



NSW NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Maynggu Ganai Historic Site

Plan of Management



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Cover photo: View from Military Barracks Block to the north-west, Maynggu Ganai Historic Site, M Billington/DPE

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How to use this plan

This plan of management directs the management of Maynggu Ganai Historic Site. This plan includes a scheme of operations consistent with section 72AA of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. Once the plan is adopted, no management operations can be undertaken that are not consistent with the plan and its scheme of operations. This plan will also apply to any future additions to Maynggu Ganai Historic Site.

Sections 1 to 6 of the plan summarise the historic site's key values, management principles and management considerations. These matters are outlined thoroughly in the *Maynggu Ganai Historic Site Planning Considerations* document.

It is recommended that readers of the plan refer to the planning considerations document for detailed explanations of the site's values and management considerations.

The scheme of operations is the core part of this plan. It describes the desired outcomes for the historic site's values, and actions that National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) proposes to undertake to achieve these outcomes.

The site use regulations tables set out the recreational and commercial activities that are permitted in the historic site and any requirements to undertake these activities, including whether consent must be sought from NPWS to undertake them.

Acknowledgments

Maynggu Ganai Historic Site is in the traditional Country of the Wiradyuri People.

This plan of management was prepared by staff of NPWS, in consultation with Wellington Historical Society, Wellington Local Aboriginal Land Council and Griffin nrm Pty Ltd.

Contact us

For more information about this plan of management or Maynggu Ganai Historic Site, contact the NPWS Central West Area at PO Box 2267, Bathurst NSW 2795 or by telephone on 02 6332 7640 (Level 2, 203–209 Russell Street, Bathurst).



Figure 1 Maynggu Ganai Historic Site.

1. Maynggu Ganai Historic Site

Maynggu Ganai Historic Site is located within the peri-urban area south of Wellington in Central West NSW (see Photo 1).

The site's 3 parcels take their names from the convict station established on the site in 1823: Military Barracks Block, Government House Block and Well Block (see Figure 1).

Maynggu Ganai means 'peoples' land' in the local Wiradyuri language and was the name chosen by the Maynggu Ganai Historic Site Community Focus Group in 2002.

Table 1 The site and its regional setting

Features	Description
Area	15.64 hectares
Reservation	26 July 2002
Previous tenure	Private tenure, various owners
Biogeographic region	NSW South Western Slopes: the second largest bioregion in the State, and among the most poorly conserved bioregions with just 2.37% conserved
Administrative areas	Dubbo Regional Council, Central West Local Land Services, Wellington Local Aboriginal Land Council

Why this site is important

The Wiradyuri People and European settlers came into contact at Maynggu Ganai in the earliest days of the colony of New South Wales, initially in 1823, when the westernmost convict station and remote government outpost were established there. Then in 1832, the first Anglican mission in Australia was established there by the Church Missionary Society.

Maynggu Ganai Historic Site is part of a broader area listed on the State Heritage Register for its associations with the development and expansion of the colony west of the Blue Mountains, and its significance as an evocative reminder of a chapter in the history of Aboriginal Australia. Despite there being no ruins and almost no tangible evidence of its past history remaining, Maynggu Ganai has been described as having outstanding archaeological research potential.

Maynggu Ganai is a rare place because its significance relates to both Aboriginal and colonial occupation and interactions. This is not always a happy story, but one that represents the real history that has subsequently shaped Australian society.

Beyond its historical significance, Maynggu Ganai presents a possibility for the broader local community to work towards developing greater knowledge and understanding of shared history as part of the reconciliation process.



Photo 1 Aerial photo of Wellington showing the location of Maynggu Ganai on the town's southern outskirts.

Management principles

Development of the objectives, actions and regulations in this plan has been directed by the management principles outlined in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

The National Parks and Wildlife Act requires that a historic site be managed to:

- conserve places, objects, features and landscapes of cultural value
- conserve natural values
- provide for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment that is compatible with the conservation of the historic site's natural and cultural values
- having regard to the conservation of the historic site's natural and cultural values:
 - provide for the sustainable use (including adaptive re-use) of any buildings or structures or modified natural areas
- provide for appropriate research and monitoring.

2. Looking after our culture and heritage

Maynggu Ganai is located in traditional Wiradyuri Country, which covers a large portion of central New South Wales and is known as the land of 3 rivers: the *Wambool*, later known as the Macquarie; the *Galari*, later known as the Lachlan; and the *Marrambidya*, later known as the Murrumbidgee.



