



## Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

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Simon McMillan  
Chief Executive Officer  
City of Whitehorse  
379-397 Whitehorse Road  
NUNAWADING STATE POSTCODE

Ref: 2022287

22 September 2020

Dear Mr McMillan

### HEALESVILLE FREEWAY RESERVE – PROPOSAL FOR WHITEHORSE CITY COUNCIL

On 14 August 2020, myself and Dick Ford, Regional Manager of Land and Built Environment, held a meeting with several representatives from the City of Whitehorse to explore Council's potential interest in becoming future manager of the land currently known as the Healesville Freeway Reserve (HFR).

Whilst Parks Victoria has previously been flagged as the likely future manager of the HFR, Parks Victoria has recently expressed to DELWP their view that the HFR does not align strategically with their core role and would invite an alternate land manager being identified and appointed.

The purpose of this letter is to provide yourself and your staff with an overview of the land and all associated matters to enable Council to review and evaluate whether it wishes to express interest in becoming Committee of Management over the HFR.

#### 1. Land Overview and Status

The land currently known as the Healesville Freeway Reserve covers 32 hectares of land and comprises 11 parcels (**Appendix 1**) that were surrendered to the Crown by the Department of Transport (DoT)/VicRoads in October 2018.

All parcels are now reserved for "Conservation, recreation and leisure" purposes under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978*, and DELWP is currently managing the reserve as interim manager until such time as a permanent land manager is appointed.

Since the land transferred to the Crown, DELWP and DoT has undertaken a range of remediation work throughout the linear reserve to prepare the land for the appointment of a land manager. This work has included demolition of derelict building, removal of dumped rubbish including building waste and asbestos, and removal of invasive weeds.

DELWP has an interim management plan (**Appendix 2**) in place for HFR that is focused on reducing risk, maintain the accessibility for pedestrians, responding to complaints and preparing the land for handover to the long-term land manager.

#### 2. Boundaries and Current Zoning

The boundaries of HFR are represented in **Appendix 3** and highlighted in bright green.

Some parcels are currently zoned PPRZ, whilst other parcels are zoned GRZ5 in part or wholly. DELWP believes all parcels within the corridor should be zoned PPRZ, and DELWP's Planning Unit will facilitate all necessary rezoning. Regardless of which authority becomes land manager, DELWP will align with Council prior to initiating the rezoning of relevant parcels.

Note there is one additional parcel at 71 Morack Road Vermont (SPI 1\LP53195) that is currently still owned by DoT and subject to a residential lease to a long-term tenant. That lease will remain in place in perpetuity until the tenant either elects to terminate the lease or passes away, after which point that parcel will be surrendered to the Crown and available for incorporation into the HFR.

### **3. Funding**

In 2019 and 2020, DoT sold several freehold parcels of land adjoining the boundary of the current HFR corridor. The proceeds of these sales are saved in trust for assignment to the eventual land manager, to fund park planning, establishment and initial maintenance.

As of the date of this letter, **\$10,585,327** is currently being held in trust by DoT.

In addition, DoT is owner of 2 additional parcels of land at 79 and 79A Morack Road, Vermont (SPI 1\TP757678 and 1\TP257703) that are also flagged for sale, with the proceeds to be added to the funding for the future land manager. DoT estimate an additional **\$1,000,000** likely to be generated from the sale and added to the existing funds above. The parcels are currently zoned PPRZ and will need to be rezoned prior to the land being put on the market.

The funding identified above is one-off in nature. There is no ongoing funding allocated from Government at this time.

#### ***Question for Council:***

The land adjoining 79/79A Morack Road is currently zoned NRZ5. DELWP has offered to rezone 79/79A Morack Road on behalf of DoT whilst we rezone the anomalous parcels within the HFR corridor. **Can Council please confirm that it agrees with 79/79A Morack Road being rezoned to NRZ5 in alignment with the adjoining land?**

### **4. Nadrasca Farm**

Nadrasca, a disability service provider, operate a community farm at 82 Morack Road, which is part of parcel 2159\PP3337 (**Appendix 4**). The land is currently zoned PPRZ.

Nadrasca's tenure on the site is based on a license previously held with DoT. That licence is now in overholding and it is suggested that DELWP maintain a direct lease with Nadrasca for that portion of parcel 2159\PP3337 it occupies and exclude it from the rest of the HFR land to be assigned to the future land manager.

