



# Cultural Heritage Assessment

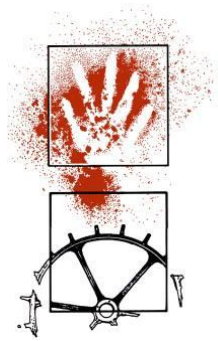
AIS Podium Project

Bruce

ACT



March 2026



**Navin  
Officer**

*heritage  
consultants*

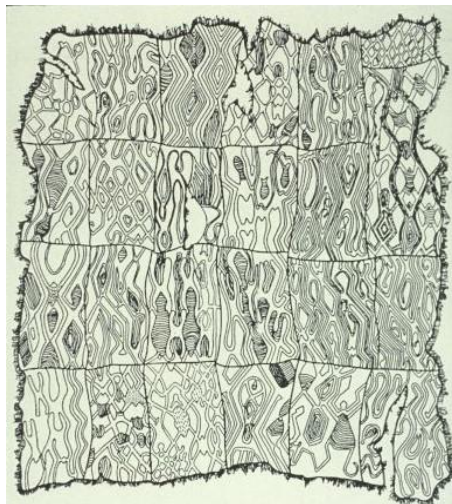
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A Report to Populous



Navin Officer Heritage Consultants acknowledges Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their many diverse communities across our nation and their rich culture. We pay respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water across the Australian landscape and seascape. We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people to Australian life and how their contribution continues to enrich our society. In our daily work we recognise, cherish, celebrate and defend the evidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples rich and complex history and prehistory which extends back from the present day into a deep and distant past. We understand that this archaeological evidence has meaning to the descendants of those who created it. Through our research and conservation efforts we strive to unlock hidden meanings from these traces of the past and to make that knowledge available to current and future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## Document control

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Ellaine Dickens and Alisdair Bryant	V1.1	Nicola Hayes	24/03/2026
Ellaine Dickens	V1.2	Following updated project design	27/03/2026

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- Information which, under Australian law, can be identified as belonging to Indigenous intellectual property; and
- Content which was sourced from and remains part of the public domain.

*Cover photographs: NOHC field photos 2026*

*Previous page: Aboriginal possum skin rug collected 1839-1840 from the Hunter River region, eastern NSW (Smithsonian Inst. Washington D.C. Cat. no. E5803).*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the results of a Cultural Heritage Assessment of the AIS Podium Project. The report was commissioned by Populous on behalf of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC).

ASC are seeking design services for a new Athlete Accommodation, a new Multi Sports Dome and a new High-Performance Testing and Training Centre (HPTTC) (hereafter the 'Study Areas') at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS). It is separated into package 1: Athlete Accommodation and package 2: HPTTC and multi-sport dome. The purpose of this project is to deliver a suite of new, fit-for-purpose facilities at the AIS campus in Canberra that will strengthen Australia's high-performance sport system in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032 and beyond. These developments will provide the following:

- Athlete Accommodation to support short, medium, and long-term stays for elite and pre-elite athletes, support staff, and select precinct users, enabling world-class preparation, recovery, and development.
- A High-Performance Testing and Training Centre (HPTTC) to integrate advanced sport science, testing, and training capabilities in a centralised, accessible location.
- A Multi-Sports Dome, providing a climate-controlled, para-athlete accessible indoor space for multidisciplinary training, testing, and analysis.

The Study Areas are located in Belconnen, Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and are bordered by Gungahlin Drive to the south and Ginninderra Drive to the north (Figure 1-1, Figure 1-2). The accommodation Study Area is 6,335 m<sup>2</sup> and the High-Performance Testing and Training Centre (HPTTC) and Sports Dome Study Area is 41,871 m<sup>2</sup>.

There are no previously recorded Aboriginal sites within either of the Study Areas. There are four Aboriginal sites in the broader vicinity of the study area (Bruce IF1, Bruce IF2, Bruce Ridge 4, and Bruce Ridge 6), the closest of which (Bruce IF1) is 198 m east of the Study Areas. Bruce Ridge 4 and Bruce Ridge 6 were salvaged in 2006 (NOHC, 2006).

There are no listed historic sites within either of the Study Areas. James Shanahan Hut site is located 367 m southwest of the Study Areas and is noted as a point of interest, however is not listed on the ACT Heritage Register. The Bruce Stadium and National Indoor Stadium Precinct is listed as 'R2 - Removed from the Provisional Register by expiration of interim effect – all located on 'National Land' managed by the National Capital Authority (NCA)'. The ACT Heritage Council has therefore decided not to enter the place in the ACT Heritage Register. The NCA manages Commonwealth and National Heritage listed places on behalf of the ACT Government. The Bruce Stadium and National Indoor Stadium Precinct is **not** listed on either the Commonwealth or National Heritage lists.

No new Aboriginal or historic sites were recorded during the field survey. There is a possible scarred tree identified within the AIS precinct, but the location of this tree is unknown and is not one of the trees identified as a significant tree in ngh 2019.

There are no Aboriginal or historic sites within the Study Areas therefore there is no impact to heritage from the project.

*It is recommended that:*

1. The project includes either naming or signage that tells of the area's Aboriginal past and connections.
2. A copy of this report should be provided to the ACT Heritage.
3. One copy of this report should be provided to each of the ACT RAOs.
4. The unanticipated discovery protocols in Appendix 1 should be implemented for this project.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Study Area Location and Description

This report documents the results of a Cultural Heritage Assessment of the AIS Podium Project. The report was commissioned by Populous on behalf of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC).

The Study Areas are located in Belconnen, Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and are bordered by Gungahlin Drive to the south and Ginninderra Drive to the north (Figure 1-1, Figure 1-2). The accommodation Study Area is 6,335 m<sup>2</sup> and the High-Performance Testing and Training Centre (HPTTC) and Sports Dome Study Area is 41,871 m<sup>2</sup>.

## 1.2 Project Description

ASC are seeking design services for a new Athlete Accommodation, a new Multi Sports Dome and a new High-Performance Testing and Training Centre (HPTTC) (hereafter the 'Study Areas') at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) (Figure 1-3). It is separated into package 1: Athlete Accommodation and package 2: HPTTC and multi-sport dome. The purpose of this project is to deliver a suite of new, fit-for-purpose facilities at the AIS campus in Canberra that will strengthen Australia's high-performance sport system in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032 and beyond. These developments will provide the following:

- Athlete Accommodation to support short, medium, and long-term stays for elite and pre-elite athletes, support staff, and select precinct users, enabling world-class preparation, recovery, and development.
- A High-Performance Testing and Training Centre (HPTTC) to integrate advanced sport science, testing, and training capabilities in a centralised, accessible location.
- A Multi-Sports Dome, providing a climate-controlled, para-athlete accessible indoor space for multidisciplinary training, testing, and analysis.

Together, these facilities will ensure the AIS remains a globally recognised leader in high-performance sport, research, and innovation.

## 1.3 Heritage Status of the Study Areas

There are no previously recorded Aboriginal sites within either of the Study Areas. There are four Aboriginal sites in the broader vicinity of the study area (Bruce IF1, Bruce IF2, Bruce Ridge 4, and Bruce Ridge 6), the closest of which (Bruce IF1) is 198 m east of the Study Areas. Bruce Ridge 4 and Bruce Ridge 6 were salvaged in 2006 (NOHC, 2006).

There are no listed historic sites within either of the Study Areas. The James Shanahan Hut site is located 367 m southwest of the Study Areas is noted as a point of interest, however is not listed on the ACT Heritage Register. The Bruce Stadium and National Indoor Stadium Precinct is listed as 'R2 - Removed from the Provisional Register by expiration of interim effect – all located on 'National Land' managed by the National Capital Authority (NCA)'. The ACT Heritage Council has therefore decided not to enter the place in the ACT Heritage Register. The NCA manages Commonwealth and National Heritage listed places on behalf of the ACT Government. The Bruce Stadium and National Indoor Stadium Precinct is **not** listed on either the Commonwealth or National Heritage lists.

## 1.4 This Report

### 1.4.1 Outline

This report:

- Describes the proposed development/works etc (Section 1);



- Describes the methodology employed in the study (Section 2);
- Describes the environmental setting of the Study Areas (Section 3);
- Provides information relevant to the Aboriginal cultural context of the Study Areas (Section 4);
- Provides information on the archaeological context of the Study Areas (Section 5);
- Provides a heritage context for the Study Areas (Sections 6);
- Describes the results of the field survey conducted in the context of the assessment (Section 7);
- Provides a statutory information as it relates to the cultural heritage identified within the Study Areas (Section 8); and
- Provides management recommendations based on the results of the investigation (Section 9).

#### **1.4.2 Restricted Information and Confidentiality**

Information in this report relating to the exact location of Aboriginal sites should not be published or promoted in the public domain. The following images and report sections should be restricted in a public version of this document:

- Figures 5-1; and
- Section 5.3 (grid references and site location information).

No information provided by Aboriginal stakeholders in this report has been specifically identified as requiring access restrictions due to its cultural sensitivity.

No information in this report has been classified as confidential.



**Figure 1-1 AIS Podium Project Study Areas**

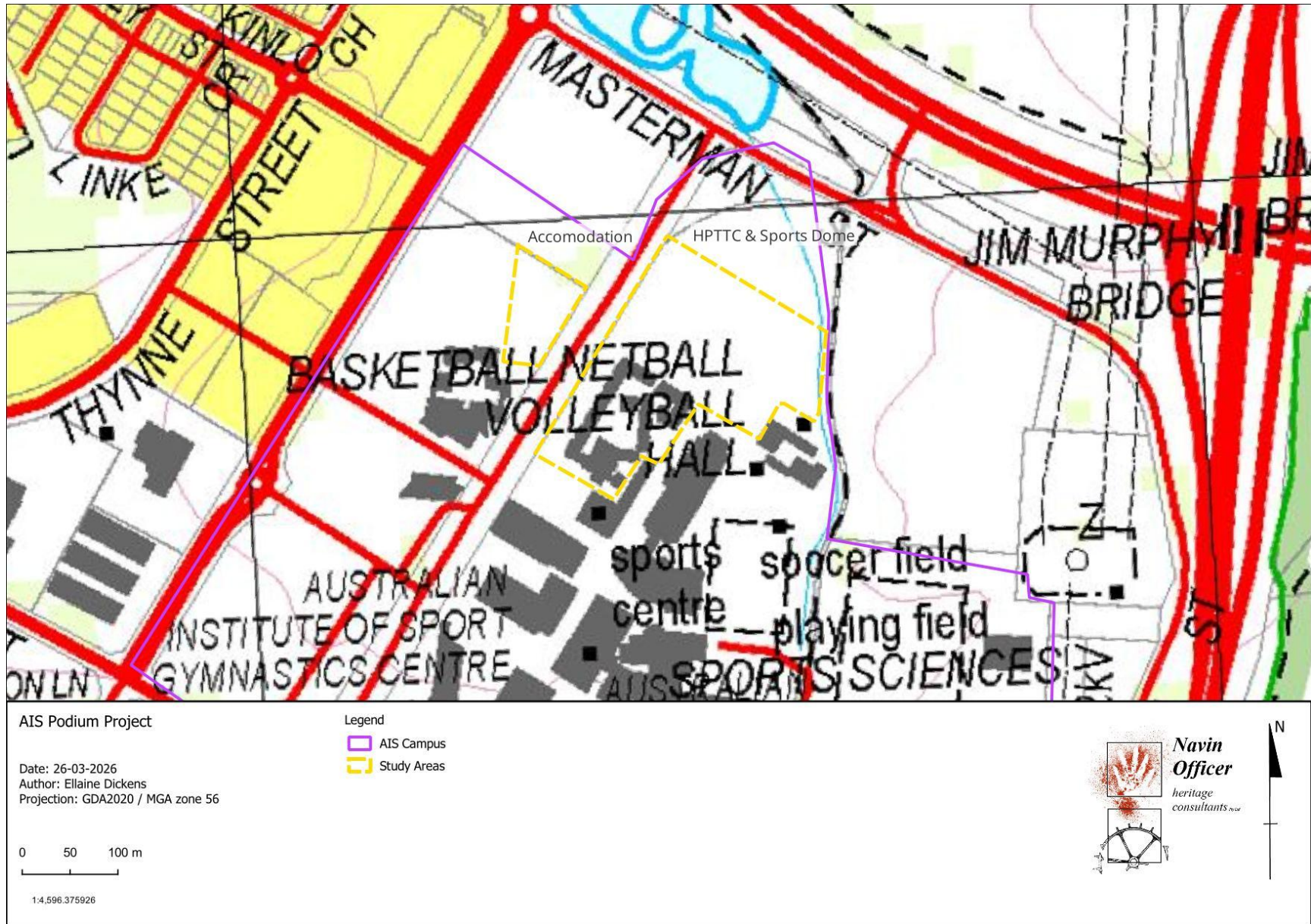
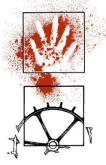


Figure 1-2 Study Areas on topographic map



Figure 1-3 Proposed site plan (from Populous)



## 2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Literature and Database Review

A range of archaeological and historical data was reviewed for the Study Areas and their surrounds. This literature and data review was used to determine if known Aboriginal and historical sites were located within the area under investigation, to facilitate site prediction on the basis of known regional and local site patterns, and to place the area within an archaeological and heritage management context. The review of documentary sources included heritage registers and schedules, local histories, and archaeological reports.

Literature sources included the Heritage Registers maintained by the Australian Heritage Council, Department of Environment and the Heritage Registers and associated reports held by ACT Heritage, ACT Department of Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate. Regional and local histories and heritage studies were also reviewed.

Searches were undertaken of the following statutory and non-statutory heritage registers and schedules:

- Statutory Listings:
  - : World Heritage List;
  - : The National Heritage List (Australian Heritage Council);
  - : The Commonwealth Heritage List (Australian Heritage Council); and
  - : The Heritage Register (ACT Heritage Council).
- Non-Statutory Listings:
  - : The Register of the National Estate (Australian Heritage Council);
  - : Register of the National Trust of Australia (ACT);
  - : Australian Institute of Architects, Heritage Buildings List; and
  - : Engineers Australia (Engineering Heritage Recognition Program).

**Table 2-1. Statutory Heritage Register Searches**

Register	Date Searched	Search Result
<b>Statutory</b>		
World Heritage List	23 September 2025	No items within the vicinity of the Study Areas.
National Heritage List (Australian Heritage Council)	23 September 2025	No items within the vicinity of the Study Areas.
Commonwealth Heritage List (Australian Heritage Council)	23 September 2025	No items within the vicinity of the Study Areas.



Register	Date Searched	Search Result
ACT Heritage Register	6 December 2025	<p>No Aboriginal sites within the Study Areas.</p> <p>There are three Aboriginal sites located within the vicinity of the Study Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruce IF1 – located 80 m from the Study Areas.</li> <li>• Bruce IF2 – located 220 m from the study Areas</li> <li>• Bruce Ridge 4 (BR4) – located 738 m from the Study Areas.</li> <li>• Bruce Ridge 6 (BR6) – located 705 m from the Study Areas.</li> </ul> <p>There is one historic item that overlaps the Study Areas, however this site is not listed as a place on the ACT heritage register:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruce Stadium and National Indoor Stadium precinct – listed as 'R2 - Removed from the Provisional Register by expiration of interim effect – all located on 'National Land' managed by the National Capital Authority (NCA)'. The ACT Heritage Council therefore decided not to enter the place in the ACT Heritage Register.</li> </ul> <p>There is one historic item that is within the vicinity of the Study Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James Shanahan Hut Site – 367 m from the Study Areas - noted as a point of interest, however not listed on the ACT Heritage Register.</li> </ul>
<b>Non-statutory</b>		
Register of the National Estate (RNE)	23 September 2025	<p>There are two items listed on the RNE within the vicinity of the Study Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruce Stadium, Original Grandstand &amp; the National Indoor Stadium – 253 m from the Study Areas – listed as an historic Indicative Place.</li> <li>• Black Mountain, Aranda Bushland, O'Connor Ridge and Gossan Hill – 560 m from the Study Areas – listed as a natural Indicative Place.</li> </ul>
Register of the National Trust of Australia (ACT)	23 September 2025	No items within the vicinity of the Study Areas.
Australian Institute of Architects, Heritage Buildings List	23 September 2025	<p>There is one place within the vicinity of the Study Areas listed on the Register of Significant Architecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIO Stadium Canberra &amp; AIS Arena Precinct (Bruce Stadium &amp; National Indoor Stadium Precinct National Athletics Stadium &amp; National Indoor</li> </ul>



Register	Date Searched	Search Result
		Sports & Training Centre) – 100 m from the Study Areas
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Listed in 2003 as an item of National significance, in the Late Twentieth Century Structuralist Style.</li></ul>
Engineers Australia (Engineering Heritage Recognition Program)	23 September 2025	No items within the vicinity of the Study Areas.

