

APPENDIX 9

**Aarons Pass Road – Heavy Haulage Route Upgrade for the Proposed
Crudine Ridge Wind Farm - European and Aboriginal Cultural
Heritage Assessment Report**

NSW Archaeology Pty Limited

**Aarons Pass Road – Heavy Haulage Route Upgrade for the
Proposed Crudine Ridge Wind Farm
European and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report**

A report to Crudine Ridge Wind Farm Pty Ltd

October 2013

Proponent: Crudine Ridge Wind Farm Pty Ltd
Bathurst Regional and Mid-Western Regional Local Government Areas



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New South Wales Archaeology Pty Ltd has been commissioned by Wind Prospect CWP on behalf of Crudine Ridge Wind Farm Pty Ltd to undertake a heritage assessment of a section of Aarons Pass Road which may be used for access to the proposed Crudine Ridge Wind Farm.

The proposal would include minor upgrade works to Aarons Pass Road between the Castlereagh Highway and the access road into the northern end of the proposed wind farm.

The proposed wind farm is defined as a Major Project under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. This report is supplementary to the heritage assessment report prepared previously in respect of the proposed Crudine Ridge Wind Farm (Dibden 2012).

The assessment has been conducted in accordance with the *Draft Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Community Consultation* (NSW DEC 2005), the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage's (NSW OEH 2011) *Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW* and the *Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales* (NSW DECCW 2010a).

A process of Aboriginal community consultation was commenced in 2011 in respect of the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm proposal and has been conducted in accordance with the guidelines set out in OEH's *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010* (NSW DECCW 2010b), as documented in Dibden (2012). All Registered Aboriginal Parties involved in the process of community consultation for the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm have been notified in regard to this impact which is additional to that outlined previously in Dibden (2012).

In regard to Indigenous heritage, this study has sought to identify and record Aboriginal cultural areas, objects or places, to assess the archaeological potential of the survey area, and to formulate management recommendations based on the results of the background research, field survey and significance assessment.

A search of the NSW OEH Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) has indicated that there is one previously recorded Aboriginal object site located in the site search area (AHIMS #103981: 21 June 2013). This site is not in the proposed impact area. A review of previous cultural heritage assessments conducted in the region has been carried out. No heritage areas, objects or places were identified to be present in the proposed activity areas as a result of this review.

A survey for Aboriginal areas, objects and places was conducted in the proposed activity area in July 2013. No Aboriginal or European sites were recorded. The proposed impact areas along Aarons Pass Road are located on landforms and terrain which are highly amorphous and generally undifferentiated in character. No landforms (or areas within landforms), were identified as likely to have been environmental focal points that Aboriginal people would have habitually occupied and, hence, which would result in high density concentrations of artefacts. In addition, biodiversity is assessed to be relatively low, and water sources are ephemeral. Accordingly, Aboriginal use of this landscape is predicted to have been generally of low intensity, and restricted to a limited range of activities such as movement through country, hunting and gathering forays and so on. These types of activities would have resulted in artefact discard which is patchy and very low density in distribution. Given, in particular, the absence of abundant and permanent water, it is unlikely that the proposed activity areas would have been used for long term habitation or large scale gatherings.

No social or cultural values which the area may have for the Aboriginal community have been identified during the assessment and process of Aboriginal consultation.

Searches of historical databases have been conducted to determine whether or not Non-Aboriginal heritage items are present in the proposed activity area. The searches of the *State Heritage Inventory*, *Australian Heritage Database*, and Bathurst Regional and Mid-Western Regional Local Government Area heritage schedules revealed that there are no European heritage items in the proposed activity area.

It is concluded that there are no heritage constraints, Aboriginal or European, with regard to the proposal.

