

Cornish College

Biodiversity

Master Plan 2020-2025



CORNISH
COLLEGE







Introduction

As part of our commitment as a College that cares for the environment and recognises the central importance of *natural sustainability* and, as a part of our ongoing engagement with the ResourceSmart Program, the ResourceSmart Committee felt that it was important to produce a master plan that has the protection and enhancement of biodiversity as its core mission. This sits alongside the *Cornish College Master Plan* to ensure that planned and future developments align with the College's values as a school that educates for a sustainable, thriving future and that we are doing our part in a world where the realities of climate change are already being felt.

We are releasing this plan to engage with our community - we would love to hear your feedback and about *the why, the how, and the when*.

Cornish College ResourceSmart Committee

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, as the original custodians of this land who have lived here for thousands of years.

We respect their relationship with the land and are committed to caring for this place and those who come here now and in the future.

It is for these reasons that we wish to formalise and develop a plan that will demonstrate our care for this place.

Biodiversity History of our 100 Acres

As part of the [Gippsland Plain Bioregion](#) there are remnants of two Ecological Vegetation Classifications (EVC) within our boundaries and the north-west corner has been identified as having a strategic biodiversity value ranking of 83, while the majority of the property is classified as 45. The higher the value the better more information can be found [here](#).

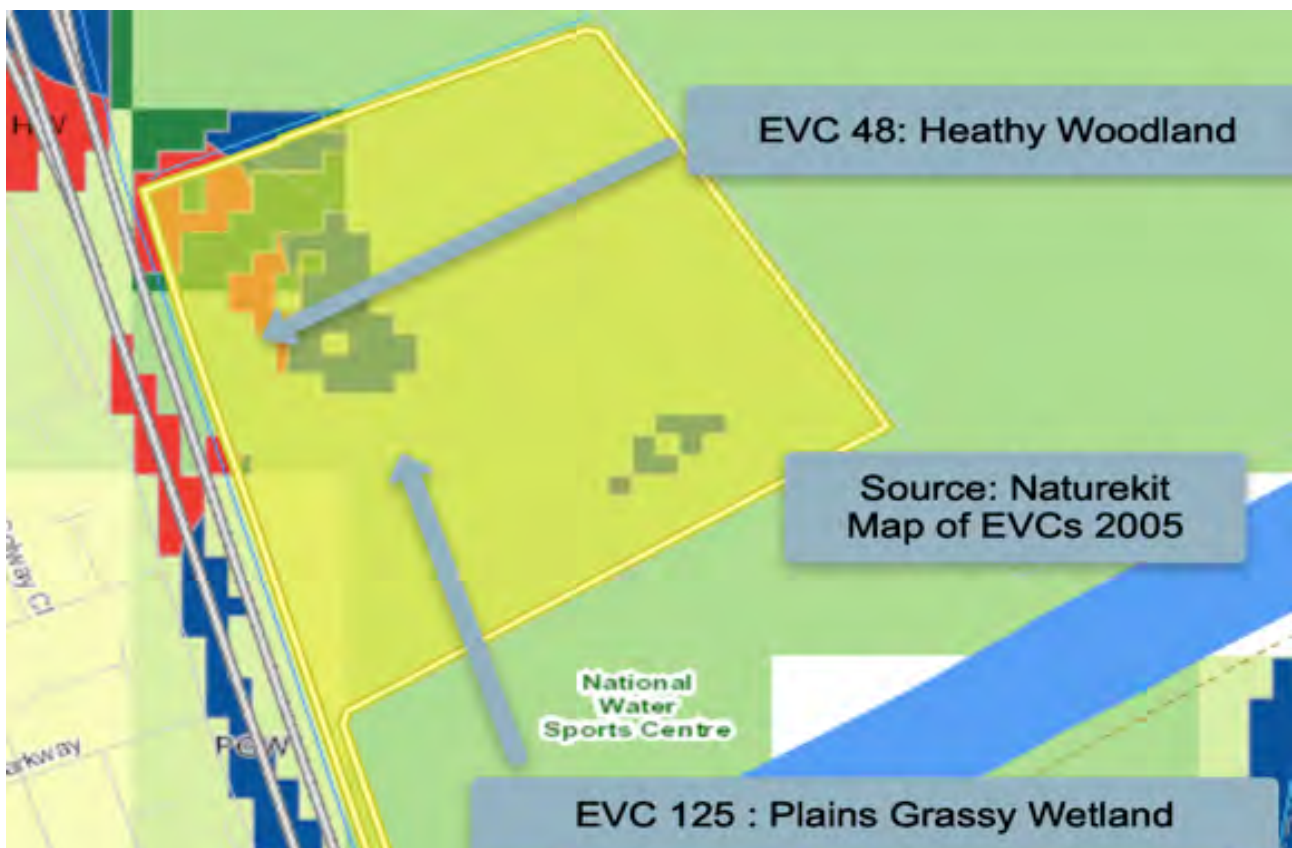


Figure 1: Map of Ecological Vegetation Classifications from [Naturekit](#)

Contrasted with a pre-1750 view in Figure 2. Where the area was a combination of *EVC 48: Heathy Woodland* in the elevated areas and *EVC 125: Plains Grassy Wetland* dominating.



Figure 2: Map of pre-1750 Ecological Vegetation Classifications from [Naturekit](#)

Ecological Vegetation Classes or EVCs are a tool used to classify flora biodiversity with a range of common characteristics.

Ecological Vegetation Classification 48 - Heathy Woodland

Heathy Woodland is classified as least concern with greater than 50% pre-European extent remains and subject to little to no degradation over a majority of this area.

Description:
