Aboriginal Heritage Management Plan

Emirates Luxury Resort, Wolgan Valley

Prepared for Clifton Coney Group on behalf of
Emirates Resorts and Hotels Australia

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1 Introduction

Kelleher Nightingale Consulting (KNC) has been commissioned by Clifton Coney Group on behalf of Emirates Resorts and Hotels Australia to prepare an Aboriginal heritage management plan as part of the overall Construction Management Plan for the proposed Emirates Luxury Resort in the Wolgan Valley, NSW.

Emirates Hotels is planning to develop a low density luxury resort consisting of a range of luxury villas and ancillary health spa, conference, restaurant, helipad and other facilities. The project has been designed to sit lightly within its environment in a manner that is sympathetic to the natural, cultural and scenic values of the Wolgan Valley. This management plan is designed to act as a guide for ensuring that Aboriginal heritage impacted by the proposed development is managed in accordance with relevant statutory guidelines. This plan is part of an ongoing consultation and management process. Two previous Aboriginal heritage assessments of the Wolgan Valley property have been undertaken which form the foundation for the current plan of management.[1] Background information and survey results are found in these previous assessments and will not be reproduced in this document.

1.1 Study Area

The property is located 35 km north of Lithgow and three km south of Newnes. It lies in a valley on the western escarpment of the Blue Mountains plateau. The study area is irregular in shape. It is bounded by rural properties on the northern side of Wolgan Road and by a Reserve which includes Mount Wolgan and Donkey Mountain, to the east by the Wollemi National Park, to the south by rural properties adjacent to the Carne Creek and Reserves and to the west by rural properties adjacent to the Wolgan River and Wolgan Road.

2 Aboriginal Heritage Management Plan Objectives

The objectives of the Aboriginal heritage management plan (AHMP) relate to the Concept Plan Approval Conditions 11(g). The AHMP objectives are to provide recommendations and strategies related to the following:

Aboriginal Community Consultation and Involvement

- consultation with relevant Aboriginal community groups and DEC;
- involve Aboriginal community groups in the conservation and management of the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the site;

Protection, Conservation, and Management

- protect Aboriginal objects/sites outside of the disturbed areas;
- salvage and or conserve any Aboriginal objects in the disturbance area;
- respond to the discovery of any new Aboriginal objects or skeletal remains during construction.

Management planning requires a detailed level of information about the area's Aboriginal heritage. Section 11 (d) of the Concept Plan Approval Conditions reflects this understanding and states that the project application requirements

> include a detailed archaeological impact assessment of the land that would be disturbed by the proposed development that has been prepared in accordance with the DECs draft *Guidelines for Assessment of Impacts on Aboriginal Heritage under Part 3A;*

2.1 Document Organisation

Each of the following sections will discuss the AHMP objectives as outlined above. The discussion will also include a research design related to the detailed archaeological impact assessment. The excavation necessary for the detailed assessment will be undertaken prior to the commencement of development construction works. The excavation results will be analysed and assessed and specific management information will be documented in a final management plan/report submitted to DEC.

[1] Preliminary assessment Wolgan Valley Aboriginal Heritage Study Stage I (AMBS 2005) and a detailed survey and recommendations was undertaken in Stage II (AMBS 2006).

3 Management Recommendations and Strategies

3.1 Aboriginal Community Consultation and Involvement

The study area falls within the boundaries of the Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council (BLALC). Several other Aboriginal community groups and individuals have registered an interest in the study area including:

- Wiradjuri Nation,
- Greater Lithgow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation,
- Aboriginal Cultural and Resource Centre, and
- Warrabinga Native Title Claimants Aboriginal Corporation.

An Aboriginal community consultation meeting was held in Lithgow on 15th November 2005 to discuss the proposed development and findings of the preliminary assessment (AMBS Stage I 2005). The minutes from this meeting are found in the Stage II report. At that time all registered Aboriginal community representatives were invited to participate in Stage II surveys (AMBS 2006). BLALC representatives Richard Peters and Chantel Peters were able to participate in the survey. Sharon Riley, Wiradjuri Nation, participated in one day of the Stage II survey.

Conservation of the study area's archaeology was discussed during the meeting as the preferred option, but it was understood that some areas will be impacted by the development. Excavation of areas of moderate or high archaeological potential (i.e. places not likely to be conserved) was also discussed as the likely management strategy. BLALC have since recommended that test excavation occur in the development area.

