

6.0 Bulga



Bulga Bridge

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contextual analysis

6.1. European Heritage

"Bulga is an ancient aboriginal name signifying mountain or mountainous, given to it long ago, long before the white man wandered over the range. It was thus the peaceful prosperous little village lying under the shelter of the Bulga mountains derived its name. Its original discovery dates with the discovery of Patricks Plains in March 1819, Bulga being the first place reached by Howe, Singleton, Thorley and others in leaving the ranges. The explorers descended from a spur in Welshs Inlet in the Milbrodale Estate.

Settlement quickly followed as the route taken by the pioneers was used as the main thoroughfare for travelling stock from the Northern districts of NSW to Sydney. The first settlement was in the fertile land adjoining the Cockfighter Creek.

The description given of Bulga by the early settlers is of open well-grassed forest lands to the feet of the mountains. The timber was mostly large with almost an entire absence of scrub and undergrowth. This was accounted for by the bush fires which regularly swept the country side during the dry seasons.

The Cockfighter Creek presented a very different appearance to the early settlers to its present state, being then deep and narrow with alternate stretches of deep water and sand. At that time as at present the banks of the creek were fringed with big shady oak trees. This creek was the main water supply of the residents". (An extract from the Eather Manuscript entitled "The History of Bulga bear Singleton N S Wales from 1820 to 1921 by A.N. Eather").

The first school room was a hut standing on the bank of the lagoon known as By-yong and "The Horse Shoe". As the children of the settlement increased, the school was shifted to an old building on the eastern bank of the Cockfighter about 100 yards, below where the Bulga Bridge then stood. This was the first village school at Bulga.

The community wanted to erect a church and school. The acre of land was donated by Mr John Eaton for church and school land and a cemetery. Previous to this, the dead were buried where fancy dictated, a number near "The Horse Shoe".

The building was paid for by public subscription and voluntary labour. It was erected near the site of St Mark's Church of England, Bulga, about the year 1856 and served the combined purpose of church and school. In the year 1879 the public school was erected and St Mark's Church in 1887. The old building was then demolished.

An application for a Provisional School was granted in 1868. The proposed Provisional School was to be conducted on the same Church of England premises, and Miss Clark was recommended as teacher. By this time 27 children were expected to attend.

In 1876 an application for a Public School at Bulga was signed by the Local Committee. The nearest school was six miles distant and 42 children lived within a radius of two miles. When reporting on the application the Inspector pointed out that the Provisional School did not provide sufficient accommodation. However, he added that this figure could only be expected if a boat was provided to ferry some of the children across the river.

When discussing the three possible sites available, the Inspector approved an acre, which formed part of Bradfords Flat, and which adjoined the existing site. Half an acre of this land was generally declared to be beyond flood reach and the Inspector felt that it was the most central site possible. The Inspector recommended that the application be granted and that a boat be provided. In February 1877, Bulga Provisional School became Bulga Public School.

By August 1878, the situation had changed. The Inspector reported that the bridge would be completed in a few months. This removed the need for a boat and he recommended that the building plans he carried out. It was decided to build with brick. The construction of the building was hampered by severe flooding. The question of the suitability of the site was again raised, but as the flooding had only reached the outhouses, and as the floods were exceptional the doubts were allayed. The buildings were completed by January 1880.

The matter was brought to a head by the floods of 1949, 1955 and 1956. When the school had to be closed because the toilets were inundated and because the Shire Council threatened to institute legal proceedings if the toilets were not re-sited. A suitable site for the new toilets was obtained by exchanging two acres of the water-covered area for two acres of the late Mr. C. W. Bird's property on the eastern side of the school. New toilets were erected on the new playground in 1957. Electric power was connected to the school and residence in 1958.

The school closed on 17 December 1970. (State Records Authority of New South Wales).



Figure 56 – 1891 Parish of Whybrow
Source: Land and Property Information 2015

- 1 Bulga Bridge
- 2 Dedicated as a site for a public school
- 3 Site of police station
- 4 John Eaton's landholdings
- 5 The Great North Road

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European Heritage cont.

Singleton Council's LEP 2013 identifies the following as local and state heritage items.

- Bulga Bridge, 213 Main Road, Road reserve, State significance.
- Mt Leonard Public School, 2099 Putty Road, Lot 64, DP 753821, Local significance.
- "Mount Leonard", 2201 Putty Road, Part Lot 7, DP 10022, Local significance.
- War Memorial Gates, 19 The Inlet Road, Lot 1, DP 949442, Local significance.

Bulga bridge

The Bulga bridge is a Dare type timber truss bridge and was completed in 1912.

As a timber truss road bridge, it has strong associations with the expansion of the road network and economic activity throughout NSW, and Harvey Dare, the designer of this type of truss.

Dare trusses were similar to Allan trusses, but contain improvements which make them stronger and easier to maintain. This engineering enhancement represents a significant evolution of the design of timber truss bridges, and gives Dare trusses some technical significance.

The Bulga bridge is particularly technically significant because it has very large supporting trestles, has the rare feature of trussed cross girders, and is the largest span Dare truss bridge built.

The bridge is located in the Hunter region, which has 15 historic bridges each constructed before 1905, and it gains heritage significance from its proximity to the high concentration of other historic bridges in the area.

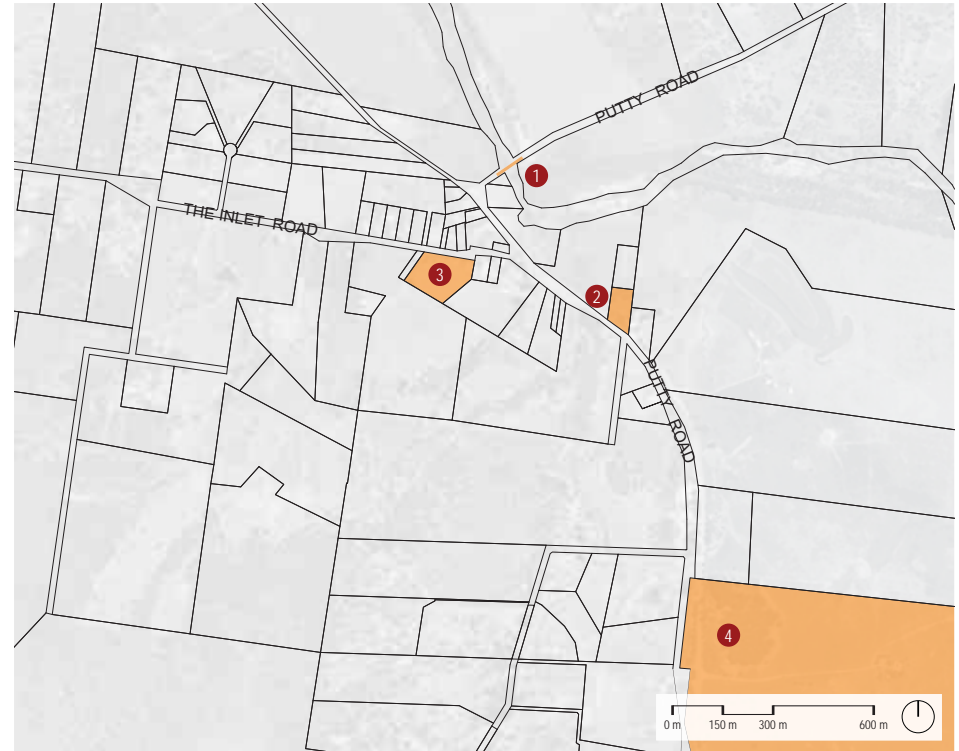
It is assessed as being Nationally significant, primarily on the basis of its technical and historical significance (www.rms.nsw.gov.au).

War Memorial

Bulga Recreation Ground commemorates the local people that lost their lives at war.

Figure 57 – Singleton LEP Local Heritage Items

- 1 Bulga Bridge (also State listed heritage item)
- 2 Mt Leonard Public School
- 3 Bulga War Memorial Gates
- 4 Mount Leonard



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6.2. Planning regime

Bulga was zoned 1(d) - Rural Small Holdings under the previous 1996 Singleton LEP (Figure 58).

The objectives of the 1 (d) (Rural Small Holdings Zone) were:

- (a) to facilitate and provide for rural residential development in appropriate locations, taking into account natural constraints;
- (b) to maintain and enhance the amenity and landscape quality;
- (c) to provide for adequate, efficient and orderly servicing.

