

SOUTH WEST VICTORIA LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY

Regional Overview Report: Executive Summary

June 2013



FOREWORD

The landscapes of South West Victoria tell the story of a rich and complex evolution - reflective of the region's geological morphology, economy, ecology and cultural history.

They include the rugged and spectacular Grampians Ranges (Gariwerd); the cones and lakes of the volcanic plains; and the majestic River Red Gums scattered throughout the pastoral lands.

The purpose of this landscape assessment is to examine the character and significance of the landscapes of South West Victoria; to understand how they may be affected by future change; and to protect and manage those values that are most important, for future generations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Traditional Owners

The Study acknowledges that the State of Victoria has an ancient and proud Aboriginal history and complex ownership and land stewardship systems stretching back many thousands of years. We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land, and offer our respect to the past and present Elders, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Project Participants

The Project Team would also like to thank all who have provide input, through the community photographic exercise, wanting to be kept informed and the sharing of information and local knowledge. This appreciation extends to the community groups, environmental/landcare groups, progress associations, from local and aboriginal people, academic groups, the Project Reference Group Members and others who have followed and supported the study.

Project Team

John Phillips (Project Director)	Department of Planning and Community Development
Simon Haber (Project Manager)	Department of Planning and Community Development
Claire Scott	Planisphere
Helen Knight	Planisphere
Isobel Maginn	Planisphere
Kate Dundas	Planisphere
Chantal Lenthall	Planisphere

Project Reference Group Members

John Hawker	Heritage Victoria
Joy Elley	Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
Terry Lewis	Department of Primary Industries
Grant Hull	Department of Sustainability and Environment
Ray McNerney	Corangamite Shire Council
Mathew Berry / Tony Augunis	Glenelg Shire Council
James Phillips	Moyne Shire Council
Lucinda Peterson / Daniel Pech	Southern Grampians Shire Council
Gillian Bradshaw	West Wimmera Shire Council
Don Lewis	Colac Otway Shire Council
Edwine Irvine	Horsham Rural City Council
Tony Baker	Wimmera Catchment Management Authority

Jacinta Rivette / Jessica Hurse	City of Greater Geelong
Deon VanBaalen / Cameron Haines	City of Ballarat
Steph Durant	Golden Plains Shire
Barry Green / Dale Tonkinson	Hepburn Shire Council
Sean Greer / Lisa Gervasoni	Moorabool Shire Council
Neil Manning / Joel Hastings	Ararat Rural City Council
Cate Barham	Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
Gillian Bradshaw	West Wimmera Shire Council
Mark Marziale / Kathleen Gosden	Northern Grampians Shire
Chris Hall	Pyrenees Shire Council
Mark Gregory / Aaron Garrett	Barwon South West Region, Department of Planning and Community Development
Tim Westcott / Eoghan McColl	Grampians Region, Department of Planning and Community Development

COVER IMAGE: Lake Linlithgow looking towards Dunkeld / Grampians, image courtesy of Tracey Kruger

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Regional Overview Report

This document, *South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study: Regional Overview Report*, provides an executive summary of the landscape character types, and most significant landscapes of the region. It outlines the methodology for the study, and contains the key recommendations for protecting and managing these landscapes at a state and regional level.

Purpose of this Study

The Department of Planning and Community Development commissioned this landscape assessment study of South West Victoria to better understand and assess the visual character and significance of the wide range of landscape types, which include the volcanic plains and cones that dominate much of the area, to the Great Dividing Range in the north, and the Grampians in the central west. The study will be used to better to better inform planning scheme policy to assist planning decision making, and to ensure landscapes of importance are adequately protected and management into the future.

The South West Landscape Assessment Study, prepared in partnership with local government throughout the region and a range of stakeholders, provides a comprehensive understanding of landscape values, their location and their spatial extent. This will assist regional planning to support economic growth and development investment in the right locations into the future through the Great South Coast, Central Highlands, and Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plans, (currently being undertaken by the Victorian Government) and implementation through local government planning schemes.

Study Methodology

The methodology for landscape assessment studies has evolved considerably over ten years of professional practice, from an initial focus on visual significance, to a holistic approach that considers all cultural landscape values, including aesthetic values (both visual and non-visual), historic, environmental, scientific, social and other values.

A detailed visual assessment is still at the core of the work however, largely because the studies are commissioned with the intention of protecting landscapes from inappropriate visual intrusion, or from development that detracts from the valued character of the landscape.

Landscape assessment studies include extensive field work, desktop research, GIS mapping, and comparative analysis against various sets of criteria in order to assess and document the character and significance of various landscapes and views. Generally, the methodology is structured around the consideration of the following five key elements:

- Landscape character
- Landscape significance
- Community values
- Change in the landscape
- Landscape protection and management

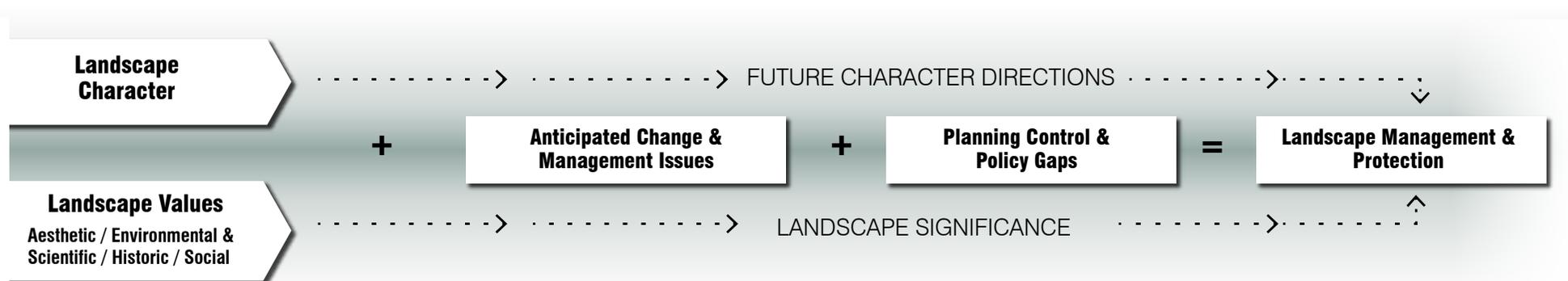
These key elements come together in the 'formula' below, around which the studies are structured:

Public Land (Including National and State Parks)

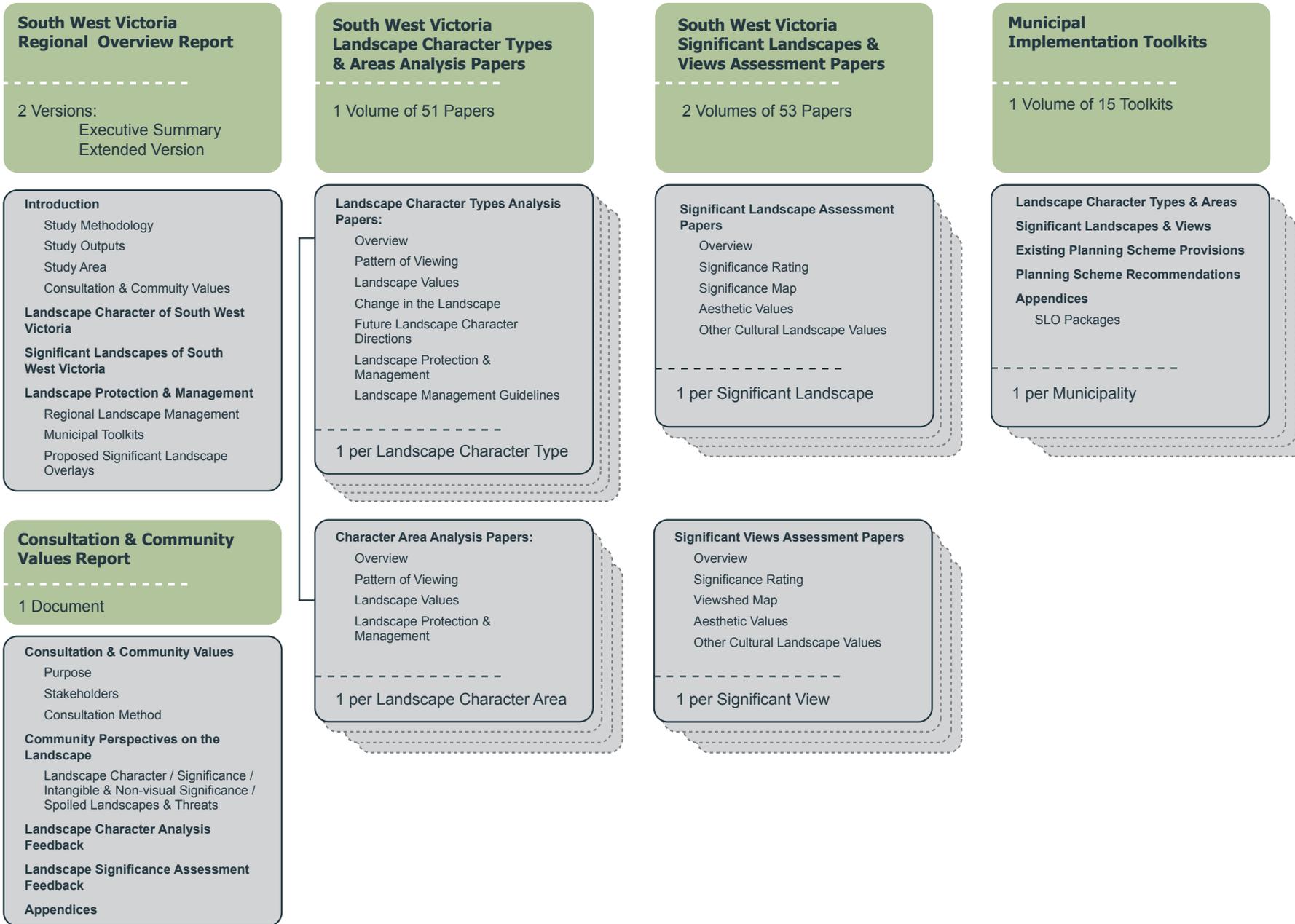
An assessment of landscape character and significance has been undertaken across the entire study area irrespective of land tenure (public or private). This was considered important for completeness and to inform a full comparative strategic assessment of significance across the region.

Land within the Public Conservation and Resource Zone is governed by legislation such as the *Crown Lands (Reserve) Act 1978*, and the *National Parks Act 1975*. This provides the appropriate framework and context for the management of public land, along with any approved incorporated plans that seek to manage these public assets relevant to the purpose of their reservation.

Notwithstanding, this study and its findings provides valuable advice and information for Public Land Managers in managing public assets, and in preparing future revisions to management plans or other guidelines.



Study Outputs



STUDY AREA

The study area for the South West Victoria Landscape Assessment includes all non-urban areas that have not been the subject of previous studies in the region, including 15 municipalities, or parts thereof. (Refer to ‘Relationship to Previous Studies’ adjacent.)

The northern boundary of the study area follows major roads (with one exception) and municipal boundaries, for simplicity and clarity i.e. from the South Australian border the Wimmera Highway to Horsham; the Western Highway to its intersection with the Ararat municipal boundary; the Ararat municipal boundary; the Pyrenees Highway to Avoca; the Sunraysia Highway, then Greenhill Creek Road to the Hepburn municipal boundary.

The Project Reference Group participants were invited to recommend expansion of the study area boundary where evidence suggested that a potentially significant landscape was located immediately beyond it. While no recommendations were received, the study did examine areas immediately adjacent to ensure full assessment of landscape character and significance. Examples of the identification of significant landscapes beyond the ‘formal’ study area boundary include the Natimuk Douglas Saline Wetland Depression (Rural City of Horsham) and the Mount Rouse and Mount Napier Lava Flows (Shire of Moyne).

Relationship to Previous Studies

The coastal areas of South West Victoria have been previously assessed as part of the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study (2004)* and the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study (2006)*, as well as the entirety of the Surf Coast Shire in 2007. A landscape assessment study commissioned by the Southern Grampians Shire for the Grampians and its surrounds was also nearing completion at the outset of this study.

Given that the Coastal Spaces work was focussed on the coastline, with efforts concentrated on all landscapes that are visible from the coast, and from which the coast is visible, significant landscapes that were identified within the South West study area that extended into the coastal hinterland were assessed in their entirety. This has resulted in the proposal of protection and management recommendations for landscapes that also formed part of the Coastal Spaces



Study Area Map



CONSULTATION & COMMUNITY VALUES

Community values are sourced through communication and consultation with the people who live or work in, or visit, the study area.

Landscapes hold different values for different people. Some people may enjoy the scenic values and settings of landscapes. Others may appreciate the habitats they provide for wildlife, or their potential for productivity and economic return.

Purpose

A consultation program was developed at the beginning of the study so that the perceptions and values of the community about landscapes could be integrated into the findings and outcomes.

The key objectives of the consultation program were to:

- inform the community, key stakeholders, Councils and other Government departments or agencies about the project and its progress;
- invite their ideas and input at each stage;
- understand the perceptions and values of the wider community in relation to landscape character; and,
- refine and confirm the identification of significant landscapes in the study area.

The consultation program sought the involvement of a broad cross-section of individuals or groups within the community who have extensive knowledge and experience of, and connection to, the South West Victorian landscape.



Photo of Lake Gnotuk from the northern rim, courtesy of Fiona Morris

Stakeholders

Project Reference Groups

Focused engagement was undertaken with two Project Reference Groups who were closely involved in the project. The groups had already been established as part of the Regional Growth Plans project and included representatives from each of the Councils and various State government departments and agencies. They had specialist knowledge, skills, information and resources to add to the project.

Interested Groups & Individuals

Interested community groups and individuals were invited to participate in the project via DPCD's project website, Council websites, local media, direct phone or email contact, or simply word-of-mouth. Project Reference Group members assisted in identifying many of these stakeholders and in disseminating information to this wider audience. Interested parties were invited to participate in the community photographic exercise to provide feedback throughout the project.



Edenhope looking over paddock trees, courtesy of Rachel Farren



Cropping in the foreground of Mt Rouse, image courtesy of Tracey Kruger

Consultation Method

A variety of methods were used in the consultation program for each project stage:

STAGE 1	Analysis & Research	Community Bulletin 1 Project Website set up Project Reference Group meetings round 1
STAGE 2	Landscape Character Analysis	Community Bulletin 2 Community Photo Exercise Project Reference Group meetings round 2 Website updated / feedback invited
STAGE 3	Landscape Significance Assessment	Community Bulletin 3 Project Reference Group meetings round 3 Website updated / feedback invited
STAGE 4	Final Recommendations	Project Reference Group meetings round 4 Website updated

Community Photographic Exercise

A community photographic exercise was undertaken in the first stage of the project to help the study team understand community views and values in relation to landscapes. Participants were invited to submit photos to illustrate their ideas about landscape character, landscape significance, the intangible and non-visual aspects of landscapes and threats to landscapes. The information and photos provided by the community helped confirm and refine the landscape character analysis, landscape significance assessment and implementation recommendations.

Character Analysis & Significance Assessment Feedback

The community and the Project Reference Group provided invaluable feedback throughout the process through their detailed knowledge of specific landscapes. The responses helped refine the papers and confirm the study findings.



