



*Warrandyte Community Association*

INC. A0042350W

PO Box 75, **Warrandyte** 3113

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19 Oct 2012

SUBMISSION BY THE  
Warrandyte Community Association Inc.  
On

2012 Review: Future directions for Native Vegetation in Victoria

To: Department of Sustainability and Environment

#### WCA ORGANIZATION

This submission is made on behalf of the Warrandyte Community Association Inc (WCA) and its membership of over 200 Warrandyte residents.

The WCA is the focus group for the Warrandyte community and has the following objectives:

- Promote all aspects of community life in Warrandyte
- Defend the character and heritage of the Township
- Protect the environment and encourage restoration and regeneration of native flora and fauna
- Protect the Green Wedge (non-urban areas)
- Promote sporting, educational, recreational and cultural activities
- Defend and enhance community assets.

The WCA has been very active in past years monitoring developments to maintain appropriate, environmental, planning and heritage standards and assist individual residents in submissions to local Councils. As a broadly representative community organisation, with longstanding environmental credentials, the WCA is confident that a majority of Warrandyte residents are supportive of the aims of the Native Vegetation Framework.

The Association welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the Review.

#### 1. BACKGROUND

The WCA acknowledges the complexity of this Framework (try reading Section 7.3 of the Review Document!) but believes the Framework:

- provides a Governmental context for the dedicated volunteer effort devoted to the enhancement of our native vegetation and habitat here and in so many areas of our State;

- has been valuable driver of planning review. The Association relied on the Framework during argument regarding proposed development of a fragile allotment in Osborne Road. The subdivision proposal was very marginal and the Framework rightly demanded exhaustive consideration;
- gives some assurance for residents concerned about the long-term decline in the extent and quality of our native vegetation. Dilution of protection measures would therefore cause consternation.

## 2. CONTEXT: ACHIEVEMENT OF FRAMEWORK

The aim of the Framework is to achieve Net Gain in quality and extent of native vegetation across Victoria. The Association submits that a reasonable reading of the performance data provided by the Department is that the State is very likely not achieving this aim.

Box 1 on page 11 of the consultation paper indicates a net loss of 4090 Habitat Hectare per year.

The Department's Native Vegetation Tracking overview 2009/10 reports that in 2009/10 clearing of native vegetation has been kept at low levels (128HHa) and was trending down from the previous year. A lay reader would be concerned to read on that 46.5% of that native vegetation cleared was "of very high conservation significance".

Our Association submits that though complex, the Framework is working; it is slowing the clearing on private land and helping our community seriously evaluate any proposal.

## 3. SUBMISSION

### 3.1 Use of vegetation Models

Proposed Actions 2.1-2.4 propose using a refined form of the Department's database "NaturePrint" to improve available site data and streamline the application process. Our Association has no knowledge of this database but past experience indicates there is a need to be cautious with such a proposal:

- There will be a wealth of data from a myriad of sources but how recent is the data which can be brought to bare on a particular site?
- What is the quality of that data, the veracity of the model?
- What are the processes deployed to keep it up-to date? For example, when a development is approved leading to clearing is the model then updated to show loss of that Habitat Hectare?
- What processes has the Department put in place to model the likely impacts of Climate Change and has this may re-scale the value of particular specie habitats?
- Has it been recognised if site quality assessments are to be prioritised/reduced that there will be a reduction in the inflow of recent data to the database and therefore replacement surveys will be required to maintain this Model?

It is our submission that professional site specific assessment should continue to fulfil a key role in the application of the Framework. This is an Investment.

### 3.2 Risk based pathways

Our membership is urban fringe based, on the edge and within green-wedge planning zones. Properties range from residential allotment to 20 hectares; in our submission the Review should avoid proposing risk management methods to downgrade the Framework focus on smaller sites.

Figure 5, "Referred and approved permitted clearing permit applications", indicates 10 percent of applications are responsible for 76 percent of permitted clearing in Habitat Hectares. Our smaller allotments are therefore likely to fall within the remaining 24% but they are never-the-less of concern to us as we focus on the distribution of species and the richness that remnant vegetation brings to the fabric of our community. This consciousness, this concern with Proposed actions 3.1-3.3, is also important to the integrity of the Warrandyte State Park which is interwoven though the area. Replicated throughout the State, such small sites represent part of the living fabric within which urban Victorians live.

### 3.3 Improving Regulatory Performance

The Association is regularly asked to assist residents with complaints about no-compliant clearing to our local Councils; there is a recognised need for better performance on follow-up by those Councils and no doubt by Councils in general. Supporting Reform 2 therefore has strong support.

sincerely,

Doug Seymour

For committee of the

Warrandyte Community Association Inc

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