
Mollers Lane, Leopold, Victoria


*Significant Landscape Overlay
Re-assessment*

For: TGM Group

November 2016 | Final

Mollers Lane, Leopold, Victoria

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Re-assessment***

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1. Introduction

TGM Group are acting for a consortium of owners who own property affected by a current SLO at Mollers Lane, Leopold.

Location

Mollers Lane is a local road which runs south from the Bellarine Highway (Queenscliff Road) to the edge of Lake Connewarre. The township of Leopold lies to the west of Mollers Lane.

Figure 1 Mollers Lane and locality (Map source: Spatial vision - Melbourne)



The following report seeks to discuss the visual impact implications of the current SLO and ascertain if the current boundary is responsive to the existing visual setting as well as key topographical features such as the drainage lines and ridgelines.

2. The current SLO

Schedule 10 to the Significant Landscape Overlay in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme is designed to protect the Lake Connewarre Escarpment.

This landscape contains the prominent escarpment that wraps around the northern and eastern edges of Lake Connewarre and the lower reaches of the Barwon River Estuary. This escarpment is part of the largest area of remnant indigenous vegetation on the Bellarine Peninsula. It provides an attractive entrance to the township of Ocean Grove and is of regional visual significance.

The landscape is valued by the local community for its scenic qualities and views over the wetlands, and as a natural landscape that provides a habitat for flora and fauna. The adjacent wetlands system has been recognised internationally as a Ramsar site and is listed on the Register of the National Estate as an important wetlands system with significant tertiary fossils. The area is also recognised for its role in contributing to the ecological and aesthetic diversity of the region.

The first section of this summary of the key elements is focused on the escarpment which wraps around the northern and eastern edges of Lake Connewarre. This escarpment would be the first ridgeline parallel to the shore. This ridgeline or escarpment would typically also form the edge of the visual catchment as land behind the escarpment would be screened from view.

The second section is focused on the views from land across Lake Connewarre.

Landscape character objective to be achieved

Schedule 10 sets out the following Landscape Character Objectives:

- *To protect locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the landscape, including extensive and scenic outviews across waterbodies from main roads and settlements.*
- *To ensure that the prominent slopes above Lake Connewarre retain a largely unbuilt and partially vegetated character, free from intrusive built development.*
- *To improve the appearance of rural living development within the landscape.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of infrastructure and signage throughout the landscape.*
- *To maintain and improve indigenous vegetation throughout the landscape, particularly at roadsides, in riparian strips and on lake escarpments.*
- *To protect cultural vegetation elements that positively contribute to the character of the landscape, including exotic wind breaks and feature planting around homesteads.*
- *To recognise and protect the continuation of the land as a working farmed landscape.*

The protection of views includes the protection of views from roads, in this case Mollers Lane. View protection is also concerned about protection of views from the Lake's edge back to the escarpment or intervening ridgeline.

The boundaries of the existing SLO are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 SLO boundaries (Source: Planning Schemes Online)



The dimensions shown on Figure 2 have been calculated to illustrate the existing separation between Lake Connewarre and residential areas. They are not shown on the map within the Planning Scheme.