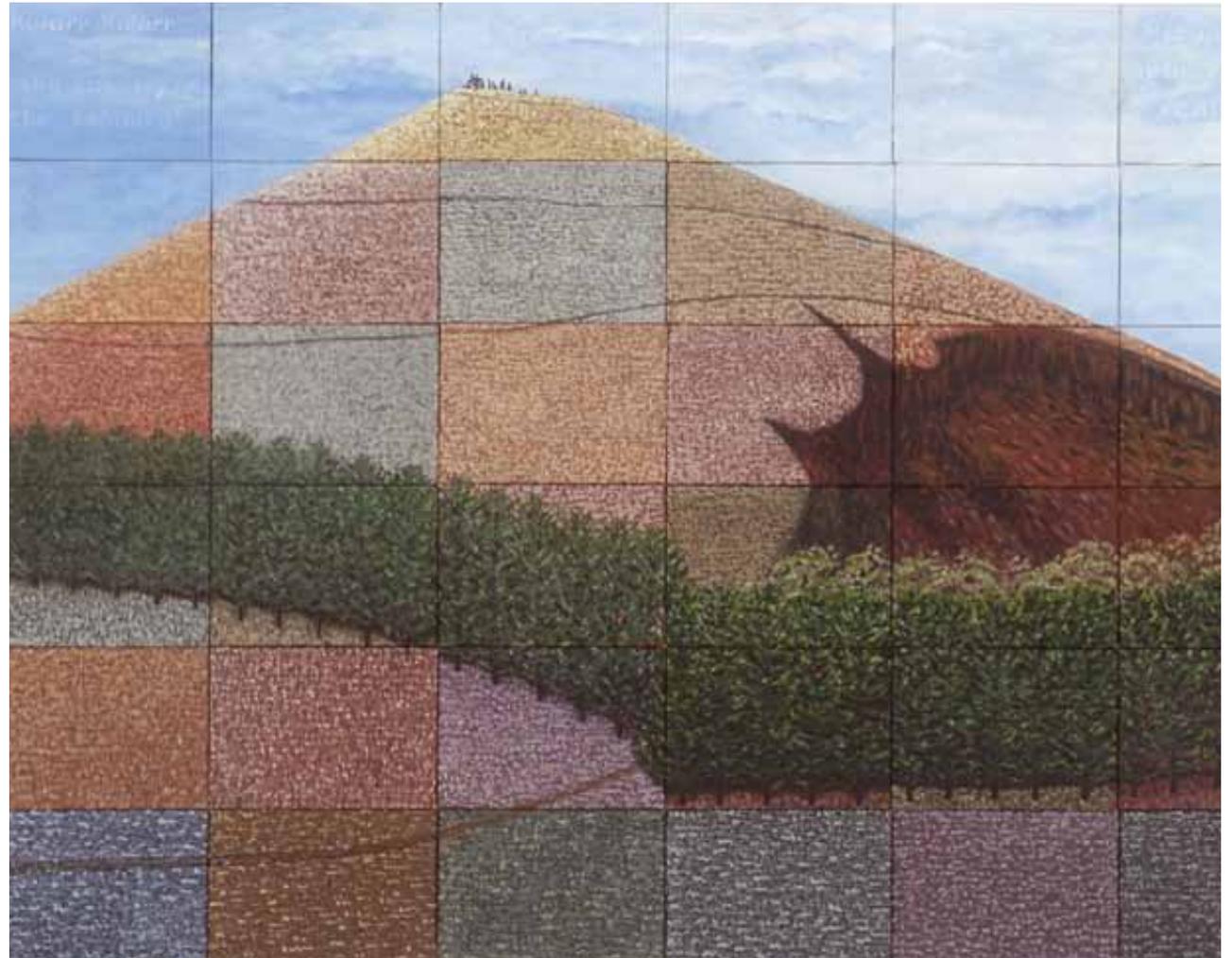
Photo of the Rabbit Wall, courtesy of Andrew Miller



Photo of Mount Elephant, courtesy of Andrew Miller



Photo of Lake Condah courtesy of Joy Elley, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria



Reproduction of 'The once perfect cone', 2005, artwork by Brigid Cole-Adams, acquired by State Library of Victoria, image courtesy of Brigid Cole-Adams



Photo of sheep, farmed for wool and meat, grazing under leaden skies (a winter typical scene), courtesy of Jo Stephens & Kay Paton, Yendon History Group



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF SOUTH WEST VICTORIA

DETERMINING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

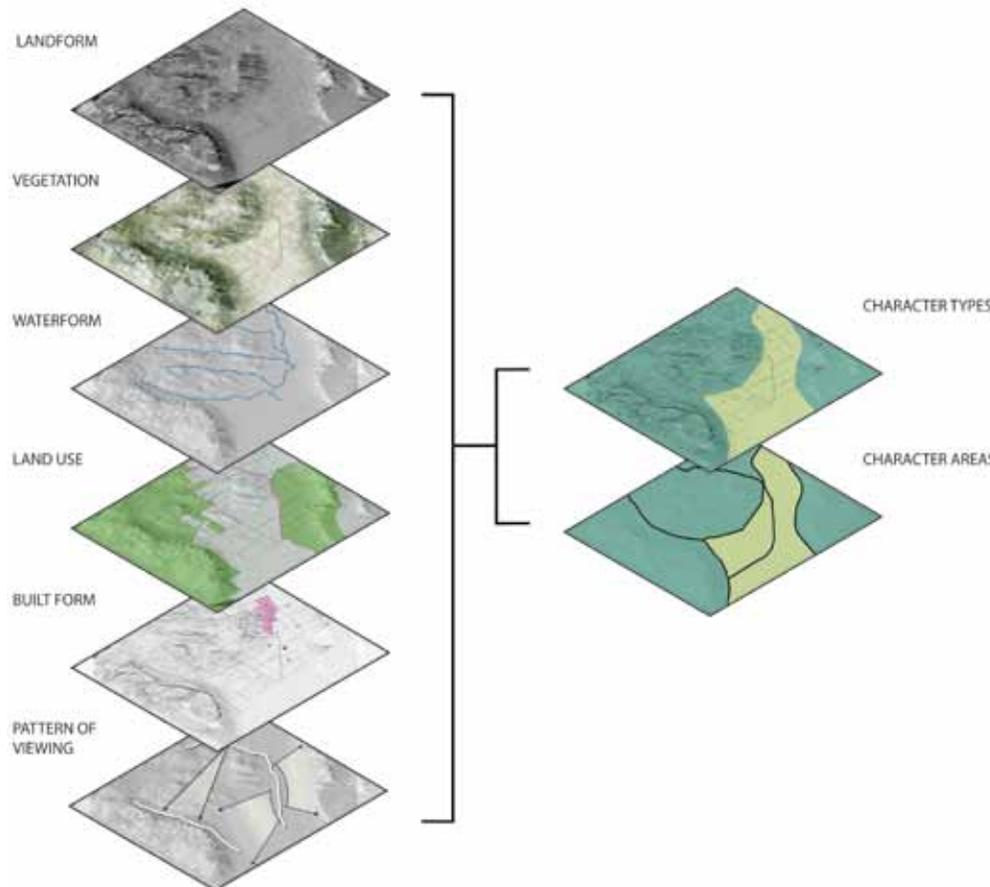
For the purpose of this study, landscape character is defined as the interplay of geology, topography, vegetation, water bodies and other natural features, combined with the effects of land use and built development, which makes one landscape different from another.

The study area has been divided into eight landscape Character Types based on broad areas of common physical, environmental and cultural characteristics. These are shown on the map opposite.

At a local level, each Character Type has been further divided into landscape Character Areas, which are separate geographical units within the same Character Type, or areas across which local conditions, such as the landscape features, or the pattern of viewing, vary.

A professional assessment has underpinned the determination of landscape character, focussing on objective distinctions between Character Types, and the relationship between landscape Character Types and their constituent Character Areas.

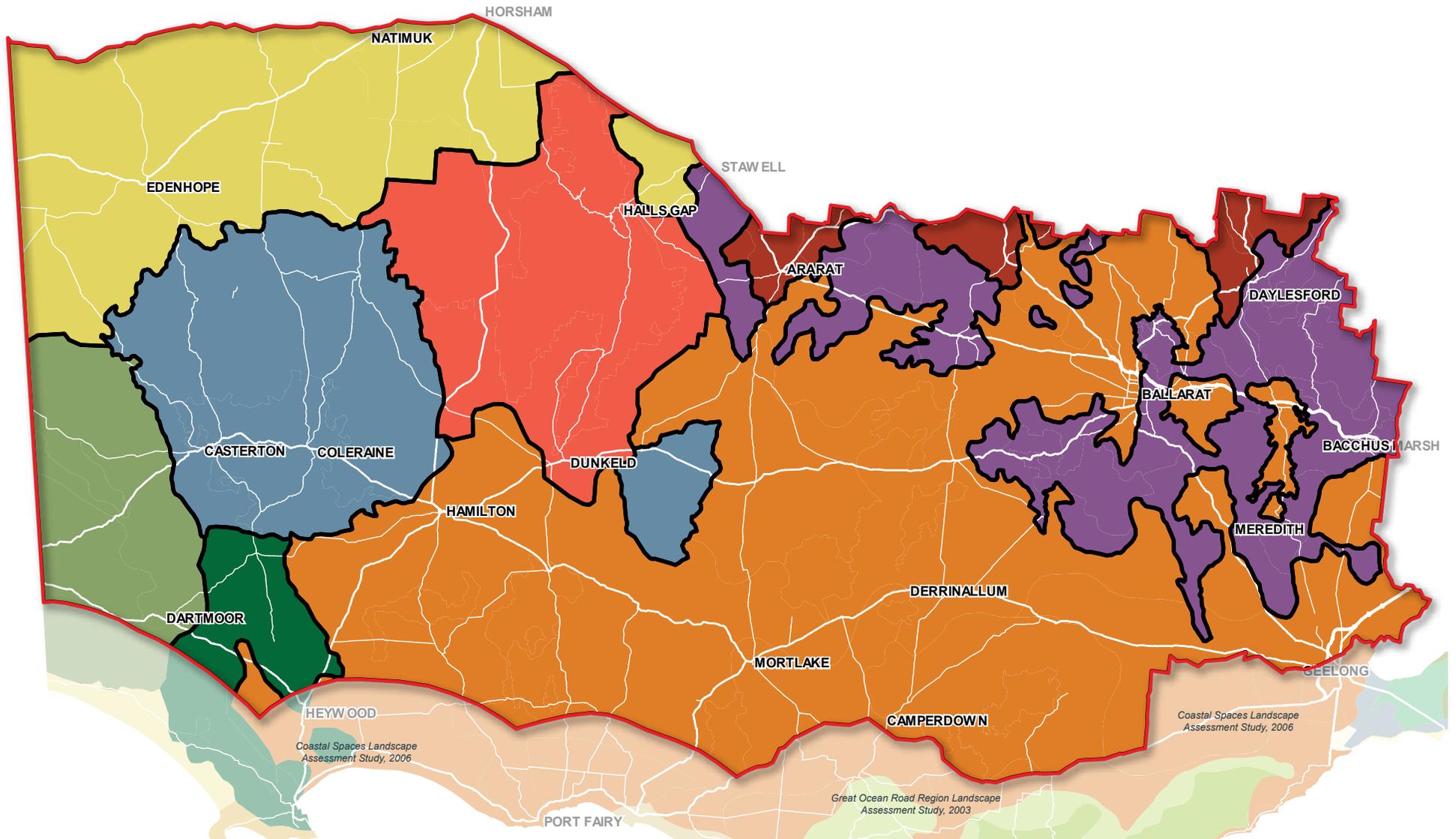
In brief, the Character Types and Areas were identified through a study of key landscape character elements including landform, waterform, vegetation and land use and built form, together with a detailed field survey.



Landscape Character Types

- | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| | 1 | The Western Volcanic Plains |
| | 2 | The Uplands |
| | 3 | Goldfields |
| | 4 | Rolling Tablelands |
| | 5 | The Wimmera Plains |
| | 6 | The Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds |
| | 7 | Vegetated Rises |
| | 8 | Glenelg Plain |

Landscape Character Types of South West Victoria



LANDSCAPE TYPES & AREAS OF SOUTH WEST VICTORIA

1 THE WESTERN VOLCANIC PLAIN

- 1.1 Paddocks & Cones
- 1.2 Large Shallow & Deep Crater Lakes
- 1.3 Volcanic Agricultural
- 1.4 Stony Rises & Lava Flows
- 1.5 Lakeside Stony Rises
- 1.6 Volcanic Lakes & Swamps
- 1.7 Cones & Mines
- 1.8 Volcanic Ranges
- 1.9 Vegetated Volcanic Plains
- 1.10 Partially Wooded Agricultural
- 1.11 Winchelsea Western Plains

2 THE UPLANDS

- 2.1 Forested Hills
- 2.2 Residential Forest Edges
- 2.3 Cleared Pastures
- 2.4 Fertile Valleys
- 2.5 Plateaus & Gorges

2.6 Brisbane Ranges

2.7 You Yangs

2.8 Creswick Forested Uplands

2.9 Rural Living

2.10 Valley Views

2.11 Central Forested Uplands

2.12 Island Uplands

2.13 Eastern Pyrenees

2.14 Southern Pyrenees Rises

2.15 Upland Interface

2.16 Mount Cole Creek

3 GOLDFIELDS

3.1 Agricultural Plateaus

3.2 Goldfields Forests

3.3 Central Goldfields

3.4 Ararat Hills

4 THE ROLLING TABLELANDS

4.1 Eastern Tablelands

4.2 Open Hills & Valleys

4.3 Vegetated Tablelands

5 THE WIMMERA PLAINS

5.1 Lakes & Wetlands

5.2 Cleared Wimmera Catchment

5.3 Lake Lonsdale & Surrounds

5.4 Mount Arapiles

6 GRAMPIANS (GARIWERD) & SURROUNDS

6.1 The Grampians Ranges

6.2 Grampians Surrounds

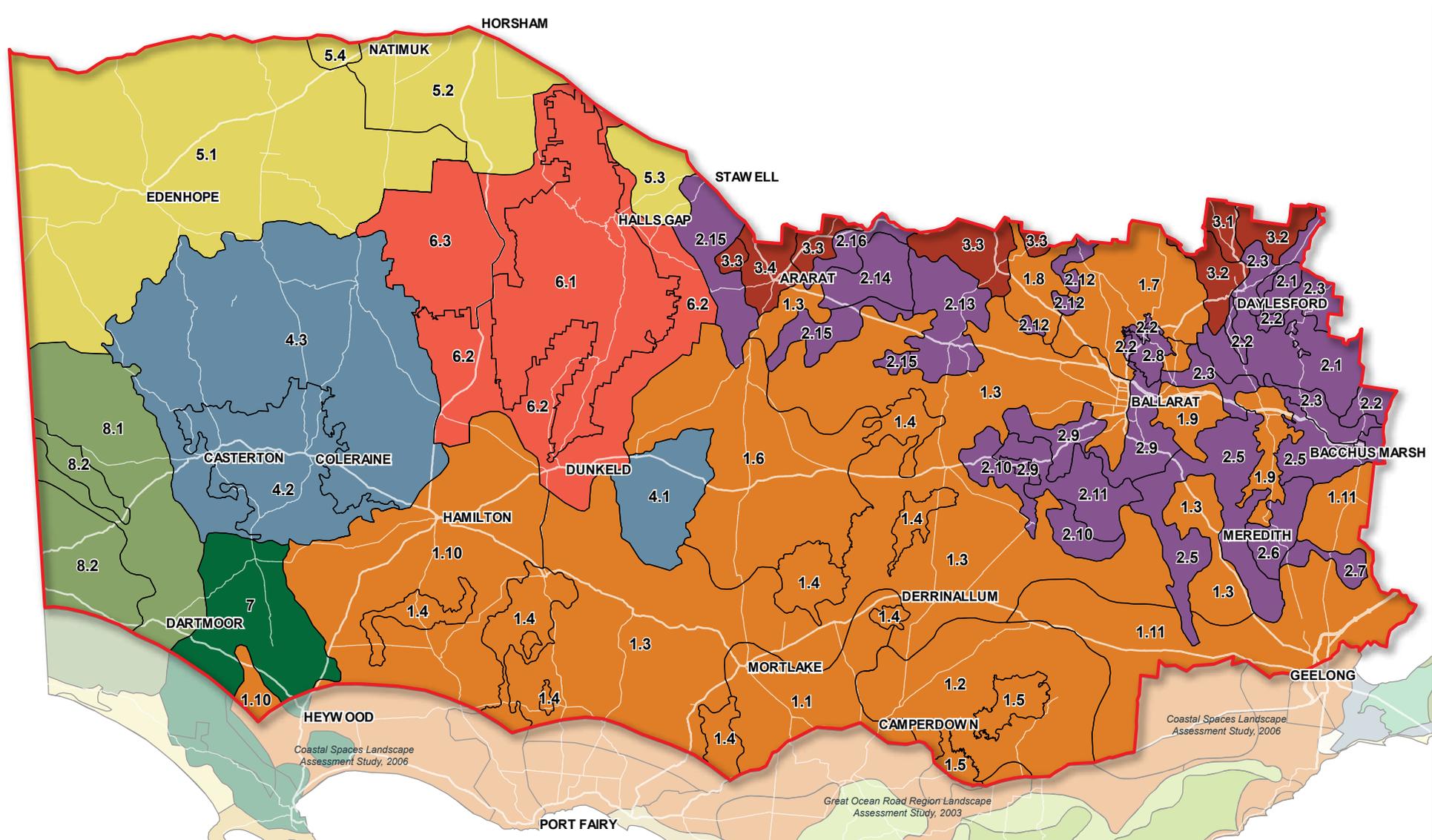
6.3 Black Range & Surrounds

7 VEGETATED RISES

8 GLENELG PLAINS

8.1 Plantations & Reserves

8.2 Pastoral Plain



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES SUMMARY

1. The Western Volcanic Plain

Volcanic activity has shaped much of South West Victoria's landscape. This extensive Character Type is formed by a flat to undulating basaltic plain scattered with volcanic features including stony rises, old lava flows, numerous volcanic cones and old eruption points which together create a unique visual landscape.

This is a place of big skies, long views with volcanic rises that punctuate the horizon. When the first European settlers arrived they found the land primed for agriculture as it contained very few trees. Shelterbelts of cypress and pine were planted to protect crops and livestock from the winds that sweep the plain and are now a defining characteristic of the Type.

The area is dotted with many beautiful lakes and wetlands that are generally broad and shallow and may contain either saline, brackish or fresh water. Some of the wetlands are RAMSAR listed and of international importance.

Many paddocks and roadsides are edged with beautifully formed dry stone walls that were created when early pastoralists cleared the land of rocks for agricultural purposes, to contain stock and to control vermin.



Dry stone walls in the foreground of Mount Noorat

2. The Uplands

Defined by topography, this diverse Character Type rises dramatically to the north of the flat volcanic plain, stretching from near the Grampians Ranges in the west to the edge of the study area at Bacchus Marsh in the east. Fingers of the Victorian Uplands weave with the adjacent Goldfields region along this northern edge to form a rugged landscape of undulating hills and fertile agricultural valleys. Granitic intrusions have formed steeply sloping peaks and ridges, some of which are carpeted in vegetation at higher elevations. Plateaus that are cut by deep river gorges create dramatic landscape features to the south.

While the Uplands are largely cleared for agriculture they also support numerous large areas of public land, including Parks, Reserves and State Forests which contain a wealth of vegetation including wet and dry forests, Box-Ironbark woodlands and endangered grasslands. This is an area of contrasting topography, picturesque vineyards, lush forests, rolling agriculture and residential enclaves.



Granitic outcrops on the slopes of Mount Cole,

3. The Goldfields

Gold transformed Victoria and the Goldfields were at the heart of this transformation. This is a landscape of undulating agricultural land, slashed by steep sided ridges and peaks (predominantly with a northern aspect) and incised by deep narrow gorges. Fingers of the Goldfields Character Type weave into the adjacent Central Victorian Uplands.

