

Site 101. Stud Rd Roadside, Wantirna

A total of 1.54 kilometres of road reserve, in four sections. Melway maps 63 and 64

Site Significance Level: *Local*

- Contains a large number of trees that provide rudimentary habitat for native birds and insects. Some trees are remnant eucalypts and wattles, and others are planted 'Australian natives'.



Scale 1:10,000
0 100 200 300 400m

Aerial photograph taken April 2003.

Boundaries

The four segments that make up this site are outlined in red on the aerial photograph. The boundaries align with title boundaries, except for two short, straight lines that delimit the site's northern and southern extent. The total area is 3.24 ha.

Land use & tenure: Roadside tree reserve.

Site description

This site provides an almost continuous canopy of trees that provide rudimentary habitat for native birds and insects. The trees that make up the canopy are a mixture of remnant eucalypts (six species), remnant wattle trees (Blackwood and Lightwood) and many planted 'Australian natives' such as Red Ironbark, Lemon-scented Gum, River Red Gum, Southern Blue Gum, Southern Mahogany, Casuarinas and Melaleucas.

The remnant trees indicate that the original Ecological Vegetation Classes were Swampy Woodland in low-lying patches and Valley Heathy Forest in the remainder. However, the native shrubs and ground flora are reduced to small numbers of plants around the bases of some of the remnant trees.

Relationship to other land

Birds and insects that use this site as part of their habitat probably access it via the surrounding residential neighbourhoods. Trees in these neighbourhoods help to maintain birds in the area, including along the Stud Rd roadside. Conversely, the trees along Stud Rd help to keep birds around the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Bioregion: Gippsland Plain

Habitat types

The original EVCs of the site have been reduced to scattered trees and a very small number of understorey plants. These EVCs are:

Valley Heathy Forest (EVC 127, **Endangered**) dominated by *Eucalyptus melliodora*, *E. macrorhyncha* and *E. radiata*.

Swampy Woodland (EVC 937, **regionally Endangered**) dominated by *Eucalyptus ovata*.

A total 12 indigenous plant species were recorded by Mr Rik Brown on 15th May 2002. This total included no indigenous grasses (because of mowing and seasonal factors), but there would undoubtedly be at least two indigenous grass species, possibly several.

Plant species

The following indigenous plant species were observed by Mr Rik Brown on 15th May 2002. Additional species would probably be detectable in other seasons. The column headed 'Risk' indicates the indigenous species' risk of extinction in Knox with 'E'=Endangered and 'V'=Vulnerable.

<u>Risk</u>	<u>Indigenous Species</u>	<u>Risk</u>	<u>Indigenous Species</u>
V	<i>Acacia implexa</i>	E	<i>Eucalyptus macrorhyncha</i>
V	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	V	<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>
	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	V	<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i>
V	<i>Coprosma quadrifida</i>	V	<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>
	<i>Dianella admixta</i>	E	<i>Eucalyptus radiata</i>
V	<i>Eucalyptus cephalocarpa</i>	V	<i>Exocarpos cupressiformis</i>

Fauna of special significance

Uncommon in the Melbourne region

Musk Lorikeet. Observed in abundance, feeding on eucalypt flowers.

Fauna habitat features

- Remnant and planted native trees provide foraging habitat for native birds;
- Large numbers of planted Red Ironbark trees (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) attract substantial numbers of lorikeets when in flower.

Significance ratings

The following is an assessment of the site's significance against the Department of Sustainability & Environment's standard criteria (Amos 2004).

Ecological Integrity and Viability

The use of the site by nomadic native forest birds, particularly Musk Lorikeets, makes the site an ecological 'stepping stone'. Criterion 1.2.6 attributes **Local** significance to ecological stepping stones like this which can be described as 'Important at local scale - Link between individual remnant habitat blocks or within subcatchment'.

Locally Threatened Flora

Some of the locally threatened plant species listed above have viable populations, thereby meeting criterion 3.1.5 for a site of **Local** significance.

Two large remnant Yellow Box trees (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) opposite Studfield Shopping Centre and two large remnant Swamp Gums (*Eucalyptus ovata*) opposite 167 and 287 Stud Road are excellent specimens of their species. However, the standard criteria of Amos (2004) do not recognise such features.

Locally Rare Fauna

Musk Lorikeets were listed by the Land Conservation Council (1991) as 'uncommon' in the Melbourne region. They are not rare within the whole of the Gippsland Plain bioregion. Their abundance within the site represents **Local** significance under criterion 3.1.5.

Threats

- Potential damage to remnant vegetation during maintenance of roads or utility services;
- Eucalypt dieback disease due to altered drainage and low incidence of insect-eating birds;
- Lack of recruitment of indigenous vegetation because of mowing and physical disturbances
- Critically small population sizes of some indigenous plant species.

Management issues

The habitat value of the site and the health of the trees could be enhanced by planting additional indigenous trees and understorey species (e.g. Sweet Bursaria, *Bursaria spinosa*) that suit insect-eating birds.

Administration matters

- This site is worthy of inclusion within the proposed Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule (Volume 1, Section 5.5) because:
 - It contains (in the words of the VPP Practice Note on Biodiversity) 'scattered living food trees with an exotic understorey';
 - It is a site of Local biological significance; and
 - Many of the trees are not native to Victoria and hence are not protected by Clause 52.17 of the Knox Planning Scheme;
- Most of the site is covered by the existing Schedule 1 to the Vegetation Protection Overlay of the Knox Planning Scheme, based on the description by Water Ecoscience (1998) of their Site 39. However, the southern end of the site was inadvertently omitted from one of Water Ecoscience's map sheets, and hence off the Planning Scheme's overlay map;
- The Planning Scheme zoning is Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

Information sources used in this assessment

- A botanical survey by Mr Rik Brown on 15/5/02 according to the standard procedures described in Section 2.4 of Volume 1, including:
 - Compilation of a list of indigenous and introduced plants;
 - A description of the vegetation's structural and floristic composition;
 - Incidental fauna observations; and
 - Checks for fauna habitat, ecological threats and management issues;
- A visual inspection of the site by Dr Lorimer in a moving vehicle in 2004;
- Aerial photography from February 2001 and April 2003;
- Satellite imagery of the district;
- The Department of Sustainability & Environment's BioMaps of the area;
- Maps of geology and topography produced by agencies of the Victorian government.