



# Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct

Landscape and Visual Assessment  
By Spiire

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Existing Waterbody with indigenous trees in the foreground and row of trees along the road in the background

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# 1- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct (BREP) landscape and visual assessment serves as a resilient framework for guiding future planning and development whilst preserving the area's visual appeal and identity. It systematically identifies landscape and visual characteristics within the precinct, determining the visual landscape character with a focus on landforms, land uses, waterways, vegetation, and views. The assessment aims to accommodate future development while maintaining landscape quality and a strong sense of place. The report carefully identifies restrictions on development to safeguard landscape features, visual identity, and scenic views.

The assessment emphasises building landscape connectivity by mapping and evaluating significant landscape areas for protection and enhancing key visual and landscape assets within the precinct. It considers the existing context, including factors such as land use, landform, vegetation, hydrology, vista, views, and heritage.

BREP's landscape character is a harmonious blend of agriculture and native elements, with mature roadside trees forming a distinctive feature.

To plan for growth and development in a more sustainable way, the assessment offers a set of strategic recommendations. These recommendations advocate for the retention and protection of mature roadside vegetation to mitigate the impact of industrial development. They encourage development that harmonises with remnant vegetation, suggests the use of non-intrusive materials for industrial sites, and promotes the preservation of undulating topography and existing vegetation.

The assessment also promotes a development approach that is sensitive to the natural landscape, with an emphasis on enhancing water assets and preserving existing hydrology. It calls for the retention and protection of significant trees and the creation of ecological corridors.

These recommendations aim to preserve BREP's unique landscape character, build landscape connectivity, and plan for growth and development in a more sustainable and resilient way, ultimately enhancing the area's visual appeal and ensuring its long-term vitality.



Existing mature trees along O'Sullivan's Road



# 2- INTRODUCTION

The proposed Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct (BREP) is an approximately 280ha site located 15 kilometres west of Bendigo. Marong township is located on the north-east of the site and Marong cemetery is located on the southern edge. Wilsons Hill Nature Conservation Reserve forms a large public use bush reserve on the north-western corner of the site. BREP consists of 13 titles, 6 of which are owned by the City of Greater Bendigo.

The purpose of this assessment is to identify landscape and visual characteristics within BREP which should be considered to help influence future planning policy and subsequent development of the precinct to maintain visual amenity and a sense of place as the land transforms.

## 2-1 Key Objectives

The key objectives of this assessment are to:

- Identify landscape and visual characteristics within the Precinct;
- Determine the visual landscape character/s of the Precinct by identifying:
  - \* Landforms
  - \* Land uses
  - \* Waterways
  - \* Trees and other vegetation
- Identify significant views to, from and within the Precinct;
- Identify methods to accommodate future development whilst maintaining a high-quality landscape and a strong sense of place (particularly how industrial/employment land uses can be integrated with sensitive land uses and development along major road interfaces);
- Identify any potential restrictions which should be placed on future development to maintain existing landscape features, visual character features, and key vistas/ views;
- High level recommendations to accommodate future development including design criteria such as assumptions relating the sensitivity and view lines to different types of built form outcomes.



Existing mature tree row lining boundaries between parcels



# 2- INTRODUCTION

## 2-2 Landscape and Visual Assessment Outcomes

Outcomes from the Landscape and Visual Assessment:

- Map and evaluate the significant landscape areas that should be protected from development due to their visual landscape value with consideration made to:
  - \* building heights
  - \* lot sizes
  - \* extent of cut/fill
  - \* interfaces to main and existing local roads (inc. Wimmera Highway and Calder Alternative Highway).
  - \* interfaces with potential sensitive and residential uses surrounding the precinct or planned as part of the Marong Township Structure Plan.
- Identify what the key visual and landscape assets are of the Precinct, and provide recommendations for how the Precinct should be designed to enhance these assets, including:
  - \* Recommendations for guidelines that may be included in future planning controls;
  - \* The location of and opportunities for shared paths throughout the precinct;
  - \* The location of open space (encumbered and un-encumbered);
  - \* Consideration of changing landscape from rural to industrial character whilst protecting its landscape and visual values;
  - \* The value of the existing roadside vegetation throughout key roads within the precinct (such as the Calder Alternative Highway);
  - \* High-level recommendations/assumptions in relation to sensitivity to key view lines to various types of built form.