This area is dominated by agriculture with large blocks of public land. Remnant forested areas dominate the lower slopes or poorer soils. Exposed quartz, granite and basalt bedrock hint towards the geological make up of the land below. Throughout this Character Area are visible reminders of the gold rush period, with old miners huts and mining shafts found in the forests, and coppiced regrowth of trees once cleared to supply timber for mining operations.



Goldfields landscape north of Ararat

4. The Rolling Tablelands

The Rolling Tablelands Character Type encompasses the Dundas and Merino Tablelands, and an area of rolling topography to the east of the southern arm of the Grampian's Serra Range.

It is defined by a broad plateau of rolling hills dissected by deep river valleys. Significant stands of vegetation line the valleys, creek corridors and roadsides in most part of this Character Type, with the exception of heavily cleared areas in the south-west that displays a much more open characteristic. The land is sparsely settled, with farm buildings and structures blending into the landscape rather than dominating it. Majestic individual Red Gums are a feature of this area.



Long range views to the Grampians north of Coleraine

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES SUMMARY

5. The Wimmera Plains

Ancient sand dunes separated by long, wide swales have formed the basis of the undulating landscape of the Wimmera Plains, which lie between Horsham and the South Australian border.

The landscape is characterised by open, agricultural fields scattered with remnant trees and an extensive network of wetlands and shallow lakes that have formed in the low lying land.



View across shallow lake to Mount Arapiles from the Mitre-Tooan Road

6. The Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds

The Grampians are a visually spectacular range of mountains that rise dramatically from the pastoral plains of Victoria, forming the southernmost part of the Great Dividing Range. Their jagged silhouette is a prominent feature on the distant horizon, visible from many parts of the study area. Up close the mountains have a commanding presence that dwarfs surrounding features. They are often shrouded in cloud and influence the weather patterns around them.

Surrounding the ranges is the flat topography of pastoral land, characterised by the visual presence of the rugged mountain ranges that rise sharply in the distance. This phenomenon is no more visually dramatic than deep

within the Victoria Valley, where productive agricultural land is surrounded by the dominant mountain ranges. Remnant River Red Gums scattered throughout the paddocks and occasionally in large stands are a significant feature of this area, diminishing markedly further south.

When travelling from the west, the scale of the ranges is exacerbated by flat topography, 'big skies' and straight roads, where view lines allow for their presence to incrementally grow in scale upon approach. The area affords spectacular and ever changing views of the jagged terracotta-coloured escarpments and surrounding pastoral land, with the outlook altering dramatically in different light and weather conditions.



View across the ranges from Mount William

7. Vegetated Rises

This Character Type is an interface area that exhibits qualities of the Western Volcanic and Glenelg Plains and the Rolling Tablelands to the north. It is unified by an undulating topography of low hills and river valleys that are for the most part densely vegetated with a combination of plantation forestry and large areas of state and national parks. These are interspersed with cleared pastoral areas that provide views over and across the terrain to hills cloaked by vegetation beyond.

The characteristics of this landscape are driven by alternating patterns of land use with a variety of outlooks and views, and it is this patchwork that unifies it to one Type. There are no distinctive Character Areas, however it merges to the south, extending to Portland and Mount Clay. This southern area is detailed in the Vegetated Rises Character Type within the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study* (DSE, Planisphere, 2006). The area identified in CSLAS is edged by what is now the Cobboonee National Park.



Dartmoor / Digby Region

8. Glenelg Plains

This Character Type encompasses the far western portion of the Study Area and is bounded by the Victorian and South Australian border, and the edges of the tablelands defined by the valley of the Glenelg River. The landscape sits within the “Green Triangle” plantation region that spans across the border, and contains a large number of plantations interspersed with forests. Aerial imagery reveals a highly dense patchwork of both.

On the ground, sandy dirt roads criss-cross a flat to undulating topography, with outward views mostly blocked by tall plantations and scrubby forests. In the south, forested areas give way to more open pastoral land. It is primarily this alternation that has delineated the two Character Areas found in this Type.



Plantation of Radiata Pine



3

SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPES OF SOUTH WEST VICTORIA

DETERMINING LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

Landscape significance is the designation of a particular landscape as special or important arising from its cultural landscape values, including aesthetic values (both visual and non-visual) historic, environmental, scientific, social or other values.

Landscapes are significant to different people for different reasons. These reasons may include their scenic beauty, historic value, environmental qualities, or less tangible values associated with the place, such as memories or associations. The fact that landscape values are held both by individuals and communities, and that many values exist in the subjective territory of human perceptions is what makes the assessment of landscape significance so challenging and often contentious.

For every landscape, a range of factors will combine to create an overall illustration of its value. In some instances, a landscape with many identified values will be considered to have a high level of significance that may warrant a specific approach to its management.

In this study, three sources of information have been used to provide a holistic understanding of the landscapes of South Western Victoria, and to identify their values:

- Detailed **field surveys** undertaken by the study team focussing mainly on the aesthetic values of the study area;
- review of **secondary sources** (existing information as opposed to new research), including historic, environmental, scientific, social and other information or research material; and,
- **community consultation**, which has helped to understand the number of different ways that local people or visitors to the area appreciate and value the landscapes.

LANDSCAPE VALUES

Five cultural landscape values are included in the definition of 'landscape significance' and an assessment of these values has been used to determine the significance of various landscapes throughout the study area.

1. Aesthetic Values

Aesthetic value relates to the 'sense of the beautiful' and includes both visual and non-visual aspects of landscape, i.e. consideration of the landscape from the point of view of all human senses (sight, touch, sound, taste and smell). An indicator of aesthetic value may also include depiction of the landscape in artwork, photography, or another cultural art.

Landscape Components

In order to determine the overall aesthetic value of landscape, three 'landscape components' have been assessed:

Landscape Features

A landscape feature is a topographic feature or prominent landmark such as a headland, mountain range or volcanic cone that is visually dramatic and provides the landscape with its 'wow' factor. The prevalence or concentration of a particular landscape element or vegetation type e.g. River Red Gums, rocky outcrops, dry stone walls etc., may also be classified as a landscape feature.

In relation to landscape features, the following criterion has been developed, which informs the determination and level of significance:

The landscape is distinctive or inspirational for its landscape feature or features that attract the viewer and may evoke an emotional response.

Edges or Contrasts

Edges or contrasts include the point of intersection between two landscape elements e.g. the coastline (the boundary between sea and land); the edge of a forest or a lake; the boundary between vegetation types or different landform types; the intersection between a mountain range and a plain; or an incised valley etc. The existence of edges or contrasts in the landscape provides visual diversity, a quality associated with scenic value.

In relation to edges or contrasts, the following criterion has been developed:

The landscape is aesthetically compelling for its edges or contrasts that provide visual variety and interest.

Composition

The composition of a landscape is its make-up or constitution, including arrangements or patterns of colour, textures, features etc. and the form, scale and unity of these and other elements.

In relation to composition, the following criterion has been developed:

The landscape has outstanding compositional qualities, the combination of which achieve a unified whole, and provide the setting or subject of notable views.

2. Historic Values

Historic value encompasses the history of the landscape both pre and post contact, and often underpins other cultural landscape values. It may be that the landscape is associated with an important historical event, figure or theme in history, and evidence of that historic value may or may not be visible.

For the purposes of this study, no primary research was undertaken to determine historic value. Rather, it was concluded from existing documentation or secondary sources such as the Aboriginal Affairs Victoria Register, the Victorian Heritage Register, the National Heritage List, the existence of Heritage Overlays in local planning schemes, and other material such as historic photographs and maps etc.

3. Environmental & Scientific Values

Environmental and/or scientific value relates to the biological conditions or 'natural' attributes of the landscape, including flora and fauna habitats, archaeological or geological attributes etc.

Secondary sources used to determine environmental and/or scientific value included the Ramsar Convention, the existence of Environmental Significance Overlays in local planning schemes, the existence of National or State Parks, or Geoparks etc.

4. Social Values

Social value encompasses those aspects of the landscape that are associated with a community or cultural group, and may cross over with historic value. A landscape may have social value as an important local landmark, or because it relates to the identity of a community, or it may have spiritual meaning to a particular group. Determination of social value also includes consideration of the landscape as a tourism destination.

Secondary sources used to determine social value include Tourism Australia and Tourism Victoria information and publications, various heritage registers etc.

5. Other Value

The fifth category of cultural landscape values encompasses any other value that is relevant to the significance of the landscape and may include economic value, for example.

Consideration of these values and their 'weightings' has evolved somewhat from when the Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study was undertaken in 2003, and the Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study in 2006. While the briefs for those projects emphasised the consideration of visual values, this study has adopted a more holistic approach to landscape significance (by elevating the consideration of other cultural landscape values), while necessarily retaining an emphasis on the aesthetic. This emphasis on the aesthetic value of landscape is required because the starting point for the study is the visual characterisation of landscape (as required by the purpose and content of the Significant Landscape Overlay). In addition, recommendations are based on the protection and management of that character, and primary research and field surveys are centred on the collection of physical characteristics and aesthetic value.

LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE

AESTHETIC VALUE

RATING CONSIDERATIONS

In order to determine a level of aesthetic significance for each landscape component, and ultimately each landscape, the following 'rating considerations' are applied:

- **EXEMPLARY**

How representative or illustrative is the landscape (and its features, edges or contrasts, and composition)? Is it 'the best' of its type? Is it exemplary within the local, regional or state context?

- **ICONIC**

Is the landscape (and its features, edges or contrasts, and composition) instantly recognisable? Is it symbolic for its visual qualities? Has it been represented in art, photography, literature etc.? Is it iconic within the local, regional or state context?

- **SCARCE**

How uncommon, rare or endangered is the landscape (and its features, edges or contrasts, and composition)? Is it scarce within the local, regional or state context?

SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS

Levels of significance are attributed to each landscape component, and an overall significance level in relation to aesthetic value is determined. The significance levels are:

Moderate = local significance

High = regional significance

Exceptional = State significance or higher

The final determination of significance level for aesthetic value is not a matter of adding up the number of 'moderate' or 'high' ratings. Rather, if a landscape rates 'high' for example in one or more of the landscape components, that level is the overall significance rating attributed to the aesthetic values of that landscape. (Just as the usual standard for listing a place on a heritage register, for instance, is that a place meets one or more criteria.)

OTHER CULTURAL LANDSCAPE VALUES

Levels of significance are attributed to other cultural landscape values i.e. historic, environmental and/or scientific, social and other values, based on the stated level of significance in the secondary source, or based on the source itself e.g. a landscape that forms part of the Victorian Heritage Register is logically of State significance.

For the purpose of this study, a landscape cannot be classified as significant for its historic, environmental and/or scientific, social or other values alone, as primary research has not been undertaken, and as such a designation could not be justified at a panel hearing. In order for a landscape to be classified as significant, it must have aesthetic value.



Mt Elephant, image courtesy of Andrew Miller

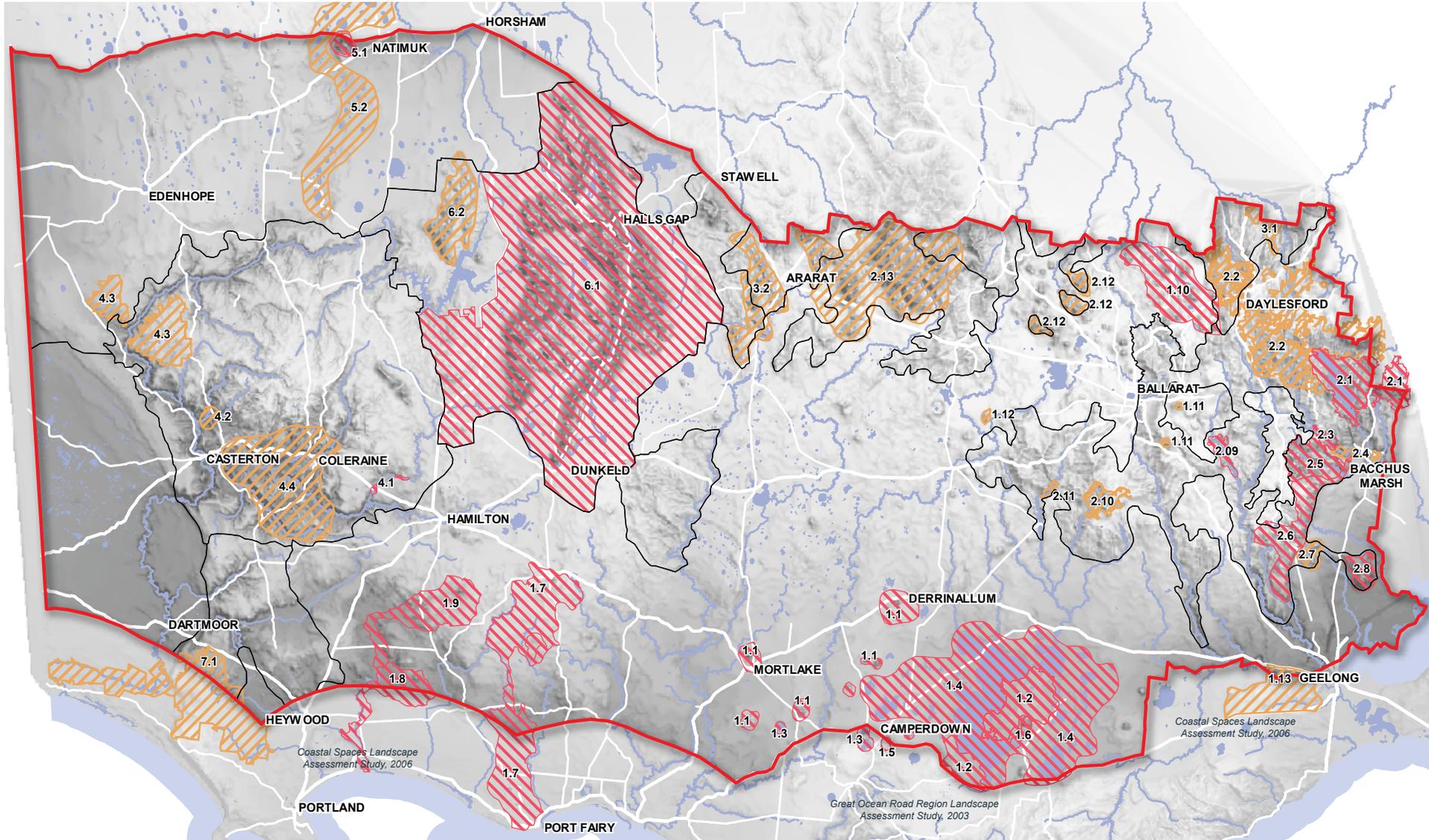
LANDSCAPES OF STATE & REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

At the outset of this stage broad landscape investigation areas were examined in detail and an assessment of their cultural landscape values was undertaken (refer to the methodology outlined on the previous page). These detailed assessments led to the designation of some landscapes as regionally significant, and others of state significance (or higher, though a rating of 'national' significance has not been attributed due to the scale/context of the study, and the inability to justify such a rating through comparative analysis.)

1. Western Volcanic Plain		3. Goldfields	
1.1 Southern Cones	State	3.1 Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park	Regional
1.2 Lakeside Stony Rises	State	3.2 Ararat Hills & Ridges	Regional
1.3 Volcanic Lakes	State	4. The Rolling Tablelands	
1.4 Inland Lakes	State	4.1 Wannon & Nigretta Falls	State
1.5 Mount Leura Complex	State	4.2 The Hummocks, Wando Vale	Regional
1.6 Red Rock Volcanic Complex	State	4.3 Dergholm State Park	Regional
1.7 Mount Rouse	State	4.4 Merino Tablelands	Regional
1.8 Mount Eccles (Budj Bim) & Tyrendarra Lava Flow	State	5. The Wimmera Plains	
1.9 Mount Napier & Harmans Valley Lava Flow	State	5.1 Mount Arapiles	State
1.10 Hepburn Gold Mines & Volcanic District	State	5.2 Natimuk - Douglas Wetland System	Regional
1.11 Mount Buninyong & Mount Warrenheip	Regional	6. The Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds	
1.12 Mount Emu	Regional	6.1 The Grampians (Gariwerd)	State (or higher)
1.13 Barrabool Hills	Regional	6.2 Black Range (Burrunj) State Park	Regional
2. The Uplands		7. Vegetated Rises	
2.1 Lerderderg Gorge & State Park	State	7.1 Cobboboonee & Lower Glenelg National Parks	Regional
2.2 Wombat State Forest & Hepburn Regional Park	Regional		
2.3 Werribee Gorge	State		
2.4 Bacchus Marsh Agricultural Valley	Regional		
2.5 Parwan Valley	State		
2.6 Brisbane Ranges & Rowsley Scarp	State		
2.7 Anakie Hills	Regional		
2.8 You Yangs	State		
2.9 Lal Lal Gorge	State		
2.10 Enfield State Park	Regional		
2.11 Devils Kitchen	Regional		
2.12 Island Uplands	Regional		
2.13 Lower Pyrenees	Regional		

Map Legend

	STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE BOUNDARIES
	RIVERS
	WATERBODIES
	SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE: STATE
	SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE: REGIONAL



1.1 Southern Cones

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

State

This landscape contains some of the most significant and iconic volcanic rises to be found in Western Victoria. Spreading out across the landscape from many of these features are the low stony rises of their lava flows. Paddocks and roadsides are often lined with impressive and intact dry stone walls. The landscape is dispersed with numerous large bodies of water (discussed in the “Inland Lakes” Significance Paper.).

