

Site 103. Blind Creek Valley, Boronia

A treed residential area, predominantly on the northern side of the Blind Ck valley. Melway map 64 (southern half).

Site Significance Level: *Local*

- There is a substantial number of mature trees, including remnant eucalypts, that provide rudimentary habitat for native birds, bats, possums, frogs and insects;
- The tree canopy helps to provide some degree of habitat connection between several more substantial sites of biological significance.

Map – see next page

Boundaries

This 108.3 ha site is outlined in red on the aerial photograph on the next page. It does not include the three segments of Site 33 (the Blind Ck Corridor) that lie within it, nor the part of St Joseph's School that forms Site 32. Most of the boundary aligns with property boundaries. The main exceptions are that the eastern edge runs down Woodvale Rd and a short section of Springfield Rd, and the border through Fairpark Reserve follows the Blind Ck shared path. If desired, Scoresby Rd could be omitted from the site for the purpose of the Vegetation Protection Overlay.

Land use & tenure: Freehold residential land, park and roads.

Site description

This residential neighbourhood retains a substantial number of mature remnant eucalypts and mature planted trees, including eucalypts from other parts of Australia. They provide a tree canopy that, despite its fragmentation, provides basic habitat needs for native birds, bats, possums, frogs and insects. Substantial numbers of native forest birds, such as Crimson Rosellas and Eastern Rosellas, frequent the area, which can be attributed to the site's trees and the presence of more substantial areas of habitat in the sites that are numbered and outlined in pink on the aerial photograph.

Indigenous understorey within the site is scarce other than for hardy grasses. A modest number of indigenous understorey species occur in patches on the northern verge of Boronia Rd.

Relationship to other land

Many native birds move through this area. A good example is the Crimson Rosellas nesting in Site 90 on the Boronia Rd roadside, which would have to fly through the site to find enough food for themselves and their young. Eastern Rosellas and Galahs that are common in Roselyn Crescent Reserve (Site 45, abutting to the west) can often be seen flying from or into the Blind Ck Valley site. It seems that most of the native fauna in the various sites seen on the aerial photograph would need to move between the sites to fulfil all their habitat needs.

Significance ratings

Ecological Integrity and Viability

The habitat value of trees in the site for use by native fauna makes the site an ecological 'stepping stone' of **Local** significance under the Department of Sustainability & Environment's criteria (Amos 2004 – criterion 1.2.6).

Locally Threatened Plant Species

The site contains some locally threatened plant species that have viable populations in combination with neighbouring native vegetation. Eucalypts are the most conspicuous examples. Such occurrences meet criterion 3.1.5 for a site of **Local** significance.

