

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT
SURVEY OF TELECOM LINE AT SOFALA AND WINDEYER

August 1984

W.Thorp (Co-Ordinator)

S.McIntyre (Prehistorian)

D.Bairstow (Historical Archaeologist)

Prepared for Telecom Australia

by

A.A.R.

AUSTRALIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

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Mr Bill Allen, Chairman of the Bathurst Local Aboriginal
Land Council

Mr Charlie Gregory, Telecom Site Engineer

Mrs Miller, local resident of "Willowview"

Mr Mark Ridge, Telecom representative

Mr Sam Yates, local resident

1.0 PREFACE TO THE REPORT

1.1 LOCATION

The survey and report is concerned with a Telecom cable line in the Sofala-Windeyer area north of Bathurst. Underground telephone cables were laid from a new automatic exchange at Sofala to all outlying farms. In addition, a similar exchange is to be constructed at Windeyer and cables again laid to surrounding farms and settlements.

Cf. Plan Nos. 1-12

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the site work were twofold: to survey the proposed line which was to be pegged out and move it as necessary to avoid damage to prehistoric and/or historic resources as located; secondly to locate on plan the same sites with a short written description.

The objectives of this report are to document this programme, formalise the results of the survey and provide recommendations for future similar works.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

Three consultants were contracted by Telecom to effect the programme; one to act as co-ordinator, a prehistorian to survey the aboriginal (prehistoric) resources, an historical archaeologist to survey the non-aboriginal historic resources. The prehistorian and historical archaeologist carried out the field work and presented their survey notes and/or brief report to the co-ordinator who compiled the final resource document.

A total of approximately eighty kilometres of cable route was involved in this survey although several kilometres of this length, along the Sofala to Ilford Road, had been completed prior to the archaeological involvement. At Wattle Flat the work involved the relaying of an already extant cable inside protective piping, thereby also reducing the actual length of line to be surveyed.

The cable is laid by means of a specially adapted machine (a "D7") to which overhead reels have been fitted

which feed the cable into a shallow ditch (c.600mm deep). This ditch is cut by a single plough blade which is attached to the front of the D7. The soil is then pushed back over the cable. However, in several instances greater areas of disturbance than this may be noted, for example, in soft soils where the treads of the machine disturb several centimetres of deposit thereby effectively increasing the disturbed area to at least the width of the machine; in areas where the D7 and grader have entered a paddock or turned around; at creek crossings where the banks are bulldozed to allow the easy passage of the machinery and small levees are created on either side of the creek to deflect run-off. In general the cable is laid within three metres of the road easement or fenceline although it is noted that this is subject to considerable variation.

To survey the length of the cable in the prescribed time most of the field work was carried out from a car with the potentially more sensitive areas being walked over. Local informants (both aboriginal and European) were spoken to by both sub-consultants.

Area plans of the route were supplied by Telecom and it was noted that some attempts had already been made to identify known historic resources and avoid them on the planned route. A complete copy of the prehistorian's report and standard recording forms have been lodged with the National Parks and Wildlife Service as an interim measure to comply with their requirements.

1.4 CONSTRAINTS

A number of constraints are recognized which inhibited the completion of a satisfactory survey. Limited time must necessarily be a major consideration; a maximum of three days in the field to survey the length of line involved presupposes considerable haste on the part of the sub-consultants and dictated the method of survey, in this case generally by car. The lack of recorded aboriginal sites along the eighty kilometre route is probably a reflection of the conditions of survey rather than the reality.

Secondly, alterations to the original brief were made in the field without the knowledge of the co-ordinator.

It had been initially planned that the line would be pegged before the arrival of the sub-consultants and their responsibility would be to move those pegs as necessary to protect sites. A letter was sent to the survey area stating that this was not to be the case, that a Telecom representative would accompany the archaeologists in the field and peg the sensitive areas. Due to work commitments this representative was not present for most of the survey. Continual surveillance was required in some areas before a site was actually pegged.

To survey an area already identified, record any site involved and move a line is considerably less time consuming and more cost efficient than establishing a line through an area that has to be surveyed to find the least sensitive areas, record sites as necessary and then ensure that the line is pegged. If these alterations to the initial briefing had been made known to the co-ordinator before work commenced it would necessarily have considerably altered the original assessment of the time and funding required.

