

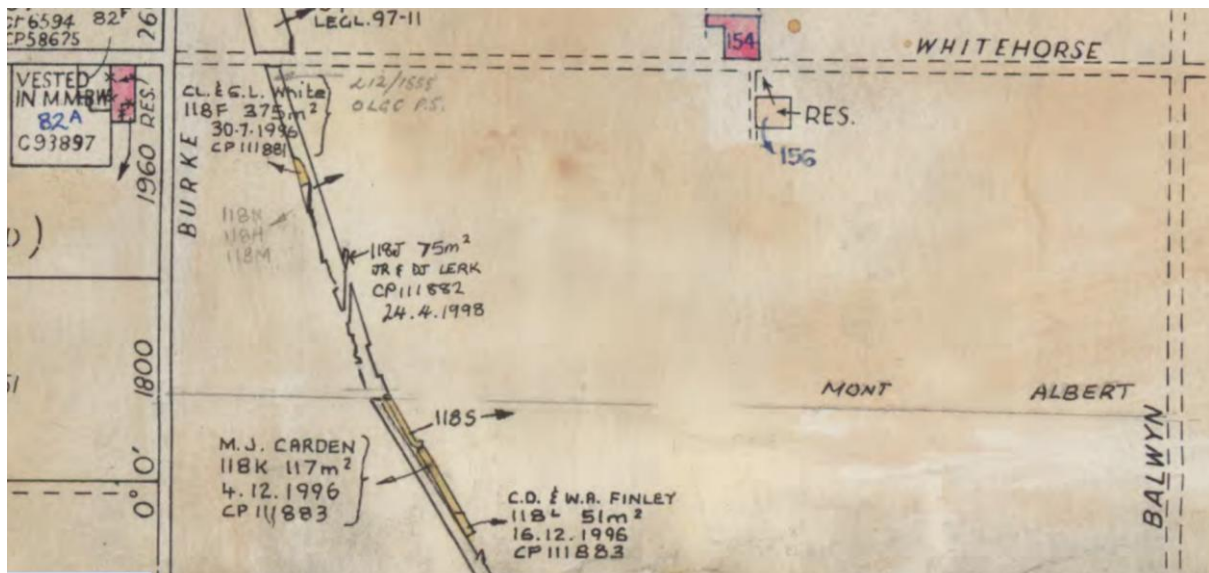
Belmont Park, Mont Albert Road, Balwyn

Belmont Park was formerly part of the Robert and Mary Reid Estate. The Belmont Park's 7 acres were gifted - to the then City of Camberwell in 1913 - by Mary Reid with the stipulation that the gum trees on the site were preserved.

Robert Reid migrated to Australia in 1855 at the age of 12. Reid went on to become a member of the Legislative Council and one of Australia's leading importers.

Reid and his wife Mary settled on land on Whitehorse Road Balwyn c 1871. When Reid died in 1904 his estate fronting Whitehorse Road extended from Parkside Avenue to Maleela Avenue. Following Mary's death in 1924 – the area was subdivided in 1926¹.

A 1926 newspaper article describing the sale of the subdivided lots also noted that when Robert Reid settled at Belmont c1871 “blacks were plentiful in the district, the high land on the estate being used by them as a look-out and camping ground.”²



¹ http://home.vicnet.net.au/~balwynhs/newsletters/letters/articles_08-09.pdf

² The Box Hill Reporter 30th April 1926

³ PROV VPRS 16171 Boroondara Parish Plan Imperial Measure B2209

2003 Dr Graeme Lorimer - *Inventory & Assessment of Indigenous Flora & Fauna in Boroondara* – Site 55 Belmont Park



Description

“Belmont Park is dominated by large specimens of naturally occurring River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), some of them pre-dating European settlement”

“The park’s remnant eucalypts are its most important natural assets.” The very large trees are over a century old. The smaller trees represent multiple generations of naturally occurring trees. Some of these trees are over a century old

4 x Swamp gums (*Eucalyptus ovata*) – 1 large, old tree

67 x Remnant River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) – 18 large, old trees

Abundant locally vulnerable Kneed Wallaby-grass (*Austrodanthonia geniculata*)

Tree Health

“The park’s eucalypts have suffered in recent years from drought, insect attack and possum browsing. Unfortunately, the locally endangered Swamp Gums have fared worst, with three in fair health and one multi-stemmed specimen in good condition (right at the centre of the park).

The extent of insect damage has been heightened as an indirect result of the paucity of shrubs in the park, which favours the aggressive Noisy Miner to the exclusion of smaller insect-eating birds.”

