

Wonthaggi North East Growth Area: Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Survey



Report to Bass Coast Shire Council

Triskel Heritage Consultants

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Date: 01 May 2017

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Cover Photo: General view of the study area.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the following for their assistance with this project:

- Chris Peckett (Bass Coast Shire Council)
- Anna Batters (Victorian Planning Authority)
- Bunurong Land Council
- Boon Wurrung Foundation
- Landowners/occupiers in the study area

Abbreviations

AV	Aboriginal Victoria (formerly Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria)
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
PSP	Precinct Structure Plan
VAHR	Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register
WNEGA	Wonthaggi North East Growth Area

IMPORTANT NOTE: This report may contain information about the specific location of Aboriginal archaeological sites within Bass Coast Shire. All specific locational information, should be deleted from the report before it is released to the general public, unless permission is obtained in writing from the Traditional Owners.

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1. Introduction

Bass Coast Shire Council has engaged Triskel Heritage Consultants to prepare an Aboriginal cultural heritage survey report for the Wonthaggi North East Growth Area (WNEGA) Precinct Structure Plan (PSP). This is the fieldwork component of a desktop-based assessment of the WNEGA (Orr 2016). Since the desktop assessment, the study area has altered, mainly in the removal of some parcels of land to the south.

1.1 The Study Area

Wonthaggi is located 137km southeast of Melbourne. The current WNEGA study area extends from Heslop Road in the north, to a section of rail trail between Carney's Road and Bass Highway in the south. Included are portions of the localities of Wonthaggi, Wonthaggi North and St Clair (see Map 2).

Current use of this land is predominantly farming, with some residential, commercial and industrial use also.

1.2 Project Brief

The project brief has been developed during communications between Chris Peckett (Bass Coast), Anna Batters (VPA) and Andrew Orr (Triskel Heritage).

The purpose of this project is to refine the desktop-based predicative modelling for Aboriginal cultural heritage, developed as part of the initial report (Orr 2016).

Fully developed and commercial land within the Growth Area is excluded from this study. Properties subject to previous assessment through the CHMP process is not included. All other land within the Growth Area is assessed in order to determine potential constraints, further investigation and management requirements for future re-zoning and urban development. Specific requirements of the brief are:

- Prediction of the likelihood of Aboriginal cultural heritage occurring in the precinct area; mapping all areas of Aboriginal archaeological likelihood and cultural heritage potential, nil, low, moderate and high
- A combination of pedestrian, vehicle and visual surveys for parcels with the greatest potential of archaeology and targeted site inspections for more intensive assessment based on the results of the background research
- Identification of cultural values that may be specifically or more broadly associated with the area
- Provision of findings and recommendations for management and opportunities for interpretation of Aboriginal cultural heritage and values

The surveys, analysis and recommendations of the report will assist in determining any areas for retention/significance that should be incorporated into the PSP.

Note: In accordance with the brief, this study does constitute an archaeological survey under Aboriginal Victoria guidelines. The brief does not extend to the assessment of historical heritage values.

1.3 Discussion of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity Mapping

An example of current “Area of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity” mapping from a government application (GeoVic) is provided in Map 1.

As part of the draft review by the VPA, the consultant was asked to *‘Clarify why the areas identified in the original desktop report do not accord with the DELWP “areas of aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity” mapping layer/include additional plan to highlight where these are.’*

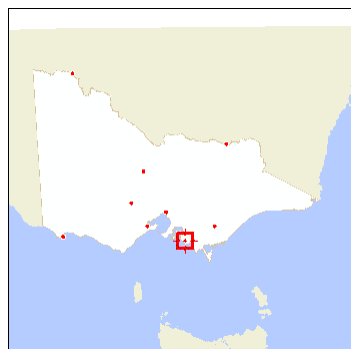
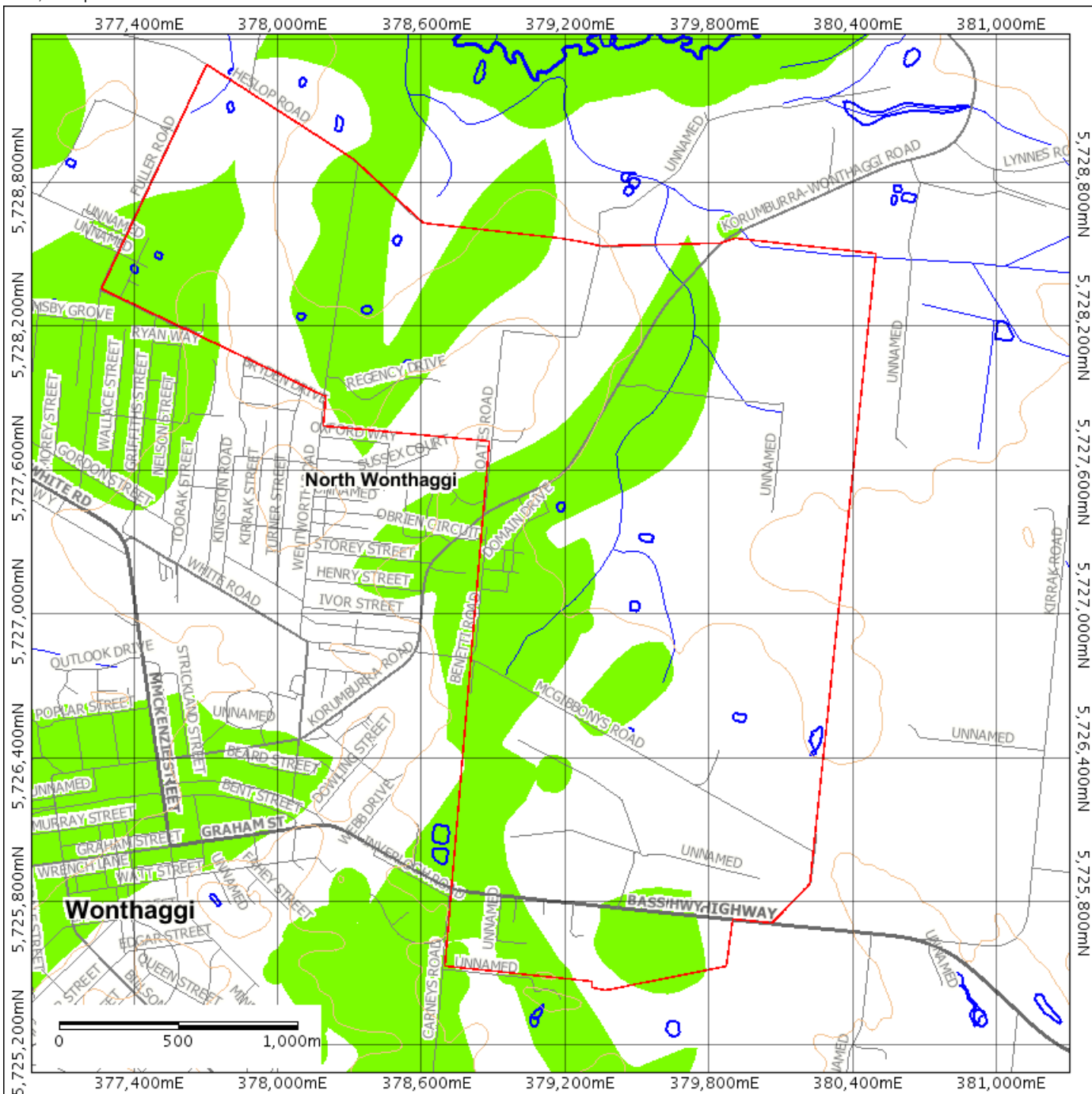
Inclusion of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity mapping was discussed with Council during preparation of the desktop report (Orr 2016). The consultant was instructed not to include this mapping. Rationale behind this included (a) the mapping layer changing over time; and (b) an accurate mapping layer being easily available to council at any given point in time.

