

# FACT SHEET



NEW SOUTH WALES  
ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

[www.alc.org.au](http://www.alc.org.au)

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18 May 2020

## Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS)

This Fact Sheet has been prepared by the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) to support the release of the Aboriginal Heritage Information System (AHIMS) on the Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping tool.

### What is AHIMS?

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NPW Act)* is the main law administering Aboriginal culture and heritage in New South Wales. Section 90Q of the NPW Act requires the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), (formerly the responsibility of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage), to keep a register of all information and records regarding Aboriginal objects, sites and places registered to DPC.

AHIMS is made up of an electronic database of recorded Aboriginal sites across NSW, and an archive of related documentation and reports.

The DPC states that AHIMS is a database containing detailed information on over 93,000 recorded sites and over 13,500 archeological and cultural heritage assessment reports. It must be noted that AHIMS is not a complete record of all sites, as only sites known to the DPC are recorded. The AHIMS database is constantly updated with sites added, sites updated, and impacts to sites recorded by the DPC's AHIMS team.

Local Aboriginal Land Councils can add and update sites online or by completing an Aboriginal Site Recording Form and submitting it to [ahims@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ahims@environment.nsw.gov.au)

### What is AHIMS used for?

AHIMS is intended to be used by Aboriginal people, organisations, academics for research purposes, authorities and local governments for planning purposes. Developers wishing to undertake groundwork are also encouraged to search AHIMS as part of DPC's *Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects* in NSW, and any other related Industry Code, before undertaking their proposed activity.

*Please Note:* While all care has been taken in the preparation of this document, the advice it contains is not a substitute for independent consideration of the issues and/or legal advice on this subject.

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## Who can access AHIMS?

The AHIMS Database is accessible to several different organisations including Local Aboriginal Land Councils. DPC recognises that certain information on AHIMS is culturally sensitive and has protocols in place to ensure such sensitivities are protected.

## Basic Online Searches:

DPC has a free online search function where anyone can register to have access to the AHIMS database. Registered users can conduct a 'Basic Search'.

This 'Basic Search' simply provides a Yes or Nil (No) result, indicating whether or not a record of Aboriginal objects or places exist within the defined area of the search. These results can be viewed immediately online.

If the request comes back with a 'Yes' result (that registered Aboriginal sites or Aboriginal places are present), users are then asked to request an 'Extensive Search'.

## Extensive Searches:

Extensive Searches provide more detailed information about the identified site, including the type of site (e.g. scarred tree, burial, midden), in some cases who recorded the site, or whether a report exists about the site.

The DPC decides what information about a registered site is to be given out as a result of an Extensive Search and what information is to be kept confidential. A fee of \$50 is currently charged for an 'Extensive Search' request, with additional costs for GIS or express services. These fees are able to be waived for Aboriginal organisations and Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

## When is AHIMS available on the GIS?

AHIMS will be available on the GIS from Monday 18 May 2020.

## More information

If you would like further information about the contents of this document, please visit the NSWALC website [www.alc.org.au](http://www.alc.org.au), call the NSWALC Culture and Heritage Program on 9689 4444 or email us at [ACH@alc.org.au](mailto:ACH@alc.org.au).

The AHIMS Team can be contacted on (02) 9585 6345 or email at [ahims@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ahims@environment.nsw.gov.au).

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