

2011

# PRYOR PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN



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Submitted for assessment in Diploma of  
Ornamental Horticulture / Develop a  
Management Plan for a Designated Area.  
[RTC5504A]

September 2011

Presented to People for Pryor Park

January 2012

## Acknowledgements

The Author of this plan would like to recognise the contributions and thank the following people for their assistance and patience during the compilation of this study.

City of Ballarat

People for Pryor Park

Department of Sustainability and Environment

Central Highlands Library Staff

University of Ballarat SMB Campus Library Staff

Leigh Catchment Group

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## SUMMARY

Pryor Park (9.21 ha) was initially created in the early 1930s for “Public Purposes (Tree Planting) and Public Recreation” by the City of Ballarat and was named after Joseph Pryor, the City of Ballarat’s Mayor of the time.

The park is now reserved and managed under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978. The City of Ballarat manages the park on behalf of the State Government of Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). The Council management is also supported by a local action group called People for Pryor Park.

In addition to this today the park has also been redesigned to play a unique role in protecting and fostering the Ballarat region’s flora and fauna while also providing much needed recreational open spaces for Ballarat’s large urban sprawl. The park lies on the eastern outskirts of Ballarat, just south of Woodman’s Hill, and forms in a critical bottle neck of a much larger North-South Ballarat Region Wildlife Corridor.

Prior to the construction of the Ballarat Western Freeway Bypass in the early to mid 1990s there was a recommendation made through an Assessment Study which was conducted on Pryor Park to redevelop the park into a Conservation Parkland. This recommendation was intended to give the park an additional function of strengthening the wildlife conductivity through this critical bottle neck in north-south wildlife corridor. However this recommendation was only acted on after the construction of the freeway bypass.

The effects of the bypass on the park would later drastically complicate and weaken the intended function of the park to act as a strong wildlife link. It would effectively break the connection between the Creswick Regional Park which sat to the north of Ballarat, with the Canadian State Forest which adjoined it immediately south of the freeway, eventually connecting the corridor up with the Enfield State Park and the Lal, Lal State Forest which sat at the very southern end of the wildlife corridor, which were linked via a close network of remnant vegetation areas.

Despite the intended function of the park to act as a strong wildlife connection between the Regional and State Parks being almost severed by the freeway, the now recent rezoning of the park to a Neighbourhood Conservation Parkland has made it notable for its western section which has been revegetated and nursed back to an impressive representation of what was originally in the Central Victorian Uplands Bioregion, with its particular revegetation emphasis on the Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) of Heathy Dry Forest which is the EVC on which Pryor Park directly sits on.

This newly redeveloped section of the park has a great potential to make the park significant to Victoria’s biodiversity in that it would allow for a much stronger north-south migration of wildlife in the greater Ballarat region and beyond, if there were some further significant

attention given to the improvement of the very poor wildlife conductivity across the major east-west converging Ballarat transport corridor which occurs immediately north of the park.

As well as being zoned as a Neighbourhood Conservation Parkland, the park is also zoned as a Recreational Open Space and provides Ballarat's urban fringe with a number of different passive recreational opportunities, bird watching, walking, discovering unique vistas of Ballarat's CBD and wildflower appreciation, and also providing for educational opportunities while enjoying these passive recreation activities. Whilst also in this park a 1932 historical avenue of ornamental conifer trees are observed down its main access track, which now predominantly consists of very large and healthy specimens of Californian Redwood trees (*Sequoia sempervirens*).

This Management Plan reviews and builds on the earlier (1991) City of Ballarat, Pryor Park Assessment Study's findings and final recommendations and also is consistent with the later (2008) City of Ballarat, Ballarat Open Space Strategy, Volume 1; in their rezoning and subsequent management of Pryor Park as a Neighbourhood Conservation Parkland and Recreational Open Space. This new plan sets out a vision, aims and strategies to guide future sound management. (Parks Victoria 2005)

The key aspects of the plan are summarised below.

- Continued emphasis on pest plant removal and habitat reconstruction.
- A continued reliance on the City of Ballarat's education program of responsible pet ownership and a closer alliance with the DSE's and Parks Victoria's pest animal management programs, to manage current and potential future pest animal problems with in the park.
- Guidance of flora and fauna management in the park via the State Government's Native Vegetation Framework.
- Acknowledgement to be given at the entrance of Pryor Park to the original custodians of the land, the Watha Wurrung people, by way of a permanent sign installed.
- Continued protection of the remaining Californian Redwoods along the central main access track in the park and a revamping of this avenue to maintain its graceful aesthetic appeal.
- Continued maintenance and improvement of the park's open space with its corresponding vista towards the Ballarat CBD.
- Continued management of the remaining section of pine plantation to both further extend its passive recreational opportunities in the short-medium to long term, while increasing over time its conservation values, with a long term goal to return it back fully to native vegetation.

- Generally increasing the park's educational and passive recreational opportunities which are consistent with the promotion and protection of the park's conservation values.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and Planning area

Pryor Park, 9.21 ha (refer to Figure 1; Map, End of Plan), is located 4 kilometres due East of Ballarat's CBD, heading towards Melbourne along Eureka Street. The park lies right in the centre of the North-South Ballarat Region Wildlife Corridor, and forms in a critical bottle neck where urban Ballarat slices through this corridor, (Figures 2 & 3; Maps, End of Plan). This plan takes into account the management issues associated with the park's unique and critical positioning in the bottle neck of the north-south wildlife corridor.

### 1.2 Regional context

Pryor Park has been classified in the (2008) City of Ballarat, Ballarat Open Space Strategy, Volume 1; as a Neighbourhood Conservation Parkland and Recreational Open Space (Figures 4 & 5; Maps, End of Plan). It is one of four hundred parks, gardens and reserves which the City of Ballarat manages.

The park sits in a southern branch of the Central Victorian Uplands (CVU) Bioregion with the Victorian Volcanic Plain (VP) Bioregion somewhat encircling it. The park lies directly within the Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) of (20) Heathy Dry Forest, and is positioned in the eastern outskirts of Ballarat's urban fringe.

It also sits in a critical bottle neck of the North-South Ballarat Region Wildlife Corridor. Its recent Conservation Parkland status and development was originally designed to provide a strong link for migrating fauna up and down this wildlife corridor, linking the Creswick Regional Park sitting to the north of Ballarat, with the Canadian State Forest which adjoined it immediately south of Woodman's Hill, which then goes on to skirt around Ballarat's south-eastern fringe to eventually form a link with the Enfield State Park and Lal Lal State Forest which sit at the very southern end of the corridor, being linked up via a close network of remnant vegetation areas.

Today however the conductivity for migrating fauna is extremely weak at Brown Hill and Woodman's Hill, just north of Pryor Park. This is due to the formidable urban development, which contains three major east-west transport corridors for Ballarat, all converging together in roughly the same two to three kilometre section, in the precise location of the bottle neck in the north-south wildlife corridor. (Refer to Figure 6; Map End of Plan). This converging transport corridor consists of the Melbourne rail line, the main eastern entry point off the freeway into Ballarat at Woodman's Hill and the freeway itself. There is one small Koala underpass traversing under the freeway at Brown Hill, which requires a significant amount of maintenance and one other small Koala underpass at the Woodman's Hill freeway interchange. This additional underpass was constructed by Vic Roads in response to community concerns, which occurred around the time of the construction phase of the freeway, about the distinct lack of safe crossing points for migrating fauna. It appears that this underpass at Woodman's Hill was hastily put in place, a very low box-shaped underpass



barely bigger than an adult Koala on all fours, stretches away into an intimidatingly black claustrophobic unknown void, with two long narrow parallel corrugated steel fences attempting to corral wildlife towards this small black opening, in a confusing dog legged fashion, as a recent visit revealed. This visit also revealed the completely neglected state of the underpass, choked with impenetrable Blackberry thickets, English Broom and caved in fence panels.

The current state of these wildlife underpass means that migrating fauna is forced to find odd gaps onto this transport corridor and attempt to negotiate across these very threatening obstacles. People for Pryor Park noted the almost continues perimeter fencing on the Western Freeway, which only breaks at major road junctions, as a concern. (J. Cerr, Personal Communication. August 9, 2011)

The park which is zoned as a Neighbourhood Conservation Parkland sits approximately a kilometre south of this major transport corridor. It is an important and critical haven for wildlife before and after attempting to navigate across these imposing obstacles.

However it must be emphasised that the convergence of Ballarat's urban landscape with the much wider north-south forests with their wider links to the CVU and VP bioregions gives Pryor Park a very unique and privileged position. This convergence enables the park to play an important role in both nature conservation and public amenity. The park provides Ballarat's large urban sprawl with much needed public open spaces while it also has great potential to provide Victoria's biodiversity with much stronger wildlife corridors. The meeting of these two aspects gives the park perfect opportunities for community education while enjoying passive recreation.

