

Re: FINAL Biodiversity assessment – Goroke-Harrow Road, Charam, VIC

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank-you for the opportunity to assist with the project. Please be advised that in this engagement, I am assuming the role of your Ecological Consultant and VQAM Accredited Assessor (VIC). As a result of my site inspection on 14/6/2021 and review of the Request for Further Information (Appl. Ref.: PA2101321 dated 30/09/2021), I contend that:

- The large native trees on site are all hollow bearing and likely to be suitable habitat for highly mobile woodland birds, including the Red-tailed Black-cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii graptogyne*), which has been previously recorded within 200m of the site (**Figure 1**).
- The site is unlikely to provide long-term habitat for the Brolga (*Antigone rubicunda*), which has also been recorded within 1km of the site (**Figure 2**) due to the lack of available open water habitat, structure and feeding zones.
- The site has a mixed native grass and exotics annual grass layer present, however it is highly degraded and affected by pasture weeds. Grass species on site are dominated by Barley grass (*Hordeum Spp.*), Bromus Spp., Annual Rye (*Lolium Spp.*) and to a lesser extent Silver Grass (*Miscanthus Spp.*) and Scotch Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*). See Photos in **Attachment 1**.
- The area is likely set-stocked with sheep and the floristics at the ground layer (and throughout) does not reflect EVC 803: Plains Woodland in the Wimmera bioregion – as it is mapped on NatureKIT (**Figure 3**).
- The vegetation along Charam-Wombelano Road is of *moderate to high conservation value* and consists of a range of native grasses, small herbs and Bullock (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*) which should be avoided.
- No part of the site is of sufficient quality or structure to be considered part of a *Northern Plains Grassland community* or a *Commonwealth listed Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains Community*;
- If any threatened native fauna (birds) are present, they were not recorded during survey on June 14th 2021. If any are present within the works zone, they are likely to be highly mobile species that are only using the site opportunistically.
- Movement of the site entry point off Charam-Wombelano Road to the south-west corner of the site exiting the road and entering the site via the existing gravel dump / roadside stockpile site *will avoid any native vegetation losses in the roadside*.
- All but one of the large tree TPZs are being avoided completely as shown in **Attachment 2**.

Under the current design (**Attachment 2**), the calculated TPZ of one (1) tree is likely to be affected to a degree greater than 10%. Therefore, while the tree is to be retained, it is considered lost and will require an assessment to support a planning permit (under Section 52.17 of the Planning Scheme).

Regards

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Figure 1: Nearest previously recorded location of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo. Source: NatureKIT, 2021

