



Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

# Draft Rear Cambridge Drive Management Plan

2021



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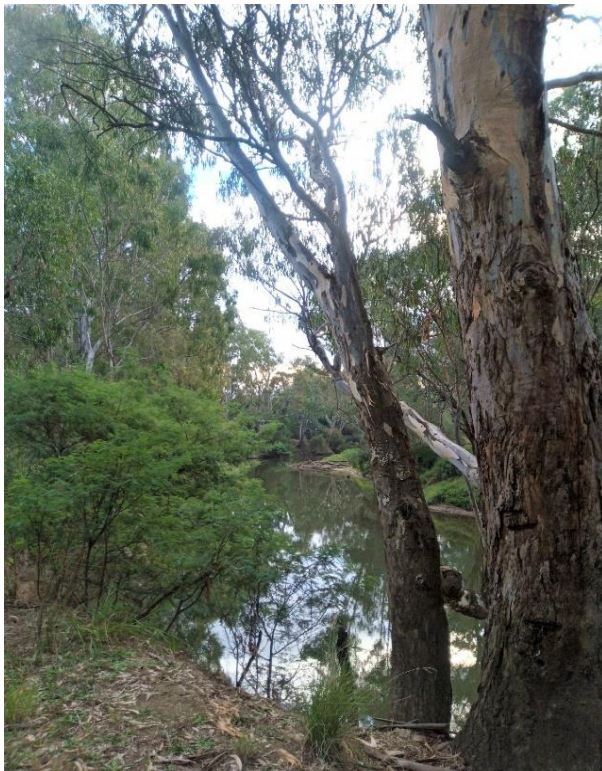
## 1. Introduction

Rear Cambridge Drive is located in the township of Wangaratta in North East Victoria and is owned and managed by the Rural City of Wangaratta (RCoW). Rear Cambridge Drive (the site) has an area of 6.9ha and is situated along the Ovens River. The site includes open grass areas, lagoons, remnant vegetation and revegetated areas. The Phillipson Street Wetland Stormwater basin which catches water runoff from local roads and houses is also located in the east of the site.

**Figure 1 - Location**



**Photo – Ovens River**



The Ovens River flows around Rear Cambridge Drive acting as a protective buffer to the site.

The Ovens River from Killawarra (between Wangaratta and Peechelba) to Lake Mulwala has been identified as a Heritage River area under the *Heritage Rivers Act 1992*. Heritage River Status means that the river has significant nature conservation, scenic or cultural heritage attributes.

The purpose of the Act is to make provision for the protection of such areas. It is also particularly important that the Wangaratta Urban area including this site and the Phillipson Wetland Stormwater are managed to avoid adverse impacts on the Lower Ovens River.

The residential properties on the North side of Cambridge Drive back on to the site and property owners are passionate about the area and how they would like to see the area managed.

### **Purpose of the Plan**

The purpose of this Management Plan is to:

- Provide an overview of the manner in which Rear Cambridge Drive will be managed.
- Provide practical information that will guide management of Rear Cambridge Drive to protect and where possible enhance natural values and recreational use.

The Rear Cambridge Drive management plan will act as referral document for all decision making processes involving the site.

*Photo - Lagoon*



*Photo – Back of Residential Properties*



### Consultation Process

The development of this Management Plan has involved both internal and external engagement with key stakeholders.

Engagement	Date	Method	People Involved
Draft Management Plan V1	21/05/2021	Word Doc	NRM Staff
Internal Stakeholder Engagement V1	24/05/2021	Draft Document sent via email for comment	Management, Natural Resource Management, Horticulture, Vegetation Management, Emergency Management
Site visit with Internal Stakeholders	27/05/2021	Site visit	Natural Resource Management, Horticulture, Vegetation Management
Draft Management Plan V2	02/06/2021	Word Doc	NRM Staff
Internal Stakeholder Engagement V2	02/06/2021	Draft Document sent via email for comment	Management, Natural Resource Management, Horticulture, Vegetation Management, Emergency Management
CMT Meeting	06/07/2021	Presentation	Corporate Management Team
External Stakeholders		Letter Drop	Cambridge Drive Residents

## 2. Vegetation

### Description

The Ecological Vegetation Community (EVC) found on the site are: Sections of Vulnerable Floodplain Riparian Woodland and a small section of Endangered Riverine Grassy Woodland/Riverine Swampy Woodland Mosaic.