A clarification of why the areas identified in the original desktop report do not accord with the DELWP “areas of aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity” mapping layer is provided below.

Aboriginal Victoria (Department of Premier and Cabinet) created and maintain the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity mapping layer, visible through Victorian Government applications including mapping maintained by DELWP.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity mapping is based on the regulations specified in Division 3 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007*. It serves no purpose other than to act as a partial trigger for a mandatory CHMP. A written rationale for specific “Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity” has not been provided by the regulator. It is assumed that Regulations 22 to 38 (“Areas of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity”) are derived from state-wide predictive modelling developed by Aboriginal Victoria.

As noted in the desktop report (Orr 2016: 4-6), sensitivity mapping in the study area largely covers the same area as mapping unit Qd2 (aeolian sand dunes) on a broadscale 1:250 000 geological map published in 1997. The inaccuracy of this broadscale mapping is discussed in paragraph 2 of the desktop conclusions (Orr 2016: 18-19). The results of the desktop assessment were based on the assessment of existing landforms, rather than the mapping referred to above. Therefore, it covered different areas.



Legend

Towns (25K)

Contours (vmelev)

Major Contour

Minor Contour

Roads (v)

Freeway

Highway

Main Road

Other

Map Scale: 1:25,000

Projection: MGA 55

Disclaimer: This map is a snapshot generated from Victoria Government data. This material may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for error, loss or damage which may arise from reliance upon it. All persons accessing this information should make appropriate enquiries to assess the currency of the data.



