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# Wurundjeri Cultural Values of Gisborne

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For Macedon Ranges  
Shire Council

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This work comes from a desire by MRSC and Wurundjeri Council to work together in improving the way in which cultural values and cultural heritage management occur within planning. The aim is to ensure that Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation is included within planning processes on decisions which affect and impact Country. The members of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation are primary partners in this process. The aim of this document is to present cultural values of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community that occur in and around the local Gisborne Township with particular focus on the areas identified in an initial Gisborne Context Plan.

This report is a Wurundjeri Cultural Values survey which focuses on the Community responses to development and land use change in the area. It is an addition to the cultural heritage report developed by Extent in 2018.

### **Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Community Statement**

*The Wurundjeri people have been caring for Country since the beginning of time. Our message is that Wurundjeri people have a deep understanding and knowledge of Country and that Wurundjeri's connection should be respected and valued.*

*The Wurundjeri have an unbroken relationship with Country, caring for this land, its waterways, its plants, and animals. A core purpose of Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Corporation is the protection, preservation and revitalisation of Wurundjeri culture and cultural practices.*

*There is a deep cultural obligation and birthright to look after Country and keep it healthy. Country to us includes the land, water, plants, animals, and spirits of the traditional lands. Country is known through the Songlines of the Ancestors who lived here for thousands of years.*

*Today our Country is shared with Victorians from many different backgrounds. In addition, people from all across Australia and even internationally visit our Country. We believe that Wurundjeri people must take a leading role in working with all communities on matters of Country.*

*As Traditional Owners we seek to build solid, working relationships and partnerships across our Traditional Country to protect, manage, and restore the land and water today and for the future generations.*

*We have the right and the obligation to speak for Country.*

*(Introduction to the Wurundjeri Community Response to the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Statement of Planning Policy)*

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Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people retain their custodianship over their cultural lands. Indigenous Sovereignty has never been ceded.

## Introduction

This report contains Wurundjeri Community feedback in response to the Gisborne Enquiry by Design workshop held on 16 October 2018. This report adds to the existing historical investigation by Extent, presenting a mix of contemporary cultural values, including social, ecological, and broader environmental values. A group of Elders, employees, and Community representatives from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation participated in site visits and tours around Gisborne to look at four target areas identified as potential expansion areas for the Township.

The information contained in the report may not be inclusive of all the local cultural values and does not reduce any legal or compliance requirements regarding property development, planning controls, land clearing, or the removal of cultural heritage material.

## Background and Value

Historically the inclusion of Traditional Owners values and input to future planning and land use making decisions was limited and inconsistent (Porter, 2006; Prangnell, Ross, & Coghill, 2010). This project is a direct example of how Victorian Planning processes can improve with early and comprehensive discussions with Traditional Owners about the full range of cultural values. This work presents the holistic landscape approach to Indigenous engagement in Town and Land use Planning. The information in this report is from a range of sources, particularly community feedback obtained on a field visit to Gisborne, as well as interviews, research, and new cultural heritage information from recent (2019) property developments within the existing town growth area.

Traditionally involvement in planning for Traditional Owners is via compliance and legislative levers such as the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act (2006). This Act outlines the legal requirements for Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPS). It is a prescriptive process limited to local and defined Activity Areas for development. The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act (2006) defines when a CHMP must be undertaken. A key part of that decision relates to the activity in relation to the areas of mapped Cultural Heritage Sensitivity based on work by Canning (2004). This process is useful in areas with many recorded Aboriginal Place records but can be limited in rural or peri-urban centres such as Gisborne. The flora and fauna values are cultural and important but are not legally considered cultural heritage (Pepper & Duxson, 2014). This process has provided an opportunity to present environmental and landscape scale considerations

Extent has previously compiled a comprehensive desktop survey of existing literature, cultural heritage places, and registered sites (as identified to January 2019) logged on ACHRIS (Janson & James, 2018). The report also included site potential modelling and a series of recommendations. It is not the purpose of this report to replicate that information, but rather to directly add Wurundjeri perspectives on the identified cultural values, re-connect community with Country, and include the broader community values in an effort to improve decision-making processes by Macedon Ranges Shire Planners.

## Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Bill 2017

The Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Bill 2017, which identified Macedon Ranges Shire Council (MRSC) as the first regions to develop a Statement of Planning Policy, support this project. The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation, as one of the Traditional Owners for the area had an important opportunity for direct feedback into the Statement of Planning Policy. This work has also come from

a direct discussion with the Planning Department at Macedon Ranges Shire Council (MRSC) in an effort to improve the land use decision making processes and actively include Traditional Owners.

As part of the background for this exercise provides the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung for section 8 of that document (Townships), informing the external parties of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Corporation preferred engagement and consultation strategies with respect to planning updates and land use decisions. The exert on Town planning from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation Community Response 2018 is a key driver for this work:

As one of the statutory authorities within the Macedon Shire Ranges, Wurundjeri Council is responsible for the approval of cultural heritage management plans. The proposed expansion of settlements within the Wurundjeri RAP area requires developers to work with Wurundjeri to ensure there is cultural heritage compliance in this process. Wurundjeri Council encourages Council to consider early planning consultation to avoid existing cultural heritage and to provide advice regarding where sites and cultural places are prior to development approvals. Where possible landscape scale CHMP development rather than individual property-based processes would be valued.

The specific area of settlement growth within the Wurundjeri RAP is the township of Riddells Creek, which has an expansion to the south. Wurundjeri Council is aware of the increased pressure on rural and peri-urban regions regarding population growth, settlement expansion and property values. Additionally, Wurundjeri Council is aware of the impacts associated with land use change, particularly in the context of cultural heritage and the need to ensure that the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2006* is followed as part of township any expansion. Wurundjeri would like to have involvement with planners within the Shire to develop strategies that provide holistic responses and guidance for settlement expansion. Identifying areas where there is minimal cultural and environmental impact is important. The *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2006* indicates that avoidance is always the preferred option for managing any known or unknown cultural heritage sites.

The consideration of intangible and environmental cultural values is also important to consider in this context. The relationship of settlement growth and preservation of biodiversity and landscape is not easy to manage. Wurundjeri Council is keen to work with Macedon Ranges Shire in identifying potential environmental and landscape impacts on the locally identified growth areas in Wurundjeri Country.

Wurundjeri Council also understands that sustainable population is difficult to manage. As part of this process Wurundjeri Council are keen to hear from MRSC regarding policy on sustainable population targets; particularly how they are identified and managed.

## **Summary**

To plan and manage growth of settlements in the declared area consistent with protection of the area's significant landscapes, protection of catchments, biodiversity, ecological and environmental values, and consistent with the unique character, role and function of each settlement:

- Work to protect any and all known existing sites within the designated expansion areas that fall within Wurundjeri Country.
- Outline a process for holistic management of future township boundary changes, which will include broader landscape scale cultural surveys where information can be obtained prior to the start of works
- Learn about Macedon Ranges Shire sustainable population processes and plans. What are realistic targets and how are they set.