Permissible and prohibited development in the 1(d) Rural Small Holdings zone included:

- Without development consent - Exempt development.
- Only with development consent - Development not included in without development consent and prohibited development.
- Prohibited development - Development for the purpose of:

Advertising structures (other than as would be permitted by clause 33 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Model Provisions 1980 if they applied); bulk stores; business premises; caravan parks; car repair stations; cellar door premises; dual occupancy-detached; extractive industries; hazardous industries; intensive agriculture; intensive livestock keeping establishments; junk yards; light industries; liquid fuel depots; mines; motor showrooms; offensive industries; residential flat buildings; road transport terminals; service stations; shops; transport terminals; warehouses.

Therefore, permissible uses included agriculture, animal establishment, residential development (excluding dual occupancy detached and residential flat buildings), tourist facilities (excluding caravan parks) and recreational areas, facilities and establishments.

These uses were defined as:

Agriculture means:

- (a) the production of crops or fodder, or
- (b) horticulture, including fruit, vegetable and flower crop production, and use of land for wholesale plant nurseries, or
- (c) the grazing of livestock, or
- (d) the keeping and breeding of livestock, including poultry, other birds, and bees, but does not include use of land for intensive agriculture feed lots, piggeries, poultry farming establishments, retail plant nurseries or stables.

Animal establishment means a place for the breeding, boarding, training or keeping of, or caring for, animals and includes dog kennels and riding schools.

Tourist facilities means a building or place providing for holiday accommodation or recreation and may consist of or include a boat shed, boat landing facilities, a camping ground, a caravan park, holiday cabins, a hotel, a house boat, a marina, a motel, a playground, a refreshment room, water sport facilities or a club used in conjunction with any such building or place. (Although caravan parks specifically excluded).

Recreation area means:

- (a) a children's playground, or
- (b) an area used for sporting activities or sporting facilities, or
- (c) an area used to provide facilities for recreational activities which promote the physical, cultural or intellectual welfare of persons within the community, being facilities provided by:
 - (i) the Council, or
 - (ii) a body of persons associated for the purposes of the physical, cultural or intellectual welfare of persons within the community, but does not include a racecourse or a showground.

Recreation establishment means a health farm, religious retreat house, rest home, youth camp or the like, but does not include a building or place elsewhere defined in this clause or a building or place used or intended for use for a purpose elsewhere defined in this clause.

Recreation facility means a building or place used for indoor recreation, a billiard saloon, table tennis centre, squash court, swimming pool, gymnasium, health studio, bowling alley, fun parlour or any other building of a like character used for recreation, whether used for the purpose of gain or not, but does not include a place of assembly.

The process to prepare a new Local Environmental Plan for Singleton began in 2006, when the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 was amended to include a standard instrument template. All Councils across NSW were directed to prepare a new Standard Instrument LEP.

The Singleton Land Use Strategy was initially prepared as the policy framework to guide the preparation of the Standard Instrument LEP and was adopted by Council in April 2008. The resolution adopting this strategy included a resolution to prepare a new LEP for Singleton.

The Draft LEP was prepared and reported to Council in October 2011, where it was adopted for the purposes of public exhibition.

The Land Use Strategy prepared in 2008 identified strategies for rural residential development as well as the residential development within the villages. The villages included Broke, Bulga, Jerrys Plains and Camberwell, which were zoned 1(d) Rural Small Holdings under the Singleton LEP 1996. There were also areas in rural locations zoned for rural residential development. Villages and rural residential areas zoned 1(d) had a total area of about 2,052 hectares, of which the 4 villages referred to above comprised about 30%. Villages and rural residential areas comprised around 7% of the total population of the LGA at that time.

The Land Use Strategy states that appropriate zones for rural residential purposes need to be determined, taking into account the Standard LEP requirements implemented by the Department of Planning. The available zonings need to be considered in conjunction with minimum subdivision sizes.

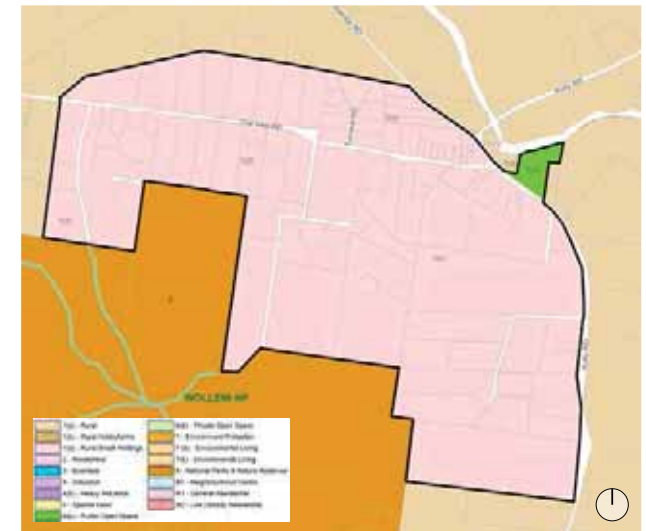


Figure 58 - 1996 Zone plan
Source: Singleton Council 1996 (NTS)

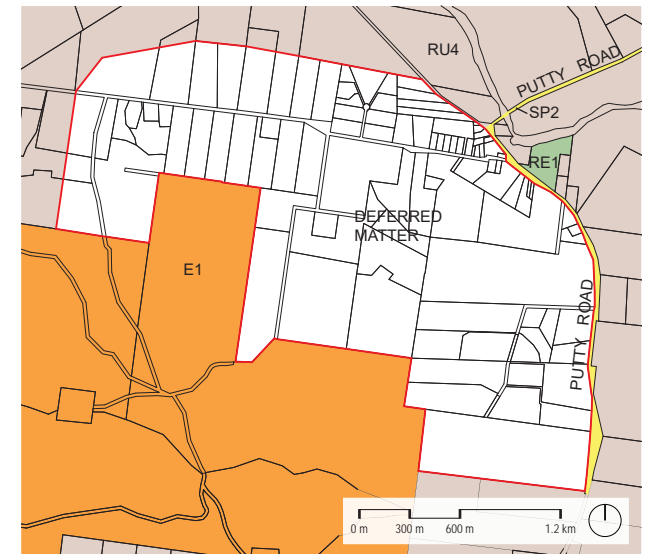


Figure 59 - 2013 Zone plan
Source: Singleton Council LEP 2013

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Planning cont.

Zone options included RU4 Rural Small Holdings (objectives mainly relate to primary production), RU5 Village (flexible zone allowing uses incompatible with existing rural residential character), R5 Large Lot Residential (primarily supports residential use), and E4 Environmental Living (for areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values). The Large Lot Residential zone most closely reflects the character of most existing rural residential areas in Singleton.

The staging and sequencing of new rural residential areas shall be dependent upon the provision of adequate water supply, reticulated sewer (smaller lots less than 8000 m²) and other infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunications and bush fire services. Criteria for new rural residential included:

- Consolidate further rural residential development of this type of land use in only two locations for each locality within the LGA, so that further services are potentially economic to provide in the long term if sufficient demand exists.
- Propose additional LEP objectives for rural residential under the proposed Standard LEP zoning provisions.
- No rezonings for rural residential in identified constraint areas (use map layers as an overlay for LEP).
- All rural residential development should have a good quality and secure water supply.
- Smaller lots (less than 8000 m²) shall have reticulated sewer provided.
- Biodiversity and water and sewer infrastructure reviews be undertaken prior to determining final zoning boundaries and minimum lot sizes.
- Subdivision for the purposes of rural residential development should be undertaken in a manner that will not increase the potential for water extraction from streams or groundwater and comply with harvestable water rights requirements.

The strategy identified the following LEP zones and minimum lot sizes for rural residential development:

- R5 Large Lot Residential where town water is provided, with two minimum average lot sizes (indicated on the lot size map), being 4000 m² where both sewer and water are provided, and 1 ha where water only is provided. The absolute minimum lot sizes for these areas being 2000 m² and 8000 m² respectively.
- Use of RU5 Village zone is not proposed.
- Large unserviced rural residential lots (4 ha minimum with 5 ha minimum average) could be an E4 Environmental Living zone, although in most cases provision of services is preferable.

It was determined that Bulga had no significant development potential due to development constraints. It generally has rural small holding character, rather than residential and therefore an Environmental Living zone was considered appropriate.

The strategy identified the following objective for the development of villages and existing 1(d) zoned land as:

- Generally retain existing subdivision and development provisions for existing 1(d) zoned land, within the framework provided by the Standard LEP. Provide for 1 ha minimum average lot size and 4000 m² minimum average if sewered.
- Review options for infill and consolidation of existing areas (except Camberwell).

