



GUNN AGRI PARTNERS

Nortongong Biodiversity Restoration Project

Replanting Native Forest and Woodland Ecosystems (Nature Repair Market)

STARTING STATE ASSESSMENT REPORT





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1. Project Details

1.1. Background

This report has been prepared by Gunn Agri Partners (GAP) for the Clean Energy Regulator (CER) to accompany the reforestation by environmental planting project application *Nature Repair (Replanting Native Forest and Woodland Ecosystems) Methodology Determination 2025*.

1.2. Site Context

The Nortongong Biodiversity Restoration Project is a landscape-scale ecological restoration initiative established under Australia's Nature Repair Market. It is located on Nortongong Aggregation, a 6,163ha mixed-farming property approximately 25 km south-southeast of Coonamble, NSW, on the Castlereagh River floodplain.

This NRM project spans 968ha is designed to repair degraded landscapes, restore regionally significant native plant communities, and enhance biodiversity values. It shares the same project boundaries and complements the Nortongong Biodiversity Restoration Project Environmental Reforestation by Environmental or Mallee Plantings-FullCAM 2024 method (ERF202584), which targets ecologically sensitive or structurally diverse areas, including riparian corridors and remnant understorey-deficient woodlands.

Table 1: Project details and identifiers

Project name	Nortongong Biodiversity Restoration Project
Project ID	NR001016
Date of project plan	01 May 2026
Project description	The Nortongong Biodiversity Restoration Project quantifies the ecological benefits resulting from activities implemented through the existing Reforestation by Environmental or Mallee Plantings initiative. These activities, including restoring endemic trees and shrubs and habitat rehabilitation, directly enhance biodiversity and ecological integrity on previously degraded agricultural lands. By explicitly quantifying ecological outcomes, the project emphasises improvements in habitat quality and landscape connectivity achieved through established reforestation practices.



1.3. Proponent Details

Table 2: Project proponent details

Name of project proponent(s)	Wilga Farming (Australia) Pty Ltd
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1.4. Additional Stakeholder Details

Table 3: Project stakeholders and roles

Stakeholder Name	Roles and responsibilities
Luka Susnjara	Senior Analyst – Natural Capital, Gunn Agri Partners Pty Ltd. Coordination of the starting state assessment, preparation of the Project Plan and Site Assessment Report, liaison with the suitably qualified persons and the Clean Energy Regulator, and management of the registration and reporting process.
Gunn Agri Partners Pty Ltd	Project development, registration management, regulatory compliance, stakeholder coordination and adaptive management oversight. Prepared the Project Plan and Site Assessment Documentation.
Narla Environmental Pty Ltd	Suitably qualified person (SQP) services: field survey design and execution, starting state assessment, site assessment report preparation, project plan certification, and ecological advisory services. SQPs: Brodie Miller (BA MEnvMgt, BAAS25016) and Chris Moore (BBioCon, BAAS21009).
Wilga Farming (Australia) Pty Ltd	Project proponent and landholder. Responsible for on-ground property management, livestock exclusion, fire preparedness, pest and weed management, and provision of site access for monitoring and assessment.

2. Suitably Qualified Persons

2.1. Report Certification

Works for this report were undertaken by the following suitably qualified persons:

Table 4: Suitably qualified persons engaged for the starting state assessment

Staff Name	Position
Chris Moore BBioCon	Narla Environmental General Manager and Principal Ecologist Accredited Assessor (BAAS21009)
Brodie Miller BA MEnvMgt (Cons)	Narla Environmental Project Manager and Ecologist Accredited Assessor (BAAS25016)

By signing the below, the suitably qualified person declares that the information provided is true, and the signature date is taken to be the date of the site assessment report.



Table 5: Suitably qualified person certification — Brodie Miller

Full name of suitably qualified person	Brodie Miller
Contact details	brodie.miller@narla.com.au
Role	☒ Undertook the field survey ☐ Prepared the Starting State Assessment Report ☒ Certified the Starting State Assessment Report
Relevant Qualifications or experience	Brodie is a dedicated ecologist and experienced project manager with a background in ecology consultancy, bush regeneration, and government sectors. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated proficiency in leading and managing ecological projects, ensuring compliance with legislation and industry standards, and delivering optimal outcomes for clients and the environment. Brodie's expertise encompasses ecological assessments, technical reporting, and vegetation management. Brodie holds a Master of Environmental Management and is a Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) Accredited Assessor (BAAS25016) with 5 years of experience. Please refer to the professional CV document provided.
Signature	
Signature date	26/06/2026

Table 6: Suitably qualified person certification — Chris Moore

Full name of suitably qualified person	Chris Moore
Contact details	chris.moore@narla.com.au
Role	☐ Undertook the field survey ☐ Prepared the Project Plan ☒ Certified the Project Plan
Relevant Qualifications or experience	Chris is a General Manager and Principal Ecologist with extensive experience working in approvals and providing ecological advice on projects across NSW. Chris has experience working on jobs varying from large scale State Significant Infrastructure projects to State Significant Developments and Part 5 local government approvals, as well as Part 4 development applications. Chris specialises in flora ecology, managing many projects that involve large scale vegetation mapping and conducting vegetation plots in accordance with Biodiversity Assessment Methodology. Chris has conducted vegetation surveys all over NSW from Clarence Valley Council in northern NSW to Eurobodalla Council in the south and Central Darling Shire in the west. Chris holds a Bachelor of Biodiversity and Conservation and is a Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) Accredited Assessor with over 7 years of experience. Please refer to the professional CV document provided.
Signature	 Chris Moore (Jun 26, 2026 14:38:12 GMT+10)
Signature date	26/06/2026



3. Site Details

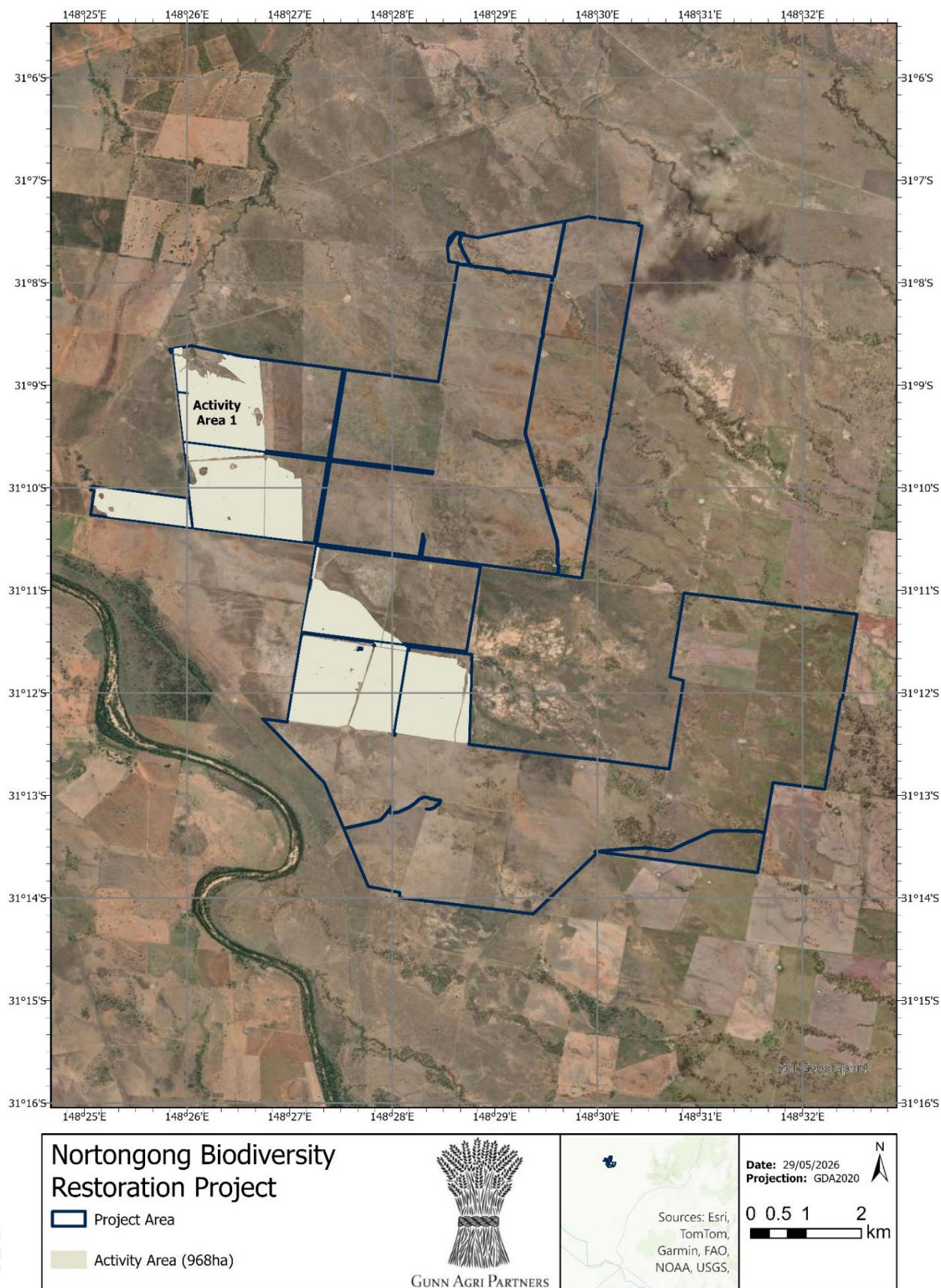
3.1. Details of the Proposed Project Area

Table 7: Site details: Property address and lot/DP information

Name and address of the property or properties	848 Nortongong Rd, Coonamble, NSW, 2829
Lot and file numbers	1/-/DP1136260 1/-/DP590858 14/-/DP754276 17/-/DP754225 2/-/DP1136260 2/-/DP590439 27/-/DP754276 28/-/DP754205 28/-/DP754276 29/-/DP754205 30/-/DP754205 31/-/DP754205 32/-/DP754205 322/-/DP800918 33/-/DP754205 34/-/DP754205 35/-/DP754205 42/-/DP754260 43/-/DP754260 49/-/DP754260 56/-/DP754260 59/-/DP754260 67/-/DP754260 68/-/DP754260 77/-/DP754260 78/-/DP754260 10/-/DP792631



Figure 1: Project Area and Activity Area





2.2 Requirements for Activity Area

Table 8: Details of how activity area 1 meets the requirements of section 22 of the method

