



spiire

**CRAIGIEBURN WEST**  
**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**  
**FEBRUARY 2019**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the existing landscape character of the Craigieburn West Precinct which abuts the western edge of Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and is the 'last piece' with PSPs already developed for adjacent sites to the north, south and east.

The report identifies and describes landscape characteristics and views within the precinct. A key objective of the report is to provide recommendations as to how these features might be considered to ensure retention and integration into future development to preserve local identity and establish a strong sense of place.

Four landscape characters have been identified in the study area to provide a broad visual character assessment of the Craigieburn West Precinct:

- ▶ Open Grassy Plains
- ▶ Hills and Valleys
- ▶ Waterways and Water bodies
- ▶ Remnant Vegetation/Conservation Planting

These character areas have been defined using a combination of onsite analysis and visual inspection by a Registered Landscape Architect combined with desk top review of data, site contours and aerial photography.

An evaluation of key viewing locations and view lines was undertaken to understand how the visual landscape character is viewed and experienced by residents both

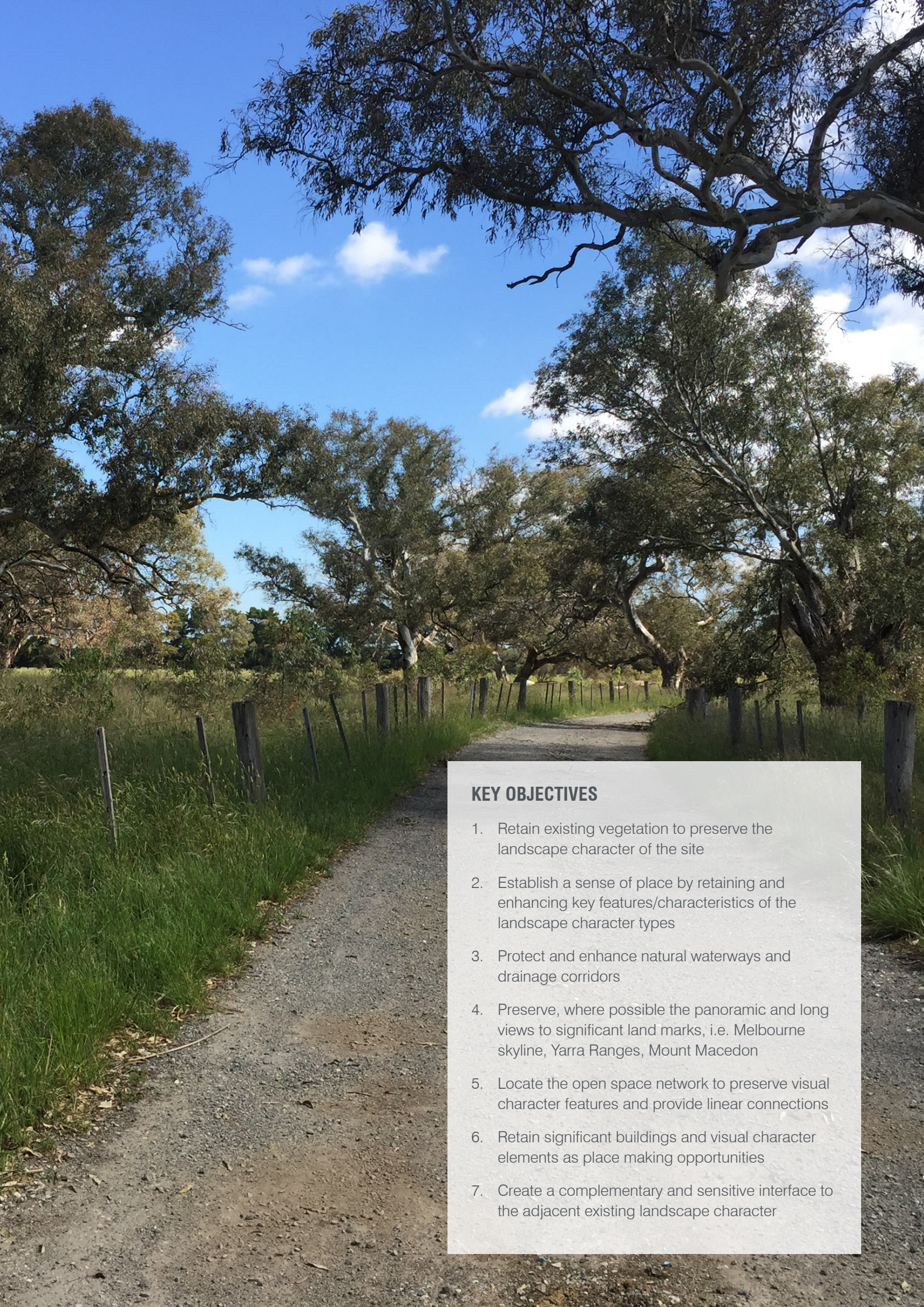
current and future, motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. Several significant views were identified including long views to the Yarra Ranges to the east and the Melbourne skyline to the south.

The Craigieburn West Precinct is the edge of the Craigieburn growth front and is bordered by the western edge of Melbourne's UGB. How this interface or 'edge' is treated will be an important consideration for the planning and urban design of this precinct. Maintaining some vestige of the existing semi rural character of the site will be essential to minimise the impact of new development on the existing rural landscape to the west. An important consideration in developing recommendations for the site is how these 'edges' once developed will interface with the adjacent rural landscape character to ensure a sensitive well integrated outcome.

Opportunities and constraints were identified and considered in the development of recommendations along with local case studies that provide examples of successful retention and incorporation of existing landscape character features into urban development.

A number of objectives were developed to facilitate the retention and preservation of the landscape character of the Craigieburn West Precinct. A series of recommendations have been developed for inclusion in the PSP to provide a means of achieving these objectives.





## KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Retain existing vegetation to preserve the landscape character of the site
2. Establish a sense of place by retaining and enhancing key features/characteristics of the landscape character types
3. Protect and enhance natural waterways and drainage corridors
4. Preserve, where possible the panoramic and long views to significant land marks, i.e. Melbourne skyline, Yarra Ranges, Mount Macedon
5. Locate the open space network to preserve visual character features and provide linear connections
6. Retain significant buildings and visual character elements as place making opportunities
7. Create a complementary and sensitive interface to the adjacent existing landscape character



# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide a Landscape Assessment to inform the Craigieburn West Precinct Structure Plan (PSP 1068). The findings will promote a unified approach to landscape planning, design and management effectively linking recommendations for landscape character and visual amenity to existing planning policies, and influencing future planning policy and subsequent development.

The Craigieburn West Precinct abuts the western edge of Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and is the 'last piece' with PSPs already developed for adjacent sites to the north, south and east. An important objective of this report is to provide recommendations for urban design outcomes that enable sensitive integration with the adjacent rural landscape character to the west.

This report provides an overview of the existing landscape and visual environment, and identifies and describes key landscape characteristics and views within the precinct. A key objective of the report is to provide recommendations as to how these features might be considered to ensure future development maintains a high-quality landscape and establishes a strong sense of place.

The methodology used in the development of this report included:

- ▶ A site inspection and field analysis
- ▶ A photographic record
- ▶ An existing landscape conditions plans
- ▶ A site analysis and descriptions of landscape character
- ▶ Identification of key views and vantage points
- ▶ An opportunity and constraint assessment
- ▶ Review of relevant local case studies which have

successfully incorporated desired visual character elements into an urban context

- ▶ Recommendations for requirements and guidelines for inclusion into the PSP to achieve the objectives.

A number of assumptions and limitations are associated with this assessment. These include:

- ▶ The report is based on the information available for the project at the time of writing, December 2018.
- ▶ Baseline conditions were confirmed in the field during the site survey.
- ▶ The assessment process aims to be objective and describe the landscape factually. Assessment requires qualitative (subjective) judgements to be made. The conclusions of this assessment therefore combine objective measurement and professional interpretation.





VIEW FROM LOT 39 TOWARDS THE CITY



# CONTEXT

The study area comprises the Craigieburn West Precinct in the City of Hume. The precinct is located approx. 30km north-west of Melbourne's CBD, and 4 km west of Craigieburn central. The precinct is located within the northern growth corridor, and covers an area of 564 hectares at the edge of Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary.

The study area is located to the west of the Craigieburn growth front between Mt Ridley Road to the north, Mickleham Road to the west and Frontier Avenue to the south. Mickleham Road runs from Donnybrook Road to the north and connects to the Western Ring Road at its most southern point. Mickleham Road acts as a major connection for local residents to the city.



Figure 1. Study Area plan





Figure 2. Study Area plan

# METHODOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

There is no formal or legislated guidance on the assessment of landscape character specific to Victoria. Therefore this assessment is based on the method for landscape visual planning outlined in '*Visual Landscape Planning in Western Australia: A manual for evaluation, assessment, siting and design*'.

## DESKTOP STUDY

The desktop study included a review of relevant published documents in relation to landscape conditions and visual amenity at a state, regional and local level for the Study Area.

The following data sets were reviewed:

- ▶ Aerial photography
- ▶ Topographic maps with contours at 1m
- ▶ Road networks
- ▶ Cadastral
- ▶ Water courses
- ▶ Local Government Area (LGA) boundaries
- ▶ Adjacent Precinct Structure Plans including:
  - ▶ Craigieburn\_R2\_PSP
  - ▶ Lindum Vale FUS
  - ▶ Greenvale North\_R1\_PSP

The Policies, Strategies and Reports reviewed for this report include:

- ▶ North Growth Corridor Plan, Growth Area Authority (2012)
- ▶ Plan Melbourne 2017-2050, Victorian State Government (2017)

- ▶ Hume Corridor Integrated Growth Area Plan (HIGAP) Infrastructure and Delivery Strategy (2015)
- ▶ Hume Horizons 2040 Community Plan (2014)
- ▶ Hume Council Plan 2017-2021
- ▶ Melbourne Strategic Assessment Program, Dept Environment Land Water and Planning, (2018)
- ▶ Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors, Dept Environment and Primary Industries (2013)

## SITE SURVEY

The site survey was undertaken over four days in November and December 2018. During the site survey, a Registered Landscape Architect viewed the Study Area from all accessible roads as well as traversing each of the landscape character areas on foot to verify, validate and complement the desktop analysis. Photographs were taken at key locations.

The site survey was undertaken to:

- ▶ Characterise the landscape
- ▶ Verify and ground truth the desktop study
- ▶ Photographically record the Study Area
- ▶ Record landscape areas and / or views / view corridors of value to the area, and;
- ▶ Observe and document how the landscape may be viewed.



## DEFINING THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER UNITS

Landscape Character Units (LCUs) form the basis for describing the landscape character of the Study Area. LCUs are considered to be common landscape types defined by typical features and characteristics.

LCU's were identified through a study of key landscape character elements including landform, water form, vegetation and land use, as well as a field survey. Landscape categorisation was also informed by a review of information gathered during the desktop study and the site survey.

## SELECTION OF VIEWPOINTS

Key viewpoint locations were identified, recorded and photographed. Viewpoints were chosen to represent a range of typical views possible from that locality. In addition, the viewpoints were selected to:

- ▶ Represent views of particular landscape and /or visual feature/s of importance, and;
- ▶ Represent views from key visual receptors (existing residents, community facilities and road users).

