

landscape assessment for significant ridgelines in banyule

prepared by **hansen partnership pty ltd**
and **banyule city council**

june 2012

hansen



urban planning | urban design | landscape architecture



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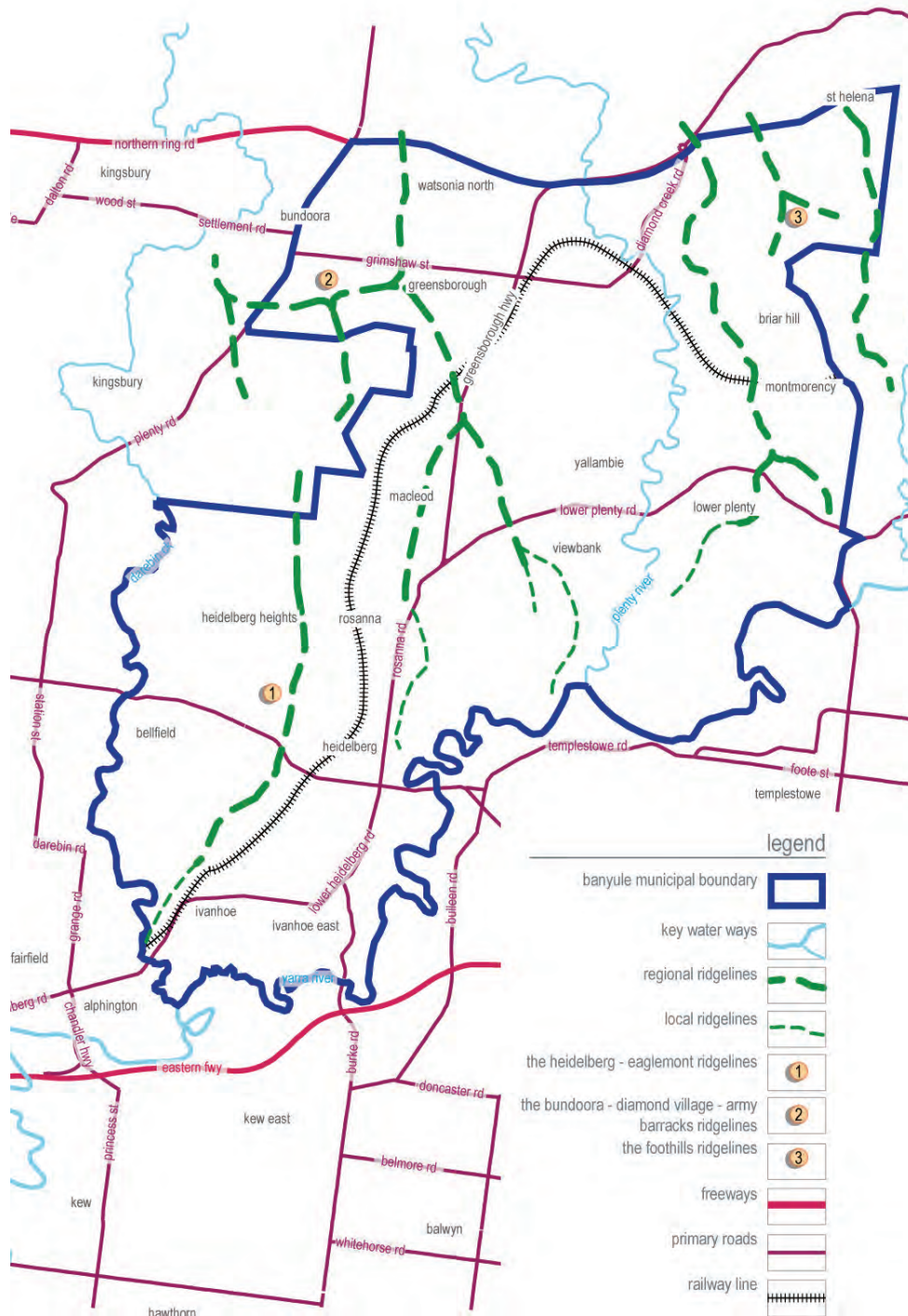


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1 Executive Summary

This study has uncovered three locally and regionally significant ridgelines in Banyule. They are the: Heidelberg to Eaglemont ridgeline; Bundoora to Diamond Village to Army Barracks ridgeline; and Foothills ridgelines. These ridgelines are shown on the following map of Banyule.





These ridgelines significantly contribute to the landscape character of various neighbourhoods in Banyule. They also contribute to the landscape of metropolitan Melbourne's inner-north.

The ridgelines have continuous green, treed hilltops with homes that sit below the canopy of trees. Many of these trees were planted or have grown since European settlement on private land along the ridgelines. These trees are clearly visible, above and around buildings and roads. They define skylines and provide backdrops to various neighbourhoods in Banyule and the region.

Along the ridgelines, a skyline of canopy trees is punctured by taller buildings and structures at some of Banyule's activity areas in Heidelberg, Ivanhoe and Watsonia. The larger buildings are hospitals, offices and apartments at the core of these three places. This urban landscape enables people to look across their treed residential streets to their commercial centres, which are seen in backdrops.

This study has identified opportunities to better protect and improve Banyule's significant ridgelines, with changes to the Banyule Planning Scheme. Because the ridgelines are mainly used for residential purposes, these changes are associated with a preferred 'green, treed' landscape character for various neighbourhoods at the ridgelines.

The priority planning scheme changes should be to improve the existing local planning policy for neighbourhood character and a vegetation protection overlay, schedule 5 for substantial trees. The changes would support a planning scheme approach to manage tree protection, planting and residential development at the ridgelines and for affected neighbourhoods.

Lesser priorities for the planning scheme include an updated Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), to give strategic weight to further overlay controls for each ridgeline. There is also the possibility of a new local planning policy for Tree Planting and Protection. These lesser priorities should only be progressed after some certainty is achieved for the priorities and when budgets are available.



2 Introduction

2.1 This Study

This Study describes significant ridgelines in Banyule and considers how they can be protected and improved, through the provisions of the Banyule Planning Scheme.

Banyule is a treed, green, urbanised place within the inner-north of metropolitan Melbourne. It has neighbourhoods that surround centres of activity at shopping streets and along major arterial roads. In household surveys and other community consultation, local residents have consistently said that trees are important to the municipality's appeal as a place to live and that tree planting and protection is very important.

Analysis of three ridgelines has been done. It has looked at their visual sensitivity and view sheds to other areas, within and outside Banyule. The characteristics of each ridgeline have also been assessed and field work has confirmed locations where each ridgeline can be seen. These landscape attributes contribute to determine each ridgeline's significance. The degree of significance may be local or regional.

Local significant ridgelines are those which are visually prominent in Banyule, for more than one neighbourhood precinct. Regional significant ridgelines are those that are clearly visible outside Banyule, in the inner-north of metropolitan Melbourne.

2.2 Banyule's Geography

Banyule's geography comes from a relationship between nearby Mount Cooper, the Great Dividing Range and the Yarra River, with its tributaries and floodplains.

The western part of Banyule has land that falls from ridgelines, along plains and into river valleys. This comes from nearby Mount Cooper in Bundoora, an extinct volcano that is the highest point in metropolitan Melbourne. Lava flowed across the landscape about 9.2 million years ago. Basalt then formed and over time grassy woodlands grew on the eroding lava fields at Bundoora, Heidelberg West and Bellfield.

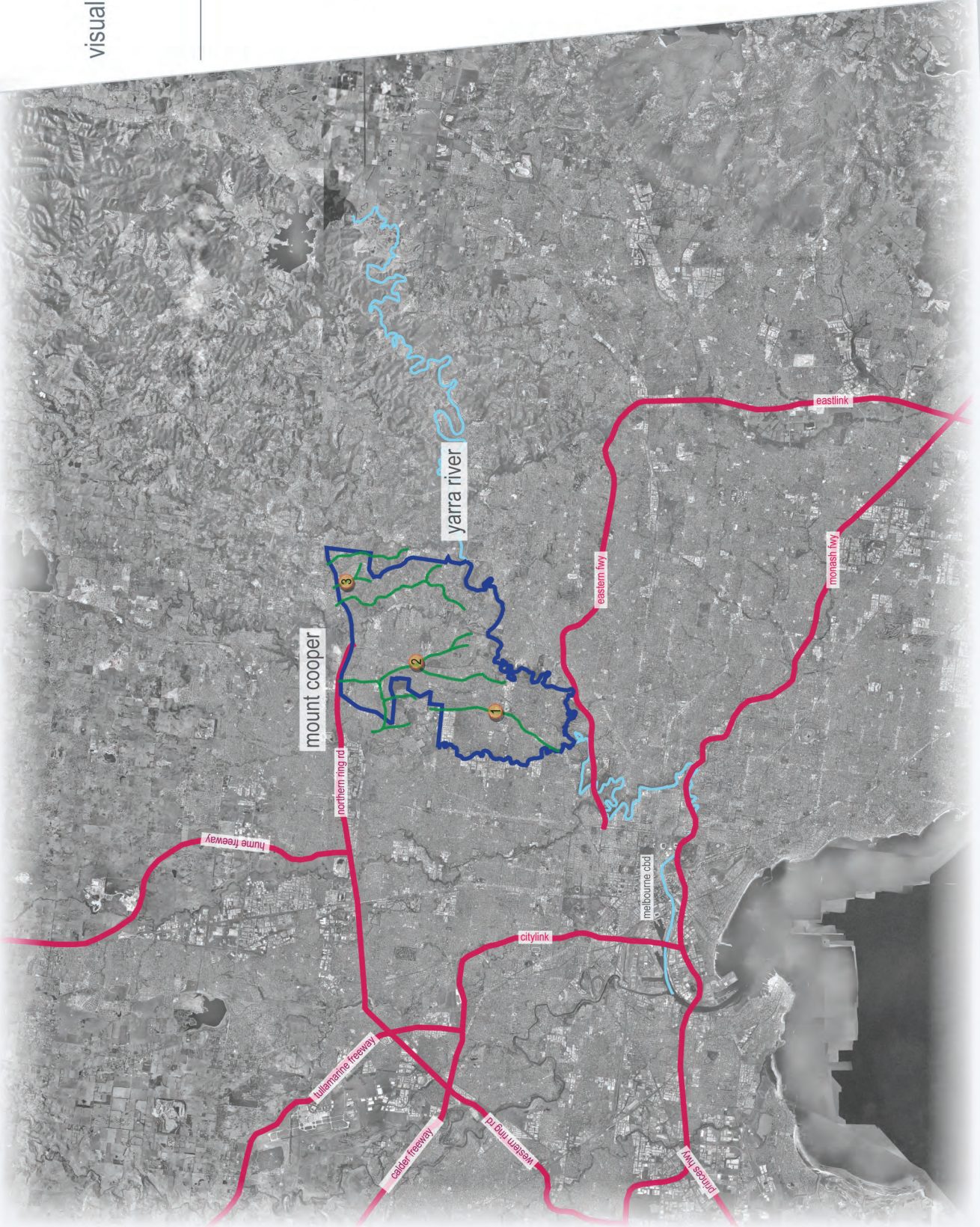
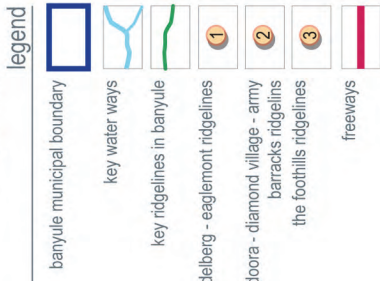
The remainder of Banyule has land that falls from the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range, through neighbouring Nillumbik, to the Yarra and Plenty Rivers in Banyule. This geography was formed about 300 million years ago, from tectonic uplifts and the erosive forces of the Yarra River and its tributaries. Forested hills and valleys emerged across Montmorency, Lower Plenty, Greensborough, Viewbank, Heidelberg and Ivanhoe.

