

## **Aboriginal Cultural Heritage:**

12% of the potential subsidence impact area has no archaeological survey. 709 Aboriginal heritage sites were found in the study area, including nine open grinding groove sites, 128 rock shelters with artifacts, art and/or grinding grooves, five scarred trees, five stone arrangements, two ochre quarries, a waterhole/well and a combined groove and artifact scatter site.

Some of these sites have regional significance. There is no consideration of the relationship with the sites in this study area to those identified in the Moolarben Stage 1 and Stage 2 or the Wilpinjong archaeological studies, or the Aboriginal heritage sites known to exist in other parts of the region such as Goulburn River National Park, Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve and the Hands on Rock reserve.

The Goulburn River headwaters contain a significant indication of Aboriginal activity. This is because of the low altitude of the Great Dividing Range in this part of the state. The Goulburn River provides a direct, easy access between the coast and western regions.

The area was used extensively for trade and travel and permanent occupation.

The cumulative impact of ongoing disturbance and destruction of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites has not been assessed.

Subsidence from longwall mining is predicted to be as great as 1.6 metres, surface cracks are predicted to be as wide as 250mm. Current mining operations have caused up to 20% of sandstone cliff formations to collapse.

The subsidence report indicates that a generic assessment of sites identified as having archaeological significance has been conducted. This is not adequate to determine the full impacts of subsidence on the identified sites.

The recommendations outlined in Volume 4 Appendix 9 of the EAR will not prevent the ongoing loss of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the region.