Rivers and their associated floodplains support a wide range of native flora and fauna, many of which are now rare or threatened. The distribution, abundance and health of these species and communities are closely associated with the condition of the riverine environment.

The site 10 years ago consisted of a few large remnant River Red Gums – *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, while the remainder of the site was bare paddock.

*Photo – Remnant Red Gums and Revegetation*

Over the past 10 years revegetation works has taken place throughout the site and many of the following species have been planted:

- Silver Wattle - *Acacia dealbata*
- River tea tree - *Leptospermum obovatum*
- Blackwood - *Acacia melanoxylon*
- River bottlebrush - *Callistemon sieberi*
- Rough barked honey myrtle - *Melaleuca parvistaminea*
- Tall sedge - *Carex appressa* planted around the retention basin only

The site has responded well to the revegetation works and has a good stand of large canopy trees (predominately Red Gum), medium to tall shrublayer and groundcover throughout.

There is also extensive natural regrowth of River Red Gum - *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* occurring throughout the site.



Council will continue to work in partnership with North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA) to assist where possible in the maintenance of the waterways, by encouraging fallen timber to remain in the waterways to assist in the re-snagging program to encourage habitat. Where possible throughout the site, riparian planting will occur to enhance the bank vegetation.

NECMA are responsible for waterway management under the Victorian **Water Act 1989**. Under the Water Act 1989 NECMA is required to produce a Regional Waterway Strategy for the North East region. This Strategy has been developed to ensure our waterways are valued, healthy and well-managed.

*Photo – Ovens River*



*Photo – Phillipson St Wetland Stormwater*



The Phillipson Street Wetland Stormwater basin that was already constructed at the site was eroding away at the edges. Jute matting was placed around the edge of the basin and replanted with native species including groundcovers. Some of the species found in and around the retention basin include:

- Common Rush - *Juncus usitatus*
- Common Spike Rush - *Eleocharis acuta*
- Giant Rush - *Juncus ingens*
- Tall Flat sedge - *Carex exaltatus*
- Tall Sedge - *Carex appressa*
- Common Reed - *Phragmites australis*
- Water Primrose - *Ludwigia peploides*

## Management Aims

- a. To protect the native plant species present including new seedlings that germinate.
- b. Undertake additional revegetation plantings and thinning of Red Gum regrowth to enhance the biodiversity of the site.
- c. Undertake additional revegetation plantings to manage the floodplain to mitigate the risk of floods and mitigate bank erosion.
- d. Control weeds including the removal of Willows.

## Actions Required

1. Spray weeds (Blackberry, Jerusalem Cherry, Paspalum).
2. Remove Willows (cut and paint).
3. Further planting of indigenous species. (Silver Wattle - *Acacia dealbata*, River tea tree - *Leptospermum obovatum*, Blackwood - *Acacia melanoxylon*, River bottlebrush - *Callistemon sieberi*, Rough barked honey myrtle - *Melaleuca parvistaminea*).
4. Thin out natural regrowth of River Red Gum - *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*.

**Photo – River Red Gum Regrowth**





### 3. Native Animals

#### Description

A wide range of native fauna rely on aquatic habitats, either directly or indirectly. Some taxonomic groups such as fish require water throughout their life cycle, some may use aquatic areas for a specific stage of their life cycle (e.g., birds or invertebrates), while others may require aquatic environments for resources such as food or as a corridor for movement.

