

A pictorial record of pagoda heritage within the Coalpac proposal area (in Ben Bullen State Forest)



© Maps compiled by Karen McLaughlin

© Photos by Ian Brown, Yuri Bolotin, Chris Jonkers, Andrew Valja

*For Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Colong Foundation for Wilderness and Lithgow Environment Group
16th April 2013*

Foreword

This report is a pictorial record of predominantly platy pagodas in and adjacent to the Coalpac 'contracted project' proposal. The latter variously involves open-cut extraction and highwall mining of lands in what was originally termed the Coalpac Consolidation Proposal. The lands comprise a significant part of the western portion of the publicly-owned Ben Bullen State Forest.

The report is designed to be self-standing. However, it also comprises **Annexure A** to accompany ***"The case for rejecting the Coalpac 'contracted project' proposal and securing a reservation outcome"***, a document submitted to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and dated 17 April, 2013, and conjointly prepared by the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, and the Lithgow Environment Group.

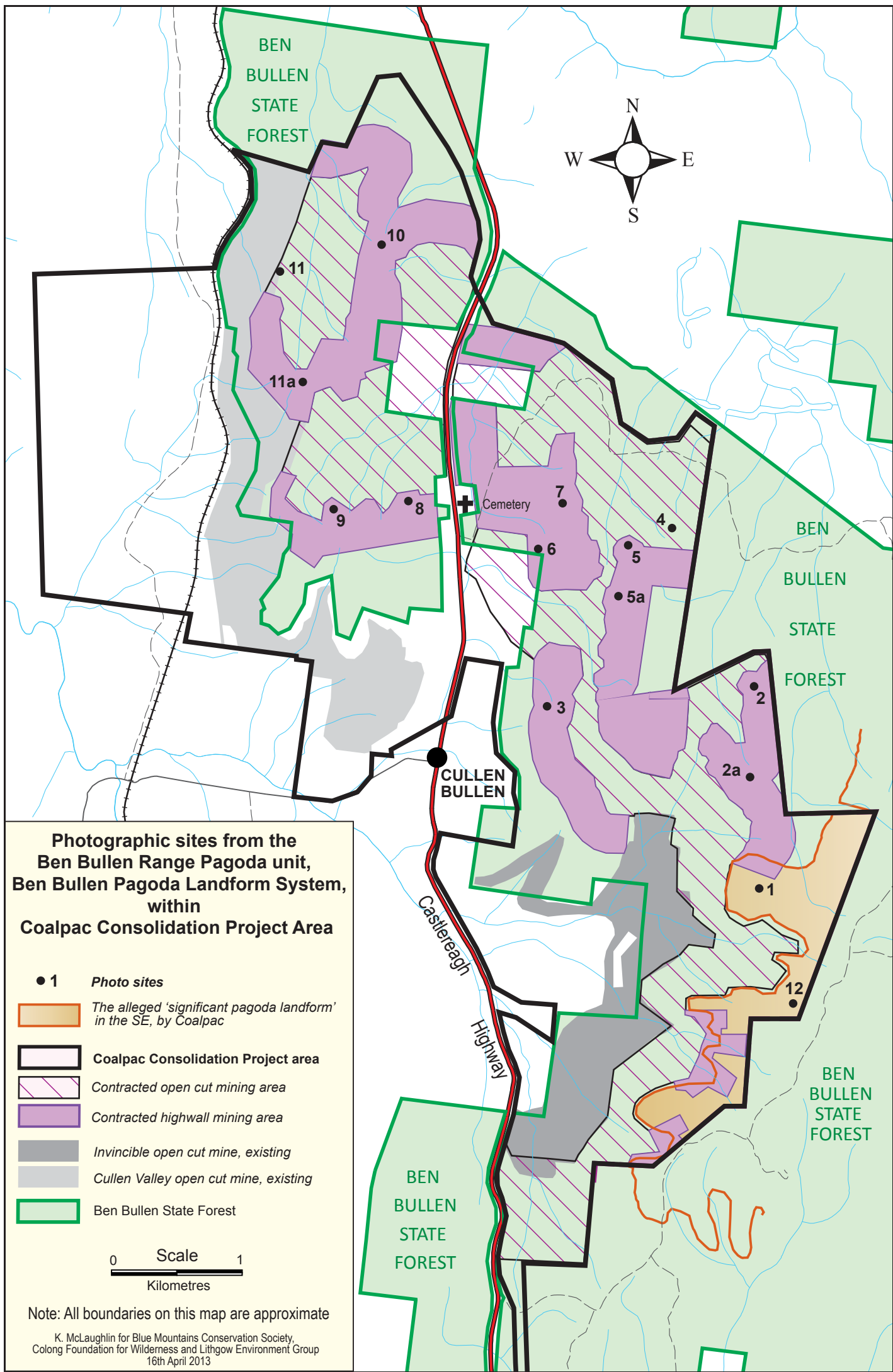
Two maps are presented for orientation purposes. The first map shows: the locations of the photographed pagodas relative to the 'contracted' open cut and highwall mining areas; the locations of Cullen Bullen village and its cemetery and their closeness to current and proposed mining operations; the boundary of the total area affected by the Coalpac Consolidation Proposal relative to the western part of Ben Bullen State Forest; and the western boundary to what Coalpac defined as its 'Significant Pagoda Landform'. The second map again shows the village, the 'contracted' mining areas and the overall proposal's boundary; it details the topography and indicates the sites of photographed pagodas relative to the ridges and spurs; and it particularly emphasises how the proposed open-cut back-walls abut the steep slopes, and how proposed highwall mining will then undercut those steep slopes.