Existing Mature Indigenous Trees- 41 0' Sullivans Road



# 3- METHODOLOGY

The Landscape and Visual Assessment Report is prepared through a series of steps:

- 1. Identifying and analysing the existing landscape condition via desktop study of the site (plans, aerial imagery and relevant reports).
- 2. On-site evaluation (pedestrian and vehicle field assessment).
- 3. Preparation of report including recommendations such as mitigation measures for potential adverse impacts.

View to the Wilsons Hill Bushland Reserve from Lot 6 O' Sullivans Road- Existing industrial Warehouses in background

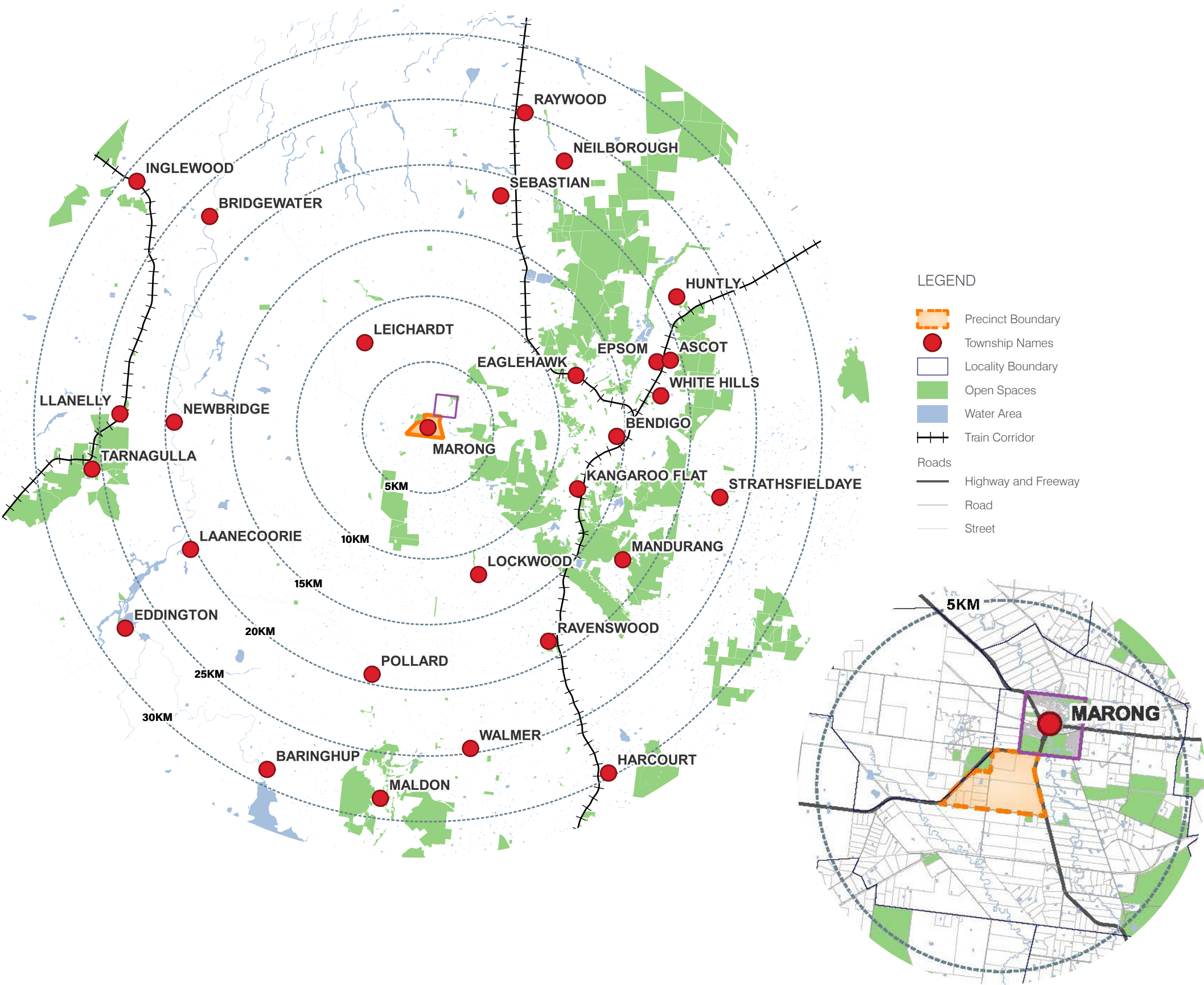




# 4- STUDY CONTEXT

BREP is situated directly to the south of the Marong township, offering a valuable opportunity to address the immediate to mid-term requirements for industrial land in Greater Bendigo and the surrounding area. This initiative will release designated land for employment and industrial purposes, addressing the current shortage of industrial zoned land in Greater Bendigo. Projections suggest that BREP will generate approximately 6,000 jobs, both directly and indirectly, benefiting the entire region.