These volcanic features rise up dramatically from the open and slightly undulating agricultural plain. Many of them are visible on the horizon from long distances away, and create a high level of contrast and visual interest in the landscape. The lakes in the area provide additional wide, flat surfaces that further highlights the prominence of the cones. Geometric shapes of shelterbelts and property edges run at sharp angles to the features.

1.2 Lakeside Stony Rises

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

State

This landscape is composed of dense hummocks of stony rises that circle the southern and eastern sides of Lake Corangamite. These originated from the explosive volcanic activity that occurred at Mount Porndon and the Red Rocks Complex. Few roads cut through the stony rises, and where they exist, they take the form of weaving goat tracks with sharp crests that move around the obstacles in the landscape, rather than formally surveyed roads. Vegetation is low and scrubby, with a windswept, coastal appearance. There are beautifully formed and intact dry stone walls throughout the area.

There is a distinctive contrast between the rough, lumpy landscape and the smooth, flat waters of Lake Corangamite that are visible at high points. Among the rocks of the rises bracken, grasses and low, scrubby vegetation grows. In some parts the landscape is thick with remnant vegetation. This peters out to more open, cleared areas that remain dotted with rises. There is a stark contrast to areas clear of rocks, where pastures predominantly used for grazing open out. Nestled throughout the stony rises are a number of small lakes and seasonal wetland areas that provide additional visual interest.



1.1 Mount Elephant



1.2 Lakeside Stony Rises

1.3 Volcanic Lakes

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

State

These maars are volcanic lakes formed when rising magma hit the water table. They are shaped into almost perfect circles, with the exception of Bullen Merri which appears as though three circles have joined to make a clover leaf pattern. Lakes Gnotuk and Bullen Merri are twin lakes separated by a high saddle of land. The edges are surrounded by prominent scoria tuff rings, which slope down to form deep craters.

The edges of the lakes feature the grassy, pastoral landscape of the volcanic plain while the vast water bodies dominate the middle ground. The colour of the water in these lakes may vary from a stunning aqua to a deep blue, which is deeper and richer than many of the shallower lakes in the region. Saline lakes are striped with white lines of salt that are blown up the edges by the constant wind. Background views feature the distant rims of the lakes, and sweeping side to side panoramas across them highlight their circular formations. Mount Noorat rises in the background in the centre of Lake Keilambete when viewed from a gap in the roadside vegetation on the southern edge. Numerous volcanic rises are also visible in the background of views across Bullen Merri and Gnotuk, and the broad flat landscape of the volcanic plain that is broken by large inland lakes and volcanic features opens out at high points on the saddle between them.

1.4 Inland Lakes

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

State

This landscape features a high concentration of lakes and waterbodies in the flat to undulating landscape of the volcanic plain. This collection includes the expansive water of Lake Corangamite, and numerous other lakes including Lake Weeranganuk, Lake Gnarpurt, Lake Milangil, Lake Colongulac, Lake Martin, Lake Beeac and Lake Colac, as well as many seasonal wetlands and that occur.

The flat surfaces of the lakes stand out in stark contrast with the surrounding pastoral land. The shores are often lined with sedges and reedy water plants with broad sandy banks. Saline lakes often have a crust of white crystals around their edges.

The lakes sometimes appear as glints across broad paddocks, barely noticeable to the eye at ground level, while other times they open up to dominate from the foreground of a view well into the middle distance. They have a tendency to reflect the colours of the sky, sometimes shimmering bright blue or cloudy grey, or reflecting the colours in the sunset.



1.3 Lake Gnotuk



1.4 Lake Milangil

1.5 Mount Leura Complex

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

State

Mount Leura is a complex nested maar which includes a series of scoria cones and craters that covers an area of 2.5km by 1.7km. Mount Leura is the largest of these, rising to a height of over 300m and offering panoramic views over the surrounding landscape. Separated from Mount Leura by a deep crater is the distinctive Mount Sugarloaf, an unusually symmetrical volcanic rise with a conical shape and a spiralling path indented into the steep side.

The volcanic complex contrasts in texture with the surrounding flat pastoral plains. The undulating hills and crater depressions form a visually interesting, almost surreal landscape which is punctuated by the rising cones of Mount Leura and Mount Sugarloaf.

Cropping on the lower slopes of the hilly complex intensifies the contrast in colour and texture, with lower slopes seasonally enveloped in bright green and giving way to the lighter green steep rises.

The landscape is mostly cleared of vegetation with occasional stands of vegetation and low shrubs peppering the summit of Mount Sugarloaf. Dark green exotic shelterbelts feature in the landscape and scoria mining has scarred the slopes.

1.6 Red Rocks Complex

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

State

Red Rocks is one of the most complex eruption points in western Victoria and includes maars, tuff rings and scoria cones surrounded by a rocky lava flow from another source (probably Warrion Hill). The Red Rock formation contains two major cones with a horseshoe shaped ridge joining them, and a deep central crater. Surrounding and adjacent to this are nine entire craters up to 75m, some containing lakes including Lakes Purdiguluc, Werowrap and Coragulac.

In the foreground of the landscape the scoria cones and tuff rings surrounding the maars contrast against the flat agricultural plain to create a visually interesting layering of landscape elements.

The Red Rocks Complex displays exposed red rock, rolling hills and sunken depressions. Panoramic views from the peaks of the cones stretch out across the flat plains and vast inland lakes. The horizon is occasionally interrupted by the conical rises of distant volcanos. Milky white saline lakes reflect the sky and built development can be seen dotted around the flat volcanic plain.



1.5 Scoria cones in the Leura Maar



1.6 Exposed red rock

1.7 Mount Rouse

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

State

Mount Rouse is a massive accumulation of scoria rising 100m above the surrounding volcanic plain. Major quarrying has scarred the scoria cone on the eastern and southern edges. To the south of the main scoria cone is a deep circular crater with a small lake and a smaller shallow crater rimmed with basalt.

The lava flow from Mount Rouse is one of the most intact and visually prominent flows found on the Victorian Volcanic Plain. It is composed of large, hummocky stony rises that churn across the open paddocks. Some of these are quite prominent, rising to up to 10 metres, while in other areas the texture is more subtle.

The exposed geology evokes a sense of the explosive landscape of Victoria, exporting the viewer back in time as one imagines a scorching river of bubbling lava, hot, smoky and slowly flowing south. Senses are heightened as Australian volcanologists and seismologists now agree that the relative age of recent eruptions, along with renewed activities such as tremors and hot springs, imply the possibility of further activity.

1.8 Mount Eccles (Budj Bim) & Tyrendarra Lava Flow

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

State

The Mount Eccles (Budj Bim) and Tyrendarra Lava Flow comprises a wealth of diverse volcanic features including lava flows, cultural artifacts, eruption points, stony rises, lakes, and wetlands.

Mount Eccles is a dormant volcano which rises from the surrounding National Park. Scoria mining scars the edge of the volcano and is prominent when viewed from the east. The central feature of the volcano is Lake Surprise which lies deep within the crater rim surrounded by native vegetation.

Lava flowed from Mount Eccles creating the textured rocky valley floor and stony rises of the Tyrendarra lava flow. The lava flow also created lakes and wetlands including Lake Condah, which contains a complex network of stone structures that were used as fish creeks, ponds, weirs, traps and gates by the Gunditjmara people.



1.7 Looking east towards Mount Rouse



1.8 Mount Eccles (Budj Bim) the source of the Tyrendarra lava flow

1.9 Mount Napier & Harmans Valley Lava Flow

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

State

This volcanic precinct comprises a wealth of features including lava flows, lava caves, eruption points and stony rises.

The densely vegetated Mount Napier rises from the surrounding flat volcanic plain, offering visual relief and punctuating the horizon. The Harmans Valley lava flow forms an flowing expanse of rocky textured along the valley floor which interrupts the regular patterns of the surrounding paddocks. This has created a rugged, exposed landscape which twists and turns as it travels south.

The lava caves of the Byaduk area and the Tumuli lava blisters are additional significant features. The caves display tubular crinkles, furrows and folds of lava while the lava blisters display ethereal mounds of sculptural stones.

1.10 Hepburn Gold Mines & Volcanic District

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

State

The Hepburn Gold Mines & Volcanic District features a dense cluster of rounded volcanic rises scattered across the rolling landscape.

Interspersed between the rises are numerous steep sided mullock heaps, leftovers from the era of deep lead gold mining. These mounds tower out of the paddocks and remain largely intact despite being exposed to weathering for over a century. In addition, the ruins of the mine buildings are highly evocative of the gold mining heritage that shaped this region, and had a wide-ranging impact upon Victoria's early development.

Birch Creek is evident as a dense line of vegetation that meanders through the middle ground of the landscape.

The surrounding pastoral land is typical of the volcanic regions in Victoria, dotted with occasional paddock trees, with lines of shelterbelts and vegetation marking property boundaries and paddock edges.

The various volcanic rises create numerous points of focus in the otherwise broad, sweeping pastoral land. Often they break the horizon with distinctive silhouettes. The mullock heaps provide an interesting level of detail that differs from, but complements, the form of the rises. The topography reveal sweeping views with these features scattered throughout.



1.9 Mount Napier



1.10 Birch Hill, with gold mining evident on the lower slopes, and Forest Hill visible in the background

1.11 Mount Buninyong & Mount Warrenheip

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

Mount Buninyong and Mount Warrenheip are both distinctive steep sided volcanic features and examples of breached scoria cones. Neither feature has been quarried which is a rarity in Victoria. Both of these volcanic features have an elevation of over 700m above sea level and are two of the few scoria eruption points to retain a natural woodland cover.

Mount Buninyong and Mount Warrenheip are recognisable landmarks, their dark green rises visible from the Grampians, the Otways and the sea-cliffs at Barwon Heads. The volcanic cones punctuate the horizon creating interest for the viewer in an otherwise flat landscape.

Panoramic views are available from the summits of Mount Buninyong and Mount Warrenheip. The foreground and midground of these views are dominated by the landscape of agriculture of the volcanic plains, with cleared paddocks separated by shelterbelts with some areas of remnant vegetation, particularly along creek lines.

1.12 Mount Emu

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

Mount Emu is a prominent granitic hill that rises 160 metres from the flat volcanic plain. It is highly visible from a number of angles across the surrounding landscape.

At closer range, large and bulbous granite outcrops that stud the surface of the rise create intense textural variation. These contrast with the surrounding pastoral land and provide a high level of visual interest.

The land surrounding Mount Emu is cleared pastoral land dotted with trees and occasional clumps of vegetation. The long, low formation of the hill is easily distinguished from long distances away. The granite chunks that protrude on the mid to upper slopes have a smooth, weathered appearance that marks their age as considerably older than the volcanic rises found on the plain. It is located in an open, windswept and sparsely populated area.



1.11 Mount Warrenheip



1.12 Mount Emu: Mount Emu, visible from Snake Valley area west of Ballarat

1.13 Barrabool Hills

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

The hills display a varied topography that gently rises from the surrounding flat volcanic plains. The steeply incised Barwon River Valley is visible as a drop in the landscape that is lined with vegetation.

A flat, grassy foreground and middle-ground is often punctuated with piles of rocks dug from paddocks and edged with low dry stone walls, which reveals the history of land use on the volcanic plain. Clear views are available across these paddocks towards the hills from the Hamilton Highway. While the Barwon River valley is not a dominant feature in the view, there is a distinctive drop in the landscape before it rises up to join the smooth, rolling Barabool Hills. The hills area is a highly scenic aspect of the view, creating an undulating and interesting horizon line.

2.1 Lerderderg Gorge & State Park

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

State

A landscape of forested hills through which the Lerderderg River has cut through sandstone and slate to create a deep gorge with walls rising to 400m and exposed rocky cliffs. This gorge stretches south to the flat volcanic plains near Bacchus Marsh. The Lerderderg River weaves through this landscape past rocky boulders and sandy beaches.

Within the park the folding, hilly topography surrounding the Lerderderg Gorge is blanketed in thick vegetation with some exposed rocky outcrops. The landscape is wild and rugged, most of it accessible only by foot.

The Goodmans Creek Valley runs along the eastern edge of the State Park, dividing the park from the surrounding agricultural and rural residential land, and the cleared Pentland Hills skirt the southern edge.

The edges of the State Park to the north are undefined, merging with the surrounding Wombat State Forest to become part of a wider forested landscape to the north and west.

The edges of the Lerderderg Gorge are clearly defined through changes in topography and the dramatic shift in colour and texture. Dark green, heavily vegetated areas give way to steep sided rocky cliffs which plummet towards the valley floor.



1.13 Barrabool Hills: Views toward the Barrabool Hills from Hamilton Highway



2.1 View over the Lerderderg State Park from Mount Blackwood

2.2 Wombat State Forest & Hepburn Regional Park

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

This landscape is defined by areas within the Wombat State Forest and Hepburn Regional Parks around the towns of Daylesford and Hepburn Springs. It contains a number of features including Trentham Falls, Deep Creek, Loddon Falls and numerous mineral springs.

The Trentham Falls are the largest single drop falls in Victoria and create a dramatic contrast in texture and sound with the surrounding forest. Basalt columns and rushing water contrast with the vegetated bush setting to create a sensory experience.

The springs and falls are set within a forested backdrop and often feature dramatic rock formations and exposed bedrock which has been worn into sculptural shapes. Exposed quartz and granite features in worn river beds and pathways while damp moss and ferns give the vegetation a lush and earthy feel. Falls and springs can be viewed from above with a foreground of bushland and the rushing water featuring in the middle ground, or from below at close range, where the rushing water dominates the foreground with the bush setting creating the background to views.

2.3 Werribee Gorge

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

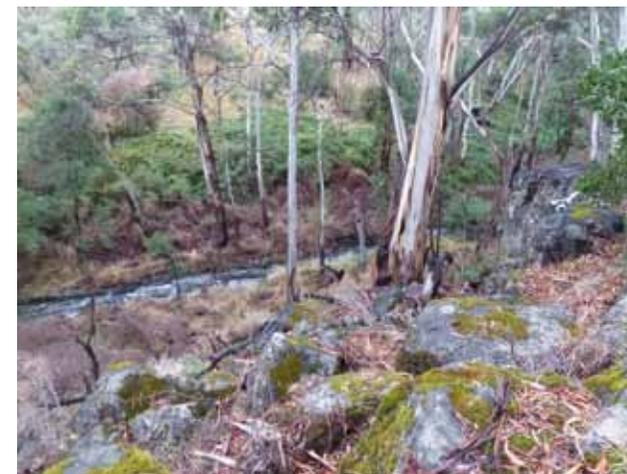
State

The formation of the Werribee Gorge slices through the surrounding cleared plateau, to the west of Bacchus Marsh. The gorge retains a rugged aesthetic of exposed craggy rock faces, native bushland, the Werribee river and steep sided valley walls.

Edges of this landscape are defined by topography and vegetation. Cleared plains give way suddenly to steep vegetated valley walls and exposed rock faces. Colours and textures deepen and become more exaggerated towards the base of the gorge.

Red and orange exposed rock faces contrast with the light and dark green vegetation which clings to the rock in some locations. The Werribee River winds along the base of the gorge rushing between rocks and boulders and creating another layer of texture and colour within the landscape.

Views across the gorge from the adjacent plateau are dramatic and expansive, sweeping and panoramic. They are generally composed of a foreground of flat to undulating agricultural plains with occasional scrub which give way to a middle ground of the cavernous, deep gorge, peppered with vegetation. In the far distance views terminate at the opposing flat plateau.



2.2 Deep Spring Reserve



2.3 The steep sided valley of the Werribee Gorge, as viewed from Ironbark Road

2.4 Bacchus Marsh Agricultural Valley

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

This landscape comprises the lush and colourful market gardens on the valley floors near Bacchus Marsh, in parts that are edged by steep valley walls of the surrounding gorges.

Views of it are filtered through the impressive Avenue of Honour that forms the main entrance to Bacchus Marsh from the Western Freeway, and along the Werribee Vale Road.

The man made regularity of the market gardens form a patchwork of colour and texture across the valley floor. Occasional vertical agricultural elements enhance the repetitive and ordered visual appearance of this landscape.

The valley walls have a more natural and organic character, in terms of their landform and vegetation, and create a defined edge and immediate visual contrast to the vibrant and regular patterns of the valley floor.

Vegetation along the base of the valley walls adds another layer of colour and texture to the landscape.

2.5 Parwan Valley

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

State

The Parwan Valley dissects the plateaus beyond the Rowsley Fault line, to the north of the Brisbane Ranges and to the southwest of Bacchus Marsh. It is a deeply incised valley with a basalt rock escarpment and edges that drops off sharply. The Parwan Creek meanders along the valley floor, fed by the Yaloak and Spring Creeks. “The Bluff” is a prominent volcanic ridge to the south of Glenmore Road, rising 150m from the valley floor.

There is a sharp and dramatic contrast that occurs as the steep walls of the Parwan Valley drop away from the flat and relatively featureless plateau. Parts of the valley are heavily cloaked in vegetation, while others are completely devoid of it which accentuates the formation of the hills and ridges contained within. In many places, the valley walls are weathered away, revealing sculptural features and sharp, contrasting angles such as seen on The Bluff. Scarring from numerous landslips can also be seen on the slopes of this feature.



2.4 Hills rise abruptly from the valley floor, Werribee Vale Road



2.5 Views across the Parwan Valley from Glenmore Road

2.6 Brisbane Ranges & Rowsley Scarp

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

State

The Brisbane Ranges are a low range of mountains dissected by rugged rocky gullies and gorges, and blanketed in thick tree cover.