Ecological links with other land

Belmont Park is rather ecologically isolated from other habitat for native flora or fauna. There is a tiny patch of Grassy Woodland in the Outer Circle Railway corridor (Site 31) 300 m to the southwest, and otherwise, the only remnant vegetation within 2 km comprises a few isolated River Red Gums and a small number of individual understorey plants.

There is therefore very little ecological linkage between Belmont Park and any other area of native vegetation.

Former habitat type

The pre-European vegetation of Belmont Park would most likely have included Grassy Woodland (EVC 175) in the south, grading into Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) to the north.

Full flora list

The table below lists the wild plant species recorded by the author in Belmont Park on 14/1/05. In the 'Abundance' column:

D = the species is dominant in its vegetation stratum;

M = many plants;

✓ = moderate numbers; and

– = very few plants.

Species Name	Abundance	Species Name	Abundance	Species Name	Abundance
Wild indigenous species		<i>Goodenia ovata</i>	✓	<i>Ehrharta erecta</i>	✓
<i>Austrodanthonia geniculata</i>	D	<i>Kunzea ericoides</i> s.l.	–	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	✓
<i>Austrodanthonia racemosa</i>	M	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	–	<i>Paspalum dilatatum</i>	–
<i>Cotula australis</i>	✓	<i>Poa labillardierei</i>	✓	<i>Pennisetum clandestinum</i>	✓
<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	D	<i>Wahlenbergia communis</i> s.l.	✓	<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>	–
<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>	✓	Other planted species		<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	✓
<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>	✓	<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	–	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	✓
<i>Muellerina eucalyptoides</i>	✓	<i>Corymbia maculata</i>	✓	<i>Poa annua</i>	✓
<i>Portulaca oleracea</i> *	✓	<i>Eucalyptus ?botryoides</i>	✓	<i>Polycarpon tetraphyllum</i>	✓
Planted indigenous species		<i>Eucalyptus sideroxylon</i> s.l.	–	<i>Polygonum aviculare</i> s.l.	✓
<i>Acacia implexa</i>	✓	<i>Eucalyptus</i> sp.	–	<i>Romulea rosea</i>	✓
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	✓	Weeds		<i>Sporobolus africanus</i>	✓
<i>Dianella longifolia</i> s.l.	✓	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	–	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	✓
<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	✓	<i>Arctotheca calendula</i>	✓	<i>Ulmus</i> aff. <i>procera</i>	✓
<i>Eucalyptus cladocalyx</i>	✓	<i>Bromus catharticus</i>	✓	<i>Vulpia bromoides</i>	✓
<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>	✓	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	M	<i>Acacia elata</i>	–

* *Portulaca oleracea* is doubtfully indigenous to the Melbourne area.

Full fauna list

The following list shows the most recent year in which each species has been recorded. Asterisks indicate introduced species. The Noisy Miner is the only species for which breeding has been confirmed.

Butterflies		Galah	1998	White-plumed Honeyeater	1998
*Cabbage White	2005	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	1998	Magpie-lark	2005
Common Brown	2005	Cockatiel	1998	Willie Wagtail	1998
Common Grass-blue	2005	Rainbow Lorikeet	2005	Grey Butcherbird	2004
		Musk Lorikeet	2005	Australian Magpie	2005
Mammals		Little Lorikeet	2005	Pied Currawong	2001
Common Brushtail Possum	2005	Crimson Rosella	2005	*House Sparrow	1988
Common Ringtail Possum	1990	Eastern Rosella	2004	Silvereye	1988
		Tawny Frogmouth	2005	*Common Blackbird	2001
Birds		Laughing Kookaburra	2005	*Common Starling	1998
Australian Hobby	1998	Red Wattlebird	2004	*Common Myna	2004
*Spotted Turtle-Dove	2000	Noisy Miner	2005		

Bird census results

One twenty-minute bird census was carried out as part of the bird survey by David Lockwood on 3/10/04. He recorded five native species and no introduced species – by far the lowest number of species of any census in this study. The species counts were Rainbow Lorikeet (18), Noisy Miner (17), Eastern Rosella (8), Australian Magpie (2) and Red Wattlebird (1). This represents a dysfunctional bird community that would be expected to lead to tree dieback from inadequate visitation by small, insect-eating birds. The abundance of Noisy Miners is a major contributor to this dysfunction.

Belmont Park's open, park-like vegetation attracts the Noisy Miner, so recent plantings of shrubs are desirable for restoring a balance among bird species. Fledgling Noisy Miners were observed, indicating that this species breeds in the park.