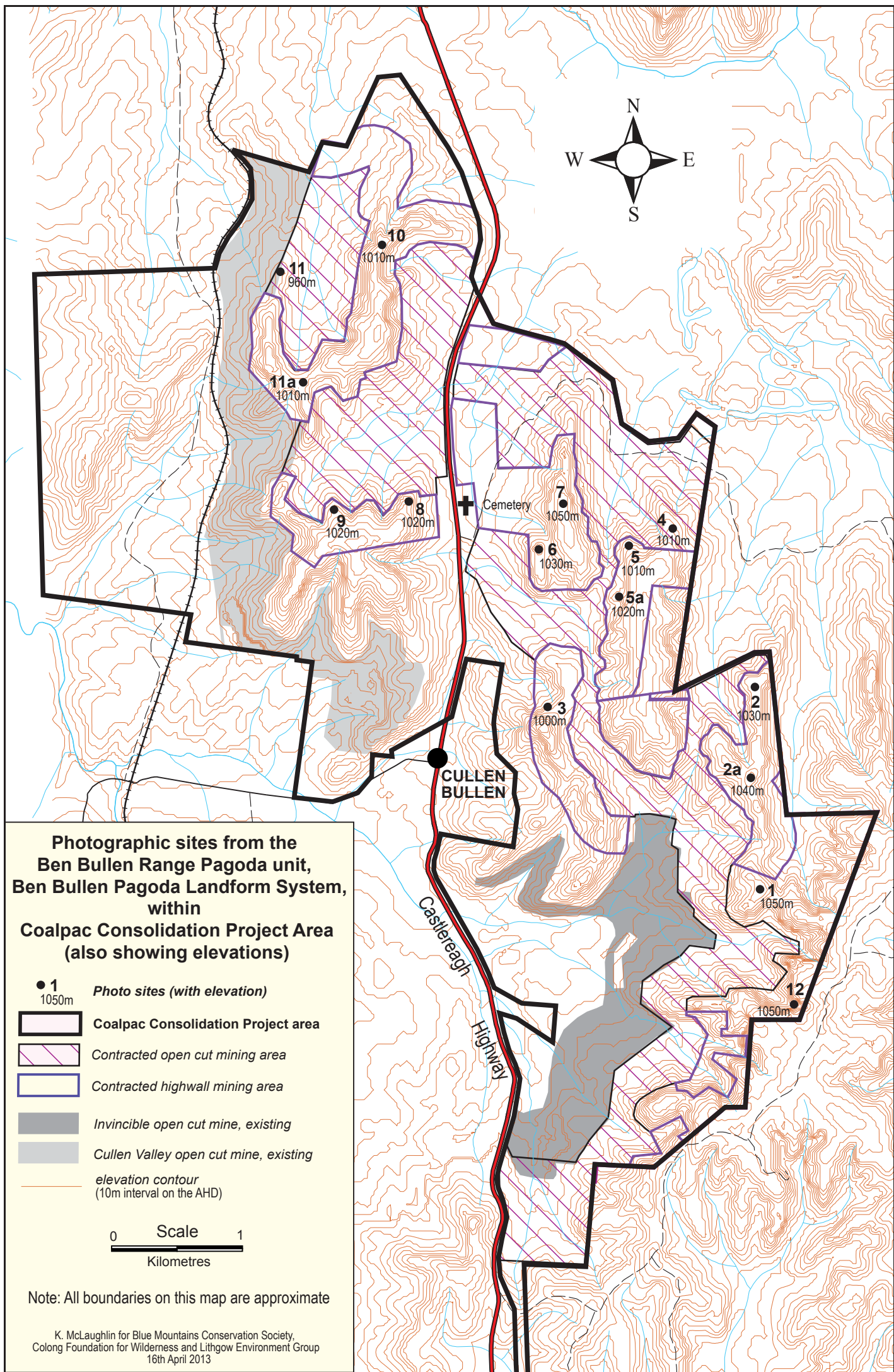
The photo-sites were chosen to substantiate the presence of classical pagodas along ridges and spurs throughout the area of the Coalpac proposal. Numerous other pagodas were not photographed due to difficulty of access and the limited time available. Of the sites selected, only two (1 and 12) are in Coalpac's restrictively defined 'Significant Pagoda Landform'. Coalpac classes all the other pagodas as seemingly insignificant 'Sandstone Outcrops' and proposes to highwall-mine under them with impunity. Coalpac actually proposes to open cut two other sites (4 and 11), so rather than 'just' being damaged, pagodas in those areas will be totally eradicated.