The Rowsley Scarp is a long ridgeline that rises to 230 metres above the sunken flat lands that border Port Phillip Bay. It sharply defines edge of the Victorian Uplands region that features flat plateaus and deeply incised gorges, and marks the eastern edge of the Brisbane Ranges.

The Scarp is a high protrusion that rises from the flat to undulating landscape. The eastern edge of the Brisbane Ranges National Park is heavily vegetated and this provides a contrast with the cleared land on the Volcanic Plain. Further north near Bacchus Marsh the slopes of the Brisbane Ranges are predominantly cleared, and the underlying structure of the landform (such as variations between sheer faces and more gentle rises) is more apparent.

In contrast to the eastern edge, the western edge of the Brisbane Ranges does not display visually strong edges, with low hills and vegetation cover which 'bleeds' into the surrounding landscape.

2.7 Anakie Hills

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

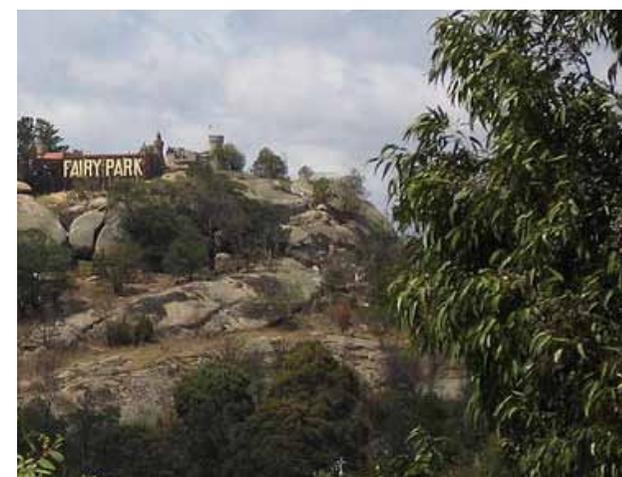
Near Anakie a small collection of volcanic cones known as the Anakie Hills abuts the edge of the Rowsley Scarp.

The Anakie Hills include Mount Anakie along with two other scoria cones and a volcanic depression which is likely to be a maar. The volcanos are adjacent to a landscape scattered with impressive granite tors and slabs, including the prominent hill that has the "Fairy Park" children's theme park located on it.

The Anakie Hills rise sharply from the plain, with distinct conical formations that provide highly scenic landscape variation before becoming engulfed in the vegetation of the Brisbane Ranges. In some areas sculptural granitic tors are scattered across the landscape which creates a high level of visual interest.



2.6 Brisbane Ranges



2.7 Exposed granite tors and slabs provide the setting for 'Fairy Park'

2.8 Wurdi Youang (You Yangs)

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

State

The You Yangs are a series of granite ranges that rise from the Werribee Plain between Melbourne and Geelong. Most of the rises are included in the You Yangs Regional Park. Flinders Peak is the highest point in the park, with an elevation of around 350 metres. From here views are available across the Brisbane Ranges, Geelong and Corio Bay, to Melbourne and as far away as Mount Macedon.

The triangular peaks of the You Yangs are a distinctive landscape feature that dominates the horizon from a number of viewing angles. Up close, weathered granite outcrops and tors on the faces of the hill slopes create intricate detail, and impressive sculptural forms. These often feature in the foreground and middle ground of views, with the dramatic backdrop of the ranges in the distance. The landscape surrounding the You Yangs often contains rough, textured surfaces of stony rises and lava flows that originated from volcanic activity at the nearby Anakie Hills.

2.9 Lal Lal Gorge

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

State

The Lal Lal Gorge is a steep sided basalt gorge carved out of a volcanic lava flow by the waters of Lal Lal Creek. The gorge is surrounded by gently undulating pastoral land and forested areas. It carves a deeply incised cleft that twists through the landscape before joining the broader waters of the Lal Lal Reservoir in the east.

Distinctive edges and contrasts are created as the grassland gives way to the textured, deep red and grey rock columns that line the walls of the gorge. The exposed rocks with undercut sides cast deep shadows on the rocky cliff faces which descend to a valley floor of crumbling basalt rocks, pools of water and tufts of vegetation.

Picture postcard views are available over this spectacular landscape. The basaltic gorge plunges dramatically into a deep, cavernous floor of textured rock and flowing water. The falls at one end create a scenic point of focus from the viewing platform. Surrounding the gorge, the gently undulating pastoral landscape is peppered with gum trees and in the distance the volcanic rises of Mounts Buninyong and Warrenheip are visible.



2.8 Granite rocks



2.9 Lal Lal Falls by Andrew Thomas

2.10 Enfield State Park

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

The Enfield State Park is a thickly vegetated area with visible signs of a history of gold mining and forestry. Nearly half of the park is available for fossicking or panning for gold along Misery Creek.

The thick vegetated cover of the Park contrasts with the cleared surrounding paddocks, however, the edges of the park are undefined as it merges into the surrounding State Forest. Rural residential development and small hobby farms on the periphery of the park are often set back into the bush which assists with blending development into the landscape.

2.11 Devils Kitchen

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

Open, rolling pastures are deeply incised by the steep-sided basalt gorge of the Woody Yallock River, forming the Devils Kitchen.

The steep basaltic cliffs of the Devils Kitchen comprise highly distinctive formations of columnar ridges and stacked, box-like sculptural rocks. Scrubby vegetation clings to the edges of these cliffs, blending the exposed rocky faces into the cleared, grassy plains above.

Amongst the surrounding rolling hills of the Central Forested Uplands Area, the Devils Kitchen is a unique and distinctive feature.



2.10 Enfield State Park



2.11 Devils Kitchen

2.12 Island Uplands

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

The Island Uplands rise as three individual landforms (Mount Beckworth, Mount Bolton and Mount Ercildoune) from the northern edges of the Western Volcanic Plain. Their prominence is visible from long distances away. The Waubra wind farm is sited to the east of the rises, and the tops of turbines are a visible feature in many parts of this landscape.

The granitic outcrops and tors on the slopes of the Island Uplands are an outstanding feature that provides additional visual interest. Edges of pine plantation also provide a contrast, though this has resulted in ugly scarring on the landscape where they have been felled in a number of places.

The steep slopes are partially vegetated which has left the rock-strewn faces and bulging granitic outcrops exposed. These rugged features differentiate the Island Uplands from the smooth, rounded volcanic rises found in the adjacent area east of Clunes.

2.13 Lower Pyrenees

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

This landscape includes the forested areas and steep escarpments of Mount Buangor, Mount Cole, Mount Lonarch and Mount Langhi Ghiran and the cleared undulating valleys in between. Rugged granite peaks and gentle sloping woodlands rise from the surrounding plains which are peppered with ancient Red Gums. To the east towards Amphitheatre, ridge landforms are visible, some of which are cleared allowing open views of the topography.

The striking silhouettes are, in places, surrounded by the regular pattern of a productive landscape as vines and orchards follow the contours of the land.

The dark green forested rises contrast in colour and texture with the cleared yellowish pastoral plains from which they rise. Native vegetation occasionally gives way to the regular texture and colour of pine plantations. In some places, plantations create geometrical scars across the steep sided rises as they have been partially cleared.



2.12 Exposed granite outcrops



2.13 Mount Buangor

3.1 Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park

Landscape Character Type

3. The Goldfields

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

Australia's first national heritage park displays a landscape of hills, ridges, gullies, creeks and rivers. The Park retains numerous visual reminders of Victoria's gold mining history including miners' huts, Chinese market gardens, stone footings, shallow shafts and the Garfield Water Wheel in a bush environment. Castlemaine Diggings possesses sites and landscapes which reflect the whole period of gold mining in Australia.

The Park generally forms the wooded background to views, with the foreground and midground being composed of undulating cleared pastoral land with scattered remnant vegetation.

Situated within regenerating box-ironbark forest, the mining remains and habitation sites immediately convey to the visitor a feeling of passed ways of working and living. The degree of alteration of, and intervention in, the natural landscape makes a strong impression on visitors.

3.2 Ararat Hills & Ridges

Landscape Character Type

3. The Goldfields

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

Dramatic, high ridge landforms rise from the undulating paddocks. These landforms create four parallel linear ridges that extend across the landscape from near Great Western to Mount Chalambar. The highest peaks are Mount Ararat (618 m) and One Tree Hill (579 m). Exposed granitic boulders are occasionally visible on the cleared hillslopes.

The sharp topographical rise of the Ararat Hills contrasts strongly with the surrounding undulating agricultural paddocks. Single trees pepper the hillslopes with patches of remnant vegetation creating a dark green textural contrast at the base of the cleared hills and ridges.

The ability to view the Ararat Hills from a number of angles, including from Pioneer / One Tree Hill Lookout, unifies the feature with the surrounding landscape. The hills and ridges create a scenic backdrop to Ararat and visual interest within the cleared, undulating surrounding landscape.



3.1 Forrest Creek diggings, part of the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park



3.2 Ararat Hills

4.1 Wannon & Nigretta Falls

Landscape Character Type

4. The Rolling Tablelands

Landscape Significance Rating

State

The Wannon and Nigretta Falls are stunning waterfalls located within 10km of each other on the Wannon River. At the Wannon Falls, the water drops 30m down in a steady stream to a deep, circular pool below. The movement of water over time has eroded away a deep cavern behind the drop. These Falls were created by lava flows that travelled up valley of the present day Wannon River. The Nigretta Falls cascade from a hard rock outcrop, streams of water are divided by clefts in the rock and dispersed in a more widespread pattern with various tributaries sprouting from the sides to fall down a series of rocky terraces.

The placid, flowing waters of the Wannon River are abruptly interrupted by the steep drops of the waterfalls. The constant movement and churning of water as it cascades over the edge of the rocky precipices is an eye catching and scenic feature of both Falls. The narrow river valleys lined with chunky, rock outcrops have created deep incisions in the undulating plain that surrounds. The undercutting of the cavernous space behind the Wannon Falls and the circular formation of the pool below is a spectacular natural feature.

4.2 The Hummocks, Wando Vale

Landscape Character Type

4. The Rolling Tablelands

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

The Hummocks are a distinctive geological feature among the cleared rolling hills and gently sloping river valleys of the Tablelands region. A deep, V-shaped cleft splits a hillside in two, leaving granitic outcrops and underlying bedrock exposed. The Wando River winds through the narrow gorge before joining with MacPherson Creek in the west.

There is a strong contrast between the undulating valley floor and the steep hillsides that slope up on either side. This join is often marked by lines of trees that follow creeks and waterways. Granitic protrusions are common in the area.

The outcrops visible in the cleft of the Hummocks create a sculptural landscape element that stands out from the smooth and rounded textures of the surrounding hills. The sharp lines and angles that the feature cuts into the ridge make it appear to be a man-made intrusion, however closer inspection reveals it to be the result of natural processes.



4.1 Wannon Falls



4.2 The Hummocks viewed from the eastern side on Hummocks-Retreat Road

4.3 Dergholm State Park

Landscape Character Type

4. The Rolling Tablelands

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

The Dergholm State Park is a thickly vegetated area set amongst rolling hills on the border of the Tablelands and the Wimmera Plain. The Park is traversed by the Glenelg River.

The Park contains Bilston's Tree, which is Australia's largest River Red Gum and Bailey's Rocks which are a series of enormous and unusual green-coloured granite boulders in a dry creek bed within the northern section of the Park.

The thickly vegetated cover of the Park contrasts with the cleared surrounding paddocks. Defined areas of plantation create a textural contrast and introduce a regular geometry into this natural landscape.

4.4 Merino Tablelands

Landscape Character Type

4. The Rolling Tablelands

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

The landscape comprises open, weathered, rolling topography of cleared pastures or grasslands. There are occasional shelterbelts and scattered Red Gum woodland. The topography is deeply dissected by river valleys which are highly visible and exposed due to the cleared nature of the landscape. The open nature of the landscape creates a sense of 'big skies'.

The open nature of this landscape, of grasslands and cleared pastures, lends itself to long range views that often form continuous corridors.

The roads that meander through the topography are mostly rural access roads, and while not heavily travelled they are highly scenic and provide an excellent viewing experience.

Lookout points in Casterton demonstrate how the town is nestled into the landscape, encircled by the riling hills and a bend of the Glenelg River.



4.3 Bailey's rocks



4.4 Merino Tablelands

5.1 Mount Arapiles

Landscape Character Type

5. The Wimmera Plains

Landscape Significance Rating

State

Mount Arapiles is situated to the west of Horsham within the flat agricultural plains of the Wimmera.

The jagged, craggy landform rises dramatically from the surrounding plain to a height of around 320m and is visible for many miles, its distinctive silhouette a striking feature on the horizon. The base of Mount Arapiles is tree covered, dark green and textural, gradually blending upwards to the craggy outcrops of red sandstone.

During springtime the rock and surrounding plain are covered in wildflowers, adding an array of colour to the viewed landscape. The often saline lakes and wetlands of the Wimmera form the foreground to many views of Mount Arapiles, creating another layer of interest within the composition.

5.2 Natimuk - Douglas Wetland System

Landscape Character Type

5. The Wimmera Plains

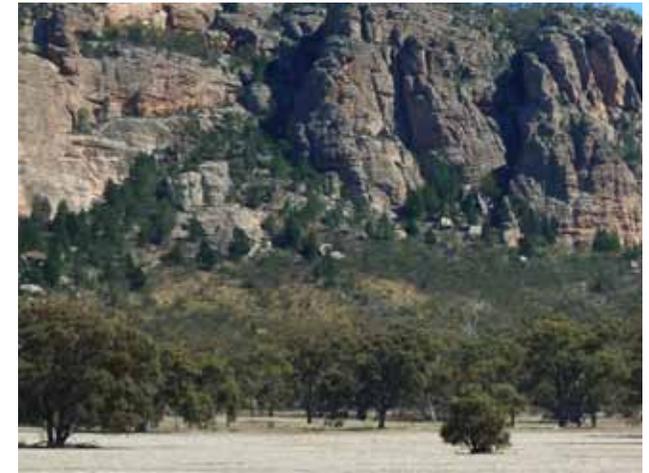
Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

A natural depression has created a distinctive and plentiful series of lakes and wetlands (or chain of ponds), that weaves across the landscape from Natimuk in the north to south of Douglas. These are predominantly fed from groundwater, and contain a mix of saline and fresh water systems. This has resulted in a complex and rare ecological system which is reflected in the visual variety they display. They vary greatly in size - some are minor depressions that subtly texture the landscape, while others form quite significant bodies of water.

Due to high salt content of many of the lakes, light is reflected off the sheer white surfaces and edges of the lakes which makes them stand out visually from the golden, pastoral paddocks. The edges are often exaggerated by concentrations of vegetation, or sandy shorelines. Where water is abundant, light reflects from the surfaces, and a variety of aquatic plant life is present that contrasts with the surroundings fields of pasture or crops.

The lakes and wetlands predominantly sit in the foreground or middle ground of views, and provide the setting for more dominant landscape features such as Mount Arapiles.



5.1 Exposed sandstone faces



5.2 Wetlands provide the setting for other regional landscape features such as Mount Arapiles

6.1 The Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds

Landscape Character Type

6. The Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds

Landscape Significance Rating

State (or higher)

The Grampians (Gariwerd) are a visually dramatic landform that comprises the southern-most arm of the Great Dividing Range. The jagged escarpments of the Grampians rise sharply from the surrounding pastoral plain.

Other landscape elements that make up the ranges include the sweeping western slopes, the craggy eastern peaks, massive sandstone cliffs, forests, water bodies, rocky outcrops and weather-sculpted rocks.

In the context of Victoria, a visually stunning mountainous landscape of this kind, rising sharply from the surrounding flat landscape, is a rare and iconic feature. For this reason, the Grampians are so often termed 'dramatic', and evoke a strong emotional response for many viewers.

The surrounding landscape is significant as the setting for the Grampians. The flat topography exacerbates the visual presence of the peaks of the Grampians, creating a stark and dramatic contrast between these two landscape elements. Remnant stands of vegetation, particularly the River Red Gums, filter views to the mountains.

6.2 The Black Range (Burrunj) State Park

Landscape Character Type

6. The Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

The Black Range is a broken ridgeline that sits independently to the west of the northern arm of the Grampians Ranges. The topographical relief is much lower than the Grampians, with Mount Byron rising to 500 metres. The landscape is blanketed in vegetation.

The thick vegetated cover of the Black Range contrasts with the cleared surrounding paddocks. There are a large number of scattered River Red Gums and dense remnant roadside vegetation in the periphery of the ranges which creates further textural contrast within the landscape.

The Black Range sits low on the horizon and generally forms a low backdrop to views, with the foreground being composed of cleared pastoral land containing scattered Red Gums.



6.1 View of the Grampians



6.2 Views from within the Black Range extend over the low hills and are punctuated with craggy sandstone outcrops

7.1 Cobboboonee & Lower Glenelg National Parks

Landscape Character Type

7. Vegetated Rises

Landscape Significance Rating

Regional

The Cobboboonee and Lower Glenelg National Parks are thickly forested landscapes that have been preserved for conservation in an area where plantation forestry is prevalent. They contain lowlands forests, heathlands and wetlands.

The National Parks are adjacent to areas of pine plantation and conservation reserves. There is a strong contrast in the patterns of vegetation where the park is bordered by pine plantations. It blends seamlessly with the Lower Glenelg National Park to the west.

The park contains mostly thick bush that is divided by dirt tracks and roads that allow access through it. This is a relatively low-lying landscape with few long range or outwards views, which allows for an intimate, enclosed viewing experience. Tree with tall, straight trunks dominate and a high canopy are prevalent, with a low understory of bracken, grasses and small shrubs.



