

Melbourne Strategic Assessment

Progress Report: 2014-15



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Executive summary

This report outlines the progress in implementing commitments made by the Victorian Government as part of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA) Program, outlined in 'Delivering Melbourne's newest sustainable communities: Program Report' (Victorian Government, 2009).

The purpose of the Progress Report is to:

- Report publicly on compliance with the endorsed MSA Program and the conditions of the Commonwealth approvals regulating urban development in Melbourne's growth corridors
- Ensure transparency and accountability in implementing the MSA Program
- Consolidate the separate reporting requirements of the Program Report.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Program Report and Monitoring and Reporting Framework for the MSA (MRF). It reports on the program outputs and the Key Performance Indicators associated with each program output detailed in the MRF.

Program outcomes will be reported in 2019.

This is the first Progress Report for the MSA Program since the MRF was approved by the Commonwealth Government in May 2015. 2014-15 is also the first reporting period since the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment granted approvals for urban development in all of Melbourne's growth corridors. This report includes reporting on the implementation of program outputs for the 2014-15 reporting period as well as overall progress to date since the endorsement of the MSA Program in 2010.

Program outputs

The report describes progress against the following program outputs:

- Urban and infrastructure development proceeds in accordance with the Commonwealth approvals
- Program cost recovery and expenditure is transparent and efficient
- A 15,000 hectare grassland reserve is established and managed
- A network of conservation areas within the Urban Growth Boundary is protected and managed for matters of national environmental significance species and vegetation communities
- A 1,200 hectare Grassy Eucalypt Woodland reserve is protected and managed
- 80 per cent of Grassy Eucalypt Woodland is protected within the Urban Growth Boundary
- 80 per cent of high priority habitat for Golden Sun Moth, Spiny Rice-flower and Matted Flax-lily is protected and managed
- Important landscape and habitat areas for Southern Brown Bandicoot are protected and managed.

Independent monitor

In accordance with the Program Report, an independent auditor reviewed stage 2 of the MSA Program to check compliance and provide assurance to the Commonwealth Government that the Victorian Government is effectively implementing the endorsed program.

The auditor has provided a qualified reasonable assurance, that except regarding three areas, the planning mechanisms of the MSA have been undertaken in the manner described in the endorsed Program Report. The Victorian Government response to the report is contained in Section 2 of this progress report.

Summary of financial performance

Revenue received under the MSA Program has been slower than expected. To date, the program has received approx. \$42.3 million in revenue and expended approx. \$28.9 million on program implementation activities. These activities have focused on the acquisition of land for the Western Grassland Reserves (1,209 ha acquired to date) and development of an online system that estimates habitat compensation obligations for land parcels in the growth corridors.

1 Introduction

The Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA) evaluates the impacts of the Victorian Government's urban development program for Melbourne on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) listed under the EPBC Act and establishes conservation measures to mitigate these impacts.

Melbourne's urban development program provides for:

- Urban development in four growth corridors within the expanded 2010 Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Urban development in 28 existing precincts within the 2005 UGB
- Development of the Regional Rail Link Corridor between West of Werribee and Deer Park (section 2)
- Development of the Outer Metropolitan Ring Transport Corridor/E6 Road Reservation.

The MSA was conducted under the strategic assessment provisions (Part 10) of the EPBC Act.

As part of the MSA, the Victorian Government made commitments to the Commonwealth Government in relation to conservation measures (program outputs) and program outcomes required to protect MNES. These commitments are outlined in the Program Report. The Commonwealth Environment Minister endorsed the program, as set out in the Program Report, in February 2010.

Since this time, the Commonwealth Minister has granted four approvals for urban development under Part 10 of the EPBC Act for the area covered by the MSA. These approvals are for:

1. Development and operation of the Regional Rail Link (West of Werribee to Deer Park) (June 2010).
2. Urban development in the existing 28 urban precincts within the 2005 UGB (July 2010).
3. Urban development in the western, north-western and northern growth corridors (September 2013).
4. Urban development in the south-eastern growth corridor (September 2014).

The Commonwealth approval for the existing 28 urban precincts requires that urban development proceeds in accordance with prescriptions for nine MNES.

The prescriptions specify requirements for the protection of MNES that must be followed during the planning of urban precincts, including requirements to protect areas of high biodiversity value for MNES and offset the removal of habitat for MNES.

The Commonwealth approvals for the growth corridors requires that urban development proceeds in accordance with the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors (BCS) and sub-regional species strategies for the Golden Sun Moth, Growling Grass Frog and Southern Brown Bandicoot.

The BCS is the overarching strategy for the protection of MNES in the four growth corridors. The Commonwealth Government has agreed that the BCS fulfils the prescriptions in 16 of the existing 28 urban precincts, as well as in part of the former Greenvale South (R3) precinct now known as Greenvale West. As such, there is no requirement to apply the prescriptions at the planning phase in these areas if the BCS requirements are met.

The conservation measures in the BCS include the protection and management of 36 conservation areas containing areas of high biodiversity value for MNES, requirements to offset the removal of habitat through habitat compensation obligations, and salvage and translocation requirements.

1.1 Reporting requirements under the program

The Program Report requires the Victorian Government to monitor and report on the implementation of the MSA Program. Section 11 of the Program Report sets out the monitoring and reporting requirements for each of the four stages of the implementation of the program: the approval stage; the process implementation stage; the construction and works stage; and the operation stage. The Victorian Government is required to submit regular reports to the Commonwealth Government or release reports publicly on various implementation activities, including in relation to the gazettal of planning scheme amendments, the removal and offset of native vegetation, and compliance activities.

The Program Report requires the government to prepare a monitoring and reporting framework for the MSA Program. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has prepared a MRF (DELWP, 2015a) that meets the requirements for monitoring and reporting in the Program Report.

The MRF sets out how the Victorian Government will monitor and report on activities, processes, program outputs and program outcomes established to deliver and implement the MSA Program. It establishes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to enable the implementation of program outputs and program outcomes to be measured. Reporting on the implementation of program outputs is undertaken annually, while reporting on program outcomes is undertaken five-yearly.

1.2 Purpose of the 2014-15 Progress Report

The purpose of the 2014-15 Progress Report is to:

- Report publicly on compliance with the endorsed MSA Program and the conditions of the Commonwealth approvals regulating urban development in the MSA Program area
- Ensure transparency and accountability in implementing the MSA Program
- Consolidate the separate reporting requirements of the Program Report.

The Progress Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Program Report and MRF. It reports on the program outputs and the KPIs associated with each program output detailed in the MRF. Progress on the program outcomes will be reported in the 2018-19 Progress Report.

This is the first Progress Report for the MSA Program since the MRF was approved by the Commonwealth Government in May 2015. This is also the first reporting period since the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment granted approvals for urban development in all of Melbourne's growth corridors. This report includes reporting on the implementation of program outputs for the 2014-15 reporting period as well as overall progress to date since the endorsement of the MSA Program in 2010.

The report has been prepared by DELWP on behalf of the government agencies responsible for implementing the MSA Program, including the Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA), Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR). Information on compliance was provided by Local Government Authorities in the program area.

1.3 Glossary

BCS area – The area covered by the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors (BCS) described on page 4 of the BCS. This is a subset of the area covered by the MSA and comprises:

- The four growth corridors in the expanded 2010 UGB
- 16 of the existing 28 urban precincts in the 2005 UGB
- The Outer Metropolitan Ring Transport Corridor/E6 Road Reservation.

Commonwealth approvals – The four approvals granted by the Commonwealth Environment Minister for urban development under Part 10 of the EPBC Act for the area covered by the MSA Program. These approvals are for:

1. Development and operation of the Regional Rail Link (West of Werribee to Deer Park) (June 2010)
2. Urban development in the existing 28 urban precincts within the 2005 UGB (July 2010)
3. Urban development in the western, north-western and northern growth corridors (September 2013)
4. Urban development in the south-eastern growth corridor (September 2014)

The approvals have effect until 31 December 2060. The approvals exclude development in the northern growth corridor within the boundary of Hearn’s Swamp and on properties 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 in the Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan (Growth Areas Authority, 2012).

DELWP Standard Outputs – One of several Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting (MER) standards developed under DELWP’s MER Framework: land, water and biodiversity. The DELWP standard outputs describe environmental goods or services delivered through program investment, in this instance particularly associated with land management. This includes structural works, environmental works and management services.

Habitat Compensation Layer – A data layer administered by DELWP showing the location of native vegetation and threatened species habitat within the BCS area. The layer is used as the basis for calculating the habitat compensation fees to be paid to DELWP for the removal or deemed removal of native vegetation and habitat in the BCS area. The layer is based on the time-stamping dataset, threatened species habitat mapping undertaken for the sub-regional species strategies and assumptions about threatened species habitat described in the BCS.

Matters of national environmental significance – Matters listed under Part 3 the Commonwealth EPBC Act.

Matters of State significance – Threatened species and ecological communities listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act) and DELWP’s Rare and Threatened Species Advisory Lists.

Prescriptions – Prescriptions specify requirements for protection of matters of national environmental significance that must be followed in preparing precinct structure plans and in undertaking individual developments. The Commonwealth Environment Minister has approved the following prescriptions:

- Natural Temperate Grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plain
- Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain
- Golden Sun Moth
- Striped Legless Lizard

- Southern Brown Bandicoot
- Growling Grass Frog
- Matted Flax-lily
- Spiny Rice-flower
- Migratory species.

Time-stamping dataset – The time-stamping project captured and ‘time stamped’ native vegetation information to establish a dataset showing the type, extent and condition of all native vegetation in the BCS area. The data was used together with threatened species habitat mapping undertaken for the Sub-regional Species Strategy for the Growling Grass Frog and assumptions about threatened species habitat described in the BCS to create the Habitat Compensation Layer.

1.4 Acronyms

BCS – Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne’s Growth Corridors

CACP – Conservation Area Concept Plan

CIP – Conservation Interface Plan

CHMP – Cultural Heritage Management Plan

DELWP – Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (formerly DEPI)

DEPI – Department of Environment and Primary Industries (formerly DSE)

DoE – Commonwealth Department of the Environment

DEDJTR – Department Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

DSE – Department of Sustainability and Environment

EMP – Environmental Management Plan

EVC – Ecological Vegetation Class

GCP – Growth Corridor Plans

GEW – Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain

GGF – Growling Grass Frog

GSM – Golden Sun Moth

IWMP – Integrated Water Management Plan

KPI – Key Performance Indicator

MFL – Matted Flax-lily

MPA – Metropolitan Planning Authority

MRF – Monitoring and Reporting Framework: Melbourne Strategic Assessment

MNES – Matters of national environmental significance

NTG – Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain

NVPP – Native Vegetation Precinct Plan

PSP – Precinct Structure Plan

SBB – Southern Brown Bandicoot

SRF – Spiny Rice-flower

UGB – Urban Growth Boundary

WGR – Western Grassland Reserve

2 Independent Monitor

In accordance with the Program Report, the Victorian Government will engage auditors in two phases during the first 10 years of the implementation of the program. The role of the auditors is to:

- Audit compliance of the implementation of stages 2 and 3 with the endorsed Program
- Provide reasonable assurance to the Commonwealth Government that the Program is being implemented in accordance with the Program Report.

In stage 2, an auditor will be engaged to review the establishment of the planning mechanisms and processes to implement the program, such as Growth Corridor Plans, Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs), and conservation strategies, against the requirements of the Program Report.

Stage 2 of the program was audited in 2014 and will be audited again in 2016-17.

In stage 3, an auditor will be engaged to review the construction of urban areas and transport infrastructure to implement the program against the requirements of the planning mechanisms and processes established in stage 2 and program approvals granted in stage 1.

Stage 3 of the program will be audited in 2017-18 and 2022-23.

The Victorian Government is currently exploring the long term options for the role of the Independent Monitor.

2.1 Audit of stage 2 of the program – 2014

The 2014 audit of stage 2 of the program is complete. The auditor prepared an Independent Reasonable Assurance Report (see Appendix 1) and provided a qualified assurance.

The qualified assurance concluded that, except for the matters identified in Table 1, the planning mechanisms and processes to prepare urban frameworks, transport frameworks and reserve land in relation to the MSA occurred in accordance with the endorsed Program Report, in all material respects.

Table 1 sets out the reasonable assurance qualifications and the Victorian Government's response.

Table 1: Reasonable assurance qualifications and Victorian Government's response

Reasonable assurance qualification	Recommended rectification	Victorian Government response
A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) was not prepared for high impact activities occurring in the Greenvale North precinct. The Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) for Greenvale North was approved on 20 January 2011. In accordance with the Program Report, precinct development	A CHMP should be prepared for Greenvale North (R1), in accordance with the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> . Identification of culturally sensitive sites and post-contact heritage sites should be reflected in the PSP. Development on the sites should not proceed until all requirements of	A PSP sets the future structure for the suburb and guides the use and development of land in the precinct over the longer term. The PSP Guidelines include a standard approach to integrating heritage requirements into the PSP process. The legal requirement to have completed a CHMP is triggered at the planning permit stage. Under Section 52 of the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> , a decision maker must not grant a

Reasonable assurance qualification	Recommended rectification	Victorian Government response
cannot occur until the requirements of the CHMP are met.	the CHMP are met.	<p>planning permit if a cultural heritage management plan is required for an activity if — (a) all or part of the activity area for the activity is an area of cultural heritage sensitivity; and (b) all or part of the activity is a high impact activity.</p> <p>It should be noted that not all subdivision or development is triggered by the above and that only land that is captured by the above requires a CHMP to be prepared.</p> <p>Hume City Council submitted to the Planning Panel considering the merits of Planning Scheme Amendment C119 to the Hume Planning Scheme (implementing the Greenvale North R1 PSP) that a CHMP should be prepared prior to the amendment being approved, the Panel accepted that sufficient investigations of pre- and post-contact heritage had occurred during the PSP process and implicitly that development proponents should be responsible for the completion of a CHMP (if required).</p> <p>Following the Panel hearing, development proponents have responded to their obligations to prepare a CHMP if they have been required to do so by the Act.</p>
Formal approval of the Growth Corridor Plans (GCPs) and their incorporation into relevant planning schemes had not occurred as at the date of this report. Despite this, PSPs were completed and have been approved as early as January 2011. As the GCPs set the regional framework for planning precincts, there is a risk that completed PSPs have not considered applicable changes made to the GCPs. This does not appear to be consistent with the	<p>The Victorian Government should review the GCPs once approved and incorporated into planning schemes, to assess whether there have been significant changes that impact completed PSPs in respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biodiversity; ▪ Transport and infrastructure; ▪ UGB areas; and ▪ Other applicable areas of the PSP that are informed by the GCPs. 	<p>The GCPs were informed by the BCS and Sub-Regional Species Strategies (SRSSs) for the Golden Sun Moth, Growling Grass Frog and Southern Brown Bandicoot and incorporate the location of the boundaries of each conservation area. DELWP reviewed the GCPs prior to their release in 2012 to ensure consistency with the biodiversity strategies.</p> <p>Finalisation of the GCPs and their incorporation into relevant planning schemes has been dependent on the finalisation of these strategies. With the BCS and SRSS completed, the GCPs have been finalised for statutory planning approval (an amendment has been prepared and is awaiting final approval).</p>