Spans a variety of geologies but is generally associated with nutrient-poor soils including deep uniform sands (aeolian or outwash) and Tertiary sand/clay which has been altered to form quartzite gravel. Eucalypt-dominated low woodland to 10 m tall lacking a secondary tree layer and generally supporting a diverse array of narrow or ericoid-leaved shrubs except where frequent fire has reduced this to a dense cover of bracken. Geophytes and annuals can be quite common but the ground cover is normally fairly sparse.

Large trees:

| Species | DBH(cm) | #/ha |
|------------------------|---------|---------|
| <i>Eucalyptus</i> spp. | 50 cm | 15 / ha |
| <i>Banksia serrata</i> | 40 cm | |

Tree Canopy Cover:

| %cover | Character Species | Common Name |
|--------|---|----------------------------|
| 10% | <i>Eucalyptus willisii</i> | Jimmy's Shining Peppermint |
| | <i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i> | Messmate Stringybark |
| | <i>Eucalyptus radiata</i> s.l. | Narrow-leaf Peppermint |
| | <i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i> ssp. <i>pryoriana</i> | Rough-barked Manna Gum |
| | <i>Banksia serrata</i> | Saw Banksia |

Extract from [Gippsland Plain Bioregion](#) - see Appendices



Ecological Vegetation Classification 125 - Plains Grassy Wetland

Plains Grassy Wetlands are classified as endangered which has a range of definitions but essentially means a significant loss often less than 10% of the pre-1750 habitat remain.

Bioregions and Ecological Vegetation Class benchmarks

Description:

This EVC is usually treeless, but in some instances can include sparse River Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* or Swamp Gum *Eucalyptus ovata*. A sparse shrub component may also be present. The characteristic ground cover is dominated by grasses and small sedges and herbs. The vegetation is typically species-rich on the outer verges but is usually species-poor in the wetter central areas.

Life forms:

| Life form | #Spp | %Cover | LF code |
|---|------|------------|---------|
| Large Herb | 3 | 10% | LH |
| Medium Herb | 10 | 20% | MH |
| Small or Prostrate Herb | 2 | 10% | SH |
| Large Tufted Graminoid | 2 | 5% | LTG |
| Large Non-tufted Graminoid | 2 | 10% | LNG |
| Medium to Small Tufted Graminoid | 10 | 20% | MTG |
| Medium to Tiny Non-tufted Graminoid | 4 | 10% | MNG |
| Bryophytes/Lichens | na | 10% | BL |
| Total understorey projective foliage cover | | 95% | |

Extract from [Gippsland Plain Bioregion](#) - see Appendices



Vision of Restoration

Our vision is to ensure that the grounds and surrounds of Cornish College reflect our love and care for the natural environment, and that they enable us to educate for a sustainable future with biodiversity and nature as the fundamental underpinnings.

