

3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

The proposed works have been identified as “development without consent” in accordance with the provisions of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007. Infrastructure NSW is the determining authority for the Project. Development consent from Clarence Valley Council is not required.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Section 5.5 - Duty to consider environmental impact.

Subdivision 2 - Duty of determining authorities to consider environmental impact of activities.

(1) For the purpose of attaining the objects of this Act relating to the protection and enhancement of the environment, a determining authority in its consideration of an activity shall, notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act or the provisions of any other Act or of any other instrument made under this or any other Act, examine and take into account the fullest extent possible all matters affecting or likely to affect the environment by reason of that activity.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007

Part 3, Division 5: Electricity Transmission or Distribution

Subdivision 1 Electricity Transmission or Distribution Networks

41 Development permitted without consent

(1) Development for the purpose of an electricity transmission or distribution network may be carried out by or on behalf of an electricity supply authority or public authority without consent on any land.

Clarence Valley Local Environmental Plan 2011

Although the State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007 is the principal legislation, the aims of the Clarence Valley Local Environmental Plan 2011 should also be recognised, and include (in relation to the proposed transmission line):

1.2 Aims of Plan

(2) The particular aims of this Plan are as follows:

- (d) to protect areas of high ecological, scientific, cultural or aesthetic value
- (e) to provide adequate access and services to development carried out in accordance with this plan
- (g) to conserve items and areas of environmental and cultural heritage
- (j) to protect key infrastructure and ensure adequate integration of infrastructure and development
- (k) to maintain or improve the natural conservation and scenic amenity values of the land, including significant habitat areas and wildlife corridors

4.0 Landscape Character and Visual Environment



Banks of the Clarence River, Grafton

4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

The following pages outline the landscape character types surrounding the proposed transmission line. The written description of the types are accompanied by a representative image taken from within the area of the character type.

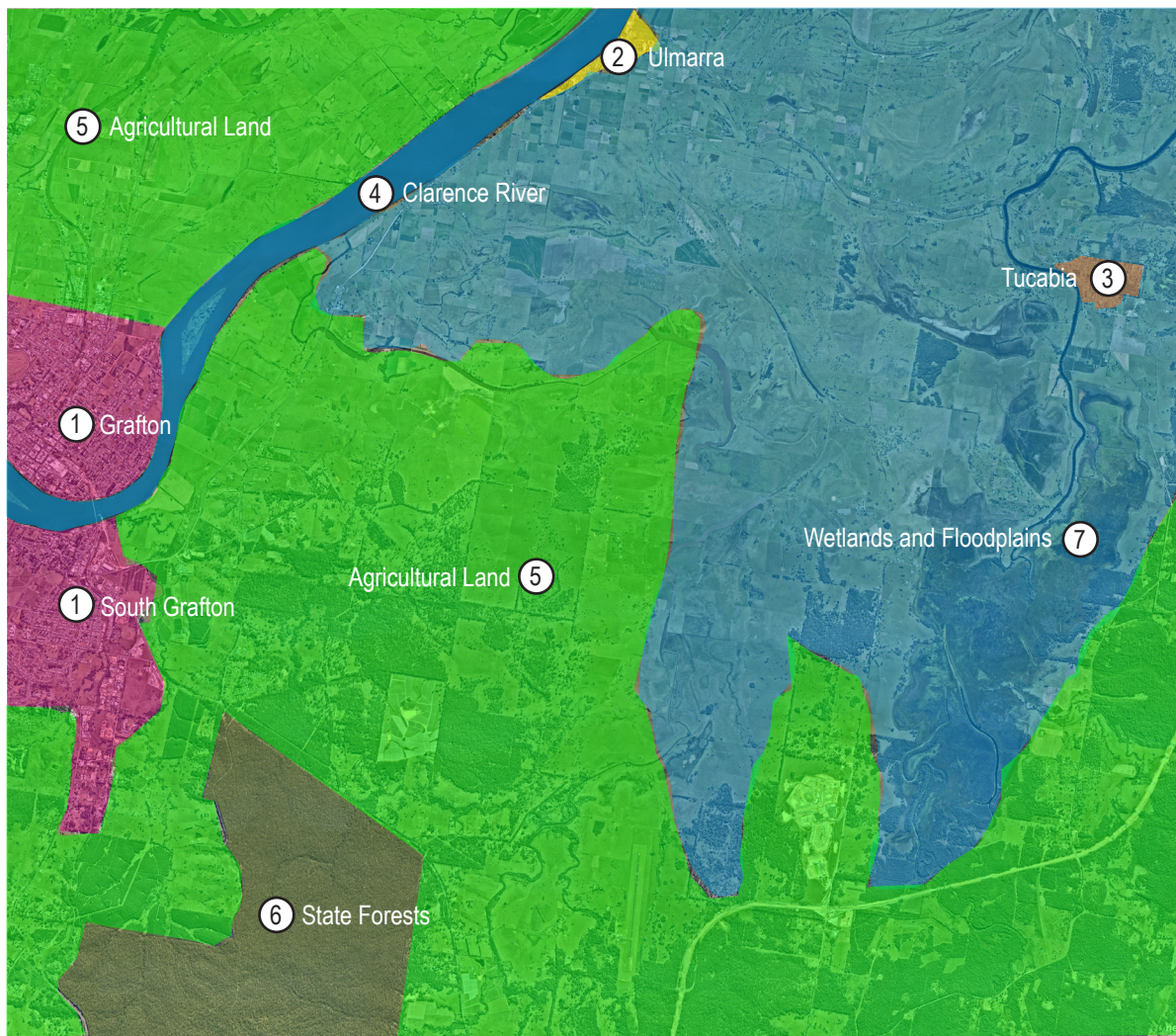
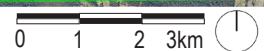