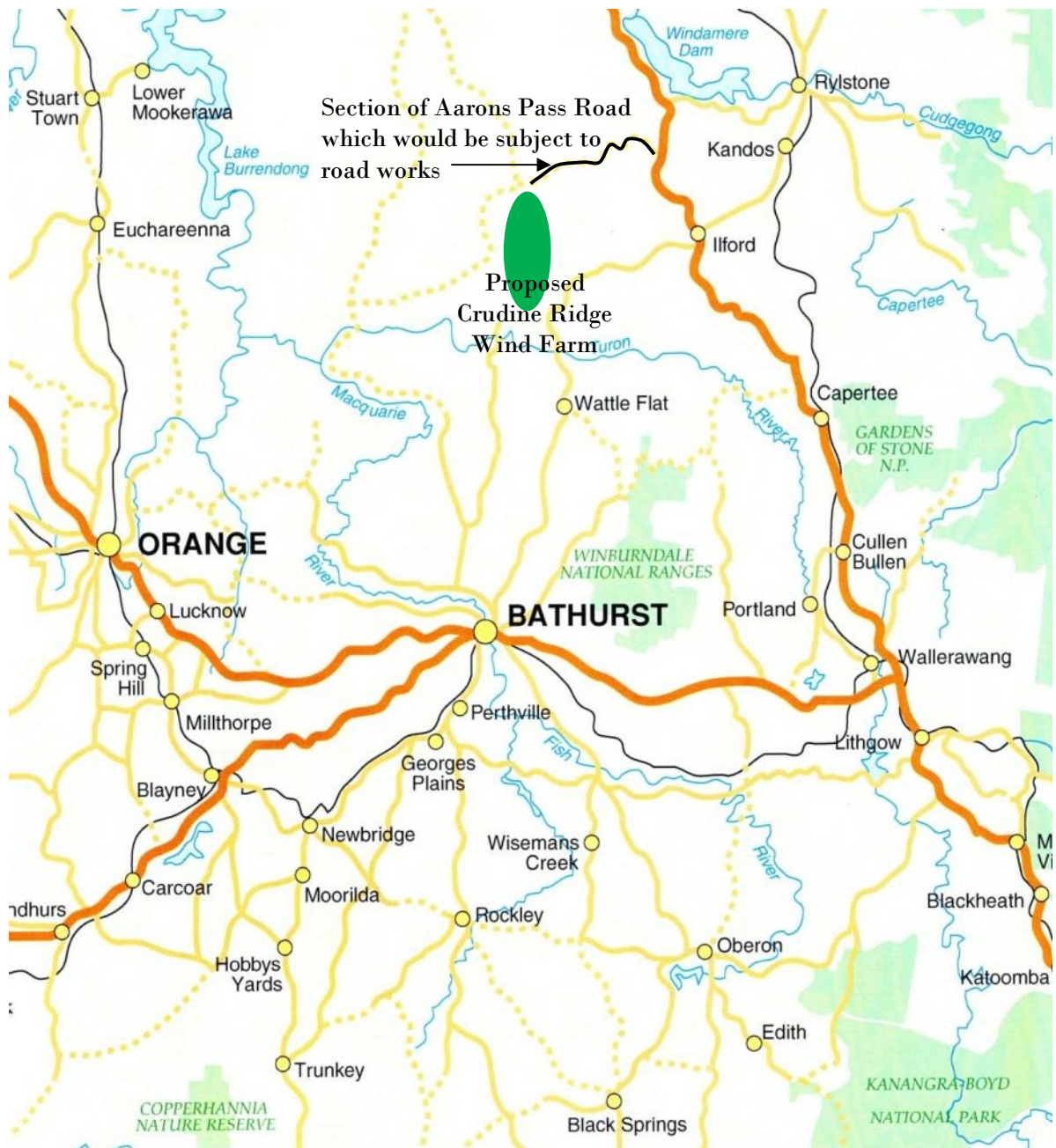


Figure 1 Location of the proposed impact area on Aarons Pass Road and Crudine Ridge Wind Farm in a regional context (approximate).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This document describes the heritage assessment undertaken in respect of the proposed upgrade works to Aarons Pass Road (Figure 1). The proponent is Crudine Ridge Wind Farm Proprietary Limited; the parent company is Wind Prospect CWP.

Wind Prospect is currently assessing the suitability of Aarons Pass Road for providing heavy haulage access of wind turbine components to the proposed Crudine Ridge Wind Farm site. Downer Infrastructure (2013) has conducted a heavy haulage route survey and assessment of Aarons Pass Road and a number of necessary, minor works have been identified. In addition, Wind Prospect CWP has identified the location of numerous places which could be modified slightly to allow for their use as passing bays. All these locations have been subject to assessment during the current study.

