Site 116c. Forest Rd Roadside, Ferntree Gully

A section of roadside with remnant overstorey, a small amount of remnant understorey and extensive revegetation.

Summary of significant features:

- Locally significant: viable populations of at least several species threatened with dying out in Knox;
- Locally significant: an ecological stepping-stone for nomadic fauna moving through the surrounding habitat matrix between other sites of biological significance;
- The remnant vegetation within the site belongs to the regionally-endangered type, Valley Heathy Forest.

Boundaries

The site comprises the roadside abutting 122 Forest Rd to 158 Forest Rd, Ferntree Gully, from the gutter to the property line. The intersection with Chestnut Avenue is excluded. The precise boundaries can be seen in the Knox Biodiversity Atlas that accompanies this report.

Land use & tenure: Nature strip, footpath and driveway crossovers.

Site description

Surrounded by Site 99 (the Dandenong Ranges Buffer), this roadside has a good cover of remnant trees and native grasses. The vegetation belongs to the endangered EVC, Valley Heathy Forest. There has also been extensive planting of indigenous species by Knox City Council over the past two decades. Neighbours have planted exotic ornamentals among the indigenous plants in some parts of the site.

Relationship to other land

This Forest Road site is believed to act as an ecological stepping-stone within the surrounding habitat matrix of Site 99 (the Dandenong Ranges Buffer site).

Bioregion: Gippsland Plain

Habitat type

There is too little coverage of native vegetation within the site to regard it as a representation of an EVC. The original EVCs were:

Valley Heathy Forest (EVC 127, **regionally Endangered**).

Plant species

The author found the following wild, vascular plant species in 2009. The column headed 'Risk' indicates the indigenous species' risk of local extinction as follows: 'C'=Critically endangered', 'E'=Endangered and 'V'=Vulnerable.

Risk	Species
	Wild indigenous species
V	*Acacia mearnsii*, Black Wattle
V	*Acacia melanoxylon*, Blackwood
V	*Acacia pycnantha*, Golden Wattle
	Bursaria spinosa, Sweet Bursaria
	Cotula australis, Common Cotula
	Dianella revoluta, Black-anther Flax-lily
E	*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*, Mealy Stringybark
V	*Eucalyptus goniocalyx*, Bundy
C	*Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*, Red Stringybark
E	*Eucalyptus obliqua*, Messmate Stringybark
E	*Eucalyptus radiata*, Narrow-leaved Peppermint
V	*Exocarpos cupressiformis*, Cherry Ballart
C	*Gahnia radula*, Thatch Saw-sedge
	Goodenia ovata, Hop Goodenia
	Lomandra filiformis subsp. co*riacea*, Wattle Mat-rush
	Lomandra longifolia subsp. lo*ngifolia*, Spiny-headed Mat-rush
	Rytidosperma geniculatum, Kneed Wallaby-grass
	Rytidosperma racemosum, Clustered Wallaby-grass
	Rytidosperma setaceum, Bristly Wallaby-grass

Risk	Species
	Senecio quadridentatus, Cotton Fireweed
	Themeda triandra, Kangaroo Grass
	Introduced species
	Agapanthus praecox, Agapanthus
	Allium triquetrum, Angled Onion
	Arctotheca calendula, Cape Weed
	Cassinia sifton, Sifton Bush
	Clematis decipiens, a small-leafed clematis
	Dactylis glomerata, Cocksfoot
	Ehrharta erecta, Panic Veldt-grass
	Fumaria bastardii, Bastards Fumitory
	Galium aparine, Cleavers
	Gladiolus undulatus, Wild Gladiolus
	Hypochaeris radicata, Cat's Ear
	Ipheion uniflorum, Spring Starflower
	Oxalis pes-caprae, Soursob
	Oxalis purpurea, Large-flower Wood-sorrel
	Romulea rosea, Common Onion-grass
	Rubus anglocandicans, Blackberry
	Sonchus oleraceus, Sow-thistle
	Sporobolus africanus, Rat-tail Grass
	Stellaria media, Chickweed
	Vulpia bromoides, Squirrel-tail Fescue

Almost all the indigenous species were found again in 2024, the exceptions being *Cotula australis* and two *Rytidosperma* species (all because of the time of year). The following additional indigenous species also grow there in 2024 as a result of planting by Council during the late 2000s to improve the habitat quality:

Risk	Planted indigenous species
C	*Acacia acinacea*, Gold-dust Wattle
V	*Acacia implexa*, Lightwood
V	*Acacia stictophylla*, Dandenong Range Cinnamon Wattle
V	*Allocasuarina littoralis*, Black Sheoak
C	*Chrysocephalum semipapposum*, Clustered Everlasting
	Goodenia ovata, Hop Goodenia
C	*Indigofera australis*, Austral Indigo
	Lomandra longifolia subsp. l*ongifolia*, Spiny-headed Mat-rush
	Olearia ramulosa, Twiggy Daisy-bush
E	*Poa labillardierei*, Common Tussock-grass
	Poa morrisii, Soft Tussock-grass

The planting has raised much of the vegetation's ecological condition from poor (rating D) to fair (rating C).

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 thought to function as an ecological stepping-stone for native fauna moving through the surrounding matrix of sites of biological significance. Such movements would be only locally important. This represents **Local** significance under criterion 1.2.6.

Locally-threatened plant species

The site supports viable wild populations of many of the locally-threatened species listed above, particularly the tree species. Such populations meet criterion 3.1.5 of Amos (2004) for a site of **Local** significance.

Threats

- Road widening;
- Removal or displacement of indigenous flora by neighbours planting their preferred species;
- 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, due to the abovementioned droughts and storms;
- Potential demands for increased fire prevention measures from adjoining properties due to climate change and consequent increases in climatic fire risk.

Strategic planning

As a result of the previous (2010) edition of this report, this site and its surroundings in Site 99 (the Dandenong Ranges Buffer) are covered by Schedule 3 of the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO3). The native vegetation is also covered by the state-wide baseline vegetation controls of clause 52.17. These planning controls remain appropriate for the site, so no amendment is recommended.

Information sources used in this assessment

- A survey undertaken by Dr Lorimer on 2nd September 2009 for the second edition of this report, including compilation of a list of indigenous and introduced plant species, incidental fauna observations and vegetation mapping/descriptions;
- A follow-up survey of the site by Dr Lorimer on 2nd June 2024, including compilation of a list of wild and planted indigenous plant species and checking for changes in features relevant to this report compared with pre-existing information;
- A search (in vain) for records of flora and fauna observations stored in Knox City Council's biodiversity database;
- Five records of plant species, stored in 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.