Requirements for each activity area	Details on how the activity area meets the specific requirements
The activity area does not have any forest cover at the 10m x 10m scale, but does have forest cover potential (image used as evidence is provided at appendix 1)	At the application date, the activity area did not have forest cover at the 10 m × 10 m scale. Existing forest cover was assessed using recent aerial imagery, historical imagery, field observations from the July 2025 survey and the final AA1 boundary layer. Areas supporting trees or shrubs at least 2 m high with crown cover of at least 20% at the 10 m × 10 m scale were excluded from AA1. The retained AA1 boundary therefore does not include existing forest cover at the application date. Forest-cover potential is supported by the adopted reference ecosystem, PCT 27, the presence of adjacent remnant woodland, field-observed alluvial clay-loam / Gilgai soils, low-relief floodplain landform and the suitability of the site for establishment of native trees and shrubs from the reference ecosystem.
Each activity area must have been comprehensively cleared (image used as evidence is provided at appendix 1)	The activity area was comprehensively cleared more than 15 years before the application date. This conclusion is supported by historical aerial imagery, landholder information and July 2025 field observations. Following exclusion of remnant woody vegetation and areas with existing forest cover, no native tree canopy remains on at least 90% of AA1 at the 10 m × 10 m scale.
Land does not contain existing woody biomass unless exception applies	At the application date, AA1 does not contain existing woody biomass. The activity area was delineated to exclude all remnant woody vegetation, isolated stands and areas of existing forest cover, which are retained outside the AA1 boundary. The July 2025 field survey and the natural regeneration assessment recorded no naturally regenerating native woody species (stems with diameter at breast height less than 5 cm) within AA1, consistent with the comprehensive clearing history and the Starting State B determination.
Within the 3 years preceding the application date, any native vegetation on the land must not have been damaged or destroyed by mechanical or chemical means	Based on landholder information, field survey observations and review of recent imagery, no native vegetation within final AA1 is known to have been damaged or destroyed by mechanical or chemical means within the three years preceding the application date. The July 2025 field survey did not record evidence of recent mechanical or chemical destruction of native woody vegetation within AA1.
The project proponent proposes to carry out environmental plantings in the activity area as part of the replanting project	The Nortongong Biodiversity Restoration Project (Replanting Native Forest and Woodland Ecosystems) project runs in conjunction with the Nortongong Biodiversity Restoration Project (Reforestation by Environmental or Mallee Plantings) project (ERF202584). Environmental plantings have been and will continue to be carried out in AA1 as part of the replanting project. Initial tubestock planting was undertaken in July 2025 at approximately 207 stems/ha using native canopy, mid-storey and shrub species aligned with PCT 27. Staggered ecological infill planting is proposed for 2026 to further add to mid-storey and shrub-layer structure. The ground-layer strategy is addressed through retained native ground-layer species, natural regeneration and adaptive management with supplementary seeding if required. The planting design is described in Project Plan Section 10 and is intended to meet the environmental planting requirements of section 17 of the method.



Activity area must not include any 10m x 10m area of land within the area: for which no environmental plantings are proposed for the purposes of the replanting project, that has forest cover, that does not have forest cover potential and that is excluded water	Mapping and field verification confirm that no 10m x 10m area within the activity area includes land that is excluded for these reasons. All mapped activity areas are proposed for environmental plantings, are free from existing forest cover, and are suitable for achieving forest potential.
Activity area is a single contiguous area, or multiple disconnected areas	The consolidated AA1 comprises multiple disconnected planting areas (initially proposed AA2–AA8), consolidated into a single activity area under s22(3) of the method based on shared reference ecosystem (PCT 27) and shared starting ecosystem condition state (State B). No sub-areas are nominated. The consolidated AA1 is treated as an undivided activity area for all purposes under the method.
Activity area or sub-area must be at least 0.2 hectares, and the activity areas together must be at least 5 hectares	Each defined activity area exceeds 0.2 ha. The total combined area across all activity areas exceeds 5 ha, meeting the minimum project scale requirements.
Activity areas meet the width requirements of the method	Activity Area AA1 meets the width requirements of s22(5) of the method. A 900m ² grid was overlaid across AA1 in ArcGIS and the average width on the narrowest side was assessed for each section. All sections of AA1 confirmed as meeting the 30m average width requirement.
Each undivided activity area has the same reference ecosystem	All areas within the consolidated AA1 have the same reference ecosystem: PCT 27 — Weeping Myall Open Woodland of the Darling Riverine Plains bioregion. See section 6
If there are sub-areas within the activity area, they must have the same reference ecosystem from the same major vegetation group	There are no sub-areas present for the project. The consolidated AA1 is an undivided activity area with a single reference ecosystem (PCT 27 — Weeping Myall Open Woodland, Darling Riverine Plains bioregion). Consolidation under s22(3) is based on shared PCT and shared starting state; no sub-area structure is required or nominated.
Activity area has the same starting ecosystem condition state	All parts of AA1 have been assessed as Starting Ecosystem Condition State B based on the July 2025 field survey data and the section 11 calculation presented in Section 8. Across the 29 permanent sampling plots, the native species richness index was 0.356, equivalent to 35.6% of the benchmark value of 25. The calculation workbook and field survey data are provided as supporting evidence.
Activity area is the subject of proposed environmental plantings with the same nominated restoration target	Restoration Target Level 2 is nominated for the Activity Area, consistent with Starting Ecosystem Condition State B and the project's 100-year permanence period. See Section 3 of the associated Project Plan.

4. Indigenous Engagement

The project area is freehold land traditionally associated with the Gomeroi people, who are acknowledged as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the project is conducted. Freehold land is excluded from the operation of the *Native Title Act 1993* under section 23B(2)(c) of that Act. Accordingly, no consent under the *Native Title Act 1993* is required for the project, and Indigenous land interests do not apply to the project area for the purposes of section 28 of the *Nature Repair (Replanting Native Forest and Woodland Ecosystems) Methodology Determination 2025*. As part of project planning, Gunn Agri Partners wrote to the Gomeroi claim group through NTSCORP Limited,



as the claim group's legal representative. The correspondence outlined the project location and proposed Nature Repair replanting activities and provides an opportunity for further discussion.

5. Optimal Growth Period

The field survey was conducted in July 2025. The relevant Natural Resource Management (NRM) region is the Central West NRM region (DCCEEW NRM Regions 2023). The optimal plant growth period for the region is spring (September to November), when rising temperatures and the onset of warm-season rainfall drive active growth and maximise the potential to identify plant species, particularly annuals, ephemerals and warm-season grasses. This period reflects the long-term seasonal climate pattern for the locality recorded at the nearest long-term Bureau of Meteorology station (Coonamble) and is consistent with the professional judgement of the suitably qualified person and with published NSW guidance on optimal survey timing for ground-layer flora (DPIE 2020).

The July 2025 survey was conducted as close as practicable to the optimal growth period, consistent with s26(3) of the method. Survey timing was constrained by the requirement to establish baseline starting state data immediately prior to the commencement of the initial environmental planting (also July 2025), so that starting values accurately reflect pre-planting conditions. Conducting the survey and commencing planting within the same period is consistent with the intent of the method, as it ensures that the starting state assessment captures the ecosystem condition that the restoration activities are intended to improve.

The survey conditions did not materially compromise the identification of species relevant to the starting state assessment for the following reasons. The activity area is comprehensively cleared agricultural land (Starting State B) with no native canopy, mid-storey or woody understorey. The primary species richness data required relates to ground-layer species, the majority of which in PCT 27 (Weeping Myall Open Woodland) are perennial native grasses and forbs that remain identifiable throughout winter. The starting NSRI of 0.356 (35.6% of benchmark) reflects a genuinely depauperate ground-layer flora consistent with long-term agricultural management. Additionally, the low ground-layer richness supports the Starting State B determination, as it confirms that native species diversity is well below the 80% of benchmark threshold required for Starting State A.

Sources

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). 2023. Natural Resource Management (NRM) Regions 2023. Australian Government. Available from:
<https://fed.dcceew.gov.au/datasets/natural-resource-management-nrm-regions-2023/about>

Bureau of Meteorology. Climate statistics for Australian locations: Coonamble (Station 051042). Available from:
http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/averages/tables/cw_051042.shtml

NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). 2020. Surveying Threatened Plants and their Habitats: NSW Survey Guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method. ISBN 978-1-922318-72-5.

6. Sampling Plots

6.1. Establishment of Sampling Plots

Permanent sampling plots were established in accordance with paragraph 30(1)(c) and section 2 of Schedule 5 of the *Nature Repair (Replanting Native Forest and Woodland Ecosystems) Methodology Determination 2025*. The consolidated Activity Area AA1 is greater than 100 hectares and has a single reference ecosystem, PCT 27 — Weeping Myall Open Woodland of the Darling Riverine Plains bioregion. Under the sampling intensity scale in



section 2 of Schedule 5, an activity area of 100 hectares or larger requires a minimum of seven permanent sampling plots.

The project established 29 permanent sampling plots within AA1, exceeding the minimum required sampling intensity. The higher plot number was retained to provide stronger spatial coverage across the consolidated activity area, including the former mapped planting areas that were consolidated into AA1, and to provide a more robust baseline for calculating starting ecosystem condition indicators and monitoring progress toward threshold values and nominated restoration targets.

Plot locations were generated in ArcGIS using a randomised point-generation process. The consolidated AA1 boundary was divided into spatial sampling portions to distribute survey effort across the activity area and former planting blocks. Within each portion, candidate 50 m × 10 m plot locations were generated using a random number process in ArcGIS within the eligible activity area boundary. Candidate plot locations were checked against the final activity area mapping and discarded where the proposed plot would intersect, or be materially affected by, an ineligible or non-representative feature, including existing forest cover, excluded water or watercourse buffers, fence lines, tracks, infrastructure, areas not proposed for environmental planting, or areas lacking forest cover potential. Replacement candidate locations were then generated using the same randomised process.

The final 29 plot locations were also subsequently reviewed on site during by the suitably qualified person to confirm that the selected plots were collectively representative of at least 90% of AA1. All 29 plots are treated as permanent sampling plots for consolidated AA1. Plot identifiers such as AA2P1, AA3P1 and AA5P1 are retained as legacy field identifiers to preserve traceability to the original field records, spatial files and photo records; they do not indicate separate current activity areas.

Each permanent sampling plot was assigned a unique identifying number and recorded in the field data, spatial files and this site assessment report. The permanent sampling plot table (table 7) provides the location of each plot and the permanent marker centre-line information required by the method. For each plot, the centre-line location is recorded by the coordinate of one permanent marker and a compass bearing along the centre line.

5.2 Field Data Collection Methods

All field methods complied with the requirements of Schedules 3 and 4 of the 2025 Determination. The groundcover subcategories used for the sampling methods is specified in table 6.

Table 9: Groundcover subcategories.

