



CROWN LANDS DIVISION PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

UPPER CLARENCE RIVERSIDE CAMPING RESERVES

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Executive Summary

The NSW Government is committed to delivering the best possible services to the people of NSW, and Crown Reserves are a key element in the provision of a diverse range of recreational opportunities. This Plan of Management aims to maintain a balanced range of recreational opportunities for the whole community while preserving the special values, character and charm of the reserves for the enjoyment of future generations.

The Plan covers four riverside Crown Reserves in the upper Clarence River catchment and the proposal to develop these areas for primitive camping and a range of river focussed recreation opportunities. All of the reserves are currently used by the general community for camping on an informal basis, but no facilities are in place to support this use. A fifth site at Cangai Bridge was considered in the draft plan, but has been deferred from the final plan pending further investigation into its suitability for camping.

The Reserves will form a network of riverside camping grounds, to be known as the Upper Clarence Riverside Camping Reserves, commencing at Copmanhurst and stretching up the Clarence River to Alice and the Mann and Nymboida Rivers to Buccarumbi. They will support the Clarence Canoe Trail currently being developed by Clarence Valley Council, and will provide for significant riverside recreation opportunities.

The Reserves are located at:

- Alice
- Buccarumbi
- Cangai Broadwater
- Lilydale.

The Camping Reserve proposal has been developed to integrate with other planning documents and initiatives relating to the future use and development of riverside reserves on the upper Clarence, and supports the involvement of the LPMA in the development of the Clarence Canoe Trail – a major initiative of the Clarence River Way Master plan.

The intrinsic natural values of these reserves are considerable, with their prime attractions being river access for water-based recreation, the scenic riverside location, the naturalness of the setting, the undeveloped nature of the reserves and varying degrees of remoteness. The issues associated with existing camping at the reserves include environmental degradation, anti-social behaviour, rubbish accumulation, and health concerns due to the absence of toilet facilities.

The Vision for the Upper Clarence Riverside Camping Reserves is “To provide a network of sustainable riverside reserves that support camping and day use recreation for the enjoyment of future generations”.

The proposal provides for the establishment of Camping Reserves with adequate facilities to support camping and day uses including toilet facilities, designated craft launching points and canoe trail information. Contract management will be appointed to manage day-to-day operations, reporting to a Reserve Trust, and all facilities will be maintained to a high standard. There will be a 50 metre buffer between the camping area and the river bank. Environmental management and interpretation of the heritage values of the sites will be improved. Promotion and marketing of the Camping Reserves and the canoe trail will also be undertaken in an integrated way.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of this plan

The purpose of this Plan of Management is to establish the framework and operational basis for five riverside Crown Reserves in the upper Clarence River catchment. Each of the reserves is currently used for camping by the public on an informal basis. The existing camping activity has no formal approval, or facilities in place to support this use.

Current use and demand for riverside camping opportunities will cause further degradation and negative environmental impact if camping is allowed to continue in an uncontrolled manner. This plan puts forward a Camping Ground Development Proposal for each site, providing for sustainable management of camping activities, effective management of environmental impacts and a mechanism for formal approval and management of the camping ground under the *Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005*.

1.2. General Description

There are five Crown Reserves which make up the Upper Clarence Riverside Camping Reserves, commencing at Copmanhurst and stretching up the Clarence River to Alice and the Mann and Nymboida Rivers to Buccarumbi.

A Plan of Management has recently been adopted for Copmanhurst Recreation and Riverside Reserves as the first site for the establishment of an approved camping ground and works are currently underway to develop this site.

The four remaining Riverside Crown Reserves are all upstream of Copmanhurst (see Map 1), and together will form a network of riverside camping grounds throughout the upper Clarence Valley that will support the Clarence Canoe Trail. The camping ground proposal has been previously identified in the North Coast Rustic Campground Development Strategy, an internal document which was adopted by the NSW Land and Property Management Authority in 2008.

The Reserves are as follows:

- Alice
- Buccarumbi
- Cangai Broadwater
- Lilydale

The intrinsic values of these reserves are considerable, with their prime attractions being the ability to access the river for water-based recreation, the scenic riverside location, the naturalness of the setting and the undeveloped nature of these areas.

Historically, the reserves have been used by the local community for water-based recreation activities, river access and traditional bush camping. In recent years, several of the sites have become subject to overuse – particularly at Christmas and Easter. There is no formal approval for camping at any of these reserves.

The Reserves are all significant in area, (ranging from 50-130ha), with camping activities being dispersed throughout a large part of each site. Hence the impacts of camping and recreational use have been spread across much of each of the reserves.

The areas which are currently used for camping are right at the rivers edge. These areas are subject to flooding, and the floods of early 2009 gave an indication of river levels during a major flood event. An important element of the proposed strategy for each camping ground is to relocate

the camping activity away from the river's edge, leaving the area available for day use. This will also provide a buffer between the river's edge and camping ground during minor flood events.

The Riverside Crown Reserves provide an important link for residents and visitors to access and enjoy the river environment. The Reserves have the following key functions:

- To contribute to the character of the upper Clarence valley by providing public access, appropriate use and enjoyment;
- To provide for a range of recreational activities which are compatible with the natural values of the reserve and the preservation of the riverside environment;
- To demonstrate a commitment to sustainable riparian management, including riverside protection, enhancement and habitat preservation on public land.

1.3. Land Description and Status

The description and status of the reserves is subject to verification. (Refer to the reserve maps for affected lands). A preliminary description of each of the reserves is:

Name: Alice	Parish: Alice
Land District: Grafton	County: Drake
Area: 159 ha	Lot/DP: 82/752364, 703/1140745, 7300,7301&7302/1144036.

Crown Land details:

- Reserve 30912 (pt 82/752364) gazetted 5th May 1900 for the purpose of Water Supply.
- Reserve 65697 (7303/1140745) gazetted 20th December 1935 for the purpose of Travelling Stock. Management is with the Livestock Health and Pest Authority.

Name: Buccarumbi	Parish: (east) Buccarumbi & Boyd (west)
Land District: Grafton	County: Gresham
Area: 54 ha	Lot/DP: 13/753508, 91/726525, 7300&7301/1145257.

Crown Land details:

- Reserve 90435 (13/753508) gazetted 10 May 1974 for the purpose of Future Public Requirements.

Name: Cangai Broadwater (Coombadjha)	Parish: Kaloe & Coombadjha (west)
Land District: Grafton	County: Gresham & Drake (west)
Area: 80 ha	Lot/DP: 7300/1145734, 7301&7302/1144630

Crown Land Details:

- Reserve 88654 (7301&7302/1144630) gazetted 30 Jun 1972 for the purpose of Public Recreation. Management is with Clarence Valley Council.

- Reserve 52268 (7300/1145734) gazetted 22 Jun 1917 for the purpose of Camping, Travelling Stock. Management is with the Livestock Health and Pest Authority.

Name: Lilydale	Parish: Copmanhurst
Land District: Grafton	County: Clarence
Area: 130 ha	Lot/DP: 404/725873 & 361,351&37/751366.

Crown Land Details:

- Reserve 1001329 (404/725873) gazetted 17 Apr 1998 for the purpose of Public Recreation. Management is with Clarence Valley Council.
- Reserve 93131 (351/751366) gazetted 18 Jul 1980 for the purpose of Future Public Requirements.

1.4. Zoning

Appropriate use and development of these riverside Crown Reserves is dependent upon the purpose of the reservation (Public Recreation, Travelling Stock, Future Public Requirements, Camping, and Environmental Protection etc), the zoning of the land under the Copmanhurst Local Environment Plan (1990) and other planning instruments. The sites at Alice and Lilydale are currently zoned 1(a) Rural (General) under the Copmanhurst Local Environment Plan (1990). The other 2 sites are within the Nymboida LEP area and are zoned as follows: Cangai Broadwater 1(a) (Special Rural) and Buccarumbi 1(b) (General Rural).

The objectives of the 1(a) zone in the Copmanhurst LEP are:

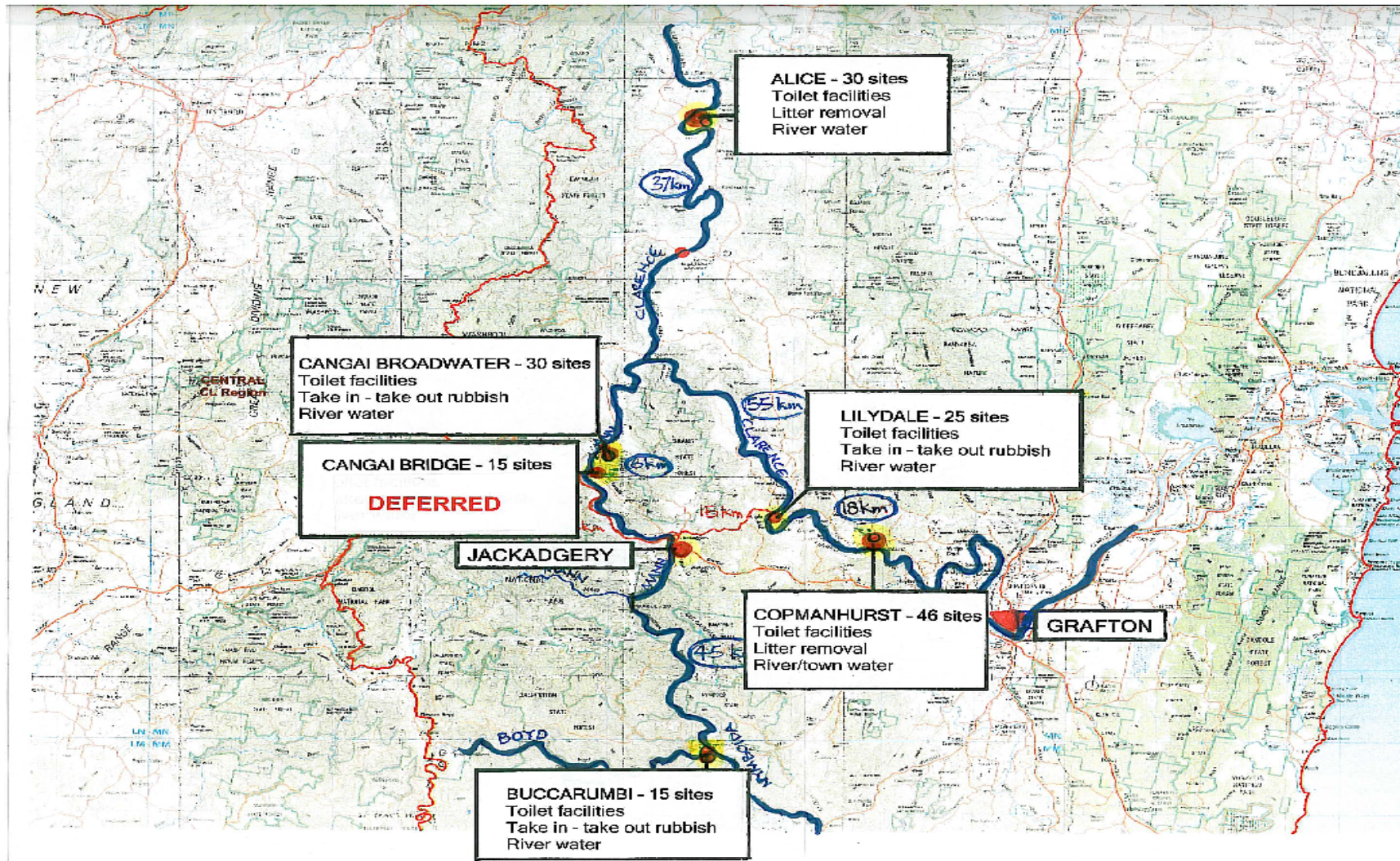
- 1) to enable development for purposes that are:
 - a) appropriate in a rural location, and
 - b) sympathetic to the characteristics of the land and the costs of providing public services and amenities, and
- 2) to promote efficient, sustainable agricultural use of agricultural land, particularly prime crop and pasture land, and
- 3) to control development that may restrict the function of, or create traffic hazards along, arterial roads in rural localities, and
- 4) to encourage the protection and conservation of
 - a) soil stability (by controlling development in accordance with soil capability), and
 - b) forests of commercial value for timber production, and
 - c) valuable deposits of minerals, coal, petroleum, and extractive materials by controlling the location of development to enable the efficient extraction of those deposits, and

