



Native Vegetation and Pest Management Plan

2024-2028



Mildura Rural City Council

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land, which now comprises the Mildura Rural City municipality. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures and acknowledge the memories of their ancestors.



Executive Summary

Mildura Rural City Council (Council) is responsible for the management of native vegetation in various natural areas, roadsides and urban areas. An important part of supporting native vegetation is managing established and emerging pest plants and animals in both the urban and rural environments.

The Native Vegetation and Pest Management Plan 2024-2028 (the Plan) defines Council's framework for the ongoing effective management of native vegetation and pest (invasive) species on Council managed land.

Council's commitment to the management of native vegetation and pest species includes the implementation of the following key principles:

- The enhancement of native vegetation and connectivity.
- Protection of plant communities and threatened species.
- The adoption of best practice management techniques.
- Providing education and encouraging community initiative in the management and enhancement of native vegetation.
- The prevention of the introduction and establishment of new and emerging pest species.
- The identification and recording of pest species.
- The containment and/or eradication of pest species.
- Management of the environmental impacts inflicted by pest species.
- Promotion of responsible actions and minimising disturbance to soils and vegetation during Council's works and programs.
- Providing education and encouraging community and landholder initiative in pest species management.

This Plan will be delivered by Council staff with the support of key stakeholders including other land managers and the wider community.



Our region

Located in north west Victoria, the Mildura Rural City Council area covers almost ten per cent of the State.

The region's landscape includes unique Mallee vegetation, broad acre grain properties, extensive horticultural farms and vibrant towns.

Mildura Rural City shares borders with New South Wales and South Australia, which makes it a strategically important regional service centre for three states.

The beautiful Murray River winds its way through much of the municipality and is a focal point for visitors and those who call the region home.

Our Community Vision

Environment

We will sustain and enhance our natural environment and resources for current and future generations

Community

We will be a healthy, respectful and connected community

Place

We will be a place to live, belong and visit with infrastructure and development that enhances our lifestyle

Economy

We will have a thriving economy that harnesses our strengths and capitalises on opportunity

Leadership

We will have responsible, collaborative leadership that puts community wellbeing at the heart of decision-making



Introduction

Our Natural Resources

Our environment and natural resources are key components to the ongoing health and viability of our community and local industries. The dominant natural features within the municipality include the Murray River and associated floodplains, salt pans, Murray Sunset National Park, Hattah-Kulkyne National Park, a portion of Wyperfeld National Park, Annuello Flora and Fauna Reserve, Big Desert State Forest and Big Desert Wilderness Park.

A semi-arid climate with annual rainfall averages of 333 mm at Walpeup and 287 mm at Mildura, extensive limestone landforms, and the influence of the Murray River and river floodplains all typify the Mallee Region. The features and characteristics of the municipality have produced unique environments, which support a diverse range of ecosystems and associated plant and animal communities.

Previous land clearing of native vegetation in the municipality for agriculture and urban development has resulted in the natural environment becoming highly modified. Areas of remnant native vegetation are considered of high environmental value.

There are large tracts of State Forest, Flora and Fauna Reserve and National and Regional Park reserves scattered throughout the municipality, however remnant native vegetation on private land and roadsides are often the only remaining intact examples of some plant communities.



Purpose of the Plan

Council is committed to demonstrating a leadership role in the management of native vegetation and pest species, as well as the protection and rehabilitation of our assets. Local assets include areas of high value biodiversity, cultural heritage sites and areas providing amenity and/or ecosystem services.

The Plan aims to provide Council with a framework for the long-term successful management of native vegetation and pest species through the integration of management between Council, key stakeholders and the community. The adoption of the objectives and management principles within this Plan, along with support from other land managers and the community, will ensure the successful implementation of actions defined in this Plan.

Background

For the purposes of this Plan the definition of native vegetation is *native local plant species that grow naturally in the environment, which can comprise a single plant (tree, shrub, herb or grass) or a patch of multiple plants and areas planted with Australian native species*. Victoria's Planning Schemes define native vegetation as 'vegetation indigenous to the region including, although not limited to, trees, shrubs, and grasses.'

The management of native vegetation aims to conserve and enhance native vegetation communities and includes reducing threats and planting native species. On roadsides this management aims to increase connectivity between remnant native vegetation patches, supporting the movement of native animals and improving/maintaining the genetic viability of communities. In the urban environment, native vegetation management aims to reduce water use and increase biodiversity.

Pest (or invasive) species are a major threat to native vegetation. They are defined as virulent plants and animals that successfully out compete native species for resources including sunlight and nutrients. Once pest species have inhabited an environment, their survival is dependent on their ability to adapt to the area – these species can usually survive on limited resources and reproduce in large numbers.

For the purpose of this document, pest species refers to both non-native (introduced) and invasive Australian species. Most invasive species are non-native, however there are also Australian species that can have a significant impact in areas that provide an opportune niche. Like non-native invasive species, these species exist in large numbers and outcompete other native species leaving areas with minimal species diversity.

Historically Council has adopted and delivered various plans and strategies related to native vegetation management. The Significant Linkages Strategy and Sunraysia Remnant Linkages Strategy are key historical documents and have been used to inform subsequent plans, including this plan. Historical Council documents related to this plan include:

- Roadside Management Plan 2010-2014
- Vegetation Strategy 2010-2014
- Sustainable Urban Landscapes Plan 2010-2015
- Vegetation Management Plan 2015-2019
- Native Vegetation Plan 2020-2024
- Invasive Plants and Animals Plan 2020-2024.

State and Federal Government Legislation

Relevant state and federal legislation that is applicable in the management of native vegetation and pest species are listed below:

- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic)
- Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 (Vic)
- Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992 (Vic)
- Biological Control Act 1986 (Vic)
- Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (Vic)
- Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 (Vic)
- Environment Protection Act 2017 (Vic)
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act; Cth)
- Fences Act 1968 (Vic)
- Firearms Act 1996 (Vic)
- Fisheries Act 1995 (Vic)
- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act; Vic)
- Land Act 1958 (Vic)
- Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
- National Parks Act 1975 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Parks Victoria Act 2018 (Vic)
- Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic) – Mildura Planning Scheme
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (Vic)
- Road Management Act 2004 (Vic)
- Wildlife Act 1975 (Vic).