Figure 4.1 - Broad surrounding landscape character types (as described on the following pages).



4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The Mid North Coast subregion is the largest subregion on the North Coast covering approximately 14,690 square kilometres and is located on the Clarence, Bellinger and Nambucca river catchments.

The Clarence Valley LGA is predominantly rural and includes dispersed settlements. Numerous small villages and rural localities are based around Grafton as well as the towns of Iluka, Maclean and Yamba.

The region incorporates a number of commercial activities including forestry, agriculture, grazing, and a growing level of tourism focused around national parks, coastal areas, rainforests, mountains and rivers.

The main land uses are grazing, cropping (particularly sugar cane), conservation reserves, forestry and tourism. There is a history of intensive land use on the coastal floodplain, with approximately 60% of floodplain vegetation having been cleared (including wetlands). Many of the remaining wetlands have also been drained for agriculture which has resulted in a significant decline in the extent and condition of coastal wetlands in NSW.

The local area is broadly characterised by plains and low undulating hills predominantly used for rural residential living and agricultural activities, as well as forest and floodplain wetlands. Discernible landscape areas in the immediate vicinity include:

1) Grafton & South Grafton

The city is located on and divided by the Clarence River and features a number of Victorian era buildings. River flats are used for mixed farming and dairying, with fishing and stock raising also being important to the local economy. The town is also famous for its annual Jacaranda Festival.

Grafton is a regional interchange for a variety of transport networks including road and river and is a focus for higher order services for the Clarence Valley sub-region. It acts as the major employment centre and includes retail and administrative services, Grafton TAFE Campus, primary and high schools and a base hospital.

2) Ulmarra

Ulmarra is a small historic town on the southbank of the Clarence River located approximately 12km from the centre of Grafton (or 17km when travelling on the Pacific Highway). Ulmarra's name comes from an Aboriginal word meaning "Bend in the river" and at the 2006 census had a population of 446 people. Elements of the town have retained their historical feel, with River and Coldstream Streets being excellent examples of the town's past as a 19th century riverport.

3) Tucabia

Tucabia is a small rural town of approximately 257 people (2016 census) to the northeast of the proposed transmission line and is one example of the surrounding small towns and settlements around Grafton. It has one local village store and petrol station. This is

4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

representative of a number of small clusters of housing with a limited amount of services directly tied to them, relying more on the larger towns or cities in close proximity to provide diversified goods and services.

