



Our Ref: 12L12\2176

Rick Houlihan
Yarra Waterways Group representative
Haining Farm Redevelopment Working Group
rwthoulihan@bigpond.com

Dear Mr Houlihan,

HAINING FARM REDEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Thank you for submitting the final recommendation of the Haining Farm Redevelopment Working Group (Working Group) about the development of Haining Farm. I understand that the final recommendation is the combined views of the community members of the Working Group and Cr Jim Child from Yarra Ranges Shire Council. The final recommendation was received on 23 August 2017.

As the project sponsors for the Working Group, we would like to extend our sincere appreciation for the work you have done over the last 7 months to investigate all possibilities for the redevelopment of Haining Farm.

The Working Group was set up with 5 clear purposes as described in the terms of reference. These purposes were to:

1. Build on and refine the priorities for the redevelopment of Haining Farm as identified by the local community (at the community meeting on 10 December 2016) and other stakeholders.
2. Develop a draft landscape plan for Haining Farm.
3. Ensure the planning for Haining Farm is consistent with the purpose of the transfer of land from the Reid family.
4. Develop bushfire management recommendations for the broader Don Valley community.
5. Represent the views and needs of the community and other stakeholders.

The final concept you have prepared for the site includes 29.8 hectares for farming and 29.2 hectares for conservation. The community members of the Working Group are supportive of this approach as a compromise between the views of the local community and the views of the broader community. The results of the community engagement process clearly demonstrated that the local community is supportive of the site continuing to be used as a dairy farm, while the broader community was supportive of the site providing habitat for 2 of Victoria's threatened species, the Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeaters possum. In total, over 2300 people responded to the community engagement process. Of these, approx. 80% of respondents were supportive of the site providing habitat for the 2 threatened species.

The Working Group's recommendation does not appear to consider the advice from 2 independent bushfire experts. Phoenix bushfire modelling indicates that the Working Group's recommendation in its current form without the open woodland on the eastern and northern boundaries, would increase the

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bushfire risk to the community. For this reason, the open woodland is an essential part of bushfire mitigation for the community and must form part of any development of the site.

The community engagement process identified that there is a large amount of support for the site providing habitat for two of Victoria's threatened species, the Helmeted Honeyeater and lowland Leadbeaters possum. The habitat requirements of these two species is quite specific and includes a wet environment with dense mid-story vegetation. In order for the site to successfully provide habitat for both threatened species, the vegetation on site must provide good connectivity and include sites which are regularly inundated. The addition of an artificial wetland in the north-west corner and ensuring good connectivity between blocks of vegetation is essential to the site providing viable habitat for both species.

DELWP and Parks Victoria acknowledge the importance the local community placed on seeing farm animals on the site, especially in the northern and southern boundaries which are most visible from Don and Dalry roads. For this reason, DELWP and Parks Victoria will investigate future uses of these areas that are consistent with the views of the local community.

The Working Group's recommendation includes increased community access and recreation opportunities on the site and both DELWP and Parks Victoria are supportive of these initiatives being included in the final plan for the site.

DELWP and Parks Victoria have developed a final plan for the site that better reflects the results of the community engagement process while also respecting the concerns of the local community. A copy of this plan is attached for your information.

The final plan for the site builds on the final recommendation of the Working Group by adding an open woodland on the northern and eastern boundaries of the site, which is considered essential to ensuring the development does not increase the bushfire risk to the community. We understand the concerns of the local community about increasing vegetation on the site leading to an increase in bushfire risk, and respect the views of the local community that the valley floor can act as bushfire mitigation due to it historically being irrigated and heavily grazed. In response to the concerns of the local community, we will incorporate additional water sources in these areas which may include either an internal sprinkler system or irrigation along the northern and eastern boundaries.

The final plan also includes the addition of an artificial wetland in the north-west corner to ensure the right hydrology for the vegetation type needed to provide suitable habitat, especially for lowland Leadbeater's possum. We understand the concerns of the local community about the impact this may have on adjoining properties and DELWP and Parks Victoria will work closely with any impacted property owner to ensure their concerns are taken into consideration as part of the planning for the site.

The local and broader community were both supportive of the site providing improved community access and recreation opportunities and improved education opportunities. These themes form an essential part of the final plan and further work will be undertaken with education providers to refine the opportunities on the site and ensure the site responds to the wishes of Sir John Reid that the site be used as an environmental study park.

We would like to thank you again for all your hard work in engaging with the community on the development of this important site.

