# WINDELLA RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

## VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**Prepared for MAVID GROUP**
**December 2023**


STUDIO 26
URBAN DESIGN
**m:** 0413 782 764
**e:** hello@studio26urbandesign.com
**w:** www.studio26urbandesign.com

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

**Studio 26 Urban Design acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Wonnarua People as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land within the City of Maitland Local Government Area that this project is located within.**

**We pay our respects to Aboriginal Elders, past and present. Studio 26 Urban Design are committed to honouring the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.**


## URBAN DESIGN TEAM

STUDIO 26
URBAN DESIGN


## CLIENT

MAVID GROUP

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NORTHROP xeriscapes SLR AEP The ELLIS Group Architects Pty Ltd McLaren Traffic Engineering

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

**Windella Retirement Community - Visual Impact Assessment**
Prepared for MAVID GROUP

| VERSION | DATE | DESCRIPTION | AUTHOR | APPROVED |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Dec 2023 | Draft for Comment | EH and NW | Esther Hermans, Studio 26 |
| 2 | Dec 2023 | Draft for Comment | EH | Esther Hermans, Studio 26 |
| 3 | Dec 2023 | For Approval | EH | Esther Hermans, Studio 26 |

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# INTRODUCTION

# BACK GROUND

Studio 26 Urban Design (Studio 26) has been commissioned by MAVID Group to prepare a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the proposed Windella Retirement Community at 16 Denton Close & 10 River Rd, Windella. The VIA will support the development application for the proposal, lodged for assessment under Maitland City Council Development Control Plan (DCP) 2010 and Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2011.

The assessment is based on three site inspections carried out on 5 April 2023, 10 September 2023, and 5 December 2023, using essential viewpoints and locations toward the site from publicly accessible land. The report details the results of the fieldwork, documents the assessment of the landscape character and visual setting, and assesses potential visual impacts associated with the proposed subdivision.

As cadastral information has little influence in defining visual catchments, this assessment aims to identify the landscape character and dominant features of the relevant visual catchment that the development site lies within. The purpose of this report is to provide a quantitative assessment of the capability and potential visual impacts of the proposal.

This report also provides detailed recommendations for the mitigation of determined impacts. This information is provided to assist Maitland City Council in understanding the likely impact and how that may be managed to ensure that the positive character elements of the immediate area and surrounding visual landscape are not overly diminished.

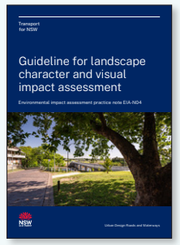
# DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

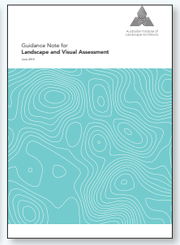
The following documents have been reviewed in preparation for the Windella Retirement Community Visual Impact Assessment, serving as key reference documents for the foundation of the report.

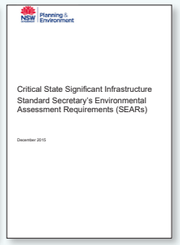
The reports prepared in direct relation to the site are as follows:

- Landscape Plan prepared by Xeriscape December 2023 including overall plan, landscape design for Community Centre, open space and pedestrian links. The landscape package includes elevations and planting and surface finishes palette.
- Community Centre - DA plans prepared by Ellis Group December 2023 which includes proposed floor plans, elevations, sections materials finishes and perspectives.
- Northrop – Concept Engineering Design
- AEP – Bushfire Threat Assessment, Biodiversity Assessment and Arborist Reports.
- De Witt Consulting – Detail Site Survey
- McLaren Traffic Engineering and Road Safety Consultants – Parking and Traffic Impact Assessment
- Muller Acoustic Consultant – Acoustic Assessment
- GIS 360 Degree View Shed - MAVID Group

## KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

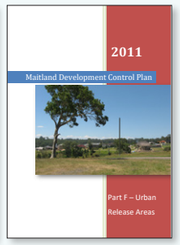


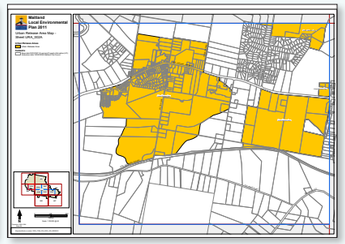




## MAITLAND CITY COUNCIL

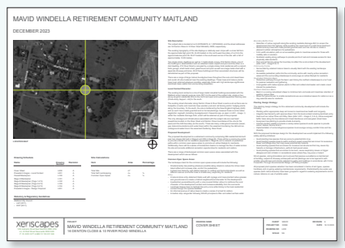
Maitland City Council LEP and DCP

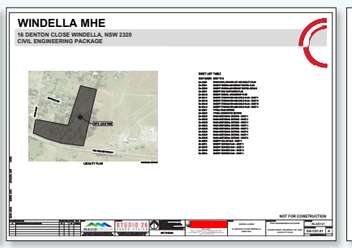




## CONSULTANTS DOCUMENTS









# EXISTING LANDSCAPE

# SITE CONTEXT

The site for the proposed Windella Retirement Community is located within the small suburb of Windella, also known as Rutherford, situated west of the Maitland Town Centre. The Maitland Local Government Area (LGA) has experienced substantial growth in recent years, and this land is now situated amidst residential expansion lands from the west (Lochinvar), industrial lands from the south (Rutherford), and employment lands to the east (Rutherford).

Overall, Windella is characterized by low open pastures interspersed with pockets of native vegetation on low surrounding ranges. Large sections of the LGA have been cleared of native vegetation due to the region's European history of land clearing for timber, mining, and urban development. The fertile soil of the floodplains is suitable for vineyards, crops, and grazing.

Due to the low topography of Windella and its immediate surrounds, opportunities for views out of the urban areas toward the surrounding rural lands are limited.


**Figure 1** - Proposed Site Locality Plan

# SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located on the New England Highway and the western corner of River Road, Windella. The site is an L-shaped block comprised of the following:

- Lot 9 (DP553872) 16 Denton Close
- Lot 1 (DP245953) 10 River Road Windella

It is a remnant portion of land between a large rural residential subdivision and Maitland Airport. Bordered to the south by the New England Highway, the land extends northward away from the road and slowly ascends to lands identified with a rural outlook.

The topography of the site is relatively even, with a gradual slope from the lowest point RL 29.27 in the southeast corner to the highest point RL 45.20 in the northwest corner of Lot 9. This results in a total fall of approximately 15.93 meters. The existing structures on the site, including two single-story dwellings and 7 metal sheds located at 16 Denton Close, will be demolished as part of the proposed project. One of the dwellings is made of weatherboard and has an attached metal carport and pool, while the other is a clad dwelling.

Additionally, 10 River Road contains a single-story brick residence with a carport, brick garage, small metal shed, greenhouse, and pool and open grassland. There is also a large metal shed with a separate driveway entrance on this property. All of these structures will be demolished as part of the proposal.

The site is characterized by a variety of trees, including large mature Eucalyptus trees and mixed trees and exotic shrubs clustered near the existing dwellings. In order to preserve the natural landscape and its aesthetic value, efforts have been made to retain these trees and mature plants wherever possible, especially those with high landscape significance. These landmark trees are visible from surrounding properties and contribute to the overall visual appeal of the area and, in doing so, act as a visual mitigation measure for the neighbouring properties.


**Plan 1** – Site Plan

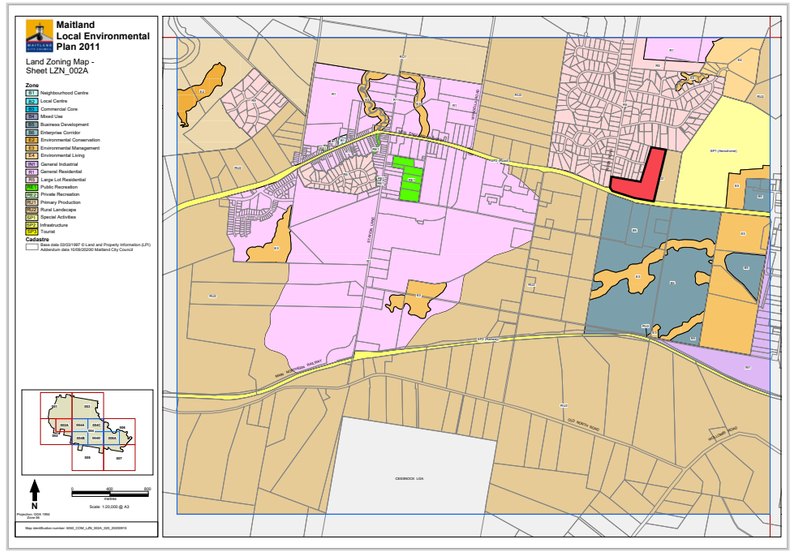
# LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF THE EXISTING AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

The Site is a rural landscape of approximately 14.5 hectares, consisting mainly of cleared/managed agricultural land with fenced areas for grazing animals, existing rural residential use, and scattered sheds. The site is located within Zone RU2 - Rural Landscape; refer to Map 1 - Land Zoning Map. Its aim is to maintain the rural landscape character of the land and provide for a range of compatible land uses, including extensive agriculture and non-agricultural uses where infrastructure is adequate to support the uses, and conflict between different land uses is minimized.

