



## 4 relevant background

In addition to the existing planning controls identified previously, the City of Knox has embarked upon and programme of strategic work since the adoption of the new format planning scheme. This work has included a review of broad scale municipal issues relating to the future form and character of City, as well as more focussed examination of Activity Centres and spines. In this regard, key relevant studies include:

- Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth,
- Knox Urban Design Framework 2020,
- City of Knox Neighbourhood Character Study,
- Dandenong Foothills Character Study (preliminary),and
- Local Structure Plans

### Melbourne 2030

Melbourne 2030 – Planning for Sustainable Growth presents a vision for Melbourne through the introduction of 9 planning directions and focussed initiatives. Melbourne 2030 is integrated into the Knox Planning Scheme. Relevant Directions relating to the Dandenong Foothills include:

- Direction 2: Better Management of Metropolitan Growth
  - Establish an urban growth boundary to set clear limits to metropolitan Melbourne's outward development
  - Concentrate urban expansion into growth areas that are served by high-capacity public transport
  - Manage the sequence of development in growth areas so that services are available from early in the life of new communities
  - Protect the green wedges of metropolitan Melbourne from inappropriate development
- Direction 5: A Great Place to Be'
  - Promote good urban design to make the environment more liveable and attractive
  - Recognise and protect cultural identity, neighbourhood character and sense of place
  - Improve community safety and encourage neighbourhood design that makes people feel safe
  - Protect heritage places and values
  - Promote excellent neighbourhood design to create attractive, walkable and diverse communities
  - Improve the quality and distribution of local open space and ensure long-term protection of public open space
  - Rectify gaps in the network of metropolitan open space by creating new parks and ensure major open-space corridors are protected and enhanced
  - Improve the environmental health of the bays and their catchments
  - Protect coastal and foreshore environments, and improve public access and recreational facilities around Port Phillip Bay and Western Port
  - Maintain and develop metropolitan Melbourne as a desirable tourist destination



## Knox Urban Design Framework 2020.

The Knox Urban Design Framework 2020 detailed the preferred vision for the future form and design of the City of Knox. It provides the tools to ensure that the unique strengths and attributes of Knox are sustained, promoted and enhanced by quality planning decisions. It identifies 6 key aims as follows:

- The Dandenong Creek Valley is a continuous network of natural landscapes, native habitats and public parklands that are easily accessible.
- A clear, attractive and stable interface exists between urban development and the rural hinterland.
- Our creek corridors provide an integrated network of natural landscapes, native habitats and public open space within Knox.
- Our activity centres are the neighbourhood focal points of community life, social interaction and business activity.
- The wooded slopes of the foothills continue to be dominated by close canopy native vegetation.
- Our residential neighbourhoods are safe, and attractive with clear identities and character.
- Travelling through Knox presents a 'green leafy' outlook.

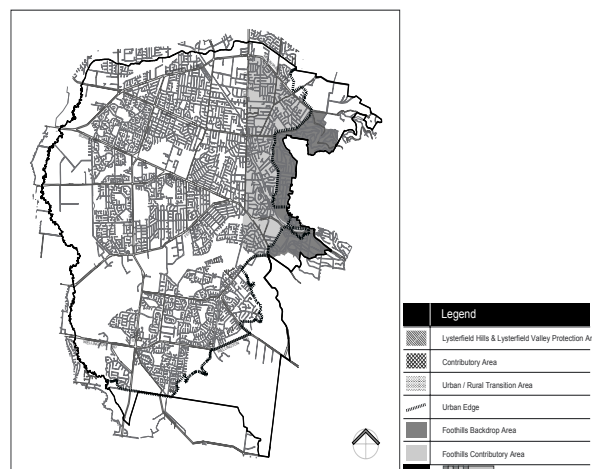
It also defines a vision for the Edge of the Suburbs as:

- A clear, attractive urban-rural boundary exists between the developed western area of Knox and the nearby rural hinterland. The wooded slopes of the Dandenong Ranges foothills remain dominated by dense native vegetation. In Lysterfield and The Basin, the end of urban development and the beginning of the rural landscape is distinct. Looking from the west, the foothills continue to appear as treed slopes rising above the suburbs. The backdrop of Dandenong Ranges and its foothills is widely visible across metropolitan Melbourne.

In arriving at this vision the Framework has identified six elements within the urban edge requiring analysis and definition (refer diagram), these include:

- Lysterfield Hills and Lysterfield Valley Protection Area
- Lysterfield Valley Contributory Area
- Urban/ Rural Transition Area
- Urban Edge
- Foothills Backdrop Area
- Foothills Contributory Area.