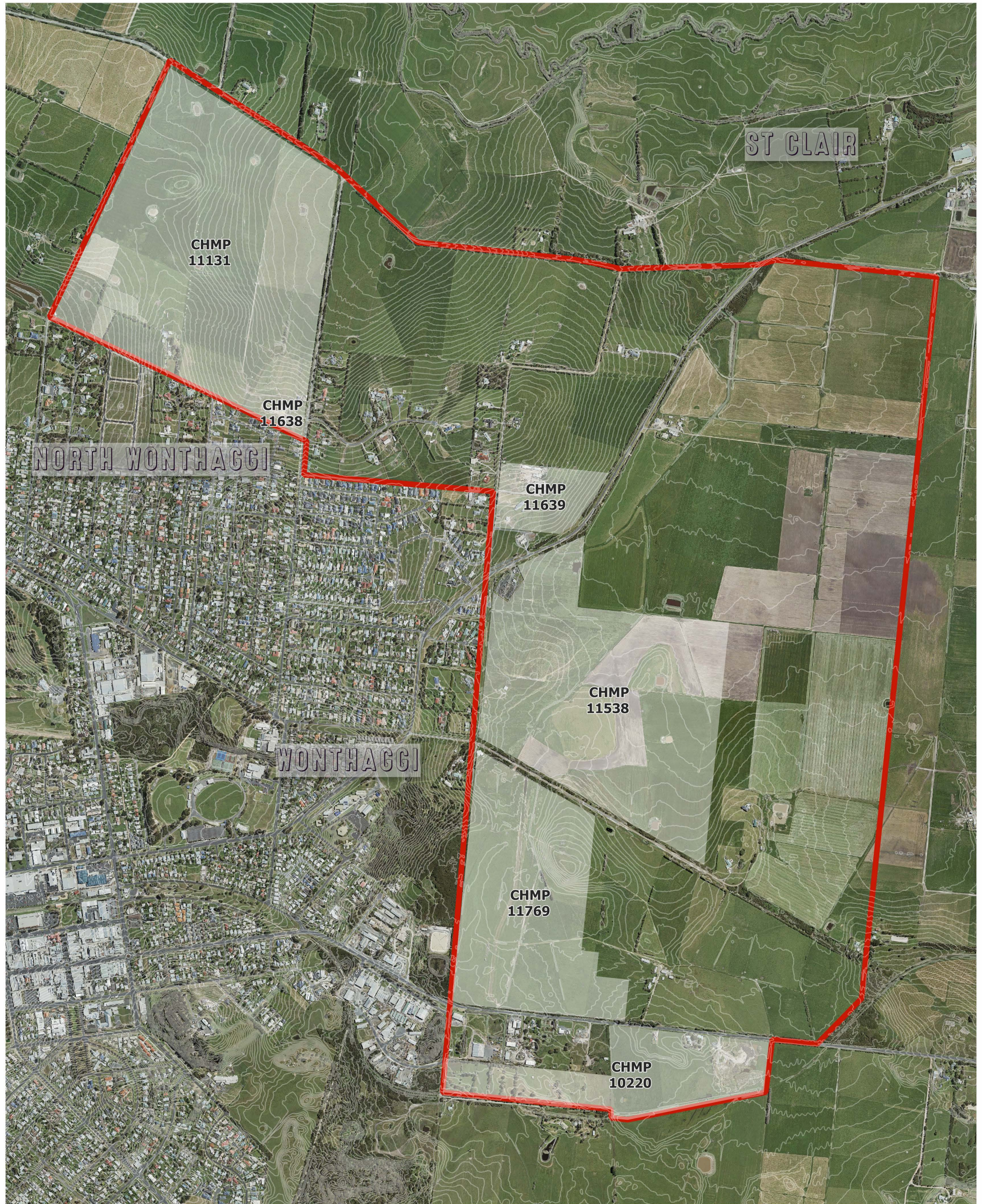
1.4 Consultation

There are two Aboriginal organisations (Traditional Owner Groups) with an interest over the current study area.

- The Boon Wurrung Foundation
- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

These organisations were notified of the project by email and invited to participate in fieldwork on 09 March 2017. A copy of the desktop study along with a request for a cultural values statement was emailed on to each group on the same day.

See Section 3.1 for details of consultation.



Map 2:
Previously Approved CHMPs within the Study Area



Legend



Study Area



0

350

700 km

CRS: MGA ZONE 55 Datum GDA 94
LGA: Bass Coast Shire Council

2. Survey Methodology

2.1 Personnel

Field survey was carried out over three days. Details of personnel involved are provided in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: PARTICIPATION IN THE CONDUCT OF THE ASSESSMENT

Date	Name	Role
16 March 2017	Andrew Orr (Triskel)	HA and Supervising Archaeologist
	Robyn Butler (Triskel)	Archaeologist
	John Winch (Bunurong)	Representative
	Dave Johnston (Boon wurrung)	Representative
17 March 2017	Andrew Orr (Triskel)	HA and Supervising Archaeologist
	Robyn Butler (Triskel)	Archaeologist
	Mark Brown (Bunurong)	Representative
	Wayne Pepper (Boon wurrung)	Representative
21 March 2017	Andrew Orr (Triskel)	HA and Supervising Archaeologist
	Robyn Butler (Triskel)	Archaeologist
	John Winch (Bunurong)	Representative
	Willie Pepper (Boon wurrung)	Representative