This will be achieved when

- All staff and students and stakeholders are aware and support the site management plan
- Appropriate planting happens at appropriate times. Broadly speaking planting should occur in Autumn/Winter
- Staff and students can participate in and support the Biodiversity Plan
- Partnerships with the wider community flourish as a result of our demonstrable care for country

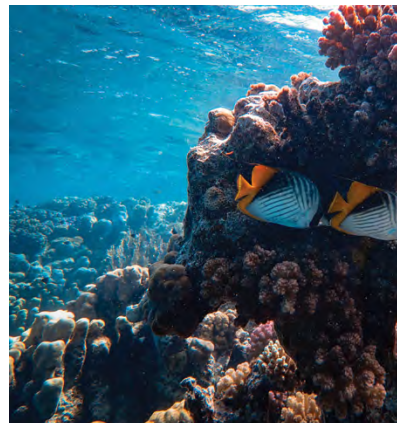
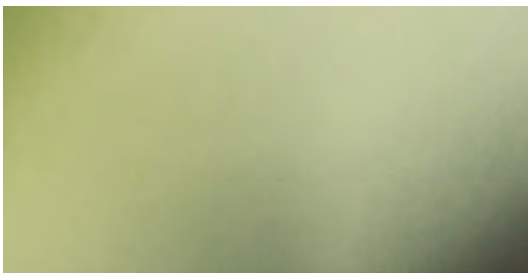


What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is all components of the living world: the number and variety of native plants, animals and other living things across our land, rivers, coast and ocean.

It includes the variety of their genetic information, their habitats and their relationship to the ecosystems within which they live.

Definition from [Biodiversity 2037 Summary](#) - see Appendices



Maps of 100 Acres

To help orientate users of the plan, the following maps have identified the regions of the campus as they are currently used and the current *Cornish College Master Plan* to show how the buildings and facilities are to be developed.



Figure 3: Map of Cornish College and Grounds 2020



Figure 4: Cornish College Master Plan



2020

Our plan for 2020 is to survey and audit the current state of our environment and to engage stakeholders with the vision of restoration.

Audit and Survey

- Biodiversity audit for ResourceSmart Certification
- Nest boxes – numbered off and monitored (investigate ‘nest cam’)
- Monitoring of wildlife on the property – reptiles, mammals
- Bird surveys – currently conducted by a range of groups, consolidate findings into a central location
- Bee hives – how/who
- Productive garden space
- EcoCentre
- Chooks
- Farm
- Tree Audit

Given the best time to do any planting is Autumn/Winter and there is a need to ‘Burn off’ to destroy current seed bank of weeds, the advice we have is to hold off substantial plantings for at least a year.

2020-2021

Continued engagement with stakeholders including, but not limited to the following.

- Indigenous Consultation: Welcome to Country – What might this look like? Would it be appropriate to name our habitats as [Balnarring Primary School](#) have done
- Edithvale Wetlands: How can we support the work of Edithvale Wetlands? [Edithvale Seaford Wetlands Projects](#)
- [City of Greater Dandenong Council](#)
- Establishment of habitat corridors across the campus to link woodlands/wetlands across the boundaries

2021-2022

- Develop an integrated nature play space between ovals near cricket net areas
- Celebrate existing nature play spaces



