



**CORANGAMITE
SHIRE**

Rural Roadside Management Plan

Corangamite Shire

February 2012

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Executive Summary

A. Introduction

The Corangamite Rural Roadside Management Plan is the key strategic document that sets the direction of rural roadside management within the municipality over the next four years.

There are four parts to this plan, comprising:

- Part A: Introduction
- Part B: Rural roadside management in the Corangamite Shire
- Part C: Goals for rural roadside management
- Part D: Implementation through strategic actions

B. Rural roadside management in the Corangamite Shire

The Corangamite Shire Council has a vision for rural roadside management:

Council is committed to work with the community and relevant stakeholders to create a network of road reserves that provide a safe environment for vehicle movement while recognising and protecting the conservation, landscape, cultural and recreation values of rural roadsides.

Corangamite Shire has a total of 2,630 km of sealed and unsealed roads. This includes 2,205 km of local roads that are managed by Council and 425 km of arterial roads that are managed by VicRoads. The Rural Roadside Management Plan will cover local rural roads only.

Proper management of rural roadsides demands multiple objectives to be fulfilled. There are conflicts between often competing objectives of road and roadside management and stakeholders will tend to have different views on how best to manage these conflicts. The plan provides a framework for all stakeholders to understand their responsibilities and collaborate where necessary to ensure balanced outcomes.

C. Goals for rural roadside management

The Corangamite Shire Council has set five goals for rural roadside management. They are:

Goal 1: Maintain a safe local road network.

A safe local road network is one in which roadsides are well maintained and safe for road users. At the same time, conservation and other values are retained and wherever possible, enhanced. Council needs to work to ensure vegetation is managed to maintain sightlines and improve routine drainage and pavement maintenance.

Goal 2: Protect natural and heritage assets.

Protecting natural and heritage assets means that roadsides are managed to protect their wider values and there is improved stakeholder and community awareness of natural and heritage assets. Thus, Council will work with the community and roadside users to improve biodiversity conservation and enhancement, manage invasive plants and animals, and protect Aboriginal and non Aboriginal heritage assets.

Goal 3: Manage third party access.

Managing third party access means ensuring there is access for all roadside users and responsibilities are known and accepted, and risks are mitigated. Third party access includes necessary fire prevention works and appropriate access for utility and service providers, adjoining landholders, and recreational users. Council will work with all of these stakeholders to ensure appropriate access whilst maintaining a safe road network and protecting natural and heritage assets.

Goal 4: Provide leadership and promote the value and function of rural roadsides.

Council aims to be a leader in good roadside management. It recognises that promoting the wider value and function of roadsides means less damaging activities and better outcomes for the environment. Thus, Council will work to improve community awareness of the value and function of rural roadsides and develop co-operative practices with all stakeholders.

D. Implementation through strategic actions

Goal 5: Monitor the effectiveness of the Rural Roadside Management Plan.

Council want a rural roadside management plan that is accountable and effective. Thus, achievement and progress will be measured against the goals and actions of the plan. The actions developed under each goal are listed in this section (at the end of the document) and include a responsible person and indicative timetable. Council will prepare an annual implementation plan, which will articulate how this management plan will be implemented in that year. Progress against the goals will be evaluated through this annual planning process and at the end of the four-year life of this plan.

PART A

Introducing the Rural Roadside Management Plan



Roadside Fuel Reduction Burn

1 Introduction

The Corangamite Rural Roadside Management Plan is the key strategic document that sets the direction of rural roadside management within the municipality over the next four years. The plan identifies Council's statutory obligations and aligns internal works programs with the strategic objectives of Council's overarching Council Plan 2009–2013. The Rural Roadside Management Plan also sets priorities in roadside management and outlines strategic actions that will occur over its duration (2012 – 2016).

Indicators of performance in roadside management have been identified that will enable Council to achieve their strategic objectives in relation to maintaining road infrastructure to its current standard, whilst making improvements in safety and showing leadership in good environmental and sustainability practices. Council proposes to work with all community, agency and organisational stakeholders with an interest in rural roadside management.

1.1 Structure of the Plan

There are four parts to this plan, comprising:

Part A: Introduction

Part B: Rural roadside management in the Corangamite Shire

Part C: Goals for rural roadside management

Part D: Implementation through strategic actions

Part A provides background information and outlines the purpose and structure of the plan. Part B provides a statement on the vision and scope of the plan and summarises the general principles for achieving balanced action on rural roadsides. Part C provides detailed information on the goals of rural roadside management and Part D outlines how the plan will be implemented and lists the strategic actions that will achieve the Corangamite Shire Council's objectives for rural roadside management.



Figure 1.1 Structure of the Rural Roadside Management Plan

1.2 Plan purpose and review

Purpose of the plan

The Rural Roadside Management Plan needs to integrate legislation, policies and programs relevant to roadside management in an easily understandable and workable format for Council staff and community members to use and understand.

The plan is a strategic rather than prescriptive document. This will help to retain its relevance over the full four-years of plan implementation. Council will develop an implementation plan to accompany the Rural Roadside Management Plan, which will specify annual actions to implement the Plan's strategic actions.

There have been several recent changes with relevance to roadside management that have been considered in the development of this plan. These include recommendations from the 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission, recent listings of protected vegetation communities under the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and changes in the interpretation of the Victorian Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994, regarding responsibility for weeds on local roadsides.

The plan will aim to guide the management of rural roadsides to:

- **Maintain and enhance the safe and efficient function of rural roads** – with attention to drainage and sight lines, for example.
- **Protect and enhance the function and values of rural roadsides** – with attention to preserving environmental, heritage and recreational values and assets.
- **Manage risks on roadsides** – with attention to weed invasion, utility and services provision, fire prevention and road maintenance practices.
- **Meet Council's legislative responsibilities** – with attention to multiple Acts of Parliament to do with a range of matters, for example, native vegetation protection, fire prevention, emergency management and road safety.
- **Promote the value and function of roadsides to the community** – through education on matters including timber removal for firewood, grazing and droving of livestock.

Development and review of the plan

Council chose a facilitative community engagement process to develop the plan in order to allow wider stakeholder involvement in the development of practical local strategies to achieve the plan's aims.

As part of their commitment to engaging with the community, Council established a Stakeholder Reference Group with membership from key state, regional and local agencies and organisations with an interest in rural roadside management and fifteen community representatives (refer to Appendix 1 for a list of members). This group provided:

- Advice about the issues, strategies and actions to be included in the Plan through two workshop sessions.
- Comments on a Discussion Paper that preceded the development of the Draft plan.

Council also committed two formal periods of public comment during the development of the Plan.

1. A discussion paper was on display for community comment during July 2011.
2. The Draft Rural Roadside Management Plan was on display during October and November 2011.

PART B

Rural Roadside Management in the Corangamite Shire



Routine Road Maintenance

2 Rural roadside management in the Corangamite Shire

2.1 Vision

The Corangamite Shire Council has a vision for rural roadside management:

Council is committed to work with the community and relevant stakeholders to create a network of road reserves that provide a safe environment for vehicle movement while recognising and protecting the conservation, landscape, cultural and recreation values of rural roadsides.

2.2 Scope

Corangamite Shire has a total of 2,630 km of sealed and unsealed roads. This includes 2,205 km of local roads that are managed by Council and 425 km of arterial roads that are managed by VicRoads.

The Rural Roadside Management Plan will cover local rural roads only (Refer to Appendix 2 for a map of these roads). Main roads and highways managed by VicRoads, unused road reserves, and public roads managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and Parks Victoria (within Forest and National Park) are not covered by this plan.

2.3 Achieving balanced actions

Proper management of rural roadsides demands multiple objectives to be fulfilled. There are conflicts between often competing objectives of road and roadside management and stakeholders will tend to have different views on how best to manage these conflicts. Council's Rural Roadside Management Plan will provide direction on how to achieve a balance between stakeholder perspectives.

What is a roadside?

The road reserve comprises the land from fence line to fence line. The road formation and the roadside are within the reserve, as indicated in Figure 2-1 below.

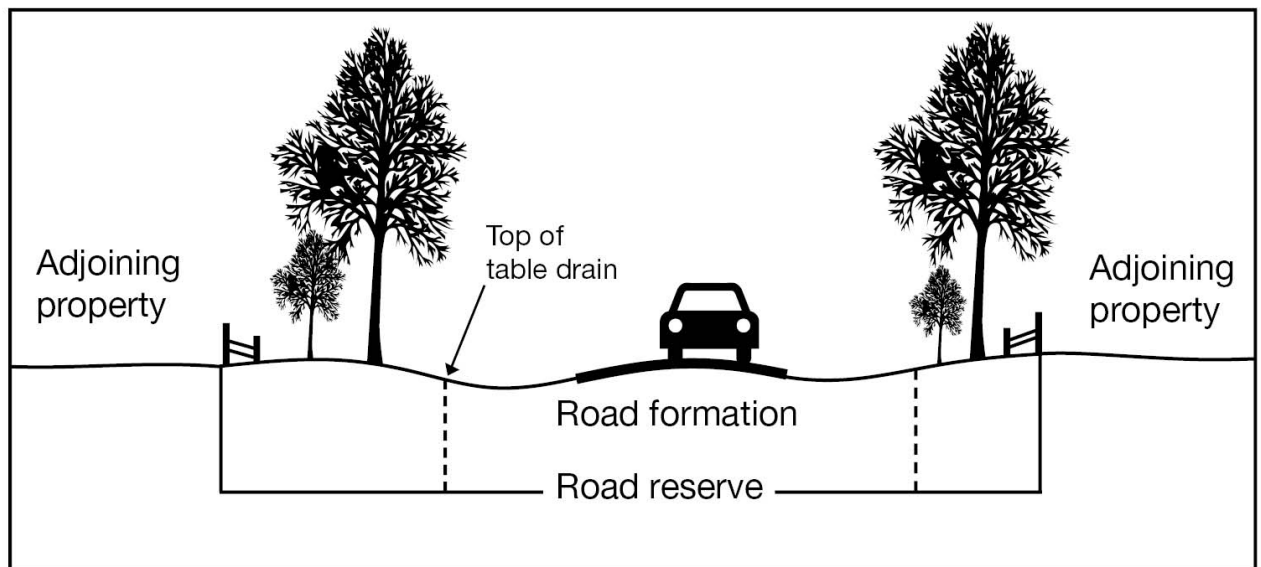


Figure 2-1 Illustration of the road reserve comprising the road formation and roadside

The road formation consists of formed pavement layers, a wearing course (either sealed or unsealed) and its drainage system (usually a table drain on either side of the formation). The roadside is the land from the upside or top of the table drain to the fence line of the adjoining property.

This is however, an idealised illustration of the road reserve and across the rural road network many of these elements will vary according to terrain and other natural environmental features.

For example:

- Table drains are not always readily defined, especially in very flat terrain.
- There could be either cut or fill batters and/or embankments in close proximity to the road formation.
- The roadside will support combinations of exotic and native vegetation, of varying structure, including different heights and densities of plant communities.
- The boundary of the road reserve may also be difficult to define, particularly where it adjoins public land, such as National Parks or State forest areas.

There are marked changes in topography and rainfall between the north and south of the municipality. Moving southwards, the terrain generally becomes steeper and rainfall increases leading to more prolific vegetative growth. Therefore, rural roadsides in the south of the Shire require a higher intensity of maintenance.

These factors in conjunction with road classification (and desired maintenance standards) will affect decisions about appropriate management of the road formation and roadside.

Roles and responsibilities

The road network includes a variety of different construction types, ranging from minor natural surfaces (or unformed roads) to high use bitumen roads. These roads also vary in ownership and management responsibility depending on their classification. Four major highways and numerous main roads (including tourist roads) are managed by VicRoads, some of which are currently being maintained under contract by Council. The Department of Sustainability and Environment and Parks Victoria also manages unleased unused roads and roads within forests and National Parks.