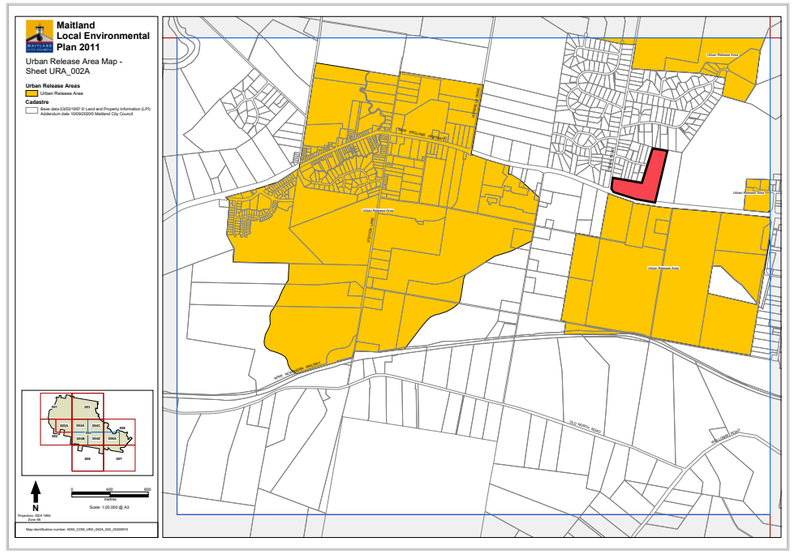
The surrounding landscape is experiencing increasing development of commercial/light industry to the east of the site, which has begun altering the local character. The surrounding topography of the site consists of cleared, gently sloping lands with a mix of large metal industrial buildings associated with the Maitland Airport special purpose zone (SP1) to the east, single or two-storey large lot residential (R5) to the north and west, and a private equestrian training area (Productivity Support - E3) to the south. Directly south of the site, large parcels of land have been indicated in Maitland City Council Local Environmental Plan (2011) (LEP) as a Site Urban Release Area for future development. There are an additional 3 locations within an approximately 1km radius of the site; refer to Map 2 – Maitland Local Environment Plan 2011 - Urban Release Area Map. This future change of use/zone will alter the landscape of the area and the immediate surroundings of the site from its current rural/rural residential landscape character.

# SCENIC QUALITY

The Site is primarily cleared, except for some pockets of existing vegetation dispersed throughout. The site has overall low to moderate scenic quality and does not feature any highly significant scenic quality. The surrounding properties have also been largely cleared of vegetation. It would be a reasonable expectation that the overall scenic quality of the subject site would be retained in any development of the site.




**Map 1** – Maitland Local Environment Plan 2011 - Land Zoning Map




**Map 2** – Maitland Local Environment Plan 2011 - Urban Release Area Map

# VISUAL EXPOSURE OF THE DEVELOPMENT SITE

The visual catchment is limited to the area where the proposed development would be noticeable to the viewer(s), and obvious features in a viewing plane or landscape. The visual catchment was determined from visiting the site and taking note of the landscape, as well as visiting public spaces in the location area to ascertain where the site itself could be seen. The visual catchment is determined to be that area as defined in Figure 1: Viewing Zones.

As part of the field assessment, the visual exposure of the development site and the resultant development was documented by visiting a number of viewing locations and making observations. The visual exposure from the private domain was determined by making observations from the surrounding road network.

The visual catchment of the proposed development site is approximately 1.5 km to the north, south, and west and 6 km to the east. This is primarily due to the nature of the topography and vegetation cover in the area. Features of the visual catchment noted include:

- To the north and west of the site, the visible catchment has been limited by large residential lots and vegetation.
- To the south, the visual catchment has been limited by the New England Highway.
- To the east of the site, the visible catchment has been limited by the gentle sloping terrain and the suburb of Rutherford.

There are a number of public spaces that are within the visual catchment, namely New England Highway to the south and the Maitland Airport to the east. The views into the development are limited to the following public places:

- New England Highway – The view north from the New England Highway looks directly into the site.
- River Road - The view east from River Road looks directly into the site.
- Anambah Road to the northeast – The view is obstructed by natural vegetation.
- Maitland Airport to the east – Largely obstructed by natural vegetation and the airport buildings.
- Anambah Road – Largely obstructed by natural vegetation and topography.
- Corner of Kelly Circus and Richard Road Rutherford - Largely obstructed by natural vegetation and topography.

Based on the above observations, the following can be drawn:

**Immediate Exposure Areas**

Public places that have immediate exposure are: along the New England Highway to the south, River Road to the west, and Maitland Airport to the east. Residential lots that are immediately adjacent to the development site and within the immediate exposure area are: 12 River Rd, 4A, 6, 6A, 10, 12, 13, and 14 Denton Cl, and 16, 16A, and 18A Beacons Hill Rd.

**Local Exposure Areas**

181 and 223 Anambah Road – Will have local exposure to the site.

**Regional Exposure Areas**

Corner of Kelly Circus and Richard Road – Will have limited regional exposure to the site.

# POTENTIAL VISUAL EXPOSURE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE

The development as proposed will make little significant difference to the extent of the visual catchment of the development site; that is to say, the size and heights of the buildings within the Windella Retirement Community will not increase the area of the visual catchment over which it will be seen. This is because the area beyond the visual catchment consists of large cleared residential lots to the north, west, and south and Maitland Airport to the east.

Based on the above analysis of the visual character of the subject site, its surroundings, and the visual exposure, the following visual opportunities and constraints have been identified in relation to the site in the context of a proposed rural dwelling.

- The built form proposed should be built at a point below the ridge-line.
- The views of the subject site and across it from rural properties to the north, south, and west of the site need to be taken into consideration.
- The architectural form needs to take into consideration that they do not impact on the views of these public places. Consideration for colours and materials needs to be natural and compatible with the local environment, and buffers to these structures should be put in place and appropriate landscaping incorporated so that the built nature of the structure does not impact on the natural scenic qualities of the area.
- Appropriate setbacks from New England Highway and River Road will be required.

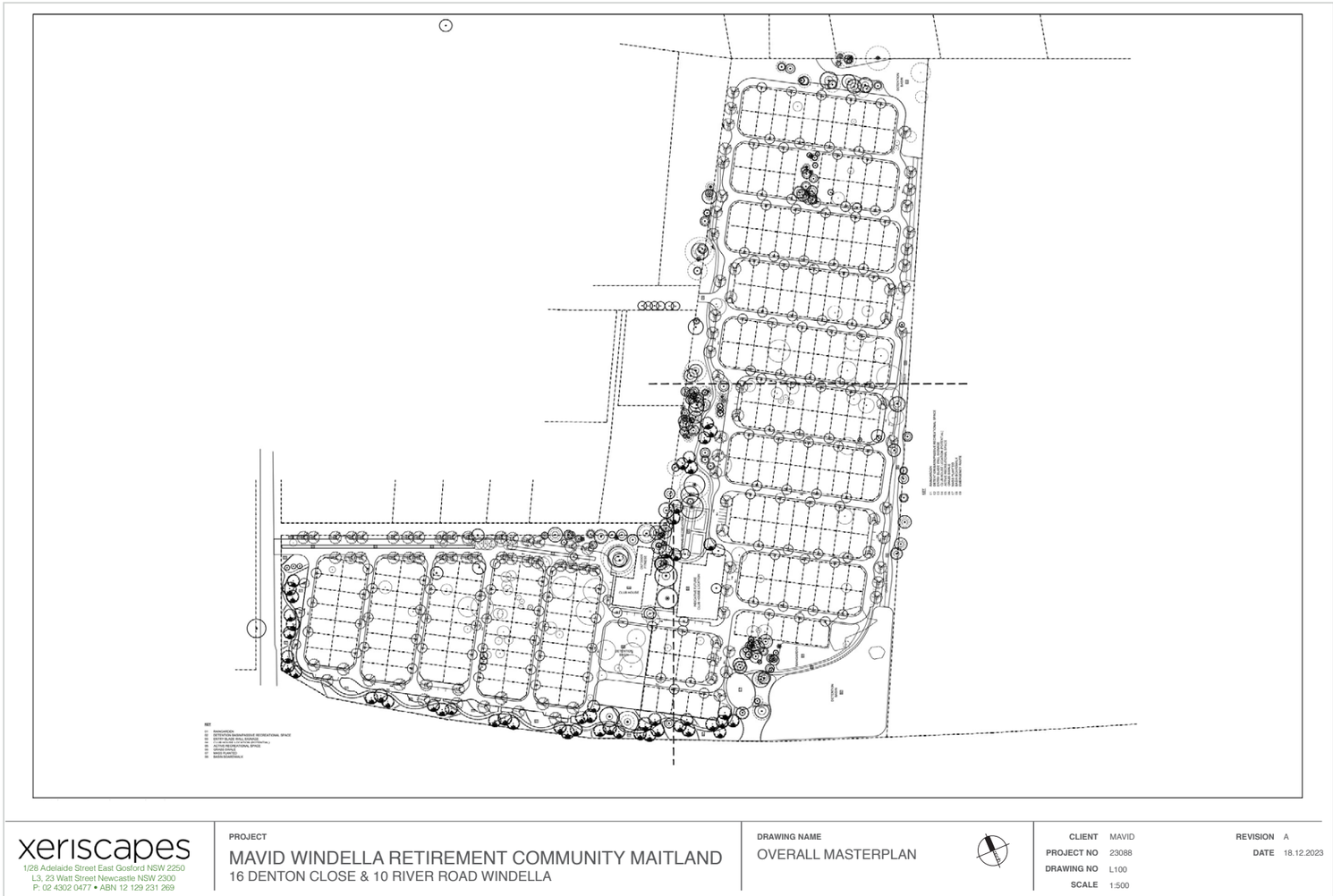
# PROPOSAL DETAILS

# PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed development is a retirement community comprising 284 residential lots built over two stages (84 built in Stage A and 202 in Stage B). The proposal involves constructing a Manufactured Home Estate (MHE) over the whole site, also known or referred to as a land lease community. The process involves seeking planning permission for the provision of sites for permanent residents. The individual dwellings are manufactured off-site and assembled on the created individual parcels. These are approved under the Local Government Act and do not require Development Applications or Construction Certificates.