Design guidelines are specified for each of the above

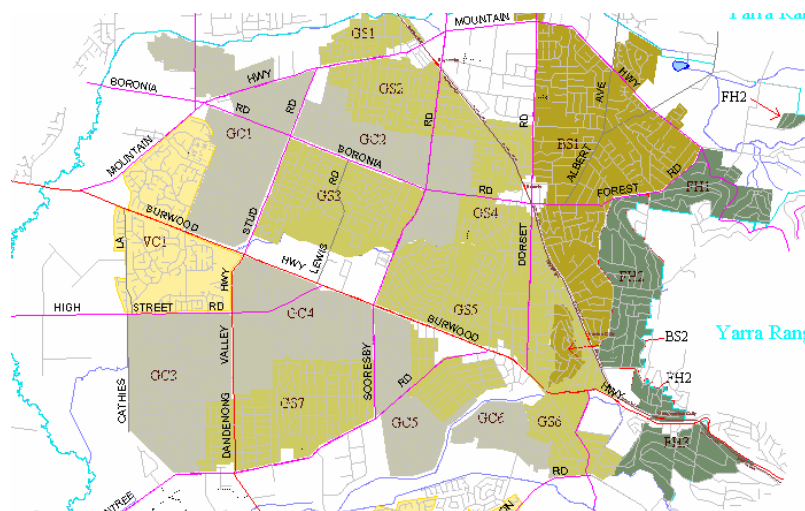




## City of Knox Neighbourhood Character Study

The City of Knox Neighbourhood Character Study (1999) describes the distinctive characteristics and planning guidelines for each part of the City. Six broad character areas have been identified within the residential sector (as distinct from those identified in the municipal framework above) and grouped by their consistencies such as topography, vegetation, streetscape, era, style, scale and intensity of development. It identifies the following relevant precincts (refer diagram):

- **Foothills(fh):** Marks the beginning of the special topographical and vegetative character of the Dandenong Ranges. Hillsides appear to be tree covered, even when developed with dwellings that tuck into or hug the hillsides with timber dwellings predominating in some areas. Large native trees with spreading canopies, coupled with substantial understorey plants and no front fences, assist in obscuring dwellings from the street. The precinct's most important characteristics are the dominance of vegetation in the streetscape and low-scale of dwellings and the continuous flow of bush vegetation across public and private land.
- **Bush suburban (bs):** Stands of trees and the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges provide a distinctive backdrop for mainly Post-war detached dwellings in an established garden setting. In response to the topography, dwellings are often sited at irregular angles to the street. Dwellings usually sit beneath the predominant tree canopy. Front fences are often absent or visually transparent and profuse landscaping dominates the streets. However, most dwellings remain wholly visible, contributing to the precinct's character. The precinct's most important characteristics are the frequent stands of high canopy indigenous and native vegetation, creating a prominent vegetation backdrop.
- **Garden suburban (gs):** Dwellings are mainly 1960s onwards, consistently low-scale and set among established low-level gardens (with occasional tall trees) free of carports, garages and front fences. Dwellings are visible from narrow, mostly straight streets arranged in a grid pattern. Driveways are well separated and gardens blend into the streetscape which has wide nature strips, narrow footpaths and variable remnant vegetation — minimal in some areas, with significant clusters in others. The precinct's most important characteristics are the low-scale of dwellings set within spacious garden settings, with either occasional pockets of large native trees or frequent stands of large native and exotic trees, rectilinear street patterns.

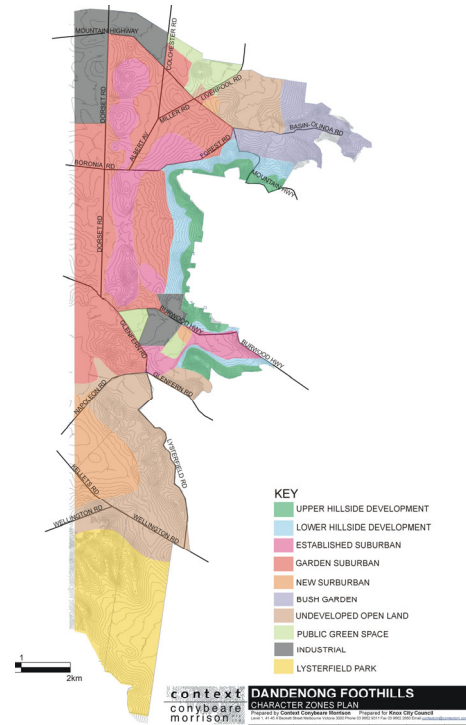




## Dandenong Foothills Character Study (preliminary)

A preliminary assessment of urban form and landscape issues focussing on the Dandenong Foothills was undertaken by Council in 2002, following the completion and adoption of the Neighbourhood Character Study. This process sought to highlight distinctive urban form and landscape features within those neighbourhood character precincts identified in the 1999 study. The study established:

- A suite of 10 indicative character zones relating to urban form and land use across the Foothills, including upper hillside development, lower hillside development, established suburban, garden suburban, new suburban, bush garden, undeveloped open land, public green space, industrial and Lysterfield Park.
- A 2 dimensional topographical review incorporating Foothill cross sections demonstrating the visual sensitivity of particular precincts within the study area, and detailed review of particular typologies of urban or suburban growth within the precinct.
- A suite of generic guidelines relating to development ambition within the Foothills including:
  - promote the preservation, regrowth and new growth of native vegetation in the area.
  - protect the hillside from irreparable damage.
  - ensure the maintenance of uninterrupted view lines to the Dandenongs from many key areas within Knox city council municipality.
  - regulate the rapid growth of new suburban development, urban sprawl, to protect the Lysterfield ridge and undeveloped land at the foothills.
  - outline and protect the context, language and posture of each zone thus regulating future development, and maintaining a sense of place and degree of uniformity.



