

SCHEDULE 7 TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OVERLAY

Shown on the planning scheme map as **ESO7**

Native grasslands

1.0 Statement of Environmental Significance

The native grasslands and grassy woodlands mapped within the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion are nationally listed as critically endangered under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999) due to their severe decline in extent and quality since European settlement and due to their future existence being severely threatened. Only small fragmented patches remain within the Victorian Volcanic Plan bioregion and their recovery and protection is required to ensure they are not lost forever.

The grasslands mapped within the Otway Plain Bioregion are relatively intact with a good coverage of native species and are of state significance.

2.0 Environmental objective to be achieved

To encourage farming and land management practices that will retain remaining grasslands and grassy woodlands in good condition.

To encourage changes in land use, detrimental to the preservation of native grasslands, in areas outside of this overlay.

To focus restoration works and the highest protection of grasslands where more than 25% of the patch supports native species.

To encourage land owners to seek funding to protect and restore grasslands on their property.

3.0 Permit requirements

Vegetation

A permit is not required to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation that is:

- within 3 meters of a building used for accommodation (or overhangs this area).
- listed as an environmental weed in the incorporated document, “Weeds of the Surf Coast Shire (2013)”.
- not native to Victoria.
- is in accordance with an approved Whole Farm Plan.

Fencing

A permit is required to construct a fence. This does not apply to:

- a post and wire fence to be erected to restrict livestock access to patches of native grasslands.
- Routine maintenance of an existing fence.
- A fence in association with a dwelling.

Application requirements

A planning application must be accompanied by the following information, as appropriate:

- A vegetation assessment report that includes:

- Identification of any native vegetation or other habitat components to be removed or disturbed,
- The location of all environmental weeds listed in 'Weeds of the Surf Coast Shire' (2012) on the site.
- Recommended measures to suitably protect native vegetation from damage during the proposed works.
- A vegetation offset plan that outlines how the loss of biodiversity will be compensated where removal is unavoidable or is not required for the creation of defensible space.
- Scaled and dimensioned plans showing proposed,
 - Fencing,
 - Buildings and works and
 - Subdivision layout.

Referral of application

Applications must be referred in accordance with Section 55 of the Act to the referral authority specified in Clause 66.04 or a schedule to that clause.

4.0

Decision guidelines

DD/MM/YYYY
Proposed C81

Before deciding on an application to remove any native vegetation, construct a building or carry out works, or subdivide land, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

Vegetation removal

- The value and specific qualities of the effected native grassland within the Victorian Volcanic Plain, and any obligations required under the EPBC Act (1999).
- The value and specific qualities of the effected biodiversity asset as defined in the reference document 'Surf Coast Shire Biodiversity mapping project' (2014).
- The value and specific qualities of the effected biodiversity asset as defined in the Moriac Environmental Assets Assessment, Beacon Ecological (2009).
- Any relevant action Statements for endangered species and communities and threatening processes.
- The results of any vegetation assessment or survey of the biodiversity assets contained on the site and whether the survey and assessment has been adequately completed under appropriate seasonal conditions and by a suitably qualified person to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.
- The reason for removing native grasslands and the practicality of any alternative options which do not require removal of native grasslands. Where alternatives exist which do not require the loss of native grasslands these alternatives should be favoured.
- Whether the proposal has made every effort to:
 - Avoid any adverse impacts on patches of native grasslands, particularly where coverage of native species exceeds 25%.
 - Minimise the removal of native grasslands where removal is unavoidable.
- The quality and extent of the vegetation that is to be removed and how the losses will be offset (unless already stipulated by a referral authority) having regard to:
 - The value of the native grassland in terms of physical and biological condition, rarity, variety and habitat quality.
 - The need to maintain viable examples of vegetation communities.

- The need for regeneration and revegetation using species from the relevant Ecological Vegetation Class.
- The merits in requiring native grasslands to be fenced off.
- The need to undertake weed control.
- Whether an agreement under section 173 of the Act, conservation covenant or other similar control is appropriate to ensure the long term viability of native grasslands on the land as part of an offsetting strategy.

Buildings and works

- The impact the proposed buildings or works will have on the native grassland and the practicality of siting buildings and works away from the grassland to ensure its ongoing protection.
- The means of protecting native grasslands during the construction of buildings and works and the on-going management of grasslands post construction.

Subdivision

- The impact the proposed subdivision will have on the native grasslands and the need to;
 - reduce impacts on the highest value vegetation.
 - Create future lots that will retain patches of grasslands within one ownership to assist its ongoing protection and management.

Fencing

- Whether fencing can be located outside this overlay.

Reference documents

- Surf Coast Shire Biodiversity Mapping Project, Surf Coast Shire, DEPI and CCMA (2014).
- Weeds of the Surf Coast Shire, Surf Coast Shire (2013).
- Nationally Threatened Ecological Communities of the Victorian Volcanic Plain: Natural Temperate Grassland & Grassy Eucalypt Woodland, DSEWPC (2011).
- Indigenous planting Guide for rural areas within the Surf Coast Shire, (2003)