Category	Subcategory	Groundcover	Description
A	N/A	Yes	Living ground vascular plant
	A1	Yes	Living grass from a species that is native to the local area
	A2	Yes	Living herbaceous vascular plant, other than a grass, from a species that is native to the local area
	A3	Yes	Living woody plant within the ground layer (less than 1 metre tall) from a species that is native to the local area. Includes seedlings, vines and other small plants of native tree and shrub species.
	A4	Yes	Living ground layer plant from a species that is not native to the local area, other than non-pasture crop species



Category	Subcategory	Groundcover	Description
	A5	Yes	Living ground layer plant from a species that is a non-pasture crop species
B	N/A	Yes	Cryptogamic soil crust or non-vascular plants
C		Yes	Dead native ground layer plant
D		Yes	Dead non-native ground layer plant
E		Yes	Litter (dead plant material including leaves, bark, twigs)
F		Yes	Bare ground
G		Yes	Rock
H		Yes	Ground cover – not otherwise specified
I		No	Living predominant native canopy tree
J		No	Living native understorey tree
K		No	Living native shrub
L		No	Living native vine
M		No	Dead native tree, shrub, or vine
N		No	Living canopy tree that is not native to the local area
O		No	Living understorey tree or shrub that is not native to the local area
P		No	Living vine that is not native to the local area
Q		No	Dead tree, shrub, or vine that is not native to the local area
R		N/A	Other – not otherwise specified

Point Intercept Method

A 50 m transect was established along the centre line of each sampling plot. Data were recorded at 1 m intervals (50 points per plot). At each point, the vertical vegetation intercept was categorised by groundcover type and subcategory (A–H), and species were identified where possible. Canopy and mid-storey crown cover were also recorded, noting whether each point was beneath the crown of a native or non-native species.

Quadrat Method

Five 1 m² quadrats were placed along the centre line of each plot at 10 m intervals. All vascular plant species within each quadrat were identified, and their percentage groundcover was estimated across categories A–H. This method was used to assess groundcover composition and calculate proportional cover of native and non-native subcategories.

Canopy Height Measurement

Canopy height was recorded for a minimum of three representative native canopy trees within each plot. Measurements were obtained using a clinometer or hypsometer and used to calculate the average canopy height for each plot.

Whole Plot Survey

A full species census was undertaken for each plot to record all visible vascular plant species. Species were categorised by life form, including trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, and herbaceous vascular plants other than grasses.



Indicator Calculations

The table below provides details of the 29 permanent sampling plots established for the consolidated Activity Area AA1 in accordance with section 2 of Schedule 5 of the method (s35(1)(l)). Plots were established during the July 2025 field survey by Narla Environmental Pty Ltd. Plot coordinates were recorded in datum GDA2020 (geographic coordinates expressed as decimal degrees of latitude and longitude). For mapping and spatial output, GDA2020 / MGA Zone 55 (EPSG:7855) applies to Coonamble at approximately 148.5° E falls within MGA Zone 55. The location of permanent markers is recorded as the start marker (Point 1) GPS, with each plot extending 50 m on a bearing of 0° to the end marker (Point 2), in accordance with Schedule 5(2)(8)(a) of the method which permits one marker plus a recorded compass bearing as an alternative to two markers. Plot identifiers are retained from the survey-stage activity-area structure to preserve traceability to the field data workbook (Nortongong_Field_Data_AA1.xlsx); all 29 plots are located within the consolidated Activity Area AA1 under s22(3) of the method.

Table 10: Permanent sampling plot details

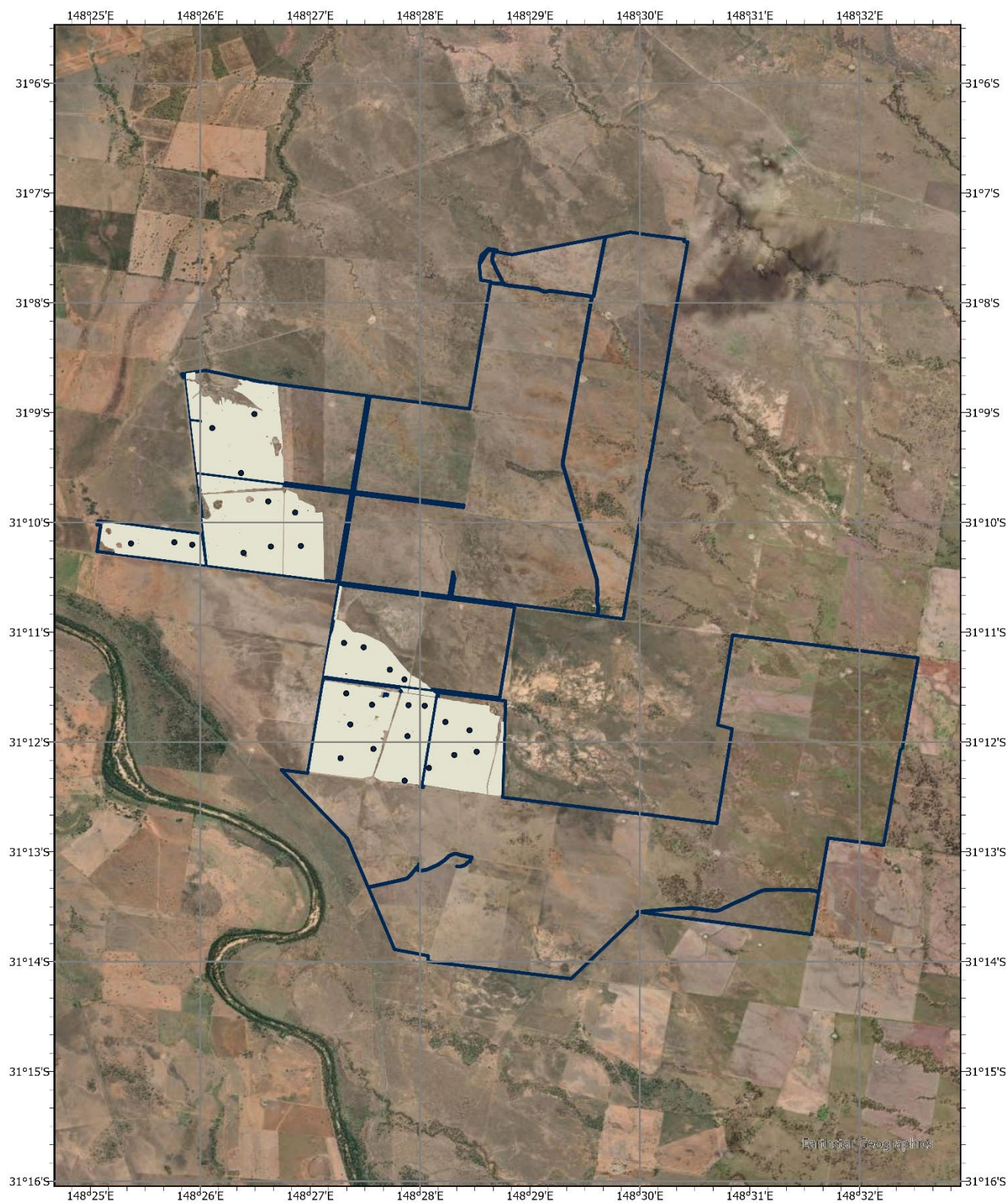
Activity Area ID	Sampling Plot ID	Location of sampling plot including GPS coordinates	Location of permanent markers/centre lines including GPS coordinates
AA1	AA2P1	-31.205859, 148.464346	1.) -31.205859, 148.464346 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA2P2	-31.203928, 148.468030	1.) -31.203928, 148.468030 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA2P3	-31.194402, 148.464912	1.) -31.194402, 148.464912 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA2P4	-31.201965, 148.471856	1.) -31.201965, 148.471856 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA2P5	-31.201474, 148.475253	1.) -31.201474, 148.475253 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA2P6	-31.196953, 148.470515	1.) -31.196953, 148.470515 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA2P7	-31.198211, 148.474181	1.) -31.198211, 148.474181 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA3P1	-31.184948, 148.455143	1.) -31.184948, 148.455143 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA3P2	-31.185608, 148.458128	1.) -31.185608, 148.458128 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA3P3	-31.189022, 148.462081	1.) -31.189022, 148.462081 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA3P4	-31.165167, 148.447731	1.) -31.165167, 148.447731 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA5P1	-31.202445, 148.454635	1.) -31.202445, 148.454635 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1



Activity Area ID	Sampling Plot ID	Location of sampling plot including GPS coordinates	Location of permanent markers/centre lines including GPS coordinates
AA1	AA5P2	-31.197324, 148.456088	1.) -31.197324, 148.456088 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA5P3	-31.192599, 148.455473	1.) -31.192599, 148.455473 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA5P4	-31.201036, 148.459598	1.) -31.201036, 148.459598 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA5P5	-31.199093, 148.464758	1.) -31.199093, 148.464758 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA5P6	-31.194348, 148.459373	1.) -31.194348, 148.459373 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA5P7	-31.194477, 148.467390	1.) -31.194477, 148.467390 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA6P2	-31.169869, 148.422821	1.) -31.169869, 148.422821 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA6P4	-31.169689, 148.429406	1.) -31.169689, 148.429406 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA6P5	-31.170039, 148.432120	1.) -31.170039, 148.432120 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA7P1	-31.171284, 148.439909	1.) -31.171284, 148.439909 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA7P4	-31.170335, 148.444042	1.) -31.170335, 148.444042 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA7P5	-31.170221, 148.448607	1.) -31.170221, 148.448607 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA7P6	-31.163476, 148.443643	1.) -31.163476, 148.443643 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA7P7	-31.165167, 148.447731	1.) -31.165167, 148.447731 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA8P2	-31.159157, 148.439533	1.) -31.159157, 148.439533 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA8P4	-31.152336, 148.435152	1.) -31.152336, 148.435152 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1
AA1	AA8P6	-31.150217, 148.441562	1.) -31.150217, 148.441562 2.) Compass bearing 0° (North) from Point 1

Map of Sampling Plots

Figure 2: Project Area, Activity Area, and Sampling Plots



Nortongong Biodiversity Restoration Project

-  Project Area
-  Activity Area (968ha)
-  Sampling Plots



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Sources: Esri,
TomTom,
Garmin, FAO,
NOAA, USGS,

Date: 29/05/2026
Projection: GDA2020



0 0.5 1 2
km



Photos of Permanent Sampling Plots

Six geo-referenced photographs were captured for each of the 29 sampling plots in accordance with section 3 of Schedule 5 of the method (s35(l)(vi)). Photos were taken from two points at either end of the 50 m centre line: Point 1 (Start marker, 0 m) and Point 2 (End marker, 50 m). At each point, three photos were taken: facing down the centre line toward the opposite end of the plot, facing 90° to the left of the centre line, and facing 90° to the right of the centre line. All photos are digital colour format with location services enabled. Photo files with geolocation metadata are provided in the report appendices files. A 500 m buffer was generated in ArcGIS around the perimeter of the final consolidated Activity Area AA1 to define the surrounding-landscape assessment area required by section 26(4) of the method. The July 2025 field survey covered the full extent of AA1 and, where practicable, the 500 m buffer area through a combination of direct field inspection, visual assessment from accessible tracks and paddock access points, and review of surrounding vegetation, hydrological features and land-use patterns. The buffer assessment was used to inform the identification of threatened species and ecological communities that occur, or are likely to occur, within the activity area and surrounding landscape, as addressed in Section 12 of this report.

