

1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the proposal and provides the context of the environmental assessment. It provides a summary of the location and need for the proposal and identifies the purpose of this report.

1.1 Proposal identification

Roads and Maritime Services proposes to construct a new four lane road-over-rail bridge on the Olympic Highway at Kapooka. The proposal would also include realigning about 2.7 kilometres of the Olympic Highway and upgrading the Olympic Highway/Camp Access Road intersection.

The proposal is required to meet current network safety and design standards, remove restrictions to traffic and improve road safety. The proposal would also provide increased clearance for trains on the Sydney to Melbourne Rail Line to facilitate the future construction of a second rail line and double stacking of freight containers.

Kapooka is located in NSW about five kilometres south-west of Wagga Wagga (Figure 1.1). The proposal is located within the Roads and Maritime south west region and in the Wagga Wagga local government area. The proposal is from about two kilometres to about 4.4 kilometres south of the Olympic Highway/Sturt Highway intersection.

Key features of the proposal would include (see Figure 1.2):

- Construction of a new four-lane road-over-rail bridge on the Olympic Highway. The new bridge would span the Sydney to Melbourne Rail Line about 460 metres north of the existing bridge. It would have three spans. It would be 21 metres wide and 99 metres in length. The bridge would provide a minimum clearance of 7.1 metres above the rail line.
- Construction of about two kilometres of realigned Olympic Highway south of the proposed bridge. This would realign the Olympic Highway to the east of the existing highway.
- Construction of about 700 metres of realigned Olympic Highway between the proposed bridge and the northern extent of the proposal. This realigned section of the Olympic Highway would be immediately west of the existing highway for about 300 metres north of the proposed bridge before matching the existing alignment for about 400 metres.
- Construction of an upgraded Olympic Highway/Camp Access Road intersection.
- Realignment of Camp Access Road at the new Olympic Highway intersection.
- Joining the new road with the existing Olympic Highway at the southern and northern extents of the proposal.
- Joining the new road with the existing Camp Access Road.
- Construction of about 560 metres of off-road shared bicycle and pedestrian pathway crossing the proposed bridge. The shared pathway would connect the Wiradjuri Walking Track to Camp Access Road.
- Construction of a temporary road east of the existing Olympic Highway for about 400 metres north of the proposed bridge.

- A large cutting about 18 metres deep, 180 metres wide and 400 metres long south of the proposed bridge.
- Construction of two large earthen embankment approaches to the bridge, including two major reinforced earth retaining wall structures.
- Establishment of sediment control basins, drainage controls, boundary fencing and traffic controls.
- Modification of existing property accesses and access roads.
- Construction of two hard stand areas for crane and piling activities adjacent to the new bridge.
- Relocation and protection of public utilities.
- Establishment of construction compounds and provision of access to the proposal.
- Construction of highway crossings for Squirrel Gliders (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) to maintain connectivity.
- Landscaping of areas disturbed by construction and plantings for biodiversity impact mitigation.
- Installation of an automatic weather station. The station would gather weather condition data to be used in construction management. The weather station would have an area of 15 metres by 15 metres.

The proposal would be constructed in four stages over about 18 months. Construction is planned to start in 2014. The current estimated cost of the project is about \$40 million. The project is being jointly funded by the Australian and NSW Government.

The existing road-over rail bridge at Kapooka (the existing bridge) is a brick arch overbridge constructed in 1880 and is listed as a heritage item under Schedule 5, Part 1 of the *Wagga Wagga Local Environmental Plan 2010* (Wagga Wagga LEP). At either end of the bridge are 90 degree corners which are hazardous to motorists and difficult for heavy vehicles to negotiate.

Silvalite Reserve is located east of the proposal at its northern end (Figure 1.2). The Kapooka Military Area, which is located on Commonwealth land, is located west of the proposal.

The woodland in the area is known to provide habitat for the threatened ecological community *White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland* (Box-Gum Woodland), the endangered population of Squirrel Gliders in the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area, and threatened fauna species including the Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*), Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*), Grey-crowned Babbler (*Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis*), Brown Treecreeper (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*) and Eastern Bentwing-bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii oceanensis*).

The central part of the proposal would be located within Planning Agreement Areas established as part of Wagga Wagga's Biodiversity Certification Area (refer to Section 4.2.1). The Planning Agreement Areas were established to meet biodiversity offset targets for development within the Biodiversity Certification Area. The Planning Agreement Areas were formalised in December 2011.