## Local Structure Plans

The City of Knox has undertaken a series of individual structure planning studies of activity centres within the City, including a major review of the Principal Activity Centre known as Knox Central, and further visions for Major Activity Centres proximate and/or within the Foothills study area at Bayswater and Boronia. Each strategy seek to create more active and enticing urban setting through the formation of attractive public space and new medium rise mixed use development above and around existing retail and public transport nodes. No Activity Centre reviews or structure plans are in place for hubs within the study area including Upper Ferntree Gully, Ferntree Gully, or the Basin.





## 5 land assessment methodology

In order to gain a detailed appreciation of the urban and landscape attributes of the study as a basis for future planning and design controls and development management, a detailed land assessment was undertaken. The assessment process and findings are outlined below.

The Dandenong Foothills land assessment was carried out in a number of phases. Each phase aimed to develop an appreciation of the study area while further defining its direction and scope. Four key steps were undertaken as follows:

- desktop review to examine relevant reports, studies and imposed controls for study area,
- overview of Knox municipal structure and related built fabric, density, vegetation and activity centre mapping,
- remote landscape and topographical review through aerial photography to establish key features and critical landform and likely view corridors,
- site inspection and review of key view locations and areas of visual sensitivity
- preparation of a photographic catalogue of views mostly within or around 10 selected view site locations (refer appendix 1)

The findings of the above process are summarised below and illustrated in Figures 4-9.

### 5.1 review of municipal structure

A series of municipal diagrams were prepared as means of analysis of the municipal structure of the City and its broader relationship to the Dandenong Foothills. This strategic review sought to break up the municipality into a series of 6 discernable study themes relating to access and movement, activity centre and nodes, landform and topography, landscape and environment, visual sensitivity and anticipated future development. This assists in understanding popular or prominent locations within the City and those portions of the City that are prone to change. The focus of this assessment is the determination of key visually prominent locations where development management is required.

#### ▪ **access & movement**

The Knox municipality includes two major highways; Dandenong Highway/Stud Road running north-south from the Monash Freeway and Burwood Highway crossing east-west and deep into the Ranges. Other complementary east-west corridors within the municipality are the Mountain Highway in the north and Wellington Road, Ferntree Gully, Kellets and Napoleon Roads in the south. Major north-south corridors further east of Stud Road are Scoresby and Dorset Roads, which both present multiple view lines towards the foothills and Ranges. Secondary roads running north-south include Albert Avenue, Forest and Glenfern Roads. These offer close range and intermittent views of the foothills. The Belgrave railway line cuts diagonally through the north of the municipality and does not offer outstanding panoramas towards the Ranges, except in its elevated position near stations at Major Activity Centres.



- **activity centres & nodes**

A review of activity centres, public spaces and institutions of note was undertaken to determine which locations may enjoy an open relationship with the foothills and Ranges. In addition to defined activity centres, the City's major roads were considered as activity spines and locations from which day-to-day exposure to the foothills occurs. Knox City is the municipality's principal activity centre with few views towards the foothills. Other centres such as Boronia, Ferntree Gully and Upper Ferntree Gully have a more proximate relationship with the foothills and Ranges. Boronia's aspect is defined largely by its foothill foreground, whereas both Ferntree Gully and Upper Ferntree Gully are positioned well within the foothills and are experienced from the flat valley floor. The Bayswater activity centre is more distant in its relationship with the foothills but has open panoramic views towards the northern Ranges. The Ferny Creek, Blind Creek and Monbulk Creek corridors which accommodate for considerable recreational areas and possess a relatively contained view shed.