Table 11: Photo point data

Side	Photo point & File name
AA2P1 – Start	F – AA2P1_OMCENTRE.jpg, R – AA2P1_OMRIGHT.jpg, L – AA2P1_OMLEFT.jpg
AA2P1 – End	F – AA2P1_50MCENTRE.jpg, R – AA2P1_50MRIGHT.jpg, L – AA2P1_50MLEFT.jpg
AA2P2 – Start	F – AA2P2_OMCENTRE.jpg, R – AA2P2_OMRIGHT.jpg, L – AA2P2_OMLEFT.jpg
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AA2P3 – Start	F – AA2P3_OMCENTRE.jpg, R – AA2P3_OMRIGHT.jpg, L – AA2P3_OMLEFT.jpg
AA2P3 – End	F – AA2P3_50MCENTRE.jpg, R – AA2P3_50MRIGHT.jpg, L – AA2P3_50MLEFT.jpg
AA2P4 – Start	F – AA2P4_OMCENTRE.jpg, R – AA2P4_OMRIGHT.jpg, L – AA2P4_OMLEFT.jpg
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Side	Photo point & File name
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AA3_P4 - End	F – AA3P4_50MCENTRE.jpg, R – AA3P4_50MRIGHT.jpg, L – AA3P4_50MLEFT.jpg
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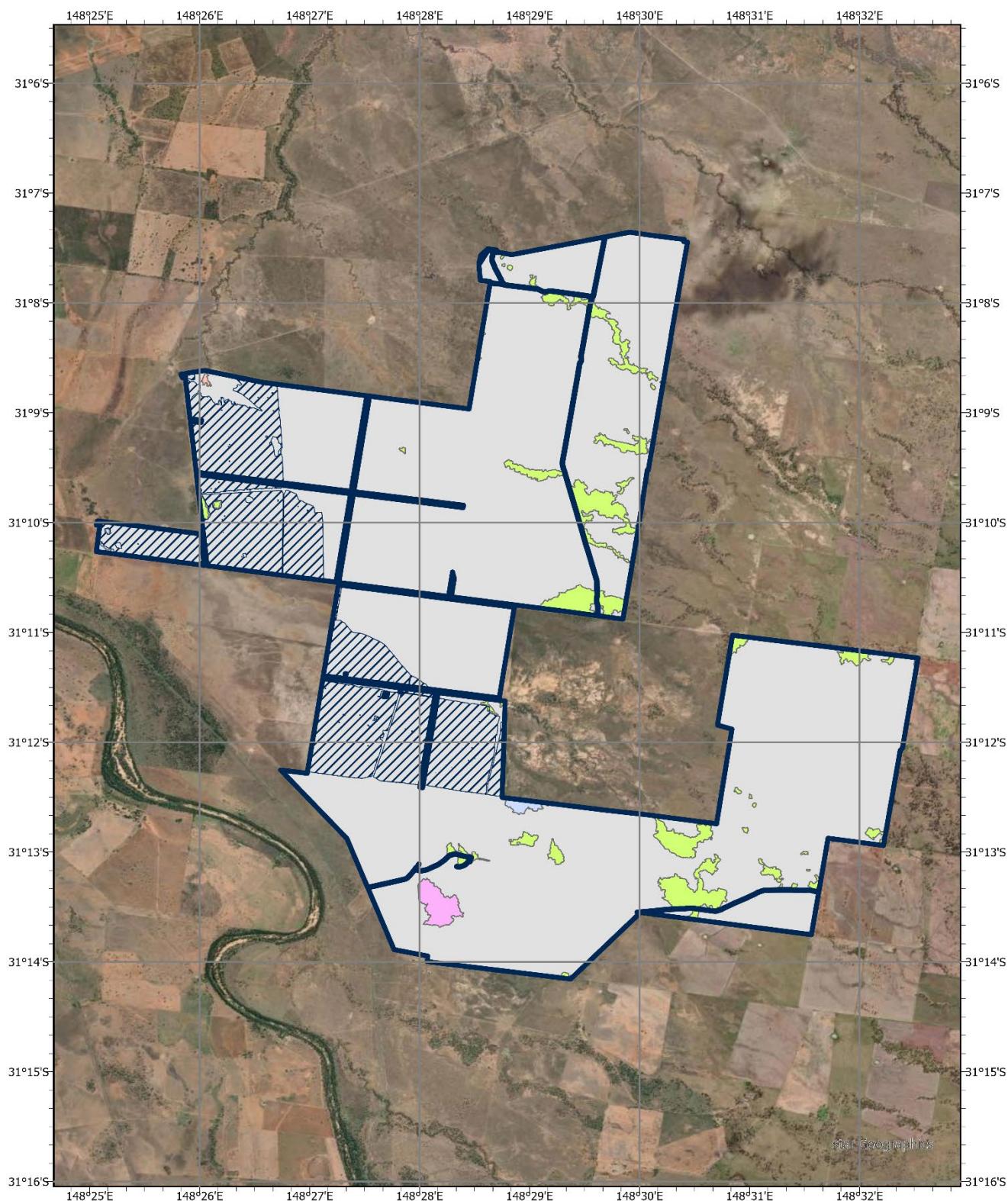


Side	Photo point & File name
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AA8P2 – End	F – AA8P2_50MCENTRE.jpg, R – AA8P2_50MRIGHT.jpg, L – AA8P2_50MLEFT.jpg
AA8P4 – Start	F – AA8P4_OMCENTRE.jpg, R – AA8P4_OMRIGHT.jpg, L – AA8P4_OMLEFT.jpg
AA8P4 – End	F – AA8P4_50MCENTRE.jpg, R – AA8P4_50MRIGHT.jpg, L – AA8P4_50MLEFT.jpg
AA8P6 – Start	F – AA8P6_OMCENTRE.jpg, R – AA8P6_OMRIGHT.jpg, L – AA8P6_OMLEFT.jpg
AA8P6 – End	F – AA8P6_50MCENTRE.jpg, R – AA8P6_50MRIGHT.jpg, L – AA8P6_50MLEFT.jpg

7. Assigning a Reference Ecosystem

The Prescribed Vegetation Map (PLANR) was reviewed in accordance with section 46 of the method to identify mapped native vegetation types within the activity areas, undertaken at a maximum scale of 3 hectares, with a minimum width of 50 metres for linear features. Further interpretation was undertaken using the State Vegetation Type Map (SVTM v3.1 – Pre-1750 and Current Extent), the NSW Plant Community Type (PCT) Database, and NVIS v7.0 datasets. These datasets were used to confirm PCT, Major Vegetation Group (MVG) and sub-group relationships, and to assess the consistency of mapped vegetation with on-ground observations and site data.

Figure 3: Project Area, Activity Area, PCTs



Nortongong Biodiversity Restoration Project

Project Area

Activity Area (968ha)

PCT ID

0 (Not Classified)

27

36

98

244



GUNN AGRI PARTNERS



Date: 29/05/2026

Projection: GDA2020



0 0.5 1 2 km



PCT Determination: The prescribed vegetation mapping indicates that the activity areas are almost exclusively classified as PCT 0 (Unclassified), with smaller isolated areas mapped as PCT 98 – Poplar Box–White Cypress Pine–Wilga–Ironwood shrubby woodland on red sandy-loam soils in the Darling Riverine Plains and Brigalow Belt South Bioregions. Limited areas of mapped vegetation occur adjacent to, but not consistently within, the activity areas. On the basis of the virtual assessment and field survey, the prescribed vegetation map was determined to be likely not correct for the activity areas, and the reference ecosystem was therefore determined using the Prescribed Vegetation Classification System (PVCS) in accordance with sections 46(10)–(13) of the method.

An on-ground field assessment of proposed activity areas was undertaken during the Starting State Assessment to verify the accuracy of the prescribed vegetation mapping and to determine the most likely pre-clearing native vegetation type. The assessment involved direct observation of dominant canopy, sub-canopy and ground-layer species, soil texture and colour, landform position, and comparison with adjacent remnant vegetation.

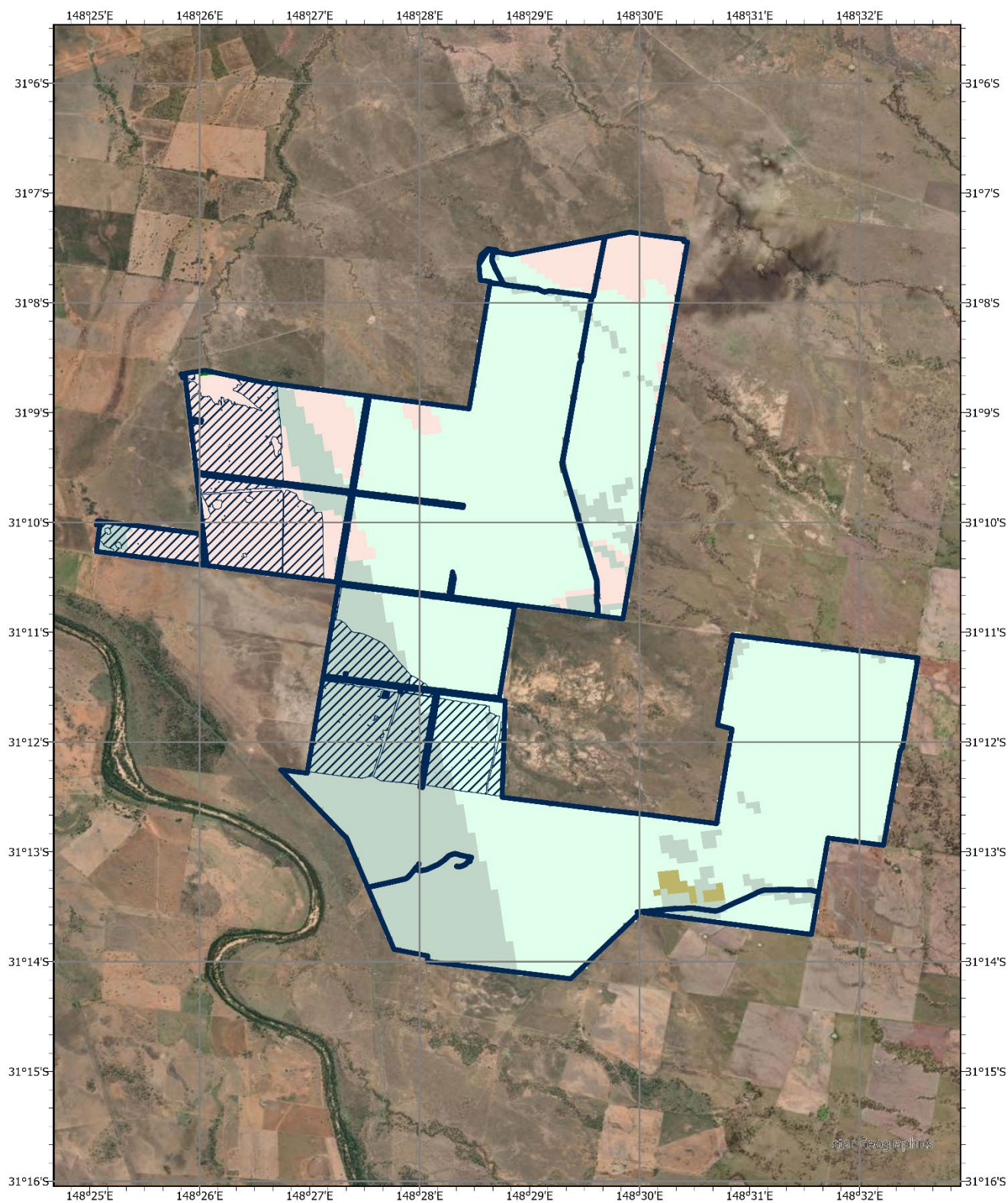
Across all activity areas, remnant vegetation occurs along paddock boundaries and as isolated stands throughout cleared areas. The vegetation present is characterised by a canopy dominated by *Eucalyptus populnea* and *Casuarina cristata*, with lower-density individuals of *Acacia pendula* (Weeping Myall) and scattered *Alectryon oleifolius* (Rosewood). The mid-storey is dominated by *Acacia pendula*, with *Rhagodia spinescens*, *Acacia salicina* and *Atriplex nummularia* commonly present. Soils across the activity areas are grey-brown cracking clay-loams on level to gently undulating alluvial plains of the Castlereagh River floodplain

