

# Unearthed

## Archaeology & Heritage



### Yathong Rewilding Program, Yathong Nature Reserve, Irymple NSW Heritage Desktop Assessment

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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Molino Stewart on behalf of National Parks and Wildlife Service
<b>LGA:</b>	Cobar Shire Council
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## Executive Summary

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) are proposing a program of rewilding which includes the establishment of a feral predator free area in western NSW within Yathong Nature Reserve. They are also proposing creating some walking trails through the Nature Reserve.

Molino Stewart on behalf of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service have commissioned Unearthed Archaeology & Heritage to undertake this desktop heritage assessment of the Yathong Rewilding Program for integration into a Review of Environmental Factors (REF). This desktop heritage assessment has been prepared in accordance with the *NSW Heritage Manual* (NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs & Planning 1996) and *Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and Relics* (Lavelle et al. 2009).

The historic research does not indicate that any structures have been constructed around the boundaries of the Yathong Nature Reserve in the location of the proposed feral proof fence or the walking trails. The locations of the three homesteads (Yathong, Irymple and Glenlea) and their associated outbuildings are not in the vicinity of the proposed works. Therefore, it is not expected that any historical archaeological deposits or relics would be impacted by the proposed works.

The proposed works are not located within the vicinity of any of the extant homestead or associated outbuildings. The extant buildings will not be impacted in any way by the proposed works.

Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. The proposed work will not adversely impact on the heritage significance of the study area or vicinity;
2. It is not expected that any archaeological deposits or relics will be disturbed by the proposed works;
3. There is no objection to the proposed works on a heritage or non-Aboriginal archaeological basis;
4. No further heritage or non-Aboriginal archaeological investigation is required in respect of the proposed works as outlined in this report;
5. If, during the works, any unexpected archaeological deposits are uncovered, all work in the vicinity of that deposit must cease and advice be sought from a suitably qualified archaeologist.

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## 1.0 Background Information

### 1.1 Introduction

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) are proposing a program of rewilding which includes the establishment of a feral predator free area in western NSW within Yathong Nature Reserve. They are also proposing creating some walking trails through the Nature Reserve.

Molino Stewart on behalf of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service have commissioned Unearthed Archaeology & Heritage to undertake this desktop heritage assessment of the Yathong Rewilding Program for integration into a Review of Environmental Factors (REF). This desktop heritage assessment has been prepared in accordance with the *NSW Heritage Manual* (NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs & Planning 1996) and *Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and Relics* (Lavelle et al. 2009).

### 1.2 Study area location

The study area is known as Yathong Nature Reserve. It is located in Irymple in the Central West of NSW within the Cobar Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA). It is located to the south of Cobar, to the east of Ivanhoe, to the north of Hillston and to the west of Mount Hope.

Yathong Nature Reserve comprises the following Lot/DP's:

- 1247//762822
- 2923//7665083
- 4573//767707
- 7330//118371

The proposed works will be undertaken around the perimeter of Yathong Nature Reserve.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 below shows the location of the Yathong Nature Reserve. Figure 3 shows the location of the proposed feral proof fence line.



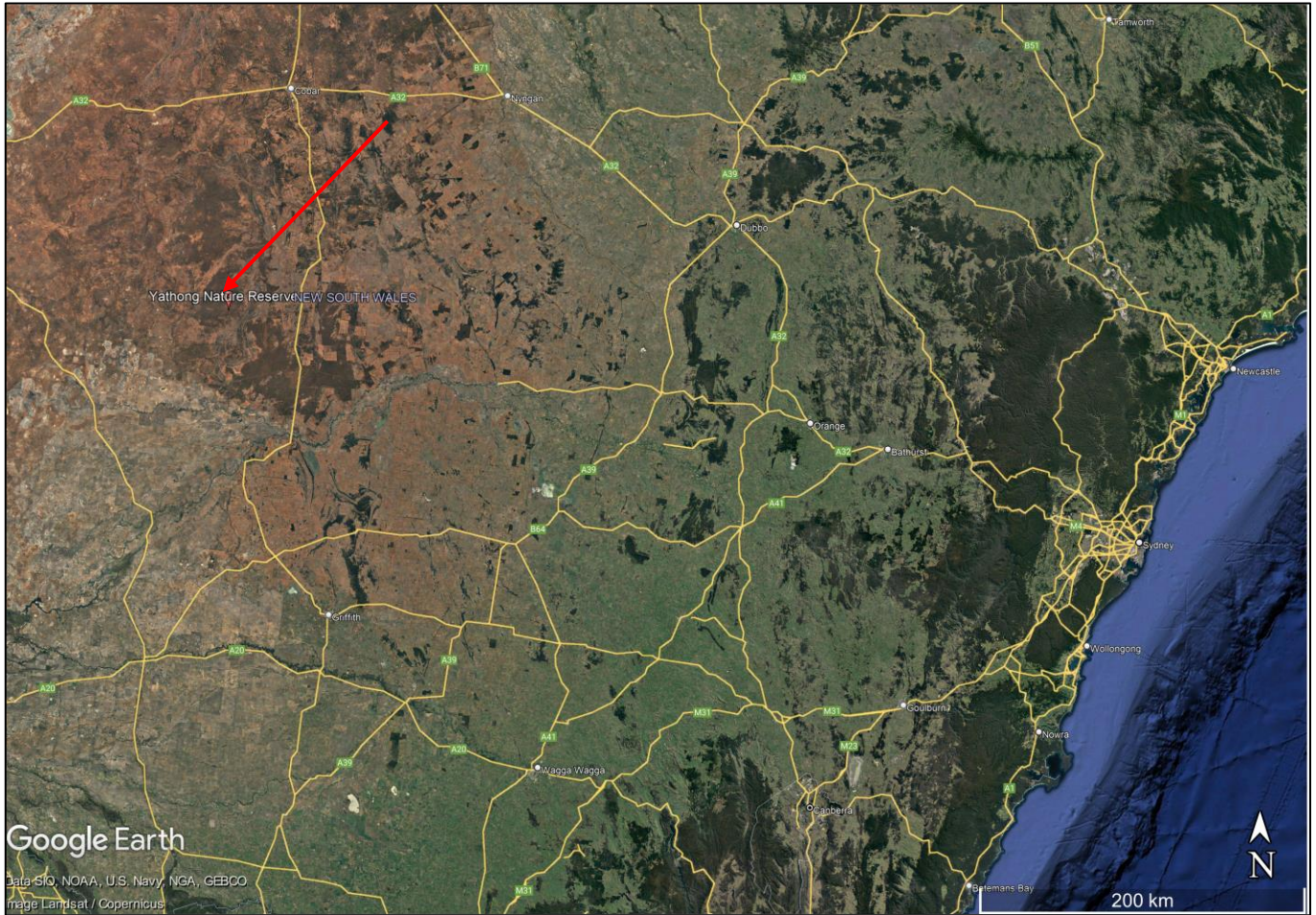


Figure 1: Showing the location of the Yathong Nature Reserve indicated by the red arrow (map courtesy of Google Earth Pro).

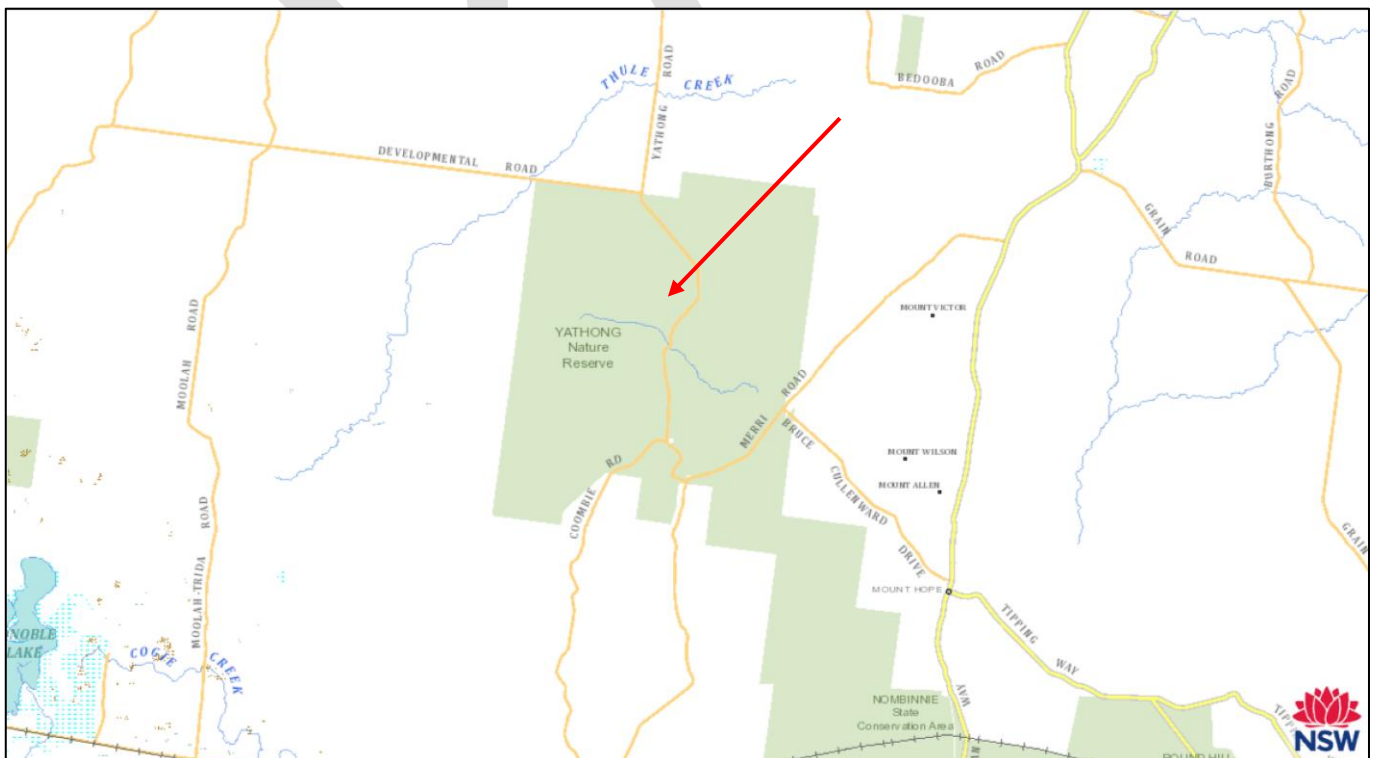


Figure 2: Showing the location of Yathong Nature Reserve on the NSW map (map courtesy of [www.maps.six.nsw.gov.au](http://www.maps.six.nsw.gov.au)).





