

AGENDA

MEETING OF THE **HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL**

To be held on

27 July 2026

At 5.30pm

In the

Roberts Avenue Kindergarten

23 Roberts Avenue, HORSHAM



**COUNCILLORS are respectfully requested to attend the Council Meeting
of the Horsham Rural City Council to be held on 27 July 2026
in the Roberts Avenue Kindergarten, 23 Roberts Avenue, Horsham at 5.30pm**

Order of Business

PRESENT

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

1. PRAYER

Almighty God, we pledge ourselves to work in harmony for, the social, cultural and economic well-being of our Rural City. Help us to be wise in our deliberations and fair in our actions, so that prosperity and happiness shall be the lot of our people. AMEN

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY STATEMENT

Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land; the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people. We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community.

We pay our respects to the Elders, both past and present, and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.

3. OPENING AND WELCOME

Chairman, Cr Brian Klowss formally welcomed those in attendance to the meeting. The Mayor advised that the meeting will be recorded to maintain a video archive, which will be available on the Horsham Rural City Council website as soon as practicable.

4. APOLOGIES

5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Recommendation

That the minutes emanating from the Council Meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm on 15 June 2026 and 22 June 2026 be adopted.

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest, must leave the meeting and remain outside the room while the matter is being considered, or any vote is taken.

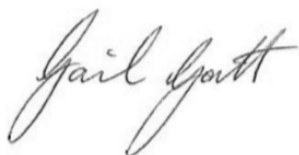
Members of Staff

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, officers or people engaged under contract to the Council providing a report or advice to Council must disclose any conflicts of interests in the matter, including the type of interest.

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<i>Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 - Section 3(1)(h) - Confidential Meeting Information</i>	

CLOSE



GAIL GATT

Chief Executive Officer

REPORTS FOR COUNCIL DECISION

9. OFFICERS REPORTS

9.1 HORSHAM AERODROME LIGHTING – GRANT APPLICATION

Director:	John Martin
Directorate:	Infrastructure
File Number:	F04/A04/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Nil

Purpose

To seek approval to submit a grant application to the Australian Government's Regional Airports Program for a lighting upgrade at Horsham Aerodrome.

Summary

- Upgrades to lighting and apron strength have been identified as key priorities in Council's advocacy priorities for the 2026 State Election.
- An opportunity has arisen through the announcement of the Australian Government's Regional Airports Program, Round 5, to submit an application for projects that support essential services, climate resilience and the transition to net zero emissions.
- It is proposed to submit an application to upgrade the lights on the main, east-west runway, as they are ageing, and it is no longer possible to get spare parts for these lights.
- The proposed upgrade will also enable a changeover to LED lights, which use less energy.
- A co-contribution of 50% is required from Council for this competitive grant stream.
- Applications are due on 28 July 2026.

Recommendation

That Council endorse the submission of the application to the Regional Airports Program for upgrading the lighting on the east-west runway at Horsham Aerodrome for the \$535,000 cost of the lighting upgrade, including a \$268,000 Council contribution.

REPORT

Background

The runway edge lights at Horsham Aerodrome are ageing, and it is no longer possible to get spare parts as the model of lights being used is no longer in production. Regulations regarding lighting are quite stringent, requiring a consistent pattern, colour and intensity for all lights on a runway, to ensure safe operations. It is not possible to swap individual lights to a different type.

Staff have been very innovative in repairing damaged lights, and have been able to keep the lighting system going, but barely. Further, the incandescent lights currently being used tend to be less reliable, often requiring staff to re-seat them in their holders as they can be impacted by atmospheric conditions.

The lights on the main, east-west runway are quite old – their age is uncertain. Lights on the secondary, north-south runway are still serviceable, as they were only installed when the runway was sealed in 2011.

It is proposed to install new LED runway edge lighting and conduits to replace the existing lighting which is at the end of its life.

Discussion

Council's 2026 State Election Advocacy document identifies some urgent upgrades that are required at Horsham Aerodrome, these include apron strengthening and runway lighting.

The Australian Government's Regional Airports Program, Round 5, became available from 17 June 2026, with applications required to be submitted by 28 July 2026. Grants require a minimum of 50% co-contribution. Eligible activities under the program include pavement works, safety enhancements, night operation support and sustainable fuel facilities.

While Council has identified a series of necessary works at the Aerodrome, the 2026-27 four year capital program has only identified funding for the Aerodrome that could be used as the grant co-contribution as follows:

- 2026-27 – Aerodrome renewals general \$50,000
- 2027-28 – Aerodrome renewals general \$50,000
- 2028-29 – Aerodrome lighting upgrade \$260,000 (50% grant, 50% Council)
- 2028-29 – Aerodrome renewals general \$50,000

The provision in the 2028-29 for the lighting upgrade was initially assumed to be sufficient for the main east-west runway. However, the cost estimate, based on 2021 prices with modest escalation, has since been found to be insufficient, with an updated estimate in the past week indicating the cost of the works for that runway alone will be \$535,000, including provision for contingencies and project management.

It is proposed that Council's co-contribution comprise the \$130,000 targeted for these works in 2028-29, and three \$46,000 allocations from each of the next three years' renewal programs. This combined contribution of \$268,000 will enable a grant application to proceed for the amount of up to \$535,000.

Options to Consider

The age and lack of spare parts for the Aerodrome lighting system highlight the necessity of the proposed upgrade that would be funded through this grant application.

Not proceeding with the grant application would mean that when the next opportunity arises the costs of the lighting upgrade would most likely be even higher. In the interim, the risk is that the lighting system will cease to be compliant, and gradually deteriorate to present a safety risk.

Continued advocacy is also necessary to highlight the needs of maintaining the aerodrome's facilities in a serviceable condition to continue to provide access for emergency services, including the Air Ambulance and fire services, both of which make significant use of the aerodrome.

Sustainability Implications

The current lighting system uses incandescent lights, which require a high energy input. The new lighting system would be an energy efficient LED system.

Community Engagement

Nil

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The upgraded lighting system, incorporating conduits, will more readily facilitate extensions to the main runway should that be considered in the future.

Collaboration

Nil

Financial Implications

The report identifies budget allocations proposed in 2026-27 and the two following years that are proposed to be combined into this application in the current year.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

This grant is available through the Australian Government's Regional Airports Program. This is a competitive grant where aerodromes throughout the country would compete for \$15M. This potential funding from the Australian Government is highly appreciated.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Upgrading the lighting at Horsham Aerodrome is identified in Council's 2026 State Election advocacy priorities document.

Risk Implications

The lack of availability of spare parts for the current lighting system could lead to the main east-west runway not being able to be used for night operations. Replacement of the lighting system will ensure that it continues to be serviceable.

The existing runway lighting system utilises a direct-buried cable installation, which remains compliant only under grandfathering provisions. As the system operates at a high voltage, it is important to reduce the associated risks by pursuing this grant opportunity. If successful, the project would enable the direct-buried cable system to be upgraded to a conduit-based installation incorporating energy-efficient LED lighting with significantly lower power demand, improving both safety and long-term reliability.

Conclusion

It is proposed to submit an application to the Australian Government's Regional Airport Program to upgrade lighting at Horsham Aerodrome.

9.2 DIRT JUMPS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Director:	Justine Kingan / John Martin
Directorate:	Community Liveability / Infrastructure
File Number:	F19/A11/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

This report is public.

Appendices 9.2E and 9.2F contain information identified as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 - Section 3(1)(a) and are provided separately to Councillors.

Appendix

Dirt Jumps Management Plan (**Appendix 9.2A**)

Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps CHMP (**Appendix 9.2B**)

Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps Gender Impact Assessment (**Appendix 9.2C**)

WCMA Letter (**Appendix 9.2D**)

Risk Management Advice (**Confidential**) (**Appendix 9.2E**)

Outcomes and Scope Summary (**Confidential**) (**Appendix 9.2F**)

Purpose

To present and decide on the outcomes of the 12-month trial of the Dirt Jumps Management Plan.

Summary

- The Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps have been used informally for approximately 30 years and provide a free, accessible active recreation opportunity for young people and BMX riders.
- A Dirt Jumps Management Plan was prepared for the Burnt Creek site from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 to better manage, safety, maintenance, cultural and environmental risks.
- The Management Plan also applies to the dirt jumps at Park Drive, however due to the unique characteristics and constraints of the Burnt Creek site, the trial and this report focus primarily on Burnt Creek.
- The trial demonstrated that the Burnt Creek site, the 'site' can operate under a structured managed framework, subject to ongoing inspection, maintenance and compliance activities.
- The site is subject to both Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) requirements and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) constraints, which significantly limit future modifications and maintenance activities.
- The Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (WCMA) supports continued use of the site, subject to ongoing compliance with floodplain management requirements.
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC) supports continued use of the site, subject to compliance with the approved CHMP.

- The trial demonstrated recreation and community benefits while identifying an ongoing annual operational maintenance requirement of approximately \$15,000 for inspections, maintenance and management activities.
- The report concludes that the most practical and cost-effective option is to continue operation of the existing site under the Management Plan while considering a longer-term investigation of alternative locations that may offer greater flexibility and future development opportunities.
- Detailed operational, insurance and risk management matters considered during the trial have been provided separately to Councillors within Confidential Appendices 6 and 7.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes that this report present the outcomes of the 12-month trial of the Dirt Jumps Management Plan.
2. Notes that *Cultural Heritage Management Plan 20945 (Burnt Creek Bike Jumps, Horsham)*, approved by the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation on 11 March 2026 under section 63(1) of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, applies to the site, and that its management conditions are binding compliance requirements.
3. Notes the written support of the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (letter dated 23 June 2026, ref. WCMA-132-1472) for the Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps and the ongoing management of the site, including agreed short-term safety works undertaken on a no net loss of floodplain storage basis, and the Authority's commitment to work collaboratively with Council and stakeholders on any future works to ensure floodplain requirements are achieved.
4. Endorses the *Dirt Jumps Management Plan (V.1.7, 2026)* as the risk management framework for the current operation of the Burnt Creek sites as a result of this trial.
5. Notes the ongoing operational funding of approximately \$15,000 per annum will be required to support inspection, maintenance and site management activities consistent with the *Dirt Jumps Management Plan (V.1.7, 2026)*
6. Commit to considering alternative management and activation models as identified in Table 1 (1) in this report, for Council consideration at a future meeting, including associated budget and resourcing requirements, to inform an updated *Dirt Jumps Management Plan (V.1.7, 2026)* to support site users.
7. Notes that potential alternative locations and opportunities for a purpose-designed dirt jumps facility may be investigated in the future, as identified in Table 1 (5) subject to external funding or partnership opportunities arising and a funding allocation through a future annual budget process.
8. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, to approve minor amendments to the current *Dirt Jumps Management Plan (V.1.7, 2026)* where they are operational in nature, don't change the intent of the Management Plan and consistent with this resolution.

REPORT

Background

Community-built dirt jumps have existed for many years on public land along the Wimmera River corridor at the Burnt Creek site on Williams Road, Horsham without a formal management framework.

Over time, this raised matters for Council regarding site management, safety, ongoing maintenance and broader duty of care. The site sits within the Wimmera River corridor and is subject to significant constraints, including a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay and recognition as a culturally sensitive area. It is understood that while dirt jumps provide an accessible local recreation opportunity, they also present a comparatively high level of risk due to their variable design, ongoing modification by users and changing site conditions.

To respond to these issues, Council prepared a Dirt Jumps Management Plan and, on 1 July 2025, commenced a 12-month trial of that plan for the Burnt Creek site, which concluded on 30 June 2026.

The trial was established to test the Management plan in practice, understand the resources required to manage the site, and assess the viability of permitting dirt jumps at Burnt Creek on an ongoing basis.

Throughout the trial, Council undertook community and stakeholder engagement, including on-site community meetings, informal discussions with users and residents, and a targeted stakeholder meeting and worked collaboratively with the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, Barengi Gadjin Land Council. A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) was also prepared and approved as part of this process.

The Management Plan was subject to a 12-month trial intended to:

1. Confirm the effectiveness of the Management Plan as an operational management framework for the Burnt Creek site, including:
 - a. user and public safety requirements
 - b. user and public safety
 - c. asset maintenance and site condition requirements
 - d. environmental and cultural heritage considerations
2. Identify staffing and maintenance requirements.
3. Assess the long-term viability of supporting dirt jumps at the Burnt Creek site.

Matters that were outside the scope of the trial are identified in Confidential Appendix 9.2F - Outcomes and Scope Summary.

The trial evaluated the performance of the Management Plan based on information available during the trial, including inspection and maintenance records, service requests, stakeholder correspondence, operational information and cost information. This information was used to understand the resources required to manage the site and assess the viability of permitting dirt jumps at Burnt Creek on an ongoing basis.

The trial evaluated the performance of the management plan based on information available through the trial including inspection and maintenance records, incident reports and stakeholder

correspondence and understand the resources required to manage the site and assess the viability of permitting dirt jumps at Burnt Creek on an ongoing basis.

Discussion

Trial Outcomes

Available trial information indicates that the site was able to be managed within the framework of the Management Plan, subject to ongoing operational resourcing. The trial demonstrated that dirt jumps at Burnt Creek can continue to operate within a structured management framework. An assessment of detailed trial outcomes is provided in Confidential Attachment 7. A summary of the key outcomes is provided below.

Key outcomes include:

- The Management Plan has been successfully implemented
- Regular inspections, maintenance and monitoring processes have been established.
- Users have generally complied with site management requirements.
- Community interest and support for retaining the facility remains strong.
- Ongoing management responsibilities and costs are now better understood.

The trial also confirmed several significant site constraints affecting future development and maintenance of the jumps.

Cultural Heritage Management Plan

A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) has been completed and approved for the site and is provided as Appendix 9.2B. The CHMP identifies the area as culturally sensitive and places restrictions on soil disturbance and jump construction.

Key requirements include:

- Additional jumps can only be constructed using approved imported soil.
- Disturbance of existing site soil requires cultural heritage monitoring.
- Existing site soils are subject to CHMP requirements, and any disturbance must be managed in accordance with the approved CHMP.
- Most existing jumps were historically constructed using soil sourced from within the activity area.

These requirements significantly limit the ability to alter or expand the existing facility.

Many locations along the Wimmera River are deemed culturally sensitive and are subject to the same considerations and conditions.

- The levelling of existing bike jumps constructed from soil from within the Activity Area is required to be monitored by a Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC) representative.
- The levelling of jumps constructed from imported soil does not require monitoring by BGLC.

Floodplain Management

The Burnt Creek site is affected by a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO).

Advice from the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority confirms:

- No net increase in site levels should occur.
- Soil cannot be introduced in a manner that alters floodplain function.
- The site must remain consistent with floodplain management requirements.
- Continued use of the jump area is supported provided these requirements are met.

Implications for Ongoing Use

The combination of CHMP and LSIO requirements mean:

- Existing jumps can continue to be used.
- Council can continue inspections and maintenance.
- Further expansion or significant redesign of the facility is not supported.
- Maintenance will be restricted by environmental and cultural heritage requirements.
- The quality of jumps may gradually decline over time as opportunities for modification are limited.

Despite these limitations, the site remains capable of functioning as an informal recreation facility under managed conditions.

Other Matters Arising During the Trial

The following matters emerged during the trial period. They were not part of the trial's scope but are recorded here for completeness, with a comment on the merit of pursuing each subject to future budget and resource considerations.

Table 1 Summary of Other Matters Arising During Trial

Matter	Description	Merit of further consideration
1. Alternative management and activation models	Potential of establishing Advisory Committee of Council incorporating BGLC, WCMA, users and Council officers, holding trained and/or supervised community volunteer maintenance and modification activities eg dig days (similar to Onkaparinga Council)	Outside the immediate decision, but genuine community-partnership interest exists. Any future model would require further scoping, clear governance settings and specialist advice on roles, responsibilities and oversight.
2. Usage and participation evidence	No formal usage data was collected; indicative use was extrapolated from engagement attendance (~40 at formal meetings) and observation. QR-code scans and webpage analytics were identified as possible low-cost proxies (to be confirmed)	Not required to manage the current site. IA formal counting mechanism would be more relevant if a purpose-designed facility is investigated.
3. Health and wellbeing benefits	Though not measured, benefits consistent with the Active Horsham Strategy 2026–2036	Record qualitatively as strategic alignment. Formal

Matter	Description	Merit of further consideration
	(physical and mental health, social connection, informal participation) were evident at the site during the trial.	outcome measurement is out of scope however would be worthwhile if a purpose-designed facility is investigated in the future.
4.Decommissioning pathway	Minimum decommissioning works were identified during the trial, with broader revegetation, engagement or alternative-site matters requiring further scoping.	Retain for future consideration only if Council does not endorse continued use, or if future compliance, funding or operational conditions require reconsideration of the site.
5. Potential alternative locations and opportunities for a purpose-designed dirt jumps facility	A regional-level facility (e.g. Creswick model, or Onkaparinga Bike Jumps Facility) would be a multi-million-dollar capital project requiring external funding, master planning, professional design and expanded assessments.	No funding source identified at this time. Consistent with the recommendation, note for future consideration only, contingent on external funding or partnership opportunities.

Options to Consider

Option 1 – Cease Use of the Site

This option would involve removal of jumps and rehabilitation of the area.

Advantages:

- Removes long-term management obligations.
- Reduces ongoing exposure associated with the site.

Disadvantages:

- Loss of a valued recreation opportunity.
- Community opposition likely.
- Decommissioning costs would be incurred.
- Does not address ongoing demand for dirt jumps.

Option 2 – a) Continue Operating the Site (Recommended)

Retain the existing jumps and manage the site in accordance with the current approved Management Plan while noting future investigation of alternative or supplementary sites may occur if funding or partnership opportunities arise.

Advantages:

- Maintains a valued recreation opportunity.
- Still allows for further consideration and investigation of activities that can occur at the site to enhance user experience
- Makes use of existing infrastructure.
- Most cost-effective immediate solution.

- Supported by existing trial findings.
- Balances recreation benefits with compliance and site management obligations.

Disadvantages:

- Ongoing maintenance and operational costs.
- Site constraints limit future development.

b) – Investigate Alternative Sites (Long-Term Opportunity)

Explore alternative locations that may provide greater flexibility for future growth and community co-design.

Advantages:

- Potential for a purpose-designed facility.
- Reduced environmental and heritage constraints.
- Opportunity to create a regional recreation asset.

Disadvantages:

- Significant additional investigation and capital funding required.
- Does not remove Council's ongoing site management responsibilities.
- Long-term project with uncertain feasibility.

Preferred Approach

Officers recommend adopting a combined approach:

Options 2 is recommended (immediate and long-term action).

Immediate Action

- Continue operation of the Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps under the existing Management Plan.
- Commit to considering alternative management and activation models to inform an updated Dirt Jumps Management Plan (V.1.7, 2026) to support site users.

Long-Term Action

- Subject to funding, investigate future alternative or supplementary sites as opportunities arise through recreation planning, partnerships or external funding programs.

This approach balances community benefit, financial considerations, site constraints and Council's management responsibilities while avoiding unnecessary loss of a valued recreation facility.

Sustainability Implications

Environmental

The site is environmentally sensitive and subject to cultural heritage protections and floodplain management controls that require restrictions on land disturbance.

Climate Change

The LSIO reflects increasing flood risk considerations. Continued operation within existing site levels supports climate adaptation principles.

Social

The jumps provide accessible informal recreation opportunities that contribute to physical activity, wellbeing, social connection and participation outside traditional organised sport.

Economic

The trial did not assess the economic impact of the facility. No information was collected about visitor spending, tourism or wider economic benefits.

Community Engagement

Community engagement undertaken throughout the trial included:

- Two formal community meetings.
- Four informal site discussions.
- Stakeholder meetings with Wimmera CMA and BGLC.
- Individual discussions with riders and residents.
- Dedicated website information and updates.
- QR code access to project information on site.
- Consideration of letters from interested community members.

Feedback and engagement throughout the trial indicate continued community interest in retaining the facility. Usage data was not formally collected due to the informal nature of the site; however, consultation activities demonstrated a high level of user interest and local support.

Collaboration

Council worked closely with:

- Wimmera Catchment Management Authority.
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council.
- Relevant specialist advisers
- Cultural Heritage consultants.
- Dirt jump users and nearby residents.

This collaboration informed both the Management Plan and Council's understanding of future site constraints and opportunities.

Financial Implications

The 12-month trial incurred costs of approximately \$20,000, associated with implementation of the Management Plan, inspections, maintenance, site works and waste management. Annual ongoing costs are estimated at approximately \$15,000.

Future investigation of alternative sites would require separate budget consideration.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Active Victoria 2022–2026

- Establish thriving, safe, fair and inclusive communities.
- Invest in infrastructure that enables active recreation.

Horsham Council Plan 2025–2029

Liveability

- Celebrate and grow recreation opportunities.
- Create welcoming places that encourage connection.

Accessibility

- Improve access to quality public spaces and facilities.

Leadership

- Make transparent and evidence-based decisions.

Active Horsham Strategy 2026–2036

Recognises growing interest in informal and emerging recreation activities and encourages activation of community recreation spaces.

Risk Implications

Dirt jumps are inherently higher-risk recreational facilities due to their informal nature, ability to be modified over time and ongoing exposure to environmental conditions.

The 12-month trial has demonstrated that the Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps can continue to operate under a structured management framework, provided regular inspection, maintenance, documentation and site management activities continue to be undertaken.

If the site remains operational, continued compliance with the endorsed Management Plan will be essential to support public safety and ongoing management of site risks.

Conclusion

The 12-month trial has demonstrated that the Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps can continue to operate as a valued informal recreation facility under an established management framework.

The trial also confirmed significant cultural heritage and floodplain constraints that limit future expansion and modification of the site. While these constraints affect long-term flexibility, they do not prevent continued operation of the existing facility and an opportunity to investigate alternate management and activation models.

Users have generally complied with the Management Plan, community interest remains strong, and the Wimmera CMA supports continued use subject to compliance requirements. Ongoing management will require annual operational funding and continued implementation of the Management Plan.

Accordingly, officers recommend that Council continue to support use of the Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps under the existing Management Plan while also identifying future opportunities to investigate alternative locations capable of accommodating longer-term growth and development of dirt jump facilities within the municipality, subject to external funding partnership opportunities and future Council budget consideration.

9.3 THE WESLEY REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Director:	John Martin
Directorate:	Infrastructure
File Number:	F34/A02/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Wesley High Level Terms of Agreement (**Appendix 9.3A**)

Purpose

To provide an update on progress with The Wesley redevelopment project, and propose certain actions to enable continued progress.

Summary

- Council has been working closely with The Wesley Committee for an extended period seeking to facilitate the re-opening of the venue as a performing arts centre.
- At its 24 November 2025 meeting, Council resolved to progress the redevelopment of The Wesley, including making a budget allocation for the works.
- The adoption of the budget at its 15 June 2026 Special Meeting, including the proposed Wesley allocation of \$2.71 million over two years, work on the project is now proceeding.
- This report outlines some key steps necessary to progress this project, and makes recommendations for these to proceed.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Undertake community engagement in relation to the proposed acquisition of The Wesley in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy and section 112(3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
2. Note that any decision regarding the transfer of title will be considered at a subsequent Council meeting following completion of community engagement undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy and consideration of any feedback received.
3. Note that any transfer of title would be subject to Council's consideration and approval of the terms and conditions in the proposed transfer agreement.
4. Proceed with the calling of Requests for Tenders for the redevelopment works, noting that any decision to award a contract or enter into contractual commitments associated with the redevelopment is contingent upon Council approving the transfer of title.

REPORT

Background

At its 24 November 2025 meeting, Council resolved the following regarding The Wesley Redevelopment Project:

1. (That Council) Notes that The Wesley Redevelopment Project fundraising campaign has raised \$423,667 of funds for the project, including a contribution of \$226,000 from their own funds.
2. Refers a funding allocation of \$2.28 M (based on the updated QS and fit out costs) to the budget process for 2026-27 financial year for the delivery of The Wesley Redevelopment Project.
3. Consider funding for The Wesley Redevelopment Project from a range of sources including but not limited to loans, grants, philanthropic organisations and Council cash
4. Finalises the transfer of the asset (the building) from the Wesley PACC prior to the development of The Wesley Redevelopment Project commencing

These resolutions represented an update on some earlier resolutions of Council on this subject. That is the 27 June 2022 Council meeting, had resolved the following:

- (That Council) Note the progress of planning works undertaken in relation to the proposed redevelopment of Wesley PACC.
- Support the redevelopment of Wesley PACC as proposed in the discussion section of this report
- i.e. flat floor design.
- Allocate up to \$224,000 in the 2023-2024 budget towards the redevelopment of the facility.
- Provide support to the Wesley PACC to undertake a community fundraising campaign to raise funding for the project to enable matching funding for any grants submissions.
- Support the Wesley PACC Committee to seek out grant opportunities to obtain the balance of
- funds required.
- Note that once works are complete, Council will own and operate the facility with annual operating costs estimated to be \$70-\$100,000.
- Note that future budget allowances will need to be made for renewal of this asset.

Key aspects of the November 2025 resolutions were:

- The commitment to fund the works in the 2026-27 budget (over two years), incorporating the funds raised by the fundraising campaign.
- That the transfer of title would need to proceed before the works could commence.

This report provides an update of progress towards these works and the necessary next steps to continue this progress.

Discussion

Transfer of title

Council adopted its 2026-27 Budget at the 15 June 2026 Special Meeting, including the proposed Wesley allocation of \$2.71 million over two years. This funding allocation enables the project to proceed, subject to Council completing the acquisition of the property and satisfaction of any associated legal and governance requirements.

To facilitate the proposed transfer, Council has engaged solicitors to prepare and negotiate the documentation necessary to effect the transfer of title and associated funds from The Wesley Performing Arts Centre Inc. to Horsham Rural City Council. As part of this process, Council's solicitors are liaising with

representatives of the Committee and their legal advisers to develop a transfer agreement that reflects the intentions of the parties and addresses Council's legal, financial and governance requirements.

The Committee has identified a number of matters it wishes to see reflected in the transfer arrangements. A summary of these matters is included in Attachment 9.3A and includes considerations relating to:

- Delivery of the redevelopment project within agreed timeframes.
- Transfer of funds held by the Committee to support the redevelopment.
- The ongoing use of the facility as a performing arts venue.
- Preservation and maintenance of significant assets and features of the building.
- Ongoing stakeholder involvement in project governance arrangements.

These matters will be considered as part of the negotiation and preparation of the formal transfer documentation. Any final transfer agreement will be presented to Council for consideration and approval prior to completion of the transfer.

Community Engagement

Section 112 of the Local Government Act 2020 provides that a Council may acquire land for the purposes of performing its functions or exercising its powers, and further requires that any acquisition be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Council has undertaken significant community engagement regarding the future of The Wesley over an extended period, including strategic planning, budget consultation and public communication regarding the proposed redevelopment and future ownership arrangements.

These activities have included:

- The 2018 Horsham Performing Arts Future Services Demand Assessment, which attracted 289 community responses
- Community engagement associated with the Council Plan 2025–29, which identifies redevelopment of The Wesley as a key initiative.
- Consultation on the proposed 2026-27 Capital Works Budget, featuring Wesley and noting that it was intended to utilise borrowings for part of the project funding.
- Public communications and media releases regarding Council's intention to redevelop and acquire the facility including:
 - 29 June 2022 – announcing that Council would acquire The Wesley on completion of the then proposed works
 - 27 November 2025 – announcing the resolution to fund in the 2026-27 budget
 - 16 June 2026 – as a key component of the adopted budget
 - Ongoing publicity of the Committee's fundraising campaign.

While this previous engagement provides substantial evidence of community awareness and involvement in the proposal, it is considered appropriate that Council undertake a further targeted engagement process specifically relating to the proposed acquisition. Consistent with Council's Community Engagement Policy, community members will be provided with an opportunity to review information regarding the proposed transfer and provide feedback prior to Council making a final decision on the acquisition.

The outcomes of this engagement process will be reported to Council and considered as part of any future decision regarding the transfer of title.

Procurement and redevelopment works

Planning for the physical works is also now well progressed, with the tender documentation now complete and ready to be advertised.

To maintain project momentum and minimise delays to delivery, it is proposed that Council commence the Request for Tender (RFT) process while the transfer documentation and community engagement activities are being completed. This approach will enable the market to be tested and tender submissions evaluated in parallel with the completion of the acquisition process.

On that basis any recommendation to award a contract will be subject to a future Council decision and will not proceed unless Council has resolved to acquire the property and is satisfied that all necessary arrangements relating to the transfer have been finalised. Should the acquisition process remain incomplete at the time a contract award would otherwise be considered, the matter would be deferred until the required approvals and transfer arrangements are in place.

Options to Consider

Council has resolved through the adoption of the 2026–27 Budget to fund the Wesley Redevelopment Project and progress the proposed acquisition and redevelopment of the facility. The key considerations at this stage relate primarily to the sequencing and timing of the acquisition, community engagement, procurement and project delivery activities.

The approach recommended in this report is intended to minimise project delays, maintain project momentum and position Council to commence redevelopment works as soon as all necessary approvals and transfer arrangements have been finalised.

Sustainability Implications

The redevelopment of The Wesley will support the continued use and preservation of a significant community asset, extending the useful life of the building and enhancing its capacity to provide cultural and performing arts outcomes for the municipality. Detailed sustainability considerations will continue to be incorporated into the design and delivery phases of the project where practicable.

Community Engagement

Council has undertaken significant engagement and public communication regarding the future of The Wesley over a number of years, including strategic planning processes, budget consultation and public updates regarding the proposed redevelopment and acquisition of the facility.

Consistent with Council's Community Engagement Policy, it is proposed that Council undertake a further targeted engagement process in relation to the proposed acquisition of The Wesley, providing the community with an opportunity to review relevant information and provide feedback prior to Council making a final decision regarding the transfer of title.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The project provides an opportunity to preserve and modernise a significant community asset while improving accessibility, functionality and long-term service outcomes for users of the facility. The redevelopment process also provides an opportunity to incorporate contemporary design and asset management principles into the ongoing operation of the venue.

Collaboration

Council continues to work collaboratively with The Wesley Performing Arts Centre Inc., project consultants, funding partners and other key stakeholders to progress planning and delivery of the project.

The Wesley Committee continues to provide valuable input through its participation in the project's governance arrangements, including representation on the Project Control Group.

Financial Implications

Council's adopted 2026–27 Budget includes an allocation of \$2.71 million over the 2026–27 and 2027–28 financial years for the redevelopment of The Wesley.

The project funding assumptions include the transfer to Council of funds currently held by The Wesley Committee, estimated at approximately \$423,000. Final financial commitments associated with the redevelopment will remain subject to Council's consideration of the transfer arrangements and any future contract award decisions.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The proposed acquisition and redevelopment supports broader State Government objectives relating to the preservation, enhancement and utilisation of community cultural infrastructure and local performing arts facilities.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Major Initiative of the 2025-29 Council Plan item 4.4 is:

- 4.4 Acquire and refurbish the Wesley Performing Arts Centre.

This report and proposed actions directly address this initiative.

Risk Implications

The project is supported by an active project risk management framework, including a detailed risk register that is regularly reviewed by the Project Control Group.

Key project risks currently being managed include:

- Completion of satisfactory transfer arrangements between The Wesley Committee and Council.
- Community and stakeholder expectations regarding future use of the facility.
- Construction cost escalation and market conditions.
- Procurement and contractor availability.
- Project delivery timeframes.
- Preservation of the heritage, acoustic and cultural attributes of the building.

Appropriate mitigation measures have been identified and are actively monitored throughout the planning and delivery phases of the project. Commencing the tender process in parallel with the acquisition process is also intended to reduce delivery risk and avoid unnecessary project delays.

Conclusion

The Wesley Redevelopment Project represents a significant strategic investment in community and cultural infrastructure and delivers on a key commitment contained within Council's adopted Council Plan and Budget.

This report seeks Council's endorsement to continue progressing the acquisition and redevelopment process through completion of community engagement activities, finalisation of transfer arrangements

and commencement of the procurement process, while ensuring that any final decision regarding acquisition of the property and award of construction contracts remains subject to future Council consideration and approval.

9.4 ENDORSEMENT OF WESTERN AND NORTH WEST VICTORIAN COUNCILS' SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT 2026 VICTORIAN TRANSMISSION PLAN GUIDELINES

Author:	Gail Gatt
Directorate:	Communities and Place
File Number:	F24/A14/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Western and North West Victorian Councils' Submission on the Draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines (**Appendix 9.4A**)

Purpose

To seek Council endorsement of the joint submission made to VicGrid on the Draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines.

Summary

VicGrid is preparing the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan as the next update to Victoria's long-term strategic plan for transmission and renewable energy zone development.

The 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan will take a 25-year outlook and will then be updated every four years to remain aligned with energy policy objectives, market conditions and future electricity system needs and will be informed by the Victorian Transmission Guidelines Plan 2026 on which Vic Grid are currently seeking comment.

A joint submission has been prepared on behalf of nine councils in North West Victoria, including Horsham Rural City Council, to advocate for genuine community engagement, realistic planning scenarios, recognition of cumulative impacts, and strategic forward investment in host communities.

The submission seeks to:

- formally acknowledge the Resource Ready - North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Study as an evidence base for planning in North West Victoria;
- ensure consultation moves beyond information sharing and demonstrates how community and council feedback influences decisions;
- require assessment of community impacts, including mental health and cumulative impacts across renewable energy, transmission and mining projects;
- include requirements for decommissioning plans and transparent delivery of community benefits; and

-
- use plausible energy scenarios, including realistic assumptions about offshore wind delivery and the consequent scale of onshore generation required in the Western and North-West Renewable Energy Zones.

The submission seeks a shared understanding of the impacts on communities, genuine engagement with VicGrid and the State Government, and a funded strategic investment framework to address the pressures associated with the energy and mining transitions.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorse the joint submission made to VicGrid on the Draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines, as outlined in **Appendix 9.4A** Western and North West Victorian Councils' Submission on the Draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines and place the submission on council's Advocacy page of the HRCC website.

REPORT

Background

VicGrid has commenced planning for the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan by releasing the Draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines for public comment. VicGrid states that the Guidelines will guide development of the 2027 plan and set out how the plan will be prepared, including the role of community and industry engagement.

The Victorian Transmission Plan is a long-term strategic plan for renewable energy zones and transmission infrastructure in Victoria. It is intended to coordinate where renewable energy generation, storage and transmission infrastructure should be developed so Victoria can maintain reliable and affordable electricity as the electricity system changes.

The 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan was the first strategic long-term plan for renewable energy zones and transmission infrastructure in Victoria and covered a 15-year period. The 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan will take a 25-year outlook, with future updates scheduled every four years so the plan remains aligned with energy policy objectives, market conditions and future electricity system needs.

- determine how much energy Victoria needs
- assess if the declared renewable energy zones can accommodate Victoria's future energy needs and, if required identify potential new areas for investigation
- identify what new or upgraded transmission infrastructure is needed and where
- partner with Traditional Owners and engage with landholders, communities and industry on the development of the plan.

The approach to developing the 2027 plan remains scenario-based, meaning it will consider a range of possible future energy needs and test different outcomes and uncertainties using energy market modelling, power system analysis and strategic land-use analysis.

Discussion

The submission responds to the Guidelines from the perspective of nine councils in North West Victoria, where renewable energy, transmission and mining projects are creating significant cumulative pressures on agricultural communities, housing, workforce availability, roads, infrastructure and community wellbeing.

The councils' position is informed by the Resource Ready - North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Study, which was developed in collaboration with VicGrid and identifies the region's existing constraints and readiness needs.

The submission was lodged to ensure the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan is informed by local government knowledge and by the lived experience of communities expected to host major energy infrastructure. In particular, the submission responds to the proposed changes in the Guidelines by

seeking stronger recognition of cumulative impacts, transparent engagement, realistic scenarios and strategic investment in host regions.

The submission raises four principal issues for VicGrid and the State Government:

- Community consultation must be genuine, transparent and timed to influence decisions, rather than limited to awareness raising.
- Community impacts, including mental health, cumulative impacts and effects on agricultural landscapes and local economies, must be assessed as fundamental planning inputs.
- The Guidelines should require decommissioning plans, transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms and a funded strategic investment framework for host regions.
- Scenarios used in the Victorian Transmission Plan must be plausible and reflect realistic offshore wind delivery timelines, so councils and communities can understand the likely implications for onshore renewable energy development in the Western and North-West Renewable Energy Zones.

Options to Consider

1. *Endorse the submission.*
2. *Do not endorse the submission and advise the participating councils and VicGrid accordingly.*

Option 1 is recommended as it confirms Council's support for regional advocacy on genuine engagement, realistic planning assumptions and investment to address the cumulative impacts of renewable energy, transmission and mining projects on Horsham Rural City and the broader region.

Sustainability Implications

The submission advocates for social, economic and environmental sustainability by seeking coordinated planning, cumulative impact assessment and strategic investment in communities hosting energy and mining infrastructure.

Community Engagement

The submission has been made through VicGrid's public engagement process for the Draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines. VicGrid invited submissions to understand community and industry views and to help ensure the final Guidelines are clear and effective. The submission reflects shared advocacy by councils in North West Victoria and responds to concerns raised by communities about the scale, pace and cumulative impacts of the energy transition.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

N/A

Collaboration

The submission has been prepared collaboratively by the participating councils, with input informed by the Resource Ready - North-Western Victoria Energy and Mining Impact and Readiness Study and the shared experiences of councils affected by renewable energy, transmission and mining proposals.

Financial Implications

Financial implications are limited to officer time and any shared costs associated with preparing the joint submission. The submission seeks State investment to address regional infrastructure, housing, workforce and community service pressures associated with the energy and mining transitions.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The submission relates to the Victorian Transmission Plan, Victorian Government renewable energy policy, Renewable Energy Zone planning and the legislative requirements applying to VicGrid's transmission planning functions.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2021-2025 Council Plan

Theme 1 – Sustainability - A sustainable community is driven by strong economic growth in a healthy and safe, natural environment.

Theme 5 – Leadership - Horsham Rural City Council, will build trust and connections with the community through good governance, community consultation, accountability, transparent decision making and financial stability.

Risk Implications

Council bears reputational risk if it does not advocate clearly on matters that affect community wellbeing, local infrastructure, housing, agriculture and the broader regional economy. Endorsement of the submission supports a coordinated regional position and assists Council to demonstrate active advocacy on behalf of its community.

Conclusion

The joint submission provides a clear regional position on the Draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines. It seeks genuine engagement, realistic planning scenarios, recognition of cumulative community impacts and strategic investment needed in affected communities.

Endorsement of the submission is recommended to support Council's advocacy for Horsham Rural City and the broader North West Victorian region.

9.5 SPORT AND RECREATION VICTORIA – LSIF GRANT FUNDING

Director:	Justine Kingan
Directorate:	Community Liveability
File Number:	F20/A01/000002

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

2026-27 Local Sports Infrastructure Fund Streams (**Appendix 9.5A**)

Purpose

To provide information on the current Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) Local Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSIF) program for 2026/2027 and provide recommendations for development of funding applications for the current round with project selection:

- Aligned to Council advocacy priorities
- Linked to Four-Year Capital Works Priorities (2026/27 Budget)
- Align to key recreation strategies, i.e. endorsed Active Horsham Strategy (June 2026)
- Strategic projects to increase participation outcomes

Summary

- The LSIF is an annual funding stream to support the development of community sporting facilities.
- The current 2026-27 round opened on 29 May 2026 and closes on 28 July 2026.
- This round was brought forward due to the pending state election in November 2026.
- Rounds usually occur in Feb and Nov each year.
- Successful applicants will be notified Oct, with agreements in place prior to the caretaker period.
- Horsham Council has a strong track record of applying for and receiving investment from SRV.
- Recent successful applications include *Haven Tennis Court Lighting Project* (\$250,000); *Horsham Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study* (\$40,000) through the 2025/2026 LSIF program and *Laharum Recreation Reserve Oval Lighting* (\$250,000), through the 2026 Country Football Netball Program.
- The LSIF 2026-2027 program includes 3 funding streams (Appendix 9.5A).
- Staff have had numerous internal discussions and direct consultations with SRV regarding options.
- Based on feedback from SRV, analysis of commitments in Council's 4-year budget, the time available to develop a competitive application, feedback from our communities' overtime, current impacts and outcomes from the January fires and alignment to the funding guidelines, options have been considered and recommendations put forward to Council in this report.
- It is recommended that one application be made to the *Planning* stream to focus on master planning across 3 sites, as per the grant guidelines, for Laharum, Quantong and Central Park precincts. Once costed, this planning work may lead to a future Community Facilities application.
- All streams require a co contribution, which must be confirmed by Council resolution at the time of lodging grant application.
- Applications are due on 28 July. Timelines are tight.

Recommendation

That Council approve:

1. A funding application seeking \$40,000 under the LSIF Planning Stream for Master Planning across three sites: Laharum Recreation Reserve, Quantong Recreation Reserve and the Central Park Community Sports Precinct.
2. That the application is supported by a Council co-funding allocation of \$30,000, that is showing as a commitment to Laharum Community Facility planning in the 2027/2028 FY.
3. That this amount is brought forward into the 2026-27 FY.
4. That the application is supported by \$50,000 approved through Fire Recovery Funds to support the planning objective of the Quantong masterplan.

Noting that this provides a total project budget of \$120,000 for the project.

REPORT

Background

The LSIF program is a key Victorian Government funding program available to local government to improve community sport participation and activity outcomes.

A summary of the program is below:

- **Eligibility:** Only Local Government can apply
- **Purpose:** Increase community sport participation outcomes
- **Timing and Closing date:** 28 July 2026
 - Annual funding program
 - Outcomes expected from September 2026 (before State Election)
- **Competitiveness:**
 - Highly competitive, state-wide Victorian Government funding program
 - Requires extensive supporting documentation
- **Project selection:**
 - Based on Council advocacy priorities
 - Linked to Four-Year Capital Works Priorities (2026/27 Budget)
 - Align to key recreation strategies, i.e. endorsed Active Horsham Strategy (June 2026)
 - Strategic projects to increase participation outcomes
- **Delivery requirements:**
 - Funding agreement signed: October 2026
 - Project completion deadline: October 2028
- **Funding arrangements:**
 - Council must provide co-funding
 - Co-funding must be confirmed by Council resolution at application stage

The LSIF will only fund project proposals that demonstrate and commit to:

- improved, inclusive, accessible & sustainable community sport & active recreation infrastructure
- increased participation opportunities for individuals and groups who participate less, including socio-economically disadvantaged communities
- increased equitable and inclusive participation opportunities for women and girls in community sport and active recreation
- enhanced multi use infrastructure that supports local economic growth through sport and active recreation and other community activities.

There are three Funding Streams available through the 2026-27 LSIF:

1. Community Facilities
2. Community Sports Lighting
3. Planning

Discussion

To further bolster Council's planning work of its recreational assets, to be able to position for future competitive applications it is proposed that under the Planning stream, Council apply for Master Planning across a minimum of three sites (in one application). The following THREE sites have been identified – two rural and one urban:

1. Laharum Recreation Reserve

A Laharum Community Precinct Plan was completed in June 2015 which provided a Master Plan and identified the need to replace the community facility at the Recreation Reserve (including concept design). This Master Plan is now over 11 years old, and Council have prioritised the planning for the new facility in both the 4-year capital budget (\$80,000 in 2027/2028) and in advocacy priorities. There is a need to review and update the Master Plan and from this, develop new schematic plans with QS estimate to ensure a funding application is ready and competitive.

This project builds on community sentiment at Laharum and strengthens the investment of the CFN lighting grant recently announced. Additionally having an agreed Master plan for this site will support an approved way the site will be managed going forward, identify priorities and assist in whatever governance arrangement eventuates for this precinct.

2. Quantong Recreation Reserve

Engagement work undertaken in the recovery phase of the Grass Flat fire has identified community need and prioritisation around safety, accessibility and appropriateness of existing female change facilities at the Quantong Recreation Reserve. A draft Precinct Plan was developed in 2019, but with these new emerging issues, the previous plan requires review and update, together with schematic plans to address the issues identified.

The Community Recovery Manager has received approval for funding of \$50,000 through the Council Support Fund (\$50,000) to undertake planning to address the safety and accessibility issues. This additional investment can add to the overall planning application budget, however, it can't be used as a co contribution from Council, as Recovery Funds are pre-approved and used for very specific purposes.

Master planning in the LSIF program focuses on increasing community sport participation outcomes and a review of the existing precinct plan will identify opportunities to increase community activity at the Reserve.

This project builds on community sentiment at Quantong. Additionally having an agreed Master plan for this site will support an approved way the site will be managed going forward, identify priorities and assist in whatever governance arrangement eventuates for this precinct.

3. Central Park Community Sports Precinct

This is a major recreational precinct in central Horsham that does not have an existing Master Plan to guide development. Project based planning has developed a concept plan for the redevelopment of the skate park, (southern end of the precinct) but planning is required to review and increase community use of the Netball Courts, CFA track and Tennis courts (at northern end of the precinct).

Maximising multi-use of existing infrastructure, identifying emerging activity options and feasibility assessment of sports lighting opportunities will be the key focus of a Master Plan for this site. Much of the infrastructure and playing surfaces at this facility are nearing end-of-life and planning must be undertaken to allow Council to meet community and user-group needs at this key sport and recreation precinct.

Officer Recommendation

Develop a funding application for Master Planning across three sites with a total budget of \$120,000.

To submit this application for a maximum Planning grant of \$40,000 requires a Council Budget allocation. There is the provision in 2027/2028 of \$80,000 for planning for the Laharum community facility. It is suggested to bring forward \$30,000 for Laharum from the 2027/2028 to the 2026/2027 budget to support the application.

Options to Consider

Option 1: Proceed with the Planning application to the LSIF funding program as recommended and bring forward the \$30,000 for Laharum from the 2027/2028 to the 2026/2027 budget to support the application.

Option 2: Do not proceed with any applications.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

The proposed Master Planning project will include an engagement element as a core deliverable of the project across the three chosen sites.

The Laharum and Quantong sites have been prioritised due to local community feedback and advocacy. The Recreation and Open Space team is having ongoing discussions with key user groups at Central Park regarding future development of assets on the site.

Council officers have also discussed projects and options with SRV, to ensure alignment to funding guidelines.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

N/A

Collaboration

The development of this report and recommendations for Council have involved a cross-functional collaboration of Council Officers from the Arts and Culture Team, Assets and the Projects Office.

Financial Implications

The submission of applications to the LSIF 2026/2027 requires an upfront financial commitment to the projects at the application stage. A Council resolution confirming future Council funding is a mandatory document required for each application.

If the funding application is successful, Council will have leveraged the nominated \$30,000 budget allocation to increase the total funding to \$120,000. (\$40: HRCC +\$40: SRV, +\$50: CSF).

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Active Victoria 2022-2026

SRV Outcomes, Principles and Priorities for Community Sport and Active Recreation Infrastructure

Fair Access Policy Roadmap

Get Active Victoria - Lighting Facilities for Active Recreation

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Council Plan 2025-2029

Liveability – 2. Celebrate and grow recreation, arts and cultural opportunities

Active Horsham Strategy (2026)

Community Facilities Strategy (2026)

Risk Implications

Annual funding rounds through SRV are highly competitive, require a high level of preparedness for application and must clearly detail community sport participation outcomes. Funding via SRV are the only state-based funding opportunities for recreational asset improvements. Failing to make submissions places a greater burden on Council 's limited rates base to fund and pay for future improvements.

Conclusion

The SRV LSIF program is open for applications and will close **July 28, 2026**

This report recommends a project for consideration by Council.

The proposed project will enable Council to respond to identified community needs, improve local sports facilities, and leverage Council investment to maximise community benefit.

9.6 NATIMUK BOWLING CLUB – GRANT APPLICATIONS

Director:	John Martin
Directorate:	Infrastructure
File Number:	F20/A10/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 – Section 3(1)(g):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Appendix

Natimuk Bowls Pavilion – Revision D (Schematic Plans) (**Appendix 9.6A**)

Auspice arrangement (**Appendix 9.6B**)

Purpose

To seek Council approval to submit grant applications to facilitate the rebuild of the Natimuk Bowling Club, including its pavilion, bowling greens and related infrastructure.

Summary

- The Natimuk Bowling Club building and greens were destroyed in the 2026 Grass Flat Fire.
- The facility is community owned and managed, i.e. not a Council asset.
- Regional Development Victoria (RDV) is leading a project to rebuild the facility, supported primarily by Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV).
- Council has been asked to assist through provision of project management skills and capability.
- It is proposed that the rebuild project would be funded by a combination of the Local Support and Infrastructure Fund (LSIF), the Community Support Fund (CSF) and the Club's insurance proceeds.
- Only Victorian Councils can apply for the LSIF grant and therefore the Bowling Club cannot apply for this funding stream and have asked that Council auspice the project.
- No Council funding is proposed to be contributed to the project.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Agree to auspice funding applications for rebuild of the Natimuk Bowling Club.
2. Endorse the submission of a funding application for the rebuild of the pavilion under the Victorian Government's Local Sports and Infrastructure Fund, Community Facilities Stream, for \$500,000, matched in part by the Club's insurance proceeds of \$440,000.
3. Endorse the submission of a funding application to replace the synthetic bowling green and associated works through the Victorian Government's Community Support Fund, for an amount of \$780,617.
4. Ensure that the funding parties are directly informed, and that funding agreements reflect that Council will be making no financial contribution to this project, as the facility is not a Council asset and Council has no funding available for this purpose.

REPORT

Background

The Natimuk Bowling Club is (was) located in Sudholz St at the western end of Natimuk. The club rooms were completely destroyed in the 7 January 2026 “Grass Flat” fire, and the green incurred significant damage to its artificial surface and surrounding edging.