1.2 Purpose of the report

This REF has been prepared by GHD on behalf of Roads and Maritime south west

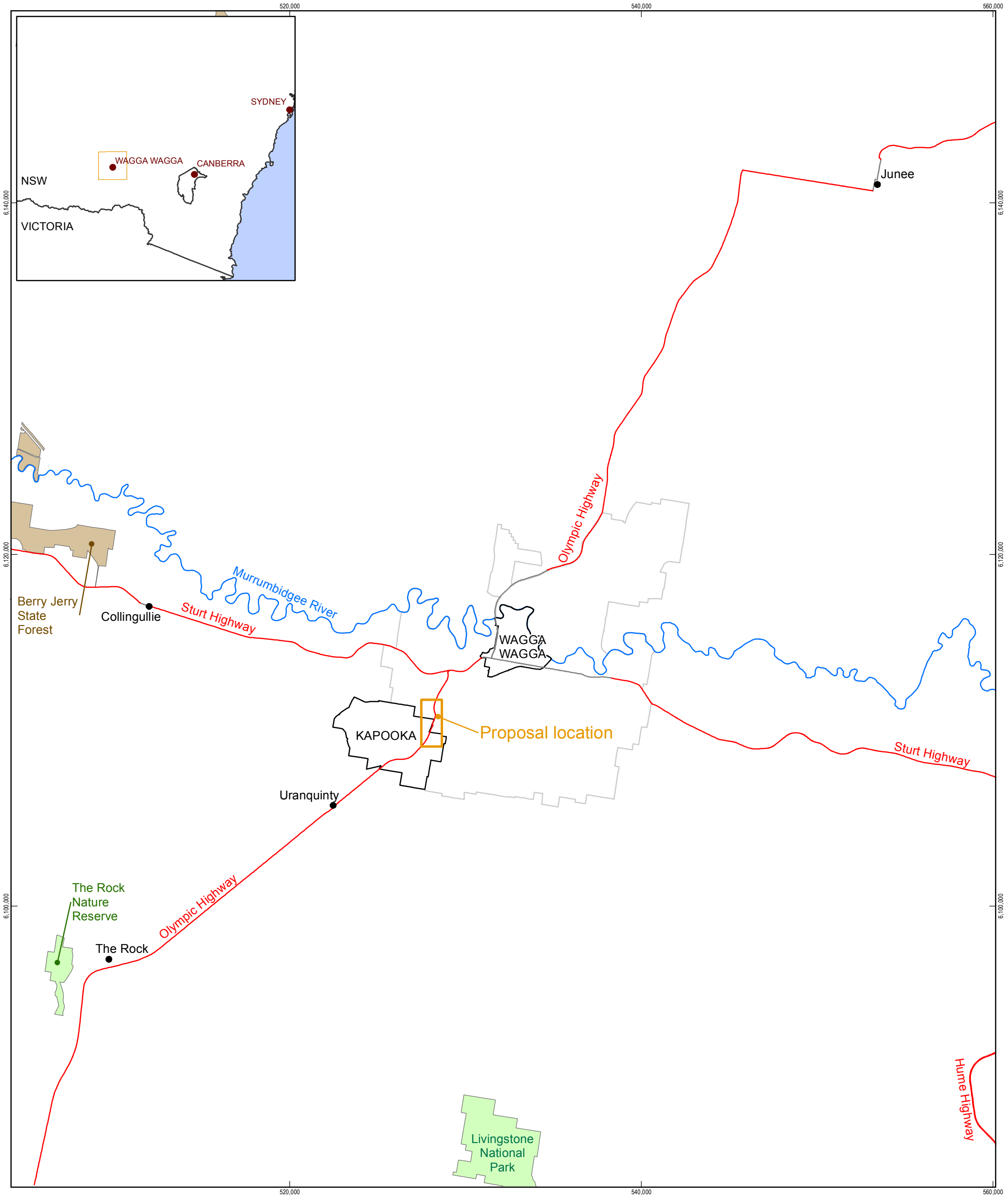
region. For the purposes of these works, Roads and Maritime is the proponent and the determining authority under Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). Concurrence is also required from the Office of Environment and Heritage under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

The purpose of the REF is to describe the proposal, to document the likely impacts of the proposal on the environment, and to detail protective measures to be implemented.

The description of the proposed works and associated environmental impacts have been undertaken in the context of clause 228 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*, the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act), the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (FM Act), and the Australian Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). In doing so, the REF helps to fulfil the requirements of section 111 of the EP&A Act, that Roads and Maritime examine and take into account to the fullest extent possible, all matters affecting or likely to affect the environment by reason of the activity.

The findings of the REF have been considered when assessing:

- Whether the proposal is likely to have a significant impact on the environment and therefore the necessity for an Environmental Impact Statement to be prepared and approval to be sought from the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure under Part 5.1 of the EP&A Act.
- The significance of any impact on threatened species as defined by the TSC Act and/or FM Act, in section 5A of the EP&A Act and therefore the requirement for a species impact statement.
- The potential for the proposal to significantly impact on a matter of national environmental significance or Commonwealth land and the need to make a referral to the Australian Government Department of the Environment (DoE) for a decision by the Australian Government Minister for the Environment on whether assessment and approval is required under the EPBC Act.