- **landform & topography**

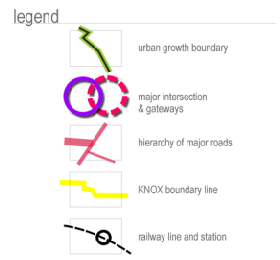
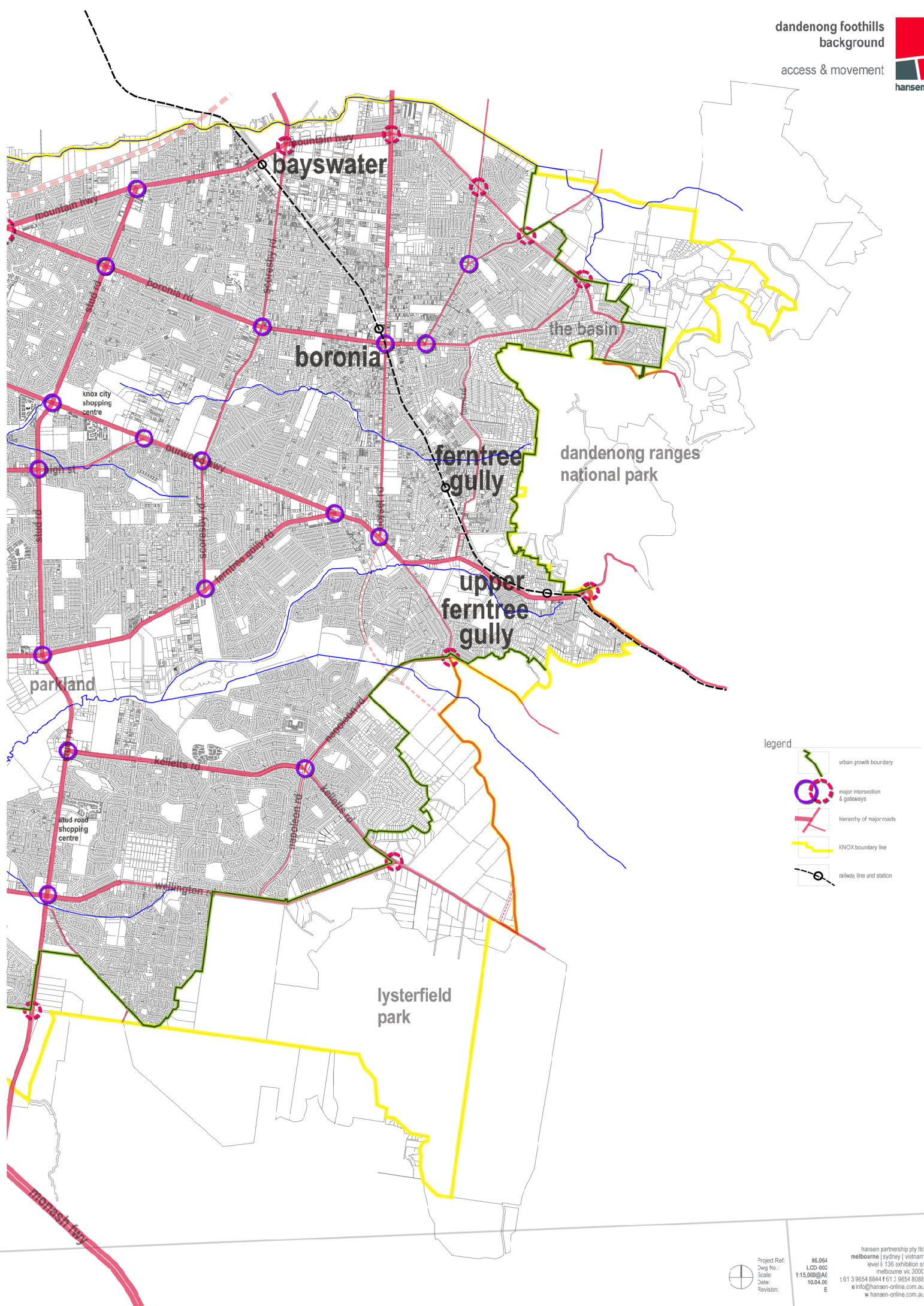
The topographical condition of the setting is the basis for the image and effect of the foothills and Ranges. The municipality is made up of broad undulating land between Dandenong, Blind and Monbulk Creek valleys to the west and rises sharply to the east, in intermediate foothills and to the north to the broad peaks and slopes of the Dandenong Range. The foothills are defined in four general parts, including the northern headland of the Basin extending west towards Bayswater and Boronia, the foreground hills running parallel to Dorset Road (north south) which conceal views to Ferntree Gully, the confined valleys and steep sloping walls of Ferny and Ferntree Gully Creeks, extending well into the Ranges, and the southern Ranges, comprising the open hills by the Monbulk Creek and the low but sweeping Lysterfield hills extending towards Endeavour Hills.

