Memorandum

Date:	29/05/2024
To:	OneSchool Melton (c/-)
From:	[redacted]
CC:	Solve TP
Project Number:	P04536
Reviewed by:	[redacted]
Released by:	

Subject: 775 High Street Melton - Flora and Fauna Assessment

Background

Morphum Environmental has been engaged by OneSchool Melton to conduct a flora and fauna assessment as part of the planning application required by Melbourne Water for the extension of a school carpark at 775 High Street, Melton (the assessment location 'site') Figure 1. The extension of the carpark is anticipated to impact the ephemeral watercourse and existing vegetation present. This flora and fauna assessment is provided to meet the requirements of Melton City Council and Melbourne Water regarding the presence of any significant flora and/or fauna species at the proposed development.

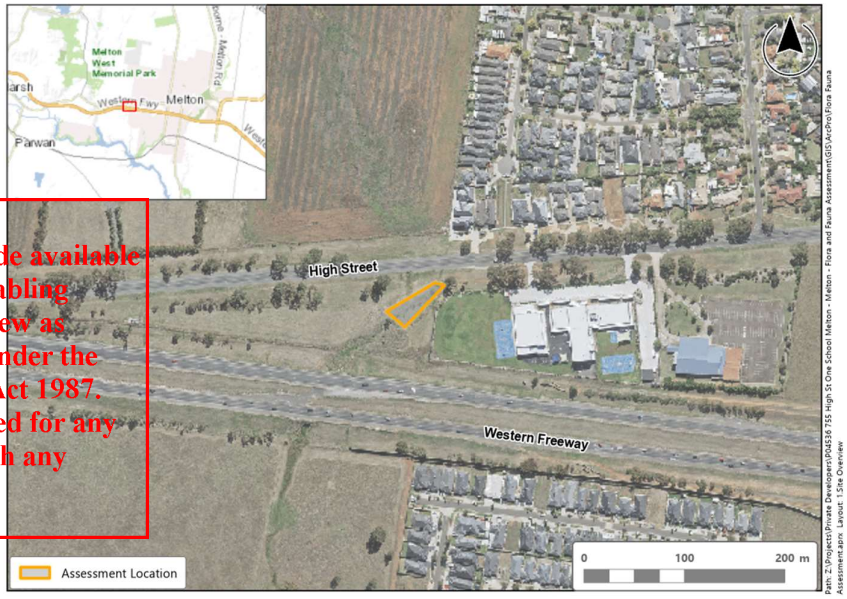

Figure 1: Location of the Site Assessment

Scope

The scope of the works has been to undertake a desktop analysis and on-site assessment of the proposed development to determine the potential presence of flora and fauna species and subsequently, provide recommendations to control any impacts the development may have on identified flora and fauna. This flora and fauna assessment memorandum:

- Determines the ecological value of the site;
- Evaluates any impacts that are likely to occur to any ecological values due to the potential loss of vegetation at the site;
- Evaluates the extent and quality of native vegetation within the site required under the Native Vegetation Removal Regulations (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, 2023); and,
- Provides practicable recommendations to mitigate and control these ecological values, if any, based on relevant legislation and policies.

It is important to note that this assessment was subject to the following limitations:

- The survey provided is an observation of flora and fauna at the single site visit only. Different seasonal conditions may yield a different result in species identified. The assessment has addresses this by conducting the survey over a 4-hour timespan during dusk to enhance the likelihood of capturing species such as birds, reptiles, mammals and amphibians. The onsite assessment was supported by the information provided/ obtained during the desktop assessment.
- The survey has also not included a survey of invertebrates that may occur within the proposed development. However, the search of Victorian Biodiversity Atlas records revealed no endangered or threatened invertebrates nearby.

Proposed Development Location

The existing site is approximately 3.6 km from the township of Melton and lies between the existing arterial roads being the Western Freeway and High Street. The proposed extension will extend approximately 120 m west of an existing carpark and will increase the carpark footprint by 2,800 m^2. This extension will expand existing parking capacity and improve access to the school. Figure 2 provides a layout of the proposed carpark extension that runs parallel to High Street, whilst also highlighting the site of assessment indicated by the orange polygon.

The expansion will span across two existing ephemeral watercourses as depicted Figure 3 and be within close proximity to a number of established trees (native and exotic).

