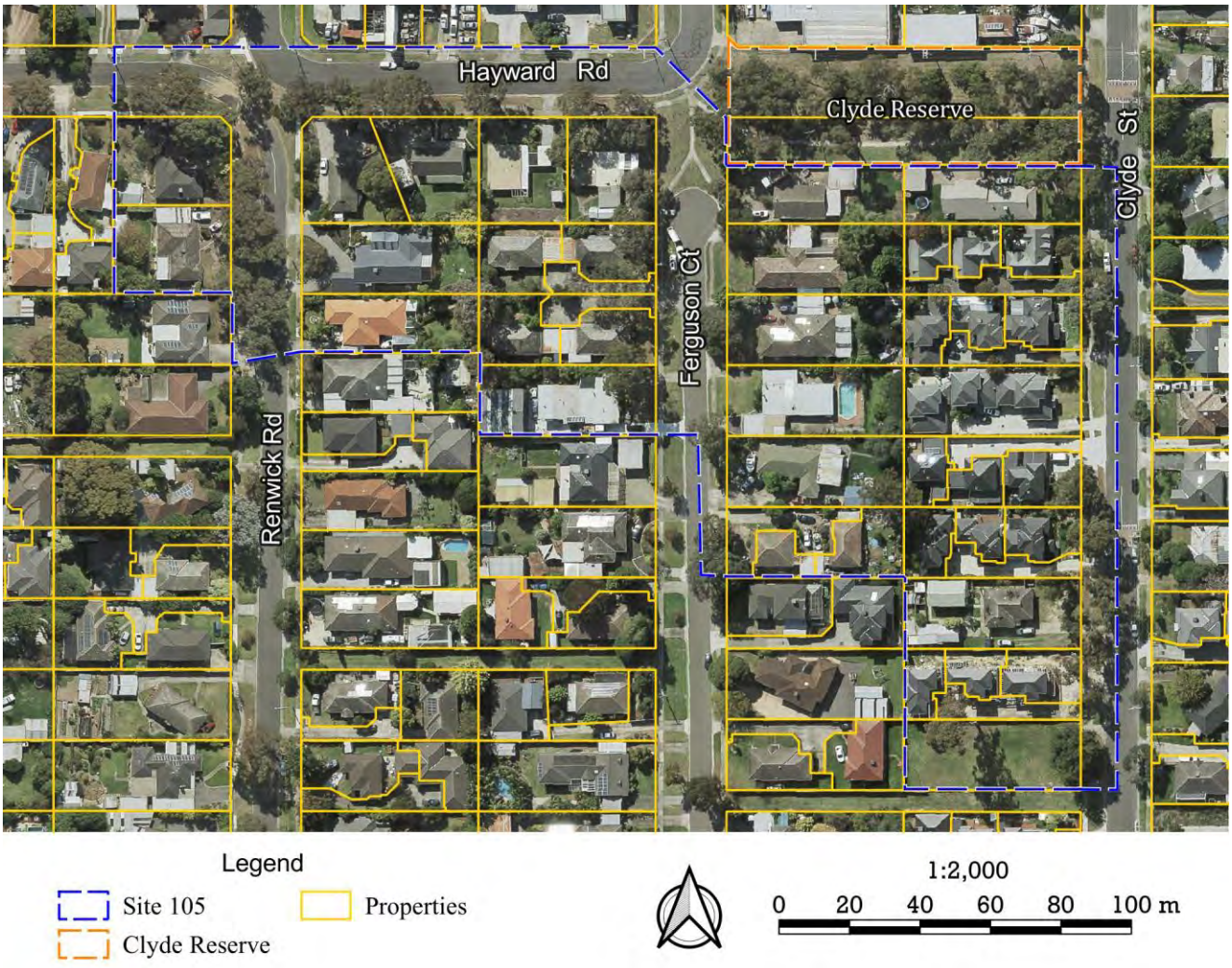
Site 105. Clyde Reserve Buffer, Ferntree Gully

A treed residential area adjacent to the more significant habitat of Clyde Reserve (Site 38, p. 277).

Summary of significant features:

- Locally significant: many trees that, in combination with Clyde Reserve, represent an ecological stepping-stone for movements of birds and flying insects around the local landscape in pursuit of their daily and seasonal needs;
- Locally significant: a substantial population of the locally-threatened species, Mealy Stringybark (*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*).