The Corangamite Shire has responsibility for the management of local roads, including roadsides. Council along with various other agencies, organisations and individuals have a range of legislative responsibilities under different Acts and Regulations (State and Commonwealth) when working on roadsides. These other parties include the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), service providers (e.g. Telstra, Powercor) and landholders. A summary of the main pieces of Commonwealth and State government legislation that can impact on roadside management is provided in Appendix 3.

The plan provides a framework for all stakeholders to understand their responsibilities and collaborate where necessary to ensure balanced outcomes. It is a source document that provides guidance to affected parties when managing competing objectives and priorities in rural roadside management.

Council's role in advocating for legislative change

The Corangamite Shire Council has a role in advocating for legislative change that will lead to balanced roadside management (for example, strategies 1.1 seeking wider exemptions for works within the maintenance envelope and 3.10 on fence line clearing). This plan has a role in providing a voice and supporting the need for legislative change in some areas of roadside management.

Users of the plan

The Corangamite Shire in partnership with the community and key agency and organisational stakeholders has developed this plan. The plan will be read and used by a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in roadside management. This will include but not be limited to, Council staff as well as service and utility providers, CFA personnel and community members, including adjoining landholders.

2.4 Goals of rural roadside management

The Corangamite Shire Council has set five goals for rural roadside management. They are:

Goal 1: Maintain a safe local road network

Goal 2: Protect natural and heritage assets

Goal 3: Manage third party access

Goal 4: Provide leadership and promote the value and function of rural roadsides

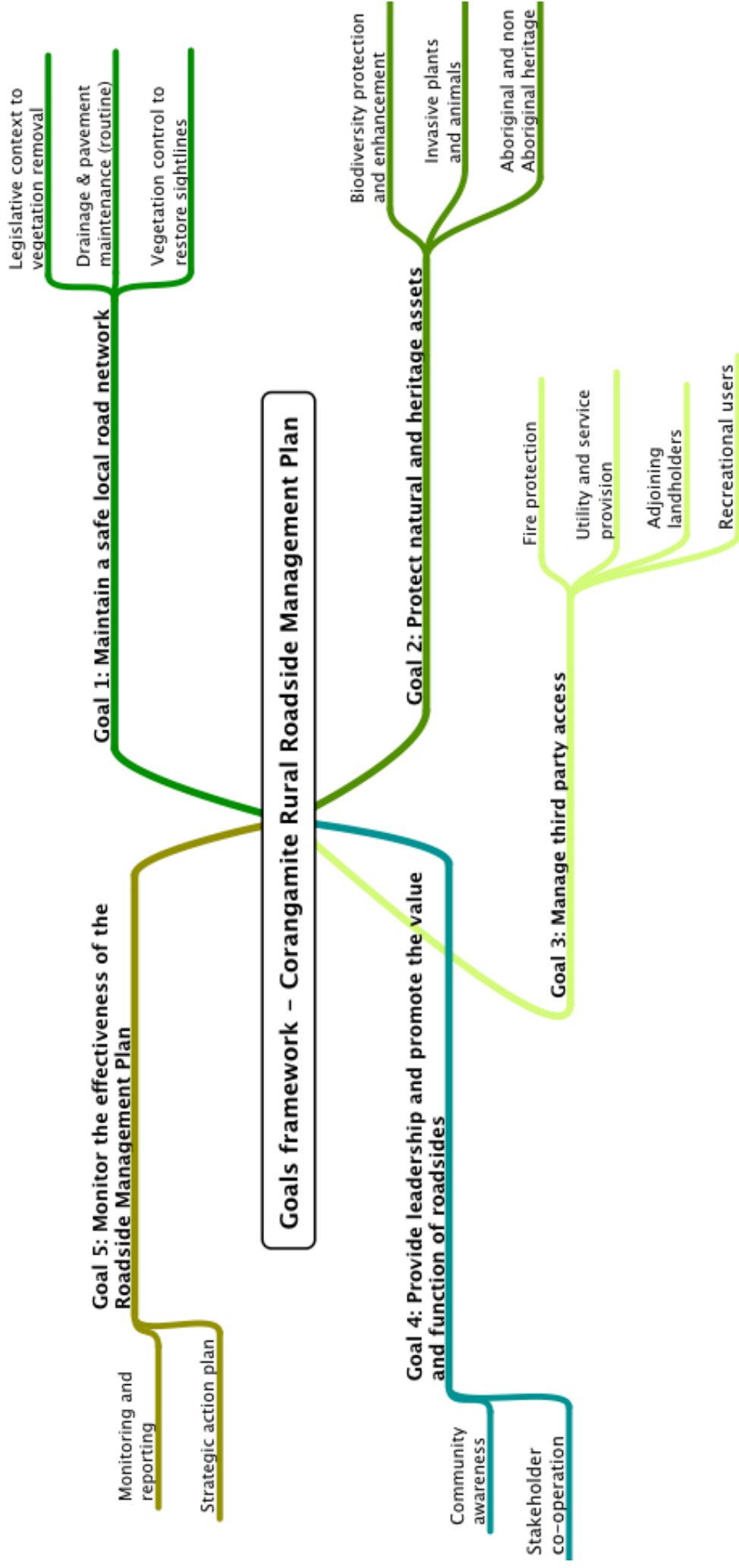
Goal 5: Monitor the effectiveness of the Rural Roadside Management Plan.

These goals are inclusive of the wide range of roadside management issues and objectives of different stakeholder groups. Figure 2 2 on the following page provides an outline of the main elements within each goal.

The following section provides the strategic direction for rural roadside management under each of the Plan's goals. The main elements of each goal are described and the areas where there is potential for competing objectives and issues are presented. Strategies for the achievement of balanced outcomes and areas of collaboration between stakeholders are also identified.

Prescriptive management guidelines for some of the important areas of rural roadside management are provided in Appendix 4.

Figure 2-2 Five goals or rural roadside management



PART C

Goals of Rural Roadside Management



Native grasses on a roadside

3 Goal 1: Maintain a safe local road network

3.1 Introducing the safe roads goal

What is the goal?

The Corangamite Shire Council is committed to ensuring that local roads meet designated quality and performance standards and provide service levels (in terms of safety and efficiency) that meet the needs of the community. Road maintenance standards vary across the network according to risk factors including: nature and volume of traffic, operating speed, susceptibility of assets to deterioration, cost effectiveness of repairs, and competing priorities for funding (Corangamite Shire, 2009).

Council's goal is to maintain roads to their current standard whilst making improvements in safety wherever possible. Maintenance and construction activities (by all parties internal and external to Council) are to be carried out according to best practice operating principles to ensure that the risk and impact of environmental damage on rural roadsides is minimised.

What are the issues?

There is a tension between native vegetation removal to restore traffic sight distances and the drainage functions of the road, and the protection and enhancement of native vegetation. This is especially evident where vegetation comprises high conservation communities supporting threatened species.

There are also competing priorities for Councils limited works budget that will maximise the benefits from routine works programs. Community expectations on desired maintenance levels are raised following wet periods and flood events because the risks from resulting vegetation growth is heightened.

Safe Roads

Roadsides are well maintained and safe for road users. At the same time, conservation and other values are retained and wherever possible, enhanced.

3.2 Legislative context to vegetation removal

Native vegetation removal is regulated through Councils local planning scheme. Section 12.01 of the Victorian Planning Provisions, provides an overarching policy framework for native vegetation management. Conservation of biodiversity across Victoria is 'tenure blind' making it relevant and of concern for all levels of government, and private individuals and organisations. The objectives for local planning authorities include:

- Assist in the protection of conservation values of national parks and conservation reserves.
- Assist in the conservation of the habitats of threatened and endangered species and communities (for example Plains Grassland).
- Address potentially threatening processes.
- Assist in the reestablishment of links between isolated habitat remnants.
- Apply the three-step process (as described in the Victorian Native Vegetation Framework).

Step 1. AVOID adverse impacts on native vegetation

Step 2: MINIMISE impacts through consideration of the Planning Process

Step 3: Identify appropriate OFFSET options

Under section 52.17 of the Victorian Planning Provisions, a planning permit is required to remove, lop or destroy native vegetation unless a relevant exemption applies. Refer to the Corangamite shire's planning scheme for guidance:

<http://planningschemes.dpced.vic.gov.au/corangamite/home.html>

Adjoining landholders and others working on the roadside must contact Council to determine permit requirements before removing or trimming native vegetation on the roadside.

Council manages native vegetation removal on rural roadsides in accordance with a written agreement with DSE that sits under the local government public roads exemption. The exemption comprises amendment VC49 to Clause 52.17 of the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) and was gazetted in September 2010. This amendment provides for a process where there is a range of exempt works that can be undertaken in order to maintain the safe and efficient function of roads without application for a planning permit for vegetation removal. Managing Native Vegetation on Roadsides – a guide for implementing agreements under the Local Government Public Roads exemption (DSE 2009), outlines a shared approach between DSE, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and local government authorities to provide a common understanding of how the exemption will be implemented by DSE and Councils.

Under this agreement and current regulations, restrictions remain, and Council is required to notify DSE prior to vegetation removals and to keep records (except for lopping and trimming where less than one third of the canopy is removed) and report annually to DSE. Offsets are not required for these removals, but may be volunteered by Council to recognise and mitigate losses.

There are two main areas of rural roadside maintenance where native vegetation removal is required to maintain a safe local road network. These are drainage and pavement maintenance, and restoration of traffic sight lines.

3.3 Drainage and pavement maintenance (routine)

Both resourcing of and the need for drainage maintenance were reduced during the prolonged drought and over that time both exotic and native vegetation re-established in table drains. Many drains have become inoperable and the road network has been experiencing poor drainage problems during high rainfall periods.

The main drainage and pavement maintenance issues are:

- **Blocked drains and outlets due to excessive vegetative growth** – leading to failure of wearing course and pavement layers.
- **Native vegetation in drains** – the removal of 10 years or older regrowth (native species) is subject to State government native vegetation controls.
- **Drainage onto roadsides** – drainage from adjoining land onto roadsides cannot be accommodated when drains are not operating effectively. Changes in farming practices, such as raised bed cropping, has increased the volumes of water draining into roadsides, in some cases causing failure of drains and erosion.
- **Drainage into adjoining properties** - roadside drainage can be impeded where farming activities or inadequate maintenance has choked drainage outfalls.
- **Road safety** - is compromised when roads deteriorate due to poor drainage (potholes in wearing surface, base failure, steep edge breaks, soft shoulders, subsidence, roadside and pavement scouring).

Council staff will apply the concepts of asset value and risk to determine the most appropriate means of controlling vegetation in drains. A decision tree to assist with treatment selection is provided in Appendix 5.

3.4 Vegetation control to restore sightlines

During high rainfall years there are high growth rates in roadside vegetation that require additional maintenance to restore sight distances to ensure the safety of road users. For example, prolific exotic grass growth and a need for trimming and removal of overhanging branches.

The main sightline restoration and vegetation control issues are:

- **Road safety across the local network** – is compromised when design sight distances are not maintained through timely trimming or removal of roadside vegetation.
- **Driveway and other access points** – need to be maintained to ensure safe entry and exit from the carriageway.

3.5 Strategies in maintaining a safe local road network

Strategies for the achievement of balanced outcomes have been identified as follows:

1. Council will advocate to DSE for a review of the local government public roads exemption to include all maintenance works within the defined maintenance envelope, including the road's drainage system.
2. Council will work with DSE to streamline administrative processes for meeting native vegetation requirements of projects that are not covered by the exemption, ensuring that minimum extent requirements are met e.g. approved offset management plans
3. Council will work with landholders to ensure that road drains into private property and natural water courses are maintained and drainage from private land does not adversely impact on road drains. 4. Where possible, Council will integrate major drainage maintenance works with planned non-routine road upgrades.
5. Council will develop a decision support tool to assist with setting priorities for scheduling drainage maintenance works as well as implementing proactive maintenance programs.

