

13.7	Biodiversity Strategy Review
Directorate	City Futures
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Attachment(s)	1. 2024 Biodiversity Strategy and Habitat Connectivity Plan Review [13.7.1 - 40 pages]

Purpose

For Council to consider the Biodiversity Strategy and Habitat Connectivity Plan Review at **Attachment 1**

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- a. **Notes the Biodiversity Strategy and Habitat Connectivity Plan Review at Attachment 1.**
- b. **Notes that a new Biodiversity Strategy, which will incorporate the Habitat Connectivity Plan, is in development and a draft will be presented to the next Council for consideration to be released for community consultation.**

Background

Brimbank Biodiversity Strategy 2012-2022 (the Strategy) and the Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan 2018-2023 (the Plan) guide Council's conservation activities and together form our approach to biodiversity. Both documents are due to be updated.

Both documents have been reviewed together with the aim of assessing our success in implementing the Strategy and identifying opportunities for the future. Analyses revealed that Council completed, or completed with an adjustment to scope, 100% of the actions in the Biodiversity Strategy, and 94% in the Habitat Connectivity Plan.

A new Biodiversity Strategy, which will incorporate the Habitat Connectivity Plan, is in development and a draft will be presented to the next Council for consideration to be released for community consultation.

Matters for Consideration

Analysis

Key successes were identified throughout the review process, alongside gaps that need to be addressed into the future.

Successes:

- Ongoing management of Council conservation reserves.
- Planning scheme amendments to increase protections within the planning process.
- Introduction of habitat elements into our reserves and creek lines to enhance habitat.

- Implemented an annual community engagement program to involve and educate our community.

Opportunities:

- Increase our knowledge of current biodiversity values for effective management.
- Review protections in current planning scheme in light of our changing landscape.
- Embed climate change considerations in biodiversity management.
- Increase the capacity of our community to contribute to protection of our environment.

Implementation

Our dynamic municipality, growing population and the impacts of climate change all influence how we manage our natural landscapes. This review document will inform the development of a draft Biodiversity Strategy to manage biodiversity into the future. Further work and consultation will be undertaken to refine a draft strategy.

Internal consultation has commenced with the review and will be ongoing with the development of the draft Biodiversity Strategy.

Key stakeholders within the organisation are the following teams;

- Climate Emergency and Environment
- Parks and Public Realm
- Engineering Services
- Asset and Property Services
- City Development
- City Strategy

External consultation with key external stakeholders will be conducted to inform the draft Biodiversity Strategy which will be presented next Council for consideration to be released for community consultation.

Community Engagement

An initial workshop was held on 5 March 2024, with 28 members of Brimbank Community Voice to assess community thoughts, attitudes and concerns regarding our local environment. The new Draft Biodiversity Strategy which will be presented next Council for consideration to be released for community consultation.

Initial meetings have been held with the Wurundjeri and Bunurong, and engagement will be ongoing.

Resource And Risk Implications

The new Strategy is in development stage, with community consultation required before finalisation. As such, costs with the project will be associated with the consultation and are expected to fall within the allocated budget.

Community: potential impact on community, including public trust and customer service impact

- Yes – developing a strong public consultation plan will empower the community to participate in the strategy development and increase trust in Council process.

Environmental: impacts on environmental sustainability, including water/waste management, climate change, and contaminated land

- Yes – development of the Strategy will guide how we protect our natural environment into the future

Regulatory: legal, legislative or regulatory implications including the rights/obligations of stakeholders

- Yes – the Strategy will guide how we ensure we are meeting our regulatory responsibilities.

Legislation/Council Plan/Policy Context

This report supports the Council Plan 2021-2025 strategic direction and objective of:

2. Places and Spaces - Liveable and connected neighbourhoods that support healthy and sustainable futures - A green place for all

- Liveable and Connected - Inviting and liveable spaces and facilities, connected so people can get around
- Sustainable and Green - Protect natural environments for current and future generations.

Council officers contributing to the preparation and approval of this report, have no conflicts of interests to declare.



Biodiversity Strategy and Habitat Connectivity Plan review

April 2024

Attachment 13.7.1

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Council respectfully acknowledges and recognises the Kulin Nations including the Wurundjeri, Bunurong and Boon Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners of this land and waterways and pays respect to their Elders past, present and future. The City of Brimbank lands have always been a significant trading and meeting place for Traditional Owners. Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Brimbank and their Elders for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

Introduction and purpose

Brimbank Biodiversity Strategy 2012-2022 (the Strategy) and the Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan 2018-2023 (the Plan) guide Council's conservation activities and together form our approach to biodiversity. Both documents are due to be updated. Therefore, both documents are being reviewed together to form a holistic understanding of our progress in protecting our natural environment.

This document includes a review of the key achievements, the remaining gaps to be addressed and will be used to inform the next iteration of the Biodiversity Strategy.

This document includes;

- A broad summary of the Biodiversity Strategy and the Habitat Connectivity Plan
- Key achievements and the remaining gaps to be addressed organised under the four key objectives of the Strategy
 - PROTECT BIODIVERSITY
 - ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY
 - CONNECT BIODIVERSITY
 - ENGAGE AND PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY
- External Influences and Internal Influences on the delivery of the Strategy and Plan
- Next steps
- Appendix 1: Biodiversity Strategy action review, inclusive of the mid-point 2018 review
- Appendix 2: Habitat Connectivity Plan action review



Biodiversity Strategy

In 2012 Council adopted its first ever Biodiversity Strategy to protect our precious and unique natural environment. The Brimbank Biodiversity Strategy 2012-2022 (the Strategy) demonstrated Council's commitment to protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity within the municipality.

The strategy set our vision for the future;

'to protect existing biodiversity and increase the diversity and sustainability of fauna habitat and remnant vegetation, through best practices available in biodiversity protection, adaptive management techniques and increased connectivity of biodiversity whilst encouraging community awareness, engagement and acceptance of Brimbank's natural environment'.

Drawing from information set in the Brimbank Natural Heritage Strategy 1997 which provided a snapshot of native vegetation within the municipality, and the threats it faces, the Biodiversity Strategy established four key objectives;

1. Protect biodiversity
2. Adaptive management of biodiversity
3. Biodiversity connectivity
4. Engage and promote biodiversity.

In alignment with the Strategy, a mid-point review was conducted and a revised action plan was developed and endorsed by Council in November 2018.

A review has been completed of the revised action plan and all actions within the plan have been completed or partially completed or completed with adjustments in scope or method (88%). A detailed analysis of the actions and their current status is included in Appendix 1.

Habitat Connectivity Plan

The Strategy has a strong focus on the flora of the municipality, and a key action within the Biodiversity Connectivity objective was to develop a connectivity plan, to focus more closely on the fauna of our municipality and the habitat available for these animals to live and move through the landscape. The Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan 2018-2023 was developed and endorsed by Council in April 2018.

The Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan (the Plan) identifies overarching goals, and corridors of land within Brimbank to focus on achieving connected natural landscapes, in order to promote and facilitate the movement of plants and animals and their genetics through the landscape, provide areas of refuge, and areas for reproduction and foraging. It establishes three key goals;

Goal 1: The Brimbank landscape will have a safe network of corridors for fauna

Effective and safe pathways will be managed and improved to allow indigenous fauna to move through the landscape and beyond Brimbank.

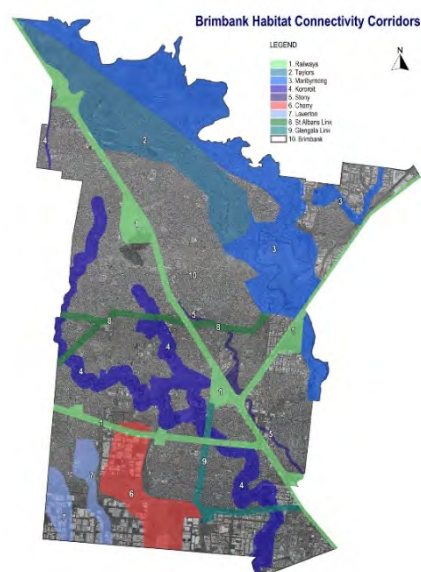
Goal 2: Brimbank's indigenous flora and fauna species will be genetically diverse communities

Our indigenous flora and fauna will be part of a large gene pool that enables resilience to changes in the environment, and to avoid inbreeding.

Goal 3: Brimbank's community of people will be connected to nature

We will have a healthy landscape for a healthy community and opportunities for people to engage with and enjoy nature.

A review has been completed of the Habitat Connectivity Plan with the majority of the actions in the plan have been completed or partially completed or completed with adjustments in scope or method (94%). A detailed analysis of the actions and their current status is included Appendix 2.