The objective of the assessment is to determine whether or not Aboriginal and European heritage could be impacted by the proposed works.

This assessment has been conducted by Julie Dibden (BA honours; PhD), NSW Archaeology Pty Ltd, and Robert Stewart, Wellington Valley Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation.

Archaeological evidence confirms that Aboriginal people have had a long and continuous association with the region for thousands of years. We would in particular like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional owners of the country which is encompassed by the proposal.

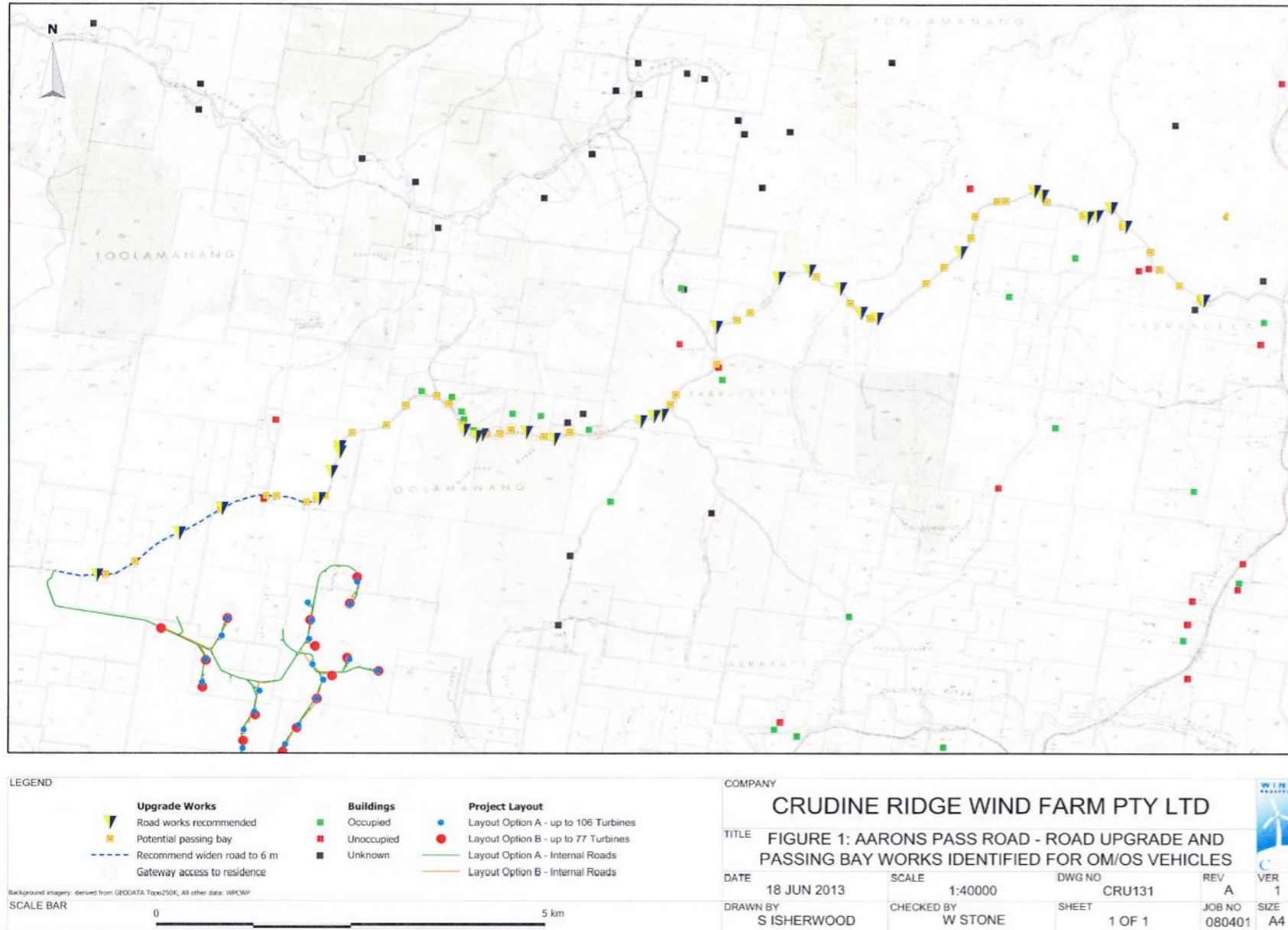


Figure 2 Location of proposed works.

2. CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Aboriginal consultation undertaken for this project commenced in 2011 and has been conducted in accordance with the NSW OEH's *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010* (NSW DECCW 2010b).

The formal process of notification and consultation is outlined in Dibden (2012). The process of consultation has been compliant with the *Interim Guidelines for Aboriginal Community Consultation - Requirements for Applicants* (NSW DEC 2004), in accordance with the provisions of the *Draft Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Community Consultation* (NSW DEC 2005). The formal process of consultation conducted for this project is documented in Dibden (2012).

Ensuing from the process of notification, twelve groups became Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) in the process of consultation for the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm project.

Given that the proposed works subject to the current assessment are additional to those specified during the initial assessment for the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm, a formal letter of notification regarding these works was provided to all RAPs in June 2013.

A copy of this report was provided to RAPs for their review and comment on the 25th July 2013. A 28 days review period was indicated. No responses were received in regard to mitigation and management options. One response was received from a RAP via email on the 11th August 2013 and 11th September 2013. The issues raised were addressed by NSW Archaeology on the 9th October 2013 via email. For confidentiality reasons, neither of these emails or their content are documented in this report, but have been provided to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure by the proponent.

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

A full description of the proposal and its potential impact on the landscape and heritage resource is described below.

3.1 Proposed Impacts

The proposed impacts are discrete in nature and will occupy a very small footprint within the overall area of Aarons Pass Road (Figure 2).

Downer Infrastructure (2013) numbered specified upgrade works locations. For the sake of consistency, the same naming device will be employed in this report (e.g. Upgrade 3-3). For proposed passing bay locations, the Wind Prospect CWP names will be used (PB01, PB02 and so on). Some 42 potential passing bay locations are identified for assessment, but not all would be used. Passing bays would measure c. 15 m x 4 m. Many of the proposed passing bay locations are graded areas currently kept clear for passing bay usage. Proposed impact areas are described further below.

Upgrade 3.3

At this site it is proposed to remove two trees and level the corner on both sides (Plate 1). The driveway at this location is also the site of PB01 (see further below). The site is on the break of slope of a narrow, slight summit of a very gently undulating ridge crest. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works.



Plate 1 Location of *Upgrade 3.3* and *PB01*; looking 270°.

PB01

This site is on the Left Hand Side (LHS) – as moving east to west along Aarons Pass Road, at the driveway entrance to a farm in the area of *Upgrade 3.3* (Plate 1). The existing driveway area measures c. 10 x 8 m and is highly eroded. Minor clearing would be required.

PB02

This site is on the Right Hand Side (RHS), at the driveway to a farm at the northern end of *Upgrade 3.3* (Plate 2). The existing driveway area measures c. 10 x 5 m and is highly disturbed. Minor clearing would be required.



Plate 2 Location of *PB02*; looking 310°.

PB03

This site is on the LHS of the road on a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 3). The site is an existing area of graded clearing measuring c. 30 x 4 m. The entire area is a graded road batter and table drain; it is highly disturbed.



Plate 3 Location of *PB03*; looking 130°.

PB04

This site is on the LHS of the road on the slight summit of a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 4). The site is an existing area of graded clearing measuring c. 15 x 8 m. The entire area is a graded road batter; it is highly disturbed. Minor clearing would be required.



Plate 4 Location of *PB04*; looking 240°.

PB05

This site is on the LHS of the road at the entrance to a property. It is on a very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 5). The site is an existing area of graded farm entrance and road batter measuring c. 40 x 10 m; it is highly disturbed.



Plate 5 Location of *PB05*; looking south.

Upgrade 3.4

At this site it is proposed to fill and cut to widen on the LHS (Plate 6). The site is on a slight summit of a very gently undulating ridge crest. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works and the formation of a farm entrance. The majority of impacts would occur on an existing gutter, therefore previous impacts are high.