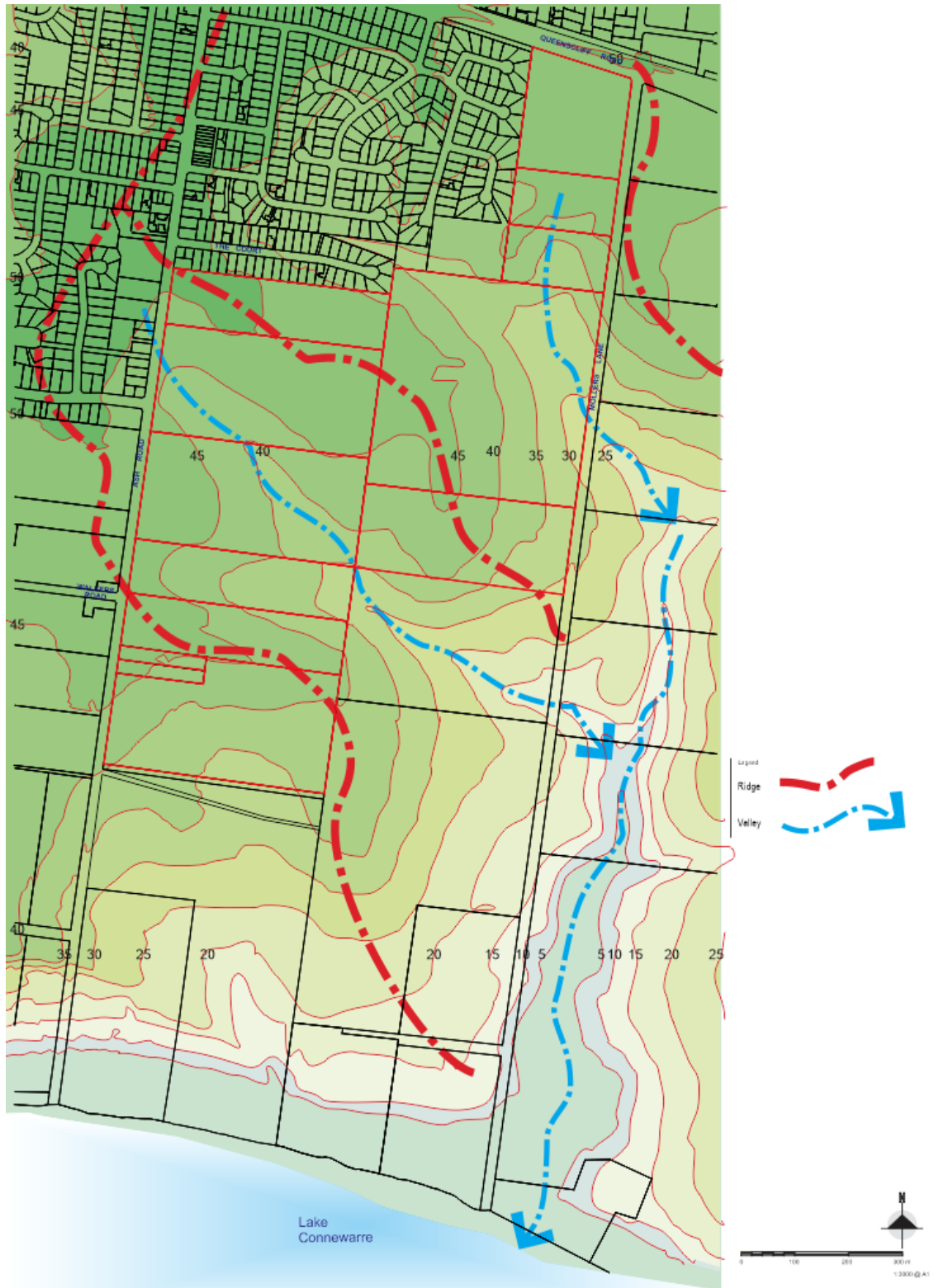
To the west of Mollers Lane, the existing SLO boundary is approximately 200 m north of the Lake Connewarre edge, whilst the edge of existing higher density residential land is approximately 600 m from the edge of the Lake. In contrast the edge of the SLO is approximately 1500 m north of Lake Connewarre adjacent to Mollers Lane.

The existing boundaries do not seem to be related to the topography of the land, nor the visual catchment of Lake Connewarre. The topography and the visual implications will be further analysed in the following Chapter of this report.

3. The existing topography

Mollers Lane as it traverses south from the Queenscliff Road rises and falls across two valleys and three ridge lines. **Figure 3** shows the topography and the existing ridgelines and valleys.

