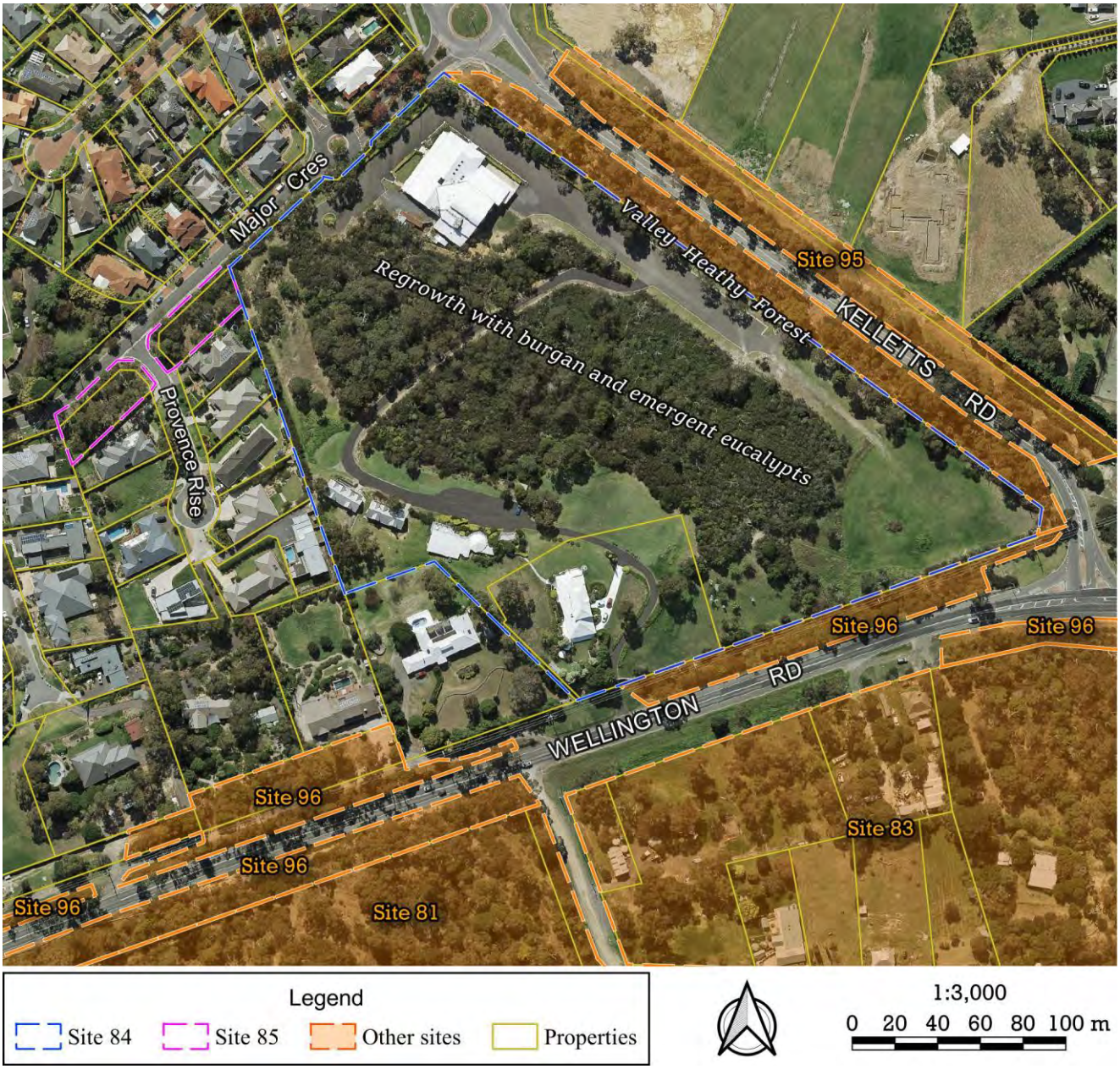
Site 84. Fruitful Vine Church, Lysterfield

A 5.9 ha private lot used for worship, related purposes and a house, with native vegetation in various stages of regrowth.

Summary of significant features:

- State significance: a patch of the regionally-vulnerable vegetation type, Valley Grassy Forest;
- Locally significant: part of a large habitat corridor;
- Locally significant: viable populations of plant species threatened with dying out in Knox.



