Theme: Tocal's Aboriginal Heritage

Note: Tocal's thematic history has been prepared as part of the assessment of the site's heritage significance in the 2012 (draft) conservation management plan.

Australian heritage theme:	2. Peopling Australia
NSW heritage theme:	Aboriginal cultures and interaction with other cultures

There were several Aboriginal nations in the Hunter Valley at the time of European arrival. The Awabakal people lived on the southern side of the Hunter River while the Wonnarua lived to the north west and the Worimi to the north east. The Paterson River probably formed the dividing line between the territories of the Wonnarua and Worimi people.

The Gringai clan of the Wonnarua Aboriginal people are thought to be the traditional owners of the land on which Tocal Homestead, campus and farm now stand, although this is not known with complete certainty. The name 'Tocal' is an Aboriginal word meaning 'plenty' or 'bountiful', reflecting the abundance of food and materials provided by Tocal's diverse landscapes that include rainforest, wetlands, woodlands and grasslands (Archer and Walsh, 2005). These landscapes are clearly evident today despite modification by European settlement and agriculture.

The stretch of the Paterson River that forms the eastern boundary of Tocal was called 'Yimmang' by the Wonnarua (Lang,1837).The large lagoon immediately to the south west of Tocal Homestead was called 'Tyeli' (Knapp, 1834), and the creek that flows through Tocal, now known as Webbers Creek, was called 'Pumby Brook' (Dangar, 1828).

There were four phases of European/Indigenous contact on the frontier in the Paterson River Valley, and each subsequent phase had an increased impact on Aboriginal life and culture. The first phase involved minimal contact as Europeans sought to explore the Hunter Valley, a notable example of which is the 1801 survey of the Paterson River by Ensign Barrallier (Grimes, 1801; Macqueen, 1993).

In the second phase, beginning in 1804, gangs of convict timber-cutters from the penal settlement at Newcastle were the principal form of European contact with Aboriginal people in the Paterson area. The gangs operated along the Paterson River and established a camp at Old Banks near Tocal. This phase of contact had little impact on Aboriginal sources of food and materials but would have impacted on Aboriginal social fabric through inter-racial sexual relations, introduction of European diseases, and indiscriminate shootings.

The third phase, beginning in 1812, involved settlement of a few Europeans on the river near Tocal (Hunter, 1997). Although these farmers held their land at Governor Macquarie's 'pleasure', their holdings constituted small-scale, early European alienation of land in the area.

The fourth phase involved large-scale alienation of land in the Paterson Valley from 1822 as settlers were granted up to several thousand acres each. By 1825 most of the prime alluvial land along the lower reaches of the Paterson River has been granted to European immigrants. This scale of settlement drastically reduced the hunting areas of the Wonnarua and Worimi, restricted their supply of game and materials, and further exposed them to European diseases against which they had little or no immunity (NSW Legislative Council, 1846).

In the 1830s Aboriginal numbers in the Lower Hunter declined markedly, and mortalities in a smallpox epidemic from 1829 to 1831 may have exceeded 30 per cent of the Aboriginal population. After this epidemic Aborigines survived in numbers only in the Upper Hunter but not in the Lower Hunter area where Tocal is located.

Throughout the phases of Indigenous/European contact there were varying degrees of conflict and accommodation, although conflict in the Lower Hunter was sporadic rather than sustained. The intercultural exchanges were diverse, fluid and ambivalent—some involved violence but there was also cooperation, companionship and sharing of knowledge (Walsh, 2007).

Tocal's convicts (see convict theme) were frequently in contact with the Gringai people, as the hunting and living areas of the Gringai were the daily workplaces of the convicts. Convict shepherds working remotely from Tocal Homestead had unsupervised contact which presented dangers and opportunities for both parties (Walsh 2007).

Tocal's Aboriginal heritage consists of stone grinding grooves, scarred trees, Aboriginal place names, a glass shard used for cutting, and a ceremonial waddy found in one of the underground silos. One set of grooves on the banks of Webbers Creek are now under water at high tide, indicating a marked rise in water levels since their establishment and use.

All the principal elements of the pre-European landscape, such as wetlands, rainforest, woodlands, grasslands and paperbark forest, are still in evidence at Tocal today, albeit in a form significantly modified by European settlement and land use.

Chronology:

Unknown	Aboriginal people have inhabited the east coast for at least 17,000 years and probably earlier (Attenbrow, 2010);
1804	convict timber cutters began operating along the Paterson River;
1812	small-scale European settlement began near Tocal;
1822	large-scale European settlement of the Paterson district began;
1822	European occupation of Tocal began.

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Theme: Tocal Convict Accommodation and Work Sites

Note: Tocal's thematic history has been prepared as part of the assessment of the site's heritage significance in the 2012 (draft) conservation management plan.

Australian heritage theme:	2. Peopling Australia
NSW heritage theme:	Convict

The Tocal Homestead precinct contains extensive physical evidence of the lifestyle and work practices of convicts assigned to the estate from 1822 until transportation to NSW ceased and the convict system wound down in the 1840s. Comprehensive documentary and biographical evidence of the 150 convicts who lived and worked on the Tocal estate between 1822 and 1840 is available to complement the physical evidence.

From 1822 the majority of convicts in New South Wales were assigned to private masters rather than to government gangs, but sites of private assignment have received little attention in Australian convict heritage. They have been overshadowed by places of secondary punishment such as the penal settlements of Port Arthur and Norfolk Island, and by other institutional sites such as Hyde Park Barracks.

By the end of Governor Macquarie's term in 1821, the majority of convicts in New South Wales were allocated to government works. From 1819 to 1821 Commissioner Bigge held an inquiry into the penal operations of the Colony and recommended that the majority of convicts be allocated to settlers rather than to government. When Governor Brisbane took over from Macquarie at the end of 1821 he restructured the convict system in accordance with Bigge's recommendations. Brisbane granted land to settlers in proportion to the number of convicts they were prepared to support off the government stores, requiring settlers to support one convict for every 100 acres granted.

