



Yarra Ranges Council
Flora & Fauna Plan

2012

Sustaining biodiversity for current
and future generations



Action sheets



Contact the Environment Department on 1300 368 333 for a copy of our Action sheets or visit www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au



How to use this document

This plan is designed as a multi-purpose document. It has two parts, a guiding principles document and theme based action sheets.

The guiding principles document explains the structure of the plan (**the Flora and Fauna Plan 2012**) and the broad framework of interlocking levels of responsibility for flora and fauna in our municipality. It covers the why and the how of plan development and implementation.

A series of theme based action sheets complement the guiding principles document. The action sheets aim to inform residents about a particular part of the Plan and how it affects them, including their rights and responsibilities towards flora and fauna in the municipality, and what they can do to help.



Flora and Fauna Guiding Principles

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Action sheets

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Flora and Fauna Guiding Principles

Partnerships for action: the need for a plan

The Yarra Ranges showcase a wonderful natural environment. People come to the area for the beauty of the region and wealth of flora and fauna that locals enjoy every day. The Yarra Ranges has a high cultural significance to the community including the traditional custodians, the Wurundjeri people, who share spiritual connectedness to the land.

The Yarra Ranges Council Environment Strategy 2008 provides the policy framework for broad environment issues including flora and fauna management. The development of the Yarra Ranges Council Flora & Fauna Plan 2012 is a critical step in the journey towards our Vision 2020 Community Plan goals of improved environmental, social and economic sustainability within the Yarra Ranges.

Why do we need a plan? Because it is critical to the continuation of our community as we know it: we can go bushwalking and see Lyrebirds, or watch a Powerful Owl in the backyard. If we are shortsighted, we could lose the very thing we value most. This plan is based on the best scientific principles available.



The Yarra Ranges municipality is home to three of Victoria's State emblems: the Common Heath, Helmeted Honeyeater and Leadbeater's Possum.

The flora and fauna of the Yarra Ranges are the key components of our complex ecosystems that support life, human wellbeing and economic sustainability in our municipality. As natural assets with national significance, our flora and fauna are a valuable part of the State's biodiversity. They also provide the elements of the ecosystem that we depend upon every day including; fresh water, air and pollination of plants.

The Yarra Ranges flora and fauna are subject to a wide number of threats, most notably through vegetation removal, the impact of weeds, and climate variability. These threats result in ongoing losses of; species distribution, environment health, and in some cases the extinction of flora and fauna.

Protection of flora and fauna is essential for the long-term wellbeing of the area's natural environment and communities. These natural assets must be protected, preserved, well managed, and enhanced over time. This plan has been prepared by Council in order to achieve that.

People come here for the beauty of the region and wealth of flora and fauna that locals enjoy every day.

Mission statement

Yarra Ranges will be a vibrant and dynamic municipality based on strong local communities living in a place of great natural beauty, sustained by a healthy local economy and a rich social fabric that is consistent with, and supports, its environmental values.

All Yarra Ranges residents, and public and private land managers, have a responsibility to protect, enhance and maintain the landscape. We are all custodians of the current and future wellbeing of our collective flora and fauna for the community as a whole.

The Boobook Owl is one local inhabitant which requires tree hollows for nesting.



Council has adopted a set of goals on the principle of retaining and protecting flora and fauna in our environment.



Goals

Goal 1

PROTECT

Protect populations and habitat of indigenous flora and fauna

Goal 2

ENHANCE

Maximise and enhance the habitat and ecosystem value of flora and fauna assets

Goal 3

RESTORE

Pro actively re-create and restore flora and fauna habitat

Goal 4

NET GAIN

Adequately offset lost vegetation to achieve net gain of habitat value in the Yarra Ranges

Goal 5

KNOWLEDGE

Further develop knowledge about flora and fauna assets in the Yarra Ranges

Goal 6

STEWARDSHIP

Foster a culture of environmental stewardship in the Council

Goal 7

INFLUENCE

Influence flora and fauna management outside Council control

Council wants the Yarra Ranges to continue to have extensive and diverse indigenous flora and fauna throughout the municipality. We want our flora and fauna to contribute to healthy functioning ecosystems that underpin the social, environmental and economically productive wellbeing of the region.

