Rural City of Wangaratta

Roadside Conservation Management Plan

2022-2027

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Contents

FOREWORD

Roads are an integral component of human society, allowing for the safe and efficient transport of people and goods. There are few places on earth that are not currently impacted by the vast networks of linear infrastructure. The ecological impacts of linear infrastructure and vehicles are numerous and diverse and have competing values and issues adding to the complexity of roadside management.

Conservation needs must be balanced with road safety, soil stability, water runoff, legal requirements, bushfire risk, infrastructure corridors (water, power, telecommunications), cultural values, firewood collection, grazing, recreational values (horse riding, hiking, bike riding), educational values and development needs.

Contrasts between the objectives of Council, the community, road user and other agencies sometimes make roadside management seemingly conflicting. A variety of legislative and regulatory mechanisms exist that inform roadside management; hence decision makers can face a complex task in balancing multiple competing objectives.

This Plan aims to provide a balanced approach to the protection and sustainable management of environmental and cultural heritage values on roadsides in the Rural City of Wangaratta, while meeting key functional and fire prevention requirements.

It must be noted that this management plan “Roadside Conservation Management Plan 2022-2027” is a guidance/reference document of information on the legislative requirements of roadside activities in relation to conservation management.

There is a separate Management Plan “Road Management Plan 2021-2025” for Council managed local road network and its associated road infrastructure. The purpose of this plan is to set out schedules of inspection type and frequency to ensure that Council managed roads continue to function and to provide a level of service including road safety acceptable to the community.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Roadside Conservation Management Plan (RCMP)

The Roadside Conservation Management Plan (RCMP) aims to conserve and enhance roadside native vegetation that often provides valuable habitat and is an important feature in local landscapes. The challenge currently facing society is to build a more efficient transportation system that facilitates economic growth and development, reduces environmental impacts and protects biodiversity and ecosystem functions. The conservation aim must also take into account property access, provision of utilities, fire management, legal stock movement and roadside maintenance. Existing legislation and regulations apply to such activities in order to protect native vegetation. The RCMP informs users of these legislated requirements and methods to conserve vegetation during activities.

The first Roadside Conservation Management Plan for the Rural City of Wangaratta was prepared by Rural City of Wangaratta Roadside Advisory Committee in 2000 with funding from the Natural Heritage Trust. The Roadside Conservation Management Plan was then updated in 2014 under the direction of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

This 2021 review of the RCMP updates legislation and conservation knowledge. The RCMP sets out relevant legislation, required permits and procedures to help users to meet these responsibilities during roadside activity.

While the RCMP focuses on conservation and management of remnant habitats on roadsides, the RCMP must be consistent with other Council policies in road management, fire management and emergency planning. The name - Roadside Conservation Management Plan - was chosen to make its focus clear and to avoid confusion with other roadwork related documents.

1.2 Scope of the RCMP

The RCMP covers all rural roads within the municipality that are under the control of the Rural City of Wangaratta (RCoW). Roads inside town boundary 80 km/hr speed limits have not generally been included. There are a few township roads of high conservation value that have received a conservation rating.

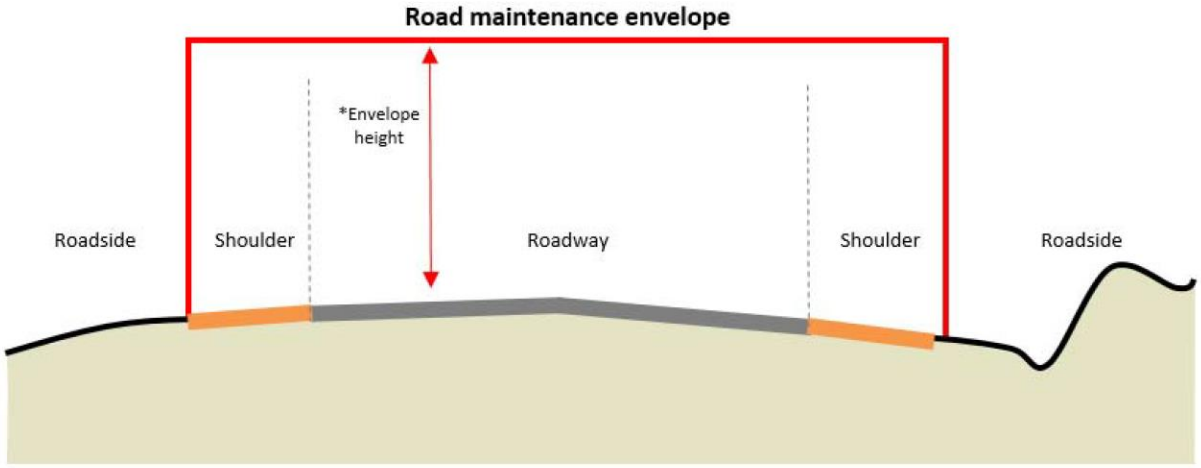
Currently there has been no systematic identification of Aboriginal Cultural values, however RCoW are working towards gathering this information over the next 2 to 3 years. A trial is currently underway between RCoW and a qualified contractor to develop a suitable methodology to collect Culturally Significant trees / sites on our roadsides.

Rural Roads Victoria (RRV, previously called VicRoads) is responsible for managing declared freeways and arterial roads, these being the Hume Freeway, Beechworth-Wangaratta Rd, Buckland Gap Road, Glenrowan- Myrtleford Road (Snow Road), The Great Alpine Road, Greta Road, Mansfield-Whitfield Road, Rutherglen-Springhurst Road, Wahgunyah-Wangaratta Road (Federation Way), Wangaratta Road, Wangaratta-Whitfield Road and Wangaratta- Yarrawonga Road. Permission must be sought from RRV for any activity on roadsides managed by RRV. The same legislation applies to native vegetation on all roadsides, so the guidance in the RCMP can assist during any permitted activities on these roadsides.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Parks Victoria (PV) are responsible for managing most roads within declared Crown Land including National Parks, State Parks and State Forest areas, plus ‘unused roads’.

Road maintenance works conducted by Council are done within the 'maintenance envelope', which is defined by DELWP as an area encompassing the road surface plus an area to one metre beyond the guideposts at the edge of the road shoulder (including roadside drains) or one metre past the table drain if there are no posts. The envelope is defined vertically to five metres above the road. The 'Procedure to rely on the Road Safety Exemption in the planning schemes' is to be followed when undertaking road maintenance work within the maintenance envelope. Other exemptions may also apply to these works including 'emergency works' exemption. This RCMP does not include any areas within this road maintenance envelope.

Figure 1: Road maintenance envelope



*Envelope height:
6.5m for Over Dimension (OD) routes
6m for urban and rural freeways, and main and arterial roads
5m for local and other roads

1.3 Objectives of the RCMP

The purpose of this RCMP is to promote good management of roadside vegetation particularly in relation to environmental values. This RCMP defines the strategic framework and management principles which will guide actions within the road reserves to promote good management of roadside vegetation for the Rural City of Wangaratta local government area (LGA).

The specific goals of the RCMP are:

- Provision of safe transportation corridors (define a clearance envelope).
- Maintain and enhance biodiversity values, including landscape habitat connectivity and habitats for rare and threatened species and communities.
- Control and reduce the spread of, and where possible, eradicate priority weeds.
- Control rabbits.
- Protect service assets located on roadsides.
- Identify and protect cultural and heritage values.
- Prevent further decline and maintain the ecosystem functions that roadsides provide.
- Maintain and enhance the visual amenity and landscape quality of roadsides.
- Manage fire risk.

1.4 Development of the plan

Community and stakeholder engagement has been central to the development of this RCMP to ensure the plan is locally relevant and practical and addresses the range of values and threats associated with road reserves in Rural City of Wangaratta.

Throughout the updating of this RCMP the appropriate areas of Council were consulted where activities either affect their operations or approval is required to ensure legislation and information is current. The Draft plan was then distributed internally for review and updated to reflect all feedback where appropriate.

The draft RCMP was placed on public exhibition from 1st December 2021 to 28th January 2022. All stakeholders and the general community were invited to comment on the draft RCMP during this period. Five Community workshop sessions were conducted across the municipality and online during December 2021 and January 2022.

Collectively, the feedback received from community, stakeholders and Council Staff has contributed to the development of this Roadside Conservation Management Plan.

1.5 Stakeholders

The plan will be used by a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in roadside management. There are different managers and stakeholders of different roads in the Rural City of Wangaratta.

- Rural Roads Victoria (formerly VicRoads) is responsible for all major arterial roads including their roadside vegetation.
- DELWP and PV are responsible for roadsides within Crown Land, State Park or National Park.
- Rural City of Wangaratta is responsible for all other roads in the Municipality.
- Landcare groups and other community members play a part in in roadside conservation undertaking revegetation projects, litter collection, education and reporting illegal vegetation removal.
- Land holders adjacent to roadside vegetation have a role to play in the protection and management of the native vegetation. Landholders are permitted to undertake weed management and slash roadsides.
- Country Fire Authority (CFA) – the CFA has a critical role in the community in preparing for and responding to bushfire threats.
- Fire Rescue Victoria - respond to fires, complex rescues, road crashes, emergency medical calls and hazardous chemical spills. FRV also works with the Country Fire Authority (CFA), which is a community-based volunteer fire service.

2. Roadside Importance and Threats

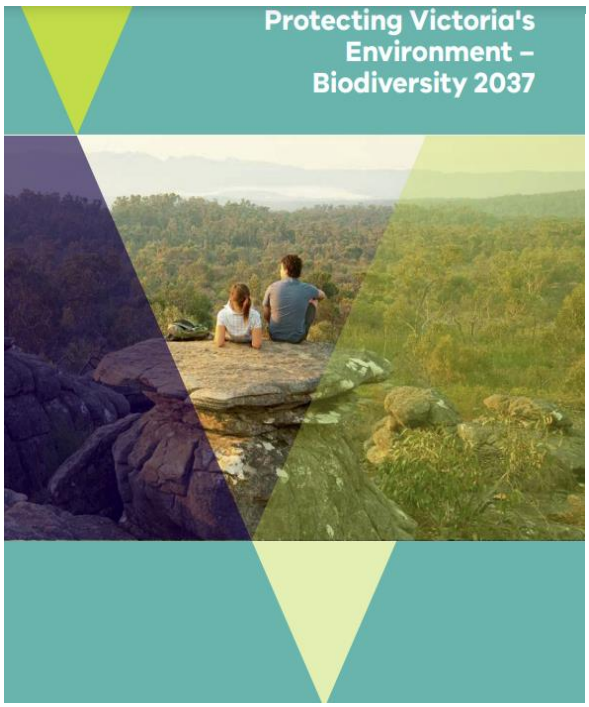
2.1 Roadside Values

Roadside reserves are a complex environment to work in due to competing values and issues. Councils are responsible in this regard to consider road safety, conservation, cultural values, firewood collection, bushfire risk, legal requirements, recreational use and development pressures. There is a need to manage linear roadside reserves for environmental objectives, recognising the ecological value of these areas rather than just their value as transport corridors.

Many roadsides support important biodiversity values because they retain remnants of native vegetation and wildlife habitats that were once widespread throughout the landscape. Roadsides often provide the only habitat connections to other native vegetation remnants in heavily cleared rural landscapes. In some parts of the municipality roadside vegetation represents the only remaining habitat for specific indigenous plant and animal species and without roadside habitats these species would be locally extinct. Roadsides can also function as a reference point for attempts at re-establishing original vegetation in the broader landscape.

The primary goal identified for native vegetation management in *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037 (DELWP, 2017)* is: '

No net loss to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation'.



Native Vegetation

The objective for the regulation of native vegetation clearing is to ensure that there is no 'net loss' to biodiversity as a result of the permitted clearing of native vegetation. This is achieved by applying the three step approach: avoid, minimise and offset.

At a broader level, the Victorian Government is committed to achieving an overall 'net gain', expressed as an improvement in the overall extent and condition of native habitats across terrestrial, waterway and marine environments. Not all habitats or vegetation types will need to be improved or increased in order to achieve this goal, but overall gains will need to outweigh losses. Such gains will be the result of investment and other efforts by government, community and land managers. The most important places to achieve gains and to avoid losses are locations with higher relative contribution to biodiversity benefit.

The importance of roadside vegetation was highlighted in the 2011 report *Remnant Native Vegetation Investigation* by the Victorian Environment Assessment Council (VEAC). This highlights the threat to biodiversity posed by loss and fragmentation of remnant vegetation in the Rural City of Wangaratta. "The importance of roadside vegetation and remnant riparian strips in bioregions generally increases as the extent of remnant native vegetation decreases. In the more cleared bioregions, road reserves and riparian areas contain significant proportions of the remaining native vegetation, and a particularly high proportion of this vegetation is on public land. In these landscapes, roadsides are disproportionately important for the habitat they provide and the species they support." (VEAC 2011)

Victorian Riverina

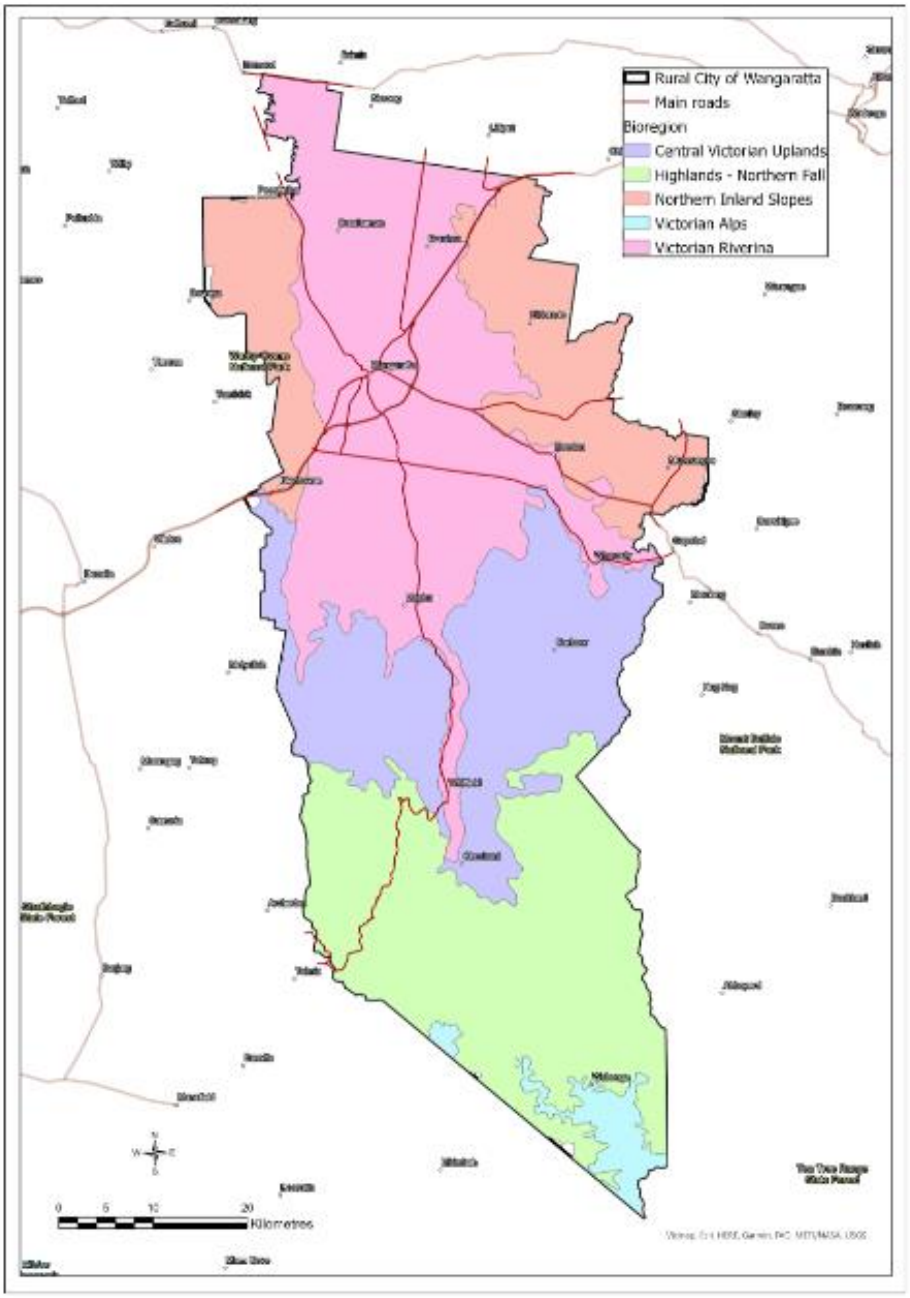
Much of this large bioregion is heavily fragmented and degraded. The patterns of clearing and site condition are relatively homogenous whether on public or private land. Most remaining native vegetation is on private land, and any large patches are of at least regional significance given the overall paucity of native vegetation. Despite being in relatively poor condition, several landscapes are relatively well connected.

As noted in the discussion paper, road reserves make a significant contribution to the total amount of native vegetation on public land. Measures to conserve and augment road reserves should have priority in this bioregion. Riparian vegetation along major rivers and streams is mostly on public land reserves, and likewise contributes substantially to the proportion of remaining native vegetation in the bioregion. However, because of grazing much of this vegetation is degraded. Both of these public land features typically abut private agricultural land so measures to facilitate conservation actions on private land and across the public-private interface would be appropriate for much of the bioregion.

The Bioregion that makes up the vast majority of the Rural City of Wangaratta (the Victorian Riverina) is classified in this study as "Most Cleared". VEAC found that a high proportion of native vegetation occurs on roadsides only and remnant vegetation is in poorer condition than other State bioregions.

The other four Bioregions that make up our municipality are the Northern Inland slopes, Central Victorian Uplands, Victorian Alps and Highland-Northern Falls. Both the Northern Inland slopes and Central Victorian Uplands are classified as "Moderately cleared". These Bioregions generally occur on the verges between intact landscapes and cleared land and are particularly important in maintaining linkages between these landscapes. In these bioregions, remnant vegetation on private land and roadsides is a landscape feature. Landcare groups and private owners have done much work to enhance remnant vegetation on private land and roadsides.

Figure 2. The Bioregions of the Rural City of Wangaratta



2.2 Important Flora and Fauna within Rural City of Wangaratta

Endangered EVCs

Remnant native vegetation in the Rural City of Wangaratta local government area is represented by 35 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) or mapping units (including complexes, mosaics and aggregates). These EVCs occur across 5 bioregions that make up our municipality (Victorian Riverina, Northern Inland slopes, Central Victorian Uplands, Victorian Alps and Highlands – Northern Fall).

There are 14 EVCs that are classified ‘endangered’ in the Rural City of Wangaratta (shown on map in figure 3).

The status of the EVCs on all roadsides are included in the Roadside Conservation Assessment, and through that, are used to determine controls and prioritisation for various activities on roadsides.