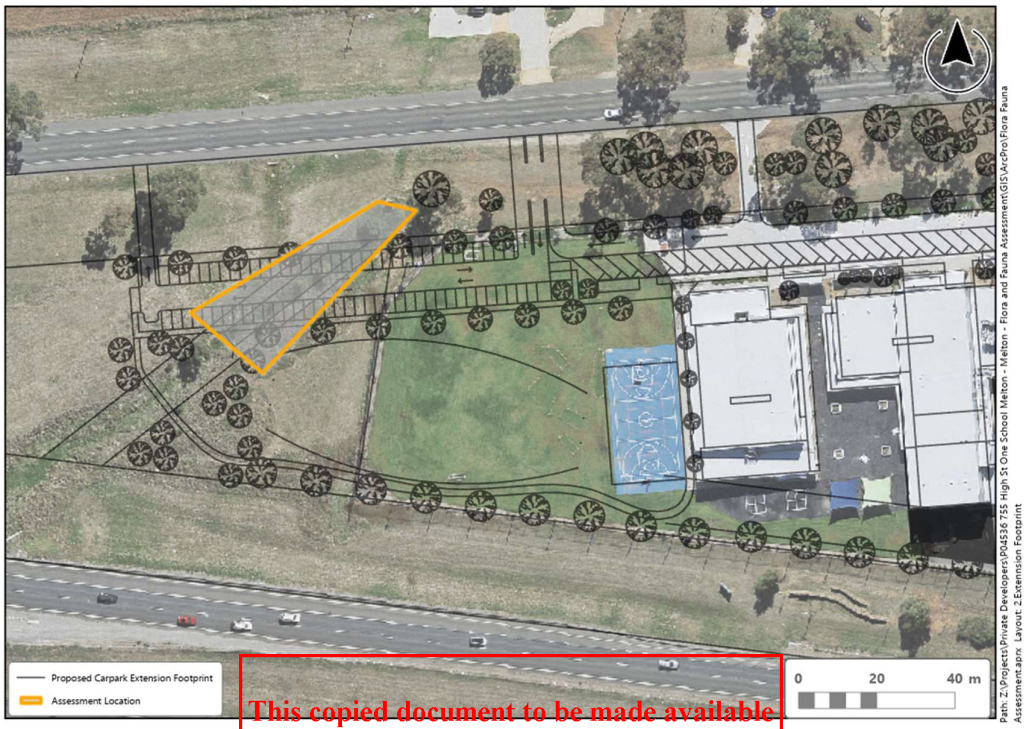

Figure 2: Proposed Carpark Extension Footprint

Surrounding Land Use and Melton City Council Ordinance

The proposed development is located within Melton City Council (MCC) which is a fast-growing municipality in Victoria (City of Melton, 2024). As seen in Figure 6 and Figure 7, site is located within an Urban Growth Zone as per Melton City Council ordinance. Additionally, the proposed development is surrounded by peri urban areas, residential land, commercial and conservation zones for public use. Appendix 1 provides an overview of the planning zones applicable to the site and its surrounds.

Despite the proximity of the site to the watercourse, it does not fall within an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) or Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). The proposed development is, however, subject to MCC's planning scheme provision 52.17 Native Vegetation, which relates to the removal of species within a development area as seen in the Melton City Council ordinance.

Site Characteristics

The site is partially mowed and maintained by OneSchool Melton, with vegetation existing no more than three metres beyond the top of bank of the two ephemeral watercourses. Within 150 m of the site (north) is a developed housing estate where construction predates 2009 (see Figure 2).

Surrounding the site are a number of established native trees which is anticipated to provide vital habitat for local fauna. These trees are scattered throughout the road easement and are thus excluded from this flora and fauna assessment as any flora and fauna disturbances are only expected within the development footprint.

The land slopes gradually west and towards the two ephemeral watercourses. The slope of the land is no greater than 2% and no erosion or frequent flooding is evident onsite. The watercourses flow in a

southwest direction towards the Western Freeway Figure 3. It was determined onsite that the main defined channel is approximately 15 m wide and 2 m deep. At the time of the site visit, this channel held small pools of water <2 m^2 in footprint and it is anticipated that flows are only experienced during high rainfall events. See Appendix 4 for main watercourse photos.

The second unnamed watercourse that is depicted in Figure 3 (dry at time of inspection – see photo 9 in Appendix 4) acts as a shallow swale and is approximately 15 m wide and 0.5 m deep. It is apparent that this watercourse is engaged far less frequently than the main watercourse (See Image 7 and 8 in Site Photos). This watercourse does not contain any tree species within its width.