## RELEVANT CASE STUDIES

Several relevant local case studies were reviewed and summarised in a later version of this report that demonstrate incorporation of desired landscape character elements within an urban context.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF IMAGE AND CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

Image and character objectives, which relate to the identified landscape character and are informed by the issues/opportunities, will be established. These objectives will describe the desired outcome to be achieved once the site is developed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for inclusion in the PSP have been developed to achieve the objectives based on the following:

- ▶ Site analysis
- ▶ The opportunities and constraints identified
- ▶ Analysis of GIS data including site contours and aerial photography
- ▶ Review of both State and Local Government Strategic Plans and Policies

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## OVERVIEW

The following section provides an overview of the existing conditions within the Study Area including: land use, land form, recreation facilities, potential cultural heritage, vegetation, geology, hydrology, slope, views and landscape character.

## LAND USE

The site is predominately semi rural comprising agricultural farmland, mainly for grazing and rural living. The land to the north is currently farmland, (although subject to the Lindum Vale PSP). The land to the east is developed and/or developing residential. The land to the west is rural farmland and outside the Melbourne Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

The Aitken Hill Conference and Events Centre is located in the south-east corner of the site.

## VEGETATION

The predominant vegetation within the study area is consistent with Plains Grassy Woodlands and Lighter Soils Plains Grassland Ecological Vegetation Classes, although species composition appears highly modified. This would need to be confirmed by Ecological Assessment.

Scattered remnant *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum), *Eucalyptus melliodora* (Yellow Box) and *Eucalyptus ovata* (Swamp Gum) exist throughout the site. *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* is the most dominant species and makes up almost 75% of the high and very high retention value trees, as identified in the Arborists Report. These trees make a significant contribution to the visual landscape character and often have both ecological and cultural significance.

The Mickleham Road Avenue of Honour extends along a portion of the north west edge of the site and consists of mixed *Eucalyptus* species. These well established trees contribute to the visual amenity of the road corridor.

Windrows and planted fencelines exist throughout the site consisting of both native species and exotic cypress trees typical of rural landscapes throughout southern Victoria.

A large area already identified for conservation exists in the northern portion of the site. Just to the south of this is a significant grove of established trees which potentially could be identified for conservation pending a Flora and Fauna study. These trees provide their own unique landscape character.

Significant native revegetation planting exists along the creek line in the south of the site.

The Aitken Hill Conference Centre site at Lot 20 Dunhelen Lane, hosts a large number of mature trees both native and exotic.

## WATER FORM

The Aitken Creek traverses the site from the north east to the south east with two additional creek tributaries forming part of the Merri Creek catchment, which forms part of the Yarra River catchment. The Aitken Creek is an ephemeral creek and for much of the alignment is little more than a depression in the ground and therefore has little visual presence.

Yuroke Creek runs south from the base of Aitken Hill to the Greenvale Reservoir.

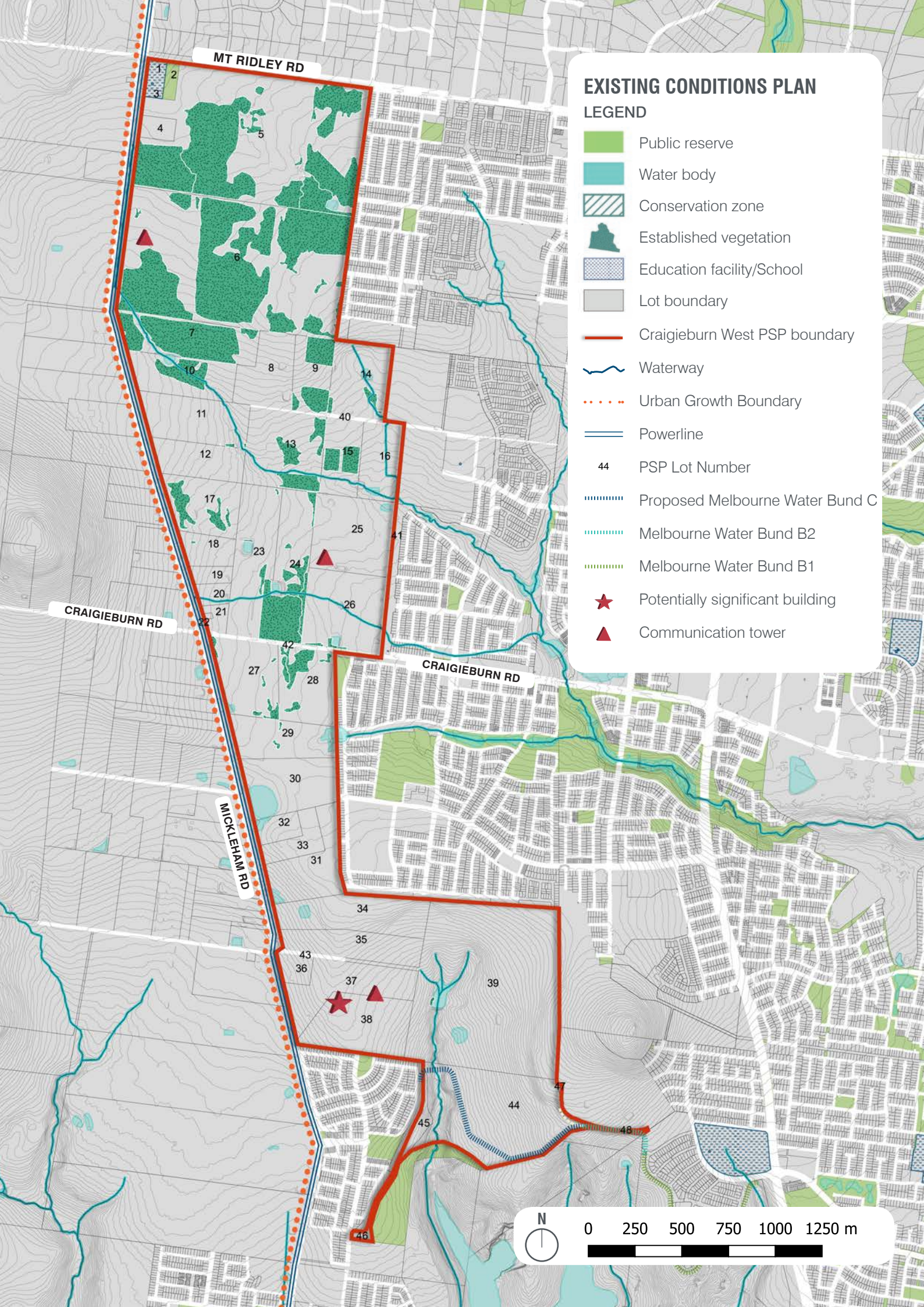
A number of scattered water bodies in the form of agricultural dams exist throughout the site, some of which are located along the Aitken and Yuroke Creek alignments.



## EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN

### LEGEND

- Public reserve
- Water body
- Conservation zone
- Established vegetation
- Education facility/School
- Lot boundary
- Craigieburn West PSP boundary
- Waterway
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Powerline
- 44 PSP Lot Number
- Proposed Melbourne Water Bund C
- Melbourne Water Bund B2
- Melbourne Water Bund B1
- Potentially significant building
- Communication tower





## VERTICAL ELEMENTS

A number of communication towers exist on the site. The nature of the visually exposed flat plains results in these towers being quite prominent.

Overhead power lines run adjacent to Mickleham Road along the western edge of the site. The avenue of honour and roadside vegetation contribute to reducing the visual prominence of the power lines.

## SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

A number of significant old farm buildings exist on the site which may have heritage value and contribute to the existing rural character of the site.

## GEOLOGY AND SLOPE ANALYSIS

The land form of the Study Area is generally consistent with that of the Victorian Volcanic Plains Bioregion and is predominately flat to gently undulating with irregular scatterings of rocky outcrops and exposed surface rock.

An understanding of the surface geology provides an appreciation of the processes which have created the land form of the Study Area and supports the landscape character descriptions of this area, including grassy plains and rocky outcrops.

Figure 4 provides an analysis of the slope/topography of the site, identifying ridge lines and high points. The map illustrates that the site is predominately flat with a slope of less than 8% across the majority of the site.

A small ridge line exists to the north of Aitken Creek on the eastern side of the site and two more significant ridge lines exist in the southern portion of the site, as shown in Figure 4.

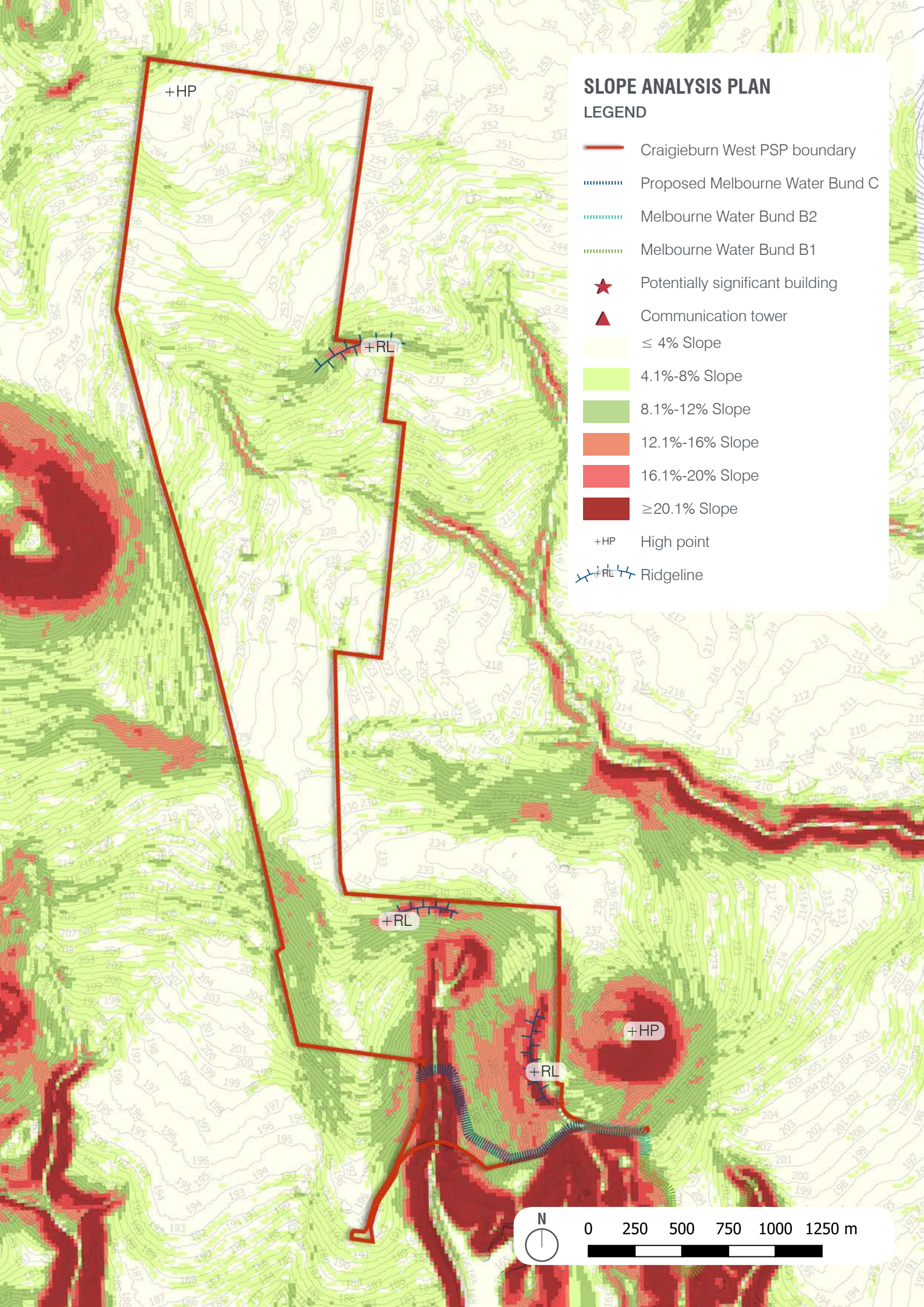
Steeper gradients are generally located in the south east corner of the site where the steep, sloped hills are punctuated by a deep waterway running north-south toward Greenvale Reservoir.

