

19. Indigenous heritage

An assessment of the area's Aboriginal heritage values and the sympathetic treatment of areas of Aboriginal cultural sensitivity has been a key determinant in the route options and preferred route development stages of the project.

The information gathered during literature reviews and the field investigations, together with the invaluable information gained through the inclusive and cooperative engagement and consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders has been compiled and used to develop the concept design, and has informed the management measures contained within the concept design strategy.

For further details, refer to the Indigenous Heritage Impact Assessment Working Paper.

19.1 Engagement of Aboriginal stakeholders

Literature reviews

A literature review of relevant heritage databases, including the Department of Environment and Climate Change Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System Register, local council heritage registers and previous studies in the area was undertaken.

Only one Aboriginal heritage item has been listed on any heritage register along the preferred route. This comprises an isolated artefact recorded by Kinhill Engineers in 1997 listed on the Department of Environment and Climate Change Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System Register. It would appear that this site has been impacted by the construction of the Halfway Creek Bypass.

An indicative natural place (ID #16399) encompassing an extensive area of the coastline between Moonee Beach and Corindi Beach is provisionally listed on the Register of the National Estate under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. This listing is under assessment and currently has no legal bearing.

A number of areas of cultural sensitivity to the local Aboriginal community, inclusive of both registered and unregistered sites, are also known to occur within the study area. This has been confirmed as a result of consultations with the Aboriginal community.

Aboriginal Focus Group

The Aboriginal Focus Group was formed in order to provide an inclusive and focussed community consultation group comprised of registered Aboriginal stakeholders with demonstrated connection to the area, and who were able to demonstrate that they could represent the Aboriginal communities of the area.

The formation of the Aboriginal Focus Group was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Environment and Climate Change "Interim Community Consultation Requirements for Applicants". The Aboriginal Focus Group was comprised of representatives from the Yarrowarra Aboriginal Corporation (including the Garby Elders), the Coffs Harbour Local Aboriginal Land Council, and the Grafton Ngerrie Local Aboriginal Land Council.

The registered parties were provided with copies of the methodology for conducting the fieldwork and comments on methodology were invited. All registered parties were in accordance that the methodology was suitable and complete.

Fieldwork

Following the literature reviews and in consultation with members of the Aboriginal Focus Group, fieldwork was undertaken at varying stages of the project.

The advanced Aboriginal heritage fieldwork took place in April 2007. Representatives from the Aboriginal Focus Group were invited to attend the fieldwork and accompanied archaeologists from South East Archaeology for the two-week field survey period.

Fifteen Aboriginal heritage sites, all isolated artefacts or artefact scatters, were identified within the study area.

The findings from the advanced Aboriginal heritage field investigations have been incorporated into the Advanced Aboriginal Heritage Survey Report. Geographical Information System data has been provided and mapped into the Geographical Information System platform to inform the concept design process.

Submissions

Following the completion of the advanced field surveys, a written submission was received from the Grafton Ngerrie Local Aboriginal Land Council on 23 April 2007. The submission expressed a request for representatives to be present during the commencement of construction, but otherwise no objections were raised to the Project commencing. A copy of this submission is provided in the Preliminary Indigenous Heritage Report working paper.

19.2 Impacts on matters of indigenous heritage

The preferred route passes through a number of areas that have been identified as being culturally sensitive to Aboriginal communities.

One area that has been identified as having a high to very high potential of containing items of Aboriginal heritage significance, and where less common artefact types are likely to occur, is the area described as the spur crest south of Corindi Creek and north of Kangaroo Trail Road (refer also figure 7). This area has been identified as an area where further investigation is recommended to determine the impacts of the proposed upgrade on heritage sites and to allow for appropriate management measures to be formulated.

One site that was previously identified as a constraint on the alignment of the highway is the bora/ceremonial site located to the east of the existing highway in the vicinity of Halfway Creek. The highway alignment has been refined and moved to the west so that this site is by-passed to the western side.