## 2.2 Fieldwork

A site survey was undertaken by Navin Officer Heritage Consultants (NOHC) staff on the 19 March 2026 (Nicola Hayes and Garth Thompson). This involved a walk over of the area proposed to be impacted by the project. All areas subject to direct impact were traversed. Field participants walked 5-10 m apart to ensure full coverage of all impact areas.

A foot survey was chosen as the best approach due to the contained nature of the project and the limited area of impact. The survey was aimed at assessing the previously recorded sites in the study area and to determine whether any other historical or Aboriginal sites were evident in the area.

Field recording of sites involved:

- Taking GPS positions for each site;
- Taking one or more digital photographs, showing the general context of the site and each artefact recorded;
- Recording basic technological traits for each artefact; and
- Recording the landscape setting of each site.

NOHC was accompanied by Adrian Brown from the Representative Aboriginal Organization King Brown Tribal Group (KBTG).

## 2.3 Project Personnel

This report was compiled by Ellaine Dickens (Senior Archaeologist / Heritage Consultant) and Alisdair Bryant (Archaeologist / Heritage Consultant) and reviewed by Nicola Hayes.

## 2.4 Recording Parameters

The archaeological survey aimed at identifying material evidence of Aboriginal occupation as revealed by surface artefacts and areas of archaeological potential unassociated with surface artefacts. Potential recordings fall into two broad categories: sites and potential archaeological deposits.

### 2.4.1 Aboriginal Sites and PADs

A site is defined as any material evidence of past Aboriginal activity that remains within a context or place which can be reliably related to that activity.



Most Aboriginal sites are identified by the presence of three main categories of artefacts: stone or shell artefacts situated on or in a sedimentary matrix, marks located on or in rock surfaces, and scars on trees.

Frequently encountered site types within southeastern Australia include stone artefact occurrences - including isolated finds and open artefact scatters, coastal and freshwater middens, rock shelter sites - including occupation deposit and/or rock art, grinding groove sites and scarred trees. For the purposes of this section, only the methodologies used in basic site identification are outlined, together with those for the recording types most likely to be encountered by this investigation.

### *Stone Artefact Occurrences*

Stone artefact occurrences are the most commonly recorded site type in Australia. They may consist of single artefacts - described as isolated finds; or as a distribution of more than one artefact – often described as an artefact scatter or 'open camp site' when recording surface artefacts, or as a subsurface artefact distribution when dealing with an archaeological deposit.

Where artefact incidence is very low, either in terms of areal distribution (artefacts per square metre) or density (artefacts per cubic metre), then the differentiation of the recording from background artefacts counts or *background scatter* may be an issue.

### *Isolated finds*

An isolated find is a single stone artefact, not located within a rock shelter, and which occurs without any associated evidence of Aboriginal occupation within a radius of 60 metres. Isolated finds may be indicative of:

- Random loss or deliberate discard of a single artefact;
- The remnant of a now dispersed and disturbed artefact scatter; and
- An otherwise obscured or sub-surface artefact scatter.

Except in the case of the latter, isolated finds may be considered to be constituent components of the *background scatter* present within any particular landform.

The distance used to define an isolated artefact varies according to the survey objectives, the incidence of ground surface exposure, the extent of ground surface disturbance, and estimates of *background scatter* or *background discard* densities. In the absence of baseline information relating to background scatter densities, the defining distance for an isolated find must be based on methodological and visibility considerations. Given the varied incidence of ground surface exposure and deposit disturbance within the study area, and the lack of background baseline data, the specification of 60 metres is considered to be an effective parameter for surface survey methodologies. This distance provides a balance between detecting fine scale patterns of Aboriginal occupation and avoiding environmental biases caused by ground disturbance or high ground surface exposure rates. The 60 metre parameter has provided an effective separation of low density artefact occurrences in similar southeast Australian topographies outside of semi-arid landscapes.

### *Background scatter*

Background scatter is a term used generally by archaeologists to refer to artefacts which cannot be usefully related to a place or focus of past activity (except for the net accumulation of single artefact losses).

There is no single concept for background discard or 'scatter', and therefore no agreed definition. The definitions in current use are based on the postulated nature of prehistoric activity, and often they are phrased in general terms and do not include quantitative criteria. Commonly agreed is that background discard occurs in the absence of 'focused' activity involving the production or discard of stone artefacts in a particular location. An example of unfocused activity is occasional isolated discard of artefacts during travel along a route or pathway. Examples of 'focused activity' are camping, knapping and heat-



treating stone, cooking in a hearth, and processing food with stone tools. In practical terms, over a period of thousands of years an accumulation of 'unfocused' discard may result in an archaeological concentration that may be identified as a 'site'. Definitions of background discard comprising only qualitative criteria do not specify the numbers (numerical flux) or 'density' of artefacts required to discriminate site areas from background discard.

### *Artefact scatters*

Artefacts situated within an open context are classed as an open artefact scatter (or 'open camp site') when two or more occur no more than 60 metres away from any other constituent artefact. The 60 metre specification relates back to the definition of an isolated find (*Refer above*). The use of the term *scatter* is intended only to be descriptive of the current archaeological evidence and does not infer the original human behaviour which formed the site. The term *open camp site* has been used extensively in the past to describe open artefact scatters. This was based on ethnographic modelling suggesting that most artefact occurrences resulted from activities at camp sites. However, in order to separate the description from the interpretation of field evidence, the terms *artefact scatter*, *artefact distribution* or *artefact occurrence* are now more extensively used. The latter two options can also be used to categorise artefacts occurring in sub-surface contexts.

### *Scarred Trees*

Trees with scars of Aboriginal origin form the other major type of artefactual evidence. Each tree is normally considered to be a separate site. The identification of a scar as Aboriginal in origin is dependent on a set of inter-related interpretive criteria. The credibility of alternative causal explanations such as natural traumas and other types of human scarring must be tested for each scar.

A range of diagnostic criteria has been developed to assist in the identification of Aboriginal scarred trees. The following criteria are based on archaeological work conducted by Simmons (1977) and Beesley (1989), and the field manual for Aboriginal scarred trees developed by Long (2005):

1. The scar does not normally run to ground level: (scars resulting from fire, fungal attack or lightning nearly always reach ground level). However, ground termination does not necessarily discount an Aboriginal origin (some ethno-historical examples of canoe scars reach the ground);
  - 1(a). If a scar extends to the ground, the sides of the original scar must be relatively parallel: (natural scars tend to be triangular in shape);
2. The scar is either approximately parallel sided or concave, and symmetrical: (few natural scars are likely to have these properties except fire scars which may be symmetrical but are wider at the base than their apex. Surveyors marks are typically triangular, and often adzed);
3. The scar should be reasonably regular in outline and regrowth: scars of natural origin tend to have irregular outlines and may have uneven regrowth;
4. The ends of the scar should be 'shaped', either squared off, or pointed (often as a result of regrowth): (a 'keyhole' profile with a 'tail' is suggestive of branch loss);
5. A scar which contains adze or axe marks on the original scar surface is likely to be the result of human scarring. Their morphology and distribution may lend support to an interpretation of an Aboriginal origin: (marks produced after the scarring event may need to be discounted);
6. The scar must date to the time of Aboriginal bark exploitation within its region: The traditional Aboriginal exploitation of bark probably ceased in most regions between 100 and 150 years ago. However, in some locations associated with Aboriginal settlement, the Aboriginal removal of bark may have continued to the present day, or restarted as part of new cultural movements.
7. The tree must be endemic to the region: (and thus exclude historic plantings).

Field based identification of Aboriginal scars, is based on surface evidence only and will not necessarily provide a definitive classification. In many cases the possibility of a natural origin cannot be ruled out,



despite the presence of several diagnostic criteria or the balance of interpretation leaning toward an Aboriginal origin. For this reason interpretations of an Aboriginal origin are qualified by the recorder's degree of certainty. The following categories were used:

- Aboriginal scar - This is a scar where an Aboriginal origin is considered the most likely. The scar conforms to all of the criteria and a natural origin is considered unlikely and improbable;
- Probable Aboriginal scar - This is a scar that conforms to all of the criteria and where an Aboriginal origin is considered to be the most likely. Despite this, a natural origin cannot be ruled out; and
- Possible Aboriginal scar - This is a scar which conforms to all or most of the criteria and where an Aboriginal origin cannot be reliably considered as more likely than alternative natural causes. The characteristics of this scar will also be consistent with a natural cause.

### *Potential Archaeological Deposits*

A potential archaeological deposit, or PAD, is defined as any location where the potential for subsurface archaeological material is considered to be moderate or high, relative to the surrounding study area landscape. The potential for subsurface material to be present is assessed using criteria developed from the results of previous surveys and excavations relevant to the region. Where necessary, PADs can be given an indicative rating of their 'archaeological potential' based on a combined assessment of their potential to contain artefacts, and the potential archaeological value of the deposit. Table 2-2 illustrates the matrix on which this assessment is based. Locations with low potential for artefacts fall below the threshold of classification. In such cases the potential incidence of artefactual material is considered to be the same as, or close to that for background scatter. Where there is moderate potential for artefacts, the predicted archaeological potential parallels the potential significance of the deposit. For deposits with high potential for artefacts, the assessed archaeological potential is weighted positively.

The boundaries of PADs are generally defined by the extent of particular micro-landforms known to have high correlations with archaeological material. A PAD may or may not be associated with surface artefacts. In the absence of artefacts, a location with potential will be recorded as a PAD. Where one or more surface artefacts occur on a sedimentary deposit, a PAD may also be identified where there is insufficient evidence to assess the nature and content of the underlying deposit. This situation is due mostly to poor ground surface visibility.

**Table 2-2 Matrix showing the basis for assessing the archaeological potential Matrix showing the basis for assessing the archaeological potential (shown in bolded black text) of a potential archaeological deposit.**

		<b>Potential to contain Aboriginal objects</b>		
		<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>High</i>
<b>Potential archaeological significance</b>	<i>Low</i>	---	<b>low</b>	<b>moderate</b>
	<i>Moderate</i>	---	<b>moderate</b>	<b>high</b>
	<i>High</i>	---	<b>high</b>	<b>high</b>

### **2.4.2 Historical Sites and Features**

Historical archaeology refers to the 'post-contact' period and includes: domestic, commercial and industrial sites as well as most maritime sites. It is the study of the past using physical evidence in conjunction with historical sources. The two primary types of places or items that may form part of the historical archaeology context include:



1. Below ground evidence, including building foundations, occupation deposits, features and artefacts; and above ground evidence, including buildings, works, industrial structures and relics that are intact or ruined; and
2. Areas of land that display evidence of human activity or occupation.

Within these broad parameters, an historical archaeological site may include:

- Topographical features and evidence of past environments (that is, resident in pollens and diatoms);
- Evidence of site formation, evolution, redundancy and abandonment (that is, features and materials associated with land reclamation, sequences of structural development, demolition/deconstruction, and renewal);
- Evidence of function and activities according to historical theme/s represented (for example, an industrial site may contain diagnostic evidence of process, products and by-products);
- Evidence associated with domestic occupation including household items and consumables, ornaments, personal effects and toys;
- Evidence of diet including animal and fish bones, and plant residues;
- Evidence of pastimes and occupations including tools of trade and the often fragmentary signatures of these activities and processes;
- Methods of waste disposal and sanitation, including the waste itself which may contain discarded elements from all classes of artefact as well as indicators of diet and pathology; and
- Any surviving physical evidence of the interplay between site environment and people.

The information found in historical archaeological sites is often part of a bigger picture which offers opportunities to compare and contrast results between sites. The most common comparisons are made at the local level, however, due to advances in research and the increasing sophistication and standardisation of methods of data collection, the capacity for wider reference (nationally and, occasionally, internationally) exists and places added emphasis on identification and conservation of historical archaeological resources.

## 2.5 Study Limitations

Archaeological assessments commissioned for development projects are restricted to the specific footprint that will be impacted by the project. The area of land being assessed is specifically constrained, and in many cases will not representatively sample the different landforms found across the wider region being studied. Therefore, a full picture of the archaeology of an area cannot be gained or assumed by this type of assessment.

These limitations will usually become less pronounced as further assessments are carried out in a region, since additional sites are assessed. A systematic bias in the data can still easily occur, however, if the patches of ground are concentrated in one landform type over another. This could be the case if the assessments relate to development projects which preferentially occur on specific landforms.

Data on uses of the land by Aboriginal groups in the post-contact period, including the present day, might be limited if activities practised by Aboriginal groups have not been reported in the public domain or to NOHC. This could occur if land use practises are associated with knowledge that is culturally restricted.



## 2.6 Glossary

<b>Aboriginal Object</b>	An object associated with Aboriginal people because of Aboriginal tradition ( <i>Heritage Act 2004</i> ).
<b>Aboriginal Place</b>	A place associated with Aboriginal people because of Aboriginal tradition ( <i>Heritage Act 2004</i> ).
<b>Aboriginal site</b>	A place or location which relates to past or contemporary Aboriginal occupation. Sites can be divided into those identified from archaeological evidence (archaeological sites), and those related to intangible cultural values, such as revealed by oral tradition and lore, or from the historical record. An Aboriginal site may have both archaeological and intangible values.
<b>Archaeological site</b>	A place or location with the confirmed presence of archaeological evidence of Aboriginal occupation, where the context of that evidence can be reliably related to the Aboriginal actions which produced the evidence.
<b>Artefact</b>	An object, normally portable, made or modified by human hand (see 'stone artefact').
<b>Artefact occurrence</b>	A term usually applied to site recordings comprising stone artefacts and which refers to one or more stone artefacts situated within a specified surface area or subsurface deposit. Various measures are used for defining the boundaries of such recordings. Refer also to 'surface' and 'subsurface artefact occurrence'.
<b>Artefact scatter</b>	A formerly used open site-type classification defined as two or more stone artefacts situated no more than a specified distance (such as 60 m) away from any other included artefact. Typically, this category did not include isolated finds. The use of the term <i>scatter</i> was intended only to be descriptive and did not infer the original human behaviour which formed the site. The term <i>open camp site</i> has been used extensively in the past to describe open artefact scatters.
<b>Background discard or scatter</b>	<p>There is no single concept for background discard or 'scatter', and therefore no agreed definition. The definitions in current use are based on the postulated nature of prehistoric activity, and often they are phrased in general terms and do not include quantitative criteria. It is commonly agreed that background discard occurs in the absence of 'focused' activity involving the production or discard of stone artefacts in a particular location. An example of unfocused activity is occasional isolated discard of artefacts during travel along a route or pathway. Examples of 'focused activity' are camping, knapping and heat-treating stone, cooking in a hearth, and processing food with stone tools.</p> <p>In practical terms, over a period of thousands of years an accumulation of 'unfocused' discard may result in an archaeological concentration that may be identified as a 'site'. Definitions of background discard comprising only qualitative criteria do not specify the numbers (numerical flux) or 'density' of artefacts required to discriminate site areas from background discard.</p>
<b>Exposure incidence</b>	The percentage of the ground (i.e., without grass, leaf litter, gravel cover) that can be seen in the overall area.
<b>Isolated find</b>	A single stone artefact, not located within a rock shelter, and which occurs without any associated evidence of Aboriginal occupation within



a specified radius, such as 60 m (depending on which archaeological convention is used). Isolated finds may represent single discard events, be constituent components of background scatter, or be indicative of larger obscured, remnant and disturbed sites.