If you would like any additional information, please contact Victoria Purdue, Project Manager, Yellingbo Conservation Area, on 0419 115 636 or email victoria.purdue@delwp.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,



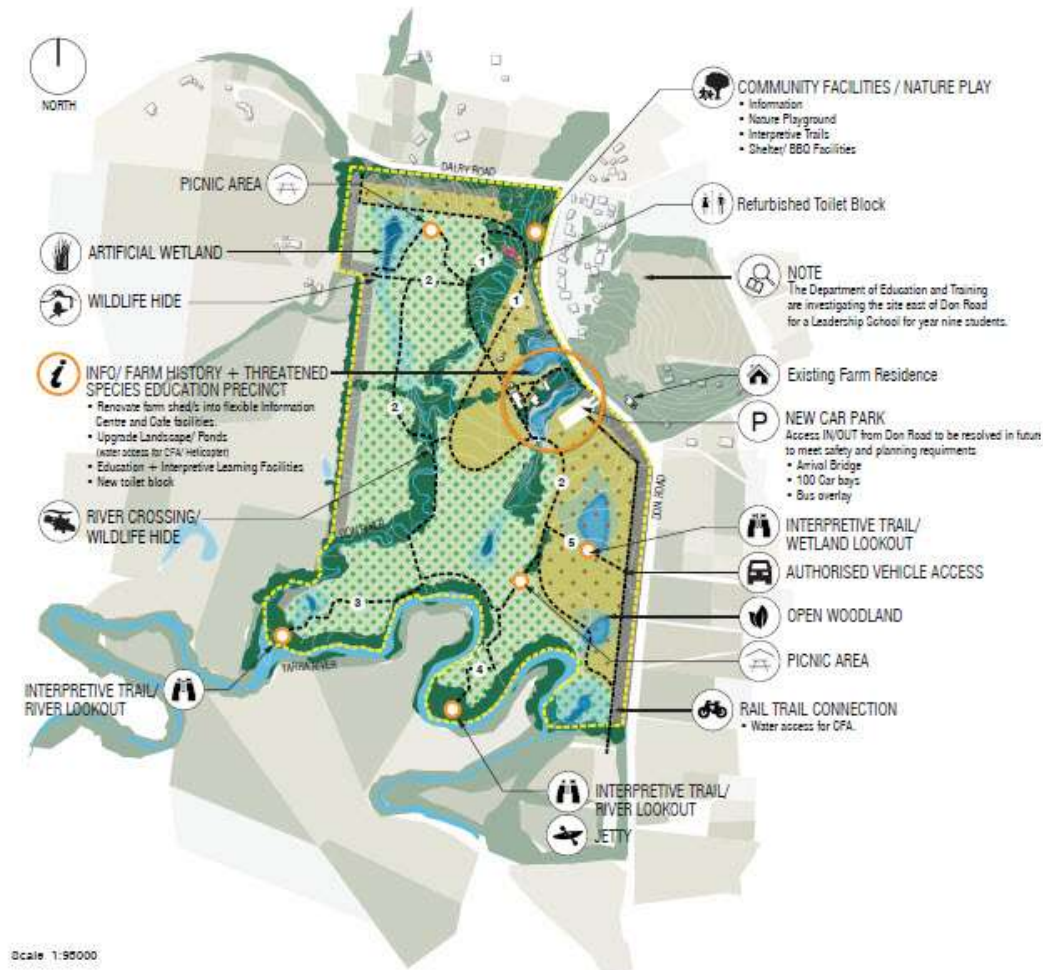
KELLY CROSTHWAITE DATE: 04/09/17
REGIONAL DIRECTOR
PORT PHILLIP REGION
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIROMENT,
LAND, WATER AND PLANNING



CHRIS HARDMAN DATE: 4.../9/17
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PARKS VICTORIA

HAINING FARM CONCEPT PLAN

'A place where people and threatened species can go wild together' - Parks Victoria + Greening Australia



59 HA
Landsize of Haining Farm

42 HA
Conservation

168
Helmeted Honeyeater's

75
Lowland Leadbeaters Possum's

17 HA
Open Woodland Grazing

30 HA
Public/Community Access

6 kms
Walking/cycling Trails

Conservation
Community
Education
Recreation

LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 20m Fuel Break
- Conservation
- Public Open Space
- Open Woodland
- Wetlands
- Existing Vegetation
- INFORMATION & COMMUNITY FACILITIES
 - Nature Playground
 - Interpretive Walking Trails
 - BBQ/ Shelter
 - Refurbish Existing Toilets
- Picnics/ Lookouts/ Wildlife hides
- 5 Interpretive Walking Loops/ Trails
- Rail trail connection