

HAMILTON PARK

COMMON LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

UPDATE 2026

To be read in conjunction with:

Hamilton Park Common Land Management Zones MAPS

- Overview - page 44 this document

Enlargements:

- South(insert website link)
- North.....(insert website link)

August 2026

PURPOSE:

To provide the basis for sound land management of all land owned by the Hamilton Park Co-operative Ltd, known as the Common Land.

AIMS:

1. To manage the Common Land as a **community amenity** for Hamilton Park residents and their visitors
2. To manage the Common Land to **minimise the ignition and escape of fire**
3. To **enhance the quality of the natural environment** and manage any threats

Approved by the Board of Management, August 2026

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**NB voluntary contributions*

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Photographs in this document were taken by Jan Osmotherly or Glen Scholfield, Osfield Consultants within Hamilton Park, unless otherwise acknowledged.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Hamilton Park Co-operative Inc acknowledges the Bangerang people as the traditional custodians of the land upon which we live. We acknowledge and respect Elders past and present and welcome all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to our community.

FOREWORD

The common lands of Hamilton Park contain some unique wooded areas and grasslands and a diversity of flora and fauna which contribute to making this a great place to live. As the custodians an updated plan has been prepared for the management of these areas.

This plan sets out the objectives and guidelines which will be used to protect and conserve the parks unique natural environment. It recognises the value and importance of involving the community to ensure that the area is protected for all to enjoy well into the future.

Many people have contributed to the review of this plan and we would like to acknowledge their interest, their skills, but most of all we would like to acknowledge their passion for the environment and the enormous amount of unpaid time given to this task.

Fire is a constant concern but is also tempered by a love for the environment in which we live. As part of the 2020 review, much consultation was undertaken with residents who directly bordered bushland areas. Clear details on management of these Buffer Zones were agreed on to help mitigate the fire risk.

Periodically 'cultural burns' (cool burns) will be conducted to reduce fine fuel load, enhance native vegetation and protect native wildlife.

The board of Hamilton Park Co-Operative is pleased to formally adopt this plan and we encourage you to read and value the efforts made to ensure that this area is preserved for all into the future.

Hamilton Park Co-Operative Board
August 2026



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ACRONYMNS

CaLP Act = Catchment and Land Protection Act, Victoria, 1994.

CFA = Country Fire Authority, Victoria

DEECA = Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Victoria

DELWP = Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning, Victoria

EVC = Ecological Vegetation Class

RCOW = Rural City of Wangaratta

INTRODUCTION

Hamilton Park (HP) is a co-operative residential community developed in the mid 1970s.

The community now consists of over 100 houses with 15 hectares of Common Land. This consists of remnant bushland (50%), native grasslands (35%) and grassy parkland (15%).

The Common Land is owned by Hamilton Park Co-operative Ltd and managed by the Board on behalf of all residents. General conditions of use are consistent with Rural City of Wangaratta (RCOW) local laws for public parks and bushland reserves.

Hamilton Park is located at the foot of the Warby Ranges. It comes under a Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) which is a statewide local government guide for the development of land, design and construction of dwellings and the implementation of bushfire protection measures. Fire Authorities have assessed HP and surrounding areas as having VERY HIGH bushfire risk.

The Common Land bushland is a valuable natural asset classified as ENDANGERED on both National and State lists. Hamilton Park Co-operative Ltd has a legal responsibility to protect and maintain its high conservation value.

The first Common Land Management Plan was adopted by the Board in 2014. It was designed specifically for the HP Common Land following site assessments by CFA and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) in 2010 -12. Follow-up site assessments were carried out for the 2020 review. Updates to the document have been made for the 2026 review.

The Plan outlines 'agreed standards' established to guide management actions designed to minimise fire risk yet also avoid negative impacts on native vegetation and wildlife. It is also important that the Common Land, as a community amenity, is managed with attention to the area's unique aesthetic values and accessibility for a wide cross section of ages, interests and physical abilities.

A major outcome of the assessment process was the discovery that most management actions designed to reduce fire fuel hazard also assist in maintaining healthy native vegetation. Where differences lie, workable compromises have been reached.

This Plan provides a sound basis for management activities.

The Plan should be reviewed at least every 5 years as it is dealing with living, dynamic systems in a changing climate.

**MANAGEMENT
ACTIONS DESIGNED
TO REDUCE FIRE FUEL
HAZARD ALSO ASSIST
IN MAINTAINING
HEALTHY NATIVE
VEGETATION**

1. LAND MANAGEMENT

1.1 LAND TYPES

The Common Land of Hamilton Park consists of five different land management types.

Each land type is divided into different zones reflecting individual management requirements.

Management requirements may change over time for some zones.

BUSHLAND

Description

Dark green on map

- Area of approx. 7 hectares
- 6 separate patches of bushland, divided into 14 different management zones
- Described as '**remnant**' bushland because it has not been planted
- Consists of indigenous species remaining from original vegetation present at settlement

Management

- **Organise regular weeding** of garden escapee shrubs and introduced invasive grasses
- **Protect from soil disturbance** eg. bike tracks/jumps, digging, soil removal, wheel ruts
- **Protect from dumping** of dirt, rubble or garden waste
- **Enhance** with eco-thinning of seedling Euc blakelyi and periodic cool burns
- **Check for rabbit burrows** regularly - dig out all branches to remove breeding chamber
- **Monitor** in late spring for leafy fallen branches **& organise removal** of any 'fine' fire fuel

NATIVE GRASSLANDS

Outstanding diversity and variety in native ground flora species can be found in Zones: 40 & 41. These are some of the best examples in NE Victoria of the diversity of species that can be found in native grasslands.

Yellow on map

Description

- Area of approx. 4 hectares, 16 different zones
- Relatively **free of weedy** grasses & small broadleaf plants
- **16 different native grass** species have been identified ...so far
- Some Native Grassland zones have up to 50% of fragile ground cover - **mosses, lichens**
These areas are **low in fire fuel** and provide spaces for native lilies and orchids to grow in between the sparse tufts of native grasses.

Management

- **Enhance species diversity** with cool burns and reintroduce depleted species eg. Kangaroo grass
- Aim to **maintain weed free** by minimising disturbance to the ground. Special challenges are likely to be: Paspalum, Pigeon grass, Kikuyu and Capeweed.
- Control invasive weeds as soon as noticed with species specific **herbicide spot-spray**
- **Continual mowing will weaken** native plants and favour establishment of weedy species
- **Can be mowed once a year** early summer just before Fire Danger Period is declared

Specific Native Grasslands

- i. **Scattered woodland trees: Zones 32, 33, 37, 38, & 42** have very sparse native grass.
 - **Mowing is not essential**, leave if possible. Seasonal variations will occur
 - Annual weedy grasses may grow immediately under some trees, **whipper- snip** when seed stalks have run up, but before seed set (Sept – early Oct) if possible
 - **Aim to conserve native grasses and control weedy grasses**
- ii. **No mowing** is required on the zones noted below as it would de-grade the native vegetation:
 - **The Orchid Patch: Zone 28** north of the Sports Hub - an open area with a relatively bare surface. Delicate species include: native lilies, orchids, mosses, sundews, pea shrubs and thin native grasses.
 - **Dam banks: Zones 29, 35 & 36**, steep banks where local native species have re-established since the dams were built in the 1970s.
Check **walking tracks around the top** of these dam banks – mowing may be required in high growth years - in early summer.
Whipper-snipping may be required once a year (Oct-Nov) on **Zone 36** and the south bank of **Zone 29** in high growth years, targeting weedy grasses eg Wild Oats.
- iii. **Swale drains: Zones 30 and 31** feature wetland grasses.
 - **Cut only in more abundant seasons** - in most seasons it is not required
 - If required, do so **once a year** in early summer just before Fire Danger Period is declared, after seed set
 - Mow or whipper-snip no lower than 100mm/4 inches

GRASSY PARKLAND

Description

Light green on map

- Area of approx. 2.5 hectares
- 11 different zones, identified because they are mainly introduced grasses (compared to the native grasslands), lie under powerlines or provide open recreational space
- Composed of many **non-native grasses and plants** e.g. Winter grass, Silver grass, Rye grass, Paspalum, Capeweed, Plantain, Sorrel, Corkscrew, Kikuyu
- Some zones have a bit of native grass and other ground layer native plants remaining
- Rehabilitation to restore native species may be possible in some of these zones

Management

- **Mow** as required to minimize fire fuel, suppress weeds and maintain a neat parkland appearance
- Aim to provide a safe, accessible open space for recreational activities
- Maintain neat **mown area around the bus shelter** on the Henley/Warby Range Roads corner for the safety of students.
- Manage areas to rehabilitate or enhance native species where possible
- **Discourage vehicle access** to prevent tracks forming or tyre ruts when wet

DISTURBED

There are 3 areas which reflect significant disturbances in past years.