**Lithic assemblage**  
(of stone)

Collection of whole and fragmentary stone artefacts and manuports obtained from an archaeological site, either by collecting items scattered on the present ground surface (see lithic scatter) or by controlled excavation (see also 'stone artefact').

**Open camp site**

A formerly-used site type classification defined as an open context stone artefact occurrence (or artefact scatter), containing two or more artefacts situated no more than a specified arbitrary distance (such as 60 m) away from any other included artefact. The term *open camp site* was based on ethnographic modelling suggesting that most artefact occurrences resulted from activities at camp sites. However, in order to separate the description from the interpretation of field evidence, both open camp sites and isolated finds are now referred to as *artefact occurrences*.

**Potential archaeological deposit (PAD)**

A discrete location or area, defined spatially either by geomorphological, disturbance or administrative criteria, within which there is a predicted likelihood that subsurface archaeological material is present, and that this material would warrant archaeological investigation in order to determine its scientific, cultural, or statutory value and status.

**Study Areas**

The area for which the assessment is being undertaken.

**Visibility**

Visibility within exposures relates to what can be seen as a percentage of the ground within exposures.



## 3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

### 3.1 Geology

The underlying geology of the Study Areas is dominated by Silurian sedimentary rocks (formed approximately 443 million years ago) that feature sandstone and siltstone metamorphosed to slate and quartzite (Figure 3-2). Also present is volcanic rocks including dacite and airfall tuffs (Figure 3-2). Immediately south of the Study Areas is Ordovician sedimentary rocks (formed 491 million years ago), featuring quartz-rich interbedded and laminated siltstone and mudstone. Another prominent geological unit, late Ordovician Warbisco Shale, runs centrally through O'Connor and Bruce Ridge, located South of the Study Areas. The underlying geology of a region can significantly influence trends in Indigenous stone tool production, procurement and distribution, with materials such as tuff, quartz, and silcrete favoured by past Indigenous groups (Flenniken and White, 1985).

### 3.2 Soils

The Study Areas cross two of the Great Soil Groups (Figure 3-3) and are dominated by Yellow Podzolic Soils, featuring granites and metasediments, associated with the Ginninderra's catchment. The East, South and West of the Study Areas consist of a boundary with Red Podzolic Soils. These soils are categorised in the Australian Soil Classification as 'Kurosols', generally acidic and nutrient poor soils with limited fertility and agricultural application (DCCEEW, 2012).

### 3.3 Landform (topography)

The Study Areas are situated within a low relief rolling topography of open hills and basal valley slopes, bounded by the gently sloping Bruce and O'Connor ridges to the south (Figure 3-4). The Study Areas feature gently sloping hills, which have experienced considerable grading associated with the construction of the existing AIS campus. Elevation ranges from 605 to 623 m above sea level within the Study Areas.

### 3.4 Drainage and Hydrology

Water sources are some of the most culturally significant landforms to contemporary Indigenous groups and are thus considered a key resource in the development of predictive modelling for Aboriginal archaeology (Langton, 2006). The site is drained to the north into 'Pinker Pond' via an intermittent tributary of Ginninderra Creek which runs north-south 80 m east of the Study Areas (Figure 3-4).

### 3.5 Vegetation

The majority of the vegetation within the Study Areas has been extensively cleared due to previous agricultural and pastoral land use, and the construction and maintenance of the existing AIS campus. Few areas of remnant vegetation are present within the study area, with vegetated areas generally consisting of regrowth and isolated old growth trees, consisting of Stringybark (*E. macrohyncha*), Yellow Box (*E. melliodora*), and Blakely's Red Gum (*E. blakelyi*). Prior to land clearing, the environment would have consisted primarily of Eucalypt woodland and dry sclerophyll forest, broadly similar to the Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum grassy woodland vegetation. Likewise, native grassland would have been prominent, with understorey species, especially in association with alluvial flats, including a variety of grass species such as *Poa spp.* and *Stipa sp.* (snow grass & spear grass), *Danthonia pallida* (wallaby grass), *Themeda triandra* (kangaroo grass), *Panicum effusum* (hairy panic) and *Sporobolus elongatus* (rat's tail) (Pryor, 1938). A wide range of plant species throughout the environment had practical, medicinal, and ritual significance to Aboriginal groups. These groups engaged in a complex process of exploitation and renewal, resulting in the wholesale creation of patterns of biodiversity throughout the region (Gott, 2008).



### 3.6 Land Use Impacts

Historical land use within the region consists primarily of agricultural activity, either modified pastoral use (i.e., grazing) and rural residential/farm infrastructure (DCCEEW, 2017) (Figure 3-1). Historical aerials demonstrate pastoral/grazing activities as the dominant land use surrounding the study area through 1961 until 1976, when construction begun on the associated stadium 500 m to the south. By 1991 most of the AIS campus had been constructed, with further developments of Eastern Bruce and the Gungahlin Drive Extension visible in 2005 (Figure 3-5).

Within the Study Areas the predominant contemporary type of land use consists of urban/intensive residential infrastructure, with smaller areas of land having been used for services, transport, and communication. Considerable recreational infrastructure, including the GIO stadium, have all been constructed in association with the AIS. The majority of the Study Areas have been extensively developed since 2005, involving considerable grading, construction of roads, car parks, and buildings (Figure 3-1).

Considerable disturbance in the Study Areas is further documented through a detailed view of historical imagery from 2007 to present day (Figure 3-6). The Accommodation Study Area appears to have been extensively disturbed prior to 1991 when the AIS campus was constructed. Imagery in December 2005 follows the demolition of a carpark adjacent to the southern border of the study area, demonstrating extensive grading and construction across the entire bounded area. The area of vegetation to the northeast of the Study Areas is comprised largely of isolated new-growth trees and low scrub, which has been cleared and then died back several times since 2005, as well as having been impacted by vehicle use in the area, as is evident in imagery from 2018. The HPTTC & Sports Dome Study Area has been extensively cleared and graded since the earliest available imagery in 2004, with only the northern section of the Study Area remaining relatively undeveloped since the construction of the AIS compound in 1991. The 2005 imagery demonstrates very little vegetation within the northern extent of the Study Area, except for isolated Eucalyptus trees. Clearance for the construction of a carpark and two adjacent buildings, one of which effectively comprised the last remaining area of undeveloped land within the current Study Area, occurred in 2005. Both buildings were demolished in 2008, resulting in further disturbance throughout the Study Areas.

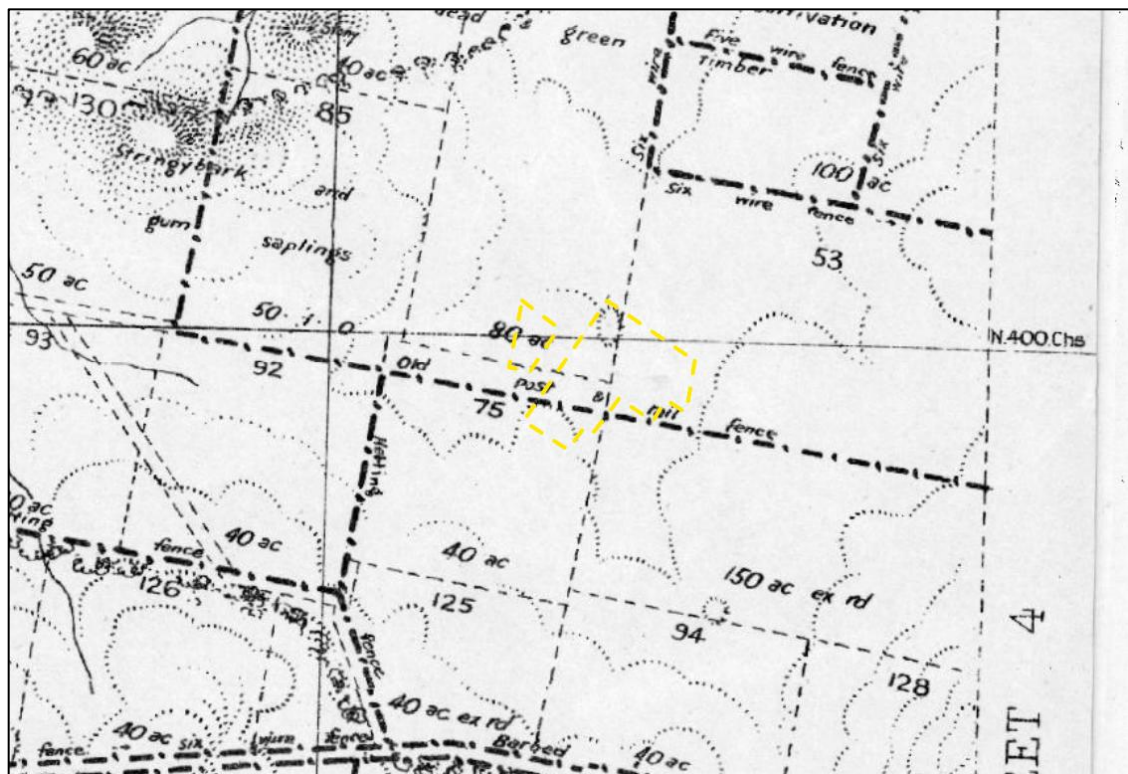
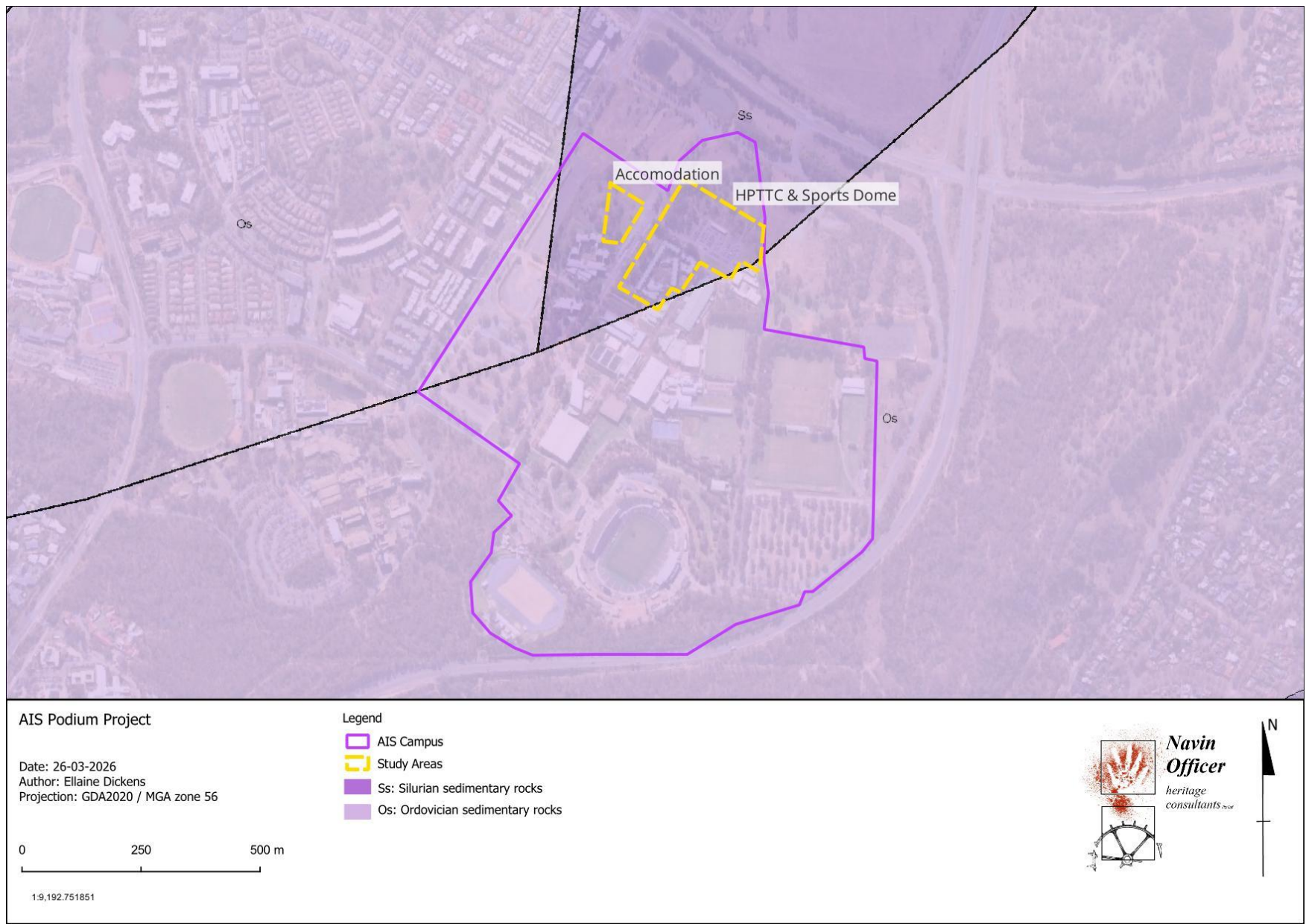
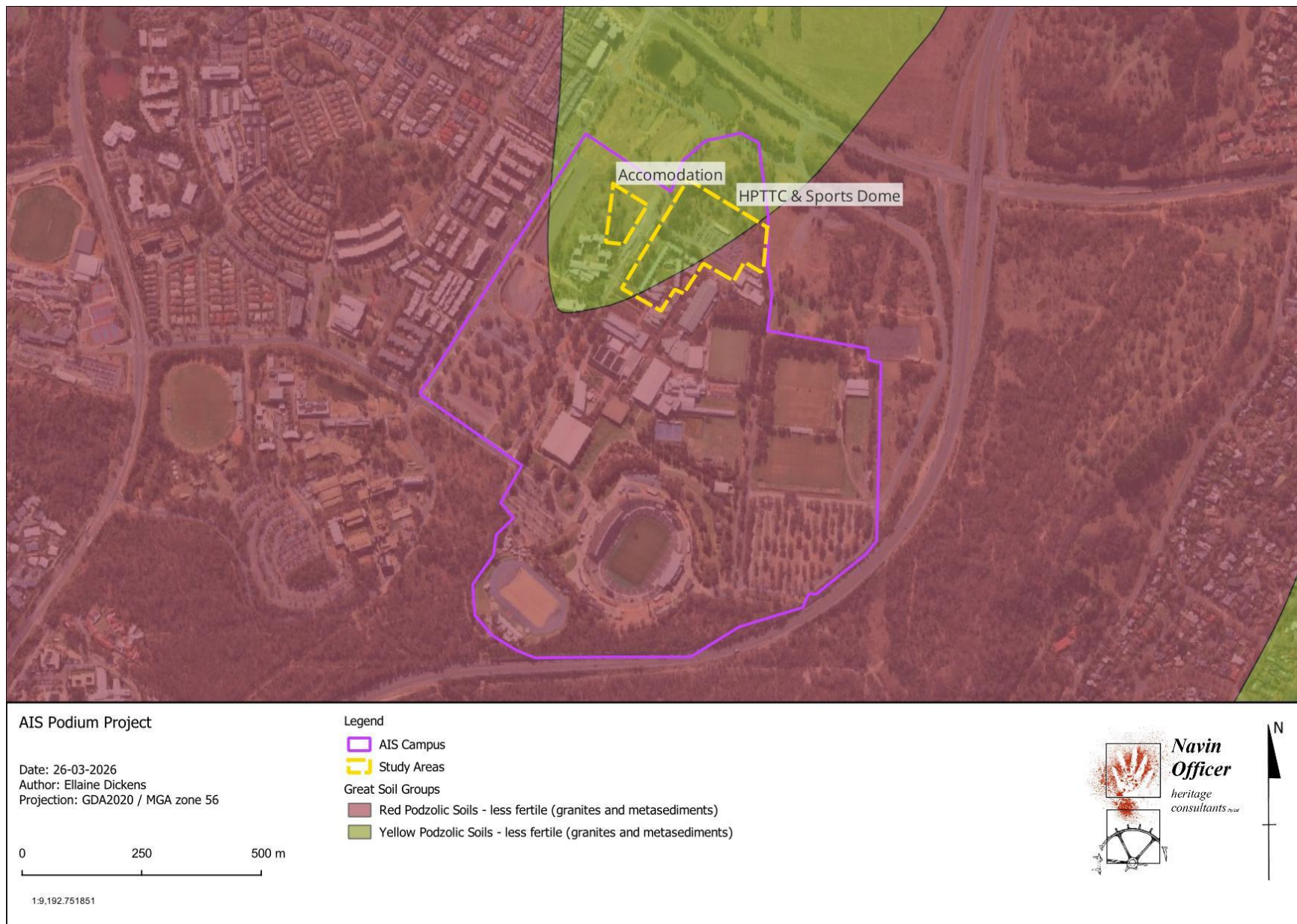