Existing Plans, Strategies, Policies and Guidelines

Existing plans, strategies, policies and guidelines that relate to this Plan are listed below. These documents can be accessed online or by contacting the relevant agency.

- Australian Pest Animal Strategy 2017-2027 (Department of Agriculture and Water Resources)
- Australian Weeds Strategy 2017-2027 (Department of Agriculture and Water Resources)
- Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water)
- Fauna Sensitive Road Design Guidelines 2012 (Vic Roads)
- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Threatened List (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action)
- Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation December 2017 (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action)
- Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework (Department of Primary Industries)
- Lake Hawthorn Management Plan (MRCC)

- Procedure to Rely on the Road Safety Exemption in Planning Schemes August 2018 (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action)
- Mallee Native Vegetation Plan 2008 (Mallee Catchment Management Authority)
- Mallee Natural Resource Management Plan for Climate Change (Mallee Catchment Management Authority)
- Mildura Planning Scheme (MRCC)
- Native Vegetation Policy – CP065 (MRCC)
- Roadside Management Strategy 2011 (Vic Roads)
- Roadside Weeds and Pests Program Control Plan 2023-2026 (MRCC).



Council's Native Vegetation

Council is responsible for the management of native vegetation across three categories – natural areas, roadside reserves and urban areas. Most of the Council managed land containing native vegetation is classified in Council's Planning Provisions to be managed under the Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ), Farming Zone (FZ; roadsides) and Environmental Significance and Vegetation Protection Overlay conditions, which legally protects this land for the best conservation outcomes.

Throughout the Mildura region there are multiple species of plants and animals which are categorised as rare and threatened. This encompasses species which are critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable, rare or poorly known. Where identified on roadsides at risk, threatened plant species have been protected by the identification of Significant Roadside Plants (Appendices 1 to 3).

In addition to individual species, the municipality contains the endangered buloke woodlands of the Riverina and Murray-Darling Depression bioregions and grey box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) grassy woodlands and derived native grasslands of south-eastern Australia ecological communities, which are protected under the EPBC Act.



Natural Areas

Murray Riverfront Reserves

The Murray River is unique in the world, being one of the few major rivers where the public can freely and openly access the bank (on the Victorian side) along its entire length. This is thanks to some visionary thinking over a century ago; in 1881 Crown land in Victoria along the Murray River was permanently reserved for public purposes by the Governor in Council (*Government Gazette* 1881) under the *Land Act 1869* (Vic). The most common width reserved was 'three chains' (approximately 60 m) from the ordinary winter level of the river.

Council is currently the Committee of Management (CoM) for the majority of the Murray Riverfront Reserve between Cowra Avenue, Mildura and Chaffey Landing, and Merbein. This area offers the community recreational access to the river with consideration for the environmental values. As well as the Murray Riverfront Reserve, Council is also the CoM for some Crown land parcels which contain various native vegetation communities including mallee, pine/belah and black box woodlands.

Throughout the Mallee Region, approximately 400 bushland and crown reserves of differing dimension and native vegetation type occur across the landscape, providing connectivity to the Murray River. These varying native vegetation communities exist on both public and private land and are managed by individual community members and state government agencies.

Lakes

Council has some management responsibilities for the area surrounding two major lakes in the municipality, Lake Ranfurly and Lake Cullulleraine. Council has freehold ownership of the area surrounding Lake Ranfurly and has some CoM area surrounding Lake Cullulleraine. Operational Management Plans have been developed for both lakes. These plans guide the day-to-day operational activities at these sites and provide recommendations for actions when funding is available.

Lake Ranfurly is a shallow hyper-saline lake with national environmental significance. Like the nearby Lake Hawthorn, it was once part of the Murray River floodplain but has been levied off from the River and used as a Salt Interception Scheme evaporation basin. The lake currently supports a wide variety of plant and animal species including the vulnerable Ecological Vegetation Communities (EVCs); lake bed herbland and semi-arid woodland and the depleted EVCs; lignum swampy woodland, riverine chenopod woodland, semi-arid chenopod woodland and low chenopod shrubland.

Several rare or threatened plant species have been recorded in the area with the lake being listed as a significant wetland under the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia, the Japan Australia Migratory Bird Agreement and the China Australia Migratory Bird Agreement. The critically endangered hooded scaly-foot *Pygopus schraderi* has been recorded at Lake Ranfurly.

Lake Cullulleraine is a popular visitor destination. Many recreational activities are undertaken on and around the lake with amenities provided for a range of uses for sporting groups and visitors. The land has areas of high, moderate and low biodiversity value and consists of black box woodland and chenopod shrubland in the Murray Scroll Belt Bioregion. Threatened plants and animals have been recorded in the area.

Council has constructed several walking trails surrounding Lake Cullulleraine and installed educational signage. The area has been subject to many threatening processes since European settlement, such as grazing by sheep and rabbits, significant clearing of trees, weed infestations and disturbance by vehicles, earthworks and human access.

Constructed Wetlands

Council manages three major constructed wetlands as natural areas - Etiwanda Wetlands, Mildura South Wetlands and Bob Corbould Wetlands. These wetlands are managed with the primary purpose of restoring a natural environment whilst maintaining environmental stormwater management outcomes. Most of the native vegetation at Etiwanda Wetlands and Bob Corbould Wetlands is remnant or naturally regenerated, complemented by native revegetation programs. The Mildura South Wetlands have predominantly been planted with native vegetation.

The wetlands provide important habitat for plants and animals, as well as facilitate the passive treatment of stormwater. They function as areas that support species diversity and abundance by providing native vegetation and habitat complexity, offering suitable breeding sites and food resources. The principle functions of the wetlands in relation to land management are:

- Littoral native vegetation and reed beds providing important habitat, breeding and nesting sites for wildlife
- Open water areas providing habitat for aquatic species and refuge/landing areas for waterbirds
- Wetland native vegetation providing food, cover and shelter for animals and enhancing stabilisation of banks
- Enhanced plant diversity and structure to support increased animal diversity
- Excess nutrients and chemicals in stormwater being filtered by wetland plants.



Bushland Reserves

Council manages some parcels of bushland reserve which contain significant remnant native vegetation. These parcels provide linkages to adjoining bushland areas and are primarily managed for the preservation of remnant native vegetation. Maintenance activities in these areas include pest plant and animal control and rubbish removal, most commonly from illegal dumping.

