Brimbank City Council

Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan

2018 - 2023

Acknowledgments

This plan was created by Brimbank City Council with support from Scaled Ecology.

We would like to thank staff from the following organisations and departments for their contribution to the plan.

Northwest Connectivity working group

- Brimbank City Council
- Hume City Council
- Melbourne Water
- Parks Victoria
- Moonee Valley City Council
- City of Whittlesea
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- Wyndham City Council
- Melton City Council
- Moreland City Council
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority

Expert contributions to the NECI

- Practical Ecology
- Brimbank City Council
- Hume City Council
- EcoAerial
- Biosis
- The Nature Conservancy
- Monarc Environmental
- Victoria University
- WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff
- Friends of Organ Pipes NP
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- Maribyrnong City Council
- Hobsons Bay City Council
- Melton City Council
- City of Melbourne
- Moonee Valley City Council
- Yarra City Council
- Wyndham City Council
- City of Whittlesea
- Victorian National Parks Association

Community Conservation Groups

- Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley
- Friends of Iramoo
- Ardeer and Albion Community Club
- Friends of Kororoit Creek
- Friends of Organ Pipes National Park

Photos

Friends of Maribyrnong Valley (page 11), Friends of Organ Pipes National Park (page 11)
Jessica Gerger – Friends of Kororoit Creek (page 11), Robert Jackson (page 4)

Brimbank City Council acknowledges the tradition custodians of this land, the Kulin Nation, and pays its respects to elders past and present.

The Kulin Nation is made up of five tribes (language groups): the Woiworung (Wurundjeri), Bonnerwrung, Taungurong, Djadjawurrung and Wathaurong.

Brimbank has a long Aboriginal history which is evident in the form of scattered artefacts, particularly along waterways, Scar trees, ancient middens, charcoal from hearths, fish and bird traps and significant Aboriginal occupation sites are also plentiful within our local area.

Contents

Glossary

Habitat Connectivity: the connections available in the landscape for flora and fauna to access resources and to retain natural patterns of movement

Biodiversity: the variety of life on earth and the natural patterns they form. This includes the variety of species, the variety within species (genetic diversity) and the variety of ecosystems

Flora: plants

Fauna: animals

Corridor: geographical area that provides movement through the landscape

Ecosystem: an ecosystem is a community of living organisms in conjunction with the non-living components of their environment, interacting as a system

Species guild: a group of animals with similar habitat and movement needs

Dispersal: how far an individual tends to travel across the landscape

Stepping stones: smaller areas with the right structure for a species, usually used temporarily, which provide a connection for species to reach larger patches

NECI: Northwest Ecological Connectivity Investigation

Structural connectivity elements: the parts of a habitat that create the right structure for a species; vegetation, rocks, logs, etc.

Habitat patch: an area of habitat which has the right structure and indigenous vegetation for a species

Ephemeral wetland: wetland that is often dry but occasionally fills with water

Overwintering: a period of time in the cooler months when species are inactive, taking shelter on land under structural connectivity elements

Introduction

Context

Development of a Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan is a key action of the *Brimbank Biodiversity Strategy 2012-2022*, and is Council's primary approach towards biodiversity resilience within the *Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2017*.

The Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan (the Plan) will direct priorities for conservation land management and habitat improvement so that investment is made where it most benefits indigenous flora and fauna. The Plan aims to increase resilience within our landscape and provide strategic direction to assist the long term survival of local species and to prevent local species extinction.

The goals and actions within the Plan align with Commonwealth, State and Regional strategy and policy for biodiversity conservation, including:

- **Protecting Victoria's Environment: Biodiversity 2037**
- **Recovery Plans** for Brimbank's threatened species listed under the Commonwealth **Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)**
- **Port Phillip and Westernport Regional Catchment Strategy**
- Melbourne Water's **Healthy Waterways Strategy**.

Consultation – How was the Plan developed?

The Plan was developed in consultation with the community, conservation volunteer groups and Council staff. Consultation involved targeted and informal workshops and an online survey questionnaire. All feedback has been considered as part of the development of the Plan.

Understanding this Plan – Background

Habitat connectivity describes the connections available in the landscape for flora and fauna to access resources and to retain natural behaviours and patterns of movement.

Connectivity is critical for the survival of all species on earth. It promotes genetic diversity, landscape resilience, underpins human health and maintains people's connection with nature.

The Plan provides an overview of the indigenous species and habitats in our municipality and describes habitat connectivity and its importance. The action plan identifies areas to retain and opportunities to improve a network of connections in our local landscape. These connections are known as 'corridors' that will enable flora and fauna movement throughout Brimbank and into adjoining municipalities.

Council partnered with State and Local governments in the north-west region, consultants and local experts to develop the Northwest Ecological Connectivity Investigation (NECI), which is the key technical reference document. The NECI provides detailed information based on species and habitat research, modelling and expert review.

While the detailed investigation focussed on fauna movement, the Plan considers data on the best ways to maintain flora connectivity. Actions in the Plan are focussed on both fauna and flora connectivity, which are intrinsically linked; providing connectivity for one will naturally benefit the other.

This Plan addresses complex conservation issues using a logical and evidence based approach. It capitalises on existing land links and commits to actions across different land tenures to maximise opportunities for effective habitat corridors.

Guiding Principles

The Plan follows a set of guiding principles, which were developed and agreed to by the regional connectivity working group in 2016. The principles are designed to align habitat connectivity and greening projects for consistent and positive landscape outcomes.

The Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan will:

- Be implemented through strategy, policy, environmental planning, community engagement and on-ground work
- Collaborate across political boundaries that connects landscapes, areas of significance and people that have measurable goals and objectives
- Aim to have a healthy landscape
- Increase nature's resilience under a future of climate change
- Increase connectivity and decrease further fragmentation concurrently; 'increase connectivity' means action we take to repair landscape function and structure, and 'decrease further fragmentation' means designers of developments and infrastructure account for how their structures might impede natural processes
- Prioritise remnant indigenous vegetation when planning habitat corridors and connections, and gradually build and restore vegetation with naturally occurring species to increase extent and diversity
- Utilise a consistent monitoring and reporting framework that takes an adaptive management approach, analysing information about successes and failures when implementing connectivity actions.

Kororoit Creek Rotary Park

Goals

Goal 1: The Brimbank landscape will have a safe network of corridors for fauna	**Goal 2:** Brimbank's indigenous flora and fauna species will be genetically diverse communities	**Goal 3:** Brimbank's community of people will be connected to nature
Effective and safe pathways will be managed and improved to allow indigenous fauna to move through the landscape and beyond Brimbank.	Our indigenous flora and fauna will be part of a large gene pool that enables resilience to changes in the environment, and to avoid inbreeding.	We will have a healthy landscape for a healthy community and opportunities for people to engage with and enjoy nature.

Cunningham Skink, Kororoit Creek Albion

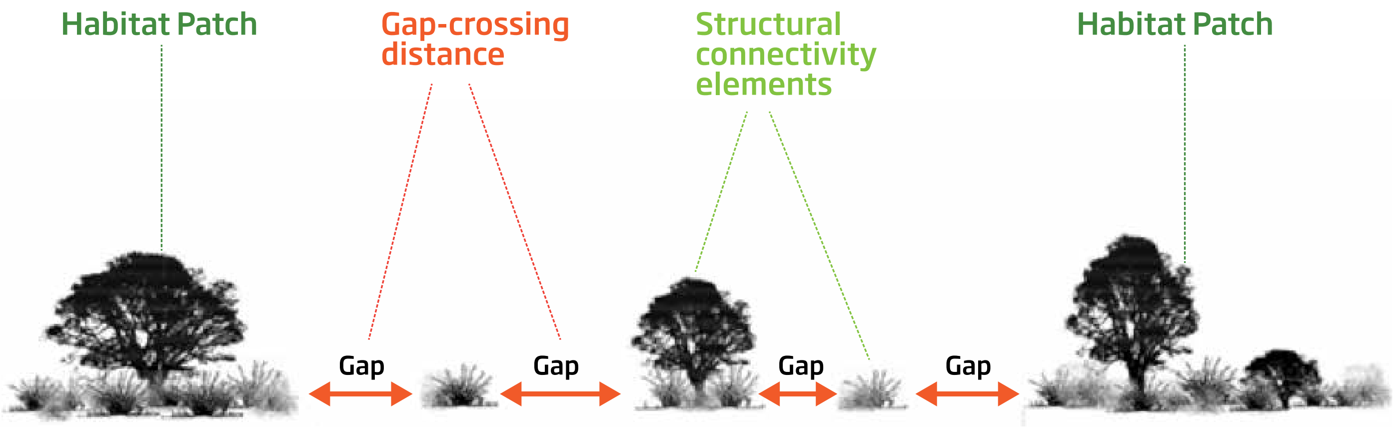
Habitat Connectivity

Connected Landscapes

A landscape with habitat connectivity is one that contains the right structure and qualities to allow free and natural movements and behaviours of flora and fauna within a corridor.