Reasonable assurance qualification	Recommended rectification	Victorian Government response
<p>Program Report and the intent of the MSA Program.</p>		<p>The BCS, SRSSs and GCPs have not significantly changed since 2012. Approved PSPs are generally consistent with the final GCPs; however they will be reviewed by the Metropolitan Planning Authority following statutory planning approval, and incidental minor modifications will be incorporated where required.</p>
<p>The SRSS for the Southern Brown Bandicoot was approved on 7 August 2014, however the BCS was finalised on 5 August 2013. This is not consistent with the Program Report requirement where each SRSS must be approved by the Commonwealth Government prior to the finalisation of the BCS.</p>	<p>If there are changes made to the SRSS that have not been gazetted and impact the BCS, the BCS should be updated and approved accordingly.</p>	<p>DELWP has reviewed the BCS for consistency with the SRSS for the Southern Brown Bandicoot and associated supplement and has determined that the documents are consistent and that the BCS addresses all relevant aspects of the SRSS.</p> <p>The SRSS focuses on a 'management area' outside the south-eastern growth corridor (i.e. outside the area covered by the BCS). The only mandatory obligation it imposes within the BCS area relates to habitat compensation fees and this requirement is consistent between the BCS and SRSS.</p> <p>The associated supplement applies to some land within the area covered by the BCS (Botanic Ridge and Devon Meadows precincts). The supplement does not establish any conservation areas within these precincts and so DELWP is of the view that the BCS does not need to be updated. Rather, the supplement commits the Victorian Government to creating habitat for SBB within certain existing open space and drainage reserves. These commitments will be implemented through the PSPs for these precincts and DELWP has agreed on a process to achieve this with the MPA.</p>

3 Urban and infrastructure development proceeds in accordance with the Commonwealth approvals

3.1 Introduction

The Victorian Government is implementing the MSA Program, including the Commonwealth approvals and the requirements of the Program Report and BCS, through a range of mechanisms and processes, including planning processes under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (P&E Act).

This section reports on the implementation of these planning mechanisms and processes.

The key mechanisms and processes are:

- **Planning scheme amendments** – Planning schemes are amended under the P&E Act after the preparation of PSPs to give effect to the Commonwealth approvals and requirements of the Program Report and BCS within each precinct.
- **Precinct Structure Plans** – PSPs are prepared for each precinct and set out the future structure of a suburb, including the location of housing, activity centres, community facilities, transport networks, open space and conservation areas. PSPs include conservation requirements to give effect to the Commonwealth approvals and requirements of the Program Report. Development in a precinct must be generally in accordance with the PSP.
- **Native Vegetation Plans (NVPs)** – NVPs are maps prepared for each precinct and shown in PSPs that identify the native vegetation that may be removed and the native vegetation that must be retained within a precinct. The term ‘NVP’ in this document includes Native Vegetation Precinct Plans prepared under clause 52.16 of the Victoria Planning Provisions.
- **Conservation Area Concept Plans (CACPs)** – CACPs are maps prepared for each conservation area and shown in PSPs that set out the land-uses suitable within each conservation area and specify broad conservation requirements and constraints. The term ‘CACP’ in this document includes Conservation Management Plans prepared as a requirement of the prescriptions.
- **Planning permits** – A planning permit is a legal document that gives permission for a use or development on a particular land parcel under a planning scheme. The permit includes conditions that reflect the requirements of the Commonwealth approvals and BCS where relevant.
- **Integrated Water Management (IWM)** – IWM planning aims to ensure precincts are developed in accordance with best practice urban water management principles and methods and impacts on MNES, including Ramsar wetlands, are avoided and minimised. IWM plans are prepared as separate plans as part of the PSP process or are incorporated into various section of each PSP and are implemented by Melbourne Water through drainage schemes and planning processes.
- **Environmental Management Plans** – An Environmental Management Plan (EMP) has been prepared by the Regional Rail Link Authority for the Regional Rail Link (section 2 west of Werribee to Deer Park) to ensure impacts on native vegetation and MNES are avoided, minimised and mitigated. The EMP was prepared in accordance with the conditions of the referral for the project under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*. DELWP may also require proponents to prepare EMPs for proposed uses or development within conservation areas.

- **Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs)** – CHMPs are required for certain activities including subdivisions of three or more lots in culturally sensitive areas in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. CHMPs provide for the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage values. Development not in a culturally sensitive area does not require a CHMP.
- **Work plans** – Work plans are prepared for any quarries and mines within the MSA area, which include plans for managing the impacts of the quarry on native vegetation and MNES. Work plans must be consistent with the requirements of the BCS or prescriptions.
- **Adjustments to conservation area boundaries** – The Commonwealth approvals require that agreement be obtained from the Commonwealth Environment Minister for proposed adjustments to conservation area boundaries in certain circumstances. DELWP has administrative responsibility for considering endorsement of proposed adjustments that require the agreement of the Commonwealth Minister. Where a proposed adjustment does not require the agreement of the Commonwealth, the proposal requires the agreement of DELWP.
- **Development or works in conservation area** – The Commonwealth approvals require that agreement be obtained from the Commonwealth Environment Minister for proposed development or works in conservation areas that results in a 'net loss of habitat' for ecological communities or species listed under the EPBC Act. DELWP has administrative responsibility for considering endorsement of proposals that require the agreement of the Commonwealth Minister. Where the proposed development or works does not require the agreement of the Commonwealth Minister, the proposal will require the agreement of DELWP.

The methodology for collecting and analysing the data in the tables below is set out in the *Monitoring and Reporting Framework: Technical Protocols for Program Outputs* (DELWP, 2015b).

3.2 Compliance

This Progress Report has not reported on the following KPIs in the MRF as they were not required by the MRF to be monitored and reported prior to 2014-15:

- Per cent of permits with conditions consistent with the Commonwealth approvals
- Number of non-compliances with permit conditions associated with the Commonwealth approvals.

Reporting on the KPIs for compliance with NVPs and illegal removal of native vegetation (see Tables 4 and 8) utilised information from existing DELWP and Council records that had been collected for other purposes.

For future Progress Reports, data to enable reporting on these KPIs will be collected in accordance with the *Monitoring and Reporting Framework: Technical Protocols for Program Outputs* (DELWP, 2015b) following completion of the MSA Compliance and Enforcement Strategy.

3.3 Progress so far

The highlights for the MSA Program to 30 June 2015 are:

- 36 PSPs were gazetted
- 32 NVPs were approved and incorporated in gazetted PSPs
- 206.4 ha of native vegetation was identified for retention in gazetted PSPs within the BCS area
- The following habitat for MNES was identified for retention in gazetted PSPs in the BCS area:
 - 149.0 ha of Golden Sun Moth (native and non-native) habitat
 - 596.6 ha of Growling Grass Frog habitat
 - 87.6 ha of Matted Flax-lily habitat
 - 17.4 ha of Spiny Rice-flower habitat.

3.4 Progress against key performance indicators

3.4.1 Planning scheme amendments

A total of 10 planning scheme amendments were gazetted in 2014-15 to implement the MSA Program making a total of 38 planning scheme amendments gazetted since commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015, covering 36 precincts.

In determining the per cent of planning scheme amendments gazetted in the reporting period that are consistent with the Commonwealth approvals (see Table 2); DELWP reviewed the PSPs and Urban Growth Zone (UGZ) schedules introduced by the amendments in relation to:

- Incorporation of a CACP (or an equivalent CMP) in the PSP, where conservation areas occur in the precinct
- Incorporation of a Conservation Interface Plan (CIP) in the PSP. CIPs are plans showing the layout of the interface area, or buffer, that must be established around conservation areas in accordance with the requirements for buffers specified in the BCS, where conservation areas occur in the precinct
- Requirements to secure conservation areas, as specified in the BCS, where conservation areas occur in the precinct
- Requirements to undertake salvage and translocation, as specified in the BCS.

Table 2: Planning scheme amendments

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Number of gazetted planning scheme amendments to introduce a Precinct Structure Plan	10	38
Number of gazetted planning scheme amendments to introduce a Precinct Structure Plan consistent with the Commonwealth approvals	10	38
Per cent of gazetted planning scheme amendments to introduce a Precinct Structure Plan consistent with the Commonwealth approvals	100%	Not reported*

*This Progress Report has not reported on the per cent of planning scheme amendments gazetted since commencement of the MSA Program that are consistent with the Commonwealth approvals as 12 of these amendments were gazetted prior to the finalisation and approval of the BCS. DELWP will conduct a review of these amendments to ensure they are consistent with the Commonwealth approvals, and report on this in the next progress report.

3.4.2 Precinct Structure Plans

A total of 11 PSPs were gazetted in the reporting period to implement the MSA Program with a total of 36 PSPs gazetted since commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015. The 36 gazetted PSPs cover approximately 32.1 per cent of the MSA Program area.

A complete list of the 36 PSPs gazetted since commencement of the MSA Program is provided in Appendix 2. The PSPs gazetted in the 2014-15 reporting period were:

- Ballan Road
- Berwick Waterways
- Casey Fields South Residential
- Clyde Creek
- Riverdale
- Tarneit North
- Thompsons Road
- Toolern Park
- Truganina
- Westbrook
- Woodlands

The BCS identifies 36 conservation areas in the growth corridors within the 2010 UGB that will be protected and managed for conservation of MNES and matters of state significance. There are additional conservation areas. DELWP is currently undertaking a review of the status of the 12 precincts and will include the additional conservation areas in the next progress report.

Table 3: Precinct Structure Plans

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Number of Precinct Structure Plans gazetted	11	36
Per cent of program area with gazetted Precinct Structure Plans	10.6%	32.1%

Native vegetation and potential habitat for MNES identified in gazetted PSPs to be retained in conservation areas

Habitat for MNES species*

Golden Sun Moth [^]	37.0 ha	149.0 ha
Growling Grass Frog	240.6 ha	596.6 ha
Matted Flax-Lily	-	87.6 ha
Spiny Rice-flower	17.4 ha	17.4 ha

MNES communities

Natural Temperate Grassland	17.4 ha	17.4 ha
Grassy Eucalypt Woodland	-	85.9 ha
Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands	-	17.4 ha
Other native vegetation	59.6 ha	85.7 ha
Total native vegetation	77.0 ha	206.4 ha

Hectares of land available for urban development in gazetted PSPs	5,964.0 ha	12,227.7 ha
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* These figures are not additive as habitat for some MNES overlaps. For example, Golden Sun Moth and Spiny Rice-flower habitat may occur on the same patch of native vegetation.

[^] Golden Sun Moth habitat includes native habitat (which occurs in native vegetation) and non-native habitat (which occurs in non-native vegetation).

3.4.3 Native Vegetation Plans

A total of 10 NVPs were approved as part of PSPs in the reporting period bring the total of approved NVPs since commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015 to 32. NVPs were not prepared as part of four PSPs since commencement of the MSA Program.

NVPs were not prepared for Alfred Road (Wyndham Vale) and Melton North, as there is no native vegetation in these precincts.

For Truganina Employment Area, the PSP specifies that a NVP will be prepared for this precinct. Until this occurs, any removal of native vegetation in the precinct is assessed under clause 52.17 of the Wyndham Planning Scheme.

There were two known cases of non-compliances with NVPs in the reporting period and since commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015. The two known cases include failure to

provide offsets prior to removal of native vegetation and minor damage to native vegetation to be retained within NVPs. Council has issued an infringement notice and official warning for these cases.

Table 4: Native Vegetation Plans

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Number of gazetted precincts with Native Vegetation Plans	10	32
Per cent of gazetted precincts with Native Vegetation Plans	91%	89%
Number of non-compliances with Native Vegetation Plans	-	2 [^]

[^] Information used to report on the number of non-compliances with NVPs (or equivalent plans) were collated from existing DELWP and Council records and may be incomplete.

3.4.4 Conservation Area Concept Plans

A total of 7 CACPs were approved as part of PSPs in the reporting period with a total of 21 CACPs (or equivalent plans) approved since commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015.

Initially under the MSA Program, Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) were the primary mechanism for protecting and managing conservation areas. CMPs were prepared by DELWP for each conservation area at the precinct structure planning stage and set out land-uses suitable within each conservation area as well as specifying detailed management actions to be implemented in the conservation area.

DELWP has improved the approach to conservation management planning since the commencement of the MSA Program. CMPs have been replaced by CACPs and detailed land management plans. This approach allows land management details to be determined once land is secured and land managers are identified.

CACPs set out land-uses suitable within each conservation area and broad conservation requirements and constraints. Detailed management actions (e.g. ongoing fire and weed control) are set out in land management plans prepared by the land manager.

Table 5: Conservation Area Concept Plans

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Number of Conservation Area Concept Plans (or equivalent plans) approved as part of Precinct Structure Plans	7	21
Per cent of conservation areas in gazetted precincts with Conservation Area Concept Plans (or equivalent plans)	100%	86%

3.4.5 Adjustments to conservation area boundaries

A total of six adjustments to conservation area boundaries were approved in the reporting period making a total of eight adjustments approved since the commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015 in accordance with the Commonwealth approvals (Appendix 3).

Three of the adjustments to conservation area boundaries in the reporting period required the approval of the Commonwealth Environment Minister under conditions 3 or 4 of the Commonwealth approvals.

The remaining three adjustments to conservation area boundaries in the reporting period and two adjustments prior to 2014-15 did not require the approval of the Commonwealth Environment Minister under conditions 3 or 4 of the Commonwealth approvals. In approving the proposed adjustments, DELWP considered the criteria in the *Guidance Note: Implementing the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors* (working document) (DELWP, 2015), which are consistent with the Commonwealth approvals and BCS.

Conservation area boundary adjustments approved by the Commonwealth Environment Minister were made to the following:

- Conservation Area 1: 'Kororoit Creek North Herb-rich Grasslands, Plumpton'
Removal of 0.42 ha of land from the southern part of the conservation area. Addition of 0.42 ha of land to the western part of the conservation area.
- Conservation Area 11: 'Woods Road, Truganina'
Removal of 0.95 ha of land from the southern part of the conservation area. Addition of 0.90 ha of land to the western part of the conservation area. While the net area is slightly reduced by 0.05 ha, the amount and quality of Natural Temperate Grassland and high persistence habitat for Golden Sun Moth is slightly increased. There is a net gain of 0.13 ha of Natural Temperate Grassland, which equates to a net gain of 1.05 habitat hectares of native vegetation.
- Conservation Area 34: 'Northern Growth Corridor: Growling Grass Frog Corridors'
Removal of 13.93 ha of Growling Grass Frog conservation area along Edgars Creek, Wollert. Concerns were raised that this area was not included in the draft Sub-regional Species Strategy (SRSS) for the Growling Grass Frog (GGF) prior to its inclusion in the finalised SRSS for the GGF. Due to that concern, an independent review was undertaken of the suitability of Edgars Creek west branch for the GGF SRSS. The review concluded that a GGF conservation area on Edgars Creek west branch has a low likelihood of colonisation, primarily because of changes in the viability of the source population in the local area. The Commonwealth Environment Minister approved removal of this area from Conservation Area 34.