### **1.3 Significance of the Park**

Pryor Park has great potential to make a valuable contribution to the North-South Ballarat Region Wildlife Corridor and to the wider biodiversity of Victoria by providing a strong native vegetation link in a small intense chain of critical native vegetation links which effectively cross over and under major obstacles in the bottle neck where Ballarat's urban landscape slices through the corridor. Today Pryor Park's section in this potential chain is already up and running as an adequate native vegetation link for migrating wildlife. However the effective final native vegetation links connecting up the safe and functioning crossing points for wildlife across road, rail and freeway in the 2.5 kilometre wide section of urban Ballarat which slices through the wildlife corridor is not yet in place, and at this stage is not yet planned for.

It is the hope of this Management Plan that these further effective vegetation links and safe crossing points be put in place one day to enable Pryor Park to reach its full 1991 indented function of strengthening the wildlife conductivity within this valuable bottle neck of the north-south corridor, providing a much stronger connection for wildlife between the Creswick Regional Park to the Enfield State Park and back up again. If these further native vegetation links were put in place which connected up safe crossing points across road, rail

and freeway, it would allow Pryor Park to make a valuable contribution to Victoria's wider biodiversity. (Please refer again to Figure 6; Map End of Plan).

Currently the park makes a valuable contribution to the City of Ballarat's parks, gardens and reserves system on a number of different levels. It contributes to the Ballarat community by providing a recreational open space for a number of different passive recreation pursuits which includes; bird watching, walking, discovering unique vistas of Ballarat and wildflower appreciation. It also provides opportunities for community interaction by way of community working bees to help maintain the park. It also provides the Ballarat urban community with valuable education opportunities, via information throughout the park on the park's flora and fauna and what fauna uses in the park when migrating through it. Finally, Employment and Training opportunities are provided to the community via the Australian Government's Green Corps Initiative, conducting programs in the park.

## **1.4 Creation of the Park**

The park was created in 1931 under the provisions of lands Act 1928. The land was temporarily reserved for "Public Purposes (Tree Planting)" with the Ballarat City Council being its Committee of Management. Later in 1934 the Governor in Council amended this reservation to "Public Purposes (Tree Planting) and Public Recreation". (City of Ballarat 1991).Pryor Park was named after a local Ballarat East Councillor, Joseph Pryor, who served on council from 1916-1921 and later became the Mayor of The City of Ballarat from 1928-1936.

## **1.5 Legislation**

The City of Ballarat (1991) Pryor Park Assessment Study indicates that in 1931 the Park was originally set up under the Provisions of Land Act 1928 and further states that it "was temporarily reserved for public purposes (tree planting) with the Ballaarat (sic) City Council as Committee of Management." In 1934 the use of the Park was also extended to include Public Recreation (City of Ballarat 1991).

The park is now reserved and managed under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, but remains under the management of The City of Ballarat. The Council management is also supported by a local action group called People for Pryor Park.

The (2008) City of Ballarat, Ballarat Open Space Strategy states that "The powers and responsibilities of a Committee of Management are outlined under the Crown Land (reserves) Act 1978." It also states that the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) has prepared the "Responsibilities and Good Practice Guidelines" for committees of management to guide the management of Crown Land.

The powers vested to the Committee of Management include the management and development of the reserve, financial transactions relating to the reserve, leasing and licensing arrangements and the enforcement of regulations. (DSE 2011)

The responsibilities for this committee include the management and maintenance of the land for the purposes which it is reserved, reporting to DSE on specific issues and financial transactions, ensure that the management and maintenance meet all regulatory requirements (DSE 2011)

The regulations originally set down in 1934 (refer Appendix A) are currently under review and the outcome may impact the powers and responsibilities currently vested in this committee.

In the (1991) City of Ballarat, Pryor Park Assessment Study there were final recommendations to develop the park as a reserve for the conservation and establishment of indigenous parkland which would maximise the wildlife habitat and act as a critical component in the North-South Ballarat Region Wildlife Corridor. The City of Ballarat has now re-zoned Pryor Park as a “Neighbourhood Conservation Parkland and Recreational Open Space” and now manages the Park in accordance with the State Government’s Native Vegetation Framework (City of Ballarat 2008).

## 2.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### 2.1 Park Vision

The park's convergence of a Neighbourhood Conservation Parkland and Recreational Open Space, located on the eastern outskirts of Ballarat while also forming in a critical bottleneck of a north-south wildlife corridor gives this park a unique vision.



**Native vegetation – western section of park**

This unique vision reflects the many aspects of the park. The first aspect is to protect and promote the native flora and fauna so as to provide a wider conservation function for the linkage of Victoria's biodiversity.

This vision predominantly applies to the western side of the park (Zone 1: Neighbourhood Conservation Parkland) where currently native vegetation has been encouraged to grow back and plantings of other native trees and shrubs have been planted to provide food for passing Koalas,

Yellow Tailed Cockatoos and other migratory fauna.

As well as protecting and promoting the native flora and fauna, the vision is to educate the community by way of information in the park outlining the species and habitats that are being preserved and how it links to the broader wildlife corridor.

The second aspect of the park's vision relates to the Recreational Open Space section of the park, (zones 2 & 3), zone 2 being the: Historic Avenue of Redwood Trees and Zone 3: which currently has a mix of pine plantation and open space which also contains native vegetation.

The ornamental avenue of conifers were planted in 1933 when the park was established, this consists predominantly of giant Californian Redwood trees which forms the basis of the parks European heritage. The vision is to protect and maintain the remaining Redwood's and increase this majestic avenue for the enjoyment of the Ballarat community.



Along with these Redwood's planted around 1933; the park was also established by the City of Ballarat as a commercial pine plantation, with the bulk of the parkland being planted out to Radiata pine. The western half of the park was harvested in the late 1980s leaving space for the now native vegetation regeneration. The eastern side of the park remains under pines (Zone 3.) and it is the vision of the local action group to maintain this largely standing for the immediate future in order to turn it into a Glade like setting. This will be achieved by



**Pine plantation to be thinned**



**Forest floor post thinning and regrowth**

thinning out the current pine plantation as depicted to allow more light to reach the forest floor whilst preserving the healthier, more aesthetically pleasing pines.

The vision is to then encourage the already establishing understory of blackwood trees, grasstrees and dianella ground cover to sweep the forest floor.

The proposed vision is to progressively thin and eventually remove all the pines in the plantation to allow an establishment of a wider range of indigenous plant species in a staged process rather than the option of clear felling which would cause significant

disruption to the native vegetation understorey.

This option also extends the passive recreation option for the park in the short to medium term, whilst moving toward the ultimate goal of re-establishing the native species. This method of return to native vegetation may at first seem unorthodox but it is however more in line with the priorities of extending the passive recreation opportunities for this section of the park. It is also recognised that this method of revegetation will not see the native vegetation returning back to the site with a strict end result of an original EVC being fully restored, but it will never the less result in forming a very similar function to that of an original EVC. It is also understood that a staged removal of the pines in this plantation will create some ongoing management issues of pine wildling control; however this management issue is not an unduly large problem to overcome as explained in the next section; Management Directions.

In addition, the vision for this pine plantation is to recover income from any commercially saleable trees that are thinned and use these funds for the ongoing upkeep and development of the park. It is recognised that an immediate clear felling of the pine plantation may see a grater monetary return however this option would greatly detract from the unique opportunity

currently presented by the plantation to extend the passive recreational opportunities in this section of the park.



**Vista to Ballarat CBD**

Lastly, this eastern section of the park has an open space that lies between the central avenue of Redwood's and the pine plantation. (Zone 3.) There is a small loop road within this open space, leading to picnic facilities at which point an impressive vista is revealed of the Ballarat CBD and other prominent landmarks including St Andrews Cathedral and the Ballarat Base Hospital. The vision is to maintain and enhance the open space with its resulting vista and provide a suitable

structure for viewing. This would create an immediate and perfect visual connection within the park between the east-west urban and rural corridor intersecting with the north-south wildlife corridor. It would at this point provide a golden opportunity for education around the need for strong wildlife corridors throughout Victoria and also throughout Australia in general. This strong visual connection is very unique to this spot in the park and its educational relevance is largely lost when Ballarat's CBD is viewed outside the park.

## **2.2 Management Directions**

There are 4 major recommendations in relation to the native flora and fauna and preservation of the historic avenue of Redwood trees, to be implemented as part of the management plan, with the City of Ballarat to implement these changes.

- To protect the native flora and fauna present in the park and encourage its regeneration
- To maintain and enhance the Redwood avenue planting
- Maintain the parks vista toward the Ballarat CBD
- The staged removal and sale of the existing pine plantation

This plan aims to protect and promote the native flora and fauna in the park, especially the native vegetation in the identified Significant Roadside Area which also resides in the park, in accordance with the State Government's Native Vegetation Framework (City of Ballarat 2008). It also aims to protect and maintain the historic avenue of Redwood trees by monitoring and dealing with pests and diseases as well as replanting gaps with new Redwoods. The avenue also requires the removal of several poorly formed pine trees that have emerged in the avenue to restore the visual flow as intended by the original custodians of the park.