This community-owned, non-Council facility hosts a well-supported club that provides strong social connections in Natimuk.

In the aftermath of the fire, there has been solid support from Government through RDV and SRV to facilitate the process to rebuild the facility. Council was asked to provide support to the project through its Project Office team, which has a broad range of capability in relation to project management, including scoping, planning, grant application preparation, permits/approvals, right through to construction supervision and commissioning.

Funding for the project is proposed to be sourced primarily from the State Government, combined with the Club's insurance proceeds. Confidentially, there is a strongly implied commitment from the senior SRV representative on the Project Control Group (PCG), that the funding will be secured through Government.

The clear understanding of Council officers and the Natimuk Bowling Club, is that Council funds will not be sought or required for this project. The attached letter (at Appendix 9.6B) from the Bowling Club confirms their understanding that Council funding is not being sought.

Discussion

As advised at the 6 July 2026 briefing, after initial costs estimates were assessed as too high to be funded, the scope of the proposed rebuild had been modified to align with the Bowling Club's expectations and likely grant funding.

The initial floor plan proposed an area of 347 m², but this has now reduced to an area of 236 m². The Club has been extensively consulted along the way to ensure they are comfortable with the proposed area and social space. The Club suggested the reduction in the changerooms and other areas to accommodate a smaller more affordable building.

The updated cost estimate for the project is as outlined in the following table:

-
- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| • Pavilion and related works | \$940,000 |
| • Green and related works | \$780,617 |

The proposed funding as advised by SRV is as follows:

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| • Bowling Club Insurance | \$ 440,000 |
| • Local Sports and Infrastructure Fund (LSIF) | \$ 500,000 |
| • Community Support Fund (CSF) | <u>\$ 780,617</u> |
| • Total | <u>\$1,720,617</u> |

A separate report to this Council meeting provided further details about the LSIF funding program. In particular, reference is made to the Community Facilities stream, including that the fund allows for up to \$500,000 of applications per LGA, and that no other project is proposed by Council for this stream, this year. It is proposed that Council would apply to this funding stream to cover part of the cost of the Bowling Club rebuild.

To meet the requirements of the LSIF program, the grant application needs to identify a clear scope of works that is affordable within the available funding. It is proposed that the building would be the focus of the LSIF application. The balance of site works would be the subject of the separate Community Sports Fund (CSF) application.

The CSF is not a mainstream fund. Applications are only invited under specific circumstances, and will require some political support to ensure the grant proceeds. This is understood to involve seeking election commitments from the various parties ahead of the 2026 State election. It would be the responsibility of the Bowling Club to seek these commitments.

SRV has advised that the announcements on the LSIF applications are expected in about September 2026, aiming to be before the caretaker period ahead of the 28 November 2026 election.

Options to Consider

The Bowling Club is not eligible to apply for the LSIF funding directly, but Council can auspice the application on behalf of the Club.

If Council decides not to auspice the grant, or the grant is unsuccessful, the Club will be limited to works that can be afforded within its insurance funds, which are approx. \$440,000. The cost of the green itself is \$261,586. If no clubroom facility is built, they will be unable to play competition games at their home ground due to the lack of facilities. Any facilities built on the site will still be subject to the building code regulations and permits for commercial use, with cost allowances for these items having been included in the estimates above.

Sustainability Implications

Sustainability measures will be incorporated in the building design. There may be a requirement to moderate some of these features if funding becomes limited.

Rebuilding the facility is important for community sustainability.

Community Engagement

The Bowling Club is directly represented on the PCG for the project and has been extensively engaged in developing the plans for the project to date.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Nil

Collaboration

Council is working closely with RDV and SRV on this project.

Financial Implications

As discussed in the body of the report, the key financial aspects of this report are that

- it is not proposed that Council funds would be used for the rebuild, and
- political support will need to be obtained to ensure the Community Support Fund grant is obtained.

The project and budget has been re-scoped to ensure that it is able to be delivered within the available grant funds and the Club's insurance funds, with suitable provision for contingencies. Up to date cost estimates have been obtained from reputable regional builders based on the floor plans for the re-scoped works.

Council as auspice body, will require written confirmation of successful funding for both applications (LSIF and CSF) totalling \$1,280,617 before signing any funding agreements to commence the project.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Nil

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Council's support for the rebuild of the Natimuk Bowling Club aligns with a number of commitments from our Council Plan 2025-29, including:

2. Celebrate and grow recreation, arts and cultural opportunities.
4. Create welcoming places that reflect our identity and encourage connection.
11. Ensure our community can access resilient and reliable assets and services.
13. Demonstrate sound financial and asset management.

Risk Implications

Key risks for this project, at this funding stage include:

- A delay to funding becoming available could lead to demise of the club.
- Lack of sufficient grant funds to proceed with the project would face a significant reputational and potentially financial risk to Council.

Significant work has gone in to re-scoping the project to make it affordable within the grant funds that are available. Applying for the grants in the manner proposed is considered the appropriate way to manage these risks.

It is proposed that if the grant applications are not successful, as proposed, the Bowling Club would be confined to working within its insurance proceeds. A response to the Natimuk Bowling Club's letter stating this position will also be forwarded to SRV and RDV so they acknowledge Council's position.

Conclusion

Council's auspicing of an application to the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund and Community Support Fund provides an opportunity to enable the timely rebuild of the Natimuk Bowling Club facility, destroyed in the 2026 Grass Flat Fire.

9.7 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE BIANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL – 1 JANUARY TO 30 JUNE 2026

Director:	Kim Hargreaves
Directorate:	Organisational Performance
File Number:	F18/A13/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Audit and Risk Committee's Biannual Report to Council January to June 2026 (**Appendix 9.7A**)

Purpose

To present the Audit and Risk Committee Chair Biannual Report for the period 1 January to 30 June 2026 to Council.

Summary

The attached report provides the twelfth biannual update on the activities and recommendations of Council's Audit and Risk Committee and outlines key activity during the reporting period including:

- Two Audit and Risk Committee meetings were held during the reporting period - 11 February 2026 and 23 April 2026.
- The Committee received and endorsed the VAGO Audit Strategy Memorandum for the financial year ending 30 June 2026 and continued oversight of prior VAGO audit actions.
- The Committee monitored delivery of the Strategic Internal Audit Program, including the Human Resource Risk Management audit scope, Procurement Internal Audit outcomes and closed audit recommendation review.
- The Committee considered quarterly financial and performance reports, Local Government Planning and Reporting Framework changes, asset valuation matters and year-end preparation.
- The Committee reviewed governance and risk matters including the 2026 Annual Work Program, Fraud and Corruption Control Policy, Operational Risk Work Plan, Strategic Risks and insurance updates.
- The Committee received CEO and other reports on key operational, recovery, property, workforce, cybersecurity and landfill audit matters.

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Biannual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee for the period 1 January to 30 June 2026.

REPORT

Background

This report is prepared in accordance with the Horsham Rural City Council's Audit and Risk Committee Charter 2025 (section 4.2.2) and fulfils the obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020* (s 54(5)).

The specific requirements of that section are that:

(5) An Audit and Risk Committee must—

- a) prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee and includes its findings and recommendations; and
- b) provide a copy of the biannual audit and risk report to the Chief Executive Officer for tabling at the next Council meeting.

The biannual report covers the period January to June 2026 and includes the Committee meetings held on 11 February and 23 April 2026 with the April meeting held online due to fuel crisis considerations.

Discussion

This report provides a summary of the work the Committee performed to discharge its responsibilities. It also includes a summary of Council's progress in addressing internal and external audit matters, financial and performance reporting, governance, risk management, CEO updates and other reporting received by the Committee.

Key activity of the following items is attached report:

- External audit - including the VAGO Audit Strategy Memorandum for the financial year ending 30 June 2026 and monitoring of prior VAGO management letter actions
- Internal audit - including delivery of the Strategic Internal Audit Program, Human Resource Risk Management audit scope, Procurement Internal Audit outcomes and closed audit recommendations review
- Financial reporting - including quarterly financial and performance reporting, Local Government Planning and Reporting Framework changes, asset valuation review and year-end preparation
- Governance - including the 2026 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Work Program, Fraud and Corruption Control Policy review, RCCC project close report, and Committee self-assessment actions
- Risk management - including the Operational Risk Work Plan, strategic risk review, risk reporting improvements and insurance updates
- CEO report - including fire recovery, business continuity, civic centre matters, property leases and licences, government submissions, enterprise agreement implementation, organisation realignment and municipal monitor recommendations
- Other reporting - including information technology and cybersecurity updates, the JLT Cyber Security Review response and the Dooen Landfill Operations Audit

Options to Consider

The report is required by legislation (section 54(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020*) so must be presented to Council to receive and note.

Sustainability Implications

Not applicable

Community Engagement

Council's Audit and Risk Committee is comprised of Councillors and independent members. Consultation is undertaken with Internal Auditors and external (Victorian Auditor-General's Office – VAGO) Auditors.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Council applies the principles of continuous improvement in the operation of the Audit and Risk Committee with a strong process of regular review and evaluation of the Committee's operations. From this regular review and evaluation, processes and practices are changed as required to deliver improved and effective outcomes. The biannual report represents one such mechanism of evaluation of operations.

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

Costs associated with Council's Audit and Risk Committee are within the relevant operational budget allocation.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Nil

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2025-2029 Council Plan

Leadership - A trusted and capable Council that leads with integrity and responsibility

- 12. Make transparent and evidence-based decisions
- 13. Demonstrate sound financial and asset management

Risk Implications

An Audit and Risk Committee is required under the *Local Government Act 2020*. A properly functioning Committee, and the tabling of its biannual report, supports Council's compliance with legislative and Charter obligations and provides an important independent assurance mechanism. The Committee's oversight includes financial and performance reporting, internal and external audit, management of audit actions, governance, fraud and corruption controls, risk management, cybersecurity, insurance and other matters affecting Council's control environment.

Conclusion

The Audit and Risk Committee is a legislated requirement under the *Local Government Act 2020*. Other obligations are placed on the Committee by the Audit and Risk Committee Charter. This report meets our obligations under the Act and the Charter and is provided for the information of Council.

10. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cr Brian Klowss (Mayor)

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
30/06/26	Dyurrite Community Working Group
06/07/26	Bypass Planning Consultant RFQ Evaluation
17/07/26	Dyurrite Community Working Group
Other Council Activities	
24/06/26	HRCC Briefing to Governor of Victoria; Governor of Victoria Tour: Longerenong College; Governor of Victoria visit: Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative & BGLC Smoking Ceremony;
24/06/26	Natimuk Economic & Social Plan PAC Meeting
24/06/26	Governor of Victoria Visit: SEC Renewable Energy Park; Governor of Victoria Visit: Farm Frites; Governor of Victoria visit - SCT Logistics Intermodal Freight Terminal Logistics Hub; Governor of Victoria visit: Grain Innovation Australia; Governor of Victoria visit to Wimmera Cancer Centre; Governor of Victoria visit: Afternoon Tea with bushfire affected residents in Natimuk
28/06/26	Horsham Sports & Community Club - Annual Sponsorship Presentation Day 2026
30/06/26	Information session on the WJJWJ People Land Use Activity Agreement
01/07/26	Wimmera Mallee 9 Council Alliance Ministerial Meeting
02/07/26	HRCC meeting with Office of Minister D'Ambrosio
03/07/26	Meeting with Wimmera Southern Mallee Council Alliance + DEECA
06/07/26	NAIDOC Week 2026 Flag Raising & Opening Ceremony
09/07/26	WSMCA Mayor and CEO Meeting
09/07/26	Councillor Mandatory Planning Training
14/07/26	Horsham Bypass Planning CRG #3
16/07/26	Meeting with Emma Kealy MP
17/07/26	MAV Regional Meeting-Wimmera Southern Mallee Central Highlands
17/07/26	Meeting with Ryan Millgate
20/07/26	Resource Ready Presentation to One Nation, Rikkie-Lee Tyrell MP

Cr Cam McDonald

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
Other Council Activities	
1/06/26	Council Briefing
9/06/26	Meeting Justine Kingan Council Briefing
15/06/26	Council Meeting

	Council Briefing
22/06/26	Council Meeting
24/06/26	Meeting Governor at Council Chambers
29/06/26	Council Briefing

Cr Dean O'Loughlin

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
14/07/26	Horsham Bypass Planning CRG No 3
Other Council Activities	
24/06/26	HRCC briefing to Governor of Victoria
29/06/26	Council Briefing
06/07/26	Council Briefing
06-10/07/26	NAIDOC Week Activities – Opening – Exhibition - Closing
09/07/26	Councillor Mandatory training - Planning
13/07/26	Council Briefing

Cr Bec Sluggett (Deputy Mayor)

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
29/05/26	MAV State Council Melbourne
Other Council Activities	
25/04/26	Horsham RSL Dawn Service and RSL Commemorate Anzac Day Service
04/05/26	Shine the Light on Family Violence Candlelight Walk and Vigil
05/05/26	Effective Council Meeting Procedure Training
06/05/26	Council Briefing
11/05/26	Council Meeting and Briefing
12/05/26	CEO/Councillor Only Time
14/05/26	CEO ERC Meeting
15/05/26	VLGA Lunch & Learn Online Training – Successfully Navigating a CEO Performance Review Process
18/05/26	Council Briefing
25/05/26	Horsham RSL Cent Auction (Fund Raiser)
25/05/26	Council Briefing
28/05/26	All in For Reconciliation – Reconciliation week event for local businesses and organisations to come together and share what they will do to contribute to ongoing reconciliation.
01/06/26	Meeting with Director of Community Liveability
01/06/26	Council Briefing
09/06/26	Council Briefing
10/06/26	MAV Pre-Briefing – National General Assembly

15/06/26	Unscheduled Council Meeting for the Budget Council Briefing
18/06/26	VLGA Gender Round Equality Round Table Results – Zoom
19/06/26	Meeting with Jo Martin about By Five
21-25/06/26	Australian Local Government Association – National General Assembly – See attached report.
29/06/26	Council Briefing
30/06/26	Information session on the WJJWJ People Land Use Activity Agreement from Department of Premier & Cabinet
01/07/26	Rotary Club of Horsham East – President Changeover & 55 th Anniversary Dinner
08/07/26	NAIDOC Week Art Exhibition
09/07/26	Councillor Mandatory Planning Training
10/07/26	NAIDOC Week Closing Ceremony – Stawell
13/07/26	Council Briefing
20/07/26	Council Briefing

Cr Todd Wilson

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
26/06/26	WSM RTG Meeting
Other Council Activities	
01/06/26	Council Briefing
09/06/26	Council Briefing
10/06/26	Regional Safety Forum
10/06/26	Meeting with Director Justine Kingan
10/06/26	MAV Pre-briefing about the NGA
12/06/26	Horsham Arts Council - Wizard of Oz Gala Night
13/06/26	Wimmera Filipino-Australian Club- Philippine Independence Day
15/06/26	Unscheduled Council Meeting (Budget) Council Briefing
18/06/26	CEO ERC Meeting (un-minuted)
22-26/06/26	ALGA NGA
29/06/26	Council Briefing
01/07/26	Rotary club of Horsham East changeover dinner
06/07/26	Council Briefing
09/07/26	Mandatory Planning Training
13/07/26	Council Briefing
20/07/26	Council Briefing

ALGA NGA (Cr Wilson's Report)

This year Cr Sluggett and myself travelled up on the Sunday/Monday so that we would get the opportunity to attend the Regional Forum held on Tuesday the 23rd.

Tim Cox was the MC and after the formal opening addresses, the first session was titled Disaster Management Fatigue. This session covered topics ranging from the ongoing efforts of our volunteers, to the lack of 'betterment' funding for replacing lost council infrastructure in a way that does not just let the same loss happen next time around.

The second session was run by Simon Kuestenmacher and was titled State of the Regions. Simon is an excellent presenter and happened to make specific reference of HRCC by putting our council on the map with Spongebob, to show how our population grew, but at the expense of all our neighbouring councils who had a population loss.

After lunch we returned to National Productivity and Local Roads, which helped to capture where value for money was best achieved.

The final presentation was from Carol Mudford from sHedway, a regional health pioneer who is helping those particularly in shearing sheds and on rural properties.

The first day of the NGA started with two panels. One of Federal Ministers and one of Shadow ministers. Neither really told us anything we did not already know and were in a way disappointing.

We also heard from State and Territory Association Presidents, about how different regions were facing different challenges.

Michael Theo (may recognise from Love on the Spectrum) was a highlight from Day one and was such an enthralling speaker that I failed to take many notes on what he said. I can only say that if you ever get a chance to hear him speak, you should take it.

The afternoon session and following morning session were wholly devoted to motions. Horsham had three motions put forward and all were carried without opposition. As delegates from our Council, Cr Sluggett and I also proposed 7 amendments to other motions which we managed to get 4 accepted.

Talking to some of the other delegates, there was a general feeling that 'regional councils had a bit of a win this year', succeeding in achieving motions that would really help with the problems and issues we are facing out of the cities.

Day two of the NGA, after the motions, was the session run by Jason Clarke. Jason continued on from last years presentation with an interactive session. He was just as good as last year and really gets the best out of those who attend and contribute.

After lunch we had a list of presenters who each made a small presentation on Practical Tools for the Modern Council, including Colin Grant on 'getting the grant', Jodie Deakes on 'dealing with asbestos' and Felicity Cull on 'respectful online communication'. All these presenters had different insights on how to deal with their niche topic but I gathered information which I felt was very transferable to other issues.

During the conference we were seated with Snowy Valleys Council from NSW. While we operate under different rules and in different locations, it was very interesting to hear how they have had to deal long term with industry like logging and Snowy Hydro, and how some of the lessons they have learnt are what we are currently facing with the influx of mining and renewable projects. In other conversations with a Cr

from Yalgoo (2hr inland from Geraldton WA), it was enlightening to learn that while we have issues in Victoria, they are just trying to get a dentist to visit their children closer than 100km away.

Overall, I felt that I got so much more out of the event this year, both in debating motions that favoured our regional councils and in gaining a greater understanding of the issues facing the Local Government sector Australia wide, not just in our little corner of it.

11. URGENT BUSINESS

12. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

13.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS – RECORD OF MEETINGS

- Council Briefing Meetings held on 29 June, 6, 13 and 20 July 2026.

Refer to **Appendix 13.1A**

13.2 COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Nil

Recommendation

That Council receive and note agenda item:

13.1 Informal Meetings of Councillors – Record of Meetings

14. NOTICE OF MOTION

Dirt Jumps – Management Plan

Horsham Rural City Council seeks to provide a range of active recreation opportunities for our community. Activities are provided in a range of locations, for a range of interests and abilities.

Dirt jumps are a low cost (to the individual) but high-risk activity and selected jumps are supported as part of a range of active recreation opportunities provided for community use.

Victoria has a duty of care for mixed use trails (including dirt jumps) on land owned or managed by councils. To meet the required duty of care, councils must demonstrate they have acted reasonably. This involves balancing the resources and ability of council to reduce risks to users.

Risk management is an essential component of good business practice. The risk management objective is to find the balance between providing trails for the local community and meeting community expectations in relation to safety.

A Dirt Jumps Management Plan has been developed to guide the safe operation and maintenance of the dirt jumps and to protect the environmental values and public amenity at both the Burnt Creek and Park Drive sites.

The Management Plan identifies responsibilities of various stakeholders, both internal and external to the council, and provides scheduling and maintenance details.

The Management Plan refers to the following documents:

- Appendix 1 – **Site details** - Park Drive and Burnt Creek jumps
- Appendix 2 – **MAV Off-Road Multi-Use Trail Checklist**
- Appendix 3 – **Specifications** – for reference
- Appendix 4 – **Signage details** – for application

Unless otherwise stated, the Dirt Jumps Management Plan applies only to the jumps at Park Drive and Burnt Creek. (For site details, please refer to Appendix 1)

Responsibilities

1. Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) is the lead agency responsible for all planning, implementation, maintenance, and communication regarding the sites.
2. Community members are responsible for support actions (identified in blue).

Managing Risk				
What	Detail	Who	Document / Action	When
Inspections	HRCC will undertake maintenance and safety inspections of the site	Parks & Gardens	Maintenance checklist: Appendix 2	As per Service Levels
	Staff are trained or have experience in risks associated with dirt jumps	Parks & Gardens	HRCC staff will undertake relevant training	As soon as possible or when available
	Maintenance and safety issues identified	Community	<i>Lodge a Service Request</i>	As required
	Engagement of relevant expert to undertake inspection of jumps	Parks and Gardens to coordinate		Every 3 years
	Modification of jumps in excess of permitted minor maintenance by community	Parks and Gardens	The impacted area will be closed and the jump(s) restored to the original size and length (<i>Refer Closure procedure</i>)	Closed - As soon as possible – generally within 9.5 (business) hours of identification Restored – when resources available
	Creation of new jumps by community – Not permitted	Parks and Gardens	The impacted area will be closed and the jumps will be removed. (<i>Refer Closure procedure</i>).	Closed - As soon as possible – generally within 9.5 (business) hours of identification. Restored – when resources available
Regular Maintenance	Includes: signage, site cleanliness, condition of jumps, vegetation, furniture and access paths	Parks & Gardens	Maintenance checklist: Appendix 2 And other HRCC documents: eg: Graffiti policy	Local – monthly (4 weeks) Regional – fortnightly (2 weeks)
	Minor maintenance tasks completed to ensure the jumps are kept in safe and usable condition.	Community	Minor includes: Repairs to small ruts/erosion on jumps (packing of mud)	As required

			Removing rubbish and debris from activity area	
Emergency Maintenance	Emergency/safety maintenance identified	Parks and Gardens	Incident report completed. The impacted area will be closed until the risk has been removed or addressed.	As soon as possible – generally within 9.5 (business) hours of identification
	Safety and maintenance issues identified	Community	<i>Lodge a Service Request</i> The impacted area will be closed until the risk has been removed or addressed. (<i>Refer Closure procedure</i>)	As soon as possible – generally within 9.5 (business) hours of notification
Risk Assessment	Risk assessment conducted to identify potential hazards or risks associated with the jumps	External auditor	Risk assessment checklist as per external audit requirements	Every 3 years
	HRCC will undertake a detailed safety inspection & review of the site	Parks & Gardens	Off-road / Trail / Jumps checklist Appendix 2	Annually Consider community feedback re: site and activity
Upgrades	Minor modifications of the site may include: • Levelling or rebuilding of jump(s)	Parks & Gardens	Specifications: Appendix 3	As required
	Construction of new jumps (not permitted at Burnt Creek site, subject to a future Council decision and compliance with CHMP 20945)	Parks and Gardens / Contractors		As budget permits
	Modification of lines of jumps	Community		Not permitted
Rubbish	Rubbish bin located at the site.	Waste Services		Local – weekly Regional - weekly
Incidents	If HRCC becomes aware of an incident at either site, including an accident, injury or near miss, HRCC HR Officer must be advised. HR Officer to complete any required reporting.	Parks and Gardens Human Resources	Advise HRCC HR Officer	As required
Insurance	Insurance coverage reviewed to reflect HRCC's risk profile.	Governance		Annually

Communication				
What	Detail	Who	Document	When

Signage	Maintain expectations and confirm behaviour expectations through signage located at each site.	ROSP to develop content Maintained by Parks and Gardens	Appendix 4 As per HRCC Branding guidelines	In conjunction with approval of Management Plan
Community meeting	Meet with users of the site.	ROSP to coordinate meeting(s)		As required
Community information	Provide information re: the site via: 1. HRCC social media posts 2. <i>Active</i> Newsletters 3. Liaison with peak bodies in sector	CRAT ROSP ROSP		Ongoing As required As required
Wimmera Catchment Management Authority	HRCC to liaise with WCMA regarding any proposed works at the Burnt Creek site. If advised, relevant permits to be obtained.	Parks and Gardens		As required
DEECA	HRCC to liaise with DEECA regarding any proposed works at the Park Drive site. If advised, relevant permits and consents to be obtained.	Parks and Gardens		As required

HRCC teams:

- Community Relation and Advocacy Team (CRAT)
- Governance
- Parks and Gardens
- Infrastructure
- Recreation and Open Space Planning (ROSP)
- Waste and Environment

Closure Actions

Applies when:

- jumps have been modified or new jumps created,
- trails have been modified or new trails created,
- trees or other vegetation have been damaged,
- site is significantly changed (debris in the circulation area, litter, water inundation, surface damage to the circulation area)

Council reserves the right to close any jumps at its discretion.

Repeated Modification means a pattern of unauthorised alteration, construction, excavation, feature creation, maintenance activity or other physical modification of the Burnt Creek site by users or visitors that continues after Council has communicated its requirements, issued directions, undertaken remediation works, removed non-approved infrastructure, or otherwise sought to prevent further

modification. Repeated modification may be evidenced by two or more separate incidents within a 24-month period, or by an ongoing course of conduct that results in a continuing increase in safety risk, asset management obligations, environmental impacts, legal liability, maintenance costs or budget expenditure for Council.

Decommissioning decision guidelines

Council may consider partial or full decommissioning of the site where repeated modification of the site by users:

- results in an unacceptable increase in public safety risk;
- creates infrastructure or features that do not comply with approved designs, standards or Council requirements;
- gives rise to increased operational, maintenance, inspection, remediation or insurance costs;
- exposes Council to heightened legal or regulatory liability; or
- cannot be effectively managed through education, enforcement, site redesign or other reasonable control measures.

In determining whether decommissioning is warranted, Council will consider the frequency and severity of incidents, the effectiveness of previous interventions, the cumulative financial impact on Council, and the ongoing risk to users and the broader community.

Action	Who	Timeline
Item/site photographed	HRCC Parks & Gardens staff member	Immediately
Issue entered on REFLECT as a Defect.	HRCC Parks & Gardens staff member	Immediately
A: If single item/site: Install para-webbing installed around the item /site B: If more extensive changes have been made: Install signage: SITE CLOSED	HRCC Parks & Gardens staff member	Within 9.5 hours of site inspection Para-webbing / signage obtained from Depot
Email Coordinator, Parks and Gardens	HRCC Parks & Gardens staff member inspecting inspector	Same day as incident identified
Notify CRAT	Coordinator, Parks and Gardens	Same day as incident identified
Notify Manager, Waste and Environment	Coordinator, Parks and Gardens	Weekly Operations meeting
Social / Media release prepared	CRAT	Within 48 hours of being notified
Issue rectified	HRCC Parks and Gardens team	When resources available
Photos taken and Issue CLOSED	HRCC Parks and Gardens team	When issue rectified

APPENDIX 1 Site Details

Park Drive (known locally as the Skate Park or Central Park).

Dirt jumps at **Park Drive** were developed by HRCC as part of Stage 2 development of the site when the concrete skate bowl was constructed by an external contractor. (c2012). The dirt jumps were constructed by an external contractor with experience in the construction of dirt jumps.



The site is located at 1 Park Drive, Horsham.

The site includes approximately 0.7ha of mixed use land, a concrete bowl and flat concrete area for skate and scoot – scooters, a curved stabilised natural bike track and a series of 4 formalised dirt jumps in the south-west corner of the site.

The Park Drive site is located in the centre of the Horsham urban area on the corner of Natimuk Rd and Park Drive.

The site is classified as a Regional Park.

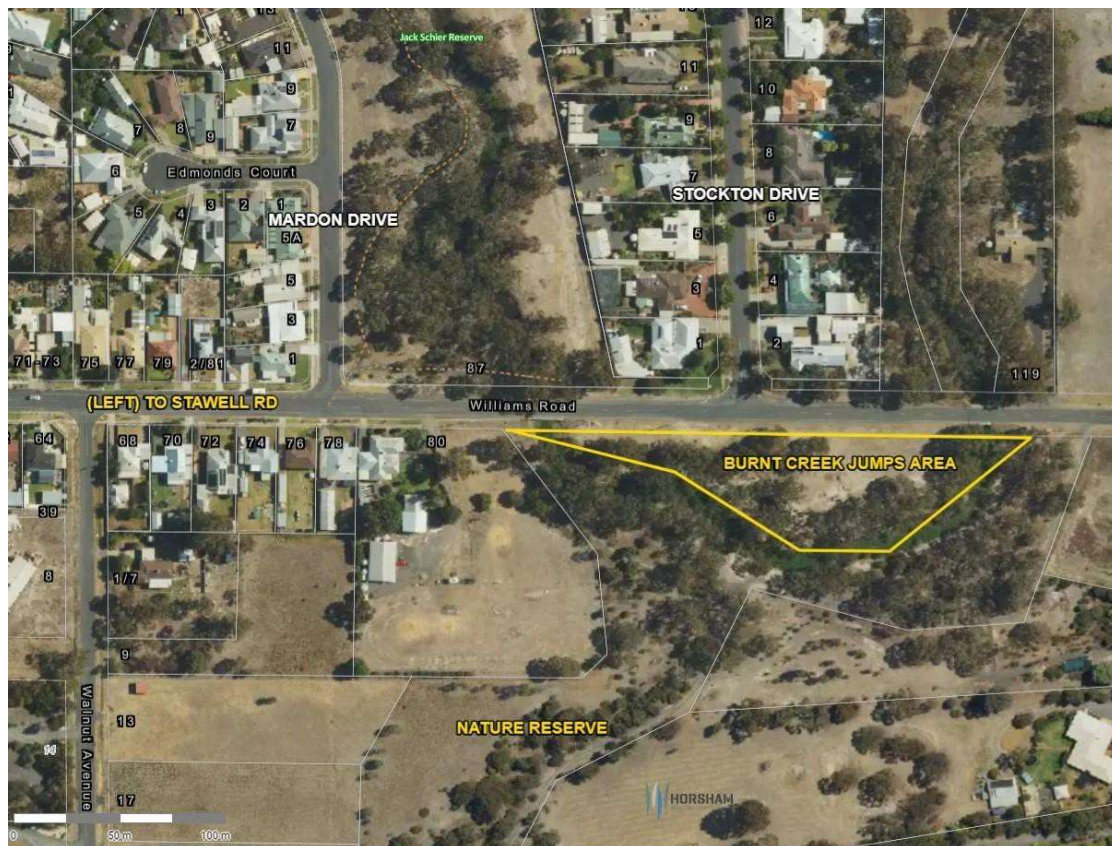
Burnt Creek

A location known as the ***Burnt Creek jumps*** has been used by local dirt jump enthusiasts for many years. The area is located at 80 Williams Rd (Refer to attached site map).

The site includes approximately 2000m² of open land, and land amongst trees. The area extends south from Williams Rd to Burnt Creek.

The jumps at the Burnt Creek site were constructed by community members and have been in operation for approximately 20 years. The jumps are checked every two weeks by HRCC Operations teams and the size and location of the jumps have been maintained according to the specification Guidelines (Appendix 3).

The site is classified as a Local park.



Appendix 2 – Dirt Jumps and Trails checklist

DIRT JUMPS AND BIKE TRAILS CHECKLIST						
		Date of inspection:				
		Inspected by:				
		Site Name:				
No.	Item	Yes, No, N/A	Is Action Required? or Other comments?	Accountable (Team, role)	Target Completion Date	Actual Completion Date
MANDATORY ACTION REQUIRED						
	Have the jumps been modified? (includes new jumps)		If YES, implement <i>Closure Procedure</i>	Parks and Gardens	Within 9.5 Hours	
	Have the trails been modified? (includes new trails)		If YES, implement <i>Closure Procedure</i>	Parks and Gardens	Within 9.5 Hours	
	Have trees or other vegetation have been damaged?		If YES, implement <i>Closure Procedure</i>	Parks and Gardens	Within 9.5 Hours	
	Has the site been significantly changed (debris in the circulation area, litter, water inundation, surface damage to the circulation area)?		If YES, implement <i>Closure Procedure</i>	Parks and Gardens	Within 9.5 Hours	
1.0 Signage						
1.1	Is signage placed around the site in locations to be viewed by the maximum possible number of users?					
1.2	Is signage clearly visible on approach, not blocked by vegetation?					
1.3	Are signs free of graffiti / vandalism, not faded/peeling?					
1.4	Are any directional markers / arrows sufficiently visible on the tracks?					

No.	Item	Yes, No, N/A	Is Action Required? or Other comments?	Accountable (Team, role)	Target Completion Date	Actual Completion Date
2.0 Trails - trees and debris						
2.1	Is the trail free from dead trees, broken branches, tree roots, or overhanging trees that are a safety hazard?					
2.2	Are the surfaces of tracks and trails free of excessive wear, erosion, over-grown vegetation/weeds?					
2.3	Is the trail free from any foreign objects such as glass, stones, etc. that could present a safety hazard?					
2.4	Is the trail and immediate surrounds free of signs of vandalism, user modification, graffiti?					
2.5	Does the trail surface and immediate surrounds conform to the following recommended characteristics:					
2.5.1	• Minimum overhead clearance - 3m					
2.5.2	• Clear lines of sight in both directions					
2.5.3	• 1m either side of trail free of large obstacles such as large rocks/boulders, trees, fallen logs, drops, etc. that may present a hazard?					
3.0 Jumps and surrounding areas						
3.1	Is the riding or circulation area free from any debris / loose items, rocks, timber or rubbish that could present a safety hazard?					
3.2	Are the jumps free from dead trees, broken branches, tree roots or overhanging trees that are a safety hazard?					
3.3	Are the jumps free from any foreign objects such as glass, stones, etc. at the facility that could present a safety hazard?					
4.0 Unauthorised Vehicle Access						
4.1	Are measures in place to prevent unauthorised vehicle access?					
4.2	Is fencing/barriers in good condition, free of hazardous holes/tears?					
5.0 Emergency Access						
5.1	Is there clear access for emergency vehicles?					
5.2	Are Emergency Markers or signage for emergency vehicles clearly visible (no over-hanging branches or concealed by vegetation)?					
5.3	Are Emergency Markers or signage for emergency vehicles in good condition (free of graffiti, lettering clearly visible)?					
5.4	Has the grass been mown (as per the appropriate Service Level)?					

No.	Item	Yes, No, N/A	Is Action Required? or Other comments?	Accountable (Team, role)	Target Completion Date	Actual Completion Date
6.0 Equipment, Surfaces and Surrounding Areas						
6.1	Are structures free of signs of damage or obvious structural integrity hazards (e.g. seating, ramps, bridges, handrails/barriers)?					
6.2	Are there any other obstructions sighted that could present a safety hazard?					
6.3	If shade areas / structures are provided, are they free from damage?					
6.4	Are bins being used?					
6.5	Are bins regularly emptied? (not over-flowing when inspected)?					
7.0 Drainage						
7.1	Are drainage points across the site free from debris/blockages?					
7.2	Is drainage adequate (e.g. no evidence of water pooling, etc.)?					
8.0 Other Risk Exposures						
8.1	Is the area protected from other nearby activities (mowing, balls being thrown, dogs off lead) that might pose a risk to the safety of users?					
8.2	If there is artificial lighting at the facility, is it in good working condition? (All lights working?)					
8.3	Does lighting comply with Australian Standards?					
Other:						

APPENDIX 3
Specifications – Guidance only

What	Detail	Who
Maximum jump height	1.0m Burnt Creek 1.8m Park Drive	Parks & Gardens
Maximum table-top length	4m	Parks & Gardens
Minimum down ramp and table-top width	1m	Parks & Gardens
Minimum offset from trees and other solid natural or built assets	1.0m	Parks & Gardens
Minimum vertical clearance from overhanging trees and vegetation	3.0m	Parks & Gardens
Gaps	No gaps between the launch and landing ramps of jump elements	Parks & Gardens
Construction materials	Jumps made exclusively from dirt located on site unless by prior written approval from HRCC	Parks & Gardens

APPENDIX 4 Signage

The following is provided as guidance only to be a reference in the development of on-site signage. The Guidance document should also be read in conjunction with Appendix 2: Dirt Jumps and Trails checklist (Section 1).

Adapted from: *MAV insurance Guidance Document: Off-Road Mixed-Use Trails 2019*.

The provision of appropriate signage along a trail network is an essential element of good risk management practices.

Signage assists councils to demonstrate they have taken reasonable steps to respond to the foreseeable risks faced by the intended users of the trail. Additionally, providing accurate information in relation to the conditions of the trail allows the intended user group/s to assess their own experience and skill levels and to determine whether the trail network is appropriate and/or caters to their needs.

Signage along a trail network should be:

- consistent
- legible
- easily accessible to accommodate the widest number of users' (e.g. ability, age, diverse languages).

And include

- a combination of educational information
- conditions of use
- safety information.

The wording utilised in the signage is important. It is recommended that wording form part of a design stage risk assessment.

It is recommended that councils consider the following key attributes / criteria when planning signage along a trail network:

- installed in accordance with Universal Design Principles
- constructed to withstand harsh conditions and potential damage
- position and placement of signage be at major trail-heads, intersections and any significant features along a trail network
- location and placement of signage does not create a hazard
- provides users with sufficient time to act as advised by the sign (e.g. the approaching speed allows sufficient time for users to view and read the sign).
- maintained in good condition
- content of the signage expressed in positive, user friendly language
- where symbols are used they are compliant with Australian Standards.

Signage details

Signage	Signage be provided at the starting point of the trail or series of jumps and as required, include the following: • Map/s of the trail route (e.g. 'you are here marker') and loop system/s. • Name of the trail or site. • Difficulty ratings for the intended user group/s. • Identifications of sections suitable for all abilities to access. • Distances between trail intersections. • Known hazards (e.g. uneven terrain, blind corners, etc.). • Surface type, firmness and stability. • Emergency contact information to report incidents / issues (e.g. the use of Emergency Markers - ESTA). • User trail etiquette / code of conduct. • Rules and regulations relating to user and restriction symbols (e.g. "No Motorised Vehicles" symbol, "Use at Your Own Risk", "Please Keep Clean").
	 Indicative only – to be altered to suit the context and local conditions.
Regulatory signage	It is recommended that regulatory signage be placed at the start of a network or at key intersections where people may join the network. Signage may: • specify the legal disclaimers/requirements and regulations associated with the overall use of the network or site • educate the users of appropriate and inappropriate uses of the site.

	It is also possible for the regulatory signage to be included as part of the trailhead signage.  Examples of regulatory/regulation signage used in mixed-use trail networks, often combined with navigational signs at trail intersections.
Warning / Hazard signage	To warn intended users of existing/known risks and/or dangers associated with the trail (e.g. flood waters, slippery surface, steep descents, narrow path width, etc.) that have not been able to be mitigated through design and/or alignment. It is also possible for the warning / hazard signage to be included as part of the trailhead signage, particularly where hazards / warnings apply to all, or large sections of, a trail or network.  Examples of warning / hazard signage used in mixed-use trail networks, often combined with regulatory signage / text (e.g. Cyclists Dismount, Please Slow) as an instruction to users on how to proceed safely.
Directional / Navigational Signage	Directional signage/trail markers be strategically positioned along key sections of the trail network. The signage may include the following information: • Name of the trail/reserve. • Destination/s and the required distance to each destination/s. • Direction to each destination (e.g. through the use of arrow/s) • Number of the intersection/location It is recommended that directional signage/trail markers: • be placed on the left-hand side of the trail • be placed at all intersections where users could travel in either a left or a right direction.
Behavioural Signage	Behavioural signage is used to advise the trail users with information relating to the overall use of the trail network (e.g. trail user etiquette/code of conduct).

Suggested text for Burnt Creek Jumps:

Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps

This is a shared space for everyone to enjoy.

We ask that you:

1. Ride safely
2. Stay on the trails
3. Use only the jumps provided
4. Respect the land, trees and the creek
 - a. Do not remove any vegetation
 - b. Do not dig into or disturb creek beds
 - c. Do not introduce any foreign soil
5. No motorised bikes
6. Share the area with others
7. Place rubbish in the bin provided
8. Report issues via a Service Request (QR code to Service Request HRCC page)
9. Call 000 in the event of an emergency

Any breaches of the rules may result in removal of the dirt jumps.

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Version	Action	Responsible	Date
1.0	Drafting of Management Plan	M.Kirsopp	March 2024
1.1	Addition of signage details	M.Kirsopp	July 2024
1.2	Addition of development details (MAV guidance), review of responsibilities and timelines for closure or remedial actions, review of signage text	M.Kirsopp	October 2024
1.3	Addition of process for closure of the site	G. Preece	February 2025
1.4	Clarification of detail re: modifications and new jumps	G. Preece	April 2025
1.5	Update dimensions table, permit requirements and reporting process.	D. Schmid	October 2025
1.6	Re-worked Upgrade/Construct section	D. Schmid	July 2026
1.7	Added definition of Repeated Modification and Decommissioning decision guidelines	J. Kingan	July 2026



CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN 20945

BURNT CREEK BIKE JUMPS

WILLIAMS ROAD, HORSHAM

Authors: Abby Cooper and Ilaria Yakimov

Heritage Advisor: Abby Cooper

13 February 2026

SPONSOR: Horsham Rural City Council





**Barengi
Gadjin**

LAND COUNCIL
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION RNTBC
ICN: 4395

11 March 2026

Mr. Dale Schmid
Horsham Rural City Council
18 Roberts Avenue
Horsham, VIC 3400

Dear Dale,

RE: BURNT CREEK BIKE JUMPS, WILLIAMS ROAD, HORSHAM:
CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN – CHMP 20945

I refer to your application to the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC), dated 13 February 2026 for approval of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) entitled **BURNT CREEK BIKE JUMPS, WILLIAMS ROAD, HORSHAM (CHMP 20945)**

Acting on behalf of, and with delegated authority from, the BGLC Board of Directors, I can inform you that under Section 63(1) of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, BGLC has considered and approved this CHMP.

If you require any additional information, please contact our Cultural Heritage Technical Specialist, Francisco Almeida, at Francisco.almeida@bglc.com.au or on the number below.

Yours Sincerely,

Mick Douglas
Cultural Heritage Manager

CC. Abby Cooper, Cooper Heritage Management

Burnt Creek Bike Jumps Williams Road, Horsham

Cultural Heritage Management Plan 20945

Activity Size: Medium

Assessment: Standard

Registered Aboriginal cultural heritage **is not** present within the
Activity Area

Sponsor: Horsham Rural City Council

ABN: 37 019 724 765

Authors: Abby Cooper and Ilaria Yakimov

Heritage Advisor: Abby Cooper

13 February 2026



Acknowledgements

Cooper Heritage Management Pty Ltd (Cooper HM) thank the following people for their assistance and participation in this study:

Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

Michael Douglas
Francisco Almeida
Tamika Chester

Horsham Rural City Council

Dale Schmid
Mandy Kirsopp

The authors pay their respects to the Traditional Owners whose ancestral lands they have worked on and written about whilst preparing this Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP). They also acknowledge the deep feelings of spiritual attachment and ongoing relationship that the Traditional Owners have with these lands.

Spatial data and mapping

Spatial data recorded for the purposes of this CHMP was obtained on a Samsung Galaxy tablet using Trimble Terraflex™ connected to Trimble Catalyst™ and the Trimble Catalyst™ DA2 antenna kit to achieve decimetre accuracy (~30cm). All maps in this CHMP were produced in ArcGIS Pro using the datum GDA94, Zone 54.

Photographs

All photographs were taken by Abby Cooper using a Samsung Galaxy tablet unless otherwise stated.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this CHMP has been compiled from standard heritage database sources and is as accurate as far as the author is aware. No responsibility can be taken for errors or omissions in primary and secondary source material cited in this report. Any opinions expressed in this CHMP are those of Cooper HM and do not necessarily represent those of the Sponsor.

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Aboriginal cultural and intellectual property

The authors acknowledge Aboriginal Peoples' rights to be recognised as the owners and guardians of their cultural and intellectual property. Ownership of the intellectual property rights of ethnographic cultural information provided by Aboriginal people in this CHMP remains the property of those named persons.

Executive Summary

*** Compliance requirements are set out in Part 1 of this Cultural Heritage Management Plan**

Cooper Heritage Management Pty Ltd (Cooper HM) was commissioned by Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC, the Sponsor) to prepare a mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) for the construction/formalisation of recreational bike jumps along Burnt Creek in Horsham and a footpath adjacent to Williams Road.

The Activity Area is located on Lot RES1 LP145075 on Williams Road, Horsham and comprises 20,780m² (2.07ha). The Activity Area is located within the Horsham Rural City Council in the Wimmera region of Victoria.

The Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the Activity Area is the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC). As the RAP, the BGLC elected to evaluate this CHMP. The Heritage Advisor (HA) and supervising archaeologist for this CHMP was Abby Cooper.

The Desktop Assessment found that there were a total of 45 registered Aboriginal cultural heritage places within the defined geographic region being the Horsham locality. Scarred trees form the most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage present (n=37, 82.22%). There were two (2) artefacts scatters (4.44%), one (1) Aboriginal cultural place (2.22%) and five (5) low density artefact distributions (11.11%). The Desktop Assessment also found that the immediate region around the Activity Area has been subject to numerous Heritage Assessments and CHMPs over the last 29 years due largely to the expansion of residential and rural living areas, which is a major instigator for archaeological investigations, as well as surveys intended to document Aboriginal cultural heritage places within the wider region. The Desktop Assessment also found that the Activity Area had been subject to prior ground disturbance resulting from makeshift dirt bike jumps that had been created over the past 20 years.

The Standard Assessment revealed that the Activity Area comprised a floodplain featuring sandy clay and grey cracking clays typical of the Horsham region. It also found that the Activity Area had been subject to a considerable amount of past ground disturbance, as result of soil being moved to make bike jumps, as well as erosion caused by bikes, flooding and recreational use.

As no Aboriginal cultural heritage was found during the Standard Assessment and there is a low potential for subsurface deposits due to erosion and previous ground disturbance, a Complex Assessment was not considered necessary under r.64(2) of the Regulations.

Management conditions and contingency plans are in Part 1 of this CHMP.

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PART 1 – CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT CONDITIONS

Note: These conditions become compliance requirements once this Cultural Heritage Management Plan is approved. Failure to comply with a condition is an offence under section 67A of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

The Cultural Heritage Management Plan must be readily accessible to the Sponsor and their employees and contractors when carrying out the activity.



1. SPECIFIC CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT CONDITIONS

1.1.1 Additional jumps to be constructed using imported soil (Condition 1)

During the activity

1. Any additional bike jumps must be constructed from imported soil obtained from a registered quarry.

1.1.2 Levelling of existing bike jumps (Condition 2)

During the activity

1. The levelling of existing bike jumps constructed from soil from within the Activity Area must be monitored by a Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC) representative.
2. The levelling of jumps constructed from imported soil do not require monitoring by BGLC.
3. At least two (2) weeks notice must be provided to BGLC when booking a representative.
4. The Sponsor is responsible for the cost of the BGLC representative engaged to monitor the levelling.

1.1.3 Works confined to Activity Area (Condition 3)

During the activity

1. All works must be limited to the specified extent of the Activity Area, as identified in Map 1.

1.1.3 Copy of Cultural Heritage Management Plan (Condition 4)

During the activity

1. A copy of this Cultural Heritage Management Plan is to be retained on-site during works to ensure compliance with the management conditions and contingency plans outlined in Part 1.
2. A Compliance Checklist is included as Table 1 on page 9.

1.1.4 Discovery of additional cultural heritage material (Condition 5)

During the activity

1. If cultural heritage material is identified during works, the contingency plans in Section 2 of this CHMP must be followed.



Map 1 Activity Area (Management Condition 2)

2. CONTINGENCY PLANS

Clause 13(1), Schedule 2 of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) requires that the CHMP must contain a contingency plan for the matters referred to in Section 61 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act (AHA) 2006. Section 61 requires consideration of:

- a) Whether the activity will be conducted in a way that avoids harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage;
- b) If it does not appear to be possible to conduct the activity in a way that avoids harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage, whether the activity will be conducted in a way that minimises harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage;
- c) Any specific measures required for the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage likely to be affected by the activity, both during and after the activity;
- d) Any contingency plans required in relation to disputes, delays and other obstacles that may affect the conduct of the activity; and
- e) Requirements relating to the custody and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage during the activity.

2.1 Proposed changes to the conduct of the activity (Contingency 1)

1. If any proposed changes to an activity require a statutory authorisation (for example, an amendment to the planning permit application), the Sponsor must determine if a new CHMP is needed, or if an amendment to the approved CHMP would be appropriate under s.66A of the AHA 2006 and r.69 of the Regulations.
2. The Sponsor must refer any proposed changes to the activity, including proposed changes that require works outside of the Activity Area, to a HA for guidance on cultural heritage requirements.

2.2 Discovery of Aboriginal cultural heritage during works

2.2.1 Unexpected discovery of human remains (Contingency 2)

While it is unlikely, if suspected human remains are discovered in the Activity Area, the following steps must be taken:

1. DISCOVERY:

- a) If suspected human remains are discovered, all activity in the vicinity (=10 meter buffer) must stop to ensure minimal damage is caused to the remains.
- b) The remains must be left in place and protected from harm or damage.
- c) DO NOT CONTACT THE MEDIA.

2. NOTIFICATION:

- a) If suspected human remains are discovered, the State Coroner's Office and the Victoria Police (use local number) must be notified immediately.
- b) If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the remains are Aboriginal Ancestral Remains, the Coronial Admissions and Enquiries hotline must be contacted immediately on 1300 888 544.
- c) All details of the location and nature of the human remains must be provided to the relevant authorities.
- d) If it is confirmed by these authorities that the discovered remains are Aboriginal Ancestral Remains, the person responsible for the activity must report the existence of them to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (VAHC) in accordance with s.17 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (AHA 2006).

- e) Submit report to the VAHC Ancestral Remains Unit: ancestral.remains.unit@dpc.vic.gov.au
- f) Notify the BGLC Office via email at admin@bgcl.com.au and/or phone 03 5381 0977.