Light pink on map

- **Zone 44 is a large heap of subsoil from the construction of the 2 nearby dams.**
 - Some native grasses are establishing, some trees have been planted
 - **Check** for troublesome weeds especially kikuyu
 - An opportunity for ‘adventure play’ such as dirt bike riding tracks
 - A potential dumping site for clean fill from works carried out in HP
 - Temporary depot for storage of materials for Common Land works eg, culvert pipes, salvaged wood etc.
 - Suitable site for a regularly maintained **garden waste burn pile**
- **Zone 45 is the strip between the subsoil heap (Zone 44) and the bottom dam.**
 - Revegetated to stabilize potential erosion into the dam
 - Revegetated with native species not indigenous to this area
 - Local species have also established themselves over the years
 - Does provide good habitat for native wildlife
 - Nice walking track, adventure play area
 - Provides effective screen to hide the big heap of dirt – Zone 44
 - **Kikuyu weed threat** – check & control twice a year till eliminated
- **Zone 17 adjoins the mowed strip under powerlines (Zone 16) and lies between residences and bushland (Zone 6). It reflects a variety of disturbances:**
 - 4 different planting projects:
 - Sugar gums (now mature) were planted for firewood, 50+ years ago
 - Warby Swamp gums 10 -12 seedlings planted approx 2010 (local endangered species)
 - Bush revegetation adjoining bushland Zone 6, indigenous shrub & eucalypt species - approx 2012-14
 - Rock garden – large granite rocks brought in, indigenous Drooping She-oak and shrub species planted in mulched garden style - approx 2005-6
 - Earthworks to lay a large submerged water pipe west to east in mid section – 2010. The result of a ‘drought proofing’ grant, overflow from the top dam is piped to the middle dam.
 - **Results of disturbance:** Two weedy grasses Fog grass and Paspalum predominate
 - **Mow regularly in spring and autumn**, to manage bulk of growth, maintain a neat parkland appearance and act as a fire break
 - Mowed open area - **can become very wet** due to nearby spring-soak. This should always be considered when works are planned here.
 - **Potential** for future ‘development’, projects etc

DRAINS

Blue on map

Description

There are seven main drains numbered on the map. These major drains collect runoff water for the 2 lower dams. Five are **open drains**.

Many **local native aquatic plants** can be found naturally occurring within these drains including: several small native rushes, raspworts, joyweed and native wetland grasses.

These native species bend allowing water to flow while **protecting the surface soil** from washing away, during heavy flows. They can also act as a filter helping to prevent chemicals or other pollutants reaching dams.

Crushed rock (5cm) has been used to fill Drains 4 (dam spillway) and 5. There is no soil capping.

Threats

- **Excessive weed** growth in response to seasonal conditions
Species include: Curled Dock, Drain sedge, Kikuyu and Paspalum
- **Erosion** causing deep washaways in drains, at worst - silt deposits in dams
- **Blockages** caused by weeds and/or erosion leading to localised flooding and reduced inflow to dams

Management

- **Check for weeds** in drains twice a year – before winter and during spring
 - Treat with a weed wiper (or careful spot spray) any invasive non-native species likely to block water flow. Use 'frog friendly' glyphosate herbicide.
- **Whipper-snipping** may be required on **rock-filled drains** and some table drains – check May and October
- **Maintain native vegetation cover** – -AVOID spraying out all vegetation growing within the drain. An informed operator will be required if herbicide is used on weeds.
- **Check for erosion** in drains and repair with appropriate stabilization
- Try to **ensure wastewater** (from houses) is not seeping into table drains and eventually (potentially) into dams

1.2 ANNUAL ACTION

MOWING ZONES

NO MOWING

- AIM:** To avoid soil and native vegetation disturbance in **low growth areas**
- ZONES:** **The Orchid Patch: 28** - lilies, orchids, native grass & mosses – very sparse
Dam banks: 29, 35, 36 – steep, difficult, sparse growth & generally weed free
Swale Drains 30 & 31 – wetland grass species
- WHIPPER-SNIPPING:** In high growth seasons, some areas may require **one cut**, in late spring when seeds have fallen or come off easily in hand, not below 100mm.
Swale Drains: Zones 30 & 31, South: **Zone 27** (mid section – too rough to mow)
Dam banks: 36, & south bank only of **Zone 29**

NATIVE GRASSLANDS

- AIM:** To **retain and enhance** Native Grasslands by NOT OVER-MOWING
- ACTION:** Mow or whipper-snip **ONCE a year** no lower than **100mm/4 inches**
 Clean machinery to remove weed seeds before start
 Ensure no soil disturbance. Be selective, mow in patches if seed is not ripe.
- WHEN:** Late Oct - early Dec (when seeds have fallen or come off easily in hand)
 Just prior to start of Fire Danger Period – varies each year
- ZONES:** **Central: 32, 33, 34, 37**
South of Henley Rd: 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43
- NOTES:** Mow **walking tracks** if necessary (especially late spring or late autumn) through **Native Grasslands and on top of dam banks**
Under trees - may not need mowing every year– **parts of Zones 32, 37 & 38**

GRASSY PARKLAND

- AIM:** To maintain tidy open space for recreational activities
 To maintain a **low fuel load** & clear access lines for emergency vehicles.
- ACTION:** Mow to maintain a **neat parkland** appearance
 Avoid mowing too low (no lower than **25mm/1 inch**)
- WHEN:** As required. Will depend on amount of growth
- ZONES:** **North west: 15, 16, 17, Community Hub**
Central: 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
South of Henley Rd: 25, 26, 27
- NOTES:** **Caution with wet/soak** sections in wet years – attention to timing
 eg. parts of Zones 16, 17, 21, 22

CALENDAR OF WEED AND RABBIT CONTROL

MONTH	TARGET SPECIES	TECHNIQUE	MATERIALS
Feb – mid April	Rabbits	Collapse warrens, following all burrows to the absolute end	Crowbar, shovel
April, May, June	Paspalum, Kikuyu, Pigeon grasses	Spot spraying with a knapsack is best for bigger infestations: before seed set ideally	Herbicide: glyphosate & wetter
	African lovegrass	Spot spray with knapsack, really saturate each plant (root uptake)	Herbicide: flupropanate
	Asparagus	Hand dig to remove crown	Fork
	Erodium/Corkscrew	Check walking tracks on dam banks, spot spray when seedlings are small (< saucer size) before flowering	Selective broad leaf herbicide
	Cleavers/ Sticky weed	Spot spray with knapsack or smaller atomiser when seedlings (<20cm height)	Herbicide: Garlon/ triclopyr (1/3 strength)
	Annual weedy grasses	Smother/mulch with leafy wattle or eucalypt prunings – when available. Brush tips with weed wiper	Loppers, secateurs glyphosate
March to August	Garden escapee shrubs, weedy wattles	Hand pull when damp enough OR cut & dab stem w/in 10 seconds	Gloves glyphosate- straight
	Wonga vine	Cut & dab stem within 10 seconds	glyphosate- straight
July August	Bridal creeper	Careful hand removal to find all nodules, place in bag for disposal to landfill	Weeding tool, bag
		Spot spray if too numerous	Herbicide: Brushoff/ metsulfuron & wetter
	Freesias, Jonquils	Dab just before flowering	glyphosate- straight
August September October	Soursob/oxalis	Spot spray with knapsack or smaller atomiser – when flowering	Herbicide: glyphosate & wetter
	Phalaris, Cocksfoot Fog grass	Twist tussock and dab for scattered individual plants	Dabber w glyphosate- straight
		Spot spray individual tussocks with knapsack for larger infestations	Herbicide: glyphosate & wetter
November December	Drain sedge	Hand remove OR spot spray larger infestations	Weeding tool glyphosate & wetter
	St John's Wort	Careful hand removal - remove complete rhizome root system – works best in damp soil	Weeding tool
		Spot spray while flowering	Herbicide: Garlon /triclopyr
November to April	Bindii (Caltrop/Three-cornered Jack)	Hand remove small infestations OR Spot spray - knapsack or small atomiser before burrs form. Hand remove burrs if present Treat new outbreak w/in 2 weeks of rain	Weeding tool Herbicide: dicamba

***Disclaimer: This information is not professional advice.
It is a report of what actions have worked on the Common Land.***

CALENDAR OF ANNUAL VEGETATION MAINTENANCE

AIM: To reduce fire hazard while protecting native vegetation

MONTH	WHERE	MANAGEMENT ACTION	WHO
When necessary	Buffer Zones	1st 10 m from fence: • Mow to maintain clear access, no lower than 25mm/1 inch	Adjoining resident
Nov/Dec – Mar/Ap Fire Danger Period		2nd 10m - <u>if</u> required (to orange topped posts): • Whipper-snip or ride –on mower – No lower than 100mm/4 inches – After native grasses have seeded & small lilies have flowered – Avoid mowing large evergreen lilies: eg. Stypanandra and Dianella	
Mar- May		Remove Silver wattle & eucalypt seedlings as they emerge: • Hand pull or mattock out OR • Cut at ground level, paint stem immediately with neat Roundup	
Oct - Nov	Common Land Bushland	• Check for bulky fallen leafy branches • Remove this fine fire fuel NB: This does not include larger fallen branches & logs – leave for conservation value – not significant as fire fuel	Working bee OR Native Vegetation Group
May – August	All large open drains 1, 2, 3, 6, 7	• Check function of drains • See detailed information - page 10 • Spot spray OR wick wipe non-native grasses & weeds (Glyphosate green) • Retain native species for erosion control	Person who can identify native species
May and October	Drains 4 & 5	• Whipper-snip surface if required (unable to mow due to rock fill) • Remove any seedling eucalypts or acacias	

1.3 GUIDELINES FOR WORKS

Land degradation can be minimised by adhering to some basic principles during land management works. It need not be more costly or more time consuming. In fact, additional work and expense may be avoided in the future.

