

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 About this Plan**

This document is a Conservation Management Plan (Stage 1) for the entire length of the Great North Road, originally constructed from 1826 to 1836 to link Sydney with the Hunter Valley, a distance of some 240 kilometres.

This plan deals with the historic background and significance of the Great North Road, provides an overview description of its physical condition, considers present management issues, and provides policy and recommendations to assist with the future management of this highly significant heritage item. This Plan is an advisory document. It is not a statutory document and is not binding on any of the parties mentioned, involved or commented upon in this document.

The client for this plan is The Convict Trail Project. This Project is a community based initiative which seeks to link together a diverse range of government agencies, non-government organisations and community groups which either have responsibility for management of parts of the Great North Road or which share an interest in its long term conservation.

In NSW the heritage management system requires three steps:

- investigate significance
- assess significance
- manage significance.

The *NSW Heritage Manual*, 1996, discusses the NSW system (also see 1.3 below).

### **1.2 The Brief for the Plan and required Key Outcomes**

The Convict Trail Project Heritage Working Group prepared a brief for the completion of a Stage 1 Conservation and Management Plan in February 1997. The Heritage Working Group is chaired by Clare James, the Maitland Council Heritage Adviser. It comprises representatives with heritage expertise from other Local Councils, and representatives of other relevant organisations such as the NSW Heritage Office, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Roads and Traffic Authority (Environment and Community Policy Branch).

Expressions of Interest for the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan were sought in March 1997. The team was formally commissioned to undertake the plan in July 1997.

Those objectives described in the Brief prepared for the Stage 1 plan may be summarised as:

- Compilation and Collation of Information, Basic Mapping and Identification; Basic Survey of under-documented road branches or sections.

As described in the Brief, specific outcomes required for the Stage 1 plan include:

- Identification of the road line, its branches and relevant associated sites on Base Maps

- Base maps are to include reference to relevant management information

- Production of a Companion document to the base maps

- Specification and undertaking of basic survey work in under-represented or as yet undocumented areas of the road line.

### **1.3 Approach**

The underlying philosophy informing this conservation plan, particularly its Policy section, is that expressed in the Burra Charter of Australia ICOMOS (International Council for the Conservation of Monuments and Sites of Significance). The general approach adopted for the structure and

process of the plan reflects that recommended in the supporting guideline documents to the Burra Charter as well as *The Conservation Plan* of J S Kerr (1996). The present plan is also consistent with the *NSW Heritage Manual*, 1996, issued by the NSW Heritage Office, and in particular with the *Heritage Assessments* and *Conservation Management Documents*, guidelines which are included in the manual.

A fundamental basis of all conservation plans is the review and analysis of documentary, physical and other evidence; the determination of what constitutes the heritage value of the place; an indication of the implications of maintaining this value for the place; taking into account other requirements of the place including, importantly, how it is used; then, having considered all this information, states how the valued aspects of the place can be maintained for the future. This process is summarised in the following diagram:

### **1.3.1 Conservation Definitions**

Various terms, such as *place*, *fabric*, *cultural significance* and *conservation*, are used in this report in a technical sense. The terms are an essential means of expressing and differentiating important concepts pertaining to heritage work. They are all stated as the definitions in Article 1 of the Burra Charter. As many of the terms appear often in the **Conservation Policy** of this report, the definitions have been restated there for more convenient reference. (**Section 6**)

### **1.4 Form and Component Parts of this Plan**

The form of this report reflects the basic process required of conservation plans. It begins with a review of the Road's history (**Section 2**) as well as a consideration of its physical context and condition (**Section 3**) before stating what it is that constitutes the value or cultural significance of the item (**Section 4**). **Section 5** considers the various issues relevant to the development of the ultimate purpose of the conservation plan - the Policy and its implementation (**Sections 6 and 7**).

At the risk of making this part of the conservation plan too large a document, it was thought essential to include a historic overview of the road as well as a discussion of its physical character and its implications in this covering report itself, rather than simply as appendices. The purpose of placing this information early in the report rather than at the end, apart from gaining a clearer understanding of the item, is to emphasise the sequential links between particular observations made in the earlier sections, especially their reiteration as key aspects of cultural significance, and subsequent restatement as policy.

This Stage 1 Conservation Plan consists of several inter-related components:

PART 1 - Covering report (this document)

PART 2 - Inventory

PART 3 - MAPS

### **1.5 Scope of this Plan**

This study is a Stage 1 Conservation Plan. The original funding application, and the consequent Scope of Work, was designed on the basis that this Stage of the Plan would provide an essential overview of the entire context of the Great North Road, by addressing the key outcomes noted in Section 1.2. Thus whilst this plan has addressed all the components of a standard Conservation Plan, the sheer length and complexity of the Great North Road has meant that an exhaustive coverage was not possible. This is particularly the case for the Inventory and Mapping component, which seeks to provide information in a rapidly accessible format for those responsible for managing sections of the Road. The Inventory has been designed with multiple levels in order that extra information and extra items can be easily added in any future plan Stages. It is recommended in Section 6.13 that updates to the Plan, such as those resulting from new discoveries, should be notified to the Executive Director of the Convict Trail Project. It is also

recommended that the CTP should retain responsibility for the dissemination of this Stage 1 Plan, and its components.

In the course of completion of the Stage 1 Plan a number of additional items, not reported in previous surveys, were drawn to the attention of the study team, and most of these have been inspected, assessed and included. Some items referred to the team, were inspected but found not to relate to the Road. An example was a potential old road formation at Millfield, referred via Cessnock Council. Field inspection indicated that there were no old road features here, merely modern spoil material adjacent to the existing road shoulder. Sites such as this were not subsequently inventoried.

## 1.6 Study Team and Authorship

*Principal* *Heritage* *Consultant*  
& *Study* *Coordinator:*

Siobh n Lavelle

*Consultant Historian /*  
*Historical Archaeologist*  
*and* *Specialist* *Adviser* *:*

Dr Grace Karskens

*Specialist* *Mapping*

C o n s u l t a n t s :

RTA Technology (Parramatta)

This report (Part 1 of the Plan) and the Inventory (Part 2) has been prepared by Siobh n Lavelle. Section 2 of this document was written by Dr Grace Karskens, who also contributed extensively to parts of this report dealing with significance (**Section 4**), to the physical description of the road and its division into Sections and Precincts as arranged in the Inventory component.

The specialist mapping component provided by RTA Technology was coordinated by Mr William Evans, Engineering Heritage Surveyor. The maps were prepared by Mr Ian Urban.

## 1.7 Previous Work and Assessments

Completion of this Stage 1 Conservation Plan has been considerably assisted by the large volume of previous work and documentation which has been compiled for the Great North Road. All relevant sources are listed in notes to the text and in the report Bibliography, however, the following specific items merit further acknowledgment here:

G Karskens,  
"The Grandest Improvement in the Colony" - An Historical and Archaeological Study of the Great North Road, NSW 1825-1836', M.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 1985

This work is the definitive study and analysis of the history, construction and interpretation of the Great North Road, and it remains an essential source for all subsequent documents.

The series of reports and other management documents commissioned or undertaken by the National Parks and Wildlife Service for the 40 kilometre section of Road between Wisemans Ferry and Mount Manning, as this section (Section 3) passes through Dharug and Yengo National Parks, and is therefore partly managed by the NPWS.

These include reports by H Burke, by J Comber, G Karskens, and also by National Parks staff (refer to Bibliography).

Engineering reports and assessments on various sections of the road by McBean and Crisp P/L.

The Ken Marheine collection of documents which relate to the road.

The Lesley and Alan Wickham indexed document database and their additional research and mapping of the Simpson Track from Ten Mile Hollow to Cooranbong. All information in this study relating to the Simpson Track derives from Lesley and Alan Wickham.

## **1.8 Acknowledgments**

Many individuals and groups made valuable contributions to this document.

The assistance and advice is acknowledged of the following:-

Lorraine Banks, Executive Director, Convict Trail Project

Clare James, Maitland City Council

Bill Evans and Tony Mitchell

Maria Whipp

MacLaren North

Alice Brandjes

Elton Menday

Kathy Kelman

Ken Phelan

David Workman

Phillip Pleffer

Lesley and Alan Wickham

Joan Robinson

Greg Powell

Ian Webb

Carl Hoipo

Gillian James

Rosemary Walsh

Joy Hughes

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Malcolm Hughes, Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Trust

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## **2. DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE Historical Overview of the Great North Road (Dr Grace Karskens)**

The Great North Road, built by convict labour between 1826 and 1836, has drawn in and fascinated people from diverse disciplines and callings since the early twentieth century, just as it inspired a number of nineteenth century artists. This section does not present a complete history of the road, but an outline which sketches its development, major perspectives and themes of interpretation, and the reasons for its significance. This is thus a precis of a much more complex history and historiography, and the reader interested in a deeper understanding should consult the works listed in the bibliography compiled for this report.

## 2.1 Historical Outline

The Great North Road was constructed in a period of colonial expansion, in terms of both geographic settlement and population growth. Envisioned by ambitious engineers, surveyors and governors, and built over a ten-year period by gangs of convicts under colonial sentence, it was the first of a network of 'Great Roads', which radiated to the north, west and south of Sydney, by then a rapidly growing port-town. These roads were named after the 'Great Roads' of England, the newly constructed road system which was itself the product of a revolution in scientific road building providing the first durable, reliable and impressive roads since the Roman period. The technology was rapidly transferred to the colony in New South Wales, mainly by military engineers and surveyors.<sup>1</sup>

The road was built to provide a land link between Sydney and the burgeoning settlements in the Hunter Valley to the north. The original line ran between Baulkham Hills and Wollombi via Wisemans Ferry, at the confluence of the Hawkesbury and MacDonalld Rivers. From Wollombi it originally ran north east to Maitland and Newcastle; later in the construction period, branches were added to the upper and middle Hunter Valley via Broke. Today this historic line traverses a diverse range of cultural and natural landscapes : from the kerbed and guttered suburban streets and roads of Sydney, it leads through the transitional urban/rural fringes at Dural and over dry rocky ridges and eucalypt forests, plunging dramatically down spectacular gorges at Wisemans Ferry. The road winds through the narrow, isolated Wollombi valley, crossing and recrossing streams and rivers, and then reaches the open, undulating lands of the Hunter Valley.

Of the areas to the north, west and south of the Cumberland Plain which were appropriated and settled in the 1810s and 1820s, the Hunter Valley was among the earliest discovered, the latest to be opened, and the most rapidly settled. Its relatively late European development was a result of the penal settlement founded at the mouth of the river (on the site of Newcastle) in 1804, some years after it was discovered by Lieutenant Shortland in 1797. The settlement's only link to Sydney was by sea, but by the late 1810s it became ineffective as a prison, its distance from Sydney eroded by escaping convicts who made their way up the valley and then overland to Sydney. Although the valley was officially closed to settlers, some grants were made in the middle parts in 1817 and 1818. A land route discovered by Windsor grazier John Howe in 1819 between Windsor and the upper Hunter at Jerry's Plains was probably used as a stock route immediately, and was officially opened in 1823. It was known as the Bulga Road, now the Putty Road. The penal settlement was removed to the remote Port Macquarie in 1822, and thereafter the Hunter Valley was rapidly alienated and settled, mainly by newly-arrived free immigrants. The lower valley was characterised by smaller agricultural holdings, the drier upper reaches by large pastoral estates. The rapidity of the valley's settlement, especially in the lower parts, soon made the rough and roundabout Bulga Road inadequate, while and the coastal sea journey was one of 'very great inconvenience [and] risk' to the settlers. In 1825 surveyor Heneage Finch was despatched to find a better route north, and his general tracing was the original line for the Great North Road.<sup>2</sup>

For escaping convicts, for the European exploring parties and for surveyors who made these expeditions to find a way north, the land between the Cumberland Plain and the Hunter Valley was a barrier, an unknown wilderness and in many places barren, extremely rugged and inhospitable. But for the various Aboriginal bands and tribes (the Dharug tribe west of Broken Bay on the Hawkesbury River, the Guringai on the coastal regions, the Gandangara inland to the south and the Dharginung to the north) who occupied or moved across it, though, the land was familiar, criss-crossed by paths, and marked by an intimate geography of sacred sites, places of shelter, rest and food sources, places for teaching and learning. Unlike the mammoth bulk of parts of the European road, and the gashes made in the landscape by clearing, cutting blasting and quarrying, the Aboriginal tracks were simply made, they 'didn't need any complicated engineering'; their imprint was light, though distinct. In place of a lineal notion of an orderly, rationally planned Great Road, an artery connecting one place with another, which demonstrated a kind of struggle and triumph over the landscape, the ancient lines were a network of fine interconnected veins with multiple destinations; the landscape, crowded with meanings and stories, was integral to the journey.<sup>3</sup>

It is very likely that the Great North Road, surrounded as it is in some parts by sites and artefacts

of Aboriginal origin and significance, runs over and incorporates some of this pre-existing network of tracks. The fact that the road skirts sacred sites suggests that Aborigines assisted the European explorers, settlers and surveyors by showing them the paths, but at the same time carefully diverting them from their important sites. The European road, with its evocations of the colonial past, also has an older, Aboriginal context and significance : 'other footsteps that went before', as Coral Edwards expresses it. <sup>4</sup>

As yet we do not know who may have guided John Howe in 1819, nor whether Aboriginal people helped Richard Wiseman, the son of Solomon Wiseman, locate a line up and over the ridges from Wisemans Ferry to Maitland. Heneage Finch probably followed this line in turn, surveying it and marking the trees as far as Wollombi. Further south, he had followed the existing roads west towards Parramatta and Baulkham Hills, then the road up to the early Lunatic Asylum at Castle Hill, and from there he followed the ridge line to Lower Portland Head where emancipist Solomon Wiseman had already established a farm and a hotel on the banks of the Hawkesbury River. <sup>5</sup>

The settlers of the Hunter Valley, many of whom were wealthy and well-connected, presented a petition to Brisbane in April 1826 praying that the line marked by Finch be constructed. As a result, work eventually began in a modest fashion in September 1826, when two gangs totalling 67 men were posted north of Castle Hill. Another gang was sent up to the road in December, while in 1827 gangs were also sent to Newcastle in the north to work on the road southwards. <sup>6</sup> The work north and south of Wisemans Ferry was supervised in that year by Lieutenant Jonathon Warner. Warner was responsible for the initial construction of the approaches to the Hawkesbury, and the work of this period reflects his interest in minimising both time and effort spent on construction. The walls and drainage from this period tend to be the less well-constructed, ranging from Types 1b to 2b, while the original ascent (via 'Rose's Run' or 'Finchs Line') on the north side of the Hawkesbury, downstream of the present ferry crossing, is steep, winding and relatively narrow, with two sharp corners and four hairpin bends with minimal turning spaces. Part of the rough wall erected on the south descent to Wisemans collapsed in heavy rains in 1830. <sup>7</sup>

Some of these early structures were improved, rebuilt or replaced by Warner's successor, Lieutenant Percy Simpson. Simpson, who described himself as having 'knowledge of surveying and roadmaking', was appointed Assistant Surveyor at Lower Portland Head in June 1828 and remained there until 1832. His period of superintendence is marked by far more ambitious and permanent structures : the 'lofty and massive side-walls' of the best quality Type 3a and 3b masonry, deep cuttings and quarries, elaborate drainage systems and the simple but handsome bridges on the road between Wisemans and Mt Manning. It was during Simpson's period that the road was named the Great North Road, transformed from a simple cart track to a fine and permanent avenue. Further north, around Wollombi, Heneage Finch was appointed to superintend the gangs in 1830, and, resolving to 'complete a road equally secure with the other part [ie Simpson's]', he too supervised some of the finest and most ambitious structures on the road: the curved walls and bridge at Mt McQuoid, for example, and the massive wall, buttress and flume at Ramsay's Leap on the side of Mt Simpson. He lived on his own property a 2,000 acre grant named 'Laguna', where the gangs, stores and bullocks were also stationed. Road gangs were also proceeding southwards from Maitland, building the road along existing settlers' tracks under the supervision of Patrick Campbell from 1828. <sup>8</sup>

This grander and more imposing version of the road was given impetus by the arrival Surveyor General Major Thomas Mitchell in 1827. Mitchell took to the roads with great zeal. Believing that the best, 'scientific' or 'true' roads were based not on the paths of 'black natives', nor the tracks of settlers, but on the straightest lines possible, he set about resurveying practically every road in the country. In 1829 he resurveyed Finch's original 1825 traverse (much of which was an established cart track) deviating from it at many points, including Twelve (now Ten) Mile Hollow, Hungry Flat and Sampson's Pass. At these particular points, the road as constructed and surveyed by G. B. White in 1831 differed again from Mitchell's line, probably because his lines involved too much construction, even for the numerous road gangs posted in that area. <sup>9</sup>

The most notable deviation from the original line was the new ascent from the Hawkesbury at Devine's Hill, which replaced Warner's 1828 ascent further south. In place of the narrow,

precipitous road scrambling up the slopes, Simpson's gangs cut and blasted Mitchell's line out of a mountainside of solid rock and, to support the road, built an almost continuous retaining wall to the summit, reinforced on the steepest section by five (now four) massive buttresses. Mitchell claimed later that the Devine's Hill section was completed in six months, but it was not until 1832 that the gangs there were finally removed.<sup>10</sup>

Shortly after his resurvey of the Great North Road, Mitchell also planned another branch which ran from the Parramatta Road at present-day Five Dock, across the Parramatta River at Abbotsford and Bedlam Point and thence northwest through Ryde towards Dural. This road would, he argued, cut four miles from the original more roundabout route via Castle Hill, which had just been completed by No 8 Iron Gang. Work on this section, however, appears to have been slow and sporadic. A Road Party built the southern section, known as 'Kissing Point Road' (now Punt and Victoria Roads Gladesville) and also a stone wharf in early 1830. Meanwhile No 34 Road Party was stationed on the 'New Road to Dural' (now Beecroft and New Line Roads) from March 1830 and a Bridge Party was working in the Dural area. But when the appointed ferry lessee went to Bedlam Point two years later he found that neither the wharf nor the approaches to it had been built, and that no punt had been supplied. A Bridge party was hurriedly despatched and the stone wharf still extant at the water's edge probably dates from this period.<sup>11</sup>

By 1832 the substantial structures over the stony mountains, ridges and gorges were mainly complete and the convicts who had acquired skills in their construction were shifted to other Great Roads. Heneage Finch was replaced by Lawrence Dulhunty in 1831, who, Mitchell complained, 'is not acquainted with the country nor what is to be done on the roads I laid out there'. Dulhunty's reports were vague and uninspired and his period of supervision marked the de-emphasis of the road as a premier public work. The workforce shrank to two road parties and a bridge party in 1833, mainly concerned with the numerous crossings of the Wollombi Brook (nine, in addition to creek crossings) which Mitchell's straight line entailed. In 1834, Dulhunty moved the road station northwards to Cockfighter's Creek at Warkworth.<sup>12</sup>

Beyond the Wollombi, the final selection of the Hunter Valley branches had been laid out by Mitchell in late 1832. As in many other instances, Mitchell tended to ignore established tracks, villages and towns (such as Singleton) in favour of straight lines with phantom 'official' town sites at their intersections. His new selections for the Hunter Valley road connecting the branches threw the half-finished roads there into chaos, making the work already completed between Wallis Plains, Patrick's Plains and Singleton redundant. The northernmost branches of the Great North Road were cleared by private contract in 1834 and constructed by the convict gangs, supervised by Peter Ogilvie from February 1835. Ogilvie was also responsible for the road down the Hunter to Maitland, and although the terrain was much less difficult than the ridges further south, he was hampered by the fact that 'the number of working men in the two parties are only ten, and many of those are cripples'. As a result he felt himself caught in a cycle of construction and decay: 'I am lead to believe that before the Eastern extremity of the line could be completed, the Western would be quite out of repair'.<sup>13</sup>

Whether or not the last branches of the Great North Road were actually finished is unclear. Ogilvie presented another dismal report in 1836 listing the work still to be done, particularly at creek crossings. He was removed shortly after and not replaced, and the Hunter Valley and Great North Roads were left, presumably unfinished.