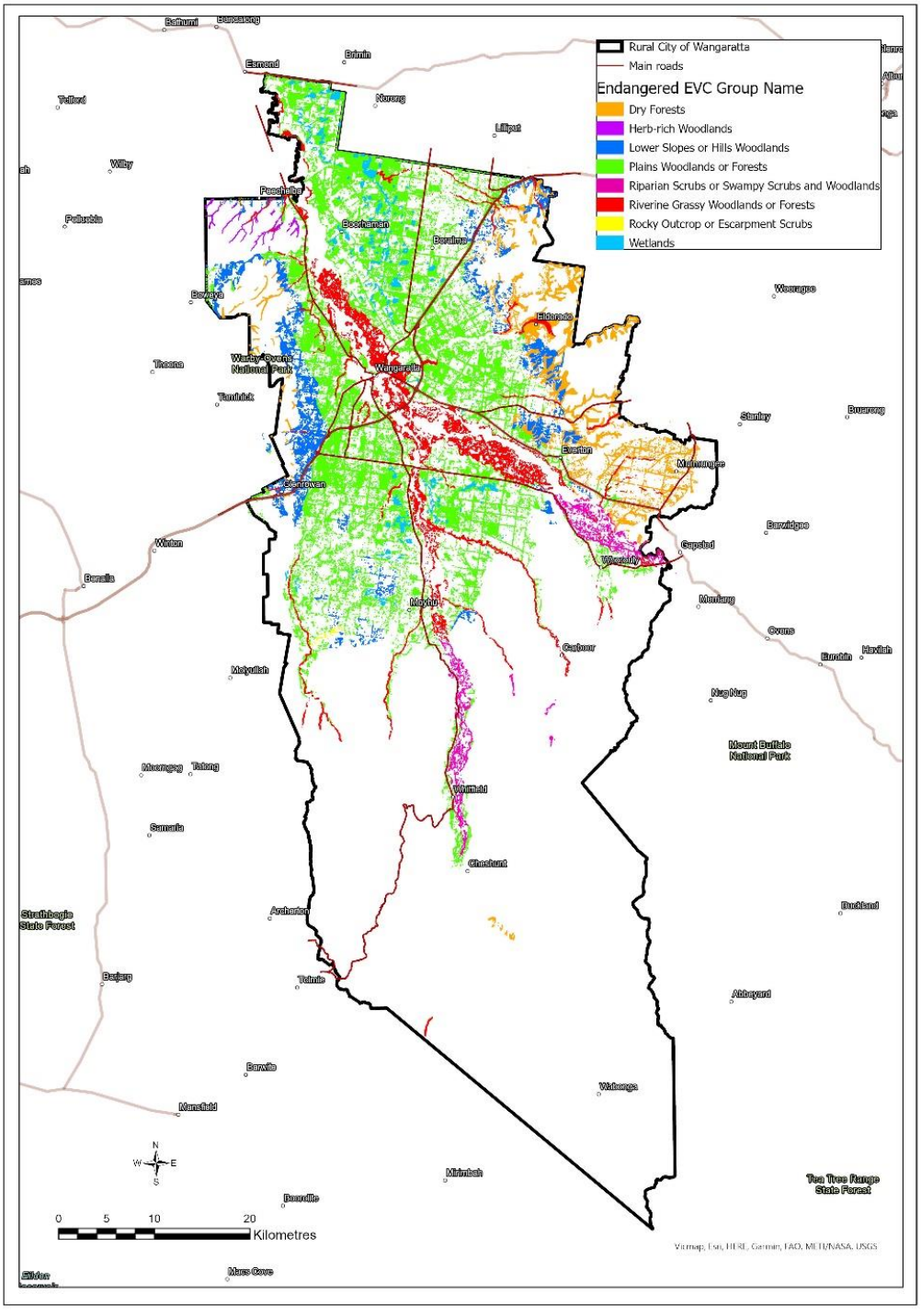


Figure 3: Endangered EVCs of the Rural City of Wangaratta

Commonwealth listed vegetation communities (EPBC Listed vegetation)

In addition to the threatened EVCs of the Rural City of Wangaratta there are four Commonwealth listed vegetation communities. The four listed vegetation communities are:

- Alpine Sphagnum Bogs Fens
- Buloke Woodlands of the Riverina and Murray Darling Depression Regions
- Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands of South Eastern Australia
- White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands

A vegetation community is a naturally occurring group of native plants, animals and other organisms that are interacting in a unique habitat. Its structure, composition and distribution are determined by environmental factors such as soil type, position in the landscape, altitude, climate and water availability.

Photo: Buloke Woodlands (National Recovery Plan).

Photo: Grey Box Grassy Woodland

Threatened Flora and Fauna

The Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (2021) has records for 122 threatened native species of plants listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act) in the RCoW. Of these 8 are listed as Nationally Threatened under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 EPBC Act). A full list of threatened flora in RCoW can be found in Appendix 5.

Roadside vegetation often provides habitat linkages which allows for the movement of fauna across otherwise highly cleared and fragmented landscapes. This is mostly applicable to highly mobile species such as birds and bats. However, other vertebrate species such as woodland birds, reptiles, gliders and ground dwelling mammals are also likely to favour well vegetated roadside corridors in the absence of other connecting vegetation. Maintaining and in some cases, improving these linkages is important for maintaining genetic diversity and flow between different fauna populations.

Habitat features that are particularly important include old trees with hollows, logs, native understorey and ground cover vegetation, leaf litter and flowering shrubs and trees.

The Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (2021) has records for 74 threatened native species of animals listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act) in RCoW. Of these 24 are listed as Nationally Threatened under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 EPBC Act). A full list of threatened fauna in RCoW can be found in Appendix 4.

1. Carpet Python 'Morelia spilota' (photo by Chris Tzaros), 2. Bull-Oak 'Allocasuarina luehmannii ' (photo by Mark Marathon)
3. Bent leaf Wattle 'Acacia flexifolia', 4. Brush-tailed Phascogale 'Phascogale tapoatafa' (photo by Chris Tzaros)
5. Barking Owl 'Ninox connivens' (photo by Chris Tzaros), 6. Mugga Ironbark 'Eucalyptus sideroxylon'

2.3 Threats to roadside biodiversity

The key threats to roadside biodiversity within Rural City of Wangaratta include:

Disturbance and edge effects

Disturbance is a major threat to roadside vegetation. Primary causes of disturbance include the removal of vegetation within the road reserve and the movement, exposure or compaction of soil (such as through road maintenance and construction activities). Removal of vegetation can also increase edge effects such as changes to light, drainage and wind exposure, which occur when a new edge is created. Minimising disturbance during road maintenance and construction is key to managing this issue.

There is also the very real and increasing biodiversity threat of roadsides being “cleaned up” for amenity purposes with shrubs removed and untidy plant material slashed or piled up and burnt. The cumulative impact on biodiversity is considerable as more property owners “beautify” the adjoining roadsides and in the process destroy the remaining habitat values.

Habitat loss

Native species of birds, mammals, frogs, reptiles and insects depend on hollows in live and dead standing and fallen trees to live, feed and raise their young. Mid storey vegetation provides valuable food and shelter for many species. Fallen branches and logs (woody debris) are very important habitat for ground-dwelling fauna such as frogs and lizards and decomposing wood provides habitat and food for a diversity of invertebrates, fungi and bacteria which in turn are food for larger animals. Woody debris is also immensely important to nutrient cycling, erosion prevention and weed suppression.

Firewood collection is a major contributor to the loss of habitat. Regular high intensity burning, inappropriate herbicide use, weed infestation, works, grazing, slashing and soil compaction can also lead to habitat decline.

RCoW is committed to conserving the native vegetation and habitats that make up roadside reserves across the region. Consent from Council is required for all firewood collection, native vegetation removal and works on road reserves. Unpermitted activities will be investigated and can result in fines or prosecution.

Eastern Bearded Dragon (Photo credit: Chris Tzaros, Birds Bush and Beyond)

Fire

Inappropriate management of fire frequency and intensity can lead to a loss of species diversity, a reduction in habitat availability and weed infestation.

Fire management needs to balance the hazards from accumulated fuel loads with the ecological requirements of roadside communities. An appropriate fire regime specific to the vegetation communities present can achieve these outcomes. Council works closely with the CFA to develop site specific treatments as part of the Municipal Fire Prevention Strategy.

Grazing

Repeated grazing by livestock can cause a reduction in the native diversity of the groundcover through the elimination of species sensitive to grazing (such as lilies, some native grasses with high growth points and a number of daisies).

Added nutrients from manure encourages weed growth and creates conditions unfavourable to many native species.

Grazing is permitted only after provision of a grazing licence. Grazing permits will only be issued in consultation with RCoW's Natural Resource Management and Sustainability Team.

This is to ensure that the grazing will not have a detrimental impact to native vegetation present on the roadside or increase the spread of weed species.

Photo: Crash Grazing

Indirect impacts from road works

Aside from the direct impacts caused by disturbance, roadworks also introduce threats from the creation of stockpile sites, destabilisation of sediments and presence of pollutants that can move out of the works area. Other indirect impacts such as dust, light and noise can also have impacts on the roadside environment. Careful planning and management of these issues can minimise these impacts.

Pest and Weed infestation

Exotic plants compete with native plant species for available resources and alter environmental conditions diminishing habitat resources for native fauna. Some weeds can also increase fire risk e.g. Phalaris and African Lovegrass. Disturbance is often a major cause of weed infestation. Weed invasion can also occur from machinery, vehicles, movement of animals and through stormwater and wind. Roadways are high-risk pathways for the movement of weeds across the LGA. Effective weed control and the prevention of the spread and introduction of weeds is key to managing this threat

Photo: St John's Wort

Pest Pathogens like cinnamon fungus (Phytophthora cinnamomic) can also cause a serious threat to many species not only on roadsides but can be spread to adjacent areas. Pathogens can be spread through the movement of native animals that may carry the spores or the movement of plant and machinery. Control measures such as ensuring earthmoving equipment are cleaned routinely can help prevent the spread.

European rabbits (Oryctolagus cuniculus) are not a natural part of Australia's ecology. As an introduced species, a thriving rabbit population has a significant impact on agriculture and comes at the expense of many native plants and animals. They degrade landscapes through:

- digging warrens,
- selectively grazing on vegetation and undermining native vegetation,
- preventing natural regeneration and damaging revegetated sites,
- promoting the spread of invasive weeds,
- causing soil erosion,
- degrading ecosystem quality and resilience,
- degrading cultural heritage sites,
- creating unsafe surfaces for vehicles and pedestrians; and
- undermining buildings and road structural integrity.

Roadside Biodiversity Risk Management

The 2007 Goulburn Broken Catchment Roadside Biodiversity Risk Management Protocols project provided a risk assessment framework. The project identified the seven overall activities that have the potential for the greatest impacts on biodiversity on roadsides (shown in figure 4).

Table 1. Roadside Risk Summary

	Management Activity Group						
Potential Impact	Road Construction & Maintenance	Fire Prevention Works	Livestock grazing & droving	Slashing & Spraying	Fence & Property access	Roadside Rehabilitation	Firewood Collection
Native vegetation removed/ effected							
Loss or damage to habitats							
Accidental pest spread, weeds etc							
Contamination run-off sediments, dust							
Altered water regimes, drainage etc							

Table sourced from Goulburn Broken Catchment Roadside Biodiversity Risk Management Protocols Report 2007

Key: High Risk | Medium Risk | Low Risk

3. Legislative and Policy Framework

A number of pieces of state and federal legislation are applicable to roadside management activities. A brief summary of the main Acts likely to guide roadside management activities are included below.

Commonwealth Legislation

3.1 Environmental Protection Biodiversity and Conservation Act, 1999

The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) is the primary piece of Commonwealth legislation relating to environmental conservation. The EPBC Act provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places—defined in the EPBC Act as matters of national environmental significance.

A number of EPBC Act protected ecological species and communities have the potential to occur on roadsides within the Rural City of Wangaratta. There are 5 listed communities found within the Rural City of Wangaratta and are listed in section 2.2. A list of flora and fauna species that are known to occur, or have the potential to occur, on roadsides throughout the shire can be found in Appendices 4 and 5.

State Legislation

3.2 Planning and Environment Act 1987

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 sets out the objectives for land use planning in Victoria and the legislative framework for achieving these objectives. The Act requires municipalities to prepare and administer local planning schemes that can include targeted policies and provisions related to native vegetation removal and protection of the natural environment. The Act also sets out processes for enforcing planning schemes and planning permits.

3.3 Victorian Planning Provisions

The Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP) are the standard provisions that form the framework for all of Victoria's planning Schemes. Clause 12.01 Biodiversity provides specific direction regarding the protection and management of biodiversity and native vegetation in Victoria. A key strategy identified in Clause 12.01 is to ensure that there is no net loss to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.

Native vegetation is defined in Clause 73-01 of the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) as Plants that are indigenous to Victoria, including trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses.

A permit may be required to remove native vegetation under Clause 52.16 or 52.17. This includes the removal of dead native vegetation (see link under Victoria Native Vegetation Regulations).

Victoria Native Vegetation Regulations

The native vegetation removal regulations are the rules governing the removal of native vegetation in Victoria. These regulations are generally implemented through all Victorian planning schemes, in accordance with the Guidelines. The overarching legislation is the Planning and Environment Act 1987, which is administered by local government and the Minister for Planning. The regulations require landholders to obtain a planning permit to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation.

DELWP produces a range of useful supporting material that can assist in ensuring compliance with the regulations. They are available at https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/native-vegetation/native-vegetation

- Assessor's handbook – applications to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation (Assessor's handbook)
- Applicant's guide – Applications to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation (Applicant's guide)
- Exemptions from requiring a planning permit to remove native vegetation – Guidance (Exemption Guidance)

3.4 Agreement with DELWP – road safety exemption

The Rural City of Wangaratta has an agreement with DELWP to access the Road Safety Exemption under Clause 52.17 in accordance with the Procedure to rely on the road safety exemption in planning schemes (2018). This agreement:

- Outlines that council (as the road manager for municipal roads) can remove, destroy or lop native vegetation along existing roadsides to maintain the safe and efficient function of the road, without a planning permit, within certain thresholds.
- States that although exempt from a planning permit, the requirements of the procedure must be met (or the agreement may be revoked).
- Requires that vegetation removal must be minimised as much as possible in all cases.
- Explains there are two categories of road works subject to this procedure: maintenance and low impact construction works and road safety projects.
- Consultation with DELWP and offsets are required for low impact construction works and road safety projects.

3.5 Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act) provides the key legal framework relating to the conservation of threatened species, threatened communities and management of potentially threatening processes on public land throughout Victoria. Over 730 species, communities and threats are listed under the Act. The role of the Act is to conserve all Victorian flora and fauna and sets out to achieve this via a range of mechanisms, including:

- listing threatened species, communities and threats to native species
- requiring an overarching strategy for Victoria's biodiversity
- enabling the declaration of habitat critical to the survival of native plants and animals
- placing a duty on public authorities to have regard to the objectives of the Act
- requiring permits for activities that could harm threatened plants and fish and communities

A permit from the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) may be required for removal of FFG Act listed flora species from a roadside in the shire as a part of any management or maintenance works. This requirement is independent and in addition to any permit that may be required under the Rural City of Wangaratta Planning Scheme.

A permit or license may be required to collect seed or conduct research on listed threatened species that occur on road reserves.

3.6 Country Fire Authority Act 1958

Section 43 of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 requires public authorities, including municipal councils and VicRoads, to take all practicable steps to prevent the occurrence of fires, and to minimise the danger from the spread of fires on or from land which the authority owns, manages or maintains. Additionally, Section 55 of the Act states that each municipal council must prepare and maintain a Municipal Fire Management Plan in accordance with the advice and recommendation of the Municipal Fire Management Committee.

3.7 Catchment and Land Protection Act, 1994

The Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act) sets out a framework for managing noxious weeds and pest animal matters to prevent degradation to catchments. The Act is applicable across all public and privately managed land throughout Victoria.

The Act provides a hierarchy by which invasive species can be ranked based on their potential to degrade landscapes, both agricultural and natural, and specifies management responsibilities for land managers.

Under the Act, all landowners and land managers are required to take all reasonable steps to conserve soil, protect water resources, eradicate regionally prohibited weeds and pest animals and avoid contributing to land degradation which causes or may cause damage to the land of another land owner.

In November 2013 amendments were made to the CaLP Act to introduce the opportunity for municipal councils to prepare roadside weed and pest animal management plans. These amendments were made to clarify responsibilities for roadside weed and pest animal control.

The Act also prohibits the transportation of listed noxious weeds without a permit in order to minimise the spread of weeds.

3.8 Aboriginal Heritage Act, 2016

The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 establishes processes and procedures to protect places and features of Aboriginal cultural heritage value. In particular, the Act establishes the approval processes for works deemed “high impact activities” in areas of cultural heritage sensitivity such as named waterways. All Victorian Aboriginal archaeological sites (registered and unregistered) are protected.

3.9 Road Management Act, 2004

The purpose of the Road Management Act 2004 is to establish a coordinated management system for public roads that will promote safe and efficient state and local public road networks and the responsible use of our roads.

The Road Management Act sets down specific requirements for Local Government Authorities, including but not limited to the following:

- Road authorities will be required to make an assessment of the need to put into place a formal road management plan.
- Road authorities will be required to establish a Register of Public Roads listing each public road for which it is responsible.
- Councils are considered a works and infrastructure manager where they are conducting work on roads, other than municipal roads, and are subject to the notification and consent requirements of the Act, unless varied by regulation.

3.10 Electrical Safety Act 1988

The Electricity Safety Act 1998 (Vic) (ES Act) provides that a municipal council must specify, within its Municipal Fire Prevention Plan:

- Procedures and criteria for the identification of trees that are likely to fall onto, or come into contact with, an electric line (hazard trees); and
- Procedures for the notification of responsible persons of trees that are hazard trees in relation to electric lines for which they are responsible.

The Rural City of Wangaratta implements an Electrical Line Clearance Management Plan. This Plan is reviewed and updated prior to March 31st each year and outlines processes and procedures in relation to identification and notification of hazard trees and nominates responsible authorities for electrical line clearance.

Council Plans and Policy

3.11 Rural City of Wangaratta Planning Scheme

The Rural City of Wangaratta's Planning Scheme sets out planning policies and permit requirements for development and works in the municipality, including for vegetation removal. The Scheme includes state-wide provisions as well as local planning policies and overlays aimed at protecting locally significant environmental assets.

The key planning provisions and overlays relevant to roadside management are Clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation), Clause 42.01 (Environmental Significance Overlay), and Clause 42.02 (Vegetation Protection Overlay).

The Rural City of Wangaratta has a Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2 (VPO2) on roads within the municipality with high conservation value. Where this overlay applies a permit may be required from Council where normally an exemption under Clause 52.17 might apply.

3.12 Municipal Strategic Statement

Wangaratta's Planning Scheme Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) acknowledges that "the incremental loss of remaining habitat is a major issue across most of the municipality, particularly the northern plains".

The MSS identifies key issues relating to biodiversity and land use planning:

- The need for protection of remnant vegetation including roadside reserves.
- The need to enhance and protect the municipality's natural assets as non-renewable resources essential to the long-term sustainability of tourism as an industry.
- The conservation of the municipality's biodiversity.
- Protection of natural resource base of soil, waterways and wetlands, remnant vegetation and threatened flora and fauna; and
- The need to manage the natural resource base in a sustainable way to secure these environmental assets.

3.13 Council Plan

The *Council Plan 2021-2025* has a separate theme for Valuing Our Environment. The community vision 2033 for this theme is to build environmentally sustainable communities, reduce waste and enhance resource recovery, actively combat the causes and impacts of climate change and healthy and protected waterways and access to water.

3.14 Consent to Work in Road Reserves

The Council operates a system requiring a 'Works in Road Reserves Permit' for all activities on council managed roads. A permit is not required for mowing, slashing, fencing and weed spraying where works are mainly conducted on the roadside area.

3.15 Environmental Sustainability Strategy

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy is a plan for a healthy, resilient, and sustainable future for our municipality. The strategy recognises that climate change and degradation of the natural environment are defining issues of our time and the Strategy outlines a vision and action plan over the next five years to address these concerns to ensure sustainable environmental, social and economic prosperity for the Rural City of Wangaratta.

3.16 Roadside Weed and Pest Control Program

The Rural City of Wangaratta has a Roadside Weed and Pest Control Plan (RWPP) that was established in 2010 and is currently being reviewed and updated. The report traced the development and outcomes achieved in the first five years of RCoW's first comprehensive roadside program and concludes with an outline of future direction for roadside pest control within RCoW.

3.17 Fire Management Plan Roads and Rail Trail

Council's Fire Management Plan Roads and Rail Trail classifies roads within the Rural City of Wangaratta for the purpose of fire management and provides a risk-based fire management plan to reduce the risk of fire impact on and from the municipal road network and rail trail.

3.18 Road Management Plan 2017-2021

The Road Management Plan (RMP) has been developed to establish a risk management system for the Rural City of Wangaratta's local road network. The RMP is intended to encompass road users' needs and expectations within an economic framework based on meeting 'reasonable' maintenance standards relative to the function of the road network.

4. Roadside Conservation Values Assessment

The Rural City of Wangaratta (RCoW) manages 1,828 km of local roads, or 3,656 km of road reserve length (excluding Regional Roads Victoria [RRV] managed roads); however, these roads reflect the broader extent of native vegetation across the whole Shire and indeed the region, with a large proportion of the original native vegetation on roadsides having been lost or modified due to agricultural practices, road and drainage works, urban growth and weed invasion.

Notwithstanding the extent of native vegetation clearance described above, the rural roadsides within the RCoW Council contain a high proportion of the remaining native vegetation and habitat found within the Shire, and therefore roadsides need to be protected and managed carefully. In many areas, the roadsides provide clear examples of vegetation communities that once were widespread across the municipality.

The most recent survey of the roadsides of the RCoW was in 2009-2010, and the survey outcomes, amongst other data collected, classified the Council road network into three Conservation Value categories, ranging from High to Low. These categories represent a rapid assessment of conservation significance of the roadsides, and the collected information has been available in Council's Geographic Information System (GIS) and is accessible to all Council Officers in decision making.

However, it is important that Council maintains accurate and up-to date information regarding roadsides in order to appropriately conserve them. Given that the existing dataset is 10-11 years old, a consultant was appointed to undertake a new assessment of rural roads for which Council is the responsible authority.

The assessment considers large trees, percentage canopy cover, percentage cover weeds, understorey, recruits, logs, organic litter and landscape connectivity. All roads included in the assessment were assigned a conservation value as per Table 2. A map of the conservation value of roadsides (very high, high, medium, low and nil conservation value, Appendix 3) is provided on Council's website, as well as in the Councils geographical information system.