4 Goal 2: Protect natural and heritage assets

4.1 Introducing the assets protection goal

What is the goal?

The Corangamite Shire Council is committed to ensuring that natural and heritage assets on rural roadsides are protected and wherever possible enhanced.

Cultural heritage sites on and adjacent to rural roadsides, include Aboriginal sites, heritage stone walls and significant trees. Outside larger State managed public land areas, remaining native vegetation occurs mainly on rural roadsides.

They can support communities of high biological significance such as threatened plant species and habitats for threatened fauna.

Native vegetation remaining on private land is highly fragmented and usually occurs as isolated and small remnants. Remnants are often of poor quality with limited diversity where they lack understory and ground litter. In many instances, they are depleted and degraded, however these areas can also provide critical habitat for vulnerable and endangered species.

Threats to native vegetation and biodiversity conditions on rural roadsides are many and varied. These include but are not limited to disturbance from:

- Spraying herbicides, ploughing and grading firebreaks, mowing and slashing, spreading weeds by machinery.
- Installation and maintenance of services, road upgrade and realignment.
- Weed invasion from adjoining properties (public and private).
- Unauthorised firewood collection and rubbish dumping.
- Cropping and ploughing, grazing by livestock.

The majority of these are also threats to heritage assets. There are also threats posed by invasive plants and animals on rural roadsides, which threaten both biodiversity values and agricultural assets on adjoining land. Council's goal is to minimise these threats through good communication between stakeholders and better planning of works.

What are the issues?

Tensions are evident between preservation of natural and heritage values and a range of activities occurring on rural roadsides. For example, routine maintenance activities such as vegetation trimming and removal to: restore sight distances, reduce fuel loads and maintain drains, can all impact biodiversity and heritage values. Incremental losses compound over time. Adjoining landholders need to maintain fence lines and they are not always aware of the conservation and heritage values on particular parts of the network. Utility and service provision and maintenance can also cause incremental damage due to excessive soil disturbance and vegetation clearing. Utility installations (for example, buried assets) can also alter the soil profile and change the hydrology on roadsides.

Natural and Heritage Assets Protected

Roadsides are managed to protect their wider values and there is improved stakeholder and community awareness of natural and heritage assets conservation and other values are retained and wherever possible, enhanced.

There is a lack of recognition and/or training with regard to the importance of preserving Aboriginal heritage. There is also an absence of a clear process for maintenance crews and utility providers to follow prior to undertaking works; especially in areas where there are high value assets. Resourcing for weed control is generally insufficient to meet community expectations on the desired level of control and there is ongoing uncertainty about responsibilities for weed control on local roads. There are also differences in opinion about the most damaging weed species in terms of which ones should be controlled and where.

These tensions are especially evident where activities are occurring on rural roadsides where vegetation comprises high conservation value communities supporting threatened species or where there are highly valued heritage assets.

Councils are now responsible for the issuing of permits for firewood collection on local roadsides. Corangamite Shire Council currently does not issue any permits for firewood collection on roadsides.

4.2 Biodiversity protection and enhancement

Victoria's Native Vegetation Management Framework (DSE 2002) is integral to the State Government's policy on vegetation management. The overarching goal of the framework is to achieve a reversal in the decline in the extent and quality of native vegetation leading to a net gain in native vegetation. 'Net Gain' is the outcome where overall gains are greater than overall losses (assessed by a combined quality-quantity 'habitat-hectare' measure) and where individual losses of native vegetation are avoided where possible.

In practice, Council's application of the 'Net Gain' principle means retaining existing native vegetation and avoiding clearance wherever feasible. Where removal is unavoidable, Council aims to minimise disturbance and where necessary administer suitable offsets. Since the introduction of the framework in 2002, Council is required to document all clearing of native vegetation that has occurred under permit on Council land. This forms the basis for Council's native vegetation offsets register.

The CCMA's Corangamite Native Vegetation Plan 2005 – 2008 is a valuable resource for Council in the management of native vegetation on roadsides. There are three bioregions in the Corangamite shire. These are: Otway Plain, Warrambool Plain and Victorian Volcanic Plain. All three bioregions are extensively cleared and modified, with less than 30%, 20%, and 15% of native vegetation remaining, respectively (VEAC 2010).

Roadside reserves on the Western Plains (of which Corangamite is a part) are reported to be home to 45% of remaining grassland sites, and 25% of all plant species listed under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.

There are also Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999 listed threatened communities residing within the Shire. These include:

- Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain
- Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain

These encompass the Plains Grassland and Plains Grassy Woodland communities, which are listed as critically endangered, and a matter of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act.

Rural roadsides in the municipality have been assessed to determine predominant vegetation types and their environmental significance. Conservation values have been assigned across the network and mapped (as high, medium and low value) to assist with planning works in the Shire (Appendix 6). This mapping has been done using a 'windscreen analysis' technique that was developed by the Roadside Conservation Advisory Committee.

The main biodiversity protection and enhancement issues are:

- Roadsides support valuable biodiversity – protected under various State and Commonwealth legislation.
- Conservation values are mapped – however condition changes are largely not monitored.
- Roadside maintenance practices – need to be undertaken in a manner that minimises disturbance to indigenous vegetation and spread of weeds.
- Intrusion of weeds and rabbits – onto roadsides from adjoining private and public land.
- Poor communication of conservation values – to all roadside users and other stakeholders in the community.

4.3 Invasive plants and animals

Invasive plants and animals threaten land, water and biodiversity in the Corangamite Shire. They present threats to primary production, native flora and fauna, and the recreation and amenity of Council owned and managed land assets.

All land managers and members of the community have a role to play in controlling invasive plants and animals in the Shire. DPI takes the lead role on most private land while DSE has the lead role on public land, particularly for the management of parks and reserves through Parks Victoria. Under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act), Council as a land manager for Council-managed reserves has a legal responsibility to: “eradicate regionally prohibited weeds; and prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds; and prevent the spread of, and as far as possible eradicate, established pest animals.”

At the time that this Plan was developed, the responsibility for controlling weeds and pests (particularly rabbits) on roadsides was being reviewed by the State Government. A roadside weeds and pests working party was appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security to examine the responsibilities for operational management of invasive plants and animals and funding for such activities.

In late 2011 the working party produced a report with recommendations for the Ministers consideration. Some of these recommendations included:

- Local government should be responsible for regionally controlled weeds and rabbits on local roads with the costs shared between state and local government.
- Local government obligations for managing regionally controlled weeds and rabbits should be limited where it meets the following criteria:
 - o Sustained community led action by an appropriately recognised group is making progress in managing targeted regionally controlled weeds or rabbits in a defined geographic location.
 - o Weed management on municipal roadsides is needed to meet objectives of this community led group and/or municipal roadsides represent a significant pathway of spread for the targeted regionally controlled weeds of rabbits.
 - o State and regional priorities are being appropriately addressed, including the need to contain priority species and to protect key assets both on municipal roadsides and in the surrounding private and public land.
 - o Community led action is clearly producing public benefit.

- Councils should develop a Roadside Weed and Rabbit Control Plan as a measure to minimise roadsides as a source for weed and rabbit problems.
- Under the proposed funding model, it is recommended that state government provide a base level of funding to each Council for implementation of their Roadside Weed and Rabbit Control Plan. Additional levels of funding will be available to Councils according to the Council's financial stress.
- It should be legislated that Council will meet its obligations under the CaLP Act 1994 where it develops and implements a Roadside Weed and Rabbit Control Plan.
- State government should be responsible for state prohibited weeds.
- State government should be responsible for regionally prohibited roadsides, with local government responsible for the onsite management of these weeds (funded by state government).

The Minister is currently considering the working party's recommendations.

A list of weeds and their classifications can be found at

<http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/weeds/invasive-plants/weed-classification-victoria>.

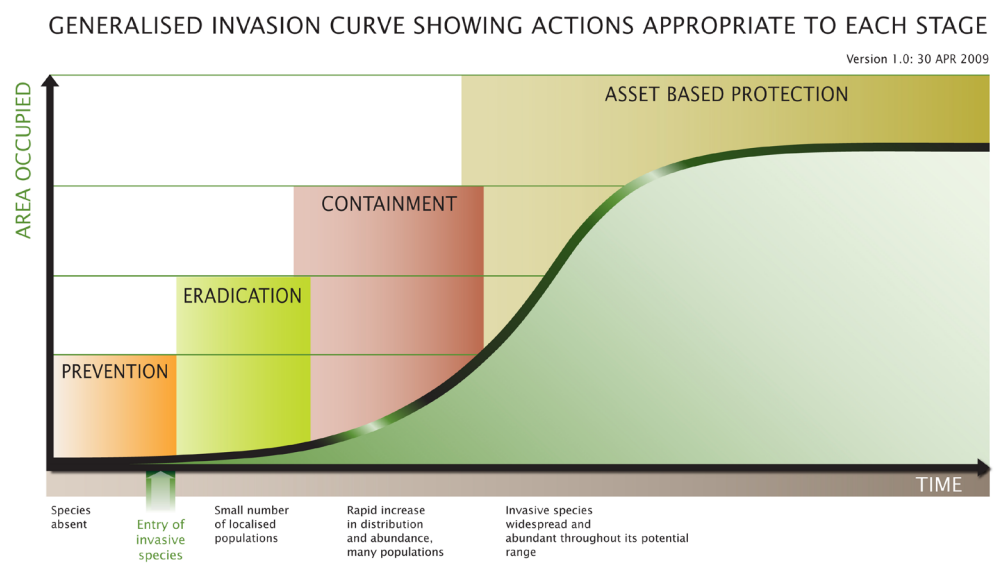


Figure 4 1 Generalised invasion curve for invasive plants and animals

DPI has adopted a biosecurity approach to invasive plants and animals control in Victoria. This approach emphasises that prevention and eradication of new and emerging high-risk species will generally be more cost-effective than managing an invasive species once it has become widely established. A 'generalised invasion curve' (Figure 4 1) illustrates four approaches to invasive plants and animals management: prevention, eradication, containment and asset based protection.

Prevention, eradication and containment measures are used before a target species is widespread and generally applies to weeds that are declared (under the CaLP Act) as State or regionally prohibited weeds. The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) has recently released its Invasive Plants and Animals (IPA) Strategy that identifies high-risk pest threats to valuable regional assets within the region (CCMA, 2010).

When an invasive species is abundant and widespread, the most cost effective approach is to protect priority assets. Assets include things like recreational parkland, waterway frontages, wetlands, areas of agricultural land, parks with high cultural or historical significance or stands of intact native vegetation. Adopting an asset protection approach means that priorities can be set among the many Council managed assets threatened by invasive plants and animals.

Council staff will apply the concepts of asset value and risk to rank rural roadside assets in order of priority for weed control. A decision tree for prioritising roadside weed control in the Shire is provided in Appendix 7.

The main invasive plants and animals issues are:

- Management of weeds (control and prevention) is a shared responsibility – that requires cooperation between all rural roadside users and adjoining land managers.
- Interpretation of the CaLP Act – responsibility for roadside weed control is unclear.
- Roadsides are high risk – due to their exposure to adjoining land use practices and infestation from passing road transport and construction vehicles.
- Pest and animal control practices – need to be undertaken in a manner that minimises disturbance to indigenous vegetation and spread of weeds.
- Prioritising weed control – according to a risk and asset value rating; firstly targeting new and emerging high risk weeds and then the protection of high value assets such as high conservation value roadsides.
- Weeds posing road management risks – the spread of weeds can lead to higher maintenance requirements and a heightened fire and road safety risk.