This geography puts Banyule in a unique and visually prominent place in metropolitan Melbourne. Visually prominent ridgelines, valleys and plains are now a canvass to an urbanized landscape where much vegetation has grown since early European settlement. Analysis of land contours reveals that the most prominent ridgelines in Banyule are the:

1. Heidelberg to Eaglemont ridgeline
2. Bundoora to Diamond Village to Army Barracks ridgeline
3. Foothills ridgelines

The following map shows these ridgelines and the geographical features mentioned above.

visual assessment of ridgelines in banyule location map



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figure 1



2.3 Policy Context

Banyule's ridgelines support built and natural environments. Council's policy direction for land use and development is given in the MSS, where there are objectives for built and natural environments.

In 2010 Council did early analysis for ridgelines and included it in a draft strategy, titled *Neighbourhood Character Policy and Plan (October 2010)*, which was given to the community for comment. This draft made reference to the three ridgelines shown in Section 1 of this report. It was supported by the *Banyule Neighbourhood Character Background Report (August 2010)*, which said:

Residential development and vegetation that is on or near these ridgelines will be prominent across Banyule and parts of Melbourne's inner north. (page 58)

Banyule's policy approach for housing includes a framework for neighbourhoods and areas for varying degrees of housing growth. The framework for neighbourhoods is represented by five neighbourhood character precinct types, which are: Garden Suburban, Garden Court, Bush Garden, Semi Bush and Bush Woodland neighbourhoods. The framework for housing is represented by six housing area types, which are: Diversity, Accessible, Incremental, Limited Incremental, Limited and Low Density.

This study will leverage off Banyule's policy framework for neighbourhoods and housing, to give direction for guiding appropriate development outcomes at ridgelines in Banyule.



3 Where are they, and what do they look like?

3.1 Heidelberg to Eaglemont ridgeline

This ridgeline (ridgeline 1) is about 8km long. It runs in a north-south direction, to the east of the Darebin Creek. It passes through Macleod, Heidelberg, Rosanna, Ivanhoe and Eaglemont.

This ridgeline is in the south-west corner of the municipality and can be seen from over 3km away to the west and further beyond Darebin Creek. It is also visible to the east. Figure 3 shows this ridgeline and identifies all surrounding land from which it may be visible.

This ridgeline is made up of residential neighbourhoods, roads also run along the top. At the higher part of the ridgeline, Waiora Road passes from Heidelberg Heights and leads down to Ivanhoe, where Upper Heidelberg Road continues towards Darebin Creek. Along the way, dwellings sit below trees. Many of these trees are on private land at or close to the top of the ridgeline. Dwellings are predominately one and two storey. Buildings only appear above the ridgeline at the Heidelberg Specialised and Major Activity Centre (SMAC) and the Ivanhoe Major Activity Centre (MAC)

At the Heidelberg SMAC, which is centred on Burgundy Street and Bell Street, the large Austin/Mercy Hospital Complex has tall buildings that sit above the tree-line ridgeline. There are also taller buildings at Bell Street that appear above the trees.

At the Ivanhoe MAC, which is centred on Upper Heidelberg Road, the taller heritage clock tower at the former Heidelberg Town Hall sits above the tree-line. In the evening this clock-tower is illuminated and is a significant landmark. Shops and other commercial buildings along Upper Heidelberg Road define the ridgeline's appearance in this location, further down the hill from the Heidelberg Town Hall building.

Other than in the core of Activity Centres, the character of the ridgeline is dominated by a tree canopy.

3.2 Bundoora to Diamond Village to Army Barracks ridgeline

This ridgeline (ridgeline 2) is made up by several ridgelines that run through the centre of the Banyule municipality. They traverse the suburbs of Bundoora, Greensborough, Watsonia, Viewbank and Macleod and parts of Rosanna and Heidelberg. These ridgelines can be viewed from all over the municipality and numerous locations beyond 5km to the west. Figure 4 shows Bundoora – Diamond Village – Army Barracks Ridgelines and identifies all surrounding land from which they may be visible.

This ridgeline passes through several suburbs. It is made up of residential properties with dwellings below trees. There are fewer trees at the northern end of the ridgeline in Bundoora. However pockets of trees still dominate the skyline. The Simpson Army Barracks is at the ridgeline, as a large landholding. At the Barracks, building sit below canopy trees and within a well treed setting.

The Watsonia Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC) is near the ridgeline, it has some buildings that breakup the continuity of the ridgeline's treed silhouette. In this location the most dominant feature on the skyline is power lines, which pass through and above the NAC.

Other than in the core of the Watsonia NAC, the character of the ridgeline is dominated by a tree canopy.



3.3 Foothills ridgelines

This ridgeline (ridgeline 3) is the most dominant feature in Banyule's topography. It is to the east of the Plenty River, in the north east corner of the municipality. Rolling hills make up a series of dominant ridgelines, which run from Lower Plenty to St Helena, incorporating the suburbs of Montmorency, Briar Hill and parts of Eltham.

The terrain represents the foothills of the Yarra Ranges and the ridgelines can be viewed from various areas within Banyule and beyond. Figure 5 shows the Foothills Ridgelines and identifies all surrounding land from which they may be visible.

These ridgelines are occupied various neighbourhoods, with dwelling set below the canopy of trees. Many of the trees along and around the ridgeline are on private property. In comparison to the other ridgelines, the Foothills ridgelines is more densely populated with trees.

visual assessment of ridgelines in banyule context map



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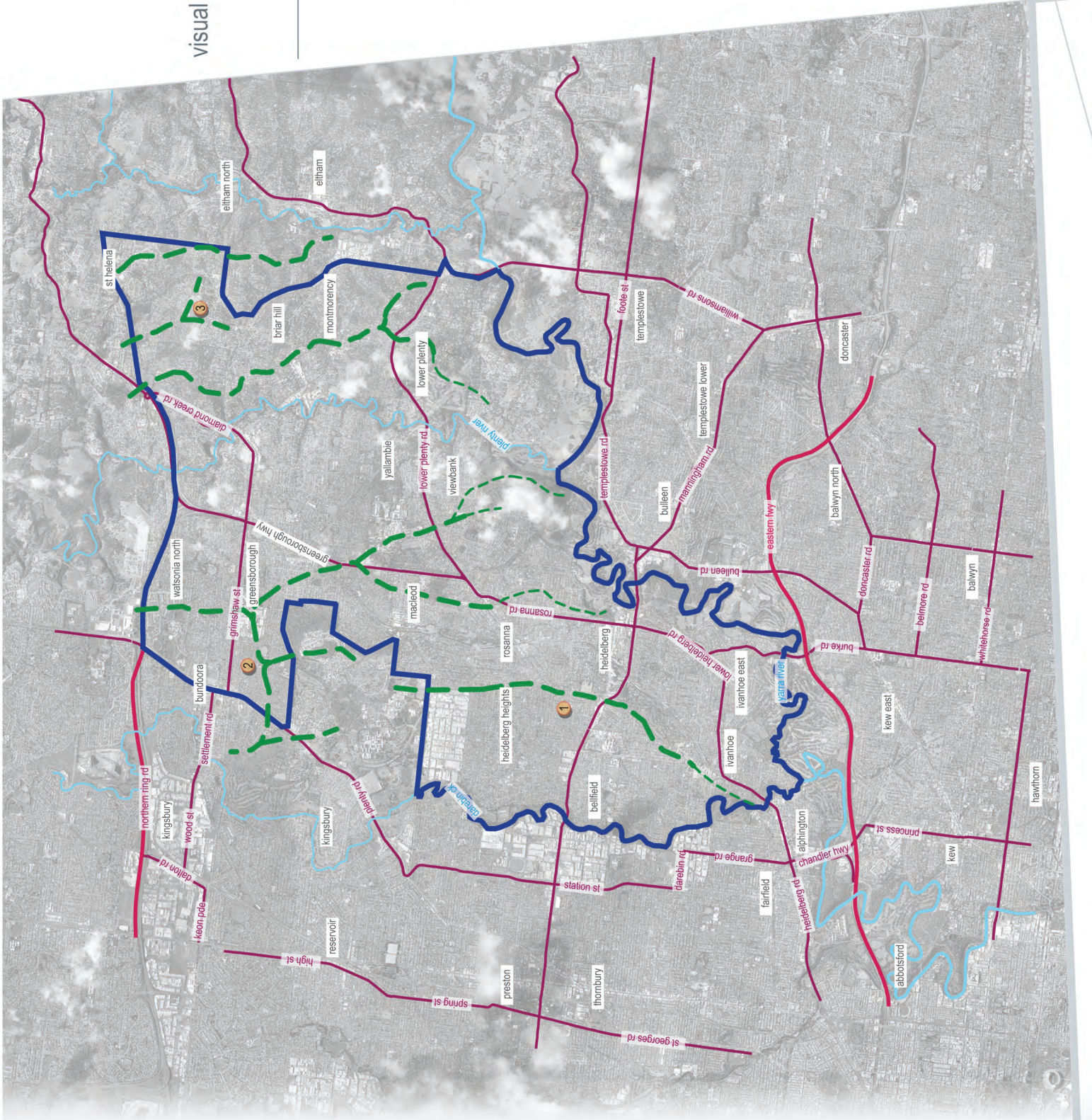
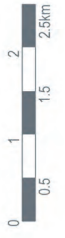








