

Site 118. Parks and Reserves

This section refers to native vegetation in parks and reserves that are not recognised as sites, or parts of sites, described earlier in this report.

Site Significance Level: *Local*

As in the case of schoolgrounds, some parks and reserves in Knox have remnant trees and sometimes patches of native understorey, or areas of hardy native grasses such as Clustered Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma racemosum*) and Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*). The remnant eucalypts and large wattles that are common in these parks and reserves generally belong to locally-threatened species. Any park or reserve with a substantial number of such species meets the Victorian Government's standard criteria for a site of at least Local biological significance.

The more biologically important parks and reserves are covered earlier in this report. The native vegetation in other parks and reserves seen during this study is too isolated or too sparse to warrant the application of an overlay in the Knox Planning Scheme. The four reserves discussed below summarise the most noteworthy examples of native vegetation in this category. In all cases, the properties are larger than 0.4 ha and so they are subject to the state-wide baseline 'native vegetation retention' provisions of Clause 52.17 of the Victoria Planning Provisions.

Site 118a. Birchfield Reserve, Wantirna

Native vegetation in this reserve is represented by revegetation of various ages and some scattered remnant eucalypts. The reserve also has many mature Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*), which are competing strongly with the remnant vegetation and revegetation. The pines represent a significant threat to the remnant vegetation.

The remnant eucalypts are mostly Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), accompanied by five Red Stringybark (*E. macrorhyncha*), two Mealy Stringybark (*E. cephalocarpa*) and a Bundy (*E. goniocalyx*). The size and position of the Red Stringybarks suggests that at least some of them may have been planted.

The only remnant shrubs are a couple of Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*). Remnant groundcover is limited to a small patch of Thatch Saw-sedge (*Gahnia radula*), some Kidney-weed (*Dichondra repens*) and the ubiquitous grasses, Clustered Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma racemosum*) and Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*).

The habitat provided by the remnant vegetation and planted indigenous species is supplemented by planted Australian native trees along the western boundary of the reserve, including Sydney Blue Gum, Lemon-scented Gum and Bracelet Honey-myrtle.

Threats:

- The impacts of many Monterey Pines, up to 30 m tall;
- Human-induced climate change, which is predicted to cause more severe droughts, heatwaves and storms, as well as substantially lower rainfall (particularly in winter);
- Lack of recruitment of indigenous vegetation because of mowing.

Site 118b. Michelle Drive Reserve, Scoresby

This reserve is located between 42 and 52 Michelle Dr. It was created in 2003 from subdivision of the Catholic seminary that was on the site. Within an area of 2,400 m², there is a near-pure stand of approximately 25 remnant Mealy Stringybarks (*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*). There is also one remnant Narrow-leaved Peppermint (*E. radiata*), an apparent hybrid eucalypt and some planted Australian native eucalypts. There is only lawn beneath the trees, with some Clustered Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma racemosum*).

Site 118c. Peregrine Reserve, Rowville

The native vegetation within this reserve was mostly cleared or destroyed during its period as part of a grazing property. It would have belonged to the Swampy Woodland EVC, which is now regionally endangered. Today, the reserve's remnant vegetation includes a small number of Swamp Gums (*Eucalyptus ovata*) and a sickly Mealy Stringybark (*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*). One of the remnant Swamp Gums is very large; It and other remnant eucalypts have many hollows and fissures that may be inhabited by native birds, bats, possums or invertebrates.

The reserve has been a priority revegetation site for Knox City Council since about 1998, resulting in some of the indigenous plants today being indistinguishable between planted or remnant.

Site 118d. Teofilo Drive Reserve, Lysterfield

situated between Teofilo Dr and Sunrise Ct.

This 0.2 ha park has:

- Eleven mature, remnant Mealy Stringybarks (*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*), three of which have trunk diameters large enough to qualify as 'large trees' under the Victorian Government's criteria;
- A single remnant Spiny-headed Mat-rush plant (*Lomandra longifolia*); and
- Some planted indigenous species, including Yellow Box (*E. melliodora*), Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*) and Spiny-headed Mat-rush.

The large Mealy Stringybarks represent good habitat for native birds, possums, invertebrates and perhaps bats.

The habitat formed by the reserve's vegetation may encourage native fauna to the park, mostly from the extensive habitat in the Lysterfield Hills (Site 81), which is only several hundred metres away.