The **two most basic principles** to minimise weed invasion, the loss of native vegetation and to prevent erosion, are:

- Minimise disturbance of the top-soil
- Ensure all vehicles and machinery entering a work site are clean of weed seed or particles

Guiding principles mentioned below could be used as a checklist for works

EARTHWORKS

- **Discuss the plan** in detail at a site inspection before works begin
- **Top-soil:** set aside before works begin, replace after the job
- **Avoid dumping** top-soil from weedy sites on non-weedy or native grass sites
- **Vehicle hygiene** –to prevent weeds - ensure that machinery entering the site is free of any soil, mud or vegetable matter
 - Vehicle hygiene is now understood by all reputable contractors
 - The employer has every right to enquire and expect that machinery entering a site is free of any soil, mud or vegetable matter
- Avoid carrying out works if soil is **wet and boggy**
- Identify location of suitable **dump sites** required during works eg 'disturbed' land type
- Obtain any **additional soil or gravel** if required from weed free sites

MOWING -GENERAL

- Avoid mowing on **TOTAL FIRE BAN** or **EXTREME fire risk** days
- **Clean down mowers** after use - hearth brush for dry chaff, flat spade for underneath
- Ensure **safety & hygiene equipment** for volunteer mower operators is available: earmuffs, small hearth brush and flat scraper – the latter 2 ideally attached to each mower
- Do not mow in **wet/boggy conditions** – wheel ruts & soil disturbance can lead to weeds
- Check mower height to **avoid scalping** the ground- can lead to weeds and dust
- Mark with secure tall wooden/plastic stakes any low stumps, holes or low growing native species to alert mowers to avoid hazard
- If overgrown, walk area first to **check for hazards**

MOWING GRASSY PARKLAND

- **Mow no lower than 25mm/1 inch**
 - If continually mowed too short, **grasses will die out**.
This encourages broadleaf weeds eg. Capeweed, Corkscrew or results in bare dusty ground.
 - **Kikuyu** grass is an exception. It can survive low mowing and will be encouraged to take over, if present. It can then become very difficult to mow, 'choking' the mower.

Light green on map

- **Timing for Grassy Parkland:**
 - Mow as often as required to maintain a neat parkland appearance and accessibility for residents including pushers, wheelchairs etc.
 - Early summer – mow to reduce fire fuel hazard and maintain safe track access points

MOWING NATIVE GRASSLAND

Yellow on map

- **Timing is important**
 - **Mow once a year** in late spring after seed set (seed will come off easily in your hand)
 - Aim to mow a week before fire restrictions begin
 - This will produce a neat appearance going into the summer/Christmas period
 - Mowing too early - late winter/early spring - native grasses are likely to die out
 - Occasionally, if an early autumn break produces a lot of grass growth, one mid-autumn cut may be required
 - Frequent mowing can also result in soil compaction impacting lilies, mosses and other delicate small plants e.g. Sundews
- **Avoid bringing in weeds**
 - Make sure mower is free of old grassy residue that may contain weed seed or particles, before entering native grass area
 - Brush loose chaff off surfaces and scrape build-up of mowing residue from underneath the mower
- **Mow no lower than 100mm/4 inches**
 - Native grasses become exhausted and die out if mowed too low, too frequently
 - Avoid killing native grasses as Flat weed, Capeweed and other broadleaf weeds are likely to take over
 - Avoid scalping the soil with machinery - to maintain mosses and keep weeds out
- **Slash or whipper-snip** areas not accessible for mowers, to retard growth of weedy annual grasses and enhance growth of native species

**OVER-MOWING IS
THE NO 1 CAUSE
OF LOSS
OF NATIVE
GRASSLANDS**



Mow **walking tracks** through the grassland **IF** required to avoid grass-seed discomfort and provide good visibility for snakes and other obstacles.

Vary the route each season so a permanent track (bare ground) doesn't establish.

FALLEN TREES

- **Retain** naturally fallen trees or branches (dead or alive) where they fall in the Bushland, Native Grasslands or dams for conservation purposes
- **Cut and remove** trees or branches that fall on Grassy Parkland or on tracks, sheds or other infrastructure
- Retain any timber containing **hollows**. Locate in nearby Bushland or Native Grasslands for wildlife habitat. Hollows are useful on the ground or secured to standing trees for nesting sites
- Placement of larger trees or branches into **dams** will create useful habitat

VEGETATION REMOVAL

- **Remove** weedy garden escapee shrubs. Hand remove small seedlings. Use cut and paint (C&P) method for larger shrubs.

C&P method = Cut as near to ground level as possible.
 Paint/dab clean cut surface with undiluted glyphosate
 - within 10 seconds of cutting.

- **Remove** Blakely's red gum (*Euc. blakelyi*) seedlings. Use mattock to lift divot of soil just enough to extract the seedling with minimal disturbance. Tramp soil back in place.
- **Scatter** the cut or fallen vegetation in nearby Bushland to create a natural mulch for conservation purposes



- Distribute - **do not make a heap** - a dense pile can kill the underlying native ground species and worse – provide cover for rabbits to establish

Excess vegetation residue from the Common Land can be taken to the burning pile by arrangement with the Board via the Parklands representative

REVEGETATION

- Encourage **natural regeneration** wherever possible
- **Bushland** - always plant species consistent with the relevant Ecological Vegetation Community, EVC for each location (p. 36)
 - Seek advice from an ecologist
 - Ideally use plants from **locally collected seed or tip cuttings** (p.21)
- **Native Grasslands** - avoid planting trees or shrubs in these grasslands
- **Grassy Parkland & Disturbed** land types– suitable for planting trees or shrubs
- Grasses and some lilies – **division method** - carefully loosen a section of the root area of an existing mature plant. Divide off and remove part of the plant. Separate into segments for replanting elsewhere

VEHICLES

- Vehicles (including motor bikes) are **not allowed** on Common Land
- Vehicles for **management purposes** are allowed only with the approval of the Board
- **Variation** of conditions on a short-term basis, for example - trades people, may be possible by arrangement with the Board

TRACKS

- **Walking tracks**
 - Bicycles must give way to walkers
 - **Motor bikes** and **horses** not allowed
 - Avoid creation of any new tracks
 - Occasional whipper-snipping/mowing may be required - primarily on the narrow tracks
 - Occasional pruning of overgrown vegetation may be necessary
- **Vehicular tracks**
 - Fire truck access and management purposes only
 - Tracks are **not intended for rear access** to private property from the Common Land
 - Variation on a one-off basis for works may be possible with approval from the Board

WEED AND PEST ANIMAL CONTROL

Hamilton Park Co-operative Ltd, as the private landowner, is legally required to control **declared noxious plants and pest animals** on the Common Land (CaLP Act 1994).

This means 'to prevent the spread of - and as far as possible **eradicate - established pest animals**' and 'to **prevent the growth and spread of listed noxious weeds**' (row 3, table below).

These are the management aims for the Board.

WEEDS

Many invasive **garden escapee** plants are termed environmental weeds. **Weedy grasses** and **other weeds** also threaten the conservation values of the Bushland and Native Grasslands.

WEED SPECIES FOUND AND CONTROLLED ON COMMON LAND 2010 – 2026	
Garden escapees - mainly in Bushland	Agapanthus, Agave, Angled onion/Three-cornered garlic, Arum lily, Ash, Asparagus, Blue-bell creeper/Sollya, Broad-leaf Privet, Cotoneaster, English ivy, Fig, Freesia, Galenia, Gazania, Japanese Honeysuckle, Jonquil, Lippia, Lucerne Tree, Olive, Orange Fire-thorn, Prunus/Wild cherry, Swan River daisy, Sweet Pittosporum, Watsonia, Wonga vine, Wood sorrel/Purple oxalis, weedy wattles (5 species)
Other weeds	Capeweed, Cleavers/Sticky weed, Curly dock, Dandelion, Deadly Nightshade, Drain sedge, Flat weed, Fleabane, Kickxia creeper, Milk Thistles, Prickly Lettuce, Twiggie mullein
Listed noxious weeds in NE Victoria and/or Weeds of National Significance WONS*	African lovegrass, Blackberry*, Bindii/Caltrop/Three-cornered Jack, Briar rose, Bridal creeper*, Gorse*, Hawthorn, Horehound, Paterson's Curse, Prickly pear* & other cactus species, St John's wort, Soursob/Oxalis, Tree of Heaven
**Weedy grasses:	Annual Veldtgrass, Barley grass, Cocksfoot, Fog grass, Kikuyu, Paspalum, Phalaris, Ryegrass, Slender Pigeon grass, Wild oats

*WONS: 32 weeds have been identified and listed as the worst weeds in Australia

**Definition of a weed: 'an unwanted species, usually with a vigorous growth habit'

The term '**weedy grasses**' is used throughout the Plan. Some 'weedy grasses' are valuable pasture grasses, others are introduced (by accident or design) from overseas (also known as exotic) and some are native Australian but from other regions.

