

Melton Landscapes

SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE FEATURES STRATEGY



FINAL REPORT
Adopted May 2016



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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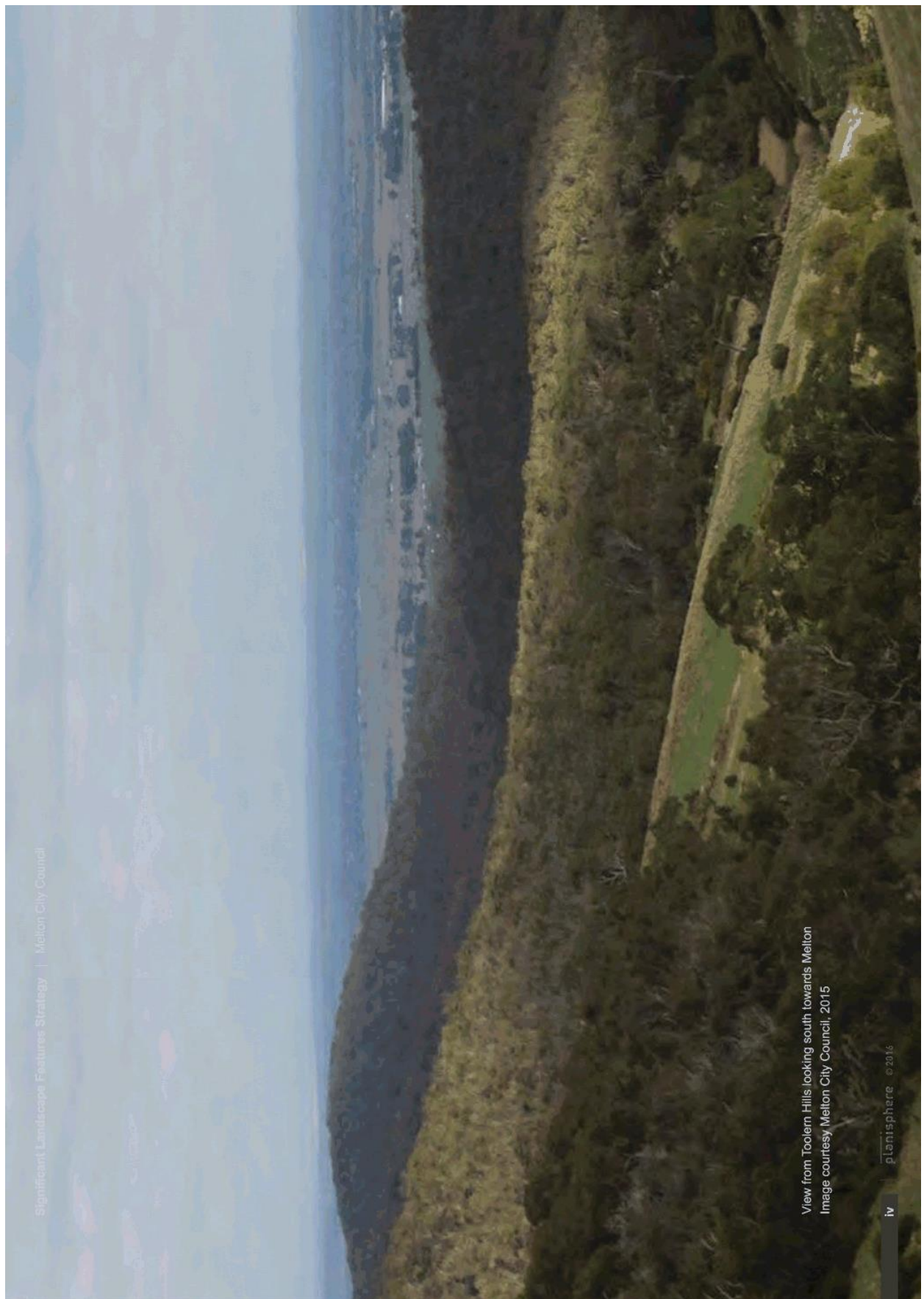
It is acknowledged that the Melton City Council is on traditional lands of the Wathaurong and Wurundjeri tribes of the Kulin Nation. We offer our respect to the Elders of these traditional lands, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

PROJECT CONTROL

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Significant Landscape Features Strategy | Melton City Council

View from Toolem Hills looking south towards Melton
Image courtesy Melton City Council, 2015

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BACKGROUND

With the population expected to double over the next 20 years and large areas of the municipality newly within the Urban Growth Boundary, the City of Melton's landscapes will be subject to ongoing pressure for change. It is essential that the significant natural features of the area are adequately recognised and protected through the planning scheme to ensure they are considered in any future land use decisions.

This project is a key recommendation of the Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan (2014), which identified the need for greater protection of the rural landscape in the northern part of the municipality.

The Importance of Landscape

The environments in which we live, work and play have their origins in the interactions between people and landscape. Development can affirm and express the underlying landscape character of an area in rural and urban areas; or it can hide or destroy features that might otherwise have made an urban area distinctive and attractive. Landscape character is a vital component of vibrant cities and towns; communities value places with a strong identity, and businesses like to locate in areas that have a distinct character.

Project Method

The starting point of this study was to assess the entire study area to determine its landscape character - the essential elements that make one landscape different from another. This first step formed an important base for the subsequent stages of work.

Areas of significance were identified for their aesthetic values, through the study team's field surveys. Secondary sources and feedback from the community and stakeholders were used to understand other landscape values, such as environmental, historic or social values.

Changes to the landscape both past, present and potential were considered in order to determine the policy gaps and landscape management and protection needs of the municipality. Threats to the landscape were identified to determine the need for additional planning controls to manage and protect the landscape. Other management strategies outside of the planning system were also considered in the study's recommendation. The study method is detailed in **Chapter 1**.

The criteria used to assess landscape significance are identified in more detail for each significant landscape in **Chapter 4** of this report. In short, five cultural landscape values are used to determine 'landscape significance':

- > Aesthetic values (landscape components, features, edges or contrasts, composition)
- > Historic values
- > Environmental and scientific values
- > Social values
- > Other values.



View across the Western Volcanic Plains towards the Uplands from McCorkell Road (image courtesy Melton City Council, 2016).

pattern occurring on the perimeter of the townships. Rocks are often grouped into piles in paddocks in an attempt to clear the land and make it more arable for farming.

The Uplands

Defined by topography, this diverse Character Type rises dramatically to the north of the flat volcanic plain. Granitic intrusions have formed steeply sloping peaks and ridges, some of which are carpeted in vegetation at higher elevations and in creek valleys. These areas are visible from a distance throughout the City of Melton. While the Uplands are largely cleared for agriculture they also support numerous large areas of public land, including conservation areas, reserves and state forests which contain a wealth of vegetation. This is an area of contrasting topography, lush forests and rolling agricultural countryside.

LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE IN THE CITY OF MELTON

Landscape significance is the designation of a particular landscape as special or important arising from its aesthetic values (both visual and non-visual) which takes into account aesthetic values historic, environmental, scientific, social or other values.

A number of sites and areas have been identified as having landscape significance within the City of Melton. These landscapes fall into the following three categories. Landscape significance is detailed in Chapter 3.

› *Note any threats to the landscape and devise management guidance.*

› *Publicise your findings and submit them to your Local Council or State Government Heritage Agency for protection.*

¹ICOMOS Heritage Toolkit: *Understanding Cultural Landscapes*, accessible via <http://australia.icomos.org/resources/australia-icomos-heritage-toolkit/>

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IN THE CITY OF MELTON

Two Character Types have been identified in the City of Melton, based on broad areas of common physical, environmental and cultural characteristics - the Western Volcanic Plain and the Uplands. Landscape character is detailed in **Chapter 2**.

Western Volcanic Plain

Volcanic activity has shaped much of Victoria's landscape. These extensive flat and undulating basaltic plains extend from the South Australian border to western Melbourne. Scattered across these plains are stony rises, old lava flows, volcanic cones and old eruption points which together create a unique visual landscape. In the City of Melton, the plains are interrupted by volcanic cones. Native grasslands and areas of remnant trees are located throughout the area. Most trees in this Character Type are located along waterways and at Eynesbury Woodland, a key feature of the area. Shelterbelt planting, rural-style fencing and dry stone walls are common along property frontages and paddock edges. Farm houses and outbuildings are scattered throughout, with a smaller subdivision

Assessment of the five elements above are used to identify significant landscapes. In addition, levels of significance (local, regional or State) are established using the following rating considerations:

- › Exemplary
- › Iconic
- › Scarce.

The degree (moderate, high or exceptional) to which the significant landscape is exemplary, iconic or scarce contributes to the final determination of significance for a landscape. This classification is explored in more detail in **Chapter 4** of the report.

The methodology above reflects national and international precedents and standards which support assessment and preservation of cultural heritage and landscapes, such as the /COMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) Heritage Toolkit for understanding 'cultural landscapes,'¹ which sets out ways to record and protect cultural landscapes through:

- › *Research the important stories associated with the region and identify the landscapes that best express the stories.*
- › *Document features such as mountains, hills, rivers, topography, soils, skyline ridges, patches of forest, natural water courses.*
- › *Note aesthetic qualities such vistas, quietness, natural sounds, birdlife, colour, particular forms and landscape patterns.*
- › *Record how the landscape has been used, its sustainability and conservation needs.*
- › *Talk to communities to ascertain meanings and stories associated with the landscape.*
- › *Map and photograph the landscape.*

Forested Areas

The densely treed vegetation of the forests contrasts strongly with the surrounding cleared landscapes and open grasslands. From within, the forests are enclosed spaces and the landscapes are constrained by vegetation, creating a visual tunnel of tall trees framing roads and pathways. Areas of heavily vegetated forest cloak the rolling hills in the Uplands, forming their dark silhouette which can be seen throughout the municipality from some distance. The forested areas within the Volcanic Plain are visible as dark patches of vegetation along the horizon or in the distance. This provides a distinctive contrast to the surrounding landscape of open plains with light-coloured grasses and few trees. The forested areas have local significance as iconic and scarce features of the City of Melton's landscape.

Volcanic Hills & Cones

The City of Melton's volcanic plain is punctuated by dormant volcanic cones which rise up from the surrounding landscape. Of these, Mount Kororoit, Mount Cottrell and Mount Atkinson are the most prominent. These cones form part of the volcanic plain that stretches across western Victoria to South Australia. Despite their relatively low elevation, they are visible from long distances and provide points of interest within the open plains. Visible throughout the municipality, the cones create a high level of contrast and visual interest in the landscape. These cones are iconic features of local significance that are scarce due to their topographic variation, unusual in the local context.

Waterways

The four major watercourses and smaller creeks of the City of Melton are key features of interest in the rural and urban landscape. In some places the waterways form shallow depressions; in other locations they are incised across the volcanic plain as well-defined valleys or deep gorges. Forested river corridors are a highly visible feature of the volcanic plains, creating a backdrop to the surrounding open and expansive countryside. Where waterway settings are cleared, the topography of the waterway is a highly distinctive feature of the landscape. Cleared volcanic plains give way to vegetated valley walls or exposed rock faces. Where accessible by shared trails or parklands, the viewer experiences and winding journey of the waterway as it traverses the landscape. The waterways have local significance as exemplary compositional, iconic and contrasting features of the City of Melton's landscape.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Strategy identifies existing and potential future threats and challenges to the protection of Melton's landscapes. The Strategy will be used to inform planning scheme policy and to assist planning decision-making, to ensure the character and significance of Melton's landscapes will be adequately protected and managed into the future. Landscape management issues are discussed in Chapter 5. Planning Scheme controls have been examined as policy tools that can be used to ensure built form does not diminish the significant landscape features and views identified throughout the preparation of this Strategy. The nuances of these are examined in Chapter 6 (Landscape Protection and Management).



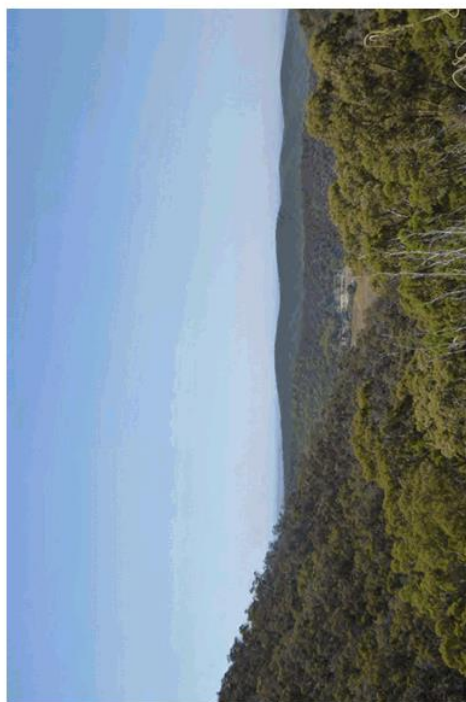
Toolern Creek bridge at Hannah Watts Park, Melton



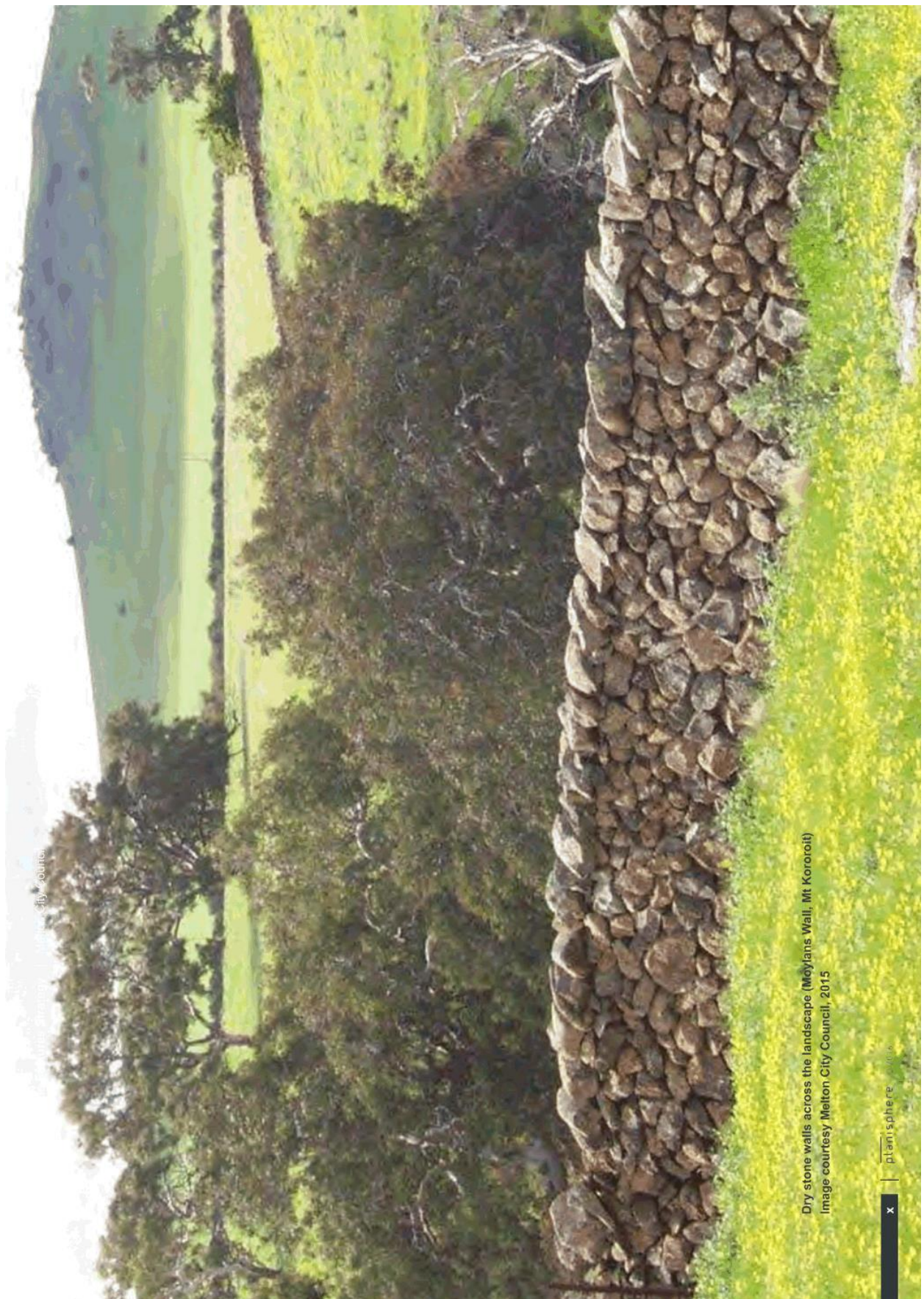
Toolern Vale forested hills



View from Ryans Lane across the Western Volcanic Plain to Mount Kororoit

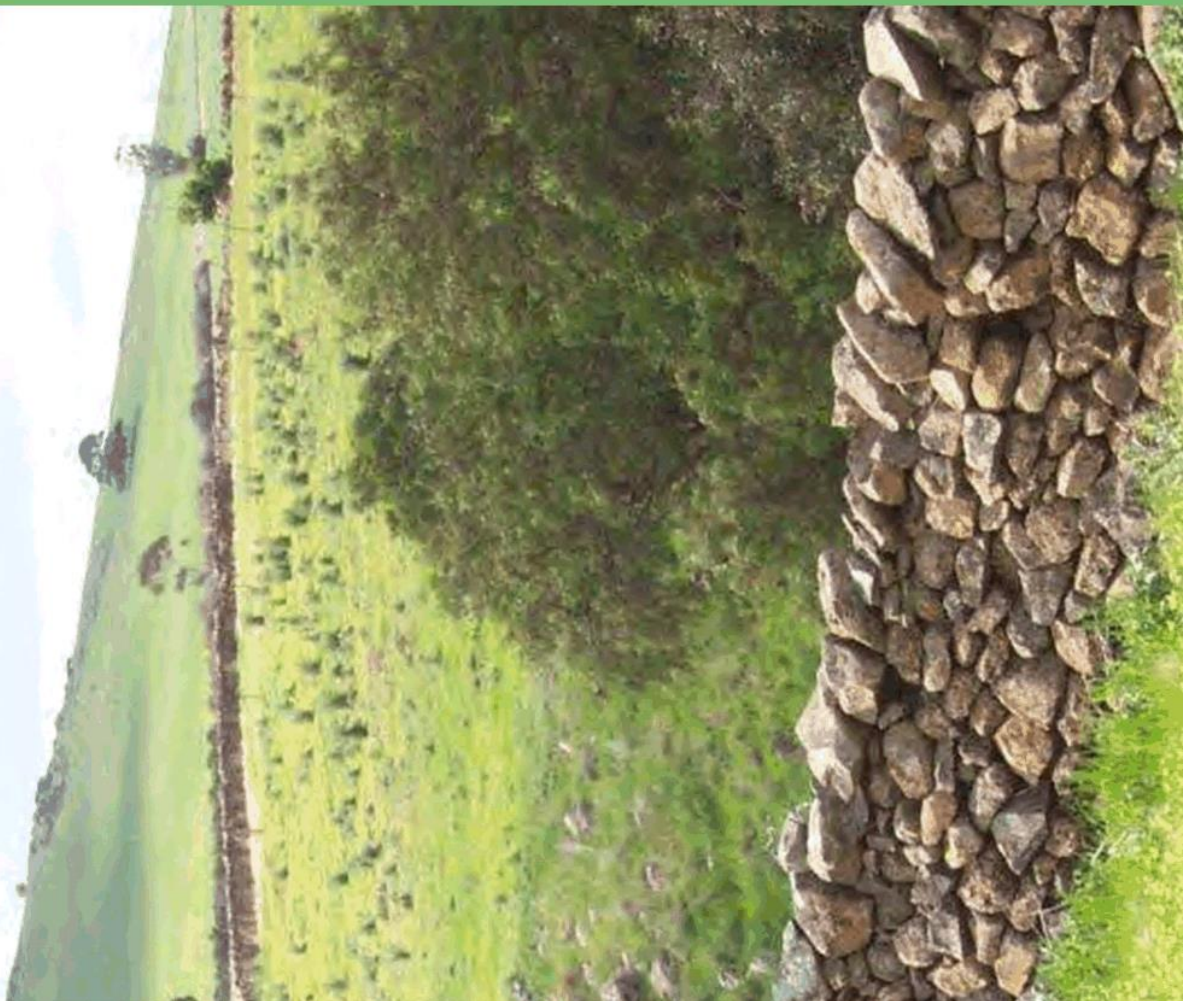
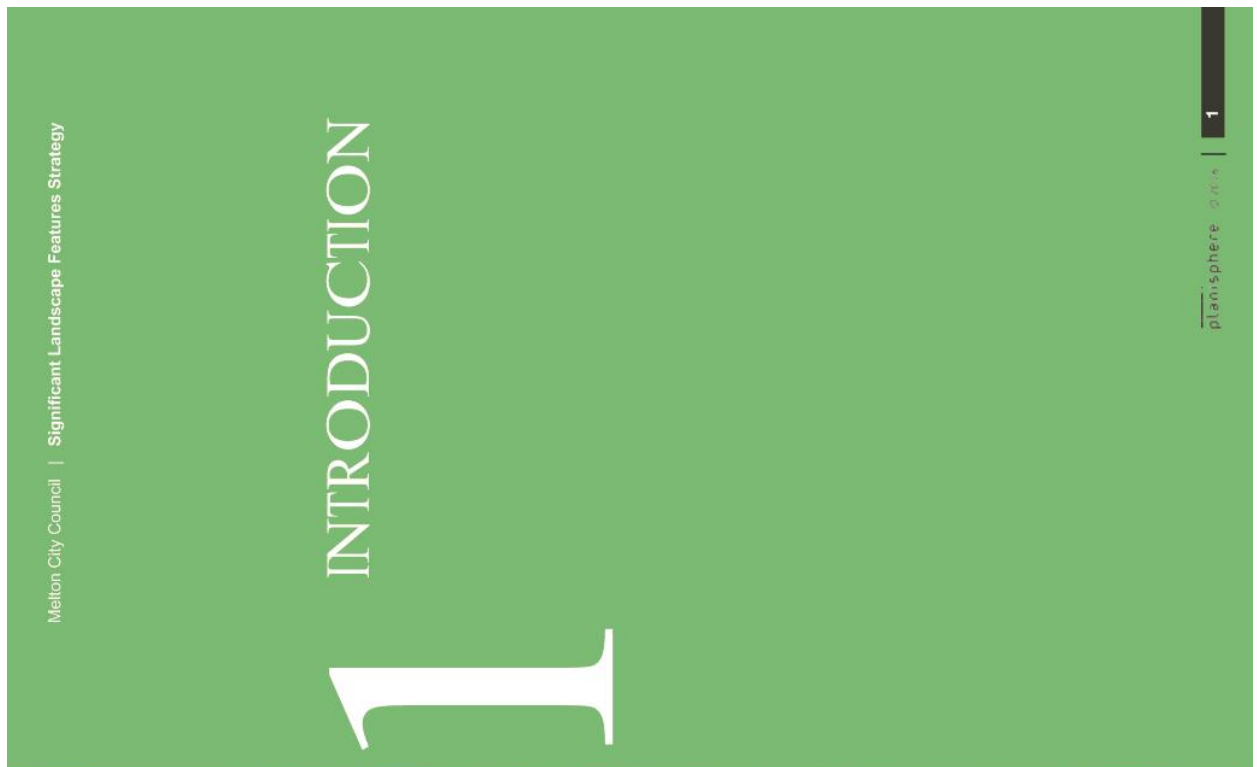


Part of the Toolern Vale Forest in the Uplands viewed from Gisborne-Melton Road on the Pyrete Range



Dry stone walls across the landscape (Moylans Wall, Mt Kororoit)
Image courtesy Melton City Council, 2015

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1.1 PURPOSE

THIS STUDY

The Significant Landscape Features Strategy identifies significant landscape features within the City of Melton, and outlines the existing and potential future threats and challenges to the protection of these assets. The Strategy recommends a range of measures to ensure landscapes of importance are adequately protected and managed into the future. This includes planning scheme policy and controls to guide decision making, and other actions for the community and stakeholders to assist in long-term landscape management.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

With the population expected to double over the next 20 years and large areas of the municipality newly within the Urban Growth Boundary, the City of Melton's landscapes will be subject to ongoing pressure for change. It is essential that the significant natural features of the area are adequately recognised and protected through the planning scheme to ensure they are considered in any future land use decisions.

This project is a key recommendation of the Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan (2014), which identified the need for greater protection of the rural landscape.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LANDSCAPE

The environments in which we live, work and play have their origins in the interactions between people and landscape. Urban development can affirm and express the underlying landscape character of an area, or it can hide or destroy features that might otherwise have made an urban area distinctive and attractive. Landscape character is a vital component of vibrant cities and towns: communities value places with a strong identity, and businesses like to locate in areas that have a distinct character. The essential first step is to answer the question: What makes the landscape of this place distinct and different from other places? What is its DNA? This is explored in detail the following Chapter, and throughout the document.

“ The Significant Landscape Features Strategy will identify significant landscape features within the City of Melton ”

1.2 METHOD

OVERVIEW

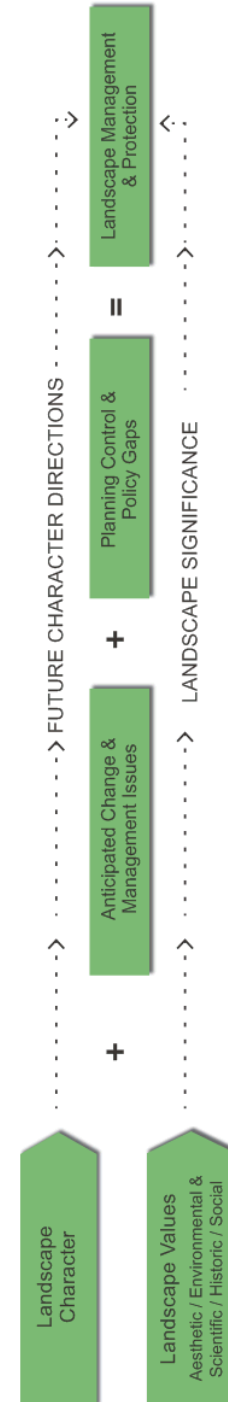
The methodology for landscape character and aesthetic significance assessment has evolved considerably over ten years of professional practice, from an initial focus on visual significance, to a holistic approach that considers all cultural landscape values, including aesthetic values (both visual and non-visual), historic, environmental, scientific, social and other values.

A detailed visual assessment is still at the core of the work, largely because the studies are commissioned with the intention of protecting landscapes from inappropriate visual intrusion, or from development that detracts from the valued character of the landscape.

Landscape assessment studies include extensive field work, desktop research, GIS mapping, and comparative analysis against various sets of criteria in order to assess and document the character and significance of various landscapes and views. Generally, the methodology is structured around the consideration of the following five key elements:

- > Community values (**Chapter 2**)
- > Landscape character (**Chapter 3**)
- > Landscape significance (**Chapter 4**)
- > Change in the landscape (**Chapter 5**)
- > Landscape protection and management (**Chapter 6**)

These key elements come together in the 'formula' below, around which the studies are structured:



MELTON LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY

The starting point of this study was to assess the entire study area to determine its landscape character - the essential elements that make one landscape different from another. This first step formed an important base for the subsequent stages of work.

Areas of landscape significance were identified for their aesthetic values, through the study team's field surveys. Secondary sources and feedback from the community and stakeholders were used to understand other landscape values, such as environmental, historic or social values.

Anticipated changes to the landscape - past, present and potential - were considered in order to understand landscape management issues for the municipality. Current planning policies and controls were analysed to determine where gaps exist in managing anticipated change and protecting landscapes. Additional planning policy and controls have been recommended, as well as other management strategies outside of the planning system.

1.3 STUDY AREA

The study area for this project, shown opposite on **Map 1** and **Map 2**, is all land within the City of Melton except activity centre areas, with a focus on rural land and land in private ownership.

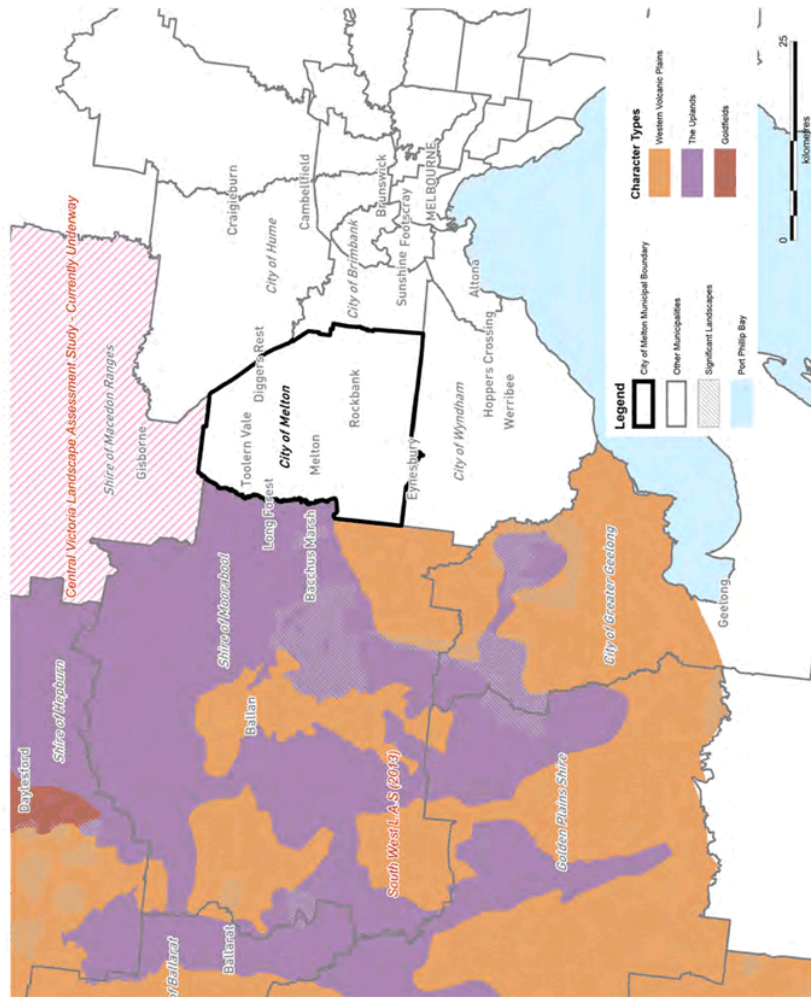
RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LANDSCAPE STUDIES

As shown on **Map 1**, the western edge of the City of Melton adjoins the study area of the South West Landscape Assessment Study (2013), which covered land in the adjoining municipality of Moorabool west to the South Australia border. This study assessed the character of landscapes across the region and identified significant landscapes using the methodology outlined in **Section 1.2** and the landscape significance classification and rating criteria outlined in **Chapter 4**.

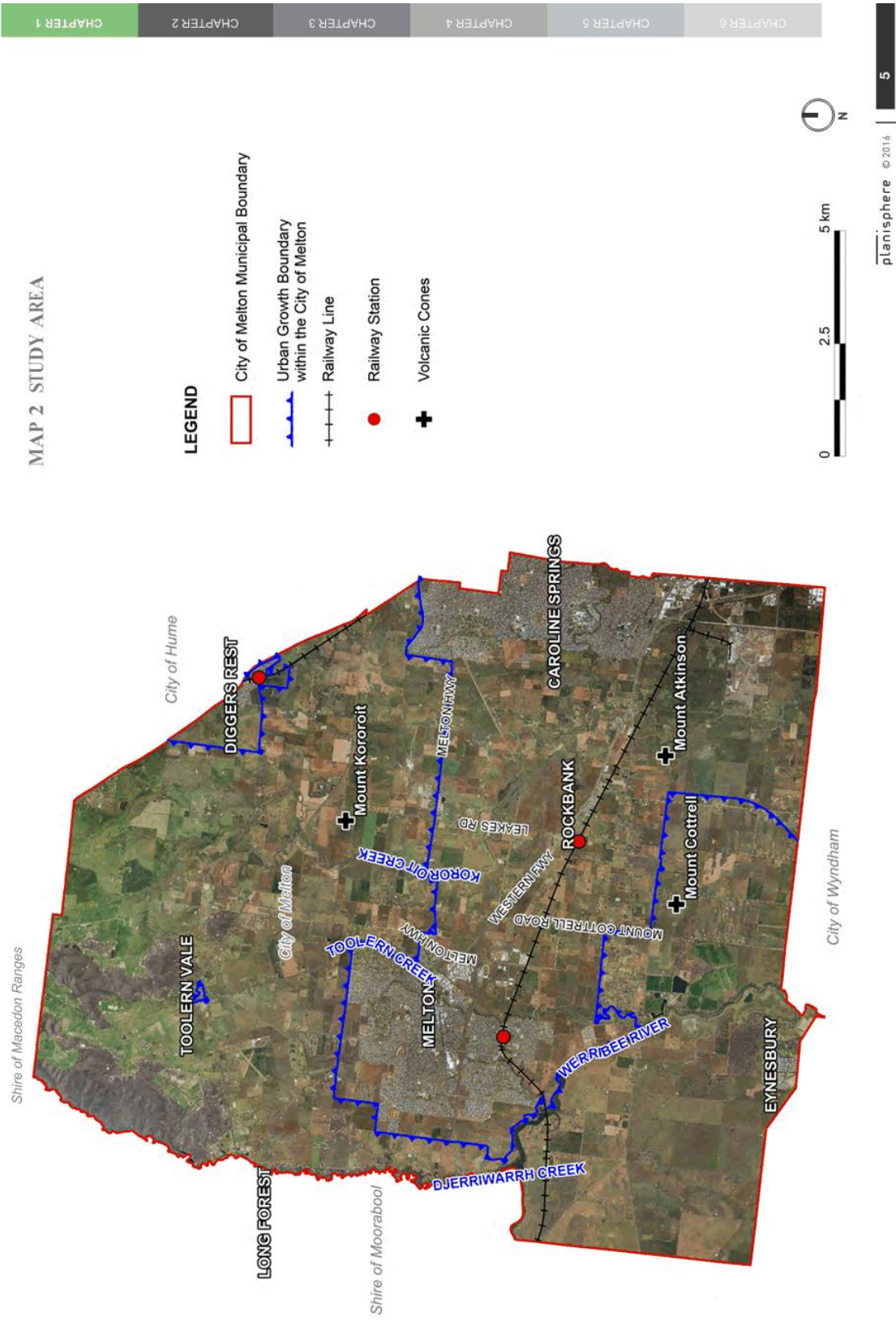
No landscape assessments have been prepared for the adjoining municipalities of Wyndham and Hume.

Macedon Ranges Shire is included within the study area of the Central Victoria Landscape Assessment Study which is currently being prepared by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

MAP 1 CONTEXT



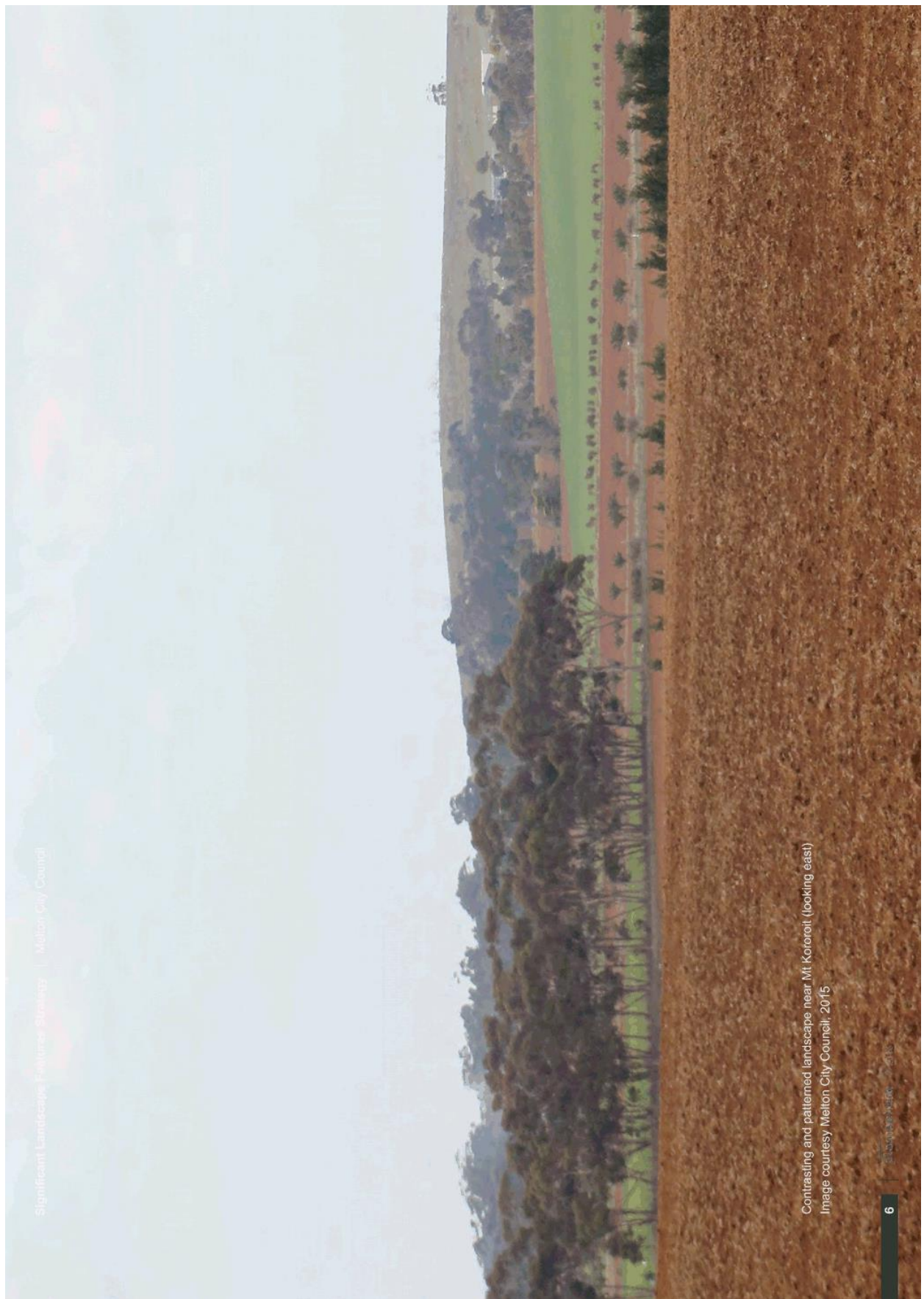
MAP 2 STUDY AREA



LEGEND

- City of Melton Municipal Boundary
- Urban Growth Boundary within the City of Melton
- Railway Line
- Railway Station
- + Volcanic Cones





Significant Landscape Features Strategy | Melton City Council

Contrasting and patterned landscape near Mt Kororoit (looking east)
Image courtesy Melton City Council, 2015



2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the landscape context in the City of Melton. It describes the City's history and evolution, its underlying environment and natural systems, including its geology, landform, waterform and vegetation, and current patterns of land use.

The legislative and statutory context of the project is summarised, including relevant Acts of Parliament and the policies and controls of the Melton Planning Scheme.

The background review of strategic background documents is also summarised, demonstrating how the key references to the study have informed its preparation.

An overview of community consultation and feedback illustrates the values held by the people of Melton about the City's landscapes.

2.2 MELTON CITY'S STORY

LANDSCAPE FORMATION

The landscape of the City of Melton has been shaped by ancient volcanic activity which formed the expansive basaltic and alluvial plains that make up much of the municipality. The three volcanic cones of Mount Cottrell, Mount Atkinson and Mount Kororoit are distinctive landmarks visible across the open landscape.

Extensive swamps once existed to the east of Melton and provided rich habitats for birdlife. Rivers and creeks wind across the plains and in some locations have incised deep gorges over time. At the northern edge of the municipality the topography changes distinctively as land rises towards the Central Victorian Uplands Bioregion.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND THE LANDSCAPE

These are the traditional lands of the Wathaurong and Wurundjeri tribes of the Kulin Nation, Aboriginal people with a strong connection to this landscape over many thousands of years. Kororoit Creek, which separated two of the Wurundjeri clans was, like many waterways for the Aboriginal people, a particularly important landscape feature, source of livelihood and meeting place.

Aboriginal people are likely to have found a rich variety of fish, eels, waterbirds as well as materials and shelter in the City's waterways.

It was their practice in autumn to burn the grassy plains to attract game, promoting fresh grass growth for the following season. The forested hills around Melton are likely to have provided Aboriginal people with shelter, food and materials for tools.

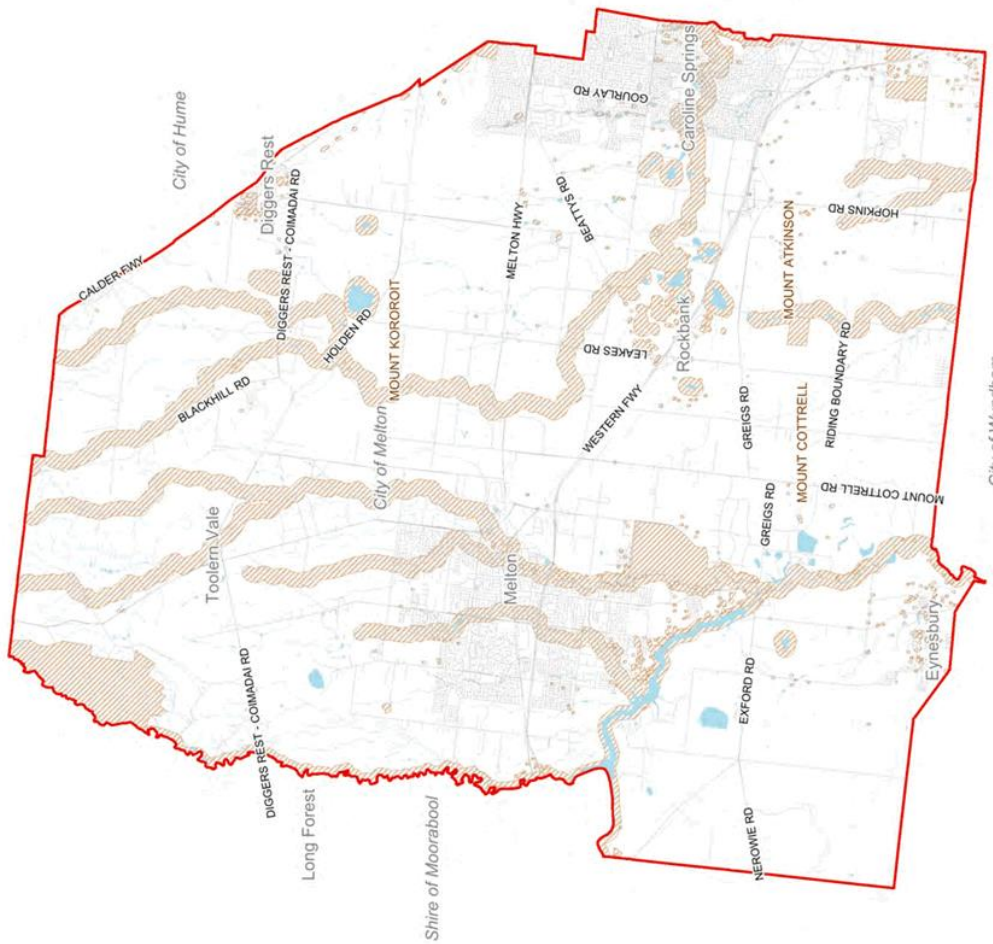
Evidence of the City's Aboriginal heritage exists today in the form of scar trees and stone artefact scatters. Often remaining artefact scatters and sub-surface deposits can be found in close proximity to waterways. This is reflected in the mapping of cultural heritage sensitivity in the area shown on **Map 3**.



Toolern Creek

MAP 3 ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE SENSITIVITY

- Legend**
-  Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity
 -  City of Melton Municipal Boundary
 -  Roads
 -  Watercourse
 -  Waterbodies (Intermittent and Perennial)



EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

One of the first imprints of European settlement on Melton's landscape was the Cadastral subdivision of the landscape into units of ownership, from the 1830s onwards. The Port Phillip District was laid out by T-square and protractor into a myriad of land parcels, most in standard sizes and orientations.