## **2.2 Building the Road**

### **2.2.1 The Road Building Revolution in Britain**

The Great North Road is an extraordinary museum of technology, for it demonstrates the extent to which engineers and surveyors transferred, applied and modified certain newly-emerged principles of road engineering to the colonial context.<sup>14</sup> A revived interest in road construction in Europe and particularly in France during the eighteenth century spread to England in the 1790s and 1800s and thence to New South Wales in the 1820s. The new technology,

developed principally by John Metcalfe, Thomas Telford and John Loudon MacAdam, focused on the development of long-wearing pavements and proper drainage, in response to the obvious defects of the traditional convex earth roads, which were constantly rutting, sinking and decomposing. Close attention was also given to the proper planning and tracing of roads.

Later in the nineteenth century an explosion of books and articles about road building by engineers including Telford and MacAdam, and their successors Henry Parnell, Richard Edgeworth and Henry Law dealt with all aspects of road tracing and construction, often reporting the theories and results 'on the ground' of the earlier nineteenth century pioneers. The documentary and archaeological sources of the Great North Road and other colonial roads indicate that much of the new technology was familiar to the engineers who arrived in New South Wales in the 1820s. Most were military men seeking positions and opportunities in the colonies after the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815. Percy Simpson described himself as having road-building skills, and demonstrated them on the Great North Road. Surveyor Heneage Finch M.A. had '...graduated brilliantly in Mathematics at Christ Church, Oxford'. Captain William Dumaresq, the Surveyor of Roads and Bridges in 1826-7 had an English military education in engineering. Assistant Surveyor Elliot, who supervised the construction of the Argyle (South) Road and the works at Mt Victoria on the Western Road, was recommended by Thomas Telford himself.<sup>15</sup> The road building technology they employed may be divided into the following stages and operations:

### **2.2.2 Clearing**

The first task of the road builders was to clear the ground along the line of notched trees made by the surveyors. This extremely laborious work involved felling trees with broad axes or cross-cut saws, and then splitting, grubbing up and removing stumps. Sometimes, when formations and cuttings were considered unnecessary, clearing was the only operation, for this path-breaking work provided a serviceable if rough 'horse track' preceding more permanent work for some months or even years. In 1827 the Surveyor of Roads and Bridges reported that the North road between Castle Hill and Dural was '...at present merely proposed to [be opened] by felling the timber one chain [20.1m] in width and stumping one half that space in the centre'.<sup>16</sup>

### **2.2.3 Formation : Excavation and Embanking**

On sloping ground a manageable gradient was achieved by cutting the natural surface down to the level of the road, and/or filling the lower side to the required height, as circumstances dictated. Like their British counterparts, colonial road builders referred to natural irregularities as 'hollows and points', while the convicts working on excavations were described as 'moving and splitting rocks', 'quarrying', 'widening', 'picking the side of the hill' or 'picking the bank'. The formations from the second and third construction periods were particularly impressive and durable. Deep cutting and extensive filling were required on steep slopes, such as the descent to Wisemans Ferry, Devines Hill, Mt Baxter, Mt McQuoid, Mt Simpson (Ramsays Leap) and Mt Finch.

Generally, where a rock cutting was required up to about 1.5m, it was hand-cut with rock-picks, chisels and gads, and the cutting had a vertical face. These can be seen along many parts of the road between Wisemans Ferry and Wollombi. Larger cuttings, such as those flanking the road at major sites such as the descent to Wisemans, and on Devine's Hill, were blasted out with gunpowder and the exposed faces were usually quarried to provide stone for retaining walls and drains. Cuttings and quarries vary in height from 150mm to 15m while embankments are as shallow as 300mm, and, where enclosed by retaining walls, reach 9m in height.

The filling of deep or extensive hollows, such as the ramp north of Mt Manning, and the embanking of steep slopes were usually accompanied by the construction of masonry retaining walls of widely varying quality. The operations were simultaneous - the embankment was kept filled to the height of the retaining wall. Hand carts and wagons drawn by bullocks were used to transport the stone and earth fill.

### **2.2.4 Blasting and Quarrying**

Rock blasting with gunpowder was employed throughout the construction period. Early nineteenth century blasting techniques were very traditional and fairly simple and the semicircular,

triangular and faceted shafts left by the jumper, a long iron tool with a chisel-point end, are commonly found where the roadbuilders encountered rock outcrops, such as Wisemans Ferry Devine's Hill, Sampson's Pass, Mt Simpson and Mt Finch. On heavily worked areas there are scores of shafts up to 1200mm long on the rock faces, but in less rugged places groups of more than two or three are rare. The convicts employed in 'jumping and blasting', as the operations were termed, worked 'double handed' in pairs, one holding the jumper and the other striking it with a sledge hammer or maul to chip out the shot shaft. As a result of the scarcity and irregular supply of gunpowder, the tasks of jumping and blasting were often divided, the former being undertaken well in advance of the arrival of the powder. It appears that clay was used to tamp down the powder before firing.

Simpson described the stone walls on his section of the road as 'lofty and massive side walls' which were built of 'stone quarried by force of maul and wedge'.<sup>17</sup> These tools are often mentioned in reports and there are numerous examples of unused wedge pits or 'pool holes' cut into rock faces with chisels or picks. The wedges were driven into these pits with mauls (wooden hammers) until the rock split into large slabs. It was then removed for dressing to the required shape and size.

### **2.2.5 Pavements**

Perhaps the best-known of the British road engineers were Thomas Telford and John Loudon MacAdam, and their renown was due largely to their work in developing durable road pavements. Telford was best known for his work on the London to Holyhead road, which comprised three layers. A foundation course of large hand-set stones, the spaces packed with stone chips was covered by a layer, six inches (152mm) deep, of 2 1/2 inch (64mm) broken stone. The uppermost level, or wearing surface, comprised one and a half inches (33mm) of 'good binding gravel'.<sup>18</sup>

Telford's roads were acclaimed but also expensive as a result of the heavy handset foundation. A cheaper alternative was devised by MacAdam, who, believing that it was 'the native soil which really supports the weight of traffic', dispensed with the foundation altogether. The key to MacAdam's roads was drainage, and in order to keep them thoroughly dry he advised that they be built above the level of the surrounding land. The pavement was to be of carefully graded angular stones of up to two inch gauge, laid in thin layers in three stages, with time allowed between each for consolidation by traffic. MacAdam maintained that this surface could be as little as ten inches thick, depending on the location and the amount of traffic.<sup>19</sup>

By 1828, only four years after MacAdam published his major work, the Surveyor of Roads and Bridges in distant New South Wales, Edmund Lockyer, issued detailed instructions to his Assistant Surveyors which were a hybrid of Telford's and MacAdam's roads. He directed that the roadway be built from whinstone or ironstone broken to a gauge of one and a half to two inches (38 to 51mm), and laid 6 inches (152.4mm) deep and 21 feet (6.4m) wide. The wearing surface was to be a coat of ironstone gravel screened to remove soil, as both Telford and MacAdam recommended.<sup>20</sup> These directives are very similar to Telford's, but for the extensive colonial roads, the expensive foundation had been omitted, as suggested by MacAdam. The road gang reports reveal that a large proportion of the men in the gangs were employed breaking stone, and in picking, shovelling and raking gravel.

Although most of the original pavements of the Great North Road have not survived as a result of sealing, grading, weathering and erosion, there were remnants perfectly demonstrating Lockyer's directives still extant on abandoned sections in 1985. The most southerly of these was on the section 40.4 km north of Baukham Hills which was cut off by a new section of road. There a pavement of evenly graded compacted stones of 50-65mm gauge was laid up to seven metres wide and approximately 150mm thick. On steep sections such as Devine's Hill (Precinct 3.2.0), erosion had exposed a fill of large broken stones which had been covered by a layer of 75-100mm gauge broken stone. Another example of similar broken stone pavement construction occurs at the abandoned Mt McQuoid section (Precinct 4.2.0), while further north, a stone causeway (Precinct 4.4.0) was constructed of hand-knapped stones fitted together to form a solid pavement over low-lying, swampy ground.

Where rock platforms or shelves were encountered on the line of road, they were usually incorporated into the roadway by smoothing any projections with a pick or chisel, cutting to the requisite width and filling gaps with broken stone. Side drains were cut from the rock at the same time. Examples of this sheet-stone pavement are common on the unsealed sections of the road, and it seems likely that the road was frequently aligned and levels arranged to take advantage of the pavement they provided.

### **2.2.6 Drainage**

The engineers evidently understood the importance of keeping water off the road by the construction of a proper drainage system. There are numerous references in instructions and reports about the side and cross drains constructed, and many of them are still extant, particularly on the steeper sections.

Side drains would originally have lined the entire road on both sides in the case of flat land, and on the uphill side only where the road was built on a slope. They were excavated from earth or cut from rock where it occurred, in the latter case often combined with cuttings and sheet stone pavements. The side drains were either square, rounded or irregular in shape, and many bear chisel and pick marks. The most elaborate have low walls or edging of one to two courses of stone set on the alignment side.

Culverts to carry the water out of the side drains and built of stone were set either perpendicular to the road alignment or obliquely across at intervals according to the gradient. At sag points they have double inlets to take water from both directions, while in continuously sloping sections they have single inlets set at an angle to the alignment. The floors of the culverts were often sloped to assist the flow of water, as recommended by the British road-builders. The most common surviving type of culvert is the stone box culvert, in which the lintel, four sides and the outlet are built of stone blocks and slabs and natural stone where it occurred. The earlier and more primitive examples are composed of roughly hewn rectangular stones and are usually relatively small, while the culverts from the impressive sections built under Simpson's and Finch's supervision are larger and much more elaborate, some with handsome curved lintels, races and spillways. Still more elaborate examples are the large box culverts in the Wollombi valley (Precincts 4.5.0 and 4.6.0), while major structures such as the Ramsays Leap section and the buttresses on Devines Hill were equipped with substantial culverts.

### **2.2.7 Retaining Walls**

The construction of the road over a ten-year period by numerous gangs under different supervisors resulted in an extremely diverse range of retaining walls, including rubble, block-in-course and ashlar work. Extensive examples of these walls are extant, varying from about 300mm to over 9.5m in height, and between 300 and 1000mm in thickness. In some cases a single course of stones was laid to retain a slight embankment, while in others over twenty heavy courses were necessary to support the massive formation on the precipitous slopes. The best examples of the latter are the approaches to Wisemans Ferry (Precincts 1.4.0 and 3.2.0), and Ramsays Leap on Mt Simpson (Precinct 4.3.0).

The single common factor is that all the walls are dry-laid. Even walls comprising the smallest or most ill-shaped stones were not mortared, for the time-consuming, much more expensive use of mortar would have complicated the works in these remote areas greatly. The walls on the road were battered, or sloped back, for stability as recommended by the British engineers. Three techniques were used to achieve a batter. The first was to incline the beds slightly so that the face sloped. The second method was to cut each of the outer stones with a sloped face, especially in the case of larger walls where the thickness of the base is greater. The third method, used on the more primitive walls, was to simply recess each succeeding course, creating a stepped profile. In some cases two of these techniques were combined, while for the crudest walls no attempt was made to slope the rough and uneven face.

### **2.2.8 Bridges**

The surviving masonry bridges constructed on the Great North Road are the oldest known on the Australian mainland and constitute an excellent collection of evidence about bridge-building in

NSW before the appointment of the first 'scientific' bridge builder, David Lennox, in 1832. Each bridge is different in scale and construction, but they are all stone conduit bridges which would have had timber decks built from girders and slabs. The most refined are Clare's Bridge at Ten Mile Hollow (Precinct 3.7.0) with its central cutwater pier and corbels to support struts for the deck; and the Circuit Flat bridge just south of Mt Manning (Precinct 3.11.0), which features gently flared outer abutments, a projecting coping course and corbels.

### **2.2.9 Conclusion**

What is perhaps most striking about the Great North Road in terms of engineering heritage is its integrity, the fact that examples of most phases, types, features and standards of colonial road engineering survive, from the simplest earth formations to the most elaborate retaining walls and bridges. The road is an extraordinary outdoor museum which clearly demonstrates the technology brought by the engineers and surveyors, and the skills acquired and fostered by the convicts in the gangs. New road-building technology was applied to these ambitious Great Roads, and on the Great North Road we can see how the British theory was translated and modified by local conditions and materials.

### **2.3 People on the Road**

The Great North Road can also be interpreted as a kind of cultural intersection of the beliefs, ideology, and the practice and behaviour of several disparate groups of people. The road has a different appearance and meaning according to the standpoint we take, whether that of the governors, the engineers and surveyors (inspired and ambitious, or disinterested and ineffective); Aboriginal people who saw their own routes and their lands appropriated; settlers on the lookout for opportunities for profit; the convicts who made up the labour force, from overseers to unskilled labourers; and, far from the rough stations and the massive works, the wives and families some of these men left behind in the towns to fend for themselves as best they could.

From the perspective of the educated elite, those charged with government and order, the road played a particular role as a signifier as well as a facilitator of 'civilisation'. Many of these men understood society as moving, according to natural laws, through the various stages of barbarity (hunting and gathering), followed by pastoralism, giving way in turn to agriculture, where the population remained settled in one place on the land. This fixedness was the prerequisite for the highest stage in the 'Course of Empire' : that of commerce, signalled by towns and cities, by complex culture, served and connected by permanent roads and bridges.<sup>21</sup> The public works initiated by Governor Macquarie, and his encouragement of small-scale agriculture, were aimed at assisting these 'natural laws' to fruition in New South Wales, and these policies were carried on by his successors, Brisbane and, in particular, Darling. Darling intended the Great Roads as a bequest to the colony, one which would assist in its proper ordering and development, and a lasting epitaph to his much more orderly and bureaucratic style of government.<sup>22</sup>

He was robbed of that ambition after the arrival of Major Thomas Mitchell as Deputy Surveyor General in 1827. Mitchell's energetic resurveys and realignments of the major colonial roads according to rational, logical and scientific principles, eventually brought him into conflict with the Governor. His realignment of the Western Road at Mt Victoria sparked an eruption over Mitchell's extravagance and autocratic manner in 1832. But the new work went ahead, Darling was recalled soon afterwards, and it was Mitchell who succeeded in having his name attached to the roads, particularly to those great engineering feats across mountainous country.<sup>23</sup>

The 'course of empire' model of civil society, though little questioned by these men, was in many ways inappropriate to the Australian landscape. The town of Sydney grew quickly as a port, not as the centre or result of agricultural settlement. Much of the landscape, with its leached soils and capricious climate, lent itself much more readily to pastoral expansion, an unrooted, wandering population and rough lifestyles, and cheap, meandering bush tracks. The function of the Great North Road in 'opening up' the country never eventuated. There were no 'smiling villages', no 'crowded towns' on the various reserves marked out along the dry barren ridge tops by the surveyors who ignored the shortcomings of landscape, soil and lack of water.

The relegation of Aboriginal people to the primitive 'hunter/gatherer' stage, meant that little recognition could be made, either, of the infinitely complex and ancient culture which they had

inherited, practiced and passed on in their turn. For them the European road must have represented an ignorant and probably clumsy appropriation of their own lines, and incursions onto the familiar sites and journeys of their lands. Further research is needed to clarify the Aboriginal perspective, and to investigate the resistance, accommodation or evasion which may have occurred during and after the road's construction.

In the 'course of empire' model, too, the labour of convicts is an abstract force, simply the means to the end. This abstraction, then, does not concern itself with individual, human experience. The 1820s and 1830s were marked by increased severity for convicts, as well as a large increase in their numbers. Darling in particular took his instructions to revive the dread of transportation seriously, and it was he who established the road-gang system whereby convicts (and others) with one or more colonial convictions were despatched to distant parts of the colony to work on the roads. It was a convenient, seemingly rational solution to both the problems of punishment and of public works considered essential for the colony's progress. This type of punishment differed from earlier forms (flogging, hangings, town gang work) in that it banished the convict from the public eye.