Table 2. Roadside Value Categories

Category	Treed/woody vegetation	Treeless vegetation
Very High	• Areas categorised as High Conservation Value that are an Endangered Ecological Vegetation Class • Areas categorised as High or Medium Conservation Value that maintain a recent record(s) of a threatened flora and/or fauna species, including threatened species that were observed during the survey	
High	• Native vegetation at ground level up to 50 % projective foliage cover, with considerable diversity apparent • Tree layer more-or-less continuous (> 10 % projective foliage cover) • Native shrub layer generally well defined • Introduced species at ground level < 50 % projective foliage cover • Litter dominated by material from indigenous species	• Native vegetation at ground level up to 50 % projective foliage cover • A native shrub layer may be present in patches or in clumps • Introduced species at ground level < 50 % projective foliage cover
Medium	• Native vegetation at ground level up to 20 % projective foliage cover or absent, but if present, lacks diversity • Tree layer as scattered trees and/or in small patches and/or more-or-less continuous • Probably includes some large hollow-bearing trees • May be scattered native shrub individuals present • Introduced species at ground level > 50 % projective foliage cover • Litter dominated by material from introduced species	• Native vegetation at ground level up to 20 % projective foliage cover • Introduced species at ground level > 50 % projective foliage cover
Low	• Native vegetation at ground level < 10 % projective foliage cover or absent, but if present, lacks diversity • May include some isolated tree or shrub individuals/small patches, but a lack of continuity in woody vegetation (< 5 % projective foliage cover) • Introduced species at ground level > 50 % projective foliage cover	• Native vegetation at ground level < 10 % projective foliage cover • Introduced species at ground level > 50 % projective foliage cover
Nil	• No native vegetation	• No native vegetation

Examples of Roadside Conservation Values

Very High or High		
Medium		
Low		
Nil		

5. General Operational Controls

5.1 Roadside maintenance

Roadside Maintenance refers to the clearance of regrowth vegetation (native and introduced) in order to maintain a road corridor or other established cleared or disturbed areas on road reserves. Adequate height and lateral clearance of roadside vegetation is needed for the safe movement of legal height vehicles across the full width of the traffic lanes.

5.2 New Roadworks

Local councils sometimes need to undertake new roadworks that will result in the clearance of native vegetation, some of which may be of high biodiversity value. These works can include construction of new roads along previously undeveloped road reserves, and the widening or realignment of existing roads. New roadworks also includes the construction of new drains, stockpile sites, and borrow pits or any other new works incidental to road construction or roadwork as defined in the Local Government Act 1999. These activities could have significant environmental impacts and it is important that the vegetation be assessed prior to the works. If significant vegetation is present, it may be possible to modify the roadworks to reduce or avoid critical impact.

5.3 General management practices

Native vegetation along roadsides needs careful management if it is to be conserved for future generations. Because of its linear nature, it is susceptible to gradual degradation through weed invasion. This degradation can be compounded if soils are disturbed or compacted by machinery or if low native shrubs or native grasses are driven over or cleared. Not only can native plants be unnecessarily destroyed, but conditions can be made unsuitable for natural regeneration and management problems can be created for adjoining landholders.

5.4 Pest plant and animal control

Pest plants and pest animals can invade rural land or natural habitats and can cause economic, ecological, physical or aesthetic problems, often with significant potential impacts on local and regional biodiversity. The linear and semi-disturbed nature of many roadsides means that they are susceptible to invasion by plant and animal pests. Without appropriate control and preventative measures in place pest plants, in particular, can invade and degrade native vegetation areas both on and adjacent to the roadside, as well as more distant areas via the road network.

The management of pest plants and animals is outlined in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994. In 2013 the State government passed an amendment making Councils responsible for specified weeds on roadsides. Council is required under the legislation to develop a Roadside Weed and Pest Control Program (RWPP). This RWPP contains management actions and control measures for a range of target species including: Blackberry, Gorse, Chilean Needle Grass, Sweet Briar, African Love Grass, Serrated Tussock, St John's Wort and Rabbits.

Photo: Chilean Needle Grass (CNG)

An experienced consultant was also appointed to undertake updated weed mapping in 2021 to capture a range of weeds on our roadsides throughout the Municipality including African Love Grass and Chilean Needle Grass. Roadside weeds can be found on Wangaratta's Online Mapping:

[Wangaratta Online Mapping (pozi.com)]

Figure 4: Roadside Weeds 2021

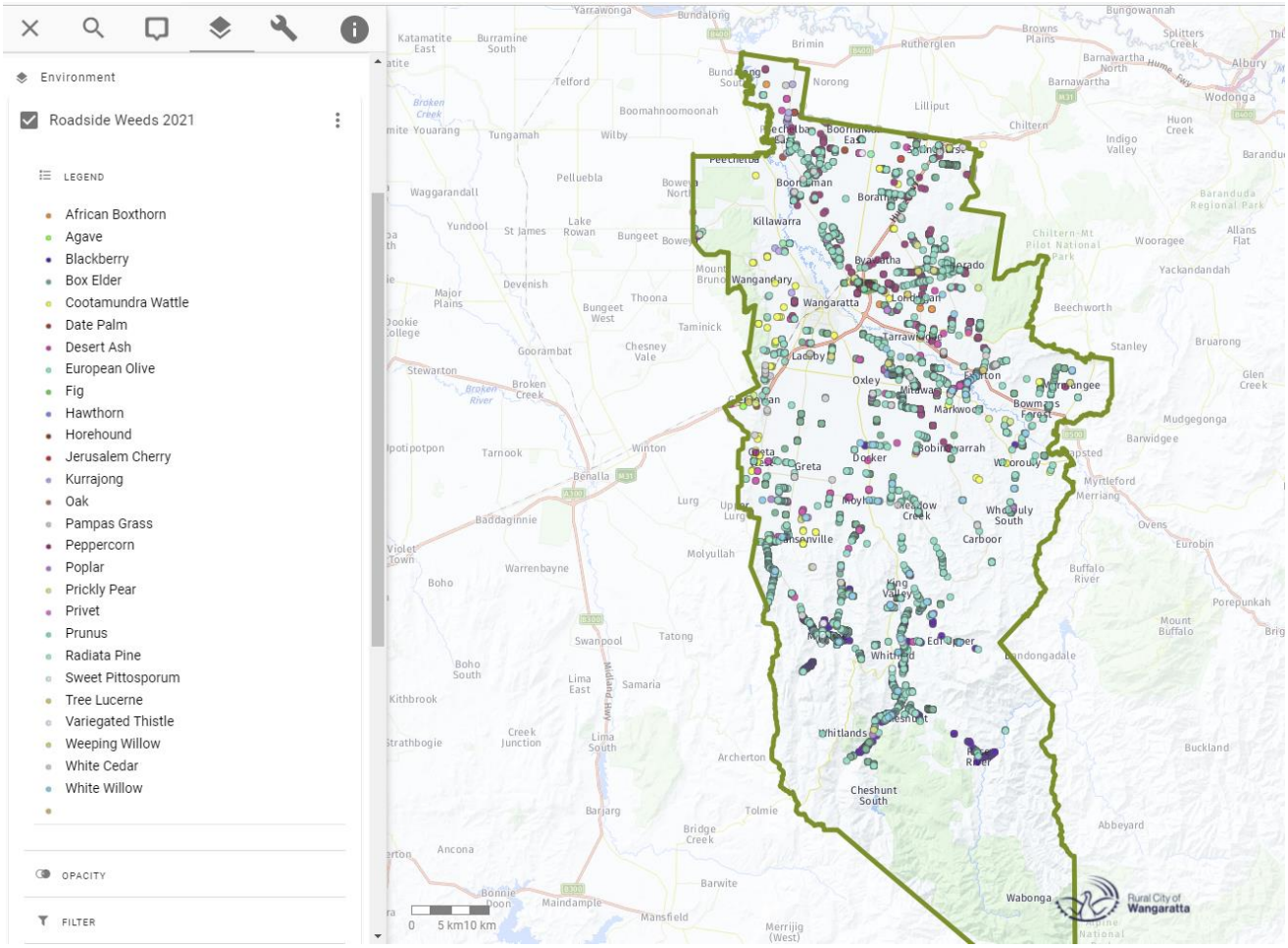
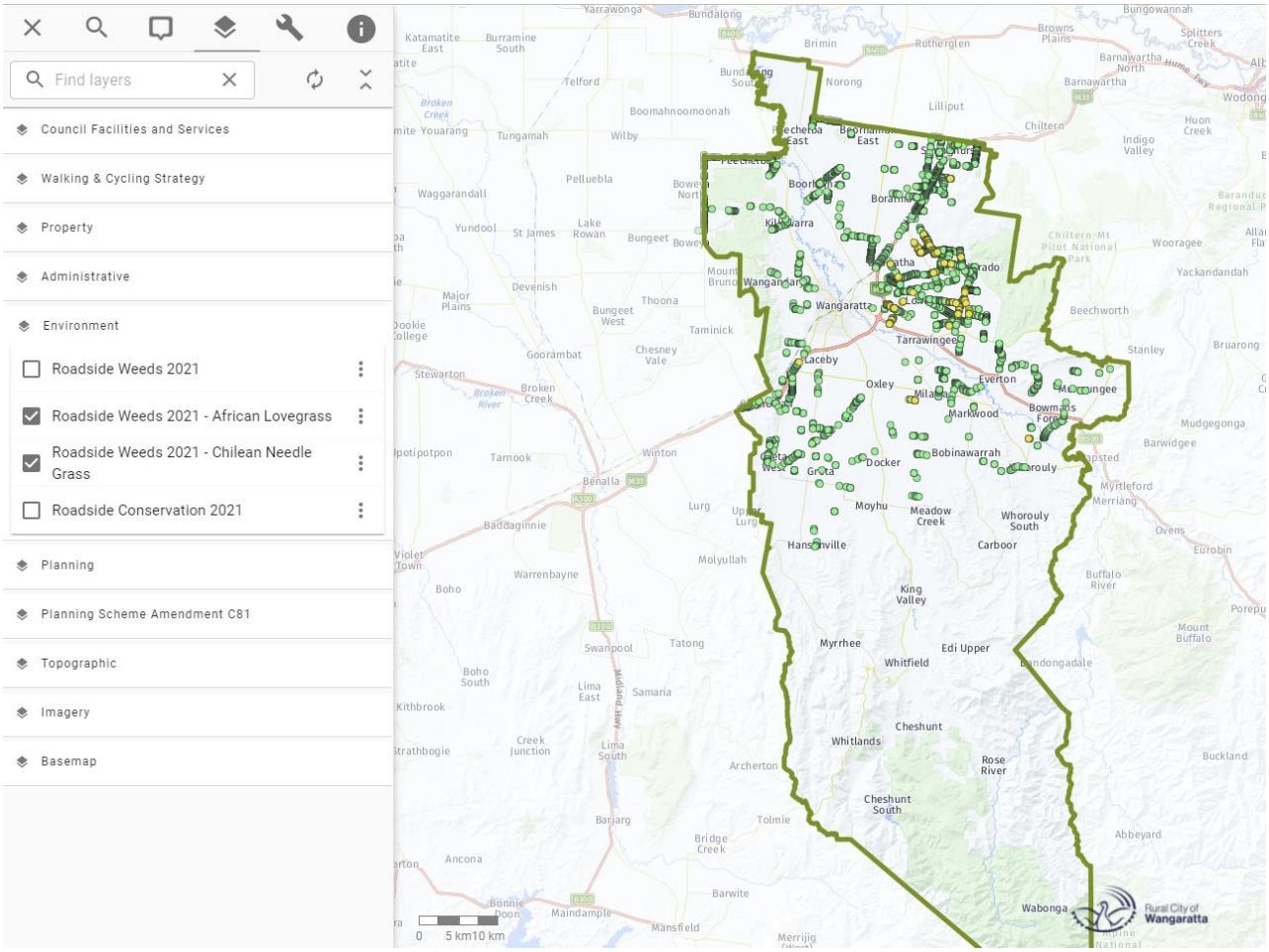


Figure 5: Roadside Weeds 2021 – Targeted Weeds (African Love Grass, Chilean Needle Grass)



6. Enhancement and Management of Roadside Vegetation

The structure and composition of roadside vegetation may vary from frequently mown grass to shrubs and trees and from artificial landscaping to natural plant communities. Roadside vegetation can perform many important functions, including the provision of habitat for rare plants and animals, a source of seeds for adjacent landscapes, a buffer to reduce the penetration of traffic noise and light, carbon sinks, stormwater filter and enhanced aesthetics for road users.

6.1 Conserving Vegetation Communities

The Roadside Conservation Management Plan is based on these priorities:

- Retain existing native vegetation by avoiding removal and minimising disturbance.
- Prevent the decline of native vegetation communities by actively conserving roadsides and containing spread of environmental weeds.
- Enhance priority habitats.
- Improve connectivity through revegetation of potential corridors.

6.2 Natural Regeneration

Regeneration on a roadside has the potential to enhance the biodiversity values of that area. Regenerating areas will eventually reduce ground weeds through competition, however initial weed control may be needed.

Photo: Kangaroo Grass

Natural regeneration of native vegetation will be protected and encouraged wherever possible unless it poses a safety risk or interferes with the road, table drains, sign posting, road widening and road construction or where overhead power lines exist.

6.3 Wildlife Habitat

Large old native trees provide extensive habitat for native fauna and when combined with other native vegetation, fallen timber and leaf litter old trees become very important for preserving biodiversity. Large old dead trees (standing or fallen) provide hollows and nesting sites for a range of native animals. It is for this reason that the removal of large dead trees requires a permit under the Planning Scheme.

Red-bellied Black Snake (Photo credit: Chris Tzaros, Bush Birds and Beyond)

Some threatened species in the Rural City of Wangaratta rely on remnant habitat along roadsides for their survival. The Grey-crowned Babbler lives in open woodlands and prefers mature eucalypt trees interspersed with younger trees and shrubs and other ground cover species. The Babblers eat insects they find on the ground among leaves and fallen branches or behind bark on trees.

Squirrel Gliders and Brush-tailed Phascogales also rely on roadside vegetation where there is sufficient canopy connectivity and the presence of large hollow-bearing trees.

Grey-crowned Babbler (Photo credit: Chris Tzaros Bush Birds and Beyond)

6.4 Connect Roadside Habitat

Habitat connectivity is considered to be one of the most important factors in maintaining biological diversity. Maintaining or increasing connectivity allows limited-range species to shift habitat to adjacent areas for food, shelter and on a seasonal basis to migrate or disperse to other areas.

In extensively cleared and modified grasslands and woodlands in North East Victoria, Road reserves contain a large proportion of the remaining native vegetation, and the oldest and largest trees with hollows needed by a range of wildlife.

The reserved status of roads, their geographical extent and continuity, and their network structure provide valuable opportunities for retaining and expanding wildlife habitat in disturbed environments, and for restoring or enhancing continuity to natural elements in the landscape.

Figure 4: Roadside Vegetation Linkages (Walkers and Sessions Rd)

Roadside vegetation can often provide linkages across fragmented landscapes as seen in figure 4 above showing continuity in vegetation from the Oven River through to the Warby—Ovens National Park.

Priority locations will be assessed and mapped to undertake revegetation works to increase connectivity of vegetation between roads and to our natural reserves located within the Wangaratta municipality. Revegetation works will only occur where they do not pose a safety risk to road users and in consultation with local CFA.

7. Requirements for specific activities on roadsides

Poor management practices can result in the decline of native vegetation cover and increased spread of weeds and pasture grasses into roadside reserves. When unmanaged, the increased weediness can result in increased maintenance costs, increased fire hazard, harbour for pest plants and animals, loss of visual amenity and erosion. This results in a loss of remnant vegetation and wildlife habitat with possible extinctions of local rare or threatened species.

Table 2 outlines all the main activities that could occur on roadsides, with basic information on permits and other regulations. The following sections provide further details of some of these activities.

Table 2. Roadside Activities Quick Reference Guide

Activity	Planning Permit Required?	Is there an exemption?	Permission of responsible authority required?	Requirements	Further information in section indicated
Bee Keeping	No	N/A	No	Beekeepers need to be registered, comply with the Bees Act 1971 and Bees Regulations 1992, and need to keep the bees and hives in accordance with the Apiary Code of Practice.	7.1
Construction of access point	No	Yes, crossovers of a limited width, at existing properties only.	Yes 'Works in Municipal Road Reserve Permit'	Avoid and minimise vegetation removal through appropriate siting of crossover points	7.2
Drains and Culverts	No – if removing from existing culverts and drains. (Removal of mature native vegetation may require permit or endorsement from DELWP)	Yes	Yes	Drainage works by Council must refer to and follow the DELWP Agreement 'Procedure to Rely on the Road Safety exemption'	7.3
Enhancement/ Rehabilitation of Roadside	No	N/A	Yes, consent required, and a 'Works in Municipal Road	Revegetation should be encouraged, particularly on medium or low-conservation roadsides. Species planted should match the EVC of the site and follow best practice. Planting of exotic vegetation, particularly noxious or environmental	7.4

Activity	Planning Permit Required?	Is there an exemption?	Permission of responsible authority required?	Requirements	Further information in section indicated
			Reserve Permit' required	weeds, is not permitted. requirements relating to traffic management, asset maintenance and fire protection	
Fencing	No – unless road has a vegetation overlay VP02	Yes	Yes, Works in Municipal Road Reserve Permit' required if works undertaken from the road reserve.	Vegetation removal must be to the minimum extent necessary to maintain or construct a fence. Contact Council's planning department for guidance	7.5
Fire Management	No	Yes	Yes, by both Council and CFA and in consultation with DELWP in accordance with the procedure.	Exemptions to requiring a planning permit to remove native vegetation allow fire suppression and prevention activities, under Clause 52.17	7.6
Firewood Collection	Yes	No	Yes – Firewood Collection Permit	Firewood collection only permitted on low conservation value roadsides.	7.7
Harvesting Wildflowers, Foliage and Seeds	Yes	No	Permit required under FFG Act.	Permits for the collection of native flora are administered by DELWP. Council consent is also required.	7.8
Livestock grazing	Yes	No	Yes	There are limitations to grazing, such as herd size, health, water access, etc. Local Law no. 1 section 18 applies.	7.9
Livestock Droving	Yes	No	Yes	There are limitations to stock droving, such as herd size, health, water access, etc. Local Law no. 1 section 17 applies.	7.10
Livestock Movement	No	N/A	No	You must adhere to the requirements of Droving of Livestock Local Law.	7.11
Maintenance of Electrical Lines	No	Yes	No	Electrical distribution companies are responsible for maintaining power lines in rural areas, and Council responsible in urban areas. Both are exempt from requiring a permit to remove native	7.12

Activity	Planning Permit Required?	Is there an exemption?	Permission of responsible authority required?	Requirements	Further information in section indicated
				vegetation providing works comply with the Code of Practice prepared under Section 65 of the State Electricity Commission Act 1958.	
Pest Plant and Animals	No	Yes	No	Landholders are required under CaLP Act to ensure noxious weeds and pest animals do not spread to the road reserve. Council is responsible for controlling specified noxious weeds and pest animals on Council managed roads.	7.13
Ploughing, Grading, Haymaking, Hay Storage and Cropping	No – unless works damage native vegetation	No	Yes – Consent and 'Works in Municipal Road Reserve Permit' if activity is approved by council.	Ploughing, haymaking and cropping generally not permitted in the road reserve. Ploughing is only permitted for fire breaks and must be undertaken in consultation with Council and CFA or for the installation and maintenance procedures by service provider.	7.14
Road maintenance, construction and widening	Yes – if more than 0.5 hectares of native vegetation is removed for low impact construction	Yes	Yes, if more than 0.5 hectares of native vegetation is removed for low impact construction works. Endorsement from DELWP required if less than 0.5 hectares of native vegetation is removed for low impact construction works and all native vegetation removal for road safety projects.	Agreement with DELWP allows for routine maintenance which does not require offsets. Low impact construction works and safety projects require endorsement from DELWP and offsets if native vegetation is removed. if more than 0.5 hectares of native vegetation is removed for low impact construction works then a planning permit is required.	7.15
Sand, soil and gravel extraction	Yes	No	Yes, consent and a 'Works in Municipal Road Reserve Permit'	Approval may be required from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions where proposed	7.16

Activity	Planning Permit Required?	Is there an exemption?	Permission of responsible authority required?	Requirements	Further information in section indicated
				extraction is greater than two cubic metres and areas greater than 2000 square metres.	
Sign Installation	Yes	No	Yes, consent and a 'Works in Municipal Road Reserve Permit'	no signs are to be fixed directly to a tree or shrub on a road reserve	7.17
Slashing	No	No	No	Slashing on roadsides should avoid destruction of native vegetation and spread of weeds.	7.18
Stockpiles and dump sites	No	No	Yes, consent and a 'Works in Municipal Road Reserve Permit'	If stockpiles and dump sites are required, then they should be located in designated areas. If these are not available, then consultation with Council NRM staff is required.	7.19
Unused road reserves	No	No	Yes, permission required from DELWP	The Department of Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is responsible for the issue of licences for respective uses of these areas.	7.20
Utility Installations	No	Yes	Yes – in accordance with written agreement from DELWP	The utility service provider must maintain or construct a utility installation in accordance with the written agreement of DELWP.	7.21
Vegetation Risk Management	Yes – in some cases	Yes	Yes, consent and a 'Works in Municipal Road Reserve Permit'	A permit may be required for vegetation removal outside of the Road maintenance envelope and be undertaken at the expense of the property owner.	7.22
Weed Control	No	No	No – If controlling weeds adjacent to your property or Council staff Council Contractors undertaking weed management.	Best-practice spraying must be adhered to, to prevent damage to native vegetation. Operators should have appropriate chemical users permit.	7.23

7.1 Bee Keeping

There are rules and regulations for keeping bees. Bees are classified as livestock and in Victoria are governed by the Livestock Disease Control Act 1994. Bees must therefore be kept in accordance with this Act.