Photo 2 Corroboree, Wellington Valley 1847. Drawing by William Curtis, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

The timeline of colonial occupation of the Maynggu Ganai Historic Site spans just over 20 years, the main events being:

- 1823–1831 Wellington Convict Settlement and agricultural station (see Box 1)
- 1832–1843 Wellington Mission, the first mission to the Wiradyuri People by the Church Missionary Society (see Box 1)
- 1844–1845 abandonment of the site by the government.

After the departure of the missionaries, the government released the Wellington Valley land for private sale. By 1844–45 the site was abandoned, remaining buildings deteriorated quickly and were progressively stripped by local settlers to re-use the materials. An 1872 map shows the land had been divided into privately owned portions, but there is no record of any buildings being constructed in the area now gazetted as the historic site.

One hundred years passed during which the site attracted little attention in the public record. Researchers visited the site in the 1970s, and there is some evidence of a market garden and a poultry farm being established then. It was not until the 1990s that renewed interest by local historians and others led to the purchase of the site by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in 2001 and reservation in 2002. A more detailed history is provided in the Planning Considerations document.

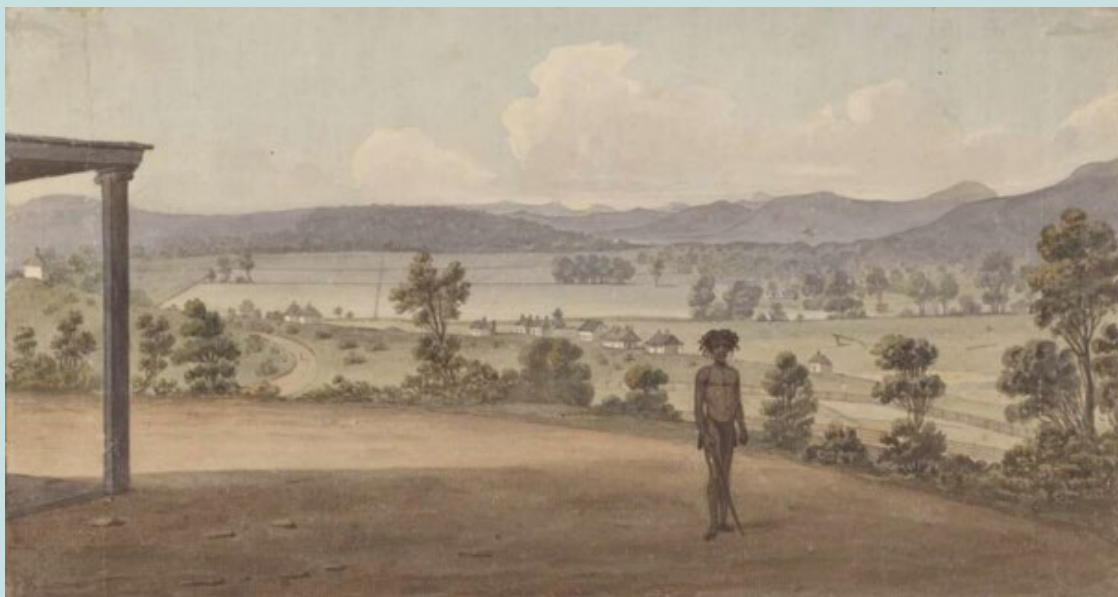
Box 1 Colonial history of Maynggu Ganai Historic Site

Wellington Convict Settlement Site 1823–1831

The Wellington locality was ‘discovered’ and named by Surveyor General John Oxley in 1817. The decision to establish a penal settlement there in 1823, on the outer edge of the colony’s ‘limits of location’, was intended to take advantage of fertile land and convict labour to grow food for the starving Sydney colony. It was hoped a government presence would also provide a secure outpost for further European settlement and growth of the colony. This was only the second penal settlement west of the Blue Mountains and modest in size compared to Bathurst. Some 40 buildings were constructed over the period to support the settlement, ranging from the sophisticated, kiln-fired brick Government House to wattle-and-daub stores and bark huts. There are no ruins left on the site today.

The Europeans of the settlement established first contact with the local Wiradyuri People. Unlike Bathurst where the infamous ‘Wiradyuri Wars’ were to develop from 1822–1824, relations at Wellington remained amicable. The Wiradyuri were introduced to European ways and a supply of rations and blankets, but in due course, contagious diseases took a serious and tragic toll.