4.4 Aboriginal and non Aboriginal heritage

Many places such as historic sites and structures, Aboriginal places and tree plantings on and adjacent to rural roadsides hold significant cultural and natural values for the local and broader community. These places need to be protected from harm. Some places and sites, such as stonewall fences, are protected through the Corangamite Planning Scheme and require particular management. Such sites are often listed on the Victorian Heritage Register and are protected by the Heritage Act 1995.

The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and accompanying Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007 provide for the protection and management of Victoria's Aboriginal cultural heritage. The legislation outlines the requirements for Aboriginal cultural heritage management in Victoria. The discovery or uncovering of Aboriginal cultural heritage on public or private land is reportable to Aboriginal Affairs Victoria for entry on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register.

The main Aboriginal and non Aboriginal heritage issues are:

- Routine roadside maintenance – may impact on known registered or previously unknown and unregistered heritage sites and places.
- Utility and service provision and maintenance – may also harm heritage sites and places.
- Need for a permit or a management plan – an Aboriginal cultural heritage permit is required if an activity will or is likely to, harm Aboriginal cultural heritage. An Aboriginal cultural heritage management plan is required if the roadside work is in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity and is a high impact activity that is not an exempt activity.
- An absence of protocols and effective communication – on appropriate management of heritage sites and Aboriginal places by various stakeholders.

An understanding of the legislative and reporting requirements, consultation, planning and risk assessment must be undertaken to avoid harm to heritage.

4.5 Strategies in protecting natural and heritage assets

Strategies for the achievement of balanced outcomes have been identified as follows:

Biodiversity conservation and enhancement

1. Council will work with adjoining landholders and Landcare to support revegetation/regeneration on the roadside or on adjoining properties where appropriate and where it enhances roadside corridors.
2. Council will investigate establishing a permit system for firewood collection from roadsides with consideration to potential public liability issues.
3. Council will increase awareness amongst community and roadside users of all available information on roadside biodiversity values.
4. Council will monitor roadside vegetation condition and identify highest value biological assets in collaboration with agencies with expertise and resources.
5. Council will work with DSE to investigate the use of strategic rural roadsides for native vegetation offsets.

Invasive plants and animals

6. Council will control weeds on roadsides in accordance with Appendix 7, working in partnership with other government organisations involved in invasive plant and animal management (DSE, DPI, Parks Vic and the CCMA) across all land tenures.
7. Council staff will be trained in recognising high-risk weed species and high-risk pathways of entry and spread of invasive species e.g. adherence to appropriate vehicle hygiene practices.
8. Council will work with DPI to raise awareness about the risk of new high risk weed species being introduced via fodder coming into the region, particularly during or following emergencies like drought or fire.
9. Council will train staff in rabbit and weed identification and conduct community weed identification and control training programs to minimise the introduction of new high risk species and increase the likelihood that they will be detected early.
10. Council will support partnerships with landholder groups and other agencies (i.e. Parks Victoria) to undertake weed and rabbit control e.g. funding incentives for landholders, where appropriate.
11. Council will map roadside weed infestations and their treatment in partnership with community groups and relevant agencies (i.e. DPI)
12. Council will develop a register of known certified organic properties and where possible, avoid roadside spraying adjoining these properties.

Aboriginal and non Aboriginal heritage assets

13. Council will encourage all rural roadside users to consult the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage registers (the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register and the Victorian Heritage Register) for information about any on-site cultural heritage prior to working on the roadside to ensure non-Aboriginal heritage sites and Aboriginal places are not harmed.
14. Council will increase awareness and consistency, and fully implement established processes for the identification, reporting and management of Aboriginal places, in accordance with relevant legislation, on rural roadsides in the Shire.
15. Council will establish a site identification and management process for non-Aboriginal heritage sites.

5 Goal 3: Manage third party access

5.1 Introducing the third party access goal

What is the goal?

There is a range of works and activities that are undertaken by a third party rather than directly by Council. These rural roadside users include:

- Utility service providers and their contractors – installation and maintenance of services (electricity, telecommunications, water, sewage and gas).
- Fire and other emergency services – access to properties and front line control.
- Landholders – livestock droving and grazing, machinery movement, access to properties, cattle underpasses.
- Community groups – include Landcare and other groups such as ‘Adopt a Roadside’, which can be involved with clean-ups and revegetation projects.
- Recreational users – roadside trails (designated or not) used by walkers, cyclists, horse riders etc. Roadside also host wayside stop areas for longer distance travellers.
- Unauthorised and uncontrolled works in road reserves can have serious risks. Some of the risks that require managing include:
 - Safety issues – for example, utility providers, fire and other emergency personnel, road works crews need a safe working environment; risks can be mitigated by appropriate signage and following other protocols.
 - Native vegetation disturbance – for example, clearing and soil disturbance by utility providers and farmers maintaining boundary fences; risks can be minimised by issuing of relevant permits and working within codes of practice.
 - Ease of access – for example, utility providers will need to maintain assets routinely and in an emergency.
 - Roadside revegetation activities – for example, guidelines need to be followed on appropriate species and setbacks.

Effective communication and consultation between third party roadside users and Council will minimise risks and the frequency of unauthorised works. Council’s goal is for all third party users to have access to the roadside as necessary and to be aware of their responsibilities so that risks are mitigated.

What are the issues?

Tensions are evident between preservation of natural and heritage values and a range of activities being undertaken by third party users of rural roadsides. Utility and service providers, for example, want clear access to their assets, which can mean native vegetation removal and soil disturbance. Utility assets can also be damaged by road works. Landholders need to manage vegetation along their fence lines and there is some lack of agreement on an appropriate clear zone. Emergency personnel and vehicles use the roadside during emergencies and want clear access wherever possible. The risk of negative impacts on biodiversity from fire protection works is high and needs to be properly managed by all parties.

Third Party Access

There is access for all roadside users and responsibilities are known and accepted. Risks are mitigated.

5.2 Fire prevention

South-west Victoria is a fire prone area due to a high average rainfall contributing to high fuel loads almost every year. On the other hand, extreme and dangerous fire risk is also associated with persistent low rainfall and the occurrence of hot dry conditions, coupled with depleted water supplies in communities. Grass fires are more prevalent in the northern part of the Shire whereas forest fires are also a high risk in the southern regions.

Under Section 43 of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 it is Council's responsibility to 'take all practicable steps to prevent the occurrence of fires on, and minimise the danger of the spread of fires on any road under its care and management'.

The Corangamite Shire's Municipal Fire Prevention Plan 2008 – 2011 (last amended 2010) outlines areas of responsibility between stakeholders, a fire prevention and mitigation works program and documents a network of strategic fire management roads throughout the Shire. The Plan articulates that 'fire prevention is a whole of community responsibility and no person or single organisation can expect to, or be expected to, assume full responsibility'.

Fire protection works are planned in conjunction with the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer and CFA Regional Officers, and all works are carried out in accordance with the Corangamite Municipal Fire Protection Plan.

Council issues permits for some roadside grazing for fire prevention purposes. Currently, permits are only issued for grazing on rural roadsides of low conservation value during the fire danger period (1 October – 30 April). Council does not permit grazing on rural roadsides outside of these times due to potential damage to the roadside during the wetter months, i.e. pugging.

Following the hearings at the 2009 Victorian Bush Fires Royal Commission, new guidelines, Roadside Fire Management Works: CFA guidelines and procedures (CFA 2010) provide a process for brigades and CFA Areas to follow when planning non-emergency roadside fire management works. They are intended to assist those with a legal responsibility to maintain roads, by providing advice and information on planning effective roadside fire management. An amendment to the Planning Scheme (VC83) was also gazetted in November 2011, which introduces new bushfire exemptions for private land, public land and roadsides.

The main fire protection issues are:

- **Fire prevention as a shared responsibility** – that requires cooperation between Council, all roadside users, the CFA and adjoining land managers.
- **Fire prevention works (grazing/slashing/spraying/maintaining fire breaks/cleaning up fallen timber)** – can negatively impact on native vegetation and habitat values.
- **Differences in opinion** – about how best to maintain roads as 'relatively safe corridors' in the event of wildfire (e.g. to reduce fuel loads, burning is preferable over spraying which adversely impacts on native species and can lead to weed infestations which can subsequently increase fuel loads).
- **Plains Grassland & Plains Grassy Woodland native communities** – require regular burning to maintain biodiversity.

5.3 Utility and service provision

Service providers include all utility companies that distribute communications, water, sewer, electricity and gas services. There is an intensive program of gas exploration and pipelines in the region. Consultation with Council is required before undertaking any works related to installation or maintenance of services (except in an emergency). Wherever practical, utilities are encouraged to locate services on low conservation value rural roadsides or cleared land adjacent to rural roadsides.

To ensure that the objectives of good roadside management are met communication between service providers and Council needs to be clear and effective. Utility companies are required to obtain a planning permit when undertaking new works, however, the removal of vegetation to ‘the minimum extent of native vegetation necessary to maintain utility services’ is exempt under Clause 52.17 of the Victorian Planning Provisions.

The main utility and service provision issues are:

- **Communication between Council and providers** – to ensure the best outcomes for protection of natural and heritage assets on rural roadsides.
- **Working within an identified code of practice** – that followed by all service providers, with Council notified of planned works on local roadsides.

5.4 Adjoining landholders

Rural roadsides usually traverse farming land, which means that there are pressures from the activities of landholders on adjoining properties.

The main adjoining landholders issues are:

- **Stock movement or grazing** – when poorly timed or managed, grazing can have high risks, for example, causing ground disturbance and compaction, weed, pathogen and disease spread, increased nutrient levels, and loss or damage to native vegetation.
- **Maintenance of fence lines** – works to construct or repair fence lines presents a high risk of damage, in particular where there is excessive clearing, dumping of spoil or use of machinery on the roadside.
- **Property access** – poor siting of new access points and/or excessive clearing and trimming of vegetation to enable access or restoration of sightlines can cause damage.

5.5 Recreational users

Rural roadsides provide a commonly used resource for informal recreation by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and others. This includes the use of both formal and informal trails.

The main issues associated with recreational use of rural roadsides are:

- **Safety** – visibility of users and separation from vehicle movements, as well as safety from hidden obstacles, e.g. rocks in tall grass, holes left by road or utility maintenance crews.
- **Improved access** – rural roadside provide an underutilised resource, which could be better developed and incorporated into existing trail networks.

5.6 Strategies in managing third party access risks

Strategies for the achievement of balanced outcomes have been identified as follows:

Fire prevention

1. Council will promote a cooperative approach to fire prevention between all interested parties, especially landholders, CFA, DSE and Council.
2. Council will integrate roadside fuel reduction and ecological burns with CFA training to meet multiple objectives of fire prevention and biodiversity conservation.
3. Council will encourage controlled arrangements for landholders to reduce fuel loads on some low conservation value roadsides (slashing, hay making, mowing and grazing, for example).
4. Council will review the local law regarding grazing on local roads to extend the permitted grazing period from 1 September to 30 April.
5. Council will review outcomes of the Victorian Bush Fires Royal Commission and the implications for Council’s obligations.

Utility and service provision

6. Council will advocate for a review of electrical clearance works within the Shire to ensure that they are consistent with the Electricity Safety (Electrical Line Clearance) Regulations 2010 and Planning Provisions.
7. Council will encourage utility and service providers to plan works in advance to properly allow for consultation with all interested parties.
8. Council will encourage utility and service providers to adopt route selection that considers road infrastructure, significant flora and fauna, and sites of cultural or heritage significance.
9. Council to increase communication with utility and service providers to ensure works are undertaken according to best practice in relation to aspects including site rehabilitation, vehicle hygiene and minimum vegetation clearance.