We want to avoid further loss and damage to local species by encouraging the community to be knowledgeable about our natural assets: about their development, appropriate protection, preservation and management.

We will undertake measures such as effective education, and seek collaboration and support for ongoing growth of a strong sense of environmental stewardship across the community.

Council has adopted a set of goals on the principle of retaining and protecting flora and fauna in our environment.

Education relates to knowledge

One of Council's responsibilities is education, in the broad sense of helping its land owners and residents understand their rights and responsibilities, as well as encouraging active engagement with the direction set by the community in Vision 2020 and other policies. But much damage to natural resources occurs unwittingly. Council and community ask you, as land owners and residents, to become educators of visitors and other residents, and to engage in your own lifelong learning about the natural environment of your municipal area.



Diversity of plants flowering on a high conservation roadside.

Guiding ecological principles for action

The management of flora and fauna in the context of ecosystems requires complex consideration of a range of factors and potential impacts. A set of principles has been developed, reflecting scientific knowledge and best practice to underpin discussions about the protection, management, replacement and enhancement of flora and fauna in the Yarra Ranges.

1 Strength with diversity

- a. Species diversity and functional balance is critical to maintain ecosystem processes. Diversity of species brings with it a diversity of functions within an ecosystem such as structure, food, shelter and nutrient cycling.
- b. Diversity of structure is critical in providing habitat for flora and fauna:
 - Ensure the appropriate vegetation layers (trees, large shrubs, medium shrubs, small shrubs and groundcovers) are present to maintain healthy natural ecosystems.
 - Maintain hollows of all shapes, sizes and locations, as they are critical to the survival of fauna species and populations and take at least 100 years to form naturally.
 - Maintain logs of all sizes as they are critical habitat for flora and fauna species and assist in soil moisture retention.
 - Organic litter on the soil surface is to be maintained at an appropriate level for the ecosystem type.
 - Regeneration of flora and fauna is critical to maintain current and future populations.

- c. Diversity of vegetation types is important to maintain habitat requirements for fauna species and other ecosystem processes, such as water cycles.

2 Disturbance starts a natural process of change

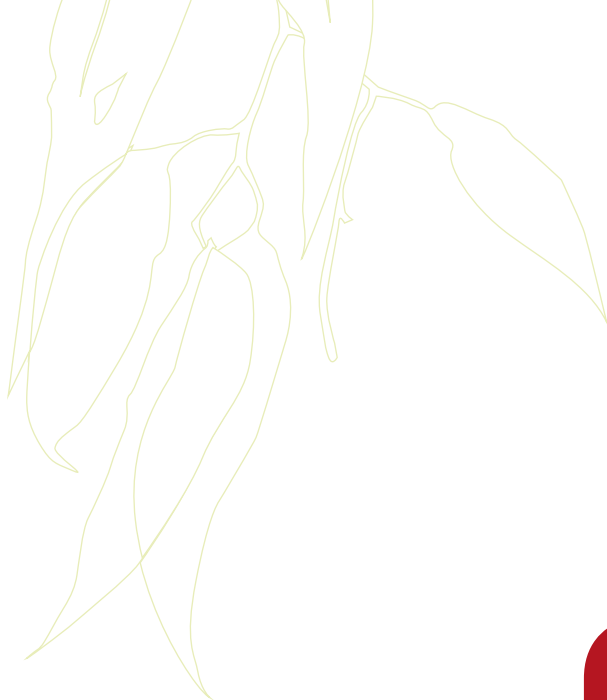
- a. Natural fire regimes (frequency, intensity and season) have a critical influence on how ecosystems change over time (succession).
- b. The natural water regime (frequency, duration and depth of flooding) for waterways and wetlands is a critical component influencing habitat for flora and fauna species reliant on these environments.

