Anambah Concept Development Application

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Prepared for Thirdi Anambah Pty Ltd

August 2024

Anambah Concept Development Application

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Thirdi Anambah Pty Ltd

E240310 LVIA

August 2024

Version	Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Comments
1.0	2 August 2024	Simon Lacey and Stephen Bertram	Tadd Andersen	For client review
2.0	28 August 2024	Stephen Bertram	Tadd Andersen	For submittal
3.0	29 August 2024	Stephen Bertram	Tadd Andersen	For submittal

Approved by

Tadd Andersen
Associate Environmental Planner & Landscape Architect
29 August 2024

Level 3 175 Scott Street
Newcastle NSW 2300
ABN: 28 141 736 558

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendices

Tables

Figures

Photographs

1 Introduction

EMM Consulting Pty Limited (EMM) was engaged by Thirdi Anambah Pty Ltd to prepare this landscape and visual impact assessment for a Concept Development Application (CDA) at 559 Anambah Road, Gosforth, NSW (the Site). The Site sits within the City of Maitland local government area (LGA) of New South Wales, and therefore this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared to meet the requirements of Maitland City Council.

The Project is for a Concept Development Application (CDA) seeking concept approval for the staged development of the concept master plan, and for which detailed proposals for the Site or for separate parts of the site are to be subject of subsequent Development Applications (DAs), apart from stage 1.

The masterplan creates a new urban subdivision within the Anambah Urban Release Area accommodating a mix of housing types with approximately 900 residential lots, and incorporates open space, roads, pedestrian networks, utilities and services, intersection upgrades and drainage infrastructure.

The application includes a development application for stage 1, which is made up of approximately 240 lots. This stage includes the subdivision of the land, construction of the lots including roads, services, bulk earth works and dedication of reserves. The application includes all works associated with access via Anambah Road which has an intersection with the New England Highway together with an emergency flood access to be constructed via the unformed River Road.

This LVIA is based on a draft concept masterplan prepared by Peter Andrews + Associates Pty Ltd in August 2024 on behalf of Thirdi Anambah Pty Ltd (Figure 1.2). It describes the existing landscape and visual character of the Site and surrounding study area to a distance of approximately 4 kilometres (km). It then applies a method to assess the visual sensitivity of the Site and to assess the visual impact of the changes resulting from the planned development.

This LVIA assesses landscape and visual impact based on the visual characteristics of the site and study area as they are at the time of the assessment. It is understood that the site and much of the study area has been rezoned and that substantial residential development, and therefore substantial change in visual character, is expected to occur in the future. While this LVIA might find that the Project may have potential for visual impacts, this is to be expected, and any assessment of its acceptability must be made while considering the anticipated visual character of the area.

1.1 Site location and context

The proposed development is located at 559 Anambah Road, Gosforth. The project location is shown in Figure 1.1. The Site lies at the northern end of a band of R1 – General residential zoned land that extends northward from an area R5 – Large lot residential land occupied by existing residential development at Windella. The Rutherford industrial area lies approximately 3.6 km south of the Site.

KEY

- Project boundary

Existing environment

- Major road
- Minor road
- Vehicular track
- Named waterbody

INSET KEY

- Major road
- NPWS reserve
- State forest

Source: EMM (2024); DCSSS (2024); ESRI (2024); GA (2009); ABS (2021)

0 0.5 1 km

GDA2020 MGA Zone 55

N

\\emm.local\xdrive\2024\AE240310 - Anambah Subdivision\GIS\02_Maps\VIA001_ProjectLocation\VIA001_ProjectLocation_20240828_02.aprx 28/08/2024

Project location

Anambah Subdivision
Visual Impact Assessment
Figure 1.1

EMM
creating opportunities

1.2 Existing landscape character

The landscape character within and surrounding the Site is generally rural/agricultural, with patches of native vegetation on higher ground. The gently undulating terrain is formed by a number of small creeks and drainage lines that flow to the Hunter River, which meanders in a broad arc to the west, north and east of the Site. This landscape character is illustrated in Photograph 1.1.

Roads in the study area are generally narrow, sealed and with no kerb and gutter, supporting the rural character. The New England Highway runs east – west approximately 3.6 km south of the Site.

Buildings in the bulk of the study area are scattered private residences and agricultural buildings. In the southern part of the study area there is suburban development including parts of Windella, Lochinvar, Rutherford and Aberglasslyn. Suburban development typical of this part of the study area is shown in Photograph 1.2. The Rutherford industrial area lies approximately 3.6 km southeast of the Site on Anambah Road, forming a significant feature on the main access road to the Site. Maitland Airport lies just north of the Rutherford industrial area.

Photograph 1.1 Typical rural landscape character in the study area

Photograph 1.2 Suburban development in the southern part of the study area

1.3 Project description

The Concept Development Application proposes approximately 900 house lots, and associated roads, drainage infrastructure etc. The site is approximately 66 hectares (ha) in size and is identified as being within the Anambah Urban Release Area which intends to deliver 3,000 residential allotments and a small neighbourhood centre. The site is bound to the north and west by rural land, east by Anambah Road and south by Windella rural residential estate and rural lands. The proposed development relates to the portion of the landholding currently zoned R1 – General residential.

The master plan will be developed in conjunction with the construction of access roads to service the proposed residential precinct through adjoining lands. The proposed access roads will connect to Anambah Road and a new intersection from the development onto Anambah Road is part of the proposal.

1.4 Scope and limitations

1.4.1 Scope

The scope of this LVIA is to provide an independent assessment of the draft concept master plan prepared by Peter Andrews + Associates Pty Ltd in August 2024 (Figure 1.2) to identify any potential visual amenity issues related to the proposed development to support the approval process.

1.4.2 Limitations

Limitations of this LVIA include:

- No detailed review has been undertaken of background reports that have informed the development of the concept masterplan.
- No assessment has been made on potential amenity impacts due to night lighting and lighting associated with future site infrastructure and buildings on local receptors and is understood that this is being considered by other consultants.

- No 3D modelling has been undertaken of proposed structures. This assessment is based on modelling of existing terrain and an assumed maximum development height of 8.5 metres (m) above existing ground level.

