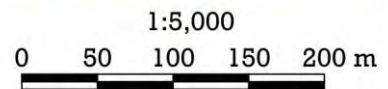


Site 62. Scoresby Linear Reserve

A linear reserve that was once occupied by the southern end of Cathies Lane.

Summary of significant features:

- State significance: a patch of the regionally-endangered vegetation type, Valley Heathy Forest, heavily supplemented by planting (including rare species);
- Locally significant: viable populations of some locally-threatened plant species.



Boundaries

This 1.9-hectare site is outlined with blue dashes on the aerial photograph above. No change has been made to the boundary since the previous (2010) edition of this report. An additional 7.2 ha was included in the site in the first (2004) edition but it was removed as a result of the construction of EastLink.

Land use & tenure: Linear Council park (formerly a road, since ripped up), as well as a tree reservation beside Ferntree Gully Rd.

Site description

Cathies Lane once ran along this reserve but it has been closed and greatly revegetated to provide a linear park along the interface between an industrial estate and a residential neighbourhood. Elevations range between 55 m on a floodplain near Ferntree Gully Rd to 73 m at the northwest end.

The terrain northwest of the floodway marked on the aerial photograph is a gentle slope with a gradient of typically 5% and a silty, poorly draining clay loam soil. The remnant vegetation there belongs to the regionally-endangered Ecological Vegetation Class, Valley Heathy Forest, but the eucalypt canopy is patchy in places and the understorey is predominantly planted.

Southeast of the floodway, the soil is silty alluvium on a drainage line with a gradient of approximately 1%. Swampy Woodland (another regionally-endangered Ecological Vegetation Class) once occurred there but it is now represented by sparse remnant eucalypts and hardly any native understorey other than revegetation. There are also mature, planted eucalypts from other parts of Australia and areas of mown lawn.

Except quite close to Ferntree Gully Rd, Knox City Council has extensively revegetated the site since c. 2018 with an unusually large number of indigenous species. Among those species are some quite uncommon ones, including Scaly-foot Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma lepidopodum*) and the globally-endangered Matted Flax-lily (*Dianella amoena*). The revegetation has thickened what was already a fairly dense shrub layer, benefiting small native birds such as White-browed Scrubwrens and Brown Thornbills.

Because of the large quantities of planted plants, it is hard to tell whether some species are present naturally, due to planting, due to descendants of planted plants, or any mixture of these.

A highlight of the site prior to the construction of EastLink was the occurrence of the Yarra Gum (*Eucalyptus yarraensis*), which is critically endangered globally. Supplement Volume H of the Environment Effects Statement for the Scoresby Transport Corridor (1998) concluded that there were seven clustered around the northwestern end of the original (2004) version of this site, but they were cleared during EastLink's construction. The affected part of the site was excised in the second (2010) edition of this report.

It is very unusual to find Yarra Gums extending so far from a floodplain or on a 5% slope, suggesting that the soil drains very poorly despite the slope.

Relationship to other land

Redcourt Reserve (Site 63) lies 150 m northeast of the Scoresby Linear Reserve. Some native birds and invertebrates no doubt travel between these sites but the combined habitat is still insufficient to meet the needs of species such as the rosellas and kookaburras seen there. It is expected that the required additional habitat is being met partly by native trees and shrubs in the neighbourhood. Native vegetation along Dandenong Creek – including Jells Park – may also contribute. However, there is no observational evidence of what fauna regularly crosses EastLink.

Bioregion: Gippsland Plain

Habitat types

Valley Heathy Forest (EVC 127, regionally **Endangered**): Estimated to cover 1 ha, comprising 0.8 ha in fair ecological condition (rating C) and 0.2 ha in poor ecological condition (rating D).

Canopy trees: Dominated by *Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*, *E. radiata* and *E. melliodora*, with some *E. macrorhyncha*. *Eucalyptus goniocalyx* was formerly present.

Sub-canopy trees: *Exocarpos cupressiformis* is the only sub-canopy species in substantial numbers. There are also small numbers of *Acacia mearnsii*, *A. melanoxylon* and *Allocasuarina littoralis*.