**Figure 3:** Showing the location of the proposed feral proof fence which will be installed around the perimeter of the white shaded area (map courtesy of Google Earth Pro).

### 1.3 NSW Rewilding Initiative

Australia has the worst mammal extinction in the world. At least 34 Australian mammal species have been driven to extinction since European settlement, with feral cats and foxes the main drivers for at least two-thirds of these losses (Legge et al. 2018, Woinarski *et al.* 2015; Radford *et al.* 2018). The range and abundance of surviving mammals continues to decline significantly across Australia.

Feral cats and foxes also impact on bird (Garnett et al. 2011; Woinarski et al. 2017), reptiles (Woinarski et al. 2018; Chapple et al. 2019), and amphibian species (Woinarski et al. 2020). Feral cats are found throughout mainland Australia and are estimated to kill over 2 billion native animals every year (J. Woinarski, S. Legge pers. comm). In NSW, cats are thought to impact 117 threatened species, more than any other feral animal species (Coutts-Smith et al 2007).

A network of predator free areas is an essential part of NPWS' strategy to protect and restore our most vulnerable native species.

The NSW Rewilding Initiative represents one of the most significant threatened fauna restoration projects in NSW history. The establishment of four large feral cat and fox-free areas at various locations across

NSW, (including a site in western NSW) will deliver a measurable conservation benefit for at least 50 threatened animal species including:

- The re-establishment of nine mammal species, currently listed as extinct in NSW including iconic species such as the Greater Bilby, Western Quoll and Eastern Bettong;
- The establishment of new populations of at least 14 threatened species (and five protected species) which are locally extinct – priority species will include the critically endangered Long footed Potoroo, the Eastern Quoll and bushfire affected species such as the Smoky Mouse;
- An improvement in the trajectory, or reduction in extinction risk, for another 21 threatened extant animal species including bushfire affected species such as the Red-legged Pademelon and iconic species such as the Koala and Malleefowl;
- A significant conservation benefit for an additional 10 or more extant threatened animal species.

As part of the NSW Rewilding Initiative, the Yathong Nature Reserve was identified as a preferred rewilding location through an assessment against broad criteria, requiring judgements based on available science, experience and an overall, holistic assessment.

The Yathong rewilding program involves the construction and operation of conservation fencing and associated infrastructure for the reintroduction of locally extinct species within the Yathong Nature Reserve.

The objectives of the rewilding program are to:

- Establish and maintain viable populations of reintroduced species in the new feral free area;
- Improve the trajectory for extant threatened species within the new feral free area;
- Improve the environmental health and ecosystem function within the feral free area; and
- Improve the effectiveness of rewilding as a conservation management technique.

In addition, the Yathong Nature Reserve feral free area has an important role in increasing the awareness and understanding of threatened species, ecological communities, threatening processes and their management.

## 1.4 Heritage Listings

There are no heritage items listed on the State Heritage Register or the Cobar Local Environmental Plan 2012 (CLEP) within or in the vicinity of Yathong Nature Reserve.

## 1.5 Authorship

This report was prepared and written by Tory Stening, B.A., M.A. (Archaeology), Unearthed Archaeology & Heritage. Section 3.0 of this report was researched and written by Dr Mark Dunn, MPHA NSW & ACT.



## 2.0 Proposed Works

NPWS are proposing the construction of a feral animal proof fence around the perimeter of the Yathong Nature Reserve. Following are details of the proposed fence construction:

- Construction of a 1.8m high fence with an approximate 600mm curved floppy top and two hot (electric) wires.
- Installation of two skirts that lay flat on the ground on the inside and outside of the fence extending 400mm on each side.
- The bulk of the fence will be constructed from netting with 40mm aperture on the upper section and 30mm aperture on the lower section.
- Vegetation will be cleared where necessary to install strainer assemblies at the corners and any changes in direction greater than 10 degrees off alignment.
- Strainers will consist of posts (40mm nominal bore) and a single strut and be designed as bases for wire tensioning.
- A single plain wire is to be installed at ground level to provide a sight line for the installation of pickets and intermediate posts. Intermediate posts (posts 1.8m above ground level, 80mm nominal bore) will be spaced every 500 metres or where extra strength or support is required.
- Intermediate posts and struts will be driven into the ground, depending on the underlying substrate.
- Pickets (1.8m above ground) are to be installed every 5m.
- Pickets will be installed mechanically, using a port knocker that will ram them to a depth of 1200mm, rock drill or concrete footing (where required).
- Six horizontal plain selvedge wires (2.5mm diameter) spanning the height of the fence will be strung.
- The plain wires will be tensioned back to the strainers and will be attached to the pickets using post clips.
- Insulated hot wire “stand offs” (160mm long insulated rods that support the electric wires) to be bolted to the pickets at 1100 and 1440mm above ground level.
- Insulators should be fitted to intermediate posts and strainer posts.
- Three rolls of 1.4mm gauge netting are to be installed (1800mm wide for upper vertical section and floppy top; 1200mm wide for the lower vertical section and external skirt; and 900mm wide for the lower section and internal skirt).
- Two electric wires are to be installed between each picket, equally spaced.
- Sliding gates that roll on tracks set into a concrete plinth are to be installed at the entries to the Nature Reserve.

Figure 4 below shows the proposed feral proof fence construction. Figure 5 shows the proposed fence post details. Figure 6 shows the proposed sliding gate details.

Walking trails are also proposed through the Yathong Nature Reserve. The construction of these walking trails will only require under scrubbing or the removal of the under scrub. No larger vegetation or trees will be removed.

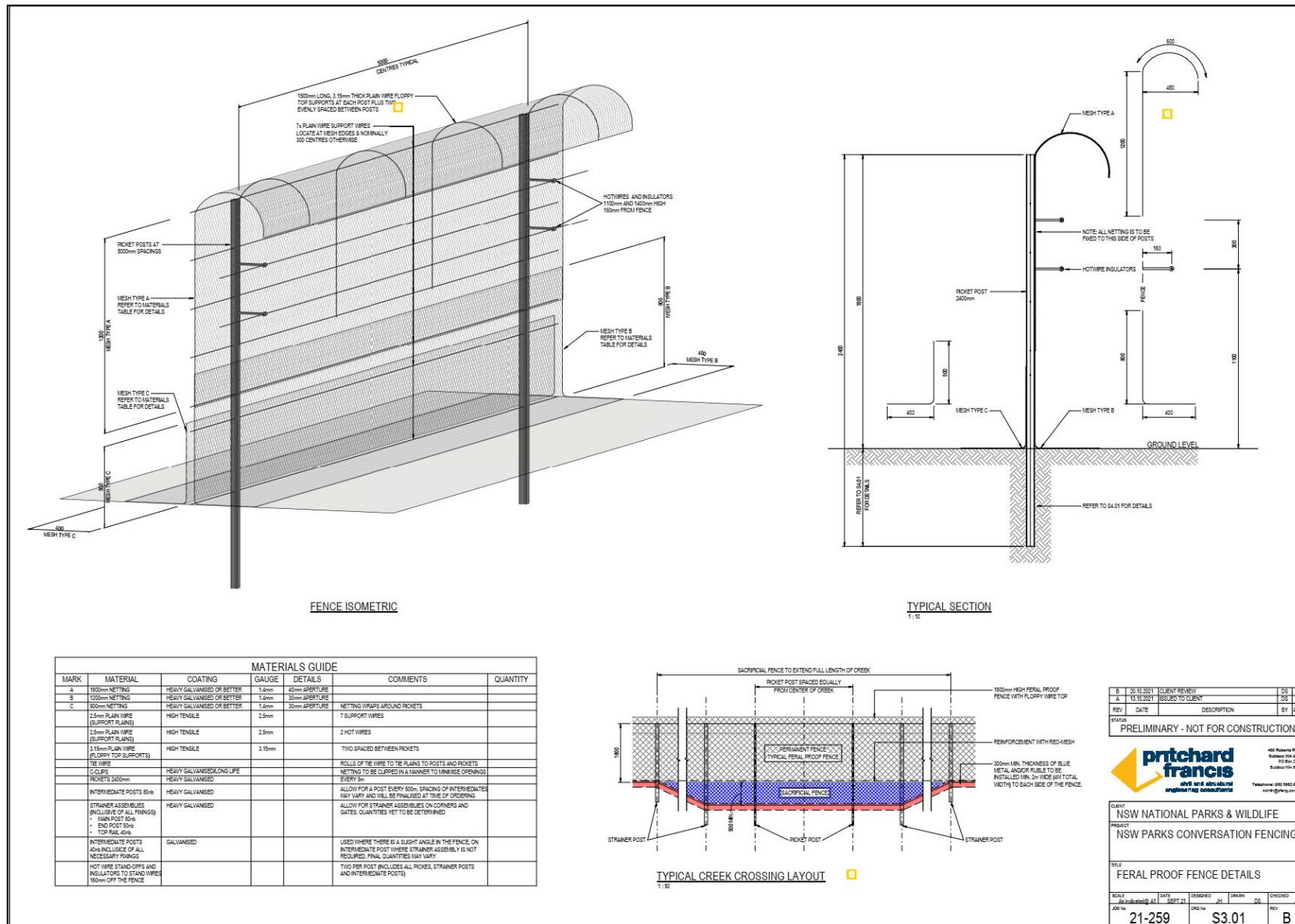


Figure 4: Showing the proposed fencing details.