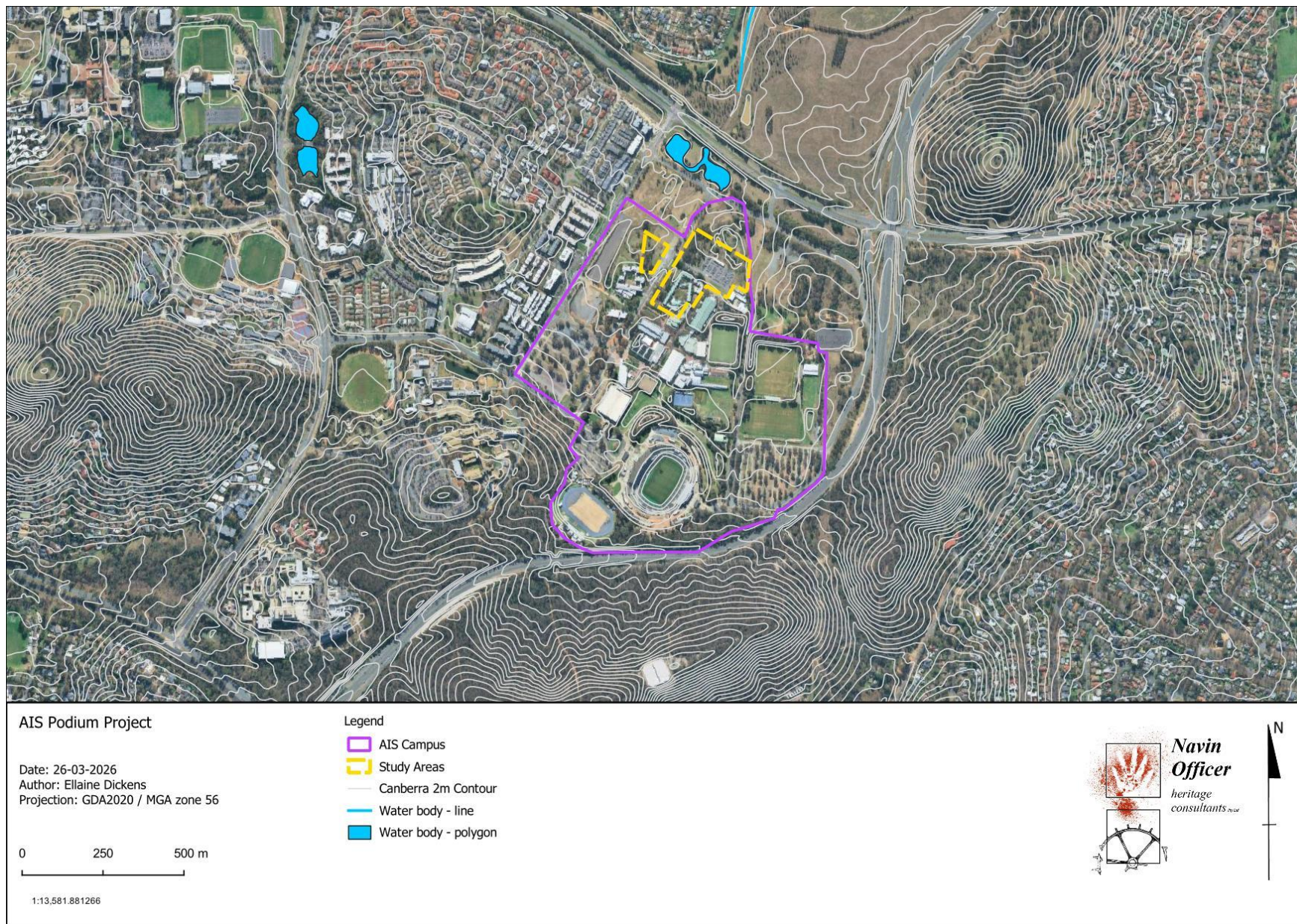
Figure 3-1 Study Areas (yellow dashed line) on 1915 Federal Territory Feature Map (from ACTmapi)



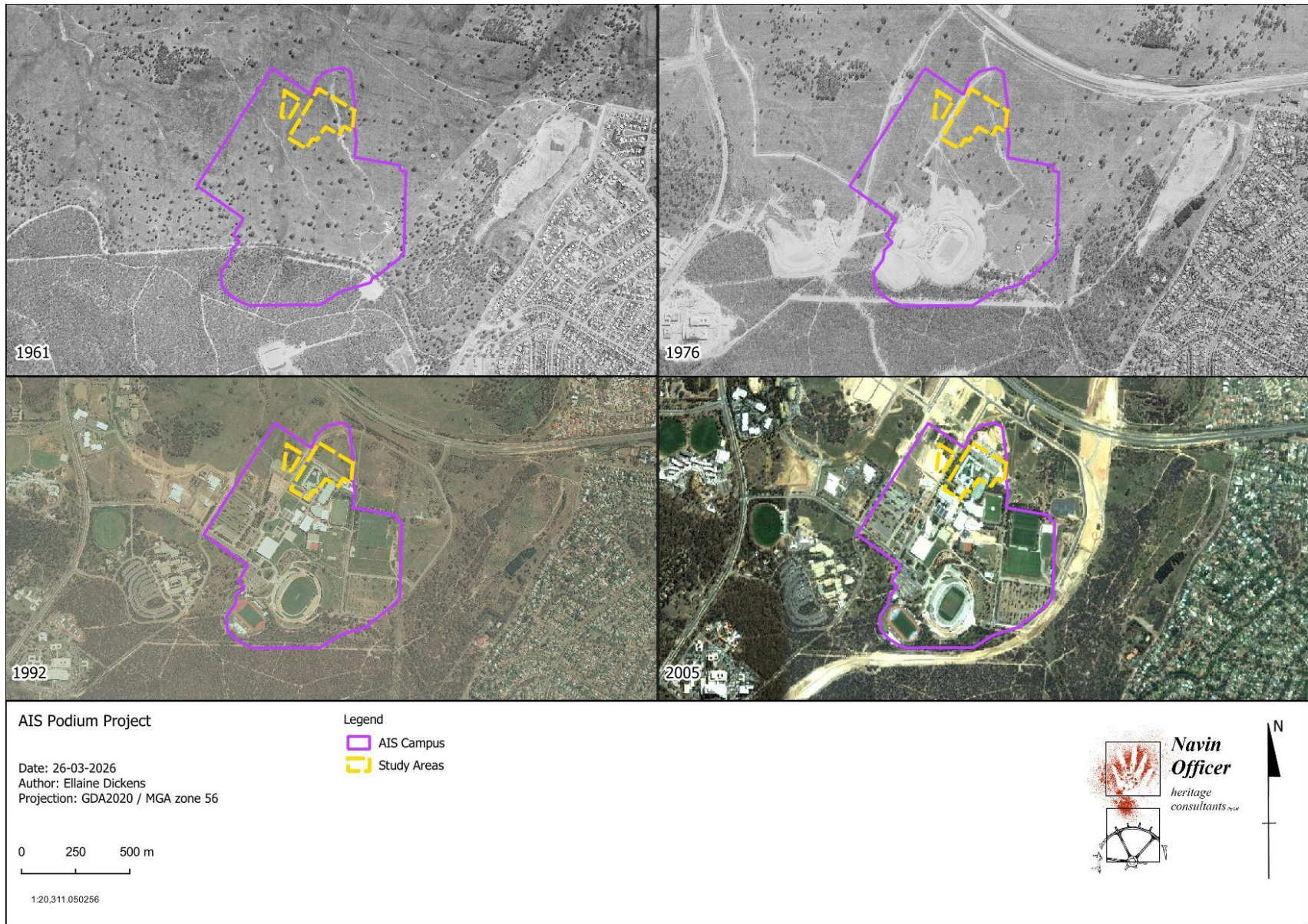
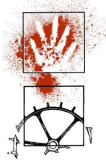
**Figure 3-2 Geological units within the vicinity of the Study Areas**



**Figure 3-3 Soil Landscapes within the vicinity of the Study Areas**



**Figure 3-4 Water Courses, Topographic Contours within the vicinity of the Study Areas**



**Figure 3-5 Approximate location of the Study Areas and broader landscape on historic aerials from 1961, 1976, 1992, and 2005 (from NSW Historical Imagery Viewer)**



**Figure 3-6 Close view of the Study Areas on aerials from 2007, 2008, 2012, and 2018 (from Google Earth Pro)**



## 4 ABORIGINAL CULTURAL CONTEXT

### 4.1 ACT Ethnohistory

Tribal boundaries within Australia are based largely on linguistic evidence and it is probable that boundaries, clan estates and band ranges were fluid and varied over time. Consequently 'tribal boundaries' as delineated today must be regarded as approximations only, and relative to the period of, or immediately before, European contact. Social interaction across these language boundaries appears to have been a common occurrence.

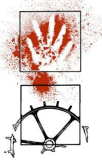
There have been several attempts to identify historical boundaries between Aboriginal language groups and the local kinship families within these groups. Wilhelm Schmidt published the first large-scale map of the native languages of Australia in 1919, based in part on the maps published by explorer Alfred William Howitt in 1904 showing the boundaries of Aboriginal language groups in south-east Australia (Briggs, 2018; Howitt, 1996 [1904]:823). The Ngunnawal and Ngarigo language groups form part of the Yuin linguistic group, which Schmidt shows as extending southward from Sydney to Cape Howe (Schmidt, 1919).

Tindale's map of tribal boundaries attempted to reconstruct the distribution of Aboriginal language groups at the time of European contact, prior to the onset of the major disruptions and displacements that followed in the 19th and early 20th Centuries (Tindale, 1974:5). Tindale regarded the boundaries between language groups to be stable and long-standing, being affected more by climate variables than the European invaders (Tindale, 1974: 56). In regard to the ACT, the map shows the Ngunnawal language group extending across Canberra, bordering the Gundungurra language group in the north, the Walgalu and Ngarigo language groups in the south, and the Wiradjuri language group in the West.

Jackson-Nakano's map shows the kinships groups in the Canberra region from the 1820s (Jackson-Nakano, 2001). Jackson-Nakano (2001:xiv) notes that Aboriginal family groups within the Canberra-Queanbeyan district and surrounds were known by many names in the early nineteenth century, but local Europeans who knew them best referred to them as Kamberri – also spelled Kgamberry, Kamberra and even Nganbra (Ngambri). She says the heart of their country was centred on the area now referred to as the Acton Peninsular. To the Northeast, the Kamberri shared a border with the Gundungurra speaking Pajong, to the Northwest the Kamberri and Pajong share borders with the Ngunawal speaking Wallabalooa. The Kamberri share borders to the East with the Ngarigo speaking Moolinggoolah kinship group, to the West the Kamberri share a border with the Walgalu speaking Gurmial, and the Ngarigo speaking Monaro kinship group share a border to the South. Some of these kinship groups shared Country as well as borders. Jackson-Nakano asserts that the Kamberri were a multilingual kinship group by the 1820s, speaking the languages and dialects of their neighbouring groups, and at this time the families joined neighbouring friendly groups as they were pushed off their land. Some Kamberri individuals, she says, intermarried with neighbouring Ngunawal families from the 1880s, and some descendants of such marriages re-identify in modern times as Ngunnawal. While maintaining their distinct association with the ACT and surrounds, members of Kamberri-Ngunnawal families might also identify personally as Ngunawal, Walgalu or even Wiradjuri through their familial links to these other groups (Jackson-Nakano, 2001: xv).

References to the traditional Aboriginal inhabitants of the Canberra region are rare and often difficult to interpret (Flood, 1980; Huys, 1993). The consistent impression however is one of rapid depopulation and a desperate disintegration of a traditional way of life over little more than fifty years from initial white contact (Officer, 1989). The disappearance of Aboriginal people from the tablelands was probably accelerated by the impact of European diseases which may have included the smallpox epidemic in 1830, influenza, and a severe measles epidemic by the 1860s (Flood, 1980; Butlin, 1983).

By the 1850s the traditional Aboriginal economy had largely been replaced by an economy based on European commodities and supply points. Reduced population, isolation from the most productive grasslands, and the destruction of traditional social networks meant that the final decades of the region's indigenous culture and economy was centred on white settlements and properties (Officer, 1989).



By 1856 the local 'Canberra Tribe' were reported to number around seventy (Schumack, 1967) and by 1872 was recorded as only five or six 'survivors' (The Queanbeyan Age, 7 November 1872 p. 2). While the Aboriginal population had no doubt decreased, a more likely scenario is that of dispossession and the movement of people off their traditional lands. In the 1880s, the 'NSW Aborigines Protection Board' had been formed and began establishing reserves across the state, the largest of which for the Canberra region were located around Yass. While a few Aboriginal people were able to continue living in the Canberra and Queanbeyan area, by 1900 it seems the majority of families had moved to reserves near Yass (Jackson-Nakano, 2001).

Early accounts of Aboriginal lifestyles in and comparable with the current study localities describe aspects of a successful hunting and gathering economy and eventful social life and inter-group contacts. The material culture, which is partly reflected in the surviving archaeological record, included stone and wooden artefacts, skin clothing and bark and bough temporary dwellings (Flood, 1980; Huys, 1993).

The Aboriginal people of the Canberra region continue to hold strong association with the area and take an active role in retaining their connection to their traditional lands.

## 4.2 Representative Aboriginal Organisations

Four local Aboriginal organisations have stated an objective to represent traditional Aboriginal cultural values and interests within the ACT. These groups have been recognised by the Minister as Representative Aboriginal Organisations (RAOs) as defined under the ACT *Heritage Act 2004*. These groups are the:

- Buru Ngunawal Aboriginal Corporation (Buru Ngunawal);
- King Brown's Tribal Group Pty Ltd (KBTG);
- Mirrabeji; and
- Ngarigu Currawong Clan (Ngarigu).

It is the policy of the ACT Heritage Council that the RAOs should be consulted with regard to the management of, and potential impacts to, Aboriginal cultural values and places within the ACT.

## 4.3 Evidence of RAO Consultation

Contact was made by email with the RAOs to inform them of this assessment and to organise representation during the field survey. Adrian Brown (KBTG) participated in the fieldwork program and represented the interests of their group in the project.

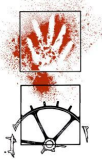
A draft copy of this report will be provided to the RAOs for comment prior to finalisation.

Table 4-1 Consultation Log

Date	Type of Contact (email, phone etc)	Group/Individual	Comment/Action
12/03/2026	Email	All RAOs	Invitation to field assessment
13/3/2026	email	Wally Bell Buru Ngunawal	Confirmed attendance to field assessment
16/03/2026	email	Arian Brown KBTG	Confirmed attendance to field assessment
18/03/2026	email	Cheryl Garland Ngarigu	James will not be able to attend field assessment



Date	Type of Contact (email, phone etc)	Group/Individual	Comment/Action
19/03/2026	Field survey	Arian Brown KBTG	Participated in the field assessment



## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

### 5.1 Regional Overview

Stone artefact scatters are the most frequently occurring residue of prehistoric activity in the region. They may range considerably in size and density, factors that are often interpreted as an indication of intensity of the Aboriginal land use. As well, they provide insight into stylistic and technological behaviours. Such scatters are representative of one or more stages in what is termed a 'reduction sequence'. That is, the entire process from obtaining stone raw material, to manufacture of stone artefacts and to eventual discard or loss and incorporation into the archaeological record. Isolated finds are artefacts that occur without any apparently associated archaeological materials or deposit. Open scatters are defined as spatially concentrated occurrences of two or more flaked stone artefacts.