Adjoining landholders

10. Council will advocate for a review of the extent of native vegetation clearance permitted for fence line maintenance under the State Planning Provisions.
11. Council will establish a pilot program to trial roadside management partnerships with adjoining landholder groups.
12. Council will work to ensure that landholders are aware that State planning provisions apply to activities that remove, lop or destroy native vegetation on rural roadsides and that landholders must contact Council prior to undertaking any removals.
13. Council will work to ensure that landholders are aware that ploughing, cultivating or grading on rural roadsides is only permitted on firebreaks that have been previously regularly maintained using these methods
14. Council will raise awareness of local law permit requirements and those for roadside revegetation to ensure that revegetation is appropriate for the site.
15. Council will review the conditions on permits for storing equipment and fodder on roadsides.

Recreational users

16. Council, through its Trails and Links Strategy, will explore opportunities to better integrate rural roadsides into the existing trail network.

6 Goal 4: Provide leadership and promote the value and function of rural roadsides

6.1 Introducing the leadership goal

What is the goal?

Rural roadside management needs to recognise the many different (and often conflicting) needs of the community. At the same time Council aims to promote the wider value and functions of roadsides and encourage wider stakeholder ownership of the plan.

What are the issues?

Unauthorised works and damaging activities in road reserves will often take place because of a lack of awareness by third party roadside users and community members. If the community is more aware of the potential for impacts and how to avoid them there is likely to be better outcomes for the environment.

Council's goal is to promote the wider value and function of rural roadsides to enable better outcomes for both the environment and road users.

Council is a leader in good roadside management

Promotion of the wider value and function of roadsides means less damaging activities and better outcomes for the environment.

6.2 Community awareness

Wider promotion of the values of rural roadsides will discourage damaging practices. Providing accessible information and clear direction in the following areas will encourage community involvement and acceptance:

- **Conservation value mapping** – made available in a readable format and readily accessible.
- **Guidance on roadside revegetation** – made available to community groups and others to ensure planting is compatible with other roadside uses, such as utilities provision.
- **Third party permits** – parties need to be aware of those activities that require a permit e.g. consent for works, livestock permits, and systems need to be in place to issue them.

6.3 Stakeholder cooperation

The implementation of the Rural Roadside Management Plan will require coordination and engagement with regional agencies and authorities that have corresponding areas of responsibility. The roles of major stakeholders with respect to the plan are as follows:

Country Fire Authority

The CFA is a volunteer and community based organisation that responds to a variety of fire and emergency incidents including wildfires, structure fires and transport related fires. They require access to the local road network at all times and plan and instigate fire prevention works in consultation with Councils' Municipal Fire Prevention officer.

Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) & Glenelg-Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA)

CCMA and GHCMA are statutory authorities established by the Victorian Government and have a lead role in working with community and Government to enhance land, and biodiversity across all land tenure.

Corangamite community and community groups

The Corangamite community and community groups is a major stakeholder of the plan.

Department of Primary Industries (DPI)

DPI has responsibility for biosecurity including pest plant and animal planning and control.

Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE)

DSE has responsibility to enhance land, water and biodiversity of State owned land and is Victoria's lead government department for sustainable management of land, water and biodiversity resources.

Service providers e.g. Telstra, Powercor and Water Authorities

Service providers include all utility companies that distribute communications, water, electricity and gas services. Consultation with Council is required before undertaking any works related to installation or maintenance of services (except in an emergency).

6.4 Strategies in promoting the value and function of rural roadsides

Strategies for the achievement of balanced outcomes have been identified as follows:

1. Council will conduct promotional activities and make information available that will improve the community's awareness of roadside values.
2. Council to advertise as the first point of contact when landholders, community members or utility and service providers are planning to undertake works on rural roadsides.
3. Council to implement an accessible permits system so that third party users can access information and apply for permits as necessary in a streamlined manner.

PART D

Implementation through strategic actions



A roadside revegetation project

7 Goal 5: Monitor the effectiveness of the Rural Roadside Management Plan

7.1 Introducing the monitoring and effectiveness goal

What is the goal?

The effective implementation of the plan will require:

- Engagement with regional agencies and authorities, utility and service providers, landholders and community members
- Processes put in place for monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring the success of this plan will be based around progress against the first four goals and their actions.

A strategic action plan identifies actions for each of the five goals of the plan.

A Roadside Management Plan that is accountable and effective

Achievement and progress is measured against the goals and actions of the plan

7.2 Implementation Plan

The plan is a strategic rather than prescriptive document. This will help to retain its relevance over the full four-years of implementation. An annual implementation plan will be developed, which will specify the annual actions to achieve the plan's strategic actions (Table 7-1).

The Implementation Plan will include:

- Specific annual actions to achieve the plan's strategic actions.
- Timeline for completion of specific actions.
- Target outputs for each specific action.
- Responsibilities for each specific action.

The annual implementation plan will be developed by Council staff in consultation with relevant stakeholders (i.e. government agencies). The implementation plan will be developed with consideration to strategic action priorities and funding availability and will assist Council to target grant funding opportunities.

7.3 Monitoring and reporting

Council proposes that the monitoring and evaluation of the plan focus on the implementation of actions and the outcomes of these. This will occur in two timeframes: an annual review to coincide with the Council's budget review and development process, and a final review after four years.

The annual review would consist of:

- Assessing the progress of actions in the implementation plan against target outputs.
- Assessing the progress of strategic actions in the plan.
- Developing a new annual implementation plan that includes:
 - Strategic actions to be targeted in the year's implementation.
 - Specific actions to achieve selected strategic actions for inclusion in forthcoming budget.
 - Specific actions that can potentially be funded through grant funding.

- For completed strategic actions, evaluation of the efficacy in achieving the intended outcomes.
- Reporting of progress of the plan in Council's Annual report.
- Annual progress report provided to Council.

This evaluation of completed specific actions should include, where possible, assess how successful the action was and whether it achieved its target outputs and objectives. The evidence required in each case will differ, but may include measuring items such as:

- Attendance of staff at training sessions and knowledge gained.
- Application of new knowledge through its inclusion in Council's management plans.
- Level of stakeholder engagement in development of specific management plans or protocols.
- External funding achieved for rural roadside management projects.

The final review will be conducted in 2016 and will combine the annual reporting to:

- Assess overall implementation of the actions.
- Identify outcomes achieved by the plan.

7.4 Strategic action plan

The rural roadside management action plan provides a framework for action over the next four years. Table 7 1 identifies longer-term strategies and actions that will enable the Corangamite Shire Council to achieve their objectives around rural roadside management. An estimate of the time line for their implementation is also included in the Action Plan.

Table 7 1 Strategic action plan: Corangamite Rural Roadside Management Plan

E&ED: Council's Environment & Emergency Department

P&B: Council's Planning and Building Department

WO: Council's Works Department

AS: Council's Assets Department

ES: Council's Executive Services Department

HR/R: Council's Human Resources and Risk Department

REC: Council's Recreation Department

DSE: Department of Sustainability and Environment

AAV: Aboriginal Affairs Victoria

HV: Heritage Victoria

CFA: Country Fire Authority

No.	Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Goal 1: Maintain a safe local road network			
1.1	Council will advocate to DSE for a review of the local government public roads exemption to include all maintenance works within the defined maintenance envelope, including the road's drainage system.	E&E, DSE	Year 1
1.2	Council will work with DSE to streamline administrative processes for meeting native vegetation requirements of projects that are not covered by the exemption e.g. approved offset management plans.	E&E, DSE	Year 4
1.3	Council will work with landholders to ensure that road drains into private property and natural water courses are maintained and drainage from private land does not adversely impact on road drains	Wo Adjoining landholders	Ongoing
1.4	Where possible, Council will integrate major drainage maintenance works with planned non-routine road upgrades.	Wo	Ongoing
1.5	Council will develop a decision support tool to assist with setting priorities for scheduling drainage maintenance works as well as implementing proactive maintenance programs.	Wo	Year 2
Goal 2: Protect natural and heritage assets			
Biodiversity conservation and enhancement			
2.1	Council will work with adjoining landholders and Landcare to support revegetation/regeneration on the roadside or on adjoining properties where appropriate and where it enhances roadside corridors.	E&E Adjoining landholders, Landcare	Ongoing
2.2	Council will investigate establishing a permit system for firewood collection from roadsides with consideration to potential public liability issues.	E&E HR/R	Year 1
2.3	Council will increase awareness amongst community and roadside users of all available information on roadside biodiversity values.	E&E, Landcare	Year 2
2.4	Council will monitor roadside vegetation condition and identify highest value biological assets in collaboration with agencies with expertise and resources.	E&E	Year 3
2.5	Council will work with DSE to investigate the use of strategic rural roadsides for native vegetation offsets.	E&E, DSE	Year 2
Invasive plants and animals			
2.6	Council will control weeds on roadsides in accordance with Appendix 7, working in partnership with other government organisations involved in invasive plant and animal management (DSE, DPI, Parks Vic and the CCMA) across all land tenures.	E&E	Ongoing
2.7	Council staff will be trained in recognising high-risk weed species and high-risk pathways of entry and spread of invasive species e.g. adherence to appropriate vehicle hygiene practices.	E&E , Wo	Year 1

No.	Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
2.8	Council will work with DPI to raise awareness about the risk of new high risk weed species being introduced via fodder coming into the region, particularly during or following emergencies like drought or fire.	E&E, DPI	Year 3
2.9	Council will train staff in rabbit and weed identification and conduct community weed identification and control training programs to minimise the introduction of new high risk species and increase the likelihood that they will be detected early.	E&E, Landcare, DPI	Year 1
2.10	Council will support partnerships with landholder groups and other agencies (i.e. Parks Victoria) to undertake weed and rabbit control e.g. funding incentives for landholders, where appropriate.	E&E	Year 2
2.11	Council will map roadside weed infestations and their treatment in partnership with community groups and relevant agencies (i.e. DPI)	E&E, Community groups, Landcare, DPI	Year 3
2.12	Council will develop a register of known certified organic properties and where possible, avoid roadside spraying adjoining these properties.	E&E, WO	Year 4
Aboriginal and non Aboriginal heritage assets			
2.13	Council will encourage all rural roadside users to consult the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage registers (the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register and the Victorian Heritage Register) for information about any on-site cultural heritage prior to working on the roadside to ensure non-Aboriginal heritage sites and Aboriginal places are not harmed.	E&E, AAV	Year 4
2.14	Council will increase awareness and consistency, and fully implement established processes for the identification, reporting and management of Aboriginal places, in accordance with relevant legislation, on rural roadsides in the Shire.	P&B, AAV	Ongoing
2.15	Council will establish a site identification and management process for non-Aboriginal heritage sites.	P&B, HV	Year 4
Goal 3: Manage third party access			
Fire prevention			
3.1	Council will promote a cooperative approach to fire prevention between all interested parties, especially landholders, CFA, DSE and Council.	E&E	Ongoing
3.2	Council will integrate roadside fuel reduction and ecological burns with CFA training to meet multiple objectives of fire prevention and biodiversity conservation.	E&E,, CFA	Ongoing

No.	Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
3.3	Council will encourage controlled arrangements for landholders to reduce fuel loads on some low conservation value roadsides (slashing, hay making, mowing and grazing, for example).	E&E	Year 3
3.4	Council will review the local law regarding grazing of local roads to extend the permitted grazing period from 1 September to 30 April.	E&E	Year 1
3.5	Council will review outcomes of the Victorian Bush Fires Royal Commission and the implications for Council's obligations.	E&E	Year 1
Utility and service provision			
3.6	Council will advocate for a review of electrical clearance works within the Shire to ensure that they are consistent with the Electricity Safety (Electrical Line Clearance) Regulations 2010 and Planning Provisions.	E&E, AS	Year 2
3.7	Council will encourage utility and service providers to plan works in advance to properly allow for consultation with all interested parties.	E&E, AS	Ongoing
3.8	Council will encourage utility and service providers to adopt route selection that considers road infrastructure, significant flora and fauna, and sites of cultural or heritage significance.	E&E, AS	Ongoing
3.9	Council to increase communication with utility and service providers to ensure works are undertaken according to best practice in relation to aspects including site rehabilitation, vehicle hygiene and minimum vegetation clearance.	E&E, AS	Year 3
Adjoining landholders			
3.10	Council will advocate for a review of the extent of native vegetation clearance permitted for fence line maintenance under the State Planning Provisions.	E&E, DSE	Year 2
3.11	Council will establish a pilot program to trial roadside management partnerships with adjoining landholder groups.	E&E, WO	Year 2
3.12	Council will work to ensure that landholders are aware that State planning provisions apply to activities that remove, lop or destroy native vegetation on rural roadsides and that landholders must contact Council prior to undertaking any removals.	E&E, DSE	Year 1
3.13	Council will work to ensure that landholders are aware that ploughing, cultivating or grading on rural roadsides is only permitted on firebreaks that have been previously regularly maintained using these methods.	E&E	Ongoing
3.14	Council will raise awareness of local law permit requirements and those for roadside revegetation to ensure that revegetation is appropriate for the site.	E&E	Year 3
3.15	Council will review the conditions of permits for storing equipment and fodder on roadsides.	E&E	Year 2