The corridor itself consists of a number of elements:

- **A Habitat patch** is a specific size area of habitat which has the right indigenous vegetation and habitat structure for a species.
- A **Gap** is any land without habitat or structural connectivity elements e.g. urban development and roads.
- **Structural connectivity elements (stepping stones)** are smaller areas with the right structure for a species, usually used temporarily, which provide a connection to reach larger habitat patches. Stepping stones are found within waterways, roadways, rail reserves and residential gardens including elements such as trees, rocks, logs and long grass.
- **Gap-crossing distance** maximum distance an individual will move between two structural connectivity elements.



There are several key elements that contribute to habitat suitable for flora and fauna:

- Presence of particular plant species – indigenous flora and fauna have evolved over millions of years to rely on other indigenous flora and fauna
- Quality of vegetation – health and diversity of plant species
- Structure of plants – the right cover of different layers such as grasses, shrubs and trees. Structure is based on benchmarks for relevant Ecological Vegetation Classes
- Fauna activity – many animals drive critical processes which provide the right environment for other animals and plants
- Non-living structural elements – landform, rocks, bare earth and logs
- Climate – rainfall, temperature, wind
- Soil – structure, moisture, acidity and nutrient levels.

Why we need connectivity

Everything living in the landscape is interdependent, meaning every individual needs a community of diverse individuals to survive. Soil, rocks, insects, grasses, trees, reptiles and mammals are all examples of individuals.

Protection of wildlife

Wildlife frequently suffer death or trauma from fragmentation, including road accidents, death through habitat clearing or separation from family or vital resources.

Genetic diversity

All fauna species have a home range, an area which they live in and can travel across. These home ranges naturally overlap in connected habitats, allowing individuals to connect with each other to socialise and breed. This connection drives a healthy level of genetic diversity. Why do we need genetic diversity? When genetically linked individuals can spread across the landscape, they can directly avoid the dangers of inbreeding. Additionally, genetic diversity makes a species more resilient to changes in the environment, such as climate, as some populations will be able to adapt better to certain changes.

Connecting people to nature

Our community of people are part of nature and need access to natural systems and the benefits they provide. Poor quality, disconnected natural environments can impact the physical, mental and social wellbeing of our community. The vast majority of people live in urbanised areas, yet these areas have the least connected ecosystems.

Community members working along Taylors Creek Keilor

Brimbank's landscape profile

Brimbank is a living landscape. The municipality lies within the Victorian Volcanic Plains Bioregion, which prior to European settlement was covered in grasslands, wetlands, and woodlands. Brimbank's landscape of flat plains and steep river escarpments was formed through volcanic activity.

Native grasslands once covered the majority of Brimbank. These grasslands are one of the most depleted bioregions in Australia and are listed as critically endangered under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999).*

Corridors of riparian woodlands, shrublands and escarpments, which are now locally rare, were once extensive along waterways. Although a large amount of the landscape has been modified and disturbed, many areas remain and provide good habitat for flora and fauna.

As a result of human intervention, our natural landscape has become increasingly fragmented, often leaving these individuals stranded or locally extinct. The majority of Brimbank's habitat has been disrupted either directly or indirectly.

Land use, especially the clearing of vegetation for agriculture and development, has had the most significant impact. Alongside vegetation clearing comes infrastructure, such as roads, fences, power lines and buildings, which create a harsh barrier for the movement of many species.

Indirect disruptions include the introduction of pest plants and animals, which displace indigenous flora and fauna by hunting them and destroying their habitat. Pest animals can cause a barrier to native wildlife, fear driven from animal scent and behaviours will stop wildlife from their natural activities. The impacts of human behaviour is closely related, as our physical activities such as hunting or even walking dogs can easily alter natural cycles and wildlife behaviour.

A changing climate poses significant challenges and opportunities for our natural landscape. As our climate warms and average temperatures increase, the distribution, dispersal and life cycles of flora and fauna populations will likely change. Ecosystem resilience, in the face of this change, may determine the ability of both flora and fauna to persist into the future. More frequent and extreme weather events, such as flood, drought and fire, can temporarily destroy habitats and cause populations of plants and animals to become physically stranded or even cause local extinctions. When the landscape is intact, it can easily recover and revive the natural balance in these areas, but an already fragmented landscape will likely struggle.

Lack of habitat connectivity has become the biggest threat to the ongoing survival of our local species and communities. The regional investigation (NECI) identified that habitat connectivity within Brimbank is depleted disproportionately within the broader region. Although this may be expected in our urban context, the importance of biodiversity in an urban setting and opportunities for conservation are constantly growing.

Taylors Creek within the Taylors Corridor

Our Approach

A long-term plan

The Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan is the commencement of a long journey to restore habitat corridors across Brimbank. Our plan for the future is a physically connected and genetically sustainable landscape within our municipality and the broader region. We aim to retain existing connections as well as recreate lost ones, contributing to the State Government's strategic objective to stop the decline of our native plants and animals (Biodiversity 2036).

This long-term approach is also acknowledged within the Brimbank Climate Change Adaption Framework (2017-2022), which coordinates and build measures that prepare Council and the community to respond to oncoming climate change impacts. The Framework prioritises a cool, biodiverse and water secure city through ensuring genetic diversity and resilience of native vegetation and managing the impact of drainage on local waterways and biodiversity.

Achieving this long-term plan will provide our community access to natural environments that support indigenous fauna and fauna species and provide associated human health benefits.

Phase One – the first five years

The Plan sets out actions for the first five years to reconnect the natural landscape. Throughout phase one of implementation, all research opportunities that further expand knowledge and data on species distribution and requirements should be pursued.

The Plan will be reviewed after five years to take us further towards our goals. Each revised Plan for connectivity will have more data available, better technology and more support for prioritising the natural landscape; this means more complex and ambitious actions in the future will progress us further towards a connected Brimbank.

Gathering the Right Data

To gather the right connectivity information, Brimbank partnered with Hume City Council to commission an extensive and innovative investigation, known as the Northwest Ecological Connectivity Investigation (NECI). This investigation helped to prioritise the actions for the first five years, ensuring they are evidence-based and appropriate for Brimbank's landscape.

The results of the technical investigation were combined with existing land links and local knowledge to identify species, habitats, corridors and actions to achieve the connectivity goals.

Our Species

Brimbank's indigenous fauna species were grouped into 'species guilds' based on their natural habitats and requirements to move safely through the landscape. Each guild has a flagship species and a list of others with similar needs. By managing species in guilds we can achieve good value from our investment and benefit multiple species with the same set of actions.

Our Habitats

Broad habitat groups were identified by grouping a number of vegetation types which provide similar habitat. These vegetation types are classified in Victoria as Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC). They have State Government descriptions which contain benchmarks, which guide the amount of cover of different vegetation layers and structural elements required to provide appropriate habitat.

The Urban Landscape Habitat group, shown in the table below, acknowledges created habitat including street trees and residential gardens supporting indigenous, native and exotic species. This habitat group supports fauna species that can tolerate Brimbank's highly urbanised and modified landscape and are not restricted to a specific habitat group.

Broad habitat group	Ecological Vegetation Classes Included	% of Brimbank's current natural landscape
Grassy Habitats	Heavier-soils Plains Grassland (EVC 132_61) Plains Grassland/Plains Grassy Woodland Mosaic (EVC 897)	49%
Escarpments	Escarpment Shrubland (EVC 895) Stream Bank Shrubland (EVC 851)	28%
Woodlands	Riparian Woodland (EVC 641) Floodplain Riparian Woodland (EVC 56)	16%
Wet Habitats	Ephemeral Drainage-line Grassy Wetland (EVC 678) Tall Marsh (EVC 821) Plains Grassy Wetland (EVC 125) Brackish Wetland (EVC 656)	14%
Urban Landscape Habitat	Created habitat including street trees and residential gardens supporting both native and exotic species (The Brimbank Corridor).	Non-natural landscape

Corridors

Corridors were selected based on the NECI outcomes, existing land links and local knowledge. Corridors are diverse in their habitat, condition and current connectivity, yet all have existing habitat for indigenous species. Corridors will strategically build on existing connections, conservation areas and patches of remnant habitat to create a network that includes all of Brimbank's natural habitats.

A Brimbank Corridor, covering the entire municipality, has been identified encompassing all urban landscapes. This corridor identifies opportunities for species not requiring a land-based corridor, but require habitat stepping stones and can utilise both native and exotic vegetation.

All corridors are tenure-blind, meaning they cover all types of land use and land ownership.

Actions

Action plans were created to conserve and improve habitat connectivity for the target species guilds in each corridor. The actions are designed to be appropriate to land tenure.

