

Boundary Change Notice: Conservation Area 29

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Conservation Area 29- Northern Growth Corridor: Mickleham Road, Mickleham

Key Messages

- The purpose of Conservation Area 29 is to protect areas of Grassy Eucalypt Woodland (GEW) within a practically manageable area and contribute to the persistence of Golden Sun Moth (GSM).
- The original boundary was delineated using a GEW extent determined from aerial imagery, over-the-fence assessment and modelled data; no field inspection was undertaken as property access was not granted.
- These limitations meant the original GEW extent focused heavily on canopy coverage in lieu of quantity and condition of understory vegetation.
- A Flora Assessment undertaken by Hume City Council in May 2020 and submitted to DELWP has confirmed the presence of very high-quality grassland derived from tree-loss, consistent with the Commonwealth thresholds of GEW, is present immediately adjacent to the original conservation area.
- An independent site assessment undertaken by the Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) confirmed the results of the Hume City Council assessment.
- Both surveys identify an area adjacent to the original conservation area containing vegetation communities that are unequivocally GEW that is relatively intact compared to most other stands within the Melbourne Strategic Assessment area.
- Under the Melbourne Strategic Assessment Program, the Victorian Government has committed to the protection of 80 per cent of GEW, that meets the Commonwealth thresholds, as per the *Final Prescription for Grassy Eucalypt Woodland in the Victorian Volcanic Plain*.
- The proposed boundary change results in a net increase in the amount of very high value GEW protected by Conservation Area 29 and contributes towards meeting the Final Prescription for GEW.
- The proposed boundary change will result in a net increase in GSM habitat under the Melbourne Strategic Assessment Program by:
 - Achieving a net increase in the area of 'high contribution to species persistence' habitat for GSM as defined in the *Final Prescription for Golden Sun Moth*.
 - Including an additional GSM record within the conservation area boundary.
- Upon receiving approval from the Commonwealth Environment Minister, the boundary change will result in no net loss in total area protected by the conservation area, and a gain of 6.1 hectares of very high value GEW.

Introduction

The primary objective of Conservation Area 29 is to provide for the protection of GEW within a practically manageable area.

The boundary of the conservation area was previously delineated through aerial imagery and modelled data.

On-ground assessments of the area have since been conducted by qualified ecologists at Hume City Council

and the Arthur Rylah Institute. The assessments identified very high value grasslands derived from tree loss, consistent with the definitions and thresholds of GEW, located immediately adjacent to the conservation area. The Assessments also identified areas within the conservation area previously mapped as GEW that had no intact understory.

The proposed boundary change seeks to add very high-quality GEW areas to Conservation Area 29. To offset



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the additional area of very high quality GEW an equivalent area of the conservation area has been excluded. The proposed excluded area consists primarily of low-quality GEW or areas absent of GEW. This will result in a significant increase in biodiversity value whilst achieving a no net loss in overall conservation area.

Table 1: Key information for Conservation Area 29

Conservation Area- Key Information	
Conservation area name and number	Conservation Area 29 - Northern Growth Corridor: Mickleham Road, Mickleham
Conservation area type	Nature Conservation
Precinct name	Craigieburn West
Council area	Hume
Property addresses	1\PS736443 – 1780 Mickleham Rd, Mickleham 3064 2\PS301908 – 1760 Mickleham Rd, Mickleham 3064
Were new surveys undertaken to inform the proposal?	Yes – surveys of native vegetation in May 2020

Assessment Criteria

Condition 4 of the Final approval for urban development in three growth corridors under the Melbourne Urban Growth Program Strategic Assessment (5 September 2013) identifies that the boundaries of Conservation Area 29 cannot be changed unless agreed by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment.

This boundary change proposal has been assessed against criteria consistent with the Melbourne Strategic Assessment prescriptions and the *Guidance note: Implementing the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors*.

The proposed changes:

- Strategically increase the amount of very high value GEW within Conservation Area 29.
- Improve the outcome of Conservation Area 29 by defining the boundary on site surveys instead of aerial imagery and modelled data.
- Provide additional increases to GSM habitat and improve overall quality of GSM habitat.
- Will be made prior to the final gazettal of the Craigieburn West Precinct Structure Plan.
- Are based off independent site assessments conducted by Hume City Council and the Arthur Rylah Institute.

- Result in a net improvement in the biodiversity values of Conservation Area 29.
- Contribute to the commitment to protect 80% of GEW across the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion.
- Do not impact on the ability to manage the conservation area or compromise values through fragmentation or increased area to perimeter ratio.

The purpose of the boundary change is to improve conservation outcomes relating to the protection of GEW and provide benefits for GSM. The Guidance Note does not recognise improved conservation outcomes as a site-specific issue for undertaking a boundary change proposal. However, due to the exceptional GEW values that are proposed to be added to the conservation area, the need for the boundary change is considered justified in this case.