ALL, for the purposes of the sustainable management of the Bushland and Native Grasslands of the Common Land, are invasive 'weedy grasses'.

- **Control of weeds** – general
 - Control with **minimal disturbance** to soil or surrounding vegetation
 - Give **priority** weed control to highest conservation value areas
 - Remove **before seeding** ideally or bag if already seeding to prevent spread
 - Hand removal – **pull weeds** if soil is damp enough
 - Hand removal – **prize with weeding tool** eg. St John's Wort, seedlings from dry ground or fork for larger weeds eg. mature asparagus crowns. Carefully replace any disturbed soil.

See Calendar of Weed Control for specific individual species information on page 12.

- **C&P method** (described p. 16) achieves weed control with minimal soil disturbance
 - Useful for larger shrubs
- **Herbicide eradication** – invasive grasses - ideally when first noticed before rapid spread
 - Use the **appropriate** herbicide for the plant species
 - Treat in autumn or spring when plant is **actively growing**
 - Careful **spot spray** or **dab** with brush wiper or dabber tool
 - Use only glyphosate 360 'frog friendly' eg. brand names: Round-up Biactive or Glyphosate Green
- **Prevention**
 - Consider promoting a list of the known garden escapee species enabling residents to make an informed decision about what NOT to plant
 - Vehicle hygiene awareness to stop weeds being brought in
 - Avoid soil disturbance

PEST ANIMALS

Rabbits and foxes are **declared pest animals**. HP Co-operative Ltd as the land manager has a legal responsibility for their control.

- **Rabbits** – Rabbit numbers are lowest at the end of summer. Autumn green pick triggers burrowing and breeding. The **most effective control** work is to totally destroy burrows and thus prevent breeding **before the end of April**.

Wild rabbits only live for about 2 years so the cycle is easily broken with timely effort. If not, rabbits can rear 6-8 young per month for approx 10 months of the year. Females reproduce at 4-5 months of age.

See local Landcare brochure: Peri-Urban Rabbit Control in NE Victoria – Hamilton Park website

- Check Common Land after first autumn rains for new scratchings
- If scratchings are found, locate nearby burrows or source of incoming rabbits
- Dig back along any burrows until all of the warren is collapsed. A crowbar causes least soil disturbance and is sometimes easier to use than a shovel or mattock. Tramp it down.
- Check every 6 weeks, at least after 4 months (Aug/Sept) for re-openings

- **Fox** control action is not appropriate on the Common Land so close to a residential community. Do not use poison baits or shoot foxes on the Common Land. Support Parks Vic in their fox control activities in the Warby Ovens National Parks.

- **Mosquitoes** are food for many birds, reptiles and other small animals.

Mosquitoes can carry viruses and infect people and animals eg. Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus.

A healthy native environment in the Common Land will support a variety of native wildlife predators.

Tips to help residents eliminate potential breeding sites:

Mosquitoes breed in still water.

- Ensure water tanks are mosquito proof
- Change the water in outdoor containers at least once a week (pet & bird baths, drip trays of pot plants, wading pools, disused tubs etc)
- Add sand to pot plant trays. The sand will hold water but eliminate open, still water.

COMPLAINTS OR CONCERNS

Any issues that may arise with regard to the operation of this Management Plan (or where it appears that the guidelines are not being followed), should be referred to the Hamilton Park Board.

2. COMMUNITY

The Board is responsible for regulating uses and activities on HP Co-Operative Ltd property. These conditions are generally consistent with RCOW rules for public parks and bushland reserves and include:

- **Safety** and convenience for other users
- **Respect** for the communal land, infrastructure and amenities
- **Consideration** for others - residents and their visitors

ACCEPTABLE ACTIVITIES:

- **Walking**
- **Dogs** – to be under effective control at all times
- **Cycling** with care, giving right of way to walkers
- **Fishing in dams** with hand-held rods
- **Yabbing** with legal yabby nets
- **Seed collecting** from native plants for the home garden
- **Tip cuttings** for propagation of native species –not more than 5% from any one plant

UNACCEPTABLE ACTIVITIES:

- **Land degradation:**
 - **Burn piles**
 - **Dumping** – of rubbish, e.g. garden waste
 - **Soil disturbance** such as: ruts from vehicles on wet ground, scalping by mowers, bike jumps, cave cubbies, bike/bush tracks, digging for Bardi grubs
 - **Vehicles (including motor-bikes) being driven on access tracks or across the Common Land** – management vehicles only
 - **Extension of back yard** for storage eg. building/garden materials or equipment
 - **Mowing** without approval
 - **Weedicide Spraying** without approval
 - **Removal** of plants – dead or alive
 - **Cutting down** vegetation
 - **Firewood collection**
 - **Off-road biking** in bushland and Native Grasslands
 - **Horse riding**
- **Nuisance activities**
 - **Dogs - wandering** - safety concern for people on foot, cycle or vehicles.
 - **aggressive** -towards people, native wildlife, other dogs
 - **barking** – excessive or continual – anxiety provoking and unneighbourly!
 - **Cats – wandering** - cats must be kept on their owner's premises at all times
Free cat traps are available to all residents - from the Board and/or RCOW
 - **Littering** – **please pick up litter including dog poo**
- **Swimming** in dams is prohibited

COMPLIANCE

- Council by-laws (Domestic Animals Act 1994) apply for animal infringement behaviour such as unregistered, wandering or dangerous animals
- As the Common Land is private property, civil law applies for violations such as trespass, theft, wilful damage, vandalism, etc.
- Private landholders are legally required to 'prevent the growth and spread of' **declared noxious plants and pest animals** on or from their property (CaLP Act 1994). The weed of greatest concern is African Lovegrass found in Zones 43 and 27W at the end of Avoca La. *See Listed Noxious Weeds found on Common Land, p. 18*

COMMUNAL WATER

- The water in dams is stored for resident's use and for firefighting
- It is the responsibility of residents to keep **drains** in the vicinity of their residence clear of debris

MANAGEMENT FOR AMENITY

Walking tracks, seats and other features the Common Land should be safe, comfortable and pleasant for all users.

- Walking tracks should be **mowed infrequently through Native Grasslands**, when necessary for ease of walking, to avoid grass-seed discomfort and ensure snake visibility
 - Vary the temporary mowed track through Native Grasslands each season so a permanent track (bare ground) doesn't establish
- Maintain all walking tracks **free of trip hazards** or other obstacles eg. large fallen branches
- **Trim vegetation** along bushland walking tracks if/when required for ease of use
- Maintain board walks, seats, the landing at top dam in **good repair for safety** of users

PESTICIDES

- Residents need to be cautious as **insecticides can drift** onto Common Land and cause secondary poisoning to unsuspecting spiders, birds, bats, reptiles and frogs that may eat dead insects, beetles and grubs
- These small native animals play a vital part in a healthy environment eg. mosquito control, many birds depend on spider web for nest building
- **Rodenticides** (rat and mouse baits) - second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs), do cause secondary poisoning. For example, if unsuspecting birds and lizards eat dead or dying rats or mice, SGARs will kill them too. If baiting, use first-generation anticoagulants such as Racumin. These are rapidly metabolized by the rodents so have a low risk of secondary poisoning to pets and wildlife.

VOLUNTEERS

Stewardship and maintenance of Common Land assets (natural and built environment) depends on volunteers.

- The Welcome Pack distributed to new residents informs them of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the Common Land and the volunteer opportunities available
- Communication is required so that all residents understand the vital role of volunteers

ACTIVITIES RELYING ON VOLUNTEERS

- Maintain a register of resident's skills and interests to allow the Board's appointed Parklands Manager to organise on-going jobs and respond to extra maintenance needs as they occur
- Maintain an updated contact list for individual volunteers or group representatives

The Parklands Manager will be responsible for adequate **training of volunteers** for their protection (OH&S) and a briefing about the specific requirements of each job

VOLUNTEERS: INDIVIDUALS OR GROUP	VOLUNTEER'S ROLES AND ACTIVITIES
Mowing roster	Mowing as specified by the Parklands Manager
	Removal of specific fallen trees, or other debris
	Whipper-snipping and directed clean up prior to summer
	Maintenance of equipment kept in the Bob Bracken shed
	Small maintenance jobs
Communal water supply	Maintenance of communal water supply
	Water Distribution Manager
Community Hub	Maintenance and cleanliness of the built infrastructure
Garden Club	Maintain the median strip in Henley Rd and the native garden at the Community Hub.
Native Vegetation Management	Hand weeding e.g. invasive seedlings, Bridal creeper, Asparagus
	Small-scale targeted seasonal herbicide brush, dab or spot spray
	Control of listed noxious weeds – in season
	Trim vegetation along walking tracks if required
	Collect & scatter seeds of existing desired native plants
	Divide and transplant native grasses.
	Possible propagation of local native plants
	Monitor bushland and assess need for a cool burn
	Organise implementation of a cool burn

1. BUSHFIRE

The CFA has identified Glenrowan and Hamilton Park as **VERY HIGH** bushfire risk.