## RESERVOIR BUNDS

The Greenvale Reservoir is immediately south of the site and supplies water to the the north-western and western suburbs of Melbourne. Due to the proximity of development to the Greenvale Reservoir a series of bunds have been designed and are currently under construction to protect the quality of the water in the reservoir. The location of these bunds is shown on Figure 3.

The bunds are a series of earthen embankments designed to provide a permanent structure capable of protecting the Greenvale Reservoir from stormwater entry up to approximately a one in one million year flood event from developed catchments upstream of the Reservoir.







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# LANDSCAPE CHARACTERS

## INTRODUCTION

The broad landscape character of the site is predominantly semi rural lifestyle blocks with a suburban edge, consistent with the existing and past use of the land being dominated by agricultural and hobby farming activities.

The majority of the site is visually exposed flat land form with few outstanding landscape features other than vegetation in the form of scattered trees, River Red Gums, and windrows/fenceline planting. The southern portion of the site is more topographically interesting with sloping landforms that provide long views toward the Greenvale Reservoir and the Melbourne skyline.

Four landscape characters have been identified in the study area to provide a broad visual character assessment of the Craigieburn West Precinct. For the purpose of this report these have been named:

- ▶ Open Grassy Plains
- ▶ Hills and Valleys
- ▶ Waterways and Water bodies
- ▶ Remnant Vegetation/Conservation Planting

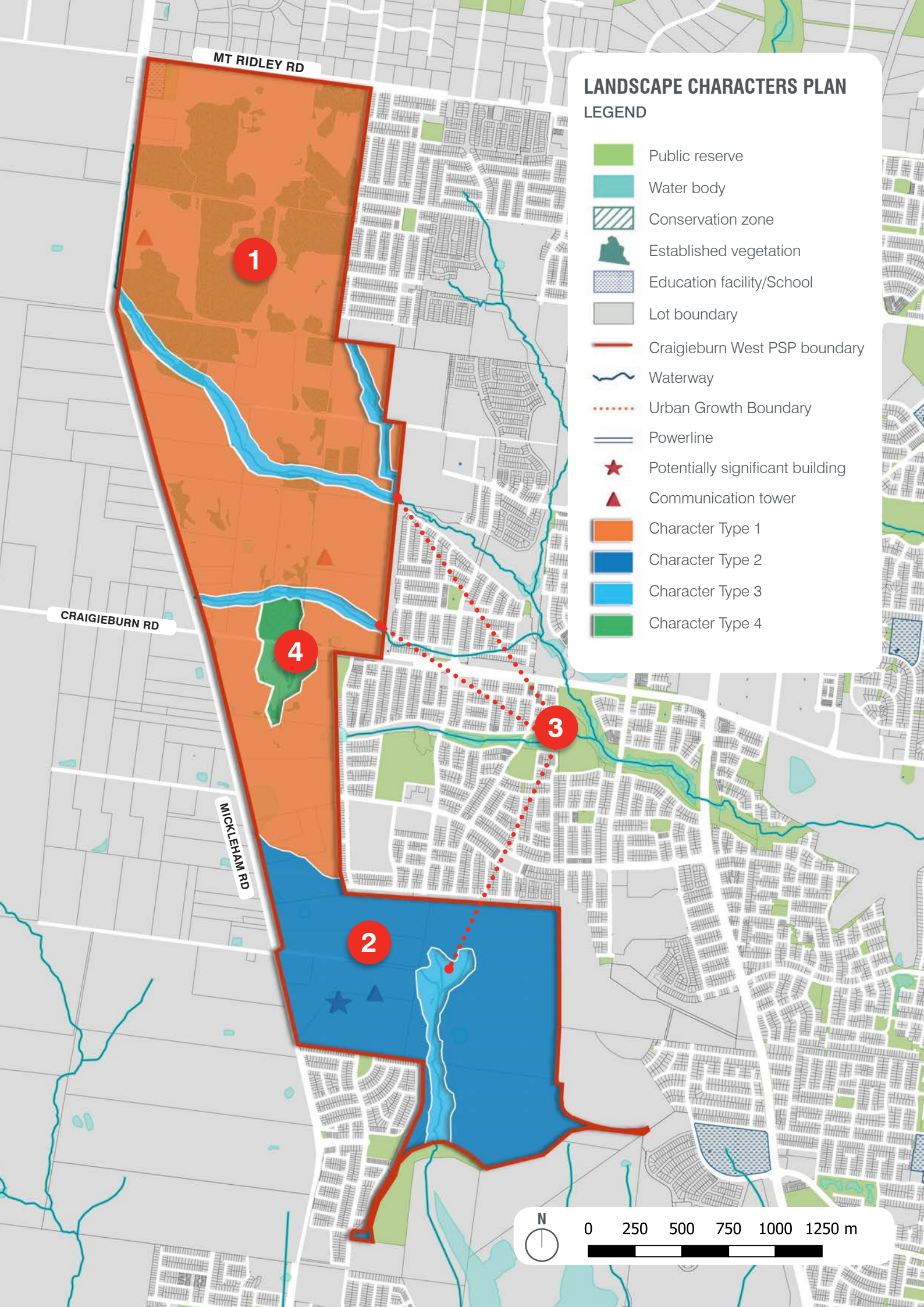
These character areas have been defined using a combination of onsite analysis and visual inspection by a Registered Landscape Architect combined with desk top review of data, site contours and aerial photography. The outline of these character areas has been based on natural features rather than property boundaries.

The following pages describe the attributes of each landscape character area.

# LANDSCAPE CHARACTERS PLAN

## LEGEND

- Public reserve
- Water body
- Conservation zone
- Established vegetation
- Education facility/School
- Lot boundary
- Craigieburn West PSP boundary
- Waterway
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Powerline
- Potentially significant building
- Communication tower
- Character Type 1
- Character Type 2
- Character Type 3
- Character Type 4





## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 01 - OPEN GRASSY PLAINS

This landscape type is typified by rural living, non-urban landscape that has been substantially modified, primarily for agriculture.

- ▶ Relatively flat, open pasture land. The eastern boundary is enclosed by recent residential developments.
- ▶ Large cleared expanses are particularly exposed to sun and wind.
- ▶ The western edge is bound by Mickleham Road.
- ▶ Scattered remnant *E. camaldulensis* (River Red Gums). Some individual tree specimens have high visual interest due to their notable scale, form and habit.
- ▶ Irregular scattering of rocky outcrops and exposed surface rock.

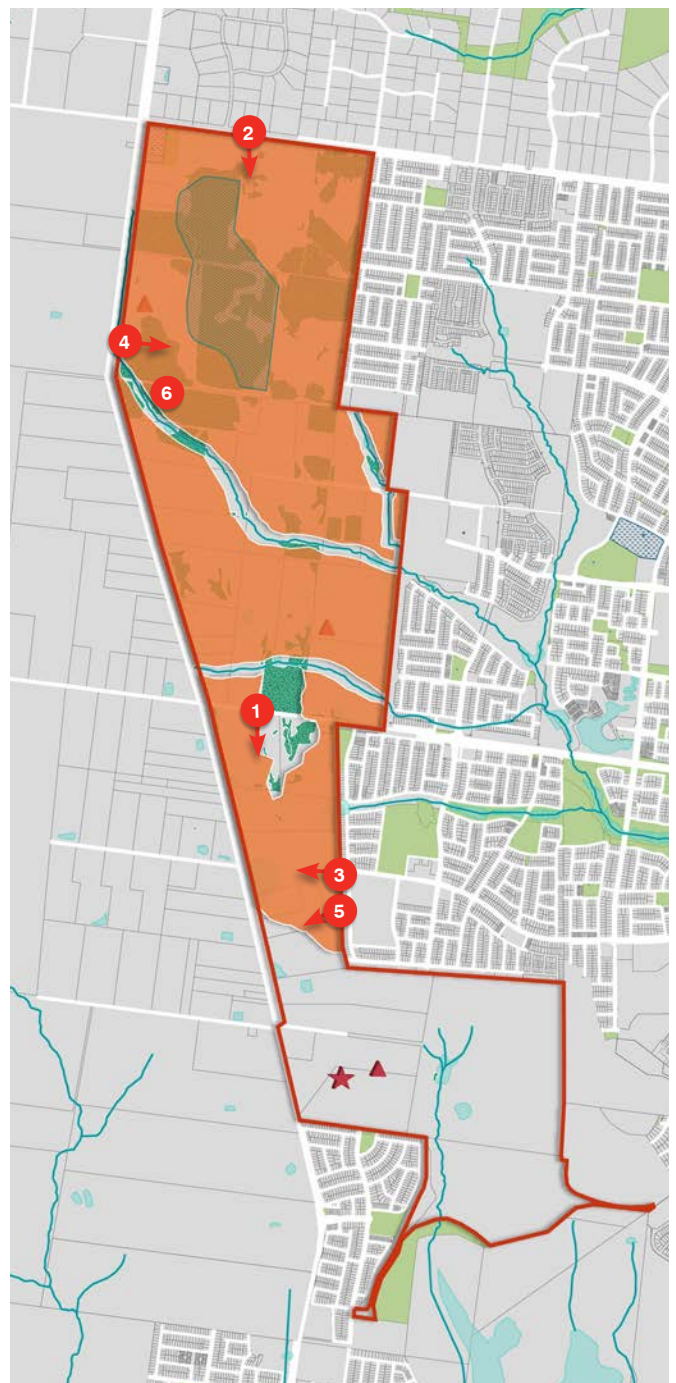


Figure 6. Landscape Character 01 plan





Image No 1. Typical *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum). Image taken from Craigieburn Road roadside of Lot 27 looking South



Image No 2. Typical pasture grass area with large *E. camaldulensis* specimens scattered throughout. Image taken from Mt Ridley Road looking South



Image No 3. Existing agricultural paddocks and windrow. Taken from Elevation Boulevard looking west Lot 30



Image No 4. Grassy Plain with rocky outcrops. Taken from Mickleham Road looking east into Lot 6

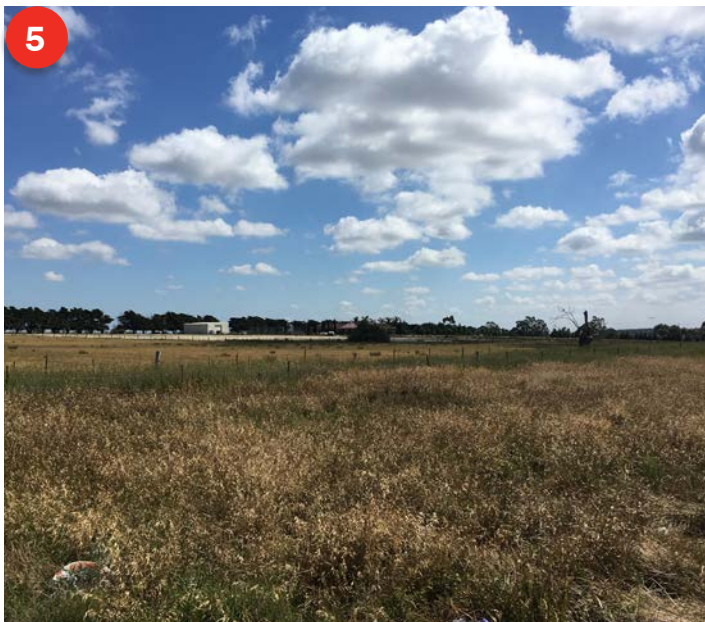


Image No 5. Grassy Plain. Taken from Elevation Boulevard looking south west into Lot 31



Image No 6. Rocky outcrop. Image taken from within Lot 7 Mickleham Road



## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 02 - HILLS AND VALLEYS

This character is typified by rolling hills and deep valleys.