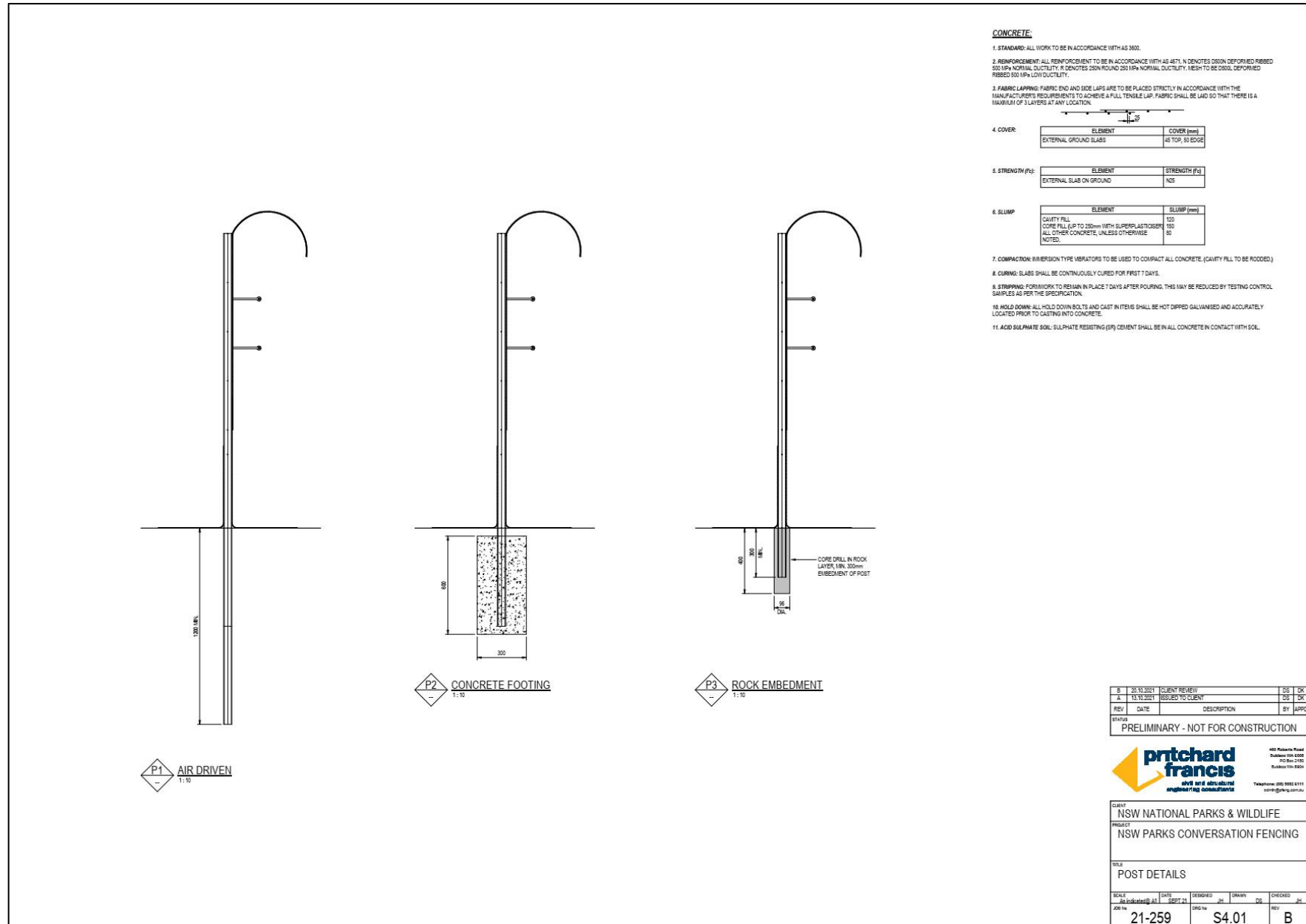


Figure 5: Showing the proposed fence post details.

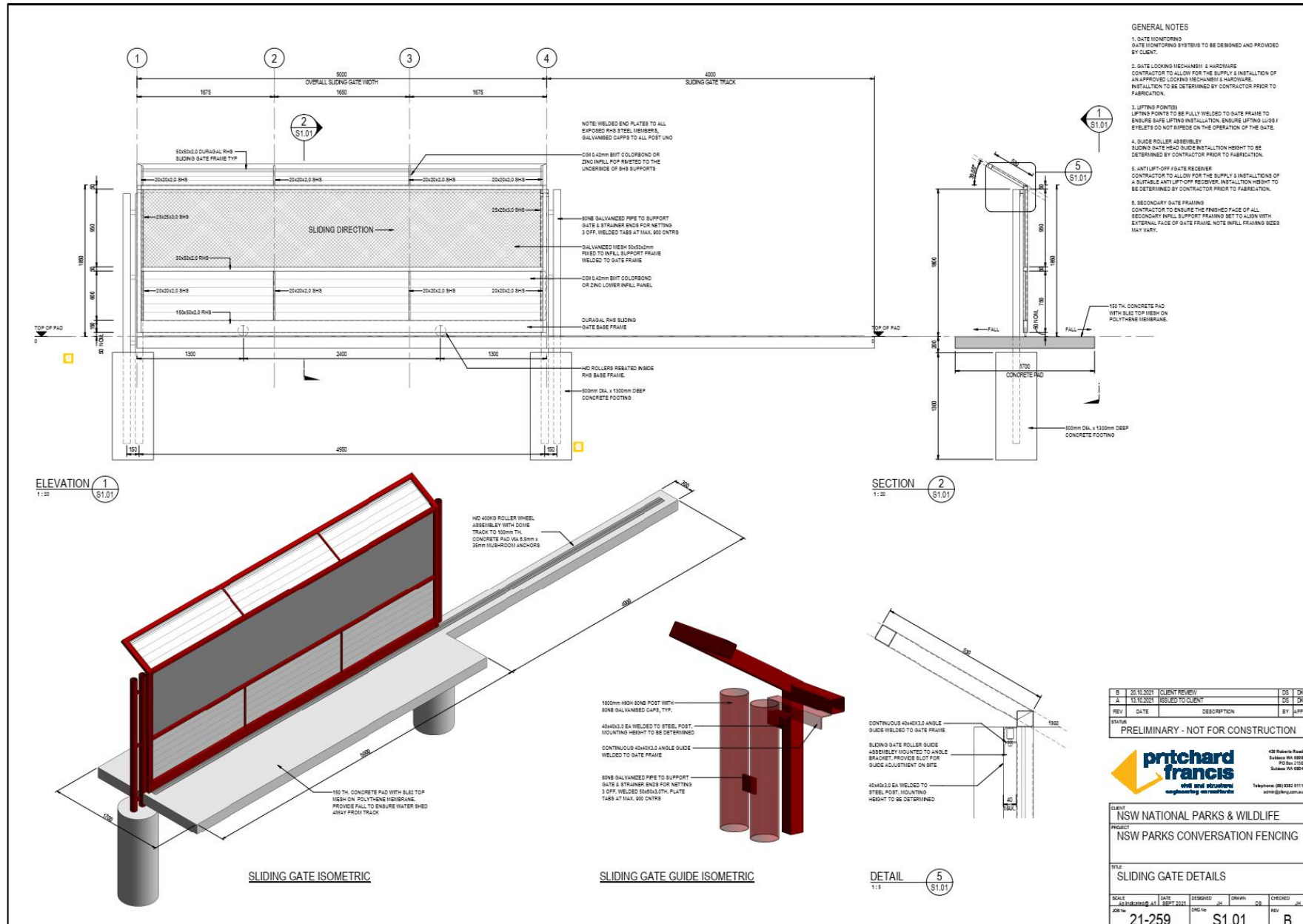


Figure 6: Showing the proposed sliding gate details.