Victoria also has an Apiary Code of Practice that is mandatory to adhere to. The Apiary Code of Practice sets out the parameters for use of land for apiary in all parts of Victoria. Every beekeeper must comply with this Code.

7.2 Construction of Access Point

Consent from the Rural City of Wangaratta is required for construction of a property access point within a municipal road reserve by a third party such as an adjoining landowner, community group or contractor under the Road Management Act 2004. Council has a permit system in place and requires a 'Works in a Municipal Road Reserve' Permit.

In most cases, a Planning Permit for native vegetation removal (trees, shrubs and grasses) on a road reserve is required under the Wangaratta Planning Scheme, however some exemptions do allow for construction of cross-over of a limited width (refer to Clause 52.17 of the planning scheme). Council's planning staff can determine the need for a Planning Permit as required by the Wangaratta Planning Scheme.

7.3 Drains and Culverts

The maintenance of both table drains (running parallel with the road) and cut off drains (drains that take the flow of water away from the road) is required to remove silt build up so that water is not sitting in the drain or on the road – thus providing a safety risk to road users. The pooling of water can also lead to moisture under the road pavement leading to road breakdown including potholes, subsidence and shoulder slumping.

For drains associated with an access point, refer to 7.2 Access Points.

The maintenance of drains is to be in accordance with the DELWP Agreement Procedure to rely on the road safety exemption in planning schemes, 2018, which is based on the principle of avoiding the removal of native vegetation where possible and minimising any disturbance. Maintenance of existing structures does not require a permit, but construction requires consultation with DELWP and offsets.

The following must be considered:

- On high conservation roadsides there must be consultation with RCoW Natural Resource Management and Sustainability staff regarding the maintenance or construction works.
- The spread of soil is not to occur on high and medium conservation roadsides.
- On high and medium conservation roadsides the drain spoil is to be taken to a disposal site or placed on the lower side of the road – spoil should not be placed on top of the batter.
- Material to be pulled along road shoulders or pavement where grader can access, ensuring material is not a safety hazard.
- Removal of vegetation that has re-established can occur however must be to the minimum extent necessary and in accordance with the DELWP agreement.
- Long undisturbed road drains that support wetland habitats should be assessed for their values prior to works.

7.4 Enhancement/ Rehabilitation of Roadside

Revegetation works on roadsides are usually conducted to improve vegetation quality or connectivity, or for rehabilitation following disturbance and may include weed control (see section 7.21 weed control). Council may undertake this work or it may be done by community groups, adjoining landholders or contractors. Consent from Council is required before works begin. To ensure risks are addressed and managed a 'Works within Municipal Road Reserves Permit' from Council is required.

The species planted must match the Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) of the area, unless biophysical changes to the site means that the EVC is no longer appropriate (e.g. where a wetland has been created), or there is a rationale for recreating an endangered EVC at the site. Revegetation should consider all plant forms, such as grasses, herbs and forbs, as well as trees and shrubs, as appropriate to the site. RCoW NRM and Sustainability staff and/or local Landcare groups can provide site-specific revegetation advice. Trees should not be planted too close together – consult the EVC description for tree density to ensure increased vegetation levels are not above the EVC descriptors. It is important to not plant trees and shrubs into a grassland, or where the understorey could be unduly disturbed (e.g. where there are orchids, mosses, herbs or native grasses). Inappropriate species selection can have detrimental effects on local biodiversity.

RCoW is required to consult with the relevant CFA brigade to ensure that any proposed works will not be in conflict with priorities in the Municipal Fire Management Plan.

Works undertaken must reflect the biodiversity and road safety objectives of Council policies, strategies and plans and must be referred to Council Natural Resource Management, Fire Protection, Engineering and Operations staff for approval. Proposals for roadside rehabilitation should have defined biodiversity objectives and should enhance the quality of remnant vegetation, provide vegetation linkages and/or enhance threatened species habitat. Revegetation works and methods must be planned to minimise disturbance and undertaken in a best practice manner. Proposals for these works must demonstrate how they:

- Adequately consider the priorities in the Municipal Fire Management Plan through consultation with the CFA District and relevant brigade.
- Ensure appropriate planting density including spacing every 100 meters for fire prevention access.
- Following rehabilitation and enhancement works maturing vegetation should be assessed to ensure adequate and appropriate access for future fire suppression can be maintained.
- Allow sufficient room from fence-lines to enable future maintenance of such assets.
- Not impede traffic line of sight or compromise any future road maintenance activities such as clearing of table drains.
- Ensure that the movement of roadside users (e.g., walkers) is not impeded.
- Outline how maintenance will occur (i.e., who, when, what.).
- Check that underground services will not be damaged as a result of the planting.
- Use indigenous species of the appropriate vegetation type for the site.
- Planting of exotic vegetation, particularly noxious or environmental weeds is not permitted.

Rehabilitation must include removal/treatment of declared noxious and environmental weeds that are threatening native vegetation and habitats. If weeds are providing habitat for native animals (such as nesting sites for woodland birds) then these values must be considered as part of the weed control strategy for a site. Preference will be given to proposals that enhance the quality of habitat and/or enhance vegetation linkages.

7.5 Fencing

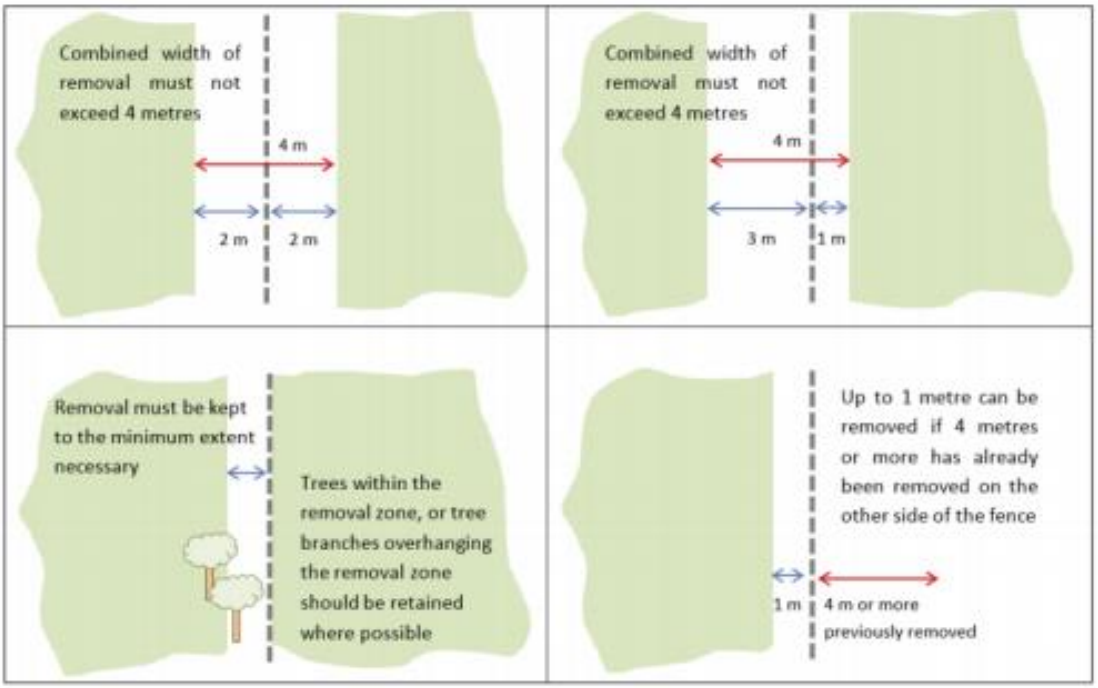
Consent from Council is required to construct a fence by a third party such as an adjoining landowner, community group or contractor where such works will involve operating within the municipal road reserve. This is to ensure that care is taken in assessing and managing risks associated with working in the road reserve.

In some instances, a Planning Permit for native vegetation removal is also required under the Wangaratta Planning Scheme. However, exemptions do permit clearing to a combined maximum width of 4 metres for the construction or maintenance of a boundary fence, but if one side is already clear to 4 metres or greater, then only 1 m may be cleared on the other side of the fence only if required. It is important to remember that any exemption for clearing of native vegetation is to the minimum extent necessary (refer to Clause 52.17-7 of the planning scheme and Figure 5). Council's planning staff can determine the need for a Planning Permit as required by the Wangaratta Planning Scheme.

Fencing works undertaken by a third-party or Council (for Council managed land) should be undertaken with regard to the following:

- A planning permit is required if native vegetation removal beyond the combined 4 metre width is deemed unavoidable.
- Consideration must be given to any Planning Scheme controls including overlays and exemptions.
- Works and machinery operation must be conducted from the freehold property side of the road reserve boundary.
- Waste, including removed fencing materials, must not be left on the road reserve
- The area must not be graded or ploughed, although minor levelling can occur along the fence line to assist works.

Figure 5. Graphical representation of the fence line exemption, DELWP, 2017.



7.6 Fire Management

Fire management within the municipality consist of response agencies and regulatory and service providers which include:

Country Fire Authority (CFA): is created under the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 and has responsibility for State wide fire and related emergency coordination. The CFA is a community based fire and emergency service whose mission is to protect lives and property. CFA responds directly to a range of emergency incidents, as well as conducting broader activities with the community such as education, awareness raising, industry brigades and fire investigation. The Rural City of Wangaratta is within the boundary of CFA Region 23 and within the North East Fire Ban District.

Department of Environment, land, water and Planning (DELWP): is responsible for fire suppression and management on public land (with support from Parks Victoria), including planned burning for ecological and risk management objectives. Their objective is to protect communities and critical infrastructure from fire and to promote healthy and resilient ecosystems. DELWP is focussed on helping people, the natural environment and fire co-exist. The Rural City of Wangaratta falls within the boundaries of the DSE Fire Management Districts Ovens and Goulburn.

Rural City of Wangaratta Council: are responsible for the management of all council owned property as well as ensuring that private land holders appropriately manage their land in relation to issues such as fire risk. Council officers inspect properties within the municipality to assess the potential risk of a bushfire and where necessary may issue a fire prevention notice. The Rural City of Wangaratta also undertake annual fire prevention works on roadsides and reserves and other Municipal owned or managed assets leading up to and during the fire season.

Fire prevention works can range from regular slashing to controlled burning and in some cases the removal of vegetation to reduce the fuel load. Slashing and mowing adjacent to your property does not need consent from Council.

Consent from the Rural City of Wangaratta is required for any removal of timber or native vegetation and for controlled burning within a municipal road reserve for fire prevention purposes by a third party such as an adjoining landowner, community group or contractor. Under the Road Management Act 2004 a 'Works within Municipal Road Reserves Permit' will also be required.

The DELWP document, *Roadside vegetation management for bushfire risk mitigation purposes – a guideline for road managers,* states that a permit is not required when native vegetation is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to reduce fuel loads on roadsides to minimise risk to life and property from bushfire on an existing public road (LPP Clause 52.17). This process requires consultation with DELWP natural environment program staff and CFA staff and typically requires a two-to-three-year plan be prepared for all relevant roadside risk mitigation works. This exemption includes a roadside risk assessment process which is based on the CFA Roadside Fire Management Guidelines.

The 'Rural City of Wangaratta – Fire Management Plan: Municipal Roads and Rail Trail' classifies all roads within the RCoW for the purpose of fire management. The plan identifies six road classes and provides a description of each road class and a set of treatment options available for each class.

The plan also states that fire managers should strive to limit detrimental environmental impacts by applying the principles of *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP, 2017) of avoid, minimise, offset. When planning fire prevention activities, avoid damage wherever possible. If damage cannot be avoided, then the effects should be minimised through appropriate planning and management of the fire prevention activity. Some effects, such as weed invasion, may need ongoing management.

All strategic fire prevention works on a municipal road reserve must:

- Gain approval from the CFA in consultation with Council's Fire Prevention and Engineering/Works staff prior to works commencing.
- Have approval from Environment staff to ensure that any specific conservation values are identified and considered during works – this may include consultation with Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) Natural Environment Program staff where works are proposed on high and medium value conservation roadsides.
- Comply with Council's Fire Management Plan and Country Fire Authority Act 1958.
- Comply with CFA Roadside Fire Management Guidelines.
- Comply with the Rural City of Wangaratta Planning Scheme.
- Comply with the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 and the Commonwealth's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

In planning fire prevention work it should be noted:

- Native grasses generally have lower fuel loads than introduced grasses such as *Paspalum* or *Phalaris* species, so retention of native grasses is an advantage. Heavier fuels like branches and logs (greater than 25mm in diameter) are slower to ignite than fine fuels and give off heat more slowly, therefore they can be retained in road reserves while maintaining an effective firebreak.

- Other options for fire prevention – such as burning or slashing- must be considered and is the preferred option before permitting mineral earth firebreaks on road reserves, especially those classed as having a high conservation value.
- Where possible, firebreaks should be placed on neighbouring land which has already been cleared or where the road reserve is already cleared and the primary flora is introduced (pasture) grass and/or weeds.

7.7 Firewood Collection

Consent from the Rural City of Wangaratta is required for all firewood collection and timber harvesting activities within a municipal road reserve. Firewood collection is not permitted on Rural Roads Victoria managed Roads.

A Local Laws Permit is required for firewood collection on a roadside (Local Law No.1 of 2018 Community Amenity *16. Collection of firewood).* Council has a permit system in place to comply with the Road Management Act 2004 and the State Firewood Strategy. This is to ensure that care is taken in assessing and managing risks associated with working in the road reserve. Firewood collection is only permitted on low conservation value roadsides. Council staff can assist with identifying low conservation value roads and the purchase of a Firewood Collection Permit. When possible Council will make timber salvaged from works or natural events available to the public through the Council managed community firewood depots at Eldorado and Glenrowan. A permit is required for collection from the firewood depots.

Firewood collected on roadsides under a permit or from the firewood depots is for personal use only and is not to be used for commercial use or sold on.

7.8 Harvesting Wildflowers, Foliage and Seeds

Consent from the Rural City of Wangaratta is required for all harvesting and seed collection activities that are to be undertaken within a municipal road reserve by a third party such as an adjoining landowner, community group or contractor under the Road Management Act 2004.

Collection of native plant material on public land (including roadsides) requires permission under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 protected flora regulations. Permit enquiries must be directed to regional Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) Natural Environment Program staff.

7.9 Livestock Grazing

A Local Laws Permit is required for livestock grazing on a roadside (Local Law No.1 of 2018 Community Amenity *18. Grazing of Livestock)*

Grazing of stock on roadsides is defined as using a particular area of the roadside for grazing rather than for droving or movement of livestock. The grazing of stock on roadsides can, if implemented correctly, be an important management tool for the control of introduced grasses and pasture species on roadsides. High intensity, short duration (crash, shock or pulse) strategic grazing is encouraged when it is identified that the grazing will enhance biodiversity values of the roadside. On many occasions roadsides with good tree cover often have weedy ground layer e.g., Giant Brome, *Phalaris* and *Paspalum* and crash grazing these areas during early germination would be beneficial.

Proposals for livestock grazing on roads must be referred to Council Local Laws staff for compliance with Wangaratta's Local Law and to Council's Environment staff for environmental assessment and recommendations. Site conditions and conservation values will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will guide recommendations and permit conditions.

Ecological objectives should be the primary consideration if allowing livestock on roads with native vegetation and habitats, for example, timely reduction of introduced grasses to enhance native vegetation regeneration.

Grazing of native vegetation and disturbance of habitats should not be undertaken if it is likely to contribute to a loss of vegetation and habitat quality. To protect conservation values associated with high quality remnant vegetation, grazing is not generally permitted on roadsides of high and medium conservation value.

7.10 Livestock Droving

A Local Laws Permit is required for livestock droving on a roadside (Local Law No.1 of 2018 Community Amenity *17. Droving of Livestock)*

Livestock droving is defined as the driving of stock from one location to another to change their grazing area, go to/from market or driving in or through the municipality, where such activity occurs along roadsides.

Proposals for livestock droving on roads must be referred to Council Local Laws staff for compliance with Wangaratta's Local Law and to Council's Environment staff for environmental assessment and recommendations. Site conditions and conservation values will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will guide recommendations and permit conditions. Permit consideration will include ecological objectives, timing of droves, and conservation status of roadsides. Droving on roadsides with native vegetation and disturbance of habitats should not be undertaken if it is likely to contribute to a loss of vegetation and habitat quality to protect conservation values associated with high quality remnant vegetation. Droving is not generally permitted on roadsides of high conservation value.

A Local Laws Permit for livestock droving must include as a minimum:

- The use of roads for droving of livestock is minimised so far as is practicable (roads should not be used as an alternative to providing internal property access).
- Livestock shall at all times be supervised by a person competent in the handling of livestock.
- Livestock droving is to be avoided when ground conditions are wet or extremely dry to avoid compaction and erosion of soil.
- Livestock droving is not permitted when noxious weeds are in seed.
- Droving of livestock must occur promptly so stock are not allowed to wander aimlessly.
- No supplementary feeding of stock in road reserves.
- Driving vehicles on roadsides must be avoided.
- Livestock droving can only occur between the hours of sunrise and sunset.
- Appropriate public liability insurance must be in place.

7.11 Livestock Movement

No permit is required for the movement of livestock on roadsides.

Movement of livestock means moving stock between adjoining or adjacent properties. If you are doing this using the road reserve, it does not require a permit as long as it is done in daylight hours (and at not less than one km/hr), appropriate signage is used and the requirements of the Droving of Livestock Local Law are adhered to.

7.12 Maintenance of Electrical Line

Council is responsible for maintaining power line clearances in urban (or declared) areas and electrical distribution companies are responsible in the remaining urban areas and the rural (or undeclared) areas.

Councils and electrical distribution companies are exempted from requiring a permit to remove native vegetation providing the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations (2015) including the Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance (made under sections 151, 151A and 157 of the Electricity Safety Act 1998) are complied with.

Any damage to, or removal of, native vegetation outside the clearance space recognised under the Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance requires a Planning Permit under the Wangaratta Planning Scheme. If the obligations of the electrical distribution companies under the Code are not met, concerns with non-compliance can be lodged with the Energy Safe Victoria and also with the Energy and Water Ombudsman. Any damage to understorey or vegetation outside the clearance space recognised under the Code (for power line clearance) requires a permit.

7.13 Pest Plant and Animals

Declared noxious weeds in Victoria are pest plants that have been proclaimed under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 which require management to control. These plants cause environmental or economic harm or have the potential to cause such harm.

Environmental weeds are weeds that threaten natural ecosystems. They are capable of invading native plant communities and out-competing native species - resulting in a reduction of plant diversity and loss of habitat for native fauna. They can also increase the fuel load (e.g. Phalaris).

A pest animal is an introduced animal with an established self-supporting population in the wild (also known as feral) that is a threat to human health, primary production and/or the natural environment. Common pest animals in Wangaratta municipality are rabbits, hares, foxes, deer, pigs and goats.

Noxious and environmental weeds can be spread on roadsides via machinery, vehicles, livestock, animals, wind, water and movement of soil. All parties undertaking works or activities on roadsides are obligated under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 to prevent the spread of noxious weeds.

There is no legislative requirement to control or remove environmental weeds. Landholders will be alerted to the potential problem of environmental weed spread and will be encouraged to act as a good neighbour and control the spread of these weeds. Refer to section 7.21 for spraying best practice guidelines.

To assist staff and landholders identify weeds the Rural City of Wangaratta has developed a weed brochure with detailed information on weeds and their weed category.

Council has developed and implemented a Roadside Weed and Pest Control Plan (RWPP) for all regionally prohibited and regionally controlled pest plants and animals and works closely with Landcare and community groups to implement this program.