Identified Corridors

- Railways Corridor
- Taylors Corridor
- Maribyrnong Corridor
- Kororoit Corridor
- Stony Corridor
- Cherry Corridor
- Laverton Corridor
- St Albans Link Corridor
- Glengala Link Corridor
- Brimbank Corridor

PROTECT BIODIVERSITY

Key Achievements

- Implemented planning scheme amendments that seek to provide greater protection of native vegetation and species, on both private and public land through Environmental Significance Overlays.
- Created a native vegetation alert for Council's land use planners and officers to identify properties that potentially support native vegetation or fauna habitat.
- Provided ongoing support for Council's project managers to incorporate biodiversity considerations into capital works projects, and guidance on how to avoid and minimise negative impacts.
- Translocation and reintroduction of threatened species such as Spiny Rice-flower and Button Wrinklewort
- Council adopted an additional planning scheme amendment that seeks to review and update the Brimbank Planning Scheme into a new format. Part of the review sought to include additional content which aimed to protect biodiversity from both the Plan and the Strategy. This amendment is sitting with the Minister for Planning for approval.

- Submissions prepared for legislative reviews and other inquiries including the Independent review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, and the inquiry investigating ecosystem decline in Victoria.

Button Wrinklewort at Pioneer Park

In 2014, the Conservation team started introducing Button Wrinklewort into council managed grassland at Pioneer Park.

The bright yellow daisy is listed as endangered and has been threatened by habitat destruction, lack of fire, and importantly - genetic issues.

Melbourne populations are genetically incompatible with western Victorian populations. Cross pollination of these two groups leads to the plants becoming sterile.

To diversify the genetics plants were introduced to Pioneer Park from Truganina cemetery. Then through 2016- 17, plants were added from St Albans, to increase genetic diversity. Since 2018, new plants have continued to be introduced, along with monitoring, weed control and use of fire, the plants are now producing offspring.

Gap Analyses

- No provision for decision making for Council to accept new conservation reserves that may arise from the planning process. Investigations into a policy or similar that could guide Council, and potentially developers in future ownership and the ongoing management of conservation reserves.
- The effectiveness of planning controls and other strategic guidance could be reviewed with consideration of relevant legislation, in order to assess efficacy, opportunity and ability for change, and any gaps with aims to achieve greater protections for locally significant species and connectivity.
- The strategy does not consider climate change impacts on biodiversity.
- The strategy does not address the need to collate existing and incoming data on our biodiversity values.



Button Wrinklewort

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY

Key Achievements

- Ongoing management of 396 hectares of Council land for the purpose of biodiversity
- Mapped the extent, condition and legislative context of native vegetation across 1400 hectares of Brimbank owned or managed land for baseline data.
- Created a Conservation Asset Management Framework providing a methodology to monitor and track the extent and value of conservation assets and identify land management interventions to reduce threats, and enhance ecological and habitat condition.
- Increased the condition (quality) of managed grassland assets with increased ecological burn frequency, intensive weed control and species reintroduction.
- Supported ongoing research projects on threatened species within the municipality.
- Planted an average of 38,000 locally indigenous grasses, wildflowers, trees and shrubs each year over the past five years

Conservation Asset Management Framework

In 2023, The Conservation Asset Management Framework was developed. The Framework is an overarching document that enables Council to achieve the goals and objectives of the Strategy and the Plan.

The direct purpose of the framework is to improve environmental values, provide a methodology to monitor and track the extent and value of conservation assets and identify land management interventions to reduce threats, and enhance ecological and habitat condition. This allows us to assess the success of our on-ground activities, and allow for adjustments to management regimes.

The framework ensures that our resources are best placed for the highest benefit.



Isabella Williams Grassland

Gap Analyses

- The strategy does not consider the impacts of climate change on management actions or restoration goals.
- The updated strategy actions do not consider the development of pest plant guidelines.
- Further investigation into emerging IT applications for adaptive land management and monitoring is required.
- Adaptive management of biodiversity values in the broader open space network is required (not just conservation assets)
- Lack of focus on fungi, soils and invertebrates



Kororoit Creek

CONNECT BIODIVERSITY

Key Achievements

- Developed the Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan 2018-2023.
- Supplementary habitat hollows installed along Jacksons Creek at Sydenham Park, with regular monitoring conducted.
- Introduction of structural habitat across the municipality (rocks and logs).
- Increased grassland patches at Isabella Williams Reserve and Lakes Grassland to connect with creek corridor.
- Council adopted an additional planning scheme amendment that seeks to review and update the Brimbank Planning Scheme into a new format. Part of the review sought to include embedding the Habitat Corridors in Strategic Framework Plans and other policy change. This amendment is sitting with the Minister for Planning for approval.



Stepping Stones path

Kororoit Creek Stepping Stones

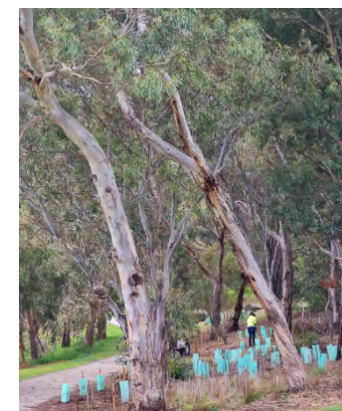
This project involved the introduction of locally sourced logs, basalt rocks, targeted weed control and lots of planting. Friends of Kororoit Creek have been working to beautify an area of 300m² since 2016. Council, acting on a Habitat Connectivity Plan action in 2020, started works with a Working for Victoria team to expand this area to connect with other areas of vegetation.

Stepping Stones Woodland has been the site for World Environment Day community planting for the past 2 years, where the community has come together to expand the plant and habitat diversity. The site is now 10,000 m² of connected habitat for creatures such as Common Long Necked Tortoise, Rakali, Spotted Pardalote, frogs and reptiles.

The site provides the opportunity for our community to connect with nature. It is a good example of Council working with Friends of groups, volunteers and the community to protect, enhance and connect with the natural environment.

Gap Analyses

- Further fauna surveys required in targeted areas for a greater understanding of our baseline and the success of management actions on Council Land.
- Amendment of some land management (including mowing) regimes required to maximise habitat at critical times, and increase likelihood of seed set.
- Identification and prioritisation of key gaps in connectivity for each species guild in the Habitat Connectivity Plan for all waterways.



Stepping Stones – introducing shrub layer

ENGAGE AND PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY

Key Achievements

- Implemented the annual community engagement program which provides a diverse range of community programs and opportunities.
- Supported local environment groups and schools with biodiversity focussed on-ground activities and education.
- Implemented 'Nature Places' program to three sites, with a fourth in implementation phase. The program integrates grasslands into the urban landscape, by providing a system of trails, paths, and signage to allow our community to experience nature in a guided and safe way.
- During the period of the Strategy, Brimbank has played a role in an average of approximately 50 activities per year, with the exception of the Covid period, where it was 20.

Wildflowers in Schools Program

The School wildflower pollinator gardens project was piloted in 2020. The program was successful and has continued since. The program encourages schools to plant local grassland wildflowers in their school yard, to increase the number and genetic diversity of these plants in our municipality, and to attract beneficial pollinators. It increases biodiversity on school grounds, and engages young people in caring for nature.

Schools are offered 50 free plants to plant in their yard, along with help and support for site selection, and information on these local species. The pilot commenced with 10 schools, and has grown to seventeen schools since.



Keilor Views Primary - planting wildflowers

Gap Analyses

- Community led programs are often successful, but frequently are not ongoing due to funding or succession of leadership. Assessing community led programs for success and alignment with council strategies should be regularly conducted to consider if Council can provide longer term support.
- Local retail indigenous plant nurseries in the municipality should be supported so the community can buy local species.
- Greater use of technology should be investigated to increase reach to the community (e.g. socials, use of QR codes on signage).
- Updated suite of information on Brimbank's local environment for our community to learn about our local patch.

External Influences

Victorian Planning Provisions

Since 2012, State Government has made two major changes to biodiversity related planning legislation which have effected planning for native vegetation at a local level.

In 2013 changes were made to the native vegetation clearing regulations with amendments to the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP). This reform, called the Permitted Clearing Regulations, made significant changes to the intent, coverage and process of native vegetation clearing controls particularly under VPP clauses 52.16 and 52.17 contained within the Brimbank Planning Scheme.

The implications to Council of this change included;

- An increase in the number of development applications triggering Clause 52.17
- Increased conflict and applicant confusion over the importance of Brimbank's biodiversity due to differences in priority statements between local, State and Federal legislation.
- Significant barriers for Council, and in turn planning permit applicants, to 'avoid and minimise' vegetation clearance as the vast majority of Brimbank applications triggered a low-risk pathway, meaning that they could not be refused or objected to on the basis of biodiversity considerations in Clause 52.17.

The 2013 Permitted Clearing Regulations decreased the strength of Clause 52.17 which meant that instead of seeking to retain native vegetation in-situ, it created easier pathways for the removal and 'offset' of native vegetation losses. This change resulted in further clearing and fragmentation of native vegetation values within Brimbank.

In 2017 new amendments were made to the VPPs and in turn the Brimbank Planning Scheme with the introduction of Native Vegetation Removal regulations Clause 52.17.

The implications to Council of this change included;

- Increase in policy strength resulting in greater enforcement powers for Council to seek to 'avoid and minimise' native vegetation removal.
- Consideration of endangered Ecological Vegetation Classes, allowing Council to greater scrutinise applications that seek to remove native vegetation – particularly important as there are a number of vacant development sites with endangered grasslands in Brimbank .

