



NSW NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Maynggu Ganai Historic Site

Planning Considerations



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Cover photo: View southwards from the site of the former Government House, Maynggu Ganai Historic Site. M Billington/DPE

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How to use this document

This planning considerations document outlines the matters considered in preparing the *Maynggu Ganai Historic Site Plan of Management*, including the site's key values, management principles and management considerations. Further information, including scientific names for common names of species, is provided in the appendices.

It is recommended that readers of this document also read the plan of management.

The plan of management describes the desired outcomes for the site's values and actions that National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) proposes to undertake to achieve these outcomes. It also sets out the recreational and commercial activities that are permitted in the historic site and any requirements to undertake these activities, including whether consent must be sought from NPWS to undertake them.

This planning considerations document will be updated when appropriate, for example, if we have new information on:

- the values of the historic site (e.g. archaeological values)
- management approaches (e.g. new weed control)
- new programs.

Changes will only be made to this document if they are consistent with the plan of management.

Acknowledgments

Maynggu Ganai Historic Site is in the traditional Country of the Wiradyuri People.

This plan of management was prepared by staff of NPWS.

Contact us

For more information about this plan of management or Maynggu Ganai Historic Site, contact the NPWS Central West Area at PO Box 2267, Bathurst NSW 2795 or by telephone on 02 6332 7640 (Level 2, 203–209 Russell Street, Bathurst).

1. Maynggu Ganai Historic Site

Maynggu Ganai Historic Site is located within the peri-urban area south of Wellington in Central West New South Wales, approximately 356 kilometres north-west of Sydney. The site lies in the flat, fertile valley formed by the junction of the Macquarie and Bell rivers (see Photo 1).

The historic site consists of three separate parcels of land with a total area of 15.64 hectares, bounded by Curtis Street/Mitchell Highway to the west and the Main Western Railway to the east (see Figure 1). The main parcel (Military Barracks Block) and the northern parcel of the site (Government House Block) rise towards the north-east and provide a view of the Bell River to the west. The third and smallest parcel (Well Block) occupies river flat land to the south-west.

Maynggu Ganai Historic Site is significant as part of the second penal settlement west of the Blue Mountains (1823–1831) and as the first Aboriginal mission to the Wiradyuri People in Australia established by the Anglican Church Missionary Society (1832–1843).

In view of this significant history, the 'Wellington Convict and Mission Site – Maynguu Ganai' is listed on the State Heritage Register even though there are no ruins surviving. Maynggu Ganai occupies less than half of the 38-hectare state-listed area. The remainder is used for agriculture and rural residential housing.

Maynggu Ganai means 'peoples' land' in the local Wiradyuri language (Griffin nrm 2004). This name is meant to encompass the whole community rather than identify a particular group, and was the name suggested for the historic site by the Maynggu Ganai Historic Site Community Focus Group in 2002.

In this document, 'Maynggu Ganai' is used to designate the historic site.



Photo 1 Aerial photo of Wellington, showing the location of Maynggu Ganai Historic Site in green



Figure 1 Map of Maynggu Ganai Historic Site

2. Looking after our culture and heritage

2.1 Wiradyuri Country and shared history

Maynggu Ganai is located in traditional **Wiradyuri Country**, which covers a large portion of central New South Wales and is known as the land of three rivers: the *Wambool*, later known as the Macquarie; the *Galari*, later known as the Lachlan; and the *Marrambidya*, later known as the Murrumbidgee. Throughout this large area, the Wiradyuri People share various cultural attributes, particularly material culture and social organisation (White 1986, cited in Griffin nrm 2004).

The Wiradyuri People and European settlers came into sustained contact at Maynggu Ganai in the earliest days of the colony of New South Wales, firstly as a penal settlement and remote government outpost established in 1823 and then as the Wellington Mission from 1832 to 1843. This makes Maynggu Ganai a rare place because its significance relates to both colonial and Aboriginal occupation and interaction. This is not always a happy story, but one that represents the real history that has shaped subsequent Australian society (Griffin nrm 2004).



Photo 2 **Corroboree, Wellington Valley 1847.** Drawing by William Curtis. Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

Our knowledge of this history derives from a wealth of ethnohistoric material, including official government documentation, accounts by official observers and travellers, watercolour paintings and detailed observations by the missionaries. The Wellington Valley Mission Papers collated by the University of Newcastle (2013) represent one of the largest and most important sources for the history of the colonial frontier in New South Wales (Griffin nrm 2004).

Archaeological surveys have also contributed to our understanding of Maynggu Ganai's shared history. While all these sources are invaluable in providing baseline, comparative and often telling insights into pre-colonial Wiradyuri life and experiences around first contact, it is important to acknowledge that it derives from non-Indigenous perspectives and not from Wiradyuri People themselves.

The British presented themselves at Wellington Valley in the early 1820s to establish a convict agricultural station for supplying food to the Sydney colony. Early interactions with the Wiradyuri were likely to have been a combination of ambivalence and curiosity on both sides, but reportedly relations were amicable (Roberts 2000a, Read 1998, both cited in Griffin nrm 2004). This contrasted with the clashes between Aboriginal people and settlers in other locations on the western frontier, which steadily escalated in intensity and degrees of lawlessness. At nearby Bathurst, what became known as the Wiradyuri Wars took place between 1822 and 1824, brought on by dispossession of traditional hunting lands, competition with growing numbers of Europeans for resources and loss of access. After seven European shepherds were killed, Governor Brisbane went so far as to declare martial law (a license to kill for the NSW military and police) in August 1824. Many Aboriginal deaths and instances of barbaric behaviour resulted.

The commandant of the Wellington Convict Settlement (described below) had been instructed to establish friendly relations with the Wiradyuri and ensure their cooperation. Gifts of food and blankets were offered to the local Aboriginal people, and the new tools brought by the strangers appealed to the Wiradyuri.

