



Dandenongs to
Yarra Ranges

Yellingbo Conservation Area



Yellingbo Conservation Area Action Plan

Review 2018



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Yellingbo Conservation Area
Coordinating Committee



Action Plan 2016 - 2018

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|---------------|--|
| ADA | Australian Deer Association |
| CFA | Country Fire Authority |
| CoM | Committee of Management |
| CSC | Cardinia Shire Council |
| DELWP | Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning |
| KPIs | Key Performance Indicators |
| Land Managers | The public land managers in the YCA include Parks Victoria, DELWP, Zoos Victoria, Yarra Ranges Council, Cardinia Shire Council, VicRoads, and local Committees of Management (CoMs) e.g., Millgrove Township Group. A partnership arrangement with Melbourne Water and the PPWCMA assist with strategic management of public land. |
| MER | Monitor, Evaluation, Review |
| MW | Melbourne Water |
| PPWCMA | Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority |
| PV | Parks Victoria |
| SSAA | Sporting Shooters Association Australia |
| TfN | Trust for Nature |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| VEAC | Victorian Environmental Assessment Council |
| ZV | Zoos Victoria |
| YCA | Yellingbo Conservation Area |
| YCACC | Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee |
| YNCR | Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve |
| YRC | Yarra Ranges Council |

Acknowledgements

The Yellingbo Conservation Area (YCA) Action Plan is the result of a collaborative process integrating information shared by YCA land managers, agencies and community members constituting the Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee (YCACC). The information contained in the YCA Action Plan, and subsequent updates to this document, draws on the expertise of committee members shared at the monthly YCACC meetings.

The significant work of all committee members in contributing to this Action Plan and also the Draft 10-Year YCA Plan is acknowledged.

Thanks also go to the DELWP Project Implementation Team members who have devoted considerable time to developing the Draft 10-Year YCA Plan and running community consultation process.

The on-ground works of Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, DELWP, Yarra Ranges Council and Cardinia Shire Council along with the ongoing work and commitment of volunteer Landcare, Friends and other conservation groups has also been most important in maintaining the overarching high biodiversity values of the Yellingbo Conservation Area.

YCACC also has been fortunate in having the services of part time executive officer Joan Howard who has managed the editing of this document, administration of YCACC, amassed valuable resources and worked extremely hard to establish the new YCACC website.

Although only the second yearly report, this is the final report of the current YCACC committee. The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and Minister for Solar Homes, has advised through DELWP Regional Director Kelly Crosthwaite, that a new coordinating committee of land managers focussed on coordinating land management works in the YCA together with a new community reference group will continue the development and ongoing management of the Yellingbo Conservation Area.

Anne Langworthy
Convener, Yellingbo Conservation Area Co-ordinating Committee

Introduction

In August 2011, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change requested the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) to investigate public land in the Yellingbo area, focussing on the biodiversity and ecological values, and make recommendations for appropriate management arrangements to conserve and enhance these values.

In July 2013, VEAC completed the Yellingbo Investigation Final Report (VEAC report) which made recommendations to recognise the high conservation values in parts of the area and to build on the existing collaboration in managing the land by the community, local governments and State government. The principal recommendation is that areas of Crown land within the investigation area be added to a new Schedule Four A 'Conservation Landscapes' created for the protection of fragmented public land within specified landscapes and for the integrated management of the designated land for nature conservation. It also recommended that Parks Victoria (PV) be appointed as the ongoing delegated land manager for the majority of the reserve.

In its response in March 2014, the Victorian Government largely accepted the recommendations of the VEAC report and committed to establishing the Yellingbo Conservation Area (YCA). The extent of its acceptance of the recommendations is set out in the *Victoria Government Response to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's Yellingbo Investigation Final Report* (Government report).

On the 19th January 2017, in response to local community concern regarding revegetation and bushfire risk, the Minister of Energy, Environment and Climate, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio, announced restriction of streamside revegetation to a maximum of 10 metres on each side of the waterways in the north-east corner of the YCA. In addition, no revegetation will occur in this area until the bushfire planning process is complete.

Yellingbo Investigation Area

The Yellingbo Investigation Area (51,370 Ha) is centred on the Yellingbo township, about 50 kilometres east of Melbourne. It includes the towns of Woori Yallock, Launching Place, Yarra Junction, Hoddles Creek, Cockatoo, Emerald, Monbulk and Seville. Most of the investigation area is within the Local Government Area of Yarra Ranges Council with approximately 12% of the land area within the Local Government Area of Cardinia Shire Council. Most of the investigation area is also within the largest of Melbourne's designated Green Wedges, namely the Yarra Valley, Yarra and Dandenong Ranges Green Wedge. The investigation area incorporates approximately 5,990 Ha of Crown land, some of which is proposed to be incorporated into a new conservation area.¹

¹ Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC). (2013). Yellingbo Investigation Final Report. Victorian Government. p. 7

Yellingbo Conservation Area

The YCA will be made up of the following:

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Nature Conservation Reserves | 1662 Ha |
| Sassafras Creek Nature Conservation Reserve | 243 Ha |
| Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve | 144 Ha |
| Natural Features Reserve (Streamside reserves) | 695 Ha |
| Wright Forest Bushland Reserve | 126 Ha |
| Haining Park | 69 Ha |
| Total | 2939Ha |

See Appendix A for the map of the lands proposed to be incorporated into the YCA.

Funding

The Victorian State Government has allocated \$3.2 million to implement the Government supported VEAC recommendations. The State government is supportive of additional resources being allocated for biodiversity conservation, pest plant and animal control, and fire management and preparedness. Land managers will be responsible for identifying priority areas where funding is needed to support the recommendations.²

As of November 2018, \$1,524,565.00 remained.

Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee

The Government response to the VEAC report supported the creation of a coordinating committee 'to oversee and coordinate land management for nature conservation and biodiversity programs, ... set strategic directions and policies [and] guide the implementation of the Conservation Area'.³ In December 2015, the Minister appointed this committee known as Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee (YCACC) which also has a role "to increase the profile of the biodiversity and ecological values of the area and their protection'. See YCACC Terms of Reference at Appendix B.

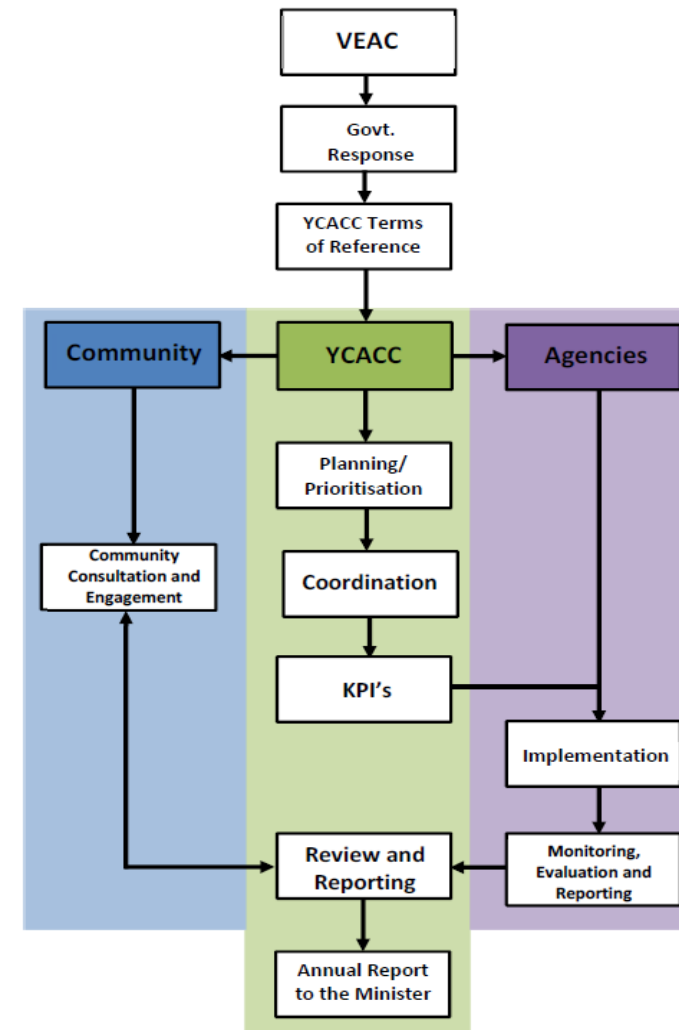


FIGURE 1: YCAC ORGANISATIONAL CHART

² Department of Environment and Primary Industries. (2014). *Victorian Government Response to Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's Yellingbo Investigation Final Report* (2014) p. 4.

³ Ibid. p. 6

Committee Membership

YCACC members during 2018 included an independent convener and representatives as follows:

- Anne Langworthy - Independent Convener;
- Merryn Kelly - Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning;
- Steve Hosking - Melbourne Water;
- Cr Jim Child - Yarra Ranges Council;
- Marianne Sawyer - Cardinia Shire Council;
- Dan Harley - Zoos Victoria;
- Ben Cullen - Trust for Nature;
- Sue Tardif - Community representative Yarra Ranges Council;
- Peter Cooper - Community representative Yarra Ranges Council;
- Jeff Latter - Community representative nominated by Cardinia Shire Council;
- Corinne Mays - Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority nominated representative confirmed by Minister's letter extending YCACC term until January 31, 2019 dated October 30, 2018;
- Georgia Kerr Parks Victoria - substitute representative confirmed as ongoing by Minister's letter extending YCACC term until January 31, 2019 dated October 30, 2018; and
- Uncle Dave Wandin - Wurundjeri Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Incorporated –nominated representative confirmed by Minister's letter extending YCACC term until January 31, 2019 dated October 30, 2018.

Appointments Pending

- Country Fire Authority (*position vacant awaiting appointment*); and
- Community representative Yarra Ranges Council (*position vacant awaiting appointment*).

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

The YCA will be a stronghold for biodiversity conservation with improved landscapes, healthy rivers, active and passive recreation opportunities, and an engaged and inspired community.

Mission

The YCA will be managed in an integrated way to achieve the long-term security of our natural biodiversity and other natural values across the landscape, by improving ecological resilience and connectivity, restoring the habitat for threatened species, and enhancing community appreciation and involvement in the protection of these values.

Values

- Integrity: We act in a respectful, fair, honest, and non-discriminatory manner.
- Collaboration: We model collaborative practice and work in partnership with all YCA stakeholder groups, agencies, government and the wider community.
- Sustainability: We act in ways that build resilience in our natural environment by promoting biodiversity, natural values, environmental sustainability, and community engagement.
- Advocacy: We work together with an engaged community to raise awareness of the conservation and natural values of the YCA.

Strategic and Management Plans of Represented Land Managers

The YCA Action Plan reflects both the spirit and intent of the relevant strategic plans of represented land managers but also is responds directly to the sections of these plans that relate specifically to the YCA. For the purposes of this plan the represented land managers are listed below with indicative plans:

- **Parks Victoria**
 - Conservation Reserves Strategy
 - Yellingbo Action Plan 16/17
 - YNCR Management Plan
 - YNCR Revegetation Management Plan
- **The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning**
 - DELWP Corporate Plan 2018 – 2022
 - DELWP 2020 Strategic Framework
 - Munganin-Gadhaba 'Achieve Together' - DELWP Aboriginal Inclusion Plan 2016-2020
 - Victoria's Climate Change Framework
 - Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037
 - Biodiversity 2037 Implementation Framework
 - DELWP Strategic Plan
 - Draft Deer Management Strategy [for public consultation]
 - Strategic Bushfire Management Plan
 - Fire Operations Plan
 - Flood Plain Management Strategy
 - Seasonal Watering Plan
 - Living with Wildlife Action Plan
- **Melbourne Water**
 - Melbourne Water Corporate Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23
 - Flood Management Strategy
 - Melbourne Water System Strategy
 - Yarra Strategic Plan (in progress)
 - Healthy Waterways Strategy
 - Co-Designed Catchment Program for the Yarra Catchment

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- Port Phillip and Westernport Regional River Health Strategy
- Streamflow Management Plan Woori Yallock Creek 2012
- Streamflow Management Plan Little Yarra and Don River
- Streamflow Management Plan Hoddles Creek
- Yarra River Upper Catchment Drought Response

- Zoos Victoria
 - Lowland Leadbeater's Possum Strategic Plan
 - Helmeted Honeyeater Possum Strategic Plan
 - Coranderrk Action Plan

- Yarra Ranges Council
 - Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2013-2017
 - Environment Strategy 2015 – 2025
 - Flora and Fauna Plan 2012
 - Integrated Water Management Plan 2017
 - Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2013 - 2023
 - Upper Yarra and Dandenong Ranges Regional Strategy Plan
 - Adapting to a Changing Climate and Energy Future Strategy
 - Don Valley Rosanne Management Plan for Vegetation Protection Areas, on Crown Allotments 8B, 8C, 8E, Don Valley
 - Green Wedge Management Plan
 - MEMP -Municipal Emergency Management Plan part 1
 - Environmental significance and Bushfire Management Planning Overlays
 - Reconciliation Framework

- Cardinia Council
 - 2016 Council Plan - Creating Our Future
 - Cardinia Shire Council Landscape Strategy
 - Pest Plant Management Strategy
 - Reserves Policy
 - Recreational Open Space Strategy
 - Sustainable Environment Strategy
 - Integrated Water Management Plan 2015 - 2025
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy 2017

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It is noted that VicRoads manages roadside verges that abut the YCA and similarly there are Trust for Nature properties that abut the YCA that are managed for environmental purposes.