There will be a community centre to provide a social hub for residents (a requirement of the MHE legislation), expanded in Stage B. The clubhouse and facilities will include an indoor pool, a small cinema, BBQ facilities, an office, reception, a non-licensed bar area, lounge, billiard room, games rooms, and the like.

The outdoor facilities will include pickleball courts, open space, a network of pedestrian paths within common open space areas to promote an active lifestyle for residents. Additionally, there will be a series of bioretention basins to manage the flow of water across the site and provide a new lake/water feature and additional recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. The master plan for Windella Retirement Community (Plan 2 - Overall Plan) shows the layout of the proposed buildings and facilities incorporated into the overall site.




**Plan 2 -** Overall Plan (Prepared by Xeriscape)

# VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

# THE METHODOLOGY

A VIA is used to identify and determine the value, significance and sensitivity of a landscape. There is currently no universally agreed method of undertaking a VIA in NSW, therefore, the methodology used to inform this VIA involves systematically evaluating the visual environment of the Site and using judgements based on community responses to the scenery. The assessment undertaken in stages is as noted below.

The process has been adapted from the following:

- Road and Maritime Services Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment (2018).
- Classification of the landscape into different character types and a description of those types.
- The scope of the Critical State Significant Infrastructure Standard Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARS) (2015) concerning visual impact assessments.
- An assessment of view sensitivity to change. This includes how different groups of people view the landscape and how many people are seeing from how far.
- The viewpoint analysis identifies areas likely to be affected by the development of the Site and an assessment of visual impacts and the preparation of recommendations for impacts mitigation. The mitigation recommendations in Section 8 of this report have been made to ensure that the development maintains the areas of visual quality.

# VISUAL CATEGORY AND DISTANCE

Viewing zones are areas outside the Site that have potential views to the Site from various distances within the immediate vicinity, local area and regional context. The viewing zones based on the range from the proposed development were defined as follows:

- Immediate vicinity (< 1.5km)
- Local area (1.5km – 3km)
- Regional area (3km – 6km)

Representative view locations were selected from places where the Site was visible, and the visual impact of the planned development has been assessed from each area (See **Plan 3 -** Viewing Zones and **Plan 4 -** View Analysis Locations)

# THE IMPACT OF SPEED ON VISIBILITY

Relevant to road users, the time for which the project will be visible in a forward-looking direction, assuming a maximum visibility of 7km, travelling on the road network is outlined in **Table 1** - Time the Site will be Visable for Travelling at Speed. This is assuming a clear line of site, noting that undulation, road curvature, landscape features and prevalent vegetation would affect these values.

| Driving Speed (by road classification) | Time the SITE is visible for in minutes |
|---|---|
| 110km/h | 3 minutes (330m) |
| 100km/h | 3 minutes (300m) |
| 80km/h | 4 minutes (320m) |
| 60km/h | 6 minutes (360m) |
| 50km/h | 7 minutes (350m) |

**Table 1 -** Time the Site will be visible for travelling at speed.

# IMMEDIATE VICINITY VIEWING ZONES (< 1.5KM)

- View 1: New England Highway and Kyle Street Roundabout
- View 2: Maitland Airport Driveway
- View 3: 717 New England Highway
- View 4: 709 New England Highway
- View 5:  New England Highway
- View 6: 23 River Road
- View 7: Corner of River Road and Pennparc Drive
- View 8: 10 Denton Close
- View 9: 22 Beacon Hill Road

## LOCAL AREA VIEWING ZONES (1.5KM – 3KM)

- View 10: 223 Anambah Road
- View 11: 181 Anambah Road

## REGIONAL AREA VIEWING ZONES (3KM – 6KM)

- View 12: Corner of Kelly Crescent and Richard Road

Each view analysis has been addressed separately in Section 5 of this report. **Plan 3** - Viewing Zones are used to assess the potential visual impacts of the development.


**Plan 3** - Viewing Zones


**Plan 4** - View Analysis Locations

# VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Visual sensitivity refers to the qualities of an area, the number and type of receivers and how sensitive the existing character of the setting is to the proposed nature of change to the Site. The assessment is based on the number of viewers who would be likely to see the proposed development and their likely expectations for visual quality. It is usually considered that a visual impact on a sensitive location in the public domain is deemed to be more important than one of similar quality on a less sensitive site or seen from a private viewing place.

- Visual sensitivity decreases as the view distance increases.
- Visual sensitivity decreases as the viewing time is decreased.
- Visual sensitivity can also be related to the viewer(s) activity (a person viewing an affected site while engaged in recreational activities will be more strongly affected by change than someone passing the Site in a car travelling to a different destination).

# MAGNITUDE

Magnitude refers to the physical scale of the project, how distant it is and the contrast it presents to the existing condition. For example a large interchange would have a very different impact on landscape character than a localised road widening in the same area. A more distant bridge would have a lesser magnitude than one nearer to residents. A vegetated embankment facing a parkland would have less contrast than a retaining wall in the same location. Magnitude will also need to consider cumulative impact, which is a consideration of the result of the incremental impact of the proposal when added to other past, current and known likely future activity.

Visual magnitude refers to the extent of change that will be experienced by receptors. Factors that are considered when assessing the magnitude of change include:

- The proportion of the view / landscape affected.
- Extent of the area over which the change occurs.
- The size and scale of the change.
- The rate and duration of the change.
- The level of contrast and compatibility.

(Source: AILA, 2018)

Whilst the methodology shown above is both relevant and robust in assessing Visual Magnitude in most applications, a number of additional factors must be considered when assessing a site that is situated within an existing urban environment. Other factors include:

- Consideration of the existing and proposed built form that surrounds the Site.
- How well the Project ties into the existing context.
- Impact on key features identified within existing Scenic Quality Guidelines in the Study Area.

# VISUAL IMPACT

The assessment of visual impact follows a process of evaluating a range of publicly accessible locations with a potential view of the Project. By assessing a representative range of viewpoints that are at different distances and directions from the Project and from a range of landscapes, one can evaluate the visual impact of the Project on the broader landscape as a whole.

Each viewpoint has been assessed using a process of combining the rating of:

- The sensitivity of the landscape to change.
- The sensitivity of the viewer to change.
- The magnitude of change in relation to both of the above.

Table 2 - Visual Impact Assessment Rating Matrix indicates the visual impact assessment rating matrix.

| VISUAL IMPACT RATING MATRIX | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | MAGNITUDE | | | |
| | | HIGH | MODERATE | LOW | NEGLIGIBLE |
| VISUAL SENSITIVITY | HIGH | High | High-Moderate | Moderate | Negligible |
| | MODERATE | High-Moderate | Moderate | Moderate-Low | Negligible |
| | LOW | Moderate | Moderate-Low | Low | Negligible |
| | NEGLIGIBLE | Negligible | Negligible | Negligible | Negligible |

**Table 2** - Visual Impact Assessment Rating Matrix (Source: Guideline for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment, 2023)

# VIEW ANALYSIS

This part of the visual assessment considers the likely impact that development would have on the existing landscape character and visual amenity by selecting prominent sites, otherwise referred to as viewpoints.

# VIEWPOINT SELECTION PROCESS

Viewpoints are selected to illustrate a combination of the following:

- Present landscape character types
- Areas of high landscape or scenic value
- Visual composition (e.g. focused or panoramic views, simple or complex landscape pattern)
- Range of distances
- Varying aspects
- Various elevations
- The extent of development visibility (full and partial visibility)
- Sequential views.

Viewpoints have been carefully selected to be representative of the range of views within the study area. The selection of viewpoints is informed by topographical maps, fieldwork observations, and other relevant influences such as access, landscape character, and the popularity of vantage points.