Boundaries

The site is outlined with blue dashes above, measuring 3.3 hectares. The 21-hectare version of this site that appeared in previous versions of this report under the title, 'Dobson Street Treed Precinct', was based on a vegetation survey by the author in 2003. The tree canopy was rather fragmented even then but it has deteriorated further in the intervening 22 years. Only the area delineated here warrants recognition as a site of biological significance.

That is not to say that the area excised from the original site contains no natural assets of any significance. In particular, the large, old, remnant eucalypts in Kent Park Primary School and to its south along Dobson St belong to the locally-threatened species, Mealy Stringybark (*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*) and Narrow-leaved Peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*) and they help keep native birds in the area.

Land use & tenure: Freehold residential land and road reserve.

Site description

This treed neighbourhood retains a substantial number of remnant trees, all of which belong to locally threatened species. The most abundant species by far is the Mealy Stringybark (*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*). Messmate Stringybark (*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*) and Narrow-leaved Peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*) are also present. Mealy Stringybark, in particular, is a high producer of carbohydrates for fauna. The habitat provided by the remnant eucalypts is supplemented by planted eucalypt species from other parts of Australia, particularly ironbarks that produce copious nectar for fauna. Together, these trees significantly supplement the fauna habitat provided by the abutting Clyde Reserve (Site 38, p. 277).

Relationship to other land

On its own, the site could not fulfil all the habitat needs of the many parrots that were observed there. The same is likely to be true of some other species of birds and flying insects. It appears that these fauna fulfil their daily and seasonal needs by moving among 'ecological stepping-stones' that include this site, Clyde Reserve, Lakewood Nature Reserve (Site 43) and the Knoxfield treed precinct (Site 107) (among others). In the intervening space, even an individual Australian native tree can serve as a brief staging post for the nomadic fauna.

Bioregion: Gippsland Plain

Habitat type

Valley Heathy Forest (EVC 127, **Endangered**), reduced to its eucalypt canopy.

Fauna of special significance

None observed.

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

In combination with Clyde Reserve, the site represents an ecological stepping-stone for locally-nomadic birds and probably flying insects. Criterion 1.2.6 attributes **Local** significance to ecological stepping-stones that it describes as 'Important at local scale - Link between individual remnant habitat blocks or within subcatchment'.

Locally Threatened Plants

The site contains a substantial population of Mealy Stringybark, which falls into the Endangered category of risk of dying out in Knox. This meets criterion 3.1.5 for **Local** significance.

Threats

- 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;
- Residential development;
- Lack of natural replacement of indigenous species as they die;
- Potential damage to remnant vegetation during maintenance of roads or utility services.

Strategic planning

Schedule 4 of the Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO4) applies to this site as a result of a recommendation in the previous (2010) edition of this report. The stated reasons for applying VPO4 were that:

- The site contains (in the words of the VPP Practice Note on Biodiversity) 'scattered living food trees with an exotic understorey';
- The site is a site of Local biological significance;

- The properties involved are too small to be affected by Clause 52.17 of the Knox Planning Scheme, which might otherwise provide the indigenous 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 remain and therefore there is no need to alter the application of VPO4 to the site delineated here. Although the site has shrunk greatly compared with the previous edition of this report, it would be reasonable to retain the existing VPO4 boundary. That is because most properties in the area that has been excised from Site 105 are unaffected by it (as they contain none of the protected types of trees) and the few exceptions warrant VPO4.

Information sources used in this assessment

- Ecological surveys of Clyde St, Dobson St, Dobson Reserve and Kent Park Primary School by Rik Brown on 8th May 2002 for the first edition of this report, including (for each of these four areas):
  - Compilation of a list of indigenous and introduced plants;
  - A description of the vegetation's structural and floristic composition;
  - Incidental fauna observations; and
  - Checks for fauna habitat, ecological threats and management issues;
- An inspection of the area by Dr Lorimer in 2003 for the specific purpose of determining the distribution of trees that represent reasonable habitat for native fauna;
- A vegetation survey of the site for this edition on 19th 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 from between 1976 and 2025;
- The Victorian Government's 'NatureKit' website;
- Maps of geology, topography and strategic planning information produced by agencies of the Victorian Government.