The policies identified for the development of villages and existing 1(d) zoned land included:

- Review options for consolidating additional rural residential development within existing zones to facilitate more efficient infrastructure utilisation.
- Maintain and enhance the distinctive character and landscape setting of existing villages, and ensure that the character of villages is identified in DCP or LEP supplementary objectives.

- Prepare draft outline for the security of villages from further underground and open cut mining with an emphasis on a buffer zone and the way forward for growth for these villages.
- Seek to maintain or encourage at least two development options in terms of land ownership for each rural residential area where growth is anticipated and provided for.
- Put in place strong controls on incompatible land uses in rural residential zones, including the use of supplementary objectives.
- Minimum lot sizes for each village are to take into account existing lots, character requirements, on-site wastewater servicing requirements, and separation distances from existing dwellings.

Actions proposed for the development of villages and 1(d) zoned land included:

- Zone existing 1(d) zones (except Bulga and Whittingham) R5 Large Lot Residential. Retain current 8000 m² minimum subdivision area but implement a 1 ha minimum average.
- Zone Bulga and Whittingham 1(d) zones E4 Environmental Living with 4 ha minimum subdivision area and 5 ha minimum average.

The Strategy identified that the village of Broke is being provided with a reticulated water supply, and is the only village where substantial demand for additional development could be anticipated. There is currently minimal land available for subdivision at Bulga under current LEP and DCP provisions.

The objective for village service provision and maintenance included:

- Provision of limited urban services within villages (e.g. water, and waste) where demand for growth is identified and service provision is economic.

Policies identified for village service provision and maintenance included:

- Reticulated water is available to Broke and Jerrys Plains, but not Bulga, Camberwell or any other village type areas.
- Reticulated sewer will not be provided to any village, and minimum lot sizes for subdivision and construction of dwelling houses is to be based on on-site wastewater disposal requirements.

The Strategic Actions identified for village service provision and maintenance included:

- Review potential for further development at Broke and current Section 94 contributions plan provisions.
- Maintain current level of development potential in LEP provisions for all villages to relate to service provision.

The Draft SLEP 2012 (as exhibited) implemented two Strategic Actions from the adopted Singleton Land Use Strategy (2008) in regards to the village of Bulga:

- It proposed to zone all land currently zoned 1(d) Rural Small Holdings in the Singleton LEP 1996 to E4 Environmental Living; and
- It proposed to increase the minimum lot size from 8000 m² to 4 ha.

The findings in the Strategy were based on land capability and suitability criteria, after giving due consideration to the extent of significant vegetation throughout the village location, the relationship with the adjoining National Park and the lack of both reticulated water and sewerage systems.

The residents of Bulga were briefed on the provisions in the Draft SLEP 2012 at a meeting held in Bulga on 2 August, 2012. Approximately 20 residents attended the meeting and the discussion was robust and informative.

The group expressed considerable concern regarding both proposed amendments, considering the findings in the Strategy unreasonable in comparison to the approach taken with other villages, particularly Broke, where the existing provisions in the current Singleton LEP 1996 as they relate to subdivision have been maintained in the exhibited draft plan.

The option was offered to the residents at this meeting to defer Bulga from the finalisation of the draft plan, in order to allow more detailing planning studies to be prepared. This request was expressed in the submission received from the Bulga-Milbrodale Progress Association.

The need to undertake detailed planning studies for all village areas within the local government area is further reflected in Notices of Motion from Council (meeting 5 November 2012), which request Council to investigate the options of providing a reticulated sewerage system to the village of Broke and a reticulated water supply system to the village of Bulga.

Work of this nature should be undertaken in the context of broader strategic planning that considers the value of villages within the overall settlement hierarchy in the LGA, as well as the opportunities for growth in these village locations should reticulated services be provided. Accordingly, the recommendation to defer Bulga from the finalisation of the draft LEP will be the driving process for this broader strategic planning work.

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage also express concern over the range of permitted land uses included in the E4 Environmental Living zone, noting that the zone is designed to promote biodiversity conservation in residential settings. Additional permitted land uses were specifically included in the land use tables to accommodate Bulga, including an additional local zone objective framed to recognise this relationship.

Accordingly, the recommendation to defer the village of Bulga from the final adopted version of the draft plan also defers the additional local zone objective and a number of additional permitted uses that relate specifically to Bulga and are in conflict with the opinion expressed by OEH.

Therefore, at the Council meeting of 3 December 2012, it was recommended and resolved that the new LEP would include a 'deferred matter' relating to the village of Bulga. Refer Figure 59.

Since the deferral, Singleton Council has now submitted two expressions of interests for funding of a water supply for the townships of Camberwell and Bulga as part of the NSW Government's Water Security for Regions initiative.

The program allows Council to pursue funding opportunities for a safe, secure water supply for Bulga and Camberwell that may not be available in the future. Singleton Council has stated that the quality of drinking water for villages is a high priority for Council.

Council's detailed Strategic Business Plan for Water and Sewer includes consideration for water and supply augmentation in villages and townships. The provision of good quality treated drinking water is significant for the townships of Bulga and Camberwell given their close proximity to large mining operations.

Council advised that it is only participating in the expression of interest process at this stage, and no commitment to funding the water supply services will be made until the project planning and costing have been fully completed.

The program will only meet 50 per cent of the capital costs of the project and Council will have to provide funding for the balance as well as all operations and maintenance costs.

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6.3. Land use

Bulga is surrounded by agricultural properties, including vineyards, olive groves, horse studs and National Parks.

The Cockfighter Tavern acts as a community focal point and is a key meeting place as is the Bulga Community Hall.

The Bulga Recreational Grounds include tennis courts and associated facilities.

Mining is also one of the main economic driver and at times has divided the community.

Key Statistics for Bulga include:

- 127.3 km²
- 356 people in the district (2011 Census)
- 30% are under 20
- 11% are over 65
- Median age is 43
- Household size is 3.1
- Median weekly household income of \$1,882
- 20% over 15 volunteer

Similar to Broke, Bulga also has a higher percentage of youth (0-15) 21.6% than the state of NSW (20.5%) and a lower percentage of seniors (65+) 11% than NSW (14.7%).

The 40-49 year age group is the largest group with 17.13% followed closely by the 10-19 age group (16.01%) and the 50-59 age group (15.73%). Refer Figure 61.

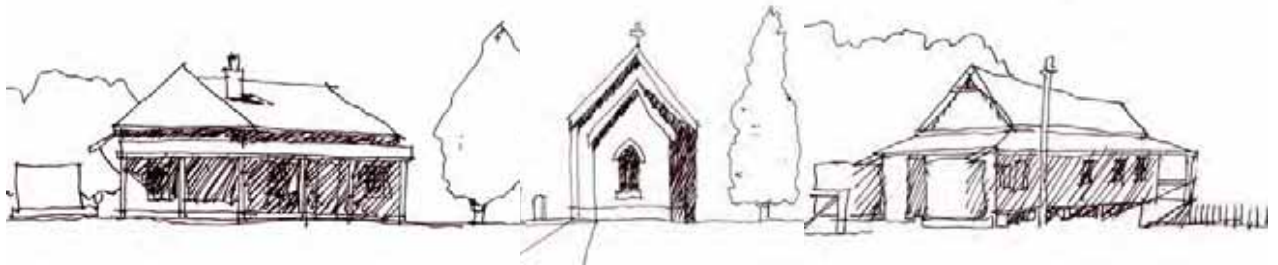


Figure 60 – The built form



Figure 61 – 2011 Community Profile
Source: Remplan 2014

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6.4. Physical setting

The village and rural lands of Bulga are generally flat along the banks of the Wollombi Brook up to the National Park towards the west. Wollemi National Park provides a scenic backdrop to Bulga.

Smaller lots are generally located at the intersection of The Inlet Road with Putty Road. The outer areas are generally larger lots. Extensive riparian vegetation is located along the Wollombi Brook. Extensive vegetation is also located on the larger lots towards the National Park.