Actions will be implemented across land tenures to achieve a shared landscape outcome, including;

On **Council-managed land**:

- Targeted restoration of conservation areas to provide suitable habitat for identified species
- Targeted greening of open space reserves to provide suitable habitat or stepping stones for identified species
- Inclusion of indigenous species and appropriate structural elements in municipal landscape projects
- Ongoing community engagement focussed on habitat connectivity through citizen science
- Targeted community awareness and action programs that support the delivery of a changing landscape
- Ongoing support of conservation volunteers restoring habitat connectivity.

On **other Public Land**:

- Work with land managers to encourage restoration of habitat for identified species
- Advocate for funding to increase habitat on public land.

On **Private Land**:

- Encourage and support private landholders to incorporate indigenous habitat on properties to expand corridors and stepping stones throughout the landscape
- Work with development applicants through statutory planning processes to incorporate appropriate buffers and landscaping to minimise disruption to corridors.

Connectivity is a joint effort: Local case studies

Dedicated volunteers in our community are already busy with great initiatives to increase habitat and stepping stones across our landscape. We encourage Brimbank residents to get involved and create habitat in their patch.

Friends of Maribyrnong Valley: Connecting the next generation

The Friends of Maribyrnong Valley have helped the next generation of volunteers connect with nature along the Maribyrnong River by teaching local students about local fauna and habitat needs. The Friends group gain grants to provide field days, including education, entertainment and hands on habitat creation.

Friends of Organ Pipes and Brimbank City Council:

Restoring Sugar Glider Habitat

The Friends of Organ Pipes have been improving habitat for Sugar Gliders at Organ Pipes National Park since 2012. The project includes the installation of nesting boxes for instant Glider homes, planting habitat trees for future habitat and fauna monitoring. Brimbank provided equipment to assist with monitoring and will partner with the group in 2018 and beyond to extend habitat into neighbouring Sydenham Park.

Friends of Kororoit Creek and Melbourne Water: Fence By Fence Project

The Friends of Kororoit Creek have been partnering with Melbourne Water and residents in the Kororoit Creek Corridor to create habitat patches next to their properties. The program provides a fantastic opportunity for people to connect with nature, extend habitat along the creek and provide safe havens for indigenous flora and fauna.

Species Guilds

Brimbank's indigenous fauna species were researched and grouped into 'species guilds' based on their natural habitats and home range ('long dispersal' or 'short dispersal').

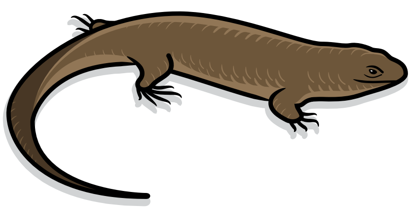
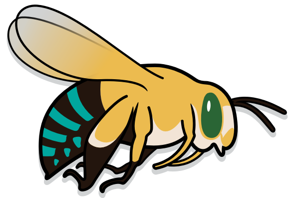
Species were then assessed by a panel of experts to determine their connectivity requirements. This assessment included the maximum distance most of the species in each guild can tolerate between patches of habitat and how far they could travel between patches using stepping stones.

Each guild is represented by a flagship species and accompanied by a list of other species with similar needs for landscape movement. Some species live in multiple types of habitats and may appear in more than one guild.

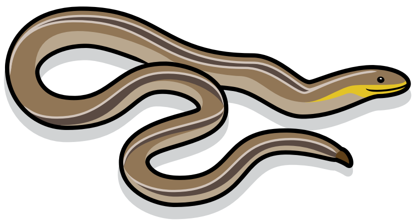
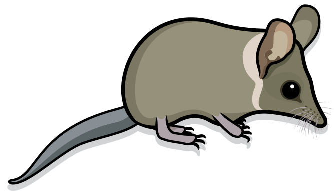
For each of the five broad habitat groups, two species guilds represent a long and short home range. Brimbank has ten guilds, each named after their flagship species which is shown in the table below.

Broad Habitat Type	Species Guild Flagship Species
Escarpment	- Cunningham's Skink (short dispersal) - Blue-banded Bee (long dispersal)
Grassy Habitat	- Fat-tailed Dunnart (short dispersal) - Striped Legless Lizard (long dispersal)
Wet Habitats	- Growling Grass Frog (short dispersal) - Rakali (long dispersal)
Woodlands	- Rufous Whistler (short dispersal) - Sugar Glider (long dispersal)
Generalist (Urban Environment)	- Garden Skink (short dispersal) - Australian Magpie (long dispersal)

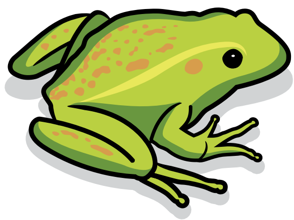
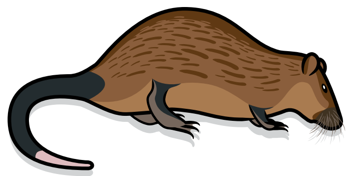
Escarpment Guilds

		
Habitat type	Escarpment	Escarpment
Description	short disperser	long disperser
Flagship species	Cunningham's Skink *(Egernia cunninghami)*	Blue-banded Bee *(Amegilla cingulate)*
Profile	• Lives in escarpment habitat, especially rocky areas along waterways • Is a social animal who lives in groups • Eats insects, snails, fruit and leaves • Requires a habitat patch at least every 80m and stepping stones every 5m • Significant barriers: areas of bare ground without rocks and logs for protection.	• Lives in shrubby habitats, especially places with pollen producing flowers and rock crevices • Eats nectar • Requires a habitat patch or stepping stone at least every 300m, this is the maximum distance one will travel from its nest to forage • Significant barriers: vegetation clearing, urban development.
Some other species in guild	Eastern Blue-tongue Lizard (reptile) Jewel Spider (spider) Golden Orb-weaver (spider)	Australian Painted Lady (butterfly) Fat-tailed Dunnart (mammal) Wedge-tailed Eagle (bird) Swamp Wallaby (mammal)

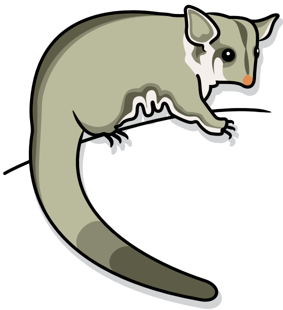
Grassy Habitat Guilds

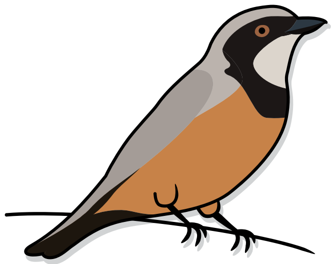
		
Habitat type	Grassy Habitats	Grassy Habitats
Description	short disperser	long disperser
Flagship species	Striped Legless Lizard *(Delma impar)*	Fat-tailed Dunnart *(Sminthopsis crassicaudata)*
Profile	• Lives in grassland habitat with natural structure, especially with cracking soils and rocks • Eats insects • Prefers a habitat patch at least every 5m and stepping stones every 2m • Significant barriers: Grassland clearing, rock removal and soil disturbance.	• Lives in grassy habitat, with an open structure • Eats insects • Prefers a habitat patch at least every 300m and stepping stones every 250m • Significant barriers: Introduced predators, large roads.
Some other species in guild	Australasian Pipit (bird) Golden Sun Moth (insect) Little Whip Snake (reptile) Tussock Skink (reptile)	Brown Songlark (bird) Black-shouldered Kite (bird) Nankeen Kestrel (bird) Yellow-rumped Thornbill (bird) Plains-wanderer (bird) Red-chested Button-quail (bird) Stubble Quail (bird) Eastern Brown Snake (reptile)

Wet Habitat Guilds

		
Habitat type	Wet Habitats	Wet Habitats
Description	short disperser	long disperser
Flagship species	Growling Grass Frog *(Litoria raniformis)*	Rakali *(Hydromis chrysogaster)*
Profile	• Lives in wet habitat, especially slow flowing creeks and wetlands with grassland and shrubland habitat • Eats insects and other frogs • Requires a habitat patch at least every 500m and stepping stones every 100m • Significant barriers: heavily shaded areas, large roads and urban developments.	• Lives in wet habitats, and is especially adaptable to urban areas • Eats fish, frogs, crustaceans, mice and many other things • Requires a habitat patch at least every 5000m and stepping stones every 1000m • Significant barriers: degraded habitat, especially where food is scarce, drought.
Some other species in guild	Brown Toadlet (frog) Common Eastern Froglet (frog) Southern Water Skink (reptile) Sacred Kingfisher (bird) Australian Reed-Warbler (bird) Dusky Moorhen (bird) White-faced Heron (bird) Little Egret (bird)	Southern Myotis (bat) Buff-banded Rail (bird) Eastern Long-necked Turtle (reptile) Australian Pelican (bird) Australian White Ibis (bird) Australian Wood Duck (bird) Platypus (mammal) Tiger Snake (reptile) Red-bellied Black Snake (reptile)