BREP is situated 140 kilometers away from Melbourne, with Marong, the closest town, located 1.5 kilometers away. It is also approximately 10 kilometers from Bendigo, and the nearest railway connection is located 11.9km away in the northeastern direction.





# 4- STUDY CONTEXT

## 4-1 Existing Conditions

The following section provides an overview of the existing conditions within the study area and immediate vicinity of the site.

The project site is irregular in shape with an approximate area of 280ha. The site is bound to the east by Calder Alternative Highway, to the south by Cemetery Road, to the north and west by Wimmera Highway. O’ Sullivans Road running north-south also divides the study area in two portions.

Except for the Wilsons Hill Bushland Reserve, the whole site is significantly shaped by farming practices including substantial deforestation. The existing conditions are categorised into natural, constructed elements and cultural elements. Land use, landform, views, vistas, vegetation and hydrology are considered natural features. Constructed features include dwellings, farm buildings, fences, roads, driveways and pylons. Water bodies are differentiated between naturalised low points collecting water, and active man-made dams used in agriculture.

### NATURAL ELEMENTS:

#### 4-1-1 Land use

The study site has mostly farm zone overlay and used mainly for pasture grazing. One industrial parcel is located on the north-west corner of the site and to the south of Wilsons Hill Bushland Reserve, namely Waterstore Poly Tanks (Parcel 7A-5\PP3068). On the west side of O’Sullivan Road (Parcel 6A-5\PP3068), there is a piggery, and the owner’s residence can be found in the lot directly below it at 6B-5\PP3068. The property associated with Waterstore Poly Tanks has industrial warehouses within its boundary.

41 O’ Sullivans Road (1\TP13152), 106 O’ Sullivans Road (6B-5\PP3068) and 1877 Calder Alternative Highway (1\TP123242) are the only occupied residential parcels within the study area.

The land to the north-east of the site has been developed as the Marong township. The land immediately adjacent to the study site has a special use zone overlay and is functioning as Marong Recreation Reserve and Golf Club.

The farming zone also continues to the north and most of the land to the south.

Although The Wilsons Hill Bushland Reserve is not within the study area, it provides a great vegetation cover and ecological balance to the proposed industrial site. This reserve has a public conservation and reserve zoning overlay. It is the only boundary of the site that is not defined by a road and as such would need a considered interface to any development not at odds to the values of the Conservation Reserve.

Marong Cemetery is located on the southern boundary of the site and is separated from the BREP site with a gravel road.



Piggery, O’Sullivans Road (6A-5\PP3068)



