

**NATIONAL TRUST REGISTER
LISTING REPORT**

LOCALITY	NAME OR IDENTIFICATION		ADDRESS OR LOCATION
Parish of Durrigere & Ulan	The Drip and Corner Gorge and associated sandstone escarpments Goulburn River, NSW		Goulburn River 50 kms north/east Mudgee Upper Hunter Valley NSW
LGA:	Mid Western Regional Council	ABORIGINAL NATION:	Wiradjuri
POSTCODE:	2850	Lot//DP:	7301//1136299, 7008//1030463, 80//750736, 45//750750, 30//755439, 51//720321, 50//720321, Crown non tidal waterway Goulburn River
COMMITTEE:	Landscape Heritage Conservation	GRID (access):	GDA94 MGA56 E 197162 N 6431373
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Drip and Corner Gorges on the Goulburn River form part of a visually dramatic landscape of sandstone cliffs and gorges located on the western-most edge of the Hunter River Network and the geographic line where the Sydney Sandstone Basin abutts the Lachlan Fold, and at the lowest point of the Great Dividing Range. The sculptural rock and ironstone formations drip clear spring water which seeps from a perched aquifer through a porous rock wall supporting ferns, bottlebrushes and weeping grasses. The atmosphere of The Drip is described as having a cathedral-like quality.

The area in which The Drip and Corner Gorge is situated is significant for its association with Indigenous history, early scientific exploration of the geology, flora and fauna of Australia, and the early development of the pastoral, timber and mining industries.

The high social and environmental values of The Drip and Corner Gorge are reflected in its regular use as an educational site, as a site of recreation and for its spiritual values by Indigenous and other communities. The wider cultural landscape including the Goulburn River corridor and adjacent escarpment, provide evidence of extensive Aboriginal heritage indicating the area was used for highly skilled tool production and extensive artwork. Scientific findings indicate that The Drip and Corner Gorge do not exist in isolation but were part of a network of tool production and travel for Aboriginal peoples which awaits greater investigation.

Within the Goulburn River corridor is evidence of Aboriginal painted hands on rock walls and the extraordinary beauty of the site attracted the Sydney artist, Brett Whiteley, who painted animals and objects in a style reflecting Aboriginal artwork.

The Drip and Corner Gorge are situated at a number of intersections – cultural, historic and geographic. Too often the heritage of Aboriginal people, of settler Australians, and the environment is separated.¹ The history of Indigenous habitation and attachment to this region, including the intersection of different Aboriginal groups, has

yet to be extensively researched. At this western tip of the Goulburn River is the geographic intersection of the Sydney Basin and the Lachlan Fold, the physical boundary of the Great Dividing Range and the inland plains, the western-most point of the Hunter River network across 2.2 Kms².

Assessments made of finite, spatially limited sites, have found scores of examples demonstrating the cultural and economic life of Aborigines in the area (temporary dwelling, industry, artworks, ceremonial practices and artefacts). There is a high level of archaeological potential relating to Aboriginal cultural heritage throughout the area of the Goulburn River and The Drip and Corner Gorge: further research, collaborative and broad studies will provide a more complete understanding of Aboriginal culture and attachment.

The Aquifer Interference Policy announced by NSW Government in September 2012 offers some hope of protection for the fragile eco-system of The Drip, which is at considerable risk from commercial activity.

Official protection and recognition of the Drip and Corner Gorges and riparian corridor along the Goulburn River has the support of the Aboriginal Cultural Environment Network (ACEN), the Hunter Central Rivers CMA, Mid-Western Regional Council, Mudgee District Environment Group, Central West Environment Network, the NSW Government's Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel (for the Moorlaben Coal Project) and the local community. The Mid-Western Regional Council area has no other natural assets of this significance and readily accessible from a major road.

The inclusion of this area into Goulburn River National Park is supported by the National Parks and Wildlife Service / Office of Environment and Heritage. The Department of Mines and the mining company are prepared to release the land with conditions – i.e. the mining company has exploration and mining plans on the northern side of the river which includes a tunnel under the river at the Drip.

In 2007 the *Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel* reflecting public and government concerns about the potential impact of commercial mining on The Drip and Corner Gorge "concluded that significant cultural, spiritual, historical, educational, tourism and recreational values were associated with" The Drip and Corner Gorge and these features should be protected.

There is an urgent need to recognise and protect this outstanding area for contemporary and future generations.

DESCRIPTION:

The Goulburn River area in which The Drip and Corner Gorge, The Drip Picnic Reserve and the riparian corridor of the Goulburn River is located is approximately 100 hectares.

The following feature table describes the status of the land supporting the Drip and Corner Gorges.

	Feature (W to E)	Lot/DP	Owner/Landholder	GDA94 MGA56	
				Easting	Northing
1	R81766 & access to The Drip	7301//1136299 7008//1030463	Crown Reserve under Trust R81766 gaz 10/07/1959 PK557679	197132	6431366
2	Orchid Rock	N/A	Crown non tidal waterway	197693	6431545
3	Arch Rock	N/A	Crown non tidal waterway	197882	6431426
4	Brett Whitely mural Honeycomb Rocks	N/A	Crown non tidal waterway	198148	6431474
5	THE DRIP GORGE	N/A	Crown non tidal waterway	198332	6431697
6	The Corner Gorge	N/A	Crown non tidal waterway	198520	6431317