Copies of the previous Stage I and Stage II reports and this AHMP have been sent to all Aboriginal groups for comment. BLALC have stated support in written correspondence for an excavation of the development area (AMBS stage II 2006).

AHMP recommendations:

- It is understood by all parties that Aboriginal community consultation is an ongoing process.
- Further consultation may also be appropriate once the resort becomes operational if issues arise related to Aboriginal heritage.
- A formal advertising process following DEC guidelines (DEC 2004) in local and Indigenous media inviting Aboriginal stakeholders to register an interest (if not already registered).
- Written notification to key stakeholders, including the BLALC, NSW Aboriginal Land Council, National Native Title Tribunal, National Native Title Services, Local Council and NSW Department of Environment and Conservation.
- Registered Aboriginal community will be invited to participate in the detail assessment (excavation program). During the test excavation program stakeholders and representatives have the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the fieldwork, including setting up locations and test squares, excavation, wet sieving, bagging finds and recording.
- Aboriginal stakeholders will determine the cultural significance of the excavation findings. Comments (oral and written) will be incorporated with the archaeological assessment to form an overall Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment.
- Aboriginal community consultation will continue to occur following the test excavation program to ensure stakeholder's views are considered for the future management of the study area.
- Continued Aboriginal community access to and opportunity to care for cultural heritage material recovered through the excavation program. This may be achieved through storing the artefacts on site or the transfer of Aboriginal objects to an Aboriginal person or Aboriginal organisation for safekeeping under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. A care agreement with DEC would be required.

3.2 Protection, Conservation and Management

Previous assessments have identified 11 archaeological sites within the study area. All of the sites are stone artefact scatters (Figure 1, Appendix). One of these sites contained hundreds of stone artefacts, but most were small scatters. In addition to the 11 stone artefact sites, one rock-art shelter was found just outside of the property boundaries on an access route leading up to the Gloworm Tunnel. A further three areas are identified as exhibiting potential archaeological deposit (PAD). These locations are where Aboriginal objects (archaeological sites) are highly likely to occur.

For Aboriginal people the significance of individual features (sites) is derived from their inter-relatedness with the cultural landscape. This means that it is not possible to assess the identified sites in isolation and any assessment must be a holistic approach.

The Wolgan Valley property is scientifically and culturally significant because it is in itself a representative sample of the archaeological landforms. Large portions of the property are in effect continuums of archaeological activity, spread both along the valley and up onto the ridgetops. Best practice conservation outcomes should be concerned with preserving the property's archaeology en masse. This is by far the best possible conservation outcome. However, archaeological continuums (cultural landscapes) do not preclude the development of the site. Continuums by their nature display varying degrees of significance. All parts are important, but not all parts are equally important. Unfortunately it is not possible to ascertain the true nature of the study area's archaeology solely from surface survey.

In short, the identified archaeological and landform features within the study area represent a complete archaeological landscape. The potential exists to conserve the archaeological resource of the study area, while still allowing the proposed low density development to proceed. Only a small portion of the overall study area's archaeology will be impacted by the proposed development. The bulk of this impact will occur within the Development Precinct and during the construction of the proposed dam. Management of these impact areas and of the remainder of the study area should adhere to the following strategies and principles.

AHMP recommendations:

- Continued consideration of the known and potential Aboriginal cultural heritage (mapped Aboriginal sites and potential archaeological deposits) in relation to the future development and use of the property.
- Identified sites of high or moderate scientific and cultural significance should be conserved. Sites of low scientific or cultural significance should not pose a constraint to development.
- Sensitive areas outside of the disturbance area should be identified on the environmental construction management plan to avoid accidental damage.
- Site WV AMBS 7 located at the entrance to the property is especially vulnerable and should be cordoned off to prevent accidental damage.
- Test excavation will be required within the Development Precinct and proposed dam disturbance area to determine the presence and thereafter extent, integrity, spatial distribution and nature of the subsurface archaeology (see section 3.3). The testing program will allow for a determination of the archaeological and Aboriginal heritage significance and impacts related to the disturbance areas.
- Where it is not possible or practical to conserve sites of moderate or high archaeological significance in the disturbance areas it will be necessary to salvage the Aboriginal objects in order to ensure that a proper record of their contents is obtained, and a sample of their assemblage retained.
- All archaeological excavation should be carried out and recorded in accordance with existing DEC guidelines.
- Excavation reporting should include strategies for the long term management of the archaeology and Aboriginal heritage within the study area.
- Long term management strategies should include an appropriate response to the discovery of any new Aboriginal objects in the development area, based on the findings of the excavation program.
- If skeletal remains or significant Aboriginal objects are unearthed during the construction process, construction works should cease in that location. The appropriate authorities should be contacted.