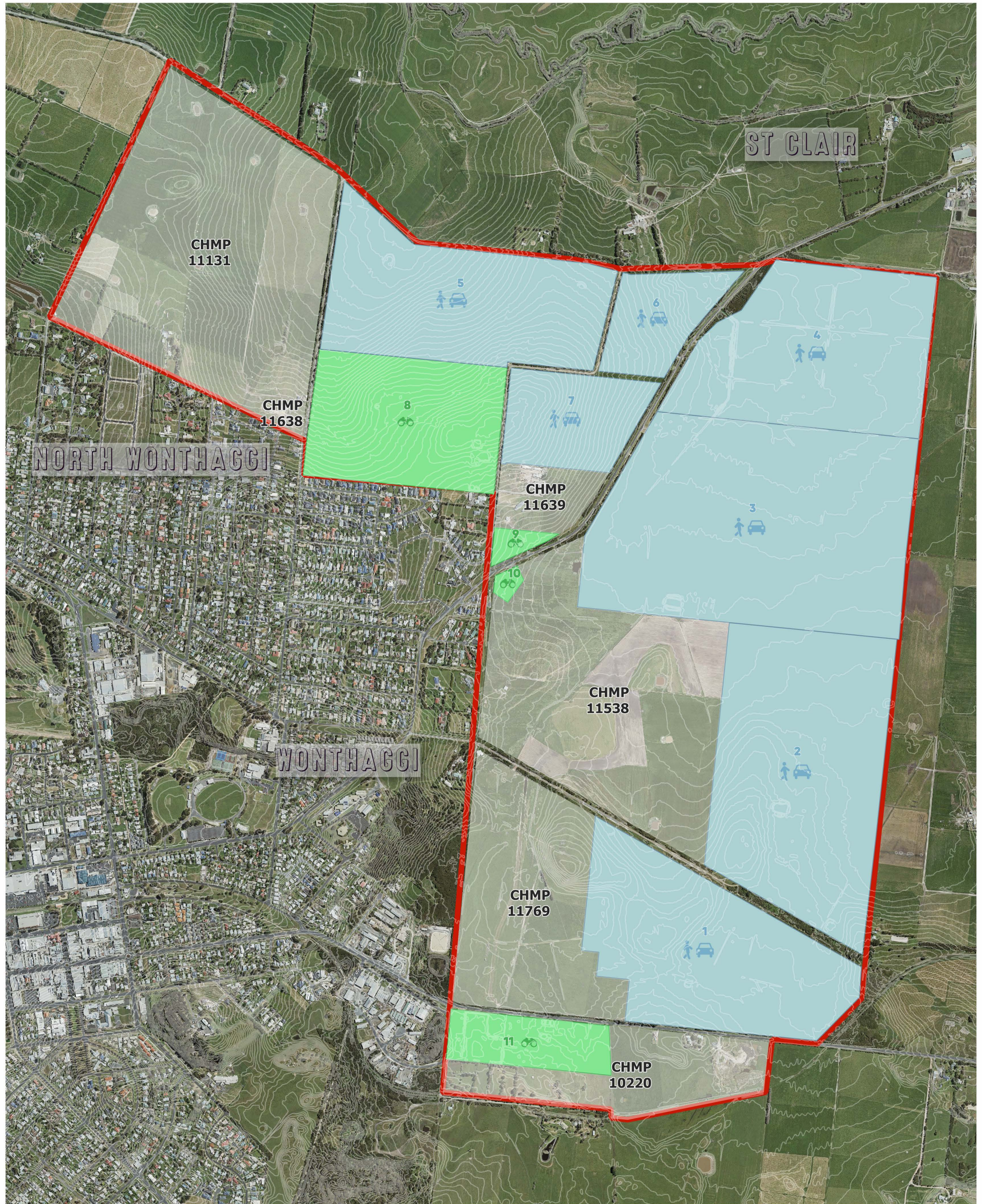
2.2 Methods

The brief called for a combination of pedestrian, vehicle and visual surveys for parcels with the greatest potential of archaeology and targeted site inspections for more intensive assessment based on the results of the background research.

Where possible to access land, vehicle and pedestrian surveys were carried out. This involved walking a single transect across every major land division (paddock) followed by a reconnaissance survey by vehicle to verify landforms and establish areas of ground surface visibility. Pedestrian survey was the carried out at all areas of ground exposure.

Where not possible to access land directly, visual assessment of landform was carried out from adjacent land.

During each survey, details of the nature and extent of Ground Surface Visibility were noted. Extents of areas of potential were recorded using GPS and contour mapping. Detail of each survey area was recorded using notes and digital photography. Results were discussed between the archaeologists and the Aboriginal field representatives following the completion of each survey.



MILDURA
ECHUCA
HORSHAM
BALLARAT
CENTRAL
MELBOURNE
QUEENSLIFF
WONTHAGGI
SALE
LAKES
ENTRANCE
PORTLAND
WILSONS
PROMONTORY

Map 3: Survey Coverage

Legend

Survey Area

Survey Coverage Type

Vehicle and Pedestrian Survey of land

Visual Inspection from adjacent land

0 350 700 km

CRS: MGA ZONE 55 Datum GDA 94
Scale 1:12326 LGA: Bass Coast Shire

N

Triskel
HERITAGE CONSULTANTS

3. Survey Results

Combined vehicle/pedestrian survey was carried out at most properties. It was not possible to access two clusters of small parcels at Regency Drive and off the Bass Highway, therefore these were visually assessed from adjacent land. Properties at the intersection of Oates Road and Korumburra-Wonthaggi Road were also inspected from adjacent land.

A summary of the survey results is provided in Table 2 below

TABLE 2: RESULTS SUMMARY

Survey Area	Method	Landforms	Disturbance	Exposure	Visibility	Estimate of Effective Survey coverage	Areas of M/H Archaeological Potential
1	V/PS	Rises, Plain	Moderate	4%	50%	2%	Rises
2	V/PS	Rises, Plain	Moderate	10%	80%	8%	Rises
3	V/PS	Plain	High	5%	80%	4%	No
4	V/PS	Plain	High	2%	50%	1%	No
5	V/PS	Rise, Plain	Moderate	2%	50%	1%	Moderate slope
6	V/PS	Rise, Plain	Moderate	8%	50%	4%	
7	V/PS	Rise, slope	Moderate	1%	50%	0.5%	Steep upper slope, crest
8	Vis.	Rise, slope, plain	Moderate-High	-	-	-	Crest, upper slope
9	Vis	Plain	Moderate	-	-	-	No
10	Vis.	Plain	Very high	-	-	-	No
11	Vis.	Plain	Moderate-High	-	-	-	No

Survey Area 1

Survey Area 1 is bounded by McGibbonys Road to the north and Bass Highway to the south. It consists of a farm complex with open paddocks occasionally separated by cypress-pine windbreaks. Pasture grass covers most of this study area. High levels of localized disturbance were noted at the farm buildings and the locations of farm infrastructure including tracks and drainage ditches. Areas of ground surface visibility were confined to areas of high animal traffic (e.g. gates and troughs) and grazing (e.g. base of windbreaks), and recently excavated water pipeline trenches between water troughs. There is a gentle fall in slope between the west containing the farm complex and the lower lying east containing regular drainage ditches. A difference in visible soils was noted also, with peaty soils visible in exposures on the low-lying ground and sandy soils on more elevated ground. Three areas of archaeological potential were noted during the survey. A large gentle rise in the centre and a second extending from the west have been assessed as having moderate archaeological potential. A segment of a more pronounced sandy rise in the northeast corner has been assessed as having high archaeological potential due to visible depths of sand in exposures. No Aboriginal artefacts or archaeological features were identified within this Survey Area.



Photograph 1 - Typical conditions on low-lying land, survey area 1



Photograph 2 - Inspecting disturbed soil from installed water pipe. Survey Area 1



Photograph 3 - Gentle rise in centre Survey Area 1



Photograph 4 - Sandy rise in northeast corner, Survey Area 1

Survey Area 2

Survey Area 2 extends northwards from McGibbonys Road. A Farm complex accessed from McGibbonys Road is located on a prominent north-south trending ridge/rise and there is a small segment of rise in the southeast corner also. Otherwise, the property consists of large open paddocks that are generally low-lying and level. Disturbance was visible at the farm buildings, as well as tracks and patches of introduced Wonthaggi redstone. Some sections of ridges also suggest cropping in the recent past.

This Survey Area was generally grassed, with some sections having recently been cut. Ground surface visibility was relatively good on the cut paddocks, at sections of graded track and at an area of mechanical disturbance (most likely a filled in silage pit). The rise in the south was assessed as having high archaeological potential along the most pronounced section of ridge, while the northern section of gentle slope was assessed as having moderate archaeological potential. No Aboriginal artefacts or archaeological features were identified within this Survey Area.