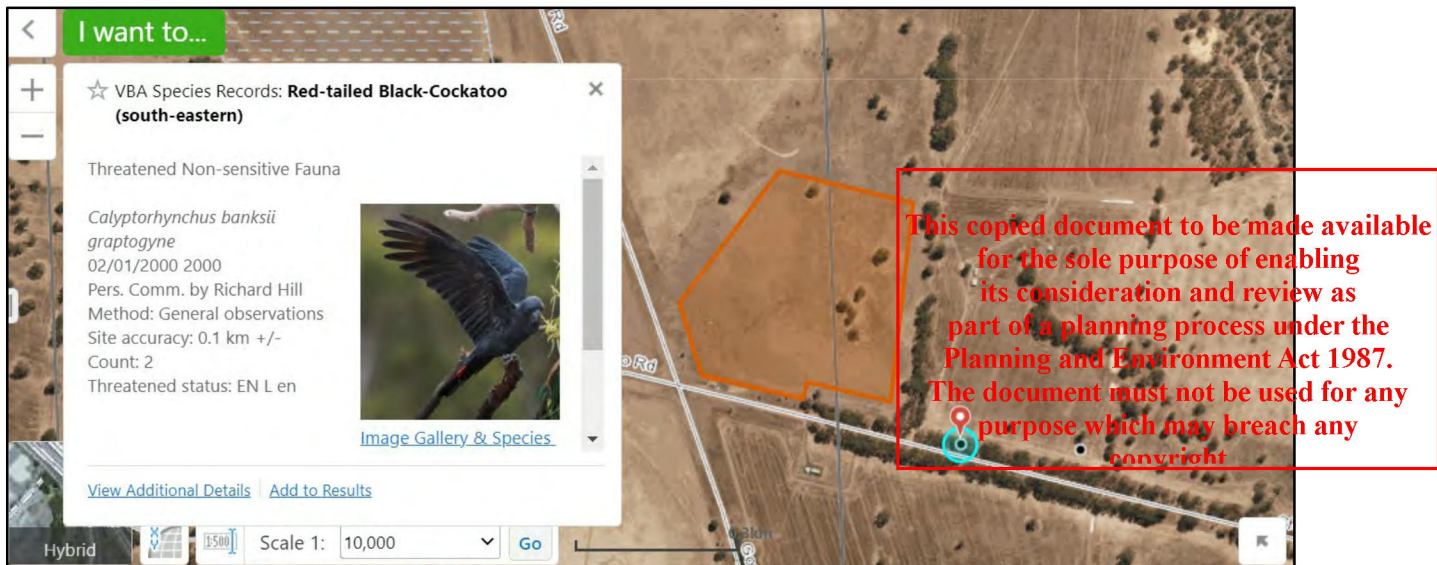


Figure 2: Nearest previously recorded location of Brolga. Source: NatureKIT, 2021

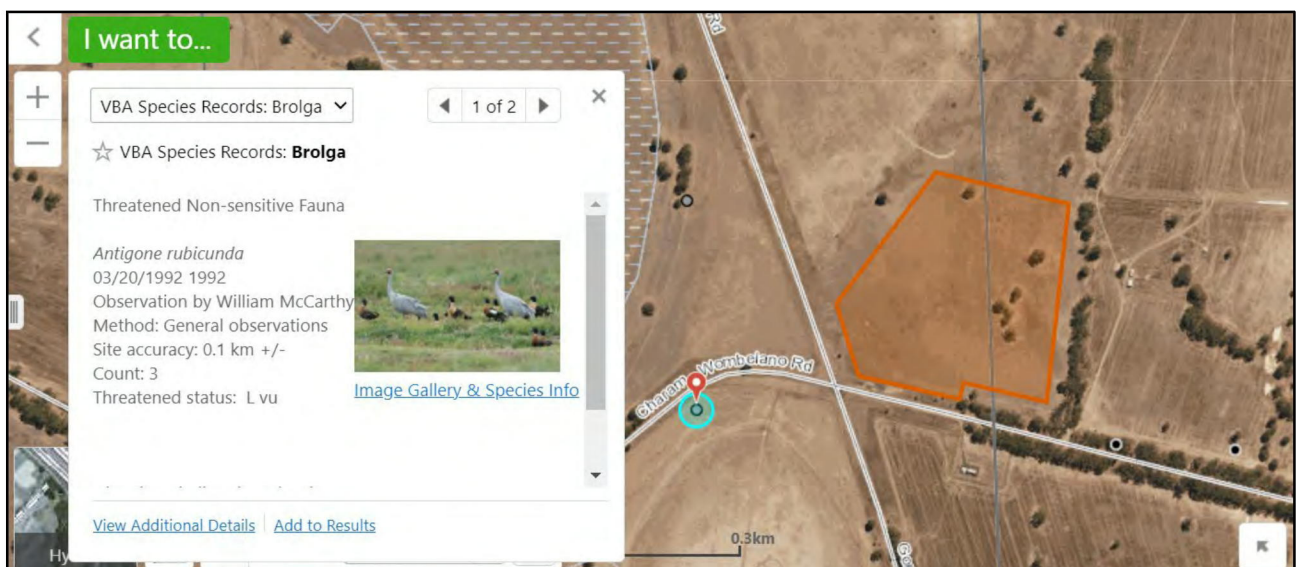


Figure 3: Mapped EVCs on Site. Source: NatureKIT, 2021



Attachment 1: Site Photos



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Photo 1: Centre of site, south-west orientation. Lack of viable native ground cover. Dominated by annual exotic pasture grass that is heavily grazed. D.Wall, 14/06/21



Photo 2: Dead annual rye, barley grass and scotch thistle over annual shooting clovers following recent rain. Fine hair grass (fescue) is also present. East half of site, North east orientation. D.Wall, 14/06/21

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Photo 3: Old large trees to be retained and TPZs avoided completely. Mid site, south orientation. D.Wall, 14/06/21



Photo 4: Vegetation along Charam-Wombelano Road is of moderate to high conservation value and consists of a range of native grasses, small herbs and Bulloke (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*) which is to be avoided. East orientation. D.Wall, 14/06/21

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Photo 5: Proposed site of entry point to avoid the high-quality native vegetation on the roadside shown in Photo 5. West orientation. D.Wall, 14/06/21



Photo 6: Retained but considered lost Old Large Tree. The TPZ for this tree is encroached upon by >10%, however the development is unlikely to affect its longevity. D.Wall, 14/06/21