Some aquatic species found at the site include:

- Wood duck - *Chenonetta jubata*
- Damselfly nymph - *Odonata spp*
- Yabbie - *Cherax destructor*
- Eastern common froglet - *Crinia signifera*
- Pacific black duck - *Anas supercilliosa*
- Murray cod - *Maccullochella peelii*
- Eastern long-necked turtle - *C.longicollis*

**Photo – Eastern Common Froglet**



**Photo – Sugar Glider (Photo courtesy of SWIFT)**



The site also provides suitable habitat for terrestrial fauna including the Sugar Glider *Petaurus breviceps* who like forests with an understory of acacia, the sap of which they devour. They also eat acacia seeds, nectar, pollen and invertebrates. The Sugar Glider is not currently listed as threatened in Victoria and the population is currently stable.

Ring Tail Possum *Pseudocheirus peregrinus* can also be found due to the site having a good variety of native plants that provide a food source from leaves, flowers and fruits. Nest boxes have been placed in several locations to provide additional nesting habitat suitable for both gliders and possums.

**Photo – Barking Owl (Photo courtesy of SWIFT)**



Barking Owl *Ninox connivens* have been observed at the site. This species is usually found in habitats that are dominated by eucalyptus species, particularly river red gum. They prefer woodlands and forests with a high density of large trees and particularly sites with hollows that are used by the owls as well as their prey. Roost sites are often located near waterways or wetlands. The Barking Owl is the most threatened owl in Victoria and is listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. A study undertaken in 1999 estimated there were fewer than 50 breeding pairs in north-east Victoria.

The primary threat to the Barking Owl in Victoria is loss of habitat, particularly the deterioration or loss of the large, hollow-bearing trees on which the species depends for nesting. Hollows suitable for nesting for owls do not form in eucalypts until they are at least 150-200 years old.

The site is also connected to Mullinmur Wetlands and Northern Beaches Reserve providing a corridor for the movement of wildlife. These corridors help link up areas of habitat allowing the movement of species to find resources, such as food and water.

### **Management Aims**

- a. Manage the lagoons and wetlands to provide food and habitat for wildlife.
- b. Improve habitat values for native birds, reptiles and mammals.

### **Actions Required**

5. Maintain and enhance native vegetation in and around natural lagoons / wetlands to provide habitat and food source for Wetland Fauna.
6. Leave dead limbs and dead trees in place to provide hollows for nesting birds and small mammals.
7. Retain leaf litter and fallen branches on the ground to build up a healthy living system of bugs and small critters.
8. No firewood collecting or removing of fallen debris allowed.

