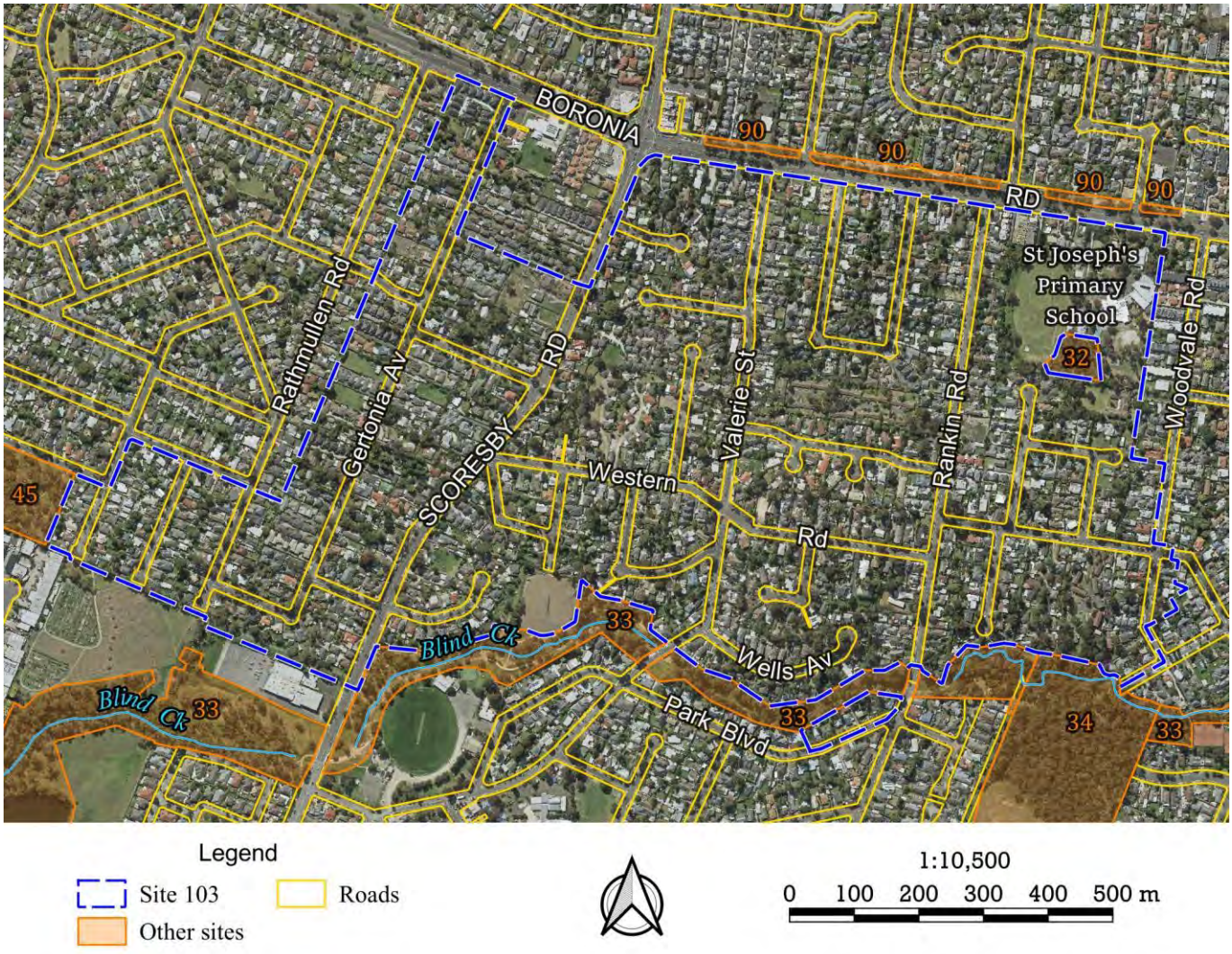
Site 103. Blind Creek Valley, Boronia

A treed residential area, predominantly on the northern side of Blind Ck.