*From Wurundjeri Community Response to the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Statement of Planning Policy 2018*

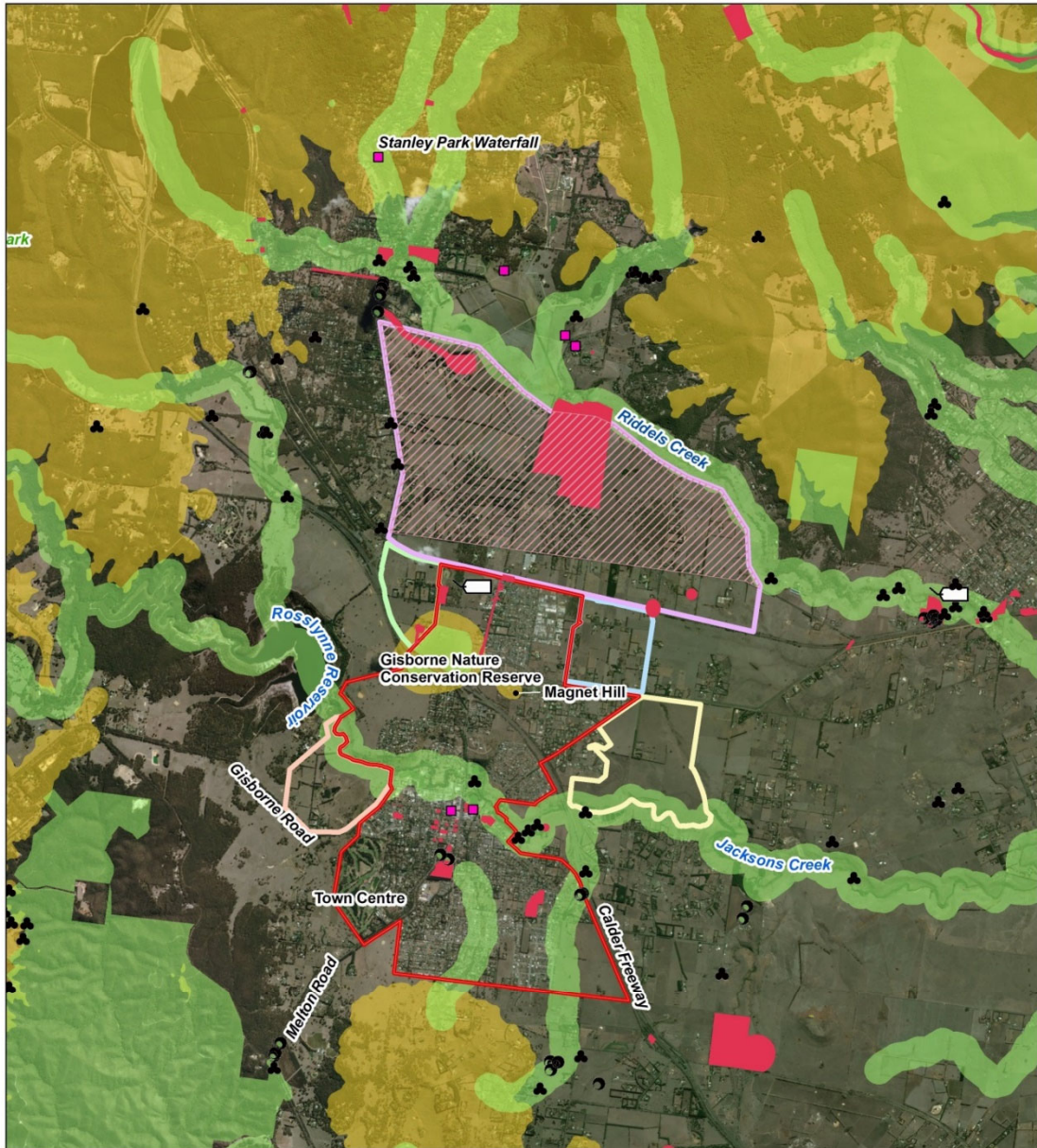
## **Purpose for Study**

It is driven by the understanding that Gisborne, (and the Shire of Macedon Ranges) is a high demand growth area, being in close travel proximity to Melbourne, but also providing a rural lifestyle for residents. The projected growth for this area is XXX over the next 20 years. In preparation of this Macedon Ranges Shire Council recognises the importance of planned township expansions, both as a way of ensuring that development meets demand and, importantly, that the existing local values are minimally impacted. Cultural values in this area are important within the landscape. Gisborne is located on Jacksons Creek, an important Wurundjeri travel route and source of resources. It is close to Mt Macedon, an important landmark seen across much of Wurundjeri Country, and the Sunbury Rings one of many culturally significant ceremony places. Figure 1 (from the Extent report) shows the broader study area, the target areas, the location of cultural heritage sensitivity and registered cultural heritage sites within the area as of December 2018.

This report examines and includes information and data not traditionally included in cultural heritage surveys such as resource use of the local plant and animal species, vegetation communities, and intangible information. The information presented also represents contemporary community knowledge, values, and understanding to this very important cultural area. The report contains the perspectives of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and Community who participated in the field visits. There are many notable local features identified in the immediate area:

- Jacksons Creek  
Important travel route and place of natural resources
- Gisborne Nature Conservation Reserve (Swamp)  
Food and Fibre resources
- Magnet Hill  
Lookout area above the Swamp
- Mt Gisborne  
High peak with views to the south to Wada-wurrung (Werribee River) and east back to Wurundjeri Country

- Mt Macedon  
Tall peak seen through most of Wurundjeri Country, mentioned by William Barak
- Stanley Park Waterfall  
Area with known cultural sites potentially related to Mt William Axe Quarry



# EXTENT

**Drawn by:** Alexander Murphy, Tom Sapienza  
**Checked by:** Luke James  
**Date:** 18 December 2018  
**Projection:** GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55  
**Data sources:** Extent, ESRI, ACHRIS

- Gisborne Township Boundary
- 1 Current Investigation Area
- 2 Current Investigation Area
- 3 North of Railway
- 4 Kilmore Road (Eastern Area)
- 5 Bypass (Western Area)
- Areas of Aboriginal Heritage Sensitivity
- Areas of predicted cultural heritage sensitivity
- Likely sites of Aboriginal cultural sensitivity
- Places included on the Victorian Heritage Register, Victorian Heritage Inventory and/or Heritage Overlay
- Areas of Likely Heritage Sensitivity (both Aboriginal and post-contact)
- ♣ Artefact Scatter
- Low Density Artefact Distribution
- Object Collection
- Stone Feature

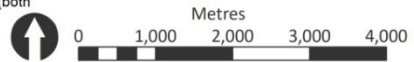


Figure 1 Gisborne Region with Study Areas (Extent Heritage 2018)

## Method

This information from this report is drawn from a number of sources, but primarily has arisen from field trips and interviews with Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Elders and Community (including members of the Wurundjeri Narrap Team). The first field trip had 12 participants including four Wurundjeri Elders, and 3 members of the Wurundjeri Narrap Team. A second field trip occurred with Elders and community. A series of one on one discussions confirming and clarifying points made on the field trip also occurred as part of this work. The report also contains information sourced from flora and fauna records, ethnographic information, and a range of academic literature providing context both from the perspective of the activity and supporting material for the information presented in the report.

## Regional Description and Values

Gisborne and surrounds are located within Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung County. The ethnographic study conducted as part of the Extent project provides a detailed review of the associated information. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation has an application in under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act (2010)*. The application area for the Act, shown in Figure 2, extends from Werribee River in the west to Mt Baw Baw in the east. The Macedon Ranges Shire Council overlaps with this claim in the north-west. The major settlements within the area include Gisborne, Macedon, and Romsey. The Wurundjeri Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) Boundary has a smaller boundary area. The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council under the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2006 approved the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung RAP area in 2008.



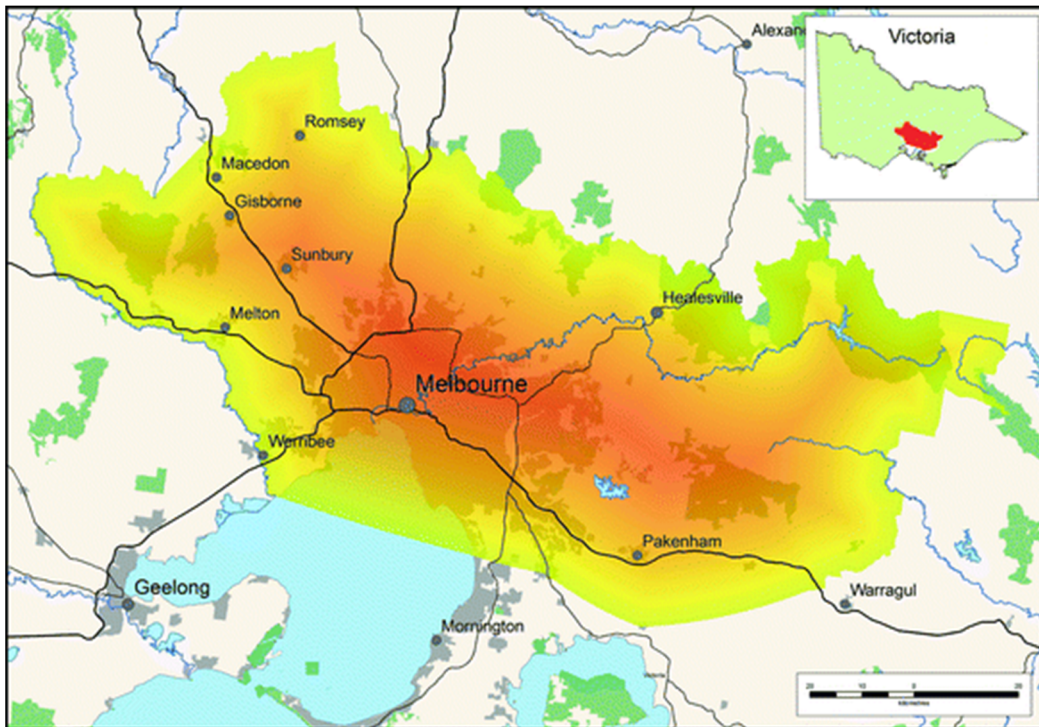


Figure 2: Wurundjeri Traditional Owner Settlement Act Claim (Gardner & McGaw 2018)<sup>1</sup>