Figure 3 Topography



The existing SLO boundary is shown in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4 Topography & SLO boundary

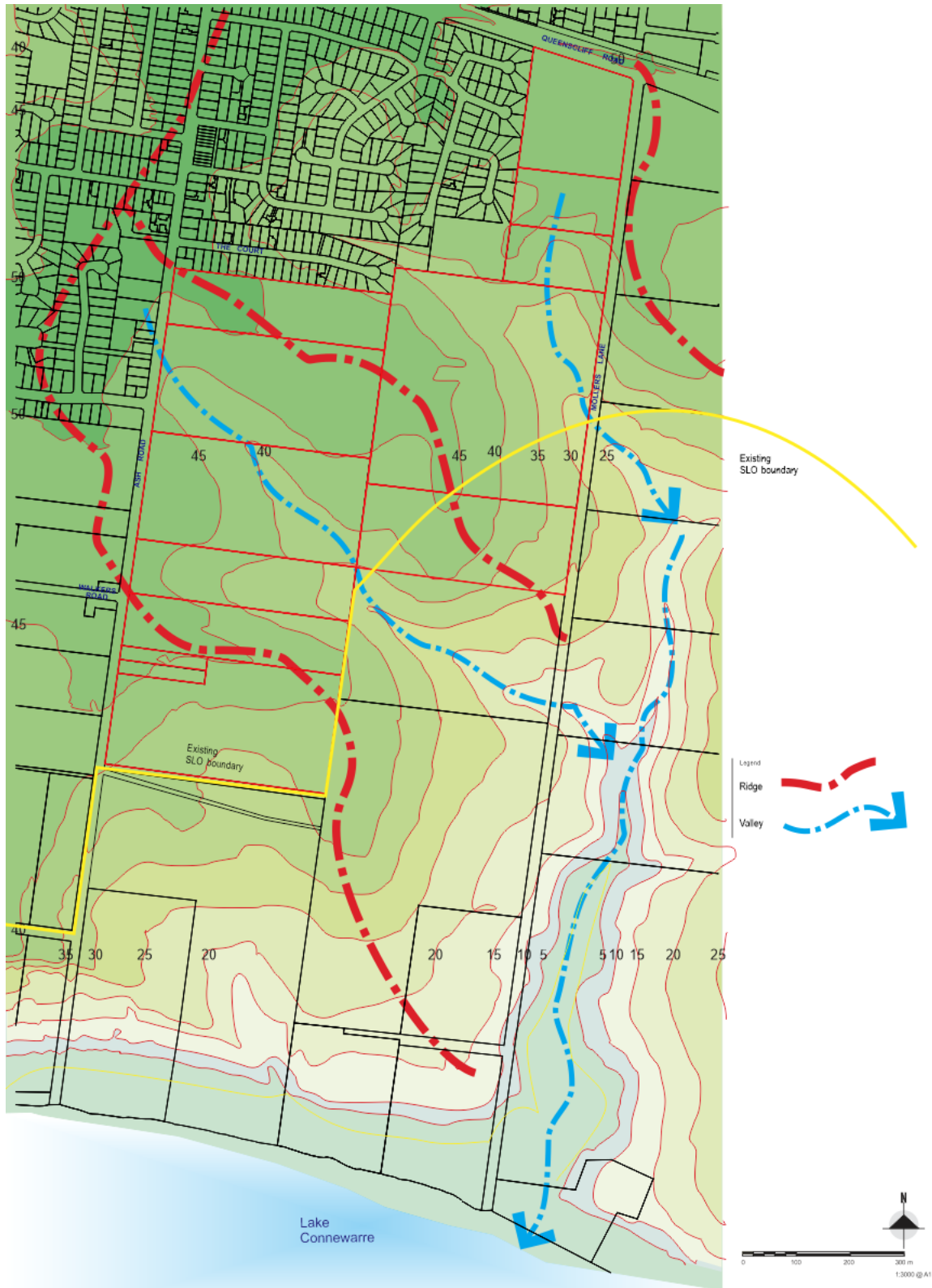


Figure 4 shows that the existing boundary of the SLO varies along the edge of Lake Connewarre and that this boundary is not based on any topographical feature. It roughly runs along existing title boundaries, until the curved section at Mollers Lane.

