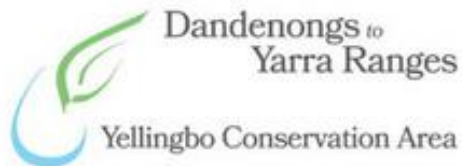




FOR PUBLIC
COMMENT

YELLINGBO CONSERVATION AREA DRAFT 10 YEAR PLAN



Approved by the Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee

7 - 9 Symes Road, Woori Yallock VIC 3139

PO Box 32, Woori Yallock VIC 3139

Your submission is invited in response to this plan

This draft plan for the Yellingbo Conservation Area is now released for public comment (August 2019). Interested individuals, community organisations, groups and agencies are invited to make written submissions by close of business on **Sunday, 7th October 2018**

A series of consultation questions are included throughout this plan. These are aimed at helping the reader focus on providing feedback. The questions are the same as those on the Engage Victoria website; answers can be submitted through the Engage Victoria website or via a paper copy of the survey.

A survey is available online at:

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/yellingboconservationarea>

All submissions will be carefully considered and taken into account as the final plan is being prepared for approval. The names of people and groups making submissions will be published in the final plan unless comments are marked as CONFIDENTIAL when submitted.

Submissions can also be lodged online at:

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/yellingboconservationarea>

The survey can be downloaded from <https://engage.vic.gov.au/yellingboconservationarea> and mailed to:

Yellingbo Conservation Area Submissions
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Private Bag 15
Ferntree Gully Delivery Centre
Victoria 3156

Or emailed to:

YCA.Plan@delwp.vic.gov.au (case sensitive)

Copies

This draft plan may be downloaded from:

www.engage.vic.gov.au



YELLINGBO CONSERVATION AREA DRAFT 10 YEAR PLAN

*Prepared for the Yellingbo Conservation Area
Coordinating Committee*

*by the Yellingbo Conservation Area Project
Implementation Team, Department of
Environment, Land Water and Planning*

August 2018



Wurundjeri
Land and Compensation
Cultural Heritage Council
Aboriginal Corporation



TRUST FOR
NATURE
Habitat forever



Acknowledgements

The Yellingbo Conservation Area (Conservation Area) Draft 10 Year Plan has been prepared to guide the strategic development and long term detailed planning for implementation of the Conservation Area.

Creation of the Conservation Area is a key recommendation of the 2013 Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) Yellingbo Investigation. The *Government Response to Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's (VEAC) Yellingbo Investigation Area Final Report (March 2014)* outlines the scope and purpose of the Conservation Area in detail and this Draft Plan builds on the recommendations through expanded and more thorough community engagement processes.

DELWP has developed this Draft Plan in partnership with the Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee (YCACC). The YCACC is comprised of an independent convenor, community representatives from the Yarra Ranges Council and Cardinia Shire Council, representatives from Yarra Ranges Council and Cardinia Shire Council, and from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Melbourne Water (MW), Parks Victoria, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (PPWCMA), Trust for Nature (TfN), Wurundjeri Tribe Council, Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Zoos Victoria. The Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft Plan is the result of an extensive community engagement process including workshops and meetings with a range of community groups, online input via surveys, conversations with landholders and land managers, and the general community, as well as input from a range of agencies, YCACC members and guests of YCACC.

We respectfully acknowledge that the Yellingbo Conservation Area is located on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people. We honour their culture, which has nurtured this land since The Dreamtime.

Photo credits

Front cover: L-R: Stream (credit: Anton Atanasovm, pexels.com), Leadbeaters Possum (credit: Zoos Victoria), walkers in Yarra Forest (credit: DELWP)

Page 5: *Eucalyptus ovata* (S. Tardif)

Page 24: Safer Together (State Government of Victoria)

Page 37: Yarra River at Milgrove (S. Tardif)

Page 47: Agile Antechinus (B. Tardif)

Page 11: Dog Walker (DELWP)

Page 28: Walkers in park (Parks Victoria)

Pages 42: Eucalyptus identification (TfN)

Page 88: Scientific Study (pixabay.com)

© Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee as author. The licence does not apply to any images, photographs or branding including, but not confined to, the following images: Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee logo; Victorian Coat of Arms; Victorian Government logo; Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning logo; Parks Victoria logo; Melbourne Water logo; Yarra Ranges Council logo; Cardinia Shire Council logo; Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority logo; Zoos Victoria logo; Trust for Nature logo; Wurundjeri Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council logo.

To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the Department of Environment, land, water and Planning and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft 10 Year Plan.....	iv
Introduction	1
<i>Vision</i>	1
1. Land Status and Zoning	6
1.1 Overview of land status changes	6
1.2 Zoning.....	7
1.3 Legislation	9
2. Healthy Conservation Landscape	11
2.1 Key management outcomes	12
2.2 Public land.....	13
2.3 Native vegetation.....	14
2.4 Endangered vegetation communities.....	15
2.5 Threatened species	17
2.6 Waterway health.....	19
2.7 Climate change.....	23
3. Fire Management.....	25
4. Recreation and Use	29
4.1 Key management outcomes	29
4.2 Recreational activities.....	29
4.3 Current agricultural and horticultural land use	31
4.4 Adjacent landholders	32
4.5 Access, facilities and safety.....	33
4.6 Education and interpretation.....	34
4.7 Authorised uses.....	34
4.8 Riparian management licences	34
4.9 Conservation Area compliance strategy	35
5. Cultural Heritage	38
5.1 Key management outcomes	38
5.2 Aboriginal land use and history	38
5.3 European heritage	40
6. Coordinated Management.....	43
6.1 Key management outcomes	44
6.2 Manage with Traditional Owners	44
6.3 Manage with agency partners	45
6.4 Manage with community groups or other management groups	46

7. Precincts and Site-specific Management Strategies	49
7.1 Precinct 1: Yarra River Woori Yallock to Healesville, including Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve, Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve, Badger Creek (Coranderrk Creek), and junction of Woori Yallock Creek and the Yarra River.....	49
7.2 Precinct 2: Yarra River Millgrove to Woori Yallock, including Little Yarra River, Britannia Creek and Lower Hoddles Creek	57
7.3 Precinct 3: Hoddles Creek, including Hoddles Creek Education Area, Beenak Bushland Reserve and Wet Lead Creek.....	64
7.4 Precinct 4: Existing Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, Woori Yallock Creek, Sheepstation Creek, McCrae Creek, Cockatoo Creek.	70
7.5 Precinct 5: Wright Forest Bushland Reserve and Cockatoo Creek in Cockatoo township	78
7.6 Precinct 6: Sassafras Creek, Perrins Creek, Emerald Creek and Menzies Creek.....	82
8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting.....	88
8.1 Key management outcomes	88
8.2 Ecological measures	88
8.3 Cultural heritage	89
8.4 Visitors and tourism	89
8.5 Community partnerships	89
References	91
Appendices.....	93
Appendix A – VEAC definition of reserves	93
Appendix B – Consultation summary.....	96
Appendix C – Licensing principles for fencing and grazing within Yellingbo Conservation Area	98
Appendix D – List of acronyms/definitions.....	108

Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft 10 Year Plan

The Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft 10 Year Plan has been developed through consultation with a wide range of interested community members, stakeholder groups and agencies.

Consultation and engagement for this plan has been undertaken through targeted meetings with community groups, coordinated agency meetings, public surveys and informal conversations with community members.

The community identified the following as key opportunities for the Conservation Area; encouraging community access, contributing to tourism opportunities and providing habitat for threatened species. The community also identified the biggest issues that the establishment of the Conservation Area should be focused on: ensuring appropriate long-term management, controlling weed species, controlling pest animal species and managing bushfire risk.

The plan uses the information gathered from the community to guide management directions for the public land. The plan describes the current condition of the Conservation Area and addresses the intent of future management. It articulates the management direction for the Conservation Area over a 10-year time frame and is aimed at enhancing the biodiversity values, cultural heritage values and community enjoyment of the area. It provides clear strategies for managing the issues that the community have identified.

Once the final Plan is approved, it will guide the direction and strategic approach applied to managing the Conservation Area. Consequently, the plan does not detail operational work. Rather, it will help shape such activity by encouraging compatibility with the vision for the area and existing strategies and guidelines established by relevant bodies. It will align effects and improve consistency between the developed land managers.

The Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft 10 Year Plan has been prepared to clearly articulate the vision for the area based on the *Government Response to Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's (VEAC) Yellingbo Investigation Area Final Report (March 2014)*, and to raise community awareness of the proposed direction for management of the Conservation Area. Individuals and groups are encouraged to comment on this draft to help shape the future management of the Conservation Area.

The Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft 10 Year Plan is a strategic guide for the management of the natural values of the planning area. It provides for a range of continuing and future uses, including biodiversity and threatened species protection, recreation, conservation, interpretation and education.

Chapter 1 outlines the proposed management zones of the Conservation Area, while Chapter 2 through Chapter 5 discusses the values of the Conservation Area. Within Chapters 2–6, key overarching management outcomes are outlined along with associated goals and strategies necessary for achieving them.

Chapter 7 introduces the different precincts for the area, which provide the framework of geographical areas in which specific management directions can be applied and certain activities can occur.

There are a series of consultation questions throughout this plan identified by a blue box. These are aimed at helping the reader focus on providing feedback. The consultation questions in the plan are

the same as those on the Engage Victoria website. Responses can be submitted to the Engage Victoria website, or via a paper copy of the survey.

Goals and strategy tables

Throughout the plan, goals and strategies have been identified in a series of tables. The goals and strategies have been developed based on themes (Chapters 2 – 6, and 8), as well as having specific goals and strategies for the individual precincts (Chapter 7). The theme goals and strategies can be applied to the precincts as well. Each strategy has been prioritised as follows:

Immediate: indicates that action is required to start within the first two years.

Medium: indicates that action can commence in 3 – 5 years with resourcing addressed by the second year.

Longer term: both actions and resourcing commence from 3 years onwards.

As required: can only be undertaken when required.

A range of the goals and strategies are currently being implemented as part of existing programs, both by the land managers as well as community groups. Other goals and strategies will require additional funding.

Land manager refers to:

The public land managers in the Conservation Area include Parks Victoria, DELWP, Zoos Victoria, Trust for Nature, Yarra Ranges Council, Cardinia Shire Council and VicRoads (roadside verges). When the term “land managers” is used, this refers to multiple land managers. In all planning, Melbourne Water and the PPWCMA provide information and evaluation.

Statement of Commitment

The *Government Response to Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's (VEAC) Yellingbo Investigation Area Final Report (March 2014)*, states that the Government supports (in principle) the allocation of additional resources to address current and future public land management needs in the Investigation Area. The Government will consider requests for additional resourcing for biodiversity conservation, pest plant and animal control and fire management and preparedness where required to implement the objectives of the supported recommendations. Land managers will be responsible for identifying priority areas where funding is needed to support implementation. Resources required to implement supported recommendations, that exceed current funding arrangements, will be subject to normal budgetary processes.

Introduction

This Yellingbo Conservation Area (Conservation Area) Draft Plan has been prepared to guide the strategic development, management intent and long-term planning for implementation of the Conservation Area. It outlines management directions for the Conservation Area for the next 10 years.

The Conservation Area consists of existing public land along streamsides, including existing conservation reserves in the Yarra Valley and southern Dandenong Ranges.

The Conservation Area will allow for consolidated management of public land and reduce the complexity of current management arrangements, allowing for a more consistent and appropriate approach. Improved management of the Conservation Area will aim to improve the extent and quality of native vegetation through the Conservation Area, as well as habitat connectivity, water quality and biodiversity values across the broader landscape. The Conservation Area will also help safeguard critically endangered species through improved core habitat and targeted restoration projects, while taking into account management requirements (such as weed and pest animal control) and not materially increasing the risk of bushfire.

Vision

The vision for the Conservation Area is long term and aspirational, expressing how it will look to a future visitor and describing the ultimate outcome of management directions and strategies in the plan. The vision has been developed with the input of Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee (YCACC) members as well as through conversations with the wider community regarding the values that they would like to see protected.

The Yellingbo Conservation Area will be a stronghold for biodiversity conservation with improved landscapes, healthy rivers, active and passive recreation opportunities, and an engaged and inspired community.

The Conservation Area will provide critical habitat corridors between large vegetated blocks to allow an interconnected network of rivers and streams to provide connectivity in the landscape. The Conservation Area will be actively managed for weeds and pest animals, and processes will be put in place to ensure there is no material increase in bushfire risk.

Scope of the plan

The plan is intended to guide the direction and strategic approach applied to managing the public land that will form the Conservation Area. The scope of the plan is therefore limited to issues relevant to the public land only but will highlight key areas where adjacent land use has relevance. Additionally, the plan does not detail operational work activity but, rather, guides future management activity, and allows for community input into key future directions for the Conservation Area.

Aims of the plan

The plan will outline, explain and identify actions and directions for continued and future management of the Conservation Area. The actions and directions for future management will:

- Align with the *Victorian Government Response to Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's Yellingbo Investigation Final Report (March 2014)* in improving the management of public land to enhance conservation values
- Align with the Yarra River Strategy, *Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung Murrumbidgee) Act 2017*, Victorian Waterway Management Strategy (DELWP, 2013), and the DELWP Biodiversity Plan (Biodiversity 2037)
- Be based on a bushfire risk management plan that uses best-practice science and local knowledge in designing bushfire risk mitigation measures, to ensure that implementation of the Conservation Area does not materially increase the bushfire risk to the community
- Allow for community input, to increase the understanding of how the Conservation Area is used, and help shape its future use
- Prioritise areas with the highest conservation value for protection
- Identify and plan for areas for community access and recreation
- Be realistic within the timeframes and resources available, including in terms of the costs associated with establishing and maintaining the area in the long term
- Focus on delivering and maintaining immediate and high-priority actions within available resourcing and project funding
- Acknowledge and support the existing management of public land by volunteer groups and individuals, including adjoining land owners, where consistent with the values of the area
- Identify the future land manager for specific areas
- Take into account changes in public land status.

Geographic area

The Conservation Area is made up of approximately 3,000 hectares of existing public land reserves and Crown water frontages (Table 1) within the area, extending from Healesville in the north to Millgrove and Hoddles Creek in the east, Emerald and Cockatoo in the south, and the southern Dandenong ranges in the south-west (Figure 1). Most of the proposed Conservation Area is within the municipality of Yarra Ranges Council with slightly more than 10 per cent of the southern area within Cardinia Shire.

Feedback from the community has identified that the name “Yellingbo Conservation Area” is confusing and doesn’t accurately reflect the extent of the Conservation Area. Renaming of the Conservation Area will be considered in the future.

Current Public Land Unit	Area (Hectares)
SF: Stream frontage natural features reserve; NCR: Nature Conservation Reserve	
Yellingbo NCR (including some abutting unused roads)	668
Warramate Hills NCR and adjoining Woori Yallock Creek and Yarra River SF	497
Hoddle's Creek Education Area	278
Yarra River SF upstream from Warramate Hills NCR	247
Sassafras Creek NCR and Kallista Bushland Reserve (at Beagley's Bridge); Sassafras Creek Bushland Reserve and Sassafras Creek Reserve (consolidation)	195
Coranderrk NCR	144
Beenak Bushland Area	126
Wright Forest Bushland Reserve and adjoining Cockatoo Creek SF	126
Little Yarra River SF	100
McCrae Creek SF	90
Cockatoo Creek SF	73
Lower Hoddles and Wet Lead Creeks SFs and Hoddle's Creek Bushland Reserve	63
Badger Creek and Yarra River SFs downstream of Warramate Hills NCR; Yarra River Streamside Reserve (Everard Park)	62
Haining Farm	59
Upper Hoddles Creek and Wet Lead Creek SF	52
Emerald Creek SF	33
Woori Yallock Creek SF downstream of Yellingbo NCR	33
Britannia Creek SF	27
Woori Yallock Creek SF between Yellingbo and Sassafras Creek NCRs	25
Shepherd Creek SF	16
Menzies Creek SF	15
Total	2929

Table 1: Summary of current public land units included in the Yellingbo Conservation Area

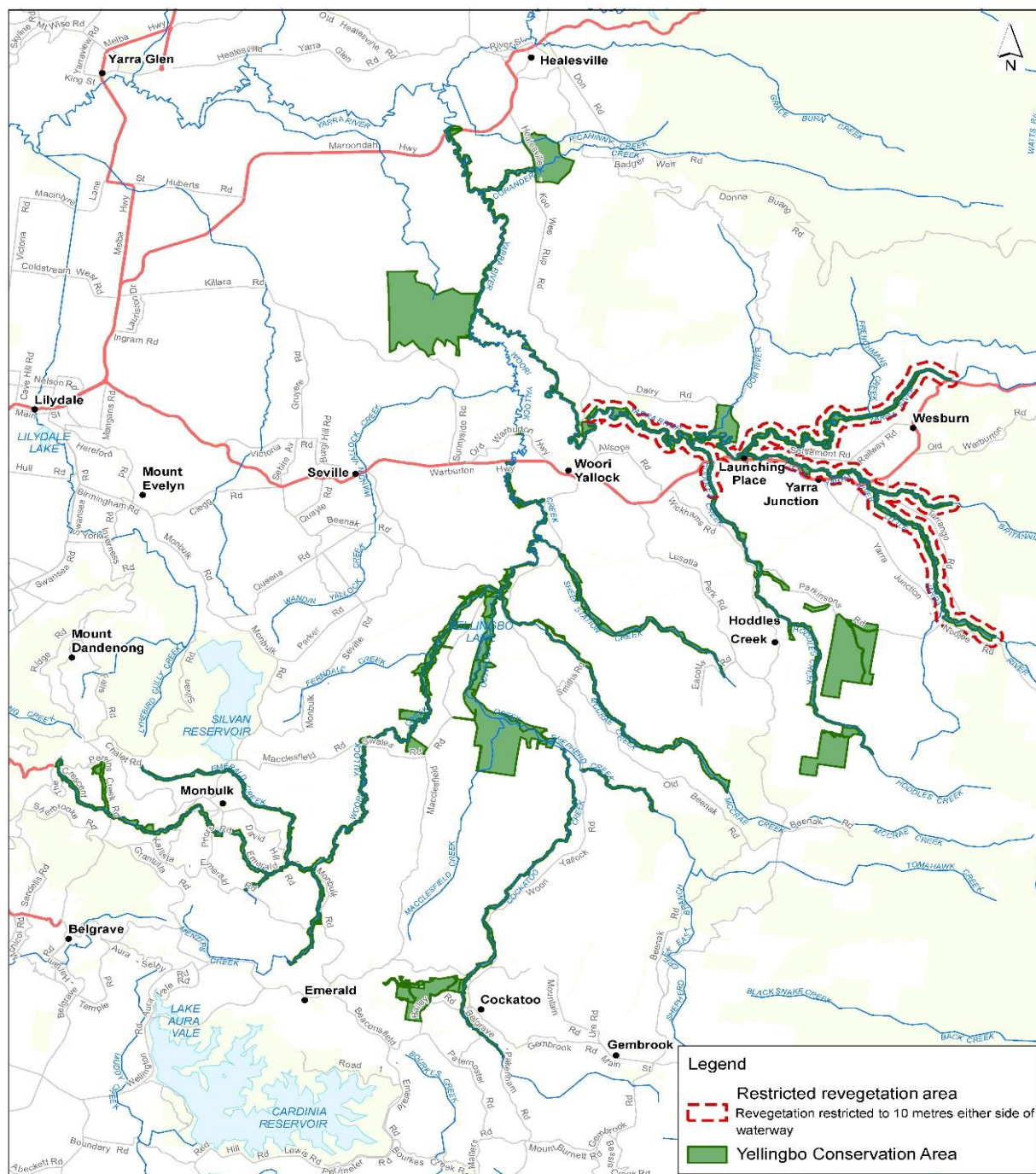
This region is part of the traditional lands of Aboriginal people of the Wurundjeri tribe and includes several language groups or clans of the Woi wurrung. It includes many places and sites of cultural heritage significance to Aboriginal people. The Yarra River and other waterways, the Corranderrk Estate, swamps and lakes are of importance to Aboriginal people and contain archaeological sites, although the entire region was part of a broader cultural landscape.

Since European settlement, the land has been heavily modified through clearing, construction of levee-banks, agriculture, stock grazing and dam construction. The region contains limited areas of its original vegetation extent, in varying conditions. These changes have altered the hydrology of the landscape which, in turn, has affected the health of the landscape.

The Yarra Valley features a mosaic of rural agricultural and natural environments, attracting a variety of recreational activities such as picnicking, bushwalking, nature study, food and wine tourism, horse riding, cycling, kayaking and camping. The area is known for high quality cool climate wines, and orchard fruits and berries, as well as for producing beef and dairy.

Like other peri-urban areas, the range of existing and potential land uses places sometimes conflicting demands on the land. The region contains approximately 19,000 properties and 18,000 dwellings, with a population of more than 46,000 people (according to the 2011 Census). Although there is increasing demand for housing and residential development closer to Melbourne, the area has an overall forecast of low population growth for the greater Yarra Ranges local government area in the short to medium term.

Yellingbo Conservation Area



Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purpose and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format such as large print or black and white please telephone 136 186, or email customer.service@delwp.vic.gov.au. Deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired? Call us via the National Relay Service on 133 677 or visit www.relayservice.com.au

Map produced by PPR GIS August 2018
Spatial data is sourced from the Victorian Spatial Data Library.
Copyright © The State of Victoria,
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2018



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning

Figure 1: Yellingbo Conservation Area Map

Note: More information on the *Restricted Revegetation Area* is included in *Section 7.2 Precinct 2: Yarra River – Millgrove to Woori Yallock*.



1. Land Status and Zoning

Within the Conservation Area, changes to land status have been recommended by VEAC. In addition to land status changes, zones have been developed which explain different planning approaches based on different management priorities. Zoning provides the geographic framework for managing the area, indicating which management directions have priority and the types and level of appropriate use. This chapter outlines the changes to land status and the zones proposed.

1.1 Overview of land status changes

To implement the *Victorian Government Response to VEAC Yellingbo Investigation Final Report (2014)*, changes must be made to the reservation status, management arrangements, authorised uses and activities for the land included in the Conservation Area. It is important to clarify what this means for the different parts of the Conservation Area.

There are three key types of land status that will be applied across the Conservation Area: nature conservation reserve, natural features reserve, and community use area.

Nature Conservation Reserves

Nature Conservation Reserves are the highest level of protected land in the Conservation Area and recognise the sensitive values of an area. In these areas, public access can be regulated or limited at the discretion of the land manager, as is the case at the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve and at Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve. The areas of streamside and other public land with a Nature Conservation Reserve recommendation from VEAC are to be permanently reserved for conservation purposes.

Natural features reserves

Natural features reserves afford a high level of recognition of the natural environment in a landscape context, allow for public access and a wider range of recreational activities, while protecting natural features and values such as ecology and water quality. The areas of streamside and other public land with a Natural features reserve recommendation from VEAC are to be permanently reserved for an appropriate purpose (for example, conservation purposes), if not appropriately reserved.

Community use area

For the Conservation Area, community use area applies to Haining Farm. Haining Farm has additional recommendations for future use including reservation for “Public education about sustainability and habitat restoration purposes”. Community use areas are to provide for community infrastructure, recreation, trails and parklands, and for a range of recreational pursuits. Haining Farm will also include an area of habitat restoration to allow for populations of Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater’s Possum to be introduced to the site.

The above reserve types will be brought together as a “Conservation Landscape” under a new Schedule Four A of the *National Parks Act 1975*. Parks Victoria will then manage the land as a conservation landscape. Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve will be included in the Conservation

Area and Schedule Four A to the *National Parks Act*. Zoos Victoria will continue as the operational manager of this reserve in conjunction with the adjoining Healesville Sanctuary.

More information on the VEAC definitions for these three reserve types is outlined in Appendix A.

Allowing for local requirements

Applying Schedule Four A to the Conservation Area will mean that the National Parks regulations (2013) will apply to the Conservation Area. The regulations provide for uses that may not otherwise be allowed to be permitted by setting aside areas. This enables regulations to be adjusted to suit local requirements where appropriate. These are referred to as **set-asides**, drafted at the point of writing the plan, which come into effect with the new Schedule Four A to the Act. The set-asides for the Conservation Area are to be determined through the formulation of this 10-year plan, and the associated community engagement processes.

In simple terms, in recognising local conditions and as a result of community feedback, set-asides can be written for specific areas where it may be appropriate to allow certain activities that would otherwise be prohibited by the standard Parks Regulations. For example, dog walking may continue to be allowed along Menzies Creek, where the standard regulations would not allow for this, meaning that area can be set aside from the standard regulations for that purpose.

