



## 03 \_\_\_\_\_ Visual impact assessment

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### 3.1\_ Introduction

The EIA guide note clearly identifies a difference between the landscape character impacts and the visual impacts of a proposed development. Landscape character assessment, as presented in Chapter 2 for example, is about determining the impact of development on the aggregate of an area's built, natural and cultural character or sense of place. Visual assessment helps to define the day to day visual effects of a project on people's views from their home or from other places of value in the community (EIA guide note, pg 4, section 1.3).

Chapter 3 presents the visual impact assessment of the project. As for the character assessment, the visual assessment is structured around the 11 sections of the project. For each section the character impact assessment determined in Chapter 2 is noted at the front.

An objective of visual assessment is also to identify scenic resources that should be protected because of their value to the community. Visual impact is the measure of the potential change that new interventions would have on the existing visual environment. Visual impact depends upon:

- \_The visual catchment area, or the extent of visibility of the proposed changes
- \_Visual sensitivity, or the quality of the view and how sensitive it is to the proposed change, related to the direction and composition of the view
- \_Magnitude, or the nature of the project and its proximity to the view.  
Magnitude considers the frequency of the view and distance at which it is viewed

Visual assessment is a function of these influencing factors.

## **03\_\_\_\_\_ Visual impact assessment**

### **3.2\_ Visual impact assessment methodology**

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#### **3.2.1\_ Assessment process**

In accordance with the RMS Guide EIA-N04 the process undertaken in this visual assessment has included the following:

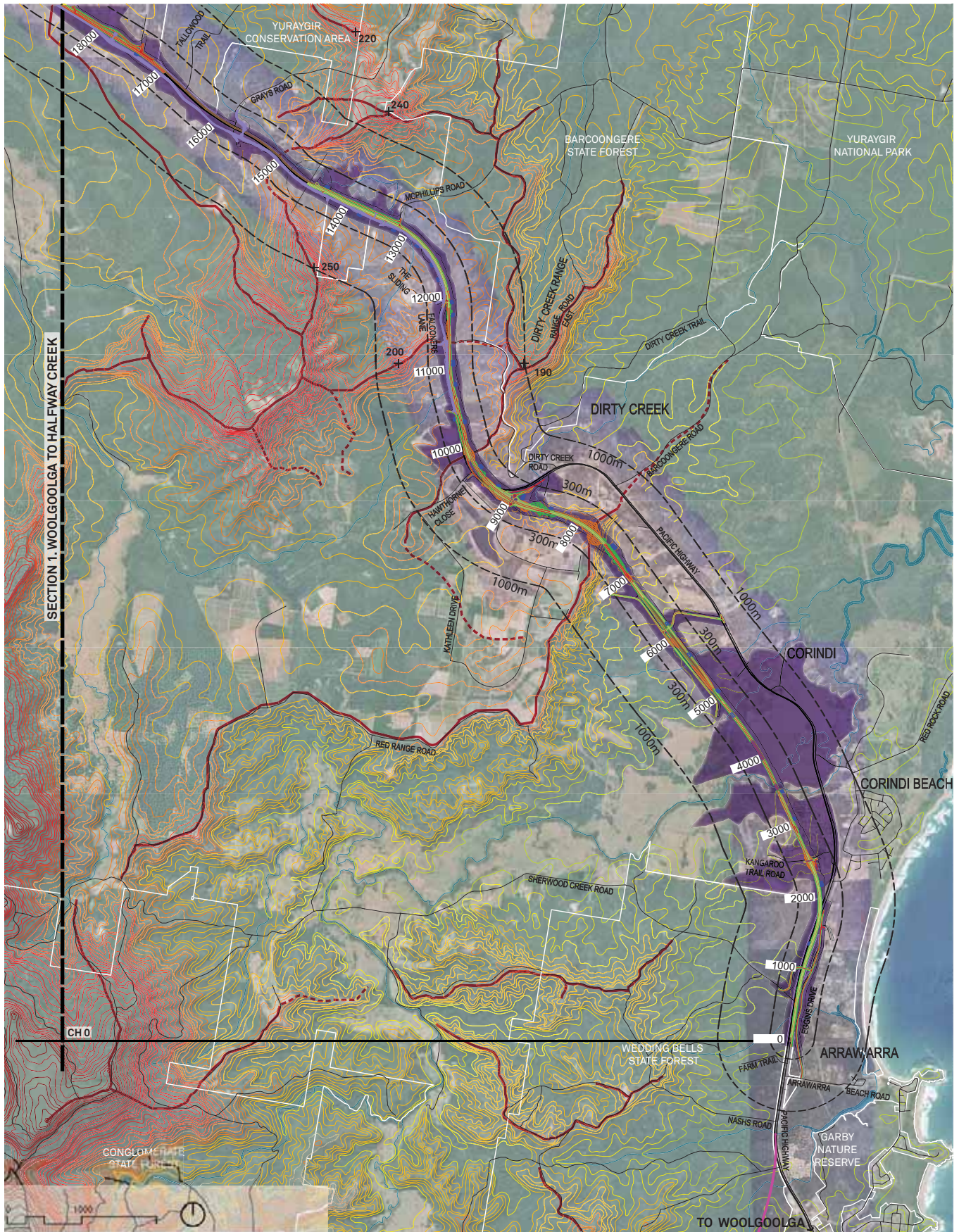
- \_Establish an estimated visual catchment
- \_Ground truth the estimated catchment
- \_Establish viewpoint locations addressing areas of impact
- \_Review likely impacts at viewpoint locations
- \_Finalise catchment and visual impacts
- \_Use visual impact assessment to influence design and mitigation measures