Figure 3 Digital Twin Victoria Recognised Watercourses (Vicmap Hydro)

Methodology

A desktop assessment was then undertaken to review flora and fauna species records and the closest nearby ecological vegetation class to inform the on-site assessment Figure 4 and Figure 5. A 10 km search radius was used to identify any nearby species that were either listed in the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act or listed in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Records dating prior to 1999 have been excluded from this assessment due to the age of records and significant development that has occurred within the region since that time.

The assessment has included the following methods to determine presence of flora and fauna within the study area:

- Desktop review of existing literature and databases on flora and fauna in the region.
- Review of available statewide biodiversity databases including data from the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas and Victorian Digital Twin Platform, Nature Kit, Atlas of Living Australia (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2024b, Nature Kit, 2024, Atlas of Living

Australia, 2024), and search for local species reports in the Statewide Integrated Flora and Fauna Teams – SWIFFT (State Wide Integrated Flora and Fauna Teams [SWIFFT], 2024) to determine threatened species within a 10 km radius.

- An observation only field assessment was to be undertaken to identify and document flora and fauna species present. This assessment was conducted two hours either side of dusk (6pm) and included documenting exotic and native vegetation species observed, fauna observations including presence of scat and tracks, and callback assessments targeted at growling grass frogs. The Growling Grass Frog callback assessment was undertaken as the desktop assessment revealed there had been a record of potential growling grass frog within the 10km radius.

Results - Desktop Assessment

The desktop assessment found 60 Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act Listed species recorded within 10 kilometres of the proposed development. Of the 60 species, 27 were fauna species (4 species critically endangered, 7 species endangered and 16 species vulnerable) and the remaining 33 species were flora species (8 species critically endangered, 17 species endangered, 1 species threatened and 7 species vulnerable), this list can be viewed in Appendix 2.

Despite this high number of threatened species within a 10km radius, it should be noted that only one species and record of threatened flora, *Corymbia maculata* – Spotted Gum (blue point in Figure 4), has been recorded within 200 m of the site, additionally a single threated fauna record, *Aythya australis* – Hardhead (yellow point in Figure 4), was found more than 1 km from the site.

The nearest Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) was also reviewed to inform the onsite assessment of the potential native vegetation that may persist within the proposed development. EVC 132 – Plains Grassland was found within 100 m from the site Figure 5.