We should remember the impact that such a sentence must have had on the families of those men who had managed to find partners and have children. For example, Andrew Johnston was a free-by-servitude householder living in Cumberland Street on the Rocks in Sydney in 1822. He had a wife, the native-born Elizabeth Ellard, and five small children. When he was arrested and convicted of stealing in 1827, he pleaded for the sake of his family, and the court 'taking this into consideration, sentenced the man to two years in an iron gang', rather than death or a fourteen-year transportation. He was sent to No 3 Iron Gang, on the dry rocky ridges south of Wisemans, while Elizabeth and the children were taken in by their neighbour Bridget Nowland. Elizabeth worked as a laundress to support her family. The work currently being undertaken by researchers into the profiles of individual convicts (the 'Adopt A Convict' program, under the auspices of the Royal Australian Historical Society) should open up this hitherto hidden aspect of the road's history, and further recreate the broader human experience of the Great Roads period and the convict road gang system. <sup>24</sup>

The hundreds of men sent out were described in contemporary accounts, as well as in much historiography, as either 'double distilled villains' or 'wretched victims'. But the Great North Road allows us in some measure to dispel these stereotypes, offering instead a means of reconstructing the world of the road gangs. The remains and the situation of the road station sites at Wisemans Ferry and Devine's Hill present a strong reminder of the harsh living conditions endured by the gangs, while the extensive and varied stone and earthen structures of the road itself are a museum of convict work. They convey a sense of the mammoth scale of the work, the heavy, tedious and laborious work. We can physically experience the hand-cut cuttings, drains, the great bulk of the largest dressed stones. The stones can also tell us about convict work at a deeper level. If we compare the physical evidence with the documentary records available, juxtaposing the extant walls and their quality with the known gang locations, patterns emerge concerning the organisation of the gangs according to skills, and throw light on the acquisition of those skills. Thus we can trace the development of No 25 Bridge Party through its work on the rubble block-in-course work on the 1828 ascent from the Hawkesbury (Precinct 3.1.0), to the Masonry Type 3a bridge on the approach to Devine's Hill (Item 3.2.1), and then in the remarkable walls on Devine's Hill itself (Precinct 3.2.0). Conversely, No 8 Iron Gang was consistently stationed in areas which today only feature poor quality stonework, for example, the stretches between Devine's Hill and Ten Mile Hollow, and the vicinity of Hungry Flat and Sampson's Pass. Not only do the various structures disprove the long-held assumption that the gangs were wholly unskilled, inefficient and produced nothing of use, but they present overlaid evidence that at least some of the overseers and road builders were skilled, diligent and sufficiently interested in their work to stay on the job in a situation where escape was easy. The work suggests that a range of incentives (tickets of leave, a measure of discretion, promotion to a Bridge Party) were employed here at these isolated outposts, just as they were in the rest of colonial society, to get the job done. <sup>25</sup>

Supervising engineers like Percy Simpson and Heneage Finch must have understood this, though Jonathon Warner thought the lash was a more effective means of extracting work. For these men, and also for settlers such as Solomon Wiseman and his son Richard, and several

other trail-blazers and contractors, the Great North Road was an opportunity for gain in one form or another. Simpson wanted to demonstrate his considerable skills both in engineering and in the management of a large labour force, in the hope of remuneration and promotion. He had been granted 4,000 acres at Cooranbong in 1826 after serving as superintendent at the failed settlement at Wellington, while Finch received 600 acres in the Wollombi Valley for his efforts in the original survey, and Richard Wiseman was also granted 640 acres in the Wollombi for locating the line north of Wisemans Ferry. Both Simpson and Finch endeavoured to have the line of road northwards pass through their respective properties, and the matter was finally settled when Mitchell selected the Wollombi-Broke route, since it would serve 'a better class of settler'. As Lesley and Allan Wickham point out, the wealthy graziers of the upper and middle Hunter were thus given preference over the 'little pockets of subsistence farmers who were dotted all up the creeks...that Simpson's line of road served'.<sup>26</sup>

Simpson and Finch clearly knew of the money to be made from the road; the enterprising emancipist Solomon Wiseman had already demonstrated its potential for profit. A journeyman lighterman originally convicted of stealing timber, Wiseman had taken up land at the isolated post on the Hawkesbury in 1817 and established his first hotel, the Sign of the Packet there in 1819. After a series of floods he moved to higher ground away from the flood-prone river banks. The very existence of his building and boats drew Finch along the line in the first place, and in 1826 Wiseman in turn built the handsome Cobham Hall (Precinct 1.6.0) and opened the Branch Hotel in 1826 in anticipation of the large numbers of travellers needing accommodation, food and drink. He also established the ferry crossing essential to the route, had the lucrative contracts to supply the gangs in the area with rations, and was also engaged to repair the tools of the gangs, although blacksmiths were lent to him for this purpose by the government. Wiseman and his wife Sophia entertained lavishly at their home, and he liked to boast of the thousands of pounds the government contracts had brought him. Their elite and educated guests enjoyed their hospitality, but later wrote accounts which poked fun at Wiseman's lack of education and polish, and his avarice.<sup>27</sup>

## **2.4 Use and Abandonment**

Wiseman's empire was short-lived, however. The contracts vanished with the gangs after 1832, while the volume of traffic on the road itself diminished after the introduction of a regular steam boat service between Sydney and Newcastle in the same year. This rapid decline is indicative of the fate of the road itself. A year before it was completed, some sources were already describing it as a grand folly. The steamers were apparently considered 'a more eligible mode of communication' by 1835, and public complaints about the poor condition, lack of water and the 'long, tedious and circuitous' road journey were common.<sup>28</sup>

Overland droving of stock did continue, but even here drovers appear to have also used other branches and routes as well as the Great North Road. The early Bulga Road from the settlements around Windsor was used as a land link at least until 1827, continued in use throughout the nineteenth century and was improved for the increasing local traffic in 1890-1900. It was in that period that the travelling stock reserves on the Great North Road were rescinded (1889); by then, it seems little stock was moving along the stony ridges there. The Bulga Road was sealed during World War II and is now known as the Putty Road.<sup>29</sup>

An early line between McGraths Hill, near Windsor, and Maroota, via Cattai Creek, also predated Finch's survey, and was marked as a 'made road' in 1829. With settlement at Pitt Town and Cattai Creek, this road was more hospitable than the Great North Road through Glenorie. By 1927 it was marked as the main route to the north, while the North Road was described as 'disused'. Mitchell's branch via Bedlam Point was also largely ignored by local settlers, although it was later incorporated into the network of suburban and outer metropolitan streets and roads. Further north, travellers preferred the early line along the fertile and settled west bank of the MacDonald River to the impressive but rugged and isolated road over the ridge above. The St Albans Road was surveyed in 1864, gradually improved, and officially opened in 1884. It rejoined the original road at Mt Manning.<sup>30</sup>

Part of the road further south of Ten Mile Hollow was incorporated into roads or tracks to the

Brisbane Water area, such as Simpsons Track which was gazetted in 1871, upgraded in 1896 and by 1927 formed the main route between Sydney and Gosford. Still more popular was a line from North Sydney to the Hawkesbury at Peat's Ferry, located by 1829, which followed a well-defined ridge to Mt McQuoid at Bucketty where it joined the Great North Road. This was the route that the Reverend Alfred Glennie took when he travelled between Wollombi and his parish at Gosford in the 1840s. The 'Peat's Ferry Road' was surveyed and partly constructed during the 1840s and early 1850s, although Mitchell's opposition to it probably explains why the work was not completed at this stage. In 1925 this road was proclaimed a Main Road, and heavy construction work was carried out on it. It was opened as the Great Northern Highway, later the Pacific Highway, in 1927.<sup>31</sup> In subsequent years, the forgotten road over the ridge was visited by sightseers, dedicated local people and amateur historians drawn to colonial heritage and the growing folklore surrounding it. The Post Master Generals Department (P.M.G.) located the first overland telephone line linking Sydney with Brisbane and the north coast along the old road, the copper wire strung from pole to pole from Wollombi down to a hill opposite Wisemans Ferry, where it 'took off in a big sweep over to the other side'. The road became familiar to generations of linesmen who travelled up and down, at all times of the day and night, to repair and maintain the line. When it was superseded, the copper was retrieved and the poles were chopped down and left where they fell.<sup>32</sup> Dharug National Park, north of Wisemans Ferry, was proclaimed in 1967 and had the Great North Road south of Mt Manning as its western boundary. Personnel from the National Parks and Wildlife Service became the road's new users, some of whom took a deep interest in its history and in recording its many sites. In later years this interest was formalised in the commissioning of several archaeological surveys. Less sensitive were the scores of four-wheel drive enthusiasts who used the road as a racetrack most weekends during the 1970s and 1980s, inflicting considerable damage on the early formations and structures; and, worse, the vandals and thieves who stole dressed stones from some of the most important and beautiful structures, including the Circuit Flat Bridge, Ramsay's Leap and the wall at Mt McQuoid.

It was one such incident - the theft on Australia Day 1990 of about eighty stones from the 'Bucketty Wall', as it is known locally - which sparked the most recent phase of the road's history. In the general context of rising interest in history, heritage and conservation, this theft galvanised local people, such as Paul Budde and Carl Hoipo, into action, and resulted ultimately in the formation of the Convict Trail Project. The Project's aims are 'to protect, restore, maintain and promote' the road, and it has successfully brought together local people, historical societies, local councils in whose areas the road falls, and government bodies with an interest and responsibility in the conservation of the road. It has already succeeded in winning funding and support, in undertaking some restoration work, in collating existing and initiating further research. Ongoing effort and success will ensure that the road survives for future generations.<sup>33</sup>

## **2.5 Afterword**

There are many ironies in the fate of the Great North Road. The route to the north developed over the nineteenth century in a manner exactly the opposite of the original vision. Instead of people, stock and goods flowing along a great 'artery', a fine, permanent and well-maintained road, through districts settled at convenient intervals, the traffic which did cross overland was dispersed, trickling down a criss-crossed network of unmade and unplanned tracks. Parts of the Great North Road fell in and out of use in this haphazard process. Mitchell himself lamented the road's abandonment, and, reflecting in the 1850s, wrote that the government should have discouraged the use of the other tracks, so that 'roads fit to travel on' would have 'compensated for going a little around'.<sup>34</sup> That a man originally so completely committed to straight lines and shortest distances should in the end argue for a longer route speaks volumes for the gap between rational, scientific planning on one hand, and how people actually dealt with the practical problems of land transport on the other. The road represents a vision of rural development, of close settlement, small-scale agriculture and thriving, orderly villages which never really became widespread.

Had the road become the main route to the north, however, it is unlikely that we would have inherited such a fine and intact museum of colonial road building which speaks so directly and evocatively about these visions for the colony, about the transmission of scientific methods and

new technology, and perhaps most importantly, about convict work. While the road was meant to be of immense practical use, its failure means that it has become, instead, a site of immense cultural value, an avenue for understanding past peoples.

## Notes for Section 2, Historical Overview

1. For a full account of the historical context and construction of the road, see Grace Karskens, "'The Grandest Improvement in the Colony' - An Historical and Archaeological Study of the Great North Road, NSW 1825-1836', M.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 1985; for an earlier more general account of the establishment of road communication north of Sydney, see T. H. Upton, 'The Establishment of Direct Road Communication between Sydney and Newcastle', in Journal of the Institution of Engineers Australia, vol. 4, May-July 1932.

2. See T. M Perry, Australia's First Frontier : The Spread of Settlement in NSW 1788-1829, Melbourne, 1963, pp. 55-9; W. A. Wood, Dawn in the Valley : The Story of Settlement in the Hunter River Valley up to 1833, Sydney 1972, pp. 1, 15-16; H. A. M. Morgan, 'The Bulga or Coal River [Road] - Australia's First North Road, Its History and Pioneers', in Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society [hereafter JRAHS] vol. 44, 1958, 185-221; Hunter's River Settlers to Darling, 19 April 1826, Colonial Secretary's In-Letters [hereafter CSIL], Archives Office of New South Wales [hereafter AONSW]; Thomas L. Mitchell, Report Upon the Progress Made in Roads and in the Construction of Public Works in NSW from 1827 to June 1855, Sydney, 1856, p. 30.

3. Coral Edwards, Interview, in Bill Bottomley, By Force of Maul and Wedge : Talking About the Great North Road, Kulnura, NSW, 1996, pp. 88-91. See also 'Aboriginal Life on the Lower Hawkesbury at the Time of European Settlement', in Jocelyn Powell and Lorraine Banks (eds), Hawkesbury River History : Governor Phillip, Exploration and Early Settlement, Wisemans Ferry, Dharug and Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society, 1990, pp. 31-42.

4. Edwards, ibid.

5. Karskens, 'The Grandest Improvement', Section III/1.

6. Hunter's River Settlers to Darling, 19 April 1826, CSIL, AONSW; Australian 24 May 1826; Lieutenant Wilford to MacLeay (Colonial Secretary), 25 September 1827, 'Detailed Report of the Number of Convicts who have been Employed in Making and Repairing Roads from December 1823 to September 1827', CSIL, AONSW.

7. See Karskens, 'The Grandest Improvement', Section III/4; Karskens, 'Deference, Defiance and Diligence, Three Views of Convicts in New South Wales Road Gangs', in Australian Historical Archaeology, 4, 1986, 17-28.

8. Karskens, 'The Grandest Improvement', Sections III/6-8; Karskens, 'Deference, Defiance and Diligence'; Weekly and Monthly Road Gang Reports, 1827-1830  
1 Volume, Surveyor of Roads and Bridges Correspondence, AONSW; re Simpson, see Memorial of Lieutenant Percy Simpson of the late 5th Royal Veteran Battalion to the Right Honourable Earl Bathurst, 26 February 1822, Colonial Office Records, CO 201/111 Folio 581.

9. Mitchell to Macleay, 8 October 1829 'Report on the Road between Young Wiseman's... and the Twelve Mile Hollow' and 'Report on the Road Northwards from Sydney', Surveyor General to Colonial Secretary, AONSW; Karskens, 'The Grandest Improvement', pp. 105ff. Compare to Karskens, 'An Historical and Archaeological Study of Victoria Pass, Mt Victoria', report prepared for the Department of Main Roads, Lithgow, 1988. For a study of Mitchell, see T. H. L. Cumpston, Thomas Mitchell - Surveyor General and Explorer, London, 1954.

10. Mitchell, Report on Roads, p. 30; Simpson to Mitchell, 5 June 1830 and 9 May 1832, Surveyors to Surveyor General, AONSW; Karskens, 'The Grandest Improvement', pp. 111-12.

11. Karskens, 'The Grandest Improvement', Section III/9; M.C. I. Levy, Wallametta : A History of Ryde and its District 1792-1945, Ryde, 1947, p107; Mitchell, Report on Roads, pp.29-30;

Mitchell, 'Report on the Road Northward from Sydney'; Road Gang Reports.

12. Re convicts' skills, see Karskens, 'Defiance, Deference and Diligence'; see Karskens, 'The Grandest Improvement', Section III/8,10; Mitchell to Murray, 7 February 1831, in Historical Record of Australia [hereafter HRA], vol. 16, p. 188 correspondence between L. V. Dulhunty and P. Ogilvie and Thomas Mitchell, 1834-1836, Surveyors to Surveyor General, AONSW.

13. *Ibid.*; and Ogilvie to Mitchell, 9 May 1836, Surveyors to Surveyor General, AONSW.

14. This section is a summary of the more detailed research and analysis of road building technology in Karskens, 'The Grandest Improvement', Section IV. See also Karskens, 'The Construction of the Great North Road NSW 1826-1836', in Transactions of the Institutions of Engineers - Multidisciplinary, volume G.E. 9, no. 2, October 1985, 102-111.

15. See Thomas Telford, Life of Thomas Telford, Engineer Written by Himself, London, 1838; John Loudon Macadam, Remarks on the Present System of Road Making, London, 1824; and A Practical Essay on the Scientific Repair and Preservation of Public Roads, London, 1819; R. L. Edgeworth, An Essay on the Construction of Roads and Carriages, London 1817; Henry Law and D. K. Clarke, The Construction of Roads and Streets, London, 1881; Darling to Bathurst, 15 March 1827, HRA, vol. 12 p541; Darling to Murray, 24 September 1830, HRA, vol. 15 p739; Mitchell to Macleay, 8 February 1831, CSIL, AONSW.

16. Wilford to Macleay, 4 August 1827, CSIL, AONSW; Road Gang Reports.

17. Simpson to Mitchell, March 1830, 'Report of the Assistant Surveyor...for March 1830', in Road Gang Reports, AONSW.

18. Telford, Life of Thomas Telford, p. 526 and loc. cit.

19. Macadam, Remarks on the Present System of Road Making, loc. cit.

20. Lockyer to Macleay, 25 June 1828, 'Code of regulations for the Guidance and Conduct of the Roads Department', CSIL, AONSW.

21. For discussion see Robert Dixon, The Course of Empire : Neo-Classical Culture in New South Wales 1788-1860, Melbourne, 1986.

22. *Ibid.*; Karskens, "'As Good as Any in England" : The background to the construction of the Great North Road NSW', in JRAHS, vol. 68, part 3, 1982, 192-204; see also Brian Fletcher, Ralph Darling : A Governor Maligned, Melbourne, 1984.

23. Cumpston, Thomas Mitchell; Fletcher, *ibid.*, pp171ff.

24. See District Constables Notebooks, 1822/23, entries for Gloucester Street, Sydney, Colonial Secretary Special Bundles, AONSW; and Malcolm Sainty and Keith Johnson (eds), Census of New South Wales November 1828, Sydney, 1985.

25. For discussion see Karskens, 'Defiance, Deference and Diligence'; compare with John Hirst, Convict Society and its Enemies, Sydney 1983.

26. Keith Clouten, Reid's Mistake - The Story of Lake Macquarie from its Discovery to 1890, Lake Macquarie, 1967, pp37-50; James Jervis, 'The Great North Road - Supplement', in JRAHS, vol. 20, 1934, 335-6; Finch to Oxley, 3 February 1826 Surveyors to Surveyor General, AONSW; E. Hickey (ed.), Wollombi Valley, Description and History, Wollombi, 1980, p. 27; Lesley and Allan Wickham, Interview, in Bill Bottomley, By Force of Maul and Wedge, p. 84.

27. See Karskens, 'The Grandest Improvement', Section III/5; and 'Defiance, Deference and Diligence'; Lorraine Banks and Jocelyn Around and About Wisemans Ferry, Berowra Heights, NSW, Deerubbin Press, 1996, pp. 7-8; Ian Jack, 'Wisemans Ferry at the Crossroads', in Powell, Jocelyn P. (ed.), Cross Currents : Historical Studies of the Hawkesbury, pp.77-84; Dharug and

Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society, The Ferry, the Branch, the Creek, Wisemans Ferry, 1987, pp. 21-3; P. W. Gledhill, 'Wisemans Ferry', in JRAHS, vol. 27, 1941, 134-36; Charles Swancott, Wisemans Ferry, Central Coast Printery, 1965.

28. Karskens, 'The Grandest Improvement', Section III/11; Australian Almanack Dictionary, 1835; Thomas Mitchell, Three Expeditions into the Interior of Australia, London, 1839, pp. 8-9; J. H. M. Abbott, The Newcastle Packets and the Hunter Valley, 1943.

29. H.A.M. Morgan, 'The Bulga or Coal River [Road] - Australia's first north road, its history and pioneers', in JRAHS, vol. 44, Part 4, 1958, 185-221.

30. Upton, 'Establishment of Direct Road Communication', pp.162-3; Hughes to Macleay, 22 May 1828, CSIL, AONSW; H. E. C. Robinson Ltd., NSW Motorists' Road Guide, Sydney 1927, p. 86; Hugh Hamilton Newell, 'Road Engineering and its Development in Australia 1788-1938', in Journal of the Institution of Engineers, vol. 10, nos. 2 and 3, 1938, p.51; Marjorie Hutton Neve, The Forgotten Valley : History of the Macdonald Valley and St Albans NSW, Sydney, 1987, p 22.

31. Upton, ibid., p. 163; Robinson Ltd., NSW Motorists' Road Guide; Lesley and Allan Wickham, Interview, in Bottomley, By Force of Maul and Wedge; Frank Walker, 'Old Peat's Ferry Road', in JRAHS, vol. 11, 1925, 207-14; H. Selkirk, 'Old Peat's Ferry Road, in JRAHS, vol.11, 1925, 215-23; J. A. Ferguson, 'George Peat and his Ferry', in JRAHS, vol.11,1925, 223ff.