While also maintaining and restoring this avenue the other important management consideration is the maintaining of the parks vista towards the Ballarat CBD. This consideration will slightly alter the current spacing of conifers trees in the avenue to allow for a constant visual window to be maintained through to the CBD. Currently this avenue has two small young Redwood trees planted in this existing window which is not blocking the view at this point in time; however in ten to fifteen years time these trees will substantially disrupt this vista. In line with the maintenance of this vita it is recommended that these young Redwood trees be removed now so as to avoid a potentially much larger removal issue in the future. There is also a small amount of young Eucalyptus trees that have been planted on the western side of the main access track which will also disrupt this view, it is recommended that these trees be removed and replaced with smaller growing indigenous shrubs in line with maintaining this vista.

Another consideration is the ongoing management of the remaining Pine plantation in line with the broader vision of staged return to native habitat and the appropriate sale and management of those pine trees. Given the relatively small size of the plantation, the pine wildling management issue raised in the “Park Vision” can be effectively controlled by annual working bees conducted by People for Pryor Park which will implement a search and remove program, pulling pine wildling by hand and cutting out bigger plants using brush saws (Kasel 2004). As an additional backup, the pine wildling can also be controlled as part of the annual spraying program.

### **2.3 Zoning**

The park has three zones or sections. The Western side of the park (Zone 1.) which is predominantly managed as a Neighbourhood Conservation Parkland while the central and eastern sections of the park (Zones 2. & 3) are predominantly managed as a Recreational Open Space.

The fundamental goal for each zone is clearly encapsulated in the vision, the move to return the recreational open space areas to native vegetation will only enhance its usability for this purpose in the longer term.

## 3.0 RESOURCE CONSERVATION

### 3.1 Geological and Landform Features

The City of Ballarat's Pryor Park Assessment Study (1991) states that "the Ballarat East area is largely made of sedimentary rock from the Palaeozoic era (Lower Ordovician). Palaeozoic sediments occur in low and dissected ridges embedded with the slate, sandstone and quartz reefs along the higher slopes of Pryor Park."

The assessment study also states that "in recent times stream alluvial deposits have formed low level terraces along catchments, consisting of sand, silt, quartz, clay and gravel, commonly known as alluvial terraces. Such deposits are consistent with the soil profiles nearer the lower slopes of Pryor Park."

The Assessment Study goes on to state that "As with the Ballarat area in general, soils are shallow, stony and gradational. They have weak structure with low water holding capacities so that in summer they are prone to drying out and in winter to saturation and waterlogging".

The landform and topography of Pryor Park is slightly undulating with a shallow gully cutting through the middle of the park from the Southeast to the Northwest. The park has a predominantly westerly aspect with the highest point of the park being at its most easterly point, Blair Lane.

*Management objectives and targets (short-long term)*

- Ensure that no undue land alterations are performed in the park that will significantly change the current landform or features of the park such as earthworks or new road creation.

### 3.2 Vegetation

The park has two main vegetation zones. (Zone 1: Neighbourhood Conservation Parkland in the western section of the park and Zones 2; & 3: the eastern Recreational Open Space, which contains the historic avenue of Redwood trees and the pine plantation). The first zone is the western conservation parkland section. This zone was cleared of softwood pine plantation in the late 1980's and was replanted with indigenous species from the CVU bioregion with a particular emphasis on the ecological vegetation class of Heathy Dry Forest. Much of the remaining undergrowth has self generated.

The second vegetation zone is the Recreational Open Space section from the central avenue of Redwoods to the eastern border of the Park. The bulk of this eastern section has a large remaining Radiata pine plantation on it. While in between the remaining Pine plantation and avenue of Redwoods there is roughly one hectare of open space predominantly filled with grass and some native shrubs.



An initial vegetation survey (refer Appendix B) of the Western Conservation Parklands zone revealed in excess of 35 different species of native trees, shrubs and ground covers.

A similar survey in Eastern Recreational Open Space zone identified 18 different species including both native and exotic trees, shrubs and ground covers. (Appendix C).

Also throughout this eastern section of the park many common exotic weed species were identified dominated by Gorse, Blackberry, Hawthorn and English Broom.

*Management objectives and targets (short-medium-long term)*

- Manage the parks native flora in accordance with the State Government's Native Vegetation Framework (City of Ballarat 2008)
- Undertake initial comprehensive flora identification survey recording results in the Parks Victoria Environmental Information System and the DSE Flora Information System. Encourage seasonal surveys to monitor change. (DSE 2005)

### **3.3 Fauna**

Pryor Park has not had a comprehensive survey to determine the resident and migratory fauna and avi-fauna population in the park, however local residents have indicated that Koalas, Wallabies, Echidnas and Kangaroos have been sighted in the park (City of Ballarat 1991).

This park, forming a critical built up link in the North-South Wildlife Corridor means that it is more likely that although the park does not contain a large native fauna population, it would however definitely have a large migratory population.

The DSE provides a comprehensive publication of fauna species of the Ballarat region which would support the anecdotal evidence provided by the People of Pryor Park.

The park also contains a population of stray cats and dogs with a small permanent population of rabbits. This is particularly so because of its close proximity to a large urban centre.

*Management objectives and targets (medium-long term)*

- Undertake initial comprehensive native fauna identification survey recording results in the Parks Victoria Environmental Information System and Atlas of Victorian Wildlife. Encourage seasonal surveys to monitor change (DSE 2005).

### **3.4 Landscape**

Pryor Park's immediate landscape is a complex mix of two converging landscapes. This landscape includes the urban fringe of Ballarat's landscape intersecting with the larger north-south state forest landscapes. This has resulted in the City of Ballarat classifying and managing this park as a combination of conservation parkland and recreational open space.

The park has a distinctive native vegetation landscape in its western section whilst its central and eastern sections have a historical parkland landscape and a commercial pine plantation.

The park's topography falls away to the northwest, providing a unique vista back over to the city of Ballarat.

### 3.5 Indigenous and European Cultural Heritage

Pryor Park's Indigenous Heritage includes all Indigenous places and objects and Indigenous cultural lore relating to the park (Parks Victoria 2005). The park is located in the Country of the Watha Wurrung people of the Wathaurong language speaking group (Sovereign Hill Education Service 2011).

The Land Conservation Council (1980), Ballarat area, states that "to date, insufficient is known about the prehistory of Victoria to permit a definitive comment on the cultural sequence for any specific part of the state".

The Land Conservation Council also goes on to state that "Our knowledge of the way in which Aborigines used their environment is obtained from contemporary sources coupled with modern interpretation of archaeological and ethnographic information". It also states that "Recent surveys in the Western District of Victoria have discovered thousands of mound sites, stone arrangements, and other signs of Aboriginal occupation".

While recent surveys have discovered many signs of Aboriginal occupation in the Western District of Victoria, Pryor Park has no immediate signs of any indigenous cultural heritage. The initial 1834 Pastoralists of Ballarat converted the tribal lands to sheep runs. These large and extensive sheep runs altered the vegetation structure so much that the tribes could no longer rely on a good distribution of seasonal food resources. This soon resulted in a very marked reduction in the indigenous population around Ballarat. With the abandonment of many indigenous occupation sites around Ballarat the next phase of European history, the Victorian Gold Rush completely erased any signs of occupation in the park. However it can be reasonably assumed that the park and the land immediately around it would have seen indigenous occupation at different points in time, given that the land on which the park sits had a prominent position with an outlook to a spiritually significant Mt Warrenheip which had a permanent spring. While it also had good access to waterways, grasslands, woodlands and other environmental zones which gave the tribes a large scope to exploit the seasonal food recourses of the area. (Land Conservation Council 1980)

#### *Management objectives and targets (short-medium term)*

- The Park's Committee of Management respects the Watha Wurrung people's cultural lore, and connection to land, and seeks to provide an acknowledgement to the original custodians of the land, by way of a permanent sign installed at the entrance to Pryor Park (Parks Victoria 2005).

- Respect the aspirations and rights of the Traditional Owners and the local Aboriginal community in managing Pryor Park in accordance with relevant legislation and Parks Victorias operational policies. (DSE 2005)

The European heritage links the Park back to the early pioneers and gold miners who settled the area. By the time of the creation of the park in 1931, Ballarat had become a very prominent and wealthy regional centre. The City at this time possessed a large network of reserves, commons and parks and gardens throughout the City, with the Ballarat Botanic Gardens being its centrepiece, which possessed many well established ornamental conifer trees and an impressive avenue of giant Californian Redwoods.

Somewhat mimicking the spirit of the Ballarat forefathers, the park's creators planted their own version of an ornamental conifer avenue, all be it in a somewhat more informal fashion which remains a link to the European cultural heritage.

Aside from the introduced tree species there appears to be no other direct evidence linking the park to activities such as pastoral production or gold mining which has had such a big impact on the surrounding environment.

*Management objectives and targets (short-long term)*

- Protect and maintain the historic avenue of Redwood trees by monitoring and dealing with pests and diseases
- Replant gaps in avenue with new Redwoods
- Replace poorly formed conifer trees in the avenue with new Redwoods

## 4.0 PARK PROTECTION

### 4.1 Fire Management

The park has a significant vegetation cover however this does not pose any more risk than the surrounding eucalypt forests. The fire management in the park is currently conducted by the People of Pryor Park via regular working bees to clear excess dead timber throughout the park. The City of Ballarat maintains the parks boundaries and ensures adequate access for fire service vehicles.