Table 3 shows the responsibility for weed control. Appendix 6 gives a list of categorised weeds in the Rural City of Wangaratta.

Table 3: Weed Categories

Weed Category	Type of Land	Responsibility for Management
State Prohibited (See Appendix 6)	All including private land	Department Environment, Land, Water and planning (DELWP)
Regionally Prohibited (See Appendix 6)	Private Land Freeway or Arterial Road Local Roads Unlicensed Unused Road Reserves Licensed Unused Road Reserves	Landowner Rural Roads Victoria (RRV) Council Council Licence holder
Regionally Controlled (See Appendix 6)	Private Land Freeway or Arterial Road Local Roads Unlicensed Unused Road Reserves Licensed Unused Road Reserves	Landowner Rural Roads Victoria (RRV) Council Council Licence holder

Source: Agricultural Victoria 2021

7.14 Ploughing, Grading, Haymaking, Hay Storage and Cropping

Ploughing, grading, haymaking, storage of hay and cropping is generally not permitted on roadsides within the Rural City of Wangaratta municipality due to damage to existing vegetation, the spread of and encouragement of weed growth and risk of machinery use on roadsides.

Ploughing or grading on roadsides will only be considered to undertake the following works:

- To maintain existing CFA approved fire breaks.
- As an ancillary measure on strategic firebreaks approved by the CFA and in consultation with appropriate Council staff and where there is no opportunity to do so on freehold land adjoining the road reserve.
- As part of installation and maintenance procedures by service providers.

Where consent from the Rural City of Wangaratta has been provided for one of the above activities by a third party a 'Works in a Municipal Road Reserve Permit' may be required.

7.15 Road Maintenance, Construction and Widening

This section applies to works on municipal roads. Any works on roads controlled by VicRoads must comply with VicRoads requirements.

The agreement with DELWP, titled *Procedure to rely on the road safety exemption in planning schemes* allows for the Rural City of Wangaratta to remove, destroy or lop vegetation (native and non-

native) to the minimum extent necessary to maintain the safe and efficient function of a public road, without a planning permit. Although a planning permit is not needed, requirements of DELWP's procedure must be followed, which may include consultation and the purchase of offsets.

Where low impact construction works require the removal of more than 0.5 hectares of native vegetation the works will require a planning permit and offsets.

Clauses 52.16 and 52.17 apply to native vegetation. The Road safety exemption states:

• The requirement to obtain a permit does not apply to:

– Native vegetation removed, destroyed or lopped to the minimum extent necessary by, or on behalf of a public authority or municipal council to maintain the safe and efficient function of an existing road in accordance with written agreement of the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Within the overlay clauses (42.01, 42.02, 42.03, 44.01, 44.02), the Road safety exemption states:

• The requirement to obtain a permit does not apply to:

– Vegetation that is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to the minimum extent necessary by or on behalf of a public authority or municipal council to maintain the safe and efficient function of an existing public road in accordance with the written agreement of the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Removal of native (or non-native) vegetation under any other relevant exemption

This *Procedure to rely on the road safety exemption in planning schemes* does not apply to native (or non-native) vegetation removal that is exempt from a planning permit due to another relevant exemption in these clauses. However, the principles of avoid and minimise should be applied.

Consent from the Rural City of Wangaratta is required for road construction and maintenance projects that are to be undertaken within a municipal road reserve by a third party such as an adjoining landowner, community group or contractor under the Road Management Act 2004. Council has a permit system in place and requires a 'Works in a Municipal Road Reserve Permit'.

All low impact construction, large construction and Road Safety projects outside of the road maintenance envelope / current asset footprint are undertaken by third party contractors. All works require that the contractor develop a site-specific Environmental Management Plan prior to any works being handed over. Where native vegetation is proposed to be disturbed an assessment and checklist is also completed by Councils NRM team to verify the extend of vegetation removal, identify opportunities to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity and identify other potential legislation requirements.

To minimise the impact of works on biodiversity the following should be applied:

- Desktop assessments to be undertaken for low impact construction works and Road Safety project works by the project manager and with the help of NRM staff to identify:
    - The conservation value of the road being worked on
    - Any listed species known or likely to occur in the area
    - Cultural heritage values

- Significant or protected vegetation, or areas containing protected species under the FFG Act, should be excluded from disturbance and classified as ‘no-go’ zones using barrier tape or highly visible temporary fencing and signage prior to works commencing.
- Trees to be retained should be protected within the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) according to AS 4970-2009). These TPZ should also be defined on-site as a ‘no-go’ zone using barrier tape or equivalent.
- The ‘construction’ zone should be identified and machinery must be confined to this area during the period of works. These should preferably be sited on previously disturbed land, for stockpiles, turning circles, parking areas and areas for operation of machinery.
- Vegetation approved for removal must be identified by highly visible paint or tape. All approved vegetation removal or lopping must only be the minimum extent necessary.
- The ‘no-go’, ‘construction’ and approved vegetation removal zones must be identified on a site plan that all staff working on the project are familiar with and are confident to use.
- Machinery size and type must be suited to the works site. Large machinery working in a small space will increase the likelihood of accidental destruction of vegetation.
- Fill or windrow spoil should not be placed over ground flora or tree roots (it will suffocate them). Spoil should be removed and disposed of off-site away from native vegetation.
- Appropriate actions should be taken to prevent erosion and weed spread.

The removal of limbs and branches occurs as part of road maintenance to ensure the road maintenance envelope (see section 1, figure 1) remains clear. Any reports of dead or overhanging limbs posing a risk to road safety need to be assessed by appropriately qualified Council staff (Arbiculture Crew). Timber and debris created as a result of tree management activities needs to be appropriately managed. A balance is needed between retaining logs and branches (especially hollow logs) for habitat and the need to remove or chip this material to reduce the fuel load. Stockpiling timber on the roadside should be avoided as this harbour’s pest plant and animals. Excess timber can be taken to one of the two firwood depots managed by council.

7.16 Sand, Soil and Gravel Extraction

A Planning Permit may be required for stone or soil extraction, including on a roadside, under the Wangaratta Planning Scheme. Detailed discussion should be had with the relevant department before any extraction works is undertaken. Approval from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) is required for sites where proposed extraction is greater than two cubic metres and for areas greater than 2000 square metres.

As outlined in the Extractive Industries Development Act 1995, Council must obtain a Work Authority from the DJPR for any proposed sand, soil or gravel extraction on a roadside.

7.17 Sign Installation

Under the *Road Management Act 2004,* consent from the Rural City of Wangaratta is required for a third party (eg community group, adjacent landholder etc) to place a sign within a municipal road reserve. Council has a permit system in place and requires a ‘Works in a Municipal Road Reserve Permit’. A planning permit may also be required under the Wangaratta Planning Scheme.

No signs are to be fixed directly to a tree or shrub on a road reserve, this can cause a decline in health to the tree or shrub.

7.18 Slashing

Slashing can be a useful tool in the control of weeds and enhancement of native vegetation. Although no permit is required from Council, any slashing on roadsides should be conducted in accordance with the guidelines below to provide benefit to native vegetation.

Slashing of introduced or pasture species, if implemented correctly, can be an important management tool for the control of introduced grasses and pasture species on roadsides. Slashing is often conducted for weed control or fire protection purposes to allow for sight distances at intersections, and aesthetics. However, a good covering of native vegetation will prevent weeds and introduced pasture species dominating. Native vegetation often has a lower fuel load than introduced grasses and weeds, such as Phalaris and Paspalum. The timing of slashing can be important. On many occasions roadsides with good tree cover often have weedy ground layer e.g., Giant Brome, Phalaris and Paspalum and slashing these areas during early germination would be beneficial. Hence planned slashing can discourage weed growth and encourage native growth. Avoid slashing native grasses and herbs and associated plants (orchids, lilies, daisies etc) during the time that they grow, flower and seed. Council officers can provide advice on suitable times and techniques for slashing.

Care should be taken to minimise slashing under the drip line of mature trees or near areas of regeneration. Tree roots need to access water, nutrients and space to grow. Even small vehicles working around trees can damage fine roots and cause soil compaction that will eventually lead to decline of the tree. In areas of mixed native and exotic vegetation, care should be taken not to allow slashed material to smother native vegetation.

Machinery used for slashing can transport masses of weeds seeds into uncontaminated areas. Clean down can be reduced by working in native areas first and then moving into weedy areas. If this cannot be done, it is necessary to clean down equipment of seeds before moving to any areas with native vegetation.

7.19 Stockpiles and Dump Sites

Consent from the Rural City of Wangaratta is required for any activities relating to stockpile and dump sites that are to be undertaken within a municipal road reserve by a third party such as an adjoining landowner, community group or contractor under the Road Management Act 2004. Council has a permit system in place and requires a ‘Works in a Municipal Road Reserve Permit’.

A Local Laws Permit is not required for stockpiles on a roadside (Local Law No.1 of 2018 Community Amenity *60. Stockpiles)* however the below requirements must be followed:

- The owner or occupier of a site must ensure that soil that is stripped from the site is stockpiled on the site for re-use or is transported to a legal place for disposal.
- Where soil is stockpiled on the site, it must, unless otherwise advised by an Authorised Officer, be protected by Sediment Fencing/Barriers to ensure the retention of silt, sand and waterborne particles within the stockpile.

If stockpiles and dump sites are required, then they are to be sited at the mapped Council designated locations. Environmental staff consultation is required if stockpile site or dump site is proposed at a location that is not a designated location.

Material is to be weed and pathogen free and is to be maintained as weed and pathogen free.

7.20 Unused Road Reserves

Council is responsible for the management of unused road reserves under the *Land Act 1958* and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is responsible for the issue of licences for respective uses of these areas.

Council can consult with DELWP Public Land Services where information is required about unused road reserves or any licence enquiries.

7.21 Utility Installations

Native Vegetation that is to be removed, destroyed or lopped to the minimum extent necessary to maintain the safe and efficient function of a minor utility installation does not require a planning permit. The definition of a minor utility installation can be found in Clause 74 of all planning schemes.

A permit is also not required for the removal of native vegetation for routine maintenance, and construction works for a utility installation, however this is subject to the removal of native vegetation being undertaken in accordance with the written agreement of the Secretary to the DELWP (as constituted under Part 2 of the Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987).

The written agreement may require compliance with a Utility installations exemption – procedure for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation. This document includes a set of obligations that align with the no net loss objective. Any procedure and a list of the utility service providers that have written agreement to rely on this exemption to remove native vegetation can be found on the DELWP website at: **https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/native-vegetation/native-vegetation**

7.22 Vegetation Risk Management

Under the provisions of the Planning Scheme, Council can only respond to tree management requests and concerns on roadsides without the need for a Planning Permit where:

- There is an immediate risk to the safety of the road and its users or
- The vegetation is within the road maintenance envelope.

Risk to Road Safety

Council can undertake vegetation works within the road maintenance envelope. Both internal and external requests for vegetation to be removed or lopped outside this envelope for road safety reasons must be assessed by an appropriately qualified member of Council's planning team and referred to Council's Environment unit for approval.

Recommendations for removal or lopping of vegetation must be guided by the immediate risk to the road and its users, for example if a tree branch has broken and is hanging from the tree and is likely to fall onto the road right away or if a tree is split and is likely to fail.

If it is determined that the vegetation is not an immediate risk but still needs to be removed and is not within the road maintenance envelope, a planning permit may be required.

Risk to Privately Owned Assets

Council does not have the legislative requirement or the resources to manage vegetation on road reserves that property owners deem as a risk to privately owned assets such as fences and buildings and denies liability for such issues.

A planning permit is not always required for vegetation removal to construct and maintain a fence. However, property owners will need to obtain permission from Council's Planning Department prior to disturbing any native vegetation. Once approved, the property owner can undertake management of vegetation on road reserves that they deem to be a risk to their assets at their own expense.

It should be noted that most overhanging trees do not drop onto private assets. If these trees were routinely removed, it could result in considerable amounts of vegetation being removed from all road reserves. The costs to biodiversity and landscape amenity as a result would far outweigh the cost to replace portions of assets such as fences.

7.23 Weed Control

Spraying to control weeds is an important activity to protect native areas. Although no permit is required by Council, any spraying on roadsides should be conducted in accordance with the guidelines below to avoid damage to native vegetation.

Weed spraying is most successful if methods and chemicals are targeted to the weeds present. Inappropriate spraying of herbicides on roadsides has a high risk of removing or destroying native vegetation, incurring loss of or damage to habitats and causing accidental spread of weeds. Damaging plants other than weeds can cause greater weed problems due to larger areas of disturbance. This risk can be reduced by following these methods:

- Having the skills to accurately identify the difference between weeds and native species.
- Hold appropriate qualifications such as Agricultural Chemical Users Permit.
- Spray in calm and dry weather conditions.
- Spray weeds from a close distance.
- Use low pressure and large droplet size to minimise drift
- Mark native vegetation with highly visible tape or temporary fencing.
- In instances where weeds sit among native vegetation, use appropriate chemicals for the weed type and make sure weed control techniques are specific, such as:
    - Drilling and filling, or cutting and painting
    - Using specific herbicides
    - Using spray hoods where possible
    - Hand pulling (where weed occurrence is minimal)
- While conducting weed control works, consideration must be given to managing spread of weeds. This can be controlled by:
    - Brushing/blowing/washing down machinery before leaving weed infested areas
    - Brushing/blowing/washing down machinery before entering areas which have low weed infestation
    - Beginning work in areas of low infestation then moving to areas of high infestation

Dead vegetation created by spraying works can be left to undergo decomposition rather than being 'cleaned up'.

8. Implementation of this plan

8.1 Roadside Weed and Pest Animal Management Program

The Rural City of Wangaratta has approximately 2000kms of roadsides that require management. Roadsides can be a harbour for weeds and a potential avenue for their spread, so it is critical to have an effective roadside pest and weed management program.

The Rural City of Wangaratta has a Roadside Weed and Pest Control Plan (RWPP) that was established in 2010 and is currently being reviewed and updated. The report traced the development and outcomes achieved in the first five years of RCoW's first comprehensive roadside program and concludes with an outline of future direction for roadside pest control within RCoW.

Effective weed management control is not possible without a highly skilled team. Roadside weed control consists almost entirely of spot spraying and is undertaken by skilled contractors and overseen by the NRM team leader. In an effort to cover a large area in a timely manner, the municipality has been divided into 5 zones, contractors are responsible for one zone each (further information can be found in the RWPP). The program aims to control all noxious weeds listed under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act) and where funding allows some environmental weeds are targeted. The program also supports a small but increasing amount of rabbit control. Due to the success achieved with the use of the rodenator method rabbit control work has continued annually with a gradual increase in budget each year.

RCoW's Roadside Weed and Pest Program has been funded approximately two-thirds by internal Council funding, and one-third contribution by DELWP. The DELWP contribution is reviewed annually and is not guaranteed to continue. Even with the combined budget, not all roads and weeds can be treated. Prioritisation needs to occur to ensure effective use of the funding. The program has focused on State-listed noxious weeds (a condition of the DELWP funding), and less focus has been given to environmental weeds.

8.2 Internal Awareness

All staff working on roadsides or advising the community or third parties about working in road reserves, must be aware of this plan. Staff will be made aware of this plan and their responsibilities and legislative requirements through the following:

- Communicate this RCMP to all RCoW staff with a responsibility in the plan.
- Provide further training in roadside management to field staff.
- Inclusion of applicable requirements in project/site specific environmental management plans.
- Inclusion of applicable requirements / conditions on all permits (Works in Municipal Road Reserve Permit, Planning Permits, Grazing Permit and Firewood Collection Permits.
- Regular update of roadside conservation values assessment and inclusion of roadside conservation values in the GIS program.

Further information that can be found to help staff understand their responsibilities in roadside management include:

- Roadside Conservation Values in IntraMaps.
- Exemption from requiring a planning permit documents that can be found at https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/native-vegetation/native-vegetation/exemptions-from-requiring-a-permit

- Planning controls under the Wangaratta Planning Scheme: https://www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au/Development/Planning/Understanding-planning-permits
- Procedure to rely on the Road safety exemption in planning schemes: https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/408480/RoadSafetyProcedure.pdf
- VicPlan Maps tool that allows you to view and query Planning scheme Zones and Overlays: https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan/

8.3 Community Awareness and Education

The management of roadsides is complex and diverse especially with the range of legislation, management organisations, land uses and adjoining landholder responsibilities. Educating and raising awareness of the importance of correctly managing roadsides and engaging relevant land managers to undertake their roadside responsibilities is an important component of this Roadside Conservation Management Plan.

Education and awareness programs need to:

- Recognise the many different (and often conflicting) needs of the community for roadside management.
- Promote the value of roadside flora and fauna to road users and managers (distribute The Ground Storey booklet).
- Encourage community ownership of this Roadside Conservation Management Plan.

Community groups, such as Landcare, can play and important role in managing roadsides. Landcare groups in the Rural City of Wangaratta municipality have been involved in rubbish collection along roadsides, revegetation projects in consultation with Council NRM staff and promoting the importance of roadside vegetation. RCoW should continue to partner with Landcare groups where possible who hold considerable expertise and local knowledge which can be used to mutual benefit.

8.4 Compliance and Enforcement

Compliance activities are actions and programs designed to ensure laws are followed. Enforcement activities are actions undertaken when the law is not followed and help to ensure a return to compliance with the law.

Compliance and enforcement activities usually include three core elements:

- Encouraging compliance - through education, providing information and support, incentives for compliance and controls such as licence and permit conditions.
- Monitoring compliance - through regular, random and/or targeted inspections, audits, covert and overt patrols, information and intelligence gathering and assessment.
- Responding to non-compliance – through investigating suspected breaches of the law and resultant enforcement activities, including issuing official warnings or notices to comply or infringement notices or undertaking prosecution.

RCoW authorised officers may undertake surveillance and compliance enforcement activities relating to members of the community or third parties undertaking activities on the roadside. This may be random or in response to complaints. Compliance and enforcement activities shall be risk based and undertaken in accordance with the DELWP compliance and enforcement strategy – native vegetation removal and regulations and the DELWP roadside vegetation compliance and enforcement toolkit.

Enforcement activities are actions undertaken when the law is not followed. Much of the content of this RCMP is state legislation, which, via the Planning Scheme, is regulated and enforced by local governments. Any observed/reported un-permitted removal of native vegetation is to be referred to RCoW's Planning Department or the NRM and Sustainability team.

Further guidance on appropriate, risk-based responses to native vegetation non-compliances can be found in the DELWP compliance and enforcement strategy – native vegetation removal and regulations and the DELWP roadside vegetation compliance and enforcement toolkit.

8.5 Actions

Table 4: Actions Table

S = short term (1-2 years) M = Medium term (3-5 years) L = Long term (5-10 years)			
Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	ESS Action
Update roadside conservation values layer in GIS	Council	S	Yes
Review VP02 to reflect updated roadside conservation values.	Council	S	
Undertake weed mapping and update weed layer in GIS.	Council	S	Yes
Advocate to the State government for continuing funding contribution to the roadside weed and pest program	Council	S	
Continue to deliver RCoW's Roadside Weed and Pest Program.	Council	S	
Review and update RCoW's Roadside Weed and Pest Program (Document)	Council	S	
Promote awareness of the Roadside Conservation Management Plan and the importance of roadside vegetation to the community.	Council	S	Yes
Liaise with Landcare groups to share information on the new roadside conservation values mapping, this plan and their potential partnership roles.	Council	S	
Provide training on remnant vegetation and roadside training to depot / roads crew.	Council / External Trainer	S	Yes
Provide training to Council staff including depot / roads crew on Culturally Significant trees / sites.	External Trainer	S	
Provide training to Council outdoor staff on the "Procedure to rely on the Road safety exemption in planning schemes" specifically maintenance that can be undertaken under this exemption.	Council	S	

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	ESS Action
Work in partnership with Landcare groups to map potential roadsides to increase green corridors across the municipality (this will include Rail Trails)	Council, CFA, Landcare Groups	S-M	Yes
Reassess roadside conservation values in 2026	Council, Consultant	M-L	
Develop new weed brochure for NE Victoria and promote.	Council	S	Yes
NRM Staff to continue to assist Municipal Fire Prevention Committee and the CFA to understand the Roadside Conservation Management Plan and provide information on roadside significance and local flora and fauna, and suitable treatments for fuel reduction.	Council, MFPO, CFA	S	
Evaluate and monitor fire prevention works in consultation with CFA to determine the effect of works on both the conservation values and fuel management.	Council, CFA	S	
Work with Community Compliance Team to review the local laws.	Council	S	

8.6 Monitoring and Review

The Rural City of Wangaratta will oversee the implementation of the Roadside Management Plan but will need to work with all stakeholders including government agencies, utility providers and local landholders in the delivery of many of the actions.