A number of broader planning changes that have an impact on how Council plans for the retention and protection of biodiversity. They include:

- In July 2018 the then Department on Environment, Land Water and Planning (DELWP) initiated planning reforms which resulted in a new format planning scheme – the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) which overtook the previous VPP. The new PPF format seeks to simplify and modernise Victoria's planning policy and rules to make planning schemes more efficient, accessible and transparent. Relevant changes included:
 - The introduction of a Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) (Clause 02) which now has a 5000 word word-limit (replacing the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS))
 - A new Planning Policy Framework (PPF) (Clauses 10-19) which combined three levels of policy (State, Regional and Local) under each theme - rather than the previous State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) and Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) being completely separate and limited regional policy.
 - New provisions relating to administration, enforcement and strategic implementation.

The greatest impact this change had on biodiversity outcomes was due to a number of planning rules that Planning Schemes had to accord with. They included:

- State planning policy sometimes overriding local provisions
- An inability to repeat or conflict with State legislation
- An inability to repeat / capture legislation that sits outside Planning Schemes
- Word limits and standard wording
- Simplification of planning policy and removal of content that is not directly related to planning.

To respond to planning reforms Council was required to translate the then Brimbank Planning Scheme into the new format. Amendment C22brim to the Brimbank Planning Scheme (Amendment C225brim) was prepared and subsequently adopted by Council in October 2022. Amendment C225 seeks to translate the existing scheme into the PPF format to accord with State Government requirements. The translation was also combined with a planning scheme review and update which proposes to embed new and updated policy content into the new format Brimbank Planning Scheme from a review of over 50 Council adopted policies, strategies and plans – including the Strategy and the Plan. As mentioned previously Amendment C225brim is sitting with the Minister for Planning for approval. The changes proposed as part of this amendment have resulted in both the loss of some existing local policy content and guidance in addition to additional content obtained from the Strategy and Plan.

- The introduction of new legislation, changes to planning schemes to remove permit requirements and a greater incidence of the Minister for Planning acting as the Planning and/or the Responsible Authority are also impacting the ability for Council to influence in order to protect species and habitat considered of local significance.

The changes provide the State Government and other entities with greater powers to obtain land and deliver projects without local level assessments or planning permits. They also often exempt other requirements contained within planning schemes. These are particularly for projects considered of state importance or that deliver on key housing projects. Examples include introduction of the Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009 which was introduced to obtain land and deliver on state significant transport projects. New particular provisions for a range of transport projects including for rail projects and rail related car parks and Planning scheme amendments that seek to rezone land and facilitate development such as Amendment C222brim for the Development Victoria site in Cairnlea.

There is the potential that these types of planning changes will continue, further threatening Council's role in planning for biodiversity.

- Amendment VC201 was prepared to deliver the Waterways of the West Action Plan. Gazetted in December 2022, this amendment delivers stronger recognition and protection for our waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs. It aims to improve waterway health, amenity and access while acknowledging the important community and cultural values associated with waterways.

Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037

In early 2017 the State Government released 'Biodiversity 2037', which is 'Victoria's plan to stop the decline of our native plants and animals and improve our natural environment so it is healthy, valued and actively cared for'. This plan is ambitious, particularly around restoration and collaboration, and has led to funding opportunities for Council.

Healthy Waterways Strategy (2018-2028)

The Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-28 sets a long-term vision for managing the health of rivers, wetlands and estuaries in the Port Phillip and Westernport region, in order to protect and improve their value to the community. The strategy is a collaboration between Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Local Government, Environment Protection Authority, Port Phillip and Westernport

Catchment Management Authority and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA – previously DEWLP). Melbourne Water is the lead organisation in the implementation of the strategy.

The strategy divides the region into catchments and sub-catchments, and prioritises stretches of rivers and creeks for restoration. Significant capital works and restoration have occurred have been delivered by Melbourne Water within Brimbank along the Maribyrnong River and Jacksons Creek at Sydenham Park, McNabbs Weir, and Caroline Chisolm Reserve..

Internal Influences

Brimbank Environmental Sustainability Policy and Framework

The Brimbank Environmental Sustainability Policy and Framework (updated 2017) outlines the guiding principles and strategic pathways to improve the environmental sustainability of Brimbank's natural environment. The Policy and Framework further strengthen Council's strategic approach to addressing biodiversity issues.

Brimbank Climate Emergency Plan (2020-2025)

This plan sets targets on how Brimbank will address the climate emergency. Climate Emergency is one of the Council Plan's three pillars. Addressing the climate emergency is a strong priority of the organisation. Biodiversity falls under the theme: Green and Cool which '...is about embracing nature as an ally, caring for biodiversity as our privilege and responsibility...'

Council plans, policies and strategies for Biodiversity and open space

A range of Council plans, policies and strategies focus and refer to open space within Brimbank, including:

- Creating Better Parks Policy update (2016)
- Urban Forest Strategy (2016-2046)
- Cycling and Walking Strategy 2016
- Sports Facility Development Plan 2016, revised in 2018
- Industrial Land Strategy (2018-2030)
- Industrial Design Guidelines
- Sustainable Water Management Strategy 2013-2023

These policy and strategy documents facilitate the use of open space and linear corridors across the municipality, which can complement but also at times compete with biodiversity values and the vision outlined in Brimbank's Biodiversity Strategy.

Next steps

Council officers are developing a new Biodiversity Strategy that aligns with our community Vision

- By 2040, the Brimbank community will be healthy and safe and we will be united through a sense of belonging and pride.
- Our City will be inclusive, resilient, innovative and vibrant and our people will share equally in the City's prosperity and opportunity.
- The environment and heritage will be protected and enhanced and Brimbank's diverse neighbourhoods and housing will offer something for everyone.

Biodiversity, or biological diversity, refers to the variety of all life forms on earth – the different plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form part

(Commonwealth of Australia 1996)

Biodiversity is essential for the processes that support life on earth. It provides for the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the medicine we take. Time in nature is proven to improve our state of mind, and the condition of our health. Yet, biodiversity is declining on a global, national and local scale. The United Nations estimate that up to one million species are threatened with extinction. The Australian Government State of the Environment Report (2021) says that 'the state and trend of the environment of Australia are poor and deteriorating'. A Victorian Legislative Council Committee inquiry (2021) found that Victoria's ecosystem is facing major threats from noxious weeds and invasive species, climate change and habitat loss and fragmentation.

Council will be developing a new Biodiversity Strategy to help change the trajectory of the health of our environment. We will consult with a range of our diverse community, local agencies and ecological experts to create achieve or Council Plan objective to *Protect natural environments for current and future generations*.



Appendix 1

Biodiversity Strategy (2012-2022) – Revised Action Plan Review 2024

Key

	Action implemented as planned	31	72%
	Action partially implemented or with adjustments to scope or method	12	28%
	Action not implemented	0	0%

Objective 1. Protect Biodiversity

#	Action	Comment
1	Undertake the appropriate geology and geomorphology studies and remove any requirement to reference Natural Heritage Study 1997 within the Brimbank planning scheme.	Influenced by State Government Policy changes. The Planning Policy Framework is undergoing a translation, with a staged approach introduced in 2018. The translation started with replacement of the State Planning Policy Framework, and continues, in conjunction with the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), to replace Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) in each planning scheme. Amendment C225brim – Planning Policy Framework Translation has been submitted to the Minister for approval, in line with the December 2023 updated Ministerial Directions and guidance. The translation does not include reference to the Natural Heritage Strategy. Instead, the draft PPF refers to Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan 2018 – 2023 and Brimbank Biodiversity Strategy 2012 – 2022 (background documents). Until the amendment C225brim is approved by the Minister, the current Brimbank Planning Framework is in place, referencing the Brimbank Natural Heritage Strategy. Given these changes, funding for the geology and geomorphology studies was not prioritised within the Brimbank budget.
2	Review the effectiveness of existing planning controls to acknowledge and protect identified natural assets and habitat corridors. Identify alternative planning controls where required.	Investigation into the effectiveness of current planning controls particularly Environmental Significance Overlays is in progress. Climate Emergency and Environment have commenced conversations with the planning departments to determine correct processes.