*Management objectives and targets (short-medium-long term)*

- The park does not and will not require any ecological burning for the foreseeable future. A review of this management plan in 20-30 years time may find that such a burn may prove advantageous to the conservation of the native vegetation zone.
- Continue regular working bees to clear excess timber in the park.
- Review fuel load annually and perform reduction burns if necessary and practical.

### 4.2 Pest Plants, Animals and Diseases

The park has several pest plant species. These noxious weeds mainly exist in the central and eastern sections of the park, becoming more numerous throughout the pine plantation.

*Management objectives and targets (short-long term)*

- A regime of yearly herbicide spraying has already been adopted in the park and this will need to continue. This program will, over time, successfully manage the weed population throughout the park.

There is also a general background population of feral cats, stray dogs and rabbits. This is unfortunately due to the ongoing problems of urban development. The management of these Pest Animals is limited due to its proximity to urban areas.

*Management objectives and targets (short-long term)*

- Baiting programs would be impractical and controversial due to the use of the park by pet owners.
- Pryor Park's pest animal control must largely rely on the City of Ballarat's regulations on responsible pet ownership, while also relying on the DSE's and Parks Victorias, pest management programs throughout the adjoining Canadian State Forest and broader Regional and State Parks.

The pines throughout the park in 1990 suffered a fungal disease (*Diplodea pinea*) which caused severe limb die back. This fungal disease gained entry via bark injuries to the upper limbs of the pines during a substantial hailstorm. The city council resolved to clear fell the mature plantation. The following two decades however has only seen the Western section of

the pine plantation being cleared felled with the eastern section still standing. To date this remaining section of pine plantation has not sustained any severe long term damage and has largely recovered and now requires no immediate consideration to be clear felled.

*Management objectives and targets (short-medium-long term)*

- Continue to monitor diseases identified in the park such as the fungal disease *Diplodea pinea*.
- The monitoring and resolving of such diseases in the park will need to be conducted by the City of Ballarat as the managing body.

### **4.3 Catchment and Soil Conservation**

The park's underlying parent rock material is largely made of sedimentary rock from the Palaeozoic era. Its subsurface soils are dominated by clay while its topsoils are shallow, stony and gradational. This topsoil has a weak structure and a low water holding capacity. (City of Ballarat 1991)

This poorly structured topsoil in the park leaves it prone to soil erosion, while its underlying parent material the Palaeozoic sediments have little residents to weathering processes once exposed.

The City of Ballarat (1991) Pryor Park Assessment Study states in its "Hydrology" section that "The sloping nature and elevation of Pryor Park prevents it being subject to flooding"

The park has some small gullies which run through its middle and north east section towards Specimen Creek. Existing at the headwater to these small gullies are two dams on neighbouring land which largely retards the excess rainwater. A culvert pipe has been constructed on the park's main access track where these gullies cross it. The park does not require any additional drains to be constructed, given the relatively low key utilisation of the land. (City of Ballarat 1991). (Refer to Figure 7; Map, End of Plan) for the park's Topography & Hydrology.

To date the park has never sustained any significant soil erosion of any kind and given that the vegetation cover in the park is good and its topography is gentle, major soil erosion is not going to be an issue in the park.

*Management objectives and targets (short-long term)*

- Keeping a good cover of vegetation in the park and keeping the park's key utilisations to an appropriately low level of passive recreation will ensure no soil erosion occurring in the park in the future.

## **5.0 THE PARK VISIT**

### **5.1 The Park Visitor**

Pryor Park provides the visitor with a number of passive recreational opportunities. These include bird watching, walking, discovering unique vistas of Ballarat and wildflower appreciation. Informative signage is also provided throughout the park on its flora and fauna.

### **5.2 Visitor Activities and Facilities**

The City of Ballarat provides a well maintained central service track giving good vehicular access to the park and together with the “People for Pryor Park” they also provide consistent and improving walking tracks throughout the park. Signage is provided at the entrance of the park, emphasising the parks passive recreational activities, while this signage also clearly bans motorbikes, horse riding and mountain biking activities while also highlighting that dogs are to be on a leash. The committee of management does not provide public toilets or rubbish bins, consistent with the parks emphasis on a Conservation Parkland.

*Management objectives and targets (short-medium-long term)*

- City of Ballarat will continue to provide a well maintained central service track into the future and will provide assistance to the “People for Pryor” group for the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of paths and signage throughout the park.
- As there are no rubbish bins provided in the park, the City of Ballarat will check the park on a monthly basis for illegal rubbish dumping.

### **5.3 Visitor Information Interpretation and Education**

The City of Ballarat together with the assistance of the DSE, Parks Victoria and People for Pryor Park provides professionally presented information throughout the park on the native flora and fauna. This information consists of a general summary at the noticeboard of the park as well as individual identification of native species using plant tags along the walking tracks. An additional and unique opportunity for presenting educational information about the park’s native flora and fauna in contexts to its position in the North-South Wildlife Corridor is recommended to be situated at the viewing platform.

*Management objectives and targets (short-long term)*

- The committee of management with the assistance of other authorities will continue to provide professionally presented information throughout the park.
- Implement the recommendations to construct an appropriate viewing platform with its further information on the park’s wider biodiversity context.

## 5.4 Public Safety

Pryor Park is orientated around conservation values and passive recreational activities which directly and indirectly revolve around these values.

*Management objectives and targets (short-long term)*

- In line with the park's conservation values and its passive recreational activities it is in order to prohibit certain activities including motorbikes, horse riding, mountain bikes and camping. This will preserve the tracks reducing the need for regular maintenance as well as making it safe for walkers to use the tracks for their intended purpose.
- The committee of management with the assistance of People for Pryor Park will monitor the walking tracks for damage that may occur by people ignoring the signage at the entrance of the park. This monitoring will also include assessing and fixing where necessary any storm damage, wash outs and fallen limbs etc.

## 6.0 COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT

### 6.1 Friends and Volunteers

Pryor Park has, since 1991, had a local residents action group called People for Pryor Park. This group has worked in close partnership with the City of Ballarat to maintain this park. As the Park has an increasing emphasis on the conservation parkland whilst supporting passive recreation, the role of the volunteers will become more important into the future. This is especially true if Pryor Park is to reach its full potential as a credible strong link which effectively aids migration of wildlife up and down the north-south corridor.

*Management objectives and targets (short-long term)*

- The strong partnership between the City of Ballarat, the DSE and the People for Pryor will need to continue into the future to see the park reach its full potential as a conservation parkland and recreational open space.
- The City of Ballarat, DSE and People for Pryor Park will need to build further strong partnerships with other local community Landcare groups, Vic Roads, private landholders and VicTrack to see an adequate wildlife connection established between the north and south sections of the corridor.

### 6.2 Community Awareness and Park Neighbours

The park is perfectly situated on an intersection of the urban fringe and the larger north-south wildlife corridor. This gives the local community opportunities to study and appreciate nature conservation and how urban areas can care and interact with nature. Many other community conservation groups such as Landcare, Volunteer indigenous nurseries etc can visit the park and participate in education programs which encompass the park.

*Management objectives and targets (short-long term)*

- People for Pryor Park will need to continue to build cohesive relationships with the rest of the parks neighbours to create a sense of ownership and pride in their local park. Their ongoing work will encourage the local community to utilise and enjoy such a valuable open space located right on their doorstep.
- The committee of management will continue to give assistance to the People for Pryor Park for the production of flyers and other literature concerning the park.



## 7.0 OTHER ISSUES

### 7.1 Authorised uses

The park has one major easement running from East to West. This easement contains an important gas main for the city of Ballarat. Telecommunications services also run from Eureka St to Elsworth St. in a North/South direction to service several properties located on Elsworth St.

The park has one major access track. This track is the only access to the properties located on the section of Elsford St between Turpie St and Blair's Lane.

*Management objectives and targets (short-long term)*

- The two identified easements in the park will need to continue to carry a light vegetation load to ensure easy access for maintenance of those easements.
- The City of Ballarat will need to continue to maintain the park's main access track in its current good condition for the residents located on Elsford Street.

### 7.2 Boundaries and Adjacent Uses

Blair's Lane, whilst marked on the map, has not been completely constructed to link Eureka St. with Elsworth St. The park's commercial pine plantation has been allowed to overrun this section of the lane with a profusion of thousands of Pine Wildling saplings. This section presents a hazard for fire access and has become a haven for feral animals.

Mt Xavier Golf Club is a significant neighbour of the park and presently holds a lease of approximately 3.4 hectares of land in the northeast corner that was previously part of Pryor Park. It currently provides approximately \$10,000 per annum for the park's upkeep.

*Management objectives and targets (short-long term)*

- It is recommended that the City of Ballarat reopen the uncompleted section of Blair's Lane to give immediate access for fire service vehicles only.
- As part of its lease conditions, Mt Xavier Golf Club will need to continue its \$10,000 per annum for the Parks upkeep.
- This arrangement will need to be reviewed periodically to ensure it continues to provide the relevant and functional support required to maintain the park as a conservation parkland and recreational open space.

