

Site 116a. Colchester Rd Roadside, Boronia

Verges of a secondary road with remnant trees, some remnant understorey and extensive revegetation.

Summary of significant features:

- Locally significant: substantial populations of a number of plant species threatened with dying out in Knox;
- Locally significant: a habitat link between the Dandenong Creek Corridor (Site 26) and the treed area along and south of Mountain Hwy (Sites 92 and 98);
- The remnant vegetation within the site belongs to the regionally-endangered type, Swampy Woodland.

Boundaries

The site includes the four roadside strips shown on the aerial photographs on pages 195 and 601. The precise boundaries can be seen in the Knox Biodiversity Atlas that accompanies this report. The site's southern extent had to be reduced in the second half of 2024 due to road widening.

Land use & tenure: Road reservation and Council reserve.

Site description

Large, old Swamp Gums (*Eucalyptus ovata*) and Mealy Stringybarks (*E. cephalocarpa*) line both sides of the road. Remnant understorey is almost confined to sections of the western side, including wetland species in the table drain and dry land species elsewhere. The eastern side of the road has been extensively planted with indigenous species (particularly understorey) to complement the remnant eucalypts.

Relationship to other land

The vegetation, in conjunction with that on the abutting GlaxoSmithKline property, represents a habitat link between the Dandenong Creek Corridor (Site 26) and the treed area along and south of Mountain Hwy (Sites 92 and 98). The link is believed to serve birds, bats, tree frogs and flying insects.

Bioregion: Gippsland Plain

Habitat type

Swampy Woodland (EVC 937, **regionally Endangered**).

Plant species

The following wild, indigenous plant species were observed by the author in June 2002 or June–July 2024. (No additional wild, indigenous species have been recorded in the site.) Asterisks indicate the species seen in 2024. Additional species would probably be detectable in the later months of the year. The column headed 'Risk' indicates the indigenous species' risk of local extinction as follows: 'C'=Critically endangered', 'E'=Endangered and 'V'=Vulnerable.

Risk	Species name	Risk	Species name
	<i>Acacia dealbata</i> , Silver Wattle	E	<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i> , Messmate Stringybark
V	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i> , Blackwood*	V	<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i> , Swamp Gum*
V	<i>Acaena echinata</i> , Sheep's Burr	E	<i>Exocarpos strictus</i> , Pale-fruit Ballart
	<i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i> , Bidgee-widgee	C	<i>Gahnia radula</i> , Thatch Saw-sedge*
	<i>Austrostipa rudis</i> subsp. <i>rudis</i> , Veined Spear-grass		<i>Gonocarpus tetragynus</i> , Common Raspwort
	<i>Carex breviculmis</i> , Short-stem Sedge		<i>Goodenia ovata</i> , Hop Goodenia
E	<i>Carex gaudichaudiana</i> , Fen Sedge*	C	<i>Imperata cylindrica</i> , Blady Grass
	<i>Dianella revoluta</i> , Black-anther Flax-lily		<i>Isolepis inundata</i> , Swamp Club-rush*
	<i>Dianella tasmanica</i> , Tasman Flax-lily*		<i>Juncus amabilis</i> , Hollow Rush*
	<i>Epilobium hirtigerum</i> , Hairy Willow-herb	C	<i>Juncus fockei/holoschoenus</i> , a joint-leaf Rush*
E	<i>Eucalyptus cephalocarpa</i> , Mealy Stringybark	E	<i>Juncus subsecundus</i> , Finger Rush
			<i>Lomandra longifolia</i> , Spiny-headed Mat-rush

Risk	Species name	Risk	Species name
	<i>Lythrum hyssopifolia</i> , Lesser Loosestrife		<i>Pteridium esculentum</i> , Austral Bracken
E	<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i> , Swamp Paperbark*	E	<i>Rubus parvifolius</i> , Small-leaf Bramble
	<i>Microlaena stipoides</i> , Weeping Grass	E	<i>Senecio campylocarpus</i> , Bulging Fireweed*
	<i>Persicaria decipiens</i> , Slender Knotweed		<i>Senecio quadridentatus</i> , Cotton Fireweed*

Senecio campylocarpus (Bulging Fireweed) is listed as Endangered under Victorian law. A single individual was seen in July 2024. This species occurs sporadically on denuded, boggy ground and is likely to appear in this site and on disturbed ground across the floodplain from time to time.

Fauna of special significance

None detected.

Significance rating

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 noted above under the heading, 'Relationship to other land', this site is believed to function as an ecological link or corridor for native fauna between the Dandenong Creek Corridor (Site 26) and the treed area along and south of Mountain Hwy (Sites 92 and 98). Such movements would be only locally important. This represents **Local** significance under criterion 1.2.6.

Locally-threatened plant species

The site supports substantial populations of most of the locally-threatened species shown above with asterisks. Such populations meet criterion 3.1.5 of Amos (2004) for a site of **Local** significance.

The adventive occurrence of a single plant of *Senecio campylocarpus* does not meet the conditions required by the standard criteria to be considered significant.

Threats

- Road widening;
- Inexpert herbicide spraying on the western side of the road – the probable cause of the elimination of Small-leaved Bramble (*Rubus parvifolius*) from the site (where it was growing on the GlaxoSmithKline fence);
- Collateral damage during clearance of sediment and vegetation from the table drain on the western side of the road;
- 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 eucalypts and paperbarks, partly due to the abovementioned droughts and storms;
- Lack of natural replacement of remnant eucalypts as they die.

Strategic planning

The previous edition of this report did not recommend a planning overlay to protect the site's vegetation, because it was believed that the state-wide baseline controls of clause 52.17 would be adequate. Since then, that clause has been significantly watered down. In any case, it is being repeatedly ignored in the site by road workers and people spraying weeds. The application of Schedule 2 of the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2) would perhaps draw attention to the site's significance but that would probably be ineffectual with people who are doing damage to the site.

Information sources used in this assessment

- A survey undertaken by Dr Lorimer on 19th June 2002 for the first edition of this report, including compilation of lists of indigenous and introduced plant species, incidental fauna observations and vegetation mapping/descriptions;

- A follow-up survey of the site by Dr Lorimer on 28th June and 31st July 2024, compiling a list of wild indigenous plant species and checking for changes in features relevant to this report compared with pre-existing information;
- Incidental observations of removal of vegetation (including the former site's only Rough Tree-ferns) for road widening near the Mountain Highway intersection in the latter half of 2024;
- A search (in vain) for records of flora and fauna observations stored in Knox City Council's biodiversity database or the Atlas of Living Australia;
- 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.