

Aboriginal cultural heritage

Foxground and Berry bypass Princes Highway upgrade



Transport
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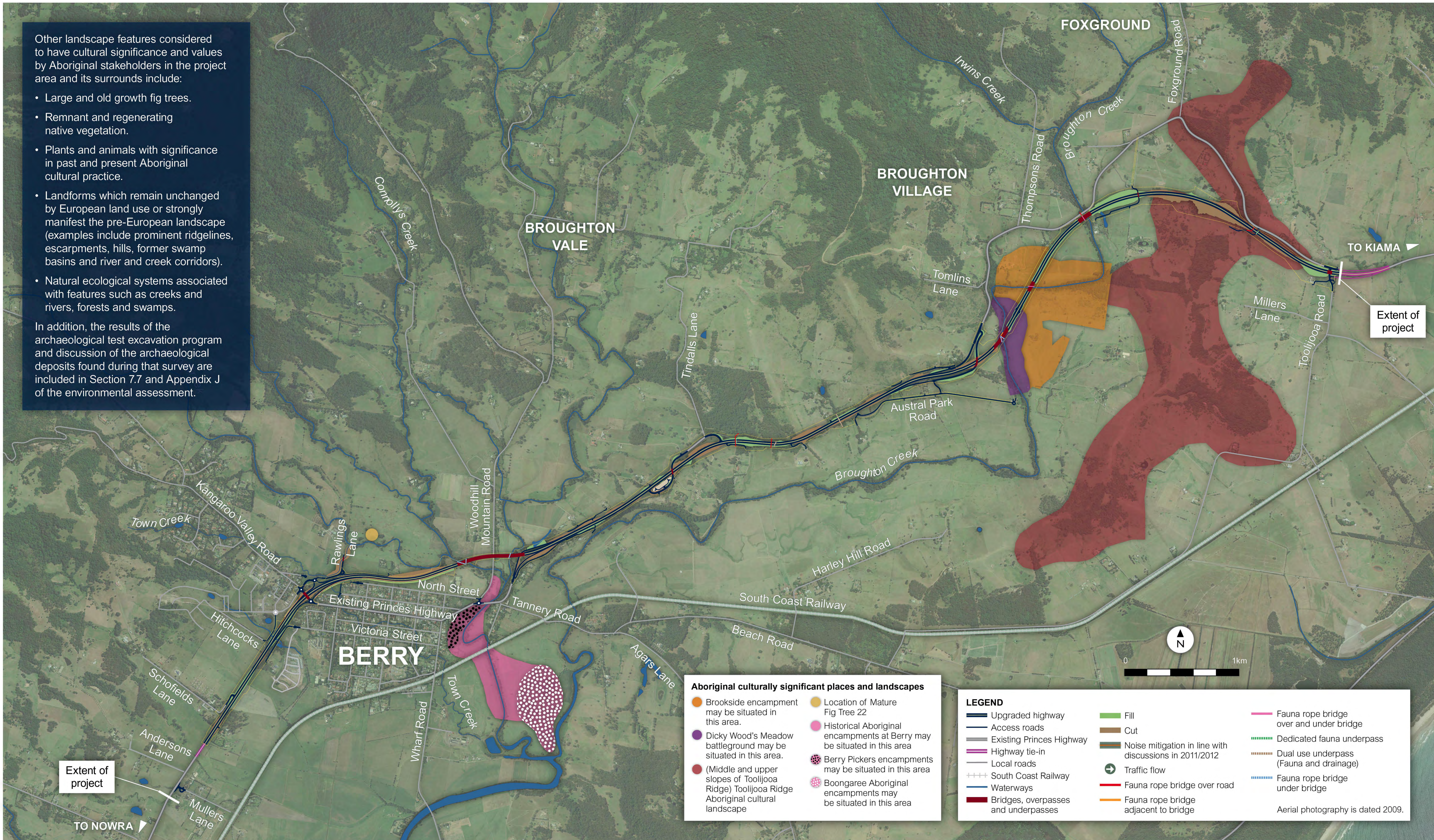
NOVEMBER 2012

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Other landscape features considered to have cultural significance and values by Aboriginal stakeholders in the project area and its surrounds include:

- Large and old growth fig trees.
- Remnant and regenerating native vegetation.
- Plants and animals with significance in past and present Aboriginal cultural practice.
- Landforms which remain unchanged by European land use or strongly manifest the pre-European landscape (examples include prominent ridgelines, escarpments, hills, former swamp basins and river and creek corridors).
- Natural ecological systems associated with features such as creeks and rivers, forests and swamps.