LEGEND

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Locality

—

Highway

—

Road

—

Murrumbidgee River

Proposal location

Suburbs of Kapooka and Wagga Wagga

City of Wagga Wagga

National Parks and Wildlife Service Reserve

State Forest

02.5510

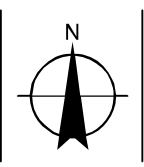
Paper size A3

Kilometres

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator

Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994

Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55



GHD

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Roads and Maritime Services
Kapooka bridge replacement REF

Job Number

23-14107

Revision

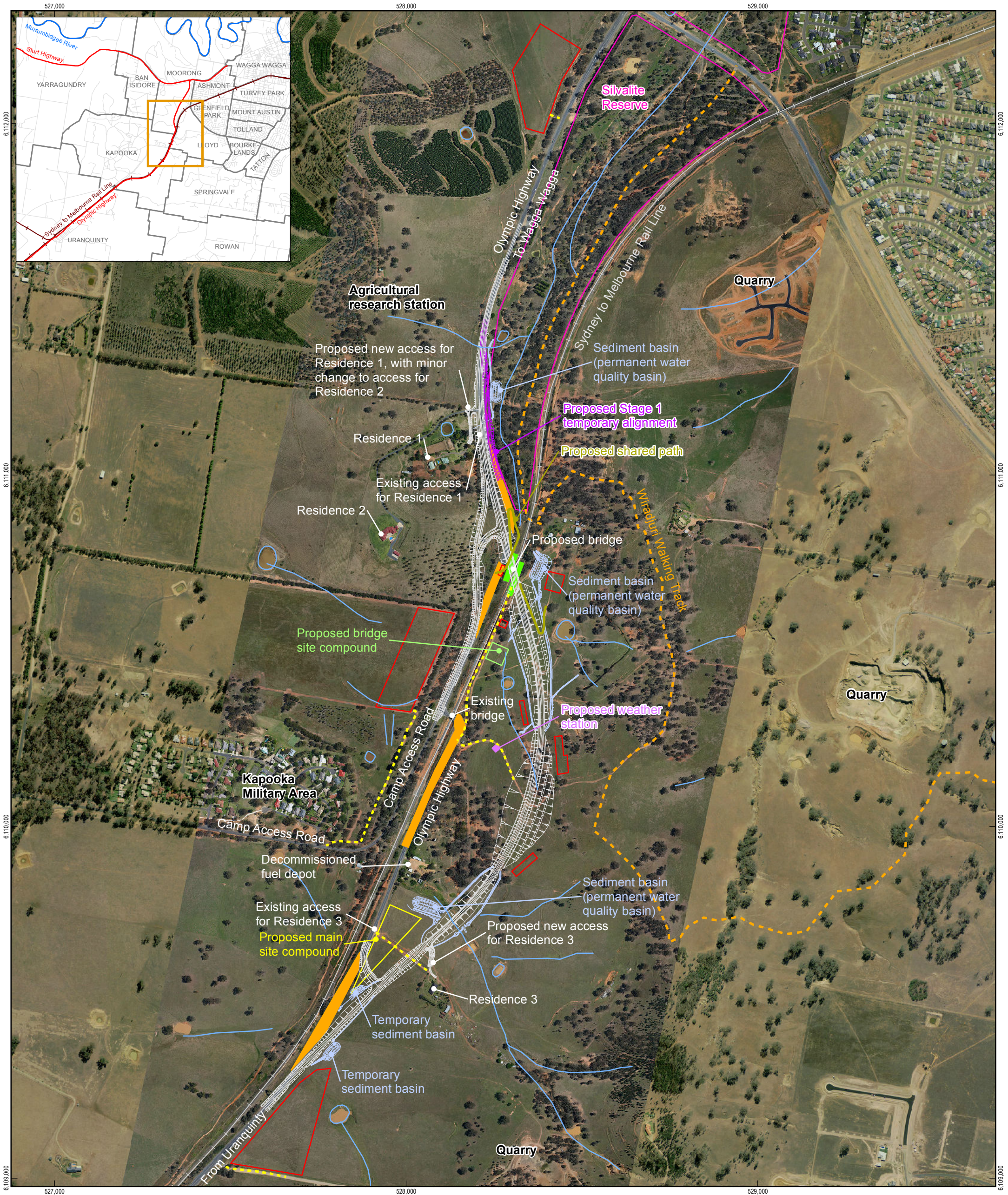
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Date

21 Oct 2013

Proposal location

Figure 1.1



LEGEND			
Proposed road	Existing drainage	Proposed weather station	Proposed main site compound
Proposed Stage 1 temporary alignment	Railway line	Proposed crane and piling pads	Proposed bridge site compound
Proposed drainage and sediment basins	Wiradjuri Walking Track	Proposed pavement removal from existing highway	Proposed stockpile/compound site
Proposed shared path		Silvalite Reserve	
Proposed construction access road			