Boundaries

The site is the property on the western corner of Wellington Rd and Kelletts Rd, outlined above with blue dashes. It includes all vegetation growing in or over the property. The adjoining property outlined with magenta dashes is Site 85.

Land use & tenure: A single, 5.9-hectare private lot used partly for worship and related purposes, and also with a house and 3½ ha of native vegetation.

Site description

There has been substantial clearing within this property at intervals over the past six decades or longer. A 1976 aerial photograph shows more than half the property covered with dense, low regrowth and a few taller trees. Most of that area remains in a comparable state today except that the regrowth has matured and some of it has been cleared, particularly in a 20 m-wide band along the western margin in 2009. The surviving regrowth is marked on the aerial photograph, where emergent eucalypts can be recognised by their shadows over the surrounding dense scrub of Burgan (*Kunzea* sp. (Upright form)). Botanical surveys have found that this vegetation is regrowth of the regionally-vulnerable Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) called Valley Grassy Forest, dominated by Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and Bundy (*E. goniocalyx*). Approximately fifty indigenous plant species have been recorded within the regrowth.

There are also vestiges of Valley Grassy Forest – mature remnant eucalypts with mown understorey – within 50 m of the buildings in the south or southwest of the site. Some of those eucalypts are large, the biggest being a Bundy (*Eucalyptus goniocalyx*) with a trunk diameter of almost 1 m, which is exceptional for Knox.

Beneath this tree and surrounding ones, the groundcover comprises overwhelmingly indigenous species (but few of them). There are several square metres of Slender Speedwell (*Veronica gracilis*).

Kelletts Rd perimeter

There is a strip of Valley Heathy Forest along the Kelletts Rd perimeter with mature remnant eucalypts and partly natural understorey of Valley Heathy Forest, contiguous with the road verge (Site 95). Twenty-seven indigenous plant species were found in 2002. Eucalypt dieback is serious toward the Wellington Rd intersection, and the rest of the strip has been moderately degraded by clearing and excavation.

Wellington Rd perimeter

The perimeter along Wellington Rd has only patches of indigenous vegetation and little understorey other than the ubiquitous Thatch Saw-sedge (*Gahnia radula*).

Seasonal Wetland

A seasonal wetland in the site's southeast was seen in 2002 to have a large and thriving population of the regionally-rare grass-like species, Slender Spike-rush (*Eleocharis gracilis*). Some of that patch remains visible from the verge of Wellington Rd but permission was not sought to inspect the wetland closely. A small amount of this species is also present in the adjacent roadside verge, as well as in substantial quantities in Lysterfield Park (Site 82) and at the Rowville Electricity Terminal Station (Site 72).

Relationship to other land

This site is at the junction of two habitat corridors (Kelletts Rd and Wellington Rd – Sites 95 and 96 respectively) and there is an almost continuous tree canopy to the large expanse of native vegetation on the Lysterfield Hills, including Churchill National Park and Lysterfield Park. There are also large patches of remnant eucalypts on private land northeast of Kelletts Rd (Site 83), being progressively diminished by residential development.

Bioregion: Highlands Southern Fall (on the rather diffuse boundary with the Gippsland Plain bioregion).

Habitat types

Seasonal wetland (part of EVC 74, which is **regionally Endangered**): 500 m^2, all in ecological condition D (poor). 5 indigenous plant species, seen in 2002 to be dominated by *Eleocharis gracilis, Carex appressa* and the introduced *Allium triquetrum* and *Holcus lanatus*.

Burgan scrub regrowth of Valley Grassy Forest (EVC 47, see below) and perhaps some Valley Heathy Forest (EVC 127, regionally Endangered): Total area 2 ha, generally in fair ecological condition (rating C); approximately 50 indigenous plant species recorded.

Emergent tall trees: *Eucalyptus melliodora, E. goniocalyx*;

Emergent Sub-canopy trees: *Acacia pycnantha, Exocarpos cupressiformis* and occasional *Allocasuarina littoralis*;

Shrubs: *Kunzea* sp. (Upright form) has approximately 80% foliage cover.

Groundcover: Moss and lichen dense; vascular plants sparse except near edges and tracks. *Lepidosperma gunnii* and patches of *Gahnia radula* dominate the vascular groundcover. *Bossiaea prostrata* is also abundant.