It is also noted that the Victorian Government Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murron) Bill 2017 will have an impact on current and future planning in the YCA.

Second Year Action Plan Report

YCACC is obliged to develop successive three-year action plans for the ten years term specified in the YCACC Terms of Reference.

The initial three-year Action Plan was developed during 2017 and submitted to the Minister of Energy, Environment and Climate, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio alongside the 2017 YCACC Annual Report in December 2017.

This report updates the status of all goals, key performance indicators and actions action identified in the 2017- 2019 Action Plan as of November 2018. The progress, achievements, obstacles and delays in the journey to establishing the YCA during 2018 are discussed in more detail in the 2018 YCACC Annual Report.

Based on the VEAC Report recommendations of as endorsed by the Victoria Government, the 2017- 2019 Action Plan identifies nine Goal Areas, 28 Key Performance Indicators and 70 Actions. These actions are mapped against specific VEAC approved recommendations.

In summary this report demonstrates that:

- progress has been made to some degree in all of the goal areas (mostly in Goals 1,3, and 5; less likely in Goals 2, 4, 8 and 9);
- much of the work in each of the goal areas is ongoing;
- of the 70 action items identified, 20% (n=14) have been completed, 41% (n=29) are ongoing [or data has not been provided to YCACC], 39% (n=27) are not started yet; and
- much work is still required to implement the VEAC Recommendations as approved.

Whilst progress has been made to some degree in planning (Bushfire Plan, Draft 10-Year YCA Plan, Communication and Engagement Plan, for example), the concomitant monitoring and evaluation processes have not been progressed thus limiting capacity to evaluate outcomes or achievement of Key Performance Indicators. Little progress has been made in mapping – whilst mapping the boundaries of the YCA has commenced, mapping the values of the YCA beyond broad precinct descriptors not commenced. Whilst there has been some cancellation of licences and some work done in developing new riparian management licences, required development of management agreements and conservation agreements has not commenced. Development of the required legislation has not commenced. Most importantly, the securing of ongoing resources to establish the YCA has not commenced.

Given the dissolution of YCACC there is a legitimate concern that the Action Plan will not be continued.

Goals and Key Performance Indicators of the Action Plan

Goal 1: To fulfil the Minister’s Terms of Reference for the YCACC.

| Performance Indicators | Status Report 2018 |
|---|---|
| 12 meetings held annually | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee has met on the third Tuesday of every month. The January 2018 meeting was deferred to 6th February resulting in two meetings being held in February. In 2018 two meetings failed to meet the requirements for a quorum and decisions were deferred to the next meeting. |
| 75% attendance at meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall attendance at Committee meetings over the last 12 months [January to December 2018] was 78% (attendance = 94; apologies = 26; meetings = 12). |
| Number of out of session working group meetings [and selected meetings] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group Meetings = 16; Other selected meetings and presentations = 25 |
| Annual Committee self-evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One self-evaluation process has been conducted (16 October 2018) |

Goal 2a: To guide and coordinate the establishment of the YCA to prioritise the protection of high conservation value areas and to achieve the biodiversity and water quality benefits identified in the VEAC report.

| Performance Indicators | Status Report 2018 |
|--|---|
| A new Schedule Four A under the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> has been prepared. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In preparation; Discussions with DELWP Land Management Policy Division and OSGV continue to progress. Surveys of parcels is in progress to enable a legislative plan to be prepared to allow gazettal. The schedule has not been progressed due to the need for the legislative plan, and other priorities, such as the development of the Yellingbo Conservation Area draft 10-year Plan. Not discussed at YCACC as yet. |
| Establishment of the YCA under a new Schedule Four A in the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> . | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not established as yet. |
| Ongoing land managers have been identified and appointed over the YCA. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Until the YCA is formally created the existing land managers continue to be: DELWP; Parks Victoria; Zoos Victoria (Coranderrk); Yarra Ranges Council (Everard Park, Doon Reserve, Butterfield Picnic Ground); Cardinia Shire Council (Baker Street and Bailey Road car park and reserve); VicRoads (wayside stop Warburton Hwy); Local CoM (Millgrove). Once the YCA has been formally created and the enabling legislation enacted Parks Victoria will be the primary land manager, however, other agencies may continue to provide on-ground management via a formal agreement process. Melbourne Water will remain the waterway manager in the YCA but is not a land manager. An agreement will need to clarify the responsibilities of land managers and Melbourne Water which details: mutual responsibilities; integrated strategic planning; information/data sharing arrangements (MOUs); and resource allocations. |

Action Plan Progress Report 2018

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|---|--|
| <p><i>Goal 2a Performance Indicators cont.</i> Parks Victoria (and other agencies) supported as the ongoing land manager.</p> | <p><i>Status report 2018 cont.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing funding to support the YCA has not yet been secured and is a major obstacle to the successful establishment of the YCA. Land and water managers are unable to formulate long-term strategic planning or resource allocation to facilitate the long-term management of the YCA. ▪ Strong partnerships with existing and future community partners will continue to be an essential component of support for activities undertaken by Parks Victoria and other land / water managers in the YCA. |
|---|--|

Goal 2b: To identify Crown land boundaries within the YCA as preparation for required legislative amendment.

| Performance Indicators | Status Report 2018 |
|--|---|
| <p>All Crown land boundaries to form part of the YCA are digitally mapped.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing; ▪ A review has been conducted of the category one investigation survey reports for areas surveyed by the Office of Surveyor General (OSG) being; Coranderrk NCR, Warramate Hills NCR, Haining Park (Farm), Yellingbo NCR, areas of Sheepstation Creek, Hoddles Creek Education Area, areas of Shepherds Creek, Beenak Bushland Reserve and Wright Forest Bushland Reserve. A summary report outlining the next steps will be drafted. Following drafting of this report, a request will be made to Crown Survey Approvals (CSA) branch of OSGV to create plan(s) for gazettal purposes. |
| <p>An established procedure is developed to resolve disputed boundaries.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Office of Surveyor General is undertaking surveying of public land boundaries. As the surveys are being undertaken, there may be disputes relating to private land/public land boundaries. No established procedure has been developed. If disputes arise, DELWP will manage these on a case by case basis to resolve. |

Goal 2c: To amend the *National Parks Act 1975* to allow for management of areas within the YCA by public authorities and adjoining landowners.

| Performance Indicators | Status Report 2018 |
|---|---|
| <p>The <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> has been amended to allow for management agreements with public land managers.</p> | <p>The National Parks Act has not been amended. Discussions with DELWP Land Management Policy Division and OSGV continue to progress. Surveys of parcels are in progress to enable a legislative plan to be prepared to allow gazettal. The schedule has not been progressed due to the need for the legislative plan, and other priorities, such as the development of the Yellingbo Conservation Area draft 10-year Plan.</p> |
| <p>The <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> has been amended to allow for conservation agreements with adjoining land owners.</p> | <p>The National Parks Act has not been amended. Conservation agreements have not been drafted. Discussions with DELWP Land Management Policy Division and OSGV continue to progress. Surveys of parcels is in progress to enable a legislative plan to be prepared to allow gazettal. Schedule 4 has not yet been developed due to delays in the survey process, and an absence of the Property Officer role.</p> |

Goal 3: To engage and communicate regularly with the community in the process of establishing the YCA.

| Performance Indicators | Status Report |
|---|---|
| The preparation and implementation of an engagement and communication plan. | <p>YCACC prepared the “Yellingbo Conservation Area Engagement and Communication Plan”. This plan outlines the engagement and communication activities that will be undertaken by YCACC. Key achievements for this plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establishing engagement and communication principles; ▪ identifying a program of engagement activities that need to be rolled out; ▪ upgrade of the YCACC website; ▪ development of E-newsletter to registered interested parties; and ▪ development of best practice case studies. |
| The community is engaged in the process of establishing the YCA in accordance with the YCACC Communications and Engagement Plan and the YCA Plan. | <p>The Yellingbo Conservation Area draft 10-year Plan was open for public comment for eight weeks, ending on October 7th. During this period, three community drop in sessions were held, supported by six smaller 'pop-up' sessions. In addition to the drop in sessions and the pop-up session, the following consultation occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ flyers, signs and posters to notify local community of the survey and drop-in sessions; ▪ Media release promoting the YCA draft Plan, and encouraged the community to take survey and attend drop in sessions; ▪ proactively provide responses to local media enquiries regarding articles being run; ▪ organic Facebook posts featuring Yellingbo video and still from video; ▪ boosted dark Facebook post featuring Yellingbo video and still from video. Post boosted only to local community, to postcodes: 3139, 3159, 3770, 3777, 3781, 3782, 3783, 3787, 3788, 3789, 3791, 3792, 3793, 3795, 3797, 3799; ▪ letter drop to adjacent landholders. Yarra Ranges Shire and Cardinia Shire supplied addresses for mailout; ▪ emails to stakeholders and everyone who took part in last stage of survey; ▪ one on one meeting with key stakeholders and CFA brigades; ▪ Youth engagement - Shire of Yarra Ranges "Hot Choc and Toasties program". |

**Goal 4: To manage management agreements with public authorities within the YCA; and
To manage conservation agreements with adjoining land owners within the YCA.**

| Performance Indicators | Status Report 2018 |
|--|---|
| Grazing licences have been phased out in accordance with the timeframes recommended by the VEAC Yellingbo Investigation; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 85 licences cancelled, and 107 licences remain to be cancelled in late 2018 and into early 2019. |
| An established process to develop and enter into Riparian Management Licences (for conservation purposes); | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Riparian licence process developed and approved by YCACC led by Melbourne Water; ▪ the YCA draft 10-year Plan outlines the process for entering into Riparian Management Licences. |
| An established process to develop and enter into conservation agreements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not yet started. |

Goal 5: To implement the YCA in a way that does not increase the bushfire risk to the community; and To undertake a strategic landscape scale approach fire prevention and management in the YCA.

| Performance Indicators | Status Report 2018 |
|---|--|
| A bushfire management plan has been prepared that demonstrates no increase in bushfire risk as part of the implementation of the YCA. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete – The Yellingbo Conservation Area Bushfire Risk Management Plan was released to the public in August 2018 |
| Monitor and report on bushfire risk mitigation in collaboration with the responsible agencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not yet started |

Goal 6: To coordinate the management of the YCA consistent with the government supported recommendations.

| Performance Indicators | Status Report 2018 |
|--|---|
| Implement YCA Action Plan referencing the government supported recommendations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress Zoos Victoria continue to actively manage the Coranderrk Bushland to improve habitat condition. Zoos Victoria continue to work with partners and provide funding to support the restoration of habitat for the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowland Leadbeater’s Possum at Haining Farm. |
| Establish a YCA Plan in collaboration with public land managers, agencies and the community in accordance with the government supported recommendations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing; The Yellingbo Conservation Area draft 10-year Plan was developed in conjunction with YCACC and open for public comment for eight weeks, ending on October 7th. During this period, three community drop in sessions were held, supported by six smaller 'pop-up' sessions. |
| All public land managers within the YCA are identified and report works and priorities to YCACC. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public land managers within the YCA are: Parks Victoria; DELWP; Zoos Victoria; Yarra Ranges Council; Cardinia Shire Council; Local Committee of Management (Millgrove); and VicRoads. YCA management partners are Melbourne Water and the PPWCMA. There is inconsistent reporting of works and priorities to YCACC from all the land management agencies. Some works programs are detailed in YCACC briefing notes to the Committee however a comprehensive integrated list of works has not been achieved. Incompatible IT systems complicate data sharing and delay collaborative endeavours. YCACC has established interactive maps on the YCACC website but data on works programs is not yet efficiently updated to indicate current works or priority works. |

Goal 7: To prepare and implement an effective YCA Planning process across the YCA;

To improve revegetation, pest plant and animal control, fire management planning, and fire preparedness and on-ground staff presence particularly with a view to improving levels of compliance with regulations;

To connect the community with YCA and the value of biodiversity; and

To convene an annual capital works planning workshop between managers and agencies.

| Performance Indicators | Status Report 2018 |
|---|--|
| YCA Plan developed and implemented; and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing; YCA draft 10 Year Plan has been completed and released for public consultation. |
| Coordinated monitoring process established with responsible agencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not yet started |

Goal 8: To ensure that resources are available to implement the government supported recommendations of the VEAC Report.

| Performance Indicators | Status Report |
|--|---|
| A request for funding has been prepared to support the implementation of the YCA Plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The request for funding has not been prepared although the YCA draft 10-year Plan has will be used to support a funding application. ▪ YRC: The recent grant application under the DELWP Biodiversity Response Planning for the project ‘Birds to Butterfield’ was awarded to Yarra Ranges Council (pending contract). This grant will work towards biodiversity improvement through weed control and pest animal management in the Yellingbo area. Corridors of Green grants are offered by Melbourne Water annually, and Yarra Ranges Council is a regular applicant and recipient of these grants to support conservation works in reserves within (and external to) the YCA. |
| Funding has been sourced to allow the implementation of the YCA Plan by the land managers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not started ▪ YRC: There is existing funding within the Yarra Ranges Council budget for the management of the reserves within the YCA that fall under the responsibility of Yarra Ranges Council. This is recurrent funding, which is supplemented by Melbourne Waters Corridors of Green Program. |

**Goal 9: To Increase the long-term protection of threatened species within the YCA; and
To ensure that adaptive management is an integral part of the implementation of the YCA.**

| Performance Indicators | Status Report |
|---|---|
| Improvement in the status of threatened species as indicated by the monitoring of threatened species by the responsible agencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in numbers of Helmeted Honeyeaters in the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve. ▪ Decrease in numbers of Lowland Leadbeater’s Possums in the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve. ▪ The Helmeted Honeyeater population at Yellingbo NCR is stable at approximately 200 individuals with good breeding success. The population is heavily supported by a supplementary feeding programme coordinated by the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater and undertaken by volunteers. The Lowland Leadbeater’s Possum population declined by approx. 10% during 2018-19 and population size remains critically low at fewer than 40 individuals. Urgent habitat protection measures are being implemented in conjunction with a population management strategy focused on increasing numbers and restoring genetic diversity. |
| The Development of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting framework. | Not yet started |

These goals are shown in the following relevant sections, together with the associated performance indicators, and the resultant actions.