32. Ken Marheine, Interview in Bottomley, By Force of Maul and Wedge, pp. 69-70.

33. Interviews with Tony Horwood, Lorraine Banks, Carl Hoipo and Paul Budde, in Bottomley, By Force of Maul and Wedge. See also Robyn Aitken, (ed.), Conservation Plan for the Old Great North Road, (draft), report prepared for the National Parks and Wildlife Service, 1993; and National Parks and Wildlife Service, 'Dharug National Park : Draft Plan of Management', Gosford, 1996.

34. Mitchell, Report on Roads, p. 106.

### **3 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

#### **3.1 Description of Road Sections**

This part of the report provides a brief summary of the nature and physical character of the various Sections of the Great North Road, which are also described on the Section sheets included in the Inventory component of the Stage 1 Conservation Plan (Part 2 of the plan).

The physical evidence which comprises the road-line includes the line of the road, its formation and pavements, side cuttings and component structures such as retaining walls, culverts and bridges, as well as adjoining landscape corridors, environment (natural and built) and setting.

Since this study is an overall Conservation Management Plan for the entire length of the Great North Road, it is not concerned with the fine details of every individual structure but rather with the establishment of overall guidelines, development of policies and consideration of opportunities for the future management of the Road. The Inventory has been prepared in a way which easily allows the addition of more items and information in the future at such time as they come to light, or when the Plan is updated. Additional items may be uncovered through more intensive research and field investigations.

The whole of the Road was divided into separate Sections. The reason for this is that the existing line or corridor of the Great North Road, being such a lengthy heritage item, changes its nature and character very sharply in different areas. These **Sections** have been further subdivided into **Precincts** and then down to the level of individual **Items** as a way of organising and describing

the character of the whole Road. The result of this is that the (main) Great North Road has been divided into eight primary Sections. They are:

Section 1.0.0 Baulkham Hills to Wisemans Ferry

Section 2.0.0 Branch of the Great North Road between Abbotsford and Dural  
(the "New Line")

Section 3.0.0 Wisemans Ferry to Mount Manning Junction

Section 4.0.0 Mount Manning Junction to Wollombi

Section 5.0.0 Wollombi to Maitland

Section 6.0.0 Wollombi to Broke

Section 7.0.0 Broke to Patrick's Plains

Section 8.0.0

Broke to Warkworth (Jerry's Plains)

These major Sections then sub-divide into 39 further Precincts, each of which may include additional and/or separate inventory items. There are 13 Inventory Items. Sections and Precincts are described on a separate basic inventory format, which provides quick and accessible information about the Road.

There is also a Section Sheet for the Simpson Track, which runs from Ten Mile Hollow to Cooranbong.

Several important individual items have been added into the formalised road information as a result of the completion of fieldwork and consultations with individuals familiar with the Road and its environs. They include two wells (Maroota and Wisemans Ferry), the site of the powder magazine near Finch's Line, (Wisemans Ferry) and additional quarry sites located in Section 3 of the Road (Hungry Flat and Circuit Flat).

This descriptive process has recorded the extremely diverse character of the presently surviving Great North Road. While nearly *all* Sections have been found to include some isolated and important surviving traces of the earlier Road (whether Precincts or Items) some parts which remain in use as major transport arteries today display very little in the way of an historic or archaeological character. This is the case for the first 40 km of the "Old Northern Road" from Baulkham Hills, and also for much of the Abbotsford to Dural, "New Line" branch - with some notable exceptions - for example the Bedlam Point road precinct at the rear of the former Gladesville Hospital. This incredibly suburban-looking branch is remarkable for one other attribute, however, which is that it still retains its historic name as "The Great North Road".

Section 3, the Old Great North Road passing through Dharug and Yengo National Parks, has been probably the most long recognised surviving "historic" part of the road. The work undertaken initially by dedicated amateurs; individuals of the NPWS staff; then elaborated by Grace Karskens for her MA Thesis and by subsequent individual studies and consultant reports, recorded the physical character of this "abandoned" 40 kilometre section of Road between Wisemans Ferry and Mt Manning, and led to its description as an "outdoor museum". The road here retains an "original" wilderness setting which is extremely evocative. A 7 km length of this Section, including the original 1828 Ascent north from Wisemans Ferry (Finchs Line) and the replacement 1831 Devines Hill Ascent (Mitchells Line) is also the part which has been focussed on for potential World Heritage Listing as a component of a possible Convict Sites group nomination to Unesco.

Sections 4 to 8 tend to present the Road in a modern context, as an in use main road, but as the road passes through relatively undeveloped rural areas it may be found in an overall setting approximating that envisaged at the time of its construction.

Section 4, from Mt Manning (Bucketty) to Wollombi is also an extremely important part of the road. In this 30 km Section the Road retains several individually valuable and unique structures (considered further below) and it passes and links surviving historic and archaeological sites and other landscape elements including early dep<sup>ts</sup>, rural homesteads and land grants, and the historic village of Wollombi itself.

Section 5, from Wollombi to Maitland (via Cessnock), also presents an in-use main road with a predominantly rural character. A 2km section of the "Old Maitland Road" at Sawyers Gully was recently found to contain significant early structures including sandstone box culverts and a small single-span masonry and timber bridge (inventoried as the Sawyers Gully Precinct, 5.1.0).

Section 6, from Wollombi to Broke, includes the sites of several former crossings of the Wollombi Brook (Precinct 6.1.0), which were reduced by a realignment of the Road in 1860 (Plan R113.1603). Parts of this section were also remarked and slightly realigned again in 1902 (Plan R7641.1603). Some older structures survive in this section, including culverts, which have been marked onto the relevant base maps of Section 6.

The map overleaf, shows the division of the Great North Road into the Sections used in the Part 2 Inventory.

**The Full List of Sections, Precincts and Items included in the Inventory is:**

## **Section 1.0.0 Baulkham Hills to Wisemans Ferry**

### **Precinct 1.1.0 Abandoned Loop, Maroota, 40.4 km north of Baulkham Hills**

*Item 1.1.1 Rock-cut Well*

### **Precinct 1.2.0 Early Zig-zag Descent to Mr Sharps' on the Hawkesbury**

### **Precinct 1.3.0 Retaining Wall and Small Bridge, 51 km north of Baulkham Hills**

### **Precinct 1.4.0 Descent to Wisemans Ferry (Retaining walls, Bridge, Quarries)**

### **Precinct 1.5.0 Convict Road Station/Stockade Site 1**

*Item 1.5.1 'Wiseman's/Warner's Well'*

### **Precinct 1.6.0 Wisemans Ferry Hotel and grounds ("Cobham Hall")**

### **Precinct 1.7.0 Wisemans Ferry Crossing**

## **Section 2.0.0 Branch of the Great North Road between Abbotsford and Dural**

### **Precinct 2.1.0 Great North Road, Abbotsford**

### **Precinct 2.2.0 Bedlam Point - Wharf, cutting and quarries**

*Item 2.2.1 Rockend Cottage*

### **Precinct 2.3.0 Remains of Early Bridge and Approach over Terry's Creek, Albuerra Road, Eastwood**

### **Precinct 2.4.0 Stone Causeway, Devlins Creek, Epping**

### **Precinct 2.5.0 Road Section in Blackwood Reserve, Pennant Hills**

**Precinct 2.6.0 Pye's Creek - Bridge, Road and Quarry Site**

**Precinct 2.7.0 Cherrybrook (Elouera) - Early pavement and drains**  
**Section 3.0.0 Wisemans Ferry to Mount Manning Junction**

**Precinct 3.1.0 Original 1828 Ascent from the Hawkesbury River (Finchs Line)**

*Item 3.1.1 25 Road Party Inscription*

*Item 3.1.2 Powder Magazine*

**Precinct 3.2.0 Devine's Hill Ascent**

*Item 3.2.1 Stone Bridge (Settlers Road)*

*Item 3.2.2 Cave, Devine's Hill*

*Item 3.2.3 Carving of a man with a hat and pipe*

**Precinct 3.3.0 Devine's Hill Convict Stockade Site 2**

*Item 3.3.1 Stone Water Trough*

**Precinct 3.4.0 Shepherds Gully Road**

**Precinct 3.5.0 Mitchell's Loop**

**Precinct 3.6.0 Ten Mile Hollow (Stone Wall Foundations)**

**Precinct 3.7.0 Clares Bridge**

*Item 3.7.1 XII Mile Marker*

*Item 3.7.2 Drinking Trough*

**Precinct 3.8.0 Frog Hollow (Stone Hut Foundations)**

**Precinct 3.9.0 Ascent of Mt Baxter**

*Item 3.9.1 Carving of a man with a hat and pipe*

*Item 3.9.2 Quarry Site near Hungry Flat*

**Precinct 3.10.0 Sampson's Pass (including Stone Bridge)**

**Precinct 3.11.0 Circuit Flat Bridge and Quarry, Little Mogo Creek**

**Section 4.0.0 Mount Manning Junction to Wollombi**

**Precinct 4.1.0 Stone Ramp (+ Quarry)**

**Precinct 4.2.0 Abandoned Loop, Mt McQuoid, Bucketty (Bridge & Culverts)**

**Precinct 4.3.0 Ramsay's Leap, Mt Simpson**

**Precinct 4.4.0 Stone Causeway**

**Precinct 4.5.0 Stone Arched Culvert, Fernances Crossing**

**Precinct 4.6.0 Stone Arched Culvert and retaining wall, Murray's Run**

**Precinct 4.7.0 Thompson's Bridge**

**Precinct 4.8.0 Finch's Dep<sup>™</sup>t / Laguna House**

**Precinct 4.9.0 Abandoned Formation at Laguna Shop**

## Precinct 4.10.0 Abandoned Loop(s) at Milsons Arm Road

## Section 5.0.0 Wollombi to Maitland

Precinct 5.1.0 Sawyer's Gully, Old Maitland Road  
(2 km Road Section with culverts, bridge & side cutting)

## Section 6.0.0 Wollombi to Broke

Precinct 6.1.0 Former Crossings of the Wollombi Brook  
(Including Timber Bridge)

Precinct 6.2.0 Bridge with Masonry Abutments, 21.5 km north of Wollombi

## Section 7.0.0 Broke to Patrick's Plains (Whittingham)

## Section 8.0.0 Broke to Warkworth

Precinct 8.1.0 Monkey Place Creek - Abandoned Road Formation

## Associated Roads and Tracks

### Simpson's Track

#### 4 SIGNIFICANCE

##### 4.1 Concept of Significance

In NSW the process of finding out whether an item is important or not is called **assessing significance**. The *Heritage Assessments* document in the *NSW Heritage Manual* suggests that in assessing heritage significance two types of criteria may be applied, those which deal with the **nature** of significance (a range of values) and those which deal with the **degree** of significance (comparative values).

The **Nature** of significance criteria are:

Criterion 1 - **historical** significance (evolution and association).

An item having this value is significant because of the importance of its association with, or position in the evolving pattern of the cultural history of NSW.

Criterion 2 - **aesthetic** significance (scenic/architectural qualities, creative accomplishment).

An item having this value is significant because it demonstrates positive visual or sensory appeal, landmark qualities and/or creative or technical excellence.

Criterion 3 - **technical/research** significance (archaeological, industrial, educational, research potential and scientific significance values).

Items having this value are significant because of their contribution, or potential contribution to an understanding of our cultural history or environment.

This criterion includes archaeological, research potential, and scientific significance.

Criterion 4 - **social** significance (contemporary community esteem).

Items having this value are significant through their social, spiritual or cultural association with a recognisable community.

The **Degree** of significance criteria are:

Criterion A - **representativeness**.

Items having this value are significant because they represent an important class of significant items or environments.

Criterion B - **rarity**.

An item meeting this value is significant because it reflects a rare, endangered, or unusual aspect of our history or cultural environment.

Cultural significance is thus an expression of the cultural value afforded a place or item. Apart from the NSW State guidelines outlined above, the nationally recognised Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Significance (*The Burra Charter*) also defines cultural significance as meaning *aesthetic, historic, scientific and social value for past, present and future generations*.

An important component of a conservation plan is the statement of policy where guidelines for the future care of a place are given in order to ensure that the assessed value of the place is maintained. A fundamental basis of the statement of policy therefore is the determination of the significance of the place.

#### **4.2 Previous Assessments of the Significance of the Great North Road**

A consideration of the information provided in **Sections 2 and 3** can help determine the nature and degree of significance pertaining to the Great North Road. Information in these parts of the report has reviewed the Road in terms of its historical, and physical context.

The significance of the Road in terms of a number of heritage values has also been considered in a report undertaken by Grace Karskens for the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1991 (refer to Bibliography). This report specifically considered the 40 kilometre section of Road between Wisemans Ferry and Mt Manning, however, many of the statements expressed in that report clearly apply to the Road line in its wider context as well. The major statements of the 1991 Karskens report are re-expressed below against the current State Heritage criteria. The 1991 Karskens report also includes detailed statements of significance for component Road elements such as formations, pavements, cuttings, quarries, retaining walls, drains, culverts, and bridges. These statements and assessments are not reiterated here, but have been considered in preparing the Inventory sheets for road sections and precincts which form part 2 of this Conservation Plan.

Several formal Heritage Listings and identifications also provide assessments of the significance of particular Great North Road Sections, and/or items and precincts. Part of the Road is included in the Register of the National Estate and a part of it is also one of the component items being considered for World Heritage Nomination as part of an Australian Convict Sites group. The issues associated with Heritage listings are examined further in later parts of this report. (Section 5).

#### **4.3 Consideration of Significance**

##### **4.3.1 Discussion of Approach**

Before the significance of the Great North Road is stated concisely in **Section 4.5**, the various aspects of cultural significance previously discussed, and additional values as also assessed by the present study, are brought together below.

The structure used to set out this summary of significance is simple. The State Heritage Criteria are used, but are also cross-referenced to the terms of the Burra Charter definitions of cultural significance - historic, aesthetic, scientific and social. The same type of structure is later used in the Policy section of this report. (**Section 9**).

**Section 4.3.4** also briefly summarises the Australian Heritage commission criteria which are relevant to the Great North Road.

Additional and specific statements are also provided on the information sheets in the Inventory

component of this plan.

#### 4.3.2 Significance Assessment using the State Heritage Criteria

##### **Criterion 1 - *historical* significance (Burra Charter = Historic)**

The Great North Road has **historic significance** as a signifier of the outlooks of early colonial society. Its magnificent structures were powerful, tangible symbols of the colony's perceived place and role in the course of empire, unmistakable evidence that the civilised state was being attained, and a triumph over the rugged and inhospitable landscape separating the centre of Sydney from the 'garden of the colony', the Hunter Valley.

The Great North Road is **associated** with several notable figures in colonial administration, surveying and engineering. It represents the more ordered and administratively responsible style of government imposed by Governor Ralph Darling; its location, tracing, and indirectly, its structures, record Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell's obsession with rectilinearity in road building, and his attempt to use such major public works as a means of self-aggrandisement; the road's most ambitious structures are the materialisation of the skills and vision, as well as the hopes of remuneration, of one of Australia's earliest scientific road engineers, Percy Simpson.

Prior to its selection and survey by Europeans, much of the route which later became the Great North Road, was in use as an **Aboriginal route** linking the tribal groups of the Hunter Region to the Hawkesbury. Much of the Road line passes through Darkinjung Country and prior to its acquisition by Europeans, the route functioned both as a "highway", allowing contact and trading between different Aboriginal groups, and also as a "songline" linking important ceremonial sites and dreaming places which occurred throughout the landscape and enabling the interpretation and understanding of those places to be passed on from generation to generation. (For discussion of this aspect refer to transcribed interviews with Lesley and Alan Wickham, and Coral Edwards, in Bill Bottomley, *By Force of Maul and Wedge : Talking About the Great North Road*, Kulnura, NSW, 1996).

In several areas the Great North Road, although lacking in any obvious historic character, remains in use as an essential transport link and itself has immense **symbolic** significance as the latest successor to the historically important earlier road formations which have carried European traffic since the 1820s and 1830s. This is particularly the case for the entirely modern section through Five Dock and Abbotsford, which still retains its original name. In this respect the surviving alignment of the Road itself is associated with the earliest movement of European settlers from the Cumberland Plain into the hinterland of the colony and even when renamed (as is the case with "Old Northern Road" from Baulkham Hills to Wisemans Ferry for example) parts of the original road remain as one of the most historic road-lines still in use in New South Wales. The improvements such as widening, reconstruction and deviation which are evident on those sections remaining in use for modern traffic also reflect a long and constant process of road redevelopment and improvement in response to constantly increasing traffic and modern road engineering requirements.

##### **Criterion 2 - *aesthetic* significance (Burra Charter = Aesthetic)**

The Great North Road has **aesthetic** value both historically and at present.

This is particularly the case for the comparatively unaltered section preserved between Wisemans Ferry and Mount Manning. In this section, the conjunction of spectacular views and rugged topography with the great curve of stone walls and handsome bridges inspired several nineteenth century artists (most notably Conrad Martens) who considered such engineering feats as the Devine's Hill Ascent both sublime in the romantic sense and a subject for reflection upon the relationship of 'man' and nature.

**Individual structures** found along the Great North Road **are aesthetically attractive**. Structures

such as the Devines Hill buttressed retaining wall and items such as Clare's Bridge and Circuit Flat Bridge have **aesthetic value in their design, execution and siting**.

A number of individual road precincts and structures remain preserved as isolated remnants close by otherwise modern road-lines. Several of these provide focal features of considerable interest within the landscape. Examples include the stone culverts near Fernances Crossing and Murray's Run, which sit adjacent to more recent road-line deviation works; and the Ramsay's Leap wall and flume, and the extensive walling on the Descent to Wisemans Ferry, both of which support sections of the road which are still in use. Surviving road-side details such as these structures give **character and interest** to the modern road-line and provide important reminders of the early ancestry and historic importance of the Great North Road.

An additional component of the aesthetic value of the Great North Road is the surviving physical relationship between many of the now abandoned road precincts and their **setting**. The adjacent landscape is often of considerable importance in providing the present setting and curtilage for the built heritage components. In some cases, particularly for the section of the Road preserved within Dharug and Yengo National Parks between Wisemans Ferry and Mt Manning, the **curtilage and associated 'visual catchment'** of the surviving precincts provides a largely intact natural landscape setting which is evocative of the isolation and remoteness of the road during its initial construction period. In other cases, for example in the area from Laguna to Wollombi, adjacent land often has significant historical links with the history of the Great North Road, and a significant **physical relationship** to the present road-line, in providing **evidence of successive phases** of historic occupation and development following the initial arrival of European colonists, given that the road-line here shaped the pattern of subsequent development and subdivision. The Great North Road remains an important landmark and reference point within many of its surrounding local areas, and is often also a particularly prominent **visual landmark**.

### **Criterion 3 - technical / research significance (Burra Charter = Scientific)**

The Great North Road has **historical archaeological** significance in that it physically demonstrates the work patterns, skills and organisation of the convict road gangs, particularly through the distribution and configuration of the stone retaining walls, drainage structures and bridges. This evidence is unavailable in documentary sources and has been essential in changing our historical views on convicts in road gangs. The Road may be considered a **museum of convict work**, graphic in its **demonstration** of the difficulty, laboriousness and isolation of 1830s road building.