Council also has a responsibility to monitor the progress of the actions over time. This will include identifying if the actions are completed on time and within budget, as well their overall effectiveness in contributing to the intended goal. Over time, some actions may no longer be relevant or may need to be adapted to suit new conditions. It is important that a review process is undertaken to allow a level of adaptive management to occur.

It is intended that the Plan will be reviewed regularly, with a more comprehensive review occurring in five years' time (during 2026).

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https://www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/Policies-and-documents/Strategies-and-Plans

VicRoads. 2010. VicRoads' Roadside Management Strategy.

https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/about-vicroads/our-strategy/vicroads-roadside-management-strategy

Victorian Biodiversity Atlas 2021.

https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/victorian-biodiversity-atlas

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Acronyms and Definitions

Term	Meaning
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DJPR	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (previously the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources)
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
EVC	Ecological Vegetation Class
NECMA	North East Catchment Management Authority
TfN	Trust for Nature
RCoW	Rural City of Wangaratta
RRV	Rural Roads Victoria (Previously VicRoads)
VFF	Victorian Farmers Federation
Biodiversity	The range of all living life-forms including plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they all contain and the ecosystems of which they form a part.
Declared Road	Freeways, State highways, main roads, tourist roads and forest roads that are managed by Rural Roads Victoria (previously VicRoads) in accordance with VicRoads Roadside Management Strategy.
Environmental Weed	A plant that colonises natural vegetation and threatens conservation values. It can be an exotic or native plant (e.g. Cootamundra wattle) that is not indigenous to the area. They are so called because their presence is in some way detrimental to the natural environment.
Indigenous Vegetation	Native vegetation that occurs naturally in a particular district including trees, shrubs, herbs, forbs and grasses.
Non Declared or Local Road	Roads managed by Rural City of Wangaratta
Noxious Weed	A plant listed under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 that requires either eradication or control (dependent on the class).
Priority Access Road	As specified in the Municipal Fire Management Plan a road that is critical for an ensured transport route for travellers and provides a link between critical locations to reduce travel time for fire fighters
Remnant Vegetation	Remaining indigenous vegetation.
Road Formation	The portion of the road reserve along which vehicles travel. It includes the road pavement, shoulders and the area to the outermost side of the roadside drain, at least to where the drain batter meets the natural surface. This area includes the cut off drain.
Roadside	The strip of land between the road formation and the boundary of the road reserve which is usually also the boundary of the adjoining property.
Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)	A tree protection zone is an area around the trunk of the tree which has a radius of 12x the diameter at breast height to a maximum of 15 m but not less than 2 m. Dead trees should be protected with a radius of 15 m from the base.
Unused Road Reserve	A road that has been gazetted under the Crown Lands Act 1958 where it is not used for public traffic and is not on Council's road register.

Appendix 2: Frequently asked questions

Q: Why has this plan been produced?

A: The Roadside Conservation Management Plan is a review of a document which has been in place since 2000. Council's Roadside Management Strategy was developed to provide guidelines for roadside activities to avoid illegal removal or destruction of vegetation. Legislation has been introduced or modified since 2000 and Council has sought to update its plan to reflect these changes.

Q: What is the purpose of the plan?

A: In Council's 2030 vision the community identified the value of natural landscapes and habitats. Roadsides are an integral part of these landscapes, holding the major amount of native vegetation in many areas and providing habitat refuge and linkages. There are many laws around the protection of native vegetation. The purpose of this Plan is to give guidance around activities on roadsides and prevent inadvertent illegal activity affecting roadside native vegetation. For this reason, this Plan deals with roadside areas and not issues about road infrastructure. The plan also aligns with Council's other strategic plans including the Municipal Fire Prevention Strategy.

Q What legislation affects activities on roadsides

A: There are several areas of State and Commonwealth government legislation.

The Roadside Management Act 2004 requires permission from the road authority (Council or VicRoads) relating to works on roadsides. This permission is needed to reduce the risk of an activity causing a road accident or damaging Council roads.

Under the State government section of the Wangaratta Planning Scheme, it is illegal to destroy, remove or lop native vegetation without a planning permit. This includes native trees and shrubs, large dead trees and native grasses and herbs. There are limited exemptions relating to fencing, access and other activities. Native grasses can be slashed to leave a height of at least 10cm. Council's planning department can advise how the exemptions apply.

Some flora, fauna and habitats are protected under the State Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. These Acts include significant penalties for destruction of rare identified vegetation.

Permits are required from Council for grazing and droving on roadsides and firewood collection on roadsides.

Q: How does this plan assist me to carry out works on roadsides?

A: The Roadside Conservation Management Plan is designed so that the reader can see the regulations that apply and the permissions required for each activity. Guidelines show how to do works to comply with these regulations and not damage native vegetation.

Q: Does the Roadside Conservation Management Plan introduce new permits?

A: There are no new permits introduced by this Plan. The Plan sets out the existing permissions required for activities, to enable users to include this in planning.

Q: Is permission needed to clear native vegetation along roadside fence lines?

A: Maybe. A planning permit is required for native vegetation removal unless fencing works meet certain exemptions that must be approved by Council. For all enquiries about fence line clearing and fence line exemptions contact Councils planning department.

Q: How are the Roadside Conservation Values Assessments decided?

A: The 2000 Plan saw all of Councils road network independently assessed for their conservation values and assigned a value of high, medium or low conservation. The update of the plan included a reassessment of all roadsides regardless of their previous classification.

Q: How do I find out about the Roadside Conservation Values assessment for my roadside?

A: Council has a database of the most recent 2021 Roadside Conservation Values assessments. You can call Council to access this data and find out more about the biodiversity and conservation value of any roadside and use it as a decision-making tool for roadside activities. These databases also identify any rare or threatened species that may be on the roadsides and help to fulfill obligations under the State Government Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988) and the Commonwealth government Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999). Call Council's Environment Unit, on 5722 0888 for information on roadside vegetation assessments.

Q: Does this plan cover issues relating to road maintenance and the safety of road users?

A: Yes. Council's road works affecting native vegetation are also governed by planning regulations. Council has an agreement with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) which allows it to carry out removal of vegetation within the 'road clearance envelope' for road safety and maintenance purposes. Council can clear vegetation within specified clearances above and beside Council roads. All other removal of vegetation outside of this envelope is subject to the planning permit requirements.

Q: Is Livestock movement permitted?

A: Yes. Movement of stock (as defined in section 7.11) during daylight hours at not less than one km/hour is permitted from one paddock to another or from one property. This includes movement between properties along and across a road reserve. Droving or grazing of stock outside of these parameters requires the permission of the road authority.

Q: Do I need a permit to spray weeds on my roadside?

A: No. Weed spraying is permitted, provided it is carried out in compliance with all other legislation.

Spraying on roadsides has a high risk of removing or destroying native vegetation and causing accidental spread of weeds. Weed spraying must be planned to avoid loss of native vegetation. All persons undertaking roadside weed spraying must hold appropriate qualifications such as Agricultural Chemical Users Permit.

Q: Is permission needed for other works on road reserves?

A: Yes. Under the Road Management Act 2004, Council is required to regulate activities on roadsides to protect public safety. Some activities on roadsides require the consent of the road authority to prevent degradation of the road itself or risk to the road users. A 'Works on Municipal Road Reserve' permit is needed for ploughing or grading, however cropping or haymaking adjacent to Council roads is generally not permitted.

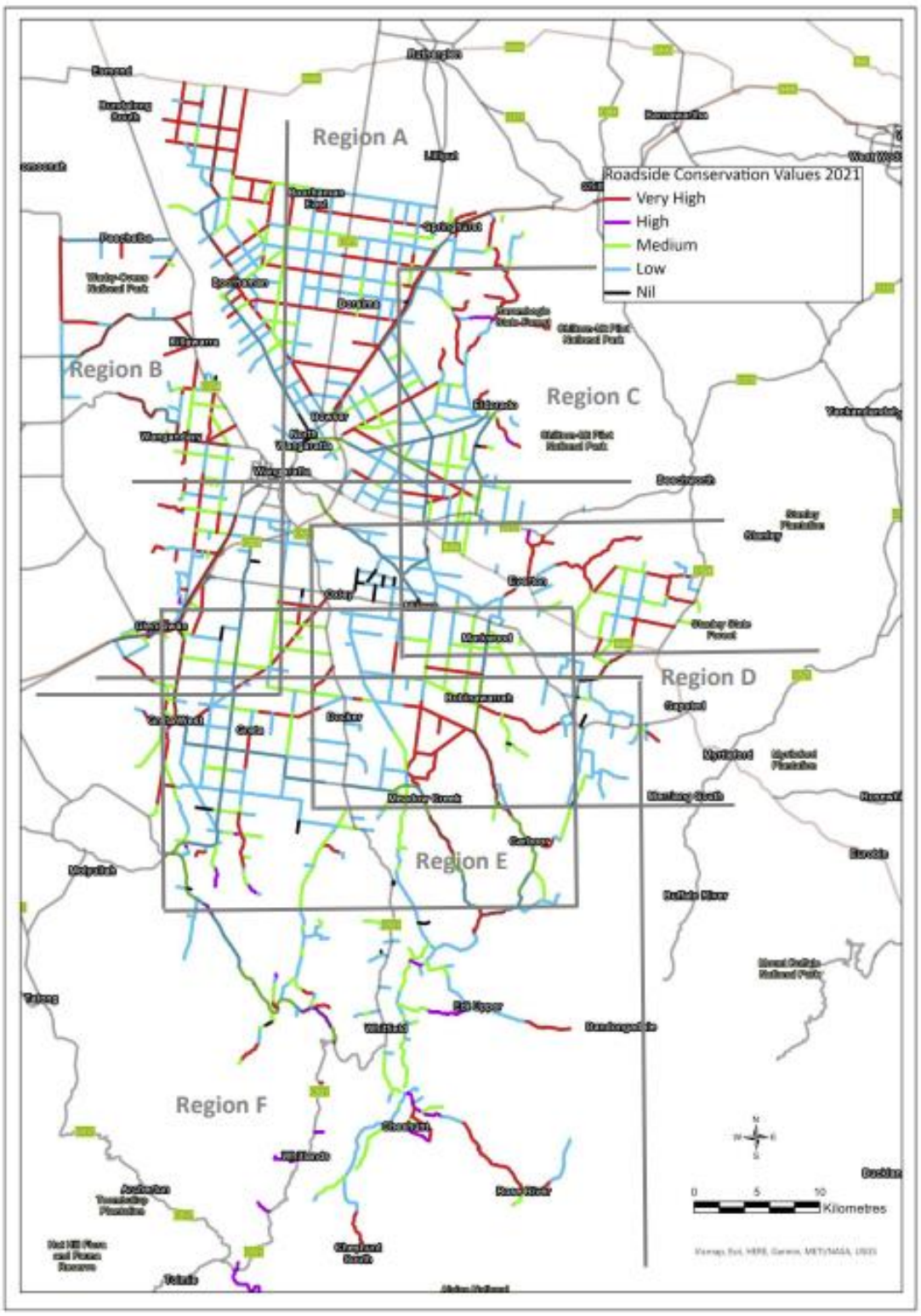
Q: Has fire management been addressed in the Plan?

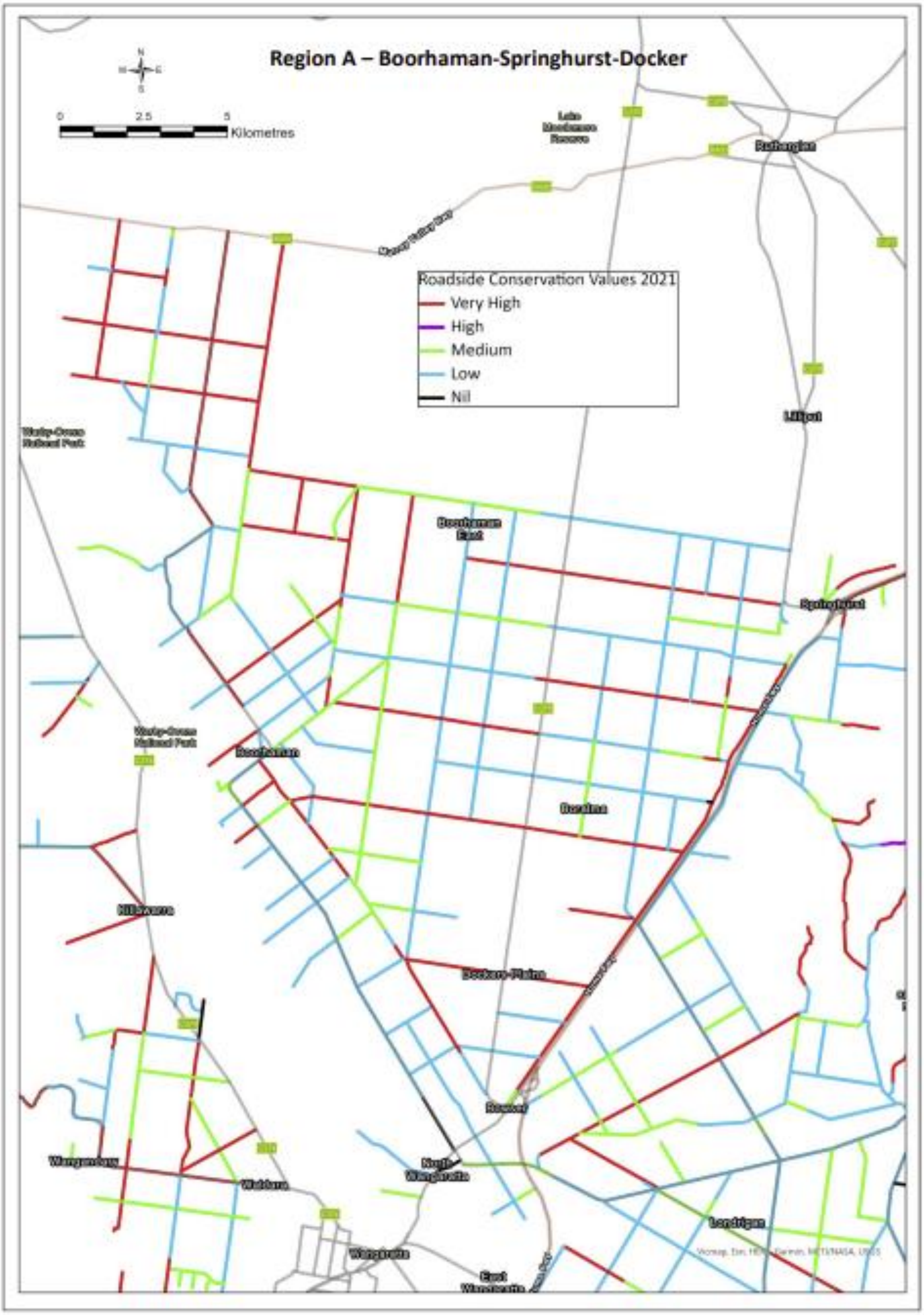
A: Yes. All roadsides within the municipality are maintained to comply with the Municipal Fire Prevention Strategy. This Plan does not override the Municipal Fire Prevention Strategy. Consultations for this Plan included discussions with the CFA and the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer. Strategic burning of roadsides for fire prevention, fuel management and conservation management is encouraged in the Plan, where these activities comply with all appropriate legislation and have a strategic fire prevention purpose.

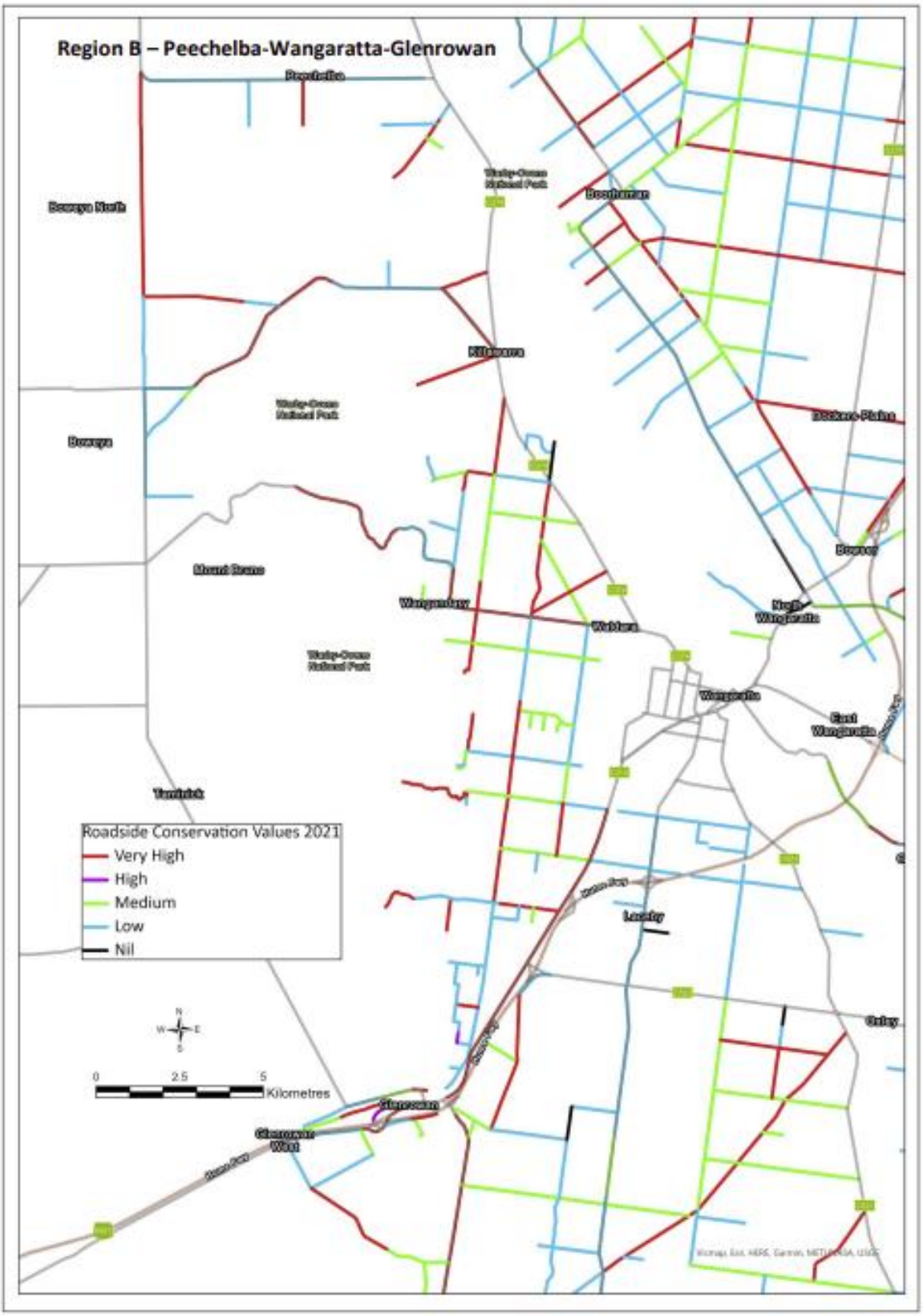
Q: Do I need a permit to collect firewood from Council roadsides?