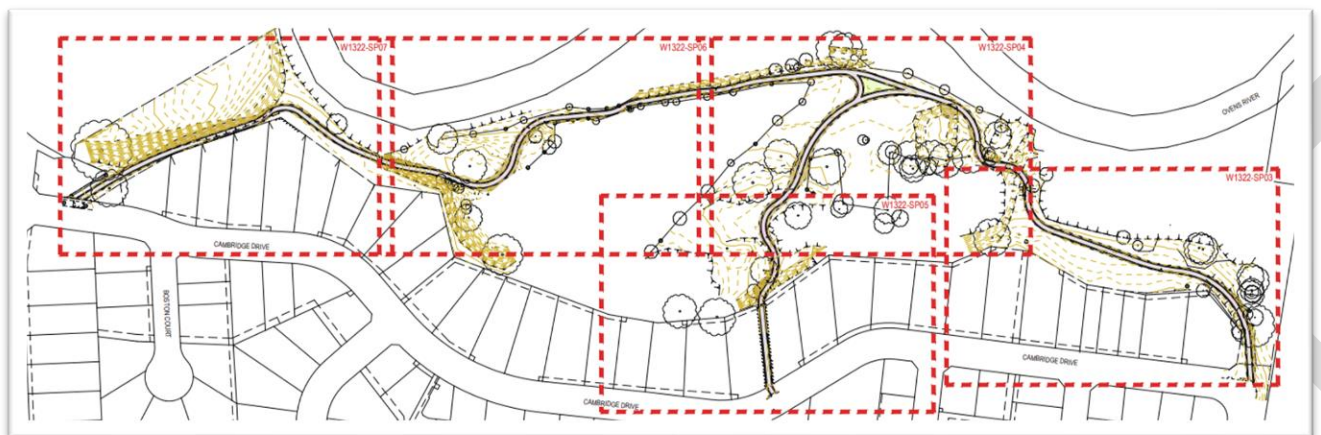
## 4. Access / Recreation

### Description

The site at the rear of Cambridge Drive is popular with residents and community members. Access to the site is currently via the gateway at the end of Phillipson Street and a pedestrian access further along Cambridge Drive. There are currently no designated walking tracks through the site however there are worn in, informal walking tracks. The area is only accessible via foot with vehicle access only by Rural City or Wangaratta staff to allow mowing, slashing, weed management and planting.

The Rural City of Wangaratta have had plans drawn up for the construction of a shared pedestrian path through this area but have not been able to secure funding for the construction of the path. The shared path will provide several access points from Cambridge Drive to the site.

*Photo – Proposed shared pedestrian path*



### Management Aims

Continue to provide a well-managed natural area for residents of Cambridge Drive and the wider community to access and enjoy nature whilst not compromising conservation values. Users' enjoyment could be enhanced by helping them appreciate the variety of flora and fauna species present through tasteful signage and/or an information board.

### Actions Required

1. Update Flora and Fauna education signs.
2. Continue to seek funding for the construction of a shared pedestrian path.

## 5. Wildfire Risk Reduction

### Description

The site has several areas where there is little native vegetation and requires management to ensure the reduction of fine fuels in the event of a wildfire.

There is a large mown area directly behind residents at the east end of Cambridge Drive and an area located centrally within the site that requires slashing. When accessible the West end of Cambridge Drive and an access track are also slashed.

*Photo – Mown Area Back of Residential Properties*



*Photo – Slashed Area Back of Residential Properties*



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## Management Aims

To carry out annual fuel reduction activities and rehabilitate the reserve as a native woodland to minimise fire risk to adjoining residents.

## Actions Required

1. The Rural City of Wangaratta to mow the buffer area behind property numbers 2 through to 14 throughout the year (depending on season) to keep grass short. Residents may only undertake extra mowing in this area no further than 6 metres from their boundary fence and only where grass occurs.

*Map – Area mowed by Council staff*



2. Properties 16 and 18 will also be permitted to keep the grass area short at the rear of their property where Council do not currently undertake mowing. They are to mow no further than 6 metres from boundary fence. No areas consisting of native vegetation are to be mown over including vegetation on the edge of the lagoons.
3. The remaining properties 20 through to 66 have different levels of sloping and some have patches of grass at the top of the slopes directly out their boundary fence. These areas are currently being mowed by landholders and this may continue. These areas are only to be mown where grass is currently present and at no time should these mown areas extend out to lagoons or mow over native vegetation.
4. Relocate fallen timber in slashing areas to planting patches or directly under established trees (late autumn when highly visible, check in spring).

5. Slash woodland as required annually where pasture grasses (esp. *paspalum*) predominate to prevent heavy build-up of grassy fuel. The area covered by slashing activities to change overtime as revegetation occurs through the site and if inaccessible due to high water levels.
  - a. -Retain stubble of 100mm when slashing - to protect & encourage native species.
  - b. -Avoid where possible slashing areas where there is fallen timber or too close to lagoon edges and tree trunks.

**Map – Area slashed by Council staff**



6. Undertake planting in areas where it is difficult to slash to reduce the establishment of weeds and provide native habitat.

## 6. Erosion Control

The rear of properties 20 through to 66 (including No 2 Macquarie Court) have different levels of sloping from the rear of their boundary fences. Some areas are beginning to show signs of erosion. These slopes are too difficult to mow or slash and continued spraying of weeds remove vegetation cover eventually leading to further erosion.