Tocal's first land grantee, James Phillips Webber, arrived in the Colony in January 1822, only a few weeks after Governor Brisbane, and was one of the first setters in the Colony to acquire land under the new policy of extensive private convict assignment. He was also one of the first to take up land in the Hunter Valley when it was opened to wide scale settlement at the end of 1821 following the decision to close the penal settlement at Newcastle and to transfer its function (as a place of secondary punishment) to Port Macquarie.

In late January 1822 Webber agreed to support 15 convicts and applied for 1,500 acres. Within a few months he amended the request to 20 convicts and his initial grant was set at 2,000 acres. James Webber took possession of the Tocal land in March 1822 with his first four convicts and he relied almost entirely on convict labour to develop the estate. The Tocal estate was typical of the pattern of land settlement and rural development in the 1820s and 1830s as the Colony rapidly expanded beyond the Sydney basin.

By 1828 there were 34 convicts living and working on Tocal at any one time and the estate had grown to 3,300 acres. Tocal accurately represents rural estates that constituted the core of the convict assignment system. Usually convicts were assigned to Tocal upon their arrival in New South Wales but the estate also received convicts returning from a term of secondary punishment at a penal settlement or in an iron gang, or those who had been returned to government by other settlers as 'unsatisfactory' and then re-assigned.

The transportation of convicts to New South Wales was suspended in 1840 and assignment of convicts to settlers formally ended in 1841. About half of the 150 convict men and boys who were assigned to Tocal between 1822 and the end of the convict period remained on the estate until they obtained a ticket-of-leave or their sentences expired. Of the others, some were returned as unsatisfactory, some were banished to serve time in an iron gang or a penal settlement, and some died before emancipation (Walsh, 2006). The Tocal estate therefore demonstrates the full gamut of private assignment experience and illustrates the dynamics of private assignment in action.

The estate provides ample evidence of convict living conditions, ranging from crude slab-timber structures to the two-storey brick convict barracks constructed about 1836. The estate is replete with evidence of day to day convict labour including remnants of a sheep-wash in Webber's creek, the mounds of Tocal's first vineyard, a convict quarry and the bell used to summon convicts to work and meals. Evidence of convict-built structures include the

magnificent stone barn constructed in 1830, a blacksmith's shop, underground bottle-shaped brick grain silos, and remnants of timber and stone bridges.

Recent research has provided detailed, exhaustive documentation and interpretation of the deployment, organisation and administration of convict labour on the Tocal estate, along with methods of control, rewards, punishments and behaviour of individual convicts living and working there (Walsh, 2006, 2007, 2008). Tocal's convicts—nearly 150 in total—cleared and ploughed the land, planted, tended and harvested a range of crops including tobacco and wheat, constructed and maintained a variety of fences, huts and sheds, tended Tocal's vineyard and some assisted in wine making.

Most of Tocal's convicts lived in the Homestead precinct but some convict shepherds and watchmen/hutkeepers lived remotely in rough timber huts in the bush. Some of Tocal's convicts were skilled artisans such as coopers, blacksmiths and stonemasons, and Tocal's 1830 stone barn is testament to the skills and pride of workmanship of convict stonemason Dennis Long who was assigned to Tocal at the time.

A detailed survey of the Tocal estate undertaken in 1834 has been found and analysed, providing further interpretative detail for the physical evidence and indicating an untapped potential for substantial archaeological finds relating to convict lifestyle and work practices (Knapp, 1834). Some of the buildings identified in this survey are no longer evident but many key elements, such as the stone barn, have survived. The current layout of the precinct and relationships between the buildings, fences and spaces remain substantially as they were in 1834, thus providing a rich picture of the character and organisation of convict work and life on a rural estate.

The layout of the estate and the extensive surviving physical evidence also clearly demonstrate the social structures associated with a rural estate based predominantly on a convict workforce. The physical structures mirror the social strata, functions and roles operating at the time, ranging from basic convict accommodation, the modest brick overseer's cottage, to the substantial original Tocal Homestead and outbuildings (not extant) and the grand Tocal Homestead constructed at the end of the convict era as a country retreat for the estate's owner.

Chronology:

1822, March	James Webber and his first four convicts arrived at Tocal;
1828, November	34 assigned convicts living and working at Tocal;
1829, November	13 convicts revolted at Tocal due to lack of rewards during harvest;
1834, May	Tocal surveyed by Edward Knapp prior to its sale;
1834, August	Tocal sold to Caleb and Felix Wilson and its convicts transferred to them;
1835	Fire at Tocal destroyed several buildings[1];
1837, April	Convict murder at Tocal, one witness hid in the stone barn;
1840	Transportation of convicts to New South Wales suspended;
1841	Private assignment of convicts formally ended;
1844, December	Tocal's last known convict absconded and was arrested at Maitland races.

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Theme: Tocal's agriculture and pastoralism

Note: Tocal's thematic history has been prepared as part of the assessment of the site's heritage significance in the 2012 (draft) conservation management plan.

Australian heritage theme:	3. Developing local, regional and national economies
NSW heritage theme:	Agriculture, pastoralism

Tocal's first land grantee, James Phillips Webber, arrived in the Colony in January 1822 and was one of the first to take up land in the Lower Hunter Valley when it was opened to wide scale settlement at the end of 1821. This followed the decision to close the penal settlement at Newcastle and transfer it to Port Macquarie. In March 1822 Henry Dangar was instructed to survey the Lower Hunter area in preparation for settlement and to accommodate Webber who already occupied his land. This explains why Dangar started his district survey at Tocal, using the estate's boundaries as his base datum (Dangar, 1822).