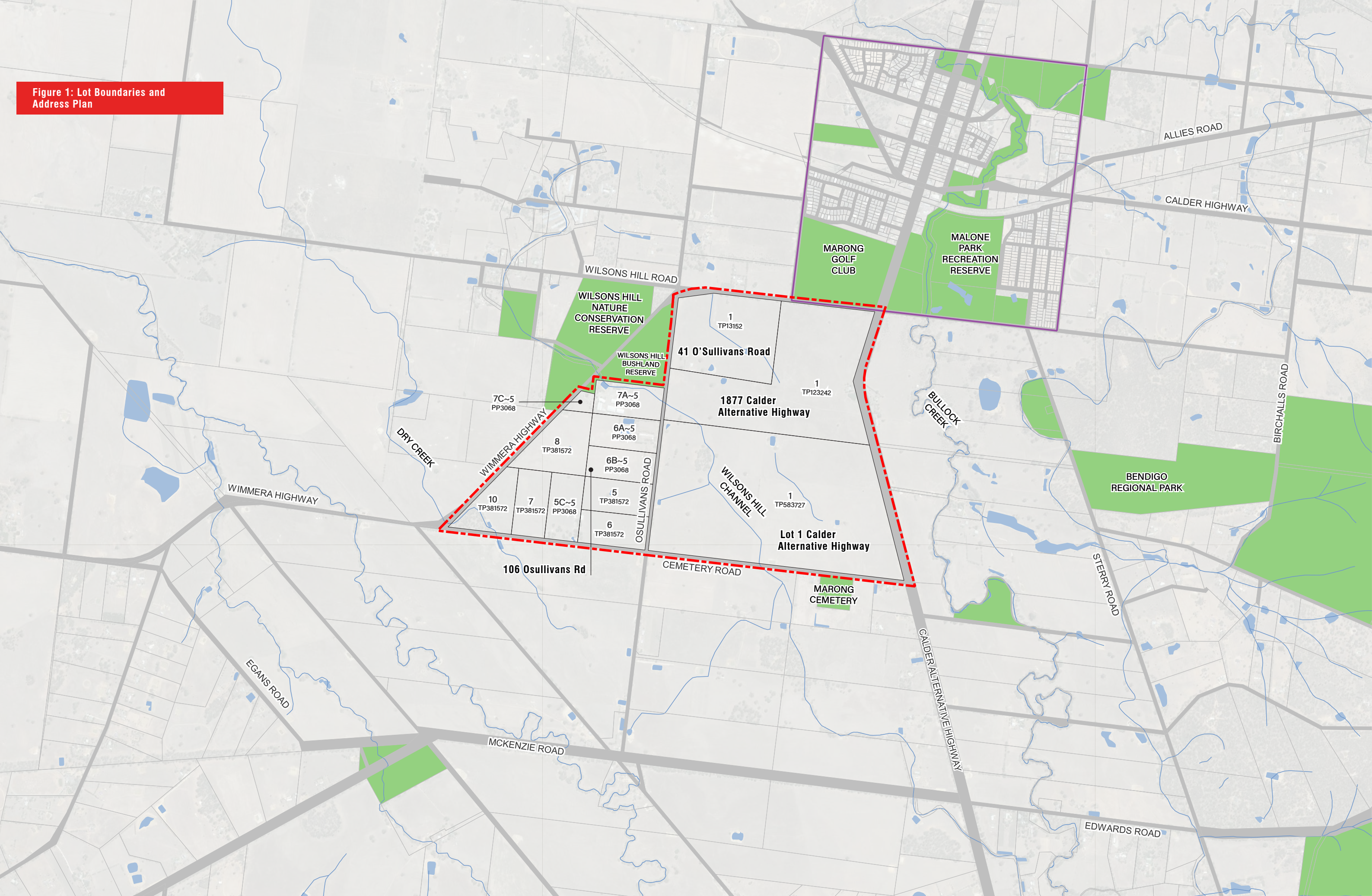
Existing residential, 41 O’Sullivans Road (1\TP13152)



Marong Golf Club, Wimmera Highway



Figure 1: Lot Boundaries and Address Plan





# 4- STUDY CONTEXT

## NATURAL ELEMENTS:

### 4-1-2 Landform and Topography

The topography of the site is generally flat. The main falls are toward the north and west with the southeast corner being the highest corner of the site.

There are also two gentle undulating mounds closer to the O' Sullivans Road which could block some views from east to west. The height difference between the lowest and highest point is a maximum 10 meters which can be considered a gentle slope over large distances. The steepest slope on the mounds has a gradient of 1:20.

The most significant low point on site is located on the western boundary and along Wimmera Highway. This area was flooded during the 2022 flood event in the wider Bendigo region. However, based on the BREP Land Capacity Assessment report (WSP, July 2023), the site falls outside the 0.5% AEP flood extent, so flooding is expected to be confined to the regions near Bullock Creek and is unlikely to encroach upon the site.

The only active waterbody on the site is the Wilsons Hill Channel, primarily an irrigation channel, and it may cause localised, minor flooding in extremely rare situations.

Figure 2 illustrates highpoints, lowpoints and gradings on site.



