

**SCHEDULE 2 TO THE VEGETATION PROTECTION OVERLAY**

Shown on the planning scheme map as **VPO2**

**SIGNIFICANT VEGETATION****1.0 Statement of nature and significance of vegetation to be protected**

The vegetation of the City of Greater Bendigo has been extensively cleared due to European settlement, agricultural land uses and exploitation of forests during the gold-rush era. The remaining vegetation is significant for its diversity and environmental value in providing habitat areas of state, national and international significance. In particular, large areas of remnant and regrowth box-ironbark forests surround Bendigo and Heathcote.

Extensive areas remain in public ownership in the Whipstick and Kamarooka State Parks, One Tree Hill and Eaglehawk Regional Parks, Maiden Gully, Marong, Wellsford and Mandurang State Forests, Diamond Hill Historic Reserve and various flora, fauna and bushland reserves. However, important tracts of forest are also in private ownership and subject to development pressures.

Remnant vegetation often contains mature trees and/or trees with hollows which are rare in this area and vital for fauna conservation.

Remnant vegetation is a key feature of Bendigo's landscapes and the scenic recreational value for local and regional communities.

Retaining vegetation is also critical to catchment management in terms of both surface and ground water quality, the control of salinisation, acidity and waterlogging and prevention of erosion.

**2.0 Vegetation protection objective to be achieved**

To protect remnant native vegetation and habitat, including understorey, and facilitate natural revegetation.

To promote the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity.

To encourage maintenance and development of linkages between existing remnant vegetation.

To recognise the catchment-wide land and water management benefits resulting from vegetation retention.

To maintain and enhance Bendigo's scenic and recreational landscape assets.

**3.0 Permit requirement**

A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation.

This does not apply to:

- Vegetation which is not native vegetation.
- The removal, destruction or lopping of vegetation, the minimum extent necessary, for works undertaken by or on behalf of VicRoads required for construction of the new Calder Highway between Faraday and Ravenswood on land within a Road Zone, Category 1 or covered by a Public Acquisition Overlay.

#### 4.0 Application requirements

An application to remove native vegetation must:

- Indicate the total extent of native vegetation on the site and adjacent to the site, the extent of proposed clearing on the site, the location of any river, stream, watercourse, wetland or channel on the site, and if relevant, the location of areas with a slope exceeding 25%.
- Explain the purpose of the proposed clearing.
- Demonstrate that the need for removal, destruction or lopping of remnant native vegetation has been reduced to the maximum extent that is reasonable and practicable.
- Specify proposals for revegetation following disturbance or restoration of an alternate site, including proposed species and ground stabilisation.
- If the area of proposed clearing exceeds 0.4 ha. A report on the vegetation and habitat significance of the area to be cleared, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

#### 5.0 Comments

The responsible authority may seek the comments of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment to ensure that the environmental objectives are satisfied.

#### 6.0 Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application, the responsible authority must consider:

- The need to retain remnant vegetation and conserve flora and fauna habitats including habitat corridors and biolinks.
- The significance of the vegetation in terms of physical condition, rarity and variety.
- The purpose of removal, destruction or lopping of vegetation and alternative ways of carrying out development on the site.
- The effect of removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation on resident and migratory fauna and the need to retain trees (live and dead) with hollows for habitat value.
- Impacts on soil, water, flora, fauna, air and ecosystems.
- The future use of the land and whether it is appropriate to include conditions requiring planting, replanting or other treatment of any part of the site.
- Any comments from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.