

Landscape Assessment Study: Consultation Summary Report

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Acknowledgement of Country

Mitchell Shire Council acknowledges the Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Mitchell Shire.

We pay our respect to their rich cultures and to Elders, past, present, and emerging, as well as other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live, work and play in the area.



Executive Summary

The purpose of this Consultation Summary Report is to record the community engagement activities conducted during development of the Landscape Assessment Study (LAS) between February 2021 and April 2024.

This Consultation Summary Report also provides a high-level summary of submissions received and matters raised during drop-in sessions and other meetings. A detailed assessment of and response to submissions can be found in the Council Report seeking adoption and implementation of the LAS.

The LAS seeks to implement new and amend existing Significant Landscape Overlays and update local planning policy. This is to assist in managing development and the amenity of Mitchell Shire's significant landscapes.

The LAS comprises three Volumes:

- Landscape Assessment Study Volume 1: Landscape Character
- Landscape Assessment Study Volume 2: Landscape Significance
- Landscape Assessment Study Volume 3: Landscape Protection and Management

Council separately exhibited and sought community input on all three Volumes of the LAS. Consultation was conducted in accordance with the Mitchell Shire Council Community Engagement Policy 2021.

Key Figures

Between February 2021 and April 2024, over the three stages of development of the LAS, Council:

- Received 110 submissions
- Directly notified 1,388 affected properties via post
- Conducted 16 community drop-in sessions, with approximately 140 attendees across all sessions
 - o Six of these sessions were combined with the related Rural Land and Activities Review drop-in sessions early in the project
- Held one Interested Parties Group meeting and several direct meetings with community groups
- Held two briefings with the Mitchell Environmental Advisory Group
- At all three stages the project was advertised in all three local papers
- Engaging Mitchell website and hard copy materials available at all customer service centres during all three stages

Landscape Assessment Study Volume 1: Landscape Character

Volume 1 of the LAS provided background data, such as landscape character types, and sought early community input of important landscape areas to inform Volumes 2 and 3 of the Study.

Volume 1 Consultation

Volume 1 of the LAS was placed on consultation with the Rural Land and Activities Review (RLAR) between February and June 2021. A dedicated information sheet was available for the community to review, with a questionnaire. Consultation of Volume 1 of the LAS with the RLAR consisted of:

- Advertising in all local papers
- Engaging Mitchell Website
- Information Sheet, Questionnaire and Hard Copies available at all Customer Service Centres
- Drop-in sessions held at Tooborac, Tallarook, Pyalong, Waterford Park and Reedy Creek throughout March 2021
- A direct mailout to all landowners in the Farming Zone (3,660 letters). This was primarily for the RLAR however it did raise awareness of the LAS
- Additional drop-in sessions held in Tooborac and Tallarook in May 2021
- Approximately 63 attendees were recorded at all drop-in sessions
- A presentation was provided on the LAS to the Mitchell Environment Advisory Committee (MEAC)
- Known interest groups BEAM, KADRRA and Wallan Environment Group were directly notified of the project
- Direction notification to relevant State Authorities, including Parks Victoria, Catchment Management Authorities, CFA, registered aboriginal parties and Heritage Victoria

Volume 1 Submissions

Council received 18 submissions to Volume 1 of the LAS, including submissions from MEAC, BEAM and the Wallan Environment Group. All submissions supported the project and provided advice and input into landscapes that are most significant to the community. This aided in targeting investigation areas for Volume 2 of the Study. This is considered a high number of submissions for a project in early stages of consultation and provided valuable input.

Landscape Assessment Study Volume 2: Landscape Significance

Volume 2 of LAS provided the methodology and criteria for identifying significant landscapes and identified nine (9) areas for investigation for the Significant Landscape Overlay.

Volume 2 Consultation

Volume 2 of the LAS was placed on consultation from 21 February 2023 to 6 April 2023. Consultation of Volume 2 of LAS consisted of:

- All previous submitters directly notified
- Direct mailout to all properties nominated as regional significance (999 properties) which are most likely to be proposed for a Significant Landscape Overlay
- Engaging Mitchell project website
- Information Sheet and Hard Copies available at all Customer Service Centres
- Drop-in sessions held in Pyalong, Wallan, Kilmore and Seymour
- Attended Seymour Alternative Agricultural Expo
- Newspaper advertising in all three local papers
- Direct notification to relevant State Authorities, including Parks Victoria, Catchment Management Authorities, CFA, registered aboriginal parties and Heritage Victoria

Volume 2 Submissions

Council received 63 submissions to Volume 2 of the LAS:

- 22 submitters support the LAS:
 - o State Authority support from Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Goulburn Valley Water, Victorian Planning Authority, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Goulburn Murray Water
 - o Nine (9) from affected landowners
 - o Four (4) from unaffected landowners within the Shire
 - o Three (3) from residents in Dropmore in Murrindindi Shire
 - o One (1) from the Wallan Environment Group
- 18 submissions from property owners who oppose any new planning controls
- Nine (9) submissions relate to the existing Significant Landscape Overlay covering Monument Hill and the Kilmore Historic Outdoor Recreation Precinct and vary in terms of being supportive or opposing
- The remaining 14 submissions are general in nature with some:
 - o having already been resolved,
 - o some seeking further detail which will become available later in the process and
 - o others raising site-specific matters but not outlining overall support or objection to the project.