#### **3.2.2\_ Visual catchment**

The visual catchment for the current project design is the extent to which the project can be viewed from outside of the project corridor. Landform, vegetation, land use, and other landscape features influence the extent of the visual catchment.

The visual catchment was initially determined through desktop analysis using GIS to review topography and ascertain the extent from which landform would allow views to the project. Further plan analysis was undertaken to ascertain the influence of vegetation, land use, and distance to the raw GIS/landform data. Mapping was then validated via ground truthing to check the extent to which vegetation, land use and distance restrict views to the project. Ground truthing was limited to the extent that some private lands located within the nominated visual catchment area were not able to be accessed. This is a typical limitation of visual analysis, particularly in rural areas where large tracts of land may be inaccessible.

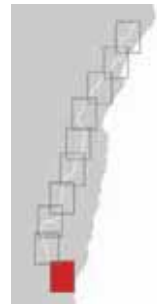
Visual Envelope Maps (VEMs) were created from the GIS, desk top and on site analysis work. The VEMs define areas from which the project can be viewed based on the above process from a 1.5 m vantage point which is the typical height of a person at eye level. Areas that are cloaked in dense vegetation, with tree canopies higher than 1.5 m are generally excluded from the visual catchment area. (Refer Visual Envelope Maps VEM 01 - VEM 10)