3.3 Detailed Archaeological Impact Assessment (Excavation Methodology)

The main aim of this excavation program is:

- To determine if subsurface archaeological deposit is present in the disturbance areas.

If archaeological deposit is encountered, the further aim of the test excavation program will be to determine the integrity, extent, spatial distribution and nature of the deposit.

- Determining the integrity of the deposit involves assessing the degree of disturbance which is present.
- Determining the extent of the site involves identifying the boundaries associated with the identified archaeological deposit. The subsurface program will try to determine the 'edges' of any identified significant archaeological deposit with the aim of conserving the deposit.
- Assessing the spatial distribution involves identifying the presence/absence of archaeological material across identified land forms (e.g. elevated ground, terraces, low rises, gullies, swales). Management of the study area will benefit from an increased understanding of the spatial distribution of archaeological materials. Such information will allow for more accurate assessment of the need and scope for future Aboriginal heritage mitigation.

- The nature of the site refers to the type of activities indicated by the artefactual material (e.g. primary production, domestic knapping, hunting camps). The goal will be to retrieve assemblages from specific activities (e.g. selective knapping, heat treatment) if such activities are present.
- If highly significant deposits are encountered in the disturbance areas these will be salvaged to mitigate against the loss of information.
- Retrieved assemblages will be compared with the results from other relevant archaeological projects in order to assess archaeological and Aboriginal cultural significance.
- Aboriginal stakeholders will determine the cultural significance of the excavation findings.

The results of the test excavation program will enable an informed impact assessment of the land that is proposed for disturbance and allow the formulation of appropriate long term management recommendations. All reporting will be undertaken in accordance with DEC guidelines.

3.3.1 Field Methods

The goal of the excavation program is to answer two pertinent questions: Where are significant subsurface deposits located within the disturbance area? and What degree will the proposed construction impact archaeological deposits? Field methods reflect these basic questions.

Underlying this short term goal is the longer term objective of conserving Aboriginal archaeological heritage wherever practical during the excavation program. Field methods will minimise the impact on archaeological resources where possible. To this extent, all test squares will be located within the proposed development footprint to minimise the impacts associated with the excavation program.

The survey undertaken as part of Stage II identified a poor effective surface visibility across the proposed disturbance area (AMBS 2006:11-12). The generally accepted understanding is that the lack of surface evidence is not an indication of the nature of the subsurface archaeological resource. KNC propose to undertake a random subsurface testing program within the Development Precinct and proposed dam location. This method of testing is comparable with other recent random sampling approaches in the Sydney Basin (cf. AMBS 2006; Jo McD CHM 2004).

Test squares measuring 1m x 1m will be hand excavated in stratigraphic units. Test squares will be excavated until the basal layer or culturally sterile deposit is reached. The initial test squares at each location will be excavated well into the sterile unit to confirm the absence of artefacts.

Initial testing at each location involves the excavation of around 20-40 test squares. The precise number of test squares will depend on the archaeological deposit and geology. Test grids (transects) will be established using AMG coordinates for each test square. Test squares will be placed at 15-20 m intervals along sampling transects. The squares in adjoining transects will be staggered (at five metre intervals) to achieve maximum sampling coverage. All excavation will be limited to the proposed development areas.

The aim of the test program is to identify and understand features. It is anticipated that c.60-70 test squares will be excavated during the entire program. If significant deposits are encountered and require salvage past experience suggests that the excavation will need a further 70-80 squares.

All of the deposit will be wet sieved on 5.0mm and 2.5mm nested sieves. All artefacts will be collected and bagged.

The location of each test square will be identified on a surveyed plan of the site. Stratigraphic section detailing the stratigraphy and features within the excavated deposit will be drawn and all squares will be photographed. Soil and carbon samples will also be collected. Detailed geomorphological analysis will be undertaken by a qualified geomorphologist where appropriate.