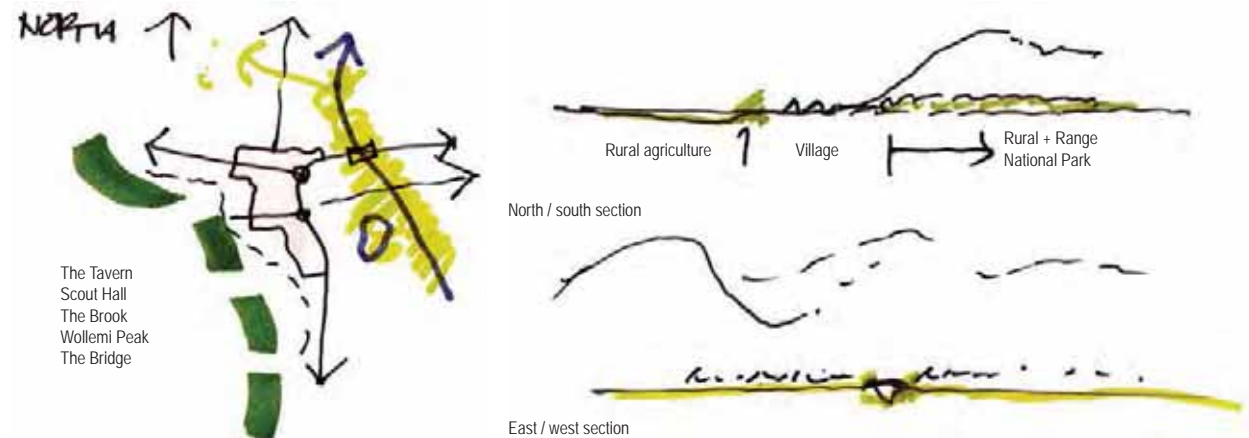


Figure 62 – Physical Setting



Figure 63 – Land and built form

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6.5. Open space and community facilities

The Open Space and Recreation Needs Study states that Bulga village has an adequate supply of open space and adequate facilities within the recreation ground. It is the village's key sport and recreation facility and requires only minor maintenance and upgrades. The recreation ground includes tennis courts, sheltered barbeque and seating areas, a children's playground, sporting oval, amenities and also is the site for the War Memorial.

The Bulga Beats is an annual festival held at the Bulga Recreation Ground. The recreation grounds are owned and managed by Council.

The Open Space strategy also identifies the Bulga Stock Reserve as a relatively undeveloped area and while there is little demand for additional facilities, the site may lend itself to the future development of an environmental park. The Bulga Stock Reserve including the scout hall is owned and managed by the State Government.

The Wollombi Brook and the Wollemi National Park are also both great open space assets in close proximity to Bulga. The Wollemi National Park is located to the south, west and north of the village. Informal access is available to the Wollombi Brook on the eastern side of the Bulga Bridge. Figure 64 also shows state owned infrastructure leading to the Wollemi National Park.

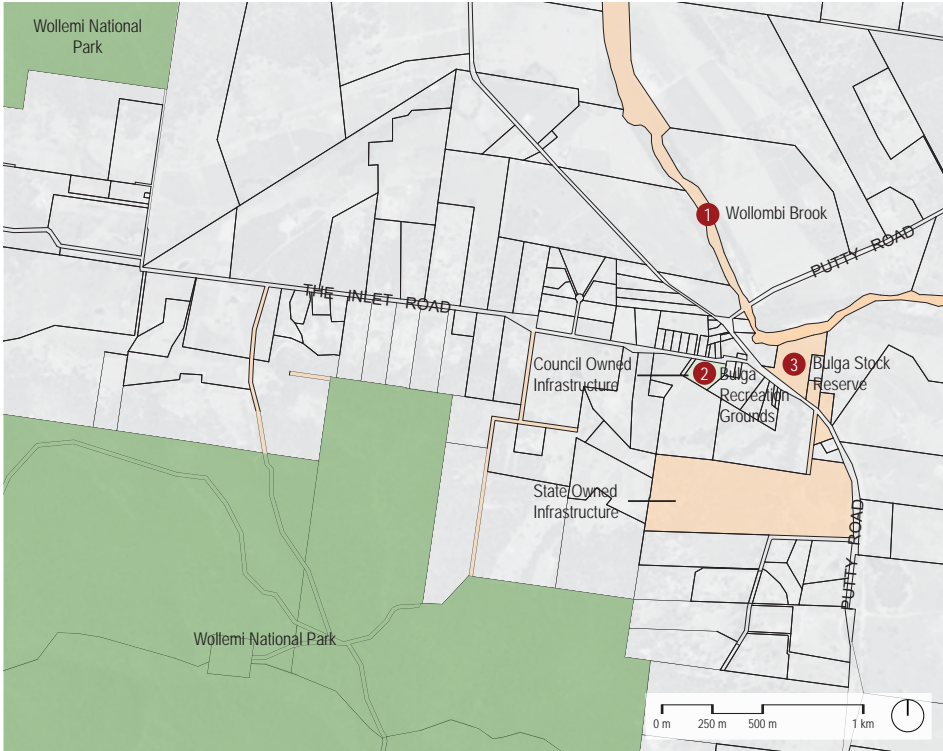


Figure 64 – Location of open space

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Figure 65 – Open space



Figure 66 – Local festivals

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Open space and community facilities cont.

A number of community facilities are located within the village of Bulga including:

- St Mark's Anglican Church.
- Bulga Community Hall. The mobile preschool also attends the community hall once per week.
- The Scout Hall, which is under the control of the State Government.
- Bulga Police Station (identified as Council property).
- The National Parks Office.
- The Hunter Valley Fire Control Centre, which was constructed in 2015.



Figure 67 – Location of community facilities

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Figure 68 – Community facilities

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6.6. Public infrastructure

Bulga is accessible by road from the east along Putty Road via the Golden Highway and from the south along Putty Road.

Bulga Bridge is a one lane bridge constructed in 1912.

The road infrastructure is generally rural in nature and does not incorporate kerb and guttering. Refer Figure 69.

Various signage including gateway signage, tourist signs and location signs are located throughout the village along road sides and at main intersections (Figure 70).



Figure 69 – Road network



Figure 70 – Existing signage

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6.7. Landscape character and views

The landscape character of the village of Bulga is generally open due to the rural nature and provides views to the east. The Wollemi National Park, which is located to the south, west and north of the village provides a scenic backdrop and encloses the village generally along The Inlet Road.

There are several key views within and on the approaches to the village due to the proximity of the Wollemi National Park. Refer Figures 71 and 72.

The mines to the south east are also visible from some residences and along Putty Road. Refer Figure 73.

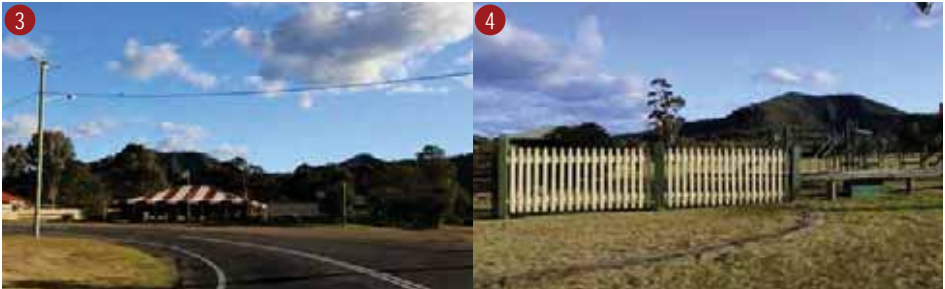


Figure 72 – Views of the National Park



Figure 73 – View of the Open Cut Mine



Figure 71 – Landscape character and key viewpoints

6.8. Strategic overview

Bulga was zoned 1(d) Rural Small Holdings with a minimum lot size of 8000 m² under the 1996 LEP. It is now identified as a deferred matter under the 2013 LEP.

The following review outlines possible scenarios for an appropriate zone, permissible land uses and a minimum lot size for the village of Bulga. The scenarios will be further investigated as part of Council's review of its Land Use Strategy.

As previously outlined, the objectives of the 1(d) Rural Small Holdings zone were:

- (a) *to facilitate and provide for rural residential development in appropriate locations, taking into account natural constraints,*
- (b) *to maintain and enhance the amenity and landscape quality,*
- (c) *to provide for adequate, efficient and orderly servicing.*

Permitted land uses included agriculture, animal establishment, residential development (excluding dual occupancy detached and residential flat buildings), tourist facilities (excluding caravan parks) and recreational areas, facilities and establishments.

The Singleton Land Use Strategy (2008) states that the staging and sequencing of new rural residential areas shall be dependent upon the provision of adequate water supply, reticulated sewer (smaller lots less than 8000 m²) and other infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunications and bush fire services.

It also states that the minimum lot sizes for each village are also to consider existing lots, character requirements and separation distances from existing dwellings.

The villages of Broke and Jerrys Plains were also previously zoned 1(d) Rural Small Holdings and had a 8000 m² minimum lot size.

Broke and Jerrys Plains both have reticulated water services, however do not have sewer services. The 2013 LEP retains the minimum lot size of 8000 m² for Broke and Jerrys Plains.

Broke is zoned R5 Large Lot Residential with an 8000 m² minimum lot size and the surrounding area is zoned RU4 Primary Production Small Lots with a 40 ha minimum lot size under the 2013 LEP.