### 3.0 Historical Background

#### 3.1 Ngiyampaa Country

The Yathong Nature reserve sits on Ngiyampaa Country, an area that extends from the Darling-Barwon River and Bogan Rivers in the north to the Lachlan River and Wilandra Creek Country in the south. The people distinguish themselves according to language group, with the Ngiyampaa-Pilaarriciyalu people closest to what became the Yathong Nature Reserve area (Comber 2006:13). The area has been occupied and managed by Aboriginal people for at least 40,000 years (OzArk 2018:7). Although the archaeological focus in the area has been primarily on rock art and associated sites, those studies undertaken during the 1970s and early 1980s, identified more than 220 individual sites across the Cobar government area, including one in Yathong Nature reserve area. Large numbers of camp sites, scarred trees and shelters in the Yathong area point to a relatively large historical population in the area (Gunn,1983:16).

The nature of the country, covered in mallee scrub with no major rivers and few permanent water sources, meant that traditional territories were large and groups responded to the transitory nature of the food and water resources by moving across their Country throughout the seasons. Areas where water came to the surface in soaks and natural springs were important camping sites, with groups moving towards the major rivers at the edge of their Country in times of prolonged drought. For the Ngiyampaa people, this meant heading into and through the neighbouring Wiradjuri country towards the Lachlan River. The culture and language of the two groups are closely related and the movement across Country for ceremony by both groups was common (Comber, 2006:15)

The isolation of the Country meant that it was the groups of the mallee that were some of the last to be directly impacted by the arrival of White squatters in the mid-nineteenth century. Charles Sturt first approached the western plains from South Australia in 1829 and Thomas Mitchell came into the area from the northeast in 1835, both reporting back to authorities about the large rivers they saw which encouraged the first squatters to push their herds and flocks down the Barwon and Darling Rivers and along the Murray to the area. By the 1840s the number of squatters in the western districts created the need for towns and villages to act as supply depots along the way. These appeared along the river courses, which concentrated European settlement close to the rivers. By 1850 the best grazing leases had been taken up along the rivers, and the first riverboats began to ply the waterways to bring in supplies and take out grain and wool. Although the first squatters had come with cattle, the arrival of the riverboats made sheep a more profitable venture, with the wool clip able to be moved quicker to the markets than droving cattle overland (Heritage Office, 1996:194).

#### 3.2 Squatting and the Establishment of Station Runs

Until 1836 the colonial government in Sydney had attempted to control the expansion of the squatters via the establishment of Nineteen Counties within which land could be granted or people could purchase land. The boundaries, or Limits of Location had been set out in 1826 in response to directives from England to divide the colony of New South Wales into counties and parishes, so that land could be valued and recorded prior to sale (Perry, 1963:45). However, the boundaries of the prescribed limit were vague, with the Macquarie River the only recognisable landmark and some graziers already out on the edges of the zone had already gone past the frontier.

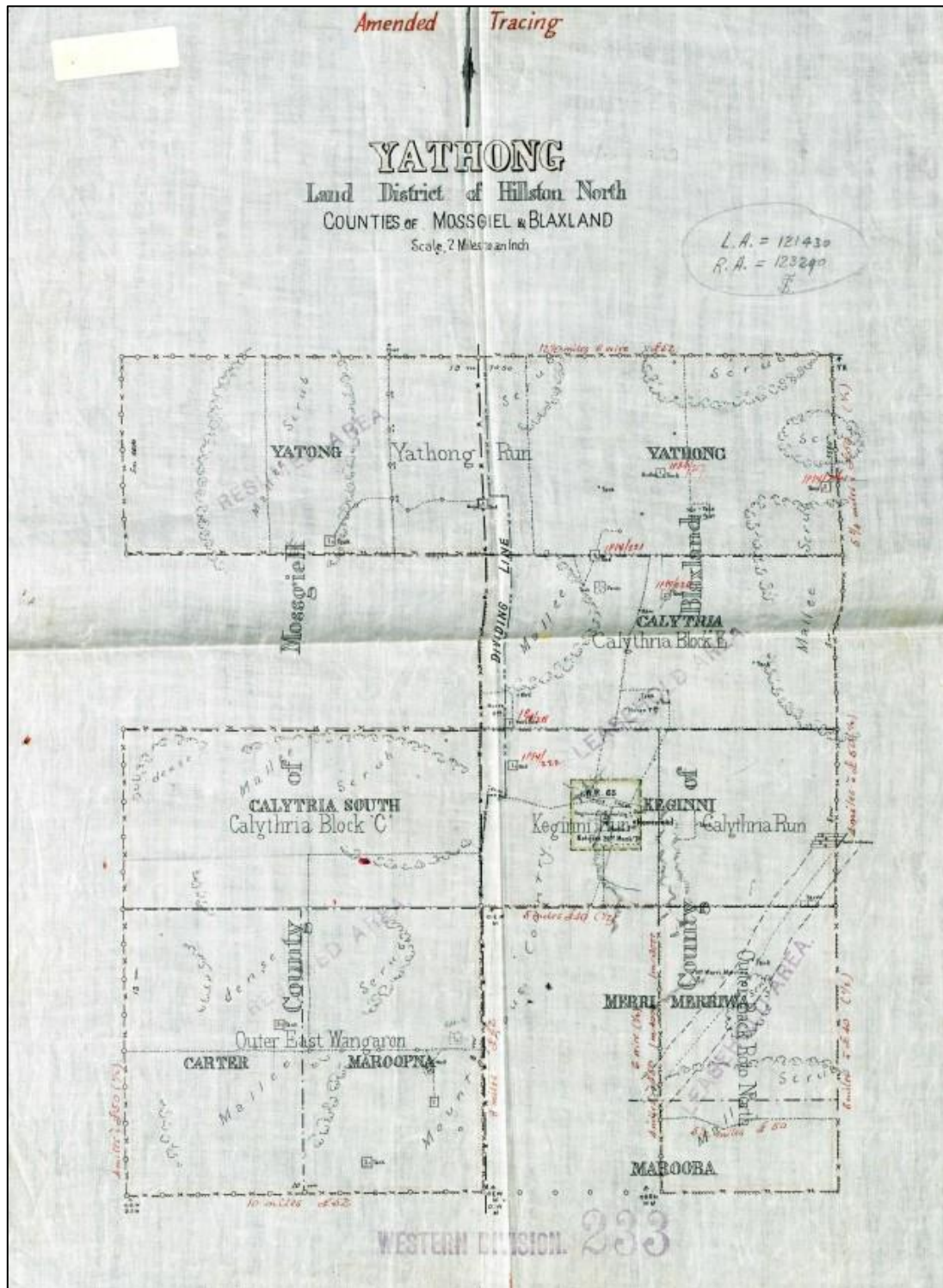
In 1836 Governor Bourke approved an Act allowing squatters the right to graze beyond the Nineteen Counties. Known as the Squatters Act, it set an annual fee of £10 to recognise grazing rights, with squatting districts proclaimed and Commissioners of Crown Lands appointed to manage the expanded area. With the Darling and Bogan Rivers having already been explored and surveyed, the first squatters followed these into the western districts, establishing their runs along the reliable waterways.

Squatters entered the area around what is now Cobar in the mid-1840s and early-1850, although frontier conflict and continuing Aboriginal resistance in the area between Nyngan and Bourke, as well as less reliable water sources, kept squatters away for longer than in those areas further west along the Darling River (Comber, 2006:23). Despite this, by the end of the 1850s much of the land with any river frontage or permanent water had been taken by squatters and their advance into more remote areas was well underway.

### **3.3 Yathong Station 1870 – 1966**

Yathong Station started sometime between 1870 and 1875, with the brothers Joseph and James Henderson, trading as the Henderson Brothers taking up the land for grazing sheep. The run was notified on 2 March 1875, although the brothers were likely already on it by the time the official notice was announced. The brothers established a homestead on the estate and took up a lease, WR65, that equalled 121,230 acres / 49,060 hectares. The homestead and home paddocks were erected close to the only reliable water source on the property, Keginni Creek, with the name Keginni also used to identify the homestead run. The station was divided into individual runs of varying sizes, from a small run containing the homestead, the station woolshed, domestic quarters, shearers quarters and other associated buildings, and larger runs covering the mallee scrub and the rocky ridges to the east and north of the homestead site (SRNSW NRS:14570 [10/43887]).

By 1885 the mortgage on the lease for Yathong was held by the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Ltd, with the Henderson Brothers as managers. The New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency were wool brokers established in London in 1865 to take advantage of the pastoral boom in New Zealand and Australia. They established a head office in Melbourne in 1875 and commenced selling wool in 1880. In February 1885, the Company applied to have their Pastoral Holding converted into a Leasehold. In the application they noted that the station was divided into seven main blocks totally 245,300 acres, with a carrying capacity of 8 sheep per acre. The property was essentially waterless, with standing water only appearing after heavy rain, and as such the station had a total of eleven tanks built on it, with two wells and two large dams. The homestead, woolshed, men's quarters and huts, as well as drains to supply the tanks, a cultivation paddock and yards were also noted. The station had 71 miles of external fencing and another 108 miles approximately of internal fencing, separating runs and yards (SRNSW NRS:8362 3/1178).



**Figure 7:** Plan of Yathong pastoral holding area in 1885 that the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Ltd applied to have transferred to leasehold. This plan shows the separate runs and blocks that made up the station area. The homestead and woolshed were within the Keginni Run area shown as the smaller square in the plan centre. Water tanks are shown as small squares across the plan area (Source: SRNSW NRS:8362 3/1178).