Broad distinctions may be made between sites formed as a result of general living and habitation activities and sites located in response to the fixed locations of specific resources. Occupation sites relating to the former activities are most commonly recognised by the discard of flaked stone materials in sedimentary deposits. Subsequent processes of erosion or land use may deflate or section these sediments to reveal surficial or embedded (sometimes stratified) materials. Sites formed as a result of resource location may be recognised by a range of features including the proximity of discarded stone materials to source stone materials and characteristic extraction and use marks upon stone or wood materials, that is, quarries, hatchet grinding grooves and scarred trees.

The wider regional pattern of Aboriginal occupation site occurrence within the ACT is one of higher site size and frequency in areas proximate to major permanent creek lines with a reduction in site size and frequency around less permanent water sources. While sites have been found to occur throughout topographic and vegetational zones, there is a tendency for more of the larger sites to be located in proximity to creeks, wetlands and proximate parts of valley floors. A trend for larger sites to be near major water sources, but avoiding frost drainage hollows, was noted at a regional level by Flood (1980). Elsewhere in the Canberra region high site and artefact frequencies have also been correlated with the geographic occurrence of specific resources particularly, stone procurement outcrop locations.

Scarred trees may be the result of Aboriginal uses of bark and/or wood materials. Various other activities, including the retrieval of honey and other foodstuffs may also result in distinctive 'toe hold' and extractive scars. Scarred trees are sparsely documented in the wider Canberra region where suitable mature woodland has been retained. The identification of scars as Aboriginal in origin is problematic for a number of reasons. A variety of natural processes such as fire damage, lightning strike and branch tears may mimic the scars formed by Aboriginal bark removal. In addition, bark was also a building material favoured by early European settlers, and there are instances where Aboriginal people were employed to strip bark for European buildings. The distinction between Aboriginal and historic scarred trees is therefore often difficult.

### 5.2 Related Reports and Information

Navin Officer (1994) was contacted by Lend Lease to provide a cultural heritage assessment (CHA) for Block 9, Section 35, Bruce ACT, located approximately 360 m west of the current Study Areas. A comprehensive cultural resource survey located two Aboriginal sites, Bruce Site 1 (BS1), an artefact scatter consisting of six stone artefacts and Isolated Find 1, an isolated white quartzite flake. Artefacts at Bruce Site 1 consisted of five grey-green chert artefacts, one core and four flakes/blades, and one grey chert flake featuring secondary retouch. Chert was identified as a naturally occurring resource within the study area. The degree of land clearance and land surface disturbance within the study area indicated that the area was of low archaeological potential. Isolated Find 1 was determined as having low archaeological significance in a local context.

Navin (1995) conducted a CHA of Section 2, Bruce, ACT on behalf of Ron Bell & Associates, for the purpose of urban and commercial development, located approximately 250 m northwest from the Study Areas. This assessment involved both desktop analysis and physical survey of the Section 2 study area. Background research indicated the presence of potential historical sites related to agricultural and pastoral use of the land, as well as five previously recorded Aboriginal sites by Marika Behr in



1992, consisting of one artefact scatter and four isolated finds. No historical sites or features were identified in the study area. The artefact scatter and two of the isolated artefact sites were reidentified during survey. The artefact scatter was comprised of material and artefact types typical of the region and was 'unlikely to be associated with an undisturbed archaeological deposit', resulting in a classification of 'low significance' (Navin, 1995:14). Likewise, the remaining isolated finds were determined to be of low archaeological significance.

Williams Barber Archaeological Services (1996) were conducted by OPTUS to complete a preliminary cultural resource survey regarding the route of a proposed fibre optic cable from the intersection of Randwick Road and the Barton Highway, Mitchell, to Battye Street Bruce in the ACT, located approximately 500 m west of the current Study Areas. The surveyed area consisted of a five metre road corridor and immediate surroundings. No Aboriginal archaeological sites were identified during the survey. Further archaeological analysis was recommended for identified sites associated with the corridor prior to further development.

Officer (1997) was commissioned by Maunsell Pty. Ltd. to conduct a staged CHA of the known and potential impacts of the construction of the proposed John Dedman Drive (now Gungahlin Drive) on cultural heritage places and values. A total of six Aboriginal sites were identified among the three potential route options for John Dedman drive, with one being located approximately 700 m south of the current Study Areas. This site, O'Connor Ridge 1, was an open artefact scatter consisting of three milky quartz flakes. Two of the flakes were broken, with potential secondary flaking evident on one of the flakes. The site had been disturbed on account of fencing, vegetation clearing, track grading and maintenance, and was determined to have minimal research potential and low significance.

'Belconnen's Aboriginal Past', written by Peter Kaibala in 1997, details elements of Aboriginal occupation in the ACT, specifically around Belconnen. Elements of the ethnohistorical record are supplemented by recorded sites from the Belconnen and inner-west area. The study lists two sites (Sites 2 & 3) located 500 m and 600 m northeast of the current Study Areas respectively. Site 2 consists of a jasper flake identified south of Ginninderra Drive, and Site 3 consists of a grey chert flake located north of Ginninderra Drive. Both artefacts were categorised by Kaibala as 'local low-grade material' (1997:41). Two more sites, Site 11 and Site 16, were recorded ~1.3 km southwest of the current Study Areas in the suburb of Bruce. Site 11 consists of three recorded artefacts: raw chert material, one grey chert flake and what is described as a 'meta/volcanic chopper', a smooth river pebble with several negative flakes. Site 16 is a medium density artefact scatter consisting of one fine volcanic core, two split dark volcanic cobbles and 14 flakes comprised of quartzite, grey silcrete, grey chert, fine volcanic and quartz material. These sites are considered representative of site types found across the Canberra region and are indicative of low-intensity occupation and ephemeral land use.

NOHC (2000) conducted an archaeological investigation of Block 9, Sections 5 & 32, Block 10 Section 3 and part of Block 1, Section 85 Bruce ACT as part of a preliminary assessment. The development area covered lands situated between the AIS and Fern Hill Technology Park (now Fern Hill) in Bruce, ACT, located approximately 1.15 km west of the current Study Areas. Five previously recorded Aboriginal sites occurred within the study area including three isolated finds (Sites 1 & 2 and IF1) and two open artefact scatters (Site 4 and Bruce Site 1) containing six and five artefacts respectively. None of these previously recorded sites could be located during a secondary survey in March 2000. No indications of disturbance were present at this time, and it was assumed that the sites remained concealed by grass cover. One new site (Bruce Site 8) was recorded during the survey. This site is an open scatter of six stone artefacts, situated on the mid-slopes of a low spur, present in the eroding surface of a cattle track. All artefact types and materials were common to those found in the Canberra region. The removal of identifiable surface Aboriginal artefacts from known site locations was recommended, as well as a program of vegetation clearance to aid with the identification and collection of further exposed artefacts.

NOHC (2001a) were commissioned by WP Brown & Partners Pty Ltd to complete a preliminary CHA of the Aranda Residents Group option for the southern extension of Gungahlin Drive in Belconnen, ACT. The area of investigation consisted of ~110 ha of land located between north and south of Belconnen Way, including the western fall of Black Mountain and Bruce Ridge, with the northern limit of the area of investigation located approximately 600 m from the current Study Areas. The preliminary assessment identified five previously located sites consisting of two Aboriginal artefact scatters (Belconnen 1 and Belconnen 17) and three isolated finds (IF1, IF2, and CDIF1) that were previously



located at the southern extent of the investigation area. No artefacts were identified during the re-survey of these sites. No further sites were identified during a field survey of the investigation area. It was determined that sites consist largely of low-density artefact scatters located on relatively flat sections of ridgeline crest, especially on shoulders or saddles. A comprehensive archaeological survey of the proposed alignment was recommended prior to the proposed development, especially in areas of identified archaeological potential or in association with known Aboriginal sites.

NOHC (2001b) were commissioned by Brown & Partners on behalf of Roads ACT to conduct a CHA of a 10.5 ha area of land situated on basal slopes at the southwestern end of Bruce Ridge and the northeastern corner of the Canberra suburb of Aranda. This area is located approximately 1.2 km southwest of the current Study Areas. No previously recorded artefacts were identified, with one Aboriginal isolated find (a single stone artefact) identified during the field survey. The isolated find, Caswell Drive Isolated Find 1, was located 1.15 km southwest of the current study area and was assessed as having low scientific value. Surface collection was recommended in the case of development unavoidably impacting this site. Subsurface testing was not deemed warranted given the nature of the site and present landform.

NOHC (2002) were commissioned on behalf of the ACT Department of Urban Services – Territory Planning Branch to conduct a preliminary CHA of an area of land located at Glenloch Interchange in the ACT, as part of the corridor for the proposed Gungahlin Drive Extension, located four kilometres from the current Study Areas. No previously recorded sites were identified within the Glenloch Interchange study area. Four Aboriginal sites and two isolated finds were identified during the field survey. Sites G1, G2, and G3 are low density artefact scatters consisting of quartz and chert artefacts, found on valley floors, basal slopes and low spur lines, consistent with common site types found in the Canberra region. Site G4 is a moderately sized scatter of artefacts (40+) identified in a 30 x 10 m area of sheet erosion on basal slopes adjacent to the southern bank of Black Mountain Creek. The density of artefacts was determined to be 'probably indicative of further artefacts being present subsurface' in associated north-facing basal slopes bordering Black Mountain Creek (NOHC, 2002:10). Surface collection was recommended for sites G2, G5, and G6 prior to works potentially impacting these sites. A documented collection of artefacts, potentially extended to salvage collection, and an assessment of potential archaeological deposit was recommended prior to proposed developments impacting sites G1, G3, or G4.

Saunders (2003) was commissioned by Capital Planners ACT Pty Ltd to conduct an Aboriginal and European CHA for Blocks 4 and 5, Section 46 and Blocks 6, 7 and 8, Section 47, Bruce. This was as part of the Australian Sports Commission's proposed redevelopment of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) complex at Bruce, ACT, consisting of the area between Leverrier and Braybrooke Streets west and northwest of the AIS complex, located 300 m from the current Study Areas. One Aboriginal archaeological site and one European historical site were recorded during field survey. The European site AIS-H1 consists of three old wooden fence posts with wire netting more recently attached. This site was considered to pose no further heritage constraints to the proposed development. The Aboriginal site AIS-A1 consists of a single volcanic stone flake located in a broad drainage depression near the northern section of Braybrooke Road. The artefact was considered 'unlikely to be *in situ*' with 'the potential for additional artefacts occurring in the area considered low' (Saunders, 2003:13). It was recommended that two options could be followed for site AIS-A1, consisting either of preservation of the artefact *in situ* with the erection of a five-metre protective curtilage, or a program of archaeological investigation and salvage. Both options were to be considered in consultation with the ACT Heritage Council and Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

NOHC (2003a; 2003c) were commissioned on behalf of the ACT Department of Urban Services to conduct a CHA for two proposed intersections for the Gungahlin Drive Extension, located 2.1 km southwest from the current Study Areas. Four Aboriginal sites were identified within the combined intersection study area, consisting of two isolated finds (IF1 and CDIF1) and two low density artefact scatters (B1 and B17). IF1 and CDIF1 consist of two isolated milky quartz flakes identified on forested basal slopes adjacent to drainage lines. Site B1 was originally recorded in 1995 by Officer as six artefacts in areas of exposure on a spur-line crest. However, in a 2001 survey NOHC (2001a) were unable to reidentify any artefacts at the site. The spur-line crest was still considered an area of archaeological potential. Site B17, also originally recorded by Officer in 1995, is a low-density artefact scatter located on basal slopes adjacent to a tributary approximately 50-90 m north of the site B1. No artefacts were reidentified during the 2001 NOHC field survey. A programme of subsurface



archaeological testing was recommended to determine the nature and significance of surviving Aboriginal heritage at the locations of IF1 and B1 as well as its associated potential PAD.

NOHC (2003b) were commissioned on behalf of the ACT Department of Urban Services to conduct a CHA for the proposed Gungahlin Drive Eastern Alignment, a development located 600 m east of the current Study Areas. Three Aboriginal recordings, and a single historic recording were identified within the development area. The historical site, a section of *Old Weetangera Road*, was assessed as falling below the threshold of the ACT heritage significance criteria due to the relatively recent construction and poor preservation. Aboriginal site O'Connor Ridge 1 is located 850 m southeast of the current Study Areas and consists of a low-density open artefact scatter of milky quartz flakes. Sites PAD 1 and Isolated Find 3 are both located 800 m north of the current Study Areas. PAD 1 consists of a low rise or spur extending across a valley floor grassland context, located 50 south of an ephemeral watercourse. Site Isolated Find 3 consists of a light green rhyolite or chert-like broken flake recorded by Officer in 1997; however, the site could not be reidentified during survey. Surface collection was recommended for O'Connor Ridge 1, should it be directly impacted by developments, and subsurface testing was recommended for IF3 and PAD1 to more accurately identify the extent and archaeological significance of subsurface material.

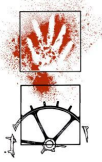
Saunders (2004a) was commissioned on behalf of Capital Planners Pty Ltd to conduct a CHA for proposed additional parking areas at Calvary Hospital in Bruce, ACT, located 1.5 km southwest of the current Study Areas. No Aboriginal sites, areas of potential archaeological deposit (PAD), or European historic sites were located in the study area. A monitoring program of vegetation clearance and topsoil removal was recommended for the future development works.

Saunders (2004b) was commissioned on behalf of Young Consulting Engineers to conduct a CHA of Diddams Close Park, Belconnen and Block 28 Section 8, Bruce, the latter being located 160 m away from the current Study Areas. Two Aboriginal sites, Bruce IF1 and Bruce IF2 were identified during the survey the Block 28 Section 8, Bruce. Bruce IF1 consists of an isolated grey chert flake located on a gently inclined basal slope, 140 m east of an ephemeral drainage line. Bruce IF2 consists of a single milky quartz flake located on an unformed vehicle track, 120 m southeast of Bruce IF1 and 180 m east of the ephemeral drainage line. Both sites were assessed as having low archaeological significance, with Saunders stating that 'overall, the block has low Aboriginal archaeological potential' (2004b:1).

NOHC (2004) collated all Aboriginal heritage recordings made within the Gungahlin Drive Extension development area since the Preliminary Assessment until 17<sup>th</sup> September 2004. Artefacts found within 2.5 km of the current Study Areas are presented in a table below (Table 5-1).

**Table 5-1 List of sites recorded during GDE development within 2.5 km of current Study Areas**

Site Name	Site Type	Number of recorded Artefacts	Landform	Approximate distance to current Study Area
<b>Bruce Ridge Isolated Find 3</b>	Isolated find	1	Crest, upper slope	1.28 km south
<b>Bruce Ridge Isolated Find 4</b>	Isolated find	1	Spur line, mid slope	1.8 km southwest
<b>Bruce Ridge 4</b>	Artefact scatter	7	Crest	980 m south
<b>Bruce Ridge 5</b>	Possible modified tree	N/A	Mid slope	1.75 km southwest
<b>Ochre Occurrence 1</b>	Ochre nodules within road base	No Aboriginal artefacts present	Gully	975 m south



Site Name	Site Type	Number of recorded Artefacts	Landform	Approximate distance to current Study Area
<b>Caswell Drive Isolated Find 2</b>	Isolated find	1	Upper slope, spur line	1.91 km southwest
<b>Caswell Drive Isolated Find 3</b>	Isolated find	1	Drainage line feature	2.3 km southwest
<b>Black Mountain Fire trail 3</b>	Artefact scatter	7	Saddle	1.92 km southeast
<b>Black Mountain Fire trail 6</b>	Artefact scatter	20	Saddle, mid slope	2.03 km southwest
<b>BHDS 3</b>	Artefact scatter	2	Upper slopes, ridgeline crest	2.29 km northeast

Saunders (2005) was commissioned on behalf of Redbox Design Group Pty Ltd to conduct an archaeological assessment of the proposed site for a future Radford College Junior School, located 1.28 km west of the current Study Areas. No Aboriginal sites were located within the study area, resulting in the area being assessed as having low archaeological potential, with no further heritage restraints considered for the proposed development.