Threats

The following threats to the site's ecological values are presented in a form to suit the Department of Sustainability & Environment's 'BioSites' database.

Threat	Natural assets affected	Severity	When?
Eucalypt dieback disease due to possums, psyllids, leaf skeletonisers, leaf miners, drought stress or other causes. Psyllid damage was quite evident at the time of the site inspection (14/1/05).	Trees	Moderate	Current
Noisy Miners chasing away smaller bird species, thereby exacerbating tree dieback.	Bird fauna; Trees	Moderate	Current
Environmental weeds. The species of concern are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious: Four-leafed Allseed (<i>Polycarpon tetraphyllum</i>), Indian Rat-tail Grass (<i>Sporobolus africanus</i>); • Moderately serious: Cape Weed (<i>Arctotheca calendula</i>), Prairie Grass (<i>Bromus catharticus</i>), Couch (<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>), Panic Veldt-grass (<i>Ehrharta erecta</i>), Perennial Rye-grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>), Kikuyu (<i>Pennisetum clandestinum</i>), Buck's-horn Plantain (<i>Plantago coronopus</i>), Ribwort (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>), Annual Meadow-grass (<i>Poa annua</i>), Common Onion-grass (<i>Romulea rosea</i>), Suckling Clover (<i>Trifolium dubium</i>), Squirrel-tail Fescue (<i>Vulpia bromoides</i>). 	All	Low to Moderate	Current

Past management and revegetation

The earliest management of the park appears to have involved removal of all shrubs and small trees, to create a very open landscape. Some trees were subsequently planted, including Australian natives and exotic species. In recent years, some mulched beds have been created beneath clusters of remnant River Red Gums. These beds provide better conditions for the tree roots, and the shrubs that have been planted may attract insect-eating birds that will help reduce tree dieback.

Future management and revegetation

- During periods of drought, the remnant eucalypts should be inspected each summer to check whether irrigation is necessary to avoid deaths, and whether protection against possums needs to be installed.
- Planting a few more Swamp Gums of local provenance would help the security of this locally endangered species.
- Additional planting of indigenous shrubs in moderately dense blocks (not strips) may encourage small insectivorous bird species to inhabit the area. Existing plantings that are in strips would ideally be broadened. The recently indigenous plantings have used appropriate species (see under the heading, 'Full flora list'), and these could be augmented by Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*), Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*) and Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*). Additional suitable species can be selected from the list for Plains Grassy Woodland in Appendix C.
- The frequency of mowing should be minimised to avoid unnecessary soil compaction and consequent harm to the park's eucalypts. One of the cuts in each year should be in late December or January with the aim of reducing proliferation of Indian Rat-tail Grass (*Sporobolus africanus*).

Monitoring

No pre-existing data appears to be available to allow monitoring trends in the ecological values of this site.

The following items have been gathered to provide a baseline for future monitoring:

- Photos 1 and 2 on page 430, for monitoring eucalypt dieback. Repeat every two years, approximately. Investigate causes and possible solutions if dieback is found to worsen;
- The tree health ratings in the section headed 'Site description'. Repeat every four years (at least by sampling some of the trees, not necessarily all of them);
- The flora list for the park, as provided beneath the heading 'Full flora list' above. Repeat at intervals of five to ten years. Check for loss or decline of indigenous species and shifts in the threat ratings of weeds;
- The weed severity ratings in the table under the heading 'Threats'. Repeat in conjunction with the previous task.

Belmont Park, Deepdene

Belmont Park has 8 zones consisting of small and large indigenous grass patches and ornamental beds throughout the park. Increased grassland management is feasible while still maintaining functional and accessible open space for park users. The site sits close to the Outer Circle corridor. Current site extent is 4,622 m2. An additional area of 2,299 m2 has been identified as potential future biodiversity zones.

In 2024 the site was assessed as having an Asset Condition Rating of 2.29.

Zone	Current m ²	Future m ²	EVC	Cat	Description
1	1,741	-	55	Rm	North grassland
2	1,436	772	175	Rm	Central grassland
3	1,445	280	175	Rv	Ornamental beds
4	-	677	175	Rv	East boundary
5	-	570	175	Rv	South boundary



Arbor Carbon Report : Aerial Measurement of Vegetation Cover 2022

Total site area	24,000 m2
Area managed for biodiversity	4,622 m2 (19% total)
Potential future area managed for biodiversity	2,299 m2 (50% increase on existing area managed for biodiversity)