We understand Nadrasca may currently slightly encroach outside of their license footprint into the HFR corridor. DELWP would address and resolve that directly with Nadrasca as part of establishing a new lease for the site.

### **5. Private Encroachments**

DELWP is aware of a small number of private encroachments onto parcel 2152\PP3337 near Bellbird Dell Reserve. These appear to involve an incorrect alignment of the rear boundary fence line of approximately 5 houses in Glenora Drive, Vermont (**Appendix 5**).

DELWP would work to resolve these encroachments prior to a land manager being appointed. Given the minor extent and length of time of the encroachments, DELWP may elect to resolve the issue through adjusting the parcel boundary.

## **6. Vermont Secondary School**

The school had previously communicated to DELWP their concern over a derelict house adjacent to the school at 67 Morack Road (parcel 2160\PP3337) which had attracted antisocial behaviour (**Appendix 6**). That house has since been demolished and the adjacent land is now fully cleared of structures.

We understand from our discussions with Council that the school has previously indicated an interest in obtaining additional land to facilitate the school's growth.

## **7. Community Consultation and Concept Plan**

DELWP engaged a consultancy named CoDesign in 2016 to undertake community engagement activities to inform a concept plan for the HFR. The engagement received 620 direct participants and submissions which included the community's different views on the future purpose and use of the reserve. These included suggestions for shared use paths for cyclists and pedestrians, on and off lead dog areas, open space for recreational play, and a focus on biodiversity values.

These engagement activities informed a Concept Plan that was finalised in 2018. The concept plan was intended to help inform the future land manager when undertaking detailed master planning for the reserve.

At this stage, no further detailed planning or implementation of paths, functional spaces etc. has been undertaken.

A copy of the 2018 Healesville Freeway Reserve Concept Plan, incorporating the 2016 community engagement, is enclosed with this letter.

## **8. Naming**

In 2018, DELWP conducted a community survey via mailout to adjacent suburbs and via a survey on the Engage Victoria website, seeking suggestions for a new name for the reserve.

135 name suggestions were received, almost all of which were unique.

- 58% of suggestions followed 1 of 7 reoccurring 'themes.'
- The most common 'theme', at 23% of all responses, requested giving the reserve an indigenous name.

The land is currently in disputed Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) status. DELWP's last commitment to the community was that we would follow-up with the three aboriginal organisations with an interest in the land, being the Bunurong, Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung,

On initial approach to Bunurong and Boonwurrung were initially interested in participating, however Wurundjeri declined, based on the disputed status of the land. DELWP's Aboriginal Inclusion Officer has recently raised the opportunity with the organisations again and we are awaiting responses.

A copy of the Renaming Survey Results is enclosed with this letter.

## **9. Drainage Issues**

Through our interim management of the HFR, DELWP is aware that some areas of the reserve may be subject to stormwater inundation issues during heavy rains. From both observation and feedback from residents, the recurring area of concern is parcel 2151\PP3337, between the Whitehorse Horticultural Centre and Community garden to the north, and houses along the boundary to the south.

DELWP recently created makeshift trenches along the southern boundary of that parcel to prevent inundation into the rear yards of residences along Murray Court, as an interim solution ahead of DELWP installing improved drainage in that area.

DELWP does not have any formal reports or surveys in relation to drainage across the corridor that we can provide to Council.

#### **10. Residual waste and contamination**

DELWP has been progressively working through the linear corridor to clear waste and contamination relating to previous occupation and other uses of the land. To date large amounts of asbestos and building waste has been cleared by both DELWP and DoT prior to the land being surrendered to the Crown.

DELWP is aware of additional areas which contain or may contain waste requiring removal,

- Central area of parcel 2151\PP3337 between Teal Court and Bellara Street; some residual building material has been discovered after removing dense weed and undergrowth. DELWP is currently obtaining quotes to remove this waste within the coming month.
- Eastern end of parcel 2151\PP3337 close to Terrara Road; this area used to contain horse agistment, and DELWP field crews are aware of star pickets and other residual materials that are gradually being removed as they are discovered.
- Parcel 2160\PP3337 (67 Morack Road) is likely to contain some residual building material following the recent demolition of the house on that parcel. DELWP will work through and identify any residual waste as it progressively clears that parcel of weeds.