- ▶ Undulating landforms of predominantly cleared pasture lands.
- ▶ Deeper valleys that exhibit notable changes in vegetation species composition, with several areas of native re-vegetation.
- ▶ Aitken Hill Conference Centre with a highly modified landscape incorporating many well establish trees and manicured lawns and gardens.
- ▶ Significant old farm buildings and infrastructure such as stockyards.

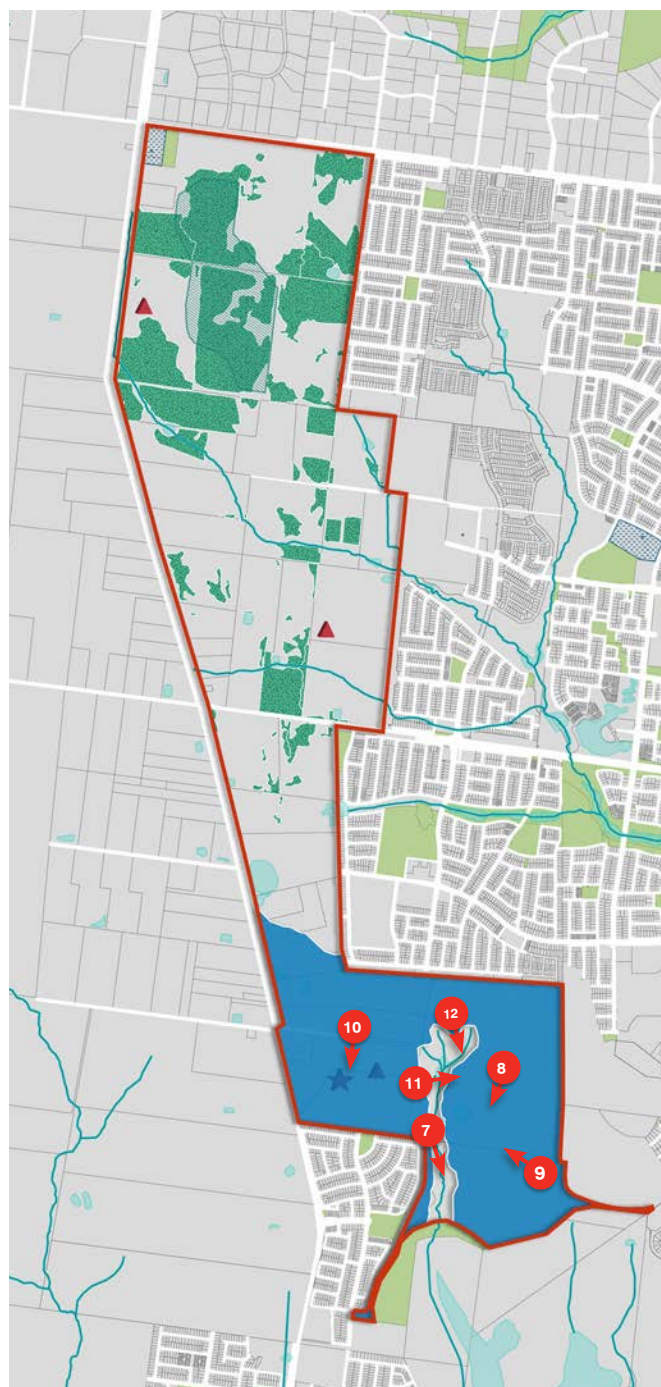


Figure 7. Landscape Character 02 plan





Image No 7. View of Yuroke Creek. Taken from Northern edge of Lot 44 looking south



Image No 8. Hill top view looking over Yuroke Creek. Taken from within Lot 39 Dunhelen Lane looking south



Image No 9. Hill top view. Taken from within Lot 44 looking north west



Image No 10. Old farm buildings. Taken from within Lot 37 looking south



Image No 11. Steep slope. Taken from southern portion of Lot 39 near Yuroke creek.



Image No 12. Steep gully. Taken from within Lot 39 looking south



## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 03 - WATERWAYS AND WATER BODIES

This character type is typified by the natural waterways on the site and the man-made dams mostly used for farming purposes.

- ▶ The ephemeral Aitken Creek channel, only distinguishable from its surrounds by the slightly darker green vegetation that runs along its length (refer image 18).
- ▶ Dams constructed for farming purposes scattered throughout the site.
- ▶ A number of dams along the Aitken Creek alignment which may contribute to the lack of water within its alignment.
- ▶ Yuroke Creek running in a north south direction on the southern portion of the site, with a large portion of this waterway having been re-vegetated with native species.
- ▶ A picturesque dam flanked by mature trees exists on Lot 39 (refer image 17).

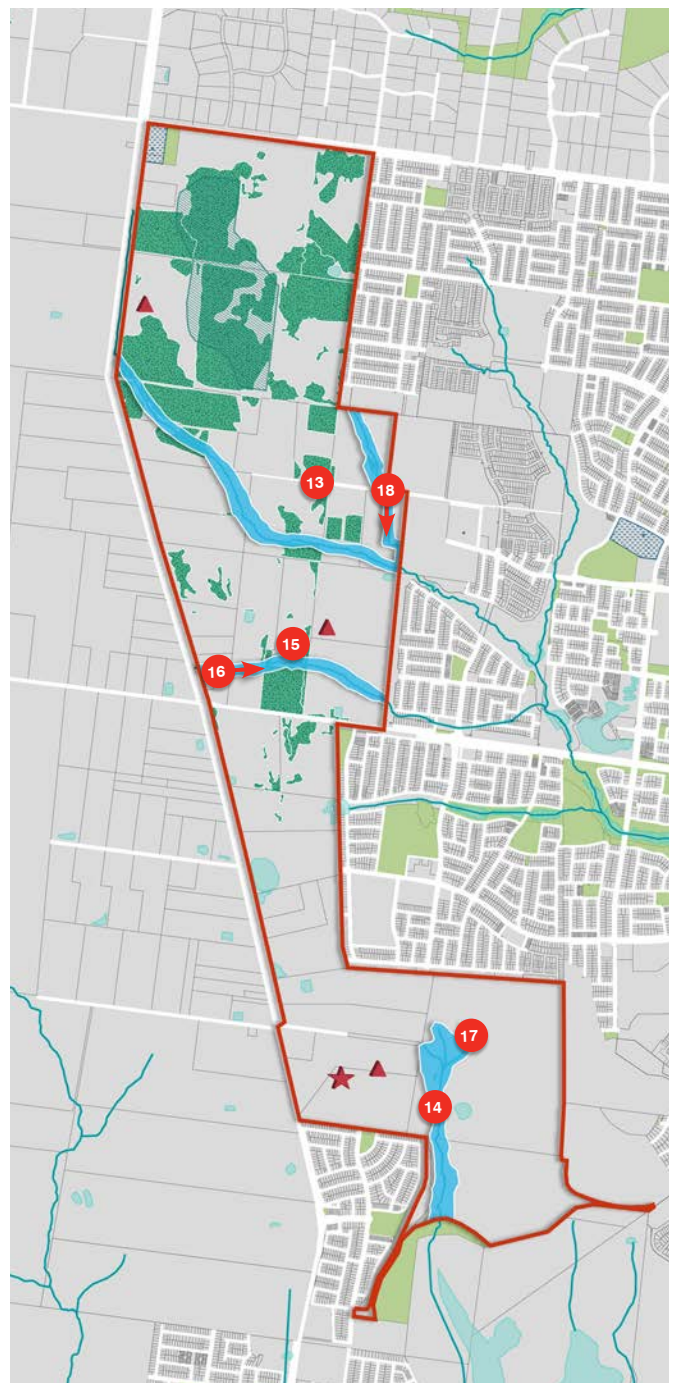


Figure 8. Landscape Character 03 plan





Image No 13. Man-made rock embankment and small dam. Image taken from Olivers Rd looking South into Lot 13



Image No 14. Larger dam along Yuroke Creek in Lot 44 with exotic vegetation species. Image taken from Yuroke Creek looking South



Image No 15. Large dam still in use for farming purposes. Taken from within Lot 24 looking North-East



Image No 16. Aitken creek is reduced to a small depression. Image taken from Lot 20 looking East.



Image No 18. Aitken creek only recognisable by the darker green vegetation. Image taken from Olivers Rd looking South into Lot 16



## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 04 - REMNANT VEGETATION/CONSERVATION/ REVEGETATION

Overall the study area is typified by sparse scatterings of trees with occasional groupings, however there are some areas, such as north of Craigieburn Road that exhibit more dominant and dense plantings of *Eucalyptus* species.

- ▶ Appearance of remnant grassy woodland species composition. The absence of mid-story vegetation highlights the textured trunks and scale of the densely planted area.
- ▶ Culturally significant trees in the form of an Avenue of Honour are planted along a section of Mickleham Road.
- ▶ Windrows and fence line plantings typical of boundary plantings in Victoria.
- ▶ Notable re-vegetation efforts along Yuroke Creek.
- ▶ Several fencelines planted with mature windrows. The windrows add verticality to the otherwise relatively flat site.