2022-2023

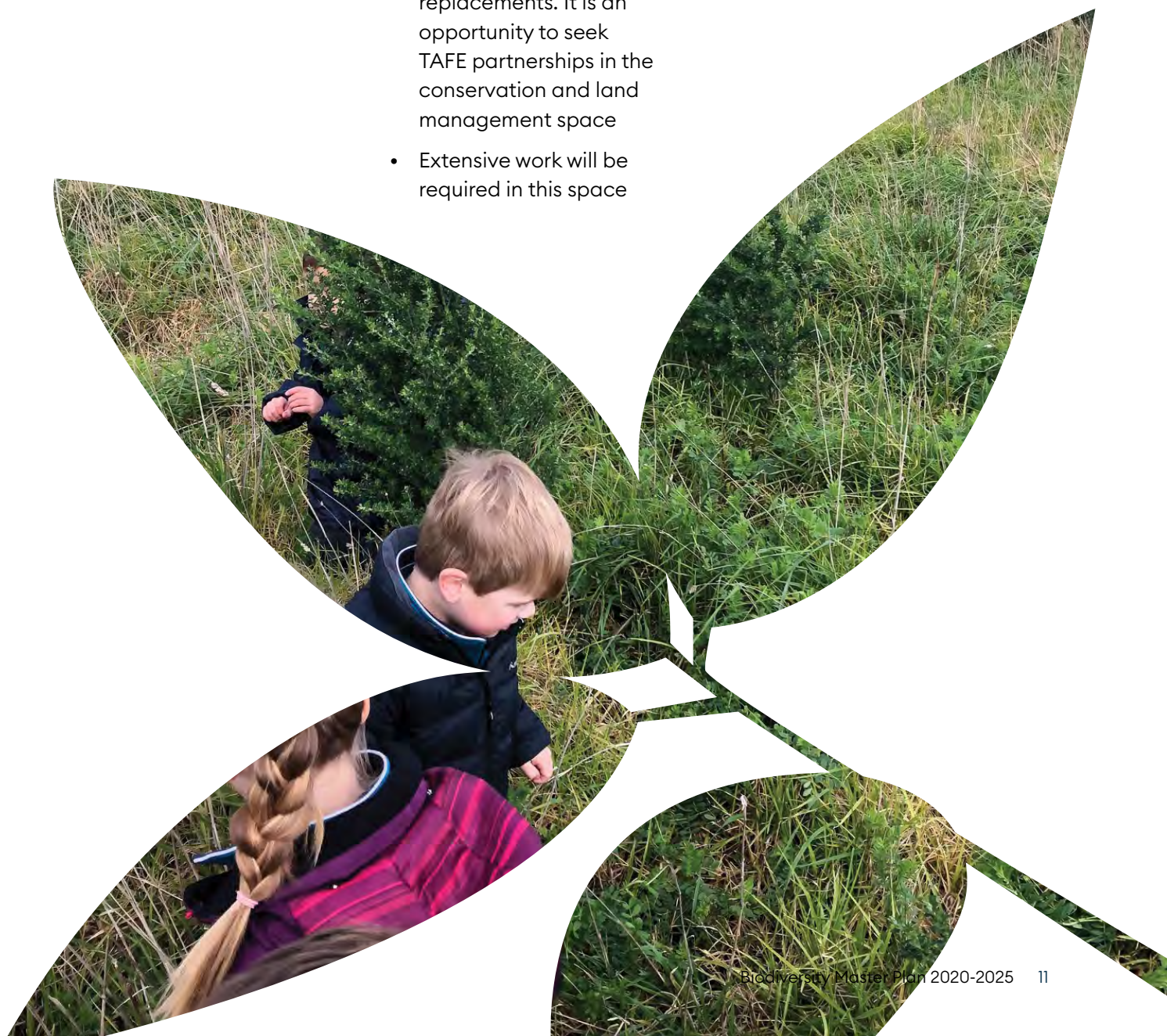
- Woodland Focus:
Building on planting from 2017/18, further develop and protect the Cornish Woods

2023-2024

- Melaleuca Strip Focus:
Given many of the melaleucas are approaching the end of their lifespan, there is significant work required to remove trees that may become dangerous or identified in the arborsafe tree audit report and plant replacements. It is an opportunity to seek TAFE partnerships in the conservation and land management space
- Extensive work will be required in this space

2024/2025

- Permaculture Focus:
What does permaculture look like? How can it feed us and heal the planet?
- This year will be an opportunity to evaluate our own contribution to education for a sustainable future