## Archaeological Records

The Gisborne Structure Plan Heritage Assessment report by Extent provides detailed descriptions of the known recorded heritage sites and historical contact sites within Gisborne and the broader study area. It is not the intent of this report to also cover that information except as part of the general acknowledgement of evidence of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung occupation of Country, or in the situation where new cultural heritage sites have been uncovered.

The report identified 11 CHMPs within the area, as well as a number of important post contact locations of note within the current township (Vines, 2013). Figure1 (from the Extent report) also shows the location of registered Aboriginal Places in and around Gisborne. Based upon the lack of formal surveys outside areas of Cultural Heritage sensitivity (as defined by the 2006 Act) it is highly likely that numerous places yet to be identified. Extant applied a model for cultural heritage potential drawing upon previous work by du Cross in 1989, and the current understanding of locating cultural material (Vines, 2013). The land coverage from this model extends beyond the current legally defined areas of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity. The model results from the model only impact one of the four survey areas.

In addition to the information provided in the Gisborne Structure Plan Heritage Assessment, a recent property development on the south east of Gisborne (within the existing town boundary) has uncovered three additional areas containing cultural heritage material (Figure 2). Situated on a ridge line close to a waterway, a series of new registered sites add to the numerous locations of cultural

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner A.M., McGaw J. (2018) Indigenous Placemaking in Urban Melbourne: A Dialogue Between a Wurundjeri Elder and a Non-Indigenous Architect and Academic. In: Grant E., Greenop K., Refiti A., Glenn D. (eds) *The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture*. Springer, Singapore

value which fall within the township boundary. The Wurundjeri Cultural Heritage Unit considers these sites substantial and significant for the local area (M. Chamberlain pers. comms. 2019). This work considers these three new cultural heritage places, the previously recorded places, and the local resource locations in a landscape context, rather than as separate discreet sites. The unknown factor will be the temporal changes of occupation.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation also support the information for areas not directly in the study area from the Extent Cultural Heritage Report:

- The Jacksons Creek corridor is an important travel route as suggested by Barwick, and that resources, both ecological and geological, are still present through the area.
- The natural resources around Wooling Swamp (the Gisborne Conservation Reserve), and the potential for cultural material associated with the swamp deposits is very high.
- Magnet Hill, which is identified an important area in the Extent report as a lookout point
- The former Bush Inn Hotel where Nangollilobel (alias Jon Bull, Captain Turnbull), the brother of the paternal grandmother of Barak, lived as it is outside the Areas of Investigation.

### Native Vegetation: Values and Uses

The use and values of the study have links to the types of native vegetation which once occurred through the local landscape. Gisborne township is located in an area that was rich with different vegetation communities, providing habitat for a broad range of species. The diversity is due in part to its location on a bioregional boundary area with elements of Victorian Volcanic Plains and Central Victorian Uplands potentially present and reflected in diversity. The other reason for the local species diversity includes different soil types, topographic variation and rainfall also add to the landform diversity with dividing range foothills, plains landscapes and volcanic cones all present in the local Gisborne region.

- Plains Grassy Woodland

The most common vegetation type in each of the 4 study areas is Plains Grassy Woodland vegetation class. Plains Grassy Woodland through this region contains numerous species of value to Wurundjeri people for medicine, food, fibre, and tool. Currently the main tree species within 2 of the study regions is River Red Gum (*E. cameldulensis*), other species which might occur in the wetter areas are likely to be Swamp Gum (*E. ovata*), and Manna Gum (*E. viminalis*). Beal is the Woi-wurrung name for the River Red Gum. These trees have been almost completely removed from Area 1 and Area 4 and across the Study Areas the majority of the Red Gum individuals are old and large trees, and there few examples of active regeneration and replacement. The eventual loss of these trees will result in a significant change in landscape character. The loss of these trees over time is a risk identified by some of the Elders, not only because there may be cultural scaring on the trees but also it might make it easier for increased urban expansion to occur. During any subdivision with old trees, a survey for scar trees is important.

Both long term grazing and historic land clearing significantly impact the understory species for this vegetation type. Important food species such as Murnong (*Microseris sp.*), Bulbine lilies (*Bulbine bulbosa*), and Chocolate lilies (*Arthropodium stricta*) do not occur in the cleared and grazed landscapes. Only The four study areas do not have terraced landscapes which would have been a key site where Wurundjeri are known to have propagated Murnong (*Microseris sp.*), but there are river terraces located within Gisborne (Gott, 1983). Native grass species are mixed in paddocks randomly

with exotic pasture grasses. The mid story species such as *Bursaria* (*Bursaria spinosa*) and the range of Acacia species are also not present across the majority of the Areas. These species were important resources for Wurundjeri, particularly the wood, sap, and seeds (Zola & Gott, 1992). Current examples of Plains Grassy Woodland through the four study areas are limited in their diversity and spread of resource species. Even with the reduction of diversity, the Wurundjeri Community still value these scattered ecological remnants and would like to see protection of as many remnant vegetation patches as possible.

- Plains Sedgy Wetland

This is the vegetation type identified in the Conservation Reserve adjacent to Area 1 (GHD, 2018). There are numerous food, fibre, art, and medicine plant species associated with this vegetation type including Cranes Bill (*Geranium sp.*), Reeds (*Juncus sp.*), and Flax Lilly (*Dianella sp.*). This ecosystem also provides habitat for numerous bird species, particularly ducks, waterhens, and the swans many of which are highly valued food sources. The extent of the Plains Sedgy Wetland is determined by the climate, particularly rainfall and over time the area would have shrunk and increased due to seasonal, and long-term climatic cycling. The impact of housing developments, will include drainage works and the potential for impacting the water table further to the existing impacts from the racecourse and freeway construction (GHD, 2018). Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung values for this area are considered high due to the location within the landscape, the values of the ecosystem and the potential for cultural material and sites.

- Valley Grassy Forest

According to other vegetation reports Valley Grassy Forest is common within many of the riparian valleys of the region, though usually not directly adjacent to waterways (Woodend grassland reserve report). Narrow Leaf Peppermint (*E. radiata*), Yellow Box (*E. melliodora*), Messmate Stringybark (*E. obliqua*), and Candlebark (*E. rubida*) are the key overstorey species found in the EVC. Understorey species include a variety of Acacia's many of which had traditional uses, such as sap for medicine and adhesives, wood for tools like digging sticks, and as habitat for animals used for food. Similar to the Plains Woodland many of the herbaceous species have food, fibre, and/or medicinal properties. Early Nancy (*Wurmbia dioica*) have edible roots, while Flax Lilies (*Dianella sp.*) are key fibre plants producing fine silk like fibres. These are resources which were once common though the Gisborne landscape.

The DELWP pre 1750 EVC vegetation modelling places Valley Grassy Forest EVC in and around the Gisborne area (Figure 3). Much of the area originally covered by this EVC now cleared, particularly through the valley of Jacksons Creek (Figure 4).