The Great North Road has **historic / scientific** value in its **demonstration** of the standards and practice of road engineering in the colony during the "Great Roads" period of the late 1820s and 1830s, and records the importation and adaptation of the (then) recent road-building revolution in England. This essential information is unavailable in documentary sources, and as such it has changed our understanding of Australia's road engineering history.

Many precincts of the Road still **demonstrate** the nature of nineteenth century travel, through their early style geometry and layout, including sight-lines and tight curves, and with structures passing through the original landscape and vegetation.

Specific associated sites and items along the Great North Road are significant for their **archaeological research potential**. This includes for example, the various convict road station (stockade) sites such as those at Wisemans Ferry and on Devines Hill, the hut sites at Frog Hollow and along the 1828 Finch's Line (the 'powder magazine'), and the former property of Heneage Finch at Laguna. Such historical archaeological sites are important in possessing structures, and associated archaeological deposits and artefacts which provide independent and primary physical evidence of past human conditions and activities. The sites may contribute to the answering of **present** research questions in Australian history - questions relating to the convict experience and the early colonial period, and to more global research questions about the history and role of convict transportation in British colonisation, etc. Such sites and deposits also have the potential to answer **future** research questions in Australian history. Potential here means that new techniques or analysis developed in the future may allow new information to be obtained from stored archaeological material and collections. New research questions may also be

developed which can be applied to this material or to as yet uninvestigated archaeological sites.

#### **Criterion 4 - social significance (Burra Charter = Social)**

A number of Great North Road precincts appear to be associated with **particular 'communities of interest'** for whom individual sites and items may have particular meaning. One such example is the "Bucketty Convict Wall" which forms an important focal point and public space for its local community. (Precinct 4.2.0 Abandoned Loop, Mt McQuoid, Bucketty).

The Convict Trail Project is itself a community based initiative, initially developed as a response by local people to counter perceived threats to the road. The project thus indicates the care and concern of local people at a 'grass roots' level and the wider local interest in history, heritage and conservation. The Project aims 'to protect, restore, maintain and promote' the Road, by uniting local people, historical societies, local councils in whose areas the road falls, and government bodies with an interest and responsibility in the conservation of the road.

Thus contemporary social significance may relate both to those with close connections physically or historically, and to a broader community which although more distant, nevertheless claims some 'ownership' of the Road and interest in the conservation of its heritage value. Thus the Road may have special meanings, for both locals and other people.

The broader community interest in the Great North Road and the perceived heritage value of the major built structures and other items is also indicated by their listings at both the local Council level and with other government and non-government organisations. For example, the NSW National Trust listed its first section of the Road (the section between Wisemans Ferry and Mt Manning) in 1975, to be followed by National Trust listings of further sections in 1978 and 1980. (Heritage listings are considered further in later parts of this report, Section 5.2.2).

Complete understanding of this aspect of heritage significance requires additional research not possible under this Stage 1 plan. Such research would need to further clarify and establish contemporary social significance. Subject to individual site circumstances, interest groups may include local residents, local and family historians or direct descendants of individuals associated with the Road. The potential research interest of road precincts and specific sites may also have particular value to professional practitioners such as historians, archaeologists, and to members of other professions such as engineers, surveyors, etc, who are interested in the history of such disciplines in the early colonial period.

The Mexican Committee of ICOMOS prepared a statement known as the Declaration of Oaxaca which is a declaration on "Cultural heritage in daily life and its conservation through community support". Some of the tenets of the Declaration include:-

Seeking to build a community's role in creating, maintaining and giving life and meaning to places of heritage significance.

Seeking to build a role for such communities in conserving the place - both its meanings and its fabric.

Arguing that those who create our heritage, and for whom it is part of their daily lives, offer the best means for its conservation through the continuity of traditional practices.

Expressing concern about limiting the identification of heritage significance to entities such as standing structures. Social values are also important.

Seeking a continuity of use for a place as the best way of retaining its heritage value.

Acting to continue and reinforce the connection between local people and a place.

Arguing that a process of community participation in all aspects of decision making in the conservation of heritage places is essential if contemporary communities are to commit the same energy and conviction to safeguarding the cultural heritage as did their antecedents in forming it.

#### **Criterion A - representativeness**

In its demonstration of the standards and practice of road engineering in the colony during the "Great Roads" period of the late 1820s and 1830s, and of the adaptation of English road-building practice, the Great North Road is a **representative** example of the state of road-building of the time and the methods being used in the colony on the other major road lines including the

other Great roads (West and South).

Thus **as a whole** the surviving structures such as bridges, walls, culverts, and other construction features are individually and collectively excellent examples of the range and types of structures used to build new roads in the colonial period. In their range and distribution, combined with historical evidence, the structures also allow interpretation of the work patterns, skills and organisation of convict road gangs and their supervisors in the colonial period.

#### **Criterion B - rarity**

Whilst the entire length of the surviving Great North Road has the representative value just noted, individual Sections and precincts of the Road also possess **rare** and **unique features**.

The section of the Road between Devines Hill and Mt Manning is particularly significant for its **rarity** and **integrity**. While there are comparable sites of the same period elsewhere, there are no sections of comparable "Great Roads" so extensive or as well preserved.

Several of the individual structures surviving on the Great North Road appear to be unique as no identical examples have so far been located elsewhere. Examples include the diverse range of stone bridges which survive on the Road, which feature individual and specific design and detailing, and the arched culvert at Murray's Run.

#### **4.3.3 Group Value (additional, non SHI criterion)**

The assessment of the Great North Road under the two immediately preceding criteria (representativeness and rarity) indicates the immense value of the whole road in providing a notable and progressive series of surviving sections, precincts, items and other physical evidence of colonial road-building. The significance of each individual precinct or "set" of structures is enhanced by the existence of the others, especially for comparative and interpretive purposes.

#### **4.4 Significance Assessment against the AHC Criteria**

The following references in brackets relate to the Australian Heritage Commission's criteria for consideration for listing on the Register of the National Estate. Some important sections of the Road are already listed on the Register, so reference to the AHC criteria have been included here in a brief summary form as it is considered that this might be of use to the Commission for the purpose of upgrading the existing quality of its listing information for the Great North Road.

##### ***Roads /site as part of a larger group [AHC E.1]***

Collective group with a strong historical, physical, landscape presence.

##### ***Of value as part of a broader social and cultural context [AHC A.4]***

##### ***It has the capacity to demonstrate [AHC A.4]***

*Engineering*

*History*

*Archaeology*

##### ***Strong associations with various people, and events [AHC H.1]***

*Early important figures* (Governor Ralph Darling, Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell)

*Other key figures* (Finch, Warner, Simpson)

*Convict artisans*

##### ***Social value attached to the Road by the community [AHC G.1]***

##### ***Symbolic and representative value [AHC G.1]***

## **Curtilage [AHC G.1]**

*as landmark/reference point  
Immediate visual setting*

### **4.5 Summary Statement of Heritage Significance**

The Great North Road is an item of **National** heritage significance. It has values under **all** relevant heritage assessment criteria, including historic, aesthetic, scientific and social significance as expressed by the ICOMOS Burra Charter, and under the SHI criteria. The Road also fulfils numerous assessment criteria as expressed by the Australian Heritage Commission. Whilst many heritage items will fulfil more than one value, the immense significance of the Great North Road is reflected in its possession of these multiple values at a number of levels.

Historically the Great North Road was the first made road north of the Hawkesbury, constructed by convict gangs between 1826 and 1836. The road has historic associations with several notable colonial figures including Governor Darling and Surveyor-General Sir Thomas Mitchell. The Road is also tangible evidence of the development of the colony at Sydney, and of policies which saw convict gangs used to construct major public works during this period.

The Great North Road also provides a direct material record of convict labour. Many surviving structures and precincts indicate the quality of work achieved by convict artisans. Many precincts of the road also remain in relatively unspoilt settings which are evocative of the environment on the 'frontier' of the 1830s.

Other parts of the historic Great North Road (even if re-named) remain in use as an essential transport corridor and have thus carried European traffic continuously since the 1830s.

### **4.6 Prioritising Significance**

#### **4.6.1 Discussion**

While the whole of the Great North Road is of extremely high cultural significance there are within it many individual items that have varying levels of significance. To assist in the process of making good decisions about the conservation management of specific items the following priorities and rankings have been attempted.

**Level A** refers to items of very high significance and for these the implication is that their retention and appropriate conservation is essential. A very limited level of intervention may be acceptable, however there would need to be very compelling justification for this, and even then the intervention would need to be strictly controlled and any displaced fabric meaningfully reemployed on site. For Level A items retention/conservation is the principal emphasis, the very limited level of intervention referred to above would represent the rare exception.

**Level B** is for items of high significance and retention/conservation is a requirement although some level of intervention or adaptation **may** be acceptable depending on the circumstances and manner of intervention.

**Level C** indicates that retention / conservation of the item is preferred with the same proviso as the previous level.

#### **4.6.2 Schedule of Precincts / Items with Significance Rankings**

**Section**  
**Precinct/Item**  
**Name/Identification**

## Significance

### Section 1.0.0 Baulkham Hills to Wisemans Ferry Precinct 1.1.0

Item 1.1.1 Abandoned Loop, Maroota 40.4 km nth of Baulkham Hills

Rock-cut Well B

B Precinct 1.2.0 Early Zig-zag Descent to Mr Sharps' on the Hawkesbury B Precinct 1.3.0 Small Bridge, 51 km north of Baulkham Hills A Precinct 1.4.0 Descent to Wisemans Ferry A Precinct 1.5.0

Item 1.5.1 Convict Road Station/Stockade Site 1

'Wiseman's/Warner's Well' A

A Precinct 1.6.0 Wisemans Ferry Hotel and grounds B Precinct 1.7.0 Wisemans Ferry Crossing C

Section 2.0.0 Great North Road between Abbotsford and Dural Precinct 2.1.0 Great North Road, Abbotsford C Precinct 2.2.0

Item 2.2.1 Wharf, cutting and quarries, Bedlam Point

Rockend Cottage A

B Precinct 2.3.0 Remains of Early Bridge and Approach over Terry's Creek, Albuerra Road, Eastwood B Precinct 2.4.0 Stone Causeway, Devlins Creek, Epping A Precinct 2.5.0 Road Section in

Blackwood Reserve, Pennant Hills B Precinct 2.6.0 Pye's Creek Bridge, and Quarry A Precinct 2.7.0 Early pavement and drains, Cherrybrook B

Section 3.0.0 Wisemans Ferry to Mount Manning Junction Precinct 3.1.0

Item 3.1.1

Item 3.1.2 Original 1828 Ascent from the Hawkesbury River

25 Road Party Inscription

Powder Magazine A

A

A Precinct 3.2.0

Item 3.2.1

Item 3.2.2

Item 3.2.3 Devine's Hill Ascent

Stone Bridge

Cave, Devine's Hill

Carving of a man with a hat and pipe A

A

A

A Precinct 3.3.0

Item 3.3.1 Devine's Hill Convict Stockade Site 2

Stone Water Trough A

A Precinct 3.4.0 Shepherds Gully Road B Precinct 3.5.0 Mitchell's Loop A Precinct 3.6.0 Ten Mile Hollow (Stone Walls) A Precinct 3.7.0 Clares Bridge A Item 3.7.1 XII Mile Marker A Item 3.7.2 Drinking

Trough A Precinct 3.8.0 Frog Hollow (Stone Hut Foundations) A Precinct 3.9.0 Ascent of Mt Baxter A Item 3.9.1 Carving of a Man with a hat and pipe A Item 3.9.2 Quarry Site near Hungry

Flat A Precinct 3.10.0 Sampson's Pass (including Bridge) A Precinct 3.11.0 Circuit Flat Bridge and Quarry, Little Mogo Creek A

Schedule of Precincts / Items with Significance Rankings (Cont'd)

## Section

### Precinct/Item

### Name/Identification

### Significance

Section 4.0.0 Mount Manning Junction to Wollombi Precinct 4.1.0 Stone Ramp (+ Quarry), Mt

Manning A Precinct 4.2.0 Abandoned Loop, Mt McQuoid, Bucketty A Precinct 4.3.0 Ramsay's Leap,

Mt Simpson A Precinct 4.4.0 Stone Causeway B Precinct 4.5.0 Stone Culvert A Precinct 4.6.0 Stone

Arched Culvert and retaining wall, Murray's Run A Precinct 4.7.0 Thompson's Bridge A Precinct

4.8.0 Finch's Dep<sup>TM</sup>t / Laguna House A Precinct 4.9.0 Abandoned Loop, Laguna Shop B Precinct

4.10.0 Abandoned Loops, Milsons Arm Road B

Section 5.0.0 Wollombi to Maitland Precinct 5.1.0 Sawyers Gully A

Section 6.0.0 Wollombi to Broke Precinct 6.1.0 Prior

crossings of the Wollombi Brook C Precinct 6.2.0 Stone Bridge, 21.5 km north of

Wollombi B

Section 7.0.0 Broke to Patrick's Plains Section 8.0.0 Broke to Warkworth Precinct

8.1.0 Abandoned Formation, Monkey Place Creek C

## 5.1 Diverse Ownerships and Stakeholders, Roles and Perceptions

The Great North Road is currently in the control, management or ownership of an extremely diverse range of management authorities. These multiple ownerships then impose their own differing objectives and requirements and encompass diverse responsibilities and resource levels. The Road also crosses numerous physical and administrative boundaries.

In the case of the Sections of the Road still in use these include the Roads and Traffic Authority, and Local Government Authorities which are responsible for maintenance of the road as an actively used transport corridor. This imposes particular requirements and potential threats, which are considered further shortly. The longest abandoned or out of use section of the Great North Road is the 40 km now included within Dharug National Park and adjacent to Yengo National Park (Section 3). The National Parks and Wildlife Service has its own land management responsibilities and has set these out in a range of documents, many of which specifically address the Great North Road (refer to report Bibliography). The first 16 km of the Road is within Dharug National Park, and other significant items, such as the Circuit Flat Quarry are within the Yengo National Park. The rest of the 'abandoned' Road (Section 3) is a closed public road managed by Gosford City Council.

In an administrative sense, the Great North Road sits on the boundaries of numerous administrative regions (Sydney and Hunter Regions), sub-regions, and agencies. These include its definition as a Local Government Area boundary, and also as a boundary for other regions, including for example, Tourism Commission and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning regions. The main Great North Road passes through the Local Government Areas of Drummoyne, Ryde, Hornsby, Baulkham Hills, Hawkesbury, Gosford, Cessnock, Singleton, Maitland. In joining to Mitchell's Hunter Valley Road (now the New England Highway) the road then enters the City of Newcastle. The associated Simpson Track (which diverges from Ten Mile Hollow) crosses into additional LGAs, including Wyong.

Other agencies which may have a less direct involvement in management or operational issues, especially in a day to day sense, may nevertheless have a considerable interest in the overall outcome. These types of agencies include the various statutory authorities responsible for heritage. These agencies also have the potential to become involved in a more direct way in the future conservation and management of the Great North Road, in particular through the provision of direct or indirect funding or other assistance. For example, the current Stage 1 Conservation Plan (this document) has been undertaken using funding provided by the NSW Heritage Office.

**The biggest issue for the entire Great North Road is the lack of an overall, or holistic management structure** which can assess and view proposals for the road (whether positive or negative) from the perspective of its entire context. The overall history of management of the Great North Road shows short periods of active government involvement for short term projects, whether past upgrading and maintenance or more recent conservation and interpretation projects. These are generally followed by long periods of neglect. The diversity of agencies and roles briefly noted above, has not been conducive to truly effective management.

The Convict Trail Project originated precisely because of the perception by local communities at a "grass roots" level that meaningful co-ordination or co-operation between diverse management agencies was not occurring in a way that translated to effective conservation of the Great North Road. Fieldwork undertaken for this project tends to confirm and support this perception. The absence of a single co-ordinating body has allowed much of the management of the Great North Road to fall into a policy and/or legislative vacuum.

Adjoining Landowners are also an issue for the Great North Road. Due to the length of the Road (some 240km) and the changing tenure of the surrounding land, a major issue evident from this study is that of curtilage, especially for those Precincts which are still in use. Consideration of this issue was beyond the scope of this Stage 1 Plan, but some comments are made on this issue in Section 6.4. The landscape through which the Great North Road passes is of both Natural and European Heritage Significance (the Wollombi Valley for example is a National Trust Classified Landscape and was also identified in the Cessnock Heritage Study). It is therefore desirable that

agencies with responsibility for devising planning controls for the management of significant places take a more pro-active role in ensuring the future conservation of these aspects of significance. These agencies include Local Councils and the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning.

Possible options to address some of these issues by either the creation of a new management structure (formal or informal) or some other mechanism are discussed in Section 7 of this report.

## **5.2 Statutory Obligations and Constraints**

### **5.2.1 Planning Legislation**

In NSW, land use planning is controlled by the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act, 1979*. (EPA Act). The planning system established by the EPA Act includes regional environmental plans (REPs), local environmental plans (LEPs) and provisions relating to development control. When items are listed in the heritage schedule to a Local Environmental Plan (L.E.P.) or a Regional Environmental Plan (R.E.P.), usually following identification in an Heritage Study, they are offered protection by the heritage provisions contained within the plan which will require Council's consent for certain actions or activities, and/or referral of some proposals to the NSW Heritage Council. All of the LEPs include similar provisions.

#### **5.2.1a Local Government Heritage Listings and/or LEPs**

The Inventory Sheets in Part 2 have noted the existing Local Government listings. These are either in Heritage Studies, or in heritage studies and inclusion in the Schedule of Heritage Items in an appropriate LEP. Not all Heritage Studies have progressed to formal LEP stage as yet, however it may be inferred that identified items should ideally be managed accordingly. Parts of the Great North Road are listed with the following Local Government Authorities:

Baulkham Hills  
Hornsby  
Gosford  
Hawkesbury  
Cessnock

#### **5.2.1b Hunter Regional Environmental Plan 1989 (Heritage)**

The aims of the HREP 1989 are set out in Section 2 of the document. They are:

2 *Aims, objectives etc*

*The general aims and objectives of this plan are:*

*(a) to conserve the environmental heritage (including the historic, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural and aesthetic heritage) of the Hunter Region,*

*(b) to promote the appreciation and understanding of the Hunter Region's distinctive variety of cultural heritage items and areas including significant buildings, structures, works, relics, towns, precincts and landscapes, and*

*(c) to encourage the conservation of the Region's historic townscapes which contain one or more buildings or places of heritage significance or which have a character and appearance that is desirable to conserve.*

Items of State Significance are set out in Schedule 1 of the Plan and those of Regional Significance in Schedule 2. Provisions relevant to the Development of Heritage Items are set out in Clauses 7 to 9. These are as follows:

### **7 Development of heritage items**

*(1) A person shall not, in respect of a building, work, relic, tree or place that is a heritage item:*

- (a) demolish or alter the building or work,
  - (b) damage or move the relic, including excavation for the purpose of exposing the relic,
  - (c) damage or despoil land on which the building, work or relic is situated or land which comprises the place,
  - (d) erect a building on or subdivide land on which the building, work or relic is situated or on the land which comprises the place, or
  - (e) damage any tree on land on which the building, work or relic is situated or on the land which comprises the place,
- except with consent of the Council.
- (2) The Council shall not grant consent to a development application made under subclause (1) unless it has made an assessment of:
- (a) the significance of the item as a heritage item,
  - (b) the extent to which the carrying out of the development in accordance with the consent would affect the heritage significance of the item and its site,
  - (c) whether the setting of the item, and in particular, whether any stylistic, horticultural or archaeological features of the setting should be retained,
  - (d) whether the item constitutes a danger to the users or occupiers of that item or to the public, and
  - (e) measures to be taken to conserve heritage items including any conservation plan prepared by the applicant.