The variations from the standard arise from the interaction between people and landscape. The more closely settled areas are likely to have been those considered to have most potential for stock raising or crop growing. Frontages to watercourses were highly valued because they provided access to water and an aesthetically pleasing setting.

The earliest communication routes – often the roads to the diggings – slash across some parcels, their directness adjusted to connect river crossings and avoid topographical barriers. Generations of subdivision, consolidations and urban development have happened within this framework, which often explains a sharp bend in the road, a row of trees, or the edge of an estate.

Some of the early pastoralists built impressive homesteads, many of which survive today, such as Eynesbury. The Clarke family established a station at Rockbank, the Staughtons at Exford and Eynesbury, and the Taylors at Overnewton. The area obtained its name by association with the hunting countryside around Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire.

GOLD AND RAILWAYS

Pastoral life was interrupted in the 1850s and 1880s by the Gold Rushes. Melton became an important stopping point on the way to the Ballarat gold fields; Diggers Rest performed an equivalent role on the road to the Castlemaine and Sandhurst (Bendigo) diggings.

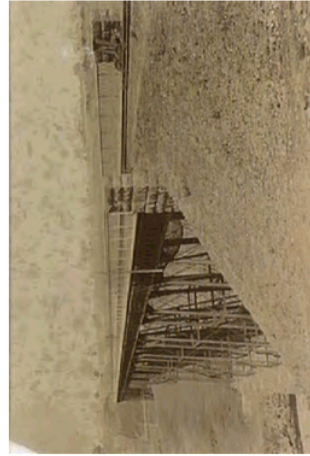
The railway to Bendigo and the River Murray reached Diggers Rest in 1859; Melton had to wait for its station to be built on the direct line from Melbourne to Ballarat, opened in 1884.

In both cases, the railway station was located a considerable distance from the township, a factor that has affected urban structure ever since. In the case of Diggers Rest this, along with an exposed location lacking a watercourse, seems to have stymied its growth prospects. In the case of Melton, it resulted in the establishment of a rival settlement at Melton South.

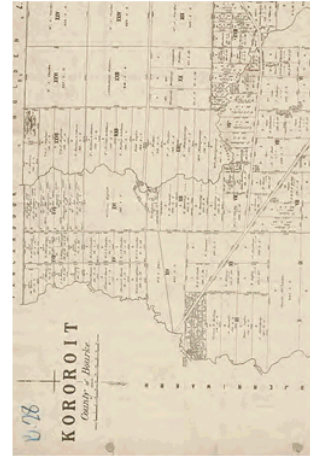
GROWTH OF MELTON

Closer settlement of farms occurred in the first half of the twentieth century, but Melton remained a small rural service centre until prosperity and rising car ownership began to attract more residents. Its population doubled from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, then quadrupled from 1966 to 1971. A shopping mall was built in 1973. Perhaps because of the expanding population catchment, the original shopping centre has continued to thrive, along with a handful of its original buildings.

In 1974 Melton (along with Sunbury) was designated a Satellite City, to accommodate Melbourne's burgeoning growth. Residential development focussed first on the Melton to Melton South axis, then turned north. This led to a rapid roll out of new subdivision and development patterns as the town expanded rapidly to its present size – first curvilinear court-style layouts, then modified grid patterns with



Historic photo of the Melton viaduct sourced from the State Library of Victoria



Historic map of Kororoit Parish showing Djerriwarrh Creek sourced from the State Library of Victoria

has larger than average household sizes. The municipality is growing in cultural diversity with people from over 130 nations.

The City of Melton offers both urban and rural lifestyle opportunities. It is strategically placed within commutable distance to Melbourne, with access to key roads, airports and ports as well as large scale warehousing and distribution centres. Melton continues to be the City's main centre, followed by Caroline Springs.

The Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) was introduced in 2002 (through Amendment VC16). Since that time there have been three major changes to the UGB:

- › C51 in 2005 (affecting parts of Toolern, Taylors Hill West and North Melton);
- › VC68 in 2010 (introduction of new ESO schedules, acquisition of land for the Regional Rail link and expansion of the UGB in Casey, Hume, Melton, Mitchell, Whittlesea and Wyndham LGAs); and
- › C128 in 2012 (included areas identified as Logical Inclusions, mainly around Melton).

These change have seen the municipality and surrounding areas become growth areas for Melbourne and it is planned that Melton will accommodate a significant proportion of the future metropolitan housing needs.

THE CITY OF MELTON'S LANDSCAPES TODAY

The City's urban areas are surrounded by large expanses of rural land which can be broadly characterised into two Landscape Types: the Western Volcanic Plains and the Uplands.

smaller lot sizes. Melton provided an alternative to life in Melbourne's suburban sprawl that was attractive to many, but it has struggled to develop a critical mass of locally-based jobs and services. One result is that many residents must commute long distances – a situation exacerbated by limited public transport services.

SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

While Melton was the epicentre of the municipality's growth for most of the post war era, rapid residential growth is now a characteristic of several parts of the municipality. Starting in the late 1990s, 800 hectares of farmland was transformed into the Caroline Springs master planned community at the municipality's eastern edge, closest to Melbourne. Communities were established in estates, each with their own landscape character.

The surrounding suburbs of Hillside, Taylors Hill, Burnside and Burnside Heights have since been established. Another master planned development has been developed on the Eynesbury estate, centred on the homestead of the Staughton family. Meanwhile, Diggers Rest and Rockbank have more gradually embarked on a transformation from loose collections of wayside dwellings to suburbs in their own right.

Today, the City of Melton (a Shire up to 2012) remains one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia, with its newest areas being Diggers Rest North, Melton North, Rockbank, Taylors Hill West and Toolern. By 2031, it is expected to have once again doubled in population. It is one of the youngest demographics in Victoria, and



Eynesbury's grand homestead



Dry stone walls, a product of volcanic activity and early pastoralists

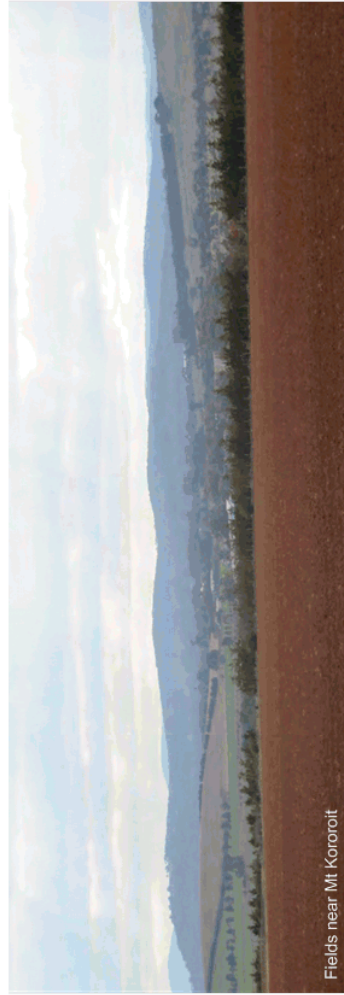
The expansive area of the Volcanic Plains extends across most of the municipality (see **Map 914**, page 37). The distinctively flat and open topography is punctuated by volcanic hills and cones, and crossed by dry stone walls, shelter belts and waterways. The landscape features extensive grasslands and cleared agricultural paddocks; there is a sense of 'big skies', with long-range views to elevated ground or the Melbourne CBD.

The Uplands rise from the Volcanic Plains across the northern parts of the municipality, with the hilly to steep gradients of their rolling topography creating a distinctively contrasting landscape. Parts of the Uplands are also heavily forested.

Across Melton's landscapes are the significant and iconic features of its waterways, forested areas and the volcanic hills and cones. These features create important variations in landform, waterform and vegetation, and are highly visible elements of the natural environment.

Sources:

- > Melton Housing Diversity Strategy (2014)
- > Melton Visitor Information Student Kit (2014)
- > Shire of Melton Heritage Study: Environmental History (2007)
- > DSE & City of Melton, Dry Stone Wall Driving Trail (undated brochure)
- > Shire of Melton Dry Stone Walls Study (2011)
- > profile.id.com.au/melton/
- > communityprofile.com.au/melton
- > economicprofile.com.au/melton
- > melton.vic.gov.au

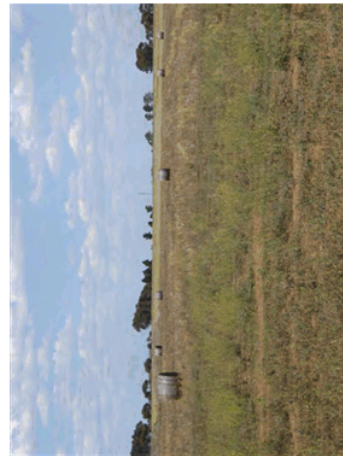


Views across the Melton landscapes can change dramatically across the seasons and as a result of agricultural activity on the land; from vibrant greens to yellows and browns (Images courtesy Melton City Council, 2015)

2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

This section provides an overview of various aspects of the natural environment including geomorphology and geology, topography, water and flora and fauna, as well as the influence of human occupation upon the landscape.

These aspects are described in text and illustrated using maps on the following pages. These show the different layers of natural and human processes that shape the landscape.



Land being used for agriculture

CLIMATE

The City of Melton is subject to a temperate climate with warm summers and cooler winters. Due to its location in the rain shadow of the Macedon Ranges, its annual rainfall is low and erratic. Annual rainfall levels are typically higher in the hillier northern parts of the municipality. The climate lends itself growing wine grapes and fruit, as well as hazelnuts, olives, pome fruit (for example, apples and pears) and lavender in the central and southern parts of the municipality.

FLORA

Existing remnant vegetation in the City of Melton consists of grasslands, open woodland, shrub and riparian vegetation. The majority of treed areas are located on public land, including state park, nature conservation reserves and rail and road reserves.

Melton has significant Grassy Ecosystems and Woodlands protected under federal and state legislation. This includes grassland areas and the Eynesbury Woodland in the south of the municipality. The Western Basalt Plains Grassland is a nationally significant grassland and one of the most endangered vegetation communities in Victoria.

Rare and threatened flora species in the municipality include:

- > Small Scurf-pea (*Cullen parvum*)
- > Spiny Rice-flower (*Pimelea spinescens*)
- > Matted Flax-lily (*Dianella amoena*).
- > Large-headed Fireweed (*Senecio macrocarpus*)
- > Buloke (*Allocasuarina leuhmannii*).

FAUNA

In terms of large fauna, the City of Melton is home to reptiles, birds of prey and waterbirds.

Areas of rocky outcrops, a key feature of the Western Basalt Plains, provide habitats for grassland communities.

Rare or threatened fauna species in the municipality include:

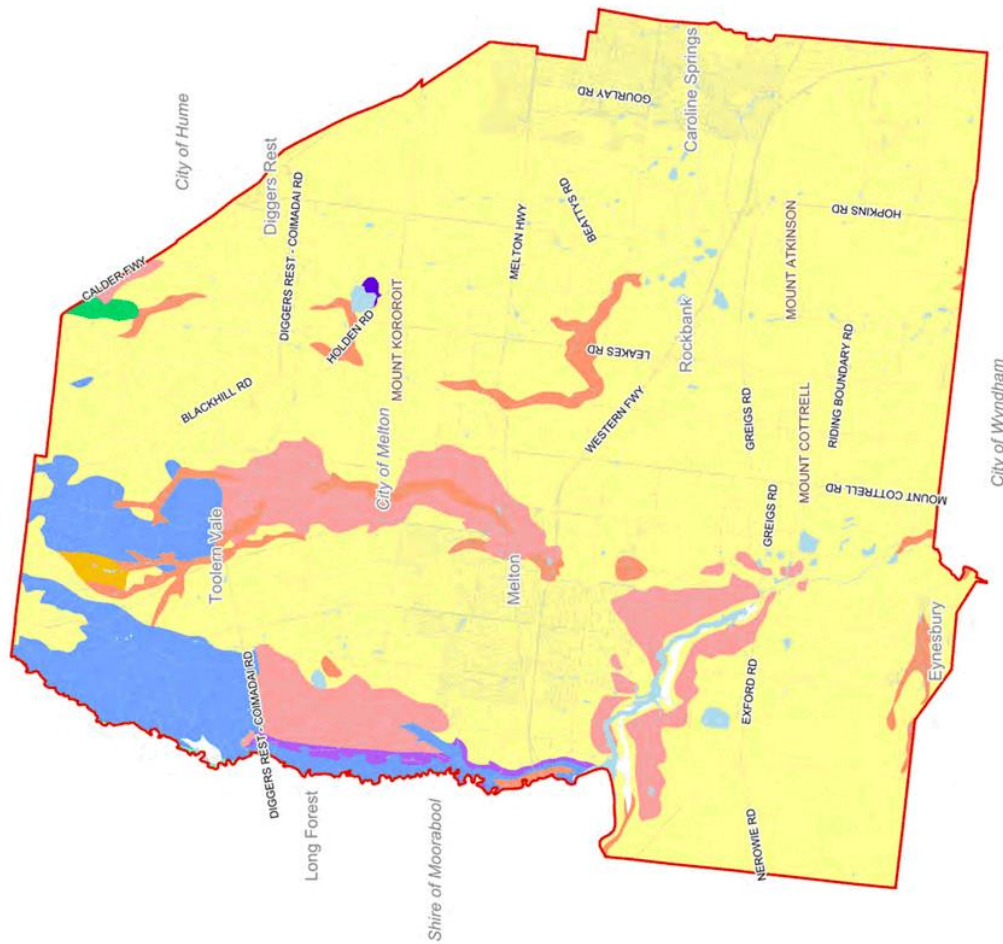
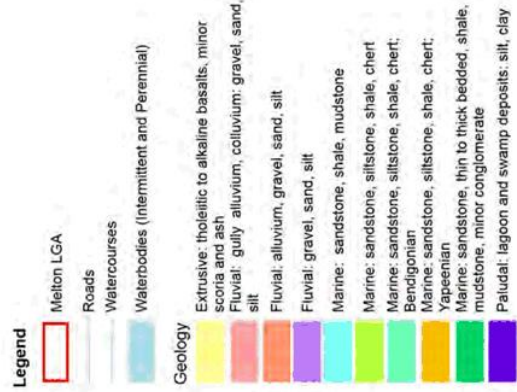
- > Australasian Bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*)
- > Blue-billed Duck (*Oxyura australis*)
- > Fairy Tern (*Sterna nereis*)
- > Orange-bellied Parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*)
- > Plains-wanderer (*Pedionomus torquatus*)
- > Fat-tailed Dunnart (*Sminthopsis crassicaudata*)
- > Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*)
- > Striped Legless Lizard (*Delmar impar*)
- > Growing Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*)
- > Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)



Eucalypts in Toolern Vale

MAP 4 GEOLOGY

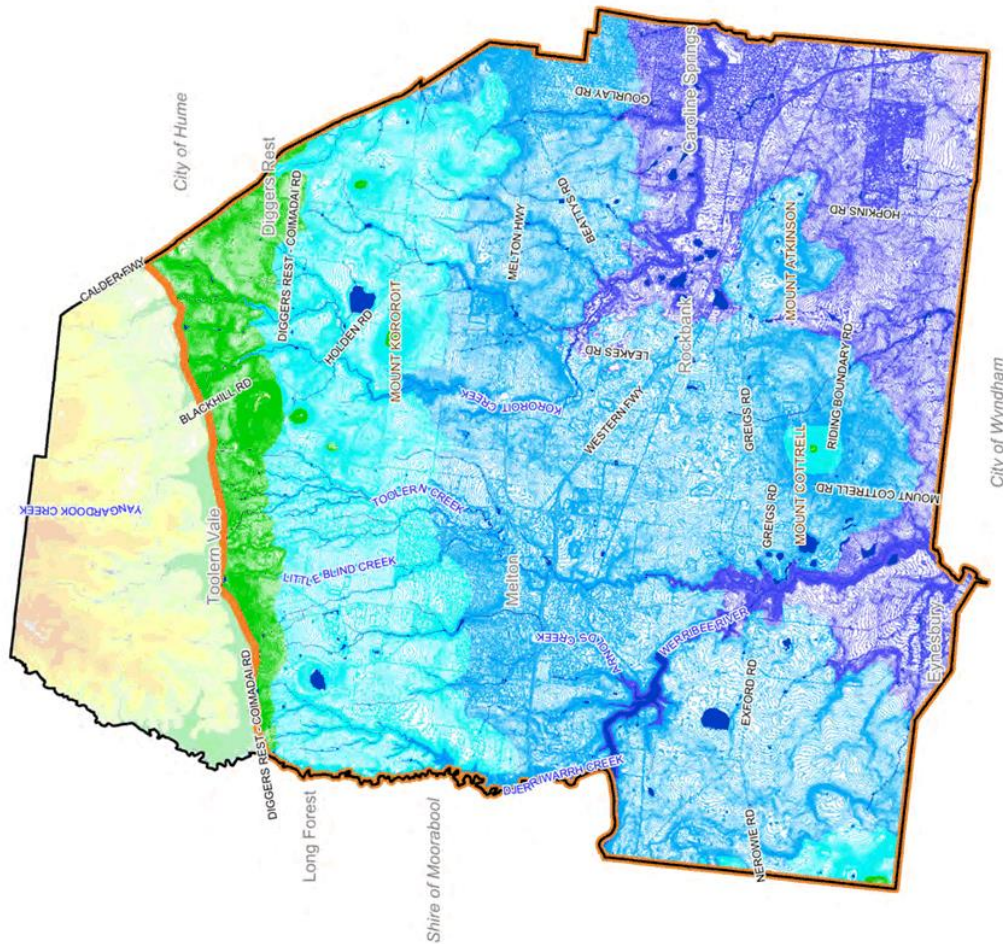
The City of Melton's geology reflects the way land has been formed and changed over time, including its volcanic and climatic history. **Map 4** shows the expansive basaltic plains that comprise much of the municipality, with variations in geology evident around the watercourses and the uplands in the north.



MAP 5 LANDFORM & WATERFORM

The landscape in the municipality comprises mostly flat, sweeping plains which rise up to hills in the north, as shown on **Map 5**. Three volcanic cones provide distinct landforms visible across the plains. The Werribee River and northern extensions of Kororoit and Toolern Creeks have carved out the deepest valleys in the area.

The Werribee River, which sources water from Wombat State Forest in the Great Dividing Range, is the main waterway that traverses the City of Melton. Its tributaries are the Arnold, Djerriwarrh, Little Blind, Ryans, Toolern and Yangardook Creeks. The Melton Reservoir is the Werribee River's main storage basin which is primarily used for irrigation. The Kororoit Creek crosses the municipality connecting Toolern Vale and Caroline Springs to Port Phillip Bay.



Legend

0.5m Contour Lines
(Metres above Australian Height Datum)

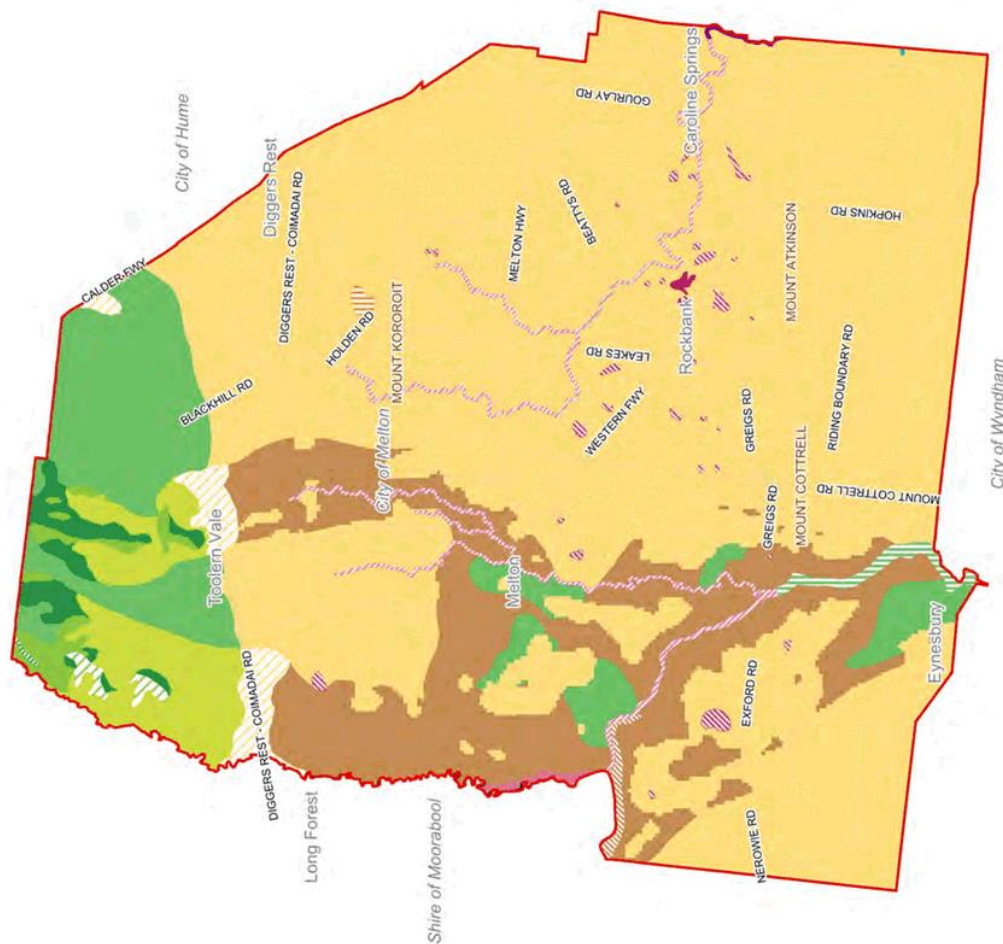
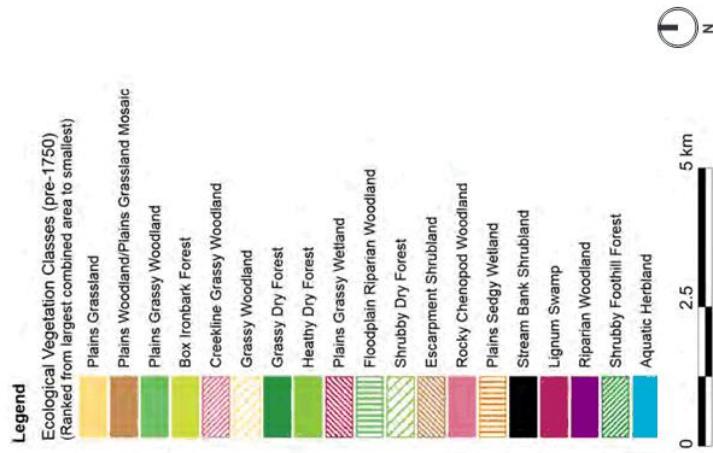
- 450 to 500
- 400 to 450
- 350 to 400
- 300 to 350
- 250 to 300
- 200 to 250
- 150 to 200
- 100 to 150
- 50 to 100
- 0 to 50

- Western Volcanic Plains
- Melton LGA
- Roads
- Watercourses
- Waterbodies (Intermittent and Perennial)



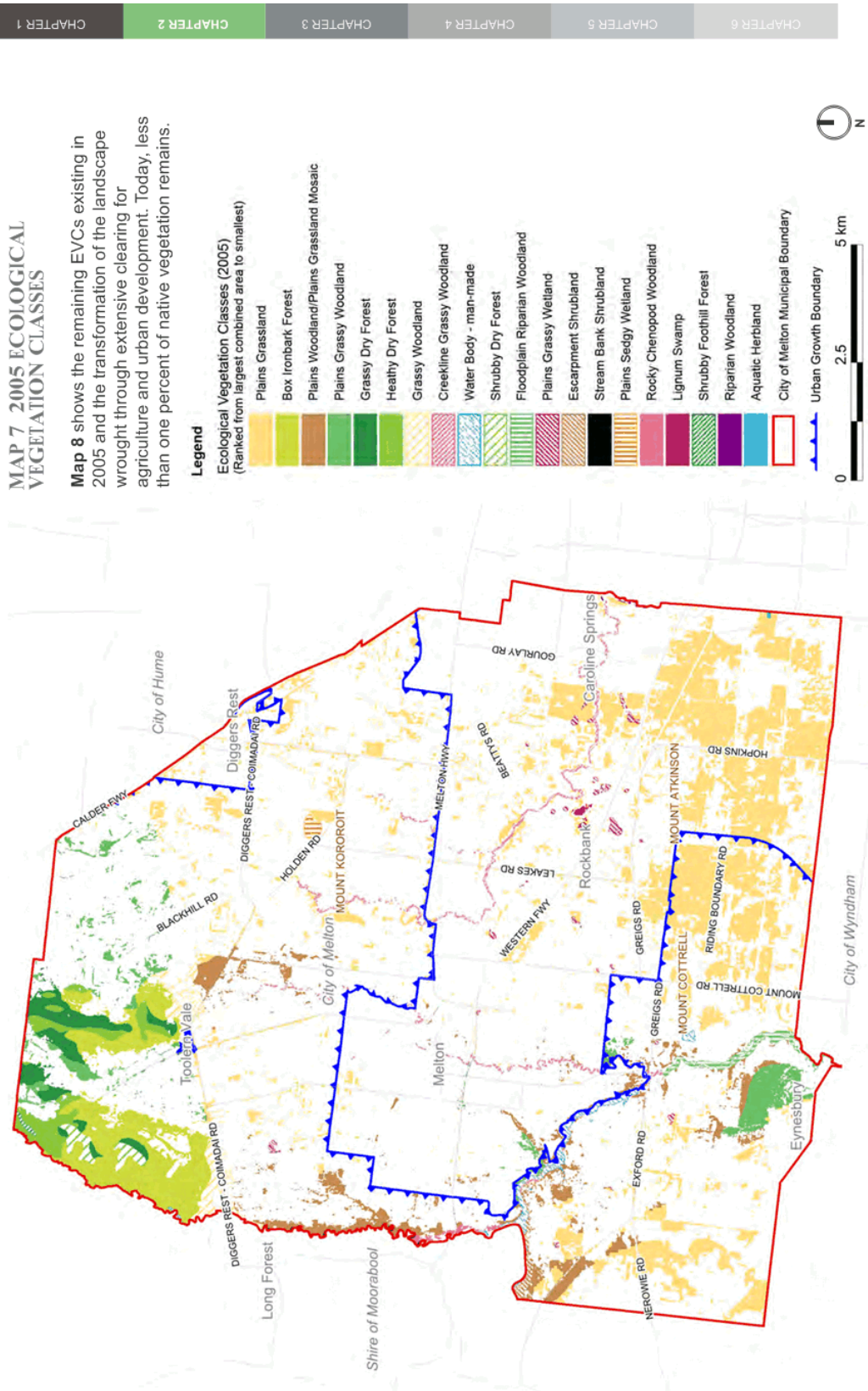
MAP 6 PRE-1750 ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASSES

Map 6 shows the Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) that existed prior to 1750 and European arrival. At that time the landscape was dominated by Grasslands and Grassy Woodlands.



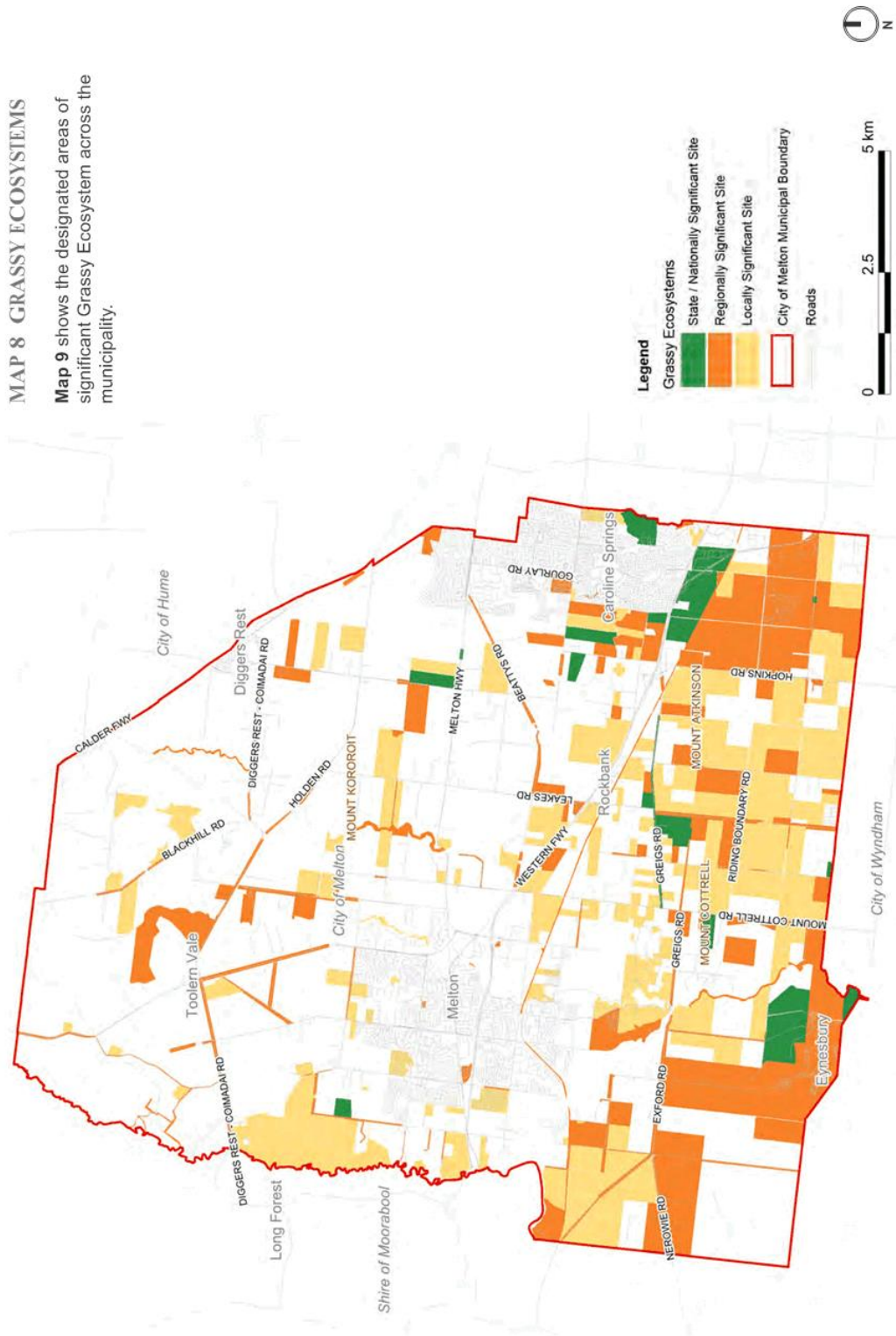
MAP 7 2005 ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASSES

Map 8 shows the remaining EVCs existing in 2005 and the transformation of the landscape wrought through extensive clearing for agriculture and urban development. Today, less than one percent of native vegetation remains.



MAP 8 GRASSY ECOSYSTEMS

Map 9 shows the designated areas of significant Grassy Ecosystem across the municipality.



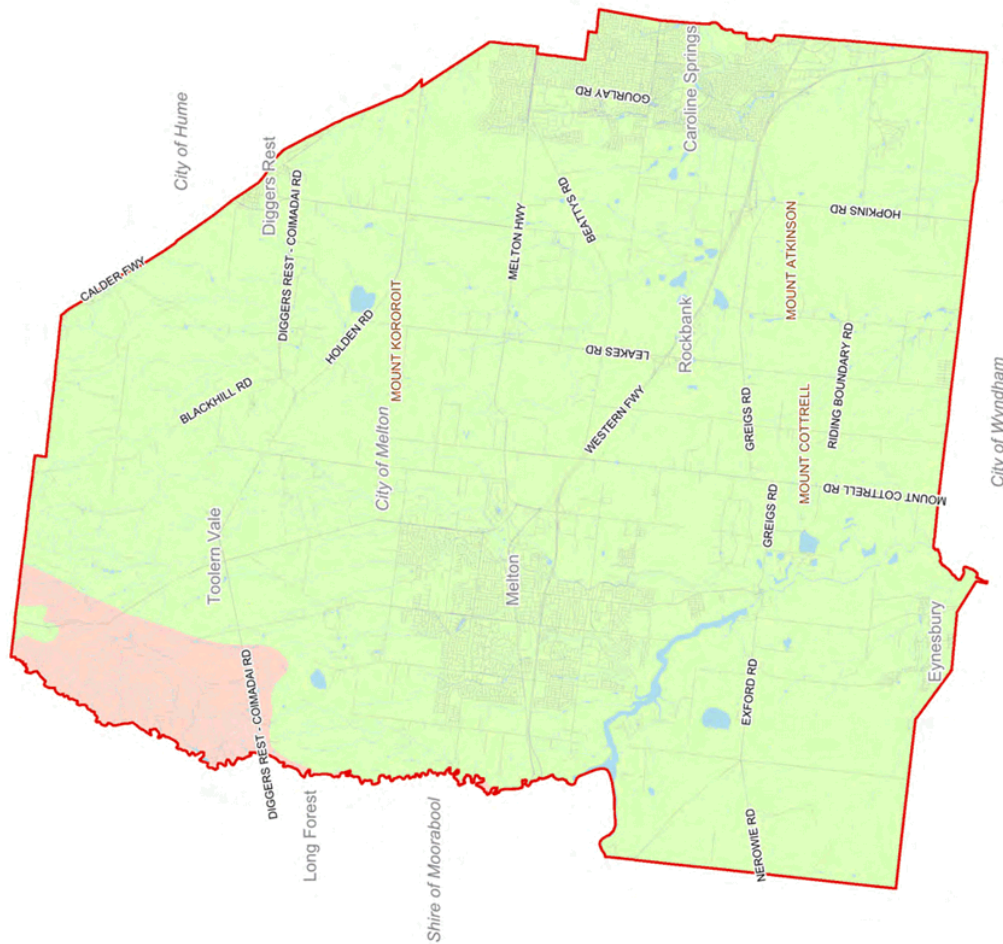
MAP 9 AUSTRALIAN BIOREGIONS

Bioregions are large, geographically distinct areas of land with common characteristics such as geology, landform patterns, climate, ecological features and plant and animal communities. The Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) is a system of bioregional classification applied across the country.

Two IBRA bioregions have been identified within the City of Melton (see **Map 9**). The municipality is located at the eastern edge of the Southern Volcanic Plain bioregion and Victorian Volcanic Plain sub-region. This bioregion, which covers the majority of the municipality, consists of vast flat to undulating plains.

A small portion of the municipality at the north western corner is within the Victorian Midlands bioregion and Central Victorian Uplands sub-region. This bioregion is characterised by undulating rural landscapes with farmland and patches of forest.

Bioregions differ from Character Types (see **Map 14**), which are a classification predominantly defined by visual survey used in aesthetic landscape character studies such as this.



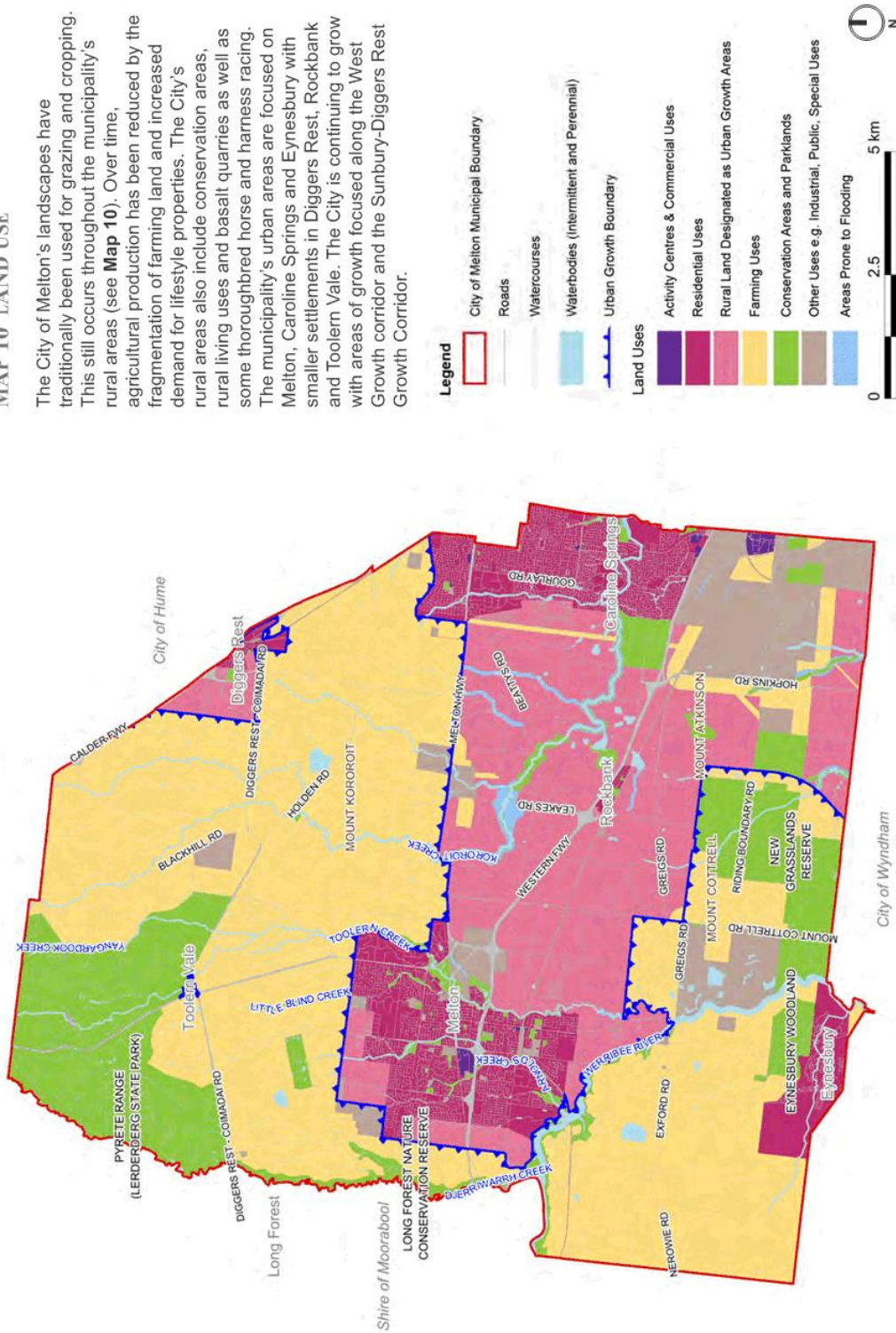
Legend

- Bioregions
 - Central Victorian Uplands
 - Victorian Volcanic Plain
- City of Melton Municipal Boundary
- Roads
- Watercourses
- Waterbodies (intermittent and Perennial)



MAP 10 LAND USE

The City of Melton's landscapes have traditionally been used for grazing and cropping. This still occurs throughout the municipality's rural areas (see **Map 10**). Over time, agricultural production has been reduced by the fragmentation of farming land and increased demand for lifestyle properties. The City's rural areas also include conservation areas, rural living uses and basalt quarries as well as some thoroughbred horse and harness racing. The municipality's urban areas are focused on Melton, Caroline Springs and Eynesbury with smaller settlements in Diggers Rest, Rockbank and Toolern Vale. The City is continuing to grow with areas of growth focused along the West Growth corridor and the Sunbury-Diggers Rest Growth Corridor.





Long Forest Conservation Area

OPEN SPACES & CONSERVATION AREAS

There are a number of significant open spaces and conservation areas within Melton.

The Eynesbury Woodland and Long Forest Nature Conservation Reserve are protected areas of native forest.

The south eastern corner of the Pyrete Range, part of Lerdererg State Park, sits within the City of Melton. This forms part of the larger Toolern Vale Forest, which extends out from the State Park boundaries across rural land. Yangardook Bush Reserve is a small area of protected forest south of the Pyrete Range.

Along both the Kororoit Creek and Djerrawarrh Creek are undeveloped areas of environmental and landscape value. As a part of growth area planning, Rural Conservation Zoned land at Kororoit Creek will become a regional park and land alongside Toolern Creek will also be set aside as a regional park. The Toolern and Kororoit Creek corridors also display high biodiversity values due to communities of Growing Grass Frogs, an endangered species native to the area.

A large area of land within the Rural Conservation Zone, spanning across the southern municipal boundary into the City of Wyndham, will be designated as the new Western Grasslands Reserve.

Bush's Paddock and Pinkerton Forest are also highly valued conservation areas of remnant grassland and woodland.

2.4 LEGISLATION

The following Federal and State legislation is of relevance to landscape assessment.

NATIONAL

- › Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: Environmental legislation to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places, including those found in the City of Melton

STATE

- › Planning and Environment Act 1987: State framework for planning the use, development and protection of land which is implemented through the Melton Planning Scheme in the City of Melton
- › *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*: This key piece of legislation governs the conservation of threatened species and communities as well as the management of potentially threatening processes
- › *Water Act 1989*: Legislation that governs water entitlements and establishes mechanisms for managing Victoria's water resources
- › *Heritage Act 1995*: Legislative framework for heritage protection in Victoria, including historic archaeological sites and artefacts, historic buildings, structures and precincts; gardens, trees and cemeteries, cultural landscapes, shipwrecks and relics, and significant objects.

2.5 MELTON PLANNING SCHEME

The City of Melton has experienced significant changes in growth and land use in recent years, particularly with respect to residential development due to the municipality's proximity to Melbourne. The Melton Planning Scheme is being updated to respond to these land use and development trends, which includes protecting and managing the landscape features identified by this study.

The Melton Planning Scheme, in both State and local policy, seeks to protect significant landscape features as well as environmentally sensitive areas. The planning scheme also aims to manage development with consideration of its impact on the landscape.

Planning schemes set out the rules governing planning decisions under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. The following sections of the Melton Planning Scheme provide planning policy and controls in relation to the municipality's landscapes.

STATE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) provides planning policy that applies across Victoria.

A number of policies at clause 11 *Settlement* are relevant. Clause 11.02-3 *Structure Planning* states that Growth Area Framework Plans will identify the boundaries of landscape values in relation to urban breaks and their management.

West Growth Corridor Plan (2012): This strategy was prepared by the Growth Areas Authority (GAA, now the Metropolitan Planning Authority, MPA) and is a high level integrated land use and transport plan that provides a strategy for the development of the Western Growth Corridor over the coming decades. The plan will guide the delivery of key housing, employment and transport infrastructure in new suburbs and provide a clear strategy for the development of the growth corridors over the next 30 to 40 years. It is intended to provide for housing, jobs, transport, town centres, open space and key infrastructure across our city's newest metropolitan suburbs. The plan also identifies broad transport networks, industrial and employment zones, residential areas and recreation precincts.

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (2013):

The overarching strategy for the protection of biodiversity in the growth corridors. It addresses all relevant matters of state significance, as well as matters of national environmental significance protected under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The strategy also ensures the long term protection of biodiversity in the growth corridors, by setting up a network of conservation areas, and sets out conservation measures to protect important biodiversity outside Melbourne to complement actions within the growth corridors.

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from inappropriate development. The clause includes initiatives such as Landcare, Council's Environment Enhancement Policy and planning controls to encourage revegetation. It also seeks to protect ridge tops, volcanic cones and watercourses.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local planning policies implement the objectives and strategies in the MSS. The Melton Planning Scheme provides policy guidance relating to this project in clauses 22.02, 22.03, 22.08, 22.09 and 22.10.

Clause 22.02 *A Sustainable Environment Policy* aims to protect and conserve the environmental assets of Melton for the benefit of current and future communities. The policy includes objectives and strategies to protect wetlands, waterways, drainage lines, grasslands and other vegetation and to manage flooding. It also requires applications to undertake rural development in accordance with the *Environmental Management Plan Guidelines* (1996).