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## APPENDICES

### A. 1934 Original Pryor Park Regulations

Victoria Gazette

2457

November 7, 1934

REGULATIONS FOR THE CARE, PROTECTION, AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RESERVE KNOWN AS "PRYOR PARK," IN THE TOWN OF BALLAARAT EAST, NOW CITY OF BALLAARAT.

WHEREAS by the 181st section of the *Land Act 1928*, power is given to the Board of Land and Works to make Rules and Regulations for the care, protection, and management of all public parks and reserves not conveyed to and vested in trustees and for the preservation of good order and decency therein, and also for the collection and receipt of tolls, entrance fees, and other charges for entering therein or thereupon. Now therefore the Board of Land and Works, in pursuance of the powers conferred as aforesaid, doth hereby make the following Regulations in respect of the land temporarily reserved by Orders in Council of 8th December, 1931, and 6th August, 1934, as a site for Public purposes (Tree Planting) and Public Recreation in the Parish of Ballarat, at Ballarat East, and known as "Pryor Park."

#### REGULATIONS.

1. The Reserve shall be at all times open to the public from sunrise to sunset free of charge.
2. No person shall enter or remain in the Reserve who may offend against decency as regards dress, language, or conduct.
3. No person shall damage in any way the trees, shrubs, or flowers in the Reserve, nor shall fires be lighted therein.
4. No person shall climb or jump over the gates or fences in or around the Reserve, stick bills thereon, or cut names on, or in any way damage or injure any of the buildings, gates, fences, seats, or trees in the Reserve, nor leave or deposit any glass, paper, or rubbish, nor roll or throw stones or any missiles of any kind therein.
5. No person shall put in the Reserve any cattle, horses, sheep, goats, pigs, or other animals without the permission in writing of the Committee of Management first obtained. Provided always that the moneys received for agistment shall be expended in the maintenance and improvement of the Reserve, and that an account thereof shall be furnished annually to the Board of Land and Works.
6. The Committee of Management shall have full power and authority to impound any cattle found trespassing on the Reserve, and shall be taken to be the occupier of the Reserve (with all power incidental to that status) within the meaning of any law for the time being in force relating to the impounding of cattle.  
For the purposes of this clause "cattle" shall mean cattle as interpreted by section 3 of the *Pounds Act 1928*.
7. No person shall bring into the Reserve any dog, unless controlled by a chain or cord, without the permission, in writing, of the Committee of Management first obtained.
8. No person shall camp in the Reserve, or erect therein any building, or any booth or other structure for the purpose of offering for sale any article, without the permission, in writing, of the Committee of Management first obtained.
9. No person shall take part in any public entertainment of any sort in the Reserve without the permission, in writing, of the Committee of Management first obtained.
10. No person shall spit or expectorate on the paths or on any structure or erection in the Reserve.
11. No person shall bet publicly in any part of the Reserve, and any person infringing this Regulation shall be liable to expulsion from the enclosures and Reserve.
12. Persons renting or hiring any stand, building, erection, or enclosure on the occasions of any fêtes, sports, or holiday amusements may be required to deposit any sum which the Committee of Management may at any time determine, not exceeding Ten pounds (£10), by way of guarantee that due

care shall be taken of such stand, building, erection, or enclosure, and such Committee in its absolute discretion, may make good any damage or injury sustained by such stand, building, erection, or enclosure, or anything contained therein during such occupancy or hiring, and deduct the cost of making good such loss or damage from the sum of money deposited by way of guarantee, and all persons so renting or hiring shall abide by these Regulations and by any order given by the Committee of Management.

13. No persons, except labourers and workmen employed in the Reserve, shall enter any plots therein which may be enclosed for plantations of young trees or shrubs.

14. No person shall disturb the surface or remove any earth, sand, stone, marl, or gravel from the Reserve.

15. No person shall play, practise, or engage in any organized game or sport within the Reserve on Sundays or on Anzac Day.

16. No person shall play, practise, or engage in any sport, including tennis, football, quoits, golf, cricket, hockey or any other game or foot racing, except in the portions of the Reserve set apart for that purpose, and then only with the permission of the Committee of Management first obtained, and such permission may be granted subject to such terms and conditions as the Committee of Management may determine.

17. No person shall enter the Reserve or pass over the playing area or oval with any vehicle or on horseback, without the permission of the Committee of Management first obtained, nor drive or ride amongst or to the danger or annoyance of persons assembled on any part of the ground.

18. No person shall obstruct, disturb, interrupt, or annoy any officer or employee of the Committee of Management in the proper execution of his work and duty.

19. No assemblies for concerts or for the purpose of public worship, preaching, or public speaking of any kind shall take place in the Reserve without the permission, in writing, of the Committee of Management.

20. No person, other than the players and officials connected with any game (football, cricket, tennis, hockey, or golf), and than any competitor and officials at any sports gathering, shall intrude upon any playground or oval during the course of such games and sports.

21. All timber at present growing or that may at any future time be planted in the Reserve shall remain the property of the Board of Land and Works and the Committee of Management, and should any of the said timber be sold, the net proceeds therefrom shall be paid on a ratio basis of 20 per cent. to the Board of Land and Works and 80 per cent. to the Committee of Management.

22. The Council of the City of Ballarat has been appointed a Committee of Management with power and authority to enforce the foregoing Regulations.

Every person offending against these Regulations shall, in accordance with the provisions of section 181 of the *Land Act 1928*, for each offence be liable to a penalty of not more than Five pounds (£5), and every person who knowingly and wilfully offends against any such Regulations, and who, after he has been warned by any bailiff of Crown lands or by any member of the Police Force, does not desist from so offending, may be forthwith apprehended by such bailiff or member of the Police Force and taken before some justice to be dealt with according to law, and shall be liable to a penalty of not more than Ten pounds (£10).

The common seal of the Board of Land and Works was hereunto affixed this 30th day of October, 1934, in the presence of—

(SEAL)  
(Corres. Rs.4159.)

A. A. DUNSTAN, President.  
W. McILROY, Member.

#### Land Act 1928.

#### LICENCES UNDER THE LAND ACT 1915 EXPIRED.

NOTICE is hereby given that the Licences mentioned in the Schedule hereunder have expired for the reason specified in each case.

District.	Corr. No.	Name of Licensee.	Section of Land Act under which Licensed.	Parish.	Allotment.	Area.	Class.	Reasons for Forfeiture, &c.
Melbourne ...	01878	J. Macartney and Co. Pty. Ltd.	129	South Melbourne	2A, sec. 63A	A. R. P. 1 0 13	...	Non-payment of rent
" "	01684	J. S. Avery Pty. Ltd....	129	" "	15, sec. E	0 1 32	...	" " "

Department of Lands and Survey,  
Melbourne, 2nd November, 1934.

A. A. DUNSTAN,  
Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey.

**B. Provisional Plant Species List – West**

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**Provisional Species List of Flora at Pryor Park  
(Western Conservation Parkland Zone)**

<b>Botanical Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>
<b>Indigenous Species</b>	
<i>Acacia aculeatissima</i>	Thin-Leaf Wattle
<i>Acacia dealbata</i>	Silver Wattle
<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	Black Wattle
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood
<i>Acacia myrtifolia</i>	Myrtle Wattle
<i>Acacia paradoxa</i>	Hedge Wattle
<i>Acacia pycnanthan</i>	Golden Wattle
<i>Allocasuarina littoralis (male)</i>	Black Sheoak
<i>Allocasuarina verticillata (female)</i>	Drooping Sheoak
<i>Burchardia umbellate</i>	Milk Maids
<i>Cassinia arcuta</i>	Drooping Cassinia
<i>Daviesia leptophylla</i>	Narrow Leafed Bitter Pea
<i>Dianella revoluta</i>	Black-Anther Flax Lily
<i>Dillwynia cinerascens</i>	Grey Parrot Pea
<i>Drosera peltata spp. auriculata</i>	Tall Sundew
<i>Drosera whittakeri subsp. aberrans</i>	Scented Sundew
<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>	Swamp Gum
<i>Eucalyptus radiata</i>	Narrow Leafed Peppermint
<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>	Manna Gum
<i>Exocarpos cupressiformis</i>	Cherry Ballarat

<i>Goodenia ovate</i>	Hop Goodenia
<i>Grevillea steiglitziana</i>	Brisbane Ranges Grevillea
<i>Hakea decurrens</i> spp. <i>physocarpa</i>	Bushy Needlewood
<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	Purple Coral Pea
<i>Helichrysum scorpioids</i>	Button Everlastings
<i>Leporhynchos tenuifolius</i>	Wiry Buttons
<i>Leptospermum myrsinoides</i>	Silky Tea Tree
<i>Leucopogon viratus</i>	Common Beard Heath
<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Spiny Headed Mat Rush
<i>Olearia myrsinoides</i>	Silky Daisy Bush
<i>Pimelea humilis</i>	Common Rice Flower
<i>Poa labillardieri</i>	Silver Tussock
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	Austral Bracken
<i>Pultenaea gunnii</i>	Golden Bush Pea
<i>Stackhorsia mongyna</i>	Creamy Candles
<i>Tetradthea ciliate</i>	Pink Bells
<i>Themada triandra</i>	Kangaroo Grass
<i>Wurmbea dioica</i>	Common Early Nancy
<b>Weed Species</b>	
<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	English Broom
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse

### C. Provisional Plant Species List – East

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#### Provisional Species List of Flora at Pryor Park

#### (Eastern Recreational Open Space Zone)

Botanical Name	Common Name
<b>Indigenous Species</b>	
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood
<i>Acacia paradoxa</i>	Hedge Wattle
<i>Daviesia leptophylla</i>	Narrow Leafed Bitter Pea
<i>Dianella revoluta</i>	Black-Anther Flax Lily
<i>Dillwynia cinerascens</i>	Grey Parrot Pea
<i>Eucalyptus dives</i>	Broad Leafed Peppermint
<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i>	Messmate Stringybark
<i>Eucalyptus radiata</i>	Narrow Leafed Peppermint
<i>Hakea decurrens</i> spp. <i>physocarpa</i>	Bushy Needlewood
<i>Helichrysum scorpioids</i>	Button Everlastings
<i>Leucopogon viratus</i>	Common Beard Heath
<i>Tetralochea ciliata</i>	Pink Bells
<i>Themada triandra</i>	Kangaroo Grass
<i>Xanthorrhoea minor</i>	Small Grass Tree

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### Introduced Species

<i>Cedrus deodara</i>	Deadora Cedar
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<i>Cuppressus macrocarpa</i>	Monterey Cyprus
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<i>Pinus radiata</i>	Radiata Pine
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<i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>	Californian Redwood
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### Weed Species

<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
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<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	English Broom
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<i>Rubus fruticosus aggregate</i>	Blackberry
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<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse
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Figure 1. Pryor Park Map

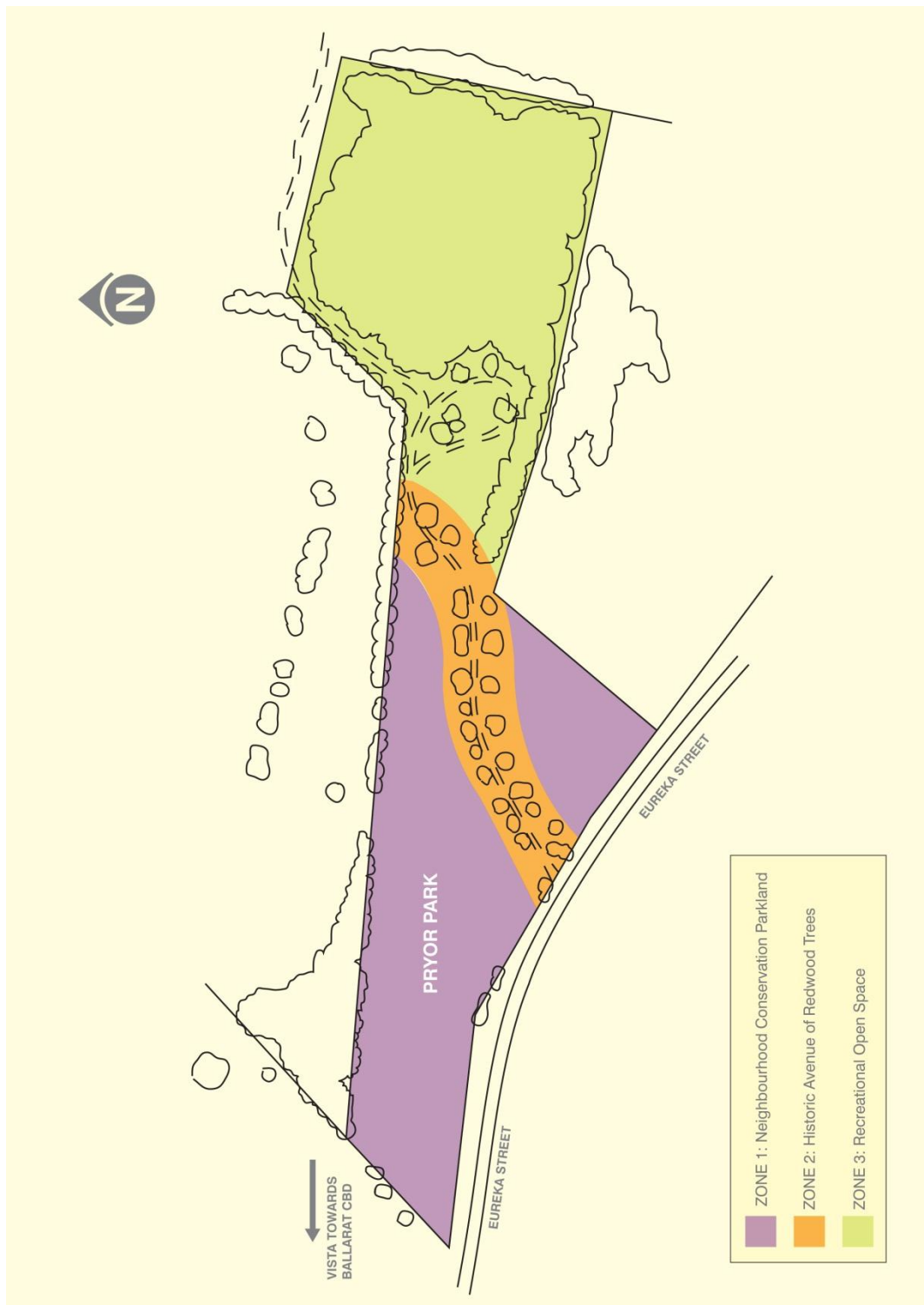
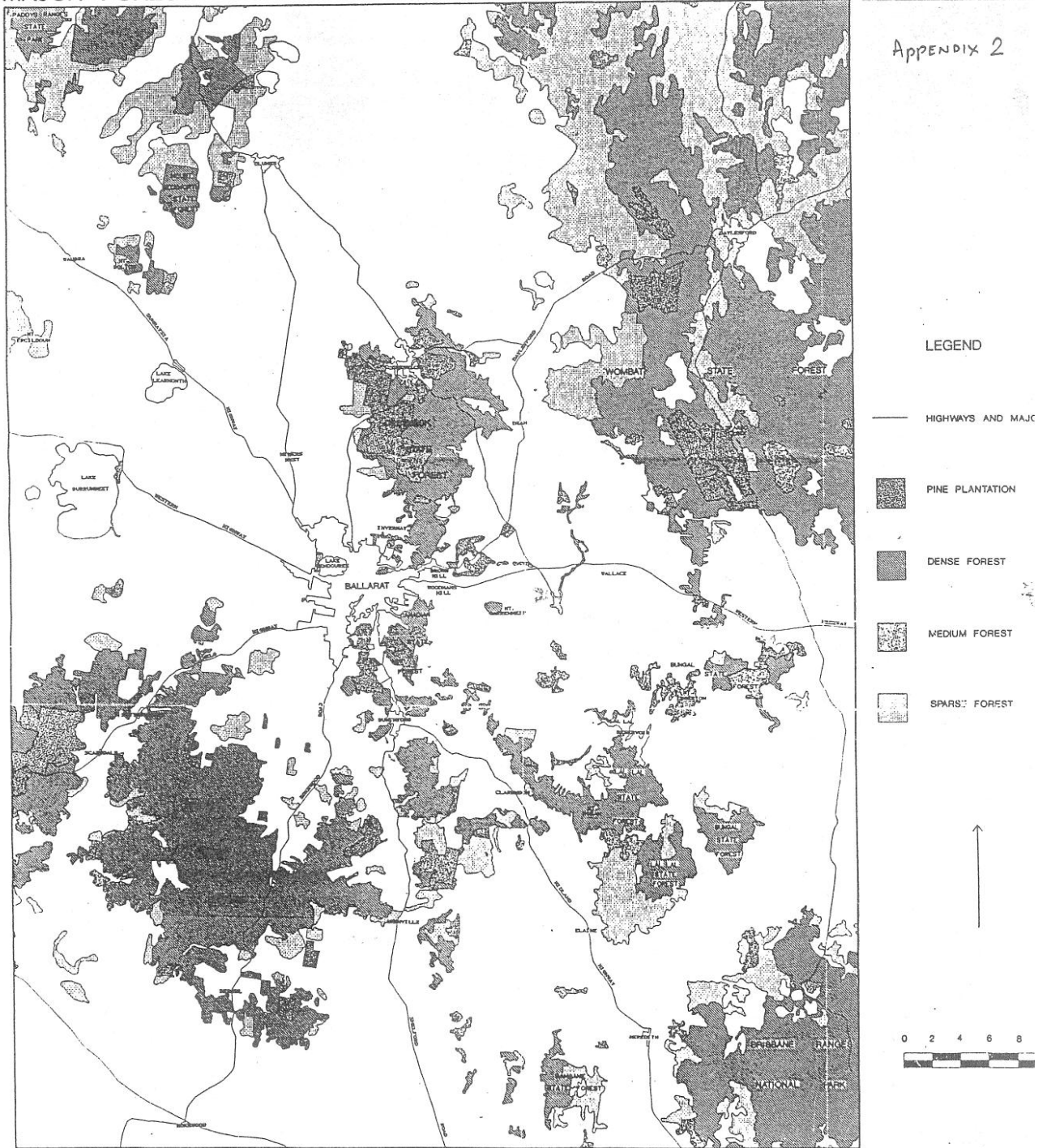


Figure 2. Map of Ballarat and District Wildlife Corridor

MAJOR FOREST BLOCKS AND VEGETATION CORRIDORS OF THE BALLARAT REGION



MAP FROM, ELEISHA BIRKIN, (1989) THE VALUE OF REMNANT VEGETATION AS WILD LIFE HABITAT ON THE URBAN FRINGE OF BALLARAT. BALLARAT. BALLARAT COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION.