Figure 4: Distance to Closest VBA Flora and Fauna records

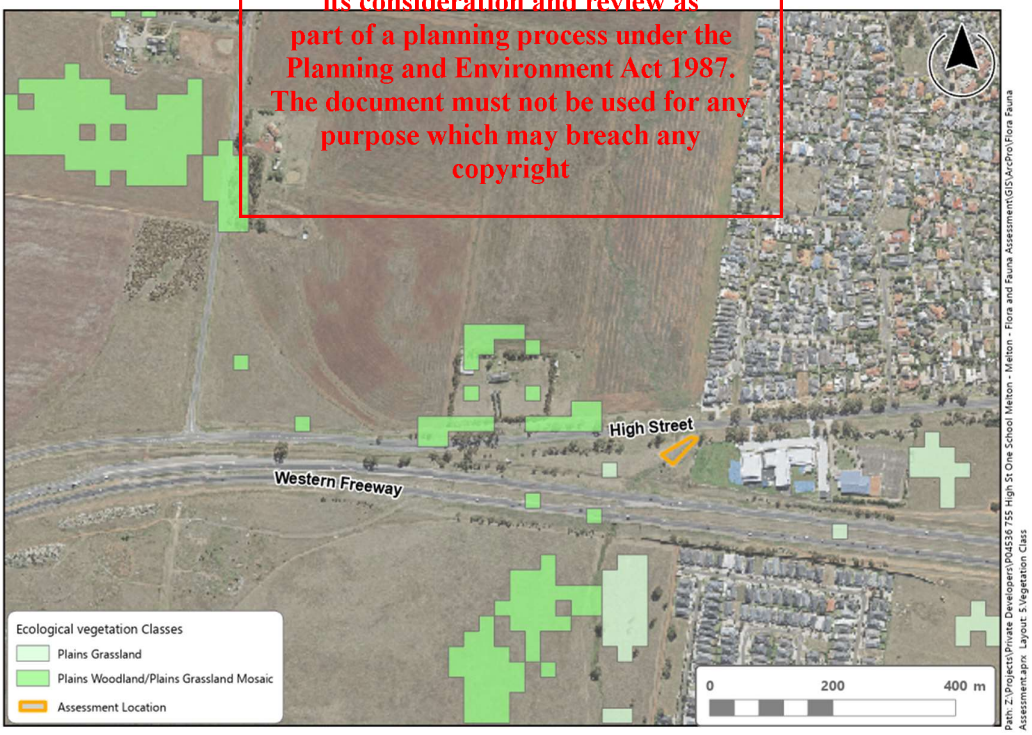

Figure 5: Ecological Vegetation Classes Nearby the Site

Results - Onsite Assessment

The onsite assessment was conducted on 25th March 2024. Weather conditions at the time of the assessment were clear and the highest temperature recorded was 22.6°C (Bureau of Meteorology, 2024). The assessment was conducted two hours either side of dusk (6pm) to target potential amphibious and other species that may inhabit the waterway, as it is recognised that the twilight period often experiences higher animal movement (Phillips, Robinson, and Klerman, 2013).

The two flora and fauna guarantee act listed species identified in Figure 4 (*Corymbia maculata* – Spotted Gum and *Aythya australis* – Hardhead) were specifically searched for during the site visit, however no records where observed. The site visit revealed total of two native plant species as shown in Table 1(*Poa Labillardieri and Persicaria decipiens)* and 21 exotic plant species were identified within the development footprint which will be impacted by the proposed development.

Flora

The total density of the native species identified was <3 m^2 of the total development area as only three small individuals of *Poa Labillardieri* and two individuals of *Persicaria decipiens* were located (see marked up location in Appendix 3). No flora species of conservation value were identified during the site assessment. Throughout the site it was observed that exotic flora dominates the proposed development footprint with large areas of Coastal Galenia (*Aizoon pubescens*) and Sweet Briar (*Rosa rubiginosa*) present. Exotic tree species were also present within the main watercourse with two established Willow trees (*Salix spp*.) and five occurrences of ash (*Fraxinus spp*.) present. See Table 2 for list of exotic plant species observed and Appendix 3 for approximate locations.

Table 1: Native Flora Species Observed and Risk Matrix

Native Species	Count	Status	Significance	Risk from Construction
Common Tussock Grass - *Poa labillardierei*	3	Native	Common - Non Threatened	Lost
Slender Knotweed - *Persicaria decipiens*	2	Native	Common - Non Threatened	Lost

Table 2: Observed Exotic Plant Species List

Observed Exotic Plant Species List	
Perennial Ryegrass - *Lolium perenne*	Red-flowered Mallow - *Modiola caroliniana*
Cocksfoot - *Dactylis glomerata*	Cleavers - *Galium aparine*
Common couch - *Elymus repens*	Flax-leaf Fleabane - *Erigeron bonariensis*
Canary grass - *Phalaris aquatica*	Drain flat sedge - *Cyperus eragrostis*
Prairie grass - *Bromus wildenowii*	Willow - *Salix spp.*
Coastal galenia - *Aizoon pubescens*	Mintweed - *Salvia reflexa*
Sweet Briar - *Rosa rubiginosa*	Common sowthistle - *Sonchus oleraceus*
Curled Dock - *Rumex crispus*	Blue Passionflower - *Passiflora caerulea*
Creeping buttercup - *Ranunculus repens*	Fennel - *Foeniculum vulgare*

Tree Lucerne - *Cytisus proliferus*

The native vegetation (Common Tussock Grass and Slender Knotweed) discovered within the development footprint as demonstrated in Appendix 3 are individual scattered plants (<3 m^2) and therefore, these are exempt from Melton City Council's planning scheme 52.17 as per the table of exemptions in Council's planning scheme 52.17-7.

The Victorian government native vegetation removal tool (NVR) map was used to determine the appropriate assessment pathway for the proposed development. The tool indicated that native vegetation found within the proposed development was determined to be within a Location 1 category and therefore, only a basic assessment pathway was required for the site (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2024a). A Location 1 category indicates the development of an area that is likely to have limited impact to existing biodiversity values. However, as per the guidelines for native vegetation removal, the scattered occurrences do not qualify as a patch, as they are no greater than 25% of the total perennial understorey (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2024a). No offset will be required as there is expected to only be removal of less than 0.4 hectares of native vegetation. Therefore, selection of an appropriate assessment pathway and further assessment is not required per the Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.