A total of twelve viewpoints were taken as part of the fieldwork process. The majority of these viewpoints were taken from publicly accessible roads surrounding the site. The viewpoints included in this report represent the areas of the site that would appear most prominent, either based on the degree of exposure or the number of people likely to be affected. It is important to note that viewpoints for this study have been taken only from accessible public land.

Viewpoint selection is based on considerations related to the maximum distance at which the project would be visible to the naked eye, assuming clear conditions and the absence of intervening terrain and objects. Figure 5 - Maximum Human Field of Vision indicates a likely visual representation of the typical vertical field of view of the human eye, with components broken down into various elements. Noting a normal visual field is an island of vision measuring 90 degrees temporally to central fixation, 50 degrees superiorly and nasally, and 60 degrees inferiorly. Visual acuity increases from movement discrimination in the extreme peripheral vision to better than 20/20 in the centre of vision. The purpose of using this data is to understand and account for how the project will be visually perceived within the surrounding environment. (*Clinical Methods: The History, Physical, and Laboratory Examinations. 3rd edition.)*

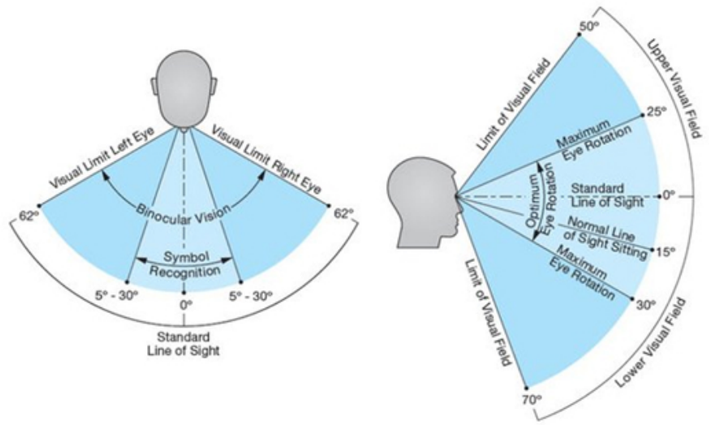


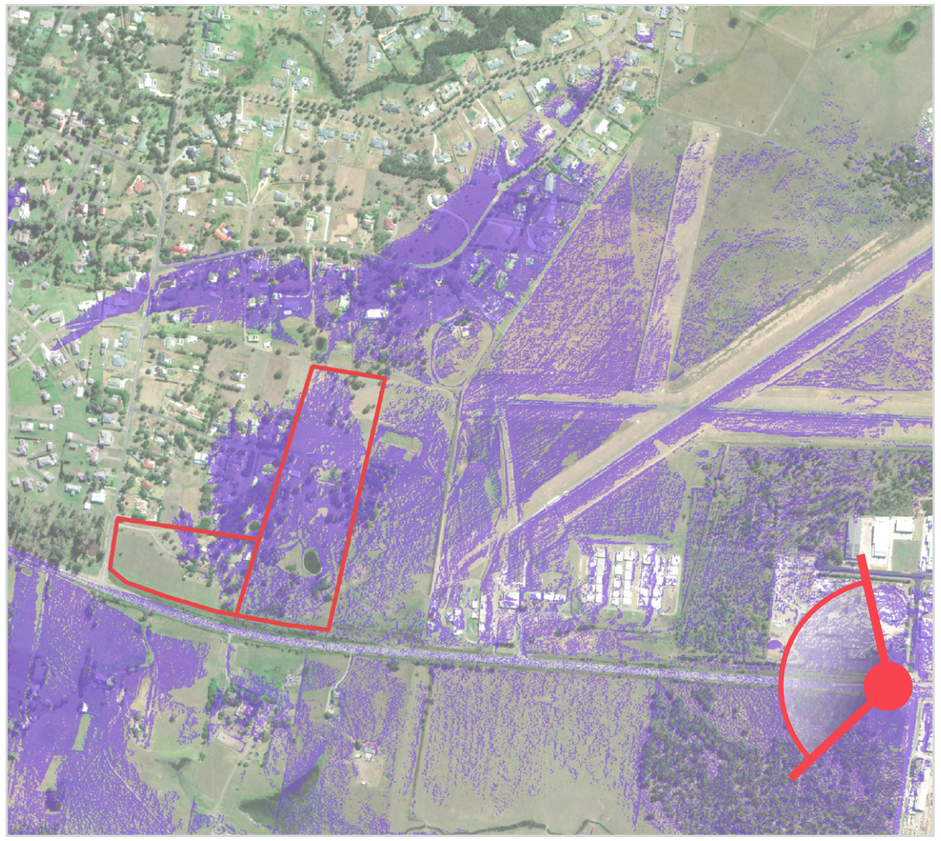

**Figure 5 -** Maximum Human Field of Vision (Image Source: Quara)

From each viewpoints selected for the report, is a single-shot photograph was taken at eye level towards the Site. Photographs were taken through a 35mm fixed focal lens Canon EOX 200D II to best represent the human eye. (reference ALIA, 2018)

The visual impact of the viewpoint was then assessed both on Site and with the topographic and aerial information to ensure accuracy. Viewpoint photographs and analysis are included in the following pages.

# VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

# VIEWPOINT 1 - NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY AND KYLE STREET ROUNDABOUT



**360 Degree View Shed Analysis**

## VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | New England Highway and Kyle Street Roundabout |
| **View category and distance** | Immediate vicinity, approximately 1.1km |
| **View direction** | West |
| **Coordinates** | 32°42'24.5"S 151°29'49.5"E |

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | **Value** | **Comment** |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Low | Receivers at this viewpoint will be driving along New England Highway at 80km/hr and it is assumed they will have limited interest in their surroundings. The visual characteristics of this viewpoint will be similar to Maitland Airport in the neighbouring lot that they will pass before the project site. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | Negligible | The project will be barely perceivable due to the screening by existing vegetation and buildings. |
| **Visual Impact** | Negligible | Given the low viewpoint sensitivity and screening from existing vegetation and buildings. |

# VIEWPOINT 2 - MAITLAND AIRPORT ENTRANCE - NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY

**360 Degree View Shed Analysis**

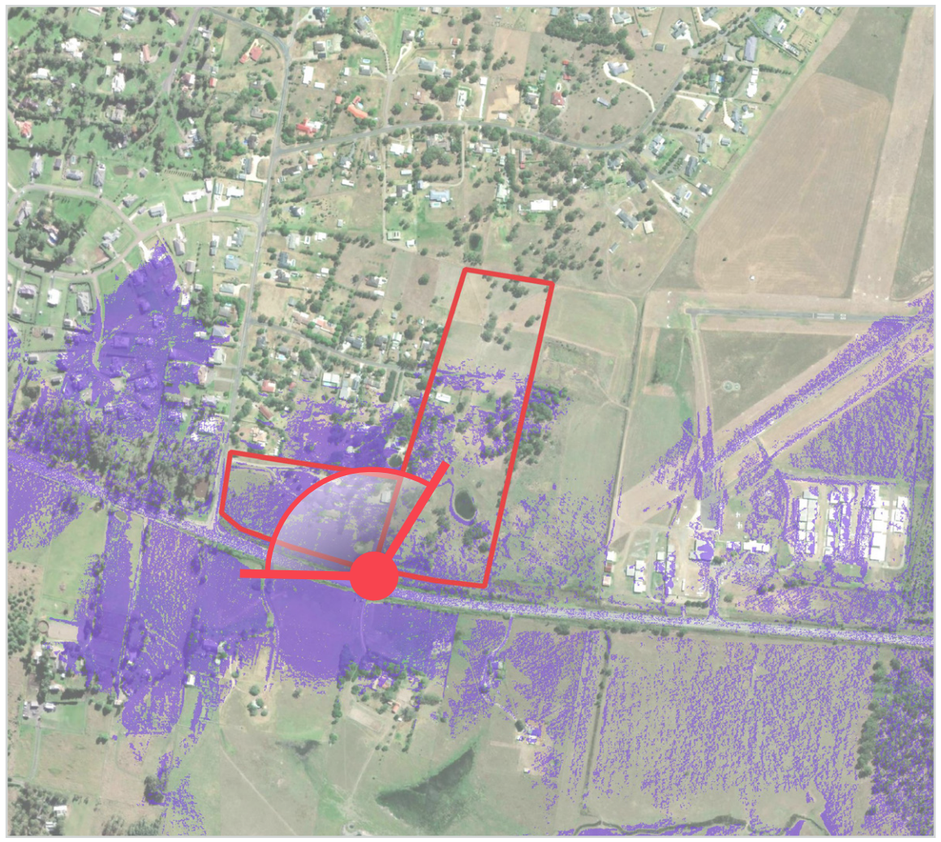
## VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | Maitland Airport Entrance - New England Highway |
| **View category and distance** | Immediate vicinity, approximately 400m |
| **View direction** | West |
| **Coordinates** | 32°42'22.1"S 151°29'20.1"E |

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | **Value** | **Comment** |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Low | Receivers at this viewpoint will be driving along New England Highway at 80km/hr and it is assumed they will have limited interest in their surroundings. The visual characteristics of this viewpoint will be similar to Maitland Airport in the neighbouring lot that they will pass before the project site. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | Negligible | The project will be largely screened by existing vegetation, the parts of the buildings that will be visible would represent a low change to the landscape as the buildings colours and low height will help the project blend in with its surroundings. |
| **Visual Impact** | Negligible | Given the low viewpoint sensitivity and screening from existing vegetation and buildings. |