Plate 6 Location of *Upgrade 3.4*; looking 260°.

PB06

This site is on the LHS of the road just to the north of Upgrade 3.4. It is on a very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 7). The site is an existing area of graded gutter and road batter measuring c. 50 x 6 m; it is highly disturbed. Some levelling would be required.



Plate 7 Location of *PB06*; looking 140°.

Upgrade 3.5

At this site it is proposed to fill and level on the RHS corner (Plates 8 and 9). The site is on a very gently undulating ridge crest. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works and the formation of a farm entrance. The majority of impacts would occur on an existing deeply excavated gutter, therefore previous impacts are high. The farm entrance at this site is also the location of proposed *PB07*.



Plate 8 Location of *Upgrade 3.5*; looking 300°.

PB07

This site is on the RHS of the road on a very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 9). The site is an existing farm entrance and is highly disturbed. Minor clearing would be required.



Plate 9 Location of *Upgrade 3.5* and *PB07*; looking 255°.

Upgrade 3.6

At this site it is proposed to remove two trees and level the corner on the RHS. The site is on a break of slope of very gently undulating ridge crest; the head of a drainage line is in the impact area. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works.

Upgrade 3.7

At this site it is proposed to remove two trees and level the corner on the RHS (Plate 10). The site is on a slight summit of very gently undulating ridge crest. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works.



Plate 10 Location of *Upgrade 3.7*; looking 240°.

PB08

This site is on the LHS of the road on a slight summit of a very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 11). The site is an existing area of graded gutter and road batter measuring c. 20 x 4 m; it is highly disturbed. Some clearing may be required.



Plate 11 Location of *PB08*; looking 300°.

PB09

This site is on the LHS of the road on a slight saddle of a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 12). The site is an existing area of graded gutter and road batter measuring c. 25 x 5 m; it is highly disturbed. Some clearing would be required.



Plate 12 Location of *PB09*; looking 130°.

Upgrade 3.8

At this site it is proposed to modify (lower) the crest of the hill. The site is on a slight summit of a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works. Previous disturbance extends c. 5m from the top of batter on each side of the road.

Upgrade 3.9

At this site it is proposed to remove c. five trees and level the inside (LHS) corner (Plate 13). The site is on a gently undulating ridge crest. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works.



Plate 13 Location of *Upgrade 3.9*; looking 260°.

PB10

This site is on the LHS of the road on a slight summit of a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 14). The site is an existing area of graded gutter and road batter measuring c. 20 x 5 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require some clearing and levelling.



Plate 14 Location of *PB10*; looking 120°.

PB11

This site is on the RHS of the road on a slight saddle of a narrow, gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 15). The site is an existing area of clearing and graded gutter measuring c. 25 x 4 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require minor clearing and levelling.



Plate 15 Location of *PB11*; looking 110°.

PB12

This site is on the RHS of the road on a slight summit of a very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 16). The site is an existing area of clearing and farm entrance measuring c. 15 x 5 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require minor clearing and levelling.



Plate 16 Location of *PB12*; looking 210°.

PB13

This site is on the LHS of the road on a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 17). The site is an existing area of clearing and graded farm entrance measuring c. 30 x 5 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require some clearing and levelling.



Plate 17 Location of *PB13*; looking 170°.

Upgrade 3.10

At this site it is proposed to modify (lower) the crest of the hill (Plate 18). The site is on a slight summit of a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works.



Plate 18 Location of *Upgrade 3.10*; looking 210°.

PB14

This site is on the LHS of the road on a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 19). The site is an existing area of cleared batter and graded gutter area measuring c. 30 x 4 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require some clearing and levelling.



Plate 19 Location of *PB14*; looking 200°.

PB15

This site is on the LHS of the road on a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 20). The site is an existing area of cleared batter and graded gutter area measuring c. 30 x 4 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require minor clearing and levelling.



Plate 20 Location of *PB15*; looking 50°.

Upgrade 3.11

At this site it is proposed to remove c. five trees and fill and level the inside corner on the RHS (Plate 21). The site is on a break of slope of a gently undulating ridge crest and at the head of a drainage line. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works.



Plate 21 Location of *Upgrade 3.11*; looking 260°.