In 1887, when the station was being assessed to determine the rent per acre owed under the Lands Act, Joseph Henderson reported that Yathong was 70 miles (112km) from Hillston and 150 miles from the nearest railway at Carrathool in the south (241km) [the actual distance is 98km to Hillston and 199km to Carrathool] with no navigable waterways. Wool from their sheds was taken out for the Sydney markets via Hillston at a cost of £9.1.5 per ton on average. The station employed 13 hands, with 8 or 9 extra during the

lambling season and another 32 at shearing for up to six weeks. As well as the homestead and woolshed, Yathong also had 10 tanks, 3 dams and 1 well, all built by the Henderson's. The property included 137 miles (220km) of 5 and 6 wire strand fencing, and 211 miles (340km) of log fencing. The fence line included the boundary of the station, the internal runs and individual stock and horse paddocks.

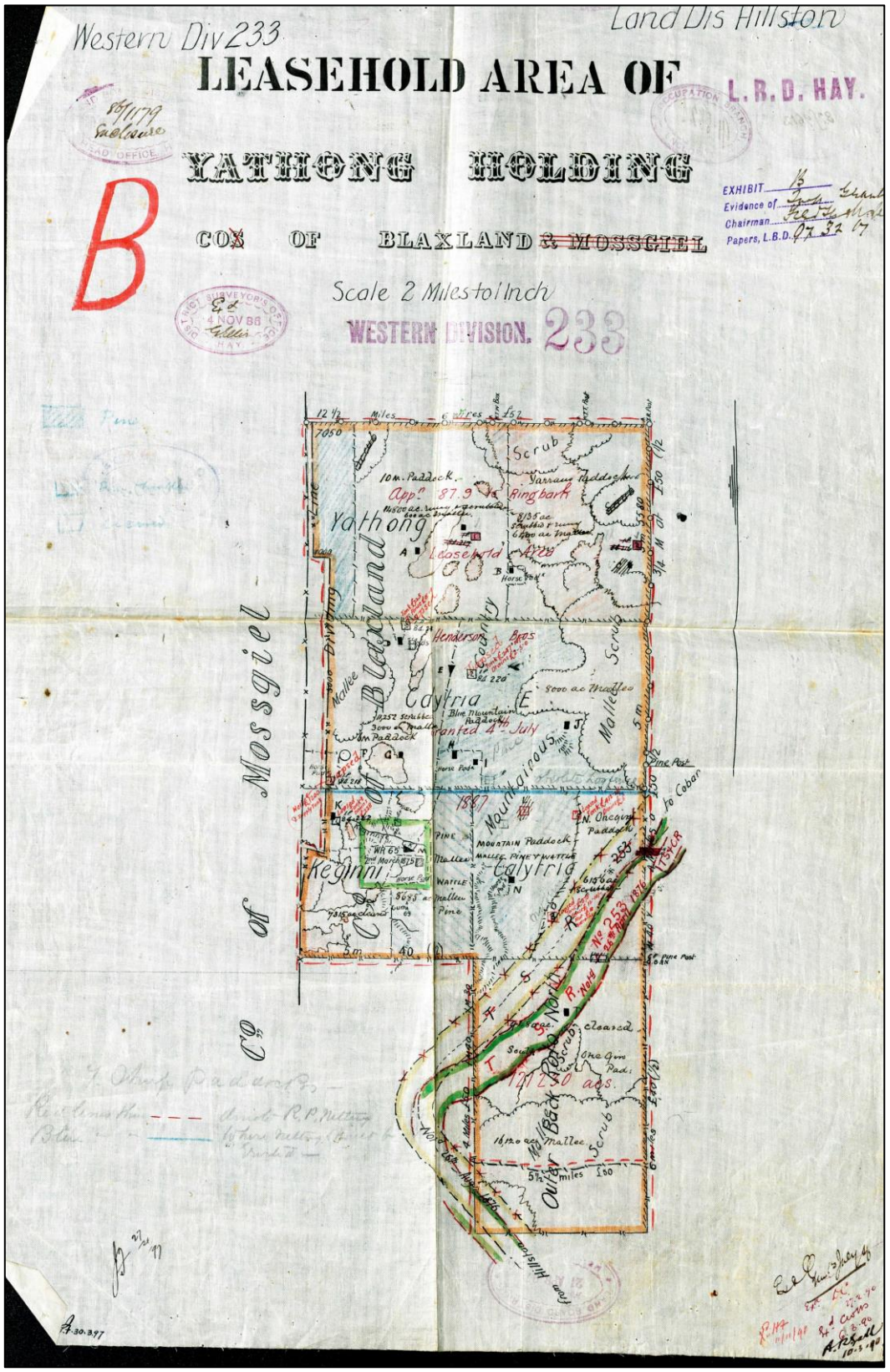
The brothers also employed five men to kill and trap rabbits on the station, which had become an increasing problem since about 1880. In the year from May 1886 over 11,000 rabbits had been killed on the property (SRNSW NRS:14570 [10/43887]). Rabbits had arrived in the western districts of New South Wales in the early 1880s and were in plague proportions soon after. Good rains in 1886 and 1887, which helped pasture growth, also encouraged the rabbits to breed and succeeding droughts brought them into direct competition with grazing sheep. Rabbits would eat pasture to the roots and strip trees and shrubs of foliage creating an environmental disaster for the regions they were in and cutting the stock carrying capacity of the stations. By 1887 the Henderson's reported they were cutting scrub to feed their sheep due to the destruction of the pasture by rabbits.

The Henderson's also reported on the type of country they had. Much of Yathong was covered in mallee scrub, with a ridge running north-south through the centre. An expanding area of pine was also found on the station, with Henderson noting that this had increased since 1875 on account of the stocking of the country and the absence of bushfires. The brothers had ringbarked pine in the horse paddocks to clear it and were applying for permission to clear more across the station (SRNSW NRS:14570 [10/43887]). It was likely that the Henderson's were employing Chinese labourers to do the ring-barking and scrub clearing at Yathong. Chinese workers were employed in the area in 1888, with 200 men working on the neighbouring Goan Downs and up to 60,000 acres to be cleared at Yathong (*Australian Town and Country Journal*, 19 May 1888:24). Most of the larger stations also employed Chinese market gardeners to supply the fresh vegetables and other produce to the station workers. Yathong may have had such men on the property although there is no clear reference to them being there.

Henderson's remarks about stocking and fires suggest some sense of the environmental change that their grazing was having. In these early days of the squatters, Aboriginal people who had lived around the area had been pushed back off their Country, and the fire regime they would have employed had been disrupted. No reports of the Aboriginal occupation at the time of the Henderson's arrival have been found, but with the homestead and station buildings erected around the only reliable water source, any Ngiyampaa who would have been relying on the water would likely have been driven away. Considering the brothers report on the condition of the station, and the Land District officer inspection in 1888 it was determined that the appropriate rent was ¼ penny per acre per year, which was under the minimum rate for leases and pointed to the degraded situation the station was already in.

The Hendersons left Yathong in c.1895 when New South Wales was in the middle of a devastating drought. Years of increasing sheep numbers which had left the land overstocked and the plague numbers of rabbits meant many stations were already under strain when the drought hit. Sheep numbers which had peaked at 15.4 million around 1889, collapsed with an estimated 10 million sheep dying through the long seven-year drought (Barnes & Wise, 2003: 10).





**Figure 8:** Detail of the eastern section of Yathong surveyed in 1890. The pan shows the homestead block (outlined in green) and the Travelling Stock Route that crossed the south east corner of the station. Fence lines are also shown dividing the internal paddocks on the station with the various types of land covering and terrains also indicated (Source: SRNSW NRS-14570-1-[10/43887]-233).

The situation resulted in a Royal Commission into the condition of Crown Tenants in the western division of New South Wales being called in 1900. One of the findings was the collapse in land value in western New South Wales due to the drought, rabbits and overstocking. Land values had fallen between fifty and eighty percent, with the representative of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency claiming that of twenty stations they held the mortgage for, not one of the mortgagors had been able to repay the mortgage from the profits made on their station (Quinn, 1995:108). Amongst the recommendations of the Royal Commission was that a single land board be established to administer the western division, taking over from nineteen separate local land boards that were then in place and would allow a more consolidated management, the setting of consistent rents and better adaptive management to the needs of the district (Quinn, 1995:119).

From the Royal Commission came the passing of the Western Lands Act 1901, the establishment of the Western Lands Commission and the recommendation of long-term leases over properties to allow for stability and future management. Although the commission recommended twenty-five years, the Lands Act set the lease term at forty-two years, effectively closing off the land to any closer settlement and ensuring large landholders remained secure (Quinn, 1995: 131).

Under a series of managers, the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency continued to run Yathong until 1934 when it was transferred to Edward Naughton. Naughton transferred the station to the joint ownership of John Hawthorne, Gwenneth and Brenda Hughes and Joan Coglan in 1940 who ran the station as a pastoral company, Yathong Pty Ltd until it ceased trading in February 1958 and Yathong was sold to Edward and Irene Fryer (SRNSW: NRS 17408-6-15-1992/P/1997). Throughout its history the station operated as a sheep grazing property, with stocking rates rising and falling as conditions changed.