In addition, the results of the archaeological test excavation program and discussion of the archaeological deposits found during that survey are included in Section 7.7 and Appendix J of the environmental assessment.



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Aboriginal cultural heritage issues

The 'Brookside' Aboriginal encampment	The Dicky Wood's Meadow Battleground	Toolijooa Ridge Aboriginal cultural landscape	Historical Aboriginal encampments at Berry	Large and old growth fig trees
<p>There is a local oral tradition that Aboriginal people were known to have camped along the banks of Broughton Creek in the vicinity of 'Brookside' at Broughton Village until at least the turn of the century.</p> <p>The Aboriginal cultural significance of this site relates to the interaction between Aboriginal and European people, and camping adjacent to homesteads.</p>	<p>An Aboriginal battleground is located in the vicinity of Broughton Village. The Dicky Wood's Meadow battleground is based on an account provided by a local Aboriginal person. This place has high significance for Aboriginal people as it is related to traditional lore and practice and is associated with the potential for burials.</p> <p>Despite the absence of archaeological evidence for a battleground, such evidence may still be present. The test excavations conducted to date have been limited in scope and extent, relative to the potential battleground area. The current archaeological evidence remains compatible with the reported battleground function and does not limit its Aboriginal cultural value.</p>	<p>There is a local oral tradition that 'an old cattle trail now running along Toolijooa Ridge and down towards the coast actually follows an old Aboriginal trail which had its origins in Foxground' and that 'on Toolijooa Hill, close to this trail, there is thought to be a fairly open area associated with a stand of Lilli Pilli trees, a stone arrangement and bora ring'.</p> <p>This is supported by artefactual deposits identified on the Toolijooa to Harley Hill spur which are probably representative of 'sporadic movement' by Aboriginal people utilising the spurline as an 'occasional walking route from the coastal hinterland down to the coastline around Gerroa'.</p> <p>The Aboriginal cultural significance of the Toolijooa Ridge Aboriginal cultural landscape relates primarily to its role as a traditional access route and pathway between the Illawarra range and the coastal fringe.</p> <p>Contemporary local Aboriginal groups also recognise the ridgeline as having cultural significance for its ecological importance as a wildlife corridor.</p>	<p>The historical encampments at Berry recording is based on oral tradition and documented evidence, which indicates that there were at least two phases of Aboriginal encampment in the Berry area.</p> <p>The first phase was the Boongaree encampment, noted in the 1820s and centred on the former meadow lands on the north side of the junction of Broughton and Broughton Mill creeks. Oral tradition indicates that nineteenth century camping may have occurred in this area possibly as a response to the European 'Broughton Creek' village built on the adjacent spurline.</p> <p>The Boongaree encampment has high Aboriginal cultural significance for a number of reasons including its cultural, spiritual and historical importance as an Aboriginal encampment recorded at the time of European contact and potential to contain archaeological evidence of Aboriginal occupation.</p> <p>The second phase was the establishment of temporary encampments in the middle decades of the twentieth century, up to the 1960s, on the Broughton Mill Creek flats east of Berry by Aboriginal crop pickers during seasonal employment.</p> <p>The twentieth century phase of camping has strong cultural significance to Aboriginal people as evidence of a past way of life and as a place associated with their ancestors. It is evidence to the general community of the role of Aboriginal people in the Berry township and economy.</p>	<p>Large and old growth fig trees within the Illawarra region are generally considered by the Aboriginal community to have high Aboriginal cultural heritage value as they were used as shelter, a food source and a birthing place.</p> <p>Twelve large or old growth fig trees have been identified in or near to the project area.</p> <p>Not all Aboriginal stakeholders consider fig trees to be culturally significant. However, Mature Fig Tree 22 identified on the banks of Bundewallah Creek, is thought to have unanimous cultural significance which is accepted amongst the project's Aboriginal stakeholders. The significance of this particular tree is based on the education, representative and rarity value of this tree and traditional lore associated with large and old growth fig trees. Its size, height and form represent a forest structure that has now vanished from the Coastal Plain and, as a consequence, a traditional lifestyle which also disappeared with that forest.</p>