

Frequently asked questions about the Yellingbo Conservation Area (YCA)



1. Background

Why is the Yellingbo Conservation Area being established?

The establishment of the Yellingbo Conservation Area (Conservation Area) is a response by the Victorian Government to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) *Yellingbo Investigation Report (2013)*. The Conservation Area is being established to consolidate management of a fragmented landscape and enhance the ecological and natural values of the public land in the area. The new reserve will assist in the protection and improvement of the area's significant biodiversity and ecological values, as well as improve river health and water quality (through the removal of stock from waterways).

What areas are included in the Conservation Area?

The Conservation Area is made up of just under 3000 ha of existing public land. It includes Crown (public) land water frontages and large blocks of public land, such as Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve, Beenak Bushland Reserve and Wright Forest Bushland Reserve, as well as stream frontages across the area.

2. Funding

What funding has been secured to implement the project?

\$3.2 million has been secured to implement the Conservation Area.

3. Pests and weeds

How will pest plant and animals be managed in the Conservation Area?

The Conservation Area Plan includes pest and weed management measures. DELWP is responsible for the management of weeds on Crown land and there is assistance available to undertake weed control works.

What funding has been secured for pest and weed control?

In 2018, there was \$200,000 allocated as part of the broader Conservation Area program to respond to pest and weed issues. Further funding will be provided in 2019. Please contact DELWP to discuss options for weed control along water frontages.

Is there work being done at the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve?

A lot of work goes into maintaining The Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve. Deer are being managed through installing strategically located fences and culling is being used to remove deer from critical areas. This approach intended to reduce the number of deer in the reserve to a manageable level. The Deer Control Program is being conducted as a partnership between Parks Victoria and the Australian Deer Association and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia.

There have been ongoing weed works within the Reserve, including slashing, the installation of weed mats and revegetation to prevent weeds from re-emerging. Weeds are notoriously difficult to fully

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eradicate and weed control works are an ongoing activity.

Controlling pests and weeds in the Yellingbo Conservation Area will be a key priority for the project and a number of control methods, such as those listed here will be used will be used.

4. Grazing licences

What is the plan for phasing out grazing licences?

As part of the Government response to the VEAC recommendations, all remaining grazing licences on Crown water frontages in the Conservation Area will be phased out by the end of 2018.

Are fines being issued for non-compliance?

There will be no active compliance as DELWP works through the new arrangements with each landholder.

With grazing licences no longer in place, what alternative arrangements are in place?

There will be an option to enter into riparian management licences within the Conservation Area, in areas where licences are consistent with the environmental values of the area (as per proposed zoning). Grazing as a management tool may be permitted in some areas and will be assessed on a case by case basis. However, stock is not permitted within a waterway. DELWP encourages any landholders interested in seeking new licences to contact us and to arrange a site inspection.

Are riparian management licences currently being issued? How do I obtain one?

DELWP has been speaking to the community about riparian licensing arrangements under the proposed new arrangements at community engagement sessions. Information is also provided in the *Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft 10 Year Plan*. There are several pre-existing riparian management licences already in place.

Do I have to put up a new fence to keep my stock out?

It is the landowner's responsibility to ensure livestock and other general farming activities are kept on their private freehold property. A fence is the most common practical way to achieve this. To discuss your individual situation, please contact DELWP on 136 186, or via enviroplan.portphillip@delwp.vic.gov.au

Is there funding available to support any fencing needed as a result of establishing the YCA?

Funding assistance for stock-proof fencing is available for eligible applicants through Melbourne Water's Stream frontage management program. To find out more about the program and to make an application, you can visit Melbourne Water's website at www.melbournewater.com.au and search 'Stream frontage management program'.

How will these changes affect my rights to water?

How am I going to get water for my livestock?

Once the Crown land frontage is fenced livestock will no longer have direct access to the waterway. Off-stream stock watering infrastructure will be encouraged and funding assistance for this is available to eligible applicants through Melbourne Water's Stream Frontage Management Program. You can visit www.melbournewater.com.au and search 'Stream frontage management program' for further information. If pumping from the waterway, you will be required under the Water Act to have a take and use licence for domestic and stock purposes.

5. Bushfire risk

Where can I access more information on the Yellingbo Conservation Area Bushfire Risk Management Plan?

The Yellingbo Conservation Area Bushfire Risk Management Plan can be downloaded from engage.vic.gov.au/yellingboconservationarea

You can also read about Frequently Asked Questions on the plan [here](#).

6. Community use and recreation

Will there be changes to recreation use in the YCA?

There will be some changes in how recreation is managed in the Conservation Area. Recreational activities can occur within some areas of the Conservation Area, providing that it is consistent with the management objectives of the Conservation Area. Read more about recreation and use possibilities on p.29 of the draft Plan.

How do I know what recreation activities can be done in different areas?

Various types of recreation have been identified in the *Yellingbo Conservation Area Draft 10 Year Plan* and grouped into the three types of zoning. Only a limited range of activities, all are which are low impact, are

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permitted in areas of higher conservation values. In the remaining areas, a broader range of activities are permitted. The allowed activities are have impacts that can be managed, and they do not adversely affect the conservation values. You can look up the recreation table in the draft plan to find out what activities is allowed in what zone.

Is dog swimming allowed in Yellingbo Conservation Area?

