

**PALMERS ROAD CORRIDOR (WESTERN FREEWAY TO CALDER FREEWAY):
DESKTOP, STANDARD AND COMPLEX ASSESSMENT REPORT**

CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN NUMBER: 12662

Activity Size:	Large
Assessment:	Desktop, Standard and Complex
Sponsor:	VicRoads
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NATURE AND EXTENT OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

As part of the planning for road construction along the Palmers Road Corridor between the Western Freeway and Calder Freeway, VicRoads commissioned Dr Vincent Clark & Associates to undertake a cultural heritage assessment. To comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, a cultural heritage management plan (CHMP) is compulsory because an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) is required (s.49). The CHMP requires a Desktop, Standard and Complex Assessment.

The activity area is located 18-23km west and northwest of Melbourne city centre; it falls within City of Melton and City of Brimbank local government areas, and crosses the suburbs of Ravenhall, Caroline Springs, Burnside, Taylors Hill, Sydenham, Calder Park and Keilor North. The activity area consists of a linear, north/south-aligned shape, 14.5 km in length and with a total surface area of approximately 104 hectares. The activity area crosses volcanic plains typified by flat and gently undulating ground; Kororoit Creek intersects the central part of the activity area; the northernmost point is above the escarpment overlooking the deeply incised valley of Jacksons Creek at Organ Pipes National Park.

The Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Incorporated is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the northern section of the activity area, north of the Sunbury railway line. This section spans a length of approximately 1.4 km (north/south) and has a surface area of 33.6 hectares. The Wurundjeri will evaluate parts of the CHMP that relate to this land. There is currently no RAP appointed for the remainder of the activity area, which has a north/south length of approximately 13.1 km and a surface area of 70.8 hectares. Parts of the CHMP that deal within these southern sections of the activity area will be evaluated by the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet under s.65 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

RESULTS OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

The Desktop Assessment involved a comprehensive review of cultural heritage within the activity area and its surroundings. This considered the geographical context, modern land use history and ethno-historical information on Aboriginal occupants of the region. Previous archaeological studies and their results were reviewed, and recorded sites within the activity area were researched.

At the time of the Desktop Assessment, 30 Aboriginal sites listed with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR) were situated within 200 m of the activity area. These are concentrated at the far north of the activity area, north of the Calder Freeway and along the banks of Kororoit Creek. Other sites are recorded at Ravenhall, near the southern part of the activity area. However, the intensive building development that has occurred in the area means that the status of previously recorded sites may have changed.

The ground survey (Standard Assessment) was carried out during three days in June and July 2013. The survey assessed land use and ground conditions within the activity area, identified places of cultural heritage sensitivity and located and recorded archaeological remains present on the surface. Previously recorded sites were re-located and additional recording took place, beside Kororoit Creek and north of the Calder Freeway; cultural deposits were also located in six previously unrecorded locations.

The survey included a thorough assessment of ground conditions. Observations in the field, in combination with information from maps, satellite images and written sources, proved that large stretches of the activity area have undergone significant ground disturbance. Artificial surfaces, where the ground has been mechanically excavated and redeposited, are present across large stretches of the activity area. The largest area of undisturbed land is located north of the Calder Freeway; smaller pockets of potentially undisturbed land are beside Kororoit Creek.

The Complex Assessment was carried out during eleven days in August and September 2013. The excavations investigated the presence and attributes (surface area, condition and nature) of Aboriginal cultural deposits within the activity area. Previously recorded Aboriginal sites were investigated using targeted test excavations. Subsurface testing was also carried out in areas where it was suspected that cultural deposits may be present.

Three techniques were used: (1) small test holes or shovel probes measuring 0.5 x 0.5 m were excavated to investigate the presence of artefacts and the extent of subsurface scatters; (2) pits measuring 1 x 1 m were excavated to investigate the nature of cultural deposits and subsurface conditions at identified sites; (3) pits measuring 2 x 2 m were excavated to investigate in detail the nature of identified deposits.

Excavations were carried out at 84 points across the activity area (72 test holes, nine 1 x 1 m pits and three 2 x 2 m pits). The excavations confirmed that most of the activity area has undergone significant disturbance but that some Aboriginal cultural deposits are found in undisturbed contexts, even close to where there has been recent ground disturbance. Intact archaeological deposits are present north of Kororoit Creek and north of the Calder Freeway. Though contained in shallow and thin soil strata, the nature of these deposits, as recognised from consistencies and variations in the material culture, has significance for the understanding of past Aboriginal occupation in this region.

At the completion of the investigation, having registered new sites and amalgamated some previously recorded sites, it was determined that there are 12 Aboriginal places within the activity area. Nine of these sites were identified and defined during the present investigation; a further three sites which had been previously recorded within the activity area were not re-located. Information on the investigated sites was submitted to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR), administered by the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (OAAV). A summary of the attributes of these 12 sites is provided in **Table 1**.