Roadsides

The Mallee Region of Victoria contains several unique and expansive native vegetation blocks. These include the Murray River Corridor, Hattah Kulkyne National Park, Murray Sunset National Park, Big Desert Wilderness Park, Annuello Flora and Fauna Reserve, Big Desert State Forrest and Wyperfeld National Park.

The national parks, representing approximately 38 per cent of the landscape in the municipality, and other smaller native vegetation blocks are predominantly bordered by extensively cleared land utilised for dryland agriculture (which occupies approximately 61 per cent of the landscape; almost three million hectares). Agricultural development has resulted in the fragmentation and isolation of native vegetation patches, often with only narrow linear roadside native vegetation linkages between them. The extensively cleared dryland agricultural areas of the Mallee Region contain less than five per cent of the original landscape native vegetation, most of which exists as roadside corridors. These roadside corridors provide connectivity across the landscape and can be the last refuge for many threatened species.



Council manages approximately 5,100 kilometres of roadside reserves with most containing native vegetation of varying dimension and condition. Controlling threats such as pest plants and animals on roadsides is beneficial to native plants and animals and the adjacent landholder. Council has identified significant native vegetation corridors (within the dryland areas); and zones (within the irrigated areas) based on:

- The presence of threatened native vegetation communities.
- The health of the native vegetation.
- The location of key native vegetation communities within the landscape.

In addition to native vegetation, non-indigenous plantings, of species not at risk of becoming invasive, help to provide connectivity across the landscape.

The significant native vegetation areas identified in Appendices 1 to 3 are a priority for enhancement through strategic native revegetation and targeted pest plant and animal control. Strategic Biodiversity Values provided by Nature Print can be referenced to provide information on highest value areas, threatened plants and animals and vegetation type/condition within the priority areas.

Roadsides play an important role in supporting rare and threatened plant populations. Council maintains a Significant Roadside Register including known rare or threatened species sites. These sites are regularly monitored and maintained.

Irrigated Farming Areas

The pressure of urbanisation, horticultural development and public activity along adjacent riparian zones has resulted in the decline and fragmentation of native vegetation communities. Remnant native vegetation exists along roadside corridors, the Murray River floodplain, on railway and channel land, on private land and within bushland reserves.

Council offers native vegetation tube stock to landowners, on a case by case basis, who have native vegetation remnants close to their road reserve. Any native tube stock supplied is on the condition that the landowners agree to maintain the plantings. The species used for revegetation are matched to the native vegetation community already present in nearby remnants. Prior to revegetation, threats such as pest plants and animals are identified and controlled.

Roadsides in the zones identified in Appendix 1 are targeted for the management of threats such as pest plants or animals or enhancement by revegetation. These zones, in the irrigated farming area, are identified as providing the greatest opportunity for roadside vegetation corridors from the riverine environment to inland blocks of vegetation.

Dryland Farming Areas

There are a variety of land systems and associated native vegetation communities located within the municipalities dryland farming areas. The municipality contains two threatened ecological plant communities, buloke woodlands of the Riverina and Murray-Darling Depression bioregions and grey box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) grassy woodlands and derived native grasslands of South-eastern as these communities are rare, and their retention and protection is legislated and will increase the richness of native species.

Roadsides considered to have the greatest potential to provide valuable native vegetation corridors are targeted for the management of threats such as pest plants or animals or enhancement by revegetation (see Appendix 2 and 3 – Significant Northern/Southern Roadside Native Vegetation Corridors).

Urban Areas

Council maintains parks, gardens and public open space throughout the municipality in Mildura, Red Cliffs, Merbein, Irymple, Nangiloc, Cardross, Nichols Point, Lake Cullulleraine, Werrimull, Ouyen, Walpeup, Underbool, Cowangie and Murrayville.

There are two broad landscape treatments that focus on native vegetation which are outlined in the table below.

Category	Landscape Treatment	Example Locations
Gardens	Native gardens	The Alfred Deakin Centre, Rio Vista Park, Walpeup Dryland Garden
Neighbourhood Parks	Grassed passive areas and garden areas	Green Pines (Mildura), Blackburn Park (Ouyen)

Table 1: Urban landscape treatments that focus on native vegetation.



Native vegetation facilitates development of sustainable urban landscapes. A sustainable landscape is one that meets the needs of the present and future generations. Some important considerations in the development of a sustainable landscape include:

- Appropriateness to the local climate and environment.
- Biodiversity and habitat for native birds and animals.
- Water efficiency and drought tolerance.
- Low maintenance levels.
- Meeting the expectations of the community.
- Aesthetically appealing.
- Requiring minimal or no chemicals or fertilisers.

Gardens

The plant composition of gardens varies depending on the outcome required for the specific areas. Council utilises a wide range of plants including exotic, Australian native and indigenous plants. The major criteria for plant selection is suitability to our local climate.

There is a distinct advantage in planting native or indigenous plants as these plants provide habitat for native animals in the urban environment. When designed and structured correctly, these landscapes provide aesthetics and amenity while enhancing the biodiversity of our urban environment.

Neighbourhood Parks

Neighbourhood parks are located throughout residential areas to provide passive recreational open space for residents. Council recognises the importance of providing grassed areas to facilitate recreational activities such as ball sports and other active pursuits.

Neighbourhood parks should be designed to be water efficient, incorporating a minimum of 60 per cent of mulched area or low water use garden area landscaped with native, drought tolerant species and a maximum 40 per cent turf (60/40 concept). This will minimise unnecessary grassed areas and water consumption.

Pest Species

Economic and Environmental Impacts

Pest Plants

Pest plants reduce the quantity and quality of agricultural, horticultural and forestry products. It has been estimated that the cost of pest plants to the Australian economy is approximately \$4 billion per annum. This includes the direct costs of control actions, a loss of yield and contamination of products. It is thought that the costs of pests on conservation, tourism and amenity would be of the same magnitude. Spined weeds have a significant impact on human comfort and health and safety, commonly infesting areas such as sporting grounds, playgrounds, nature strips and walking trails.

The impact of pest plants on the environment is beyond measure and they can cause an imbalance in ecosystems by:

- Contributing to the depletion of native animal habitats and food sources.
- Providing shelter for pest animals effectively encouraging an increase in population.
- Competing with indigenous plants for space, light, water and nutrients.