Jerrys Plains is zoned part RU5 Village and R5 Large Lot Residential with a minimum lot size of 8000 m² under the 2013 LEP. The surrounding area is zoned RU1 Primary Production and has a minimum lot area of 40 ha.

Bulga does have electrical, bushfire and telecommunication services. It does not currently have water or sewer services. However, it is noted that Singleton Council has applied for a grant to provide reticulated water to Bulga. This would be subject to undertaking further feasibility of the proposal.

A small area to the north west of the deferred area in Bulga is identified as a critical land cluster for viticulture under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production, Extractive Industries) 2007.

The local planning Directions and the State Environmental Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008 does not require councils to review their minimum lot size(s) or change those lot sizes in an existing LEP. Councils may transfer the existing minimum lot size(s) currently applying in its local government area into a new LEP. If more than one minimum lot size applies in the rural areas all lot sizes are to be transferred to the new LEP unless a review is undertaken in accordance with the rural subdivision principles.

It is not proposed to reduce the minimum lot size for Bulga below the 8000 m² as it does not have access to reticulated water or sewer. Further, the village is located within a rural setting and located in close proximity to the Wollemi National Park.

As previously noted, an E4 Environmental Living zone was initially proposed for Bulga. The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage expressed concerns over the range of permitted land uses proposed to be included in the E4 Environmental Living zone, noting that the zone is designed to promote biodiversity conservation in residential settings.

The Department of Planning & Environment has recently undertaken a review of the Environmental zones for the Far North Coast. It states that Environmental zones or 'E zones' are designed to protect land that is of important environmental value. The Final Recommendations Report ensures that environmental zones are applied to places on the Far North Coast where the 'primary use' of the land justifies either environmental conservation ('E2') or environmental management ('E3') zoning, based on validated ecological evidence. The 'primary use' of the land, the main use for which the land has been used for the last two years, is to be the first consideration when making zoning decisions.

Areas of Bulga are used for agriculture including grazing, orchards and vineyards. Vegetation mapping has not been undertaken for the village, however, it is considered that an E zone would not be appropriate and lead to a conflict with the current commercial and agricultural practices.

The Department of Planning & Environment's Practice Note on preparing LEPs provides an overview of the general purpose of each zone. The general purpose of each of the possible relevant rural zones for Bulga is identified in Figure 74.

General Purpose of zones	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R5 Large Lot Residential <p>This zone is intended to cater for development that provides for residential housing in a rural setting, often adjacent to towns or metropolitan areas. The allocation of large lot residential land should be justified by council's housing/ settlement strategy prepared in accordance with planning principles set out in regional and subregional strategies, s.117 directions and relevant SEPPs. Access to reticulated sewerage and water systems should be considered when determining appropriate minimum lot sizes. Lot sizes can be varied within the zone depending on the servicing availability and other factors such as topography, native vegetation characteristics and surrounding agricultural land uses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RU2 Rural Landscape <p>This zone is for rural land used for commercial primary production that is compatible with ecological or scenic landscape qualities that have been conserved (often due to topography). It may apply to land that is suitable for grazing and other forms of extensive agriculture, or intensive plant agriculture (such as 'viticulture'), but where the permitted uses are usually more limited and differ from RU1 land due to landscape constraints. This zone is not to be used where the main purpose of the zone is to protect significant environmental attributes or to provide for rural residential accommodation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RU4 Primary Production Small Lots <p>This zone (previously named Rural Small Holdings) is for land which is to be used for commercial primary industry production, including emerging primary industries and agricultural uses that operate on smaller rural holdings. In 2011, the name of the zone was changed to clarify that it is a rural zone for agricultural uses, not a pseudo-residential zone. The objectives of the zone have been changed to encourage employment opportunities in relation to primary production on small lots and to minimise fragmentation and alienation of resource lands important for food security. The changed zone name, modified core zone objectives and additional mandated permissible uses ('intensive plant agriculture' and 'plant nursery') better reflect the intent of the zone – being an agricultural industry/food production focus and not a rural residential lifestyle zone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RU5 Village <p>This zone is a flexible zone for centres where a mix of residential, retail, business, industrial and other compatible land uses may be provided to service the local rural community. The RU5 zone would typically apply to small rural villages within rural areas.</p>

Figure 74 – General Purpose of the Zones
Source: Department of Planning and Environment

6.0 Bulga

strategic overview

Strategic overview cont.

The objectives and permissible land uses for the RU2 Rural Landscape, RU4 Primary Production Small Lots, RU5 Village and R5 Large Lot Residential identified in the Singleton LEP 2013 are outlined in Figure 75.

An RU2 Rural Landscape zone may be relevant to the village of Bulga due to its rural industry, rural landscape character and proximity to the Wollemi National Park.

The RU2 Rural Landscape zone permits Agriculture, Cemeteries, Community facilities, Food and drink premises, Places of public worship, Recreation facilities, Service stations **amongst other uses as identified**. These uses are located within Bulga and “additional uses” would not be required to be added and **therefore cause a conflict of land uses** within the zone.

Other areas within the Singleton LGA are zoned RU2 Rural Landscape including Doyles Creek, Dural, Appletree Flat, Putty, Garland Valley and Howes Valley. These areas have a minimum lot size of 40 ha in the Singleton LEP 2013.

The RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zone has similar land uses to the RU2 zone, however its objectives are to support primary industry as well as to recognise and minimise conflicts for the viticultural and tourism industry. The RU4 zone is applied to the land surrounding Bulga. The RU4 zone also has a 40 ha minimum lot size.

The RU5 Village zone includes more intensive land uses, such as business premises and hotel and motel accommodation that may reduce the rural characteristics of Bulga. It is considered that this zone is not appropriate for Bulga.

An R5 Large Lot Residential zone may be appropriate for part of the village of Bulga. Agriculture is not a permissible use in this zone and therefore would not be appropriate for the whole village. This zone permits residential dwellings, as well as Community facilities, Food and drink premises, Places of public worship, Recreation facilities (outdoor) and Service stations. However, agricultural land uses are not permissible and a land use conflict may arise between the two land uses.