Tocal's frontage to the navigable, tidal section of the Paterson River is a key to understanding why Webber chose to settle there. It gave him direct access to Sydney markets. The nearby deep-water port of Morpeth provided regular sailings to Sydney, and from 1832 a regular steamship service (Walsh and Archer, 2007). Webber and fellow settlers could ship their produce by boat to Morpeth and trans-ship it to Sydney in larger ships.

This maritime access offered considerable advantages in trade and amenity for Lower Hunter Settlers compared to other areas of the colony such as Bathurst. It drove the rapid, large-scale alienation of land in the Paterson Valley from 1822 as settlers received up to several thousand acres each. By 1825 most of the prime alluvial land along the lower reaches of the Paterson River has been granted to European immigrants (Perry, 1963).

Like many other established settlers, Webber purchased Crown land adjoining his grant, and by 1828 Tocal comprised 3,300 acres. With a large convict workforce, Webber produced wheat, oats, barley and maize, but his largest cash crop was tobacco. Webber ran up to 600 cattle and 3,000 sheep, and produced milk, butter and cheese.

Many of the elements of agriculture and pastoralism under Webber are still evident at Tocal. His farm land, the stone barn where tobacco was stored, blacksmith's shop, barracks and supervisor's cottage remain intact, and there are remnants of his sheepwash. The relationships between the buildings, fences and spaces are substantially as they were in 1834 and accurately reflect the form and function of early colonial agriculture.

A notable activity at Tocal under Webber was viticulture and wine making. In the 1830s Webber was acknowledged as one of the pioneers of the wine industry in the colony (Walsh, 2007, 2008), but this is largely unrecognised in modern histories. Consequently the mounds and trenches of Webber's vineyard evident today are among the oldest remnants of the Australian wine industry but are seldom accorded that significance.[2]

In 1834 Webber sold the whole estate to Sydney merchants Caleb and Felix Wilson. Caleb died in 1838 and Tocal Homestead was constructed in 1841 as the country residence for Felix, a city businessman and banker. Over the next few decades Tocal underwent considerable transformation. The changes mainly reflected the preferences of the new owners and lessees, but were also partially driven by the unsuitability of some of Webber's original enterprises to Tocal's humid, high rainfall coastal environment.

Wheat production was susceptible to fungal diseases such as smut and rust. Tobacco was probably phased out at Tocal because of disease and reduced market prospects. Sheep numbers were reduced as the wet climate was not ideal for wool production. These changes at Tocal are representative of wider patterns of agricultural adjustment in the colony as much cropping and grazing moved inland and pastoralism expanded west of the ranges where the climate was more suited to sheep and wool production.

In 1843 Felix Wilson leased Tocal to Charles Reynolds, and the lease between the Wilson and Reynolds families continued in an unbroken span until Frank Reynolds purchased Tocal

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[2] Extant evidence of Australia's early wine industry is rare. A recent doctoral thesis on the history of the industry featured ruins of wine vats at Camden Park from the 1840s, a decade later than Tocal's evidence (McIntyre, 2008 p.154).

in 1907. This 64 years of continuous lease protected the estate from major changes or subdivision during this period.

Charles Reynolds, pursuing his interests and recognising that Tocal was more suited to livestock production than to cropping, changed the estate into a specialist stud breeding business. As part of this change, Tocal's river and creek flats that were previously used to produce grains and tobacco for sale, were now used to grow fodder to feed the stud animals. Reynolds had found a niche that proved to be a long-term, sustainable use of Tocal's land.

Under Charles Reynolds' management Tocal gained national renown for stud Hereford and Devon cattle and Thoroughbred horses. Using high quality imported and colonial bloodstock, Tocal stallions sired Melbourne Cup and other high profile race winners. The bloodline of the famous 20th century racehorse Gundsynd can be traced back to The Barb, a stallion that Charles Reynolds purchased in 1869 for the staggering price of 2,000 guineas. Other nationally reputed Tocal stallions included The Drummer and Goldsborough. The historical importance of Tocal bloodlines to the Australian horse racing industry should not be underestimated. In addition, Tocal stud Hereford and Devon cattle won numerous championships at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, reaching their peak of achievement in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Reynolds, 2006).

Charles Reynolds adapted the convict-era farm structures for his own use, including the addition of stables or 'loose boxes' to the western side of the 1830 stone barn. Reynolds also added new structures at Tocal, purpose built for stud breeding enterprises. These now stand alongside the convict era infrastructure and add another significant layer of agricultural and pastoral heritage to the estate.

Particularly notable among the Reynolds-era structures is the imposing barn designed by colonial architect Edmund Blacket (primarily known as a church architect), the timber bull barn and brick stables. The scale and character of these buildings reflect the large investment in capital and husbandry that accompanied top quality stud breeding. They also reflect the rewards in finance and prestige that flowed to those who reached the pinnacle of the industry. Animal wash pads, water tanks and a stallion exercise yard in close proximity to Tocal Homestead further evoke the high regard for the stud animals and the degree of attention and care they received.

The Reynolds era at Tocal is also notable for its workers and in particular the Kidd family whose contribution to Tocal is well documented (Brouwer, Meehan and Brown, 2005). John Kidd was a convict initially assigned to Tocal in 1833 who left the estate in 1838 after receiving a ticket-of-leave. In 1856, now married and holding a conditional pardon, he returned permanently to Tocal with his family to live and work. When John died in 1881 his sons John and William and their families were well established at Tocal as part of a life-long commitment to the estate by the Kidds that spanned four generations.

The Reynolds era Tocal heritage is therefore significant as the workplaces and living areas of the Kidds and others. The social strata and class divisions operating at the time is well illustrated by extant buildings such as the tearooms where workers ate meals in isolation from the owners or lessees who ate in the Homestead itself.

In 1926 Tocal was sold to the Alexander family and, although some stud Herefords were retained, the estate changed from a stud enterprise to a commercial beef farm. In 1963 the Presbyterian Church became the beneficiary of the deceased estate of CB Alexander and consequently became the owner of the Tocal property.