These floristic, structural and edaphic characteristics are consistent with the published profile for PCT 27 – Weeping Myall open woodland in the NSW Plant Community Type Database. Adjacent areas in the southern portion of the property are mapped as PCT 27 and exhibit the same dominant canopy species, mid-storey composition and soil characteristics observed within the activity areas, providing direct evidence of the historic pre-clearing ecosystem for the land in accordance with s46(3) of the method.



Figure 3: Project Area, Activity Area, and Major Vegetation Groups





Nortongong Biodiversity Restoration Project  Project Area  Activity Area (968ha) Major Vegetation Groups (MVG) Pre 1750  3, Eucalypt Open Forests  5, Eucalypt Woodlands  11, Eucalypt Open Woodlands  14, Mallee Woodlands and Shrublands  22, Chenopod Shrublands, Samphire Shrublands and Forblands	 GUNN AGRIPARTNERS	 Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS,	Date: 29/05/2026 Projection: GDA2020  0 0.5 1 2 km
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MVG Determination: Although SVTM and NVIS mapping identify a mosaic of MVG 5 – Eucalypt Woodlands, MVG 11 – Eucalypt Open Woodlands, and MVG 23 – Chenopod Shrublands, Samphire Shrublands and Forblands across the activity areas and broader property, field observations confirm that vegetation structure and species composition are largely continuous across these mapped polygons. All mapped areas share a consistent canopy of *Eucalyptus populnea* and *Casuarina cristata*, with a persistent mid-storey of *Acacia pendula*, *Rhagodia spinescens*, *Atriplex nummularia* and *Acacia salicina*.

The vegetation present does not align with MVG 11 – Eucalypt Open Woodlands, characterised by a limited mid-storey development, nor with MVG 23 – Chenopod Shrublands, which lacks a consistent eucalypt overstorey. The site instead supports a structurally distinct Poplar Box–Belah woodland with a mid-storey of Weeping Myall and associated chenopod shrubs, growing on alluvial clay gilgai soils at the eastern extent of the Darling Riverine Plains.

Under NVIS v7.0, PCT 27 in this biophysical context is classified within MVG 6 – Acacia Forests and Woodlands, reflecting the structural prominence of *Acacia pendula* in the mid-storey and the alluvial clay substrate, which supports denser structural development than the MVG 5 – Eucalypt Woodlands classification typical of the drier, sandier western occurrences of this PCT. This MVG 6 assignment is confirmed by the Commonwealth's Prescribed Vegetation Classification System (PVCS) dataset, accessed in accordance with s46(10) of the method as an authoritative source for identifying reference ecosystems and Major Vegetation Groups. The PVCS dataset explicitly maps PCT 27 to MVG 6 (Acacia Forests and Woodlands). The PLANR vegetation layer independently classifies a 30.57 ha remnant PCT 27 patch on the property as MVG 6, with 89% coverage in the Biodiversity Benefit Tool, further supporting this determination.

Based on direct field observations, the site's biophysical context, application of the Prescribed Vegetation Classification System in accordance with sections 46(10)–(13) of the method, and cross-referencing with PLANR, SVTM, NVIS, NSW Soil Landscape Mapping, and BioNet Atlas data, PCT 27 – Weeping Myall open woodland is adopted as the reference ecosystem for the project. Under the IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology (GET) 2.0, PCT 27 is classified as T4.4 Temperate Woodlands (Keith et al. 2020). Under NVIS v7.0, this site occurrence of PCT 27 is classified within MVG 6 – Acacia Forests and Woodlands, as supported by the site's biophysical context, structural expression, and geographic position at the eastern extent of the Darling Riverine Plains where alluvial clay gilgai soils support the denser structural expression characteristic of this classification.

Mid-storey classification of *Acacia pendula*: For the purposes of crown cover indicator calculations, *Acacia pendula* is classified as contributing to the mid-storey layer rather than the canopy layer. This reflects the observed structural expression at the project site, where *Eucalyptus populnea* forms a distinct upper canopy that overtops *Acacia pendula*. This site-scale structural variation is consistent with the range of structural expressions documented for PCT 27 / Weeping Myall Woodlands. The Commonwealth Conservation Advice for the Weeping Myall Woodlands ecological community states that "the structure and composition of the community varies, particularly with latitude" and that "in some areas the shrub and canopy stratum may have been reduced or eliminated by clearing or heavy grazing" (DCCEEW 2009).

The NSW Scientific Committee Final Determination for Myall Woodland likewise records that "the structure of the community varies from low woodland and low open woodland to low sparse woodland or open shrubland, depending on site quality and disturbance history" (NSW Scientific Committee 2011). The NSW BioNet PCT 27 community profile (PCT 27 — Weeping Myall open woodland on alluvial clay-loam soils mainly in the Darling



Riverine Plains Bioregion) similarly records *Acacia pendula* in the upper / mid stratum depending on stand structure, and identifies *Eucalyptus populnea* as a co-occurring canopy species where present. The site-scale stratification of *Acacia pendula* as mid-storey for crown cover indicator calculations (per Schedule 5, section 10) is independent of, and does not modify, the MVG 6 reference ecosystem classification, which is determined at the PCT level via the PVCS as set out in SSA Section 5.

Table 12: Reference ecosystem classification

Activity Area	Reference Ecosystem
AA1	PCT 27 — Weeping Myall open woodland of the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion

Sources

NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). 2024. NSW Plant Community Types — SEED V1.2 Vegetation Condition Benchmarks (PCT 27, Darling Riverine Plains). Office of Environment and Heritage. Available from: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-plants/vegetation-mapping>

Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). 2024. Prescribed Vegetation Classification System (PVCS). Available from: <https://fed.dcceew.gov.au/maps/erin::prescribed-vegetation-classification-system/about>

NSW Department of Primary Industries. 2017. NSW Soil Landscape Mapping and Land Use Mapping v1.5. Available from: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/>

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. 2012. IBRA 7 Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia. Available from: <https://www.environment.gov.au/land/nrs/science/ibra>

NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). 2024. NSW State Vegetation Type Map (SVTM 2024). Available from: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-plants/vegetation-mapping>

DCCEEW (2009) *Weeping Myall Woodlands of the Darling Riverine Plains, Brigalow Belt South, Cobar Peneplain, Murray–Darling Depression, Riverina and NSW South Western Slopes Bioregions: A Nationally Threatened Ecological Community* (Commonwealth Conservation Advice). Australian Government, Canberra. Available at: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/weeping-myall-woodlands.pdf>

NSW Scientific Committee (2011) *Myall Woodland in the Darling Riverine Plains, Brigalow Belt South, Cobar Peneplain, Murray–Darling Depression, Riverina and NSW South Western Slopes bioregions — Determination to make a minor amendment*. NSW Government.

NSW Department of Planning and Environment (current) *NSW BioNet — PCT 27: Weeping Myall open woodland on alluvial clay-loam soils mainly in the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion*. Available at: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/>



8. Benchmark Values for Reference Ecosystems

Benchmark values for the AA1 have been determined from the approved source benchmark list (Schedule 4 of the method) for the reference ecosystem PCT 27 Weeping Myall Open Woodland, Darling Riverine Plains IBRA bioregion. All indicator values are sourced from the BioNet Vegetation Classification — community condition benchmarks (PCT 27), supplemented by Walker and Hopkins (1990) for canopy height classification, in accordance with s35(1)(n) of the method. The derivation process for each indicator is detailed in Table 10 below.

Table 13: Details of the data used to determine benchmark indicators from the approved source benchmark list PCT 27

Ecosystem condition indicator	Benchmark value (PCT 27)	Data source	Data source field used
Canopy height of native vegetation (m)	9	BioNet Vegetation Classification — community condition benchmarks (PCT 27) BioNet PCT 27 Threatened Biodiversity, TECs & Benchmarks Walker & Hopkins (1990)	Height class from PCT 27 structural formation description (Open Woodland). Walker & Hopkins classification Mid-point of “Low” tall-stratum class (Specht 1970 revised) applied = 9 m.
Crown cover from native plants in the canopy layer (%)	5%	BioNet Vegetation Classification — community condition benchmarks (PCT 27) BioNet PCT 27 Threatened Biodiversity, TECs & Benchmarks	“Tree cover” field for PCT 27, BioNet Vegetation Classification community condition benchmarks — Darling Riverine Plains IBRA region, average rainfall year (329–571 mm).
Crown cover from native plants in the mid-storey layer (%)	22%	BioNet Vegetation Classification — community condition benchmarks (PCT 27) BioNet PCT 27 Threatened Biodiversity, TECs & Benchmarks	“Shrub cover field for PCT 27, BioNet Vegetation Classification community condition benchmarks — Darling Riverine Plains IBRA region, average rainfall year (329–571 mm).
Crown cover from exotic plants in the canopy layer (%)	0%	Defined by method (Schedule 5, s10)	Exotic canopy benchmark is automatically 0% by definition.
Crown cover from exotic plants in the mid-storey layer (%)	0%	Defined by method (Schedule 5, s10)	Exotic mid-storey benchmark is automatically 0% by definition.
Ground cover from A1+A2+A3 plants as	100%	Defined by method (Schedule 5, s10)	Benchmark ground cover is 100% native (A1+A2+A3) and 0% exotic (A4+A5) by