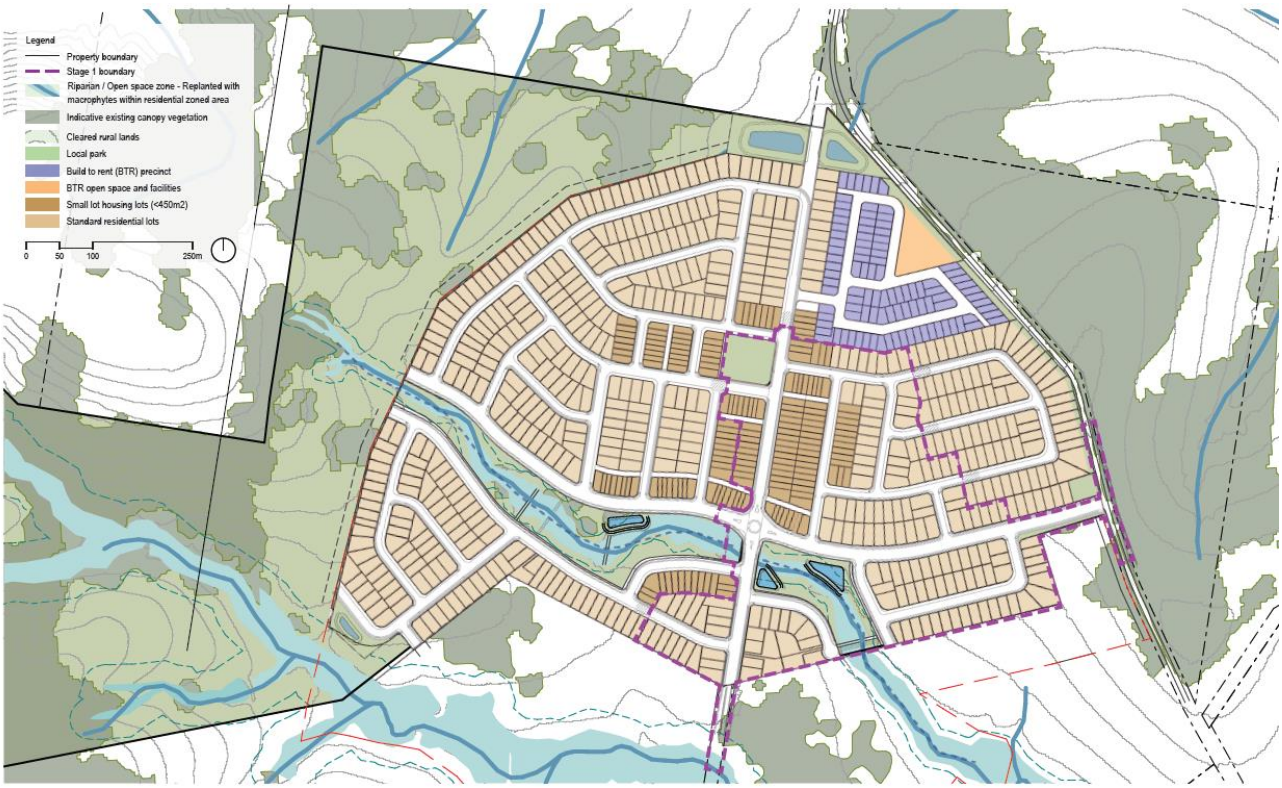


Figure 1.2 Master plan

2 Assessment methodology

The approach to this assessment has been developed with reference to accepted guidelines from both Australia and international sources. This approach is used due to the absence of a universally agreed method for conducting visual impact assessments for residential developments in New South Wales and the lack of specific references in the Maitland Development Control Plans (DCP). Consequently, the method employed in this visual impact assessment is based on established practices and policies. The documents used for broad guidance include:

- *Guideline for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment*, EIA-N04, Version 2.2 (2020), Transport for NSW Centre for Urban Design
- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (*2013) (GLVIA3), The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, UK, Routledge
- *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19: Visual Representation of development Proposals* (2019), The Landscape Institute
- *Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity* (2006), Scottish Natural Heritage and The Countryside Agency, UK.

2.1 Desktop assessment

A desktop assessment was undertaken to identify the existing landscape and visual values of the Site and its prior to development. This includes a review of the current legislative context and standards that are relevant to the Project and site as described in Section 3 of this LVIA.

EMM employs a system that enables the evaluation of the visual impact in rural and urban environments. The desktop study method for the LVIA follows key steps outlined below:

- review of proposed concept master plan
- relevant planning scheme strategic framework, zoning and overlay maps
- visual catchment area defined through reviewing maps and satellite imagery to identify where the Site is visible from.

2.2 Field survey

A field visit is used to validate the findings of the desktop assessment and to make a preliminary evaluation of the landscape character and visual amenity, including the identification of sensitive viewpoints.

Photographs are taken during the Site visit to inform the assessment of potential visual impacts and confirm the desktop assessment's findings. The visit focuses on assessing receptors that are likely to be most sensitive to the Project and understanding the Project infrastructure that is most likely to affect landscape character and visual amenity values.

2.3 Visual impact assessment methodology

2.3.1 Assessment criteria

The potential visual impact of the planned development is measured through the combination of two factors:

- visual sensitivity of the development on the viewer
- visual effect of the development on the landscape.

To measure the visual sensitivity and the visual effect of the Site, specific locations known as 'viewpoints' are chosen as representative views (refer to Section 5.1). These are then assessed to determine the overall visual impact. Visual sensitivity and visual effect are defined below.

2.3.2 Visual sensitivity

Visual sensitivity is a measure of the extent to which activities or components of a proposal may change the landscape and be visible from surrounding areas. This considers the relative number of viewers, the period of view, viewing distance and context of view.

The rationale for the assessment is that if a proposal is not visible the impact is nil and if the number of people who would potentially see the proposal is low, then the visual impact would be lower than if a potential large number of people had the same view.

For this study, the general category of visual sensitivity has been divided into two elements. The first, viewing location, is a rating based on distance from the Site and the type of landscape as shown in Table 2.1. The second, viewer experience is based on the number of people affected and the duration of the impact as indicated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.1 Visual sensitivity rating – location

Viewing location	Distance from site (km)				
Land-use	**0–0.5**	**0.5–1.0**	**1.0–2.5**	**2.5–4.0**	**>4.0**
Townships	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Recreation reserve	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Residence	High	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low
Rural township	High	Moderate	Low	Low	Nil
Main highway	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	Nil
Local roads	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	Nil
Farm roads	Low	Low	Low	Nil	Nil
Agricultural land	Low	Low	Low	Nil	Nil

Table 2.2 Visual sensitivity rating – experience

Viewer experience	Number of viewers		
Duration of view	**Large**	**Moderate**	**Small**
Long (>10 minutes)	High	High	Moderate
Moderate (1–10 minutes)	High	Moderate	Low
Short (<1 minute)	Moderate	Low	Low

The two sensitivity ratings above are then combined to form the visual sensitivity rating as indicated in Table 2.3. This combined rating is applied to the visual impact rating shown in Table 2.5.