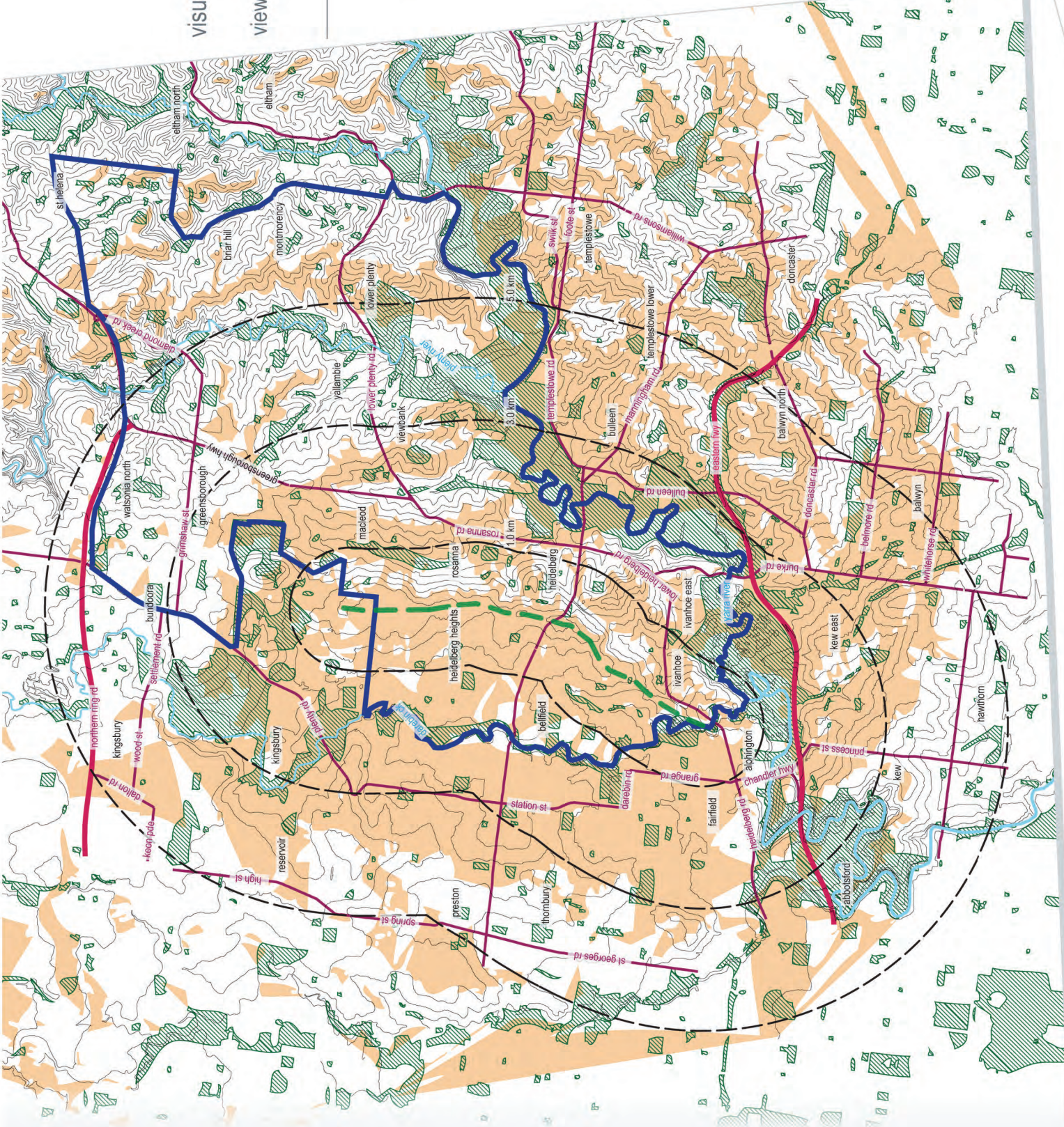


figure 2

visual assessment of ridgelines in banyule viewshed analysis - the heidelberg - eaglemont ridgelines

legend

-  banyule municipal boundary
-  key water ways
-  viewshed mapping - all land from which ridgelines may be visible*
-  public open space
-  the heidelberg - eaglemont ridgelines
-  freeways
-  primary roads
-  contours at 10m intervals



*viewshed mapping is based on a terrain model (based on 10m contour intervals) and does not take into account any vegetation or buildings.

within the digital model, light source locations are located at typical intervals along the top of the key ridgelines, 5m off the ground level to simulate the roof ridge of a typical single storey house.

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figure 3

visual assessment of ridgelines in banyule viewshed analysis - the bundorra - diamond village army barracks



*viewshed mapping is based on a terrain model (based on 10m contour intervals) and does not take into account any vegetation or buildings.

within the digital model, light source locations are located at typical intervals along the top of the key ridgelines, 5m off the ground level to simulate the roof ridgeline of a typical single storey house.

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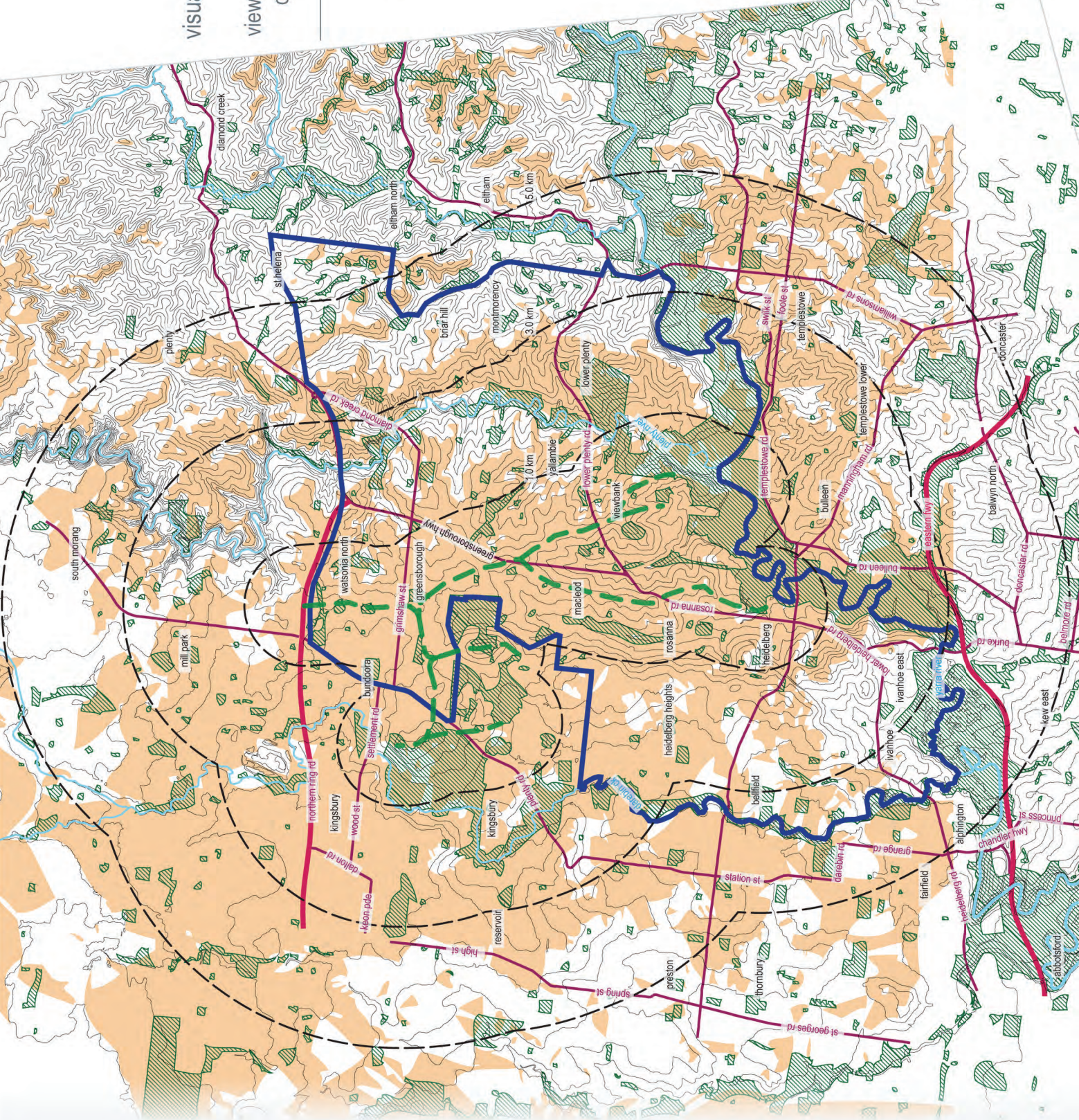
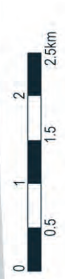









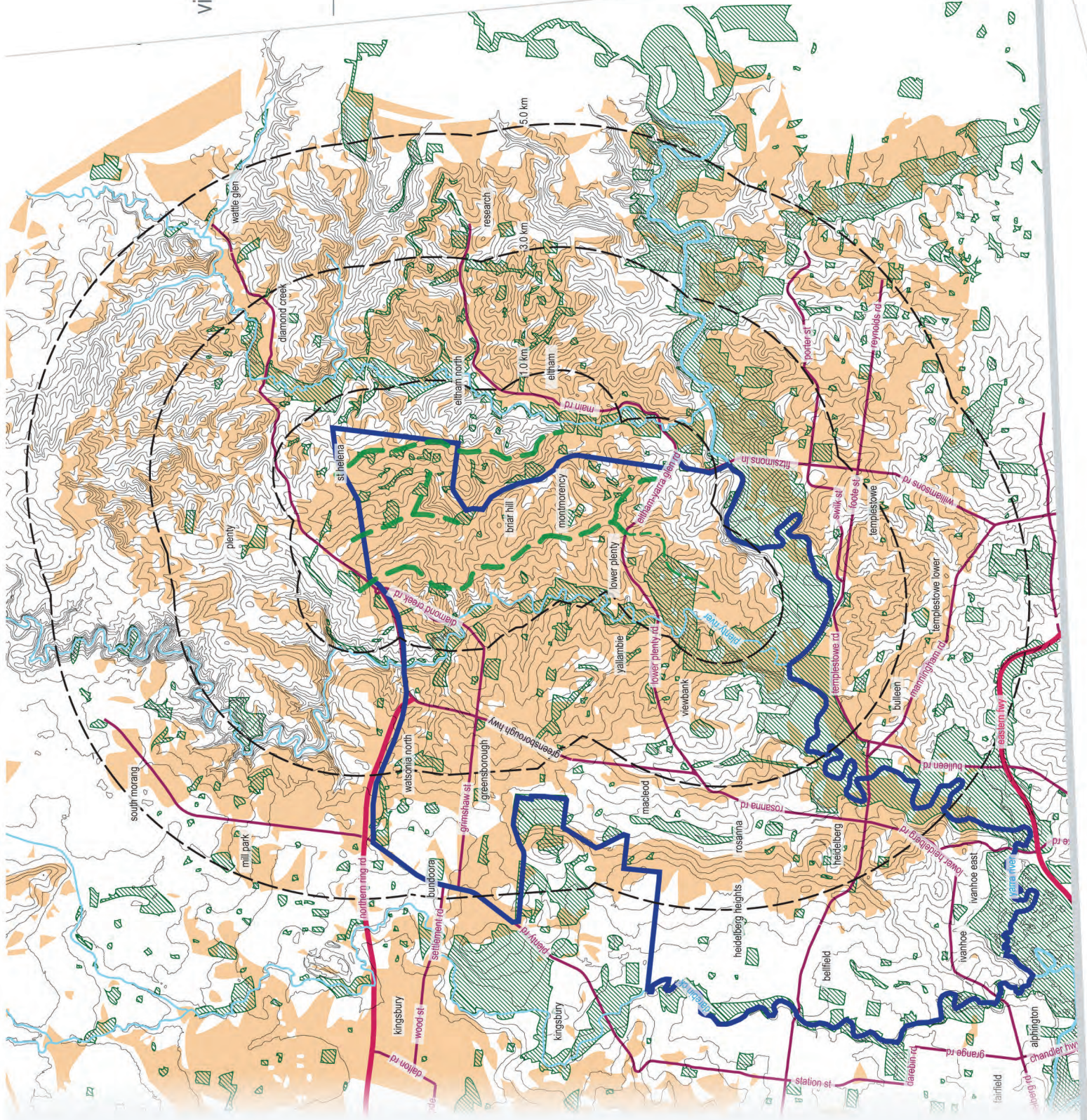


figure 4

visual assessment of ridgelines in banyule viewed analysis - the foothills ridgelines