Valley Grassy Forest (EVC 47, **regionally Vulnerable**): 1,500 m^2, all in poor ecological condition (rating D). 16 indigenous plant species found.

Canopy trees: *Eucalyptus goniocalyx* with fewer *E. melliodora* and *E. radiata*;

Sub-canopy trees: *Acacia mearnsii, A. melanoxylon, Exocarpos cupressiformis*;

Shrubs: scant.

Groundcover: Mown, grassy; *Rytidosperma racemosum* and *Dichondra repens* are both abundant, also a large patch of *Veronica gracilis*.

Valley Heathy Forest (EVC 127, **regionally Endangered**): approximately 0.4 ha, almost all in poor ecological condition (rating D). 27 indigenous plant species found, the dominant ones as follows:

Canopy trees: *Eucalyptus goniocalyx, E. cephalocarpa, E. melliodora*;

Sub-canopy trees: *Allocasuarina littoralis, Acacia melanoxylon, Exocarpos cupressiformis*;

Shrubs: *Kunzea* sp. (Upright form), *Acacia pycnantha*;

Groundcover: *Gahnia radula, Austrostipa rudis*.

Plant species

The following plant species have been recorded in the site during surveys in 2002, 2004 or 2011, or during this study's 2024 inspection from surrounding public land. The column headed 'Risk' indicates the indigenous species' risk of dying out in Knox as follows: 'C'=Critically Endangered; 'E'=Endangered; and 'V'=Vulnerable. In addition, *Eleocharis gracilis* is rare in metro Melbourne.

Indigenous mosses and liverworts
Campylopus introflexus, Heath Star Moss
Hypnum cupressiforme, Common Hypnum
Rosulabryum billarderi, Common Thread-moss
Thuidiopsis furfurosa, Golden Weft-moss
Triquetrella papillata, a moss

Risk	Wild indigenous vascular species
V	*Acacia implexa*, Lightwood
V	*Acacia mearnsii*, Black Wattle
V	*Acacia melanoxylon*, Blackwood
V	*Acacia pycnantha*, Golden Wattle
	Acaena novae-zelandiae, Bidgee-widgee
E	*Acrotriche serrulata*, Honey-pots
V	*Allocasuarina littoralis*, Black Sheoak
C	*Amyema pendula*, Drooping Mistletoe
	Arthropodium strictum, Chocolate Lily
	Austrostipa rudis subsp. *rudis*, Veined Spear-grass
	Billardiera mutabilis, Common Apple-berry
N	*Bossiaea prostrata*, Creeping Bossiaea
	Burchardia umbellata, Milkmaids
	Bursaria spinosa, Sweet Bursaria
V	*Caesia parviflora*, Pale Grass-lily
	Carex appressa, Tall Sedge
	Carex breviculmis, Short-stem Sedge
	Carex inversa, Knob Sedge
	Cassinia longifolia, Shiny Cassinia

Risk	Wild indigenous vascular species
V	*Clematis aristata*, Mountain Clematis
	Clematis decipiens, a small-leafed clematis
E	*Comesperma volubile*, Love Creeper
	Deyeuxia quadriseta, Reed Bent-grass
	Dianella longifolia var. *longifolia*, Pale Flax-lily
	Dianella revoluta, Black-anther Flax-lily
	Dichondra repens, Kidney-weed
V	*Dillwynia cinerascens*, Grey Parrot-pea
V	*Drosera aberrans*, Scented Sundew
E	*Eleocharis gracilis*, Slender Spike-rush
C	*Epacris impressa*, Common Heath
V	*Epilobium billardiereanum* subsp. *cinereum*, Variable Willow-herb
E	*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*, Mealy Stringybark
V	*Eucalyptus goniocalyx*, Bundy
E	*Eucalyptus melliodora*, Yellow Box
E	*Eucalyptus radiata*, Narrow-leaved Peppermint
	Euchiton japonicus, Creeping Cudweed
V	*Exocarpos cupressiformis*, Cherry Ballart
C	*Gahnia radula*, Thatch Saw-sedge
	Gonocarpus tetragynus, Common Raspwort
N	*Goodenia lanata*, Trailing Goodenia
E	*Hardenbergia violacea*, Purple Coral-pea
C	*Hibbertia australis*, Upright Guinea-flower
E	*Hypericum gramineum*, Small St John's Wort