Table 2.3 Visual sensitivity rating

Visual sensitivity rating	Viewing location			
Viewer experience		High	Moderate	Low
	High	High	High	Moderate
	Moderate	High	Moderate	Low
	Low	Moderate	Low	Low

2.3.3 Visual effect

Visual effect is an estimation of the capacity of the landscape to absorb development without creating significant visual change. The capacity to absorb development is primarily dependent on landform, vegetation cover and the presence of other development.

The extent to which portions of the Site can potentially absorb development without reducing the scenic quality of the area is assessed under these criteria. Generally, an urban context can absorb buildings and structures with low impact to the scenic value, while erecting structures in a natural or agricultural setting may impact the scenic quality significantly.

The level of contrast is also strongly influenced by the nature of the backdrop against which development is viewed. Structures that are viewed above the skyline will potentially create a higher degree of contrast than the same elements viewed against a backdrop of similar structures or a landscape of similar colour/textures as the building or structure.

The degree of contrast between proposed development and the existing landscape (buildings and vegetation) can be reduced by careful attention to the colour, scale, texture, and reflectivity of building materials and by avoiding development that breaks the height of the existing tree canopy. Where possible these considerations are to be incorporated into the design and locations of buildings, roads and other structures.

Table 2.4 Visual effect criteria

Criteria	Definition
High	A substantial or obvious change to the landscape due to a total loss or change to characteristic elements or features of the landscape. Existing landscape is unable to absorb the change/development and a high degree of visual contrast is apparent. There is little, or no screening or integration with the vegetation, topography or existing urban context.
Moderate	Discernible changes to the landscape due to partial loss or change to elements or features that are characteristic of the landscape. The changes may be partly mitigated, but will leave an adverse, recognisable change to the landscape. Existing landscape is able to visually absorb some of the development, but there is some visual contrast and the development is visible.
Low	Minor loss or change to key landscape elements or features that may alter the landscape but still maintain the existing landscape character. Existing landscape or built environment is able to visually absorb the development. There is a low degree of visual contrast and effective use of screening.

2.3.4 Visual impact rating

Visual impact refers to the change in the appearance of the landscape because of development. This report addresses a number of factors that contribute to the visual impacts and has presented them in a measurable way.

Table 2.5 provides a matrix that combines the visual sensitivity rating with the visual effect rating to determine the visual impact rating. This rating is applied to each viewpoint to measure the impacts of a development from particular locations.

Table 2.5 Visual impact rating matrix

Visual impact rating		Visual effect		
Visual sensitivity		High	Moderate	Low
	High	High	High	Moderate
	Moderate	High	Moderate	Low
	Low	Moderate	Low	Low

3 Planning policy review

A review of applicable State and local planning policy provisions and guidelines was conducted in order to understand the regulatory context of the Site, identify key landscape and visual values acknowledged in planning and policy documents and to determine key risks to these values and if these provisions have been adequately addressed within the draft concept master plan.

No formal assessment against planning scheme codes has been made in this report, rather, the identification of applicable benchmarks for assessment has informed the assessment of potential issues that have been considered within the review of the draft concept master plan (Figure 1.2).

The following strategic plans and planning statements apply to the Site.

3.1 Regional planning and policy

- Hunter Regional Plan 2036.
- Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036.

As the proposal is not a planning proposal seeking to amend land use permissibility, formal assessment against these provisions for visual impact is not required.

3.2 Local planning and policy

3.2.1 Maitland Local Environmental Plan 2011 (MLEP2011)

The site is zoned R1 – General Residential under the Maitland LEP 2011. The R1 zone objectives are:

- to provide for the housing needs of the community
- to provide for a variety of housing types and densities
- to enable other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of residents.

The proposal will contribute to providing for the housing needs of the community and will provide a variety of lot sizes for housing density in the area to enable support of local services and facilities by attracting population to the locality.

The proposal is permissible with consent under Clause 2.6 Subdivision of the MLEP2011. The proposal will result in approximately 900 residential lots with a residentially zoned area greater than the specified minimum lot sizes in accordance with Clause 4.1 of the MLEP2011, and Clause 7.8 of the MLEP2011 which permits lots smaller than the minimum lot size. Minimum lot sizes under the MLEP2011 is 450 sqm.

The proposed subdivision is situated within large-scale rural lots. The surrounding residential lots have historically been used for rural residential living and open lifestyles. However, the proposed lots align with the character of the Site's current zoning and with existing surrounding housing developments beyond the immediate locality. The built form of any development will be considered under future applications, however this LVIA assumes future development will be designed and constructed to respond to the DCP requirements for residential development and existing and future characteristics of the locality, that were considered as part of the rezoning of the URA.

3.2.2 Maitland Development Control Plan 2011 (MDCP)

The Maitland Development Control Plan 2011 (MDCP) is the supporting document for the Maitland Local Environmental Plan 2011 (MLEP). It provides general controls within the LGA that should be considered in the preparation of a development application.

Part C of the MDCP has been used as a framework for the site-specific design controls used in the concept master plan. **Section C.8 (13)** and **Section C.8 (16)** nominate the following Design Objectives that relate to minimising visual impact and promoting visual privacy through design:

i Section C.8 (13) - Landscape Design

- Site disturbance shall be minimised and existing landscape elements such as above-ground rock formations, significant trees and watercourses shall be preserved where possible.
- In established areas, landscaping should relate to the scale of other elements of the streetscape and of buildings/trees within the development itself and on adjoining land.
- The development shall be designed to provide the maximum opportunity for tree planting.
- Appropriate vegetation shall be used to provide shade to the northerly and westerly elevations of buildings in summer, while allowing penetration of sunlight in winter.
- Landscaping should be geared towards user requirements, taking into account maintenance, shade provision and aesthetic quality.

ii Section C.8 (16) - Views, and Visual and Acoustic Privacy

View Sharing

- All property owners should be able to develop their property within the established planning guidelines, however, existing views should not be substantially affected where it is possible to design for the sharing of views.
- Grand vistas and significant views that are recognised and valued by the community should not be obscured by new development.
- Heritage or familiar dominant landmarks should be retained and not obscured.