legend

-  banyule municipal boundary
-  key water ways
-  viewshed mapping - all land from which ridgelines may be visible*
-  public open space
-  the foothills ridgelines
-  freeways
-  freeways
-  primary roads
-  contours at 10m intervals



*viewshed mapping is based on a terrain model (based on 10m contour intervals) and does not take into account any vegetation or buildings.

within the digital model, light source locations are located at typical intervals along the top of the key ridgelines, 5m off the ground level to simulate the roof ridge of a typical single storey house.

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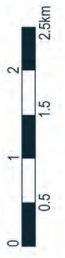


figure 5



4 What is their landscape assessment?

4.1 Desktop analysis

A desktop view-shed analysis has used computer software to develop a three-dimensional terrain model of each ridgeline and the surrounding region. The model used topographic data and 10m contour intervals within Banyule and beyond, into surrounding suburbs of inner northern Melbourne.

Within the digital model, light sources were put at frequent intervals along the top of the 3 ridgelines, 5m off the ground. This height simulated a typical single storey building at the ridgeline. The model was then able to identify all areas in the digital terrain that were visible from each ridgeline. This 'line of sight' modelling gave an accurate view-shed of land for each ridgeline. Using digital modelling this way, as a remote analysis tool, enables subsequent landscape assessment and fieldwork to validate the modelled view shed for on-the-ground conditions.

4.2 Landscape assessment methodology

Landscape assessment used extensive fieldwork to view and analyse each ridgeline. Vantage points were taken from open space, freeways and major roads, because these locations are publically accessible. Public views to a ridgeline contributes to its potential significance

Once all viewing locations were established, a landscape assessment was done to appreciate the significance of each ridgeline, for either local or regional significance. This involved a 3-step process to:

- Describe the landscape
- Evaluate the landscape
- Develop objectives to manage visual landscape character

The landscape assessment also looked at visual sensitivity and checked the modelled view-sheds, to establish landscape attributes for each ridgeline.

Ridgeline views

Various viewing points to the ridgelines were recorded. Some were in Banyule, others were further away. Each was recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) and then map on Figure 6.

The following gives information from the viewing points towards the ridgelines. Photographs help to illustrate the landscape character and potential impacts for each ridgeline.



4.3 Heidelberg to Eaglemont ridgeline

View 1: Plenty Road and Albert Street, Reservoir

This viewpoint is at a major road intersection, where there are distant panoramic views towards the eastern section of the ridgeline. It illustrates that there are many properties around Plenty Road which also enjoy views towards the ridgeline.



View 2: Plenty Road and Albert Street, Reservoir

This viewpoint was taken outside Westfield Shopping Centre, Doncaster, on Williamsons Road. It provides a long and direct view towards the southern section of the ridgeline.



Heidelberg – Eaglemont ridgeline Summary

The ridgeline has a soft treed silhouette. It is dominantly green with buildings around the ridgeline set below the heights of trees. The more distant silhouette of the Great Dividing Range is in the background.



4.4 Bundoora to Diamond Village to Army Barracks ridgeline

View 1: Rosanna Road, Heidelberg

This viewpoint is on the crest of a major road in the Heidelberg Specialised and Major Activity Centre. It provides a long and direct view towards the southern section of the ridgeline at Rosanna Road in Heidelberg.



View 2: Foote Street, Templestowe

This viewpoint is at the crest of a major road. It provides a long and direct view towards the south eastern section of the ridgeline.





View 3: Main Road, Lower Plenty

This viewpoint is at the crest of a major road, where there are clear, long and direct view to the eastern section of the ridgeline.



View 4: Metropolitan Ring Road, Plenty

This viewpoint is at a freeway, where there are distant panoramic views to the northern section of the ridgeline, as well as to Mount Cooper.



Bundoora to Diamond Village to Army Barracks ridgeline Summary



The ridgeline has a soft treed silhouette. It is dominantly green with buildings around the ridgeline set below the heights of trees. Views in a north-west direction to the ridgeline also give a silhouette of Mount Cooper in the background.



4.5 Foothills ridgelines

View 1: Templestowe Road, Bulleen

This viewpoint is at a bend in a major road, where there are long and direct views to the southern section of the ridgeline.



View 2: Foote Street, Templestowe

This viewpoint is at the crest of a major road, where there are long and direct views to the southern section of the ridgeline.





View 3: Foote Street, Templestowe

This viewpoint is at the crest of a major road, where there are long and direct views to the southern section of the ridgeline.



View 4: Williamsons Road, Templestowe

This viewpoint is at a major road, where there are long and direct views to the southern section of the ridgeline.





View 5: Lower Plenty Road, Yallambie

This viewpoint is at a major road, where there are clear, long and direct views to the eastern section of the ridgeline.



View 6: Grimshaw Street, Greensborough

This viewpoint is at a main shopping strip in the Greensborough Principal Activity Centre, where there are clear, long and direct views to the north-western section of the ridgeline.





View 7: Main Street, Greensborough

This viewpoint is at another main shopping strip in the Greensborough Principle Activity Centre, where there are clear, long and direct views to the north-western section of the ridgeline.



View 8: Diamond Creek Road / Aqueduct Road, Diamond Creek

This viewpoint is at a major road, where there are clear, long and direct views to the northern section of the ridgeline.




Foothills ridgelines Summary

The ridgeline has a soft treed silhouette. It is dominantly green with buildings around the ridgeline set below the heights of trees. The more distant silhouette of the Great Dividing Range is in the background.

visual assessment of ridgelines in banyule viewpoint locations

legend

-  banyule municipal boundary
-  key water ways
-  the heidelberg - eaglemont ridgelines
-  the bundoorra - diamond village - army barracks ridgelines
-  the foothills ridgelines
-  views to the heidelberg - eaglemont ridgelines
-  views to the diamond village ridgelines
-  views to the foothills ridgelines
-  freeways
-  primary roads



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 date: 12.06.12
 revision: B



figure 6



5 Which neighbourhoods are affected by them?

The ridgelines are expected to affect various neighbourhoods. Each will make a contribution to landscape character for affected neighbourhoods. Any contribution will need to be informed by relevant strategic objectives and any policy framework that exists. These are found in the MSS and Local Planning Policy. An appreciation of the objectives and the framework will help identify if any changes are needed to integrate a strategic direction for the ridgelines.

5.1 Municipal Strategic Statement

In November 2010 Banyule Council updated its MSS. This was done to implement its 2009 Housing Strategy and give the following Built Environment Objectives at Clause 21.06 of the Banyule Planning Scheme:

1. To provide a safe, attractive and high quality built environment.
2. To ensure that development respects and contributes to the desired future character of residential neighbourhoods and the identity of Activity Centres, in a manner that supports varying degrees of housing change.
3. To encourage a built form that delivers more environmentally sustainable construction and contributes to the desired future character of residential neighbourhoods and identity of Activity Centres.
4. To increase the diversity of housing types and promote new housing that meets the needs of the broader community in a manner that respects and contributes to the desired future character of residential neighbourhoods and identity of Activity Centres.

5.2 Local Planning Policy - Objectives

Banyule Council has a Local Planning Policy for Residential Neighbourhood Character at Clause 22.02 of the Banyule Planning Scheme. This Policy was informed by a 1999 Neighbourhood Character Strategy. The Clause 22.02 Policy Objectives are:

- To ensure that development complements and respects the desired future character of the area.
- To retain and enhance the identified elements that contributes to the desired future character of the area.
- To recognise the need for new or additional Design Objectives and Design Responses for areas within and around activity centres that are or will be subject to structure planning or design frameworks.

Council is doing work to review its 1999 Neighbourhood Character Strategy. This is represented by:

- *Neighbourhood Character Policy and Plan (draft), October 2010*
- *Draft Background Report, August 2010*



5.3 Local Planning Policy – Framework of Precincts

The Banyule 1999 Neighbourhood Character Strategy and work being done for a reviewed strategy, is confirming a framework of five neighbourhood character precinct types. Each precinct type takes into account topography, vegetation, street and subdivision pattern, era, style, scale and intensity of existing development. A summary of these five (5) different types of precincts is:

- **Garden Suburban:** Spacious leafy character in generally formal street settings, with space around and between dwellings, a relatively wide and open street space, and garden style vegetation, often mature and exotic, in both the private and public domain, creating an attractive, tree - dominated landscape setting in some streets.
- **Garden Court:** Curvilinear and cul-de-sac street pattern, low scale, generally brick dwellings dominated by a low - pitched tile roof, set in spacious, often informal garden settings, with a mix of native and exotic plantings.
- **Bush Garden:** Substantial native trees provide the backdrop for the mainly low scale, post war detached dwellings in their mature garden settings.
- **Semi Bush:** Representative of the highly valued native vegetation - dominated residential environments found in some of the hillier north eastern and eastern parts of the metropolitan area, epitomised in the popular imagination by 'Eltham' or 'Bellbird'. These areas are becoming scarcer as they succumb to vegetation clearance and more intense development.
- **Bush Woodland:** Retain much of their rural, undeveloped character, with significant native vegetation, a farmland landscape character, meandering or straight country roads without made kerbs, and various dwelling styles.