Local residents and visitors should be prepared for fire and have a plan for when the Fire Danger Rating is HIGH, EXTREME or CATASTROPHIC.

This Management Plan has been developed to minimise fire fuel hazards on the Common Land but also to protect its natural environmental assets.

3.1 BUSHLAND

Canopy or crown fires are the most dangerous. Well managed Grassy Woodlands have reasonably open areas in between large old trees. With fewer well-spaced trees, the canopies are not touching. This is the goal.

Thinning of some regrowth trees has reduced the amount of denser connected canopy and ladder fuel which would take a fire up to the canopy.

‘Coarse’ fuels such as fallen timber, larger logs or dead standing trees and stumps do not add fuel to fire front although they do tend to remain burning after the front has passed.

Fine fuels contribute to fire intensity and rate of spread. Fine fuels are defined as less than 6mm in diameter (smaller than your little finger). ‘Fines’ are made up of leaves, twigs, bark and other ground litter.

In the Common Land bushland, surface fine fuel is generally moderate to low, typical of Grassy Woodland vegetation communities.

A pre summer check and removal of significant clumps of fine twigs and dry leafy material that has not rotted down, is recommended.

In the Common Land bushland, native grasses predominate and generally have a low, sparse growth habit. A build-up of dead material can be controlled by a cool burn. Cool burns are also good for ‘cleaning up’ fine fuels such as excessive ground litter.

Bark on standing trees can be a ‘fine fuel’ and produce embers. Most Common Land trees are Blakely’s Red Gums which have smooth bark – these are of least concern.

The Stringybark eucalypts pose the greatest fine fuel threat with their coarse fibrous bark. ‘Candling’ of the small number in strategic locations was deemed unnecessary (2010, 2020) due to their small size and relatively fine bark - to be monitored in the future.

3.2 GRASSLANDS

Grassfires can spread rapidly on unmanaged grasslands. Non-native/introduced grasses are thicker in growth habit and produce much more intense fires than native grasses.

Regular mowing of the **‘Grassy Parkland’** zones with their higher fire fuel, non-native grasses will ensure fuel minimisation.

The **‘Native Grasslands’** are rich in native grasses and other ground layer species such as lilies, ferns and mosses which have very little biomass over summer.

- Native grasses have approximately 25% of the fuel load of non-native grasses
- Many native grasses are also summer active, responding quickly to summer rain and sometimes remaining green during the drier months

General grassfire facts:

- Produce far fewer embers than forest fires
- Fire burns through it faster than through forest
- Less intense than a forest fire
- Tall, dry grass will burn more intensely than shorter grass
- Short grass has a lower flame height, easier to control
- Grassfires can start earlier in the day than forest fires as grass dries out more quickly
- Grassfires can be started accidentally when using machinery such as chainsaws, lawnmowers, tractors and welders over summer

3.3 ACTIONS TO MINIMISE FIRE RISK

This section outlines the preparation activities, to minimise the risk to HP residential properties, in the event of a bushfire within or near the community.

MONITORING

Seasonal assessment is required twice a year to determine management actions required.

- Mid spring – develop list of jobs for **pre summer clean-up**
- Autumn - identify area for **annual cool burn**

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT VEHICLES

Tracks and entrances/exits for trucks have been identified for the main bushland area of the Common Land.

- Track must have a minimum **trafficable width of 3.5 metres** and be clear of encroachments for at least 0.5 metre on each side
- Track must be kept free of obstacles to a **height of 4m**
- Young regenerating wattles and eucalypts should be removed to 3m either side of the track
 - Scatter (do not pile) offcuts in the adjoining bushland
- Zone 5 – identified as a potential **turnaround point** - mid way along access track, near north boundary of central bushland

MOW GRASSY PARKLAND ZONES

- During periods of high growth (especially mid spring, sometimes autumn and late winter) mowing is required to contain weedy species and for a neat appearance
- Early summer – mow to reduce fire fuel hazard and maintain safe track access points
- No lower than 25mm/1 inch to avoid creating bare ground

Light green on map

MOW NATIVE GRASSLAND ZONES

- **Once a year** after seed fall, late spring/early summer. This will usually coincide with the declared Fire Danger Period (Nov/Dec)
- Aim to mow a week before restrictions begin
- No lower than 100mm/4 inches

Yellow on map

BUFFER STRIPS

The buffer strip is a firebreak between the resident's boundary and the Common Land.

The need for maintaining a buffer strip has been identified in zones where defendable space is required between private properties and adjoining **bushland zones 2, 3, 7, 8, 13 and 14.**

These **strips** are to be maintained by each adjoining landholder according to the '**agreed standards**' identified during joint site inspections by CFA Fire and Native vegetation Officers. Strips can be **up to 20m wide.**

Agreed standards:

- **First 10m wide strip – mow** as often as required to maintain clear access. Mow no lower than 25mm/1 inch to avoid bare dusty ground and loss of grasses. Loss of perennial grasses encourages capeweed and other broadleaf weeds to establish.
- An **additional 10m wide strip** (marked by orange topped posts in some places) **can be whipper-snipped** or slashed if required into the bushland, **during the declared Fire Danger Period (Nov- April):**
 - After native species have seeds have fallen or come off easily in hand and lilies have flowered (November/December)
 - No lower than 100mm/4 inches
 - Hand pull or cut & paint regenerating wattles and eucalypt seedlings
 - Avoid cutting large evergreen lilies, small shrubs e.g. Stypantra and Dianella
 - It is OK to look a bit patchy
 - These 2nd strips can be maintained until the Fire Danger Period ends (March/April)

<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/restrictions-during-the-fire-danger-period>

NOTE: Zone 16 is maintained as Grassy Parkland to provide clear access under powerlines. This also acts as the first 10m section of PPS between Zone 8 and the adjoining properties.

COOL BURNS - INFORMATION

Relatively frequent, **low intensity fires** maintain woodland health while reducing the fine fuels present. Only a small patch of vegetation is burnt. These fires are known as **cool burns**, also referred to as **cultural burns** as this is a long-established indigenous practice and often involves current descendants.

- **AIMS**
 - To encourage a more open bushland, reduce fire fuel hazard in bushland and grasslands
 - **Bushland** - Control of native grasses to stimulate a greater variety of ground layer plants eg. lilies, orchids etc. A cool burn can also refresh and encourage small shrubs.
 - **Native grasslands** - To encourage a greater diversity of species and discourage dominant native grasses. It can also break the cycle of weedy annual grasses.
- **TIMING**
 - Late autumn, winter, or early September depending on seasonal conditions
 - Burns are always done outside the declared Fire Danger Period
- **ADVANTAGES**
 - Fire less likely to 'get away'
 - Canopy damage minimal, most small native shrubs and lilies can survive
 - Removes dead vegetation, recycles nutrients, stimulates native seed germination, helps maintain native plant diversity
 - Small native animals and birds can escape during burn to nearby safe places
- **FREQUENCY**
 - Cool burns should be carried out on a **semi-regular basis**
 - A patch may be re-burnt every 5-10 years, depending on the location, type of vegetation and seasonal conditions
 - Expect a small cool burn to be carried out most years on the Common Land
- **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**
 - Descendants of the original custodians of this land, the **Bangerang Dgalan Bitja Rangers**, periodically carry out cultural burns on the Common Land
 - The Native Vegetation Group has also carried out cool burns
- **SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS**
 - The local CFA Glenrowan & South Wangaratta Brigades have offered on-ground support
- **GOAL FOR BUSHLAND**
 - A woodland with larger but fewer well-spaced trees, **canopies not touching**, i.e. should be able to see through the woodland
 - Reasonably open areas in between trees, dotted with clumps of Dianella lily
 - Grass-trees, Kurrajongs, She-oaks, Bulokes & Cherry Ballart trees retained
 - More knee-high shrubs should emerge eg. Guinea Flowers, pea species
 - Greater variety & numbers of native grasses and small ground layer plants including native lilies, ferns, orchids, raspwort etc.



Goal: An open woodland.

Features:

- organic ground litter in the foreground
- a clump of Dianella lilies - mid ground
- sparse trees with native grasses in-between.

Location: north west of Community Hub 2020.

Native Vegetation Group
carrying out a cool burn on native grasslands,
12 July 2021

Location:
Zone 41,
south of
Henley Rd.