The Wiradyuri were free to come and go and maintain their cultural connections and patterns of life, but inevitably, issues arose. Aboriginal women cohabited with convicts, and Aboriginal people were seen to take on the corrupting vices of the Europeans, such as over-consumption of spirits. As historians are always keen to point out, the men who found themselves in positions of power in the early days of New Holland (as Australia was then known) were rarely selected on their abilities to broker relations with Aboriginal people who were being ousted to make way for the new colony. In 1827 an overseer at the convict settlement was convicted of murdering a 7-year-old Aboriginal girl. The conviction was commuted to manslaughter and the protagonist sentenced to be worked in irons for 2 years.

But arguably, the most tragic impact visited on the Wiradyuri by the Wellington colonial settlement was the introduction of contagious diseases, such as smallpox and venereal disease, which took a serious toll on the Aboriginal population. The smallpox epidemic reached the Wellington settlement in 1828, shortly before the closure of the convict station. It has been mooted that possibly a third of the local Wiradyuri People died in the single epidemic (Carey & Roberts 2002), and their population was never to recover. The Wiradyuri response to the epidemic included holding a special corroboree for the following few years to *Baiame* the creator (also referred to as the *Baiame waganna* or dance ritual) to seek protection from smallpox (Carey & Roberts 2002). This has been described as the earliest 'nativist' movement detected among Australian Aboriginal people and is of significance in understanding Aboriginal responses to colonisation in south-east Australia.

2.2 Wellington Convict Settlement Site 1823–1831

The successful European crossing of the Blue Mountains in 1813 led to the establishment of Bathurst in 1815, and soon after Surveyor General John Oxley was instructed to explore and survey the Lachlan River. On his return journey eastwards in 1817, Oxley came to what is now the Wellington Valley and stood at the junction of the Bell and Macquarie rivers, some three kilometres from the site now known as Maynggu Ganai. Oxley named Wellington after the Duke of Wellington and the Bell River after Brevet Major Bell of the 48th Regiment. (The Macquarie River had been named by George Evans, assistant surveyor to Oxley, in honour of the present governor during the Blue Mountains expedition 4 years earlier).

Oxley's descriptions of 'soil rich, country beautiful', clear flowing rivers and abundant wildlife (Oxley 1820) soon led to an influx of pastoralists keen to take up the fertile riverine grasslands for their flocks. European settlement 'leapfrogged' along the accessible river corridors, leaving forested country which would need clearing and therefore was not as desirable (Pearson 1981, cited in Griffin nrm 2004). In 1823, on instructions from Governor Brisbane, Lieutenant Percy Simpson established a convict station at Wellington Valley on the site of Maynggu Ganai. At this time, Wellington was literally on the far western edge of the colony and became only the second colonial outpost west of the Blue Mountains after Bathurst. The 'limits of location' had been determined by Governor Darling in 1826 and later defined by the *Map of the Nineteen Counties* compiled by Surveyor General Mitchell in 1834. Settlement by Europeans beyond this limit was discouraged and the government offered no tenure or protection. Government outstations like Wellington became centres of administrative and military presence, and settlers congregated around them for the security they provided.

From the outset, the Wellington convict station was intended to be self-supporting but also provide food for the starving Sydney colony using convict labour. The settlement originally spread over an area of about 10,000 acres (~ 4000 hectares) (Kabaila 1998) but housed only a modest number of convicts (80 to 90), compared to others such as Bathurst, which housed 284. The convicts at Wellington were put to work to grow crops (wheat, maize and tobacco) and raise farm stock (cattle, sheep, pigs and horses). Among them were 'gentleman' or 'special' convicts (middle class and educated) who were transported for political offences and subsequently proved unsuited to farming.

The convict station consisted of Government House, offices, military barracks, accommodation for convicts and staff, a blacksmith shop and stores for provisions. There were about 10 main buildings constructed from adobe or sandstock bricks and thatch, and 300 acres (~ 1200 hectares) of plough land. In all, there had been some 40 buildings, including 14 huts constructed from bark. There are no ruins of any of these buildings left today, and it has proven difficult to locate them with any certainty (see Section 2.5.).

The Wellington Convict Settlement struggled from its beginning and was not a success, either as an agricultural station or as a penal facility. While it may originally have been intended for use as a secondary penal facility, it instead assumed a small, relatively insignificant and somewhat neglected role in the colony's penal network (Roberts 2000). Commander Simpson was sacked after three years, and the station later closed in 1830 after the efforts of several successive commandants. A number of factors appear to have contributed to the failure of the settlement, including the unsuitability of the first commander and a lack of farming skills among the convicts. In addition, the settlers in the surrounding area did not need the convicts' services and refused to buy their produce, so the settlement was costly to run and increasingly inefficient (Griffin nrm 2004).

When the convict station was closed, convicts were relocated or assigned to settlers, but it was some years before all the farm stock (including 3500 cattle) and stockpiled wheat could be sold off.



Photo 3 *Wellington Valley, looking East, from Government House, showing part of the Commandant's house and a Wiradyuri warrior in the foreground and the huts of the penal settlement, established in 1823, in the middle distance. (The view is actually looking towards the south-west, CMP 2004). Augustus Earle, watercolour c. 1826–7, Rex Nan Kivell Collection NK12/24, National Library of Australia*

2.3 Wellington Mission 1832–1843

A Wesleyan missionary (John Harper) had resided at the convict station for almost 2 years in 1825 during Simpson's tenure. Separately, the British government had instructed the Anglican Archdeacon of Sydney to 'take measures for the civilisation of the Black Natives of this Colony and their conversion to Christianity' (HRA 1, cited in Griffin nrm 2004).

After some years the church approached Governor Darling about use of the abandoned convict station in the Wellington Valley as a mission. It had the advantage of existing buildings, land already under cultivation, and was close to the edge of European settlement so hopefully, the Aboriginal people there would be less contaminated with colonial vices. The events surrounding the Wiradyuri Wars were also taken very seriously by colonial administration and influenced the decision to establish a mission on the site as a symbol of stability for settlers. It has also been suggested that establishing a mission made it appear the colonial government was doing something about 'the Aboriginal problem' (Kabaila 1998). A mission was finally established by the Church Missionary Society over a portion of the former convict station at Wellington on the site of Maynggu Ganai in 1832 by Reverend William Watson, Reverend Johann Handt and their wives.

