

19/01/2006
VC37**SCHEDULE 3 TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OVERLAY**

Shown on the planning scheme map as ESO3.

LONG FOREST AND WERRIBEE GORGE**1.0**19/01/2006
VC37**Statement of environmental significance****Long Forest**

The Long Forest area is of high natural, scientific and scenic value and comprises important forest, grassland and riparian ecosystems, which represent valuable habitat for native flora and fauna. While much of the area is protected within the scattered blocks of the Long Forest Flora Reserve, valuable habitat remains on private land between and surrounding the Reserve, and on other public land including roadsides, streamside reserves and on land managed for water supply.

This area supports a unique vegetation community of national significance known colloquially as the Melton Mallee. Its significance is recognised by the fact that it is included in the National Estate Register and is listed as Threatened under Schedule 2 of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. The vegetation essentially occupies the slopes and valleys of the Coimadai and Djerriwarrh Creeks and the ridge between them along which runs Long Forest Road. This tongue of vegetation is entirely different from the surrounding community, and is more characteristic of dry north-western Victorian environments. It is thought to be thousands of years old and is of great scientific and scenic interest.

Werribee Gorge

The dominant features of the Werribee Gorge State Park are the Werribee River and Werribee Gorge itself, which is classified as being of national significance for its extensive outcrops of Permian sediments and exposed sub-glacial topography. It is included in the National Estate Register. The almost 200 metre deep gorge is one of the deepest in Victoria and is unique because of its long cliff-walled sectors. These sectors reveal the geological history of much of central and western Victoria.

The vegetation of the Park itself is considered to be of State significance, primarily because of the presence of nine rare or threatened species and 20 of regional significance. It is predominantly Stringybark-Box forest with abundant Red Stringybark, Red Box and associated Yellow Gum. Though there have been few recent investigations into the fauna of the Park, it is known that the Powerful Owl and Brush-tailed Phascogale are considered to be threatened in Victoria, and are both listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. It is also a breeding locality for Peregrine Falcons.

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VC37**Environmental objective to be achieved**

- To protect the environmental and scientific significance of the vegetation.
- To protect the habitat significance of the vegetation.
- To protect the areas high landscape values and scenic views.
- To protect significant threatened species of flora and fauna from adverse management practices that may result in their extinction.
- To conserve native vegetation communities in their natural condition, and maintain genetic diversity.
- To provide protection and enhance the long-term survival prospects for significant vegetation communities and species.
- To improve the water quality of the waterways and increase and protect their significance.
- To minimise the erosion risk due to shallow soils and rocky outcrops.

- To provide for the retention, restoration and revegetation of local native species.
- To protect the natural, aesthetic and scientific values of geological features. To minimise impacts from visitors on sensitive geological features.

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Application requirement

An application to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation must be accompanied by the following information as appropriate:

- The purpose of the removal of vegetation.
- Method of removal of vegetation.
- Photographs of vegetation to be removed, or alternatively, a report from a qualified person detailing the level of significance and status of vegetation to be removed.
- A plan drawn to scale, showing the area and location of vegetation to be removed.
- Details of any replanting or regenerative measures to be undertaken.

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Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application, the responsible authority must consider:

- The extent of vegetation to be removed.
- The reason for removing the vegetation.
- Whether the removal of the native vegetation will detrimentally impact on the sustainability of Bull Mallee and other threatened flora and fauna.
- The cumulative effect of incremental removal of native vegetation.
- Whether the removal of native vegetation will detrimentally affect the scenic value of the locality.
- Whether the removal of native vegetation will detrimentally affect the habitat value of the locality.
- Any replanting or regenerative measures to be undertaken.