In 1965 the CB Alexander Presbyterian Agricultural College was opened on the Tocal property. In 1970 the College was transferred to the NSW Department of Agriculture and the Tocal land was entrusted to the CB Alexander Foundation under the *CB Alexander Foundation Act*, 1969. This arrangement continues today. The Tocal land retains all the original grants and purchases (with some minor boundary adjustments) and has been expanded by purchases from the 1960s to 1980s. Tocal now operates large commercial beef, dairy and poultry enterprises.

Tocal's layers of 19th, 20th and 21st century farm structures and equipment provide substantial evidence of major transformations that Australian agriculture and pastoralism underwent between initial establishment and the present time. Tocal's farm heritage collection

demonstrates agriculture based on horse and bullock power, and early mechanisation including one of the first tractors in the district. Other evidence of the full gamut of farm mechanism includes horse-driven machinery that powered chaff cutters and water pumps, and a 1927 generator and battery room that provided domestic and farm electricity years before Tocal was connected to the grid. The transformation from timber to wire fences, which had far reaching effects for agriculture, is well represented by numerous examples of both.

The changes often involved adaptive re-use of existing structures. For example, CB Alexander installed his power generator and bank of batteries in the brick stables previously used by the Reynolds to house stud Thoroughbred horses. Alexander also extended a portion of the 1830 stone barn to house his Rolls Royce motor cars.

In contrast, Tocal's present-day horse facilities are used for the Australian Stock Horses that are bred on the estate. These modern structures, that range from simple paddock shelters to a large indoor equestrian arena, add a 21st century layer to Tocal's colonial and 20th century horse facilities.

Other evidence of successive implementation of new technology at Tocal include the change from farmyard colonial poultry production to a modern broiler farm with a throughput of over one million chickens per year. The Tocal broiler farm was the first to use tunnel ventilated sheds in New South Wales.

Similar evidence of the progression of technological change is provided by Tocal's dairies. They comprise a colonial era dairy in the Homestead precinct where cows were hand-milked, an early 20th century walk-through dairy on Glendarra (part of Tocal), and the late 20th century, modern herringbone dairy currently in operation that produces nearly two million litres of milk per year. This dairy was one of the first in the region to introduce innovative practices such as bike-shift irrigation and environmentally sensitive effluent treatment.

Another initiative, Tocal's '40 Acre Dam', was constructed to provide practical demonstration of on-farm water storage to Hunter Valley farmers. (Pattison and Hatfield, 1971). These practices had been well accepted in the Sydney Basin through pioneering research work by the University of Sydney in the 1950s. (Geddes 1954, 1960).

Similarly, transformations in labour history are well evidenced at Tocal. Workplaces, structures and sites of convict labour stand alongside those for free colonial labour and modern agricultural and pastoral workplaces. The social structure and organisation of labour, supervision and estate ownership is also clearly evident through the diverse accommodation on the estate, ranging from basic worker residences to the stately, Georgian two-storey owner's residence.

The Tocal estate also contains evidence of competing and conflicting land use for defence purposes. During World War II, a concrete observation post (OPIT) was constructed on Tocal and part of the farm was used as an artillery practice range. Shrapnel scarred trees remain evident, and unexploded ordinance is still occasionally found, restricting current land use (Brouwer, 2009).

Since 1965 the Tocal estate has been remarkable for its commitment to farm planning and its implementation of coordinated strategies and actions to improve land management, conserve natural resources, enhance biodiversity, ameliorate past degradation and rehabilitate environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and riparian zones. The Tocal property is unique for its planning process that has been continuously and consistently implemented over 45 years.

This process began in 1965 with the adoption of a holistic farm plan drawn up by the NSW Soil Conservation Service. At that time it was Service policy to prepare farm plans under the Farm Planning Scheme that began in 1958 (Breckwoldt, 1988). The main thrust of the initial 1965 plan was to transform the extensive grazing layout based on 19th century husbandry practices into a paddock layout suited to a 20th century animal breeding and production enterprise based on scientific principles. The farm plan was revised in 1978 and 1991, and most recently in 2007.

Planting of introduced species of farm trees began at Tocal in 1968 and the first native trees were planted in 1978. Large-scale plantings were made on the beef section under the State Youth Employment Scheme in 1982, followed by beef and dairy plantings in 1984 (Brouwer

and Gillespie, 2007). Rehabilitation of the Bona Vista lagoon precinct began in 1980 and plantings continued there for several years (Archer and Brouwer, 2004).

In 1989 a section of the Paterson River on the Tocal dairy was fenced to exclude stock, Tocal being the first landholder in the Paterson Valley to take such an initiative. In 1990 more river bank was fenced at Glendarra, and tree plantings were undertaken on both sites (Brouwer, Bell and Archer, 1998).

In 1991 a formal Tree Management Plan was developed and Tocal's property plan was updated. In 1996 a major project was undertaken to regenerate the riparian zone along Webbers Creek near Tocal Homestead in order to restore a natural ecosystem using endemic species to regenerate the rainforest. In 1997 the Quarry Creek wetland area was rehabilitated, guided by a 1996 report (Heinrich, 1996).

In 1998 a landscape plan was commissioned for the Tocal Homestead precinct, which built on a landscape plan prepared in 1994 (Ratcliffe, 1994; Heinrich, 1998). This plan now guides planting and maintenance of the area to ensure a consistent approach that is sensitive to the heritage values and characteristics of the area.

On the Tocal farm, work has continued since the 1990s to extend the network of wildlife corridors and tree lots, and to progressively join these corridors to other areas such as the wetlands. These actions improve biodiversity and provide shelter for both farm and native animals. During this period key principles developed by the Potter Farmland Plan Project in western districts of Victoria were adopted to create a balance between habitat for native fauna and avifauna and food production for people (Campbell, 1991).