The Wellington Mission was the first Anglican mission in Australia, and the third mission in colonial New South Wales (after Parramatta–Blacktown and Lake Macquarie) (Griffin nrm 2004). For the local Aboriginal community, it was the first of several missions and occupation sites in the Wellington area, which later included Nanima, Apsley, the town common and others. The missionaries left outstanding legacies through their intentional interest in, and recording of, the Wiradyuri People. For example, they recorded Wiradyuri languages and made detailed observations of Wiradyuri traditions and ways of life. The lexicon, grammars, vocabularies and painstakingly recorded diaries are still valuable today for language restoration projects.

Like the convict settlement before it, the mission did not do particularly well and failed to succeed in its primary aim of converting the Wiradyuri People to Christianity. Apart from

tensions and poor relations that developed between the missionaries themselves, the general behaviours of the colonising British stood in direct contradiction of their teachings on sin and virtue, and so undermined arguments for conversion to their religion (Griffin nrm 2004). The mission also suffered because it struggled to demonstrate self-sufficiency through farming (Gunther 1841, cited in Griffin nrm 2004) and placed an emphasis on 'settling down' which was at odds with the Aboriginal way of life established over thousands of years (Ferry 1979, Harris 1990, both cited in Griffin nrm 2004).

The mission was also undermined to some degree by the behaviour of some local settlers, for example, by them trespassing on the mission site and seducing mission girls (Griffith University n.d.). In learning of cases of venereal disease in Aboriginal girls, Reverend Watson set about removing children from their families to the mission. This is possibly the first evidence of the deliberate removal of Aboriginal children from their unwilling parents, in the belief that education in Christian beliefs and culture would benefit them (Gunther 1839, 1840, cited in Griffin nrm 2004). The mission also inadvertently impressed on the Wiradyuri People a dependence on handouts for minimal work (Griffith University n.d.).

Division among the missionaries finally saw Reverend Handt leave in 1836, Reverend Watson left to start a new separate mission elsewhere in Wellington in 1840, and Reverend Gunther, whose linguistic efforts had produced a dictionary and lexicon for the Wiradyuri language, left in 1841. The Bishop of Australia William Broughton visited Wellington Mission in 1841 and declared it a total failure (Griffith University n.d.). The government withdrew its annual funding of £500, and the mission was wound up in 1843.

The failure of the mission does not detract from its significance as the first Aboriginal mission to the Wiradyuri People. Kabaila (1998) also points out that although the mission failed and was closed after only a few years, it laid the foundation for a succession of local camps and housing areas in the Wellington district, which continue to be important to present-day Wiradyuri People.

2.4 1843 to the present

As of 1838 some of the Wellington settlement buildings were appropriated for use as a police establishment, but in 1842 this was relocated to Montefiores (north of the Macquarie River) (Griffin nrm 2004). With the withdrawal of the police and departure of the missionaries the government released the Wellington Valley land for private sale. By 1844–45 the site was abandoned, remaining old buildings deteriorated quickly and were progressively stripped by local settlers or their materials auctioned off for re-use.

It appears that from this point, the site and the earliest historic events at Wellington Valley were already 'receding into the vapour of a distant past' (Roberts 2000). By the 1850s much of the site had been sold off into smaller farm allotments and, apart from farmlands changing hands, there is little mention of the site in the historical record for the last 170 years.

Not far to the north, first the settlement of Montefiore and then the town of Wellington proceeded to develop. The railway that borders the historic site to the east was constructed in 1877. Memoirs and recollections of life in Wellington from the 1920s to 1940s omit mention of the Wellington Settlement Site. By 1999 the site was divided among 16 owners. There was also a Chinese market garden on the river flat and at some time, a chicken farm on the Military Barracks Block. The land now in Maynggu Ganai Historic Site was purchased by NPWS in 2001 and gazetted in July 2002. Other surrounding parcels that were part of the original settlement continue to be farmed or have been developed for rural residential use.

2.5 Management considerations and opportunities

Almost nothing is left above ground to identify the historic Wellington Settlement Site and Wellington Mission. Not only is the site visually unimpressive, but its history can be read as an 'utter failure' (Griffin nrm 2004).

Notwithstanding, the 'Wellington Convict and Mission Site – Maynggu Ganai' was listed on the **State Heritage Register** on 22 March 2011 (Number 01859). This listing highlights the rarity and complexity of the site, its associations with the development and expansion of colonial occupation west of the Blue Mountains, and its significance as 'an evocative reminder of a chapter in the history of Aboriginal Australia'. In view of its history, the site represents a significant cultural landscape and also relates to significant contemporary social issues (Griffin nrm 2004).

Maynggu Ganai Historic Site occupies approximately 42% of what is considered the less-disturbed part of the state-listed area (see Figure 2). The remainder is in multiple ownership and has experienced more disturbance through farming and rural residential development. Dubbo Regional Council has responsibility for protecting and managing the cultural values of this area, which includes the Old Wellington Cemetery on the southern edge of the state-listed area (Lot 7018 on Figure 2). This cemetery was used as Wellington's general cemetery until 1873 and contains the unmarked graves of the Church Missionary Society's missionary William Watson and his wife (Harris 1990, cited in Griffin nrm 2004). The earliest burial in the cemetery is 1825, and the latest was in 1905. Widening of the Mitchell Highway in 1932 resulted in a loss of headstones and grave markers. To date, 418 memorials have been registered for the cemetery (Find a Grave 2019).

A **conservation management plan** (CMP) has been prepared (Griffin nrm 2004) to support listing of the site on the State Heritage Register. State heritage listing means that the approval of the NSW Heritage Council must be obtained for all works on the historic site. NPWS now manages Maynggu Ganai consistent with the principles and findings of the CMP.

The CMP focussed on providing an assessment of the significance of the Wellington Convict and Mission Site from an early 19th century perspective and paid scant attention to the following 150 years of use of the area. During this later phase it appears the site was used to support agricultural activities, and several visible remnants of these have been left behind on the site. An assessment of the heritage (or other) significance of these structures and features will be undertaken to inform future management by NPWS. This may require preparation of an addendum to the CMP. Where the structures and features remaining from the 20th century are found to have minimal heritage significance they are likely to be removed.