- Riparian Woodland

This vegetation type is highly restricted to along the larger permanent waterways of the region, Jacksons Creek being one of the most common. The current EVC mapping shows that Riparian Woodland no longer occurs along Jacksons Creek. In terms of the focus Areas it is clear that along the Kilmore Road property this vegetation is no longer present in any intact form. There may be remnant grass species present. This vegetation type is similar to the Plains Grassy Woodland vegetation containing numerous plant species which had significant use value to Wurundjeri people, including River Red Gums (*E. cameldulensis*), and Spiny Mat Rush (*Lomandra filiformis*).

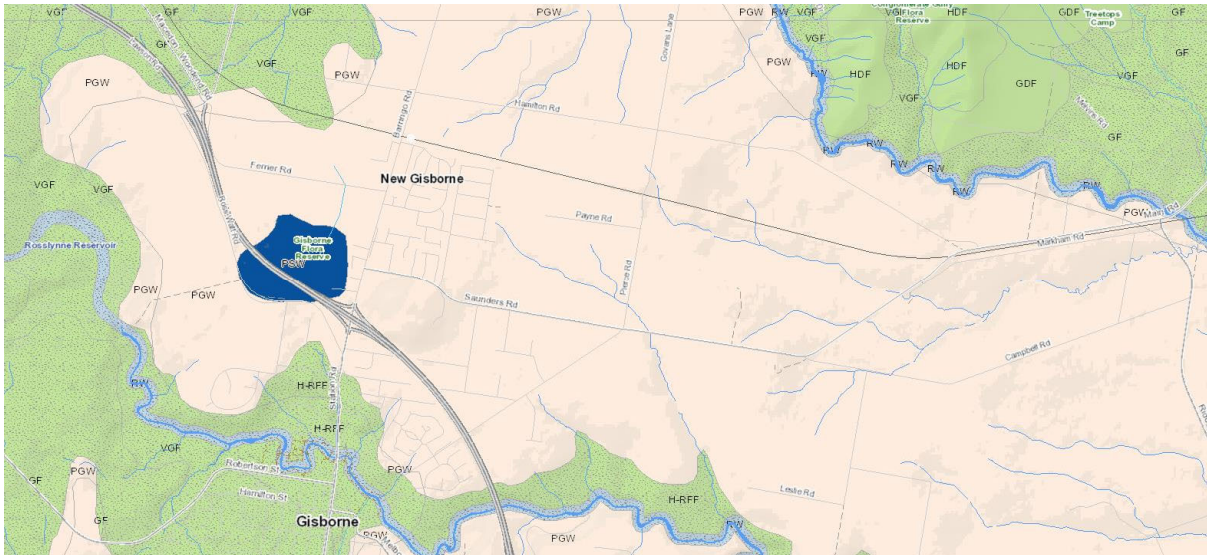


Figure 3 Pre 1750 EVC DELWP (Modelled)

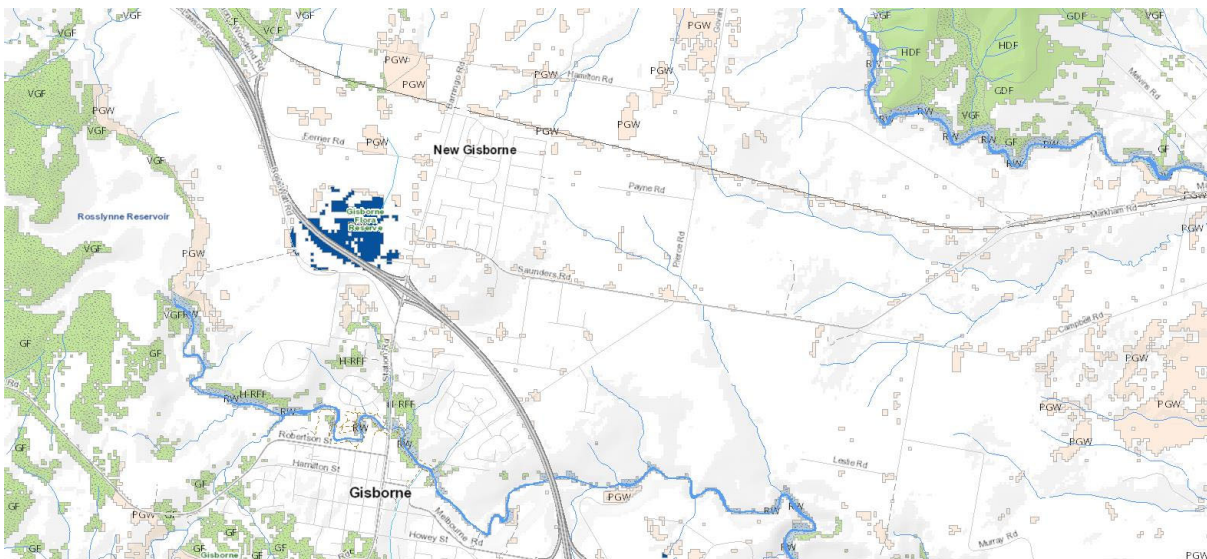


Figure 4 2005 EVC DELWP

The change in native vegetation distribution across the region is clearly seen when comparing the historic and current coverage (Figure 3 & 4). This information comes from a variety of field and modelled observations.

### Local Fauna Resources

The State fauna records contain a number of important species occurring within the local Gisborne area. This list is incomplete as the earliest record in the database comes from 1967 and there would have been additional species located within the area prior to clearing and land use change. There are twelve species recorded on the state register in the study area that are known food sources of Indigenous people. Eels are a well-documented seasonal food source through the southern eastern coast, and numerous eel-trap locations at strategic places along waterways or in billabongs (Cahir, Clark, & Clarke, 2018; Presland, 2014). The Blackfish, also known as 'Slimies', are often referenced by Wurundjeri people as good river fish for eating. Blackfish are highly susceptible to environmental change with nutrient run-off, changes in water pH, and river flow all known to impact negatively on

the species. Waterbirds are commonly recorded as food, while Swan Eggs are a noted valuable food in many ethnographic records.

**Table 1: List of Species used by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People (From Bunce, D. 1859, and Berry 1991, compiled by Monash University Linguistics team)**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung
Blackfish	<i>Gadopsis marmoratus</i>	Duat (Fish species unspecified)
Eel	<i>Anguilla australis</i>	Iuk
Black Wallaby	<i>Wallabia bicolor</i>	Wimbii(rr)
Australasian Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus novaehollandiae</i>	Toolome (Duck species unspecified)
Australian Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadornoides</i>	Toolome (Duck species unspecified)
Australian Swan	<i>Cygnus atratus</i>	Gunawarra (Wife of Bunjil)
Australian Wood Duck	<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>	Toolome (Duck species unspecified)
Chestnut Teal	<i>Anas castanea</i>	Toolome (Duck species unspecified)
Pacific Black Duck	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>	Toolome (Duck species unspecified)
Brush-tail Possum	<i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>	Walert - Woolert
Eastern Grey Kangaroo	<i>Macropus giganteus</i>	Mirrm
Common Wombat	<i>Vombatus ursinus</i>	Warin

The records also show that Gisborne area is home to the two species representing the Wurundjeri Moieties, the Wedge Tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*), and the Crow or Raven (*Corvus sp.*). Bunjil is the creator spirit, making the land and the animals before flying high into the night sky, while Waa the Crow. These species are valued from a cultural perspective both as important beings, and via the basis of the Wurundjeri Clan structure, particularly relating to marriages and rights to resource rich places. Other animals of cultural note within the survey area include the Nankeen Kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*), known as Djurt Djurt, a messenger for Bunjil (Ellender, Christiansen, & Faithfull, 1999), the Ringtail Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) and the Crimson Rosella (*Platycercus elegans*) Darnum. The Wurundjeri community agree that these species form part of Wurundjeri lore, culture, and have value which should be recognised in equal consideration to those on the list of locally occurring threatened species<sup>2</sup>. Conversations around local species protection plans are important for the Wurundjeri Community and the Narrap Team who wish to be involved moving forward.