Dog swimming in the Yellingbo Conservation Area is something we want your feedback on. In the draft plan, it's proposed on-leash dog walking will be permitted in designated biodiversity and community use zones, but not in conservation or restoration zones - with the exception of an area along Menzies Creek. The greatest threat dogs pose is from disturbing, chasing and/or catching native fauna, including endangered species.

However, if closely monitored by an owner when playing fetch or swimming in the river, dogs pose less of a threat to native species. If you are passionate about dog walking and swimming, let us know your thoughts in question 6 of our survey

7. Survey

How will my feedback be used?

The Victorian Government is committed to implementing the recommendations in the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's Yellingbo Investigation Final Report (March 2014).

All feedback regarding the draft Plan will be reviewed and considered. Community-based responses and suggestions will help refine and improve the key themes established in the draft Plan.

The Department will also be preparing an analysis of the feedback, identifying how it as able to be incorporated, and if not, why not.

8. Wildlife

How much area do the Helmeted Honeyeater and Leadbeater's Possum need to thrive?

Helmeted Honeyeaters require streamside or swamp habitat. They are territorial, and territories occur in colonies. Females need to disperse from their family colony, so there must be other colonies nearby for the females to move to. This dispersal is critical for genetic

diversity. Helmeted Honeyeaters need well vegetated corridors to move through in order to avoid predators. For the Leadbeater's Possum, their successful survival depends on habitat connectivity. Unlike some other small possums that can glide between trees, Leadbeater's Possums depend on areas of directly connecting vegetation to move through their home range. Habitat connectivity along waterways is therefore one of the key aims of the Yellingbo Conservation Area.

9. Implementing the final Yellingbo Conservation Area plan

Who will manage the land, once stock is removed?

DELWP remain the land manager of the Crown land until the land is transferred to Parks Victoria following amendments to legislation. After transfer, Parks Victoria will commence the implementation of a long-term rehabilitation plan that will include re-establishing native revegetation and weed management. Melbourne Water remains the designated waterway, drainage and floodplain authority.

Which organisation is leading the implementation?

To deliver a healthy conservation landscape through the implementation of the Conservation Area, there must be a strong focus on coordinated management. This means working across government agencies such as Parks Victoria, DELWP, Melbourne Water, Port Phillip Catchment Management Authority and Zoos Victoria to support and enhance each agency's projects. Ultimately DELWP is responsible for implementation prior to transfer, the Parks Victoria being responsible after transfer.

The Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee (YCACC) has many resources and information about the YCA – including many more FAQs. Visit: ycacc.com.au

10. Haining Farm

How did Haining Farm, donated by Sir John T Reid, become property of Parks Victoria?

Sir John T Reid donated the land in 1974 to all of the people of Victoria, to be managed by the Victorian Conservation Trust, now known as Trust for Nature. Over time, management of Haining Farm became the responsibility of Parks Victoria.

Did Sir John Reid intend for the farm to be used to educate children about dairy practices?

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Sir John Reid's wishes were "for Haining Farm to be available to all Victorians for conservation, science and education."

Four of Sir John T Reid's descendants wrote submissions on Haining Farm during the consultation process, and a summary of their thoughts can be read on pages 14 of the engagement report. All submissions supported Concept 3 – the conservation option. The submissions reference Concept 3 as most consistent with Sir John Reid's wishes, highlighting notably that Sir John Reid left the property to the Victorian Conservation Trust, not the Department of Agriculture.

How was the Haining Farm Bushfire Mitigation Measures document created? Is it supported by CFA?

DELWP engaged the Hon. Kevin Tolhurst AM (University of Melbourne, Tolhurst Bushfire Services) and Justin Leonard (CSIRO) as independent experts in the field of bushfire risk, to examine risk at both a landscape scale and at a local level. The bushfire mitigation measures for Haining Farm were developed by the Haining Farm Redevelopment Working Group with the assistance of the two independent experts. In preparing the Haining Farm Bushfire Mitigation Measures document, DELWP consulted with the local CFA brigade to incorporate valuable local knowledge into our planning. As an organisation, CFA has officially endorsed the Haining Farm Bushfire Mitigation Measures document.

During the consultation process for Haining Farm, why were people outside the local area allowed to contribute submissions and vote?

Crown land is for the benefit of all Victorians. The Victorian Government decided the future use of Crown

land is relevant to all who might access and use it into the future.

Zoos Victoria and Greening Australia promoted to their networks the survey and asked them to vote. Did this change the outcome of the final tally? How were these responses used?

The wider Victorian community had the chance to vote and comment on the plans on the Engage Victoria website, and the majority of survey respondents supported the idea of using the area for conservation purposes, however, as we noted in our report, social media campaigns by Zoos Victoria and Greening Australia led to an increase in community voting to support the plan to use Haining Farm for conservation.

The Victorian Government took this into account when making its decision on how to proceed, and the final concept was a new plan that incorporated feedback from both the local and broader community.

Why is Glyphosate being used for weed clearing?

Greening Australia uses a range of techniques and tools for weed clearing. Glyphosate is one of a host of tools used. In instances where Glyphosate has been used, it has been applied at least 10 metres away from waterways and only used on days where no precipitation occurred to minimise any negative impact on aquatic ecosystems.

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