7.1 Cobboboonee National Park



SIGNIFICANT VIEWS OF SOUTH WEST VICTORIA

DETERMINING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VIEWS

Views occur over distance and through 'view planes', and comprise a foreground, middle-ground and background. The qualities or components of the foreground, middle-ground and background help to define what is significant about a view, and changes within those 'planes' will alter the qualities and characteristics of a view. Views are sensitive to changes within the natural and built environment of a landscape and are affected by weather variations that contribute to the changing 'moods' of landscape features and skylines

Viewing distance is important in determining how change is perceived across a landscape. However, assigning specific distances to the 'view planes' that occur within a view is difficult, as the various planes are also defined according to the character of the viewed landscape i.e. the foreground of a view may terminate at a particular landform, as opposed to being defined by a distance in metres. Generally speaking however, the following view plane distances have been applied to this study¹:

Foreground: This zone begins at the viewer and extends to approximately 800m of the observer. Generally, the detail of the landscape is more pronounced within this view plane.

Middle ground: Alterations in landscape within this zone (800m to 6.5km) are less distinctive.

Background: This view plane extends from the middleground (6.5km minimum between the observer and the area being viewed) to infinity. Shape may remain evident beyond 16km, especially if it is consistent with the surrounding landform. Beyond 16km, alterations in landscape character become obscure.

¹[http://brekenridgepeak6.com/document/DEIS/Chapter 3D Scenery/](http://brekenridgepeak6.com/document/DEIS/Chapter%203D%20Scenery/)

SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

There are many places from where spectacular views are available across the study area, including the tops of volcanic rises and peaks within mountainous areas. These viewing locations also have various levels of accessibility, promotion and visitation. For the purpose of this study, viewing locations have been chosen because they feature a view of a regionally or state significant landscape, and they meet a minimum of two of the following selection considerations:

- The viewing location is accessible, preferably by vehicle;
- The viewing location is a designated lookout point with interpretive information;
- The viewing location is widely promoted;
- The viewing location is located on public land.

The views available from viewing locations that satisfy the selection considerations have been assessed against the 'components and values criteria' (refer p.4) in order to determine their significance.

OTHER NOTABLE VIEWING LOCATIONS

Views available from lesser known, not easily accessible and/or informal viewing locations that did not satisfy the selection considerations have not been assessed for their level of significance. These other notable viewing locations are, however, listed in the relevant landscape significance assessment papers.

Major viewing corridors that transect the landscape and from which the qualities of the landscape are best experienced, have also been listed in the landscape significance assessment papers.

VIEWSHED MAPPING

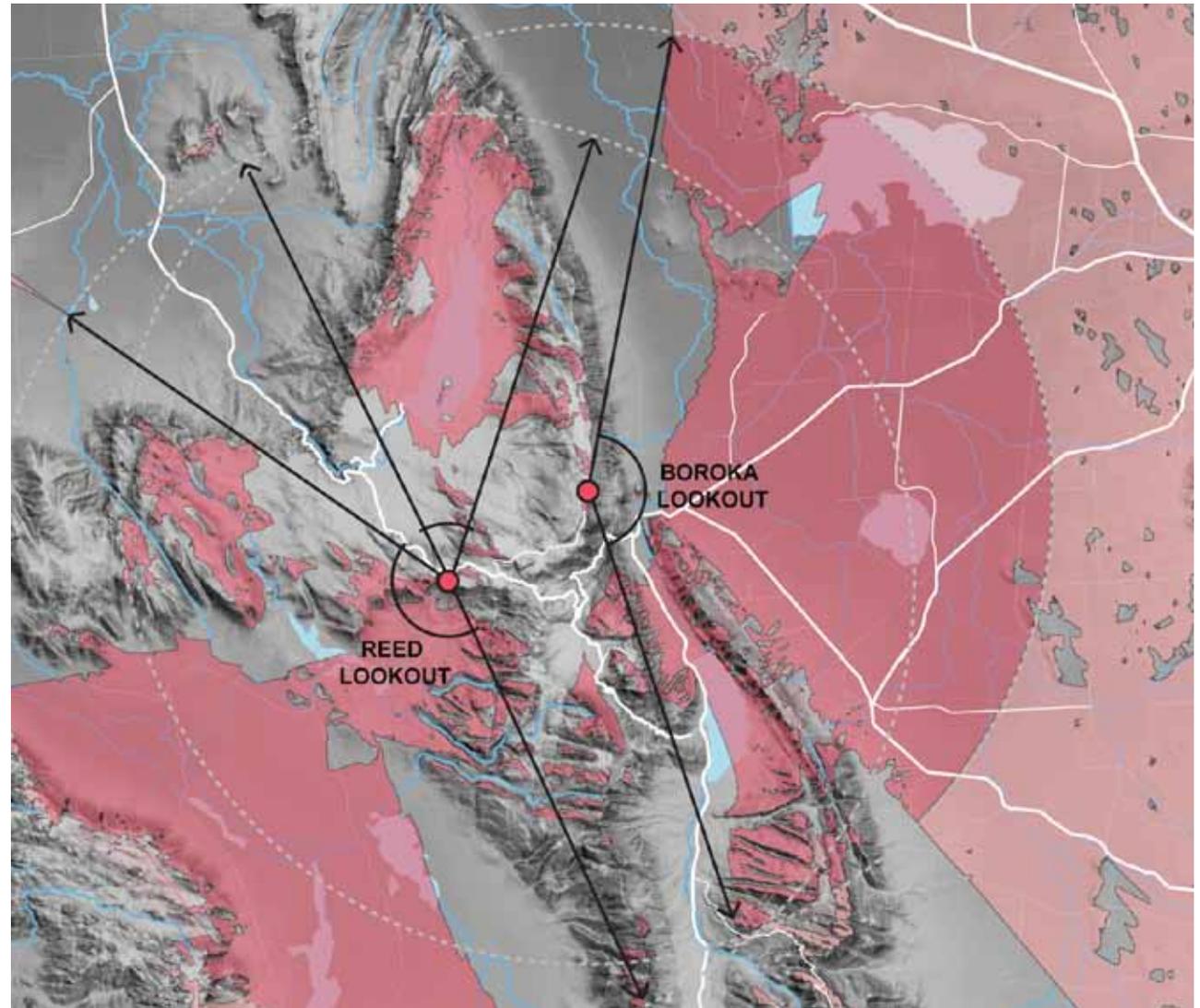
Views that have been assessed as being of state or regional significance have also been mapped as part of this study. The majority of the maps contain viewsheds over two distances: a 16km radius within which most detail in the landscape remains visible, and a 32km radius to illustrate the point at which alternations in the landscape become obscure. In some instances, the view may appear to be infinite, while others may terminate at a large landscape feature on the horizon or in the background of a view.

Viewsheds have been calculated based purely on topographical data and do not take into account any vegetation or built form that may obscure parts of the view.

Therefore, in addition to the viewshed, a view cone has been mapped that is more representative of the actual extents of view, as experienced at the viewing location. This takes into account elements that play a role in framing or defining a view such as vegetation or built form.

These maps are available in the *Regional Overview Report: Extended Version* and in the *Significant Views Assessment Papers*.

Example viewshed map:



VIEW COMPONENTS & VALUES CRITERIA

COMPOSITION (STRUCTURE)

In relation to the composition or structure of a view, the following criterion has been developed, which informs the determination and level of significance:

The view has outstanding compositional qualities, whether a classic vista, or a sweeping panorama. The view may be balanced, both horizontally and vertically; a 'picture postcard' view. The focal point of the view may be centred, and elements in the foreground, middle ground and background, equally weighted. The view may be framed by elements to the viewer's left and right.

COMPOSITION (QUALITIES)

In relation to the compositional qualities of a view, the following criterion has been developed:

The view is compelling or inspiring for its aesthetic qualities, including a landscape feature (that may be the focal point of the view), or a collection of landscape features; edges or contrasts; and other compositional elements such as colour and texture etc.

OTHER CULTURAL VALUES

This study also includes consideration of other cultural values that may contribute to the overall significance of a view.

SOCIAL VALUES

The following criterion has been used to determine social value:

The view is widely promoted, well known, and popular with tourists to the area. It is a view of note that is available from a publicly accessible location.

HISTORIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, SCIENTIFIC ETC. VALUES

Other cultural heritage values are taken into account where relevant:

The view or viewing location is important for its other cultural values, including historic, environmental, scientific or other values.

LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE

RATING CONSIDERATIONS

In order to determine a level of significance for each view component or value, and ultimately each view, the following 'rating considerations' are applied.

Exemplary

How representative or illustrative is this view? Is it 'the best' of its type? Is it exemplary within the local, regional or state context?

Iconic

Is the view instantly recognisable? Is it symbolic for its visual qualities? Has it been represented in art, photography, literature etc.? Is it iconic within the local, regional or state context?

Scarce

How uncommon or rare is the view? Is the view a 'one off' that is not available nearby or elsewhere in the study area? Is it scarce within the local, regional or state context?

SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS

Levels of significance are attributed to each view component and value, and an overall significance level in relation to the view is determined. The significance levels are:

Moderate = Local significance

High = Regional significance

Exceptional = State significance

As per the determination of landscape significance, the final determination of a significance level for a view is not a matter of adding up the number of 'moderate' or 'high' ratings. Rather, if a view rates 'high' for example in one or more of the view components, that level is the overall significance rating attributed to that view.

Levels of significance are attributed to the other cultural values of the view i.e. historic, environmental and/or scientific, social and other values, based on the stated level of significance in the secondary source, or based on the source itself.

Again, as per the determination of landscape significance, a view cannot be classified as significant for its historic, environmental and/or scientific, social or other values alone. In order for a view to be classified as significant, it must substantially meet the composition (structure and qualities) criteria.



VIEWS OF STATE & REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. WESTERN VOLCANIC PLAIN

1.1	Mount Rouse	State
1.2	Harmans Valley	State
1.3	Lake Surprise	Regional
1.4	Lake Linlithgow	Regional
1.5	Mount Leura	State
1.6	Red Rocks	State
1.7	Lakes Gnotuk & Bullen Merri	State
1.8	Lake Keilambete	Regional
1.9	Berry Deep Lead Gold Mine Views	Regional
1.10	Mount Buninyong & Mount Warrenheip	Regional

2. THE UPLANDS

2.1	Mount Blackwood	State
2.2	Lal Lal Falls	State
2.3	Robertsons Hill	Regional

3. THE GOLDFIELDS

3.1	Pioneer Lookout (One Tree Hill)	State
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4. THE ROLLING TABLELANDS

4.1	Mickle Lookout, Casterton	Regional
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5. THE WIMMERA PLAINS

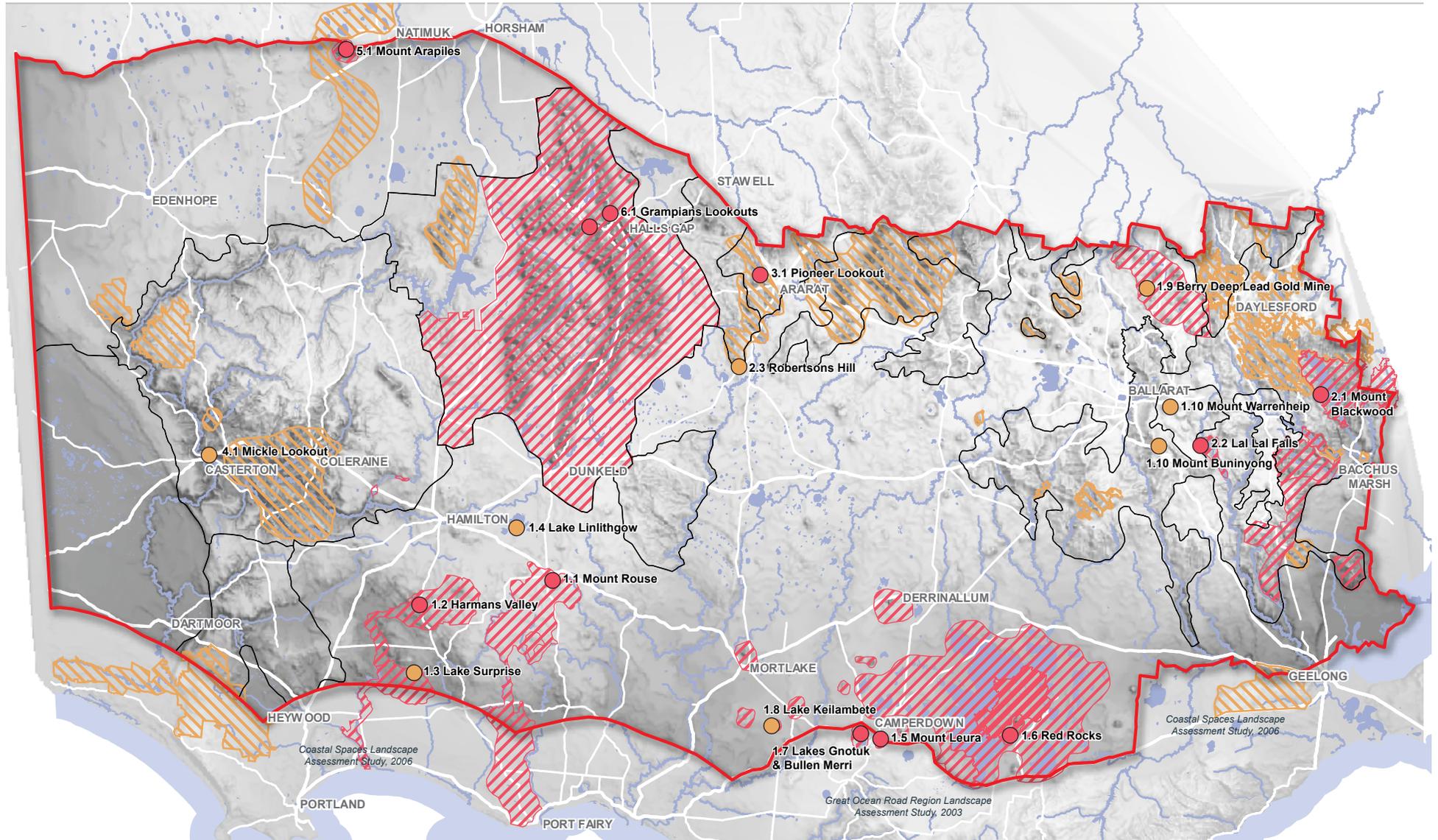
5.1	Mount Arapiles	State
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6. THE GRAMPIANS (GARIWERD) & SURROUNDS

6.1	Grampians Lookouts	State
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Map Legend

	STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE BOUNDARIES
	RIVERS
	WATERBODIES
	VIEWING LOCATION: STATE SIGNIFICANT VIEW
	VIEWING LOCATION: REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEW
	SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE: STATE
	SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE: REGIONAL



1.1 Mount Rouse

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Significant View Rating

State

The Mount Rouse Lookout provides almost 360° ‘picture postcard’ views across the roughly textured lava flow and surrounding district. These are available from a number of locations on the summit. The Grampians Ranges rise up from the horizon in the north, which provides a visual balance between foreground and background elements. Views terminate at the jagged peaks of the Ranges on the horizon which provide a strong visual contrast with the surrounding flat pastoral landscape.

Views from the summit of Mount Rouse are panoramic, with the foreground and middle ground stretching out across the lava plain towards a backdrop of the Grampians. Paddocks are criss-crossed with dark green shelterbelts and the nearby volcanic rises of Mount Napier and Mount Eccles (Budj Bim) can be seen. It is also possible to view the extent of the rocky lava flow as it makes its way south, creating a rough, lumpy texture across the agricultural field patterns.

1.2 Harmans Valley

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Significant View Rating

State

This viewing location overlooks the Harmans Valley Lava Flow and includes designated viewing infrastructure and interpretive information. It is situated near the junction of Harmans Road (which runs through the Mount Napier State Park) and the Port Fairy - Hamilton Road.

The view is contained within the sweeping curve of the valley, with Mount Napier visible in the background. While other parts of the surrounding landscape are visible, the view cone describes the extent of the view that is dominated by the lava flow.

The open, cleared foreground and elevated position of the viewing location allows for excellent, uninterrupted views over the lava flow. There is a high contrast between the rough texture of the flow and the dark, scrubby bracken growing in its crevices, and the smooth, grassy slopes of the valley walls. The lava flow is a dramatic visual feature that twists across the middle ground. The central location of Mount Napier and the span of the landscape between it and the viewing location makes it easy to appreciate the distance that the river of lava travelled when the volcano was active. This is further highlighted by dark vegetation that frames the valley and directs the eye across the volcanic features.



1.1 Wide views to the south display the textured landscape of stony rises from the Mount Rouse lava flow



1.2 The classic cone formation of Mount Napier is a stand out feature on the horizon in this view

1.3 Lake Surprise Lookout

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Significant View Rating

Regional

The Lake Surprise Lookout is located on the edge of the Mount Eccles crater rim and offers views over the Lake and surrounding volcanic features.

The photo to the right documents the extent of the viewshed from the Lake Surprise Lookout.

This view is largely contained within the deep crater of Mount Eccles (Budj Bim) which is filled with the waters of Lake Surprise. The crater is comprised of three smaller craters which have amalgamated over time and are now rimmed with dense vegetation. Geological features, including lava caves, scoria cones and the crater lake, can be viewed from the lookout point and crater walk. Lake Surprise sometimes displays a deep blue colour which is formed from lake sediments and by algae in the water.

1.4 Lake Linlithgow

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Significant View Rating

Regional

Lake Linlithgow is situated outside landscapes of regional or state significance, however an excellent view is available across the Lake to the Grampian Ranges in the north.

