

Approved Boundary Change

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Conservation Area 33 - O'Herns Road (Epping)

Key Messages

- Conservation Area 33 consists of multiple reserve types including nature conservation, existing offsets and open space. The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (DEPI, 2013) outlines that the boundaries of the open space areas will be revised at the Precinct Structure Planning phase.
- On-ground surveys have been conducted in the open space areas, and the data assessed against boundary change criteria consistent with the *Guidance Note: Implementing the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridor*.
- The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has now approved changes to the boundary of the conservation area. The remaining conservation area is classified as nature conservation.
- A large proportion of the conservation area consists of degraded Grassy Eucalypt Woodland. These areas have three of the four key characteristics identified in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999* listing advice and are important areas to protect and manage.
- The open space portions of the conservation area equal 186.5 hectares. The revised boundary;
 - Removes area occupied by infrastructure associated with an existing clay target shooting club, and a future road off-ramp;
 - Removes 2.607 hectares of native vegetation that does not meet the listing criteria of Grassy Eucalypt Woodland or Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plains;
 - Removes a total of 34 scattered trees from the conservation area, many of which may be negotiated by local council to be protected as local conservation areas or green links;
 - Removes 61.039 ha of land from the conservation area that contains low biodiversity values and does not require protection according to the criteria identified in the guidance note; and
 - Protects all known Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) listed under the EPBC Act.
- The boundary change for Conservation Area 33 has been approved by the Commonwealth Minister for the Department of Environment and Energy.
- Habitat compensation fees will apply to the land approved to be removed from the conservation area.

Summary

The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy identifies several conservation areas that require on-ground surveys to confirm the boundaries and determine the protection and management requirements of these areas. Conservation Area 33 is combined of areas of nature conservation, existing offset and open space. The open space sections of the conservation area were based on estimated data and the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy outlines DELWP's intention to finalise the boundaries of the open space areas following on-ground surveys.

On-ground surveys for the open space areas of Conservation Area 33 have been conducted by a suitably qualified consultant. The survey data has been analysed against the appropriate boundary

change criteria and DELWP has approved changes to the boundary to focus on the areas of high biodiversity value.

The proposed boundary protects all areas of Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plains and high quality habitat for MNES. DELWP considers that many of the trees removed from the conservation area can be sufficiently protected and managed as local conservation areas that will also enable these areas to be used for other purposes. The boundary change provides a habitat link between the Craigieburn grasslands and Conservation Area 33.

The Precinct Structure Plan must allow a 20-metre buffer for the Craigieburn grassland.

The boundary change results in the removal of 2.607 hectares of native vegetation, which does not meet the listing criteria for Natural Temperate Grassland or

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Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plains.

No additional data submissions were received as part of DELWP consultation processes.

Table 1: Key information for conservation area 33

Conservation Area- Key Information	
Conservation area name and number	BCS Conservation Area 33 O'Herns Rd, Epping
Type of conservation area	Multiple- Existing offset, open space, nature conservation. Boundary change only applies to open space areas
Precinct name	Cooper Street West
Council area	Whittlesea
Property addresses	1\LP66823 - 20 Vearnings Rd Epping 3076 1\LP88205- 25 Vearnings Rd Epping 3076 1\PS518234- 365 Craigieburn Rd Wollert 3750 1\PS518236 -159 Tesselaar Rd Epping 3076 1\TP828725 - 25 Vearnings Rd Epping 3076 2\PS504599 - 461 Craigieburn Rd Wollert 3750 3\PS504599-501 Craigieburn Rd Wollert 3076 4\PS504599 -521 Craigieburn Rd Wollert 3076 W\PS626250- 210 Vearnings Rd Epping 3076
Were new surveys undertaken to inform the proposal?	Yes – surveys of native vegetation, scattered trees and Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES)

Relevant Commonwealth Approvals

The change boundary of Conservation Area 33 has been approved by the Commonwealth Minister of the Department of Environment and Energy, under condition 4 of the September 2013 approval.

Assessment Criteria

This boundary change proposal has been assessed against criteria consistent with the *Guidance Note: Implementing the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Melbourne's Growth Corridor*. Changes to the boundaries of these conservation areas are considered necessary if the adjustment is required to address one or more of the following site-specific issues;

Criteria 1: Areas of low biodiversity value for MNES.

Criteria 2: The adjustment is required to address one or more of the following site-specific issues:

- urban infrastructure shown in the Growth Corridor Plans (GAA, 2013);
- existing or proposed new infrastructure of state significance;
- urban planning objectives of a precinct structure plan, such as appropriate urban form, roads, bridges, water management and other infrastructure;
- land made inaccessible as a result of a conservation area;
- existing buildings or other infrastructure on or near the boundary of a conservation area;
- final requirements of regional (metropolitan) park planning processes; and
- Errors in mapping.

Change 1: Remove areas of land with low biodiversity value

This change removes two areas of the reserve that contain low biodiversity values, do not protect any MNES and are not required to be protected as outlined in the guidance note.