# VIEWPOINT 3 - 717 NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY



360 Degree View Shed Analysis

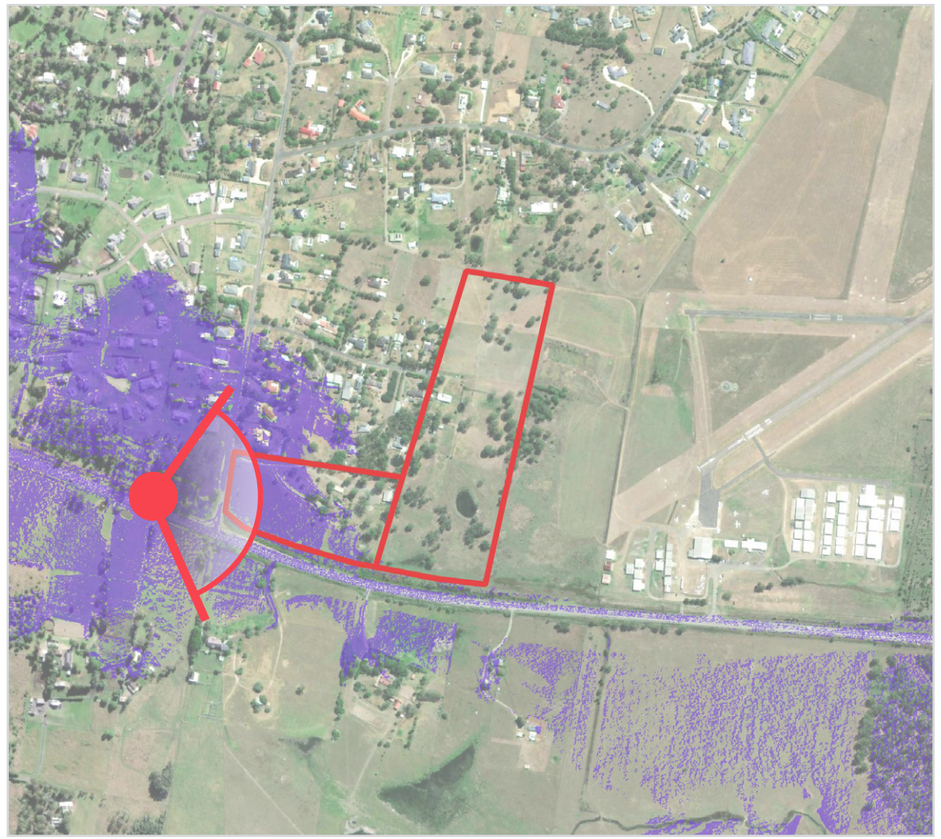
## VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | 717 New England Highway |
| **View category and distance** | Immediate vicinity, approximately 40m |
| **View direction** | North |
| **Coordinates** | 32°42'19.6"S 151°28'56.4"E |

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | **Value** | **Comment** |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Low | Receivers at this viewpoint will be driving along New England Highway at 80km/hr and it is assumed they will have limited interest in their surroundings. The visual characteristics of this viewpoint will be similar to Maitland Airport in the neighbouring lot. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | High | The project will be partially screened by existing vegetation, the parts of the buildings that will be visible would represent a high change to the landscape, however the buildings colours and low height will help the project blend in with its surroundings. |
| **Visual Impact** | Moderate | Given the low viewpoint sensitivity and partial screening from existing vegetation. |

# VIEWPOINT 4 - 709 NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY

360 Degree View Shed Analysis

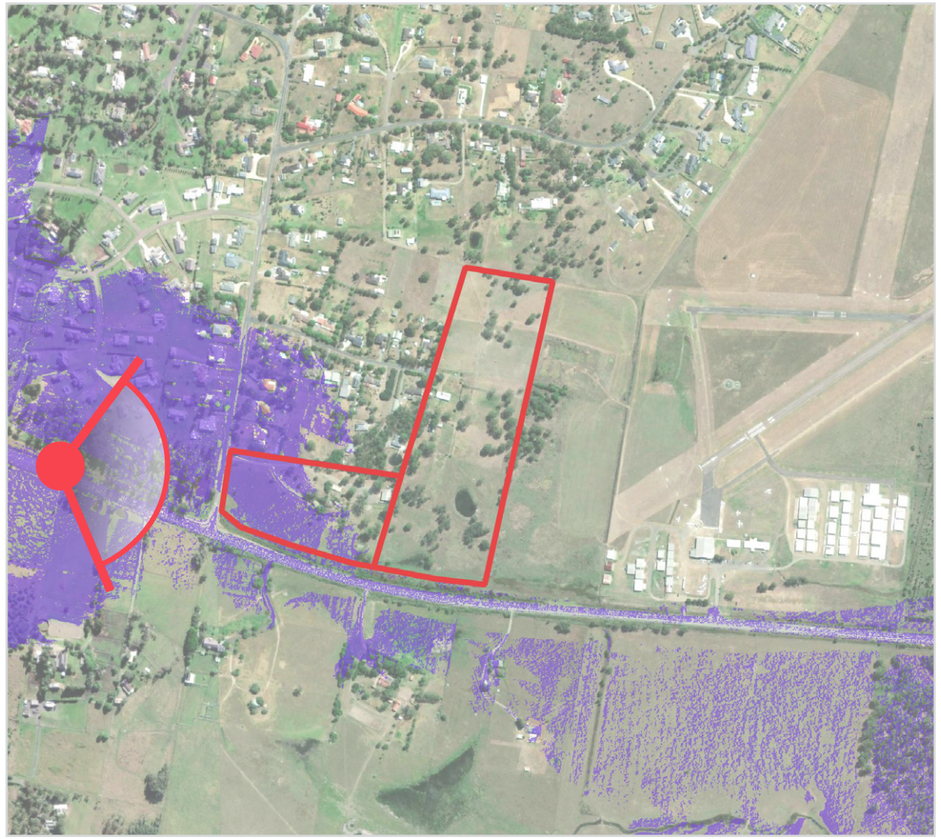
## VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | 709 New England Highway |
| **View category and distance** | Immediate vicinity, approximately 150m |
| **View direction** | East |
| **Coordinates** | 32°42'14.9"S 151°28'41.4"E |

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | **Value** | **Comment** |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Low | Receivers at this viewpoint will be driving along New England Highway at 80km/hr and it is assumed they will have limited interest in their surroundings. The visual characteristics of this viewpoint will be similar to Maitland Airport in the neighbouring lot. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | High | The project will be partially screened by existing vegetation, the parts of the buildings that will be visible would represent a high change to the landscape, however the buildings colours and low height will help the project blend in with its surroundings. |
| **Visual Impact** | Moderate | Given the low viewpoint sensitivity and partial screening from existing vegetation. |

# VIEWPOINT 5 - NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY



360 Degree View Shed Analysis

## VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | New England Highway |
| **View category and distance** | Immediate vicinity, approximately 300m |
| **View direction** | East |
| **Coordinates** | 32°42'14.9"S 151°28'41.4"E |

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | **Value** | **Comment** |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Low | Receivers at this viewpoint will be driving along New England Highway at 80km/hr and it is assumed they will have limited interest in their surroundings. The visual characteristics of this viewpoint will be similar to Maitland Airport in the neighbouring lot. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | Low | The project will be largely screened by existing vegetation, the parts of the buildings that will be visible would represent a low change to the landscape as the buildings colours and low height will help the project blend in with its surroundings. |
| **Visual Impact** | Low | Given the low viewpoint sensitivity and screening from existing vegetation. |