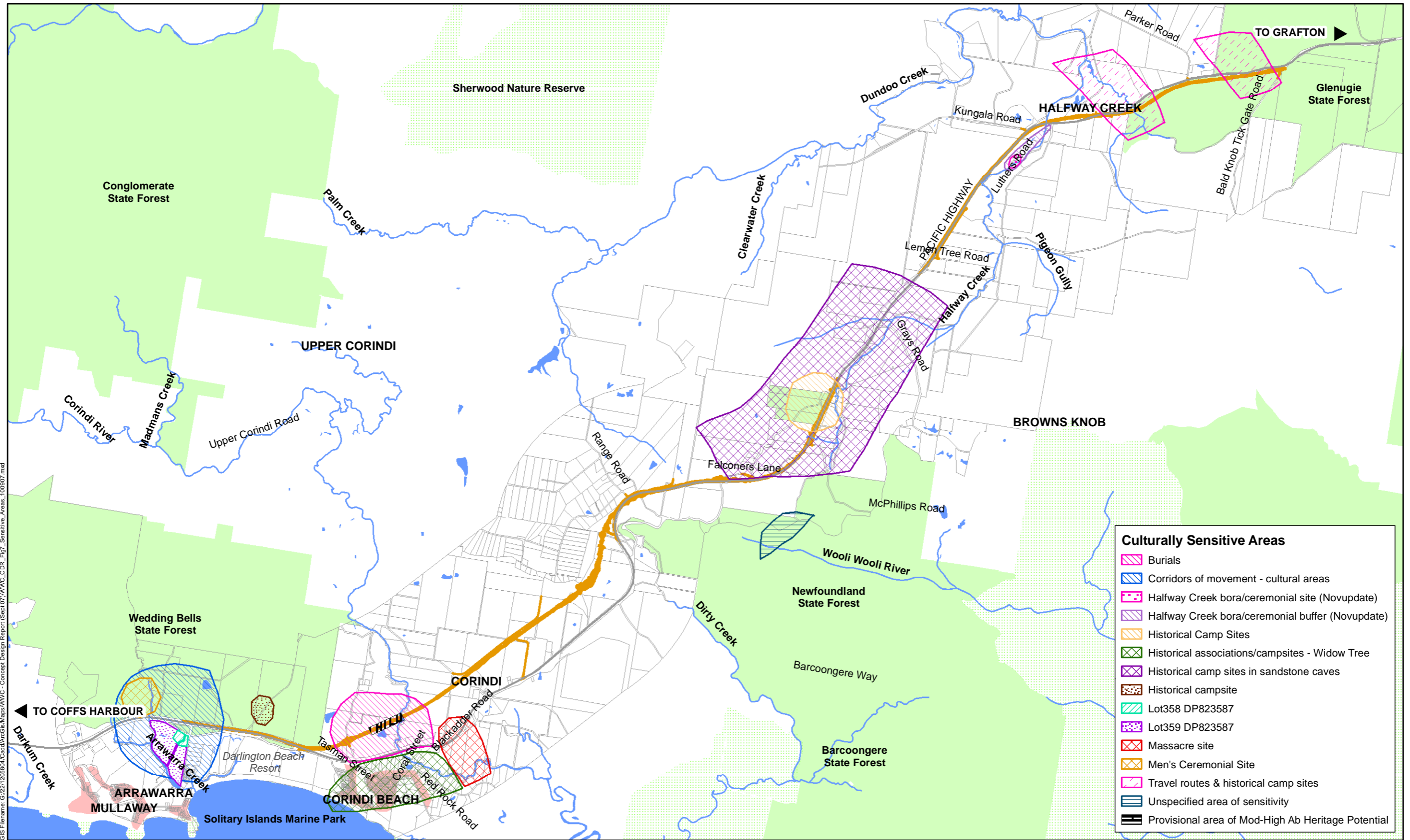
Two areas where there is a significant potential for skeletal remains to be disturbed during construction have been identified. They are:

- Sherwood Creek to Kangaroo Trail Road.
- Corindi Creek to Redbank Creek.