Summary of significant features:

- Locally significant: many trees that facilitate movements of birds, bats, tree frogs and flying insects around the local landscape in pursuit of their daily and seasonal needs;
- Locally significant: viable populations of locally-threatened indigenous tree species;
- Locally significant: a substantial patch of the locally-threatened Common Bird-orchid (*Chiloglottis valida*).



Boundaries

This 99-hectare site comprises the two polygons outlined with blue dashes on the aerial photograph above. It does not include the part of St Joseph's School that forms Site 32. Most of the boundary aligns with property boundaries except where crossing roads.

The version of this site that appeared in previous editions of this report was somewhat larger, at 108 ha. A small area has been added on the eastern side of Woodvale Rd. That increment is far outweighed by the excision of:

- Many properties on the western side of Woodvale Rd, due to residential subdivision and consequent tree removal;
- In a square to the southwest of the Boronia Rd / Scoresby Rd intersection, for the same reason;
- Part of Fairpark Reserve that has been transferred in this edition to Site 33 due to its improved habitat; and
- On the southern side of Blind Ck (21-39 Park Rd) due to tree removals.

Land use & tenure: Freehold residential land, Council park and roads.

Site description

This residential neighbourhood retains a substantial number of mature remnant eucalypts and mature planted trees, including eucalypts from other parts of Australia. Street trees represent a significant fraction of the tree canopy. Although the canopy is patchy, it provides basic habitat needs for native birds, bats, possums, tree frogs and invertebrates. Substantial numbers of native forest birds, such as rosellas, thornbills and pardalotes, frequent the area. That can be attributed to the site's trees and the presence of more substantial areas of habitat in the sites that are numbered and shaded orange on the aerial photograph on the previous page.

Most of Wells Avenue Reserve retains a canopy of remnant trees and an area of groundcover dominated by indigenous grasses. Among those grasses is a colony of Common Bird-orchids (*Chiloglottis valida*).

Abutting the Blind Creek corridor, to the rear of 60 Woodvale Rd, is an area that is mostly dominated by large pines but also supports some remnant Swamp Gums, shrubs and groundcover.

Other parts of the site have very little indigenous understorey other than hardy grasses.

Relationship to other land

Many native birds move through this area. A good example is the Crimson Rosellas nesting in Site 90 on the Boronia Rd roadside, which would have to fly through the site to find enough food for themselves and their young. Eastern Rosellas and Galahs that are common in Roselyn Crescent Reserve (Site 45, abutting to the west) can often be seen flying between there and Site 103. It seems that most of the native vertebrate fauna in the various sites seen on the aerial photograph would need to move between the sites to fulfil all their habitat needs. Therefore, Site 103 appears to play an important role in facilitating movement of wildlife so they can meet their daily or seasonal needs.

Plant species

The following wild, indigenous plant species were observed from the public domain by the author on 18th January 2025. (No additional species have been recorded growing wild in the site.) Additional species would probably be detectable from private land. The column headed 'Risk' indicates the indigenous species' risk of local extinction as follows: 'C'=Critically endangered', 'E'=Endangered and 'V'=Vulnerable.

Risk	Species
	Acacia dealbata, Silver Wattle
V	*Acacia implexa,* Lightwood
V	*Acacia mearnsii,* Black Wattle
V	*Acacia melanoxylon,* Blackwood
	Austrostipa rudis subsp. *rudis,* Veined Spear-grass
	Bursaria spinosa, Sweet Bursaria
	Carex breviculmis, Short-stem Sedge
V	*Chiloglottis valida,* Common Bird-orchid
	Dianella longifolia var. *longifolia,* Pale Flax-lily
	Dianella revoluta, Black-anther Flax-lily
	Dichondra repens, Kidney-weed
E	*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa,* Mealy Stringybark
V	*Eucalyptus goniocalyx,* Bundy
E	*Eucalyptus melliodora,* Yellow Box
E	*Eucalyptus obliqua,* Messmate Stringybark
V	*Eucalyptus ovata,* Swamp Gum
E	*Eucalyptus radiata,* Narrow-leaved Peppermint
V	*Exocarpos cupressiformis,* Cherry Ballart
C	*Gahnia radula,* Thatch Saw-sedge
E	*Juncus subsecundus,* Finger Rush
	Kunzea leptospermoides, Yarra Burgan
	Lomandra filiformis subsp. *coriacea,* Wattle Mat-rush
	Lomandra longifolia, Spiny-headed Mat-rush
	Lomandra longifolia subsp. *longifolia,* Spiny-headed Mat-rush
E	*Melaleuca ericifolia,* Swamp Paperbark
	Microlaena stipoides, Weeping Grass
V	*Prostanthera lasianthos,* Victorian Christmas-bush
	Rytidosperma penicillatum, Slender Wallaby-grass
	Rytidosperma racemosum, Clustered Wallaby-grass
	Rytidosperma setaceum, Bristly Wallaby-grass
	Rytidosperma tenuius, Purplish Wallaby-grass
	Themeda triandra, Kangaroo Grass