The Reserves are zoned RU1 (Primary Production), RU2 (Rural Landscape) and E3 (Environmental Management) in the Draft Clarence Valley Local Environment Plan 2010. These zonings reflect the broad approach to zoning in the rural areas of the Clarence Valley, and do not relate to the specific values of each of the sites. 'Caravan Parks' are permitted with consent in zones RU2 and E3, but are not listed in zone RU1. The reserves do however meet one objective which is common to all three zones, which is as follows:

- to maintain or improve the natural conservation and scenic amenity values of the land, including significant habitat areas and wildlife corridors.

1.5. Surrounding Land use

The reserves are generally surrounded by rural lands and all have between 500 metres and 2 km of frontage to the river. The river is visible and easily accessible from all locations. The reserves have varying degrees of remoteness, with Buccarumbi being the furthest from any township, (45km to Grafton). Alice is 18km from Tabulam, Cangai Broadwater is 20km from Jackadgery and Lilydale is 18km from Copmanhurst. All sites are easily accessible by 2 wheel drive vehicle.



Map 1 - Location and details of Upper Clarence Riverside Camping Reserve

2. Planning and Management Context

2.1. Legal framework

This Plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 112 of the *Crown Lands Act 1989*. A range of legislation, policies and other planning instruments are also relevant to the management of the Reserves and have been considered in the formulation of the plan. These are listed below.

- *Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003*
- *Clarence River Way Masterplan 2009*
- *Copmanhurst Local Environment Plan (LEP) 1990*
- *Crown Lands Act 1989*
- *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
- *Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005*
- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*
- *Native Vegetation Act 2003*
- *North Coast Regional Environmental Plan (REP)*
- *North Coast Regional Strategy 2006-31*
- *NSW State Plan 2006*
- *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*
- *Rural Fires Act 1997*
- *SEPP (Infrastructure) 2007*
- *SEPP 60 - Exempt and Complying Development*
- *Soil Conservation Act 1938*
- *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*

2.2. Principles of Crown Land Management

Section 10 of the *Crown Lands Act 1989* requires the LPMA 'to ensure that Crown Land is managed for the benefit of the people of NSW'. The Principles of Crown Land Management are defined in *Section 11* of the Act. The principles are:

- That environmental protection principles be observed in relation to the management and administration of Crown land;
- That the natural resources of Crown land (including water, soil, flora, fauna and scenic quality) be conserved wherever possible;
- That public use and enjoyment of appropriate Crown land be encouraged;
- That, where appropriate, multiple use of Crown land be encouraged;
- That, where appropriate, Crown land should be used and managed in such a way that both the land and its resources are sustained in perpetuity; and
- That Crown land be occupied, used, sold, leased, licensed or otherwise dealt with in the best interests of the State consistent with the above principles.

These principles are aimed at recognising and protecting the intrinsic values of the land, and its natural, cultural and social resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

2.3. Crown Lands (General Reserves) By-law 2006

The affairs of certain Crown reserves are covered by the *Crown Lands (General Reserves) By-law 2006*. The By-law is made under the *Crown Lands Act 1989* and deals with a range of reserve management matters including:

- Procedures to be followed by reserve trusts
- Administrative matters relating to trust boards
- The regulation of entry and conduct on reserves, and
- The setting of fees and charges and the provision of certain services by reserve trusts.

This By-law does not currently apply to the riverside Crown Reserves covered by this plan of management. It is recommended that these reserves are added to Schedule 1 of the By-law to enhance the management and regulation of proposed activities such as camping.

2.4. Local Government Regulation 2005

The *Local Government Act 1993* states that the operation of a camping ground is subject to an *operational approval* issued under the Act in accordance with the *Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds & Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005* (s.68 LG Act).

The *Local Government (Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwelling) Regulation 2005 (LG Regulation 2005)* establishes the approval process to operate caravan parks, camping grounds and manufactured home estates, and sets out the requirements for the design, construction and installation of moveable dwellings¹ and associated structures.

The establishment and operation of the proposed Upper Clarence Valley Camping Reserves will be subject to an approval issued under Section 68 of the Local Government Act from Clarence Valley Council in accordance with the requirements of Clause 132 (Table 1).

Table 1: Legislative requirements to operate a primitive camping ground (source: Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds & Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005, cl.132)

132 Primitive camping grounds

- (1) If an approval to operate a primitive camping ground designates one or more camp sites within that ground, then the maximum number of designated camp sites is not to exceed a mean average of 2 for each hectare of the camping ground (where that figure is the average calculated over the total area of the primitive camping ground).
- (2) The following conditions apply to a primitive camping ground:
 - (a) if the approval to operate the primitive camping ground designates one or more camp sites within that ground—camping is not permitted within the primitive camping ground other than on those designated camp sites,
 - (b) if the approval to operate the primitive camping ground does not designate one or more camp sites within that ground—the maximum number of caravans, campervans and tents permitted to use the camping ground at any one time is not to exceed a mean average of 2 for each hectare of the camping ground (where that figure is the average calculated over the total area of the primitive camping ground),
 - (c) a caravan, annexe or campervan must not be allowed to be installed closer than 6 metres to any other caravan, annexe, campervan or tent,
 - (d) a tent must not be allowed to be installed closer than 6 metres to any caravan, annexe or campervan or closer than 3 metres to any other tent,

¹ Moveable dwelling means: any tent, or any caravan or other van or other portable device (whether on wheels or not), used for human habitation (s.3 LG Act).

- (e) *the camping ground must be provided with a water supply, toilet and refuse disposal facilities as specified in the approval for the camping ground,*
 - (f) *unoccupied caravans, campervans and tents are not to be allowed to remain in the camping ground for more than 24 hours,*
 - (g) *if a fee is charged for camping, a register must be kept that contains entries concerning the same matters as are specified in clause 122 and, in addition, that specifies the size of the group (if any) with whom the person listed in the register camped,*
 - (h) *such fire fighting facilities as may be specified in the approval are to be provided at the primitive camping ground.*
- (3) *If the approval to operate a primitive camping site does not designate camp sites, a council may impose as a condition of the approval that the installation of tents, caravans, campervans and annexes is not permitted on a particular area or areas of land within the primitive camping ground, for reasons of health or safety or to ensure consistency with the principles of ecologically sustainable development or for any other purpose.*

2.5. Linkages to other planning documents

This Plan of Management has been developed to integrate with a range of other planning documents which relate to the future use and development of the upper Clarence Valley. The key documents and a brief summary of their contents are listed below.

NSW State Plan

There are two priority areas within the NSW State Plan 2010 which have strong links to the recommendations of this Plan. They are:

- Green State - Protect our native vegetation, biodiversity, land, rivers and coastal waterways, and
- Stronger communities - Promote our parks and increase participation in recreational and sporting activities

Northern Rivers Catchment Action Plan

The following targets are contained in the *Northern Rivers Catchment Action Plan (2007)*:

- Management target W1 - Rehabilitate and protect stream health (structure and riparian vegetation) in priority sub-catchments including the Mann and Nymboida rivers; and
- Management Targets B2, B3, B5 and B6 - revegetation of corridor habitats to reduce fragmentation and increase connectivity, reduce weed and disturbance to natural systems, maintain extent and improve condition of multiple use sites and increase the extent and quality of riparian habitats through revegetation and rehabilitation.

Caring for our riverside parks and reserves: A strategy for managing riverside recreation and riparian vegetation

This document was adopted by Clarence Valley Council in 2009, and provides a framework for balancing recreational uses of the riverside environment with the need for protection of natural vegetation and other environmental conditions. Guiding principles for the strategy were as follows:

- Conservation of natural and cultural values - finding the appropriate balance of recreational uses with the need to protect the natural and cultural values of a site.
- Integrated planning - identifying appropriate recreational uses for each site in context with the opportunities available within the broader region.
- Recreation based on identified need and demand - need and demand may relate to residents and visitors and Councils 'Sustainability Initiative' will guide the assessment process

- Consultation with community and user groups - facilities will be planned in consultation with the community and user groups.
- Economic evaluation - proposals should consider initial capital costs and ongoing operational costs and should be grounded in realistic business cases.

The recommendations of this document relating to the provision of camping opportunities have been integrated into the camping ground development proposals for each Reserve.

Impact of recreation on riparian vegetation and riverine environs

This Technical Report, prepared and adopted by Clarence Valley Council in 2009, highlights the impacts associated with recreational activities on riverside reserves, and identifies mitigation strategies to address these impacts. The document specifically deals with the range of visitor impacts associated with camping, such as trampling, weed dispersal, compaction, littering, human waste, campfires, boating, fishing and vehicle use. The recommended mitigation strategies from this document will be incorporated into the camping ground development proposals for each reserve.