NOHC (2006) was commissioned by Brown Consulting Pty Ltd to provide a CHA for a several proposed transit way routes, the closest of which (the Northern Route) is 630 m southeast of the current Study Areas. An inspection of the Northern Route identified ten Aboriginal sites, including nine artefact scatters and one scarred tree, and four previously recorded European sites (including the Bruce Stadium and National Indoor Stadium precinct, located within the current Study Areas). After the course of field survey and desktop survey, ten new Aboriginal sites and one new European site were identified. Avoidance of sites where possible was recommended, and a system of field survey was recommended following the initial clearing of all routes prior to full development. Sites to be impacted by the development were recommended to be salvaged in accordance with the heritage management plan endorsed by the Heritage Council in consultation with representative Aboriginal organisations. A program of subsurface testing was recommended prior to developments impacting the Bruce Ridge PAD site.

Saunders (2007) was commissioned on behalf of CBRE Consulting to undertake an Aboriginal Heritage Assessment for a proposed student accommodation at the University of Canberra in Bruce, located approximately 1.8 km west of the current Study Areas. No Aboriginal sites were identified within the study area and no further management recommendations were made.

AASC (2008) and CHMA (2008) were commissioned by Daly International to carry out a cultural heritage survey and assessment of a proposed phone facility works area and associated fibre optic conduit route in West Lyneham, located approximately 1.57 km northeast of the current Study Areas. One previously identified Aboriginal heritage site was located in the study area, site NLAS1 which consisted of a low-density artefact scatter featuring milky quartz and fine-grained siliceous flakes in an area of shale exposure on a crest. One new site was identified through field survey, site LR1, which consisted of an isolated fine-grained siliceous artefact identified in a disturbed spoil heap on the eastern mid slopes of Lyneham Ridge. Both sites were assigned low archaeological significance, and a detailed salvage collection program was recommended for both sites prior to the proposed development work. CHMA undertook this salvage program in 2008, with all the known artefacts having been collected as per the recommendations of the AASC report (2008).

Umwelt (2014) was commissioned by Brown Consulting (ACT) to conduct a Heritage Assessment Report for the construction of a new hospital located at the University of Canberra, located 2.23 km



northwest of the current Study Areas. An isolated small volcanic flake (UCPH IF 1) was identified in a planted wood row adjacent to a vehicle track 40 m north of a minor drainage line. Site UCPH IF 1 was identified to not be in association with any areas of PAD and did not satisfy any of the heritage significance criteria outlined in the Heritage Act (2004). The project area was considered unsatisfactory for heritage significance criteria for historical heritage. This was on account the prevalence of land disturbance associated with agricultural and pastoral activity within the study area prior to the property having been leased to the University of Canberra.

Biosis (2015) were commissioned by Purdon Planning to conduct a CHA of undeveloped areas on the University of Canberra campus, in West Belconnen, located approximately 1.5 km west of the current Study Areas. Field survey identified 10 previously unrecorded sites within the study area, consisting of a scarred tree, six isolated finds, two artefact scatters, and an artefact scatter and PAD. No proposed developments existed at the time of the assessment. Proposed impacts to any site would require approval from ACT Heritage, and require a program of salvage collection, and/or subsurface testing to determine impacts for the area of PAD.

Umwelt (2016) was commissioned by Brown Consulting (ACT) to conduct an updated Statement of Heritage Effects (SHE) for the construction of a new hospital located at the University of Canberra with updated information provided by Biosis's (2015) assessment of the UC Campus area. The two newly identified sites in the study area, UC1 and UC2 (both isolated finds), were both recommended to be salvaged. Representatives of Aboriginal organisations expressed their wish for further survey, salvage, and monitoring for proposed works.

In 2019 ngh completed a detailed environmental constraints report for the whole of the AIS Brice campus. This report summarised several other assessments that had been undertaken for the ASC holdings including the AIS precinct including Marshall and Pearson 2010, and the individual building assessments for the Basketball and Netball Centre, the Combat Centre and the Gymnastics Centre (Phillip Leeson Architects 2016a to c). The ngh report identified that there was a dead tree with a possible scar within the AIS precinct but gave no further detail on the location or description of this tree so it is unknown where this tree is or if it is still extant. No scarred tree recorded is on the ACT Heritage sites inventory. There are two trees identified as significant within the ngh report within the current project area, however these trees are trees *protected* under the *ACT Tree Protection Act 2005* (TP Act) but do not include scarred trees.

CHMA (2020) were commissioned by SMEC to conduct a CHA and SHE for the O'Connor Reservoir Upgrade, in the Bruce Ridge Nature Reserve located approximately 1.32 km south of the current Study Areas. Previously recorded sites ORF3, ORE2, and ORE3 were located within the proposed impact area but were not successfully relocated during the field surveys. Two newly recorded sites were identified during the field survey, an isolated find (O'Connor Ridge 2) and possible glass artefacts considered by the RAOs to be possible contact items. The latter of these sites were assessed as a modern glass shatter given their immediate proximity to the reservoir site in an area of high disturbance, resulting in their assessment of no heritage significance. O'Connor Ridge 2 consists of an isolated silcrete flake in a disturbed mound of 'push' created for soil mitigation along the alignment on a mid-slope. This site was determined to have low significance, given the disturbance in which it was identified, and salvage program was recommended prior to works impacting the site. A year later a proposed upgrade to the Reservoir required a revised CHA and SHE for the site, and no new sites were identified (CHMA, 2021).

On behalf of the ACT Heritage Advisory Services panel and the Friends of Aranda Bushland Group, GML (2022) was engaged to conduct a preliminary CHA for a proposed bushland walking track in Aranda, located approximately 3.8 km south of the current Study Area. Four new sites were identified during the field survey, AIA1 to AIA4, all isolated finds. Minimal impacts were proposed by the development as the maintenance of the proposed track would not involve raking or considerable ground disturbance. This resulted in no impacts proposed to any of the identified Aboriginal sites. Monitoring for further tree removal was recommended.

Past Traces (2024) were commissioned by PEET Bruce Pty Ltd to undertake a CHA and SHE for the proposed PEET Bruce Development on Part Block 11 and all of Blocks 12,13,14 Section 3, Bruce ACT, located approximately 1.76 km northwest of the current Study Areas. Fieldwork identified five previously unrecorded sites and two areas of PAD within the project area. Isolated finds UC2/4 and



UC2/5 were assessed as having low cultural and scientific significance on account of their provenance in an area of high disturbance with high previous impacts. As a result, a program of collection was recommended for these two sites. A detailed program of subsurface testing was recommended for proposed development impacts on areas of PAD (UCPAD1 and UCPAD2), with further mitigation measures recommended, including fencing. Fencing was recommended for artefact scatters UC2/1, UC2/2, and UC2/3, despite being located outside of the area of proposed impacts.

### **5.3 Previously recorded sites**

There are four previously recorded Aboriginal sites within 800 m of the Study Areas.

#### **Bruce IF1**

208735, 607867

This site is located 198 m east of the Study Areas and was recorded in 2004 by Archaeological Heritage Surveys (AHS). The site consists of an isolated stone artefact located on a very gently inclined basal slope. The site is at the northern edge of an unformed vehicle track running east from a bicycle path, approximately 80 m east of an ephemeral drainage line. The artefact is a single grey chert flake measuring 30 x 24 x 5 mm.

#### **Bruce IF2**

208815, 607770

This site is located 320 m east of the Study Areas and was recorded in 2004 by Archaeological Heritage Surveys (AHS). This site consists of a single milky quartz flake (24 x 19 x 5 mm) located on the unformed vehicle track approximately 220 m southeast of the study area near the top of a gently inclined slope and approximately 180 m east of the ephemeral drainage line.

#### **Bruce Ridge 4 (BR4)**

208341, 607108

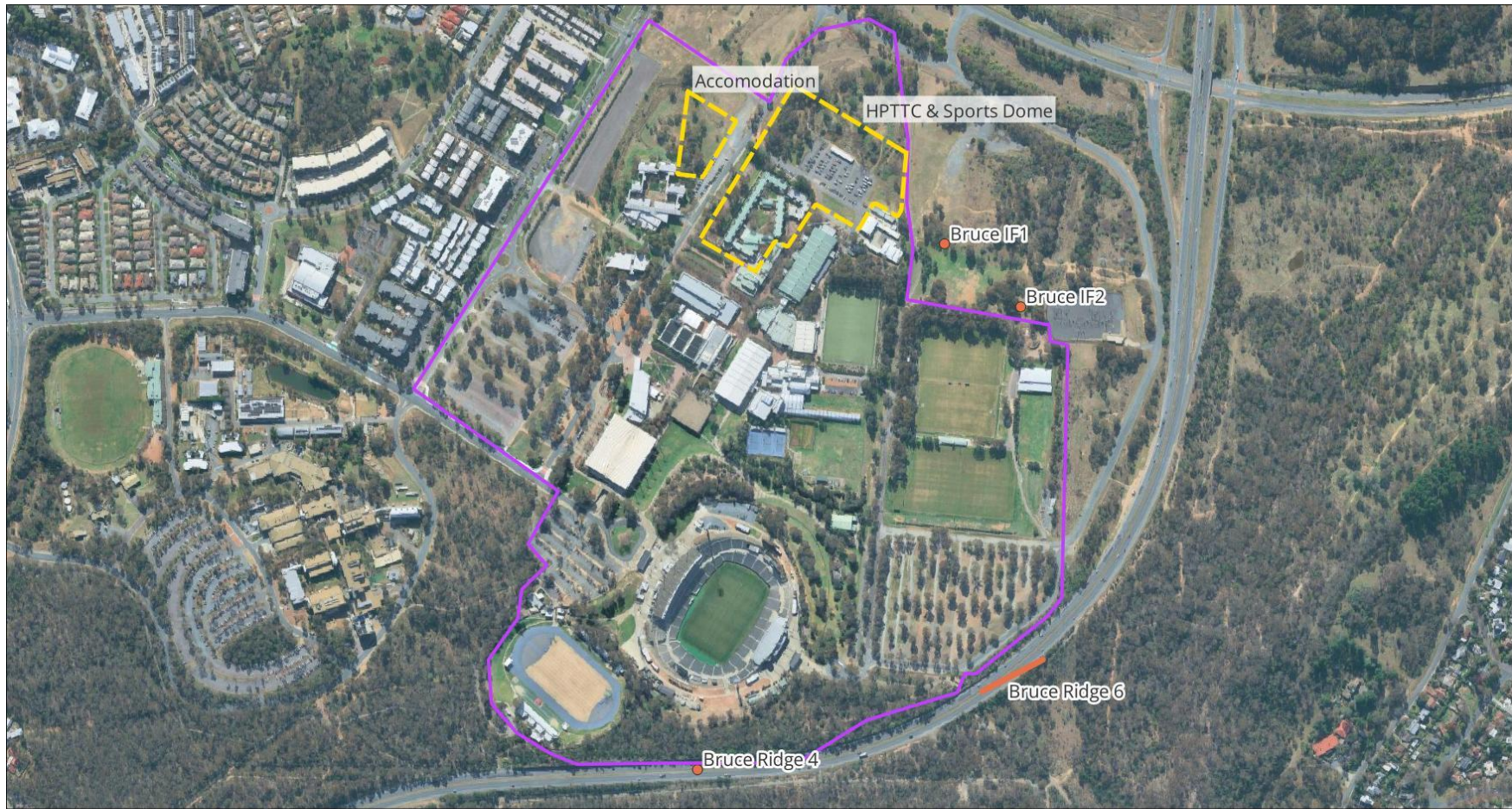
This site is located 738 m south of the Study Areas and was recorded by NOHC in 2004. The site consists of an open scatter of at least seven artefacts located on the crest of a low spurline between two shallow drainage gullies. The artefacts were exposed as a consequence of recent tree felling and associated mechanical vehicle disturbance. The approximate area in which surface artefacts occur is 60 x 50 m. The site was salvaged by NOHC in 2006 for the GDE heritage impact mitigation program and 18 artefacts were identified (NOHC, 2006).

#### **Bruce Ridge 6 (BR6)**

208764, 607206

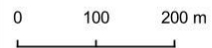
208855, 607249

This site is located 705 m southeast of the Study Areas and was recorded by NOHC in 2005. The site consists of a scatter of at least 8 artefacts located in a highly disturbed context on either side of an excavated drainage line that cuts across the easement from the AIS carpark to the eastern side of the GDE easement. The recorded extent of the site is 80 x 30m with the potential to be larger. The site was salvaged by NOHC in 2006 for the GDE heritage impact mitigation program and 10 artefacts were recovered (NOHC, 2006).



**AIS Podium Project**

Date: 26-03-2026  
Author: Ellaine Dickens  
Projection: GDA2020 / MGA zone 56



1:7,487.012048

**Legend**

-  AIS Campus
-  Study Areas
-  Previously Recorded Aboriginal Site
-  Previously Recorded Aboriginal Site (polygon)



**Figure 5-1 Previously recorded Aboriginal sites within the vicinity of the Study Areas**



## 5.4 Predictive Archaeological Model – Aboriginal Heritage

As a result of the archaeological surveys undertaken to date in the local area and ethno-historical data from the local region and south-eastern Australia more broadly, qualitative observations regarding Aboriginal site location parameters may be summarised as follows:

- The most commonly recorded site types are surface and subsurface scatters of stone artefacts.
- Artefact densities in open artefact scatters may vary considerably.
- Open artefact scatters are most likely to occur on relatively level ground in locally well-drained contexts, either spur line crests, terraces or elevated creek banks in valley floor contexts, low gradient crests and streamline banks in mid valley slope contexts, and level crests, shoulders and saddles on major ridgelines and spurs.
- The majority of open artefact scatters, (particularly larger sites), are situated adjacent to, or in close proximity to, creek flats or valley bottom contexts, frequently on low gradient basal slopes adjacent to streams or wetlands.
- Open artefact scatters which contain relatively large artefact assemblages and densities occur most frequently and consistently within 100-150 m of major and relatively permanent drainage lines.
- Open artefact scatters which occur away from the valley basal slopes and major tributaries tend to be small and sparser. A preference for major confluences and valley constrictions may be indicated.
- Subsurface deposits of artefacts will not necessarily be associated with visible surface artefacts.
- Most sites located away from major water sources will consist of low-density scatters of artefacts and mostly contain less than ten visible surface artefacts.
- Artefacts may occur wherever surface exposures of exploitable rock occur, rock sources which are known to have been locally exploited include chalcedony, chert, quartz, and fine-grained igneous rocks such as fine-grained porphyry and fine grained intrusives within granodiorite. The occurrence of high-grade chert does not necessarily indicate Aboriginal exploitation (Officer and Navin, 1992).
- Aboriginal scarred trees may occur anywhere old-growth trees survive. It is estimated that in the Canberra/Queanbeyan region trees bearing Aboriginal scars would need to be in the order of 140 to 150 years old.



## 6 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### 6.1 Regional Overview

The Canberra region has a history of European settlement dating back to the 1820s when the first settlers and squatters moved into the area in the wake of early exploratory undertakings in search of the Murrumbidgee River. From this time through to the mid-1830s most of the productive country was acquired by squatters and absentee landholders and by the 1850s substantial properties were being established by the likes of Joshua Moore and Robert Campbell (Williams and Barber, 1995: 7; Navin, Officer and Legge, 1996:13).

Large estates were established around the Hume area during the 1820s. This included Robert Campbell's 'Duntroon', which extended from the Molonglo to the Hume valley, and the 'Jerrabomberra' property, established by John Palmer who arrived with the First Fleet (Lea-Scarlett, 1968: 10). Land use over this period was focused upon grazing, although dairying is known to have been undertaken at Jerrabomberra by the early 1830s (Lea-Scarlett, 1968: 11).

Following the establishment of the large land grantees whose land covered the best grasslands on the river flats and basal valley slopes, the pattern of land selection was characterised by the purchase or selection of small parcels of forested land, following the Robertson Land Act of 1861. The land selectors who applied for land under the Robertson Land Acts were often people of limited financial resources or no government contacts, and often locals whose occupations and families were connected to the labour force of the larger estates. Their landholdings were often small and conditionally purchased, with freehold title only gained after completion of all payments. During the payment period, various conditions were often specified, including the completion of improvements such as fencing and clearing, and a period of residency on the block.