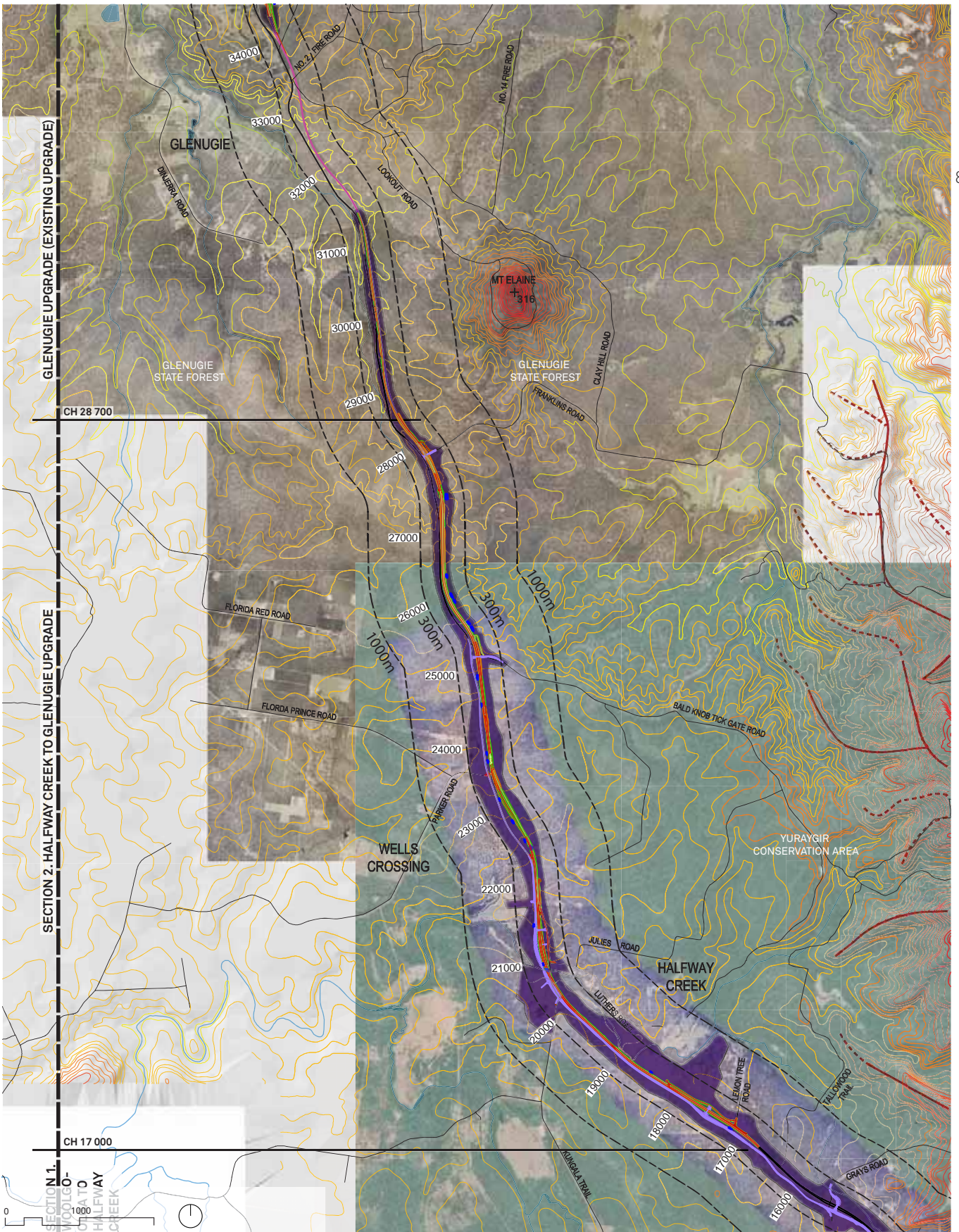


Legend

- |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
|  | Alignment: Interim option                  |  | Strong ridgelines   |
|  | Alignment: Ultimate option                 |  | Notional ridgelines   |
|  | Areas of cut                               |  | Visual Envelope   |
|  | Areas of fill                              |  | National Parks, State Forests,<br>Nature Reserves, Conservation Areas |
|  | Existing Pacific Highway route             |  | Waterways   |
|  | Existing Pacific Highway Upgrade alignment |  | Contours at 10m interval  |
|  |  |  | Distance from road centreline   |