Grassy, open shores frame the gently lapping waters of the lake. A history of alternating dry periods and flood are written in the layers of earth that have built up along the shore line. The edges of the lake are ringed in places by reedy banks that contrast with dry mud beds and the surface of the lake. Mount Sturgeon and Mount Abrupt provide distinctive visual contrast and a stunning focus for views across the lake. Their silhouettes are a distinctive feature of the landscape of the Southern Grampians region. Raised lunettes are visible on the eastern shore.



1.3 View from the Lake Surprise Lookout



1.4 View of Lake Linlithgow

1.5 Mount Leura

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Significant View Rating

State

Mount Leura is a complex eruption point just outside Camperdown. A designated viewing location at the top is accessible by vehicle and includes interpretive signage.

Views from the summit of Mount Leura are panoramic, taking in much of the surrounding landscape for almost 360°, and occasionally framed by vegetation growing in the foreground.

The foreground features shrubby vegetation that occasionally frames views, before it drops down sharply to reveal the sweeping plain that surrounds Mount Leura. The spectacular conical formation of Mount Sugarloaf is a distinctive part of the view, as is the township of Camperdown nestled in Mount Leura's shadow.

Dark green shelterbelts create short geometric repeats across the landscape beyond, which contrast with the vast paddocks and organic outlines of the broad and reflective inland lakes. The scattered volcanic rises create a high level of visual interest for the viewer, displaying a variety of shapes and form.

1.6 Red Rock Lookout

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Significant View Rating

State

The Red Rock Complex lies to the east of Lake Corangamite and contains a collection of volcanic features. The summit of the main volcanic rise has two viewing locations that look out to the east and the west. These are accessible by car and contain interpretive information.

The Red Rock area is one of the most complex eruption points in the Victorian Volcanic Plain. The fore and middle ground of views feature a textured landscape of scoria cones, tuff rings and volcanic maars. Exposed red rocks contrast against the grassed volcanic slopes. The landscape of hummocky stony rises around the southern edge of Lake Corangamite is visible as a rough texture in the topography.

The views stretch out across the flat agricultural plains that are interspersed with shelterbelts. These contrast against the reflective surface of the large inland lakes that include Lake Colac, Lake Beeac and the huge saltwater expanse of Lake Corangamite. Views take in the conical rises of nearby volcanos including Mount Elephant, Mount Porndon and Mount Leura.



1.5 Mount Sugarloaf



1.6 View from the eastern lookout

1.7 Lakes Gnotuk & Bullen Merri

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Significant View Rating

State

Sadlers Road spans the high saddle of land that separates Lakes Gnotuk and Bullen Merri. While there are no designated viewpoints along the road, there are two opportunities to pull over and view the impressive craters filled by the lakes.

The south western extent of the view from Lake Gnotuk is visible over a small rise in the topography, and is not a dominant feature of the view across the lake.

High elevations of the tuff rings surrounding the water bodies allow for expansive views of the lakes. The foreground on either side of the road drops steeply down the crater wall before sweeping across the still waterbodies. Dark vegetation contrasts with the grassy pastoral land and the straight edges of shelterbelt planting highlights the form of the craters. Built form and rural development is visible within the crater rims, however these are recessive features of the views. The water in the lakes is a striking shade of deep blue.

1.8 Lake Keilambete

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Significant View Rating

Regional

Lake Keilambete is an almost circular lake with startling blue waters that provides a stunning foreground for Mount Noorat on the horizon. A small interpretive sign denotes this significant viewing location. Views to the west and south/west are actually blocked by shelterbelt planting on site.

Lake Keilambete is not immediately discernible to the eye, as it nestles in a deep crater. Where Keilambete Road edges the lake, views are predominantly blocked by dense roadside vegetation. A break in the vegetation on the south western edge opens up to reveal the sparkling blue water of the lake. From this point cleared, grassy banks slope down to the water's edge and the almost perfectly circular formation of the lake is visible. The view is contained within this deep recession, with the raised sides (or 'tuff' ring) blocking outward views. Mount Noorat is centred in the view on the horizon.



1.7 Lake Gnotuk, view



1.8 Striking blue water

1.9 Berry Deep Lead Gold Mine

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Significant View Rating

Regional

There are two components to this viewing location. The first is the roadside view of the Berry Deep Lead No1 Mine on the Daylesford - Clunes Road just west of Smeaton. This is a short range view, with cleared paddocks allowing for direct views towards the huge mullock heaps of the mine. The remains of the pump house nestled among the mullock heaps is an important part of the view that provides an attractive and historic focal point.

The second view is available a little further east along the Daylesford - Clunes Road, where the landscape opens up to reveal pastoral land punctuated with volcanic cones and remnant mullock heaps from a number of different mine sites. The eye is carried across the landscape, towards individual features, and an interpretive board is in place to assist in locating these within the landscape

1.10 Mount Buninyong & Mount Warrenheip

Landscape Character Type

1. Western Volcanic Plain

Significant View Rating

Regional

Mount Buninyong and Mount Warrenheip are located to the east of Ballarat and offer spectacular viewing locations of the agricultural landscape and volcanic plains surrounding Ballarat.

Roads wind up both of the rises so views are potentially available from numerous angles. Much of the surrounding landscape is visible due to the height of the volcanic rises and the relief of the surrounding terrain. The view cones describes what can actually be seen taking into account vegetation, which frames many views from the hills.

These views are open, expansive and varied, displaying the rich colours and textures of the agricultural patchwork that disappears into a distant horizon. The characteristic 'big skies' of western Victoria create a spectacular frame for the features of the surrounding landscape, and change distinctly in colour and mood with variations in the changeable weather and light.

The layers of history of the surrounding landscape are expressed in these views, from the volcanic activity that formed the landscape, to the agricultural activity that dominates it today.



1.9 Remains of the Pumphouse



1.10 View from Mount Buninyong

2.1 Mount Blackwood

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Significant View Rating

State

Mount Blackwood is a peak on the ranges at the edge of the Lerderderg State Park, with excellent views across the park and the volcanic plain to the south. There is no formal viewing infrastructure in this location, however there are access roads for telecommunications towers that provide public access to the views. The viewshed extends over the eastern edge of the study area, and the view cone describes the view which is predominantly visible to the east.

This is a high and windswept location, where the sharply defined ridges and deep valleys of the Lerderderg Gorge and surrounding ranges are clearly visible from above. There is a strong contrast between the forested areas of the State Park and the cleared, open pastoral land to the south. Here, properties and paddocks are divided by rows of shelterbelts and other clumps of vegetation. The Merrimu Reservoir glints within the landscape, and highlights the presence of the steep-sided gorges that are a dominant character of the landscapes to the south. The Macedon Ranges appear as a dark, mounded band on the horizon, while to the south, occasional rises of volcanic origin can be seen. Overall, this view encapsulates the interface of the uplands and the volcanic plains, and is composed of a great diversity of features that are associated with both of these landscapes.

2.2 Lal Lal Falls

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Significant View Rating

State

A viewing platform has been created to capture this view of the Lal Lal Gorge. The platform is situated on the edge of the Gorge, above a tumble of rocks below, and captures a sweeping horseshoe shaped bend in the deeply incised valley.

The image opposite shows the predominant extents of the view, which is short range.

The Falls at the south-western edge of the Gorge provide a visual focus, and the eye is drawn across the sweeping bend of the Gorge as it disappears out of sight around another twist. The flat surface of the surrounding plain is visible to either side of the Gorge. Mount Buninyong is present as a distinctive volcanic cone rising on the horizon.

The depth that the Gorge cuts into the surrounding landscape is an impressive feature, which is highlighted by the contrast between the surrounding flat, agricultural plain and the deep, weathered textures of the basalt columns that line the walls and edges of the Gorge. The tumbling waters of the Lal Lal Falls provide a picturesque focus for the view. These are subject to seasonal variation, from powerful flows that are dispersed over the rocky cliff face, to more sedate trickles that flow languidly through pools of water below.



2.1 Mount Blackwood



2.2 Lal Lal Falls by Andrew Thomas

2.3 Robertson Hill

Landscape Character Type

2. The Uplands

Significant View Rating

Regional

Robertson Hill is located on Watgania Road, just off the Pyrenees Highway between Ararat and Glenthompson. While it is not a formal or designated viewing point, a magnificent viewing opportunity is created at a rise in the landscape. This is part of the very southern tip of the Victorian Uplands.

The view to the south is visible from the road. Views to the north are blocked by roadside shelterbelt planting.

The climb up Robertson Hill is not particularly spectacular, until the crest is reached and the sweeping panorama suddenly opens out. To the south east the cleared landscape of the volcanic plain is revealed with its open pastures and shelterbelt planting. A volcanic cone rises on the distant horizon. The lakes shimmer with the reflections of the sky, and are revealed in glints through the surrounding vegetation, which contrast strongly with the dry, grassy pastoral landscape. The Gariwerd silhouette is deep blue and dramatic, with a faint haze softly rising. To the south, the towering turbines of the Glenthompson Wind Farm are visible in a portion of the view.

3.1 Pioneer Lookout, Ararat

Landscape Character Type

3. The Goldfields

Significant View Rating

State

Pioneer Lookout is a memorial viewing point on One Tree Hill in the Ararat Regional Park that captures stunning panoramic views.

The foreground drops away sharply on all sides, and views are experienced over and through the forested canopy of the land below. To the north, the ridges and folds of the landscape that surrounds Ararat dominate, with the more distant shapes of the Pyrenees Ranges beyond. To the east, the urban areas of Ararat sit nestled within trees and the distinctive silhouettes of Mounts Langhi Ghiran and Buangor are layered on the horizon. To the south east, the landscape flattens out, and the turbines of Challicum Hills Wind Farm are visible before the closer hills of Mount Chalambar and Mount Ararat fill the middle ground. Past these, flatter land stretches out before the jagged formation of Gariwerd (the Grampian Ranges) rises up to dominate the western horizon.

This is a stunning view of textures, moods and colours. The Grampians have a blue tinge, and are often dramatically shrouded in cloud. The pastoral land in the middle ground is dotted with River Red Gums and areas of remnant vegetation create a patchwork that intensifies as it gets closer to the ranges. This contrasts with the cleared hills and ridges surrounding Ararat, making them stand out boldly.



2.3 View towards hills south of Ararat, which is blocked by pine shelterbelts along the north side of the road.



3.1 Panoramic views from Pioneer Lookout

4.1 Mickle Lookout, Casterton

Landscape Character Type

4. The Rolling Tablelands

Significant View Rating

Regional

The Mickle Lookout on a hill above Casterton is a well publicised and easily accessible viewing location.

The Lookout is located high on one of the ridge lines that surrounds the township of Casterton. The town is nestled into the vegetated valley of the Glenelg River in the middle ground, with views extending across to terminate on the distant rolling hills.

The main street of Casterton is the central feature of this view. The eye is drawn up the straight axis of the street, with built form spreading out on either side to merge with the surrounding landscape. The lush qualities of the river valley can be seen in contrast to the rolling, cleared agricultural land beyond. Slabs of plantation provide additional contrast within the gently undulating landscape.

5.1 Mount Arapiles

Landscape Character Type

5. The Wimmera Plains

Significant View Rating

State

As a prominent outcrop favoured by rock climbers, views are available from literally all over Mount Arapiles. The most readily available viewing location is at the end of Mount Arapiles Summit Road. The viewshed predominantly captures land to the north over Mitre Rock and Mitre Lake.

The view features a foreground of rugged, rocky slopes, covered with dense vegetation. The slope down dramatically, with a middle ground dominated by the smaller rocky outcrop of Mitre Rock and the expanse of Mitre Lake just beyond. The background of the view stretches over the Plains, with the Little Desert National Park discernible as a darker stretch of vegetation on the horizon.

The vast landscape of the Wimmera Plains is a dominant feature of views from other vantage points high on Mount Arapiles. These experience much seasonal variation, with grasses of deep green in during the cooler months, bright yellow canola crops in Spring and then drying out to a light golden colour over Summer. The plains are scattered with lakes and wetlands that also experience high levels of seasonal variation. The craggy formation of the Grampians Ranges is a striking feature on the eastern horizon, while to the west views seem to stretch infinitely out across the relatively flat land.



4.1 View over Casterton from Mickle Lookout



5.1 Looking out from Mount Arapiles

6.1 The Grampians Lookouts

Landscape Character Type

6. The Grampians (Gariwerd) & Surrounds

Significant View Rating

State (or higher)

The Grampians Ranges National Park (Gariwerd) offers numerous spectacular scenic lookout points which capture stunning, panoramic views to features within the ranges and out across the surrounding landscape. These are often located up high and feature dense bushland in the foreground with sweeping views across the vegetated valleys and craggy, rocky peaks of the ranges, to agricultural land beyond.

Reed Lookout provides sweeping, panoramic views over the interior of the Grampians landscape, from the Victoria Valley in the south to Lake Wartook and the Mount Difficult Range to the north. Reed lookout is accessible by car, while the Balconies involves a 2km return walk. Boroka Lookout is another highly visited location, accessible by a short walk from a car park. It looks outwards over the sweeping agricultural land to the east of the ranges that extends to the peaks and formations of the Southern Pyrenees and hills surrounding Ararat, as well as Halls Gap nestled between the juncture of the Mount Difficult and Mount William Ranges.



6.1 View from Mount William towards the Victoria Valley



5

LANDSCAPE PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT

LANDSCAPE PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT

The implementation recommendations for the South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study represent the third and final stage of the project, following the determination and analysis of landscape character, and the significance assessment of the landscape and views.

This section of the Regional Overview Report contains an executive summary of the suite of recommendations, and briefly describes the approach and rationale for them.

THE VICTORIA PLANNING PROVISIONS

The focus for implementation of the study is through the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs) via local planning schemes. This was the intention of the study from the outset, and is clearly stated in the project brief. Successful implementation of the proposed planning scheme policy statements and controls will legally bind local Councils, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) and applicants to consider the identified values of landscapes that have been defined and documented as part of the study.

A detailed audit of all existing planning scheme policies and controls that apply across the region underpinned the proposed statutory recommendations for the study.

REGIONAL LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

A set of Landscape Management Guidelines ('guidelines') have been prepared for the study area, based on the various Landscape Character Types, and their sensitivity to change, and are appended to the relevant Landscape Character Type Analysis Papers. These guidelines have informed the development of the proposed SLO schedules that have been prepared as part of the study, and form the basis of the following objectives and strategies that should apply to the protection and management of landscapes at a regional level.

These (or an abridged version) may be considered for inclusion in the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) at Clause 12.04-2 Landscapes, and incorporation in the Regional Growth Plans (in preparation at the time of this study).

The objectives for the protection and management of landscapes within the South West Region of Victoria are:

- To protect and manage the significant landscapes of South West Victoria, including the following landscapes of State significance (and other identified landscapes of regional significance):
 - Grampians Ranges (Gariwerd) and surrounds
 - Mount Arapiles (Djurite) and surrounds
 - Wannon and Nigretta Falls
 - the Volcanic Cones and Lava Flows district, including Mount Rouse, Mount Eccles (Budj Bim) and surrounds, and Mount Napier
 - the Volcanic Cones, Lakes and Stony Rises district, including Lake Corangamite and nearby volcanic rises
 - Lal Lal and Werribee Gorges

- Brisbane Ranges and Rowsley Scarp
- Parwan Valley
- You Yangs (Wurdi Youang)
- The Hepburn Gold Mines and Volcanic district
- To protect and enhance the identified significant views and vistas of South West Victoria.
- To manage the visual impact of development on the character and significance of the landscape.
- To maintain the important contribution that significant landscapes and views make to the regional economy as tourism assets.
- To maintain the positive contribution that productive agriculture and sustainable land management practices make to the character of the landscape.
- To protect and enhance remnant indigenous and/or native vegetation as an important landscape feature of South West Victoria, especially remnant River Red Gums.

The strategies for the protection and management of landscapes within the South West Region of Victoria are:

- Ensure that the design and external appearance of development complements the character of the surrounding landscape with consideration of form, construction materials, colours and finishes, and design detailing.
- Ensure that development in the foreground of identified significant views is sited and designed to minimize visual intrusion (e.g. low building heights, minimal building footprints, appropriate colours and materials to the setting, and integration with vegetation.)

- Ensure that large scale development is sited to avoid impacting on significant landscapes and views, with particular consideration given to the foreground of identified significant views, which are particularly sensitive to visual intrusion.

Ensure that development is sited:

- Within existing clusters of buildings where possible.
- Away from visually prominent locations such as ridge lines and hill faces.
- Away from identified landscape features.
- Among established vegetation and/or screened with substantial landscaping of locally appropriate species.
- To follow the contours and/or natural form of the landscape.
- To minimise visibility from identified significant viewing locations, including major road corridors.
- Protect and rehabilitate significant stands of remnant indigenous and/or native vegetation where they are integral to the character and significance of the landscape, and where practical. Particular consideration should be given to vegetation at roadsides, throughout paddocks, and adjacent to waterways, subject to farming requirements, fire protection and safety.

The South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study 2013 should also be included at Clause 12.04-2 of the SPPF under ‘policy guidelines’.

MUNICIPAL TOOLKITS

The statutory implementation recommendations are packaged into ‘Municipal Toolkits’, being stand alone reports for each municipality within the study area, containing the following:

- A summary of landscape character types and areas within the municipality;
- a summary of significant landscapes and significant views within the municipality;
- a list of current planning scheme provisions relating to landscape;
- suggested inclusions to the existing Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), and advice regarding the use of local policy;
- proposed application of the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO), SLO maps and draft schedules;
- proposed amendments to existing SLO maps and schedules (where relevant); and,
- relevant background information, maps and justification to support each SLO package.