Clause 22.03 *Recreation and Open Space Networks Policy* aims to provide recreation and open space networks that cater for a variety of life cycle needs. The policy includes objectives that provide for passive and active recreation use, maximise opportunities for multi-use open space and ensuring that open space is appropriately integrated with surrounding land uses.

One of the objectives for Clause 22.05 *Employment Policy* aims to support quality tourist developments that capitalise on and

MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

The City of Melton's Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) provides a strategic planning framework for the municipality. Of key relevance to this project are clauses 21.01 and 21.03.

Clause 21.01 *Snapshot of Melton City in 2014* gives an overview of the City of Melton and discusses its location, growth and proximity to significant areas in the context of metropolitan Melbourne. Clause 21.01-3 *Rural Areas* discusses the non-urban areas of Melton that provide a vital role in providing a buffer between the spread of Melbourne and the rural hinterlands. It discusses the Green Wedge areas along with the traditional land use of agricultural purposes. Clause 21.01-11 *Environment and Landscape Character* discusses the City's major landscape character units of:

- > Grass Plains
- > Lowland Pastures and Woodlands
- > Upland Pastures and Foothills
- > Water Courses
- > Significant Natural Sites

It also discusses the key land management and conservation issues such as:

- > The control of noxious weeds and animals
- > Ensuring suitable land use on Melton's generally fragile environment
- > Conservation of significant natural sites and remnant vegetation.

Clause 21.03 *Planning Vision and Objectives for Melton* outlines the vision for Melton to 2015 and discusses urban growth and protection of the hills north of the Melton township

Clauses 11.03-2 Open Space Management and 11.04-7 Green Wedges also reinforces the need to protect sites and features of landscape and scenic value, as well as scientific, conservation, biodiversity, heritage and geological value. Clause 11.05-2 Melbourne's Hinterland Areas provides for development that has regard to landscapes in the area. Clause 11.05-4 Regional Planning Strategies and principles aims to develop regions and settlements which have a strong identity, are prosperous and are environmentally sustainable.

One of the nine headings in the SPPF is *Environmental and Landscape Values* at Clause 12. In particular, the SPPF provides policy for *Significant Environments and Landscapes* at Clause 12.04. It seeks to protect and conserve environmentally sensitive areas and to protect landscapes and significant open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments.

A number of policies are relevant at Clause 14 *Natural Resource Management*. This includes *Agriculture* (Clause 14.01), *Water* (Clause 14.02) and *Resource Exploration and Extraction* (Clause 14.03). These clauses aim to assist in the conservation and wise use of the natural resources.

Clause 15.03 Heritage aims to conserve and protect the local heritage. This includes Clause 15.03-1 *Heritage Conservation* and Clause 15.03-2 *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage*.

enhance the City's landscape, natural features, and economic base. The policy includes a local policy to preserve areas of broad hectare farming land to allow for a range of agricultural activities and pursuits by discouraging small lot excisions adjacent to productive rural enterprises.

Clause 22.08 *Rural Land Use Policy* seeks to preserve the city's rural land for sustainable and efficient rural land uses and maintain a permanent non-urban buffer between metropolitan Melbourne and the Melton township. It provides important objectives and strategies to maintain and enhance rural landscapes.

Clause 22.09 *Eynesbury Station Policy* provides policy for a large area of land to the south of the City of Melton. It seeks to protect the area's environmental assets, namely the Grey Box forest (referred to as Eynesbury Woodland in this report), and its rural landscape as well as encourage the continued use of Eynesbury station for agriculture. It refers to the *Eynesbury Station Incorporated Plan* (2001).

Clause 22.10 *Stores and Outbuildings Policy* aims to protect areas of open plain, highway routes, historic areas, attractive townships and significant landscapes from inappropriately sited designed stores and outbuildings. The objectives aim to ensure that the siting, design and scale of outbuildings and stores respect the character of an area and does not have a detrimental impact upon visual amenity and the natural landscape.

ZONES

Zones set out the uses permitted for all land within the municipality. The zones that apply in the City of Melton are shown on **Map 11**.

The key zones that apply to Melton City's landscapes are as follows.

The *Green Wedge Zone* applies to most rural land of Melton. The purpose of this zone is to recognise, protect and conserve the land for its agricultural, environmental, historic, landscape, recreational and tourism opportunities, as well as mineral and stone resources. It also encourages use and development that is consistent with sustainable land management practices and farming activities to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the area.

The *Green Wedge A Zone* applies to the western edge of the municipality between Melton West and the Djerriwarrh Creek. The zone aims to provide for the use of land for agriculture and to protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity, natural resources, scenic landscapes and heritage values of the area. It also aims to recognise and protect the amenity of existing rural living areas.

The *Rural Conservation Zone* applies to rural land in the north and south of the municipality and along the Kororoit and Djerriwarrh Creeks. The zone aims to protect and enhance the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, archaeological and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat and cultural values.

The *Farming Zone* provides for the use of land for productive agricultural land. It ensures that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not

adversely affect the use of land for agriculture. In Melton, the areas of Farming Zone that remain are limited, and largely provide a buffer area function to other land uses or zones.

The *Public Park and Recreation Zone* recognises areas for public recreation and open space. It protects and conserves areas of significance where it is appropriate.

The *Public Conservation and Resource Zone* protects and conserves the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values. It provides for appropriate resource based uses.

The *Urban Growth Zone* manages the transition of non-urban land in accordance with a precinct structure plan. To provide for the continued non-urban use of the land until urban development in accordance with a precinct structure plan occurs.

OVERLAYS

Overlays provide additional requirements to a site or area and may apply to a single issue to related set of issues (e.g. heritage, environmental concern, flooding). A number of overlays apply in the City of Melton. Of particular relevance to this project are the Significant Landscape, Environmental Significance and Heritage Overlays.

Significant Landscape Overlay

The *Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)* identifies significant landscapes and aims to conserve and enhance the character of these significant landscapes.

use and development of land for stone extraction does not adversely affect the environment or amenity of the area during or after extraction.

Clause 52.16 *Native Vegetation Precinct Plan* sets out the permit requirements for removal of native vegetation in accordance with a native vegetation plan. It aims to ensure that there is not net loss in the contribution made by native vegetation to Victoria's biodiversity.

Clause 52.17 *Native Vegetation* sets out the permit requirements for removal of native vegetation. It aims to ensure that there is not net loss in the contribution made by native vegetation to Victoria's biodiversity.

Clause 52.37 *Post Boxes and Dry Stone Walls* aims to conserve historic post boxes and dry stone walls. A permit is required to demolish or remove a post box constructed before 1930 or a dry stone wall constructed before 1940.

Clause 52.45 *Resource Recovery* aims to facilitate the establishment and expansion of a Transfer station and/or a Materials recycling facility in appropriate locations with minimal impact on the environment and amenity of the area.

ensure development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.

Many sites included within the Heritage Overlay are related to Melton's pastoral history, such as dry stone walls, stone cottages, dams and farming structures, and are relevant to considering the cultural heritage of the City's landscapes.

The HO has been used to protect historic development on individual properties. In another instance, a proposed HO is currently being addressed through an amendment to the Melton Planning Scheme (Reference C100). This will be used to protect the form and heritage significance of dry stone walls not currently protected across parts of the network of walls that exists in the City of Melton.

PARTICULAR PROVISIONS

Particular provisions apply to a range of particular uses or developments across Victoria, such as advertising signs and car parking.

Clause 52.37 is relevant to the City of Melton because numerous dry stone walls are present.

Clause 52.08 *Earth and Energy Resources Industry* encourages land to be used and developed for exploration and extraction of earth and energy resources in accordance with acceptable environmental standards. This includes Clause 52.08-2 Mineral

Extraction which requires the application to be accompanied by a number of documents and be referred to the relevant authorities.

Clause 52.09 *Stone Extraction and Extractive Industry Interest Areas* aims to ensure that the

There is one Schedule to the SLO in the Melton Planning Scheme - SLO1 Volcanic Hills and Cones, which applies to three sites within the municipality - Mount Atkinson, Mount Kororoit and Mount Cottrell (see **Map 12**).

SLO1 aims to protect and conserve the volcanic hills and cones from inappropriate development and to help to conserve the existing visual amenity and rural landscapes.

Environmental Significance Overlay

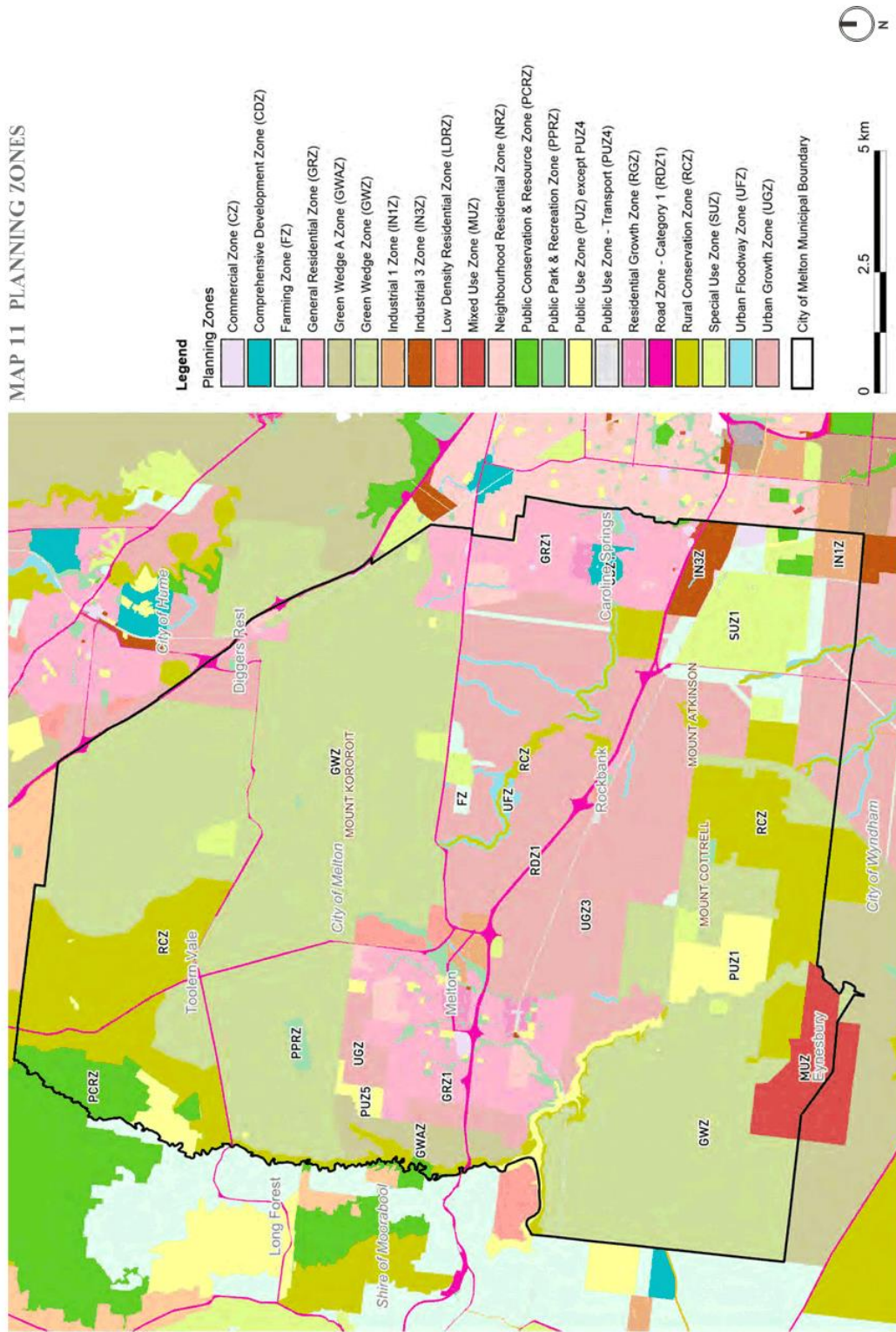
The *Environmental Significance Overlay* applies to many areas in Melton, mostly along rivers, creeks and areas of vegetation such as grasslands as shown on **Map 12**.

It identifies areas where the development of land may be affected by environmental constraints. It also ensures that development is compatible with identified environmental values. The schedules to the overlay are:

- > Schedule 1 *Remnant Woodlands, Open Forests and Grasslands*
- > Schedule 2 *Wetlands, Waterways and Riparian Strips*
- > Schedule 3 *Western Grassland reserves*
- > Schedule 4 *Grasslands within the Werribee Plains Hinterland*
- > Schedule 5 *Rural Conservation Area*

Heritage Overlay

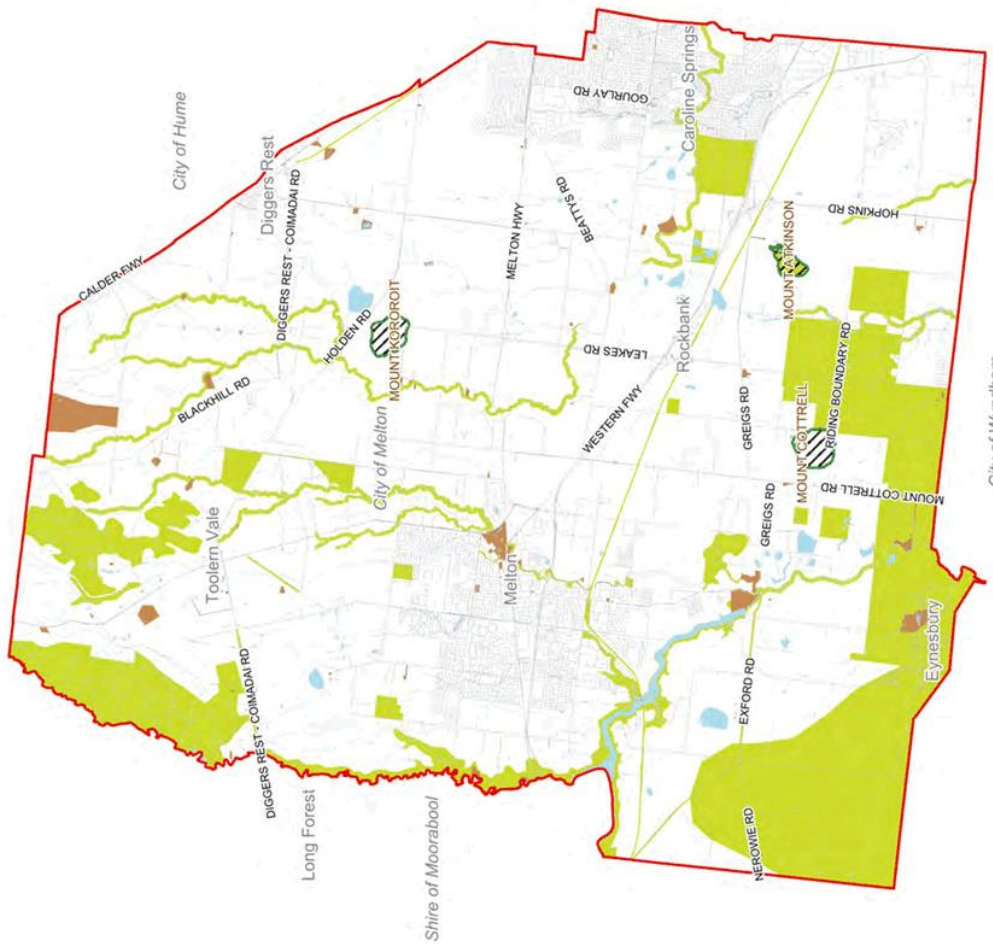
The *Heritage Overlay* in Melton applies to pockets of small residential areas and sites throughout the municipality as shown on **Map 12**. It seeks to conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance and to



MAP 12 PLANNING OVERLAYS

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- Legend**
- Overlays**
- Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)
 - Heritage Overlay (HO)
 - Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)
 - City of Melton Municipal Boundary
 - Roads
 - Watercourses
 - Waterbodies (Intermittent and Perennial)

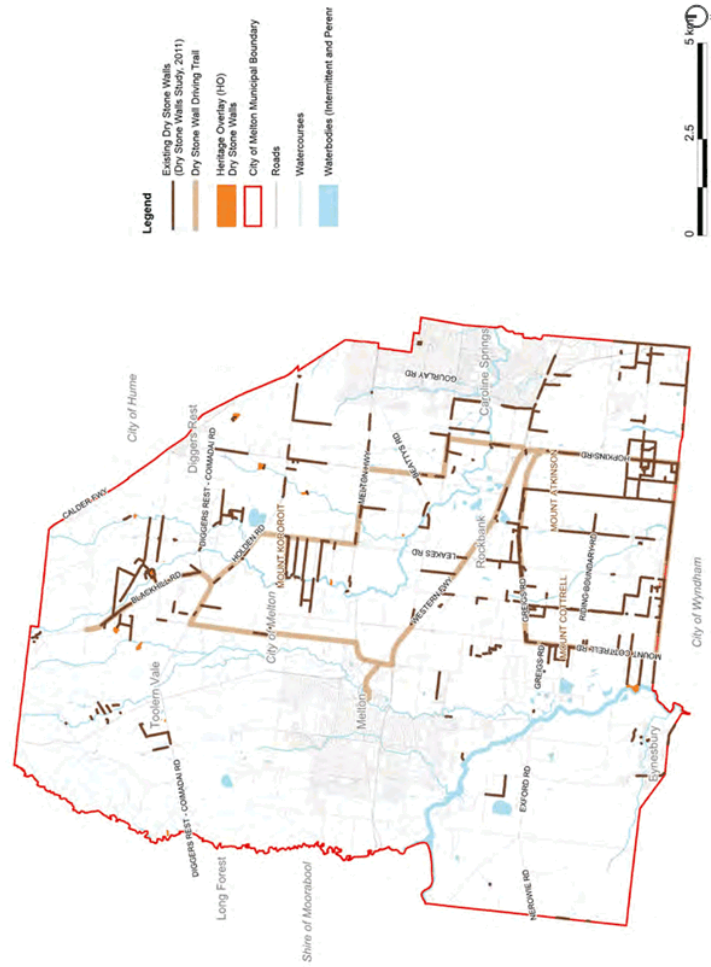


2.6 STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

Other important strategic reference documents have been reviewed as a part of this study, providing invaluable background information:

- > Dry Stone Wall Driving Trail Brochure
- > Dry Stone Walls Study (2011)
- > Melton Council Plan 2013-2017
- > Melton Environmental Atlas (2007)
- > Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- > Plan Melbourne (2014)
- > Port Phillip & Western Port Regional Catchment Strategy (Online 2012)
- > Sites of geological and geomorphological significance in the western region of Melbourne / N.J. Rosengren
- > South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study (2013)
- > Werribee River Shared Trail Strategy (2013)
- > Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan (2013)
- > National Trust Classification Reports for the Werribee River, Long Forest Mallee and the Western Basalt Plains.

MAP 13 DRY STONE WALLS & DRIVING TRAIL



DOCUMENT	OVERVIEW	IMPLICATIONS	DOCUMENT	OVERVIEW	IMPLICATIONS
Environmental Atlas (2007)	The Environmental Atlas analyses the natural resources and environment in the City of Melton to help improve the ecological and socioeconomic sustainability of the municipality. The atlas presents spatial data and analysis to underpin strategic planning and decision-making in Melton's rural areas within the Green Wedge Zone.	The environmental analysis is a very useful input into the identification of landscape character and significance.	Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017	The plan identifies community health and wellbeing needs and issues, establishing clear service planning and strategic priorities for a period of four years.	One of the objectives in this plan is to encourage an inclusive and connected community that promotes cultural diversity and harmony. This includes appreciation of the diverse landscape and heritage of the municipality.
Dry Stone Wall Driving Trail Brochure	This brochure outlines a driving trail to view dry stone walls in Melton's rural areas and explains their history and significance.	This brochure identifies the location and cultural significance of dry stone walls, which are a notable landscape feature.	Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan (2014)	This plan aims to provide a framework to support sustainable land use, land management and development of Melton's Western Plains North Green Wedge (WPNGW) area.	The plan recommended that this project be undertaken and that planning controls should be applied to significant landscapes. It also seeks to advocate for a significant landscape component to be included between the proposed Outer Metropolitan Ring Road and the WPNGW.
Melton Council Plan 2013-2017	The Council Plan sets out the strategic planning direction for the Council and the community. The Council Plan represents the priorities of Melton for the near and medium term future.	The plan establishes objectives to conserve and enhance rural landscapes, waterways and heritage places.			The plan provides strategic guidance for the WPNGW, at the north of the municipality. The vision for the area is of beautiful, well-managed, expansive rural landscapes.
Werribee River Shared Trail Strategy (2013)	The Werribee River Shared Trail Strategy provides a plan for a shared path along the Werribee River between Wyndham and Melton.	As a major waterway in the west of Melbourne, the Werribee River is a key landscape feature. Improving public access to river will allow wider appreciation of this significant aspect of Melton's landscape, and the trail will ultimately become a key landscape viewing corridor.			This plan provides detailed recommendations to protect, enhance and recognise biodiversity and dry stone walls. As part of this it suggests developing an 'environmental' driving trail that takes visitors to roadside grassland reserves and the viewpoint from Melton-Gisborne Road.

DOCUMENT	OVERVIEW	IMPLICATIONS	DOCUMENT	OVERVIEW	IMPLICATIONS
South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study (2013)	The South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study identifies the landscape character and significant landscapes in areas abutting the City of Melton on its western side.	The study identifies two Character Types along the boundary with the City of Melton: Western Volcanic Plain and The Uplands Character Types. It is important that there is a consistent and coordinated approach to landscape management for land on either side of the municipal boundary. There are no areas of State or regional significance identified in the study that abut the City of Melton.	Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (2013)	The strategy forms part of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment to inform the preparation of the Growth Area Framework Plans and to ensure a high level of guidance. The strategy splits metropolitan Melbourne into four growth corridors with Melton located in the Western growth corridor. A number of conservation areas are highlighted in this strategy of biodiversity importance.	The strategy highlights a number of areas that require protection for conservation within the growth corridors. A number of these conservation areas are located within the municipality's boundaries. Some of these areas may be of significance.
West Growth Corridor Plan (2012)	The plan sets the strategic direction for future urban development of land that was included within the UGB as part of its 2010 review. The plan identifies areas for housing, employment, transport, town centres, open space and key public infrastructure. A framework is set by the MPA to guide development of the vision.	The plan discusses the growth corridor's landscape, environment and open space. It notes that these features are significant and provide an important natural setting for amenity, sense of place and access to open space in the future.	Port Phillip & Western Port Regional Catchment Strategy (Online 2012)	The strategy provides a plan for protecting environmental assets and coordinating organisations involved in environmental management for the Port Phillip and Western Port catchment. The strategy includes objectives, priorities and targets.	The City of Melton sits within the Port Phillip and Western Port regional catchment. The website includes an interactive map with useful information about broad targets for the area and records of native vegetation and animals.
Plan Melbourne (2014)	The strategy provides a vision, objectives and strategies for the development of metropolitan Melbourne through to 2050.	The plan seeks to establish a permanent metropolitan growth boundary to protect the values of non-urban land, including the protection of significant landscapes.	Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999	The EPBC Act is the Australian Government's environmental legislation which provides for the protection and conservation of the environment and biodiversity.	The EPBC Act identifies nationally threatened species and ecological communities. A significant area of the critically endangered Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain is located in the City of Melton. The City of Melton includes species on the threatened species lists such as the Golden Sun Moth (critically endangered), Button Winkletwort (endangered) and the Growing Grass Frog (vulnerable).

DOCUMENT	OVERVIEW	IMPLICATIONS	DOCUMENT	OVERVIEW	IMPLICATIONS
Various Precinct Structure Plans in the City of Melton	<p>PSPs are master plans of communities which provide direction to new large development areas. PSPs lay out roads, shopping centres, school, parks, housing, employment, connections to transport, biodiversity, cultural heritage, infrastructure provision and council charges. PSPs in Melton include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Robinsons Road Employment Area South (approved) › Diggers Rest (approved) › Melton North (approved) › Rockbank North (approved) › Taylors Hill West (approved) › Toolern (approved) › Toolern Park (approved) › Rockbank (under preparation) › Plumpton (under preparation) › Kororoit (under preparation) › Mt Atkinson (under preparation) and › Tarnait (under preparation) › Paynes Road (under preparation) 	<p>Precinct Structure Plans in the City of Melton have set land aside required by the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the conservation of significant biodiversity areas.</p>	National Trust Classification Reports	<p>National Trust Classification Reports for the Werribee River, Long Forest Mallee and the Western Basalt Plains document the significance of these landscapes which in the Trust's view are 'essential to the heritage of Australia and which must be preserved'. The reports include descriptions and assessments of the physical, geological, historical and environmental aspects of the landscapes.</p>	<p>These reports form valuable background information in the identification of significant landscapes within Melton. Importantly, they also discuss threats to the landscapes which should be managed into the future.</p>

2.7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community values are sourced through communication and consultation with the people who live or work in, or visit, the study area.

Landscapes hold different values for different people. Some people may enjoy the scenic values and settings of landscapes. Others may appreciate the habitats they provide for wildlife, or their potential for productivity and economic return.

PREVIOUS CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Consultation was undertaken as part of the Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan (2014) that is relevant to this project in relation to the northern section of the study area. The community was engaged as part of two rounds of consultation, one in May 2013 and the second in November 2013, which involved a number of workshops.

Feedback indicated that the community placed importance on the conservation and management of biodiversity.

In the Stakeholder Response survey, The respondents to the following questions generally agreed to the statements of:

- › Consider the creation of environmental and biodiversity strategies and schemes which both celebrate and actively improve

environmental values and assets within the green wedge.

- › Seek to establish Council as the focal point for conservation initiatives in the green wedge.

- › Seek to protect key environmental attributes within the green wedge.

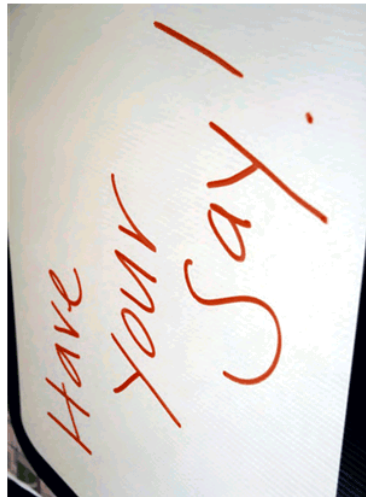
Some suggestions and other comments include comments about the environment. The comments included:

- › More focus on conservation of flora and fauna
- › Higher priority for maintenance of areas of native vegetation.
- › Careful planning of wildlife corridors
- › Consideration to protect waterway health and water catchments
- › More detail and practical statements around the protection of the environment
- › Protection of the Djerrivarrh Creek corridor
- › Exploration of potential subsidies for biodiversity outcomes
- › Better databases of surveys done as some responses tend to be misleading.
- › More education on the value of native grasslands.
- › Requirement of the use of native species on developments.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The process of community engagement for Melton Landscapes commenced with the circulation of postcards promoting the Significant Landscape Features Strategy, in April 2015. Following this, a photo competition was run on the project Facebook page to encourage the community to post their favourite natural landscape in Melton. Photographs received included wide panoramas showing landscape features (including Mt Kororoit), as well as historical, agricultural and waterway bushland scenes.

In addition to ongoing web engagement with the community, a formal consultation process was held in late August and September 2015 to assess this draft strategy. This process involved sessions aimed at presentation and discussion of the work so far, as well as a period during which members of the community were encouraged to provide written feedback to the draft strategy.



2.8 COMMUNITY VALUES

The feedback received from the photo competition demonstrated that the community places high value on the iconic landscapes identified by the survey; the Volcanic Cones, Forested Areas and Waterways of Melton. Some images showcased Melton's city centre, or illustrated the impact of agricultural land uses on the landscape, and showed people enjoying the natural features of the municipality, including those found in urban areas.

Further identification and analysis of community values has been included in **Section 2.9** and **2.10** of the report, following the community engagement phase on the draft strategy.

2.9 SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS

Twelve submissions were made to the Draft Significant Landscape Features Strategy and represented a variety of stakeholders. The most strongly represented group was landowners subject to potential changes in the planning overlay controls as a result of the Strategy's recommendations. However, some service authorities and landholders with commercial interests also responded to the draft document. An outline of the key concerns can be grouped into the following themes:

- › Comments on proposed changes to the existing planning overlay controls
- › Comments on the proposed Landscape Management Guidelines
- › Comments on the report details and anomalies in the text.

RELATIONSHIP OF STRATEGY TO EXISTING & PROPOSED PLANNING CONTROLS

Some submissions made about the SLO1 - Volcanic Hills and Cones affecting Mt Kororoit suggested the western part of the overlay boundary should stop at Leakes Road as a man-made barrier on the east of Leakes Road.

Concerns were raised that there would be a lack of flexibility in the proposed updated overlay controls, additional permit triggers, and increased costs associated with new land use or development as a result of the proposed changes.

Some submissions requested clarification regarding use of the term 'buffer' as part of the updated overlay mapping methodology, and requested further clarification about the function of planning controls and permit triggers (including application of landscape management guidelines such as those included in Appendix A in these areas).

DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The submissions highlighted that the community and particularly landowners in SLO or ESO areas are seeking further detail with regard to the format of any proposed changes to the planning scheme, including the wording of the Landscape Management Guidelines, and which additional requirements would apply to their land. Submitters requested greater detail about how the landscape management guidelines (Appendix A) will be applied and when they will be triggered with regard to new applications or activities.

The relationship of tree planting and agricultural outbuildings to the Landscape Management development Guidelines was highlighted as an area of inconsistency in the report, as exotic tree shelterbelts and farm buildings may be part of the identified character, but may not be sought to be placed or designed in the same way in future development. With regard to tree planting some submissions raised the fact that the volcanic plain is traditionally quite treeless and questioned whether planting native vegetation as screening would improve the landscape or be equally conspicuous.

Some submissions considered the impact of design guidelines in concert with expanded overlay controls, and were concerned that this may impose onerous requirements on landowners seeking to develop their properties.

REPORT DETAILS

Use of the word 'prohibit' in draft policy recommendations referring to built form and development above a certain contour line for the proposed revisions to the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) on the volcanic cones received a strong reaction in a number of submissions. A recommendation from the submissions was to use the word 'discourage' rather than 'prohibit' with regard to the siting of built form to ensure some flexibility in the planning permit application assessment stage.

Some questions were raised regarding the methodology for establishing an extension to overlay boundaries around significant features for the ESO and SLO, and while details were included in the draft strategy, the recommended approach has been strengthened and clarified as a result of consultation (refer to Chapter 6 of this report).

NEW INFORMATION

The Exford Werribee River Grassy Woodlands and Riverine Area as well as the Pawarrn Gorge and Exford Parwan Grasslands were identified as significant landscapes that were acknowledged but could be further emphasised in the report.



Toolern Vale (view from Benson Road)

siting of buildings to ensure that views to a landscape feature can be protected as part of the factors and spaces that contribute to a feature's ongoing visual significance. The use of this term required clarification in the report as a number of submissions raised concerns that the definition and delineation of a buffer area around a feature was not presented clearly enough. This concern was most evident when discussing the cones and recommended extension to the SLO1 overlay areas covering Mt Kororoit, Mt Cottrell and Mt Atkinson.

Concerns regarding terminology used in the draft version of the report have been addressed in clarifying changes to the report which expand on the explanations and recommendations previously included. In a number of instances, the term 'buffer' has been revised to refer to a "core cone area" (the main peak and slope of the cones, for the most part currently covered by the overlays) and a "cone environs area" (the landscape setting, shallower parts of the volcanic cone slope and a distance in which the landscape guidelines are still recommended to apply). This approach and clarification is included in greater detail in Chapter 6 of this report.

In response to comments that the SLO1 on Mt Kororoit should be reduced, it is important to note that this report does not recommend a reduction in the existing extent of the SLO. Rather, it is recommended that the SLO be extended so that the impact of future development upon this feature can be determined through the planning permit application process.

2.10 RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

It is important to acknowledge the character identified in the first part of the report is not necessarily the preferred future character for Melton. The policy approaches and changes recommended in this report seek to fill an identified gap that existing planning controls, particularly with regard for future design and development that could better acknowledge and respond to visual landscape features.

Melton is rapidly developing and it is important that significant features are identified and protected for the benefit of future generations. Comments put forward in the submissions raised legitimate concerns that policy should be flexible and enable future statutory planning decisions to consider local context and individual conditions. Decision guidelines and a local policies recommended as part of this report will assist the planning assessment process.

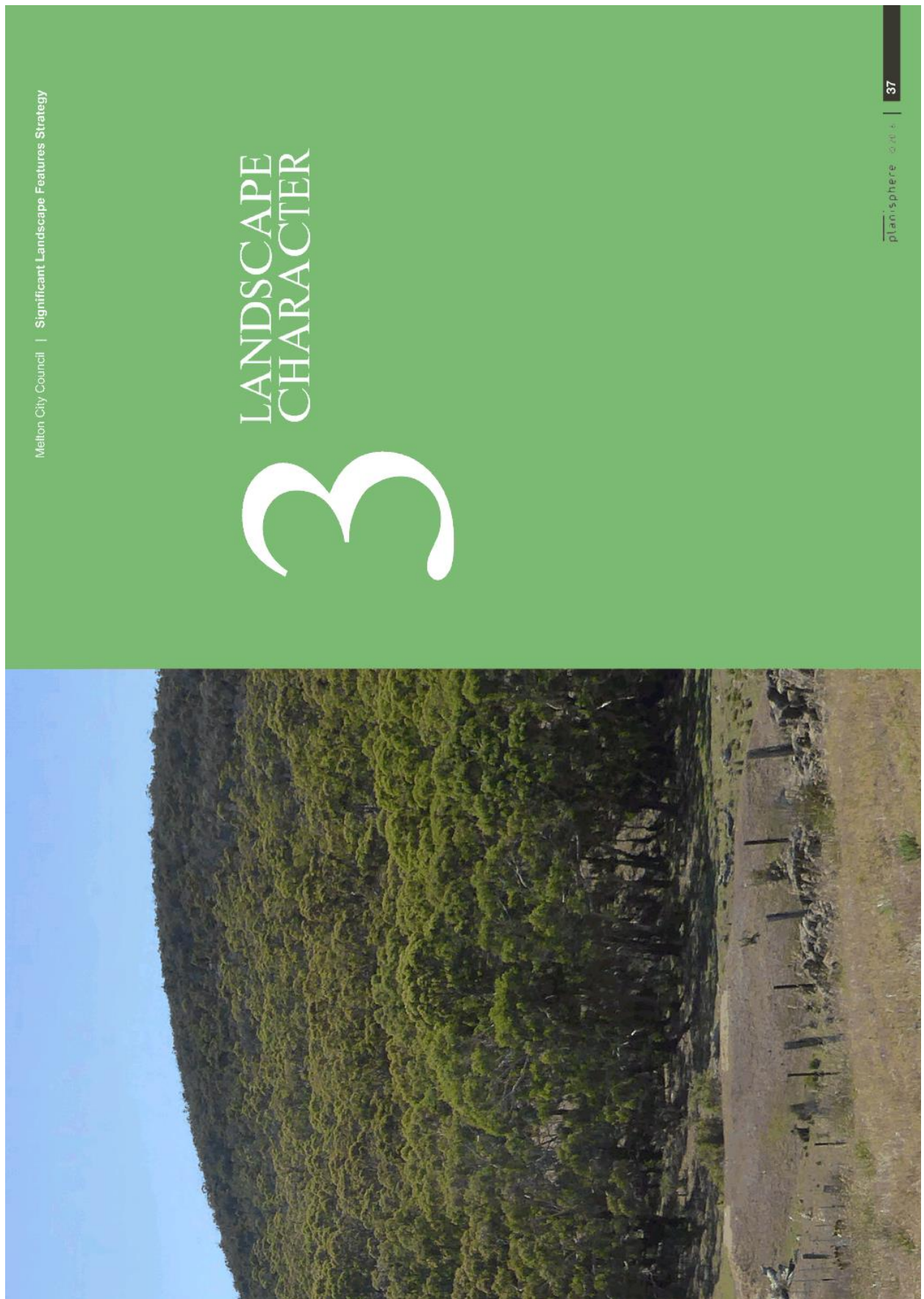
The submissions call for greater detail and clarity surrounding mapping approaches to the recommended overlay extensions, and clarification of the definition of 'buffer' areas recommended for establishment around significant landscape features.

In the draft version of the report exhibited for public comment, the "Mapping the Overlays" section and other parts of the document referred to "buffers" around landscape features. This is a term used to describe the landscape setting, or context, in which a significant landscape feature sits. Often, the buffer area is used as an area to manage development, design and



Significant Landscape Features Strategy | Melton City Council

View towards Toolern Vale Forest
Image: Planisphere, 2015



Melton City Council | Significant Landscape Features Strategy

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3

3.1 INTRODUCTION

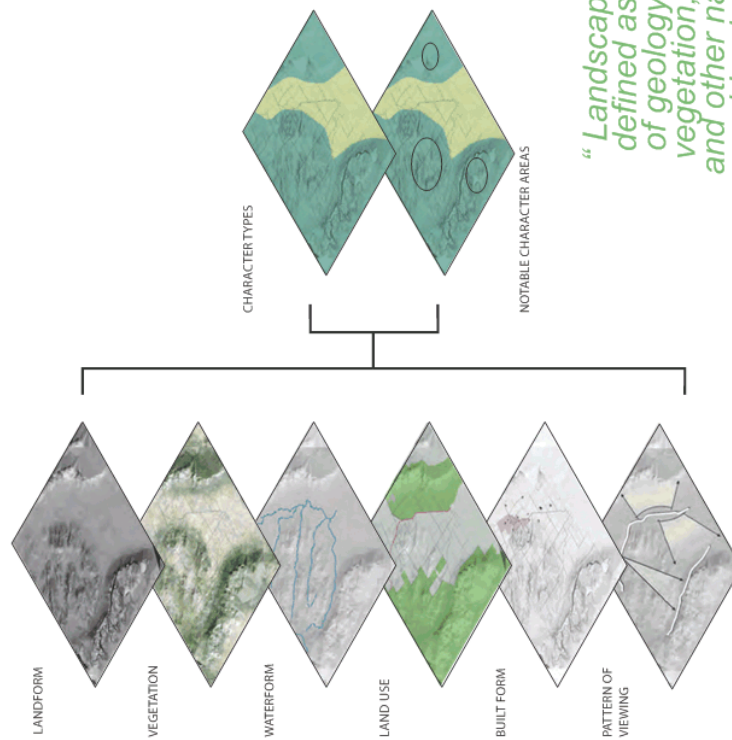
Landscape character is defined as the interplay of geology, topography, vegetation, water bodies and other natural features, combined with the effects of land use and built development, which makes one landscape different from another.

The starting point in preparing a landscape strategy is to understand and document the area's underlying landscape character. This forms the basis and context for identifying areas of landscape significance.

Two landscape Character Types have been identified within the City of Melton, based on broad areas of common physical, environmental and cultural characteristics - the Western Volcanic Plain and the Uplands.

These were identified through a study of key landscape character elements including landform, waterform, vegetation and land use and built form, together with a detailed field survey. The two Character Types are shown on **Map 14** opposite.







The identification of these of Character Types has been informed in part by the two Bioregions identified within Melton, as reflections of key elements of the landscape, such as its geological, ecological and vegetative features. However, the boundary between the two areas has been amended from the Bioregional mapping to reflect the changes in topography and vegetation cover between the two Character Types, which are key observations of the visual assessment undertaken for this study.

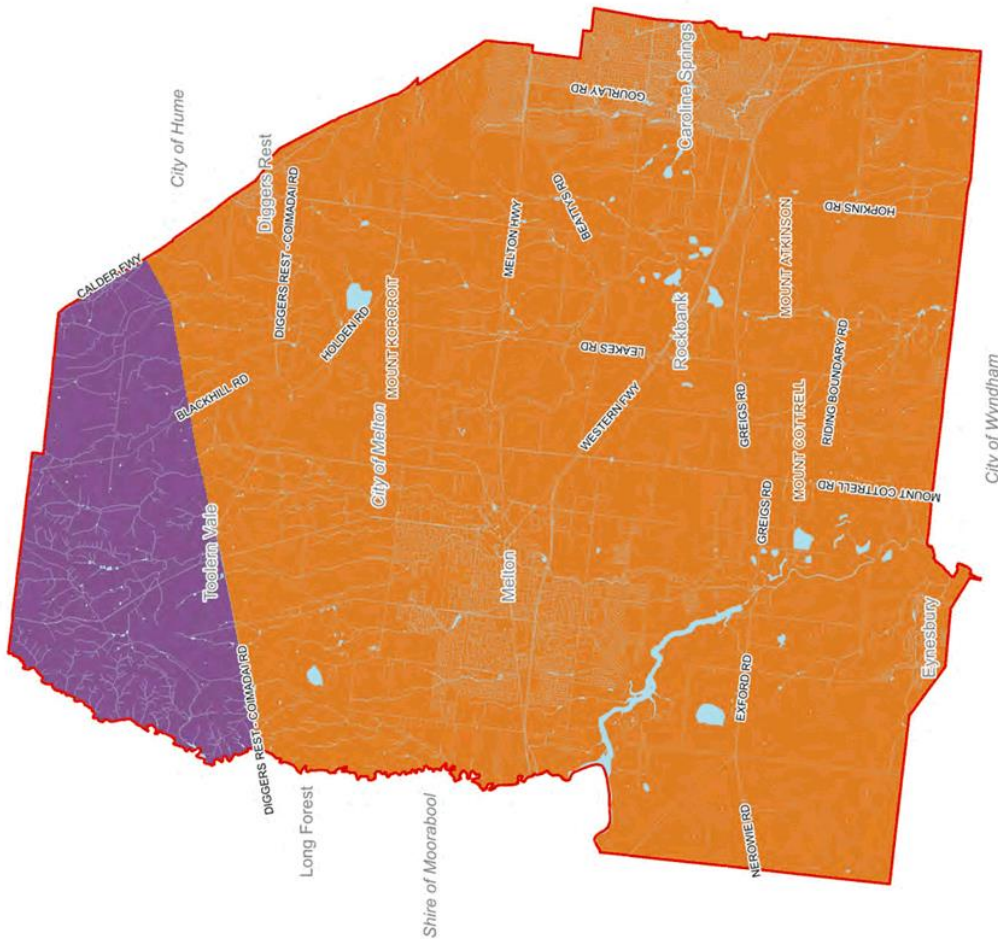


“Landscape character is defined as the interplay of geology, topography, vegetation, water bodies and other natural features, combined with the effects of land use and built development, which makes one landscape different from another”

MAP 14 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

Legend:

-  Uplands
-  Western Volcanic Plains
-  Melton LGA
-  Roads
-  Watercourses
-  Waterbodies (Intermittent and Perennial)



3.2 WESTERN VOLCANIC PLAIN

DESCRIPTION

Volcanic activity has shaped much of the landscape across western Victoria. The Western Volcanic Plain comprises vast basaltic plains that extend from the South Australian border to western Melbourne. Scattered across these plains are stony rises, old lava flows and volcanic cones which together create a unique visual landscape.

A large part of Melton's landscape is included within the Western Volcanic Plain. The vast, flat landscape features open grasslands, interrupted by the volcanic cones of Mount Kororoit, Mount Cottrell and Mount Atkinson.

This is a place of big skies, long views with volcanic rises that punctuate the horizon. When the first European settlers arrived they found the land primed for agriculture as it contained very few trees. Shelterbelts of cypress and pine were planted to protect crops and livestock from the winds that sweep the plain and are now a defining characteristic of the Character Type.

Many paddocks and roadsides are edged with beautifully formed dry stone walls that were created when early pastoralists cleared the land of rocks for agricultural purposes, to contain stock and to control vermin.

The majority of the City of Melton is included in this Character Type, characterised by generally flat topography with occasional low, volcanic

rises. The large, open paddocks are sometimes divided by shelter belts and low, transparent post and wire style fencing, which is occasionally supported by dry stone walls.

Native grasslands and areas of remnant trees are located throughout the area. Most trees in this Character Type are located along waterways and at Eynesbury Woodland, a key feature of the area.