Conservation area boundary adjustments approved by DELWP were made to the following:

- Conservation Area 34: 'Northern Growth Corridor: Growling Grass Frog Corridors'
Removal of 0.19 ha of land from the western part of the conservation area. Addition of 0.19 ha of land to the western part of the conservation area.
- Conservation Area 34: 'Northern Growth Corridor: Growling Grass Frog Corridors'
Removal of 4.65 ha of land from the eastern and western parts of the conservation area. Addition of 4.65 ha of land to the eastern and western parts of the conservation area.
- Conservation Area 36: 'South-Eastern Growth Corridor: Growling Grass Frog Corridors'
Removal of 8.6 ha of land from the northern part of the conservation area. Addition 8.6 ha of land to the eastern and western part of the conservation area.
- Conservation Area 14: 'Western Growth Corridor (south): Growling Grass Frog Corridors'
Removal of 1.62 ha of land from the western part of the conservation area. Addition 1.62 ha of land to the western part of the conservation area.
- Conservation Area 14: 'Western Growth Corridor (south): Growling Grass Frog Corridors'
Removal of 1.45 ha of land from the eastern part of the conservation area. Addition 1.45 ha of land to the eastern part of the conservation area.

Table 6: Adjustments to conservation area boundaries

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Number of approved adjustments to conservation area boundaries	6	8
Number of adjustments to conservation area boundaries requiring Commonwealth approval	3	3
Net land added to or removed from conservation areas as a result of approved adjustments to conservation area boundaries, by conservation area type:		
Nature Conservation	- 0.05 ha	- 0.05 ha
Growling Grass Frog conservation, floodplain and open space	- 13.93 ha	- 13.93 ha

3.4.6 Development or works in conservation areas

A total of 9 proposals for development or works in conservation areas were approved in the reporting period with a total of 10 proposals approved since commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015 in accordance with condition 2 of the Commonwealth approvals. Habitat compensation fees were paid over the area of the development.

In approving the proposals, DELWP considered the criteria in the working document *Guidance Note: Implementing the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors* (working document) (DELWP, 2015).

Table 7: Development or works in conservation areas

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Number of approved development or works in conservation areas	9	10
Hectares of native vegetation and habitat for MNES affected by development or works, by conservation area type:		
Nature Conservation	4.5 ha	4.5 ha
Growling Grass Frog conservation, floodplain and open space	5.9 ha	5.9 ha

3.4.7 Illegal removal of native vegetation

There were no known cases of illegal removal of native vegetation within conservation areas in the reporting period however there have been four cases of illegal removal of native vegetation (3 of which were outside conservation areas) since commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015. Four hectares of native vegetation was illegally removed from conservation area 3 prior to 2014–15. An investigation was conducted and the Commonwealth Environment Minister imposed requirements for its restoration.

Table 8: Illegal removal of native vegetation[^]

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Number of cases of illegal removal of native vegetation outside conservation areas	-	3
Number of cases of illegal removal of native vegetation within conservation areas	-	1
Hectares of native vegetation and habitat for MNES affected by illegal removal of native vegetation within conservation areas, by conservation area type:		
Nature Conservation	-	4.0 ha

[^] Information used to report on the number of cases of illegal removal of native vegetation was collated from existing DELWP and Council records and may be incomplete.

3.4.8 Water management

A total of 9 Integrated Water Management Plans (IWMPs) were approved in the reporting period bringing the total IWMPs approved since commencement of the MSA Program to June 2015 to 13.

Initially under the MSA Program, IWMPs were the primary mechanism for ensuring best practice urban water management in the development of precincts. IWMPs were prepared for each precinct at the precinct structure planning stage. Integrated water management planning has now been progressed to be part of whole of water cycle planning in PSPs.

While IWMPs are part of some PSPs, integrated water management planning is now incorporated into various parts of each PSP and are implemented by Melbourne Water through drainage schemes and river health planning.

Table 9: Water management

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Number of Integrated Water Management Plans approved for gazetted precincts	9	13

3.4.9 Transport projects

Two transport projects are part of the MSA Program – the Regional Rail Link (section 2 – West of Werribee to Deer Park) and Outer Metropolitan Ring/E6 Transport Corridor. To date, approval has only been sought and granted for the Regional Rail Link (section 2).

Construction of the Regional Rail Link (section 2) was completed in August 2014. There were no known non-compliances with the approved EIMP affecting matters of national environmental significance (RRLA, 2015).

3.4.10 Cultural heritage

No Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) were approved in the reporting period and a total of 101 CHMPs were approved since commencement of the MSA Program to June 2015.

Initially under the MSA Program, CHMPs were prepared for each precinct at the precinct structure planning stage to protect and manage Aboriginal cultural heritage values across the whole precinct. CHMPs are required for subdivisions of three or more lots in culturally sensitive areas in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and are now prepared only for culturally sensitive areas. Development that is not in a culturally sensitive area does not require a CHMP.

Table 10: Cultural heritage

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Number of Cultural Heritage Management Plans approved for gazetted precincts	-	101

3.4.11 Quarries and mines

Since endorsement of the MSA Program in 2010 up to 30 June 2015, no new work plans were approved for quarries or mines. Approval was granted for the variation of one existing work plan in April 2010. This variation did not affect any native vegetation or habitat for MNES.

Table 11: Quarries and mines

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Per cent of approved work plans consistent with the prescriptions or BCS	-	-
Number of non-compliances with approved work plans affecting matters of national environmental significance	-	-

4 Program cost recovery is transparent and efficient

4.1 Introduction

The MSA is being delivered on the basis of full cost recovery through payment of habitat compensation fees by proponents undertaking buildings and works in the MSA program area.

Habitat compensation fees are used to implement the conservation measures outlined in the Program Report, including acquisition of the WGR. Fees are paid to DELWP, and these are held in a trust account administered by DELWP.

4.2 Progress so far

Revenue received under the MSA Program to date has been slower than expected and minimal revenue has been received for some habitat compensation fees. This delay has slowed progress in securing the Western Grasslands Reserve (section 5), Grassy Eucalypt Woodland reserve (section 7), and 80 percent of highest priority habitat for MNES protected under the MSA Program (sections 9, 10 and 11).

Approval for urban development in the south-eastern growth corridor was granted by the Commonwealth Environment Minister in September 2014. Therefore revenue received from urban development in the south-eastern growth corridor has only recently commenced.

Details of revenue and expenditure by financial year are shown in Table 12 and for each habitat compensation fee type in Table 13.

There is a total revenue of \$42,301,295 up until 30 June 2015, of which \$30,101,295 was received through the payment of habitat compensation fees for native vegetation and scattered trees. The expenditure up to 30 June 2015 was \$28,855,066 of which \$23,802,512.68 was on land acquisition.

Program delivery focused on the development of an online tool in the Department's Native Vegetation Information Management system (<http://nvim.depi.vic.gov.au/BCS>) to enable landowners in the BCS area to estimate their habitat compensation obligations.

A summary of progress for habitat compensation obligations in the BCS area and offsets in the 12 precincts is provided in Table 14.

Table 12: Program revenue and expenditure by financial year to 30 June 2015

Revenue	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Trust	\$6,922,750.00	\$3,387,104.53	\$2,768,450.03	\$4,779,808.41	\$12,243,181.99	\$30,101,294.97
State Appropriation Funding	\$10,000,000.00	\$0.00	\$293,762.95	\$1,906,237.00	\$0.00	\$12,199,999.94
Total Revenue	\$16,922,750.00	\$3,387,104.53	\$3,062,212.99	\$6,686,045.41	\$12,243,181.99	\$42,301,294.91

Expenditure	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Land acquisition	\$11,340,000.00	\$4,660,000.00	\$933,022.51	\$3,453,709.46	\$2,695,780.70	\$23,082,512.68
Land management	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$151,272.18	\$382,129.56	\$533,285.79
Habitat construction	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,687.94	\$1,799.65	\$12,487.59
Ecological monitoring	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$293,803.45	\$661,731.50	\$955,534.95
Program delivery	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$293,762.95	\$1,089,862.57	\$2,887,619.82	\$4,271,245.34
Total Expenditure	\$11,340,000.00	\$4,660,000.00	\$1,226,785.46	\$4,999,219.66	\$6,629,061.23	\$28,855,066.35

Table 13: Program revenue and expenditure for each habitat compensation fee type

Income	Native Vegetation and Scattered Trees	Golden Sun Moth	Spiny Rice-flower	Matted Flax-lily	Growling Grass Frog	Southern Brown Bandicoot	Total since MSA commencement
Trust	\$22,840,005.76	\$5,470,198.82	\$419,629.19	\$266,744.70	\$1,049,446.00	\$55,270.50	\$30,101,294.97
State Appropriation Funding	\$9,227,935.52	\$2,547,605.60	\$64,531.18	\$4,112.68	\$38,189.18	\$317,625.78	\$12,199,999.94
Total Revenue	\$32,067,941.28	\$8,017,804.42	\$484,160.37	\$270,857.38	\$1,087,653.18	\$372,896.28	\$42,301,294.91

Expenditure	Native Vegetation and Scattered Trees	Golden Sun Moth	Spiny Rice-flower	Matted Flax-lily	Growling Grass Frog	Southern Brown Bandicoot	Total since MSA commencement
Land acquisition	\$17,542,709.64	\$4,874,327.67	\$692,475.37	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$23,082,512.68
Land management	\$403,081.66	\$114,441.11	\$15,763.02	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$533,285.79
Habitat construction	\$9,490.56	\$2,622.40	\$374.63	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$12,487.59
Ecological monitoring	\$654,020.34	\$146,640.85	\$25,366.78	\$2,369.20	\$121,807.09	\$5,330.69	\$955,534.95
Program delivery	\$2,565,929.02	\$685,639.42	\$115,805.32	\$61,799.28	\$573,277.26	\$268,795.03	\$4,271,245.33
Total Expenditure	\$21,175,231.22	\$5,796,671.45	\$849,785.12	\$64,168.48	\$695,084.35	\$274,125.72	\$28,855,066.35

Table 14: Habitat compensation – progress to date

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Regional Rail Link corridor (section 2) and 12 precincts approved prior to 1 March 2012		
Number of habitat hectares provided as offset	33.5	113.3
Number of hectares of GSM habitat with offset met	12.0	97.9
Number of hectares of GGF habitat with offset met	2.2	24.0
Number of staged obligations agreements	0	3
Area covered by Biodiversity Conservation Strategy		
Hectares of land with habitat compensation obligations met	306.1	427.2
Number of staged obligations agreements	17	21
Other Areas		
Hectares provided as offset to development within the Melbourne Urban Development Policy Area	0	5.0
Hectares provided as offset from changes to Conservation Area boundaries	0	0

5 A 15,000 hectare grassland reserve is established and managed

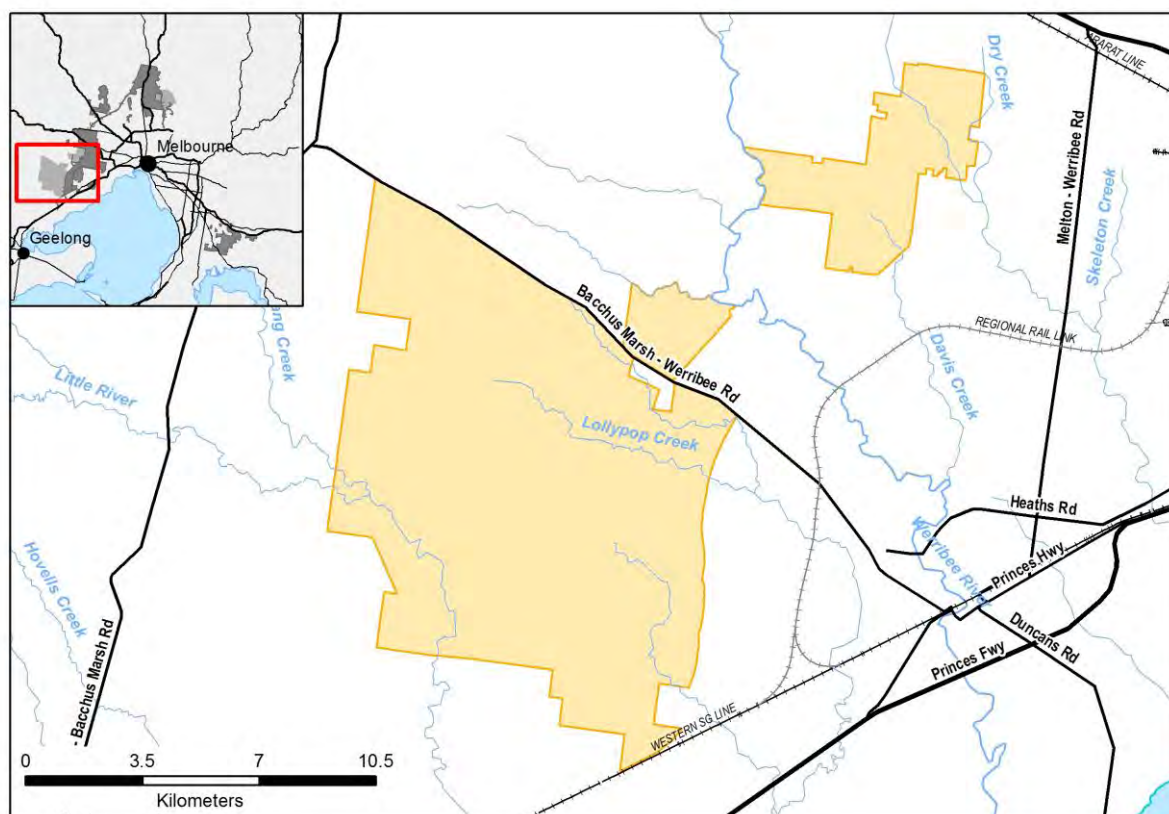
5.1 Introduction

The Victorian Government has committed to reserving 15,000 hectares of land west of Melbourne as part of the MSA Program to protect the critically endangered ecological community *Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain* (Natural Temperate Grassland) and threatened species, and to mitigate the impacts of urban development in the growth corridors on MNES.

The Western Grassland Reserves (WGR) will cover two areas of land outside the UGB located south-east of Melton and west of Werribee (see Figure 1).