Shrubs: The only remnant shrub species in substantial numbers is *Bursaria spinosa*. The few *Solanum laciniatum* present may be all planted or some may be descendants of planted plants. A single, wild seedling *Coprosma quadrifida* was found in 2024.

Climbers and creepers: No wild species remain.

Ferns: There is a small patch of *Pteridium esculentum* at the site's northwest end.

Groundcover: Few wild indigenous groundcover species remain. They include *Acaena echinata*, *Austrostipa rudis*, *Crassula decumbens*, *Dianella revoluta*, *Epilobium hirtigerum*, *Lomandra filiformis*, *Microlaena stipoides*, *Oxalis exilis/perennans*, *Poa morrisii*, *Rytidosperma racemosum* and *Senecio quadridentatus*.

Swampy Woodland (EVC 937, **regionally Endangered**): Estimated to cover 0.1 ha (but uncertain due to intergradation with Valley Heathy Forest), mostly in poor ecological condition (rating D).

Canopy trees: Dominated by *Eucalyptus ovata*. *E cephalocarpa* is also present.

Sub-canopy trees: Very small numbers of *Acacia melanoxylon*, *Exocarpos cupressiformis* and (formerly) *Melaleuca ericifolia*.

Shrubs: Very few wild, indigenous shrubs remain, mainly *Bursaria spinosa*. *Solanum laciniatum* is also present, perhaps descended from planted plants.

Climbers, creepers, ferns: None remain.

Groundcover: Mostly dominated by introduced grasses, but the indigenous species, *Microlaena stipoides* persists and *Phragmites australis* was present until at least 2008.

Plant species

The following wild, indigenous plant species were observed by the author in his botanical surveys of the site on 26th June 2003, 5th June 2008 and 8th September 2024. Those not seen in 2024 are indicated by the year of the most recent in parentheses. Additional species would no doubt be detectable in summer. Some species in the list are represented by both wild and planted individuals, and sometimes descendants of planted individuals. The column headed 'Risk' indicates the indigenous species' risk of dying out in Knox as follows: 'C'=Critically Endangered; 'E'=Endangered; and 'V'=Vulnerable.

Indigenous mosses and liverworts	Risk	Wild indigenous vascular species
<i>Campylopus introflexus</i> , Heath Star Moss	E	<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i> , Yellow Box
<i>Chiloscyphus semiteres</i> , Green Worms	V	<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i> , Swamp Gum
<i>Fossombronia ?wondraczekii</i> , a liverwort	E	<i>Eucalyptus radiata</i> , Narrow-leaved Peppermint
<i>Hypnum cupressiforme</i> , Common Hypnum	V	<i>Exocarpos cupressiformis</i> , Cherry Ballart
		<i>Lomandra filiformis</i> subsp. <i>coriacea</i> , Wattle Mat-rush (2002)
		<i>Lomandra longifolia</i> , Spiny-headed Mat-rush (2002)
	E	<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i> , Swamp Paperbark (2008)
		<i>Microlaena stipoides</i> , Weeping Grass
		<i>Oxalis exilis/perennans</i> , Wood-sorrel
	E	<i>Phragmites australis</i> , Common Reed (2008)
		<i>Poa morrisii</i> , Soft Tussock-grass
		<i>Pteridium esculentum</i> , Austral Bracken
	C	<i>Rytidosperma lepidopodum</i> , Scaly-foot Wallaby-grass (probably planted)
		<i>Rytidosperma racemosum</i> , Clustered Wallaby-grass
		<i>Senecio quadridentatus</i> , Cotton Fireweed
	V	<i>Solanum laciniatum</i> , Large Kangaroo Apple
Risk	Wild indigenous vascular species	
V	<i>Acacia mearnsii</i> , Black Wattle	
V	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i> , Blackwood	
V	<i>Acacia pycnantha</i> , Golden Wattle (2008)	
V	<i>Acaena echinata</i> , Sheep's Burr	
V	<i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i> , Black Sheoak	
C	<i>Amyema pendula</i> , Drooping Mistletoe (2002)	
	<i>Austrostipa rudis</i> subsp. <i>rudis</i> , Veined Spear-grass	
	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i> , Sweet Bursaria	
	<i>Cassinia aculeata</i> , Common Cassinia	
V	<i>Coprosma quadrifida</i> , Prickly Currant-bush	
	<i>Crassula decumbens</i> , Spreading Crassula	
	<i>Dianella revoluta</i> , Black-anther Flax-lily	
	<i>Epilobium hirtigerum</i> , Hairy Willow-herb	
E	<i>Eucalyptus cephalocarpa</i> , Mealy Stringybark	
V	<i>Eucalyptus goniocalyx</i> , Bundy (2002)	
C	<i>Eucalyptus macrorhyncha</i> , Red Stringybark	