*Photos – Sloping areas Rear of Cambridge Drive*



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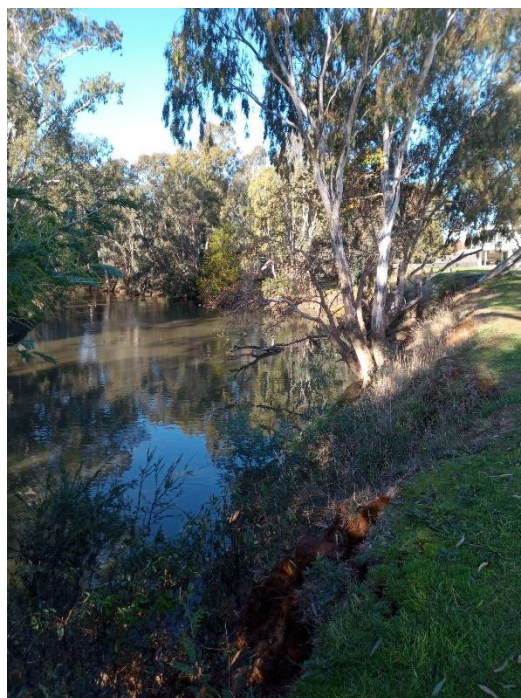
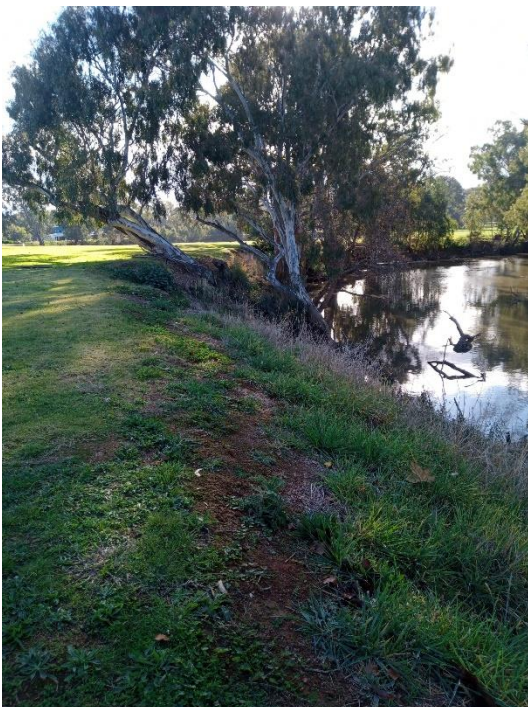
Some areas are further being eroded from the installation of privately owned water runoff pipes. There have also been instances where the runoff from these unapproved pipes has killed off all the ground layer vegetation.

**Photo – Private landholder pipe installation causing erosion**



The bank of the Ovens River behind properties 52 and 54 is also showing signs of erosion and has minimal vegetation present and would benefit from revegetation works to stabilise the bank.

**Photo – Ovens River behind properties 52 to 54**





## Management Aims

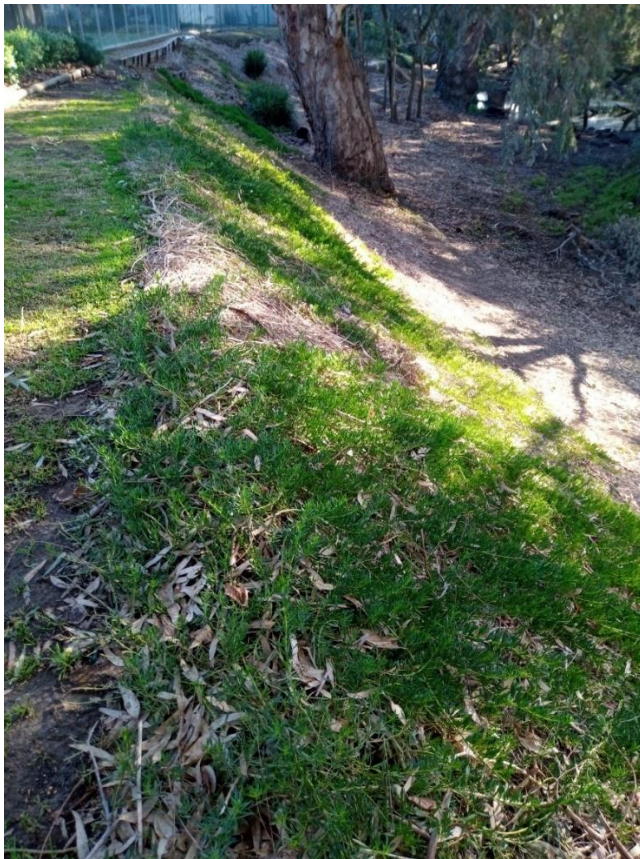
Undertake additional revegetation plantings to mitigate further erosion of the banks of the river and sloping areas.