The draft Neighbourhood Character Policy and Plan has been informed by a review of these precinct types and the 1999 Strategy and has found that the types remain relevant for Banyule. However there is an opportunity to consolidate a refine the location of specific precincts. This has resulted in a future framework for thirteen (13) different precincts in Banyule. The make-up of these is proposed to be:

- Garden Suburban: 6 precincts
 - Garden Court: 3 precincts
 - Bush Garden: 1 precinct
 - Semi Bush: 1 precinct
 - Bush Woodland: 2 precincts
- Total: 13 precincts**

A final new Neighbourhood Character Strategy, which will be based on the draft Policy and Plan will show the final mapping of these precincts. The following analysis has leveraged off the draft Policy and Plan to appreciate the landscape character contribution that each ridgeline makes to affected precincts.



5.4 Precincts with the Heidelberg to Eaglemont ridgeline

This ridgeline affects three (3) precincts. They are Garden Suburban 2, Garden Suburban 3 and Garden Suburban 6.

The desirable characteristics of these precincts are to retain a consistent rhythm of dwelling spacing with softened appearance of buildings and extensions along the streetscape. This includes substantial trees within front setbacks. It also involves retaining existing substantial trees and vegetation with additional planting of substantial trees and other vegetation where possible. It includes dwellings which respect the undulating landscape character of the area and acknowledges the benefit of those buildings that give front setbacks that enhance the vegetated character of the area.

5.5 Precincts with the Bundoora to Diamond Village to Army Barracks ridgeline

This ridgeline affects five (5) precincts. They are Garden Suburban 1, Garden Suburban 2 and Garden Court 1, Garden Court 2 and Garden Court 3.

The desirable characteristics of these precincts are to retain a consistent rhythm of dwelling spacing with softened appearance of buildings and extensions along the streetscape. This includes substantial trees within front setbacks. It also involves retaining existing substantial trees and vegetation with additional planting of substantial trees and other vegetation where possible. It includes dwellings which respect the undulating character of the area and acknowledges the benefit of those buildings that give front setbacks that enhance the vegetated character of the area. To the south of Lower Plenty Road, retention and enhancement of wildlife corridors is also important.






5.6 Precincts with the Foothills ridgelines

This ridgeline affects four (4) precincts. They are Bush Woodland 2, Semi Bush, Bush Garden and Garden Court 2.

The desirable characteristics of these precincts are to retaining the spaciousness and rural landscape character, with the appearance of 'buildings in grounds'. This provides for buildings sited and designed to minimise excavation and intrusion into the landscape vistas. It anticipates that dwellings will be sympathetic to the landscape context, with retention of existing substantial trees and vegetation. This will help to protect the native vegetation dominated vistas and streetscapes, with additional planting of substantial trees and other vegetation to enhance the vegetated character of the area. The retention of high canopy trees at the front or rear of dwellings, as well as a rhythm of dwelling spacing to allow for substantial trees between built form, is also important in these areas.

visual assessment of ridgelines in banyule neighbourhood character precincts

legend

-  banyule municipal boundary
-  key water ways
-  the banyule ridgelines
-  freeways
-  primary roads
-  bush woodland 1
-  bush woodland 2
-  semi bush
-  bush garden
-  garden suburban 1
-  garden suburban 2
-  garden suburban 3
-  garden suburban 4
-  garden suburban 5
-  garden suburban 6
-  garden court 1
-  garden court 2
-  garden court 3

project ref: 2010.640
 dwg no.: LCD-006
 scale: 1:60,000@A3
 date: 12.06.12
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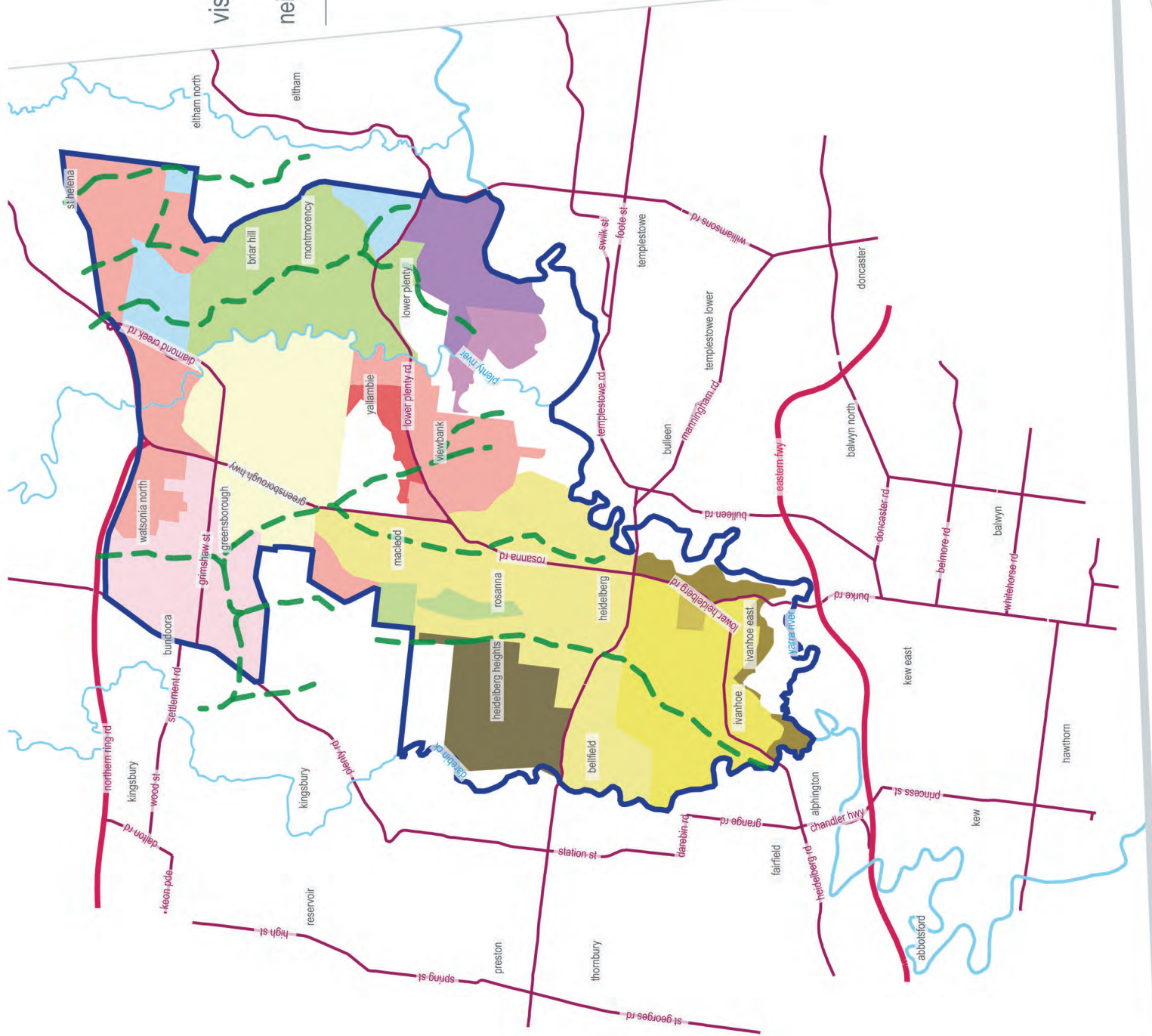
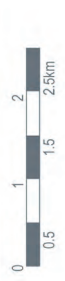


figure 7



6 Their landscape statements

This section considers the information and analysis given in early sections of this report to provide:

- **Vision** statement for each ridgeline, which takes into account desired characteristics of affected neighbourhood precincts
- **Landscape Significance** statement for each ridgeline, which takes into account the visibility of each ridgeline to determine if it warrants local or regional landscape significance
- **Land Development Risks** for each ridgeline, which need to be overcome so as to achieve the vision, maintain Landscape Significance and given direction to Objectives.
- **Objectives** for each ridgeline, which enable the Vision Statement and Landscape Significance for each

The objectives illustrate a balanced approach, so that on one hand they enable reasonable protection and enhancement of each ridgeline for vegetation and well-designed buildings. On the other, they provide for an appropriate degree of development for private properties at the ridgeline. This approach is consistent with the MSS Objectives for housing and neighbourhood character, described at section 5.1.



6.1 Heidelberg to Eaglemont ridgeline landscape statement

Vision

The Heidelberg to Eaglemont ridgeline runs north-south from Macleod through to Ivanhoe. The ridgelines continuous green, dominant treed canopy and natural vegetated appearance will be maintained and improved. Visually recessive buildings will sit below the silhouette of the treed canopy and designed to blend into the ridgeline. This continuity is only punctured by taller development at the core of the Ivanhoe and Heidelberg Activity Centres.

Landscape Significance

The ridgeline has Regional Significance, other than for the lower parts in Ivanhoe that are not visible from abutting municipalities. This significance is supported by the ridgeline's visibility from:

- Areas around the apex of the Diamond Village to Army Barracks ridgelines, 1 to 2km to the east. There is medium visual sensitivity as the viewing distance is short, and covers a small area. This area includes neighbourhood character precincts in MacLeod, Yallambie and Viewbank.
- Areas around the apex of the foothills ridgelines, over 5km to the east. There is lower visual sensitivity. This area includes some neighbourhood character precincts on the east side of the Plenty River in Banyule.
- Areas around the southern sections of Yarra River corridor, predominately over 2km to the south and south-east. There is low visual sensitivity. This area includes neighbourhood character precincts in Heidelberg and Ivanhoe.
- Areas around the apex of a ridgeline in Darebin, over 3km to the west, as well as most areas in-between as the two ridgelines create a valley with Darebin Creek at its low point. There is medium visual sensitivity within the higher areas along the ridgeline in Darebin, with low visual sensitivity to the lower areas sloping down to the Darebin Creek. This area includes residential areas outside Banyule and some neighbourhood character precincts in Banyule at Ivanhoe West, Bellfield and Heidelberg West.

Land Development Risks

Many of the residential properties around the apex of the ridgeline have not been redeveloped for additional dwellings. The existing dwellings sit below the canopy of trees and within a prominent green, treed setting that is visible from other areas. There is a risk that incremental impacts arising from future development will affect this desired setting by:

- Removing trees that contribute to the ridgeline, when new or modified buildings are constructed.
- Not providing space for new canopy trees to grow, when new or modified buildings are constructed
- Allowing the appearance of new dwellings and other buildings that detract from the continuous green, vegetated appearance of the ridgeline.
- Allowing more vehicle crossings along streets and double width crossings that affect existing street trees and opportunities for further planting. The associated increase in vehicle driveways, arising from residential development, may also affect opportunities to protect trees and spaces for planting, in the front setback spaces between dwellings and their front boundary.



- Away from activity centres, enabling the height of new dwellings and other buildings that detract from the continuous, silhouette of the treed canopy at the ridgeline.

There are some instances where the above concerns have occurred at this ridgeline. There are also risks that future tree removal will affect the vision for the ridgeline as well. This includes removal of trees that:

- Already contribute to the green, naturally vegetated appearance of the ridgeline.
- Would be expected to contribute in the future.