In 2007 Tocal prepared a Property Vegetation Plan (PVP) under the *Native Vegetation Act*. The PVP included a Permanent Conservation Order for an area of Tocal below the campus oval, one of the first such orders under the *Act* in New South Wales. Another recent landcare initiative was the blocking of a drain to reclaim and rehabilitate Tyeli Lagoon.

In summary, the Tocal estate continues to be a remarkable national exemplar of landcare, conservation and land management initiatives. Its integrity and uninterrupted, documented chronicle of rural land-use reflects major changes in understanding of land and property management in Australia.

Chronology:

1822   James Webber granted land at Tocal;

1822   James Webber became a foundation member of the Agricultural Society of New South Wales;

1827   Webber became chairman of the newly-formed Farmers Club at Paterson;

1830   Webber built a two storey stone barn (extant) at Tocal to store farm produce;

1830   Webber praised for innovative drainage of part of Tocal's wetland;

1830   The *Sydney Gazette* described the tobacco produced at Tocal by Webber as the best in the Colony (SG 6 March 1830);

1832   Tocal reported to have one of the largest vineyards in the Hunter Valley (the mounds and trenches of which are extant);

1833   James Webber named as one of the four pioneers of viticulture in the Colony;

1834   Webber sold Tocal to Caleb and Felix Wilson. Various attempts at tenant farming followed, which ultimately proved unsatisfactory;

1840s   Underground grain silos constructed at Tocal (late 1830s or early 1840s);

1843   Tocal leased to Charles Reynolds (lease by Reynolds family continued to 1907);

1844   Charles Reynolds awarded the prize for the best colonial cheese at the inaugural Hunter Agricultural Society Show at Maitland;

1846   Charles Reynolds imported a reaping machine from South Australia and used it at Tocal, reportedly the first such machine in NSW (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 December 1846);

1853   Fred Ward (later known as Captain Thunderbolt) and his two brothers worked as horse-breakers at Tocal until 1855;

1856   Fred Ward/Captain Thunderbolt stole 15 horses from Tocal;

1860s   The stallion 'Freetrader', winner of the Grand National Steeplechase at Aintree, England in 1856, stolen from Tocal by Captain Thunderbolt (according to local legend);

1867   Barn constructed at Tocal, designed by colonial architect Edmund Blacket;

1869   Charles Reynolds purchased the stallion 'The Barb' for 2,000 guineas;

1888   Tocal won Hereford Champion Cow at the Sydney Show. The Reynolds family recorded wins at the Sydney Show every year thereafter until the early 1930s;

1907   Tocal sold to Charles' son, Frank Reynolds;

1926   Tocal sold to Jean Alexander who took up residence with three siblings;

1930s   Charles Alexander travelled to Queensland on several occasions to purchase cattle which were transported by train to Tocal to be fattened and sold;

1947   CB Alexander died, the last of the Alexander family at Tocal;

1963   Ownership of Tocal passed to the Presbyterian Church;

1965   A detailed farm plan prepared to guide future farm development at Tocal;

1965   The first planting of native trees undertaken at Tocal;

1970   CB Alexander Foundation established and College operated by NSW Government;

1969   40-acre dam constructed to trial irrigation from large on-farm storage;

1976   The first native regrowth area protected from livestock;

1980   Rehabilitation of Bona Vista lagoon precinct began;

1989   Tocal began to fence off riparian zones, the first farm in the Paterson Valley to do so;

1996   Regeneration of the Webbers Creek rainforest began;

1997   Rehabilitation of the Quarry Creek wetlands was undertaken;

1998   A landscape plan was drawn up for the Tocal Homestead precinct;

2007   Tocal prepared a Property Vegetation Plan (PVP) under the *Native Vegetation* Act. It included a Permanent Conservation Order for an area of Tocal, one of the first in NSW;

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Theme: Tocal Homestead Precinct, Campus and Farm – landscape and environment

Note: Tocal's thematic history has been prepared as part of the assessment of the site's heritage significance in the 2012 (draft) conservation management plan.

Australian heritage theme:	3. Developing local, regional and national economies
NSW heritage theme:	Environment - cultural landscape

Tocal encapsulates multi-layered evidence of the ways in which successive occupants of the site interacted with and shaped their physical surroundings.

Archer (2007) demonstrated how the pre-European landscape of Tocal was a product of the interaction between the lifestyle practices of the Aboriginal people and their environment. Key Indigenous interactions included regular, strategic burning of selected areas for various reasons such as to provide favourable areas for game where hunting prospects would be enhanced. The most tangible evidence of Indigenous habitation at Tocal today comprises several rock outcrops containing grinding and sharpening grooves created by use over hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years.

The principal elements of Tocal's pre-European landscape, indicated in Archer's diagram below, are wetlands, rainforest, open woodlands, grasslands and paperbark forest. All are still evident today despite extensive modification of some elements by European occupation, agricultural and pastoral activities. In recent years some of these modifications have been reversed. Parts of Tocal's wetlands have been restored and Tocal's remnant rainforest, situated in close proximity to Tocal Homestead, has been expanded through regeneration. This rainforest now includes the interpretative Pumby Brush Walk.

Evidence of the impact of early colonial agriculture on Tocal's landscape includes extensive clearing (which now shows varying degrees of regrowth), and the drainage of some of the wetlands, although large areas of wetland remain. Webber drained some of these wetlands in the 1820s, for which he received praise at the time (Dawson, 1830 and Walsh, 2007). Other evidence of Webber's impact on the Tocal landscape include the mounds of his vineyard which are still clearly evident, a testament to his innovation and the toil of his assigned convicts.

Evidence of the impact of European settlement is also provided at Tocal by Aboriginal grinding rocks within the bank of Webber's Creek that are now under water at high tide. This indicates a marked rise in water levels during the Aboriginal era of occupation.