## Actions Required

1. The Rural City of Wangaratta to undertake planting of the sloping areas with native groundcovers listed below, these are all creepers and wont block views:
  - *Hardenbergia violacea* – Purple Coral Pea, Happy Wanderer.
  - *Myoporum parvifolium* – Creeping Boobialla.
  - *Kennedia prostrata* --Running Postman
2. Undertake revegetation along the section of the Ovens River that is showing signs of erosion and has very little vegetation to stabilise the bank. These plantings will consist of river and creek species used throughout the site and listed on page 5.

Revegetation works on both the slopes and the river edge will be undertaken as funding and resources become available.

**Photo - Example of the type of planting to occur on slopes.**



## 7. Non-Council Assets

Council has noted that there has been encroachment of private landholder infrastructure on to Council owned and managed land (Rear of Cambridge Drive). These include steps, retaining walls, vegetable gardens/flower gardens and water runoff pipes.

There are also several areas throughout the site that have been planted with non-native plant species. These plants have the potential to spread widely and can become very difficult to manage. The site is along the banks of the Ovens River and acts as a flood plain. Floods can spread weeds along watercourses and throughout the site into areas that were previously free of weeds.

There is to be no further installation of privately owned infrastructure or plantings on Council land without prior approval from Council.

The installation of future privately owned Infrastructure will only be assessed and approved by Council if there is an immediate need for this infrastructure. The intention is that there will be no new privately owned infrastructure built on site unless absolutely necessary.

### Management Aims

To ensure all non-Council owned infrastructure at Rear Cambridge Drive is safe and does not pose a risk and is in line with the intentions of this management plan.

To ensure all plantings at Rear Cambridge are native and do not pose as a weed risk that could be spread through the site or down-stream of the site.

### Actions Required

1. All existing privately owned infrastructure to be inspected and approved where appropriate by qualified Council staff or where required an independent assessor. If the infrastructure is approved and can remain on site, then a formal agreement will need to be put in place between the property owner and Council.
2. Where infrastructure is deemed to be a hazard, unsafe or has the potential to cause erosion, the property owner will be required to remove the privately owned asset.
3. Removal of plantings that are non-native and have the potential to spread weeds.

## 8. Drainage

### Description

The Phillipson Street wetland system was a joint project between the developer of the subdivision, the Rural City of Wangaratta, the North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA) and Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

The wetland catches water run-off from local roads and houses. The water passes through a Gross Pollutant Trap where litter is captured. The first pond in the wetland captures any sediment from stormwater. The second pond has a variety of native aquatic plants that works to filter out pollutants contained in the stormwater. The water that overflows from the stormwater wetlands into the Ovens River is of significantly improved quality.

### Management Aims

To protect the health of our waterways by ensuring clean runoff from Wangaratta's stormwater by providing water quality improvement and flood storage.

### Actions Required

1. Native vegetation should be encouraged to establish providing a filtering and calming effect on water passing through.
2. Spray exotic vegetation (weeds) in and around the wetlands.

*Photo – Phillipson St Wetland*





Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**