1.2 Zoning

The YCACC determined three categories for land planning in the Conservation Area. These zones are consistent with the intent of land status types and will be applied over the top of the land status to provide greater detail on management direction of any given area of public land. The zones can be seen in the precinct maps (Chapter 7).

The zones are:

Conservation Zone

Characteristics:

- Existing habitat for threatened species and vegetation types
- High conservation values.

Management requirements:

- Managed for conservation purposes as a priority
- Managed in accordance with VEAC classification of Nature Conservation Reserve
- Area may provide opportunities for a limited range of passive recreation activities
- Riparian management licences are not appropriate for this area
- No potential for grazing on the streamside areas
- Existing habitat for threatened species, high-value conservation – maintain and enhance; manage threats.

Restoration Zone

Characteristics:

- High-priority restoration site for threatened species and/or particular vegetation communities (Ecological Vegetation Classes)

- Core habitat for the Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's Possum that comprise larger patches of vegetated Crown land to provide breeding habitat
- High-priority restoration sites to provide habitat corridors for threatened species including Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's Possum.

Management requirements:

- Restoration areas may provide opportunities for a limited range of passive recreation activities
- Riparian management licences can be entered into with adjoining landowners
- Revegetation on streamside areas should cover a total width of at least 70m along the waterway where possible/practicable (35 metres each side). In the north-east corner of the Conservation Area revegetation will be limited to 10 metres either side of the waterway in response to community concerns about bushfire risk (Refer Figure 1: *Restricted revegetation area*)
- Grazing can be considered as a management tool outside the vegetated area subject to the application of *Managing grazing on riparian land: decision support tool and guidelines* (DELWP 2016).

Biodiversity and Community Use Zone

Characteristics:

- General biodiversity corridors providing strategic linkages between localities
- In varying condition due to past land practices
- Contains some sections of good value vegetation
- Provides connectivity to surrounding Crown land parcels such as national parks and state forest.

Management requirements:

- Area may provide opportunities for a broad range of recreation activities where appropriate
- Vegetated corridors should cover a width of at least 20 metres from the top of bank where possible/practicable
- Riparian management licences can be entered into with adjoining landowners
- Grazing can be considered as a management tool outside the vegetated area subject to the application of *Managing grazing on riparian land: decision support tool and guidelines* (DELWP 2016)
- Vegetated corridors should cover a width of at least 40 metres from the top of bank where possible/practicable (20 metres each side). In the north-east corner of the Conservation Area, revegetation is limited to 10 metres either side of the waterway in response to community concerns about bushfire risk. (Refer Figure 1: *Restricted revegetation area*).

CONSULTATION QUESTION

How supportive are you of the proposed zones?

- Very supportive
- Supportive
- Not sure/Don't know
- Unsupportive
- Very unsupportive

Tell us about your level of support.

Do you agree that such zones will allow for the protection of the environment while still allowing some appropriate uses?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Not sure/Don't know
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Share your thoughts on this issue.

1.3 Legislation

There are a range of relevant state and federal legislative Acts that apply to the Conservation Area. These include (but are not limited to):

- *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*
- *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978*
- *Environmental Conservation and Biodiversity Protection Act 1999*
- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
- *Land Act 1958, Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *National Parks Act 1975*
- *Wildlife Act 1975*
- *Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin-Birrarung Murrn) Act 2017*

Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung Murrn) Act 2017

The Yarra River is one of Victoria's most iconic waterways, integral to Melbourne's identity and the liveability of the city. The river traverses more than 200 kilometres of urban and rural landscapes across many thousands of hectares of private and public land. The Yarra River system in its entirety is the major source of Melbourne's drinking water and a biodiversity corridor supporting diverse life forms. It has particular spiritual and cultural significance for Aboriginal communities. To the Wurundjeri people, the river, known as Birrarung, was a life source and an important meeting place.

In 2017, legislation passed through the Victorian Parliament to protect the Yarra River for future generations. In an Australian first, the *Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung Murrong) Act 2017* enables the identification of the Yarra River and the many hundreds of parcels of public land it flows through as one living, integrated natural entity for protection and improvement. Additionally, to underline the importance of the public parklands and open spaces along the Yarra River within metropolitan Melbourne, the Act allows these to be collectively declared as the Greater Yarra Urban Parklands. The Act is the first in Victoria to use the language of Traditional Owners in its title, and one of the first in Australia to include Traditional Owner language in the Act's body. Woi wurrung language is used in recognition of Traditional Owners' custodianship of the river and connection to the lands through which the river flows.



2. Healthy Conservation Landscape

One of the key objectives of establishing the Conservation Area is to address fragmentation and long-term decline in the quality and extent of native vegetation and habitat in the landscape.

The Conservation Area contains some larger reserves where conservation protections and management will be improved. However, many of the strategic actions and goals relate more specifically to riparian areas.

Coordinated management of the landscape will result in healthy ecosystems and healthy productive landscapes, and deliver social, economic and environmental benefits.

2.1 Key management outcomes

The management outcomes provide the overarching direction which allows for more specific goals and strategies to be developed for a healthy conservation landscape. They are:

- Large areas of the Conservation Area managed for the primary objective of conservation as reflected in the zoning (refer to precinct maps in Section 7)
- Integrated and coordinated management of the Conservation Area, including collaboration with land and agency managers for riparian management to address impacts on natural values
- Consistent reserve regulations across the landscape in alignment with zoning and local use
- Protection and improvement in the condition of native vegetation and priority habitats by reducing disturbance, rehabilitating priority areas, managing weeds and pests, ensuring there is no material increase in bushfire risk and implementing control measures for appropriate and sustainable access to the Conservation Area
- Recovery of endangered and vulnerable species of flora and fauna such as Helmeted Honeyeater (*Lichenostomus melanops cassidix*) and lowland Leadbeater's Possum (*Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*), while reducing threats to these species through targeted management to improve local hydrology, enhance vegetation, and control pest plants and animals
- Consolidation of management of the reserve under Section 19B and Section 19F of the *National Parks Act 1975*, and add to a new Schedule Four A "Conservation Landscapes"
- Land is appropriately reserved under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978* in addition to the above
- Grazing licences are phased out and riparian management licence agreements to be entered into where appropriate
- Waterway health is improved, maintaining and improving values in the wetlands and river systems, including in-stream habitat
- Collaboration with Traditional Owners in management, and interpretation of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the Conservation Area.

2.2 Public land

Existing public land reserves

The Conservation Area contains some large areas of public land including the Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve, Beenak Bushland Reserve, Hoddles Creek Education Area, Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, Wright Forest Bushland Reserve and Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve. These existing reserves will be incorporated into the management of the Conservation Area, and there will be some changes in the level of conservation protection, as recommended by VEAC.

The Conservation Area adjoins significant areas of state forest and national park. There are also many patches of bushland on adjoining and surrounding freehold property, as well as council-managed reserves, water catchments managed by Melbourne Water and important native vegetation on roadsides.

Management of stream sides (riparian land) will enable better connectivity between larger patches of habitat, and enable and enhance movement of species such as birds and mammals through the whole of the landscape.

Riparian public land reserves

Victoria has a unique network of public riparian land known as Crown water frontages (owned by the State), which were mostly established between the 1850s and the 1880s in recognition of their value as a public resource.

A key objective of the Conservation Area is to improve the quality and extent of native vegetation along key rivers and streams while not materially increasing bushfire risk. This will improve river health and increase the habitat value of the riparian areas themselves, while enhancing the ability of birds and mammals to move through the landscape between the larger areas of native vegetation. These actions will also serve to improve water quality both ecologically and for human consumption, as much of the Conservation Area is within the water supply area for Melbourne.

Some small mammals and birds are vulnerable to changes in localised climate, food availability and predator impacts, and often require a minimum width or area of vegetation for safe movement through the landscape. These types of requirements have informed the target widths of the riparian areas across the Conservation Area. Some areas have been identified for a wider area of vegetation along a stream to help establish core habitat as well as habitat that the species can use for movement. Wider areas of vegetation are also more resilient to weed invasion due to less edge effect.

In much of the Conservation Area, Crown frontages have been licensed to adjoining landholders for grazing. A key action in establishing the Conservation Area is to phase out grazing licences. However, in some areas, riparian management licences can be entered into with adjoining land owners. Some licences in the Conservation Area will allow for grazing to occur in a limited set of circumstances. More information on riparian management licences in the Conservation Area is outlined in Section 4.8 and Appendix B.

Values and threats identified by the community

The Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft 10 Year Plan has been developed through consultation with a wide range of interested community and stakeholder groups. Various engagement activities (for example, meetings with stakeholders and agencies, as well as public surveys) were undertaken to develop the proposed direction for management of the Conservation Area.

Some consistent themes emerged out of the information that was collected¹. Feedback suggested the main aims of establishing the Conservation Area should be to:

- Ensure there is no increase in bushfire risk to the community
- Encourage community access and recreation
- Provide habitat for threatened species
- Contribute to tourism opportunities in the region
- Support local industry and adjoining land uses.

Key challenges facing the Conservation Area, according to respondents, would be:

- Controlling weed species
- Controlling pest animal species
- Managing bushfire risk.

CONSULTATION QUESTION

The above list of values and threats was finalised using information gained during the initial community consultation in 2017. To what extent do you agree that the values and threats are an accurate summary of those applicable to the Conservation Area overall?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure/Don't know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Are there any other values or threats that could apply to the area?

2.3 Native vegetation

Remnant vegetation in and around the Conservation Area mostly comprises dry and lowland forest, wet or damp forest types at higher elevations, and riparian or swampy scrub and woodlands along drainage lines. Riparian forest represents the single largest Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) along major waterways such as the Yarra River. On the valley floor and floodplains, heathland, riparian scrub or healthy woodlands dominate, but all vegetation types are significantly depleted due to large scale clearing since European settlement. Vegetation depletion has also occurred through ongoing incremental loss through grazing regimes by both domestic stock, deer and pest animals.

¹ Full details of the community consultation activities that took place in 2017 are included in the *Yellingbo Conservation Area Plan – Engage Victoria Report*, available on the Engage Victoria website: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/yellingboconservationarea>

Goal The condition of native vegetation is maintained and enhanced to support dependent flora and fauna species, to improve water quality and to enhance ecosystems values			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Protect existing vegetation through weed control and exclusion or control of stock grazing, as well as integrated approaches to managing feral herbivores such as deer and rabbits	Immediate	Land managers	Melbourne Water
Improve habitat structure with supplementary planting in areas with depleted understory or poor habitat structure	Medium	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Increase quality and extent of vegetation by targeted planting, in line with bushfire risk management recommendations	Immediate	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Design planting to minimise any fire risk	Immediate	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Design planting to maintain as appropriate and reasonable access for adjoining residents to maintain their connection to the riverscape	Immediate	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Maintain planting and weed control to enhance works by other land managers and adjoining property owners	Immediate	DELWP	Parks Victoria

2.4 Endangered vegetation communities

Three endangered Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) are sited on public land in the Conservation Area: Cool Temperate Rainforest, Floodplain Riparian Woodland and Swampy Riparian Complex. Each of these EVCs is listed as threatened on the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and is briefly described below. (VEAC, 2012)

Cool Temperate Rainforest vegetation community is typically dominated by combinations of Mountain Ash, Myrtle Beech, Southern Sassafras, Black Olive-berry and Blackwood. The understorey contains Musk Daisy-bush, Austral Mulberry and Tree ferns, with a ground layer dominated by ferns. (VEAC, 2012). Pockets of Cool Temperate Rainforest persist in the Sassafras Creek headwaters and in the existing Sassafras Creek Nature Conservation Reserve.

Floodplain Riparian Woodland is a low elevation open woodland dominated by river red gum with a medium to tall shrub layer and ground layer consisting mainly of grasses, herbs and sedges. It occurs along floodplains of large meandering rivers, often in conjunction with one or more wetland communities. This EVC is of restricted extent and principally located along riparian strips fronting Woori Yallock Creek and the Yarra River. (VEAC, 2012).

Endangered **Swampy Riparian Complex** is a structurally variable vegetation complex of swampy to waterlogged areas along low gradient drainage lines. Component EVCs can include Creekline Herb-rich Woodland, and Swampy Riparian Woodland. (VEAC, 2012). Approximately 70 per cent of endangered Swampy Riparian Complex EVC on public land is within the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, with small stands also in the Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve and Little Yarra River (between Coles Road and Blacksands Road).

Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve supports the extremely rare and threatened² **Sedge-rich *Eucalyptus camphora* Swamp Community**. This threatened vegetation community comprises an overstorey of Mountain Swamp Gum with structural variation from open forest to woodland. The understorey consists of sparse Woolly Tea-tree and localised stands of Swamp Paperbark, except along permanent stream beds where it can form a closed shrub layer. Scented Paperbark can also occur with Woolly Tea-tree in ephemeral waterways. The ground layer consists of a range of sedges, rushes, grasses and forbs. This vegetation community provides critical habitat for the two iconic nationally critically endangered animals: the Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's Possum at Cockatoo Swamp, although these species were formerly more widespread. The Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve also supports rare floral species such as Wiry Bossiaea. Large areas of swamp habitat have been in decline, with dieback spreading upstream along Cockatoo Creek. Recent works by Melbourne Water have been completed to help reduce dieback through removal of a levee bank to restore a more natural hydrological regime in the area.

Goal			
The condition of threatened vegetation communities and wetlands is maintained and enhanced to support dependent flora and fauna species			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Facilitate the active rehabilitation of Swampy Riparian Complex and Sedge-rich <i>Eucalyptus camphora</i> Swamp communities via supplementary planting of indigenous species, scoping key hydrological restoration opportunities, targeted weed control and active management of pest animals, as well as management of site-specific impacts such as trampling or inappropriate access	Immediate	Land managers	Parks Victoria, community groups, Melbourne Water
Facilitate the active rehabilitation of Cool Temperate Rainforest via supplementary planting of indigenous species and targeted weed control, and by addressing site-specific impacts such as trampling or inappropriate access	Immediate	Land managers	Community groups, Melbourne Water, local councils
Facilitate the active rehabilitation of Floodplain Riparian Woodland via supplementary planting of site-indigenous species, targeted weed control and active management of pest animals and site-specific impacts	Immediate	Land managers	Community groups, adjoining landowners
Undertake invasive weed management through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising treatment of new and emerging weed species infestations; e.g., Wachendorfia • Staged control of priority invasive weeds; e.g., aerial Ivy, Honeysuckle, Blackberry, Yellow Flag Iris and Willows • Maintenance of previously treated areas 	Immediate	Land managers	Melbourne Water, DEDJTR, PPWCMA, local councils, adjoining landowners, community groups

² Sedge-rich *Eucalyptus camphora* Swamp Community is listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging weed management on adjoining private properties. 			
Reduce the impacts of fragmentation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing illegal vehicle access points Closing and rehabilitating informal tracks Ensuring the management of existing assets and planning for asset and access upgrades considers potential fragmentation and erosion impacts. 	Immediate	Land managers	Community groups, adjoining landowners
Facilitate natural regeneration by protecting high-quality remnant vegetation from access through the installation of fencing or re-alignment of access	Medium	Land managers	Community groups
Identify opportunities to connect the Conservation Area to other high-quality habitat in the area, enabling native animals to move through the landscape	Longer-term	Land managers	YCACC, councils, Trust for Nature, community groups, Melbourne Water
Promoting and educating visitors on biosecurity issues and the benefits of using designated pathways and the impacts of forming undefined tracks, trampling vegetation	Medium	Land Managers	Community groups, Melbourne Water

2.5 Threatened species

Fauna

The Conservation Area is well known for containing the last remaining wild population of the nationally critically endangered **Helmeted Honeyeater**, which was chosen as Victoria's bird emblem in 1971. This species has been the subject of a conservation program extending for more than half a century and focused near the township of Yellingbo. The Helmeted Honeyeater is listed on the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The area also supports the only lowland population of the critically endangered **Leadbeater's Possum**, which is Victoria's faunal emblem, endemic to the state and listed in both the Victorian and federal threatened species legislation. Research has found genetic differences between the lowland and montane populations, with the small outlying population at the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve being managed as an 'evolutionarily significant unit'. In addition, the Yellingbo population inhabits the same swamp forest as the Helmeted Honeyeater – a very different habitat to the tall wet eucalypt forests where montane populations of the possum exist. The Yellingbo population was discovered in 1985 and has been the subject of intensive monitoring since the mid-1990s.

Goal			
Maintain and, where required, increase the size of threatened fauna populations. Increase extent of occurrence of key threatened fauna species across the Conservation Area through provision of suitable habitat			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Support the continued implementation of Leadbeater's Possum and Helmeted Honeyeater recovery plans	Immediate	DELWP	Land managers, recovery teams, Zoos Victoria
Maintain targeted deer control fencing and control methods within the Conservation Area and cross-tenure programs to minimise browsing impacts and damage to native vegetation	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Adjoining landholders
Maintain targeted fox and cat control programs within the Conservation Area and cross-tenure programs to minimise predation. Monitor impact of fox control on feral cat populations; implement controls	Medium	DELWP	Land managers
Identify key habitat requirements and habitat restoration goals	Medium	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Continue to support the work of community volunteer groups such as the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater	Medium	Parks Victoria	Friends groups

Flora

The Conservation Area is home to several threatened orchid species such as the **Wine-lipped Spider-orchid**, **Mountain Bird-orchid** and **Spurred Helmet-orchid**, as well as shrubs and herbs such as **Wiry Bossiaea**, **Slender Bitter-cress** and **Swamp Everlasting**. Also of note is the vulnerable **slender tree-fern** – a tall (10-20 metres) fern with a fibrous trunk of 8-10 centimetres diameter. It is uncommon in the region but can be found in moist shaded gullies, particularly near Sassafras Creek.

Goal			
Maintain and increase the extent and richness of threatened flora and vegetation communities			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Continue targeted species monitoring to understand population size and distribution of key species, and the range of specific threats at sites. Use monitoring results to inform/adapt management of visitor activity	Immediate	Land managers	Community groups
Manage ecological burn regime	Immediate	Parks Victoria	FFMV

Implement values-based weed control projects, target new and emerging species, protect key natural value asset areas from degradation. Maintain targeted weed control programs within the Conservation Area and cross-tenure programs to minimise the spread of weeds and impact on vulnerable species	Immediate	Land managers	Community groups
Hydrological regime/restoration where identified to provide ecological benefits	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Melbourne Water
Maintain targeted deer control fencing and control methods within the Conservation Area and cross-tenure programs to minimise predation on vulnerable species and habitats	Immediate	Land managers	Parks Victoria
Inform Conservation Area users of the presence of important flora species and communities through permanent signage at key access points	Medium	Parks Victoria	DELWP
Protect key species from trampling and other visitor impacts through sensitive site access designs, mapping and monitoring of key sites across the Conservation Area. Close and rehabilitate tracks where appropriate	Immediate	Land managers	Parks Victoria
Reduce disturbance to vulnerable flora and habitat communities by implementing park zoning and access regulations.	Medium	Land managers	Community groups

2.6 Waterway health

Waterway frontages form an important part of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area will support and improve waterway health, with projects delivered in partnership with Melbourne Water and adjoining landholders in some cases. Healthy riparian land is a key objective of the Conservation Area.

Healthy riparian land provides:

- Cultural values, especially sites of significance to Traditional Owners who have a strong connection to waterways as the lifeblood for Country. Of the thousands of Aboriginal places and significant sites recorded on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register, approximately 95 per cent occur within one kilometre of a waterway or waterbody. These can include sites such as middens, scar trees and fish traps, as well as places with spiritual and ceremonial significance
- Habitat for native flora and fauna, including rare and threatened species
- A connection to other remnant vegetation, providing for movement of native animals and plants (known as a biolink)
- Stability for river bed and banks, minimising erosion
- A filter for nutrients and sediment from catchment runoff, which improves water quality, especially upstream of drinking water supplies
- Shade, which is important in maintaining water temperature
- A supply of food for platypus, fish and aquatic macroinvertebrates from organic matter entering the water

- A supply of large wood, which forms important in-stream habitat for many native fish and invertebrates. This is also important from a geomorphic perspective, as large wood influences the formation of pools and reduces erosion of the stream bed and banks
- Recreational opportunities, such as walking, picnicking, swimming and fishing; and tourism opportunities, especially for regional areas
- Opportunities to manage climate change and its impacts by 'soaking up' (sequestering) carbon through revegetation, mitigating the impacts of climate change by the vegetation regulating in-stream temperatures through the shading of waterways and by providing habitat and enhanced connectivity for plants and animals seeking more suitable environments due to climate change impacts.

The major threats to riparian land are those that affect one or more of these key attributes. The presence of livestock (particularly juvenile stock) in waterways creates a risk to human and stock health. Stock manure contains disease-causing microorganisms known as pathogens. Juvenile stock, particularly calves, contain many times more of these human-infectious pathogens than adult stock. This is because juvenile stock take a while to develop resistance to the pathogens.

Stock defecate more when standing in waterways to drink or when crossing waterways. They also stir up sediments and any pathogens that may be in the water. If stock manure contaminates drinking water sources, and the required level of water treatment is not applied, pathogens can cause serious outbreaks of human disease. Stock are also a cause of point erosion and degradation of stream banks, increasing instability in the channel.

Therefore, managing stock access to waterways upstream of drinking water off-takes is a priority for riparian management programs in Victoria. Managing juvenile stock is the most cost-effective first action for the protection of drinking water catchments.

Recreational pressure can also impact on riparian values, as well as weeds (especially willows) and pest animals. Other impacts such as unmanaged vehicle access and stream crossings, rubbish dumping, inappropriate urban development, and other agricultural practices (such as cropping too close to riparian land), can impact on riparian values.

The environmental and waterway health benefits of undertaking riparian management are well established. The benefits to landholders of undertaking the works include:

- Reduced costs through increased ease of mustering
- Access to high-quality water for stock, which leads to increased water and forage intake leading, in turn, to increased weight gain or milk production
- The presence of on-farm native vegetation, which increases the land value of the farm
- The presence of healthy riparian land, which can contribute to a sense of farmer wellbeing and contribute to nature conservation.

Grazing of stream frontages will cease as part of the establishment of the Conservation Area. If you own land that fronts onto a river or creek, you may be eligible for funding to help you manage the land. Melbourne Water's Stream Frontage Management Program supports work that protects or enhances river banks, such as weed control, fencing and planting native vegetation.

Melbourne Water helps fund a range of materials and works, including:

- Streamside fencing
- Weed control

- Setting up watering points for livestock away from rivers³
- New planting or revegetation
- Some ongoing maintenance.

To find out more about the program and to make an application, you can visit Melbourne Water's website at www.melbournewater.com.au and search for 'Stream frontage management program'⁴.