The significance of Maynggu Ganai goes beyond its historical and archaeological significance (see Box 1). The CMP was prepared in close consultation with a community focus group which included members of the local Aboriginal community. Exposing the shared history of the site and developing the CMP together was considered a worthwhile exercise by all participants and made a positive contribution to the ongoing reconciliation process for the broader Wellington community. The CMP also identified some aspects of Australia's early colonial–Aboriginal interactions, which would benefit from further research.

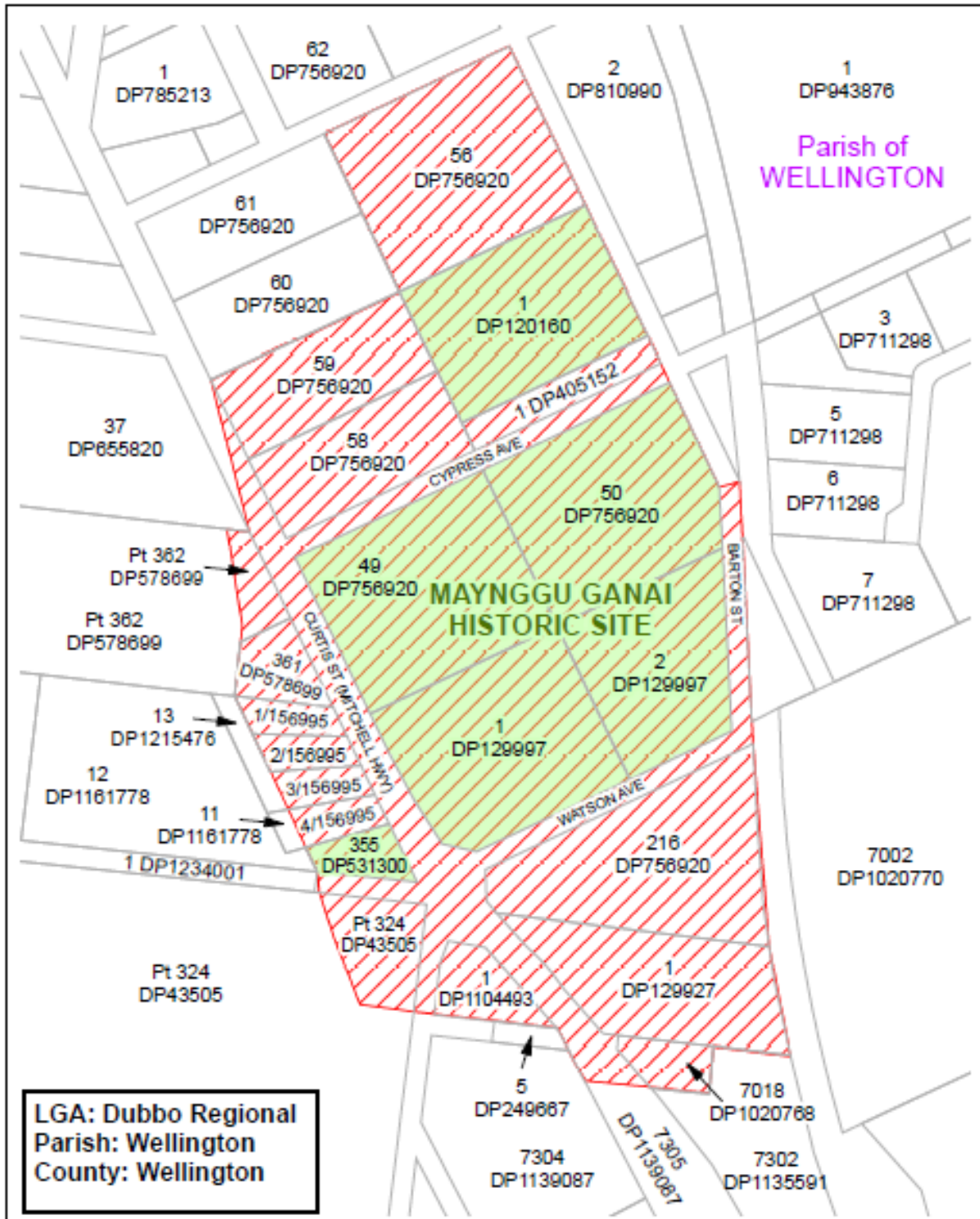


Figure 2 'Wellington Convict and Mission Site – Maynggu Ganai' (as listed on the State Heritage Register)

Box 1. Significance of Maynggu Ganai Historic Site

The conservation management plan (CMP, Griffin nrm 2004) describes Maynggu Ganai Historic Site as being of national, state and local significance for its combination of historical, archaeological, social and aesthetic values.

Maynggu Ganai is a unique site in the history of intercultural relations in New South Wales. As the second colonial outpost established west of the Blue Mountains, it is the place where Wellington Wiradyuri and British officials and convicts first interacted and established relations. In the 1820s when Maynggu Ganai was a convict station (1823–1831) these relations were very different from the violence perpetrated between settlers and Wiradyuri around nearby Bathurst, probably because Wellington Wiradyuri still had access to their usual land and resources around the small and contained convict station.

The archive of the Church Missionary Society missionaries, at Wellington from 1832–1843, forms a highly significant aspect of Maynggu Ganai. These journals tell the poignant stories of the missionaries themselves, and through their eyes, describe the ways of life, language and beliefs of the Wiradyuri with whom they interacted. These papers are important linguistic resources and also document the terrible toll of introduced diseases on Wiradyuri society. Carey and Roberts claim that the *Baiame Waggana* was an early Indigenous religious movement that developed in response to colonialism and the impact of smallpox on Wiradyuri People.

The Wellington Mission was the first Anglican mission in Australia, and only the third mission in colonial NSW (after the Parramatta–Blacktown Native Institutions and Threlkeld’s Lake Macquarie Mission). For the Wellington Indigenous community, the Wellington Mission was the first of a number of missions and occupation sites in the Wellington area. Many local Indigenous families can trace their ancestors back through this series of sites. Eminent historian Peter Read has claimed that Wellington is the earliest colonial example of missions in New South Wales procuring children for re-education and separation from their families and cultural milieu. This places Maynggu Ganai Historical Site as an important marker in the narratives of the ‘Stolen Generation’.