Singleton LEP 2013 Zones, Objectives and Permissible Uses			
Zone RU2 Rural Landscape	Zone RU4 Primary Production Small Lots	Zone RU5 Village	Zone R5 Large Lot Residential
<p>1 Objectives of zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base. To maintain the rural landscape character of the land. To provide for a range of compatible land uses, including extensive agriculture. <p>2 Permitted without consent Extensive agriculture; Home occupations; Intensive plant agriculture</p> <p>3 Permitted with consent Airstrips; Animal boarding or training establishments; Aquaculture; Boat launching ramps; Boat sheds; Building identification signs; Business identification signs; Camping grounds; Cellar door premises; Cemeteries; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Community facilities; Dual occupancies; Dwelling houses; Eco-tourist facilities; Environmental facilities; Environmental protection works; Farm buildings; Flood mitigation works; Forestry; Helipads; Home-based child care; Home businesses; Home industries; Information and education facilities; Jetties; Marinas; Mooring pens; Moorings; Places of public worship; Plant nurseries; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (outdoor); Restaurants or cafes; Roads; Roadside stalls; Rural industries; Service stations; Sewerage systems; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Turf farming; Veterinary hospitals; Viticulture; Water supply systems</p> <p>4 Prohibited Backpackers' accommodation; Hotel or motel accommodation; Intensive livestock agriculture; Livestock processing industries; Serviced apartments; Stock and sale yards; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 3</p>	<p>1 Objectives of zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable sustainable primary industry and other compatible land uses. To encourage and promote diversity and employment opportunities in relation to primary industry enterprises, particularly those that require smaller lots or that are more intensive in nature. To minimise conflict between land uses within this zone and land uses within adjoining zones. To recognise Hunter Valley Wine Country and the adjoining environs of Broke-Fordwich as a major viticultural and tourist destination by providing additional opportunities for compatible tourist uses. <p>2 Permitted without consent Extensive agriculture; Home occupations; Intensive plant agriculture</p> <p>3 Permitted with consent Airstrips; Animal boarding or training establishments; Aquaculture; Building identification signs; Business identification signs; Cellar door premises; Community facilities; Dual occupancies; Dwelling houses; Environmental facilities; Environmental protection works; Farm buildings; Flood mitigation works; Forestry; Function centres; Helipads; Home-based child care; Home businesses; Home industries; Information and education facilities; Plant nurseries; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (outdoor); Restaurants or cafes; Roads; Roadside stalls; Rural industries; Sewerage systems; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Turf farming; Viticulture; Water supply systems</p> <p>4 Prohibited Backpackers' accommodation; Intensive livestock agriculture; Livestock processing industries; Sawmill or log processing industries; Serviced apartments; Stock and sale yards; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 3</p>	<p>1 Objectives of zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide for a range of land uses, services and facilities that are associated with a rural village. To recognise the limitations to development in the absence of reticulated systems. <p>2 Permitted without consent Home occupations</p> <p>3 Permitted with consent Bed and breakfast accommodation; Building identification signs; Business identification signs; Business premises; Child care centres; Community facilities; Dual occupancies; Dwelling houses; Environmental protection works; Flood mitigation works; Food and drink premises; Home-based child care; Home businesses; Home industries; Hotel or motel accommodation; Information and education facilities; Neighbourhood shops; Places of public worship; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (indoor); Recreation facilities (outdoor); Respite day care centres; Roads; Schools; Service stations; Veterinary hospitals; Water supply systems</p> <p>4 Prohibited Any development not specified in item 2 or 3</p>	<p>1 Objectives of zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide residential housing in a rural setting while preserving, and minimising impacts on, environmentally sensitive locations and scenic quality. To ensure that large residential lots do not hinder the proper and orderly development of urban areas in the future. To ensure that development in the area does not unreasonably increase the demand for public services or public facilities. To minimise conflict between land uses within this zone and land uses within adjoining zones. <p>2 Permitted without consent Home occupations</p> <p>3 Permitted with consent Bed and breakfast accommodation; Building identification signs; Business identification signs; Dual occupancies; Dwelling houses; Food and drink premises; Group homes; Home industries; Neighbourhood shops; Roads; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 4</p> <p>4 Prohibited Agriculture; Air transport facilities; Airstrips; Amusement centres; Animal boarding or training establishments; Boat building and repair facilities; Camping grounds; Car parks; Caravan parks; Cemeteries; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Commercial premises; Correctional centres; Crematoria; Depots; Eco-tourist facilities; Entertainment facilities; Exhibition homes; Exhibition villages; Extractive industries; Farm buildings; Forestry; Freight transport facilities; Function centres; Heavy industrial storage establishments; Helipads; Highway service centres; Home occupations (sex services); Industrial retail outlets; Industrial training facilities; Industries; Marinas; Mooring pens; Moorings; Mortuaries; Open cut mining; Passenger transport facilities; Public administration buildings; Recreation facilities (indoor); Recreation facilities (major); Registered clubs; Residential accommodation; Restricted premises; Rural industries; Sex services premises; Signage; Storage premises; Transport depots; Truck depots; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Vehicle body repair workshops; Vehicle repair stations; Veterinary hospitals; Warehouse or distribution centres; Waste or resource management facilities; Water recreation structures; Wharf or boating facilities; Wholesale supplies</p>

Figure 75 – Singleton LEP 2013 - Rural zones, objectives and permissible land uses

6.0 Bulga

strategic overview

Strategic overview cont.

Two scenarios are proposed for Council's consideration for the zoning of Bulga village based on preliminary information. Council is now revising its Land Use Strategy for the LGA. Further consideration of the appropriate zone and permissible land uses for Bulga would be undertaken as part of the Land Use Strategy. The scenarios include:

Scenario 1 - "Do Nothing"

Bulga village would remain as a deferred matter and be considered once Council has undertaken project planning and costing to determine the feasibility of providing water and sewer to Bulga.

This is not the preferred option, as timing for funding and project feasibility of water services is not known and therefore should not continue to defer the zoning of Bulga.

Scenario 2 - An RU2 Rural Landscape zone

Bulga village to be zoned RU2 Rural Landscape as shown on Figure 76. As previously identified, this will permit all of the land uses currently present in Bulga. The objectives of the RU2 Rural Landscape zone will assist in ensuring that the important characteristics including the rural and scenic landscape are retained.

A minimum lot size of 4 ha is proposed in accordance with the Singleton Land Use Strategy (2008). This 4 ha minimum lot size is proposed as water and sewer services are not available. Further, a 4 ha lot size would assist to retain the rural landscape characteristics

Whilst this minimum lot size is not in accordance with the other RU2 zones in the LGA, any development within the area would need to address the objectives of the zone, which generally relate to sustainable primary industry production and maintaining the rural landscape character.

A parcel of land located in the north west of the village is identified as part of the critical land cluster for viticulture. It may be appropriate that this landholding be zoned RU4 Primary Production Small Lots as the adjoining lots are identified as a critical land cluster.

Landholdings greater than 8 ha are identified in Figure 77. These landholdings have been subdivided into 4 ha lots to show a hypothetical subdivision layout for the village as shown on Figure 77. The subdivision layout does not take into account any environmental issues such as vegetation or bushfire. It is only to show a potential subdivision layout based on a minimum lot size of 4 ha.

A 4 ha lot would allow for services to be provided on site and provide buffers and retention of vegetation enhancing the rural and scenic qualities of Bulga.

Clause 7.10 Essential Services of the Singleton LEP 2013 outlines that development consent must not be granted to development unless the consent authority is satisfied that essential services for the development are available or that adequate arrangements have been made to make them available when required including water, electricity, the disposal and management of sewage, stormwater drainage or on-site conservation and suitable vehicular access.