PB16

This site is on the LHS of the road on a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 20). The site is an existing area of cleared batter and graded gutter area measuring c. 25 x 3 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require minor clearing and levelling.



Plate 22 Location of *PB16*; looking 100°.

Upgrade 3.12

At this site it is proposed to modify the crest of the hill (Plate 23). The site is on a slight summit of a gently undulating ridge crest. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works.



Plate 23 Location of *Upgrade 3.12*; looking 120°.

PB17

This site is on the RHS of the road on a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 20). The site is an existing area of cleared batter and graded gutter area measuring c. 30 x 4 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require some levelling.



Plate 24 Location of *PB17*; looking 150°.

Upgrade 3.13

At this site it is proposed to fill the RHS corner to the edge of the vegetation (Plate 25). The site is on a slight summit of a gently undulating ridge crest. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works including an entrance to a property.



Plate 25 Location of *Upgrade 3.13*; looking 110°.

PB18

This site is on the LHS of the road on a saddle of a gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 26). The site is an existing area of cleared batter and graded gutter area measuring c. 20 x 8 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require some levelling.



Plate 26 Location of *PB18*; looking 180°.

Upgrade 3.14

At this site it is proposed to fill the RHS corner and level the camber (Plate 27). The site is on a moderately undulating ridge crest. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works.



Plate 27 Location of *Upgrade 3.14*; looking 270°.

Upgrade 3.15

At this site it is proposed to remove two trees. The site is on a steep simple slope. The road is filled (benched road) in the area in which impacts would occur.

PB19

This site is on the RHS of the road on a slight summit of a very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 28). The site is an existing area of cleared batter and graded gutter area measuring c. 20 x 5 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require some clearance and levelling.



Plate 28 Location of *PB19*; looking 240°.

PB20

This site is on the RHS of the road on a slight saddle of a very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 29). The site is an existing area of cleared batter and graded gutter area measuring c. 20 x 5 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require some clearance and levelling.



Plate 29 Location of *PB20*; looking 30°.

Upgrade 3.16

At this site it is proposed to fill the RHS corner (Plate 30). The site is on a moderate gradient simple slope. The area in which impacts would occur is excavated and highly disturbed by previous road works.



Plate 30 Location of *Upgrade 3.16*; looking 210°.

PB21

This site is on the LHS of the road on a wide, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 31). The site is an existing area of cleared and graded gutter and farm entrance area measuring c. 30 x 8 m; it is highly disturbed.



Plate 31 Location of *PB21*; looking 180°.

PB22

This site is on the RHS of the road on a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest. The site is an existing area of cleared and graded gutter and batter area measuring c. 20 x 4 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require some clearance and levelling.

PB23

This site is on the LHS of the road on a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 32). The site is an existing area of cleared and graded gutter and batter area at a farm entrance measuring c. 20 x 4 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require some clearance.



Plate 32 Location of *PB23*; looking 180°.

Upgrade 3.17

At this site it is proposed to remove trees/bushes and fill the RHS corner (Plate 33). The site is on a drainage line/simple slope. The area in which impacts would occur is excavated/filled and highly disturbed by previous road works.



Plate 33 Location of *Upgrade 3.17*; looking 240°.

Upgrade 3.18

At this site it is proposed to fill and level the RHS corner (Plate 34). The site is on a simple slope. The area in which impacts would occur is benched and highly disturbed by previous road works.



Plate 34 Location of *Upgrade 3.18*; looking 250°.

Upgrade 3.19

At this site it is proposed to remove trees and level on the RHS (Plate 35). The site is on a drainage line. The area in which impacts would occur is benched and highly disturbed by previous road works.



Plate 35 Location of *Upgrade 3.19*; looking 240°.

PB24

This site is on the LHS of the road in a slight saddle on a narrow, very gently undulating ridge crest (Plate 36). The site is an existing area of cleared and graded gutter and batter area measuring c. 20 x 3 m; it is highly disturbed. The site would require some clearance and levelling.



Plate 36 Location of *PB24*; looking 240°.

Upgrade 3.20

At this site it is proposed to remove trees and level on the RHS (Plate 37). The site is on a narrow, very gently undulating crest. The area in which impacts would occur is highly disturbed by previous road works.