4) Clarence River

The Clarence River is the major natural feature within the immediate area. The river lies within one of the east coast's major catchments and has multiple tributaries of differing sizes. The river passes through numerous populated areas including the town of Ulmarra and the city of Grafton.

5) Agricultural Land

Much of the surrounding landscape is comprised of agricultural land (predominately grazing) as well as horticultural activities such as tea tree farming. The proposed transmission line crosses over this agricultural land but it is noted that the Mid North Coast Farmland Mapping Project completed by the Department of Planning and Environment in 2008 does not identify any of this land as regionally significant farmland.

6) State Forests

To the south of the proposed transmission line is Bom Bom and Divines State Forests. Bom Bom State Forest covers an area of approximately 890 hectares and includes mountain biking tracks as well as the Grafton Pistol Club. Divines Forest covers approximately 1500 hectares and borders Bom Bom State Forest.

7) Wetlands and Floodplains

There is a history of intensive land use on the coastal floodplain. Approximately 60% of floodplain vegetation has been cleared (including wetlands). Many of the remaining wetlands have also been drained for agriculture. Periods of heavy rainfall often result in the many wetland depressions on the Clarence and Richmond floodplain becoming inundated, particularly during summer months.

The surrounding wetlands are identified in the *Clarence Lowlands Wetland Conservation Assessment* as the Coldstream Wetlands area. Almost all of the land is entirely freehold or Crown leasehold land and has been extensively cleared for grazing purposes as well as for sugar cane agriculture.

4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



Character Type 1 - Grafton and Grafton South. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length



Character Type 2 - Ulmarra. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length



Character Type 3 - Tucabia. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length



Character Type 4 - Clarence River. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length

4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL ENVIRONMENT



Character Type 5 - Agricultural land. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length



Character Type 6 - State Forest. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length



Character Type 7 - Wetlands and Floodplains. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length

5.0 Visual Catchment Analysis and Viewpoint Selection



Grafton Sheriff's Office.

5.0 VISUAL CATCHMENT ANALYSIS AND VIEWPOINT SELECTION

EXISTING VISUAL CATCHMENT

This desktop topography study is sourced from Google Earth and is limited to an estimated viewshed based on topography only, without taking into account vegetation or building heights. This analysis has been used as a guide only, while significant ground studies have been conducted in and around the site to ascertain the key locations from which the proposal would potentially be visible.

The visual catchment when viewed from ground level is very minimal due to the extent of existing vegetation within the surrounding area and the low number of residential dwellings in close proximity to the proposed transmission line route.

BASIS OF SELECTION

The selection of views for detailed evaluation later in this report has been based on the following sources:

- Visual assessment policy guidance in particular the NSW Land and Environment Court Planning Principles
- Background documents
- Desktop mapping
- In field evaluation undertaken for this report