Clarence Valley Council Sustainability Initiative

The *Sustainability Initiative* seeks to identify and protect key values of the Clarence Valley's culture and lifestyle. This involves improving our understanding and integrated management of the Valley's ecological, social, cultural and economic assets. The initiative seeks to ensure potential and likely impacts on present and future generations, and the environment, are well considered in planning, decision-making and daily actions. The aim is to continually improve assessment and decision making, with an emphasis on seeking positive outcomes for the natural environment and community.

Clarence River Way Masterplan

The *Clarence River Way Masterplan (2009)* is a recent initiative of Clarence Valley Council intended to boost economic development and tourism in the region. The plan's central focus is the Clarence River and related built, natural and cultural attractions. The masterplan encourages better physical and visual access to the river and access to interpretive stories about the river and encourages a coordinated approach to planning and management activities associated with the Clarence River.

It stresses the need to upgrade reserves so that they are more clearly identifiable as public open space. One of the strategic intents of the *Clarence River Way Masterplan* is to develop the upper reaches of the Clarence River and its tributaries through the provision of greater visitor access and infrastructure. Specific key issues are the availability of identifiable access points on and off the rivers and tributaries as well as legal camping sites.

2.6. Community Consultation

Community consultation is an integral part of the process of preparing a Plan of Management. Pursuant to *Section 113 - Crown Lands Act 1989*, the Draft Plan was placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days from 12th November to 10th December 2010. The plan was available for viewing at the NSW Land and Property Management Authority office in Grafton, the Clarence Valley Council offices in Grafton, the Mann River Caravan Park at Jackadgery and the NSW Land and Property Management Authority website.

A total of 6 submissions were received to the draft plan. These submissions were reviewed and considered in the preparation of the final plan.

2.7. Implementation

It will be incumbent on the Reserve Trust to implement the Plan pursuant to Section 114 of the *Crown Lands Act 1989*. The Trust must manage the land consistent with any adopted plan of management and may not allow any operations or development which is not authorised by the Plan.

Alteration of the adopted Plan may be undertaken under Section 115 of the Act and may be required after a period of five years to keep abreast of government policy, to cater for the changing expectations and requirements of the community and to ensure the Plan remains useful and relevant.

Funding for management of the reserve will be sought from a range of Government, Council and community sources. The Trust Manager may enter into a lease or licence for the whole or part of the lands to which this Plan applies provided that:

- The use and/or occupation of the land is in accordance with this Plan and relevant Crown land management policies
- The use and/or occupation of the land is consistent with the purpose of the reserve and is considered to be in the public interest.
- The granting of the lease or licence is in accordance with the provisions of the *Crown Lands Act 1989*.
- The use and/or occupation of the land complies with local environmental planning policies that are in force at the time

2.8. Accountability

The *Crown Lands Regulation (2006)* specifies the accountability of the Reserve Trust in terms of the management of the Reserve. Clause 32 of the Regulation directs that Reserve Trust reports must be prepared annually detailing the income, expenditure, assets, liabilities and improvements of the reserve as well as the details of any leases or licences granted by the Trust. Clause 33 directs that the Trust must keep the following records as detailed in Schedule 4 of the Regulation:

- Where a reserve trust is managed by a trust board, the minutes of all meetings, receipts for all money received, documentation of all expenditure, cash book, bank, building society or credit union deposit book, and a plant and asset register must be kept.
- Where a reserve trust is managed by a council, as defined in the *Local Government Act 1993*, the council is required to keep records that will permit dissection of monetary details in respect of each reserve from which the Council receives revenue of any nature, details of improvements effected on each reserve, and details of all leases and licences granted or in force.
- Where a reserve trust is managed by a corporation other than a council, records must be kept which allow assessment of income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, improvements effected and leases and licences granted or in force in respect of the reserve.

2.9. Development Proposal Assessment

Issues to be considered by the Reserve Trust when deciding whether a particular land use or development is appropriate include:

- The compatibility of the proposal with the notified purpose of the reserve;
- The views of the Minister and the LPMA
- The impact on the existing use of the reserve;
- The compatibility with the Vision and Management Principles established for the reserve;
- The need for the proposal and whether it will promote and be ancillary to the use and enjoyment of the reserve, as distinct from satisfying a requirement generated by an adjoining property or by an unassociated community need;
- The advantage and benefit that the development would bring to the normal reserve user;
- The management responsibility and public availability of the development to reserve users;
- The need for a lease and its draft terms, conditions and rental that would apply.

3. Reserve Values and Issues

3.1. Values

3.1.1 Environmental

The riverside Crown Reserves of the Upper Clarence valley and the riparian environments which they support are an important element in the public understanding and use of the river corridor. They are key points for public access to the river in an area where the vast majority of the riparian zone is in private ownership.

People are attracted to these areas for a wide range of recreational activities. Wildlife also use these areas for food, habitat or as movement corridors, while stock graze and water along their banks. The natural environmental values of the riverside Crown Reserves are the major elements responsible for their appeal for camping and other recreational pursuits. They are also the elements which are most under threat from the continued unmanaged use for these activities.

The natural riparian vegetation of each of the reserves is dominated by the Weeping Bottlebrush (*Callistemon viminalis*) and River Sheoak (*Casuarina cunninghamia*), providing a buffer to the river's edge from the more open grassed areas of the lower flood terraces behind. Weeds are a significant problem throughout the reserves, with species such as senna, lantana, and cat's claw all present. Clearing and vandalism of vegetation on the reserves for firewood also diminishes environmental values and creates potential soil erosion problems, as does the soil compaction and loss of vegetation caused by uncontrolled vehicle access and fire scars. Flooding has the most dramatic impact on the reserves, with significant loss of topsoil and stripping of vegetation at most locations following the flood events of early 2009.

The Reserves provide the opportunity to protect and conserve the riverbanks and high conservation value riparian vegetation which:

- provides high conservation value habitat for terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna
- provides high amenity opportunities for recreation
- provides buffers to help sustain healthy water quality, and
- supports sustainable economic activities, such as fishing and ecotourism.

Continued inappropriate recreational use of the reserves will lead to long term environmental degradation including loss of vegetation cover, soil erosion, reduced water quality, reduced wildlife habitat and accumulation of pollutants in the river system.

The Clarence Valley Council document, *'Caring for our riverside parks and reserves; a strategy for managing riverside recreation and riparian vegetation'* outlines a strategy for the protection and restoration of riparian vegetation along the Clarence River. Weed management, regeneration of native species and management of threatening processes such as grazing, camping, vehicle access, soil erosion and fire are all key actions in the strategy. A similar approach is proposed for the management of riparian vegetation throughout the Riverside Crown Reserves of the upper Clarence Valley.

3.1.2 Economic

The reserves are of significant economic value to the villages of the upper Clarence valley and local tourism businesses. Copmanhurst, Jackadgery and Tabulam all benefit from the influx of campers – particularly during the peak times of Christmas and Easter. As the reserves are all located adjacent to river crossings and are the key locations for public access to the river, their importance in supporting existing or future economic activities on the river is also significant.

There is no business or commercial focus to the existing activities within the reserves. The proposal to establish approved camping grounds at each reserve, developed under economically sustainable management principles will generate an income stream which can be directed towards improved reserve management. Trust management of the camping grounds is proposed to move the reserves to being more financially self-sufficient. Currently, the only source of income for the reserves is derived from grazing licences. The camping reserves will contribute significantly to the range of nature-based tourism facilities in the Clarence valley.

The reserves are all relatively undeveloped, and have no facilities to support existing or possible future recreational uses – particularly camping. Capital improvements for the proposed camping ground development will include provision of toilet facilities, camping ground maps and river access points. These facilities will also be available for day use recreation, and will be critical for the development and promotion of the Clarence River Canoe Trail being developed by Clarence Valley Council. These improvements will also be funded under a TQUAL grant programme being administered by Clarence Valley Council.

The proposal to establish approved camping grounds on each of the reserves is consistent with the objectives of the *Clarence River Way Masterplan (2009)*, which identifies development of the upper reaches of the Clarence through the provision of greater visitor access and infrastructure as a major element of the plan.



Alice reserve in flood - May 2009

3.1.3 Recreation

The outstanding natural values of the reserves provide for a range of outdoor recreation opportunities for local residents and visitors alike. Activities such as camping, fishing, canoe/kayaking, boating, picnicking, sightseeing, swimming, bird watching and bushwalking are all popular pursuits.

The majority of people who currently use the reserves for camping drive to the destination and typically stay anywhere from a night to a week in the one location. These campers are generally self-contained, and have minimal impact on the natural values of the reserves. The exception to this is the large numbers of camping groups that assemble at several of the sites (particularly Alice, Lilydale and Cangai) at Christmas, Easter and on holiday weekends. These groups are large in numbers, have large camp set-ups and bring along lots of 'toys' such as dirt bikes, chainsaws, water pumps and fish traps. The impact on the natural values of the reserves following this type of use, particularly over recent years, is high and includes significant erosion, loss of vegetation, rubbish accumulation and inappropriate disposal of human faeces. This has led to the erection of signs prohibiting camping at the Alice reserve, where the problems were the most severe.

Day use of the reserves is also significant, and the facilities proposed for the camping grounds, particularly the toilets, will also be available for use by day visitors. This will significantly enhance the potential day use of the reserves for riverside picnics, fishing and other river-focused recreation activities.

The reserves are also an integral component of the Clarence River of Adventure initiative being undertaken by Clarence Valley Council, the centrepiece of which is a 195 km long-distance canoe trail commencing at the junction of the Nymboida and Little Nymboida Rivers and finishing at Copmanhurst on the Clarence River. This project is being developed by Clarence Valley Council in conjunction with the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) and the NSW Land and Property Management Authority (LPMA). Overnight camping is an important aspect of the canoe trail experience, which is being designed to be completed as a series of day trips or as a multi-day trip with each leg starting/finishing at a point where people can camp overnight if necessary. The canoe trail will be supported by the six camping grounds being developed by the LPMA, and the toilet facilities and river access points proposed will enhance the experience for both long distance and day use paddlers on the trail.



Riverside camping at Copmanhurst

3.1.4 Social/Cultural

The Reserves are the key points for public access to the rivers in an area where the vast majority of the riparian zone is in private ownership. They are located where public roads cross giving the public direct access to the river environment. The natural values of the reserves provide the opportunity to connect with nature, and provide links to the history and development of the region.