Furthermore, The Melton City Council planning scheme particular provision 52.17-7 (Native vegetation) indicates the table of exemption that Native vegetation that is to be removed, destroyed or lopped on land, together with all contiguous land in one ownership, which has an area of less than 0.4 hectares (Department of Transport and Planning, n.d.). This particular provision exemption applies to the OneSchool Melton site.

Fauna

As described above, the onsite assessment also aimed to identify any fauna species (native/non-native) utilising the area. The assessment was targeted at visual observation of fauna species, as well as documenting any scat or tracks observed within the development footprint. A total of six avian species were identified and are listed in Table 3. No other observations or indications of mammals, amphibians or reptiles were identified within the development footprint during the assessment.

There were no observations or traces (scat or tracks) of mammals, amphibians or reptiles during the site visit which may indicate that the development area is seldom utilised by these species. Despite this, the six different avian species were observed to moving throughout the vegetated watercourse area and utilising the stagnant water pools remaining at the bed of the channel as an important food source and watering location.

Site observations revealed that the vegetation did not harbour any avian nests and thus utilisation was limited to feeding and perching. It was also observed that avian use of the proposed development was predominantly for feeding and watering purposes. Significant linear fragmentation (limiting capacity for species to migrate between adjacent environments) is already apparent around the site due to it already being a developed area and between two arterial roads.

Table 3: Fauna Species observed and risk matrix

Species	Count	Status	Significance	Risks from construction
Rock Dove - *Columba livia*	1	Exotic	Common - Non-Threatened	Habitat loss (Exotic)

New Holland Honey Eater - *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*	4	Native	Common - Non-Threatened	Disturbance including. - Noise - Dust - Vibration Collisions with construction vehicles
Magpie Lark - *Grallina cyanoleuca*	2	Native	Common - Non-Threatened	
Noisy Minor - *Manorina melanocephala*	1	Native	Common - Non-Threatened	
Willie Wagtail - *Rhipidura leucophry*	2	Native	Common - Non-Threatened	
Crested Pigeon - *Ocyphaps lophotes*	1	Native	Common - Non-Threatened	

Despite the exotic nature of the vegetation present onsite and stagnant waterbody present, it is necessary to highlight its importance in providing refuge, feeding and watering opportunities for avian species that utilise the area.

Recommendations

Based on the above assessments, it is likely that the proposed development will remove approximately 900 m^2 of mostly exotic vegetation. Table 3 further outlines the current site environmental values that are anticipated to be impacted due to the development and respective mitigation measures that may minimise or improve environmental impacts.

Table 3: Site environmental values and recommendations

Impacted value	Impacts (During/After)	Recommended mitigation measures
Fauna	Noise Dust Vibration Loss of habitat for feeding/watering Disturbance from added traffic Potential risks of injury or death to fauna by carpark traffic	• Ensure all construction activities are kept within the proposed development footprint as indicated by the design plans. • Ensure construction activities are outside of peak breeding periods of birds. • Ensure all machinery is well maintained (eg. Belts and exhausts) so that noise is kept to a minimum. • Avoid operating during low light or nighttime hours. • Develop a plan for rescuing and relocating displaced fauna. Consult with local wildlife professionals for onsite support. • Onsite supervision from a suitable qualified wildlife handler when machinery is removing/clearing exotic trees (Willows/ Ash)

Vegetation	Destruction of vegetation and trees (exotic) Loss of habitat diversity Loss of soil stability Increased erosion potential	• Ensure all construction activities are kept within the proposed development footprint as indicated by the design plans. • Develop and implement an onsite habitat rehabilitation plan that includes a planting schedule of local indigenous species to surround new carpark area and stream banks. • Arborist supervision is to be implemented when working within tree protection zones of native tree species.
Water Sources	Destruction of main semi-permanent water source Contamination of water Likelihood of sedimentation and increases in turbidity	• Ensure all construction activities are kept within the proposed development footprint as indicated by the design plans. • Carpark stormwater runoff structures to minimise erosion and scour. • Implement sediment and erosion control plan. • Develop onsite permanent water source within the channel such as a pond/wetland to increase water availability for native fauna.

Whilst on site, Morphum identified the following opportunities that, whilst not required for effects management, could further enhance the ecological and environmental outcomes.