**8 Heritage items of State significance**

( 1 )  
 The Council shall not grant consent to a development application made under clause 7 for items specified or described in Schedule 1 unless the concurrence of the Director of Planning is obtained.

( 2 )  
 In deciding whether to grant concurrence under subclause (1) the Director shall take into consideration:

- ( a )  
 the views of the Heritage Council,
- ( b )  
 the heritage significance of the item to the State,
- ( c )  
 the extent to which the carrying out of the development would affect the heritage significance of the item and its site,
- ( d )  
 whether the setting of the item, and in particular, whether any stylistic, horticultural or archaeological features of the setting should be retained,
- ( e )  
 measures to be taken to conserve and preserve heritage items including, where appropriate, any conservation plan, and
- ( f )  
 whether the item constitutes a danger to the users or occupiers of that item or to the public.

**9 Heritage items of regional significance**

( 1 )  
 The Council shall not grant consent to an application made under clause 7 to demolish or alter an item specified or described in Schedule 2, unless it has referred the application to the Director of Planning.

( 2 )  
 Subclause (1) does not apply to the partial demolition of a building or work which, in the opinion of the Council, is of a minor nature and does not adversely affect the heritage significance of the building or work.

( 3 )  
 Where a copy of an application has been forwarded to the Director of Planning pursuant to subclause (1), the council shall not determine the application until:

( a )

*it has received and considered any advice with respect to the application from the Director,*  
( *b* )  
*the council has been notified that the Director does not wish to submit any advice with respect to the application, or*  
( *c* )  
*28 working days have elapsed after the date on which the application was referred to the Director,*  
*whichever occurs first.*

The Old North Road from Mount Manning to Paynes Crossing is listed in Schedule 1. (Section 4).  
Laguna House is listed in Schedule 2. (Precinct 4.8.0)

## **5.2.2 Heritage Legislation**

### **5.2.2a The New South Wales Heritage Act, 1977**

The Heritage Act, 1977, was enacted to ensure that the environmental heritage of New South Wales would be adequately identified and conserved. The Act established the Heritage Council of New South Wales, which makes recommendations to the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Planning on the implementation of the Heritage Act. The Heritage Amendment Bill 1998, recently altered several provisions of the Heritage Act.

The provisions of the Heritage Act with particular reference to the management and conservation of archaeological sites in New South Wales are those which relate to "relics" and the provisions for the listing of significant items in the State Heritage Register.

#### **The "Relics" Provisions**

The term "relic" is defined in the Heritage Act, 1977 (as amended 1987).  
Part 1, Section 4, defines a relic as:

*" any deposit, object or material evidence -*  
(a) *which relates to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement; and*  
(b) *which is 50 or more years old. "*

The Heritage Act provides automatic statutory protection for relics in Sections 139 - 145 which prevent the excavation or disturbance of land for the purpose of discovering, exposing or moving a relic except in accordance with an excavation permit. Section 139 of the Heritage Act, states in part, that:

*(1) A person must not disturb or excavate any land knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed unless the disturbance or excavation is carried out in accordance with an excavation permit.*

Thus, the disturbance or excavation of land containing, or likely to contain, relics may only take place after an excavation permit has been granted by the Heritage Council. Section 146 of the Act also requires that if a relic is discovered (or located) the Heritage Council must be notified of its existence as soon as possible.

The Road Precincts noted in the Inventory and isolated road structures, archaeological sites and relics would fall within these provisions.

Parts of the Great North Road (Devines Hill to Mt Manning -Section 3; and Mt Manning to Paynes Crossing - Sections 4/5) are already included in the State Heritage Inventory, and a nomination has been prepared for the entire Road to be listed in the State Heritage Register. If the Road is included in the SHR, then the provisions of Section 57 of the Act will apply. Section 57 controls activities such as demolition, damage, moving, destruction, excavation, development

and alteration and requires approvals for any such work to be obtained under a Section 60 Application.

Section 170 of the Heritage Act also requires that government instrumentalities establish and maintain a "Heritage and Conservation Register" of all items in their ownership which are of heritage significance. A copy of the Register must be lodged with the Heritage Council of NSW, and items must be managed in accordance with State Owned Heritage Management Principles. This affects government departments, for example, the Roads and Traffic Authority, which maintains a heritage site register.

#### **5.2.2.b Australian Heritage Commission (Commonwealth)**

This is a federal statutory body established under the *Australian Heritage Commission Act, 1975* (Commonwealth). The Commission is responsible for the identification and maintenance of the Register of the National Estate.

The Act prevents any Commonwealth Department or instrumentality, or any organisation using Commonwealth funds from taking any action which might adversely affect a site on the Register except where there is no "feasible or prudent" alternative. (Section 20 parts (1) and (2)). It should be noted that the interpretation of "feasible or prudent" is for the proponent to determine, not the AHC.

Sections 3, 4 and 5 (part) of the Great North Road are included in the Register of the National Estate. This is from north of the Hawkesbury River near Wisemans Ferry, to Mount Manning via Ten Mile Hollow. Thence from Mount Manning north to Paynes Crossing. It is entered under the title "Old North Road".

### **5.3 The World Heritage Nomination (Convict Sites Group)**

This nomination was prepared through the World Heritage Unit of the AHC/ Environment Australia (Federal Government). Some Sections of the Great North Road were included within the Convict Sites Group nomination. These sites/items were the Devines Hill Ascent (including the Devines Hill Stockade Site), and the 1828 Ascent (Finch's Line). The Wisemans Ferry Stockade Site (south of the Hawkesbury River) has also been suggested as a possible future addition to the nomination, once necessary management plans have been prepared.

Nominations are submitted in June and are sent to the World Heritage Bureau of UNESCO, where they are assessed by independent international organisations. Recommendations are considered by the World Heritage Committee. Consideration of applications for World Heritage Listing usually takes at least 18 months.

The nomination was not submitted in June 1998. It is still being developed with a view to possible submission by June 1999. The current management of National Parks is not directly affected by World Heritage Listing. Land tenure is also not affected.

### **5.4 The National Trust of Australia (NSW) - Non Statutory Heritage Listing**

The National Trust is a non-government organisation which compiles its own Register of heritage items. Listing in the Trust register has no legal force but is widely regarded as an authoritative statement of the heritage significance of a place or item.

The National Trust listed its first section of the Road (the section between Wisemans Ferry and Mt Manning = Section 3) in 1975, to be followed by National Trust listings of further sections in 1978 and 1980. These additional Listings are for the sections of the Road from Glenorie to Wisemans Ferry (= part of Section 1) and for the Road between Mt Manning and Paynes Crossing (= Section 4 and part of Section 5). The Wisemans Ferry Stockade (Precinct 1.5.0) and Wiseman's Inn (Precinct 1.6.0); The Gladesville Wharf (Bedlam Point, Precinct 2.2.0) and the Pyes Creek Bridge (Precinct 2.7.0) are also classified by the National Trust.

## **5.5 The National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974 (as amended)**

This Act is relevant to those parts of the Great North Road which are on Service Estate and within the ownership and management of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. These are the Bedlam Point Precinct, the Wisemans Ferry Convict Stockade Precinct and part of Section 3 of the Great North Road, the 40 km section from Wisemans Ferry to Mount Manning. The first 16 km of Section 3 is within Dharug National Park. Part of Section 3, from Ten Mile Hollow to Mount Manning lies adjacent to Yengo National Park. The NPWS refers to Section 3, from the Hawkesbury River to Mount Manning as the "Old Great North Road".

The Act sets out the objectives, roles and functions of the NPWS. Part 5 of the Act sets out the requirement for the preparation of Plans of Management for National Parks and Historic Sites. A draft Plan of Management has been prepared for Dharug National Park and a separate draft Conservation Plan exists for the Old Great North Road. The NPWS advise that this Plan (prepared under Section 75(1) of the NPW Act, 1974) is to be on exhibition in April-May 1999 and due to be finalised by June 1999. A Conservation Plan is to be prepared for the Wisemans Ferry Stockade Site during 1999, with a Plan of Management to follow. There is also a final draft version of a Plan of Management and Masterplan for the Regional Park site at Bedlam Point. Officially, it is known as "Parramatta River Regional Park - Bedlam Bay". The Department of Health who administer the main part of the property (the former Gladesville Hospital) and all the historical structures will be preparing some form of Conservation Plan or management plan for the whole site. (Information from NPWS email 3/3/1999 forwarded by the Convict Trail Project, and in an undated letter from Central Coast District received 29/3/1999).

The NPWS is a corporate member of Australia ICOMOS and has adopted the Burra Charter. The NPWS also has responsibilities to ensure the conservation of historic places, landscapes, works and relics within Service Estate. With this in mind the NPWS has funded a series of studies and reports which have recorded and assessed those parts of the Great North Road in NPWS lands. The NPWS has also completed conservation and interpretation works on some parts of the Road.

## **5.6 Roads and Traffic Authority Legislation**

The Roads and Traffic Authority is established under the Transport Administration Act, 1988. The Authority has those functions conferred upon it, by that Act and also by the Roads Act, 1993; the Traffic Act 1909, the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act 1988, and the Road Transport Act, 1995.

These Acts are principally concerned with the operational requirements of the road transport system. Most of these are described in Section 2F of the Traffic Act, 1909. This states:

*2F Functions of the Authority relating to traffic arrangements etc*

*(1) The functions of the Authority include the following:*

*(a) reviewing the traffic arrangements in the State, including arrangements in connection with the movement, regulation and control of traffic and the parking of vehicles,*

*(b) formulating or adopting plans and proposals for the improvement of those arrangements,*

*(c) establishing general standards and general principles in connection with:*

*(i) the design, construction, erection, affixing, marking, maintenance, repair, alteration, operation or removal of traffic control facilities, and*

*(ii) the design of intersections and the approaches to them or the approaches to railway level crossings, for purposes connected with traffic safety and the movement, regulation and*

control of traffic,

(d) *promoting traffic safety,*

(e) *co-ordinating the activities of public authorities so far as those activities relate to:*

(i) *the carrying out of plans and proposals formulated or adopted by the Authority for the improvement of traffic arrangements, or*

(ii) *the design, construction, erection, affixing, marking, maintenance, repair, alteration, operation or removal of traffic control facilities, or*

(iii) *traffic safety, or*

(iv) *any other matter connected with the Authority's functions under this Part.*

(2) *The Authority may:*

(a) *promote traffic safety measures or activities, including measures or activities for:*

(i) *the safety and protection of the public, including pedestrians, on roads or road related areas, and*

(ii) *the prevention of accidents on roads or road related areas, and*

(iii) *the minimising of the effect of accidents on roads or road related areas, and*

(iv) *the protection of property from damage from accidents on roads or road related areas, and*

(b) *promote or engage in the dissemination and publication by suitable media of advice and information resulting from research or otherwise for the education and guidance of, and observance by, drivers of or persons travelling in vehicles, or persons on roads or road related areas, or manufacturers of, repairers of, or dealers in, vehicles or vehicle parts, and*

(c) *make reports or recommendations to the Minister, or any other person or body, in relation to the following:*

(i) *traffic arrangements, and the movement, regulation and control of traffic, on roads or road related areas,*

(ii) *traffic planning,*

(iii) *traffic safety,*

(iv) *the parking of vehicles,*

(v) *the operation, maintenance or alteration of traffic control facilities,*

(vi) *any other matter connected with the Authority's functions under this Part, and*

(d) *carry out or promote research or investigations into matters connected with any of the Authority's functions under this Part including*

*research or investigations into:*

- (i) traffic control facilities, and (ii) the cause of accidents, their incidence and the ways and means that may be adopted for their prevention or for controlling or mitigating their effects.*

It should be noted that the primary operational focus of this legislation is on issues of “safety” and “improvement”. The potential effects of these requirements are considered in Section 5.9.

## **5.7 Other Legislation**

Fire management is also an issue for the Dharug National Park section (Section 3), and possibly some others, as the Bush Fires Act can over-ride other legislation. The impact of fire and the use of roads for fire management is a separate issue, with the obligation on the owner/manager of affected road sections to ensure they have fire planning in place which minimises the need for bush fire traffic. This legislation is also relevant to comments made in Sections 6.3 and 6.5, below.

## **5.8 Issues and Objectives/Obligations arising from Significance**

### **Obligations to retain Significance**

#### Physical Evidence and Structures

The entire length of the Great North Road should be conserved in accordance with established conservation principles such as those outlined in the ICOMOS Burra Charter.

All surviving historic elements (including formations, structures and other historic items) should be retained and conserved.

Where the presence of a natural or historic setting is an aspect of the Road’s present significance this should also be retained and conserved.

#### Conservation Philosophy

The ongoing use of any historic site, place or item (in this case both the overall road-line and its abandoned sections and isolated precincts) will usually inevitably involve some disturbance and/or adaptation. The appropriate extent of that disturbance or adaptation must derive from the **Conservation Policy** for the item arising from the Statement of Significance. The degree of acceptable impact or modification may vary from place to place, or in the case of the Great North Road, from Precinct to Precinct.

### **Obligations arising from the Burra Charter**

(NB references in parentheses relate to the relevant articles explaining Definitions, Principles, Processes and Practice of the Burra Charter).

The cultural significance of the entire surviving length of the Great North Road should be retained and provisions made for its protection, appropriate maintenance and future preservation.  
**(Article 1.5, Article 2)**

All conservation work should be based on a respect for the existing fabric and should involve minimum intervention. **(Article 3, Article 12)**

An appropriate visual setting for the Road should be maintained wherever possible. New works or development affecting the road-line itself or adjacent significant lands, which would adversely affect the Road’s present setting should not be allowed. Environmental intrusions

adversely affecting an appreciation or enjoyment of the place should be excluded.  
**(Article 8)**

All significant fabric should remain in its historical location. The relocation of all or part of any significant fabric is unacceptable unless it is the sole means of ensuring its survival.  
**(Article 1.3, Article 9)**

The removal of significant fabric is unacceptable unless it is the sole means of ensuring its security and preservation. Such fabric must be returned to its location should changed circumstances make this feasible. **(Article 10)**

For future restoration work at individual precincts and structures, the contributions of all periods to the place must be respected and should be assessed. **(Article 1.7, Article 16)**

Where appropriate, reconstruction should be limited to the reproduction of fabric, the form of which is known from physical and/or documentary evidence. **(Article 1.8, Article 19)**

Significant fabric previously or subsequently removed from the Road should be kept safely, ready for future reinstatement. **(Article 22)**

The existing fabric should be recorded before any work or exploratory intervention on the Road.  
**(Article 23)**

The process of decision making and individuals responsible should be identified.  
**(Article 26)**

Appropriate professional direction and supervision should be maintained at all stages of the work.  
**(Article 27)**

Records should be kept of new evidence and subsequent decisions. **(Articles 25, 27)**

Copies of all reports and records should be placed in a permanent archive and made publicly available. **(Article 28)**

Significant fabric kept in storage should be professionally catalogued and protected.  
**(Article 29)**

## **5.9 Issues arising from Physical Condition**

### **Generally**

Some precincts of the Great North Road have been subject to vandalism (including theft of stone blocks), inadvertent damage, and other unsympathetic works which have compromised the significance of the precincts and structures by reducing their intactness and aesthetic qualities, and by obscuring their ability to demonstrate.

It may be expected that appropriate works including the repair of the damaged monuments/ structures, will recover some of the significant aspects which have been reduced or lost as a result of vandalism, neglect, and unsympathetic works.

An overall impression of the condition of the Great North Road has been gained through the completion of the Inventory fieldwork, and comments are included within the Inventory about the condition of precincts and items.

### **Disused Road Sections**

These are principally Section 3, the 40 km 'abandoned' stretch of the Road between Wisemans Ferry and Mount Manning, but are also various small loops and isolated structures which have been cut off from the still in-use road by subsequent road deviations. Most of these have been inventoried as individual Precincts.

Several previous studies and reports have described and commented upon the condition of the Road within or adjacent to the Dharug and Yengo National Parks. Most of these reports were completed at least 8 years ago (reports are listed on Section and Precinct Sheets and in the Bibliography). As a result, for the purposes of this overview Stage 1 Conservation Plan field inspection was undertaken to verify the condition of major road structures and precincts.

Extensive parts of Section 3 of the Great North Road are in very poor condition. Significant structures such as retaining walls, culverts, and bridges are damaged, missing or collapsed. Pavements are deteriorated and in some cases the road has eroded to levels well below the original sub-base. Examples of eroded sections and damaged structures are shown in the photographs on the next pages.

The causes of the damage to Section 3 of the Road include damage through an intensive period of over-use by modern 4wd vehicles, through lack of maintenance (over a period of some 160+ years) and through uncontrolled runoff of stormwater. The Road was found to be in a worse condition than reported by Karskens in her MA Thesis, 1985, and in the various NPWS reports undertaken during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Burke, 1988; Comber, 1990, 1991). This suggests that the lack of regular maintenance and resultant ongoing deterioration reached a critical point during the past decade as some old structures started to collapse or totally failed, thereby exacerbating road drainage problems and erosion.

The present road is primarily in use as a walking track. Despite notions that the road might be subject to occasional use by authorised vehicles for emergency situations such as search and rescue, fire, or for periodic inspections, in effect the present condition of the road renders it impassable to vehicular traffic.

The deep rutting and erosion of the road has exacerbated the water run-off problems as water ponds and is not able to be thrown off the road. This deflation of the surface and the creation of convex road profiles is somewhat ironic given the emphasis in nineteenth century road engineering in designing, constructing and maintaining roads to avoid exactly this occurrence.

The loss of covering fill also means that original structures such as timber culverts have collapsed. The timber culverts have also proved very vulnerable to bushfire, especially due to the presence of overgrown vegetation close to and on road structures and formations. Vegetation should be cleared where it is threatening structures in accordance with the principles given in Section 8. If the road is to remain trafficable at all then parts require new road-base or surfacing material to fill the hollows and gullies. Such material should be free-draining and appropriately compacted and profiled. Overall, this type of remedial work would not substantially affect the archaeological integrity of the road as on these severely degraded sections original surfaces exist rarely if at all.