- **landscape & environment**

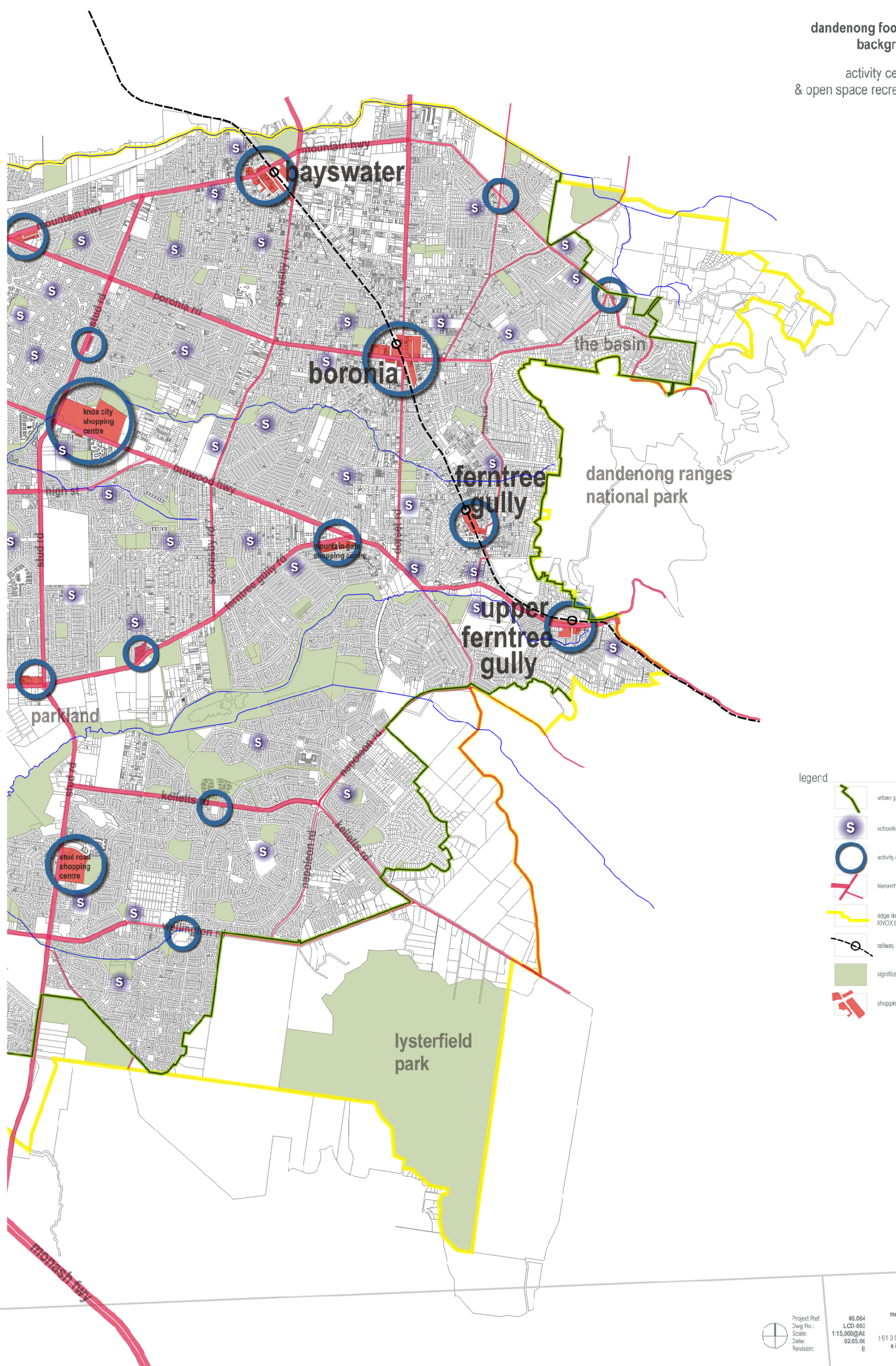
The extent of canopy cover and vegetation across the municipality is considerable, in particular given the municipality's identity as a City in the Bush. Canopy cover and tree density are extensive in the north-east and south-east of the municipality where public open spaces and or rural land is established. This is particularly evident around The Basin and Ferntree Gully north. Within residentially developed areas, there is excellent tree cover to the north of Ferntree Gully Road and east of Forest Road as the land rises sharply towards the edge of the National Park. The extent of canopy cover is more varied to the south, in particular around the Monbulk Valley where open hills accommodate for limited tree cover. The Lysterfield Park to the south has generous canopy cover. Dense canopy cover around is an important element when considering the foothills visual quality.

- **anticipated future urban development**

The potential for change in the municipality is informed by data provided by the Urban Development Program (UDP) and the Knox Housing Statement (2004). The combined outcome suggests that most of Knox's new development (for residential purposes) will occur on strategic sites on the flatter western parts of the City. Locations within the sensitive sloping foothill and Ranges area include land near the junction of Forest road Burwood Highway, the area around the proposed Dorset Road extension and Napoleon Road, and released residential land close to the Wellington Road and Kelletts Road intersection. In addition to 'stated' development sites, a large proportion of growth is anticipated from multiple lot subdivision of large lots within established or emerging precincts.