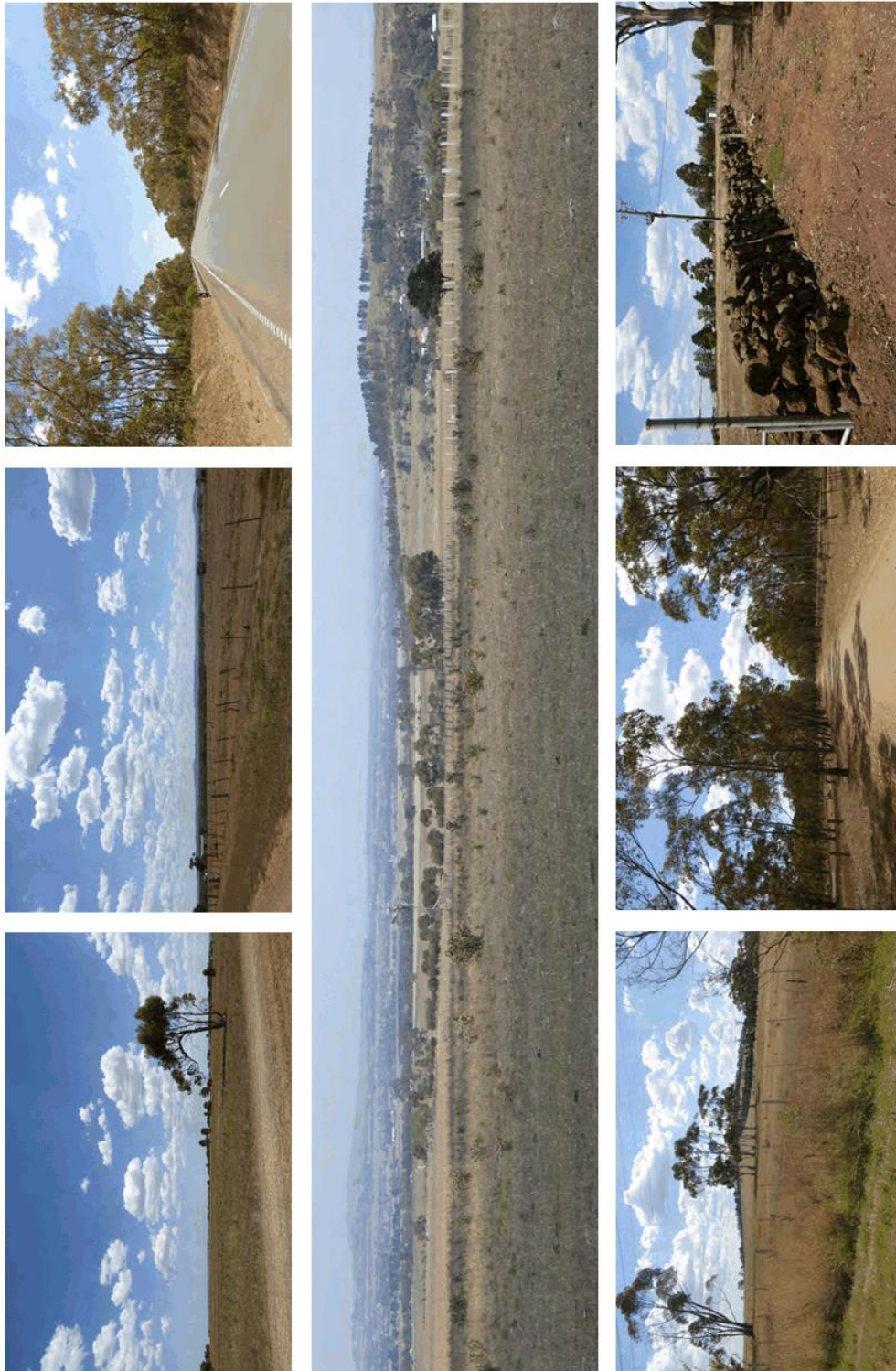
Shelterbelt planting along property frontages and paddock edges is common on the windswept plains. Farm houses and outbuildings are scattered throughout, with a smaller subdivision pattern occurring on the perimeter of the townships. Rocks are often grouped into piles in paddocks in an attempt to clear the land and make it more arable for farming.

Key Characteristics

- > Flat to undulating cleared agricultural plains
- > Extensive areas of grasslands which are an intrinsic aspect of the Volcanic Plains character, and some of which have a high environmental value
- > Volcanic features punctuating the landscape
- > Dry stone walls
- > Largely underdeveloped character
- > Mostly sparse tree cover, with occasional trees scattered across paddocks
- > Areas of heavier tree cover in some locations along creek corridors or roadsides, and within small patches forest
- > Rich, red volcanic soils
- > Exotic shelterbelts

“The valleys of the Werribee and its tributaries are here very beautiful... On the whole ... the finest I have seen in the colony.”

Governor Sir Richard Bourke's description of the area near the three branches of the Werribee (presumably Lerderderg River, Panwan River and Djerriwarrah Creek junction) during his visit to the new colony at Port Phillip



LANDFORM

The landform of the Western Volcanic Plain is flat to gently undulating basaltic plains. The three volcanic cones of Mount Kororoit, Mount Cottrell and Mount Atkinson rise up to between 140 m (Mt Atkinson) and 230 m (Mt Kororoit) in height to punctuate this landscape, and are visible from long distances. Geological features in the landscape also include stony rises, lava flows and exposed bedrock.

Refer to the Volcanic Cones & Hills significant landscape in Chapter 4 for a description of Mount Kororoit, Mount Cottrell and Mount Atkinson.

Sheoak Hill is a low, rounded volcanic cone rising above the surrounding pastoral land towards the north of the municipality. Quarrying has seen the removal of part of the formation, and ultimately it is likely to be completely removed.

WATERFORM

A number of waterways traverse the Western Volcanic Plain. These are a key point of visual interest and reference in the landscape. While some of the waterways are ephemeral, such as the Djerriwarrh Creek, they have carved valleys through the landscape, some of which are deeply incised and key features of the landscape.

The Werribee River, the main waterway in the City, cuts through the volcanic plain creating a deep incision in the landscape. The Melton Reservoir, located on the Werribee River, holds water for the Werribee Irrigation District.

Tributaries of the Werribee River include Djerriwarrh Creek, Toolern Creek, Arnolds Creek and Little Blind Creek which generally travel north-south across the City. Arnolds, Toolern and Little Blind Creeks form the basis of linear reserves through the urban areas around Melton. The Djerriwarrh Creek forms part of the Long Forest Nature Conservation Reserve, located mainly in the City of Wyndham. In summer, many of the creeks become dry. Refer to the Waterways significant landscape in



View of the Western Volcanic Plains from Mount Cottrell

Chapter 4 for more detail regarding the Werribee River, Djerriwarrh Creek, Kororoit Creek, Toolern Creek and other smaller creeks.

A limited number of wetlands are evident in the area. This includes Deans Marsh Wetlands and Paynes Road South Wetlands protected by Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 2 (ESO2).

VEGETATION

The Western Volcanic Plains is largely a grassland landscape devoid of trees. The 268 hectare Grey Box Forest at Eynesbury is a notable exception. Key areas of grassland and the Grey Box Forest comprise significant remnant vegetation in the City of Melton.

Property edges are often identified by exotic shelter belts. Linear bands of native trees that snake across the landscape indicate the location of waterways. These bands are dotted with river red gums.

Grasslands

Grasslands are an intrinsic feature of the Western Volcanic Plains. Many of these



Shelterbelts and dry stone walls criss-cross the landscape

grasslands are environmentally significant, protected by the Melton Planning Scheme as well as state and federal legislation. The Western Basalt Plains Grassland is one of the most endangered Victorian vegetation communities. The Volcanic Plains grasslands are predominantly home to perennial tussock-style grasses, such as Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) and Wallaby Grasses (*Rytidosperma* spp.) (Williams et al., 2015).

Forested Areas

Refer to the Forested Areas significant landscape in Chapter 4 for a description of Ryans Lane Woodland, Eynesbury Woodland, Long Forest Nature Conservation Reserve and Melton Gilgai Woodlands Nature Conservation Reserve.

A number of other remnant woodlands are found scattered throughout the municipality. They are found in small groups of similar or same species of vegetation. They are mostly found near waterways.

Shelterbelts

Shelterbelts, vegetated barriers to mitigate wind and provide shelter, are common across the landscape. They form patterns, delineating property boundaries.

LAND USE & BUILT FORM

Land outside of built up areas is generally used for agricultural purposes, including grazing or cropping. Agricultural buildings are dotted throughout the plains and settlements are generally sparse.

Extensive urban areas have and will be developed across these plains as metropolitan Melbourne expands west. Seas of roofs and tall fences interface open plains at the edge of the current growth front. Currently the largest of these settlements are based around Melton and Caroline Springs with smaller settlements at Eynesbury, Rockbank and Diggers Rest.

Rocks in Paddocks

Basaltic stones, thought to have covered 20-50% of the volcanic plains, are a key feature of the landscape. While some rocky outcrops remain in paddocks, many stones are found in piles on properties and have been cleared for farming since European settlement. These stones are important habitat for native wildlife.

Stone Cottages

Early stone cottages, testifying to the area's settlement history, can be spotted in the landscape.

Dry Stone Walls

Dry stone walls, erected by early European settlers for boundary definition and internal stock management, are typically low in the City of Melton and is one of ten types identified in the Dry Stone Walls Study. The Clarkes were responsible for the construction of nearly half the dry stone walls in the municipality, with 74 km of extant walls built as part of Clarke's Rockbank Estate.

Bridges

Historic bridges in the area contribute to the landscape character. Notable bridges in the

area are the grand Melton viaduct bridge over the Werribee River and the now disused Djerriwarrh bridge, at the western edge of the municipality. Several historic timber bridges, which are now unusable, are important features of the landscape and remnants of the area's pastoral history.

Homesteads

Some homesteads from the pastoral era remain but are often hidden from view. Publicly visible and accessible, Eynesbury Homestead is a central feature to the Eynesbury town centre's entry.



Disused wooden bridge across Toolern Creek



1860s Stone Cottage at Toolern Vale, visible from Blackhill Road (image, Victorian Heritage Database)

LANDSCAPE VALUES

Landscape values include aesthetic (visual and non-visual), historic, environmental, scientific and other social values. A range of sources have been used to identify the landscape values of the Western Volcanic Plains, such as field survey, a review of existing studies and documentation.

Historic

- > City of Melton lies within the traditional lands of the Wathaurong and Wurundjeri tribes of the Kulin Nation
- > Many post-contact place names commemorating the Aboriginal heritage of the area (Djerriwarth, Yangardook, Kororoit) (Shire of Melton Heritage Study Stage 2: Environmental History, 2006, p. 12)
- > Waterways, an important landscape features, travelling routes, sources of livelihood and meeting places for Aboriginal people, including Kororoit Creek which separated two of the Wurundjeri clans
- > Dry stone walls and stone cottages constructed by early European settlers
- > Early homesteads such as the Eynesbury Homestead
- > Harry Houdini's flight, Australia's first officially recorded controlled powered flight on March 18, 1910 at Plumpton Dam, Diggers Rest
- > Mount Kororoit, a 'camping ground' by Aborigines prior to and following European contact (Shire of Melton Heritage Study Stage 2: Environmental History, 2006, p. 14)
- > Patterns of early European settlement and subdivision, including routes linking homesteads.

Environmental / Scientific

- > Significant Grassy Ecosystems and Woodlands protected under federal and state legislation including the Eynesbury Woodland and grassland areas
- > Long Forest Flora and Fauna Reserve and Banchory Grove Grassland, Melton Gilgai Woodlands, Mount Cottrell and Ravenhall Nature Conservation Reserves, protected areas on the IUCN list Category IA (Strict Nature Reserve)
- > Clarke Road, Kororoit Creek K36 and Werribee River Streamside Reserves, protected areas on the IUCN list Category III (Natural Monument or Feature)
- > Rare and threatened flora and fauna species including but not limiting to Spiny Rice-flower, Pains Yams-daisy, Pale Spike Sedge, Golden Sun Moth, Fat-Tailed Dunnart, Austral Crane's-bill and Growling Grass Frog
- > Remnant grasslands providing habitat for fauna and mitigating land degradation
- > Network of waterway reserves providing a valuable wildlife corridor (e.g. Arnolds Creek biolink through Melton West running from the Pyrete Range through to the Werribee River at Melton Reservoir owned by Parks Victoria and managed by Melton Shire)
- > Land within the City of Melton and Wyndham will be designated as a new Western Grasslands Reserve due to its high conservation values
- > Volcanic plain's rich soils due to the weathering of basaltic flows which has benefits for agricultural production.

Social

- > Dry stone walls driving tour
- > Melton township heritage walking trail which provides a self-guided tour about the history of Melton's settlement
- > Community friends groups that protect and conserve Melton's waterways and parklands
- > Opportunities for bird watching due to the diverse range of birds, including birds of prey, in wetlands and woodlands
- > Opportunities for high quality interpretation of one of Victoria's most subtle and least well understood natural environments
- > Indigenous and non-indigenous cultural ties to the landscape and natural environment.

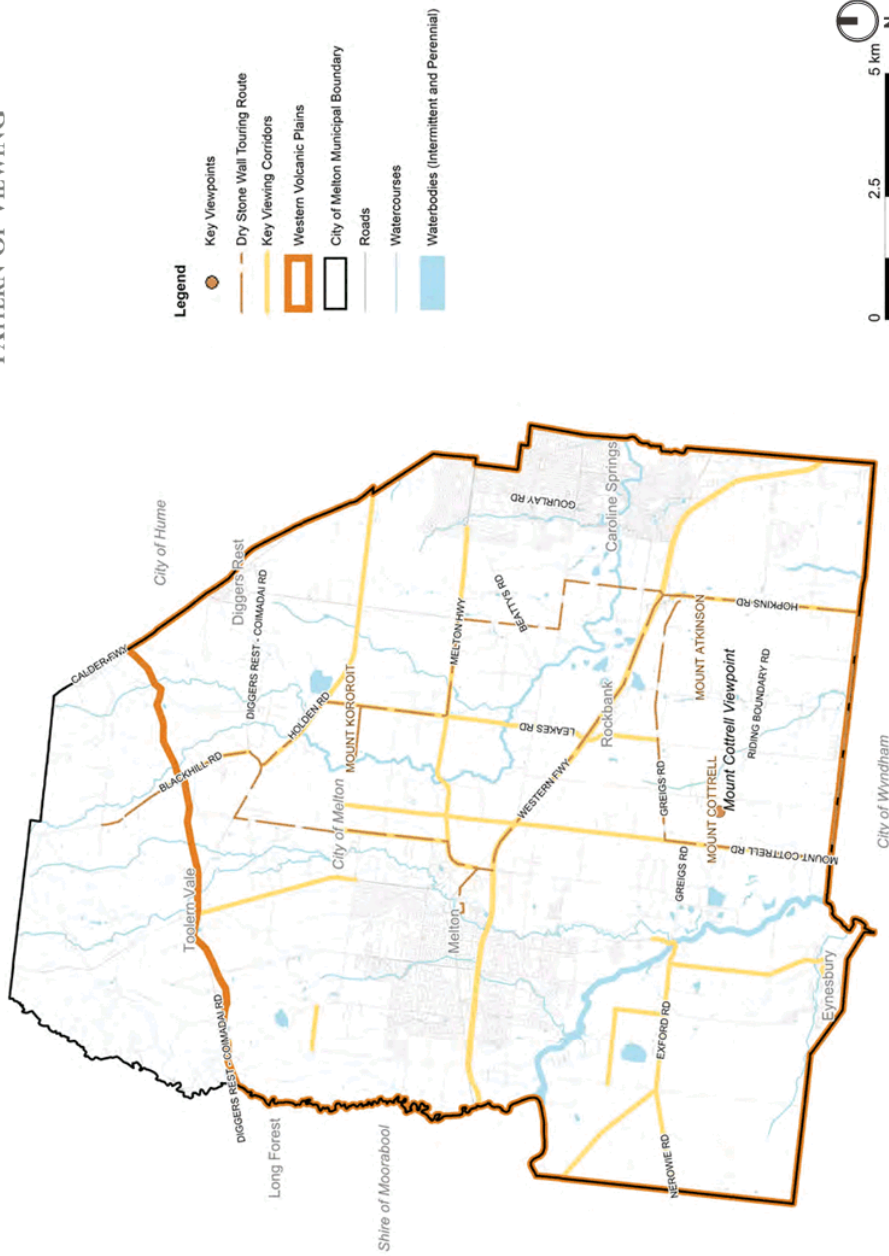
PATTERN OF VIEWING

The majority of views are over flat to undulating plains with volcanic features occasionally visible on the horizon. Shelterbelts and roadside planting consistently filter views. A number of long range views are available to Melbourne's CBD and surrounding ranges including the You Yangs and Mount Macedon.

The volcanic cones are the key high points in this Landscape Character Type, allowing panoramic views across the landscape, over flat agricultural land and towards the adjacent Uplands which rise majestically from the Western Volcanic Plain.

A Dry Stone Wall Driving Trail is a tourist route that takes the visitor to the rural lands between Melton and Caroline Springs. The trail, mostly located on sealed roads and some well maintained unsealed roads, takes visitors to dry stone walls in the open rural landscape.

MAP 15 WESTERN VOLCANIC PLAIN
PATTERN OF VIEWING



Viewing Corridors

There are numerous key viewing corridors which traverse this landscape Character Type:

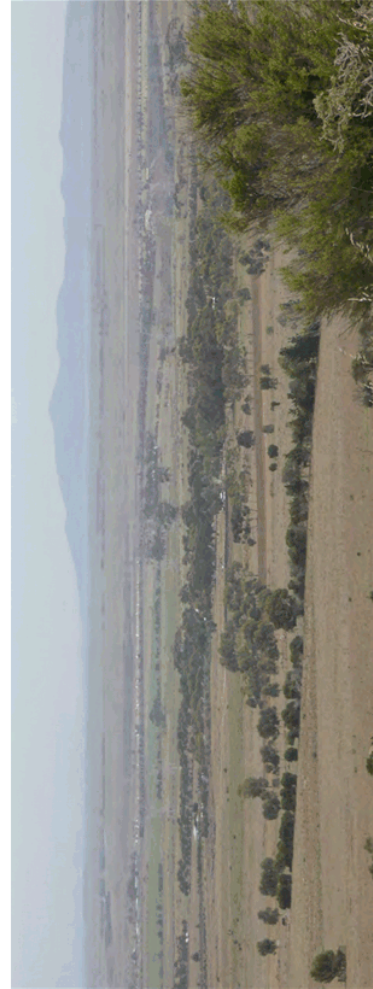
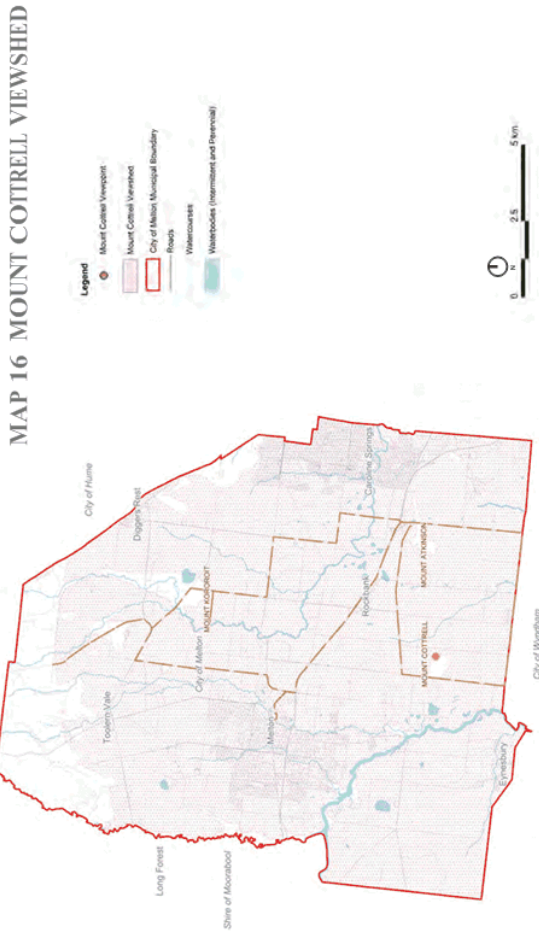
- > Calder Freeway & Western Freeway
- > Melton Highway
- > Blackhill Road
- > Exford Road
- > Eynesbury Road
- > Gisborne-Melton Road
- > Holden Road
- > Hopkins Road
- > Leakes Road
- > Mount Cottrell Road
- > Murphys Road
- > Nerowie Road
- > Porteous Road

Viewpoint

The peak of Mount Cottrell provides expansive views across the flat to undulating plains in all directions, and north into the Uplands. The view offers uninterrupted long-range views to the You Yangs, Mount Macedon and Melbourne's CBD.

This is the key viewing location for the Volcanic Cones landscape. While not publicly accessible, the land is publicly owned.

The extent of the viewed from Mount Cottrell is shown on the map opposite.



Looking south from Mount Cottrell with the You Yangs in the distance

3.3 UPLANDS

DESCRIPTION

Defined by topography, this diverse Character Type rises dramatically to the north of the flat volcanic plain.

Granitic intrusions have formed steeply sloping peaks and ridges, some of which are carpeted in vegetation at higher elevations and in creek valleys. These areas are visible from a distance throughout the City of Melton.

While the Uplands are largely cleared for agriculture they also support numerous large areas of public land, including conservation areas, reserves and state forests which contain a wealth of vegetation. This is an area of contrasting topography, lush forests and rolling agricultural countryside.

Key Characteristics

- › Hilly topography
- › Bare hills and valleys as well as forested ridges and creek valleys
- › Undeveloped character
- › Limited public access
- › Public land (Lerderberg State Park Pyrete Range) and conservation areas (zoned Rural Conservation)

LANDFORM

The rugged landform in this Character Type continually rises up northwards from the Western Volcanic Plain. Forested high points in and connecting to the Pyrete Range include Stringybark Hill and the lower Casey and Western Hills. Between Gisborne-Melton Road and Blackhill Road, Flagstaff Hill, Gilby Hill, Green Hill and the Black Hills form part of the Toolern Vale Forest. Between these forested areas lies the Toolern Creek valley and Cabbage Tree Hill. East of the forested areas are higher areas carved up by creek valleys and featuring Mount Aitken and Mount Tophet.

WATERFORM

Incised creek valleys meander through the uplands area generally travelling north-south. Djerrivarrh Creek and the Djerrivarrh Reservoir, located on the creek, forms the City of Melton's western edge. Other creeks that traverse the area include Kororoit, Toolern and Yangardook Creeks. These creek valleys are often dry in summer.

Refer to the Waterways significant landscape in Chapter 4 for a description of Werribee River, Djerrivarrh Creek, Kororoit Creek, Toolern Creek and other smaller creeks.

VEGETATION

There is a mix of vegetation in the Uplands. Most of the land is cleared for agricultural purposes and is classed as grassland. There

are large forested areas which are extensions of much larger state parks.

The Pyrete Range is the eastern extremity of the Lerderberg State Park. The forest north of Toolern Vale is separated from the Pyrete Range from a valley but consists of the same mixed vegetation. The forests consist of dry and shrubby forests with the Box Iron-bark tree the most prevalent tree species in both forests.

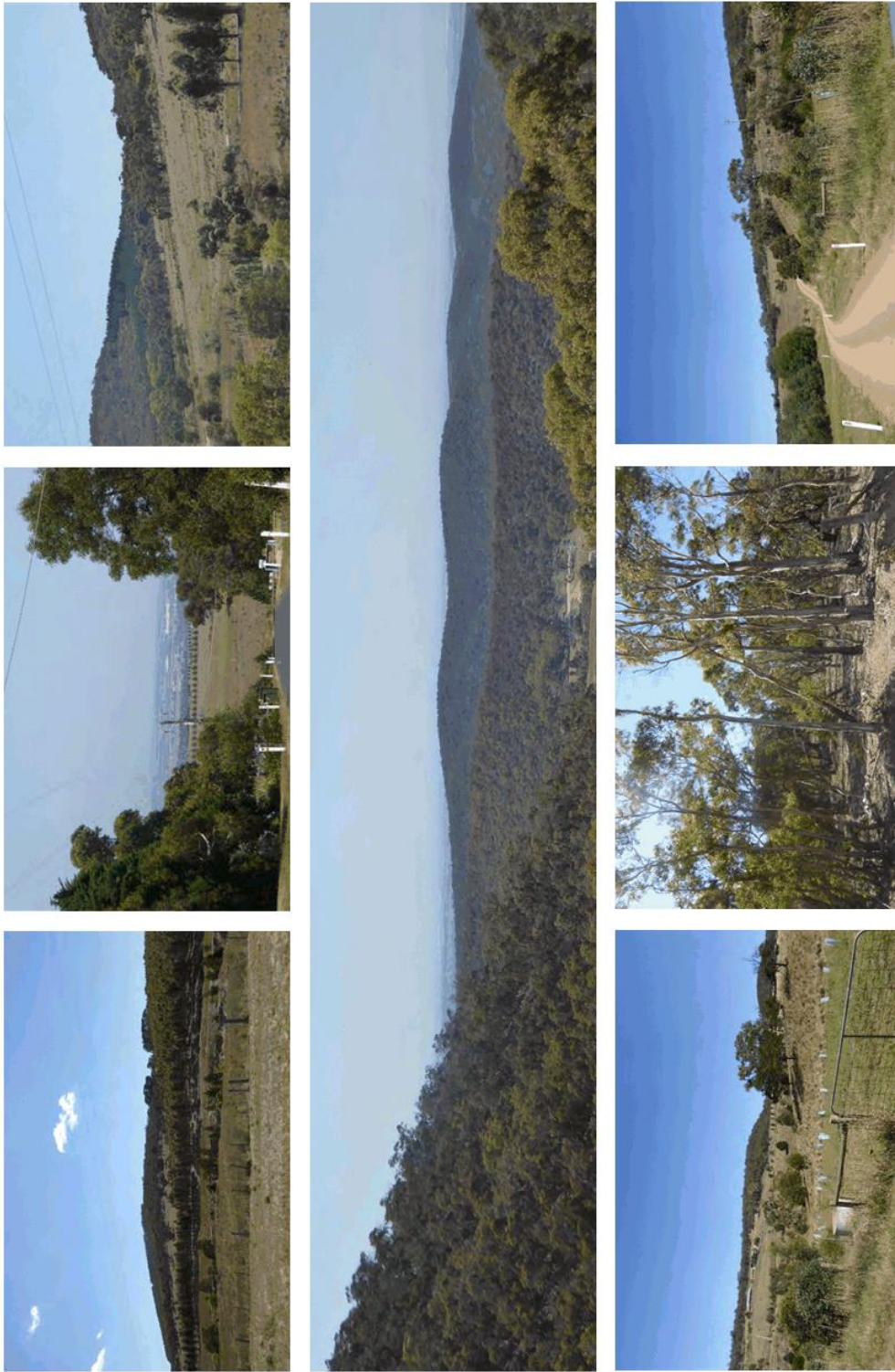
The area has a high amount of records of significant flora. Two species of national significance include the Spiny Rice-Flower which is found throughout the municipality and the Large-Headed Fireweed. The former is listed as critically endangered with the latter listed as vulnerable.

Another 17 species of state significance consisting of shrubs, herbs and grasses are found in the Uplands. It has been noted that established and undisturbed areas of vegetation are remarkably resilient to weed invasion. (Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan, 2013)

Refer to the Forested Areas significance landscape in Chapter 4 for further detail on this area.

Refer to the Forested Areas significant landscape in Chapter 4 for a description of Pyrete Range, Yangardook Bush Reserve and Toolern Vale Hills.

Refer to Western Volcanic Plain Character Type for a description of shelterbelts.



LAND USE & BUILT FORM

Land is mostly used for agriculture and other rural activity. A cluster of development exists at Toolern Vale, otherwise there is minimal built form. Dwellings and agricultural buildings are located on or near main roads and around the base of the forested hills. The north west portion of the Toolern Vale forest has a number of equine agistments and stables.

Refer to Western Volcanic Plain Character Type for a description of stone cottages, dry stone walls, bridges and homesteads.

LANDSCAPE VALUES

Landscape values include aesthetic (visual and non-visual), historic, environmental, scientific and other social values. A range of sources have been used to identify the landscape values of the Western Volcanic Plains, such as field survey, a review of existing studies and documentation. Any relevant feedback from community engagement will also be included in this section.

Historic

- > Waterways, an important landscape features, travelling routes, sources of livelihood and meeting places for Aboriginal people (Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan Cultural Values Recording (2013) p. 7)
- > Mount Tophet, likely gathering place for ceremonies (Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan Cultural Values Recording (2013) p. 8)

PATTERN OF VIEWING

The pattern of viewing from the Uplands is limited due to the terrain, vegetation and limited or no public access to potential lookouts, outcrops and top of hills. Most roads in the area are unsealed.

Where views are available in this Character Type, the area's higher elevation provides distant views to Melbourne's CBD, Mount Macedon and the You Yangs. The higher elevation provides views out toward the flat volcanic plains where they can be glimpsed when the road runs parallel or over a ridge line or glimpsed through dense vegetation.

One informal lookout is located in the south west corner of the Uplands and directs views to the south and west, mostly outside of the municipality. The lookout's location is on an unsealed road halfway up the lower extremity of the Pyrete Range and is surrounded by housing. It is most likely a turning basin for large vehicles but there is potential.

Due to the wide rolling hills, potential views are disrupted because of access as most of the land is privately owned and access is prohibited.

Key viewing corridors which traverse this landscape Character Type are:

- > Blackhill Road
- > Calder Freeway
- > Gisborne-Melton Road

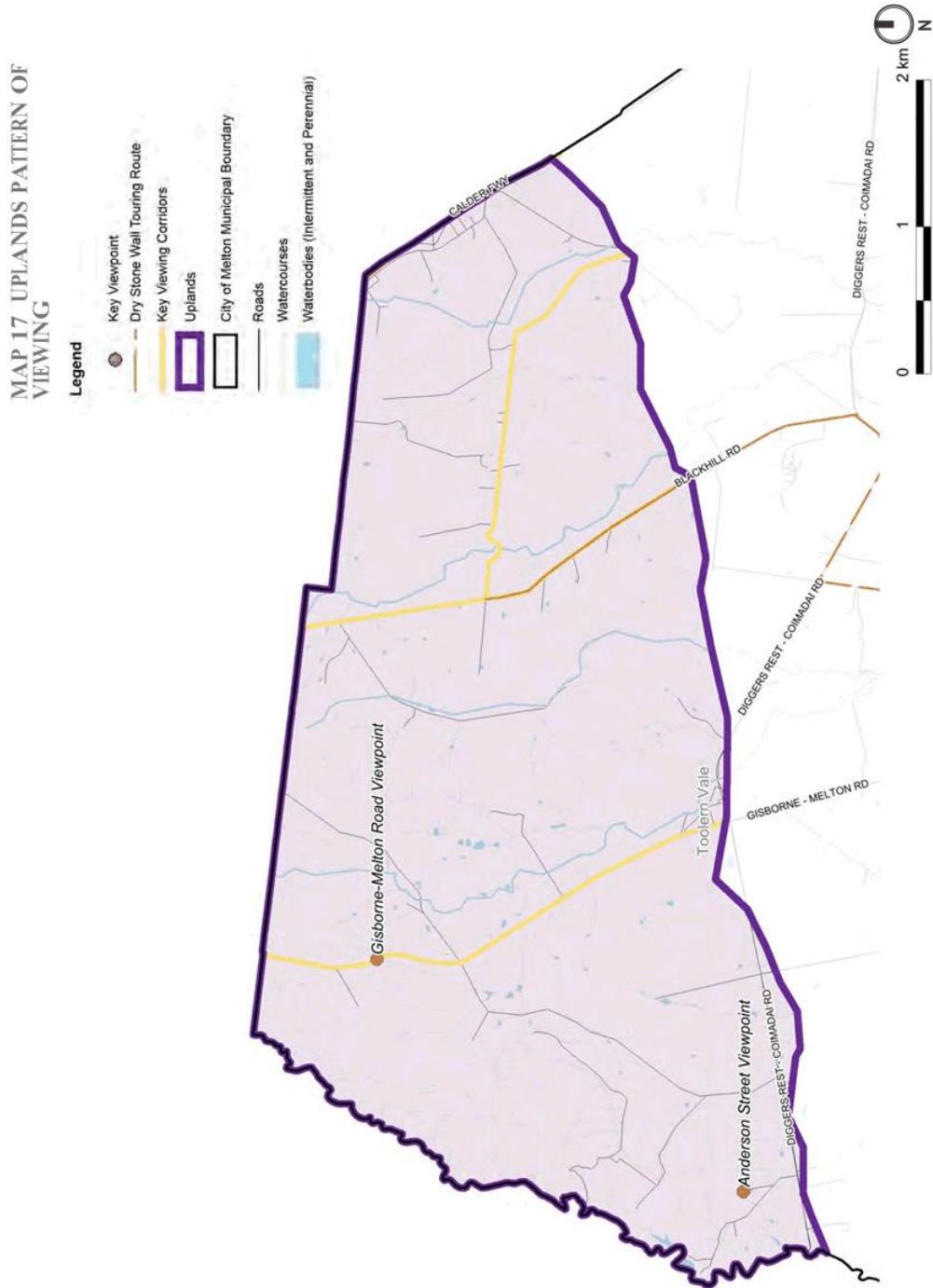
- > John Aitken's station, where a number of Aboriginal people died in conflicts with Europeans (Shire of Melton Heritage Study Stage 2: Environmental History, 2006, p. 12)
- > Gold rush routes traversed this area (Shire of Melton Heritage Study Stage 2: Environmental History, 2006, p. 104)
- > Mount Aitken, named by Governor Sir Richard Bourke after John Aitken, who had a sheep station in the municipality (Shire of Melton Heritage Study Stage 2: Environmental History, 2006, p. 10)
- > Many post-contact place names commemorating the Aboriginal heritage of the area (Djerriwarh, Yangardook, Kororoi) (Shire of Melton Heritage Study Stage 2: Environmental History, 2006, p. 12)

Environmental / Scientific

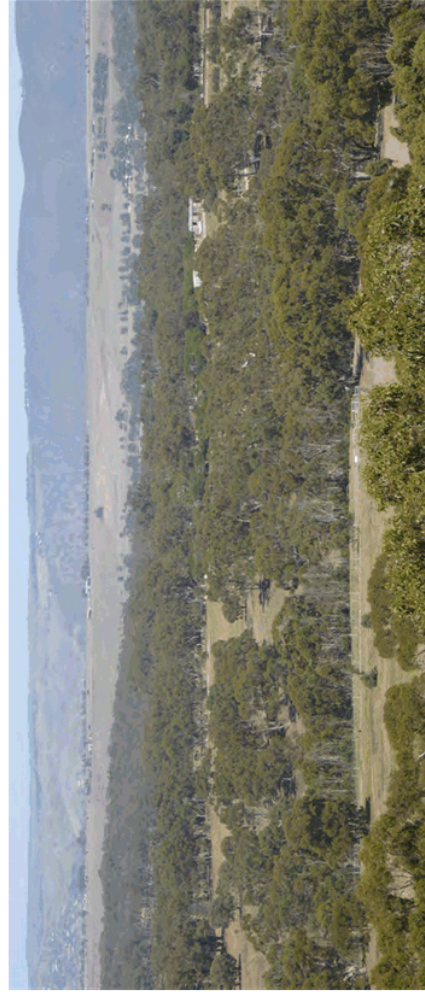
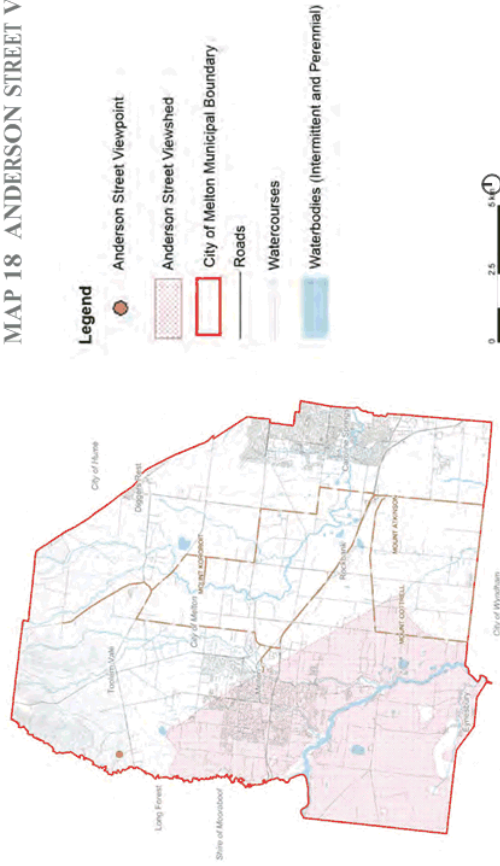
- > Yangardook Bushland Reserve, protected area on the IUCN list Category IV (Habitat/Species Management Area)
- > Lerderberg State Park, protected area on the IUCN list Category II (National Park) & protected by National Parks Act 1975
- > Community groups that aim to protect and conserve the forests and waterways

Social

- > Bushwalking through forested areas
- > Mountain bike riding
- > Remnant trees and native vegetation important to the Wurundjeri community as they show what the area looked like prior to clearing (Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan Cultural Values Recording, 2013, p. 5)



MAP 18 ANDERSON STREET VIEWSHED



Looking southwest from the Anderson Street vantage point towards the Lerderberg Gorge

Viewpoint

A viewpoint on Anderson Street (shown on Map 18, right) provides an expansive view of the Uplands area merging into the vast expanse of the Western Volcanic Plain beyond. The viewshed analysis (Map 18, right) shows the extent of the view from this location.

While not a formal lookout, the view is one of the best vantage points from the Uplands area.

The foreground of the view captures the forested rises of the Uplands. In the middle distance the landscape opens out in the Western Volcanic Plain and the course of the Werribee River can be seen winding across the landscape.

To the southeast are views of the forested Lerderberg State Park.

The expansive view across the Melton landscape from the Anderson Street viewpoint demonstrates the vulnerability of the landscape to change. Built form across the flat and open landscape Western Volcanic Plains is highly visible from elevated points and in long range views across the plains.

The extent of the viewshed from this vantage point is shown on the map opposite.

Similar views are available from other high points and lookouts in this landscape, including the Gisborne-Melton Road viewpoint, identified on Map 17, left (p. 48).



Significant Landscape Features Strategy - Melton City Council

Dense vegetation along a creek line in the Volcanic Plain Character Type
(Image Planetphotos 2015)



Melton City Council | Significant Landscape Features Strategy

LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

4

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Landscape significance is the designation of a particular landscape as special or important arising from its aesthetic values (both visual and non-visual) which takes into account aesthetic values historic, environmental, scientific, social or other values.

Assessment of landscape significance is a deep exploration of landscape values, and follows the process of documenting landscape character, through which the context of the study area has been fully explored and understood.

Landscapes are significant to different people for different reasons. These reasons may include their scenic beauty, historic value, environmental qualities, or less tangible values associated with the place, such as memories or associations. The fact that landscape values are held both by individuals and communities, and that many values exist in the subjective territory of human perceptions is what makes the assessment of landscape significance so challenging and often contentious.

For every landscape, a range of factors will combine to create an overall illustration of its value. In some instances, a landscape with many identified values will be considered to have a high level of significance that may warrant a specific approach to its management.

In this study, three sources of information have been used to provide a holistic understanding of the landscapes in the City of Melton, and to identify their values:

- › Detailed field surveys undertaken by the study team focussing mainly on the aesthetic

values of the study area;

- › Review of secondary sources (existing information as opposed to new research), including historic, environmental, scientific, social and other information or research material; and
- › Community engagement, which has helped to understand the number of different ways that local people or visitors to the area appreciate and value the landscapes.

LANDSCAPE VALUES

Five cultural landscape values are included in the definition of 'landscape significance' and an assessment of these values has been used to determine the aesthetic significance of various landscapes throughout the study area.

As this study focussed on assessment of aesthetic (mostly visual) values, only these values have been rated by the study team.

Where secondary sources cite ratings for other values, such as historic or environmental values, reference is made to the ratings made through these other studies.

1. Aesthetic Values

Aesthetic value relates to the 'sense of the beautiful' and includes both visual and non-visual aspects of landscape, i.e. consideration of the landscape from the point of view of all human senses (sight, touch, sound, taste and smell).

An indicator of aesthetic value may also include depiction of the landscape in artwork, photography, or another cultural art.

In order to determine the overall aesthetic value of landscape, three 'landscape components' have been assessed:

Landscape Features

- › A landscape feature is a topographic feature or prominent landmark such as a headland, mountain range or volcanic cone that is visually dramatic and provides the landscape with its 'wow' factor. The prevalence or concentration of a particular landscape element or vegetation type e.g. River Red Gums, rocky outcrops, dry stone walls etc., may also be classified as a landscape feature.

In relation to landscape features, the following criterion has been developed, which informs the determination and level of significance:

The landscape is distinctive or inspirational for its landscape feature or features that attract the viewer and may evoke an emotional response.

Edges or Contrasts

- › Edges or contrasts include the point of intersection between two landscape elements e.g. the coastline (the boundary between

“Landscape significance is the designation of a particular landscape as special or important arising from its aesthetic values”

sea and land); the edge of a forest or a lake; the boundary between vegetation types or different landform types; the intersection between a mountain range and a plain; or an incised valley etc. The existence of edges or contrasts in the landscape provides visual diversity, a quality associated with scenic value.

- › In relation to edges or contrasts, the following criterion has been developed:
- › The landscape is aesthetically compelling for its edges or contrasts that provide visual variety and interest.

Composition

- › The composition of a landscape is its make-up or constitution, including arrangements or patterns of colour, textures, features etc. and the form, scale and unity of these and other elements.
- › In relation to composition, the following criterion has been developed:
- › *The landscape has outstanding compositional qualities, the combination of which achieve a unified whole, and provide the setting or subject of notable views.*

2. Historic Values

Historic value encompasses the history of the landscape both pre and post contact, and often underpins other cultural landscape values. It may be that the landscape is associated with an important historical event, figure or theme in history, and evidence of that historic value may or may not be visible.

For the purposes of this study, no primary research was undertaken to determine historic

value. Rather, it was concluded from existing documentation or secondary sources such as the Aboriginal Affairs Victoria Register, the Victorian Heritage Register, the National Heritage List, the existence of Heritage Overlays in local planning schemes, and other material such as historic photographs and maps etc.

3. Environmental & Scientific Values

Environmental and/or scientific value relates to the biological conditions or 'natural' attributes of the landscape, including flora and fauna habitats, archaeological or geological attributes etc.

Secondary sources used to determine environmental and/or scientific value included the Ramsar Convention, the existence of Environmental Significance Overlays in local planning schemes, geological studies, the existence of national or state parks, or other significant parks etc.

4. Social Values

Social value encompasses those aspects of the landscape that are associated with a community or cultural group, and may cross over with historic value. A landscape may have social value as an important local landmark, or it may have spiritual meaning to a community or group. Determination of social value also includes consideration of the landscape as a tourism destination.

Secondary sources used to determine social value include Tourism Australia and Tourism Victoria information and publications, various heritage registers etc.

5. Other Value

The fifth category of cultural landscape values encompasses any other value that is relevant to the significance of the landscape and may include economic value, for example.

Consideration of these different cultural values allows a holistic and comprehensive understanding of all aspects of landscape significance. However, there is a necessary emphasis on assessment of visual aesthetic values, as this forms the basis of the study's implementation through the planning scheme and, in particular, the Significant Landscape Overlay, which is the primary statutory tool to manage significant landscapes.

4.2 LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE

AESTHETIC VALUE

Rating Considerations

In order to determine a level of aesthetic significance for each landscape component, and ultimately each landscape, the following 'rating considerations' are applied:

Exemplary

- How representative or illustrative is the landscape (and its features, edges or contrasts, and composition)? Is it 'the best' of its type? Is it exemplary within the local, regional or state context?

