## Introduction

Biodiversity Response Planning (BRP) is a long-term area-based planning approach to biodiversity conservation in Victoria. It is designed to strengthen alignment, engagement and participation between government, Traditional Owners, non-government agencies and the community.

DELWP Regional staff have been working with stakeholders on actions to conserve biodiversity in specific landscapes, informed by the best available science and local knowledge.

These Fact Sheets capture a point in time, reflecting data and knowledge available in 2020. They provide information for many (but not all) landscapes across Victoria, containing general information on the key values and threats in each area, as well as the priority cost-effective actions that provide the best protection of biodiversity. Fact Sheets are intended to provide useful biodiversity information for the community, non-government and government organisations during project planning and development.

Further information and the [full list of Fact Sheets](http://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/working-together-for-biodiversity) is available on the Department’s Environment website.

## Landscape description

This 46,928ha landscape includes the townships of Maldon and Newstead, and moves south, to just east of Campbelltown. The landscape is 58% native vegetation, with 24% of the area designated public land. This includes Maldon Historic Reserve, Muckleford Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR) and State Forest (SF), Walmer SF and Sandon SF. Refer to the map at the end of this Fact Sheet.

This landscape has an overlap with the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation RSA landscape. For more information, please refer to this Fact Sheet in the [full list of Fact Sheets](http://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/working-together-for-biodiversity).

## Cultural importance

We recognise that the entire landscape has high cultural value for Traditional Owners. Landscapes identified as having “notable” cultural importance is based on the density of recorded cultural heritage sites and knowledge shared by Traditional Owners. We also recognise that there are locations important to Traditional Owners not within these landscapes.

## Stakeholder interest

As part of the BRP process, in October 2020 stakeholders were asked to nominate focus landscapes and actions of interest. Mount Alexander Shire Council, Connecting Country, DELWP (Public Land), and Dja Dja Wurrung all nominated Muckleford.

Possible future investment/project development in this landscape will be available to any interested stakeholders in addition to those who nominated this landscape.

|  |
| --- |
| 0BEcological values identified by Traditional Owners, partners and community within this landscape |
| Revegetation of Djandak with:   * Buwatji (grasses used for grain) * Witji (weaving grasses) * Gatjawil Matorm (tuberous plants with scented flowers) * Murnang (Yam Daisies) including Kangaroo grass, Lomandra and Dianella species, Chocolate Lily, Vanilla Lily, Bulbine Lily and Yam Daisy |
| The Muckleford Forest and associated reserves consists of Box-Ironbark forest, and as such represents part of only 17% that remains of the original cover of this forest type in Victoria |
| Wi (cultural fire) authorised and lead by Dja Dja Wurrung on Djandak (Country) |
| Significant ecological vegetation classes include Alluvial Terraces Herb-rich Woodland (Endangered) and Grassy Woodland (Vulnerable) |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Habitat Distribution Models identify 14 species with more than 5% of their Victorian range in this landscape area | Traditional Owners, stakeholders and community groups identified the following species of interest within this landscape |
| Plant | * 13 Plants; notably: * Fryers Range Scentbark (*Grevillea obtecta*), endangered with 25% of its Victorian range in area * Woodland Plume-orchid (*Pterostylis sp. aff. plumosa* (Woodland)), rare with 23% of its Victorian range in area * Smooth Grevillea (*Grevillea rosmarinifolia subsp. glabella*), rare with 17% of its Victorian range in area | * Whirrakee Wattle * Buloke * Castlemaine Spider-orchid * Dwarf Cassinia * Lanky Buttons |
| Rat | Mammals | * Brush-tailed Phascogale * Eastern Pygmy-possum |
| Sparrow | 1 Bird:   * Swift Parrot, endangered with 5% of its Victorian range in area | * Australian Little Bittern * Swift Parrot * Grey-crowned Babbler * Powerful Owl |