3	Develop Brimbank biodiversity sensitive urban design guidelines.	Draft Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design guidelines have been developed, landscape design guidelines have been developed throughout Council strategies and the planning scheme where biodiversity has been considered. Housing Strategy endorsed by Council 16/04/24 and includes actions for further work to be undertaken that proposes further landscaping and design guidance for residential land. Industrial Design Guidelines have been adopted by Council and will seek to implement them into Brimbank Planning Scheme. Landscape designs for permit applications that meet the Environment referral triggers, are reviewed and considered.
4	Develop a formal measure for monitoring and reporting on the protection and enhancement of significant biodiversity values across the municipality.	Completed as part of the Conservation Asset Management Framework.
5	Identify opportunities to retain and protect native vegetation on private land through the land use planning process.	Ongoing. Through the careful application of the planning scheme clauses related to Biodiversity, patches of biodiversity have been retained. Significant protections achieved via ESO6 with the retention of ESO protected land within 80A-80B Oakwood Road. This area is significant for its habitat values for reptiles, and supports a population of the Striped Legless Lizard which is listed as "vulnerable" under the EPBC Act. Council was successful in refusing a permit based on the applicant not meeting the requirements of 52.17. 27A Palmer Parade DERRIMUT
6	Investigate the feasibility of developer contribution plan or open space contributions that aim to improve or enhance the natural environment.	Development Contributions cannot be used for this purpose. Open space contributions can contribute to the improvement of the natural environment as non-encumbered space. The development of open spaces within Brimbank consider biodiversity values as part of the design process. An Open Space Gaps Analyses is currently being undertaken by Strategic Planning to identify future provisioning.
7	Maintain the Brimbank Offset register and document ongoing removal of all indigenous flora and fauna habitat on public and private land.	Ongoing. Offset register maintained. Submitted to State Government. DELWP (now DEECA) commenced requesting data in 2019. Format of register compliant with DEECA data gathering.
8	Seek permanent protection for significant Council owned conservation assets through Trust for Nature covenants.	Investigations into the Trust for Nature process have been undertaken. Registering requires initial and ongoing resources. Prioritisation of sites for protection will be undertaken as part of the implementation of the new Conservation Asset Management Framework.
9	Continue to provide technical advice internally regarding proposed works on private and Council land covered by Environmental Significance Overlays and/or regarding State and Federal legislative requirement pertaining to native vegetation.	Ongoing. A new position Biodiversity Referrals Officer was created to assist with planning applications with biodiversity impacts. Ongoing support is provided to internal staff with operations and capital works.

10	Continue to build capacity and knowledge of internal departments through internal engagement programs to ensure the protection and maintenance of biodiversity values within the municipality.	Ongoing. Environment considerations and requirements to consult with the CEE team have been included in the Business Case models in the capital works process. A mapping layer has been developed providing 'alerts' where native vegetation may be a consideration on the internal GIS system. Site tours to key sites including grasslands, and conservation assets which have been impacted by civil works are provided for internal staff, particularly targeting the planning department and capital works project managers.
11	Identify and address illegal encroachment and neighbouring property issues directly impacting open space areas in particular native vegetation values including dumping, discharge of stormwater, personal use, inappropriate access and boundary delineation.	Ongoing. Illegal encroachment is addressed as issues arise. Working with Melbourne Water, multiple key sites of illegal vehicle access and motorbike trails have been addressed through the introduction of new fencing, rocks and logs greatly reducing incursion along Kororoit Creek. Within Taylors Creek valley, property boundaries have been surveyed to clearly delineate private and council property, and long term encroachment has been addressed in high risk areas.
12	Develop and implement a Council machinery hygiene procedure to minimise the spread of weeds and disease across the open space network.	Machinery hygiene requirements are included in the Conservation Land Management Services contract, and monitored regularly. Hygiene requirements are incorporated into the approval process for access into conservation reserves for education or research purposes.
13	Advocate to relevant authorities for increased resourcing and funding for the protection and/or maintenance of Crown land containing significant biodiversity values or forming part of an identified habitat corridor.	Council submitted responses to two major investigations into biodiversity protections. In 2020 Council responded to the Inquiry into ecosystem decline in Victoria, an investigation run by the Victorian Environment and Planning Committee. Council response was inclusive of adequacy and effectiveness of government funding. Also in 2020 Council responded to the Independent Review of the EPBC ACT Discussion Paper, and highlighted the need for further resourcing.

Objective 2. Adaptive Management of Biodiversity

#	Action	Comment
14	Continue active conservation land management actions of weed control, biomass reduction, pest animal control and planting/direct seeding on Conservation assets.	Ongoing. 46 Assets managing over 396 hectares. Annual works plans developed and implemented yearly for each site.
15	Review the open space network, classifying areas and management objectivities for native vegetation values and habitat. The review to consider areas supporting significant native vegetation, indigenous fauna habitat and biodiversity 'hot spots'.	Conservation Asset Management Framework developed and in implementation phase. The Framework provides a system to formally identify, value, and monitor assets across the municipality. It provides management and maintenance standards to increase the quality and extent of these assets.
16	Develop formal monitoring and reporting protocols for short, medium and long term management objectives of conservation assets.	See Action 15. Conservation Asset Management Framework.

17	Continue to evaluate land management actions to ensure management actions adapt as required.	Ongoing. Conservation asset management actions are assessed and adapted in response to the changing environmental conditions and the response of each site to management interventions.
18	Map the extent and condition (quality) of native vegetation values within the open space network to determine a decline or increase from 2013/14 & 2015/16 mapping.	This mapping was intended to replicate the previous mapping completed across the municipality. Subsequent to the writing of this action Conservation Asset Management Framework has been developed which prioritises areas for mapping The Conservation Asset Management Framework (CAMF) incorporates mapping of areas managed for conservation, and areas that are considered to have a high likelihood of high biodiversity values. Through the capital works and planning process, many areas of the municipality have been mapped, providing a good understanding of the public open space. Collation of these maps, and those developed through the CAMF provides a strong baseline to assess the trajectory of native vegetation extent and quality.
19	Continue to trial new methods in biodiversity management including indigenous land management practices. Use trial results and emerging industry knowledge to ensure best practice management principles are followed in conservation areas.	Land managers regularly attend industry seminars and conferences, as well as participating in conversations with regional land managers to learn of new techniques in management. Trials in the use of sugar as a weed control have been conducted on multiple sites, and is used in appropriate areas. Trials on the efficacy of certain herbicides on high threat weeds such as Serrated Tussock has been undertaken, and the results applied across sites, particularly at Sydenham Park, where there has been a significant reduction in this weed. Access to aboriginal land managers has been limited, and only one burn has been conducted by the Narrap Wurundjeri rangers, however traditional burning principles are considered and applied on all ecological burns.
20	Investigate the application of emerging IT for adaptive land management and monitoring.	Investigations into several land management programs have been undertaken, The use of GIS mapping has increased, and will be adopted across Conservation Assets. Adoption of particular applications has been deferred until tThe transition of Council to M365 is completed. The use of drone technology has been applied on one Council site, and the further use will be considered on a site by site basis.
21	Continue to develop an integrated pest animal control program to ensure a strategic approach to the protection of biodiversity values across Brimbank.	An integrated Rabbit Control Program is conducted across conservation assets. The program is inclusive of multiple control techniques, inclusive of harbour removal and warren destruction. Integrated control has resulted in a large reduction in the reliance on baiting across the municipality. A standard process for conducting activities, monitoring and reporting is outstanding. Fox control is undertaken in areas where it has been assessed and considered to be effective.
22	Develop a restoration management plan for Sydenham Park, Keilor North.	Complete. Sydenham Park Restoration Plan was completed in 2021, and is being implemented across the site.

23	Implement annual Vegetation Fuel Reduction Plan, for Conservation Assets, in accordance with the Municipal Fire Prevention Management Plan.	Ongoing Fire mitigation and fuel reduction requirements are assessed annually and implemented throughout the fire danger period. Fuel reduction activities include control of high biomass weeds, slashing, and biomass removal. Controlled burns are conducted throughout the year at key sites to keep fuel loads low. The fire mitigation plan is developed in conjunction with the municipal Fire Prevention Officer.
24	Assess trees municipal wide for habitat and foraging values and embed protections for identified trees into the proposed Municipal Tree Policy.	No municipal wide investigations have been undertaken specifically for habitat values. In 2021, Brimbank adopted a Significant Tree Policy, which established a Significant Tree Register, with these trees requiring a permit to remove. Criteria for significance is based on size, which could be considered a coarse proxy for habitat values. Habitat trees are identified through the tree maintenance program, and retention of stags and the creation of supplementary hollows are conducted in an ongoing manner.
25	Support research opportunities where appropriate, that target improved adaptive management of relevant flora, fauna and ecological communities.	Ongoing. Three ongoing research projects are being conducted on Council land, all conducted by Victoria University. Two are on the critically endangered Spiny Rice-flower; Project 1 - Will supplementation improve the recruitment capacity of <i>P. spinescens</i> populations? Denton Avenue Grasslands, Bon Thomas Grassland. Project 2 - <i>P. spinescens</i> Seed collection, supplementation and field experiments. Bon Thomas, Matthews Hill Project 3 - Striped Legless Lizard Translocation Project, Paramount Grassland Council are in conversations with the researchers, and are guided by their management recommendations for these species.
26	Review and update existing land management agreements with relevant agencies including VicTrack and Melbourne Water	Ongoing. . External influences have impacted finalising agreements. Attempts have been made to formalise agreements with VicTrack, complications have arisen with major rail projects underway within the municipality. Conversations are ongoing, and short term agreements are in place.