<sup>2</sup> There are likely to be other species which may not occur formal records. It is intended to increase this information as part of the Narrap Plan (Wurundjeri Country Plan)

## Current Gisborne Local Landscape

Gisborne is located in an area of landscape transition where the volcanic plains landscape to the south meets the foothills of the Dividing Range to the north, leading up to Mt Macedon and Camels Hump. To the west lies Lerderderg and Wombat State Parks, areas that contain deep gorges where the rivers and waterways cut through the sandstone geology. These steep zones distinguish it from the volcanic formations closer to Gisborne (Figure 3). The flatter volcanic plains to the south and the east have highly modified vegetation. The changes began in the mid to late 1840s for this area, with sheep in particular playing a significant part for the vegetation change and clearing as the European population spread outside the city. The purchasing of land at this time occurred in ignorance of Traditional Lands and without the consent of Wurundjeri people. North of Gisborne lies Mt Macedon and the Dividing Range. This area was part of a travel route between Wurundjeri and Dja Wurrung Country. Mt Macedon is an important guiding landscape feature for this route. At the far end of the Mt Macedon plateau is Hanging Rock, another culturally significant area.

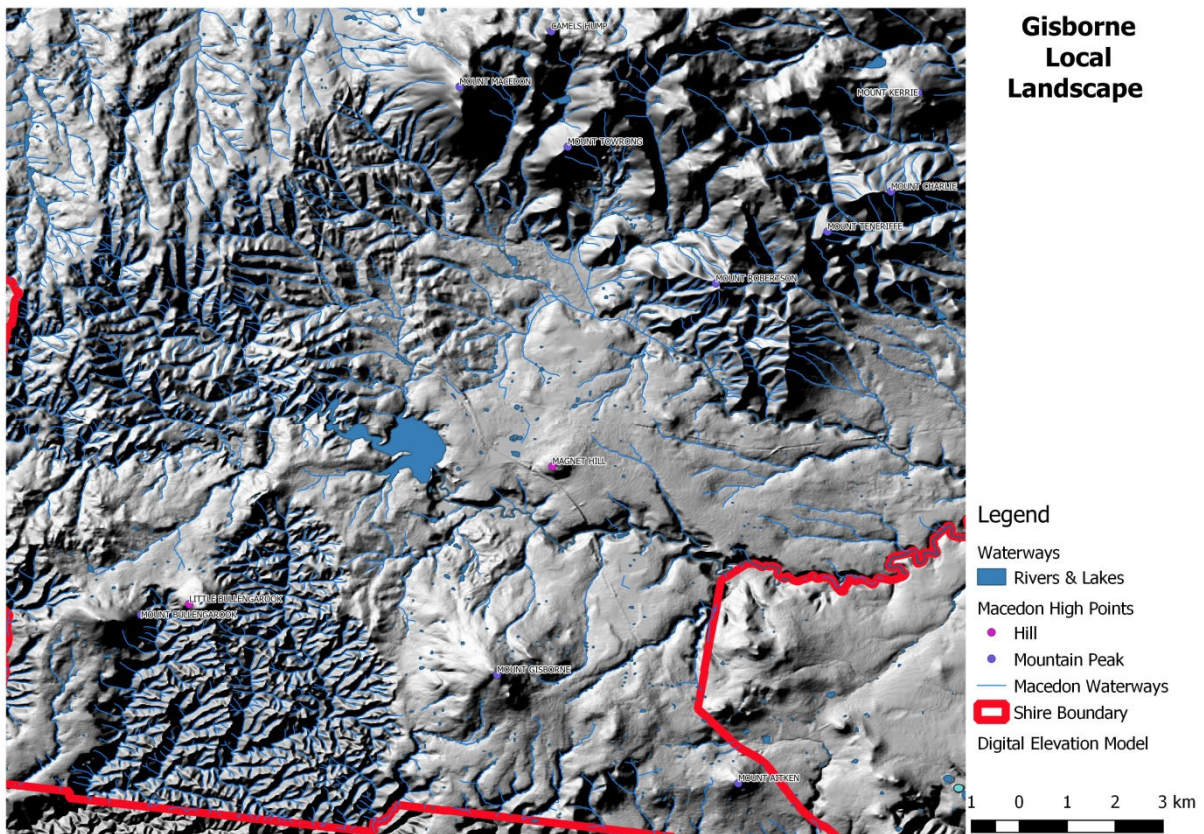


Figure 5 Local Digital Elevation Model of the Gisborne Area (Vertical exaggeration x10)

## Mt Gisborne

An important part of the field trip was driving around and then walking up Mt Gisborne through the conservation reserve. While housing is present on the slopes on the north and west the area at the peak of Mt Gisborne is a Council owned reserve. The southern slopes have stock, while the northern, western, and eastern slopes have low-density housing. Mt Gisborne is the tallest of the local peaks, and has a longer eruption history with a series of flows (Agriculture Victoria, 1996).

Mt Gisborne is not directly part of the study areas but it does provide the highest location within the immediate Gisborne study area (Figure 3). It is a useful and important reference point and one of the local volcanic eruption locations. Mt Gisborne provides an excellent vantage point to observe the surrounding landscape, particularly to the South and East. To the north and west the views line face Mt Macedon, and the dividing range. Examining the key landscape points Mt Macedon and the ranges are close to the north and west, while to the south other volcanic peaks such as Mt Cottrell and the You Yangs to the south.

The peak of Mt Gisborne is a conservation reserve, containing Scoria Cone Woodland Ecological Vegetation Class. This vegetation type includes a number of species with specific and important cultural uses such as Drooping She-oak (*Allocasurina verticillata*) and Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*). This reserve is not physically within the study areas but it provides landscape context, and importantly broader landscape views. Volcanic peaks across the district, like Mt Gisborne, are documented as important navigation, meeting and cultural points through the local landscape. A previous survey of the peak by the Wurundjeri Narrap Team in 2012 identified a number of quartz flakes around the peak. The inclusion of a cultural survey for the area is something to consider as part of future environmental management plans.

## Summary

- Mt Gisborne provides excellent views of the area which show approach routes
- The visual relationship of Gisborne and Mt Gisborne with Mt Macedon is important and needs to be retained, through planning processes.
- Identifying the other volcanic peaks gives a good understanding of Country and these view lines should also be retained
- Cultural material is likely to occur at the top of Mt Gisborne. Identifying this and incorporating it into the ongoing management is a priority.
- The volcanic flows from Mt Gisborne occurred across a long geological timeframe and there are numerous features in the landscape such as old stony rises from the eruptions.

## Area 1

This first area is located on the northwest side of Gisborne. The proposed area covers roughly 77 ha and is adjacent to an area containing an existing low-density housing subdivision (Figure 1). The land is zoned Rural Living Zone (RLZ) and currently contains 10 different land parcels. The zone is on a section of volcanic plain, elevated above the major waterway, Jacksons Creek. It would seem that there are old stony rises significantly elevating the potential for cultural heritage material through Area 1 (Figure 2). The remnant vegetation remaining in the area is predominantly single older trees, with some scattering of Acacia species through some of the properties.

Other environmental cultural values include the Gisborne Nature Conservation Reserve, adjacent to Area 1. The area was until 1939 the local racecourse, after drainage of the wetland. The dominant vegetation type within reserve is mapped as Plains Sedgy Wetland EVC (DELWP 2018), a finding that is supported by numerous vegetation assessments, as well as a section of Plains Grassy Wetland EVC (GHD, 2018). The Plains Grassy Wetland EVC occurs across the drier zones in the southeast of the reserve. The Conservation area has the Calder Freeway running through the southwestern section,

and it abuts the southern section of Area 1. The land east of Area 1 and north of the swamp is currently zoned residential land, in preparation for property development (Figure 1).

