

GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in the Greater Dandenong Green Wedge

Introduction

The City of Greater Dandenong respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land that makes up the Greater Dandenong Green Wedge, being the Wurundjeri, Bunurong and Boon Wurrung, their spirits and ancestors.

Throughout Victoria, even in the most intensively developed regions such as Greater Dandenong, the landscape holds the imprint of thousands of generations of Aboriginal people.

Within the Green Wedge itself, there are a total of 92 registered sites comprising 77 scarred trees, 13 artefact scatters, a retired site and a sub-surface cultural deposit comprising an earth feature – and there are over 500 registered Aboriginal sites within a 15km radius of the Green Wedge.

Aboriginal Heritage Act, 2006 and its implications

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (the Act) and *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007* (the Regulations) provide protection in Victoria for **all Aboriginal places, objects and human remains** regardless of their inclusion on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register or whether they are located on public or private land.

The Act requires that the discovery of Aboriginal cultural heritage places or objects on any public or private land in Victoria must be reported to the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (OAAV).

If you believe you may have found an Aboriginal place or object on your land you can find out what to do by visiting the page [Reporting a possible Aboriginal place or object](#). There are substantial penalties under the Act for knowingly undertaking an activity which harms or is likely to harm Aboriginal cultural heritage.

If suspected human remains are discovered, you must contact the Victoria Police and the State Coroner's Office immediately. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the remains are Aboriginal, the State Control Centre should be contacted on 1300 888 544.

Most of the Greater Dandenong Green Wedge is considered a cultural sensitivity area, meaning that a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) may need to be prepared and approved for certain development proposals.

GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

What is a CHMP?

A CHMP is a written report, prepared by a [Cultural Heritage Advisor](#), containing the results of an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed activity on Aboriginal cultural heritage. It outlines measures to be taken before, during and after an activity in order to manage and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in the activity area.

It is important to note that Council cannot issue statutory approvals (such as planning permits), for certain activities without first receiving an approved CHMP.

What types of sites are found in the Greater Dandenong Green Wedge?

The Greater Dandenong Green Wedge and the area around it has been subject to thorough and in-depth cultural heritage investigations over a period of years. As a result we know that:

- scarred trees and stone artefact scatters are the most likely Aboriginal place types to be located in the area
- the Scarred trees in the area are generally River Red Gums
- higher sandy rises within the Green Wedge are particularly sensitive and have a high potential to contain stone artefacts
- **Aboriginal cultural heritage sites may be up to 35,000 years old**
- the further from creeks, swamps and stone resources, the lower the density and frequency of artefact scatters
- stone artefacts are likely to be found at varying densities across the Green Wedge.

Links to online cultural heritage resources

The Department of Premier and Cabinet, which encompasses the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (OAAV) has a large amount of information available on its website that can be used by landowners.

The following 'heritage tools' link <http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/aboriginal-affairs/heritage-tools> will take you to a webpage giving information on the Act and the Regulations, with details on what a CHMP is, mapping showing areas of Cultural Sensitivity across Victoria and guides, forms and other information about Aboriginal Heritage Management.

Aboriginal Scarred Tree



Local indigenous communities and organisations

As there is currently no Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) over this area, all three Traditional Owners must be considered before a CHMP can be approved.

Due to there being no RAP, any CHMP for this area will be evaluated by OAAV. Please note that a planning permit **cannot** be issued until there is a completed and evaluated CHMP. As

GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

part of this evaluation, OAAV will seek the opinion of the three groups listed above.

Due to this, it is **strongly advisable** to consult with RAP applicants before you commence your CHMP, whose details are found below:

Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation at <http://www.bunuronglc.org/>

Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council at <https://wurundjeri.com.au/>

Boon Wurrung Foundation at <http://www.boonwurrung.org/>

These organisations also may be able to assist with:

- providing advice on cultural matters
- providing general advice on Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) requirements including a preliminary assessment of the level of cultural heritage assessments required
- undertaking site inspections for land owners within the Greater Dandenong Green Wedge
- undertaking cultural heritage inductions
- providing education opportunities to local schools
- providing display materials at community / education events. These may include stone artefacts, wooden artefacts, old photographs of the area and information about Aboriginal life within the area and cultural practices.

Further information

There is a range of information available, as well as a useful heritage management tools by searching online for the 'Department of Premier and Cabinet' webpage and following the links to the Aboriginal Affairs Heritage Tools page.

Further information can also be found in [Council's Green Wedge Management Plan, December 2014](#) and at [Appendix H](#).

Artefact scatters of different sizes and shapes



GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Glossary:

Artefact scatter: A surface scatter of cultural material. Aboriginal artefact scatters are defined as being the occurrence of five or more items of cultural material within an area of about 100m² (Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, 1993). They are often the only physical remains of places where people have lived, camped, prepared and eaten meals and worked.

Registered Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Places:

These are the Aboriginal sites registered on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR).

Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP): RAPs are the voice of Aboriginal people in the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. RAPs have responsibilities under the Act relating to the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage, including:

- evaluating [Cultural Heritage Management Plans](#)
- providing advice on applications for Cultural Heritage Permits
- making decisions about [Cultural Heritage Agreements](#)
- providing advice or application for interim or ongoing [Protection Declarations](#).

Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP):

Assesses whether a project will have any impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage values and, as appropriate, outlines management recommendations. A CHMP is a written report containing the results of the assessment and recommendations for measures to be taken before, during and after an activity to manage and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in the area.

Scarred trees: Aboriginal derived scars are distinct for naturally occurring scars by their oval or symmetrical shape and occasional presence of steel, or more rarely, stone axe marks on the scar's surface. Generally, scars occur on River Red Gums. The size and shape of the scar depended on the use for which the bark was intended. For example, bark was used for a variety of dishes and containers, shields, canoes and construction of huts.

Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register: A list of all registered Aboriginal cultural heritage places (Aboriginal Places) in Victoria.

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