27	Continue environmental works coordination with stakeholders, including Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and neighbouring Councils, to maximise land management outcomes across the municipality.	Ongoing. Maribyrnong Valley Connection project central to maintaining and facilitating relationships and coordinated land management efforts, particularly regarding high threat weed control, and regular stakeholder meetings. Council activities and Melbourne Water capital works programs are developed in conjunction to ensure complementary works.
28	Participate in relevant Regional and State land management and biodiversity working groups.	Ongoing. Brimbank council has representatives on the <i>Pimelea spinescans</i> Recovery Team, and the LGA Biodiversity Planners Network. Members of the Australian Association of Bushland Regenerators.
29	Review and update Council's Sustainable Land Management Incentive Grant, to increase participation to maximise outcomes.	Review undertaken. Changes being implemented. Ongoing assessment required.

Objective 3. Connect Biodiversity

#	Action	Comment
30	Implement the Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan 2018-2023.	See HCP Action Review
31	Develop and implement the Kororoit Creek and Taylors Creek waterway implementation plans.	Taylors Creek Conservation Management Plan completed, and actions being prioritised and implemented Kororoit Creek Habitat Connectivity Plan is operational, and being implemented..
32	Develop monitoring and reporting protocols for habitat protection, restoration and creation projects.	See Action 15. Conservation Asset Management Framework.

Objective 4. Engage and Promote Biodiversity

#	Action	Comment
33	Develop and implement annual environment community engagement program offering a diverse range of educational activities and experiences based opportunities.	An annual engagement program is delivered annually, offering a wide variety of opportunities for the community to learn about, and participate in the protection of our natural environment. The program is developed for a wide range of interest abilities, and ages, and includes volunteer days (clean ups and plantings), bird surveys, walks and talks and webinars. During the period of the Strategy, Brimbank has played a role in an average of 50 activities per year, with the exception of the Covid period, where it was 20.
34	Develop and implement citizen science programs focused on indigenous flora and fauna.	Brimbank Council participates in and promotes the Great Aussie Bird Count, Frog Census, and Waterwatch. Council has adopted the iNaturalist app to promote to the community. iNaturalist allows community to record and upload their observations, this program includes verification of observations, keeps a permanent record accessible to all, and shares the data with scientific data repositories like the Global Biodiversity Information Facility to help scientists find and use your data. Brimbank has recently joined the Melbourne Team in the international City Nature Challenge, which uses iNaturalist to record observations.
35	Continue to support 'friends of' groups, volunteers and community to protect, enhance and connect with the natural environment.	Ongoing. Council provides ongoing support with advice, grant applications and implementation, on-ground and event support and capacity building initiatives.
36	Update and administer the Brimbank Friends Agreements for conservation volunteers to undertake works on Council land.	A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and is in finalisation stage.
37	Develop a targeted habitat gardening program to increase the overall quantity of indigenous vegetation and habitat features on private land.	Habitat Gardening education and webinars provided through the My Smart Garden program and the Brimbank annual Environment Events Calendar. Wildflowers in Schools program provides plants, education and advice for schools.
38	Develop and facilitate the creation of a community biodiversity working group who can provide local expertise.	Council maintains ongoing contact with local biodiversity experts, and relevant state departments, and participates in the state wide Biodiversity Planners network.
39	Review existing range of Council's primary school education resources to promote Brimbank's biodiversity values, nature landscape and flora and fauna values.	Elements of the Schools Sustainability Resources developed in 2014 are still circulated and relevant to today. Primary schools are supported with on-ground activities, and incursions associated with the Wildflowers in Schools program. Development of a series of updated fact sheets and posters are in development.
40	Continue to provide opportunities for schools to actively enhance and engage with the natural environment.	Ongoing. Council supports schools with education and environmental events, through education sessions, walks and talks and providing volunteering opportunities.

41	Continue implementation of 'Nature Places' projects, where amenity infrastructure is strategically incorporated into conservation areas to invite our community into nature.	Ongoing. Matthews Hill, Pioneer Park completed. Lakes Grassland partially complete with ongoing implementation. Bon Thomas Grassland in implementation phase.
42	Develop new and innovative ways of communicating and promoting to increase our community reach.	Ongoing. Use and development of computer programs, socials and website for newsletters, events advertising and bookings, SMS reminders. Effort is made to use already established channels of communication from other focus groups (libraries, neighbourhood houses, youth services etc.). Efforts have been made to reach CALD communities with the translation of projects such as Good Grassland Neighbour booklet, advertising for selected events, and participating in the development of the Waterways of the West - CALD Engagement Toolkit.
43	Develop/formalise evaluation and reporting protocols on the engagement and promotion programs.	A conservation community engagement framework is in development, and at the phase of internal department review.

Biodiversity Strategy (2012-2022) Action Review – (Completed 2018)

The Strategy sets out actions under four Objectives

1. Protect (Protect biodiversity)
2. Manage (Adaptive management of biodiversity)
3. Connect (Biodiversity connectivity)
4. Educate (Educate community about local biodiversity values)

Key

	Action implemented as planned
	Action implemented with adjustments to scope or method
	Action not implemented

Protect Biodiversity

#	Action	Comment
1	Proceed with Planning Scheme Amendments: C146 Maribyrnong River Corridor, C131 Kororoit Creek Corridor and C53 Identified sites of biological significance, to incorporate Environmental Significance Overlays 4, 5 and 6 (ESO 4, 5, 6) into the Brimbank Planning Scheme with the revision to accommodate changes to Federal and State legislation.	Planning scheme amended. Further strategic work required to review current Environment Significance Overlays and acknowledge and protect identified Habitat Connectivity corridors. Further reviews need to accommodate changes to Federal or State legislation.
2	Investigate possible additional landholder incentives programs for properties covered by current and future Environmental Significance Overlays to assist in the protection and enhancement of biodiversity values.	Action scope to be adjusted and incorporated with other private landholder programs that aim to improve biodiversity values.
3	Develop specific guidelines to assist Council officers issuing condition of land and fire abatement notices to properties covered by Environmental Significance Overlays to protect and maintain biodiversity values.	Internal procedure developed to ensure land and fire abatement notices maintain biodiversity values on private land.
4	Investigate and implement the best form of permanent protection of all Council owned conservation assets through the Brimbank Planning Scheme.	Investigation undertaken. Trust for Nature covenant determined to provide the best form of on-title protection.

5	Develop internal Council procedures and guidelines to identify requirements under State and Federal legislation for the protection of flora, fauna and vegetation communities within the municipality.	Internal procedure developed to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Native vegetation mapping available to all staff.
6	Continue to build capacity within Council operations of general open space monitoring, management/ and compliance to ensure the protection and maintenance of conservation assets within the municipality.	Ongoing.
7	Identify and address illegal encroachment and neighbouring property issues directly impacting open space areas, in particular conservation assets, including dumping, discharge of stormwater, personal use, inappropriate access and boundary delineation.	Ongoing. Encroachments addressed on Taylors Creek and Kororoit Creek in collaboration with Council and Melbourne Water.
8	Review and update Council's current private vehicle access procedure to minimise negative impacts on Council owned open space and in particular areas supporting protected flora and fauna.	Completed. Service reviewed and currently provided through Council's Parks Services.
9	Develop and implement a Council machinery hygiene procedure to minimise and eliminate the spread of weeds and disease across open space and in particular conservation areas within the municipality.	Not implemented to date.
10	Review and update Council's 'Dog Off' leash areas policy, to minimise negative impacts on biodiversity.	Review and update completed.
11	Within the municipality develop and install conservation assets notification signage at all relevant open space entry points to highlight the presence of protected native vegetation.	27 standard signs installed at 19 locations. Ongoing monitoring of signage effectiveness that prevents unwanted access/disturbance.
12	Develop Council specifications for landscaping materials.	Not implemented. Adjust action scope to consider all works within the open space network.
13	Advocate to relevant authorities for increased resourcing and funding for the protection and/or maintenance of Crown land containing significant native vegetation or forming part of vital biolinks within the municipality.	Issue highlighted as part of Melbourne Open Space Strategy consultation with the Melbourne Planning Authority. Continue to advocate with focus on identified Habitat Corridors.