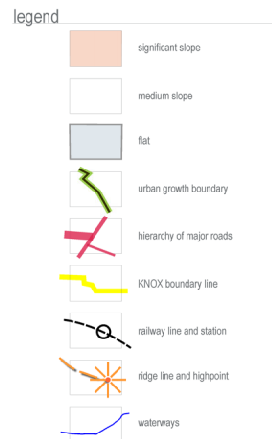
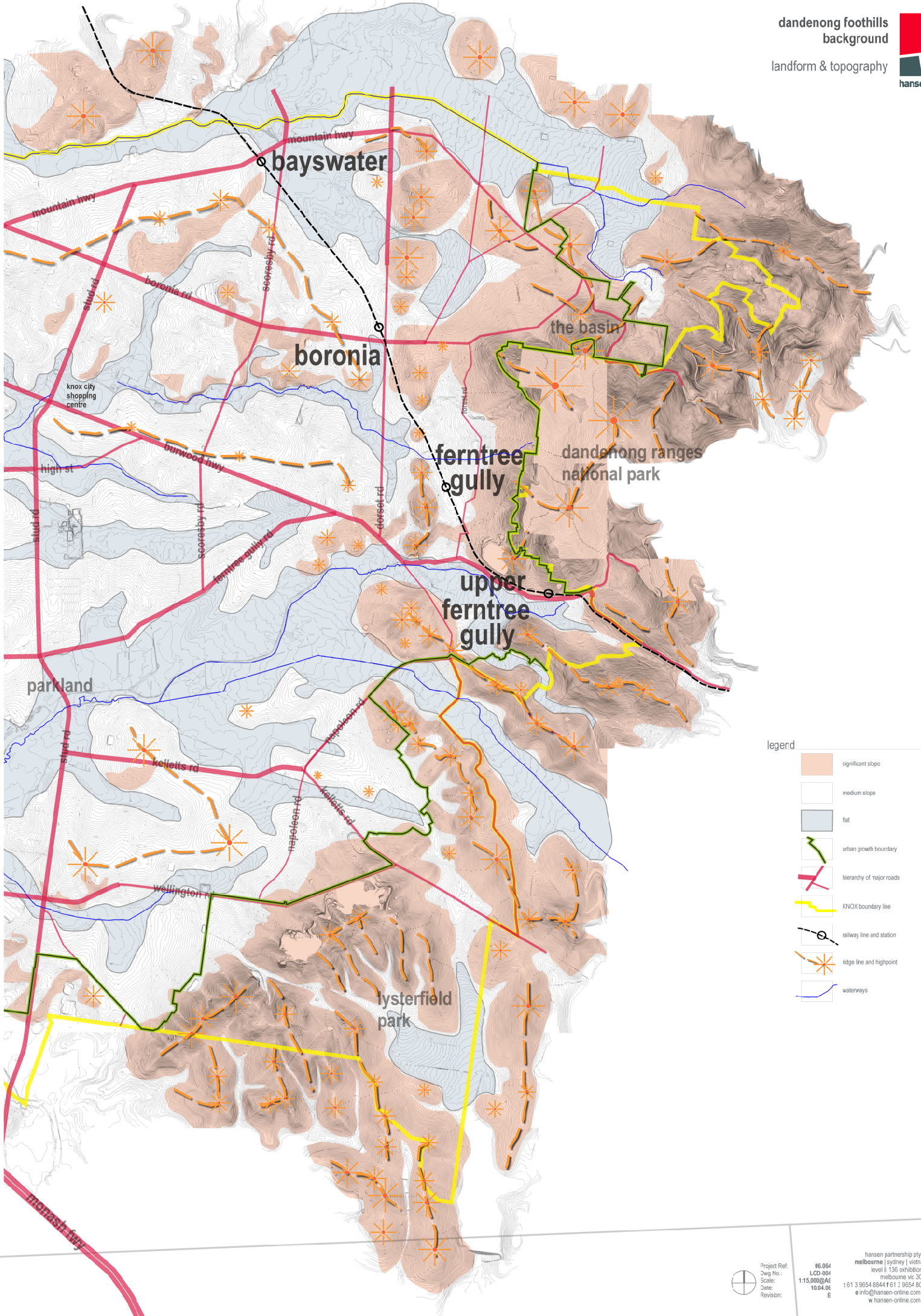