- Stormwater runoff management/treatment from the carpark through the installation of raingardens.
- Supplementary tree planting surrounding carpark with (local indigenous mid-story and canopy species), which would provide shade and additional habitat.
- Culvert installed with invert below the streambed to allow a natural sediment bed layer to develop through the culvert.
- Undertake erosion protection and sediment control within vicinity of works.

The proposed development has not been subject to any strategic planning for native vegetation retention; however, the footprint is a westerly expansion only and does not significantly impede on the adjacent lot owned by OneSchool. The alteration (north or south) of the proposed development footprint may result in a more significant impact to native vegetation (namely tree species) and therefore the destruction of native vegetation within the proposed footprint cannot be avoided. It is anticipated that with the adoption of the above recommendations, including the implementation of an onsite habitat rehabilitation plan, an improvement in biodiversity values will be achieved at the site.

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Appendix 1 Melton City Council Zones and Overlays

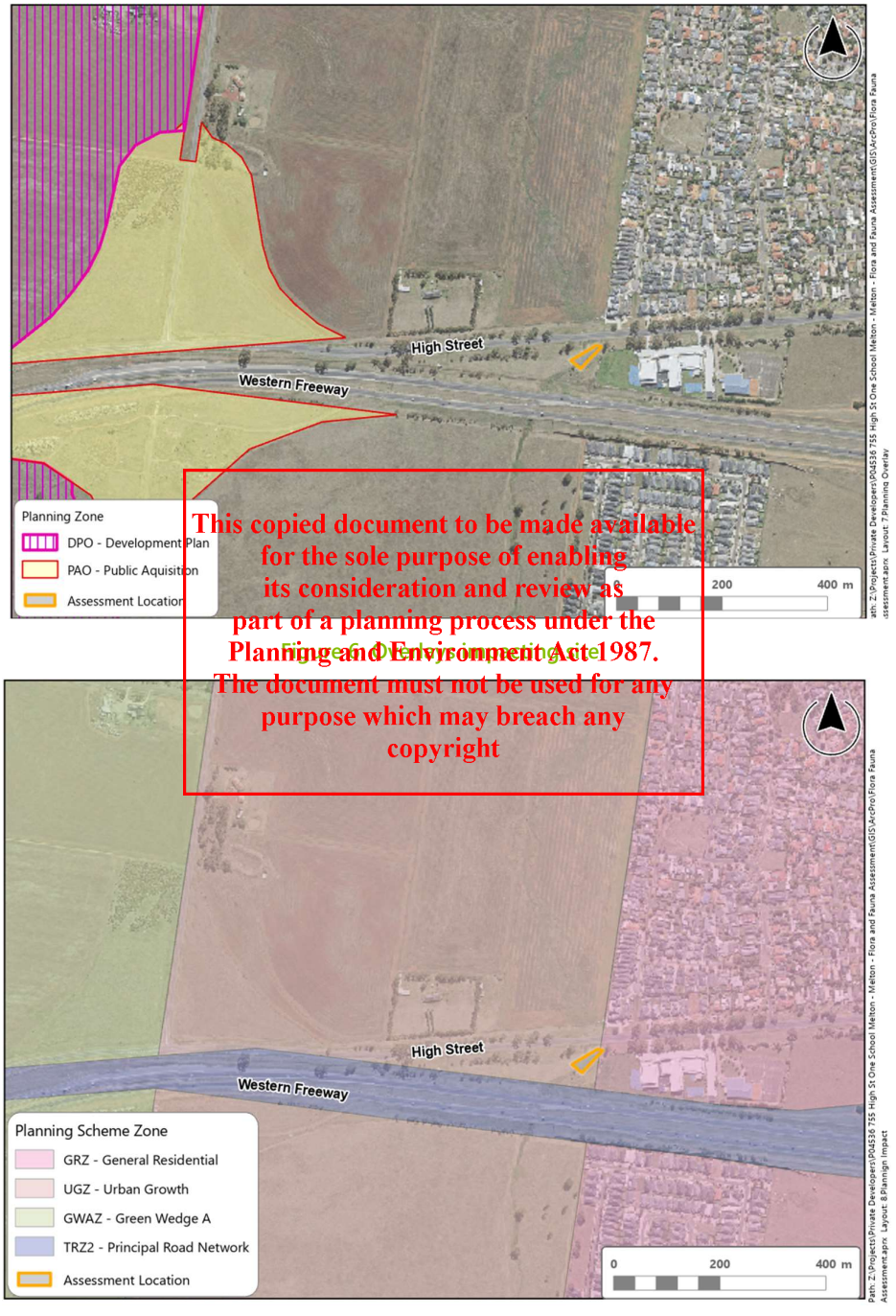

Figure 7 Planning Zones impacting site.