Risk	Wild indigenous vascular species
E	*Juncus* ?*subsecundus*, Finger Rush
	Juncus bufonius, Toad Rush
	Juncus pallidus, Pale Rush
E	*Juncus planifolius*, Broad-leaf Rush
	Juncus sarophorus, Broom Rush
C	*Kennedia prostrata*, Running Postman
	Kunzea sp. (Upright form), Forest Burgan
	Lachnagrostis filiformis, Common Blown-grass
V	*Lagenophora sublyrata*, Slender Bottle-daisy
	Laphangium luteoalbum, Jersey cudweed
	Lepidosperma gunnii, Slender Sword-sedge
V	*Lepidosperma laterale*, Variable Sword-sedge
C	*Leptospermum continentale*, Prickly Tea-tree
	Leptospermum scoparium, Manuka
	Lomandra filiformis subsp. *coriacea*, Wattle Mat-rush
	Lomandra filiformis subsp. *filiformis*, Wattle Mat-rush
	Lythrum hyssopifolia, Lesser Loosestrife
	Microlaena stipoides, Weeping Grass
C	*Muellerina eucalyptoides*, Creeping Mistletoe
V	*Opercularia ovata*, Broad-leaf Stinkweed
V	*Opercularia varia*, Variable Stinkweed
	Oxalis exilis/perennans, Wood-sorrel
V	*Ozothamnus ferrugineus*, Tree Everlasting
	Pandorea pandorana, Wonga Vine
E	*Pimelea humilis*, Common Rice-flower
	Poa morrisii, Soft Tussock-grass
	Poranthera microphylla, Small Poranthera
	Rytidosperma fulvum, Leafy Wallaby-grass
	Rytidosperma laeve, Smooth Wallaby-grass
E	*Rytidosperma pallidum*, Red-anther (or Silvertop) Wallaby-grass
	Rytidosperma racemosum, Clustered Wallaby-grass
E	*Rytidosperma semiannulare*, Tasmanian Wallaby-grass
	Rytidosperma setaceum, Bristly Wallaby-grass
	Rytidosperma tenuius, Purplish Wallaby-grass
	Schoenus apogon, Common Bog-rush
	Senecio hispidulus, Rough Fireweed
	Senecio minimus, Shrubby Fireweed
	Senecio quadridentatus, Cotton Fireweed
V	*Solanum laciniatum*, Large Kangaroo Apple
E	*Stackhousia monogyna/subterranea*, Candles
	Themeda triandra, Kangaroo Grass
	Tricoryne elatior, Yellow Rush-lily
V	*Veronica gracilis*, Slender Speedwell
E	*Veronica plebeia*, Trailing Speedwell
E	*Viola hederacea*, Ivy-leaf Violet

Introduced species
Acacia longifolia subsp. *longifolia*, Sallow Wattle
Agapanthus praecox, Agapanthus
Agrostis capillaris, Brown-top Bent
Aira elegantissima, Delicate Hair-grass
Allium triquetrum, Angled Onion
Anthoxanthum odoratum, Sweet Vernal-grass
Arctotheca calendula, Cape Weed
Asparagus asparagoides, Bridal Creeper
Briza maxima, Large Quaking-grass
Briza minor, Lesser Quaking-grass
Cassinia sifton, Sifton Bush
Centaurium erythraea, Common Centaury
Chrysanthemoides monilifera subsp. *monilifera*, Boneseed
Cirsium vulgare, Spear Thistle
Cotoneaster glaucophyllus, Cotoneaster
Cotoneaster pannosus, Cotoneaster
Cynodon dactylon, Couch
Cyperus eragrostis, Drain Flat-sedge
Digitaria sanguinalis, Summer-grass
Echinochloa crus-galli, Common Barnyard Grass
Ehrharta erecta, Panic Veldt-grass
Ehrharta longiflora, Annual Veldt-grass
Erigeron sumatrensis, Fleabane
Holcus lanatus, Yorkshire Fog
Hypochaeris radicata, Cat's Ear
Isolepis levynsiana, Tiny Flat-sedge
Juncus articulatus, Jointed Rush
Lactuca serriola, Prickly Lettuce
Lysimachia arvensis, Pimpernel
Paspalum dilatatum, Paspalum
Pinus radiata, Monterey Pine
Pittosporum undulatum, Sweet Pittosporum
Plantago lanceolata, Ribwort
Polypogon monspeliensis, Annual Beard-grass
Romulea rosea, Common Onion-grass
Rubus anglocandicans, Blackberry
Salix ?*fragilis*, Crack Willow
Setaria parviflora, Slender Pigeon Grass
Solanum nigrum, Black Nightshade
Symphyotrichum subulatum, Aster-weed
Trifolium repens, White Clover
Ulex europaeus, Gorse (Furze)
Vulpia myuros, Rat's-tail Fescue