3.3.2 Analysis

Artefacts will be analysed on a comparable level with previous analyses of excavated assemblages (AMBS 2000; 2006a; Jo McD CHM 2003, 2004; Attenbrow 1981; Koettig 1985). Information derived from this analysis; in particular the identification of specific artefact types, and their distributions and associations; will be used to formulate interpretations about the site's use, antiquity, settlement patterns and assess cultural heritage values. By comparing different test areas it will be possible to determine whether there were differences in the kinds of activities carried out and the way that stone technologies were organised across the landscape. Importantly it is hoped that sufficient data will be recovered in order to assess the dyadic nature of archaeological landscape (i.e. how each part works within the whole). Differences could be expected if different aspects of settlement organisation varied in relation to the landscape units as defined.

A range of stone artefacts may be present at the site and the analysis will expand accordingly to account for artefact variability. All information will be recorded in database form (MS Excel). Various types of evidence will be used to determine the kinds of activities that were carried out. A short description of the proposed analysis in outlined below.

- Field analysis will record basic data, such as material type, number, and any significant technological characteristics, such as backing or bipolar techniques; added to this will be any provenance data such as pit ID and spit number. The purpose of the field recording is twofold: 1) establish a basic recording of artefacts retrieved and 2) to allow on-going assessment of the excavation regime (e.g. whether higher stratigraphic resolution is required while digging).
- Detailed (laboratory) analysis will entail recording a larger number of characteristics for each individual artefact. These details will be recorded in matrices suitable for comparative analysis (e.g. multivariate and univariate) of the Wolgan assemblage on a local and regional basis.
- Lithic characteristics to be recorded cover a range of basic information but are not limited to these categories (see table below). For transparency, terms and category types will in large part be derived from Holdaway and Stern (2004).

Table 1: Lithic characteristics sample categories

Sample Categories		
Record Number	% Cortex	Flake Type
Pit ID	Length	Termination Type
Spit Number	Width	Core Type
Count	Thickness	Number of Scars (Core)
Raw Material	Weight	Scar Type (Core)
Colour	Modification	Shape of Flake
Quality	Reduction Type	Platform Type

- A detailed explanation and glossary will be provided with the final excavation report.
- Minimum Number of Flake (MNF) calculations formulated by Hiscock (2000, 2002) will be undertaken where applicable. The main outcomes of the analysis will be to investigate: the type of activities being carried out across the subject area; stone materials used and quantity; technology; and modification/retouch (type and quantity).

The analysis of artefacts recovered during the excavation program will be undertaken in a transparent and replicable fashion so as to permit the comparison of the Wolgan assemblage with data from other regions. This will also allow for an interpretation of the study area's archaeological significance.

3.3.3 Excavation Field Team

KNC is comprised of highly qualified and experienced archaeologists with experience in all aspects of Aboriginal archaeological assessment and management, including surface survey, test and salvage excavations, sensitivity mapping, significance and impact assessment and site management.

KNC directors, Dr Matthew Kelleher and Alison Nightingale, will be responsible for the excavation program. Dr Matthew Kelleher will direct the excavation component of the Aboriginal archaeological assessment. Matthew has extensive experience in managing large scale archaeological excavations and research projects. Matthew is also a leading researcher in the Greater Blue Mountains area. Alison will be responsible for the project management and review. She has over 12 years experience managing Aboriginal cultural heritage. Alison has worked in both public and private sectors, including recently with the Cultural Heritage Division of DEC. Both Matthew and Alison have previously undertaken archaeological assessments for Part 3A Major Projects and are familiar with the process and requirements.

The proposed field team personnel, roles and tasks are listed in the table below.

Table 2: Project Personnel

Person	Role	Tasks
Dr Matthew Kelleher	Director / Archaeologist	Excavation director, coordinate team, lithic analysis, assessment and reporting
Alison Nightingale	Director / Archaeologist	Project director, coordinate team, liaison with community, assessment , reporting and review
Mark Rawson	Senior Archaeologist	Excavation supervisor, lithic analysis and reporting
Archaeologists (2)	Field Archaeologists	Excavation program
Gabor Vasarhelyi	GIS Specialist	Mapping
Anthony Barham	Geomorphologist	Geomorpholoigcal assessment and sediment dating
Senior Researcher	Scientific Review	Review project outputs

3.3.4 Excavation Timeframe

The excavation program is scheduled to be carried out in February 2007. This allows for the advertising and formal registering of Aboriginal stakeholder and for a period of consultation before commencing the excavation. Fieldwork will take 2-4 week depending on the requirement of the salvage component. All archaeological field works will be completed before construction of the resort commences.