Appendices

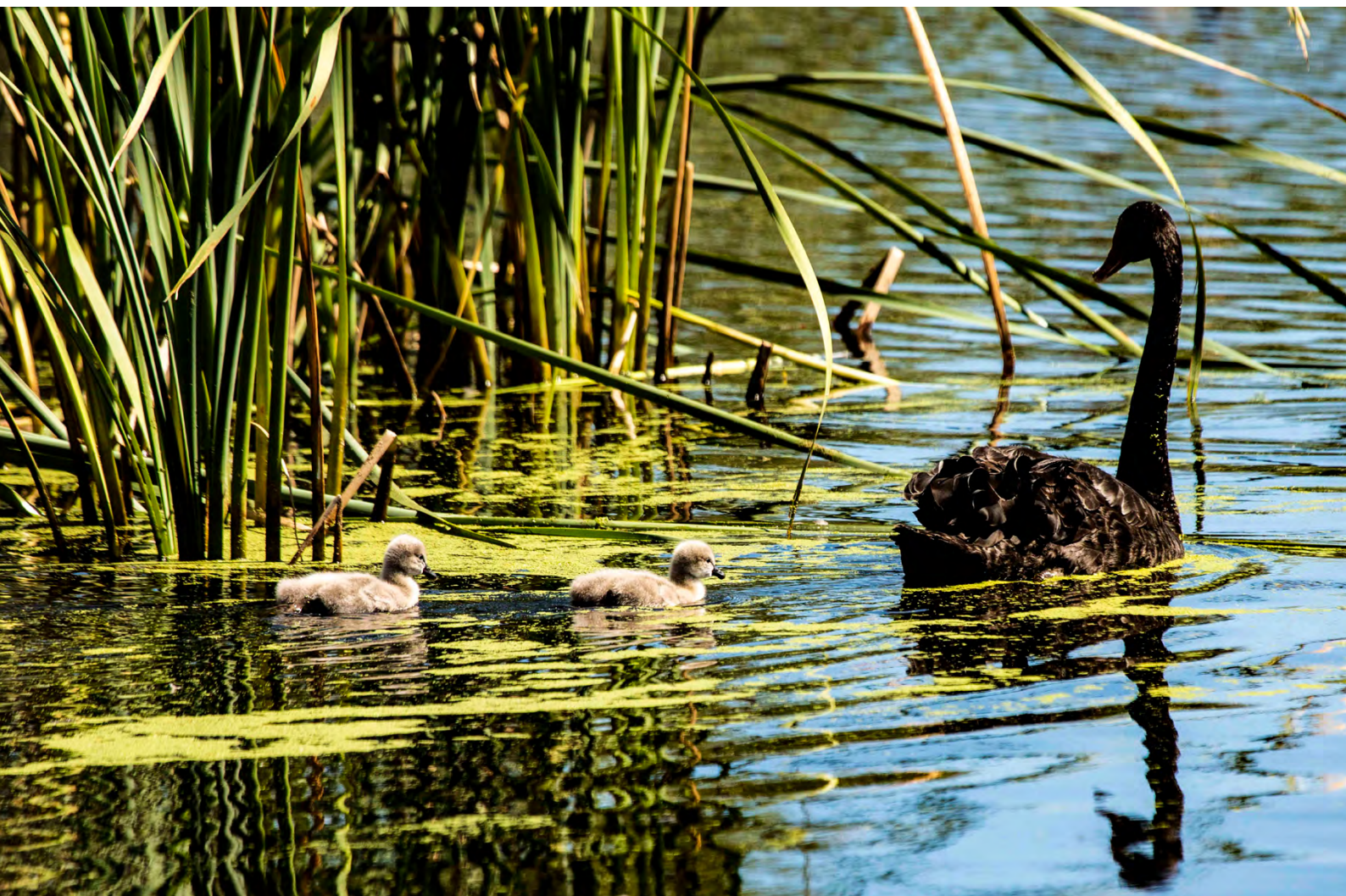
Launched in 2017, Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037 presents a long-term vision for Victoria's biodiversity supported by two overarching goals:

- Victorians value nature, and
- Victoria's natural environment is healthy

[Victoria Biodiversity Plan 2037](#)

[City of Greater Dandenong Biodiversity Plan](#)

[ResourceSmart Schools](#)





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