

# 4. MAPPING HISTORICAL FOREST DISTURBANCES

## 4.1 BACKGROUND

Phase Five of the project proposal was split into two parts. Part one was the validation of recent disturbance mapping contained within the growth stage map. Part two was mapping logging, fire and clearing evidence from past “historical” photography. This mapping was to occur across all land tenures based on agreed API specification.

## 4.2 METHODS AND SPECIFICATIONS

The mapping of historical disturbances was the last task undertaken by this project. Specifications provided by API-EWG were constrained by a two-week completion deadline for this phase. Minimum polygon size and API pathways were not specified. The interpreters were relied upon to limit their interpretations to obvious, clearly discernible disturbances that could be comprehensively recorded within the time frame allowed. No field validation, formal spatial control process or independent agreement assessment procedures were specified.

SFNSW provided two senior interpreters and photography which were managed by NPWS under a Memorandum of Understanding.

Photography was provided by SFNSW Eden region. Coverage for all of Eden was provided between 1964 and 1967 using 1:40,000 black and white aerial photography. There was a rapid API assessment of fire and logging disturbance that was obvious on photography. No field validation was possible. Information was recorded on clear acetate overlays that manually captured sketch mapping then digitised using AUTOCAD and exported into ERMS. A senior interpreter did all digital capture. Mapping specifications were the same over all tenures.

## 4.3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A final digital map was completed as specified. Fire and logging appeared more widespread than expected though current evidence of these disturbances on recent photography was minimal.

The interpreters were concerned that without field checking and independent validation both the spatial accuracy and comprehensive spread of information capture was non-specific. They recommended that the layer be used with some caution and decisions regarding it not be taken without appropriate field validation. Given the scale of photography and the minimal use of formal control, the information is provided as an indicative level of accuracy and should not be considered spatially accurate below 1:100,000. The API-EWG and SFNSW representative were advised that this procedure would be adopted. They suggested that the procedure should not compromise final completion project dates.

## 4.4 RECOMMENDATION

With no field validation and independent accuracy assessment both the interpreters and project management team recommend that this map should only be provided as a contextual layer to assist conservation planning.