To other members of the Wellington community, this site is most important as the ‘origin site’ for the later town of Wellington and its region, with important associations with agricultural development, pioneering forebears, and also with the central role of convicts and their labour in the development of New South Wales. Yet other members of the community see Maynggu Ganai as a place with the potential to act as a vehicle for local reconciliation and for a greater understanding of entangled colonial histories.

The rural landscape, which forms the context for Maynggu Ganai Historic Site, is a significant remnant of a colonial agricultural landscape, with definite similarities to the landscape portrayed by Augustus Earle in 1826. This provides a rare opportunity to interpret the site’s 19th century history and for people to easily connect with this history.

Maynggu Ganai has considerable potential for archaeological research and may contain rare remains from the 1820s, 30s and 40s, when this area was in the Wiradyuri heartland and on the frontier of the British colony.

Maynggu Ganai is well known to only a small group of people. Through communication of its heritage significance, it has the potential to take a greater role in the cultural life of Wellington and the broader state and national community.

Figure 3 and Table 1 describe the parts of the historic site where key buildings constructed in the 1820s were located. Due to the almost complete removal of historical building materials, disturbance by farming activities, differences between written accounts and the passage of time, the actual **locations of the original convict settlement and mission buildings** on Maynggu Ganai have not been identified. Several attempts have been made, including Thurlow (2003), Roberts (2000) and Kabaila (1998). These were based on imprecise maps from 1832 and 1844, a detailed assessment of building types and uses (Roberts 2000) and archaeological investigations (by Pearson in 1975, Mulvay in 1997, Kabaila in 1977 and Bickford in 1998, as described in Griffin nrm 2004).

Table 1 Zones of archaeological potential (based on Griffin nrm, 2004)

Zone	Features
1	Government House and surrounding activity areas
2	Gardens and stockyards
3	Military barracks and surrounding activity areas
4	Convict hut sites? Mud-walled sites?
5	Nucleus of government buildings and convict stockade? Stores? Etc.
Balance of historic site	Landscape/occupation/activity features

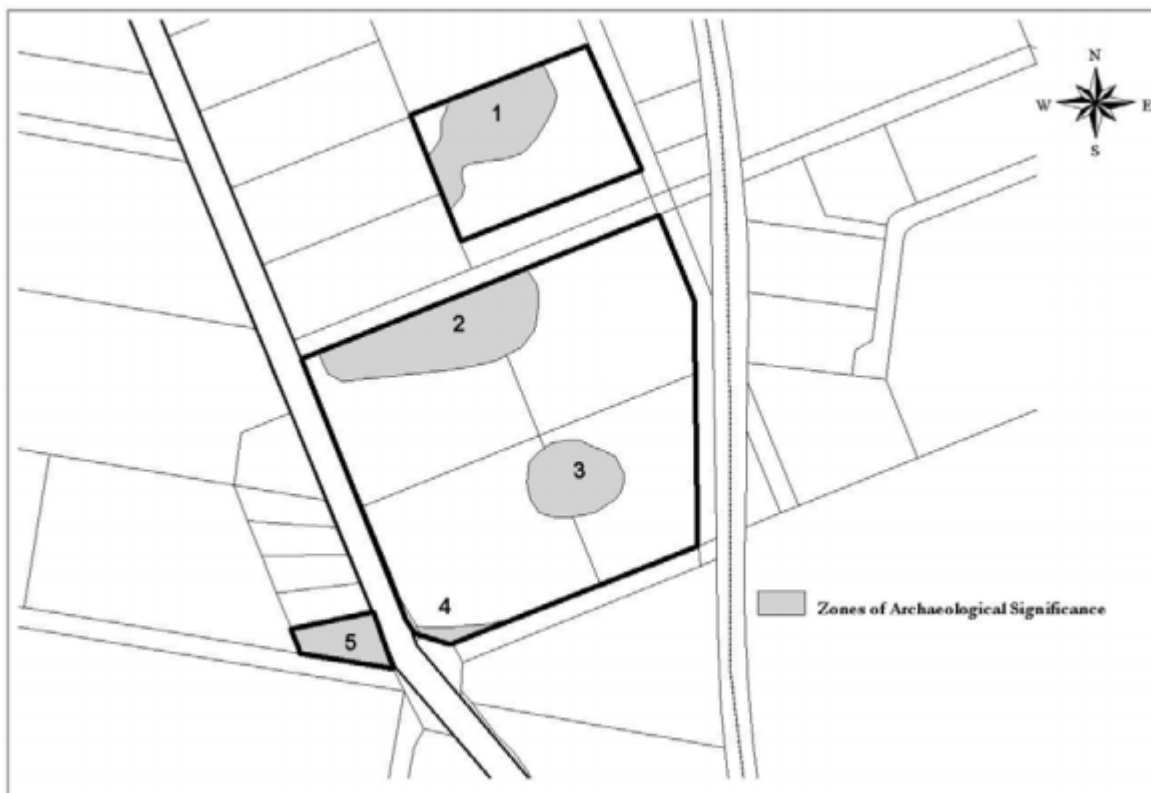


Figure 3 Zones of archaeological significance (Griffin nrm 2004)

Figure 4 provides a more recent interpretation of the placement of buildings on the site, based largely on Kabaila (1998). It shows how the site was clearly divided into two distinct parts to physically separate the commandant’s house and soldiers’ accommodation on the most elevated part of the site from the convicts stockade and garrison some 400 metres to

the south, closer to the river flats, and now on the western side of the Mitchell Highway. Interestingly, local residents say in dry times the outline of huts in the barrack blocks can be seen on the hill (Pearson 1981, cited in Griffin nrm 2004). Establishing the footprint of former buildings on the site with some certainty will assist NPWS management and interpretation for visitors.