### **3.4 Yathong Nature Reserve**

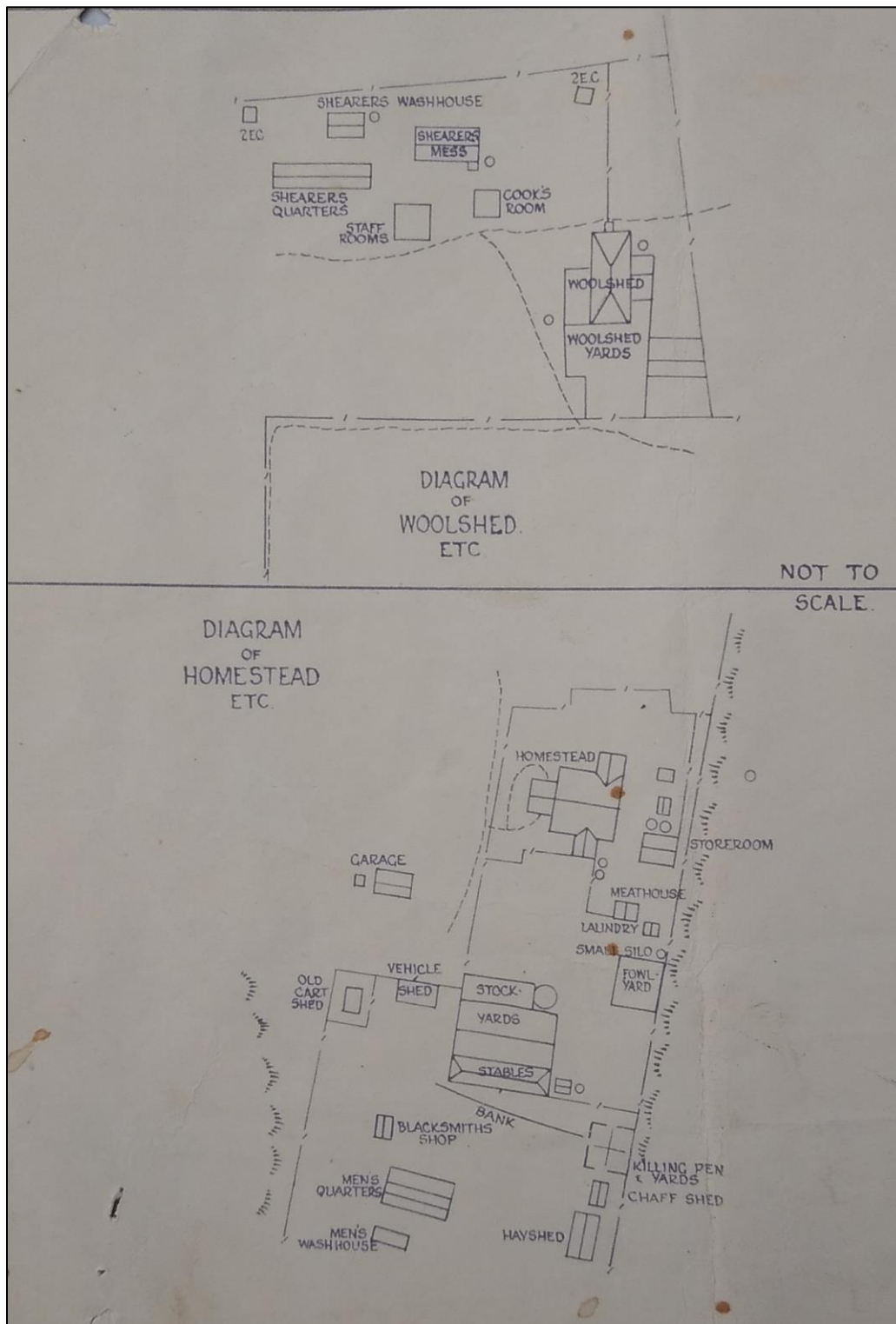
In 1966, the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service proposed a new nature reserve in the Merri-Merriwa ranges in the Western District. The Parks Service were particularly interested in the Yathong Station after a survey revealed the diversity of wildlife, the range of flora and the presence of a natural spring in Keginni Creek. Its geographical position on the eastern margin of the Western Plains and the western and southern margins of the Cobar penneplain meant it would cover a combination of habitats and it was considered to be one of the few places in NSW where all three major kangaroo species overlapped in one range. This made it suitable for acquisition under the then NPWS Kangaroo Conservation project. Yathong was one of six Western Division stations that Parks were interested in, but had been identified as their number one priority.

In 1969 a pastoral survey was undertaken of Yathong as part of the ongoing lease agreement. The survey noted the condition of the station, issues with erosion and noxious weeds and listed all improvements. Yathong was then being used to breed Merino sheep and for the production of wool, with a few cattle also being bred and fattened. Goats were a problem, with the inspector estimating thousands of wild goats across the station. The station was divided into seven large paddocks, six receiving paddocks and four small holding paddocks, and while it was noted that fences were in good repair, it also pointed out that most were old and some boundary fences were not stock proof. Timber for posts was mainly obtained on the property, with pine, bumble box and red box mostly used, as well as some yarran posts. The majority of the fence posts were of box wood, with steel posts used on the rest, with a mix of wire or netting as the fence (NRS 17408-6-15-1992/P/1997).

In regards to the improvements on the station, the homestead was new having been recently erected to replace the original house that had burnt down in 1966. Outbuildings and associated structures around the homestead included a storeroom, laundry, meat house, chaff shed, hay shed, men's quarters and washroom, stables, blacksmiths, garage, a vehicle shed and an old cart shed that was falling down all dated from earlier in the Station's history, although exact dates of construction were not recorded. Close by was the woolshed, shearers' quarters, mess room, wash room, cook house, staff room, again erected throughout the history of the station. A small hut, known as 8 Mile hit was also on the property. This was directly north of the homestead paddock, with a tank for water and horse yards nearby. The audit of buildings also listed a dilapidated hut known as the Chinaman's Hut, which may have been a remnant of the Chinese workers on Yathong in the 1890s and early 1900s. Although not pinpointed on any of the surveys, a 1970 plan of the Yathong station for National Parks shows Chinaman's Paddock immediately north of the homestead paddock, and it is likely the hut was located there as well. The demolition of the hut at the time was considered more than its value, and it is not clear if it was demolished or left to fall into further ruin. With the exception of the new homestead, the car shed and hay and grain sheds, all the buildings listed on the station were built of galvanised iron over timber frames (NRS 17408-6-15-1992/P/1997).

In 1970 the Parks Service began the process of acquiring the land. At the time Edward and Irene Fryer still held the lease which, although due to expire in 1970, they had applied to the Western Lands Commission to extend for perpetuity. When informed of this decision in June 1970, Parks opened direct negotiations with the Fryer's as well as with the Commission to secure the station, however the Fryer's, keen to stay at Yathong, simultaneously began to lobby state and federal politicians to allow them to remain, noting that there were actually twelve other properties in the district that were for sale. In August the purchase of the station was approved and in September 1970 Parks offered the Fryer's the option of staying at Yathong to manage the station for National Parks if it was purchased. The options included for the Fryer's being employed by Parks as staff to act as station managers or to buy the property outright from the Fryer's with payment in three instalments, after which the Fryer's position at Yathong would be reviewed. The property was to be run as a multi-purpose park, retaining parts of it as a working sheep station and set other areas aside for native flora and fauna programs.

In December 1970, despite their attempts, the Fryer's lease was not renewed, and parks went ahead with the purchase of Yathong in three instalments, with the Fryer's as site managers. From this date no further culling of kangaroos or other wildlife or the removal of any vegetation could take place without Parks permission. No more sheep than were recommended by the Western Lands Commission could be added to the existing flocks and no more improvements could be made. On 20 October 1971 the Government Gazette published a notice of the purchase of Yathong Station, with the deeds signed on 3 November 1971. The New South Wales Geographical Names Board approved the assignment of Yathong Nature Reserve on 9 September, and the new reserve was officially dedicated on 5 November 1971 (NRS 17408-6-15-1992/P/1997).



**Figure 9:** Detail of the homestead and woolshed precincts of Yathong Station at the time that National Parks took over the property in 1971. While the homestead was new, replacing the original house that was lost in a fire in 1966, many of the other buildings dated from earlier and represented various stages of Yathong's development as a pastoral property (Source: SRNSW NRS 17408-6-15-1992/P/1997).