Council is able to manage some of these risks because there is a Vegetation Protection Overlay (Schedule 5) in the Banyule Planning Scheme. Also, Council has recently established a Residential Vehicle Crossing Policy to manage impacts for street trees. However the overlay is temporary and Council's Residential Vehicle Crossing Policy is not yet integrated into the planning scheme.

Objectives

This ridgeline runs through *Garden Suburban* neighbourhood character precincts 2 and 3. A Design Objective and Design Responses that would benefit the ridgeline in these precincts may be:

Design Objective	Design Response
Developments on or near ridgelines should sit below the tree canopies, minimise excavation, and enable further tree planting to maintain the scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New dwellings at or near ridgelines should be designed and sited so that cut and fill is minimised and the building sits below the height of trees along the ridgeline. • New buildings at or near ridgelines should have muted colours and tones, and non reflective materials. • Trees and vegetation that contributes to the landscape should be retained. New native or indigenous trees should be planted on or near the ridgeline.

Additional Objectives and supporting Design Responses might also be considered. The additional objectives may help:

- To maintain the pattern of current front setbacks and enable tree planting in front gardens.
- To minimise loss of front garden space, and the dominance of vehicle access, storage facilities and built form as viewed from the street.
- To maintain and strengthen the garden dominated streetscape character and landscaping setting of the precinct.

These objectives would help further promote landscape and tree outcomes that also give benefits for achieving this ridgeline's vision.



6.2 Bundoora to Diamond Village to Army Barracks ridgeline landscape statement

Vision

The Bundoora to Diamond Village to Army Barracks ridgeline runs north-south from Watsonia North through to Heidelberg. The ridgelines continuous green, dominant treed canopy and natural vegetated appearance will be maintained and improved. Visually recessive buildings will sit below the silhouette of the treed canopy and be designed to blend into the ridgeline.

Landscape Significance

The ridgeline has Regional Significance, other than for the lower parts in Heidelberg that are not visible from abutting municipalities. This significance is supported by the ridgeline's visibility from:

- Areas around the northern sections of the Northern Ring Road predominately over 2km away to the north. There is lower visual sensitivity. This area includes neighbourhood character precincts in Greensborough and Bundoora.
- Areas around the apex of the foothills ridgelines, over 3km to the east, as well as most areas in-between as the two ridgelines create a valley with the Plenty River at its low point. There is low visual sensitivity as the viewing distance is far, and covers a small area, with medium visual sensitivity to the lower areas sloping down to the Plenty River. This area includes neighbourhood character precincts in Lower Plenty and Montmorency.
- Areas around the southern sections of Yarra River corridor, predominately over 1km to the south. There is low visual sensitivity. This area includes neighbourhood character precincts in Viewbank and parts of Lower Plenty.
- Areas around the apex of the Heidelberg to Eaglemont Ridgeline, predominately over 1km to the west, as well as most areas in between - as the two ridgelines form a valley. There is low visual sensitivity within the higher areas along the Heidelberg to Eaglemont Ridgeline, with low visual sensitivity to the lower areas sloping down to the Darebin Creek. This area includes neighbourhood character precincts in Rosanna, Macleod and parts of Watsonia.
- Areas around the apex of a ridgeline in Darebin, predominately over 3km to the west, as well as most areas in-between. There is very low visual sensitivity within the higher areas along the ridgeline in Darebin, with very low visual sensitivity to the lower areas sloping down to the Darebin Creek.

Land Development Risks

Many of the residential properties around the apex of the ridgeline have not been redeveloped for additional dwellings. The existing dwellings sit below the canopy of trees and within a prominent green, treed setting that is visible from other areas. There is a risk that incremental impacts arising from future development will affect this desired setting by:

- Removing trees that contribute to the ridgeline, when new or modified buildings are constructed.
- Not providing space for new canopy trees to grow, when new or modified buildings are constructed.



- Allowing the appearance of new dwellings and other buildings that detract from the continuous green, vegetated appearance of the ridgeline.
- Allowing more vehicle crossings along streets and double width crossings that affect existing street trees and opportunities for further planting. The associated increase in vehicle driveways, arising from residential development, may also affect opportunities to protect trees and spaces for planting, in the front setback spaces between dwellings and their front boundary.
- Away from activity centres, enabling the height of new dwellings and other buildings that detract from the continuous, silhouette of the treed canopy at the ridgeline.

There are some instances where the above concerns have occurred on this ridgeline. There are also risks that future tree removal will affect the vision for the ridgeline as well. This includes removal of trees that:

- Already contribute to the green, naturally vegetated appearance of the ridgeline.
- Would be expected to contribute in the future.

Council is able to manage some of these risks because there is a Vegetation Protection Overlay (Schedule 5) in the Banyule Planning Scheme. Also, Council has recently established a Residential Vehicle Crossing Policy to manage impacts for street trees. However the overlay is temporary and Council's Residential Vehicle Crossing Policy is not yet integrated into the planning scheme.

Objectives

This ridgeline runs mainly through *Garden Suburban* neighbourhood precincts 1 and 2 and *Garden Court* precincts 1, 2 and 3. A Design Objective and Design Responses that would benefit the ridgeline in these precincts may be:

Design Objective	Design Response
Developments on or near ridgelines should sit below the tree canopies, minimise excavation, and enable further tree planting to maintain the scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New dwellings at or near ridgelines should be designed and sited so that cut and fill is minimised and the building sits below the height of trees along the ridgeline. • New buildings at or near ridgelines should have muted colours and tones, and non reflective materials. • Trees and vegetation that contributes to the landscape should be retained. New native or indigenous trees should be planted on or near the ridgeline.

Additional Objectives and supporting Design Responses might also be considered. The additional objectives may help:

- To maintain the pattern of current front setbacks and enable tree planting in front gardens.
- To minimise loss of front garden space, and the dominance of vehicle access, storage facilities and built form as viewed from the street.
- To maintain and strengthen the garden dominated streetscape character and landscaping setting of the precinct.

These objectives would help further promote landscape and tree outcomes that also give benefits for achieving this ridgeline's vision.



6.3 Foothills ridgelines landscape statement

Vision

The Foothills ridgeline runs north-south over three separate ridgelines from St Helena through to Lower Plenty. The ridgelines continuous green, dominant treed canopy and natural vegetated appearance will be maintained and improved. Visually recessive buildings will sit below the silhouette of the treed canopy and be designed to blend into the ridgeline.

Landscape Significance

The ridgeline has Regional Significance other than the lower parts that are closer to Lower Plenty in the south. This significance is supported by the ridgeline's visibility from:

- High areas around the northern sections of the Diamond Creek Road predominately over 1km away to the north. There is very low visual sensitivity. This area includes neighbourhood character precincts in St Helena, Eltham North and northern parts of Greensborough.
- Areas around eastern sections of Diamond Creek, over 1km to the east. There is low visual sensitivity as the viewing distance is far, and covers an area with dense vegetation. This area includes neighbourhood character precincts in Briar Hill, Montmorency and parts of Eltham in Banyule.
- Areas around the southern sections of Yarra River corridor, predominately over 1km to the south. There is lower visual sensitivity to the surrounding region beyond Banyule. This area includes neighbourhood character precincts in Lower Plenty.
- Areas around the apex of the Bundoora to Diamond Village Army Barracks Ridgeline, predominately over 1km to the west, as well as most areas in-between as the two ridgelines creates a valley with Plenty River as the low point. There is medium visual sensitivity within the higher areas along the Diamond Village Army Barracks Ridgeline, with medium visual sensitivity to the lower areas sloping down to the Plenty River. This area includes neighbourhood character precincts in Watsonia, MacLeod, Yallambie and Viewbank.
- Areas around the apex of the Heidelberg to Eaglemont Ridgeline, predominately over 3km to the west, as well as most areas in-between the Bundoora to Diamond Village Army Barracks Ridge creates a valley. There is low visual sensitivity within the higher areas along the Heidelberg - Eaglemont Ridgeline, and low visual sensitivity to the lower areas sloping down to the Plenty River. This area includes neighbourhood character precincts in MacLeod, Heidelberg Heights, Rosanna, Heidelberg and Ivanhoe.

Land Development Risks

Many of the residential properties around the apex of the ridgeline have not been redeveloped for additional dwellings. Construction of dwellings on large lots, many of which were built after the 1970s, has enabled tree protection away from building footprints. Also, enough time has gone by so that planted trees by landowners and naturally occurring regrowth can also contribute to the continuous tree canopy above dwellings.

Some original residential properties have been redeveloped for more dwellings. There is a risk that incremental impacts arising from future development will affect the desired setting by:



- Removing trees that contribute to the ridgeline, when new or modified buildings are constructed.
- Not providing space for new canopy trees to grow, when new or modified buildings are constructed.
- Allowing the appearance of new dwellings and other buildings that detract from the continuous green, vegetated appearance of the ridgeline.
- Allowing more vehicle crossings along streets and double width crossings that affect existing street trees and opportunities for further planting. The associated increase in vehicle driveways, arising from residential development, may also affect opportunities to protect trees and spaces for planting, in the front setback spaces between dwellings and their front boundary.
- Away from activity centres, enabling the height of dwellings and other buildings that detract from the continuous, silhouette of the treed canopy at the ridgeline.

There are some instances where the above concerns have occurred on the ridgeline, particularly for the construction of new dwellings. Existing planning scheme controls for Landscape Significance are helping to manage implications for tree removal in this area, although better design guidance is needed for residential development in the affected neighbourhoods. Council's work for a Residential Vehicle Crossing Policy will also help to manage impacts for street trees.

Objectives

This ridgeline goes mainly through *Semi Bush* and *Bush Garden* neighbourhood character precincts. A Design Objective and Design Responses that would benefit the ridgelines in these precincts may be:

Design Objective	Design Response
Developments on or near ridgelines should sit below the tree canopies, minimise excavation, and enable further tree planting to maintain the scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New dwellings at or near ridgelines should be designed and sited so that cut and fill is minimised and the building sits below the height of trees along the ridgeline. • New buildings at or near ridgelines should have muted colours and tones, and non reflective materials. • Trees and vegetation that contributes to the landscape should be retained. New native or indigenous trees should be planted on or near the ridgeline.

This ridgeline also affects the *Bush Woodland* neighbourhood character precinct, in Lower Plenty. A Design Objective and Design Responses that would benefit the ridgelines in this precinct may be:

Design Objective	Design Response
Developments on or near ridgelines should sit below the top of the ridgeline and tree canopies, minimise excavation, and enable further tree planting to maintain the scenic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New dwellings at or near ridgelines should be designed and sited so that cut and fill is minimised and rooftops are set below the top of the ridgeline. • New buildings near ridgelines should have muted colours and tones, and non reflective materials. • Trees and vegetation that contributes to the landscape should be retained. New native or indigenous trees should be planted on or near the ridgeline.