Privacy

- Proper consideration shall be given to privacy outcomes at the site planning stage. Development shall be designed such that the privacy of each individual dwelling and adjacent existing dwellings is protected, with particular regard to private open spaces and the windows of habitable rooms.

Visual Privacy

Overlooking of private open space and direct views between living area windows shall be screened or obscured using one or more of the following methods:

a) Separation distance between windows of habitable rooms or balconies.

b) Separation by design.

c) Offset living room windows of opposing dwellings/units.

d) Splay windows to redirect sight lines.

e) Build to a boundary and avoid window openings.

f) Screen planting between units.

g) Fencing design or privacy screens.

h) Use of fin walls.

i) Planter boxes.

j) Louvre screens (vertical or horizontal).

k) Pergola.

l) Change in level.

The masterplan and housing lot orientation are designed to capitalise on the significant and attractive views of the surrounding rural lands; The Project Urban Design has strategically aligned streets to capture these vistas, while situating lots outside local flood zones. The concept masterplan is supported by a landscape masterplan that has been drafted in accordance with the design requirements and objectives of Section C.8(13) of the MDCP. Although the masterplan does not retain existing vegetation within the Site, an arborist report prepared by EMM (EMM, 2024) indicates that the current vegetation is in poor condition and not recommended for retention. The landscape plan will provide compensatory planting along the proposed road network and within the large, landscaped open space allotments shown on the subdivision plan.

The masterplan also accounts for the riparian zone to the east and northeast adjacent to the Site. Masterplan sites identified within the DCP are not located within proximity to the Site, thus are not considered as part of this VIA. The DCP also states that “there are no specific requirements as residential densities are already controlled by lot size in the MLEP 2011”. Amenity impacts thus relate to the surrounding residential and rural zoned land in all directions. The rural zoned land surrounding the Site and existing uses are consistent with the residential housing that will make up this development. The locality has seen and will continue to see the construction of new dwellings near the proposed site."

4 Zone of visual influence

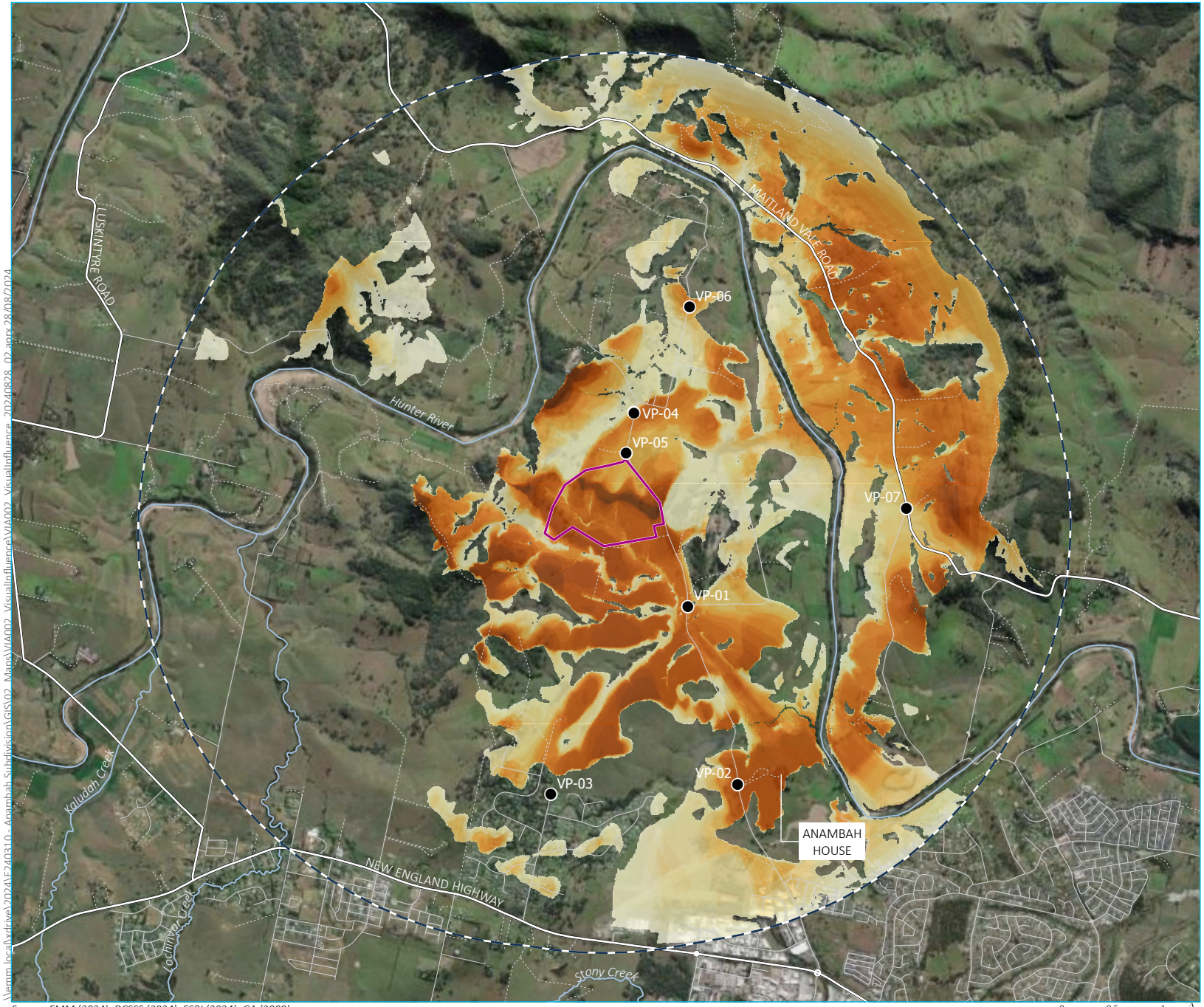
4.1 Zone of visual influence

A ZVI diagram has been prepared to illustrate the theoretical visibility of the proposed building massing. Using geographic information systems (GIS) technology, it combines the topography of the land with project elevation data to analyse potential visibility of the Project. The ZVI graphically represents the area over which a development may be seen. Refer Figure 4.1 for the ZVI for this project.

The ZVI diagram is generated using a digital elevation model (DEM) which covers the study area. The DEM was built using publicly available ELVIS spatial data from the Foundation Spatial Data Framework. The DEM is representative of the bare earth surface and only considers the topography of the landscape. This does not account for any vegetation (trees), or structures (e.g. rural dwellings, farm sheds and agricultural infrastructure) that may screen views into the development footprint. It represents a worst-case scenario in terms of project visibility.