In addition to the above, snowfall reduced surface visibility and heavy overnight frosts and snowfalls restricted vehicular access into certain areas during the mornings resulting in some loss of valuable time. The limited time available for this work also necessitates the resource document being brief presenting only the basic information which was retrieved with no assessment.

1.5 FORMAT OF REPORT

The report is in three main sections. Section 3.0 presents the synthesis of the data recorded in the field survey. Section 4.0 provides location plans and Section 2.0 recommendations arising from the work. As noted, the prehistorian's report, recording forms and original negatives have been lodged with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The field notes and negatives of the historic survey are filed by the co-ordinator.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recognized that this survey could not be judged to have been completely successful for the reasons outlined in Section 1.4, particularly from the consideration of the prehistorian whose obligations required by the National Parks and Wildlife Service could not be satisfactorily met under the imposed conditions. However, it has proven to be a good educational process and the lessons from this should be incorporated into future similar programmes as well as consideration being given to longer term planning processes. Recommendations arising from this work are included as follows:

- 2.1 That scale plans of the exact route be provided before work commences to facilitate archival or listings searches e.g. at the National Parks and Wildlife Register, National Trust, Heritage Council etc.
- 2.2 That no changes are made to an original briefing after work has commenced unless these are made known to the co-ordinator/principal consultant who shall have time to reassess the work and renegotiate the time and funding required if necessary.
- 2.3 That any survey work proposed be pegged out before the consultants enter the field.
- 2.4 That some contingency should exist to account for lost time through conditions beyond the control of the survey team e.g. snowfall, rain etc.
- 2.5 That Telecom, the Heritage Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service should arrange a meeting to discuss long term programmes, priorities and planning rather than rely on short term "crisis" consultancies.

3.0 RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

3.1 PRECIS

Virtually no prehistoric sites were located on the cable line and this must necessarily be the product of a number of factors: the conditions of the survey, prohibitive environmental factors making the area unattractive for aboriginal occupation, later European mining activity disturbing and obliterating most of the few sites to be found and the twentieth century activity disturbing or destroying the remainder.

European occupation is somewhat better represented with a number of disused roads and mining sites being located, however, the majority of the cable length crossed country that appeared to have no historic potential. Some disturbance to historic sites had already occurred, particularly in the townships.

Most of the sites located in the surveys have been avoided by the cable line, the remainder have incurred some damage of varying degrees.

3.2 PREHISTORIC RESOURCES

A CONTEXTUAL DATA

There is very little available information on the pre-history of this area. The nearest known site to the area in question is at Turondale, this being an engraving site, although some questions have been raised regarding its authenticity. Further away on the Macquarie River a plentiful number of aboriginal sites are known (open camp sites, artefact scatters, scarred and carved trees, quarries, axe grinding grooves and rock shelters with deposit).

It has been concluded that the reason for the scarcity of sites across most of the Orange and Hill End Plateaux is due to harsh environmental conditions which deterred aboriginal occupation. This is especially true of the Hill End Plateau which has steep slopes, poor soils, lack of water and harsh climatic conditions.

Along the cable route only one site (PH1) was located and this was in an area where the cable had already been lain. Also along the cable route an isolated artefact was located (PHA1) and another three artefacts grouped together as one because they are devoid of any archaeological context (PHA2). Two other sites were located while travelling to and from the cable route (PH2, PH3). Both occur well clear of the cable route and were not threatened by it.