The Clarence River and its tributaries were well used by local Aboriginal communities, and while there are no known uses which specifically relate to these reserves, sheltered riverside locations were generally used as campsites, for food gathering and for a variety of ceremonial and sacred purposes. The Reserves lie within the traditional lands of the Gumbaingirr, Bundjalung and Ngarrabul people, and are covered by the Grafton-Ngerrie and Jana Ngalee Local Aboriginal Land Councils. The development of the Upper Clarence Riverside Camping Reserves provides an opportunity to create a partnership with the local aboriginal community to enhance cultural awareness and understanding. Development of these reserves will also create opportunities for the indigenous community to educate visitors about their culture in the region.

The upper Clarence Valley also has an interesting post-European heritage associated with early grazing, mining, fishing and logging. The history of copper mining around Cangai, the flood that took out the Buccarumbi bridge and the town of Alice that was never built, these are stories that are unique to the upper Clarence and relate directly to the riverside reserves. The development of the camping reserves will provide the opportunity to provide some historic interpretation of the reserves which will enhance community awareness of our past, and in turn foster an appreciation of where we are today.



The Clarence River upstream of Lilydale

3.2. Issues

3.2.1 Camping Ground Approval

Currently, the camping activity that is occurring at the Reserves is unauthorised and unregulated. There is a long standing history of camping in these locations, but there is no regulatory management. The *Local Government Act 1993* requires that the operation of a camping ground is subject to an *operational approval* issued under the Act in accordance with the *Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds & Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005* (s.68 LG Act). The Regulation establishes the approval process to operate the proposed camping grounds and sets out the basic requirements. The LPMA have also committed to meeting the requirements of the *Regulation* in any camping grounds that are established on Crown Land. Approval from Clarence Valley Council will be sought for the camping grounds.

3.2.2 Camping Ground Management

The camping grounds, once established, will require regular ongoing management to maintain the facilities, service toilets and rubbish collection, collect fees, ensure compliance and maintain a register of camp ground users. This may require daily attendance at each of the sites during the peak season and weekly attendance at low season. There will also be a reporting requirement of camping ground activities to the NSW Land and Property Management Authority. The establishment of a Reserve Trust to oversee management of the Camping Reserves appears to be the most appropriate model to deliver the management necessary.

3.2.3 Environmental degradation

There are currently a range of environmental impacts which can be attributed to unregulated camping on the reserves. Significant soil erosion, loss of vegetation, rubbish accumulation and the presence of human faeces are issues at several of the sites. There is a need for tighter control of camping and other activities at the reserves to ensure that the recreational use of these sites is sustainable into the future. Mitigation of environmental impacts and a better understanding of the environmental conditions at the Reserves are necessary to improve sustainability. An Environmental Management Plan is recommended for each Reserve to outline a programme for best practice environmental management.

3.2.4 River access

Currently access to the river is gained indiscriminately along each Reserve river frontage. There is a need to identify suitable river access points to limit impacts on the riparian zone and the stability of the riverbanks in general.

3.2.5 Grazing

Grazing is currently undertaken on most of the reserves. There is potential for conflict between people at the camping ground and cattle. The existing grazing licences for the reserves will be reviewed in consultation with the holders, and cattle will be excluded from the camping areas during peak times.

3.2.6 Anti social behaviour

There is a significant record of anti-social behaviour at several of the reserves – particularly during the peak season times of Christmas and Easter holiday periods. This has escalated over the past 5 years to a point where signs have been erected prohibiting camping at the Alice reserve. Complaints from adjoining neighbours have led to many compliance actions from both Council and LPMA. Formal approval of the camping grounds, a more structured and regulated approach to management and a greater presence by management staff should result in fewer incidents and more orderly operation of the camping areas.

3.2.7 Day use recreation

The reserves are popular day use recreation areas, and this should be encouraged, but there are currently no facilities to support this use. There is also currently potential for conflict between campers and day users, with campers occupying the most desirable locations along the river edge. The proposal for the Camping Reserves will provide a buffer zone between the camping area and the river bank of 50 metres, which will provide an area for day use recreation and equitable river access for all. Also the toilet facilities proposed for the camping grounds will be available for day users.

3.2.8 Emergency management

All of the reserves are potentially subject to flooding and bushfire. Flooding and bushfire are two natural events that must be planned for to ensure the safety of visitors/users.. Reserve users need to have information available to them to make an informed decision regarding these events. The Camping Reserve maps will provide emergency contact numbers for the SES and RFS and other general warnings relating to fire and flood. Camping Reserve management should also develop an emergency warning and evacuation plan as part of risk management documentation.

3.2.9 Flooding

All of the reserves are impacted by flooding. The flood event in May 2009, demonstrated the need to plan for future use of the reserves to ensure that facilities and infrastructure are not affected. The location of proposed uses and facilities needs to take known flood heights into consideration, and there is a need to provide flooding information on site to inform reserve users of potential hazards.

3.2.10 Provision of integrated nature-based tourism infrastructure

The reserves provide for a significant range of river related recreation activities, but there are no facilities in place to support this use. There is also a general lack of nature-based tourism infrastructure throughout the Upper Clarence, despite the exceptional range of nature-based recreation opportunities that the River provides. The proposal for the establishment of the camping reserves will add to the tourism infrastructure on the river and integrate well with the proposed Clarence Canoe Trail.

4. Plan of Management

4.1. Vision

The Vision for the Upper Clarence Riverside Camping Reserves is:

“To provide a network of sustainable riverside reserves that support camping and day use recreation, for the enjoyment of future generations”.

4.2. Management Principles

The following principles establish the broad direction for the management of the Reserves to protect and enhance their values and achieve the vision.

1. To ensure that the ongoing use and management of the reserves are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable
2. To reduce risks to government and the community currently posed by unauthorised uses of the reserves
3. To preserve and enhance the values of the reserves for future generations
4. To enhance public access to and utilisation of the reserves
5. To ensure the reserves are well resourced and financially self-sustaining
6. To encourage active participation of locals, visitors, project partners and other organisations in the development, care and long-term management of the reserves
7. To make the reserves a significant contributor to the social, cultural, economic and environmental future of the Upper Clarence Valley community
8. To incorporate a management style which ensures reserve viability, promotes cooperative decision-making and responds to legal, social, and technological changes.

4.3. The Plan in Brief

The following points summarise the overall direction for future management of the Reserves:

- A s68 application for the establishment of the Camping Reserves will be submitted to Clarence Valley Council for consideration.
- Upon approval, a Reserve Trust will be established for the specific purpose of camping over the Reserves
- Infrastructure for the camping areas will be installed in accordance with the s68 approval including toilet facilities, camping ground maps, craft launching points and canoe trail information. All facilities will be maintained to a high standard.
- Promotion and marketing of the Camping Reserves network and the canoe trail will be undertaken in an integrated way in conjunction with Clarence Valley Council
- Contract management will be appointed to manage day-to-day operation of the Camping Reserves reporting to the Reserve Trust.
- Camping Reserve usage will be monitored to assess demand and site numbers and facilities provided will be reviewed to meet increased demand as necessary
- Environmental management of the reserves will be improved with the implementation of an environmental management plan.
- Interpretation of the heritage values of the Reserves will be incorporated into signage
- Commercial opportunities will be pursued where appropriate to support future Reserve development.

4.4. Action Plan

The following sections detail the key individual actions required to implement this plan, note High Priority: within 1st year, Ongoing Priority: from establishment, Medium Priority: 1-3 years.

4.4.1 Governance, Management and Administration

Desired Outcomes:

- a) Camping Reserves are authorised under s68 of *the Local Government Act 1993*.
- b) Camping Reserves are managed in an integrated and effective manner.
- c) Reserve Trust management is in place to ensure policies, procedures and systems are in place to effectively manage and reduce risk.
- d) Effective communication between project partners and stakeholders occurs.

Management Strategy:

Action	Responsibility	Priority	Performance measure
Submit s68 application to Clarence Valley Council for approval to operate Camping Reserves at each location.	LPMA	High	s68 approval granted
Establish a Reserve Trust for the specific purpose of managing the camping activity and associated infrastructure on each of the riverside reserves and appoint the Lands Administration Ministerial Corporation as manager of this reserve trust.	LPMA	High	Reserve Trust established and Managers of Reserve Trust appointed
Complete a Risk Assessment for each proposed Camping Reserve as part of the s68 application to Council and implement controls with establishment.	LPMA	High	Risk Assessment completed and controls in place
Develop management guidelines for the Camping Reserves including regular maintenance and servicing, collection of camping fees, compliance, records and financial management, risk management and OH&S.	Reserve Trust	High	Guidelines for contract management prepared and implemented
Develop policies, procedures and systems for the effective and efficient operation of the Camping Reserves.	Reserve Trust	High	Policies, procedures and systems developed and implemented
Implement Crown Reserve Reporting System requirements to meet the Trusts annual reporting obligations.	Reserve Trust	High	CRRS requirements established and implemented
Maintain contact with project partners – specifically Clarence Valley Council regarding ongoing development and promotion of the Clarence Canoe Trail.	Reserve Trust	Ongoing	Regular project partner meetings attended

4.4.2 Maintenance, Infrastructure and Facility Provision

Desired Outcomes:

- a) Appropriate infrastructure is installed to support the Camping Reserves and use of the reserves generally.
- b) Infrastructure and facilities are serviced and maintained to a high standard.
- c) Planned approach to expansion of existing facilities or new facility development.

Management Strategy:

Action	Responsibility	Priority	Performance measure
Install appropriate facilities at each of the Camping Reserves to support the camping and day use activities.	LPMA	High	Facilities installed in accordance with master plan and s68 approval at each reserve
Provide facilities which allow for possible future expansion of Camping Reserves as demand increases.	LPMA	High	Additional capacity built into initial facility provision
Develop long-term asset management plan and annual maintenance programme (including costings). Prioritise future funding allocation based on asset management planning.	Reserve Trust	High	Asset Management Plan prepared and implemented
Ensure appropriate service levels are prescribed within the Camping Reserves management contract to ensure facilities are maintained at an acceptable standard.	Reserve Trust	High	Service levels specified in management contract
Ensure all assets are registered for insurance purposes.	Reserve Trust	Ongoing	Insurance register maintained

4.4.3 Future Development and Funding

Desired Outcomes:

- a) Annual review of Camping Reserve usage undertaken
- b) A staged approach to Camping Reserve development to ensure that the facilities can grow to meet possible future increased demand.
- c) Work with key stakeholders to further develop camping Reserve network.
- d) Contract management arrangements appropriate to service levels required.