Photograph 5 - Rise with farm-buildings. Also, introduced redstone and bluestone. Survey Area 2



Photograph 6 - Level floodplain, Survey Area 2

Survey Area 3

Survey Area 3 is located to the east of Korumburra Road and is accessed through a complex of buildings and compound in the northwest corner. This area is low-lying and level in nature, with no distinct landforms or features present. This area is divided into large open paddocks, with regular drainage and water troughs. The area was covered in grass at the time of assessment, with patches of visibility confined to areas of high stock traffic such as at water troughs. No artefacts or archaeological features were identified and no areas were assessed as having moderate or high archaeological potential.



Photograph 7 - Level low-lying ground, Survey Area 3



Photograph 8 - Exposure at water trough, Survey Area 3

Survey Area 4

Survey Area 4 is located to the east of Korumburra Road. It consists of regular open paddocks of low-lying level ground with regular tracks and drainage ditches. There are no buildings in this area. Grass cover was present in all paddocks, with relatively high visibility in recently grazed areas, along with the edges of cut ditches and tracks. No artefacts or archaeological features were identified and no areas were assessed as having moderate or high archaeological potential.



Photograph 9 - Level ground with ditch and exposures, Survey Area 4



Photograph 10 - Low-lying level paddock with heavy grass cover, Survey Area 4

Survey Area 5

Survey Area 5 is located between Oates Road and Heslop Road. This area was accessed through the farm complex on Oates Road, which is located on a high point, with surrounding grassed paddocks sloping downwards to the west and north. Localised disturbance was noted at the farm complex, tracks and at three large dams. Patches of visibility were confined to areas of high stock traffic such as at dams and gateways. Otherwise there was little visibility due to dense grass cover.

The southwest of the Survey Area was inspected in detail. This was due to an oral reference to a possible warm spring at the location of a dam (Murphy & Owen 2007), and the presence of a stand of European trees noted during the current survey. Subsequent discussion with the landowner indicated that the dam was recent in origin and there was no local knowledge of a natural spring/warm spring in the area. The trees related to a post-war dairy and residence, that was used until the 1960s and later demolished. The upper slopes extending from Oates Road and adjacent properties on Regency Drive were assessed as having moderate archaeological potential. No artefacts or archaeological features were identified.



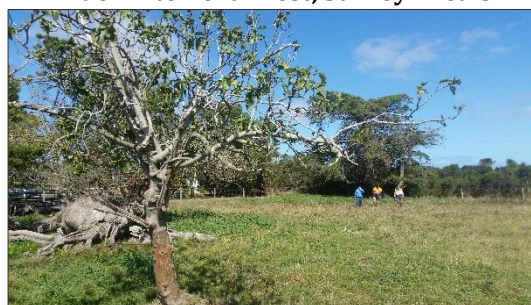
Photograph 11 - Farm complex at highpoint, Survey Area 5



Photograph 12 - Ground sloping down to northwest, Survey Area 5



Photograph 13 - Dam in southwest, Survey Area 5



Photograph 14 - Stand of European trees including Fig (foreground), Survey Area 5

Survey Area 6

Survey Area 6 is located on the corner of Heslop Road and Korumburra Road. It has access from both Korumburra Road and Oates Road through a farm complex in the south. From the farm, the ground slopes moderately down to the northeast, before reaching a section of major drainage line and a section of saturated ground. Localised disturbance was visible around a recently-constructed farm complex. There also appears to have been some movement of soil/fill down onto the lower-lying ground in the northeast corner. At the time of assessment, the land was heavily grassed, with exposures from stock traffic and grazing throughout. High levels of visibility were noted adjacent to the field boundaries.

A linear exposure along the Oates Road boundary was assessed as having high archaeological potential as it displayed depths of archaeologically sensitive aeolian sand. The remainder of the east-facing slope was assessed as having moderate archaeological potential. No artefacts or archaeological features were identified.



Photograph 15 - View to northeast from top of slope, Survey Area 6



Photograph 16 - Saturated ground in northeast corner of Survey Area 6



Photograph 17 - Redeposited soil on lower slope. Farm complex in background. Survey Area 6



Photograph 18 - Inspecting Linear sand exposure next to Oates Road, Survey Area 6

Survey Area 7

Survey Area 7 is located on the inside corner of Oates Road. It consists of a section of upper slope and crest containing a residence with commanding views to the east over steeply sloping ground and the surrounding plain. The land had heavy grass cover at the time of assessment.

Visible evidence of disturbance was confined to the house and gardens. Elsewhere, visibility was very low, with very occasional exposures at areas of high stock traffic. The upper slope and crest were assessed as having high archaeological potential. The midslope was assessed as having moderate archaeological potential. No artefacts or archaeological features were identified.



Photograph 19 - House on crest.



Photograph 20 - Inspecting a soil exposure.

Survey Area 8

Survey Area 8 consists of over twenty-five residential properties surrounding Regency Drive, some of which are accessed from Wentworth Road to the west and Oates Road to the east. These were assessed through visual inspection from adjacent land. Disturbance varies between each block, with localized disturbance at structures, but the potential for minimally disturbed land within undeveloped blocks and outside building footprints. One section of recently cut drain was inspected within the Regency Drive reserve. No artefacts or archaeological features were identified. Taken this area was assessed as having moderate archaeological potential.



Photograph 21 - View of north-facing slope from Survey Area 5 boundary. Photo facing west, Survey Area 8



Photograph 22 - Soil profile exposed in cut drain at Regency Drive, Survey Area 8

Survey Area 9

Survey Area 9 is a triangular-block located at the intersection of Oates Road and Korumburra Road. Adjoining road reserve provided clear views over the property allowing for assessment of landform. The property is on very gently sloping low-lying ground. It consists of an open grassed area with a large central shed and turning circle. No areas of moderate or high archaeological potential were identified.