B SITE DESCRIPTIONS

i) Site PH1

The site consists of an open artefact scatter on a hill immediately south of Sofala, approximately 300m SE of the post office. This is the location of the new automatic exchange and the cable had already been lain, dissecting the site. The area was probably a workfloor measuring at least 300 x 200m covering most of the hill side and consists of quartz artefacts, predominantly core, many with obvious focal platforms and reverse scars. Most of the artefacts appear to have measured c.43 x 40 x 20mm.

ii) Site PH2

The "site" consisted of three pale green chert flakes

and one scraper with retouch which measured 20 x 12 x 1mm. The artefacts were found eroding out of the bank of a small creek which runs into Big Oakey Creek. The location was east of Sofala on the Turon River Road 600m past "Greenbank" on the side of the road where a small run-off leads towards Pennyweight Flat creek. The artefacts were found approximately 30m from the road on the western bank of the small run-off. The site was not threatened by Telecom's activities. . .

iii) Site PH3

The site of a scarred tree, being a large River Gum from which a piece of bark had been removed from a point two metres from the base. The scar measured approximately 1m x 45cm. The tree is found on the roadside along the upper Turon River approximately seven kilometres east of Sofala. It is located immediately after the second Turon crossing. It was not threatened by the current programme.

iv) Artefact PHA1

This artefact was a utilized core with use wear along one edge, measuring 30 x 25 x 10mm and was made from a yellow chert pebble. Approximately 70% of its surface area was cortex. It was located on the eastern bank of the Turon River three metres in from the south side of the road and was in a disturbed context beside a European fireplace. The entire bank had been disturbed at this area due to the construction of the forde and an access road. The cable closely followed the line of the disturbance.

v) Artefact PHA2

This group, recorded together because they are devoid of a clear archaeological context, consisted of three artefacts scattered along the western bank of Bell Creek beside a DMR bridge. It is unclear where the artefacts were originally derived from. They consist of one chert core; one quartz flake and one possible core of an unknown material (volcanic tuff?). It was noted that on the opposite side of this bridge the banks open out onto a small flat area which is protected from the wind. The deposit here is apparently undisturbed and is of archaeological potential.

C INFORMANT DATA

The sub-consultant contacted a local resident who had several aboriginal artefacts in her possession. Two had come from Flaggy Creek. From Wallaby Rocks came an unidentified artefact possibly made from rhyolite. It was ground on all surfaces and had a hole ground in one end. Its purpose is unknown. Also from Wallaby Rocks was an engraving on a piece of shale. The lines were engraved and then pecked (the opposite to common aboriginal practice) and the designs and edging were atypical for aboriginal custom. It is unclear whether the engraving is of aboriginal origin. Discussions with the local Aboriginal Land Council revealed no known sites in the immediate area.

3.3 HISTORIC RESOURCES

A CONTEXTUAL DATA

Although the area has a considerably well documented historic period very little field work has been carried out to date. The major impact on this area were the gold rushes beginning in the 1850s bringing with them an attendant influx of semi-permanent and transient people.

The major sites recorded to date are those of the National Heritage Commission in Clarks Creek Road viz. a Chinese joss house, gold diggings, pig roasting oven, possible Chinese settlement, the bases of two stone chimneys, windmill and farmhouse, Chinese cemetery and a tinshed.

B SITE DESCRIPTIONS

i) Site H1

Noted only as the remains of an old mining pit. It was not threatened by the cable line.

ii) Site H2

The route of a disused road. It could not be avoided but the damage was noted as minimal.

iii) Site H3

This appeared to be the site of an old road. The cable avoided the site.

iv) Site H4

East of Bells Creek the line crossed the modern road from south to north and was laid close to the line of the old Sofala to Hill End Road. Damage to approximately 50 metres of the road was noted. Another disused road ran north/south on the western side of the creek although it appeared to be of minimal historic value. The cable crossed it at a point where there were no retaining walls and only minor earth embankments.

v) Site H5

An area with considerable evidence of mining activities (pits, shafts, mullock heaps etc). The line was laid to the north of it and caused minimal damage except at a

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v) Site H5

An area with considerable evidence of mining activities (pits, shafts, mullock heaps etc). The line was laid to the north of it and caused minimal damage except at a

point 100 metres east of the Turon River Bridge.

vi) Site H6

Another site with quite extensive evidence of mining activity (as noted for above). The line avoided the major sites, however, some minor damage did occur to lesser mining sites in the eastern bank of Big Oakey Creek.

vii) Site H7

A number of points along the Turon River were noted as areas of alluvial mining, however, being subject to flooding the physical remains are no longer extant.

viii) Site H8

At Windeyer a number of minor diggings were located but a change in the cable line avoided these.