No.	Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Recreational users			
3.14	Council, through its Trails and Links Strategy, will explore opportunities to better integrate rural roadsides into the existing trail network.	REC	Year 3
Goal 4: Provide leadership and promote the value and function of rural roadsides			
4.1	Council will conduct promotional activities and make information available that will improve the community's awareness of roadside values.	E&E	Ongoing
4.2	Council to advertise as the first point of contact when landholders, community members or utility and service providers are planning to undertake works on rural roadsides.	E&E, P&B	Year 1
4.3	Council to implement an accessible permits system so that third party users can access information and apply for permits as necessary in a streamlined manner.	E&E, P&B	Year 3
Goal 5: Monitor the effectiveness of the plan			
5.1	Progress in implementing roadside management strategies will be reported in Council's Annual report	E&E, ES	Ongoing
5.2	Council will conduct a final review in 2016 to assess the overall level of implementation of strategies and to identify the outcomes of the plan.	E&E	Year 4

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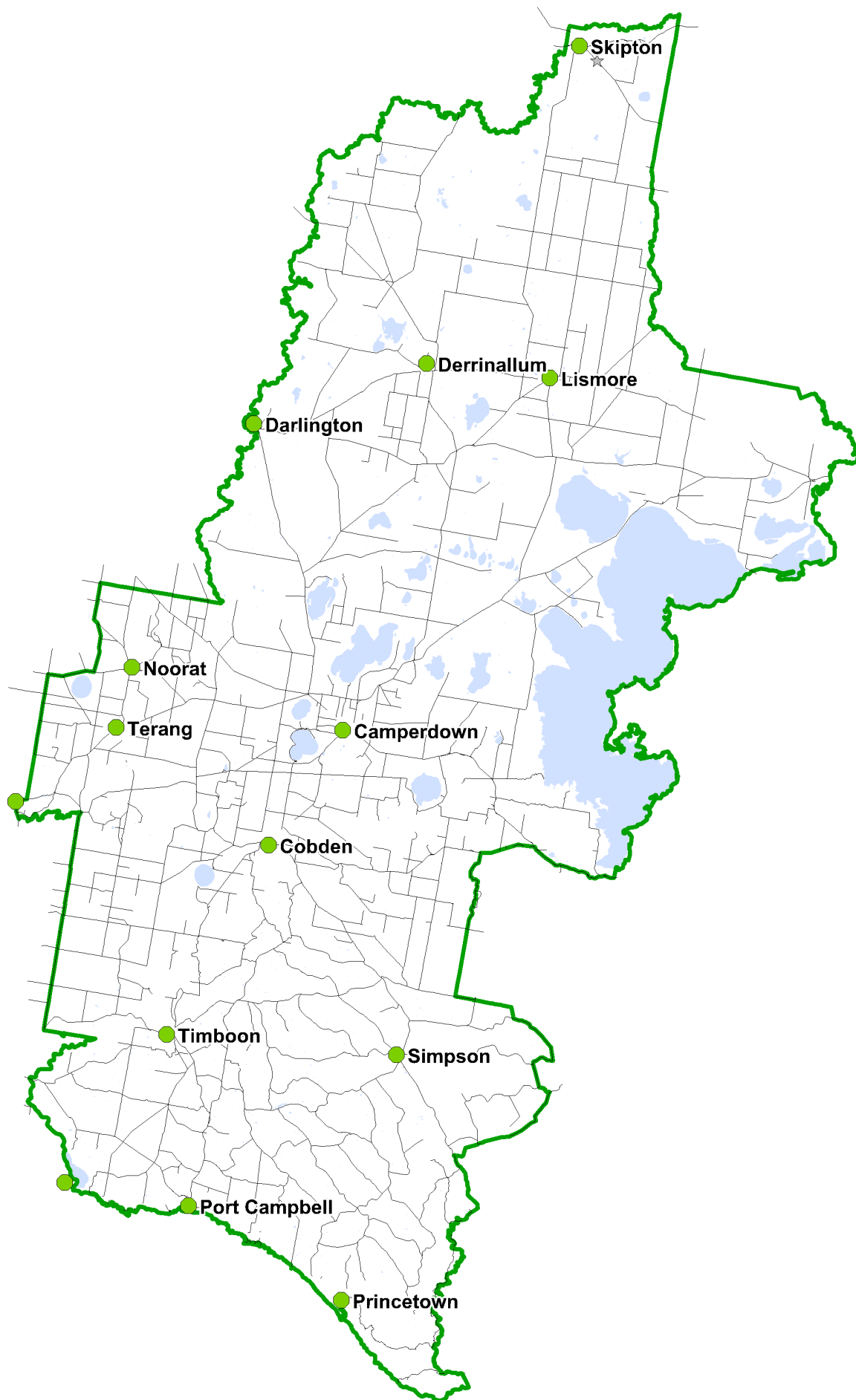
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Appendix 1: Stakeholder reference group members

Surname	First name	Position	Organisation	Town
Austin	Geoff		Heritage Victoria	EAST MELBOURNE
Bailey	Keith		Community representative	TIMBOON
Bond	Lyll	Environment and Emergency Manager	Corangamite Shire	CAMPERDOWN
Crocker	Brad		Telstra	BALLARAT
Cumming	Steve	Councillor	Corangamite Shire	CAMPERDOWN
Curwell	Richard	Environment Coordinator	VicRoads	GEELONG
Farquharson	Ken		Community representative	ELINGAMITE NORTH
Farrell	Ray	Works Manager	Corangamite Shire	CAMPERDOWN
French	Vicky		Community representative	VITE VITE
Gibb	Ian	Sustainable Development Director	Corangamite Shire	CAMPERDOWN
Green	Alex	Works and Services Director	Corangamite Shire	CAMPERDOWN
Grist	Charles		Community representative	BRADVALE via SKIPTON
Hanks	Craig	Parks and Gardens Coordinator	Corangamite Shire	CAMPERDOWN
Holland	Russell		Community representative	via TIMBOON
Lang	Val		Community representative	LISMORE
Laurenson	Ian		Community representative	COBDEN
Lawson	Yvonne		Community representative	PRINCETOWN
Manson	Dean	Operations Officer	CFA	COLAC
McDougall	Steve	Team Leader- Biodiversity Services Barwon Otway	Department of Sustainability & Environment	COLAC
Melville	Ryan	Senior Project Officer	Greening Australia	COLAC
Melville	Georgia	Heritage Project Officer	Aboriginal Affairs Victoria	BALLARAT
Molan	Kevin		Community representative	TERANG
Morrison	Ian	Vegetation Management Officer	CFA	COLAC
Mulholland	Les		Community representative	COBDEN
Nash	Ian		Community representative	SKIPTON
O'Keefe	Karen	Landcare Coordinator	Lismore Land Protection Group	LISMORE
Rees	Nicholas	Regional Asset Manager	Powercor	WARRNAMBOOL

Surname	First name	Position	Organisation	Town
Reichman	John	Team Leader	Corangamite Shire	CAMPERDOWN
Reiley	Peter	Technical Support Officer	Corangamite Shire	CAMPERDOWN
Robilliard	Lance		Community representative	CAMPERDOWN
Rollinson	Geoff	Landcare Coordinator	Heytesbury & District Landcare Network	TIMBOON
Sargeant	Tim		Community representative	TERANG
Scally	Jackie	Natural Resource Management Officer-Local Government	Corangamite CMA	COLAC
Smith	Geoff	Councillor	Corangamite Shire	CAMPERDOWN
Stanley-Eyles	Kim	Team Leader	Greening Australia	COLAC
Stewart	Warren	Local Laws Officer	Corangamite Shire	CAMPERDOWN
Treble	Kylie		Community representative	SIMPSON
Trigg	Douglas		Community representative	TIMBOON
Vermeeren	Saul	Biodiversity Officer	Department of Sustainability & Environment	COLAC
Wade	Lance	Works Engineer	Corangamite Shire	CAMPERDOWN
Walsgott	Peter	VVF Regional Manager	Victorian Farmers Federation	
Whiteside	Bill		Department of Primary Industries	BALLARAT

Appendix 2: Local rural roads in the Shire of Corangamite



Appendix 3: Relevant legislation

Commonwealth Legislation

- **Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999** Provide for the protection of the environment, especially those aspects of the environment that are matters of national environmental significance, promote ecologically sustainable development, conservation of biodiversity, co-operative approach to management of the environment including governments, community, land holders and indigenous people.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984** The purposes of this Act are the preservation and protection from injury or desecration of areas and objects in Australia and in Australian waters, being areas and objects that are of particular significance to Aboriginals in accordance with Aboriginal tradition.

State Legislation

- **Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972** Provides for the care and protection of relics including the land they are located in.
- **Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994** Landholders must take reasonable steps to control regionally controlled weeds and established pest animals, on roadsides that adjoin the landowners land. (Excluding highways, declared roads and unleased crown land). The Department of Natural Resources and Environment is responsible for State Prohibited and Regionally Prohibited species. Reasonable precautions must be taken to ensure that equipment is free from noxious weeds, including seeds, or plant matter capable of growing, before moving any machinery or equipment from land onto a road.
- **CFA Act 1958** Municipalities are responsible for managing roadside vegetation for fire prevention.
- **Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987** Prior to works being undertaken which may disturb critical habitat a plan of works must be submitted to Department of Natural Resources and Environment.
- **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978** Gives Crown ownership rights over all vegetation on roadsides, and the power to reserve land for public purposes.
- **Electricity Safety Act 1998** Stipulates the maintenance of land above or below electrical lines.
- **Environment Protection Act 1970** Provides for the control of polluted runoff from disturbed roads.
- **Extractive Industries Development Act 1995** Ownership of stone on private and crown land. Covers permits required to search or extract stone on crown land. Protects reference areas from being eligible for any extraction work.
- **Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988** Flora and fauna conservation and management with minimal adverse social and economic impact. Public authorities must have regard for flora and fauna conservation and management objectives, which aim to ensure that Victoria's flora and fauna can survive, flourish and retain their potential for evolutionary development in the wild. It places responsibility on Government, business organisations and the community to act in a way so as to conserve Victoria's flora and fauna and their genetic diversity.
- **Forests Act 1958** Gives local municipalities responsibility for managing vegetation on most roadsides.
- **Land Act 1958** Allows prosecution for removal of timber from roadsides.
- **Local Government Act 1989** Gives local government responsibility for management of undeclared roads. Gives Council power to create certain local laws relating to roadsides.
- **Mineral Resources Development Act 1990** Offence to search or fossick on any land without the appropriate licences. Conditions regarding rehabilitation of the land, protection of the environment and groundwater.