3. IMPACT MITIGATION OR SALVAGE:

- a) The VAHC, after consulting with BGLC, will determine the appropriate course of action as required by s.18(2)(b) of the AHA 2006.
- b) An appropriate impact mitigation or salvage strategy as determined by the VAHC, in consultation with BGLC, must be implemented by the person responsible for the activity.

4. CURATION AND FURTHER ANALYSIS:

- a) The treatment of salvaged Aboriginal Ancestral Remains must be in accordance with the direction of the VAHC and BGLC.

5. REBURIAL:

- a) Any reburial site(s) must be fully documented by an experienced and qualified archaeologist, clearly marked and all details provided to the Heritage Registrar, First Peoples-State Relations (FPSR).
- b) Appropriate management measures must be implemented to ensure that the Aboriginal Ancestral Remains are not disturbed in the future.

2.2.2 Discovery of unexpected Aboriginal cultural heritage material (Contingency 3)

If any unexpected Aboriginal cultural heritage is identified during works, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Secret/ sacred objects

- (a) Any suspected secret/ sacred objects must be reported to the VAHC, as per Part 2, Division 3 (sections 21-2) of the AHA 2006.
- (b) All works must stop within at least 10 metres of the objects.
- (c) The VAHC will transfer the object/s to an Aboriginal person that the VAHC is satisfied is entitled to and willing to take possession, custody or control of the object/s, or otherwise will deal with the object/s as the VAHC thinks appropriate, as per section 21B of the AHA 2006.

2. Discovery

- a) If any other suspected Aboriginal cultural heritage, excluding Aboriginal Ancestral Remains and suspected secret/ sacred object/s, is uncovered or identified:
 - i. All works must stop within at least 10 metres of the suspected Aboriginal cultural heritage.
 - ii. The 'stop works' area around the suspected Aboriginal cultural heritage must be fenced off using appropriate temporary fencing and protected from further disturbance; "no-go zone" signage must be attached to the fencing at all times to prevent the area from being disturbed further.
 - iii. An appropriately qualified Heritage Advisor (HA) must be notified within two (2) working days.
 - iv. An appropriately qualified HA, in association with a BGLC representative, must inspect the suspected Aboriginal cultural heritage within three (3) working days of notification.

3. Notification

- a) BGLC (cultural.heritage@bgcl.com.au) must be notified of the discovery of any Aboriginal cultural heritage by the Sponsor within five (5) working days.

4. Unexpected discoveries of Aboriginal cultural heritage

- a) If the Heritage Advisor, in conjunction with BGLC, determines that the discovery is Aboriginal cultural heritage:
 - i. The Sponsor must consider whether it is possible to avoid harm to the Aboriginal cultural heritage, and if harm cannot be avoided, whether harm can be minimised, and salvage excavation of the Aboriginal cultural heritage undertaken to mitigate impact.
 - ii. If harm cannot be avoided, the Sponsor must arrange a meeting between the HA and BGLC, as soon as practicable, to discuss and agree an appropriate way of managing the Aboriginal cultural heritage.
 - iii. All reasonable costs arising from the meeting and any agreed management actions must be borne by the Sponsor.
 - iv. The temporary fencing around the suspected or identified Aboriginal cultural heritage may be removed, and works re-commence in the “no-go zone”, when the suspected or identified Aboriginal cultural heritage has been investigated and managed appropriately, in accordance with the AHA 2006 and as agreed in discussions with BGLC and the HA.
 - v. The HA must record the Aboriginal cultural heritage in accordance with VAHR standards and relevant forms must be submitted to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register as soon as practical.

5. Not unexpected Aboriginal cultural heritage and low density artefact distributions and other

- a) If the HA determines that the discovery is a low density artefact distribution or other expected Aboriginal cultural heritage:
 - i. The HA must record the Aboriginal cultural heritage in accordance with Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR) recording standards, and relevant forms must be submitted to the VAHR as soon as practical.
 - ii. Works can continue once the Aboriginal cultural heritage has been recorded and all temporary fencing is removed.

2.3 Management and custody of Aboriginal cultural heritage

2.3.1 Custody and Management (Contingency 4)

1. The custody of Aboriginal cultural heritage (with the exception of Aboriginal Ancestral Remains or secret or sacred objects) discovered during or after an activity must comply with the requirements of the AHA 2006 and be assigned according to the following order of priority, as appropriate:
 - a) Any relevant Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the land from which the Aboriginal heritage is salvaged.
 - b) Any relevant registered native title holder for the land from which the Aboriginal heritage is salvaged.
 - c) Any relevant native title party (as defined in the AHA 2006) for the land from which the Aboriginal heritage is salvaged.
 - d) Any relevant Traditional Owner or Owners of the land from which the Aboriginal heritage is salvaged.
 - e) Any relevant Aboriginal body or organisation which has historical or contemporary interests in Aboriginal heritage relating to the land from which the Aboriginal heritage is salvaged.
 - f) The owner of the land from which the Aboriginal heritage is salvaged.
 - g) Museums Victoria.
2. As the Registered Aboriginal Party for the Activity Area, any Aboriginal cultural heritage material recovered during the activity phase of this CHMP must be returned to BGLC within

six (6) months from the completion of the activity. BGLC must then be the custodian of this material and may choose to rebury it within the Activity Area.

2.4 Dispute resolution

2.4.1 Managing Disputes (Contingency 5)

1. Clause 13(1) Schedule 2 of the Regulations requires that the management plan must contain a contingency plan for the resolution of any disputes between the Sponsor and relevant RAP concerning the implementation of an approved management plan or the conduct of the activity.
2. Disputes may arise at various stages of the activity. Procedures for dispute resolution aim to ensure that all parties are fully aware of their rights and obligations, that full and open communication between parties occurs and that those parties conduct themselves in good faith.
3. If a dispute arises that may affect the conduct of the activity, resolution between parties using the following dispute resolution procedure is recommended:
 - a) All disputes will be jointly investigated and documented by both the RAP and the Sponsor.
 - b) Where a breach of the management plan requirements is identified, the RAP and the Sponsor will agree to a suitably appropriate corrective method to remedy the breach by organising a meeting to attempt to resolve the dispute.
 - c) The issue/s in dispute must be clearly understood and stated by the authorised representatives of the RAP and Sponsor at the meeting.
 - d) If sought and agreed to by the RAP and Sponsor, third party mediation may be held during the meeting.
 - e) Any correction or remedial activities required must be:
 - recorded in writing and signed off by the authorised representatives of the RAP and Sponsor;
 - supervised by an authorised RAP representative; and
 - occur in accordance with the RAP representative's instructions.
 - f) The Sponsor, site supervisor, contractor and any relevant personnel will not undertake any such correction or remedial activities without receiving the written consent of the RAP.
 - g) The dispute resolution must be recorded in writing and signed by both parties.
 - h) The RAP will strive to minimise delays to work schedules while not compromising Aboriginal cultural heritage, places or values.
 - i) Issues directly related to cultural heritage management will be handled through the following dispute resolution mechanism:
 - Authorised representatives of the RAP and the Sponsor will attempt to negotiate a resolution to any dispute related to the cultural heritage management of the Activity Area within two (2) working days of a notice being received that a dispute between the parties is deemed to exist.
 - If the authorised representatives of the parties do not reach an agreement, alternative representatives of both parties will meet to negotiate a resolution to an agreed schedule.
4. The dispute resolution process does not preclude any legal recourse open to the parties being taken, but the parties agree the above resolution mechanism will be implemented before such recourse is made. For dispute resolution, the following persons will represent the parties:

Sponsor

Horsham Rural City Council
ABN: 37 019 724 765
Contact person: Dale Schmid
Address: 18 Roberts Avenue, Horsham VIC 3400
Phone: (03) 5382 9509/ 0428 407 184
Email: dale.schmid@hrcc.vic.gov.au

Registered Aboriginal Party

Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
Contact person: Michael Douglas (Cultural Heritage Manager)
Address: 38 Plumpton Road, Horsham Vic 3400 (PO Box 1255 Horsham Vic 3402)
Phone: 0407 392 060
Email: michael.douglas@bgcl.com.au

2.5 Reviewing compliance**2.5.1 Compliance (Contingency 6)**

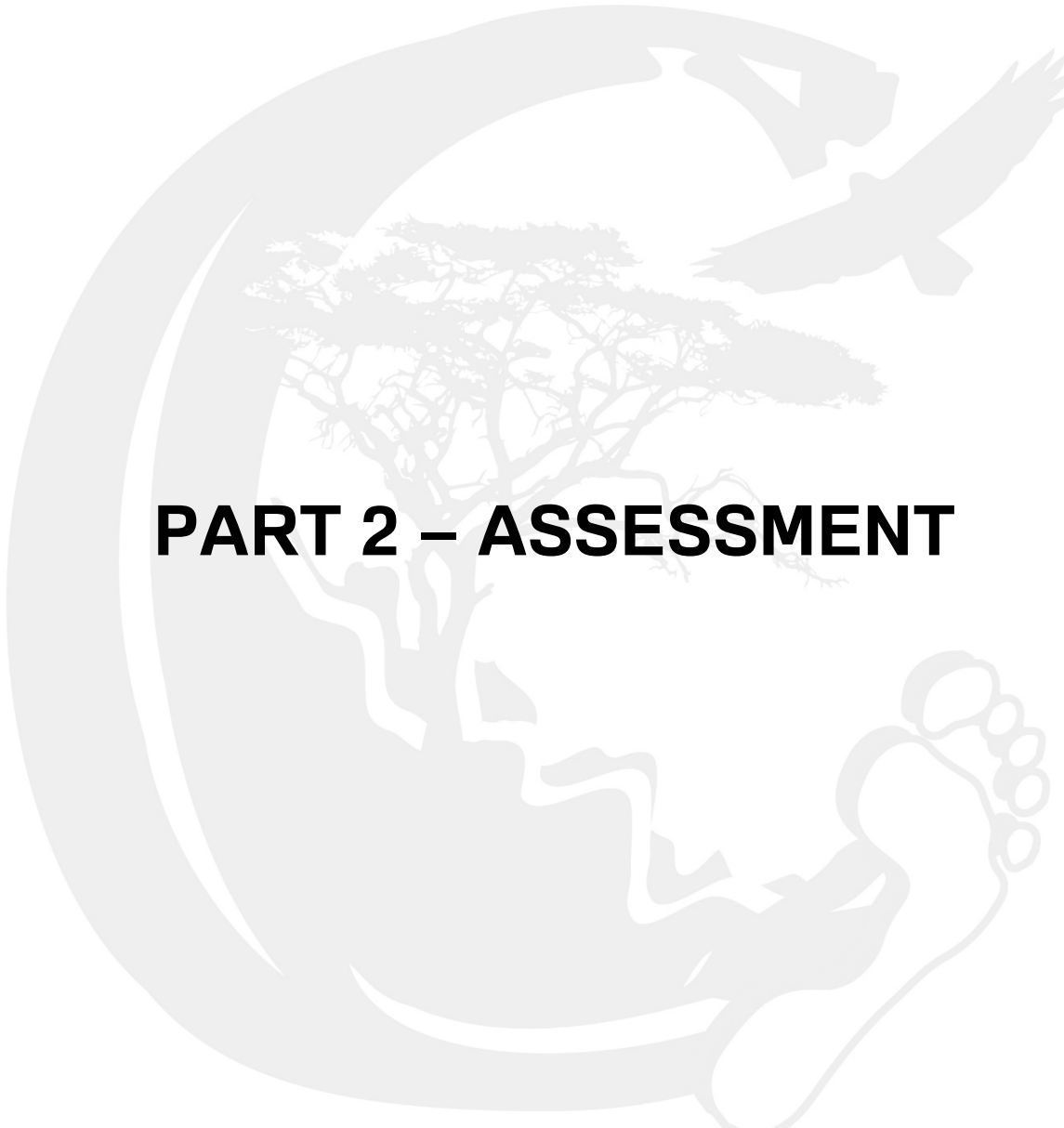
1. A compliance checklist is included at Table 1 to ensure that the activity is conducted in compliance with the management conditions outlined in this CHMP.
2. A copy of the CHMP and checklist must be kept on-site at all times during the conduct of the activities so that it can be referred to as required. The Sponsor should also use the compliance checklist as a reference if compliance with the plan is questioned.
3. In the event of suspected non-compliance:
 - a) All relevant works must stop.
 - b) The Sponsor must contact the Statewide Compliance and Enforcement Unit (compliance.aboriginalvictoria@dpc.vic.gov.au) within two (2) working days to review the suspected non-compliance and agree to any required remedies.
 - c) If agreement cannot be reached by all parties, the Minister may order an audit of the management plan.
 - d) All reasonable costs arising from the meeting and any agreed remedies must be borne by the Sponsor.

2.6 Protocol for handling sensitive information (Contingency 7)

1. Apart from publicly available information, there shall be no communication or public release of information concerning Aboriginal cultural heritage material without the written permission of BGLC. No onsite photographs or information concerning Aboriginal cultural heritage is to be circulated to the media or via social media without the written permission of BGLC.
2. The coordinates of all registered or identified Aboriginal cultural heritage places included in this CHMP are to be deleted prior to this CHMP being distributed by the Sponsor to any other parties, with the exception of First Peoples- State Relations, or as required by the management conditions of this CHMP.

Table 1 Compliance Checklist

COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST	Y/N
Additional bike jumps constructed from imported soil? (<i>Management condition 1</i>)	
BGLC representative engaged to monitor levelling of jumps constructed from soil obtained within the Activity Area? (<i>Management Condition 2</i>)	
All works confined to extent of Activity Area? (<i>Management Condition 3</i>)	
Copy of Cultural Heritage Management Plan kept on site during works? (<i>Management Condition 4</i>)	
Procedure followed for discovery of unexpected Aboriginal cultural heritage material? (<i>Management Condition 5</i>)	



PART 2 – ASSESSMENT

3. INTRODUCTION

Cooper Heritage Management Pty Ltd (Cooper HM) was engaged by Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC, the Sponsor) to prepare a mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) for the construction/formalisation of recreational bike jumps along Burnt Creek in Horsham and a footpath adjacent to Williams Road.

The Activity Area is located on Lot RES1 LP145075 on Williams Road, Horsham and comprises 20,780m² (2.07ha) (see Map 2). The Activity Area is located within the Horsham Rural City Council in the Wimmera region of Victoria.

The Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the Activity Area is the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC) and the BGLC has elected to evaluate this CHMP. The Heritage Advisor (HA) and supervising archaeologist for this CHMP was Abby Cooper who holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons), Master of Public History, Graduate Certificate in Cultural Heritage Management, and Graduate Diploma in Archaeology and Heritage Management. Abby is a full member of the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists Inc. (ACCAI), an accredited Level 4 member of the Professional Historians Association (PHA) and a recognised heritage advisor in accordance with s.189 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (the Act).

3.1 Reasons for preparing the Cultural Heritage Management Plan

The proposed activity triggers a mandatory requirement for a CHMP, as specified in Division 1, Part 2, Regulation 7 of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 (the Regulations), which state that a CHMP is required for an activity if-

- (a) all or part of the activity area for the activity is an area of cultural heritage sensitivity; and
- (b) all or part of the activity is a high impact activity.

The Activity Area is an area of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity because it is located within 200m of a waterway (r.26), being the Burnt Creek.

The construction of recreational bike jumps (minor sports and recreation facility) is considered a high impact activity under r.46(1)(b)(xv) if it will result in significant ground disturbance (SGD). The Regulations define SGD as disturbance of the topsoil or surface rock layer of the ground by machinery in the course of grading, digging, dredging or deep ripping (r.5). As the formalisation of the bike jumps involves the disturbance of the topsoil by heavy machinery, the proposed activities are considered high impact.

As the proposed activity is within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity and it is considered a high impact activity under the Regulations, there is a mandatory requirement for a CHMP to be prepared under s.46 of the AHA 2006.



Map 2 Extent of Activity Area

3.2 Activity size

The proposed Activity Area is defined as medium-sized because it is more than one hectare, but less than 40 hectares (Part 7, r. 81).

3.3 Notice of intent to prepare a CHMP

Section 54 of the AHA 2006 requires that the sponsor of a CHMP give written notice of their intention to prepare the plan to: (a) to each relevant Aboriginal party; (b) to the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC); (c) to the owner or occupier of any land within the area to which the plan relates, and (d) to any municipality council whose municipal district includes an area to which the plan relates.

A Notification of Intent (NOI) to prepare this CHMP was submitted by the Heritage Advisor (HA) to First Peoples-State Relations (FPSR) on 18 November 2025 (see Appendix 1). On that same day, FPSR notified the HA that the CHMP was assigned the registration number 20945.

A copy of the NOI was forward to the Sponsor, the Horsham Rural City Council's Planning Department and BGLC by the HA on 18 November 2025, as BGLC are the RAP for the Activity Area. BGLC's Cultural Heritage Manager, Michael Douglas, acknowledged the receipt of the NOI and informed the Sponsor of BGLC's intent to evaluate the plan in a letter to the Sponsor on 18 November 2025 (see Appendix 2).

3.4 Sponsor details

Horsham Rural City Council
ABN: 37 019 724 765
Contact person: Dale Schmid
Address: 18 Roberts Avenue, Horsham VIC 3400
Phone: (03) 5382 9509/0428 407 184
Email: dale.schmid@hrcc.vic.gov.au

3.5 Heritage Advisor and author details

Abby Cooper- Heritage Advisor and Author

PhD (Arch) Flinders University- in Progress, GradDipArchHerMgt Flinders University, , GradCertCultHerMgt Flinders University, MPubHist Monash University, BA (Hons) Monash University, , Cert IV Training and Assessment (TAE 40116), MPHA (Vic), MAACAI

Abby is a heritage professional with nearly 20 years' experience in archaeology and cultural heritage across Australia. Based in Horsham in western Victoria, she has extensive knowledge of the Wimmera, Mallee, and south-western Victoria and has worked with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal organisations, government and industry on projects ranging from small assessments to large surveys and excavations.

She is a qualified historian and archaeologist, a registered Heritage Advisor under s.189 of the Victorian *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, and has extensive expertise in Aboriginal archaeology, including site recording, excavation, GIS, lithic analysis, and oral history. Her work is underpinned by strong knowledge of heritage legislation and the Burra Charter.

Abby has held positions with the National Museum of Australia, Aboriginal corporations, and private industry, consistently producing clear, evidence-based reports and engaging effectively with communities and stakeholders. She is skilled in policy and strategy development and has contributed

to Thematic Environmental Histories, landscape assessments, and heritage studies for Heritage Victoria.

In addition, Abby is a qualified Trainer and Assessor supporting the delivery of the Certificate IV in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management (La Trobe University) and lectures casually at La Trobe and Flinders universities. Abby is an accredited Level 4 member of the Professional Historians Association and a full member of the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists (AACAI).

Ilaria Yakimov- Senior Archaeologist & GIS Technical Specialist

BA (Hons) University of Melbourne, GradCertGeoSci RMIT

Ilaria is a qualified archaeologist and experienced GIS specialist with strong skills in analysing complex information and data and translating it into concise, high quality reports. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Ancient World Studies and Art History, 2017) and First Class Honours (Ancient World Studies, 2018) from the University of Melbourne, where her thesis developed a new theoretical framework for evaluating 3D printed reproductions of endangered or destroyed heritage material. Ilaria also holds a Graduate Certificate in Geospatial Science from RMIT, enhancing her technical expertise in geospatial analysis, mapping, and spatial data integration within heritage management contexts.

A fully qualified Heritage Advisor under section 189 of the *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, Ilaria brings a high level of technical proficiency, written precision, and cultural awareness to her work. Her combined background in archaeology, spatial science, and heritage consulting ensures accurate, context-driven reporting that supports the effective protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage across Victoria.

Since 2018, Ilaria has worked across diverse cultural heritage projects in Victoria, including two of the state's largest archaeological excavations. She has collaborated extensively with Aboriginal communities and their representative organisations, applying her ability to synthesise technical cultural, and spatial information into clear, succinct reports for CHMPs, due diligence assessments, and cultural heritage management advice. Her advanced GIS capabilities enable her to manage large spatial datasets, produce precise visual outputs, and support complex heritage analysis that inform planning and land use decisions.

Ilaria's experience extends to artefact analysis, archaeological draftsmanship, post-excavation artefact management, repatriation processes, and cultural heritage reburials. She has prepared salvage reports and contributed mapping and analytical data to a wide range of archaeological and cultural heritage assessments. Her reports balance scientific rigour with accessibility, ensuring findings are easily understood by clients, regulators, and community stakeholders.

3.6 Owners of the Activity Area

The Activity Area comprises the following parcel of land as set out in Table 2. The land is currently managed by Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) and features bike jumps created by the local community.

Table 2 Activity Area land details

SPI	Crown description	Address	Planning Zones*	Landholder/ Land manager
RES1\LP145705	Lot 1 RES1 LP145705	Williams Road, Horsham	PPRZ	Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC)

*PPRZ= Public Park and Recreation Zone

3.7 Registered Aboriginal Party with responsibility for management of Aboriginal cultural heritage within the Activity Area

Under s.148 of the AHA 2006, BGLC has responsibility for all Aboriginal cultural heritage matters relating to the Activity Area (see Figure 1). As such, they were consulted with and involved in the preparation of this CHMP, including field assessment and final evaluation.

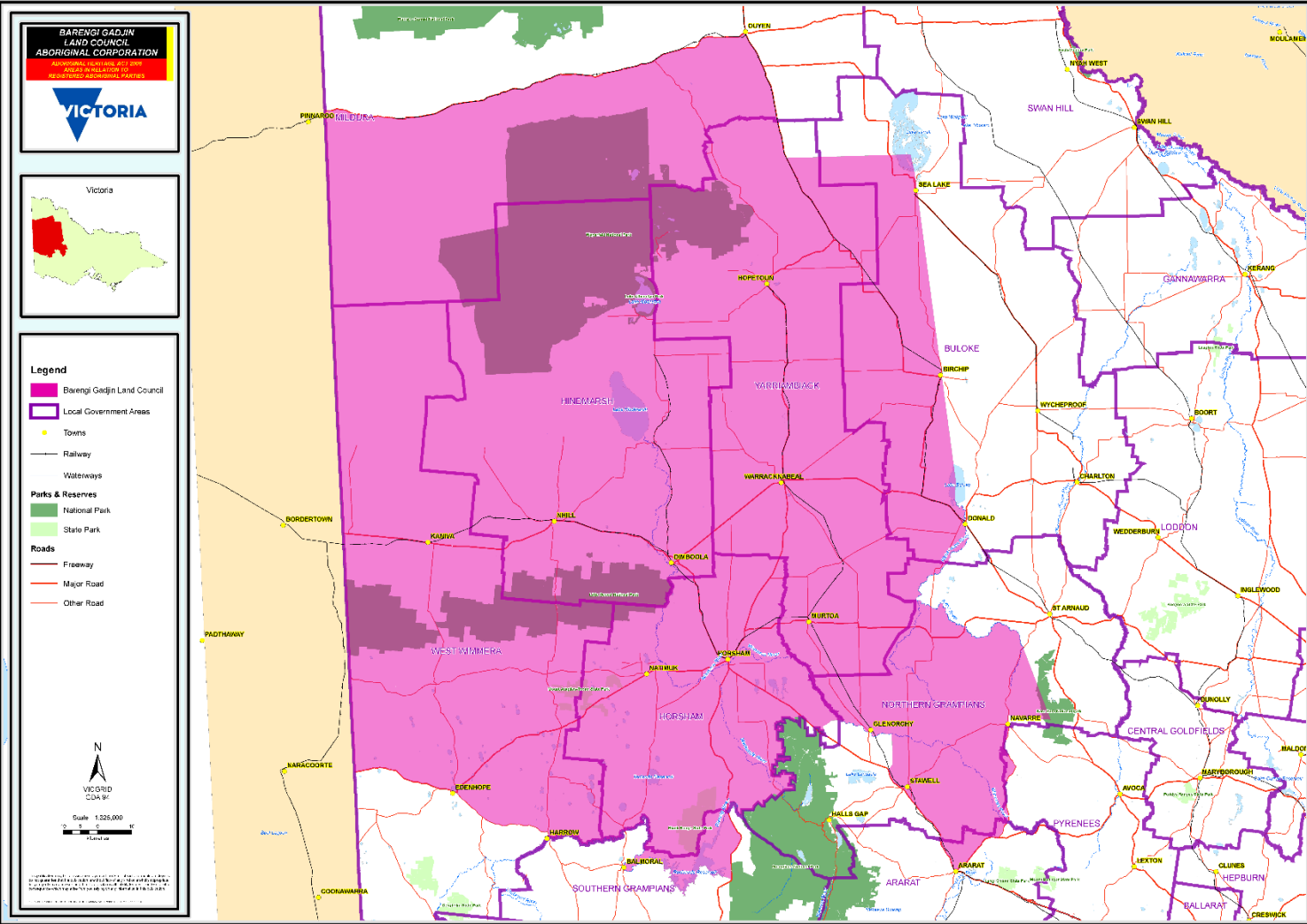


Figure 1 Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation's RAP Area (Source: Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council 2020)

4. ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

4.1 Proposed activities

The proposed activities involve the formalisation of the existing bike jumps along Burnt Creek and the construction of a footpath approximately 4m south of Williams Road connecting existing paths. Currently, there are no plans to create new bike jumps; however, future work at the site may involve the creation of new jumps using heavy machinery, or the levelling of existing jumps that have been deemed to be unsafe. Seating will also be installed at the site positioned on an above ground concrete slab. The construction of a 1.5m footpath will involve excavation to approximately 100-200mm and the placement of gravel to create a formed path (see Figure 2).



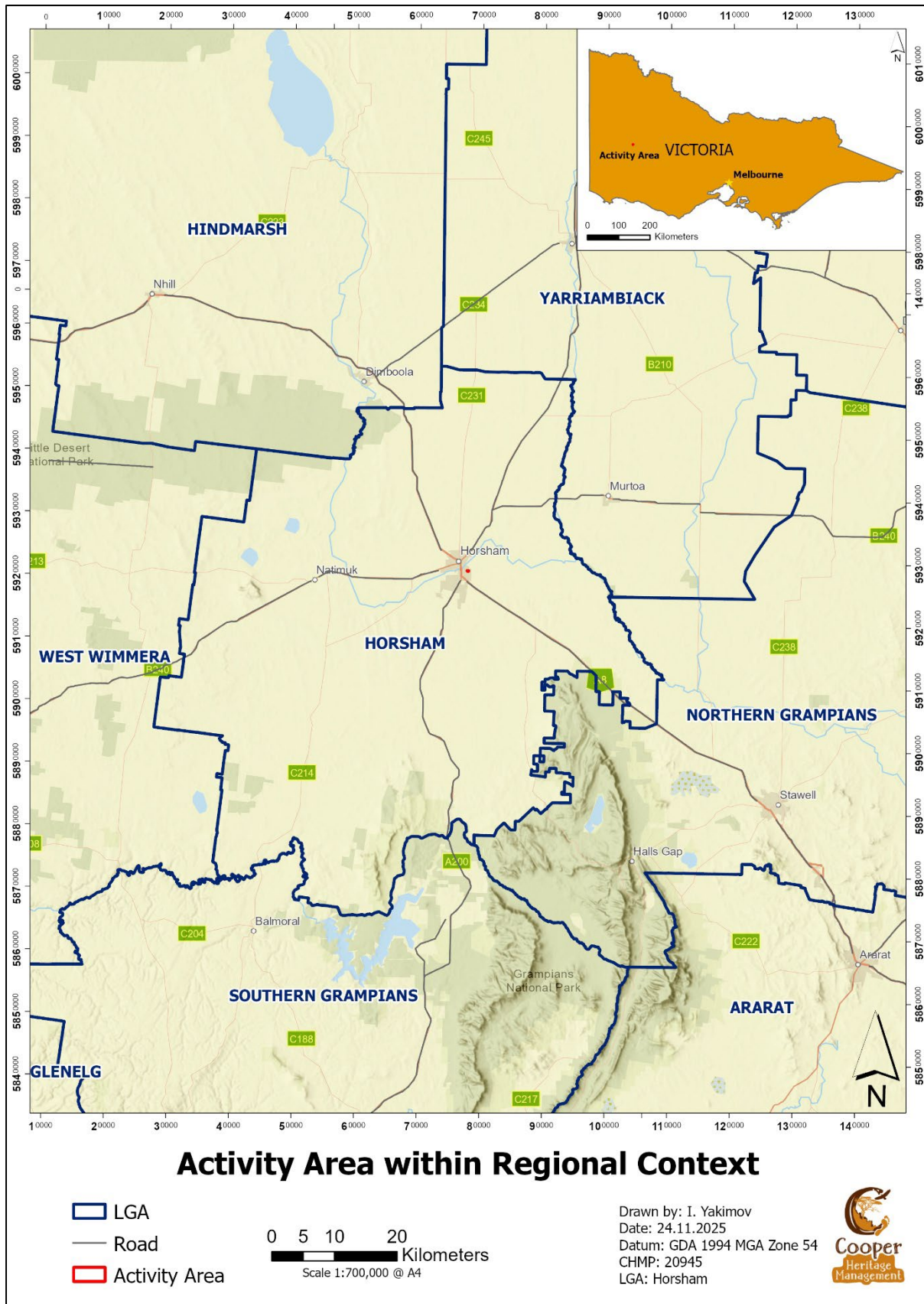
Figure 2 Location of future footpath (Source: Dale Schmid, 4 December 2025)

4.2 Potential impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage

The proposed activities involve grading and excavation, which will disturb the ground surface as well as buried former land surfaces. The proposed activities therefore have the potential to disturb or damage any Aboriginal cultural heritage that may be present.

5. EXTENT OF ACTIVITY AREA

The Activity Area is 20,780m² (2.07ha), as displayed in Map 2. It is situated in the locality of Horsham in the Wimmera region of Victoria and is approximately 275km north-north-west of Melbourne CBD by road (see Map 3).



Map 3 Activity Area within a regional context

6. DOCUMENTATION OF CONSULTATION

As the RAP for the Activity Area defined in s.148 of the AHA 2006, BGLC were consulted throughout all stages of this CHMP, including the assessment and preparation of the plan (s.59(2) & s.59(3)), participating in fieldwork and undertaking final evaluation (s.60).

6.1 Consultation in relation to the assessment

Details of consultations undertaken concerning the assessment of the Activity Area in preparation for this CHMP are set out in Table 3.

Table 3 Consultation concerning the assessment of the Activity Area for the preparation of this CHMP

Date	Name	Organisation & Role	Nature of Consultation
18.11.2025	Abby Cooper Michael Douglas Francisco Ameida Kylie Boundy Dale Schmid Planning Officers	Cooper Heritage Management (Cooper HM) – Heritage Advisor (HA) BGLC- Cultural Heritage Manager BGLC- RAP Technical Specialist BGLC- Compliance Officer Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC)- Sponsor HRCC- Planning Department	Submission of Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a CHMP to the Secretary at FPSR under s.54 of the AHA 2006. Forwarded NOI to BGLC, Sponsor and HRCC's Planning Department.
18.11.2025	Michael Douglas Dale Schmid Abby Cooper	BGLC- Cultural Heritage Manager HRCC- Sponsor Cooper HM- HA	RAP informed Sponsor of intent to evaluate the CHMP in a formal letter. Copy of response sent to HA.
1.12.2025	Abby Cooper Michael Douglas Francisco Almeida Dale Schmid	Cooper HM – HA BGLC- Cultural Heritage Manager BGLC- RAP Technical Specialist HRCC- Sponsor	Inception meeting to discuss proposed activities, previous significant ground disturbance within the Activity Area, existing VAHR sites within the Activity Area, site predictive model and dates for fieldwork. Dale explained that HRCC does not have any plans to develop the site further.

6.2 Participation in the conduct of the assessment

The individuals who participated in the Standard and Complex field assessment for the preparation of this CHMP are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4 Participation in the conduct of the Standard Assessment for this CHMP

Date	Name	Organisation	Role
6.11.2025 (Standard Assessment)	Tamika Chester Abby Cooper	BGLC Cooper HM	RAP Field Representative HA and supervising archaeologist

6.3 Consultation in relation to the conditions

The details of any consultation concerning the management conditions and contingency plans developed in response to the Standard Assessment are provided in Table 5.

Table 5 Consultation concerning the management recommendations for this CHMP

Date	Name	Organisation & Role	Nature of consultation
12.1.2026	Abby Cooper Michael Douglas Francisco Ameida Dale Schmid Mandy Kirsopp	Cooper HM – HA BGLC- Cultural Heritage Manager BGLC- RAP Technical Specialist HRCC- Sponsor HRCC- Coordinator Recreation and Open Space Planning	It was agreed in the post-Standard meeting that BGLC's standard conditions and contingency plans be included, but a cultural heritage induction was not required. It was also agreed that a BGLC representative must be engaged to monitor any jumps made from local material prior to levelling out and if any new jumps are made, they must be constructed from imported material.
13.1.2026	Abby Cooper Dale Schmid Mandy Kirsopp	Cooper HM- HA HRCC- Sponsor HRCC- Coordinator Recreation and Open Space Planning	Draft CHMP sent to Sponsor to review.

6.4 Summary of outcomes of the consultation

The outcomes of consultation undertaken for the preparation of this CHMP are as follows:

- The results of the Desktop Assessment correlated with BGLC's awareness of previously registered Aboriginal cultural heritage places within the defined geographic region.
- An acceptable level of Standard Assessment was undertaken for the size and nature of the proposed activity.
- A BGLC representative must be present when jumps constructed from local material are levelled.
- The levelling of jumps from imported material do not require monitoring by BGLC.
- Any new jumps must be constructed from imported material.

7. ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

7.1 Desktop Assessment

A desktop study of the Activity Area was undertaken in accordance with s.53(2) of the AHA 2006. This included a search and analysis of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Registry (VAHR) managed by FPSR, ethnographic and historical research of the Activity Area and the surrounding region (where available), as well as a review of the geomorphology, geology and landform of the Activity Area.

7.1.1 Search of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register

Iliaria Yakimov accessed the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) on 28 November 2025. A search was conducted for previously registered Aboriginal places and prior archaeological investigations in the defined geographic region within which the Activity Area is located. The results of the VAHR search are set out in sections 7.1.3 and 7.1.4.

7.1.2 The geographic region

Research and assessment of the geographic region within which the Activity Area is situated were undertaken in accordance with r.61(1)(b). For this CHMP, the geographic region within which the Activity Area is located is defined as the Horsham Locality, which extends to Riley & Rasmussen Roads in the north; Kenny and Osborne Roads in the south; Cameron Road in the east; and Curran and Pearsons Roads in the west (see Map 4). The total approximate area of the Horsham Locality is 23.5km². This includes the Wimmera River and its tributary, Burnt Creek.

Horsham is the most populous city in the Wimmera and home to more than 16,985 people according to the 2021 census (figure relates to Significant Urban Area profile- see ABS 2025). While a large portion of Horsham's surrounds serves agricultural (particularly dryland cropping, i.e. cereals and lentils) and industrial pursuits, the city itself is composed mainly of built-up residential and industrial zones.

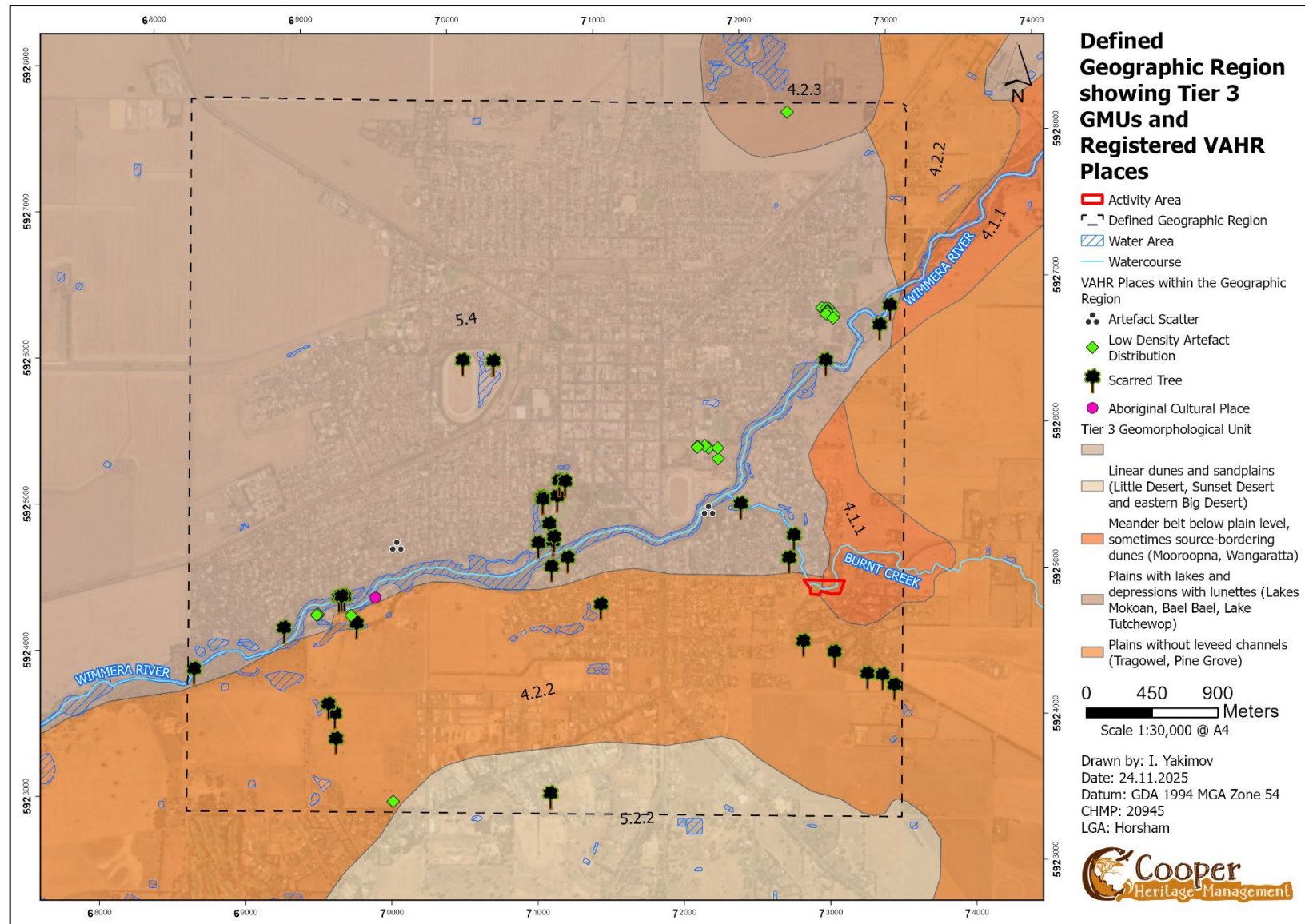
Regarding environmental management, the Wimmera is a sub-region of the Murray Darling Depression bioregion. At the same time, the Australian Bureau of Statistics defines the Wimmera as comprising six local government areas, being the Shires of Buloke, Hindmarsh, Northern Grampians, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack, and the Horsham Rural City Council.

The Wimmera is renowned for its natural and cultural heritage, including the undulating Grampians (*Gariwerd*) and Pyrenees Ranges (*Pilliwint-panyul*), and imposing Mount Arapiles (*Dyurrite*) set amongst the flat dryland agricultural landscape. The Wimmera also boasts the highest number of wetlands in Victoria, including the Wimmera River, which is joined by 14 minor tributaries before draining into a series of ephemeral lakes in the north that form part of the Murray River catchment of the Murray-Darling Basin.

The Activity Area lies within the plains without leveed channels (GMU 4.2.2) and meander belts below plain level, sometimes source-bordering dunes (GMU 4.1.1) geomorphic units; however, the wider region surrounding the Activity Area contains a variety of geomorphic features that would have been utilised by local Aboriginal peoples through time. These include:

- Clay plains and subdued ridges (GMU 5.4);
- Plains with leveed channels (GMU 4.2.1);
- Plains with lakes and depressions with lunettes (GMU 4.2.3);
- Alluvial fans and aprons (GMU 4.2.3); and
- Linear dunes and sandplains (GMU 5.2.2).

A more detailed discussion of the geomorphology and landforms within and around the proposed Activity Area is provided in Section 7.1.7.



Map 4 Defined geographic region showing Tier 3 geomorphic units and registered Aboriginal places

7.1.3 Aboriginal places in the geographic region

A search of the VAHR for sites within the defined geographic region (Horsham Locality) was undertaken on 28 November 2025. This was to ensure that a relevant and representative sample of data was obtained from the same geomorphological units and landforms to assist with the development of the site predictive model. The results are set out in Table 6.

Table 6 Registered Aboriginal places within the defined geographic region (Horsham Locality)

VAHR Number	VAHR Place Name	Place Type	Geomorphic Unit	Proximity to water
7324-0383	KAYLENES TREE HORSHAM	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~35m
7324-0397	LOWER WIMMERA 71A	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~5m
7324-0463	BURNT CREEK NO 7	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~5m
7324-0464	BURNT CREEK NO 6	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~10m
7324-0465	BURNT CREEK NO 5	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~92m
7324-0466	HWRR-12	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~20m
7324-0467	HWRR-11	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~25m
7324-0468	HWRR-10	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~20m
7324-0469	HBG	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~120m
7324-0470	Barrengi Gadjin Scarred Tree 4	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~165m
7324-0752	Barrengi Gadjin Scarred Trees 2 & 3	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~35m & ~50m
7324-0473	Barrengi Gadjin Scarred Tree 1	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~45m
7324-0474	HWRR-2	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~40m
7324-0475	HWRR-1	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~5m
7324-0476	HWRR-17	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~20m
7324-0477	HWRR-16	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~20m
7324-0478	HWRR-15	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	0m
7324-0479	HWRR-14	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	0m
7324-0480	HWRR-13	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~43m
7324-0481	HORSHAM RACECOURSE 2	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~45m
7324-0482	HORSHAM RACECOURSE 1	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~112m
7324-0483	BURNT CREEK 4	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~10m
7324-0484	BURNT CREEK 3	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~4m
7324-0485	BURNT CREEK 2	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~30m
7324-0486	BURNT CREEK 1	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~5m
7324-0487	HWRR-5	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~30m
7324-0488	HWRR-4	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~20m

VAHR Number	VAHR Place Name	Place Type	Geomorphic Unit	Proximity to water
7324-0489	HWRR-3	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~10m
7324-0495	HORSHAM SALEYARDS 1	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~185m
7324-0496	HORSHAM SALEYARDS 2	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~200m
7324-0688	SOUTHBANK ST 1	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~395m
7324-0690	Horsham Helipad 1	Scarred Tree	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~5m
7324-0695	Bogambilor AS1	Artefact Scatter	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~160m
7324-0696	Bogambilor 2 LDAD1	Low Density Artefact Distribution	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~115m
7324-0701	Bogambilor 3 LDAD 1	Low Density Artefact Distribution	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~85m
7324-0709	Bogambilor LDAD 4	Low Density Artefact Distribution	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~40m
7324-0708	Bogambilor Ring Tree 1	Aboriginal Cultural Place	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	~10m
7324-0711	Bogambilor Scarred Tree	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~30m
7324-0727	Bogambilor Artefact Scatter	Artefact Scatter	Clay plain with subdued ridges (5.4)	0m
7324-0754	Bogambilor Scarred Tree 2	Scarred Tree	Linear dunes and sandplains (5.2.2)	~500m
7324-0773	Rasmussen ROAD LDAD	Low Density Artefact Distribution	Plains with lakes and depressions with lunettes (4.2.3)	~160m
7324-0810	Barringgi Gadyin CMT 127	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~55m
7324-0811	Barringgi Gadyin CMT 128	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~90m
7324-0815	Barringgi Gadyin LDAD 4	Low Density Artefact Distribution	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~440m
7324-0816	Barringgi Gadyin CMT 130	Scarred Tree	Plains without leveed channels (4.2.2)	~190m
TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE PLACES				45

Summary of recorded places

- A total of 45 Aboriginal cultural heritage places are registered within the defined geographic region, 29 of which lie within the same geomorphic unit as the Activity Area (clay plains with subdued ridges GMU 5.4).
- One (1) place comprised ten (10) components (VAHR 7324-0696), one (1) place comprised 12 components (VAHR 7324-0701), one (1) place comprised six (6) components (VAHR 7324-0709), whilst another place comprised three (3) components (VAHR 7324-07703). All of these places were low density artefact distributions (LDADs).
- Scarred trees form the most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage site component identified (n=37, 82.22%).
- There were two (2) artefact scatters (4.44%); one (1) Aboriginal cultural place (2.22%)- being a culturally modified 'ring tree' and five (5) LDADs (11.11%) within the defined geographic region.

- Broken down into their individual components, the Aboriginal cultural heritage places within the defined geographic region are presented in Figure 3.

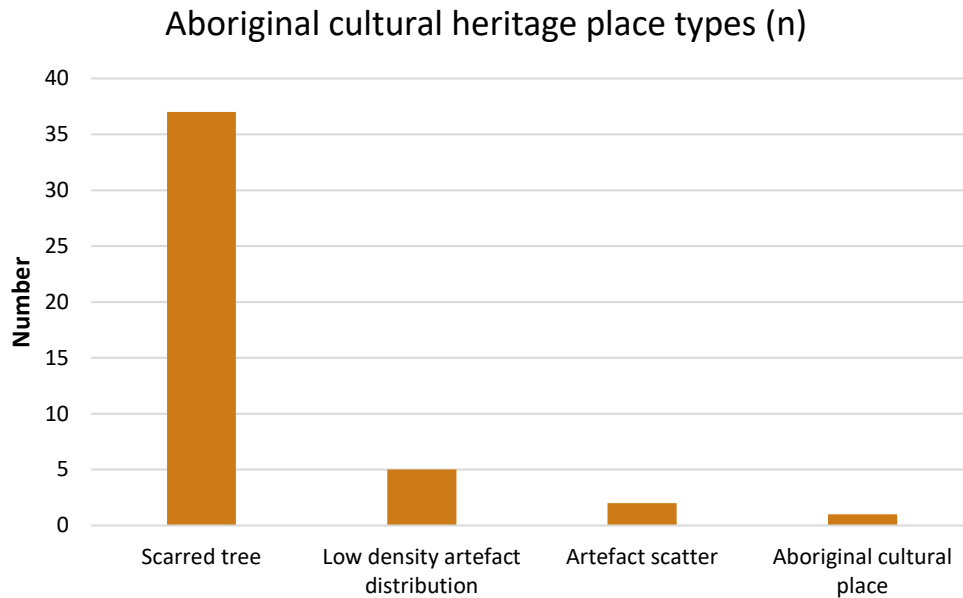


Figure 3 Aboriginal cultural heritage place types (n) within the defined geographic region

- A total of 193 stone artefacts were found within the defined geographic region.
- Stone artefact types were flakes (n=109, 56.47%), flakes- distal (n=4, 2.07%), flakes- proximal (n= 7, 3.62%), flakes- longitudinal split (n=1, 0.51%), blades (n=9, 4.66%), angular fragments (n=49, 25.38%), cores- multidirectional (n=8, 4.14%) and cores- bidirectional (n=6, 3.10%), as displayed in Figure 4.

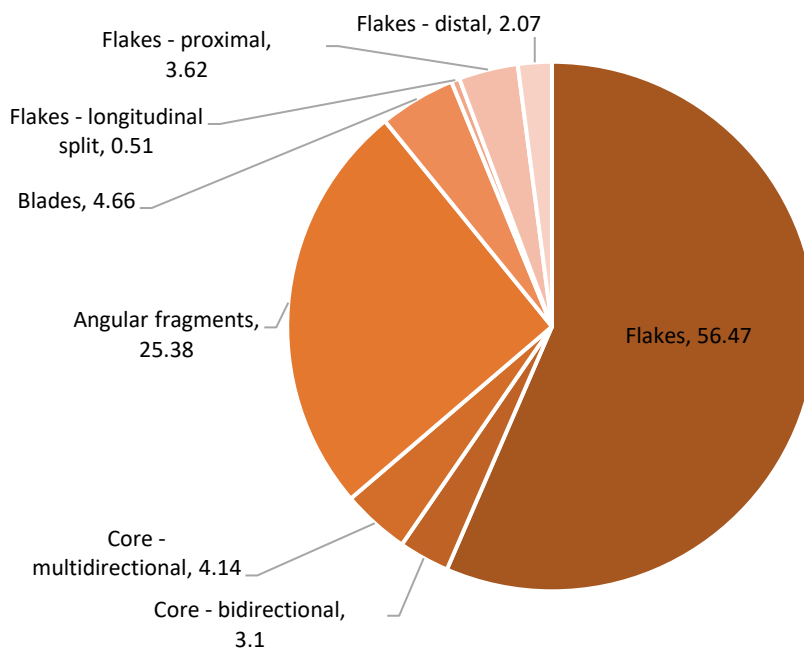


Figure 4 Stone artefact types (%) found within the defined geographic region

- Within the defined geographic region, the following raw materials were found: quartz (n=171, 88.60%), crystal quartz (n=1, 0.51%), quartzite (n=3, 1.55%), silcrete (n=4, 2.07%), inland flint (n=2, 1.03%), sandstone (n=2, 1.03%), basalt (n=1, 0.51%), tachylite (n=5, 2.59%), coastal flint (n=2, 1.03%) and chert (n=1, 0.51%)
- A breakdown of the raw material types found within the defined geographic region is presented in Figure 5.