Adaptive Management of Biodiversity

#	Action	Comment
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14	Develop a Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator that classifies the extent and quality of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat areas across the municipality.	Biodiversity Indicator (monitoring protocol) has not been developed. Data and recommendations within the Native Vegetation Mapping Report need to be considered.
15	Using the Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator, measure and map the extent and quality of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat areas across the municipality.	Linked to action 14. Native Vegetation Mapping baseline data completed for 1400ha of open space.
16	Using the Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator, develop a conservation asset management and monitoring works program for all conservation assets. These will be informed by the Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator, Invasive Plants and Animals Management plan and the Municipal Vegetation Fire Management plan.	Linked to actions 14 & 15. Conservation Asset annual works plans also need to be considered through the development and implementation of the monitoring protocol.
17	Identify, prioritise and undertake flora and fauna assessments in accordance with the State Government's Native Vegetation Management Framework for eligible sites within the municipality.	Legislative changes no longer require site assessments for offset recipient sites.
18	Develop and periodically update mapping of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat across the municipality.	Mapping undertaken in 2013/14 (1000ha) & 2015/16 (400ha). Mapping update required every three years.
19	Develop a Brimbank Native Vegetation Offset Management register that documents the removal of all indigenous flora and fauna habitat and lists all current and potential native vegetation offset sites.	Brimbank received offsets (under the Framework for Action) are recorded. All permitted removal of native vegetation is tracked; however this requires updating and triggers for follow up.
20	Update waterway operational plans, in partnership, to clearly define current ownership and management responsibilities of Council and relevant State government agencies.	Not implemented to date. Develop Habitat Implementation plans for two major corridors
21	Develop an Invasive Plants and Animals Management plan for the municipality to ensure a strategic approach to the protection of biodiversity values across Brimbank.	Pest plant and animal works incorporated into Conservation Asset annual plans. The focus has shifted from weed control to an integrated program including harbour removal, warren destruction and population control.
22	Develop a strategic rehabilitation management plan for Sydenham Park, Keilor North.	Restoration Plan in development, together with the Sydenham Park Master Plan.
23	Develop and implement an annual Municipal Vegetation Fire Management plan in accordance with the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.	Completed and under implementation.
24	Review and update the information recorded in Council's Significant Tree register to include ecological values.	Action deferred.

25	Monitor and evaluate the existing “hollow creation project” at Matthews Hill, Sunshine to determine the possibility of implementation at other suitable locations.	No monitoring undertaken. Natural hollow creation undertaken within Cyril Clements Reserve in 2013/14. Further opportunities through the Habitat Connectivity Plan.
26	Support research opportunities where appropriate, that target improved adaptive management of relevant flora, fauna and vegetation communities.	Supported research projects on Council land include; fire ecology, frog habitat, invertebrates, Pimelea Spinescens subsp. spinescens population density, Delma impar population density and modelling. Delma impar translocation research project is currently underway, in partnership with Victoria University.
27	Advocate to the Department of Sustainability and Environment for the research outcomes of the Gilbertsons/Angliss Native Grassland Research Committee.	Advocacy undertaken. Continue to advocate with focus on identified Habitat Corridors.
28	Ensure adequate resourcing including suitable technology is available to provide the required levels of service for managing conservation assets in accordance with statutory requirements.	Council staff issued with mobile technology. Further consideration of IT solutions for management required.
29	Review and update existing land management agreements with relevant agencies.	Ongoing agreements with relevant agencies.
30	Enter into data exchange agreements, where available, for accessing Biodiversity Databases including the Department of Sustainability and Environment's Flora Information System (FIS) and Atlas of Victorian Wildlife (AW).	Action completed.
31	Continue environmental works coordination with stakeholders, including Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and neighbouring Councils, to maximise land management outcomes across the municipality.	Ongoing collaboration to maximise land management outcomes including pest plant and animal control.
32	Participate in relevant Regional and/or State Biodiversity working groups such as the proposed LGPro Native Vegetation Special Interest Group.	Ongoing participation in LGPro Biodiversity Planners Network.
33	Ongoing monitoring of available and relevant funding opportunities.	Ongoing review and submission of funding applications including Melbourne Water Corridors of Green funding program.
34	Review and update Council's Sustainable Land Management Incentive scheme, to increase participation to maximise biodiversity outcomes.	Revised grant program being implemented.

Connect Biodiversity

#	Action	Comment
35	Develop a Brimbank Biodiversity Connectivity Plan creating biolinks to enhance the genetic diversity of threatened flora and fauna, including planting guidelines and species lists for areas in or adjacent to biolinks.	Completed. Implementation to commence
36	Investigate and implement appropriate protection of biolinks in the Brimbank Planning Scheme.	Included in Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan
37	Review and update Council's current Naturestrip Landscaping Guidelines to enable local residents to increase biodiversity values within identified biolinks.	Supported 'Seeds from the Streets' program. Action now redundant, with private landholder schemes now included within Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan

Engage and Promote

#	Action	Comment
38	Review and promote existing annual environment community engagement program offering a diverse range of educational activities and experience based opportunities.	Ongoing
39	Develop a Brimbank biodiversity community 'knowledge share' network as an opportunity for 'friends of' groups, conservation volunteers and community members to contribute to the development of the annual environment community engagement program.	Review and incorporate new action into 2018-2022 action plan
40	Review and update Brimbank Friends Agreements for volunteers to undertake works on Council land.	Ongoing
41	Continue to develop the existing range of Council's primary and secondary school education programs to promote Brimbank's biodiversity values, nature landscape and flora and fauna values.	Completed
42	Develop and implement an awareness program for relevant Council departments relating to the management and protection of Brimbank biodiversity values.	Native vegetation mapping available to all Council staff. Opportunistic awareness sessions conducted within Council

43	Develop a Brimbank biodiversity interpretive signage implementation plan.	Implementing through the 'Nature Places' capital works program
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Appendix 2

Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan (2018-2023) – Action Review 2024

The Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan (the Plan) identifies overarching goals, and corridors of land within Brimbank to focus on achieving connected natural landscapes, in order to promote and facilitate the movement of plants and animals and their genetics through the landscape, provide areas of refuge, and areas for reproduction and foraging.

Goals

Goal 1: The Brimbank landscape will have a safe network of corridors for fauna

Effective and safe pathways will be managed and improved to allow indigenous fauna to move through the landscape and beyond Brimbank.

Goal 2: Brimbank's indigenous flora and fauna species will be genetically diverse communities

Our indigenous flora and fauna will be part of a large gene pool that enables resilience to changes in the environment, and to avoid inbreeding.

Goal 3: Brimbank's community of people will be connected to nature

We will have a healthy landscape for a healthy community and opportunities for people to engage with and enjoy nature.

Identified Corridors

1. Railways Corridor
2. Taylors Corridor
3. Maribyrnong Corridor
4. Kororoit Corridor
5. Stony Corridor
6. Cherry Corridor
7. Laverton Corridor
8. St Albans Link Corridor
9. Glengala Link Corridor
10. Brimbank Corridor

Key

	Action implemented as planned	27	56%
	Action partially implemented or with adjustments to scope or method	18	38%
	Action not implemented	3	6%

1. Railways Corridor

#	Action	Comment
1	Advocate to rail authorities to reduce barriers to connectivity for Striped Legless Lizard and Fat Tailed Dunnart guilds by: - Managing pest plants and animals - Avoiding stockpiles on vegetated areas.	Council advocacy conducted through the planning process of major transport projects. Advocacy and guidance on landscaping and biodiversity sensitive urban design also provided. •Level Crossing Removal Project •Melbourne Airport Rail •MTM Sunbury Line Upgrade
2	Ensure trails or infrastructure on Council land retain connections for Striped Legless Lizard by: - retaining existing habitat patches where populations are known or likely - retaining stepping stones at least every 2m - ensuring infrastructure does not create a barrier or a hard surface more than 2m wide.	Advice and guidance has been given on Council trail construction in order to minimise fragmentation. Trails where possible have avoided potential habitat, and been designed to minimise fragmentation of habitat where not possible to avoid entirely. Retention/creation of stepping stones every two meters not considered viable for projects constructed, however disturbed areas of soil have been re-seeded with native grasses where viable to restore and enhance potential habitat. Shared user trails are required to follow standards and guidelines, with a width of 3m wide considered sufficient for safety. In small lengths with high conservation or habitat values, this width has been reduced, and design to maximise habitat supplementation has occurred using rocks (e.g. Kororoit Creek Opie Road). Design trials are in place to split the path for small lengths in high habitat value areas, providing habitat islands in the middle of the path (Taylors Creek SUP – design phase)
3	Connect grassy habitat patches along St Albans Road for Golden Sun Moth by improving existing patches and developing stepping stones of suitable habitat.	Sunbury Rail Corridor. Consultation with MetroTrains Biodiversity Manager to restore and change mowing regimes along stretches in Keilor Downs, and the restoration of biosites in St Albans. Retention of habitat within Denton Avenue grasslands. Advocated for suitable indigenous species to be planted with the Sunbury Line Upgrade
4	Increase habitat patch size at Bon Thomas Reserve for Striped Legless Lizards and create stepping stones to rail corridor.	Increase in area managed as conservation site has occurred. See Action 2 for limitations on shared user paths fragmenting habitat.

5	Ensure maximum connectivity and retention of native vegetation and fauna habitat in Sunshine North through strategic planning for undeveloped industrial land. Ensure corridors of structural habitat are retained and improved if development occurs.	Council applies the planning scheme to the maximum extent of our authority in this area. Discussions and responses on development design and landscape design have focussed on maximising habitat and connectivity potential.
6	Ensure all vegetation planting within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.*	All Council plantings have considered habitat structure and density along this corridor, and locally indigenous plants used where possible. If density structure of remnant EVC for the area not feasible for the intent of the planting, then the design and planting palette has been chosen to minimise negative impacts on the EVC, and maximise the enhancement of general biodiversity.