Management Strategy:

Action	Responsibility	Priority	Performance measure
Undertake annual review of Camping Reserve usage to determine if demand is increasing.	Reserve Trust	High	Annual review of Camping Reserve usage undertaken
Implement a staged approach to facility provision in the Camping Reserves, and review the number of sites to determine if additional sites are needed. Seek to modify the s68 approval as necessary to provide for additional sites and facilities as demand increases.	Reserve Trust	High	Staged implementation and site provision to match demand
Work with key stakeholders and project partners – specifically CVC – to identify funding sources to further improve infrastructure as necessary.	Reserve Trust	High	Key stakeholders informed and involved in future development plans
Review contract management arrangements to ensure that adequate service levels are maintained as Camping Reserves develop.	Reserve Trust	High	Contract management arrangements reviewed annually

4.4.4 Environment and Heritage Management

Desired Outcomes:

- a) Sustainable use and management of all environmental assets.
- b) Minimal impact on natural and environmental values by camping activity
- c) Effective communication of environmental sustainability message.
- d) Local heritage of the Reserves is managed and communicated for future generations.

Management Strategy:

Action	Responsibility	Priority	Performance measure
Work with key stakeholders, agencies and partners to develop and implement, monitor and review an Environmental Management Plan for each of the Reserves.	Reserve Trust	High	Environmental Management Plans developed, implemented, monitored and reviewed as necessary
Adopt ESD principles for all facility provision and ensure that sustainability principles are incorporated into ongoing management of the Camping Reserves and communicated through appropriate media.	Reserve Trust	Ongoing	ESD checklist prepared and environmental sustainability improved and incorporated into appropriate media
Undertake appropriate vegetation management, and work with stakeholders where possible to implement vegetation management strategies (eg PACTEC).	Reserve Trust	Ongoing	Vegetation management strategies developed and implemented
Undertake pest and weed management at each Reserve in conjunction with appropriate agencies (eg. CVC, LHPA, LPMA).	Reserve Trust	Ongoing	Weed and pest management strategies developed and implemented
Explore potential for local indigenous groups to be involved in guiding, ranger duties, interpretation etc to provide indigenous cultural interpretation of Reserves	Reserve Trust	Medium	Opportunities for local indigenous involvement investigated
Incorporate local heritage information into displays/signage at each Reserve to improve interpretation of historical use of each Reserve and area.	Reserve Trust	Medium	Local heritage information for each Reserve displayed and interpreted

4.4.5 Marketing, Promotion and Stakeholder Engagement

Desired Outcomes:

- a) Targeted and integrated marketing and promotion plan.
- b) Improved strategic, local and community networks.
- c) Integrated management of events across Camping Reserve network.

Management Strategy:

Action	Responsibility	Priority	Performance measure
Develop a marketing and promotions strategy in consultation with CVC which targets tourism potential, supports local and regional initiatives and reflects the unique qualities of each Reserve and the network as a whole.	LPMA, Reserve Trust and CVC	High	Marketing and promotions strategy developed and implemented
Work with CVC, tourism organisations and local operators to develop packaged events and activities.	Reserve Trust	Ongoing	Regular contact with tourism organisations and local operators
Develop a community and stakeholder engagement plan which encourages community feedback, enhances promotion and financial viability and improves public relations.	Reserve Trust	Ongoing	Community and stakeholder strategy developed and implemented
Coordinate all communications, promotions and marketing with an events calendar.	Reserve Trust	High	Integrated events calendar established

4.5. Riverside Camping Reserves proposal

The Upper Clarence Riverside Camping Reserves proposal provides for the following;

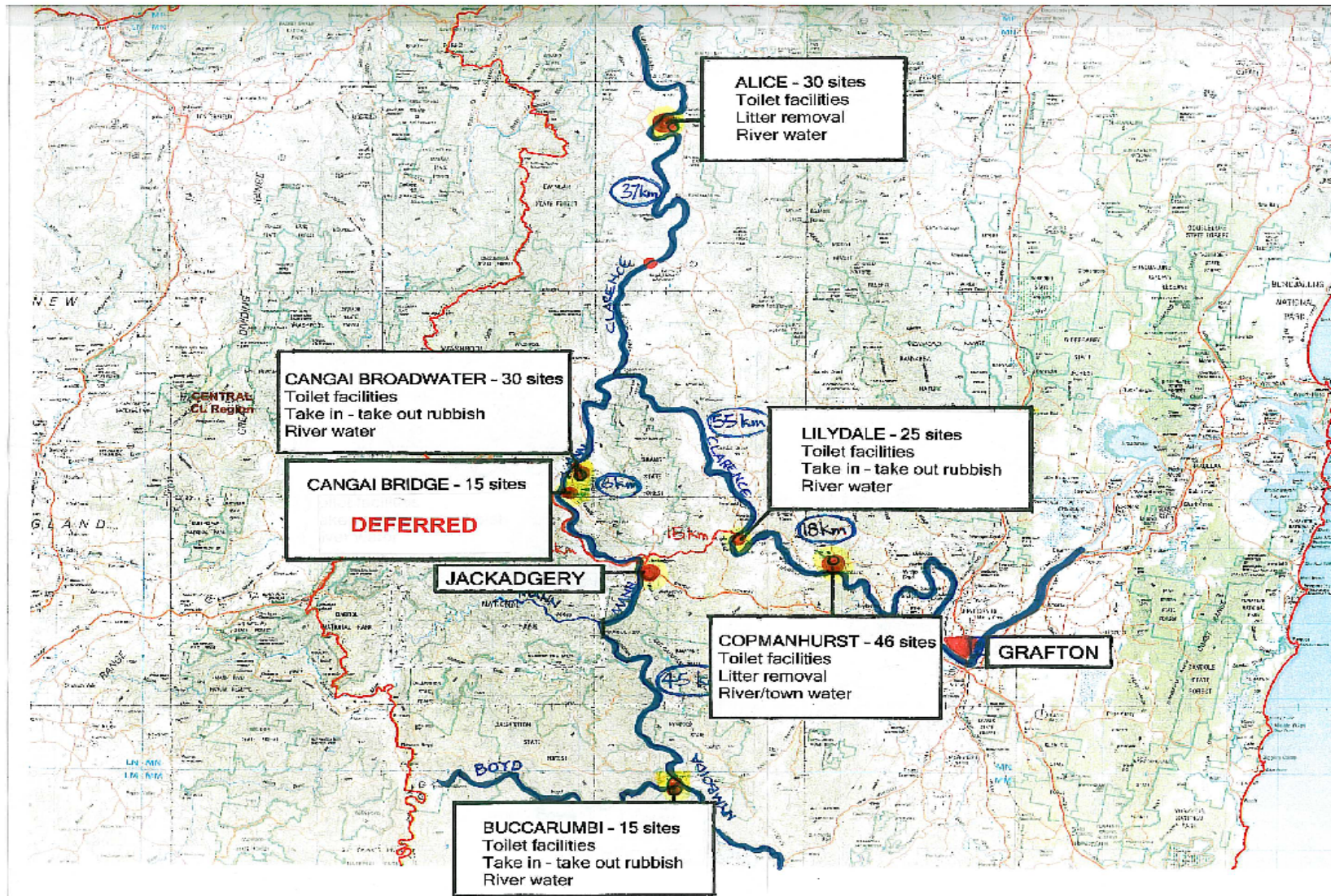
- The establishment of five (5) camping reserves located at Copmanhurst, Alice, Buccarumbi, Cangai Broadwater and Lilydale each having an initial capacity of 15-30 sites, and toilet facilities. Rubbish collection and firewood provision at Copmanhurst and Alice camping areas only. All camping areas to be located above minor flood levels and 50 metres from the rivers edge.
- An annual review of camping demand will be undertaken to determine if any increase to the camping area and facilities is necessary at any of the sites following promotion and marketing of the camping reserve network and the Clarence Canoe Trail.

The proposed layout at each of the Camping Reserves provides for the following:

- a clearly defined undesignated camping area (where individual sites are not marked), confined to a limited portion of the reserve and located on the highest ground practical to contain camping ground impacts, prevent uncontrolled spread of camping and limit impact of flooding.
- a 50 metre buffer between the camping area and the rivers edge to provide for day use recreation of the reserves and minimise impacts on the riparian zone from camping activities, vehicle use, fire scars etc
- toilet facilities to service the proposed camping area and day use, with additional capacity to service possible future extension of the camping area
- Camping Reserve maps, which designate the camping area, establish camping ground regulations and provide information about the canoe trail, some interpretive information of the site and emergency contacts.
- a designated craft launching area including information on the canoe trail and other river related matters
- rubbish collection and firewood supply at Copmanhurst and Alice
- the potential for permanent and seasonal camping reserves, depending on the demand at various sites

Management of all Camping Reserves will be the responsibility of a single Reserve Trust established for that purpose. The Trust will appoint a contract manager to undertake day-to-day management of the Camping Reserves. The scope of the contract will include:

- camping ground inspections
- collection of camping fees
- enforcing camping ground regulations
- general camping ground management
- maintenance servicing and repair of toilet facilities
- rubbish removal and litter management
- supply of firewood



Map 2 – Location and details of Upper Clarence Riverside Camping Reserves

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- Parkin, D. (2010), *Providing for camping on long-distance recreational trails: Navigating the complex maze of legislation and approvals processes*. Paper submitted for consideration to Australian Planner.
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- Succession Planning (2009), *Technical Report – Impact of Recreation on Riparian Vegetation and Riverine Environments*, unpublished report prepared for Clarence Valley Council, NSW.