1. Yellingbo Conservation Area Action Plan

The Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee is required under its terms of reference to prepare the YCA Action Plan for priority land management programs in the area. The Action Plan will:

- (a) establish strategic priorities and clear directions for the area to assist land managers, local government, and the community to work in partnership to achieve better environmental outcomes in the area;
- (b) articulate the links between the plan and strategic or management plans produced by represented public land managers;
- (c) subject to the endorsement of represented public land managers, establish priority land or biodiversity actions within the area that increase the profile of the biodiversity and ecological values of the area;
- (d) identify resources and partnerships essential to the achievement of the identified priority actions; and
- (e) prioritise actions by consideration of the most efficient and effective application of public funds.

In addition, the committee is required to review and update the plan every three years and in preparing or reviewing the plan the committee must consult with reserve users and other relevant stakeholders.

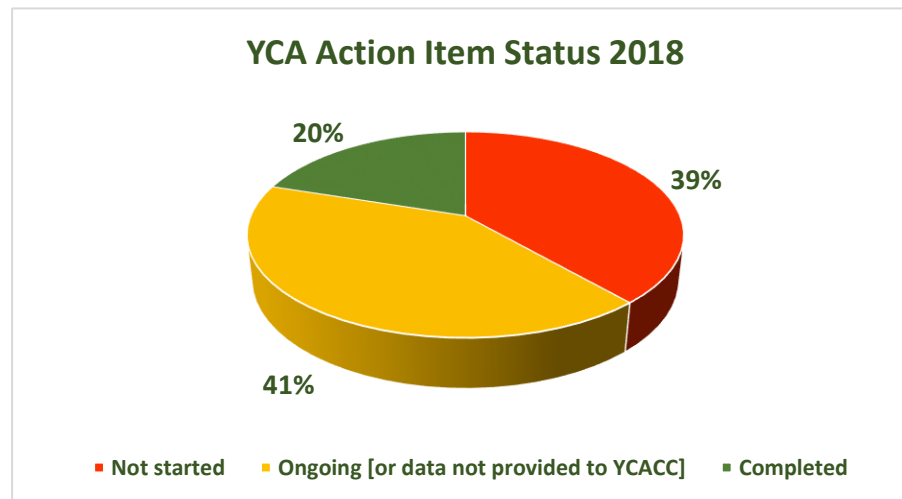


FIGURE 2: STATUS OF ACTION ITEMS

Figure 1 provides an overall summary of the status of the action items identified in this plan. Of the 70 action items identified 20% (n=14) have been completed, 41% (n=29) are ongoing [or data has not been provided to YCACC], 39% (n=27) are not started yet.

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To carry out the specific responsibilities in the Minister's Terms of Reference, the Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee has identified the following actions:

Goal: To fulfil the Minister's Terms of Reference.

Performance Indicators:

- 12 meetings held annually;
- 75% attendance at meetings;
- number of out of session working group meetings; and
- annual Committee self-evaluation.

The following actions are the specific tasks required to achieve the previously listed goals.

| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|-----|---|----------|----------|---------------------|---------|--|
| 1.1 | YCACC will meet monthly to oversee and coordinate land management for nature conservation and biodiversity programs in YCA. | Rec 6a | High | YCACC | 2016/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YCACC have met on the third Tuesday of every month; ▪ the January 2018 meeting was deferred to 6th February resulting in two meetings being held in February; ▪ two meetings in 2018 failed to meet the requirements for a quorum and decisions were referred to the next meeting. |
| 1.2 | Agency representatives will report on priorities and works within YCA at YCACC meetings. | Rec 6a | High | YCACC members | 2016/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agency representatives have provided briefing notes which detail some of the priorities and works undertaken in the YCA; ▪ a comprehensive methodology for reporting on priorities and works in the YCA has not yet been developed; ▪ Agencies are working towards providing this information in GIS format to be loaded into the interactive maps on the YCACC website. |
| 1.3 | YCACC working groups will meet out of session to develop specific plans and actions for YCACC. | Rec 6a | High | YCACC | 2016/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YCACC members have participated in 41 of out of session working groups and meetings. Additional meetings have occurred between agencies. |
| 1.4 | Community members on YCACC will represent their communities at YCACC meetings and advocate for YCACC's role in the community. | Rec 6a | High | YCACC Comm. members | 2016/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YCACC is a point of reference for community members and community groups; ▪ requests and suggestions from community members and community groups are raised at YCACC meetings; ▪ participate in community consultation events; ▪ contribute to agenda and/or suggest member/visitor presentation/s; ▪ contribute to YCACC website and participate in community consultation events; ▪ effective representation through local government representatives (Cardinia and Yarra Ranges Councils). |

2. Establishment of the Yellingbo Conservation Area

The formal establishment of the YCA seeks the ongoing protection of the YCA through appropriate reservation status and ongoing management arrangements. Ultimately it is proposed that the YCA become part of a new Schedule Four A under the *National Parks Act 1975* and that Parks Victoria be appointed as the ongoing land manager for most the land.

The process for formally establishing the YCA includes the identification of Crown land to be incorporated into the new reserve, revoking the existing reservation status where needed and reserving the land under the new Schedule Four A of the *National Parks Act 1975*. As part of this process, a legislative plan is required to be prepared to identify the boundaries of the YCA.

The identification of the boundaries of the YCA may identify areas where private infrastructure has been built on Crown land. The response to these cases will be different and will be based on the conservation values in the area and the priority that is placed on the area for rehabilitation works. In some cases, boundary changes will be considered where the actual and practical boundaries differ. Any change on title will involve negotiation and agreement with the adjoining landowners and will result in no net loss of Crown land.

The new schedule will include a clause to allow the issuing of management agreements to allow the continued management of some areas by public authorities and conservation agreements to encourage adjoining landowners to continue to participate in the management of Crown land.

The Yellingbo Investigation Area contains many unused roads which may contain ecological values that are most appropriately managed as part of the YCA. These unused roads may currently be licensed by adjoining land owners, used as access points, or in some cases, not be distinguishable at ground level from the adjoining land, whether that be private or Crown land. Where these unused roads contain values that are best managed as part of the YCA, they will be formally reserved under the *National Parks Act 1975*.

As well as Parks Victoria being appointed as the ongoing land manager for the majority of the land, the Government report is supportive of other agencies also being appointed as ongoing land managers of some areas. This decision aims to recognise the existing work of other agencies in managing parts of the YCA and ensure a consistent application of management aims by including these areas in the *National Parks Act 1975*.

The Government report supported Recommendation A2 in the VEAC report which relates to the management of Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve by Zoos Victoria. The continued management by Zoos Victoria recognises the importance of the site for the conservation of the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowland Leadbeater's Possum.

The Government report also supported Recommendation B in the VEAC report which states that Trust for Nature should continue to manage identified protected areas if the areas are needed by Trust for Nature. If parcels are no longer needed by the trust, the government will consider appropriate management arrangements.

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Goal: To guide and coordinate the establishment of the YCA to prioritise the protection of high conservation value areas and achieve the biodiversity and water quality benefits identified in the VEAC report.

Performance Indicators:

- A new Schedule Four A under the *National Parks Act 1975* has been prepared.
- Establishment of the YCA under a new Schedule Four A in the *National Parks Act 1975*.
- Ongoing land managers have been identified and appointed over the YCA.
- Parks Victoria (and other agencies) supported as the ongoing land manager.

Goal: To identify Crown land boundaries within the YCA as preparation for the required legislative amendment.

Performance indicators:

- All Crown land boundaries to form part of the YCA are digitally mapped.
- An established procedure is developed to resolve disputed boundaries.

Goal: To amend the *National Parks Act 1975* to allow for management of areas within the YCA by public authorities and adjoining land owners.

Performance indicators:

- The *National Parks Act 1975* has been amended to allow for management agreements with public land managers.
- The *National Parks Act 1975* has been amended to allow for conservation agreements with adjoining land owners.

The following actions are the specific tasks required to achieve the previously listed goals.

| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|-----|--|----------|----------|--------|---------|--|
| 2.1 | Identify Crown land boundaries through digital means and resolve specific management issues such as fencing alignment and encroachments. | Rec 4 | High | DELWP | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crown land boundaries are being verified through on-ground surveys. Lack of qualified survey staff within OSGV has meant that this will take longer than originally proposed; ▪ fencing alignments are being discussed and resolved with adjoining landholders on an ongoing basis; ▪ other specific management issues such as encroachments will be addressed through the DELWP Port Phillip Regional Compliance Strategy, due to be drafted in 2019. |

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| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|-----|--|---------------|----------|--------|---------|--|
| 2.2 | Assess uncategorized public land & retain or dispose. | Rec G | Low | DELWP | 2019/20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing – desktop assessments are being conducted and recommendations will be made based on these assessments which may result in the inclusion or disposal of some uncategorised public land in the YCA. See draft YCA 10-year plan. |
| 2.3 | Assess surplus public authority land & retain or dispose. | Rec G | Low | DELWP | 2019/20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing; refer 2.2 |
| 2.4 | Identify individual Crown land parcels to be included in YCA; include unused roads. | Rec 4 | High | DELWP | 2018/19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing; refer 2.2 |
| 2.5 | Prepare new Schedule Four A 'Conservation Landscapes' of the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> . | Rec 5c | High | DELWP | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not prepared. Discussions with DELWP Land Management Policy Division and OSGV continue to progress. Surveys of parcels are in progress to enable a legislative plan to be prepared to allow gazettal. The schedule has not been progressed due to the need for the legislative plan, and other priorities (such as the development of the Yellingbo Conservation Area draft 10-year Plan). The implications of the VEAC state-wide land classification review⁴ which will also need to be considered in this process. |
| 2.6 | Amend <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> to allow management of areas in YCA by public authorities through management agreements. | Rec 5(e) (i) | High | DELWP | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer 2.5 |
| 2.7 | Amend <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> to allow for management of Crown frontages in YCA by adjacent landowners through conservation agreements. | Rec 5 (e)(ii) | Low | DELWP | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer 2.5 |
| 2.8 | Incorporate Wright's Forest Bushland within proposed YCA. | Rec C9 | Medium | DELWP | 2018/19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In preparation. Wright Forest has been surveyed by OSGV. |
| 2.9 | Excise part Nathania Springs Creek Bushland Reserve to allow Monbulk Scout Hall to expand. | Rec E | Low | DELWP | 2019/20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not started |

⁴ Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC). (2017, May). *Statewide Assessment of Public Land: Final Report*. East Melbourne: VEAC. Retrieved from <http://www.veac.vic.gov.au/documents/Final%20report.pdf>.