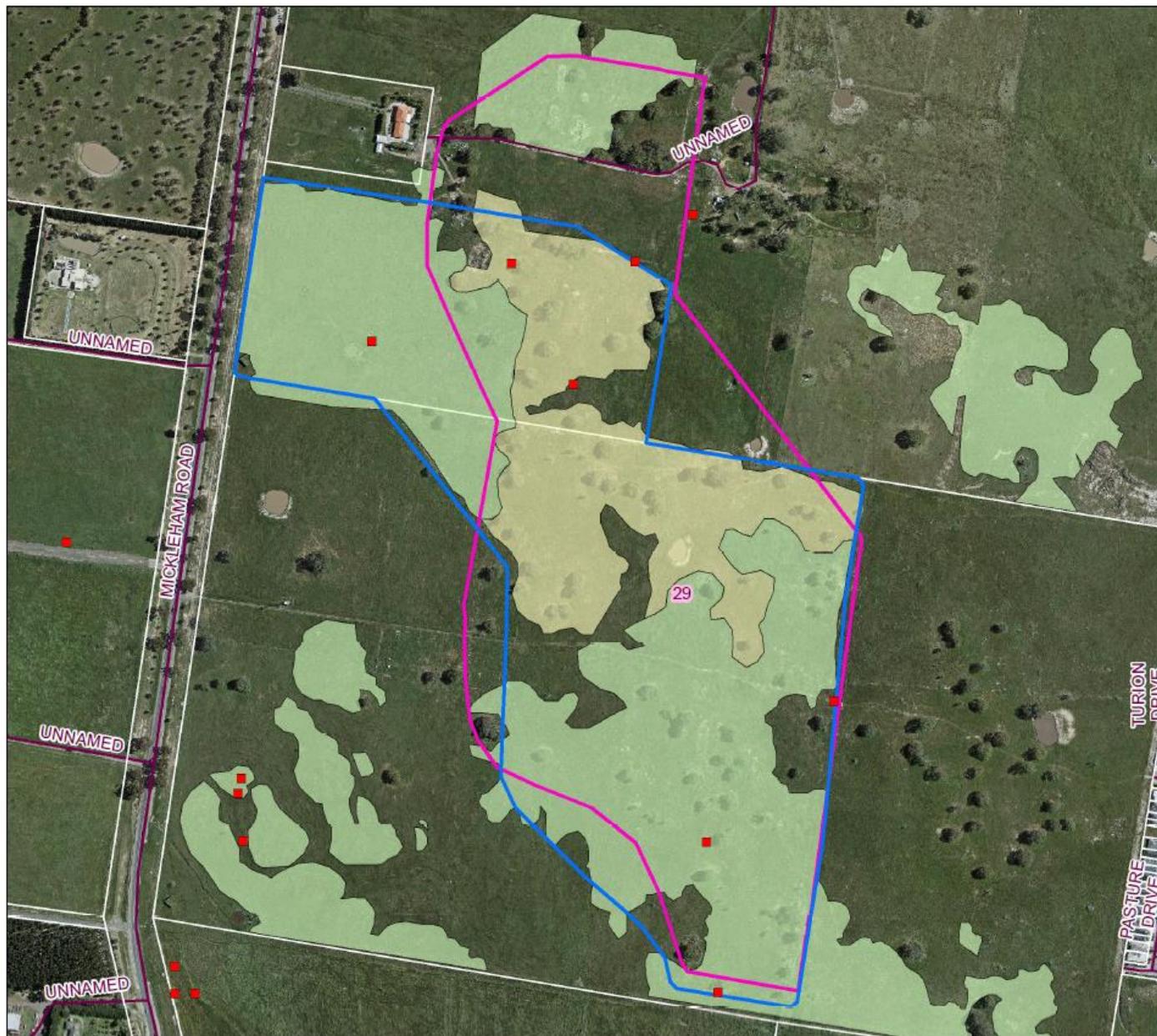
In total the proposed change includes;

- The addition of an area of very high-quality grassland derived from tree loss, consistent with the definition and thresholds of nationally significant GEW.
- Removal of areas of low-quality GEW.
- A net increase of 6.1 hectares of very high-quality GEW protected within Conservation Area 29.
- The inclusion of an additional GSM record within the conservation area.
- A net increase in the area of 'high contribution to species persistence' habitat for GSM as defined in the *Final Prescription for Golden Sun Moth (April 2010)*.
- No net change in the overall area of Conservation Area 29.

The proposed adjustment to the boundary and changes to environmental values are shown in the following figure.

A copy of the current conservation area boundaries can be downloaded as a spatial data file from the Victorian Government Spatial Datamart (<https://services.land.vic.gov.au/SpatialDatamart/>).

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Proposed Boundary Change Conservation Area 29



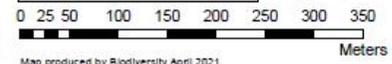
Area added: 9.1 ha
 Area removed: 9.1 ha
 Net change (total area): 0 ha
 Net change (very high value GEW): +6.1 ha

Legend

- Proposed Boundary
- Current Boundary
- GSM Records
- Parcels

Surveyed Vegetation Category

- High value GEW
- Very high value GEW



Map produced by Biodiversity April 2021
 Datum: GDA84
 Projection: MGA Zone 55
 Spatial data is sourced from the Victorian Spatial Data Library.
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