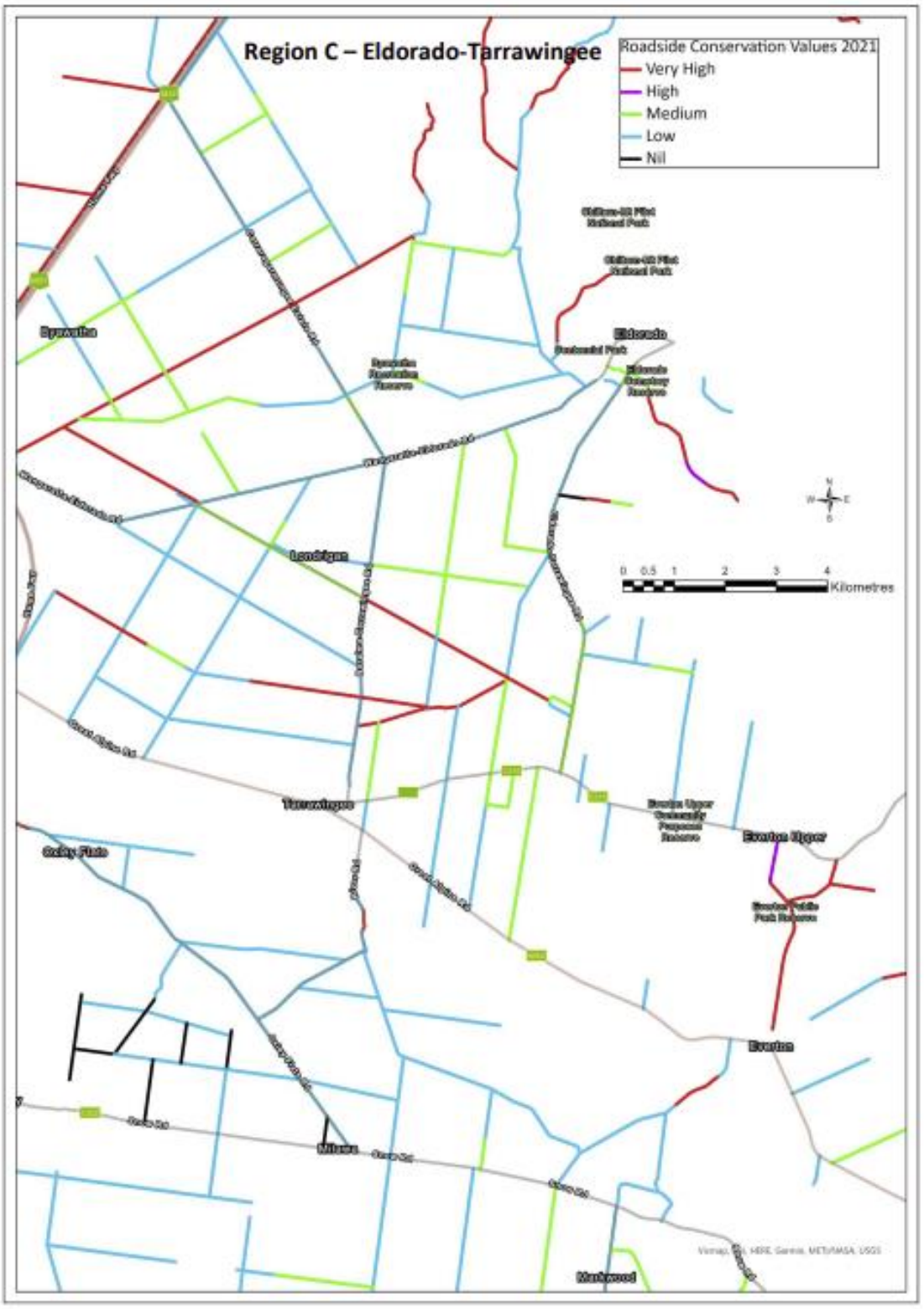
A: Yes, a Council permit is required for the protection of public safety and the environment. Fallen timber on road reserve is important habitat for native fauna. When deciding whether removal of firewood from roadsides is appropriate, Council will consider environmental values, fire fuel hazards and safety. For safety reasons, Rural Roads Victoria does not allow timber collection on roadsides under its control.

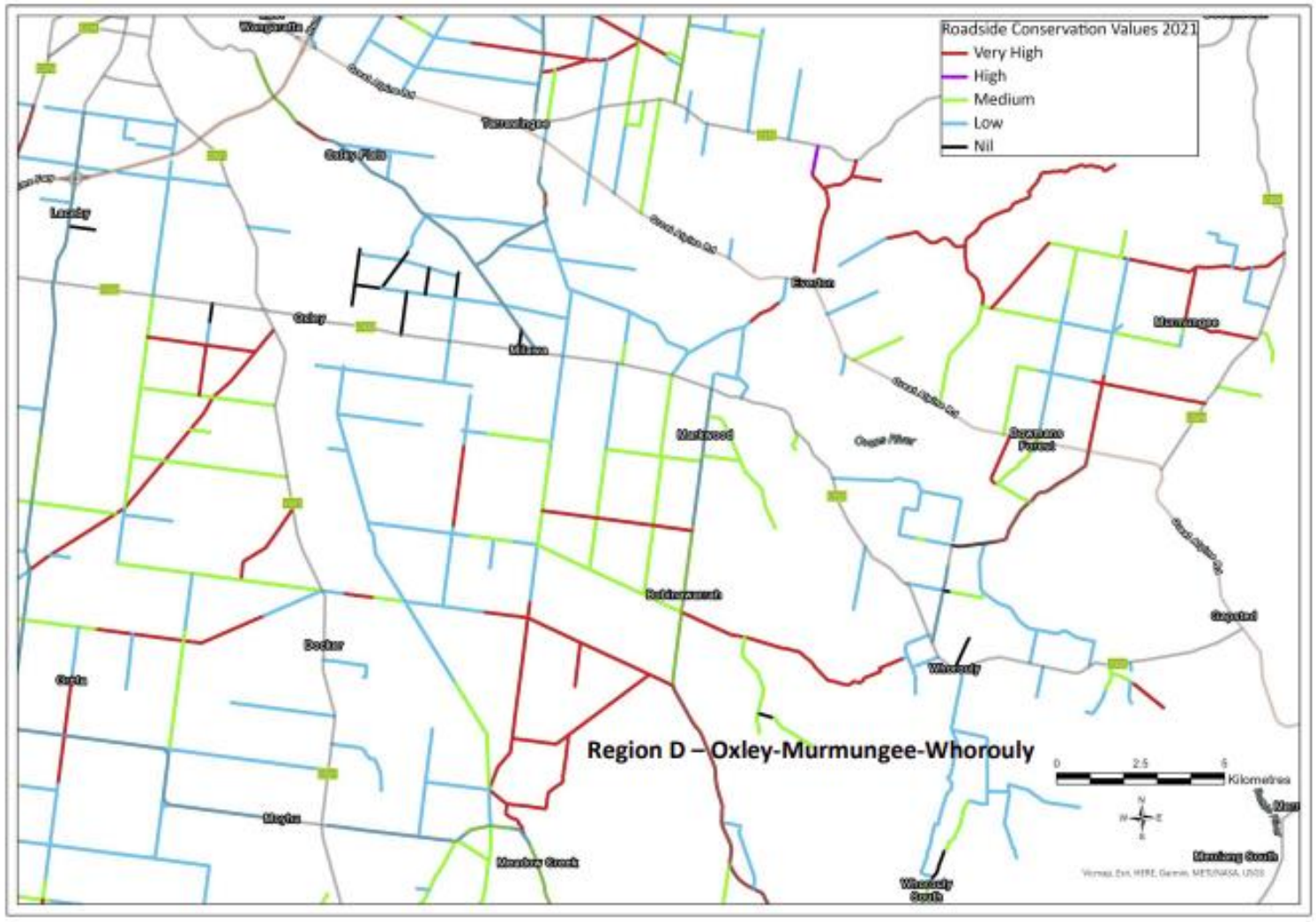
Appendix 3: Roadside Conservation Values Maps

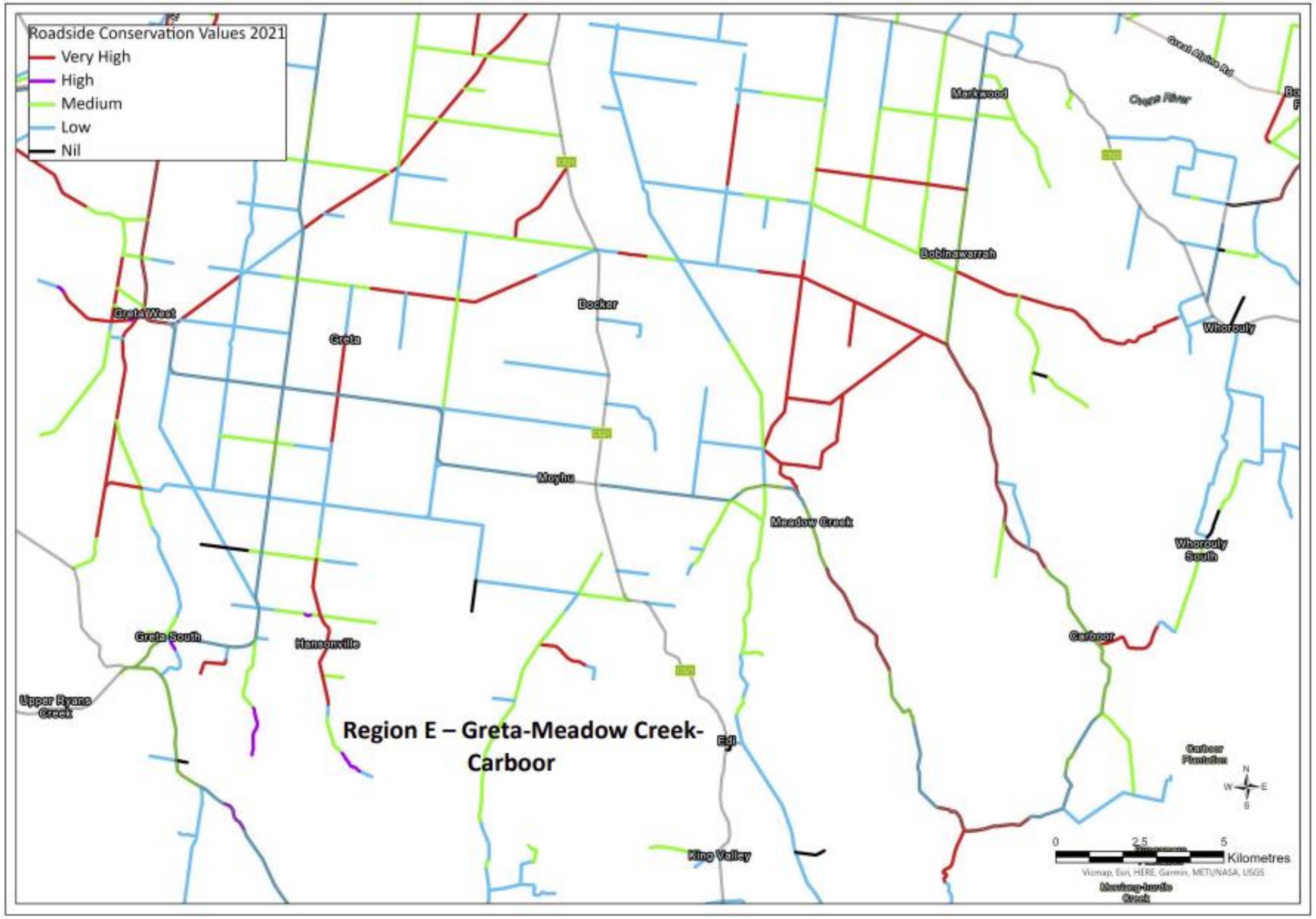


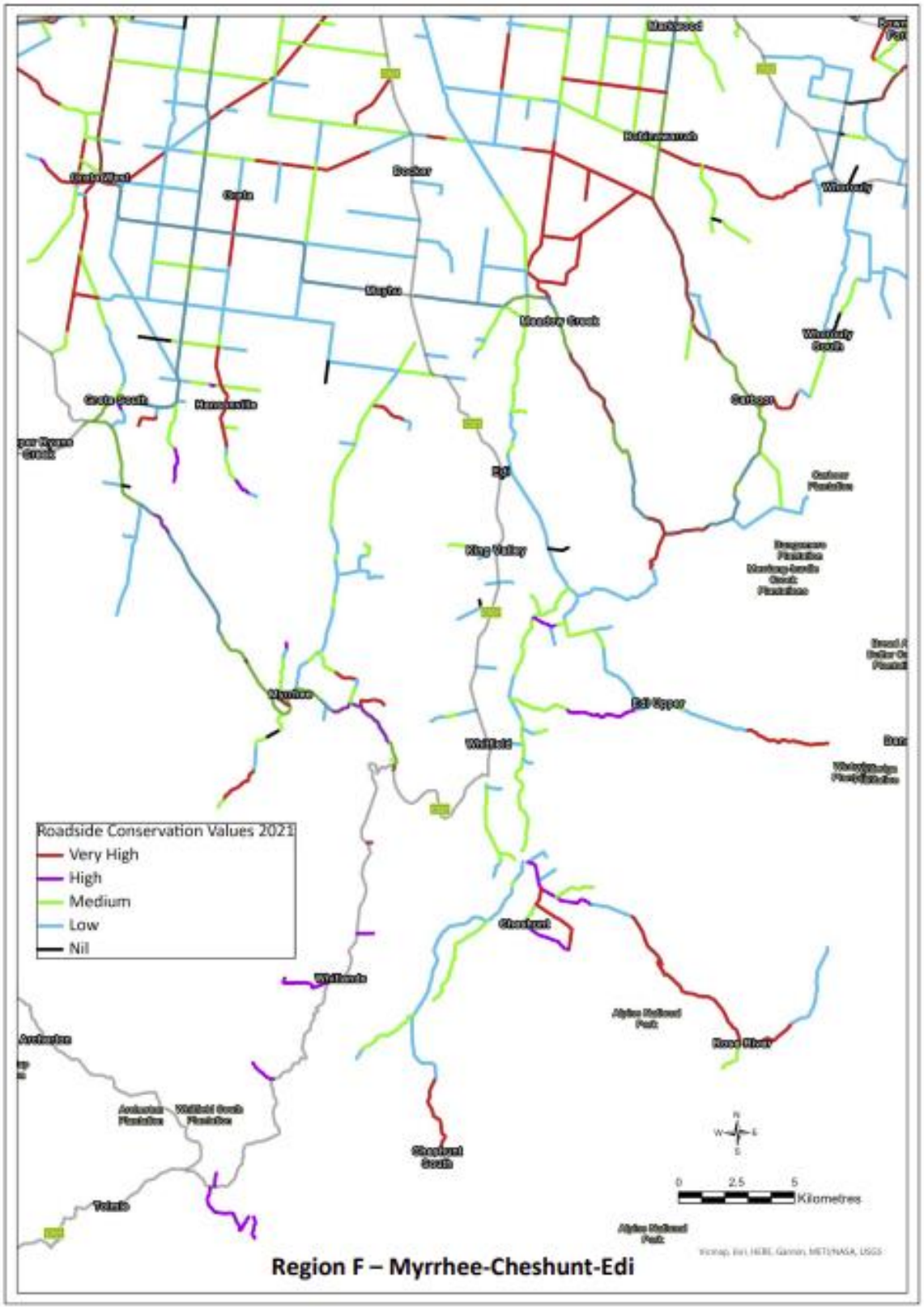

Region A – Boorhaman-Springhurst-Docker
0 2.5 5
Kilometres
Roadside Conservation Values 2021
Very High
High
Medium
Low
Nil


Region B – Peechelba-Wangaratta-Glenrowan
Roadside Conservation Values 2021
Very High
High
Medium
Low
Nil
0
2.5
5
Kilometres


Region C – Eldorado-Tarrawingee
Roadside Conservation Values 2021
Very High
High
Medium
Low
Nil
Eldorado
Tarrawingee
Everton Upper
Everton
Kilometres


Roadside Conservation Values 2021
Very High
High
Medium
Low
Nil
Region D – Oxley-Murmungee-Whorouly
Kilometres


Roadside Conservation Values 2021
Very High
High
Medium
Low
Nil
Markwood
Ovens River
Bobinawarrah
Docker
Greta West
Greta
Whorouly
Moyhu
Meadow Creek
Whorouly South
Greta South
Hansonville
Carboor
Upper Ryans Creek
Region E – Greta-Meadow Creek-Carboor
Edi
Carboor Plantation
King Valley
Kilometres
Vicmap, Esri, HERE, Garmin, METI/NASA, USGS



Region F – Myrrhee-Cheshunt-Edi

Key to identifiers of the attribute table

Heading	Metric
EZI_RDNAME	Council assigned road name
Segment	Assessor assigned segment identifier
Length	Length of segment in metres
Date_Asses	Date segment assessed
Road_Side	The orientation of the road reserves assessed in the segment
Width_m	The width of road reserves assessed in the segment
Condition	Abbreviated segment condition: C = cleared; ST = Scattered Trees; TE = Trees.
Image_No	Image identifiers for images taken within the segment. Last three digits of camera-assigned image identifier.
Indig	Percentage indigenous species ground layer projective foliage cover
Exotic	Percentage introduced species ground layer projective foliage cover
Large_tree	VQA 'Large Tree' score
Canopy	VQA 'Canopy Cover' score
U_storey	VQA 'Understorey' score
Lack_weeds	VQA 'Lack of Weeds' score
Recruits	VQA 'Recruitment' score
Logs	VQA 'Log' score
Litter	VQA 'Organic Litter' score
L_Connect	VQA 'Landscape Connectivity' score
Hab_Score	VQA 'Habitat Score' – sum of all attributes
Cons_Value	Assigned Conservation Value for segment
E_EVC_2005	Segment maintains Endangered EVC(s) as mapped in 2005
ThSppObs	Threatened species observed during survey within a segment
FaunaRec	Threatened fauna record since 2001 within close proximity or within the road reserves of the segment, with aquatic-dependent species excluded. Codes for species can be converted to Species and Common Name according to the Excel spreadsheet 'VBA Species-Checklist 010921'.
FloraRec	Threatened flora records since 2001 within close proximity or within the road reserves of the segment. Codes for species can be converted to Species and Common Name according to the Excel spreadsheet 'VBA Species-Checklist 010921'.

Appendix 4: Rare and Threatened Fauna of Rural City of Wangaratta

Source: Victorian Biodiversity Atlas June 2021.

Conservation Status in Australia

The 'EPBC' column outlines the national conservation status of the taxon under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

EX - Extinct

CR - Critically Endangered

EN - Endangered

VU - Vulnerable

Conservation Status in Victoria

As a part of the FFG Amendment Act the status of all species listed on the Advisory lists and species listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 were consolidated and are now known as the FFG Act Threatened List

Endangered (Extinct in Victoria)

Critically Endangered

Endangered

Vulnerable

Threatened

Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG	EPBC
Accipiter novaehollandiae	Grey Goshawk	Endangered	
Actitis hypoleucos	Common Sandpiper	Vulnerable	
Anseranas semipalmata	Magpie Goose	Vulnerable	
Anthochaera phrygia	Regent Honeyeater	Critically endangered	CR
Antigone rubicunda	Brolga	Endangered	
Ardea alba modesta	Eastern Great Egret	Vulnerable	
Ardea intermedia plumifera	Plumed Egret	Critically endangered	
Austroaeschna (Austroaeschna) flavomaculata	Alpine Darner Dragonfly	Vulnerable	
Aythya australis	Hardhead	Vulnerable	
Bidyanus bidyanus	Silver Perch	Endangered	CR
Biziura lobata	Musk Duck	Vulnerable	
Botaurus poiciloptilus	Australasian Bittern	Critically endangered	EN
Burhinus grallarius	Bush Stone-curlew	Critically endangered	
Calamanthus pyrrhopygius	Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	Vulnerable	

Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG	EPBC
Calyptorhynchus lathami	Glossy Black-Cockatoo	Critically endangered	
Chelodina expansa	Broad-shelled Turtle	Endangered	
Coracina maxima	Ground Cuckoo-shrike	Endangered	
Crinia sloanei	Sloane's Froglet	Endangered	EN
Dasyurus maculatus maculatus	Spot-tailed Quoll	Endangered	EN
Dasyurus viverrinus	Eastern Quoll	Endangered(extinct in Victoria)	EN
Delma impar	Striped Legless Lizard	Endangered	VU
Egretta garzetta	Little Egret	Endangered	
Emydura macquarii	Murray River Turtle	Critically endangered	
Euastacus armatus	Murray Spiny Crayfish	Threatened	
Falco hypoleucos	Grey Falcon	Vulnerable	
Falco subniger	Black Falcon	Critically endangered	
Galaxias rostratus	Flat-headed Galaxias	Vulnerable	CR
Geopelia cuneata	Diamond Dove	Vulnerable	
Grantiella picta	Painted Honeyeater	Vulnerable	VU
Haliaeetus leucogaster	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Endangered	
Hieraaetus morphnoides	Little Eagle	Vulnerable	
Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail	Vulnerable	VU
Ixobrychus dubius	Australian Little Bittern	Endangered	
Lathamus discolor	Swift Parrot	Critically endangered	CR
Lewinia pectoralis	Lewin's Rail	Vulnerable	
Litoria raniformis	Growling Grass Frog	Vulnerable	VU
Litoria spenceri	Spotted Tree Frog	Critically endangered	EN
Lophochroa leadbeateri	Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	Critically endangered	
Lophoictinia isura	Square-tailed Kite	Vulnerable	
Maccullochella macquariensis	Trout Cod	Endangered	EN
Maccullochella peelii	Murray Cod	Endangered	VU
Macquaria australasica	Macquarie Perch	Endangered	EN
Mastacomys fuscus mordicus	Broad-toothed Rat	Vulnerable	VU
Melanodryas cucullata	Hooded Robin	Vulnerable	
Melanotaenia fluviatilis	Murray-Darling Rainbowfish	Endangered	
Morelia spilota metcalfei	Carpet Python	Endangered	
Nannoperca australis (Murray-Darling lineage)	Southern Pygmy Perch (Murray-Darling lineage)	Vulnerable	
Neophema pulchella	Turquoise Parrot	Vulnerable	
Ninox connivens	Barking Owl	Critically endangered	
Ninox strenua	Powerful Owl	Vulnerable	
Ornithorhynchus anatinus	Platypus	Vulnerable	
Oxyura australis	Blue-billed Duck	Vulnerable	
Petauroides volans	Southern Greater Glider	Vulnerable	VU
Petaurus norfolcensis	Squirrel Glider	Vulnerable	

Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG	EPBC
Phascogale tapoatafa	Brush-tailed Phascogale	Vulnerable	
Pogona barbata	Bearded Dragon	Vulnerable	
Polytelis swainsonii	Superb Parrot	Endangered	VU
Pomatostomus temporalis	Grey-crowned Babbler	Vulnerable	
Potorous longipes	Long-footed Potoroo	Endangered	EN
Pseudomys fumeus	Smoky Mouse	Endangered	EN
Pseudophryne bibronii	Brown Toadlet	Endangered	
Pteropus poliocephalus	Grey-headed Flying-fox	Vulnerable	VU
Pyrrholaemus sagittatus	Speckled Warbler	Endangered	
Rostratula australis	Australian Painted-snipe	Critically endangered	EN
Spatula rhynchotis	Australasian Shoveler	Vulnerable	
Stagonopleura guttata	Diamond Firetail	Vulnerable	
Stictonetta naevosa	Freckled Duck	Endangered	
Struthidea cinerea	Apostlebird	Vulnerable	
Synemon plana	Golden Sun Moth	Vulnerable	CR
Thylogale billardierii	Rufous-bellied Pademelon	Threatened	
Tyto tenebricosa	Sooty Owl	Endangered	
Uperoleia rugosa	Rugose Toadlet	Endangered	
Varanus varius	Lace Monitor	Endangered	
Vermicella annulata	Bandy Bandy	Endangered	

Appendix 5: Rare and Threatened Flora of Rural City of Wangaratta

Source: Victorian Biodiversity Atlas June 2021.