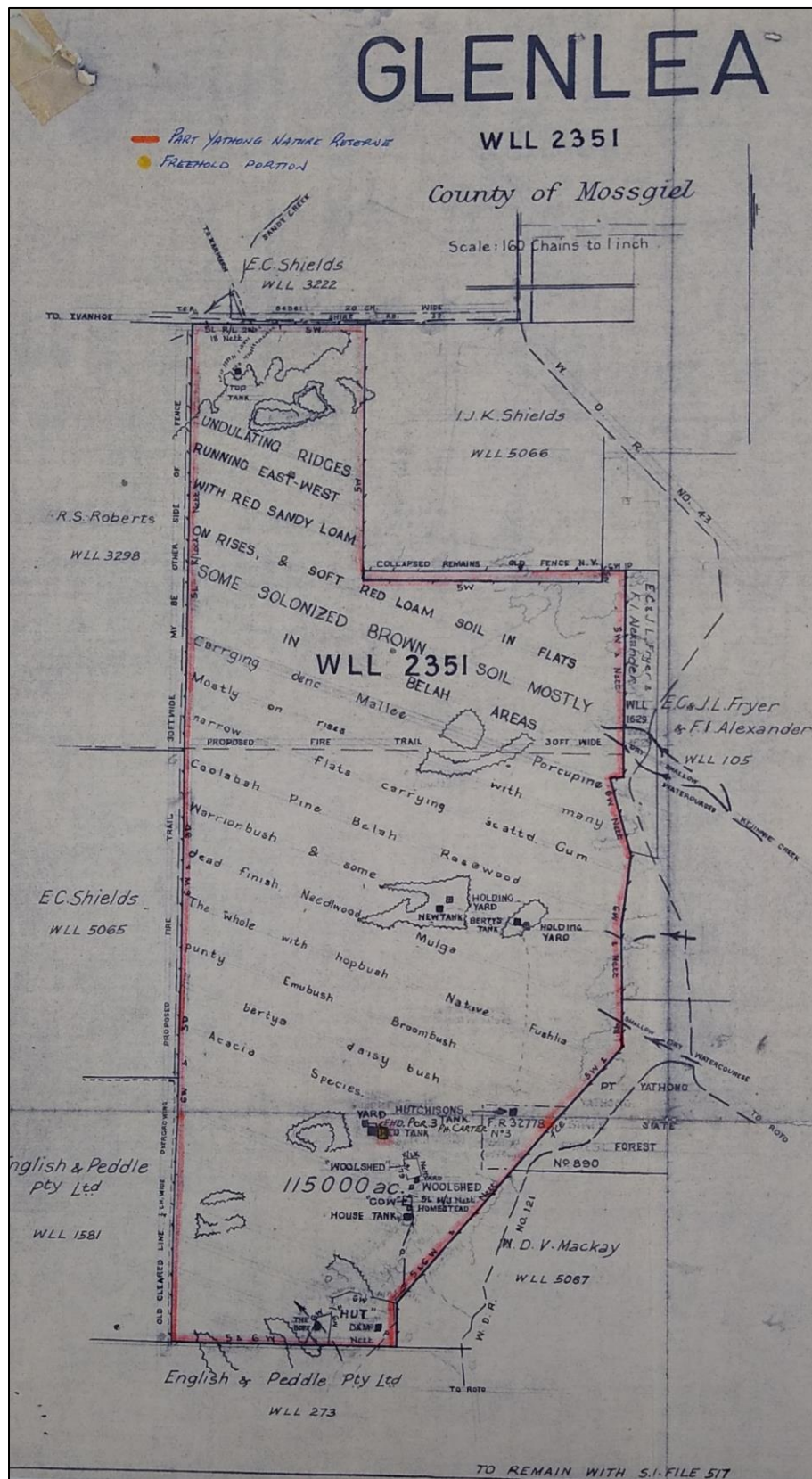


### 3.5 Additions to Yathong Nature Reserve 1973 - 1985

Almost as soon as Yathong Nature Reserve was confirmed, additions to the dedicated area were being investigated. To the west of Yathong, Glenlea Station (Western Land Lease 2351) was the first to be added to the reserve, with an offer to the owner, Harold Henman made in February 1973. The station totalled 115,000 acres (46,540ha) and had been leased by Henman since 1955. Henman had taken over the lease with no improvements on the Station, adding a new homestead, a 10,000 yard tank, a bore, a 6000 yard house tank plus two more 2000 yards tanks, a three stand shearing shed, shearers quarters and four machinery sheds. The offer from Parks had come along just as Henman was considering abandoning the station. Henman accepted \$32,000 for the station which covered the coast improvements he had made, despite the Western Lands Commission valuing the station at \$63,810 (SRNSW NRS 17408-5-37-1992).

The benefits of Glenlea was that it would make the reserve more of an ecological unit. As the western portion of Glenlea was dominated by mallee, by attaching it to Yathong it would mean that from east to west the landscape and vegetation would transition from woodland in the east through to mallee in the west. The addition of a new homestead would also help alleviate accommodation issues faced by staff working on the reserve. At the time park personnel were either staying with the Fryer's in the main homestead or sleeping in the Yathong woolshed and its quarters. As a new accommodation building was estimated to cost \$12,000 to build, the addition of the Glenlea Station and its homestead was seen to be a cost-effective option. In February 1974 National Parks made an offer of \$32,000 to Henman which he accepted in March. Parks took possession of Glenlea in July 1974 (SRNSW NRS 17408-5-37-1992).

In 1980 Irymple Station (19,482 ha) was also added to the reserve. Irymple bordered Yathong on the north and like Yathong had a new homestead located close to its southern boundary and an airstrip nearby. In 1985 part of the Mawonga Run was also proposed to be added to the Reserve. Mawonga had been in part used by the CSIRO as a research station, as well as being part of Yathong State Forest. The area included a number of important Aboriginal sites including cave art sites, scarred trees and artefact sites. The property included a house, woolshed and tanks, although it was not clear if these had been included in the Reserve. (SRNSW NRS 17408-5-114-1992). Further small additions to the Reserve were made in November 1977 (65ha), 1 January 2011 (4212 ha), 1 January 2015 (4151 ha) and 30 October 2020 (3201 ha) (NPWS, 2021:3).



**Figure 10:** Western Land Lease 2351 Plan of Glenlea Station at the time it was incorporated into the Yathong Nature Reserve. The plan shows the homestead in the bottom portion of the run with its woolshed nearby. A number of tanks and yards are shown across the property. (Source: SRNSW: NRS 17408-5-37-1992/P/9040).

### **4.0 Physical Evidence**

#### **4.1 Aboriginal Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Significance**

A separate Aboriginal due diligence assessment (Stening 2021) has been prepared and that report has determined that the proposed works are unlikely to impact on any Aboriginal objects within the study area.

#### **4.2 Historical Archaeology**

Evidence of former outbuildings or the former Yathong, Glenlea or Irymple Homesteads in the form of footings, postholes or occupation deposits could be expected in and around the homestead locations and shearer's quarters. However, the proposed feral proof fence and walking trails are not proposed in the vicinity of the homesteads or their shearer's quarters and outbuildings.

#### **4.3 Built Environment**

The properties of Irymple, Yathong and Glenlea maintained their own self sufficient homestead complexes supporting an isolated sheep station. The homesteads of Yathong and Irymple are new buildings which were constructed on the location of the former homesteads. The Glenlea Homestead is in ruins.

The original layout of Yathong Homestead and farm comprises the classic Riverina homestead pattern, with 3km separation between the woolshed and shearer's quarters (Central Mallee planning considerations p34). At Glenlea, the living and working precincts were much closer together.

The Yathong shearer's quarters; cookhouse; and a large timber slab and frame stable and adjoining tack room are located adjacent to the Homestead and are extant, however the woolshed and most other outbuildings are gone.

## 5.0 Significance Assessment

### 5.1 Preamble

Significance assessment is the process whereby buildings, items or landscapes are assessed to determine their value or importance to the community.

The following criteria have been developed by the NSW Heritage Office and embody the values contained in the Burra Charter. The Burra Charter provides principles and guidelines for the conservation and management of cultural heritage places within Australia.

Following are the significance assessment and statement of significance for the three homesteads: Yathong, Glenlea and Irymple, located within the Yathong Nature Reserve. There are no items of local or State heritage significance in the study area.

### 5.2 Significance Assessment

#### Historic

**Criterion (a) – an item is important in the course, or pattern of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).**

The three homesteads, Yathong, Glenlea and Irymple, are comprised of two rebuilt homesteads (Yathong and Irymple) and the ruins of the third (Glenlea). These homesteads and their associated lands have general associations with the development of the Irymple area and the land to the west of the Nineteen Counties.

#### Association

**Criterion (b) – an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of important in NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).**

There is no documentary evidence to indicate that any of the three homesteads meet this criteria.

#### Aesthetic

**Criterion(c) - an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).**

The three homesteads and associated outbuildings demonstrate late 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular architecture in the west of NSW.

#### Social

**Criterion (d) – an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.**

The study area does not meet this criterion.

#### Research

**Criterion (e) – an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).**

It is possible that further historical research and/or archaeological investigation could provide further information about the development of pastoral runs in the area.



### Rarity

**Criterion (f) – an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).**

A number of other extant homesteads are located within the region and listed as items of local or State significance on the NSW State Heritage Register. It is not considered that the Yathong, Irymple or Glenlea homesteads and associated outbuildings are rare. .

### Representativeness

**Criterion (g) – an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s:**

- Cultural or natural places;
- Cultural or natural environments (State Significance); OR

**An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of the local area’s:**

- Cultural or natural places; or
- Cultural or natural environments (local significance).

It is considered that the setting of the three homesteads and the landscape of the Yathong Nature Reserve as a whole is representative of the mallee scrublands of western NSW.

### Integrity/Intactness

None of the three homestead buildings are intact. Yathong and Irymple have been rebuilt and Glenlea is in ruins. Some of the outbuildings and shearer’s quarters maintain some integrity, although have been modified over the years.