Appendix 2 VBA Records -10km Radius

Scientific Name	Common Name	Last Year Observed	Record Type
Synemon plana	Golden Sun Moth	2023	FAUNA
Lathamus discolor	Swift Parrot	2021	FAUNA
Litoria raniformis	Growling Grass Frog	2021	FAUNA
Pteropus poliocephalus	Grey-headed Flying-fox	2020	FAUNA
Falco subniger	Black Falcon	2019	FAUNA
Pyrrholaemus sagittatus	Speckled Warbler	2019	FAUNA
Accipiter novaehollandiae	Grey Goshawk	2019	FAUNA
Biziura lobata	Musk Duck	2019	FAUNA
Spatula rhynchotis	Australasian Shoveler	2019	FAUNA
Ornithorhynchus anatinus	Platypus	2019	FAUNA
Oxyura australis	Blue-billed Duck	2019	FAUNA
Aythya australis	Hardhead	2019	FAUNA
Anseranas semipalmata	Magpie Goose	2019	FAUNA
Haliaeetus leucogaster	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	2018	FAUNA
Stictonetta naevosa	Freckled Duck	2018	FAUNA
Hieraaetus morphnoides	Little Eagle	2018	FAUNA
Phascogale tapoatafa	Brush-tailed Phascogale	2018	FAUNA
Stagonopleura guttata	Diamond Firetail	2018	FAUNA
Hydroprogne caspia	Caspian Tern	2017	FAUNA
Callocephalon fimbriatum	Gang-gang Cockatoo	2016	FAUNA
Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail	2016	FAUNA
Ardea intermedia plumifera	Plumed Egret	2013	FAUNA
Ninox strenua	Powerful Owl	2011	FAUNA
Pseudophryne bibronii	Brown Toadlet	2004	FAUNA
Calamanthus pyrrhopygius	Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	2004	FAUNA
Oreoica gutturalis	Crested Bellbird	2003	FAUNA
Ninox connivens	Barking Owl	2002	FAUNA
Rhagodia parabolica	Fragrant Saltbush	2021	FLORA
Haliaeetus leucogaster	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	2021	FAUNA
Diuris basaltica	Small Golden Moths	2020	FAUNA
Allocasuarina luehmannii	Buloke	2020	FLORA
Pimelea spinescens subsp. spinescens	Spiny Rice-flower	2020	FLORA
Dianella amoena	Matted Flax-lily	2020	FLORA
Eucalyptus leucoxylon subsp. connata	Melbourne Yellow-gum	2020	FLORA
Nicotiana suaveolens	Austral Tobacco	2020	FLORA

Tripogonella loliiformis	Rye Beetle-grass	2020	FLORA
Podolepis linearifolia	Basalt Podolepis	2020	FLORA
Dianella sp. aff. longifolia (Benambra)	Arching Flax-lily	2020	FLORA
Corymbia maculata	Spotted Gum	2020	FLORA
Eucalyptus baueriana subsp. thalassina	Werribee Blue-box	2018	FLORA
Austrostipa breviglumis	Cane Spear-grass	2018	FLORA
Pimelea hewardiana	Forked Rice-flower	2018	FLORA
Melaleuca armillaris subsp. armillaris	Giant Honey-myrtle	2018	FLORA
Acacia rostriformis	Bacchus Marsh Wattle	2018	FLORA
Pterostylis truncata	Brittle Greenhood	2013	FLORA
Coronidium gunnianum	Pale Swamp Everlasting	2012	FLORA
Cullen parvum	Small Scurf-pea	2012	FLORA
Geranium sp. 3	Pale-flower Crane's-bill	2011	FLORA
Prostanthera nivea var. nivea	Snowy Mint-bush	2011	FLORA
Amyema linophylla subsp. orientalis	Buloke Mistletoe	2010	FLORA
Eleocharis plana	Flat Spike-sedge	2010	FLORA
Senecio cunninghamii var. cunninghamii	Branching Groundsel	2009	FLORA
Acacia aspera subsp. parviceps	Rough Wattle	2009	FLORA
Olearia minor	Satin Daisy-bush	2009	FLORA
Cullen tenax	Tough Scurf-pea	2009	FLORA
Austrostipa exilis	Heath Spear-grass	2009	FLORA
Calotis lappulacea	Yellow Burr-daisy	2009	FLORA
Roepera billardierei	Coast Twin-leaf	2008	FLORA
Goodia medicaginea	Western Golden-tip	2008	FLORA
Austrostipa hemipogon	Half-bearded Spear-grass	2006	FLORA