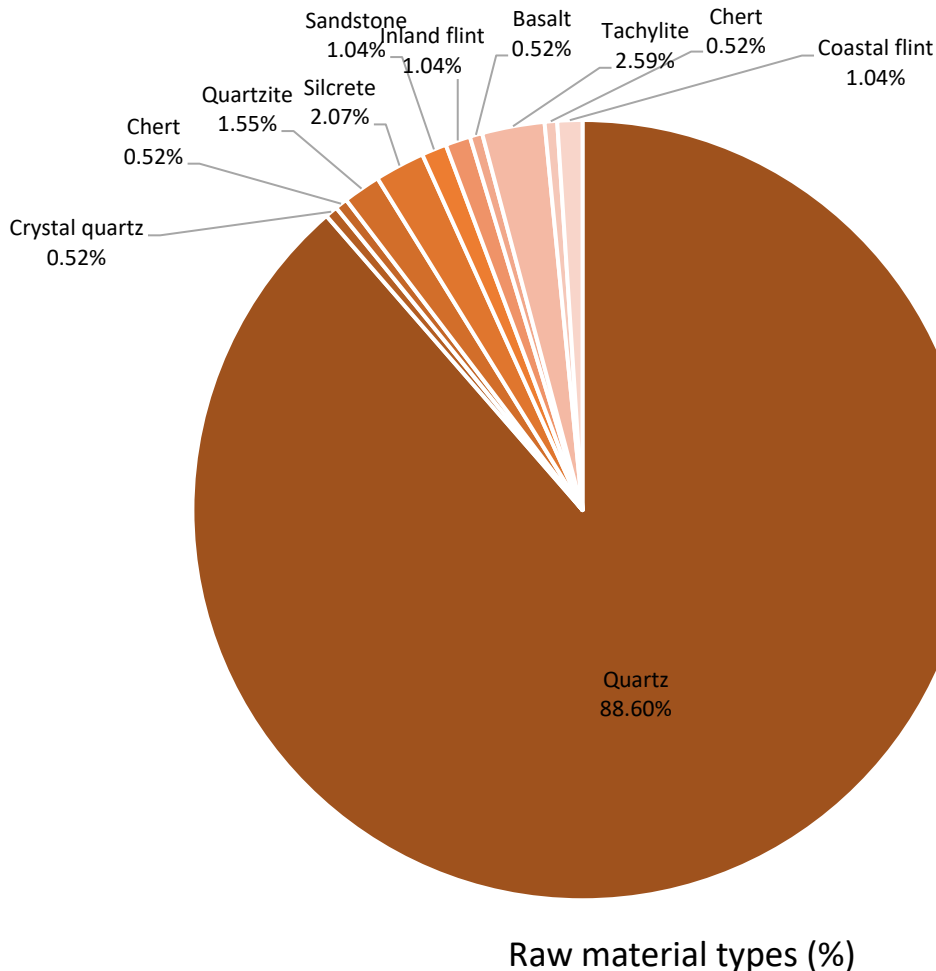


Figure 5 Raw material types (%) found within the defined geographic region

Basic site prediction model based on registered sites within the defined geographic region

- Many Aboriginal cultural heritage places have been previously registered within the defined geographic region and these places are not particularly diverse in terms of their type, with scarred trees accounting for most.
- All of these places were found within 200m of a waterway, with the exception of three (3) places found ~395m, ~440m and ~500m from a waterway.
- There are no known previously recorded places within the Activity Area. The closest place is Barringgi Gadyin Scarred Tree 1 (VAHR 7324-0473) which is located 85m to the north-east of the Activity Area.
- It is predicted that there is a high likelihood that unrecorded stone artefacts may be found within the Activity Area based on registered sites within the same local geomorphic units as the Activity Area (GMU 5.4 Clay plain with subdued ridges); however, due to the high level of

previous ground disturbance in most the Activity Area it significantly reduces the likelihood that they will be found.

- If located, stone artefacts are most likely to be flakes, angular fragments and cores made from quartz; though, imported foreign materials may also be present.
- It is predicted that there is a very low to negligible likelihood that other place types, such as Aboriginal Ancestral Remains (burials), middens or earth features, will be present.
- There is no likelihood of rock art/engravings or grinding grooves being present, as there are no caves, shelters or stone outcrops within the Activity Area.

7.1.4 Previous work in the geographic region

A large number of archaeological studies have been undertaken in the defined geographic region over the past 36 years. These studies provide a wide range of information about Aboriginal occupation and land use over time. The immediate region around the Activity Area has been subject to numerous Heritage Assessments and CHMPs over the last 29 years due largely to the expansion of residential and rural living areas, which is a major instigator for archaeological investigations and surveys intended to document Aboriginal cultural heritage places within the wider region.

The results of prior archaeological studies relevant to and/or conducted within the vicinity of the Activity Area, along with the current regional model of site distribution, are relevant to assess the archaeological sensitivity of the area and to help inform the methodology of the field assessment program.

Archaeological studies within the defined geographic region

Cooper, A. and I. Yakimov 2025 Apex Island Pedestrian Bridges and Walking Paths, Barnes Boulevard, Horsham: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 20888. Unpublished report prepared for Wimmera Catchment Management Authority.

Cooper Heritage Management Pty Ltd (Cooper HM) was commissioned by Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (Wimmera CMA, the Sponsor) to prepare a mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) for the construction of two pedestrian bridges, walking paths and irrigation at Apex Island on the Wimmera River (Barringgi Gadyin) in Horsham.

The Activity Area is located on Lot RES1 LP126778 on Barnes Boulevard, Horsham and comprises 15,876m² (1.58ha). The Activity Area is within the Horsham Rural City Council in the Wimmera region of Victoria.

The Desktop Assessment revealed that there were 45 Aboriginal cultural heritage places registered within the defined geographic region, 29 of which lie within the same geomorphic unit as the Activity Area. Scarred trees were the most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage (n=37, 82.22%), followed by artefact scatters (4.44%), Aboriginal cultural places (2.22%) and low density artefact distributions (11.11%).

The Desktop Assessment also found that the Activity Area has been disturbed by post-colonial impacts. Apex Island was constructed during 1978-68 by creating a deep, straight channel through the removal of sandbanks and reed-fringed little islands so the land would not be subject to flooding from the Wimmera River. The Assessment also found that the Activity Area has been subject to natural impacts such as flooding, which causes erosion and aggradation of the riverbank and creek bed, as well as impacts from recreational use. The Desktop Assessment concluded that despite these impacts, it was reasonably possible for Aboriginal cultural heritage to be present within the Activity Area and

therefore a Standard Assessment was required under Part 3, Division 1, r.62(1) of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 (the Regulations).

The Standard Assessment was undertaken on 6 November 2025 and revealed that the Activity Area comprised an alluvial plain and floodplain featuring sandy clay and grey cracking clays typical of the Horsham region. It also confirmed that the Activity Area had been subject to a considerable amount of past ground disturbance, as a result of the channelling of the Wimmera River to form Apex Island and the use of the island as a recreational facility.

As no Aboriginal cultural heritage was found during the Standard Assessment and there is a low potential for sub-surface deposits due to erosion and previous ground disturbance, a Complex Assessment was not considered necessary under r.64(2) of the Regulations.

Cooper, A. 2025 Horsham Rising Main- Stage 2: Plumpton Road- Pearsons Road, Horsham: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 20592. Unpublished report prepared for GWMWater.

Cooper Heritage Management Pty Ltd (Cooper HM) was commissioned by Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water (GWMWater, the Sponsor) to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) for the Horsham Rising Main-Stage 2. This involves duplication of Horsham's sewerage main, which will become the new primary pipeline to allow the existing main to be adequately assessed and maintained as an alternative.

The Activity Area encompasses road reserves along Plumpton Road, King Drive, Golf Course Road, Ballinger Street, Pohlner Street, Kenny Road, Pearsons Road and terminates at the Horsham Sewerage Plant. It also encompasses an area within the Horsham Golf Course, an agricultural paddock adjacent to Ballinger Street and a small area west of King Drive. The activity is a linear project approximately 5,255m in length. The width of the Activity Area ranges from 20m to 45m and the total area is 152,547m² (15.25ha). The Activity Area is located within the Horsham Rural City Council in the Wimmera region of Victoria.

The Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the Activity Area is the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC). The Heritage Advisor (HA) and supervising archaeologist for this CHMP was Abby Cooper who is a qualified archaeologist and historian.

The Desktop Assessment revealed that there were 33 Aboriginal cultural heritage places registered within the defined geographic region comprising 36 components. One (1) registered cultural place is located within the Activity Area, which is registered as Wopet Bungundilar 'House of Feathers' (VAHR 7324-0702). Scarred trees form the most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage site component identified (n=24, 66.67%) followed by artefact scatters (n=4, 11.11%) and low density artefact distributions (n=4, 11.11%) and Aboriginal cultural places (n=2, 5.56%). There was one (1) earth feature (2.78%) and one (1) Aboriginal Ancestral Remains (burial). The Desktop Assessment also revealed that the Activity Area has been subject to moderate levels of ground disturbance as the result of past and present land use activities, including agricultural activities, construction of roads and installation of services and utilities (i.e. sewerage, water pipelines, Telstra and NBN and electricity). The Desktop Assessment concluded that it was possible for Aboriginal cultural heritage to be present within the Activity Area and therefore a Standard Assessment was required.

The Standard Assessment was undertaken on 27 June 2025 and revealed that the majority of the Activity Area comprised a flat plain featuring dark brown cracking clays typical of the Horsham region, which had been subject to previous ground disturbance from urban and industrial development. The Standard Assessment revealed that Activity Area in the east featured a lunette, which contained light brown loose sands that was identified as having potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage to be present. This lunette also includes the extent of Wopet Bungundilar 'House of Feathers' (VAHR 7324-0702), which is located along Pearsons and Kenny Road and encompasses the area now currently occupied by the Horsham Golf Club. No additional Aboriginal cultural heritage was discovered within the Activity Area during the Standard Assessment. Due to the presence of a registered Aboriginal cultural heritage place within the Activity Area, which is located on a culturally sensitive lunette landform, a Complex Assessment was required in accordance with r.64 of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018.

The Complex Assessment was undertaken on 27-28 August 2025 and comprised four (4) 1m x 1m manual test pits. The Complex Assessment revealed that the soil profile on the lunette comprised light brown to pink sand with a pH of 6-7.5. This profile correlates with the predicted soil profile for this area, which resulted from the drying of a former lake basin and subsequent transportation of sand from the exposed lake bed to form a crescent shaped dune. Test pits excavated on adjacent alluvial deposits, comprised both sand and clayey sand, which is also representative of this geological unit (Qa1). No new Aboriginal cultural heritage places were identified during the Complex Assessment.

Cooper, A. 2024 Wimmera River Lighting, McBain Street to Stawell Road, Horsham: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 20143. Unpublished report prepared for Horsham Rural City Council.

Cooper Heritage Management Pty Ltd (Cooper HM) was commissioned by Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC, the Sponsor) to prepare a mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) for the installation of lighting along the existing walk/bike path adjacent to the Wimmera River between McBain Street and Stawell Road, Horsham.

The Activity Area is in Horsham within the Horsham Rural City Council. It measures approximately 540m x 5m (4,687m²) and comprises Crown Allotment 29, Section 26 in the Township of Horsham, and Lot 2 LP128384 and Lot 1 TP682519 being 22 McBryde Street, Horsham. The Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the Activity Area is Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC).

The Desktop Assessment indicated that any Aboriginal cultural heritage places present within the Activity Area are likely to be situated near water sources, which were rich resource centres for Aboriginal people within the area. Scarred trees, mostly comprising Red Gum and Grey Box with bark removal scars are the most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage found in the defined geographic region, followed by low density artefact distributions (LDADs) and artefact scatters comprising stone artefacts made from quartz, as well as other imported materials. The Desktop Assessment also revealed that the Activity Area was within the Horsham Showgrounds and therefore likely contained high levels of previous ground disturbance.

The Standard Assessment was undertaken on 24 May 2024 and revealed that the Activity Area has been highly disturbed during the construction of walk/bike path, as well as being impacted by vehicles, pedestrians and animals, landscaping, installation of bollards, utilities and drainage. This greatly reduces the potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage to be present, particularly in an in-situ context.

The Activity Area comprises a flat alluvial plain with sandy brown loams and clays, which corresponds with the predicted soil profile for this area. As no cultural heritage was identified during the Standard

Assessment and the assessment found that there is a very low potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage to be present, a Complex Assessment is not required under r. 64.

Cooper, A. and I. Yakimov 2024 Enterprise Estate Commercial Subdivision- Lot S3 PS641591, Lot 26 PS641591 and Lot RES2 PS539076, Plumpton Road, Horsham: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 19745. Unpublished report prepared for Horsham Rural City Council.

Cooper Heritage Management was commissioned by Horsham Rural City Council (the Sponsor) to prepare a mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) for the proposed subdivision of Lot S3 PS641591, Lot 26 PS641591 and Lot RES2 PS539076 in Horsham into approximately 31 allotments including the construction of access roads (total chainage 2.6km). The Activity Area is within the Horsham Rural City Council and comprises 576,000m² (57.6ha).

The Desktop Assessment revealed that there were 75 Aboriginal cultural heritage places registered within the defined geographic region, being the locality of Horsham, with 31 places being object collections. Fourteen (14) of these places were in the same geomorphic unit as the Activity Area. All of these places were found within ~200m of a waterway, with the exception of five (5) places found up to, but not exceeding ~1,500m from a waterway. Scarred trees (n=36, 48%) formed the most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage component identified within the defined geographic region. Other site types comprised object collections (n=31, 41.3%), low density artefact distributions (n=4, 5.3%), Aboriginal cultural places (n=2, 2.6%) and artefact scatters (n=2, 2.6%). Two (2) registered places are within the Activity Area comprising scarred trees (VAHR 7324-0811 and VAHR 7324-0810). The Desktop Assessment also revealed that the Activity Area has been subject to moderate levels of ground disturbance as the result of past and present land use activities, including agricultural activities.

The Standard Assessment was undertaken on 27 October 2023 and revealed that the Activity Area comprised a flat plain featuring dark brown cracking clays, which had been subject to previous ground disturbance from past and present agricultural activities (i.e. dryland cropping) and previous channels. Two (2) Aboriginal cultural heritage places were found during the Standard Assessment (scarred tree, VAHR 7324-0816) and isolated quartz artefact (VAHR 7324-0815)), as well as two (2) existing registered places (VAHR 7324-0811) and VAHR 7324-0810). Due to the presence of Aboriginal cultural heritage, a Complex Assessment was required in accordance with r.64 of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 to determine the nature and extent of these places.

The Complex Assessment was undertaken on 27 October 2023 and 10 November 2023, and comprised two (2) 1m x 1m manual test pits. The Assessment revealed a very shallow soil profile comprising greyish brown to dark greyish brown clayey loam with a pH of 7 overlying greyish brown moderately moist, firm, clay with a pH of 6.5. This soil profile correlates with the predicted soil profile for this area, which is described as containing vertosols comprising light clays overlying medium to heavy clays. No Aboriginal cultural heritage was identified during the Complex Assessment.

Sutherland, G. 2023 Amendment to Residential Subdivision and Recreational Precinct, Horsham: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 19097. Unpublished report prepared for Rasmussen Estate Pty Ltd.

Heritage Futures completed CHMP 19097 for a residential subdivision and recreational precinct in Horsham, Victoria, sponsored by Rasmussen Estate Pty Ltd. The Activity Area was within the Horsham Rural City Council and comprises 50 hectares (Parcel number 1\LP115019 and Parcel 2\LP81658) currently used for agricultural purposes at Rasmussen Road in the north of Horsham locality.

The desktop assessment determined that the most probable Aboriginal cultural heritage site types in the region are scarred trees, low-density artefact distributions, and artefact scatters. It also indicated that campsites and larger artefact scatters are likely to be found along major watercourses, with dune formations identified as particularly sensitive areas. The desktop assessment further noted that the Activity Area has experienced significant ground disturbance over time due to agricultural activities such as grazing and ploughing. Additionally, it was highlighted that a substantial archaeological subsurface investigation was conducted on the lunette landform in 2006, which did not identify any Aboriginal cultural heritage at that time.

The standard assessment was carried out on 17 January 2023, during which no Aboriginal cultural heritage was identified. Following this, a complex assessment was undertaken on 18 January 2023, in consultation with BGLC to ensure compliance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and to examine the soil stratigraphy within the activity area. During the complex assessment, a low-density artefact distribution (LDAD) was recorded at Rasmussen Road 7324-0773.

An amendment to the CHMP was made in 2023 by Heritage Futures to reflect changes in the proposed activities. These changes included relocating the planned playground and carpark away from areas mapped as sensitive for Aboriginal cultural heritage, and adding a sports and recreation facility, including hockey fields, to the west of the sensitive area but still within the original activity area. BGLC determined that no further field assessment was necessary, and the Management Conditions were updated accordingly.

Cooper, A. and L. Chester 2021a Horsham Rising Main Duplication Project: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 17783. Unpublished report prepared for GWMWater.

Cooper Heritage Management was commissioned by GWMWater to prepare a CHMP for the Horsham Rising Main Duplication Project. The Activity Area is within the HRCC and comprises 70,108m² (7.01ha) Crown and freehold land along Wotonga Basin and from the Wimmera River to Plumpton Road in Horsham. The project involves the construction of a sewerage pipeline to duplicate part of the existing main, which connects Sewer Pump Station 1 in Spry Court to the Horsham Wastewater Treatment Plant on Pearsons Road.

The Desktop Assessment suggested that any Aboriginal cultural heritage places present within the Activity Area are likely to be situated in close proximity to the Wimmera River, which was a rich and secure resource centre within the area. Scarred trees containing bark removal scars are the most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage located within the defined geographic region, followed by low density artefact distributions and artefact scatters comprising locally available raw materials, such as quartz. The Assessment also revealed that one (1) registered scarred tree was within the Activity Area (VAHR 7324-0473).

The Desktop Assessment also discovered that the Activity Area has been subject to moderate ground disturbance as the result of past land use activities, such as the construction of weirs and bridges, and flood mitigation works.

The Standard Assessment confirmed that the Activity Area had been subjected to a moderate degree of contemporary land use development, including the construction of walk paths along Wotonga Basin and the Wimmera River. As part of the Assessment, the abovementioned registered scarred tree was also relocated.

Despite moderate levels of previous ground disturbance within the Activity Area, the Desktop Assessment showed that it was still likely that Aboriginal cultural heritage may be present within the Activity Area in a sub-surface context. Therefore, due to this possibility, and the relatively low level of ground surface visibility during the Standard Assessment, it was considered that a Complex Assessment was required in accordance with r. 64 of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018.

The Complex Assessment comprised two 1m x 1m test pits (TPs), one positioned on the northern side of the Wimmera River on an alluvial plain, approximately 15m from Wotonga Basin and another positioned approximately 430m south of the Wimmera River on a flat plain.

The Complex Assessment revealed that the Activity Area generally has a shallow silt/silty clay profile (10cm), which overlays a medium clayey B Horizon. This correlated with the predicted soil profile for the Activity Area. Sub-surface testing revealed that the soil within the Activity Area contained little organic matter, which is also consistent with soils within this formation. No Aboriginal cultural heritage material was found during the Complex Assessment.

Cooper, A and L. Chester 2021b Subdivision of LOT A LP216391 Hardings Road, Haven: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 17699. Unpublished report prepared for Ivan Sherriff.

Cooper Heritage Management was commissioned by Ivan Sherriff (the Sponsor) to prepare a CHMP for the subdivision of Lot A LP216391 at Hardings Road, Haven, into 18 allotments and the construction of a sealed access road 22m wide and ~1.77km in length. The Activity Area is within the Horsham Rural City Council and comprises 774,800m² (77.48ha) freehold land within 200m of Bungalally Creek.

The Desktop Assessment suggested that any Aboriginal cultural heritage places present within the Activity Area are likely to be situated close to waterways such as the Wimmera River and its tributaries, which was a rich and secure resource centre within the area. Scarred trees containing bark removal scars are the most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage located within the defined geographic region, followed by low density artefact distributions and artefact scatters comprising locally available raw materials, such as quartz. The Desktop Assessment also revealed that the Activity Area has also been subject to widespread ground disturbance as the result of past agricultural activities, and the construction and subsequent fill of an open earth channel through the centre of the allotment.

One new Aboriginal cultural heritage place was identified during the Standard Assessment on a disturbed sand dune- Bungalally LDAD 1 (VAHR 7324-0753) comprising one (1) quartz flake. However, this artefact was not in its primary context because it had been potentially impacted by agricultural activities, vehicles/machinery, erosion and flooding, which would have caused the movement of any in-situ artefacts.

The Standard Assessment confirmed that the Activity Area had been subjected to widespread agricultural land use. However, the Desktop Assessment showed that it is still likely that Aboriginal cultural heritage may be present within the Activity Area in a sub-surface context. Therefore, due to this possibility, and the low level of ground surface visibility during the Standard Assessment, it was considered that a Complex Assessment was required under r. 64 of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018.

The Complex Assessment was undertaken on 3 February 2021 comprising two (2) 1m x 1m test pits (TPs), each positioned with the Quaternary Alluvium and Loxton Sands geological units. The Complex Assessment revealed that the Activity Area generally has a shallow silty sandy profile (~10cm), which overlays a medium clayey B Horizon. This correlated with the predicted soil profile for the Activity

Area, which includes sands and silts derived from the Loxton Sands and Quaternary Alluvium geological units. Sub-surface testing revealed that the soil within the Activity Area contained little organic matter, which is also consistent with soils within this formation.

Cooper A. and L. Chester 2021c Horsham CBD Irrigation Redevelopment: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 17985. Unpublished report prepared for the Horsham Rural City Council.

Cooper Heritage Management was commissioned by Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) (the Sponsor) to prepare a CHMP for the Horsham CBD Irrigation Redevelopment. The Activity Area is within the HRCC and comprises 6,205m² (0.62ha) Crown land from Wotonga Basin to Firebrace Street in Horsham. The project involves relocating and upgrading the irrigation water supply system for the irrigation of Horsham CBD, and includes the construction of a new pumpstation along Wotonga Basin, cofferdam within the basin and irrigation pipeline measuring approximately 580m in length.

The Desktop Assessment suggests that any Aboriginal cultural heritage places present within the Activity Area are likely to be situated in close proximity to the Wimmera River, which was a rich and secure resource centre within the area. Scarred trees containing bark removal scars are the most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage located within the defined geographic region, followed by low density artefact distributions and artefact scatters comprising locally available raw materials, such as quartz. The Assessment also revealed that one (1) registered scarred tree was within the Activity Area (VAHR 7324-0473).

The Desktop Assessment also discovered that the Activity Area has been subject to moderate ground disturbance as the result of past land use activities, such as the construction of Wotonga Basin, footbridges and walk/bike paths, landscaping, and the development of the Botanical Gardens and Horsham Caravan Park.

The Standard Assessment was undertaken on 28 May 2021 and confirmed that the Activity Area had been subjected to a moderate degree of contemporary land use development, as listed above as well as a levee south of the Horsham Lawn Tennis Courts. As part of the Assessment, the abovementioned registered scarred tree was relocated as well another previously registered scarred tree (VAHR 7324-0470). A place inspection was undertaken and the extent of VAHR 7324-0470 was calculated to also fall within the Activity Area. A limitation of the Standard Assessment was that 863.56m comprised Wotonga Basin, which was filled with water and unable to be surveyed.

Despite moderate levels of previous ground disturbance within the Activity Area, the Desktop Assessment showed that it was still likely that Aboriginal cultural heritage may be present within the Activity Area in a sub-surface context. Therefore, due to this possibility, and the low level of ground surface visibility during the Standard Assessment, it was considered that a Complex Assessment was required in accordance with r. 64 of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018.

The Complex Assessment was undertaken on 28 May 2021 comprising one 1m x 1m test pit (TP) positioned on a flat floodplain 15m east of the Banks of Wotonga Basin and 70m north of the Wimmera River.

The Complex Assessment revealed that the Activity Area has a shallow silty clay profile (10cm), which overlays a medium clayey B Horizon. This correlated with the predicted soil profile for the Activity Area. Sub-surface testing revealed that the soil within the Activity Area contained little organic matter,

which is also consistent with soils within this formation (North Western Dunefields and Plains unit). No Aboriginal cultural heritage material was found during the Complex Assessment.

Cooper, A. and L. Chester 2021d City to River- Waterfront Precinct Development, Horsham: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 17283 (Amendment). Unpublished report prepared for Horsham Rural City Council.

Cooper Heritage Management was commissioned by the Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC, the Sponsor) to prepare a CHMP for the City to River- Waterfront Precinct Development, Horsham. The Activity Area is within the HRCC and comprises 62,490m² (6.249ha) 63,987m² (6.398ha) Crown and freehold land along and adjacent to the Wimmera River frontage in central Horsham.

The City to River-Waterfront Precinct Development involves a number of proposed activities that are designed to increase utilisation by residents and visitors; improve the integration and accessibility of existing areas within the Riverfront Precinct; and establish commercial and tourism development opportunities.

The Desktop Assessment suggests that any Aboriginal cultural heritage places present within the Activity Area are likely to be situated in close proximity to the Wimmera River, which was a rich and secure resource centre within the area. Scarred trees containing bark removal scars are the most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage located within the defined geographic region, followed by low density artefact distributions and artefact scatters comprising locally available raw materials, such as quartz. The Assessment also revealed that two three (2) (3) registered scarred trees were within the Activity Area (VAHR 7324-0471, VAHR7324-0470 & VAHR 7324-0472), and that the extent of another scarred tree directly north may also fall within the Activity Area when its exact extent is determined (VAHR 7324-0473).

The Desktop Assessment also revealed that the Activity Area has also been subject to widespread ground disturbance as the result of past land use activities, including a large-scale brickworks and rubbish tip on the site of what is now Sawyer Park, as well as extensive works to widen the river and clear native vegetation and understory from its frontage during the late 1960s/early 1970s.

The Standard Assessment was undertaken on 16 July 2020 and confirmed that the Activity Area had been subjected to a high degree of contemporary land use development and landscaping. As part of the Assessment, the abovementioned three (3) registered scarred trees were relocated and rerecorded. HWRR-6 (VAHR 7324-0473) was renamed Barringgi Gadyin Scarred Tree 1 (VAHR 7324-0473), and because the place extents of HWRR-7 (VAHR 7324-0472) and HWRR-8 (VAHR 7324-0471) were found to overlap, they were registered as Barringgi Gadyin Scarred Trees 2 & 3 (VAHR 7324-0752).

Despite high levels of previous ground disturbance within the Activity Area, the Desktop Assessment showed that it was still likely that Aboriginal cultural heritage may be present within the Activity Area in both a surface and sub-surface context. Therefore, due to this possibility, and the low level of ground surface visibility during the Standard Assessment, it was considered that a Complex Assessment was required in accordance with r. 64 of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 .

The Complex Assessment was undertaken on 16 July 2020 comprising one 1m x 1m test pit (TP) positioned on the northern side of the Wimmera River on an alluvial plain, approximately 35m from the banks of the Wimmera River in the Horsham Showgrounds, and 35m east of the Wimmera Bridge.

The Complex Assessment revealed that the Activity Area generally has a shallow sandy clay loam profile (10cm), which overlays a medium clayey B Horizon. This correlated with the predicted soil profile for the Activity Area, which belongs to the Quaternary Alluvium comprising Pleistocene to Holocene age fluvial sediments including gravels, sands and silts, as well as lacustrine-derived and deflated clays. Sub-surface testing revealed that the soil within the Activity Area contained little organic matter, which is also consistent with soils within this formation. No Aboriginal cultural heritage material was found during the Complex Assessment.

Changes to CHMP 17283 were required to include the installation of new cabins, outdoor kitchen, and all accessible amenities block within the Horsham Caravan Park at the northern extent; therefore, the Activity Area was increased to include these additional works. Additional field assessment of the new component to the Activity Area was undertaken on 21 July 2021; however, no Aboriginal cultural heritage was found.

Cooper A. and L. Chester 2019 Subdivision of land at 95 Derry Parade, Horsham: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 16259. Unpublished report prepared for Motavu Pty Ltd.

Cooper Heritage Management was commissioned by Motavu Pty Ltd to prepare a mandatory CHMP for the subdivision of land at 95 Derry Parade, Horsham in the Parish of Boroka, County of Borung. The subdivision entailed the realignment of ten (10) existing allotment boundaries and the construction of an access road with a length of more than 100m.

The Activity Area comprised 104,928m² (10.493ha) of vacant land, situated on alluvial plains to the south-east of Horsham town centre, approximately one kilometre south of the Wimmera River and directly south of Burnt Creek 2.

The Desktop Assessment revealed that the Activity Area and the wider geographic region has a rich Aboriginal history and contained a wide range of natural resources that would have been utilised by Jadawadjali clans to support subsistence all year round. However, since the mid-nineteenth century, the Activity Area had been used for pastoral purposes (e.g. livestock grazing and cropping) and this had likely disturbed the integrity of any Aboriginal cultural heritage material that may be present.

One new Aboriginal cultural heritage place was identified during the Standard Assessment-Bogambilor Scarred Tree 1 (VAHR 7324-0711) comprising one (1) culturally modified Black Box tree with one (1) bark removal scar. The Standard Assessment also revealed that the Activity Area had been impacted by past historical activities, specifically agricultural pursuits, as well as erosion caused by past flooding events, resulting in the significant erosion of topsoils. This altered landscape no longer contained any intact soil deposits likely to contain Aboriginal cultural heritage material, as identified in the Desktop Assessment; therefore, no Complex Assessment was required for this CHMP.

Cooper A. and L. Chester 2018 Wimmera River Trails Project: Cultural Heritage Management Plan 15753. Unpublished report prepared for the Horsham Rural City Council.

Cooper Heritage Management was commissioned by the Horsham Rural City Council to prepare a Complex CHMP for the Wimmera River Trail Project, including the construction of the Hamilton Street extension pedestrian bridge. The Activity Area comprised 142,670m² (14.267ha) vacant land situated along the Wimmera River in the city of Horsham on alluvial plains and a creek line.

The Desktop Assessment revealed that scarred trees were the most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage located within the defined geographic region and it was therefore possible that they

may be present within the Activity Area. Cooper and Chester also concluded that the second most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage within the region, stone artefact distributions, may also be found within the Activity Area.

The results of the Standard Assessment confirmed the site prediction model developed in the Desktop Assessment, with one (1) culturally modified Black Box tree and six (6) artefacts identified during the pedestrian survey. The tree was registered as Bogambilor Ring Tree 1 (VAHR 7324-0708) because it featured a very rare ring formed by the deliberate fusion of two branches together. The low density artefact distribution was registered as Bogambilor LDAD 4 (VAHR 7324-0709) comprising five (5) quartzite and quartz artefacts.

The Standard Assessment also revealed that the Activity Area had been impacted by past historical activities, such as livestock grazing, the subdivision of land for residential growth and associated development activities, as well as erosion and aggradation caused by river overflow. Due to the potential for further Aboriginal cultural heritage to be present within the Activity Area within a sub-surface context, a Complex Assessment was required under regulation 64(a) of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations (2018).

Complex Assessment was undertaken over four (4) days and involved the hand excavation of three (3) 1m x 1m test pits (TPs) on alluvial plains within the Activity Area. Two (2) TPs were excavated on the southern side of the Wimmera River in Survey Unit 1 at opposite ends of the unit, with the TP at the western end (TP3) containing one (1) quartzite flake at ~10cm in spit 1, whilst TP2 at the eastern end of the survey unit contained no artefacts. The other TP was excavated on the eastern side of the Wimmera River in Survey Unit 3 (bridge area). No artefacts were present in this TP.

Specific management conditions for this CHMP included the condition that a BGLC representative must monitor all works that occur within 20m of the registered place extent of Bogambilor Ring Tree 1 (VAHR 7324-0708) and that no soil was to be removed from the Activity Area during the course of the works, unless 100% was sieved through a 4-6mm gauge screen by a HA and at least one BGLC representative to determine whether any Aboriginal cultural heritage material is present.

Cooper, A. and A. van der Walt 2017a Construction of the Holy Trinity Lutheran Senior School at 7 Peppertree Lane, Horsham: Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) 15020. Unpublished report prepared for Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Horsham.

Cooper Heritage Management was commissioned by the Holy Trinity Lutheran School Horsham to prepare a Standard CHMP for the proposed construction of a Senior School Campus at 7 Peppertree Lane, Horsham (Lot 2 on PS425571K, Parish of Horsham). The Activity Area comprised 8,615m² trapezium shaped block of vacant land comprising of alluvial plains in a general residential zone (GRZ1), situated approximately 90 metres from the Wimmera River.

One new Aboriginal cultural heritage place was identified during the Standard Assessment-Bogambilor 3 LDAD 1 (VAHR 7324-0701) comprising 11 stone artefacts. Raw materials included quartz, sandstone, inland flint, basalt and tachylite. The Standard Assessment also revealed that the Activity Area had been impacted by pedestrian and vehicular traffic, associated with the nearby school, particularly in the western part along Trinity Drive. Numerous rabbit burrows also indicated that it had been impacted by feral animals (e.g. rabbits). Whilst Aboriginal cultural heritage material was present within the Activity Area, it was deemed unnecessary to undertake a Complex Assessment because the artefacts were believed to have been imported with the fill material.

Specific management conditions included the condition that if any soil was to be removed from the Activity Area, then sample sieving must be undertaken by a HA and BGLC representative.

Cooper, A. and A. van der Walt 2017b Burnt Creek Industrial Estate Subdivision: CHMP 14875. Unpublished report prepared for Horsham Rural City Council.

Cooper Heritage Management was commissioned by the Horsham Rural City Council to prepare a Complex CHMP for the proposed construction of a stock feed mill and artificial breeding centre on Lot 1, Parish of Bungalally, County of Borung, and the subdivision of Allotment 2 (in the same parish and county) into two or more lots.

The Activity Area is located approximately 7.5km south-east of the City of Horsham on low lying plains and comprised 61.58 hectares in the form of an irregular shaped block of land situated in an industrial zone. It is bound by Burnt Creek Drive in the west; Mackies Road in the south; the Western Highway in north; and Peuckers Road in the east.

The field assessment was undertaken over five (5) days and involved a standard archaeological pedestrian survey of the entire Activity Area, as well as the excavation of one 1m x 1m Test Pit on a low sandy rise to a depth of 90cm.

Two new Aboriginal cultural heritage places were identified within the Activity Area during the Standard and Complex Assessments- Purtit LDAD 1 (VAHR 7324-0699) comprising six (6) stone artefacts, and Purtit Artefact Scatter 1 (VAHR7324-0700) comprising 97 stone artefacts (41 found on the surface and 56 sub-surface). Raw materials included quartz (n=91), crystal quartz (n=6), chert (n=2), quartzite (n=2), sandstone (n=1) and inland flint (n=1).

The extent of Purtit Artefact Scatter 1 (VAHR7324-0700) was determined mostly by landform because it was located on a sandy rise in an otherwise flat loamy paddock, thereby making it a distinct area of cultural sensitivity. The north-eastern extent was determined by a cut away for a drainage line that runs parallel with the Western Highway. It is possible that the sandy rise/place once continued in this direction. Surface artefacts were on the western side of the low rise, possibly due to flooding from Burnt Creek, which may have shifted them downhill in a westerly direction. It is also possible that the artefacts were moved downhill by post-depositional processes, such as stock trampling and vehicle damage, and wind erosion. No artefacts were observed off-landform.

The management conditions determined for Purtit Artefact Scatter 1 (VAHR7324-0700) included undertaking further sub-surface testing if ground disturbance works were to occur within the registered extent. All artefacts found during the field assessments were salvaged and returned to the BGLC.

Cooper, A. 2017a 1 Stawell Road, Horsham Residential Subdivision: CHMP 14719. Unpublished report prepared for Abby and Luke Uebergang.

Abby and Luke Uebergang of Horsham sponsored Cooper Heritage Management to prepare a CHMP for the proposed subdivision of 1 Stawell Road, Horsham, which also included the demolition of an existing three bedroom weatherboard dwelling and three sheds; removal of an inground pool and backfill; and excavation along the southern boundary of the allotment to install sewerage pipes to an approximate depth of 2m.

Cooper's report highlighted that the Activity Area and wider geographic region has a rich Aboriginal history and contained a wide range of natural resources that would have been utilised by Jadawadjali clans to support subsistence all year around. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the Activity Area had

been used for pastoral purposes (i.e. livestock grazing) and more recently for residential living. Cooper concluded that this had likely disturbed the integrity of any Aboriginal cultural heritage that may have been present.

Cooper undertook a Standard and Complex Assessment of the Activity Area comprising alluvial plains within 200m from the Wimmera River, including one 1m x 1m test pit and one 50cm x 50cm shovel test pit; however, no cultural heritage material was found in either surface or sub-surface contexts.

Cooper, A. 2017b Allotment 2A Parish of Bungallally, County of Borung, Subdivision: CHMP 14464. Unpublished report prepared for Darryl Edwards.

In 2016, Darryl Edwards of Haven sponsored Cooper Heritage Management to prepare a CHMP for a proposed subdivision of land for rural living at 628 Three Bridges Road, Haven. Cooper's report highlighted the rich Aboriginal and European history in the region and the disturbance and destruction of large portions of land because of agricultural and industrial pursuits.

During the Standard Assessment, Cooper identified one new Aboriginal cultural heritage place in the Activity Area, which was registered as Bun-nah LDAD 1 (VAHR 7324-0697). This low density artefact distribution (LDAD) was identified along the southern boundary of the Activity Area on a low lying sand dune and plain, and comprised of a total of nine (9) quartz and quartzite stone artefacts. A Complex Assessment was undertaken on the sand dune to assess whether more Aboriginal Cultural heritage, such as stone artefacts, were present in a sub-surface context. During this phase of the project, a single (1) chert isolated stone artefact was collected in Spit 3 of TP2 (Test Pit 2), which Cooper concluded was not in-situ, and another new Aboriginal cultural heritage place was identified, which was registered as the Bun-nah LDAD 2 (VAHR 7324-0698).

Cooper concluded that a salvage of surface artefacts forming part of the Bun-nah LDAD 1 (VAHR 7324-0697) Aboriginal place needed to be completed by appropriate parties prior to the commencement of works and that contingency plans set out in the CHMP should be followed if any new Aboriginal cultural heritage was uncovered during the activity.

Cooper, A. 2016 99 Robinson Street, Horsham, Residential Subdivision: CHMP 13936. Unpublished report prepared for CHEST Pty Ltd.

Walkabout Cultural Heritage Management (now Cooper Heritage Management) was commissioned by CHEST Pty Ltd to prepare a CHMP for the residential subdivision of a 1.32 hectare parcel of land at 99 Robinson Street, Horsham, located within 200m of the Wimmera River on an alluvial plain. Approximately 90% of the Activity Area had been raised by an average of 1.27m by the deposition of fill onto the natural ground surface.

One new Aboriginal cultural heritage place was identified- Bogambilor 2 LDAD 1 (VAHR 7324-0696). This consists of a low density artefact distribution spread over an area roughly measuring 125m by 75m with the majority of the material located in the northern and south-western part of the Activity Area. Two quartz flakes were found on the surface, as well as two possible volcanic glass cores.

The Complex Assessment involved the controlled mechanical excavation of five test trenches (2m x 1m). Two quartz flakes, one quartz blade and one inland flint/chert flake were found in Trench 1 in the north-eastern section of the Activity Area, as well as possible volcanic glass. One quartz flake was found in Trench 2 in the south-eastern section of the Activity Area; one quartz blade was found in Trench 4 in the south-western section; and one crystal quartz blade and one quartz flake was found in Trench 5 in the centre of the Activity Area.

Subsurface testing revealed that the deposition of fill had occurred relatively recently, as rubbish material found in the trenches positioned on the fill section had not yet decomposed and the soil profile in this context was representative of a type of soil that was not found on the natural surface. Various types of materials found in the fill, such as building rubble and bitumen, also suggested that the fill may have originated from more than one source.

Cooper concluded that Bogambilor 2 LDAD 1 (VAHR 7324-0696) did not demonstrate any new, rare or unusual patterns of composition in either technology or raw material, representation and use. The position of the artefacts within a demonstrated fill layer suggested that the artefacts were not in-situ. Therefore, she advised that further archaeological investigations would not provide any further information about the place.

Matic, A. 2015 10 Tydeman Street, Horsham, Residential Subdivision: CHMP 13476. Unpublished report prepared for Vic Building Group Pty Ltd.

Ashley Matic of Pragmatic Cultural Heritage Services was commissioned by Vic Building Group Pty Ltd to prepare a CHMP for the residential subdivision of a 1,660m² parcel of land at 10 Tydeman Street, Horsham, located within 200m of the Wimmera River on an alluvial terrace.

Within the Activity Area, one new Aboriginal cultural heritage place was identified during the Standard Assessment, Bogambilor AS1 (VAHR7324-0695). This consisted of a stone artefact scatter covering an area approximately 25m x 20m in the south central section of the Activity Area, located on a remnant terrace of the Wimmera River.

The Complex Assessment comprised one 1m x 1m test pit (TP) and nineteen 40cm x 40cm shovel test pits (STP). A total of 42 stone artefacts were identified in both surface and subsurface contexts representing a variety of functions, including 17 complete flakes, 12 broken flakes, three broken blades, six angular fragments and four formal tools (three scrapers and a single geometric microlith) predominantly made from quartz, though some silcrete and quartzite objects were also identified. Bogambilor AS1 covered an area of 60m x 20m, though the vast majority of cultural material was concentrated in an area 25m x 20m in the south of the recorded place extent.

Subsurface testing also revealed that there had been significant levels of ground disturbance, as evidenced by the soil profile in much of the Activity Area. This was attributed to disturbance resulting from the demolition of an existing dwelling. Matic concluded that whilst it was possible that the Activity Area may contain additional deposits of Aboriginal cultural heritage material, it would be of a similar nature to those already identified; therefore, he advised that further archaeological investigation was not warranted.

Cupper, M. 2014 193 Wards Road, Horsham Residential Subdivision: CHMP 12899. Unpublished report prepared for Lesley Burgess.

Matthew Cupper of Landskape Heritage was engaged by Lesley Burgess to prepare a mandatory CHMP for the proposed subdivision of land for residential dwellings in Wards Road, Haven, part of which was located within 200m of the Mackenzie River on an alluvial terrace.

The Activity Area at 193 Wards Road, had been subject to ground disturbance associated with pastoral and agricultural activities, which had impacted on the land surface and subsurface. Vegetation had also been removed, which prior to European settlement would have once supported Grey Box, Yellow Gum and Buloke open woodland.

No Aboriginal cultural heritage places had been registered within the Activity Area, though there was one scarred Grey Box tree, Mackenzie Creek 1 (VAHR 7324-0636) on the eastern bank of Mackenzie Creek approximately 100m northwest of the Activity Area, which had fallen into an adjacent paddock. Copper found that the Activity Area did not contain any culturally sensitive landforms or Aboriginal cultural heritage deposits; and therefore, the development would not impact on any Aboriginal cultural heritage places. He advised that the proposed activity should proceed without Complex Assessment.

Copper, M. 2013 Stormwater Retarding Basin, Curran Road, Horsham: CHMP 12407. Unpublished report prepared for Chempaka Pty Ltd.

In 2012, Landsape Heritage was engaged by Chempaka Pty Ltd to prepare a mandatory CHMP for their proposed activity to construct a stormwater retarding basin at a property in Curran Road, Horsham. The Activity Area for the stormwater basin and the associated pipeline was 3.7 hectares, located on both private land and the state government owned road reserve off Curran Road, on an alluvial terrace.

No archaeological sites were located in the Activity Area during the Standard Assessment, which was described as being a largely flat and featureless alluvial plain. Copper found that the land surface had been significantly modified since European settlement by pastoral and agricultural activities and road construction, which may have obliterated any archaeological sites had they occurred previously. Similarly, the clearing of trees may have also destroyed scarred trees and earthen features, such as mounds and hearths.

Copper concluded that the proposed stormwater basin would not harm any known or identified Aboriginal cultural heritage places and recommended that the proposed activity should proceed without Complex Assessment.

Copper, M. 2010a Low Density Residential Subdivision, Natimuk Road, Horsham: CHMP 10742. Unpublished report prepared for Chempaka Pty Ltd.

Chempaka Pty Ltd engaged Landsape Heritage to prepare a CHMP for their proposed subdivision of land for residential dwellings in Natimuk Road, Horsham. The Activity Area measured 40 hectares located within 200 metres of the Wimmera River and would occupy an alluvial terrace some 100 metres north of the river.

No Aboriginal cultural heritage places had previously been located in the area of the proposed subdivision, though there were nine registered sites within approximately one kilometre of the Activity Area. These included five scarred Grey Box trees and one scarred River Red Gum, as well as a site containing an extensive array of scattered stone artefacts, hearths and burials on the south side of the Wimmera River, south of the Activity Area.

No new Aboriginal cultural heritage places were identified as being located in the Activity Area. This was predicted due to the high level of ground disturbance created by the Wimmera domestic stock and supply water system, agricultural and pastoral land use and the clearing of vegetation. Copper advised that the subdivision would not harm any known or identified Aboriginal cultural heritage places and therefore advised that the development should proceed without Complex Assessment.

Cupper, M. 2010b The Village-Gates Estate Residential Subdivision, 97 Williams Road, Horsham: CHMP 11076. Unpublished report prepared for Motavu Pty Ltd.

Landscape Heritage was engaged to prepare a CHMP by Motavu Pty Ltd who proposed to subdivide 23 hectares of land for residential dwellings at 97 Williams Road, Horsham. The activity would occupy an alluvial terrace some 50 metres from the Wimmera River.

Two previously recorded scarred trees occurred within the Activity Area, Burnt Creek No. 7 (VAHR 7324-0463) and Burnt Creek No. 6 (VAHR 7324-0464). At the time of the ground surface survey, the Activity Area was being used as a sheep paddock with sections of it being subject to inundation from Wimmera River floods. The land surface had also been significantly disturbed by the removal of vegetation.

No additional Aboriginal archaeology sites were located in the Activity Area of the proposed residential subdivision during the Standard Assessment. Cupper therefore concluded that the development would not harm any known or identified Aboriginal cultural heritage and should proceed without Complex Assessment.

Long, A., A. Thorn and J. Banks 2002 The Origin and Date of Two Scarred Trees at Horsham Saleyards, Horsham, Western Victoria: A Report to Horsham Rural City Council & Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative.

In 2002, Andrew Long and Associates were engaged by Horsham Rural City Council to undertake a scientific study of two occluded scar box trees, Horsham Saleyards 1 (VAHR 7324-0495) and Horsham Saleyards 2 (VAHR 7324-0496) in an area of proposed residential redevelopment in the centre of Horsham, in order to provide guidelines for the long-term preservation of the scarred sections.

The study involved a multidisciplinary team comprising Andrew Long (Archaeologist, Andrew Long and Associates), Andrew Thorn (Conservator, Artcare) and John Banks (Botanist, ANU). Their methodology involved removing overgrowth from block sections of the trees for the purposes of growth ring counting and carbon dating. Their study concluded that VAHR 7324-0495 displayed evidence of an exceptionally old Aboriginal bark removal scar, dating to the period 1644-1784BP. They considered this to be the result of removing bark for shelter construction. This was the oldest dated scarred tree in Victoria at the time of the study, and possibly the only Aboriginal scar to be positively identified and dated through these techniques.

Horsham Saleyards 2 (VAHR 7324-0496) was not subject to full investigation, but overgrowth removal revealed a small dry face displaying steel tool marks, which was possibly the result of non-Aboriginal activity. The study team provided recommendations for the scarred trees if they were to be displayed either indoors or outdoors, as both trees were removed to make way for the redevelopment.

Gunn, R. and A. Burns 1998 Water-Main Replacement (Horsham): Archaeological Survey. Unpublished report prepared for Grampians Water.

Gunn was engaged by Grampians Water to undertake an archaeological survey of an area for a proposed replacement section of water main in Horsham. The survey route extended from the southern end of McPherson Street, over the Wimmera River and continued south for approximately two kilometres to the Horsham Pump Station on the corner of the Henty Highway and Old Hamilton Road, Horsham.

No archaeological or Aboriginal cultural heritage sites were located and it was recommended that the development proceed along the proposed route; though, care should be taken by Grampians Water when excavating in sands of any depth greater than 1 metre, as there may be a chance of disturbing burials.

Edmonds, V. 1997a An Archaeological Survey of the Inner-City Land Development, Horsham. Unpublished report prepared for VP Town and Country Real Estate.

In 1997, VP Town and Country Real Estate, Horsham, engaged Archaeological Consulting Services to undertake an archaeological survey of the 106 hectare 'Riverbanks' property on the Wimmera River in Horsham for future subdivision and the development of a 30 metre public space. This study encompasses the Southbank portion (Survey Unit 1) of the Activity Area for this CHMP.

One Aboriginal scarred tree was located on the edge of a riverbank within the study area, Kaylene's Tree (VAHR 7324-383), which was dead, but reasonably well preserved. No other Aboriginal cultural heritage sites were located within the study area.

Due to the majority of the contour irrigated paddocks (49ha) within the study area being excluded from the survey due to their highly disturbed nature and wet conditions underfoot resulting in low ground surface visibility, effective survey coverage of the area was very low, and mainly focused on the eroded riverbank where visibility was high and mature trees, which were inspected for cultural scars.

Edmonds concluded that it was unlikely that there were undetected campsites along the riverbank in the study area due to a lack of sandy soils in which campsites tend to occur. Similarly, she contended that the gilgai effects of the soils within the study area would have caused any archaeological deposits to be continually reworked with relics surfacing and being reburied in a cyclical fashion thereby positively influencing the visibility of sub-surface archaeological deposits in the study area. She claimed that deep cracks in the soil also increased the visibility of the any possible sub-surface deposits. Edmonds concluded that the nature of the local environment and past land use of the study area indicates that Aboriginal sites, apart from scarred trees are unlikely to exist there.

7.1.5 Historical and ethno-historical accounts in the geographic region

Historical and ethnographic accounts contain information about Aboriginal people's way of life, cultures and traditions. They include for example, personal diary entries of European explorers and settlers, as well as publications by academics and amateur ethnographers. Whilst extremely important sources of information, we must always be mindful of the author's intended audience and the biases from which their accounts were written.