5. Appendix 1

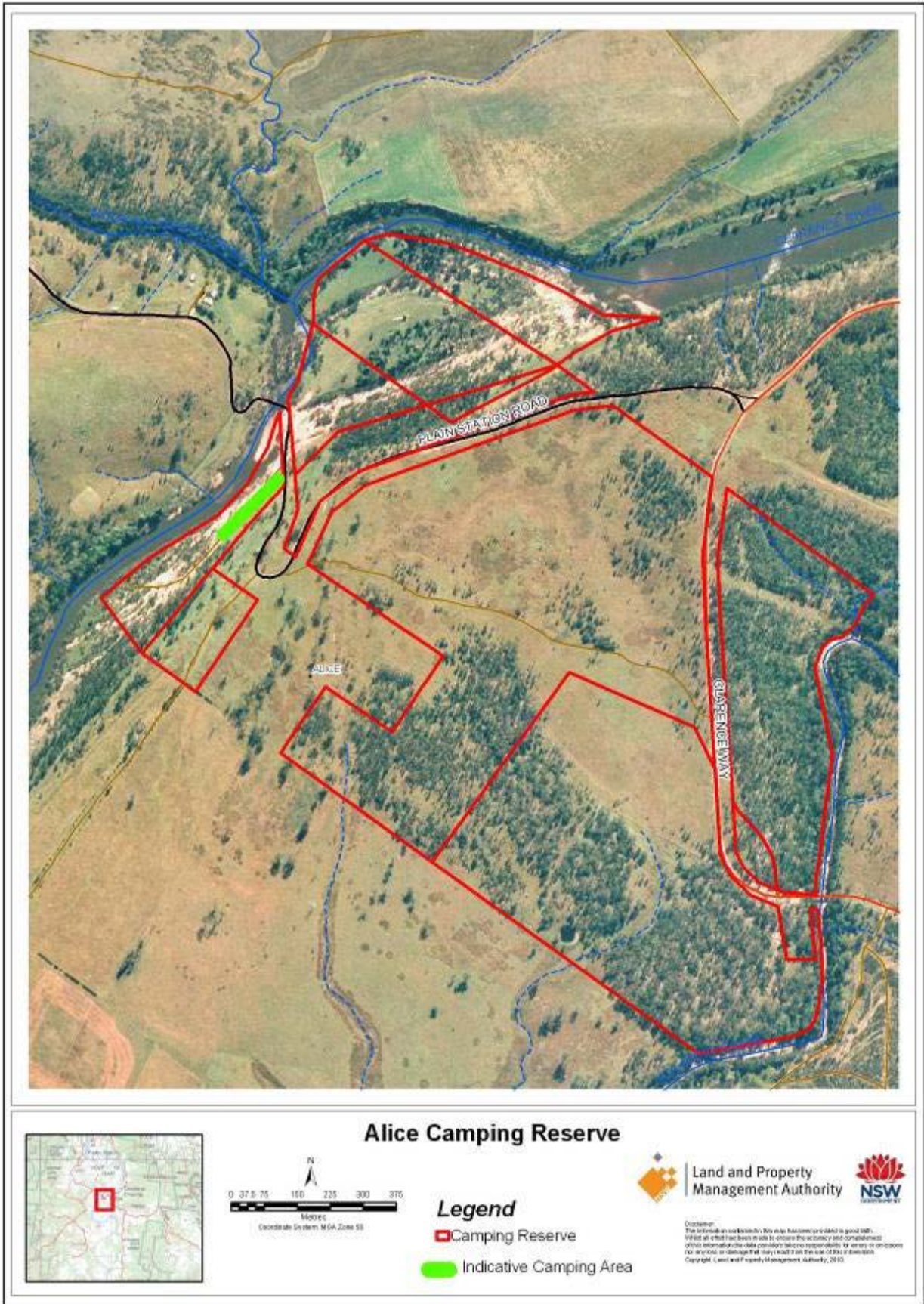
Riverside Camping Reserves and Camping Ground Concept Plans

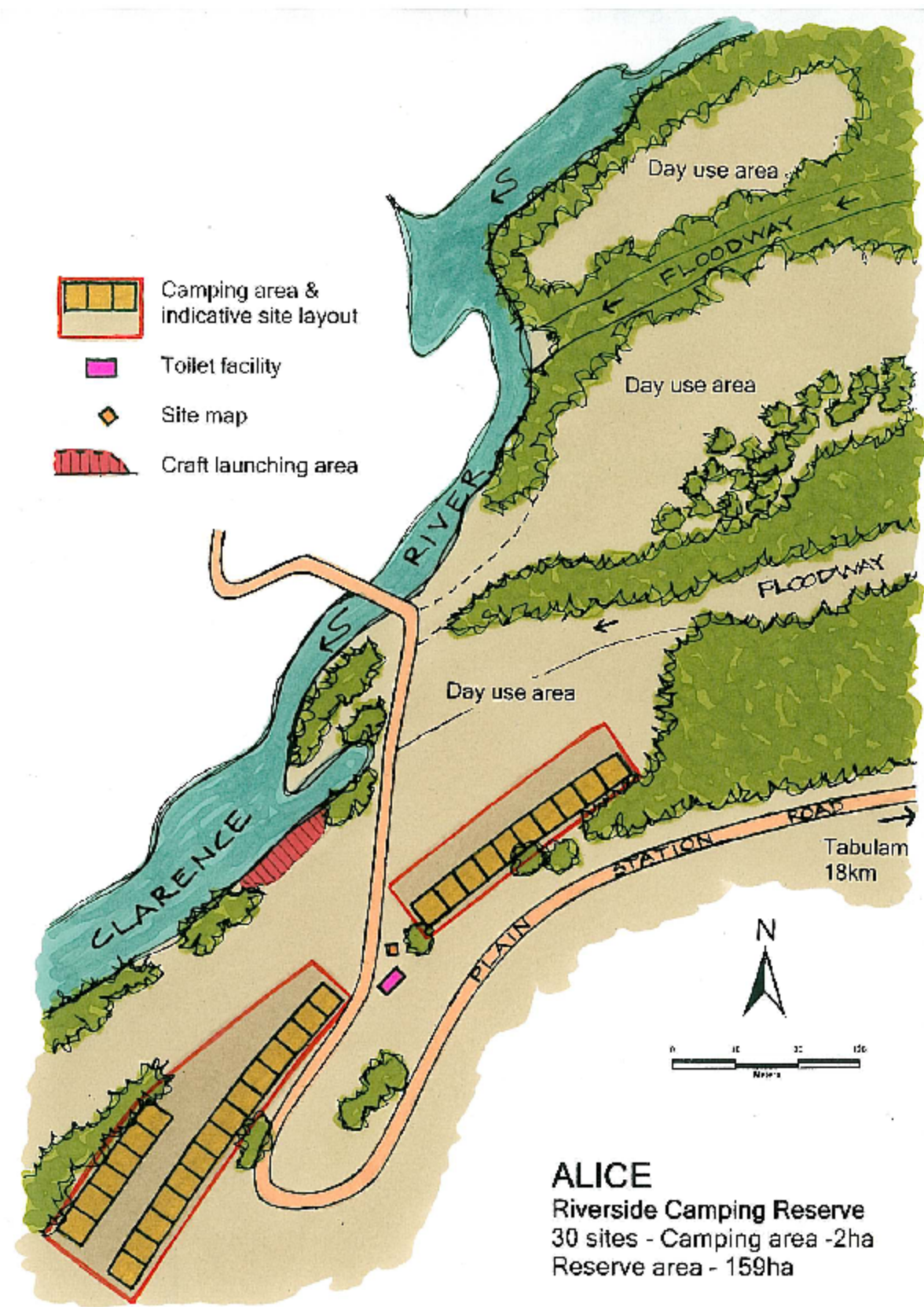
Alice Camping Reserve and Camping Ground concept plan

Buccarumbi Camping Reserve and Camping Ground concept plan

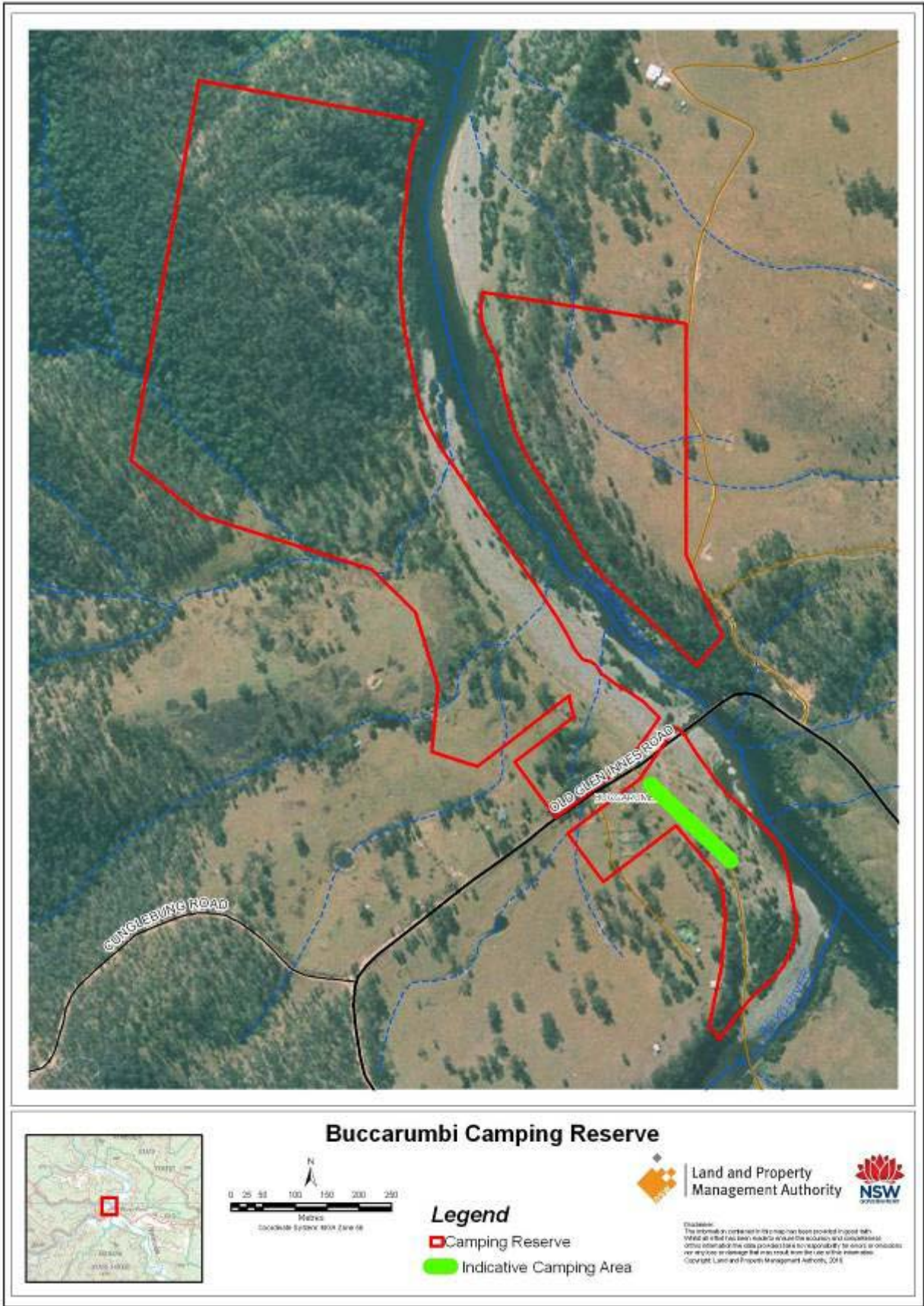
Cangai Broadwater Camping Reserve and Camping Ground concept plan