# VIEWPOINT 6 - 23 RIVER ROAD

**360 Degree View Shed Analysis**

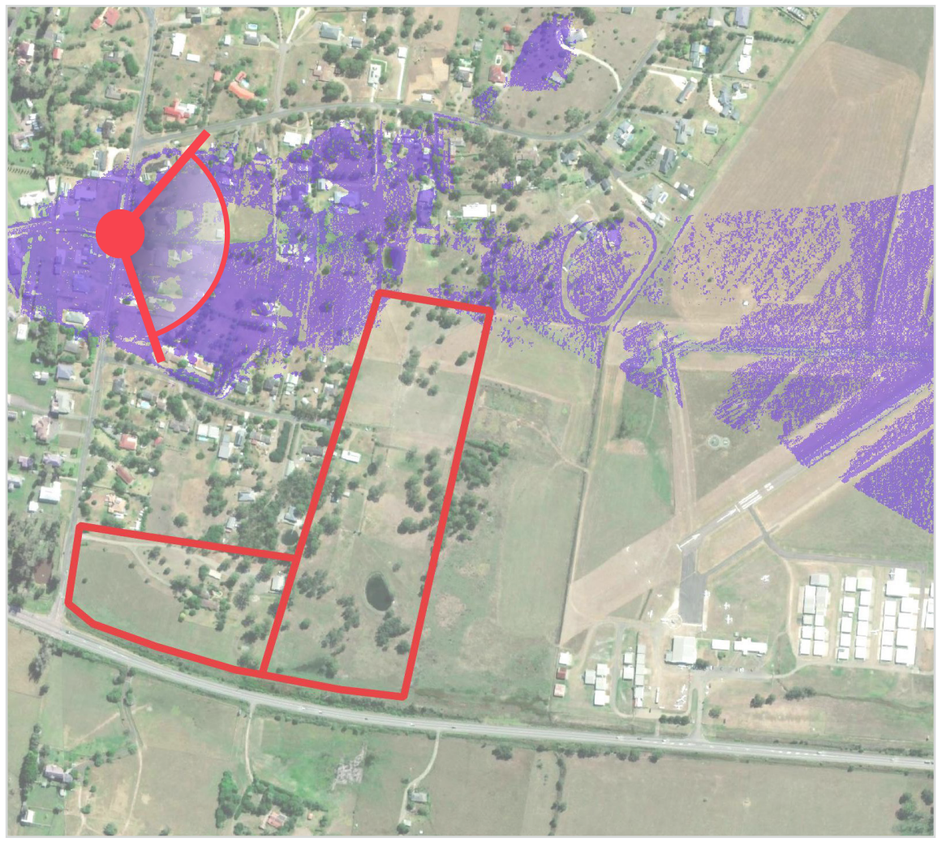
## VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | 23 River Road |
| **View category and distance** | Immediate vicinity, approximately 150m |
| **View direction** | South |
| **Coordinates** | 32°42'06.8"S 151°28'48.0"E |

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | **Value** | **Comment** |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Moderate - Low | The number of receivers will be low driving along River Road at 50km/hr, however the receivers will be neighbours and local residents with a high interest in their surroundings. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | Low | The project will be partially mitigated by existing vegetation and fences, the remainder of the structures would represent a low change to the landscape due to the colours and low building height which will help the project blend in with its surroundings. |
| **Visual Impact** | Moderate - Low | Given the moderate viewpoint sensitivity and partial screening from existing vegetation |

# VIEWPOINT 7 - CORNER OF RIVER ROAD AND PENNPARC DRIVE



**360 Degree View Shed Analysis**

## VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | Corner of River Road and Pennparc Drive |
| **View category and distance** | Immediate vicinity, approximately 400m |
| **View direction** | South |
| **Coordinates** | 32°41'58.2"S 151°28'49.6"E |

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | **Value** | **Comment** |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Low | The number of receivers will be low driving along River Road at 50km/hr, however the receivers will be local residents with a passing interest in their surroundings. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | Low | The project will be largely mitigated by existing vegetation and topography, the remainder of the structures would represent a low change to the landscape due to the colours and low building height which will help the project blend in with its surroundings. |
| **Visual Impact** | Low | Given the low viewpoint sensitivity and screening from existing vegetation and topography. |

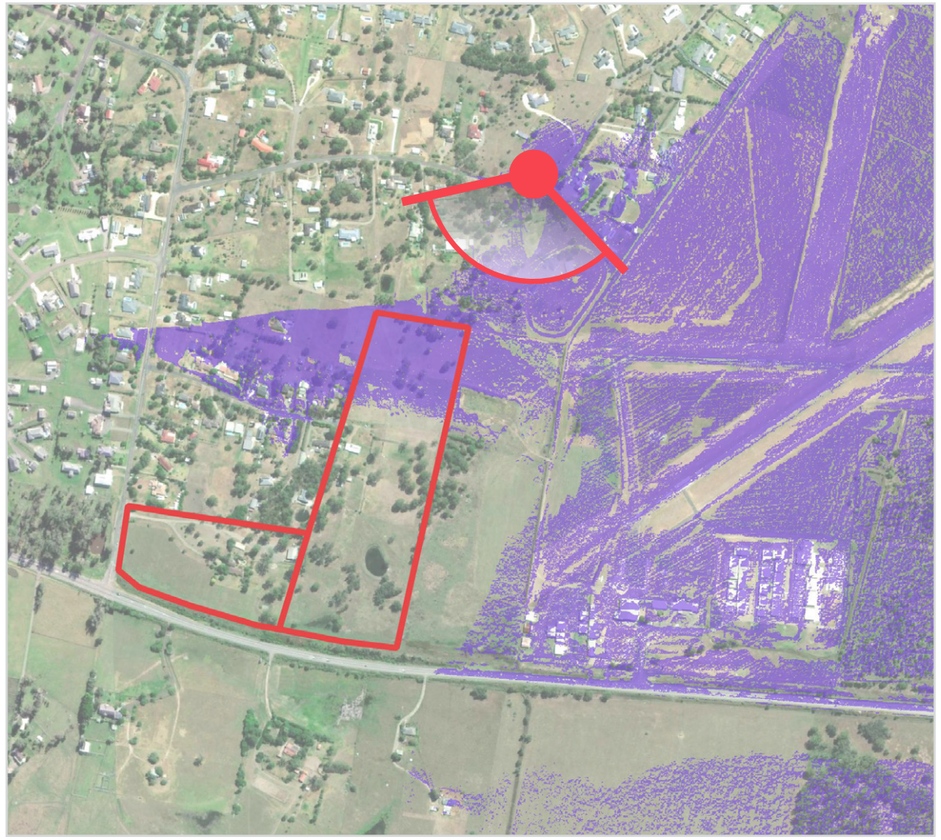
# VIEWPOINT 8 - 6 DENTON CLOSE

360 Degree View Shed Analysis

| VIEWPOINT INFORMATION | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | 6 Denton Close |
| **View category and distance** | Immediate vicinity, approximately 150m |
| **View direction** | East |
| **Coordinates** | 32°42'06.6"S 151°28'56.7"E |

| ASSESSMENT CRITERIA | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Value** | **Comment** |
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Low | The number of receivers will be low driving along River Road at 50km/hr, however the receivers will be neighbours and local residents with a high interest in their surroundings. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | Low | The project will be largely mitigated by existing vegetation with only a narrow viewing angle visible between the existing vegetation. |
| **Visual Impact** | Low | Given the low viewpoint sensitivity, screening from existing vegetation and narrow viewing angle. |

# VIEWPOINT 9 - 22 BEACON HILL ROAD

360 Degree View Shed Analysis

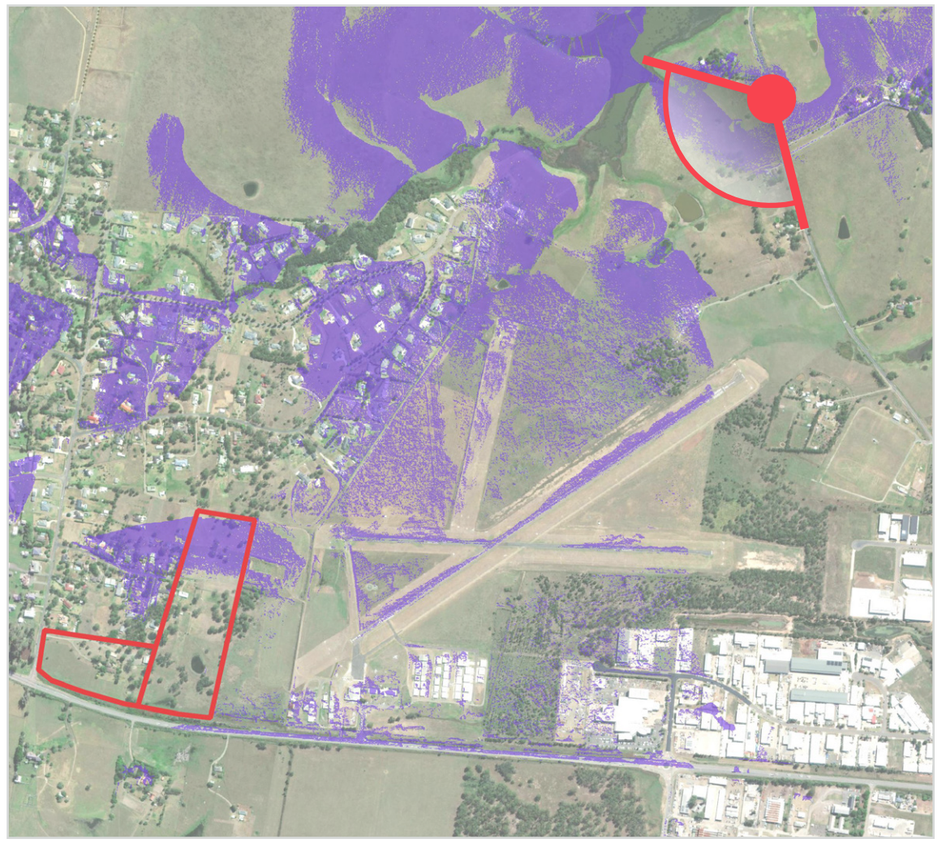
## VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | 22 Beacon Hill Road |
| **View category and distance** | Immediate vicinity, approximately 500m |
| **View direction** | Southeast |
| **Coordinates** | 32°41'54.0"S 151°29'14.8"E |