Ecosystem condition indicator	Benchmark value (PCT 27)	Data source	Data source field used
proportion of total ground cover from category A plants (%)			definition in the method for a benchmark reference community.
Ground cover from A4+A5 plants as proportion of total ground cover from category A plants (%)	0%	Defined by method (Schedule 5, s10)	Benchmark exotic ground cover is 0% by definition.
NSRI (native tree species richness)	2	BioNet Vegetation Classification — community condition benchmarks (PCT 27) BioNet PCT 27 Threatened Biodiversity, TECs & Benchmarks	“TreeRichness” field for PCT 27, BioNet Vegetation Classification community condition benchmarks — Darling Riverine Plains IBRA region, average rainfall year (329–571 mm).
NSRI (native shrub species richness)	7	BioNet Vegetation Classification — community condition benchmarks (PCT 27) BioNet PCT 27 Threatened Biodiversity, TECs & Benchmarks	“ShrubRichness” field for PCT 27, BioNet Vegetation Classification community condition benchmarks — Darling Riverine Plains IBRA region, average rainfall year (329–571 mm).
NSRI (native vine species richness)	1	BioNet Vegetation Classification — community condition benchmarks (PCT 27) BioNet PCT 27 Threatened Biodiversity, TECs & Benchmarks	The BioNet PCT 27 community profile identifies <i>Convolvulus clementii</i> as the species accounting for this OtherRichness count: it is listed in the ground stratum of the PCT 27 species composition. <i>Convolvulus clementii</i> is described in standard Australian floristic references (PlantNET, NSW Flora Online) as a prostrate to twining perennial herb of the family Convolvulaceae. Its twining growth habit is consistent with vine morphology in the sense used by the <i>Nature Repair (Replanting Native Forest and Woodland Ecosystems) Methodology Determination 2025</i> — the method does not provide an explicit definition of “vine” but reserves the Vines life-form for species whose growth habit is climbing, twining, or scrambling rather than upright. The OtherRichness benchmark value of 1 has therefore been mapped to the Vines life-form for the purposes of NSRI calculation



Ecosystem condition indicator	Benchmark value (PCT 27)	Data source	Data source field used
			under the method, on the basis that (i) <i>Convolvulus clementii</i> is the only species in the OtherRichness count for PCT 27, (ii) its twining habit is consistent with vine morphology, and (iii) no other life-form category in the method (trees, shrubs, grasses, herbs) accommodates a prostrate/twining growth form within the ground stratum. The species was recorded in plot AA5_P3 during the July 2025 field survey, supporting the validity of this benchmark allocation.
NSRI (native grass and grass-like species richness)	5	BioNet Vegetation Classification — community condition benchmarks (PCT 27) BioNet PCT 27 Threatened Biodiversity, TECs & Benchmarks	“GrassRichness” (grass and grass-like species field for PCT 27, BioNet Vegetation Classification community condition benchmarks — Darling Riverine Plains IBRA region, average rainfall year (329–571 mm).
NSRI (native herbaceous (forb) species richness)	10	BioNet Vegetation Classification — community condition benchmarks (PCT 27) BioNet PCT 27 Threatened Biodiversity, TECs & Benchmarks	“ForbRichness field for PCT 27, BioNet Vegetation Classification community condition benchmarks — Darling Riverine Plains IBRA region, average rainfall year (329–571 mm).. The “OtherRichness” field (value = 1) is not included in the Herbs total, as it maps to the Vines life-form.
Total NSRI benchmark	25	—	Trees (2) + Shrubs (7) + Vines (1) + Grasses (5) + Herbs/Forbs (10)

Sources

NSW DCCEEW. BioNet Vegetation Classification — community condition benchmarks for PCT 27 (Weeping Myall open woodland), Darling Riverine Plains IBRA region, average rainfall year. Accessed via vegetation.bionet.nsw.gov.au.

Walker J and Hopkins MS. 1990. Vegetation. In: McDonald RC, Isbell RF, Speight JG, Walker J, Hopkins MS (eds), Australian Soil and Land Survey Field Handbook. 2nd edn. Inkata Press, Melbourne. pp. 58–83.



9. Starting Ecosystem Condition State

9.1. Starting ecosystem condition state

For each activity area or sub-area, the starting values for each ecosystem indicator must be calculated in accordance with the process in section 10 of schedule 5 of the method. The data relied upon is provided in the field data workbook (Nortongong_Field_Data_AA1.xlsx) submitted with this report.

9.2. Overall cover percentage

The overall cover percentage for each subcategory was calculated by averaging the pooled point intercept proportion and pooled quadrat proportion across all 29 sampling plots in AA1, in accordance with Schedule 5 Section 11 of the method.

TABLE 11A: OVERALL COVER PERCENTAGE OF CATEGORY A AND SUBCATEGORY A PLANT SPECIES

Activity area	% of A1	% of A2	% of A3	% of A4	% of A5
AA1	69.32%	20.89%	1.47%	6.16%	2.15%

9.3. Calculating species number (richness)

Using data from the quadrat surveys and the whole-plot species census, the total number of category A species recorded across all 29 sampling plots is presented below. Species were identified to species level where possible; genus-level identifications (e.g. *Sclerolaena* spp.) are counted as single taxa.

TABLE 11B: NUMBER OF CATEGORY A AND SUBCATEGORY A PLANT SPECIES

Activity area	No. A1 spp.	No. A2 spp.	No. A3 spp.	No. A4 spp.	No. A5 spp.	Total Cat A
AA1	15	14	2	8	1	40

Using the above data for overall percentage cover and species richness, and informed by benchmark values for PCT 27 (Section 7), the starting ecosystem condition state was assigned to AA1 according to Section 12(1) of the method. The A4+A5 proportion (8.31%) is well below the 50% threshold for State C/D. The NSRI of 0.356 (35.6% of benchmark) is below the 80% threshold required for State A. AA1 is therefore assigned Starting State B.

TABLE 14C: STARTING ECOSYSTEM CONDITION STATE FOR EACH ACTIVITY AREA

Activity area ID	Starting ecosystem condition state
AA1	B



9.4. Ecosystem scores

Ecosystem condition scores for AA1 were calculated using PLANR in accordance with Schedule 8 of the method. The PLANR-generated CSV file is provided as supporting evidence with this report.

TABLE 11D: ECOSYSTEM CONDITION SCORES

Activity area ID	Starting ecosystem condition score	Forecast ecosystem condition score	Starting contribution to biodiversity persistence score	Forecast contribution to biodiversity persistence score
AA1	0.45	0.55	59.39	72.77
Aggregate scores for the project	0.45	0.55	59.39	72.77

10. Starting Values for Ecosystem Condition Indicators

Indicator values for ground cover proportions (f, g) were calculated using the Section 11 pooled method, combining all point-intercept hits and quadrat data across the 29 sampling plots. Crown cover indicators (b, c, d, e) and the NSRI indicator (h) were calculated as averages across the 29 sampling plots in accordance with Schedule 5 Section 10 of the method. The full calculation is provided in the field data workbook (Nortongong_Field_Data_AA1.xlsx).



Table 15: Starting values of each indicator for consolidated Activity Area AA1 (Section 11, 29 sampling plots)

Indicator	Sub -Indicator	AA1
(a) Canopy height of native vegetation (m)	-	0m
(b) Crown cover from native plants in the canopy layer (%)	-	0%
(c) Crown cover from native plants in the mid-storey layer (%)	-	0%
(d) Crown cover from plants in the canopy layer provided by non-native plants (%)	-	0%
(e) Crown cover from plants in the mid-storey layer provided by non-native plants (%)	-	0%
(f) Ground cover from A1, A2, A3 plants as proportion of total A ground cover	-	91.69%
(g) Ground cover from A4, A5 plants as proportion of total A ground cover	-	8.31%
(h) Native species richness index (NSRI)	Native Trees	0.0
	Native Shrubs	0.7
	Native Vines	0.0
	Native Grasses	3.7
	Native Herbaceous (Forb)	4.45
	Total NSRI	35.6%
<i>Indicator (h) is calculated per Schedule 5, s10. For each of the 29 permanent sampling plots in AA1, the number of native species in each life form was counted and capped at the relevant benchmark (Trees 2, Shrubs 7, Vines 1, Grasses 5, Forbs 10). The mean across the 29 plots is reported above for each life form. The NSRI for AA1 is the sum of those means (8.9) divided by the total benchmark (25), giving 0.356 or 35.6 % of benchmark.</i>		



11. Threats to the Project Outcome

Threats to the project outcome were identified during the starting state assessment by direct field observation, by review of historical pest and weed treatment records provided by the landholder, and by desktop analysis of climate vulnerability (Section 11) and surrounding land use, in accordance with s32(b), s33(2)(3), s34 and s35(1)(o) of the method. Threats are documented at the activity area scale (AA1) and include threats present within the activity area as well as in the surrounding landscape. Management activities to address these threats are detailed in Section 14 of the Project Plan in accordance with s37(l)(i) and s43.

TABLE 16: THREATS TO THE PROJECT OUTCOME

Threat category (s34)	Description and supporting evidence
Non-native plant species (s34(a))	Exotic pasture grasses (predominantly introduced <i>Cenchrus</i> , <i>Hordeum</i> and <i>Lolium</i> species) and broadleaf weeds (<i>Conyza bonariensis</i> , <i>Hypochaeris radicata</i> , <i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>) recorded across the activity area during the July 2025 field survey. Exotic ground cover proportion at starting state is 8.31% of category A ground cover, indicating moderate but manageable weed pressure. Surrounding landscape includes ongoing cropping operations that present a continuous propagule source.
Non-native animal species (s34(a))	Feral pigs (<i>Sus scrofa</i>), feral goats (<i>Capra hircus</i>) and European rabbits (<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>) are present in the broader Coonamble district per historical landholder records and Western Local Land Services pest distribution data. Risk to plantings: trampling, browse on tubestock, soil disturbance.
Contaminants and contaminant sources (s34(b))	Adjacent cropping land within and abutting the property uses inorganic fertilisers and herbicides under standard broadacre agricultural practice. Risk of nutrient or chemical drift to the activity area is low given the buffer width but is identified as a residual threat.
Significant natural disturbances (s34(c)) drought	The project area is in a semi-arid zone (~450 mm mean annual rainfall) with documented drought episodes in 2002–2009 and 2017–2019. Climate projections (Section 11) indicate increased drought frequency and intensity. Drought poses a survival risk to establishing tubestock during the first 3–5 years post-planting.
Significant natural disturbances (s34(c)) flood	The activity area is situated on the Castlereagh River alluvial floodplain and is subject to periodic inundation following major rainfall events. Periodic inundation is consistent with the hydrological regime of PCT 27 and is not a threat to the reference ecosystem itself, but presents a risk to immature plantings during establishment.
Significant natural disturbances (s34(c)) fire	Grassland fuel load presents a wildfire risk during dry summer conditions. Climate projections (Section 11) indicate increased severe fire weather days. Risk is highest during the early establishment phase before bark development confers fire protection.



12. Historic Drivers of Change

Historic drivers of change associated with biodiversity in the project area were assessed during the starting state assessment using a combination of remote imagery analysis (NSW historical aerial imagery 1955–2024, Sentinel-2 imagery for the most recent decade) and on-ground visual inspection by the suitably qualified persons in July 2025, in accordance with s31 and s35(1)(r) of the method.