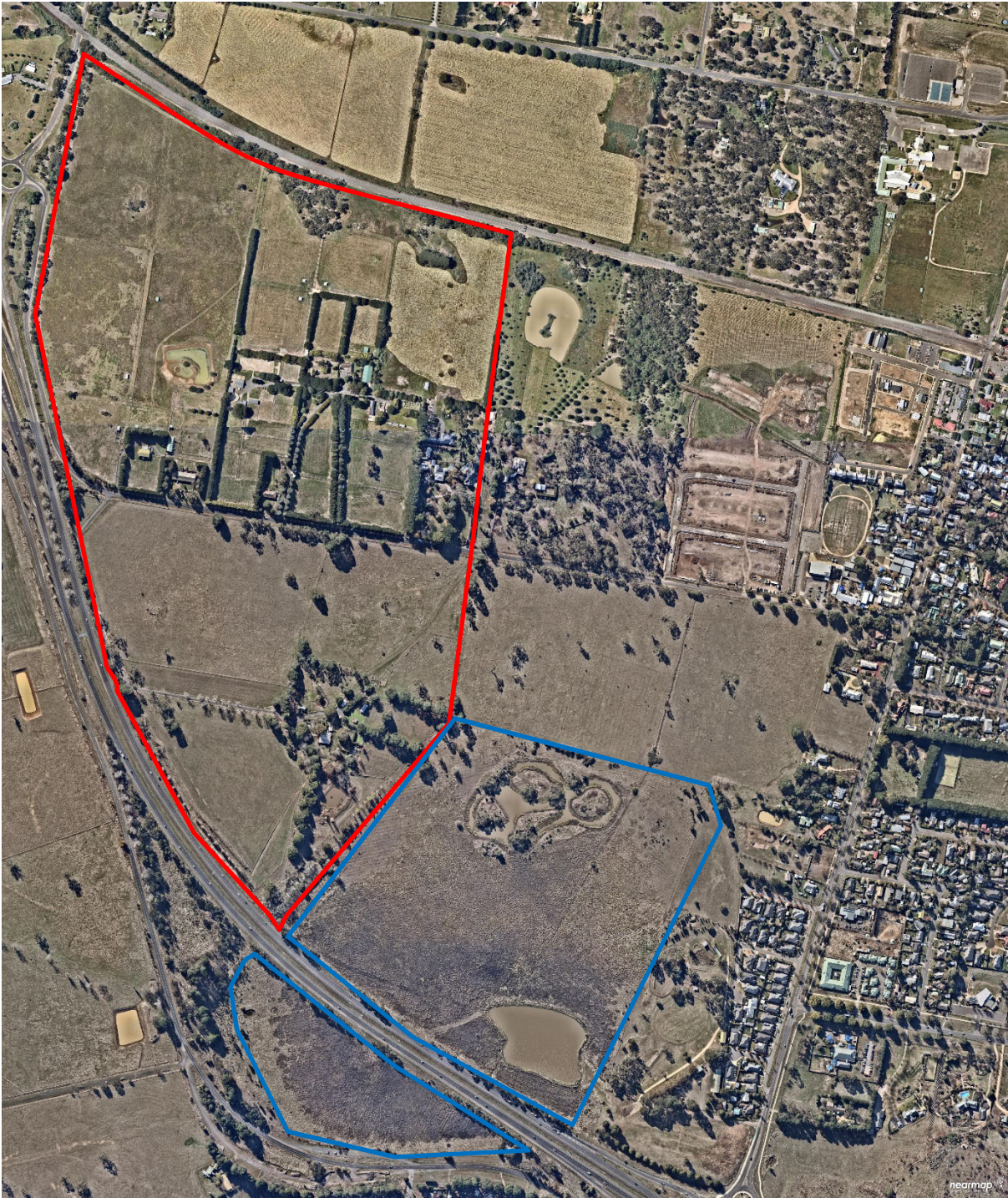
In terms of the cultural values identified by Wurundjeri the conservation reserve contains a diverse range of plants and animals. Many of these would have been useful for Wurundjeri people, with specific examples including Cumbungi (*Typha sp.*), Water Ribbons (*Triglochin sp.*), and the presence of habitat for a wide range of water birds. Around the edge of the swampy soil deposits there is high likelihood of material cultural heritage, this is also a particularly important area for these food and fibre cultural resources. The location of this swamp in the landscape is unusual as it is above Jacksons Creek, and associated floodplain, being part of the volcanic plain elevated about 50 – 100m above the creek.

While there has been some development around Area 1, it is the potential impact on the swamp which is of concern for the Wurundjeri Community. From a cultural heritage perspective, the extent of the swamp is unknown which is concerning to the Community. It is highly likely that there are cultural sites around the edge of the swamp and occupation timelines suggest that the extents will have changed over time.

Artefacts and other tangible items could be present through a large section of Area 1. An examination of the current Cultural Heritage Sensitivity overlay shows that it only covers the swamp and official conservation area rather than the full extent of the swamp deposits (Figure 4). This means that future development will not require a CHMP which may result in no suitable archaeological assessment of the area. The potential for cultural material in this area is high, even outside the sensitivity boundary. Wurundjeri feedback is to have AV extend the cultural sensitivity layer to include a survey of the Swamp deposits plus the standard 200-meter buffer. It is important to have this update made particularly in relationship to current potential for development in the adjacent section. This situation is mentioned in the Cultural Heritage Report by Extent (Janson & James, 2018).

The water officer and the Narrap Team are keen to protect and enhance the environmental values of the area. The ongoing protection of the area could include reducing the visual and environmental impact of housing and ensuring appropriate management of urban runoff and maintaining the water quality.





*Figure 6 Area 1 Current Investigation Area (Conservation reserve marked in blue)*

### **Area 1 Summary**

- Approval for high density development in this area is not in keeping with Wurundjeri community values which would seek to preserve the views across the Gisborne Nature Conservation Reserve to the elevated slopes of Magnet Hill.
- The area seems to have old and weathered Stony Rises (though they may have been cleared and ploughed by early settlers). This increases the likelihood of cultural material in the area, particularly when considered with proximity to the swamp.

- Expand the official cultural heritage significance overlay in consultation with AV to expand beyond the conservation zone boundary – preferably if there is an opportunity to identify the boundary of the swamp deposits and include an additional 200m buffer for the Cultural Heritage Sensitivity Overlay (as per waterways).
- Manage development in this area to have minimal impact on swamp including the land already designated for property development by keeping housing density at a minimum.
- The application of an appropriate buffer zone around the reserve.
- Maintain and improve the views from this area – a higher elevation swamp is unusual in the landscape. It is clearly visible from Mt Gisborne and Magnet Hill.

## Area 2

This area consists of cleared flat land with limited remnant native vegetation. The topography of the area is generally flat with some small rises and volcanic rock outcrops. One ephemeral drainage line runs across the area from the north west to the south east, which eventually ends up in Jacksons Creek. The current property sizes through this section reflect the Rural Living Zone (RLZ), being larger than urban blocks. There are remnant stony rises from the eruption at Magnet Hill running across the landscape. While they are not marked as areas of cultural heritage sensitivity these stony rise areas are often key locations for finding cultural material.



*Figure 7 Area 2 Current Investigation Zone*

## Area 2 Summary

- There looks to be remnant stony rises. These formations, created by the cooling lava flows, can be key areas of cultural material in the area. The rises provide elevation above waterlogged grassy plains.
- The native vegetation and habitat values of this area are limited having been removed to accommodate European-farming practices. However, as the area is private property no additional surveys have been conducted.
- If this area is to be subdivided for housing it is highly recommended that surveys around the ephemeral creek line be conducted specifically for remnant vegetation and cultural material.

### Area 3: North of Railway Road

The northern study area is bounded by the railway and Hamilton Rd (Figure 8 & 9). The topography of this region is generally flat until the foothills of the divide begin. The original extent of this area went north to Riddles Creek however due to initial public feedback the main focus on the marked area. It is currently a Rural Living Zone (RLZ), with part also being Public Use Zone and Public Park and Recreation (schools and sporting reserves).

The northern area consists of larger properties, often containing large, old, remnant, River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus cameldulensis*). Some of the properties are light industrial or industrial parks. The train station and line formed the previous boundary for higher density development. The main east west road seems to be an important boundary to the local community who are keen to keep higher density developments south of the road.

The Wurundjeri feedback about this area is that while it is unlikely that there are tangible sites, the Plains Grassy Woodland vegetation in its natural state contained many important foods, medicinal, and fibre plant species. Further investigation shows that there are stony rises and a small eruption point which may contain cultural material. The understory of this area is highly degraded from historical grazing, and European farming processes. The remaining vegetation is the older trees that provide hollows and habitat for native birds and marsupials. It is also likely that some of the trees have scars from Wurundjeri use. Wurundjeri community would like to see an active program of regenerating the River Red Gums (*E. cameldulensis*).