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | **Value** | **Comment** |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Low | The number of receivers will be low driving along Beacon Hill Road at 50km/hr, however the receivers will be local residents with a passing interest in their surroundings. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | Low | The project will be partially mitigated by existing vegetation and buildings, the remainder of the structures would represent a low change to the landscape due to the colours and low building height which will help the project blend in with its surroundings. |
| **Visual Impact** | Low | Given the low viewpoint sensitivity and partial screening from existing vegetation and buildings. |

# VIEWPOINT 10 - 223 ANAMBAH ROAD



360 Degree View Shed Analysis

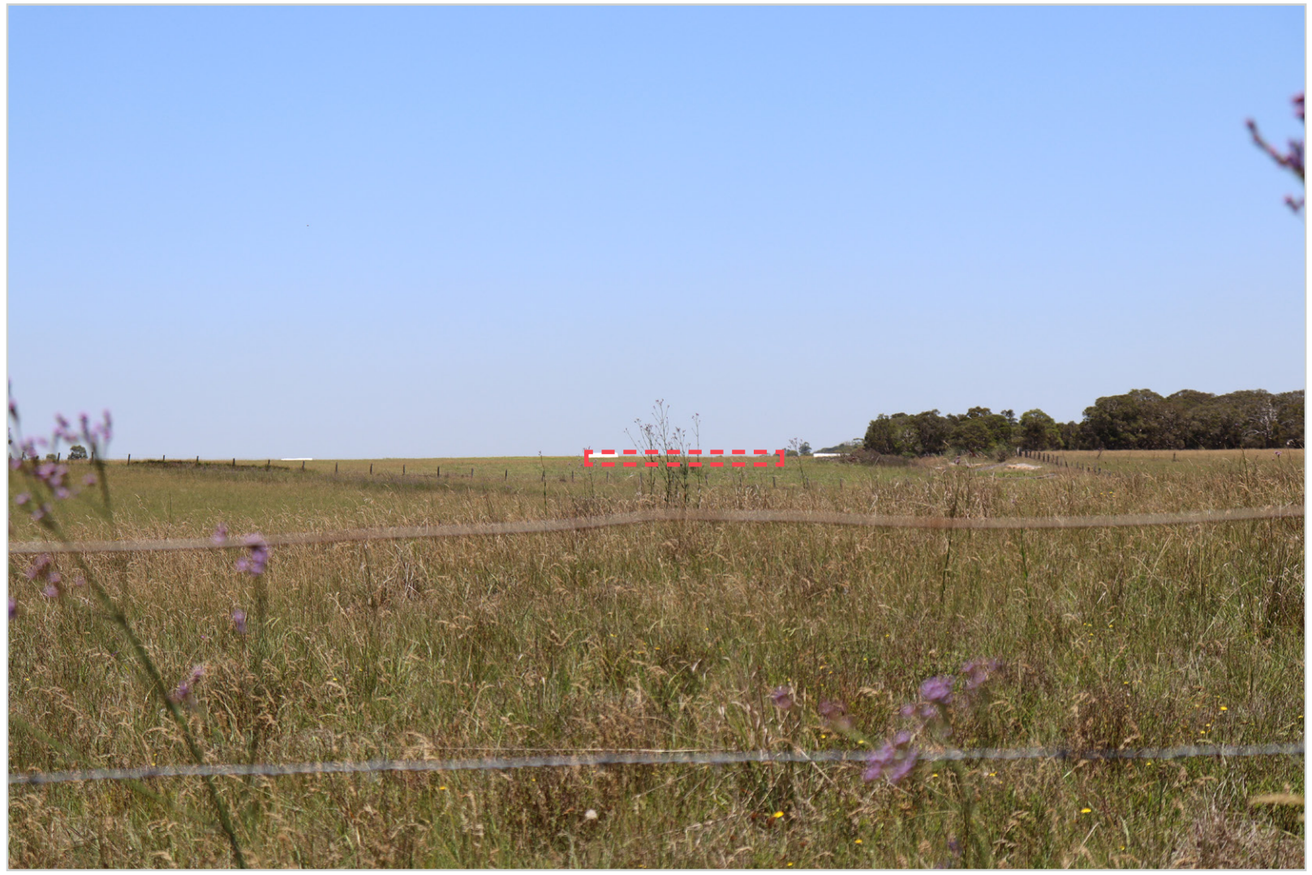
## VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

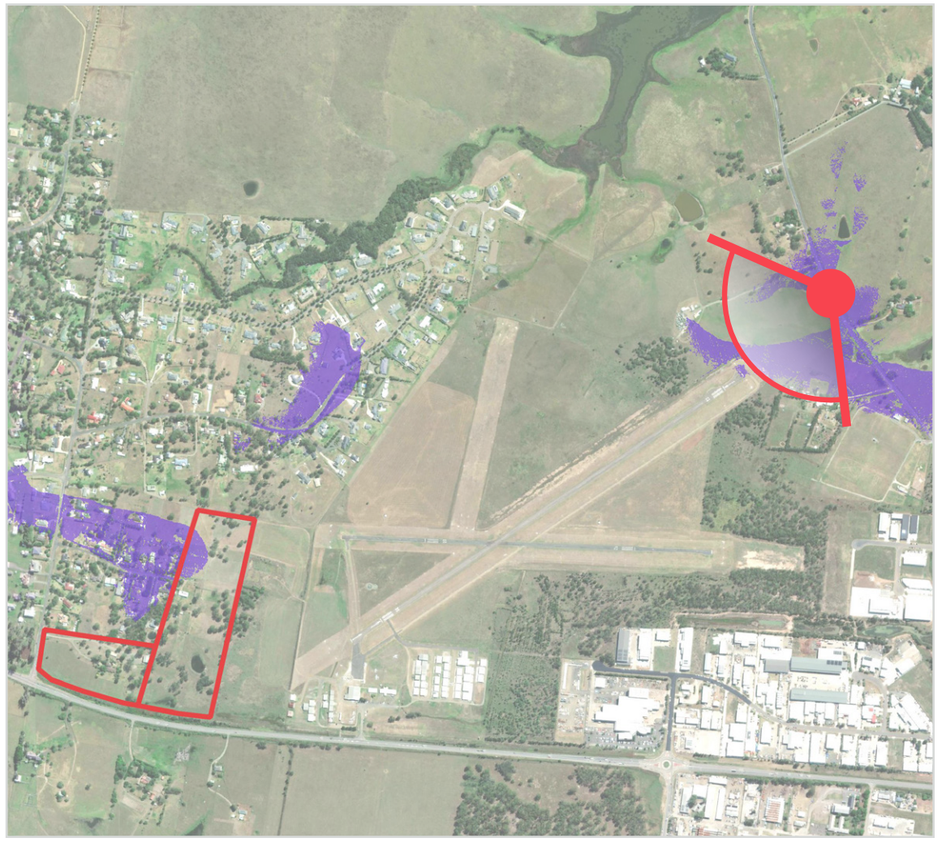
| | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | 223 Anambah Road |
| **View category and distance** | Local area vicinity, approximately 1.8km |
| **View direction** | Southwest |
| **Coordinates** | 32°41'25.2"S 151°30'04.1"E |

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | **Value** | **Comment** |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Low | Receivers at this viewpoint will be driving along Anambah Road at 100km/hr. and it is assumed they will have limited interest in their surroundings. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | Negligible | The project will be barely visible due to the distance, speed the receivers will be travelling and short duration time. |
| **Visual Impact** | Negligible | Given the low viewpoint sensitivity, distance, speed the receivers will be travelling and short duration time. |

# VIEWPOINT 11 - 181 ANAMBAH ROAD





360 Degree View Shed Analysis

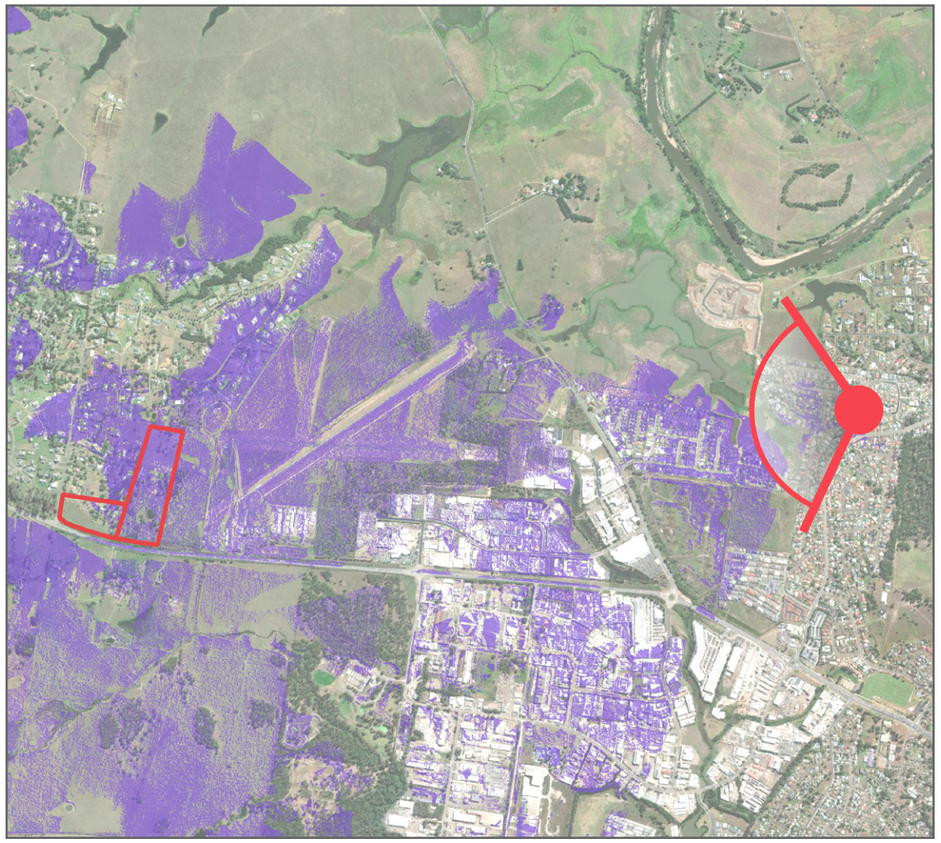
## VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | 181 Anambah Road |
| **View category and distance** | Local area vicinity, approximately 1.7km |
| **View direction** | Southwest |
| **Coordinates** | 32°41'44.2"S 151°30'10.4"E |