|  |
| --- |
| Traditional Owners, stakeholders and community groups identified the following threats within this landscape |
| Exclusion of Dja Dja Wurrung leadership (governance) |
| Lack of enquiry and understanding of Dja Dja Wurrung customs and practice that provide an enabling and supportive environment so that Djaara can reconnect to land and reconnect stories and knowledge to place. Ask “How?” not “Why?” |
| Weeds – Wheel cactus (*Opuntia robusta*) – significant and extensive infestations |
| Overabundant kangaroos |
| Change of land use |
| Missing sub-storey species |
| Lack of listening, hearing and respect for Dja Dja Wurrung ability to talk to Country – bias toward western science-based decision support tools and not Dja Dja Wurrung knowledge-based tools |
| Utilising past learnings and achievement to guide future effort – Dja Dja Wurrung participation in past and future biodiversity planning and delivery below the IAP2 level of ‘involve’ does not support Dja Dja Wurrung aspirations |
| Pest animals, including rabbits, deer, foxes |
| Loss of native vegetation |
| Firewood collection |

## Strategic Management Prospects

Strategic Management Prospects (SMP) models biodiversity values such as species habitat distribution, landscape-scale threats and highlights the most cost-effective actions for specific locations. More information about SMP is available in [NatureKit](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/naturekit).

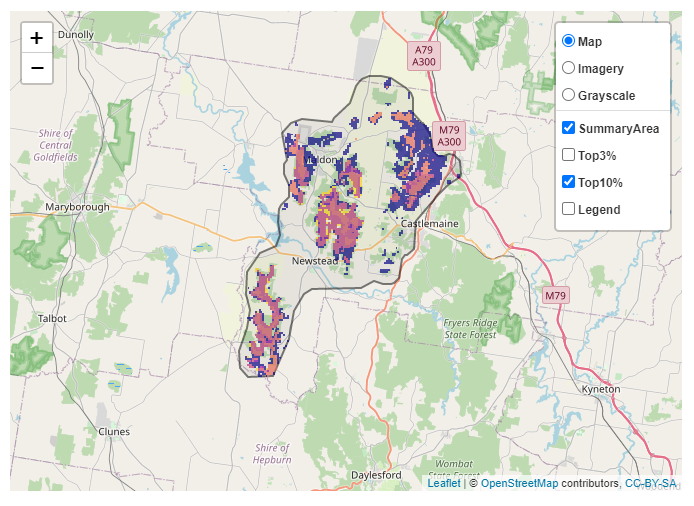
## Additional threats

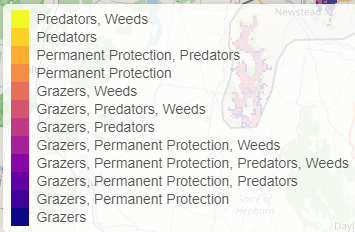
Threats identified (in addition to those modelled in SMP) through the consultation process were:

* alterations to hydrology
* land salinisation
* soil erosion
* habitat degradation due to extremes of climate and weather, and lack of regeneration in some vegetation classes
* recreational activities causing fragmentation
* loss of vegetation, and erosion
* legacy use of public land
* private land use impacting biodiversity
* inappropriate land use planning
* inappropriate fire regimes (planned burning and bushfires)

Some individual threatened species may also require targeted intervention, beyond actions to manage landscape-scale threats, to improve their future prospects.

## Which landscape-scale actions are most cost-effective in this landscape?

The coloured areas indicate where the identified landscape-scale actions and locations are most cost-effective and will maximise biodiversity benefit across Victoria for multiple species.

The SMP priority actions which rank among the top 10% for cost-effectiveness of that action across Victoria for much of the landscape are in order of the top 3 actions, see map and list below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Rabbit | Control rabbits  13,355ha |
| A picture containing text  Description automatically generatedA picture containing text  Description automatically generated | Combined cat and fox control 6,718ha |
| Grain | Control weeds  3,711ha |

Of the top 10% of cost-effective actions, combined cat and fox control provides the most cost-effective biodiversity benefits when considering all flora and fauna.

From the nomination process the following additional actions were also suggested for this landscape:

* domestic grazing control
* revegetation
* cultural fire
* appropriate frequency of planned burns to support native vegetation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The most cost-effective action for flora and fauna | |
| Plant | Plants - Control rabbits |
| FrogSnakeSparrowRat | Reptiles, Birds, Mammals, Amphibians - Combined cat and fox control |

For a further in depth look into SMP for this landscape please refer to [NatureKit](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/naturekit).

## 