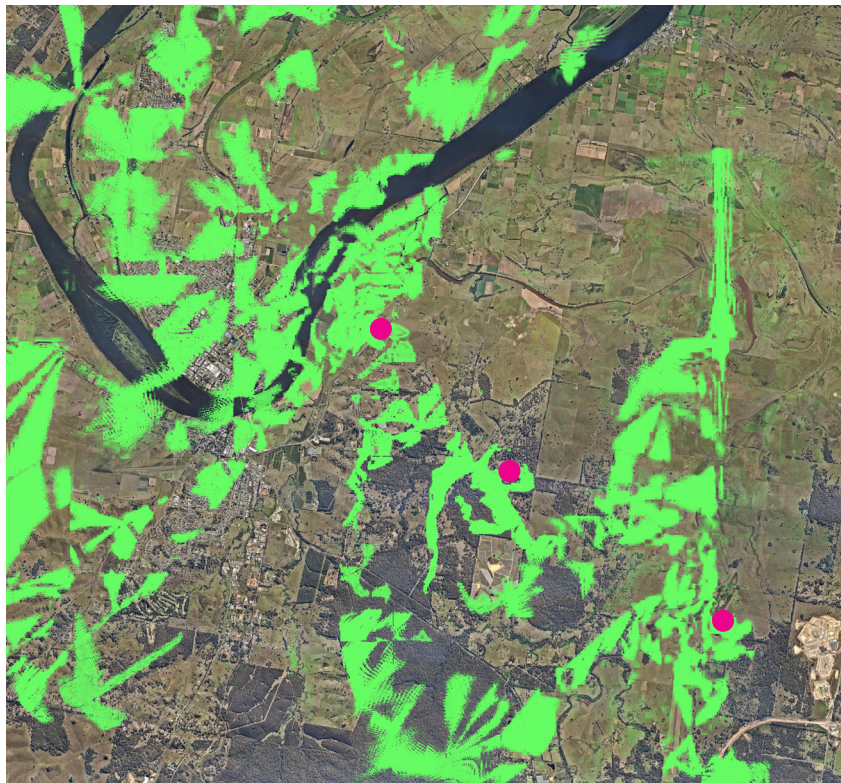


Figure 5.1 - Surrounding viewshed. ■ Potential viewshed based on topography only ● Viewshed locations on topography only



PART B

visual impact assessment

Looking south along Timbs Lane.