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Appendix Maps

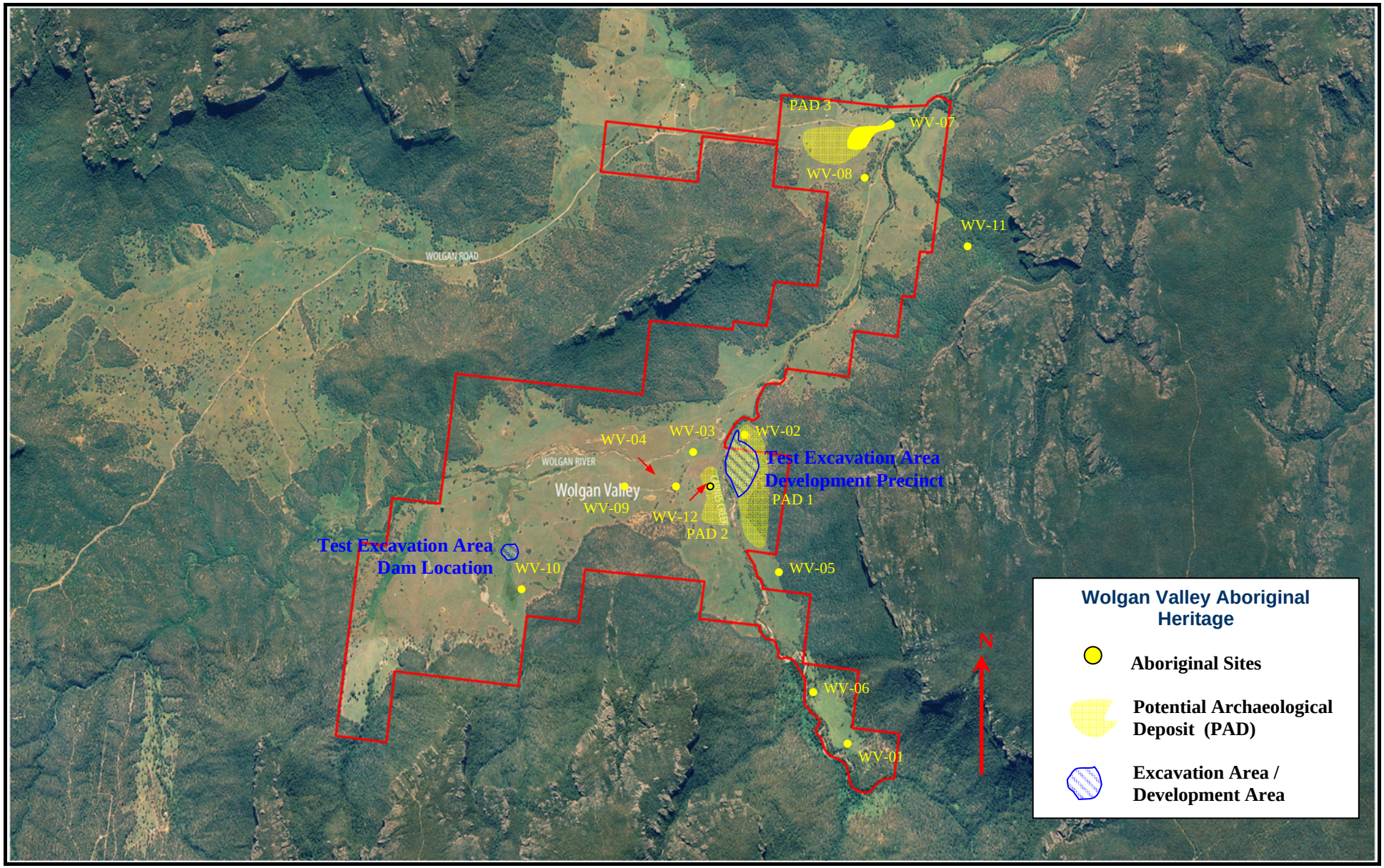

Figure 1: Map of the study area showing locations of Aboriginal archaeological sites, PADs and excavation areas (base map AMBS 2006).