Compared to the original government grants, the land subject to selection was mostly more marginal and forested, and often poorly watered in upper creek catchments. In many cases the smallholdings proved uneconomic, and selectors could not support their payments and consequently lost or sold their holdings. The buyers were frequently the neighbouring large estate holders who retained the best land, the best water sources and could raise sufficient capital.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, there was a continuing consolidation of settlement throughout the region. George Campbell, the fourth son of Robert Campbell, came to Duntroon in 1855 and added to the large holdings left to him by his father by purchasing land north of Canberra. George resided at Duntroon until 1876, when he went to England and lived until his death in 1881. Duntroon was managed by Campbell's nephew, Frederick, until the Commonwealth resumed the property (Gillespie, 1991).

The ACT was established from land ceded by New South Wales in 1911. Initial development of the ACT was slow, and management of the existing NSW infrastructure was continued by the Commonwealth with only gradual changes. The last 'freehold' properties were not resumed until the 1980s. Names already in use in 1911 such as natural features and locality names were retained. Although some localities have disappeared as a result of urban development, their names have usually been retained in some form.

### 6.2 The Study Areas

The Study Areas fall within the former Parish of Canberra, County of Murray. Portions 54 (80 acres) and 75 (40 acres) formed part of an estate comprising six portions totalling 400 ½ acres originally selected by P. Shumack Junior. Peter 'Big Pete' Shumack (Jr) was born in 1844 and was part of the Shumack family that settled at modern-day Lyneham (Figure 6-1). Peter's father John Schumack had landed in Sydney just three years prior (Schumack, 1967:1).

Peter married Elizabeth Jane Gillespie in 1869 and had two children. Elizabeth died in 1872, and Peter was remarried to Elizabeth 'Betsy' Williams a year later, with whom he had eleven children. Peter's brother Joseph and uncle Peter (Senior) bought blocks of land in Upper Canberra, and in 1876 Joseph



converted the house he had built on his block into one of the first hotels to be run in Canberra, the 'Canberra Inn' (Hall Heritage Centre, website) (now the Old Canberra Inn).

Peter's (Jr) first property was known as 'Fern Hill' (with the homestead located near the intersection of what is now Mackennal Street and Archibald Street, Lyneham) (Figure 6-2). Peter was an avid cricket player, and some of his paddocks were used for occasional cricket matches between his Canberra side and Ginninderra's (Hall Heritage Centre, website). Peter eventually sold some of his land to George Southwell, with his son Edward farming the remainder (Schumack, 1967:3).

In 1958 the Fern Hill Property was to be demolished for the development of the suburb of Lyneham. The Fern Hill Park and playground located 300 m west of the Study Areas is named after this property. At this time the Canberra Times reported that the original slab house built by Peter 100 years prior was intact when the homestead buildings were being demolished. The slab house was 30ft by 10ft, consisting of two rooms and was made entirely of red gum slabs (Hall Heritage Centre, website). Some of the land that was part of the Fern Hill property is now protected as the O'Connor Ridge Nature Reserve.

Peter Schumack died in 1912 and is buried in St Johns, Reid, where he had served as a Churchwarden (Hall Heritage Centre, website).



**Figure 6-1 Peter 'Big Pete' Schumack, 1844-1912 (Gillespie Collection, Hall School Museum and Heritage Centre)**



**Figure 6-2 Peter Schumack and family at 'Fern Hill' (Hall Heritage Centre, website)**

In 1981 the Australian Institute of Sports headquarters was officially opened, with the area housing the institute containing the current Study Areas. The AIS was opened by then Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, who declared that its inception was a 'clear sign that we are no longer going to allow the world to pass us by' (Conde, 2021). In the following 45 years the institution has 'revolutionised' Australian sport, with 60 per cent of Australia's gold medals having followed the establishment of the institution (Conde, 2021).

### **6.3 Previously Recorded sites**

There are two previously recorded non-Aboriginal historic sites in the vicinity of the Study Areas.

#### **James Shanahan Hut site**

This site was identified in 1984 by Canberra and District Historical Society (CDHS) and is noted as a point of interest. The location was identified as there is a "hut" marked on the portion plan for portion



92, Parish of Canberra. Portion 92 was applied for by James Shanahan and the block was surveyed in 1874. The location is not listed on the ACT Heritage Register. The site is located 367 m southwest of the Study Areas, in an area that has been completely disturbed through building and road construction.

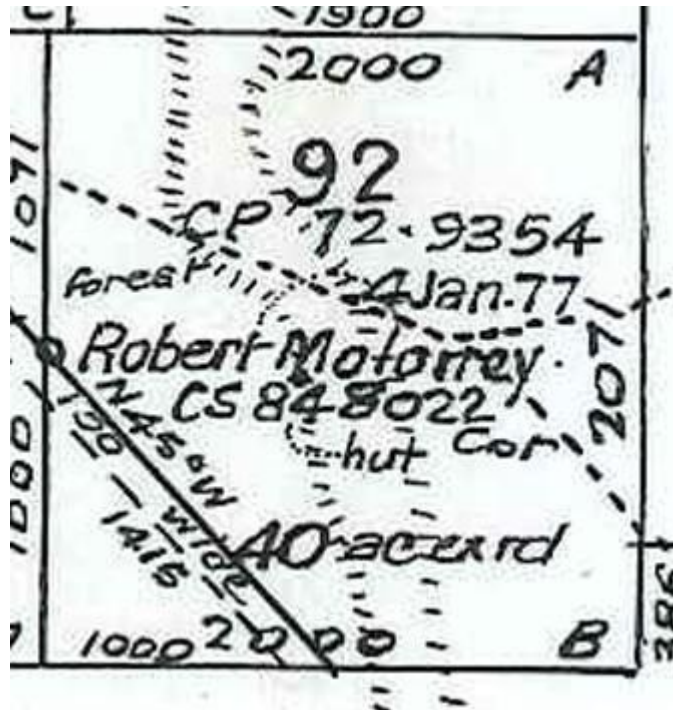


Figure 6-3 Extract of portion plan for Portion 92, Parish of Canberra showing “hut” location

#### Bruce Stadium and National Indoor Stadium Precinct

The two buildings were designed by the Sydney firm of Philip Cox & Partners; the Bruce Stadium in 1974 and the National Indoor Stadium in 1979, for the National Capital Development Commission. The construction of the Bruce Stadium was completed in 1977 and the National Indoor Stadium in 1981. The buildings are examples of the Late Twentieth-Century Structuralist Style (1960-) with their compression masts and cable stays (both buildings), the reinforced concrete supporting structure and cantilevered end of concrete beams of the Bruce Stadium, and the internal triangular steel supports to the roof of the National Indoor Stadium.

The precinct, which is located off Leverrier Crescent and the end of Battye Street in Bruce, includes the original structures of the two stadiums, the landscaped area between and adjacent to them and their natural setting. The buildings are well maintained, in good condition and intact apart from the lower seating of the grandstand and the ground floor office additions.

The Bruce Stadium and National Indoor Stadium Precinct is listed as 'R2 - Removed from the Provisional Register by expiration of interim effect – all located on 'National Land' managed by the National Capital Authority (NCA)'. The ACT Heritage Council has therefore decided not to enter the place in the ACT Heritage Register. The NCA manages Commonwealth and National Heritage listed places on behalf of the ACT Government. The Bruce Stadium and National Indoor Stadium Precinct is **not** listed on either the Commonwealth or National Heritage lists.

#### 6.4 Predictive Archaeological Model – Historical Heritage

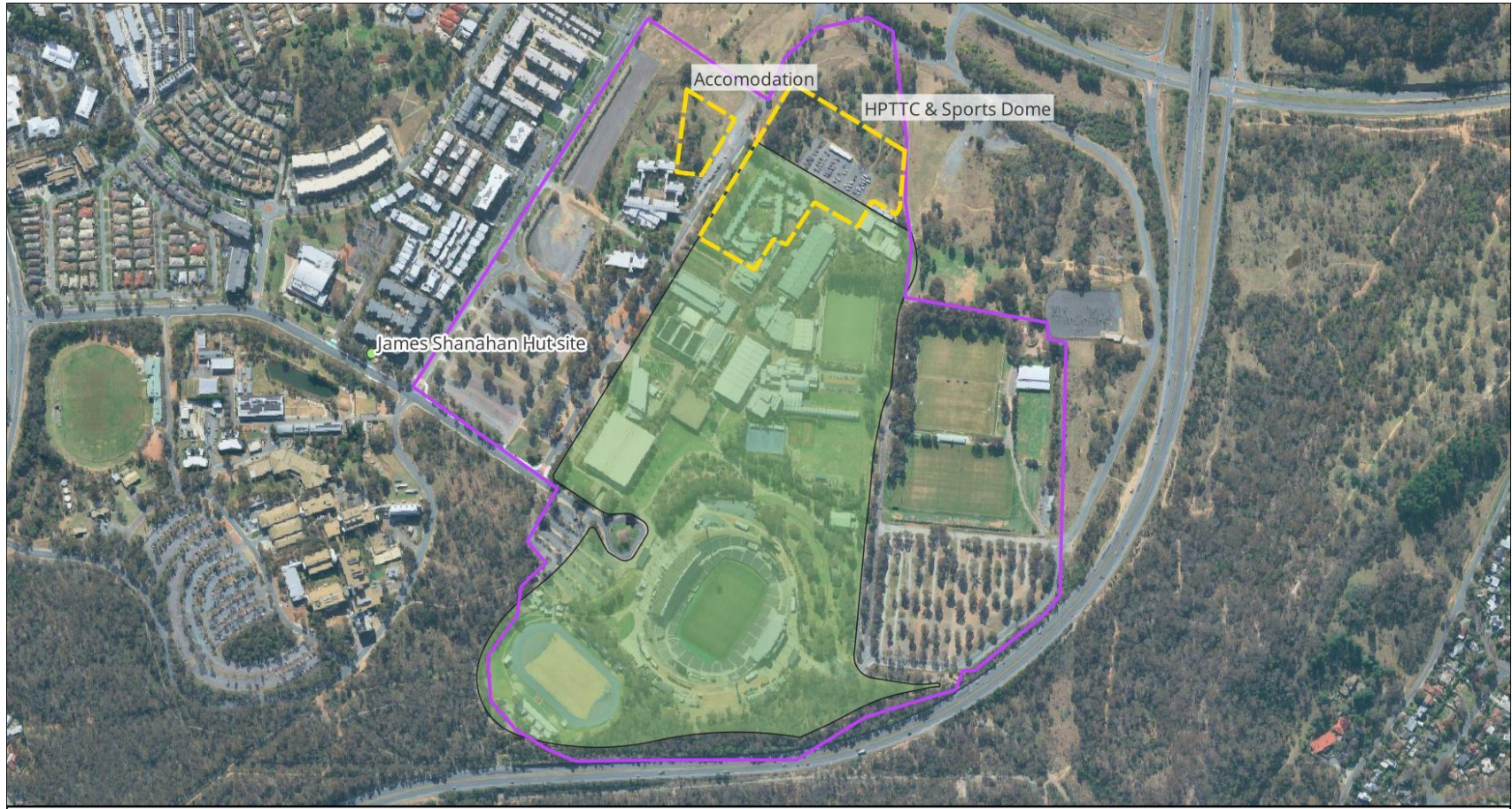
Unrecorded historic sites and features of heritage significance that may occur within the study area include:

- Old fence lines, such as post and rail fencing; these may occur along road easement boundaries and farmlands.



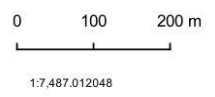
- Indications of field systems, such as drainage channels and ridge and furrow ploughlands; these are likely to survive in low lying agricultural ground, especially in areas that are now used for grazing, rather than cropping.
- Archaeological sites, such as the occupation remains of former dwellings including homesteads, houses and huts; these will be distributed in close association with land settlement patterns, and correlated with favourable agricultural lands, trading nodes and transport corridors.
- Sites associated with early roads; these will be closely associated with early cadastral road reserves, watershed ridgelines, and related to early river and creek crossing points.
- Transport and access routes, such as bridle paths and stock routes of varying forms and ages; these may survive as abandoned remnants adjacent to modern transport routes, or as alignments now followed by more modern or upgraded road and track infrastructure.

Structures of historical interest and heritage significance may be standing, ruined, buried, abandoned or still in use.



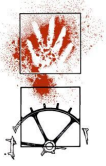
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Author: Ellaine Dickens  
Projection: GDA2020 / MGA zone 56

- Legend
- AIS Campus
  - Study Areas
  - Bruce Stadium and National Indoor Stadium Precinct
  - Historic Sites



**Navin  
Officer**  
heritage  
consultants ptw

**Figure 6-1 Previously recorded historic sites within the vicinity of the Study Areas**



## 7 PHYSICAL INVESTIGATIONS

### 7.1 Results

- There are no previously recorded Aboriginal sites within the Study Areas.
- There is a possible scarred tree identified within the AIS precinct, but the location of this tree is unknown and is not one of the trees identified as a significant tree in ngh 2019.
- The project area overlaps with the Bruce Campus and National Indoor Stadium precinct, however this place is not listed on any heritage register
- No new Aboriginal or historic sites were recorded during the field survey.

During the field assessment Mr Adrian Brown (KBTG) requested that the project include either naming or signage that tells of the areas Aboriginal past and connections. Mr Brown indicated that the area was a meeting place for Ngunnawal peoples.

### 7.2 Survey Coverage and Visibility Variables

A site survey was undertaken by Navin Officer Heritage Consultants (NOHC) staff on the 19 March 2026 (Nicola Hayes and Garth Thompson). This involved a walk over of the area proposed to be impacted by the project. All areas subject to direct impact were traversed. Field participants walked 5-10 m apart to ensure full coverage of all impact areas. NOHC was accompanied by Adrian Brown from the Representative Aboriginal Organization King Brown Tribal Group.

The effectiveness of archaeological field survey is to a large degree related to the obtrusiveness of the sites being looked for and the incidence and quality of ground surface visibility. Ground surface visibility is a measure of the bare ground visible to the archaeologist during the survey. There are two main variables used to assess ground surface visibility, the frequency of exposure encountered by the surveyor and the quality of visibility within those exposures. The predominant factors affecting the quality of ground surface visibility within an exposure are the extent of vegetation and ground litter, the depth and origin of exposure, the extent of recent sedimentary deposition, and the level of visual interference from surface gravels. Visibility across the project area was low with some grass and leaf litter cover. It was evident from ground conditions that the whole area has been disturbed in the past.



Figure 7-1 Field photos of the Study Areas



## 8 STATUTORY CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>

### 8.1 Commonwealth

#### 8.1.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984

The Act provides for the protection of areas and objects that are of significance to Aboriginal people in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. The Act allows Aborigines to apply to the Minister to seek protection for significant Aboriginal areas and objects. The Minister has broad powers to make such a declaration should the Minister be satisfied that the area or object is a significant Aboriginal area or object and is under immediate threat of injury or desecration. A duly processed declaration by the Minister can have effect for any specified time period. An 'emergency declaration' can remain in force for up to 30 days.

It is an offence under the Act to contravene a provision of a declaration. Provisions are made for penalties of up to \$50,000 for a corporation found guilty of contravening the Act and up to \$10,000 and imprisonment for a maximum of five years for a person found guilty of contravening the Act.

Under the Act, 'Aboriginal tradition' means:

'the body of traditions, observances, customs and beliefs of Aboriginals generally or of a particular community or group of Aboriginals, and includes such traditions, observances, customs or beliefs relating to particular persons, areas, objects or relationships' (s3).

A 'significant Aboriginal area' refers to:

an area of land or water in Australia being of 'particular significance to Aboriginals in accordance with Aboriginal tradition' (s3).

A 'significant Aboriginal object' refers to:

an object (including Aboriginal remains) of 'particular significance to Aboriginals in accordance with Aboriginal tradition' (s3).