- Affecting water quality by altering natural water filtering processes.
- Spoiling the aesthetic appearance of the natural environment.
- Contributing to a decline or loss of rare or threatened plant species.
- Impacting the balance of plant species in a vegetation community.
- Changing the chemical makeup of soils inhibiting the germination of native seed.

Pest Animals

The Australian Pest Animal Strategy 2017-2027 has estimated the economic impacts between \$720 million and \$1 billion annually, through production losses and management costs. Pest animals can cause significant damage to crops and affect livestock industries.

Pest animals have a significant impact on biodiversity and the environment. These impacts include:

- Direct predation on native animals and domestic livestock.
- Destruction of habitats and natural resources including reduction in water quality, increased soil erosion and land degradation.
- Destruction of indigenous plants that provide food and shelter to native species.
- Competition for harbour, food and water resources with native animals.
- Spread of pest plants across the landscape.
- Spread of exotic diseases that can be transferred to native animals.
- Increased grazing pressure on crops and pastures.



Classifications of Pest Species

Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994

The Victorian Governments' *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act) identifies pest plants and animals that are particularly virulent and have adapted to a range of environments including agricultural and natural landscapes. In support of the control and/or eradication of these pest plants and animals the CaLP Act specifies responsibility and the level of control required.

Pest plants listed in the CaLP Act and known as noxious weeds. There are four categories of noxious weeds as detailed in the table below.

Classification	Responsibility	Distribution	Level of Control and Action Statements
State prohibited	Agriculture Victoria may direct land manager.	Do not occur in Victoria but pose a significant threat if they invade, or are present in relatively small numbers and pose a serious threat that can reasonably be expected to be eradicated.	Prevention They are to be eradicated from Victoria if possible or excluded from the State.
Regionally prohibited	Land owner or manager.	Not widely distributed in a region but are capable of spreading further.	Eradication They are to be eradicated from a region and they must be managed with that goal.
Regionally controlled	Land owner or manager.	Usually widespread in a region.	Containment Take reasonable steps to prevent growth and spread.
Restricted	Land owner or manager.	Pose an unacceptable risk of spreading in Victoria and are a serious threat to another State or Territory of Australia.	Must not be sold or traded.

Table 2. Categories of noxious weeds under the CaLP Act.

The CaLP Act identifies pest animals under the categories of prohibited, controlled, regulated or established. Of particular relevance for Council is the established pest animals category, which includes introduced species that are widespread and established with no possibility of eradication from the whole of Victoria.

Advisory List of Environmental Weeds

The Advisory List of Environmental Weeds in Victoria provides general advice to conservation managers on the relative risks posed by different environmental weeds and the relative urgency of managing them across Victorian natural ecosystems.

Weeds of National Significance

Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) is a national approach to managing pest plant species. With the support of relevant Ministers, a strategic plan has been developed for the awareness of and efficient management of 32 recognised pest plant species. These species have been highlighted under the plan due to the impact they have across Australia, causing major economic, environmental and social (including cultural) damage in a number of states and territories, with the potential to further spread.

Council's Pest Species

Pest Plants

There are several pest plants that have established throughout the municipality. Plants such as African boxthorn, bridal creeper and prickly pear are highly invasive and competitive with indigenous vegetation. Due to the ability of these plants to outcompete indigenous species for sunlight and nutrients, they have become prevalent across the Mallee region.

Cumbungi (*Typha domingensis* and *Typha orientalis*) are species native to Victoria which have historically been invasive in certain situations within the municipality. Due to the native status of cumbungi, control must be assessed on a case by case basis and any relevant permits obtained.

Introduced pest plant species that have been identified on Council land are listed in the table below.



Common Name	Scientific Name	CaLP Act	Environmental Weeds^	WoNS #
African boxthorn	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	Regionally controlled	Listed	Listed
Asparagus fern	<i>Asparagus scandens</i>	Restricted	Listed	Listed
Athel pine	<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>	Restricted		Listed
Bathurst burr	<i>Xanthium spinosum</i>	Restricted	Listed	
Blackberry nightshade	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>		Listed	
Boneseed	<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i> subsp. <i>monilifera</i>	Regionally controlled	Listed	Listed
Bridal creeper	<i>Asparagus asparagoides</i>	Restricted	Listed	Listed
Buffel grass	<i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i>		Listed	
Caltrop	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>	Restricted	Listed	
Camelthorn	<i>Alhagi maurorum</i>	State prohibited		
Century plant	<i>Agave americana</i>		Listed	
Common Heliotrope	<i>Heliotropium europaeum</i>		Listed	
Common ice plant	<i>Mesembryanthemum crystallinum</i>		Listed	
Dense waterweed	<i>Egeria densa</i>		Listed	
Devil's rope cactus	<i>Cylindropuntia imbricata</i>	Restricted	Listed	Listed
False caper/ Terracina spurge	<i>Euphorbia terracina</i>		Listed	
Fierce thornapple	<i>Datura innoxia</i>	Restricted	Listed	
Flaxleaf fleabane	<i>Conzys bonariensis</i>			
Gazania	<i>Gazania</i> sp.		Listed	
Geranium	<i>Geranium</i> sp.		Listed	
Hardhead thistle	<i>Rhaponticum repens</i>	Regionally controlled	Listed	
Horehound	<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	Restricted	Listed	
Hudson's pear	<i>Cylindropuntia rosea</i> and <i>Cylindropuntia tunicata</i>	Restricted		Listed
Khaki weed	<i>Alternanthera pungens</i>	Restricted	Listed	
Kikuyu	<i>Cenchrus clandestinus</i>		Listed	
Lippia	<i>Phyla canescens</i>			
Mustard/Turnip weed	<i>Brassica</i> sp.		Listed	
Noogoora burr	<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>	Regionally controlled	Listed	
Olive	<i>Olea</i> sp.			
Onion weed	<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>		Listed	
Paddy melon	<i>Cucumis myriocarpus</i> subsp. <i>leptodermis</i>		Listed	
Palms			Listed	
Peppercorn tree	<i>Schinus molle</i>		Listed	
Prickly pear	<i>Opuntia stricta</i> and <i>Opuntia monacantha</i>	Regionally controlled	Listed	Listed
Silverleaf nightshade	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i>	Regionally controlled	Listed	
Spear thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Restricted	Listed	
Tree of heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Restricted	Listed	
Tree tobacco	<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>		Listed	
Velvetweed/ Clockweed	<i>Oenothera curtiflora</i>			

Common Name	Scientific Name	CaLP Act	Environmental Weeds^	WoNS #
Willows	<i>Salix</i> spp. except <i>S.babylonica</i> , <i>S.x calodendron</i> and <i>S.x reichardtii</i>	Restricted	Listed	Listed
Wiry noon-flower/ Match-head	<i>Psilocaulon granulicaule</i>		Listed	

Table 3. List of introduced pest plant species that have been identified and controlled by Council.