This section reports on the implementation of the establishment and management of the WGR.

Figure 1: Location of Western Grassland Reserves



The WGR will protect the largest remaining concentration of volcanic plains grasslands in Australia and a range of other habitat types, including ephemeral wetlands, waterways, Red Gum swamps, rocky knolls and open grassy woodlands. The reserves will increase the extent of protection of Natural Temperate Grassland on the Victorian Volcanic Plain from two per cent to 20 per cent. The WGR also provides habitat for a large number of State and Commonwealth listed threatened and rare species.

Land in the WGR is subject to a Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) and the reserves will be established by acquisition of properties subject to the PAO in accordance with the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986*. The Minister responsible for administering Part 2 of the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* is the acquiring authority and will seek to negotiate voluntary sale agreements with landowners affected by the PAO. The acquisition process for the WGR is expected to take a number of years.

DELWP has prepared the document *Land Protection under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy* (DEPI, 2014a), which sets out the prioritisation approach for land acquisition in the WGR. Multiple criteria are used to determine high priority land for acquisition in the WGR, including ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act, EVCs and management risks.

DELWP has established an interim management program for the WGR to support landholders in maintaining the values of the WGR during its establishment. Under this program, DELWP delivered three projects to support interim management in the WGR, which were made available to all landowners in the WGR:

- **A weed control program.** Under this program, DELWP engaged contractors to conduct targeted weed control works. The program targeted grassland weeds in the 'lag phase', which can be eradicated completely, and the spread of other established weeds. Site Management Plans were prepared for each area by the contractor in consultation with DELWP prior to weed control works commencing.
- **BushTender auction.** BushTender is an auction process for improving native vegetation on private land. Under the approach, landholders competitively tendered to improve the quality or extent of their native vegetation. The benefit offered by each tender was assessed according to a range of biodiversity outcomes. Successful tenders were those that offered the best environmental value for money, with successful landholders receiving periodic payments for management activities conducted under agreements entered into with DELWP.
- **Serrated tussock.** DELWP commissioned the Serrated Tussock Working Party to map serrated tussock infestations, provide extension to landowners, produce a serrated tussock implementation plan and initiate on ground treatment. Serrated tussock control works were carried out across six sites covering an area of approximately 652 hectares.

Councils have also provided land management support services to landowners in the WGR. Melton City Council provides an Environmental Enhancement Program that encourages rural landholders to work in conjunction with Council to facilitate sustainable land management. The program targets land degradation processes with particular emphasis on noxious and environmental weeds, pest animals and soil erosion and offers rate rebates for eligible landholders. Wyndham City provides funding to eligible landowners under the Land Protection Grant Scheme which focuses on protecting indigenous vegetation, revegetation and weed control activities.

The parts of the WGR that have been purchased are managed under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*. Management is guided by land management guidelines prepared by DELWP for each acquired land parcel. The guidelines are informed by surveys and inventory reports of each land parcel that document the location of biodiversity values and land management risks and opportunities.

The methodology for collecting and analysing the data in the tables below is set out in the *Monitoring and Reporting Framework: Technical Protocols for Program Outputs* (DELWP 2015b).

5.2 Progress so far

The highlights for this commitment to 30 June 2015 are:

- 1,209 ha of land has been secured, representing 8% of the WGR
- The following land management activities have been undertaken:
 - The construction of 3,750 metres of fencing for pest animal and stock management
 - Ecological burn regime established and implemented for 251.5 hectares of land
 - Ecological grazing regime established and implemented for 685.5 hectares of land.

5.3 Progress against key performance indicators

Table 15: Land purchased in Western Grassland Reserves

	2014-15	Total	Percentage of total WGR area
Land secured	166 ha	1,209 ha	8%

5.3.1 Native vegetation secured in Western Grassland Reserves

Land secured in the reporting period includes three Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) totalling 73.0 hectares of native vegetation including two ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act: Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain (NTG) (47.8 hectares) and the critically endangered community *Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater) of the Temperate Lowland Plains* (SHW) (3.4 hectares).

The land secured prior to 2014-15 in the WGR includes seven Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) totalling 908.0 hectares of native vegetation including two ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act: NTG (885.2 hectares) and SHW (19.8 hectares).

Table 16: Vegetation communities secured in Western Grassland Reserves

EPBC-listed community	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Natural Temperate Grassland	47.8 ha	933.0 ha
Seasonal Herbaceous Wetland	3.4 ha	23.2 ha

EVC Number	Ecological Vegetation Class		Total since MSA commencement
125	Plains Grassy Wetland	3.7 ha	25.6 ha
132	Plains Grassland	65.0 ha	902.9 ha
641	Riparian Woodland		< 1 ha
649	Stony Knoll Shrubland	1.5 ha	37.7 ha

654	Creekline Tussock Grassland	13.9 ha
821	Tall Marsh	< 1 ha
895	Escarpment Shrubland	< 1 ha

5.3.2 Interim management of land in Western Grassland Reserves

A total of 55 landowners participated in either DELWP's interim management program for the WGR or accessed land management support services provided by local councils since commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015, which covered 56 parcels of private land.

In 2012, DELWP established ten BushTender agreements with three landowners (the agreements continue until 2017). The total area under the BushTender agreements is 88 hectares. The management commitments under the agreements include grazing exclusion, weed control, ecological burning, pest control and fencing maintenance.

DELWP delivered two interim management projects in the WGR prior to 2014-15, which included the Weed Control Program and the Serrated Tussock Project (785 ha, 16 land parcels). Local councils have been delivering support services for weed control works to eligible landholders in the WGR since commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015 (1,719 ha, 37 land parcels) funded by Wyndham City and Caring For Our Country.

Table 17: Interim management of land in Western Grassland Reserves

		2014-15	Total since MSA commencement (where additive)
Number of parcels under interim management		9 parcels	56 parcels
Number of landowners participating in interim management program		9 landowners	55 landowners
Units of interim land management (DELWP Standard Outputs) undertaken			
Fence	Metres of fence maintained	500 m	500 m
	Hectares of stock exclusion created by fencing	60 ha	60 ha
Weed control	Hectares of weed species contained	311 ha	2,592 ha
Pest animal control	Hectares of pest animal species controlled	60 ha	60 ha
Grazing regime	Hectares of grazing management regime established	88 ha	88 ha
Fire regime	Hectares of fire regime established	12 ha	12 ha

5.3.3 Management of land in Western Grassland Reserves

Management guidelines for land secured in the WGR in the reporting period are being prepared.

A total of 685.5 ha of grazing regime and 251.5 ha of fire regime was established on land in the WGR prior to 2014-15 and maintained in the reporting period. A total of 3,750 m of fence was installed in the WGR in the reporting period to manage grazing regimes.

A total of 1,046.8 ha of weed control has been undertaken on land acquired in the WGR since commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015.

Table 18: Management of land purchased in Western Grassland Reserves

Units of land management (DELWP Standard Outputs) undertaken		Units delivered 2014-15 [^]	Total units delivered since MSA commencement (where additive)
Fence	Metres of fence installed	3,750 m	3,750 m
Weed control	Hectares of weed species controlled	0 ha	1,046.8 ha
Grazing regime	Hectares of grazing management regime established	0 ha	685.5 ha
Grazing regime	Hectares of grazing management regime maintained	685.5 ha	685.5 ha
Fire regime	Hectares of fire regime established	0 ha	251.5 ha
Fire regime	Hectares of fire regime maintained	251.5 ha	251.5 ha

[^]Land secured in the WGR during the reporting period was secured at the end of the 2014-15 financial year. As such, management of this land will commence once the management guidelines have been finalised.

6 A network of conservation areas within the Urban Growth Boundary is protected and managed for matters of national environmental significance species and vegetation communities

6.1 Introduction

The BCS identifies 36 conservation areas in the growth corridors within the 2010 UGB that will be protected and managed for conservation. These conservation areas protect the most important habitat for ecological communities and populations of MNES and state significance in the growth corridors, including Natural Temperate Grassland, Grassy Eucalypt Woodland, Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands, Growling Grass Frog, Golden Sun Moth, Spiny Rice-flower and Matted Flax-lily.

Additional reserves to be protected and managed for conservation of MNES and state significance have been identified in 12 of the existing 28 precincts within the 2005 UGB as a result of the implementation of the prescriptions for MNES (see section 3.4.2).

The 36 conservation areas in the BCS are classified into five main categories:

- *Nature conservation.* These areas will be protected and managed primarily for conservation of a range of biodiversity values, including native vegetation and MNES.
- *Growling Grass Frog conservation, floodplain and open space.* These areas will be protected and managed primarily for the Growling Grass Frog, but will also include areas managed for passive recreation, water management and other suitable land-uses.
- *Regional parks.* These areas will be protected and managed as regional parks, with specific management regimes in place for areas containing MNES.
- *Existing public land.* These areas will be protected and managed for conservation of a range of biodiversity values, including native vegetation and MNES, under existing arrangements.
- *Open space.* These areas will be protected and managed for conservation, but will also include areas managed for passive recreation, water management and other suitable land-uses, with specific management regimes in place for areas containing MNES.

This section reports on the establishment and management of the 36 conservation areas identified in the BCS, as well as the Truganina South Conservation Reserve established in one of the 12 precincts. The status of other conservation areas in the 12 precincts will be included in future reporting.

Conservation areas will be secured for conservation over time as PSPs are prepared and urban development proceeds in the growth corridors, through the following mechanisms:

- Voluntary acquisition by the Crown and reservation under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, or
- On-title management agreements under section 69 of the *Conservation Forests and Land Act 1987*, or
- Vesting of the land in a public authority.

The management of conservation areas will generally be undertaken by public land managers. Private landowners will manage these areas where the land is not vested in a public authority or voluntarily acquired by the Crown. The land management requirements for conservation areas will be set out in management plans and/or on-title management agreements prepared by the land manager in consultation with DELWP. This will occur once relevant land managers have been identified and the conservation areas have been secured for conservation.

The form of management arrangement for conservation areas will depend on the land security arrangements and the type of land manager. For nature conservation areas, management plans will be guided by land management guidelines that will be prepared by DELWP for each acquired land parcel. The guidelines will be informed by surveys and inventory reports of each land parcel that document the location of biodiversity values and land management risks and opportunities.

The methodology for collecting and analysing the data in the tables below is set out in the *Monitoring and Reporting Framework: Technical Protocols for Program Outputs* (DELWP, 2015b).

6.2 Progress so far

The highlights for this commitment to 30 June 2015 are:

- 82.8 ha of land in conservation areas was secured for conservation
- 3.8 ha of Natural Temperate Grassland was secured in conservation areas.

6.3 Progress against key performance indicators

6.3.1 Land secured in conservation areas

A total of 72.3 ha of land was secured for conservation in the reporting period making a total of 82.8 ha secured for conservation since commencement of the MSA Program to 30 June 2015.

Land secured in this reporting period forms part of conservation area 26 and Truganina South Conservation Reserve.

Land secured prior to 2014-15 also includes part of Truganina South Conservation Reserve, which is being established as part of the prescriptions for GSM. The boundary of Truganina South Conservation Reserve is shown in the Truganina South PSP.

Table 19: Land secured in conservation areas

Conservation area	Total size of conservation area	Land secured 2014-15	Total land secured	Per cent secured
Truganina South Conservation Reserve	38.1 ha	3.8 ha	14.3 ha	37.5%
Conservation Area 26	111.8 ha	68.5 ha	68.5 ha	61.3%

6.3.2 Native vegetation and key populations secured in conservation areas

Land secured in Truganina South Conservation Reserve prior to 2014-15 includes 1.8 ha of Natural Temperate Grassland, which is equivalent to the EVC 'Plains Grassland'. The additional land secured in Truganina South Conservation Reserve in the reporting period includes 2.0 hectares Natural Temperate Grassland.

Land secured in conservation area 26 contains EPBC-listed threatened ecological community Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain and was secured at the end of 2014-15. Accurate values of Grassy Eucalypt Woodland and key populations secured on this land will be determined and reported once inventory surveys have been conducted.

Table 20: Vegetation communities and key populations secured in conservation areas

EPBC-listed community		2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Natural Temperate Grassland		2.0 ha	3.8 ha

EVC Number	Ecological Vegetation Class	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
132	Plains Grassland	2.0 ha	3.8 ha

6.3.3 Land security and management arrangements for conservation areas

Land secured in Truganina South Conservation Reserve since commencement of the MSA program to 30 June 2015 was secured through voluntary transfer to the Crown for reservation under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

The land secured in Conservation area 26 in the reporting period was secured through on-title agreements under section 69 of the *Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987*.

Table 21: Land security and management arrangements for conservation areas

	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Land secured through voluntary transfer to the Crown		
Truganina South Conservation Reserve	3.8 ha	14.3 ha
Land secured through vesting in a public authority and on-title agreement with management plan		
-	-	-
Land secured through on-title agreement with management plan		
-	-	-
Land secured through on-title agreement		
Conservation area 26	68.5 ha	68.5 ha

6.3.4 Management undertaken in secured conservation areas with a management plan

A 1,772 metre slashed firebreak was established on land secured in Truganina South Conservation Reserve prior to 2014-15 to manage biomass along the reserve boundary. This firebreak was maintained in the reporting period.