Fauna of special significance

Eastern Yellow Robin, Tree Martin and (to a lesser degree) Superb Fairy-wren are uncommon in suburbia but all three were recorded in the Scoresby Linear Reserve by Birds Australia volunteers in 2017. It is unknown how much use those species make of the site.

Fauna habitat features

- The good cover of indigenous trees and shrubs provides habitat for native birds, bats, possums and invertebrates, including small forest birds such as Brown Thornbills and White-browed Scrubwrens. The prickliness of many of the shrubs helps protect birds from cats;
- Large Yellow Box trees (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) attract honeyeaters and lorikeets.

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).

Endangered Vegetation Types

The vegetation that lies northwest of the floodway and on the southwestern side of the former road meets the definition of a 'remnant patch' adopted by the standard criteria, i.e. a continuous area of at least 0.25 ha in which the cover of native understorey is at least 10% throughout. The vegetation is Valley Heathy Forest – a regionally-endangered EVC. According to '*Victoria's Native Vegetation Management – A Framework for Action*' (NRE 2002a), any remnant patch of a regionally-endangered EVC has a conservation significance rating of either High or Very High, depending on the ecological condition. Criterion 3.2.3 of Amos (2004) translates such a situation to **State** significance.

Locally-threatened plant species

Some of the locally-threatened plant species listed above have viable populations, thereby meeting 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);
- Decline of tree health, partly due to the abovementioned droughts and storms;
- Displacement of indigenous flora and fauna by environmental weeds, exacerbated by debilitation of the native vegetation by the impacts of climate change. However, Knox City Council has been putting enough effort into controlling environmental weeds that they are not an active threat at the time of writing;
- Continuing loss or decline of plant species that have such small populations that they are vulnerable to inbreeding, poor reproductive success or chance events such as being struck by a falling tree limb;
- Ongoing rubbish dumping.

Strategic planning

- The previous (2010) edition of this report led to this site being covered by Schedule 2 of the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2), based on the same matters of biological significance as discussed above. Since 2010, there has been extensive revegetation and the ecological condition of the habitat has improved in most of the site. The change does not affect the appropriateness of ESO2 for the site, so no recommendation is made for any amendment;
- The site is zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) except for the tiny fraction that lies within the road reservation for Ferntree Gully Rd.

Information sources used in this assessment

- The 1998 '*Scoresby Transport Corridor Environment Effects Statement*', particularly Supplement Volume H: Flora and Fauna by Williams L.M., Yugovic J.V., McGuckin J., Humphrey P. and Larwill S. (1998), in which part of this site is labelled as 'Site 6';
- Site surveys for the first edition of this report, undertaken by Rik Brown in 2002 and Dr Lorimer on 26th June 2003. The information gathered included a description of the vegetation composition, compilation of a list of indigenous and introduced plant species, incidental fauna observations, and checks for fauna habitat, ecological threats and management issues;
- A report, '*Assessment of Native Vegetation on the Mitcham to Frankston Freeway Alignment in Knox*', by Dr Lorimer in July 2003 for Knox City Council;
- A re-inspection of the site by Dr Lorimer on 5th June 2008, to check for any changes to features relevant to the second edition of this report;
- An inspection of the site by Dr Lorimer on 8th September 2024, compiling a list of wild, indigenous plant species in each of the site's two EVCs and checking for changes in features relevant to this report compared with pre-existing information;
- Records of flora and fauna observations stored in the Knox City Council's biodiversity database;

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- Records of flora and fauna observations stored in the Atlas of Living Australia. Note that almost all the ALA's records for this site were contributed by Birds Australia, who labelled them 'Scoresby Linear Reserve' but wrongly mapped them in Redcourt Reserve;
 - Aerial and satellite imagery from 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.