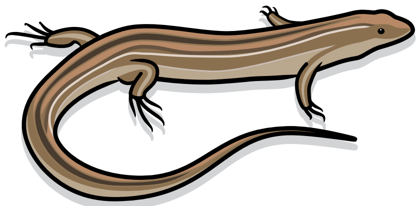
Woodland Guilds

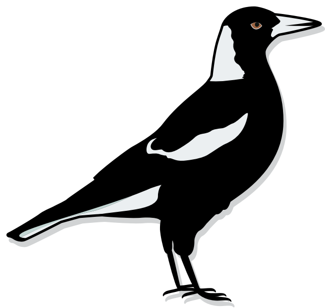




Habitat type	Woodland	Woodland
Description	short disperser	long disperser
Flagship species	Sugar Glider *(Petaurus breviceps)*	Rufous Whistler *(Pachycephala rufiventris)*
Profile	• Lives in woodland habitat, especially old trees with hollows (or nest boxes) and acacias • Eats insects, nectar and pollen • Requires a habitat patch at least every 150m and stepping stones every 75m • Significant barriers: land clearing, introduced predators.	• Lives in woodland habitat, with a shrubby understorey • Eats insects and sometimes seeds, fruit or leaves • Significant barriers: treeless environment.
Some other species in guild	Diamond Firetail (bird) Fuscous Honeyeater (bird) White-Throated Treecreeper (bird) Yellow-faced Honeyeater (bird) Eastern Yellow Robin (bird) Laughing Kookaburra (bird) Eastern Freetail Bat (bat)	Common Wombat (mammal) Common Ringtail Possum (mammal) Nankeen Night Heron (bird) Swift Parrot (bird) Southern Myotis (bat) Eastern Spinebill (bird) Spotted Pardalote (bird) Swamp Wallaby (mammal)

Generalist Guilds





Habitat type	Generalist	Generalist
Description	short disperser	long disperser
Flagship species	Common Garden Skink *(Lampropholis guichenoti)*	Australian Magpie *(Cracticus tibicen)*
Profile	• Lives in many habitats, especially gardens with rocks, logs and leafy debris • Eats flies, ants, moths and cockroaches • Requires a habitat patch at least every 5m and stepping stones every 2m • Significant barriers: open areas with no shelter, use of pesticides, cats.	• Lives in many habitats, especially open woodlands and open space • Insects (Eats insects, grubs, small reptiles) • Requires a habitat patch at least every 5000m and stepping stones every 500m • Significant barriers: treeless environments.
Some other species in guild	Weasel Skink (reptile) Lesser Long-eared Bat (bat) Yellow-Bellied Sheath-tailed Bat (bat) Blue-banded Bee (insect) Willie Wagtail (bird) Superb Fairy-wren (bird) New Holland Honeyeater (bird) White-plumed Honeyeater (bird) Welcome Swallow (bird) Marbled Gecko (reptile) Striped Marsh Frog (frog)	Eastern Grey Kangaroo (mammal) Black Falcon (bird) Grey-headed Flying-fox (bat) Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (bird) Long-billed Corella (bird) Noisy Miner (bird) Red Wattlebird (bird) Magpie-lark (bird) Crested Pigeon (bird) Australian Raven (bird) Short-beaked Echidna (mammal)

Corridors and Actions

Actions are identified for nine geographic corridors. These actions aim to improve and retain connectivity through adaptive land management, community involvement, environmental planning and advocacy. An additional Brimbank Corridor identifies opportunities for species that do not require a land-based corridor but require habitat stepping stones. The Brimbank Corridor actions provide an overarching municipal approach.

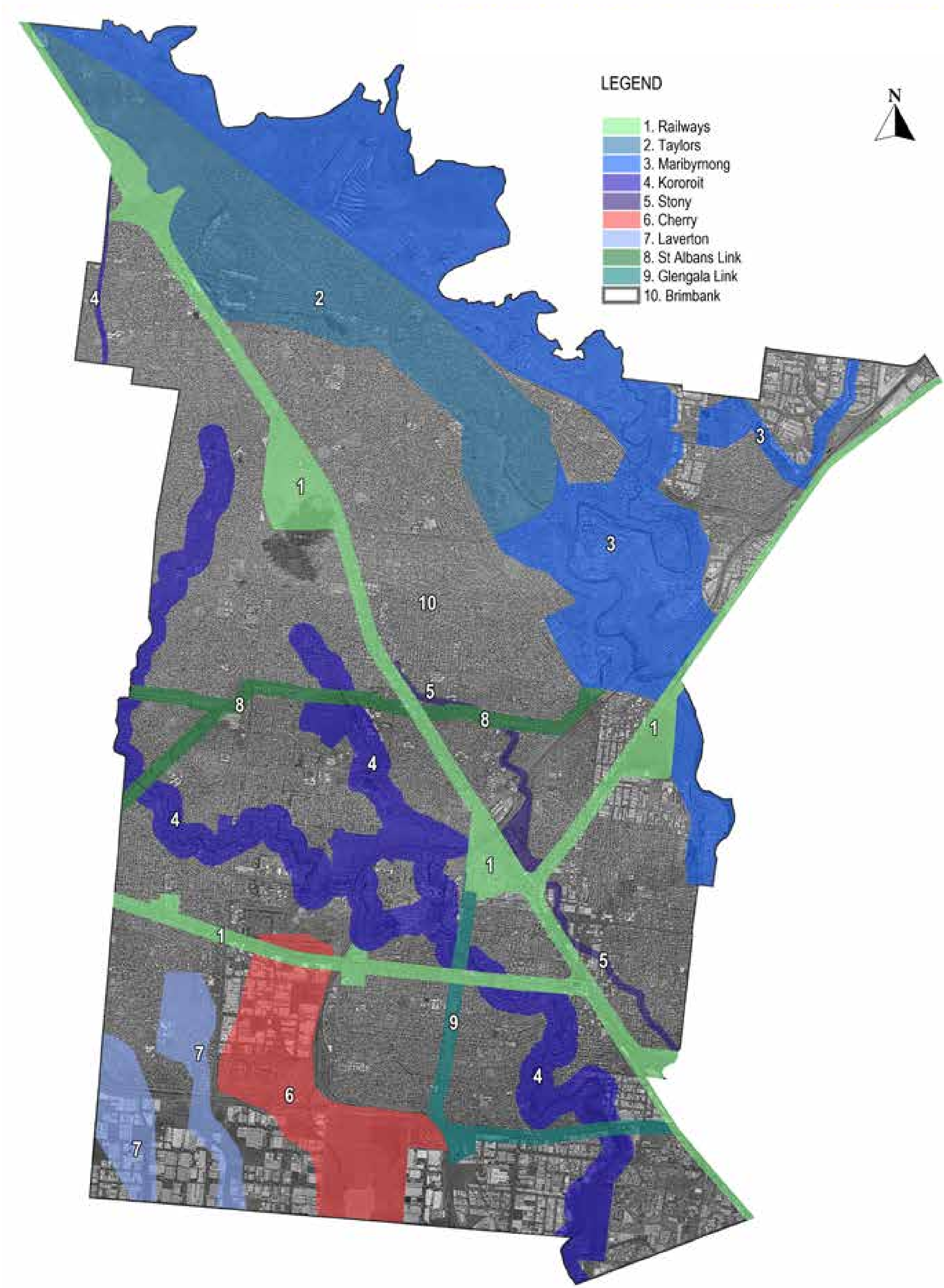
Actions are based on the species and guilds which are the priority in each corridor for the next five years. The majority of the actions will be undertaken directly by Council with the assistance of government, non-government and community partners. There are also vast opportunities for community members to contribute on private and Council land.

Identified Corridors

1. Railways Corridor
2. Taylors Corridor
3. Maribyrnong Corridor
4. Kororoit Corridor
5. Stony Corridor
6. Cherry Corridor
7. Laverton Corridor
8. St Albans Link Corridor
9. Glengala Link Corridor
10. Brimbank Corridor

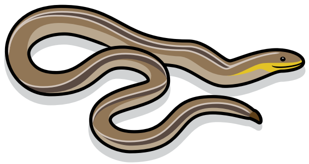
Eastern Grey Kangaroo population within the Maribyrnong Corridor

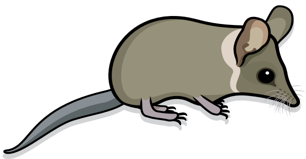
Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Corridors

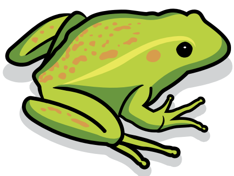


Railways Corridor

Focus Species Guilds







Geographical Description

The Railways Corridor is a mostly linear corridor that provides a complete connection through Brimbank to the northwest, southeast, west and northeast along three rail lines.

This corridor includes rail corridors and some large grasslands which remain connected to the railway vegetation.

Landscape and biodiversity

The natural landscape of this corridor is open grassy plains, with sparse ephemeral wetlands.