Note the following regarding the ZVI diagram:

- The ZVI does not account for the diminishing size of project elements as the viewer moves further away. It only indicates where the Project may be visible.
- The ZVI uses colour to indicate high visibility and low visibility. Highly visible areas show locations on the ground from which large areas or the entire development is likely to be visible. Low levels of visibility are locations where small areas or parts of the development are likely to be visible. No colour within the study area indicates locations where no views will be possible.
- The ZVI is a tool to help identify the development's visibility from the surrounding landscape. The extent of the Project's visibility and the potential for impacts on visual amenity is verified by field work and photographic evidence.



Source: EMM (2024); DCSSS (2024); ESRI (2024); GA (2009)

\\emm.local\xdrive\2024\EF240310 - Anambah Subdivision\GIS\02_Maps\VIA002_VisualInfluence\VIA002_VisualInfluence_20240828_02.aprx 28/08/2024

Zone of visual influence

Anambah Subdivision
Visual Impact Assessment
Figure 4.1

EMM
creating opportunities

4.2 Summary of ZVI

The ZVI indicates:

- potential visibility of the Project to the west is limited to approximately 0.5–1.0 km, except for small patches of high ground beyond the Hunter River
- to the north, east and south widespread area of high ground may have views of the Project
- views from residential and industrial areas in the south of the study area are possible but likely to be limited to partial views of the Site
- the heritage listed Anambah House is located near the edge of an area with possible low-level views of the Project
- there will be no views of the Project from the New England Highway.

5 Visual assessment

5.1 Viewpoint selection

Site visibility helps to determine where the Site can be seen from. This is important in mapping out the visual catchment of the Site and determining viewing zones and viewpoint locations. The areas from which the Site can potentially be seen from are illustrated in the ZVI shown in Figure 4.1.

Viewing zones are areas outside the Site that have potential views into the Site. These are categorised by distance since visibility diminishes with distance. The categories are the Site context, immediate vicinity, local area, district area and regional area. These are illustrated in Figure 5.1.

After the viewing zones are determined, viewpoints are selected. Viewpoints are locations from which photographs are taken that will illustrate the views from that area. These are then tested through field investigations and photography to determine if the Site is visible and how much of the Site can be seen from the viewpoint.

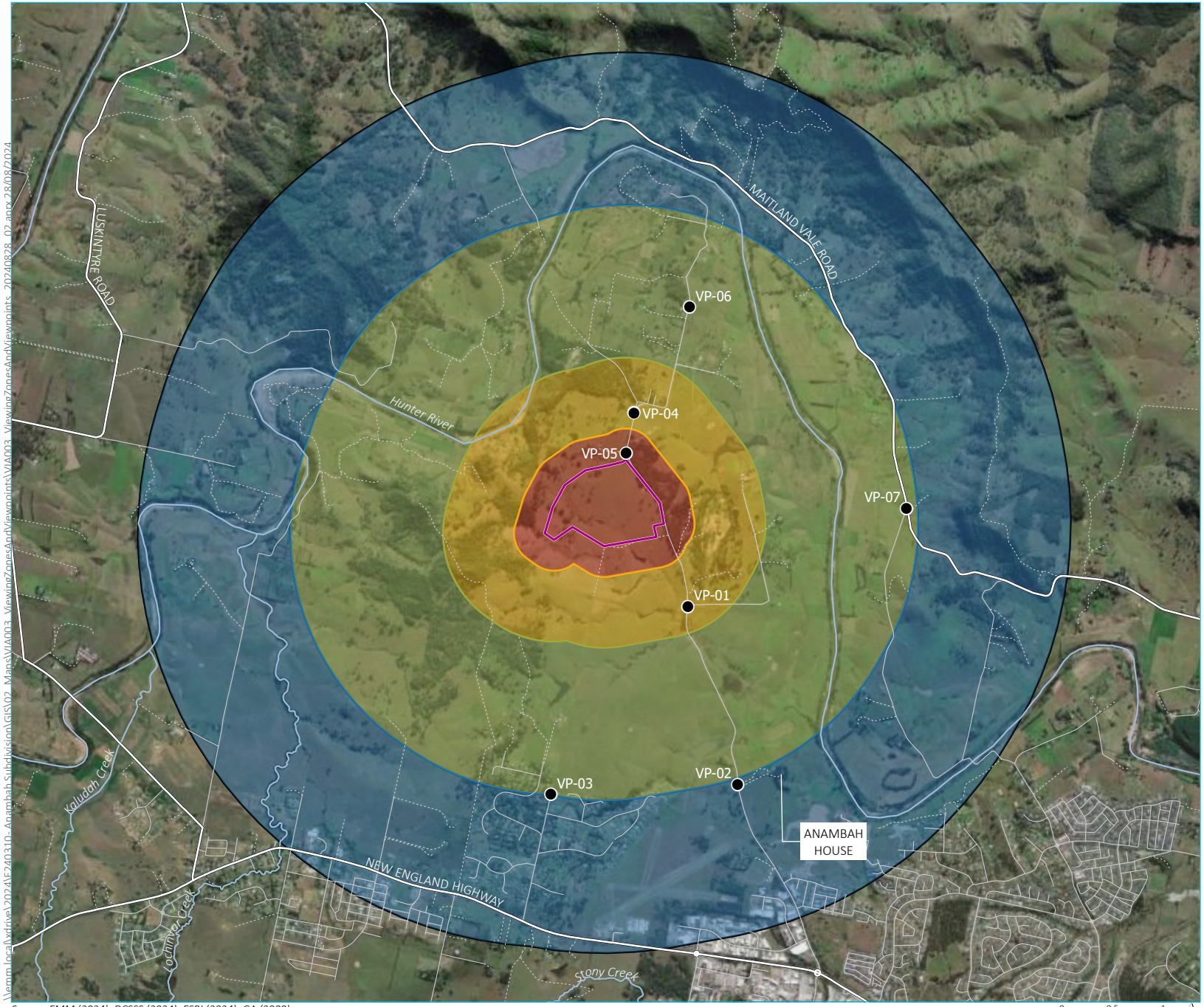
The viewpoints, as shown in Table 5.1 were selected based on where the development would appear to be most prominent either based on degree of exposure or the number of people likely to be affected.

To assess the potential visual impacts of the development, viewing zones based on the distance from the proposed development were defined as:

- site context (0–0.3 km)
- immediate vicinity (0.3–1.0 km)
- local area (1.0–2.5 km)
- district area (2.5–4.0 km)
- regional area (>4.0 km).