After only a few years, the struggling agricultural settlement was deemed a failure and closed.



Wellington Valley, looking East, from Government House, Augustus Earle watercolour c. 1826, Rex Nan Kivell Collection NK12/24, National Library of Australia

Wellington Mission 1832–1843

In 1832, part of the site was deeded to the Church Missionary Society to establish a mission to the Aboriginal people. This was the first Anglican mission in Australia, and only the third mission in colonial New South Wales (after Parramatta–Blacktown and Lake Macquarie). For the local Aboriginal community, it was the first of several missions and settlements in the Wellington area, which included Nanima, Apsley, the town common and others.

Like the convict station before it, the mission was short-lived and not a resounding success in terms of converting the Wiradyuri People to Christianity. However, the missionaries left outstanding legacies in the form of the earliest written records of the Wiradyuri People, including culture, language and way of life. The lexicon, grammars, and painstakingly recorded diaries are still useful today for language restoration projects.

These missionary accounts are also important for the record they provide of early interactions, both positive and negative, between colonialists and Aboriginal people.

Almost nothing is left above ground to identify Maynggu Ganai as the location of the historic Wellington Settlement Site or the Wellington Mission of the early 1800s.

Notwithstanding, in 2011 the 'Wellington Convict and Mission Site – Maynggu Ganai' was listed on the State Heritage Register for its unique history of both convict station and first contact with Aboriginal people on NSW's early colonial frontier. Maynggu Ganai Historic Site occupies approximately 42% of the state-listed area. The remainder is in multiple ownership and has experienced comparatively more disturbance through farming and rural-residential development. Dubbo Regional Council has responsibility for protecting and managing the cultural values of the state-listed area outside the historic site.

NPWS manages Maynggu Ganai in accordance with a conservation management plan (CMP) prepared in consultation with a community focus group. NPWS proposes to seek an addendum to the CMP to address the heritage significance of vernacular structures and debris remaining on the historic site with the intention of removing them. State heritage listing means that the approval of the NSW Heritage Council must be obtained for all works on the historic site.

Due to the removal of historical building materials, differences between written accounts and the passage of time, the actual locations of the original convict station and mission buildings on Maynggu Ganai have not been identified with certainty. Figure 2 shows a possible layout of the former settlement using imprecise maps drawn between 1832 and 1843 and limited archaeological assessment. Further research to establish the footprint of the former buildings would be welcomed by NPWS.

A brick-lined well has survived in the Well Block and is the only intact heritage item present. The cover and safety fencing around the well need to be replaced for visitor, staff and animal safety. A variety of small artefacts have also been recovered.

Wiradyuri people have an ongoing connection with their Country. Maynggu Ganai and several other former mission sites within Wiradyuri Country are integral to the history of the Wiradjuri people and colonial Australia. However, due to the low level of active management required at this site, the scope for the participation of the local Aboriginal community has been limited. NPWS will continue to consult with representatives of the Aboriginal community on any matters affecting the site and welcomes any future opportunities to work together in partnership.

In keeping with the heritage significance of Maynggu Ganai, ongoing management is aimed at preserving the integrity of the site. Some minor stabilisation works have been carried out, and limited visitor facilities have been established without ground disturbance. No new infrastructure which would disturb the ground surface is proposed. The main management task undertaken is slashing for visitor amenity, fire prevention and weed control.