Approximately 80 residents attended drop-in sessions, with approximately 50 residents at the Pyalong session. At the Pyalong session the key points of discussion with the community were the impact of the Significant Landscape Overlay on farming operations.

The submissions received and discussions held during drop-in sessions, particularly concerns regarding the impact of new Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule planning provisions on farming operations, strongly informed the final stage of the LAS project.

Landscape Assessment Study Volume 3: Landscape Protection and Management

Volume 3 of the LAS identified two new areas for application of the Significant Landscape Overlay:

- Granitic Uplands (Pyalong and Tallarook areas)
- Mount Piper, Broadford
- Extend the existing Significant Landscape Overlay at Tallarook to Cherry Tree Ranges and Trawool Valley

The investigation extents from Volume 2 of the LAS were refined to proposed Significant Landscape Overlay extents with a reduction in the number of affected properties lowering from 999 to 389.

Volume 3 also provides recommendations for existing Significant Landscape Overlay extents, proposed Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule provisions and Local Policy recommendations.

Volume 3 Consultation and Drop-in Session Feedback

Volume 3 of the LAS was placed on consultation from 31 October 2023 to 15 December 2023. Consultation of Volume 3 of LAS consisted of:

- All previous submitters directly notified
- Direct mailout to all properties nominated for the Significant Landscape Overlay (389 properties)
- Engaging Mitchell project website;
- Information Sheet and Hard Copies available at all Customer Service Centres
- Drop-in sessions held in Tallarook, Pyalong and Kilmore
- MEAC presentation
- Newspaper advertising in all three local papers
- Direct notification to relevant State Authorities, including Parks Victoria, Catchment Management Authorities, CFA, registered aboriginal parties and Heritage Victoria

Throughout December 2023 an affected landowners meeting was held in Pyalong and a meeting with KADRRA was held.

In April 2024 an information sheet providing an update on the project was sent to all submitters and a final drop-in session in Pyalong was held to advise the community of the Council Officer response to submissions and next steps for the project.

Volume 3 Submissions and Drop-in Session Feedback

Council received 31 submissions to the Volume 3 of the LAS:

- Three (3) State Authorities support the LAS: Coliban Water, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority. Goulburn Murray Water advised they have reviewed LAS Volume 3 materials and do not offer any comment on the project
- The Wallan Environment Group, BEAM and KADRRA support the project and request changes, including additional areas are included
- The Kilmore Cricket and Recreation Reserve request updates to the Significant Landscape Overlay that applies to the Kilmore Historic Outdoor Recreation Precinct
- 11 community/resident submitters object to or are concerned about the LAS and application of the Significant Landscape Overlay:
 - o Four (4) submissions outright object to the LAS and application of the Significant Landscape Overlay
 - o Five (5) submissions are considered partially resolved as some requested changes to Planning Provisions have been agreed to or concerns raised have been directly addressed
- Six (6) supportive community/resident submitters support the LAS:
 - o Three (3) from affected landowners
 - o One (1) submitter requests the Significant Landscape Overlay is applied to their property and surrounds
 - o Several of the supportive submissions request additional areas are added to the Significant Landscape Overlay Extent
- Two (2) submitters request that the Significant Landscape Overlay is reduced on their property to higher ridgeline areas and one (1) submitter requests it is removed entirely from their property.
- Two (2) submitters from outside Mitchell Shire request changes to the Significant Landscape Overlay that applies to the Kilmore Historic Outdoor Recreation Precinct

Approximately 30 residents attended the three drop-in sessions in 2023, with 15 attendees in Pyalong. A further 19 residents attended the affected landowners meeting in Pyalong in 2023. At drop-in sessions and the affected landowners meeting Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule provisions and their effect on ongoing farming operations were the key discussion point.

At the Kilmore drop-in session and during the KADRRA meeting updates to provisions for the Significant Landscape Overlay on the Kilmore Historic Recreation Precinct were discussed. MEAC during their briefing indicated support for the project and did not provide a submission. Approximately 10 residents attended the final 2024 Pyalong drop-in session.

In response to submissions and feedback several updates to Significant Landscape Overlay planning provisions were made to ensure reduced impact on farming operations. Minor updates to the Significant Landscape Overlay provisions for the Kilmore Historic Recreation Precinct are proposed. No changes to the extent of the Significant Landscape Overlay are proposed. A detailed assessment of and response to submissions can be found in the Council Report seeking adoption and implementation of the LAS.