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| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|------|---|----------|----------|----------------|---------|--|
| 2.10 | Remove Haining Farm from Schedule Three, <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> and incorporate in YCA. | Rec E1 | High | DELWP | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not started |
| 2.11 | Management of Council owned land within the YCA for conservation and recreation purposes. | | | YRC CSC | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yarra Ranges Council (YRC) do not own any land within the YCA, however YRC are the Committee of Management for 4 sites: Everard Picnic Ground; Doon Caravan Park; Little Yarra Bushland Reserve; and Baynes Park. These are managed by the YRC Bushlands Team with programmed works annually for both conservation and recreation purposes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roadside reserves? Joan ask Amanda for this information Through Cardinia Shire Council's annual operational works program, the following activities have commenced or have been undertaken in areas of land under council's jurisdiction within the YCA's southern boundary: <p><i>Fire management works</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fuel break slashing program in reserves – due to commence in November 2018; slashing of strategic and tactical fire breaks along roadsides – first cut commences November 2018. <p><i>Natural Reserves - Operational works undertaken/ongoing July 2018- June 2019</i></p> <p>NB. Works in the following list of reserves include herbaceous, grassy and major woody weed control, minor revegetation works, track clearance, minor infrastructure installation. Total estimated expenditure - \$50,000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avonsleigh Common Bushland Reserve, Emerald Lake Park, Wattle Creek Bushland Reserve; Clematis Bushland Reserve, Baker Street Reserve, Pepis Land Reserve Wetland, Stewart Rd Reserve, Garden City Estate (Wrights Forest Reserve), Emerald Quarry/Bob James Reserve. |

3. Engaging the Community in the Establishment of the Yellingbo Conservation Area

The VEAC report, at recommendation six, provides for YCACC to be the central contact point for community engagement and liaison.

There is strong support in the Government’s response emphasising the importance of engaging with the community in the process to establish the YCA. It is recognised that the successful management and implementation of the YCA is dependent on the support and local knowledge of the local communities, and this can only be gathered by directly engaging with them and including community members in the preparation of plans to guide the management of the area. Therefore, YCACC will develop an engagement and communications strategy to achieve this goal.

The Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee acknowledges the impact that the implementation of the YCA may have on many adjoining landowners and regular communication with those who will be impacted will be essential. The major impacts to adjoining landowners are due to the cancellation of grazing licences, the potential change in land use in some areas, such as regulating recreation opportunities, the increase in native vegetation coverage and the potential for increased bushfire risk.

Goal: To engage and communicate regularly with the community in the process of establishing the YCA.

Performance indicators:

- The preparation and implementation of an engagement and communication plan.
- The community is engaged in the process of establishing the YCA in accordance with the YCACC Communications and Engagement Plan and the YCA Plan.

The following actions are the specific tasks required to achieve the previously listed goals.

| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|-----|--|----------|----------|--------|---------|---|
| 3.1 | Develop YCA Engagement & Communications Plan. | Rec 6e | High | YCACC | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all members of YCACC have supported the development of the YCA engagement and communications plan. |
| 3.2 | Establish and maintain the YCCAC website and newsletter. | Rec 6e | High | YCACC | 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> new YCACC website established; one long form newsletter and four electronic newsletters produced; website and newsletter content provided by all YCACC member Agencies. |
| 3.3 | Engage the local community in drop - in information sessions and meetings in line with engagement and communication and concept development plans wherever possible with partner agencies. | Rec 6e | High | YCACC | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> YCACC members attend and support local community drop in sessions as they arise; DELWP managed drop in sessions and pop-up sessions as part of the YCA Plan development. |
| 3.4 | Engage with the tourism, agricultural and other relevant regional industries on matters relating to land management. | Rec 6e | High | YCACC | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> targeted sessions were conducted with tourism and agriculture stakeholders in 2017; ongoing engagement relating to land management is managed by the DELWP |

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|--------------|--|-------------------|--------|------------------------------|---------|--|
| 3.4 cont. | | | | | | <p>3.4 cont. Project Implementation Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmer's Forum prioritised by YCACC was not able to be facilitated by the DELWP Team [similarly Youth Forum an additional stakeholder group identified during the year]. |
| 3.5 | Engage with regional stakeholders and the community in matters relating to land management including conservation, pest plant and animal control, fire management planning and fire preparedness management, tourism, agriculture, and recreation to establish priorities. | Rec 6e | High | YCACC YRC CSC | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the process of developing the YCA Plan has engaged the community in relation to land management including conservation, pest plant and animal control, fire management planning and fire preparedness management, tourism, agriculture, and recreation to establish priorities; in response to community requests, limited pest plant control has been commissioned by the DELWP Project Implementation Team. Yarra Ranges Council regularly communicates with environment volunteer groups and adjoining landowners on the management of sites within the YCA; annual fuel reduction programs include roadside slashing, fuel-break slashing in reserve and fuel modification including woody weed removal; Council programs including Ribbons of Green and Weed Wipeout assist landowners in biodiversity restoration on private land within the YCA (and more broadly within council); Council also facilitates the preparation of the Municipal Fire Management Plan, which works collaboratively across agencies for fire management and preparedness planning for the community. relevant Cardinia Shire Council staff have engaged with regional and local stakeholders and the community, in relation to various environmental programs and initiatives to guide investment in priority areas. |
| 3.6 | Publicise the condition of threatened species within the YCA and foster the development of public education initiatives. See also Action 9.5 | Additional action | Medium | YCACC DELWP PV | 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> dedicated information on threatened species in the YCA featured on the YCACC website; support for partner projects related to threatened species (Helmeted Honeyeater); publicising work through the newsletter. ongoing: the YCA draft 10 Year Plan identifies key threatened species within precinct and the area in general and makes recommendations relating to education. ongoing – mainly focused at Haining Farm and Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve with the Lowland Leadbeater's Possum and Helmeted Honeyeater; Education Officer employed by Greening Australia to deliver education programs |

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|--------------|--|-------|------|-------------------------|------|---|
| 3.6 cont. | | | | MW ZV CSC | | <p>3.6 cont. at Haining Farm;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$10k 2018/19 and \$10k 2019/20 from 'faunal emblems funding' to involve community stakeholders in monitoring activities and continue to implement education programs to improve understanding of Leadbeater's Possum and their management. ▪ Melbourne Water work collaboratively to support education opportunities as they arise. Melbourne Water shared a fact sheet on the importance of Large woody debris to river health with a stakeholder group in Woori Yallock. ▪ Zoos Victoria continue to promote the conservation of the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowland Leadbeater's Possum through its 'Fighting Extinction' schools program and 'Love Your Locals' program; ▪ a podcast was developed focused on the conservation of Lowland Leadbeater's Possum. ▪ Cardinia Shire Councillors and senior management have been provided with regular updates on the status of the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Programs and captive breeding program and Lowland Leadbeater's Possum. |
| 3.7 | Development and maintenance of a stakeholder database. | Rec 6 | High | YCACC PV | 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YCACC and DELWP have established a considerable stakeholder database which forms part of the community engagement and communications strategy for the YCA project. ▪ Ongoing – Parks Victoria have a stakeholder data base for Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve, Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, Sassafras Creek Nature Conservation Reserve, Menzies Creek, Haining Farm and Wrights Forest Bushland Reserve. |
| 3.8 | Support, promote and utilise existing community forums and community engagement mechanisms | | | YCACC | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YCACC members have been taking every opportunity available to provide regular updates to the public about the YCA progress; ▪ YCACC have provided updates through the website and newsletters. |
| 3.9 | Continue the Yarra4Life Program as a valuable local forum bringing various organisations and community sectors together to discuss and plan coordinated land, water, and biodiversity management | | | PPWCMA | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the Yarra4Life Program continues to be a valuable local forum for bringing various organisations and community sectors together to discuss and plan environmental works; ▪ during 2017/18 the Yarra4Life Program Coordination Committee met on four occasions; ▪ a major achievement for Yarra4Life in 2017/18 was the completion of the five-year, \$1Million National Landcare funded project 'Protecting and Connecting EPBC Listed Species in the Yarra Ranges' project. |

4. Management Agreements within the Yellingbo Conservation Area

Within the YCA, there are areas of land that are currently managed by public authorities via legislation and areas managed by adjoining land owners via licences for a range of purposes. VEAC recognised the benefits that collaborative management can play in the YCA due to the highly fragmented landscape and recommended that the *National Parks Act 1975* be amended to allow for management agreements with public authorities, and conservation agreements with adjoining land owners. The Government report is supportive of this approach.

The YCA includes areas of public land that are currently managed by public authorities. The VEAC report specified that management agreements were to be limited to public authorities such as Zoo's Victoria and local government who have an existing role in land or biodiversity management. The areas of land where conservation agreements can be entered into include Coranderrk Nature Conservation Reserve, Streamside reserves (C1-C8) and Haining Education Area (Haining Park).

The YCA also includes many areas where the adjoining landowners have been managing the land for generations for a range of different purposes. Historically, licences have been issued to adjoining land owners under both the Land Act 1958 and the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*. The purposes of these licences vary and include, conservation, riparian management, water supply, land management and grazing. Adjoining landowners have been instrumental in improving the ecological values of some areas.

The VEAC Report identified clear ecological values within the YCA and grazing is considered inconsistent with those values. However, VEAC also supported the use of contract grazing for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control. The Government response is supportive of using contract grazing for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control.

The change in agreements with adjoining landowners from licences to conservation agreements means that the existing licences are required to be phased out. VEAC recommended a time period for the phase out of licences which started in 2014. Additional licences were then phased out in 2016 and the remaining licences are scheduled to be phased out in 2018.

The quality of the riparian areas within the YCA varies greatly and many management decisions, such as the alignment of fences and the suitability of grazing as a management tool will be determined on a case by case basis. Many water frontage areas have been well managed by adjoining landowners for ecological values and those landowners have been instrumental in improving those ecological values.

Where these strong local connections to managing the water frontage areas are evident, this connection will be acknowledged and encouraged by the issue of conservation agreements.

Prior to the YCA being reserved under the *National Parks Act 1975*, and conservation agreements being entered into, DELWP intends to enter into riparian management licences for conservation purposes. This process will continue until the land is formally reserved under the *National Parks Act 1975*. These riparian management licences for conservation purposes will facilitate the removal of grazing from areas with high ecological significance while supporting the management of the Crown land by adjoining landowners.

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Melbourne Water’s Stream Frontage Management Program is designed to assist landowners to manage riparian areas for ecological values. Funding is available and will be prioritised for those who have a valid tenure agreement.

There are some areas that have been historically occupied and managed by adjoining landowners with no tenure agreement. Some of these areas are not appropriately managed and increased communications with these landowners will be required. In some cases, compliance action by the DELWP may be required to ensure that land is managed in accordance with the Government report.

Goal: To manage management agreements with public authorities within the YCA

Performance indicators:

- Public authorities with an existing role in land or biodiversity management have been identified.
- An established process to develop and enter into management agreements.

Goal: To manage conservation agreements with adjoining landowners within the YCA.

Performance indicators:

- Grazing licences have been phased out in accordance with the timeframes recommended by the VEAC Yellingbo Investigation;
- An established process to develop and enter into Riparian Management Licences (for conservation purposes);
- An established process to develop and enter into conservation agreements

The following actions are the specific tasks required to achieve the previously listed goals.

| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|-----|---|--------------|----------|------------------------------|---------|---|
| 4.1 | Phase out grazing Streamside Reserves C1 & C2 30 by Sept 2016. | Rec C1 – C8 | High | DELWP | 2016/17 | ▪ phase out of licences for C1, C2 and C6 complete. |
| 4.2 | Phase out all water frontage licences in remaining areas (C3-C8) by 30 Sept 2018. | Rec C1 – C8 | High | DELWP | 2018/19 | ▪ 107 licences remain to be cancelled in late 2018 and into early 2019 - these licences are within C3, C4, C5, C7, C8 and C9. |
| 4.3 | Establish new management agreements under the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> with public land managers. | Rec 5 (e)(i) | Medium | DELWP PV Zoos Victoria | 2019/20 | ▪ not yet started. ▪ documents and process currently being reviewed by Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and DELWP legal teams. ▪ Zoos Victoria have requested that amendments to the National Parks Act enable management of the Coranderrk Bushland to include actions aimed at conserving Australian wildlife (including non-Victorian species where appropriate). |

| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|-----|---|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|---------|---|
| 4.4 | Establish a process to enter into riparian management licences for conservation purposes with adjoining landowners. | Rec 5 (e)(i) | High | YCACC | 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> process developed and approved (see YCACC Minutes 15 May 2018). |
| 4.5 | Enter into riparian management licences for conservation purposes with adjoining landowners. | Rec 5 (e)(i) | Medium | DELWP | 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not yet started; the process for undertaking this has been included in the YCA Draft 10 Year Plan for community input. This will allow the refinement of this process to enable riparian management licences to be developed. |
| 4.6 | Encourage adjoining landholders to enter into Conservation Agreements. | Rec 5 (e)(ii) | Medium | YCACC DELWP TfN | 2019/20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no conservation agreements developed as yet. not yet started - <i>see 4.5 above</i> there are currently 31 Trust for Nature covenants in the VEAC Investigation Area. 8 of those were added during the time of the committee. |
| 4.7 | Establish new conservation agreements under the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> with adjoining land owners. | Rec 5 (e)(ii) | Medium | DELWP PV | 2019/20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not yet started - <i>see 4.5 above</i> existing environmental access agreements and minor service/work agreements can be used for this purpose in the interim. |
| 4.8 | Prepared a decision-making tool to determine where grazing may be able to be used as a management tool under conservation agreements. | Rec A, note 3 Rec C, note 2 | High | YCACC | 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process developed and approved (see YCACC Minutes 15 May 2018). |

5. Managing Bushfire Risk

The community has expressed great concern about the potential for bushfire risk to increase following the rehabilitation of riparian areas. Concerns have also been raised about the bushfire risk associated with community infrastructure such as schools and recreation areas. This has been demonstrated through the work of the Haining Farm Working Group in developing a concept plan for the site that does not increase the bushfire risk to the community.