2. Taylors Corridor

#	Action	Comment
7	Assist local schools to provide habitat patches of vegetation and structures through a targeted program. A learning program will be developed so school students can identify target indigenous species, restore habitat and monitor their chosen species.	Action dependent on school curriculum and teacher resource availability. Activities have been conducted with St Augustine's Primary School, and Keilor Downs College, both of who back onto the Taylors Creek Corridor. Planting and education activities were interrupted with COVID. Relationships are currently being re-established with St Augustine's, who have shown interest in interacting with the creek corridor.
8	Conduct Golden Sun Moth surveys within powerlines easements and areas with suitable habitat.	Surveys have been conducted as part of the planning process for Councils capital works projects. (Taylors Lakes) and targeted surveys along the powerline easement
9	Amend mowing regimes on grassy habitats to commence creation of stepping stones for Golden Sun Moth between Keilor-Melton Highway and Robinsons Road. Stepping stones consist of plains grassland species and structure.	Mowing regimes have been adapted through the removal of mowing over the spring season, particularly while surveys are being conducted. Limitations on the operational ability and pragmatism of current machinery. Action needs to be revisited in light of current machinery, and recent Golden Sun Moth surveys.
10	Ensure all vegetation planting within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	All Council plantings have considered habitat structure and density along this corridor, and locally indigenous plants used where possible. If density structure of remnant EVC for the area not feasible for the intent of the planting, then the design and planting palette has been chosen to minimise negative impacts on the EVC, and maximise the enhancement of general biodiversity.

11	Amend mowing regimes and reinstate habitat structure to provide stepping stones for Golden Sun Moth commencing at Rutherglen Way and working towards Denbigh Court, Keilor. Stepping stones consist of plains grassland species and structure, including rocks and natural debris.	Increase in area managed as grassland increased at Denbigh Court. Mowing regimes have not changed towards Rutherglen Way. Mowing regimes have been adapted through the removal of mowing over the spring season, particularly while surveys are being conducted. Limitations on the operational ability and pragmatism of current machinery. Action needs to be revisited in light of current machinery, and recent Golden Sun Moth surveys.
12	Increase grassland patch size at The Lakes Grassland and Kings Road Grassland for Golden Sun Moth. Increase management of grassland patches and restore stepping stones to extend to southern side of Taylors Creek.	Lakes Grassland patch size has increased and connected towards Kororoit Creek. Patch size at Kings Road grassland has increased marginally, but as a predominately Kangaroo Grass grassland increase in Golden Sun Moth habitat is minimal.

3. Maribyrnong Corridor

#	Action	Comment
13	Partner with existing programs to assess current extent of arboreal mammals downstream of Organ Pipes National Park.	Knowledge share and partnership with the Friends of Organ Pipes National Park sugar glider program led to a research opportunity. The habitat supplementation (see Action 17) was consistent with a research program at Organ Pipes National Park, however the research project did not extend to Sydenham Park site.
14	Investigate options for safe movement of Black Wallabies under Green Gully Road. Options ensure there is habitat cover at both side of the road, access to the road is discouraged and an appropriately sized culvert or tunnel.	Action is reliant on prioritisation, support and large investment from Melbourne Water. Melbourne Water have indicated this is not a priority.
15	Support landholder participation in sustainable land management through active management for habitat on private land, prioritising reducing pest plants and animals.	Sustainable Land Management grant run annually, with an average of 13 landholders participating.
16	Revegetate with habitat trees and food sources for Sugar Gliders between Organ Pipes National Park and Maribyrnong Valley Parklands.	Council revegetation programs along the Maribyrnong at Sydenham Park and Caroline Chisolm Reserve have included a suite of plant species suitable for Sugar Gliders. Melbourne Water capital works programs along Jacksons Creek and Maribyrnong River (Sydenham Park, McNabbs Weir and Caroline Chisolm Reserve) have also included a suite of plant species suitable for Sugar Gliders.
17	Install, maintain and monitor Sugar Glider nest boxes and tree hollows at Sydenham Park. Coordinate sites and share data with Hume City Council and Macedon Ranges Shire Council.	Supplementary habitat hollows installed along Jacksons Creek at Sydenham Park, with regular monitoring conducted.

18	Extend and connect grassland patches at Sydenham Park for Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard.	Park is being managed to maintain grassland patches, with high threat weed control conducted leading to an increase in the quality of the patches within the Park.
19	Conduct a study on current populations, movement and barriers in the Maribyrnong Corridor for Eastern Grey Kangaroos.	No formal studies have commenced. Kangaroos are moving through the landscape along the Maribyrnong Corridor as reported by officers and residents of the area. Decrepit fencing and wire has been identified as a danger, with several Kangaroos caught. Staged removal of obsolete fencing within Council conservation assets is being conducted.
20	Embed requirements to prevent further impediment to safe Eastern Grey Kangaroo movement through the entire Maribyrnong corridor.	Safe movement for Kangaroos is considered within the planning process.
21	Retain and improve a safe passage for Growling Grass Frogs at Sydenham Park from the Maribyrnong River and Jacksons Creek to grassy habitat above the river for hibernation (over-wintering).	Heyes Gully, the creek line from the upper dams a known GGF and Jacksons Creek has undergone targeted weed control. Burn activity in the area has retained cover for GGF movement along this ephemeral waterway.
22	Continue to facilitate the Maribyrnong Valley Connection Project and undertake weed control on Council land within the project area.	Council continues to participate in the Maribyrnong Valley Connection Project, hosting the facilitator, and successful in funding to extend the project until 2025.
23	Ensure all vegetation planting within the corridor utilises species, structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	All Council plantings have considered habitat structure and density along this corridor, and locally indigenous plants used where possible. If density structure of remnant EVC for the area not feasible for the intent of the planting, then the design and planting palette has been chosen to minimise negative impacts on the EVC, and maximise the enhancement of general biodiversity.

4. Kororoit Corridor

#	Action	Comment
24	Develop monitoring protocol for connectivity and undertake pilot in the Kororoit Corridor to measure gaps in corridors and progress towards closing them.	Conservation Asset Management Framework developed and in implementation phase. The Framework provides a system to formally identify, value, and monitor assets across the municipality. It provides management and maintenance standards to increase the quality and extent of these assets.
25	Reintroduce logs to revegetation beds at Buckingham Reserve to protect Eastern Longneck Turtles moving over land; placement should guide turtles away from roads.	Logs have been introduced 500m upstream as part of the Stepping Stones Woodland project.

26	Reintroduce mid and understorey layers within existing revegetation beds between Carter Street and Wright Street to complete vegetation structure and provide examples of natural landscape, as well as shelter for juvenile Eastern Long Necked Turtles.	Council has not completed work here, but Friends of Kororoit Creek in conjunction with Melbourne Water have revegetated significant areas at The Lizard Lounge (Fraser St), and the Bug Rug (Calder Court)
27	Maintain and restore grassland habitat for Striped Legless Lizards along Jones Creek between Denton Hills Parkland and Gladstone Street wetlands.	Council assets maintained along Jones Creek for SLL habitat.
28	Expand grassland patch size at Isabella Williams Reserve to meet escarpments and provide connected habitat for Cunningham's Skink as well as an example of natural structure of indigenous vegetation.	Grassland patch extended.
29	Reintroduce mid and understorey layers within existing revegetation beds between Deer Park Powerline easement to Station Road to complete vegetation structure and create overwintering habitat for Growling Grass Frog.	Restoring the Woodlands project in this area, has been introducing mid and understory plants within existing treed planting beds to recreate a holistic woodland structure.
30	Restore connection for Striped Legless Lizard through Denton Hills Parklands to Denton Grassland.	Future corridor and width for Striped Legless Lizard has been identified. Urban design projects such as the Cooler Greener tree planting have considered this corridor in the design. The draft Sunshine Energy Park Vision Plan identifies this area for biodiversity sensitive urban design.
31	Investigate and advocate for habitat restoration for the Cunningham's Skink and Growling Grass Frog along Kororoit Creek from the Western Ring Road to Albion.	Council work with Melbourne Water to identify areas suitable for skinks and Growling Grass frog, and ensure revegetation and planting considers allowing for basking sites and overwintering for GGF.
32	Advocate Melbourne Water to restore vegetation and habitat structures instream and streamside between Esmond Street and Albion.	Melbourne Water have conducted corridor planting within Ardeer area, and supported Council Cooler Greener tree planting on Melbourne Water land.
33	Ensure all vegetation within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	All Council plantings have considered habitat structure and density along this corridor, and locally indigenous plants used where possible. If density structure of remnant EVC for the area not feasible for the intent of the planting, then the design and planting palette has been chosen to minimise negative impacts on the EVC, and maximise the enhancement of general biodiversity.