Notes concerning some a locally-threatened plant species

Chiloglottis valida (Common Bird-orchid) – A patch of approximately 1½ m² grows next to the play equipment in Wells Avenue Reserve.

Significance ratings

The following is an assessment of the site's biological significance against the Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action's standard criteria (Amos 2004).

Ecological Integrity and Viability

As discussed above, the trees in the site serve as ecological 'stepping stones' for flying fauna to move about the local landscape and between neighbouring sites of biological significance. This feature meets criterion 1.2.6 for a site of **Local** significance.

Threatened plant species

The site's locally-threatened species of wattles and eucalypts have viable populations in combination with neighbouring native vegetation. Eucalypts are the most conspicuous examples. The patch of Common Bird-orchids at Wells Avenue Reserve is also viable, or else it would have died out long ago. All these populations meet criterion 3.1.5 for a site of **Local** significance.

Threats

- Residential subdivision and development;
- Human-induced climate change, which is predicted to cause more severe droughts, heatwaves and storms, as well as substantially lower rainfall (particularly in winter);
- Debilitation and deaths of trees, partly due to the abovementioned droughts and storms;
- Lack of natural replacement of indigenous species as they die;
- Loss or decline of the indigenous plant species as a result of most of their populations being so small and fragmented that they are vulnerable to inbreeding, poor reproductive success or localised chance events.

Strategic planning

As a result of the previous (2010) edition of this report, Schedule 4 of the Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO4) applies to the slightly different version of the site that was delineated at that time. The stated reasons for applying VPO4 were that:

- It contains (in the words of the VPP Practice Note on Biodiversity) 'scattered living food trees with an exotic understorey';
- It is a site of Local biological significance;
- Most of the properties involved are too small to be affected by Clause 52.17 of the Knox Planning Scheme, which might otherwise provide some of the trees with some protection; and
- Some of the habitat trees are not native to Victoria and are therefore not protected by Clause 52.17.

These features are equally valid for the current version of the site. There is no need to alter the text of VPO4 but it is recommended here to amend the VPO4 boundaries to match the ones here.

Information sources used in this assessment

- An inspection of the area by Dr Lorimer in 2003 for the specific purpose of finding sites of biological significance and determining the distribution of trees that represent reasonable habitat for native fauna;
- General visual inspection of the area's vegetation by Dr Lorimer during 2003–8 and 2024 while surveying other sites in this report, such as St Joseph's School (Site 32), the Blind Creek Corridor (Site 33), the Blind Creek Billabong (Site 34) and Roselyn Crescent Reserve (Site 45);
- Dr Lorimer's reassessment of the site's biological significance for the Knox Housing Strategy, as discussed in his report to Knox City Council titled 'Implications of Sites of Biological Significance on the Draft Knox Housing Strategy' and dated 14th August 2014;
- A vegetation survey of the site for this edition on 21st November 2024 and 18th January 2025, on foot and by car, including redetermination of the site's boundary;
- A search in vain for records of flora and fauna observations stored in Knox City Council's biodiversity database;

- Records of flora and fauna observations stored in the Atlas of Living Australia;
- Aerial and satellite imagery between 1946 and 2025;
- The Victorian Government's 'NatureKit' website;
- Maps of geology, topography and strategic planning information produced by agencies of the Victorian Government.