^ Advisory List of Environmental Weeds in Victoria

WoNS – Weeds of National Significance

Pest Animals

There are several pest animals that have established throughout the municipality. Pests such as the European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and the Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) are highly invasive and competitive with indigenous animal species. Due to being highly adaptive in an array of environments, these species have become prevalent across the Mallee region.

Introduced pest animal species that have been identified on Council land are listed in the table below.

Common Name	Scientific Name	CaLP Act
European rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	Established
Feral cat	<i>Felis catus</i>	Established (Crown land)
Feral pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	
Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Established
Western honey bee	<i>Apis mellifera</i>	

Table 4. List of introduced pest animal species that have been identified and controlled by Council.

Stakeholder, Objectives and Principles

This Plan aims to promote Council's partnerships with government departments, landowners, land managers and the local community to achieve the objective of effective and efficient management of native vegetation and pest species control across the municipality.

Implementation of on-ground works for the management of native vegetation, including pest species control works, will be carried out in conjunction with adjoining land managers, where possible, to create opportunities to extend and connect native vegetation communities.

A native vegetation Bushland Watch Program has been developed to encourage the community to report threats to native vegetation in Council managed areas. Threats may include vandalism, recreational pressures (litter, off track driving), pest plants and animals, removal of fire wood and roadside clearing.

The performance of this Plan will be determined through quarterly and annual reporting.



Stakeholders

Multiple stakeholders are involved in the role of native vegetation management across the municipality. A list of major stakeholders is below. This list is not exhaustive, and many other groups are involved in conserving native vegetation and managing pest species.

Stakeholder	Role	Land Managed
Aboriginal Victoria	Administer the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.	Traditional Owners.
Traditional Owners	Engage with Council in accordance with existing agreements and requirements.	Traditional Owners.
First People of the Millewa Mallee	Manage properties for conservation outcomes including pest control.	Land manager of Ned's Corner Station.
Australian Rail Track Operation, V/Line, Pacific National	Manage native vegetation on leased land.	Land leased from Vic Track.
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)	Administer acts for the protection and enhancement of native vegetation including rare communities and species.	Public Land including State Forests, Crown Land.
Parks Victoria	Manage native vegetation on responsible land in conjunction with other land owners/managers. Control pest plants and animals on managed land in conjunction with other landholders/managers.	Public land including National Parks, Flora and Fauna Reserves, State Parks and most river frontage areas.
Agriculture Victoria	Protects, manages and commercialises new technologies generated by the agriculture research and development divisions of the department. Administers the CaLP Act.	No land under direct management.
Local Government Victoria, Department of Government Services	Management of the Roadside Weeds and Pests Program.	No land under direct management.
Environment Protection Authority	Preventing waste and pollution impacts.	No land under direct management.
Landcare/community groups	Management of native vegetation across public and private landscapes for agricultural and environmental benefit. Management of	No land under direct management.

Stakeholder	Role	Land Managed
	pest plants and animals across the landscape for agricultural and environmental benefit.	
Landholders/land managers	Manage native vegetation on own land and/or in conjunction with other local landholders/managers. Control pest plants and animals on managed land in conjunction with other landholders/managers.	Private land.
Local nursery owners/managers	Supply of seedlings and materials to land owners and managers. Ensure compliance with CaLP Act.	No land under direct management. Supply to public/private land.
Local seed collectors/managers	Supply of indigenous native seed to land owners and managers.	No land under direct management. Collect on public/private land.
Lower Murray Water, Goulburn Murray Water, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water	Manage native vegetation on responsible land in conjunction with other land owners/managers. Control pest plants and animals on managed land in conjunction with other landholders/managers.	Land under ownership/management.
Mallee Catchment Management Authority (Mallee CMA)	Administrate State Government funding. Consult and support the community.	No land under direct management.
Mildura Rural City Council	Manage native vegetation on responsible land in conjunction with other land owners/managers.	Council parks and reserves, urban riverfront areas, Council owned/managed land, municipal roads and roadsides.
Sunraysia Institute of TAFE	Conservation and Land Management students gain skill in managing bushland, natural parks, water catchments and public spaces.	No land under direct management.
Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF)	Provide support and information to farmers for agricultural and environmental benefit.	No land under direct management.
Department of Transport and Planning	Manage native vegetation on responsible land in conjunction with other land owners/managers. Control pest plants and animals on managed land in conjunction with other landholders/managers.	Victorian freeways and arterial roads including the roadsides.

Stakeholder	Role	Land Managed
Vic Track	Manage native vegetation on responsible land in conjunction with other land owners/managers. Control pest plants and animals on managed land in conjunction with other landholders/managers.	Vic Track owned land.
Victorian Rabbit Action Network (VRAN)	Promotes community-led action for more sustainable and effective rabbit management.	No land under direct management.
Recreational groups and tourists/visitors	Utilise Council's vegetated areas and are responsible for creating minimal disturbance to native vegetation.	No land under direct management.

Table 5: Stakeholders



Objectives and Management Principles

Successful integrated native vegetation and pest plant and animal management involves a number of objectives and ongoing management principles. Objectives and management principles which support the Action Plan are detailed in the table below.