5. Stony Corridor

#	Action	Comment
34	Implement the Stony Creek Restoration Project to re-create natural creekline habitat between Furlong Road and Gilmour Road.	Stony Creek Restoration Project scope impacted by contaminated land issues. No naturalisation of creek, but trees have been planted, and understory restoration has commenced.
35	Support partnerships with other key stakeholders to improve water quality, habitat and access along upper Stony Creek, between Camphora Place and Furlong Road, in line with the area's designation as a Health and Education Precinct under Plan Melbourne.	Council participated as a key stakeholder in the community engagement and early conceptual designs of the Reimagining your Creek at Sunshine Hospital in 2019. Melbourne Water have since de-prioritised this project, and it is put on hold and focus has turned to the Upper Stony Creek transformation project.
36	Collaborate with Maribyrnong City Council and Melbourne Water to restore riparian habitat with indigenous vegetation and habitat structures along Stony Creek between Matthews Street and Sunshine Road for Rakali and Growling Grass Frog.	Melbourne Water have done some woody weed removal in this area, and structural work on the water flow. Discussions about joint restoration work have been undertaken, with the site in mind for future prioritisation..
37	Ensure all vegetation within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with mapped habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	All Council plantings have considered habitat structure and density along this corridor, and locally indigenous plants used where possible. If density structure of remnant EVC for the area not feasible for the intent of the planting, then the design and planting palette has been chosen to minimise negative impacts on the EVC, and maximise the enhancement of general biodiversity.

6. Cherry Corridor

#	Action	Comment
38	Diversify and increase the population of Striped Legless Lizard in targeted conservation areas through evidence-based supplementation projects.	Striped Legless Lizard translocation occurred. Reports that animals surviving, and some evidence of reproduction. (Gravid females).
39	Develop a new 'Nature Places' project to develop passive park adjoining Paramount Grassland as a space that integrates and highlights the adjoining grassland reserve.	The Nature Places is a rolling program of urban design treatments in and around high profile grasslands within Brimbank. The project aims to showcase the grasslands to our community, and allow access to nature in a guided and safe manner. Project sites to date are; Matthews Hill, Pioneer Park, Lakes Grassland, and Bon Thomas Reserve in progress. Sites are chosen to prioritise grasslands with high interaction with the public first, Paramount Grassland will be a focus in the future
40	Ensure all vegetation within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	All Council plantings have considered habitat structure and density along this corridor, and locally indigenous plants used where possible. If density structure of remnant EVC for the area not feasible for the intent of the planting, then the design and planting palette

	has been chosen to minimise negative impacts on the EVC, and maximise the enhancement of general biodiversity.
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7. Laverton Corridor

#	Action	Comment
41	Restore vegetation to provide habitat corridors for Growling Grass Frogs between waterway and grassy wetlands, including ephemeral wetlands between Calarco Drive and Boundary Road.	Grassland Habitat ongoing restoration within conservation asset straddling Australis Drive. Mowing regimes avoid grassy wetlands during wetter seasons which allows movement along corridor.
42	Collaborate with Melbourne Water to reintroduce rock habitat in drainage line between Hermitage Parade and Tiverton Parkway to enhance flora habitat.	In collaboration with Melbourne Water, Kororoit Creek has been the focus for introduction of rocks and logs. This stretch of Laverton Creek is not a priority at this point.
43	Create a targeted community information session and materials so landholders surrounding Mt Derrimut Nature Conservation Reserve can learn about Striped Legless Lizards.	Not Joint project with Friends of Iramoo to assist with the development of Be a Good Grassland Neighbour booklet, which was translated into Vietnamese and Mandarin.
44	Ensure all vegetation within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	All Council plantings have considered habitat structure and density along this corridor, and locally indigenous plants used where possible. If density structure of remnant EVC for the area not feasible for the intent of the planting, then the design and planting palette has been chosen to minimise negative impacts on the EVC, and maximise the enhancement of general biodiversity.

8. St Albans Link Corridor

#	Action	Comment
45	Improve structure of constructed earth mounds with habitat rocks and shrubs between Kororoit Creek and Neale Road for Blue-banded Bee.	No adaptations to existing constructed mounds, but new conservation area identified between Neale Road and McCann Drive, with rocks introduced for reptile habitat. (Striped Legless Lizard).
46	Protect and mark ephemeral wetlands between Phyllis Parade & Neale Road to avoid damage when inundated.	Grassland Habitat ongoing restoration within conservation asset straddling Australis Drive. Mowing regimes avoid grassy wetlands during wetter seasons which allows movement along corridor.

47	Amend mowing regimes on grassy habitats to commence creation of stepping stones for Golden Sun Moth between Robinsons Road and Oakwood Road. Stepping stones consist of plains grassland species and structure.	Mowing regimes have been adapted through the removal of mowing over the spring season while surveys are being conducted. Limitations on the operational ability and pragmatism of current machinery. Action needs to be revisited in light of current machinery, and recent Golden Sun Moth surveys
48	Ensure all vegetation planting within the corridor utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	All Council plantings have considered habitat structure and density along this corridor, and locally indigenous plants used where possible. If density structure of remnant EVC for the area not feasible for the intent of the planting, then the design and planting palette has been chosen to minimise negative impacts on the EVC, and maximise the enhancement of general biodiversity.

9. Glengala Link Corridor

#	Action	Comment
49	Amend mowing regimes to provide higher quality grassland stepping stones for Golden Sun Moth between Forrest Street and The Avenue.	Mowing regimes have been adapted through the removal of mowing over the spring season while surveys are being conducted. Limitations on the operational ability and pragmatism of current machinery. Action needs to be revisited in light of current machinery, and recent Golden Sun Moth surveys
50	Collaborate with Melbourne Water to reintroduce habitat structure inclusive of rocks in target sites between Fairburn Road and Kororoit Creek for Striped Legless Lizards.	In collaboration with Melbourne Water, Kororoit Creek has been the focus for introduction of rocks and logs. This section of land has not been considered a priority to date.
51	Ensure all vegetation planting within the corridors utilises species, habitat structure and density that are consistent with identified habitats and Ecological Vegetation Classes.	All Council plantings have considered habitat structure and density along this corridor, and locally indigenous plants used where possible. If density structure of remnant EVC for the area not feasible for the intent of the planting, then the design and planting palette has been chosen to minimise negative impacts on the EVC, and maximise the enhancement of general biodiversity.

10. Brimbank Corridor

#	Action	Comment
52	Develop habitat connectivity implementation plans for Kororoit Creek and Taylors Creek.	Taylors Creek Conservation Management Plan and Kororoit Creek Habitat Connectivity Plan in draft form only.
53	Undertake fauna surveys to develop baseline data of the extent of Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard populations.	Ongoing. Completed at Keilor Downs Recreations Reserve, Taylors Lakes Power easement, Bon Thomas Reserve, Sunshine West power easement, Goldsmith Avenue Retarding Basin, Delahey Recreation Reserve.
54	Support and participate in research opportunities that increase knowledge and understanding of species distribution and habitat requirements.	Only participated in one project: Paramount Striped Legless Lizard translocation.
55	Undertake strategic work to acknowledge and protect identified corridors and ensure appropriate habitat is maximized to inform a potential planning scheme amendment. This includes area adjacent to industrial precincts.	Planning Scheme Amendment C225brim addresses the Planning Policy Framework translation refers Brimbank Habitat Connectivity Plan 2018 – 2023 and Brimbank Biodiversity Strategy 2012 – 2022 (background documents). This may need to be amended with the updated Biodiversity Strategy. C225brim is sitting with the Minister for approval, and has not been enacted as yet.

56	Assess trees municipal wide for habitat and foraging values and embed protections for identified trees into the proposed Municipal Tree Policy.	No municipal wide investigations have been undertaken. Habitat trees are identified through the tree maintenance program, and retention of stags and the creation of supplementary hollows are conducted in an ongoing manner.
57	Community engagement programs to be developed to support specific active delivery.	Community environment events undertaken with habitat connectivity actions. Habitat Hollows sessions, community planting days and working bees.
58	Community engagement to monitor indicator species e.g. participation in National Bird Week.	Participation and promotion of the Great Aussie Bird Count, Frog Census, and Waterwatch. Council has adopted the iNaturalist app to promote to the community. iNaturalist allows community to record and upload their observations
59	Continue to deliver annual indigenous plantings within Conservation Assets.	Average 38,000 plants per year over five years.
60	Continue to deliver annual advanced street tree planting program.	Average of 5,500 annually for the last five years
61	Continue to deliver annual tree and shrub plantings within Council reserves.	Park and playground upgrades are inclusive of landscaping where habitat and biodiversity values are considered. State government funded programs for planting tubestock trees has occurred with an average of 15,000 planted per year over the past five years
62	Incorporate fauna sensitive design into road, footpath and trail projects managed by Brimbank. Vic Roads Guidelines for Fauna Sensitive Road Design will be used as guidance.	Advice and guidance has been given on Council trail construction in order to minimise fragmentation. Trails where possible have avoided potential habitat, and been designed to minimise fragmentation of habitat where not possible to avoid entirely.
63	Advocate to State and Federal government for structural connectivity to be retained through fauna sensitive design in infrastructure projects.	Council advocacy conducted through the planning process of major transport projects. Advocacy and guidance on landscaping and biodiversity sensitive urban design also provided. •Level Crossing Removal Project •Melbourne Airport Rail •MTM Sunbury Line Upgrade No direct advocacy has been undertaken.

Brimbank City Council

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Attachment 13.7.1