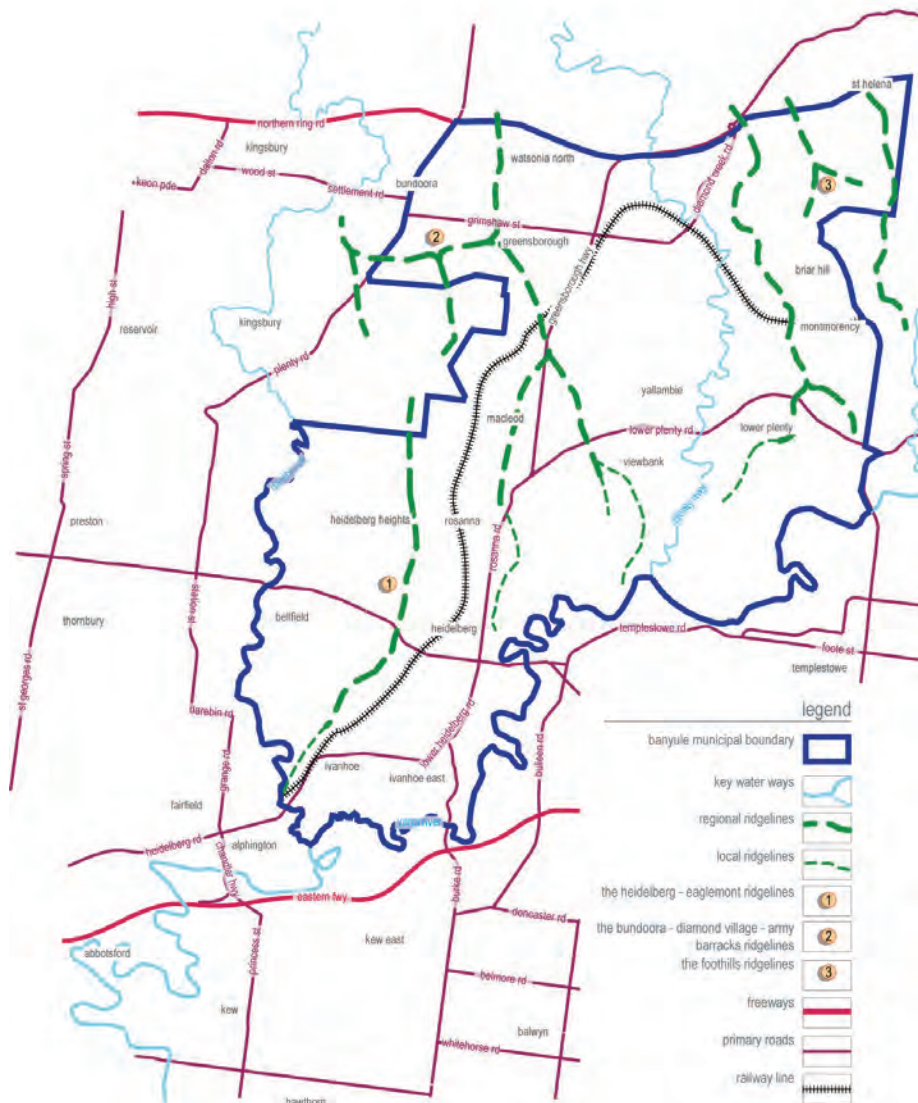


Additional Objectives and supporting Design Responses might also be considered. The additional objectives may help:

- To maintain the pattern of current front setbacks and enable tree planting in front gardens.
- To minimise loss of front garden space, and the dominance of vehicle access, storage facilities and built form as viewed from the street.
- To maintain and strengthen the garden dominated streetscape character and landscaping setting of the precinct.

These objectives would help further promote landscape and tree outcomes that also give benefits for achieving this ridgeline's vision.

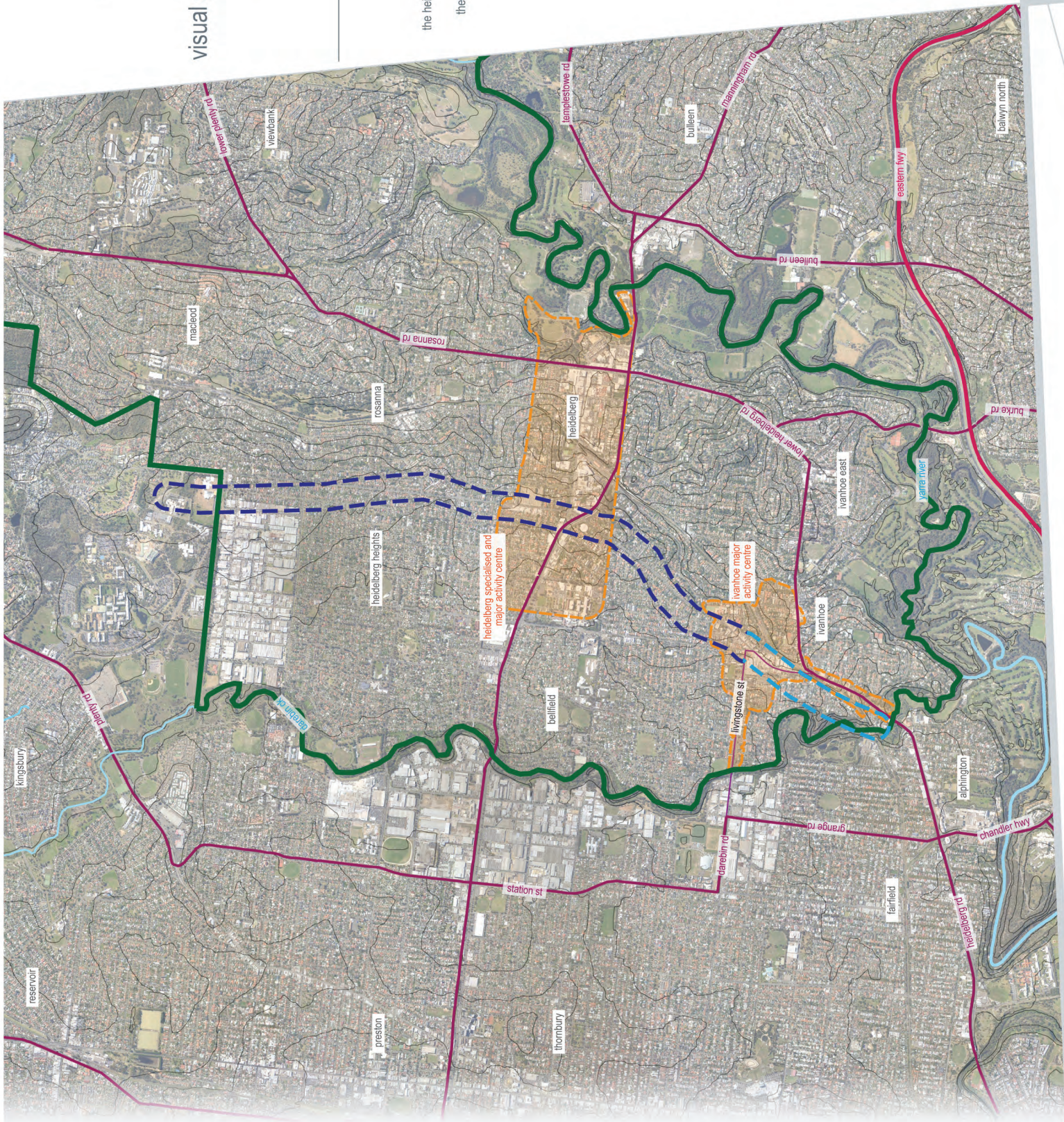
The following plan shows the regional and local significance components of the assessed ridgelines.



The following plans show more detail for each ridgeline.

Figure 8

visual assessment of ridgelines in banyule the heidelberg-eaglemont ridgelines



project ref: 2010.640
 dwg no.: LCD-008
 scale: 1:30,000@A3
 date: 12.06.12
 revision: B



figure 9

visual assessment of ridgelines in banyule the bundoora-diamond village army barracks ridgelines

- legend
-  banyule municipal boundary
 -  key water ways
 -  the bundoora-diamond village army barracks regional ridgeline
 -  the bundoora-diamond village army barracks local ridgeline
 -  freeways
 -  primary roads
 -  contours at 10m intervals
 -  activity centre

project ref: 2010.640
 dwg no.: LCD-009
 scale: 1:30,000@A3
 date: 30.05.12
 revision: B