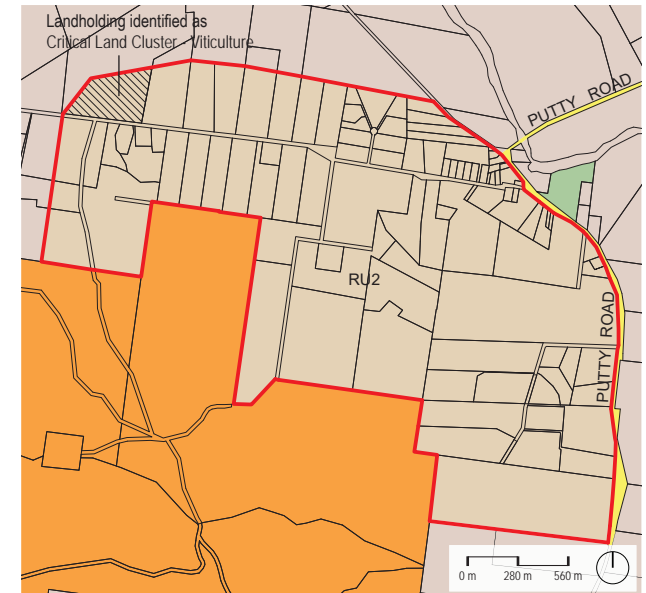


Figure 76 - Scenario 2

Source: Base map - Singleton Council LEP 2013

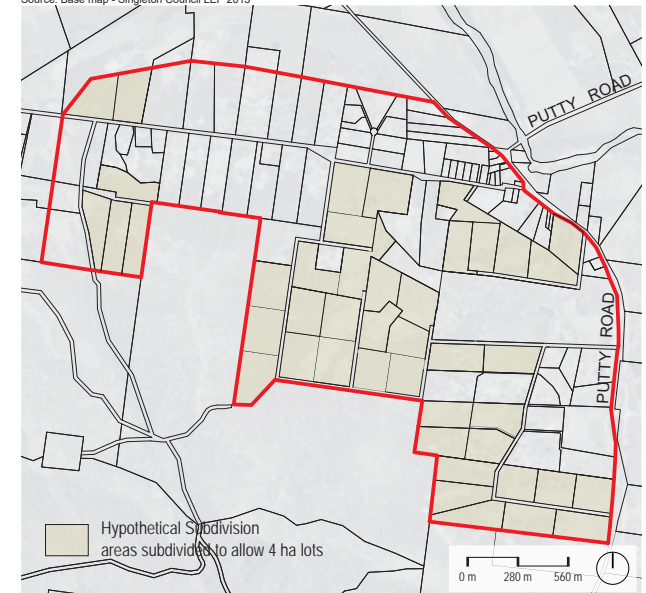


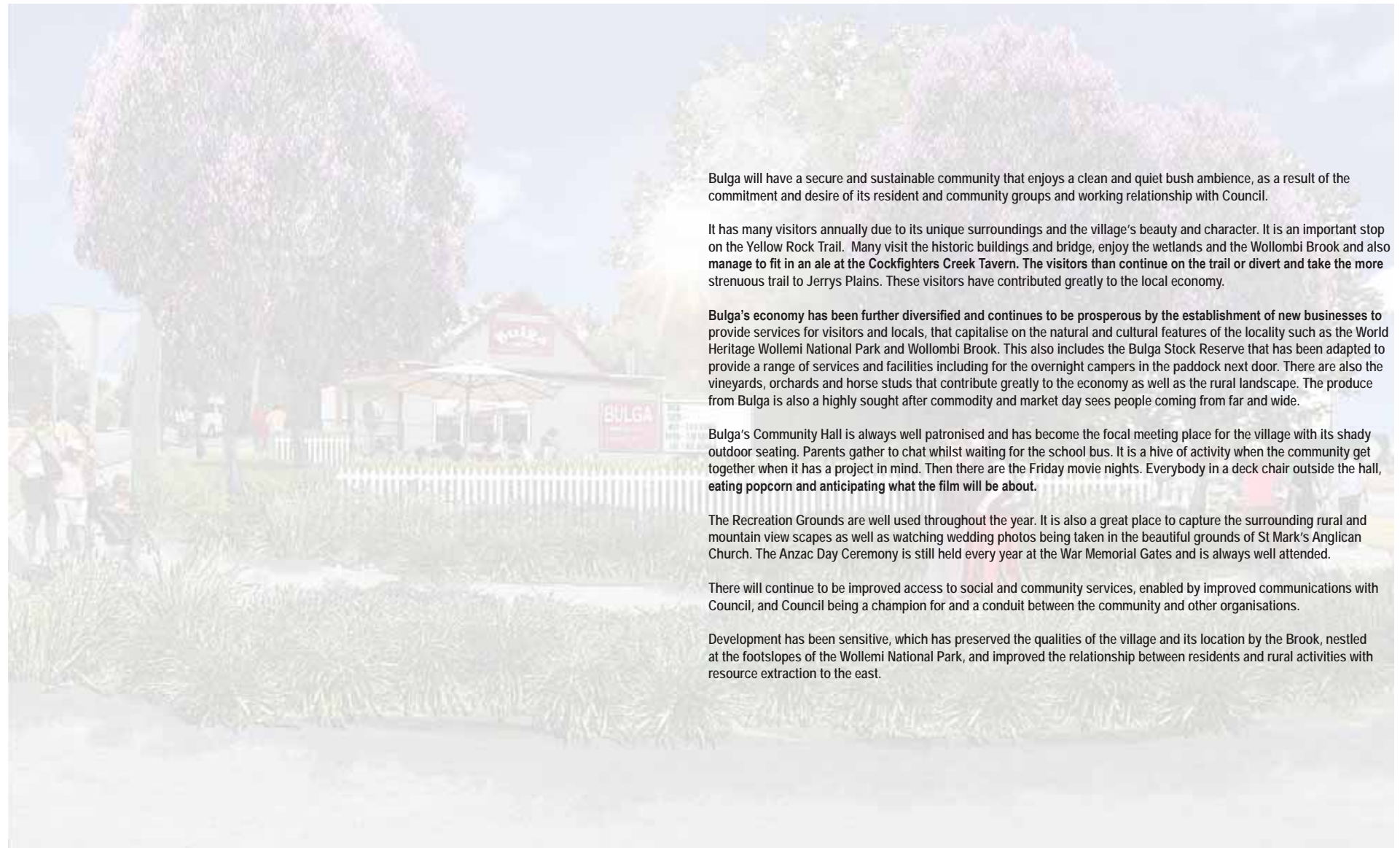
Figure 77 - Hypothetical Potential Subdivision - 4 ha

Source: Aerial Photo - Google Earth Pro 2015

6.0 Bulga

village master plan

6.9. The Vision



Bulga will have a secure and sustainable community that enjoys a clean and quiet bush ambience, as a result of the commitment and desire of its resident and community groups and working relationship with Council.

It has many visitors annually due to its unique surroundings and the village's beauty and character. It is an important stop on the Yellow Rock Trail. Many visit the historic buildings and bridge, enjoy the wetlands and the Wollombi Brook and also manage to fit in an ale at the Cockfighters Creek Tavern. The visitors then continue on the trail or divert and take the more strenuous trail to Jerrys Plains. These visitors have contributed greatly to the local economy.

Bulga's economy has been further diversified and continues to be prosperous by the establishment of new businesses to provide services for visitors and locals, that capitalise on the natural and cultural features of the locality such as the World Heritage Wollemi National Park and Wollombi Brook. This also includes the Bulga Stock Reserve that has been adapted to provide a range of services and facilities including for the overnight campers in the paddock next door. There are also the vineyards, orchards and horse studs that contribute greatly to the economy as well as the rural landscape. The produce from Bulga is also a highly sought after commodity and market day sees people coming from far and wide.

Bulga's Community Hall is always well patronised and has become the focal meeting place for the village with its shady outdoor seating. Parents gather to chat whilst waiting for the school bus. It is a hive of activity when the community get together when it has a project in mind. Then there are the Friday movie nights. Everybody in a deck chair outside the hall, eating popcorn and anticipating what the film will be about.

The Recreation Grounds are well used throughout the year. It is also a great place to capture the surrounding rural and mountain view scapes as well as watching wedding photos being taken in the beautiful grounds of St Mark's Anglican Church. The Anzac Day Ceremony is still held every year at the War Memorial Gates and is always well attended.

There will continue to be improved access to social and community services, enabled by improved communications with Council, and Council being a champion for and a conduit between the community and other organisations.

Development has been sensitive, which has preserved the qualities of the village and its location by the Brook, nestled at the footslopes of the Wollemi National Park, and improved the relationship between residents and rural activities with resource extraction to the east.

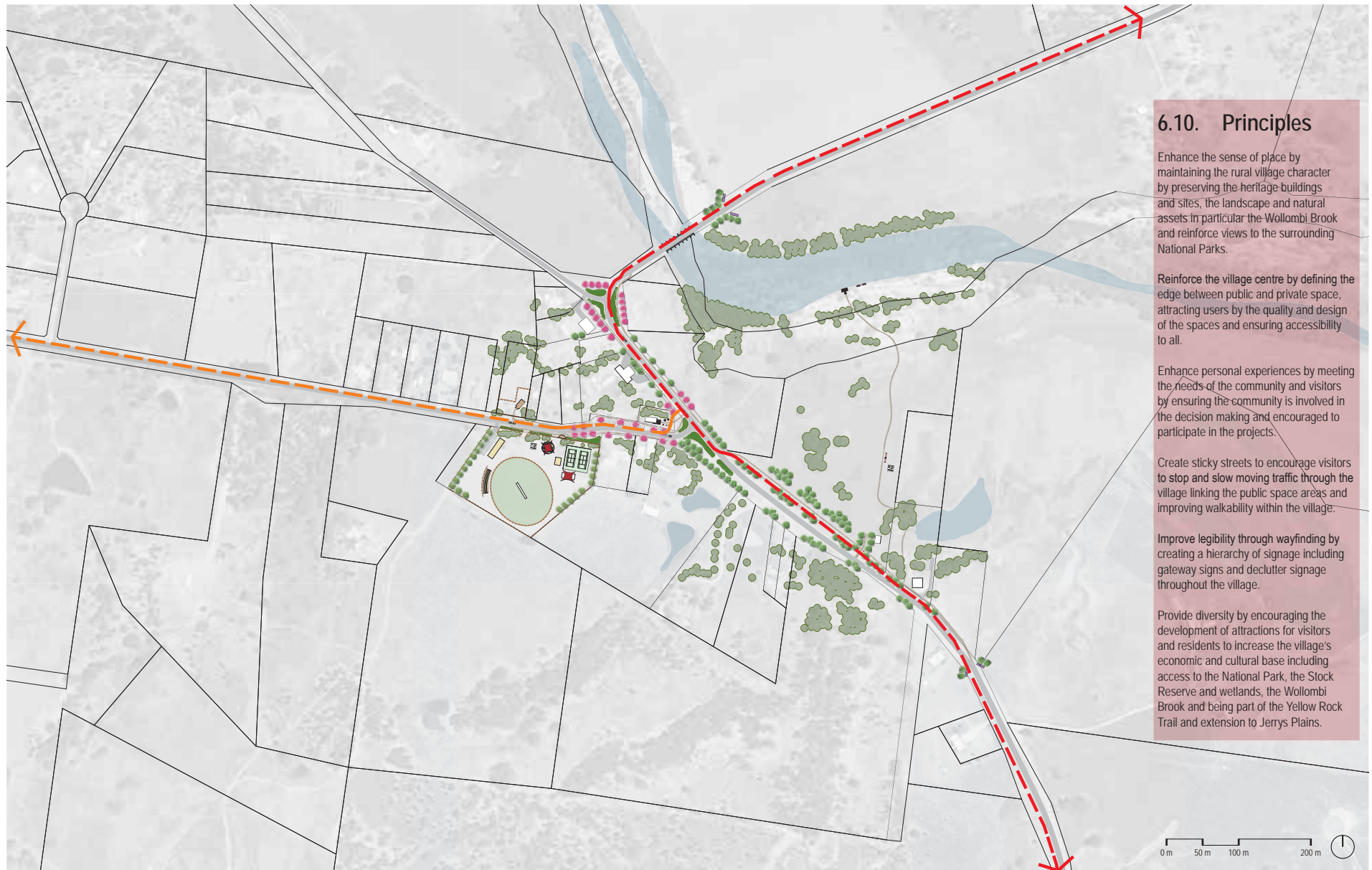


Figure 78 - Bulga Village Master Plan

6.11. Village Concepts

Create a central focal point for the village that will provide new opportunities for social and cultural interaction between the residents, workers and visitors. The Community Hall is centrally located and provides an opportunity to be the community hub. Key concepts:

Improve connectivity and permeability

- 1 Ensure the village is well connected to the community hub, items of significance and open space areas.
- 2 Pathways to lead visitors and residents to items of interest, e.g. Wollombi Brook, heritage buildings, community hall.
- 3 Promote the Yellow Rock Trail including mapping, signage, identifying key landmarks and destinations.
- 4 Provide access to the National Parks and the creation of the track to Jerrys Plains.
- 5 Gateway treatment including feature tree planting and rainwater gardens to assist in identifying key locations, e.g. the entries to Bulga, further definition of the right hand bend towards the Bulga Bridge and better definition of the intersection at The Inlet Road to identify the path to tourist attractions. Realignment of the intersection to improve sightlines.
- 6 Informal pathways to be used throughout the open space areas.
- 7 Provide pedestrian refuges at appropriate places.

Improve wellbeing and amenity

- 8 **Bulga Community Hall**
Update and improve with a colour scheme, front entry, fence and landscape to meet the rural village theme. Provide a deck with outdoor seating. Provide community and tourist information. Create a central hub. Upgrade of children's playground.
Refer to visualisation.
- 9 **St Mark's Church**
Improve the amenity and definition by providing a complementary heritage rural fence around the church grounds and a picket fence around the grave yard. Improve the pathway to the front entry. Identification and upgrade of grave stones. Fences to be an appropriate material for low maintenance.

Bulga Recreational Grounds

Maintain the rural views to the surrounding National Parks.

Provide new and upgrade facilities:

- 10 Upgraded clubhouse including amenities and parking facilities.
- 11 Tennis courts.
- 12 Provide shade over the playground.
- 13 Provide fitness equipment.
- 14 Incorporate Wifi.
- 15 Improve the oval with turf and a white picket fence.
- 16 Provide a dedicated area for events and separate camping areas.
- 17 Maintain access to the War Memorial Gates.
- 18 Provide seating around the oval as well as raised stadium seating appropriately located for events.

Bulga Stock Reserve and Wetland

Encourage the development and beautification of the Stock Reserve in discussions with the State Government. Improvements to the Scout Hall.

- 18 Provide various informal access paths to and from and within the Park and to Wollombi Brook. Provision of facilities including seating, barbeque facilities, amenities block, toilets, showers, fitness equipment located along the pathways creating an exercise route. Possibility of bushwalking tracks and garden trails.
- 19 Possibility for a short term camping site to reduce conflicts with the recreation grounds and as overflow camping when events are held in the recreation grounds.
- 20 Rural fences to define access areas to the reserve.
- 21 Potential area for a nursery to provide street and shade trees for the villages.
- 22 **Wollombi Brook**
Improve the amenity and usability of Wollombi Creek by clearing debris and rubbish.
- 23 Provide access to Wollombi Creek for recreational use e.g. kayaking, fishing. Provide a boardwalk and viewing platform to the Brook from the Stock Reserve. Refer visualisation.

Improving adaptability and flexibility

- Festivals could be held throughout the village including the Recreation Grounds and the Bulga Stock Reserve.
- Heritage Trail - Implement appropriate markers to identify the heritage sites / buildings of Bulga.

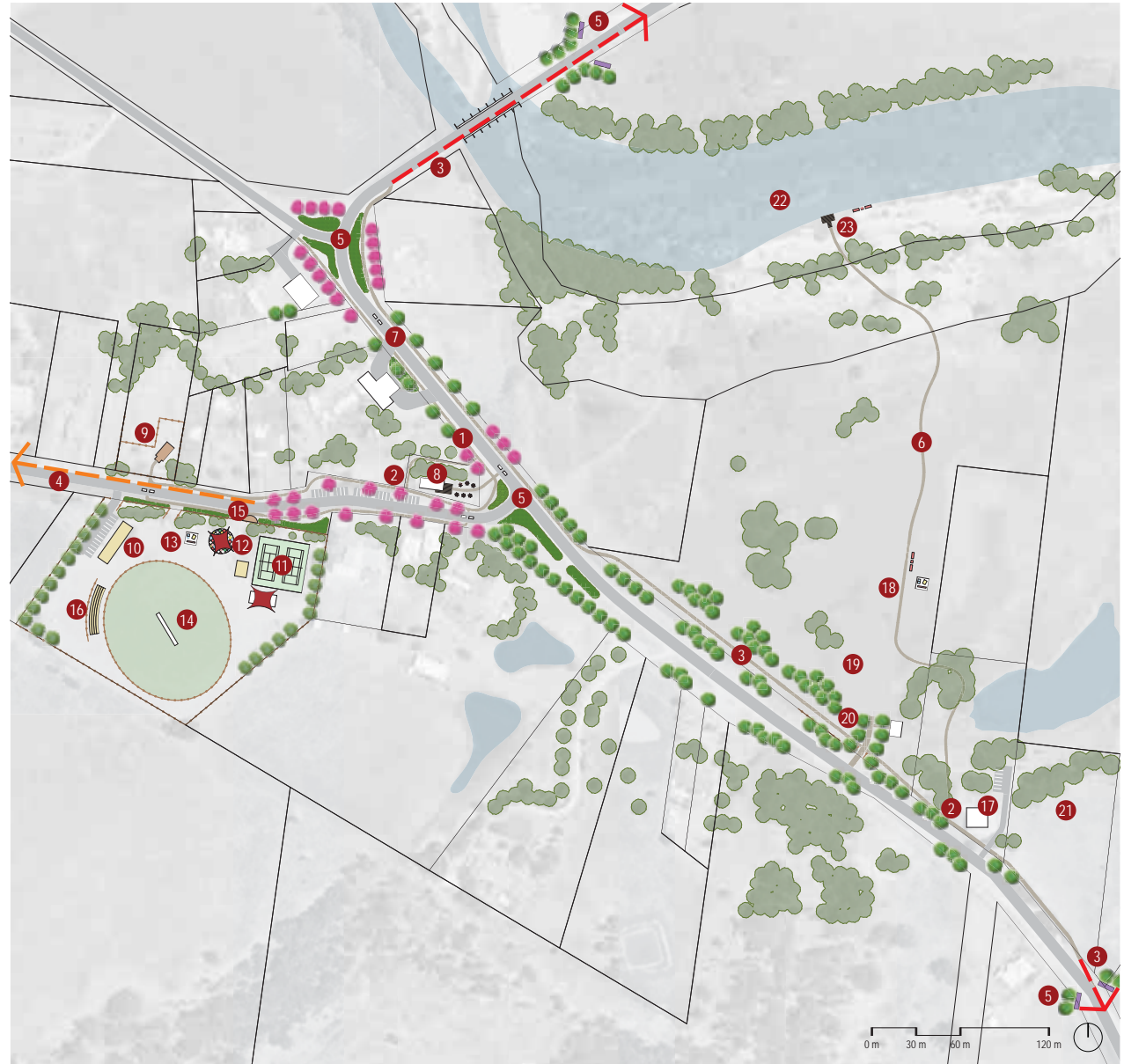


Figure 79 – Bulga Village Concepts

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village master plan

Village Concepts

Pedestrian/cycle connections are proposed throughout the village to connect the recreation grounds, community hall, the stock reserve and Wollombi Brook as shown on Figure 80. Other future connections may be possible with the extension of the Yellow Rock Trail.



Figure 80 – Bulga Village Pedestrian and Cycle Connections

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village master plan

Village Concepts



Before



Figure 81 – Possible Visualisation – Bulga Community Hall Upgrade

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village master plan

Village Concepts



Before



Figure 82 – Visualisation – Bulga Wetlands

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village master plan

Village Concepts



St Mark's Church 1914
Figure 83 – Bulga Village Examples

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