A brick-lined well has survived in the Well Block west of the Mitchell Highway and is the only intact heritage item present (see Photo 4). The cover and safety fencing around the well need to be replaced for visitor, staff and animal safety.

In addition to flagging stones and bricks, **moveable heritage** items recovered from what is now the historic site include broken clay pipe stems, glass and pottery fragments, hand-wrought nails, strips of metal, hinges, molten lead, a pewter button made by McGowan of London, whitewash and lime mortar, a stone flake, a flaked glass bottle base, horseshoes and pieces of chain. It is highly likely that other artefacts have found their way into private collections in Wellington.



Photo 4 The brick-lined well on the Well Block, view looking towards the Mitchell Highway.
M Billington/DPE

The heritage significance of Maynggu Ganai means that it must retain its integrity as a complete archaeological landscape remnant (Griffin nrm 2004). Due to the archaeological sensitivity of the entire site, and in accordance with the CMP, care must be taken to avoid unnecessary disturbance. The CMP recommends that all archaeological material be conserved in situ. The age and fragility of brick rubble and other material that has been exposed also mean that while it may be possible to excavate a part of the site for public viewing for a short time, a permanently 'open' excavation is not advisable.

Some low-key visitor infrastructure has been constructed (see Section 4). Stabilisation works may be needed from time to time to provide ongoing protection of important heritage values. Some non-historical materials from modern 20th-century uses will need to be removed (see Section 5).

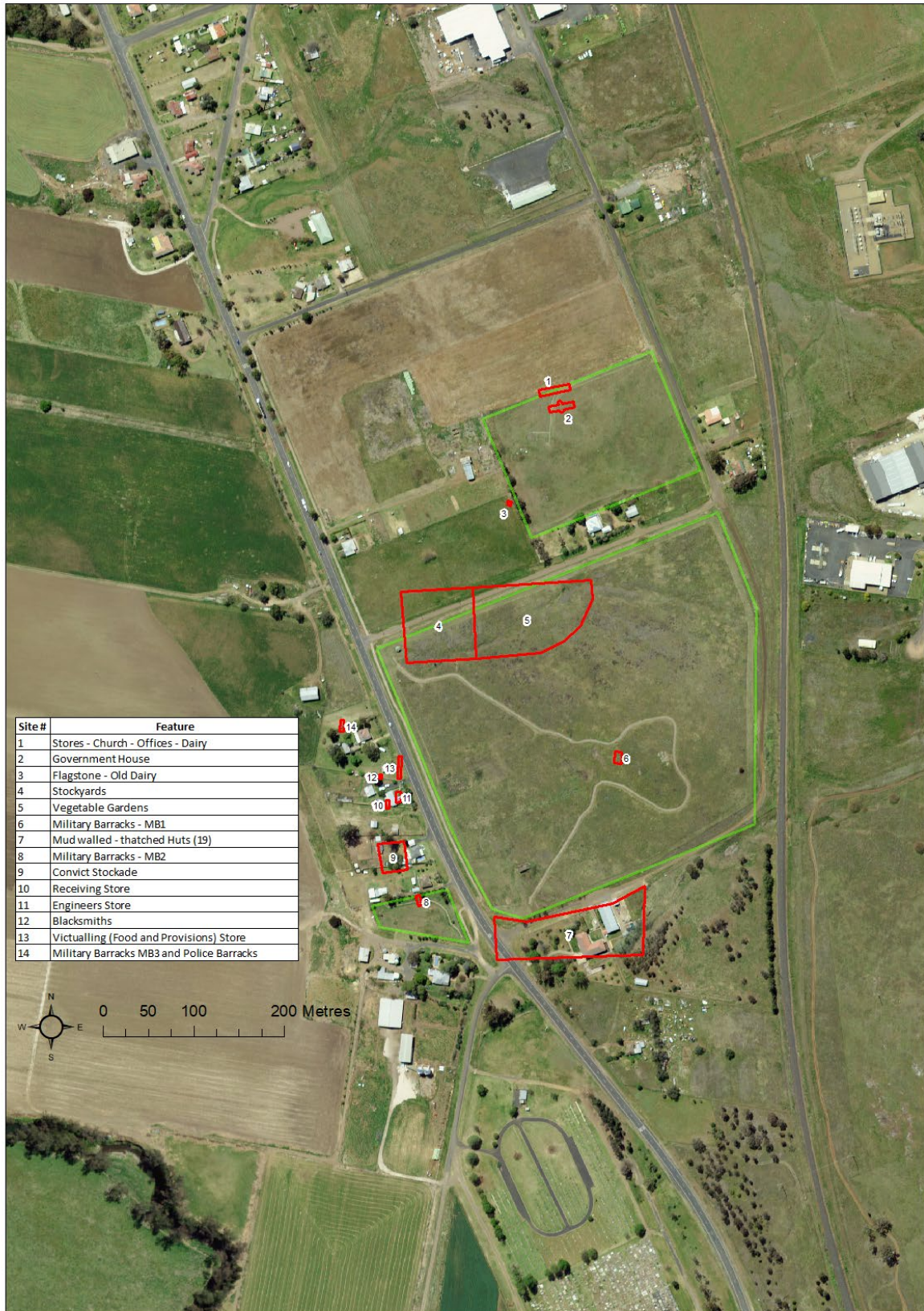


Figure 4 Possible location of key historic buildings on Maynggu Ganai (after Kabaila 1998)

3. Protecting the natural environment

Maynggu Ganai's native vegetation was cleared in the 1820s and the natural environment was modified to make way for buildings, grazing stock, gardens and crops when the site was developed for the Wellington Convict Settlement and later the Wellington Mission. What remains today is a culturally significant but aesthetically unappealing landscape, and in its current state, it presents a number of management challenges. NPWS acknowledges that the contemporary landscape is highly significant for its rich cultural history but less significant for its biodiversity values.