Photograph 23 - View of property, facing west. Survey Area 9



Photograph 24 - View of property facing north. Survey Area 9

Survey Area 10

Survey Area 10 consists of the electricity substation compound at the corner Benetti Road and Korumburra Road. This was inspected from a distance for safety reasons. Given the extensive works that have taken place here in the past, combined with the low sensitivity of the land form, this Survey Area has been assessed as having no Aboriginal archaeological potential



Photograph 25 - View of compound, facing southeast. Survey Area 10



Photograph 26 - View of electricity infrastructure, facing north. Survey Area 10

Survey Area 11

Survey Area 11 consists of a complex of properties on the corner of Carney's Road and Inverloch Road. This area was visually inspected from adjacent road reserve and accessible land from the east. Some properties contain large commercial/industrial structures and associated sealed and unsealed surfaces. These are separated by large heavily grassed areas with no obvious exposures or ground surface visibility. There appears to be a gentle slope northwards towards the Inverloch Road. No distinct landforms were visible and no areas of moderate or high archaeological potential identified.



Photograph 27 - Highly disturbed portion of block on corner Carneys Road and Inverloch Road. Survey Area 11



Photograph 28 - Grassed section, Survey Area 11

Additional Area to South

After survey had been completed, Chris Peckett (Senior Strategic Planner, Bass Coast) contacted the consultant to in relation to an additional area to the south of the current study area (See Map 4). Due to time constraints, this area has not been surveyed or inspected as part of the current assessment. A recommendation based on the results of the previous assessment (Orr 2016) is provided in Section 4.

3.1 Traditional Owner Information and Consultation

Both Traditional Owner Groups, Bunurong Land Council (Bunurong) and Boon Wurrung Foundation (Boon Wurrung), were invited to provide information on Cultural Values before commencement of fieldwork (see Section 1.3).

Dan Turnbull (Manager, Bunurong) responded by phone (14/03/17) with the following comments:

- Yowengerra or Lowandjeri Bulluk are the relevant clan.
- At least one burial known from sand deposits next to Powlett River. Axes have also been found.
- Little is known of the broader region – concerns that anything could be found anywhere.
- Bunurong Land Council would like involvement in higher resolution assessments.
- An area where conflict occurred with Gunai/Kurnai from the east. Did conflict take place in or near the study area? Where were people buried? Sensitive issues.
- Low chance that burials will be identified through CHMP assessments using conventional subsurface testing techniques.
- Cultural Heritage Inductions are importance to raise awareness and address developer/contractors concerns about what to do in case artefacts/Ancestral Remains found. Process is to record, remove, repatriate.

All Aboriginal Field Representatives noted the archaeological potential of rises, particularly those with commanding views over surrounding landscape. The following Field Representatives also gave specific comment as follows:

- Dave Johnston (Field Representative, Boon wurrung), 16/03/17: Pronounced rises have high potential. Gentle rises and slopes also have some potential. Landscape likely to have been an area that people moved through between hills to north and coast to south.
- John Winch (Field Representative, Bunurong), 16/03/17: Rises likely to contain artefacts. Unhappy with level of assessment on some previous CHMPs. Would like to see larger samples investigated through machine excavation during assessments.

Following fieldwork, an email was received (07/04/17) from Dan Turnbull (Manager, Bunurong) containing the statement below. Also provided was a general statement of significance (see Appendix 1) and additional ethnographic information relating to the Yowengerra (Fels 2011).

...due to the Yowengerra being potentially 'extinct' this space is incredibly important to the Bunurong community today. Their bodies are buried within this landscape, their stone tools, campfires and stories too. A very sensitive and important landscape. The rises may be important, but were they rises 25,000 years ago? Everywhere is important and has the potential to tell us something about our people in the past and is useful to all Australians for the future.

3.2 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage identified during the Survey

No Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Places were identified during the current assessment. Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage potential are shown in Map 4.

There are six approved CHMPs from within the current boundaries of the WNEGA (Maps 2-4). Assessment for three of the CHMPs identified Aboriginal Cultural Heritage which has been registered as seven Aboriginal Places (Orr 2016: 16). These Aboriginal Places were assessed as having extremely low to moderate scientific significance. No areas of high significance were identified. Conditions of the three CHMPs where Aboriginal Cultural Heritage was identified allow for all known Aboriginal Places to be harmed and there are no long-term implications in relation to the protection of Aboriginal Places in these areas (Orr 2016: 15).

3.3 Conclusions of the Ground Survey

No artefacts or archaeological features were identified during the survey. There are several potential factors behind this. Very few mature indigenous trees are present and no evidence of any obtrusive sites such as scarred trees. In relation to surface/subsurface archaeological sites, no paddocks had been recently ploughed at the time of assessment and therefore heavy grass cover hindered survey. Where ground surface visibility was present, it was most evident on low-lying ground where drainage ditches and stock traffic on softer ground exposed more of the soil, potentially skewing visibility towards areas of lowest archaeological potential.

The only area where archaeological potential can be ruled out is the electricity substation at corner Benetti Road and Korumburra Road. During the survey, it was noted that much of the low-lying plain contains drainage, with peaty soils visible in exposures, particularly in the northeast of the study area. This indicates that prior to European contact, these landforms are likely have contained wetlands. While there has been landscape alteration to allow drainage and access, it remains technically possible that archaeological deposits associated with resource acquisition from these environments may have survived. The potential for survival on the low-lying land is dependent on the depths of topsoil in relation to depths of disturbance resulting from historic and ongoing agricultural practices. Associated with this is the potential for smaller sand deposits and rises which may have been truncated or levelled, retaining archaeological deposits below the surface.

The Desktop Assessment (Orr 2016) noted the high archaeological potential of all elevated landforms, with sandy rises (sand dunes). The brief for this initial assessment focused on identifying areas of high archaeological potential only. The brief for the current assessment called for a tiered approach to defining potential. Field survey with the participation of Traditional Owners allowed for a more detailed categorizing of landforms and landform elements in order to achieve the project aims. Each property and landform were assessed individually during fieldwork. In general terms, pronounced rises with commanding views over surrounding land were assessed as

having highest potential to contain subsurface archaeological deposits. The crests and upper slopes of such rises would have provided ideal locations for camping and associated activities that leave an archaeological signature such as stone tool making and use, as well as being vantage points with ready access to potable water and plentiful resources in the surrounding wetlands. The farm and residential buildings that often occupy these rises have caused varying levels of ground disturbance. However, given the potential depths of aeolian sands and the likely localized nature of such disturbance, there remains high potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage to be present.