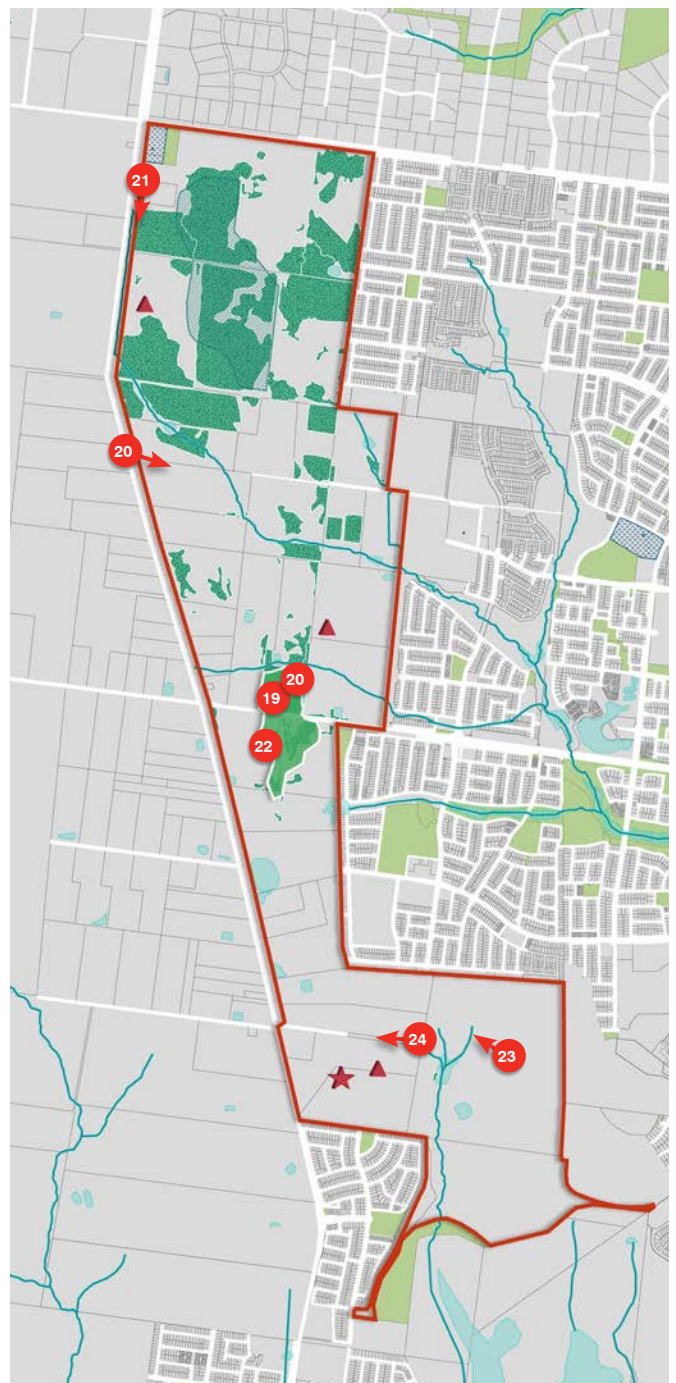


Figure 9. Landscape Character 04 plan



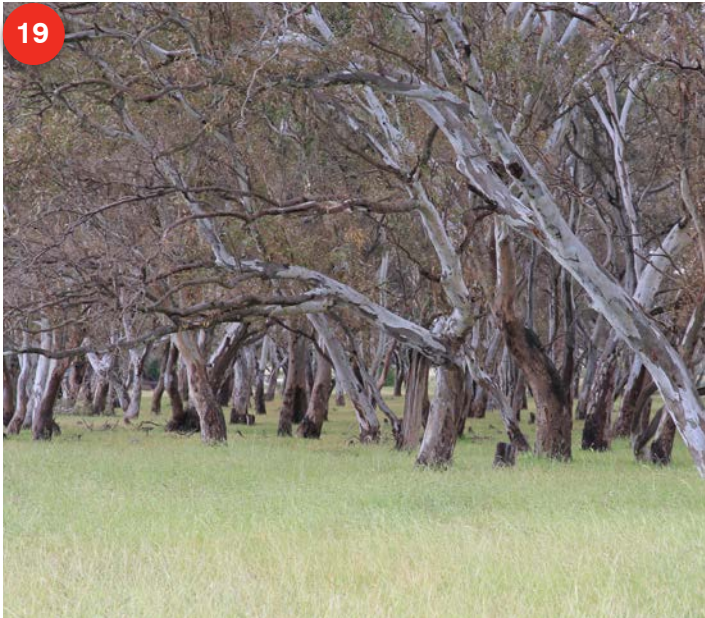


Image No 19. Dense cluster of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum). Taken from within Lot 24 looking North-East



Image No 20. Cypress windrow typical of the area. Taken from Lot 10 Mickleham Road looking East



Image No 21. Avenue of Honour. Image taken from Mickleham Road road reserve looking South

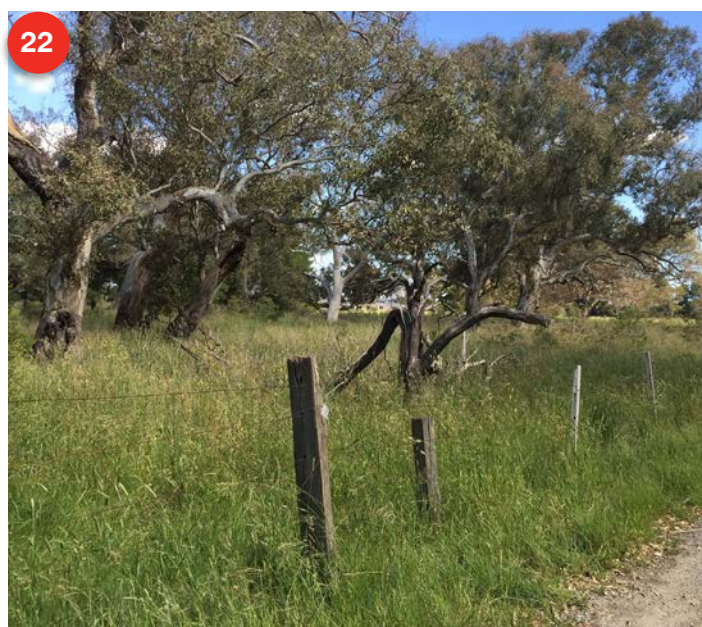


Image No 22. Regeneration of grasses after stock removal. Image taken from Craigieburn Road looking South into Lot 28



Image No 23. Remnant fence line planting. Taken from within Lot 39 looking west

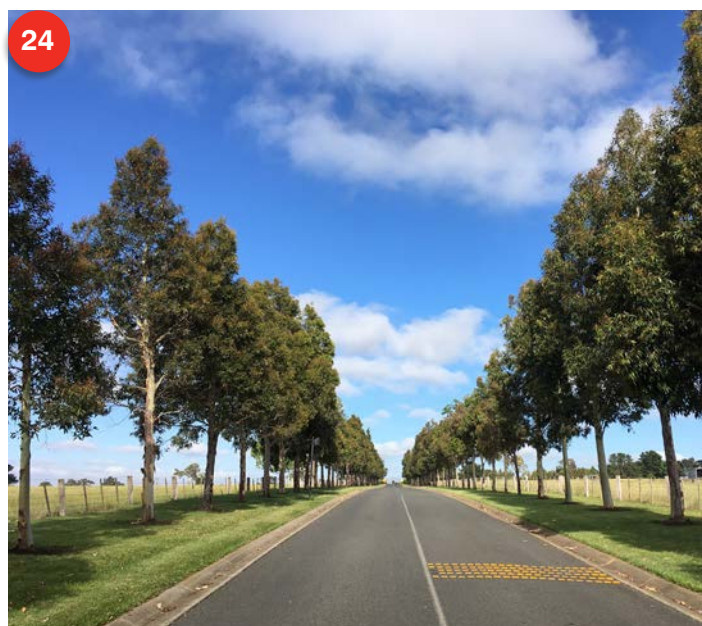


Image No 24. Significant avenue of trees. Taken from within Lot 39 looking west



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## KEY VIEWS AND VIEW LINES

An evaluation of key viewing locations and view lines was undertaken to understand how the visual landscape character is viewed and experienced by residents both current and future, motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Several view locations were identified providing long views to the Yarra Ranges to the east and the Melbourne skyline to the south.

More localised views were also identified including framed canopy views along Mickleham Road, and treed rural driveways.














Views to the existing urban fabric detract rather than add to the landscape character of the site and consideration should be given to how these views are reduced rather than retained.

In the southern portion of the site the land slopes significantly providing long views to the south to the Melbourne skyline and glimpses of the Greenvale Reservoir.



## KEY VIEWS & VIEWLINES PLAN

### LEGEND

-  Public reserve
-  Water body
-  Conservation zone
-  Established vegetation
-  Education facility/School
-  Lot boundary
-  Craigieburn West PSP boundary
-  Waterway
-  Urban Growth Boundary
-  Powerline
-  PSP Lot Number
-  Potentially significant building
-  Communication tower





## VIEW TO CBD

Views to the city can be highly valued by communities as they provide a connection to the CBD. These views can be particularly interesting at night. At the southern portion of the site the land falls steeply away permitting substantial views to the reservoir and the Melbourne CBD skyline.



**Image No 25 - View to Melbourne CBD and Greenvale Reservoir**

Direction- Facing south from Lot 44 (investigation area)

View - Long range uninterrupted view to the city.



**Image No 26 - Melbourne CBD and Greenvale Reservoir**

Direction- Facing south-east from Scenery Drive at Aston Estate

View - long range view to the city partially obscured by dense planting in middle-ground and Comms tower.



**Image No 27 - View to Melbourne CBD**

Direction- Facing south from Dunhelen Lane

View - Long range view to the city heavily obscured by farm sheds and large trees in the middle ground.



**Image No 28 - Long View to Melbourne CBD**

Direction- Facing south from within Lot 20 Dunhelen Lane

View - Long range view to the city looking over Greenvale Reservoir.



## VIEWS TO AIKEN HILL

Aiken Hill is a local landmark and can be seen from multiple positions throughout the site. Aiken Hill is topographically distinct from the surrounding flat plains.



**Image No 29 - View to Aitken Hill**

Direction- Facing east from Dunhelen Lane

View - Clear view across flat plains to Aitken Hill.



**Image No 30 - View to Aitken Hill**

Direction- Facing south east from Olivers Rd

View - Clear view across flat plains to Aitken Hill.



**Image No 31 - View to Aitken Hill**

Direction- Looking north east from Lot 47 (investigation area)

View - Clear view across flat plains to Aitken Hill.



## VIEWS TO REGIONAL LANDMARKS

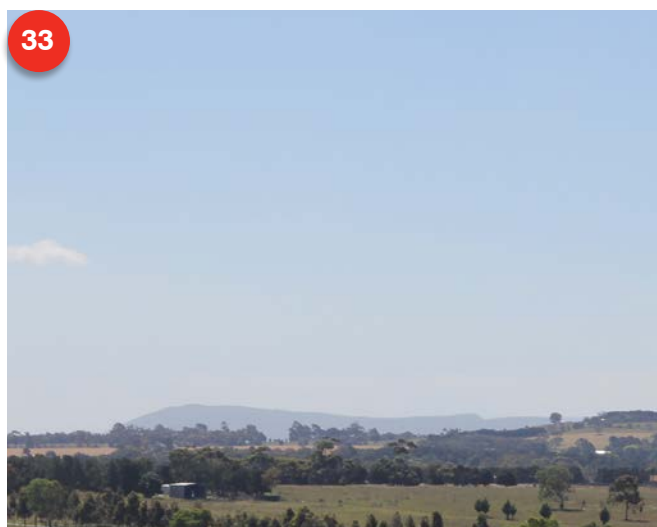
The site offers views to various mountain ranges of the region including the Pyrete Range, Mount Macedon and the Yarra Ranges. These views are generally obtained from elevated positions and form the background of a panoramic view.



**Image No 32 - Yarra Ranges**

Direction- Facing north from Mt Ridley Rd

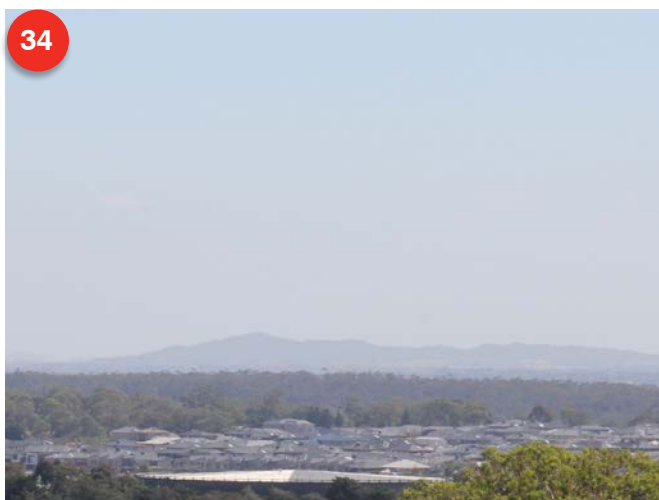
View - Long view of the Yarra Ranges in the distance



**Image No 33 - Mount Macedon**

Direction- Looking north west from Lot 44 (investigation area)

View - Long view of Mount Macedon in the distance



**Image No 34 - Pyrete Range, Lerderderg State Park**

Direction- Looking west from Lot 44 (investigation area)

View - Long view of the Pyrete Range in the distance



## CANOPY VIEWS AND TREE LINE VIEWS

Enclosed canopy views are atypical of the site however can provide an individual with more shelter than sites offering panoramic views. Windrows, driveway planting and fence-line shade planting are typical of the area and can provide axial views that lead the eye to the distance.



