

3.5 Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Heritage

3.5.1 Construction

A project-specific Heritage Management Plan was prepared to address the MCoA No's 46, 49a and 50. It detailed the safeguards implemented to protect indigenous and non-indigenous heritage areas. These included: -

- Protecting designated heritage items such as the 'Scar Tree' and the middens site beside the road footprint by the use of protective fencing;
- Inviting an archaeologist and representatives of the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council to be present when initial site disturbance works was proposed;
- Including heritage awareness in the project Site Induction program; and
- Salvaging found material on site, and where necessary undertaking archaeological reports on the significance of unexpectedly found objects.

Seven 'Potential Archaeological Deposit' PAD sites were identified as being impacted by the road alignment. Other issues included protection of a scar tree, and limiting clearing around the SEPP 14 wetlands sites. These were located and marked on the project Sensitive Area Plans for the project. During the initial site disturbance activity at all these sites, a qualified archaeologist was in attendance, and representatives of the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council were invited to be present.



Photograph 3.15 Stone axe discovered during landscaping activities. Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council currently retains it.

An artefact was discovered in the latter stages of construction by a local aboriginal and representative of the Jali Land Council who was working with Abigroup's landscaping crew, and on another occasion by a member of the RTA. On each occasion, the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Lands Council was notified immediately and attended the site late that afternoon or the day after.

The presence of an archaeologist during the initial clearing of the SEPP14 wetland enabled the uncovering and reporting on an old abandoned jetty structure. This structure was reported upon and assessed as having low heritage significance. Having professional people in attendance at these critical areas proved to be a successful mitigation measure.

The archaeologist was also in attendance at the Hainsville 'Rail Town' area which was near the old Salad Bowl Caravan Park. A MCoA required that an historical interpretive marker be prepared for the former rail town at Hainsville, and following community consultation, this was designed by the RTA and later installed by Abigroup at the site. This included part of an old post-and-rail fence. A cedar stump, which was saved for future incorporation into such a display, was stolen shortly after it was stockpiled.



Photograph 3.16 Historical interpretive marker at the former rail town at Hainsville, with an historical post and rail fence behind it.



Photograph 3.17 Details of the interpretive marker at the former rail town at Hainsville.

It is concluded that the measures put in place to address issues of heritage were comprehensive, and resulted in good outcomes in terms of minimising disturbance to, and preserving historical material. It also provided significant opportunity for those with interest in this subject to be involved.

3.5.2 Operation

No further impacts are expected upon heritage items as a consequence of operation of the Upgrade.

It is possible that artefacts may be discovered during maintenance activities, and consequently, workers are given training in responses to such discoveries during site inductions. The maintenance contractor also has a Work Method Statement which details appropriate measures to address this potential impact.

3.5.3 Learnings

A pro-active communication with multiple sectors of the community revealed information that would otherwise have been lost. In particular, historical issues and items of significance to the community were recorded, or saved for incorporation into historical displays and markers. This conservation validated the long-term efforts of some members of the community who had identified and preserved such information.

Comprehensive education of all involved in the project resulted in minimising disturbance to artefacts as they were encountered during construction.