



# Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management – Challenges, Changes & Perspectives


Presentation by Melissa Falkenberg  
Wyndham City  
6<sup>th</sup> June 2013



- 30km west of Melbourne CBD
- Growth municipality
- Pressure to deliver infrastructure for our community

# Case Study 1 – Wootten Road



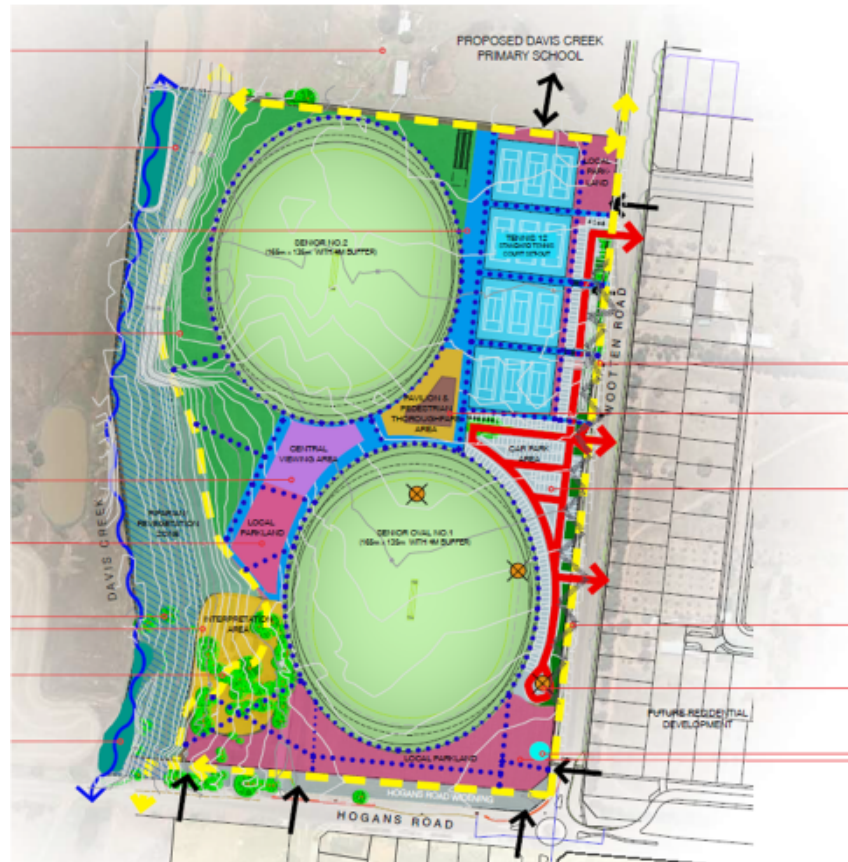



Original Road was rural in nature – our task was to reconstruct to an urban standard

Previously disturbed through pavement construction and installation of services in the roadside verges - didn't trigger a CHMP – wasn't within 200m of a waterway or 50m of a registered site

Completed design, advertised construction tenders and awarded the construction contract in October 2010

# Wootten Road ovals





Found out a CHMP was being conducted on the site to the west for the future construction of ovals. An artefact was found within 50m of the road reserve – ALARM BELLS

This now triggered a CHMP for the entire project – Construction couldn't commence

An archaeologist was engaged, a field investigation was conducted (nothing found) and the CHMP was lodged.

Resulted in a loss of 3 months (to obtain a CHMP) and an extra \$31k in costs

# Suggestions.....



## *ISSUE 1 – The types of activities triggering a mandatory CHMP*

- On previously disturbed sites an archaeologist could be engaged to review the site, if nothing is found then works could continue (no need for CHMP). This would minimise delays and save sponsors \$'s.
- “Sliding scale” assessment – significantly disturbed or not? If no previous disturbance then a high level of investigation would occur (complex assessment?).
- If there is a history of disturbance, such as Wootten Road, then a site visit and due diligence note would suffice. If any heritage material is found it could be returned to the RAP or reburied on site at an agreed location and works could continue.

## *ISSUE 2 – Whether Cultural Heritage Management Plans are too complicated*

The discovery of the artefact near Wootten Road triggered the need for a CHMP for the entire 800 m length of road. This is considered to be overcomplicated as the project didn't trigger a CHMP prior to the discovery of an artefact on the abutting site. It was just a matter of timing.


A better solution may have been to section off the area within the 50m radius of the site to allow for further investigation and allow construction to continue on the remaining section of the road.

No delays – more practical – less additional costs



# Case Study 2 – Werribee River bridge





Council was developing a feasibility study for a proposed pedestrian bridge across the Werribee River at Willow Street.

Engaged archaeologist – complex assessment took place – access tracks for construction were discussed (no direct access so track would need to be 250m long on the north side of the river).

Several RAP's were involved at this site – all consulted – they requested the installation of a geoweb, crushed rock backfill and geofabric to construct the temporary track – cost of approx. \$225k. Very expensive!

Wyndham City proposed a simpler treatment – geofabric and crushed rock – will still protect heritage material – easily removed – cheaper – approx. \$92k

The RAP's and AAV said they would consider this alternative if more site testing was conducted.

This occurred and the alternative proposal was eventually accepted.

The final cost of preparing the CHMP was \$120,000



*ISSUE 3 – The time and cost involved in preparing a Cultural Heritage Management Plan*

Local Governments need a better indication of what CHMP's will cost. How much do we budget for? Costs can easily blow out. How do we cover additional costs?

It is sometimes felt that the requests made by RAP's cannot be challenged as it may have a negative impact on the relationship with the RAP. How do we improve communications and create a more open avenue for discussion?

*Other suggestions for improvement to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006:*

A 'stop the clock' mechanism would be an advantage as long as its initiation is supported by both the RAP and sponsor. eg. if a sponsor needs to supply additional information or resolve an issue. It would save on resubmission fees and save time

A clear definition of significant ground disturbance is required. The definition should consider previous works on the site and the original footprint of the works eg. roadworks and drainage where reconstructions are required

The development of different types of permits would be useful. eg. the suggestion of exempting rehabilitation works from requiring a CHMP





## CONCLUSION

We want to do the right thing – we want to protect cultural heritage material and respect it's significance.

We have a challenge to deliver infrastructure to our community – they have expectations and needs.

We are looking for a practical approach that will protect cultural heritage while allowing Local Government to work within reasonable timeframes and budgets.



**Thank you**