- **Planning and Environment Act 1987** Sets guidelines for removal of native vegetation from roadsides under the Native Vegetation Retention Controls and seeks to encourage the retention of native vegetation on private and public land. Prior to removing, destroying or lopping an area of native vegetation on roadsides applications must be referred to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.
- **Road Management Act 2004** Defines 'works' undertaken by a third party on the road reserve and requires written consent of the coordinating authority and issuing of a 'consent for works in a road reserve permit'.
- **Servicing Acts** Permits servicing authorities to locate assets on roadsides and gives them rights of access for maintenance works.
- **State Conservation Strategy 1987** Recognised the value of roadside vegetation and commits the government to prepare roadside management plans.
- **Transport Act 1983** VicRoads is responsible for management of declared roads.
- **Wildlife Act 1975** Defines wildlife in Victoria and specifies conditions for holders of a wildlife licence. A licence holder must also comply with any relevant State or Federal legislation and by-laws or other requirements of the local council.

Appendix 4: Management guidelines

1. Vegetation management

Objectives:

- o Protect and enhance remnant vegetation, maximising the retention of rare and threatened flora and fauna species or communities, and value the importance of all habitat components.
- o Re-establish indigenous vegetation with a preference for natural regeneration where appropriate.
- o Assess vegetation for removal where it poses a safety risk or impedes road drainage function.
- o Manage roadside vegetation in order to minimise fire risk to life and property and negative impacts on flora and fauna.
- o Increase the local community's appreciation and understanding of the value of roadside vegetation through awareness raising and education.

1.1 Native vegetation removal

GUIDELINES

- o Activities that require removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation are to be conducted in accordance with the Corangamite Shire Planning Scheme. This requires a planning permit to be issued by Council unless exempt under the Planning Scheme. Council must be contacted prior to any native vegetation being removed, destroyed or lopped on roadsides. Consider the following procedures when planning native vegetation removal;
 - Mark for removal only the minimum vegetation necessary to meet required works
 - Remove vegetation that is to be felled in a manner that minimises damage to surrounding vegetation
 - Retain dead trees and naturally fallen timber on roadsides to provide habitat for wildlife, unless they pose a significant hazard as specified by the relevant Shire officer
 - Operators removing vegetation are to be trained in correct techniques. All pruning of native vegetation must be undertaken in accordance with AS4373-2007: Pruning of Amenity Trees.
- o Fire prevention works are to be carried out in accordance with the Council's Municipal Fire Prevention Plan 2008-2011.

1.2 Slashing, spraying and burning programs

GUIDELINES

- o Spraying of road shoulders and road drain should be limited where possible (see Appendix 5). Widespread spraying of roadsides is not permitted.
- o Slashing road shoulders is recommended over spraying where there is native vegetation present.
- o Machinery and vehicle hygiene practices should be implemented to avoid the movement of soil and plant material to avoid accidental spreading weed seeds.
- o Weed control should be undertaken on medium and high conservation roads following burning where practicable. Where practicable, roadside burning should have a timing and frequency that enhances native vegetation communities as well as reducing fire risk.

1.3 Revegetation and enhancement

GUIDELINES

- o Landholders, community groups, contractors and others planning to conduct works on a road reserve (i.e. seed collection and revegetation) should seek a permit from Council.
- o Works should encourage natural regeneration as the preferred form of revegetation or use seed of local vegetation for direct seeding or tube stock planting.
- o Use only indigenous species of the appropriate vegetation type (EVC) for the site except on low conservation roadsides where written consent has been provided by Council officers.
- o Appropriate setback distances need to be applied from both the road formation, fence line and utilities
- o Preference should be given to those projects that enhance the quality of remnant vegetation, provide linkages with other remnants or enhance threatened species habitat.

1.4 Livestock movement and droving

GUIDELINES

- o A permit is generally required for livestock movement and droving, and there may be conditions applied to permits.
- o Proposals for the droving of livestock should be restricted to low conservation value areas. Care should be taken to avoid access to existing water holes and marsh areas.
- o Livestock movement should be avoided when ground conditions are wet to avoid pugging and compaction.
- o Vehicles should not be driven on roadsides where practicable.
- o Livestock should not remain in road reserves overnight.

1.5 Livestock grazing

GUIDELINES

- o Council issues permits for grazing and/or cutting of silage/hay on roadsides for fire prevention purposes. An application must demonstrate a proposed reduction in fuel load prior to the critical fire periods.
- o Grazing of roadsides is not permitted on high and medium conservation roads (excepting existing permits).
- o No supplementary feeding of stock in road reserves.
- o Grazing is only permitted under a permit during the fire danger period (1 October-30 April), although a review of this local law is recommended (see Action 3.4).

1.6 Fence maintenance

GUIDELINES

- o Vegetation clearance can be undertaken to construct or maintain fences along roadsides provided it is restricted to the 'minimum extent required to undertake the works'. The clearing width must not exceed 2 m on the road side of the fence.
- o Landholders must contact Council prior to removing any native vegetation for fence line maintenance.

1.7 Other activities

GUIDELINES

Other activities that require a permit include:

- The use of the roadside to store/stockpile equipment, machinery, fencing material, stock feed, vehicles etc.
- Any building/works activity including construction of vehicle entrances to properties and stock crossing points.
- Ploughing, cultivation and grading is not permitted on roadsides unless managing an existing firebreak that has been regularly maintained using that technique.
- New road access or widening of existing road access to properties.
- Landholders are responsible for maintaining driveway access, except where native vegetation needs to be removed (becomes responsibility of Council).

2 Roadside weed control

Objectives:

- **Employ surveillance to ensure the prevention of new invasive weeds from becoming widespread.**
- **Eradicate or contain specific high risk weeds in a manner that minimises disturbance to indigenous vegetation.**
- **Protect high priority areas from high risk invasive weeds.**
- **Prevent the spread of weeds and soil pathogens during road and roadside maintenance.**
- **Encourage control measures to be undertaken in partnerships with neighbouring landholders when appropriate.**

GUIDELINES

- Weed control measures that minimise disturbance to the roadside environment should be adopted.
- On low conservation value roadsides, slashing can be an appropriate weed control mechanism and the frequency and timing is determined by the species present. To minimise the spread of introduced species and to assist in the regeneration of desirable native species, slashing of plants that contain viable seeds should be avoided.
- On high or medium conservation value roadsides:
 - Treat isolated weed infestation patches first.
 - Control major weed infestation by starting from the edge of the weed infestation and working towards the centre.
- Operate construction and maintenance machinery so as to minimise the spread of weeds or soil pathogens. (See road construction and maintenance guidelines).
- Encourage cooperative action for weed control. Control works undertaken by one landowner or agency should be supported by adjoining landowners.

3 Cultural and heritage sites

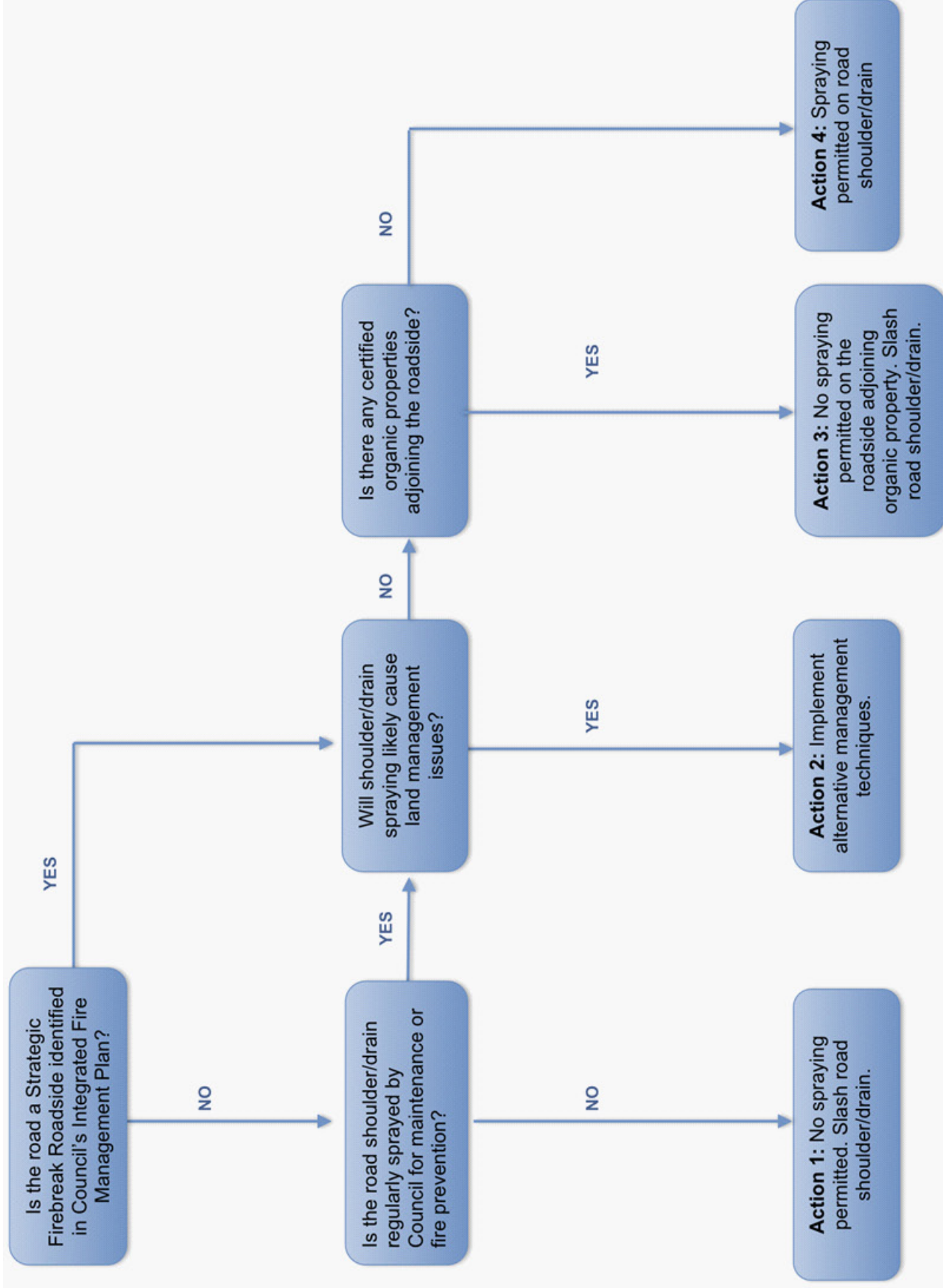
Objectives:

To ensure the protection of roadside sites that have been identified as having cultural, heritage, archaeological, aboriginal or geological significance.