Iconic

- Is the landscape (and its features, edges or contrasts, and composition) instantly recognisable? Is it symbolic for its visual qualities? Has it been represented in art, photography, literature etc.? Is it iconic within the local, regional or state context?

Scarce

- How uncommon, rare or endangered is the landscape (and its features, edges or contrasts, and composition)? Is it scarce within the local, regional or state context?

Significance Levels

Levels of significance are attributed to each landscape component, and an overall significance level in relation to aesthetic value is determined. The significance levels are:

- Moderate = local significance
- High = regional significance
- Exceptional = state significance or higher

The final determination of significance level for aesthetic value is not a matter of adding up the number of 'moderate' or 'high' ratings. Rather, if a landscape rates 'high' for example in one or more of the landscape components, that level is the overall significance rating attributed to the aesthetic values of that landscape. (Just as the usual standard for listing a place on a heritage register, for instance, is that a place meets one or more criteria.)

Other Cultural Landscape Values

Levels of significance are attributed to other cultural landscape values (i.e. historic, environmental and/or scientific, social and other values) is based on the stated level of significance in the secondary source, e.g. a landscape that forms part of the Victorian Heritage Register is logically of State significance.

For the purpose of this study, a landscape cannot be classified as significant for its historic, environmental and/or scientific, social or other values alone, as primary research has not been undertaken by the study team in these fields, and a rating could not be justified at a panel hearing. In order for a landscape to be classified as significant, it must have visual aesthetic value.

4.3 SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPES IN MELTON

OVERVIEW

A number of sites and areas have been identified as having landscape significance within the City of Melton.

These landscapes fall into three categories, shown on Map 15 Significant Landscapes, opposite:

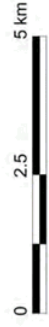
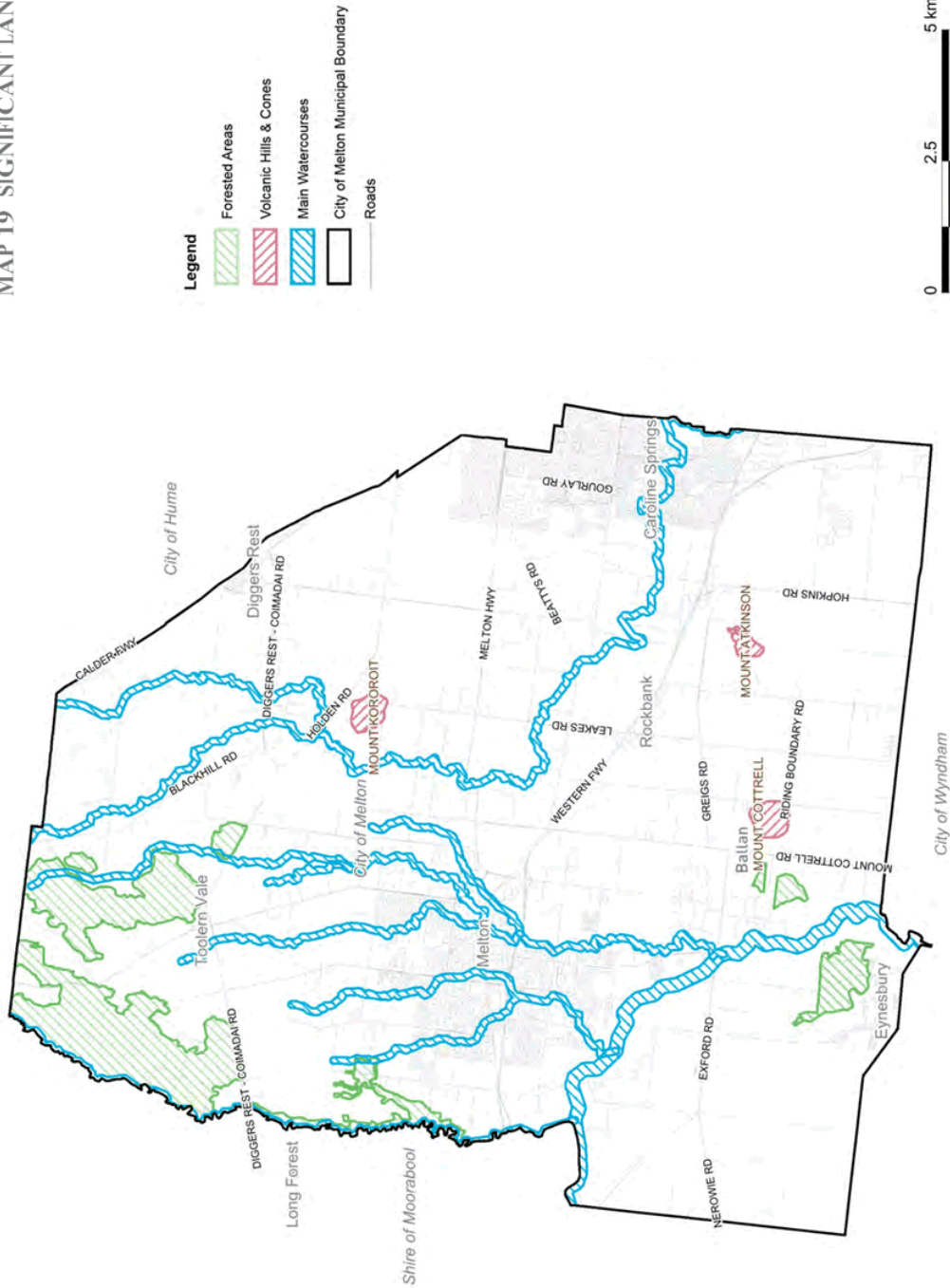
- Forested Areas
- Volcanic Cones & Hills
- Waterways.

Each of these significant landscape categories, have been assessed on the following pages. This assessment details:

- Description of the different significant landscape areas and their key features
- Key views and viewing corridors
- Significance assessment – aesthetic values and other cultural values.

While there are a number of grasslands within the City of Melton of high environmental significance, these have not been identified as visually significant landscapes. Due to seasonal variations, grasslands may be difficult to rate on aesthetic values. When flowering, grasslands are highly visible and picturesque, while in other seasons they may be difficult to differentiate as a distinct feature within the broader landscape.

MAP 19 SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPES



4.4 FORESTED AREAS

Areas of heavily vegetated forest exist within the City of Melton's landscape, located across hilltops within the northern extent of the municipality, or near waterway corridors. These forested areas are important enclaves of remnant vegetation and the only areas of dense woodland of the municipality. They are home to numerous species of flora and fauna. They also provide a glimpse into the landscape that would have existed in Melton prior to European settlement.

Pyrete Range & Yangardook Bush Reserve

The Pyrete Range, part of the Lerderberg State Park, comprises an extensive area of relatively undisturbed old growth forest in steep and rugged terrain. The south eastern corner of the Pyrete Range is included within the City of Melton. A key feature in the area is Stringybark Hill. Yangardook Bush Reserve is a protected area of forest located south of the Pyrete Range.

Toolern Vale Hills & Ryans Lane Woodland

The forested hills of Toolern Vale rise across the northern edge of the municipality, from the expanse of the volcanic plain. At the base of the Toolern Vale hills to the south, the forested areas around Ryans Lane create a cloak of heavy vegetation across the gently undulating landscape.

Pinkerton Forest and Bush's Paddock

Two forest areas lie to the west of Mount Cottrell, alongside the Werribee River and Toolern Creek. These areas contrast distinctly with surrounding cleared farmland paddocks.

Melton Gilgai Woodlands Nature Conservation Reserve

Melton Gilgai Woodlands Nature Conservation Reserve is mixed Grey Box and Yellow Gum forest. It is a remnant of the once larger woodlands that covered a much broader region.

Eynesbury Woodland

Eynesbury Woodland is one of Victoria's largest remaining Grey Box Forests (of 268ha), providing a striking entrance to Eynesbury township. This forest is located near to the Werribee River and is the setting of the original pastoral homestead.

Long Forest Nature Conservation Reserve & Forested Areas

The Long Forest Nature Conservation Reserve is set along Djerriwarth Creek at the western edge of the municipality. The reserve consists of forested areas of unusual species, namely Mallee and Box woodland community and rich variety of ants and birds as well as mammals. The creek around which the forest is set is deeply gullied with small-scale creek escarpments, gorges, rocky outcrops and flats.

Kororoit Creek and Western Grasslands Reserve

Undeveloped land along Kororoit Creek and in the south of Melton with environmental and landscape values has been set aside for new regional parks as part of Growth Area planning currently underway. Creation of a new Western Grasslands reserve will be managed by the State government, with collaboration from Wyndham City Council.

VIEWS

Major viewing corridors for Pyrete Range and Toolern Vale Forest:

- › Blackhill Road
- › Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road
- › Gisbourne-Melton Road

These forests can be viewed from most vantage points in the municipality.

The main way to view the Eynesbury Woodland is via Eynesbury Road.

The forested areas in and around Long Forest Nature Conservation Reserve are relatively inaccessible. The tree tops of these areas, however, can be viewed from Harkness Road.

The Melton Gilgai Woodlands Nature Conservation Reserve is best viewed from Harkness Road which abuts its western edge.



Pyrete Range

AESTHETIC LANDSCAPE VALUES

Landscape Features

The elevated forested areas of the Pyrete Range, Toolern Vale Forest and Yangardook Bush Reserve create expanses of dense vegetation cover across the Uplands of the municipality's northern edge. In some locations, there are viewpoints from the elevated forested areas looking out to the flat plains and landmarks including the You Yangs, Mt Kororoit, Mt Cottrell and the Melbourne CBD.

The Ryans Lane forested area lies at the interface between the Volcanic Plain and Uplands Character Types. This is a transitional landscape, where the topography becomes undulating as the land rises to the Uplands and the vegetation increases in density nearer to the base of the Toolern Vale Hills.

The Long Forest and Gilgai Woodlands provide a sea of dense vegetation with a distinctive green-yellow tinge that sets these areas apart from the other forests.

The Eynesbury Woodland creates a sense of enclosure to the entry of the Eynesbury Township with the roadway framed by its tall trees.

The forested areas have local significance as iconic features of the City of Melton's landscape.

Edges or Contrasts

Within the Uplands, the thick vegetation of the forested areas cloaks the rolling hills, forming their dark silhouette which can be seen throughout the municipality from some distance. The forested areas within the Volcanic Plain

are visible as dark patches of vegetation along the horizon or in the distance. This provides a distinctive contrast to the surrounding landscape of open plains with light-coloured grasses and few trees.

The forested areas provide pockets of dense remnant vegetation which is rare within the municipal context, considering most of the forests have cleared for grazing.

Composition

From the outside, the forest areas have a very defined edge of cleared land. The densely treed vegetation of the forests contrasts strongly with the surrounding cleared landscapes and open grasslands. From within, the forests are enclosed spaces and the landscapes are constrained by vegetation, creating a visual tunnel of tall trees framing roads and pathways.

Within the context of the municipality they are a scarce feature.

Overall Aesthetic Significance Rating

Within the context of the City of Melton, the forested areas have local significance.

OTHER LANDSCAPE VALUES

The other cultural values that have been identified for the forested areas are listed below.

Historic Values

- Aboriginal sites showing use of the area including scattered stone artefacts and scar trees

- Long Forest, used as freehold land and was a source of fence posts and firewood for the area
- Eynesbury Woodland, part of the Eynesbury station pastoral run and houses a number of building relics

Environmental / Scientific Values

- Long Forest Reserve is listed under the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category IA (Strict Nature Reserve) for Natural Reserves and Protected Areas
- Long Forest Reserve, classified by the National Trust as a significant landscape and listed on the Register of the National Estate
- A diverse range of flora and fauna found in all forested areas
- Vegetation of Long Forest, the only example of Mallee vegetation is found south of the Great Dividing Range

Social Values

- The forested areas, their distinctive natural features and places of ecological value are likely to have high Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity
- Bird watching at Long Forest and other forested areas
- Bushwalking in forested areas

4.5 VOLCANIC CONES & HILLS

The City of Melton's volcanic plain is punctuated by dormant volcanic cones which rise up from the surrounding landscape. Of these, Mount Kororoit, Mount Cottrell and Mount Atkinson are the most prominent. These cones form part of the volcanic plan that stretches across western Victoria to South Australia. Despite their relatively low elevation, they are visible from long distances and provide points of interest within the open plains.

Mount Kororoit

Mount Kororoit (237m AHD) is a low asymmetric conical hill with a flattened summit. Formed by a cenozoic volcanic deposit, this cone slopes steeply to the south and west with a long, gentle slope of eroded lava to the north. This flow terminates at a broad, swampy depression to the north of Holden Road. It is located within a rural context and is surrounded by land used predominantly for agricultural purposes.

Mount Kororoit Road provides the closest access to this cone, which is located on private land. The cone can also be viewed on approach from Leakes Road, which passes over part of the feature. Due to the extent of this topographic feature and its long-reaching and gentle rise, it is also visible from afar when travelling through the Western Volcanic Plains character area.

Mount Cottrell

Mount Cottrell (205m AHD), one of the best examples of a lava shield volcano in Victoria, is one of the most striking volcanoes close to Melbourne. This dormant volcano has a classic profile formed by lava erupting in a radial fashion. The lava flows on its western side are most discernible. Its summit provides panoramic views in all directions, including views to the You Yangs, Mount Macedon and Melbourne's CBD. This cone is also located within a rural setting.

Mount Atkinson

Mount Atkinson (140m AHD) is also a low volcanic cone. It provided extended flows of lava with a spur forming a low ridge just south of Greigs Road and another to the cone's south forming an ill-defined low north-south ridge. This dormant volcano is less obvious in the landscape than Mount Kororoit and Mount Cottrell.

Mt Atkinson is currently surrounded by open paddocks and is located within the Urban Growth Zone (UGZ). Land surrounding the cone has been identified in a draft Future Precinct Structure Plan for residential development (MPA, 2015).

VIEWS

Notable viewing locations within this landscape include:

- > Mount Cottrell summit

Major viewing corridors for Mount Kororoit:

- > Beattys Road
- > Blackhill Road
- > Calder Highway
- > Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road
- > Gisborne-Melton Road
- > Holden Road
- > Leakes Road
- > Plumpton Road

Major viewing corridors for Mount Cottrell:

- > Eynesbury Road
- > Faulknors Road
- > Greigs Road
- > Mount Cottrell Road
- > Murphys Road
- > Western Freeway

Major viewing corridors for Mount Atkinson:

- > Hopkins Road
- > Greigs Road
- > Troups Road South
- > Western Freeway

AESTHETIC LANDSCAPE VALUES

Landscape Features

Mount Kororoit, Mount Cottrell and Mount Atkinson, and their associated lava flows, are key geological features of the City of Melton's landscape. They form part of the broader Western Victorian Volcanic Plain.

Environmental / Scientific Values

- > Mount Kororoit is considered to be of State geological significance. (Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan)
- > Mount Cottrell had one of the biggest lava outputs of Victoria's western volcanic plain, which is the largest volcanic area in Australia (Shire of Melton Heritage Study State Two).
- > Mount Cottrell is crown land and designated as a Nature Conservation Reserve (although not publically accessible)
- > Due to limited human activity, Mount Cottrell is home to a number of native animals including kangaroos (survey)
- > The ancient eruption of Mount Atkinson influenced the course of Kororoit Creek to the north with its long ranging lava flows (Buller, 2014)

Social Values

- > The volcanic cones, their distinctive natural features and places of ecological value are likely to have high Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity
- > Mount Kororoit, Mount Cottrell, Mount Atkinson are included within the Significant Landscape Overlay of the Melton Planning Scheme (SLO1)
- > Due to the relatively high elevation of the cones, infrastructure such as telecommunications towers and an air navigation facility are located on their rises

Overall Aesthetic Significance Rating

Within the context of the City of Melton, the volcanic cones have local significance.

OTHER LANDSCAPE VALUES

The other cultural values that have been identified for these volcanic cones are listed below.

Historic Values

- > The volcanic hilltops are a rich source of Aboriginal archaeological deposits. (Shire of Melton Heritage Study State Two)
- > Mount Cottrell is named after Anthony Cottrell, one of 15 members of John Batman's party who were officially the first to settle in Melbourne / Port Phillip (Melton Visitor Information Student Kit)
- > Mount Cottrell has a number of buildings that are listed under a Heritage Overlay in the Melton Planning Scheme (HO11). This includes a homestead, stables and machinery shed.
- > Mount Cottrell was originally surrounded by a Grey Box Forest but the late 1800s saw forestry operations that emptied the cone and surrounding areas of timber which was sold as firewood to Melbourne.
- > The volcanic cones are the origin of the field stone that was gathered by early settlers to make dry stone walls. Dry Stone Walls can be found along roads next to Mount Cottrell and Mount Kororoit. (Shire of Melton Heritage Study State Two)

The cones are visible in long-range views across the flat topography of the municipality and form important local landmarks.

Many roadsides are lined with impressive and intact dry stone walls which have been created from the rocky outputs of their lava flows.

These three major volcanic cones have local significance as iconic features of the City of Melton's landscape.

Edges or Contrasts

The cones rise up from the flat topography of the surrounding plains and grasslands. Within their expansive, open settings, the cones provide a distinctive contrast to their immediate landscape context.

Visible throughout the municipality, the cones create a high level of contrast and visual interest in the landscape.

The topographic variation created by the volcanic cones is scarce within the local municipal context.

Composition

Each cone varies in scale and form. Their original composition has been changed through the presence of telecommunications towers and other infrastructure across their rises or development on their sides.

While relatively low in scale and extent within the broader context of the western Victorian volcanic plain, they are significant visual formations within the local municipal context.

4.6 WATERWAYS

The four major watercourses and smaller creeks of the City of Melton are key features of interest in the rural and urban landscape. Networks of open spaces and shared trails are formed around the waterways throughout the municipality. The waterways traverse open landscape settings in rural areas and extend into urban areas as more formalised parklands.

Werribee River

The Werribee River is the City of Melton's main waterway. It snakes its way across the volcanic plain and is deeply incised into the landscape. The Melton Reservoir and its wetlands have been created from the Werribee River.

Djerriwarth Creek

The Djerriwarth Creek forms part of the municipality's western boundary and flows into the Werribee River. It is an ephemeral waterway, largely dry during summer months. Parts of the Creek are characterised by deep incisions.

Kororoit Creek

The path of the Kororoit Creek within the City of Melton extends from Caroline Springs to Diggers Rest, where it forms the East and West Branches. While the part of the Kororoit Creek within the municipality is relatively shallow, it is a distinctive feature of the landscape.

Toolern Creek

The Toolern Creek generally travels north-south,

through Melton and feeds into the Werribee River at Exford. It can be appreciated via the Toolern Creek Trail and at crossings such as the railway and Western Freeway crossings.

Smaller Creeks

Arnolds Creek (including its East and West Branches), Little Blind Creek, Ryans Creek and Yangadook Creek are also key parts of the City's waterway system and open space network.

VIEWS

Notable viewing locations within this landscape occur in parkland along creeks, such as at the Melton Reservoir, along shared pathways, particularly in the urban areas of Melton and Caroline Springs, and at creek crossings.

AESTHETIC LANDSCAPE VALUES

Landscape Features

The four major waterways and smaller creeks are key features of the City of Melton's landscape. In some places the waterways form shallow depressions; in other locations they are incised across the volcanic plain as well-defined valleys or deep gorges.

Parts of the waterways feature significant native vegetation along their banks or escarpments, and lining the valley walls. This includes the Long Forest around Djerriwarth Creek, the Werribee River and parts of the Toolern Creek. Forested river corridors are a highly visible feature of the volcanic plains, creating

a backdrop to the surrounding open and expansive countryside.

Where waterway settings are cleared, the topography of the waterway is a highly distinctive feature of the landscape. Some of the waterways appear as gentle undulations within the landscape, such as parts of the Toolern and Kororoit Creeks. The Werribee River, Djerriwarth Creek and parts of Arthurs Creek are more deeply incised into the landscape, with the high escarpments at their edges plunging to low riverbeds.

The Werribee River and Toolern Creek are flowing with water. The Djerriwarth and Kororoit Creeks are ephemeral waterways and during the summer months their rocky sandstone beds lay exposed. Other smaller creeks are also ephemeral or have minimal water flow.

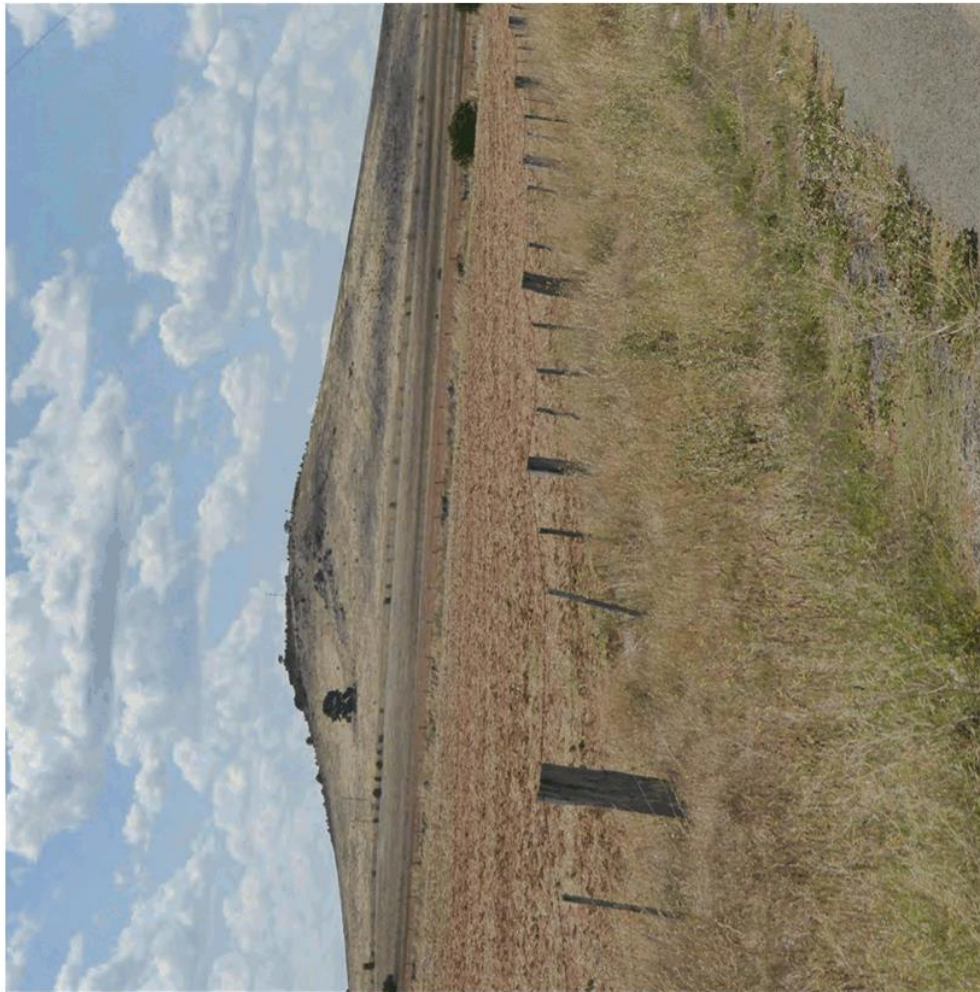
Historic bridges over the waterways are important human created features of the landscape. These are made of stone, timber or steel.

The waterways have local significance as iconic features of the City of Melton's landscape.

Edges or Contrasts

The waterway corridors create significant variations across the landscape through well defined changes in topography and vegetation. Cleared volcanic plains give way to vegetated valley walls or exposed rock faces. Within the municipal context, the contrasts and variations of the waterways are of local significance.

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6
<p>Composition</p> <p>The landscape setting of the waterways is composed of the river or creek bed framed by its valley walls, which range from gentle undulations to steep escarpments. Where accessible by shared trails or parklands, the viewer experiences and winding journey of the waterway as it traverses the landscape. Within the context of the municipality the waterways are exemplary compositional features of the landscape and of local significance.</p> <p>Overall Aesthetic Significance Rating</p> <p>Within the context of the City of Melton, the waterways have local significance.</p> <p>OTHER LANDSCAPE VALUES</p> <p>The other cultural values that have been identified for these waterways are listed below.</p> <p>Historic Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waterways, important sources of food and medicine, movement corridors and meeting places, for Aboriginal people and early settlers (Shire of Melton Heritage Study State Two) Melton Reservoir, completed in 1916 to provide water via irrigation to agricultural fields in the Melton area (State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, 1948) Aboriginal cultural sites are mostly found along waterways with scattered artefacts, burial sites and scarred trees. (Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan, 2013) 	<p>Environmental / Scientific Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Werribee River features aged hollow Red Gums and platypus colonies (Werribee River website) Melbourne Water has been working on restoring habitat corridors and increasing overall river health of various waters in Melton (Local Waterways Update 2011/2012) Waterways supporting large range flora and fauna (Local Waterways Update 2011/2012) Areas of remnant vegetation are found along the waterways including Creeklane Grassy Woodland and Floodplain Riparian Woodland (Western Plains North Green Wedge Management Plan, 2013) Parts of the Djerrivarrh Creek dry up in the summer months due to irregular stream flow. The cause of this is not clearly understood Kororoit Creek Scientific interest as a classic example of creek formation over a basalt plain with the geomorphology of the creek varying across its length Toolem Creek features remnant Blackwood 'Acacia melanoxylon' and the large River Red Gums 'Eucalyptus camaldulensis' such as Big Red which may over 400 years old. It is also home to the rare native raspberry 'Rubus parvifolius', that can easily be mistaken for blackberry (Toolem Creek Trail Brochure) Kororoit Creek and Toolem Creek in particular are important biodiversity assets for their contribution to the habitat corridors of the Growing Grass Frog. 	<p>Social Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The waterways, their distinctive natural features and places of ecological value are likely to have high Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity Kororoit Creek, an important landmark separating the territory of two Wurundjeri clans (Shire of Melton Heritage Study State Two) Numerous parklands created alongside waterways forming integral links within the City's open space network (Open Space Strategy) Shared trail networks along many of the waterway corridors which will continue to be upgraded and extended over time (Open Space Strategy) Waterways incorporated as landscape features and recreational spaces in the planning of new urban areas (Precinct Structure Plans) 			

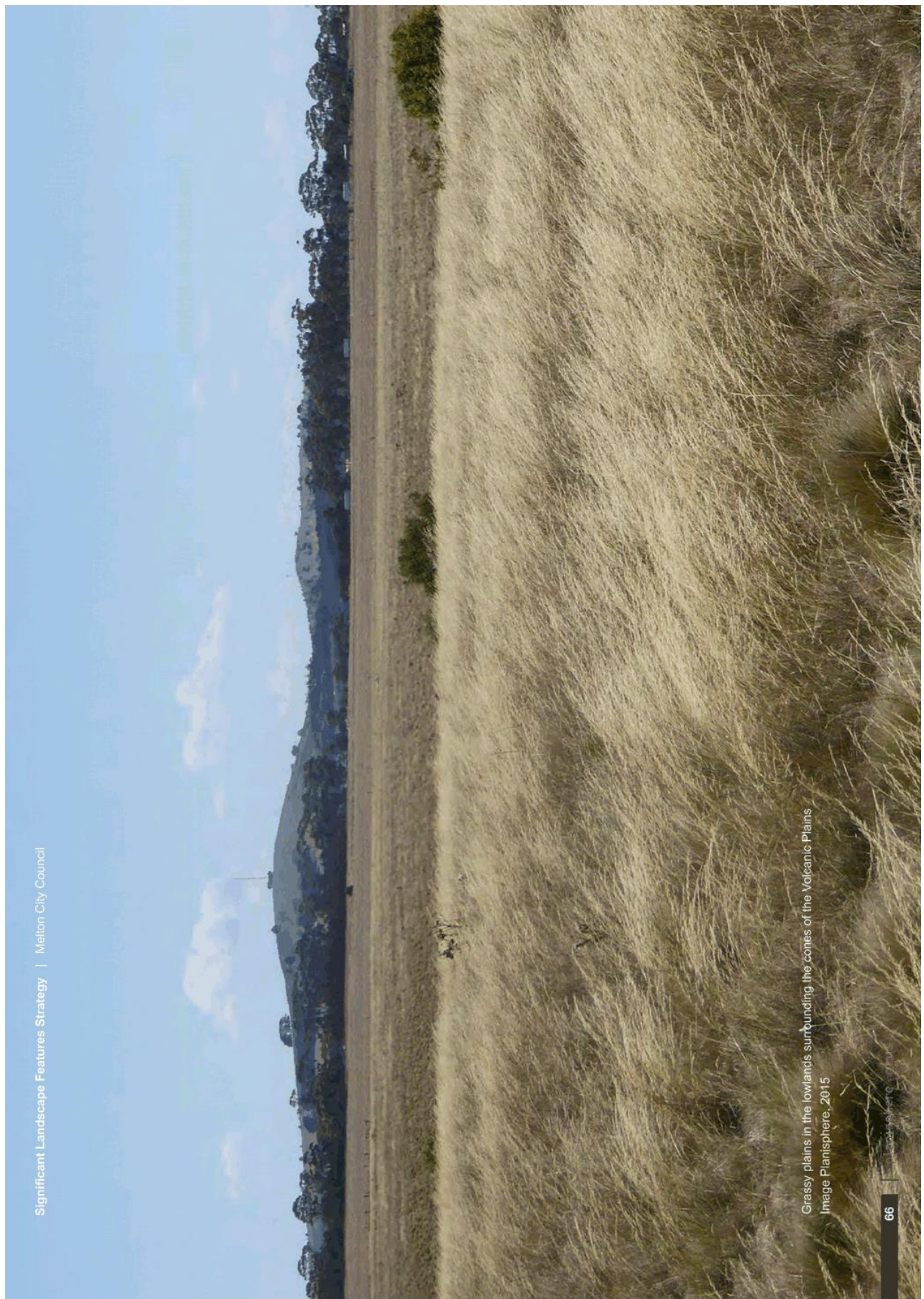


Mount Kororoit

4.7 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

The significance assessment ratings for each landscape value has been summarised:

	LANDSCAPE FEATURES	AESTHETIC VALUES EDGES & CONTRASTS	COMPOSITION	OVERALL AESTHETIC VALUES	HISTORIC VALUES	ENVIRONMENTAL & SCIENTIFIC VALUES	SOCIAL VALUES
Forested Hills	Expanse of dense vegetation cover Sense of enclosure within forest	Distinct edges with dark silhouette of vegetated areas providing contrast with open plains	Vegetation frames views	Local significance	Local significance	Local / regional significance	Local significance
Volcanic Cones & Hills	Cones and lava flows are key geographic features	Topographic variation (hills) contrast with the flat landscape	Varied scale and form of cones	Local significance	Local / regional significance	State significance	Local significance
Waterways	Shallow depressions, well-defined valleys or gorges often well vegetated	Topographic variation (depressions) contrast with the flat landscape	Waterway bed framed by valley walls with gentle undulations and steep escarpments	Local significance	Local significance	Local significance	Local significance



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Grassy plains in the lowlands surrounding the cones of the Volcanic Plains
Image: Planisphere, 2015



Melton City Council | Significant Landscape Features Strategy

5 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

A framework for ongoing landscape management has been prepared to ensure the valued aspects of Melton's landscapes are protected into the future.

Landscapes are constantly evolving, and change is part of landscape character. Past change has produced the landscape we see today. Trends and future changes need to be anticipated so that their effect – positive and negative – on the valued character and significance of landscapes can be managed.

In this Chapter, patterns of change have been examined for the two Character Types in Melton, including the areas of landscape significance contained within each. The way in which anticipated changes might threaten landscape values or provide opportunities for the enhancement of Melton's landscapes is considered.

Future directions for the landscape Character Types and associated areas of landscape significance are set out in Preferred Character Statements.

Objectives for future landscape management provide overarching directions for achieving the Preferred Character Statements. Guidelines have been prepared to provide detailed guidance for the siting and design of new development across all landscapes in the study area.

For a map showing the Character Type areas in Melton, see **Map 14**.

5.2 WESTERN VOLCANIC PLAIN

LANDSCAPE MORPHOLOGY

This landscape has evolved from centuries of volcanic action creating one of the world's largest basaltic plains which is dotted with extinct volcanoes and field stone. Mount Cottrell had one of the largest lava outputs of Victoria's Western Volcanic Plain. Today, Mount Cottrell, Atkinson and Kororiot serve as visual reminders of the City's geological history. It is thought that the youngest eruptions occurred between thousands and tens of thousands of years ago and that they may have been witnessed by Aboriginal people.

The Western Volcanic Plain has some of the most fertile soils. The City of Melton's plains, however receive low and erratic rainfall due to their location in the rain shadow of the Otway Ranges. Pre-settlement vegetation in this area would have consisted of woodlands and grasslands with some wetlands and swampland, this is now mostly long cleared.

Waterways traversing the landscape have created depressions, valleys and, in some locations, deep incisions. Today, the waterways are a distinctive feature of the landscape.

Evidence of early Aboriginal inhabitation is limited in the area as they treaded lightly on the landscape. It is believed that over 30,000 years ago Aboriginal people modified the landscape through hunting and their extensive use of fire. This controlled use of fire changed

the appearance of the native bushland, with large areas of forest being replaced by open grasslands.

The open grassy plains created the park-like expanses which so suited the sheep of the first British settlers. Major Mitchell, one of the first Europeans to explore the broader volcanic plain, noted that what the settlers found here was not a pristine or natural landscape but one that had been heavily modified by the Aboriginal people over several thousands of years. He declared it as ready for the "immediate reception of civilised man". Major Mitchell ascended and named Mount Macedon, a key landmark visible to the municipality's north.

The proximity to Melbourne and cleared nature of the Western Volcanic Plain were ideal for grazing. The agricultural era began by the subdivision and sale of crown land, induced by the gold rush. The plains were dominated by large pastoral properties, with early dwellings situated near watercourses because of the area's dryness. These large properties often had extensive exotic gardens as the new settlers aimed to recreate their familiar British landscapes.

As time passed the larger properties were compulsorily purchased, subdivided and sold amongst small farmers to graze cattle and grow food, once again changing the face of the volcanic plain.

As the land was settled and cleared for agriculture, stones from the lava flows were dug from paddocks and built into the dry stone walls that are visible today. The unspectacular shield volcanoes in the area are the origins of stones gathered by early European settlers to create

dry stone walls. These volcanic hilltops in the area are also expected to be a rich source of Aboriginal archaeological deposits. Aboriginal people were reported to make use of the stones from lava flows to construct channels linking the wetlands, weirs, fish-traps, wind breaks and stone huts.

The creation of agricultural land by the first European settlers changed not only the landscape, but also the watercourses as the draining, diversion and damming of waterbodies has encouraged rising salinity levels.

The landscape that we see today represents a hybrid of generally undisturbed underlying topography with patchwork remnants of the natural landscape evident. Intertwined with this lies the heavily modified landscape of exotic shelterbelts, dry stone walls, farming, infrastructure and large areas of urban development.

New residential neighbourhoods are extending across the previously undeveloped plains and irrevocably changing their landscape character. The volcanic cones have development at their lower slopes, infrastructure on their peaks or are being reshaped by quarrying. While some of the forested areas are protected by public land ownership and management, such as the Pyrele Range and Long Forest, others may experience pressure for change in the future.

SENSITIVITY TO CHANGE

The Western Volcanic Plain is highly sensitive to change, as the flat and open nature of the topography offers expansive, long range views, creating a landscape in which there is 'nowhere

to hide'. There is limited capacity for this Character Type to absorb development without it becoming prominent in the viewed landscape. However, balanced against this is the degree to which this landscape has been modified, shaped by human intervention over generations. In this context, some level of further change in the landscape may be accommodated.

ANTICIPATED LANDSCAPE CHANGE

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of this Character Type include:

- › Metropolitan Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary provides for large areas of the Western Volcanic Plain to be developed for urban purposes between Melton and Caroline Springs in the coming decades.
- › There is an increasing awareness from farmers as to the value of biodiversity, and setting aside existing vegetation or native revegetation to create linked habitat corridors may change the aesthetics of this vast cleared plain.
- › Increase of extreme climate and weather will exacerbate low and erratic rainfall in the area.
- › Continued spread of introduced grass and other plant species will further threaten endemic vegetation and its contribution to the underlying landscape character.
- › Further changes in patterns of land use and development, such as increased rural residential properties, different agricultural practices or lot fragmentation may also impact upon landscape character.

“low plain where the water appeared frequently to lodge, it was covered with small-blade grass but almost destitute of wood, and the soil was clayey and shallow ... Towards the interior there was a mountain [Mount Macedon] ... and so far the country was low, grassy, and slightly covered with wood ...”

Matthew Flinders in April 1802, probably the first non-Aboriginal person to obtain a view towards the Melton area, viewed from the summit of the You Yangs

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE WESTERN VOLCANIC PLAIN

Opportunities

- > Residential development that benefits from scenic views to the surrounding landscape
- > New development, including Precinct Structure Planning, designed around significant landscape features, i.e. volcanic cones, waterways and forested areas, and considering views to and from the surrounding landscape
- > Rehabilitation and opening up of public access to Council land at Mount Cottrell and along the Djerrivarrh Creek
- > Improved management of the waterway ecosystem health which will benefit the visual aspects of the landscape
- > Conservation areas to expand to avoid local species extinction
- > Improved management of grassland remnants on small public land blocks and private land, including land resting for flowering and the creation of a protective layer of moss to keep out weeds
- > Increased access to recreation facilities across the municipality
- > Increased tourism taking advantage of the dry stone wall trail, heritage trail and recreation trails along waterway reserves

Threats

- > Encroaching urbanisation into the undeveloped landscape
- > Inappropriate subdivisions

- > Development that dominates the landscape, blocks or spoils significant views, or is located on ridgelines and hilltops
- > Loss of vegetation, including significant areas of grassland, forests and shelterbelts

- > Failing to reach a balance between protecting the landscape and productive use of the land
- > Lack of understanding of the values of landscape features such as volcanic cones, forests, waterways
- > Pressure to locate development and infrastructure on the volcanic cones, such as telecommunications towers, water storage infrastructure or dwellings
- > Limited access to geological features and lack of interpretive information
- > Quarrying of volcanic cones
- > Soil disturbance in grasslands disrupting their natural defensive procedures and leading to weed invasion
- > Feral animals and invasive species such as introduced grass and herb species
- > Deforestation of upland areas affecting water run off and catchment on the plains
- > Loss of landscape features on private land such as indigenous vegetation, dry stone walls and stone cottages
- > Inappropriate activities taking place on public land which have led to its closure
- > Environmental hazards which impact on visual landscape values including erosion, salinity, flooding and fire risks

WESTERN VOLCANIC PLAIN PREFERRED CHARACTER STATEMENT

The City of Melton's Volcanic Plain, as part of the broader Victorian Volcanic Plain, will remain as one of the most important geological and environmental areas in Victoria. Conservation efforts will see the features of volcanic cones, extensive grasslands, remnant forests and waterways managed and protected.

Built form will be well-designed and, where possible, screened or sited to reduce visual dominance in the flat landscapes; this should include discouraging development in prominent positions.

Rural areas will continue to be productive landscapes with co-operation between land management authorities and land owners.

The aesthetic qualities of these areas will be retained and enhanced through a variety of policies and schemes to preserve the landscape.

The interface between rural and urban areas will be carefully managed. Urban development will be designed to minimise its visual impact on the surrounding landscape and in particular, significant landscape features.

Waterway systems and remnant forests will be protected and their conditions ameliorated through measures such as planting indigenous vegetation. This will help promote recreational opportunities that exist in these areas.

5.3 THE UPLANDS

LANDSCAPE MORPHOLOGY

The Uplands were formed from Ordovician Marine Sedimentary deposits that consist of sandstone, shale and mudstone. These rocks were uplifted and dissected which formed the landscape of the Lerdererg and Yangardook areas. The geology of the area has a higher relief when compared to the Volcanic Plains. Dissected and uplifted bedrock gives rise to valleys and plains of fertile alluvial soils that form corridors between the peaks and ridges. The hills, however, are relatively infertile.

The area was home to Aboriginal people who found shelter in the treed hills, as well as timber for building and tools and possums and other foods. They made little impact on the landscape, with evidence of their existence mostly located around waterways.

Following early European settlement in the area, the gold rushes brought a wave of people across the Uplands. This spawned the development, land clearing and agricultural activities in the area. Toolern Vale became known for agriculture specifically for barley production.

Despite fire sweeping through the area in the 1860s, the higher areas continued to produce the best crops. Firewood, a substantial industry in the area, helped supplement farmers' incomes and impacted the landscape. Today the landscape remains relatively undeveloped with the majority of land included in rural or public land use zones.

SENSITIVITY TO CHANGE

The undulating to hilly topography and vegetation cover of the area allows development to be absorbed without undue visual interference, if appropriately sited.

Development on hillsides or ridges and in large cleared areas, however, has the potential to be highly visible.

ANTICIPATED LANDSCAPE CHANGE

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of this Character Type include:

- > Due to the proximity of this Landscape Character Type to Melbourne and other large urban centres (Sunbury, Gisborne, Melton), it is anticipated that the expected increase in Victoria's population will be a driver of land use change.
- > Reduction in grazing and an increasing demand for rural 'lifestyle' properties near regional centres has meant changing land use priorities which may continue.
- > Scattered remnant vegetation has regenerated in some areas as previous grazing activities have declined.
- > New property owners interested in nature conservation may be keen to assist with improved environmental management and enhancement.
- > New agricultural enterprises such as viticulture and olive growing, as well as an increasing influx of people onto small land holdings, previously used for broad scale agriculture, will change the established rural character.

- > Vegetation clearing around properties may increase due to recent changes to bushfire regulations.
- > Potential increase in tourism, retail and accommodation uses in rural areas and smaller lots or more dwellings in the Rural Conservation Zone may result from recent State Government reforms to planning zones.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE UPLANDS

Opportunities

- > Residential development that is well integrated with the undulating and forested landscape of the Uplands, and which may also benefit from scenic views to the surrounding landscape
- > Improved management of the waterway ecosystem health which will benefit the visual aspects of the landscape
- > Conservation areas to expand to avoid local species extinction
- > Revegetation, particularly on hilltops, sloping land, along waterways and within forested areas to manage and maintain biodiversity and to protect the landscape from erosion
- > Increased tourism taking advantage of the dry stone wall trail and extending this to other heritage places relating to the area's early settlement

Threats

- > Inappropriate subdivisions and development, such as built form that dominates the landscape, blocks or spoils significant views, or is located on ridgelines and hilltops

- > Loss of vegetation, including significant areas of forests, shelterbelts and vegetation along waterways
- > Failing to reach a balance between protecting the landscape and productive use of the land
- > Land uses that transform the landscape such as plantations or quarrying
- > Deforestation and subsequent impacts on water run off and catchments
- > Loss of landscape features on private land such as indigenous vegetation, dry stone walls and stone cottages
- > Deterioration of privately owned landscape features such as indigenous vegetation
- > Limited access to public forested areas and lack of interpretive information
- > Incursion of weeds when areas of natural vegetation are disturbed
- > Feral animals and invasive species such as introduced grass and herb species
- > Environmental hazards which impact on visual landscape values including erosion along waterways and in sloped areas, salinity, flooding and fire risks

UPLANDS PREFERRED CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Uplands in the City of Melton will remain a picturesque undulating area, with views to the adjacent volcanic plain and distant hills protected. Vegetation will be retained and built form avoided in prominent areas, including ridgelines and hilltops.

The tree cover that blankets extensive areas in this Character Type will be preserved and revegetation with indigenous plantings will be encouraged. Conservation efforts will see a balance reached between productive agriculture, recreation and ecological restoration.

Rural areas will continue to be productive landscapes with co-operation between land management authorities and land owners. The aesthetic of these areas will be retained and enhanced through a variety of policies and schemes to preserve the landscape.

Built form and agricultural development will be designed to respect the landscape features, sensitively sited at lower points in the landscape and screened by vegetation where possible.

5.4 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Development patterns and changes to the landscape have been examined to identify the key issues to be addressed in the landscape management objectives and guidelines.