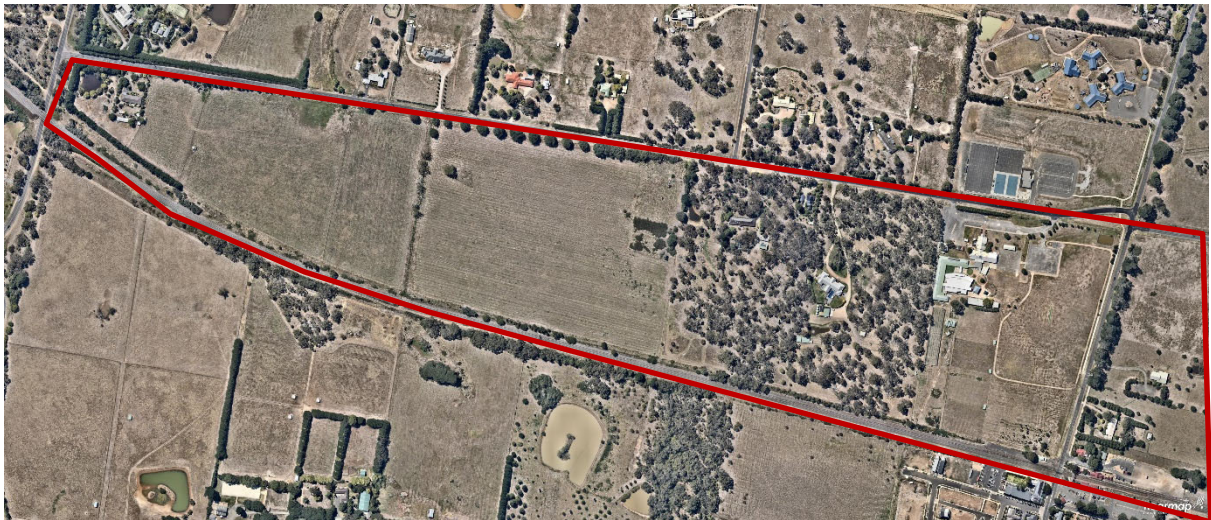
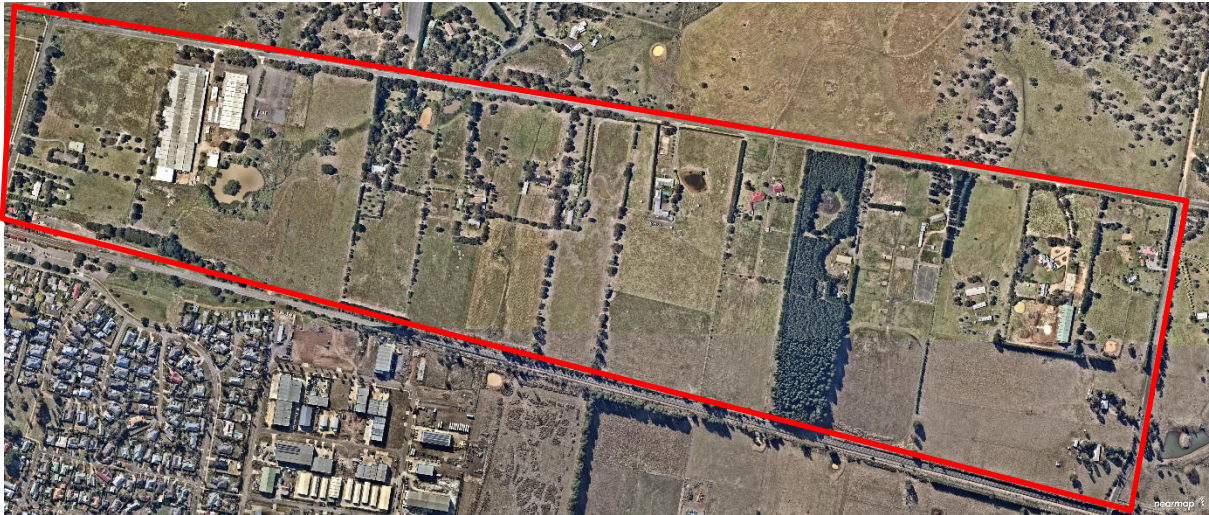


Figure 8 Area 3 North of Railway Road (1)



*Figure 9 Area 3 North of Railway Road (2)*

### Area 3 Summary

- Maintain and protect the large old trees
- Enhance recruitment of new River Red Gums to maintain regional character and value
- In areas designated for development, conduct a survey prior to development to identify existing scar trees to avoid harm.
- There is a small eruption point in this area. While there is existing construction over one section Wurundjeri people would like to see the remaining sections protected from development.
- Identify the older stony rises within the area as these may have cultural material.

### Area 4: Kilmore Road

This area covers 2178.5 ha to the east of Gisborne and extends from Jacksons Creek north to Kilmore Road. Currently the zone is one single property which the owner of this block of land attempting to gain planning permission to subdivide. The current planning zone is a Rural Living Zone and the current land use is grazing. The topography of the area presents as a steady slope up to Kilmore Road, with some small drainage lines dividing it, and river terraces in the south east section.

According to the DELWP pre 1750 EVC mapping the area close to Jackson Creek was once covered with Riparian Woodland along the edge of the creek and Herb-rich Foothill forest vegetation. Today the area is completely cleared of native vegetation both in terms of over-storey and the associated understory (Figure 10).

If Area 4 is approved for developed the Elders and community would like to see substantive set back from the creek as a nature corridor, with support to revegetate and restore the vegetation as a habitat corridor. While the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2006 has a 200m sensitivity buffer, the Wurundjeri community are also keen to promote the example in the Yarra River Protection Act (2017) which has a 500m buffer for planning and development approvals. Jackson's Creek not only is an important major waterway for the region but it is also a significant cultural corridor in Wurundjeri Country. The planning decisions made near the headwaters will affect the health and cultural values further downstream.

The Extent Report (2018) identified in the ethnographic and archaeological reports supporting information about the cultural sensitivity of Jacksons Creek.

The topography and landforms suggest Area 4 has a high likelihood of cultural material across much of the site. This point is supported by the presence of drainage lines, and river terraces identified in Figure 10. In addition, similar landforms at other locations around Gisborne have turned up new sites in areas beyond the 200m waterway Cultural Heritage Sensitivity buffer as defined by AAV. If permission to subdivide is granted, the recommendation from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation is that a site survey to identify surface artefacts be conducted prior if possible, or that a CHMP is a key recommendation across the property, ensuring that the full area is examined for Cultural Heritage material.

An important part of this landscape is the Jacksons Creek valley, waterway health is important to the Wurundjeri people so concerns were raised about increases in pollution and stormwater runoff into Jacksons Creek by the community representatives. The drainage lines are at risk of erosion as the vegetation in the area is sparse. Any development in this area would need to include water management planning and revegetation.

The primary viewing of this area was from the south side of the property as the best visual access is from the local Western Water Treatment Plant. It presented a view of Jacksons Creek bank and the lower slopes of the undeveloped property. We also passed the property on the northern side, though the visual identification was limited due to trees lining the road and property boundary. The Elders and community members present on the day felt the values of this area are high as a wildlife corridor. The presence of a Wedge-tailed Eagle on the day was an important sighting for everyone present from a spiritual and ecological perspective. Bunjil is the creator spirit for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people so the sighting was important for the event.



*Figure 10 Area 4 Kilmore Road*

### **Area 4 Summary**

- The Elders are keen to have a continuous broad corridor for native species retained along the waterway.
- Despite the loss of existing native vegetation Jacksons Creek is an important ecological and cultural area which needs to be protected
- From a heritage perspective there is likely to be artefacts and tangible assets on the slopes and terraces coming down to the river
- The area would once have contained grassland and grassy woodland species, revegetate with the same set of species.
- That Jacksons Creek retains a minimum 500m offset from housing and development (similar to the Yarra Protection (Birrarung Marron) Act 2017)
- If a sub-division is to occur ensure that prior to any approval a cultural heritage survey is conducted and that CHMPs are recommended across the area.
- Protect the Jacksons Creek river terraces as areas of high potential cultural heritage and value. This should be considered for those terraces outside Area 4 as well.

