Site 116. Road Verges

This section refers to native vegetation on road verges that are not included in sites described earlier in this report.

Site Significance Level: *Local*

Isolated remnant trees, or small groups of them, are not uncommon on road verges in Knox that are not parts of formally recognised sites of biological significance. On rare occasions, the trees are accompanied by small patches of native understorey. These occurrences of native vegetation often provide fauna habitat or landscape value, but they are too isolated or too sparse to warrant the application of an overlay in the Knox Planning Scheme.

Under the town planning system, road reservations are regarded as subject to the baseline 'native vegetation retention' provisions of Clause 52.17 of the Victoria Planning Provisions. Council, road workers, service utility companies and owners of land abutting roadsides with native vegetation should be mindful that roadside native vegetation is protected under Clause 52.17, even in the absence of a planning overlay. Private land owners often ignore this or are ignorant of it.

The exemption that Clause 52.17 provides for clearing of vegetation within ten metres of a building or for construction of a building usually does not apply on roadsides. This places less need on the use of overlays for roadsides compared with other land. Consequently, some roadsides in Knox that are not proposed for overlays have vegetation even though their vegetation is more significant than some of the sites that are recommended for overlays. The most important examples of this that were detected in this study are as follows:

Site 116a. Colchester Rd Roadside, Boronia

Aerial photographs: pp. 141 and 466 (the latter at higher resolution, but not covering the whole site).

The full length of Colchester Rd in Knox is a site of **Local** biological significance because:

- There are large specimens of *Eucalyptus ovata* and *E. cephalocarpa*, both with trunk diameters to 0·86 m;
- There is a strip of the regionally endangered EVC, Swampy Woodland, in fair to poor ecological condition (ratings C and D), with twenty-six indigenous plant species;
- There is one patch of Blady Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), which is rare (but not threatened) in Knox; and
- The vegetation represents a habitat link between the Dandenong Creek Corridor (Site 26) and the treed area along and south of Mountain Hwy (Sites 92 and 98).

Site 116b. Taylors Lane Roadside, Rowville

The western road verge, north of Kelletts Rd, is a site of **Local** biological significance:

- There is a fair to good cover of remnant trees, including five eucalypt species, and patches of native understorey (mostly a few shrubs and native grasses). These are vestiges of the endangered EVC, Valley Heathy Forest (ecological condition rating D), with sixteen indigenous plant species;
- Australian native trees and shrubs have been planted extensively within the tree reserve beside the remnant trees. They include Red Ironbark, wattles and hakeas;
- The vegetation represents a habitat link between Hillside Park (Site 68) and Corhanwarrabul Creek (Site 66).

Site 116c. Forest Rd Roadside, Ferntree Gully

The eastern road verge from 122 Forest Rd to 160 Forest Rd is a site of **Local** biological significance:

- There is a good cover of remnant trees in several strips, each typically 50 m long, comprising five eucalypt species, three wattle species and two individual *Exocarpos cupressiformis* trees. The ground flora is dominated by native grasses over much of the area but aside from grasses, mowing has allowed only a handful of individual plants of indigenous shrub or ground flora species to persist. The vegetation belongs to the endangered EVC, Valley Heathy Forest (ecological condition rating D), with twenty-one indigenous plant species;
- Indigenous trees and shrubs were planted by Council in patches during the late 2000s to improve the habitat quality and compensate for the loss of species that has resulted from the history of mowing.