A collection of images has been used to illustrate elements of built form, design and siting, vegetation, land maintenance and infrastructure in examples that show "preferred" outcomes and techniques that should be "avoided".

The examples used in this section reflect recommendations put forward in the objectives (Chapter 5) and guidelines (Appendix A), which are designed to improve the relationship of development to the landscape character and significance of Melton.

EXAMPLES OF DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES TO BE AVOIDED

Key development issues to be addressed are described in the following table. Due to the flatness of the Western Volcanic Plains, built form in the Melton landscape is highly visible and sensitive to change.

Elements to consider with respect to the above are building design and siting, sensitive material selection and building location within vegetation and topography, where possible.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES TO AVOID

ELEMENT	BUILT FORM	DESIGN	SITING	VEGETATION	LAND MAINTENANCE
Development and significant landscape features	Inappropriate buildings and infrastructure that encroach and visually intrude upon views to the cones or the slope of a creekbank due to the location of buildings on the base, slope or peak of a feature.	Building design is a primary focus to be supported by sensitive vegetative screening, where widespread dense vegetation in itself is not historically a key characteristic of the area.	Conspicuous or incongruous buildings, structures or infrastructure visible in the foreground of views to notable geological features should be avoided. Views across the rural landscape abruptly interrupted by a band of urban development.	Incongruous urban development that has been inserted into the mid-ground views. Absence of meaningful vegetation or landscape buffer to soften development in long-range views otherwise be available from roads (viewing corridors).	Providing more vegetation within subdivisions to soften their appearance from a distance could result in a better outcome.
Urban-style development	Frequent use of heavy materials (stone, brick, tiles). Density of development that limits opportunities for long-term establishment of vegetation.	Urban-style development that encroaches on rural areas. Despite some articulation in the projecting parts of a building, repeated vertical elements should be avoided to minimise the potential to accentuate building height.	Cut and fill should not be used to elevate a building on a "plinth". This undermines the ability to relate to natural contours. Buildings located in close proximity to the road, are also highly visible in the foreground of views.	Sparse planting around buildings. Lack of tree canopies above dwelling roofs that can be used to connect development to the surrounding landscape.	Erosion and invasive plant species contribute to loss of significant stands of vegetation. Degradation of significant flora. Little consideration given to remediation.
Outbuildings (sheds, etc.)	Agricultural buildings using bright colours and reflective materials that are visually dominant in their surroundings.	Light colours and large scale buildings are highly visible against the landscape backdrop.	Buildings located in close proximity to roads in combination with poor selection of colours and materials.		
Land and hard waste management					Dumping on private property; unkempt and poorly managed agricultural lands, including land uses that may reduce the productivity or contaminate those lands.
Fences		High, solid or non-visually permeable fencing and development that displays a lack of integration with adjoining open spaces.			

EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

Examples of positive development outcomes are shown in images across the following pages. Many features discussed have been selected as a means to illustrate ways to respond to the guidelines presented in Appendix A to this report.



PREFERRED

Siting: Development sited below peak of ridge/line. Front fencing highly visually permeable (post and wire), and gravel driveway softens entry.

Design: Construction materials chosen in muted tonings to lessen the visual impact of the building against the landscape. Fencing and gates are visually permeable and suited to a rural environment.

Vegetation: Established vegetation around the house and in the front setback from the road lessens the visual bulk of the dwelling; vegetation projecting above the roof line assists in the success of this technique.



PREFERRED

Built form: Contemporary built form and new development can be designed to sensitively respond to the surrounding environment. Colours chosen are muted and reflect those found in the palette of surrounding vegetation and landscape. A segmented form lessens its visual bulk and the height of the building retains some views to the tree canopy to the rear.

Design: Skillion roof forms in this instance emphasise the notion of an informal and non-urban building. Verandahs and a high degree of articulation between each part of the building lessen its visual bulk.



PREFERRED

Siting: Buildings well-integrated with adjoining open space.

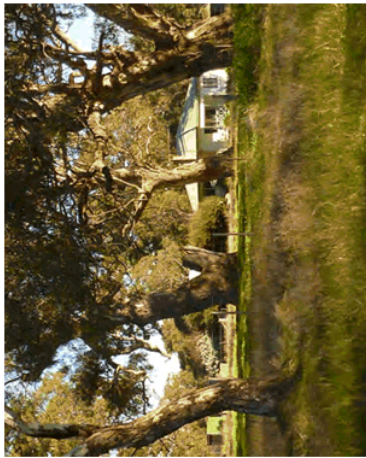
Design: Large windows and transparent fencing allow a visual connection with the public areas and for landscaping to flow between public and private spaces.



PREFERRED

Siting: Low profile buildings sit comfortably within the landscape. Structures are "tucked" in to the landscape and sited among vegetation are strongly encouraged. As seen from the road, this building is also sited below the ridgeline of hills in the background

Vegetation: Well-selected vegetation has become established and minimises the dominance of built form in the landscape, with tree canopies projecting above the roofline of the building.



PREFERRED

Built Form: The scale of this built form enables visual primacy to established and remnant vegetation in the surrounding landscape. Outbuildings have small building footprints and are also located amongst vegetation.

Design: The form of the building itself displays simple, pared back design detailing. Fencing is open and visually permeable, ensuring it is not visually intrusive. This is also reflective of styles traditionally used in rural areas.



PREFERRED

Siting: Building nestled among trees whose canopies have been allowed to extend above the building roofline.

Design: Use of a recessed verandah and simple roof form reduces the visual bulk of built form. The external form of the building complements the surrounding landscape by utilising colours and finishes that immerse the building in the landscape and minimise contrast with its surrounds.

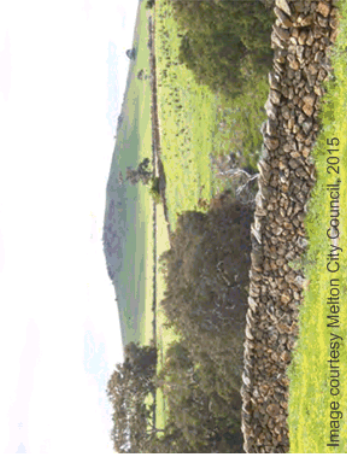


Image courtesy, Melton City Council, 2015

PREFERRED

Dry Stone Walls: Dry stone walls on private property have been retained along this fenceline. All dry stone walls should be retained as important cultural, historic and visual features of the Melton landscape.



PREFERRED

Vegetation: Retention of significant landscape at town boundaries (this example: Eynesbury) provides a visual buffer to development and is a highly valued recreational and environmental resource.



PREFERRED

Design: Visually permeable/transparent fencing reduces the feeling of separation from the surrounding landscape when travelling along roads, which are often viewing corridors to the surrounding area.

Vegetation: Substantial planting along the property boundary provides a visual buffer to the building.

5.5 OBJECTIVES

Objectives and guidelines have been prepared to assist in the implementation of the Preferred Character Statements.

General objectives provide the overarching direction for the study area as a whole. Specific objectives provide additional direction for the two Character Types, for urban areas and for the significance areas.

Detailed landscape management guidelines are contained in **Appendix A**. They provide detailed guidance for the siting and design of new development across the study area and address the key issues of:

- > Land maintenance
- > Geological features
- > Dry stone walls
- > Indigenous vegetation
- > Shelter belts & established planting
- > Views & vistas
- > Siting & design of buildings & structures
- > Signage & infrastructure
- > Cultural heritage
- > Siting & design in relation to settlements.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES FOR THE STUDY AREA

To protect and respect the cultural heritage values of Melton's rural landscapes.

To minimise the visual impact of buildings and structures upon the landscape.

To ensure that buildings and structures demonstrate a high standard of design and respond to the character and significance of the surrounding landscape.

To preserve and enhance the landscape features of Melton's landscapes such as the volcanic cones, incised gorges, waterways and grasslands.

To provide an appropriate setting for heritage elements that illustrate the history of human interaction with the landscape.

To increase indigenous planting to assist in emphasising the natural features of the landscape and in strengthening linked habitat corridors.

To incorporate best practice environmental sustainability principles in building siting and design.

To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly when visible from identified significant viewing corridors and viewing locations.

To maintain the positive contribution that appropriate rural land uses make to the character of Melton's landscapes.

To sensitively manage the interface between urban and rural areas of the landscape.

To maintain a clear visual separation between urban and rural areas.

To minimise the visual impact of noxious weeds and animals.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE WESTERN VOLCANIC PLAIN

To retain the sense of openness of Melton's volcanic plains and grasslands.

To conserve and enhance the volcanic cones and rocky outcrops as important geological features of this landscape.

To provide an appropriate landscape setting for waterways, incised valleys and gorges.

To retain forested areas as important features of the landscape.

To preserve and enhance the dry stone walls as a key historic feature of Melton's post-settlement rural landscapes.

To encourage the retention of shelter belt planting as a feature of the area.

To retain key views to significant landscape features from identified significant viewing locations and road corridors. Key views include:

- > Views to the uplands to the north
- > Views to volcanic cones
- > Long range views to Melbourne's CBD.

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6
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OBJECTIVES FOR SIGNIFICANCE AREAS

In addition to the general objectives for the study area and for each Character Type, the following objectives also apply to the significance areas:

Forested Areas

To retain and enhance the natural vegetated character of the forested areas.

Volcanic Cones & Hills

To retain the volcanic cones free from development, where possible.

To sensitively design buildings and structures within the foreground setting of the volcanic cones to minimise impacts on their landscape values.

Waterways

To maintain the topography and vegetation of waterways as dominant visual elements in the landscape.

To avoid visually obtrusive building silhouettes at the edges of waterways.

OBJECTIVES FOR URBAN AREAS

To maintain significant elements of the natural landscape within developed areas of the municipality.

To minimise the visual impact of buildings and structures upon places of identified landscape character or significance.

To carefully manage the interface between urban and rural areas.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE UPLANDS

To emphasise the importance of topography and indigenous vegetation within the Uplands landscape.

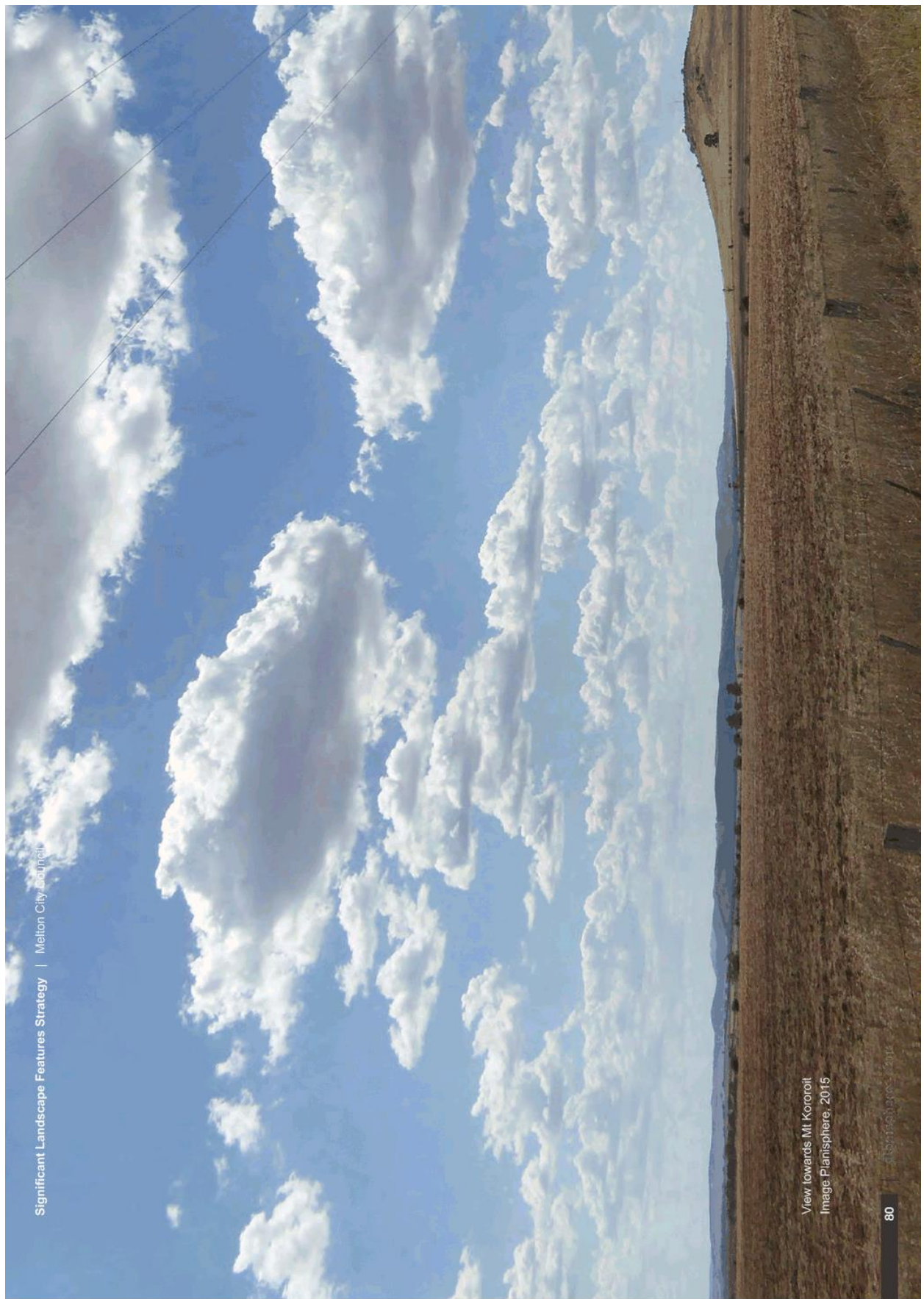
To sensitively design buildings and structures within the open pastoral areas and the forested areas of the Uplands to minimise impacts on natural and landscape values.

To retain ridgelines and prominent hill faces free from development, where possible.

To retain forested areas as important features of the landscape.

To retain key views to significant landscape features from identified viewing locations and road corridors. Key views include:

- > Views across the expansive volcanic plains and grasslands
- > Views to volcanic cones.



Significant Landscape Features Strategy | Melton City Council

View towards Mt Kororoit
Image: Plansphere, 2015



Melton City Council | Significant Landscape Features Strategy

IMPLEMENTATION

6

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study will be implemented through a range of measures, undertaken by various stakeholders. The study's recommendations will involve Council, other government agencies, the broader community and land owners.

The focus for implementation of this study is through the statutory controls of the Melton Planning Scheme. Successful implementation of the proposed planning scheme changes will legally bind local Councils, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) and applicants to consider the identified values of landscapes that have been defined and documented as part of the study.

Other recommendations which lie outside of the Planning Scheme are also suggested. While not binding in a statutory sense, these actions are important steps in fostering a sense of 'custodianship' of the landscape.

Protection and enhancement of valued landscapes is ultimately a collective responsibility. All people who live or work in, visit or manage development within the study area can play a role in managing Melton's landscapes into the future.

Understanding how landscape character and significance are addressed in the Melton Planning Scheme demonstrates where gaps in the statutory management of landscapes exist, and forms the basis for implementation recommendations.

An overview of current planning policies and controls is provided in **Chapter 2**, and a detailed analysis of provisions relating to significance areas is included as **Appendix B**.

Sections 6.5-6.7 outline the operation of existing planning controls for each landscape significance area (Forested Areas, Volcanic Hills and Cones, and Waterways). The list below outlines all planning zones that currently operate within character areas and apply to significant landscapes across the City of Melton:

- > General Residential Zone (GRZ)
- > Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ)
- > Green Wedge Zone (GWZ)
- > Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ)
- > Public Use Zone (PUZ)
- > Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)
- > Urban Floodway Zone (UFZ)
- > Urban Growth Zone (UGZ)
- > Comprehensive Development Zone (CDZ).

As described in **Appendix B** to this report, the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) and Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) can be used to manage built form, vegetation removal and subdivision (ESO only).

Zoning provisions primarily control use of the land but may also control the built form of a proposed development. They can require the following:

- > Planning permission for a variety of land uses.
- > Planning permission for buildings and works associated with a 'permit required' land use.
- > Planning permission for subdivision and specification of a minimum lot size and number of lots to be created.
- > Planning permission for advertising signage.

> Development setback requirements from roads, dwellings not in the same ownership, and waterways, wetlands or designated floodplains.

Without overlays that focus specifically on significant landscapes and environmental qualities in addition to an underlying zone, there may be limited opportunity for planning to protect character and significance in order to address the threats to landscape character outlined in **Chapter 3**. This has potential to create issues for the management of landscape character and significant landscapes. The purpose of the zones listed and the scope of controls are not designed to trigger planning permit requirements for the protection of significant landscapes.

6.2 MANAGING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

In most instances, typical buildings and works relating to permitted land uses will be consistent with the character of landscapes within the zone.

However, for proposals requiring planning permission, it is important that the character of Melton's landscapes is considered in the planning permit application process, through the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and Local Planning Policy.

As outlined in **Chapter 2** (see "2.5 Melton Planning Scheme" on page 22), landscapes are recognised as having cultural and aesthetic importance as part of the objectives in the MSS (Clause 21.03-2). However, there are no clear strategies in the MSS or local policies that set out how to manage and enhance landscape character in Melton.

In future, creation of a local planning policy applicable to development and new land uses in non-urban areas, where appropriate, is recommended. Such a policy would address the current deficit in character areas that are not subject to overlays. It will assist in management of preferred landscape character across the City of Melton by providing clear guidelines for assessing development in the context of landscape character. The basis for a local planning policy should be drawn from the "Landscape Management Guidelines" included as **Appendix A** to this report.

6.3 PROTECTING LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

The landscapes identified in this study as being significant are:

- > Forested Areas
- > Volcanic Cones and Hills
- > Waterways

Map 19 on page 57 ("Significant Landscapes") indicates the location of each area, and the landscape significance of the areas is described and explained in **Chapter 3** (see page 36).

Landscapes of identified significance have a higher sensitivity to change. As many types of development will have the potential to impact upon landscape significance, a greater level of planning control should apply to these areas of investigation.

The existing planning controls (policies, zones and overlays) that currently apply to the identified significant landscapes in Melton have been analysed in detail in order to determine any gaps in statutory landscape management.

In summary:

- > The MSS refers briefly to the ridgetops, volcanic cones and waterways as significant landscape features (Clause 21.03). This should be augmented with the findings of this study.
- > All of the identified significance areas are included within existing overlay controls: the Volcanic Cones are protected through the Significant Landscape Overlay and the

Forested Areas and Waterways are protected by the Environmental Significance Overlay.

- > These controls trigger planning permits for a wider range of development. However, they require strengthening to implement the findings of this study.
- > The extent of the overlay controls requires revision to ensure that the significant landscape features in the relevant investigation areas are included within the boundary of the control.

OVERLAY BOUNDARIES

The mapping boundaries drawn for significant landscapes should capture the landscape features that require protection and management. In addition, extension of the SLO beyond identified features to include the landscape setting is also recommended around each feature, so that the potential impact of development within their immediate environs can be appropriately managed via planning permit assessment processes. This also creates protection for viewsheds towards significant landscapes.

This report recommends:

- > Extending the Forested Area ESO2 to include Forested Areas that are not currently covered by an overlay.
- > Extending the 'core cone area' currently applied to the Volcanic Cones and Hills SLO1 to include a 'cone environs area'.
- > Extending the Waterways ESO1 to consider a 'core environs management area'.

The 'core cone area' for the SLO1 refers to the existing extent of the overlays on the City of Melton's volcanic cones. At present, the SLO1 stops at the base of each feature and does not include the cone environs. This report therefore recommends extension to the SLO1 area to include a 'cone environs area' which will be measured at a distance from the base of the cone. Inclusion of a 'cone environs area' will establish a landscape setting around each feature where development can be managed through the planning permit process, where appropriate.

Development is not prohibited within the landscape setting areas recommended for inclusion in the SLO; rather, the overlay permit triggers allow an assessment of potential visual impacts for important vistas and the landscape feature itself. In setting a distance around the significant landscape features, it may be logical to further extend the overlay boundary so that it aligns with cadastral boundaries, or a logical contour line. Consideration should also be given to extension of the overlay up to a public road in the landscape feature's environs. This will ensure inappropriate building design or siting does not diminish the relationship between a significant landscape feature and the road as a viewing corridor to the feature.

6.4 THE SIGNIFICANT FORESTED AREAS

WHAT SHOULD BE THE AIM?

The significance of this area, based on the analysis in **Chapter 3**, can be summarised as follows:

The densely treed vegetation of the forests contrasts strongly with the surrounding cleared landscapes and open grasslands. From within, the forests are enclosed spaces and the landscapes are constrained by vegetation, creating a visual tunnel of tall trees framing roads and pathways. Areas of heavily vegetated forest cloak the rolling hills in the Uplands, forming their dark silhouette which can be seen throughout the municipality from some distance. The forested areas within the Volcanic Plain are visible as dark patches of vegetation along the horizon or in the distance. This provides a distinctive contrast to the surrounding landscape of open plains with light-coloured grasses. Toolern Vale forested hills, Toolern Creek bridge at Hannah Watts Park, Melton and few trees. The forested areas have local significance as iconic and scarce features of the City of Melton's landscape.

The objectives for landscape management set out in section 5.5 of this report include the following objective for this significance area:

To retain and enhance the natural vegetated character of the forested areas.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE AIM?

As described in **Section 6.3**, an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO), Schedule 1, applies to the majority of Forested Areas in Melton.

The ESO1 Remnant Woodlands, Open Forests and Grasslands seeks to protect and conserve these features, and to discourage inappropriate use and development. Planning permission is required for buildings and works (development), subdivision and vegetation removal. The ESO1 also requires specific environmental reports to be considered during application assessment.

The ESO2 Wetlands, Waterways and Riparian Strips applies to part of the Forested Areas along the Djerrivarrh Creek. This ESO focuses on conservation of waterways and waterbodies but also seeks to identify, conserve and enhance the character of significant landscapes. The same permit requirements essentially apply as for ESO1.

Other provisions covering this area are:

- › Green Wedge Zone (GWZ)
- › Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ)
- › Public Use Zone (PUZ)
- › Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ).

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE?

The existing permit requirements of ESO1 and ESO2 afford a high level of protection to the Forested Areas as they generally provide for a planning assessment where a landscape's significance could be under threat. However,

BOUNDARIES

In some locations the Forested Areas extend beyond the current boundaries of ESO1 and ESO2. The overlay boundaries therefore require detailed review to ensure they adequately cover the significance areas identified in this study. This work would form part of a future detailed review of all ESOs to check and ensure they adequately cover areas of environmental significance.

Future investigation may include consideration of a 'management area' extending approximately 30m from the edge of the identified significance area, as appropriate, that would allow for maintenance of undergrowth and habitat at the sensitive edges of the forests. Establishment of this management area around the fringe of forested areas would allow for the visual impact of development to be assessed across its landscape setting. Landscape management guidelines such as those contained in Appendix A to this report may be applied in that management area to allow Council to consider the impact new development may have on the sensitive edges of these landscape features.



The Pyrele Range is visible via long-range views in the Uplands and adds a high degree of visual interest to the landscape.



Densely forested parts of the Pyrele Range are currently recognised by the RCZ but require further protection from a significant landscapes perspective.

- as the schedules are not specifically designed to address visual landscape values there are several improvements that could be made to respond to the critique in **Section 6.3**:
- › Include reference to visual landscape values in the statement of environmental significance
- › Add objectives that relate to visual landscape values
- › Add detail to the schedules in the application and permit requirement sections, to adequately address the ways environmental qualities should be managed when seeking to develop or disturb ground in an ESO area
- › Add permit requirements for high, solid fencing, which could also form a threat to these landscapes
- › Expand the decision guidelines and supplement the list of reference documents
- › Add application requirements.

6.5 THE SIGNIFICANT VOLCANIC HILLS & CONES

WHAT SHOULD BE THE AIM?

The significance of this area, based on the analysis in Chapter 3, can be summarised as follows:

The City of Melton's volcanic plain is punctuated by dormant volcanic cones which rise up from the surrounding landscape. Of these, Mount Kororoit, Mount Cottrell and Mount Atkinson are the most prominent. These cones form part of the volcanic plan that stretches across western Victoria to South Australia. Despite their relatively low elevation, they are visible from long distances and provide points of interest within the open plains. Visible throughout the municipality, the cones create a high level of contrast and visual interest in the landscape. These cones are iconic features of local significance that are scarce due to their topographic variation, unusual in the local context.

The objectives for landscape management set out in section 5.5 of this report include the following objective for this significance area:

To retain the volcanic cones free from development, where possible.

To sensitively design buildings and structures within the foreground setting of the volcanic cones to minimise impacts on their landscape values.

HOW ARE THE CURRENT PROVISIONS PERFORMING?

The following planning controls apply to the Volcanic Cones and Hills of Melton:

- > Green Wedge Zone (GWZ)
- > Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ)
- > Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)
- > Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)

Mount Cottrell and Kororoit are included within the GWZ and Mount Atkinson is partially covered by the RCZ and is also within the UGZ. As detailed for the Forested Areas, the schedules to these zones afford only a general level of landscape protection. Many types of development are permissible without a permit, and the zone controls or their schedules do not specifically address the landscape features of the Volcanic Cones and Hills.

The Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) Schedule 1, "Volcanic Hills and Cones", currently applies to all three volcanic cones identified in this study as having landscape significance. The schedule's 'statement of nature and key elements of landscape' is very brief, referring only to the visual relief that they provide in an otherwise flat landscape (refer to existing SLO1 in **Appendix C**). This renders decision making difficult when attempting to assess the impact a development may have on identified features and significance of a landscape.

The statement of significance currently states that "in order to protect these volcanic cones from development, buildings and works will be discouraged above the [nominated] contour lines". The contour lines nominated relate to what is approximately the base of each of the

volcanic cones and approximately reflect the boundary of each cone's SLO.

As this requirement for restricted development upon the cone is included in the statement of significance but not in the decision guidelines, it is not effective in protecting the volcanic cones from "inappropriate development" and it does not achieve its aim to "conserve the existing visual amenity and rural landscapes" (see **Appendix C** for further detail).

Only one objective has been included in Schedule 1 to the SLO, which provides broad direction about the protection of the volcanic hills and cones. The schedule's application requirements are problematic as they do not relate to where the SLO has been applied. Instead they apply outside the SLO boundaries - between 100 metre contour and the contour that defines each SLO boundary.

The existing application requirements and decision guidelines provide limited guidance for development in these areas. Permit requirements have not been considered in detail beyond the standard requirements for buildings and works (development).

An Environmental Significance Overlay, ESO5 Rural Conservation Area also applies to Mount Atkinson. It seeks to enhance the environmental and landscape values of the area. The ESO requires a permit for subdivision and the removal, destruction and lopping of some native vegetation.

The boundaries of the existing SLOs and ESO reflect the base of each volcanic cone. The existing overlays do not provide an area around the base of the cones to allow management of development in their immediate context.

environs area will enable the siting and design of development in the foreground of views to the cones to be more effectively managed.

In the case of Mount Cottrell and Mount Kororoit, their surrounds are to remain rural. The responsible authority should require buildings to be sited away from key viewing corridors, and to be massed in ways that complement, rather than dominate, the landscape of the cones.

Mount Atkinson, by contrast, sits within a the context of a future residential or urban environment. Overlay control of siting and design of the urban development at the foot of the cone can ensure that development is respectful of the scale and topographic integrity of the cone. In all three cases, the cones themselves should remain free of development as far as possible.

A suitable distance for the cone environs area may be calculated using a ratio of 1:5. As an example, a cone with a height measuring 50m from the base to the top would require a 250m radius for the proposed control, measured from the base of the cone. This methodology was developed as a part of the South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study, commissioned by the State Government, and used to apply to volcanic cones across that study area.

important landscape setting surrounding each cone. Permit triggers for development within the SLO area will consider the location of development with respect for the main part of the cone and will enable improved design solutions that uphold preferred landscape character.

Development on the main part of the volcanic cones could be addressed using a similar technique to an SLO schedule used in the Corangamite Planning Scheme, which discourages development on the slopes of cones. Where development is proposed to be constructed on the cone (i.e. the 'core cone area') in the SLO1 ("Volcanic Landscape Area"), development applications must make adequate justification "that there is no alternative suitable site and that the buildings and works are essential". This technique ensures that where the SLO applies to a whole site, it does not completely remove the development potential.

BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the existing SLOs and ESO should be extended to include a 'cone environs area' around the base of the cone. At present, the existing SLO and ESO only cover the main body of the cone itself. Creating a cone

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE?

The schedules to the Mt Cottrell and Mt Kororoit Green Wedge and Rural Conservation Zones should be upgraded to refer explicitly to the landscape features of the Volcanic Cones and Hills, and to include more specific permit provisions.

The following improvements should be considered to the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) Schedule 1 Volcanic Hills & Cones:

- > Expand the 'statement of nature and key elements of landscape' to include specific reference to the landscape attributes of the cones, as described in this report
- > Add the requirement to discourage development upon the cone to the decision guidelines
- > Ensure there is consistency between the reference to a contour line and the provisions required by the schedule
- > Add more objectives to reflect the elements of significance of each cone to be protected or managed, expand the application requirements and decision guidelines, and review the permit requirements
- > Incorporate a set of landscape management (design and development) guidelines as a reference document and/or local policy into the Melton Planning Scheme; the guidelines would apply to new development, buildings and works within the extent of the updated SLO1 (see example guidelines in **Appendix A**).

The recommended changes to the SLO will manage design on the volcanic cones. The SLO should also be extended to manage the

CONE	CONE ELEVATION (METRES AHD)	APPROX. CONE HEIGHT FROM BASE	1:5 RATIO CALCULATION	EXTENDED SLO BOUNDARY TO INCLUDE CONE ENVIRONS AREA
Mt Kororoit	236m AHD	236 - 180m AHD = 56m	56 x 5 = 280	280m from the base of the cone (ie existing SLO boundary)
Mt Cottrell	205m AHD	205 - 160m AHD = 45m	45 x 5 = 225	225m from the base of the cone (ie existing SLO boundary)
Mt Atkinson	140m AHD	140 - 120m AHD = 20m	20 x 5 = 100	100m from the base of the cone (ie existing SLO boundary)

A similar approximate calculation has been made to illustrate how the significant volcanic cones in Melton could have improved protection.

The distances calculated would be applied from the top of the cone. This measurement has been translated onto the maps on the following pages, to show how the ratio may be applied to create a cone environs area.

In contrast to the method proposed above, the current SLO1 covers an area over the cone to a contour line of approximately 180 metres AHD. The peak of the cone is located at approximately 236 metres AHD. If the difference in these elevations is taken as the main height of the cone, then the main part of the cone would be considered to be approximately 56m high, the figure used in the calculation about.

Applying a 1:5 ratio to extend the SLO1 would therefore require a cone environs area for Mt Kororoit measured a distance of 280m from its base, or the contour line at its break of slope - here roughly taken to be the 180m AHD contour line and the existing extent of the SLO1 (see page 89 for map and cross-section illustrations of this example, and see **Appendix C** for a copy of the existing SLO1 policy).

The example method outlined above has previously been adopted for protection of volcanic cones in other locations in western Victoria.

It is recommended that the contours surrounding volcanic cones continue to be used as a reference for setbacks and in setting the revised boundary of the SLO. Consideration should also be given to the use of cadastral boundaries and public roads, where present, in the immediate surrounds of the cone, to ensure an appropriate cone environs area and protection of viewsheds can be established and appropriately managed.

The extent of cone environs area required around Mount Atkinson depends on the likely development pressures anticipated. If residential development of the kind normally allowed under the General Residential Zone is envisaged, as suggested in the current draft Future Urban Structure Plan for Mt Atkinson and Tarnet (MPA, 2015), then the cone environs area would probably only need to encompass the first row of lots fronting the cone.

Until appropriate plans for the new urban area around Mt Atkinson are prepared in the form of a Precinct Structure Plan, landscape management guidelines such as those included in **Appendix A** for development in the Urban Growth Zone (UGZ), core cone and cone environs areas should still be considered relevant.

EXAMPLE CONTROLS

The maps and diagrams on the following pages illustrate the potential extension of the SLO1 that could be applied to Mount Kororoit, Mount Cottrell and Mount Atkinson. Cross sections illustrate the gentle slope of these cones and demonstrate the high degree of vulnerability to change as a result of inappropriate development on the landscape setting.

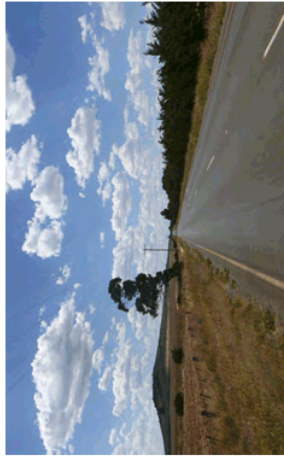
The maps show the following information:

- > Peak contour line (top) and elevation in metres AHD for each cone
- > Extent of existing SLO, which approximates to the base of each cone
- > Line showing current SLO1 policy that currently discourages development above a certain height in metres AHD (shown as "Proposed extension to the SLO")
- > Proposed 'cone environs area' to cover land between the existing SLO1 and a distance of 1:5 from the peak contour line (top) of the cone.

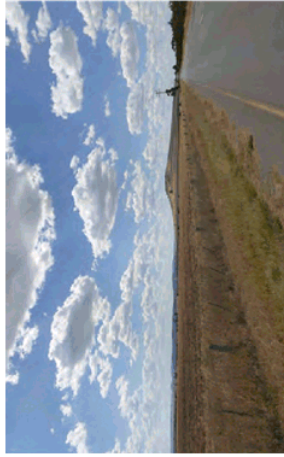
MT KOROROIT: POTENTIAL EXPANSION OF THE SLO1



View towards Mt Kororoit, looking east

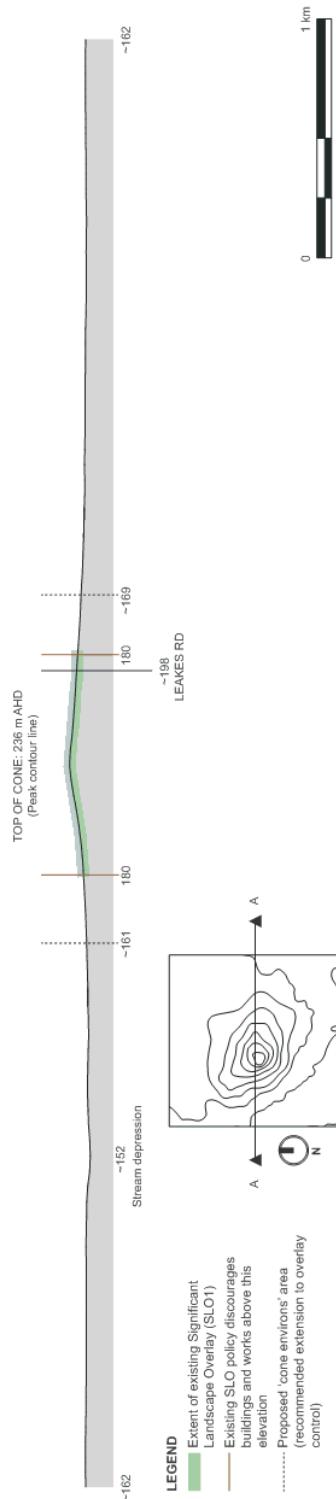


View of Mt Kororoit from Leakes Road, looking north

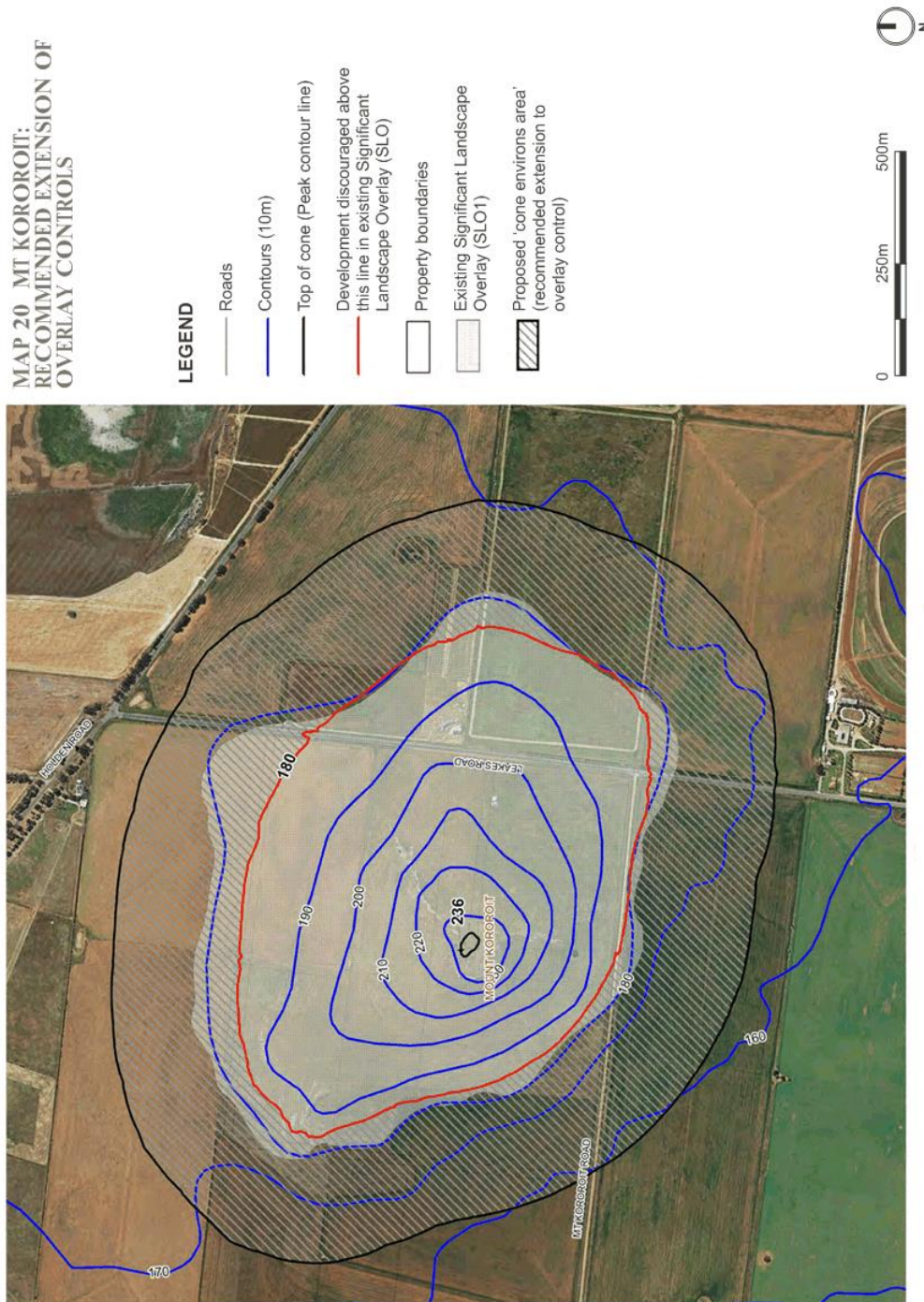


View of Mt Kororoit from Leakes Road, looking north

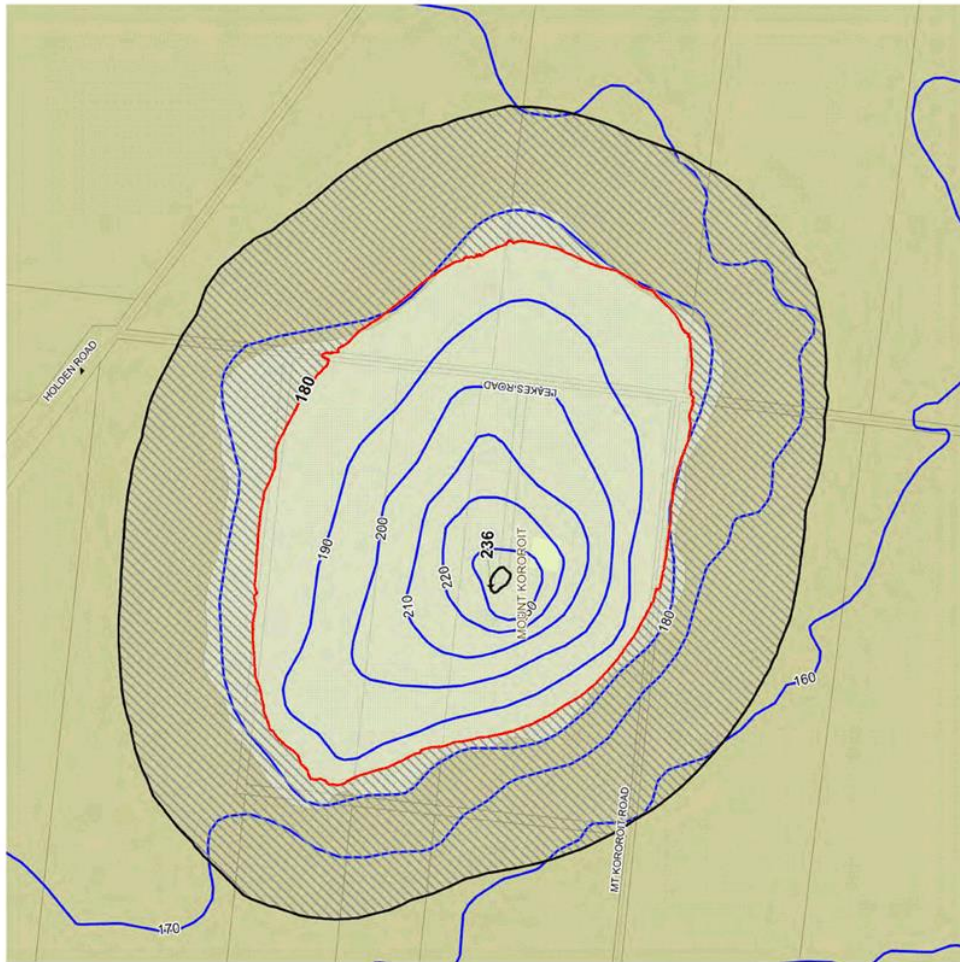
FIGURE 1 SECTION DIAGRAMS: MT KOROROIT



CONE	CONE ELEVATION (METRES AHD)	APPROX. CONE HEIGHT FROM BASE	1:5 RATIO CALCULATION	EXTENDED SLO BOUNDARY TO INCLUDE CONE ENVIRONS AREA
Mt Kororoit	236m AHD	236 - 180m AHD = 56m	56 x 5 = 280	280m from the base of the cone area (ie existing SLO boundary)



MAP 21 MT KOROROIT EXISTING ZONES AND PROPOSED SLO



LEGEND

- Roads
 - Contours (10m)
 - Top of cone (Peak contour line)
 - Development discouraged above this line in existing Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)
 - Property boundaries
 - Existing Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO1)
 - Proposed 'cone environs area' (recommended extension to overlay control)
- Planning Zones
- Public Use Zone (PUZ) except PUZ4
 - Green Wedge Zone (GWZ)