Objectives	Principles
Foster partnerships and build knowledge among stakeholders and the community.	Continue to engage and build relationships with community groups that assist in the protection and enhancement of native vegetation e.g. Landcare, Schools.
	Continue to engage and build relationships with other public land managers (including DEECA and Parks Victoria) and other natural resource management agencies including the Mallee CMA.
	Support and promote the adoption of Council's Open Spaces and Natural Areas by community groups.
	In conjunction with Agriculture Victoria and the Mallee CMA, encourage increased pest plant and animal control in the community (including landholders) through integrated procedures involving education, co-ordination and leadership.
	In conjunction with Landcare and the community, collaborate to produce and act on the most current Roadside Weeds and Pests Program Plan.
	Support biodiversity and conservation programs on Council managed land that demonstrate effective pest plant management and allow the community to become involved in pest plant control activities.
Promote Council as a custodian and protector of plant communities, threatened species and cultural assets.	Continue to engage with Aboriginal Victoria and Traditional Owners for the effective management of cultural assets on Council land.
	Incorporate information on the status and cultural importance of native vegetation for native revegetation projects and to create public awareness.
	Identify and effectively manage rare and threatened species and their communities as listed in relevant federal and state legislation and acts.
	Protect vegetation which may not be locally indigenous which is functioning as a connection in the absence of indigenous species. Provided this vegetation is not at risk of becoming pest.

Objectives	Principles
Ensure best practice techniques are adopted for the management and protection of native vegetation.	Ensure all native vegetation maintenance works undertaken are best practice measures. All pruning, hedging etc. are delivered to industry standard and are best practice measures causing minimal disturbance to species and native vegetation communities.
	Adopt maintenance practises to enhance the biodiversity of sites including pruning for habitat techniques and other sustainable design principles.
	Undertake native revegetation in natural areas and along roadside reserves in accordance with best practice guidelines and consideration of existing native vegetation types and structures (Ecological Vegetation Communities).
	Ensure native vegetation protection is included in the conditions for hoarding permits and road opening permits issued by Council.
	Ensure targeted compliance against regulatory requirements for illegal native vegetation clearing on Council managed and private land.
	Ensure licensee or leasee of Council managed land is aware of required management when licence/lease is located within a Public Conservation and Resource Zone and/or Environmental or Vegetation Overlay.
Ensure best practice is adopted for the development and management of native vegetation within urban, industrial and retail precincts and landscapes.	Designs for new gardens incorporate sustainable design principles.
	Incorporate drought tolerant native plant species into all new garden and streetscape designs to encourage and support native animals where possible.
	Extent of turf for all new designs to meet minimum requirements using 60/40 model as a guide.
Prevent the introduction and establishment of new and emerging pest plants and animals.	In conjunction with Agriculture Victoria and the Mallee CMA, assist in the early detection and rapid eradication of new and emerging pest plant and animal species where possible.
	Ensure Council staff minimise vegetation disturbance and impact from roadside maintenance and construction works, including safe vehicle hygiene practices.
	Ensure weed management is undertaken in line with DEECA decision making framework for early invader weeds.

Objectives	Principles
Protect high value regional assets from the impact of pest plants and animals.	Identify the asset and consider the importance of and risk to the asset, to prioritise treatment areas and options with reference to the Strategic Management Prospects modelling tool
	Work with neighbouring landowners to establish the best options for managing the risk.
	Consider the Significant Roadside Vegetation Corridors and the Significant Remnant Vegetation Zones.
Contain and reduce the impact of Regionally Controlled and Regionally Prohibited Weeds.	Encourage community weed control programs that contain and reduce the impact of Regionally controlled and regionally prohibited weeds.
	Deliver weed control advice using an integrated land management approach.
	Work with all land managers so control occurs at the same time across the landscape.
	Implement 'Road Construction and Maintenance Code of Practice' procedures.
Provide a quality support service for all landholders.	In conjunction with Agriculture Victoria and the Mallee CMA, communicate sound technical advice and support to assist landholders in implementing high quality integrated weed management programs.
	Ensure Council land weed control actions support private land weed control actions.

Table 6: Objectives and management principles.



Implementation of Pest Species Control

Council is committed to effectively managing pest plants and animals on land under Council management. Following best practice for control including planning, acting, monitoring and improving ensures the process for control of pest plants and animals used by Council is comprehensive and consistent.

Plan	Identification and recording of pest plant, size of infestation and location.
	Prioritising pest plants for treatment as listed under the CaLP Act.
	Consideration of variables such as extreme weather conditions, optimum growing time, resistance to herbicides, seed capability for germination, seasonal plant species and non-flowering or seeding times.
	Plan joint control programs with adjacent landholders and other public land managers where possible.
	Consultation with Agriculture Victoria for the most ideal control method and best practice procedures involved where required.
	Avoid disturbance to native vegetation and cultural heritage sites.
Act	Initiate procedures to contain or eradicate pest plant infestations.
	Treatment of small outbreaks and isolated patches on the perimeter first, then isolate the major infestation and work towards the centre.
	Disposal of pest plant in a cleared area for burning or to a disposal site, such as a designated landfill. Pest plants in seed or plants that spread vegetatively (by fragments) should not be removed from an infested site.
Monitor and Improve	Monitor treated areas for reinfestation and identify any new infestations or invasions in the area.
	Apply follow up procedures if applicable, e.g. seasonal spraying.
	Verbal communication with community members on effectiveness of treatment programs.
	Data collection and analysis.
	Use previous results to inform effective management for future.
	Regular photographs taken from photo points.
	Ongoing pest plant mapping surveys.
	Consider undertaking revegetation programs to prevent pest plants re-invading.

Table 7: Pest plant control process.

Plan	Identification and recording of pest animal, population size and location.
	Consider integrated methods of control.
	Plan to maximise the control of the pest animal and minimise threats to off target animals.
	Plan joint control programs with adjacent landholders and other public land managers where possible.
	Consider the most effective method of control taking into consideration any legislative requirements.
	Ensure the location of control is considered when selecting option for control, e.g. in urban areas safety of others needs to be considered.
	Assess all pest animal control works in the context of any relevant local pest animal action plans (either community or agency supported).
	Identify and avoid cultural heritage values when planning mechanical rabbit control works (burrow ripping) which are protected under the Aboriginal Heritage Act.
Act	Initiate procedures to control pest animal.
	Ensure to use various integrated control measures considering seasonal movements.
Monitor and Improve	Monitor progress and success of control program and vary if required.
	Monitor for numbers of targeted pest animal and carry out follow up works.
	Verbal communication with community members on effectiveness of treatment programs.
	Data collection and analysis.
	Use previous results to inform effective management for future.
	Regular photographs taken from photo points.
	After monitoring of infestations is complete, a review should be completed covering all key actions and objectives undertaken. The review should evaluate successes and any failures to ensure strategic actions continue to be effective.