Change 2: Remove an existing shooting club

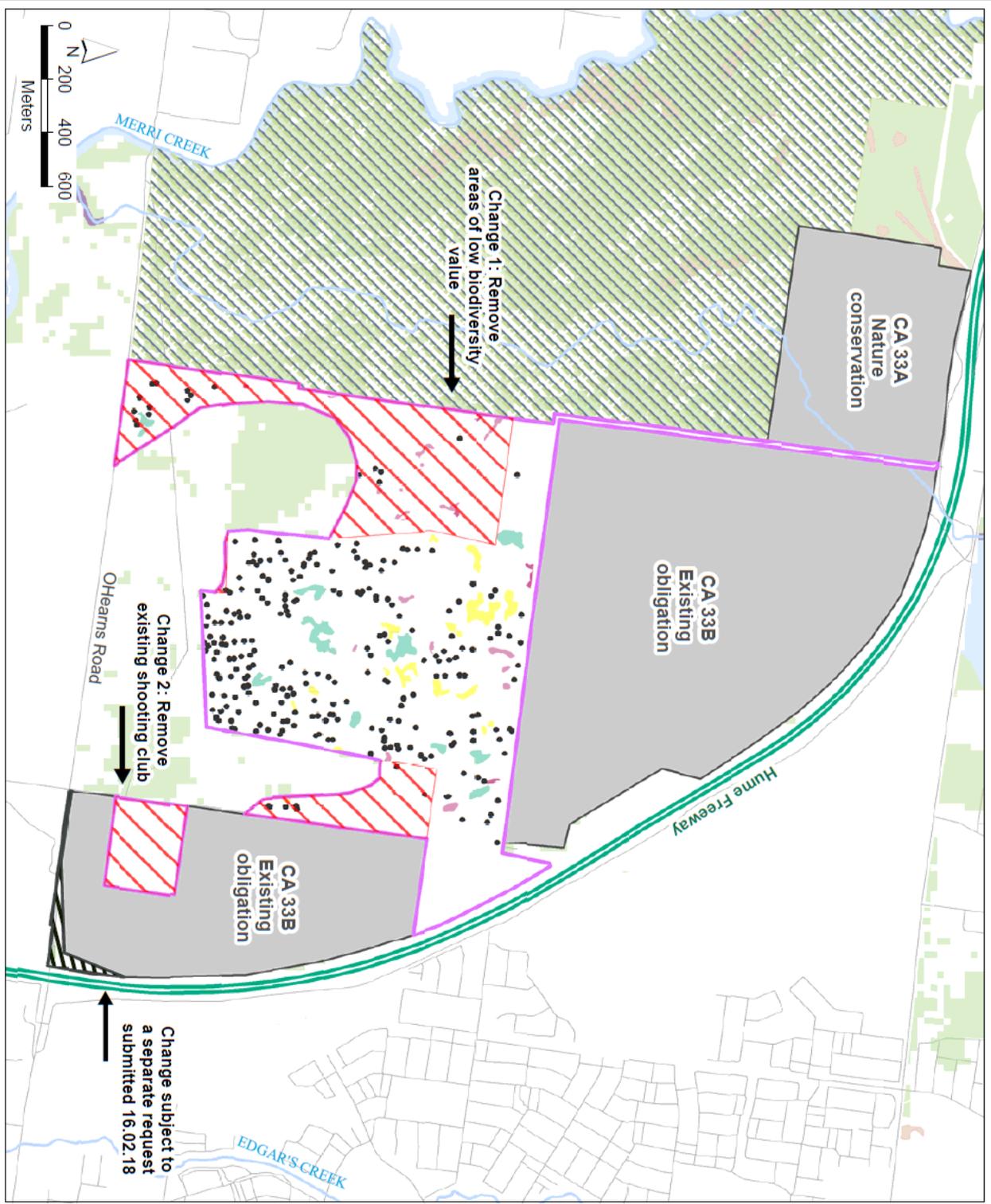
This change removes infrastructure associated with the Metropolitan Clay Target Club (southeast section of reserve) that existed on or near the boundary of Conservation Area 33 prior to the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. The area contains low biodiversity values and does not protect any MNES.

In total the proposed changes;

- Remove 61.039. hectares of land, of which only 2.607 hectares is native vegetation and none of which meets the listing criteria for Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plains.
- Cause no loss of MNES.
- Removes 34 scattered trees from the conservation area. Many of these trees may be negotiated for protection as local conservation areas or green links by the City of Whittlesea.

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Proposed boundary adjustment, Conservation Area 33 (part) (O'Hearns Road, Epping)



- Legend**
- Proposed Conservation Area 33 (part) boundary
 - Current Conservation Area 33 (part) boundary
 - Area proposed to be removed from Conservation Area 33 (part)
 - Other BCS conservation areas not relevant / applicable to this boundary adjustment
 - Craigieburn Grassland N.C.R.
 - Scattered trees
 - National Listed Species
 - Matted Flax-lily
 - River Swamp Wallaby-grass
 - Golden Sun Moth
 - Growing Grass Frog
 - Plains-wanderer
 - Striped Legless Lizard
- Ecological Vegetation Class**
- 55 Plains Grassy Woodland
 - 132 Plains Grassland
 - 203 Stony Rises Woodland
 - 647 Plains Sedgey Wetland
 - 649 Stony Knoll Shrubland
 - 654 Creeklane Tussock Grassland
 - 656 Brackish Wetland
- Map produced by Biodiversity Division March 2018
 Datum: GDA94
 Projection: MGA Zone 55
 Spatial data is sourced from the Victorian Spatial Data Library.
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