MT COTTRELL: POTENTIAL EXPANSION OF THE SLO1

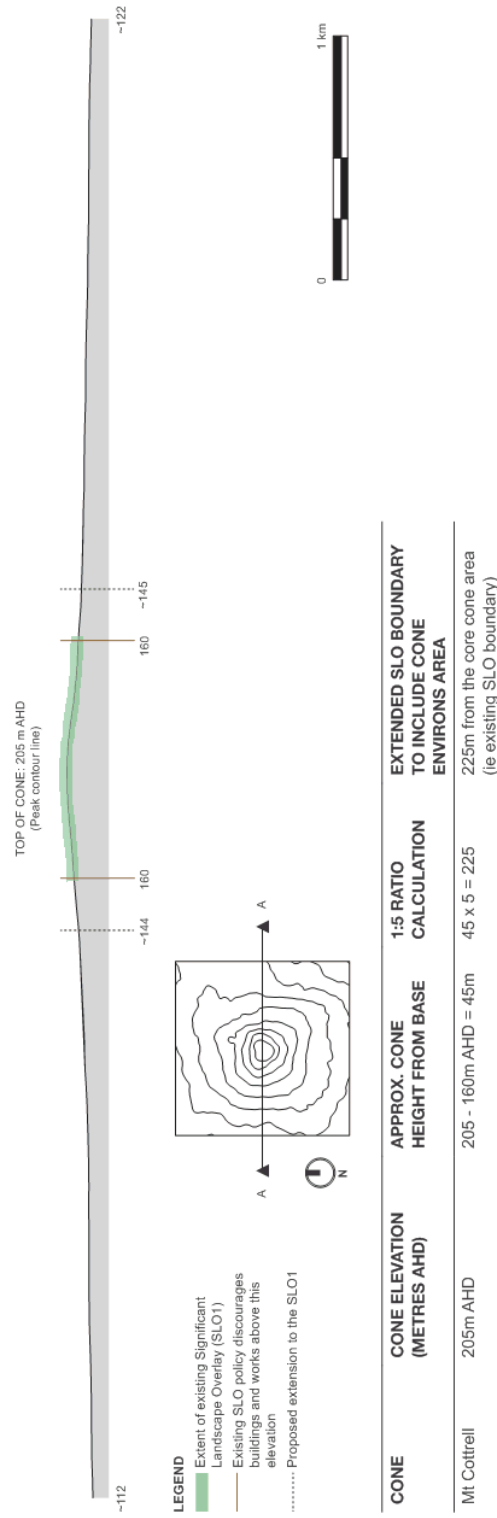


View towards Mt Cottrell looking southwest from Faulkners Road











View towards Mt Cottrell looking north from Boundary Road

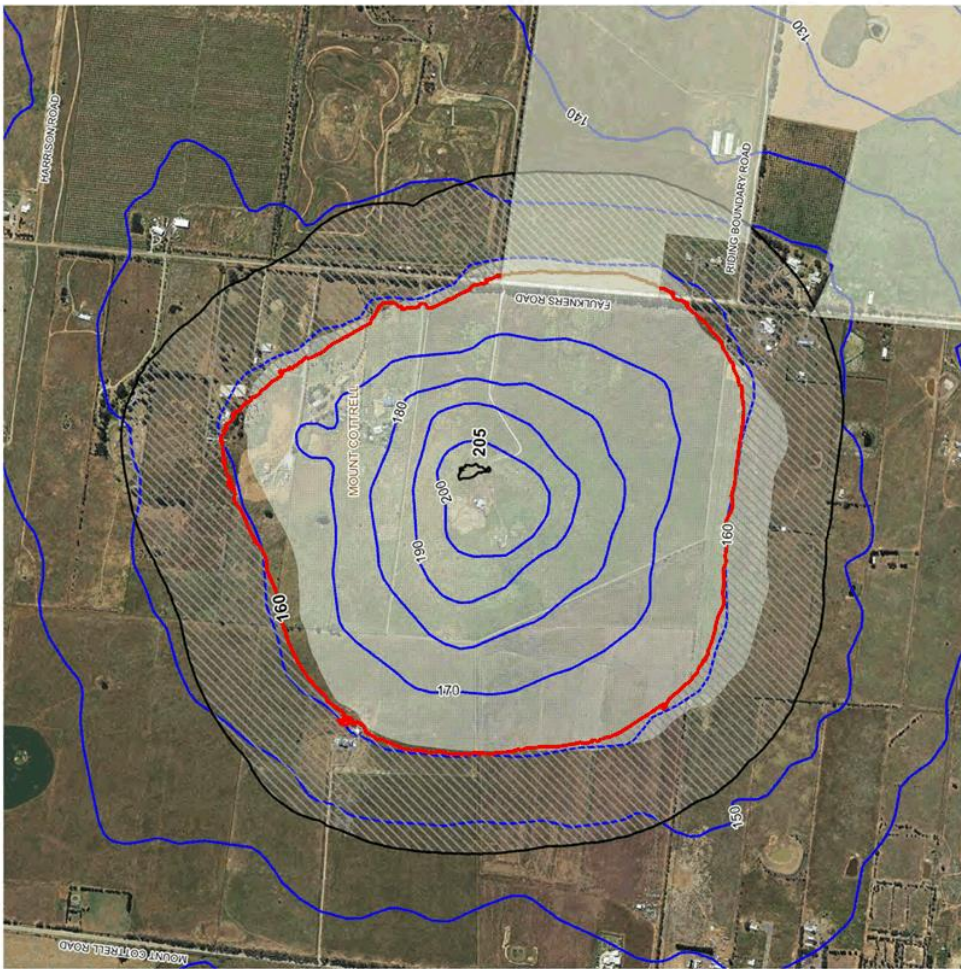
FIGURE 2 SECTION DIAGRAMS: MT COTTRELL

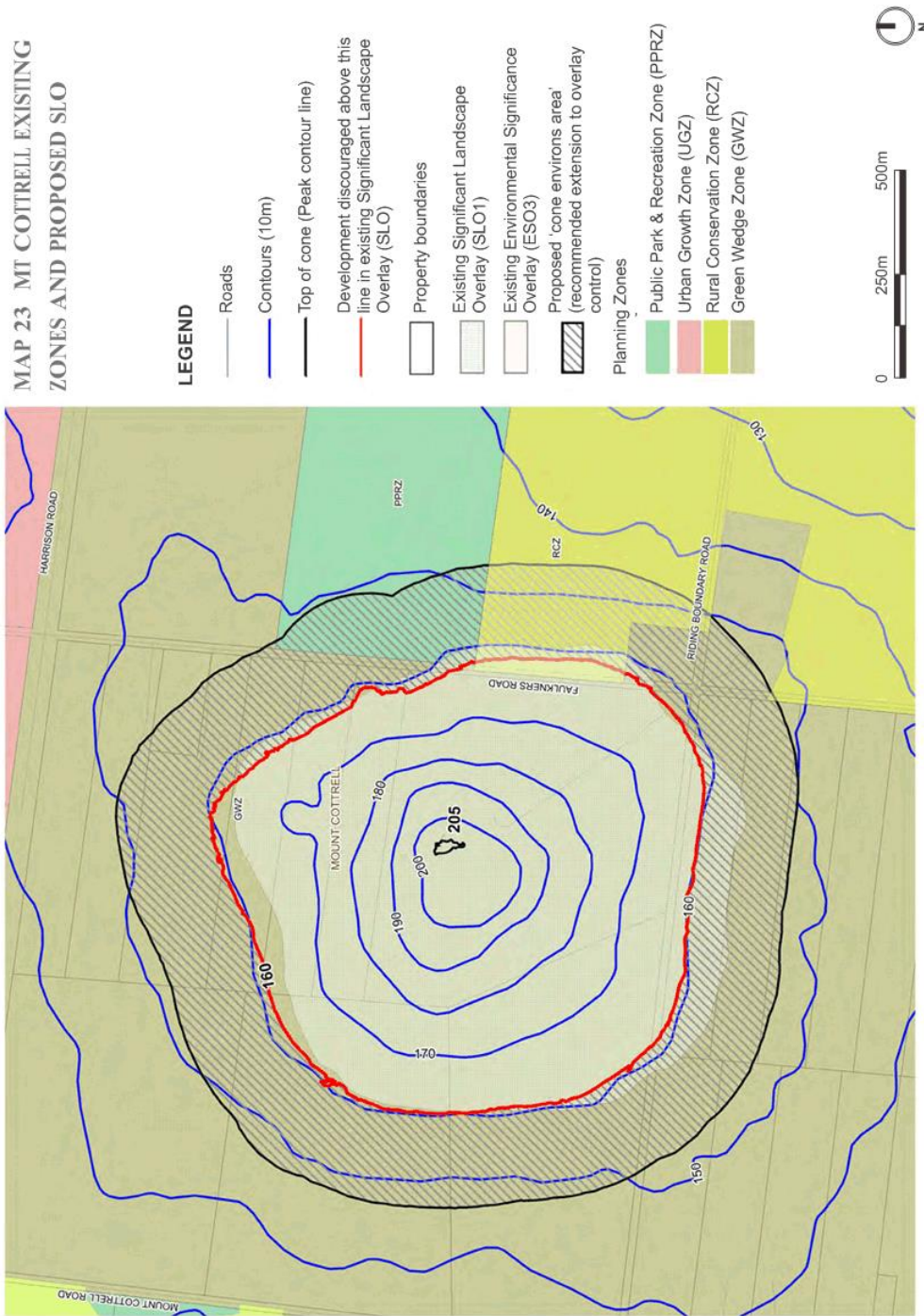


**MAP 22 MT COTTRELL
RECOMMENDED EXTENSION OF
OVERLAY CONTROLS**

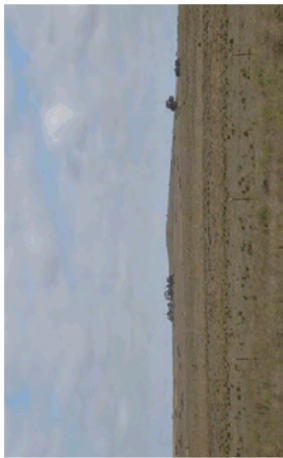
LEGEND

-  Roads
-  Contours (10m)
-  Top of cone (Peak contour line)
-  Development discouraged above this line in existing Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)
-  Property boundaries
-  Existing Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO1)
-  Existing Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO3)
-  Proposed 'cone environs area' (recommended extension to overlay control)





MT ATKINSON: POTENTIAL EXPANSION OF THE SLO1

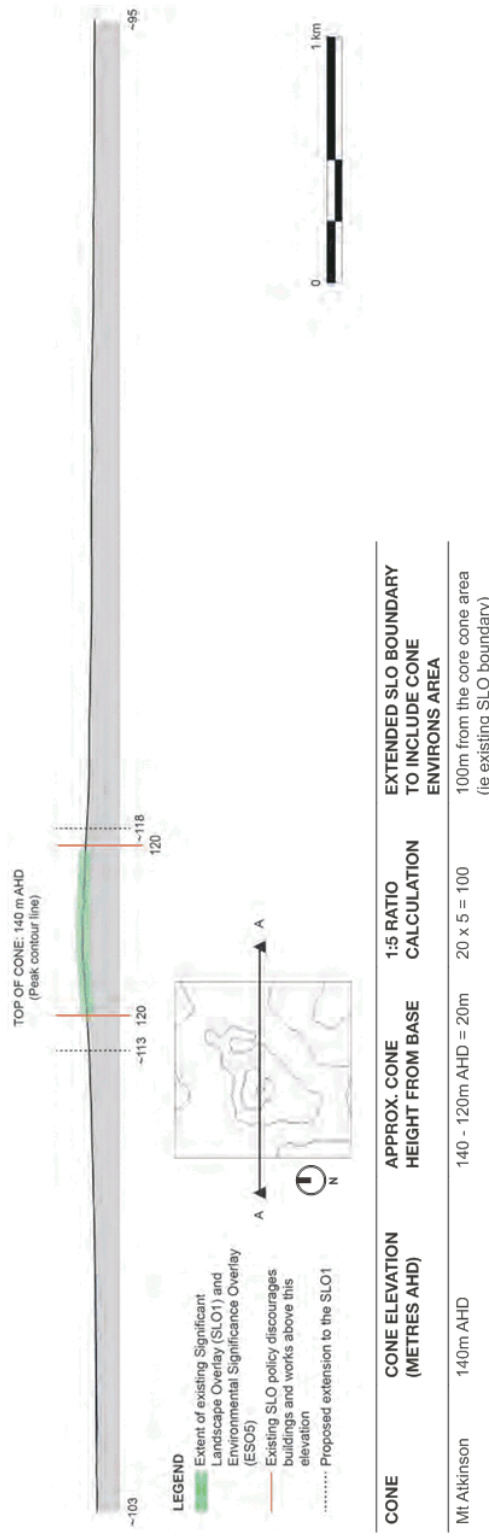


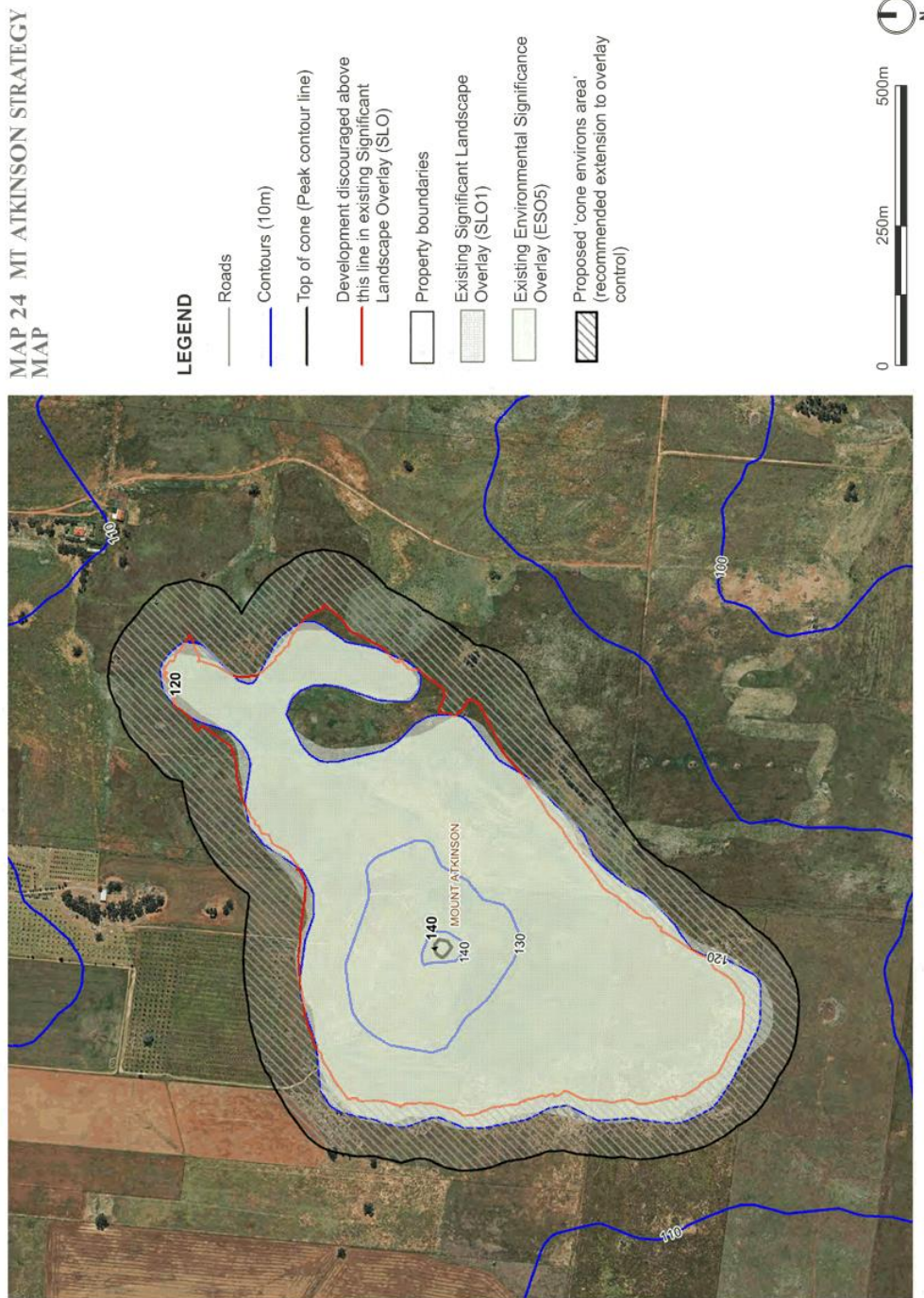
View towards Mt Atkinson



View towards Mt Atkinson looking west from Hopkins Road

FIGURE 3 SECTION DIAGRAMS: MT ATKINSON





MAP 25 MT ATKINSON EXISTING ZONES AND PROPOSED SLO



LEGEND

- Roads
- Contours (10m)
- Top of cone (Peak contour line)
- Development discouraged above this line in existing Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)
- Property boundaries
- Existing Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO1)
- Existing Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO5)
- ▨ Proposed 'cone environs area' (recommended extension to overlay control)
- Planning Zones
 - Urban Growth Zone (UGZ)
 - Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ)



6.6 THE SIGNIFICANT WATERWAYS

WHAT SHOULD BE THE AIM?

The significance of this area, based on the analysis in **Chapter 3**, can be summarised as follows:

The four major watercourses and smaller creeks of the City of Melton are key features of interest in the rural and urban landscape. In some places the waterways form shallow depressions; in other locations they are incised across the volcanic plain as well-defined valleys or deep gorges. Forested river corridors are a highly visible feature of the volcanic plains, creating a backdrop to the surrounding open and expansive countryside. Where waterway settings are cleared, the topography of the waterway is a highly distinctive feature of the landscape. Cleared volcanic plains give way to vegetated valley walls or exposed rock faces. Where accessible by shared trails or parklands, the viewer experiences and winding journey of the waterway as it traverses the landscape. The waterways have local significance as exemplary compositional, iconic and contrasting features of the City of Melton's landscape.

The objectives for landscape management set out in section 5.5 of this report include the following objective for this significance area:

To maintain the topography and vegetation of waterways as dominant visual elements in

the landscape.

To avoid visually obtrusive building silhouettes at the edges of waterways.

HOW ARE THE CURRENT PROVISIONS PERFORMING?

The Environmental Significance Overlay ESO2, *Wetlands, Waterways and Riparian Strips*, provides protection along most of the waterways identified as having landscape significance. This ESO focuses on conservation of waterways and waterbodies but also seeks to identify, conserve and enhance the character of significant landscapes. The same permit requirements essentially apply as for ESO1.

Other planning provisions affecting Melton's waterway corridors are:

- › General Residential Zone (GRZ)
- › Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ)
- › Green Wedge Zone (GWZ)
- › Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ)
- › Public Use Zone (PUZ)
- › Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)
- › Urban Floodway Zone (UFZ)
- › Comprehensive Development Zone (CDZ)

The permit and application requirements for the ESO2 are not well developed and lack detail regarding specific ways to address Waterway protection from an aesthetic landscape perspective. This limits the ability for the Waterways to be protected as contiguous scenic and biodiversity corridors.

The boundaries of the existing ESOs vary along

the course of each waterway. In general, they include the waterway itself and part of the banks. In some instances the ESO may extend beyond the break of slope at the top of the bank. For the most part, the ESOs do not adequately cover the entire extent of topographic changes that define the waterway features.

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE?

ESO2 should explicitly refer to protection of Waterways as contiguous scenic and biodiversity corridors. The permit and application requirements should detail specific ways to address Waterway protection from an aesthetic landscape perspective.

BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the existing ESOs should be reviewed to cover the entire extent of topographic changes that define the waterway features. A distance of 50 m from the break of slope at the edge of the waterway would allow for the visual impact of development to be assessed across the landscape setting of the creek. The topographic features of the waterway should remain clear of development, to a distance of 10 m from the edge of the waterway.

At Clause 14.02-1 of the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF), Melbourne Water's guidelines have been included for protection of the riparian zone ("Catchment planning and management"). This policy encourages the establishment of a viable riparian vegetated environment to maintain health waterways. The policy states the following:



alternative measurement may be required. An illustration of how this approach may be applied is included in **Figure 4**, opposite.

EXAMPLE AREA: WERRIBEE RIVER

The significant Waterway Areas identified by this study are almost all covered by an ESO (ESO2, Wetlands, Waterways and Riparian Strips). The maps and diagrams on the following pages show the current protection applicable to a portion of the Werribee River and potential for expansion to the ESO2 in that area.

As shown in **Figure 4**, the slopes and boundaries of the slopes on the Werribee River are not fully covered by the ESO2. Protection of this study includes the landscape setting around the watercourse itself, which may extend beyond the break of slope. Given the scale and slope of the Werribee River in the portion shown on the following pages, a 50m setback width has been shown to demonstrate a future area of management that would incorporate the landscape setting.

Retain natural drainage corridors with vegetated buffer zones at least 30 m wide along each side of a waterway to maintain the natural drainage function, stream habitat and wildlife corridors and landscape values, and to minimise erosion of stream banks and verges and to reduce polluted surface runoff from adjacent land uses.

The above minimum distance of 30m forms the basis of a minimum benchmark setback to be achieved for river and catchment health. For the protection of significant landscapes, it may be appropriate to consider extending the boundary beyond this 30m minimum (as suggested above) in order to accommodate the landscape setting and allow development applications to be assessed in terms of their visual impact on that setting.

Alternatively, the Melbourne Water standard setback widths applied to existing waterways in the Port Phillip and Westernport region could be applied. The aim in applying a standard setback width is to achieve a balance between river health and visual amenity. There are three standard setback widths: 20m, 30m and 50m.

According to Melbourne Water, the setback that applies to a waterway at a particular location is determined by the size of the waterway within the channel network. These widths were defined following a comprehensive review of waterway management science in Australia and worldwide (Melbourne Water, 2013).

The widths are measured from a setback reference point and apply to both banks. The reference point is generally the top of the bank (or, the break of slope from the river bank to the surrounding land) of the waterway. In cases where the bank cannot be easily defined, an

WERRIBEE RIVER: EXAMPLE POTENTIAL EXPANSION OF THE ESO2

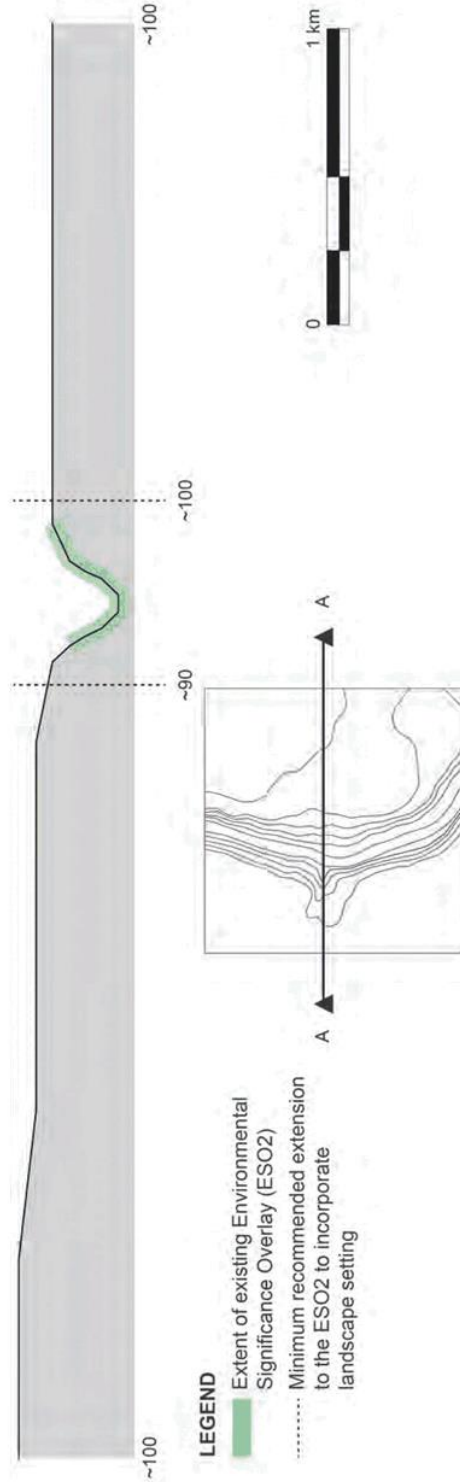


View along the Werribee River corridor

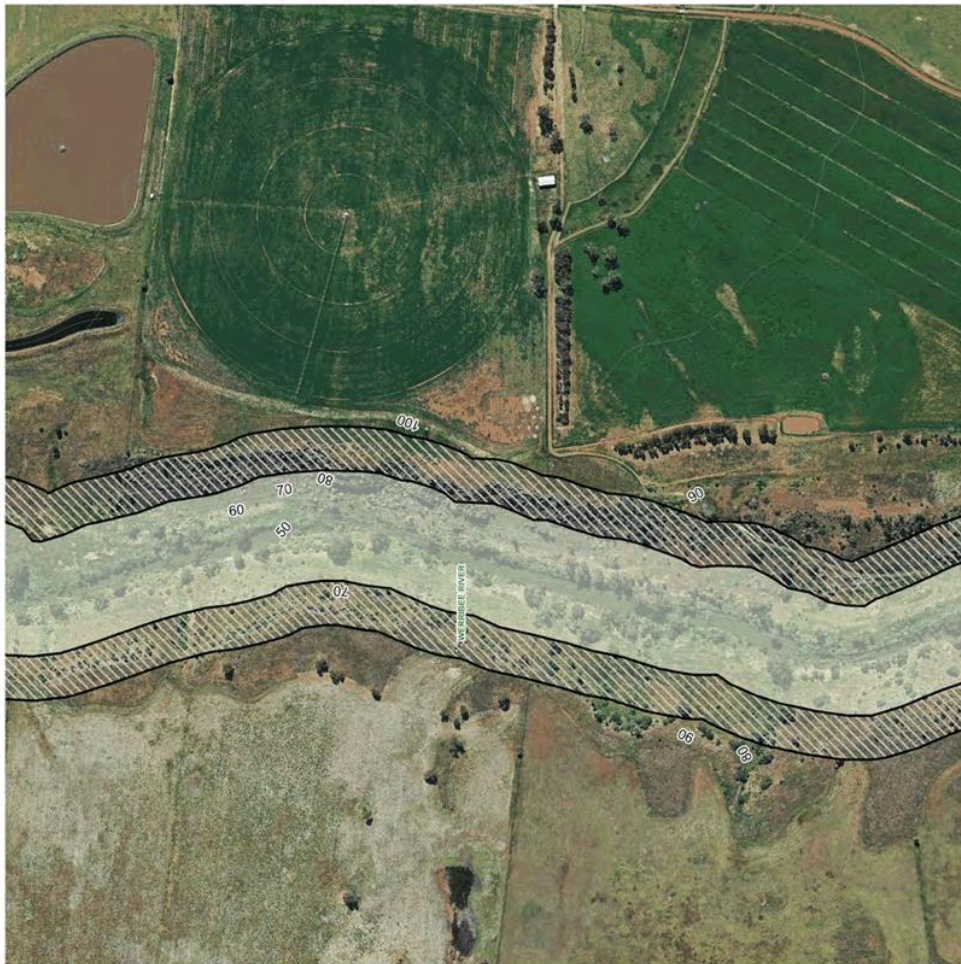


The banks of the Werribee River and other significant Waterway Areas are an important part of the overall landscape feature, which includes the landscape setting.

FIGURE 4 EXAMPLE WATERWAY SECTION (WERRIBEE RIVER)



MAP 26 WATERWAYS:
RECOMMENDED EXTENSION OF
OVERLAY CONTROLS (EXAMPLE AREA)

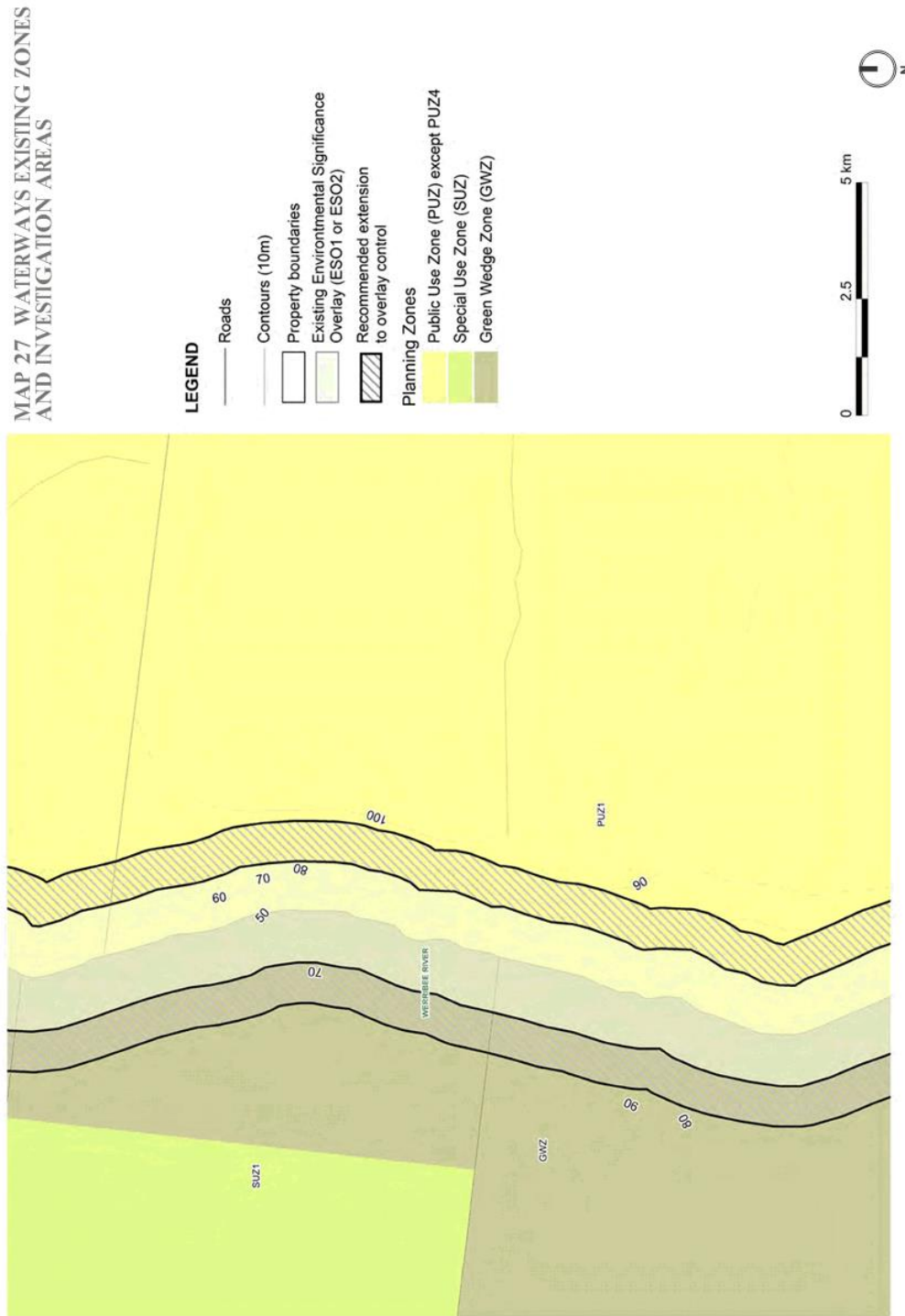


LEGEND

- Roads
- Contours (10m)
- Property boundaries
- Existing Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1 or ESO2)
- Recommended extension to overlay control



MAP 27 WATERWAYS EXISTING ZONES AND INVESTIGATION AREAS



6.7 STATUTORY IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT (MSS)

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) is the Council's primary statutory tool. It must provide the strategic rationale and context for all statutory controls introduced into the planning scheme.

A number of changes to the aspects that address landscape management are warranted.

Reference to the outcomes of this study should be embedded within the strategic vision of the MSS. The MSS should be revised and strengthened at Clause 21.01-11 *Environment and Landscape Character* to refer to the landscape character and significant landscapes identified in this study. This would provide a framework for the management of the City of Melton's landscapes in the planning scheme. The list of land management issues could also be updated in line with the findings of this study.

It is important to note that guidance on how discretion in a zone or overlay will be exercised can be expressed in the MSS as a policy guideline; this can provide greater guidance to decision makers and applicants alike and strengthen the utility of references to this study.

Clause 21.03-2 Planning Objectives should also be updated to refer to areas of landscape significance.

This study recommends:

- › renaming Clause 21.01-11 to 'Environment and Landscapes'
- › updating Clause 21.01-11 to refer to the landscape Character Types and significant landscapes identified in this study (Chapters 3 and 4)
- › including a map of the character and significance areas identified in this study
- › updating Clause 21.01-11 to refer to a broader list of land management issues as identified in this study (Chapter 5)
- › including landscape significance in the list of areas of significance to be protected and enhanced at Clause 21.03-2.

LOCAL POLICY

A Local Planning Policy can provide detailed guidance to assist with decision making in relation to landscape values, where a planning permit is required. It is recommended that a new local policy is introduced to the Melton Planning Scheme to ensure that all proposals requiring a planning permit are assessed against the landscape management objectives and design guidelines set out in this study.

The policy could apply to all land outside of the urban growth boundary (including public land) and land within the Urban Growth Zone. For landscapes within urban residential areas, the Neighbourhood Character Policy would provide guidance on the interface with landscape features.

Reference to the proposed landscape management guidelines (see Appendix A)

could be made in a local planning policy for land covered by the updated SLO or ESO. The guidelines would be used to guide decision-makers and provide greater clarity for permit applicants regarding the type of design solutions, recommended techniques for construction and materials selection when choosing to develop in the vicinity of significant landscapes.

This policy should provide an overview of landscape character and significance within the municipality and refer to the Preferred Character Statements and objectives included in Chapter 5.

The policy requirements should reference the key elements of the design guidelines (included as Appendix A). This would include guidelines relating to:

- › Protection of geological features, such as volcanic cones, waterways and incised valleys and gorges
- › Protection of dry stone walls
- › Protection of indigenous vegetation and shelterbelts
- › Encouraging planting of indigenous vegetation, particularly in screening new development
- › Siting and designing buildings, structures and other infrastructure to minimise visibility from identified significant viewing corridors
- › Ensuring that the siting and design of buildings and structures complements the surrounding landscape and topography
- › Encouraging low or visually transparent fencing
- › Discouraging excessive hard surfaces
- › At settlement edges, carefully designing

- development and landscaping to integrate with existing topography and vegetation.
 - The policy should require responsible authorities to consider:
 - › The intention of the Preferred Character Statement of the relevant Character Type.
 - › Whether the proposal meets the design objectives and guidelines of the relevant area.
 - It would also include this study as a reference document.
 - This study recommends that a local policy be prepared that includes:**
 - › **the preferred character statements set out in Chapter 5**
 - › **the objectives and design guidelines set out in Chapter 5 and Appendix A**
 - › **the decision guidelines suggested above**
 - › **the study as a reference document.**
- ZONE SCHEDULES**
- The Green Wedge Zone (GWZ) Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) apply to most private land in the study area, outside of the Urban Growth Boundary. While the schedules to these zones can be altered in relation to certain use and development provisions, such as minimum subdivision area or minimum area for which a permit is required for a dwelling, they cannot be tailored to address landscape management requirements (for example, to require that a dwelling be sited beyond a certain distance from a significant Waterway or Forested Area).
- For landscapes of high sensitivity to change, whereby the siting or design of a single dwelling may have an impact, the DELWP have previously recommended that the application an overlay control is the most appropriate approach.
- The schedule to the Urban Growth Zone (UGZ) implements Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) in the planning scheme. The implementation of future PSPs could include consideration of landscape values.
- As such, no changes are proposed to the Melton Planning Scheme in relation to zone schedules.**



OVERLAY CONTROLS

There are a number of options for managing landscape significance through the application of overlay controls.

The Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) is designed to manage holistic landscape values and can be used to protect vegetation and guide built form outcomes. The SLO offers the flexibility to include a wide range of design direction and controls in a schedule that could be tailored specifically for the requirements of the significant landscape area.

The SLO can be used to cover targeted significant landscapes such as the volcanic cones identified as part of this study. Use of the SLO on land in the immediate vicinity of a significant landscape feature can be used to protect viewsheds.

The Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) Schedule 1 Volcanic Hills & Cones currently applies to all three volcanic cones identified in this study as having landscape significance. The existing schedule requires updating in order to adequately protect and manage the Volcanic Cones and Hills (refer to **Appendix B**).

The Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) is designed to protect vegetation and other environmental values. It also can be used to protect vegetation and manage built form and offers the flexibility to be adapted to manage landscape values.

The ESO is currently applied to the Forested Areas and Waterways significance areas: ESO1 *Remnant Woodlands, Open Forests and Grasslands* applies to the majority of Forested

Areas in Melton; ESO2 *Wetlands, Waterways and Riparian Strips* applies to part of the Forested Areas along the Djerriwarth Creek.

The existing ESO schedules also require updating in order to adequately protect and manage the Forested Areas and Waterways significance areas (refer to Appendix B). The boundaries of the ESOs also require review to ensure these areas are included within the area of the control.

Other overlay controls, such as the Design and Development Overlay or the Vegetation Protection Overlay would be available to manage specific aspects of landscape significance, i.e. built form or vegetation protection. As these controls do to allow a holistic consideration of landscape values in terms of management of built form and vegetation, they are not recommended for consideration.

The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) currently applies to some parts of the Forested Areas. A revised ESO schedule would need to take into consideration the risk management issues addressed through the BMO.

As part of the revised SLO and ESO, reference could be made to the landscape management (see draft guidelines in Appendix A) in the schedule's decision guidelines. These guidelines would be triggered for planning permit applications within the SLO and ESO extent.

This study recommends that the current suite of SLOs and ESOs is retained and updated with the findings of this study.

This study recommends that SLO1 be updated to protect the significance of the

Volcanic Cones and Hills by:

- > Expanding and updating the statement of nature and key elements of landscape as set out in Chapter 4;
- > Expanding and updating the objectives as set out in Chapter 5;
- > Expanding and updating the application requirements as set out in this Chapter;
- > Including a permit trigger for fences that are not open-style up to 1.8m in height;
- > Expanding and updating the decision guidelines as set out in this Chapter;
- > Amending the SLO1 to discourage buildings and works that occur above a specified contour line on Volcanic Cones;
- > Including this study as a reference document.

This study recommends that ESO1 and ESO2 be updated to protect the significance of the Waterways and Forested Areas by:

- > Expanding and updating the statement of environmental significance as set out in Chapter 4;
- > Expanding and updating the objectives as set out in Chapter 5;
- > Expanding and updating the application requirements as set out in this Chapter;
- > Including a permit trigger for fences that are not open-style up to 1.8m in height;
- > Expanding and updating the decision guidelines as set out in this Chapter;
- > Including this study as a reference document;
- > Review the boundary of the controls.

For further information regarding the form that proposed overlay controls may take, refer to **Appendix B**.

MAPPING THE OVERLAYS

Recommended distances for extension of each type of significance area are:

- > Forested Areas: 30m from the edge of the identified significance area, to allow for maintenance of undergrowth and habitat at the sensitive edges of the forests.
- > Volcanic Cones & Hills: a distance of 1:5 (or for every 100m of height of the cone, a 500m distance should be also covered by the overlay, measured from its base). This method has previously been adopted for protection of volcanic cones in other locations in western Victoria. For example, Mt Kororoit is 50m high, therefore requiring the SLO to be extended to a distance 250m from its base.
- > Waterways: 50m from the break of slope at the edge of the waterway. This allows for the topographic features of the waterway to remain clear of development, to a recommended distance of 10m from the edge of the waterway, and for the visual impact of development up to 50m to be assessed.

In setting extended coverage of overlays around significant landscape features, it may be logical to further extend an overlay boundary so that it aligns with cadastral boundaries, where appropriate.

This study recommends that the current overlay boundaries are reviewed to:

- > Extend ESOs on Forested Areas to incorporate a 30 metre area around the edge of the identified significant area
- > Extend ESOs on Waterways to include

- any break in the slope surrounding waterbodies, with an additional 50 metre area beyond the break of slope
- > Extend the SLOs on the volcanic cones to ensure the overlay covers a substantial area around the base of the cone.

REFERENCE DOCUMENT

The study and the proposed landscape management guidelines included at Appendix A to this report should be included as a Reference Document in the planning scheme, to ensure the strategic intent of the controls is also included in the decision making process. The guidelines should be triggered via a local policy to ensure applications for buildings and works (for example, new development or large alterations and additions) in the SLO1 or ESO areas are required to be assessed against or have reference to these recommended design criteria.

This study recommends that this report and design guidelines be included as a reference document in the planning scheme. The design guidelines should be made available as a useful resource for applicants.



6.8 OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to acknowledge that planning controls only come into effect when a certain use or development is proposed on land to which a zone or overlay applies. As such, a commitment to landscape custodianship at all other times is required across municipal Councils, the community, government agencies and infrastructure service providers.

Protection and enhancement of valued landscapes is ultimately a collective responsibility. Otherwise it is individual landholders through land management practices that play an important part in protecting the landscapes of the broader area. A collaborative approach between all parties is required to offer a holistic and comprehensive approach to landscape management.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Council

Council can manage land use and development through the Melton Planning Scheme. They also own and manage specific areas of public land in the study area (e.g. Mount Cottrill). They maintain public realm elements such as roads and open spaces through their capital works programs, promote information about landscape values and consider financial incentives for landscape protection initiatives.

Community

Property owners play a significant role in the management of landscape and environmental values on individual sites. The way in which property owners use or develop land can impact significantly upon landscape values. The management of individual sites may have a cumulative impact across the study area.

Only certain types of land use or development can be managed through regulatory measures. Otherwise it is the responsibility of individual land owners to consider how their actions might affect the landscape values of the broader area.

Community groups, such as volunteer, 'friends of' or Landcare groups (e.g. Toolern Vale Landcare, Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group) are active in the City of Melton and can greatly assist with the protection of the natural environment.

Landscape management can form part of education programs at all levels. It may also be included in the activities of community groups such as local service or recreational clubs.

Government Agencies

Government agencies manage some public land within the study area. Other agencies are responsible for specific aspects of the landscape. Relevant government agencies include:

- > Parks Victoria, who manage major parklands [to be confirmed];
- > Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), the State Government department that coordinates planning outcomes across the region and represent

- > the Planning Minister in authorising and approving a planning scheme amendments;
- > Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA), who also manage regional planning outcomes and are responsible for preparing Precinct Structure Plans within the growth areas;
- > Melbourne Water, who manage waterways and the Melton Reservoir;
- > VicRoads, who manage the major roads and roadside vegetation;
- > Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV), who are the State Government department representing Traditional Owners;
- > Heritage Victoria, the State Government department within DELWP representing heritage matters; and
- > The Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority, who is the peak natural resource management body in the Port Phillip and Western Port region to develop and oversee the implementation of the Regional Catchment Strategy.

Registered Aboriginal Parties

The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 recognises Aboriginal people as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage. At a local level, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) are the voice of Aboriginal people in the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria.

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 5

CHAPTER 6

Infrastructure Service Providers

Public infrastructure, such as powerlines, electricity pylons, mobile phone towers and radio masts, are evident in the study area and in some locations could be considered to have a negative impact upon the landscape. Dialogue with infrastructure service providers is essential to communicate the objectives for landscape management in the study area. Water authorities are also significant public land managers in the study area.

CHARACTER AREAS & GUIDELINES

The Character Areas form the basis for understanding the key elements related to the character and significance of the landscape within the study area. The guidelines detail best practice approaches for siting development within the landscape, and strategies to encourage appropriate landscape management outside the planning scheme.

It is recommended that Council make this study available at the planning counter and on Council's website for interested community members, and as a reference document for applicants and Council decision-making.

GROWTH AREA PLANNING

The study's landscape management framework should provide a key input into future growth area planning. Council could use the Preferred Character Statements, objectives and guidelines to inform future preparation of Precinct Structure Plans, so that the valued landscape character

and significant features are protected. This is particularly relevant to ensuring a carefully designed urban-rural interface, and sensitive design around significant landscape features.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community support and engagement is an essential part of landscape management. It is recommended that Council consider developing a community education program to disseminate information about the landscape character and significance defined in this study, and appropriate approaches to landscape-sensitive development. This could include a marketing campaign to inform the community of the study and its recommendations.

PROPERTY OWNERS

Property owners play a significant role in the management of landscape and environmental values on individual sites. The way in which property owners use or develop land can impact significantly upon landscape values. The management of individual sites may also have a cumulative impact across the study area.

Landowners should be encouraged to have a landscape management plan which addresses issues of management of both visual and environmental landscape values.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Financial incentives could be offered to landowners to assist with initiatives such as land rehabilitation or additional planting (e.g. a rate reduction for each significant tree that has been protected), weed control or for good grazing management. Council may consider establishing a funding program for smaller scale projects that would have wider community benefit, and could also assist landowners in applying for State or Federal government grants through funding streams such as the Land Care program.