Table 22: Management undertaken in secured conservation areas with a management plan

Units of land management (DELWP Standard Outputs) undertaken	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement (where additive)
Meters of firebreak installed	0 m	1,772 m
Meters of firebreak maintained	1,772 m	1,772 m

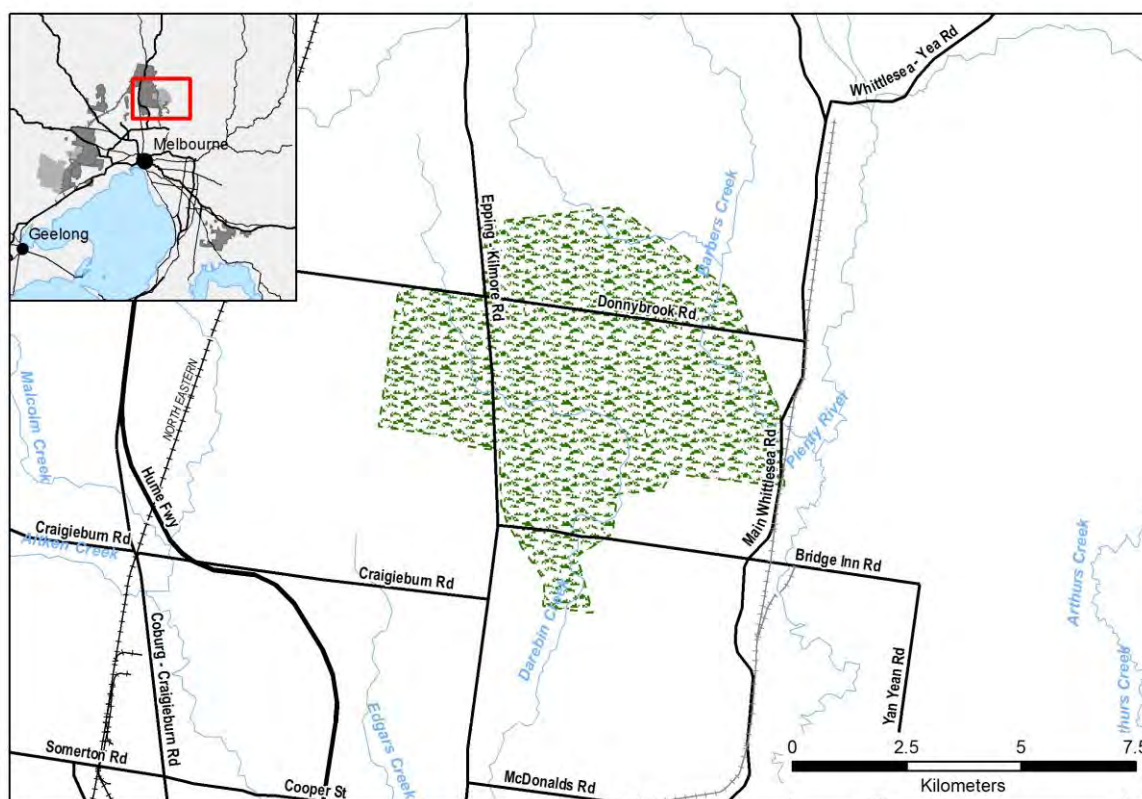
7 A 1,200 hectare Grassy Eucalypt Woodland Reserve is protected and managed

7.1 Introduction

The Victorian Government has committed to reserving at least 1,200 ha of land north-east of Melbourne as part of the MSA Program to protect Grassy Eucalypt Woodland (GEW) and mitigate the impacts of urban development in the growth corridors on this ecological community.

The boundaries of an investigation area within which the GEW Reserve will be located are identified in the BCS (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Investigation area for Grassy Eucalypt Woodland reserve



Land in the GEW Reserve will be secured for conservation through voluntary negotiation with landowners, including through voluntary purchase by the Crown and reservation under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* or on-title management agreements under section 69 of the *Conservation Forests and Land Act 1987*. The final boundary of the GEW Reserve will depend on the voluntary negotiation process, with each new land parcel secured influencing the future priorities for securing land parcels for the reserve and the final shape of the reserve.

A reserve management plan will be prepared for the parts of the GEW Reserve secured through voluntary purchase by the Crown. The management of the GEW Reserve will be guided by land management guidelines that will be prepared by DELWP for each acquired land parcel. The guidelines will be informed by surveys and inventory reports of each land parcel that document the location of biodiversity values and land management risks and opportunities.

7.2 Progress so far

Reporting against this program output will commence after the first land parcel in the GEW Reserve is secured for conservation through voluntary acquisition or on-title management agreements.

In accordance with the cost recovery approach under the MSA Program, securing the GEW Reserve is reliant on the payment of habitat compensation fees from landowners as development progresses in the growth corridors. A slow-down in the property market has resulted in fewer fees received than expected to date, which has delayed the establishment of the GEW Reserve.

The timing for purchasing the GEW Reserve will be determined in accordance with the *Land Protection under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy* (DEPI, 2014a), which outlines the process for prioritising land security in the reserves established under the MSA Program.

8 Eighty per cent of Grassy Eucalypt Woodland is protected within the Urban Growth Boundary

8.1 Introduction

As part of the MSA Program, the Victorian Government is required to protect 80 per cent of Grassy Eucalypt Woodland (GEW) occurring within the growth corridors that meets the definition of the ecological community as listed under the EPBC Act.

GEW is listed as critically endangered under the EPBC Act.

DELWP has estimated that 368 hectares of land in the growth corridors is 'highly likely' to contain GEW (DEPI, 2013a). Of this habitat, 294 hectares must be protected to meet the 80 per cent target. Land that may contribute to the 80 per cent target includes:

- Conservation areas identified in the BCS
- New and existing reserves within Melbourne's growth corridors not identified in the BCS or required under the prescriptions
- Land secured as part of the GEW Reserve that is additional to the 1,200 hectares of land the Victorian Government committed to protecting for the reserve, in accordance with the BCS.

8.2 Progress so far

The first land parcels containing GEW have been secured in the growth areas through on-title management agreements under section 69 of the *Conservation Forests and Land Act 1987* in the reporting period. This land was secured in conservation area 26 at the end of 2014-15. Accurate values for total area of GEW secured will be determined and reported once inventory surveys have been conducted.

9 Eighty per cent of highest priority habitats for Golden Sun Moth protected and managed

9.1 Introduction

As part of the MSA Program, the Victorian Government is required to protect 80 per cent of high priority habitat for Golden Sun Moth (GSM) within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion.

GSM is listed as critically endangered under the EPBC Act and threatened under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act).

‘High priority habitat’ for GSM is defined as ‘high persistence habitat’ (as determined in DSE, 2009) where the presence of the species has been confirmed.

The total area of high priority habitat for GSM within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion is 12,328 hectares (DEPI, 2013d). Of this habitat, 9,862 hectares must be protected to meet the 80 per cent target. Land that may contribute to the 80 per cent target includes:

- WGR (expected to protect 8,100 hectares of high priority habitat)
- GEW Reserve
- Conservation areas identified in the BCS (expected to protect 410 hectares of high priority habitat)
- Additional habitat to be protected outside the UGB, as specified in the BCS
- New and existing areas protected within or outside the MSA Program area, not identified in the BCS or required under the prescriptions.

Existing reserves that are not part of the MSA, such as national parks, council reserves and offset sites, currently protect 677 hectares of high priority habitat for GSM (DEPI, 2013d).

As identified in the BCS, it is expected that an additional 680 hectares of high priority habitat will require protection outside the UGB to meet the 80 per cent target.

The methodology for collecting and analysing the data in the tables below is set out in the *Monitoring and Reporting Framework: Technical Protocols for Program Outputs* (DELWP, 2015b).

9.2 Progress so far

The highlights for 2014-15 are an additional 77 ha of high priority habitat secured for GSM. This brings the total area high priority habitat within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion that has been secured to 1,662 ha or 13%.

9.3 Progress against key performance indicators

9.3.1 High priority habitat for Golden Sun Moth protected

A total of 77 hectares of high priority habitat for GSM has been secured within the Victorian Volcanic Plain in the reporting period. This land was secured in the WGR and Truganina South Conservation Reserve. Recent surveys have confirmed the presence of GSM on this land.

A total of 1,662 hectares of high priority habitat has been secured for GSM within the Victorian Volcanic Plain that contributes towards the 80 per cent target for GSM. This includes existing reserves and private land that are not part of the MSA Program in accordance with the approach agreed to by the Commonwealth Government (DEPI, 2013d).

Table 23: High priority habitat for Golden Sun Moth protected

Key Performance Indicator	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Total hectares protected	77 ha	1,662 ha
Total per cent protected	-	13%

10 Eighty per cent of highest priority habitats for Spiny Rice-flower protected and managed

10.1 Introduction

As part of the MSA Program, the Victorian Government is required to protect 80 per cent of high priority habitat for Spiny Rice-flower (SRF) within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion.

SRF is listed as critically endangered under the EPBC Act and threatened under the Victorian FFG Act.

'High priority habitat' for SRF is defined as 'high persistence habitat' (as determined in DSE, 2009) where the presence of the species has been confirmed.

The total area of high priority habitat for SRF within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion is 1,422 hectares (DEPI, 2013e). Of this habitat, 1,138 hectares must be protected to meet the 80 per cent target. Land that may contribute to the 80 per cent target includes:

- WGR (expected to protect 314 hectares of high priority habitat)
- Conservation areas identified in the BCS (expected to protect 216 hectares of high priority habitat)
- Additional habitat to be protected outside the UGB, as specified in the BCS
- New and existing areas protected within or outside the MSA Program area, not identified in the BCS or required under the prescriptions.

Existing reserves that are not part of the MSA, such as national parks, council reserves and offset sites, currently protect 69 hectares of high priority habitat for SRF (DEPI, 2013e).

As identified in the BCS, it is expected that an additional 394 hectares of high priority habitat will require protection outside the UGB to meet the 80 per cent target.

The methodology for collecting and analysing the data in the tables below is set out in the *Monitoring and Reporting Framework: Technical Protocols for Program Outputs* (DELWP, 2015b).

10.2 Progress so far

The highlights for 2014-15 are an additional 3 ha of high priority habitat secured for SRF. This brings the total area high priority habitat within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion that has been secured for this species to 72 ha or 5%.

10.3 Progress against key performance indicators

10.3.1 High priority habitat for Spiny Rice-flower protected

A total of 3 hectares of high priority habitat for SRF has been secured within the Victorian Volcanic Plain in the reporting period. This land was secured in the WGR. Recent surveys have confirmed the presence of SRF on this land.

A total of 72 hectares of high priority habitat has been secured for SRF within the Victorian Volcanic Plain. This includes land in existing reserves and private land that are not part of the MSA Program in accordance with the approach agreed to by the Commonwealth Government (DEPI, 2013e).

Table 24: High priority habitat for Spiny Rice-flower protected

Key Performance Indicator	2014-15	Total since MSA commencement
Total hectares protected	3 ha	72 ha
Total per cent protected	-	5%

11 Eighty per cent of highest priority habitats for Matted Flax-lily protected and managed

11.1 Introduction

As part of the MSA Program, the Victorian Government is required to protect 80 per cent of high priority habitat for Matted Flax-lily (MFL) within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion.

MFL is listed as endangered under the EPBC Act and threatened under the Victorian FFG Act.

'High priority habitat' for MFL is defined as 'high persistence habitat' (as determined in DSE, 2009) that is confirmed to contain the species. The total area of high priority habitat for MFL within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion is 901 hectares (DEPI, 2013e). Of this habitat, 721 hectares must be protected to meet the 80 per cent target. Land that may contribute to the 80 per cent target includes:

- GEW Reserve
- Conservation areas identified in the BCS (expected to protect 187 hectares of high priority habitat)
- Additional habitat to be protected outside the UGB, as specified in the BCS
- New and existing areas protected within or outside the MSA Program area, not identified in the BCS or required under the prescriptions.

Existing reserves that are not part of the MSA, such as national parks, council reserves and offset sites, currently protect three hectares of high priority habitat for MFL (DEPI, 2013e).

As identified in the BCS, it is expected that an additional 529 hectares of high priority habitat will require protection outside the UGB to meet the 80 per cent target.

The methodology for collecting and analysing the data in the tables below is set out in the *Monitoring and Reporting Framework: Technical Protocols for Program Outputs* (DELWP, 2015b).

11.2 Progress so far

There was no progress towards this target in the reporting period. The current amount of high priority habitat for MFL that has been secured within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion is 3 ha or 1%.

11.3 Progress against key performance indicators

11.3.1 High priority habitat for Matted Flax-lily protected

No high priority habitat for MFL was secured in the reporting period.

A total of three hectares of high priority habitat for MFL has been secured within the Victorian Volcanic Plain. This comprises land in existing reserves that are not part of the MSA Program in accordance with the approach agreed by the Commonwealth Government (DEPI, 2013e).

Table 25: High priority habitat for Matted Flax-lily protected

Key Performance Indicator	2014-15 [^]	Total since MSA commencement
Total hectares protected	-	3 ha
Total per cent protected	-	1%

[^] Land secured in conservation area 26 in the reporting period contains high persistence habitat for MFL. This land was secured at the end of 2014-15 and surveys to confirm presence of MFL on this land are yet to be conducted on this land.

12 Important landscape and habitat areas for Southern Brown Bandicoot are managed

12.1 Introduction

The Victorian Government will implement a range of conservation measures to protect Southern Brown Bandicoot in south-eastern Melbourne in accordance with the Sub-regional Species Strategy for the Southern Brown Bandicoot and associated supplement (DEPI, 2014b, 2014c).

Conservation measures will be implemented within a management area of 60,000 hectares primarily outside the UGB. The measures include:

- A co-ordinated predator control program.
- Voluntary incentive programs to deliver on-ground works on private and public lands such as fox baiting, habitat restoration and enhanced security for the species.
- The enhancement of habitat in open space and drainage reserves in the Botanic Ridge and Devon Meadows precincts to enhance connectivity within the UGB.

12.2 Progress so far

The Commonwealth Environment Minister approved the Sub-regional Species Strategy for the Southern Brown Bandicoot in August 2014. Reporting on progress will commence once the Implementation Plan for the Sub-regional Species Strategy for the Southern Brown Bandicoot is complete (due in 2016).

13 References

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- DELWP (2015c) Monitoring and Reporting Framework: Technical Protocols for Program Outcomes: Melbourne Strategic Assessment, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, East Melbourne
- DEPI (2014a) Land Protection under the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, East Melbourne
- DEPI (2014b) Sub-regional Species Strategy for the Southern Brown Bandicoot, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, East Melbourne
- DEPI (2014c) Sub-regional Species Strategy for the Southern Brown Bandicoot Supplement: Habitat Connectivity Department of Environment and Primary Industries, East Melbourne
- DEPI (2013a) Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridors, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, East Melbourne
- DEPI (2013b) 'The impact of Melbourne's growth on Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (freshwater) of the temperate lowland plains'
- DEPI (2013c) Sub-regional Species Strategy for the Growling Grass Frog, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, East Melbourne
- DEPI (2013d) Spatial definition of habitat for Golden Sun Moth across the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, East Melbourne
- DEPI (2013e) Spatial definition of habitat for Spiny Rice-flower and Matted Flax-lily across the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, East Melbourne
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- DSE (2009) Delivering Melbourne's Newest Sustainable Communities, Strategic Impact Assessment Report. Department of Environment and Sustainability, East Melbourne
- DSE, (2005) Advisory List of Rare or Threatened Plants in Victoria, Department of Environment and Sustainability, East Melbourne
- GAA (2013a) Growth Corridor Plans, Growth Areas Authority, Melbourne
- GAA (2013b) Ballan Road Precinct Structure Plan, Growth Areas Authority, Melbourne
- GAA (2013c) Riverdale Precinct Structure Plan, Growth Areas Authority, Melbourne
- GAA (2012) Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan, Growth Areas Authority, Melbourne
- KBR/ARUP (2012) RRL Authority, Section 2 Environmental Management Plan, Revision 0
- MPA (2014) Clyde Creek Precinct Structure Plan, Metropolitan Planning Authority, Melbourne

RRLA (2012) Section 2 Environmental Management Plan, Revision 0

RRLA (2015) Regional Rail Link Deer Park – West Werribee Junction Combined Annual Environmental Project Report, July 2012 – August 2014

Victorian Government (2009) Delivering Melbourne's Newest Sustainable Communities – Program Report. Department of Planning and Community Development, East Melbourne.