It is recognised that local knowledge is imperative to the development of fire management recommendations and that some areas of Crown land may be required to create an adequate fuel break to community assets and residential development.

A bushfire management plan will be prepared with the assistance of independent experts and local knowledge. The bushfire management plan will contain a range of mitigation measures that will be incorporated into the YCA Plan for the YCA. This aims to ensure that any plans to revegetate Crown land will consider local bushfire risk and assist in determining where grazing can be used as a management tool to reduce that bushfire risk. This work will also incorporate the strategic bushfire management plan for the East Central Bushfire Risk Landscape.

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Recommendation A1 of the VEAC Yellingbo Investigation, highlights the need for the finalisation of the draft fire management plan for the existing Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve (YNCR). DELWP is responsible for managing bushfire risk on public land in Victoria. DELWP is currently preparing a fire management plan for the entire YCA which will include the existing YNCR.

Consequently, the Government will not be undertaking any revegetation within the North – East corner of the YCA until the bushfire management planning process has been finalised. In addition, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and Minister for Suburban Development, Hon Lily D’Ambrosio has decided to limit the amount of revegetation that can occur on Crown land in that part of the YCA to a maximum of 10 metres from either side of the Yarra River and tributaries in the streamside reserves. A lesser area will be revegetated if determined through bushfire management planning, to ensure that there is no material increase in bushfire risk and that priority is given to the protection of human life and private property.

Goal: To implement the YCA in a way that does not increase the bushfire risk to the community.

To undertake a strategic landscape scale approach to fire prevention and management in the YCA.

Performance indicators:

- A bushfire management plan has been prepared that demonstrates no increase in bushfire risk as part of the implementation of the YCA;
- Monitor and report on bushfire risk mitigation in collaboration with the responsible agencies.

The following actions are the specific tasks required to achieve the previously listed goals.

| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|-----|---|---------------------------------------|----------|--|---------|---|
| 5.1 | Develop Bushfire Management Plan for the YCA. | Rec A, p 8 Rec C1-8, pp. 11-12 | High | DELWP PV CFA ⁵ YRC | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ complete – the <i>Yellingbo Conservation Area Bushfire Risk Management Plan</i>⁶ was released to the public in August 2018 ▪ complete – includes YCA Plan and Haining Farm Plan. ▪ ▪ DELWP are soon to initiate the process and contacts within Yarra Ranges Council who will be engaged are YCACC member Cr Jim Child & Lisa Keedle, Emergency Management Co-ordinator of Safer Communities. |

⁵ CFA representation on YCACC lapsed in 2017. CFA input into the *Yellingbo Conservation Area Bushfire Risk Management Plan* was sourced via direct consultation with DELWP staff.

⁶ Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). (2018). *Yellingbo Conservation Area Bushfire Risk Management Plan*. Melbourne: State Government of Victoria. Retrieved from https://engage.vic.gov.au/download_file/10447/944.

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|---------------------|---|--|------|---|---------|--|
| 5.1 <i>cont.</i> | | | | CSC | | <p>5.1 <i>cont.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> this has been achieved through the work of DELWP in conjunction with the Haining Farm Working Group and has been used to inform the Haining Farm Bushfire Management Plan. |
| 5.2 | Model a local fire risk mitigation process with Haining Farm Working Group. | <p>Rec A, p 8</p> <p>Rec C1-8, pp. 11-12</p> | High | <p>DELWP</p> <p>PV</p> | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete - <i>Haining Farm Bushfire Mitigation Measures Report</i>⁷ released and funding of \$670,000 to support these measures has been announced. complete |
| 5.3 | Promote existing fire risk management and fire preparedness programs impacting upon the YCA. | <p>Rec A, p 8</p> <p>Rec C1-8, pp. 11-12</p> | High | <p>YCACC</p> <p>CFA⁸</p> <p>YRC</p> <p>CSC</p> | 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> general bushfire information is provided on the YCACC website and links to Forest Fire Management Victoria and CFA websites provide access to more detailed current information. Yarra Ranges Council undertakes an annual seasonal communications program across the municipality regarding pre-season fire prevention and fuel management. This is undertaken through various media formats including online, local newsletters and through community groups and events; through the fire prevention program YRC inspect and oversee properties with fire hazard notices and respond to community concerns regarding fuel hazards in their local area. fire preparedness activities in Cardinia are about to commence in November with Fire Inspection Program and the Roadside slashing program; two fuel reduction burns have been undertaken in Autumn, one of which was conducted in Wrights Forest by PV, which is part of the YCA. |
| 5.4 | Include annual Council roadside and reserve annual fire slashing programs are included in the Bushfire Management Plan. | <p>Rec A, p 8</p> <p>Rec C1-8, pp 11-12</p> | | <p>DELWP</p> <p>CFA*</p> <p>YRC</p> | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not considered appropriate for inclusion in the final Plan annual fuel reduction programs include roadside slashing, fuel-break slashing in council managed reserves, planned burns in conjunction with CFA and DELWP and fuel reduction including woody weed removal on roadsides and within council reserves; |

⁷ Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). (2018). *Haining Farm Bushfire Mitigation Measures*. Melbourne: State Government of Victoria. Retrieved from https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.vic-engage.files/4315/3301/9892/20180731_HainingFarmBushfireMitigationMeasuresreport.pdf.

⁸ CFA representation on YCACC lapsed in 2017. CFA provide current information on the CFA website.

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| 5.4 cont. | | | | | | <p>5.4 cont.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the annual program is adaptive based on the Victorian Fire Risk Register and considers high risk areas in programming. This information can be provided to YCACC to assist with the development and review of the YCA Bushfire Management Plan. ▪ SEE ABOVE comment in 5.3 |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

6. Interim Management of Yellingbo Conservation Area

The land will be managed in accordance with recommendation three in the VEAC report and as supported by the Government’s response. The land will be managed in accordance with the recommendations for Nature Conservation Reserve as described in the VEAC report. This includes the following key objectives:

- The land is managed for the overall protection or enhancement of biodiversity and ecological values;
- Encourage management of the Crown land by adjacent landowners, as described in section 4 above.

A clear planning process is required to identify areas with high ecological significance to determine appropriate uses. That process has been initiated by YCACC in a mapping exercise whereby all lands in the YCA have been classified into one of the following categories, namely:

- Conservation;
- Restoration; or
- Biodiversity corridor.

Further planning work in collaboration with reserve users and the wider community is required to determine the appropriate uses. A YCA Plan is the most effective way to identify the priority areas for protection, restoration, and other uses.

Funding assistance from Melbourne Water’s Stream Frontage Management Program will be provided to assist in the removal of domestic stock from areas with high ecological values and for priority site specific conservation or restoration works programs by agencies and volunteer groups.

No action will be taken to remove off-stream stock watering from Crown land where it is required to access current water allocations.

Goal: To coordinate the management of the YCA consistent with the Government supported recommendations.

Performance indicators:

- Implement YCA Action Plan referencing the government supported recommendations;

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- Establish a YCA Plan in collaboration with public land managers, agencies and the community in accordance with the government supported recommendations;
- All public land managers within the YCA are identified and report works and priorities to YCACC.

The following actions are the specific tasks required to achieve the previously listed goals.

| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|-----|--|----------|----------|--|---------|--|
| 6.1 | Manage the land within the YCA in accordance with the government accepted recommendations. | Rec 3 | High | DELWP PV YRC | 2014/15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ongoing - DELWP continues to manage public land throughout the YCA, with the exception of the existing large reserves: Warramate Hills NCR, Haining Farm, Yellingbo NCR, Hoddle's Creek Education Area, Beenak Bushland Reserve and Wright Forest Bushland Reserve managed by Parks Victoria; and Zoos Victoria managing Coranderrk NCR. ▪ subject to future funding bids. ▪ Yarra Ranges Council are Committee of Management for 4 sites in the YCA; Everard Picnic Ground, Doon Caravan Park, Little Yarra Bushland Reserve & Baynes Park. These are managed by councils Bushlands team with programmed works annually for both conservation and recreation purposes. |
| 6.2 | Identify public land managers and the respective responsibilities. | Rec A1 | High | YCACC DELWP PV MW | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public land managers are identified in the initial VEAC report with the notable exception of VicRoads and Local Government for roadside reserves. Until the YCA is formally created the existing land managers continue to be: DELWP; Parks Victoria; Zoos Victoria (Coranderrk); Yarra Ranges Council (Everard Park, Doon Reserve, Butterfield Picnic Ground); Cardinia Shire Council (Baker Street and Bailey Road car park and reserve); VicRoads (wayside stop Warburton Hwy); Local CoM (Millgrove). ▪ ongoing - land managers identified through the YCA draft 10-year Plan. ▪ all public land will be managed by Parks Victoria with waterways managed by Melbourne Water; ▪ Committees of Management (CoMs) will be established post land assignment to Parks Victoria which will reflect current arrangements. ▪ Melbourne Water has contributed to this action in supporting the identification of public land managers and responsibility identification. |

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| 6.2 cont. | | | | ZV YRC CSC TfN | | <p>6.2 cont.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoos Victoria continue to actively manage the Coranderrk Bushland to improve habitat condition. ▪ Yarra Ranges Council has been working with YCACC and DELWP GIS team to provide information on the land that Yarra Ranges manages within the YCA; ▪ information on the programmed works and activities within the YCA are also being provided in an ongoing manner as required. ▪ achieved ▪ 2 properties were purchased and transferred to crown to expand the Yellingbo Conservation Area. They both contained habitat for Helmeted Honeyeaters and Leadbeater's Possum. Collectively these sites are approximately 23 hectares. |
| 6.3 | Identify and promote existing revegetation and pest plant and animal control initiatives. | Rec 3a Recs A, B, C, D, G Rec 5 | High | YCACC DELWP PV MW | 2017/ 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ revegetation and pest plant and animal control initiatives are publicised and advocated by YCACC where possible (<i>Draft Deer Management Strategy September 2018</i>⁹, for example). Further research will enable a more complete population of the website relating to these topics. Any revegetation planning for the YCA has not been made available to YCACC. ▪ the process of developing the YCA Plan has engaged the community in relation to land management including conservation, pest plant and animal control, fire management planning and fire preparedness management, tourism, agriculture, and recreation to establish priorities; ▪ in response to community requests, limited pest plant control has been commissioned by the DELWP Project Implementation Team. ▪ ongoing - some initiatives identified through YCA draft 10-year Plan. ▪ ongoing (mainly focused on pest animal) - pest animal control (deer and fox) has been promoted through local, state and social media. Additional initiatives with the SSAA and ADA have supported collaborative program delivery; ▪ guided by the Healthy Waterways Strategy and delivered through our waterway management programs we identify locations and contribute to re-vegetation along with pest plant and animal controls. |

⁹ Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP). (2018). *Draft Deer Management Strategy*. Melbourne: State Government of Victoria. Retrieved from https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.vic-engage.files/8815/3837/3085/DEDJTR_DeerManagementStrategy_final_v2_003.pdf.

