

Site 118. Parks and Reserves

This section refers to native vegetation in parks and reserves that are not recognised as sites, or parts of sites, described earlier in this report.

Site Significance Level: *Local*

As in the case of school grounds, some parks and reserves in Knox have remnant trees and sometimes patches of native understorey, or areas of hardy native grasses such as Weeping Grass or Clustered Wallaby-grass. The remnant eucalypts and large wattles that are common in these parks and reserves give the sites at least Local conservation significance on the same criteria as just discussed for schools.

The more biologically important parks and reserves are covered earlier in this report. The native vegetation in other parks and reserves seen during this study is too isolated or too sparse to warrant the application of an overlay in the Knox Planning Scheme. The four subsections below summarise the most noteworthy examples of native vegetation in this category. In all cases, the properties are larger than 0.4 ha and so they are subject to the baseline 'native vegetation retention' provisions of Clause 52.17 of the Victoria Planning Provisions.

Site 118a. Birchfield Reserve, Wantirna

Melway ref. 63 H9.

Native vegetation in this reserve is mainly represented by a fair cover of remnant trees towards the northern end of the reserve, including several mature specimens of Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*). Native understorey is mainly restricted to a few shrubs and ground layer plants around the base of remnant trees. The habitat provided by the native vegetation is augmented by planted Australian native trees along the western boundary of the reserve, including Sydney Blue Gum, Lemon-scented Gum and Bracelet Honey-myrtle.

A flock of Musk Lorikeets was observed feeding on eucalypt flowers. They are likely to be regular seasonal visitors. Although regarded as regionally rare until the 1990s, Musk Lorikeets have become increasingly common.

Threats

- Invasion by Sweet Pittosporum;
- The effects of many Monterey Pines, up to 30 m tall, along the eastern side of the reserve;
- Dieback of remnant trees associated with altered drainage and ecological isolation;
- Lack of recruitment of indigenous vegetation because of mowing.

Site 118b. Michelle Drive Reserve, Scoresby

Melway ref. 72 H5.

This reserve is located between 42 and 52 Michelle Dr. It was created in 2003 from subdivision of the Catholic seminary that was on the site. Within an area of 2,400 m², there are approximately twenty eucalypts (mainly Mealy Stringybarks, *Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*), one Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and a single Burgan shrub (*Kunzea ericoides*). There is effectively no indigenous ground flora.

Site 118c. Peregrine Reserve, Rowville

Melway ref. 82 D2.

The native vegetation within this reserve was mostly cleared or destroyed during its period as part of a grazing property. It would have belonged to the Swampy Woodland EVC, which is now regionally endangered. Today, the reserve's remnant vegetation comprises a small number of Swamp Gums (*Eucalyptus ovata*), very few Narrow-leaved Peppermints (*Eucalyptus radiata*) and a single Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*). The eucalypts are estimated to be mostly 80-100 years old, with some exceeding 100 years. Such old Swamp Gums generally make excellent habitat trees because of their tendency to develop hollows and fissures that may be inhabited by native birds, bats, possums or insects.

Knox City Council has planted many indigenous trees since about 1998, including Swamp Gum, Bundy (*Eucalyptus gonicalyx*), Mealy Stringybark (*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*), Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), Blackwood (*Acacia*

melanoxylon) and Black Sheoak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*). Council has also revegetated the centre of the reserve with indigenous understorey plants, including Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*), Prickly Moses (*Acacia verticillata*), Burgan (*Kunzea ericoides*), Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*), Prickly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum continentale*), Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*), a tussock-grass (*Poa* species) and Pale Flax-lily (*Dianella longifolia*).

The value of the site for habitat is likely to increase substantially as the revegetation matures, considering the wealth of native fauna within the Lysterfield Hills area (Site 81), less than one kilometre away.

Site 118d. Teofilo Drive Reserve, Lysterfield

Melway ref. 82 G2, between Teofilo Dr and Sunrise Ct.

This 0.2 ha park has:

- One dozen mature, remnant Mealy Stringybarks (*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*), some of which are very large;
- Some young wattles that have probably been planted; and
- A single remnant Spiny-headed Mat-rush plant (*Lomandra longifolia*).

The main significance of this vegetation is that some of the trees are very large and represent good habitat for native birds, possums, insects and perhaps bats.

Knox City Council has planted some indigenous species to augment the remnant habitat. This should encourage increasing numbers of native fauna to the park, mostly from the extensive habitat in the Lysterfield Hills (Site 81), which is only several hundred metres away.