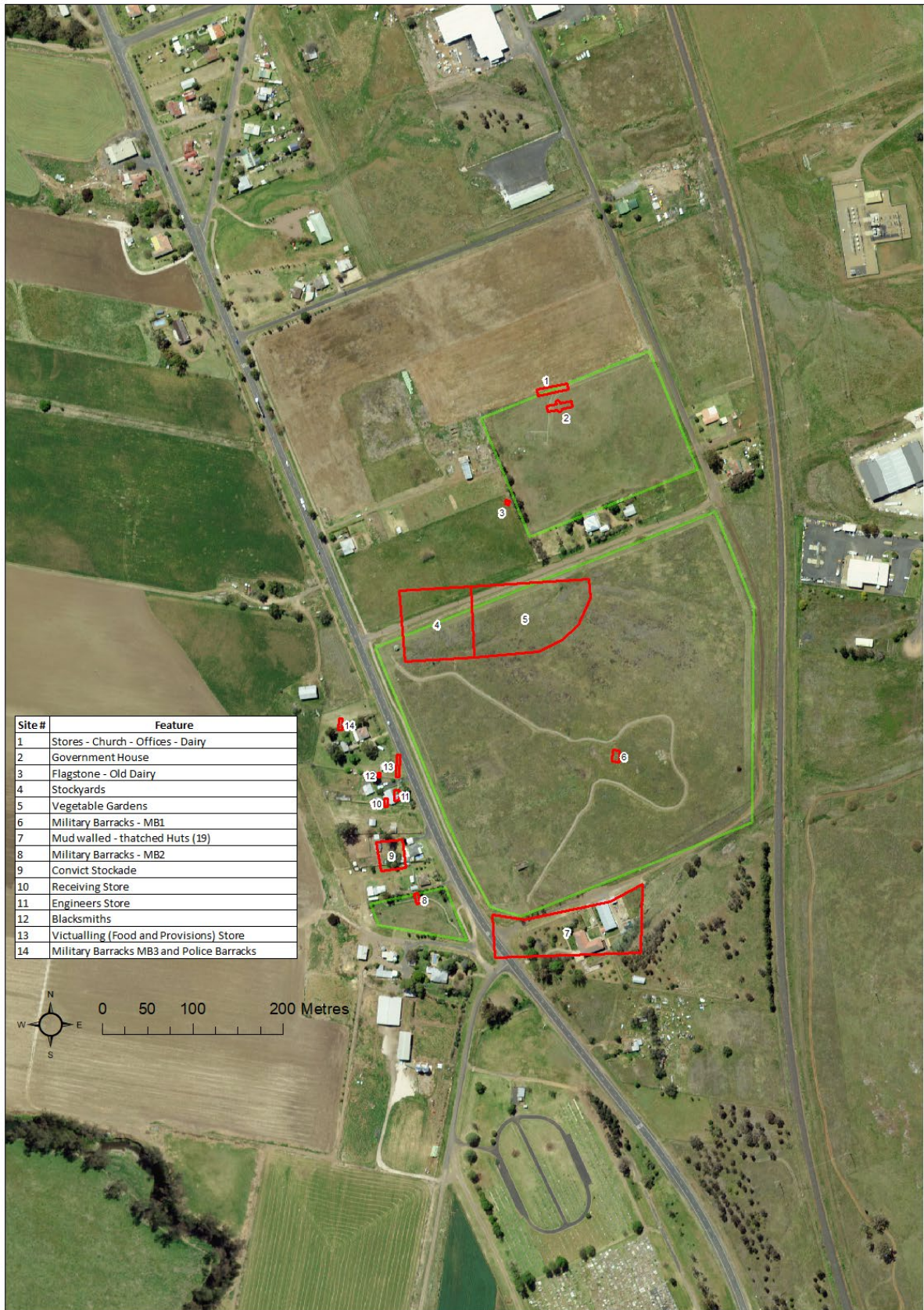


Figure 2 Reconstruction of Wellington Valley (based on Kabaila 1998).

3. Protecting the natural environment

Maynggu Ganai's natural environment was cleared in the 1820s when the Wellington Convict Settlement and agricultural station were developed. What remains today is a highly modified cultural landscape representative of its past history.

A flora survey in June 2020 found the site supports 96 plant species, which includes 52 non-native and 44 native plants, mostly grasses, and a handful of isolated trees. NPWS' management of the historic site recognises that the contemporary landscape is highly significant for its rich cultural history but less notable for biodiversity values. Weed management is carried out from time to time.

Due to its small size, Maynggu Ganai does not present a significant fire risk. A fire management strategy that defines the fire management approach for the site has been prepared and is updated periodically. The strategy aims to protect the site from fire as far as possible. Growth of ephemeral grasses after wet conditions can substantially increase the available fuel layer, therefore, mechanical fuel reduction is undertaken as needed.



Photo 3 View of Well Block from the Mitchell Highway. M Billington/DPE

In view of the archaeological sensitivity of the site and the need to avoid ground disturbance, limitations are placed on mechanical fuel reduction activities. The only machinery allowed is light plant, and these vehicles must be fitted with rubber tyres/slasher combinations.

Climate change modelling for the Central West and Orana Region, which includes Maynggu Ganai Historic Site, predicts increases in temperature, hot days over 35°C and fire weather. Soil conditions will be drier throughout the year.