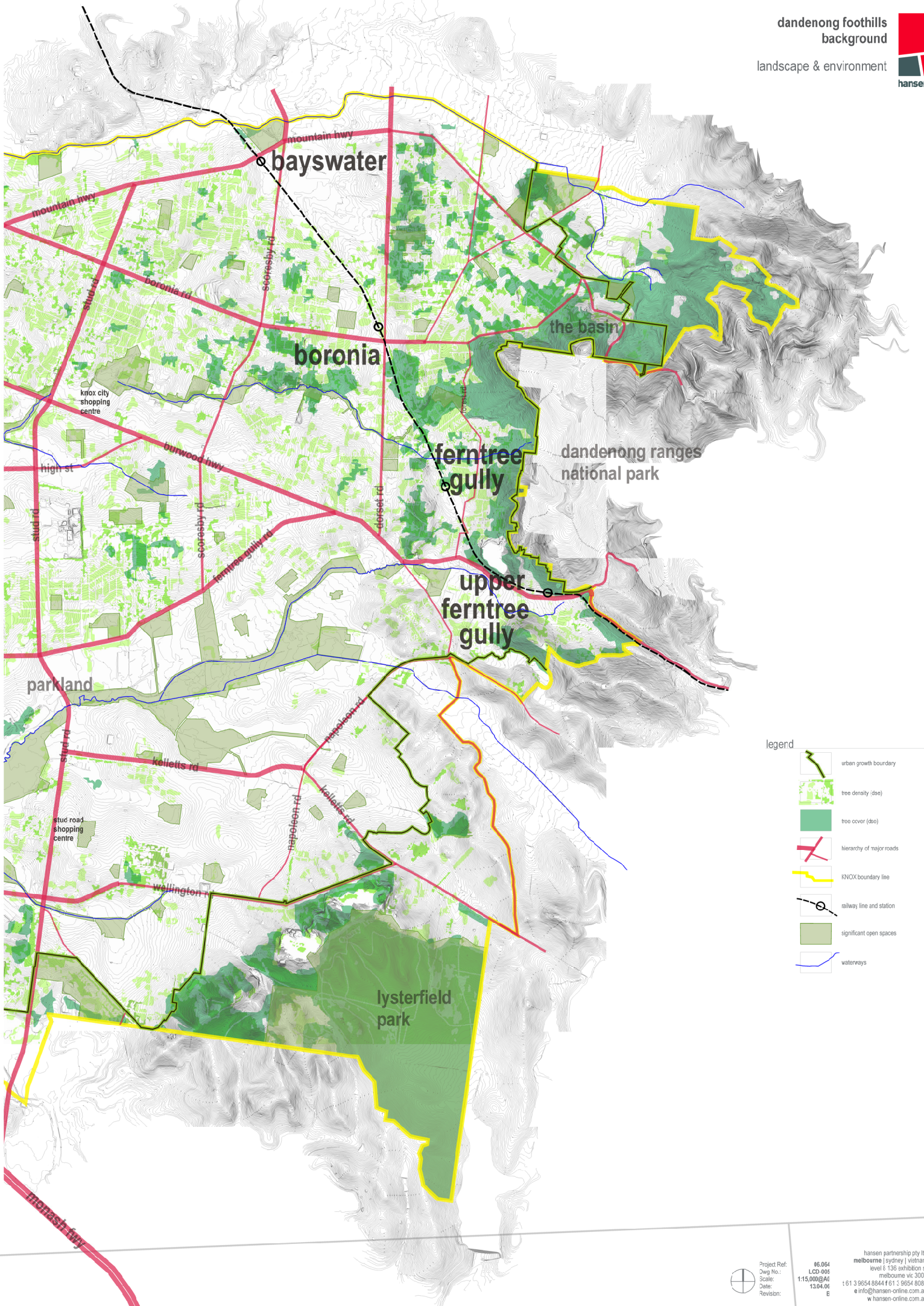
legend

- urban growth boundary
- schools
- activity centre
- hierarchy of major roads
- edge line and highpoint KNOX boundary line
- railway line and station
- significant open spaces
- shopping centre