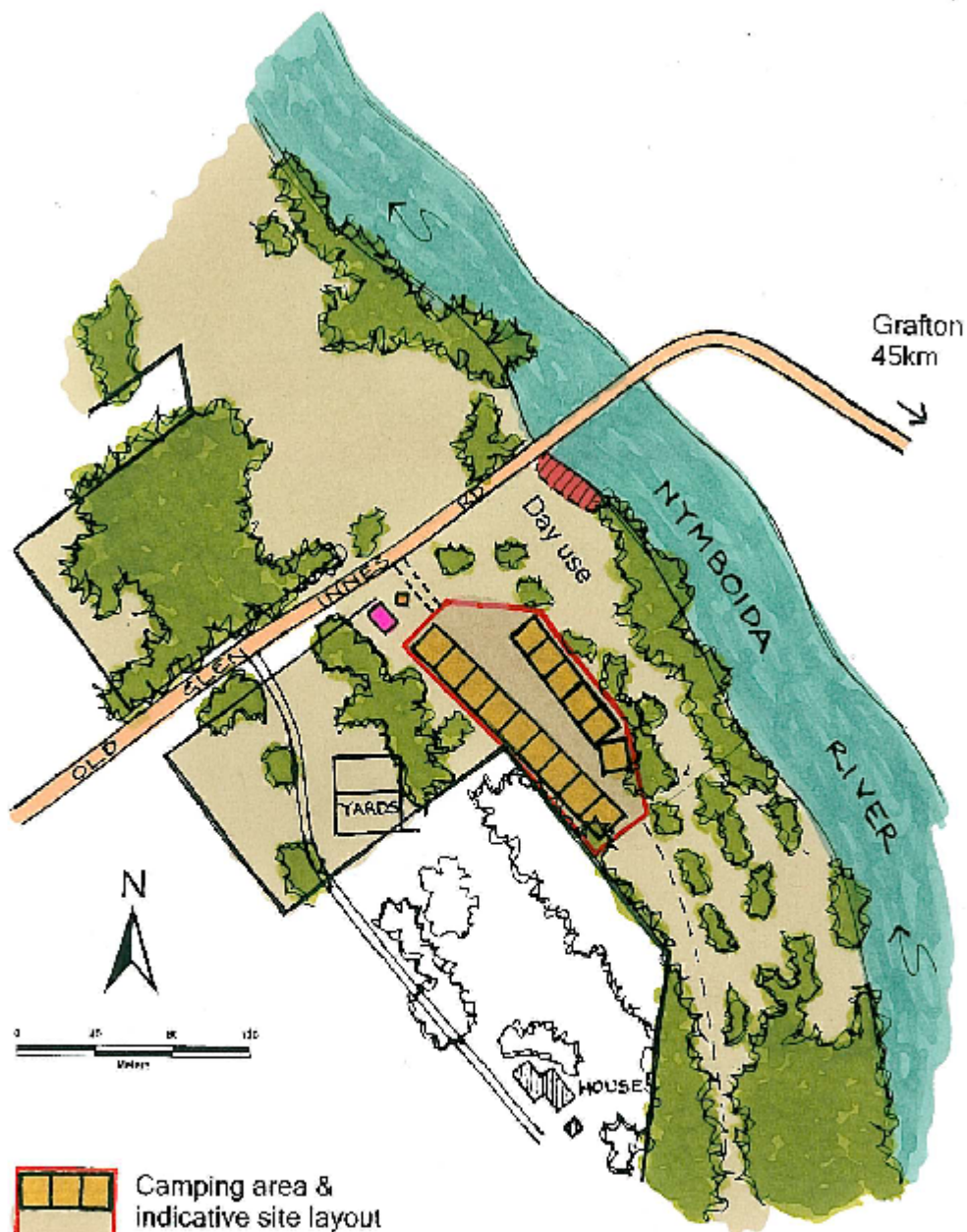
Lilydale Camping Reserve and Camping Ground concept plan





ALICE
 Riverside Camping Reserve
 30 sites - Camping area - 2ha
 Reserve area - 159ha

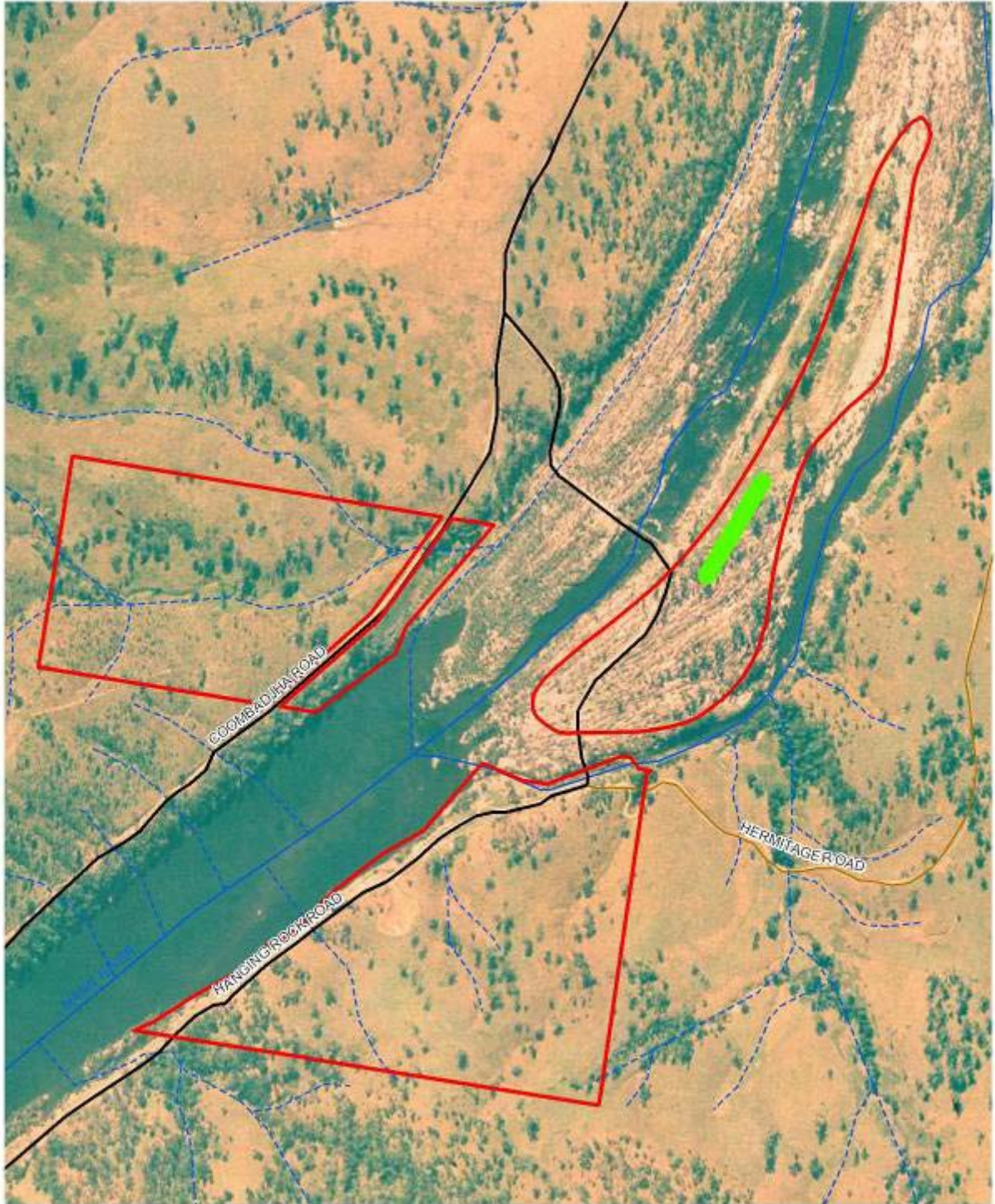




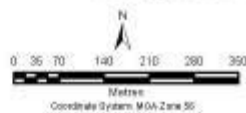
Grafton
45km

BUCCARUMBI
 Riverside Camping Reserve
 15 sites - Camping area - 1ha
 Reserve area - 54ha

-  Camping area & indicative site layout
-  Toilet facility
-  Site map
-  Craft launching area