For the purposes of the Act, an area or object is taken to be injured or desecrated if:

- a) in the case of an area it is used or treated in a manner inconsistent with Aboriginal tradition; the use or significance of the area in accordance with Aboriginal tradition is adversely affected by reason of anything done in or near the area; or passage through or over, or entry upon the area by any person occurs in a manner inconsistent with Aboriginal tradition;
- b) in the case of an object it is used or treated in a manner inconsistent with Aboriginal tradition (s3).

#### 8.1.2 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

This Act (EPBC Act) repeals the *Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974*, the *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975*, the *Whale Protection Act 1980*, the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act 1983*, and the *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992*. The scope and coverage of the Act is wide and far-reaching. The objectives of the Act include: the protection of the environment, especially those aspects of national significance; to promote the conservation of biodiversity and ecologically sustainable development; and to recognise the role of indigenous people and their knowledge in realising these aims.

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<sup>1</sup> The following information is provided as a guide only. Readers are advised to seek qualified legal advice relative to legislative matters.



A person must not take an action that has, will have or is likely to have a significant impact on any of the matters of environmental significance without approval from the Australian Government Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the Minister).

Matters of national environmental significance (NES) including:

- world heritage properties
- national heritage places
- wetlands of international importance
- threatened species and ecological communities
- migratory species
- Commonwealth marine areas
- the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and
- nuclear actions (including uranium mines).

Other matters:

- the environment, where actions proposed are on, or will affect Commonwealth land, and
- the environment, where Commonwealth agencies are proposing to take an action.

The Act makes it a criminal offence to undertake actions having a **significant** impact on any matter of national environmental significance (NES) or on Commonwealth land without the approval of the Environment Minister. There are significant penalties, including fines and imprisonment, for taking such an action without approval. If it is to take an action that is likely to have a significant impact on a matter protected by the EPBC Act, it is important to make a referral to Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPAC) as early as possible in the planning and development stages.

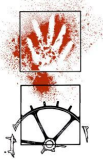
A **significant** impact is an impact which is important, notable, or of consequence, having regard to its context or intensity. Whether or not an action is likely to have a significant impact depends upon the sensitivity, value, and quality of the environment which is impacted, and upon the intensity, duration, magnitude and geographic extent of the impacts. You should consider all of these factors when determining whether an action is likely to have a significant impact on the environment. There are published guidelines on assessing if an impact is **significant**.

The Act adopts a broad definition of the environment that is inclusive of cultural heritage values. In particular, the 'environment' is defined to include the social, economic and cultural aspects of ecosystems, natural and physical resources, and the qualities and characteristics of locations; places and areas (s528).

The Act allows for several means by which a controlled action can be assessed, including an accredited assessment process, a public environment report, an environmental impact statement, and a public inquiry (Part 8).

Section 68 imposes an obligation on a proponent proposing to take an action that it considers to be a controlled action, to refer it to the Environment Minister for approval.

World heritage values are defined to be inclusive of natural and cultural heritage (s12(3)), and a declared World Heritage Property is one included on the World Heritage List, or is declared to be such by the Minister (s13 and s14). The Act defines various procedures, objectives and Commonwealth obligations relating to the nomination and management of World Heritage Properties (Part 15, division 1).



### 8.1.3 Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Act (No 1) 2003

#### ***Australian Heritage Council Act 2003 and Australian Heritage Council (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Act 2003***

These three Acts replace the previous Commonwealth heritage regime instigated by the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975*. The Acts establish the following provisions:

#### **The National Heritage List**

The National Heritage List is a schedule of places which the Minister for the Environment and Heritage considers to have 'National Heritage Value' based on prescribed 'National Heritage Criteria'. The List may include places outside of Australia if agreed to by the Country concerned. There is a public nomination process and provision for public consultation on nominations. Expert advice regarding nominations is provided to the Minister by the Australian Heritage Council.

A nominated place considered to be at risk can be placed on an emergency list while its heritage value is assessed.

The listing of a place is defined as a 'matter of national environmental significance' under the EPBC Act. As a consequence, the Minister must grant approval prior to the conduct of any proposed actions which will, or are likely to have, a significant impact on the National Heritage values of a listed place.

The Minister is to ensure that there are approved management plans for most listed places owned or controlled by the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth agency, and that Commonwealth actions are in accord with such plans.

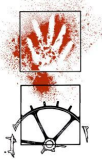
The Commonwealth or its agencies cannot sell or lease a listed place unless the protection of its National Heritage values is specified in a covenant, or such an action is found to be unnecessary, unreasonable or impractical. All Commonwealth agencies which own or control places which have or may have National Heritage values, must take all reasonable steps to assist the Minister and Australian Heritage Council to identify and assess those values.

#### **The Commonwealth Heritage List**

The Commonwealth Heritage List is a schedule of places owned or controlled by the Commonwealth, which the Minister for the Environment and Heritage considers to have 'Commonwealth Heritage Value'. The list may include places outside of Australia. The processes of nomination and assessment are similar to those for the National Heritage List. Like the National Heritage List, there is a provision for emergency listing.

The Act places a range of obligations on the Commonwealth Agencies with regard to places included on the Commonwealth Heritage List. These include:

- Development of a heritage strategy applicable to all listed places controlled by the agency;
- Preparation of a management plan for each listed place;
- Conduct of a program to identify Commonwealth Heritage values on lands controlled by the agency and maintaining a register of such values;
- Ensuring that no action is taken which has, will have, or is likely to have an adverse impact on the National Heritage values of a National Heritage Place, or the Commonwealth Heritage values of a Commonwealth Heritage Place, unless there is no feasible or prudent alternative and all reasonable measures to mitigate impact have been taken; and
- Including a covenant in any sale or lease contract for land which includes a Commonwealth Heritage place which stipulates the protection of the Commonwealth Heritage values of that place, unless such an action is found by the agency to be unnecessary, unreasonable or impractical.



## The Australian Heritage Council

The Australian Heritage Council provides expert advice to the Minister on heritage issues and nominations for the listing of places on the National Heritage List and the Commonwealth Heritage List. The Council replaces the former Australian Heritage Commission.

## 8.2 ACT

### 8.2.1 Heritage Act 2004

This Act provides for the protection, management and conservation of heritage places and objects in the ACT. The Act establishes a Heritage Register of heritage places and objects and establishes procedures for both provisional and full listing to the Register. The Act establishes the ACT Heritage Council to function as the main advisory body to the Minister on heritage issues. The Council receives administrative support from the ACT Heritage, Environment ACT, Department of Territory and Municipal Services. The Council has the power to provisionally and fully register Heritage places and objects. Under the Act, the ACT Heritage Council is to be responsible for the Heritage Register and the heritage registration process.

An 'Aboriginal Place' and 'Aboriginal Object' are defined as 'a place/object of particular significance to Aboriginal people because of either or both:

- (a) Aboriginal Tradition; and/or
- (b) The history, including contemporary history, of Aboriginal people (s9).

Under s74 and s75 of the Act a person commits an offence if they engage in conduct that diminishes the heritage significance of a place or object, or engage in conduct that causes damage to an Aboriginal place or object. These offences are graduated according to whether an offender was reckless or negligent 'about whether the conduct would diminish the heritage significance' or 'cause damage' to an Aboriginal Object of Place. To 'cause damage' is inclusive of disturbing or destroying.

A person also commits an offence under the Act if they do not report an Aboriginal place to the Heritage Council, and has 5 working days to do so (s51).

The reporting and offence provisions of the Act apply irrespective of land status or whether registration to the Heritage Register occurs.

The Act provides for the development and application of Heritage Guidelines. These are to be formulated by the Heritage Council and will set the policy for how places and objects are to be conserved, including registered places and objects. The guidelines may control how development is to take place in an area which is a heritage place or contains a heritage object. They will be performance-based but may include mandatory provisions (Part 5). During the transitional phase of the Act a heritage or conservation requirement for a place is taken to be a heritage guideline under the Heritage Act (s129).

The only provisions for legally sanctioned disturbance to an Aboriginal place or object, or the diminution of the heritage value of a Heritage Place or Object is to conform to one of the exceptions listed in s76 of the Act. According to this section, the offence provisions of the Act (s74 and s75) do not apply if conduct is engaged in accordance with the following:

- (i) a heritage guideline;
- (ii) a heritage direction;
- (iii) a heritage agreement;
- (iv) a conservation management plan approved by the council;
- (v) development approval under the Planning Act 2023;
- (vi) an excavation permit;



(vii) a statement of heritage effect approved by the council.

Heritage recordings which occur on National Land under the National Land Ordinance 1989 (or subsequent amendments), or which occur in Designated Areas under the National Capital Plan are subject to development approval processes which may be in addition to, or instead of requirements identified as management requirements under the *Planning Act 2023*.

Development approval processes within the ACT can be summarised as follows:

- Work carried out on National Land in Designated Areas is subject to the approval of the National Capital Authority (NCA);
- Work carried out on Territory Land in Designated Areas is generally subject to approval by the NCA but Territory requirements may also apply to development where the Territory is the approving Authority;
- Work carried out on National Land outside of Designated Areas must be in accordance with a Development Control Plan agreed by the NCA that reflects the requirements of the Territory Plan; and
- Work carried out on Territory Land outside Designated Areas is subject to the Territory Plan and Territory Approval processes.

### **8.3 Implications for the AIS Podium Project**

The AIS precinct is located on land managed by the National Capital Authority. There are no heritage items within the project area therefore there are no further heritage assessment or approval requirements.



## 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no Aboriginal or historic sites within the Study Areas therefore there is no impact to heritage from the proposed project.

*It is recommended that:*

1. The project includes either naming or signage that tells of the area's Aboriginal past and connections.
2. A copy of this report should be provided to the ACT Heritage.
3. One copy of this report should be provided to each of the ACT RAOs.
4. The unanticipated discovery protocols in Appendix 1 should be implemented for this project.



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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **UNANTICIPATED DISCOVERY PROTOCOLS**



## **Protocol to be followed in the event that previously unrecorded or unanticipated Aboriginal or non Aboriginal archaeological material (objects, artefacts, deposits or relics) are encountered**

1. All ground surface disturbance in the area of the finds should cease immediately the finds are uncovered.
  - a. The discoverer of the find(s) will notify machinery operators in the immediate vicinity of the find(s) so that work can be halted; and
  - b. The site supervisor and the development proponent will be informed of the find(s).
2. If there is substantial doubt regarding a human or Aboriginal or historical European origin for the finds, then consider if it is possible to gain a qualified opinion (such as from the project archaeologist) within a short period of time. If feasible, gain a qualified opinion (this can circumvent proceeding further along the protocol for remains which turn out not to be archaeological). If a quick opinion cannot be gained, or the identification is positive, then proceed to the next step.
3. Immediately notify the following authorities or personnel of the discovery:
  - a. The ACT Heritage, the discovery of Aboriginal places and objects must be reported to the Council as soon as possible and within five working days;
  - b. Representatives from the Representative Aboriginal Organisations (RAOs) (where appropriate); and
  - c. The project archaeologist (if not already present).
4. Facilitate, in co-operation with the appropriate authorities and stakeholders:
  - a. The recording and assessment of the finds by a suitably qualified heritage professional (either the project archaeologist or a member of the ACT Heritage). This will include determining if the find(s) are from a new or previously recorded site, and lodgement of site information for all new recordings with the Heritage Unit;
  - b. Fulfilling any legal constraints arising from the finds. This will include complying with Heritage Council advice, any Statement of Heritage Effects (SHE) requirements in the case of a previously recorded site; and
  - c. The development and conduct of appropriate management strategies. Strategies will depend on stakeholder requirements and the assessed significance of the find(s).
5. Where the management of find(s) involves the salvage excavation or collection of artefacts, this material will be curated according to the provisions of any relevant SHE, or as directed by the Heritage Council.
6. Where the find(s) are determined to have cultural heritage value according to the criteria specified in the *Heritage Act 2004*, any re-commencement of construction related ground surface disturbance may only resume in the area of the find(s) following compliance with any consequential legal requirements and gaining written approval from the ACT Heritage Council. All Aboriginal objects and places are protected under the *Heritage Act 2004* and do not need to meet significance criteria in order for protection to be applied.



## **Protocol to be followed in the event that suspected human remains are encountered**

1. All ground surface disturbance in the area of the finds should cease immediately the finds are uncovered.
  - a. The discoverer of the find(s) will notify machinery operators in the immediate vicinity of the find(s) so that work can be temporarily halted; and
  - b. The site supervisor and the development proponent will be informed of the find(s).
2. If there is substantial doubt regarding a human origin for the remains, then consider if it is possible to gain a qualified opinion within a short period of time. If feasible, gain a qualified opinion (this can circumvent proceeding further along the protocol for remains which turn out to be non-human). If conducted, this opinion must be gained without further disturbance to any remaining skeletal material and its context as possible (Be aware that the site may be considered a crime scene containing forensic). If a quick opinion cannot be gained, or the identification is positive, then proceed to the next step.
3. Immediately notify the following people of the discovery:
  - a) The local Police (this is required by law);
  - b) The ACT Heritage, the discovery of Aboriginal places and objects must be reported to the Council as soon as possible and within five working days;
  - c) Representatives from the Representative Aboriginal Organisations (RAOs) (where appropriate); and
  - d) The project archaeologist (if not already present).
4. Facilitate the evaluation of the find(s) by the statutory authorities and comply with any stated requirements. Depending on the evaluation of the find(s), the management of the find(s) and their location may become a matter for the Police and/or Coroner.
5. Construction related works in the area of the find(s) may not resume until the development proponent receives written approval from the relevant statutory authority: from the Police or Coroner in the event of an investigation; and from the ACT Heritage Council in the case of human remains outside of the jurisdiction of the Police or Coroner.
6. In the event that the proponent continues an active role in the evaluation and/or management of the find(s), via a direction or advice from the Police, Coroner and/or Heritage Council, then all or some of the following steps may be conducted:
7. Facilitate, in co-operation with the appropriate authorities, the definitive identification of the skeletal material by a specialist (if not already completed). This must be done with as little further disturbance to any remaining skeletal material and its context as possible.
8. If the specialist identifies the bone as non-human then, where appropriate, the protocol for the discovery of historical or Aboriginal artefacts (above) should be followed.
9. If the specialist determines that the bone material is human, then the proceeding course of action may be of three types:
  - a. The bone(s) are of an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal person who died less than 100 years ago and where traumatic death is suspected. Such remains come under the jurisdiction of the *ACT Coroner's Act 1997*. All further decisions and responsibilities regarding the remains and find location rest with the ACT Police, and/or the ACT Coroner.



- b. The bone(s) are of a non-Aboriginal person who died more than 100 years ago. In this case, and where the Police have indicated that they have no interest in the find(s), the following steps may be followed:
- i. Ascertain the requirements of the ACT Heritage Council, the development proponent, the project archaeologist, and the views of any relevant community stakeholders;
  - ii. Based on the above, determine and conduct an appropriate course of action. Possible strategies could include one or more of the following:
    1. Avoiding further disturbance to the find and conserving the remains *in situ* (this option may require relocating the development and this may not be possible in some contexts);
    2. Conducting (or continuing) archaeological salvage of the finds following receipt of any required statutory approvals;
    3. Scientific description (including excavation where necessary), and possibly also analysis of the remains prior to reburial;
    4. Recovering samples for dating and other analyses; and/or
    5. Subsequent reburial at another place and in an appropriate manner determined by the Heritage Council and in consultation with other relevant stakeholders.
- c. The bone(s) are of an Aboriginal person who died more than 100 years ago. In this case the following steps may be followed:
- i. Ascertain the requirements of the local RAOs, the ACT Heritage Council, the development proponent, and the project archaeologist;
  - ii. Based on the above, determine and conduct an appropriate course of action. Possible strategies could include one or more of the following:
    1. Avoiding further disturbance to the find and conserving the remains *in situ*, (this option may require relocating the development and this may not be possible in some contexts);
    2. Conducting (or continuing) archaeological salvage of the finds following receipt of any required statutory approvals;
    3. Scientific description (including excavation where necessary), and possibly also analysis of the remains prior to reburial;
    4. Recovering samples for dating and other analyses; and/or
    5. Subsequent reburial at another place and in an appropriate manner determined by the RAOs and the Heritage Council.

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