It is DELWP's intention that all the areas listed above will be cleared prior to a land manager being appointed.

We recognise this is an initial step in formally opening a dialogue with Council on its potential interest in managing the Healesville Freeway Reserve, and that there will likely be follow-up queries and clarifications required to enable Council to make a formal decision.

Should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0436 945 640 or [david.adeson@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:david.adeson@delwp.vic.gov.au).

Regards,



**David Adeson**

Program Manager, Land and Built Environment  
Port Phillip Region

Encl.

**APPENDIX 1  
LAND PARCELS**

<b>SPI Code</b>	<b>Planning Scheme Zoning (as at 18/9/20)</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Official Area</b>
2151\PP3337	Part GRZ5 / PPRZ	Crown Parcel	9.4552 Ha
2161\PP3337	GRZ5	Crown Parcel	0.8584 Ha
2163\PP3337	GRZ5	Crown Parcel	2.4197 Ha
2154\PP3337	GRZ5	Crown Parcel	1.1997 Ha
2159\PP3337	PPRZ	Crown Parcel	2.6849 Ha
2155\PP3337	GRZ5	Crown Parcel	1.8057 Ha
2152\PP3337	Part GRZ5 / PPRZ	Crown Parcel	5.8390 Ha
2164\PP3337	GRZ5	Crown Parcel	1.7848 Ha
2160\PP3337	GRZ5	Crown Parcel	1.4163 Ha
2162\PP3337	GRZ5	Crown Parcel	4.1364 Ha
2153\PP3337	PPRZ	Crown Parcel	0.4434 Ha

## APPENDIX 2 HFR INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN

# Healesville Freeway Reserve Interim Management Plan

Operations Team - Metropolitan Fire District

This document outlines the plan and actions associated with the interim management of the Healesville Freeway Reserve.

### Background:

Healesville Freeway Reserve (HFR) is made up of several unreserved crown land blocks running from Boronia Road to Springvale Road in the City of Whitehorse totalling 37 hectares. As the name states, it was reserved to build a freeway running from Healesville to the City. In 2014, the plan was abandoned, and the land transferred from VicRoads to DELWP with the view that Parks Victoria (PV) would become the land manager and turn the reserve into a linear park. So far there is delay in the appointment of PV as the land manager and the interim management is the responsibility of DELWP.

### Interim management timeline:

This plan will incorporate actions spanning 12 months, ending 30 April 2021.

## Management Plan

### Concept of management

The Metropolitan Fire District (MFD) Operations team has limited resources when it comes to long term management of crown land. With that in mind, the Operations team will base the plan around reducing risk, maintain the accessibility for pedestrians, responding to complaints and preparing the land for handover to the long-term land manager. The priorities will be responding to perceived fire risk, access to the reserve, heavy fuel treatment and biodiversity issues such as removal of woody weeds. The works will be planned to be delivered over the Interim Management Plan period in a number of stages.

Works will include:

- Broad acre slashing
- Mowing
- Brushcutting
- Tree removal
- Fuel break construction
- Mulching
- Weed works
- Burn heaps
- Access management (gates for vehicle access)
- Pedestrian management (clearly defined paths)

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# Healesville Freeway Reserve Interim Management Plan

## Stage 1 – Initial treatment

Stage 1 will be addressing the immediate public concerns around long, unsightly grass, the perceived fire danger and vehicular access. This stage will be ongoing as the grass grows at different rates throughout the year.

### Mowing and Brush cutting

Breaks will be mowed, and brush cut around the broad acres of grass. Treatment will also be applied to paths, fence lines and high visitation areas starting at the western boundary and moving east to Terrara Road.

### Management Vehicle access

Vehicle access will be restricted to the reserve by building gates and applying departmental locks. Tracks will be cleared wide enough for Tanker access throughout the reserve. This will facilitate fire response and truck access for future machine works in the reserve.

### Asbestos Removal

There have been a few suspected asbestos materials found throughout the reserve. These will be contracted to be removed safely.

## Stage 2 – Fuel break construction

Stage 2 will be addressing the perceived fire danger and the hazardous tree risk throughout the reserve. As HFR runs through metropolitan suburbs there is an increased perceived fire risk as the vegetation is more abundant. We will mitigate this through the following actions:

### Fuel break construction

The construction of fuel breaks along private property boundaries utilising forestry mulcher to remove undergrowth and small trees. Removal of fallen trees and branches, mulched if possible. The fuel break will be 10m from the private property boundary.

