

SCHEDULE 3 TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OVERLAY

Shown on the planning scheme map as **ESO3**.

BARFOLD GORGE**1.0 Statement of environmental significance**

Barfold gorge is significant for a diversity of volcanic features including basalt columns, waterfalls, lava caves and tessellated pavements. The gorge represents a very good example of geological processes associated with the volcanic history of north west Victoria.

It contains very good examples of active erosion and the resultant talus piles. The Campaspe River has exposed a lava sequence which is one of the best exposures of magmatic differentiation in the new volcanics in Victoria. The area has high education value as a geological excursion site.

The rare plant *discaria pubescens* is found growing in the gorge and platypuses have been seen in pools below the falls.

The dramatic scenery of the 80m gorge is of aesthetic significance in a mostly undulating topography.

The area is also of historical significance as the site of the 1860 Campaspe River gold rush, some evidence of which is still visible. It is a good example of a small scale short-lived gold field.

Description

Barfold Gorge is approximately 300ha in size and is located 6.5km south of Redesdale between the Campaspe River and Pipers Creek. It is a steep-sided, narrow gorge up to 80m deep, incised into the volcanic plain by the Campaspe River, exposing a sequence of three lava flows with intervening fossil soils. There are cliffs of basaltic columns, waterfalls, lava caves etc. which add to the dramatic scenery of the Gorge.

Much native vegetation, including River Red Gums, remains and provides habitat for more than 95 species of bird recorded in the vicinity.

The Italian prospector, Geo Antagnini, found gold in July 1860 at the foot of the Gorge slope. A small rush to the Campaspe River diggings, later to be called the Italian Diggings, peaked at around 200 miners. This quickly dwindled to half when it was realised shafts would be necessary. By March 1861 only a few miners remained. More recent attempts at gold mining took place in the 1930's. The remains of tunnels into the sub-basaltic gravels on the western side of the 'Italian Diggings' can still be seen.

The area has been grazed since 1850s but steepness and ruggedness of gorge has ensured relatively little disturbance.

2.0 Environmental objective to be achieved

- To provide for the conservation, maintenance and enhancement of significant environmental features which are of scientific importance, natural beauty, environmental interest, environmental importance or natural heritage value and which therefore form an essential component of the natural heritage and character of the area.
- To protect natural environmental processes, maintain bio-diversity and protect natural resources of soil, water, flora and fauna.

3.0 Permit requirement

Application of the kind listed below must be referred to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the National Trust

- Subdivision creating lots less than 40 hectares.
- Intensive agriculture, lot feeding, poultry farming and pig keeping or any other intensive land use.
- Any use or development which the responsible authority considers may not satisfy the environmental objective of this schedule.
- All applications for use and development of land within 100 metres of the Barfold Gorge.

A permit is not required for routine maintenance works on land managed by Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

4.0 Decision guidelines

An applicant must demonstrate that the proposed development has considered the following issues, prior to the responsible authority deciding on an application:-

- the primary purpose for which the land is zoned
- the orderly and proper planning of the relevant zone
- the preservation of the amenity of the area and the need to prevent unnecessary intrusive development from occurring in visually exposed areas.
- the preservation of the natural environment and the prevention of erosion
- the necessity or otherwise of retaining a buffer strip of vegetation in the vicinity of water courses roads and property boundaries or in visually prominent areas of the site.

Any consent granted may include conditions requiring replanting, sowing down or other treatment of any area to be cleared, including fencing, protection and management of remnant vegetation and exclusion of stock and domestic animals.