VEM 01

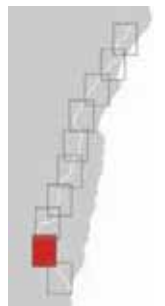


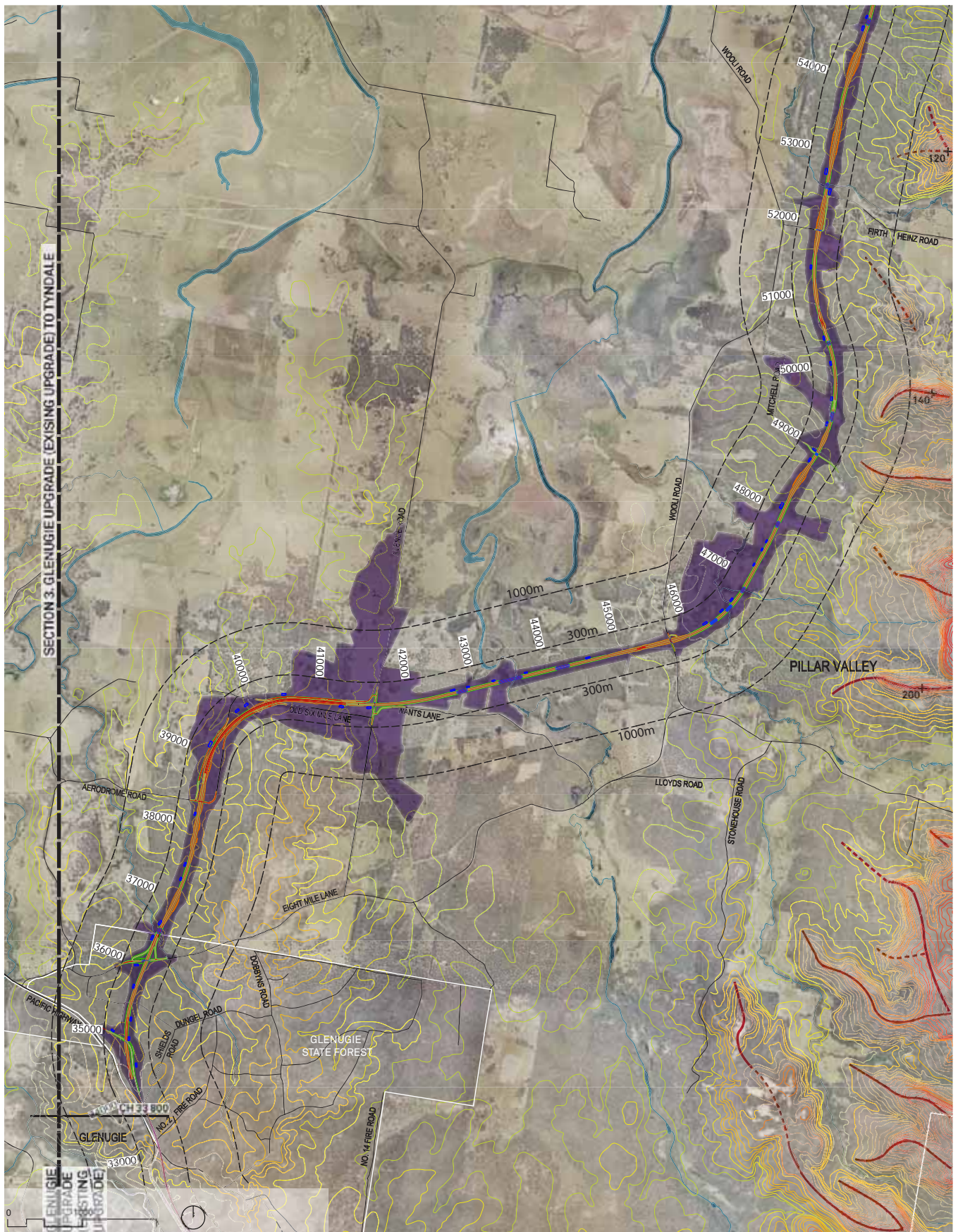


Legend

- Alignment: Interim option
- Alignment: Ultimate option
- Areas of cut
- Areas of fill
- Existing Pacific Highway route
- Existing Pacific Highway Upgrade alignment
- Strong ridgelines
- Notional ridgelines
- Visual Envelope
- National Parks, State Forests, Nature Reserves, Conservation Areas
- Waterways
- Contours at 10m interval
- Distance from road centreline

VEM 02





Legend

- |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  | Alignment: Interim option                  |  | Strong ridgelines  |
|  | Alignment: Ultimate option                 |  | Notional ridgelines  |
|  | Areas of cut                               |  | Visual Envelope  |
|  | Areas of fill                              |  | National Parks, State Forests, Nature Reserves, Conservation Areas |
|  | Existing Pacific Highway route             |  | Waterways  |
|  | Existing Pacific Highway Upgrade alignment |  | Contours at 10m interval   |
|  |  |  | Distance from road centreline                                      |

VEM 03