Today most of the Tocal property outside the Homestead precinct is a rural landscape formed by agricultural and pastoral activities since 1822. This landscape comprises a mixture of heavily timbered country, eucalypt regrowth, native/naturalised pasture and improved pasture.

Tocal's natural vegetation contrasts with the 19th century European landscape around the lagoon. Poplars, willows and other planted species dominate the lagoon and flats around Tocal Homestead, their presence demonstrating European interaction with the environment for aesthetic and amenity purposes.

European efforts to manage Tocal's spaces for agriculture in the colonial era are particularly evident in the extensive sets of timber post-and-rail fences that radiate from the Tocal lagoon to provide access to water for animals in several separate paddocks and to facilitate stock movement to and from the yards and sheds. Tocal's lagoon was a deciding factor in the use of this area by both Aborigines and Europeans, as it provides a permanent source of fresh water for people and animals. For Aborigines it was also an important source of food, not only from fish and other marine life but also from the numerous species of water birds for which the lagoon provides habitat. These include spoonbills, pelicans, wood ducks, moorhens, stilts, cormorants, ibis, herons, coots, egrets and black swans (Aartsen, 1991; Hathway, 2003).

Transport infrastructure has significantly impacted on the Tocal landscape. Evidence of Settlers' Road can be found in several places on Tocal. This was the early road north from Maitland that, of necessity, skirted upstream (west) of the tidal reach of Webber's creek to provide a shallow crossing. In 1849 the current Tocal Road and bridge were completed,[3]

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[3] *Maitland Mercury*, 1 August 1849.

effectively splitting the eastern portion of Tocal in two and ending the estate's previously unencumbered corridor to the Paterson River. The construction of the North Coast Railway further dissected the Tocal property to the west in 1911.

Tocal's natural landscape was a major source of inspiration for Philip Cox and Ian McKay's prize-winning design of the CB Alexander Campus in 1963. The campus buildings were designed to merge into the hill-top to form part of the landscape, with the chapel as the centrepiece. The buildings' architecture reflects the vernacular of the colonial timber buildings at Tocal Homestead, particularly Blacket Barn.

Several studies on various aspects of Tocal's landscape have been undertaken, which serve to inform and guide future usage. These include a reconnaissance survey of Tocal's natural environment (Aartsen, 1991), a Tocal landscape master plan (Ratcliffe, 1994), a report on the rehabilitation of Tocal's Quarry Creek wetlands (Heinrich, 1996), and a vegetation development and management plan for the Tocal Homestead precinct (Heinrich, 1998).

Details of the extensive conservation and landcare measures that have been implemented on Tocal since 1965 are provided in the theme on agriculture and pastoralism.
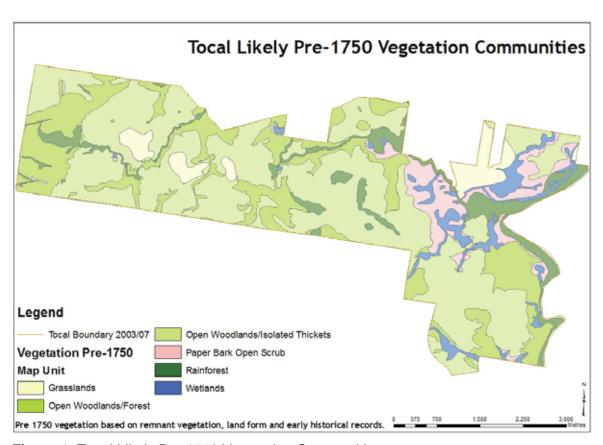

Figure 1: Tocal Likely Pre 1750 Vegetation Communities

Chronology:

1822   James Webber granted land at Tocal;

1843   Webber sold Tocal to Caleb and Felix Wilson;

1841   Tocal Homestead built;

1843   Tocal leased to Charles Reynolds (lease continued to 1907);

1907   Tocal sold to Charles' son, Frank Reynolds;

1926   Tocal sold to Jean Alexander who took up residence with three siblings;

1947   CB Alexander died, the last of the Alexander family at Tocal;

1963	Ownership of Tocal passed to the Presbyterian Church;
1965	The CB Alexander Presbyterian Agricultural College, Tocal, opened;
1965	A detailed farm plan prepared to guide future changes to the farm's landscape;
1970	CB Alexander Foundation established and College operated by NSW Government;
1987	Tocal Homestead opened to visitors;
2002	Tocal Visitor Centre opened;
2006	The education facility at Tocal became the CB Alexander Campus of Tocal College.

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Theme: Education – CB Alexander Campus of Tocal College

Note: Tocal's thematic history has been prepared as part of the assessment of the site's heritage significance in the 2012 (draft) conservation management plan.

Australian heritage theme:	6. Educating
NSW heritage theme:	Education

Tocal's last private owner, Charles Boyd Alexander, died in 1947 leaving a complex will that intended his estate be used to assist destitute, homeless and orphan children by training them for agricultural careers. Alexander's will was over-prescriptive and initially proved impossible to enact. It was not until 1963 that the Alexander Trustees and the NSW Equity Court accepted a proposal, championed by the Law Agent for the Presbyterian Church, EA Hunt, for the Trustees of the Church to use Alexander's bequest to establish an agricultural college for boys on the Tocal estate (Brouwer, 2007; Hunt, 1972).

In 1963 architects Philip Cox and Ian McKay designed the College, and construction began in early 1964. The CB Alexander Presbyterian Agricultural College commenced operation in 1965 with an initial intake of 15 male students. The College was formally opened in that year by the then Prime Minister of Australia, Sir Robert Menzies.

In terms of education history the College is a remarkable example of a 1960s residential facility of private/benevolent origins, purpose-built to provide hands-on, practical farm-based training in agriculture. With its farms, 92 student rooms, dining room and teaching facilities, it is an archetypical residential agricultural college of the post-war period. The social and cultural context of its establishment is reflected in the College motto '*Bonus agricola vir bonus*' which means a good farmer is a good citizen. These cultural underpinnings are based on the notion of the yeoman farmer and the inherent respectability and worth of working on the land.