6.0 THE PROJECT

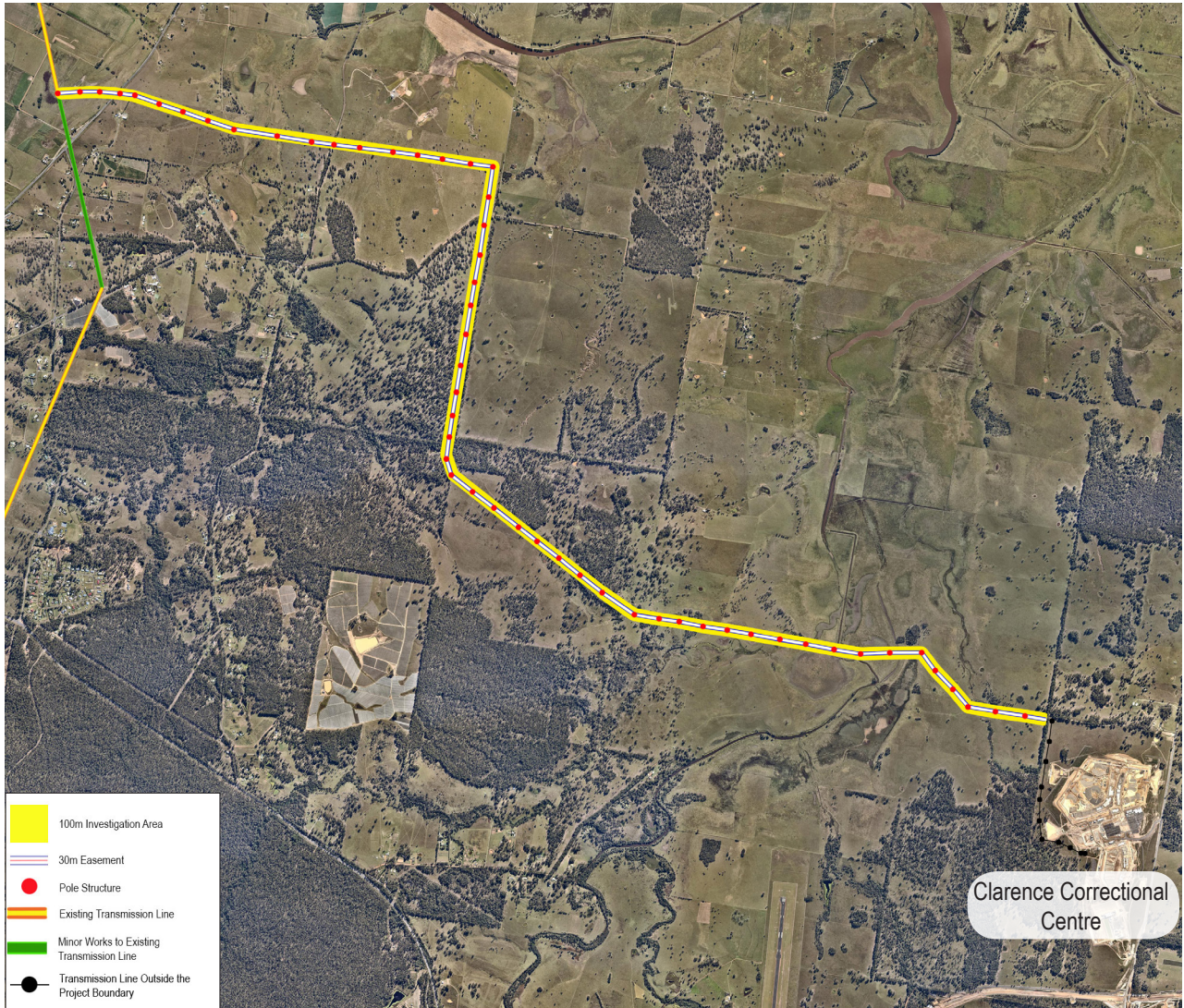


Figure 6.1 - Proposed transmission line route.

6.0 THE PROJECT

Infrastructure NSW is responsible for the delivery of a new electricity transmission line which will provide power to the Clarence Correctional Centre currently under construction. The proposed activity involves the construction, operation and maintenance of a new 132kV double circuit electrical transmission line to be established between the existing TransGrid transmission line to the west and the Correctional Centre's new substation to the east.

The proposed activity comprises:

- 132kV double circuit transmission line and Optical ground Wire (OPGW) from the existing 96H transmission line Structure 339 to the new substation, including approximately 54 new structures.
- New easement clearing, construction pads, access gates, and new access tracks
- OPGW works, including:
 - Pulling back the coil of OPGW from Structure 328 to Structure 339 on the existing 96H Koolkhan-Coffs Harbour 132kV Transmission Line
 - Splicing OPGW as required at the intersection of the new 132kV double circuit transmission line and the existing 96H Koolkhan-Coffs Harbour 132kV Transmission Line
- Removal of trees and vegetation within the 30m easement to enable installation of the new transmission line
- removal of 'danger trees' outside the easement which have the potential to fall onto or come in contact with transmission line
- Construction of suitable access tracks.

7.0 Identification of Key Views, Vistas and Analysis



Grafton Gaol.

7.0 IDENTIFICATION OF KEY VIEWS, VISTAS AND ANALYSIS

Based on the foregoing selection criteria this section maps and describes 12 views of the site from a variety of close and more distant viewpoints. A photograph of each viewpoint is accompanied by a description of the view and the major visual elements within that view.

(See Appendix A for details of the impact rating methodology).



Looking north east from Centenary Drive towards the proposed transmission line.

7.0 IDENTIFICATION OF KEY VIEWS, VISTAS AND ANALYSIS



Figure 6.0 - Proposed transmission line route and viewpoints.





Reilleys Lane

7.0 IDENTIFICATION OF KEY VIEWS, VISTAS AND ANALYSIS



View 1 - Looking west along Avenue Road towards the CCC. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length



View 2 - Looking west from Pacific Highway towards existing transmission line and new connection point. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length



View 3 - Looking northeast from Pacific Highway. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length



View 4 - Looking east from Centenary Drive. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length

7.0 IDENTIFICATION OF KEY VIEWS, VISTAS AND ANALYSIS



View 5 - Looking north from Washpool Road. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length.



View 6 - Looking northwest from Four Mile Lane. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length.



View 7 - Looking north from Four Mile Lane. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length



View 8 - Looking north from Tancreds Lane. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length.

7.0 IDENTIFICATION OF KEY VIEWS, VISTAS AND ANALYSIS



View 9 - Looking south from Tancreds Lane. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length.



View 10 - Looking southwest from Timbs Lane. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length.



View 11 - Looking southeast from the end of Timbs Lane. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length.



View 12 - Looking north from Reilley's Lane. Photograph stitched using 50mm focal length.

VIEWPOINT 1



Viewpoint location



Viewpoint 1