3 Ecology of modified landscapes

- Larger remnant vegetation patches are better than smaller ones.
- Circular or square patches are more resilient to impacts of edge effects than narrow linear patches.
- The smaller the distance between remnant vegetation patches the greater opportunity for all fauna species and populations to access available habitat.
- High disturbance activities adjacent to remnant vegetation will impact upon the health and function of the remnant.

4 Threatened vegetation communities and species

- Protect threatened species and their habitats as well as threatened vegetation communities from further decline.



Legal regulation of flora and fauna

The law governing what councils, land managers and residents are able to do is spread across Federal, State and Local Governments. This section explains briefly how laws fit together in a structured system of regulation. The relevant legislation for each goal is then listed in the action sheets. Council, residents, and land managers can achieve more by being aware of the scope of local authority exercised by the Council, and where that fits in the wider context.

Australian law (federal legislation)

The Australian Constitution sets out a list of powers that the States gave to the Commonwealth at Federation. Because flora and fauna are not listed as a specific topic in the Constitution, State Governments have general responsibility.

But there is no one simple answer to the question **“Who is responsible for flora and fauna?”**

This is because the Australian Government also passes laws on flora and fauna, which it does to meet its constitutional obligations. For example the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) refers to conventions on biodiversity, conservation of migratory fauna species, wetlands, cultural heritage and natural heritage.

What we do together to protect, enhance and restore flora and fauna in our local area has national impact.



Growing fern frond.



Blue Wren

Victorian law (State Government legislation)

There are State Government laws that govern parks, Crown land, catchment and land protection, primary industries, wildlife, and water. The two State Government departments with authority that directly affects flora and fauna are the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI). The State Government, as the owner of Crown land, also has responsibilities that are different from those of private land owners.

Local Government (delegated legislation, rules, regulations and by-laws)

The State Parliament delegates some of its own legislative power to the Council to enable Council to make rules and regulations suited to the local area. This power must be exercised in the way the State Parliament directs. For example, the Local Government Act 1989, sets out the purpose of Local Government, the way councils are constituted, their objectives, role, functions and powers.



Lace Monitor or Goanna





What you can do for flora and fauna in the Yarra Ranges

The Council is here to serve the community. What we can do depends heavily on community engagement and self-education of visitors and the community. The community becomes stronger and healthier when more residents are members of community groups. In particular, environment groups play an important role in: monitoring and sustaining the municipality's natural resources, practising sustainability principles, eradicating weeds, practising ecological principles for flora and fauna management and recycling.

Council is managing flora and fauna in partnership with agencies, groups and individuals. We hope you will continue to be involved, if you already are. If not, joining a group is a good way to start.

Local groups to join

In the Yarra Ranges there are a large number of groups that meet regularly undertaking such activities as fauna surveys, tree planting, environmental weed control and plant surveys.

To find out more about environmental groups in your area visit the Yarra Ranges Council website :

www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

or contact the Council's Environment Department on **1300 368 333**.



Fringe Lily



Educational materials

The Council produces a range of programs and materials for the private sector and regional education. These are available to private land managers, builders, the agricultural sector and Council staff. These materials can be sourced from the website or from any of the Council offices. They guide best practice conservation and land management, drainage, erosion, sediment control and similar matters. Council tries to identify gaps in information and constantly aims to improve these materials. In order to make available the best possible materials Council works with other councils, relevant agencies (such as the CFA) and interested groups (such as Weed Control and Landcare).

Action sheets

There is a series of 8 theme based action sheets that complement the guiding principles document. The action sheets aim to inform residents about a particular part of the Plan and how it affects them, including their rights and responsibilities towards flora and fauna in the municipality, and what they can do to help.



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Photo acknowledgements: Esther Beaton, David Blair, Alex Maisey, Marty White, Merrilyn Serong, Emma Campbell.
Front Cover - Helmeted Honeyeater, critically Endangered species and one of Victoria's faunal emblems.