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| 6.4 cont. | | | | DELWP PV MW CFA* TfN | <p>6.4 cont.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ in preparation - refer 6.3 ▪ Fox control, deer control, revegetation at Yellingbo NCR, threatened species monitoring, research partner projects, fuel break slashing, hydrology management in Yellingbo NCR, deer proof fencing, weed control. ▪ Bushfire mitigation works are underway at Haining farm with the development of tracks, water points, bridges etc. ▪ Melbourne Water undertake an ongoing maintenance program within the YCA to support conservation and biodiversity; ▪ this program also supports public amenity and reduces flooding risk; ▪ Melbourne Water undertake monitoring and research into aquatic and riparian habitats that support key values including inventories of vegetation condition. <p>▪ [did not report]</p> |
| 6.5 | Allocate funding and apply for additional funding assistance. | Rec 2 | High | YCACC DELWP PV MW | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YCACC has been unable to recommend funding allocation nor seek funding assistance. ▪ ongoing - YCA draft 10-year Plan has been drafted, will be used to support a funding application. ▪ successful in a State Government funding bid for \$651,000 over 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 to support 'state faunal emblems' at Yellingbo NCR; ▪ successful 'Safer together' funding bid for \$675,000 to deliver bushfire mitigation works at Haining Farm; ▪ funding from PPWP CMA to support Deer monitoring; ▪ Haining Farm received funding for the development of the habitat cell civil construction works, the deer proof fence, cultural heritage management plans and site clean-up. ▪ While the major waterways of the Yarra, Little Yarra and Woori Yallock draw our attention, Melbourne Water does undertake activities across the whole catchment. Works are delivered directly through a range of capital works projects and maintenance activities and indirectly through incentives and grants offered to landholders such as through the Stream Frontage Management Program and Rural Land Program. |

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| 6.5 cont. | | | | | | <p>6.5 cont.</p> <p>Water level of investment in the Yellingbo Investigation Area over the last twelve months across the different programs. (These are works across waterways within the entire investigations area as Melbourne Water does not limit our activities to the public land spaces only).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capital projects have been spread across the Yarra River, Cockatoo Creek, McCrae Creek, Little Yarra River, Hoddles Creek, Woori Yallock Creek, Macclesfield Creek and Wandin Yallock Creek. ▪ Melbourne Water has through the Stream Frontages Program and other established long-term engagement with many neighbouring landowners in the riparian zones. |
| 6.6 | Collate and share with stakeholders all capital and conservation works being undertaken by agencies and conservation groups in the YCA. | Rec 3a | High | YCACC | 2017 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YCACC estimated investment by stakeholders in the YCA in 2016 but has not been provided with the data subsequently to replicate the report; ▪ YCACC has attempted to capture the capital and works programs in the YCA via data fed into the interactive maps on the YCACC website however an incompatibility in interagency data storage/software programs has delayed the collection and collation of this data—the DELWP GIS Officer is assisting to rectify this issue. ▪ Melbourne Water has a wide network of customers and partners we work with and share our works. https://www.melbournewater.com.au/what-we-are-doing/whats-happening-near-me#tour=true |
| 6.7 | Continue to manage existing nature conservation, bushland and streamside reserves to community standards. | Rec 3a | High | DELWP | 2016/ 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing - DELWP continues to manage public land throughout the YCA, with the exception of the existing large reserves managed by Parks Victoria and Zoos Victoria (Coranderrk NCR) Committees of Management etc see earlier. ▪ Yarra Ranges Council are Committee of Management for 4 sites in the YCA; Everard Picnic Ground, Doon Caravan Park, Little Yarra Bushland Reserve & Baynes Park. These are managed by councils Bushlands team with programmed works annually for both conservation and recreation purposes. ▪ funding and resources are prioritised to protect the highest priority environmental assets; ▪ successful in a State Government funding bid for \$651,000 over 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 to support 'state faunal emblems' at Yellingbo NCR. ▪ Melbourne Water support the management of existing reserves to community standards. We have an emergency response where required. |

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| 6.7 cont. | | | | ZV | | <p>6.7 cont</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoos Victoria continue to actively manage the Coranderk Bushland to improve habitat condition. Works include revegetation, weed control, staged removal of invasive Kunzea, re-engagement of the Barak floodplain hydrology, fox and cat control, and management of macropod abundance using contraception or relocation. |
| | | | | TfN | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [did not report] |
| 6.8 | Identify priority areas for restoration (refer to earlier mention of spatial categorisation). | Introduction Recs A, B, C, D, G Rec 5 | High | DELWP | 2016/ 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority areas for restoration have not been identified as yet. The draft YCA 10-year Plan identifies strategic areas for priority for conservation activities. This will provide the basis for identifying priority areas for restoration. High priority areas within Yellingbo NCR have been identified as part of the 20 million trees project for restoration with Greening Australia. \$120k 2018/19 and \$130k 2019/20 from 'faunal emblems funding' to Revegetate Young Swamp in Yellingbo NCR. Melbourne Water have supported the identification of priority areas for restoration. The Healthy Waterways Strategy review undertook a large co-design process in 2017/18. MW held many workshops to engage with customers and help shape the program. https://yoursay.melbournewater.com.au/healthy-waterways The vision for the Yarra (as developed by the community) is:- <i>"Our Yarra catchment waterways are increasingly protected, respected and collaboratively cared for by Traditional Owners, government and community as living and highly valued entities. They are a linked network of thriving corridor and in-stream spaces which nurture biodiversity, deepen the relationship between people and nature, build resilience as our population grows and the climate changes, and contribute to well-being and liveability. Their ecological health and value to the community continuously improves through rehabilitated waterways and balanced uses."</i> The proposed catchment works program for the Yarra is https://yoursay.melbournewater.com.au/Yarra-catchment/catchment-overview-yarra As part of the five-year, \$1Million National Landcare funded project 'Protecting and connecting EPBC listed species in the Yarra Ranges Project' an Ecological Character Description (ECD) was developed for the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowland Leadbeater's possum, which included habitat modelling for priority areas for restoration. An action plan associated with |
| | | | | PV | | |
| | | | | MW | | |
| | | | | PPWCMA | | |

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| 6.8 cont. | | | ZV | | <p>6.8 cont. the ECD was also developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Priority restoration areas have been identified for the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowland Leadbeater’s Possum and the development of restoration strategies for three areas is underway. Habitat restoration at Haining Farm has commenced. |
| 6.9 | Seek funding to support nature conservation and enhancement works including through the existing Yarra4Life program. | | TfN | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ [did not report] |
| 6.9 | Seek funding to support nature conservation and enhancement works including through the existing Yarra4Life program. | | YCACC | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YCACC has not been able to seek funding or aid in the development of future budgets. |
| 6.9 | Seek funding to support nature conservation and enhancement works including through the existing Yarra4Life program. | | PPWCMA | | |
| 6.9 | Seek funding to support nature conservation and enhancement works including through the existing Yarra4Life program. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As part of the five-year, \$1Million National Landcare funded project ‘Protecting and connecting EPBC listed species in the Yarra Ranges Project’ the following enhancement works were achieved through the Yarra4Life program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 20.8 Hectares of revegetation in priority areas to enhance habitat connectivity and structure; ○ 2.3 Hectares of land now known as Burrungma Biik was purchased and transferred to the National Reserves System and in the process of being restored; ○ 13.8km of fencing with 40.5 Ha protected through fencing activities; ○ 91 Ha of weeds were treated; ○ 514.5Ha of pest animal control was undertaken. ○ 30 landowners adopted improved natural resource management practices on their properties. ▪ During 2017/18, the Yarra4Life Coordinating Committee continued to seek funding to support nature conservation and enhancement works. As part of the second phase of the National Landcare Program a new project ‘The Great HeHo Escape’ has been developed and submitted to the Regional Land Partnerships Program. |

7. Preparation of a YCA Plan for the Yellingbo Conservation Area

A YCA Plan to guide the implementation of the YCA will be prepared as a priority to guide the early development and ongoing management of the YCA.

The purpose of the YCA Plan is to provide an overview of the planning direction and principles associated with the management of the YCA. It will provide the overall direction and concept of how the YCA will be managed in the future. The YCA Plan will provide a level of detailed planning to guide the ongoing land management of the YCA now, and after transfer to PV.

In undertaking this planning work in collaboration with the wider community, it is important to provide stakeholders with an understanding of what is negotiable and non-negotiable, so people are clear on the areas they can influence. Non-negotiables are based on the Government's response to the VEAC recommendations and will be communicated clearly and respectfully. There are also several matters where negotiation is possible, and this provides an opportunity to work closely with the community and ensure they are engaged in the process and have some ownership of local decisions on issues of concern.

An outline of the steps involved in the process of developing a YCA Plan is set out below:

- Use YCACC as the coordinating group;
- Review plans that currently apply to the area and determine the scope and content of the YCA Plan;
- Identify stakeholders and communities of interest;
- Meet with stakeholders;
- Prepare draft YCA Plan;
- Undertake public submission process;
- Review submissions and revise draft YCA Plan;
- Share findings through community consultation;
- Given the emphasis placed on collaboration and coordination in establishing the YCA, submit the revised YCA Plan to YCACC Agencies for endorsement (DELWP, PV, Zoos Victoria, Melbourne Water, PPWCMA, Yarra Ranges Council, Cardinia Shire Council, Trust for Nature, CFA, Wurundjeri Tribe Land Council; and
- Adopt final draft YCA Plan and release to the public.

Goals: To prepare and implement an effective YCA planning process across YCA.

To improve revegetation, pest plant and animal control, fire management planning and fire preparedness and on-ground staff presence particularly with a view to improving levels of compliance with regulations.

To connect the community with YCA and the value of biodiversity.

To convene an annual capital works planning workshop between a managers and agencies.

Performance indicators:

- YCA Plan developed and implemented; and
- Coordinated monitoring process established with responsible agencies.

The following actions are the specific tasks required to achieve the previously listed goals.

| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|-----|--|---|----------|----------------------|----------|---|
| 7.1 | Incorporate the outcomes of the YCA Bushfire Management Plan into the YCA Plan to ensure no increase in bushfire risk following the implementation of the YCA. | Rec A1 | High | YCACC DELWP PV | 2016/ 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YCACC was presented with the Bushfire Management Plan. ▪ Complete - outcomes of the <i>YCA Bushfire Risk Management Plan</i> were included in the YCA draft 10 Year Plan. ▪ the Plan has been finalised – a revegetation plan will inform outcome to this action. |
| 7.2 | Develop a categorisation process to identify high value conservation areas within the YCA. | Rec A, B, C, D, G Rec 5 Rec C 1-8 | High | YCACC | 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a broad three level categorisation was developed initially based on the knowledge of YCACC members. Melbourne Water undertook on-ground surveys of specific river reaches identifying high value areas, and areas of pest plant and animal infestation; ▪ subsequently six zones were used in the development of the draft 10-year YCA Plan; ▪ the evidence base for further categorisation is yet to be completed. |
| 7.3 | Establish priority additional revegetation pest plant and animal control initiatives. | Rec A, p. 8 Rec C1-8 pp. 11-12 | High | DELWP PV | 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ some initiatives included in the YCA draft 10-year Plan. ▪ subject to future funding bids; ▪ \$120k 2018/19 and \$130k 2019/20 from ‘faunal emblems funding’ to Revegetate Young Swamp in Yellingbo NCR; ▪ \$178k 2018/19 and \$128k 2019/20 from ‘faunal emblems funding’ for Bell Minor pest animal control and pest animal monitoring in Yellingbo NCR. |
| 7.4 | Apply a balance of social values and conservation values when determining appropriate public access and use areas as part of the YCA planning process. | Rec A | High | YCACC | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the development of the draft YCA 10-year Plan has placed a significant emphasis on community feedback and the recreational needs of the community. |

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| 7.5 | Prepare a communication and engagement plan to deliver community engagement during the development of the YCA Plan. | Rec 6 | High | YCACC DELWP | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Communications and Engagement Plan was developed by the YCA Project Implementation Team. Complete |
| 7.6 | Undertaken community engagement as per plan including meetings with key stakeholders and public drop in sessions. | Rec 6 | High | YCACC DELWP YRC CSC PV MW ZV | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all YCACC members have participated in community engagement activities as per the YCA Plan. Complete - the Yellingbo Conservation Area draft 10-year Plan was developed in conjunction with YCACCC and open for public comment for eight weeks, ending on October 7th. During this period, three community drop in sessions were held, supported by six smaller 'pop-up' sessions. Yarra Ranges Council staff attended each of the community engagement sessions held to support the release of the draft Yellingbo Conservation Area Plan. this is undertaken when required e.g. the YCA Plan community engagement sessions. Complete Melbourne Water has supported the YCA engagement and communications plan development; MW staff have attended drop in sessions and also provide content to newsletters and the webpage. Zoos Victoria attended several community forums focused on aspects of the YCA (e.g. Haining Farm, Draft 10 Year Plan); a meeting was held with the Friends of Leadbeater's Possum Committee to discuss options for their involvement in the recovery of Lowland Leadbeater's Possum. |
| 7.7 | Prepare the draft YCA Plan and run a public submission process to obtain feedback. | Rec 6 | High | YCACC DELWP | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> YCACC endorsed the release of the Draft YCA 10-year plan for public comment on 17 July 2018. complete - the YCA draft 10-year Plan was open for public comment for 8 weeks, ending on October 7th. |
| 7.8 | Prepare an analysis of the public consultation process and show how submissions have been considered in the revised YCA Plan. | Rec 6 | High | DELWP | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not yet started. |
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| 7.9 | Convene annual works and planning workshop between land managers and respective agencies. | Rec 6 | | YCACC | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ summary data have been collected through meeting briefing notes; ▪ one agency workshop held in 2017; ▪ annual works and planning workshops have not been convened - these discussions still occur within the Agency context. |
| 7.10 | Assess the opportunities for Haining Farm and Coranderrk to be used for Helmeted Honeyeater and Leadbeater's Lowland Possum habitat restoration. (see Action 9.6) | Rec 5 Rec E 1 | High | PV DELWP ZV | 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ completed for Haining farm; ▪ LLBP and HeHo habitat to be planted across 40ha in early 2019 including Eucalyptus camphora swamp; ▪ development works are continuing and habitat cell construction and deer proof fencing is complete and re-vegetation has commenced. ▪ ongoing - some opportunities identified in the YCA draft 10 Year Plan. ▪ restoration priorities have been identified at Haining Farm and the Coranderrk Bushland; ▪ habitat restoration is underway at both locations to support future releases of the Helmeted Honeyeater and Leadbeater's Lowland Possum; ▪ this is being done under the PPWCMA Yarra 4 Life project with federal funding through the National Landcare 2 Program – project 'The Great HeHo Escape.' |
| 7.11 | Prioritise preservation and restoration of wildlife corridors along the Yarra River and tributaries riparian areas. (see Action 9.7) | Rec 4 Rec 5 Rec C1-8 | High | YCACC DELWP PV MW TfN | 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ not prioritised in the Draft YCA 10 Year Plan ▪ ongoing - some values identified in the YCA draft 10 Year Plan. ▪ not started ▪ While the major waterways of the Yarra, Little Yarra and Woori Yallock draw our attention, Melbourne Water does undertake activities across the whole catchment. Works are delivered directly through a range of capital works projects and maintenance activities and indirectly through incentives and grants offered to landholders such as though the Stream Frontage Management Program and Rural Land Program. ▪ <i>[did not report]</i> |
| 7.12 | Identify and map the values in the YCA including cultural heritage, biodiversity, recreation opportunities, threatened species, and waterway health using the resources and knowledge of local stakeholders including Shire Councils, other partner agencies and the community. | Intro Rec 3 Rec 6 Rec D | | YCACC DELWP PV | 2017/18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ information required to complete the mapping process not yet provided to YCACC. ▪ ongoing - some values identified in the YCA draft 10 Year Plan. ▪ some aspects of this information are included in the YCA plan; ▪ individual technical assessment exists for some Crown Land parcels e.g. Haining Farm [e.g. cultural heritage and hydrology reports]. |