It has been agreed between the RTA and members of the Aboriginal Focus Group, that upon commencement of the environmental assessment phase that the local Aboriginal elders will be taken to site to inspect the alignment and comment sought as to any areas of cultural sensitivity that have not been identified to date.

Areas mapped as being culturally sensitive, and those showing known Aboriginal Heritage items are shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8.

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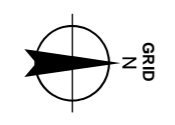
Culturally Sensitive Areas

- Burials
- Corridors of movement - cultural areas
- Halfway Creek bora/ceremonial site (Novupdate)
- Halfway Creek bora/ceremonial buffer (Novupdate)
- Historical Camp Sites
- Historical associations/campsites - Widow Tree
- Historical camp sites in sandstone caves
- Historical campsite
- Lot358 DP823587
- Lot359 DP823587
- Massacre site
- Men's Ceremonial Site
- Travel routes & historical camp sites
- Unspecified area of sensitivity
- Provisional area of Mod-High Ab Heritage Potential

SCALE 1:70,000 @ A3

0 0.5 1 2 Km

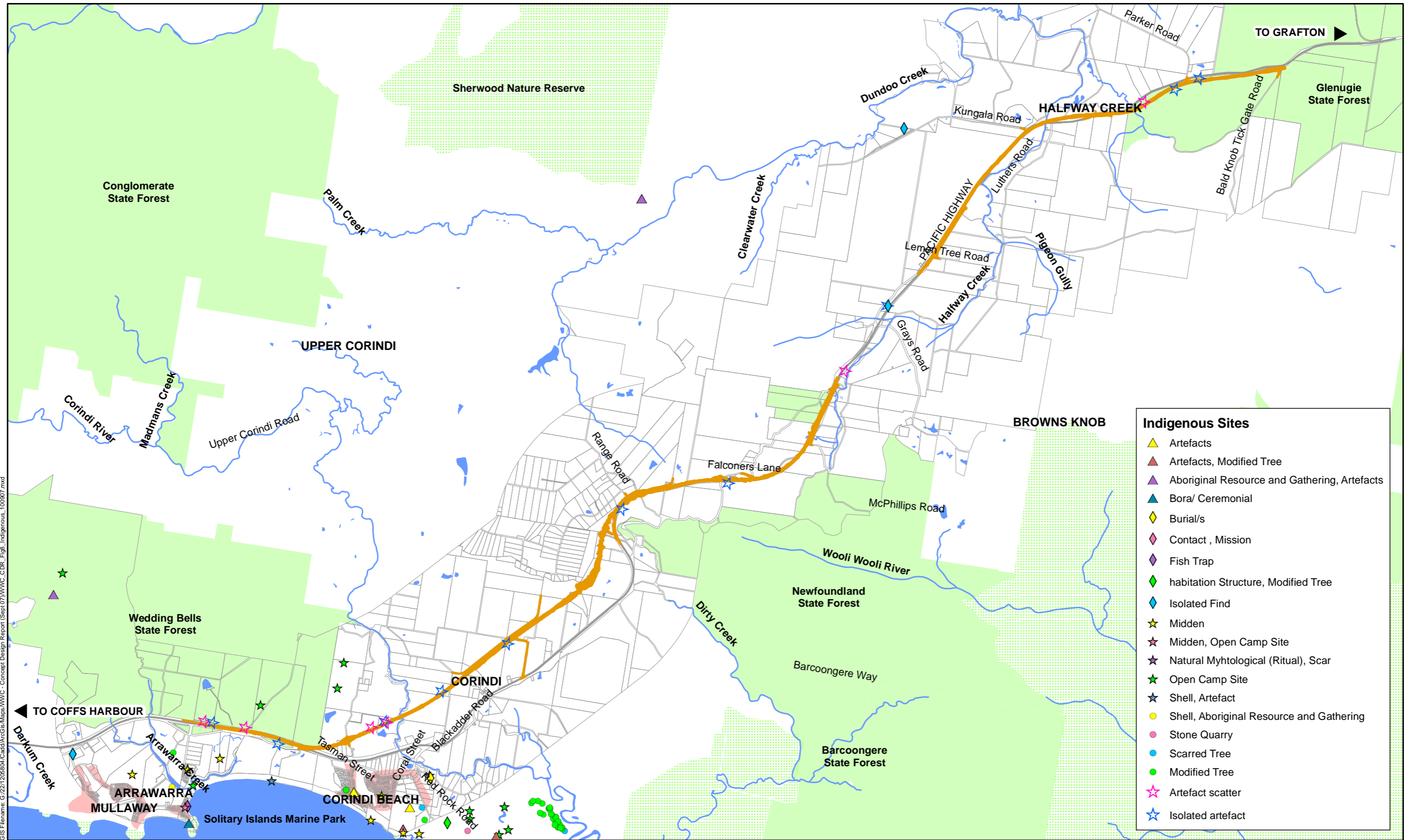
Map Projection: Universal Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: Geodetic Datum of Australia 1994
Grid: Map Grid of Australia, Zone 56