The 12 sites that are situated within the activity area are as follows (from north to south):

North of the Calder Freeway there are two large sites (VAHR 7822-3669 and 7822-3670, which both augment previously recorded sites) which extend into Organ Pipes National Park; another two sites here consist of artefacts in less secure and redeposited contexts (VAHR 7822-1306 and 7822-3660). One previously recorded site at the far east of the activity area was not relocated (VAHR 7822-1858).

Along Calder Park Drive, between the Sunbury railway line and the Melton Highway, lithics were recorded on the surface at four positions, which are registered as a 'low density artefact deposit' (VAHR 7822-3661). A single surface artefact, recorded prior to construction of Calder Park Drive, was not relocated (VAHR 7822-0308).

Along the partially built section of Westwood Drive at Caroline Springs, north of Kororoit Creek, a small and disturbed surface artefact scatter was located (VAHR 7822-3658). A large site spanning the creek's north bank (VAHR 7822-1130) was further investigated and so too was a previously recorded site on the south bank (VAHR 7822-0310), which overlaps partly with another site, which was not identified during the present investigation (VAHR 7822-0247). The most southerly identified site consists of two surface artefacts beside a roundabout next to Burnside Shopping Centre (VAHR 7822-3656).

Table 1: Summary of recorded Aboriginal (VAHR) sites within the activity area

Stage of recording	VAHR no.	Site name	RAP	Land form	Significance	Impact of activity (estimated % of site affected)	Management requirements
Recorded before CHMP 12662	7822-0247	Kubis City 18		Terrace	Very Low	Impacted (<5%)	No
	7822-0308	Melton East 4		Terrace	Very Low	Impacted (100%)	No
	7822-0310	Melton East 6		Terrace	Very Low	Impacted (35%)	Yes
	7822-1130	Karmadonna Park 1		Terrace	Moderate	Impacted (19%)	Yes
	7822-1306	Organ Pipes Road 3	Wurundjeri	Plain	Low	Impacted (50%)	Yes
	7822-1858	Thunderdome 2	Wurundjeri	Plain	Low	Impacted (100%)	No
Recorded during CHMP 12662	7822-3656	Wenden Court Roundabout		Artificial surface	Very Low	Impacted (100%)	Yes
	7822-3658	Arroyo Place		Terrace	Low	Impacted (100%)	Yes
	7822-3660	Calder Highway Keilor 3	Wurundjeri	Plain	Low	Impacted (100%)	No
	7822-3661	Calder Park Drive		Artificial surface	Very Low	Impacted (100%)	Yes
	7822-3669	Jacksons Creek Escarpment	Wurundjeri	Plain, crest	Moderate-High	Impacted (32%)	Yes
	7822-3670	Rainey's Hotel	Wurundjeri	Plain	Moderate	Impacted (<5%)	Yes

MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND INITIATIVES

The assessment found that the largest and most intact Aboriginal sites within the activity area are located north of the Calder Freeway where there are buried and *in situ* cultural deposits. Aboriginal cultural deposits are also located in subsurface contexts on the north bank of Kororoit Creek. The remaining Aboriginal cultural deposits consist of surface remains in disturbed and/or redeposited contexts.

As a result of the assessment, and taking into account the impact of the activity on the location of recorded sites, the following site-specific measures are required prior to the commencement of the activity:

- Archaeological salvage excavations are required at the following sites: VAHR 7822-1130, -3669 and -3670.
- Surface artefact survey and collection is required at the following sites: VAHR 7822-0310, -1130, -1306, -3656, -3658, -3660, -3661, -3669 and -3670.
- Protective fencing is required at the following sites: VAHR 7822-1306, -3669 and -3670.

The scope and location of these measures, as well as the field methodology, recording and reporting requirements, are detailed in Section 8 of this report, as well as general requirements including the custody of Aboriginal artefacts and cultural heritage awareness training. Contingency plans regarding Aboriginal cultural heritage in relation to the activity are contained in Section 9 of this report. The management requirements for each site are summarised below, in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of site-specific management requirements

VAHR no.	Site name	Management requirements (paragraph)	Management requirements		
			Fencing and signage	Surface artefact collection	Salvage excavation
7822-0247	Kubis City 18	8.1.1			
7822-0308	Melton East 4	8.1.2			
7822-0310	Melton East 6	8.1.3		x	
7822-1130	Karmadonna Park 1	8.1.4		x	x
7822-1306	Organ Pipes Road 3	8.1.5	x	x	
7822-1858	Thunderdome 2	8.1.6			
7822-3656	Wenden Court Roundabout	8.1.7		x	
7822-3658	Arroyo Place	8.1.8		x	
7822-3660	Calder Highway Keilor 3	8.1.9			
7822-3661	Calder Park Drive	8.1.10		x	
7822-3669	Jacksons Creek Escarpment	8.1.11	x	x	x
7822-3670	Rainey's Hotel	8.1.12	x	x	x

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