VEGETATION ASSESSMENT

BATMAN ROAD
PORTARLINGTON

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

A parcel of land, bound by Batman Road, Allens Road, Tower Road and the Geelong Portarlington Road, Portarlington, is the subject of a proposed Planning Scheme Amendment. The purpose of this report is to record, describe and assess any occurrences of indigenous vegetation and any sites of significance as habitat for indigenous fauna that are located on the site.

1.1 STUDY AREA

The site is comprised of a truncated triangular parcel of land that is bound by Batman Road, Allens Road, Tower Road and the Geelong Portarlington Road, at Portarlington, on the Bellarine Peninsula east of Geelong.

Soil types are comprised of black cracking clays of the Mt Bellarine Older Volcanics to the south and dark sandy loams of the Barrarbool Sandstones to the north (Geological Survey of Victoria- Portarlington Geological Map, 1977).

The historical land use appears to have been agriculture. Current land use is mixed agriculture with an olive plantation covering much of the site along with areas of grazing. Several residences are also located within the site.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 TAXONOMY

Scientific names for plants follows the Census of Vascular Plants of Victoria (Ross and Walsh 2003). Common names for plants follows the Flora of Victoria Vols 2-4 (Walsh and Entwisle 1994-1999).

2.2 LITERATURE AND DATABASE REVIEW

Relevant literature and databases, including data within the Flora Information System (FIS) of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), the Technical Support Maps for Local Government Authorities (DSE 2003), and the Victorian Atlas of Wildlife (DSE) were reviewed.

2.3 FIELD SURVEY

The study area was inspected on August 16, 2004. General observations were made on the vegetation and habitat quality of the study area. Records were taken of all indigenous

vascular plant species recorded with in the site.

2.4 LIMITATIONS

The assessment was conducted in August which is early for the detection of some flora species and for the identification of some flora to species level. However it is considered that the field survey, combined with information available from other sources, is sufficient to assess the significance of the study area. As a result there are no significant limitations to the study.

The present survey includes only indigenous vascular flora (ferns, conifers and flowering plants). Non vascular flora (eg mosses, liverworts) are not recorded.

2.5 DEFINING SIGNIFICANCE

A number of criteria are applied in order to assess the significance of flora species, vegetation communities and faunal habitat. The definition of the criteria is detailed in Appendix 1.

3.0 RESULTS

The site is overwhelmingly dominated by exotic vegetation. With the exception of one small site there are only negligible indigenous flora and habitat values.

3.1 INDIGENOUS PLANT SPECIES

A total of two indigenous vascular plant species were recorded for the site.

Table I Indigenous Plant Species

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIGNIFICANCE
Allocasuarina verticillata	Drooping Sheoke	Regional
Austrodanthonia racemosa	Slender Wallaby-grass	Local

3.2 SIGNIFICANT PLANT SPECIES

One plant of Regional Conservation significance, Drooping Sheoke (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) was recorded for the site. This species is represented by one population of six plants which are located at the northern corner of Pigdon Street and the Geelong Portarlington Road, just inside the boundary fence. This population was once larger, as several dead

stumps are scattered amongst the population. Drooping Sheoke is considered to be a depleted tree in the Greater Geelong Region (Ecology Australia 2000).

One plant of Local Conservation Significance, Slender Wallaby-grass (*Austrodanthonia racemosa*) was recorded. This species is scattered across the site in low densities, amongst the exotic vegetation. This species is common and widespread in the region, often being one of the few indigenous species that is able to survive amongst exotic vegetation.

3.3 HABITAT VALUES

The vegetation of the site does not contain any notable habitat values. A number of exotic and non-indigenous native trees occur, however none of them appear to provide hollows or any other habitat values of note. The site would be expected to support a number of more common and widespread native bird species as well as a number of exotic bird species.

4.0 CONCLUSION

It is recommended that the population of Drooping Sheoke be protected. It would also be appropriate for seed to be collected from this population and used for revegetation on the site, thus strengthening the tenure of the population.

Aside from the Sheokes, the site is considered to be of nil to negligible significance for indigenous flora or as habitat for indigenous fauna.

5.0 REFERENCES

Conn, B J (1993) Natural regions and vegetation of Victoria. Pp. 79-158 In Foreman, D B and Walsh, G (eds.) 'Flora of Victoria Volume 1: Introduction.' Inkata Press, Melbourne.

DSE (2003) 'Victoria's Native Vegetation Management Framework - Technical Support Maps (CD)' Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne Victoria.

Ecology Australia (2001) 'City of Greater Geelong Biodiversity Plan'.

RFA Steering Committee (2000) 'West Victoria Comprehensive Regional Assessment Biodiversity Assessment' DNRE, Melbourne, Victoria.

Ross, J H & Walsh, N G (2003) 'A Census of the Vascular Plants of Victoria -Seventh Edition' Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, Victoria.

Appendix 1 ASSESSING CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE

Conservation significance is assessed at a range of scales, including global, international, national, state, regional and local. Criteria used for determining the conservation significance of flora and fauna at national to local scales are presented below for botanical and zoological conservation significance.

Botanical Significance

State botanical significance applies to an area when it supports one or more of the following attributes:

A population of at least one plant species threatened in Victoria, as listed by Gullan et al. (1990), NRE (2000a) or more recently in the unpublished records of the Flora Information System (NRE), or on the schedules to the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

An ecological community considered threatened in Victoria through its listing on the schedules of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

Regional botanical significance applies to an area that supports one or more of the following attributes:

Supports a population of one or more regionally depleted species defined in a valid regional assessment of biodiversity (eg. Regional Native Vegetation Plan, Environment Conservation Council Report or Comprehensive Regional Assessment documents).

An ecological vegetation class that is considered endangered or vulnerable in a particular bioregion (based on Conn 1993 and the Regional Native Vegetation Plan), in which case the area is of **High Regional** significance.

An ecological vegetation class that is considered depleted in a particular bioregion (based on Conn 1993 and the Regional Native Vegetation Plan), in which case it is of **Regional** significance.

Local botanical significance applies to all remnant native vegetation that does not meet the above criteria. In much of Victoria, native vegetation has been so depleted by past clearing and disturbance that all remaining vegetation must be considered to be of at least local conservation significance.