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | **Value** | **Comment** |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Low | Receivers at this viewpoint will be driving along Anambah Road at 100km/hr. and it is assumed they will have limited interest in their surroundings. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | Negligible | The project will be barely visible due to the distance, speed the receivers will be travelling and short duration time. |
| **Visual Impact** | Negligible | Given the low viewpoint sensitivity, distance, speed the receivers will be travelling and short duration time. |

# VIEWPOINT 12 - CORNER OF KELLY CIRCLE AND RICHARD ROAD



360 Degree View Shed Analysis

## VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **View location** | Corner of Kelly Crescent and Richard Road |
| **View category and distance** | Regional Area vicinity, approximately 3.2km |
| **View direction** | West |
| **Coordinates** | 32°42'02.4"S 151°31'12.9"E |

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

| | **Value** | **Comment** |
|---|---|---|
| **Viewpoint Sensitivity** | Low | Receivers at this viewpoint will have interest in their immediate vicinity but it is assumed they will have limited interest in the surroundings of the project. |
| **Magnitude Of Change** | Negligible | The project will be barely visible due to the distance and screening from existing vegetation and buildings. |
| **Visual Impact** | Negligible | Given the low viewpoint sensitivity, distance and screening from existing vegetation and buildings. |

# OVERVIEW OF THE VIEW ANALYSIS

As discussed in the rationale for the viewpoint selection process, these viewpoints are representative of the site lines scenario. The visual sensitivity and magnitude of each viewpoint have been assessed which, when combined, result in an overall visual impact for the visual impact assessment. Table 3 provides a summary of the Visual Impact Assessments.

| VIEWPOINT | OVERALL VISUAL IMPACT |
|---|---|
| **Viewpoint 1** - New England Highway and Kyle Street Roundabout | Negligible |
| **Viewpoint 2** - New England Highway at Maitland Airport Entrance | Low |
| **Viewpoint 3** - 717 New England Highway | Moderate |
| **Viewpoint 4**- 709 New England Highway | Moderate - Low |
| **Viewpoint 5** - New England Highway | Low |
| **Viewpoint 6** - 23 River Road | Moderate - Low |
| **Viewpoint 7** - Corner of River Road and Pennparc Drive | Low |
| **Viewpoint 8** - 6 Denton Close | Low |
| **Viewpoint 9** - 22 Beacon Hill Road | Low |
| **Viewpoint 10** - 223 Anambah Road | Negligible |
| **Viewpoint 11** - 181 Anambah Road | Negligible |
| **Viewpoint 12** - Corner of Kelly Circle and Richard Road | Negligible |

# MITIGATION MEASURES

# MITIGATION METHODS

Whilst the visual impact of the Project from most viewpoint locations is moderate, low or negligible, the following recommendations for mitigation may apply to further reduce visual impact at localised areas of concern, or on a site-specific basis at project implementation stage.

These recommendations seek to achieve better visual integration of the proposal and the existing visual character at both, local and regional scales. The mitigation measures attempt to lessen the visual impact of the proposed development while enhancing the visual character of the surrounding environment.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MITIGATING MEASURES

Recommendations for mitigating this impact include the following:

- Appropriate setbacks and buffer zones for tree and shrub planting to all borders of the development.
- Management of planting within the site to minimise visual effects of internal roads and parking.
- The incorporation of vegetation endemic to the area and native species currently found on site. This will provide visual integration with surrounding bushland or pockets of native vegetation, in particular the planting with tree canopies widths to be consistent with the bush fire management plan for the Site. Whist creating an overall a positive impact in the broader view.
- Locally sourced native plant species, especially trees, should be utilised throughout the development. They help preserve the landscape character and scenic quality of the area as well as building habitat for local fauna. Native species are also well suited to local conditions (i.e. soil, climate, etc.) and will build on the existing vegetation assemblages in the area. Understorey planting will also contribute to the habitat values and screening potential of the proposed landscape works.
- Tree planting to reference requirements for height limits for Maitland Airport.
- Fencing to the boundary of New England Highway and Rivers Road to be consistent with the rural residential aesthetic that is currently existing.
- Lighting treatment should minimise light spill in areas such as pedestrian pathways, internal vehicle sealed road, accommodation, and function centre buildings within the Site.
- Built form architectural vernacular to be of significant architectural merit that compliments the Sites surrounding character and topography of the land. This relates to the proposed buildings being one storey high, roof form, building materials, finishes and colours materials to complement the surrounding landscape.
- The position of the proposed function centre to be single story. Material and colour palette is of most importance to minimise view impacts towards the site from New England Highway and River Road.
- This is by no means an exhaustive list however the adoption of these recommendations will assist considerably in ensuring that the proposal contributes positively to the visual quality and character of the visual catchment and the character of Maitland's LGA.

# CONCLUSION

The primary focus of the Visual Impact Assessment is not to ascertain the mere visibility of the project but to thoroughly examine and assess the extent of visual changes the project will introduce to the landscape. Additionally, the assessment considers the sensitivity of the receiving environment and its receptors to these visual alterations.

Visual compatibility of the site with the surrounding rural and rural residential environment is an assessment considered over its total visual catchment. Compatibility. While change is objective, the measure of visual compatibility is intended to evaluate the extent to which the change conforms with or acceptably fits into the future visual context of the site and its surroundings in reference to the surroundings.

During the assessment process, careful attention to the impact of the visual changes on the amenity of the existing landscape. Subsequently, potential mitigation measures were identified with the aim of limiting the visual impact to levels deemed more acceptable.

Of the 12 viewpoints that were assessed for visual impact:

- 2 were assessed as Moderate
- 1 was assessed as Moderate-Low
- 5 were assessed as Low
- 4 were assessed as Negligible

The locations where the project will have the greatest visual impact are generally those along the New England Highway, River Road, and the neighbouring lots. These viewpoints have a moderate to high visual impact, but after the mitigation methods have been implemented with appropriate setbacks and buffer zones for tree and shrub screening to all borders of the development, the project will be barely noticeable from the road and neighbouring lots.

The conclusions drawn from this analysis, coupled with the available data, have informed the following key findings. The intent is likely to guide decision-making and further actions related to the project, ensuring that visual changes are understood, and appropriate measures are taken to mitigate the impact on the landscape and the surrounds.

Another reason for this is that its visibility is largely confined to only a small number of private domain locations and to a small public domain catchment. Also, the proposal is consistent with the emerging and desired future character of the locality as it has been identified in Maitland City Council future urban release (Map 2 – Maitland Local Environment Plan 2011 - Urban Release Area Map) area and appropriate for the location of the subject site adjacent to an urban fringe.

Compatibility with the existing character of the site is a measure of how the proposed development responds to the natural and built features such as vegetation, topography, scenic features, and existing developments within the site as well as its potential impact on the visibility of those features from external viewing locations. It is also an assessment of how the proposed development takes into consideration the future retention, management, and conservation of such natural features. In assessing this, it is also taken into consideration whether the proposed development is a permissible use for the site.

# REFERENCES


https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2023/guideline-landscape-character-and-visual-impact.pdf

https://www.aila.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/_AILA/Submission%20Library/QLD/RLG_GNLVA_V3.pdf

https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-02/critical-ssi-standard-secretarys-environmental-assessment-requirements.pdf

**Maitland City Council Documents**

https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/epi-2011-0681

https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/services/planning-development/planning-strategies

https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/public-exhibition/part_c_final_1.pdf

https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/public-exhibition/part_f_urban_release_areas_updated_1.pdf

https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2023-07/FINAL_Rural_Land_Strategy_2041_%28Adopted%20by%20Council%20on%2027.06.2023%29_0.pdf

**Map Base for this report are base on the following:**

Google Earth, 2021 http://google.com/maps/

GIS maps - GIS master