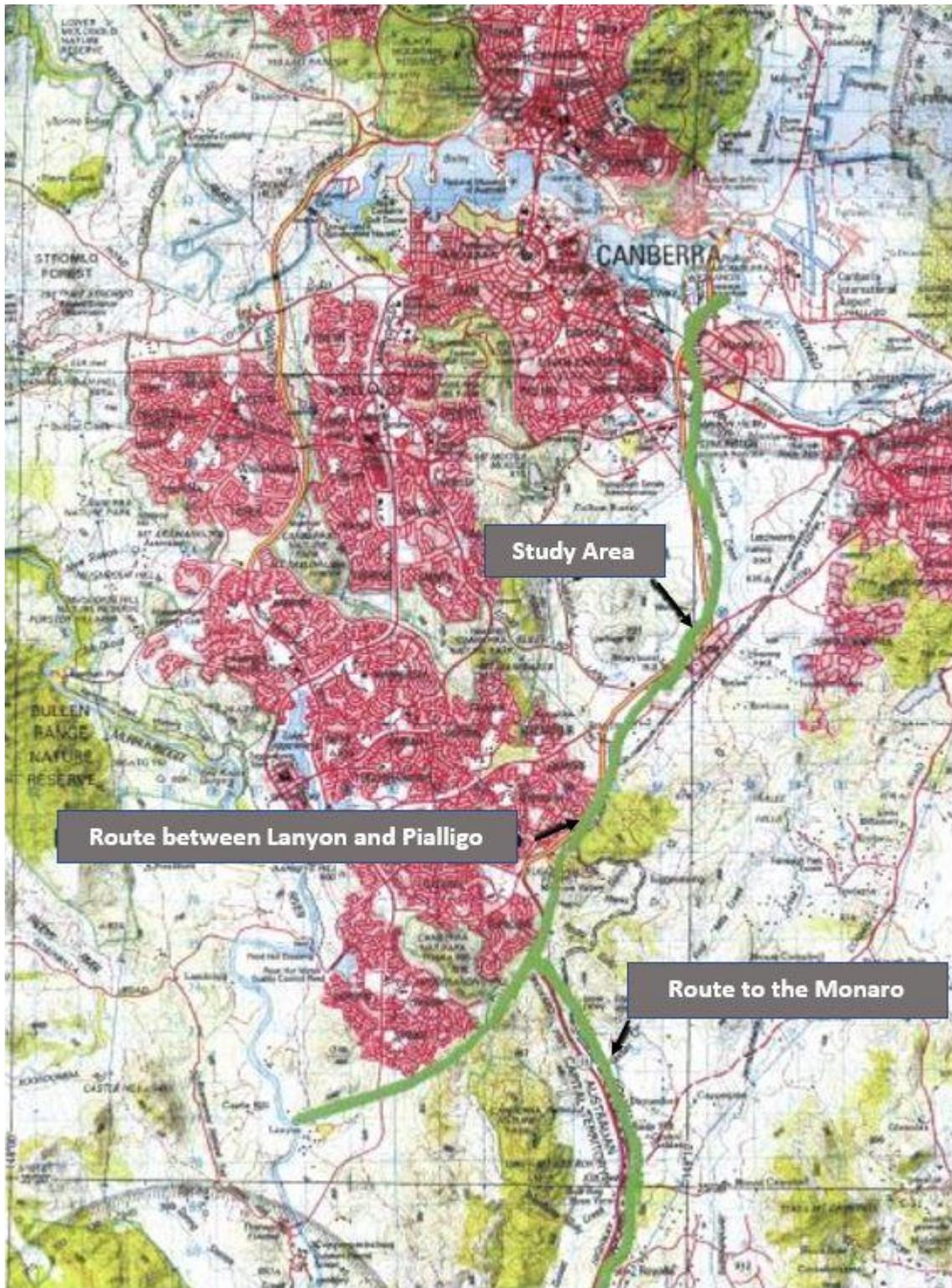


Image 2: Probable Aboriginal travelling routes between Lanyon, Pialligo and the Monaro. The image also shows 'Study Area' which is where HA12 and HAC2 are located. (AASC and CHMA 2008: pp 51)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2



Image 3: Extract from Dixon's 1837 Map of NSW showing landholdings in the vicinity of Hume Aboriginal places HA12 and HAC2, specifically Mowatt's property shown in grey.

