

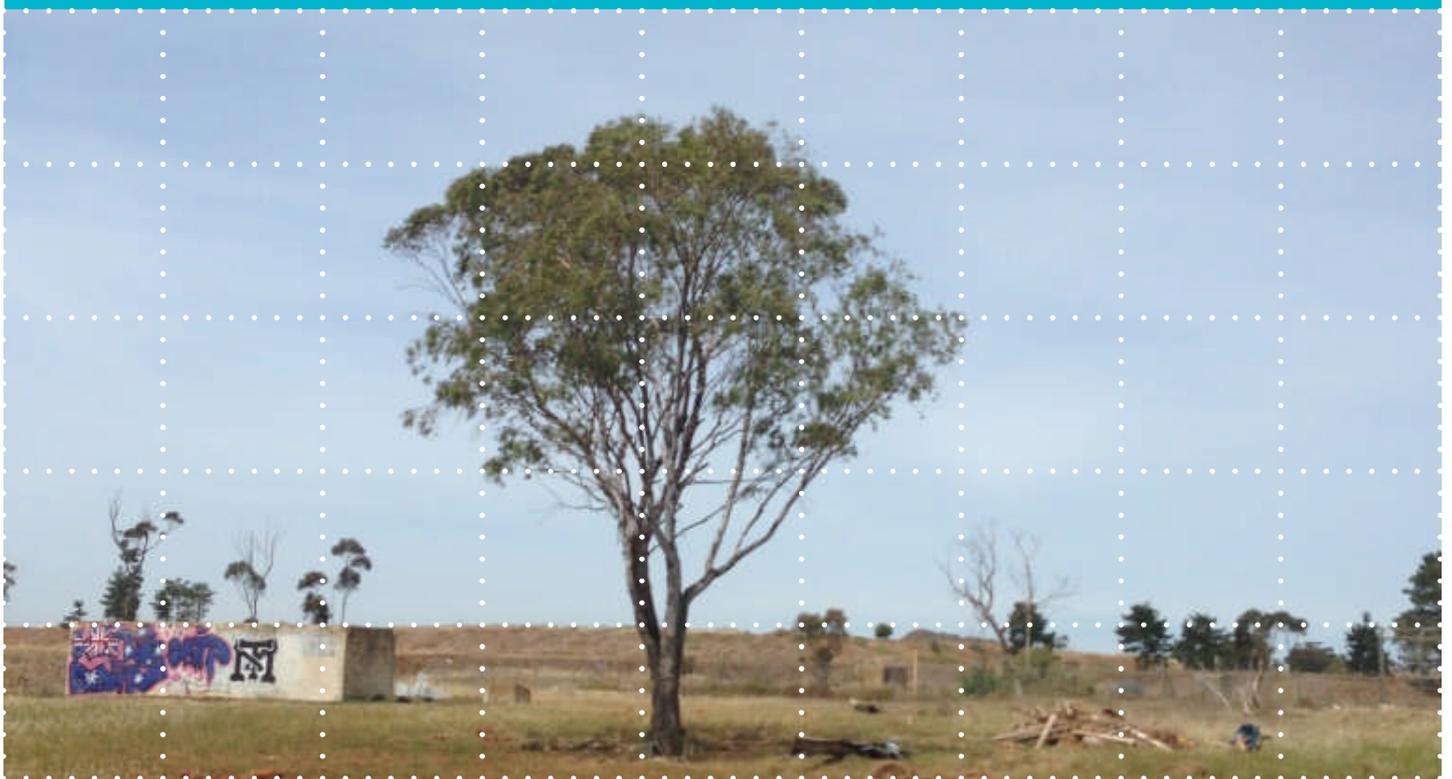
Draft Report

# Scattered Tree Assessment for Parcel 8, Mt Atkinson Precinct Structure Plan

Prepared for

**Metropolitan Planning Authority**

November 2014



**Ecology and Heritage Partners Pty Ltd**

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## GLOSSARY

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Acronym	Description
DBH	Diameter at Breast Height
DEPI	Department of Environment and Primary Industries
EVC	Ecological Vegetation Class
LOT	Large Old Tree
MOT	Medium Old Tree
ST	Small Tree
TRZ	Tree Retention Zone
VBA	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (DEPI)
VLOT	Very Large Old Tree

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Background

Ecology and Heritage Partners Pty Ltd was commissioned by Metropolitan Planning Authority to conduct a Scattered Tree Assessment at 2-50 Meskos Road, Rockbank which is also known as Parcel 8, Mt Atkinson Precinct Structure Plan. The purpose of the assessment was to identify the number and type of scattered native trees present within the study area.

To streamline the environmental approvals process within Melbourne's growth areas, the State Government released the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) (DEPI 2013d). The BCS identifies conservation reserves to be protected and offsets for native vegetation and matters of National Environmental Significance lost within the growth areas. The BCS replaces the requirement to obtain any permits for native vegetation removal under local, Victorian and Federal legislation.

To facilitate the planning approvals process for Melbourne's growth corridors and enable the implementation of the BCS, the Victorian Government introduced the 'Time Stamping' project (DSE 2009). This project captured, and 'time stamped' native vegetation information within the new urban growth corridors. This data has been mapped, and is now being used to calculate native vegetation offsets for future development under the BCS. Native vegetation includes patches of remnant native vegetation as well as remnant, scattered indigenous trees. If a proponent intends to remove any native vegetation that has been 'time stamped', they are required to pay a Habitat Compensation fee to the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) to compensate for its loss (DEPI 2013e).

This report satisfies and completes the scattered indigenous tree assessment requirements for the preparation of the Mt Atkinson Precinct Structure Plan.

## 2 METHODS

### 2.1 Nomenclature

Common and scientific names of vascular plants follow the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA) (DEPI 2013a) and the Census of Vascular Plants of Victoria (Walsh and Stajsic 2007). Vegetation community names follow DEPI's Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) benchmarks (DEPI 2013b).

### 2.2 Desktop Assessment

The following resources and databases were reviewed over the duration of the project:

- Department of Environment and Primary Industries' Biodiversity Interactive Maps showing historic and current EVCs (DEPI 2013c); and,
- Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors (DEPI 2013d).

### 2.3 Field Surveys

A Scattered tree assessment was undertaken on 06 November by an experienced botanist. All scattered indigenous trees were assigned a sequential number and recorded as a point location on aerial maps using handheld GPS devices and ArcGIS software (Figure 1). A diameter at breast height (DBH) measurement was taken for each tree using a diameter tape. The size class and conservation significance was determined for all indigenous trees according to the relevant EVC benchmark. Benchmark tree measurements for relevant EVCs are provided in Table 1. The survey assessment date, duration and assessor are provided in Table 2.

**Table 1:** Relevant EVC benchmark information pertaining to tree size classes.

Bioregion	Ecological Vegetation Class	Very Large Old Tree (cm)*	Large Old Tree DBH (cm)	Medium Old Tree DBH (cm)*	Small Old Tree DBH (cm)*
Victorian Volcanic Plain	Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55)	>120cm	80-119cm	60-79cm	<60cm

Notes: \* Very Large Old Trees are at least 1.5 times the trunk diameter of a large old tree; Large Old Trees are >1.0 to <1.5 times trunk diameter; Medium Old Trees >0.75 to <1.0 times trunk diameter and; Small Old Trees are <0.75 times trunk diameter, as defined by the relevant DSE benchmarks and the Port Phillip and Westernport Native Vegetation Plan (DEPI 2013b; PPWCMA 2006).

**Table 2:** Scattered Tree survey date, duration, access issues and assessor.

Parcel Number	Property Number	Assessment Date	Duration	Assessor
8	3/PS448579	6/11/2014	12:00pm-1:00pm	Robyn Giles

## 3 RESULTS

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### 3.1 Scattered Tree Assessment

A total of four indigenous River Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* trees were recorded within the study area (Figure 1). All trees were less than 60cm in diameter and are considered to be Small Trees as per Table 1 and correspond to the Plains Grassy Woodland EVC (EVC 55). The details of indigenous trees recorded within the property are presented in Table 3 below.

All other trees within the study area were planted, including non-indigenous or exotic species such as Sugar Gum *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* and Radiata Pine *Pinus radiata*. Trees were determined to be planted due to them being located in obvious rows and/or not indigenous to Victoria. Planted trees were not included in the assessment as they did not meet the definition of a remnant tree (DEPI 2013f).

No trees recorded during this assessment were within a patch of native vegetation.

Under the BCS, habitat compensation fees are only required for the removal of Very Large Old Trees (VLOTs), Large Old Trees (LOTs) and Medium Old Trees (MOTs). No fees apply to Small Trees (STs).

**Table 3.** Scattered trees recorded during the present assessment.

Tree ID	Scientific name	Common name	DBH (cm)	Size Class	EVC	Latitude	Longitude
1	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	River Red Gum	46	ST	PGW	-37.74364	144.69333
2	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	River Red Gum	48	ST	PGW	-37.74312	144.69144
3	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	River Red Gum	41	ST	PGW	-37.74319	144.69125
4	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	River Red Gum	57	ST	PGW	-37.7436	144.69185

## 4 HABITAT COMPENSATION COSTS FOR SCATTERED TREE REMOVAL

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Under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS), DEPI have outlined habitat compensation costs (offset costs) that are required to be paid to DEPI before the removal of native vegetation and scattered trees is permitted. These costs go towards managing conservation areas within the Urban Growth Boundary. The cost to remove a scattered tree is the same for all size classes of scattered tree (VLOT, LOT, MOT); although no fee is required to remove Small Trees (DEPI 2013e). Under the *Biodiversity Compensation Strategy* released in May 2013, the cost is **\$13,218** per scattered tree considered removed (DEPI 2013e). This includes stags, and trees that experience impacts to their Tree Retention Zone, but are not physically removed (Appendix 1.1).

Given that the four scattered trees present within the property were small trees, there is no habitat compensation cost associated with their removal.

## 5 REFERENCES

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## 6 FIGURES

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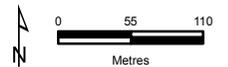


**Legend**

- Parcel boundary
- + Scattered Trees
- Freeway
- Collector Road
- Minor Road



**Figure 1**  
**Scattered trees within the study area**  
*Parcel 8, Mt Atkinson PSP*



VicMap Data: The State of Victoria does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of information in this publication and any person using or relying upon such information does so on the basis that the State of Victoria shall bear no responsibility or liability whatsoever for any errors, faults, defects or omissions in the information.

## 7 APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX 1

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### Appendix 1.1 – Tree Retention Zones

Tree Retention Zones (TRZs) should be implemented to prevent indirect losses of native vegetation during construction activities (DSE 2010). A TRZ applies to a tree and is a specific area above and below the ground, with a radius 12 x the DBH. At a minimum standard a TRZ should consider the following:

- A TRZ of trees should be a radius no less than two metres or greater than 15 metres;
- Construction, related activities and encroachment (i.e. earthworks such as trenching that disturb the root zone) should be excluded from the TRZ;
- Where encroachment exceeds 10% of the total area of the TRZ, the tree should be considered as lost and offset accordingly;
- Directional drilling may be used for works within the TRZ without being considered encroachment. The directional bore should be at least 600 millimetres deep;
- The above guidelines may be varied if a qualified arborist confirms the works will not significantly damage the tree (including stags / dead trees). In this case the tree would be retained and no offset would be required; and,
- Where the minimum standard for a TRZ has not been met an offset may be required.

A Tree *Protection Zone* (TPZ) is different to a TRZ. A TPZ applies to any scattered trees used as an offset and is designed not only to prevent the tree from indirect damage, but also to give it sufficient space to recruit new trees in the future. A TPZ is defined as an area of twice the canopy diameter, which should be fenced and protected from adverse impacts (e.g. grazing, burning, soil disturbance, removal of logs, etc.) (DSE 2007).