Appendix 3 Site Plan Mark-Up Findings

NOTES:

1. ALL NATIVE TREE SPECIES ARE TO BE RETAINED.
2. ALL WORKS WITHIN TREE PROTECTION ZONES REQUIRE ARBORIST SUPERVISION.
3. FAUNA SPECIES DISCOVERED ONSITE DURING CONSTRUCTION ARE TO BE REPORTED TO COUNCIL'S WILDLIFE REPRESENTITIVE.
4. ALL OTHER VEGETATION SPECIES WITHIN THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FOOTPRINT ARE EXOTIC AND THEREFORE ARE OF NO CONCERN.

Secondary ephemeral watercourse

Existing concrete endwall

Main fauna corridor

Primary ephemeral watercourse

Common Tussock Grass
Poa labillardierei (Native) - **LOST**

Eucalyptus Spp. (Native) - **RETAIN**

Standing waterbody

Eucalyptus Spp. (Native) - **RETAIN**

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ALIGNMENT

Willow - Salix Spp. (Exotic) - **REMOVE**

Willow - Salix Spp. (Exotic) - **REMOVE**

Willow - Salix Spp. (Exotic) - **REMOVE**

Slender Knotweed
Persicaria decipiens
(Native) - **LOST**

Ash Tree - Fraxinus Spp. (Exotic) - **REMOVE**

Ash Tree - Fraxinus Spp. (Exotic) - **REMOVE**

Ash Tree - Fraxinus Spp. (Exotic) - **REMOVE**

Ash Tree - Fraxinus Spp. (Exotic) - **REMOVE**

Brittle Gum- Eucalyptus mannifera (Native) - **RETAIN**

REV.	DESCRIPTION	BY	DATE
1	FLORA AND FAUNA MAPPING	BY	DATE

DESIGNED: MAPPED | CHECKED: AR
DRAWN: SS | CHECKED: JR
APPROVED FOR ISSUE: FINAL | DATE: -

MORPHUM environmental

ADVERTISED PLAN

PROJECT: OneSchool Melton
Flora and Fauna Assessment

TITLE: MAP OF FINDINGS

STATUS: FINAL
A3 SCALE: SCALES
DRAWING No: P04536_01
REV: A

Appendix 4 Site Photos (25/03/2024)

Photo 1 Downstream extent of development. Two exotic trees in picture to be removed.

Photo 2 Close up photo of two downstream exotic trees in picture to be removed.

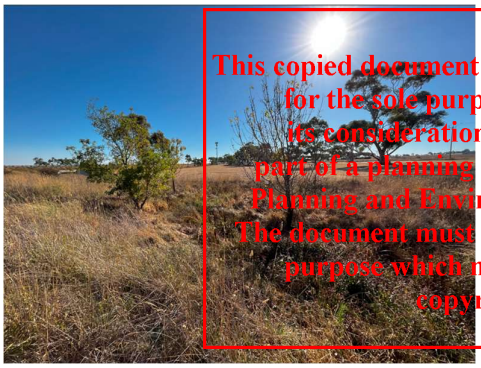

Photo 3 Photo looking upstream. Ash and Willow in picture to be removed.

Photo 4 Photo looking upstream. All instream exotic trees (Willows) to be removed.

Photo 5 upstream extent of development. Willow tree in photo to be removed.

Photo 6 All vegetation to be removed. Image demonstrated mowing regime to top of bank.

Photo 7 Demonstrates mowed extent and secondary watercourse (Dry)

Photo 8 Close up of secondary ephemeral watercourse outfall

Photo 9 Photo looking downstream of two ephemeral stream confluence. Showing two of the three Poa observations.

Photo 10 New Holland Honey Eater perched on Willow branch

Photo 11 New Holland Honey Eater observation #2 perched on Willow branch