Table 8: Pest animal control process

Action Plan

The Native Vegetation and Pest Management Plan aims to implement education, management and monitoring and reporting actions for an integrated approach to effective native vegetation and pest species management. These actions guide the focus for the successful attainment of each goal and are detailed in the table below.

Theme	Goal	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Education and engagement	Support public awareness programs on drought tolerant and native plants.	Deliver the Low Water Use Nature Strip Program to 20 sites.	PR	Annually
	Encourage stewardship over native vegetation near private property.	Engage stakeholders and the broader community in reporting threats that may degrade native vegetation, including pest species hotspots/outbreaks.	CP	Annually
		Assist internal staff and the community with biodiversity enquires and keep a record of this.	CP	Ongoing
	Increase community awareness about native vegetation clearing regulations.	Review the native vegetation clearing communication material and run campaigns to promote information.	CP	Annually
	Increase staff awareness on the effective management of native vegetation on roadsides, drainage infrastructure and shared paths.	Facilitate training for Works and Infrastructure, Parks, Engineering and Statutory Planning on native vegetation management including weed hygiene, identification and control options.	CP	Biannually
		Deliver training for Works and Infrastructure on the Road Safety Exemption, drainage infrastructure and shared paths.	WI/CP	Annually
		Develop and review an online training module for the Road Safety Exemption, drainage infrastructure and shared paths.	CP	Annually
	Engage with the community, Landcare groups and other agencies regarding Council's management of pest species in rural and urban areas.	Facilitate the Roadside Invasive Plant and Animal Working Group to develop a landscape approach to pest management.	CP	Ongoing
		Respond to individual community queries about pest species.	CP	Ongoing

Theme	Goal	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
	Increase staff awareness of best practice for pest plant control.	Provide information and training to Parks and Gardens staff to promote best practice for weed control.	PR	Ongoing
Management	Enhance native vegetation communities and their connectivity.	Identify and implement revegetation programs using best practice revegetation.	CP	Annually
		Develop operational guidelines for rural roadsides.	CP	Year 1
		Develop operational guidelines for natural areas.	CP	Year 2
	Protect native vegetation.	Produce a road works/maintenance Quick Guide for the Road Safety Exemption.	CP	Year 1
		Investigate protection of significant natural areas through Planning Scheme Protection.	CP	Ongoing
	Ensure a consistent approach is taken when developing new urban landscapes.	Create guidelines and policy for the development of new landscapes to increase the use and extent of native vegetation.	PR	Year 2
	Provide an effective service for native vegetation clearance.	Review the planning and assessment processes relating to permitted native vegetation clearing on private and public land.	SP	Year 1
		Review processes for illegal native vegetation clearing on private and public land.	SP	Year 2
	Control pest plants on Council managed natural areas.	Develop and implement pest plant control programs in wetlands, natural areas and rural roadsides.	PR	Annually
	Control pest animals on Council managed natural areas.	Develop and implement pest animal control programs in natural areas and rural roadsides.	CP	Annually
	Support the control of pest plants and animals on municipal roadsides.	Prioritise and control pest plants and animals reported by staff or the community.	CP	Annually

Theme	Goal	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Monitoring, review and reporting	Identify opportunities for improving native vegetation and rehabilitation programs.	Undertake trials of new native plant species/varieties suitable for sustainable urban landscapes.	PR	Annually
		Update and review Council's plant list outlining plant species suited to various landscapes and vegetation communities.	CP/PR	Annually
		Develop and implement project site monitoring for revegetation and regeneration sites.	CP	Annually
	Demonstrate works undertaken by Council to revegetate and rehabilitate native vegetation communities.	Record information on native vegetation planting projects. Publish results in the Environmental Sustainability Report.	CP	Annually
		Monitor current Significant Roadside sites and undertake threat mitigation where required.	CP	Annually
	Ensure Committee of Management Land is protected by all Licence/Leaseholders.	Support three Licence/Leaseholders in Public Conservation Resource Zones to protect native vegetation including pest control.	CP	Annually
	Demonstrate works undertaken by Council to control pest plants and animals.	Develop and maintain a database of weed locations including any control works undertaken. Use this as a resource to inform requirements for vehicle hygiene and roadside works.	CP	Ongoing
		Record pest plant and animal control works in wetlands, natural areas and on roadsides and publish in the Environmental Sustainability Report.	CP	Annually
	Monitor climate change impacts	Develop a database of weather conditions and report on changes over time in the Environmental Sustainability Report.	CP	Annually
		Document the impacts of climate change by carrying out monitoring programs at targeted sites.	CP	Annually