PROPOSED SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAYS

The map opposite depicts the proposed use of the SLO across the region to protect and manage the landscapes of regional and state significance.

Twenty new SLOs are proposed to be implemented throughout South West Victoria. In addition, 18 existing SLOs currently in place across the region have been amended (both spatially and/or in relation to schedule content). These are shown on the map as 'new' or 'revised'.

Landscapes covered by existing SLOs that were not identified as being of regional or state significance are outside the scope of this study and have not been amended.

PROPOSED SLO BY MUNICIPALITY

- N** New SLO
- R** Revised SLO

West Wimmera Shire

- N** Douglas Saline Lakes

Horsham Rural City

- R** SLO1 Grampians (Gariwerd) Surrounds
- R** SLO2 Mount Arapiles (Djurite) Surrounds
- R** SLO3 Black Ranges (Burrunj) Surrounds
- N** Natimuk - Douglas Saline Wetland Depression

Northern Grampians Shire

- R** SLO1 Grampians (Gariwerd) Surrounds

Southern Grampians Shire

- N** Grampians (Gariwerd) Surrounds
- R** SLO2 Volcanic Cones & Lava Flows
- R** SLO3 Nigretta & Wannon Falls Reserves
- N** Merino Tablelands

Glenelg Shire

- N** Harmans Valley & Tyrendarra Lava Flows
- N** The Hummocks
- N** Merino Tablelands

Moyne Shire

- N** Lava Flows & Mount Eccles (Budj Bim) Surrounds
- N** Volcanic Rises

Rural City of Ararat

- R** Grampians (Gariwerd) Surrounds
- N** Lower Pyrenees Environs
- N** Ararat Hills & Ridges

Pyrenees Shire

- N** Island Uplands (Mount Eccildoune / Mount Misery)
- N** Mount Emu
- N** Lower Pyrenees Environs

Corangamite Shire Council

- R** SLO1 Volcanic Cones, Lakes & Stony Rises

Colac Otway Shire

- R** SLO1 Volcanic Cones, Lakes & Stony Rises

Golden Plains Shire

- R** SLO1 Devils Kitchen
- N** Brisbane Ranges & Rowsley Scarp Environs
- N** Barrabool Hills

City of Greater Geelong

- R** SLO5 Brisbane Ranges & Rowsley Scarp
- R** SLO1 You Yangs (Wurdi Youang) Foothills
- R** Anakie Hills

Moorabool Shire

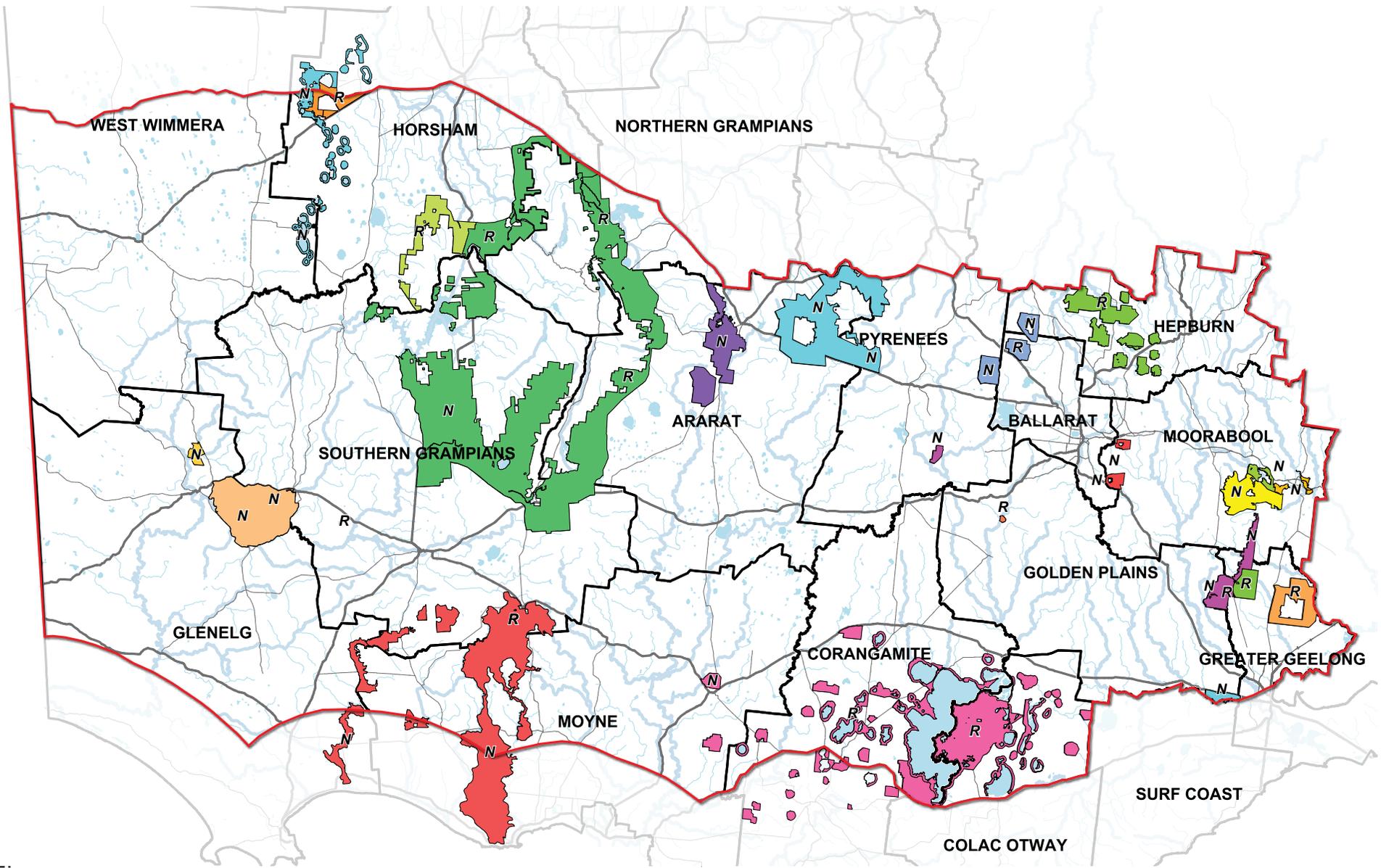
- N** Werribee Gorge
- N** Brisbane Ranges & Rowsley Scarp Environs
- N** Parwan Valley
- N** Bacchus Marsh Agricultural Valley
- N** Mount Buninyong & Mount Warrenheip Environs

Ballarat City

- N** Mount Buninyong Environs
- R** SLO1 Island Uplands (Mount Bolton)

Hepburn Shire

- R** SLO1 Hepburn Gold Mines & Volcanic District
- N** Island Uplands (Mount Beckworth)



THE SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAY

The Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) is the most appropriate planning scheme tool for protecting and managing significant landscapes. Its purpose is to identify significant landscapes, and conserve and enhance their character. The SLO can require a permit to construct a building or construct or carry out works, construct a fence, and remove, destroy or lop any vegetation.

A number of landscapes of regional or state significance are proposed to be protected and managed with the SLO as part of this study. The detailed determination and analysis of character, together with the assessment of the relative significance of the landscapes, provides a sound strategic basis for such recommendations, particularly in this region, where the community places high value on the aesthetic and other qualities of landscape, and where existing planning controls are not necessarily achieving the desired outcomes.

It should be noted that the approach to drafting the SLO schedules has also been influenced by the identification, and emphasis on the management and protection of, holistic landscapes, rather than individual landscape features. This is particularly evident in areas such as the Volcanic Cones, Lakes and Stony Rises district, where the collection, or concentration, of features and their settings is what is most significant about the landscape, rather than each individual cone or lake being of State significance in its own right. The proposed SLO and its schedule reflects this.

THE SCHEDULES TO THE SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAY

Some 38 SLO areas (20 new, 18 existing) have been mapped, and individual schedules prepared and/or amended. Existing but amended schedules retain their current SLO number, and new SLO schedules have not been numbered. SLO areas are named according to the identified significant landscape previously identified, and/or geographical area, and/or landscape feature (s) being covered.

The following is a summary of how the proposed SLO schedules have been prepared, with the headings derived from the SLO schedule.

Statement of nature and key elements of landscape

This section of the schedule reads as a 'statement of significance' for the landscape area. It describes the character and significance of the landscape, based on the contents of the relevant Significant Landscape(s) and Significant View(s) Assessment Papers undertaken as part of the study. The statements are generally structured so that the first sentence establishes the level of significance and goes on to describe the aesthetic qualities of the landscape and its significance. If applicable, the name, location and description of any significant view follows (and its significance level), if it (or the 'essence' or 'focus' of the view) is contained within the proposed SLO area. The third part of the statement describes the other cultural values associated with the landscape.

Landscape character objective to be achieved

The objectives relate to the most significant aspects of the landscape, and may include reference to specific views. Again, they are based on information contained in the relevant Significance Assessment Paper(s), as well as the 'Future Landscape Character Directions' section of the relevant Landscape Character Type(s) and Area(s) Analysis Papers.

Permit requirement

The requirements specified in the schedules are based on the sensitivity to change of the landscape, and the potential threats to the landscape that have been identified. A standard set of exemptions are provided for landscapes of regional significance, and a standard set of (fewer) exemptions are outlined for landscapes of state significance. These are based on the current requirements of the zone (generally the Farming Zone), with consideration of the proposed Reformed Rural Zones (draft only at the time of the preparation of these recommendations), together with past experience in the drafting such schedules for similar studies, and their assessment by Planning Panels Victoria, and support by Council officers and the community.

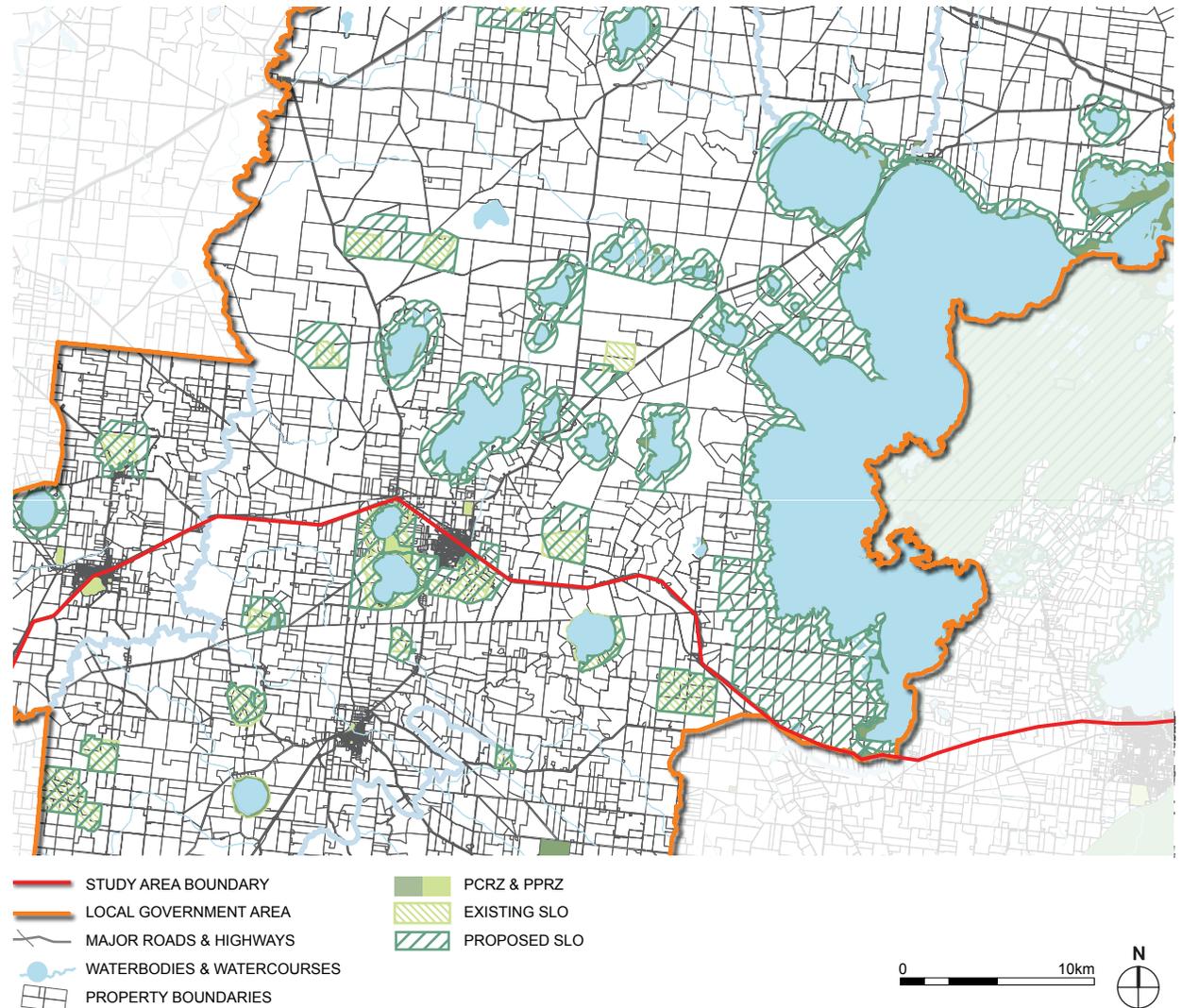
Decision guidelines

The guidelines are based on the content of the relevant Significance Assessment Paper(s), together with the Landscape Management Guidelines that have been prepared for each Landscape Character Type. The decision guidelines are pertinent to the local conditions of each landscape area and its significance, and aim to proactively protect landscape features of particularly high value, while supporting strong siting and design outcomes.

The South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study 2013 is also included as a 'reference document' in each of the proposed SLO schedules.

Utilising experience gained in the preparation of this and previous landscape assessment studies, it is recommended that DPCD prepare a Practice Note for 'Applying the Significant Landscape Overlay'.

Example Significant Landscape Overlay map from a Municipal Toolkit



MAPPING THE SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE OVERLAY

The following considerations have been used to determine the most appropriate location for SLO boundaries:

- The nature of the landscape feature(s) itself, including the type of feature and its physical characteristics.
- The setting (or appropriate buffer) of the landscape feature(s), and its interface with the landscape beyond.
The definition of 'setting', and the starting point and justification for calculating various 'setting distances' is outlined in the following section of this introduction.
- Views towards the landscape and/or landscape feature(s) from public roads, including:
 - highly trafficked roads considered as primary viewing corridors (category 1 & 2 roads, tourist roads and major arterials); and/or,
 - other public roads or minor roads that access the landscape as a secondary consideration.
- Ease of administration i.e. boundaries have been drawn to match cadastre boundaries and road edges for ease of administration, where appropriate.

The Setting

In mapping the proposed SLOs, much consideration has been given to the landscape features that form part of the landscape, or are the subject of significant views within that landscape, and their setting. 'Setting' is defined as:

The immediate and extended environment that is part of, or contributes to, its significance and distinctive character.

Source: 2005, ICOMOS Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of Settings

The determination of the exact boundaries of the proposed SLOs as part of this study has been based on the fact that the setting is greatly influenced by the visual impact of the landscape feature itself. As such, as a starting point to the mapping, this influence has been quantified with an assessment of the height, width and distance relationships, and the status of the landscape and landscape feature) as either regionally or state significant.

DETERMINING THE SETTING DISTANCES

As a starting point, the following visibility distances have been used (based on the viewer being located at ground level, rather than in an elevated viewing location):

- **5,000m** – Feature is visible, though not a dominant aspect of the landscape
- **3,000m** – Feature is clearly discernible in the landscape
- **1,000m** - Feature dominates the landscape

(These distances are based on previous visual amenity work undertaken by Planisphere involving a best practice review of visual assessment methods.)

For the purpose of this study, landscape features that provide relief from flat or undulating terrain have been grouped into two categories:

- **Minor features (<5km wide)** which include volcanic cones and granitic outcrops such as Mount Emu and the Island Uplands.
- **Larger features (or State significant features of any size) (>5km wide)** which have the height and width to dominate landscapes completely at close range (up to 3000m) and are clearly visible on the horizon from much greater distances (such as the You Yangs, Pyrenees Ranges or the Grampians) or have been assessed as State significant landscapes.

The setting, or buffer, for minor features has been calculated at 1:5, or a 500m offset from the feature per 100m in height. The height of the surrounding land has been taken into account, with the height of the feature measured from the 'break of slope,' where the change in elevation is most evident. For example, Mount Emu is approximately 150m high, and is therefore proposed to have a setting of approximately 750m.

The setting for large landscape features, or State significant features, has been set at 1:10. As the width of the feature increases as does its visual dominance from greater distances; State significant features have also been given a wider buffer to ensure a higher level of protection. For example, the Grampians Ranges have an average elevation of 800m, therefore the proposed setting offset (and SLO boundary) is 8,000m and Mount Elephant, which is a State significant landscape feature, has a height of approximately 170m and therefore a buffer zone of 1,700m.

The offset for lakes has been set at 500m. Smaller lakes have a low profile in the landscape and unless viewed from the edge have minimal visual impact. One of the most significant aspects of the lakes within the study area is the collection or grouping of them in some areas, rather than their overall visual impact. The buffer is sufficient to capture these groupings in most instances, and to prevent inappropriate development from occurring adjacent to their perimeters.



Major landscape features: Grampians Ranges



Lake edges protected with a 500m offset



Minor landscape features: Mount Emu



The SLO protects prominent hills slopes and ridges such as The Bluff in the Parwan Valley (pictured above)

