

Response to the City of Ballarat “Woodmans Hill” Gateway Precinct Master Plan May 2nd 2013 by the Friends of the Canadian Corridor.

The Friends of the Canadian Corridor (FoCC) is a local neighbourhood group dedicated to the conservation of the natural environment including vegetation between Woodman’s Hill and Buninyong, along the east side of Geelong Road. The principal aims of the group are to protect neighbourhood character, maintain public open space and protect wildlife habitat in the local area.

The Friends have considered the City of Ballarat plan for Woodmans Hill and offer support for the concepts and requirements of the “Woodmans Hill Gateway Precinct Master Plan”.

In particular we support the proposal to:

- “REZONE TO RURAL LIVING (RLZ) PROTECT KOALA HABITATS AND NATIVE VEGETATION” section at the western end of the planning zone. Ref: Draft Master Plan, Aurecon Sept 2012

And to provide:

- *DENSE PLANTING IN ROAD RESERVE WITH NATIVE SPECIES TO REINFORCE WOODMANS HILL CHARACTER*. Ref: Draft Master Plan, Aurecon Sept 2012

The rezoning means that the area will retain its rural ambience and will allow existing native vegetation to remain part of the natural landscape. The planting of “dense native species” fits into the rural ambience and provides additional native vegetation to the existing remnant native vegetation.

There are three additional points we would request Council to consider:

1. That property managers in the Rural Living Zone be required to maintain and/or promote where possible, plantings of local native vegetation, particularly plantings that support habitat for koalas, and within areas that are known to have supported koalas in the past. The decrease in local numbers of koalas is a significant issue for Ballarat.
2. That a significant tree audit be undertaken and significant tree register be maintained. This is in order to identify the actual trees in the Rural Living Zone and to assist in protecting the vegetation into the future. This audit should also provide useful additional information (for areas not already included) to strengthen the Ballarat Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management.
3. The designation of the land between Nerrina (Creswick Forest) and the Canadian Forest as part of a significant Bio Link for Ballarat. The “Woodmans Hill Gateway Precinct Master Plan” to identify it as such, and this identification of its value to be added to the Ballarat Planning Scheme.

We note that current macro environment planning is consistently looking at Bio links between significant areas. The Friends believe that the Master Plan document should show the axis of the Bio link in a North-South alignment across the western end of the planning zone. The following statement and reference sets out the case to identify the Bio Link:

“The National Wildlife Corridors Plan is the Australian Government’s approach to restoring and managing ecological connections in the Australian landscape. It recognises that connectivity is a fundamental requirement of healthy, productive landscapes.

Ref: www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/wildlife-corridors/index.html : page 17

The Australian Government’s **“Caring for Country”** package emphasizes:

“Biodiversity Fund projects will provide significant opportunities for landscape resilience and make a considerable contribution to Australia’s transition to a clean energy future through:

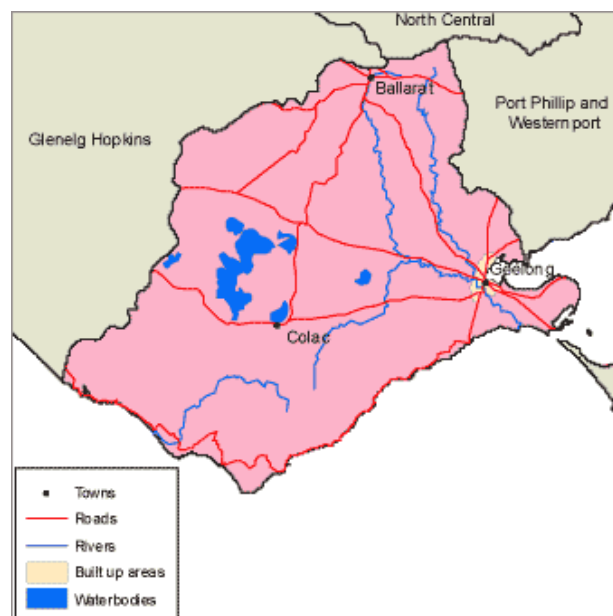
- improved connectivity within the landscape
- revegetation, and management and enhancement of existing biodiverse carbon stores across significant tracts of land
- enhanced biodiversity conservation outcomes for key areas of high conservation value, for example by restoring and connecting areas of remnant vegetation adjacent to key assets such as Ramsar sites, World Heritage Areas and National Reserve System areas; long-term management of the land, providing longevity of outcomes for biodiversity conservation. Ref: www.environment.gov.au/prospectus page31.

And the package also identifies Western Victoria as:

“South Australia-Victoria Connection

South-east South Australia includes parts of the Murray Mallee and Murray Lakes and Coorong sub-regions, as well as the Naracoorte Coastal Plain. South-west Victoria includes the Wimmera, Glenelg Hopkins, Mallee and Corangamite Natural Resource Management areas. The area has a temperate climate. www.environment.gov.au/prospectus Page 65

There is an opportunity for the Nerrina (Creswick Forest) to the Canadian Forest Bio Link to be revegetated under the South Australia - Victoria connection. The Canadian Forest falls within the Corangamite Natural Resource Management area as shown on the map below which is a priority area.



Corangamite Natural Resource Management area

Thankyou for the opportunity to contribute to the Planning Process and we would welcome the opportunity for further discussion or clarification if the opportunity arises.

Yours sincerely

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