3.4 Revised Site Prediction Model

The site prediction model presented in the Desktop Assessment (Orr 2016) has been revised following the results of the current survey.

- Stone Artefact Sites are the most likely site-types to be present.
- Given the distance from water sources, freshwater shell middens are unlikely
- Occupation deposits may be present due to the local availability of potable water.
- Conditions are unlikely to be conducive to the survival of organic material including bone.
- If mature indigenous trees have survived within the study area, it is possible that Scarred Trees may be present.
- Due to prior agricultural land use, the potential for *in situ* survival of shallow archaeological sites is low.
- All elevated landforms have the potential to contain Aboriginal cultural heritage material.
- The upper slopes and crests of prominent sandy rises (sand dunes) provide the highest potential for *in situ* archaeological deposits to be present.

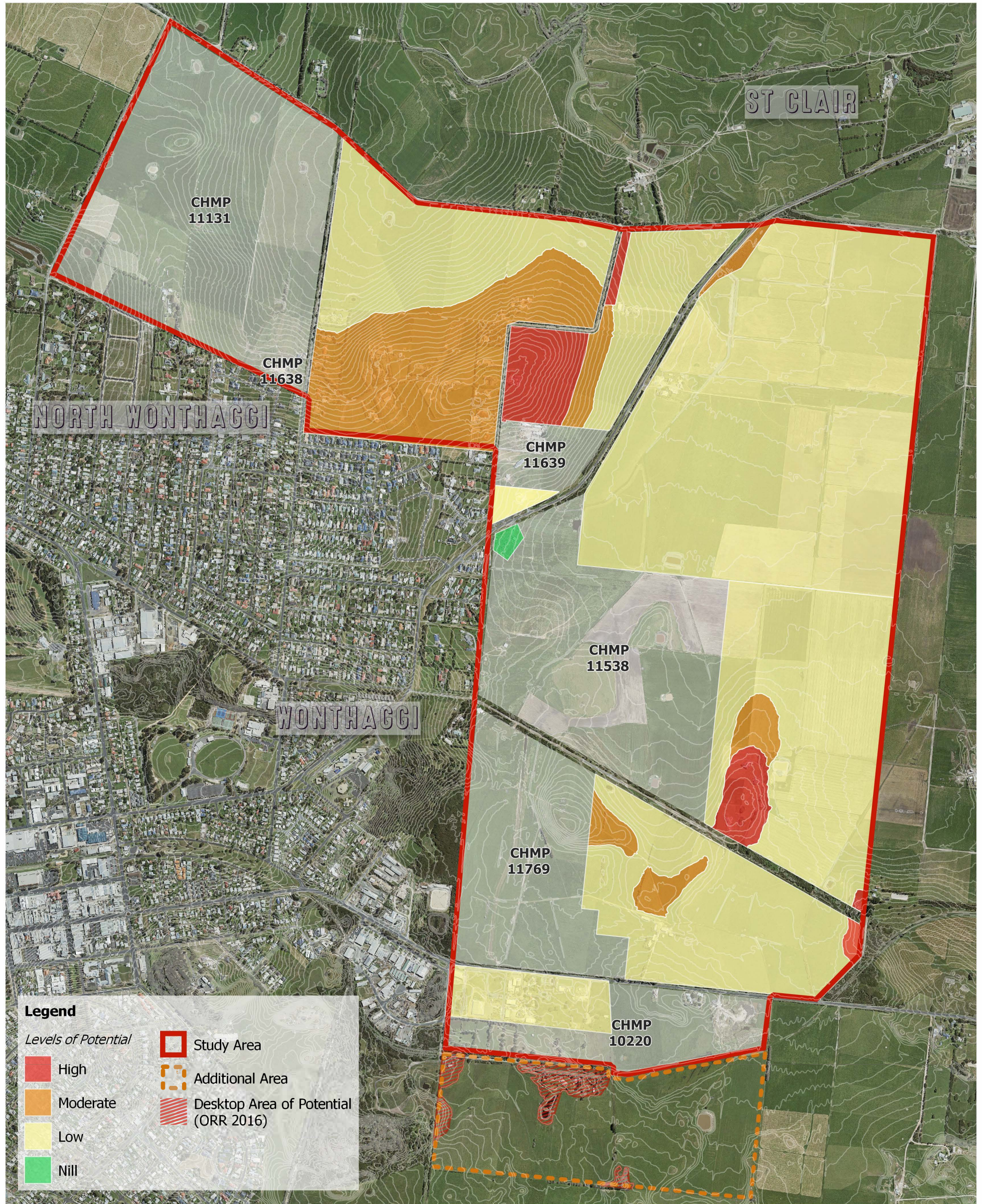
A prediction of the likelihood of Aboriginal cultural heritage occurring in the study area is provided in Map 4. All areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage potential are mapped against the following criteria:

High: Crest and upper slopes of distinct (high-relief) rises that are either known or likely to contain depths of sand. Such rises have commanding views over adjacent lower-lying land indicative of former resource-rich wetlands. Such locations would have been ideal for sustained activity such as camping as well as stone tool manufacture and use. Where present, depths of sand have the potential to preserve *in situ* archaeological deposits including former land surfaces.

Moderate: Low-relief rises and slopes which may contain depths of sand. Also, a patch of remnant native vegetation which indicates minimal disturbance, and therefore higher potential for survival of the archaeological record.

Low: Low-lying, featureless plain, likely to contain shallow peaty soils. Includes former wetlands which may have been accessed to acquire resources but unlikely to have seen sustained activity that would leave a substantial archaeological signature.

Nil: Low-lying ground where shallow soils have likely been fully disturbed.