In the document¹ to which this report is Annexure A, the western portion of the Ben Bullen State Forest, as largely covered by the Coalpac proposal, is identified as a pagoda landscape complex. It has been classified using a land-system approach whereby environmental features which are commonly treated separately (e.g. rainfall, geology, topography, soils and indigenous vegetation) are integrated. The region embracing the pagoda landscape complex is termed the **Ben Bullen Pagoda Land System**. It has three well-defined land units: the Cullen Plateau Unit; the Ben Bullen Range Pagoda Unit; and the Tablelands Grassy Woodland Complex Unit. All the pagodas at the photo-sites are within the **Ben Bullen Range Pagoda Unit**.

The Ben Bullen Pagoda Land System is highly significant because it is irreplaceable and other parts of it have already been compromised by mining and clearing for agricultural purposes. Yet, despite being unique, none of it is protected in national parks or state conservation areas.

¹*"The case for rejecting the Coalpac 'contracted project' proposal and securing a reservation outcome"*, The Colong Foundation, Blue Mountains Conservation Society and Lithgow Environment Group, April 17, 2013





Site 1 - elevation 1050m



Site 1

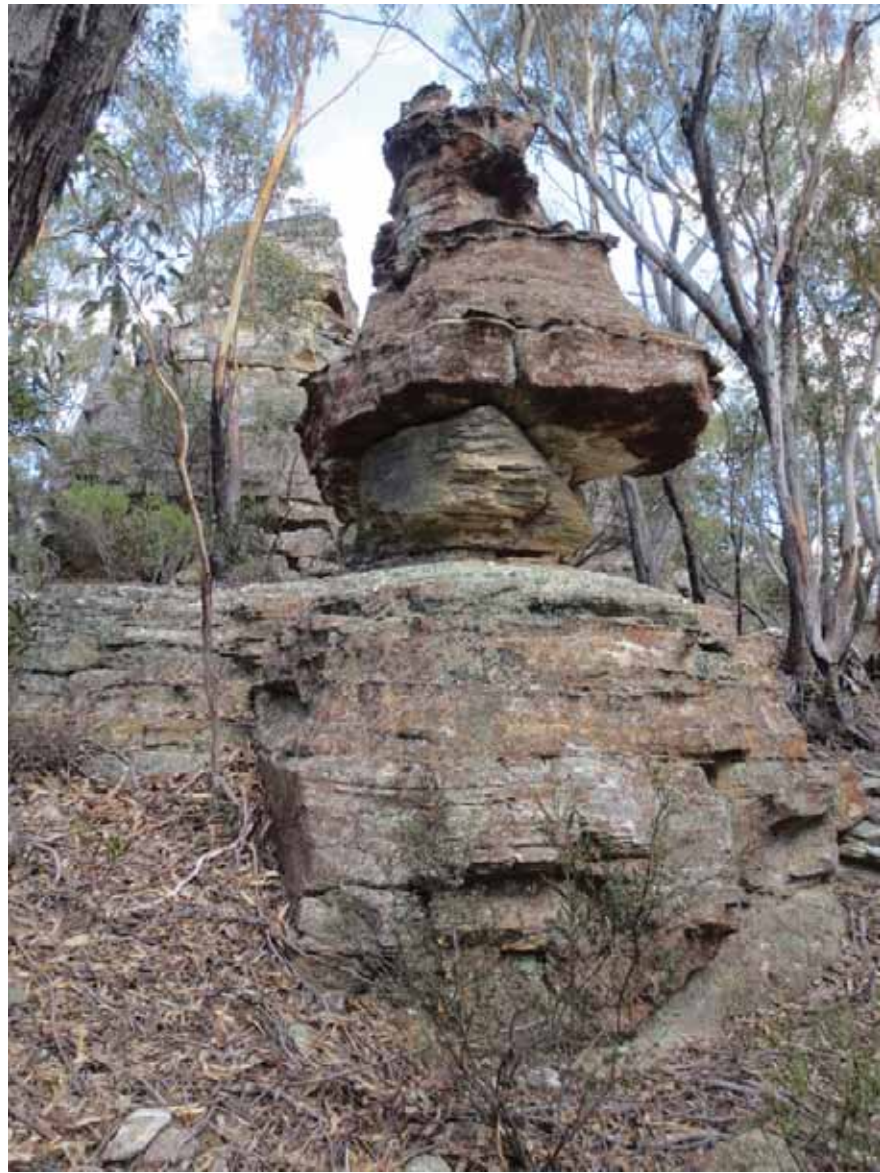
the slot



Site 2 - elevation 1030m



Site 2



Site 2a - elevation 1040m



Site 2a



Site 3 - elevation 1000m



Site 4 - elevation 1010m



Site 5 - elevation 1010m



Site 5



Site 5a - elevation 1020m



Site 5a



Site 6 (locally known as the King's Chair)
elevation 1030m



top of King's Chair



Site 6



Site 7 - elevation 1050m



Site 7



Lyrebird's nest



Site 8 - elevation 1020m



Site 9
- elevation 1020m



Site 10 - elevation 1010m



Site 10



Site 11 - elevation 960m



Site 11a - elevation 1010m



Site 11a



Site 12 - elevation 1050m