This is Brimbank's largest remaining corridor of grasslands and will be critical for maintaining species as we recreate connections in other areas.

Key habitats

- Grassland
- Wet Habitats

Railways Corridor

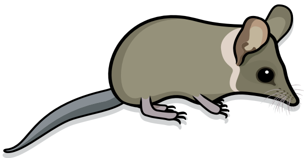
Action Plan 2018-2023

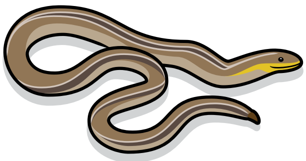
Action	Target Outcome	Year to start
Advocate to rail authorities to reduce barriers to connectivity for Striped Legless Lizard and Fat Tailed Dunnart guilds by: - Managing pest plants and animals - Avoiding stockpiles on vegetated areas.	Reduced pest plants and animals in the corridor, providing freer movement.	2020
Ensure trails or infrastructure on Council land retain connections for Striped Legless Lizard by: - retaining existing habitat patches where populations are known or likely - retaining stepping stones at least every 2m - ensuring infrastructure does not create a barrier or a hard surface more than 2m wide.	Council infrastructure allows for habitat patches to be retained and stepping stones every 2m.	As opportunity arises
Connect grassy habitat patches along St Albans Road for Golden Sun Moth by improving existing patches and developing stepping stones of suitable habitat.	Unmown/lightly mown patches are maintained at least every 200m, aiming for 1ha patches.	2021
Increase habitat patch size at Bon Thomas Reserve for Striped Legless Lizards and create stepping stones to rail corridor.	Patch size will extend to 2ha with stepping stones at least every 2m to next patch.	2018
Ensure maximum connectivity and retention of native vegetation and fauna habitat in Sunshine North through strategic planning for undeveloped industrial land. Ensure corridors of structural habitat are retained and improved if development occurs.	All grassy, escarpment and wet habitat species are able to move safely through Sunshine North to connecting grassy habitats.	2018
Ensure all vegetation planting within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.*	An overall increase in structural habitat is gained across the corridor.	2018

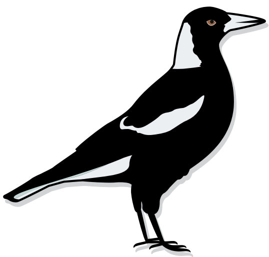
*See page 9 for explanation of Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs)

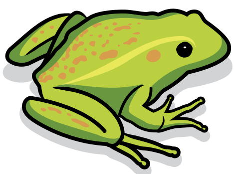
Taylors Corridor

Focus Species Guilds





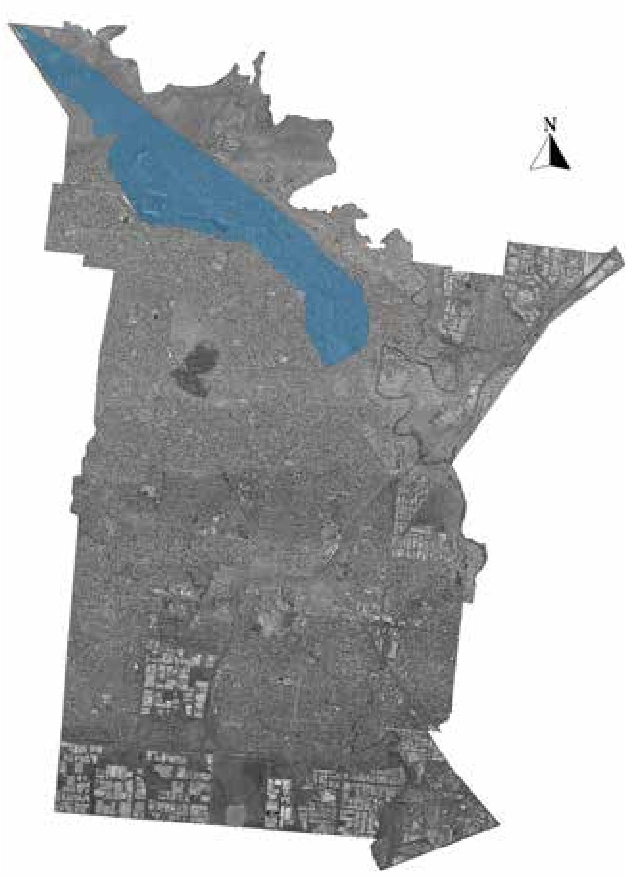




Geographical Description

The Taylors Corridor is an area that encompasses the upstream section of Taylors Creek, beginning from Brimbank's northernmost boundary and extending southwest to join the Maribyrnong Corridor.

In addition to the Taylors Creek riparian area, this corridor includes significant utility easements and open spaces, and provides an east west connection across Brimbank to the Railways Corridor.



Landscape and biodiversity

The natural landscape of this corridor is open grassy plains, alongside a ribbon of riparian vegetation and rocky escarpments.

The high amount of grassy ecosystems is the key feature separating it from the Maribyrnong Corridor.

Key habitats

- Escarpment
- Grassland
- Wet Habitats

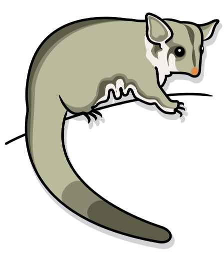
Taylors Corridor

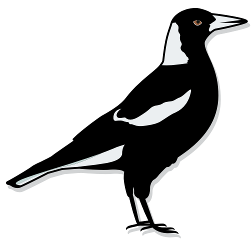
Action Plan 2018-2023

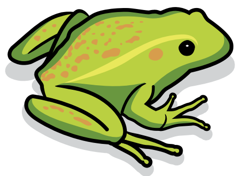
Action	Target Outcome	Year to start
Assist local schools to provide habitat patches of vegetation and structures through a targeted program. A learning program will be developed so school students can identify target indigenous species, restore habitat and monitor their chosen species.	At least 2 local schools per year creating, maintaining and monitoring habitat for appropriate species.	2019
Conduct Golden Sun Moth surveys within powerlines easements and areas with suitable habitat.	Determine presence or absence of Golden Sun Moth.	2018
Amend mowing regimes on grassy habitats to commence creation of stepping stones for Golden Sun Moth between Keilor-Melton Highway and Robinsons Road. Stepping stones consist of plains grassland species and structure.	Unmown/lightly mown patches are maintained at least every 5m.	2020
Ensure all vegetation planting within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	An overall increase in structural habitat is gained across the corridor.	2018
Amend mowing regimes and reinstate habitat structure to provide stepping stones for Golden Sun Moth commencing at Rutherglen Way and working towards Denbigh Court, Keilor. Stepping stones consist of plains grassland species and structure, including rocks and natural debris.	Habitat stepping stones or patches present at least every 200m, aiming for several patches of >1ha.	2022
Increase grassland patch size at The Lakes Grassland and Kings Road Grassland for Golden Sun Moth. Increase management of grassland patches and restore stepping stones to extend to southern side of Taylors Creek.	Natural Temperate Grassland patches are minimum of 1ha. Stepping stones between patches at least every 200m.	2020

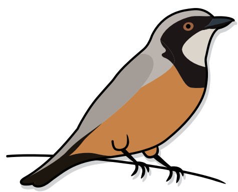
Maribyrnong Corridor

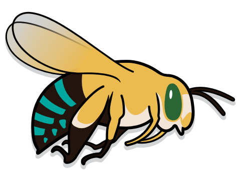
Focus Species Guilds

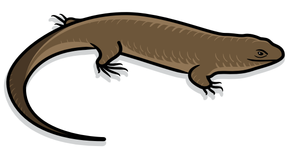






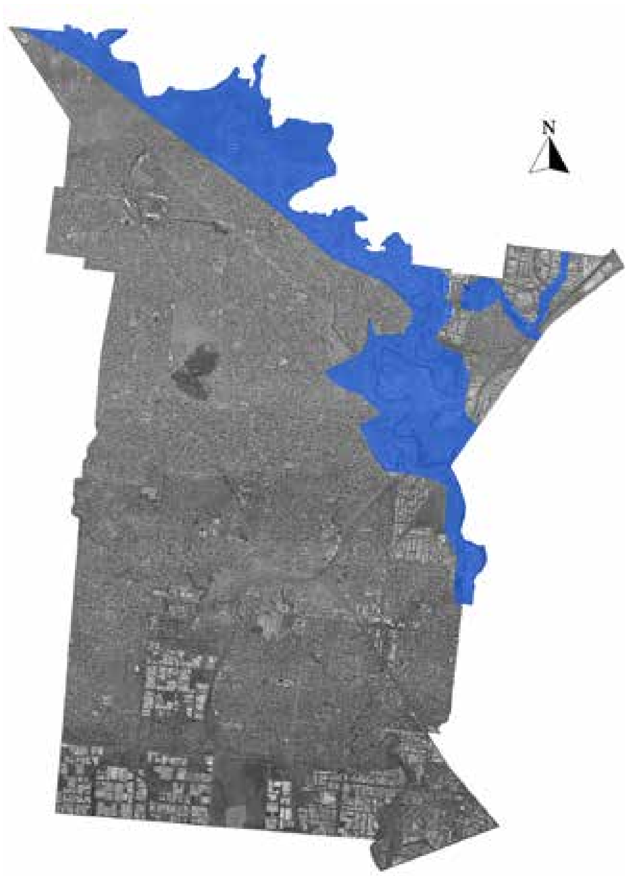






Geographical Description

The Maribyrnong Corridor is the broadest and covers a large area, includes Steele Creek and lower Taylors Creek. It extends along the north-eastern boundary of the municipality, then narrows as it heads to the south where Brimbank meets the Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley municipalities.