## Jackson's Creek Corridor and Escarpment

The Jackson's Creek corridor extends from Rosslynne Reserve in the west to the municipal border in the East (Figure 5). A deeply incised creek Jacksons Creek is an important cultural and landscape feature for Wurundjeri people, linking Narrm (Port Phillip Bay), as the Maribyrnong River, before splitting into two and connecting with Geboor (Mt Macedon), through the north-south axis of Wurundjeri Country (Clark & Heydon, 2002). One part of Jackson's creek cultural value is the number of recorded cultural places. These recorded Places range from large artefact scatters, to silcrete quarries, earth features, and scar trees. Another is the ecological resources found either in the creek or within close proximity, species to hunt or fish, and plant resources for food, fibre, medicine, and other uses. There is concern about the impact of urban expansions along Jacksons Creek from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation, as well as external parties with respect to maintaining cultural landscape values. This is an issue not just for Macedon Ranges Shire Council at Gisborne but is highlighted by Bashta (2016) for the area around Sunbury in Hume.

While past planning policies have sought to preserve the integrity of the corridor residential development has nonetheless had a detrimental impact of its quality and values. Private ownership and poor landscape management of the escarpment has resulted in the spread of weeds and haphazard maintenance approaches. The visual and geotechnical qualities of the escarpment as a backdrop to the town are threatened by the residential zoning to the west, and areas within the rural conservation zone are experiencing pressure for rezoning. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation, through the Water Unit, is currently involved with the development of the Waterways of the West (similar to the Birrarung Council for the Yarra River) can and will be a guiding body for management of waterways and planning (Department of Environment, 2019).

Additionally, the Gisborne Futures Structure Plan is investigating potential for a north-south bypass road on the western side of town which could potentially further impact on the visual and landscape values of the corridor. These also present significant impacts on the cultural amenity. The location of any new Creek crossing would have to be compliant with cultural heritage legislation as a minimum but also should consider the broader cultural concepts in design and location. It should be noted that in sections of Jacksons Creek the Cultural Heritage Sensitivity Layer zone of 200m from waterways does not extend to the Escarpment, particularly within the Gisborne Township (Figure 1).

The Jacksons Creek corridor should continue to be recognised and developed as a local and regional linear park and trail system that protects and enhances the cultural, landscape, and environmental values. It is a place where information and signage about the cultural values can be presented to the broader public. The escarpment and corridor should be treated as a single cultural and environmental landscape asset through strategies that provide for revegetation, improved landscape management and recreational programming. Formalising protection for cultural values can also be considered under this idea. Landscape based cultural values are not well represented in legislation but that does not preclude its inclusion moving forward.

### Jacksons Creek Summary:

- Formal protection of the corridor cultural values
- Signage or interpretive app tour and education around Jacksons Creek
- Use the planning scheme to improve environmental management of the Jacksons Creek Landscape.

- Involvement of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation in location and design of future Creek crossing points to minimise cultural impact, and to incorporate ideas about design and themes.
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation to have a role within the planning and management Jacksons Creek landscape planning.
- Inclusion of Waterways of the West recommendations regarding waterway management as they occur (<https://www.water.vic.gov.au/waterways-and-catchments/wow>).

## Recommendations and Further Partnership Work

This work is the next step in developing a culturally appropriate and healthy relationship between Macedon Ranges Shire Council and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation. As the Traditional Owners of this Country Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung invite Macedon Ranges Shire Council and the broader local community to walk with Wurundjeri people, exploring how they can support improving outcomes. This project is the kind of direct engagement action directly supporting Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation.

Understanding and respecting cultural lore on Country, knowledge of links between the high places of Country and the views afforded. These views were important to identify who was on Country and where they were. Macedon Ranges Shire Council in the development of this report show their acknowledgement of, and respect for, the intangible and environmental cultural values. Where possible Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation will encourage and support the use of planning schemes and local regulations to go beyond the requirements of the current Cultural Heritage Act 2006 as a way of reducing harm to intangible and tangible cultural places. Comments and amendments to planning processes may be a suitable mechanism as it is also used to notify owners and developers of special requirements. An important recommendation is to examine the terms of the Birrarung Act, (and the upcoming Waterways of the West policies) and also identify how Macedon Ranges Shire Council are ensuring that volcanic cones are protected as heritage and environment sites within the planning scheme.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung are keen to be engaged in restoration and replacement of the missing environments and species. Revegetation that is appropriate and covers the full range of species present at pre-contact times is an important goal especially were development. Wurundjeri Narrap Team are working to reinstate cultural practice i.e. fire and land management techniques. While this is not an environmental document it is important to consider the consequences of development, such as flows of water, need for habitat corridors, and fire management. This includes particular focus on the Jacksons Creek corridor and the Gisborne Conservation reserve swamp. This will be particularly important in the face of changing climatic conditions.

Consulting directly with Wurundjeri Council regarding these matters is an important and suitable method to build relationships. While the capacity of the Council is sometimes limited there are skills and information which are held by the community which can be shared in appropriate cultural forums. Working directly with the organisation can also reduce costs directly to the Macedon Ranges Shire Council. The skilled areas include archaeology, anthropology, water and land management (Narrap Team and Water Unit,), and community education.



Wurundjeri Elders have expressed a desire to be involved with design and planning of landscape development above and beyond the compliance and regulatory processes of the Cultural Heritage Act 2006. Wurundjeri people are active and engaged participants in the concept designs right through to implementation for numerous large-scale projects. This includes setting local design themes, culturally appropriate and sourced naming, commission of artwork, and education programs. It can include recommendations on council street plantings, appropriate signage, the development of interactive material, and internet tools or information. Examples include play equipment design, drone footage of landscapes, information videos, and cultural displays of cultural material including local artefacts. The conversations around planning scheme notes and the use of other planning levers as tools to protect and recognise cultural values which are not explicitly covered by the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2006, such as culturally values plant and animal species, views, and songlines.

#### **A Summary of Recommendations from this work:**

- Protection of Jacksons Creek, offset greater than 200m and revegetate the area (recommendations driven by Waterways of the West MAC).
- Survey for cultural material and the edge of the swamp around Area 1.
- Increase the buffer around the swamp for Area 1.
- There are old and disturbed stony rises through Area 1 and Area 2 which may contain cultural material.
- Area 2 and Area 3 contain remnant large River Red Gums (*E. cameldulensis*), these should be retained and increased in number through revegetation.
- Prior to any subdivision of Area 4 it is recommended to conduct a cultural heritage survey, identifying the locations of cultural material along the ridge and terraces.
- Improve habitat protection for migrating species
- Maintain and improve water quality as it flows into Jacksons Creek.
- Examine the potential to recognise culturally valued species in the area
- Investigate options to amend the local planning scheme regarding cultural views, species, and other values.
- Regionally Gisborne has significant value and the ethnographic record for the area is substantial. Culturally appropriate mapping of these values would be a suitable project.
- On-going involvement in landscape management in urban design, naming, as part of the effort to appropriately emphasise the Wurundjeri cultural footprint.
- Education opportunities for local community engagement and information sharing.
- Encourage flexible design to allow for unidentified cultural sites, and encourage the avoidance of cultural sites as new places are identified.
- Have a policy around the choice and appropriate use of Woi-wurrung language names
- Continuing commitment to this work with an ongoing budgeting for appropriate engagement with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Corporation.
- Plan for Climate Change impacts such as water usage, increased heavy rainfall events, extended dry periods, etc.

## **Conclusion**

All of Wurundjeri Country is culturally valued and valuable. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung corporation are keen to work with Macedon Ranges Shire Council to improve cultural recognition and outcomes on Wurundjeri Country. The model of working with the Traditional Owners in the development of planning responses is an essential and important aspect which has long been overlooked. The Council would like to continue this partnership in future planning, environmental and cultural management projects moving forward.

While Wurundjeri Elders recognise the need for housing and supporting infrastructure, they are also concerned about the rate of land use change, its impact on the environment, intangible, and material cultural heritage. Engagement whereby areas are considered for the broad range of cultural values is important for the community.

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