Jadawadjali

According to Clark (1990:255), members of the Jadawadjali language group (*Jardwa* meaning 'no', *djali* meaning 'lip, tongue' language), occupied an area extending from the Glenelg and Wannon Rivers to the south, to the Richardson River and Wallaroo Creek in the east, north to Lake Buloke and Mitre Creek and to the Tallageira/Langkoop region in the west. The Jadawadjali's neighbours included the Buandig, Dhauwurd Wurrung, Djab Wurrung, Dja Wurrung and Wergaia (See Figure 6).

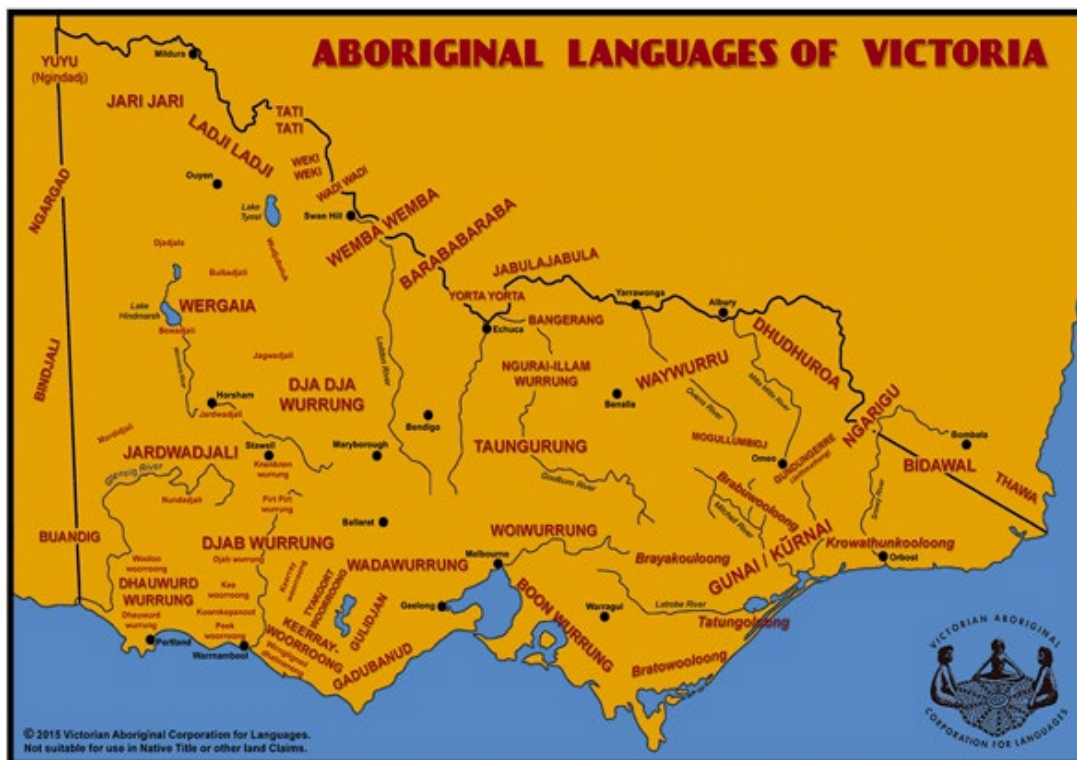


Figure 6 Aboriginal Languages of Victoria
(Source: Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages 2016)

It is believed that the Jadawadjali language group was composed of 19 smaller clans, with each of these consisting of approximately 120 individuals. It has therefore been estimated that approximately 2,280 people belonged to the Jadawadjali overall (Bird 1990:11-12), although this data cannot be definitively validated using archaeological or ethnographic data. Other reports state that the Jadawadjali was composed of at least 37 clans (Wood 1997:7). These clans were further subdivided into smaller bands of approximately 20-50 individuals from close family groups (Bird 1990:13), with each group associated with a major resource area in the region. These areas were important centres for economic, social, and political activities (Tindale 1974).

The Jadawadjali clans moved to more productive and resource-rich areas as seasons changed. It is likely that the region within which the Activity Area is located was mostly occupied during the summer

and autumn months when the watercourses, freshwater lakes, and swamps were full and a wide range of flora and fauna was available, while the higher ground in the nearby Gariwerd complex (the Grampians) was preferred during colder winter months. Radiocarbon dating from rock shelters (*Drual* and *Billimina*) in Gariwerd suggests that Aboriginal people had occupied this region for at least 22,000 years (Gunn 2000:4; Bird and Frankel 2005).

The traditional land of Djab Wurrung is positioned along the south-eastern boundary of the Jadawadjali territory (Gunn 1983:9; Gunn 2000:5; Clark and Harradine 1990:27). As well as sharing tribal boundaries, the Djab Wurrung also shared approximately 90% of their vocabulary with the Jadawadjali, which formed a part of the western Kulin dialects. It is likely that they had friendly and profitable relations with each other, and shared kinship and marriage ties.

Djura balag

The *Djura balug* clan is believed to have occupied the present-day Horsham area, according to the ethno-historical accounts of civil servant Robert Brough Smyth published in 1878. Clark explains that the Horsham tribe was also referred to as *Dullundeer*, which anthropologist, Norman Tindale considered to be the Wemba Wemba name for the Jardwa; though, it is now the place name for the area known as Toolondo. *Djura balug* literally means 'Djura people' from '*Turo/Juro*' meaning 'plain or level country' (Clark 1990:262).

Massola (1969:99-100) notes that the present-day site of Horsham was the actual location 'of a famous camp, and was of great importance in Aboriginal geography as a stopping place on the track to Lake Hindmarsh'. The campsite, known as *Wopet bungundilar*, is located on the southern side of the Wimmera River on a sandy ridge between the River and the Horsham Golf Course. This extent of this place extends along the Wimmera River (Barringgi Gadyin) and a lunette, which comprises part of the Activity Area.

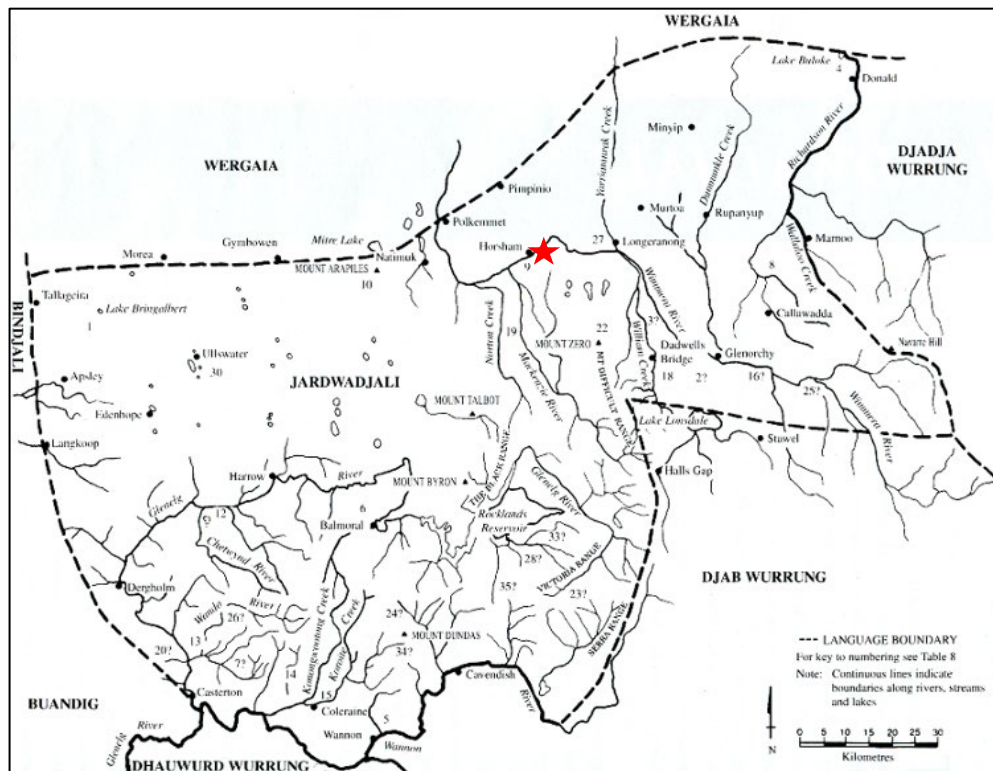


Figure 7 Jadawadjali language area and clans (Source: Clark 1990:256). Red star indicating Horsham

Unfortunately, little ethno-historical information has been recorded specifically about the *Djura balag* clan. It is nevertheless possible to gain a broad understanding of the *Djura balag* peoples by studying the broader history of the Jadawadjali.

Aboriginal lifeways and exchange

Aboriginal clans who occupied the region surrounding the Activity Area practiced a seasonal hunter-gatherer economy focused on resource distribution and density. Labour was often divided according to gender and age, with the men of the group predominantly responsible for hunting, and the women for gathering resources across a defined clan territory. The patterns of their seasonal movement would have been carefully designed and carried out.

Bird (1984:9) notes that many Aboriginal groups in the Wimmera created a sweet drink by soaking flowers from shrubs/small trees, such as proteas (*Hakea* and *Banksia ornate*), and *Xanthorrhoea* (tree grass). This drink was transported in bags made from wallaby or possum skins. The fur was generally used to form the lining on the inside of these bags, acting as a sort of filter for collecting impurities (Bird 1984:9). Food would likely have been cooked over open fires and in earthen ovens (Bird 1984:13-14).

While the Jadawadjali and Djab Wurrung clans shared tribal boundaries and approximately 90% of vocabulary, it is likely also that their language formed part of a “dialect continuum” with other clans in the wider region (Clark 2005:11). It has been suggested, for instance, that the Djab Wurrung shared 80% common vocabulary with the Dja Dja Wurrung, 70% with Wergaia and Wemba Wemba, 48% with the Dhauwurd Wurrung, and 42% with the Buandig (Clark 2005:11). It is also believed that the Jadawadjali shared common language with these groups, therefore allowing the easy negotiation of combined hunting efforts, intermarriage, trade, and other obligations. Such linguistic similarity would also have allowed for the swift diffusion of information about the whereabouts and activities of the European squatters within the region.

During the late nineteenth century, European explorers and settlers witnessed large Aboriginal corroborees at several sites in the region, including Lake Lonsdale (*Djakyl*), Lake Buloke (*Banyenong*), Lake Hindmarsh (*Guru*), Warracknabeal, Lake Bolac (*Baluk*), Lake Wirrengren (*Werreng-jerren*), and the wetlands of Mount William (*Duwil*) in the Gariwerd complex. Some of these corroborees, such as those held at *Duwil*, were attended by up to thousands of peoples from Jadawadjali, Djab Wurrung, Dhauwurd Wurrung, Girai Wurrung and Wada Wurrung/Wathaurong clans, and were generally held during the summer months when eels migrated to the region (Wettenhall 1999:24), and when other resources were more readily available and accessible (Bird 1984:5; Bird 1990:13). Members of Aboriginal groups were summoned to these gatherings by message sticks or smoke signals in the landscape (Wettenhall 1999:29). According to the Europeans who witnessed these gatherings, these were occasions where food and other items were traded between clans, initiation ceremonies took place, disputes were resolved, and marriages were arranged. Distant enemy groups were unlikely to have joined in these gatherings, and were commonly referred to by the Djab Wurrung and Jadawadjali peoples as ‘*gulum gulum*’ or ‘*mainmeet*’ (Wettenhall 1999:31). The last known large-scale gathering was noted as occurring at Lake Lonsdale in 1858 (Edmonds 1997:21).

In warmer months, the clothing of traditional local Aboriginal peoples would have been minimal, with a short apron worn by men and a skirt of emu feathers worn by women. During winter, it is likely that this dress would have been accompanied by elaborate possum skin cloaks, which comprised of the skins of up to 70 possums sewn together (Wettenhall 1999:42). Bodies may also have been covered

with animal fats to protect against the cold. The possum skin cloaks and the persons themselves would have been adorned with necklaces and other items made from animal fur and skin, feathers, teeth, and shell, while ochre was sometimes painted on their bodies during ceremony (Wettenhall 1999:31-32, 34, 38, 43-44).

Evidence of Aboriginal occupation within the study area is visible by an extensive number of scarred trees, which are found mostly near watercourses, such as rivers, lakes and swamps. Scars occurred when bark was removed from trees to make canoes, shelters, coolamons (carrying vessels), or chipped out to create toeholds to hunt game, such as possums. Stone axes were also used to cut holes to extract resources, such as bird eggs and native honey.

Spiritual beliefs

The Aboriginal clans who lived in the Wimmera region had strong spiritual links to their landscape, the creation and ordering of which was described in the 'Dreaming'. According to the Dreaming, the land, animals, and people were created by ancestral beings who also put forth rules by which all living things must live in order to maintain order. These rules were passed from one generation to through the enactment of rituals and the relaying of these narratives.

The nearby Gariwerd Complex is central to the identity and Dreaming of the Aboriginal clans of Western Victoria. The Dreaming stretches back to the beginnings of time, with the creation of the world and all in it, including the development of Aboriginal cultures. The dreaming forms an Aboriginal explanation of the world, and is commemorated throughout the social and ritual activities of its members. While the details of myths and legends may vary across the clans of Victoria, many are closely shared, with places remembered as important mythological scenes, and many also holding important totemic values.

With many of the rock art sites located in Gariwerd closely linked to the spiritual beliefs of local traditional Aboriginal peoples, a rich tapestry of mythology is preserved in the region. Gariwerd is particularly significant to the Dreaming of the *Bram-bram-bult brothers*, also known as the two brothers *Bram*, who created and named many of the landforms and sites in western Victoria upon the instruction of the Great Ancestor Spirit, *Bunjil*. The *Bram-bram-bult brothers* were also responsible for bringing order to the new world, by naming the flora and fauna, constructing languages, and devising lore (law).

A painting of *Bunjil* and his two helper dingoes (*Wiringan*) can be seen today at *Bunjil's* Shelter located at the Black Range Scenic Reserve, near Stawell. The shelter is believed to have been an important place occupied by *Bunjil* due to its commanding view over the surrounding landscape. *Bunjil* sometimes took the form of *Werpil* the eagle so that he could survey his work from the sky. Once tired of being on earth, he ordered his son, *Bimbeal* (a rainbow) to cause a whirlwind to come, which took him and his family, including his two wives who were black swans, up into the sky. Having appointed the *Bram-bram-bult brothers* to continue his work, *Bunjil* become a star, where he remains today to watch over the world and its people. *Bunjil* is important to all Aboriginal peoples of north-western and central Victoria, as it is believed that 'it was he that warmed the sun, and the sun warmed the earth, which opened, and the blackfellows came out', as Massola (1969:107) explains.



Photograph 1 Bunjil's Shelter (VAHR 7423-0001) at the Black Range Scenic Reserve in *Gariwerd*,
24 March 2016



Photograph 2 *Gulgurn Manja* Shelter (VAHR 7324-0013) (meaning hands of young people), located at the Hollow Mountain camping ground in western *Gariwerd*. The shelter features the hands of *Jadawadjali* children dipped in red ochre then placed onto the walls to leave a print, as well as bars and emu tracks,
24 March 2016

Two creation stories forming a subset of the larger *Gariwerd* creation story and to the *Bram-brambult brothers* also survives today, with one relating to *Tchingal* the emu and *Waa* the crow, and the other to the attainment of fire by Aboriginal peoples (Gunn 2003:10). The story of *Tchingal* and *Waa* details the crow's discovery of *Tchingal's* egg while the ferocious emu, who lived in the mallee scrub, was away from its nest. Upon returning to the nest, *Tchingal* was furious and chased *Waa* all the way to *Gariwerd*, where *Waa* disappeared into a crack in the mountains. *Tchingal* split the mountains by kicking it with its foot, thus creating *Barigar*, also known as *Roses Gap*. Fleeing to the western side of *Gariwerd*, *Waa* again tried to hide from *Tchingal*, and another mighty kick resulted in the creation of *Jananginj Njaui* (*Victoria Gap*) where *Bugara* (the *Glenelg River*) passes out onto the western plains (BGLC 2017:2).

Waa woke early the next morning and escaped to the Moora Moora swamp, which was his totem site, and forbidden to *Tchingal*. *Waa* eventually told the *Bram-bram-bult brothers* about his encounter with *Tchingal*, and the brothers decided to kill the emu- his blood subsequently forming the Wimmera River (*Barringgi Gadyin*) (BGLC 2017:2-3).

Wopet Bungundilar

A large sand dune blowout off Pearsons Road at Haven, called *Wopet Bungundilar* (VAHR 7324-0702), is believed to be the place where *Tchingal* died having been fatally wounded by spears thrown by the *Bram-bram-bult brothers* (see Photograph 3, Photograph 4, Photograph 5). Here the brothers plucked the feathers from the emu's body and split each feather down the centre. They tossed one half of its feathers to the left and one half to the right, thereby creating male and female emus. The Jadawadjali believe that the splitting of *Tchingal's* feathers is why emus have double feathers with two separate shafts (BGLC 2017:3).

Tchingal's huge egg was to be collected after everyone had eaten his flesh; however, they found it too heavy to lift. *Babimbal*, a strong wattlebird, managed to carry the large egg to *Bogambilor* (the Jadawadjali word for the area now known as Horsham) where it was cooked and eaten during a great feast. The two emus created at *Wopet Bungundilar*, also known as the 'House of Feathers', were ordered by the *Bram-bram-bult brothers* to divide their eggs into smaller ones to avoid jealousy, thereby keeping peace and order in the world (BGLC 2017:3).

This story can be seen in the night sky today, with the Southern Cross representing *Bunya, Druk* and the spears that struck *Tchingal*, who himself is the small dark patch of sky next to the Cross. The two pointers adjacent to the Southern Cross are the *Bram-bram-bult brothers*, while *Bunjil* is a safe distance on the other side of the sky (Canopus) (BGLC 2017:3).



Photograph 3 *Wopet Bungundilar* (VAHR 7324-0702) view looking west from Pearsons Road, 23 March 2017



Photograph 4 *Wopet Bungundilar* (VAHR 7324-0702) view looking south-west from Pearsons Road, 23 March 2017



Photograph 5 Fallen scarred tree (VAHR 7324-0399) at *Wopet Bungundilar* view looking west, 23 March 2017 (Photo: A. Cooper)

The *Tchingal* creation story is an important form of intangible cultural heritage, not only for the Jadawadjali, but also the neighbouring Wergaia (colloquially known as the Wotjobaluk peoples- refer to BGLC 2017). In mid-2016, Wotjobaluk Elders and members of the local Aboriginal community brought to life the *Tchingal* story using large-scale puppets and interactive animations in a public performance called '*Tchingal: Stories of Wotjobaluk Country*', as part of Horsham's annual Art Is... festival. The performance, designed to explore local identity, traditions and connection to place, was a collaboration with local artists, as well as visiting artists and theatre producers, *Erth*. This performance demonstrates local Aboriginal peoples' continual connection with their culture and land (see Figure 8).



Figure 8 'Tchingal: Stories of Wotjobaluk Country' being performed at the Horsham Town Hall
(Photo: Wimmera Mail Times, 13 June 2016)

European contact

The first Europeans encountered by Jadawadjali peoples would have likely been the squatting party of Edward Henty who took up 'Muntham' station, northeast of Casterton in 1836, and Major Thomas Mitchell's exploration party in July and August 1836 (Clark 1990:238). Mitchell however, was the first European to record an encounter with Aboriginal peoples in the wider study area.

Mitchell's encounter occurred in 1836, approximately 100 kilometres directly south-east of the Activity Area, near Pigeon Ponds. In his journal, he noted hearing the voices of women and children along the creek (Mitchell 1965:205). Mitchell (1965:212) also had an encounter with an Aboriginal woman of the *Koonongwootong* clan carrying her small child at the junction of the Wando and Glenelg Rivers. Through his Aboriginal guides, he asked the woman for directions, names of locations and other information. Mitchell's influence on the landscape was lasting, with the diarist and explorer credited with bestowing European names, such as "The Grampians", after the mountain range found in his native Scotland.

Intending squatters who were keen to stake out a claim on suitable grazing land arrived in the Wimmera with their stock from the early 1840s, accompanied by labourers and servants, and sometimes joined by their wives and children. Some travelled 300 or so kilometres from Melbourne (then known as Port Phillip), whilst others headed south from New South Wales. These people were later termed "Overlanders" (see Billis and Kenyon 1974:44-51). In contrast, others travelled north from Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in search of unsettled areas on the mainland. These men, mostly of Scottish, English and Irish origin, were later known as "Overstraiters" (see Billis and Keyon 1974:30-31; Broome 1984).

The Jadawadjali who occupied the Wimmera River near/at the present-day city of Horsham had their first encounter with Europeans when they met Samuel Carter and his squatting party in August 1842 (Clark 1990:238). Carter (1911:12) recalls how the party saw 'two blacks' on the opposite side of the Wimmera River, who upon sighting them picked up their spears in defence. Rather than use their weapons, Carter (1911:12) thought it 'best to try and get on friendly terms with the natives'. Word spread that the men intended no harm through translation by a 'blackfellow' called Callaghan. After being coaxed to come to the river's edge opposite Carter's camp, they told the party that they were the first white men that they had ever seen (Carter 1911:13). Through their interpreter, they provided the men with useful information, such as where they could ford the river and source pine logs to build

huts. In return, Carter's party tied pocketknives in handkerchiefs and threw them in a bundle across the river together with some bread and meat.

Carter (1911:15) explained that 'the blacks got bold when they found that the white people did not intend to kill them' and began stealing their sheep. In response, 'the squatters often formed parties to shoot down the blacks' (Carter 1911:15). The squatters feared the Jadawadjali's initial resistance and took protective measures to avoid possible attacks by fortifying their huts so they could shoot at them from all sides through port holes. However, Brooke and Finch (1982:2) highlight that:

The ferocity of the Wimmera natives was probably more imagined than real ... as like so many other reporters of brushes with natives [Carter] lived unharmed to tell the tale.

Squatters who moved north taking up land near Gariwerd were reportedly met with carefully planned opposition by the Jadawadjali. Though, despite reports of frequent hostile interactions in the early stages of settlement, many squatting stations were ironically named after Aboriginal clan estates.

Tensions erupt

During his trip to the Wimmera in early 1845, Chief Protector of the Aborigines in the Port Phillip District, George Augustus Robinson, reported that 'in general [the] natives of the Wimmera were peaceable and that some were usefully employed by settlers' as shepherds (cited in Clark 1990:240). He also found that most squatters spoke positively of their Aboriginal workers; therefore, he 'did not consider the Wimmera Aborigines to be very numerous, nor vicious', believing that the Aboriginal clans belonging to Gariwerd to be the principal perpetrators of violence (in Clark 1990:240).

Robinson also noted that squatters had occupied almost every place where water could be found, thereby driving Aboriginal people off their land. Further, the arrival of Europeans and their livestock drastically depleted Aboriginal peoples' traditional food sources, including native animals and yams, thus forcing them to turn to sheep as a food source, which in turn resulted in reprisal attacks by the squatters.

Yanem Goona

On 20 May 1845, Major Thomas Firebrace of Vectis (west of Horsham), and ten other landholders from the lower Wimmera River, wrote to Governor Charles La Trobe in Port Phillip (Melbourne) calling for the Native Police Corps (Aboriginal troopers) to be dispatched to the Wimmera to deal with increasing cases of sheep theft. The squatters claimed that the large flocks of stolen sheep were usually shepherded north into the virtually impenetrable Mallee scrub where they could not be tracked. La Trobe requested Captain Henry Dana, head of the Native Police, to dispatch troopers to the Wimmera. In line with his request, Dana stationed six men at Firebrace's Vectis station with instructions to patrol the surrounding country.

Shortly after their arrival, Thomas Baillie reported the theft of around 600 sheep from his and Robert Hamilton's neighbouring Polkemmet station. The incident, which Baillie claimed to have witnessed, allegedly occurred at sundown on 11 July, at a lake about 15 miles from Mount Arapiles (note that this could have been any one of the lakes in the Douglas Depression, such as Mitre Lake or Lake Wyn Wyn). Baillie and his shepherd reportedly gave up chase soon after the sheep were stolen due to fading light and the fact that most of the flock had been driven north into thick scrub. He returned to his home station and requested that Hamilton go to Firebrace's station for the assistance of the Native Police stationed there (Baillie's deposition 12/7/1845 in VPRS 30 Unit 29, Item 189). At first light the following morning, the Native Police, Firebrace and some local labourers set out from Vectis station in pursuit

of the alleged offenders, destroying mia mias (Aboriginal huts) and breaking weapons, such as spears along the way (Clark 1990:242).

The Aboriginal troopers soon found the sheep tracks, which they followed north for around 30 miles until they reportedly came across several sheep with their legs broken. Another mile up they claimed that they discovered around 200 sheep held in a brush yard, whilst a little further from there they came across 'natives' with numerous sheep in their possession. According to Baillie, the 'natives' yelled and threw spears and waddies at them, prompting Dana to order his men to fire. Three 'natives' were killed, whilst others were wounded. In his written account of the incident sent to La Trobe, Dana (1845 in Clark 1990:241; Clark 1995:164-5) explained:

The ringleader of the natives was cut down, after a long resistance, by *Yupton*, a corporal of the Native Police. The prisoner is badly wounded. I have ordered him to be marched to Melbourne as soon as his wounds will permit.

The alleged ringleader was a man called, *Yanem Goona*, alias Old Man Billy or Billy Billy, a member of the *Dyurrite balug* clan belonging to Mount Arapiles.

It took six months for *Yanem Goona* to recover from his injuries and he arrived in Melbourne on 1 August having been marched under Native Police escort some 300km from the Wimmera. He was held in the Melbourne Gaol charged with sheep stealing from Baillie's and Hamilton's Polkemmet Station. On 17 October 1845, *Yanem Goona* was sentenced to ten year's transportation and sent to Norfolk Island via Van Diemen's Land (Clark 1990:242). However, it was never determined if he was the actual perpetrator of the crime, as he was unable to speak English and could neither understand the charges made against him or provide a defence during his short trial. Instead, *Yanem Goona's* mere presence at the site where the sheep were discovered deemed him guilty by association. This was reflected in the judge's comments in summing up the evidence presented at his trial, whereby he stated:

That if this black was a member of the community where the sheep were found, although he had no hand in the actual stealing or killing, yet as a member of that community, was equally guilty (cited in Clark 1990:242).

In an 1853 letter to La Trobe, Phillip David Rose of Melbourne (a contemporary of Baillie and Hamilton), reported that:

Old Billy *Yanengoneh* (spring from the earth) is at Norfolk Island. This black was seen at Norfolk Island, and whenever he mentioned the Grampians invariably cried at the thought of home (Rose in Bride et al. 1969:322).

In August 1847, *Yanem Goona* was returned to Van Diemen's Land where he died on 1 January 1848 without ever seeing his beloved mountain ranges again.

Early population decline

In the early 1850s, the Aboriginal population in the Wimmera was estimated to be around 1,200 people, but by the mid-1850s it had reduced to no more than 1,000 (Clark 1990:246). Population decline was attributed to European introduced substances, such as alcohol and tobacco, increased sedentary, poor diet and foreign diseases, such as influenza, small pox, respiratory infections and venereal diseases.

Establishment of Aboriginal Protectorates

As European settlers continued to occupy more and more land, Aboriginal people became increasingly reliant on limited government rations and employment on squatters' stations for their survival. On these properties, Aboriginal men generally assisted with farming work while the women focused on domestic duties.

In 1839, the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate was established, and officers made the first attempts to systematically record information about Aboriginal peoples in the Colony. As a key member of this scheme, Robinson appointed four Assistant Protectors to help him in his work. Edward Stone Parker was appointed as Protector of the Wimmera and North Western District in 1839, and was thus responsible for those Aboriginal Peoples living on Jadawadjali Country (Bird 1984:21; Williamson 2012:38).

'Watch[ing] over the interests of the Aborigines'

In 1860, the Victorian Government established a Central Board to 'watch over the interests of the Aborigines'. The Central Board for the Aborigines (CBA) was made up of male pastoralists, philanthropists, government and church officials whose aim was to coordinate local guardianship, and distribute food and clothing amongst Aboriginal peoples to alleviate their declining conditions.

Charles Wilson of Walmer (which later formed the western part of Horsham, north of the Wimmera River), was named an Honorary Correspondent to the Board in 1861 (Central Board 1861:34). In 1868, Wilson again served as an Honorary Correspondent and distributed supplies rations provided by the Board. He reported that the number of Aboriginal people in the Horsham locality in 1868 was 18, which comprised nine men, six women and three children. An Aboriginal couple called 'Sandy' and 'Fanny', and their two children, had resided in a hut at Walmer Station for about three years. Sandy was employed on the station and used his earnings to support his family (Central Board 1869:6).

From the late 1860s, Aboriginal people were forcibly removed from their land and shifted onto missions to be 'civilised' and 'Christianised' under the *Aborigines Protection Act 1869 (Vic)*. The closest mission to the study area was the Moravian run Ebenezer Mission Station, built on the site of a traditional corroboree ground recorded as being called *Bunyut Bunnut* (see Robinson 1845 cited in Lydon 2009:84-5), located on a bend in the Wimmera River, near the township of Antwerp.



**Figure 9 Group of Aboriginal people in front of church at Ebenezer Mission Station, 1892
(Source: Horsham Historical Society)**



Photograph 6 Church at Ebenezer Mission, 24 October 2017



**Photograph 7 Kitchen at Ebenezer Mission,
24 October 2017**



**Photograph 8 Dormitory at Ebenezer Mission,
24 October 2017**

In his report to the Central Board in 1869, John Green, a Presbyterian lay preacher and Inspector of the Missions, Reserves and Depots, recommended that Ebenezer be '.... enlarged to four times its present size [so that] it could be made to support all of the Aborigines in the Wimmera District' and that all stores be sent to the Mission instead of the Depots overseen by Honorary Correspondents (Central Board 1869:10). He also recommended '...that Mr Hartmann (Reverend at Ebenezer 1864-71)

be instructed to get the children at Carr's Plains...' (around 25 kilometres north of Stawell), and '...take them to the Aboriginal Reserve at Coranderrk...' 50km north-east of Melbourne (see Figure 10). This arrangement, Green believed, would be '... a great saving to the State', even though it meant stealing children from their mother's arms and further forcing Aboriginal people off their traditional lands, thereby severing ties with their extended families.

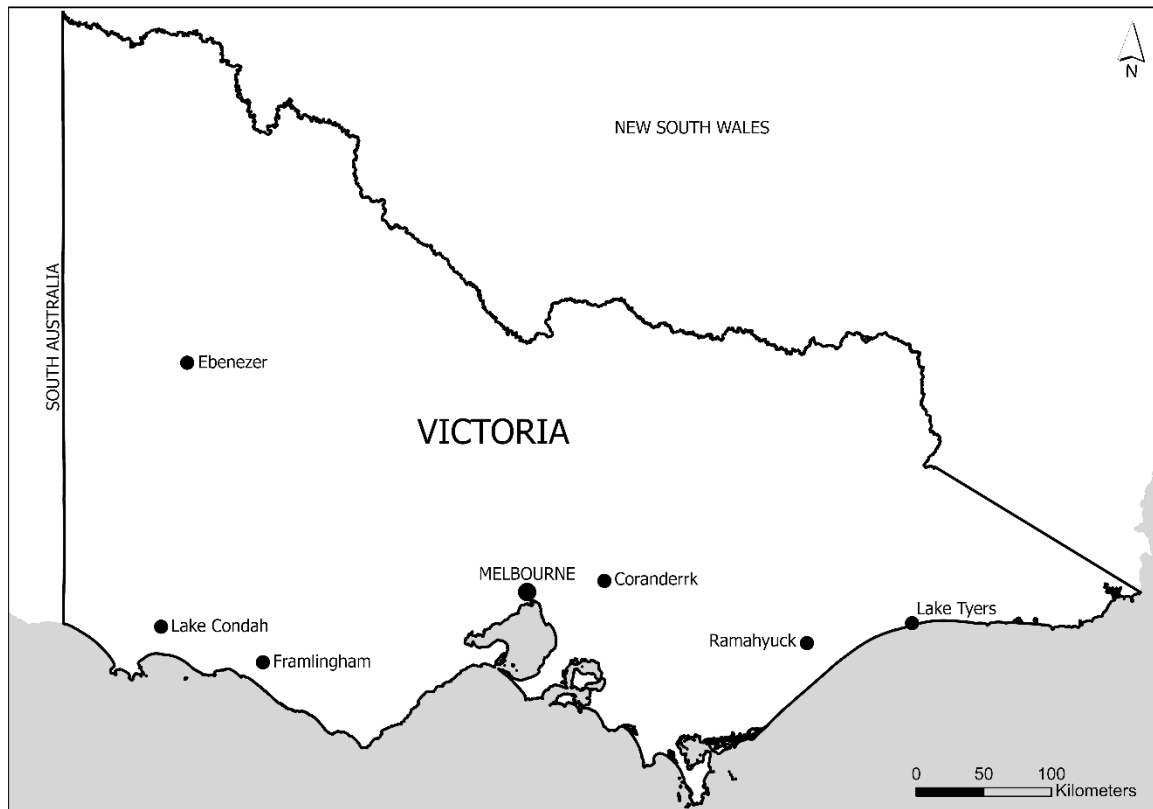


Figure 10 Aboriginal Missions and Reserves in Victoria

Further population decline

Estimates of population size in the Wimmera are difficult to ascertain due to poor record keeping prior to a survey undertaken by the CBA in 1863. However, this data was collected much too late to allow accurate estimations of population or tribe size prior to European arrival into the district some twenty years earlier. From the data available, it seems that Aboriginal peoples near Lake Hindmarsh, located approximately 133 kilometres north-west of the Activity Area, was recorded as the largest Aboriginal group in the district, with 122 members (Bird 1984:18). It is likely that this figure is not reflective of a single Aboriginal tribe or clan, but was instead comprised of Aboriginal peoples belonging to a range of tribes and clans from throughout western Victoria, who had been forcibly relocated to Ebenezer.

According to the 'Sixth Report of the Central Board' (1869:18), 794 men, women and children inhabited the Wimmera region. Twelve males and eleven females, three of which were children, were at Walmer in 1869. Seven of the men were reportedly employed washing and shearing sheep. Wilson believed Aboriginal people at Walmer would not go to Ebenezer to settle there and thought that '... in a very few years they will all have died out' (Central Board 1869:14). The continuing decline in the local Aboriginal population is clearly reflected by the 1877 census, which lists a mere 143 people of Aboriginal descent as residing in the Wimmera region at that time (Bird 1984:18). By 1901, 40

Aboriginal people were recorded in the Wimmera district, with only around half considered residents (Bird 1984:18).

Following the closure of Ebenezer in 1904, residents were taken to other missions, such as Lake Tyers in Gippsland. However, some Aboriginal Peoples avoided relocation and remained on their ancestral lands living in makeshift huts along the Wimmera River and relying on provisional goods from local depots.

Fringe Camps

After the closure of Ebenezer, many of its residents joined the community of so called 'half-castes' at their camp on the banks of the Wimmera River at Antwerp. Most of these people had been defined as non-Aboriginal in 1886 under the provisions of the *Aborigines Protection Act* ('Half Caste Act'¹) and were thereby expelled from Ebenezer Mission Reserve.



Figure 11 Photograph of Archibald Pepper with a boomerang at an Aboriginal camp on the Wimmera River, 1906 (Source: Massola 1969:101)

During the Depression (1929-1932), another camp settlement was established at Dimboola on the southwest side of the Wimmera River, which became known as "The Billabong". This camp later expanded to include "The Common" on the opposite bank, which was shared by Aboriginal and European families. In 1937, housing at The Common comprised six shacks constructed from old iron and canvas with earthen floors, and eleven camps made from old iron, tents and bagging (Lydon 2009:198).

Aboriginal people continued to live in segregated camps at Dimboola and Antwerp throughout the 1940s and 50s under the watchful eye of government officials and residents who monitored their

¹ The term 'half-caste' is derogatory and offensive. It was frequently used during colonial times to distinguish between Aboriginal people with mixed heritage. Its usage reflects a history of colonialism, racism and dehumanisation of Aboriginal peoples. However, it is used here due to legal distinctions made during the period in question, which significantly affected the treatment of various Aboriginal groups.

living arrangements, judged their performance of domesticity, and kept track of their children's school attendance. From the mid-1950s, a transitional housing approach became the basis of Aboriginal housing policies Australia-wide. Lydon (2009:216) explains that under this scheme 'Aboriginal people would be moved through progressively more modern houses as they were "taught" to live in them "properly"'. The late Uncle Jack Kennedy and his wife Molly were singled out by newspaper reporters who reproduced the logic of transformation that characterised the mission era, and especially during the 1860s when the first 'civilising experiments' were made (Lydon 2009:232).

Native Title

Forty years later from being singled out for his ability to keep in full-time employment and maintain a 'clean and tidy' house, Uncle Jack Kennedy provided key testimony in the Wotjobaluk's Native Title application, which included the Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples. Uncle Jack demonstrated that, despite every attempt by Europeans to eradicate all elements of Aboriginal culture and tradition, he and his fellow plaintiffs had refused to forfeit their Aboriginal identities, histories and cultures, and had maintained a continuous connection with their lands. In his landmark judgement, Justice Merkel quoted the then late Uncle Jack, whose testimony concluded:

I am looking forward to getting some of my country back before I die so I can die knowing I have done what the Elders expected of me. The Beal trees are dying at Lake Albacutya because they are not getting enough water. If we look after the river properly it will run clear again, run all the way to the Teardrop Lakes. If the Wotjobaluk continue to follow Bunjil then things will go as the old people would want (*Clarke on behalf of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, and Jupagulk Peoples v State of Victoria [2005] FCA 1795*).

While making the determination, Justice Merkel also acknowledged the 'severe and extensive dispossession, degradation and devastation' Aboriginal people in the Wimmera had suffered due to the 19th century declaration of British sovereignty over their land and waters (*Clarke on behalf of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, and Jupagulk Peoples v State of Victoria [2005] FCA 1795*).

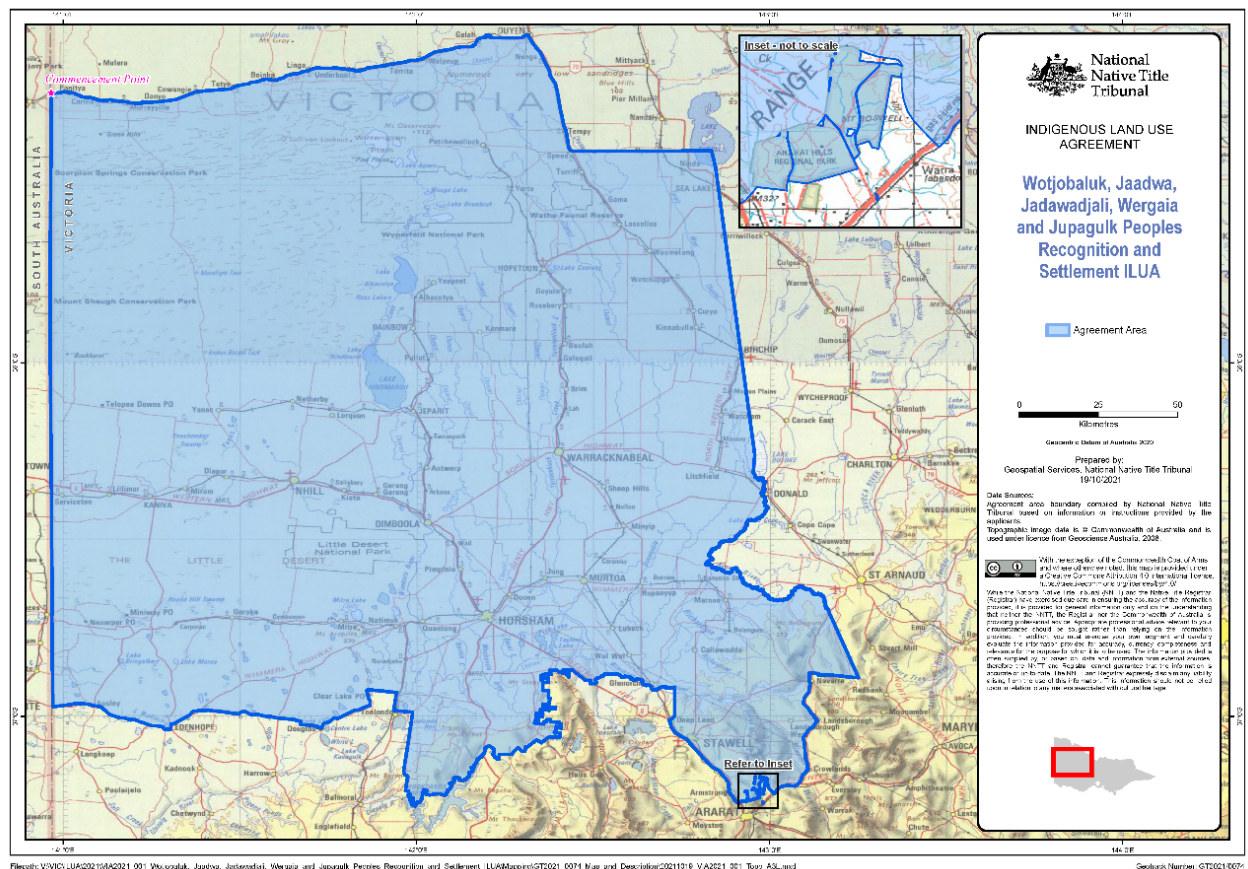
The Wotjobaluk, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jaadwa and Jupagulk Peoples No. 1 case was the first successful Native Title consent determination in south-eastern Australia when the Federal Court recognised their non-exclusive native title rights over approximately 153km length of the Wimmera River, as well as freehold title to three parcels of land. The determination recognises their native title rights to hunt, fish, gather and camp for personal, domestic and non-commercial purposes, under their traditional 'lores' (laws) and customs. Sadly, Uncle Jack passed away three months before the determination was handed down on 13 December 2005.

While the Native Title claim covers Wotjobaluk, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jaadwa, and Jupagulk Peoples there is now a preference to be collectively referred to simply as Wotjobaluk Peoples, or Wotjobaluk Nation (BGLC 2017). Wotjobaluk is a Wergaia term that translates to 'men and women'. Following the establishment of Ebenezer Mission its many Aboriginal residents started to refer to themselves as 'Aboriginal person from Wotjobaluk, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jaadwa, and Jupagulk Country'. However, the majority of descendants of the Ebenezer Mission residents and Traditional Owners today prefer to refer to themselves as a collective Wotjobaluk Peoples or Wotjobaluk Nations (BGLC 2017). The authors of this CHMP acknowledge however, that not every Traditional Owner agrees with the use of this collective terminology and prefers to identify by their language or clan group.

Upon settlement of their Native Title claim, the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC) was established under the *Native Title Act (1993)* as the Prescribed Body Corporate, which means that they are the sole organisation with the responsibility and authority to implement the *Native Title Act* (BGLC 2016).

In 2013, the native title agreements were reviewed by the Victorian government and BGLC with a recommendation that the State and the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk (WJJWJ) People consider entering into a Recognition and Settlement Agreement under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic)* (TOS Act) to enhance their 2005 agreement (FPSR 2023). After almost 10 years of negotiations, the Victorian government and BGLC signed agreements under the TOS Act and related legislation and the Recognition and Settlement Agreement commencement on 13 December 2022 (FPSR 2023). The settlement boundaries extend approximately from Ouyen in the north to Ararat in the south; and from the South Australian-Victorian border in the west to Donald in the east (see Figure 12).

The settlement package includes grants of 12 parks and reserves as Aboriginal title to be jointly managed with the State; grants of up to four public land parcels as freehold title; resourcing and strategies to assist WJJWJ Peoples to access, use and manage natural resources; funding to support BGLC to manage the settlement's benefits and undertake economic development and measures to strengthen WJJWJ Peoples' culture (FPSR 2023).



7.1.6 Landforms and geomorphology of the Activity Area

Landform

The Activity Area is located within the alluvial plains and floodplains associated with the east-west flowing section of Burnt Creek that runs into the Wimmera River through Horsham, specifically on the southern side of the river. These plains are typically flat to very gently sloping, with slope variation limited to between 9-30m. Sediments primarily consist of alluvial deposits associated with the Wimmera River and its tributary, Burnt Creek (DEDJTR 2020a).

Geomorphology

Victoria is divided into seven tier one geomorphic units under its Geomorphological Framework. The Activity Area is situated within the North Western Dunefields and Plains, which dominate north-western Victoria (DJTR 2025). It also lies within the Tier 3 geomorphic units known as 'Plains without leveed channels' (GMU 4.2.2) and 'Meander belts below plain level, sometimes source-bordering dunes' (GMU 4.1.1). These units represent the modern alluvial terraces and floodplains of today's active rivers, which carry young soils of varied texture (DJTR 2025).

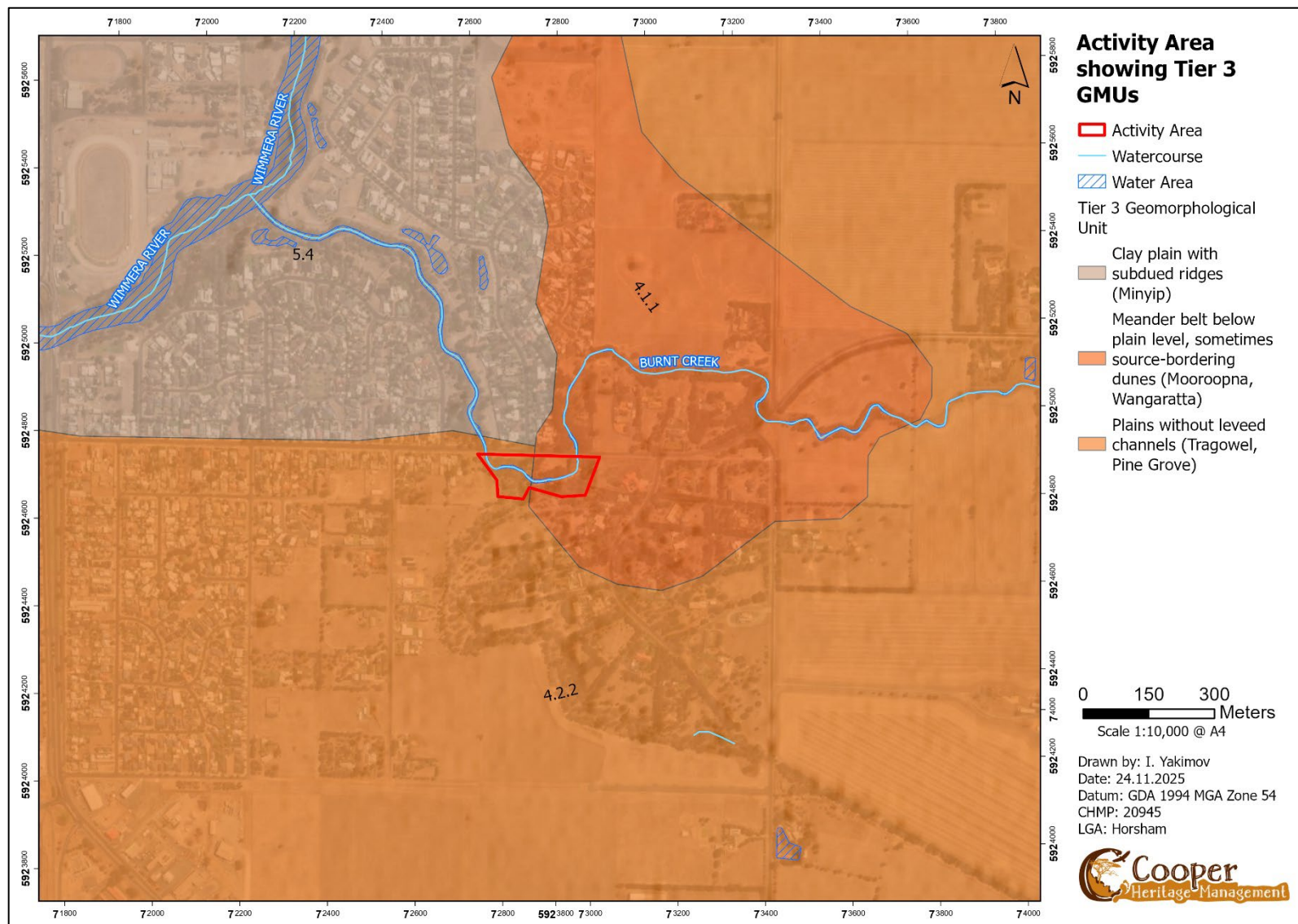
Geology

The Wimmera region is located within the broad and shallow geological depression of the Murray Basin, within which the sea level peaked approximately 6 million years ago, sprawling some 500km inland from the present-day coastline (Bowler et al. 2006).