Figure 3. Wildlife Corridor in Relation to Regional State Parks

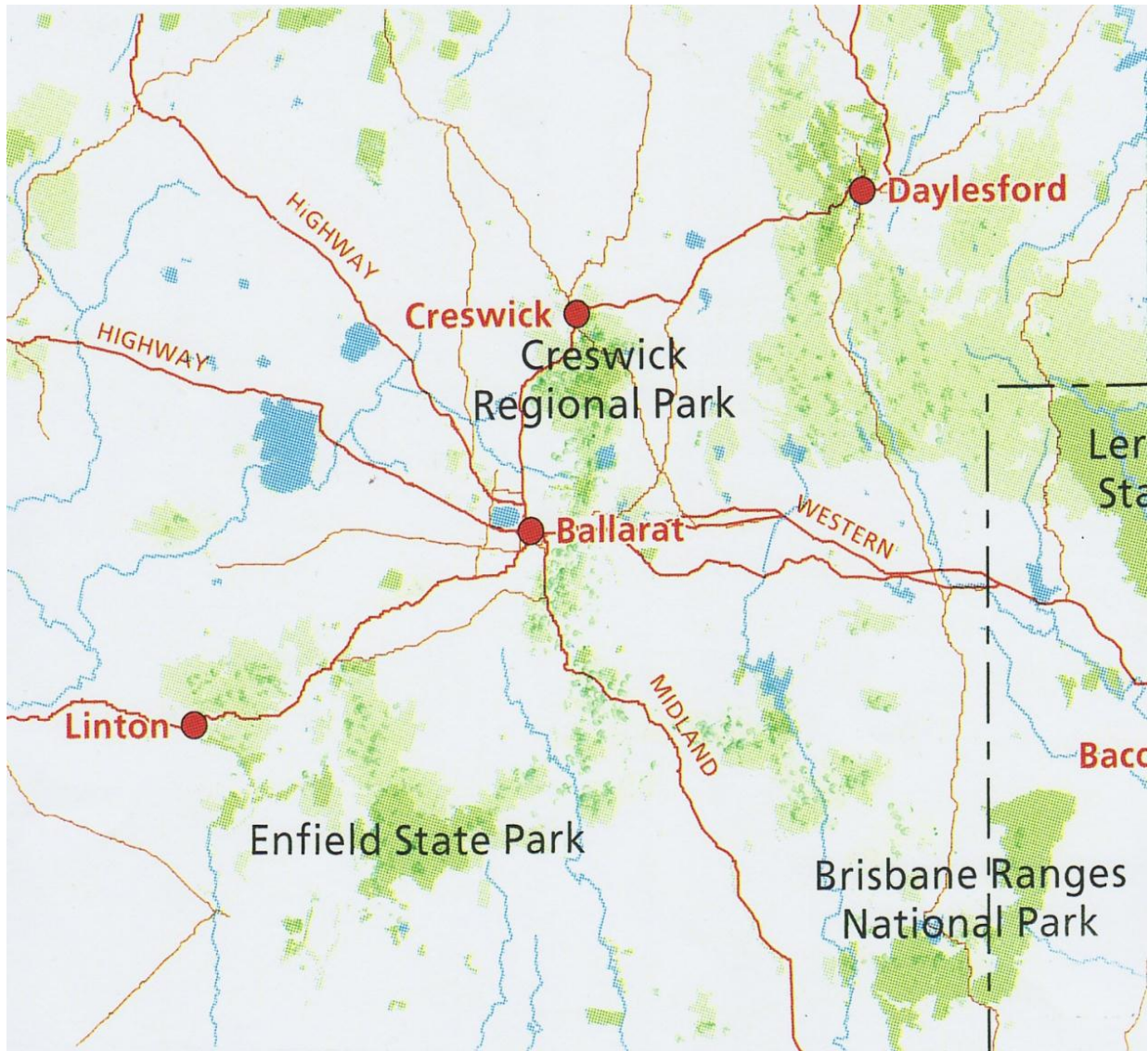


Figure 4. City of Ballarat Open Space Strategy Map (City Wide)

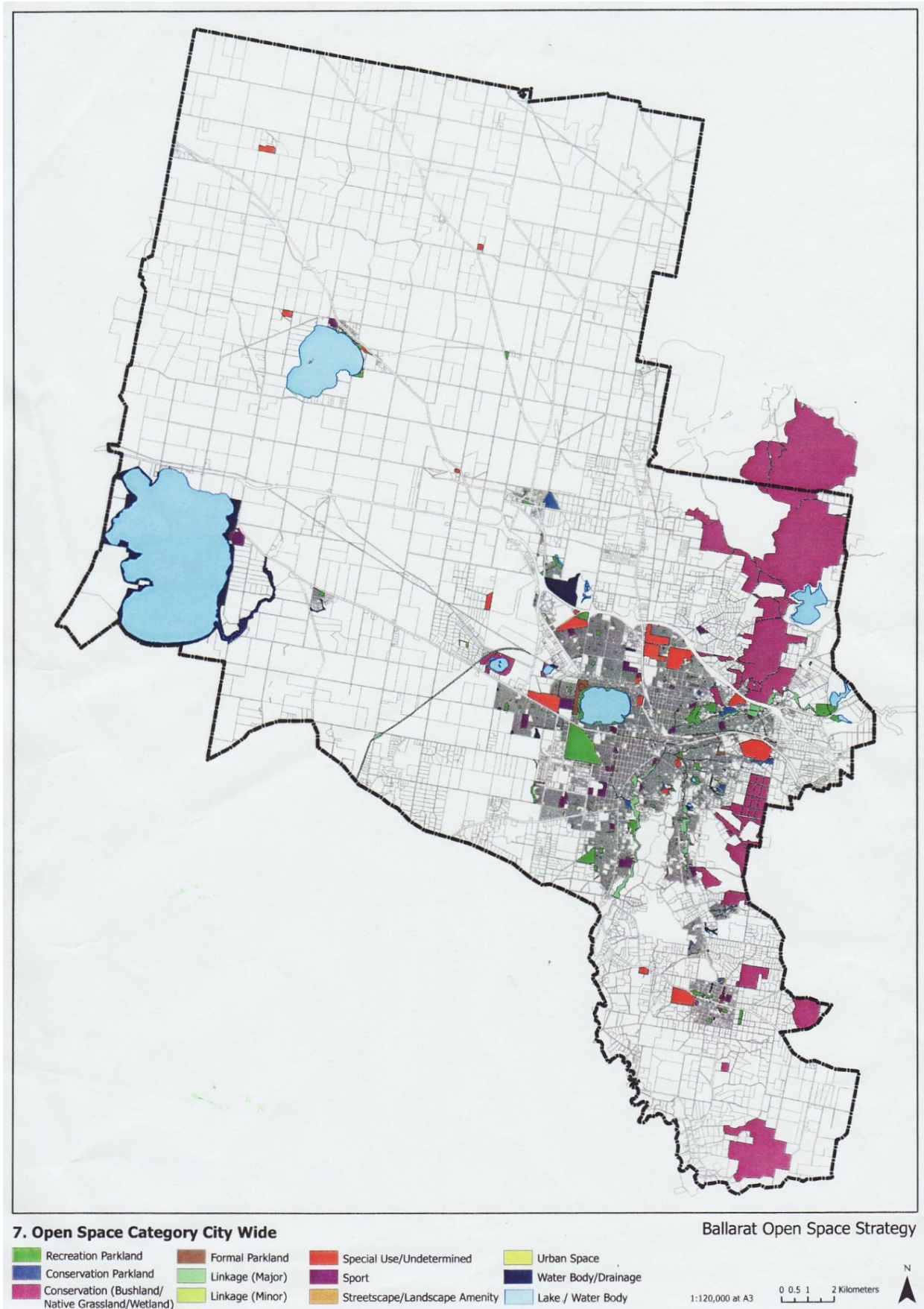




Figure 5. City of Ballarat Open Space Strategy Map ((Inner North East)