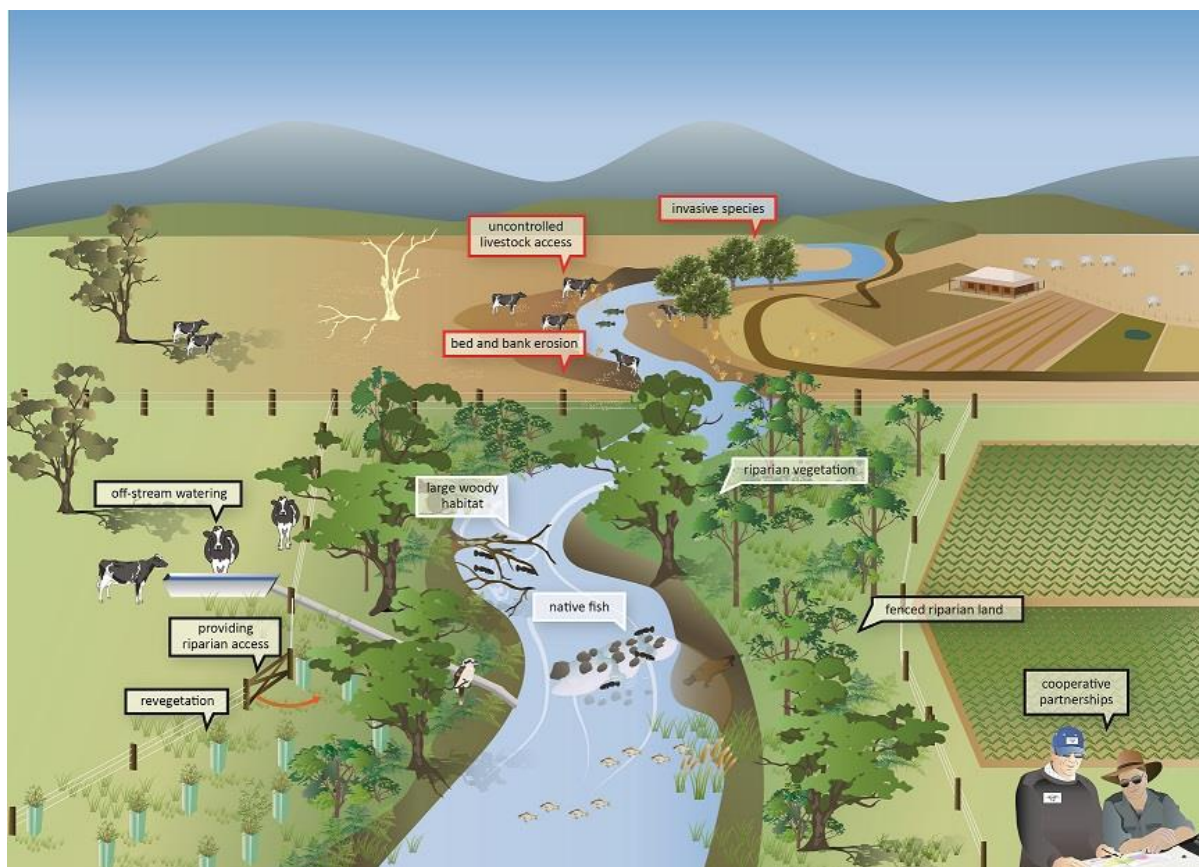


Figure 2: Healthy riparian land supports healthy primary production (Source: DELWP)

Current projects addressing waterway health

Under the *Water Act 1989*, Melbourne Water develops Stream Flow Management Plans (SFMP) for certain waterways that are considered ecologically important and stressed over summer months. SFMP are developed to manage the diversion of water from waterways to ensure there is an equitable sharing of water between commercial interests and the environment. Seven waterways in Melbourne Water's management district are classified as such, including the Woori Yallock Creek catchment. The Woori Yallock Creek Stream Flow Management Plan recommends how water will be managed in the Woori Yallock Creek catchment. To assist with improving the health of the Woori Yallock Creek catchment, Melbourne Water undertakes a wide range of works programs including a variety of incentive programs – Stream Frontage Management Program, Community Grants, Corridors of Green, and Water Sensitive Farm Design.

³ Off-stream stock watering is only available to those landowners who previously held a licence over Crown land adjoining their property.

⁴ Melbourne Water undertakes larger-scale river health works through its capital works and maintenance programs.

Parks Victoria is conducting the deer control program in partnership with the Australian Deer Association and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia. Skilled and accredited Australian Deer Association and Sporting Shooters Association Australia volunteers are used for the culling and on-ground delivery component of the program.

Yarra4Life is a major environmental project of the PPWCMA, in partnership with other government agencies and community-based groups. It works to improve water quality in the Yarra River and to save the Helmeted Honeyeater, lowland Leadbeater's Possum and other native animal species by increasing the quality, extent and connectivity of habitat across the landscape. In particular, Yarra4Life is working to establish biolink connections from the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Area north to the Yarra Ranges National Park, south-east to the Bunyip State Park and south-west to the Dandenong Ranges National Park. Yarra4Life has supported local agricultural businesses and landowners to undertake programs that improve the environmental sustainability of their businesses and property management, while also facilitating community-based education and training opportunities.

Goal Water quality improvements; maintain and improve values in the wetlands and river systems, including in-stream habitat			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Support complementary projects (Stream Frontage Management Program and capital projects)	Immediate	Melbourne Water	Land managers
Mitigate storm water impacts in and around township areas	Medium	Local councils, Melbourne Water	Land managers
Encourage landholders to access assistance with fencing where landholder conservation agreements are put in place (see Section 4.7 and Appendix C for more information about licensing arrangements)	Immediate	Melbourne Water and land managers	Adjoining property owners
Undertake coarse woody debris evaluation and management; community education about benefits	Immediate	Melbourne Water	Land managers
Mitigate impact of shading and leaf drop from deciduous weed species through progressive removal and replacement with indigenous species	Immediate	Melbourne Water	Land managers

Goal Healthy riparian zone supports the health of wetlands and river systems			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Maintain remnant riparian vegetation quality and extent, ensuring risks to natural, cultural, social and economic values are appropriately mitigated	Immediate	Land managers	Adjoining land owners, licence holders, Melbourne Water
Improve the quality and extent of riparian vegetation	Immediate	Land managers	Land owners, licence holders, Melbourne Water
Investigate site suitability for restoration works and monitor and evaluate strategies	Medium	Land managers	Melbourne Water

to restore natural hydrological regime conditions			
Natural channel form is maintained and enhanced by native vegetation. Progressive removal of willows from river banks and stream sides	Medium	Melbourne Water	Land managers
Community education about benefits of wider riparian vegetation in terms of reducing wind throw and mitigating wind impact on mature trees	Longer term	Land managers	Melbourne Water

2.7 Climate change

Recent climate change projections indicate a general trend towards higher temperatures and reduced rainfall in south-eastern Australia. This poses many challenges for land management and protection of threatened species. Where localised climatic conditions are changing, enhancing the ability of species to move through the landscape is increasingly important, as this enables animals to migrate and find more suitable habitat. Climate change will also alter the distribution and growth of many weed and pest species that may be constrained by current conditions. Changes in climate will impact waterways through reduced flows and higher water temperatures. Maintaining or improving the condition of riparian land will help mitigate some of these impacts – for example, regulating instream temperatures by shading waterways. Improved riparian land also provides habitat and enhanced connectivity for plants and animals seeking more suitable environments due to climate change impacts. Riparian areas and waterways are generally cooler than the surrounding landscape and play a vital role as refuges during extreme weather events such as heat waves. Efforts focused on improving the condition of riparian land are therefore a practical response to climate change. (Reference: DELWP Regional Riparian Action Plan).

Strategies listed in the previous sections will all help reduce the impact of climate change.

CONSULTATION QUESTION

We have developed goals for native vegetation, endangered vegetation communities, threatened species and waterway health. Do you think these goals will lead to key management outcomes being achieved?

Share your thoughts on this issue.

Safer together

A new approach to reducing the
risk of bushfire in Victoria

The Government response to the review
of performance targets for bushfire fuel
management on public land



3. Fire Management

3.1 Fire and riparian land

In response to community concerns relating to bushfire risk, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change committed to prioritising the development of a bushfire risk management plan, which incorporates community knowledge and informs a risk-based approach to revegetation and reserve planning that will not increase bushfire risk to the local and broader communities. The Yellingbo Conservation Area Bushfire Risk Management Plan 2018 (YCA Bushfire Risk Management Plan) has been prepared to address the community's concerns⁵.

The objectives of the Bushfire Risk Management Plan are to:

- Ensure there is no material increase in bushfire risk as a result of revegetating public land to implement the *Victorian Government response to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's Yellingbo Investigation Final Report (March 2014)*
- Maintain or improve the resilience of natural ecosystems and their ability to deliver ecosystem services such as biodiversity, water, carbon storage and forest products.

A series of planning principles were prepared which provide the basis for the Bushfire Risk Management Plan.

Planning principles of the YCA Bushfire Risk Management Plan

- Human life will be afforded priority over all other considerations
- Establishment of the Conservation Area will not materially increase the bushfire risk to the local or broader community
- Establishment of the Conservation Area will maintain or improve the resilience of natural ecosystems and their ability to deliver ecosystem services such as biodiversity, water, carbon storage and forest products
- A scientific approach using the most up-to-date information and advice from independent experts will be used to develop the YCA Bushfire Risk Management Plan
- Staff from Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and local CFA brigades will be involved in the preparation of the YCA Bushfire Risk Management Plan to ensure that local knowledge is considered
- DELWP will be transparent about how decisions have been made and how stakeholder input has been considered
- DELWP will be transparent about what assumptions have been made in terms of risk assessment and mitigation
- The Plan will not conflict with DELWP or Parks Victoria's legislated obligations
- The Plan will not conflict with other land management policies relevant to the conservation area

⁵ A copy of the Yellingbo Conservation Area Bushfire Risk Management Plan is available at the Engage Victoria website; <https://engage.vic.gov.au/yellingboconservationarea>

Local actions were developed that can be undertaken to mitigate the risk of bushfire. The strategies listed below explain how this can occur.

Goal			
Ensure there is no material increase in bushfire risk as a result of revegetating public land to implement the <i>Victorian Government response to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's Yellingbo Investigation Final Report (March 2014)</i>			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Limit extent of revegetation near dwellings; ensure a minimum setback distance of 100m and combine with lower bark hazard vegetation buffers	Immediate	Land managers	DELWP
Restrict revegetation to 10m from either side of the waterway in the <i>Restricted revegetation area</i> (Ref. Figure 1: <i>Restricted revegetation area</i>)	Immediate	Land managers	DELWP
Allow grazing under a Riparian Management License where appropriate	Immediate	DELWP	Land managers
Continue to work closely with local CFA brigades and local residents to share and integrate local knowledge	Medium	Land managers	FFMV, CFA
Maintain appropriate emergency management plans and access to the Conservation Area.	Immediate	Land managers	FFMV, CFA
New access tracks and water points in consultation with local government and CFA brigades	Medium	Land managers	FFMV, CFA

Goal			
Maintain or improve the resilience of natural ecosystems and their ability to deliver ecosystem services such as biodiversity, water, carbon storage and forest products			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Fire prevention and non-burning fuel treatments	Immediate	Land managers	DELWP, CFA, Parks Victoria, FFMV
Use fire management techniques that prioritise the protection of environmental and cultural values (such as slashing and minimising wetland exposure to fire retardants) and tolerable fire intervals of fire sensitive vegetation to inform the frequency of planned burns	Medium	Land managers	DELWP, CFA, Parks Victoria, FFMV
Work with Traditional Owners to investigate integrating traditional burning with planned burning for ecological objectives	Medium	Land managers	TO groups

CONSULTATION QUESTION

The initial round of community consultations in 2017 identified that bushfire risk was a significant concern within the community. In response, we have developed *The Yellingbo Conservation Area Bushfire Risk Management Plan* (found on the Engage Victoria website) to ensure there is no material increase in bushfire risk as a result of establishing the Conservation Area.

Do you understand the key concepts contained in the Plan?

What additional information would you like to convey on bushfire risk management?



4. Recreation and Use

Situated only 50 kilometres east of Melbourne, the Conservation Area and its surrounds represent a significant recreational drawcard. The Yarra Valley, Yarra Ranges National Park and the Dandenong Ranges attract many locals, visitors and tourists throughout the year. The region offers a wide range of experiences ranging from wilderness bushwalking to winery tours. The Conservation Area is used for a variety of low-impact recreational activities such as walking, swimming, hiking, picnicking, birdwatching, photography, dogwalking and biking. Local and wider communities have strong links with the land that will become part of the Conservation Area, and there are direct links between many private properties and the adjoining Crown land water frontages.

4.1 Key management outcomes

- The Conservation Area is valued and utilised by the community in a way that is consistent with the management objectives of the Conservation Area
- Passive recreation activities are supported; more active recreation and new recreational uses are managed to ensure minimal impact on both values and visitors
- Community connection with the rivers, creeks and reserves is maintained and enhanced where it does not impact on natural values
- Zones are implemented to ensure there is appropriate visitor activities that do not impact on environmental and cultural values
- Licence conditions to apply to authorised uses (including riparian management/conservation licences), ensuring minimal impact on both values and visitors
- On-site information and interpretation for the Conservation Area on values and risks is developed to enhance visitor awareness and experience.

4.2 Recreational activities

Recreational activities can occur within the Conservation Area, provided they do not conflict with conservation values.

Goal Opportunities for a range of recreational visitor activities are provided with minimal impacts on natural values, cultural values and other users			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Provide vehicle and walking access to visitor sites and close and rehabilitate informal tracks that are not required for management, have limited recreational value or are having an adverse impact on cultural or natural values	Medium	Land managers	Community groups

Control illegal vehicle access using bollards, gates and barrier fencing with clear signage at illegal vehicle access points	Medium	Land managers	Community groups, Victoria Police
Provide on-lead dog access only in the Biodiversity and Community Use Zone. Identify dog friendly zones on walk trail maps to specify suitable on-leash and nearby off-leash areas for exercising of dogs	Immediate	Parks Victoria	
Provide recreational horse riding access only in the Biodiversity and Community Use Zone on defined tracks. Implement a permit system for group recreational horse riders, providing detailed conditions of use	Immediate	Land managers	Community groups

Recreation activities by zone

The table below identifies various recreational uses and whether they are permitted across the three zones (as described in section 1.2).

Activity	Conservation Zone	Restoration Zone	Biodiversity and Community Use Zone
Birdwatching from designated walking tracks only	Y	Y	Y
Bushwalking, trail running on designated walking tracks only	Y	Y	Y
Campfires	N	N	N
Camping	N	N	N
Cycling on public access roads and designated tracks, including the rail trail	Y ⁶	Y	Y
Dog walking on-leash	N (noting Menzies Creek)	N	Y (Permitted on designated walking tracks; car parks)
Dog walking off-leash	N	N	N
Recreational fishing (bait collection not allowed in Conservation Zone)	N	Y	Y
Fossicking and prospecting	N	N	N
Recreational horse riding	N	N	Y (Permitted on designated tracks; car parks)
Commercial tours (tour operator licence is required)	Y	Y	Y
Hunting (recreational)	N	N	N

⁶ In accordance with *Public Land Mountain Bike Guidelines 2013*

Orienteering	N	N	Y
Picnicking	Y	Y	Y
Swimming	Y	Y	Y
Vehicle access: 4WDs, motorcycles, trail bikes and other recreational vehicles. Registered vehicles are permitted on public vehicle tracks only. Vehicles are not permitted off-road or on walking tracks	N	N	N

CONSULTATION QUESTION

The summary of “Recreational activities by zone” table was finalised using information gained during the initial community consultation in 2017. To what extent do you think the recreation activities proposed in the three zones are appropriate?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Not sure/Don't know
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Share your thoughts on this issue.

4.3 Current agricultural and horticultural land use

The areas adjacent to the Conservation Area accommodate a diverse range of agricultural enterprises. Fertile soils, relatively high and dependable rainfall, and varied topography provide suitable conditions for many products. Horticultural and agricultural production includes strawberries, other berries and cherries, wine, cut flowers and nurseries, potatoes, chickens (eggs, broilers, breeding), apples and pears, dairy, beef and many others such as lettuce, brassicas, lemons, ‘alternative’ livestock (e.g., alpacas). Yarra Ranges Council estimates agriculture and horticulture, including wine production, across the municipality to be worth some \$4 billion to the economy with nearly 2,000 permanent and approximately 3,000 additional seasonal workers employed in the key months of November to April. Apart from some public land licensed mostly for stream frontage grazing by cattle, virtually all agricultural production in the area surrounding the Conservation Area is from private land. Many enterprises rely on water provided under licence from public authorities, using private infrastructure that is often located on public land – diversion pumps and pipes, for example.

Goal Adjoining residents and property owners support and enjoy the ecological, economic and social values of riparian areas			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Access to riparian areas is maintained for adjoining landholders for the purpose of passive recreation	Immediate	Land managers	DELWP, adjoining land owners, community groups
Land owners continue riparian works where a riparian management licence is in place; e.g., habitat restoration and revegetation, weed management, fencing etc	Medium	Land managers, Melbourne Water	Adjoining land owners, community groups
Water pumping infrastructure that is located on Crown land will generally be allowed to remain. (However, there may be a requirement to re-locate pump sheds and other built structures at the end of their useful life. This will be negotiated with individual landowners)	Medium	Land managers	Melbourne Water
Educational experiences can continue in the Riparian land to enable educational institutions such as the schools that adjoin the Conservation Area to engage students in the local environment	Medium	Land managers	Educational providers

4.4 Adjacent landholders

Many private properties directly adjoin the Conservation Area, and landholders have had a role in managing the riparian land for many years. Some landholders feel a strong sense of ownership over the public land, and have often spent many years managing weeds and participating in revegetation programs. These relationships with the land and the river systems are important and landholder involvement in the Conservation Area is to continue and be promoted. Landholders can enter into riparian management agreements, and access and use of the Crown land for landholders will continue, despite the phase-out of grazing licences. Landholders will still have access to river frontages and be able to continue using the Conservation Area land that adjoins their private land for passive recreation, swimming access, and uses such as picnicking or walking by the river. Land managers will continue to work directly with landholders adjoining the Conservation Area to negotiate practical outcomes for fencing alignments, revegetation plans, weed control and access, as well as to discuss options for licence agreements, where appropriate.

Goal Continue to work with interested landholders to protect adjacent riparian vegetation			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Land owners continue riparian works where a riparian management licence is in place; e.g., habitat restoration and revegetation, weed management, fencing etc	Immediate	Land managers, Melbourne Water	Adjoining land owners, community groups

4.5 Access, facilities and safety

A range of infrastructure is provided and maintained to support access to the Conservation Area for passive recreation, emergency response and management in the Conservation Area while minimising the environmental and cultural impacts of visitation. Tracks will be closed or access modified where they do not support this goal. Generally, the undeveloped character of the Conservation Area is maintained.

Goal Maintain the undeveloped nature of the Conservation Area while allowing for safe, practical and appropriate access for passive recreation and management activities			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Consult with community and discuss with Traditional Owners the opportunity to assign names to unnamed roads and tracks in the Conservation Area, and update maps accordingly	Longer-term	Land managers	Traditional Owners
Maintain walking tracks to be distinct but without major modification to the ground, unless required for visitor safety or to protect values; e.g., boardwalk	Medium	Land managers	Community groups
Prioritise maintenance and renewal of facilities through detailed site planning that considers visitor use patterns, and the management of environmental and cultural impacts	Medium	Land managers	Parks Victoria
Provide vehicle and walking access to visitor sites and Conservation Areas. Monitor the condition of the access network and, where possible, mitigate damage to values or to the asset	Medium	Land managers	Community groups

Like any public land, visitors are exposed to natural hazards when they visit the area. Many risks are inherent to activities undertaken in the natural environment but, when combined with conflicting uses and/or inappropriate activities or behaviours, these can threaten visitor safety.

Goal Promote visitor safety and awareness of safety issues and risks associated with access and use of the Conservation Area			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery Partners
Implement increased compliance programs and run targeted enforcement to address illegal activities impacting on values and/or visitor safety	Immediate	Land managers	DELWP/Parks Victoria
Ensure a strategic and integrated approach to safety signage to provide visitors clear and consistent messages on safety risks so they may enjoy a safe visit	Longer-term	Land managers	Community groups, adjacent land owners
Investigate unique emergency location codes at major access areas to the Conservation Area or that site/location naming is formalised and site names are incorporated in VicMap data	As required	Land managers	Emergency agencies

4.6 Education and interpretation

Education and interpretation are important tools for connecting people with the value of public land. Fostering an appreciation for, and understanding of, nature and culture can enhance the visitor experience. Effective communication can promote appropriate behaviours to protect inherent values and to ensure all visitors enjoy their time in the Conservation Area.

Goal Visitors appreciate, understand and care for the values of the broader Conservation Area			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Review existing signage at key visitor sites and access points to improve visitor orientation and interpretation	Medium	Land managers	DELWP/Parks Victoria
Increase appreciation and understanding of the Conservation Area through increased awareness of the roles of agencies and volunteer groups in managing the Conservation Area	Medium	Land managers	YCACC
In consultation with Traditional Owners, encourage the appreciation of Aboriginal cultural heritage and country, and educate users of the cultural significance of value of the Conservation Area	Medium	Parks Victoria	TO groups
Support citizen science programs and increased active use of the Conservation Area by educational institutions to develop	Medium	Parks Victoria	Community and volunteer groups

4.7 Authorised uses

Authorised uses of the Conservation Area are determined through a combination of the *Victorian Government Response to VEAC Yellingbo Investigation Final Report (2014)* and the zoning, which has formed the basis of the management planning zones of the Conservation Area. Input through community consultation at the scoping phase of this draft Plan helped refine the zones. As discussed earlier, once the Conservation Area is Scheduled under the *National Parks Act 1975*, the Parks Regulations 2013 will apply to the land. The mechanism to allow for alterations and exceptions to the standard parks regulations is to establish set-asides under the regulations. The set-asides allow for flexibility in the application of the regulations, including exceptions and prohibitions.

4.8 Riparian management licences

Within the Conservation Area, large parts of the public land forming streamside reserves have been historically occupied and managed by adjoining landholders, either with or without grazing licences issued by DELWP. The VEAC recommendations and government's response make several references to conservation agreements with adjacent landholders and to exclusion of stock grazing.

It is recognised that public land managers will require adjacent landholder support to enable effective management of public land within the Conservation Area. Effective engagement with adjoining landholders to assist in the management of the public land is a critical outcome to achieve.

To support the use of conservation agreements with adjacent landowners, condition and availability of agreements will be formalised in a new Schedule Four A to the *National Parks Act 1975*.

In the interim, DELWP will remain the licence administrator to issue riparian management licences for conservation purposes under either the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* or the *Land Act 1958*, dependent on the status of the land.

Licences may include the use of grazing as a management tool where this is consistent with *Licensing Principles for Fencing and Grazing within Yellingbo Conservation Area*⁷, which describes in detail licensing principles for fencing and grazing within Conservation Area. The purpose of this document is to define the licensing principles to be applied within the Conservation Area and to provide clear guidance to government agencies around licensing conditions to be applied to conservation agreements entered into with adjoining landholders. This includes defining the minimum stock exclusion areas to be achieved and any associated special conditions to be included on licences. It will apply to all conservation licence agreements entered into with private landholders within the Conservation Area. A summary of this is found in Appendix C.

Where a licence agreement is entered into, it must be for the entire width and depth of the frontage adjoining the property. Funding is available to assist licence holders to install fencing to exclude stock, as well as for off-stream watering⁸ infrastructure, revegetation and weed works.

CONSULTATION QUESTION

Section 4.8 and Appendix C of the draft Plan outline opportunities for a riparian management licence (instead of a grazing licence).

After reviewing this information, how well do you understand the use of riparian management licences on Crown land water frontages?

- I have a good understanding of my options
- I don't understand and require more information.

Do you understand how to access funding for stream frontage management as outlined in section 2.6?

Is there any additional information you require in relation to riparian management licences?

4.9 Conservation Area compliance strategy

The compliance strategy is an important part of establishing the Conservation Area. The strategy will outline the priorities and decision-making frameworks to enable a consistent approach to compliance in the Conservation Area. This will include strategies for encroachments, enforcement of licence conditions, cattle at large, recreational misuse, damage to native vegetation and other unauthorised works.

Goal			
Uses of the Conservation Area are managed to minimise the impact on values and visitors			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Responsibilities for licence holders are clear and consistently applied and enforced across the Conservation Area	Immediate	DELWP	Parks Victoria

⁷ Refer Appendix C.

⁸ Off-stream stock watering is only available to those landowners who previously held a licence over Crown land adjoining their property.

Compliance strategy written and implemented to address significant issues of unauthorised use or occupation of Crown land	Immediate	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Licence agreements are entered into where appropriate. Use and development of Crown land without a licence is referred for compliance action	Medium	DELWP	Parks Victoria, licence holders
Permitted uses are clearly communicated to adjoining land owners and Conservation Area visitors	Immediate	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Ensure any encroachments on public land are appropriately managed in consultation with the adjoining landholder	Immediate	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Licence conditions are clear and consistent; strategies are in place to address non-compliance to licence conditions	Immediate	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Clear and concise information provided to adjoining property owners, licence holder or not	Immediate	DELWP	Parks Victoria

Goal Recreational uses of the Conservation Area are managed to minimise the impact on values and visitors			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Clearly communicate authorised uses in terms of individual Conservation Area users and groups of users	Immediate	Land managers	Community groups, adjoining land owners
Compliance strategy written and implemented to address significant issues of encroachments on Crown land	Immediate	Land managers	DELWP
Permit set-asides in response to VEAC Recs, and other set-asides based on community consultation	Immediate	Land managers	
Clear and consistent signage in and at the entry points of parks	Immediate	Land managers	



5. Cultural Heritage

The Conservation Area has a rich living history that is a vital legacy for Aboriginal people, the local community and for all Australians. The landscape contains evidence of thousands of years of continuous occupation and the Conservation Area endures as an important place for the Wurundjeri Traditional Owners. Post-settlement heritage is also valued, with the area providing timber, agricultural produce, drinking water, recreation, tourism and gold mining since the mid-1800s.

5.1 Key management outcomes

- Be guided by Traditional Owners in the management and interpretation of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the Conservation Area
- Establish and strengthen partnerships with the community, historical society, Shires and other key organisations, and promote opportunities for working together to achieve shared goals.

There are no current Native Title claims in the Conservation Area. However, Native Title rights apply whether or not a claim is pending. In order to comply with the *Native Title Act 1993*, once a management plan for the Conservation Area is drafted, the land manager will be required to issue a notice to the Traditional Owners, requesting a review of the draft management plan.

5.2 Aboriginal land use and history

This region is part of the traditional lands of Aboriginal people of the Wurundjeri tribe and includes a number of language groups or clans of the Woi wurrung. There are many places and sites across the area that are of cultural heritage significance to Aboriginal people. The Yarra River and other waterways, swamps and lakes are of particular importance to Aboriginal people and contain archaeological sites, although the entire region was part of a broader cultural landscape. Documented pre-contact archaeological sites occur throughout the Yarra Valley including scarred trees and artefact scatters. Some particularly good examples of scarred trees are located in Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve. Several well-known Aboriginal community leaders are associated with the historic Coranderrk Aboriginal Mission Station established near Healesville, part of which is included in the Conservation Area. (VEAC, 2012)

Goal

The cultural landscape of the Conservation Area is recognised and landscape features and values, including Traditional Owner and local community connections, are recognised, respected, protected and celebrated

Strategy	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Encourage a collaborative approach between land managers, Traditional Owners, Heritage Victoria and Aboriginal Victoria (with other partners as appropriate) to research and understand the cultural landscape of the Conservation Area	Medium	Community heritage or historical groups	Land managers, Heritage Victoria, Aboriginal Victoria
In partnership with Wurundjeri and local communities, investigate renaming the Conservation Area, key features and locations to reflect Traditional Owners' connections in accordance with the guidelines of the Office for Geographic Names	Medium	Land managers	Wurundjeri, community groups
Explore opportunities to incorporate joint management and indigenous land management techniques	Medium	Land managers	Wurundjeri, community groups

Goals

Historic heritage and connections are recognised and understanding of heritage values and places is enhanced. Contemporary Traditional Owner and local community connections are recognised as an integral part of heritage management

Strategy	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Enhance historic heritage visitor and tourism experiences with visitor information and the interpretation of key stories and themes.	Medium	Community heritage or historical groups	Land managers
Involve the local community and Traditional Owners with interpreting the area's historic heritage, encourage participation as tour guides, and record the community's knowledge of heritage values, stories and connections	Medium	Local residents, community groups, Wurundjeri	Land managers, local councils, Regional Tourism

Goal Partnerships with Traditional Owners to protect and conserve Aboriginal features, places and objects of cultural significance			
Strategy	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Undertake a targeted assessment of the informal track network to identify impacts on Aboriginal sites and prioritise management interventions for protection and conservation works	Immediate	Land managers	Wurundjeri, Aboriginal Victoria
Build capacity for the conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage, site protection and restoration	Medium	Land managers	Wurundjeri, Aboriginal Victoria
Progressively identify, document, map and record all known cultural features to contemporary standards and add newly identified sites to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register	Medium	Land managers	Wurundjeri, Aboriginal Victoria
Work with adjoining property owners to support their participation in the recording and management of cultural heritage places and values. Share resources and provide advice and practical skills to landowners to help them manage significant cultural features	Longer-term	Land managers	Wurundjeri, Aboriginal Victoria
Prepare any required cultural heritage management plans to address the relevant management and authorised activities	As required	Land managers	Wurundjeri, Aboriginal Victoria

Goal Wurundjeri cultural traditions and knowledge is practised and shared in the Conservation Area			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
In partnership with Wurundjeri, define how cultural traditions and practices relevant to the cultural heritage of the Conservation Area will be revived or continued, and facilitate cultural renewal	Medium	Land managers	Wurundjeri

5.3 European heritage

The Dandenong Ranges and Yarra Valley have provided timber, agricultural produce, drinking water, recreation and tourism since the mid-1800s. In the earliest years of European settlement, the region was part of an expanding pastoral industry. (VEAC, 2012)

Evidence remains today of a range of tourism and use-related activities in the area. As an example, a tourist track between Sassafras and Emerald was constructed in the very early 1900s, and is still in use today. Gold mining was prevalent along the creeks in the 1860s and again in the early 1900s. Various maps show the indicative location of digging areas, and mineshafts remain today. Sawmills were located throughout the area, situated on private land as well as in on-stream reserves.

Evidence of historic water distribution remain, also. As an example, the water pipeline from Beagleys Bridge to Monbulk Jams was constructed to divert water from the Sassafras Creek to supply the jam factory which was a major feature of the local economy. The Avard water turbine on frontage of Menzies Creek is of local interest as it provided electricity prior to the state government-generated

supply becoming available and utilised part of the 1920s goldmining water race to divert the creek through the turbine.

Establishment of conservation and passive recreation areas in this region in the late 1880s illustrates a changing community emphasis towards the protection of public land for non-economic purposes: mainly for recreation in a natural environment. For example, Fern Tree Gully forest – reserved as a place of public recreation – was popular for picnicking, nature study and walking from the 1880s. In 1927, Fern Tree Gully forest was gazetted as a national park and was later merged with other areas to form Dandenong Ranges National Park in 1987.

Goal European history is interpreted and protected in the Conservation Area			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
In partnership with local historical societies and community groups, define how heritage sites can be interpreted and protected in situ to enhance knowledge of the area's history	Medium	Land managers	Community groups, local residents, local councils

CONSULTATION QUESTION

Have we captured all the cultural heritage values of the Conservation Area?

Do you think anything is missing?

Do you agree the goals addressing cultural heritage will protect our heritage?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Not sure/Don't know
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Share your thoughts on cultural heritage.



6. Coordinated Management

To deliver a healthy conservation landscape through the implementation of the Conservation Area, there must be a strong focus on coordinated management. This means working across government agencies such as Parks Victoria, DELWP, Melbourne Water, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority and Zoos Victoria to support and enhance each agency's projects. It also means working with community conservation and farming groups to deliver projects that have mutual benefits for the Conservation Area as well as for surrounding communities.

Coordinated management is a key objective of the Conservation Area. In response to the VEAC Yellingbo Investigation, the Victorian government supported the recommendations to better integrate public land management and improve coordination in order to improve the protection of biodiversity and ecological values. A new governance model, the YCACC was established to improve coordination and collaboration between land managers and other agencies involved in the management of the Conservation Area. With the assistance of Trust for Nature, which is represented on YCACC, private landowners are able to achieve conservation caveats and access support for a range of services, including mapping, planting and monitoring and weed management. This work on private land is especially important where the Crown land reservation is less than 30 metres, or where there is a gap in the public land available for essential wildlife corridors and where the Trust for Nature can assist with the purchase of private land to be included in the Conservation Area.

The model allows for the development of clear overarching objectives, cross-tenure planning and building on existing work. The combined resources and expertise of the agencies and communities represented on YCACC is a powerful asset in establishing the Conservation Area and, as a result, YCACC has been able to establish a clear vision and plans as required by the committee's terms of reference. Much progress has been made through the strengthening of existing inter-agency relationships. However, formalised commitment, transparency, understanding accountabilities and operational constraints, and understanding opportunities to partner for future investment in the Conservation Area will be required to further build the culture of coordination.

Establishing the Conservation Area will require the further detailed development of partnerships with agencies, Traditional Owners, community groups and private landowners.

Yarra4Life is an exemplar of a collaborative environmental program that aims to improve the quality of land, water and natural habitat in the Yarra Valley and help protect and enhance the survival of native species in the region. Coordinated by the PPWCMA, the Yarra4Life program is a collaborative partnership involving representatives from local government, state government, land managers, Traditional Owners and community groups. Yarra4Life plans, coordinates and delivers cross-tenure land management projects that improve habitat across the Yarra4Life landscape; it provides opportunities to coordinate and connect works, and a forum to share collective knowledge. The program aims to build connections between the community and the environment, and works with Traditional Owners to incorporate their goals and aspirations for participation in natural resource management into Yarra4Life activities.

The Victorian Government Response to VEAC's Yellingbo Investigation Final Report supports the recommendation that, in the first instance, the *National Parks Act 1975* will be amended as required

to establish management agreements with public authorities to manage specified land, and conservation agreements with adjacent landholders, for land within 100 metres of both a permanent waterway and the private land boundary. The relevant public land managers through these agreements will continue to have direct management responsibility for the respective public land units, including where that relates to broader scale planning responsibilities such as fire management and planning.

6.1 Key management outcomes

- Partnerships with the community, Traditional Owners, Shires and other key organisations are established and/or strengthened while opportunities for working together to achieve shared goals are promoted
- Traditional Owners are actively involved in management decisions about the Conservation Area
- Adjoining land owners are engaged in the protection of biodiversity and ecological values of the Conservation Area by maintaining and improving conditions on their own properties.

6.2 Manage with Traditional Owners

The Conservation Area has high cultural significance for Traditional Owners. It will be critical to ensure that the Wurundjeri tribe partner with responsible agencies to ensure cultural values are protected and enhanced during the implementation of the Conservation Area.

Goal Traditional Owners caring for their Country is an integral part of the Conservation Area's management			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Facilitate knowledge-sharing and cooperation between Traditional Owner communities	Immediate	Land managers	Wurundjeri
Provide opportunities for Traditional Owners and land managers to share knowledge and work collaboratively	Immediate	Land managers	Wurundjeri
Identify and apply traditional ecological and cultural knowledge to support sustainable management practices; e.g., to enhance environmental management, education about natural values and associated cultural benefits	Medium	Land managers	Wurundjeri
Partner with Traditional Owners to enrich the cultural experience and support the growth of local businesses, such as NRM contract services, tourism operations and community enterprises	Medium	Land managers	Wurundjeri

6.3 Manage with agency partners

A range of agencies have responsibilities within the Conservation Area. It is critical that the coordinating of their activities and the implementation of this plan occurs. All activities and programs in the Conservation Area will need to relate to the delivery of a plan goal or strategy. Hence the Plan will be used to direct annual priority setting and work programming for the Conservation Area.

Periodic review of the Plan will be required, and it is proposed that the plan be reviewed against the outlined goals and strategies at years two, five and ten.

Goal Coordinated management of the Conservation Area enables efficiencies in program delivery and is supported by consistent land status and regulations			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Reserve all lands within the Conservation Area under the <i>Crown Land Reserves Act 1978</i> for conservation or other appropriate purposes	Immediate	DELWP	
Establish set-asides for the new Schedule Four A of the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> conservation landscape	Medium	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Continue to collaborate with Melbourne Water to deliver capital works programs, River Health Incentive Programs, and facilitate landholder Stream Frontage Management Plans, as well as promote funding opportunities on private land where appropriate	Immediate	DELWP	Melbourne Water
Continue a collaborative working relationship between Parks Victoria, DELWP, Yarra Ranges Council and Cardinia Shire Council through improved and sustained communication, consultation and cooperation	Immediate	Land managers	
Develop a business case to resource the implementation of the Yellingbo Conservation Area Plan	Immediate	Land managers	DELWP
Collaborate with local government and landholders to coordinate programs, such as fox control; find realistic solutions on shared issues, such as litter management; improve cross-tenure management and habitat connectivity	Medium	Land managers	PPWCMA
Undertake a two-year review of implementation of the plan, with reporting against high priority strategies provided by responsible agencies	Medium	Land managers	PPWCMA Trust for Nature
Undertake a five-year review of implementation of the plan, – with reporting against high priority strategies provided by responsible agencies	Medium	Land managers	PPWCMA Trust for Nature
Undertake a 10-year review of implementation of the plan, with reporting against all strategies provided by responsible and partner agencies and endorsed by YCACC	Longer term	Land managers	PPWCMA Trust for Nature
Explore opportunities to consolidate land management	As required	Land managers	

6.4 Manage with community groups or other management groups

A number of volunteer Landcare and friends groups are active in the area. These volunteer groups have taken on important conservation roles, including tree planting, species monitoring, the removal of rubbish, pest animals and weeds, soil conservation, the management of runoff, and community education. While conservation is a key focus, these groups provide a valuable opportunity for people to meet and interact with others who share similar interests. Participation in Landcare and friends groups builds a sense of community and connection to the local environment. Groups are extensive and include the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater, Friends of the Leadbeater's Possum, Friends of Hoddles Creek and Friends of Wright Forest. Landcare groups include Macclesfield, Yarra Valley Equestrian, Southern Dandenongs, Johns Hill and Monbulk, among many.

Committees of Management (or similar) already exist in the Conservation Area. These management groups play an important role in working with the land manager to manage areas of public land. There may be an opportunity in future to establish more of these types of management groups or arrangements.

Goal Community skills, knowledge and assistance provide stewardship and help in managing the Conservation Area			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Work with volunteer groups to promote their work, encourage safe work practices and share ecosystem restoration skills	Immediate	Land managers	Community groups
Work with Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater to source volunteers and coordinate volunteer training within the Conservation Area for monitoring and protection of key habitat/breeding sites, and to collect and analyse data for assessing management effectiveness	Immediate	Land managers	Community groups
Support opportunities to extend and diversify volunteering to increase community connections, and promote health and wellbeing of people and Country	Medium	Land managers	Community Landcare networks, PPWCMA
Promote use of the Conservation Area during community engagement days, cross-cultural training days and volunteer events such as National Tree Day and Clean Up Australia Day	As required	Land managers	PPWCMA
Encourage the establishment of Trust for Nature covenants in private land wherever possible	Longer term	Trust for Nature	Private land holders
Encourage the establishment of riparian management licences and conservation agreements wherever appropriate	Medium	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Support private landowners in maintaining biodiversity through weed management and pest animal control projects	Medium	DELWP	Parks Victoria

CONSULTATION QUESTION

The draft plan commits to maintaining the community's important role in the future of the Conservation Area, strengthening how the community and partner agencies work together. Do you understand the plan's strategies for coordinated management?

Do you have any comments?

Statewide Assessment of Public Land

It is important to note that VEAC's Statewide Assessment of Public Land was initiated in late 2014. The purpose of the investigation was for VEAC to undertake an assessment of public land in Victoria addressing the categorisation of public land, current reservation status and values on public land. The focus of the investigation was to provide information and recommendations to improve management effectiveness. VEAC's final report has been accepted by Government.



7. Precincts and Site-specific Management Strategies

To enable more site-specific management strategies to be developed, six precincts have been developed that cover the Conservation Area. These precincts were based on logical geographic location as well as by grouping similar geomorphology, land use, landscape type and ecological vegetation class.

- Precinct 1: Yarra River Woori Yallock to Healesville, including Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve, Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve and Badger Creek (Coranderrk Creek), and junction of Woori Yallock Creek and the Yarra River
- Precinct 2: Yarra River Millgrove to Woori Yallock, including Little Yarra River, Britannia Creek and Lower Hoddles Creek
- Precinct 3: Hoddles Creek, including Hoddles Creek Education Area, Beenak Bushland Reserve and Wet Lead Creek
- Precinct 4: Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, Woori Yallock Creek, Sheepstation Creek, McCrae Creek and Cockatoo Creek
- Precinct 5: Wright Forest Bushland Reserve and Cockatoo Creek in Cockatoo township
- Precinct 6: Sassafras Creek, Perrins Creek, Emerald Creek and Menzies Creek.

7.1 Precinct 1: Yarra River Woori Yallock to Healesville, including Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve, Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve, Badger Creek (Coranderrk Creek), and junction of Woori Yallock Creek and the Yarra River

This precinct includes the Yarra River from Woori Yallock to the Maroondah Highway near Healesville, Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve, Coranderrk Creek between the Nature Conservation Reserve and the Yarra River, the Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve, and a small section of Woori Yallock Creek to the south of the Warramate Nature Conservation Reserve. Between Woori Yallock and Healesville, the landscape broadens into wide floodplains which include numerous billabongs that are culturally, geomorphically and ecologically significant. Note that Badger Creek is also referred to as Coranderrk Creek.

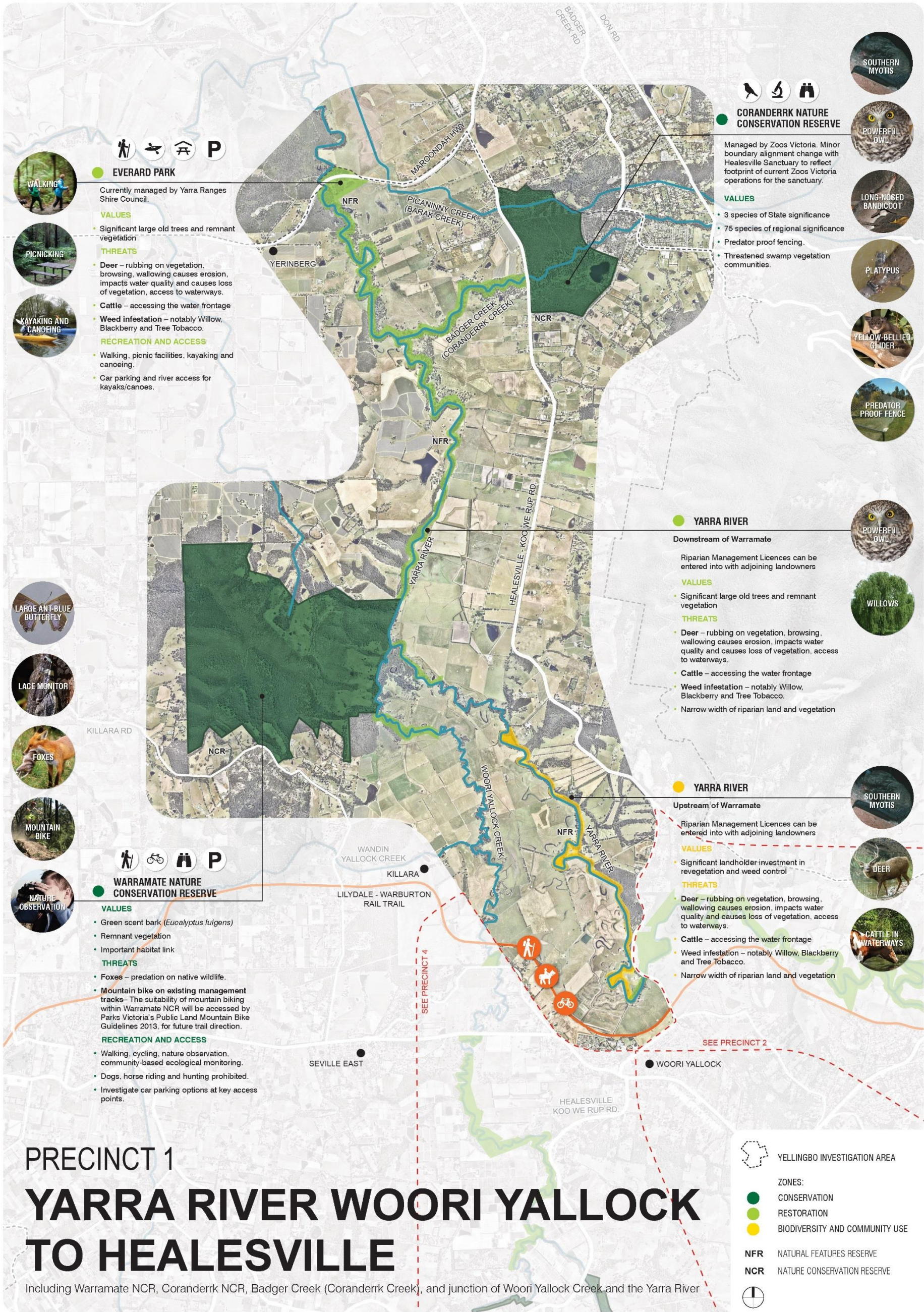


Figure 3: Precinct 1 Map

Rare and threatened species in this area include:

- Fauna: nationally listed Macquarie Perch and Australian Grayling, and state-listed White-bellied Sea-Eagle
- Flora: nationally listed Matted Flax Lily and Yering Silver Gum.

Ecological vegetation communities occurring in the area include Riparian Forest, Damp Forest, Wet Forest, Floodplain Riparian Woodland, Riparian Thicket, Swamp Scrub, Swampy Riparian Woodland and Creekline Herb-rich Woodland.

Yarra Valley Trail proposal

It is acknowledged that there is currently a process underway in relation to the Yarra Valley Trail project, which is being developed by the Yarra Ranges Council. The proposed Yarra Valley Trail consists of a 40+ kilometre long trail that would link Lilydale, Yarra Glen, Healesville and join into the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail. The Yarra Valley Trail will be delivered in stages over multiple years:

Stage 1: Lilydale to Yarra Glen.

Stage 2: Yarra Glen to Healesville.

Stage 3: Healesville to Seville East or Woori Yallock.

The project is currently in the planning phase, and the alignment of the trail is not finalised. Yarra Ranges Council will provide several opportunities for people to be involved in the project as it progresses. The planning and design of both the Conservation Area and the Yarra Valley Trail will need to be considered together so that the two processes are integrated, particularly as there are limited opportunities for recreational infrastructure in narrow riparian zones and decisions will have to be made about how the trail could be accommodated in balance with conservation values.

Riparian frontage along the Yarra River and Badger Creek (Coranderrk Creek)

Between Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve and Woori Yallock, the public land forming the Yarra River frontage is discontinuous, with an average width of 20 metres and some larger pockets of Crown frontage as the river meanders. This section is zoned Biodiversity and Community Use. The aim for this section is to achieve a minimum continuous 20 metre width of riparian vegetation on the frontage where possible and practical. There has been significant landholder investment, working in partnership with Melbourne Water, along the frontages adjoining several properties in this area. These projects have successfully excluded stock and restored native vegetation along the waterway.

Between the northern tip of the Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve and Badger Creek, the Yarra River frontage is variable, with Crown frontage on both sides of the river for about one kilometre, after which Crown frontage only exists on the eastern side. The width of the land is variable from 20-30 metres and exceeding 50 metres south of the confluence with Badger Creek. These sections are in the Restoration Zone.

From Badger Creek to Everard Park, the Yarra River frontage covers the eastern bank only to a width of approximately 50 metres, with freehold land to the edge of the river on the western bank. This section of the Yarra constitutes a relatively continuous tract of vegetation and is in the Restoration Zone.

Badger (Coranderrk) Creek flows from the Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve to the Yarra River over approximately two kilometres. The Badger Creek streamside in the Conservation Area is up to 100 metres wide and covers both sides of the creek. There has been significant investment in revegetation works from Zoos Victoria within Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve and from Yarra4Life and Melbourne Water on the adjoining properties, which forms part of the Restoration Zone.

The Yarra and Badger (Coranderrk) Creek frontages are predominantly permanently reserved for public purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978* and will be included in the new Schedule Four A “Conservation Landscapes” under the *National Parks Act 1975*, to be managed by Parks Victoria. These stream frontages are to be managed as Natural features reserves, acknowledging the natural values and landscape features of the area while allowing for continued access and some recreation. Some small areas of Yarra River stream frontage that adjoin the Warramate reserve will be consolidated into the Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve.

Licences along these streamside reserves may continue. However, grazing licences will no longer be issued. Adjoining land owners can be transitioned to riparian management licences as deemed appropriate (see section 4.8 and Appendix C). All use or occupation of Crown land must be formalised with a licence agreement, with licences issued at the discretion of the land manager.

Goal Waterways within the area will provide for protection of values as identified in the Healthy Waterways Strategy			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Environmental water reserve is increased to meet ecological watering objectives	Medium	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP
Provide continuity of fish passage along the Yarra River from the mouth to the Upper Yarra Reservoir	Medium	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP
Improve environmental values by increasing riparian vegetation cover along the Yarra River, including all tributaries	Medium	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP
Improve environmental values by increasing riparian vegetation cover along Coranderrk Creek from 95 per cent to 100 per cent (approx. one kilometre)	Medium	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP
Protect and enhance existing high-quality vegetation along the Yarra River and tributaries through managing key threats around invasive flora and fauna (deer) and recreational access	Immediate	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP
Improve water quality in the Yarra River to support existing recreational activities	Medium	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP
Undertake restoration to create suitable habitat conditions for the Helmeted	Immediate	Parks Victoria, DELWP	PPWPCMA, Melbourne Water, Conservation groups

Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's Possum			
Increase participation rates in capacity-building and citizen science programs from current levels	Low	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP

Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve

Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve was acquired by the government in 1992 and forms a prominent area of steep hills rising on the west side of the Yarra River floodplain, on the junction of the Yarra River and the Woori Yallock Creek. Given the confluence of two major waterways in the area, it is likely to also be an area of high cultural heritage value. The vegetation is largely Grassy Dry Forest and Herb-rich Foothill Forest. On the southern aspects of the hills, Lowland Forest, Damp Forest and Riparian Forest are found in the valleys. There are also some areas of former farmland dominated by exotic grasses, and several tracks cross the reserve, including both access tracks for management vehicles and un-authorised single-track mountain bike trails, which have been constructed over many years, largely without official authorisation from the land manager.

Warramate is classified as a Nature Conservation Reserve and will continue to be classified in this way. The land will be permanently reserved for conservation purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978*, and included in the new Schedule Four A "Conservation Landscape" under the *National Parks Act*, managed by Parks Victoria. Some small areas of Yarra River stream frontage that adjoin the Warramate reserve will be consolidated into the reserve. Licences will not be offered to properties adjoining the Warramate reserve.

Many community members from universities, friends groups and mountain biking groups have indicated that they are interested in participating in working bees and contributing volunteer work to improve the natural values. There is a history of community and student monitoring of biodiversity in the reserve, which will be supported into the future.

Mountain biking

Community feedback from mountain bikers indicated strong support for continued mountain biking access on existing tracks, with no new tracks to be constructed, yet local residents and the friends groups strongly oppose this on the grounds of natural values impacts. The first Engage Victoria survey also indicated that the natural environment was of great importance to both groups of respondents – mountain bikers and residents.

Mountain biking is currently a popular recreational activity within Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve. The existing informal trail network is approximately 22 kilometres long and traverses a variety of vegetation communities in varying quality. The suitability of mountain biking within Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve will be assessed by the *Public Land Mountain Bike Guidelines 2013* for future trail direction. This guideline will assess a variety of factors including flora, fauna, cultural heritage, tourism, recreation, planning, land suitability and land tenure, among other things.

Goal			
Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve will continue to provide for protection of natural values and recreation, including walking and nature observation			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Manage as a Conservation Zone to enhance protection of key ecologically sensitive areas from damage	Immediate	Parks Victoria	DELWP
Assess existing MTB trails using <i>Public Land Mountain Bike Guidelines 2013</i> for future trail direction	Immediate	Parks Victoria	DELWP
Dogs and horses not to be permitted, nor recreational hunting	Immediate	Parks Victoria	DELWP
Investigate trail linkages with Lilydale Warburton Rail trail	Medium	Yarra Ranges Council	Parks Victoria
Car parking at key access points investigated; monitoring of use and impacts to be undertaken	Immediate	Parks Victoria, DELWP	Yarra Ranges Council, Victoria Police
Signage to interpret the natural values and outline rules and regulations	Medium	Parks Victoria	DELWP
Preserve the undeveloped nature of the reserve by sensitively designing and siting signs and other new visitor infrastructure	Medium	Parks Victoria	DELWP
Protect and enhance the endangered Riparian Woodland EVC around the confluence with the Yarra River and Woori Yallock Creek	Medium	Parks Victoria	Melbourne Water

Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve

The Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve (144 hectares) is managed by Zoos Victoria as Committee of Management. It is not accessible to the general public and is subject to other specific management arrangements relating to its proximity to Healesville Sanctuary, including the presence of predator-proof fencing. Cultural heritage management is undertaken in consultation with local Aboriginal people reflecting the significance of this area as a meeting place and, later, as part of the Coranderrk Aboriginal mission, which operated between 1863 and 1924. Very high vegetation diversity has been recorded at Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve, including the presence of three species of state significance and more than 75 species of regional significance. Threatened vegetation communities Swamp Riparian Complex and Swamp Riparian Woodland exist where Boggy and Badger (Coranderrk) Creeks and Barak (Piccaninny) Creek cross the reserve. Extensive areas of Riparian Forest and Herb-rich Foothill Forest are also found here. This mixed habitat supports an equally diverse range of fauna species such as 12 species of bat (including southern myotis), powerful owl, yellow-bellied glider and lace monitor.

To protect the values of the site, particularly its security against foxes and cats, public access is not permitted.

Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve is classified as a Nature Conservation Reserve and will continue to be classified in this way. The land will be permanently reserved for conservation purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978* and included in the new Schedule Four A "Conservation Landscape" under the *National Parks Act 1975*, to continue being managed by Zoos Victoria. This continued management may require an amendment to the *National Parks Act 1975*.

Changes to the boundary between the Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve and Healesville Sanctuary are currently being considered. The first area (approx. 25.8 hectares) contains the Bush Hut, Lake Coranderrk and the browse plantations, and is recognised as integral to the Sanctuary's operations. The second area (approx. 17.7 hectares) contains compounds for Tasmanian Devils and are part of the National Insurance Population for this threatened species. Zoos Victoria wishes to retain the capacity to use this area for low impact programs that support the recovery of critically endangered species such as the Tasmanian Devil.

Goal Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve will continue to be managed primarily for nature conservation, with a focus on restoring and maintaining its endemic flora and fauna, but also contributing to the conservation of threatened species from elsewhere in Australia where this forms part of wider recovery programs			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Manage as a Conservation Zone	Immediate	Zoos Victoria	DELWP, Parks Victoria
Habitat restoration for the Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's Possum	Immediate	Zoos Victoria	DELWP, Parks Victoria
Predator-proof fencing to be maintained	Immediate	Zoos Victoria	DELWP, Parks Victoria
No public access permitted	Immediate	Zoos Victoria	DELWP, Parks Victoria

Everard Park

Everard Park near Healesville, is currently managed by Yarra Ranges Council as Committee of Management. The Park contains areas of high-quality native vegetation and a picnic area on the Yarra River, just off the Maroondah Highway. There is also access to the river for canoes/kayaks with a cleared area of stream bank under a power line easement. There is some car parking onsite.

Goal Everard Park is maintained as popular spot for picnicking, stopping for a rest on a car trip, canoeing groups and fishing			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Manage as a Restoration Zone, prioritising habitat improvement and allowing for a limited range of passive recreation activities to continue	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Yarra Ranges Council
Survey vegetation quality and extent to inform best practice management	Medium	Parks Victoria	Community groups
Maintain picnic area	Medium	Parks Victoria	Yarra Ranges Council
Recreational hunting not permitted	Immediate	Parks Victoria	DELWP
Maintain existing levels of access	Immediate	Yarra Ranges Council	Parks Victoria
Investigate opportunities to upgrade or improve facilities for fishing at this location through a recreational fishing grant	Longer term	Yarra Ranges Council	Victorian Fisheries Authority, Melbourne Water

CONSULTATION QUESTION

Is there anything missing from Precinct One?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'yes', what do you believe is missing?

Are the zones right?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'no', what changes do you think should be made?

7.2 Precinct 2: Yarra River Millgrove to Woori Yallock, including Little Yarra River, Britannia Creek and Lower Hoddles Creek

This precinct includes the Yarra River between Woori Yallock and Millgrove, Little Yarra River from Yarra Junction to Gladysdale, Britannia Creek and the Lower Hoddles Creek for approximately two kilometres from Warburton highway. The Little Yarra River and Hoddles Creek are relatively narrow valleys fed from forested headwaters of the Yarra State Forest, which reach the more expansive floodplains of the Yarra River north of the Warburton Highway. The Little Yarra River joins the Yarra near Yarra Junction; Hoddles Creek meets the Yarra near Launching Place. The area is predominantly rural in nature with stock grazing and horticulture active land uses.

The headwaters of Britannia Creek within the State forest are in excellent condition with good quality riparian vegetation and good water quality. The Little Yarra River is an important drought refuge for a number of species. Rare and threatened species in this area include:

- Fauna: nationally listed Growling Grass Frog, Macquarie Perch and Australian Grayling; state-listed White-bellied Sea-Eagle
- Flora: nationally listed Tall Astelia and Matted Flax Lily.

Ecological vegetation communities occurring in the area include: Riparian Forest, Damp Forest, Wet Forest, Riparian Thicket, Swamp Scrub, Swampy Riparian Woodland, Creekline Herb-rich Woodland and state-listed Cool Temperate Rainforest.



Figure 4: Precinct 2 Map

North-East Corner – Special conditions for revegetation in streamsides

In January 2017, the state government responded to community concern regarding bushfire risk in the north-east corner of the Conservation Area, including the townships of Yarra Junction, Launching Place, Don Valley, Millgrove and Wesburn. The government's response included a decision that, for Precinct 2, revegetation is to be restricted to 10 metres either side of waterways for the whole Precinct, excluding Haining Farm and Yarra Bridge Streamside Reserve. (Refer Figure 1: *Restricted revegetation area*).

It will give greater surety to local landholders that bushfire risk and environmental values will be managed effectively.

The changes include the following conditions:

- Revegetation will only occur to a maximum of 10 metres on each side of a waterway, in the streamside areas
- No revegetation will occur within the north-east corner of the conservation area until the bushfire planning process is complete
- Riparian management licences will be issued on an individual basis for a maximum of 10 years to replace grazing licences
- Prioritising on-ground works to support bushfire and pest management.

Rationale for the 10 metres revegetation restriction

Melbourne Water commissioned a study by Ecology Australia in 2009⁹ to undertake an assessment of riparian setback widths required to support biodiversity values. The report classified riparian areas based on the sensitivity of different indicator species into categories of low, medium and high value, and assigned a corridor width to each of these categories. The corridor width includes both sides of the water body so that a 20-metre corridor equates to 10 metres either side of the waterway. The minimum corridor widths are as follows:

- Low sensitivity – 20 metres
- Medium sensitivity – 40 metres
- High sensitivity – 50 metres.

The report indicates that a 10-metre width each side of a waterway (i.e., a total corridor width of 20 metres) is sufficient to support native fauna with low sensitivity to their environment.

YCACC established a spatial prioritisation sub-committee to identify high-value conservation areas. The working group developed a classification system for ecological values based on three categories; high, medium and low. The management requirements for each classification is consistent with Melbourne Water's commissioned report.

The outcome of the classification system and of identifying management requirements is that streamside areas within the restricted revegetation area are largely classified as having low ecological value, and revegetation can be restricted to 10 metres either side of the waterway without compromising ecological outcomes.

Land status and zoning changes

The Yarra River, Britannia Creek, Little Yarra River and Hoddles Creek frontages are predominantly permanently reserved for public purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978* and will be included in the new Schedule Four A "Conservation Landscapes" under the *National Parks Act 1975*, to be managed by Parks Victoria. These stream frontages are to be managed as Natural features reserves, acknowledging the natural values and landscape features of the area while allowing for continued access and some recreation.

⁹ Ecology Australia 2009. Assessment of riparian setback widths required to support biodiversity value.

Licences along these streamside reserves may continue. However, grazing licences will no longer be issued, with this type of licence phased out between 2016 and 2018. Adjoining land owners can be transitioned to riparian management licences as deemed appropriate. All use or occupation of Crown land must be formalised with a licence agreement, with licences issued at the discretion of the land manager.

Where a licence agreement is entered into, it must be for the entire width and depth of the frontage adjoining the property. Funding is available to assist licence holders to install fencing to exclude stock, as well as for off-stream watering infrastructure, revegetation (restricted to within 10 metres from waterway) and weed works.

A key priority will be addressing encroachments and boundary alignment issues adjoining the reserve in this precinct. These issues will be identified in more detail by formal survey to be undertaken by the Office of the Surveyor General, as the boundaries of the Conservation Area are confirmed. To ensure public land is protected, encroachments, unlicensed grazing, cropping or other inappropriate uses will be addressed in accordance with the compliance strategy currently being developed.

Millgrove to Yarra Junction

Planned works from Millgrove to Yarra Junction include weed control works for Yarra River downstream of Dee River (Millgrove) to Station Road (Wesburn). The project will involve willow and weed control along both banks downstream of the existing maintenance program (about 800 metres downstream from the Dee River confluence) to Station Road (Wesburn) and revegetation to replace canopy cover. The revegetation will not exceed 10 metres from top of bank.

Yarra Junction to Yarra Bridge

The Yarra Junction to Yarra Bridge planned works include installing a formal kayak launch on the Yarra River at Don Road, Launching Place to improve the safety of the current informal access point and to reduce impacts on the river bank. Works will include the installation of the launch, weed control in the immediate area and some landscaping works in the disturbed areas. Additionally, there will be a capital works project on the Little Yarra River, located downstream of Tarrango Road, Gladysdale focusing on weed control and minor revegetation.

Recreation Trail Proposals

Melbourne Water are investigating a Yarra loop trail. The proposed trail is located down stream of Don Road Launching Place on the southern side of the Yarra River. A trail following the public land adjacent to the river the trail would provide users with a link between the rail trail and the river. The trail is currently at a conceptual stage with preliminary design and safety checks being completed. It will be subject to available funding and further stakeholder and community consultation.

The Millgrove Residents Action Group have been investigating opportunities to develop a circuit loop trail as part of the Millgrove River Road footpath project. The proposal is to establish a river walk along River Road to complement the existing Dee Road River reserve trail to create a walking loop. Further detailed planning will be required to determine an appropriate alignment of the trail while ensuring conservation values are considered.

Goal Riparian areas be managed to improve conservation values			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Prioritise revegetation where 10 metre buffer is not present; supplementary planting to improve quality of understory vegetation within 10 metres	Immediate	Land managers	Melbourne Water
Remove stock access to areas 10 metres or less from the waterway; in-stream stock watering to be phased out with support for off-stream watering infrastructure within nominated guidelines	Immediate	Land managers	Melbourne Water
Ensure fencing and licence conditions are adhered to with licences conditional on realignment of fences where they are less than 10 metres from the waterway	Immediate	DELWP	Land managers
Weed control projects to target priority species, with the key focus on maintaining existing areas of good quality native vegetation, with strategic management of new and emerging species and other priority species	Medium	Parks Victoria	Parks Victoria,
Target blackberry and other emerging weeds in Britannia Creek/Little Yarra (Wachendofia sp, Honeysuckle)	Immediate	DELWP land manager	Melbourne Water
Facilitate landholder access to advice and information to support biodiversity conservation and improve water quality on freehold property	Immediate	DELWP	Melbourne Water

Goal Waterways within the area will provide for protection of values as identified in the Healthy Waterways Strategy			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Provide continuity of fish passage along the Yarra River from the mouth to the Upper Yarra Reservoir	Medium	Melbourne Water	
Improve environmental values by increasing riparian vegetation cover along the Yarra River, including all tributaries, from 75 per cent to 80 per cent	Medium	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP
Improve environmental values by increasing the cover of riparian vegetation along the Little Yarra River and its tributaries from 90 per cent to 92 per cent (approx. two kilometres)	Medium	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP
Protect and enhance existing high-quality vegetation along the Yarra River and tributaries through managing key threats around invasive flora and fauna (deer) and recreational access	High	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP

Improve recreational water quality in the Yarra River to support existing recreational activities	Medium	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP, Melbourne Water
Increase participation rates in capacity-building and citizen science programs from moderate to high	Low	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, DELWP, Melbourne Water
Reduce threats to water quality from nutrients, turbidity and pesticides in 10 per cent of rural and urban land			Parks Victoria, DELWP, Melbourne Water

Precinct 2a: Haining Farm

Haining Farm is managed by Parks Victoria and, until recently, operated as a working dairy farm. Parks Victoria and DELWP are working with Greening Australia and Zoos Victoria to transform this site to include community access and recreation, along with restored floodplain forest habitat, so as to become a future release site for threatened species such as the lowland Leadbeater's possum and Helmeted Honeyeater. Haining Farm will retain a strong education focus, providing a landscape in which future generations can have fun, experience the outdoors and learn to love the land on which they depend. The 59-hectare site is in the Don Valley at the confluence of the Yarra and Don rivers.

A range of land use and land management changes at Haining Farm have been planned as a sub-project of the broader Conservation Area. A community working group was established and extensive community consultation helped to determine the future land use at the site, which balances community expectations, bushfire safety and habitat restoration requirements as part of the Conservation Area. The concept plan that has been developed for the site incorporates bushfire mitigation measures, including an open woodland buffer, new water points and an extensive network of internal tracks. The plan for Haining Farm also includes habitat restoration to support future populations of Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's Possum, through planting and earthworks to create wetland and suitable habitat. There will be recreation access across the site, and a community use area with a community-led design process continuing. This direction is in keeping with the accepted VEAC recommendation that current use changes to provide for other forms of land management and educational opportunities, with a greater emphasis on sustainability, including improved protection of riparian areas and the restoration of habitat for the Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's Possum.

Linking the site with the Yarra River and the Lilydale-Warburton Rail Trail will improve access and use for the site. The works at Haining Farm will be complemented by the proposed Melbourne Water Project in Launching Place and other projects taking place along the Yarra River surrounding Haining Farm.

Haining Farm is classified as a Community use area and will continue to be classified in this way. The land will be included in the new Schedule Four A "Conservation Landscapes" under the *National Parks Act 1975*, to be managed by Parks Victoria. To enable this, the property will be removed from Schedule 3 of the *National Parks Act 1975*. The land is in the Restoration Zone, to reflect the habitat restoration goals and allow for a range of passive recreation activities across the site.

Goal To transform the Haining Farm into habitat for two of Victoria's most endangered species, and to provide education and visitor opportunities that celebrate the conservation values and farming history			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Implement bushfire mitigation measures as part of the initial redevelopment of the site	Immediate	Parks Victoria	DELWP, CFA
Restore habitat to support self-sustaining populations for two of Victoria's threatened species, Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's Possum	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Greening Australia, Zoos Victoria, Melbourne Water, DELWP
Provide for community access, passive recreation and education opportunities, and maintain trail linkages and connection with Warburton Rail Trail and Yarra River; e.g., proposed kayak launch at Launching Place	Medium	Parks Victoria	DELWP
Develop park visitor facilities and recreation, education and tourism opportunities	Medium	Parks Victoria	DELWP

CONSULTATION QUESTION

Is there anything missing from Precinct Two?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'yes', what do you believe is missing?

Are the zones right?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'no', what changes do you think should be made?

7.3 Precinct 3: Hoddles Creek, including Hoddles Creek Education Area, Beenak Bushland Reserve and Wet Lead Creek

This precinct contains two large blocks of intact vegetation; Beenak Bushland Reserve and Hoddles Creek Education Area. These two reserves are linked by a section of the upper Hoddles Creek. In the lower reaches, Hoddles Creek meets the Yarra River to the north of Warburton Highway at Launching Place.

Precinct 3 is located among hilly topography of the East Victorian Uplands. A volcanic basalt substrate dominates, giving rise to red friable earths and, in some areas, surface and subsurface volcanic rock. There may also be a band of sedimentary substrate supporting yellow duplex soils, and alluvial material along some of the waterways (Hoddles Creek, Wet Lead Creek and Slaty Creek). Common vegetation communities include Lowland Forest, which occurs on the small foothills and flats, Damp Forest, which occurs on the more exposed slopes and aspects, and Wet Forest, occurring on the more sheltered slopes and aspects. Hoddles Creek, Wet Lead Creek and Slaty Creek are important components of the Yarra River Catchment.

The precinct forms part of an expansive mosaic of remnant vegetation in a broader landscape fragmented by cleared agricultural land and lifestyle properties. This mosaic includes Yarra State Forest, Beenak Bushland Reserve, Kurth Klin Regional Park, Hoddles Creek Education Area and a network of riparian corridors. The precinct incorporates a diverse range of remnant vegetation and habitat in the landscape; also, private land, which plays an important role in connecting parks and reserves, as well as in providing catchment services (e.g., stabilising substrate, filtering water, regulating flows).

Vegetation composition and structure within the precinct provides a diversity of habitat niches for flora and fauna. The general overall quality and intactness of the vegetation is very good, and an array of flora and fauna includes several threatened species and many locally significant species. The following is a selection of the threatened species that have been recorded: Fairy Lanterns, Tall Astelia, Jungle Bristle-fern, Brickmakers Saw-sedge, Long Pink-bells, Notched Leionema, Powelltown Correa, Brown Treecreeper, Greater Glider, Powerful Owl and Sooty Owl. The following locally significant species have also been recorded: Tall Oxylobium, Feathertail Glider and Yellow-bellied Glider.

Threats include feral deer, pest plants, soil disturbance, inappropriate development, altered hydrology, illegal vegetation clearance, inappropriate plantings and a loss of habitat connectivity for threatened species.



Figure 5: Precinct 3 Map

Instream habitat varies along the stream. However, most sites show some evidence of disturbance, including clearing and degradation of riparian vegetation, cattle access and previous mining. Accumulation of silt and sediment is an issue throughout the stream. Sedimentation has impacts on fish and aquatic invertebrate numbers in the lower reaches. Despite some of the degraded areas, the stream supports 14 species of fish, seven of which are native; notably, Pouched Lamprey (considered rare), River Blackfish and Mountain Galaxias. Overall water quality is good.

Hoddles Creek and Wet Lead Creek streamside areas

The Hoddles Creek, Wet Lead Creek and Blackleather Creek frontages are predominantly permanently reserved for public purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978* and will be included in the new Schedule Four A "Conservation Landscapes" under the *National Parks Act 1975*, to be managed by Parks Victoria.

Downstream of Blackleather Creek, the stream frontages will be classified as Natural features reserve, acknowledging the natural values and landscape features of the area while allowing for continued access and some recreation. This area will be in the Restoration Zone. Wet Lead Creek frontage is in the Conservation Zone.

Upstream of Blackleather Creek, the stream frontages will be classified as Nature Conservation Reserve to reflect the important biolink that the creek forms between the larger blocks of protected native vegetation and the values in the areas adjoining the larger reserve areas. Hoddles Creek between Blackleather Creek and the Hoddles Creek Education Area will be in the Restoration Zone. Hoddles Creek between Hoddles Creek Education Area and Beenak Bushland Reserve will fall in the Conservation Zone.

Licences along streamside reserves within the Natural features reserve may continue. However, grazing licences will no longer be issued, with this type of licence phased out between 2016 and 2018. Adjoining land owners can be transitioned to riparian management licences as appropriate. All use or occupation of Crown land must be formalised with a licence agreement, with licences issued at the discretion of the land manager. Licences will not be entered into in the Nature Conservation Reserve areas.

Where a licence agreement is entered into, it must be for the entire width and depth of the frontage adjoining the property. Funding is available to assist licence holders to install fencing to exclude stock, as well as for off-stream watering infrastructure, revegetation and weed works.

A key priority will be addressing encroachments and boundary alignment issues adjoining the reserve in this precinct. These issues will be identified in more detail by formal survey to be undertaken by the Office of the Surveyor General, as the boundaries of the Conservation Area are confirmed. To ensure public land is protected, encroachments, unlicensed grazing, cropping or other inappropriate uses will be addressed in accordance with the compliance strategy currently being developed.

Goal			
Hoddles Creek, Wet Lead Creek and Blackleather Creek continue to support strong environmental values, and habitat linkage			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Implement the Restoration Zone for streamside downstream of Hoddles Creek Education Area, prioritising habitat improvement and allowing for a limited range of passive recreation activities to continue	Immediate	DELWP and other land managers	Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water

Implement the Conservation Zone for streamsid es upstream of Hoddles Creek Education Area, Wet Lead Creek Frontage and between Hoddles Creek Education Area and Beenak Bushland Reserve, prioritising habitat protection and conservation activities and land management to enhance natural values. A limited range of passive recreation activities can continue	Immediate	DELWP and other land managers	Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water
Survey vegetation quality and extent to inform best practice management based on values and presence of priority weed species, threatened species and species habitat, using the historic Melbourne Water vegetation mapping as a baseline	Medium	Parks Victoria and other land managers	MM, community groups
Provide for environmental flows that maintain suitable river blackfish and mountain galaxia habitat over low flow periods	Immediate	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria
Horses, dogs and hunting not to be permitted	Immediate	Land managers	Parks Victoria

Hoddles Creek Education Area and Beenak Bushland Reserve

Hoddles Creek Education Area was set aside at the recommendation of VEAC's predecessor after the *Melbourne District 2 Investigation* into public land in 1994. The area was intended for use as an education area for maintenance or restoration of an area's natural, cultural and landscape values as well as for studying a reasonably natural ecosystem. The area was protected from logging, hunting and quarrying, and has botanical and zoological significance due to its relatively undisturbed landscape and vegetation.

Most of the reserve is Lowland Forest with some areas of Riparian Scrub/Swampy Riparian Forest Complex in gullies through Lowland Forest areas. There are patches of Damp Forest and Riparian Wet Forest. An area of Cool Temperate Rainforest has been identified in the reserve. Significant plant species recorded in the area include rare Long Pink Bells and a population of Jungle Bristle-fern. The reserve is relatively free of weeds, which are almost confined to the edges of the reserve.

The Friends of Hoddles Creek had a vegetation study conducted by Graeme Lorimer on the education area. Along with the group, Melbourne Water co-funded a detailed vegetation study on the upper parts of Hoddles Creek, finding numerous rain forest species, previously undescribed vegetation communities and potentially a new species of giant woolly tea-tree.

Hoddles Creek Education Area and Beenak Bushland Reserve are currently unreserved Crown land. The land will be permanently reserved for conservation purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978* and will be included in the new Schedule Four A "Conservation Landscapes" under the *National Parks Act 1975*, to be managed by Parks Victoria.

Hoddles Creek Education Area and Beenak Bushland Reserve will be classified as Nature Conservation Reserve, to reflect the important values and the relatively intact nature of the vegetation in this area and connectivity to other areas of high-quality native vegetation locally. These areas will be in the Conservation Zone.

All use or occupation of Crown land must be formalised with a licence agreement, with licences issued at the discretion of the land manager. Licences will not be entered in to in the Nature Conservation Reserve areas.

A key priority will be addressing encroachments and boundary alignment issues adjoining the reserve in this precinct. Some unmade government roads may be administratively closed and incorporated into the reserves. These issues will be identified in more detail by formal survey to be undertaken by the Office of the Surveyor General, as the boundaries of the Conservation Area are confirmed. To ensure public land is protected, encroachments, unlicensed grazing, cropping or other inappropriate uses will be addressed in accordance with the compliance strategy currently being developed.

Goal			
Hoddles Creek Education Area and Beenak Bushland Reserve continue to be managed for their undeveloped character and to protect and enhance natural values			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Implement the Conservation Zone prioritising habitat protection and conservation activities and land management to enhance natural values. A limited range of passive recreation activities can continue	Immediate	Land managers	Parks Victoria
Cool Temperate Rainforest community mapped and evaluated. Surrounding area managed to mitigate impacts of change in adjoining vegetation	Immediate	Land managers	Parks Victoria
Creek crossings of track on eastern boundary of Hoddles Creek Education Area (southwards from Parkinsons Road) will need to be upgraded if use by horses is to continue Dogs and hunting to be prohibited	Medium	Parks Victoria	Parks Victoria
Work with friends group to integrate local knowledge and citizen science into best practice management	Medium	Land managers	Local friends group
Future prescribed burns should exclude the rainforest gully; Autumn burns recommended. Ecologically desirable not to burn the narrow corridors of Riparian Wet Forest along the creek channels of Wombat Creek and north of Parkinsons Road, as vegetation not as well adapted to fire as the surrounding vegetation	Medium	Parks Victoria and DELWP	FFMV
Launch measures to conserve the Jungle Bristle-fern, such as propagating plants from the reserve to boost population in the rainforest gully. Should be preceded by a census to detect how many plants presently exist in the gully	Medium	Parks Victoria and DELWP	Local friends group

CONSULTATION QUESTION

Is there anything missing from Precinct Three?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'yes', what do you think is missing?

Are the zones right?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'no', what changes do you think should be made?

7.4 Precinct 4: Existing Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, Woori Yallock Creek, Sheepstation Creek, McCrae Creek, Cockatoo Creek.

The precinct centres around the existing Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, which contains the remaining core habitat for the Helmeted Honeyeater and the lowland Leadbeater's Possum. The tributaries to the existing Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve in this precinct are important to protect the hydrology in the reserve and to improve riparian vegetation, which may extend the range of the threatened species to the broader landscape. Tributaries include the Woori Yallock, Sheepstation, McCrae, Cockatoo, Shepherd and Macclesfield Creeks, which form part of the Woori Yallock Creek catchment of the Yarra River.

The Conservation Area is linked via the creek network to nearby areas of remnant bushland and other conservation reserves, such as Kurth Kiln Regional Park and Bunyip State Park to the south-east, Sassafras Creek Nature Conservation Reserve to the south-west and Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve to the north.

The Woori Yallock, Sheepstation, McCrae, Cockatoo, Shepherd and Macclesfield Creeks form part of the Woori Yallock Creek sub-catchment of the Yarra River. The health of the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve and these streams and their catchments are closely linked. The linear nature of the conservation area makes it particularly susceptible to 'edge-effect' disturbances, including weed invasion. The surrounding area supports a significant amount of agricultural activity, including grazing and horticulture. Expansion of these activities, together with sub-divisions and loss of native vegetation through clearing, is placing pressure on natural resources of the catchment. Resultant high nutrient and turbidity levels in the waterways are contributing to an overall decline in quality of the riparian zone.

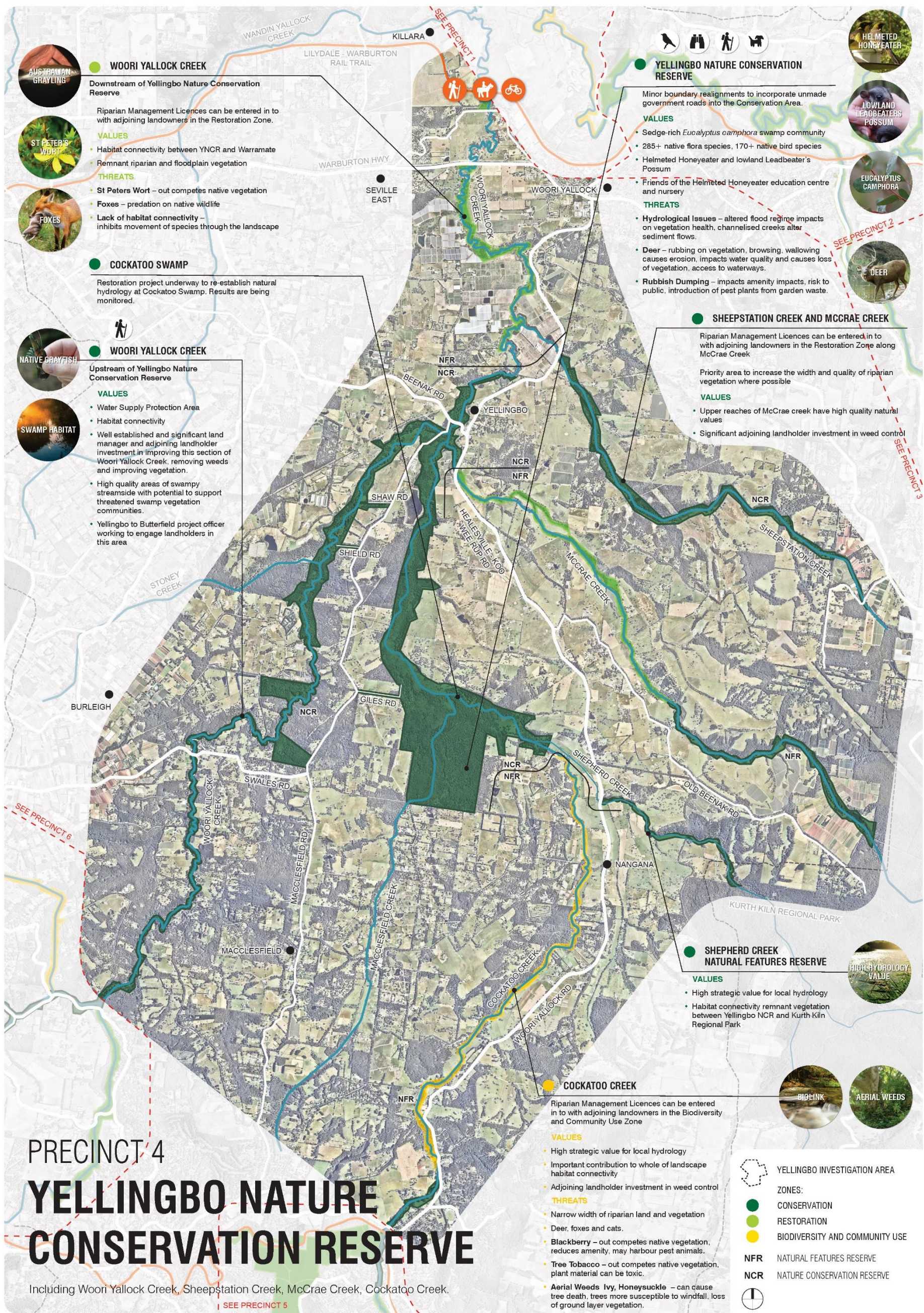


Figure 6: Precinct 4 Map

Woori Yallock Creek from Butterfield Reserve* to Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve

(* Most of the Butterfield Reserve is outside the Conservation Area. However, the picnic area of the reserve is within the boundaries of the Conservation Area.)

This section of Woori Yallock Creek has benefitted from long-term investment of \$2 million by Melbourne Water in weed control and revegetation. A significant amount of conservation work is also being undertaken on adjoining private properties.

The Yellingbo to Butterfield project is a three-year funded partnership project supported by Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater, Johns Hill Landcare, Macclesfield Landcare and Monbulk Landcare. A part-time worker engages – and works – with private landholders whose properties abut Woori Yallock Creek. Landholders are linked with relevant agencies, assisted with property planning and/or funding opportunities to enhance the natural values on their properties. This benefits the health of their properties and the waterway itself, increasing the potential for Helmeted Honeyeaters to naturally disperse out of Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve.

The Woori Yallock Creek frontage is predominantly permanently reserved for public purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978* and will be included in the new Schedule Four A “Conservation Landscapes” under the *National Parks Act 1975*, to be managed by Parks Victoria.

Woori Yallock Creek between Butterfield Reserve and the existing Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve will be classified as Nature Conservation Reserve, to reflect the important values and habitat link that the creek forms. This area will be in the Conservation Zone.

All use or occupation of Crown land must be formalised with a licence agreement, with licences issued at the discretion of the land manager. Licences will not be entered into in the Nature Conservation Reserve areas.

To ensure public land is protected, encroachments, unlicensed grazing, cropping or other inappropriate uses will be addressed in accordance with the compliance strategy currently being developed.

Goal			
Continue to maintain and improve the vegetation in this area, building on previous investment			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Implement the Conservation Zone, prioritising habitat protection and conservation activities and land management to enhance natural values. A limited range of passive recreation activities can continue	Immediate	Land managers	Yellingbo to Butterfields project officer, Parks Victoria
Maintain existing levels of access; trail linkage to be evaluated.	Medium	Land managers	Parks Victoria
Horses, dogs and hunting not to be permitted	Immediate	Land managers	Parks Victoria
Support the actions of the Yellingbo to Butterfields project officer	Immediate	Land managers	Melbourne Water

Sheepstation Creek and McCrae Creek

Sheepstation Creek and McCrae Creek flow through a predominantly rural agricultural landscape and form a link between the existing Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve and the Kurth Kiln Regional Park. The riparian vegetation in the frontages varies in extent and quality, with values generally higher in both streams in upstream areas.

The Sheepstation Creek and McCrae Creek frontages are predominantly permanently reserved for public purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978* and will be included in the new Schedule Four A “Conservation Landscapes” under the *National Parks Act 1975*, to be managed by Parks Victoria.

Sheepstation Creek will be classified as Nature Conservation Reserve to reflect its existing inclusion in the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve and the habitat link that the creek forms. This area will be in the Conservation Zone.

McCrae Creek will be classified as Natural features reserve to reflect the important values and habitat link that the creek forms. This area will be in the Restoration Zone, with the upper reach in the Conservation Zone, reflecting higher values present in the frontage closer to the Kurth Kiln Regional Park.

All use or occupation of Crown land must be formalised with a licence agreement, with licences issued at the discretion of the land manager. Licences will not be entered into in the Nature Conservation Reserve areas.

To ensure public land is protected, encroachments, unlicensed grazing, cropping or other inappropriate uses will be addressed in accordance with the compliance strategy currently being developed.

Goal Continue to maintain and improve the hydrology in this area, building on previous investment			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Survey vegetation quality and extent to inform best practice management	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Melbourne Water
Horses, dogs and hunting not to be permitted	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Parks Victoria

Cockatoo Creek downstream of Wright Forest

This section of Cockatoo Creek flows from the outer suburban areas of Cockatoo township through rural areas to meet Shepherd Creek at Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, forming Cockatoo Swamp. There have been significant historical alterations to the hydrology in this area, and rehabilitation works have been undertaken by Melbourne Water in the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve. The stream frontage varies in condition and extent along this reach, with some areas with significant presence of weeds and pest animals, such as deer, in among stands of modified-structure remnant vegetation.

Cockatoo Creek will be classified as Natural features reserve to reflect the important values and habitat link that the creek forms, while allowing for community access and a broader range of recreational activities. This area will be in the Biodiversity and Community Use Zone, with the area closer to Cockatoo township in the Conservation Zone reflecting the higher values present in the frontage closer to the Wright Forest Bushland Reserve.

Licences along the Natural features reserve streamside reserves may continue. However, grazing licences will no longer be issued, with this type of licence phased out between 2016 and 2018. Adjoining land owners can be transitioned to riparian management licences as appropriate. All use or occupation of Crown land must be formalised with a licence agreement, with licences issued at the discretion of the land manager. Licences will not be entered into in the Nature Conservation Reserve areas.

Where a licence agreement is entered into, it must be for the entire width and depth of the frontage adjoining the property. Funding is available to assist licence holders to install fencing to exclude stock, as well as for off-stream watering infrastructure, revegetation and weed works.

To ensure public land is protected, encroachments, unlicensed grazing, cropping or other inappropriate uses will be addressed in accordance with the Yellingbo compliance strategy currently being developed.

Goal Continue to maintain and improve the hydrology in this area, building on previous investment			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Survey vegetation quality and extent to inform best practice management	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Melbourne Water
Horses, dogs and hunting not to be permitted	Medium	Parks Victoria	Parks Victoria

Woori Yallock Creek Downstream of Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve

This section of Woori Yallock Creek frontage to the north of Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve is discontinuous and surrounded by agricultural and horticultural properties. The extent and quality of riparian vegetation varies significantly, with some areas heavily degraded and other areas supporting pockets of high-quality remnant vegetation.

The Woori Yallock Creek frontage in this section is predominantly permanently reserved for public purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978* and will be included in the new Schedule Four A "Conservation Landscapes" under the *National Parks Act 1975*, to be managed by Parks Victoria.

Woori Yallock Creek will be classified as Natural features reserve to reflect the important values and habitat link that the creek forms. This area will be in the Restoration Zone.

Licences along the Natural features reserve streamside reserves may continue. However, grazing licences will no longer be issued, with this type of licence phased out between 2016 and 2018. Adjoining land owners can be transitioned to riparian management licences as appropriate. All use or occupation of Crown land must be formalised with a licence agreement, with licences issued at the discretion of the land manager.

Where a licence agreement is entered into, it must be for the entire width and depth of the frontage adjoining the property. Funding is available to assist licence holders to install fencing to exclude stock, as well as for off-stream watering infrastructure, revegetation and weed works.

To ensure public land is protected, encroachments, unlicensed grazing, cropping or other inappropriate uses will be addressed in accordance with the Yellingbo compliance strategy currently being developed.

Goal Continue to maintain and improve extent and quality of native vegetation in this area, and to control weeds			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Survey vegetation quality and extent to inform best practice management; control priority weed species to protect high values in adjoining areas	Immediate	DELWP	Melbourne Water

Work with adjoining landowners to negotiate practical conservation measures	Immediate	DELWP	Melbourne Water
Horses, dogs and hunting not to be permitted	Medium	DELWP	Parks Victoria

Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve

Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve preserves wildlife habitat along sections of Woori Yallock, Cockatoo, Macclesfield and Sheep Station Creeks and part of the lower McCrae Creek. It protects a diverse array of flora and fauna, including around 285 native flora species and 230 native vertebrate species. Of these, around 55 species are regionally significant. The Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve also protects areas of Sedge-rich *Eucalyptus camphora* Swamp Community, which is considered to be of national significance. A variety of invertebrate species have been recorded in the reserve. In addition to these intrinsic values, some invertebrate species are important as food sources for lowland Leadbeater's Possum, Helmeted Honeyeater and other insect-dependent species.

Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve has been assigned the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category 1A (Strict Nature Reserve) for Protected Areas. Category 1A protected areas are managed primarily for science. Parks Victoria is the responsible land manager.

Levee banks were constructed in the 1950s along the northern section of Cockatoo Swamp, with the swamp drained for agriculture. Cockatoo Creek subsequently formed channels in the floodplain at this location and actively eroded upstream around 1.5 kilometres. Sediments from this in-stream erosion, together with sediments from agricultural areas upstream of the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, are being deposited in the downstream end of the swamp. Severe dieback has occurred of a large area of Sedge-rich *Eucalyptus camphora* Swamp Community, critical habitat for both Helmeted Honeyeaters and lowland Leadbeater's Possum.

Remedial works were undertaken in 1999. In 2017-18, after extensive research and hydrological modelling, Melbourne Water initiated further works to restore a more natural hydrological regime in Cockatoo Swamp. The University of Melbourne is a key partner in monitoring and evaluating its efficacy.

Introduced animals present a threat to the native animals by predation, competition for habitat and food and dispersal of the seeds of weeds. Sambar and Fallow Deer populations create tracks and wallows, facilitating weed invasion and increasing sedimentation of waterways. Deer control programs operate at Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, and in Sherbrooke Forest to its south-west and Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve to its north. Programs operate to control foxes and, to a lesser extent, feral cats.

A key priority for management of Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve has been the protection and enhancement of remaining Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's Possum habitat. Building on a habitat restoration strategy that was developed in 1992, and the National Recovery Plan for the Helmeted Honeyeater (2008), the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Team's Five-Year Strategic Plan will guide the next phase of management works within the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve.

A key part of the broader Conservation Area will be addressing encroachments and boundary alignment issues adjoining the reserve in this precinct. These issues will be identified in more detail by formal survey to be undertaken by the Office of the Surveyor General, as the boundaries of the Conservation Area are confirmed. To ensure public land is protected, encroachments, unlicensed grazing, cropping or other inappropriate uses will be addressed in accordance with the Yellingbo compliance strategy currently being developed. Some unmade government roads may be administratively closed and incorporated into the reserves.

Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve will continue to be classified in this way. The land will be permanently reserved for conservation purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978*, if not

already, and included in the new Schedule Four A “Conservation Landscape” under the *National Parks Act 1975*, managed by Parks Victoria. Some small areas of unmade government roads that adjoin the reserve will be consolidated into the reserve. Licences will not be offered to properties adjoining the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve. The reserve will fall within the Conservation Zone.

All use or occupation of Crown land must be formalised with a licence agreement, with licences issued at the discretion of the land manager. Licences will not be entered into in the Nature Conservation Reserve areas.

Goal			
Continue to maintain and improve extent and quality of native vegetation in this area, and to control weeds			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Implement the Conservation Zone, prioritising habitat protection and conservation activities and land management, including pest plant and animal control programs, to enhance natural values. A limited range of passive recreation activities can continue	Immediate	DELWP, Parks Victoria	Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater
Maintain existing levels of access. Continue access for bird observing (organised groups require Ranger’s permission), commercial tours and filming (subject to permit), fishing, nature study, scenic viewing, walking (organised groups require Ranger’s permission)	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater
Assist Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater to undertake revegetation works, school and community education programs and other beneficial activities to increase community involvement in the reserve	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater
Ensure vegetation is managed to promote and enhance habitat for the Helmeted Honeyeater and other significant faunal species	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater
Prohibit camping, horse riding, dog walking, hunting, feeding wildlife, bicycle riding, orienteering, trail bike riding and bait collection associated with fishing	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater
Continue to implement the Cockatoo Creek hydrology program to improve native vegetation condition	Immediate	Melbourne Water	Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water

CONSULTATION QUESTION

Is there anything missing from Precinct Four?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'yes', what do you believe is missing?

Are the zones right?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'no', what changes do you think should be made?

7.5 Precinct 5: Wright Forest Bushland Reserve and Cockatoo Creek in Cockatoo township

This precinct is centred around the Cockatoo township and includes the Wright Forest Bushland Reserve, the Cockatoo Creek Frontage upstream of Wright Forest, and part of the current Alma Treloar Reserve in Cockatoo.

Cockatoo Creek streamside and Alma Treloar Reserve

The area of Cockatoo Creek along the western bank and abutting the east of the existing Wright Forest bushland reserve, is to be added to the Wright Forest Bushland Reserve. This allows for the consolidation of land use and management. This area is considered by many people to be already part of the reserve.

The Cockatoo Creek streamside adjoins Alma Treloar Reserve in Cockatoo township. Part of Alma Treloar Reserve is council-owned and part is Crown land managed by Cardinia Shire Council. The footprint of Alma Treloar Reserve encroaches into the streamside reserve in some places. The council has recently drafted a master plan for the Alma Treloar Reserve.

Cockatoo Creek will be classified as Natural features reserve to reflect the important values and habitat link that the creek forms, while allowing for community access and a broader range of recreational activities. The land will be in the Conservation Zone where it adjoins Wright Forest and in the Restoration Zone upstream of Wright Forest.

Licences along the Natural features reserve streamside areas may continue. However, grazing licences will no longer be issued, with this type of licence phased out between 2016 and 2018. Adjoining land owners can be transitioned to riparian management licences as appropriate. All use or occupation of Crown land must be formalised with a licence agreement, with licences issued at the discretion of the land manager.

Where a licence agreement is entered into, it must be for the entire width and depth of the frontage adjoining the property. Funding is available to assist licence holders to install fencing to exclude stock, as well as for off-stream watering infrastructure, revegetation and weed works.

A key priority will be to continue to maintain and improve the quality and extent of native vegetation, and minimise the impact of weeds and pest animals where possible, building on previous investment. To ensure public land is protected, encroachments, unlicensed grazing, cropping or other inappropriate uses will be addressed in accordance with the compliance strategy currently being developed.

The Conservation Area will not include the Ox Creek Scenic Reserve which is to the south of the extent of Cockatoo Creek that will be included in the Conservation Area. The Ox Creek Scenic Reserve will continue to be managed as it is currently.

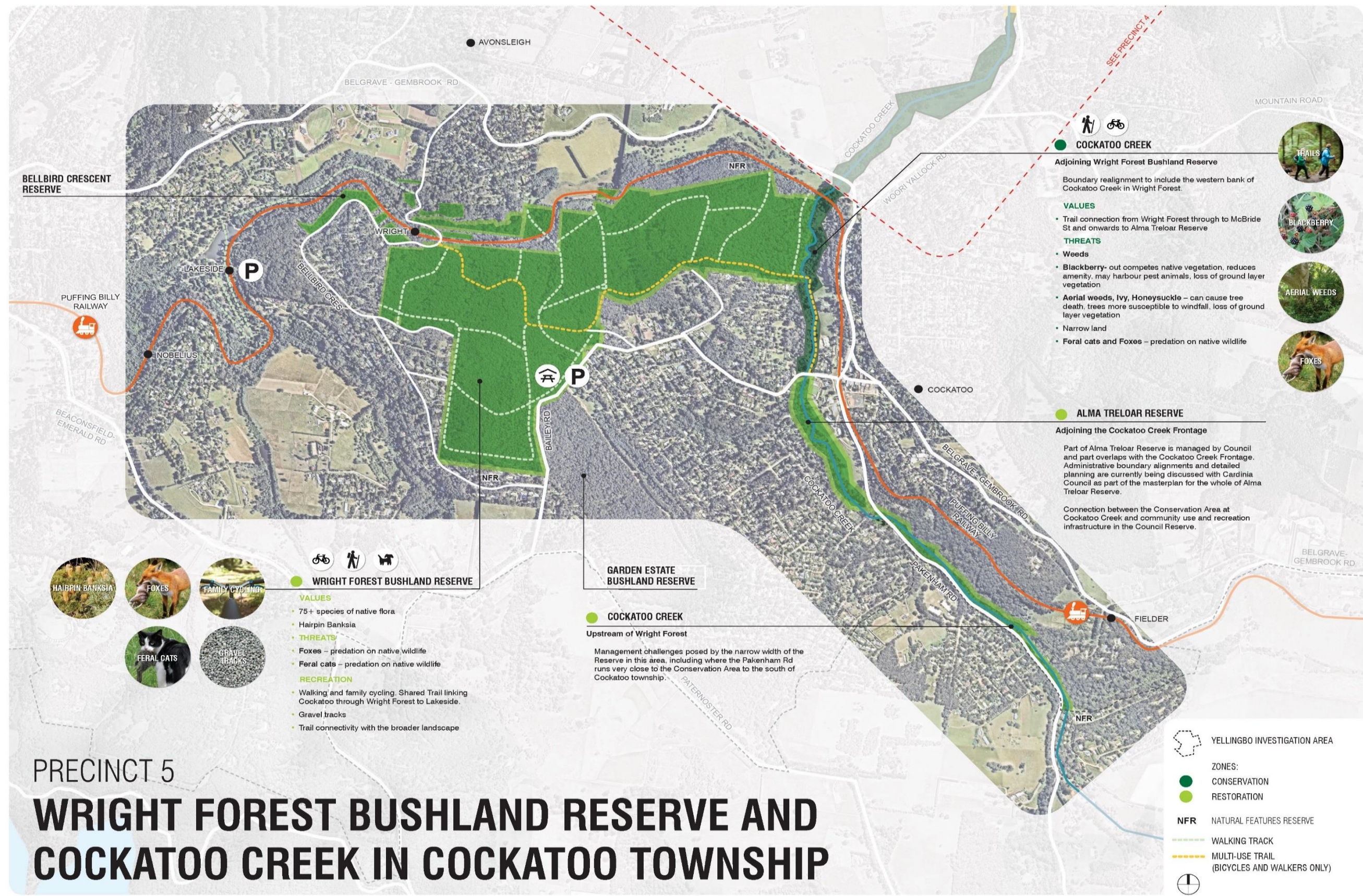


Figure 7: Precinct 5 Map

Goal Continue to maintain and improve extent and quality of native vegetation in this area, and to control weeds			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Survey vegetation quality and extent to inform best practice management	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Melbourne Water
Horses and hunting not to be permitted	Medium	Parks Victoria	Parks Victoria
Support development of the master plan for Alma Treloar Reserve	Medium	DELWP	Cardinia Shire Council

Wright Forest Bushland Reserve

Wright Forest is an area of high quality remnant vegetation in the Cockatoo area. There are many important natural values in the bushland reserve, with more than 75 species of native flora. Wright Forest is also an important area for local recreation, so current levels of recreational access will be maintained where there is minimal impact on the existing natural values. The Emerald-Cockatoo multipurpose recreation trail crosses the reserve and is a popular destination for walking, cycling and dog walking on-lead. Horse riding is not permitted in the reserve.

Wright Forest Bushland Reserve is currently unreserved Crown land. The land will be permanently reserved for conservation purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978* and will be included in the new Schedule Four A "Conservation Landscapes" under the *National Parks Act 1975*, to be managed by Parks Victoria.

Wright Forest Bushland Reserve will be classified as Natural features reserve to reflect the important values and the relatively intact nature of the vegetation, allowing for continued access for recreation that would not normally be permitted in a Nature Conservation Reserve. This area will be in the Restoration Zone.

A key priority will be addressing boundary alignment issues and administratively closing unmade government roads and incorporating that land into the reserve in this area. These issues will be identified in more detail by formal survey to be undertaken by the Office of the Surveyor General, as the boundaries of the Conservation Area are confirmed. To ensure public land is protected, encroachments, unlicensed grazing, cropping or other inappropriate uses will be addressed in accordance with the compliance strategy currently being developed.

Goal Continue to maintain and improve extent and quality of native vegetation in this area, and to control weeds			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Survey vegetation quality and extent to inform best practice management	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Melbourne Water
Investigate options for feral animal control in the reserve	Medium	Parks Victoria	Land Managers
Maintain existing levels of access, trail linkage from Emerald to Cockatoo and onto Gembrook to be maintained	Immediate	Cardinia Shire Council	Parks Victoria

Horse riding and hunting not to be permitted; on-lead dog walking to be allowed to continue as permitted by the land manager	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Parks Victoria
--	-----------	----------------	----------------

CONSULTATION QUESTION

Is there anything missing from Precinct Five?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'yes', what do you believe is missing?

Are the zones right?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'no', what changes do you think should be made?

7.6 Precinct 6: Sassafras Creek, Perrins Creek, Emerald Creek and Menzies Creek

The precinct includes Sassafras Creek, Perrins Creek, Emerald Creek, Ti-Tree Creek and Menzies Creek. Butterfield Reserve adjoins the area, but is not part of the Conservation Area. It is mentioned here to highlight similar ecological values and management requirements. This precinct is located in the Southern Dandenong Ranges, characterised by steep slopes and deep gullies, high rainfall, tree ferns and Mountain Ash. Surrounding land use includes medium density residential townships, agriculture, horticulture and nurseries.

This precinct is largely vegetated by Damp Forest, Wet Forest and small patches of Cool Temperate Rainforest along Sassafras Creek. Riparian Forest is the predominant ecological vegetation class along Woori Yallock Creek. Cool Temperate Rainforest is restricted to the Sassafras Creek headwaters. Populations of the vulnerable slender tree-fern may be found in moist shaded gullies, particularly along Sassafras Creek. There is presence of Platypus, Dandenong Burrowing Crayfish and Dandenong Amphipod, as well as Powerful Owl, Sooty Owl and Lyrebird.

The Menzies Creek frontage has a walking trail and there is a small picnicking area at Avard Picnic Ground, near Emerald. There are some historic gold mining infrastructure relics on the streamside and there is interest from the local historical society in creating signage and interpretation for the area. On-lead dog walking is permitted to continue along Menzies Creek, and in accordance with management planning.

The precinct supports threatened species of flora and fauna, valuable habitat and part of an important wildlife corridor connecting Dandenong Ranges National Park to Wrights Forest and Bunyip State Park to the east and through the Woori Yallock Creek to Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve to the north. The rich and fertile soil, and abundant rainfall, along with proximity of urban development, make the precinct particularly vulnerable to invasive weed species.

The stream frontages in this area vary from unreserved to reserved for recreation or public purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978*. Land that is not appropriately reserved will be reserved for Conservation Purposes and all land will be included in the new Schedule Four A “Conservation Landscapes” under the *National Parks Act 1975*, to be managed by Parks Victoria. The Sassafras Creek Bushland Reserve, two parcels adjoining the streamside nature conservation reserve, will be consolidated into the Conservation Area.

The stream frontages will be classified as Nature Conservation Reserve to reflect the high values in these streamside areas. The area along Sassafras and Perrins Creeks is in the Conservation Zone, while Menzies Creek is in the Restoration Zone and Emerald Creek is in the Biodiversity and Community Use Zone.

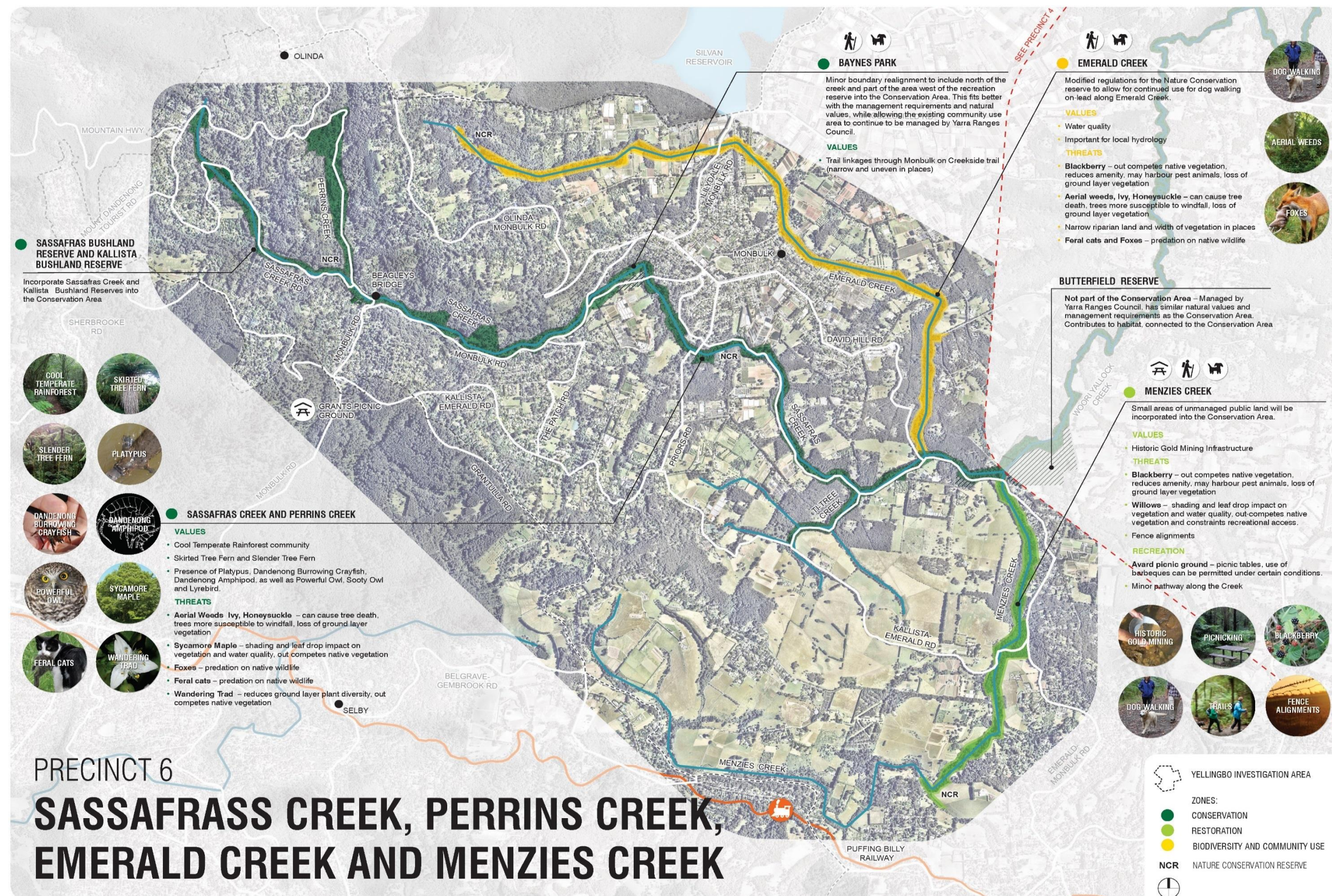


Figure 8: Precinct 6 Map

A key priority will be to continue to maintain and improve the quality and extent of native vegetation, minimise the impact of weeds such as sycamore maple, as well as the impacts from stormwater where possible, and to protect populations of threatened flora from disturbance. To ensure public land is protected, encroachments, unlicensed grazing, cropping or other inappropriate uses will be addressed in accordance with the compliance strategy currently being developed.

A range of passive recreation activities will be able to continue, in recognition of the narrow and steep roadsides and limited public land in the area available for activities such as on-lead dog walking.

A significant value of the precinct is the strong local community partnerships which have contributed to the preservation and quality of remnant vegetation not only through ongoing weed management projects but through collaborative major projects. The Community Weed Alliance of the Dandenongs (CWAD) and Friends of Sassafras Creek, along with the Monbulk, Macclesfield and Johns Hill Landcare Groups, supported by Yarra Ranges Council, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Authority, Melbourne Water and other funding agencies, have been able to undertake significant projects such as protection of Slender and Skirted Tree Fern, removal of invasive Sycamore Maple, and protection of threatened Emerald Star Bush.

Sassafras Creek Nature Conservation Reserve

The Sassafras Creek Nature Conservation Reserve is home to at least seven threatened species of flora and fauna and one threatened vegetation community, the largest known population of the vulnerable Slender Tree Fern and Skirted Tree Fern found in the Dandenong Ranges, which are listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. This area is a nationally significant site of Cool Temperate Rainforest and also one of the most threatened and fragile. It is home to small fauna, is a breeding ground of the Superb Lyrebird and is visited by 131 bird species, including Sulphur Crested Cockatoo, Crimson Rosella, Kookaburra, Eastern Yellow Robin and Pied Currawong.

There are at least 25 trees that exceed 80 metres in height along Sassafras Creek in the Dandenong Ranges. The tallest of these has been climbed to get a very accurate height estimate. These trees originated in the 1920s and are around 85 – 90 years-old, adding about a metre of height every four or five years. The trees are very fire sensitive, an attribute of the narrow streamside reserve, and will likely become the tallest specimens in Victoria within about a decade.

Threatened invertebrates in the area include the listed Dandenong Freshwater Amphipod, Dandenong Burrowing Crayfish, and Sherbrooke Amphipod. There is also a high diversity of fungi and bryophytes.

Invasive weeds species present a major threat to the Sassafras Nature Conservation Reserve. Three major invasive weed species have been mapped, with notable widespread occurrence of Sycamore Maple, Wandering Tradescantia and Cape Ivy. Other significant weeds in the area include Tree Tobacco, English Ivy and Red Cestrum. Stormwater drainage is contributing to weed spread.

Loss of mature trees is particularly important in the precinct because of its impact on nest sites for arboreal fauna. Mature trees in the Conservation Area are particularly susceptible to windthrow because of the reserve's narrow linear nature. This problem could be partly mitigated by working with neighbouring private property owners to expand the effective width of the reserve. Nest boxes are also a useful response to the loss of hollows.

Goal Maintain and improve the quality and extent of native vegetation, minimise the impact of weeds and stormwater, and protect populations of threatened flora from disturbance			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Survey vegetation quality and extent to inform best practice management	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Melbourne Water
Investigate options for feral animal control in the reserve; prepare a feral animal strategy to protect key habitat from damage	Medium	Parks Victoria	
Maintain existing levels of access; maintain trail linkage from Emerald to Cockatoo and through to Gembrook	Immediate	DELWP	Parks Victoria
Prepare a weed management strategy prioritising areas around known threatened species populations	Medium	Land managers	
Work in partnership with Yarra Ranges Council and local community groups to identify and prioritise key projects	Medium	Land managers	Yarra Ranges Council
Horse riding and hunting is not to be permitted; on-lead dog walking to be allowed to continue as permitted by the land manager	Immediate	Parks Victoria	Parks Victoria

Butterfield Reserve*

(* Outside the Conservation Area.)

Butterfield Reserve and surrounds includes the 20 hectares of public land owned by Yarra Ranges Council, that is adjacent to a Crown land picnic area managed by Yarra Ranges Council, and the smaller reserves and riparian areas of the connecting Sassafras, Emerald and Menzies Creeks. The area includes Riparian Forest with tall Manna Gums and Messmate Stringybark, and the more elevated Lowland Forest with Messmate Stringybark and Elderberry Panax. Although patches of weed infestation can be found in both the reserve and riparian areas, along with degradation in some riparian areas, the area demonstrates the benefits of significant revegetation and weed management over past years, including restoration of the understory trees and canopy species.

Habitat for fauna species including Kangaroo, Wallaby, Echidna, Wombat Possums and Sugar Gliders have been recorded on the site. In addition, Helmeted Honeyeater, lowland Leadbeater's Possum, Grey-headed Flying Fox, Southern Brown Bandicoot, Spot-tailed Quoll, Powerful Owl, Sooty Owl Spotless Crane, Growling Grass Frog, Dusky Woodswallow, Eastern Swamp Skink and Swift Parrot have been identified.

Although the 20-hectare reserve has been disturbed by fire, selective logging, mining and facilities for Eucalyptus oil extraction several decades ago, overall biodiversity demonstrates a diverse range of flora species in good condition. The area has a significant number of very large, large and medium old trees.

Previous studies have identified that the Butterfield area provides habitat for a diverse range of flora – 118 native species, including the vulnerable slender tree fern and skirted tree fern occur in the area, which also has habitat suitable for the nationally significant flax-lily, Maroon Leek Orchid.

Invasive weeds are a significant threat. These include Blackberry, English Holly, Sycamore Maple, Wandering Tradescantia, several herbaceous weed species including Blue Periwinkle (*Vinca major*) and Creeping Buttercup.

Feral herbivores create grazing pressure in the habitat of this area. Increasingly, deer are causing significant damage to biodiversity and habitat. Domestic pets roaming freely are another identified threat.

It is noted that Emerald Creek, between Vika Avenue and Monbulk Road, is compromised by roads apparently encroaching on the stream reserve and although the riparian area hosts tall old trees and tree ferns it also contains invasive Blackberry and Wandering Tradescantia, as well as some pumping stations.

CONSULTATION QUESTION

Is there anything missing from Precinct Six?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'yes', what do you believe is missing?

Are the zones right?

- Yes
- No

If your response was 'no', what changes do you think should be made?



8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Insights gained from monitoring programs will be used to evaluate, adapt and improve the management of the Conservation Area, which is vital for its future. The monitoring and evaluation will inform on-ground management and enhance user-knowledge to ensure beneficial outcomes for the Conservation Area.

8.1 Key management outcomes

- Research and monitoring activities are undertaken in collaboration with agencies and the broader community to support effective management of the Conservation Area's ecological, cultural and visitor values
- Baseline assessments of the condition of each precinct, including the mapping of weed infestation and evidence of threatened flora and fauna species.

Research and long-term monitoring will be required to determine the effectiveness of management actions. This will take many forms, focusing on areas such as ecology, cultural heritage, outdoor recreation and social science. The ongoing collection of information and evidence will not only assist reporting, it will help test assumptions and fill gaps in knowledge. This adaptive management approach will enable continuous improvement by providing timely information to support management decisions; for example, whether additional intervention or a change in approach is required to improve outcomes. It also helps build understanding about the connection between on-ground actions and long-term objectives for the Conservation Area.

Long-term monitoring of values can be costly and labour-intensive. Therefore, wherever possible, priority ecological assets (values) or threats should be selected for monitoring. These can potentially provide an indication of trends across a suite of similar elements; for example, monitoring of threatened species populations and breeding success can help to demonstrate whether management actions are likely to be achieving improved outcomes for habitat and for other broader ecological values. Community-based volunteer science programs frequently play an important role in helping to deliver such monitoring.

The following measures relate to the desired outcomes for Conservation Area, rather than for specific strategies listed throughout this plan. In the future, they will generally be reported through Parks Victoria's State of the Parks program and in land manager annual reports. These measures are expected to be refined and, subject to available funding, further measures may be identified as more information becomes available and techniques improve. Specific targets will also be developed.

8.2 Ecological measures

The goals for the natural environment are to maintain and improve the diversity and condition of ecosystems, habitats, populations of communities and species.

- Extent and condition of vegetation
- Extent and condition of target endangered vegetation communities

- Population monitoring of known threatened flora species
- Population monitoring for Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's Possum
- Distribution and status of key threats to target ecosystems, including fox and deer activity, weed invasion, human use
- Monitoring results of hydrology restoration interventions
- Monitoring dieback sites.

8.3 Cultural heritage

The goals relating to cultural heritage aim to recognise and respect peoples' heritage connections and protect heritage places. Measures could potentially focus on the:

- Involvement of Traditional Owners
- Involvement of community groups
- Condition of significant heritage places.

8.4 Visitors and tourism

The goals for visitors and tourism include maintaining a range of engaging visitor experiences, while protecting the environment. Measures could potentially focus on the:

- Condition of visitor facilities
- Extent and condition of the road and track network
- Level of participation in education and interpretation programs
- Level of participation in licensed tours.

8.5 Community partnerships

The goals for community partnerships aim to strengthen people's connections and increase community stewardship. Measures could potentially focus on the:

- Level of Traditional Owners' involvement in management of the Conservation Area
- Level of volunteers and community group participation.

Goal			
Monitoring and evaluation to improve management decisions and techniques through enhanced ecological, cultural and visitor-use knowledge			
Strategies	Priority level	Responsibility	Delivery partners
Work with Traditional Owners to research and document Aboriginal cultural values and apply traditional ecological knowledge and land management practices	Immediate	Land managers	Traditional Owners

Develop monitoring criteria for key ecological measures, informed by conservation planning and State of the Parks	Immediate	Parks Victoria	DELWP, CMA, community groups, research partners
Support and encourage citizen science research and monitoring to fill key knowledge gaps and inform management decisions	Medium	Land managers	Community groups and volunteers
Facilitate research to increase knowledge and understanding of visitor use, satisfaction and impact	Medium	Land managers	Community groups and volunteers, research partners
Collaborate on monitoring of priority ecological assets and threats to these	Medium	Land managers	Research partners
Use knowledge gained from research to refine management practices; e.g., investigations into the effectiveness of invasive species control programs and techniques	Medium	Land managers	Community groups and volunteers, research partners, DEDJTR

References

Commonwealth of Australia 2016. *National Recovery Plan for Leadbeater's possum (Gymnobelideus leadbeateri)*.

Country Fire Authority 2017. *Riparian land and bushfire. Resource document. Version 2. Report prepared by obliqua pty ltd for the Country Fire Authority and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. CFA, East Burwood, Victoria.*

Darcy Duggan & Helen Wositzky 2017. *The protection of Slender and Skirted Tree Ferns in Sassafra Creek Nature Conservation Reserve, Project Report.*

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2016. *Victorian Government Response to Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's Statewide Assessment of Public Land Final Report*

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2014. *Victorian Government Response to Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's Yellingbo Investigation Final Report.*

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2016. *Juvenile stock in waterways – Reducing impacts on human and stock health.*

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2016. *Managing grazing on riparian land – Decision support tool and guidelines.*

https://www.water.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/rtf_file/0029/52688/Riparian-grazing-guidelines-2nd-ed-Final-2016.rtf

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2016. *Managing Crown water frontages.*

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2015. *Munganin – Gadhaba 'Achieve Together' DELWP Aboriginal Inclusion Plan 2016 – 2020.*

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2016. *Protecting the Yarra River (Birrarung) – Ministerial Advisory Committee Final Report.*

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. *Yarra River Protection.*

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/waterways-planning/yarra-river-protection>

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. *Riparian land in Victoria.*

<https://www.water.vic.gov.au/waterways-and-catchments/riparian-land/riparian-land-in-victoria>

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. *Riparian reports, tools and guidelines.*

<https://www.water.vic.gov.au/waterways-and-catchments/riparian-land/riparian-reports-tools-and-guidelines>

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. *Threats to riparian land.*

<https://www.water.vic.gov.au/waterways-and-catchments/riparian-land/threats-to-riparian-land>

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2015. *Riparian management licences – To protect the riparian environment.*

Ecology Australia 2009. *Assessment of riparian setback widths required to support biodiversity value.*

Evidentiary Pty Ltd for the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2016. *What are the benefits to landholders of adopting riparian work? A summary of evidence and technical information.*

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council 2017. *Statewide Assessment of Public Land Final Report*

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council 2012. *Yellingbo Investigation Draft Proposals Paper*.

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council 2013. *Yellingbo Investigation Final Report*.

Appendices

Appendix A – VEAC definition of reserves

A.1 Nature Conservation Reserves

General recommendations for nature conservation reserves.

That the nature conservation reserves numbered A1 to A3, as shown on map A:

- (a) be used to:
 - (a) conserve and protect species, communities or habitats of indigenous flora and fauna
 - (b) provide for educational and scientific study, where consistent with (i) above
 - (c) provide for recreation by small numbers of people, at the discretion of the land manager and where consistent with (i) above
 - (d) identify and protect cultural heritage values, where consistent with (i) above,
- (b) generally permit the following activities, where compatible with (a):
 - i. bushwalking, nature observation, heritage appreciation, picnicking
 - ii. for Crown land, exploration and mining for minerals and searching for and extraction of stone resources subject to the consent of the Crown land Minister under the relevant legislation (see note 2),
- (c) exclude the following activities:
 - i. grazing of domestic stock (see note 3)
 - ii. harvesting of forest products
 - iii. hunting and use of firearms (see note 4)
 - iv. solid fuel fires at any time of year (see note 5)
 - v. dog walking (see note 6)
 - vi. horse riding,
- (d) be permanently reserved for conservation purposes under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* and included in a new schedule Four A “Conservation Landscapes” of the *National Parks Act 1975* as part of the State Emblems Conservation Area in accordance with recommendation R5(d).

Notes:

1. The above management objectives and land use recommendations are those that generally apply for the land use category. Exceptions to these may apply to specific reserves in special circumstances.
2. Exploration and mining provisions arise from nature conservation reserves being ‘restricted Crown land’ under the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990*.
3. Grazing may be contracted for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control but current licences in the recommended nature conservation reserves as shown on map A should cease as soon as possible, and grazing (if any) removed from these areas.
4. Hunting and the use of firearms may be authorised by the land manager as part of a pest animal control program.

5. Fire may be utilised as a land management tool, including for public safety, where compatible with ecological values. Existing picnic and barbecue facilities may be retained at Avarad Park, at the discretion of the land manager and in accordance with management planning.

6. On-lead dog walking is permitted to continue only along Menzies Creek in recommended A3 Sassafras Creek Nature Conservation Reserve.

A.2 Natural features reserves

General recommendations for natural features reserves.

That the natural features reserves, as shown on map A, according to their specific characteristics:

- (a) be used to:
 - i. protect natural features and values
 - ii. protect and restore areas with remnant vegetation or habitat value and conserve indigenous flora and fauna
 - iii. protect water quality where appropriate
 - iv. protect historic and Aboriginal cultural heritage features, values and sites
 - v. provide opportunities for education and recreation, at levels consistent with (i) to (iv) above
 - vi. maintain scenic features and the character and quality of the local landscapes
 - vii. preserve features of geological or geomorphological interest;
- (b) generally permit the following activities:
 - i. exploration for minerals and mining, subject to decisions on particular cases
 - ii. prospecting and apiculture;
- (c) exclude the following activities:
 - i. timber harvesting
 - ii. domestic stock grazing in bushland and streamside reserves and in stream frontages under riparian management or conservation licences or agreements (see notes 1 to 4); and
- (d) include adjoining unused road reserves where appropriate ecological or recreational values and minimal impacts on other uses are identified
- (e) be permanently reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* if not already appropriately reserved; or be managed in accordance with the above, if public authority owned land; and that
- (f) any licences permitting grazing that are subject to transfer through sale of nearby private land should not be renewed.