Appendix 1: Independent Auditor Report



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

The Victorian Government engaged RSM Bird Cameron as Independent Monitor to undertake a review of whether the planning mechanisms (i.e. the urban planning frameworks and reservation of land) at stage 2 of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment Program (the "MSA Program") have been established in the manner described in the endorsed Program Report (Victorian Government, 2009).

RSM Bird Cameron is pleased to present its Independent Reasonable Assurance Engagement Report setting out our conclusion and findings from the review conducted.

1.2 Background

On 4 March 2009, the Commonwealth Government signed an agreement with the Victorian Government to undertake a strategic assessment of the expansion of Melbourne's urban growth boundary. The Commonwealth Environment Minister endorsed the MSA Program, as set out in the Delivering Melbourne's Newest Sustainable Communities: Program Report (December 2009) (the "MSA Program Report") in February 2010. Since that time, the Commonwealth Government has approved a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Sub-Regional Strategies for the Golden Sun Moth, Growling Grass Frog, and Southern Brown Bandicoot and signed three approvals, one on 16 April 2010, a second on the 5 September 2013 and a third on 11 September 2014. These allow for urban development in the four growth corridors within Melbourne's expanded 2010 Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and in 28 existing precincts within the 2005 UGB. It also provides for the development of the Regional Rail Link Corridor between west of Werribee and Deer Park and the Outer Metropolitan Transport Corridor.

Approximately 28 Precinct Structure Plans have been approved by the Victorian Government and contain conditions and obligations to ensure the requirements of the MSA Program are implemented. Planning permits have been issued for developments within these precincts, and works have commenced.

The Victorian Government aims to provide assurance to the Commonwealth Government that that they are meeting the commitments outlined in the Program report that mitigate the process of urban and infrastructure development.

The MSA Program Report sets out monitoring and reporting activities in relation to the various stages of the MSA Program. Some of these activities require an Independent Monitor to audit the MSA program.

1.3 Role of the Independent Monitor

The role of the Independent Monitor for this engagement was to carry out an audit, and provide a report with reasonable assurance conclusion to the Victorian Government, on whether the processes undertaken to prepare urban frameworks, transport frameworks and the reservation of land have occurred in the manner described in the endorsed MSA Program Report in relation to Stage 2 of the MSA Program. The audit was to identify and report where processes are inconsistent with the MSA Program Report Stage 2 intent, and make recommendations for rectification.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONT.)

1.4 Basis for Qualified Conclusion

Our Independent Reasonable Assurance Report on whether the planning mechanisms (i.e. the urban planning frameworks and reservation of land) at stage 2 of the MSA Program have been established in the manner described in the endorsed Program Report, as at 1 September 2014, has been qualified in relation to the following:

Cultural Heritage Management Plan Not Prepared

A Cultural Heritage Management Plan was not prepared for high impact activities occurring in the Greenvale North precinct. The Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) for Greenvale North was approved on 20 January 2011.

In accordance with the Program Report Stage 2, precinct development cannot occur until the requirements of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan are met.

Approval of Growth Corridor Plans

Formal approval of the Growth Corridor Plans and its incorporation into relevant planning schemes had not occurred as at the date of this report. Despite this, Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) were completed and have been approved as early as January 2011. As the Growth Corridor Plans sets the regional framework for planning precincts, there is a risk that completed PSPs have not considered applicable changes made to the Growth Corridor Plans.

This does not appear to be consistent with the MSA Program Report and the intent of the MSA Program.

Sub-Regional Species Strategy Not Approved prior to Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

The Sub-Regional Species Strategy (SRSS) for the Southern Brown Bandicoot was approved on 7 August 2014, however the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy was finalised on 5 August 2013. This is not consistent with the MSA Program Report requirement where each SRSS must be approved by the Commonwealth Government prior to the finalisation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

Further details on these issues are provided in **Part B – Detailed Findings**.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONT.)

1.5 Qualified Reasonable Assurance Conclusion

The qualified reasonable assurance conclusion has been formed on the above basis. Our Independent Reasonable Assurance Report containing our qualified conclusion (**Part A**) has been included on pages 7 to 10 of this report.

A summary of work performed and the findings against each element of the Program Report included in the scope of our audit has been provided **Appendix 1**.

1.6 Other Matters Noted during our Audit

We have made the following observations as result of the testing performed on the following elements of Stage 2 of the MSA Program:

- Biodiversity Conservation Strategy;
- Sub-Regional Species Strategy; and
- The Outer Metropolitan/E6 Transport Corridor Infrastructure.

These have been summarised below:

- Stage 2 of the MSA Program Report states that an overarching Biodiversity Conservation Strategy will be prepared for each expanded growth area, and each Biodiversity Conservation Strategy must be approved by the Commonwealth Government.

We noted one Biodiversity Conservation Strategy was prepared to cover all growth areas, as opposed to a separate Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for each. We reviewed the Strategy and tested that each growth area stipulated within the MSA Program Report was captured and addressed, without material omission. We also noted the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy was approved by the Commonwealth Government on 5 August 2013, as required under stage 2 of MSA Program Report.

- Stage 2 of the MSA Program Report states each SRSS must be approved by the Commonwealth Government prior to the finalisation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. We noted that the SRSS that was prepared for the Growling Grass Frog and Golden Sun Moth was approved on the same day as the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. This decision was based on the need for the SRSS to be prepared in conjunction with the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, ensuring consistency. This appeared to be in line with the intent of the Stage 2 of the MSA Program Report, in material respects.
- Stage 2 of the MSA Program Report requires the following to be performed for the Outer Metropolitan/E6 Transport Corridor Infrastructure:
 - development of an Environmental Impact Report;
 - conduct a public consultation on the Environmental Impact Report; and
 - development of Development Plans.

We noted that as at the date of this report, none of the above were completed as the infrastructure project has not commenced and therefore could not be reviewed as part of this assurance engagement.

2. SCOPE AND APPROACH

2.1 Scope of the Engagement

The scope of work under this engagement included:

- Assessment of whether the processes undertaken to prepare urban frameworks, transport frameworks and the reservation of land has occurred in the manner described in the endorsed MSA Program Report. The audit and our report related only to Stage 2 of the MSA Program as outlined in the MSA Program Report, and included the following elements:
 - Growth Corridor Plans;
 - Biodiversity Conservation Strategies;
 - Sub-Regional Species strategies;
 - Cultural Heritage Management Plan;
 - Planning Permits;
 - Conservation Management Plans;
 - Native Vegetation Precinct Plans;
 - Precinct Structure Plans (specific and limited to a sample of six precinct structure plans);
 - National Park or reserve management plans;
 - Framework for transport Infrastructure and planning mechanisms (Regional Rail Link and the Outer Metropolitan Ring/E6 Transport Corridor Infrastructure);
 - Planning of Grassland Reserves (Reserve Management Plans);
 - Interim management plans; and
 - Offsets.
- Assessment of the Victorian Government's implementation of the endorsed MSA's Stage 2 program design, including identifying any anomalies and the subsequent processes adopted between the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments;
- Identified where processes or changes are inconsistent with the MSA Program Report Stage 2's intent, and make recommendations for rectification.
- Prepared a report to be submitted to the Victorian Government for the MSA Program for provision to the Commonwealth Government.

Materiality Assessment

Materiality was used to determine the nature, timing and extent of procedure if executed and to assess the relative significance of the matters noted in **Part B**. Matters were deemed material they represent risk or non-compliance which could influence the decisions of users of the Program Report.

In assessing materiality we considered the matters raised in the context of information that is relevant to stakeholders of the MSA Program or that may be affected by the delivery of the MSA Program. Our assessment of materiality included an assessment of whether the each matter was significant to the particular audited body, if it was pervasive and the effect it has on the MSA Program information or the audited body's compliance as a whole. In combination, these considerations determined whether the matter may affect the decisions of the stakeholders involved in the MSA Program or that are affected by its delivery.

2. SCOPE AND APPROACH (CONT.)

2.1 Scope of the Engagement (Cont.)

Materiality Assessment (Cont.)

Examples of qualitative factors are:

- matters which may have significant impact on the reputation of audited body;
- matters which indicate a serious weakness in the audited body's systems, processes and controls; and / or
- matters which indicate fraudulent reporting of compliance with the Program Report.

Materiality was considered during the risk assessment phase and revised during the course of the assurance engagement so that the extent and type of procedures conducted adequately reflects the risk of material non-compliance. When setting materiality, consideration was given to the risk that a misstatement or non-compliance will not be identified by the audited body's systems and processes. The auditor exercises their professional judgment in assessing these risks.



RSM Bird Cameron

INDEPENDENT REASONABLE ASSURANCE REPORT

**As at 1 September
2014**

INDEPENDENT REASONABLE ASSURANCE REPORT

Part A - Conclusion

To: The Management of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure and Melbourne Planning Authority

We have conducted a reasonable assurance engagement in relation to whether the processes undertaken to prepare urban frameworks, transport frameworks and reservation of land in respect to the strategic assessment of the expansion of Melbourne's urban growth boundary has occurred in accordance with the endorsed Melbourne Strategic Assessment Program Report (Victorian Government, 2009) (the "MSA Program Report") as at 1 September 2014.

The engagement related only to Stage 2 of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment Program (the "MSA Program") as outlined in the MSA Program Report. The assurance procedures performed were specific to the following elements of Stage 2 of the MSA Program:

- Growth Corridor Plans;
- Biodiversity Conservation Strategies;
- Sub-Regional Species strategies;
- Cultural Heritage Management Plan;
- Planning Permits;
- Conservation Management Plans;
- Native Vegetation Precinct Plans;
- Precinct Structure Plans (specific and limited to a sample of six precinct structure plans);
- National Park or reserve management plans;
- Framework for transport Infrastructure and planning mechanisms (Regional Rail Link and the Outer Metropolitan Ring/E6 Transport Corridor Infrastructure);
- Planning of Grassland Reserves (Reserve Management Plans);
- Interim management plans; and
- Offsets.

Responsibility of the Victorian Government

The Victorian Government, is responsible for preparation of the relevant urban frameworks, transport frameworks and the reservation of land required under each element of Stage 2 of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment Program Report. This responsibility includes design, implementation and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation of each framework, strategy and plan subjected to the assurance procedures within the scope of this engagement.

Our Independence and Quality Control

We have complied with the relevant ethical requirements relating to assurance engagements, which include independence and other requirements founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence, due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour.

Furthermore, in accordance with Australian Standard on Quality Control 1 *Quality Control for Firms that Perform Audits and Reviews of Financial Reports and Other Financial Information, and Other Assurance Engagements*, RSM Bird Cameron maintains a comprehensive system of quality control including documented policies and procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

INDEPENDENT REASONABLE ASSURANCE REPORT (CONT.)

Part A – Conclusion (Cont.)

Our Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express a reasonable assurance opinion on whether the processes undertaken to prepare each element of Stage 2 of the MSA Program was prepared in accordance MSA Program Report, based on the evidence we have obtained.

We conducted our audit in accordance with ASAE 3000 *Assurance Engagements Other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information*. Our procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance, as defined by ASAE 3000. The procedures selected depended on our judgment, including an assessment of the risks of material impact of the matter being audited.

We believe that the assurance evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our assurance conclusion.

Summary of Procedures Undertaken

The procedures we conducted in our reasonable assurance engagement included:

- Discussions with relevant key personnel involved in delivering each element of the MSA Program, that included responsible officers from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), the Department of Transport Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI) and Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA) to gather relevant information and develop an understanding of roles and responsibilities for implementation of Stage 2 and the processes undertaken in preparing the elements described above;
- Prepared a detailed Project Plan setting out the detailed approach and methodology;
- Conducted fieldwork, including interviews with identified responsible officers and review of information obtained, to understand and confirm:
 - whether the requirements, and intent, within the MSA Program Report for the element were clear and understood;
 - the processes undertaken to prepare the element, and how the matters required within the MSA Program report have been considered and addressed;
 - the final elements are consistent with the intent of the MSA Program Report; and
 - where elements have changed, considered whether the changes are also consistent with the intent of the Stage 2 of MSA Program.
- Assessed, based on work conducted around the chosen sample, whether the process undertaken to prepare the element is consistent with the manner as described in the MSA Program Report; and
- Prepared a draft and then final audit report to include detail of the findings and conclusions reached.

Use of our Reasonable Assurance Report

This report has been prepared for the Victorian Government. Accordingly, we expressly disclaim and do not accept any responsibility or liability to any party other than the Victorian Government for any consequences of reliance on this report for any purpose.

INDEPENDENT REASONABLE ASSURANCE REPORT (CONT.)

Part A – Conclusion (Cont.)

Inherent Limitations

Because of the inherent limitations of any internal control structure, it is possible that fraud or errors may occur and not be detected. We have not audited the overall internal control structure and no opinion is expressed as to its effectiveness. An audit is not designed to detect all weaknesses in control procedures or all instances of non-compliance as it is not performed continuously throughout the period, and the tests performed are on a sample basis having regard to the nature and size of the entity.

Any projection of the evaluation of internal control procedures to future periods is subject to the risk that the procedures may become inadequate because of changes in conditions, or that the degree of compliance with them may deteriorate.

Basis for Qualified Conclusion

Our Independent Reasonable Assurance Report on whether the planning mechanisms (i.e. the urban planning frameworks and reservation of land) at stage 2 of the MSA Program have been established in the manner described in the endorsed Program Report, as at 1 September 2014, has been qualified in relation to the following:

Cultural Heritage Management Plan Not Prepared

A Cultural Heritage Management Plan was not prepared for high impact activities occurring in the Greenvale North precinct. The Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) for Greenvale North was approved on 20 January 2011.

In accordance with the MSA Program Report Stage 2, precinct development cannot occur until the requirements of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan are met.

Approval of Growth Corridor Plans

Formal approval of the Growth Corridor Plans and their incorporation into relevant planning schemes has not occurred as at the date of this report. Despite this, Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) were completed and have been approved as early as January 2011. As the Growth Corridor Plans set the regional framework for planning precincts, there is a risk that completed PSPs have not considered applicable changes made to the Growth Corridor Plans.

This does not appear to be consistent with the MSA Program Report and the intent of the MSA Program.

INDEPENDENT REASONABLE ASSURANCE REPORT (CONT.)

Part A – Conclusion (Cont.)

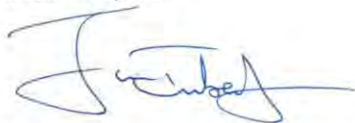
Sub-Regional Species Strategy Not Approved

The Sub-Regional Species Strategy (SRSS) for the Southern Brown Bandicoot was approved on 7 August 2014, however, the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy was finalised on 5 August 2013. This is not consistent with the MSA Program Report requirement where each SRSS must be approved by the Commonwealth Government prior to the finalisation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

Further details on these issues are provided in **Part B – Detailed Findings**.