P1- Panorama view- capturing O'Sullivan's Road and Wimmera Highway- 41 O'Sullivan's Road



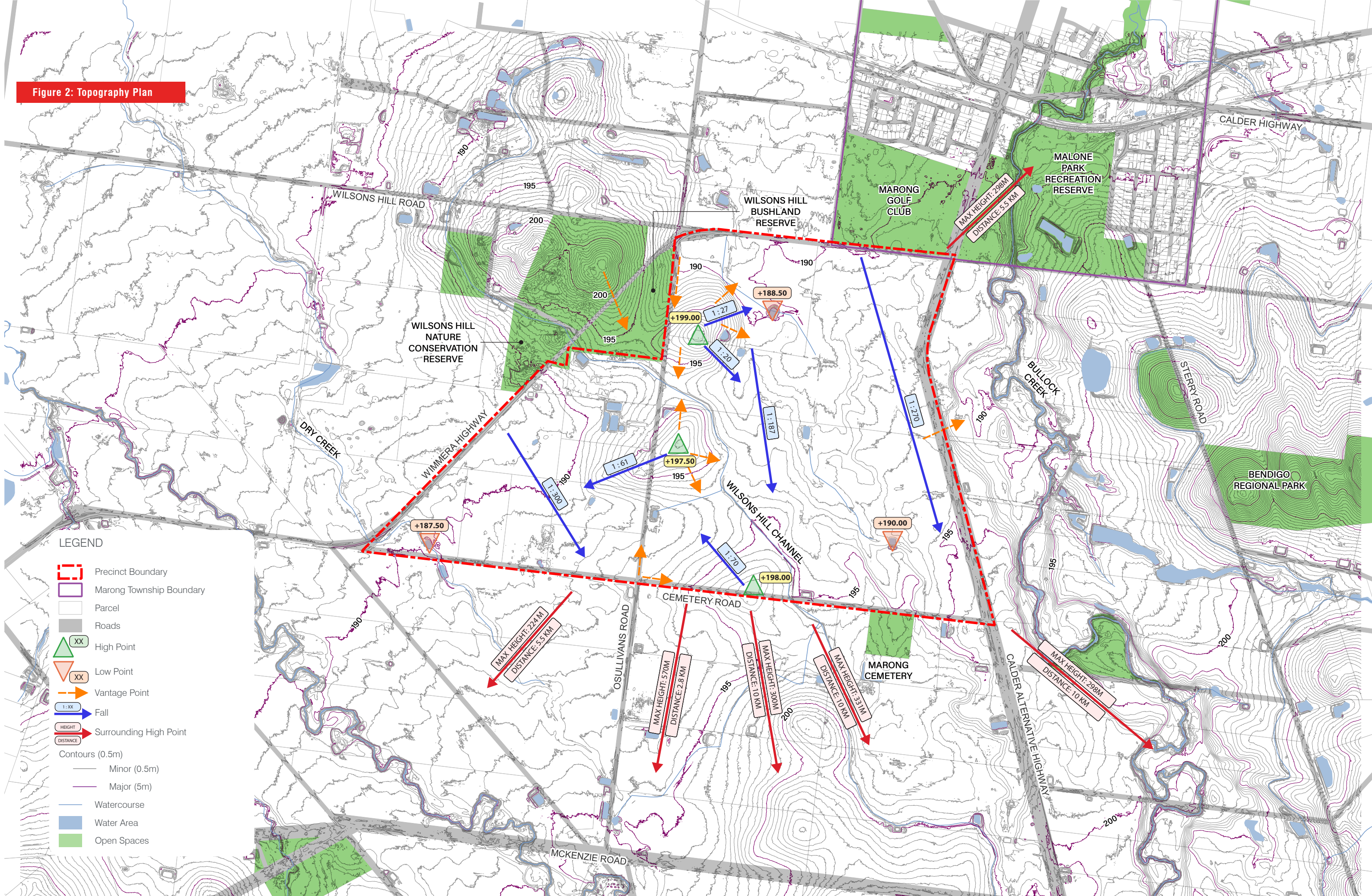
P2- Undulating surfaces at 41 O'Sullivan's Road



P3- Lowest point- South-west corner of site



### Figure 2: Topography Plan





# 4- STUDY CONTEXT

## NATURAL ELEMENTS:

### 4-1-3 Vista & Views

The Precinct has a gentle slope and subtle local undulating surfaces which form a high visibility depth quality to the site.

BREP is framed by a consistent ring of mature roadside vegetation including significant trees and some scattered patches of vegetation within the site. Most of the views into the site would be obstructed, filtered or encumbered through existing vegetation surrounding the boundaries of the site.