Based on the extant native vegetation in the surrounding area, it is likely that the fertile riverine land of Maynggu Ganai Historic Site supported Yellow Box–White Box–Blakely's Red Gum Woodland in the distant past. This community now only occurs as rare remnants and is listed as an endangered ecological community under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and as critically endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

A flora survey of Maynggu Ganai was undertaken in June 2020 (Shelly 2020), which identified 96 plant species, including 44 native species and 52 exotic species. The majority of plants found on the site are grasses and forbs, with no shrubs and only a handful of isolated canopy trees, including mugga ironbark, white box, corrugated sida, white cedar and kurrajong. Therefore, apart from birds commonly found in urban areas, it is unlikely that the site provides significant habitat for native animals.

3.1 Weeds

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* and its regulations provide specific legal requirements for the response, management and control of biosecurity risks, including weeds and pest animals. These requirements apply equally to public land and privately owned land. Under this framework, Local Land Services has prepared regional strategic weed management plans for each of its 11 regions, including Central West Region (Central West LLS 2017), where Maynggu Ganai is located.

The Local Land Services' plans identify priority weeds and pest animals in each of the regions, plus the appropriate management response for the region (i.e. prevention/alert, eradication, containment or asset protection).

NPWS prepares pest management strategies that identify the operations and control actions undertaken by NPWS to meet the priorities of regional strategic pest and weed management plans. This also includes other important programs, such as the *Biodiversity Conservation Program*. The overriding objective of the NPWS pest management strategies is to minimise adverse impacts of introduced species on biodiversity and other park and community values while complying with legislative responsibilities. These strategies are regularly updated. Reactive programs may also be undertaken in cooperation with neighbouring land managers in response to emerging issues.

None of the weeds occurring on Maynggu Ganai are regional priority species. The main weed species recorded on Maynggu Ganai include exotic grasses such as canary grass, paspalum, couch, perennial ryegrass and subterranean clover. These grasses form the majority of the ephemeral fuel loads across the site and take up most of NPWS's maintenance (slashing) effort. More recently, saffron thistle, variegated thistle, cobblers pegs, small flowered mallow (also known as marshmallow weed) and *Euphorbia* spp. have also extensively infested the historic site.

To limit the growth and spread of exotic species, weed control measures along with mechanical fuel reduction are undertaken on an as-needs basis across Maynggu Ganai.

Invasion of native plant communities by exotic perennial grasses is a key threatening process listed under the Biodiversity Conservation Act.

3.2 Fire management

Due to its small size, Maynggu Ganai does not present a significant fire risk. Grass fires may occur due to lightning strike or arson, particularly following wet conditions when the growth of ephemeral grasses can substantially increase the available fuel layer. Fire may impact NPWS infrastructure onsite.

A fire management strategy that defines the fire management approach for the site has been prepared and is updated periodically (OEH 2014b).

The CMP considers that burning is not a desirable management option as the impact of fire on archaeological remains is unknown (Griffin nrm 2004). In view of the archaeological cultural sensitivity across the site, mechanical fuel reduction is the only practical treatment option available for managing ephemeral fuel hazards. Limitations on mechanical fuel reduction activities are also in place, including:

- ploughing is not permitted
- the use of heavy earthmoving equipment (with steel tracks) is generally not permitted
- construction of new tracks is not permitted
- machinery is restricted to light plant fitted with rubber tyres/slasher combinations.

NPWS participates in the Orana Bush Fire Management Committee.

3.3 Climate change

Human-induced climate change is listed as a key threatening process under the Biodiversity Conservation Act (NSW SC 2000), and habitat loss caused by human-induced greenhouse gas emissions is listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (TSSC 2001).

Climate change modelling has been produced for 12 defined regions in south-east Australia. Table 2 provides a snapshot of the predicted changes to climate for the Central West and Orana Region, which covers Maynggu Ganai Historic Site (OEH 2014a).

Table 2 Central West and Orana Region climate change snapshot

Projected temperature changes	
Maximum temperatures are projected to increase in the near future by 0.4–1.0°C	Maximum temperatures are projected to increase in the far future by 1.8–2.7°C
Minimum temperatures are projected to increase in the near future by 0.5–0.9°C	Minimum temperatures are projected to increase in the far future by 1.5–2.6°C
The number of hot days (i.e. > 35°C) will increase	The number of cold nights (i.e. < 2°C) will decrease
Projected rainfall changes	
Rainfall is projected to decrease in spring	Rainfall is projected to increase in autumn
Projected Forest Fire Danger Index changes	
Average fire weather is projected to increase in summer, spring and winter	Severe fire weather is projected to increase in summer, spring and winter

Source: OEH 2014a. Near future = 2020–2039; Far future = 2060–2079.

Changes likely to affect the historic site are increases in temperature, fire weather and the number of 'hot days'. Evaporation rates will increase and create drier soil conditions throughout the year. The incidence of very high to extreme fire danger days is projected to increase by 10–50%, from 30 days to as many as 45 days, and the conditions conducive to large and intense fires, such as prolonged drought, low humidity, number of hot days and high wind speeds, will more than likely increase (DECCW 2010).

The characteristics of Maynggu Ganai (small size, limited habitat features and lack of standing heritage) and the fragmentation of the surrounding landscape suggest that climate change will have a limited impact on the site. National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) will continue to manage weeds and observe potential threats.

4. Providing for visitor use and enjoyment

NPWS parks provide a range of visitor opportunities. NPWS aims to ensure that visitors enjoy, experience and appreciate parks at the same time as conserving and protecting park values.

Rather than providing for active recreation, Maynggu Ganai is a focal point for visitors with an interest in Australian history, in particular the early colonial history of Wellington and its impact on the Wiradyuri People.

The site poses a number of constraints for visitor use including:

- the bare nature of the site and the absence of material evidence of its unique history make it appear like featureless paddocks
- the lack of certainty about the location of key former buildings
- the loss to farm and rural residential development of the much larger remainder of the Convict Settlement and Mission Site where this unique history unfolded
- the fragmentation of the site into three parcels, divided by a major highway
- the importance of not disturbing state-listed heritage values.



Photo 5 An interpretive panel in place on Maynggu Ganai explaining the background to the mission. M Billington/DPE

The community focus group, which was formed to oversee preparation of the CMP, gave consideration to these issues. As a result, Maynggu Ganai's convict and contact history has been interpreted onsite by the construction of self-guided winding walking tracks in each of the three parcels, with interpretive panels placed at intervals along them.