PROMOTION OF LANDSCAPES

The tourism opportunities of the study area's high scenic value could be promoted in various ways. Public 'viewing areas' for the local community and visitors to photograph and enjoy particular landscapes could be developed, or existing viewing areas upgraded as required. These could include interpretive information that describes the pre- and post-contact history of the place, links to artworks and education about the significance of the landscape and how it is being protected.

In addition to the Dry Stone Walls map, tourist maps could be produced to promote viewing points and driving routes of interest.

COUNCIL STAFF SKILLING

It will take time to become familiar with the findings of this study and its implementation through the planning system, and Council planners will need support and skilling to get the most out of the recommendations. Correct approaches to site analysis, knowledge about acceptable design solutions for particular landscape character areas and consistency are all important.

Above all, the Council must send out the right message to the development community through consistent decision-making as well as communication about the value of the landscape character to the image and economy of Melton.

Council may consider providing training sessions to assist staff in assessing applications within the proposed SLO areas and revised ESO areas).

COUNCIL STATUTORY SUPPORT

Other measures that will assist in the implementation of landscape management practices include:

- › Enforcement of permit conditions.
- › Active monitoring of illegal works, and increased publicity regarding penalties.
- › Advocate where possible with public land managers to ensure that the desired landscape character outcomes are achieved.

PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT

Council own and manage areas of land throughout the City of Melton including areas of significant landscape. For these areas, Council should prepare management plans for significant landscape areas, including Mount Cottrell and forested areas along the Djerriwarth Creek, that seek to protect their valued characteristics. These plans should consider what public infrastructure may be appropriate in these areas and if so, how it should be sited and managed. It should also consider whether public access may be provided and if so, how this may occur and how it should be managed.

It is recommended that Council liaise with public land managers, including DELWP, Parks Victoria (for activities within parks and reserves) and VicRoads (for roadside vegetation management approaches) to ensure consistency of landscape management across jurisdictions and to encourage consideration of the value that public lands make to the landscapes of the shire.

GLOSSARY

OFFICE OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS VICTORIA (OAAV)

Provides advice to the Victorian Government on Aboriginal policy and planning.

CHARACTER TYPE

Character Types are identified through a study of key landscape character elements including landform, waterform, vegetation and land use and built form, together with a detailed field survey.

DEPARTMENT OF LAND, ENVIRONMENT WATER & PLANNING (DELWP)

Victorian State government department responsible for overseeing and coordinating management of the built and natural environment in Victoria.

ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASSES (EVC)

The standard unit for classifying vegetation types in Victoria. Each EVC includes a collection of floristic communities (i.e. lower level in the classification) that occur across a biogeographic range, and although differing in species, have similar habitat and ecological processes operating.

GREEN WEDGE AREA

The non-urban areas of metropolitan Melbourne that lie outside the Urban Growth Boundary. Land in each green wedge area is unique in terms of its use and appearance, and these areas contain a mix of agriculture and low-density activities.

GROWTH AREAS

Locations on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne designated in planning schemes for large-scale transformation, over many years, from rural to urban use.

INTERIM BIOGEOGRAPHIC REGIONALISATION FOR AUSTRALIA (IBRA)

Classifies Australia's landscapes into 89 large geographically distinct bioregions based on common climate, geology, landform, native vegetation and species information.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN)

A global environmental organisation which seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity. Part of their work involves classifying and creating policy frameworks to identify the value and required management of biodiversity in significant areas, such as National Parks.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY

Landscape assessment studies include extensive field work, desktop research, GIS mapping, and comparative analysis against various sets of criteria in order to assess and document the character and significance of various landscapes and views.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The interplay of geology, topography, vegetation, water bodies and other natural features combined with the effects of land use, built development and cultural influences which makes one landscape different from another.

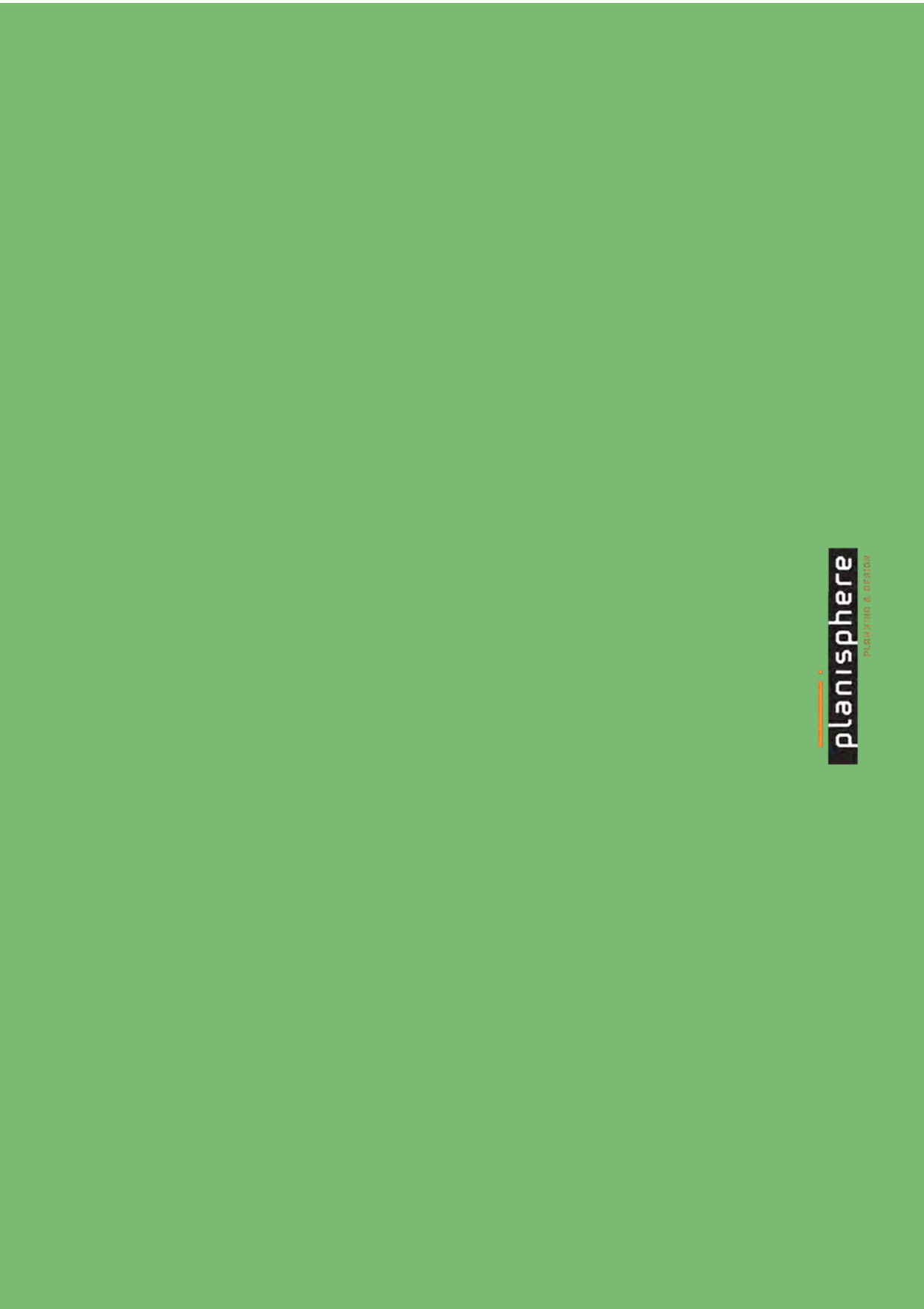
LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

Landscape significance is the designation of a particular landscape as special or important arising from its aesthetic values (both visual and non-visual) and taking into account cultural, historic, environmental, scientific, social or other values.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (LPPF)

Sets the local and regional strategic policy context for a municipality. It consists of the Municipal Strategic Statement and specific local planning policies.

<p>METROPOLITAN PLANNING AUTHORITY (MPA) An independent statutory body with a broad, facilitative role to work with councils, other government agencies and the planning development industry to help deliver greenfield and urban renewal projects across Victoria.</p> <p>MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT (MSS) The MSS establishes the strategic framework for the municipality and should show how it supports and implements the SPPF. The SPPF and MSS together provide the strategic basis for the application of zones, overlays and particular provisions in the planning scheme.</p>	<p>PREFERRED CHARACTER STATEMENT Policy statement that articulates an area's desired future character.</p> <p>STATE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (SPPF) Comprises general principles for land use and development in Victoria. It sets visions, objectives, strategies and decision guidelines that must be taken into consideration by local Councils when making a planning decision.</p> <p>URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY (UGB) The current geographic limit for the future urban area of Melbourne.</p> <p>VIEWING CORRIDOR Viewing corridors transect the landscape and are places from which the qualities of the landscape are best experienced. They may include roads, which often afford an ongoing and varied experience of a landscape.</p> <p>WESTERN PLAINS NORTH GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN Aims to achieve a balance between the protection of agricultural viability and environmental features and opportunities for other appropriate uses in the Green Wedge.</p>	<p>ZONES Relates to a particular use and is associated with a specific purpose such as residential, commercial or industrial. Each zone has policy guidelines that will describe whether a planning permit is required and set out application requirements and decision guidelines. These requirements must be considered when applying for a permit. All land is covered by a zone in Victoria.</p>
<p>OVERLAYS Planning scheme controls that apply to specific areas to address a particular issue such as environmental, landscape, heritage and flooding. These requirements operate in addition to those provided by the land's zoning.</p> <p>PLANNING SCHEME A statutory document which sets out objectives, policies and provisions for the use, development and protection of land in the area to which it applies (for example, each municipal council area in Victoria). A planning scheme regulates the use and development of land through planning provisions to achieve those objectives and policies.</p>		



Melton Landscapes

SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE FEATURES STRATEGY



APPENDICES



Significant Landscape Features Strategy | Melton City Council

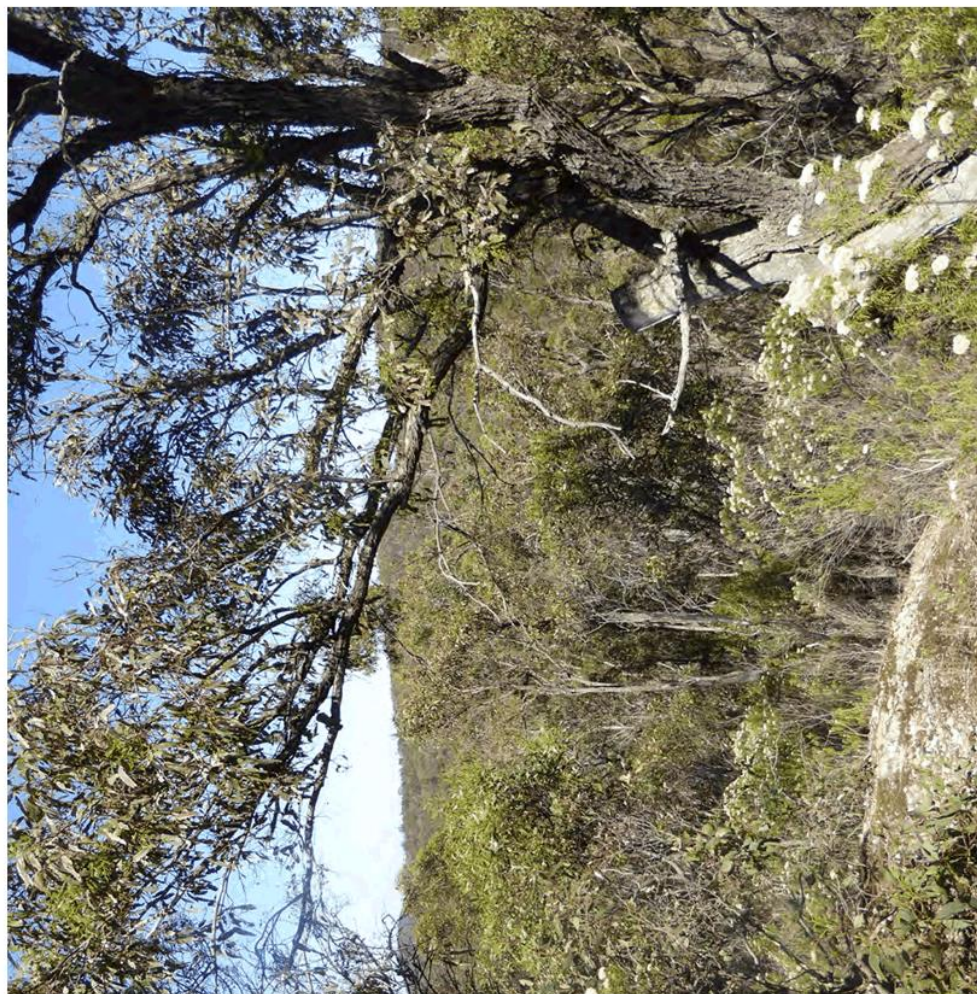
APPENDIX A

Melton City Council | Significant Landscape Features Strategy

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

A





View through the dense vegetation that forests the Pyrete Range

INTRODUCTION

A framework for ongoing landscape management has been prepared to ensure the valued aspects of Melton's landscapes are protected into the future.

As part of this framework, a series of guidelines has been prepared to provide detailed guidance for the siting and design of new development across all landscapes in the study area, including the Character Types and significance areas.

The guidelines provide detailed information on how the Preferred Character Statements and objectives for each Character Type and significance area can be achieved (Chapter 5 of the Strategy).

This appendix is intended for use in conjunction with the main report; however it can also be used as a tool to accompany planning decision making. The guidelines set out design responses for key elements of development proposals and provide a list of outcomes to avoid, where possible.

GUIDELINES

As part of this project, guidelines have been developed to provide guidance to decision-makers. The guidelines are also intended to assist residents seeking clarity on what may be considered appropriate forms of development in the updated overlay (SLO and ESO) areas. The Guidelines provide detailed guidance for the siting and design of new development to address the design elements of:

- > Land maintenance
- > Geological features
- > Dry stone walls
- > Indigenous vegetation
- > Shelter belts & established planting
- > Views & vistas
- > Siting & design of buildings & structures
- > Signage & infrastructure
- > Cultural heritage
- > Siting & design in relation to settlements

The guidelines apply to development within each Character Type as well as the significance areas.

They should be read in conjunction with the Preferred Character Statements and objectives of Chapter 5 of the Strategy.

It is recommended that the proposed landscape management guidelines (or, design and development guidelines) are triggered for development applications occurring within the updated SLO and ESO boundaries. These guidelines will provide guidance to decision-makers regarding development proposals. In

addition, they should be used by applicants when preparing development applications, to guide decisions regarding choice of materials, building siting and elements of design that may affect landscape character as described in the tables on the following pages.

In this way, the guidelines will provide support for preparation and introduction of a local policy for significant landscape protection, and implementation of the overlay controls through the planning permit process. The guidelines will be applied to the whole ESO/SLO area, but will be applied flexibly through the use of terms such as "where relevant" or "where applicable", and in this way provide discretion for decision-makers and applicants to justify variations to the guideline's recommendations, where appropriate.

GUIDELINES

ELEMENT	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
Land Maintenance	Encourage the contribution of sustainable land management practices and productive agricultural activities that have a positive impact on the landscape.	Unkept and poorly managed agricultural lands Uses, development and management practices that reduce the productivity of agricultural lands Uses and development that interfere with the ongoing management of agricultural lands
Geological Features	Site buildings and structures away from geological features such as volcanic cones, waterways and incised valleys and gorges wherever possible. Protect geological features such as rocky outcrops and sink holes in any new development.	New exotic shelterbelts adjacent to identified viewing corridors
Dry Stone Walls	Retain existing dry stone walls (in keeping with the requirements of the Heritage Overlay, as applicable).	Loss of dry stone walls
Indigenous Vegetation	Where practical, protect and rehabilitate significant stands of remnant indigenous vegetation, particularly at roadsides, throughout paddocks, and along river and creek corridors, subject to considerations such as farming requirements, fire protection and safety. Encourage land owners and occupiers to protect and manage original stands of indigenous vegetation by fencing around old trees, trimming diseased or shattered branches and leaving dead trees standing for wildlife habitat (where practical). Minimise indigenous vegetation removal in new development. Where vegetation loss cannot be avoided, balance the loss of vegetation with rehabilitation on the site or nearby areas, and replace any native or indigenous trees lost with indigenous trees that will grow to a similar size. Consider the existing landscape character of the area as a guide to the selection of vegetation and the layout of private gardens. Reinforce vegetative linkages to natural features such as existing river and creek environs. Encourage the removal of environmental weeds and their replacement with local indigenous species.	Loss of significant stands of vegetation Ad hoc clearing and removal of vegetation Development which requires permanent clearing of vegetation Lack of landscaping and substantial vegetation appropriate to the area of new development Landscaping that provides little connection to the surrounding natural environment and existing landscape character Hard surfaces and hard edges in landscaping Continuous spreading / planting of environmental weeds Degradation of significant flora
Indigenous Vegetation in Uplands & Forested Areas	Plant new trees indigenous to the area, particularly on hill slopes and ridges as well as in bare paddocks. Screen buildings, structures and large areas of hard surfaces with appropriately scaled indigenous vegetation. Design vegetation planting to retain views towards Melbourne's CBD, Mount Macedon and the Yau Yangs.	Lack of vegetation in urban and rural areas

APPENDIX A

ELEMENT	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
Shelter Belts & Established Planting	<p>Retain existing shelter belts wherever possible.</p> <p>Replace lost shelter belt trees with the same species or an alternative indigenous species, suitable to the local area.</p> <p>Encourage the planting of indigenous shelterbelts, as opposed to exotic, adjacent to identified significant viewing corridors.</p> <p>Encourage the retention of substantial garden plantings associated with homesteads or areas of rural living.</p>	<p>New exotic shelterbelts adjacent to identified viewing corridors</p> <p>Loss of shelterbelts as a landscape feature</p> <p>Unkept, broken or incomplete shelter belts</p> <p>Loss of established garden plantings</p>
Views & Vistas	<p>Buildings, structures and other development should be set back from identified viewing corridors, and designed and sited to minimise visual intrusion (e.g. low building heights, minimal building footprints, appropriate colours and materials to the setting, and integration with vegetation).</p> <p>Consider the cumulative impact of developments visible from identified significant viewing corridors, other roads and key viewing locations, on the character and views of the surrounding landscapes.</p>	<p>Unsympathetic / intrusive buildings and structures that obscure prominent views</p> <p>Conspicuous or incongruous (out of place) buildings, structures or infrastructure visible in the foreground of views to notable geological features</p>
Buildings & Structures: Siting in all areas	<p>Ensure that buildings, structures and other infrastructure are sited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Within existing clusters of buildings where possible. › Away from landscape features and visually prominent locations such as hill faces, ridgelines, the edges of gorges or waterways, volcanic cones and rocky outcrops. › To minimise visibility from identified significant viewing corridors and other main roads. <p>Ensure that buildings and structures are set back sufficient distances from roads to ensure minimal visual intrusion, particularly in open rural areas.</p> <p>Prevent ribbon development along identified significant viewing corridors and other main roads, including the outskirts of settlements.</p> <p>Minimise the number and floor area of storage areas, outbuildings and ancillary structures, wherever possible.</p>	<p>Loss of sense of openness in the Western Volcanic Plain</p> <p>Buildings and structures that are visually dominant or located in prominent locations</p> <p>Buildings and structures that impact on the character and environmental quality of watercourses</p> <p>Development of residences and other buildings and structures at the roadside</p> <p>Buildings and structures that do not have sufficient vegetative screening</p> <p>Numerous storage areas / outbuildings on a site</p> <p>Scattering of buildings and structures across a site</p> <p>Visual clutter</p>
Buildings & Structures: Siting in Uplands & Forested Areas	<p>Ensure that buildings, structures and other infrastructure are sited</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To follow the contours and/or natural form of the landscape. › Among established vegetation and/or screened with substantial landscaping of locally appropriate species. <p>Where development cannot be avoided on prominent hill faces or in steep locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Site development in the lower one third of the visible slope, wherever possible. › Integrate buildings and structures with existing vegetation, and/or establish settings of indigenous vegetation. › Design buildings to follow the contours or step down the slope to minimize earthworks. 	<p>Buildings and structures that break the ridgeline silhouette</p> <p>Buildings that require excessive cut and fill</p> <p>Conspicuous or intrusive developments on prominent hill faces</p> <p>Buildings that do not follow the natural contours of the site</p>

ELEMENT	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
Buildings & Structures: <i>Design in all areas</i>	<p>Ensure that the design and external appearance of buildings and structures complement the surrounding landscape by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Using simple, pared-back building forms and design detailing, with consideration of the Australian rural architectural vernacular. › Utilising colours and finishes that best immerse the building within the landscape and minimise contrast with the surrounds (such as muted colours and matte finishes, or corrugated iron or timber that will weather over time). › Using a mix of contemporary and traditional rural materials, textures and finishes including timber, stone, brick and corrugated iron. › Making use of building materials with minimal environmental impact and encouraging the use of recycled materials where possible. › Utilising materials and finishes that reduce distant visibility (e.g. darker colours on hill slopes, and lighter colours on sky lines). <p>Ensure that development does not visually overwhelm the landscape setting by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Designing building and structures of a scale that does not dominate the surroundings. › Achieving a minimal building footprint, and ensuring that adequate space is available on the site for the retention of existing vegetation and/or new landscaping. › Articulating large buildings into separate elements, and avoiding visually dominant elevations. › Tucking built form into the landscape wherever possible. › Using building forms and heights that sit beneath the existing or future tree canopy height. <p>Utilise open style fencing that is not visually obtrusive and is traditionally used in rural areas, such as post and wire or post and rail fencing.</p> <p>Use permeable surfacing for unbuilt areas to minimize surface run-off and to support vegetation.</p> <p>Incorporate best practice environmental sustainability principles into the design and construction of all new buildings.</p>	<p>Buildings or structures that do not harmonise with the character of the surrounding natural / rural environment</p> <p>Ad hoc or large scale urban development outside of settlements</p> <p>Large, bulky building masses / footprints that are conspicuous elements within the spacious landscape setting</p> <p>Sheer, visually dominant elevations</p> <p>Mock historical style buildings with excessive use of 'reproduction' or decorative detailing</p> <p>Highly colourful materials and finishes</p> <p>Buildings and structures that protrude above the dominant tree height of the vegetated (or proposed vegetated) backdrop</p> <p>Building design that has little or no regard to environmentally sustainable design practices, such as residential buildings with excessive western or southern orientation</p> <p>High, solid or non-permeable fencing</p>

ELEMENT	DESIGN RESPONSE	AVOID
Signage & Infrastructure	<p>Roads and driveways should be built to conform to topography, avoiding steep, visually prominent hillsides wherever possible.</p> <p>Group signage, including tourism signage, at particular locations to minimise visual impact, avoid signage clutter, and to maintain scenic outlooks.</p> <p>Infrastructure should be sited to avoid highly scenic locations, particularly identified significant views, and in the case of powerlines and other utility services, be underground wherever possible.</p> <p>Locate powerlines, access tracks and other infrastructure in areas of low visibility, preferably in previously cleared locations.</p> <p>Use materials and colours that minimise contrast with the surrounding landscape and distant visibility, and use vegetation to screen infrastructure from identified significant viewing corridors, viewing locations and other main roads.</p> <p>All new infrastructure development should be accompanied by a landscape plan utilising appropriate indigenous plant species and demonstrating how the affected area will be screened and remediated after development.</p>	<p>Signage clutter in the landscape</p> <p>Visually obtrusive and/or colourful signage in natural landscape settings</p> <p>Highly visible infrastructure</p> <p>Infrastructure that dominates views, particularly from identified significant viewing corridors or locations</p> <p>Landscape scarring as a result of vegetation removal</p> <p>No consideration of siting, design, vegetation or remediation in association with the development of infrastructure</p>
Cultural Heritage	<p>Relate landscape character to the relevant heritage, environmental, social and other values of significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations to avoid impacts on places, objects or landscapes that have identified value.</p> <p>Identify and preserve landscape conditions and settings of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</p>	<p>Loss of cultural heritage values associated with the landscape</p> <p>No regard for the cultural heritage values of the landscape in new development</p>
Settlements	<p>Ensure that settlements maintain their individual character and physical distance from each other, except for land zoned Urban Growth between Melton and Caroline Springs.</p> <p>Ensure settlement areas have a definite visual edge, delineating the boundary between urban development and the natural / rural landscape beyond.</p> <p>Carefully site buildings and structures at settlement edges to integrate with existing topography and vegetation.</p> <p>Ensure that views to Melbourne's CBD, Mount Macedon, You Yangs, hills and cones are not compromised by inappropriate siting and/or design of new development.</p>	<p>Development 'clutter' at the edges to settlements</p> <p>The expansion of rural living development into the landscape</p> <p>Ribbon development between settlements</p> <p>Suburban-style residential development, with large areas of hard paving, in the rural environment</p>



Significant Landscape Features Strategy | Melton City Council

PROPOSED
OVERLAY
CONTROLS

B



SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAY (SLO) SCHEDULE

The existing SLO schedule should be updated to adequately protect the Volcanic Cones and Hills significance areas.

The statement of nature and key elements of landscape should be amended to describe the significance of these landscape features in more detail, using the findings of this study.

The objectives in the overlay schedule should reflect the relevant objectives listed in Chapter 5.

Additional permit requirements and exemptions should be specified in the schedule. Any built form on the cones' slopes, including fences, is likely to be visible large distances given their gradual topographic rises towards the cones; peak. Given this gradual slope, the volcanic cones are particularly sensitive to buildings or works in their surroundings. It is therefore recommended that most development proposals are subject to a planning permit to enable resolution of design outcomes that do not detract from the significance of these landscape features.

High, solid fences are a threat to the volcanic cones. The construction of fences should require a planning permit unless the fence has an open rural style up to a height needed to contain animals. This permit requirement should be included in the schedule as follows:

- › A permit is required to construct a fence other than a timber post and wire, timber post and railing, wire mesh ('ringlock'), chainmesh or similar open rural style fence up to 1.8 metres in height.

No other additional permit requirements or permit exemptions are suggested.

The SLO1 decision guidelines should be updated as follows to guide assessment:

Landscape rehabilitation

- › Whether the development includes rehabilitation of mineral, stone and soil extraction sites, including progressive restoration of topsoil, indigenous vegetation and the original shape of the land.

Visual impact

- › Whether buildings and works are avoided above the break of slope of the cone (as per contour lines nominated in existing SLO).
- › The visible impact of building or works from:
 - Identified major viewing corridors, including Beatlys Road, Blackhill Road, Calder Freeway, Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road, Eynesbury Road, Faulknors Road, Gisborne-Melton Road, Greigs Road, Holden Road, Hopkins Road, Leakes Road, Mount Cottrell Road, Murphys Road, Plumpton Road, Troups Road South and the Western Freeway.
 - Identified significant viewing locations, including Mount Cottrell.

Building siting

- › Whether buildings and structures are sited:
 - To maximise clustering of new buildings with existing buildings where possible.
 - To avoid geological features such as volcanic cones including their base and lava flow areas.
 - To follow the natural form of the

landscape.

- To be set back sufficient distances from roads and dry stone walls to minimise visual intrusion.

Building design

- › Whether new buildings are designed to respond to the characteristics of the site and locality, demonstrating a high standard of contemporary expression and finish.
- › Whether buildings are designed:
 - To appear as a related group, rather than as individual units.
 - To avoid visually prominent wall and roof forms.
 - Using simple, pared-back building forms and design detailing.
 - Using finishes and colours that complement those found naturally in the landscape, with consideration as to how the materials will weather over time.
 - Whether the proposal uses permeable surfacing for all unbuilt areas to minimise surface run-off.

- The scale of a building and its impact on its surroundings.
- Where fencing is necessary, whether the proposal provides open style fencing of a type traditionally used in rural areas, i.e. post and wire.

Car parking

- › Whether any proposed car parking areas are designed to avoid large expanses of impervious surfaces.

Settlements

The exception to this is in terms of fencing, and high, solid fences are a threat in these areas. A permit should be required in the case of a fence that is not open-style up to 1.8 metres in heights, as for SLO1.

Application requirements should be included as suggested for the SLO. Additional decision guidelines should also be included as for SLO1 with the following changes:

- > The list of viewing corridors and locations should be as set out in Chapter 3 and 4;
- > The following decision guidelines should also be included:

Building siting

- > Whether buildings and structures are sited:
 - among established vegetation and/or screened with substantial landscaping of locally appropriate species.
 - to be set back an adequate distance of a minimum of 10 metres from watercourses and waterbodies.

Building design

- > Whether the proposal uses permeable surfacing for all unbuilt areas to support vegetation
- > The scale of a building and its impact on its surroundings, including its relationship to the existing or future tree canopy height

Car parking

- > Whether any proposed car parking areas are designed to:
 - Minimise visibility from Road Zone 1.
 - Incorporate landscaping suited to the character of the site.

from roads, settlements, publicly accessible waterways and recreation and tourism locations.

- > A landscape plan that proposes the use of locally appropriate species (e.g. indigenous or non-invasive native / exotic plants that are a feature of the character of the area) and how the affected area will be remediated after the development.

- > A visual impact assessment of the proposal from major viewing corridors and identified significant viewing locations.

Additional decision guidelines should be included in the schedule for consideration during assessment. These would require consideration of landscape rehabilitation, visual impact, building siting and design, particular types of land uses, infrastructure and vegetation.

ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OVERLAY (ESO) SCHEDULE

The existing ESOs should be reviewed and updated. As the ESO1 and ESO2 already apply to Waterways and Forested Areas, the overlay schedules should be modified to recognise their landscape significance. The statement of environmental significance should be updated to include the reasons for the landscapes' significance set out in Chapter 4.

The objectives in the overlay schedules should be updated and expanded in line with the relevant objectives outlined in Chapter 5.

The existing permit requirements generally provide for a planning assessment where a landscape's significance might be under threat.

- > Whether the proposal contributes to the creation of a definite visual edge for townships, delineating the boundary between urban development and the natural landscape beyond.

Infrastructure and signage

- > Whether infrastructure such as powerlines and utility services is located underground wherever possible.
- > Whether advertising signs are designed and sited to:
 - Minimise impacts on landscapes and views.
 - Integrate with the design of buildings on the site.
 - Utilise colours and forms that do not detract from the landscape character of the locality.
 - Avoid visual clutter.

Extractive industry

- > Whether the proposal minimises the visual impact of extraction sites through the use of adequate setbacks.
- > Whether the proposal includes a rehabilitation plan that includes measures to return the site to its original landscape quality.

Application requirements should be included that require the following information to be provided (at the discretion of Council) to assess the potential impact of a proposal upon the landscape:

- > A detailed site evaluation which considers the existing landscape context including topography, existing vegetation (species, location and character), and views to the site

Settlements

- › Whether the proposal contributes to the creation of a definite visual edge for townships, delineating the boundary between urban development and the natural landscape beyond.

and whether the loss of vegetation can be managed onsite through rehabilitation or replaced with native vegetation that will grow to a similar size.

- › Whether the vegetation is isolated or part of a grouping.

Infrastructure and signage

- › Whether infrastructure is sited to minimise visibility from Road Zone 1

In some locations the boundaries of the existing ESO do not correlate with the identified area of significance, and the area covered by the ESO may need to be expanded.

Extractive industry

- › Whether the proposal minimises the visual impact of extraction sites, particularly in views from Road Zone 1 through the use of landscaping and vegetation buffers.

Vegetation

- › Whether the proposal:
 - Retains existing indigenous and native trees and understorey and provides for the planting of new indigenous and native vegetation wherever possible.
 - Utilises vegetation for screening and to delineate property boundaries, instead of fencing.
- › Whether existing shelter belts are retained wherever possible, or replaced with the same species or an alternative species, suitable to the local area.
- › Where commercial timber plantations are proposed adjacent to Road Zones 1 or 2, whether the plantation is screened with a minimum 20m wide indigenous or native vegetation buffer, including understorey.
- › The effect of removing vegetation on the landscape character and significance values

APPENDIX B

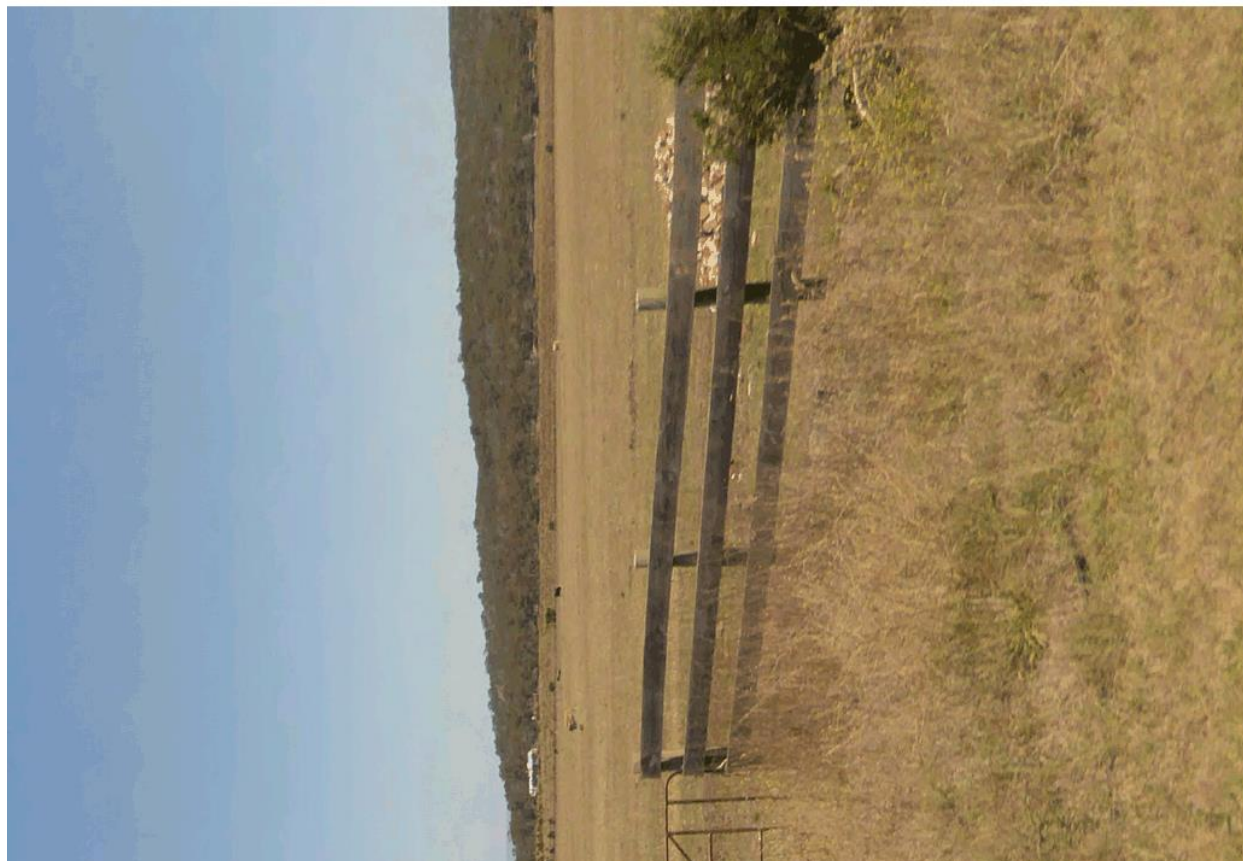


Significant Landscape Features Strategy | Melton City Council

APPENDIX B

Melton City Council | Significant Landscape Features Strategy

EXISTING SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAY (SLO1)



42.03 SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAY

02/04/2015
VC124

Shown on the planning scheme map as **SLO** with a number.

Purpose

To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.

To identify significant landscapes.

To conserve and enhance the character of significant landscapes.

42.03-1 Landscape character and objectives

19/01/2006
VC37

A schedule to this overlay must contain:

- A statement of the nature and key elements of the landscape.
- The landscape character objective to be achieved.

42.03-2 Permit requirement

15/09/2008
VC49

A permit is required to:

- Construct a building or construct or carry out works. This does not apply:
 - If a schedule to this overlay specifically states that a permit is not required.
 - To the conduct of agricultural activities including ploughing and fencing (but not the construction of dams) unless a specific requirement for that activity is specified in a schedule to this overlay.
- Construct a fence if specified in the schedule to this overlay.
- Remove, destroy or lop any vegetation specified in a schedule to this overlay. This does not apply:
 - If the table to Clause 42.03-3 specifically states that a permit is not required.
 - To the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation in accordance with a native vegetation precinct plan specified in the schedule to Clause 52.16.

42.03-3 Table of exemptions

02/04/2015
VC124

No permit is required to remove, destroy or lop vegetation to the minimum extent necessary if any of the following apply:	
Bracken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The vegetation is bracken (<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>) which has naturally established or regenerated on land lawfully cleared of naturally established vegetation. <p>This exemption does not apply to land on which vegetation has been cleared or otherwise destroyed or damaged as a result of flood, fire or other natural disaster.</p>
Crown land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped on Crown land and by a person acting under and in accordance with an authorisation order made under sections 82 or 84 of the <i>Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010</i>.

No permit is required to remove, destroy or lop vegetation to the minimum extent necessary if any of the following apply:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emergency works | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The vegetation presents an immediate risk of personal injury or damage to property and only that part of vegetation which presents the immediate risk is removed, destroyed or lopped. ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped by a public authority or municipal council to create an emergency access or to enable emergency works. |
| Fire protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped for the making of a fuelbreak by or on behalf of a public authority in accordance with a strategic fuelbreak plan approved by the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (as constituted under Part 2 of the <i>Conservation, Forest and Lands Act 1987</i>). The maximum width of a fuelbreak must not exceed 40 metres. ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped for fire fighting measures, fuel reduction burning, or the making of a fuel break up to 6 metres wide. ▪ The vegetation is ground fuel within 30 metres of a building. ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped in accordance with a fire prevention notice under: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Section 65 of the <i>Forests Act 1958</i>. · Section 41 of the <i>Country Fire Authority Act 1958</i>. · Section 8 of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>. ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to keep the whole or any part of any vegetation clear of an electric line in accordance with a code of practice prepared under Part 8 of the <i>Electricity Safety Act 1998</i>. ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped in accordance with any code of practice prepared in accordance with Part 8 of the <i>Electricity Safety Act 1998</i> in order to minimise the risk of bushfire ignition in the proximity of electricity lines. ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to reduce fuel loads on roadsides to minimise the risk to life and property from bushfire of an existing public road managed by the relevant responsible road authority (as defined by the <i>Road Management Act 2004</i>) in accordance with the written agreement of the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (as constituted under Part 2 of the <i>Conservation, Forest and Lands Act 1987</i>). |
| Geothermal energy exploration and extraction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to enable the carrying out of geothermal energy exploration or extraction in accordance with the <i>Geothermal Energy Resources Act 2005</i>. |
| Greenhouse gas sequestration exploration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to enable the carrying out of geothermal energy exploration or extraction in accordance with the <i>Greenhouse Gas Geological Sequestration Act 2008</i>. |
| Greenhouse gas sequestration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to enable the carrying out of geothermal energy exploration or extraction in accordance with the <i>Greenhouse Gas Geological Sequestration Act 2008</i>. |
| Land management notices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to comply with land management notice issued under the <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i>. |

No permit is required to remove, destroy or lop vegetation to the minimum extent necessary if any of the following apply:

Land use conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to comply with a land use condition served under the <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i>.
Mineral Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to enable the carrying out of Mineral exploration.
Mineral extraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to enable the carrying out of Mineral extraction in accordance with a work plan approved under the <i>Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990</i> and authorised by a work authority granted under that Act.
Noxious weeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vegetation is a noxious weed the subject of a declaration under section 58 or section 58A of the <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i>. This exemption does not apply to Australian Dodder (<i>Cuscuta australis</i>).
Pest animal burrows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to enable the removal of pest animal burrows. In the case of native vegetation the written agreement of an officer of the Department responsible for administering the <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> is required before the vegetation can be removed, destroyed or lopped.
Planted vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vegetation has been planted or grown as a result of direct seeding for Crop raising or Extensive animal husbandry.
Railways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to maintain the safe and efficient function of an existing railway or railway access road, in accordance with the written agreement of the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (as constituted under Part 2 of the <i>Conservation, Forest and Lands Act 1987</i>).
Regrowth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vegetation is regrowth which has naturally established or regenerated on land lawfully cleared of naturally established vegetation and is within the boundary of a timber production plantation, as indicated on a Plantation Development Notice or other documented record, and has established after the plantation. This exemption does not apply to land on which vegetation has been cleared or otherwise destroyed or damaged as a result of flood, fire or other natural disaster.
Road safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to maintain the safe and efficient function of an existing public road managed by the relevant responsible road authority (as defined by the <i>Road Management Act 2004</i>) in accordance with the written agreement of the Secretary of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (as constituted under Part 2 of the <i>Conservation, Forest and Lands Act 1987</i>).

No permit is required to remove, destroy or lop vegetation to the minimum extent necessary if any of the following apply:

- Stone exploration**
 - The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to enable the carrying out of the Stone exploration.
 - The maximum extent of vegetation removed, destroyed or lopped under this exemption on contiguous land in the same ownership in a five year period must not exceed any of the following:
 - 1 hectare of vegetation which does not include a tree.
 - 15 trees if each tree has a trunk diameter of less than 40 centimetres at a height of 1.3 metres above ground level.
 - 5 trees if each tree has a trunk diameter of 40 centimetres or more at a height of 1.3 metres above ground level.
 - This exemption does not apply to vegetation to be removed, destroyed or lopped to enable costeaning and bulk sampling activities.

- Stone extraction**
 - The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to enable the carrying out of Stone extraction in accordance with a work plan approved under the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* and authorised by a work authority granted under that Act.

- Surveying**
 - The vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped for establishing sight-lines for the measurement of land by surveyors in the exercise of their profession, and if using hand-held tools.

42.03-4

18/11/2011
VC83

Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines in Clause 65, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

- The State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- The statement of the nature and key elements of the landscape and the landscape character objective contained in a schedule to this overlay.
- The conservation and enhancement of the landscape values of the area.
- The need to remove, destroy or lop vegetation to create defensible space to reduce the risk of bushfire to life and property.
- The impact of the proposed buildings and works on the landscape due to height, bulk, colour, general appearance or the need to remove vegetation.
- The extent to which the buildings and works are designed to enhance or promote the landscape character objectives of the area.
- The impact of buildings and works on significant views.
- Any other matters specified in a schedule to this overlay.

Notes: Refer to the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement, for strategies and policies which may affect the use and development of the land.

Check the requirements of the zone which applies to the land.

Other requirements may also apply. These can be found at Particular Provisions.

MELTON PLANNING SCHEME

19/01/2006
VC37**SCHEDULE 1 TO THE SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAY**Shown on the planning scheme map as **SLO1****VOLCANIC HILLS AND CONES****1.0**19/01/2006
VC37**Statement of nature and key elements of landscape**

The Mt Cottrell, Mt Atkinson and Mt Kororoit Volcanic Hills and Cones provide visual relief in an otherwise flat landscape. In order to protect these volcanic cones from development, buildings and works will be discouraged above the following contour lines:

- Mount Cottrell, 160 metres
- Mt Kororoit, 180 metres
- Mount Atkinson, 120 metres

2.019/01/2006
VC37**Landscape character objective to be achieved**

To protect and conserve volcanic hills and cones from inappropriate development and to help to conserve the existing visual amenity and rural landscapes.

3.019/01/2006
VC37**Application requirement**

An application to construct a building or construct or carry out works on visible slopes generally above the 100 metre contour but below the above specified figures will be required to demonstrate how appropriate siting and landscaping treatment can be achieved.

4.019/01/2006
VC37**Decision guidelines**

In addition to the matters listed at Clause 42.03-3, Council will have regard to the following, where appropriate:

“Melton Design and Siting guidelines for Rural zones”, Shire of Melton 1996.

“Sites of Geological and Geomorphological Significance in the Western Region of Melbourne”, Rosengren 1987.

APPENDIX B