Faced with financial difficulties, in 1970 the operation of the College was transferred to the New South Government and the College was renamed the CB Alexander Agricultural College. The transfer occurred during a period in which the New South Wales was establishing new agricultural colleges. It had recently established a college near Leeton in 1963— named Yanco Agricultural College in 1965 and later renamed Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture—and Orange Agricultural College in 1973. These were in addition to Hawkesbury Agricultural College established in 1891 and Wagga Wagga Agricultural College established in 1949 (Black, 1976).

Since 1970 the NSW Government has operated the College at Tocal through its agency responsible for agriculture (then the Department of Agriculture and now NSW Industry and Investment). The College became the CB Alexander Campus of Tocal College in 2006. At the same time Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture became a campus of Tocal College known as Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre.

As part of the change in 1970, ownership of the Tocal lands were transferred to be held in trust by the CB Alexander Foundation, a not-for-profit statutory authority established under a NSW Act of Parliament, the *CB Alexander Foundation Act*, 1969.

Since 1970 the campus has undergone many significant changes although its fundamental aim to provide practical, residential farm training has never waivered. The changes fall into two broad categories—those associated with increasing social inclusion and those associated with the adoption of Australia's national training reform agenda.

In terms of increasing social inclusion, and the expansion associated with its implementation, female students were admitted to the College for the first time in 1972 and now constitute a majority of enrolments in the full-time courses. Modifications and additions to campus buildings occurred in 1974, 1987, 1994, 1996, 1997 and 2010, all of which were in keeping with the original architectural style and site master plan. In 1980 the College began its current suite of part-time courses with the inaugural intake of Dairy Apprentices, followed in 1994 by Rural Traineeships. In 1981 the College added distance education to its operations when it became the base for NSW Agriculture's home study program.

At various times the College has provided training to overseas students in full-time and short courses. These students were drawn from countries such as the Seychelles, Bhutan,

Pakistan and the Falkland Islands. They included members of the African National Congress who were political refugees from southern Africa. The campus continues to provide short courses to visiting overseas groups.

Tocal further broadened the scope of its operation when it launched Australia's first Certificate in Landcare in 1995, the National Rural Business Management Program in 1996, a specialised Certificate III in Agriculture (Horse Breeding) in 1999 and the Diploma of Landcare and Natural Resources in 2000. The College also provides a comprehensive range of short courses for farmers and those interested in the land.

A cornerstone of Tocal's education philosophy is to service learners living in rural areas who are disadvantaged by lack of access to training due to their remoteness. The College continues to meet this challenge through flexible delivery modes, maintenance and enhancement of its residential facilities and by providing a range of scholarships. It is notable that since the mid 2000s College staff have travelled to many parts of Australia to provide skills recognition services to Aboriginal communities in remote areas.

Since 1984 the College campus has hosted the Tocal Field Days, a three-day annual event that provides a mix of education activities, craft demonstrations and commercial displays, targeted at farmers, people living in rural areas, and the wider community (Hathway, 2007).

The College adopted Australia's national training reform agenda which began in the 1990s and continues to drive change, particularly in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector in which the College operates. In 1994 Tocal's courses were accredited and the College became a nationally Registered Training Organisation (RTO). Tocal quickly moved to competency-based training as industry agreed on national competency standards. The College adopted the new national agricultural Training Packages[4] in 1998, the first agricultural training provider to do so in Australia. Tocal continues to adopt and comply with the national provisions of the Australian Qualifications Training Framework (AQTF) as they evolve.

In 1996 the College received a Demonstrating Best Practice award and grant for its implementation of competency-based training using problem-based learning. In 1997 the College was awarded the Rivercare Gold Medal for General Education and the Landcare Bronze Medal for Education. In 2000 it received the Rivercare Award for Excellence in Landcare Education. In 2003 the College and the associated Tocal Agricultural Centre were designated as the New South Wales Centre for Excellence in Agricultural Education.

The Tocal campus has produced thousands of graduates since its commencement in 1965, many of whom have proceeded to distinguished careers in the private and public sectors.

Chronology

1947   CB Alexander died, the last of the Alexander family at Tocal;

1963   Ownership of Tocal passed to the Presbyterian Church Trust;

1963   College designed by Philip Cox and Ian McKay;

1964   Construction of the College commenced;

1965   The CB Alexander Presbyterian Agricultural College, Tocal, opened by Sir Robert Menzies, then Prime Minister of Australia;

1970   CB Alexander Foundation established and College operated by NSW Government;

1972   First female students enrolled;

1980   Inaugural intake of Dairy Apprentices;

1981   Distance education commenced;

1984   Tocal Field Days began;

1985   Problem-based learning introduced;

1994   College courses accredited and Rural traineeships commenced;

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[4] 'Training Package' in this context means a set of national competency standards and a specified list of qualifications that can be delivered.

1995   Certificate in Landcare commenced;

1996   National Rural Business Management Program delivered by the College;

1998   The College adopted the national agricultural Training Packages;

1999   The specialised Certificate III in Agriculture (Horse Breeding) commenced;

2000   Diploma in Landcare and Natural Resources commenced;

2003   Tocal Agricultural Centre designated as a Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education;

2006   The education facility at Tocal became the CB Alexander Campus of Tocal College.

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Theme: Creative endeavour/architecture – CB Alexander Campus of Tocal College

Note: Tocal's thematic history has been prepared as part of the assessment of the site's heritage significance in the 2012 (draft) conservation management plan.

Australian heritage theme:	8. Developing Australia's cultural life
NSW heritage theme:	Creative endeavour

In 1963 the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church were granted the estate of CB Alexander for the purpose of establishing an agricultural college on the Tocal property. In that year the Church commissioned architects Philip Cox and Ian McKay to design the new College. The architects' working drawings were approved in November 1963, the contract for the construction of the College was finalised in January 1964 and construction commenced shortly after (Hunt, 1972).