Notes concerning a locally-threatened plant species

Eleocharis gracilis (Slender Spike-rush): Recorded in 2002 as having 15–25 m² foliage cover, amid weedy vegetation. This study's 2024 inspection from public land confirmed that at least some of this species remains.

Fauna habitat features

- A small number of mature eucalypts have hollows that may provide habitat for the more common species of possums and bats;
- The burgan scrub provides habitat for small birds of the undergrowth such as wrens;
- The combination of dense vegetation and open areas suit reptiles and some invertebrates.

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

The site meets standard criterion 1.2.6 for **Local** significance as a part of the much larger contiguous area of bushland extending over the Lysterfield Hills and along Kelletts Rd.

Regionally Threatened Ecological Vegetation Classes

Nearly all the property's vegetation 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. Most of it represents various stages or types of regrowth of Valley Grassy Forest, which is regionally vulnerable. Most of it also has a habitat score reaching the threshold of 0.3 to have a conservation significance of 'High' under Appendix 3 of *Victoria's Native Vegetation Management – a Framework for Action* (NRE 2002a). Criterion 3.2.3 translates that 'High' conservation significance to **State** significance.

Threatened Plants

The site is of some significance for the presence of the large *Eucalyptus goniocalyx* trees, which stand out within Knox. Nevil Amos (pers. comm.) has stated that it was unintentional that the final version of the significance criteria (Amos 2004) omitted the criterion that, in previous versions, recognised 'plants of exceptional size or age'. If not for this oversight, the trees in question would qualify as Locally significant. The trunk of the largest *Eucalyptus goniocalyx* measured 0.92 m diameter at breast height in 2002.

A substantial number of the locally-threatened plant species listed above have viable populations, thereby meeting criterion 3.1.5 for **Local** significance.

Threats

- Site development: The biological significance of this site could be adversely affected by removal of, or damage to, any native vegetation on the property. This includes (but is not limited to) trees in the vicinity of the buildings and understorey beside the vehicle tracks and parking areas. The orchard, tracks, parking areas and the stockpiles of clay in the eastern corner are of no significance in themselves but developments there could affect significant vegetation through root severance, changed drainage, promotion of weeds or similar indirect effects;
- Repetition of past unpermitted vegetation removal;
- 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 in the health of eucalypts, which are quite vulnerable to the abovementioned droughts and storms;
- Displacement of indigenous flora and fauna by environmental weeds;
- The *Eleocharis gracilis* is threatened by competition from environmental weeds, as well as possible renewed excavation for drainage;
- Over-dominance of burgan, which is suppressing the growth and reproduction of other flora.

Strategic planning

- The previous (2010) edition of this report led to the Fruitful Vine property being covered by Schedule 2 of the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2), on the basis of the habitat's State significance and the presence of regionally-threatened EVCs. The only material change since 2010 is that a small part of the habitat has been removed. The current application of ESO2 to the property does not need to change;
- The property is zoned 'Neighbourhood Residential – Schedule 1' (NRZ1).

Information sources used in this assessment

- Detailed vegetation data and mapping compiled by Dr Lorimer on 23rd May 2002 for the first edition of this report, including lists of indigenous and introduced plant species within each of four different parts of the site;
- A list of fauna observed incidentally on the same day;
- Data concerning presence of tree hollows, collected by Michael Harper on 27th June 2002;
- A botanical survey by Dr Lorimer on 8th February 2011, including lists of indigenous and introduced plant species within each of three different parts of the site: the regrowth scrub, seasonal wetland and the perimeter;
- An inspection of the property from the perimeter by Dr Lorimer on 2nd October 2024, compiling a list of wild indigenous plant species and checking for changes in features relevant to this report compared with pre-existing information;
- Records of flora and fauna observations stored in the Atlas of Living Australia (noting that two quadrats from 18/11/04, mapped within this site and said to have been surveyed by Andrew McMahon, appear to have actually been done at the nearby Boral Quarry);
- 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.