5.2 Field survey

A field visit was conducted on 17 July 2024. The survey was carried out by a Registered Landscape Architect with extensive experience in LVIAs. The weather was overcast with good visibility.



\\emm.local\vdrive\2024\E240310-Anambah Subdivision\GIS\02_Maps\VIA003_ViewingZonesAndViewpoints\VIA003_ViewingZonesAndViewpoints_20240828_02.aprx 28/08/2024

Source: EMM (2024); DCSSS (2024); ESRI (2024); GA (2009)

Viewing zones and viewpoint locations

Anambah Subdivision
Visual Impact Assessment
Figure 5.1

EMM
creating opportunities

Table 5.1 Selected viewpoints

Viewpoint	Viewing zone Figure 5.1	Location	ZVI indicates potential visibility Figure 4.1	Rationale for selection
1	Immediate vicinity (<1 km)	Anambah Road	Yes	Public road in the vicinity of the Project.
2	District area (<4 km)	Anambah Road	Yes	Indicative of potential views from developed areas in Windella and Aberglasslyn. Representative of views from Anambah House (see Section 5.3.2).
3	Local area (<2.5 km)	River Road	No	Indicative of potential views from Windella.
4	Immediate vicinity (<1 km)	Anambah Road	Yes	Public road in the vicinity of the Project.
5	Site context (<0.3 km)	Anambah Road	Yes	Public road adjacent to the Project.
6	Local area (<2.5 km)	Anambah Road	Yes	Public road in the vicinity of the Project. Indicative of potential views from nearby residences.
7	Local area (<2.5 km)	Maitland Vale Road	Yes	Indicative of views from public roads to the east of the Project.

5.3 Viewpoint assessment

Based on desktop and fieldwork investigations, the viewpoints shown in Table 5.1 and in Figure 5.1 have been selected for analysis. The methodology from Section 2.3 has been applied to each viewpoint in the analysis sheets in Appendix A, with a summary of visual impact findings included as Table 5.2 below.

Note – the photographs in Appendix A show the approximate location of the Project. The proposed building structures have not been modelled and their exact location may vary.

5.3.1 Impact on public viewpoints

Apart from local roads, no public viewpoints have been identified that will be impacted by the Project.

5.3.2 Impact on heritage items

One heritage item has been identified in the study area. Anambah House at 200 Anambah Road, Anambah lies approximately 2.6 km southeast of the Project and approximately 500 m east of viewpoint 2 (Appendix A.2). The ZVI (Figure 4.1) indicates parts of the Project have the potential to be visible from Anambah House.

The location of viewpoint 2 has been selected to represent views from near Anambah House, and has been assessed as having a low visual impact rating. The visual impact rating for the house may vary slightly from viewpoint 2 due to differing view duration. However, the existing mature trees and farm structures surrounding the house will have a screening effect and will obscure views toward the Project.

Visual impacts caused by the Project when viewed from viewpoint 2 and from Anambah House will be mitigated by the following:

- The significant distance of over 2.6 km from the Project.
- A buffer of rural land will be maintained around Anambah House as part of the urban release area master plan.
- The varied topography between Anambah House and the Project will reduce the visibility of the Project when viewed from Anambah House.
- Views of the distant skyline of forested ridges will remain unchanged behind the Project, reducing the visual effect of distant developments such as the Project.
- The visibility of the Project will be reduced by future planting in the proposed riparian corridor and other planting as part of the Project.

5.3.3 Impact on residences

Assessment of visual impacts has been undertaken from public viewpoints at various distances from the Project has been used to assess the possible visual impacts on individual residences. Visual impact ratings at individual residences may be different to those at nearby viewpoints.

There are approximately eight residences within 1 km of the Site, and these receivers are anticipated to have visual impacts ranging from nil to high depending on:

- topography that may prevent or permit views of the Project
- existing vegetation and structures that may screen views of the Project
- orientation of the receiving dwelling and location of windows, outdoor spaces, etc.

Table 5.2 Viewpoint assessment

Viewpoint	Land-use / Representative receivers	Distance from site (m)	Visual sensitivity rating – location	Number of viewers	Duration of view	Visual sensitivity rating – experience	Visual sensitivity rating	Visual effect criteria	Visual impact rating	Appendix
1	Local road / motorists	700	Low	Small	Short	Low	Low	High	Moderate	A.1
2	Local road / motorists; Anambah House and nearby residences	2,500	Low	Small	Short	Low	Low	Moderate	Low	A.2
3	Local road / motorists and nearby residences	2,400	Low	Small	Short	Low	Low	Nil	Low	A.3
4	Local road / motorists and nearby residences	300	Moderate	Small	Short	Low	Low	High	Moderate	A.4
5	Local road / motorists	Adjacent site	Moderate	Small	Short	Low	Low	High	Moderate	A.5
6	Local road / motorists and nearby residences	1,400	Low	Small	Short	Low	Low	Moderate	Low	A.6
7	Local road / motorists; nearby residence	2,400	Low	Small	Short	Low	Low	Moderate	Low	A.7

5.4 Viewpoint impact summary

This LVIA has assessed and rated visual impact at seven viewpoints (Table 5.2) and found:

- Low visual impacts at four viewpoints
- Moderate visual impact at three viewpoints
- High visual impact at no viewpoints.

It is important to note that this LVIA assesses landscape and visual impact based on the visual characteristics of the site and study area as they are at the time of the assessment. It is understood that the site and much of the study area has been rezoned and that substantial residential development, and therefore substantial change in visual character, is expected to occur in the future.

No viewpoints would have received a visual impact rating above low if visual effect (see Table 2.4 in Chapter 2) was assessed based on the anticipated future character of the site. For this reason, no additional mitigation of anticipated visual impacts is required.

The key findings of this LVIA are that:

- The visual impacts of the Project are in keeping with the Site's residential zoning.
- Visual impacts at selected viewpoints have been rated as low to moderate.
- Visual impacts at all viewpoints would be rated as low if assessments were based on the anticipated landscape character under the Site's current residential zoning.
- Visual impacts at private residences have not been individually assessed as part of this LVIA, and they may be higher or lower than nearby viewpoints on public roads.
- There is one heritage listed item in the study area (Anambah House). This LVIA has determined that the visual impacts in the vicinity of Anambah House are low.
- The Project will not be visible from the New England Highway within the study area.
- The Project may be partially visible from the northern edges of existing residential development in Windella and Aberglasslyn; however, this visibility will generally be limited to those dwellings on the northern periphery of these areas and the visual impacts are anticipated to be low.