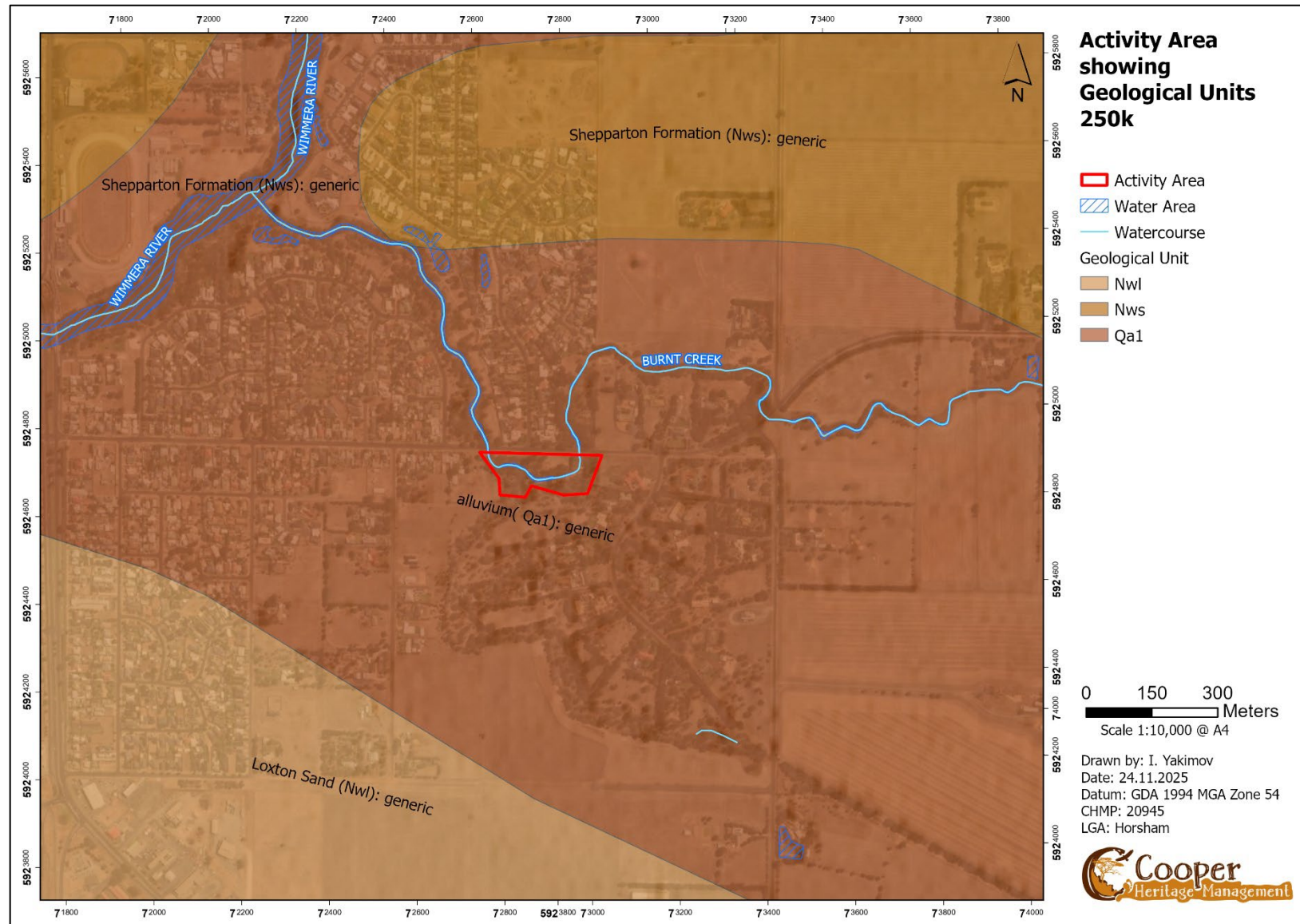
The gradual and staggered retreat of the shoreline between 6 and 2 million years ago led to the deposition of the Loxton Sands, which cover extensive portions of the Wimmera region. The Loxton Sands comprise a series of extensive curvilinear strandlines, representative of ancient beaches formed during this time (Bowler et al. 2006).

Periods of aridity during the Quaternary, particularly over the last 500,000 thousand years from the mid-late Pleistocene, led to the development of expansive dune fields across parts of north-western Victoria. The Loxton Sands and other sediments from the ancient coastline were windblown to form the landscapes of the Wimmera described under the North Western Dunefields and Plains including: the plains without leveed channels (GMU 4.2.2) and meander belts below plain level, sometimes source-bordering dunes (GMU 4.1.1) (Bowler et al. 2006; DJTP 2025).

The Activity Area is specifically located in the Quaternary Alluvium (Qa1) geological unit (see Map 6). These deposits are the results of channelled stream flow and fluvial activity associated with modern alluvial networks and floodplains, Burnt Creek. Quaternary alluvium deposits may include variably sorted and rounded silts, sands and gravels which are largely unconsolidated and Pleistocene to Holocene in age (GA 2025).



Map 5 Tier 3 geomorphic units (GMUs) within Activity Area



Map 6 Geological Units 250k within Activity Area

Water levels and lake deposits

Between 55,000 and 30,000 years ago, conditions in the Wimmera region were much wetter than today. River and lake levels were high before the onset of global cooling during the Last Glacial Maximum. Between 30,000 and 20,000 years ago, increasingly dry, cool and arid conditions caused river and lake levels to fluctuate and decline. Evaporation and salinity increased, vegetation became sparser, and dune and lunette building increased (Cochrane et al. 1991; Hesse et al. 2004; Ross 1981).

Conditions remained dry in the Wimmera region until the late Pleistocene, approximately 13,000 years ago, when seasonal precipitation saw river and lake levels increase. Very wet conditions persisted between 12,000 and 7,000 years ago, with significant water and sediment runoff in upland valleys across south-eastern Australia and higher river levels (Cohen and Nanson 2007:416; Hesse et al. 2004).

Broadly, the period between 8,500 and 4,000 years ago has been described as the Holocene climatic optimum across south-eastern Australia, with increased precipitation, larger rivers, higher lake levels and abundant vegetation. During this time, swollen and enlarged rivers cut through the landscape, reshaping floodplains and existing terraces (Cohen and Nanson 2007: 414).

Between 6,600 and 2,200 years ago conditions were still much wetter and slightly warmer than today with higher rainfall and less evaporation, before a decrease in rainfall led to the drying of many lakes and the stabilisation of river channels due to slower flows, greater sediment accumulation and riverbank formation. Conditions similar to today developed from 800 years ago (Luly 1993; Ross 1981).

Aboriginal land use history

The strategic values of an area are of greater importance than the landforms and soil types present. These values include factors such as the availability and patterning of hydrology and potable water, flora, fauna, and stone sources, as well as routes of movement (e.g. along waterways and ridgeways) and vantage points (e.g. prominent hills above plains) in the area. Aboriginal peoples preferred to establish long-term campsites close to areas with most, or all, of these strategic values because they provided a rich and diverse range of resources that were important to the hunter-gatherer lifestyle. As such, the study of strategic values in the wider landscape of the Activity Area offers an important insight into the patterning of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites.

Hydrology

In regions such as the Western Uplands, most Aboriginal archaeological sites are found close to watercourses or waterbodies. Water was plentiful in the region and most commonly obtained from a wide network of creeks, rivers, freshwater lakes and swamps. Extensive rivers and elevated catchments in the area offered a permanent supply of water, with these likely the focus of Aboriginal activity (Gunn 1983).

The Wimmera River is a high-order perennial stream that offers a yearlong supply of running water and a diverse assemblage of aquatic wildlife. Along with many of the tributaries and effluents, which service the greater region, it is highly likely that their banks would have formed a significant strategic value to the hunter-gatherer economy of local Aboriginal peoples. Lake Fyans and Lake Lonsdale further to the south-east of the Activity Area (near Gariwerd) also formed important strategic values for local Aboriginal Peoples, with Lake Lonsdale known to have hosted large gatherings of more than 1,000 people to undertake ceremonies and trade.

Rivers, creeks and streams were not only important sources of potable water, they are also prominent in Aboriginal histories, traditions and mythologies, and were an integral part of social organisations, as boundaries between clans were often defined by rivers and creeks, or their catchment boundaries (Turnbull & Lane 2008:9). Campsites were often located on flatter areas near water.

A variety of Aboriginal cultural heritage places are often situated along the margins of water sources. Of note is the occasional presence of shell middens, which comprise discarded shells of riverine species, such as mussels. These middens can be compared to modern day rubbish dumps and provide important information about a society's subsistence practices. The middens found along the banks of the Wimmera River usually represent the freshwater riverine mussel *Alathyria jacksoni* (Cupper & Stone 2008:18).



Figure 13 Fresh water mussel *Alathyria jacksoni* (Source: Ponder et al. 2016)

Scarred trees also frequently occur near water and were themselves important sources of raw materials for their bark and wood, which were used to make carrying vessels (coolamons), slabs for shelters, shields and panels to stretch animal skins. Larger bark removal scars, such as those along the Wimmera River, are indicative of the use of bark to make canoes. Brown (2001:185) explains that the late Uncle Jack Kennedy told her that he and other Wotjobaluk kids used to play in Alf Bull's canoe along the Wimmera River (see Figure 14). According to Uncle Jack Kennedy (in Brown 2001), Bull, who died in the 1930s, was the last 'fullblood' Wotjobaluk man. Uncle Jack also explained that he had been taught by the Elders that *beal* the redgum and *bullitch* the black box make fine canoes, but not *bep* white gum (manna) because it sinks (Brown 2001:185).



**Figure 14 Alf Bull in a bark canoe similar to one Uncle Jack Kennedy remembers playing in as a child, n.d.
(Brown 2001:169)**

The use of stone artefacts for the collection of raw materials, such as bark, and for the processing of shellfish and other aquatic fauna, also reflects the archaeological recording of artefact scatters in these locations. Earthen mounds are always situated near waterways and are thought to allow a more intensive and long-term settlement in areas that are seasonally waterlogged. Such evidence demonstrates the vital and strategic importance of water systems to the Aboriginal peoples for seasonal and long-term occupation, as they provided a rich and diverse range of resources.

Aboriginal material culture is also found on source bordering dunes, and colluvial floodplains and terraces of the Wimmera River, and other landforms marginal to lakes and swamps (see Bird 1990; Rhodes 1992; Edmonds 1997; Edmonds 1998; Rhodes and Bird 2000; Cooper and van der Walt 2017a; Cooper and van der Walt 2017b). In the broader semi-arid Wimmera, almost all the Aboriginal cultural sites recorded by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria in surveys undertaken in the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s are located along water sources, lunettes and other routes of movement. Such archaeological research demonstrates that Aboriginal cultural heritage places occur less frequently in areas that are deprived of a stable water source, most likely because many of the important strategic values of the Aboriginal groups are absent or compromised.

Pre-1750 Ecological Vegetation Classes

The flora and fauna in the surrounding region of the Activity Area prior to European settlement was dense and diverse, with many plant species used to assist the hunter-gatherer lifestyle of local Aboriginal peoples. Remnant vegetation within the Activity Area, which belongs to the Wimmera Bioregion, is representative of one (1) pre-1750s Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC): 'Riparian Woodland' (EVC 641) (see Map 7).

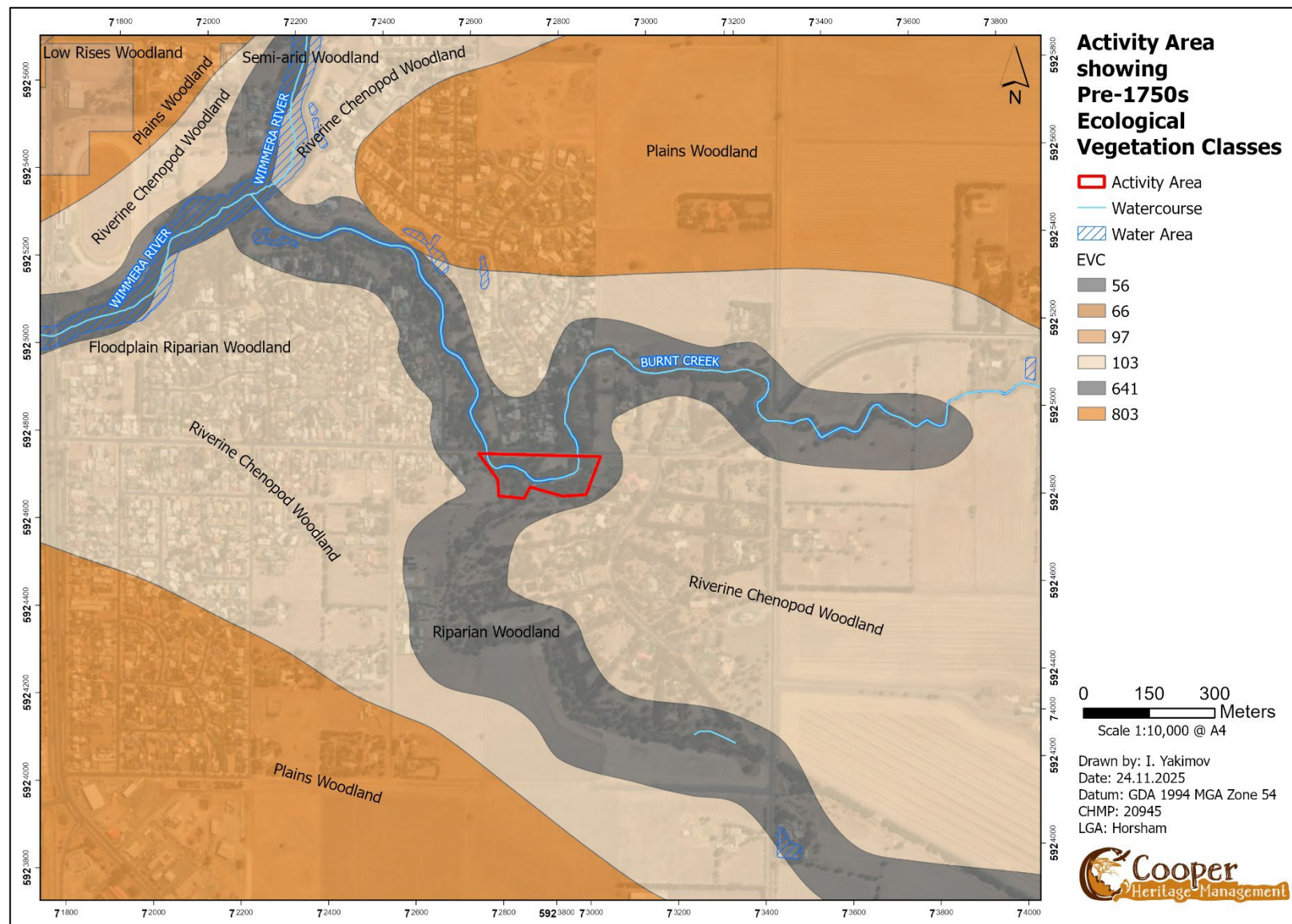
Riparian Woodland is described as:

Occurs beside permanent streams, typically on narrow alluvial deposits. Woodland to 15 m tall generally dominated by *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* over a tussock grass-dominated understorey. Tall shrubs may be present and amphibious herbs may occur in occasional ponds and beside creeks. While flooding may be common, sites are rarely inundated for lengthy periods. (DEECA 2025).

Large tree stratum consists primarily of *Eucalyptus* spp. with stems to at least 80 cm DBH at densities of about 15 trees per hectare, forming a sparse canopy cover of around 10% largely provided by *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red-gum). The understorey includes immature canopy trees, scattered understorey trees or large shrubs, and a mix of medium and small shrubs over a diverse herb and graminoid layer (DEECA 2025).

The ground layer is characterised by a high cover of medium to small tufted graminoids (c. 30%) with additional cover from large tufted and non-tufted graminoids, and a suite of large, medium and small or prostrate herbs. Amphibious herbs may occur in temporary ponds and along creek margins, with bryophytes and lichens contributing around 10% cover and organic litter and fallen logs also well represented (DEECA 2025).

Species typical of at least part of the EVC range include shrubs such as *Viminaria juncea* (Golden Spray) and *Melaleuca decussata* (Totem-poles), and small shrubs such as *Rubus parvifolius* (Small-leaf Bramble). Herbs and graminoids commonly present include *Wahlenbergia gracilis* s.s. (Sprawling Bluebell), *Myriophyllum crispatum* (Upright Water-milfoil), *Rumex brownii* (Slender Dock), *Oxalis perennans* (Grassland Wood-sorrel), *Mentha australis* (River Mint), *Acaena novae-zelandiae* (Bidgee-widgee), *Cyperus gunnii* ssp. *gunnii* (Flecked Flat-sedge), *Carex appressa* (Tall Sedge), *Lachnagrostis filiformis* var. *filiformis* (Common Blown-grass), *Juncus amabilis* (Hollow Rush), *Eleocharis acuta* (Common Spike-sedge), *Cynodon dactylon* (Couch) and the climber *Calystegia sepium* (Large Bindweed) (DEECA 2025).



Map 7 Pre-1750s Ecological Vegetation Classes within the Activity Area

Flora

Aboriginal people used certain varieties of flora to support their dietary needs. The most commonly used plants for subsistence bore seeds that could be ground into flour, fruits (including currents, kangaroo apples, pigface, native cherries, and sweet quandong, etc.), roots and greens (including water ribbons, daisy yams – also known as *Murrnong*, marsh club-rush, cumbungi, etc.). Various species of fungi were also eaten (Bird 1984:10). Flour was likely mixed with water and baked into 'breads/cakes'. Certain varieties of tubers and bulbs were eaten raw, while others were roasted (Bird 1984:10). Plants were used for their flavours, such as native mint (*Mentha satureoides*), and sweet nectars from running postman (*Kennedia prostrata*) and scarlet bottlebrush (*Callistemon rugulosus*) (Pouliot 2012).

Native plants were also used to colour fibres, such as the berries from the Black-anther flax-lily, which were used to create blue dye, and wild indigo (*Indigofera australis*) to make purple dye (Pouliot 2012). Dyed plant fibres were then woven to make mats, dilly bags and other items.

Many plants were used for their medicinal qualities, such as common sneezeweed/'old man weed' (*Centipeda cunninghamii*), which was boiled down to make a tonic for colds, chest complaints and to reduce fever. Flat splurge (*Chamaesyce drummondii*) was used to treat dysentery, genital diseases, wounds and snake bites, whilst boiled pink bindweed (*Convolvulus erubescens*) was used to treat diarrhoea and stomach aches (Pouliot 2012).

Much of the native vegetation was cleared following European settlement in the area, though as demonstrated in the summary of registered sites within the geographic region (see Table 5), moderate numbers of black and grey box trees contain evidence of cultural modification by Aboriginal Peoples.

During his expedition to through the Wimmera in 1836, Major Mitchell described how local vegetation had been used to make huts on the banks of a salt lake on south-eastern side of Mount Arapiles (at or near White Lake), which he described as being a 'very different construction' from other Aboriginal shelters that he had seen during his travels. Mitchell (1965:194) described these huts as:

... in general, being large, circular, and made of strait rods meeting at an upright pole in the centre; the outside had been first covered with bark and grass, and then entirely coated over with clay. The fire appeared to have been made nearly in the centre and a top had been left as a chimney.

Upon closer inspection, Mitchell observed that the huts appeared to have been used for many years. Inside, he found various articles including jagged spears, some set with flint and dilly bags made of 'tough small rush' (Mitchell 1965:194-5) (see Figure 15).

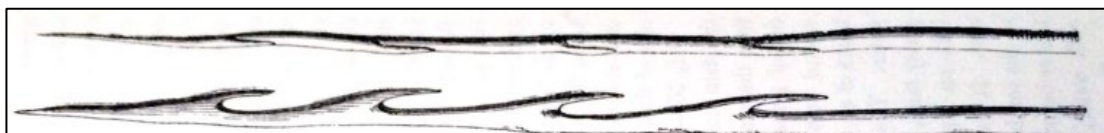


Figure 15 Mitchell's drawing of the jagged spears found in Aboriginal huts south-east of Mount Arapiles (Mitchell 1839:194)

Fauna

Native flora also supported a wide range of fauna, with these found in particularly concentrated numbers near water sources. Fauna was similarly fundamental to the hunter-gatherer way of life. Aboriginal peoples often used fire to maintain and manipulate areas of grassland to attract desirable varieties of flora and fauna that they could subsequently exploit. They were predominantly used for sustenance and because they formed a source of useful raw materials for the manufacture and maintenance of tools, weapons, shelters, clothing, and more.

The most common varieties of fauna found within the local region included terrestrial animals such as kangaroos (particularly the eastern grey kangaroo, *Macropus giganteus*), brush-tailed rock-wallabies (*Petrogale penicillata*), black or swamp wallabies (*Wallabia bicolor*), long-nosed potoroos (*Potorous tridactylus*), southern brown bandicoots (*Isodon obesulus*), emus (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*), goannas (*Varanus varius*), possums (e.g. *Trichosurus vulpecular*), gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*), bats (e.g. *Tadarida australis*), echidnas (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*), koalas (*Phascolarctus cinereus*), and platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*). A variety of reptiles, such as eastern long-necked turtles (*Chelodina longicollis*), flap-footed (legless) lizards (e.g. *Aprasia stirloti*), marbled geckos (*Christinus marmoratus*), skinks (e.g. *Ctenotus robustus*), dragons (e.g. *Pogona barbatus*), monitors/goannas (e.g. *Varanus gouldii*), and snakes (e.g. *Pseudonaja textilis*) are also native to the region. Native rodents (e.g. *Rattus lutreolus*), insects (*insectum sp.*), as well as diverse species of birds, including cockatoos (*Cacatuidae sp.*), wedge-tailed eagles (*Aquila audax*), honeyeaters (*Meliphagidae sp.*), galahs (*Eolophus roseicapilla*), and swift parrots (*Lathamus discolor*) are other common types of fauna in the region. A hunting toolkit, inclusive of spear throwers (woomera) and spears, clubs, digging sticks, snares and nets, boomerangs, shields, and poison, was used to trap and kill land animals. Fire was also used to attract desirable fauna to the region, and to expose animal tracks through the understorey. Smaller animals were usually cooked on an open fire and larger animals were often cooked in 'ovens' formed by heating clay balls (comprising clay and sand) in a fire pit. Emu eggs were also commonly collected and eaten.

Amphibians and aquatic fauna commonly found in the local region included a range of native frogs (e.g. *Crinia signifera*), toads (e.g. *Neobatrachus pictus*), tortoises (e.g. *Chelodina longicollis*), eels (e.g. *Anguilla australis*), and freshwater mussels (e.g. *Velesunio ambiguus*), as well as a wide variety of fish (e.g. *Galaxias olidus*), crayfish (e.g. *Euastacus bispinosus*), and freshwater yabbies (*Cherax destructor*). Bark canoes, some of which could accommodate up to ten people, fishing lines, and a range of baskets were built to assist in the trapping and collection of aquatic fauna. R.H Stainthorpe (1925:18), whose family moved to Sheep Hills near Warracknabeal in the northern Wimmera in 1860, noted that:

The blacks were very clever at catching game. They would put bushes round their heads and bodies and make a whistling sound whilst approaching the game, which they would then knock over with their waddies... They would also get the ducks on the swamps by going into the water with bushes round their heads and catching the ducks with their hands under the water.

Extensive resource management systems, such as artificially constructed canals/channels for the seasonal harvesting of eels and other fish have also been found at nearby Mount William and in the Toolondo Swamps. It was common for eels to have been eaten fresh or smoked.

Kangaroos and birds were mainly hunted during the warmer summer months, whilst eels were the main staple food during autumn. Yams and bird eggs were commonly eaten during spring. It is likely

that the supply local to the nearby Gariwerd complex to the south may have acted as a reserve, while more accessible strategic values were sought and gathered in the nearby flats (Gunn 1983:8).

Dating of the remnants of an earth oven, which were often used to cook underground, located near a swamp at Clear Lake, approximately 50km south-west of the Activity Area, indicated that earth ovens had been used in the Wimmera for at least 500 years. Scientific research of earth ovens, undertaken by former PhD candidate Maurizio Campanelli (Latrobe University) who excavated the Clear Lake oven (see Campanelli 2015), has led to an annual recreation event on the banks of the Wimmera River where local Aboriginal people build ovens and cook traditional foods, such as yam daisies (*bam munya*), which once formed part of their staple diet, but are now almost extinct (see Photograph 9).



Photograph 9 Earth oven recreation on banks of Wimmera River, 23 October 2015 (Photos: Tracey Rigney)

Stone resources

Stone artefacts uncovered during archaeological investigations in the region are made from a wide range of raw material types, including quartz, quartzite, basalt, chert, greenstone, coastal flint, volcanic glass, and granite.

While no known stone quarries are reported in the immediate vicinity of the Activity Area, several are known to exist in the wider region. For instance, the Gariwerd mountain range to the south-east of the Activity Area was a major source of **quartz** outcrops. Loose quartz pebbles were also found in streams and rivers as waterworn pebbles, having likely been transported by water from mountain ranges into the surrounding landscape (Kamminga & Grist 2000:108). Two quartz quarries have been recorded near Stawell, close to Green's Creek, a tributary of the Wimmera River (Bird and Frankel

2005:12). A quartz artefact scatter recorded approximately 20km east of Horsham was also interpreted as being a reduction site where quartz pebbles were obtained from a creek bed and flaked (Edmonds 1997b:44-45).

Quartzite is found bedded amongst sections of finer grained sandstone from which Gariwerd is composed (Gunn 1983:7). There is evidence in various areas within Gariwerd of stone being removed directly from the wall surface (Gunn 1983:7). Mount Arapiles (*Dyurrite*), Mount Talbot, and the Black Range were important sources of raw material in the wider landscape of the Activity Area. Quartz and quartzite were quarried in all three areas, with Mount Arapiles (*Dyurrite*) containing the most significant silicified **quartzose sandstone** quarry in Western Victoria. Mount Zero (*Mura Mura*), located approximately 30km south-east of the Activity Area, also has evidence of quartzite quarrying. Non-local quartzite probably came from the Pyrenees (Bird and Frankel 2005:13). These locations would have been consistently used by Aboriginal peoples to obtain raw materials for the manufacture of stone artefacts— an important component of Aboriginal technology. As such, these materials are the most common varieties found in artefact assemblages within the Activity Area and its wider landscape.

The Mount Stavely Volcanic Complex to the east of Gariwerd, near Wickliffe, contains outcrops of **chert**, **chalcedony** and other fine-grain siliceous materials, as well as **shale** (Bird and Frankel 2005:13; Buckland 1984). According to one of the earliest geological reports on the area (Thomas 1939 cited in Buckland 1984:6), black chert could be found at Mount Stavely. These materials are also available as pebbles in the Hopkins River to the south of the Activity Area.

Silcrete quarries have been located on the Wimmera River near Dooen, and in the western Sunset Desert in the Mallee. Deposits of silcrete are usually found directly above Parilla Sands. Duricrust silcretes formed through the silicification of sediments are common in arid regions of north-western Victoria (Bird and Frankel 2005:13).

The New Volcanics to the south of Gariwerd provided a range of course-grained igneous materials, such as **basalt** and **dolerite**. These may also occur within Gariwerd itself (Bird and Frankel 2005:13). **Basalt** outcrops are spread throughout the Glenelg Hopkins catchment region to the west of the Activity Area, near Harrow, as well as being sourced from Mount Napier and Mount Eccles, located approximately 130 and 150 kilometres south of the Activity Area by road. **Flint** was most likely sourced from the southern Victorian coast and further west along the coast toward South Australia.

West of Gariwerd is the Rocklands Volcanics, where relatively fine-grained igneous rocks occur, such as **rhyolite**. **Tachylyte** and rhyolite could also be quarried around Gariwerd and along the Glenelg River, south-west of the Activity Area.

Archaeological evidence shows that **greenstone** was quarried at Mount William, near Lancefield. Greenstone and basalt was also apparently found in the metamorphic ranges and basalt plains near Mount Ararat (Edmonds 1997b:18, after Mitchell 1949:163). Greenstone of Cambrian age also occurs at Mount Stavely Volcanic Complex and the Black Range (Buckland 1984:6).

Volcanic glass could also be quarried from the southern tip of Gariwerd (Gunn 1983:7) close to the head of the Victoria Valley, located approximately 145km south of the Activity Area by road, where **granite** outcrops are also found.

Aboriginal groups are well known for their widespread trade networks enabling them to secure other varieties of stone material that did not occur naturally in their locality. It is likely that more 'exotic' stone resources would have been traded between tribes. Kamminga and Grist (2000:116) suggest that:

The distribution and density pattern of exotic stone in lithic scatters in the Wimmera Mallee may reflect the cultural links between the Wergaia and Jadawadjali people in recent prehistoric and early historic times.

It is clear, however, that further research is required to better understand such links between Aboriginal groups, as well as the practices and patterns of trade.

Routes of movement

Aboriginal routes of movement through the Activity Area generally followed along major perennial waterways in the region, with crossings over more shallow areas. Historical stock routes connecting local European pastoral runs throughout the wider region were often established along many of these traditional Aboriginal routes of movement. The correlation between Aboriginal travel routes and waterways, such as the Wimmera River, is clearly highlighted in Major Mitchell's 1836 diaries, where he reports upon the sound of Aboriginal voices and the sight of rising plumes of smoke from the banks of rivers, streams, and lakes in the region. With a diverse range of flora and fauna concentrated near sources of water, it is logical that Aboriginal peoples would have frequented their banks and used their movement through the landscape to assist navigation.

Fewer sites have thus far been located at nearby swampy areas, which likely reduced movability in the region. Although further subsurface testing is required, it appears that these areas were less frequently used or occupied by Aboriginal peoples.

Vantage points

There are no clear or significant vantage points in the immediate vicinity of the Activity Area, with much of this landscape occurring as flat plains. However, several highly significant vantage points are found in the broader Wimmera region, which were utilised by Aboriginal peoples. The most remarkable of these include the peaks of Gariwerd and Mount Arapiles (*Dyurrite*) to the south-east and west of the Activity Area. From these elevated landforms, Aboriginal peoples could search for game and other resources in the landscape below and detect rival groups from a distance. As such, vantage points increased resource and clan security.

The peaks of *Gariwerd* and *Dyurrite* also functioned as vantage points after European colonisation, allowing Aboriginal peoples to monitor and interpret the activities of squatters and their men in the landscape below.

Summary of strategic values

This section has described many of the strategic values that were important to Aboriginal peoples' traditional way of life. Strategic values are strongly linked to the presence of Aboriginal cultural heritage places and are summarised below:

- Aboriginal cultural heritage places are generally found along watercourses and other routes of movement, which provide a range of resources;

- The most significant water source in the region is the *Barringgi Gadyin* (Wimmera River) and its tributaries;
- Eucalypt woodland with a diverse understory dominated the landscape of the Activity Area prior to European land clearing;
- Aboriginal peoples utilised a range of native flora (including seeds, roots, fruits, and grasses) and fauna (aquatic and terrestrial) for sustenance;
- Aboriginal peoples used a variety of resources to create and maintain tools, such as stone artefacts, hunting equipment, canoes, and shelters; and
- Common raw materials could be quarried near *Dyurrite* (Mt Arapiles) and *Gariwerd* (the Grampians), while less common varieties were traded from other regions.

7.1.7 Land use history of the Activity Area

Exploration of the geographic region

In the winter of 1836, Major Mitchell led an overland expedition through the region what was to become known as Victoria. The expedition was part of his third and most significant exploration of the interior of eastern Australia when he set out under the instruction of the Governor of New South Wales to trace the Murray River to its mouth. Mitchell and his party followed the Murray in an easterly direction up to a point near the present-day township of Kerang then turned south. By following a route to the west, which shadowed explorers Hamilton Hume's and William Hovell's earlier expedition in 1824 to find new grazing land to the south, Mitchell's instincts to diverge from the Murray paid off when he and his party discovered the promising land that colonists later classified as the Port Phillip District of the Colony of New South Wales.

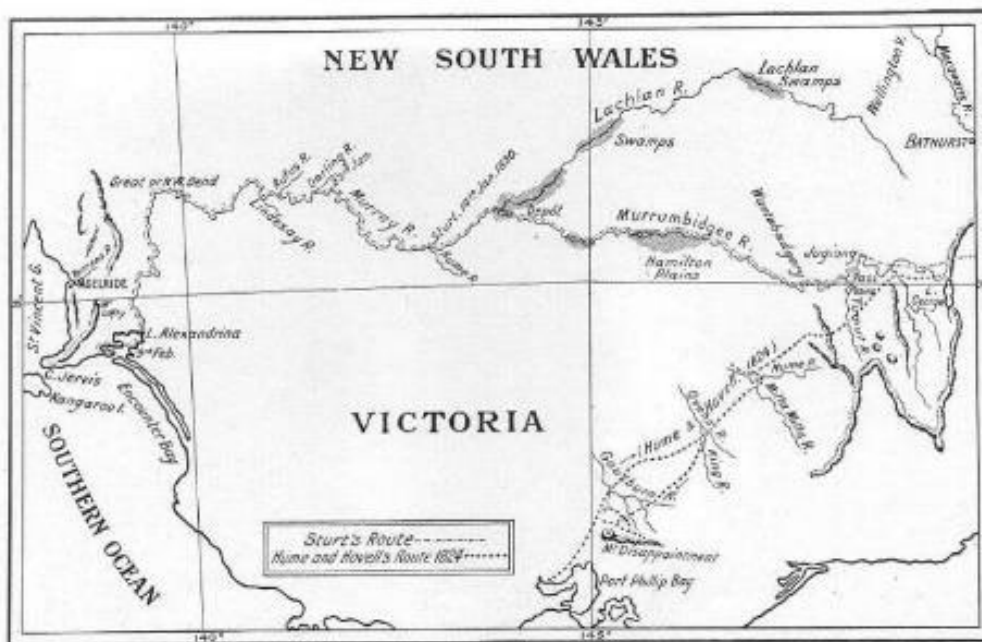


Figure 16 Hume and Hovell's exploration route, 1824 (Source: State Library of Victoria)

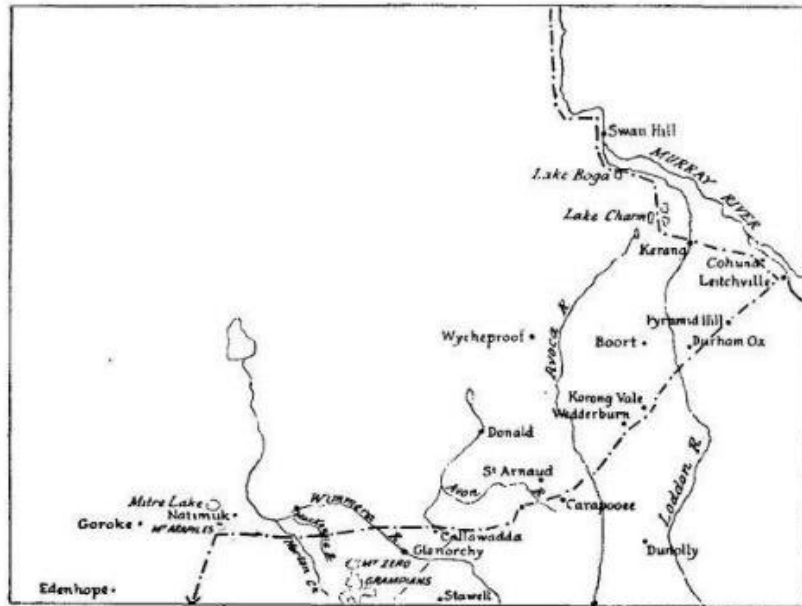


Figure 17 Mitchell's journey from New South Wales into "Australia Felix" from Swan Hill to Mount Arapiles
(Source: Project Gutenberg Australia)

In his journals, Mitchell documented his observations of the land, flora, fauna, and local Aboriginal peoples in detail. He furthermore named a great deal of landmarks throughout western Victoria, often choosing to bestow upon them their original Aboriginal names.

Mitchell (1965:195) was in awe of the Wimmera's landscape noting that:

Every day we passed over land, which natural fertility and beauty, could scarcely be surpassed; over stream of unfailing abundance, and plains covered with the richest pasturage. Stately trees and majestic mountains adorned the ever-varying scenery of this region.

Mitchell described the general Wimmera landscape as harbouring a bountiful distribution of fresh water sources and soils that were ideal for cultivation. He also noted that the pasture-like grasslands, the result of firestick farming, were covered by open forestlands of native trees. Descriptions such as these led to the eventual influx of Europeans seeking opportunity for agricultural practice into the region.

As Mitchell and his party headed south-south-west, they passed an impressive mountain range that Mitchell named the Grampians after a range in his native Scotland. Inspired by the richness of the landscape, Mitchell bestowed upon it the name "Australia Felix", meaning "fortunate Australia" or "happy Australia" in Latin. As he gazed out onto the Wimmera Plains, he declared it:

... a country ready for the immediate reception of civilised man; and destined perhaps to become eventually a portion of a great empire. Unencumbered by too much wood, it yet possessed enough for all purposes ... [it] was certain to become, at no distant date, of vast importance to a new people (Mitchell 1965:171).

As the party continued their journey in a westerly direction, Mitchell (1965:187) noted that the banks of the newly discovered Wimmera River 'were not water-worn, but characterised by verdant slopes' fringed with mimosa.

The Wimmera gained its name from Mitchell's Aboriginal guide, Piper, who on 18 July 1836 questioned a group of Aboriginal people on the other side of the river about its name and ascertained that it was called the "Wimmera" (Mitchell 1965:184). Folklore has it, that there may have been some confusion with the translation though, as 'Wimmera' sounds strikingly like an Aboriginal spear thrower called a 'woomera', which Piper could have been referring to.



Figure 18 Sketch of the Wimmera River by Duncan Cooper c. 1845 (Source: National Library of Australia)

From the Grampians, Mitchell and his party headed westward where they were forced to cross the Wimmera Plains. They noted that the ground was particularly soft and boggy due to recent heavy rainfall, which caused their ox carts and heavy whaleboat carriage to leave deep wheel ruts in the heavy clay soil. These ruts were dubbed 'Major's Line' or 'Major's Track', and were known landmarks in the district as they were still visible many decades later (perhaps up until the 1920s) (see Carter 1911:12; Field 1977:10).

George Augustus Robinson

From May to August in 1841, Robinson also documented his travels through the wider study region in detailed journal entries. Robinson was often accompanied on his travels by a team of Aboriginal escorts, who guided him through the country. Both parties introduced the other to their own way of life and exchanged goods.

In general, however, Robinson offers few descriptions of the landscape, this perhaps resulting from the enormous detail previously supplied by Mitchell, and due to the different overall goals underwriting Robinson's account. In comparison with Mitchell's writings, most of Robinson's accounts have a more social focus, with detailed descriptions of his Aboriginal guides and acquaintances, their dress, tools, and rituals, as well as the region's early European settlement and industry. Significantly, Robinson spent a great deal of his time in Gariwerd (the Grampians), where he documented many Aboriginal names for local features in the landscape (Clark and Harradine 1990:26).

Although Robinson's travels occurred only a few short years after Mitchell's, it is astounding how quickly things had changed. Firstly, it is clear that close and personal relationships with local Aboriginal peoples were more commonplace. While Robinson generally had positive and respectful relationships with his guides and the other Aboriginal peoples he met through his travels, many of the other settlers were continuously involved in violent "skirmishes" and held views of Aboriginal inferiority. Secondly, by 1841 large numbers of squatters had already established homesteads and were operating businesses, such as pastoral runs and dairy stations, throughout much of the interior countryside. Indeed, it is important to consider how the European settlement and industry developed in the region prior to, and following, the events of Robinson's journal entries.

European settlement

Europeans first squatted (unlawfully) in what was originally known as the Port Phillip District of the Colony of New South Wales in the 1830s near the present-day town of Portland. Men of Scottish, Protestant Irish and English descent began staking claims to the rich fertile lands of the Western District from 1840, first settling along the Glenelg River and its tributaries, then, one after another taking up land further north near other water sources. Here they were met by crowds of men who had driven their flocks from Port Phillip Bay and Geelong out into the favoured west. Though, the severe economic depression from 1840-43 slowed pastoral expansion and much of the land north of the Glenelg had yet to be explored.

Overlanders from New South Wales reported the land west of the Campaspe River to be dry desolate plains covered with saltbush; hence, '... the north-western corner of the colony, known vaguely as the Wimmera ... was in 1842 regarded by the squatters as a mere wilderness' (Sutherland 1888:21).

In 1847, an Order in Council (OIC) was passed, which enabled squatters to apply for a 14-year lease of their holdings, after which time they would retain preferential rights on any land on which improvements had been made.

Charles Carter, on behalf of Darlot, was the first person to take up land in the present-day Horsham area when he settled on the banks of the Wimmera River in 1842. Darlot arrived at the property in 1844, which he named Brighton after a town in Sussex, England. The first local meeting of the Lands Board took place at Brighton station around 1847 when the boundaries of the various runs were drawn up. Brighton pastoral run was officially gazetted on 19 July 1848 under the ownership of Darlot and Archibald McLachlan; though, it had been licenced to the men for 24 months prior to the 1847 Order in Council. At the time of gazettal, Brighton run comprised 102,400 acres with approximately 800 cattle and 25,000 sheep (Spreadborough & Anderson 1983:207).

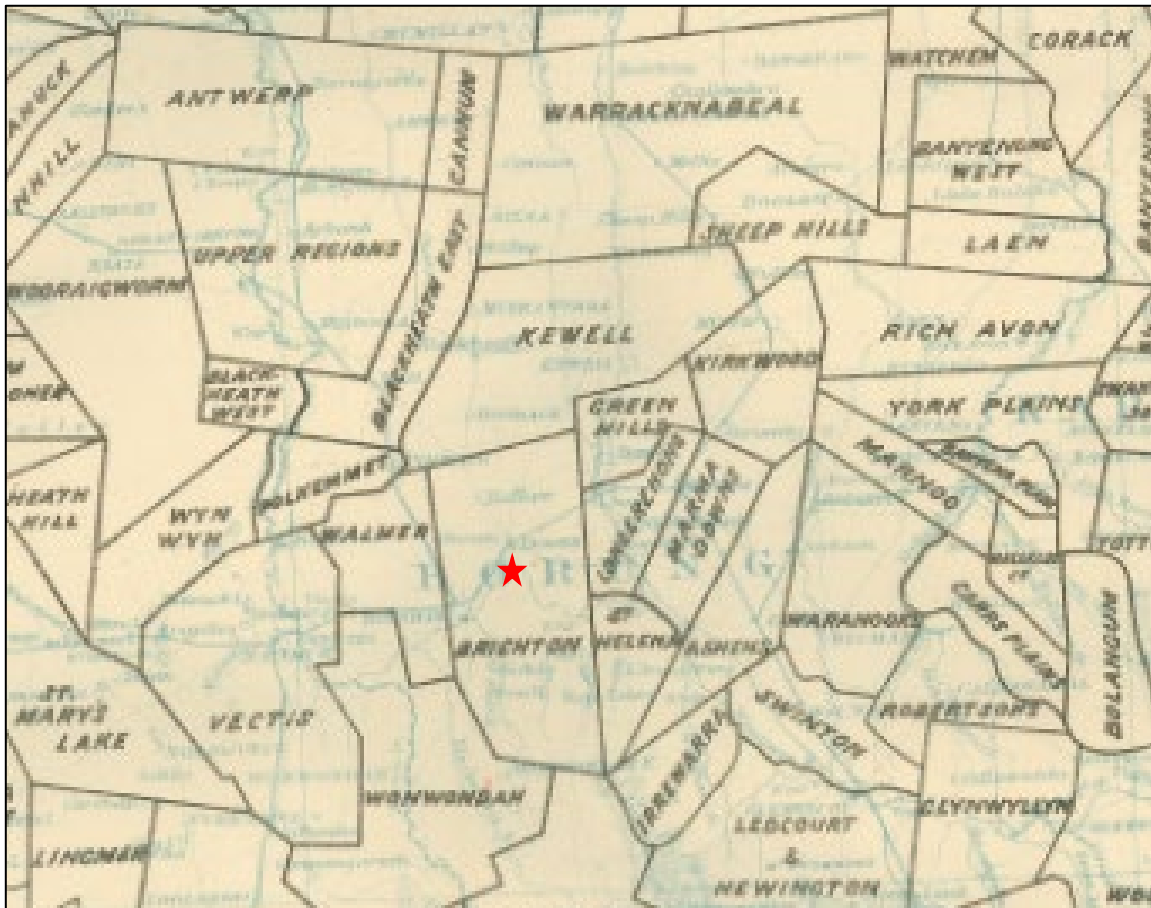


Figure 19 (part) map showing the pastoral holdings of the Port Phillip District 1835-51 now Victoria by Kenyon 1932 (Source: State Library of Victoria). Red star indicating Brighton.

Pre-emptive Rights were granted from 1852 onwards, and for a minimal fee, successful applicants received freehold title to an area of 640 acres (one square mile) around their home station. These blocks usually comprised the best land of the run and generally fronted watercourses, some of which were along the Wimmera River, including Brighton, which encompassed the present-day Activity Area. In April 1859, Brighton was subdivided into Brighton North (north of the Wimmera River) and Brighton South (south of the Wimmera River) (see Figure 20). The present day Activity Area is located on the former Brighton North run.

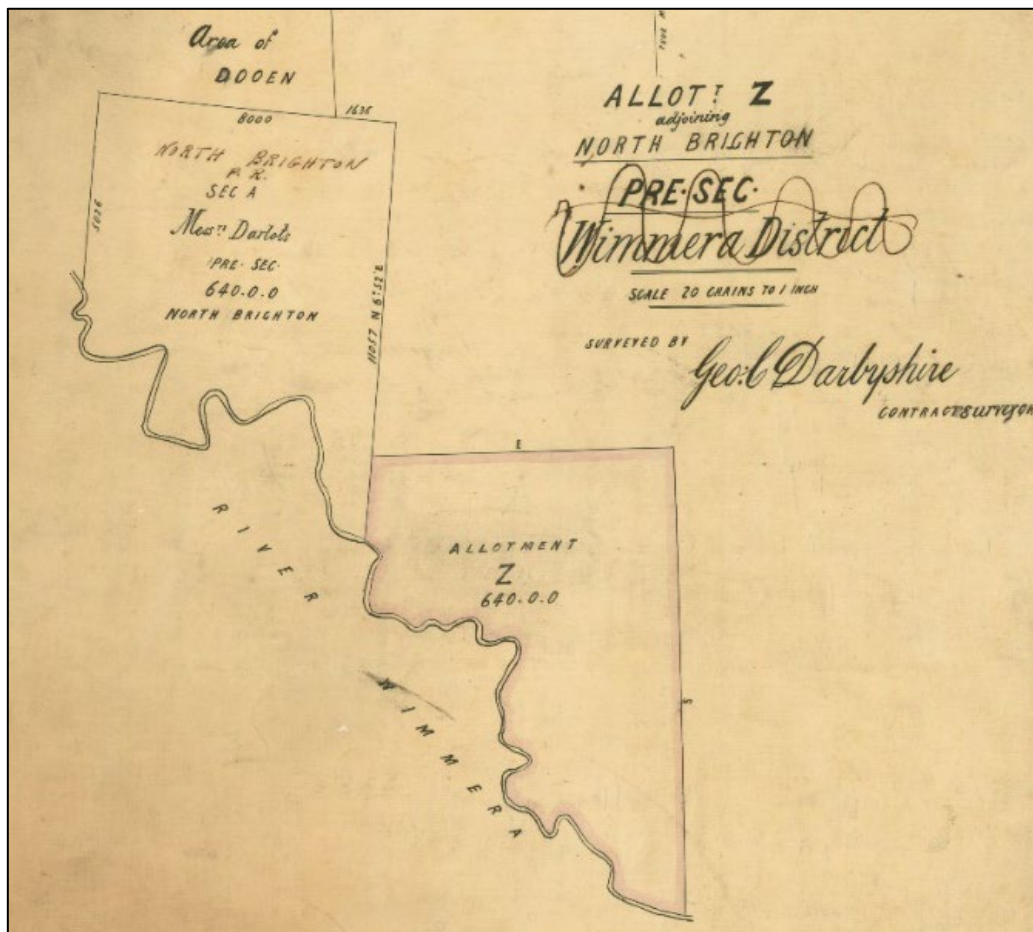


Figure 20 Darlots' pre-emptive selection comprising 640 acres known as 'North Brighton'
(Source: State Library of Victoria)

Unlocking the land

Public demand to 'unlock the land' from the squatters' stronghold was intense following the gold rush. Large populations of ex-miners and new settlers argued that squatters held the monopoly over land and overtly prevented them from becoming landowners and independent farmers. The distribution of land became a political issue when the Victorian Legislative Assembly passed the controversial Lands Acts of 1860 (*Nicholson Land Act*), 1862 (*Duffy's Act*), 1865 and 1869 (*Land and Pastoral Act*). Because of this legislation, squatting runs were extensively subdivided to release more land for selection.

Brighton North

Brighton North was licenced to Darlot and McLachlan in April 1859. The original estimated area at the time of the passing of the 1860 *Land Act*, was 43,800 acres (Spreadborough & Anderson 1983:207). McLachlan withdrew from the partnership in June 1862 and Henry King Hawke Darlot took over with his father James. On 3 March 1865, Brighton North was licenced to John Carfrae, John Chester Jervis and Robert William Nutt (Spreadborough and Anderson 1983:207). Carfrae withdrew from the partnership in 1866, whilst Jervis withdrew in 1871. For around 18 months, Brighton North was licenced solely to Nutt of Melbourne, until being taken over by Carter & Sons (Charles, Samuel, William and John) on 25 November 1872. One year later, on 19 December 1873, Carter & Sons forfeited the property and it was then let under grazing licence.

The making of the Village of Horsham

Darlot made a makeshift effort to establish a village on his Brighton North run and this was recognised by the Colonial Government when a site for a village at Horsham was selected in May 1850 (Victorian Government Gazette 14 May 1850:763; Reynolds 2003:ix). According to Darlot's son, Philip Firebrace Darlot, he claimed that his father had selected the site of an Aboriginal corroboree ground as the spot for a village (Blake 1973:54). According to local history accounts (see Slyfield 2001:13; Coulson 1950:6), the area was known by the local Aboriginal clan as 'bongambilor', meaning place of flowers in reference to the dense flowing wattle scrub that once covered the landscape.