Qualified Conclusion

In our opinion, except for the matters referred to in the Basis for Qualified Conclusion paragraph, the processes undertaken to prepare urban frameworks, transport frameworks and reservation of land in respect to the strategic assessment of the expansion of Melbourne's urban growth boundary has occurred in accordance with the endorsed Melbourne Strategic Assessment Program Report (Victorian Government, 2009) as at 1 September 2014, in all material respects.



JM IMBERT
RSM Bird Cameron

Melbourne
21 January 2015

INDEPENDENT REASONABLE ASSURANCE REPORT (CONT.)

Part B – Detailed Findings

Findings and Recommendations

We have detailed our findings from our testing performed below. The results should not be construed as providing an opinion on the matter being audited as a whole, instead they should be read in the context of providing evidence to support the conclusion.

1. Cultural Heritage Management Plans not prepared for the Greenvale North (R1) Precinct

Ratings:			
Compliance	1	Risk	M

Observation

Cultural Heritage Management Plans are required for any high impact activities listed (including greenfield residential subdivision and construction of major transport infrastructure), and for any activity in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity which has not been subjected to major ground disturbance. The MSA Program Report states that a Cultural Heritage Management Plan will be prepared for each precinct in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

We noted that Cultural Heritage Management Plans were not prepared for high impact activities occurring in the Greenvale North precinct. The Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) for Greenvale North was approved on 20 January 2011. Per the MSA Program Report Stage 2, precinct development cannot occur until the requirements of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan are met.

We made the following observations that support the requirement for a Cultural Heritage Management Plan to be prepared for the Greenvale North Precinct (R1):

- The documented Precinct Features for the Greenvale North (R1) Precinct identifies a low to moderate Aboriginal cultural heritage value and potential post-contact heritage in the form of high potential for historic heritage value, due to the eastern portion of the precinct being utilised by the Royal Australian Navy for armament testing;
- The Greenvale North (R1) PSP stated Indigenous archaeological artifacts have been found across the site and it is expected that complex investigations incorporating sub-surface testing will be required throughout the precinct when Cultural Heritage Management Plans are prepared;
- Discussions held with the Hume City Council indicated their position was that Cultural Heritage Management Plans should be prepared to ensure all cultural sensitive sites and post-contact heritage sites are identified and incorporated into the precinct planning, preventing delays in development and changes to precinct lot sizes; and
- For Greenvale North (R1) there was no evidence to support agreement by all relevant stakeholders that Cultural Heritage Management Plans were not required for the precinct.

INDEPENDENT REASONABLE ASSURANCE REPORT (CONT.)

Part B – Detailed Findings (Cont.)

Findings and Recommendations (Cont.)

1. Cultural Heritage Management Plans not prepared for the Greenvale North (R1) Precinct (Cont.)

Implication

The preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan is a requirement of the MSA Program Report.

Without a Cultural Heritage Management Plan developed in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* as required by the MSA Program Report, there is a risk that culturally sensitive and post-contact heritage sites within the precinct of Greenvale North (R1) has not been given consideration in the planning stages of the PSP.

Recommendations

We recommend a Cultural Heritage Management Plan is prepared for Greenvale North (R1), in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, as required by the MSA Program Report. Identification of culturally sensitive sites and post-contact heritage sites should be reflected in the PSP. Development on the respective sites should not proceed until all requirements of the Cultural Heritage Management Plans have been met.

Management Comments

A precinct structure plan sets the future structure for the suburb and guides the use and development of land in the precinct over the longer term. The Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines include a standard approach to integrating heritage requirements into the precinct structure planning (PSP) process. The legal requirement to have completed a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is triggered at the planning permit stage. Under Section 52 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2000*, a decision maker must not grant a planning permit if a cultural heritage management plan is required for an activity if— (a) all or part of the activity area for the activity is an area of cultural heritage sensitivity; and (b) all or part of the activity is a high impact activity.

It should be noted that not all subdivision or development is triggered by the above and that only land that is captured by the above requires a CHMP to be prepared.

Hume City Council submitted to the Planning Panel considering the merits of Planning Scheme Amendment C119 to the Hume Planning Scheme (implementing the Greenvale North R1 Precinct Structure Plan) that a CHMP should be prepared prior to the amendment being approved, the Panel accepted that sufficient investigations of pre- and post-contact heritage had occurred during the PSP process and implicitly that development proponents should be responsible for the completion of a CHMP (if required).

Subsequently, development proponents have responded to their obligations to prepare a CHMP if they have been required to do so by the Act.

INDEPENDENT REASONABLE ASSURANCE REPORT (CONT.)

Part B – Detailed Findings (Cont.)

2. Approval of the Growth Corridor Plans

Ratings:			
Compliance		Risk	

Observation

The Growth Corridor Plans (also referred to as the Growth Area Framework Plans within the MSA Program Report) set the regional framework for planning precincts within the growth areas based on the strategic directions of Melbourne 2030. The Growth Corridor Plans are intended to:

- Set an overarching strategic planning framework to guide future development in the four Growth Corridors;
- Inform the Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) Process;
- Indicate areas of high environmental or landscape value, natural features or open space to be preserved;
- Identify, broadly, the location of future residential districts, industrial and employment areas and open space networks;
- Indicate the likely strategic transport infrastructure required to support urban development; and
- Identify the location for future Major and Principal Town Centres (MTC & PTC).

The MSA Program Report Stage 2 requires the Growth Corridor Plans to be submitted for approval by the Minister for Planning and incorporated into relevant planning schemes. The requirement for formal approval of the Growth Corridor Plans and incorporation into relevant planning schemes had not occurred as at the date of this report. Despite this, we noted there are PSPs that are complete and have been approved as early as January 2011. We also noted the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy was approved on 5 August 2013 and the SRSS for the Southern Brown Bandicoot was approved by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment on 7 August 2014.

Implication

There is a risk that completed and approved PSPs were informed by Growth Corridor Plans that has been subjected to reiterations or amendments that have not been reflected or captured within the completed PSPs.

This is not considered to be in accordance with the intent of the MSA Program Report.

INDEPENDENT REASONABLE ASSURANCE REPORT (CONT.)

Part B – Detailed Findings (Cont.)

2. Approval of the Growth Corridor Plans (Cont.)

Recommendations

We recommend that the Victorian Government review the Growth Corridor Plans once approved and incorporated into planning schemes, to assess whether there have been significant changes that impact completed PSPs in respect to:

- Biodiversity;
- Transport and infrastructure;
- Urban growth boundary areas; and
- Other applicable areas of the PSP that are informed by the Growth Corridor Plans.

Management Comments

The Growth Corridor Plans (GCPs) were informed by the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) and Sub-Regional Species Strategies (SRSS) for the Golden Sun Moth, Growling Grass Frog and Southern Brown Bandicoot and incorporate the location of the boundaries of each conservation area. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning reviewed the GCPs prior to their release in 2012 to ensure consistency with the biodiversity strategies.

Finalisation of the GCPs and their incorporation into relevant planning schemes has been dependent on the finalisation of these strategies. With the BCS and SRSS completed, the GCPs have been finalised for statutory planning approval.

The BCS, SRSS and GCPs have not significantly changed since 2012. Approved precinct structure plans are generally consistent with the final GCPs, however they will be reviewed by the Metropolitan Planning Authority following statutory planning approval, and incidental minor modifications will be incorporated where required.

INDEPENDENT REASONABLE ASSURANCE REPORT (CONT.)

Part B – Detailed Findings (Cont.)

Findings and Recommendations (Cont.)

3. Approval of the SRSS for the Southern Brown Bandicoot

Ratings:			
Compliance		Risk	

Observation

Sub-Regional Species Strategies (SRSS) define how matters of environmental significance will be protected within each growth area. Examples of matters of environmental significance include:

- Growling Grass Frog;
- Southern Brown Bandicoot; and
- Golden Sun Moth.

The Sub-Regional Species Strategy (SRSS) for the Southern Brown Bandicoot was approved on 7 August 2014. .

The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy was finalised on 5 August 2013. This is not consistent with the MSA Program Report requirement where each SRSS must be approved by the Commonwealth Government prior to the finalisation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

A draft SRSS for the Southern Brown Bandicoot was initially prepared and released for public consultation in December 2011 (prior to the finalisation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy). The draft SRSS was prepared based on technical work undertaken by consultants, including literature reviews, targeted surveys, use of Population Viability Analysis tools and habitat models, and technical workshops. However, following submissions received during the public consultation process, the draft SRSS was set to be replaced by a new strategy for the Southern Brown Bandicoot incorporating additional technical work performed.

We acknowledge that the finalised version of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy states there may be amendments required for the south-eastern growth corridor to ensure consistency with the potential additional requirements arising from the SRSS for the Southern Brown Bandicoot.

Implication

There is a risk that the approved Biodiversity Conservation Strategy may not be complete and does not consider all aspects of the SRSS for the Southern Brown Bandicoot. Furthermore, a risk of non-compliance with the intent of the MSA Program Report.

Recommendations

We recommended that if there are changes made to the SRSS that have not been gazetted and impact the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, we recommend that Biodiversity Conservation Strategy is updated and approved accordingly.

INDEPENDENT REASONABLE ASSURANCE REPORT (CONT.)

Part B – Detailed Findings (Cont.)

Findings and Recommendations (Cont.)

3. Approval of the SRSS for the Southern Brown Bandicoot (Cont.)

Management Comments

DELWP has reviewed the BCS for consistency with the SBB strategy/associated supplement and has determined that the documents are consistent and that the BCS addresses all relevant aspects of the SBB strategy/associated supplement.

The SBB strategy focuses on a 'management area' outside the south-eastern growth corridor (i.e. outside the area covered by the BCS). The only mandatory obligation it imposes within the BCS area relates to habitat compensation fees and this requirement is consistent between the BCS and SBB strategy.

The associated supplement applies to some land within the area covered by the BCS (Botanic Ridge and Devon Meadows precincts). The supplement does not establish any conservation areas within these precincts and so DELWP is of the view that the BCS does not need to be updated. Rather, the supplement commits the Victorian Government to creating habitat for SBB within certain existing open space and drainage reserves. These commitments will be implemented through the precinct structure plans for these precincts and DELWP has agreed on a process to achieve this with the Metropolitan Planning Authority.

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED

Elements of the MSA Program	Audit Approach	Outcomes
<p>Growth Area Framework Plans / Growth Corridor Plans</p> <p>Growth Corridor Plans are put in place to guide the creation of new communities within the growth areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casey – Cardinia; • Hume; • Melton – Caroline Springs; • Whitelesea; • Wyndham; and • Sunbury <p>Growth Corridor Plans set out the regional framework for the preparation of precinct structure plans within the growth corridors and show broad land-use patterns, proposed transport networks, regional open space, important waterways and areas of environmental sensitivity. The plans incorporate the location and boundaries of each conservation area consistent with the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and exclude urban development from each area.</p> <p>In accordance with the MSA Program Report, the Growth Corridor Plans have been informed by the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and the sub-regional species strategies.</p> <p>The Growth Corridor Plans require approval from the State Minister for Planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained the Growth Corridor Plan that has been developed; • Tested that submission of Growth Corridor Plans have occurred following the finalisation of Biodiversity Conservation Strategies for each Growth Area; • Reviewed evidence of approval by the Minister for Planning (where applicable); • Interviewed the responsible officer for each Growth Area to gain an understanding of the process in developing the Growth Corridor Plan; • Tested that each growth area stipulated within the MSA Program Report is captured within the Growth Corridor Plan; and • Tested that boundaries of each conservation area per the Biodiversity Conservation Strategies are consistent with the Growth Corridor Plans. 	<p>RSM Bird Cameron identified issues in respect to Final Approval of the Growth Corridor Plan not having occurred at the date of this report. (Refer to Finding 2 – Part B of this report)</p>

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED (CONT.)

Elements of the MSA Program	Audit Approach	Outcomes
<p>Biodiversity Conservation Strategies</p> <p>A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy will be prepared which is relevant to all expanded growth areas and will inform the preparation of the Growth Corridor Plans. The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy must be approved by Commonwealth Government prior to finalisation. The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy defines how protected areas designated within growth areas will be managed.</p> <p>The BCS is the overarching strategy for the protection of biodiversity in the growth corridors and is a significant step towards finalising the planning for biodiversity required for the Melbourne Strategic Assessment.</p> <p>The strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses all relevant matters of state significance, as well as matters of national environmental significance protected under the Commonwealth <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>; 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. <p>The BCS informs the Growth Corridor Plans. These plans set the strategic direction for future urban development of land in the growth areas over the next 20 to 30 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained completed and finalised Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the expanded growth areas; Reviewed evidence of approval by the Commonwealth Government for finalised Biodiversity Conservation Strategy; Interviewed the responsible officer for each Biodiversity Conservation Strategy to gain understanding of the process in developing the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy; and Reviewed that approval of Biodiversity Conservation Strategy has occurred prior to approval of the Growth Corridor Plan. 	<p>The MSA Program Report states that an overarching Biodiversity Conservation Strategy will be prepared for each expanded growth area. However, we noted that one Biodiversity Conservation Strategy was prepared to cover all growth areas. (Refer to Section 1.6 of the Executive Summary, page 3 of this report).</p>

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED (CONT.)

Elements of the MSA Program	Audit Approach	Outcomes
<p>Sub-Regional Species Strategies (SRSS)</p> <p>SRSS define how matters of environmental significance will be protected within each Growth Area. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing Grass Frog; • Southern Brown Bandicoot; and • Golden Sun Moth. <p>The purpose of the SRSS is to inform the preparation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy by identifying important populations, areas of habitat to be protected as required by the prescriptions, and habitat corridors. These strategies influence the design of precincts during the preparation of precinct structure plans.</p> <p>SRSS have been prepared for the Growing Grass Frog, the Golden Sun Moth and the Southern Brown Bandicoot. These threatened species are matters of national environmental significance protected under the Commonwealth <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>.</p> <p>The sub-regional species strategies will help ensure the long-term protection of Growing Grass Frog, Golden Sun Moth and Southern Brown Bandicoot in the growth corridors. The SRSS for the Southern Brown Bandicoot also focuses on conservation actions for the species outside the area covered by the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained and reviewed completed Sub-Regional Species Strategies; • Interviewed a sample of responsible officers to gain an understanding of the process for identifying matters of “environmental significance” and the guidance obtained. • Discussed the prescriptions that were approved by the Commonwealth Environment Minister in 2010 for most relevant matters of national environmental significance, listed below and why Sub-Regional Species Strategies were no prepared. <p>These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Striped Legless Lizard; • Matted Flax-lily; • Spiny Rice-flower; and • Migratory species. <p>Tested that the Strategies have been approved by the Commonwealth Environment Minister prior to the finalisation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and applicable PSP.</p>	<p>The MSA Program Report Stage 2, states that each SRSS must be approved by the Commonwealth Government prior to the finalisation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. We noted the SRSS for the Southern Brown Bandicoot was approved on 7 August 2014 despite the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy being finalised on 5 August 2013 (refer to Finding 4 – Part B of this Report).</p> <p>The MSA Program Report states that each SRSS must be approved by the Commonwealth Government prior to the finalisation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. We noted that the SRSS for the Growing Grass Frog and Golden Sun Moth was approved the same day as the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. (refer to Section 1.6 of the Executive Summary, Page 3 of this report).</p>

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED (CONT.)