TABLE 17: SIGNIFICANT DISTURBANCES WITHIN PROJECT AREA

Historic Driver	Details
Comprehensive clearing of native vegetation	Original native woodland vegetation was comprehensively cleared more than 15 years prior to the application date for agricultural purposes (broadacre cropping and pastoral grazing). Aerial imagery analysis (NSW historical aerial imagery 1955–2024) confirms the absence of native canopy trees across the activity area for the entire imagery record available.
Long-term pastoral grazing	Continuous grazing by domestic livestock (cattle and sheep) over multiple decades has suppressed natural regeneration of native woody species and altered ground layer composition, favouring introduced pasture grasses over native species.
Periodic cultivation	Periodic cropping cycles (cereal grains and forage crops) have disturbed soil structure, accelerated organic matter decomposition, and depleted native seed banks within the activity area.
Drought	Major drought periods 2002–2009 (Millennium Drought) and 2017–2019 affected the region during the assessment period. These events further reduced native ground cover and accelerated weed colonisation in the inter-drought recovery periods (Bureau of Meteorology drought records).
Weed invasion	Establishment of exotic pasture grasses and opportunistic broadleaf weeds across the activity area during the agricultural management period, particularly in disturbed areas.

No clearing of native vegetation has been undertaken within 10 years prior to the date of the starting state assessment (s31(2)(a)), no damage or destruction of native vegetation by mechanical or chemical means has occurred within 3 years prior to the date of the starting state assessment other than initial site preparation activities (pasture spray-out, fence construction, ripping for tree planting) undertaken in 2024–2025 as part of project establishment (s31(2)(b)), and no cultivation involving significant soil disturbance has been undertaken within 3 years prior to the date of the starting state assessment other than initial site preparation activities (cultivation associated with planting line preparation) undertaken in 2024–2025 as part of project establishment (s31(2)(c)).

13. Climate Change Considerations

In accordance with s32(b) & 33(3) of the method, the vulnerability of the project area to the reasonably expected effects of climate change has been assessed using NARClIM2.0 (Di Virgilio et al. 2025), the NSW Government's authoritative downscaled regional climate modelling framework. Coonamble falls within the Central West and Orana NRM planning region, for which a dedicated Climate Change Snapshot was published. The snapshot identifies that northern areas of the region including Coonabarabran and Nyngan will experience the greatest temperature increases, placing the Nortongong project area at or above the regional average for warming impacts.

NARClIM2.0 projections are reported for SSP1-2.6 (low emissions) and SSP3-7.0 (high emissions) scenarios at 2050 (averaged 2040–2059) and 2090 (averaged 2080–2099) time horizons, relative to a 1990–2009 baseline. All values below are Central West and Orana regional ensemble means.



Temperature

Mean temperature is projected to increase by +1.2°C (range 0.6–1.7°C) under SSP1-2.6 and +2.1°C (range 1.1–2.9°C) under SSP3-7.0 by 2050. By 2090, increases reach +1.4°C (range 0.6–2.1°C) under SSP1-2.6 and +4.1°C (range 2.9–5.7°C) under SSP3-7.0. The current observed baseline is 30.5 hot days per year ($\geq 35^{\circ}\text{C}$) for the Central West and Orana region as a whole. Within the region, the snapshot reports baseline hot day frequencies of 45–55 days per year for Nyngan (the closest reporting town northwest of the project area, approximately 165 km west-southwest of Coonamble). Under SSP3-7.0 by 2090, the snapshot projects an additional 56.7 hot days per year for Dubbo (the closest reporting town southeast of the project area, approximately 130 km south of Coonamble), more than tripling Dubbo's baseline of 29.7 hot days per year. Coonamble's projected change is expected to fall within the range bracketed by Nyngan and Dubbo given its location between the two reporting points (NARClIM2.0 Central West and Orana Snapshot 2024; AdaptNSW).

Rainfall

The baseline observed annual rainfall is 562 mm. Ensemble-mean projections indicate declining rainfall across all seasons, though model spread is wide, encompassing both wetter and drier outcomes. Annual rainfall is projected to decline by –9.3% (range –23.2% to +17.5%) under SSP1-2.6 by 2050 and –15.7% (range –36.1% to +7.2%) under SSP3-7.0 by 2050. Spring rainfall faces the largest projected decline, down 21.2% by 2090 under SSP3-7.0 (range –52.3% to +45.6%), with direct implications for woodland recruitment, as spring is the primary germination and growth season for native grasses and woody seedlings in the Darling Riverine Plains (NARClIM2.0 Central West and Orana Snapshot 2024).

Fire Weather

Severe fire weather days (Forest Fire Danger Index > 50) are projected to increase from an observed baseline of approximately 4.9 days per year by +2.4 days/year (SSP1-2.6) to +3.8 days/year (SSP3-7.0) by 2050, and by +2.7 days/year (SSP1-2.6) to +7.5 days/year (SSP3-7.0) by 2090. Under SSP3-7.0, severe fire weather days would more than double to approximately 12+ days per year by 2090. The NARClIM2.0 snapshot notes the greatest fire weather increases are projected for the “central and western areas of the region including Dubbo and Nyngan,” which encompasses the Coonamble project area (NARClIM2.0 Central West and Orana Snapshot 2024; AdaptNSW).

Sources

Di Virgilio, G. et al. (2025) 'Design, evaluation, and future projections of the NARClIM2.0 CORDEX-CMIP6 Australasia regional climate ensemble', *Geoscientific Model Development*, 18, pp. 671–702.

<https://gmd.copernicus.org/articles/18/671/2025/>

NSW DCCEEW (2024) *NARClIM2.0 Central West and Orana Climate Change Snapshot*, August 2024. ISBN 978-1-76058-808-3. <https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-08/NARClIM2-Snapshot-CentralWestOrana.pdf>

AdaptNSW (2024) *Central West and Orana regional climate change projections*.

<https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/my-region/central-west-and-orana>



13.1. Significant Hydrological Features

Significant hydrological features within the activity area and the surrounding 500 m landscape were identified during the starting state assessment in accordance with s32(c), s33(4)(a) and s35(1)(p) of the method. Identification was informed by:

- The Commonwealth Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) report dated 18 March 2026;
- The NSW Hydrography spatial layer (NSW Department of Planning and Environment Spatial Services — NSW Hydro Theme), accessed via the SEED NSW Environmental Data Portal.
- Field observation by the suitably qualified persons during the July 2025 site assessment.

Table 18: Significant hydrological features

Feature	Description and treatment
Ephemeral drainage line (NSW Hydrography layer)	A minor ephemeral watercourse traverses one section of the activity area, identified on the NSW Hydrography spatial layer and confirmed by field observation. The watercourse flows only following significant rainfall events and is usually dry. It does not materially affect plant water availability within the activity area beyond the immediate riparian margin
Floodplain inundation	The activity area is situated on the Castlereagh River alluvial floodplain and is subject to periodic inundation following major rainfall events. NSW Floodplain mapping does not identify the activity area as flood-prone in the regulatory sense (i.e. no 1% AEP flood-prone designation applies), but periodic broad-scale inundation is a documented landscape characteristic. Periodic inundation is consistent with the hydrological regime of PCT 27 (Weeping Myall open woodland) and supports the reference ecosystem rather than threatening it.
Ramsar wetlands (PMST downstream proximity)	Three Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar wetlands) were identified by the PMST report as being downstream of the project area within the Murray-Darling Basin: Banrock Station Wetland Complex (Ramsar site No. 63, 800–900 km downstream), Riverland (Ramsar site No.29 700–800 km downstream), and The Coorong, and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetland (Ramsar site No.25, 900–1,000 km downstream). Given the distance from the project area, no measurable impacts on these Ramsar sites are anticipated from the project activities. The project will deliver beneficial impacts on regional water quality through reduced erosion, increased ground cover and improved riparian function.

13.2. Threatened Species and Ecological Communities

The Commonwealth Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) report was generated to identify matters of national environmental significance that may occur within or relate to the project area. The PMST search was undertaken over the project area together with a 500 m surrounding buffer around the activity area, consistent with the survey coverage required under s26(4) of the method. No threatened species were recorded on site within the activity area or the 500 m buffer during the starting state assessment field survey. The full PMST report is provided as an appendix.



13.3. Listed Threatened Ecological Communities

Five threatened ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act were identified:

- Weeping Myall Woodlands – Endangered (Community likely to occur within area)
- Poplar Box Grassy Woodland on Alluvial Plains – Endangered (Community likely to occur within area)
- Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands of South-eastern Australia – Endangered (Community likely to occur within area)
- Coolibah – Black Box Woodlands of the Darling Riverine Plains and the Brigalow Belt South Bioregions – Endangered (Community may occur within area)
- White Box–Yellow Box–Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland – Critically Endangered (Community may occur within area)

Listed Threatened Species (26 species)

Birds (18 species)

- *Pedionomus torquatus* Plains-wanderer – *Critically Endangered*
- *Calidris ferruginea* Curlew Sandpiper – *Critically Endangered*
- *Lathamus discolor* Swift Parrot – *Critically Endangered*
- *Botaurus poiciloptilus* Australasian Bittern – *Endangered*
- *Rostratula australis* Australian Painted Snipe – *Endangered*
- *Melanodryas cucullata cucullata* South-eastern Hooded Robin – *Endangered*
- *Lophochroa leadbeateri leadbeateri* Major Mitchell’s Cockatoo (eastern) – *Endangered*
- *Stagonopleura guttata* Diamond Firetail – *Vulnerable*
- *Hirundapus caudacutus* White-throated Needletail – *Vulnerable*
- *Aphelocephala leucopsis* Southern Whiteface – *Vulnerable*
- *Leipoa ocellata* Malleefowl – *Vulnerable*
- *Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami* South-eastern Glossy Black-Cockatoo – *Vulnerable*
- *Gallinago hardwickii* Latham’s Snipe – *Vulnerable*
- *Neophema chrysostoma* Blue-winged Parrot – *Vulnerable*
- *Falco hypoleucos* Grey Falcon – *Vulnerable*
- *Grantiella picta* Painted Honeyeater – *Vulnerable*



- *Polytelis swainsonii* Superb Parrot – *Vulnerable*
- *Calidris acuminata* Sharp-tailed Sandpiper – *Vulnerable*

Mammals (2 species)

- *Phascolarctos cinereus* Koala (combined populations of Qld, NSW and the ACT) – *Endangered*
- *Nyctophilus corbeni* Corben's Long-eared Bat – *Vulnerable*

Fish (1 species)

- *Mogurnda adspersa* (Murray-Darling Basin population) Southern Purple Spotted Gudgeon – *Endangered*

Plants (3 species)

- *Lepidium monoplocoides* Winged Pepper-cress – *Endangered*
- *Lepidium aschersonii* Spiny Peppercress – *Vulnerable*
- *Swainsona murrayana* Slender Darling-pea – *Vulnerable*

Reptiles (2 species)

- *Hemiaspis damelii* Grey Snake – *Endangered*
- *Anomalopus mackayi* Five-clawed Worm-skink – *Vulnerable*

Listed Migratory Species (8 species)

Eight listed migratory species were identified, including Fork-tailed Swift, White-throated Needletail, Yellow Wagtail, Common Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper and Latham's Snipe. The project area may provide transitory habitat for some of these species during migration periods.