Photo: Lucas Brook

HOW TO CARRY OUT COOL BURNS

When is the right time to burn? ASSESSMENT	Burn must occur outside Fire Declared Periods - check exact dates between April and end of September https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/restrictions-during-the-fire-danger-period
	Bushland – When ground cover grasses will burn – ie. contain roughly 30 -50% visibly dry vegetation
	Grasslands – Ideally, wait till after a couple of frosts late April, May to dry off summer growing grasses (Kangaroo, Red-leg, Windmill etc.) These are the predominant grasses in the Native Grasslands south of Henley Rd (Zones 40 & 41), also in the central bushland (Zones 1-6)
	Burn invasive pale green annual non-native weedy grasses in autumn after they have germinated but before too high and thick if sufficient dead dry grass is present. A gas gun may be required if too green.
PLANNING	Liaise with Bangerang Dgalan Bitja Rangers. Develop burn plan – possibly similar template to Dgalan Bitja - discuss. Organise volunteer residents if/when required.
	Notify neighbours – flyer and /or Facebook notification to HP residents Contact local CFA
PREPARATION The week or two before burn	Whipper-snip or mow containment lines to mark out burn patches - ensure no soil disturbance
	Carry out a COVRAM vegetation assessment. Map burn boundaries and include photo-points.
	Rake 'fines' or bark away from: – base of big old trees - ensure that no fire fuel is touching the tree – around fallen dead logs and stumps These may harbour fire and smoulder for days - if they catch fire
	Identify any 'at risk' species and mark with flagging tape: eg. small seedlings of Drooping She-oaks, Guinea flower, Common Fringe-myrtle, Daphne Heath
	If possible, remove large fallen timber to avoid smouldering logs
	Removal of small (fire wood) sized timber will help reduce fire intensity and flame height
	Organise for a small tanker or trailer and pump to be present
	Register with Fire Permits Victoria website (preferred) the day before https://firepermits.vic.gov.au/notify

Prepare site to help reduce fire intensity.
 Aim for a slow, cool, patchy burn with very little smoke.
 Smoke should be minimal and white.
 Black smoke indicates the fire is too hot.

DURING On the day	If not registered online, phone Register Your Burn-Off 2 hours prior to ignition on 1800 668 511
	Conduct on-site OH&S induction and job outline for all participants
	Assess weather condition and record it
	Position the small tanker or trailer with water
	Ignition: – Start the burn at the fire break edge with a light breeze at your back. If breeze is in the north, start at the south end – Light up spots of long grass about 1 metre apart – If patch spaces are increased to 5-10m apart, fire will burn hotter producing black smoke (more carbon) & increase flame height – Proceed slowly – Fire should just trickle along with very little smoke
	Don't burn: – Grass-trees, Cherry Ballarts, She-oaks – Dianella patches - these provide excellent refuges for lizards etc during the burn – all of a Common Fringe-myrtle patch – standing dead trees or stumps – open, bare looking areas, these probably won't burn anyway – trees with any hollows – larger dead wood at ground level – fallen trees, leave them where they fall
	Burn any dead leafy heads of fallen trees On completion – conduct an on-site assessment of the effectiveness of the burn, ability of animals to escape, protection of marked plants etc. - arrange for monitoring of the site for 8-10 days or more, depending on weather conditions
AFTER	Review effectiveness: too hot/too wet?
	Remove flagging tape from marked 'at risk' plants
	Carry out a COVRAM post fire vegetation assessment when some vegetation returns. Include photos using original photo-points.
	Manage weeds – check several times in the following year especially approx. 2 weeks after rain

A cool burn stimulates more fungi.
Wildlife can shift to safety as a cool burn trickles along.
Even insects can survive a cool burn.
A healthy balance of plant, insect and animal species
can be restored.

ZONES IDENTIFIED FOR COOL BURNS

Cool burns can be carried out on a rotational/as needs basis and are dependent on the season each year. A burn would be organised by the **Parklands Manager** for the Board.

Zone 1: SE section of the central bushland

- The purpose of a cool burn would be to ensure safe access for fire crews, in the protection of houses adjoining the bushland, in the event of a fire
- To maintain the diversity native ground layer plants

Zone 2: Bushland at rear of residences - numbers 16, 20, 26 Mistletoe Lane

- To reduce fire risk for nearby residences
- A cool burn would reduce the bulk of fine fuels
- Thin the regrowth wattle and eucalypt seedlings if necessary, before burning

Zone 3: Bushland at the rear of residences – numbers 33, 37, 41 Wirrinya Ave

- Cool burn in autumn after annual weedy grasses have germinated but before too high and thick
- Divide into smaller patches for cool burning making use of existing tracks

Zone 4: North of Community Hub

- To enhance the diversity native ground layer plants
- The central N/S track could divide the area into 2 patches

Zone 8: Southern section of the bushland above the top dam

- To reduce fire risk for nearby residences
- This area has a ground layer of mainly Weeping Grass which may be difficult to ignite
- If a cool burn was carried out, use the narrow E/W intersecting track as the northern line
- Carefully whipper-snip the north side of the track and wet down

Zone 13: Small patch of bushland in the SE corner of the Common Land (Sth of Henley Rd)

- To reduce fire risk for nearby residences
- Time cool burn to knock out annual weedy grasses – end of autumn
- To enhance the native grasses (Kangaroo & Weeping grass)

Zone 14: Spring-soak woodland near end Omar Close

- To reduce weediness and bulk of vegetation at ground level
- To stimulate regeneration of native ground layer plants

Zone 40 & 41: Large & small native grasslands – south of Henley Rd

- Cool burns rehabilitate Native Grasslands and provide spaces for lilies and orchids
- Carry out burn in small sections at a time not the whole lot at once

Zone 36: Lower dam bank - front section next to Warby Range Rd

- Time cool burn to knock out annual weedy grasses - winter
- Purpose - to enhance the native grasses (eg. Wallaby grass) and other ground layer plants (eg. raspwort, lilies small pea shrubs)
- Aim to burn around and retain planted shrubs

3.4. CALENDAR OF FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION ACTIVITIES

Activities will vary from year to year depending on the seasons.

APPROXIMATE TIMING	MANAGEMENT ACTION		WHO
Late October	Fire truck track access assessment		Parklands Manager organise
Late Oct – early December	Identify & organise removal from bushland excessive ‘fine fuel’ less than 6mm in thickness eg. fallen twigs, leafy branches		Working bee - if necessary
Late Oct- early Dec (just b/f Fire Danger Period)	Native Grasslands (low fire fuel) - mow once a year after seed fall		Volunteers – Mowing roster
As required, seasonally	Grassy Parkland (higher fire fuel) - regular mowing (no lower than 25mm/1 inch)		Volunteers – Mowing roster
As required, seasonally	Buffer Strips - for residents adjoining bushland 1st 10m - mow (no lower than 25mm/1 inch)		Adjoining residents
November - March	2nd 10m – if required - whipper-snip into bushland (no lower than 100mm/4 inches)		
Autumn	Thinning of regenerating wattle and eucalypt seedlings throughout Common Land		Native Vegetation Group
Autumn (Mar- Apr)	Assess for cool burn Identify sites/extent	Parklands Manager liaise Bangerang Field Officer Native Vegetation Group	
Autumn (Apr – May)	Approve cool burn	HP Board	
	Organise external help & local volunteers	Parklands Manager for Board	
Immediately prior to burn	Mark plants to protect Mow/whipper-snip containment lines if necessary	Bangerang Dgalan Bitja Rangers Or Native Vegetation Group	
Late autumn – early spring (May-Aug)	Conduct cool burn when suitable cool, dry conditions prevail		

4. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Hamilton Park Co-operative Ltd is the custodian of a rich diversity of native plants and animals most of which, being uniquely Australian, are found nowhere else in the world.

The Common Land provides essential food, shelter and breeding places for many small **native wildlife** species. It contains over 80 original **native plants** and around 50 introduced species (vegetation audit, 2010).

It is rare in the 21st century to find so many native species remaining.

Covram, a native vegetation assessment tool, is used by the Native Vegetation Group to monitor each zone on the Common Land. Using the mobile app while on site, assessments are guided by a series of questions resulting in an ecological health score. Features also include photo-points and zone or project boundary mapping. Data can then be accessed on the website for analysis and review. Reports can also be produced.

4.1 NATIVE VEGETATION

The Common Land bushland is not just a random patch of bush - it is special. This native vegetation has national and state significance.

NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The remnant bushland found within the Common Land is an ecological community called **Box-Gum Grassy Woodland vegetation community**. This vegetation community is listed as **critically endangered** nationally under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Box-Gum Grassy Woodland is found in a broad arc (inland) from the Queensland border in the north, to the South Australian border in the south, through inland NSW and NE, Central and SW Victoria.

Regional variations do occur as the Box-Gum Grassy Woodland vegetation type covers such an extensive area throughout a large part of eastern Australia.

Hamilton Park is in the '**Victorian Northern Inland Slopes**' Bioregion

Now less than 5 per cent remains in good condition. Most occurs in small isolated patches like Hamilton Park. It is typically an open eucalypt woodland, with a ground layer of native grasses and a variety of small wildflowers and a few small shrubs. The majority, 95% has been extensively cleared and modified over the years being particularly attractive for livestock grazing and agriculture.

**THIS BUSHLAND
IS NOT
JUST A
RANDOM
PATCH OF BUSH.**

STATE SIGNIFICANCE

The Common Land bushland features 3 different Victorian **Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs)** classified as **endangered** under the Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG).

i. **Grassy Woodland EVC 175 – 62/63**

The open central bushland north of the Community Hub is Grassy Woodland. It is a mosaic of 2 subclasses: *Rainshadow Grassy Woodland* and *Shrubby Granitic-outwash Grassy Woodland*. It is characterized by open eucalypt woodland over a diverse ground layer of native grasses and other small plants with a scattering of shrubs.