Elements of the MSA Program	Audit Approach	Outcomes
<p>Precinct Structure Plans</p> <p>Precinct Structure Plans sets out the future structure of the Suburb including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of housing; • Activity Centres; • Community facilities; • Local transport networks; and • Open space. <p>Around 28 PSPs have been approved and contain conditions and obligations to ensure the requirements of the MSA Program are implemented.</p> <p>The plans must be prepared and approved by the State Minister for Planning and incorporated into the relevant planning scheme before urban development can proceed (some exceptions apply). Once a plan has been incorporated into the relevant planning scheme, planning permits can be granted by the responsible authority (usually council) for urban development.</p> <p>PSPs must be prepared in accordance with the Growth Corridor Plans and the Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines (GAA, 2009). These guidelines provide guidance on the assessment, protection and management of biodiversity values within the precinct and identify outputs that must be produced, including a Native Vegetation Precinct Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained a sample PSP and compare against permits obtained; • Interviewed responsible officers for the PSPs obtained, to gain an understanding of the process of developing PSP and links/consistency with the Growth Area Framework Plans; • Reviewed for consideration given to applicable Cultural Heritage Management Plans, Native Vegetation Precinct Plans and Conservation Management Plans for each Precinct selected; • Tested the PSPs have been approved by the State Minister; and • For the sample of PSPs tested that it was developed in accordance with Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines (GAA, 2009). The following PSP were selected: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Botanic Ridge; 2. Greenvale North (R1); 3. Manor Lakes; 4. Blackforest Road south; 5. Taylors Hill West; and 6. Melton North. 	<p>There were no exceptions or general observations noted as result of the testing performed. Consideration was given to Cultural Heritage Management Plans, Native Vegetation Precinct Plans and Conservation Management Plans with each PSP tested, within material respects.</p>

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED (CONT.)

Elements of the MSA Program	Audit Approach	Outcomes
<p>Cultural Heritage Management Plans</p> <p>Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) are to be prepared for each precinct in accordance with the Victorian <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i>. CHMPs are required for any listed high impact activity (including greenfield residential subdivision and construction of major transport infrastructure) and for any area of cultural heritage sensitivity which has been subject to major ground disturbance.</p> <p>These plans provide for the management of known aboriginal cultural heritage values and those that may be discovered during works.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained CHMP for the sample precincts selected above and tested the CHMP was developed in accordance with the Victorian <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i>; Reviewed the PSPs for any high impact activity planned and tested that the CHMP addressed each activity and followed up on the status of these; and Interviewed responsible officers that developed each CHMP and gained an understanding of the process to identify the applicability of activities that required inclusion within the CHMP. 	<p>We noted that CHMPs were not prepared for high impact activities occurring in the Greenvale North precinct. The PSP for Greenvale North was approved on 20 January 2011. Per the MSA Program Report Stage 2, precinct development cannot occur until the requirements of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan are met (refer to finding 1 - Part B of this Report).</p>

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED (CONT.)

Elements of the MSA Program	Audit Approach	Outcomes
<p>Native Vegetation Precinct Plans (NVPP) and offsets</p> <p>NVPP is prepared for each precinct in accordance with clause 52.16 of local planning schemes. The NVPP sets out the requirements for the protection and removal of native vegetation for a defined area or precinct. The NVPP must be approved by the Commonwealth Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Arts.</p> <p>In the case of the growth corridors, the plans are a tool used to protect Commonwealth listed ecological communities.</p> <p>The plans are prepared using native vegetation assessments and mapping to standards specified by DELWP.</p> <p>Native vegetation precinct plans must be prepared based on the time-stamping maps and dataset, which cover all native vegetation patches within the precinct, and will be supplemented by surveys of individual trees where relevant.</p> <p>The plans are incorporated into the relevant local planning scheme. Native vegetation precinct plans are prepared in accordance with Biodiversity Precinct Structure Planning Kit, and in accordance with the MSA program report, must be consistent with the prescriptions.</p> <p>Offsets relate to actions to make reparation for the loss of native vegetation arising from removal or destruction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained the NVPP for the sample of Precincts select and tested that the NVPP was developed in accordance with clause 52.16 of the local planning schemes and Biodiversity Precinct Structure Planning Kit; Interviewed responsible officers that developed each NVPP to gain an understanding of the process undertaken to identify native vegetation areas within each precinct that will require the plan to be developed; Reviewed offsets relating to the specific precinct and gained an understanding of the process of identifying potential vegetation for destruction and the criteria for offset applied; Tested compliance with the vegetation offset requirements established in accordance with the Native Vegetation Management Framework (2002); and Traced offsets stipulated within each NVPP to the habitat compensation statement (where applicable). 	<p>There were no exceptions or general observations noted. Based on the testing performed this element was prepared in accordance MSA Program Report, in all material respects.</p>

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED (CONT.)

Elements of the MSA Program	Audit Approach	Outcomes
<p>Conservation Management Plans</p> <p>A Conservation Management Plan is prepared where there is an important population of species that require particular management (e.g. Growing Grass Frog, Southern Brown Bandicoot, Golden Sun Moth, Matted Flax Lily etc.)</p> <p>They outline how matters of national environmental significance and state significance will be protected and managed within a precinct and must be prepared where there are important populations or habitats of threatened species within the growth corridors that require particular management.</p> <p>The plans are prepared as part of the precinct structure planning process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained the Conservation Management Plans for the sample of Precincts selected and assessed consistency with the sub-regional species strategies for the particular Growth Area; Interviewed responsible officers that developed each Conservation Management Plan and gained an understanding of the process undertaken to identify the species within the area that would require a conservation management plan; and Followed up on the further actions that were noted to take place per the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the sample of Precincts selected. 	<p>There were no exceptions or general observations noted. Based on the testing performed this element was prepared in accordance with the MSA Program Report, in all material respects.</p>

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED (CONT.)

Elements of the MSA Program	Audit Approach	Outcomes
Planning Permits Planning permits must be issued generally in accordance with the Precinct Structure Plan and include any implementation provision outlined. Development cannot proceed unless the requirements (as set out in the CHMP, NVPP and the Conservation Management Plan) are met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed planning permits issued and assessed for compliance with the PSP, and For development that occurred, verified that the following was finalised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Heritage Management Plan NVPP, and Conservation Management Plan. 	There were no exceptions or general observations noted. Based on the testing performed this element was prepared in accordance MSA Program Report, in all material respects.
Prescriptions Prescriptions have been drafted for most matters of national environmental significance. All prescriptions require approval by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment. Requirements from the Prescriptions have been incorporated into the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See testing for Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. 	See outcomes for Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.
National Park or Reserve Management Plans National Park or Reserve Management Plans have been developed to reserve land for conservation or recreational purposes under the Victorian Crown Land Reserves Act 1978 or Victorian National Parks Act 1975 depending on the final decision regarding the tenure of the land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted interviews with responsible officers of each growth area and gained an understanding of the process of identifying land that will be reserved for conservation or recreational purposes; and Reviewed each land discussed for inclusion within the Reserve Management Plans of the applicable growth area. 	As land acquisition has only occurred recently, there is currently no Reserve Management Plan in place. The land is currently being managed under the Interim Management Plan. Management guidelines for the acquired land have been developed and will form the basis of a management plan prepared by Parks Victoria upon assignment of land. The Interim Management Plan covers the appropriate management, data and weed control of the site.

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED (CONT.)

Elements of the MSA Program	Audit Approach	Outcomes
Interim Management Plans <p>Prepared for private property that has been embarked to form part of the grassland reserve although is yet to be acquired. It must be prepared in accordance with the Victorian <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained details of the Interim Management plan for the precincts sampled; and Interviewed the responsible officer to obtain an understanding of the current status of the Interim Management Plan. 	<p>There were no exceptions or general observations noted. Based on the testing performed this element was prepared in accordance MSA Program Report, in all material respects.</p>
Quarries and Mines <p>Native vegetation removal associated with the Earth Resources Industry (Quarries and Mines) is exempt from the requirements of the Victorian <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> and the planning scheme.</p> <p>The detailed planning of future quarries within the Urban Growth Boundary will be undertaken in accordance with relevant prescriptions approved by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment. This will be affected by amending the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Primary Industries (now Department of State Development, Business and Innovation) to require that the prescriptions approved by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment will be applied to all future quarries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing could not be performed due to information not being made available to DELWP and RSM Bird Cameron. 	<p>None</p>




APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED (CONT.)

Elements of the MSA Program	Audit Approach	Outcomes
<p>Regional Rail Link and the Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor Infrastructure</p> <p>The Regional Rail Link is a 50 kilometre railway connection from west of Werribee to Southern Cross Station via the Melbourne-Ballarat railway, connecting at Deer Park. The MSA Program is concerned with the west of Werribee to Deer Park section of the Regional Rail Link, which is approximately 30 kilometres long.</p> <p>The final Strategic Impact Assessment Report for the MSA Program assesses the potential impacts of implementing the MSA Program Report on matters of national environmental significance. The final alignment is outlined in the MSA Program Report.</p> <p>The Outer Metropolitan Ring Transport Corridor is 70 kilometres long and it links Werribee, Melton, Tullamarine and Craigieburn/Mickleham and connects to the E6 Transport Corridor, which links Donnybrook to the Metropolitan Ring Road at Thomastown.</p> <p>The final Strategic Impact Assessment Report for the MSA Program assesses the potential impacts of implementing the MSA Program Report on matters of national environmental significance. The proposed corridor is outlined in the MSA Program Report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews were conducted with the relevant responsible officer; We reviewed the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecological Plan for the Regional Rail Link; Regional Rail Link Development Plan; Regional Rail Link Environmental Management Plan; and Approval and sign-off of each document above. Reviewed consideration given to the management of storm-water run-off from the Regional Rail Link and the Outer Metropolitan Ring/E6 Transport Corridor. 	<p>The MSA Program Report requires the following to be performed for the Outer Metropolitan/E6 Transport Corridor Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of an Environmental Impact Report; conduct a public consultation on the Environmental Impact Report; and development of Development Plans. <p>We noted that as at the date of this report this project had not commenced and none of the above were completed and therefore could not be reviewed as part of this assurance engagement.</p>




APPENDIX 2 – COMPLIANCE AND RISK RATINGS

The risk and compliance ratings applied to assess the issues identified are as follows:

Compliance Rating

Rating		Description	Action
Level 1		Evidence of non-compliance with audit criteria.	These should be addressed as a matter of high priority, within one to three months
Level 2		Issues which could possibly result in non-compliance with audit criteria but where no evidence of actual non-compliance was found. However, there is considered to be insufficient formal evidence of controls in place or being actioned in relation to these issues.	These should generally be addressed within three to six months.
Level 3		Housekeeping matters and opportunities for improving internal controls and procedures relating to compliance.	These should be addressed within six to twelve months.

Risk Ratings

Rating		Description	Action
High		Issues which may have a major impact on the Victorian Governments implementation of endorsed Program Report in relation to Stage 2 of the MSA Program.	These issues require senior management attention with regular monitoring and reporting at executive meetings.
Medium		Issues which may have a moderate impact on the Victorian Governments implementation of endorsed Program Report in relation to Stage 2 of the MSA Program.	These issues require management attention with regular ongoing monitoring.
Low		Issues which have a minor impact on Victorian Governments implementation of endorsed Program Report in relation to Stage 2 of the MSA Program.	These issues are the responsibility of management with regular monitoring and reporting at staff meetings.

Appendix 2: PSPs gazetted under the MSA Program

PSP number	PSP name	Gazetted	Planning scheme amendment	Within BCS area
43	Alfred Road	Aug-13	Wyndham C159	Yes
40	Ballan Road	Jul-14	Wyndham C171	Yes
9	Berwick Waterways	Nov-14	Casey C188	Yes
42.2	Black Forest Road South	Aug-13	Wyndham C169	Yes
10	Botanic Ridge	Feb-13	Casey C133	Yes
3	Cardinia Road Employment Area	Oct-10	Cardinia C130	No
1057.1	Casey Fields South Residential	Nov-14	Casey C186	Yes
1054	Clyde Creek	Nov-14	Casey C186	Yes
13	Clyde North	Nov-11	Casey C153	Part
19	Craigieburn (R2)	Oct-10	HumeC120	No
14	Cranbourne East	May-10	Casey C119	No
16	Cranbourne North (Stage 2)	Aug-11	Casey C125	No
1073	Diggers Rest	41061	Melton C121	Yes
39	East Werribee Employment Precinct	Oct-13	Wyndham C179	Yes
21	Greenvale Central	Dec-13	Hume C154 (pt1)	Yes
22	Greenvale North (R1)	Jan-11	Hume C119	No
23	Greenvale West (R3)	Jan-11	Hume C121	No
1066	Lockerbie	Jun-12	Hume C161 Mitchell C81 Whittlesea C161	Yes
1098	Lockerbie North	Jun-12	Mitchell C82 Whittlesea C162	Yes
41	Manor Lakes	Jun-12	Wyndham C154	Yes
27	Melton North	Jul-10	Melton C83	No
1064	Merrifield West	Jun-12	Hume C162	Yes
4	Officer	Dec-11	Cardinia C149	No
39.1	Point Cook West	Nov-12	Wyndham C163	Yes
1091	Riverdale	Nov-14	Wyndham C176	Yes

PSP number	PSP name	Gazetted	Planning scheme amendment	Within BCS area
1079	Rockbank North	Jun-12	Melton C120	Yes
1089	Tarneit North	Nov-14	Wyndham C188	Yes
30	Taylors Hill West	Jul-10	Melton C82	No
1053	Thompsons Road	Nov-14	Casey C185	Yes
31	Toolern	Oct-10	Melton C84 (pt1)	No
1097	Toolern Park	Oct-14	Melton C122	Yes
1090	Truganina	Nov-14	Wyndham C175	Yes
37	Truganina Employment Area	Dec-09	Wyndham C124	Yes
38	Truganina South	Jul-11	Wyndham C123	No
1092	Westbrook	Jul-14	Wyndham C172	Yes
21.1	Woodlands	Oct-14	Hume C154 (pt2)	Yes

Appendix 3: Approved boundary adjustments to Conservation areas