13.4. Measures for Conservation and Recovery of Threatened Species and Ecological Communities

Specific measures proposed for the conservation and recovery of the threatened species and ecological communities identified above are documented in the Project Plan (Section 16) in accordance with s40 of the method. These measures may be updated or amended over the course of the project's permanence period in response to monitoring outcomes per s36(3).

13.5. Natural Regeneration

Natural regeneration of native species was assessed as part of the site assessment in accordance with s35(1)(s) of the method. At the time of the July 2025 field survey, no naturally regenerating native woody species with stems of diameter at breast height less than 5 cm were recorded across the activity area. This is consistent with the comprehensive clearing history of the project area and the Starting State B determination. The soil seed bank is expected to contain viable seed of native ground-layer species characteristic of PCT 27, including perennial grasses and forbs, which will be supported to regenerate following livestock exclusion and weed control as part of the project management program. Natural regeneration of ground-layer species is expected to supplement infill planting program (Q3 2026) in achieving the NSRI threshold values for Restoration Target Level 2. Reliance on



natural regeneration as a project mechanism is described in the Project Plan (Section 11) in accordance with s37(j) and s37(l)(iv).

13.6. Covenants and Other Legal Encumbrances

The project area was reviewed for covenants, legal encumbrances and other registered interests in accordance with s35(1)(t) of the method. The following sources were assessed:

- NSW Land Registry Services land title: reviewed for registered mortgages, easements, restrictions on use, positive covenants, profits a prendre, leases and other notations on the certificate of title for each of the 27 lots comprising the property;
- ACCU Scheme Public Project Register Via CER Portal : reviewed for any Carbon Farming Initiative or Emissions Reduction Fund projects registered against the property;
- Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) public register and NSW Biodiversity Stewardship Site register: reviewed for any biodiversity stewardship agreement, conservation agreement, or registered offset site over the project area lots;
- NSW Environmental Interest Holdings (EIH) and registered Property Vegetation Plans (PVP): reviewed via the NSW Native Vegetation Regulatory Map and BioNet for any registered conservation interests applicable to the project lots;
- NSW State Heritage Register and Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS): reviewed for registered cultural heritage items, places and Aboriginal sites applicable to the project area;

Registered interests and legal encumbrances identified through these searches were assessed for relevance to the project. No covenants or other legal encumbrances relevant to the project were identified for AA1.

Table 19: Covenants and legal encumbrances

Activity area ID	Description of covenants and legal encumbrances
AA1	No covenants or other legal encumbrances relevant to the project were identified.

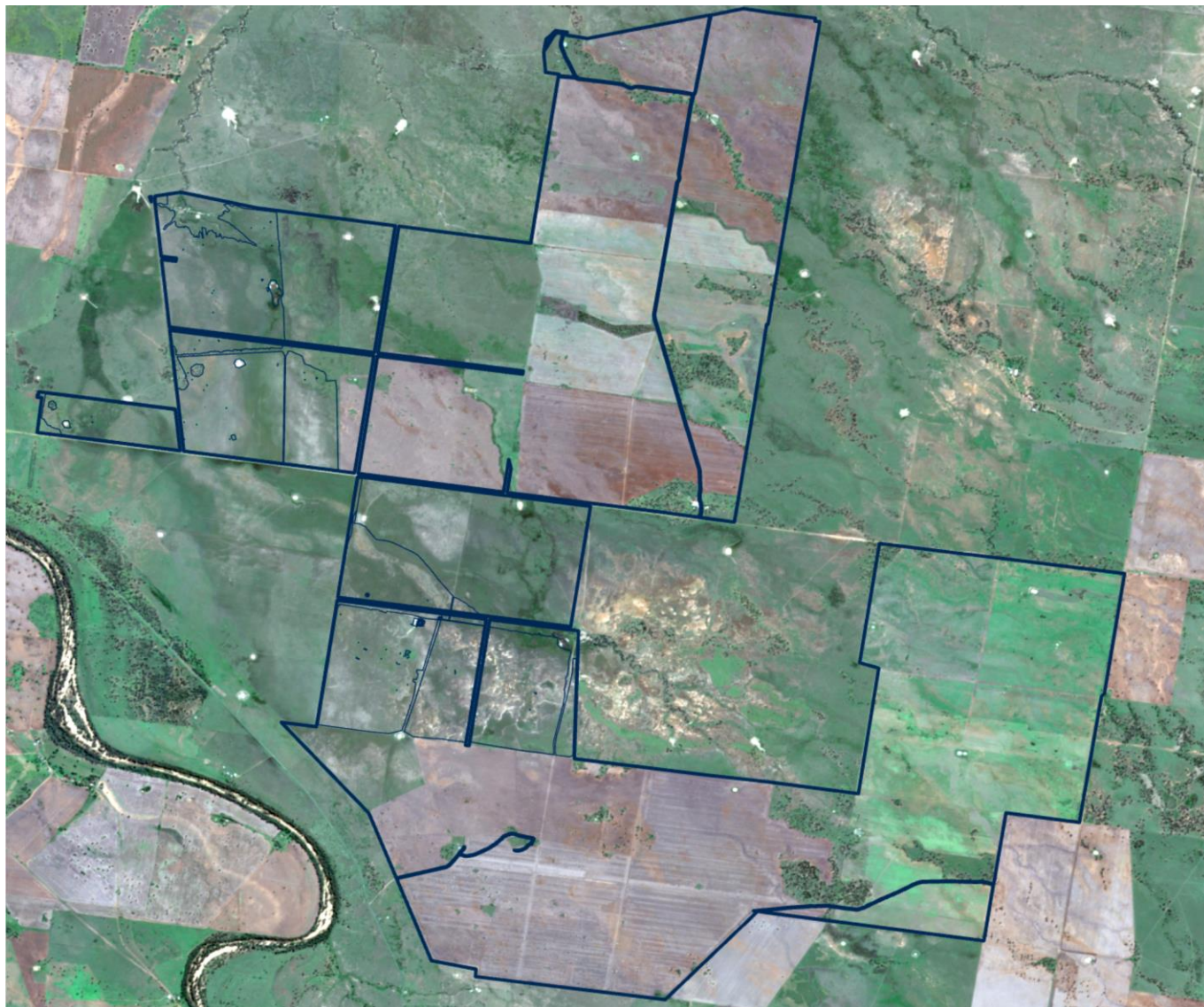


Appendix 1

Imagery used to determine lack of forest cover for activity areas near the date of application:

Imagery Scene Id: S2A_MSIL2A_20250428T001251_N0511_R073_T55JFF_20250428T023211

Imagery Acquisition date: 28 APR 2025

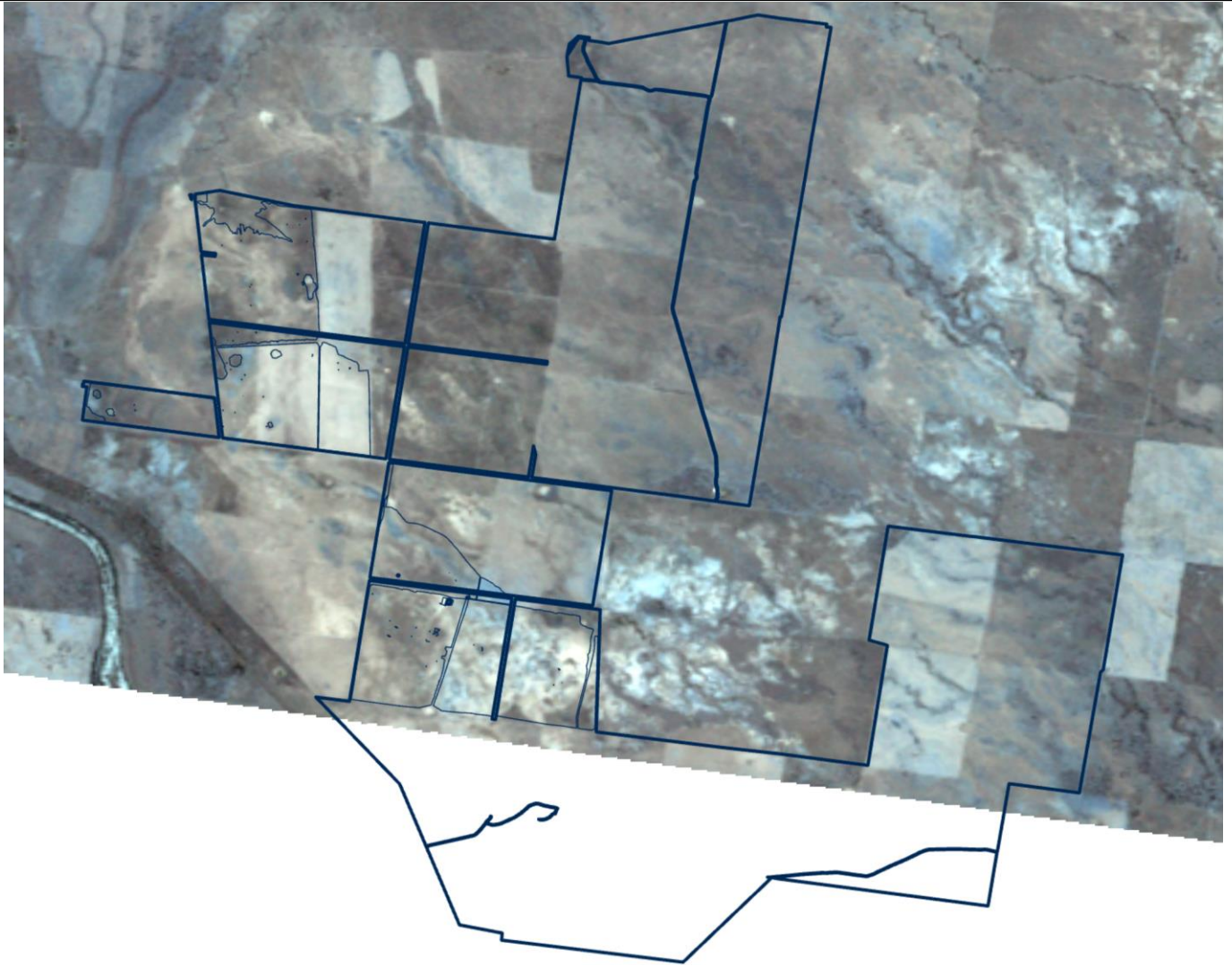


Imagery used to support that clearing within activity areas occurred over 15 years ago:

A Landsat imagery was used to check condition of land 15 years prior to project registration. Visual assessment confirms that the activity area was largely devoid of canopy cover.

Imagery Scene ID: LT05_L2SP_092081_20091201_20200825_02_T1

Imagery Acquisition Date: 01 DEC 2009





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GAP Letterhead

Final Audit Report

2026-06-26

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