Whilst this review acknowledges the potential for visual impacts on receptors situated near the Site, the delivery of concept draft master plan with associated landscape master plan, provides an opportunity to improve the existing site amenity. As there is a scarcity of native vegetation on site, the establishment of additional landscaping proposed under this development (e.g. street landscaping, embellishment of riparian corridors) will enhance the visual appearance of the area when viewed from surrounding urban and rural vantage points.

Whilst the transition of the Site from a rural/natural environment to a residential community will be noticeable, the change may not necessarily be a negative landscape and visual impact due to the existing condition of the Site and the protection and enhancement of surrounding bushland.

6 Mitigation measures

6.1 Recommendations

The visual impact assessment in Chapter 5 of this report assigns either a high, medium or low visual impact rating when viewed from the Site context, immediate vicinity, local area, district area and regional views. The visual impact rating for all viewpoints for this project ranged from low to moderate.

The following mitigation measures are general in nature and will reduce the visual impact of the Project from any viewpoint.

6.1.1 Mitigation measures

To maintain the visual character of the area around the Site, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Install perimeter screen planting of native trees and shrubs surrounding the development. This should be undertaken with consideration of bushfire requirements and other planned development.
- Maximise planting of street trees and vegetation on available public land within the development, including the proposed riparian corridor.
- Tree planting along Anambah Road will significantly mitigate visual impacts for motorists using this road. This will supplement the proposed landscape setback along Anambah Road.
- Promote lighting design that considers potential impacts on nearby sensitive land uses (e.g. residential properties) and consider opportunities to deliver best practice environmental lighting design (e.g. sensor lights in sensitive environmental areas) to mitigate impacts associated with obtrusive light on receptors.

6.1.2 Infrastructure, materials, and colours

To minimise the visual impact of new buildings on the landscape, the following are recommended for all future dwellings:

- Materials, textures and colour selection should relate to the palette of the surrounding environment to minimise visibility and potential for visual impact.
- Reflective surfaces and bright, contrasting colours should be avoided.

References

EMM (2024), Anambah Subdivision Arborist Report.

Maitland City Council (2011) *Maitland Local Environmental Plan 2011*.

Maitland City Council (2011) *The Maitland Development Control Plan 2011.*

Scottish Natural Heritage and The Countryside Agency (2006), *Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity*, UK.

Transport for NSW (2020), *Guideline for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment*, EIA-N04, Version 2.2, Centre for Urban Design.

The Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013), *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment*, Third Edition, Newport, Lincoln.

The Landscape Institute (2019), *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19: Visual Representation of development Proposals*.

Online tools

Short title	Address	Full title	Author / owner	Date accessed
Elvis	https://elevation.fsdf.org.au/	Elvis – Elevation and Depth – Foundation Spatial Data	Intergovernmental Committee on Surveying and Mapping (ICSM)	2024-07-29
EMM GIS Portal	https://gisportal.emmconsulting.com.au/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=808fb6e11a1c4dcd91f1da2180c008c6	EMM QLD Desktop Constraints Assessment	EMM	2024-07-29
Google Earth Pro	Via desktop application, v. 7.3.6.9796.	Google Earth Pro	Google LLC	2024-07-29

Appendix A
Viewpoint analysis sheets

EMM
creating opportunities

A.1 Viewpoint 1 - Anambah Road

Panoramic view of existing site

Visual assessment table	
Landscape type	Local road
Distance from site	700 m
Visual sensitivity rating - location (table 2.1)	Low
Number of viewers	Small
Duration of view	Short (< 2 minutes)
Visual sensitivity rating - experience (table 2.2)	Low
Visual sensitivity rating (table 2.3)	Low
Visual effect criteria (table 2.4)	High
Visual impact rating (table 2.5)	**Moderate**

Visual impact discussion

This view is from Anambah Road approaching the Site from the south. There are no existing residences within 500 m of this location.

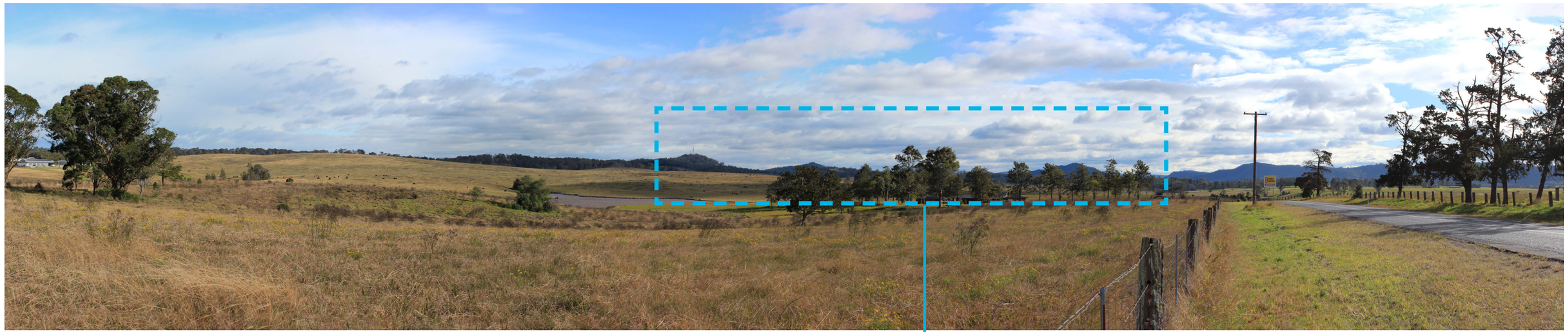
This viewpoint's low rating for viewing experience represents the small number of viewers and the brief typical duration of the view.

The landscape around this viewpoint is hilly with extensive cleared agricultural land.

The rating for visual effect criteria is high reflecting this viewpoint's proximity to the Project and the clear change in the landscape that will result from the Project.

A.2 Viewpoint 2 - Anambah Road

Panoramic view of existing site



Visual assessment table	
Landscape type	Local road
Distance from site	2,500 m
Visual sensitivity rating - location (table 2.1)	Low
Number of viewers	Small
Duration of view	Short (< 2 minutes)
Visual sensitivity rating - experience (table 2.2)	Low
Visual sensitivity rating (table 2.3)	Low
Visual effect criteria (table 2.4)	Moderate
Visual impact rating (table 2.5)	**Low**

Visual impact discussion

This view is from Anambah Road near where the site will become visible for travellers approaching from the New England Highway at Rutherford.