**Image No 35 - Avenue of Honour**

Direction- Facing north from Mickleham Rd

View - Locally significant axial view, predominantly experienced by road users at close range



**Image No 36 - Cypress Windrow**

Direction- Facing East from Mickleham Rd

View - Locally significant view that is connected to farmland character, often acts as a visual barrier to distant views



**Image No 37 - Driveway Canopy view**

Direction- Looking west towards Dunhelen Lane

View - Canopied view created by a driveway avenue of trees.



**Image No 38 - Native Windrow**

Direction- Facing west from within Lot 39

View - Locally significant view that is connected to both farmland and native vegetation character.



## VIEW TO EXISTING URBAN INTERFACE

The lack of topography across much of the site does not permit roads to be elevated enough to allow longer views above rooflines therefore the existing residential areas to the east are highly visible from within the site.



Image No 39 - View to Existing development

Direction- Facing north-east from Scenery Drive, Aston Estate



Image No 40 - View to existing development

Direction- Facing east from Lot 24





EXAMPLE OF MOSS GROWING ON SURFACE ROCKS THROUGHOUT THE SITE

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# EDGE CONDITIONS

## INTERFACE AND EDGE TREATMENTS

The Craigieburn West Precinct is the edge of the Craigieburn growth front and is bordered by the western edge of Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary. How this interface or 'edge' is treated will be an important consideration for the planning and urban design of this precinct.

To minimise the impact of new development on the existing rural landscape to the west it will be important to maintain a softer transitional character along the urban-rural interfaces. A number of important interfaces have been identified including:

- ▶ Mickleham Road interface
- ▶ Lindum Vale conservation reserve
- ▶ Sight lines to adjacent housing
- ▶ Greenvale Reservoir Reserve interface
- ▶ Greenvale Reservoir interface
- ▶ Whites Lane
- ▶ Whitefriars Oval
- ▶ East-west access into and out of the site.

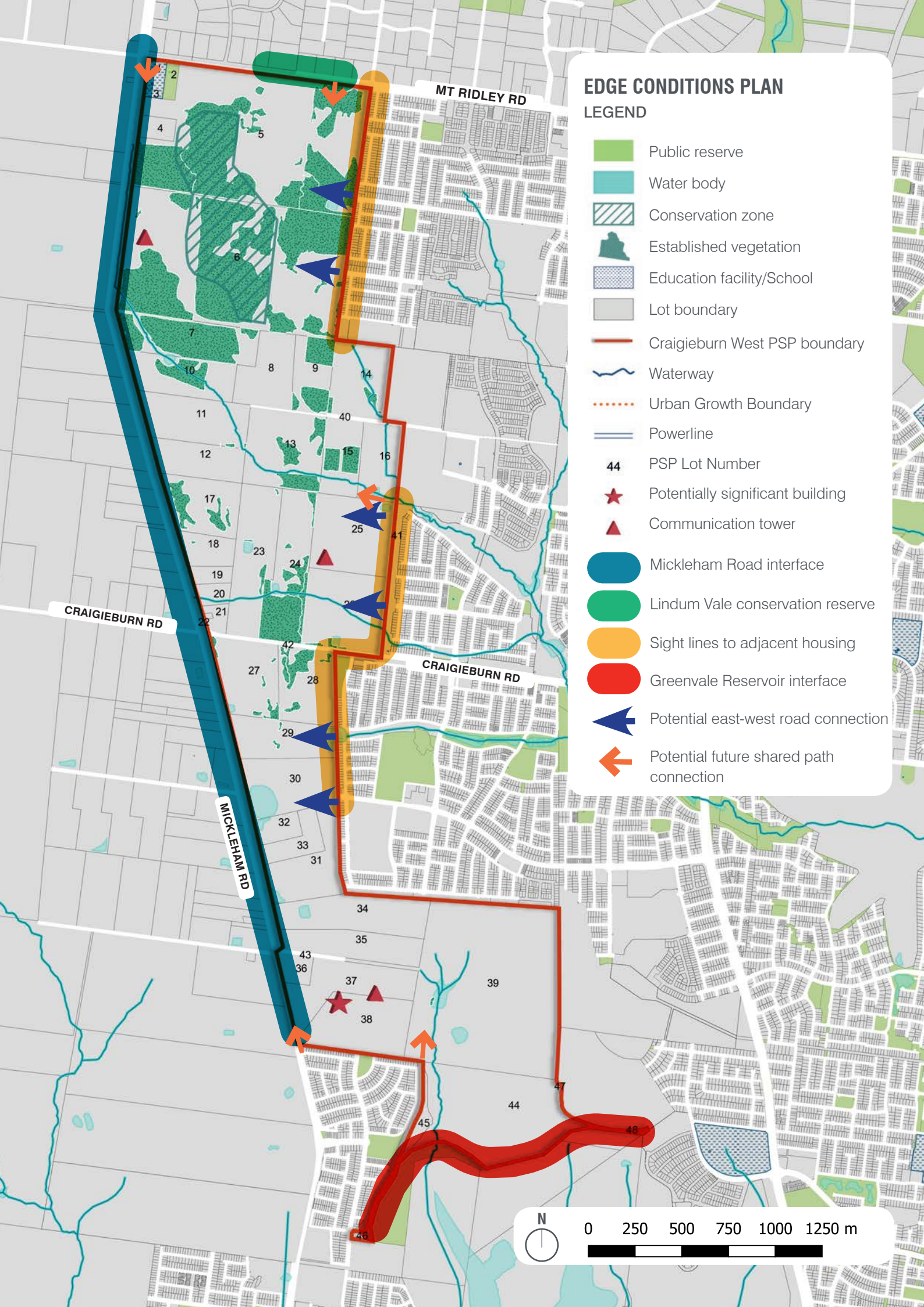
A series of recommendations and suggestions will be developed for incorporation into the Craigieburn West PSP to inform appropriate planning controls and ensure the future urban design for these areas is sensitive to and integrates with, the adjacent rural landscape.



## EDGE CONDITIONS PLAN

### LEGEND

- Public reserve
- Water body
- Conservation zone
- Established vegetation
- Education facility/School
- Lot boundary
- Craigieburn West PSP boundary
- Waterway
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Powerline
- 44 PSP Lot Number
- Potentially significant building
- Communication tower
- Mickleham Road interface
- Lindum Vale conservation reserve
- Sight lines to adjacent housing
- Greenvale Reservoir interface
- Potential east-west road connection
- Potential future shared path connection







LOOKING NORTH OVER THE DAM AT LOT 39



# OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The following opportunities and constraints will be considered in the development of recommendations in the PSP.

## OPPORTUNITY

- ▶ To retain and protect existing River Red Gums and other significant trees (as identified in arborist's assessment) by incorporating trees into open space, road reserves, widened road medians or easements where possible - subject to an arborist's assessment
- ▶ To link pockets of retained trees and other significant landscape elements with existing conservation areas in Lindum Vale to the north to provide greater connectivity for fauna and flora and improve the conservation value of the area
- ▶ To enhance amenity, habitat quality and recreational value of Aitken Creek with planting and re-vegetation with native species
- ▶ To continue the existing linear reserve along the Aitken Creek alignment and establish a linear green spine across the site
- ▶ To retain and redevelop existing buildings associated with past uses of the site such as farming and agriculture to contribute to the landscape character of the site and provide unique place-making opportunities
- ▶ To incorporate a shared use path and cycle route along Mickleham Road utilising the shade and amenity provided by the existing Avenue of Honour
- ▶ To protect and enhance the east-west view line along Mount Ridley Road
- ▶ To consider the location of major link roads and or open spaces along ridge lines to preserve long views and significant outlooks
- ▶ To re-use existing site rock within hardscape elements to maintain the local character of the site

- ▶ To consider the introduction of landscape features such as; tree avenues, gardenbeds or topography to frame desired views, soften views to existing urban fabric and enhance the landscape character.

## CONSTRAINTS

- ▶ Conservation areas; whilst a constraint to development, can provide an opportunity to preserve the natural character of the site
- ▶ Steep slopes; development on steep slopes generally requires large retaining walls, increasing the bulk and prominence of housing
- ▶ Natural drainage lines can be a constraint to development due to the need to limit vehicle crossing points to ensure continuity and habitat value
- ▶ Dominant infrastructure such as communication towers
- ▶ Viewsheds; consideration should be given to the creation of desirable viewlines through the location of roads, shared paths and open spaces
- ▶ Flat topography inhibiting the ability to take advantage of views.

### **RETAIN SIGNIFICANT TREES:**

Opportunity to retain and protect existing River Red Gums incorporating significant trees into open space reserves where possible.



### **ENHANCE AITKEN CREEK:**

Opportunity to enhance amenity, habitat quality and recreational value of Aitken Creek with planting and revegetation with native species.



### RE-PURPOSE EXISTING BUILDINGS:

Opportunity to retain and redevelop existing buildings associated with past uses of the site such as farming and agriculture to contribute to the rural identity of the site and provide a unique point of difference.



### AVENUE OF HONOUR:

Opportunity to incorporate a shared use path and cycle route along Mickleham Road utilising the shade and amenity provided by the existing Avenue of Honour.

### **RETAIN FENCELINE PLANTING:**

Opportunity to retain windrows and fence line planting and incorporate into urban fabric.



### **RE-USE SITE ROCK:**

Opportunity to re-use existing site rock as landscape features such as walls and sculptures to maintain the local character of the site.



### **CONSTRAINT: CONSERVATION AREAS**

Whilst a constraint to development the conservation areas provide a unique landscape character.



### **CONSTRAINT: STEEP SLOPES**

Development on steep slopes generally requires large retaining walls, increasing the bulk and prominence of housing.