This vegetation community, fringing the Warby Ranges, is now largely cleared with only 1% of the original area remaining (9 ha out of an estimated 886 ha before settlement). Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 13 (south of Henley Rd).

ii. **Valley Grassy Forest EVC 47**

The bushland above the top dam is Valley Grassy Forest. The eucalypts grow taller here and there is a dense ground layer of native Weeping Grass. Zones 7, 8, 9.

iii. **Spring soak Woodland EVC 80**

The bushland at the end of Omar Close is **the largest Spring-soak** patch in the Common Land: Zone 14.

There are three other small Spring-soak Woodlands: Zones 10, 11 and 12.

Spring soaks have some unique characteristics:

- Very small patches measured in square metres rather than hectares
- Seasonal wetland communities dependent on the continual availability of a reliable water supply
- Found only in areas adjoining nearby granite ranges such as the Warbys

The FFG listed **Victorian Template Woodland Bird Community** is also identified as occurring within the Common Land with 21* out of the 24 constituent species either resident or annual visitors to Hamilton Park. These areas support a specific suite of bird species, identified as declining in numbers. They are associated with drier woodlands on the slopes and plains north of the Great Dividing Range.

Typically, these woodlands have an open structure, light shrubby understorey, grassy ground cover with fallen timber, an abundance of tree-hollows and other nesting sites, and available sources of seeds, nectar and insects throughout the year. The main threats are cats and foxes.

*The 21 species: Painted Button-quail, Little Lorikeet, Superb Parrot, Swift Parrot, Turquoise Parrot, Barking Owl, Brown Treecreeper, Speckled Warbler, Western Gerygone, Regent Honeyeater, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Painted Honeyeater, Jacky Winter, Red-capped Robin, Hooded Robin, Apostlebird, Grey-crowned Babbler and Diamond Firetail.

LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

The remnant bushland, native grasslands and permanent dam water provides many aesthetic and conservation benefits.

FEATURE	IMPORTANCE FOR NATIVE PLANTS, BIRDS, REPTILES, SMALL MAMMALS AND RESIDENTS
Amenity value	Residents can enjoy a walk in the bush or native grasslands within a few minutes of home Access to nature-rich spaces that support the physical and mental well-being of residents
Close to the Warby Ranges	Extends the range of food and shelter for local Warby's wildlife especially birds A connecting vegetation link for wildlife - from the Warby Ranges to roadside & railway linear reserves
Diverse range of trees, hollows, fallen timber, shrubs, ground cover plants & native grasses	The variety of potential homes and food sources (habitat) provides safe areas for roosting, nesting and rearing of young Ability to sustain a diverse range of resident native wildlife
Gardens of residents	Provides extra food (nectar, insects) and habitat opportunities Extends the range for both resident, Warby Ranges and migratory birds
Dams (3)	A source of permanent water in the drying Warby's climate A valuable stopover spot for migratory birds Good quality water supports a variety of waterborne food for waterbirds and other wildlife
Instream reeds, overhanging trees & dam edge vegetation	Provides waterbirds with a variety of safe habitats for breeding and roosting Food and shelter for frogs and various reptiles
Native grasslands	Provides valuable food for many native birds especially ground (seed and invertebrate) feeders Extremely low in fire fuel load due to thin growth habit Contributes very little to fire spread or intensity 16 different native grass species identified so far
Mosses and lichens - ground cover	Low or no fire fuel to burn as they die right back over summer, resembling bare dirt Survive in-between tufts of sparse native grasses, saving the space for many seasonal lilies and orchids Form a protective skin called Biological Soil Covering (BSC) over the soil helping to minimise erosion from water and wind, prevent weeds establishing and minimise evaporation in summer

TYPICAL NATIVE SPECIES

NATIONAL VEG CLASS	BOX-GUM GRASSY WOODLAND		
VICTORIAN EVC	GRASSY WOODLAND	VALLEY GRASSY FOREST	SPRING SOAK WOODLAND
<i>Common Land location</i>	<i>Central bushland: Zones 1 - 6 + Zone 13 (SE boundary)</i>	<i>Above top dam Zones 7, 8, 9</i>	<i>End of Omar Close: Zone 14 + Zones 10, 11, 12</i>
Trees tall	Blakely's Red Gum, Yellow Box, Grey Box, Red Box, Apple Box, Long-leaf Box, Red Stringybark	Blakely's Red Gum, Grey Box, Long-leaf Box	Blakely's Red Gum
Trees medium	Kurrajong, Lightwood	Kurrajong, Lightwood	
Trees small	Silver wattles, Cherry Ballart, Buloke, Drooping She-oak, Grey Grass tree	Cherry Ballart, Silver wattle,	Silver wattle
Shrubs - tall	Common Fringe-Myrtle, Prickly Tea-tree	Kangaroo apple, Prickly Tea-tree, Golden wattle	Prickly Tea-tree, Golden Spray, Kangaroo apple
Shrubs low scattered	Spiny Bitter-pea, Grey Parrot-Pea, Nodding Blue-lily, Grey & Silky Guinea Flowers, Daphne Heath, Blue Finger-flower, Purple Coral-pea	Grey & Silky Guinea Flowers, Nodding Blue-lily	
Ground layer	Milkmaids, Chocolate, Fringe & Pale-vanilla lilies. Rock-fern, Native geranium, Sticky Everlasting, Black-anther & Late-flower Flax-lilies (Dianella), Raspworts, Sundews, Twining glycine, Orchids, Yellow Rush-lily	Bulbine lily, Yellow Rush-lily Narrow Goodenia Many-flowered Mat-rush Black-anther & Late-flower Flax-lilies	Yellow Star, Fairies Aprons, Swamp Isotome, Sundews, Narrow & Slender Goodenias, Chocolate Lily, Varied Raspwort, Blue Star Creeper
Native grasses	Kangaroo grass, several Wallaby grasses, Red grass, Cane Wire grass, Brush Wire grass, Dense Spear grass, Rough Spear grass, Common Wheat grass, Windmill Grass, Tussock grass	Weeping grass, Wallaby grass, Tussock grass, various sedges	Weeping Grass, several Wallaby grasses, various sedges

These lists are also useful as a planting guide for each bushland vegetation community

MANAGEMENT TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE NATIVE VEGETATION

THREAT	MANAGEMENT ACTION	WHY - REASON FOR ACTION
Ground disturbance - bare ground	- Avoid scalping with machinery eg. mower - Avoid driving on Common Land, especially when wet - Discourage off-road bike- tracks, jumps etc.	- Native species can't handle regular impact and will die - Tyre ruts make it hard to mow and can lead to scalping - Tyre ruts can lead to lines of weeds - Delicate mosses and lichens form a protective 'skin' on the soil - they are easily dislodged and killed
	If digging is necessary, retain & replace topsoil	- To minimise establishment of weeds - To ensure against loss of native species
Mowing too low (comparable to overgrazing)	Grassy Parkland Mow no lower than 25mm/1 inch	- Perennial grasses – introduced or native - will die out if mowed too low - Annuals like capeweed, winter grass, erodium will thrive - Annuals die off over summer leaving bare, dusty ground - Grasses with runners like Kikuyu are an exception - these will survive and thrive but make mowing more difficult
	Buffer Strips First 10m - Mow no lower than 25mm/1 inch	- Too frequent or low mowing can soon exhaust native grasses, lilies and ferns - If native species die out, weedy annuals like capeweed may soon move in.
	Buffer Strips - second 10m If required - into bushland - Slash or whipper-snip no lower than 100mm/4 inch - Avoid taller lilies, small shrubs – messy is OK - Try to retain natural 'mulch' layer of ground litter	- To retain native grasses, lilies, orchids, ferns, small shrubs - To protect natural ground litter which helps insulate the soil, shields against weed invasion thus minimising mass of growth - Lilies & orchids grow up through the protective mulch

THREAT	MANAGEMENT ACTION	WHY
Loss of dead fallen & standing timber	• Leave dead trees standing	Loss of homes and food sources ie. hollows, crevices, bark for small native wildlife (insects, birds, bats, mammals, reptiles)
	• Leave fallen trees, logs, branches and sticks where they lie - unless across a track or structure	As above, plus debris will discourage weeds
		To avoid rapid loss of diversity in animal species
Loss of ground litter	• Try to prevent ground layer disturbance	• Bugs, bacteria & fungi return nutrients to the soil • Protective buffer from erosion by wind or water, frost, heat
Weed invasion*	• Avoid soil disturbance -bushland and grasslands • DON'T MOW TOO LOW • Remove weedy perennial weed species when first noticed - by hand removal, cut & paint or targeted, minimal use of herbicide spray • Clean down mowers before mowing Native Grasslands • Remove garden escapee shrubs, bulbs, asparagus • Annual timely control of listed Noxious Weeds	• Weeds love bare ground • Native species will die out, perennial grasses will suffer, weeds will be encouraged • Native grasses are choked out by non-natives like: Paspalum, Phalaris, Kikuyu • Risk of spreading weed seed while mowing • To protect Bushland • A land manager's legal responsibility under the CaLP Act
Rabbits	• Remove any burrows	• No burrows -> no breeding-> no established population • Rabbits will devastate native vegetation leading to complete loss of some species e.g. native pea shrubs, lilies

*See page 18 for a list of Weeds Found on Common Land

4.2 NATIVE WILDLIFE

Many species of native wildlife live in or visit the bushland, native grasslands and resident's gardens within the Hamilton Park community.