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| 7.12 cont. | | | ZV | | <p>7.12 cont.</p> <p>population monitoring to determine distribution, population size and trends continues for the Helmeted Honeyeater (lead by DELWP) and Lowland Leadbeater’s Possum (lead by Zoos Victoria).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Melbourne Water has supported the identification and mapping of values through sharing knowledge to the YCA. |
| | | | MW | | |

8. Ongoing Resourcing of the Yellingbo Conservation Area

The purpose of establishing the YCA is to improve the ecological values within the area. These values include increasing the habitat for threatened species, improving and creating corridors for native species, increasing biodiversity and improving water quality. The YCA will include approximately 3,000 Ha of Crown land, currently in varying condition. It is not feasible for Parks Victoria to absorb the additional management burden of this land without additional funding.

The current funding allocation of \$3.2M will most likely be fully expended prior to ongoing land managers being appointed to manage the land, so a request for additional funding will be required to ensure that adequate funding is available to manage the land in accordance with the government’s response to the VEAC report.

The YCA will be managed by a range of different land managers. It is intended that Parks Victoria will be appointed to manage most of the land, with other areas being managed by Zoos Victoria, Trust for Nature, DELWP and various committees of management.

It is proposed to use the development of a long-term YCA Plan for the YCA as the basis for developing a funding request. This will ensure that all land managers are identified and have been allocated sufficient funds to implement the YCA Plan in the areas they are responsible for managing.

Given the interim management of the land by DELWP, it should be possible to gauge a reasonable estimate of the resources required to manage the land to an acceptable level over the long term. That information will be used to develop a funding request to implement the YCA Plan.

Goal: To ensure that resources are available to implement the government supported recommendations of the VEAC Report.

Performance indicator:

- A request for funding has been prepared to support the implementation of the YCA Plan; and
- Funding has been sourced to allow the implementation of the YCA Plan by the land managers.

The following actions are the specific tasks required to achieve the previously listed goals

| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|-----|--|-----------------|----------|--------|----------|---|
| 8.1 | Manage the YCA in accordance with the final YCA Plan. | Additional Item | Medium | DELWP | 2019/ 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in preparation - YCA draft 10-year Plan has been drafted identifying some key management issues. |
| | | | | PV | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> management of the YCA in accordance with the final YCA Plan is subject to funding submissions. |
| | | | | MW | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melbourne Water has provided comments during the creation of the YCA and on the draft plan during the consultation period. |
| | | | | ZV | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> |
| | | | | YRC | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reserves within the YCA that are under a Committee of Management agreement with Yarra Ranges Council are all currently being managed for their conservation values by councils Bushland department. This will continue indefinitely and consider the final requirements and recommendations of the YCA Plan in any future management actions, including revegetation works, weed and pest animal control. |
| | | | | CSC | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> underway. |
| | | | | TfN | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>[did not report]</i> |
| 8.2 | Establish a base level of on-ground staffing required to monitor and manage the YCA. | Rec 2 p. 4 | High | YCACC | 2019/ 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the base level of on-ground staffing has not been identified. |
| | | | | DELWP | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ongoing - YCA Project Implementation Team has been established within DELWP. Staffing within this team has fluctuated from 2 to 4 team members over the past two years which has affected the progress of some of the on-ground monitoring and management tasks in the YCA. The team management position was vacant from October 2017 to March 2017. |
| | | | | PV | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishment of base level on-ground staff to monitor and manage the YCA is subject to future funding submissions; PV have previously made submission on resourcing requirements. |

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|---------------------|---|--|------|--|----------|---|
| 8.2 <i>cont.</i> | | | | MW PPWCMA | | <p>8.2 cont.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Melbourne Water through our operational duties has on-ground staff working in the YCA. If the plan is adopted as proposed, there may be the requirement to seek addition resources. ▪ PPWCMA currently has an Environmental Projects Coordinator (3 days per week) who coordinates the Yarra4Life Program and associated funded projects. |
| 8.3 | Based on information assembled and priorities established, prepare funding proposal that represents value for the taxpayer dollar, for works additional to those already funded for each public land manager/ agency. | Rec 2 p. 4 Rec 6 pp. 6 -7 | High | DELWP PV MW Zoos Victoria YRC CSC TfN | 2017/ 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ not started. ▪ not started. ▪ Melbourne Water will support this process at the appropriate time. ▪ funding was secured from the Victorian Government to implement a range of population and habitat management initiatives for the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowland Leadbeater's Possum as part of the Faunal Emblems programme; ▪ the Victorian Government continue to provide Icon Species funding to assist conservation initiatives underway for the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowland Leadbeater's Possum; ▪ Port Phillip & Westernport CMA submitted a funding bid to restore habitat for the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowland Leadbeater's Possum at two priority areas under the Australian Government's National Landcare Regional Partnerships programme. ▪ additional funding recently announced by DELWP under their Biodiversity Response Planning grant program will also deliver weed removal and pest animal management (namely deer control) on private land within part of the YCA and adjoining private land areas. ▪ YCACC discussions on the topic if future funding has not yet been explored. DELWP have been working in this space behind the scenes for some time. ▪ <i>[did not report]</i> |
| 8.4 | Identify existing and additional funding sources and programs and support funding applications by partner agencies and stakeholders. | Rec 2 p. 4 Rec 6 pp. 6-7 | High | YCACC Yarra4Life | 2017/ 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YCACC has supported funding applications by partner organisations but is not able to seek funding in its own right. ▪ the PPWCMA has successfully sought funding for projects implemented in the YCA. |

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|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------|-------|----------|--|
| 8.4 <i>cont.</i> | | | | YRC | | <p><i>8.4 cont.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yarra Ranges Council has existing programs which can be accessed by private landowners within the YCA including Ribbons of Green and Weed Wipeout. These programs can assist landowners with biodiversity improvements on their land, revegetation and weed removal. ▪ additional funding gained by Cardinia to complement YCA works are; Peri Urban Weed Partnerships Project for environmental works along Cardinia Creek and Landcare Community Grant programs being conducted around Wattle Creek reserve. ▪ <i>[did not report]</i> |
| | | | | CSC | | |
| | | | | TfN | | |
| 8.5 | Identify prioritisation process for funding, (pest plant and animal control, fire management planning and fire preparedness and on-ground staff resources particularly with a view to improving levels of compliance with regulations). | Rec 2 p. 4 Rec 6 pp. 6-7 | High | YCACC | 2017/ 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ despite significant effort in developing the Draft 10 Year YCA Plan, the prioritisation process has not been developed as yet. |
| 8.6 | Promote collaborative conservation and biodiversity programs and support mutually beneficial funding submissions. | Rec 6 pp. 6-7 | High | YCACC | 2017/ 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ good practice case studies which highlight collaborative conservation and biodiversity partnerships are published on the YCACC website. |

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

There is clear evidence that natural resource management programs that invest in outcomes for land, water and biodiversity find it difficult to report to the community about the impact of the project. Therefore, well planned monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) can play an important role in supporting decision making that focuses on continuous improvement. Information generated from MER allows natural resource managers to adapt policies, programs and investment in response to risks and opportunities.

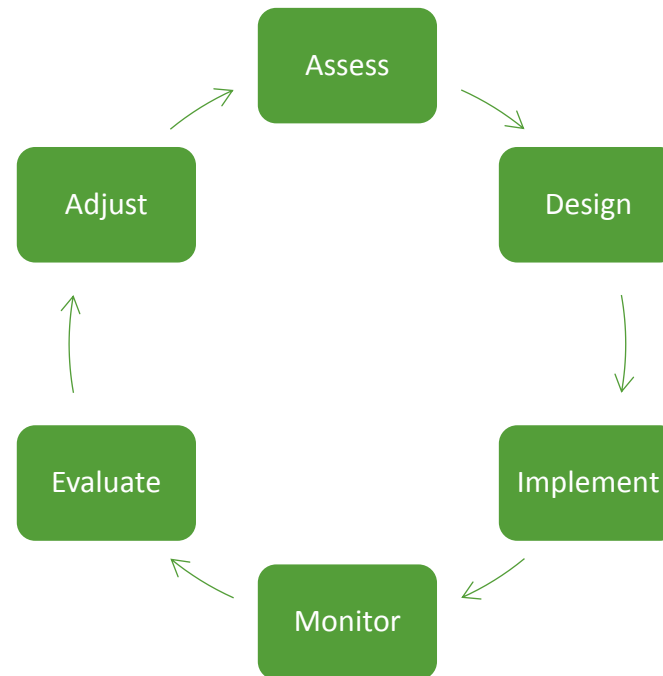


FIGURE 3: MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING CYCLE

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An MER will allow for adaptive management which is a systematic process for continually improving management practices through learning from the outcomes of previous management. The YCA Action Plan takes adaptive management to include (among other things) '...linking knowledge, management, evaluation and feedback over a period of time'¹⁰

The YCACC and member agencies will have regard to the findings and recommendations of evaluations when implementing the YCA and when proposing any amendments. What is learned through monitoring and evaluation is expected to lead not only to an improved knowledge base and continuous improvement to biodiversity conservation with improved landscapes, healthy rivers, improved leisure and recreation opportunities, and confident communities, but to potential revision or refinement of strategic priorities, and a more efficient and effective application of public funds.

Performance indicator:

- Improvement in the status of threatened species as indicated by the monitoring of threatened species by the responsible agencies.
- The Development of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting framework.