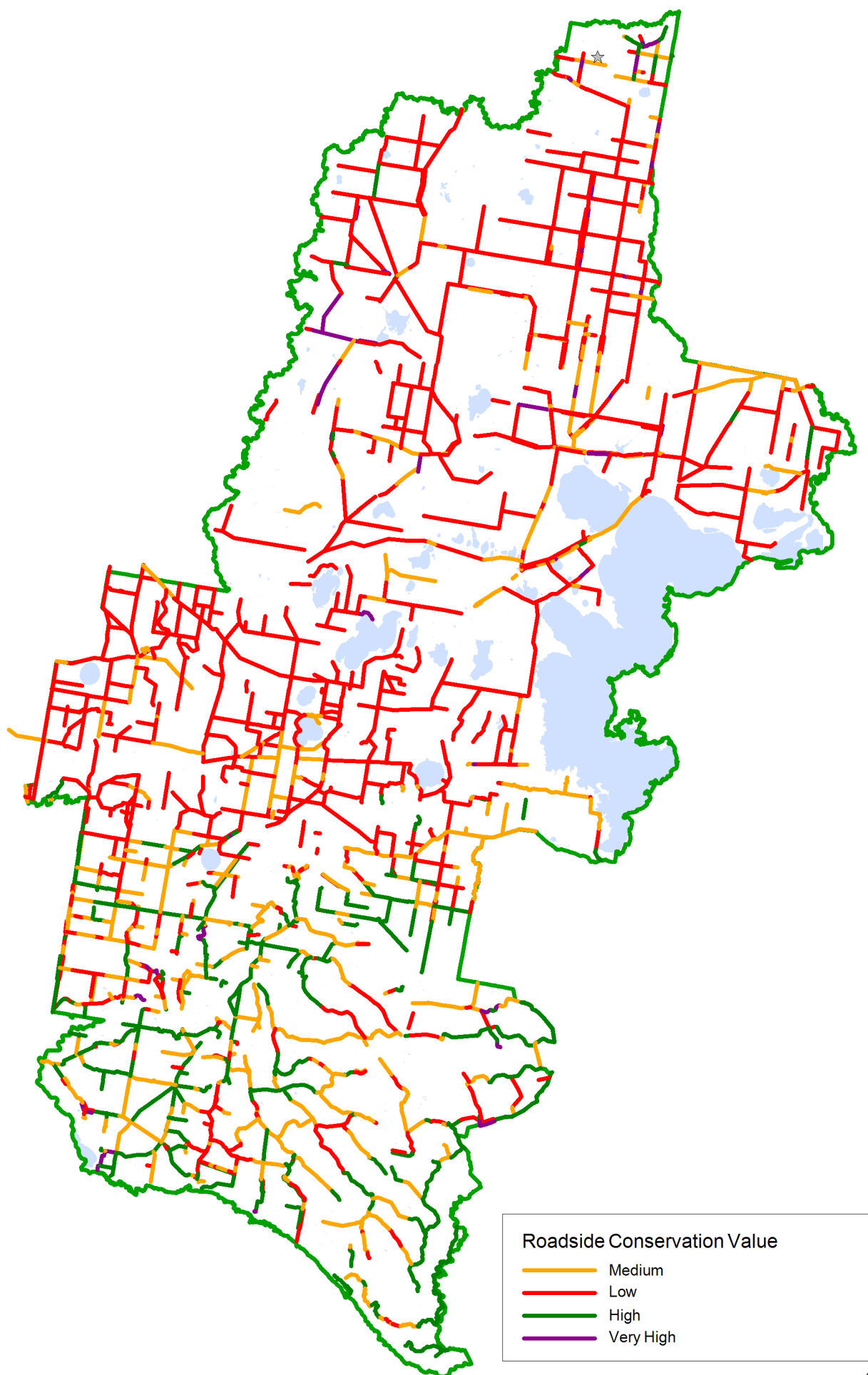
GUIDELINES

- o All roadside activities, including revegetation and weed removal, should recognise sites of cultural, heritage, archaeological or Aboriginal significance. Prior to commencing an activity:
 - Seek advice from Council as to the known location of non Aboriginal heritage sites;
 - Refer to AAV's website <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/indigenous/heritage-tools> to determine whether the proposed activity is in the vicinity of a known Aboriginal cultural heritage place or in an area of defined Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity. If so, it may be necessary to arrange an on-site meeting with AAV staff and/or to apply for a cultural heritage permit;
 - Use the Aboriginal Affairs Victoria's (AAV) Heritage Planning Tool on the same website to determine any requirement for a cultural heritage management plan for the proposed activity;
 - Ensure the relevant agency is contacted, where evidence of a site/place is known or suspected. For Aboriginal heritage places contact AAV Barwon Grampians Heritage Programs on 03 5327 2800;
 - Only proceed with works on known sites after receiving approval to do so.

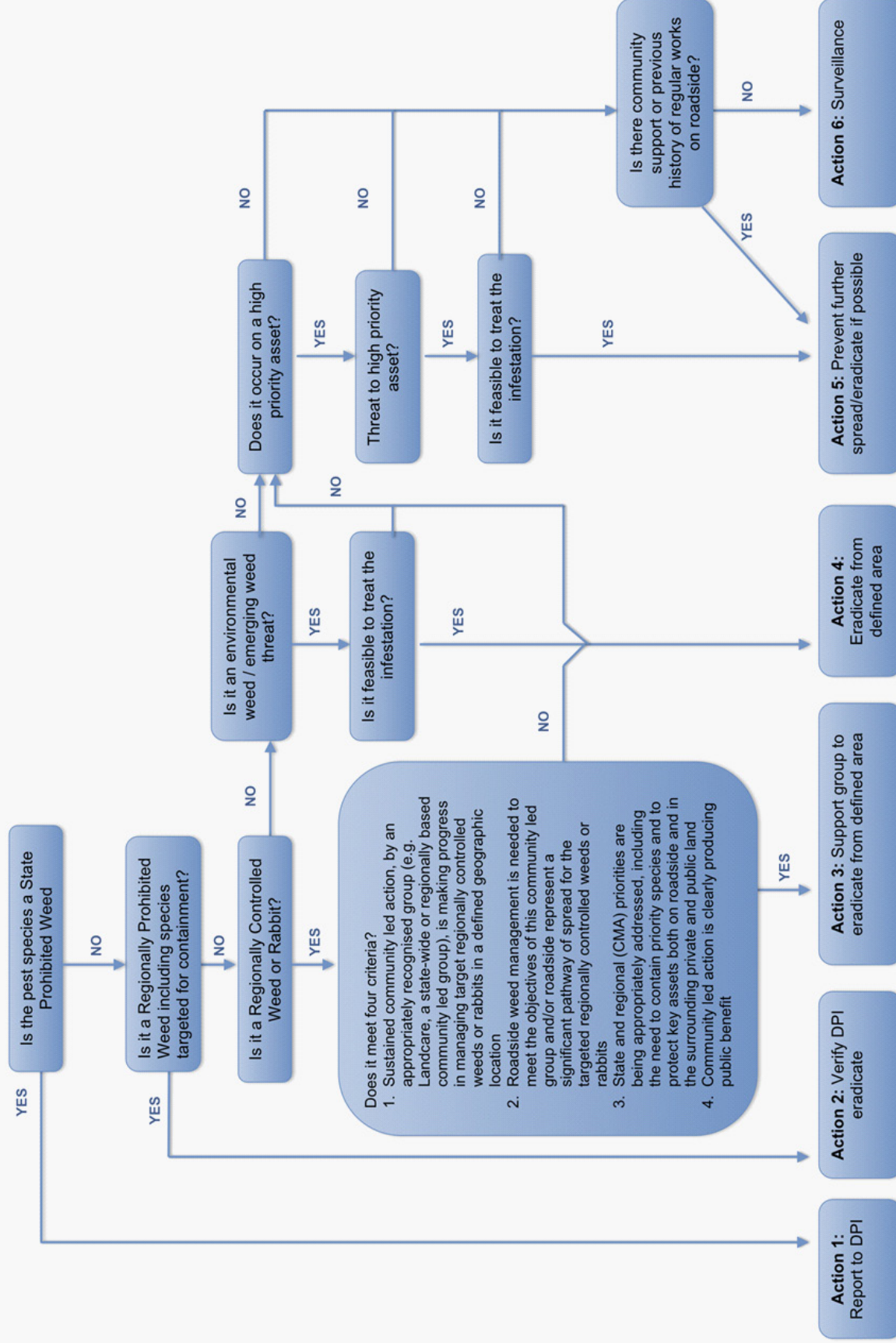
Appendix 5: Decision flow chart – selecting shoulder treatments



Appendix 6: Conservation value mapping on rural roadsides



Appendix 7: Decision flow chart – setting priorities for weed control



BOX 1: Priority assets

An asset can be valuable because of environmental, social or economic characteristics. This includes:

- High cultural and heritage values
- High recreational/amenity value
- High conservation value roadside native vegetation
- Native vegetation known to be habitat for threatened flora or fauna
- EPBC listed communities or species
- Land that borders National Park
- Land that borders other public land reserves

BOX 2: Assessing threats & impact of no treatment

A threat is considered significant if the asset will be severely damaged if threat is not treated during the next three years. Consider:

- Extent and reversibility of the damage
- Potential to spread onto valuable nearby land e.g. proximity to a waterway, agricultural asset
- Level of community concern
- Potential to restrict use of land e.g. risk of injury, limit human access, high use area, high amenity

BOX 3: Assessing likely effectiveness of treatment

Feasibility to treat the IPA threat should be based on:

- Whether the cost of treating the threat is prohibitive
- Whether it is technically feasible to eradicate or control the threat
- Whether the infestation is confined to Council managed land. If not, the likelihood of the other land managers also treating the threat must be considered

Appendix 8: Glossary and acronyms

Asset	A natural resource that provides services (ecosystem services, production services or social services).
Asset-based approach	Involves prioritising control actions for a number of threats based on the relative value of identified assets that will be protected by the actions. Prioritisation should be based on maintaining the viability of important environmental assets and optimising outcomes for asset protection and management.
Biodiversity	The variety of life forms: the different plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form.
Biosecurity	A process designed to mitigate the risks and impacts to the economy, the environment, social amenity or human health associated with invasive species and diseases.
Containment	The application of measures in and around an infested area to prevent the spread of an invasive plant or animal species. This may include reduction of the density or area of the infestation where appropriate. A containment program may include eradication of satellite infestations.
Control	In relation to organisms, this includes: reducing the number of those organisms – preventing an increase in the number of those organisms – reducing the activity or appetite of some or all of those organisms – modifying the behaviour or characteristics of some or all of those organisms.
Eradication	When a species (including, for a plant, its propagules) has been removed or killed and no longer occurs at that site. In practice, this means that it can no longer be detected by recommended methods of survey for a defined period of time.
Established species	A species that, for the foreseeable future, will perpetuate within an area after entry.
Exotic	Introduced from another area i.e. may be introduced from overseas or interstate.
Habitat	The environment in which a plant or animal lives.
High risk species	A term used to describe invasive species that, if not managed, would have a large impact on the environment, economy, social amenity or human health. They may be declared under the CaLP Act or undeclared species.
Indigenous	Native or endemic to a specific area.
Invasive species	A species occurring as a result of human activities, beyond its accepted normal distribution and which threatens valued environmental, agricultural or other social resources by the damage it causes. Species may be pest animals or noxious weeds declared under the CaLP Act, or other species that threaten the region's assets including some wild (feral) populations of domestic animals.
Native species	A species that is believed to have occurred in a specified part of Australia prior to European settlement.
Native vegetation	Plants that are indigenous to Victoria, including trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses.
Noxious weed	A species declared as 'noxious' in schedules under the CaLP Act. The Act defines four categories: state prohibited, regionally prohibited, regionally controlled and restricted. A noxious weed may be an agricultural and/or environmental weed.
Pest animal	An animal species declared under the CaLP Act in one of four pest animal categories: prohibited pest animal, controlled pest animal, regulated pest animal and established pest animal.

Appendix 8: Glossary and acronyms

Pest animal	An animal species declared under the CaLP Act in one of four pest animal categories: prohibited pest animal, controlled pest animal, regulated pest animal and established pest animal.
Rare or threatened	Flora or fauna species or community that is rare in occurrence or whose continuing existence is threatened for a wide range of reasons. Species may be listed as nationally rare or threatened (AROT) or at a State level (VROT). Species lists can be found in legislation or on the DSE website.
Risk	Risk is the chance of something happening that will have an impact on objectives.
Species-led approach	Prioritising actions that will be most effective in preventing, eradicating, containing or reducing a target invasive species, rather than those that will best protect or enhance a specific asset (see also assetbased approach).
Weed	A weed is a plant that requires some form of action to reduce its effects on the economy, the environment, human health and amenity.
Widespread species	A species that has spread to many of the places that are suitable for its growth within a specified area. It may occur at high or low density. Containment may still be possible on a small scale, but exclusion from remaining uninvaded areas or reduction is likely to be more appropriate responses.

Acronyms

AAV	Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
CCMA	Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
CaLP	Catchment and Land Protection Act
CFA	Country Fire Authority
EVC	Ecological vegetation class
DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment
IPA	Invasive plants and animals
PV	Parks Victoria



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