The topography of the site and the significant trees bordering the site mostly inhibit the views from broader distances into the site. Views within the site itself are generally unobstructed and extend to the tree rows at the site extents given the topography and the fact the current land use is cleared pasture.

The site generally is framed by a vertical border of mature, scattered trees that are indigenous to the area and there is only a distant view to the tree covered hills located to the southeast of the site from the highest point on site. The indigenous trees include remnant trees, being trees that pre-date European colonisation and provide an important indication of what the landscape was like prior to it being cleared for farming.

The cluster of mature trees lining O'Sullivan's Road serves as a natural screen, obstructing views both from the east to the west and in the opposite direction. These trees, boasting an average height of 12 meters. As mature trees encompass the site's perimeter, your view will be restricted no matter where you stand on the site, providing only partial visibility beyond the boundary.

In conclusion, the visual sensitivity of the Precinct is a product of its topography, the mature vegetation that envelops it, and the presence of these significant indigenous trees. Together, these elements create a landscape that is both visually striking and historically significant.



P4- View from highest point towards East



P5- View toward the second high point - Significant Vegetation Patch



P6- View to South-west Wimmera Highway



P7- View toward Vegetation Corridor of O' Sullivan's Road



# 4- STUDY CONTEXT

## NATURAL ELEMENTS:

### 4-1-3 Vista & Views

The visual sensitivity assessment within the figures 3 and 4 considers various viewing distances, ranging from the immediate foreground to the distant background, with a buffer of 500 meters from existing natural/ heritage elements defining the level of visual sensitivity, further emphasising the site's nuanced and captivating visual qualities.

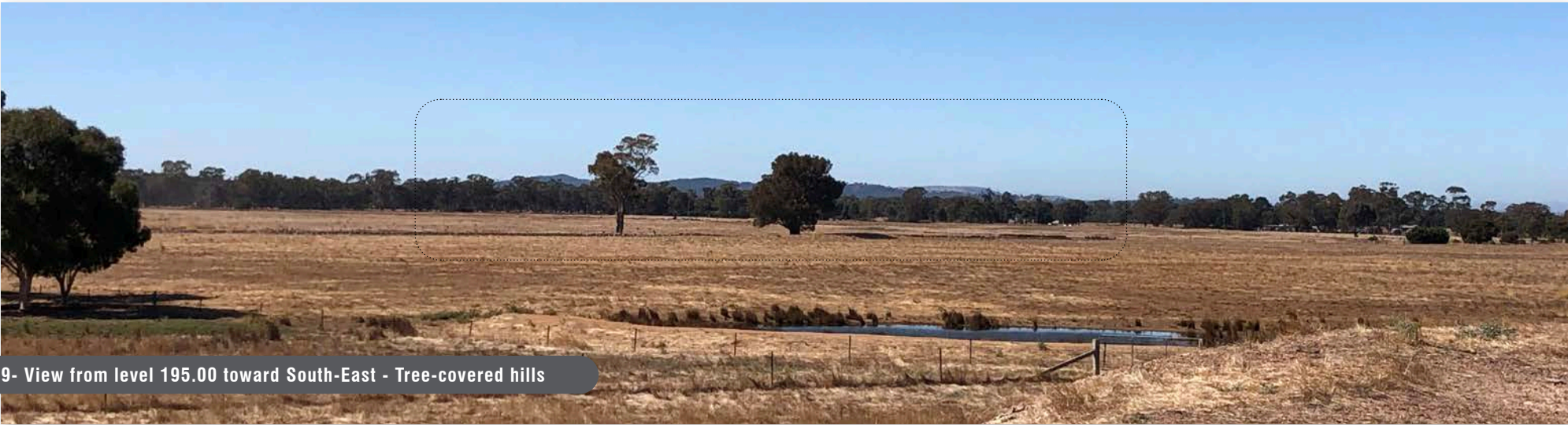
There are three viewing distances to consider:

- 1- Foreground (0- 500 meters)
- 2- Middleground (501- 1500 meters)
- 3- Background (> 1500 meters)

From the high points within the Precinct, there is a distant view to the tree-covered hills to the south and southeast, offering a vantage point. This integration of topography and vegetation provides a series of vantage points across the site.



P8- View from level 190.50 towards South-East



P9- View from level 195.00 toward South-East - Tree-covered hills