Three significant Bridge structures survive within Section 3. Clares Bridge near Ten Mile Hollow has been subject to specific engineering reports, and work is understood to be intended shortly. Some restoration has been completed of the Circuit Flat Bridge. Sampsons Pass Bridge should be the next major structure assessed. Excavation of fill material between the abutments may be required in order that this structure can be assessed.

Blocked side drains and silted up culverts are also contributing to the degraded condition of the road. For abandoned road precincts outside the National Parks works have been completed under the auspices of the Convict Trail Project to manually clear these structures. Work has generally been completed to a high standard and the condition of these precincts has improved.

Apart from the deterioration of the actual road surface, lack of routine maintenance even for basic track clearing means that the road is also impassable to vehicles due to obstacles such as boulders and fallen trees. These are shown in the photographs on the following pages.

### **Road Sections still in use**

These road sections still in use generally remain in a good condition. Most sections of in-use road are sealed, and it is unclear whether older pavements survive below the modern wearing

surfaces. Some significant precincts remain unsealed however, including the road from Mt Manning to Bucketty, (Precinct 4.1.0) part of the Old Maitland Road at Sawyers Gully (Precinct 5.1.0) and also an unsealed section near the commencement of Section 6 (Wollombi to Broke). The threat to these sections is inappropriate and unsympathetic modern maintenance. An example of the damage caused by ill-informed use of grading equipment is shown in the following photographs.

The cumulative threat of inappropriate works and maintenance is the potential loss of significant site and precinct features to a point where the overall integrity of the Great North Road is diminished. Central to the achievement of better maintenance is recognition of the following:

a change in thinking, whereby Project Managers, Engineers, Contractors and Works staff are made aware of the significant attributes of historic road precincts;

a recognition that appropriate professional assessment and advice may be needed for works which affect the Road (whether intended as 'conservation' or not).

An additional threat to these sections is the context of operational issues relating to road safety, upgrading, widening or any other relevant aspect of the normal use and maintenance of the in-use Road. Road improvements to Old Northern Road at Maroota have altered the character of this Section. Piecemeal widening of the Road corridor, with its obvious consequential impacts on individual items, is undesirable in heritage terms. The general location of much of the present Road alignment and its surviving Colonial-era structures relate to, and demonstrate, the early ancestry and historic importance of the road. In any event, proposals which impact on these older Precincts require full and appropriate Heritage Impact Assessment. Where upgrading might be required a better option for the longer term future of the Road would be the selection of a separate replacement carriageway if and when the road is to be upgraded in the future (rather than the widening on either or both sides of the present road formation). In other cases, where there is no peak traffic requirement, if necessary the Road should be restricted to light traffic only, in order to preserve its existing historic character.

## **6 CONSERVATION POLICY**

### **6.1 General Principles**

An important document for the conservation of Places of Cultural Significance is the Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter*. This is the basic document used by heritage and conservation professionals in varying disciplines. Now the accepted standard for conservation work in Australia, it is a short, practical and flexible general guide offering developers, lay people, heritage professionals and authorities assistance in managing the conservation of important heritage assets while recognising the need for continuing use and development of some sites or items. It is therefore most appropriate for use in relation to the Great North Road.

The Burra Charter states that :

“the aim of conservation is to retain or recover the cultural significance of a place and must include provision for its security, its maintenance and its future”.

The conservation principles, processes and practice indicated in the Burra Charter of the Australia ICOMOS form the basis of the following statements of conservation policy in Section 6.

The statement of cultural significance (**Section 4**) indicates that the entire Great North Road is of considerable value for past, present and future generations. It should therefore be conserved so that its significance is retained.

It is essential that conservation be understood and practised in relation to the Great North Road on the basis of a respect for all of the existing significant fabric, formations, structures, and setting. This means that all future actions should involve the **least** possible physical intervention.

The processes commonly used to implement conservation include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation. These processes are defined below.

Any major work on individual structures or precincts should be preceded by appropriate documentation and **recording**. This should include photographs, plans and descriptions incorporating analysis using appropriate professional input as required. An item specific conservation policy and appropriate work schedule or specification should be developed on the basis of an understanding of the item's significance and its physical condition. The Inventory Sheets (Part 2 of this Stage 1 Conservation Plan) provide basic information for this purpose.

In the case of the Great North Road, essential conservation should include:

- **structural analysis /assessment where necessary**

(which may lead to stabilisation or other works)

- the McBean & Crisp reports completed in the 1980s have dealt with some individual structures;
- the report by Bill Jordan & Associates, 1997, updates information relevant to Devines Hill and Clares Bridge;

- **preservation**

- **restoration**

When conservation works are undertaken on a place or item of cultural significance, they should endeavour to **retain all** of the **identified significant attributes** of the place, and to enhance or recover those attributes which have been obscured or lost.

## 6

## 2

### Terms

Throughout this Policy various terms have been used with particular meanings and these are defined below. The definitions come from the Burra Charter.

Important definitions from the Burra Charter (Article 1), include the following:

- **CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**, means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations.
- **PLACE** means site, area, building or other work ...together with associated contents and surroundings.
- **FABRIC** means all the physical material of the place.
- **CONSERVATION**, means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain cultural significance.
- **MAINTENANCE** means the continuous protective care of the fabric, contents and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves *restoration* or *reconstruction* and should be treated accordingly.
- **PRESERVATION**, means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.
- **RESTORATION** means returning the **EXISTING** fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.
- **RECONSTRUCTION** means returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric.

### 6.3 Fabric and Setting

Wherever possible, original fabric should be retained, preserved and maintained.

Wherever possible, displaced original fabric should be restored.

Replacement fabric should be of the same design, form, and finish as existing fabric.

New work should be of a form, scale and finish which respects existing elements, but should be discernible on close inspection as new work (and see Section 6.4, below).

### **6.3.1 Structures**

The progressive repair of damaged structures should be undertaken as resources become available. Detailed work schedules should be prepared for individual structures and works. The ranked list in Section 4 of this report should be used as a basis for prioritising works.

### **6.3.2 Landscape /Setting**

The significant attributes of the landscape and setting of the Great North Road should be conserved wherever possible. Settings should not be modified by the addition of new features which dominate or detract from the character of the road.

### **6.3.3 Vegetation**

Where vegetation is a significant attribute of a road Precinct, this should be conserved. Examples are the numerous “bush” settings of several road precincts which evoke the nature of the pioneer period. Whilst vegetation affecting structures should be periodically removed, these precincts should not be over-maintained.

## **6.4 Curtilage**

The question of curtilage is beyond the scope of the current Stage 1 Plan. The Great North Road is an extremely lengthy and complex item. With a length of 240 km, full consideration of the adjoining corridor on each side would have tripled the study area to more than 750 km in size. Where possible in the inventory process and significance assessment, the context of the Road’s historic, physical and cultural landscape has, however, been considered.

In general terms, however, the curtilage of the Road should be assumed to be an area of approximately 1 to 1.5 km on either side of the Road. This area generally encompasses the immediate visual catchment of the Road, although not all significant vistas will fall within such an arbitrary boundary.

Development on adjacent sites, especially the commercial, or semi-commercial development of adjoining freehold land, has the potential to severely alter parts of the significant setting(s) of the Road, and should be assessed accordingly.

## **6.5 Appropriate Uses**

Where the Great North Road continues in use as a transport corridor this may be seen as a continuation of its traditional role. It is necessary to ensure however that continued use does not result in the loss of significant attributes of the Road.

The issue of appropriate uses has been specifically addressed in the management documents for the Sections within or adjacent to the National Parks, and these should be referred to directly. For example, the matters noted in Section 5.7, will be relevant to appropriate road use(s).

## **6.6 New Works**

New works **must be compatible** with the character and style of the earlier fabric and with its surrounding context. If possible, new works should also be designed to be reversible in the future (eg if the missing fabric is later found or recovered and can therefore be reinstated).

In some cases, structures may have become deformed from their original configuration. Care

must be exercised as the correction of such defects or damage can reduce the authenticity of the surviving structure. Although unsound fabric might need replacement, applying 'minimum intervention', the emphasis should generally be on stabilisation, in preference to dismantling and repair or reconstruction. Supplementation of fabric (eg propping) may also be sufficient. Repairs must not be in stronger materials than the original fabric or differential stress (cracking, etc) will result.

#### **6.6.1 Introduced Material**

Any introduced materials should be documented (by means of photographs, reports, etc) and should be identifiable as new.

#### **6.7 Interpretation**

The increased awareness and recognition of the importance of the road is strongly supported, but needs to be co-ordinated with other developments including overall interpretive strategies, walking tracks, maps/pamphlets etc. The NPWS has fairly successfully addressed the interpretation of some of the road precincts and features within Dharug National Park.

An interpretive program should be devised and implemented recognising available archival and site evidence. It should also recognise lost fabric and layout (eg for damaged structures such as the Circuit Flat Bridge, where an opportunity exists to tell multiple stories about the structure).

Interpretive material should take into account the issues identified in the statements of cultural significance as well as the need to support specific conservation works programs arising from recommendations in this Stage 1 Conservation Plan report .

Care should be exercised to avoid over-interference (eg visually intrusive markers). Plaques or other markers **must not** be fixed to the structures they interpret, as this causes permanent change to the historic fabric, and in effect defaces the item. Interpretation should not detract from, or distract attention from, the item it addresses.

The material should also exploit the opportunity to link the history of individual precincts and items with that of other early sites and items in adjacent places or areas (when relevant) as well as links with particular people and their connections beyond the local area.

Comments about the presence or absence of interpretation at specific Precincts have been made on the Inventory Sheets in Part 2 of the Conservation Plan. These also note where additional interpretation might be desirable. The Convict Trail Project has also prepared a Draft Interpretation Plan, considering the potential development of promotional and interpretive material.

#### **6.8 Signage**

Signs used on Great North Road precincts should be designed as a system; conform to a high standard of professional design; be of good quality materials; be durable and vandal resistant; and respect the significance of the place by enhancing it rather than obscuring or detracting from it. Signage may encompass different purposes, including information signs, user education (interpretive signs), destination or next stop (route marker) signs.

Where used, interpretive signs should be part of the same system design and otherwise conform to the same requirements as described above.

Signage designs and logos have been recently revised by the Convict Trail Project. A separate Signage Plan has also been developed.

#### **6.9 Control of Physical Intervention in the Fabric**

In carrying out physical work on the damaged structures within precincts of the Great North Road,

the following principles must be applied:

- All conservation work (including maintenance) carried out on significant monuments should be according to the **advice** and direction of recognised heritage **conservation specialists**.
- work on significant structures should be carried out using **appropriate professional skills** (including qualified trade skills) with adequate direction and **supervision** maintained at all stages of the work. This means for example, that professional stonemasons or stone conservators **must** be used for works on masonry structures.
- existing fabric should be **recorded** prior to disturbance by new works;
- wherever possible original fabric should be **retained and preserved**, thereby maintaining the **integrity** / authenticity of the original structure;
- wherever possible displaced fabric should be reinstated to its original location, where this is known, thereby restoring both original fabric and form;
- careful regard should be paid to the landscape and setting of individual structures and to the **historic, physical and visual relationships** of individual structures within surviving road precincts;
- **reconstruction**, using new fabric, should be limited to works which are essential, in order to allow preservation and restoration of existing fabric.

Wherever practicable, existing fabric should be retained and incorporated in repair work. Original fabric should not be replaced with 'new' fabric as it is inevitable and appropriate that an historic structure shows some evidence of its age in the form of 'wear and tear'. This may include an existing patina of age and the results of weathering, wear, and natural decay. Even if it is damaged, the original fabric also has greater integrity and authenticity than any replacement fabric, and may always be replaced if it becomes necessary at a later date.

It is also important to adopt a policy of '**minimum intervention**'. In simple terms this equates with doing as much as necessary but as little as possible. It means that all future actions should involve the least possible physical intervention.

### **6.9.1 Archaeology**

Where physical intervention may reveal or disturb 'relics' within the meaning of the NSW Heritage Act, appropriate Permits must be obtained and professional archaeological supervision will be required. In some instances, for example where the Road is within or adjacent to National Parks, aboriginal sites may be affected. If so, separate Permits or consents may be required under the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act.

### **6.9.2 Artefacts**

Numerous isolated artefacts and portable relics are known to have been collected from road Precincts and sites in past years. Any relics removed, should be professionally catalogued and protected. Appropriate storage arrangements are also required.

The issue of an appropriate repository for Road relics is difficult due to the length and linear nature of the Road itself. Historically, salvaged relics and building fabric have been lodged with the local history museums at Hawkesbury and Cessnock, stored in NPWS depots, and retained by private individuals. The community basis of the Convict Trail Project, and tradition, makes it likely that local communities will continue to want to retain control of their localised relic collections.

It is therefore recommended that the Convict Trail Project attempt to obtain an agreement from all of the agencies and organisations involved in the project about the appropriate future treatment

of existing salvaged material, and of new material and relics recovered in the future.

A central repository with public access, and public accountability for the care of the relics in its custody, would be preferable to the continuing salvage and storage by multiple parties. At present, this type of storage is beyond the resources of the Convict Trail Project, especially for large items of fabric such as salvaged stone blocks, etc., but it remains a desirable future goal.

#### **6.10 Archival Material**

Essential archival material relating to the Road should be collected, preserved and stored in a central repository.

At the present time material is held by different agencies in scattered locations. During the attempt to collate existing material for this Plan some previous and current documents could not be located or obtained.

The Convict Trail Project currently holds copies of most of the major documents which relate to the Road, such as the Karskens MA Thesis and the various consultant reports (see Bibliography). The CTP also holds an extensive photographic record, including photographs of all major precincts and items. This appears to be the most comprehensive and accessible single collection of Road related material. Access to the material is available by contacting the Executive Director of the Convict Trail Project.

Material consulted for this Stage 1 Plan is generally referenced in Section 1.7, in detailed endnotes to Section 2, in other Sections of the Plan as relevant, on Inventory Sheets, and is listed in the Bibliography. This includes reference to known research collections.

#### **6.11 Research / Publication**

There is no end to the potential information which may be gathered about the Road. Further research and investigation may always yield new information about the Road. Further research and dissemination of information should be encouraged.

The Convict Trail project has already commenced a publications series (the Monographs series) in order to make the results of research about the road more widely available. A video, associated book and brochures have also been produced.

#### **6.12 Monitoring**

Active conservation and monitoring of works and success will be required if the heritage values identified for the Great North Road are to be safeguarded. This should be instituted by management agencies and requires a regular cycle of inspection, maintenance and conservation.

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#### **Management Co-ordination and Responsibility**

Responsibility for the management coordination of works affecting significant precincts of the Great North Road should ideally be co-ordinated through a central agency, whether an individual or a group. If possible the co-ordinator should have widely endorsed and well respected credentials in areas such as heritage conservation and management planning.

Management responsibilities would include:-

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Implementing the Conservation Plan

- 
- Periodic review of the Conservation Plan
- 
- Coordinating professional repairs, maintenance, and new works
- 
- Organising funding through appropriate revenue, grants, sponsorship and donations.
- 
- Encouraging and coordinating community involvement
- 
- Encouraging continuing research
- 
- Organising and running training seminars for workers and volunteers carrying out necessary unskilled work on the sites/precincts.
- 
- Liaising with the various Owners, Stakeholders and other responsible management agencies

It is also desirable to ensure that the present impetus and success of the Convict Trail Project can be continued. It is considered particularly important to try and build a structure which continues the 'grass roots' involvement characteristic of the present CTP, and also strengthens the links between the wide range of organisations which have responsibility or an interest in the management of the Great North Road.

The Stage 1 Conservation Plan (this document) has been prepared for the Convict Trail Project. The CTP should retain responsibility for the dissemination of this Stage 1 Plan, and its components such as Inventory Sheets or other necessary updates of material. Updates to the Plan, such as those resulting from new discoveries, should be notified to the Executive Director.

#### **6.14 Increased Statutory Recognition and Enforcement**

A more holistic planning and management approach is required, and should be facilitated through discussions with all relevant management agencies. Although the significance of the Great North Road, and some sections in particular, has been long recognised through heritage listings at all possible levels, this document is the first to consider the overall context for managing the entire length of the Road.

Comprehensive heritage listing for the entire Great North Road does not exist and should be actively pursued by preparation of new nominations based on the material presented in the components of this Stage 1 Plan.

A single statutory planning instrument, which focuses on the critical issues and values of the Great North Road is highly desirable. All identified significant Road Sections, Precincts and Items also need to be included within appropriate local planning instruments (see Section 7, below).

#### **6.15 Adoption and Review**

This Conservation Policy will be considered by the Heritage Group of the Convict Trail Project.

It should be adopted by all of the agencies which comprise the Convict Trail Project.

The Policy should be reviewed if any major departures from it are proposed.

The Policy should be reviewed at such time as there is any major change in circumstances.

## **7 IMPLEMENTATION**

### **7.1 Management Models**

Prior sections of this document have noted the absence of an overall co-ordinating management structure as a threat to the long term conservation of the entire Great North Road (Section 5.1). It has also been noted that it is desirable that any future management structure continues the 'grass roots' involvement characteristic of the present Convict Trail Project.

There are also significant community expectations, particularly as a result of the Convict Trail Project, that the heritage value of the Great North Road will be properly managed. The National Trust of Australia (NSW), as a community-based organisation, and other heritage listings, and the assessment of significance in Section 4 of this Plan, implicitly recognise broader community interest in, and concern for, the Great North Road and its significant items. These are therefore representative of a broader community concern - supported further by the Australian Heritage Commission listing on the Register of the National Estate. Many would find it inexplicable and likely experience a profound sense of loss if this item continues to be degraded, damaged or otherwise threatened without very compelling and widely appreciated reasons.

With this in mind models were investigated for the management of other similar items. Such items are lengthy, linear, and pass through a range of ownerships. Models which were looked at were:

Catchment Management Trust  
Crown Lands Reserve Trust (Specific Purpose)  
Advisory Committee  
Regional Environmental Plan (REP)

#### **Catchment Management Trust**

Discussions were held with Malcolm Hughes, Program Leader, Catchment Planning, Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Trust.

The Catchment Management Trust is set up under the Catchment Management Act, 1989. This specifies the functions of the Trust and its Trustees. Additional functions are specified in the Hawkesbury Nepean Management Regulation, 1993.

The composition of the Trust is 51% Landholder or Landuser representatives, the rest are from Local Government and State agencies. The representatives are called for by public nominations and are assessed by a formal process. Beneath the Trust are a series of smaller Catchment Management Committees.

The Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Trust is funded by a specific Treasury Grant, this is because the Hawkesbury Nepean River is seen as an item of concern to a very wide community, encompassing the entire Sydney Metropolitan Region. Because of this perceived wide benefit, the Trust is given a broad funding base from the NSW Government. Two other catchment management trusts, those for the Upper Parramatta River and the Hunter Valley are funded by levies on the ratepayers of the particular area. These Trusts carry out physical works such as flood mitigation, which specifically benefit those regions.

The Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Trust co-ordinates on management issues which affect the catchment, but does not directly engage in any physical works. Co-ordination by the HNCMT is achieved by maintaining a watching brief on planning activities in the Catchment in particular by responding to DAs, REPs, LEPs and DCPs. The HNCMT is also represented on

other planning committees. Clauses within Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No.20 Hawkesbury- Nepean River, also require some agencies to consult with the HNCMT in relation to some specific matters or types of development (Clauses 9 and 11). Additional matters may be referred to the Trust for comment at the discretion of the particular consent authority.

### **Crown Lands Reserve Trust (Specific Purpose)**

Discussions were held with Don Manson, Administrator Central Tablelands Heritage Lands Trust, Department of Land and Water Conservation, Orange.

The Crown Lands Reserve Trust system is established under the Crown Lands Act, 1989 (Division 4, Section 92). Reserve Trusts are charged with the care, control and management of any reserve (or any part of a reserve) of which it is appointed trustee. Controls on permissible activities within Reserves are established by the Crown Lands Act (General Reserves By-Law, 1995). Following completion of a Conservation and Management Plan a specific purpose Reserve Trust is to be established for the Six Foot Track, which runs between Katoomba and Jenolan Caves. This linear item, which has a total length of 42 km, passes through 3 Local Government Areas and diverse land ownerships. Parts of the track are in use as public roads.

In late 1998, management of the Track was still being co-ordinated through the Orange Lands Office with a steering committee although a formal Trust was likely to be appointed during 1999. A major issue for the track has been establishing, surveying, acquiring and gazetting of the land on which it is situated. Some 70% of the land is either Crown Road, public road or firetrail, and it was necessary to consolidate the land in order that the Trust had a specific legal entity to manage. A further issue for the Six Foot Track is its absence of an adequate funding base, especially to maintain its own infrastructure or complete capital works. The track is unlikely to be able to be self supporting and for this reason it may well continue to be managed with support from the Department of Land and Water Conservation.

### **Advisory Committee**

Numerous examples of advisory committees with both formal status and less formal status exist in a range of management situations. An example is the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council and District Committees which are established under Part 3 Division 1 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974.

### **Regional Environmental Plan**

The absence of integrated planning for the Great North Road is a major factor in the failure to effectively co-ordinate its long term conservation as a total entity. Preparation of a Regional Environmental Plan specifically for the Great North Road could serve to give a consistent planning framework across several Local Government Areas. This type of REP would also focus on the Road as the centrepiece, removing the current administrative and perception problem of the Road as being always on the margins of other areas, regions and planning instruments.

There are numerous examples of REPs not only for linear items (such as Sydney REP No 20 for the Hawkesbury - Nepean River) but also specifically to conserve heritage values. The Hunter Valley REP was discussed in Section 5.2.1b of this report.

If an REP were to be made for the Great North Road, it could also potentially refer to an appropriate management committee, co-ordinator, or indeed a Trust if such were to be established. Any of these could fulfil the functions of the central management agency noted in Section 6.12 of the Conservation Policy. This agency would not necessarily remove control from those authorities who have ownership and management responsibility for the Road, but could potentially give the present CTP a more formal status and an ongoing role.

An REP for the Great North Road could include provisions relating to both Development under Part 4 and an Activity under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979. It could also include provisions whereby the consent authority for proposed developments or activities must take into account documents such as this Stage 1 Conservation Plan, or comments from an appointed management committee, trust, etc. Other provisions which might be useful within an REP would include a formal mechanism to ensure that the monitoring work

recommended in Section 6.12 of the Conservation Policy can be carried out effectively.

Other heritage specific REPs also provide a range of provisions aimed at the conservation of significant attributes. One such example is the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 13 - Mulgoa Valley. The specific aims and objectives of the Plan are:

**Aims, objectives etc.**

**3. (1)** *The general aim of this plan is to ensure that the development of the Mulgoa Valley is guided to maximise the benefits and conservation of its resources in its metropolitan context, especially its rural landscape and heritage resources.*

**(2)** *The specific aims of this plan are:*

- (a) to identify those buildings, works, relics and places of historic, architectural, cultural, scientific, archaeological, aesthetic and natural significance which comprise the environmental heritage of the Mulgoa Valley;*
- (b) to ensure conservation of items of environmental heritage;*
- (c) to ensure protection of natural ecological elements within the valley, especially areas of ecological significance;*
- (d) to identify and protect the Mulgoa Nature Reserve to be established by the National Parks and Wildlife Service;*
- (e) to conserve the rural landscape of the valley;*
- (f) to protect the setting of the Mulgoa village within the rural landscape;*
- (g) to allow orderly and economic development which is compatible with the rural and natural landscape and heritage of the valley;*
- (h) to protect and utilise the tourism and recreation potential of the valley where it is consistent with the conservation of its rural and natural landscape, heritage and agricultural qualities;*
- (i) to protect the agricultural capability of prime agricultural land; and*
- (j) to enable rural residential development where it is consistent with the conservation of the rural and natural landscape, heritage and agricultural qualities.*

The development consent criteria within this Plan include the following:

**Development consent required for items of environmental heritage**

**9. (1)** *Subject to clause 11, a person shall not, in respect of a building, work, relic or place that is part of an item of environmental heritage:*

- (a) demolish, renovate or extend a building or work;*
- (b) damage or despoil a relic or place or any part thereof;*
- (c) excavate any land for the purpose of exposing or removing the relic;*
- (d) erect a building on the land on which the building, work or relic is situated or the land which comprises the place; or*
- (e) subdivide the land on which the building, work or relic is situated or the land which comprises the place,*

*except with the consent of the consent authority.*

**(2)** *In deciding whether to grant consent for the purposes of subclause (1), the consent authority shall consider:*

- (a) the significance of the item to the environmental heritage of the Sydney Region;*
- (b) the impact of the proposed development on the historic, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic significance of the item of environmental heritage;*
- (c) in the case of an application to erect or alter a building, its compatibility with either buildings on the site of the item of environmental heritage in terms of roof form, style, size, proportion and position of opening for doors and windows and the colour, texture, style, size and finish of the materials;*
- (d) the retention of stylistic, horticultural, vegetation, landscape or archaeological features of the setting; and*
- (e) any elements of danger to the users or occupiers of the item of environmental heritage or to the public.*

**Demolition applications**

**10. (1)** *Except as provided by subclause (2), in respect of an application to demolish a building*

or work that is an item of environmental heritage:

- (a) the provisions of sections 84, 85, 86, 87 (1) and 90 of the Act shall apply in the same way as those provisions apply to and in respect of designated development; and
- (b) the consent authority shall not grant consent to the application until 28 days after the consent authority has notified the Secretary of the Heritage Council of New South Wales of its intention to do so.

(2) Subclause (1) does not apply to the partial demolition of a building or work if, in the opinion of the consent authority, the proposed work is of a minor nature and will not adversely affect the significance of the building or work as part of the environmental heritage of the Sydney Region.

#### **Development consent criteria**

12. The consent authority shall not grant consent to an application to carry out development for any purpose:

- (a) if any proposed building will be located on ridgetops or if it will intrude into the skyline when viewed from road or other public places;
- (b) unless it is satisfied that the proposed development will not adversely affect the historic, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic significance of any item of environmental heritage in the valley;
- (c) if services, in particular arrangements regarding the provision of water and disposal of effluent satisfactory to the requirements of the Water Board, are not adequate or will not be provided in a reasonable time;
- (d) unless it is satisfied that the proposed form and sitting of buildings, colours, landscaping, and building materials are appropriate for the rural character of the valley and are consistent with the Design and Management Guidelines or their intent;
- (e) if any proposed development will detract from the vistas of an item of environmental heritage as documented in the Design and Management Guidelines;
- (f) unless it is satisfied that the development will not be exposed to unacceptable risk from bushfires;
- (g) if extensive areas of vegetation will be cleared;
- (h) unless it is satisfied that the agricultural viability of holdings and potential of the land will not be adversely affected;
- (i) unless it is satisfied that Aboriginal and European archaeological material on the land will not be adversely affected;
- (j) unless it is satisfied that the view from Mulgoa Road will not be adversely affected;
- (k) unless it is satisfied that the rural setting of Mulgoa village will not be adversely affected;
- (l) unless it is satisfied that development and its access will not be exposed to unacceptable risk from flooding;
- (m) unless it is satisfied that the development will not adversely affect the hydrology of Mulgoa Creek; and
- (n) unless it has considered any Development Control Code prepared pursuant to clause 17.

Subsequent Clauses in the REP control matters such as subdivision.

It should be noted that clauses such as 12 (a) and (j) above specify the consideration of the **view from the Road**, which is relevant to the issues associated with the curtilage of the Great North Road as discussed briefly in Section 6.4 of this Stage 1 Conservation Plan.

**On the basis of the models assessed it is considered that preparation of an REP for the Great North Road is recommended as the most viable option to pursue in the immediate future.**

## **7.2 Other Opportunities**

The Convict Trail Project has prepared a series of documents which should be considered as complimentary or companion documents to this Conservation Plan. They include a Business Plan and a Tourism Plan which set specific targets and objectives for the Project.

These documents have also assessed opportunities for increased education, promotion and marketing of the project. Accordingly these matters are not further considered here.

### **7.3 Funding Opportunities**

A number of possible avenues exists for funding the various repair, maintenance and capital works which may be necessary to conserve the Road and its significant precincts. In recent years the Convict Trail Project has received significant support through the NSW Heritage Office for the funding of a part-time Executive Director, and for the completion of this Stage 1 Conservation Plan. A number of other grant applications have also been prepared, including for Federal Tourism Funding and more recently for the Federal Cultural and Heritage Projects Program, however these applications have been unsuccessful.

The form of the funding assistance varies according to the source and the particular emphasis in policy of the assisting body. Selection eligibility criteria will often be attached to ensure the grant or other form of assistance satisfies particular policies or objectives. The following list of potential funding sources which might be further investigated is not exhaustive.

#### **7.3.1 Sponsorship**

Sponsorship is the provision of financial support, services, or goods by a person or firm usually for an anticipated benefit such as advertising of the firm's product, naming rights, etc. By its very nature, the Great North Road will not be an appropriate item for many types of sponsorship. Nevertheless a sponsorship policy might be developed which would set out expectations and benefits.

#### **7.3.2 Grants and Loans Programs**

As noted in Section 7.2 the Convict Trail Project has already completed a number of grant applications with varying degrees of success. The Project should continue to apply for all relevant programs. With the completion of the Stage 1 Plan and the adoption of its conservation policy, financial assistance should now be sought for the completion of physical conservation works, involving appropriate specialists as necessary.

#### **7.3.3 National Trust Conservation Appeal**

Because much of the Great North Road is classified, it would be possible to apply to the National Trust to establish a Conservation Appeal to assist with the restoration of specific items or precincts.

Under this scheme, donations made to the Appeal are tax deductible. The National Trust also imposes management fees on Restoration Appeals.

#### **7.3.4 Section 94 Contributions (EPA Act)**

The Convict Trail Project presently receives annual grants from a number of the member Local Councils.

The Great North Road and its heritage Precincts are a significant open space resource. It would therefore be possible for Local Councils to consider the application of open space contributions levied under Section 94 to be put towards capital works on Precincts. At the present time Section 94 contributions can only be levied within single LGAs, however, this is understood to be presently under review. Cross boundary Section 94 allocations could potentially benefit Road Precincts.

### **7.4 Other Works Assistance**

Additional support has been available to the CTP through donation of services (eg by the University of Newcastle). Other works assistance which has been or might be pursued includes:

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*Training Schemes* run periodically offer employment and training assistance for local people who have been unemployed. While they can be a useful way of providing labour and materials for designated capital works and even some basic work associated with repairs and maintenance, unless there is full-time supervision from recognised heritage advisers with experience in

organising such groups, the whole experience is potentially counterproductive. Valuable heritage fabric has been known to be lost through well meaning but unprofessionally supervised training schemes of this kind.

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*Community Participation* is also a useful and important source of labour for maintenance and other selected works on individual Road precincts, however, the same proviso applies as discussed above.

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*Weekend Detention/Community Services Scheme* projects are similarly a useful source of labour however it is again imperative that proper, full-time instruction and supervision is guaranteed. The Convict Trail Project utilises the resources of a mobile prison crew from the St Helliers Correctional Centre. This is an important and valuable labour resource which has contributed to the successful conservation of a number of precincts. The use of this resource should be strongly supported.

At the present time it appears that prisoners cannot be used within the National Parks. This policy should be clarified and negotiated with senior NPWS management levels.

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*The Army* may be an appropriate additional agency to try and involve in the Convict Trail Project. Fieldwork completed on Section 8 of the Great North Road, between Broke and Patricks Plains (Whittingham) indicated that if early settlers tracks or roads survive they appear to be within Commonwealth Department of Defence landholdings. It is also ironic that one of the prior causes of damage to Section 3 of the Road appears to have been its past use by the Army for training exercises. If involved this may also provide a useful source of labour (given that the army has access to specialists such as surveyors and engineers) however it is again imperative that proper, full-time instruction and supervision is guaranteed.

## **7.5 Summary of Recommended Key Actions**

**TASK:** Adopt the Stage 1 Conservation Plan and in particular the Conservation Policy.

**ACTION:** **The Draft Plan was circulated and reviewed by CTP Heritage Group members. The Final Plan and Conservation Policy should be adopted by CTP Heritage Group members and by all agencies participating in the CTP.**

**TASK:** Investigate the feasibility of obtaining a single Statutory Planning Instrument (an REP) applying specifically to the Great North Road.

**ACTION:** **CTP Executive Group to pursue with the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning**

**TASK:** Ensure Local Government Planning Instruments (LEPs) include provisions applying as appropriate specifically to the Great North Road and its contextual environment.

**ACTION:** **Local Government Representatives on the CTP to pursue**

**TASK:** Obtain consistent heritage listing(s) for the entire length of the Great North Road.

**ACTION:** **CTP Heritage Group to pursue**

**TASK:** Update the Plan as new information becomes available

**ACTION:** The CTP should retain responsibility for the dissemination of this Stage 1 Plan, and its components such as Inventory Sheets or other necessary updates of material. Updates to the Plan, such as those resulting from new discoveries, should be notified to the Executive Director.

**TASK:** Review this Conservation Plan

**ACTION:** The entire Conservation Plan should be reviewed at appropriate intervals. The Conservation Policy should be reviewed at such time as there is any major change in circumstances.  
The Conservation Policy should be reviewed if any major departures from it are proposed.

8

## **SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR**

As already noted in **Section 6.1, structural analysis** assessing the condition and stability of individual structures may be required. This should generally be completed by a structural engineer or architect with experience in conservation matters. Subject to any necessary structural assessment, in applying the general conservation principles to specific works, the future conservation of the Great North Road might include:

- **removal of disruptive vegetation affecting masonry structures and causing distortion.**

This includes trees growing out of walls. In such cases, trees should be cut off and the stumps should be poisoned. Trees may need to be removed in separate sections, one at a time. Stumps and roots should generally be left in-situ, as their removal may further damage and dislodge masonry. Very small stumps might be able to be carefully 'drilled out'. Dislodged stones should be realigned.

Other vegetation, either within road formations or growing close to the base of walls, may also be removed. This will both reveal the form and features of the road and will prevent further damage. Trees beside, but not on, the road should generally be left in order to retain the historic and environmental setting, although fallen timber and dead or dying trees which might fall and damage structures should be removed.

Extreme caution must be exercised in this type of activity, especially in the use of equipment such as chainsaws or power-line trimmers close to old structures, which may cause inadvertent damage. Manual clearing is generally preferable.

- **removal of overlying or obscuring material.**

This would include for example, the careful hand-clearing of structures such as drains or culverts which have become filled with silt or other debris. In some cases it may be necessary to involve an historical archaeologist to supervise these operations. (These types of excavations have frequently revealed convict-era artefacts, especially tools).

This would also include removal of overburden such as more modern pavements or fill spread from the road shoulder which is overlying older structures and formations.

- **restoration and stabilisation of structures.**

In the case of a retaining wall for example, new stone blocks may be used to reinstate missing sections, but must be of similar material, style, finish and dimensions to the original blocks.

Compatibility also includes colour, texture and surface finish. Blocks should **not** display a modern sawn or machine finished face, but should be finished to match the style of the older masonry. Where walls and other structures such as culverts have been constructed using dry-laid masonry blocks or slabs, **mortar should not be used in repair work**, although blocks may be rebedded using filling sand.

In the case of individual blocks, any stone repairs should be very minor. Where sections of individual stone blocks have been broken away but will not collect water or cause further decay, they should simply be left. Where structures have been modified in the past by the addition of more fabric or alterations these should also generally be left alone.

If it is necessary to remove any fabric, it must be catalogued and appropriately stored in order to permit its reinstatement at a future date.

- **Institution of a regular maintenance program**

It has been noted earlier in this document that blocked side drains and silted up culverts are contributing to the degraded condition of some road sections and precincts. Past practice has seen long periods of neglect of 'abandoned' sections followed by sporadic works to complete remedial or structural works. For some abandoned road precincts outside the National Parks works have recently been completed under the auspices of the Convict Trail Project to manually clear these structures.

Regular maintenance to remove invasive vegetation or to clear and keep the drains and culverts open and working, is a vital step in the effective long term conservation of the Road. Maintenance (meaning **continuous care**) must be scheduled and undertaken on a regular basis by management authorities. It must be formally scheduled into works programs.

### **Inappropriate Actions**

In Burra Charter terms **preservation, restoration**, and in some cases, **reconstruction** of the fabric is appropriate for structures within surviving precincts of the Great North Road.

The following activities therefore should **not** occur:

- 

***hypothetical reconstruction of missing elements***

- 

***further movement or relocation of any original elements of the fabric of structures (other than return to its original location if this is known)***

- 

***discarding of original fabric***

Other "don'ts" in restoration work on structures are as follows:

- no electric or pneumatic equipment or tools should be used in the vicinity of the old structures (eg to shape or bed new blocks) as these may destabilise the fabric.
- as discussed above, cement or cement mortar should not be used.
- waterproofing agents or surface coatings should not be used on old masonry.

- The cleaning of structures or stone blocks should not be considered a particular priority, but may be required in some cases to facilitate the repair work. Cleaning should not attempt to restore the stonework to 'new' condition, and should seek only to remove surface soiling and agents of deterioration. Cleaning should generally be done with water and a bristle brush only. No pressure spray methods or chemical agents should be used.
- future (regular) maintenance, especially the control of tree/scrub growth, will prevent the recurrence of several of the problems currently evident on several Great North Road Precincts.

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