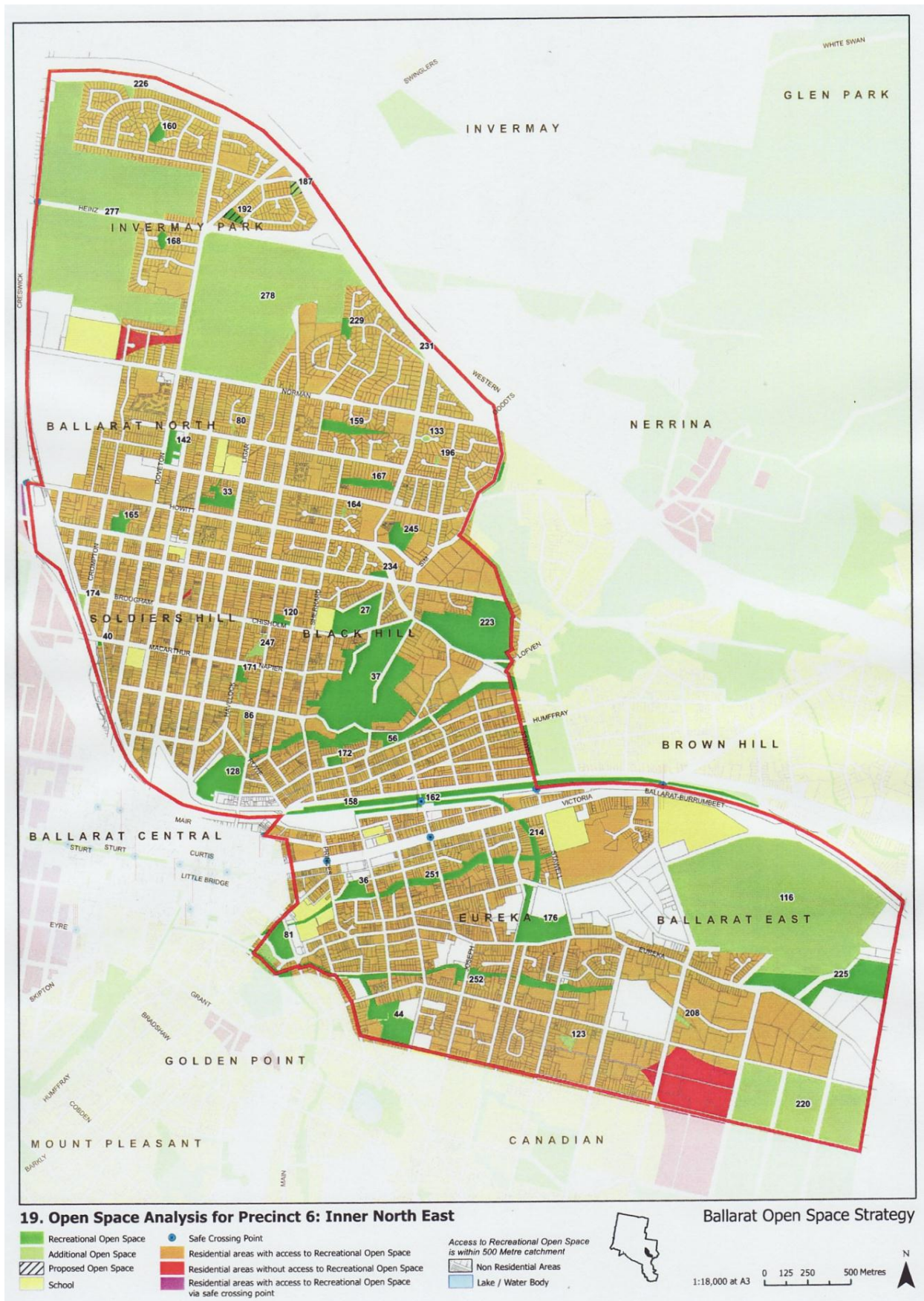
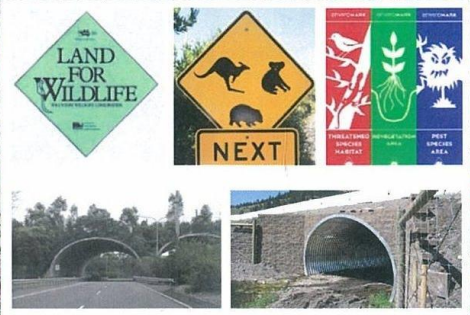
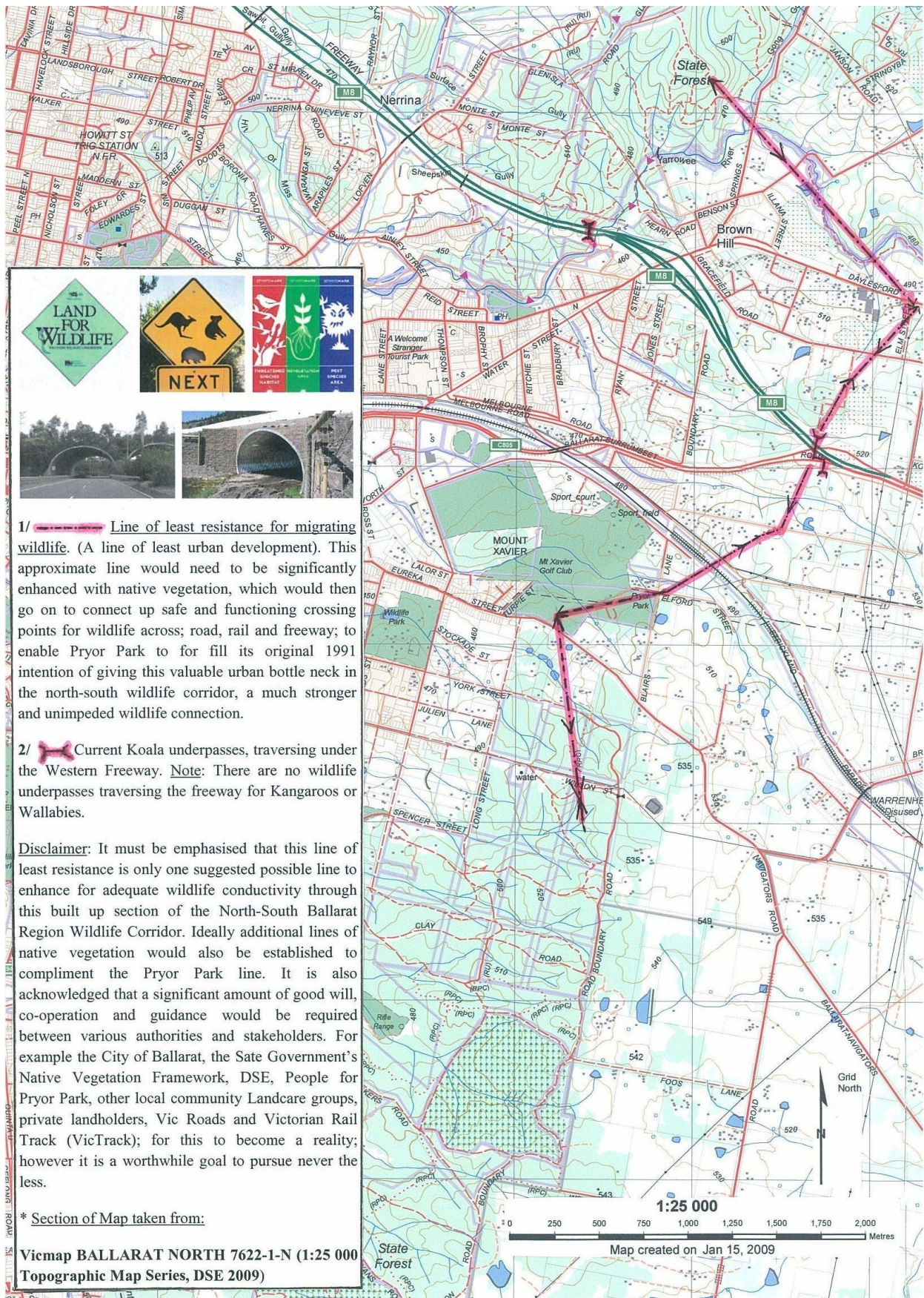






Figure 6. Section of BALLARAT NORTH, DSE Topographic Map Series 1:25 000



1/  Line of least resistance for migrating wildlife. (A line of least urban development). This approximate line would need to be significantly enhanced with native vegetation, which would then go on to connect up safe and functioning crossing points for wildlife across; road, rail and freeway; to enable Pryor Park to for fill its original 1991 intention of giving this valuable urban bottle neck in the north-south wildlife corridor, a much stronger and unimpeded wildlife connection.

2/  Current Koala underpasses, traversing under the Western Freeway. Note: There are no wildlife underpasses traversing the freeway for Kangaroos or Wallabies.

Disclaimer: It must be emphasised that this line of least resistance is only one suggested possible line to enhance for adequate wildlife conductivity through this built up section of the North-South Ballarat Region Wildlife Corridor. Ideally additional lines of native vegetation would also be established to compliment the Pryor Park line. It is also acknowledged that a significant amount of good will, co-operation and guidance would be required between various authorities and stakeholders. For example the City of Ballarat, the Sate Government's Native Vegetation Framework, DSE, People for Pryor Park, other local community Landcare groups, private landholders, Vic Roads and Victorian Rail Track (VicTrack); for this to become a reality; however it is a worthwhile goal to pursue never the less.

\* Section of Map taken from:  
**Vicmap BALLARAT NORTH 7622-1-N (1:25 000 Topographic Map Series, DSE 2009)**



Figure 7. Pryor Park Topography and Hydrology Map