## **5.3 Statement of Significance**

The three homesteads, Yathong, Glenlea and Irymple, are comprised of two rebuilt homesteads (Yathong and Irymple) and the ruins of the third (Glenlea). These homesteads and their associated lands have general associations with the development of the Irymple area and the land to the west of the Nineteen Counties. The three homesteads and associated outbuildings demonstrate late 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular architecture in the west of NSW. It is possible that further historical research and/or archaeological investigation could provide further information about the development of pastoral runs in the area. It is considered that the setting of the three homesteads and the landscape of the Yathong Nature Reserve as a whole is representative of the mallee scrublands of western NSW. None of the three homestead buildings are intact. Yathong and Irymple have been rebuilt and Glenlea is in ruins. Some of the outbuildings and shearer’s quarters maintain some integrity, although have been modified over the years.

## 6.0 Impacts and Mitigation

### 6.1 Aboriginal Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

The Aboriginal archaeological and cultural heritage significance of the study area is addressed in the Aboriginal due diligence assessment report (Stening 2021), which has determined that the proposed feral proof fence or walking trails will not impact on any Aboriginal archaeological deposits.

### 6.2 Historical Archaeology

The historic research does not indicate that any structures have been constructed around the boundaries of the Yathong Nature Reserve in the location of the proposed feral proof fence or the walking trails. The locations of the three homesteads (Yathong, Irymple and Glenlea) and their associated outbuildings are not in the vicinity of the proposed works. Therefore, it is not expected that any historical archaeological deposits or relics would be impacted by the proposed works.

#### *Impact*

It is not expected that there will be any impact upon historical archaeological deposits.

### 6.3 Built Environment

The proposed works are not located within the vicinity of any of the extant homestead or associated outbuildings. The extant buildings will not be impacted in any way by the proposed works.

#### *Impact*

There will be no visual or physical impacts to any of the extant buildings associated with the Yathong, Irymple or Glenlea Homesteads and outbuildings. There are no items listed on the State Heritage Register or the CLEP within the vicinity of the proposed feral proof fence or walking trails.

## 7.0 Legislation

### 7.1 The Heritage Act 1977 (as amended)

#### Division 9: Section 139, 140-146 - Relics Provisions - Excavation Permit

The key legislative constraint on archaeological remains is the relics provisions of the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*.

According to Section 139, a person must not “disturb or excavate any land knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed” unless the disturbance or excavation is carried out in accordance with an excavation permit.

A 'relic' is an item of 'environmental heritage' defined by the *NSW Heritage Act 1977* (amended) as: those places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects, and precincts of State or local heritage significance. A relic as further defined by the Act is: any deposit, object or material evidence -(a) which relates to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement; and (b) which is 50 or more years old.

Any item identified as an historical archaeological site, item or relic cannot be impacted upon without an excavation permit approval from the NSW Heritage Council. An excavation permit forms an approval from the NSW Heritage Council for permission to ‘disturb’ a relic. However, as the proposed works are not expected to impact on any relics or archaeological deposits, a permit under s140 will not be required.

### 7.2 Cobar Local Environmental Plan 2012

Section 5.10 of the Cobar Local Environmental Plan 2011 (CLEP) provides provision for Heritage Conservation. In addition, Aboriginal sites are protected under s5.10 of the CLEP, as follows:

#### 5.10 Heritage conservation

##### (1) Objectives

The objectives of this clause are as follows:

- (a) to conserve the environmental heritage of Cobar,
- (b) to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views,
- (c) to conserve archaeological sites,
- (d) **to conserve Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal places of heritage significance.**

##### (2) Requirement for consent

Development consent is required for any of the following:

- (a) demolishing or moving any of the following or altering the exterior of any of the following (including, in the case of a building, making changes to its detail, fabric, finish or appearance):
  - (i) a heritage item,
  - (ii) an Aboriginal object,
  - (iii) a building, work, relic or tree within a heritage conservation area,

- (b) altering a heritage item that is a building by making structural changes to its interior or by making changes to anything inside the item that is specified in Schedule 5 in relation to the item,
- (c) disturbing or excavating an archaeological site while knowing, or having reasonable cause to suspect, that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed,
- (d) disturbing or excavating an Aboriginal place of heritage significance,
- (e) erecting a building on land:
  - (i) on which a heritage item is located or that is within a heritage conservation area, or
  - (ii) on which an Aboriginal object is located or that is within an Aboriginal place of heritage significance,
- (f) subdividing land:
  - (i) on which a heritage item is located or that is within a heritage conservation area, or
  - (ii) on which an Aboriginal object is located or that is within an Aboriginal place of heritage significance.

### **(3) When consent not required**

However, development consent under this clause is not required if:

- (a) the applicant has notified the consent authority of the proposed development and the consent authority has advised the applicant in writing before any work is carried out that it is satisfied that the proposed development:
  - (i) is of a minor nature or is for the maintenance of the heritage item, Aboriginal object, Aboriginal place of heritage significance or archaeological site or a building, work, relic, tree or place within the heritage conservation area, and
  - (ii) would not adversely affect the heritage significance of the heritage item, Aboriginal object, Aboriginal place, archaeological site or heritage conservation area, or
- (b) the development is in a cemetery or burial ground and the proposed development:
  - (i) is the creation of a new grave or monument, or excavation or disturbance of land for the purpose of conserving or repairing monuments or grave markers, and
  - (ii) would not cause disturbance to human remains, relics, Aboriginal objects in the form of grave goods, or to an Aboriginal place of heritage significance, or
- (c) the development is limited to the removal of a tree or other vegetation that the Council is satisfied is a risk to human life or property, or
- (d) the development is exempt development.

### **(4) Effect of proposed development on heritage significance**

The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause in respect of a heritage item or heritage conservation area, consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the item or area concerned. This subclause applies regardless of whether a heritage management document is prepared under subclause (5) or a heritage conservation management plan is submitted under subclause (6).



**(5) Heritage assessment**

The consent authority may, before granting consent to any development:

- (a) on land on which a heritage item is located, or
- (b) on land that is within a heritage conservation area, or
- (c) on land that is within the vicinity of land referred to in paragraph (a) or (b),

require a heritage management document to be prepared that assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the heritage item or heritage conservation area concerned.

**(6) Heritage conservation management plans**

The consent authority may require, after considering the heritage significance of a heritage item and the extent of change proposed to it, the submission of a heritage conservation management plan before granting consent under this clause.

**(7) Archaeological sites**

The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause to the carrying out of development on an archaeological site (other than land listed on the State Heritage Register or to which an interim heritage order under the *Heritage Act 1977* applies):

- (a) notify the Heritage Council of its intention to grant consent, and
- (b) take into consideration any response received from the Heritage Council within 28 days after the notice is sent.

**(8) Aboriginal places of heritage significance**

The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause to the carrying out of development in an Aboriginal place of heritage significance:

- (a) consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the place and any Aboriginal object known or reasonably likely to be located at the place by means of an adequate investigation and assessment (which may involve consideration of a heritage impact statement), and
- (b) notify the local Aboriginal communities, in writing or in such other manner as may be appropriate, about the application and take into consideration any response received within 28 days after the notice is sent.

**(9) Demolition of nominated State heritage items**

The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause for the demolition of a nominated State heritage item:

- (a) notify the Heritage Council about the application, and
- (b) take into consideration any response received from the Heritage Council within 28 days after the notice is sent.

**(10) Conservation incentives**

The consent authority may grant consent to development for any purpose of a building that is a heritage item or of the land on which such a building is erected, or for any purpose on an Aboriginal place of heritage significance, even though development for that purpose would otherwise not be allowed by this Plan, if the consent authority is satisfied that:

- (a) the conservation of the heritage item or Aboriginal place of heritage significance is facilitated by the granting of consent, and
- (b) the proposed development is in accordance with a heritage management document that has been approved by the consent authority, and
- (c) the consent to the proposed development would require that all necessary conservation work identified in the heritage management document is carried out, and
- (d) the proposed development would not adversely affect the heritage significance of the heritage item, including its setting, or the heritage significance of the Aboriginal place of heritage significance, and
- (e) the proposed development would not have any significant adverse effect on the amenity of the surrounding area.

Given that the proposed works will not impact on any items of heritage significance or archaeological deposits, no further approval by council in respect of heritage is required.

### 8.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in accordance with:

- The legal requirements of the *Heritage Act 1977* (as amended) which states that it is an offence to demolish, despoil, excavate, alter, move, damage or destroy” any item listed on the SHR without a permit under s60 of the *Heritage Act 1977*;
- Legal requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 in relation to retaining the significance of heritage items listed on the CLEP;
- Research into the historical record of the study area;
- The results of this assessment which is outlined in this report.

**Therefore, it is recommended that:**

1. The proposed work will not adversely impact on the heritage significance of the study area or vicinity;
2. It is not expected that any archaeological deposits or relics will be disturbed by the proposed works;
3. There is no objection to the proposed works on a heritage or non-Aboriginal archaeological basis;
4. No further heritage or non-Aboriginal archaeological investigation is required in respect of the proposed works as outlined in this report;
5. If, during the works, any unexpected archaeological deposits are uncovered, all work in the vicinity of that deposit must cease and advice be sought from a suitably qualified archaeologist.

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**Photograph 3:** Showing the Yathong Shearer's Quarters which will not be impacted by the proposed works.



**Photograph 4:** Showing the outbuildings associated with the Yathong Shearer's Quarters which will not be impacted by the proposed works





**Photograph 5:** Showing the outbuildings associated with the Yathong Shearer's Quarters, which will not be impacted by the proposed works.



**Photograph 6:** Showing the outbuildings associated with the Yathong Shearer's Quarters, which will not be impacted by the proposed works.