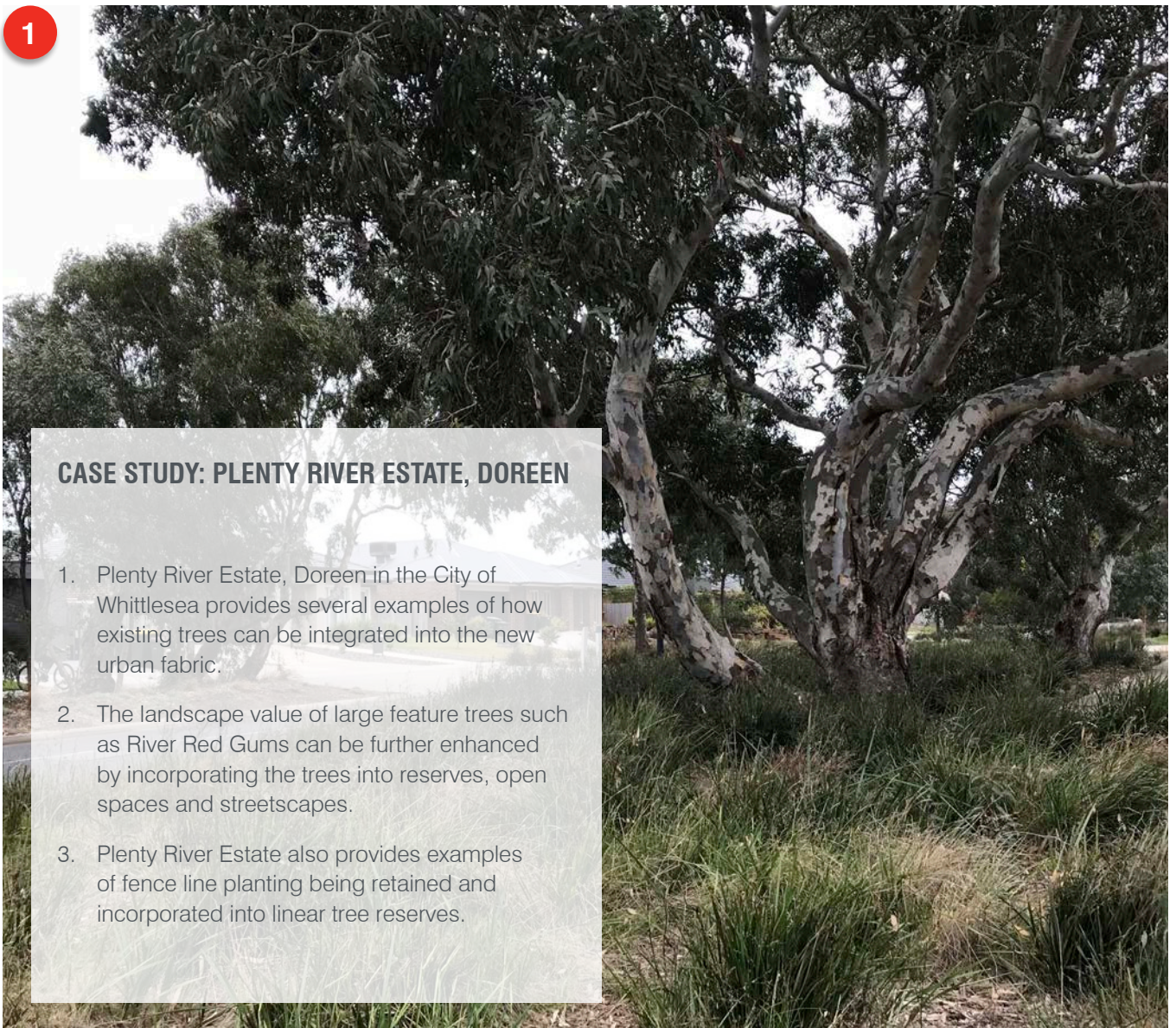
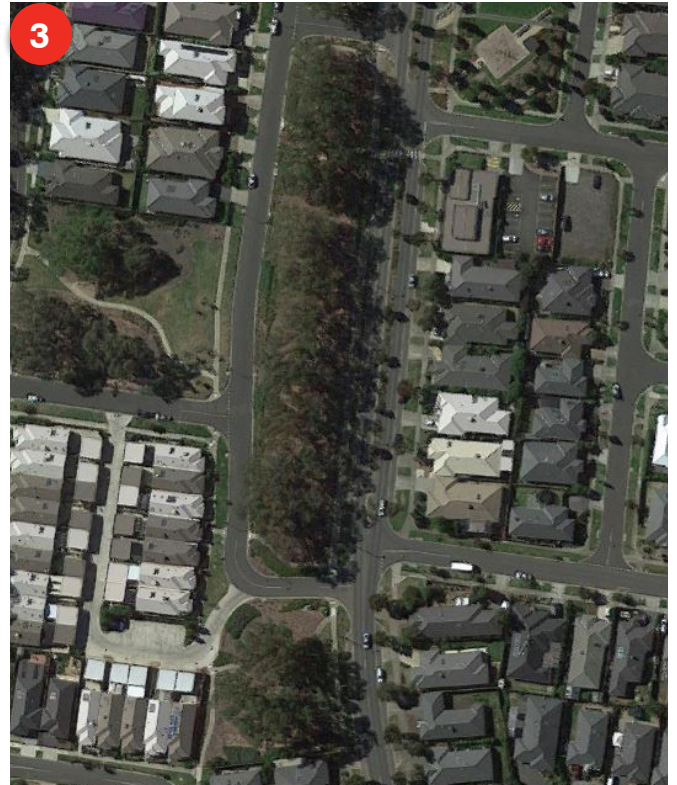
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# RELEVANT LOCAL CASE STUDIES

The following local precedents represent examples of successfully incorporating existing landscape character into the urban design. These case studies are included with the intention of helping to inform outcomes for the Craigieburn West Precinct illustrating the following:

- ▶ River Red Gums incorporated into the urban fabric
- ▶ Development of a linear reserve along drainage lines
- ▶ Roads oriented to maximise views
- ▶ Windrows maintained to retain character
- ▶ Public open space adjacent conservation reserves
- ▶ Utilise high points for reserves and lookouts.





### CASE STUDY: PLENTY RIVER ESTATE, DOREEN

1. Plenty River Estate, Doreen in the City of Whittlesea provides several examples of how existing trees can be integrated into the new urban fabric.
2. The landscape value of large feature trees such as River Red Gums can be further enhanced by incorporating the trees into reserves, open spaces and streetscapes.
3. Plenty River Estate also provides examples of fence line planting being retained and incorporated into linear tree reserves.

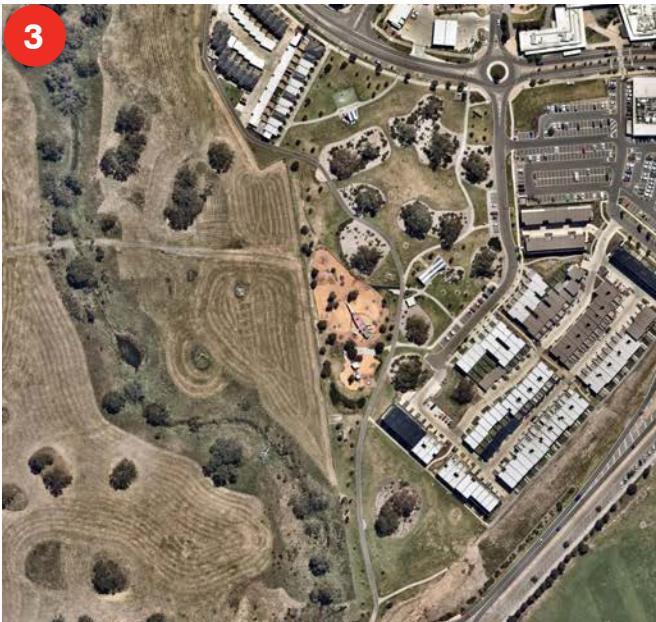


## CASE STUDY: HIGHLANDS ESTATE, CRAIGIEBURN

Highlands Estate is a masterplanned community in Craigieburn. The following elements within this estate help to inform and preserve the landscape character of the site.

1. River Red Gum trees retained and incorporated into open space reserves, both large extended reserves as well as small local pocket parks.
2. In small pocket parks the trees have been retained with adequate space around them to incorporate amenity such as seats.
3. Play space has been co-located with linear drainage reserve and conservation reserve, play elements influenced by indigenous fauna.
4. Drainage reserve has been embellished with planting to improve habitat and amenity value as well as features such as a boardwalk and viewing deck.
5. Local materials have been utilised in landscape features to help retain the existing landscape character.
6. Shared use paths have been incorporated throughout providing access as well as recreational value.







## CASE STUDY: HIGHLANDS ESTATE, CRAIGIEBURN (CONTINUED)

7. Highpoint of the site has been retained as open space: Mount Ridley Lookout Reserve, avoiding the visual dominance that can result from built form on a slope.
8. The site provides long views of the Melbourne skyline.
9. A play space has been incorporated to increase usability and amenity of the site.
10. Interpretive signage informing users of the history of the landscape.
11. Shared use paths and viewing platforms provide access, recreation value and connectivity to adjacent residential housing.







1



2



Image credit: <https://acla.net.au>

3

### CASE STUDY: QUARRY HILLS BUSHLAND PARK, SOUTH MORANG

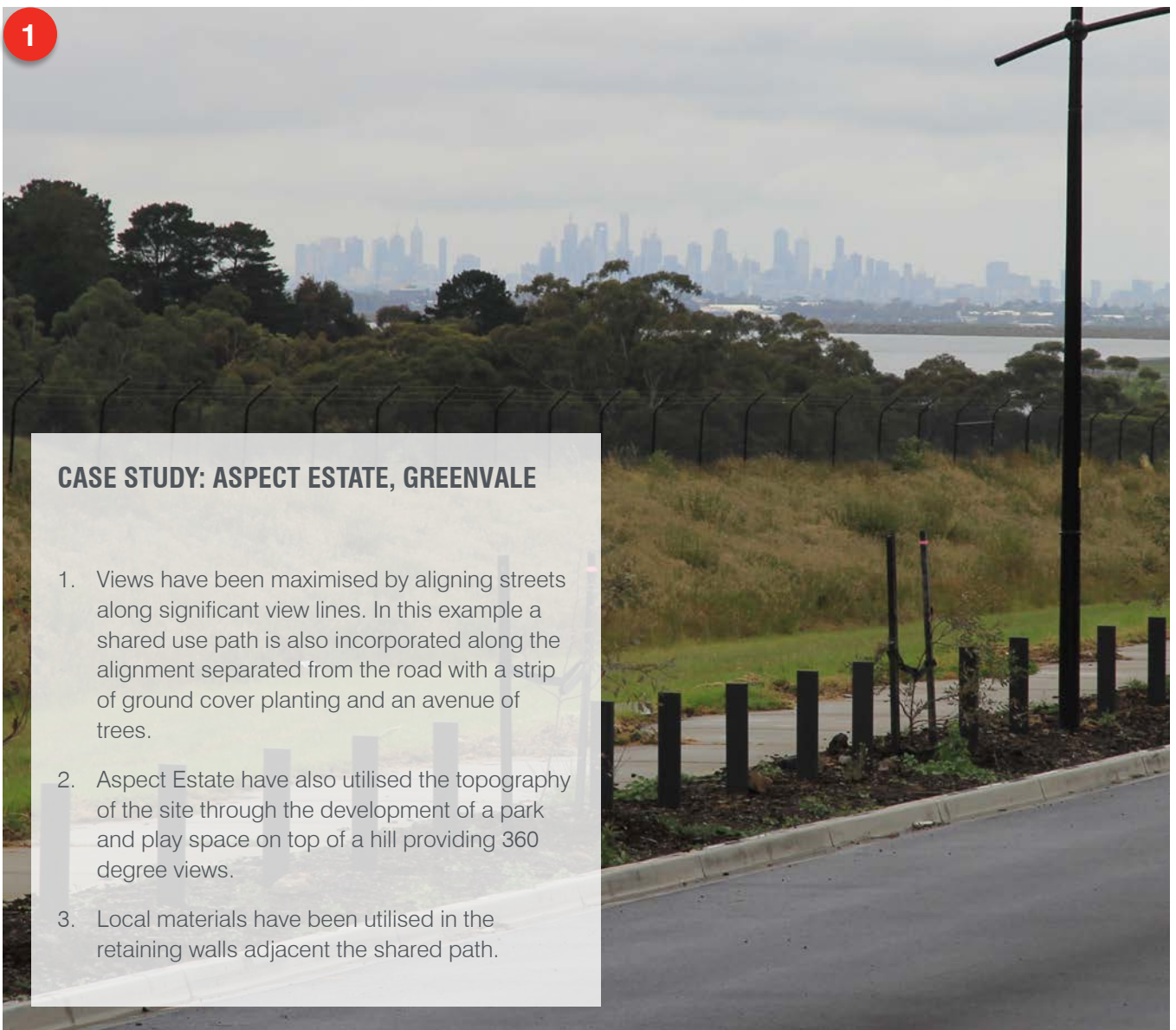
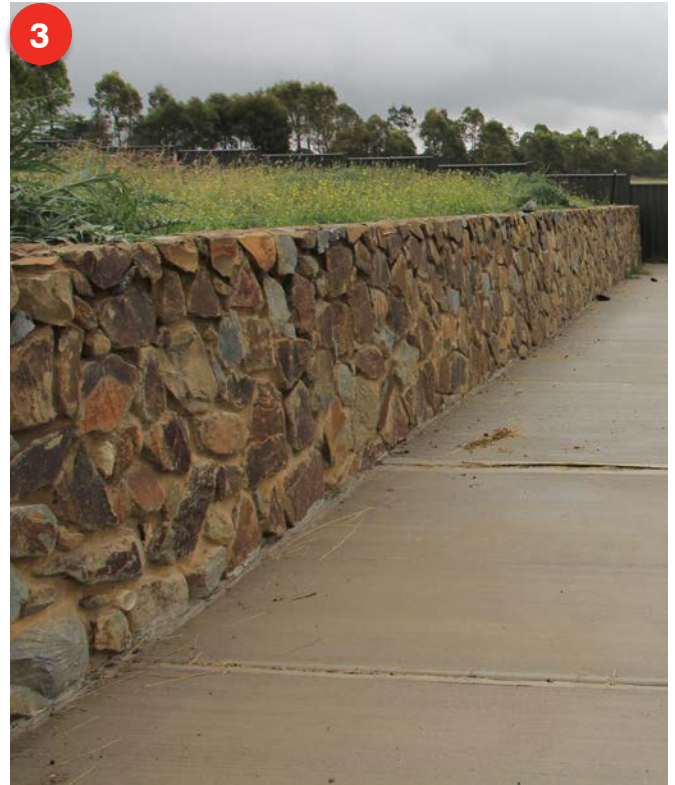
Quarry Hills Bushland Park is a good example of utilising topography and elevated areas as public open space whilst providing significant views, it also provides a natural backdrop to the surrounding housing, which helps to preserve the landscape character of the site.