Landscape and biodiversity

The Maribyrnong Corridor is large and diverse. It contains Brimbank's largest waterway and some of the best remaining grasslands and supports Brimbank's only known population of Sugar Gliders. The species is undergoing recovery work in this area, with an aim to connect to larger populations in Hume and the Macedon Ranges.

Key habitats

- Wet habitats
- Grasslands
- Escarpments
- Woodlands

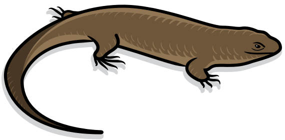
Maribyrnong Corridor

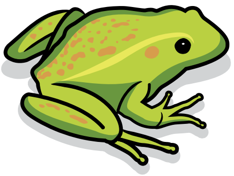
Action Plan 2018-2023

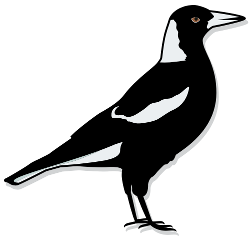
Action	Target Outcome	Year to start
Partner with existing programs to assess current extent of arboreal mammals downstream of Organ Pipes National Park.	Thorough species and population data will be collected to inform habitat projects.	2018
Investigate options for safe movement of Swamp Wallabies under Green Gully Road. Options ensure there is habitat cover at both side of the road, access to the road is discouraged and an appropriately sized culvert or tunnel.	Swamp Wallabies can move safely under Green Gully Road.	2022
Support landholder participation in sustainable land management through active management for habitat on private land, prioritising reducing pest plants and animals.	Conduct annual sustainable land management grant program.	Ongoing
Revegetate with habitat trees and food sources for Sugar Gliders between Organ Pipes National Park and Maribyrnong Valley Parklands.	A patch with habitat trees and food sources every 150m and stepping stones every 50m.	2019
Install, maintain and monitor Sugar Glider nest boxes and tree hollows at Sydenham Park. Coordinate sites and share data with Hume City Council and Macedon Ranges Shire Council.	Nest boxes installed in large trees within 200m of the nearest existing hollow or box. Boxes monitored with community involvement.	2018
Extend and connect grassland patches at Sydenham Park for Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard.	Extend and connect grassland vegetation, including inorganic structural habitat elements.	Ongoing
Conduct a study on current populations, movement and barriers in the Maribyrnong Corridor for Eastern Grey Kangaroos.	Eastern Grey Kangaroo movement patterns and solutions to reducing barriers defined.	2020
Embed requirements to prevent further impediment to safe Eastern Grey Kangaroo movement through the entire Maribyrnong corridor.	Development will not further threaten safe movement for Kangaroos.	2020
Retain and improve a safe passage for Growling Grass Frogs at Sydenham Park from the Maribyrnong River and Jacksons Creek to grassy habitat above the river for hibernation (over-wintering).	Grasslands and open woodlands within 500m of waterways/wetlands are retained and restored with stepping stones at least every 100m.	2018
Continue to facilitate the Maribyrnong Valley Connection Project and undertake weed control on Council land within the project area.	Meet weed control targets within the project area.	Ongoing
Ensure all vegetation planting within the corridor utilises species, structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	An overall increase in structural habitat is gained across the corridor.	2018

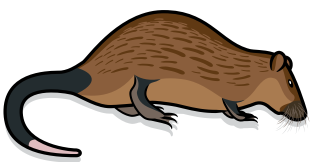
Kororoit Corridor

Focus Species Guilds



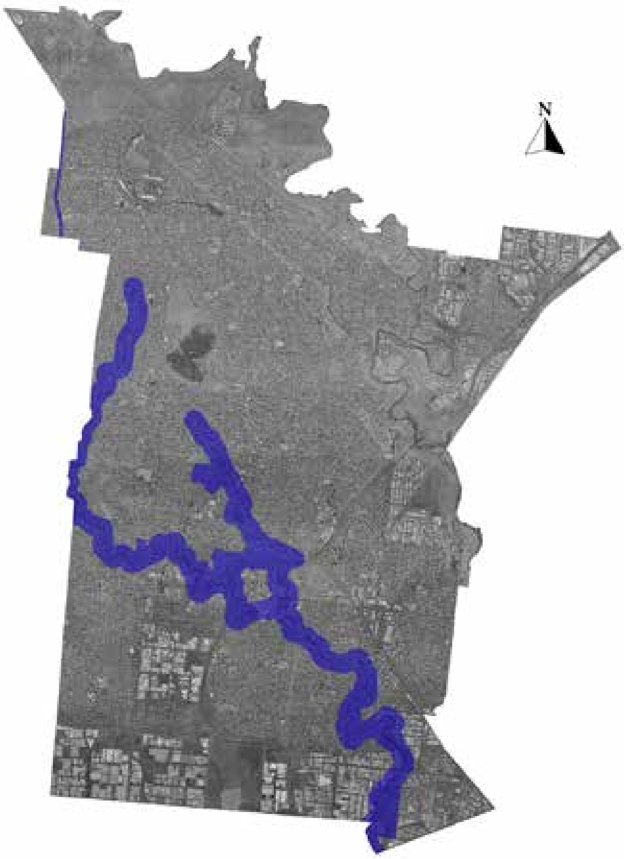






Geographical Description

The Kororoit Corridor encompasses Kororoit Creek, Jones Creek and part of Calder Park Drive. The corridor connects to the Railways Corridor at its northern extent, runs south along Brimbank's boundary and winds its way to the south.



Landscape and biodiversity

The natural landscape of this corridor includes a ribbon of open riparian woodland along the waterway, with rocky escarpments and grasslands above. Kororoit Creek has even more diversity and density in its overstorey vegetation types due to many years of community and government efforts to revegetate this creek. Key species in this corridor include Growling Grass Frogs, Eastern Longneck Turtles and Cunningham's Skink, which specifically requires connected open rocky escarpments.

Key habitats

- Woodland
- Escarpments
- Grassy Habitats
- Wet Habitats

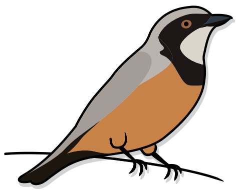
Kororoit Corridor

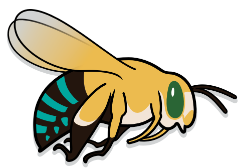
Action Plan 2018-2023

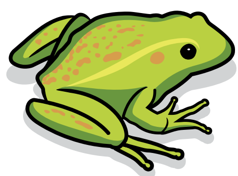
Action	Target Outcome	Year to start
Develop monitoring protocol for connectivity and undertake pilot in the Kororoit Corridor to measure gaps in corridors and progress towards closing them.	An effective and practical monitoring method is developed to be used in all corridors.	2020
Reintroduce logs to revegetation beds at Buckingham Reserve to protect Eastern Long-necked Turtles moving over land; placement should guide turtles away from roads.	Logs or shrubby vegetation are provided at least every 10m within 200m of the creek.	2020
Reintroduce mid and understorey layers within existing revegetation beds between Carter Street and Wright Street to complete vegetation structure and provide examples of natural landscape, as well as shelter for juvenile Eastern Long-necked Turtles.	Full cover with all vegetation layers represented with indigenous species and logs from the water to top of escarpment.	2020
Maintain and restore grassland habitat for Striped Legless Lizards along Jones Creek between Denton Hills Parkland and Gladstone Street wetlands.	Grassland patches are connected by stepping stones at least every 2m, long term patch sizes are ≥2ha.	2018
Expand grassland patch size at Isabella Williams Reserve to meet escarpments and provide connected habitat for Cunningham's Skink as well as an example of natural structure of indigenous vegetation.	No break of more than 5m in indigenous habitat representing the natural landscape.	2022
Reintroduce mid and understorey layers within existing revegetation beds between Deer Park Powerline easement to Station Road to complete vegetation structure and create overwintering habitat for Growling Grass Frog.	Full cover with all vegetation layers represented with indigenous species and logs from the water to top of escarpment.	2019
Restore connection for Striped Legless Lizard through Denton Hills Parklands to Denton Grassland.	Grassland patches are connected by stepping stones at least every 2m, long term patch sizes are ≥2ha.	2022
Investigate and advocate for habitat restoration for the Cunningham's Skink and Growling Grass Frog along Kororoit Creek from the Western Ring Road to Albion.	Threats identified and management actions commenced.	2020
Advocate Melbourne Water to restore vegetation and habitat structures instream and streamside between Esmond Street and Albion.	Grassy habitat restored within 200m of the creek for overwintering and restores instream and streamside vegetation.	2020
Ensure all vegetation within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	An overall increase in structural habitat is gained across the corridor.	2018