Today's viewscape of Maynggu Ganai has been analysed with reference to a watercolour painted by Augustus Earle in 1826–27 (reproduced in Section 2.2) and found that, apart from the disappearance of the 19th century buildings, the overall views are little changed. The pathways take advantage of the largely unchanged viewscape, skirting areas of likely archaeological sensitivity, so that visitors can follow a chronological timeline which exposes the history of what took place at the various locations. The text and images for the

interpretive panels are broadly based on themes outlined in the CMP and which were endorsed by the community focus group that was active at that time.

The paths were constructed of treated timber edges placed on the ground surface to avoid interference with potential archaeological material and infilled with crushed roadbase. The pathway edging is now in poor repair, and NPWS is investigating a more appropriate design and use of materials that will weather better into the future. The route of the pathways will remain unchanged.

An interpretive shelter erected at the corner of the Mitchell Highway and Cypress Street provides the starting point for any site visit and a comprehensive introduction to the site's history. Directional signage has also been placed on the pedestrian access gates that explains the location and relationship of the three parcels of land that make up the historic site.

NPWS acknowledges that the significant history of Maynggu Ganai may lend itself to more varied interpretation than the onsite signage currently in place and would support wider engagement in interpreting the site with the community. One of the criteria by which Maynggu Ganai was awarded state heritage listing refers to 'the capacity of a site to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of New South Wales's cultural history or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)'. Interpreting Maynggu Ganai presents an opportunity to increase our understanding of the early colony and the colonialist way of doing things, the impact it had on Aboriginal life, and how race relations in Australia developed from those beginnings.



Photo 6 Visitor shelter at Maynggu Ganai. M Billington/DPE

Until recently, tourism in Wellington has tended to focus on non-Aboriginal history. There is potential to develop guided tours of Maynggu Ganai in partnership with the local Aboriginal community and existing tour operators.

5. NPWS infrastructure and services

NPWS has constructed minimal infrastructure at Maynggu Ganai in keeping with its state heritage significance. The most substantial infrastructure is that provided for visitor use, namely walking tracks, directional signage, interpretive panels, and a visitor shelter. These structures are maintained and repaired as needed. There are no management trails or visitor parking on the site.

Fencing around the various boundaries of the site is in variable repair. Initially, the NPWS proposes to replace old and ineffective boundary fencing located on the Military Barracks Block frontage to the Mitchell Highway to better delineate the site and enhance its appearance. New fencing would also help to improve site maintenance (mowing). Along other boundaries, NPWS will work with neighbours to replace fencing as needed.

An assortment of items such as metal water troughs, concrete slabs, mounds of earth and building waste also remain within Maynggu Ganai from activities undertaken onsite over the last 50 years or so, prior to acquisition by NPWS.

The most prominent are the Besser block shed and earthen loading ramps adjacent to the Mitchell Highway in the Military Barracks Block (see Photo 7). The shed appears to have limited, if any, heritage significance. There is an old, rusted sign on the Military Barracks Block near the Mitchell Highway frontage reading 'Convict Settlement', which directs attention to the Besser block structure, and possibly confuses visitors about the significance of the building. NPWS proposes to remove this sign.

All of these structures and items detract from the aesthetics and heritage significance of Maynggu Ganai. Subject to further assessment of their potential heritage value, they will be removed and the site re-profiled in consultation with the Heritage Council of New South Wales.



Photo 7 Besser block shed and loading ramp on Maynggu Ganai. M Billington/NPWS

6. Non-NPWS infrastructure and services

Several utilities are potentially present inside Maynggu Ganai boundaries including:

- Military Barracks Block – underground telecommunications line (Telstra) and access pits; water and sewerage lines; overhead transmission line (Essential Energy)
- Government House Block – overhead power transmission line along Barton Street; underground telecommunication line (Telstra)
- Well Block – underground telecommunication line (Telstra).

It is likely that these utilities were located within the site boundaries during construction of houses on adjoining properties and/or widening of the Mitchell Highway prior to acquisition by NPWS. None of these utilities are contained within an easement or subject to an agreement with NPWS. However, within Maynggu Ganai they appear to require minimal maintenance by service providers. NPWS will continue to work with service providers to ensure site values are appropriately protected.

Appendices

Appendix A Legislation and policy

The following laws and policies apply to how we manage our parks (this is not a complete list):

NSW legislation

- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*
- *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
- *Heritage Act 1977*
- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and NPW Regulation

Commonwealth legislation and policy

- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

NPWS policies and strategies

A range of NPWS policies and strategies may also apply to park management:

- Fire management strategies – www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/fire/fire-management-strategies
- Park management policies – www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-policies
- Regional pest management strategies – www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/pest-animals-and-weeds

Other laws, policies and strategies may also apply. Please contact NPWS for advice.

More information

- [Maynggu Ganai Historic Site Plan of Management](#)
- [National Parks and Wildlife Service](#)

Appendix B Scientific plant names

The following table shows the scientific name for common plant names used in this plan.

Common name	Scientific name
Blakely's red gum	<i>Eucalyptus blakelyi</i>
Corrugated sida	<i>Sida corrugata</i>
Kurrajong	<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>
Mugga ironbark	<i>Eucalyptus sideroxylon</i>
White box	<i>Eucalyptus albens</i>
White cedar	<i>Melia azedarach</i>
Yellow box	<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>

Common plant names from PlantNET (The NSW Plant Information Network System), Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, Sydney, <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au>.

Appendix C Weeds in the historic site

Common name	Scientific name
Canary grass	<i>Phalaris</i> spp.
Cobblers pegs	<i>Bidens pilosa</i>
Couch	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>
<i>Euphorbia</i> spp.	<i>Euphorbia davidii</i>
Paspalum	<i>Paspalum dilatatum</i>
Perennial ryegrass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Saffron thistle	<i>Carthamus lanatus</i>
Small flowered mallow (marshmallow weed)	<i>Malva parviflora</i>
Subterranean clover	<i>Trifolium subteraneum</i>
Variegated thistle	<i>Silybum marianum</i>

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