### Removal of heavy fuel/tree trunks

There are a number of fallen trees and windrows throughout the reserve, these need to be removed or mulched. The fuel break construction will contribute to the heavy fuel loads or windrows of material. These windrows, tree trunks, and large branches will be removed by machine and turned into burn heaps. These burn heaps will be addressed later in this document.

### Removal of hazardous trees

There are a few perceived hazardous trees across HFR. These will be treated with either machine or hand fallers in accordance with safety procedures. The head matter will either be mulched or carted to the burn heaps.

## Stage 3 – Burn heaps

Stage 3 will involve construction of 2 to 3 burn heaps strategically placed across the reserve, taking into account public perception, access, visitation and public safety. These sites will be agreed upon with the Senior Forest Fire Management Officer – Fuel Management in MFD.

### Construction of burn heaps

These will be done during Stage 2. Machines and tip trucks will be used to move or cart material to the burn heap sites. The size and location of the burn heaps will be on the direction from Senior Forest Fire Management Officer – Fuel Management.

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# Healesville Freeway Reserve Interim Management Plan

## Ignition of burn heaps

This will be under direction of the Senior Forest Fire Management Officer – Fuel Management not before 01 Mar 20. The planning will be done by the Fuel Management Team and the execution will be with the Operations Team.

## Stage 4 – Weed works and footpath upgrade

Stage 4 will deal with invasive weeds that obstruct access and/or inhibit mowing or slashing. This includes removal of woody weeds, pines, and other invasive weed species with consultation with the biodiversity team.

## Divisions of works zones

The whole of HFR will be divided into zones based on works, visitation and access. These will be in numerical order starting at the western boundary, the block behind the Forest Hill Police Station is Block number 1 and moving east in sequential numerical order (see attached maps for more detail). The highest visitation of the general public is in blocks 1 to 3, these blocks will be the focus of stages 1, 2 and 4.

## Funding

Machine hire, floating of machines and access restriction (gates) will be funded through Metro Open Space Projects (Healesville Freeway) in consultation with the LBE team. We have confirmed funding through this source.