Stony Corridor

Focus Species Guilds

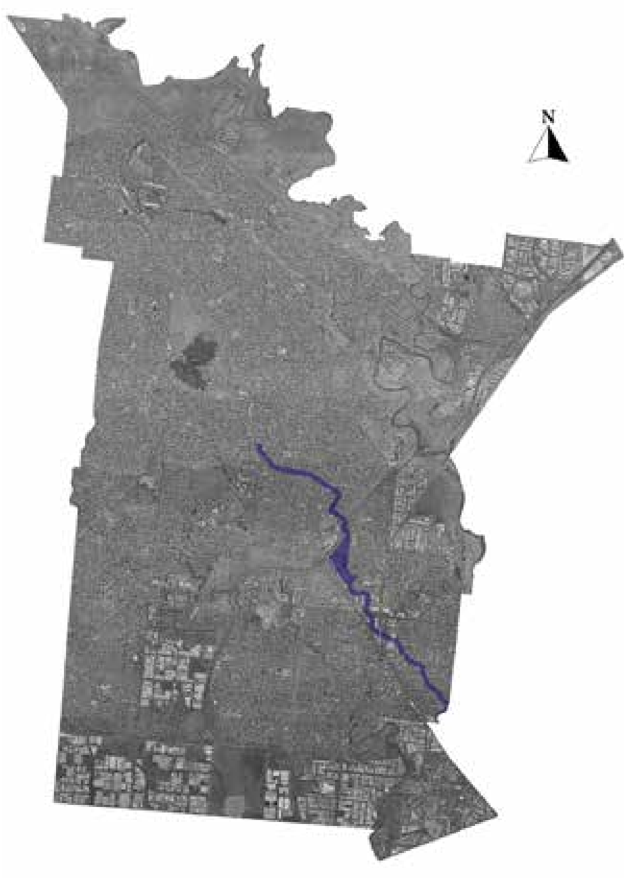






Geographical Description

The Stony Corridor consists of Stony Creek from the rail corridor in St Albans to Brimbank's boundary with the City of Maribyrnong in Sunshine. The corridor follows an altered course as most of the creek has been modified.



Landscape and biodiversity

Stony Creek's natural environment originally consisted of grasslands and open riparian woodlands. Most of Stony Creek has been highly modified, channelised or even piped underground. Innovative new projects are, however, re-naturalising part of the channel to provide better water quality, habitat and amenity for the community. Reptiles, frogs and other species still use the environment and will thrive further with improvements to habitat connectivity.

Key habitats

- Woodlands
- Grassy habitats

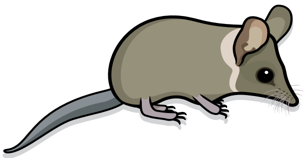
Stony Corridor

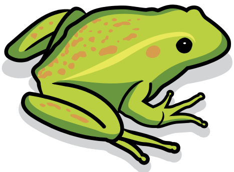
Action Plan 2018-2023

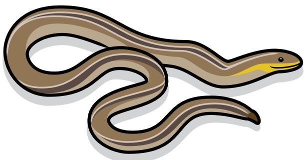
Action	Target Outcome	Year to start
Implement the Stony Creek Restoration Project to recreate natural creekline habitat between Furlong Road and Gilmour Road.	Stony Creek contains an extra 1.2km of connected habitat.	2018
Support partnerships with other key stakeholders to improve water quality, habitat and access along upper Stony Creek, between Camphora Place and Furlong Road, in line with the area’s designation as a Health and Education Precinct under Plan Melbourne.	Partnerships explored and developed for habitat gains within the Sunshine Health and Education.	2019
Collaborate with Maribyrnong City Council and Melbourne Water to restore riparian habitat with indigenous vegetation and habitat structures along Stony Creek between Matthews Street and Sunshine Road for Rakali and Growling Grass Frog.	400m of continuous habitat consistent with Riparian Woodland EVC prescriptions.	2022
Ensure all vegetation within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with mapped habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	An overall increase in structural habitat is gained across the corridor.	2018

Cherry Corridor

Focus Species Guilds

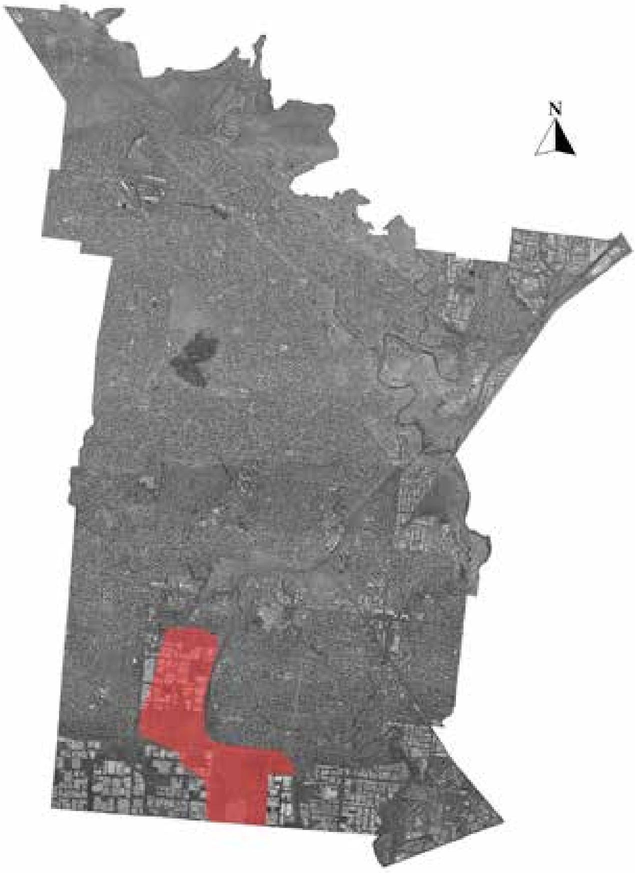






Geographical Description

The Cherry Corridor consists of remnant areas of Cherry Creek and its headwaters and wetlands. It begins in Derrimut and runs through industrial areas in the south of Brimbank before crossing the Western Ring Road and meeting the City of Wyndham municipal boundary to the south.



Landscape and biodiversity

The natural landscape of this corridor is mostly grassy and wet habitats. Although much of the area has been developed for industrial use, it still includes significant grasslands and wetland systems, such as Paramount Grassland and Derrimut Nature Conservation Reserve. These are large protected areas in close proximity that provide opportunities to improve the safety for fauna moving through them.

Key habitats

- Grassland
- Wet Habitats

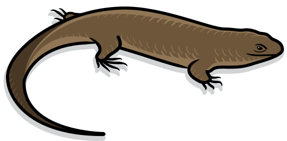
Cherry Corridor

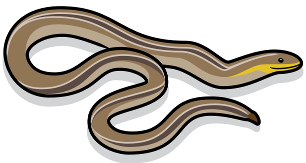
Action Plan 2018-2023

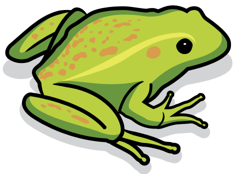
Action	Target Outcome	Year to start
Diversify and increase the population of Striped Legless Lizard in targeted conservation areas through evidence-based supplementation projects.	Increase in population size and diversity in at least one conservation reserve.	2018
Develop a new 'Nature Places' project to develop passive park adjoining Paramount Grassland as a space that integrates and highlights the adjoining grassland reserve.	Residents and local employees will be able to engage with the natural landscape in new passive parkland.	2022
Ensure all vegetation within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	An overall increase in structural habitat is gained across the corridor.	2018

Laverton Corridor

Focus Species Guilds







Geographical Description

The Laverton Corridor is relatively short in length and begins to the south of Deer Park. This corridor consists of two converging streams that run parallel through Laverton and eventually join into one when they reach the City of Wyndham.

Landscape and biodiversity

The natural landscape of this corridor is mostly grassy creeklines, ephemeral and permanent wetlands and grasslands. Important features include Mt Derrimut Nature Conservation Reserve, a grassland reserve which has a population of endangered Striped Legless Lizards.