legend

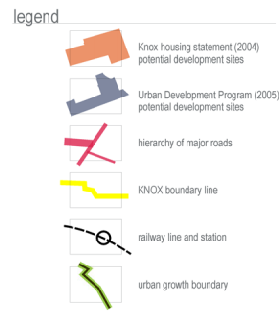
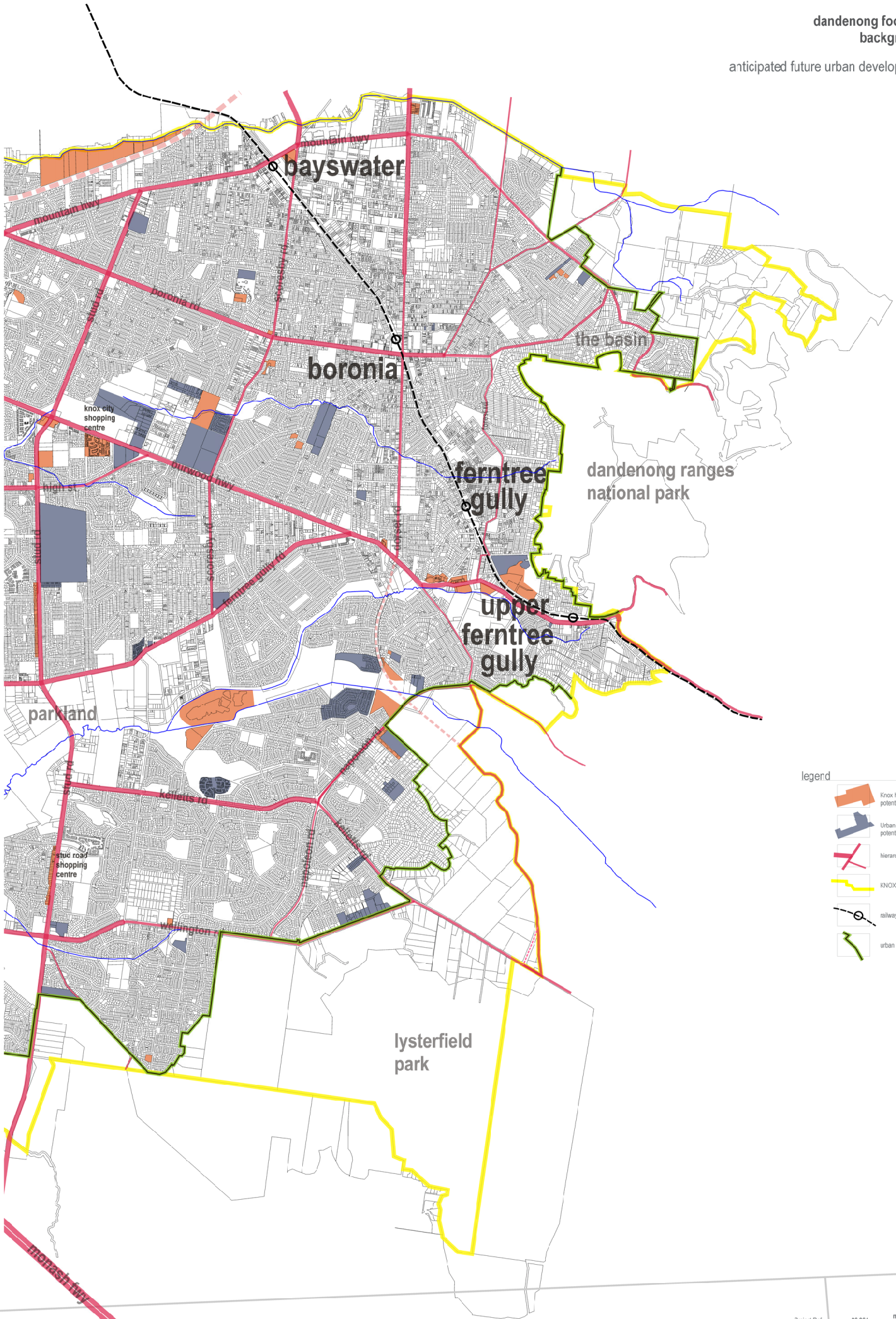
- urban growth boundary
- tree density (dse)
- tree cover (dso)
- hierarchy of major roads
- KNOX boundary line
- railway line and station
- significant open spaces
- waterways



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- **visual sensitivity**

Visual sensitivity within the study areas is determined by the aspect of key view lines along roads, open space spines and public vantage points, and proximate rising topography along such paths. Strong views east are available along each of the primary arterial roads serving the Ranges, with prominent panoramas also occurring along Scoresby and Dorset Roads. Sensitive exposed slopes views from these vantage points are the rising intermediate hills east of Dorset Road (between Mountain Hwy and Napoleon Road, lower reaches of the Lysterfield hills and the rising slopes to the east of Forest Road in Ferntree Gully). These represent exposed locations where residential development and growth has the capacity to erode the green sense of place of the City's edge.

## 6 character precincts

The thorough municipal analysis undertaken as part of this review has also assisted in the identification of a series of existing character traits that define and distinguish places within the Dandenong Foothills. A notion of the difference between places in the study area has been introduced in both the Knox Urban Design Framework 2020 and the City of Knox Neighbourhood Character Study. While each of these assessments provides a credible assessment of 'place', this review has considered these precincts in terms of their scenic contribution, topographical condition and urban development pattern. There are many consistencies with the previous studies, with a view establishing a clear set of boundaries and/or delineations to justify future development controls and guidelines (refer Figure 10).

While the notion of neighbourhood character and sense of place is relatively new in terms of planning scheme assessment, it is a factor that has been at the heart of urban development and placemaking for generations. It is defined as the 'collective experience of public and private elements within a setting', including a combination of private objects such as building forms, fencing, gardens and outdoor spaces, and public features including roads, footpaths, parklands and street trees. Another critical feature of the 'public' environment and an element which is invariably the most influential is the broader 'landscape'; in terms of the sensory experience (visual, acoustic or tactile) comprising topography, views, and the presence of bush, coast, plain or other setting.

In the context of the Dandenong Foothills, the prevailing feature of the place is unquestionably its topographical condition and the extent of vegetative cover (or lack of as the case may be). As such, the following character precincts are defined primarily in terms of their location within the broader topographical and/or bush or parkland setting.

It is also important to note that the following statements do not necessarily reflect the preferred or future quality of the place, as 'existing' character is not always highly valued. The following statements of existing character must be distinguishable from further statements of 'preferred character', which indicate what type of urban development form and finish can comfortably co-exist within a stated topographical or locations setting.