Legend

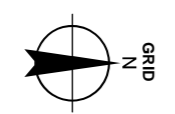
- Preferred Route
- Watercourse
- Cadastre
- Builtup areas
- National parks, Nature reserves
- State forests

Spatial layers courtesy of Coffs Harbour City Council, NSW Department of Lands, NSW Roads & Traffic Authority, Geoscience Australia, NSW Department of Environment & Conservation, NSW Department of Primary Industries.



- Indigenous Sites**
- ▲ Artefacts
 - ▲ Artefacts, Modified Tree
 - ▲ Aboriginal Resource and Gathering, Artefacts
 - ▲ Bora/ Ceremonial
 - ◆ Burial/s
 - ◆ Contact , Mission
 - ◆ Fish Trap
 - ◆ habitation Structure, Modified Tree
 - ◆ Isolated Find
 - ★ Midden
 - ★ Midden, Open Camp Site
 - ★ Natural Myhtological (Ritual), Scar
 - ★ Open Camp Site
 - ★ Shell, Artefact
 - ★ Shell, Aboriginal Resource and Gathering
 - ★ Stone Quarry
 - ★ Scarred Tree
 - ★ Modified Tree
 - ★ Artefact scatter
 - ★ Isolated artefact

SCALE 1:70,000 @ A3
0 0.5 1 2 Km
Map Projection: Universal Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: Geodetic Datum of Australia 1994
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Legend

- Preferred Route
- Watercourse
- Cadastre
- Builtup areas
- National parks, Nature reserves
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Spatial layers courtesy of Coffs Harbour City Council, NSW Department of Lands, NSW Roads & Traffic Authority, Geoscience Australia, NSW Department of Environment & Conservation, NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Locations of Known Indigenous Heritage Items

Figure 8

19.3 Proposed management measures

The performance objectives of the environmental management measures that have been developed and incorporated into the concept design will be further developed and documented in the detailed design and in a Construction Environmental Management Plan. A Heritage Management Plan would be developed to accompany the Construction Environmental Management Plan. An environmental representative is to be appointed to monitor compliance with the environmental protection measures contained within the Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Controls to be developed in the Construction Environmental Management Plan, and monitored by the environmental representative, will include procedures to be followed to ensure that during construction the performance objectives can at minimum be met. Some key recommendations for inclusion in the Construction Environmental Management Plan may include:

- Have elders traverse the site to confirm no other areas of cultural sensitivity are present in the alignment.
- Have representatives from the Aboriginal Focus Group present at the commencement of construction and whenever disturbing new ground.
- Monitoring for skeletal remains at the two sites listed in Section 19.2.