As a small reserve in a fragmented and mostly cleared landscape, there is little ability to assess or manage the impacts of climate change on Maynggu Ganai. Given the paucity of habitat features and absence of standing heritage, the potential impacts of climate change on the site are expected to be low. NPWS will continue to manage weeds and observe changes in potential threats.

4. Providing for visitor use and enjoyment

Maynggu Ganai Historic Site experiences low-level visitor use. The unassuming appearance of the site belies its fascinating early history and heritage significance. Visitors are most likely to be those with an interest in the early colonial settlement of Wellington and its shared history with the Wiradyuri People.

Walking tracks have been constructed on each of the three blocks using crushed gravel laid over geotextile fabric and treated timber edges to avoid potential archaeological impacts. The edging is now in poor repair, and NPWS is investigating a more appropriate design and use of materials that will weather better into the future.

Interpretive panels along the walking tracks allow visitors to follow a chronological history of the various locations. Directional signage has also been constructed to explain the location and relationship of the three parcels that make up the historic site, and an interpretive shelter erected at the corner of Curtis and Cypress streets provides information about the history of the site.

In the event further research provides greater confidence about the location of buildings from the Wellington Convict Settlement and Wellington Mission era, NPWS may consider supplementing the existing interpretive material with visible markers on the ground surface. Interpretive material of this kind would be planned in consultation with the Heritage Council and local government as part of managing the broader historic curtilage.

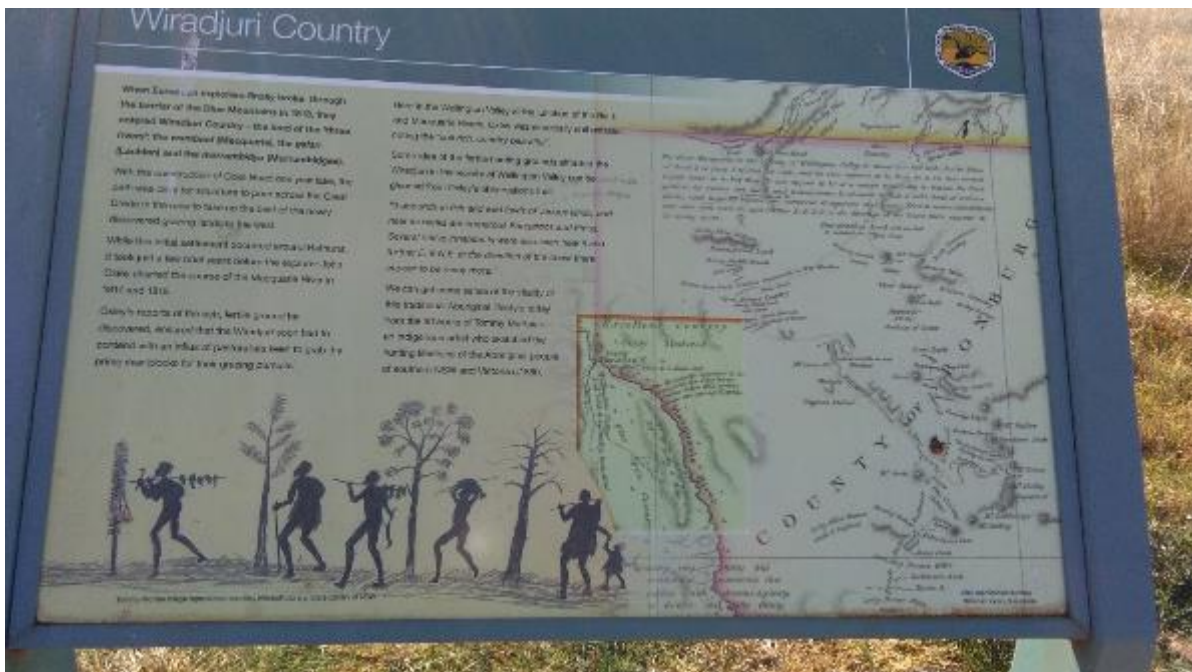


Photo 4 Example of interpretive panels on the site. M Billington/DPE

Until recently, visitors to Wellington have tended to focus on non-Aboriginal history. There is potential to develop guided tours of Maynggu Ganai in partnership with the local Aboriginal community and existing tour operators. Some of the old signage on the site also needs to be replaced to better represent its dual history and significance to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. An old sign on the Military Barracks Block that reads 'Convict Settlement' also needs to be removed.