## Conclusion

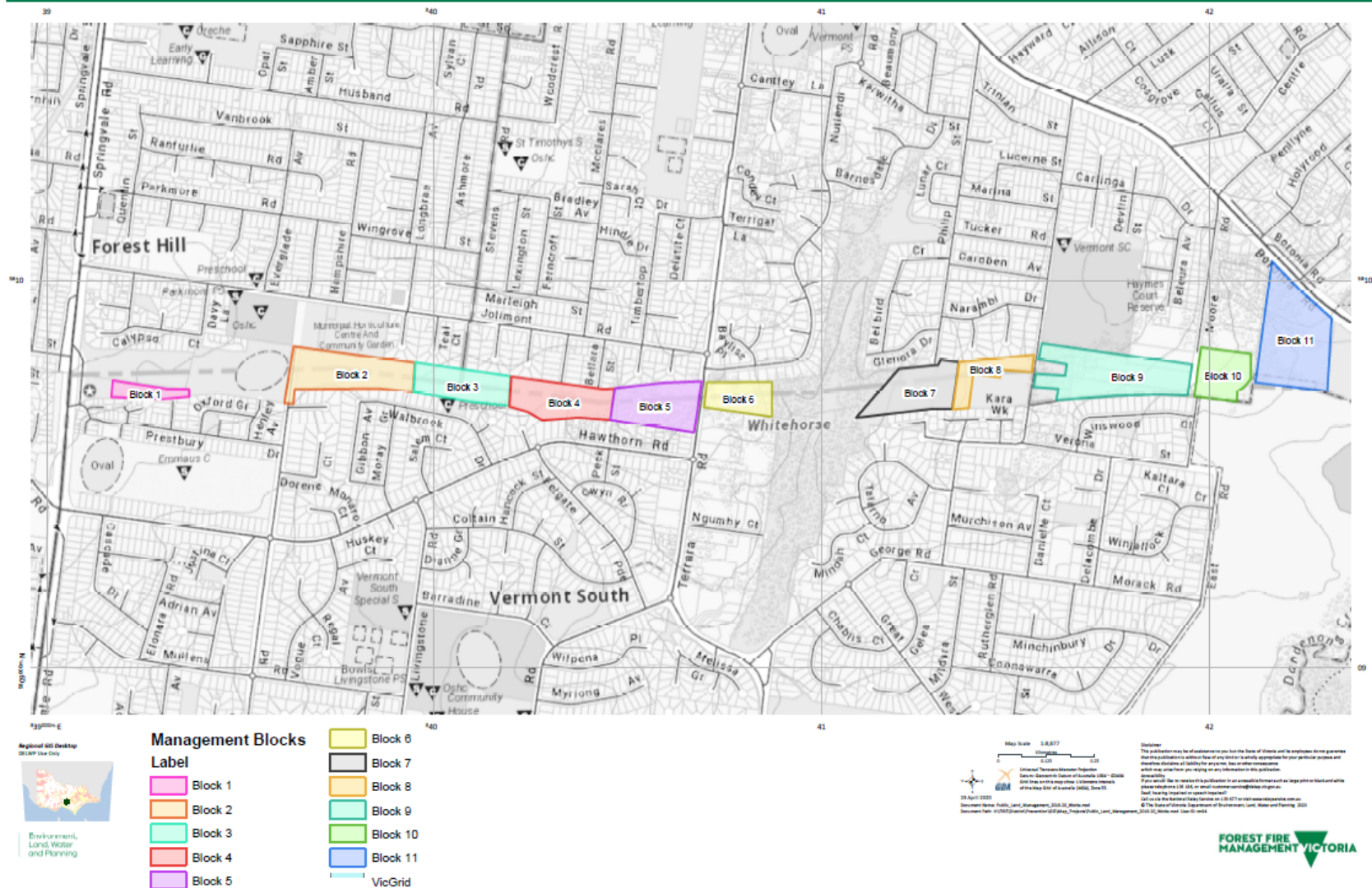
The management of HFR is important to local residence and the reputation of the Department. This plan aims to put the community at the centre of our outcomes. We need to be proactive and responsive. The work proposed in this document will mitigate the major concerns from the local stakeholders in terms of perceived fire risk and address the standard of complaints that have been coming in about the reserve. This will set the future land manager up for success when the time comes for handover.

Prepared by Peter Noonan – Forest Fire Management Officer – Operations.

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## Healesville Freeway Reserve Overview Map