Map 4: Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Potential



0 350 700 km

CRS: MGA ZONE 55 Datum GDA 94
LGA: Bass Coast Shire Council



4. Recommendations

4.1 Recommendation 1: Aboriginal CHMPs

Under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (amended 2016), it is an offence to damage or destroy Cultural Heritage other than through approved processes, most commonly through the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP).

Under the Act, a CHMP must be prepared when:

- An Environmental Effects Statement is required;
- Directed by the Minister; or
- Required by the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007*

The Regulations specify that preparation of a CHMP is mandatory where a 'high impact activity' is to take place within an 'area of cultural heritage sensitivity'. Both terms are defined under the regulations and a map of areas of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity is maintained and regularly updated by Aboriginal Victoria. **Under the Regulations, a mandatory CHMP must be prepared where both triggers are met.**

The Act also allows for the preparation of a Voluntary CHMP (Sec. 45). If the requirement for a Mandatory CHMP has not been triggered, **it is recommended that a voluntary CHMP be carried out for developments in areas assessed as having moderate or high Aboriginal archaeological potential (Map 4).**

4.2 Recommendation 2: CHMP Assessment

It is recognized that the current study is a broadscale survey aimed at refining landform-based predictive modelling and the survey was limited in its effectiveness due to poor ground surface visibility over much of the study area. The current study is not aimed at replacing the requirement for detailed Standard Assessment survey in any future CHMPs.

4.3 Recommendation 3: Consultation

It is strongly recommended that Council and developers continue to consult and engage with relevant Traditional Owners through the current PSP process as well as any more focused studies in the future, including CHMPs.

The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council has yet to appoint a Registered Aboriginal Party(s) in relation to a large region including study area. The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council has recognised two groups as representing Traditional Owners. These are:

- The Boon Wurrung Foundation
- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

4.4 Recommendation 4: Additional Area to South

After survey had been completed, Chris Peckett (Senior Strategic Planner, Bass Coast) contacted the consultant in relation to an additional area to the south of the current study area (See Map 4). Due to time constraints, this area has not been surveyed or inspected as part of the current assessment.

Based on Desktop Assessment this area contains landforms of high archaeological potential. In order to refine the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage potential of this area, further assessment in the form of an archaeological survey with the participation of Traditional Owners is recommended.

4.5 Report Lodgement

This report has been distributed to:

- Bass Coast Shire Council
- Aboriginal Victoria

4.6 Independent Review

Although the findings of a consultant's report will be taken into consideration, recommendations in relation to managing a heritage place should not be taken to imply automatic approval of those actions by the Aboriginal Victoria or the Aboriginal community. Archaeological reports and the management recommendations contained therein may be independently reviewed by the Aboriginal Victoria.

References

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (amended 2016)

Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007 (amended 2016)

Fels, M. 2011 'I succeeded once', the Aboriginal Protectorate on the Mornington Peninsula, 1839-1840. Aboriginal History Inc and ANU E Press, with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Canberra. Available for free download, subject to conditions, at: <https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/aboriginal-history-monographs/i-succeeded-once/download>

GeoVic Website: http://er-info.dpi.vic.gov.au/sd_weave/registered.htm

Murphy, A. & D. Owen 2007 Wonthaggi North East Development Plan: Desktop Cultural Heritage Assessment. Report to Beveridge Williams on behalf of Bass Coast Shire

Orr, A. 2016 Wonthaggi North East Growth Area: Heritage Study. Report to Bass Coast Shire

Appendix 1: Bunurong Land Council Statement of Significance

BLCAC respectfully offer the below statement of significance which covers all of our traditional land and water Country.

Over the last 35,000 years Bunurong people have adapted to a range of significant changes within their Country. Our stories of the Bay flooding with water, asteroid impacts near Cranbourne, Arthurs Seat once being an Island, volcanic activity in the western suburbs, the great floods, fires and earthquakes all speak of such events.

Over 1000 generations of our people have been here before us. Archaeological excavation within our Country has already demonstrated about 30,000 years worth of occupation. These sites can show us how our ancestors interacted with their environment and how that interaction changed over time. We regard all evidence of our people's occupation as sacred.

No amount of data can compensate for the loss of a site but if we can't *literally* preserve a site, the only other way it may be preserved is by way of careful data collection as part of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP). The importance of the accuracy of this data being collected *for protection* is paramount as we regard this information as sacred. It holds the stories of our people and our past. In some places our archaeology is the only thing that remains within a given landscape, the only thing left that hasn't been changed or moved, and because of this, it is now sacred to us.

All of our Country is highly significant, every square inch, every rock, every leaf, every dune and every artefact. If we could attribute the cause of this blanket high significance rating of our Country to any one thing, it would be that in Melbourne especially, so much has been destroyed and lost as the city grew, and so quickly. If you lose enough of something, what little you have left becomes so much more important. Similarly, when someone passes, their earthly possessions become more important to those they left behind.

With regards to knowledge and stories, each of our Elders that passed away during early colonisation is the equivalent of a state library burning down today. One Bunurong Elder of the time was famously quoted saying that, '*Once we are gone, no one is going to know where anything is*', clearly considering the vast amount of knowledge he and his people had collected about the landscape, all written in their songs and stories. Another Elder was noted as saying, '*one day smart people will lament at our passing*', no doubt acknowledging again the ocean of information collected on every living thing here, every tree, every animal and the key to the complex balance of all things that his people had managed to evolve and sustain. European people are still learning of the complexities of Aboriginal culture.

Though we retain a wealth of stories of our people and Country, with no written language and with change occurring here so quickly, we have lost many of the ancient stories of this landscape. At the *time*, Bunurong people's focus was more on trying to stay alive than on the luxuries of continuing to practice culture, which included the careful passing on of stories and knowledge, different levels of which would require certain initiations, performed over time.

The pressure is now on archaeological methodologies to make sure our Ancestor's sites that *are* in harms way *are* found, and that they are excavated in a way that allows for science to give us back some of those lost stories. Every part of our Country is of high significance to our people past and present.

The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation