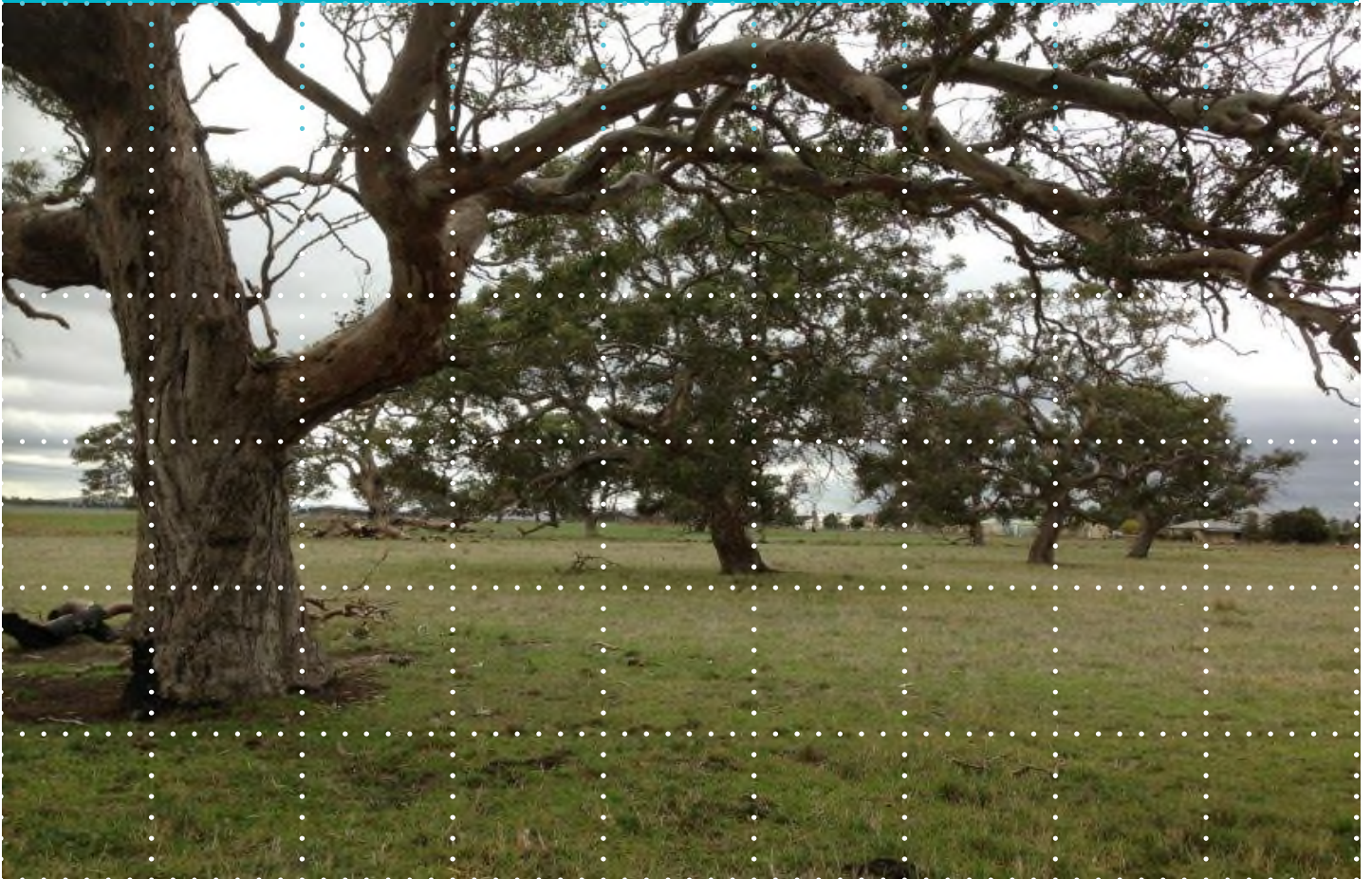


Statement of Expert Evidence: Lindum Vale Precinct Structure Plan (PSP 1202): Amendment C205

Prepared for:

Hume City Council

February 2018



Author:

Aaron Organ

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1 AUTHOR'S EXPERTISE

This Statement of Expert Evidence has been prepared by Mr Aaron Organ, Director and Principal Ecologist, Ecology and Heritage Partners Pty Ltd, of 292 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale, Victoria.

Aaron has over 22 years' experience in the environmental field, including 18 years in an environmental consultant capacity. Aaron has also previously worked as a field ecologist in East Gippsland Victoria, and has worked as a ranger in Queensland and Victoria, having extensive experience in National Park and Reserve management throughout Australia.

Aaron has a broad and working knowledge of terrestrial ecology throughout Victoria, and has either managed or played an important role in providing environmental advice on a large number of major infrastructure projects such as proposed pipelines, and road and rail developments. He has also been a lead author and/or co-author for over 500 projects and has provided expert advice to a range of clients. Some of these projects include a large number of proposed wind farms in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, long-term flora and fauna monitoring throughout the Illawarra escarpment New South Wales, and various large residential developments throughout the northern growth areas of Melbourne.

2 AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

I, Aaron Organ of Ecology and Heritage Partners Pty Ltd, have prepared this Statement of Expert Evidence pertaining to the proposed Lindum Vale Precinct Structure Plan (PSP), Mickleham Road, Mickleham, Victoria. The proceeding statement is based on the previous ecological investigations completed across the precinct by other ecological consultants (i.e. Biosis), and the recent site assessments undertaken by myself and staff at Ecology and Heritage Partners in May 2015 and December 2017.

I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.

3 INTRODUCTION

3.1 Background

I have been instructed by King and Wood Mallesons on behalf of Hume City Council to undertake an ecological review and to prepare this expert witness statement relating to the proposed Lindum Vale PSP area (PSP 1202), Mickleham, as part of Amendment C205 of the local planning scheme. This area includes two main parcels of land at 1920 and 2040 Mickleham Road, Mickleham, along with three other small parcels with frontage to Mickleham Road.

The purpose of the ecological assessment was to review the relevant ecological investigations completed as part of the preparation of the PSP, to conduct a site assessment and note the ecological values present within the precinct, and to provide expert opinion with respect to the outstanding issues raised between Hume City Council, the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) and the landowner (Satterley Property Group).

3.2 Scope of Assessment

The following was undertaken as part of the engagement:

- A review of all available literature, reports and recent exhibited reports as part of the Lindum Vale PSP, namely the Lindum Vale PSP (VPA 2017a), and Lindum Vale Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (NVPP) (VPA 2017b);
- Review the relevant ecological databases and available literature;
- Conduct a site assessment to identify ecologist values within the study area;
- Provide specific advice in response to key issues with the exhibited PSP, including
 - Conservation Reserve boundary;
 - NVPP;
 - Habitat connectivity;
 - Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) assessment and approval;
 - The proposed removal of the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESOs); and
 - Any other relevant ecological considerations for the future development of the PSP.

3.3 Study Area

The Lindum Vale PSP area covers approximately 145 hectares and consists of two land parcels located at 1960 Mickleham Road and 2040 Mickleham Road, Mickleham, Victoria, approximately 25 kilometres north of the Melbourne Central Business District.

The Lindum Vale PSP forms the western component of the 'Inter Urban Break', defined in Council policy as providing a non-urban buffer between Craigieburn and future urban development to the north (see Clause

21.06-2, Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park Neighbourhood, of the Local Areas strategy). The land was added to the UGB through the 2012 Logical Inclusions Review process, however, it is not covered under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS). The Lindum Vale PSP area is bound by Mickleham Road to the west, transmission lines and the Merrifield West PSP area to the north, Mount Ridley Road to the south, and the existing rural residential subdivision through the Inter Urban Break to the east. South of Mount Ridley Road, directly opposite the site is the future Craigieburn West PSP area.

The Lindum Vale PSP area contains a substantial number of River Red-gum, which form part of a broader conglomeration of River Red-gums, including the Mt Ridley Woodlands Conservation Area in the Merrifield West PSP to the north and the future Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) Conservation Area in the Craigieburn West PSP to the south (Conservation Areas 26 and 29, respectively) (DEPI 2013).

According to the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) Biodiversity Interactive Map (DELWP 2018a), the study area occurs within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion and is located within the jurisdiction of the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and the Hume City Council municipality.

4 METHODS

4.1 Background Review

Relevant literature, online-resources and numerous databases were reviewed to provide an assessment of ecological values associated with the study area. The following information sources were reviewed as part of the preparation of this expert witness statement:

- The DELWP Native Vegetation Information Management (NVIM) Tool (DELWP 2018b) and the DELWP NatureKit (DELWP 2018a) for the extent of historic and current Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs).
- The Victoria Biodiversity Atlas (VBA) (DELWP 2017). Flora Information System (FIS) (Viridans 2013a) and Atlas of Victorian Wildlife (AVW) (Viridans 2013b) for previously documented flora and fauna records within the project locality;
- The Federal Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE) Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) for matters of National Environmental Significance (NES) protected under the EPBC Act (DoEE 2018);
- Amendment C205 documentation, including
 - exhibited planning scheme provisions
 - exhibited zoning and overlay maps
 - explanatory report
 - Lindum Vale NVPP (August 2017) (VPA 2017b)
 - Lindum Vale Precinct Structure Plan (August 2017) (VPA 2017a)
- Current planning scheme provisions; and,
- Relevant literature and recent ecological assessments within to the study area, including
 - Biosis Pty Ltd 2016. Lindum Vale PSP 1202: Biodiversity Assessment (Final report). 29 September 2016
 - Biosis Pty Ltd 2015a. Lindum Vale PSP 1202: Biodiversity Assessment (Draft report). 18 March 2015. (as part of the EPBC Act referral submission).
 - Biosis 2015b. Lindum Vale: Golden Sun Moth survey and habitat assessment. Report for MAB Corporation. Author: Venosta, M. and Mueck, S. Biosis Pty Ltd, Melbourne. Project no. 19308.
 - Biosis 2014. Tree Assessment and Arboricultural Report: Lindum Vale, Mickleham. Report for MAB Corporation. Authors Callow, D. Biosis, Melbourne. Project No. 17916.

- Biosis 2013. Systematic search for Matted Flax-lily in areas of native vegetation at "Lindum Vale" 1920 and 2040 Mickleham Road, Mickleham. Report for MAB Corporation. Author Mueck, S. Biosis Research, Melbourne. Project No. 16178.
- Biosis Research 2012. 'Lindum Vale' Property, 1920 and 2040 Mickleham Road, Mickleham, Victoria: Flora and fauna assessment. Report for MAB Corporation. Authors Mueck, S. and Gilmore, D. Biosis Research, Melbourne. Project No. 13869.
- Biosis Research 2009. Survey of the Golden Sun Moth at Lindum Vale, Mickleham, Victoria. Report for MAB Corporation. Authors Venosta, M. Biosis Research, Melbourne. Project No. 7564.
- Ecology and Heritage Partners 2015. Lindum Vale PSP 1202, Biodiversity Assessment Peer Review. Unpublished report for Hume City Council by Ecology and Heritage Partners Pty Ltd. This peer review was undertaken to provide advice to Hume City Council regarding the future development of the precinct. The findings of this assessment are relevant to the Lindum Vale PSP and, where suitable, have been included in this statement.

4.2 Site Assessments

A previous assessment of the study area was undertaken on 14 May 2015 by a qualified ecologist of Ecology and Heritage Partners. The entire study area was traversed on foot to ground-truth remnant patches and scattered trees, as well as to assess the extent of habitat for significant fauna species and potential green linkages.

The site was also traversed on 19 December 2017 with personnel from Hume City Council, Satterley Property Group and Biosis, to inspect scattered remnant trees and patches of remnant native vegetation across the precinct to determine their importance and value for protection within the proposed Conservation Reserve, Local Parks and areas identified as Landscape Values within the PSP.

5 ECOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Lindum Vale PSP Objectives

As part of the early planning phase for the Lindum Vale PSP area, Hume City Council in conjunction with the former owner (MAB Corporation) identified a vision statement for the precinct, along with four key principles and associated strategies to achieve the principles. The vision, principles and strategy area outlined in the summary of meeting notes (dated 2 September 2013) as supplied by Hume City Council.

Several variations of the indicative development plan have been prepared over several years with varying degrees of green links to incorporate the retention of remnant vegetation.

More recently, as stated in the vision of the Lindum Vale PSP (Section 2.1, Page 11), it is anticipated that the future development of the precinct will:

‘respond to the area’s landscape values by integrating the mature indigenous trees across the precinct and the native grasslands in the south-east corner of the precinct.

A network of local parks incorporate the majority of indigenous trees to create a strong neighbourhood character with links to the broader open space network, including Mount Ridley Woodland Reserve, Malcolm Creek and Merri Creek. A centralised local park will accommodate a wetland and stormwater treatment areas, with links to the adjoining open space reserve within the rural-residential neighbourhood to the east of the precinct.

A conservation area in the south-east corner protects and enhances native grasses and Golden Sun Moth habitat, protected by the EPBC Act.

In addition, the Lindum Vale PSP includes the following objectives (Section 2.2, Page 13), with respect to open space and natural systems.

Objective 8

Create a passive recreation network via the high voltage electricity transmission easement and series of local parks linking the Mount Ridley Woodland Nature Conservation Reserve to the north and the BCS conservation areas to the south of the PSP area.

Objective 9

Provide an integrated and accessible public open space network of attractive passive recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Objective 10

Retain indigenous trees, where possible, to preserve the ecological, landscape and cultural values of the precinct through sensitive subdivision and street layout design.

Objective 11

Provide protection for areas of native vegetation through provision of encumbered open spaces.

Objective 12

Conserve and enhance the biodiversity values of Grassy Eucalypt Woodland ecological community in the south-east corner of the precinct.

Additionally, detailed requirements and guidelines for the protection of biodiversity values is provided in the Lindum Value PSP (Section 3.3.3, Page 31).

5.2 Conservation Significance of Areas within Lindum Vale PSP

Whilst the Lindum Vale PSP has been subject to varying degrees of agricultural activities and past disturbances (e.g. clearing of remnant native vegetation), the precinct supports patches of remnant Plains Grassy Woodland, scattered remnant trees (predominantly River Red-gums *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, many of which are hollow bearing), and a population of the nationally significant [listed under the EPBC Act] Golden Sun Moth *Synemon plana* (Biosis 2009, 2015b).

The precinct supports patches of the EPBC Act-listed Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victoria Volcanic Plain (GEWVVP) ecological community along the southern boundary and in the south-eastern corner of the precinct.

As outlined in: ‘Nationally Threatened Ecological Communities of the Victorian Volcanic Plain: Natural Temperate Grassland and Grassy Eucalypt Woodland: A guide to the identification, assessment and management of nationally threatened ecological communities’ (SEWPaC 2011), several criteria are used to define whether remnant vegetation qualifies as the EPBC Act-listed ecological community. These include, the Ecological Vegetation Class, bioregion, size of patch, condition thresholds and additional characteristics.

A response to the criteria outlined in SEWPaC (2011) that pertains to ‘HZ1 and HZ2 (Biosis 2015a) is provided below (Table 1). In summary, based on the previous site assessment there was no discernible difference in the vegetation quality of these two patches (see Section 6.1 below), and therefore it is likely that both of these patches meet the conditions thresholds to qualify as the EPBC Act-listed GEWVVP. However, DoEE may request additional, up to date data, regarding the extent of GEWVVP in the south-eastern portion of the study area as part of their assessment under the EPBC Act.

Table 1. Nationally Threatened Ecological Communities of the Victorian Volcanic Plain: Natural Temperate Grassland and Grassy Eucalypt Woodland: A guide to the identification, assessment and management of nationally threatened ecological communities’ (SEWPaC 2011).

Criteria	Lindum Vale PSP	
Ecological Vegetation Class	Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55_61) is present within the study area.	
Bioregion	The study area is within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion.	
Size of Patch	The minimum patch size for the listed ecological community is 0.5 hectare.	
	One or more of the following native grass genera accounts for at least 50% of the perennial ground layer cover: <i>Themeda</i> , <i>Rytidosperma</i> , <i>Austrostipa</i> , <i>Poa</i> and/or <i>Microlaena</i>	
Condition Thresholds	<u>If native grasses</u>	A valuable wildflower site where at least 50% of the ground layer vegetative

Criteria	Lindum Vale PSP	
	<u>account for less than 50% of the perennial ground layer cover, then the patch is either:</u>	cover is represented by native forbs (including geophytes) during spring-summer (i.e. September to dryland February inclusive but noting that the ground layer may be sparse in some situations); OR Not heavily invaded by perennial weeds such that perennial weeds comprise less than 70% of the ground layer vegetative cover; OR If perennial weeds comprise more than 70% of the ground layer vegetative cover, then the patch must have more than ten native perennial species per 100 m ² AND a density of at least three big trees per hectare. Big trees are defined here as trees with at least 70 centimetres diameter at breast height (DBH) for eucalypts and at least 40 cm DBH for non-eucalypt species.
Additional Characteristics	The conservation value of a patch of the ecological community is enhanced if it shows any of the following features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high native plant species richness; • Large patch size or connectivity with a large patch of remnant vegetation; • Minimal weed invasion; • Presence of threatened plant and/or animal species; • Diversity of habitat e.g. Tree hollows, fallen logs, natural exposed rock outcrops. 	

The precinct also supports habitat for the State significant Crane's-bill (vulnerable in Victoria) (Biosis 2016) and contributes to the surrounding ecological values by providing a degree of habitat connectivity for a range of species, particularly species that are highly mobile such as birds and bats. However, native ground dwelling fauna species are also likely to use the precinct either as residents or visitors on a regular or irregular basis.

6 KEY OUTSTANDING ISSUES

It is understood that the following are the outstanding issues between City of Hume, the VPA and Satterley Property Group that pertain to ecological matters. Submissions (numbered in accordance with those provided) have been made by the relevant parties and the following are my responses to specific issues relating to my area of expertise (i.e. ecology).

6.1 Conservation Reserve Boundary

Based on the Revised Plan 3 – Future Urban Structure (Page 1) the boundary of the Conservation Reserve has been extended to incorporate areas of the HZ2 patch identified in Biosis (2016).

The following Comments 16, 17 and 18 relate to Hume City Council's submission to the Conservation Reserve boundary and I have provided my responses to these comments.

Comment 16

The VPA proposes that the conservation reserve boundary be extended to include the HZ2 patch.

Comment 17

Include the local park and landscape value area (LP-01 and LV-12), adjacent to Mount Ridley Road and east of the boulevard connector into the Conservation Reserve (CR-01).

Comment 18

Update the 'Conservation Reserve' and 'credited open space' in the land use budget to match the above.

Response relating to the expansion of the Conservation Reserve Boundary

I support the extension of the Conservation Reserve to the west to include the HZ2 patch, along with an expansion of the northern boundary of the Reserve to the north to incorporate additional areas of GEWVVP and suitable habitat for Golden Sun Moth. I have marked up a figure that depicts the additional area that should be included in the Conservation Reserve (Figure 1).

Extent of GEWVVP within the study area

All remnant patches previously mapped throughout the study area (Biosis 2015) were ground-truthed on the 15 May 2015, and briefly inspected on 19 December 2017. A discrepancy exists between the extent and quality of remnant Plains Grassy Woodland patch(es) previously mapped in the south-east corner of the study area. The original flora and fauna report shows this area as containing one large patch (HZ1) (Biosis Research Pty Ltd 2012). However, the final Biodiversity Assessment indicates that the extent of the patch has not only decreased but has also been split into two discrete quality zones (HZ1 and HZ2) (Biosis Pty Ltd 2015a, 2016). Based on the site assessment undertaken on 14 May 2015 (Ecology and Heritage Partners 2015) and the additional site inspection on 19 December 2017, there is no discernible boundary between Habitat Zones 1 and 2. The two habitat zones were unable to be split based on a range of variables such as species composition, topography, weed cover or disturbance. HZ2 in comparison to HZ1 appeared to have an equivalent cover of native grasses such as Australian Wheat-grass *Anthosacne scabra*, and also supported isolated tussocks of Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra*.

As stated above, based on our site assessments it is likely that most of HZ1 and HZ2 meet the condition thresholds to qualify as GEWVVP. Indeed, the protection and active management of the vegetation within the Conservation Reserve will result in the improvement of this EPBC Act-listed community in this area.

EPBC Act Assessment and Approval

The proposed development was referred to DoEE and the proposed development of the precinct was determined a 'controlled action' (decision dated 8 December 2015) under the EPBC Act (EPBC Act 2015/7516). The development will be assessed through 'Preliminary Documentation', and as part of this, offsets for the proposed removal of GEWVVP and Golden Sun Moth will most likely be required for the approval of the development under the EPBC Act.

The key benefits for the expansion of the Conservation Reserve to the north (as shown in Figure 1) are as follows:

- Would result in an additional area of GEWVVP (Plains Grassy Woodland patch) and the highest quality Golden Sun Moth habitat (Biosis 2015b) within the Precinct being retained and protected;
- It will lead to a greater area to edge ratio, resulting in a large 'core' area that would have less exposure to 'edge effects' (e.g. weed incursion from surrounding areas);
- An additional remnant tree will be protected within the reserve; and
- An additional area for natural regeneration of retained trees to occur.

In addition, the pedestrian path that is proposed along the northern boundary of the Conservation Reserve (within the Reserve), as shown on Plan 7 (Page 32) of the exhibited PSP, should be located outside of the Reserve, thus resulting in further avoidance of impacts to remnant native vegetation and known Golden Sun Moth habitat.

No public facilities, vehicle access / maintenance tracks, or any other infrastructure that would result in a reduction in the total area of remnant native vegetation should be located in the Conservation Reserve. The primary purpose of the Conservation Reserve is to manage the natural values present.

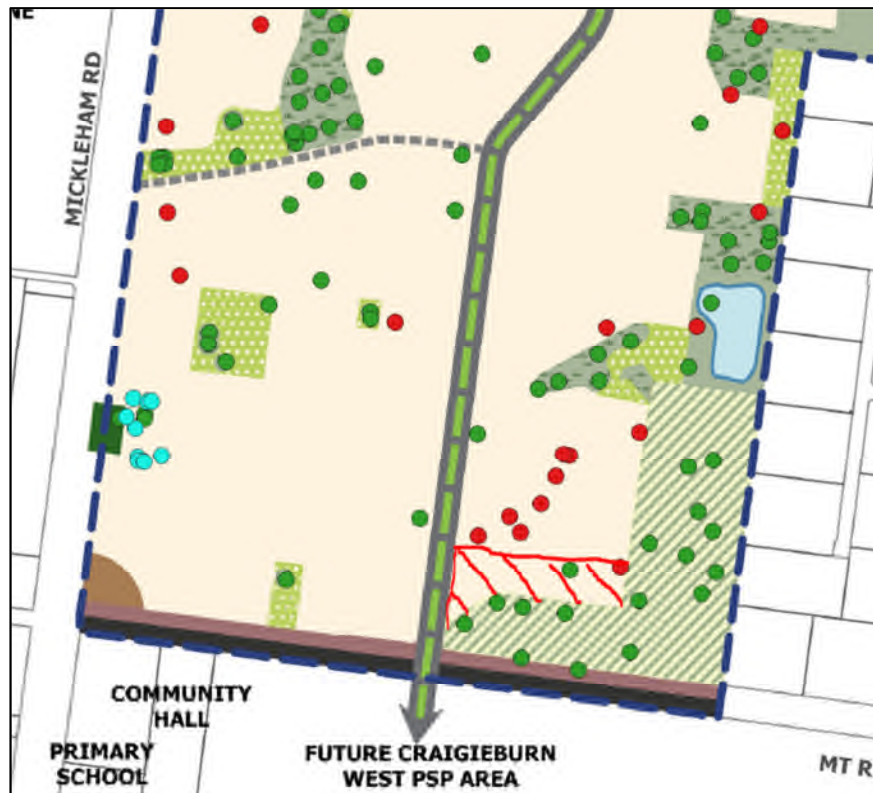


Figure 1. Proposed inclusion (red hatched area) of an additional area of remnant Plains Grassy Woodland within the proposed Conservation Reserve.

6.2 Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (NVPP)

The precinct was introduced into the Urban Growth Boundary as part of the Logical Inclusions process in 2012, the precinct does not benefit from streamlined program report for Melbourne Growth Corridors under the EPBC Act. Therefore, the amendment will incorporate the Lindum Vale NVPP into the Hume Planning Scheme, which identifies vegetation to be protected (retained) or removed in the Lindum Vale PSP. The NVPP provides offsets in relation to the removal of native vegetation within in the PSP area.

The following Comments 40, 42, 46 and 50 relate to Hume City Council's submission to the NVPP and I have provided my responses to these comments.

Comment 40

Address the requirements of the ESO as it is likely that the ESO will be removed through the planning scheme processes.

Response

Agree, this should be addressed. Scattered remnant trees located outside of the Conservation Reserve, Local Parks and areas identified as Landscape Values should be retained where possible in open space areas. A planning permit or similar mechanism should be adopted. The ESO wording could be incorporated in the NVPP.

Comment 42

The vegetation protection objectives should make reference to all local (ESO's), State, federal (EPBC Act) significant species and communities.

Response

Agree.

Comment 46

Local and federal significance are not listed anywhere within the NVPP. In particular local values, the ESO's are not included and impacts to EPBC Act-listed species and ecological communities are not listed. Nor is reference made that EPBC Act approval is still outstanding.

Response

Agree. The PSP should outline the EPBC Act-listed values present within the PSP, their known distribution and significance, and the extent of proposed impacts to matters of National Environmental Significance. One significant shortcoming of the PSP and the technical documents that were used to prepare the document is the obvious lack of information pertaining to the total extent (area) of Golden Sun Moth habitat proposed to be impacted by the future development of the Precinct. Based on the location and numbers of Golden Sun Moth provided in the previous ecological assessment (Biosis 2009, 2012, 2015a, 2016) extensive areas of habitat that is known to support the species is likely to be impacted by the future development of the precinct.

It is uncertain whether the total area of Golden Sun Moth habitat proposed to be retained within the Precinct will be satisfactory under the Commonwealth EPBC Act. That is, the Commonwealth Government may request additional areas of suitable Golden Sun Moth habitat to be retained and protected (e.g. areas where large numbers of individual moths have been recorded along the southern boundary of the Precinct, west of the proposed interconnector road). The figure below shows the large number of Golden Sun Moth recorded across the paddock located in the south-western portion of the Precinct, and in the area where the Conservation Reserve is proposed (Figure 2).

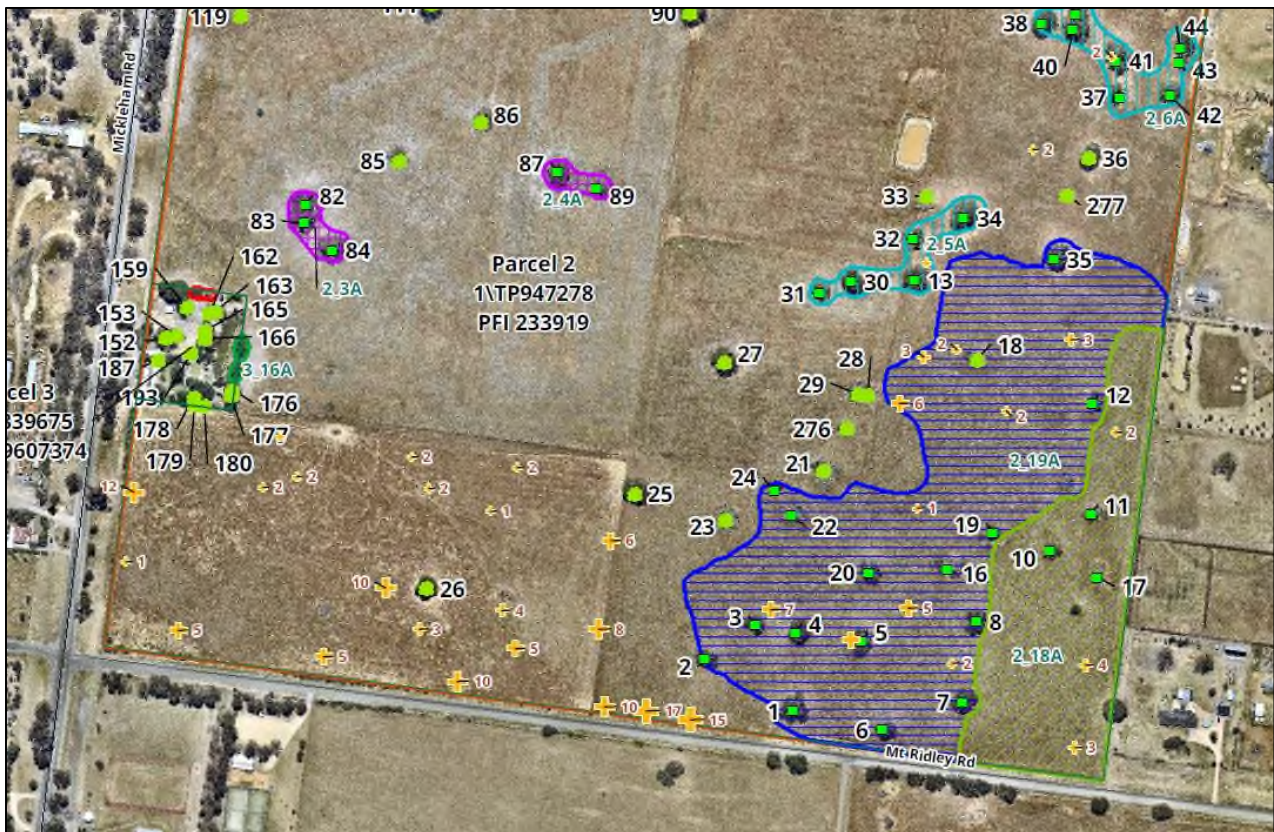


Figure 2. Distribution of Golden Sun Moth recorded within the southern part of the Precinct (orange crosses indicate the location and the number is the total number of moths observed (Biosis 2015b).

As outlined in Biosis (2015b), the proposed removal of all habitat (i.e. 141.75 hectares) within the study area, would result in an offset requirement of 231.8 hectares. However, given that areas of suitable Golden Sun Moth habitat are proposed to be protected in the Conservation Reserve, the offset requirement will be less than the 231.8 hectares. Notwithstanding this, the proposed removal of confirmed Golden Sun Moth habitat has not been formally assessed and approved by the Commonwealth.

Comment 50

Section 5.3 is very difficult to ensure enforcement without the trigger for a planning permit.

Response

Agree. A permit trigger would enable Council to provide guidance relating to tree retention for trees with landscape and amenity value across the precinct.

6.3 Precinct Structure Plan (PSP)

The following Comments 64, 75 and 76 relate to Hume City Council’s submission regarding the PSP and I have provided my responses to these comments.

Comment 64

The discussion about the EPBC Act-listed species and communities and how they are protected and retained is premature in the absence of EPBC Act approval.

Response

Agree. The future development of the Precinct is subject to the Commonwealth Approval under the EPBC Act. A primary consideration for approval under the EPBC Act is whether DoEE considers that The Commonwealth Government may insist on changes to the extent of development and the location and area of retained habitats (e.g. the Conservation Reserve).

Comment 75

Expand the boundary of the conservation reserve to align with changes requested in the submission.

Response

Agree. Consistent with Section 6.1.

Comment 76

Amend Table 1 to include LP-01/LV-12 in the conservation reserve.

Response

Agree. Consistent with Section 6.1.

6.4 Removal of ESOs

The explanatory report for Amendment C205 includes a justification for the ESOs (i.e. ESO5 and ESO11) to be removed as part of the Amendment. These overlays identify areas of environmental significance in relation to River Red-gums and Plains Grassy Woodland. Although these areas have been assessed and are incorporated in proposed Local Parks and the Conservation Reserve along the southern and eastern boundaries of the Precinct, the ESOs should remain as part of the Amendment.

The justification for this is to ensure that there is a suitable trigger for a planning permit to remove any remnant scattered native trees that are situated outside of the protected areas, and therefore providing for a suitable protection mechanism for these trees.

The ESOs should remain across the PSP as if the ESOs were removed there is no incentive or statutory approval trigger for the future developer to submit an application to remove a tree(s). However, it is acknowledged that not all trees that are situated outside of reserves warrant protection due to their relatively low or insignificant ecological values (i.e. immature, trees in poor health), and/or they pose a high public safety risk.

6.4.1 Examples of tree retention in residential development

6.4.1.1 *Epping North Conservation Reserve (Lyndarum Development)*

The Epping North Conservation Reserve is located on Lyndarum Drive, Epping North, and was protected as part of the Lyndarum residential development (Plate 1). The reserve is approximately 14 hectares and has been reserved to protect a large stand of mature River Red-gums and several areas supporting Stony Knoll Shrubland of varying quality. A balance between conservation and development has been achieved by allowing an irregular development edge including a residential pocket essentially surrounded by the reserve. The reserve has a series of formed pedestrian tracks with several interpretative signs where people are able

to be informed and experience the values within the reserve. City of Whittlesea is now responsible for the active management of the reserve.

Plate 1: Epping North Conservation Reserve (Lyndarum Development, Epping North)



There are several other examples where Plains Grassy Woodland/GEWVVP has successfully been incorporated into an urban subdivision within City of Whittlesea and other areas across northern Melbourne, including:

- Mernda Village Estate, Mernda (Plate 2).
- Laurimar Estate, Doreen (Plate 3)
- Renaissance Rise Estate, Mernda (Plate 4)
- Riverstone (Plenty River), Doreen (Plate 5)

Plate 2: Mernda Village Estate, Mernda.



Plate 3: Laurimar Estate, Doreen



Plate 4. Renaissance Rise Estate, Mernda



Plate 5. Riverstone (Plenty River), Doreen



7 CONCLUSION

In summary, I support the extension of the Conservation Reserve to the west to include the HZ2 patch, along with an expansion of the northern boundary of the Reserve to the north to incorporate additional areas of GEWVVP and suitable habitat for Golden Sun Moth (Figure 1).

Scattered remnant trees located outside of the Conservation Reserve, Local Parks and areas identified as Landscape Values should be retained where possible in open space areas. A planning permit or similar mechanism should be adopted, as per the current ESO. Indeed, the wording of the ESO could be incorporated in the NVPP.

With respect to the drainage strategy it is my understanding that there is a desire for passive irrigation of open space areas, primarily to provide for the ongoing health of remnant native vegetation that is present now and in the future. Provided this is managed by a suitably qualified person (either a contractor or council personnel), who has the appropriate experience in the management of Plains Grassy Woodland and other vegetation, then I believe this could potentially be beneficial for the health and long-term persistence and regeneration of remnant native vegetation (in an urban context) throughout the Lindum Value PSP (particularly given the anticipated changes in hydrology).

Finally, the future development of the Precinct is subject to the Commonwealth Approval under the EPBC Act. A primary consideration for approval under the EPBC Act is whether DoEE considers that The Commonwealth Government may insist on changes to the extent of development and the location and area of retained habitats (e.g. the Conservation Reserve).

9 REQUIRED INFORMATION

Name and Address

This report has been prepared by Aaron Organ, Director of Ecology and Heritage Partners, 292 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale, Ph: (03) 9377 0100, aorgan@ehpartners.com.au

Area of Expertise

Aaron Organ is an expert ecologist, with skills in all the major ecological environments of south-eastern Australia. He has particular expertise in the workings of ecological systems, both under natural conditions and when affected by unnatural disturbance regimes such as weed invasion and impacts of development projects. He has also considerable experience in the application and practical implementation of current Commonwealth and State environmental legislation and Government Policy.

Expertise to make the Report

Aaron Organ has considerable knowledge of the native flora and fauna in south eastern Australia, including in areas throughout central Victoria (including throughout east Melbourne). Relevant past experience includes:

- Completed over 500 flora and fauna investigations/assessments.
- Aaron has also prepared over 200 ecological assessment reports for residential development throughout Victoria.
- Completed along with over 100 residential developments.

A selection of past VCAT and Panel appearances include:

- 2017. Proposed retirement development at 527 Stoney Point Road and 182 Wooleys Road, Bittern (VCAT).
- 2015: Amendment C187 to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme. Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP 1070) (Panel).
- 2015: Yaringa Boat Harbour Expansion, Yaringa, Victoria – (Panel)
- 2015: Proposed residential development at 134-166 Aspinall Street, Golden Square, Victoria – (VCAT)
- 2015: Amended Permit Associated with the use and development of the land for the purpose of a Place of Worship – 171 – 197 Harkness Road, Melton West, Victoria – (VCAT).
- 2014: Proposed Development Plan Overlay and Planning Permit Applications for a Proposed Residential Development at 370A Riddell Road, Sunbury, Victoria – (VCAT).
- 2014: Kilmore – Wallan Bypass – (Panel).
- 2014. Proposed residential development at 107 Gipps Street, Port Fairy (VCAT)

- 2014: NBN Fixed Wireless Telecommunications Facility at 49D Eddy Avenue, Mt Helen, Victoria – Clayton Utz Lawyers (VCAT)
- 2014: Proposed residential development at 10 Fullarton Drive, Paynesville, Victoria – Hall & Wilcox Pty Ltd (VCAT)
- 2013: Statement of Expert Evidence: 1 Hobbs Road Wyndham Vale, Victoria. Amendment C171 - Ballan Road Precinct Structure Plan (PSP 40)
- 2013: Statement of Expert Evidence: Review of time stamped data for Amendment C172 - Ballan Road, Wyndham Vale (PSP 92)
- 2013: Statement of Expert Evidence: 305-315 Craigieburn Road East, Wollert, Victoria. Wollert Developments Pty Ltd. (VCAT)
- 2013: Proposed Planning Scheme Amendment C164 - 275 Racecourse Road, Sunbury – Hume City Council (Panel).
- 2013: Western Highway Duplication - Section 3, Ararat to Stawell, Victoria – DLA Phillip Piper (Panel).
- 2013: Cherry Tree Wind Farm – Maddocks Lawyers (VCAT).
- 2012: Western Highway Duplication - Section 2, Beaufort to Ararat, Victoria – DLA Phillip Piper (Panel).
- 2012: Proposed Peninsula Link Freeway Service Centres, 83 Sages Road Baxter, Victoria – Rigby Cook Lawyers Pty Ltd (VCAT)
- 2011: Western Highway Duplication - Section 1, Burrumbeet to Beaufort, Victoria – DLA Phillip Fox (Panel)
- 2011: Old Warrandyte Road, flora and fauna review and Panel hearing, Donvale – Norton Rose Australia Pty Ltd. (Panel)
- 2010: Marquands Road and Leakes Road (Lot 9), Truganina, Truganina South Precinct Structure Plan – Stockland (Panel)
- 2010: Proposed Eastern Golf Course relocation to ‘Windsor Park’, 215–217 Victoria Road, Yering, Victoria – for Best Hooper (VCAT)
- 2010: Truganina South Community Precinct Structure Plan – for Central Equity and Stockland Limited (Panel)
- 2010: Craigieburn R2 Precinct Structure Plan – for Peet Limited (Panel)
- 2010: Proposed Mortlake Wind Farm – for Accionia Oceania Limited (Panel)
- 2009: Grenda Vehicle Storage Depot, Springvale Road, Keysborough - for Urbis Pty. Ltd. (VCAT)
- 2009: 1280 Boneo Road, Cape Schanck, development a proposed barn – for Hansen Planning Services (VCAT)
- 2008: Donald Mineral Sands Panel and associated works. Donald Mineral Sands project (Panel)
- 2009: Melton Planning Scheme Amendment C65 – 489-555 Robinsons Road South Precinct (Marksx Property), Truganina (Panel)

- 2008: Amendment C88 to the Bass Coast Shire Planning Scheme - Silverleaves, Phillip Island (Panel)
- 2008: proposed residential subdivision at 30-80 Seymour Road, Viewbank – for local landowner (VCAT)
- 2008: Proposed medium density development located on the corner of 1587-1589 Point Nepean Road and 1-1A Chatfield Avenue, Rosebud – for Fulcrum Town Planning Pty. Ltd. (VCAT)
- 2008: Residential development at 2 Rowe Street, Alphington – for Rob Wignall Architects (VCAT)
- 2008: Officer Service Centres, Officer – for Clayton UTZ Pty. Ltd. (VCAT)
- 2007: Anglesea Golf Club proposed Amendment C32 – for TGM Group Pty. Ltd. (Panel)
- 2007: Medium density housing at 2 Ramptons Road, Eltham – for Nillimbik Shire Council (VCAT)
- 2007: Medium density unit development in Frankston (adjacent to Kananook Creek) – for Gary Testro Lawyer (VCAT)
- 2007: Single dwelling development at 683 Great Ocean Road, Eastern Views, Victoria – for SJB Planning Pty. Ltd (VCAT)
- 2006: Construction of a dwelling at 8 Charlotte Court, Warrandyte - for Glossop Town Planning Pty. Ltd. (VCAT)
- 2005: Dollar Wind Farm, Gippsland – for Freehills Lawyers (Panel)

Author's Declaration

I, Aaron Organ, have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Tribunal.



----- Date: 12/02/2018

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