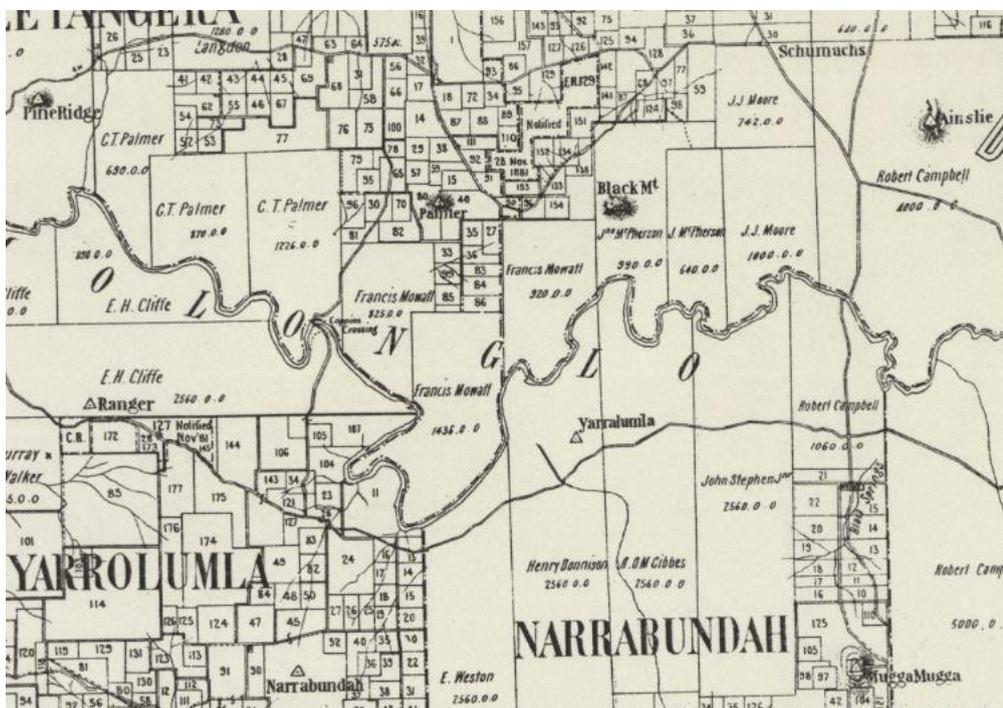


Image 4: Map of the County of Murray 1888, also showing Mowatt's land.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2

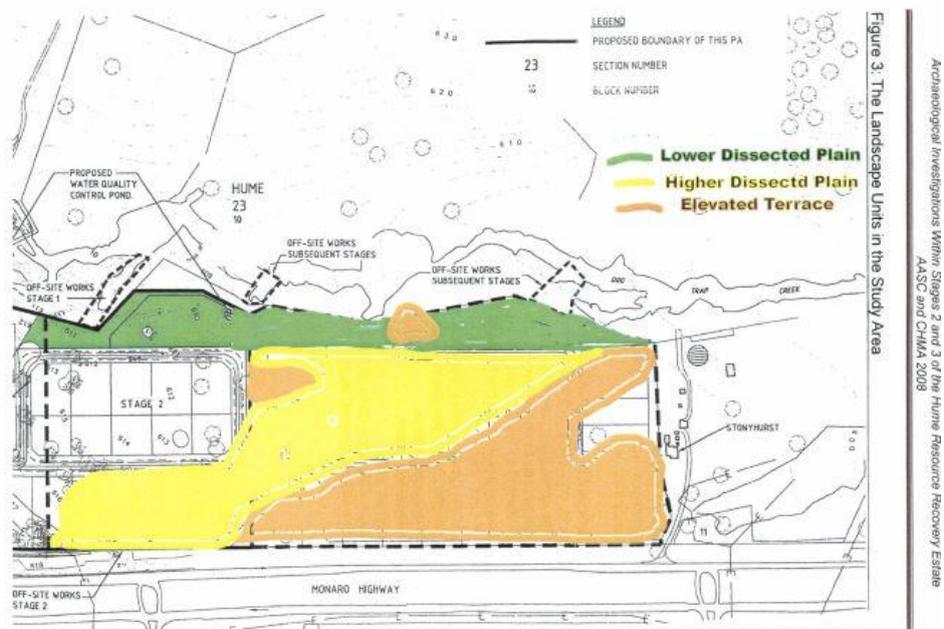


Image 5: This image shows the landscape units identified in 2008, including the three elevated terraces coloured orange. HA12 is located on the northern 'arm' of elevated terrace 3 (which is the large terrace) and HAC2 is on elevated terrace 2 which is the terrace closest to Dog Trap Creek in the north. (AASC and CHMA 2008: pp 24)



Image 6: This photo is taken from HA12 looking south towards the Monaro Highway.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2



Image 7: This photo is looking to the north towards Dog Trap Creek.



Image 8: This photo is looking to the west towards the Hume Resource Recovery Centre (HRRC).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2



Image 9: This photo is looking in the direction of the HRRC and it shows HAC2 in the distance (beyond the fence, in front of the trees).



Image 10: In this photo, HA12 with its excavation trench is visible.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2



Image 11: This photo shows the raised sandy terrace (with excavation trench in the foreground) of HAC2.



Image 12: The elevated terrace of HAC2 is in the background of this image, near the fallen trees.



Image 13: This photo is looking back towards the Monaro Highway.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ABORIGINAL PLACES HA12 AND HAC2

REFERENCES

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