In 1965, the year the College opened, the campus buildings won the Blacket Award for a Building of Outstanding Merit, presented by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, NSW Chapter. In the same year Philip Cox and Ian McKay were also awarded the Sir John Sulman Architectural Prize for the outstanding merit of the Tocal campus buildings.

Tocal College is situated on the hilltop immediately south of the historic Tocal Homestead. The principal components of the College complex consist of lecture rooms, teaching laboratories, assembly hall, administration area, staff offices, library, student residential facilities including bedrooms, dining room and kitchen, and several staff residences. The College was initially designed with a capacity of 92 residential students.

Dormitory and teaching buildings, with courtyards, are grouped around three sides of a central quadrangle. The fourth side opens to a dramatic view of the Tocal Homestead and the Paterson valley.

In the main quadrangle the Chapel with its spire is the focal point of the College. The spire and the roof of the EA Hunt hall, with their robust bolted timber structures, integrate the buildings with the site. The prominence of the Chapel reflects the role played by religion in the establishment of the College. The repetition of the chapel's design features, such as exposed laminated concrete beams, in other areas of the campus serve to integrate the sacred and secular functions of the various buildings and to impart a sense of spirituality across the campus.

The landscape is one of scattered spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) and other native trees and shrubs. Lawns are maintained but are not irrigated thereby reflecting the moods of the Australian landscape.

There is an extensive use of natural materials of timber, brick and tiles. The timbers used are from the area and include ironbark, brush box and tallow wood. Timberwork is exposed and includes large verandah post and roof beams. The campus features masonry pavers, which was highly innovative at the time of its construction when these materials were known only as 'electric bricks' and primarily buried on top of electrical cable. The campus brickwork is purposefully rough to indicate the rustic nature of the buildings. Rubble drains are used extensively in lieu of gutters. On the buildings where gutters were required copper has been used.

The vision for the buildings to age and merge with the landscape and mature with age has been achieved, and later additions have followed the spirit, intention and detail of the original concepts.

Chronology:

1963   College designed by Philip Cox and Ian McKay;

1964   Construction of the College commenced;

1965   The campus buildings won the Blacket and Sulman awards for architectural excellence;

1967	Student rooms 63 to 92 built;
1974/75	Construction of Glendarra block 1 and south western part of Crawford Court and Farm Machinery Demonstration Room;
1979	Swimming Pool constructed;
1987	Conversion of former machinery bay to offices and the creation of McFarlane Court. Completion of the north eastern elements of Crawford Court including substantial extensions to the Library and Computer Room;
1995	Construction of Glendarra 2 accommodation;
1996-97	Construction of the southern elements of McFarlane Court and extensions to far north eastern part of campus, North Court;
1998	Construction of Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority offices at Glendarra (the agency was then known as the Hunter Catchment Management Trust);
2010	extensions to dining room and kitchen; construction of residential supervisors' cottage; adaptive re-use of former staff cottages as group accommodation; refurbishment and modification of Glendarra 1 accommodation; adaptive re-use of a dairy shed as a ruminant field laboratory.

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Theme: Defending Australia – Tocal's OPIT and the Largs/Paterson Artillery Range

Note: Tocal's thematic history has been prepared as part of the assessment of the site's heritage significance in the 2012 (draft) conservation management plan.

Australian heritage theme:	7. Governing – Defending Australia
NSW heritage theme:	Defence

During World War II the western part of the Tocal property was used as an artillery training range, known as the 'Largs/Paterson Artillery Range'. Construction of a concrete gunnery observation post and bunker/pit (OPIT) on Tocal began in October 1940 and took four months to complete. The OPIT on Tocal played a key role in the functioning of the range, as it allowed its occupants to observe the accuracy of the shells as they landed and report back to the trainee gunners via field telephone. The range operated from early 1941 until mid 1944. It had many targets and several observation posts but only one OPIT, located in Heifer paddock on Tocal.

Large guns located at Mindaribba (south of Tocal) fired shells of various types into the head of Webbers Creek. The range appears to have fired 37mm, 75mm and 76mm high explosive and armour piercing/tracer ammunition, and 18 and 25 pounder guns firing rounds that exploded and fragmented on impact.

One to five percent of rounds failed to explode and consequently there have been several attempts to clear the site of UXOs, primarily to enable construction work to be undertaken. In 1994 a clearance operation for a proposed hardwood plantation on Tocal was abandoned when evidence of UXOs was found over the entire site and complete clearance could not be guaranteed. Over the years there have been a significant number of UXOs found on Tocal and occasional findings continue.

The Tocal OPIT and its role in the Largs/Paterson Artillery Range sits within the broader context of a high level of military training activity in the lower Hunter Valley during WWII. There were several military camps in the area during this time, including camps at Rutherford, Lochinvar, Largs and Greta. The Greta army camp, for example, was capable of holding over 6,000 men. By September 1940, a month before the construction of the OPIT at Tocal, about 15,000 men were camped in the Hunter Valley, many of them in the lower Hunter around Maitland.

Analysis of Significance:

Tocal's OPIT, widespread UXOs, a shrapnel-scarred tree and shrapnel-impregnated logs are evidence of WWII artillery training as part of Australia's 'war effort' for defence of the country.

Chronology:

1940   construction of the OPIT on Tocal;

1941   commencement of operation of the Largs/Paterson Artillery Range;

1944   end of operation of the artillery range;

1988   report on the high incidence of UXOs found on the range;

1989   'Operation Seebac' to clear 20ha of UXOs around the Tocal Cattle yards (Canobies paddock), hayshed and airstrip;

1994   a further clearance of UXOs for a proposed hardwood plantation abandoned due to widespread UXOs;

1995   further clearance undertaken for a dam and silage pit works.

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