**Map of Subject Property**

**Legend:**

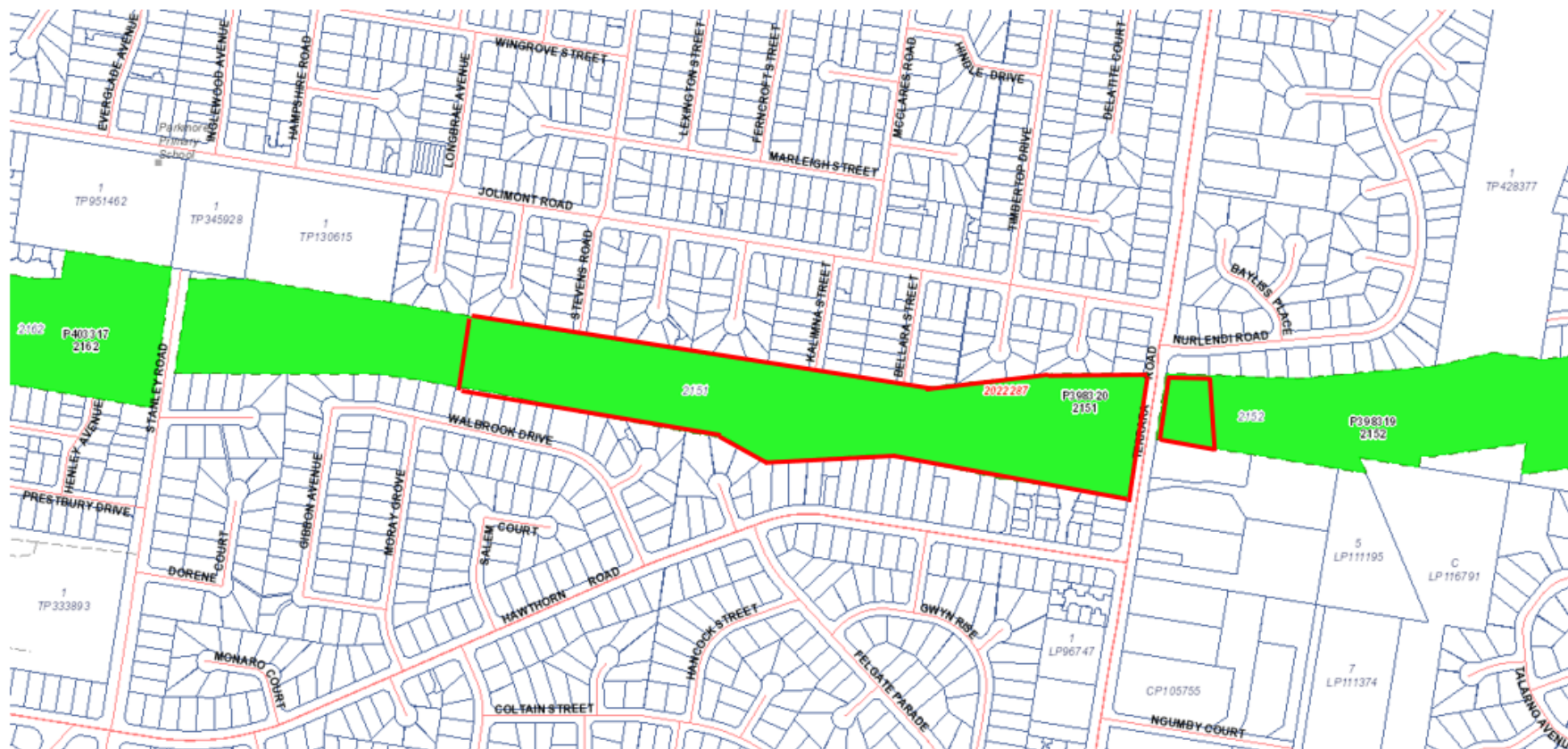
- Green: Subject Property
- Yellow: Adjacent Property
- Blue: Public Property

**Streets:** CAROBEN AVENUE, NARAMBI DRIVE, MOORE ROAD, WINSWOOD CLOSE, COWRA STREET, BELEURA AVENUE, COTSWOLD CLOSE, BORONIA ROAD, NAGIA PLACE.

**Lot Details:**

- Lot 1: PS329965
- Lot 2: LP138780
- Lot 3: SP26824
- Lot 4: LP24003
- Lot 5: LP40229
- Lot 6: LP40229
- Lot 7: TP757678
- Lot 8: TP868832
- Lot 9: TP131683
- Lot 10: TP868832
- Lot 11: TP131683
- Lot 12: TP131683
- Lot 13: LP56431
- Lot 14: PS332097
- Lot 15: CM1
- Lot 16: PS332097
- Lot 17: PS332097
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- Lot 99: PS332097
- Lot 100: PS332097

DoT Parcels:	Crown Parcels for Rezoning (GRZ5 to PPRZ):
1/LP53195 – 71 Morack Road; Lease between DoT and long-term tenant; will remain in place until tenant chooses to vacate, after which the land will be surrendered to the Crown for inclusion in HFR	2160/P403323 2154/P398317 2161/P403324
1/TP757678 } – 79 & 79A Morack Rd, pending sale. Currently PPRZ, needs to be rezoned to NRZ prior to sale. 1/TP257703 }	2155/P398316 2163/P403318
4/LP24003 – 37-43 Moore Rd, sold by DoT in May 2020 – <b>will not form part of HFR</b>	2164/P403319
3/LP40229 – 42-50 Moore Rd, sold by DoT in May 2020 – <b>will not form part of HFR</b>	



**Crown Parcels for Rezoning (GRZ5 to PPRZ):**

2151\P398320 (part thereof)

2152\P398320 (part thereof)



**Crown Parcels for Rezoning (GRZ5 to PPRZ):**

2162\P403317



## APPENDIX 4 NADRASCA FARM





APPENDIX 5  
ENCROACHMENTS NEAR BELLBIRD DELL





**APPENDIX 6**  
**PARCEL 2160\PP3337 ADJACENT TO VERMONT SECONDARY COLLEGE**