Table 9: Native Vegetation and Pest Management Plan Actions

CP - Community Partnerships

PR - Parks and Recreation

SP - Statutory Planning

WI - Works and Infrastructure

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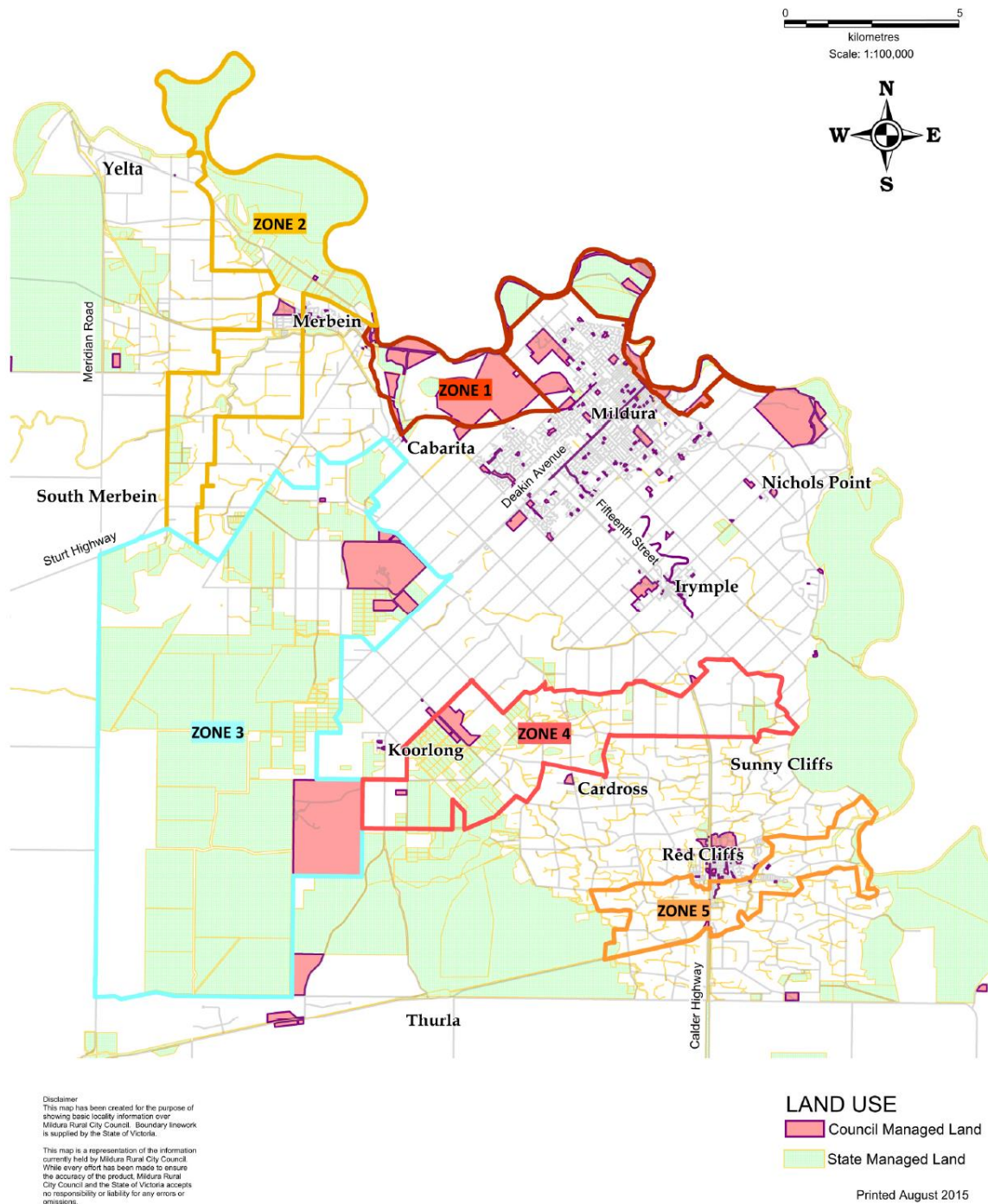
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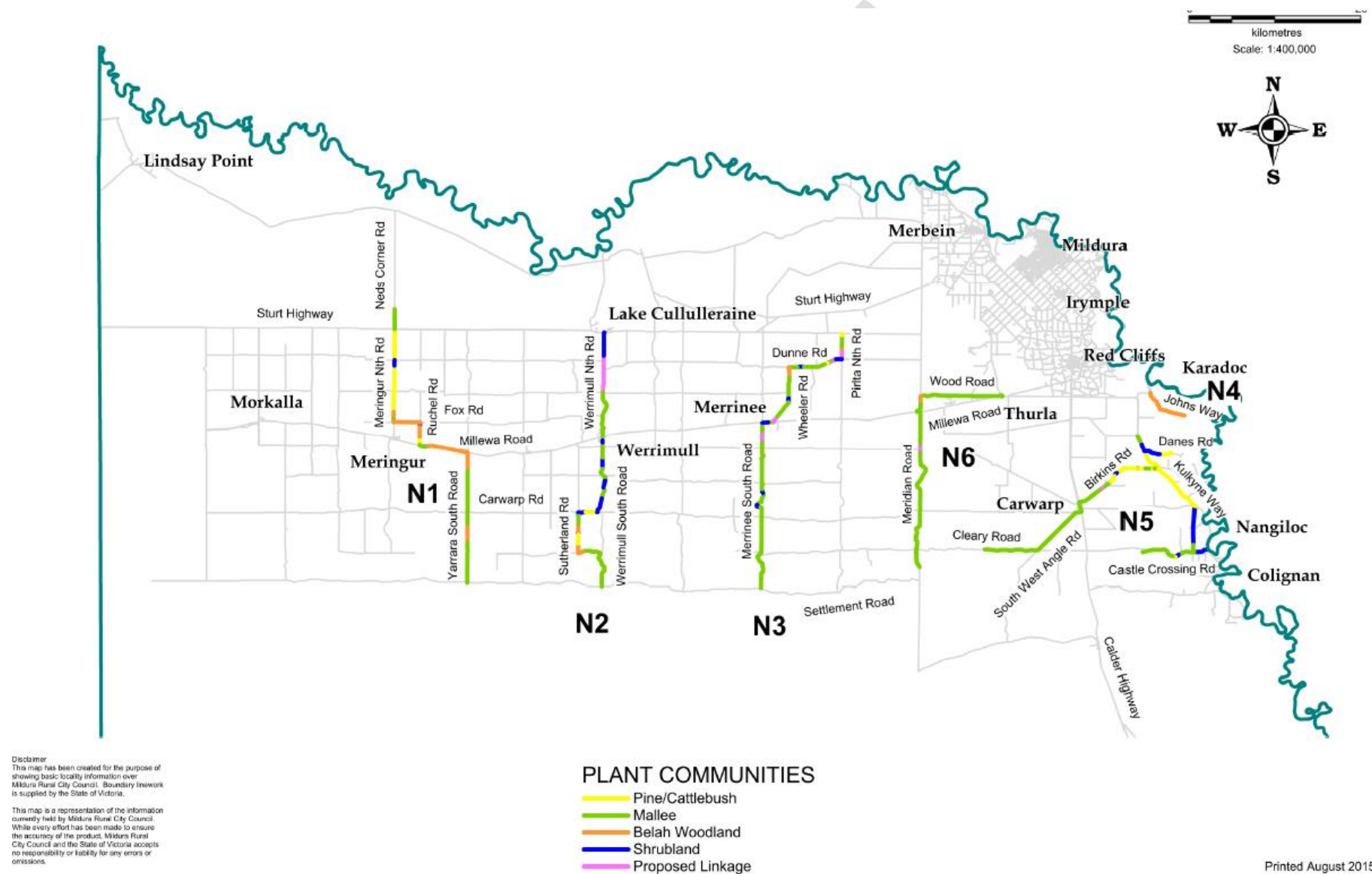
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Appendix 1: Significant Remnant Vegetation Zones



Appendix 2: Significant Northern Roadside Vegetation Corridors



Appendix 3: Significant Southern Roadside Vegetation Corridors