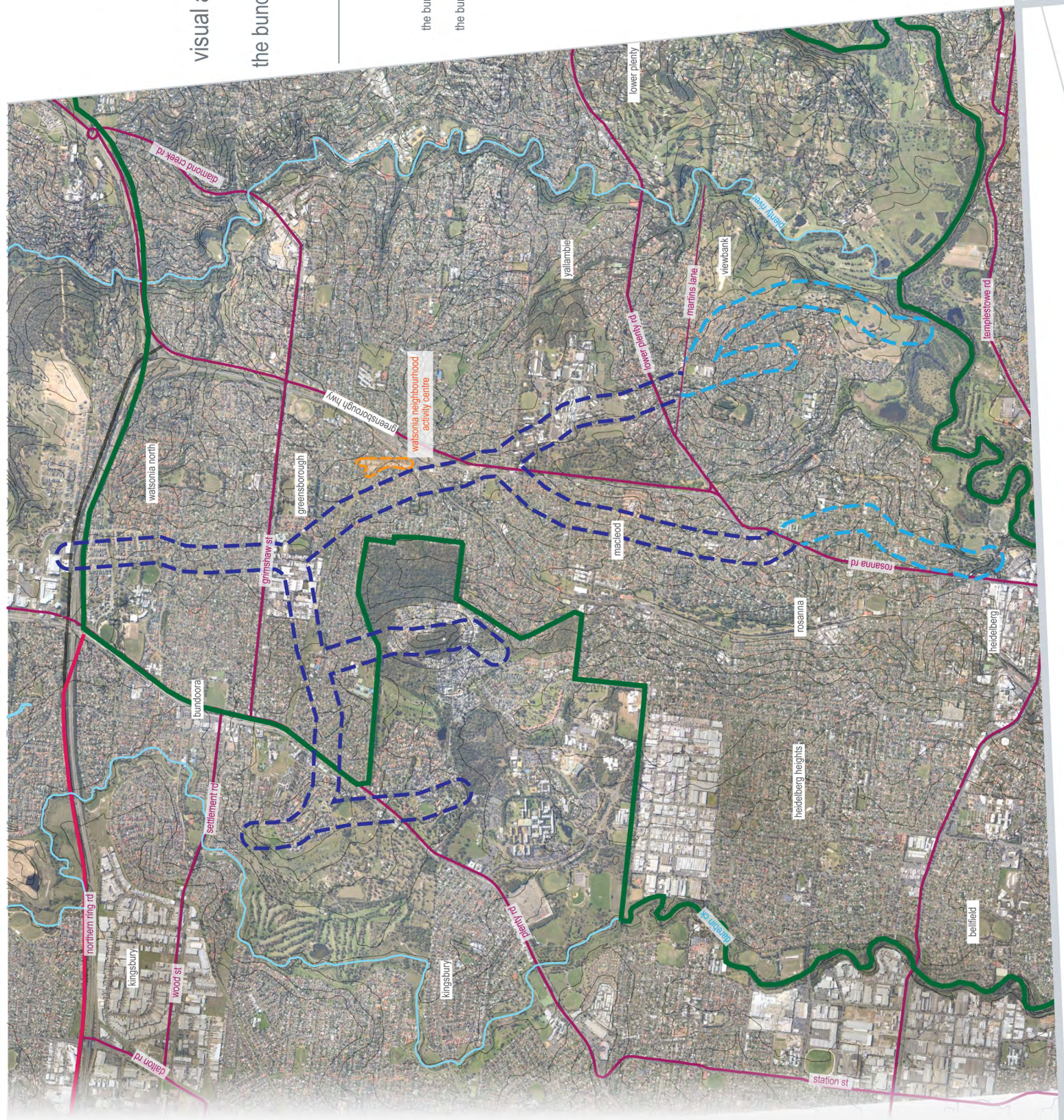
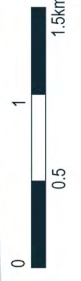
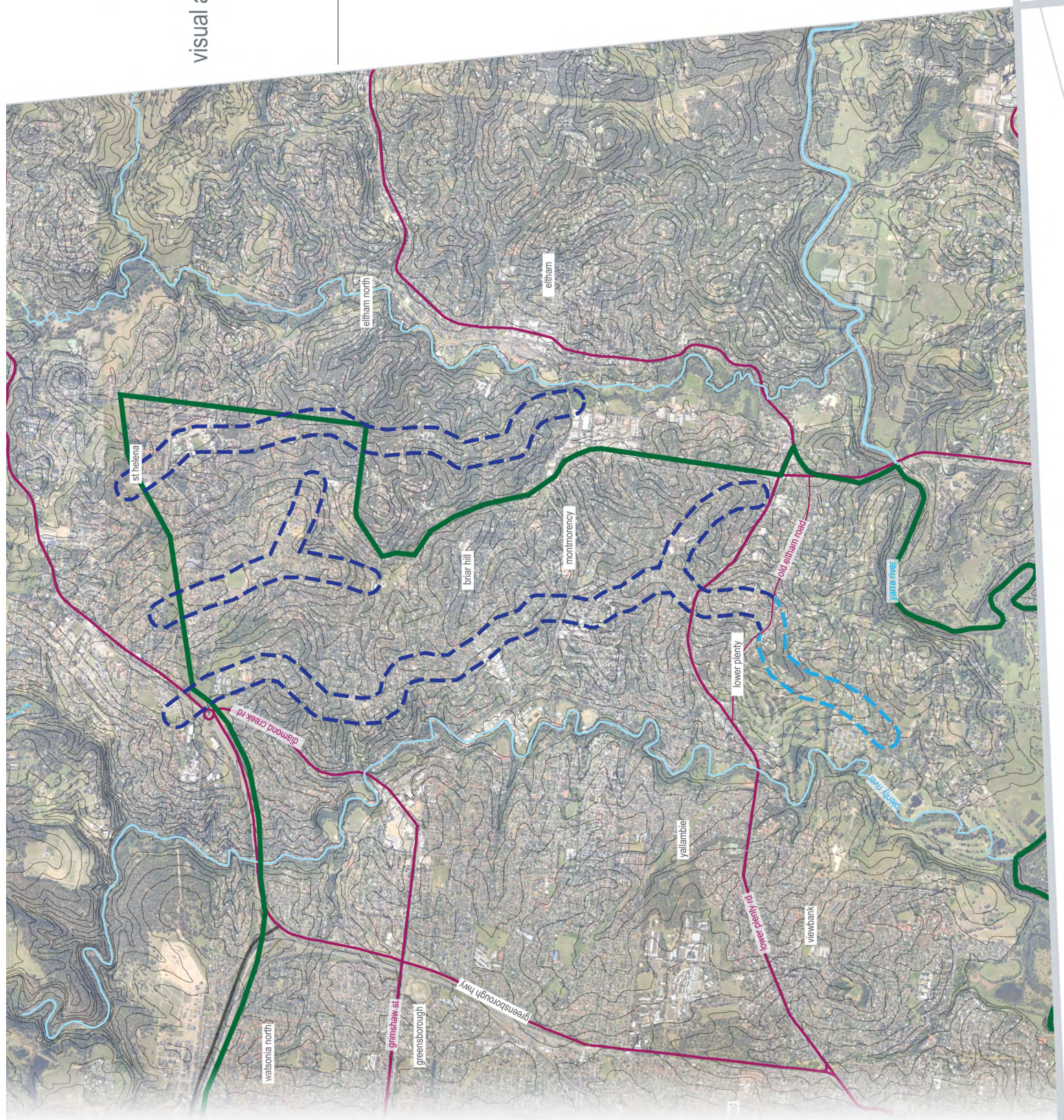


figure 10

visual assessment of ridgelines in banyule the foothills ridgelines



project ref: 2010.640
 dwg no.: LCD-010
 scale: 1:30,000@A3
 date: 12.06.12
 revision: B

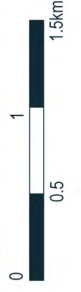


figure 11



Recommendations

This study has established an understanding for Banyule's ridgelines. It has shown that ridgelines have landscape significance. Much of this significance exists on privately owned land, along and near the apex of each ridgeline. The greatest threat to the green, treed landscape character of these ridgelines is inappropriate residential development and tree removal.

Recommendations for improving the Banyule Planning Scheme are:

- **Priority 1:** Improving existing local policies and overlays
- **Priority 2:** Updating the MSS, new Overlays for the ridgelines and a new local planning policy for trees.

7.1 Priority 1: Improving existing local planning policies and overlays

Local Planning Policies - Residential Neighbourhood Character Policy at Clause 22.02

This Residential Neighbourhood Character Policy applies to all development in the Rural Conservation, Residential 1 and Low Density Residential Zones. It expires after March 2013. The policy gives objectives for development to respect the desired future character of neighbourhood precincts. It also gives key threats, design objectives and responses for each precinct.

Whilst the existing Local Planning Policy benefits the ridgelines, with Design Objectives and Design Responses for trees and landscaping, it is necessary to give clearer direction for preferred development around the ridgelines. This should be done in a permanent Residential Neighbourhood Character Policy and any extended interim policy, by updating:

- Statements of desired future character for precincts with ridgelines, to consider the **Visions** in section 6 of this report.
- Issues for neighbourhoods, to consider the **Land Development Risks** in Section 6 of this report.
- **Design Objectives** and **Design Responses**, to consider those in Section 6 of this report.

Overlays - Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 5 (Substantial Tree Protection Area)

This overlay looks to retain, protect and promote further planting of trees as a significant component of local identity and neighbourhood character. The overlay was put into the scheme in November 2010 and expires after 30 November 2012.

The overlay affects some residential areas on the west of the Plenty River and includes the Heidelberg to Eaglemont Ridgeline and the Bundoora to Diamond Village to Army Barracks Ridgeline.

This schedule could be refined for any learnings acquired since it came into effect and made permanent as it is effectively tailored to protecting trees and enabling replanting for taller trees. Current



planning permit triggers included the removal of any trees higher than 12 metres or a tree with a trunk more than 400mm in diameter, measured at 1400mm above the base of the tree.

Other Overlays - VPOs and ESOs

Several other VPOs and ESOs affect land at the east side of the Plenty River, where the foothills ridgelines can be found. These include:

- VPO - Schedule 1 for Plenty River East Area
- ESO - Schedule 1 for Yarra River, Plenty river and Darebin Creek
- ESO - Schedule 3 for Sites of Botanical, Zoological and Habitat Significance
- ESO - Schedule 4 for Significant Trees and Areas of Vegetation

Collectively, these overlays go some way to protecting ridgelines. However a future review of the Banyule Planning Scheme might uncover opportunities to improve consistency between a final VPO5 and these other, separate overlays. In the interim these existing overlays should be retained and a review of them only done after interim VPO5 has been made permanent and a permanent neighbourhood character policy has been established.

A Design and Development Overlay, Schedule 8 for the Plenty River East Neighbourhood Character, applies to most of the Foothills ridgelines. Its objectives promote development to stay below the tree canopy in this area. Along with VPO1, the Foothills ridgelines already have effective planning scheme protection. Consequently the focus for any overlay changes should be for VPO5.

7.2 Priority 2: Updating the Municipal Strategic Statement, New Overlays for Ridgelines and a New Local Planning Policy for Trees

Updated Municipal Strategic Statement

The MSS makes no specific reference to ridgelines. It does encourage the protection and general enhancement of natural environments. It also flags implications for a changing built environment. Whilst these are important, and help to support existing planning scheme provisions, there is an opportunity to improve Clause 21.05 Natural Environment for Key Issues, Objectives and Strategies for Banyule's ridgelines. This might be done by considering the following:

Key Issues

Banyule has regionally and locally significant ridgelines. The green, tree dominated landscape character of these ridgelines needs to be protected and improved.

Banyule's significant ridgelines, outside the core of Activity Areas, are under threat from buildings that dominate their landscape and tree removal that diminishes the tree dominated appearance of these urbanised landscapes.



Objective for Topography and Ridgelines

To protect and improve regional and local significant ridgelines.

Strategies to achieve the objective

Ensure dwellings respect the undulating character of the area.

Ensure dwellings do not dominate the landscape or ridgelines by following the contours of the land.

Ensure that buildings and extensions do not dominate the streetscape and ridgelines, and sit well beneath the tree canopy and are sympathetic to the landscape context.

Maintain and improve the tree dominated ridgelines outside the core of Activity Areas.

New Overlays

The three ridgelines each have regional significance. This significance would be given greater effect in the Banyule Planning Scheme by introducing a new **ESO or SLO** for each ridgeline. The local significance of each ridgeline would be enabled by achieving priorities 1 and 2.

The definition of any ESO or SLO should ensure land at and around the apex of every regionally significant ridgeline is defined. The overlay should include those properties with vegetation that contributes to the ridgelines green, treed appearance. This will differ for each ridgeline, as a starting point it is suggested that a 100m buffer be used on each side of a ridgeline's apex, to capture those properties that are close to a ridgeline's apex.

New Policies

Creation of a Local Planning Policy for Tree Protection, Planting and Landscaping should be considered. Such a policy might bring together the various tree and landscaping provisions that exist in various overlays in the Banyule Planning Scheme.