The first town plan, created in 1850, shows a handful of pre-existing buildings, including a police station (manned by Chief Constable Thomas 'Teddy' Halfpenny), store, inn and a pound. The 1854 census recorded a population of 57. At this time, there was around 20 wooden buildings.

In 1855, the Village of Horsham was officially surveyed. It comprised ten sections laid out around a grid of streets that formed the Village centre (see Figure 21). Larger allotments surrounding the centre were used for farming and spread across a diverse range of landscapes. For example, the southern part of Section 10, south-west of the Village and south of the Wimmera River featured sand and scrub, whilst the northern part was timbered with gum and box. Directly to the east, Section 9 was thickly timbered with oak, gum and box. South of this area in Section 8, the land was timbered with pine (south of Burnt Creek). North-east of the Village centre, the landscape differed again with Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 being situated on plains. The Activity Area is located on what were originally gazetted as Allotment 3 in Section 7 (see Figure 21 and Figure 22). According to the annotations on the map, most of this landscape was thickly timbered with oak, gum and box.

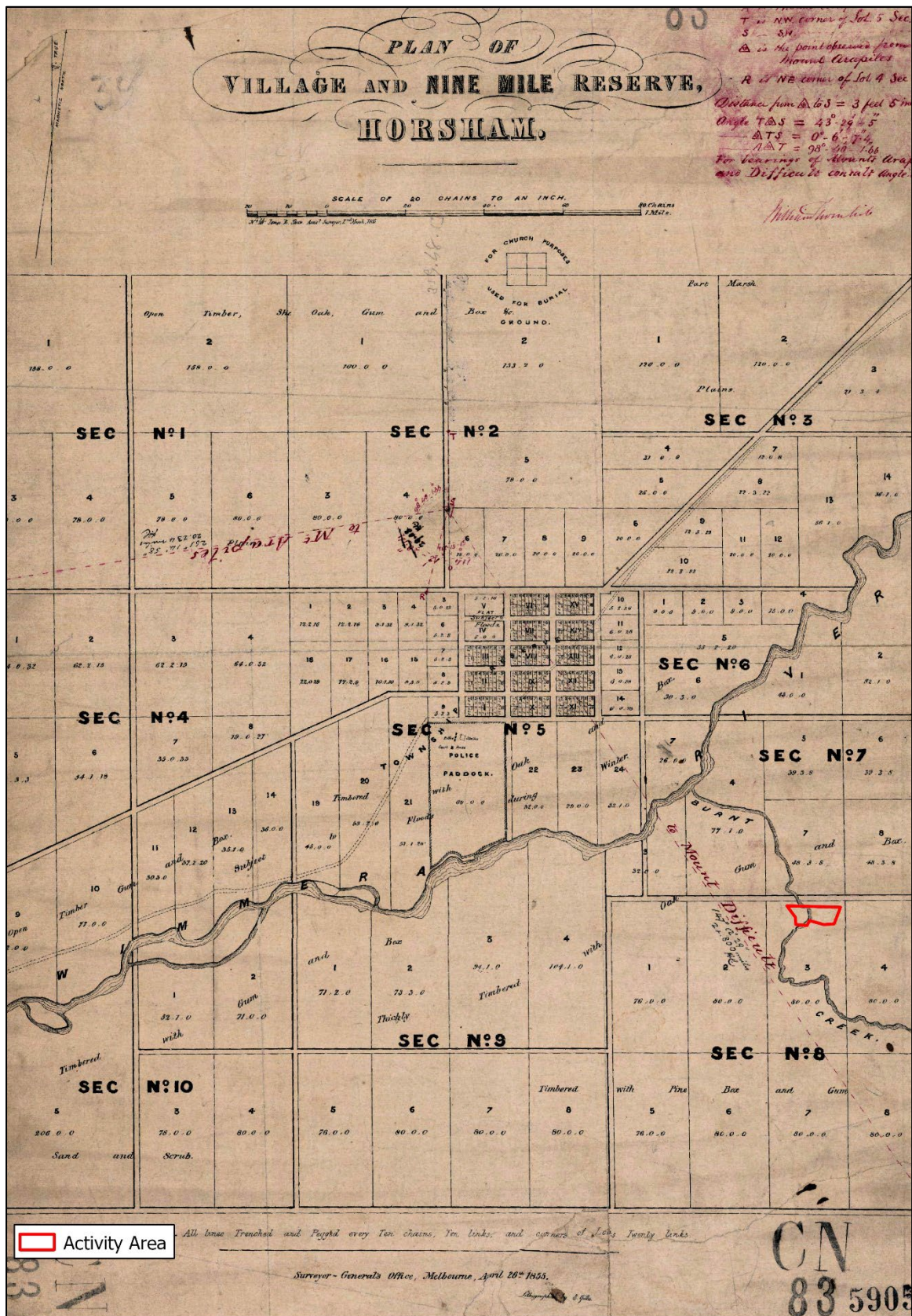


Figure 21 Plan of the Village and Nine Mile Reserve, Horsham, 1855 showing approximate Activity Area
(Source: National Library of Australia)

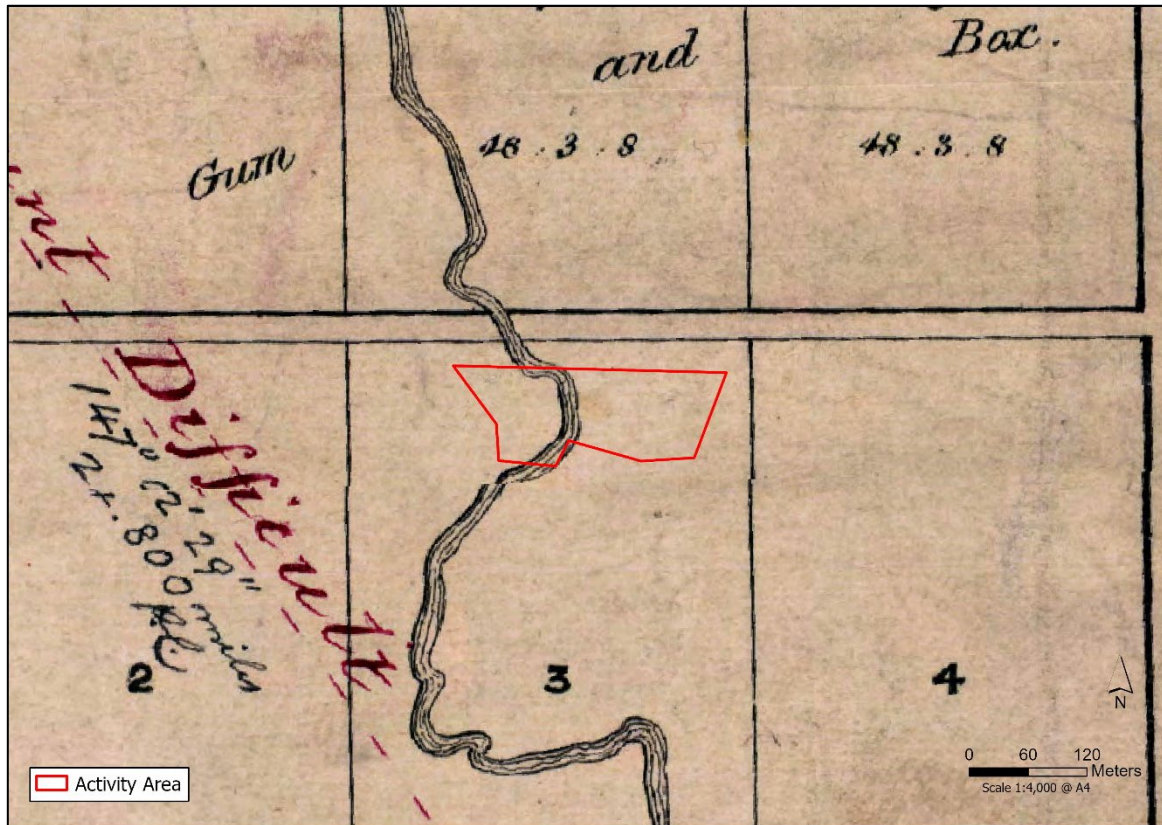


Figure 22 Detail of Plan of the Village and Nine Mile Reserve, Horsham, 1855 showing approximate Activity Area (Source: National Library of Australia)

Major development of the Village of Horsham began in the early 1870s when the area was opened for selection and wheat farming commenced. A flour mill opened in 1873, as well as the May and Millar Company, which manufactured farm implements and later became one of the largest such works in the state. By 1891, the population had grown to 2,678 from 294 in 1871. The telegraph arrived in 1875 and the railway in 1879. By this time there was a modern post office, hospital, mechanic's institute and council offices. In 1882, Horsham was officially declared a Borough. In 1932 it was proclaimed a town, and then a city in 1949 (Blake 1973). The Horsham Parish Plan from 1940 (see Figure 23), shows the Allotment 3 containing the current Activity Area under the ownership of J.M. Darlot and A.M. Lachlan.

Aerial imagery taken of the Activity Area in 1946 shows a meandering Burnt Creek with vegetated reed-fringed riverbanks scattered with large trees, a large portion of undeveloped creek frontage with remnant riparian vegetation (see Figure 24). The 1946 aerial imagery also shows that the current Williams Road, to the north of the Activity Area, was already constructed. It also shows the presence of agricultural usages of the south-western portion of the Activity Area to the south of Burnt Creek. Aerial imagery from 1975 (see Figure 25) shows that the Activity Area largely remained in this state, although the agricultural usages had halted and areas to the north of Williams Road were being increasingly built up with streets and dwellings.

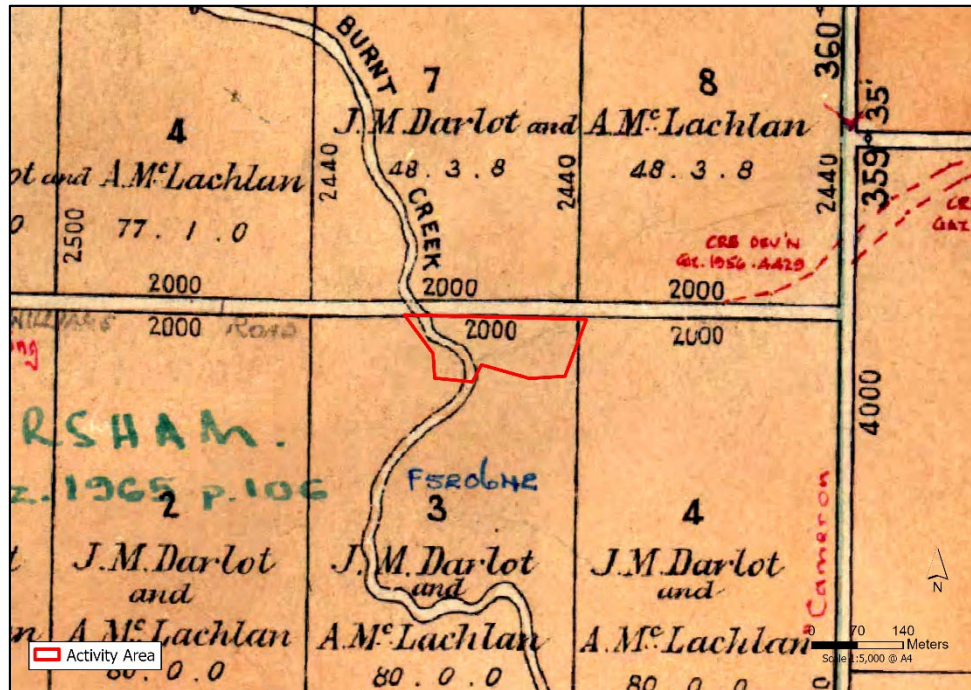


Figure 23 Horsham Parish Plan, Imperial measure 2764, 1940 showing approximate Activity Area
(Source: Public Record Office Victoria)

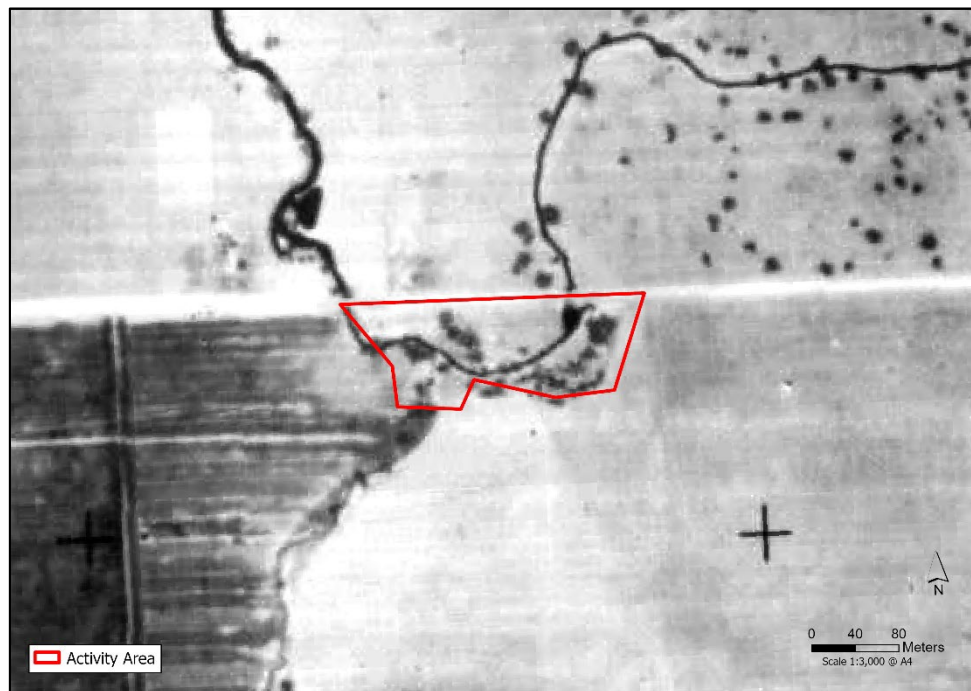


Figure 24 Detail view of aerial photograph of Horsham, 1946, showing approximate Activity Area
(Source: DEECA 2025)

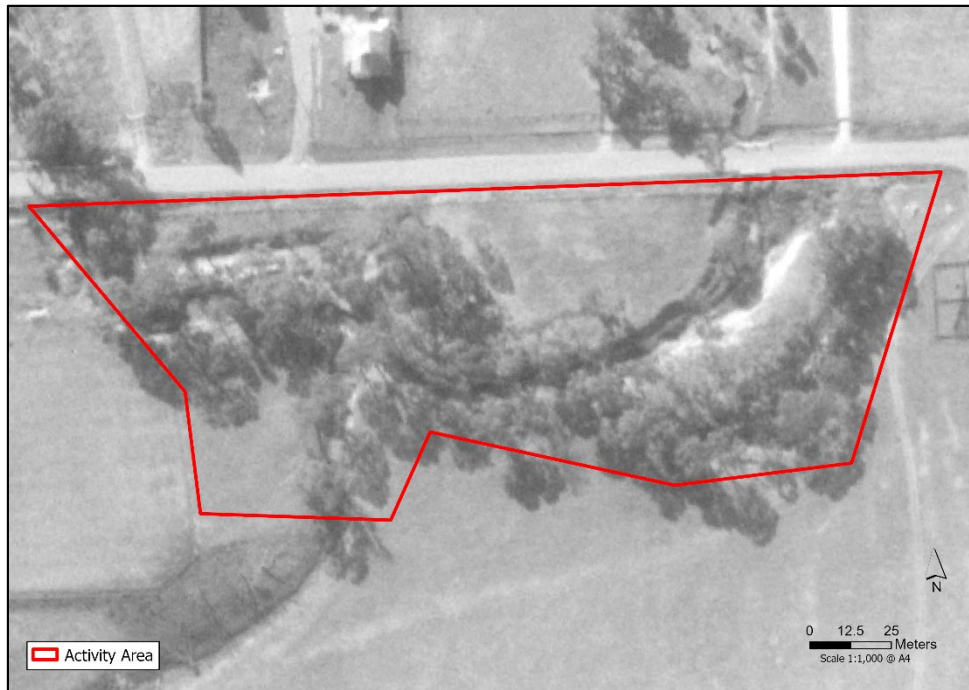


Figure 25 Special Project Photography - Census Photography - Horsham, 1975 showing approximate Activity Area (Source: National Archives of Australia, B6654, CAD49/5698)

Current land use

The Activity Area is situated on Burnt Creek. According to the Horsham Rural City Council (2025a), the public land is described as featuring makeshift dirt jumps which have long been used informally by BMX and mountain bike riders. The jumps at Burnt Creek were constructed by community members and have been in operation for approximately 20 years (HRCC 2025b).

7.1.8 Conclusions from the Desktop Assessment

- The Activity Area sits within the traditional boundaries of the *Djura Balug* (or *Balag*) clan who formed one of at least 19 clans belonging to the larger Jadawadjali language group.
- There is a considerable amount of information available about the Aboriginal occupation of the geographic region surrounding the Activity Area.
- Physical evidence of Aboriginal occupation in the Activity Area (and surrounding region) is demonstrated by the range of Aboriginal cultural heritage places found, such as scarred trees and stone artefacts.
- The study of strategic values, such as hydrology, flora, fauna, stone resources, routes of movement, and vantage points, provide important information about Aboriginal site patterning.
- Almost all Aboriginal heritage sites recorded in the wider Activity Area landscape are positioned near reliable water sources. This is particularly common within arid and semi-arid regions, such as the North West Dunefields and Plains.
- The most common type of Aboriginal cultural heritage places found in the defined geographic region are scarred trees.
- Scars of Aboriginal origin were most commonly found on grey box and red gum trees that are generally found near water sources, such as the Wimmera River and Burnt Creek.
- A wide variety of raw materials were available to the Jadawadjali, including quartz, quartzite, quartose sandstone, silcrete, flint, chert, basalt, greenstone and other exotic stones.
- The Activity Area has been disturbed by post-colonial impacts, including partial cropping as shown in the 1946 aerial. The land has now been long used as makeshift bike jumps, used by BMX and mountain bike riders.

Site predictive model

Based on our current knowledge, evidence from previous archaeological studies, and findings from official assessments and reports (e.g. CHMPs), it is likely that certain Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and materials will occur within the Activity Area.

It is expected that these site types will predominantly comprise scarred trees that have had bark removed by Aboriginal Peoples for the purposes of constructing shelters, stretching animal skins, making shields, canoes, carrying containers, etc., and as isolated or scatters of stone artefacts across the open landscape. Scarred trees are by far the most common Aboriginal site type near the Activity Area and across the wider Wimmera region (Bird 1984:11-12) and are particularly likely to be found close to water sources, such as the Wimmera River. There are thirty-three registered scarred trees near the Activity Area, therefore, there is a high lowlihood that this place type will be found/relocated.

Although isolated, low density, and scatters of stone artefacts are not highly represented in the current data, it is predicted that there is a moderate likelihood that unrecorded stone artefact sites may be found during activity, particularly since these artefacts can be difficult to see and may lie below the surface of the ground. In fact, surface scatters of stone artefacts form the second most common Aboriginal site type within the wider Wimmera region. These artefacts are most likely to be categorised as ‘worked flakes’, ‘worked cores’, ‘unmodified flakes’, ‘hammerstones, pitted stones, and grinding stones’, and ‘unspecified chipped artefacts’, are most likely to be made from locally sourced quartz and quartzite from *Gariwerd* or *Dyurrite* (Mt Arapiles). It is likely that most of these artefacts have moved from their original provenance because of European agricultural, industrial, and residential activities, but the recovery of stone artefacts, particularly as isolated specimens, during sub-surface activity is nevertheless considered to be likely.

While a wide variety of other Aboriginal site types are found within the wider geographic area, the current data suggests that there is a low likelihood that these will be identified in the Activity Area (see Table 7).

Table 7 Predictive model based on Desktop Assessment for encountering Aboriginal places in Activity Area

Scarred trees	Stone artefacts	Earth features (e.g. mounds)	Stone features	Burials	Ovens/hearths	Rock shelters/art	Quarries	Middens
High	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

As the Desktop Assessment showed that it is reasonably possibly for Aboriginal cultural heritage to be present within the Activity Area, a Standard Assessment is required under Part 3, Division 1, r. 62(1) of the Regulations.

7.2 Standard Assessment

A Standard Assessment was undertaken in accordance with Part 3, Division 1, r.63 of the Regulations. The Standard Assessment phase of this CHMP involved a surface survey to:

- Identify any Aboriginal cultural heritage material on the surface of the Activity Area; and
- Identify any exposed soil profiles within the Activity Area.

7.2.1 Standard Assessment methodology

The Standard Assessment was undertaken on 12 December 2025 by Abby Cooper, Heritage Advisor and supervising archaeologist (Cooper HM), and BGLC Field Representative, Tamika Chester. In accordance with r.63(3) of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 (the Regulations), the Activity

Area was surveyed using a pedestrian transect methodology (surface survey on foot), by walking transects (lines) across the Activity Area approximately 2-3 metres apart- a standard technique described in Burke and Smith (2004).

Field notes were taken throughout the Standard Assessment to document the way in which the survey was undertaken, including site conditions and evidence of prior disturbance. All photographs were documented using a photographic log form. Levels of ground surface visibility (GSV) were also recorded. Visibility refers to the degree to which the ground surface can be observed. It is generally expressed in terms of the percentage of the surface visible for an observer on foot (Burke and Smith 2004:80). For example, 50% visibility equates to 5,000cm² per 1m² of ground surface that is not covered by factors such as vegetation, leaf litter, introduced gravel or soil deposits. For the purposes of this report, the following terms are used to describe levels of GSV:

Table 8 Levels of ground surface visibility

Percentage of GSV	Descriptive term
0%	No visible ground surface
1% - 10%	Very poor
10% - 30%	Poor
30% - 50%	Fair
50% - 70%	Good
70% - 90%	Very good
90% - 100%	Excellent

7.2.2 Results of ground survey

The Activity Area was an open area with no caves or shelters. The landform comprised a floodplain directly north of Burnt Creek and featured sandy clay and grey cracking clays typical of the Horsham region. Remnant mature vegetation consisted of Black Box and Red Gums. All mature trees were inspected for evidence of cultural modification, although no modifications were found.

Evidence of previous ground disturbance was present in the form of excavated areas where soil had been moved to create a series of bike jumps. The Activity Area also featured large amounts of erosion associated with recreational bike use and flooding from nearby Burnt Creek. GSV was hindered by grasses and leaf litter, resulting in poor visibility in grassed areas adjacent to Williams Road; however, the majority of Activity Area contained exposure areas due to erosion and the absence of vegetation and in these areas GSV was very good. Overall, the average GSV across the Activity Area was very good.

Due to the large amount of previous ground disturbance caused by recreational use and erosion, there were no areas identified as having subsurface Aboriginal cultural heritage potential.



Photograph 9 Looking west across Activity Area towards eroded track and bike jumps, 12 December 2025



Photograph 10 Looking west across Activity Area showing erosion and bike jumps, 12 December 2025



Photograph 11 Looking west across eroded bike track, 12 December 2025



Photograph 12 Looking west along eroded bikh path on edge of Burnt Creek, 12 December2025



Photograph 13 Looking east across eroded bike track in gully and jumps, 12 December 2025



Photograph 14 Looking south-west across eroded turn around point along bike track, 12 December 2025



**Photograph 15 Looking east across proposed location for new footpath adjacent to Williams Road,
12 December 2025**

Limitations and obstacles

There were no limitations or obstacles to the Standard Assessment.

Coverage analysis

Effective survey coverage is calculated by assessing two closely related factors that can skew the results of any archaeological survey- ground surface visibility (GSV) and ground surface exposure (GSE). Conditions of GSV are affected by vegetation cover, introduced soils or gravels, leaf litter or other things that might limit the detection of Aboriginal cultural heritage material on the ground surface and in the landscape. GSE relates to geomorphic and human/animal caused processes, such as sedimentation and erosion or aggradation, which results in exposure areas.

The total effective survey coverage of the Activity Area was 63.93% or 13,284.4m² (see Table 9).

Table 9 Effective Survey Coverage for the Activity Area

Landform	Average GSV (%)	Prevailing ground surface exposure	Exposure areas	Size of Survey Unit (m ²)	Effective survey coverage (m ²)
Floodplain	80	Some erosion	Eroded gullies, unvegetated areas and bike tracks	15,214	12,171.2
Floodplain	20	Some erosion	Bike tracks	5,566	1,113.2
TOTAL				20,780	13,284.4

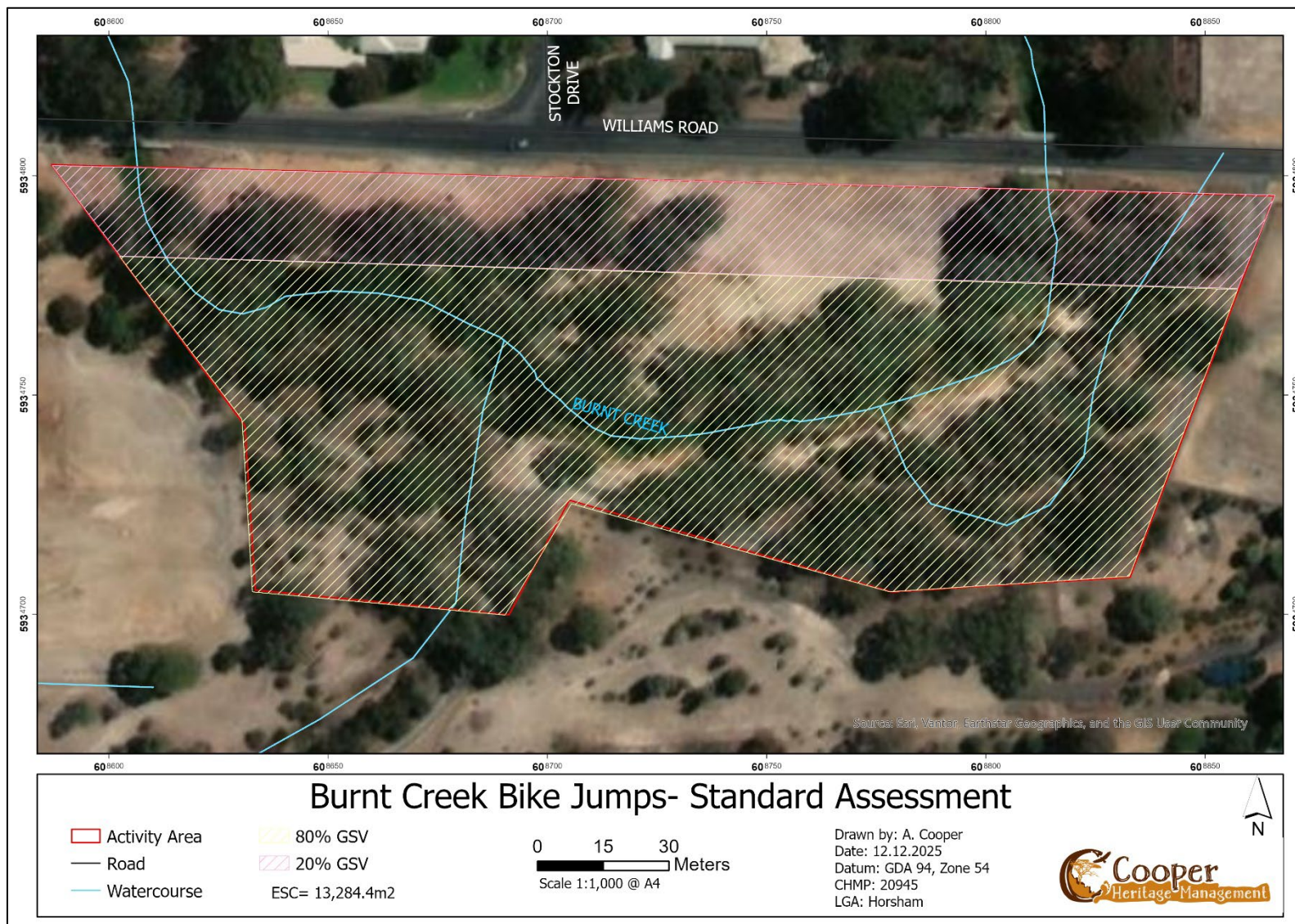
Aboriginal cultural heritage places

No Aboriginal cultural heritage places were identified during the Standard Assessment.

7.2.3 Conclusions from the Standard Assessment

The Standard Assessment revealed that the Activity Area comprised a floodplain featuring sandy clay and grey cracking clays typical of the Horsham region. It also found that the Activity Area had been subject to a considerable amount of past ground disturbance, as result of soil being moved to make bike jumps, as well as erosion caused by bikes, flooding and recreational use.

As no Aboriginal cultural heritage was found during the Standard Assessment and there is a low potential for subsurface deposits due to erosion and previous ground disturbance, a Complex Assessment was not considered necessary under r.64(2) of the Regulations.



Map 8 Results of Standard Assessment

8. DETAILS OF ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE ACTIVITY AREA

8.1 Aboriginal cultural heritage in the Activity Area

No Aboriginal cultural heritage was found in the Activity Area during the Standard Assessment.

9. CONSIDERATION OF SECTION 61 MATTERS – IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 What are the cumulative impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage in the Activity Area of the activity?

Cumulative impacts are defined as changes to the environment that are caused in action in combination with other past, present and human activities. Over time, direct and indirect human activities combine to collectively impact on the environment and any Aboriginal cultural heritage present within that environment.

The Desktop Assessment documented a range of post-contact activities that have impacted on floodplains throughout the geographic region. The widespread removal of vegetation, natural disasters (e.g. fire, flood), pastoral activities, urban development, installation of pipelines and utilities and the channelling of the Wimmera River are all likely to have negatively impacted on Aboriginal archaeological sites present within those areas.

The proposed activities will have a direct impact on the ground surface and subsurface and these activities will have a cumulative impact on the Aboriginal cultural heritage in the region if they impact on any surface and/or subsurface archaeological deposits during the course of the Activity. However, the degree of impact will be low because the Activity Area has already been subject to modification during its development and use as an informal recreational facility. Furthermore, there are other floodplains in the region that are better preserved and have the potential to contain intact Aboriginal cultural heritage.

9.2 Are there particular contingency plans that might be necessary?

In accordance with Section 61 of the AHA 2006, a CHMP must consider any contingency plans required in relation to disputes, delays and other obstacles that may affect the conduct of the activity.

The relevant contingency plans in relation to obstacles and delays that may affect the conduct of the proposed activities are detailed in Section 2 of this CHMP. The contingencies are relevant to the ongoing management of the Aboriginal cultural heritage place identified in the preparation this management plan.

9.3 What custody and management arrangements might be needed?

In accordance with Section 61 of the AHA, a CHMP must consider requirements relating to the custody and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage material found during the activity.

Any Aboriginal cultural heritage material recorded or salvaged from the Activity Area is the responsibility of the appointed HA to:

- Catalogue the Aboriginal cultural heritage material;
- Label and package the Aboriginal cultural heritage material, including site name, artefact project identification, number of artefacts in each bag and date;
- Organise storage in double sealed artefact bags/containers and store in a secure location with copies of the catalogue and relevant assessment documentation; and
- Register the Aboriginal heritage place and relevant components by completing a VAHR form, including an object component form, and submit to FPSR with relevant maps.

As the RAP for the Activity Area, BGLC will be assigned custody of all Aboriginal cultural heritage material found during or after the proposed works and may choose to rebury it within/near to the Activity Area.

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APPENDIX 1- NOTICE OF INTENTION TO PREPARE A CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN



Premier
and Cabinet

Notice of Intent to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the purposes of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*

This form can be used by the Sponsor of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan to complete the notification provisions pursuant to s.54 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (the "Act").

For clarification on any of the following please contact Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR) enquiries on 1800-726-003.

SECTION 1 - Sponsor information

Sponsor: Horsham Rural City Council
ABN/ACN: 37 019 724 765
Contact Name: Dale Schmid
Postal Address: 18 Roberts Avenue, Horsham Vic 3400
Business Number: 03 5382 9509 Mobile: 0428 407 184
Email Address: dale.schmid@hrcc.vic.gov.au

Sponsor's agent (if relevant)

Company: _____
Contact Name: _____
Postal Address: _____
Business Number: _____ Mobile: _____
Email Address: _____

SECTION 2 - Description of proposed activity and location

Project Name: Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps, Williams Road, Horsham
Municipal district: Horsham Rural City Council

Clearly identify the proposed activity for which the cultural heritage management plan is to be prepared (ie. Mining, road construction, housing subdivision)

Other _____

SECTION 3 - Cultural Heritage Advisor

Abby Cooper Cooper Heritage Management abby@cooperhm.com.au
Name Company Email address

SECTION 4 - Expected start and finish date for the cultural heritage management plan

Start Date: 18-Nov-2025 Finish Date: 31-May-2026

Submitted on: 18 Nov 2025



Premier
and Cabinet

SECTION 5 - Why are you preparing this cultural heritage management plan?

- ☒ A cultural heritage management plan is required by the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007
What is the high Impact Activity as it is listed in the regulations?

Is any part of the activity an area of cultural heritage sensitivity, as listed in the regulations? 1

- ☐ Other Reasons (Voluntary)
☐ An Environment Effects Statement is required
☐ A Cultural Heritage Management Plan is required by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.
☐ An Impact Management Plan or Comprehensive Impact Statement is required for the activity

SECTION 6 - List the relevant registered Aboriginal parties (if any)

This section is to be completed where there are registered Aboriginal parties in relation to the management plan.

BARENGI GADJIN Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

SECTION 7A - List the relevant Aboriginal groups or Aboriginal people with whom the Sponsor intends to consult (if any)

*This section is to be completed only if the proposed activity in the management plan is to be carried out in an area where there is **no Registered Aboriginal Party**.*

Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

SECTION 7B - Describe the intended consultation process (if any)

*This section is to be completed only if the proposed activity in the management plan is to be carried out in an area where there is **no Registered Aboriginal Party**.*

Inception meeting, post standard meeting and post complex meeting

SECTION 8 – State who will be evaluating this plan (mandatory)

The plan is to be evaluated by:

- ☐ Joint - Registered Aboriginal Party AND The Secretary
☒ A Registered Aboriginal Party
If checked, list the relevant Registered Aboriginal Party Evaluating:
☐ The Secretary
☐ Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council

SECTION 9 – Preliminary Aboriginal Heritage Tests (PAHTs)

List the Reference Number(s) of any PAHTs conducted in relation to the proposed activity:

SECTION 10 - Notification checklist

Submitted on: 18 Nov 2025



Premier
and Cabinet

Ensure that any relevant registered Aboriginal party/ies is also notified. A copy of this notice with a map attached may be used for this purpose.
(A registered Aboriginal party is allowed up to 14 days to provide a written response to a notification specifying whether or not it intends to evaluate the management plan.)

In addition to notifying the Deputy Director and any relevant registered Aboriginal party/ies, a Sponsor must also notify any owner and/or occupier of any land within the area to which the management plan relates. A copy of this notice with a map attached may be used for this purpose.

Ensure any municipal council, whose municipal district includes an area to which the cultural heritage management plan relates, is also notified. A copy of this notice, with a map attached, may also be used for this purpose.

Submitted on: 18 Nov 2025



APPENDIX 2- BGLC'S INTENT TO EVALUATE CHMP



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18 November 2025

Dale Schmid
Horsham Rural City Council
18 Roberts Avenue
Horsham Vic 3400

Dear Dale,

RE: CHMP 20945 - Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps, Williams Road, Horsham

I refer to your written notification to the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLC), dated 18 November 2025, stating your intention under s.54 of the Victorian *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (AHA 2006), to prepare an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) for the above activity.

Your notification has been accepted and BGLC advises that under s.55 of the AHA 2006 it intends to evaluate this CHMP. BGLC also advises it intends to consult with you in relation to the impacts of the proposed works; the assessment of the activity area for the purposes of the CHMP including fieldwork methodology; participate in the conduct of the assessment; and consult with you in relation to Conditions included in the CHMP (s.59 and s.60, AHA 2006).

BGLC are the Registered Aboriginal Party (AHA 2006), Prescribed Body Corporate (Comm. *Native Title Act 1993*) and Traditional Owner Group Entity (Vic. *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*) for the activity area. This gives BGLC legal authority and assigns rights to making decisions on Country. BGLC is committed to negotiating in good faith and with a view to obtaining the informed consent of Traditional Owners in meeting the development needs of the Sponsor.

It is therefore BGLC policy that prior to commencement of the fieldwork assessment program you or your nominated Agent and your Heritage Advisor (HA) must participate in a Project Inception Meeting. This meeting provides an opportunity for all parties to understand the project; clarify the aims of the CHMP; agree on a methodology for the fieldwork assessment program; and discuss timelines. Please bring the following items to the meeting:

- Aerial photos and/or clear maps of the activity area
- Plans of the proposed activity
- Aboriginal places location data and maps within the geographic region
- Any other background research completed by your HA

If you require any additional information, please contact the Cultural Heritage Technical Specialist, Francisco Almeida, at francisco.almeida@bglc.com.au or on the number below.

Yours Sincerely,

Michael Douglas,
RAP Manager

CC. Abby Cooper, Cooper Heritage Management

38 Plumpton Road, Horsham VIC 3400 • PO Box 1255, Horsham VIC 3402 • Ph: 03 5381 0977
Email: admin@bglc.com.au • www.bglc.com.au • ABN: 51 796 080 345

GLOSSARY

Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) radiocarbon dating A way to obtain radiocarbon dates from samples that are far tinier than that needed for standard radiocarbon dating.

Activity Area An area/s to be used or developed for an activity.

Archaeology The study of human activity through the recovery of artefacts, architecture and cultural landscapes.

Adze Axe-like cutting tool usually used to shape wood.

Aeolian Geological areas shaped by wind activity.

Alluvial Refers to sediment deposition in riverine landscapes.

Anvil A hard surface which supported a stone artefact when it was struck to produce a flake.

Arid Dry

Artefact A human made object of historical or archaeological interest.

Artefact Scatter Usually contains discarded stone artefacts and waste flakes from tool making, which signify human activity.

Assemblage A group of artefacts found in close association to one another.

Australian Small Stone Tool Tradition A set of mid-Holocene assemblages including artefacts that may have functioned as weapons, such as small blades and points.

Backed blade A stone flake retouched until it has one steep sharp edge opposite one relatively thicker blunt edge.

Balk A side wall of an excavated unit, or a partition of earth left standing between adjoining excavation units.

Basalt Dark coloured fine grained igneous rock formed by the rapid cooling of volcanic lava

Bifacial Stone artefacts retouched on both sides usually most of the way around two parallel sides.

Bipolar flakes Stone flakes with negative scars on both ends indicating that an anvil had been used to produce the flake.

Blade A flaked artefact that is at least twice as long as it is wide with parallel edges.

Burial Aboriginal burials can provide information about cultural practices and belief systems. Items found in graves, such as ornaments can provide an insight into communication and trade patterns between Aboriginal groups.

Campsite (open) Mostly surface sites that are associated with subsurface scatters of stone artefacts, sometimes with fireplaces.

Carbon dating (C¹⁴) A method for determining the age of an object containing organic material by using the properties of radiocarbon.

Carved tree Deliberate mark/markings on a tree that can indicate ceremonial grounds, birthplaces etc.

Ceremonial mound/stone arrangement A site where ceremonial activities occurred.

Chert Fine grained silica rich crystalline sedimentary rock, which breaks easily and produces sharp edges.

Context Any discrete archaeological entity on a site (same as a layer).

Context/stratigraphic method A method used to excavate one new soil layer at a time before proceeding onto the next.

Core A block of stone from which flakes have been struck.

Core tool Made from a block of stone (rather than flakes), which resembles a core.

Cortex The original outer surface of a stone.

Crystal quartz Colourless and transparent or translucent pure quartz. Traditionally called rock crystal or clear quartz.

Cultural landscape A geographic area associated with a historic event, activity or person exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.

Dating The process of estimating the age of ancient materials or deposits

Debitage Flaked waste produced during the manufacture of stone tools.

Deposit A group of artefacts associated with a single layer/context.

Distal The furthest end of an object.

Dorsal The back or outer surface of an object (opposite of ventral).

Earth mound A mound containing information about food sources, artefacts, campsites and even burials.

Ethno-history Information about peoples' way of life or culture recorded in historical documents.

Ethnography Study of peoples' way of life or culture through first hand observation.

Excavation The exposure, processing and recording of archaeological remains. Also called a "dig".

Feature Any human made components of a site.

Flake A piece of stone removed from a core by striking the core with a hammer stone.

Flint (coastal) A type of fine grained silica rich rock originating from coastal areas.

Fluvial A geomorphic process whereby sediments are transported and deposited by flowing river water.

Formal tool Stone flakes that have been shaped into a specific tool, such as a spear head.

Geometric microlith Stone flakes less than 80mm that have been backed at one end or the other (sometimes both ends) resulting in a symmetrical shape.

Greenstone (diorite) Ancient rocks formed by lavas from underground volcanoes erupting.

Grinding The process of abrading a surface by rubbing it with an abrasive stone/grit for the purposes of sharpening an object.

Grind stone Slab of stone used for graining plants, seeds or ochre usually made from abrasive stones, such as sandstone.

Ground Surface Visibility The amount of ground surface that can be seen that is not obscured by vegetation, weather conditions or other factors.

Hafted A piece of stone, shell or bone shaped and mounted onto a wooden handle usually by using resin and sinew to make an implement or weapon.

Hammer stone Hand held stones used to strike flakes for tools.

Hearth A fireplace or campsite represented by charcoal or other burnt material.

Heat shatter The process of flaking stone through extreme heat.

Holocene A geological period lasting from around 10,000 years ago to the present. The Holocene is when warmer climatic conditions began, stabilising around 6,000 years ago. It is often divided into three periods: early Holocene (6,000-10,000 years ago), mid-Holocene (3,000-6,000 years ago) and late Holocene (3,000 years ago to the present day).

Horizons Soil layers within the profile which are reasonably homogenous in terms of colour, texture and structure. A soil profile usually has these basic layers: A1 surface; A2 subsurface; B subsoil; C substrate.

Igneous rocks Rocks formed from lava.

Implement An object that has been shaped or modified for use as a tool.

In-situ Undisturbed in its original position.

Intensification A term used to describe more intensive agricultural utilisation by humans, which resulted in more a complex and sedimentary lifestyle.

Isolated find An artefact found by itself.

Knapping- see FLAKING

Kya Abbreviation for one thousand years ago.

Last Glacial Maximum A geological period that occurred around 17,000- 21,000 years ago when temperatures dropped and ice glaciers increased. On land it was exceptionally cold and dry.

Lacustrine A geomorphic process whereby soil forming material is deposited into lakes.

Layer (stratigraphic) A distinct and homogenous area of soil, whether formed by natural or cultural means or a combination.

Leaching The removal of soluble materials and salts as water moves through the profile.

Lowan sand Fine medium grained grey-white, quartz-rich, windblown sand derived from the underlying Parilla sand. It contains little carbonate or clay.

Low density artefact distribution Less than ten artefacts within an area of one square metre.

Lunettes Crescent shaped aeolian deposits of fine sediment located on the eastern side of lake beds or playas in semi-arid areas of

southern Australia.

Manuport A foreign object that has been moved by from one place to another by humans.

Material culture Physical or material objects produced by a society.

Matrilineal descent Descent traced through the female members of a family.

Metamorphic rocks One of the three main rock groups (along with igneous and sedimentary), metamorphic rocks arise from the transformation of existing rock types when subject to heat and pressure.

Microlith Small finely retouched implements.

Midden See SHELL MIDDEN.

Mottling The presence of more than one soil colour in a horizon.

Multi-directional Many different directions.

Mya Abbreviation for one million years ago.

Notched Produced by a single blow that leaves a concave scar.

Ochre quarry A place where Aboriginal people gathered ochre from.

Parilla sand More broadly called 'Loxton-Parilla Sands', were deposited during the late Tertiary period. It comprises layers of sand, silt and clay that have since been consolidated in places and is between 20-70mm thick.

Patrilineal descent Descent traced through the male members of a family.

Pedoturbation Involves mixing between soil horizons, and is an important factor in soil formation.

Platform Any surface that was struck to remove a flake.

Playa Large shallow closed depression intermittently filled with water, but usually dry due to evaporation. Often they are former lake beds. A lunette will usually be present on the eastern margin of the playa.

Pleistocene Geological time scale period lasting from around 2 million years ago to 10,000 – 12,000 years ago. Towards the end of the Pleistocene, temperatures began to rise and ice glaciers melted flooding large tracts of land.

Plio-Pleistocene Geological epoch which

lasted from around 5 million years ago to 12,000 years ago.

Post-contact After the arrival of Europeans to Australia.

Post-contact sites Places used or occupied by Aboriginal people after the arrival of Europeans to Australia.

Proximal The end of an object closest to the body.

Profile A cross section (vertical) view of the exposed balk (wall) in an excavated pit/trench.

Quarry Location where stone or ochre has been removed from the bedrock or other rock.

Quaternary A geological time scale lasting from around 2 million years ago to the present. It includes the Holocene and Pleistocene periods.

Quartz Hard silica mineral rich compound featuring cavities and veins.

Quartzite Extremely hard fine-grained rock with quartz as its primary mineral component.

Raw materials Natural materials, such as wood, bone, stone from which material culture is made.

Reduction The process of removing flakes from a stone core.

Retouch Intentional removal of smaller flakes from an edge of a flake to form a serrated edge.

Rock art Visual images on rock surfaces. Rock art sites can provide information about communication, rituals, travel routes and knowledge systems.

Rock shelter/cave A sheltered area within a cliff line, boulder or outcrop, which has formed naturally. Shelters and caves can provide information about occupation via deposits of stone artefacts, ochre, plant material etc.

Rock well Natural hole in a rock enlarged to form wells that held water.

Rhyolite Silica rich igneous volcanic rock.

Sacred sites Places that have religious significance.

Salvage The collection of archaeological data and materials from a site that is in danger of destruction.

Sandstone A sedimentary rock with rounded sand particles up to 2mm in size.

Scarred tree A tree that has a scar/s where bark or wood was removed to make canoes, shelters, carrying vessels, or foot-holds cut to gain access to possums, honey, eggs etc.

Scraper Retouched flake with one or more modified edges.

Sedimentary rocks Rocks formed by the accumulation of sediments.

Shale Fine grained sedimentary rock composed of mud and clay.

Shell midden A site where shell is the predominant cultural material. Middens can provide information about food sources and periods of occupation.

Silcrete Very brittle rock composed of quartz fragments.

Site A place that represents a particular focus of past human activity.

Site distribution General spread of sites across locations.

Spit Unit of archaeological excavation with an arbitrarily assigned measurement.

Strata Many layers of earth or levels in an archaeological site.

Stratigraphy The layering of deposits in an archaeological site.

Stone arrangement Stones placed in a certain way to form circles, semi-circles, lines and routes, which sometimes identified ceremonial grounds.

Stone artefact Any stone or rock flaked or ground into shape, or made from a combination of these methods and used by Aboriginal people. Includes pieces used as tools and waste products (debitage)

Stone quarry A site where Aboriginal people collected suitable types of stone for the manufacturing of tools, and/or ceremonial and sacred items.

Survey The systematic examination of the ground surface in search of archaeological sites.

Tachylyte Form of basaltic volcanic glass formed by rapid cooling of molten basalt.

Tertiary A geological period from 66 million to

2.58 million years ago.

Transect Lines that cut across a survey area.

Trench An excavation unit.

Use-wear Microscopic traces of wear on a stone tool.

Unidirectional The same direction.

Ventral Front surface (opposite of dorsal).

Vertosols Clay soils with shrink/swell properties that display strong cracks when dry.

Volcanic glass Uncrystallised form of rapidly cooling magma (lava).

Waste flake See DEBITAGE

What is a Gender Impact Assessment?

A Gender Impact Assessment is a process for assessing how a policy, program or service will impact people of different genders differently. The aim of a Gender Impact Assessment is to apply a 'gender lens' to service delivery to ensure that differences between people of different gender are acknowledged and assessed. Gender Impact Assessment help us consider the needs and experiences of people of all genders, so to ensure that our work is gender-aware and does not reinforce inequalities.

Why is it important to consider gender?

In many circumstances, women, men and gender diverse individuals may not have the same access to resources, responsibilities and economic or social opportunities. This means that policies, programs and services are likely to be experienced differently and have different outcomes for people of different genders. A gender-aware approach acknowledges that different strategies are often necessary for people of different genders.

Why are Gender Impact Assessments important in Local Government?

Under the Gender Equality Act 2020, defined entities (including local government organisations) are obliged to undertake a Gender Impact Assessment when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service that has a **direct** and **significant** impact on the public. As stated in the Act, a Gender Impact Assessment must:

- **Assess** the effects that the policy, program or service may have on people of different genders;
- **Explain** how the policy, program or service will be developed or varied in order to:
 - Meet the needs of persons of different genders; and
 - Address gender inequality; and
 - Promote gender equality; and
- **Apply an intersectional approach** by considering how the end user's experience of gender inequality may be shaped by other aspects of their identity including: Aboriginality; age; disability; ethnicity; gender identity; race; religion; and sexual orientation.

Using this toolkit:

This Gender Impact Assessment toolkit is a guide to gender analysis of Horsham Rural City Council policies, programs and services. The tools and checklists will help HRCC staff decide whether a GIA need be conducted

The toolkit has been developed in alignment with the *Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector Gender Impact Assessment Toolkit* and the *Local Government Gender Analysis Toolkit* developed by *Latrobe City Council* and *Gippsland Women's Health*.

1. Do I need to conduct a GIA?

1.1. Is the policy, program or service new or up for review?

The requirement to conduct gender impact assessments only applies to policies, programs and services that are **new** or **up for review**. Defined entities are **not** required to assess policies, programs and services that are already in place unless they are being formally reviewed.