This viewpoint is approximately 350 m west of the heritage listed Anambah House, and is representative of views from this heritage item and approximately three other existing residences within 500 m of this location.

This viewpoint's visual impact rating is based on the viewpoint's location on a local road and will be different to ratings for nearby residences. The low rating for viewing experience represents the small number of viewers and the brief typical duration of the view for motorists.

The landscape around this viewpoint is hilly with extensive cleared agricultural land.

The rating for visual effect criteria is high reflecting this viewpoint's proximity to the Project and the clear change in the landscape that will result from the Project.

A.3 Viewpoint 3 - Anambah Road

Panoramic view of existing site

Visual assessment table	
Landscape type	Local road
Distance from site	2,400 m
Visual sensitivity rating - location (table 2.1)	Low
Number of viewers	Small
Duration of view	Short (< 2 minutes)
Visual sensitivity rating - experience (table 2.2)	Low
Visual sensitivity rating (table 2.3)	Low
Visual effect criteria (table 2.4)	Nil
Visual impact rating (table 2.5)	**Low**

Visual impact discussion

The Project will not be visible from this location due to the higher ground in the foreground of this image. There are nearby residences, for example at the northern end of Lerra Road, that may have views of the Project. The visual impact at these residences has not been assessed as part of this LVIA.

The hilly terrain and existing vegetation indicate that any views from near this viewpoint will most likely be partial.

This viewpoint's visual impact rating is based on the viewpoint's location on a local road and will be different to ratings for nearby residences.

At this distance of over 2 km any visual impact will be significantly mitigated by the varied terrain.

A.4 Viewpoint 4 - Anambah Road

Panoramic view of existing site

Visual assessment table	
Landscape type	Local road
Distance from site	300 m
Visual sensitivity rating - location (table 2.1)	Moderate
Number of viewers	Small
Duration of view	Short (< 2 minutes)
Visual sensitivity rating - experience (table 2.2)	Low
Visual sensitivity rating (table 2.3)	Low
Visual effect criteria (table 2.4)	High
Visual impact rating (table 2.5)	**Moderate**

Visual impact discussion

This view looks south along Anambah Road. The project would be behind the closest trees and the house shown in this image, and would be partially visible through gaps in tree cover.

This viewpoint's visual impact rating is based on the viewpoint's location on a local road and will be different to ratings for nearby residences. The low rating for viewing experience represents the small number of viewers and the brief typical duration of the view.

The landscape around this viewpoint is hilly with patches of cleared agricultural land and extensive stands of remnant native trees.

A.5 Viewpoint 5 - Anambah Road

Panoramic view of existing site

Visual assessment table	
Landscape type	Local road
Distance from site	Adjacent site
Visual sensitivity rating - location (table 2.1)	Moderate
Number of viewers	Small
Duration of view	Short (< 2 minutes)
Visual sensitivity rating - experience (table 2.2)	Low
Visual sensitivity rating (table 2.3)	Low
Visual effect criteria (table 2.4)	High
Visual impact rating (table 2.5)	**Moderate**

Visual impact discussion

This viewpoint is on Anambah Road adjacent to the north-eastern corner of Project.

This viewpoints low rating for viewing experience represents the small number of viewers and the brief typical duration of the view.

The rating of high for visual effect criteria reflects the location's proximity to the Project and obvious change to landscape character from this location.

A.6 Viewpoint 6 - Anambah Road

Panoramic view of existing site

Visual assessment table	
Landscape type	Local road
Distance from site	1,400 m
Visual sensitivity rating - location (table 2.1)	Low
Number of viewers	Small
Duration of view	Short (< 2 minutes)
Visual sensitivity rating - experience (table 2.2)	Low
Visual sensitivity rating (table 2.3)	Low
Visual effect criteria (table 2.4)	Moderate
Visual impact rating (table 2.5)	**Low**

Visual impact discussion

Located on Anambah Road 1.4 km north of the Site, this viewpoint may have partial views of the higher parts of the Project. Any views will be filtered by terrain and by existing tree cover.

This viewpoint's visual impact rating is based on the viewpoint's location on a local road and will be different to ratings for nearby residences. Views from this locations will be limited by existing tree cover on intervening ridges, and trees near existing residences will further restrict / eliminate views of the Project from residences.

The low rating for viewing experience represents the small number of viewers and the brief typical duration of the view.

A.7 Viewpoint 7 - Maitland Vale Road

Panoramic view of existing site

Visual assessment table	
Landscape type	Local road
Distance from site	2,400 m
Visual sensitivity rating - location (table 2.1)	Low
Number of viewers	Small
Duration of view	Short (< 2 minutes)
Visual sensitivity rating - experience (table 2.2)	Low
Visual sensitivity rating (table 2.3)	Low
Visual effect criteria (table 2.4)	Moderate
Visual impact rating (table 2.5)	**Low**

Visual impact discussion

This view is from 2.4 km east of the Site on Maitland Vale Road near the corner of Melville Ford Road.

Partial views of the Project are possible from this location, with terrain and existing tree cover providing some screening.

This viewpoint's visual impact rating is based on the viewpoint's location on a local road and will be different to ratings for nearby residences.

The visual impact rating for this location is low due to distance and small number of viewers.

Australia

SYDNEY
Ground floor 20 Chandos Street
St Leonards NSW 2065
T 02 9493 9500

NEWCASTLE
Level 3 175 Scott Street
Newcastle NSW 2300
T 02 4907 4800

BRISBANE
Level 1 87 Wickham Terrace
Spring Hill QLD 4000
T 07 3648 1200

CANBERRA
Suite 2.04 Level 2
15 London Circuit
Canberra City ACT 2601

ADELAIDE
Level 4 74 Pirie Street
Adelaide SA 5000
T 08 8232 2253

MELBOURNE
Suite 9.01 Level 9
454 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
T 03 9993 1900

PERTH
Suite 3.03
111 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000
T 08 6430 4800

Canada

TORONTO
2345 Yonge Street Suite 300
Toronto ON M4P 2E5
T 647 467 1605

VANCOUVER
422 Richards Street Unit 170
Vancouver BC V6B 2Z4
T 604 999 8297

CALGARY
606 4th Street SW 11 Floor
Calgary Alberta T2P 1T1

linkedin.com/company/emm-consulting-pty-limited

emmconsulting.com.au