Key habitats

- Escarpments
- Grassy Habitats
- Wet Habitats

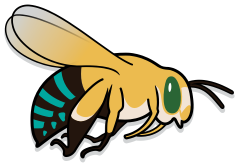
Laverton Corridor

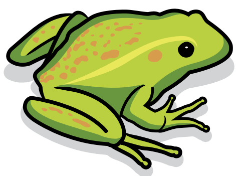
Action Plan 2018-2023

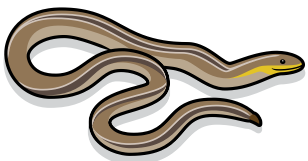
Action	Target Outcome	Year to start
Restore vegetation to provide habitat corridors for Growling Grass Frogs between waterway and grassy wetlands, including ephemeral wetlands between Calarco Drive and Boundary Road.	Frogs have access to at least 4 wetland/creekline patches less than 500m apart, with stepping stones every 100m.	2021
Collaborate with Melbourne Water to reintroduce rock habitat in drainage line between Hermitage Parade and Tiverton Parkway to enhance flora habitat.	Rocks are introduced for use as stepping stones.	2018
Create a targeted community information session and materials so landholders surrounding Mt Derrimut Nature Conservation Reserve can learn about Striped Legless Lizards.	Residents can identify a Striped Legless Lizard and understand the best action to protect them.	2020
Ensure all vegetation within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	An overall increase in structural habitat is gained across the corridor.	2018

St Albans Link Corridor

Focus Species Guilds







Geographical Description

The St Albans Link Corridor consists of large, open easements. The corridor connects the municipality from Deer Park in the east to Sunshine North in the west.

Landscape and biodiversity

The natural landscape of this corridor is mostly grassland vegetation with some wet habitats in the form of ephemeral wetlands. This Corridor is one of the rare grassy habitat connections in the municipality, and fortunately still contains large areas of remnant or modified grasslands. It provides quality habitat for many of our threatened species.

Key habitats

- Grassland
- Wet Habitats

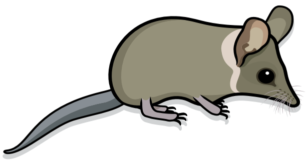
St Albans Link Corridor

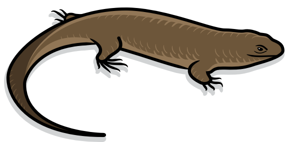
Action Plan 2018-2023

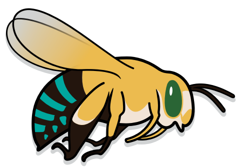
Action	Target Outcome	Year to start
Improve structure of constructed earth mounds with habitat rocks and shrubs between Kororoit Creek and Neale Road for Blue-banded Bee.	Habitat rocks and shrubs are present at least every 300m.	2020
Protect and mark ephemeral wetlands between Phyllis Parade & Neale Road to avoid damage when inundated.	The community can identify the presence of ephemeral wetlands and understand the best ways to protect them. Physical and visual barriers are in place during inundated periods.	Ongoing
Amend mowing regimes on grassy habitats to commence creation of stepping stones for Golden Sun Moth between Robinsons Road and Oakwood Road. Stepping stones consist of plains grassland species and structure.	Unmown/lightly mown patches are maintained at least every 5m.	2018
Ensure all vegetation planting within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	An overall increase in structural habitat is gained across the corridor.	Ongoing

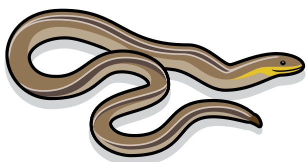
Glengala Link Corridor

Focus Species Guilds









Geographical Description

The Glengala Link Corridor runs southward from the Western Ring Road in Albion until it meets Derrimut Grassland Reserve; it then heads east and crosses Kororoit Creek before connecting with the Railways Corridor in Sunshine.

Landscape and biodiversity

The natural landscape of this Corridor is mostly grassland vegetation with some wet habitats in the form of ephemeral wetlands. This Corridor is another rare grassy habitat connection in the municipality. It still contains large areas of remnant or modified grasslands and connects to one of the largest protected grasslands in Derrimut. It provides a lifeline for many of our threatened grassland species.

Key habitats

- Grassy Habitats
- Escarpment habitats

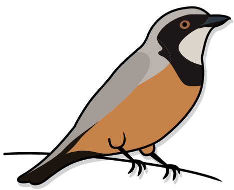
Glengala Link Corridor

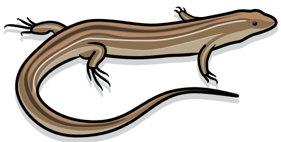
Action Plan 2018-2023

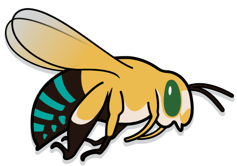
Action	Target Outcome	Year to start
Amend mowing regimes to provide higher quality grassland stepping stones for Golden Sun Moth between Forrest Street and The Avenue.	Overall patches of habitat ≥1ha with stepping stones between patches at least every 200m.	2021
Collaborate with Melbourne Water to reintroduce habitat structure inclusive of rocks in target sites between Fairburn Road and Kororoit Creek for Striped Legless Lizards.	500m of connected habitat which includes ≥2 patches with stepping stones every 2m between.	2022
Ensure all vegetation planting within the corridors utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	An overall increase in structural habitat is gained across the corridor.	Ongoing

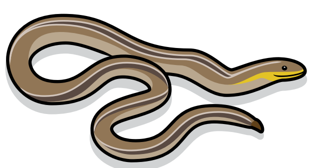
The Brimbank Corridor

Focus Species Guilds









Geographical Description

This corridor covers the entire municipality and utilises open space, backyards, scattered trees and shrubs and isolated areas of habitat. Patches of habitat are needed across the municipality, meaning everyone in the community can participate and contribute to the Brimbank Corridor.

Landscape and biodiversity

Many isolated and modified patches of natural habitat remain scattered across the municipality. Grasslands containing isolated populations of endangered reptiles are widespread, as well as scattered trees and seasonal wetlands.

The actions in this corridor are mostly for three types of species:

- those which are not sensitive to land-based barriers, such as birds, bats and flying insects
- those which live out their life in a very small patch of habitat and do not need to travel far
- those which are in disconnected habitat but can maintain viable populations through appropriate management.

Key habitats

- Modified woodland
- Open space
- Grassy habitats
- Residential gardens

The Brimbank Corridor

Action Plan 2018-2023

Action	Target Outcome	Year to start
Develop habitat connectivity implementation plans for Kororoit Creek and Taylors Creek.	A plan to connect and priorities works along two major waterways.	2018
Undertake fauna surveys to develop baseline data of the extent of Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard populations.	Determine presence or absent of populations within selected Council reserves.	2018
Support and participate in research opportunities that increase knowledge and understanding of species distribution and habitat requirements.	Increased knowledge of species distribution and habitat requirements.	As opportunities arise
Undertake strategic work to acknowledge and protect identified corridors and ensure appropriate habitat is maximized to inform a potential planning scheme amendment. This includes area adjacent to industrial precincts.	Brimbank planning controls effectively protect connectivity values in each corridor.	2019
Assess trees municipal wide for habitat and foraging values and embed protections for identified trees into the proposed Municipal Tree Policy.	Retention of habitat and foraging trees.	2020
Community engagement programs to be developed to support specific active delivery.	Community aware and supportive of landscape changes.	As required
Community engagement to monitor indicator species e.g. participation in National Bird Week.	Community participation in fauna monitoring.	Ongoing
Continue to deliver annual indigenous plantings within Conservation Assets.	8000 plants annually.	Ongoing
Continue to deliver annual advanced street tree planting program.	4000 trees annually.	Ongoing
Continue to deliver annual tree and shrub plantings within Council reserves.	8000 plants annually.	Ongoing
Incorporate fauna sensitive design into road, footpath and trail projects managed by Brimbank. Vic Roads Guidelines for Fauna Sensitive Road Design will be used as guidance.	Roads, footpaths and trails constructed by Brimbank City Council do not increase barriers to connectivity for fauna.	2020
Advocate to State and Federal government for structural connectivity to be retained through fauna sensitive design in infrastructure projects.	Federal funded infrastructure does not increase barriers to connectivity for fauna.	As opportunities arise

Action Plan 2018-2023

Action	Target Outcome	Year to start
Seek opportunities to manually relocate isolated populations of indigenous flora and fauna or those that are to be destroyed to ensure genetic diversity.	Increased diversity and population size of threatened species.	2018
Develop a targeted habitat gardening program to increase the overall quantity of indigenous vegetation and habitat features on private land.	30 new properties per year participate in a habitat gardening program.	2020
Support awareness program for responsible pet ownership to reduce impacts on wildlife.	2 annual engagement events promote responsible pet ownership.	2019
Advocate for native species to be utilised within street tree plantings within corridors.	Native species are used as street trees.	Ongoing

Taylors Creek within the Taylors Corridor

Brimbank City Council

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- TTY dial **133 677**
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Brimbank Language Link

Interpreter **9209 0140**
Local call costs apply

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