Question 1.	Response (please highlight relevant response):
Is the policy, program or service new or up for review?	YES – please progress to 1.2 .
	NO – a Gender Impact Assessment is not required.

1.2. Does the policy, program or service require community engagement, or is it a part of the Health & Wellbeing Plan?

A policy, program or service that requires community engagement or is part of the Health & Wellbeing Plan is deemed to automatically meet the criteria of having a **direct** and **significant** impact on the public.

Question 2.	Response (please highlight relevant response):
Does the policy, program or service require community engagement?	YES (to either/both) – it is recommended that a Gender Impact Assessment be completed. Please progress to 2. Completing a Gender Impact Assessment .
Is the policy, program or service identified in the Health and Wellbeing Plan?	NO (to both) – please progress to 1.3 . A Gender Impact Assessment may still be required.

1.3. Does the policy, program or service directly and significantly impact the public?

1.3.1. Complete the decision making matrix

The decision making matrix below has been developed to help you assess if a policy, program or service **directly** and **significantly** impacts the public.

Please highlight the score (1, 2 or 3) for each question which best describes the policy, program or service you are assessing.

HRCC GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

	Question:	Score		
		1	2	3
Direct	Will this policy, program or service directly impact the public?	No impact	Some impact	Direct impact 3
Significant	What proportion of the community that your organisation typically serves will the policy, program or service affect?	<1%	1% - 20% 2	20% +
	Does the policy, program or service target people who experience particular disadvantage?	No	Maybe / Potentially 2	Yes
	Is there an impact on health, wellbeing, social, environmental, economic, or cultural outcomes for any part of the community?	No	Maybe / Potentially	Yes 3
	What is the total duration of this policy, program, or service?	Once off (e.g. 1 day)	Temporary (e.g. a few weeks/months)	Ongoing (e.g. many years) 3

1.3.2. Tally your score

Total score:	13/15
Additional comments:	<i>The Burnt Creek Jumps will have a large impact on the youth within the community as this is a space where they don't feel intimidated by other older kids.</i>

1.3.3. Use the below table to determine whether a GIA should be completed

Total Score	Gender Impact Assessment Required?	Outcome
5 – 7	No	Indirect and low impact on consumers and the public. Please send this document, with section 1 completed, to hr@hrcc.vic.gov.au
8 – 10	Recommended	Moderately direct and medium level impact on consumers and the public. Please progress to 2. Completing a Gender Impact Assessment.

HRCC GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

11 – 15	Yes	Direct and significant impact on the public. Please progress to 2. Completing a Gender Impact Assessment .
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2. Completing a Gender Impact Assessment

It has been determined that the program, policy or service that is new or up for review has a direct and significant impact on the public, and so a Gender Impact Assessment is required.

Please complete, to the best of your ability, section 2.1 – 2.5 of this Gender Impact Assessment toolkit. Guiding resources are available on HRCC's Diversity SharePoint page. Additionally, the People & Culture Team can also provide help and support in using this toolkit.

2.1. Overview:

What is the name of the policy, program or service that is to be analysed?	Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps
Is this a new or existing policy, program or service? (please specify)	New active recreation space of dirt jumps located in a natural river environment within the city boundary.

2.2. Define the issues and challenge assumptions:

In this step you will identify the issues that your policy, service or program is aiming to address and think about how gender, and other inequalities, might shape the policy issue, program or service you are working on.

What issues does this policy, service or program aim to address i.e. why is it needed?	The Burnt Creek Jump Program is aimed to help the users of the space understand the importance of the land and the surrounding elements such as trees, soil and water This is due to the liability issues of the users maintaining the area and jumps themselves. Currently the site is primarily used by boys and the project will explore how girls might also use this space.
Are the people who are targeted and impacted by the policy, program or service included in the decision-making?	The users of the space are going to help with determining the dimensions and the maintenance of the Dirt Jumps.

HRCC GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

Do you think that people of different genders access this policy, program or service in the same way and at the same rate?	Majority of Males use this space – as dirt jumps participants are mostly men/boy's.
What additional needs might there be for people with disabilities, or from different cultural identities, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations or religions?	This space could cater for different genders and ages by placing seating around the area, which will cause different genders to come and interact with the space by sitting and chatting while either watching their kids or friends.

2.3. Understand the context:

This step outlines how you will undertake research and data collection on the gender implications of your policy, program or service.

How will you find the information you need to understand who will be affected by the policy, program or service and how?	Desktop analysis: Plans and strategies of similar spaces from other councils Application of contemporary principles re: maintenance of Dirt Jumps MAV Insurance Community engagement
	Data will be analysed according to gender, age and ability to participate (physical requirements, facilities, affordability, programming) The data collected will help us in determining what heights, widths and general maintenance the Users and the Depot works will approve of.
<u>Who</u> is likely to be affected by the policy, program or service? How many, and what proportions of the affected population are likely to be: • women; • men; • of various gender identities; • of various cultural backgrounds; • living with disabilities; or • in different age brackets?	Until analysis is undertaken, the number and diversity of groups can't be quantified but we expect the following groups to be positively impacted: • Guardians – women, grandparents, men • People of various gender identities • People of various cultural backgrounds • People of various age groups

HRCC GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

How is this policy, program or service likely to have different impacts for different people?	A successful Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps Plan (Program?) will provide an action plan for change. This will include: • Providing appropriate seating • Providing the space with informative signage • Creation of age friendly jumps so people of different ages can all the shared space • Creation of welcoming spaces so people are encouraged to be more socially connected e.g. Guardian or Girls • Creating a space where the users feel safe
What barriers might inhibit different genders or diverse community groups from accessing and using the policy, program or service?	Unconscious bias – externally – Not liking the idea of Council maintaining the Dirt Jumps for the users Budget limitations and the values expressed in budget allocations The Asset plan also reveals the challenge of current funding allocations and the gap with existing funding is already demonstrated. This creates further resistance to change in the creation and maintenance of new and enhanced public spaces like the Dirt Jumps.

2.4. Options Analysis

Use the information you have gathered in Steps 2.2 and 2.3 to develop an option or options for your proposed policy, program or service. If more than 2 options are required, please copy and paste the table provided to you.

OPTION 1: NO CHANGE

Description of policy solution or program or service design:	The Burnt Creek Jumps is reviewed without considering the impact of maintenance and gender. The Jumps become excluded from the maintenance schedule and the users continue to maintain the space themselves. The Jumps
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HRCC GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

	don't receive any seating, fencing or signage ideas from Laimiga.
Gender benefits:	HRCC continues to provide spaces (unconsciously) designed to cater for men and that continue to reinforce gender differentiation and gaps in the equal provision of services Gender benefits do not eventuate with a possible increase in gender-based health inequities, including violence against women, girls and gender diverse people. The consequence of no action is ignoring advice that has been given from MAV Insurance, liability risk from the users and demolishing the use of community space.
Gendered costs/risks:	Perpetuates gender inequality by reinforcing unbalanced norms, roles and relations. Social connection is not encouraged. The public realm is not accessible. Dirt Jumps aren't safe. Privileges men over women and gender diverse people. Ignores differences in opportunities and resource allocation for people of different genders. Ignores the safety of the community.
Overall gender impact (benefits >/=< costs):	Do not have the tools to calculate the costs but Aust averages are that the health benefit ratio of investment for health outcome is \$1:\$13 HRCC would be losing the potential for a \$13 health return on every dollar invested.

HRCC GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

OPTION 2: CHANGE

Proposed Option 2	The Burnt Creek Jumps is reviewed with considering the impact of maintenance and gender.
Gender benefits:	Considers gender norms, roles and relations for people of different genders and how structures and public infrastructure affects access to and control over resources. Promotes the elimination of existing gender gaps, or at least supports a significant reduction of access and participation barriers. Addresses the causes of gender-based health inequities, including the prevention of violence against women, girls and gender diverse people. Includes ways and provides infrastructure to transform harmful gender norms, roles and relations. The consequence of no action are no longer an issue and MAV Insurance is comfortable with the results Council have submitted. The liability risk of demolishing the use of community space is no longer an issue
Gendered costs/risks:	Provides real options for people of differing abilities, interests, gender norms, roles and relations to participate in public places – both for increased levels of physical activity, but also for social connectedness and emotional wellbeing. Supports girls and women and other groups to actively enjoy the park – to use the Dirt Jumps or socialise. Increase independence of movement if people are wanting to ride alone. Signals an awareness of varying types and degrees of disparity within our community and through the introduction of strategically placed infrastructure, tangibly supports a reduction to barriers preventing access and participation.

HRCC GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

Overall gender impact (benefits >/=< costs):	Do not have the tools to calculate the costs but Aust averages are that the health benefit ratio of investment for health outcome is \$1:13 Eg: Social connectedness, levels of physical activity and DALYs increase. Violence in and out of the home decrease.
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2.5. Recommendations

The final step in the gender impact assessment process is to make a final recommendation based on your analysis

Outline your recommended option from 2.4, including the rationale for this solution:	The Burnt Creek Jumps space when the considering of maintenance and gender have been taken into account the designs of the space start to create a safe and welcoming public space. Introducing informative signage to the Dirt Jumps will address factors such as land care, shared responsibilities, protection of the trees etc. Also introducing natural seating such as boulders, will help with increasing the number of girls and women partaking in the space, Fencing to help protect the users and land from disruptive community members. Providing maintenance to the jumps with the involvement of the users and taking height, top, cuts and run up needed. This will be following the advice received from the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the way dirt jumps must be managed. Creating an inclusive, safe and welcoming public space will provide opportunities for active recreation and social connection for an expanded community.
What mitigation strategies could be used to avoid any harmful and unintended outcomes:	Gain the support of Councillors and undertake a program of education for internal staff. In-service training might include: data snap shots

HRCC GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

	– sport and active recreation participation rates (Dirt jump participation), health data and violence against women. (VicPol data). Engage with the Burnt Creek Dirt Jump user group to actively seek out and encourage input and feedback about the changes that need to be made on the jumps.
Explain how your recommendation meets the needs of persons of different genders, addresses gender inequality, and promotes gender equality:	Provides options for people of differing abilities, interests, gender norms, roles and relations to participate in public places – both for increased levels of physical activity, but also for social connectedness and emotional wellbeing. Signals an awareness of varying types and degrees of bike riding and high risk activities that our community wants to partake in. The marginalised groups will change and there will be a better integration of diversity throughout our current users. The Burnt Creek Jump space will be safer, more accessible and more welcoming to all people. Social connectedness and community well-being will improve. Violence towards others and the self will be reduced. Community custodians will emerge.

Next Steps:

Please forward a copy of this complete Gender Impact Assessment template to the People & Culture Team:

- Email: hr@hrcc.vic.gov.au

Justine Kingan
Director, Community Liveability
Horsham Rural City Council

Dear Justine,

Re Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps – Confirmation of Wimmera CMA Support

Wimmera CMA confirms our support for the Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps and the ongoing management of the site with the aim of ensuring that the dirt jumps can remain and continue to be used by the community in a safe, appropriate and sustainable manner.

During a meeting held onsite on the 14th of May with representatives from Horsham Rural City Council and Barengi Gadjin Land Council we agreed to short-term immediate work being undertaken to improve the safety of the existing jumps.

These works included the:

- Reinstatement of the existing tabletops using fill already onsite; and
- The lowering of the track level between the 'pond/basin' and the creek to allow for the water in the pond/basin to flow back into the creek reducing the risk of stagnant water at the site.

Any soil removed as part of the lowering of the track level and creation of the reconnection could then be used on the site to reinstate the existing jumps under a no net loss of floodplain storage model.

In addition to the short term works mentioned above we indicated that we are happy to work with council and the relevant stakeholders on any future works that they may want to undertake at the site to ensure that the floodplain requirements at the site can be achieved.

We are committed to working collaboratively with Horsham Rural City Council, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, user groups and other stakeholders to support the long-term management and sustainability of the site.

Please feel free to contact me on 0427 316 447 should you wish to discuss our support further.

Yours sincerely



Luke Austin

Acting CEO

15 December 2025

High Level Terms of Agreement between the Wesley Performing Arts and Cultural Centre Incorporated (WPACC) & Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) for the transfer of ownership of Wesley Performing Arts and Cultural Centre (the Property) to HRCC.

WPACC will transfer the ownership of The Wesley Performing Arts and Cultural Centre (the Property) and specified contents upon satisfactory completion of the following conditions:

1. HRCC entering into a legally binding agreement with WPACC that incorporates all remaining terms for the Wesley Redevelopment Project (Project);
2. HRCC resolving to make a funding allocation of \$2.28 million, to be referred to the budget process for 2026 – 2027 financial year for the delivery of the Project; and
3. HRCC making a budget allocation of those funds to the Project.

The legally binding agreement will include the following key provisions:

1. An agreement as to a timeline of commencement and completion of the Project (including a timeline for requests for tender (RFT));
2. An agreed timeline for the transfer of funds raised by WPACC towards the delivery of the Project;
3. A commitment by HRCC to preserve and maintain:
 - a. the building as a performing arts centre (and other ancillary uses);¹
 - b. the property and contents, specifically the Schimmel piano, the Brash Paling piano and the electric organ;
 - c. the unique acoustic and architectural characteristics of the property, including the stain glass windows, heritage organ pipes, an appropriate choice of seating and the use of the Jarrah flooring (where possible); and
 - d. a donor board, with mutual agreement as to the location of the board.
4. HRCC is to obtain WPACC's agreement on dispersal of contents within the Property.
5. An agreement that two members of WPACC remain as members of the Project Control Group for the duration of the Project.
6. Dispute resolution clauses and other usual contractual terms.

¹ Under the Statement of Purpose of WPACC, WPACC could only transfer the Property to HRCC if the predominant purpose will be a performing arts centre. The Committee is required to ensure the Property is used in furtherance of its objective, to promote and ensure continuing performing arts in Horsham.

26 June 2026

Alistair Parker
Chief Executive Officer
VicGrid
Via Engage Victoria and email: vicgrid@deeca.viv.gov.au

Dear Mr Parker

DRAFT 2026 DRAFT VICTORIAN TRANSMISSION PLAN GUIDELINES

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to VicGrid on the Draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP) Guidelines. This submission is made on behalf of nine councils in North West Victoria:

1. Buloke Shire Council
2. Gannawarra Shire Council
3. Hindmarsh Shire Council
4. Horsham Rural City Council
5. Loddon Shire Council
6. Northern Grampians Shire Council
7. Swan Hill Rural City Council.
8. West Wimmera Shire Council
9. Yarriambiack Shire Council

The mainstay of our region's economy is agriculture, and the State's policies to support energy and mining development in our region are having a major impact on our communities. Community uncertainty about (and opposition to) proposed transmission infrastructure, renewables and mining projects is growing and is negatively affecting community cohesion. We urge VicGrid to engage constructively and sensitively with councils and our communities with an understanding of this context.

Our councils take this opportunity to reiterate to VicGrid and the State that the impacts of the energy and mining transitions can only be addressed through strategic, forward investment in our region.

The foundation for our submission is the *Resource Ready - North-Western Victoria Energy & Mining Impact & Readiness Study (Readiness Study)* that our councils developed in collaboration with VicGrid. The Readiness Study is a good example of how Local and State Government can work together to identify the impacts that new industries, including energy and mining, will have on the region and what is needed to address these impacts.

The nine councils urge VicGrid to formally acknowledge the Readiness Study as an evidence base for planning in North-West Victoria and commit to working with us to implement its findings through a funded, strategic investment framework. We propose a stronger role for local government, working with the State, to identify and implement solutions for our region. The outcome we are seeking from this submission is a shared understanding of the impacts on our communities and genuine engagement with you and the

State Government to address energy transition and mining impacts through adequate planning associated with the 2027 VTP.

The Readiness Study describes existing conditions in our region, including labour shortages, extremely low rental vacancy rates, ageing housing stock, financially constrained councils, and infrastructure under pressure. In this context, the cumulative impacts of energy, transmission and mining projects pose significant risks to existing industries, communities and quality of life. These findings must inform how the energy transition is planned and implemented, including in the 2027 VTP.

Community Consultation

A fundamental concern of the nine councils is the adequacy and authenticity of VicGrid's consultation. The experience of our councils across multiple rounds of submissions and engagement has left communities concluding that decisions are not incorporating their input.

Community consultation must be genuine and adequately timed. Our councils and communities seek greater transparency about how feedback shapes decisions. The 2027 Guidelines describe a 'community engagement model' (section 5.1) that amounts to a communications and awareness-raising function. Objectives such as 'increasing awareness' and 'growing our visible presence' sit at the 'inform' level of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) framework, rather than reflecting the meaningful engagement process that our communities deserve.

VicGrid's recently published *Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines* refer (p. 17) to the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Energy Collaboration. As councils have noted to VicGrid before, this is a poor example of engagement as the collaboration has excluded local government and community from its work. We urge VicGrid and the energy industry to work genuinely and collaboratively with councils.

Community Impact

The 2027 Draft VTP Guidelines, like the 2025 VTP Guidelines, remain largely silent on community impacts. The impact of multiple renewable energy, transmission and mining projects on our communities' livelihoods and mental health is significant and sustained. This was documented in the Readiness Study and has been raised repeatedly by councils in their submissions to VicGrid. The Guidelines must include explicit requirements for:

- **Community impacts**, including mental health, to be identified and assessed as part of the VTP process.
- **Cumulative impact assessment** across all proposed projects in each region, not just project-by-project assessments. This is a longstanding gap that has not been addressed despite repeated advocacy from our councils.
- **Decommissioning plans** for all renewable energy and transmission projects. This has been repeatedly raised by councils. The absence of decommissioning requirements remains a significant omission.
- **Forward investment frameworks** that go beyond optional 'social value' initiatives to require strategic, forward investment in line with the scale of impacts. The Readiness Study provides the evidence base for what our region requires. VicGrid and the State should formally acknowledge and fund implementation of its findings.

The councils note the reference in the Guidelines to 'maximising collective benefits'. We support this objective in principle but seek transparency about how it will be achieved in practice. The communities hosting energy infrastructure in our region have seen limited tangible benefits to date, while bearing significant and ongoing costs. The Guidelines must specify the mechanisms through which collective benefits will be delivered and measured.

VicGrid's Access Regime alone will not achieve the outcomes we seek. The councils also seek an active role in the governance of Community Energy Funds.

Scenarios in the VTP Guidelines

In previous submissions, councils have raised their concerns about the potential scale of renewable energy development in our region. In the 2025 VTP, under the high-energy demand scenario, the Western and Northwest Renewable Energy Zones are modelled to host around 45% of the state's new onshore wind and solar energy projects by 2040, even if 9GW of offshore wind is developed.

We are concerned that VicGrid is underestimating the potential scale of renewable energy development in our region by using implausible scenarios in the 2027 VTP.

The *National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005* (NEVA) provides what a VTP must consider. Section 57(1)(a) requires the VTP to:

Define a set of **plausible**, high-impact scenarios that establish the electricity system's 25-year investment needs consistent with Victorian energy policy objectives and market outlook.

The Draft VTP 2027 Guidelines (page 30) include three proposed scenarios, two of which assume Victoria's target of 2GW of offshore wind generation by 2032 is achieved. We submit that these two scenarios are implausible and contravene the NEVA.

The Environment Impact Statement (EIS) for Victoria's most advanced offshore wind project, Star of the South, demonstrates that the 2032 target cannot be achieved. Chapter 4 of the Star of the South's EIS states "If approvals are obtained in the next few years, construction could start around 2030 and electricity generation from 2032." (PDF p. 6). However, the EIS's own project schedule conflicts with this information and shows that turbine construction would not start until 2034 (PDF p. 7). Without turbines, there is no electricity generation. Therefore, the earliest possible date for offshore wind energy generation in Victoria is 2034, two years after the 2032 target.

Moreover, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report 'Managing the Transition to Renewable Energy' (December 2025) found explicitly that Victoria will not meet this 2032 offshore wind target. The Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's response to the report did not challenge this finding.

A transmission plan that does not model its scenarios honestly is not fit for purpose. VicGrid will not comply with the NEVA if it uses implausible scenarios. If offshore wind targets are not met, additional onshore wind and solar generation will likely be required to fill the gap. Much of that generation is likely to be sought from REZ regions like the Western REZ and North-West REZ.

Councils request that VicGrid uses only plausible scenarios in the VTP that reflect a realistic range of offshore wind outcomes, and that the VTP make clear how this would affect the scale and pace of onshore generation required in our region. Without realistic scenarios, our community cannot make informed judgements about what the energy transition means for our region, and councils cannot adequately advocate on their behalf.

The energy transition is having a profound and sustained impact on our communities' wellbeing, our agricultural landscapes and our local economies. Our nine councils remain committed to engaging constructively with VicGrid, but genuine engagement requires that community concerns are treated as fundamental planning inputs. The councils making this submission look forward to genuine engagement with VicGrid.

Yours faithfully



Daniel McLoughlan
Chief Executive Officer
Buloke Shire Council




Geoff Rollinson
Chief Executive Officer
Gannawarra Shire Council




Monica Revell
Chief Executive Officer
Hindmarsh Shire Council




Gail Gatt
Chief Executive Officer
Horsham Rural City Council




Wendy Gladman
Chief Executive Officer
Loddon Shire Council




Brent McAlister
Chief Executive Officer
Northern Grampians Shire Council




Bruce Myers
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Swan Hill Rural City Council




David Bezuidenhout
Chief Executive Officer
West Wimmera Shire Council




Tammy Smith
Chief Executive Officer
Yarriambiack Shire Council



3.



Image credit: Macedon Ranges Regional Sport Precinct Amenities (Macedon Ranges Shire Council)

Funding opportunities

3.1 Funding streams

Funding is available under the following streams. Applicants can apply up to the maximum level of funding for each stream.

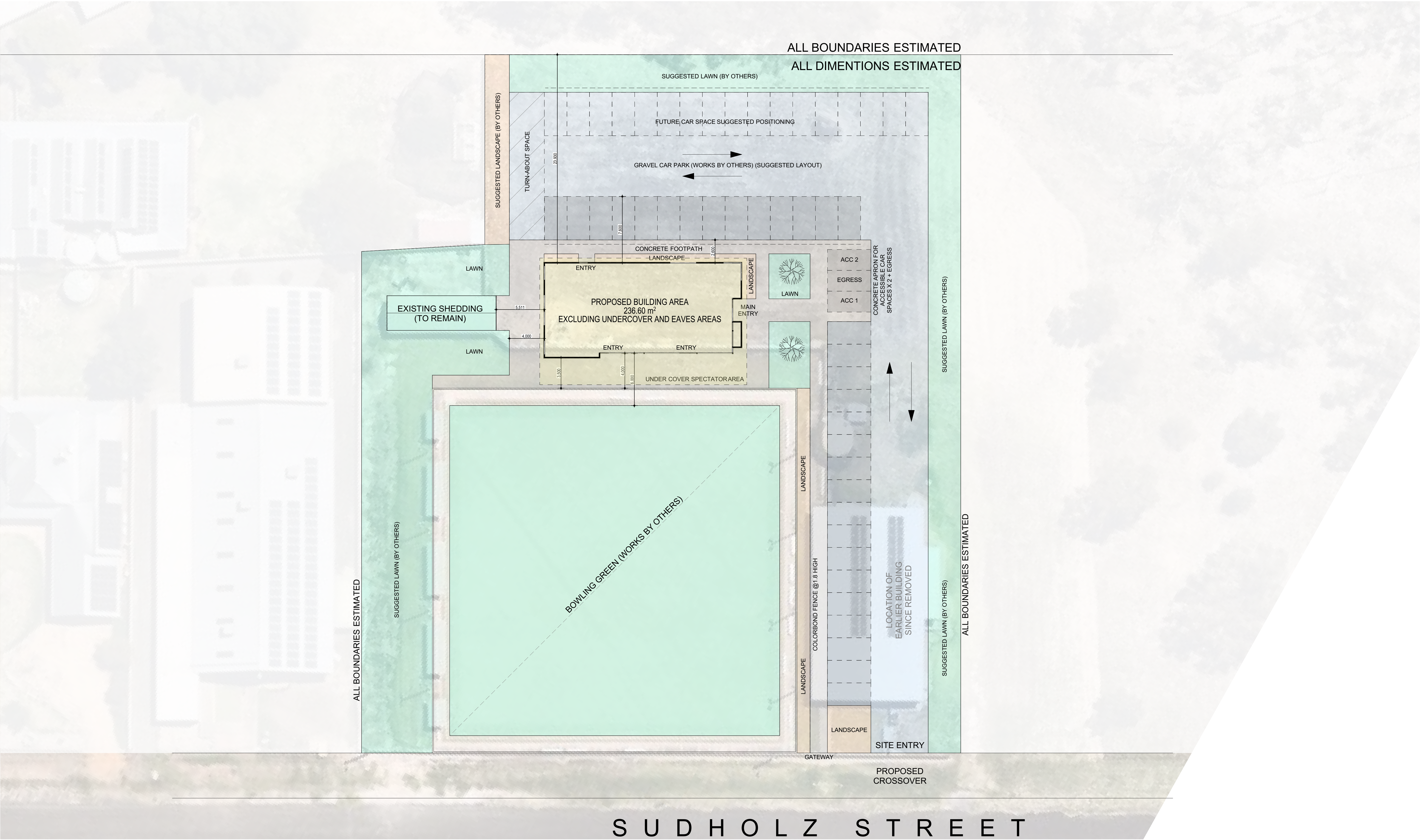
Stream	Community Facilities	Community Sports Lighting	Planning
Maximum total grant amount per applicant	Up to \$500,000	Up to \$250,000	Up to \$40,000
Number of applications	Unlimited but cannot exceed \$500,000 in total across all applications per LGA/ARV	Unlimited but cannot exceed \$250,000 in total across all applications per LGA/ARV	One Facility Planning or One Municipal Planning application per LGA/ARV
Project types eligible for funding	- Develop new or redeveloping change rooms and pavilions to increase capacity, inclusion and safety - new and/or redeveloped sports fields and sports courts - multi-sport training facilities that are publicly accessible - active recreation spaces such as multi-activity facilities, outdoor exercise equipment or redevelopment of indoor spaces, such as appropriate flooring for fitness classes - projects that result in improved facility carrying capacity, such as new drainage, irrigation and grass installations	Funding can only be sought for LED lighting infrastructure through this stream. Priority will be given to sports lighting applications that also provide a confirmed active recreation benefit through improved facility availability, scheduling, public access, and policy development. Please refer to the Will lighting outdoor sports facilities help Victorians to be more active – research summary for further information. - lighting adjacent spaces to facilitate active recreation usage by the community. - new lighting that provides capacity for sports fields, sports courts or playing areas to host activities	The stream provides support to undertake a range of specific facility and strategic planning projects that contribute to infrastructure readiness and/or the long-term direction of facility and open space. Facility Planning (single site facility planning only) facility planning activities supporting project readiness. This may include Designs (minimum schematic) and/or Quantity Surveyor and/or Technical or Specialised Reports (for example, Geotech, Turf analysis, Sustainability Report)

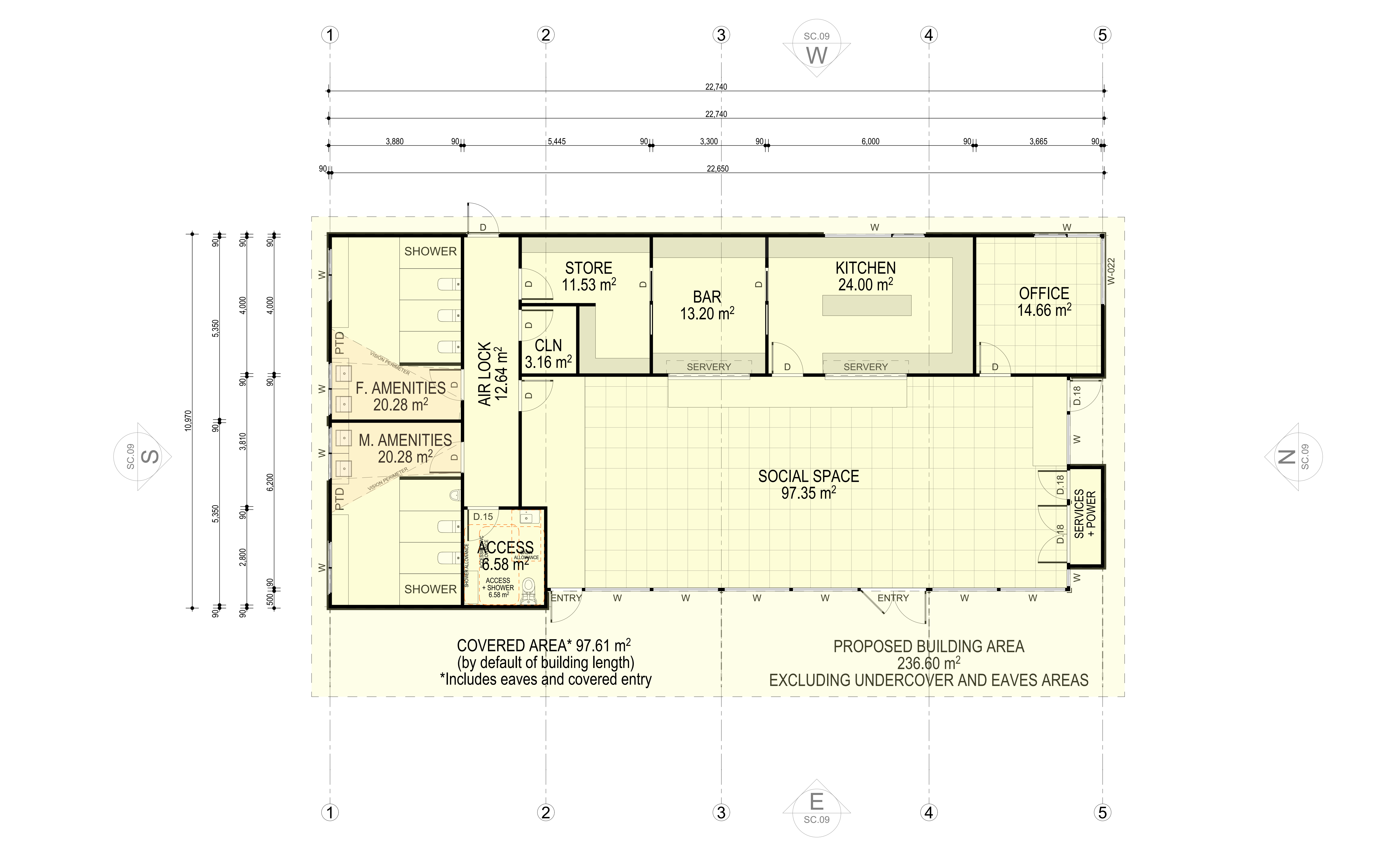
Stream	Community Facilities	Community Sports Lighting	Planning
Project types eligible for funding (cont)	- playspaces, skate parks, pump tracks, BMX tracks, and outdoor splash parks - installation of new LED or redeveloping lighting that benefits community sport and active recreation spaces when forming part of a larger project. - replacement of non-LED lighting with LED lamps to permit lighting standards to be met. Should existing lighting poles and arms be retained, a report from an engineer or other suitable expert confirming that they are structurally sound must be provided - redevelopment/upgrade to outdoor aquatic facilities that improve accessibility and participation such as leisure water, change rooms and energy or water efficiency upgrades, for example, heating of water spaces - re-purposing indoor sport or recreation spaces to create new participation opportunities - redeveloping or complementing sports facilities to include new active recreation infrastructure - accessibility improvements for facilities where Senior Victorians participate such as ramps and change rooms - LED electronic scoreboards and fixed equipment including but not limited to sports field behind goal safety netting and player/coaches' boxes.	- redeveloped or additional lighting to extend capacity (usage times and coverage) of sports fields, sports courts or playing areas - new, redeveloped or additional lighting to extend availability and capacity of active recreation facilities - replacement of non-LED lighting with LED lamps to permit lighting standards to be met. Should existing lighting poles and arms be retained, a report from an engineer or other suitable expert confirming that they are structurally sound must be provided	- proposed facilities should be strategically significant and evidenced by master plans or strategic plans. - single site planning only Municipal Planning - strategic planning for specific facility type/s such as playspaces, aquatic facilities, indoor stadiums, etc. - master planning across 3 or more sites - infrastructure and participation strategies for specific sports and/or active recreation activities - feasibility studies for one or more significant projects.













WEST ELEVATION
1:50



SOUTH ELEVATION
1:50



NORTH ELEVATION
1:50



EAST ELEVATION
1:50

EXTERNAL FINISHES LEGEND - ROOF	
FINISH TAG	FINISH DESCRIPTION
CCD-11	CLADDING - Corodeck / Shale Grey

EXTERNAL FINISHES SCHEDULE - WALL	
FINISH TAG	FINISH DESCRIPTION
PAI-21	PAINT - Colorbond / Pale Eucalypt
PAI-27	PAINT - Colorbond / Terrain
PAI-28	PAINT - Colorbond / Wallaby



Natimuk Bowling Club Inc

PO Box 133 Natimuk 3409

President Bob Pritchett 0438638873
Secretary Graeme Brown 0428340324

Gail Gatt
 CEO
 Horsham Rural City Council

Re: Letter of Support for Funding Strategy for Natimuk Bowling Club Inc

Dear Gail,

We are writing to follow up on the recent funding strategy meeting attended by representatives from Sport and Recreation Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, and Council. This meeting formed part of a series of discussions regarding Natimuk Bowling Club Inc desire to rebuild and secure funding for our future infrastructure needs.

As previously discussed in these meetings, the club's insurance settlement will not fully cover the cost of rebuilding following the loss of our facilities. As a result, additional funding is required to deliver the pavilion and green.

The purpose of the meeting held on 18 June 2026 was to identify a pathway forward for rebuilding the clubrooms and delivering associated infrastructure, including a new bowling green, car parking, accessibility ramps, and other related works.

At that meeting, Sport and Recreation Victoria outlined a funding strategy that would involve applying to the 2026-27 Local Sport Infrastructure fund (LSIF) – Community Facilities Program (closing 28 July 2026) for the bowling club pavilion, while seeking funding for a synthetic bowling green and associated infrastructure through the Community Support Fund. A detailed breakdown of this proposed strategy has been provided to the Club for consideration.

Natimuk Bowling Club Inc held a general meeting of all the members on Monday, 22 June 2026, at which members voted to proceed with the proposed funding strategy. We are therefore seeking Council's support to progress the funding applications.

We understand that Council's role would be to manage the project and administer any grant funding received. The funds received through the proposed grant programs, together with the insurance proceeds currently available to the club, would be used to deliver the proposed infrastructure works.

Should any funding shortfall arise, this would be discussed with Sport and Recreation Victoria and would not become a financial responsibility of the council.

We also understand that funding will be required to undertake the necessary planning and preparatory work to support the applications and project delivery, and the club is committed to making these funds available as required. Ownership of all new infrastructure, together with the land title, would remain with Natimuk Bowling Club Inc.

We thank Council for considering this proposal and for its ongoing support in helping Natimuk Bowling Club Inc rebuild its facilities and secure a sustainable future for our members and the wider community.

Your Sincerely

President

Secretary

Graeme A Brown



AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

BIANNUAL REPORT

For the Period 1 January 2026 to 30 June 2026

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1. BACKGROUND

A Council must establish an Audit and Risk Committee to comply with section 53(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. Once established the Committee must prepare and approve an Audit and Risk Committee Charter (s54(1)) that specifies the functions and responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee as well as an annual work program (s54(3)).

The Charter adopted by the Committee includes provision for review on a biennial basis, or as required following changes to the Act or other relevant legislation. An updated Charter was adopted by Council in September 2022, and a further updated Charter was adopted by the Committee in January 2025.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS BIENNIAL REPORT

This biannual audit and risk report provides Council with a summary of the activities, including findings and recommendations, of the Audit and Risk Committee for the reporting period 1 January to 30 June 2026. It supports Council's accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and HRCC's Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

Specifically, the report meets the requirements under s54(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020* to "prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee and includes its findings and recommendations".

3. COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

The Audit and Risk Committee comprises two appointed Councillors (one of whom is the Mayor) and three independent members with technical expertise and industry experience.

Members over the reporting period were:

- Marilyn Kearney – Independent member and Chair
- Richard Trigg – Independent member
- Anthony Smith – Independent member
- Cr Brian Klowss – Councillor representative and Mayor
- Cr Angela Munn – Councillor representative

Ex-Officio Members:

- External Auditor - Crowe Australasia (Victorian Auditor General's agent)
- Internal Auditor - AFS & Associates Pty Ltd

HRCC Executive attendees:

- CEO – Gail Gatt
- Director Corporate Services – Kim Hargreaves (Acting CEO – April meeting)
- Director Infrastructure – John Martin
- Interim Director Communities and Place – Brett Luxford
- Acting Director Corporate Services – Belinda Johnson (April meeting)

Attendance Report Table

Two meetings were held between 1 January and 30 June 2026 with member attendance as follows:

Name	11 February 2026 Meeting	23 April 2026 Meeting (held online due to fuel crisis)
Marilyn Kearney (Chair)	Attended in person	Online
Richard Trigg	Attended in person	Apology
Anthony Smith	Attended in person	Online
Cr Brian Klowss	Attended in person	Online
Cr Angela Munn	Attended in person	Apology

4. KEY ACTIVITIES DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

4.1. External Audit

- Received and considered the VAGO Audit Strategy Memorandum for the financial year ending 30 June 2026, including the planned audit scope, approach, key risk areas, materiality thresholds and proposed audit timelines.
- Endorsed the external audit strategy for the financial year ending 30 June 2026, noting alignment with *Local Government Act 2020* requirements for sound financial management and oversight and the Committee Charter responsibilities for effective external audit arrangements.
- Requested ongoing updates from management and external auditors on audit progress, emerging risks and any changes to the audit plan.
- Continued oversight of the implementation of prior VAGO management letter findings, including updates on audit actions in relation to excess leave balances and leave approval workflow matters.

4.2. Internal Audit

- Monitored delivery of the three-year risk-based Strategic Internal Audit Program adopted by the Committee in September 2025.
- Considered and endorsed the scope of the proposed Human Resource Risk Management internal audit to HRCC.
- Considered the outcome and key findings of the Procurement Internal Audit, endorsed management's agreed actions and requested ongoing reporting against implementation of audit recommendations.
- Requested that progress against endorsed audit recommendations and delivery of the Strategic Internal Audit Program continue to be reported to the Committee.
- Considered the scope of the Closed Internal Audit Recommendations Review.
- Received internal audit industry updates and requested management responses on relevant matters including data governance, psychological health regulations, hardship and financial hardship for ratepayers, and cyber security.
- Considered management responses to internal audit industry updates on data governance and psychological health, and requested reporting be updated to reference the *Occupational Health and Safety (Psychological Health) Regulations 2025* briefing provided to Councillors.

4.3. Financial reporting:

- Monitored quarterly financial and performance reports (Q2 to 31 December 2025 and Q3 to 31 March 2026) noting the inclusion of financial reporting, performance indicators and initiatives aligned to the 2025–2029 Council Plan.
- Considered changes to the Local Government Planning and Reporting Framework indicators to apply from the 2026/27 year and noted Council's approach to the amended requirements.
- Received an update on 2025/26 asset valuation review and year-end preparation, including the Revaluations Summary Report, Unit Justification Report, Accounting for Assets Policy review timing and mandatory migration to Assetic Cloud Asset Management System.

4.4. Governance:

- Welcomed new independent member Anthony Smith at the February 2026 meeting.
- Adopted the 2026 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Work Program.
- Confirmed no mid-cycle review of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter was required during the reporting period, with the next biennial review due in late 2026.
- Reviewed the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and recommended to Council that the revised Policy be adopted.
- Requested consideration be given to outsourcing fraud reporting to a third-party provider in future reviews of the Fraud and Corruption Control Framework.

- Received and noted the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality report for the period 1 January to 31 December 2025.
- Received the Rural Councils Corporate Collaboration (RCCC) project closing report and associated documentation submitted to the Rural Councils Transformation Program.
- Noted completion of actions arising from the Committee self-assessment results after presentation to Council in February 2026.

4.5. Risk Management

- Endorsed the Operational Risk Work Plan as an appropriate mechanism to support oversight of Council's risk management framework and requested regular progress updates regarding implementation, emerging risks, significant changes and items requiring escalation.
- Received updates on implementation of the Operational Risk Work Plan, including commencement of the operational risk review program, development of a consolidated Risk Reference Document to support consistent risk assessment practices across the organisation, and enhancements to the RelianSys risk management system to improve risk reporting and data quality.
- Received updates on the review and implementation of Council's Strategic Risks, including the consolidation of strategic risks aligned to the Council Plan, endorsement by the Executive Management Team, transition into the RelianSys system and preparation for enhanced strategic risk reporting.
- Requested management consider providing the Strategic Risks to Council for consideration and adoption; the Strategic Risks were subsequently presented to Councillors on 30 March 2026.
- Received Insurance Report updates to 31 January 2026 (February meeting) and 31 March 2026 (April meeting), including claims reporting, environmental liability, fire-related market impacts, asset coverage, insurance renewals and building/site improvement valuations.
- Sought clarification as to the rationale for HRCC to include bridges in its insurance coverage.

4.6. CEO Report

- Received updates on the Grass Flat fire recovery activities and Council's ongoing role in supporting community recovery, infrastructure restoration and stakeholder engagement with affected residents and agencies.
- Received updates on Council's response and recovery activities arising from the 2026 summer fire events, including support provided to affected communities, advocacy to government agencies, coordination with recovery partners and delivery of community recovery initiatives.
- Received updates on the activation of Council's Business Continuity Plan in response to fuel price and fuel availability concerns, including assessment of operational impacts, continuity arrangements for critical services and contingency planning to mitigate disruption to Council operations and essential community services.
- Received updates on flooding and roof leaks at the Civic Centre following a significant storm event, including response actions, damage assessments, rectification works, operational impacts and ongoing monitoring of the building.
- Received updates on property lease and licence matters, including management of existing agreements, governance and compliance considerations, negotiations and other matters requiring ongoing management oversight and future reporting to the Committee.
- Received updates on Council submissions prepared to Government, including advocacy on matters of strategic importance to the municipality and local government sector.
- Received updates on the implementation of the HRCC Enterprise Agreement and associated workforce matters.
- Received updates on the implementation of the Organisation Realignment, including progress against the revised structure, workforce impacts, service delivery considerations and associated organisational change activities.
- Received a report on the implementation of the Municipal Monitors Report recommendations

arising from the report released in November 2025, including progress against recommended actions and ongoing governance improvement initiatives.

4.7. Other reporting

- Considered the Information Technology update on cybersecurity activity, disaster recovery and business continuity progress, including Essential Eight Target Maturity Level 2 and future cybersecurity partnerships.
- Received and noted management's response to the 2025 JLT Cyber Security Review as represented against 12 key security controls.
- Received a report on the Dooen Landfill Operations Audit (including recommendations relating to leachate and groundwater monitoring, processes, procedures and actions from previous audits) and requirement for the next audit to be completed by 30 April 2027.

5. MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

In accordance with Section 54(6) of the *Local Government Act 2020* the Chief Executive Officer must ensure the preparation and maintenance of agendas, minutes and reports of the Audit and Risk Committee and table reports and annual assessments of the Committee at Council meetings when required by the Act and when requested by the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Charter adopted by the Committee requires the unconfirmed minutes to be reported to Council within two months of the Committee meeting. In accordance with that requirement, all unconfirmed minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee were presented within two months of the Committee meeting.

6. CONCLUSION

This report provides the twelfth biannual update on the activities and recommendations from Council's Audit and Risk Committee and represents reporting for the six-month period from 1 January to 30 June 2026. It is prepared in accordance with the requirements of s54(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

It is the view of the Audit and Risk Committee that the information provided throughout the reporting period meets the required objectives of the Committee's work as outlined in the legislation and the Committee's Charter.

The Committee acknowledges the cooperation of HRCC management and staff and appreciates the assistance of external auditors and internal audit providers.

The Committee looks forward to continuing to fulfil its role and working with Council and its auditors during the 2026-27 financial year and will provide its next Biannual report for the period 1 July 2026 to 31 December 2026.

This report has been provided to all members of the Committee.

Marilyn Kearney
Chair, HRCC Audit and Risk Committee



MINUTES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS
COUNCIL BRIEFING HELD IN RECEPTION ROOM AT THE HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY 29 JUNE 2026 AT 5:30PM

ATTENDED: Cr Brian Klowss (Mayor), Cr Bec Sluggett (Deputy Mayor), Cr Cam McDonald, Cr Angie Munn, Cr Dean O'Loughlin, Cr Ian Ross, Cr Todd Wilson, Gail Gatt, Chief Executive Officer; Justine Kingan, Director Community Liveability; John Martin, Director Infrastructure

APOLOGIES: Kim Hargreaves, Director Organisational Performance

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST SEC 130 and 131, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020 AND HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE RULES

Nil

3. PRESENTATION

3.1 Report back from ALGA (Cr Sluggett, Cr Wilson, Gail)

4. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

4.1 WJJWJ People Land Use Activity Agreement overview

4.2 Yarning circle and Aboriginal Round Table

5. COUNCIL MEETING REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

5.1 Patching Truck Rescission

6. VERBAL UPDATE

6.1 Wesley Upgrade - Property transfer

6.2 Wesley Upgrade - Tender Update

7. GENERAL DISCUSSION (Gail Gatt)

8. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 7:30pm.

DINNER

GAIL GATT

Chief Executive Officer



MINUTES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS
COUNCIL BRIEFING HELD AT THE ROBERTS AVENUE KINDERGARTEN
MONDAY 6 JULY 2026 AT 6:55PM

ATTENDED: Cr Brian Klowss (Mayor), Cr Cam McDonald, Cr Angie Munn, Cr Dean O'Loughlin, Cr Ian Ross, Cr Todd Wilson, Gail Gatt, Chief Executive Officer; Kim Hargreaves, Director Organisational Performance; Justine Kingan, Director Community Liveability; John Martin, Director Infrastructure

APOLOGIES: Cr Bec Sluggett (Deputy Mayor)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST SEC 130 and 131, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020 AND HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE RULES

Cr Ian Ross declared a conflict of interest for item 3.1. Cr Ross left the room at 6:55pm when the item was discussed and returned at 7:26pm.

3. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- 3.1 Planning and Development Update - 'VCAT, Building and Planning Permit Report and Proposed Refusals

4. COUNCIL BRIEFING REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Footpath Vegetation Clearance Incentive

5. COUNCIL MEETING REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

- 5.1 Natimuk Bowling Club rebuild
- 5.2 SRV ISIF Application

DINNER (Dinner at 7:26pm, reconvened at 7:30pm)

6. GENERAL DISCUSSION (Gail Gatt)

Crs agreed to extend the meeting beyond 9pm - extend by 30 mins

7. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 9:32pm.

GAIL GATT
Chief Executive Officer



MINUTES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS
COUNCIL BRIEFING HELD IN RECEPTION ROOM AT THE HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY 13 JULY 2026 AT 5:30PM

ATTENDED: Cr Brian Klowss (Mayor), Cr Bec Sluggett (Deputy Mayor), Cr Cam McDonald, Cr Angie Munn, Cr Dean O'Loughlin, Cr Ian Ross, Cr Todd Wilson, Gail Gatt, Chief Executive Officer; Kim Hargreaves, Director Organisational Performance; Justine Kingan, Director Community Liveability; John Martin, Director Infrastructure

APOLOGIES: Nil

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST SEC 130 and 131, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020 AND HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE RULES

Nil

3. PRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Natimuk Road Bike Path Community Presentation
- 3.2 Youth Council Presentation

4. COUNCIL MEETING REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Play Space Strategy
- 4.2 Pit 23 Waste
- 4.3 Three Bridges Rd - Haven - "Petition"

5. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- 5.1 Capex progress report (2 monthly)
- 5.2 Procurement - Quarterly Variations report

6. GENERAL DISCUSSION (Gail Gatt)

DINNER (Dinner at 7:30pm, reconvened at 7:38pm)

7. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 9:06pm.

GAIL GATT
Chief Executive Officer



MINUTES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS
COUNCIL BRIEFING HELD IN RECEPTION ROOM AT THE HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY 20 JULY 2026 AT 5:30PM

ATTENDED: Cr Brian Klowss (Mayor), Cr Bec Sluggett (Deputy Mayor), Cr Cam McDonald, Cr Angie Munn, Cr Ian Ross, Cr Todd Wilson, Gail Gatt, Chief Executive Officer; Kim Hargreaves, Director Organisational Performance; Justine Kingan, Director Community Liveability; Krishna Shrestha, Acting Director Infrastructure

APOLOGIES: John Martin, Director Infrastructure; Cr Dean O'Loughlin

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST SEC 130 and 131, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020 AND HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE RULES

Cr Bec Sluggett declared a conflict of interest for Item 3.5. Cr Sluggett left the room at 7:44pm when the item was discussed and returned at 7:49pm.

3. COUNCIL MEETING REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

- 3.1 ARC Chair - Biannual report to Council (January and July)
- 3.2 Natimuk Bowling Club rebuild
- 3.3 Wesley Performing Arts Centre
- 3.4 Burnt Creek Dirt Jumps
- 3.5 Aerodrome Lighting Grant Application
- 3.6 Request for rent reduction (Commercial Property)

4. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- 4.1 Procurement - Quarterly Variations report
- 4.2 Draft Submission to 2026 Draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines

DINNER (Dinner at 7:27pm, reconvened at 7:44pm)

5. GENERAL DISCUSSION (Gail Gatt)

Briefing closed for CEO/ Councillor only time at 8:36pm.

6. CEO/COUNCILLOR ONLY TIME

7. COUNCILLOR ONLY TIME

8. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 9:00pm.

GAIL GATT
Chief Executive Officer