A section from the Lake edge

Figure 5 shows section from the Lake edge to the nearest residential areas.

Figure 5 Section from the lake edge to existing residential areas



This section on **Figure 5** shows that at a distance of 600 m, a residential property of two stories is visually well separated from the edge of Lake Connearre. Intervening vegetation also screens views from the Lake edge to these residential areas, even though there is no intervening ridge line between the Lake’s edge and the existing residential developments.

The escarpment referred to in the Planning controls is a gentle rise from the edge of the lake to the edge of the residential.

A similar 600m setback would align with the ridge line which runs almost parallel to Lake Connearre at the southern end of Mollers Lane.

A much higher level of visual protection would be achieved if the SLO boundary was relocated further south.

Figure 7 shows an amended SLO boundary which crosses Mollers Lane some 1,100 m from the edge of the Lake and then follows the existing 25 m contour to join with the existing SLO boundary to the south west.

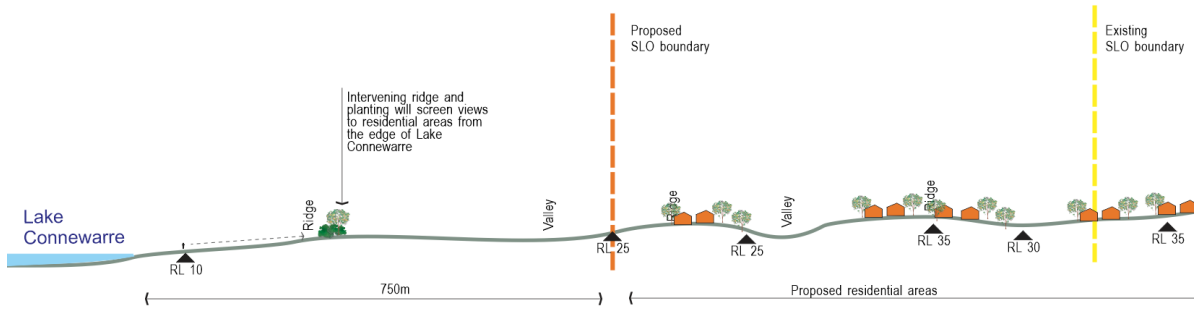
Figure 6 Proposed SLO boundary



Such a boundary alteration would still achieve the objectives set out in the SLO which would include the protection of views from the edge of Lake Connewarre and provide a widening corridor of protection as a viewer travelled south along Mollers Lane.

This is graphically shown in **Figure 7** which shows an illustrative section parallel to Mollers Lane.

Figure 7 Impact of proposed SLO boundary change



The proposed alteration to the northern SLO boundary along Mollers Lane would have no impact on views from the edge of Lake Connewarre. The proposed residential areas to the south of the existing SLO boundary would be screened by the intervening ridge as well as further screening provided by intervening vegetation.

Mollers Lane – southern ridge

The proposed residential area is accessed from Mollers Lane. At its southern end the slight ridge shown on the previous figures screens views to the Lake’s edge.

Figure 8 Mollers Lane looking south



Figure 8 shows the view from the southern end of Mollers Lane looking south to the lake. The low ridge would screen views from the Lake’s edge to the proposed residential areas and these would be located further north, also provided a large separation distance between the residential areas and the Lake.

4. Conclusion

The landscape setting of Lake Connewarre is an important feature that should be maintained, however the existing SLO boundary adjacent to Mollers Lane appears on any analysis to be overly conservative and the same degree of protection could be afforded if the SLO boundary was relocated further to the south.

Such a change has been illustrated in this report and a relocation of the SLO boundary would not impact on the amenity of Lake Connewarre.