The following actions are the specific tasks required to achieve the previously listed goals.

| No. | Action | VEAC Rec | Priority | Agency | Year | Status 2018 |
|-----|--|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|--------------|---|
| 9.1 | Preparation of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) Framework and process to allow continuous adaptive management as part of the YCA Plan. Use the Biodiversity Plan as a reference point. | Additional Action | High | YCACC | 2017/ 18 | ▪ not yet started. |
| 9.2 | Monitoring Communication and Engagement as specified in the Communication and Engagement Plan | Additional Action | Medium | YCACC | 2017 2018 | ▪ commenced. |
| 9.3 | Preparation of the YCA Annual Report | TORs | High | YCACC | 2017 2018 | ▪ completed. |
| 9.4 | Ensure land managers implement the MER to allow for continuous improvement | Additional Action | Medium | YCACC DELWP PV MW | 2019/ 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ not yet started. ▪ not yet started. ▪ ongoing. ▪ Melbourne Water will support the MER development and assist with implementation where required. |

¹⁰ SEWPAC (2013) A Guide to Undertaking Strategic Assessments, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

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| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------|--------|-------|----------|--|
| 9.4 cont. | | | | YRC | | <p>9.4 cont.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ where any MER is developed for the YCA, Yarra Ranges Council would implement the requirements of the plan within the sites it manages in the YCA. ▪ ▪ applying this process to all works undertaken. |
| | | | | ZV | | |
| | | | | CSC | | |
| 9.5 | Publicise the condition of threatened species within the YCA and foster the development of public education initiatives see also Action 3.6 | Additional Action | Medium | YCACC | 2016/ 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ information about threatened species has been posted on the YCACC website; ▪ YCACC member agencies have been requested to provide ongoing information for the YCACC website. ▪ ongoing - the YCA draft 10 Year Plan identifies some key threatened species within precinct and the area in general and makes recommendations relating to education. ▪ ongoing - particular focus on LLBP and HeHo; ▪ Education Officer employed by Greening Australia to deliver education programs at Haining Farm; ▪ \$10k 2018/19 and \$10k 2019/20 from 'faunal emblems funding' to involve community stakeholders in monitoring activities and continue to implement education programs to improve understanding of Leadbeater's Possum and their management. ▪ Zoos Victoria continue to promote the conservation of the Helmeted Honeyeater and Lowland Leadbeater's Possum through its 'Fighting Extinction' schools program and 'Love Your Locals' program; ▪ a podcast was developed focused on the conservation of Lowland Leadbeater's Possum. ▪ Melbourne Water will support the publicity of the condition of threatened species as appropriate. ▪ ▪ on Cardinia website. ▪ <i>[did not report]</i> |
| | | | | DELWP | | |
| | | | | PV | | |
| | | | | ZV | | |
| | | | | MW | | |
| | | | | YRC | | |
| | | | | CSC | | |
| | | | | TfN | | |

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|-----|---|---------------------------|------|---|----------|---|
| 9.6 | Assess the opportunities for Haining Farm and Coranderrk to be used for Helmeted Honeyeater and Leadbeater's Lowland Possum habitat restoration (see Action 7.10) | Rec 5 Rec E 1 | High | PV ZV | 2016/ 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 40ha of Haining Farm will be revegetated for LLBP and HeHo habitat in 2019; ▪ restoration will also include establishment of FFG listed Eucalyptus camphora swamp; ▪ it is expected to take 10 years until HeHo and LLBP can be introduced to the site; ▪ development works are continuing, and habitat cell construction and deer proof fencing is complete and re-vegetation has commenced. ▪ the suitability of both locations for these species has been confirmed; ▪ habitat restoration has commenced at both locations to support future releases of the two species. |
| 9.7 | Prioritise preservation and restoration of wildlife corridors along the Yarra River and tributaries riparian areas (see Action 7.11) | Recs 4 and 5 Recs C1-8 | High | YCACC DELWP PV MW TfN | 2016/ 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preservation and restoration of wildlife corridors is the focus of a number of programs/projects within the YCA including the PPWCMA Yarra4Life projects, habitat restoration at Haining Farm, Stream Frontages projects and Rural Land Program. ▪ Ongoing - some areas identified through the YCA draft 10 Year Plan. ▪ not started ▪ Melbourne Water will continue to support the preservation and restoration of wildlife corridors within existing programs. ▪ <i>[did not report]</i> |

Role of YCACC in Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

The YCACC will monitor the implementation of the YCA process through its regular monthly meeting schedule.

Technical evaluation of the effectiveness of individual project works will be undertaken by the relevant lead agencies involved with the works and processes and reported to YCACC.

YCACC will review and evaluate engagement and communication strategies and outcomes and amend the Engagement and Communication plan at least annually or as required.

As a basis for evaluation and review the following data will be monitored:

- Newsletters produced;
- Database currency and requests to be included on the mailing list;

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- Community consultation including sessions held and surveys /feedback sought;
- Press releases and press coverage;
- Website currency and traffic; and
- Works undertaken.

This information will form the basis for discussion at the evaluation Committee meeting.

Reporting of progress and outcomes will be undertaken by YCACC through its obligations to the Minister under its terms of reference, via its Annual Report.

Under these arrangements, it is envisaged that by the process of continuous improvement, the implementation of the YCA will be closely monitored and evaluated by the YCACC and subsequent actions modified considering experience and evidentiary reporting.

Appendix A

YCACC Terms of Reference

Definitions

1. In these Terms of Reference

Committee means the Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee

Code of Conduct: means

The *Code of Conduct* issued by the Victorian Public Sector Standards Commissioner and made under section 61 of the *Public Administration Act 2004*, published [here](#); and

The *Directors' Code of Conduct and Guidance Notes* issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission (published at <http://vpssc.vic.gov.au/resources/directors-code-of-conduct-andguidance-notes/>)

Department: means the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

DPC Guidelines: means the *Guidelines for the Appointment and Recruitment of Part-Time Non-Executive Directors of State Government Boards and Members of Statutory Bodies and Advisory Committees* as issued by the Department of Premier and Cabinet – see the [appointment and remuneration guidelines](#).

Member: means a member of the committee and includes a reference to the Convenor unless the contrary intention is expressed.

Minister: means the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water;

PAA: means the *Public Administration Act 2004*;

Public sector employee: has the meaning given in section 4(1) of the PAA.

Secretary: means the Secretary to the Department.

Establishment of the committee

2. The Minister establishes an inter-departmental committee, to be known as the Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee, effective from the date of these Terms of Reference.

Functions

3. The functions of the committee are to

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Improve coordination and collaboration between land managers and other agencies involved in the management of the Yellingbo Conservation Area (the area); and,

Establish strategic priorities and clear directions for the area to assist land managers, local government and the community, to work in partnership to achieve better environmental outcomes.

Accountabilities

4. To give effect to its functions the Committee will:

- Prepare the Yellingbo Conservation Area Action Plan for priority land management programs in the area;
- Be a consultation forum for the review of strategic or management plans prepared by represented public land managers for land within the area; and,
- Consider and advise represented public land managers on the means by which they may encourage complimentary management on adjacent private land.

Yellingbo Conservation Area Action Plan

5. The plan prepared by the committee will:

- Establish strategic priorities and clear directions for the area to assist land managers, local government and the community to work in partnership to achieve better environmental outcomes in the area;
- Articulate the links between the plan and strategic or management plans produced by represented public land managers;
- Subject to the endorsement of represented public land managers, establish priority land or biodiversity actions within the area that increase the profile of the biodiversity and ecological values of the area;
- Identify resources and partnerships essential to the achievement of the identified priority actions; and,
- Prioritise actions by consideration of the most efficient and effective application of public funds.

6. The committee will review and update the plan every three years. Three months prior to the expiration of a plan the committee will forward a copy of the proposed successor plan to the Minister, for in principle endorsement.

7. In preparing or reviewing the plan the committee will consult with reserve users and other relevant stakeholders.

Annual business plan

8. The committee will prepare a business plan each year, on or before 31 May.

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9. The proposed business plan will include

- The nature and scope of the activities to be undertaken by the committee to address the functions specified in the terms of reference;
- The performance targets and other measures by which the performance of the committee may be judged in relation to its functions; and,
- Estimates of the expenditure required to support the operation of the committee for the financial year.

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10. The committee will report to the Minister within three months of the end of each financial year on:

The committee's discharge of its functions, as described in these Terms of Reference;

The completion of actions prioritised by the plan; AND,

The committee's performance against the performance indicators and other measures in its annual business plan.

11. The Committee is subject to the general direction of the Minister in the performance of its functions.

12. Each member of the committee is required to comply with these Terms of Reference.

13. Each member of the committee must at all times act:

- In accordance with the codes of conduct; and,
- In a matter that is consistent with the public sector values in section 7(1) of the PAA.

Powers

14. The Committee may not enter into any agreements, contracts, employ staff, or hold or expend funds.

Timeframe

15. The Committee operates for ten years from the date of these Terms of Reference.

Membership

16. The Committee consists of:

A convenor;

Eight agency representatives – one from each of Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Yarra Ranges Council, Cardinia Shire Council, Department of Environment, Land, Water and planning, Zoos Victoria, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority; and Trust for Nature; and

Four community representatives (three nominated by Yarra Ranges Shire and one nominated by Cardinia Shire Council).

Term of appointment

17. A Member is appointed by the Minister for the term of office specified in his or her letter of invitation.

Remuneration and expenses

18. The Convenor and community representatives are entitled to receive remuneration for their services on the committee as set out in our letter of invitation.

19. Agency representatives are not entitled to remuneration.

20. A member – other than any agency representative – who is a public sector employee is only eligible to be paid remuneration in accordance with the DPC Guidelines.

21. No additional remuneration is payable to a member for time spent in preparation for meetings of the committee.

22. A member – other than an agency representative – is entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable travel and personal expenses related to their services on the Committee, at the rates that apply to employees of the department.

Removal from office and Vacancies

23. The Minister, without cause or notice, may remove a member from office at any time.

24. The office of a member becomes vacant if

- a member resigns in writing to the Minister;
- a member is removed from office;
- a member dies or in the opinion of the Minister, becomes incapable of performing his/her duties;
- a member becomes a bankrupt or a person disqualified from acting as a director or acting in management of a company;
- a member fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings without the permission of the convenor (in the case of the convenor without the permission of the Minister);
- a member fails to attend 75% of meeting over any given 12-month period without permission of the Minister (in the case of the convenor without the permission of the Minister); or,

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- a nominating body advises that advises the Minister and their nominee, in writing, that it wishes to nominate a new person for appointment as a member to represent them.

25. Upon a vacancy occurring in the office of a member, the vacancy may be filled by the Minister in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

Meeting Procedure

26. Meetings of the Committee may be conducted in a manner determined by the Convenor subject to these Terms of Reference or any direction given by the Minister or the Secretary.

27. The quorum of a meeting consists of consists of a majority of the members present at a meeting.

28. If the Convenor is absent, or the office of Convenor is vacant, the members present at a meeting may elect from the members present a member to preside at that meeting.

29. The Convenor, or presiding member, must ensure, as far as practicable, that every member has adequate opportunity to participate in discussions.

30. Decisions of the committee will be sought through consensus. Where consensus is not achieved, the Chair may choose to initiate a vote of the Committee, with decisions to be determined by a majority.

31. Voting decisions can only occur with all members present, or out of session by agreement.

32. At the commencement of each meeting, the Convenor must enquire of all members whether there is any potential for a conflict of interest to Arise in respect to any item on the meeting agenda or any matter to be discussed and an interest held by a member.

Minutes

33. The Convenor must

Ensure that the minutes of each meeting are kept; and,

Circulate the minutes for comment by members before being formally adopted at the next meeting.

Conflicts of interest and other standards of conduct

34. The Committee must ensure that processes are in place to deal with conflicts of interest that-

Apply to both financial and non-financial interests; and,

Require full disclosure of interests at meetings of the board and the recording of the disclosure in the minutes of the meeting.

35. The Committee must have regard to the *Conflicts of Interest and Duty: A Practical Guide for Directors of Public Entities* issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission (published at <http://vpssc.vic.gov.au/html-resources/conflicts-of-interest-and-duty/>) in its deliberations, proceedings or meetings.

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36. A member who has a direct pecuniary or private interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting of the Committee must declare the nature of the interest and the potential for there to be a conflict: At the commencement of the meeting; or, If they become aware of an interest during discussions, as soon as possible after becoming aware of the interest.
37. A member who has made a declaration of a potential conflict of interest may not be present or take part in any discussion of the matter to which the declaration relates unless the Committee agrees otherwise.
38. A member who has made a declaration of a potential conflict of interest must not vote on the matter to which the declaration relates.
39. The Convenor or member presiding at a meeting at which a declaration of interest is made must cause the declaration to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
40. The Convenor must keep a record of declared interests. Any member may request and be granted access to this register of interests.
41. The Committee must ensure that it has a gifts and hospitality policy in place that conforms with the Department's Model Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy ([see gifts, benefits and hospitality](#)).
42. The Committee must ensure that it has a dispute resolution policy in place that conforms with the Department's Model dispute resolution Policy ([see dispute-resolution](#)).

Time Commitment

43. Members are expected to attend a minimum of 75% of meetings.

Confidentiality and other duties of members

44. The requirements of section 79(2) & (3) and 81(1) © of the PAA apply to the Committee and its members as if the member is a director of a public entity, and the Committee is a public entity and the board of a public entity for the purposes of these provisions. The Minister may authorise the Committee to release specified information to third parties.
45. On the termination or expiry of a member's appointment, the member must return all documents relating to the Committee to the Convenor

Intellectual Property

46. The rights to Intellectual property created by the members of the Committee in the course of their duties on the committee, including any reports required under these Terms of Reference, is the property of the State of Victoria. However, The Minister on behalf of the State grants the Committee a license to use this property as authorised under these Terms of Reference. In this clause Intellectual property includes legal rights that protect the results of creative efforts including copyright, proprietary rights in relation to inventions (including patents), registered and unregistered trademarks, confidential

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information (including trade secrets and know how), registered designs, circuit layouts, and all other proprietary rights resulting from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields but does not include moral rights.

Insurance

47. It is the responsibility of each member to ensure that he or she maintains adequate insurance in relation to their activities as a member of the committee

Secretariat support to the Committee

48. Parks Victoria will provide secretariat support to the Committee, and will act as the liaison between the Committee and the Minister.

Amendments and Revocation

49. The Minister may amend these Terms of Reference in writing at any time.

50. The Minister may revoke these Terms of Reference in writing at any time and upon revocation of these Terms of Reference the Committee ceases to exist.

Dated 27/10/15

Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

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