The site use regulations tables in Section 8 sets out the recreational and commercial activities that are permitted in the historic site and any requirements to undertake these activities.

5. NPWS infrastructure and services

The only infrastructure constructed in Maynggu Ganai by NPWS is that provided for visitor use, namely walking tracks, directional and boundary signage, interpretive panels and a visitor shelter. These structures are maintained and repaired as needed. There are no management trails or visitor parking on the site.

Boundary fencing around the site is in variable repair, with the majority of fencing around Military Barracks Block in a dilapidated condition. NPWS proposes to replace old and ineffective boundary fencing as needed to help define the curtilage of the site and improve its aesthetic appearance, particularly along the Mitchell Highway frontage (see Photo 5).



Photo 5 Boundary fencing along the Mitchell Highway frontage, which is proposed to be replaced. M Billington/DPE

An assortment of contemporary items such as metal water troughs, minor structures such as signs, and building waste remain on the site from activities of the last 50 years or so, prior to acquisition by NPWS.

The most prominent of these are the besser block shed and earthen loading ramps in the Military Barracks Block.

As these items detract from the aesthetics and heritage significance of Maynggu Ganai, NPWS proposes to remove them and re-profile the land surface in consultation with the Heritage Council of New South Wales.



Photo 6 Better block shed and loading ramp from a former chicken farm on Military Barracks Block. M Billington/DPE

6. Non-NPWS infrastructure and services

Several utilities are potentially present inside Maynggu Ganai boundaries, including underground telecommunications lines (Telstra), water and sewerage lines along the Mitchell Highway, and overhead transmission lines.

None of these utilities are contained within an easement or subject to an agreement with NPWS. However, within Maynggu Ganai they appear to require minimal maintenance by service providers. NPWS will continue to work with service providers as needed to ensure site values are appropriately protected.

7. Scheme of operations

The scheme of operations in Table 2 is consistent with section 72AA of the National Parks and Wildlife Act. It details the desired outcomes for the historic site's values and actions that NPWS proposes to undertake to achieve these outcomes.

A management priority has been assigned to each action to guide the allocation of resources.

- **Very high** – Loss or significant decline in the condition of the site value is likely if action is not taken or significant improvement in the condition of the value is likely if action is taken
- **High** – Decline in the condition of the site value is likely if action is not taken or improvement in the condition of the value is likely if action is taken
- **Medium** – Some decline in the condition of the site value is possible if action is not taken or some improvement in the condition of the value is possible if action is taken
- **Low** – While decline in the condition of the site value is not likely in the short term, the action would help build the long-term resilience of the site value.

NPWS' performance in meeting the **desired outcomes** in the scheme of operations will be measured through periodic assessments. Performance in delivering the **actions** in the scheme of operations will be measured through regular audits of plans of management.

The scheme of operations sets strategic goals that may include the development and delivery of subsidiary plans. Subsidiary plans enable adaptive responses to new information or changed circumstances, such as for pests, weeds, fire and recreational activities, as required by NPWS policy. Assessments of performance and review will be used to inform adaptive management in these subsidiary plans as well as any required adjustments and improvements to future plans of management for the historic site.

The implementation of actions set out below may be subject to statutory responsibilities under the National Parks and Wildlife Act and other relevant state and Commonwealth legislation, including heritage and environmental impact assessments and approvals. Further community consultation on the proposed actions may be undertaken as part of these processes.

Information on popular recreational or commercial activities that are permitted in the historic site is provided in the park use regulations tables in Section 8. More detailed information on other activities is available on the NPWS website (www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au).