Conservation Status in Australia

The 'EPBC' column outlines the national conservation status of the taxon under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

EX - Extinct

CR - Critically Endangered

EN - Endangered

VU - Vulnerable

Conservation Status in Victoria

As a part of the FFG Amendment Act the status of all species listed on the Advisory lists and species listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 were consolidated and are now known as the FFG Act Threatened List

Endangered (Extinct in Victoria)

Critically Endangered

Endangered

Vulnerable

Threatened

Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG	EPBC
Acacia boormanii	Snowy River Wattle	Endangered	
Acacia deanei subsp. *paucijuga*	Deane's Wattle	Vulnerable	
Acacia decora	Western Silver Wattle	Endangered	
Acacia doratoxylon	Currawang	Endangered	
Acacia flexifolia	Bent-leaf Wattle	Endangered	
Acacia lanigera var. lanigera	Woolly Wattle	Vulnerable	
Acacia omalophylla	Yarran Wattle	Critically endangered	
Acacia sporadica	Pale Hickory-wattle	Critically endangered	
Acacia triptera	Spur-wing Wattle	Vulnerable	
Acianthus collinus	Hooded Mosquito-orchid	Critically endangered	
Aciphylla glacialis	Snow Aciphyll	Endangered	
Aciphylla simplicifolia	Mountain Aciphyll	Endangered	
Allocasuarina luehmannii	Buloke	Critically endangered	
Amphibromus fluitans	River Swamp Wallaby-grass		VU

Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG	EPBC
Amyema linophylla subsp. *orientalis*	Buloke Mistletoe	Critically endangered	
Astrotricha linearis subsp. 2	Narrow-leaf Star-hair	Endangered	
Billardiera scandens s.s.	Velvet Apple-berry	Endangered	
Boronia nana var. pubescens	Dwarf Boronia	Endangered	
Brachyscome gracilis subsp. *gracilis*	Dookie Daisy	Endangered	
Brasenia schreberi	Water Shield	Critically endangered	
Caladenia concolor	Crimson Spider-orchid	Endangered	VU
Caladenia cremna	Whitfield Spider-orchid	Critically endangered	CR
Caladenia flavovirens	Christmas Spider-orchid	Critically endangered	
Caladenia orientalis	Eastern Spider-orchid	Endangered	EN
Calotis anthemoides	Cut-leaf Burr-daisy	Critically endangered	
Cardamine franklinensis	Franklin Bitter-cress	Critically endangered	
Cardamine papillata	Forest Bitter-cress	Endangered	
Cassinia ozothamnoides	Cottony Cassinia	Endangered	
Cassinia scabrida	Rough Cassinia	Vulnerable	
Celmisia latifolia	Victorian Snow-daisy	Endangered	
Chiloglottis X pescottiana	Bronze Bird-orchid	Endangered	
Coronidium waddelliae	Snowy Everlasting	Vulnerable	
Corunastylis arrecta	Erect Midge-orchid	Endangered	
Craspedia adenophora	Sticky Billy-buttons	Endangered	
Craspedia haplorrhiza	Plains Billy-buttons	Endangered	
Cymbonotus lawsonianus	Bear's-ear	Endangered	
Cyperus leptocarpus	Button Rush	Endangered	
Daviesia genistifolia s.s.	Broom Bitter-pea	Endangered	
Deparia petersenii subsp. *congrua*	Japanese Lady-fern	Endangered	
Desmodium brachypodum	Large Tick-trefoil	Vulnerable	
Dianella longifolia var. *grandis*	Flax-lily	Critically endangered	
Dianella tarda	Late-flower Flax-lily	Critically endangered	
Digitaria divaricatissima var. *divaricatissima*	Umbrella Grass	Endangered	
Diuris behrii	Golden Cowslips	Endangered	
Diuris dendrobioides	Wedge Diuris	Critically endangered	
Diuris punctata var. *punctata*	Purple Diuris	Endangered	
Dodonaea boroniifolia	Hairy Hop-bush	Endangered	
Eragrostis trachycarpa	Rough-grain Love-grass	Endangered	
Eriocaulon scariosum	Common Pipewort	Endangered	
Eucalyptus brookeriana	Brooker's Gum	Endangered	
Eucalyptus cadens	Warby Range Swamp-gum	Endangered	VU
Eucalyptus cinerea subsp. *victoriensis*	Beechworth Silver Stringybark	Endangered	

Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG	EPBC
Eucalyptus sideroxylon subsp. *sideroxylon*	Mugga	Endangered	
Euchiton umbricola	Cliff Cudweed	Endangered	
Euphrasia lasianthera	Hairy Eyebright	Endangered	
Euphrasia scabra	Rough Eyebright	Endangered	
Fimbristylis dichotoma	Common Fringe-sedge	Endangered	
Fimbristylis velata	Veiled Fringe-sedge	Endangered	
Geranium solanderi var. *solanderi* s.s.	Austral Crane's-bill	Endangered	
Geranium sp. 6	Delicate Crane's-bill	Endangered	
Glycine latrobeana	Clover Glycine	Vulnerable	VU
Goodenia macbarronii	Narrow Goodenia	Endangered	
Goodia medicaginea	Western Golden-tip	Endangered	
Gratiola pumilo	Dwarf Brooklime	Endangered	
Gynatrix macrophylla	Gippsland Hemp Bush	Vulnerable	
Hakea lissosperma	Mountain Needlewood	Vulnerable	
Hibbertia diffusa	Wedge Guinea-flower	Endangered	
Indigofera adesmiifolia	Tick Indigo	Endangered	
Isolepis congrua	Slender Club-sedge	Endangered	
Isolepis gaudichaudiana	Benambra Club-sedge	Vulnerable	
Isolepis montivaga	Fog Club-sedge	Endangered	
Isolepis wakefieldiana	Tufted Club-sedge	Endangered	
Juncus psammophilus	Sand Rush	Endangered	
Lachnagrostis rudis subsp. *rudis*	Rough Blown-grass	Endangered	
Leptorhynchos squamatus subsp. alpinus	Alpine Buttons	Endangered	
Leptospermum micromyrtus	Button Tea-tree	Endangered	
Leptospermum multicaule	Silver Tea-tree	Endangered	
Lespedeza juncea subsp. *sericea*	Chinese Lespedeza	Endangered	
Lomandra oreophila	Mountain Mat-rush	Endangered	
Melaleuca armillaris subsp. *armillaris*	Giant Honey-myrtle	Endangered	
Ophioglossum reticulatum	Stalked Adder's-tongue	Endangered	
Pimelea treyvaudii	Grey Rice-flower	Endangered	
Plagiochasma rupestre	Cliff Waxwort	Endangered	
Pomaderris aurea	Golden Pomaderris	Endangered	
Pomaderris helianthemifolia subsp. *minor*	Blunt-leaf Pomaderris	Endangered	
Pomaderris pauciflora	Mountain Pomaderris	Endangered	
Pomaderris phylicifolia subsp. *ericoides*	Slender Pomaderris	Endangered	
Pomaderris subcapitata	Convex Pomaderris	Endangered	

Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG	EPBC
Pomaderris subplicata	Concave Pomaderris	Critically endangered	VU
Prasophyllum argillaceum	Delicate Leek-orchid	Critically endangered	
Prasophyllum hygrophilum	Swamp Leek-orchid	Critically endangered	
Prasophyllum lindleyanum	Green Leek-orchid	Endangered	
Prostanthera decussata	Dense Mint-bush	Endangered	
Prostanthera nivea var. *nivea*	Snowy Mint-bush	Vulnerable	
Pterostylis hamata	Scaly Greenhood	Endangered	
Pterostylis rubescens	Inland Red-tip Greenhood	Endangered	
Pterostylis smaragdyna	Emerald-lip Greenhood	Endangered	
Pultenaea foliolosa	Small-leaf Bush-pea	Endangered	
Pultenaea platyphylla	Flat-leaf Bush-pea	Endangered	
Pultenaea polifolia	Dusky Bush-pea	Endangered	
Pultenaea williamsonii	Highland Bush-pea	Endangered	
Rytidosperma alpicola	Crag Wallaby-grass	Vulnerable	
Rytidosperma monticola	Small-flower Wallaby-grass	Endangered	
Rytidosperma richardsonii	Straw Wallaby-grass	Endangered	
Santalum lanceolatum	Northern Sandalwood	Critically endangered	
Schizacme montana	Mountain Mitrewort	Endangered	
Senecio distalilobatus	Distal-lobe Fireweed	Vulnerable	
Senecio extensus	Alpine Fireweed	Endangered	
Senecio longicollaris	Riverina Fireweed	Endangered	
Senecio pinnatifolius var. *alpinus*	Snowfield Groundsel	Endangered	
Sticherus tener s.s.	Tasman Fan-fern	Endangered	
Swainsona recta	Mountain Swainson-pea	Critically endangered	EN
Thelymitra simulata	Graceful Sun-orchid	Endangered	
Tripogonella loliiformis	Rye Beetle-grass	Endangered	
Trochocarpa clarkei	Lilac Berry	Endangered	
Viola betonicifolia subsp. *novaguineensis*	Floodplain Violet	Endangered	
Viola fuscoviolacea	Dusky Violet	Endangered	
Wittsteinia vacciniacea	Baw Baw Berry	Vulnerable	
Wurmbea biglandulosa subsp. *biglandulosa*	Glandular Early Nancy	Endangered	
Xanthorrhoea glauca subsp. *angustifolia*	Grey Grass-tree	Critically endangered	
Zieria robusta	Round-leaf Zieria	Endangered	

Appendix 6: Categorised Weeds in the Rural City of Wangaratta

Below is a list of weeds that have been identified in Rural City of Wangaratta's roadsides. Weed categories are as follows:

Weeds of national significance (WONS) – nationally declared weeds, which also have state category.

State prohibited weeds – the highest category of declared noxious weeds in Victoria. By definition they are either not yet in Victoria, or are here in small numbers, where their eradication is still possible. Under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act), it is an offence to buy, sell, display or transport a State prohibited weed within Victoria.

Regionally prohibited weeds – weeds that are not widely distributed in a region but are capable of spreading further. It is reasonable to expect that they can be eradicated from a region and they must be managed with that goal. Land owners, including public authorities responsible for crown land management, must take all reasonable steps to eradicate regionally prohibited weeds on their land.

Regionally controlled weeds – weeds that are usually widespread in a region. To prevent their spread, ongoing control measures are required. Land owners have the responsibility to take all reasonable steps to prevent the growth and spread of Regionally controlled weeds on their land.

Restricted weeds – includes plants that pose an unacceptable risk of spreading in Victoria and are a serious threat to another State or Territory. Trade in these weeds and their propagules, either as plants, seeds or contaminants in other materials is prohibited.

Other weeds have been described as agricultural or environmental weeds, but they do not have a legislative category. There are several Unclassified Environmental weeds found on roadsides within the Rural City of Wangaratta.

Weed Common Name	Weed Scientific Name	Weed Category
African Boxthorn	*Lycium ferocissimum*	Regionally Controlled
African lovegrass	*Eragrostis curvula*	Regionally Controlled
Angled Onion	*Allium triquetrum*	Regionally Restricted
Arrowhead	*Saggittaria graminea*	Agricultural and Environmental
Bathurst Burr	*Xanthium spinosum*	Regionally Controlled
Blackberry	*Rubus fruticosus*	Weed of national significance, Regionally Controlled & Regional Priority
Blue Periwinkle	*Vinca major*	Unclassified Environmental
Bindweed	*Convulvus arvensis*	Regionally Controlled
Bridal Creeper	*Asparagus asparagoides*	Weed of national significance & Restricted
Box Elder	*Acer negundo*	Unclassified Environmental
Broad-leaf Privet	*Ligustrum lucidum*	Unclassified Environmental
Caltrop	*Tribulus terrestris*	Regionally Controlled
Cape Tulip	*Moraea flaccida & M. miniata*	Regionally Controlled

Weed Common Name	Weed Scientific Name	Weed Category
Chilean Needle Grass	*Nassella neesiana*	Weed of national significance, Restricted, & New and Emerging Weed
Coolatai Grass	*Hyparrhenia hirta*	Unclassified Environmental
English Broom	*Cytisus scoparius*	Regionally Controlled & Regional Priority
English Ivy	*Hedera helix*	Unclassified Environmental
False Acacia	*Robinia pseudoacacia*	Unclassified Environmental
Fennell	*Foeniculum vulgare*	Regionally Restricted
Fig	*Ficus carica*	Unclassified Environmental
Giant Reed	*Arundo donax*	Unclassified Environmental
Gorse	*Ulex europaeus*	weed of national significance, Regionally Controlled, & Regional Priority
Great Mullien	*Verbascum thapsus*	Regionally Controlled
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*	Regionally Controlled
Himalayan Honeysuckle	*Leycesteria Formosa*	Agricultural and Environmental
Honeysuckle	*Lonicera japonica*	Unclassified Environmental
Horehound	*Marrubium vulgare*	Regionally Controlled
Jerusalem Cherry	*Solanum pseudocapsicum*	Unclassified Environmental
Khaki Weed		Regionally Prohibited
Lantana	*Lantana camara*	weed of national significance & Restricted
Large-leaf Cotoneaster	*Cotoneaster glaucophyllus*	Unclassified Environmental
Lombardy Poplar	*Populus nigra*	Unclassified Environmental
Madeira Vine	*Anredera cordifolia*	Regionally Restricted
Montpellier Broom	*Genista monspessulana*	Regionally Controlled
Noogoora Burr	*Xanthium occidentale*	Regionally Controlled & Regional Priority
Orange Firethorn	*Pyracantha angustifolia*	Unclassified Environmental
Olive	*Olea europaea* ssp. *europaea*	Unclassified Environmental
Osage Orange	*Maclura pomifera*	Unclassified Environmental
Pampas Grass	*Cortaderia selloana & C. jubata*	Unclassified Environmental
Pampas Lilly-of-the-Valley	*Salpichroa origanifolia*	Unclassified Environmental
Paterson's Curse	*Echium plantagineum*	Regionally Controlled & Regional Priority
Pennyroyal	*Mentha pulegium*	Unclassified Environmental
Peppercorn Tree	*Schinus areira*	Unclassified Environmental
Pine	*Pinus radiata*	Unclassified Environmental
Prairie Ground Cherry	*Physalis viscosa*	Regionally Controlled
Prickly Pear	*Opuntia vulgaris & O. stricta*	Regionally Controlled
Purple Top	*Verbena bonariensis*	Unclassified Environmental
Saffron Thistle		Regionally Controlled

Weed Common Name	Weed Scientific Name	Weed Category
Serrated Tussock	*Nassella trichotoma*	weed of national significance, Regionally Prohibited, New and Emerging Weed
Sheep Sorrell	*Acetosella vulgaris*	Unclassified Environmental
Silver-leaf Nightshade	*Solanum elaeagnifolium*	Regionally Prohibited & New and Emerging Weed
Skeleton Weed	*Chondrilla juncea*	Regionally Restricted
Small- leaf privet	*Ligustrum vulgare*	Unclassified Environmental
Soursob	*Oxalis pes-caprae*	Unclassified Environmental
Spanish Heath	*Erica lusitanica*	Unclassified Environmental
St Barnaby's Thistle	*Centaurea solstitialis*	Regionally Restricted
St John's Wort	*Hypericum perforatum*	Regionally Controlled & Regional Priority
Stinkwort	*Dittrichia graveolens*	Regionally Controlled
Sweet Briar	*Rosa rubiginosa*	Regionally Controlled
Sycamore Maple	*Acer pseudoplatanus*	Unclassified Environmental
Thornapples	*Datura spp*	Regionally Controlled
Tree Lucerne	*Chamaecytisus proliferus*	Unclassified Environmental
Tree of Heaven	*Ailanthus altissima*	Regionally Controlled
Variegated Thistle	*Silybum marianum*	Regionally Controlled
Willows	*Salix spp*	weed of national significance & Restricted
Wild Gladiolus	*Gladiolus undulutus*	Unclassified Environmental
Wild Watsonia	*Watsonia meriana var. bulbililfera*	Regionally Controlled

Appendix 6: Native Vegetation Removal Quick Guide

In Victoria, a planning permit is usually required to remove native vegetation. The figure below explains how to check if you need a permit and how to prepare a permit application. Figure sourced from: *Applicants Guide – Application to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation*

Step 1 ***Do I need a permit?***	Your local council can confirm if you need a permit to remove native vegetation. Organise a pre-application meeting with your local council to help answer the following questions: • Am I removing native vegetation? Appendix 1 will help you to determine if the vegetation is native. • Do I qualify for an exemption? There are a range of exemptions that mean a permit is not required to remove native vegetation. Refer to the exemption guidance on the DELWP website. • Are there any other requirements? Check with your local council whether any schedule, Native Vegetation Precinct Plan or environmental overlay applies. Also check whether the vegetation could be protected under other local, state or federal legislation. If you need a permit to remove native vegetation, continue to Step 2.		
Step 2 ***What is my assessment pathway?***	Use the Native Vegetation Information Management Native vegetation removal tool (NVIM native vegetation removal tool) to map the native vegetation and determine your assessment pathway: https://nvim.delwp.vic.gov.au/. Appendix 1 explains how to identify native vegetation and collect site information. *Note: If you are removing 0.5 ha or more of native vegetation you are automatically in the Detailed Assessment Pathway. This is approximately a rectangle of 100 metres long and 50 wide or 7 large scattered trees or 16 small scattered trees.*		
	Basic *Assessment Pathway* ⬇	***Intermediate*** *Assessment Pathway* ⬇	***Detailed*** *Assessment Pathway* ⬇
Step 3 ***Do I need an accredited native vegetation assessor?***	If you are in the Basic or Intermediate Assessment Pathway you do not need to appoint an accredited native vegetation assessor. You can complete the application yourself using the NVIM native vegetation removal tool.		You need an accredited native vegetation assessor to complete a site assessment report. Contact your local council for assistance.
Step 4 ***Can I reduce my impacts, offset requirements and costs?***	Use information in the NVIM native vegetation removal tool to minimise impacts on native vegetation. Try not to remove native vegetation with higher condition and strategic biodiversity value scores, large trees (allow space for a tree protection zone within 15 metres of the tree trunk) and areas shown as Location 2 and 3 on the *Location map*. Figure 3 shows how you can avoid and minimise impacts at the site.		Use information from the site assessment and work with the accredited native vegetation assessor to minimise impacts.
Step 5 ***Prepare the application***	Follow the prompts in the NVIM native vegetation removal tool to provide additional information that is required for your application. The tool will calculate your offset requirement and you must decide how you will secure the offset – on your own property or purchased through a broker. Check the costs to secure the offset before proceeding with the application. Download the *Native vegetation removal report* (NVR report). The report will form part of your planning permit application.		Obtain a NVR report for the Detailed Assessment Pathway from the accredited native vegetation assessor. Work with the accredited assessor to complete the application.
Step 6 ***Lodge the application***	Check you have completed all application requirements and attached any necessary information. Examples of statements you could use in the application are provided in Appendix 5. Lodge the planning permit application with your local council.		

Rural City of
Wangaratta