Threats

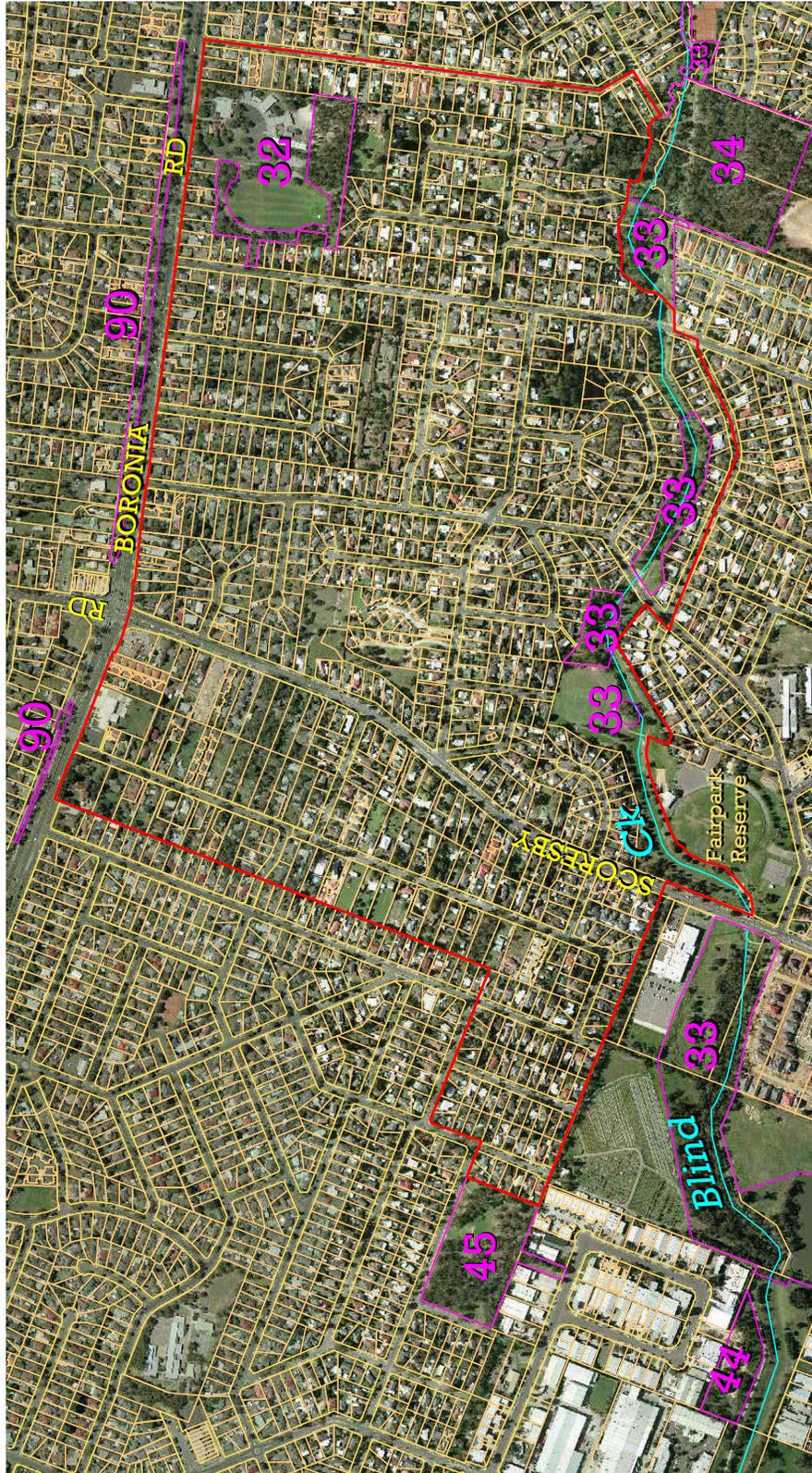
- Residential subdivision and development.

Management issues

The habitat value of the site 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';



The Blind Creek Valley site is outlined in red, and other sites are outlined and numbered in pink. The aerial photograph was taken in April 2003.

- It is a site of Local biological significance;
- Most of the properties involved are too small to be affected by Clause 52.17 of the Knox Planning Scheme, which might otherwise provide some of the trees with some protection; and
- Some of the habitat trees are not native to Victoria and are therefore not protected by Clause 52.17.
- This site largely overlaps with an area covered by the existing Schedule 3 to the Vegetation Protection Overlay of the Knox Planning Scheme. The area described here extends further west to abut Roselyn Crescent Reserve (Site 45) because of observations of birds moving through that neighbourhood (and the likelihood that other native fauna also move through). Many properties around the edge of the area under the existing overlay are omitted from the site described here because they have no trees that are either biologically significant or likely to become so within the foreseeable future.

Information sources used in this assessment

- An inspection of the area by Dr Lorimer in 2003 for the specific purpose of finding sites of biological significance and determining the distribution of trees that represent reasonable habitat for native fauna;
- General visual inspection of the area's vegetation by the author and Mr Rik Brown during 2003-8 while surveying other sites in this report, such as St Joseph's School (Site 32), the Blind Creek Corridor (Site 33), the Blind Creek Billabong (Site 34) and Roselyn Crescent Reserve (Site 45);
- Aerial photography from February 2001, April 2003 and February 2007; and
- Satellite imagery of the district.