Cangai Broadwater Camping Reserve



Legend

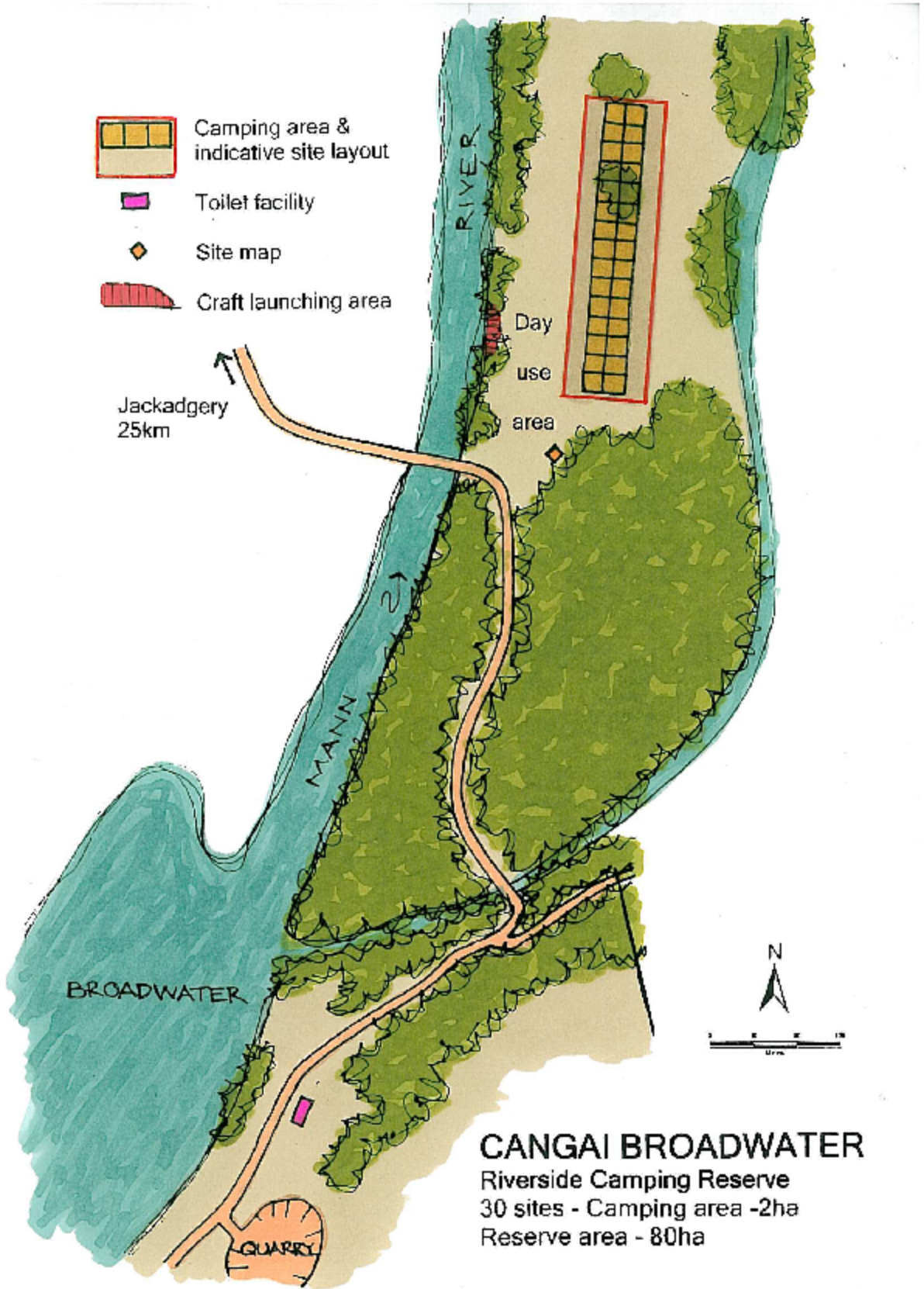
- Camping Reserve
- Indicative Camping Area

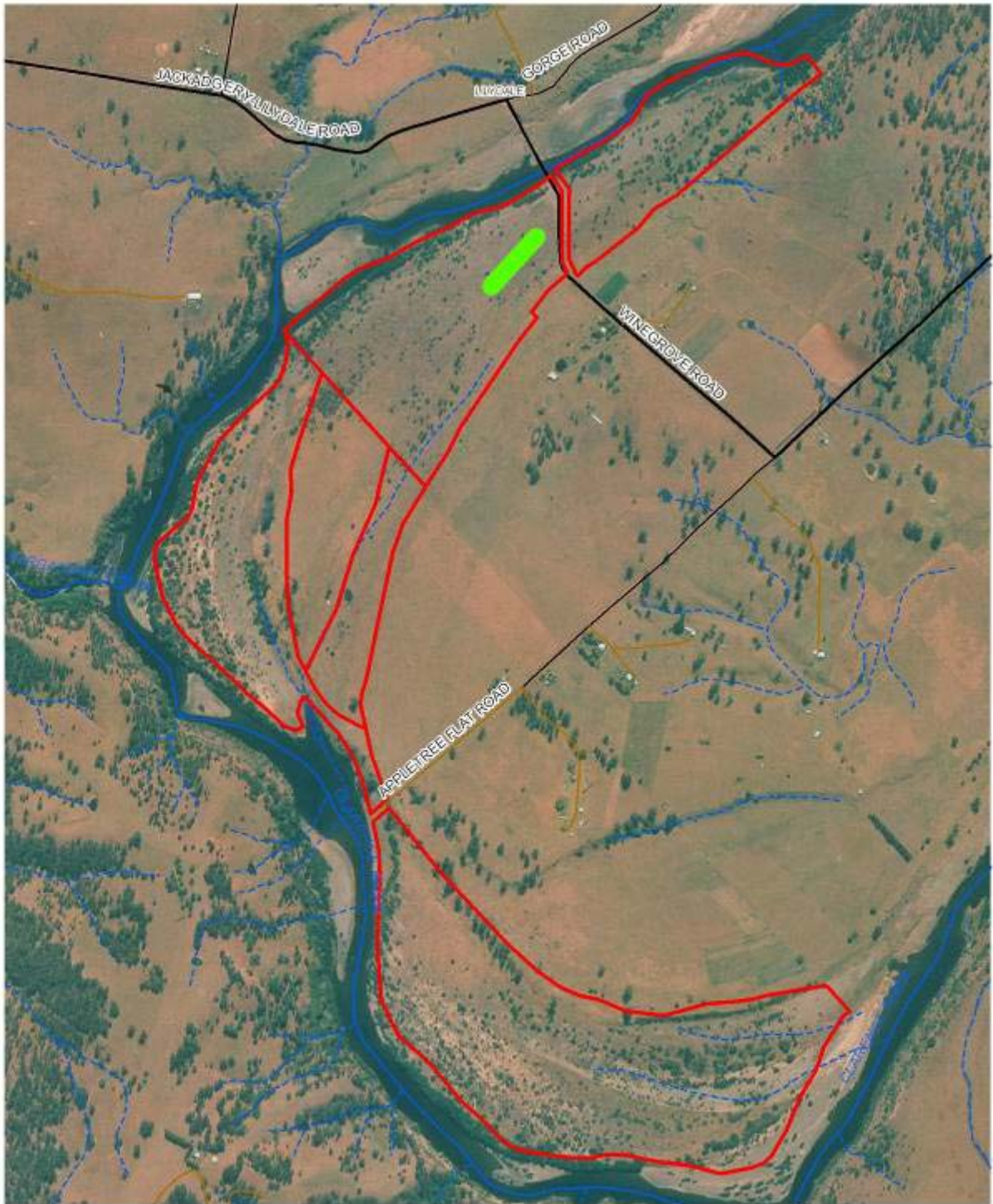


Land and Property
Management Authority

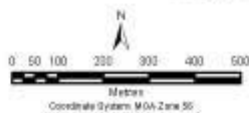


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Lilydale Camping Reserve



Legend

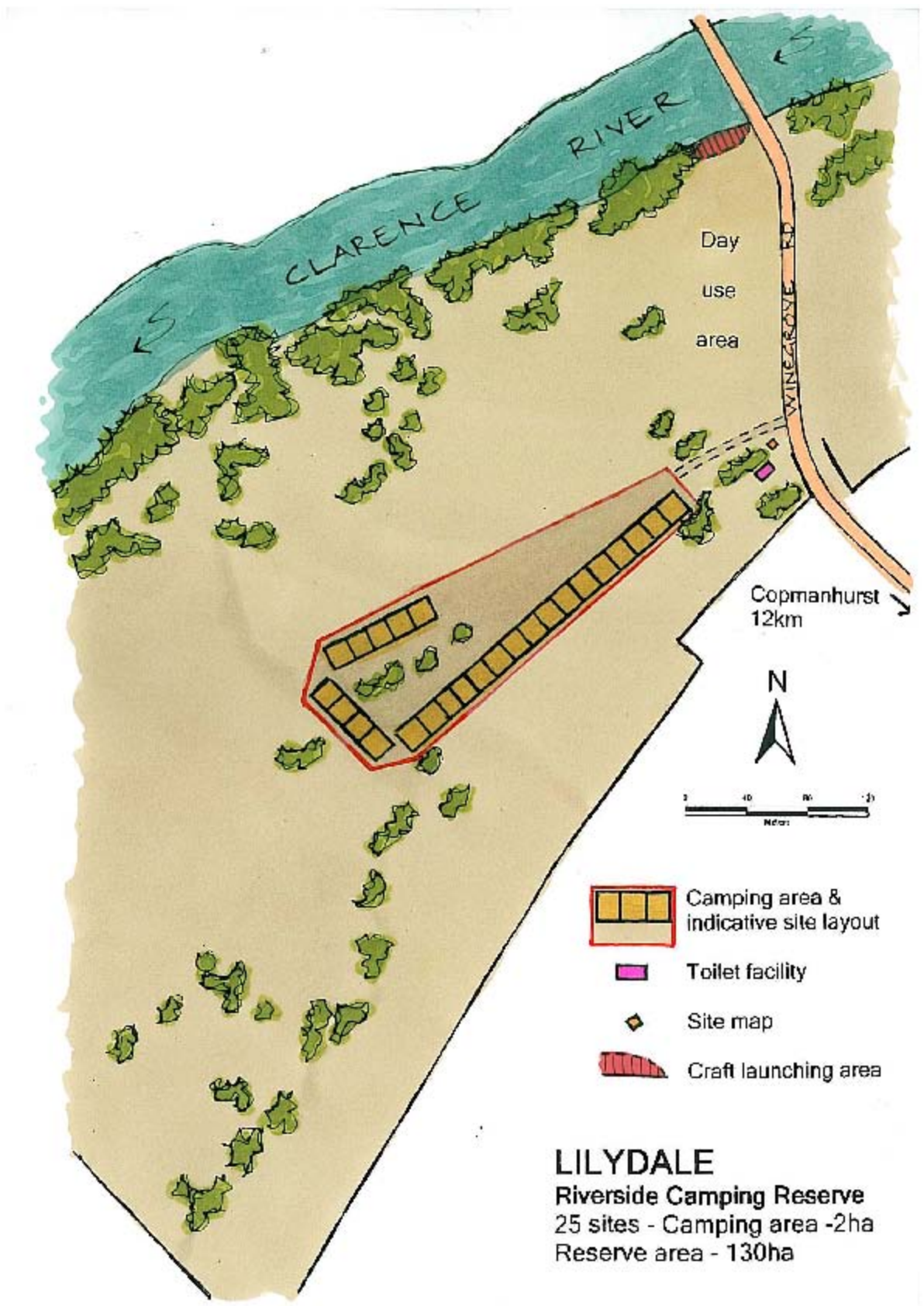
- Camping Reserve
- Indicative Camping Area



Land and Property
Management Authority



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LILYDALE
Riverside Camping Reserve
 25 sites - Camping area - 2ha
 Reserve area - 130ha