Table 2 Scheme of operations

Outcome	Actions	Priority
Looking after culture and heritage		
1. The shared heritage values of the site are protected, managed and interpreted for their significance to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.	a. Manage the site as an archaeological landscape consistent with the principles of the conservation management plan and requirements of the <i>Heritage Act 1977</i> .	High
	b. Undertake or support the preparation of an addendum to the conservation management plan, which assesses the heritage significance of 20th century siteworks and structures.	High
	c. Replace and maintain the cover which protects the brick-lined well and addresses visitor safety on the Well Block.	High
	d. Support archaeological investigations and historical research (particularly those which could assist in locating the footprint of former historical buildings) to inform management and interpretation of the site.	Medium
	e. Support involvement by the local Aboriginal community in local archaeological investigations and onsite works.	High
Protecting the natural environment		
2. Negative impacts of fire on life, property and the natural environment in and adjoining the historic site are minimised.	a. Implement and update the historic site's fire management strategy as required.	Medium
	b. Collaborate with Rural Fire Service, regional council and adjoining landowners in protecting the site and neighbouring property from fire.	Medium
3. Non-native vegetation is managed to protect historic and shared heritage values.	a. Control weeds, including emergent exotic trees, avoiding disturbance and compaction of archaeologically sensitive areas. Prioritise invasive species and emerging threats in accordance with regional and NPWS strategies.	High
Providing for visitor use and enjoyment		
4. The story of Maynggu Ganai is included in the broader story of Wellington and contributes to local tourism.	a. Remove the 'Convict Settlement' sign on the frontage to the Mitchell Highway and, if appropriate, replace with suitably worded boundary signage.	High
	b. Work with local historians, regional tourism bodies, the visitor centre and other relevant stakeholders to present a shared history of the site through a range of different media.	Medium
	c. Investigate options for guided tours of the site in consultation with relevant tourism operators.	Low

Outcome	Actions	Priority
5. The Aboriginal community is provided with opportunities to access and maintain connection with the site and its history.	a. If requested, support Aboriginal community access to maintain or renew connections to the site.	Medium
6. Visitor use of the site is consistent with the heritage values of the site.	a. Continue to allow self-guided walking tours by visitors through the site. Investigate options for redesigning the existing timber-edged walking tracks and implement the most appropriate option.	High
	b. Provide and maintain interpretive signage onsite to allow visitors to appreciate and understand the site's history and heritage values.	High
NPWS infrastructure and services		
7. Minimal built infrastructure is provided so as to maintain the site's viewscape and archaeological potential.	a. Replace boundary fencing adjacent to the Mitchell Highway subject to the requirements of the Heritage Act.	High
	b. Maintain the remaining boundary fencing where required in accordance with heritage requirements and the NPWS boundary fencing policy.	Medium
	c. Maintain existing visitor infrastructure.	High
8. Built elements that do not contribute to the state heritage significance of Maynggu Ganai are removed from the site.	a. Subject to the outcomes of the heritage assessment in 1b and requirements of the Heritage Act, remove vernacular structures and debris and reshape the site including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – building waste, miscellaneous agricultural items and waste throughout the site – the besser block shed and loading ramp in Military Barracks Block – the earthen ramp structure midway along the frontage of the Mitchell Highway in Military Barracks Block – former foundations, drainage pits and other structures along the frontage of the Mitchell Highway of the Military Barracks Block and in the Well Block. 	High
Non-NPWS infrastructure and services		
9. Existing non-NPWS infrastructure is managed to minimise impacts on site values and NPWS infrastructure.	a. As necessary, locate utilities within the boundaries of the site to facilitate ongoing site operations in consultation with service providers.	High

8. Site use regulations

8.1 Recreational activities

Maynggu Ganai is not conducive to active recreation due to its archaeological sensitivity and state heritage significance. No recreational activities are permitted other than walking on walking tracks.

8.2 Events, functions and commercial activities

The following table lists some common event, function and commercial activities that may be permitted in the historic site with consent from NPWS or under a licence or lease. It is not a definitive or exhaustive list of permitted commercial or other activities. Information on relevant policies, required approvals and fees is available on the NPWS website.

Approval to use supporting equipment, such as marquees, amplified sound or drones, will be determined on a case-by-case basis subject to an assessment of potential impacts on site values and other site users. Use of any supporting equipment will be subject to consent conditions.

Under NPWS policy, commercial operators may be required to support understanding of cultural heritage conservation and management and promote respect for Aboriginal culture and sites. This may include requirements to consult with Aboriginal communities to develop appropriate material and information for participants.

Table 3 Site use regulations – Events and commercial activities

Type of activity	Group size	Type of approval required
Public events (e.g. community days open to public participation)	All groups irrespective of size	Consent
Commercial activities (e.g. tours)	All groups irrespective of size	Licence or lease
Research (archaeological, scientific or educational, and related to conservation, management or interpretation of the site)	All groups irrespective of size	Consent or licence

More information

- [Host an event](#)
- [Maynggu Ganai Historic Site Planning Considerations](#)
- [National Parks and Wildlife Service](#)