1. Old farm fence posts have been retained, a reminder of the past use of the site.
2. This park also provides an example of incorporating public open space adjacent conservation reserves and easements. Whilst access in and around conservation reserves may be restricted, incorporating freely accessible open spaces adjacent these reserves result in large swathes of 'green' space through which a network of walking trails can be developed.
3. Views from the top of the hill provide a strong connection to the natural landscape.



Image credit: <https://acla.net.au>





## CASE STUDY: ASPECT ESTATE, GREENVALE

1. Views have been maximised by aligning streets along significant view lines. In this example a shared use path is also incorporated along the alignment separated from the road with a strip of ground cover planting and an avenue of trees.
2. Aspect Estate have also utilised the topography of the site through the development of a park and play space on top of a hill providing 360 degree views.
3. Local materials have been utilised in the retaining walls adjacent the shared path.





**“CONFLICTS THAT RESULT IN LOSS OF VISUAL LANDSCAPE VALUE ARE GENERALLY THE OUTCOME OF LAND USE DECISIONS THAT OVERLOOK THE INHERENT VISUAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS”**

*Source: 'Visual Landscape Planning in Western Australia: A manual for evaluation, assessment, siting and design'.*



# OBJECTIVES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives have been established to ensure the landscape character of the site is retained and a sense of place is established. Retaining key landscape character elements will greatly enhance the local identity of the site. The objectives listed below describe the desired outcome to be achieved once the site is developed and should be considered a priority when developing the PSP.

The following recommendations have been developed to provide a means of achieving the objectives. These aim to minimise the loss of landscape character, enhance the landscape and visual amenity of the site and help to facilitate appropriate urban development.

Objectives and recommendations have been derived from:

- ▶ The site analysis and field survey undertaken as part of this report
- ▶ Analysis of GIS data including site contours and aerial photography
- ▶ The identified opportunities and constraints of the site
- ▶ A review of local case studies as presented in this report
- ▶ Review of both State and Local Government Strategic Plans and Policies.

## OBJECTIVES & RECOMMENDATIONS - VEGETATION



OBJECTIVES	RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Retain existing vegetation to preserve the landscape character of the site	<p><b>1.1</b> Trees assessed as having a high and very high arboriculture retention value (refer Arborists Report) should be prioritised for retention.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Large significant trees identified as having high retention value (refer Arborists Report) to be incorporated into the public realm, open space, road reserves, widened road medians or easements where possible.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Windrows and fence line planting to be retained, protected and incorporated into streetscapes boulevards and reserve designs.</p> <p><b>1.4</b> Retain areas of native vegetation and/or significant vegetation, particularly along roadsides, windrows and creek corridors. Any areas identified by an Ecologist/Arborist as high quality and/or significant should also be retained.</p> <p><b>1.5</b> Retain and enhance areas of significant vegetation, as identified in the Arborist's Report as whole areas rather than fragmenting into smaller patches or individual trees.</p> <p><b>1.6</b> Consider connecting the conservation zone south of Mt Ridley Road with the future conservation zone to be located north of Mt Ridley Road.</p> <p><b>1.7</b> Minimise clearing of roadside vegetation.</p>



## OBJECTIVES & RECOMMENDATIONS - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



OBJECTIVES	RECOMMENDATIONS
2. Establish a sense of place by retaining and enhancing key features/characteristics of the landscape character types	<p><b>2.1</b> Align the urban design arrangement of roads, lots and public open spaces to retain identified landscape character elements such as; significant vegetation, historic buildings, areas of topographical interest and water bodies. Incorporating these landscape character elements into the public realm where possible.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Utilise local materials such as site rock within hardscape elements and features. Examples include paths, retaining walls, play elements, wayfinding, public art or gardenbed features.</p>
3. Protect and enhance natural waterways and drainage corridors	<p><b>3.1</b> Incorporate natural waterways and drainage corridors into open space.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Preserve scenic views to and from waterway corridors, through placement of roads, shared paths and adjoining open spaces avoiding backing or siding lots onto these spaces.</p> <p><b>3.3</b> Embellish natural drainage corridor with native revegetation planting to enhance ecological function, habitat, aesthetics, recreational value and to improve public amenity.</p> <p><b>3.4</b> Incorporate additional amenity such as play spaces and BBQ/ community gathering spaces adjacent to waterways to broaden the usability of the space and encourage public interaction.</p> <p><b>3.5</b> Minimise vehicle crossings where possible to ensure there is visual continuity and linear views are maintained.</p>
4. Preserve, where possible the panoramic and long views to significant land marks, i.e. Melbourne skyline, Yarra Ranges, Mount Macedon	<p><b>4.1</b> Explore opportunities to utilise elevated areas/ridge lines as open space allowing the wider public to take advantage of views. Minimising residential development on steep slopes may also reduce the need for large prominent retaining walls.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Align major roads with contours and along ridge line to maximise views.</p>
5. Locate the open space network to preserve visual character features and provide linear connections	<p><b>5.1</b> Where possible provide linear connections between open space reserves to improve connectivity and maximise usability.</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Connect either physically or visually retained landscape elements such as areas of remnant vegetation, place making features or River Red Gums.</p>



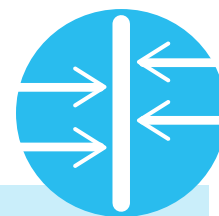
6. Retain significant buildings and visual character elements as place making opportunities

**6.1** Retain buildings identified as having heritage value and explore opportunities for adaptive re-use to provide links to the past use of the site and contribute to local identity.

**6.2** Cultural heritage assessments and management plans to be undertaken to determine cultural value and define appropriate boundaries.

**6.3** Consider the arrangement and alignment of roads and linear open space reserves as a way of visually linking character elements to retain a sense of the broader landscape character.

## OBJECTIVES & RECOMMENDATIONS - INTERFACE/EDGE TREATMENTS



OBJECTIVES	RECOMMENDATIONS
7. Create a complementary and sensitive interface to the adjacent existing landscape character	<p><b>7.1</b> Consider lot density, generous built form offsets and providing open space provisions along Mickleham Road to provide a subtle transition between new residential areas and existing rural landscapes on the western side of Mickleham Road.</p> <p><b>7.2</b> Consider integration of proposed Melbourne Water bunds into public open space to enable significant views to the reservoir and city - subject to further investigation and co-ordination with Melbourne Water.</p> <p><b>7.3</b> The shared path network must connect to existing networks in the surrounding area including; Mickleham Road shared path to the south, Aitken Creek shared path to the east, Yuroke shared path to the south and the shared path proposed in the development to the north of Mt Ridley Road.</p> <p><b>7.4</b> Limit the introduction of further telecommunication towers and mitigate the visual prominence of existing towers through the introduction of vertical landscape features such as large trees.</p>





TYPICAL FARM FENCING USED THROUGHOUT THE SITE



# GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
Access	The location by which vehicles and / or pedestrians enter and / or leave property adjacent to a road.
Amenity	The pleasant or normally satisfactory aspects of a location that contribute to its overall character and the enjoyment of residents or visitors.
Built Form	The component features of buildings, streets and spaces that make up the urban environment.
Environment	For the purpose of this report, environment incorporates physical, biological, heritage, cultural, economic and social aspects.
Heritage	Historic or cultural associations.
Land Use	The type of development permitted in an area whether it be industrial, commercial, residential, rural and recreational or a combination of some or all of these different uses.
Landscape	Soft features of the urban, suburban or rural environment, such as vegetation and green open spaces. For the purpose of this report, the term 'landscape' refers to the concept of visual and related natural qualities of the area.
Landscape feature	Prominent eye-catching elements (other than designated ones), for example a church spire, volcanic cone, monument or distinctive landmark building, significant mature specimen tree, that contributes to landscape character through appearance or specific civic use.
Methodology	The specific approach and techniques used for a given study.
Project Area	For the purposes of this report, the Project Area is the visual catchment. The visual catchment is defined as the area from within which the Study Area may be seen. The Project Area may be different (encompassing a broader geography) to the Study Area.
Property	A property is land owned by a single landowner. It may include multiple contiguous titles owned by the same registered proprietor.
Recreation Reserve	Land provided in urban or rural areas for public recreation, though not necessarily publicly owned
Receptor	Physical landscape resource, special interest or person and/or viewer group that will experience an impact.
Regeneration	The re-use or redevelopment of decaying or run-down parts of landscape/areas to bring them new life, vitality, quality and value.
Study Area	The area identified by Victorian Planning Authority for the purposes of this report and its investigations.
Tree Protection	Direction made by a local planning authority that makes it an offence to cut, top, lop, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a tree without that authority's permission.
Visual amenity	The value of a particular area or view in terms of what is seen.
Zone of Theoretical Influence	Area within which a proposed development may have an influence or impact.





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