Notes:

1. All water frontage grazing licences are recommended to be phased out by the end of 2018 on streamside reserves (see recommendations C1-C8).
2. Grazing may be contracted for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control.
3. Unless previously agreed otherwise under the Melbourne Water Stream Frontage Management Program, all future changes to licences including those recommended here (such as conversion to a landholder conservation agreement) should align with the public-private land boundaries.
4. The removal of licensed grazing does not necessarily compel the removal of stock watering; off-stream watering can be provided for, where appropriate.

5. Emerald Bushland Reserve (Hogan Park) no longer has a BMX track as referred to in the relevant LCC Melbourne District 2 Review recommendations.

A.3 Community use areas

Recommendations for community use areas.

That the community use areas, as shown on map A, according to their specific characteristics:

- (a) be used as recreation areas and trails parklands and gardens or for education and other community purposes; and
- (b) provide for a broad range of recreational and leisure activities including organised sport, walking, cycling and picnicking
- (c) provide for education and public enjoyment in schools, public halls, kindergartens, libraries, museums and other similar areas
- (d) provide for appropriate facilities
- (e) maintain or restore features of cultural significance, natural surroundings and the local character and quality of the landscape where relevant, and where compatible with the above
- (f) exclude harvesting of forest products, hunting and stone extraction, and
- (g) if Crown land which is not already appropriately reserved, be reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, or
- (h) if public authority land, be managed in accordance with the above.

Notes:

1. Where appropriate, a committee of management may be appointed or continue to manage community use areas in accordance with the general recommendation E.
2. Some areas contain significant environmental values which should be protected.
3. Monbulk Scout Hall is recommended to be expanded onto a small section of approximately 0.1 hectares of the adjoining Nathania Springs Creek Bushland Reserve. Public land use shown on map A reflects the small excision for community use area – buildings in public use.

Appendix B – Consultation summary

The Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft 10 Year Plan has been developed through consultation with a wide range of interested community and stakeholder groups. The successful management and implementation of the Conservation Area is dependent on the support and local knowledge of the community, and this can only be gathered by directly engaging with the local communities. As well as the local community, the broader community is important and has the ability to contribute to this process. The successful ongoing management of the Conservation Area can only be achieved by including all communities in the preparation of plans to guide the management of the area.

Initial consultation and engagement for this plan has been undertaken through targeted meetings, coordinated agency meetings, public surveys and informal conversations with community members.

Consultation and communication to date has included:

- Workshops with a range of different agencies
- Workshops with interested community groups, including groups associated with recreation and tourism, agriculture and industry, conservation and township associations
- Email and newsletter notifications to interested stakeholders
- Advertising the project in local newspapers and outlining opportunities for providing input
- Social media posts notifying of the Engage Victoria process
- Engage Victoria survey questions.

Targeted meetings focused on three areas: conservation, recreation and tourism, and industry and adjacent land use. These targeted meetings were held with key stakeholders from September to November 2017. The purpose of the meetings was to confirm values for different areas within the Conservation Area, identify issues and threats to those values, identify the ways community uses the area and to identify recreation and tourism opportunities.

Meetings were also held with the Yarra Ranges Rural Advisory Committee and a workshop conducted for agency stakeholders and YCACC. The agency meeting investigated the effectiveness of coordination up to that point. Monthly YCACC meetings focus on coordinated consultation between agencies.

Engage Victoria, the government's web-based survey platform, was used in December 2017 to gather community feedback identifying values and issues relevant to the Conservation Area. Adjoining landholders and licensees were mailed a paper copy of the survey. The survey was most commonly filled out by people identifying themselves as local residents, regular visitors for recreation or day trippers and tourists.

Feedback received from both the targeted meetings and workshops, as well as from the online survey, touched on various subjects, including:

- Bushfire risk – concerns were expressed about increased vegetation leading to increased bushfire risk, but there was also acknowledgement that riparian zones can inhibit fire behaviour
- Environment – comments were made on ensuring survival of threatened species, as well as on ensuring a range of impacts are managed
- Haining Farm
- Community – it was made clear that the local community wishes to be heard, with land owners and users likely to appreciate early clarity about future expectations for the Conservation Area including possible restrictions on its use, and that we need to work with adjacent landowners if the implementation is to be successful
- Capacity for management of public land – concerns were raised about whether government agencies would be able to manage the area, and about the need for adequate funding

- Recreation – a range of comments related to various recreation uses within the reserve, encouraging tourism and maintaining access
- Weeds and pest animals – there is a need to ensure there is cooperative management between government agencies and adjoining landholders relating to weeds and deer
- Resources – it is clear that significant resources will be needed to implement and maintain the Conservation Area
- Coordination – improved coordination is needed through agreed and prioritised key goals, transparency, a clear understanding of accountabilities and operational constraints, as well as understanding of opportunities to partner in investment
- Rural industries and agriculture – what will be the effects on these?

Regardless of which group we spoke to, they noted (as high priority) matters the need to:

- Ensure there is no increase in bushfire risk to the community
- Encourage community access and recreation
- Provide habitat for threatened species
- Contribute to tourism opportunities in the region
- Support local industry and adjoining land uses
- Control weed and pest animal species
- Address declining habitat for threatened species.

Appendix C – Licensing principles for fencing and grazing within Yellingbo Conservation Area

Background

In August 2011, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change requested the VEAC investigate public land in the Yellingbo Investigation Area¹⁰. The focus of the investigation was to identify the biodiversity and ecological values in the Investigation Area, identify the current and likely future threats to these values and opportunities to remove these threats, and to make recommendations for appropriate management arrangements to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and ecological values.

In July 2013, VEAC released the *Yellingbo Investigation Final Report*. The government response was released in March 2014, endorsing the final report and accepting all of the recommendations in full or in principle. The government is committed to implementing its recommendations, including the creation of the Yellingbo Conservation Area.

Within the Conservation Area, large amounts of the public land that forms streamside reserves have been historically occupied and managed by adjoining landholders, either with or without licences issued by DELWP. The VEAC recommendations and government's response make several references to conservation agreements with adjacent landholders and phasing out of grazing licences. These are reproduced in Table 2 at the end of this Appendix.

It is recognised that public land managers will require adjacent landholder support to manage all public land within the Conservation Area and, in accordance with the recommendations, the effective engagement with adjoining landholders to take out conservation agreements in order to assist in the management of the public land. This will be a critical objective.

Various Victorian Acts of Parliament need to be taken into account when dealing with the Yarra River, ensuring that the scenic landscape, recreational and cultural values are recognised, together with the economic importance of the Yarra Valley to the state's economy.

To support the VEAC recommendation for the use of conservation agreements with adjacent landowners (5(e)(ii)), it is planned to formalise the issuing of such agreements in a new Schedule Four A to the *National Parks Act 1975*.

Prior to the schedule being created, DELWP will remain the licensing agency and intends to issue riparian management licences for conservation purposes under either the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* or the *Land Act 1958*, dependent on the particular status of the land.

In August 2017, the YCACC provided in- principle support to DELWP to enter into licence agreements for conservation purposes with adjoining landowners within the Conservation Area, and that these licences may include the use of grazing as a management tool where this is consistent with YCACC's spatial categorisation process.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the licensing principles to be applied within the YCA and provide clear guidance to government agencies around licensing conditions to be applied to conservation agreements entered into with adjoining landholders. This includes defining the minimum stock exclusion areas to be achieved and associated special conditions to be included on licences.

¹⁰ The area of land VEAC considered the environmental values in its Yellingbo Investigation (2013). The area covers just over 51,000 hectares of private and public land situated across the Yarra Ranges and Cardinia shires

Licensing objectives

To engage adjoining landholders effectively across the entire Conservation Area requires balancing issues. However, it is important that licensing emphasises that nature conservation is the primary management objective and that ongoing effort will be made to reverse habitat fragmentation and improve biodiversity.

The values, threats and public land corridor widths vary significantly across the area. Consequently, assessment of fencing alignments and grazing opportunities will be required on a case-by-case basis.

Overall objectives to be met in licensing, and when considering grazing, will be:

- a. Established vegetation corridors supporting biodiversity outcomes consistent with the VEAC recommendations.
- b. Engaged adjoining landholders helping to deliver shared management (win-win outcomes)
- c. Effective pest animal control
- d. Effective weed control
- e. Stable and healthy waterways
- f. Community and recreational access where appropriate
- g. Maintaining adjoining land production values
- h. Maintaining historic legal access to water use
- i. Maintaining community safety in respect to fire risk (no significant increase to fire risk).

Licensing principles

The following licensing principles are to be applied to all streamside reserves within the Conservation Area:

- a. Agreed fencing alignments will be the delineation between where grazing will be permitted and where it will not. Stock will not have access at any time to fenced-out revegetated areas or direct access through Crown land to waterways
- b. Gates may be constructed to enable access between public and private land for the purpose of maintenance, water access etc. Stock access is not permitted. Revegetation proposals should take into consideration requirements for water access where appropriate; i.e., set aside suitable areas and access for pumps and water infrastructure
- c. Grazing will not be considered on any Public land in **any** of the following circumstances:
 - i. The land has not recently been grazed (not been grazed since 2012)
 - ii. High ecological values have been identified (based on DELWP Arthur Rylah Institute mapping and/or site inspection)
 - iii. Area has high potential for restoration of ecological values. (Based on the current ecological values of the adjoining public land and a strategic approach to providing wide habitat corridors throughout the Conservation Area for threatened species)
 - iv. The area is regularly inundated/flooded
 - v. Revegetation works have been undertaken
 - vi. In areas recommended to be a Nature Conservation Reserve.

- d. Minimum fencing setbacks will be applied based on the YCACC spatial categorisation process as follows (Refer Appendix B for category descriptions):
 - i. Conservation Zone – No licences or grazing permitted
 - ii. Restoration Zone – Minimum of 35 metres from top of bank (each side of the river – 70 metres only)
 - iii. Biodiversity and Community Use Zone – Minimum of 20 metres from top of bank (each side of the river – 40 metres total)
 - iv. North-East Corner – Revegetation is limited to 10 metres within the nominated north-east zone. Fencing will be a minimum 10 metres from top of bank to protect the revegetation zone or set at an offset to protect existing remnant vegetation whichever is the greater.
- e. Grazing will be considered in areas where **all** of the following apply:
 - i. The minimum fencing setbacks above can be met
 - ii. The area is currently or has recently been grazed
 - iii. The removal of grazing would require an increase in direct management activity by the public land manager, which is beyond current resourcing capability
 - iv. There is a riparian management agreement in place (or has been applied for) and the adjoining land owner acknowledges their requirement to manage the nominated sections of public land for ecological values
 - v. Application of the *'Managing grazing on riparian land – Decision support tool and guidelines'* determines grazing can occur as an acceptable or beneficial outcome.
- f. Other matters that may be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine fencing/grazing arrangements:
 - i. Width of public land frontage (cannot achieve fencing offset in all areas where frontage is narrow)
 - ii. A lack of access for maintenance vehicles makes direct management by DELWP/Parks Victoria impractical
 - iii. Access to additional low value public land may be appropriate where additional areas of private land containing higher ecological values are set aside and managed for conservation (effectively offset)
 - iv. Whether a fuel break is required within the public land; i.e., due to proximity of houses on adjoining land
 - v. Where easy access to the public land makes it conducive to direct active management immediately adjacent to other actively managed areas
 - vi. Where existing fencing is in place and in good condition, and within 5 metres of the required offset.

All boundaries will be surveyed by the Office of Surveyor General. Fencing alignments may by negotiation be less than the minimum specified above in the interest of achieving a practical outcome. Generally, though, there would be some give and take and the intent of the setback must be achieved on average.

Setbacks are designed to provide habitat corridors of 70 metres (35 metres each side of river) in category 2 areas and 40 metres (20 metres each side of river) in category 3 areas. In determining outcomes on the ground, consideration to achieving the total corridor width should be made. Access along the Conservation Area for maintenance, fire prevention, weed spraying etc., should be accommodated where required outside of the fenced-off areas. If vehicle or other access is required within stock exclusion areas, then the fence offset should be extended to make provision for the access requirements on top of the minimum vegetation offsets specified above.

Application of conditions on licences

DELWP will be responsible for issuing riparian management licences for conservation purposes under either the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* or the *Land Act 1958*, dependent on the status of the land. Riparian management licences require special conditions to ensure that government investment and altered land management regimes are secured through the licence.

DELWP has prepared a statewide document titled '*Special conditions for riparian management licences*' (found on the DELWP website). The introduction, background and outcome contain relevant information that should be referenced as needed. The special conditions below have been taken from that document and modified as necessary for application with the Conservation Area.

Special conditions

The special conditions have been grouped into categories and are listed below. DELWP staff should choose which categories and conditions apply to each licence they issue, based on the Riparian Management Agreement or the self-funded works on site. Special conditions are listed under item 14 of the licence schedule.

1. Grazing and stock management

The most appropriate option should be chosen depending on the licence purpose as indicated below.

Licence purpose 1	<i>Riparian management</i>
Instruction	This condition is applicable when all of the licensed land is fenced to exclude stock, and managed for riparian management purposes
Special condition	The licensee must ensure stock do not enter the licensed land

Licence purpose 2	<i>Riparian management/grazing</i>
Instruction	This condition is applicable when part of the licensed land is fenced to exclude stock, with the remaining land used for the purpose of grazing
Special condition	The licensee must ensure stock do not enter the land shown by the area shaded green on the attached licence plan

Licence purpose 3	<i>Riparian management/grazing/cropping</i>
Instruction	This condition is applicable when part of the licensed land is fenced to exclude stock, with the remaining land used for the purpose of grazing and cropping. Cropping is generally not encouraged on

	public water frontages and this licence purpose is rare
Special condition	<p>The licensee must ensure stock do not enter and cropping does not occur on the land shown by the area shaded green on the attached licence plan.</p> <p>For cropping areas: you may need to add specific conditions for cropping; e.g., timing, extent, drainage and runoff controls. These should use wording that is consistent with other special conditions and be based on riparian management agreement or what has been agreed between the licensee and DELWP staff, based on local knowledge and ecological principles</p>

2. Fencing

Licence purpose	<i>Riparian management; riparian management/grazing; riparian management/grazing/cropping</i>
Instruction	This condition is applicable when fencing has been installed to prevent stock or unauthorised vehicle access to certain areas of the licensed land
Special condition	The licensee must ensure fencing is maintained so that stock or unauthorised vehicles cannot enter the areas shaded green on the attached licence plan

3. Revegetation

Licence purpose	<i>Riparian management; riparian management/grazing; riparian management/grazing/cropping</i>
Instruction	This condition is applicable when it is likely that the licensed land will be revegetated
Special condition	If planting vegetation within nominated conservation areas on the licensed land, the licensee must only use indigenous species from an approved list

4. Pest Plants

Licence purpose	<i>Riparian management; riparian management/grazing; riparian management/grazing/cropping</i>
Instruction	<p>This condition is applicable when Melbourne Water or DELWP want to specify certain weeds to be controlled or eradicated on the licensed land. Clause 2.4.1.1 of the licence conditions states that the licensee must keep the licensed land 'free' of weeds as defined in the <i>Catchment and Land Protection (CaLP) Act 1994</i>. However, this special condition may serve as a 'reminder' of the Act's listed weeds, or environmental weeds (not listed in legislation), that require particular attention on the frontage. The species will generally be specified by Melbourne Water</p> <p>When using this condition, you should choose 'prevent the growth and spread of' or 'eradicate' depending on the CaLP Act 1994</p>

	<p>declaration for the species in a particular region, and then list the species to which the condition applies.</p> <p>If several species with different declarations are to be shown on the licence schedule, add one condition for 'prevent the growth and spread of' with a corresponding list of species, and then add a second condition for 'eradicate' with a list of species. Prescribed control measures may be included as appropriate.</p>
Special condition	<p>In addition to clause 2.4.1.1 of the licence conditions, the licensee must [prevent the growth and spread of]/[eradicate] the following weed species:</p> <p>(i) [common name (scientific name)]</p>

5. Storage of materials and machinery

Licence purpose	<i>Riparian management; riparian management/grazing; riparian management/grazing/cropping</i>
Instruction	This condition should be used on all riparian management licences to prevent the storage of equipment, materials, machinery, vehicles, fodder, fertiliser or harvest; or the locating of temporary stack sites on the public water frontage
Special condition	The licensed land must not be used for storage of equipment, materials, machinery, vehicles, fodder, fertiliser or harvest, or for temporary stack sites

6. Improvements

Licence purpose	<i>Riparian management; riparian management/grazing; riparian management/grazing/cropping</i>
Instruction	<p>This condition is applicable and <i>must</i> be used when infrastructure (e.g., fencing or off-stream watering infrastructure) on the licensed land is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part or fully funded by the Victorian or Commonwealth government or any other agency (e.g., CMAs, water authorities), and It is intended that the infrastructure remains on the licensed land on expiration, cancellation or transfer of the licence. <p>This condition allows the licensor (DELWP or Parks Victoria) to choose, on a case-by-case basis, whether the licensee must comply with clause 4.3 of the licence conditions. This clause states that 'on cancellation or expiry of the licence, the licensee must remove all Licensee's improvements from the licensed land to the satisfaction of the Secretary'</p> <p>This condition ensures that government investment into works such as fencing is not lost, and that the riparian environment continues to be protected from stock access</p>

Special condition	<p>Despite clause 4.3.2 of the licence conditions, on cancellation or expiration of the licence the following items must not be removed without the permission of the licensor:</p> <p>(i)</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fencing located within the licensed land • All fencing located on the boundary of the licensed land • All off-stream watering infrastructure associated with a take-and-use licence including all works, appliances and dams, and outlet pipes and valves located on the licensed land.
--------------------------	---

7. Annual reporting

Licence purpose	<i>Riparian management; riparian management/grazing; riparian management/grazing/cropping</i>
Instruction	This condition should be used on all riparian management licences to document the works activities (e.g., weed control, revegetation, fencing maintenance, pest animal control) undertaken within the conservation area of the licensed land. It demonstrates the licensee commitment to the primary management objective of the land and compliance with licence conditions to support ongoing licence renewal
Special condition	The licensee is to complete an annual standard condition report rating key features within the licensed land area (eg., weed infestation levels, fencing condition, vegetation condition) and submit to DELWP by August 31 of each year

Table 1– Grazing references in government response to VEAC final report

VEAC recommendation	Government response
<p>Recommendation 5 – State Emblems Conservation Area</p> <p>5(e) the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> be amended if required to allow for:</p> <p>(i) management agreements with public authorities to manage specified land included on Schedule Four A (recommendation R5(d), above), and</p> <p>(ii) conservation agreements with adjacent landholders, for land on Schedule Four A (recommendation R5(d), above) within 100 metres of both a permanent waterway and the private land boundary</p>	<p>The government also supports amending the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> to provide for the management of Crown frontages within the proposed Conservation Area by adjacent land owners as recommended in R5 (e(ii)).</p> <p>Conservation agreements may apply to other frontages within the proposed Conservation Area where appropriate, in addition to those suggested in R5 (f). The agreements will be consistent with and reflect the broader scale planning responsibilities of the relevant public land managers for matters such as fire management and planning.</p> <p>Partnering with adjacent land owners through the establishment of conservation agreements along Crown frontages will help enhance the biodiversity and ecological values of these areas and is consistent with the government's <i>Environmental Partnerships</i> and the <i>Victorian Waterway Management Strategy</i>.</p>
<p>Recommendation A – General recommendations for nature conservation reserves</p> <p>That the nature conservation reserves numbered A1 to A3, as shown on map A:</p> <p>(c) exclude the following activities:</p> <p>(i) grazing of domestic stock (see note 3)</p> <p>Note 3: Grazing may be contracted for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control but current licences in the recommended nature conservation reserves as shown on map A should cease as soon as possible, and grazing (if any) removed from these areas.</p>	<p>To improve the biodiversity values of the riparian land and the health of the waterways, government will aim for grazing, other than for ecological or other management purposes, to be phased out in accordance with RA ((c) (i)), with the small number of current licences in the nature conservation reserves ending on 30 September 2014.</p> <p>Licence holders will be encouraged to enter into conservation agreements under the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i>, as proposed in R5, to continue to manage the biodiversity and ecological values of their frontages.</p> <p>Where licence holders enter into such agreements, grants for fencing, off-stream watering, weed control and revegetation may be</p>

	<p>available where priorities align with Melbourne Water's Stream Frontage Management Program.</p> <p>Reduced water licence fees may also apply where licence holders fence their frontages as part of a conservation agreement. The progressive phase-out, will protect the highest value conservation areas as a first priority.</p>
<p><i>Recommendation C – General recommendations for natural features reserves</i></p> <p>That the natural features reserves, as shown on map A, according to their specific characteristics:</p> <p>(c) exclude the following activities:</p> <p>(ii) domestic stock grazing in bushland and streamside reserves and in stream frontages under riparian management or conservation licences or agreements (see notes 1 to 4);</p> <p>and that</p> <p>(f) any licences permitting grazing that are subject to transfer through sale of nearby private land should not be renewed.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All water frontage grazing licences are recommended to be phased out by the end of 2018 on streamside reserves (see recommendations C1-C8). 2. Grazing may be contracted for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control. 3. Unless previously agreed otherwise under the Melbourne Water Stream Frontage Management Program, all future changes to licences including those recommended here (such as conversion to a landholder conservation agreement) should align with the public-private land boundaries 4. The removal of licensed grazing does not necessarily compel the removal of stock watering; off-stream watering can be provided for, where appropriate 	<p>Grazing, other than for ecological or other management purposes, will be progressively phased out in accordance with RC ((c)(ii)) with all water frontage licences being phased out by September 30, 2018.</p> <p>Licence holders will be encouraged to enter into conservation agreements to continue to manage the important biodiversity and ecological values of their frontages.</p> <p>Where licence holders enter into such agreements, grants for fencing, off stream watering, weed control and revegetation may be available where priorities align with Melbourne Water's Stream Frontage Management Program.</p> <p>Reduced water licence fees may apply where licence holders fence their frontages as part of a conservation agreement.</p>

<p>Recommendation C1-8 – Streamside reserves</p> <p>That:</p> <p>(d) domestic stock grazing be excluded along the Yarra River upstream of the existing Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve (rec C1) and the lower Hoddles and Wet Lead Creeks (rec C2) from two years of the date of government acceptance of these recommendations through either conversion to landholder conservation agreement in accordance with recommendation R5(e)(ii) with grazing excluded or surrender of licences, with agreement boundaries to follow cadastral boundaries,</p> <p>(e) domestic stock grazing be excluded along the streamside reserves C3-C8 by the end of 2018 through either conversion to landholder conservation agreement in accordance with recommendation R5(e)(ii) with grazing excluded or surrender of licences, with agreement boundaries to follow cadastral boundaries (see note).</p> <p>Note:</p> <p>1. The term of any licences permitting grazing should be converted to annual until phased out in 2018.</p>	<p>To improve the biodiversity values of the riparian land and the health of the waterways, government will aim grazing to phase out grazing of areas C1 and C2 by September 30, 2016, and all water frontage licences in the remaining areas (C3 to C8) will be phased out by September 30, 2018.</p> <p>Landholders will be encouraged to take out conservation agreements under the proposed amendment to the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> to continue to contribute to the management of the important biodiversity and ecological values of these streamside reserves. The progressive phase out, will protect the highest value conservation areas as a first priority.</p>
---	---

Appendix D – List of acronyms/definitions

CFA	Country Fire Authority
CoM	Committee of Management
DEDJTR	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning
FFG	Flora and Fauna Guarantee
FFMV	Forest Fire Management Victoria
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
Land managers	The public land managers in the Conservation Area include Parks Victoria, DELWP, Zoos Victoria, Trust for Nature, Yarra Ranges Council (roadside verges), Cardinia Shire Council (roadside verges), VicRoads (roadside verges). In all planning Melbourne Water and the PPWCMA provide information and evaluation.
NCR	Nature Conservation Reserve
MER	Monitor, Evaluation, Review
MW	Melbourne Water
PPWCMA	Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority
PV	Parks Victoria
SF	State Forest
TfN	Trust for Nature
ToR	Terms of Reference
VEAC	Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
YCA	Yellingbo Conservation Area
YCACC	Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee
YNCR	Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve
ZV	Zoos Victoria

