

YARRA VALLEY PUBLIC OPEN SPACE RESERVATION

1. LOCATION

The Yarra Valley Public Open Space Reserve has an area of 4 square miles and comprises the flood plain and adjacent slopes of the valley of the Yarra River extending from Banksia Street, Bulleen to the Existing Public Open Space Reserve, Pound Bend, Warrandyte.

The Reserve is within the municipalities of Heidelberg, Doncaster and Templestowe, and Eltham.

2. METROPOLITAN SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Yarra Valley as a unique physical feature is acknowledged by the State Government through the promulgation of a Statement of Planning Policy (No. 4) which is concerned primarily with preserving the water quality in the Yarra River and Conservation of existing characteristics, landscape and habitat in its immediate environs.

The Statement recognises that the Valley from the City eastwards is a landscape feature which is capable of providing a tourist attraction of State significance, and states that the River and its immediate environs -

"shall be planned primarily as an open space system for nature conservation and recreation with provision where appropriate for primary production and forestry".

The Proposed Public Open Space Reserve has considerable landscape significance and potential for recreational use and will form one of Melbourne's major metropolitan parks.

3. BOUNDARY OF RESERVE

The Reserve covers the flood plain and adjacent slopes of the valley of the Yarra River and its boundary is defined by existing ridgelines break of slope, and road alignments. The Reserve for the most part will be bounded by residential development of varying intensities. This development will be mainly located on land sloping away from the Valley and generally not be seen from the River. The major portion of this adjoining residential zone will be developed at a low density.

The Board states in its report 'Planning Policies for the Melbourne Metropolitan Region' that further detailed study may indicate changes to boundaries and that some portions may be used for private recreation or other suitable uses of an open character which would ensure the conservation of significant characteristics. In such cases it may not be necessary to acquire the land for public use.

The prime purpose in reserving the subject land at this stage is to indicate broad intentions and ensure that the existing potential of the area is not reduced.

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

(1) TERRAIN

(a) Lithology

The valley ^{floor} contains Quaternary Alluvium deposits and the surrounding terrain comprises Devonian and Silurian siltstones, claystones and sandstones.

(b) Topography

Southern and North-Western parts of the subject area comprise undulating terrain with smooth slopes and isolated hills, progressing to strongly undulating hilly terrain to the north and north-east. The Valley floor contains stream and river channels, floodplains and terraces.

(ii) Vegetation

There is a substantial tree coverage over the subject area with dense stands of high quality. Gums and Box along the River and streams. Most cleared areas developed for cultivation contain mature trees on their boundaries.

(iii) Existing Conditions

Scattered throughout the area are 107 houses (60 North Bank & 47 South Bank) sited on allotments of varying sizes in accordance with domestic, orchard, market garden or pastoral pursuits.

Prominent landholders are the Rosanna Private Golf Club, Christ the King College Blessed Sacrament, and the S.E.C. with its large terminal station and main North-South and East-West easements.

A simple minor road system serves the area and unobtrusively follows the line of natural topographical features.

Access to the northern bank is provided by a variety of good loose surface all weather roads in conjunction with several deteriorating dry weather roads. ~~Surface roads~~
Hard surface roads provide access to the south bank.

5. CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE

The Conservation Council of Victoria gave the subject area the following rankings of importance.

(i) Botanical Quality. Rank 1 & 3

Containing Red Gum, Yellow Gum, Red Box, Red Stringy Bark, Long leaf Box, Yellow Box.

(ii) Botanical Rarity. Rank 2

Box and Stringy Bark forests at Warrandyte Red Gums and associated flora at Doncaster.

(iii) Mammal Survey. Rank 2 & 3

Rank 2. Yarra River between Heidelberg and Warrandyte. Remaining mid-dense forest with dense shrub layer;

9 species present - Grey Kangaroo, Black Wallaby, Echinda Platypus, Gliders, Native Rats and Bats.

Rank 3. Warrandyte area including timber reserves.

Mid-dense forest, much regrowth following fires, variable habitat, no survey, expect few species similar to Yarra River downstream.

- (iv) Bird Habitat. Rank 1 & 3
- Rank 1. Flyway, billabongs, swamps, impressive bird lists of all types.
- Rank 3. Flyway river frontage, billabongs, breeding area for all species of bush and water birds.
- (v) Landscape and scenic places. Rank 1 & 3
- (a) Landscape
- Rank 1. Yarra Valley - Major river landscape of Melbourne of supreme value.
- Rank 3. East Eltham/Warrandyte. Good rural and bush landscape adjoining the Yarra.
- (b) Scenic Places
- Rank 3. Glynn's Road Hill
Overbank Road
Lower Plenty Road Hill, Bonds Road
Hendersons Road Hill
- (vi) Water amenity. Rank 1 & 2
- Rank 1. Yarra River- peri-rural areas
Some parklands, golf courses, access at several places
- swimming, canoeing, fishing, picnic grounds for short day trips.
- Rank 2. Yarra River & Plenty River Environs
Various areas adjoining River-billabongs or flood plains or land overlooking river - for walking, swimming and viewing.
- (vii) Agricultural amenity. Rank 3
Orchard areas east of Templestowe, Lower Yarra flats and Templestowe area. Market Gardening and some grazing especially horses or river flats. Orchards on slopes have soils from Silurian sediments.
- (viii) Geology and Terrain. Rank 1
Yarra River - Alluvial flats Banksia Street to Diamond Creek.
- (ix) Recreation areas. Rank 1 & 2
- Rank 1. River recreation and the necessary buffer zone will provide most forms of outdoor recreation.
- Rank 2. Mullum Mullum Creek. Manna gum stands; Attractive for picnickers, existing caravan park.
- (x) Public accessibility. Rank 1

6. FREEWAY PROPOSALS

Freeway proposals of the F 4 & F 7 pass through the subject area, while possible re-alignment of the F 18 may effect the western-most portion of the Reserve.

These proposals will have considerable effect both on the landscape and the future use of the Reserve, segmenting the area into 3 possibly 4 district parts.

7. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR INTERIM ACTION

As future uses for the Metropolitan Park may include areas for private recreation or other suitable uses of an open character which would ensure the conservation of significant characteristics, a code of Performance Standards should be introduced for considering applications for Development. Such code should concern

- (a) Site coverage
- (b) Location of buildings
- (c) Height, shape and bulk of buildings as well as materials, texture and colour and effect on surrounding landscape.
- (d) Protective measures for flora and fauna, control of noise and pollution of air, water and land.
- (e) Traffic generation.

Outline Planning for the Yarra Valley Public Open Space Reservation is proceeding.

G. Rowntree.