BIRDS

HP has a rich variety of birds – **over 160 species** have been listed. Regionally significant birds found in Hamilton Park include **Diamond Firetail**, **Double-barred Finch** and the **Turquoise Parrot**. The community was involved in the installation of nest boxes to provide more nesting hollows for the Turquoise Parrot in 2017.

HP is on the flight path of the critically endangered **Swift Parrot** which breeds in Tasmania in summer and migrates to winter blossom feeding grounds in SE Australia. In 2025 a small flock was observed feeding in HP for over a month during winter, in this case feeding on lerp on eucalypt leaves. Six White Box winter flowering eucalypts were planted in July 2025. Other nearby feeding localities are the Killawarra & Chiltern forests.

A pair of the endangered **Regent Honeyeaters** nested in bushland next to HP in 2013. They were seen frequently feeding in a HP resident's garden. Leg bands indicated they were captive bred birds released in Chiltern. Lone birds are occasionally seen in HP. In 2022, a banded male (captive bred) was seen briefly in winter. In spring 2022, an unbanded (wild bred) female bird spent 2 weeks in a resident's garden.

Over 30 wetland bird species visit or live around the dams, including 3 different species of crakes. The dams can also be valuable for migratory birds. Of note, a rare Latham's Snipe was seen November 2024. They fly to Japan in March/April for breeding.

REPTILES AND FROGS

A variety of reptiles live in the Common Land. **Lizards** include several species of skinks, geckoes, legless lizards, dragons and goannas.

A rare Woodland Blind Snake, conservation status *vulnerable (Vic)* was found in 2010.

The Red-bellied Black and Common Brown are the most common **snakes** seen. They provide good food for Kookaburras.

Long-necked **Turtles** are around the dams and can be seen crossing Warby Range road sometimes after rain.

At least five species of **frog** have been identified in the Common Land.

A healthy frog population is good insurance for mosquito control.

INSECTS

Insects form the majority diet for a vast range of small native wildlife including: birds, small reptiles, frogs and small mammals.

They also play a vital role in the pollination of native plants.

Ants are important in nutrient cycling as they help get organic matter back into the generally low fertility granitic soils.

MAMMALS

Visitors from the nearby Warby Ranges include **Kangaroos and Wallabies**.

Koalas used to visit once or twice a year but have not been seen since 2012.

Resident mammals include: **Sugar Gliders, Squirrel Gliders, Grey-headed Flying-fox, Ringtail and Brushtail Possums**.

Echidnas have trouble getting about because of wire-netting fences but are sometimes seen. **Wombats** from nearby roadsides and private property to the north, visit occasionally. In summer 2026 two burrows were dug in the north west of the Common Land bushland – a future resident?

There are nine species of insect eating **bats** listed for the Warby Ranges. Bats are often overlooked as they are small, silent and sleep during the day, feeding by night. Bats can eat up to half their body weight in insects every night. Some bat species are likely to be providing insect control (including mosquitoes) throughout Hamilton Park.

Caution: Do not try to catch or hold a bat as it could be carrying a deadly virus.

MANAGEMENT TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE WILDLIFE

The management actions outlined will help maintain and promote the unique fit of various creatures within the different habitat features.

HABITAT FEATURES <i>'Real Estate & Supermarkets'</i>	MANAGEMENT ACTION	WILDLIFE SUPPORTED
Complex organic ground layer of fallen logs, branches, sticks, bark, leaves in bushland	- Protect ground litter - Avoid 'cleaning up' - No bike tracks, jumps <i>Check out local booklet: 'The Ground Storey' (Goulburn Broken CMA, 2020)</i>	Insects, worms, spiders, bugs, beetles, worms, soil micro-organisms
		Ground feeding birds- robins, shrike-thrush, magpies, thornbills, babblers, choughs
		Lizards, geckoes, frogs
Tree hollows, cracks and crevices in standing trees - alive or dead	Leave dead trees standing	Birds: Kookaburras, Owls, Tree-creepers, Striated pardalotes, Parrots, Kingfishers, Wood swallows & more Bats, Possums, Gliders

HABITAT FEATURES <i>'Real Estate & Supermarkets'</i>	MANAGEMENT ACTION	WILDLIFE SUPPORTED
		Goannas
Silver wattles	Ensure survival & recruitment of some wattles	Gliders & some birds – depend on gum for food in winter months
Uncontaminated fresh water Reeds, some trees or shrubs at water's edge Mixed ground debris close to water	- Avoid totally barren dam banks, encourage ground cover - Do not mow swale drains (Zones 30 & 31) - Protect Spring-soaks (Zones 10, 11, 12 & 14) as they are important breeding grounds in wetter years	Frogs, the Long-necked Turtle, tadpoles, small fish and crustaceans, waterbirds
Native grasslands, small shrubs, lilies, orchids, ferns and other ground layer plants	Protect delicate native plants from ground disturbance - Use cool burns to control grasses and encourage a wide variety of ground layer vegetation.	Small reptiles & birds, mammals, native butterflies, moths & other pollinators
Safe habitat – free of non-native predators	Cats - protect Common Land wildlife from feral or wandering cats - Encourage residents to keep their cats within their property, consistent with RCOW by-law - Free cat traps are available from the Board and RCOW	Birds- nesting and fledglings Small mammals – Gliders, antechinus, bats, possums,
	Dogs - on lead if likely to chase or be aggressive to wildlife	Water birds, snakes, lizards Long-necked turtles -eggs laid in a shallow hole near water
	Foxes - support Parks Vic baiting programs within Warby Owens National Park	
Termite mounds Ant's nests	Avoid disturbance if works required nearby	Sand Goannas lay their eggs in termite mounds Ants are food for many birds, lizards and other creatures including echidnas

4.3 RARE OR THREATENED SPECIES (ROTS)

All of our different bushland vegetation communities plus four plant species and nineteen native wildlife species in the Common Land are listed as Rare or Threatened.

These National and State 'Category of Threat' classifications may be useful for grant applications.

This information may also be useful for decision making about usage and management actions on the Common Land.

National EPBC: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Victorian FFG: Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

Category of Threat Classifications:

EX = Extinct

CR = Critically endangered

EN = Endangered

VU = Vulnerable

INDIVIDUAL PLANT SPECIES

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	National EPBC	Victorian FFG
Buloke	<i>Allocasuarina luehmannii</i>	None listed	CR
Grey Grass-tree	<i>Xanthorrhoea glauca</i> subsp. <i>angustifolia</i>		CR
Narrow Goodenia	<i>Goodenia macbarronii</i>		EN
Late-flower Flax-lily	<i>Dianella tarda</i>		CR

HP VEGETATION COMMUNITIES LISTED AS THREATENED

National EPBC	
Grey Box (<i>Eucalyptus microcarpa</i>) Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands of South-east Australia.	
Victorian FFG	
Victorian Temperate Woodland Bird Community	
Spring-soak Woodland – Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC)	EN
Grassy Woodland EVC	EN
Valley Grassy Forest EVC	EN

INDIVIDUAL NATIVE WILDLIFE SPECIES

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NATIONAL EPBC	STATE FFG	OFFICIAL RECORDED SIGHTINGS FOR HP	SEEN IN THE LAST 5 YEARS BY RESIDENTS
Regent Honeyeater	<i>Xanthomyza phrygia</i>	CR	CR	2	Single birds - spring 2022
Swift Parrot	<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	CR	CR	4	Small flock winter 2025
Gang-gang Cockatoo	<i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i>	EN	EN	20	Y
Grey-crowned Babbler	<i>Pomatostomus temporalis</i>		EN	2	Y
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>		EN	3	Y
White-throated Needletail	<i>Hiundapus caudacutus</i>	VU	VU	8	Y
Lewin's Rail	<i>Rallus pectoralis</i>		VU	1	Y
Square-tailed Kite	<i>Lophoictinia isura</i>		VU	1	Y
Painted Honeyeater	<i>Grantiella picta</i>	VU	VU	1	Y
Turquoise Parrot	<i>Neophema pulchella</i>		VU	200+	Y
Latham's Snipe	<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	VU Migratory	VU	1	November 2024
Little Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>)		VU	18	Y
Eastern Great Egret	<i>Ardea modesta</i>		VU	13	Y
Pacific Swift/Fork-tailed Swift	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	Migratory		4	* Significant – flock of 120 birds, February 2025
Squirrel Glider	<i>Petaurus norfolcensis</i>		VU	2	Occupancy evidence – all 6 nestboxes, March 2025
Grey-headed Flying -fox	<i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i>	VU	VU	100+	Y
Lace Monitor	<i>Varanus varius</i>		EN	1	Y
Carpet Python	<i>Morelia spilota metcalfei</i>		EN	1	
Eastern Bearded Dragon	<i>Pogonon barbata</i>		VU	4	Y

5 MAP – HAMILTON PARK COMMON LAND MANAGEMENT ZONES – OVERVIEW

