

Galada Tamboore

Campbellfield

SITE INFORMATION NOTE 5

Galada Tamboore, a '...window into another time...'

Hunting and food gathering grounds, cropland, dairy farm, a buffer from flooding, a hoon's playground, a haven for nature and people. Galada Tamboore's broad vistas have meant many different things to different people.

A joint effort

Friends of Merri Creek (FOMC) and local communities

Volunteer works, advocacy and funding submissions.

Wurundjeri

Traditional custodians of the area. Represented primarily by the Wurundjeri Tribe Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Inc.

Melbourne Water (MW)

Melbourne Water is responsible for coordinating onground works and developing environmental management strategies within Melbourne Water managed section of the reserve. Although purchased for flood protection purposes, it is also one of MW's designated 'Sites of Biodiversity Significance' and so receives specific resources for rehabilitation.

Parks Victoria

Responsible for the development and coordination of the wider Merri Regional Park (Maran Baba).

Merri Creek Management Committee

On-ground works and planning liaison/coordination in partnership with agencies and FOMC since 1991.

Whittlesea and Hume Councils

Site maintenance and coordination with agencies for certain parcels of council land within and adjacent to reserve.

The description of Galada Tamboore as a 'window into another time' is a dash of poetry from a consultant inspired by its geological, archeological and other values. For some, the sweeping expanses are a rare opportunity for solitude in the urban landscape. For others it seems intimidating with the potential of fires, snakes and strangers.

Galada Tamboore – 'Creek Waterhole'

Galada Tamboore is a special place for the traditional owners of this area, the Wurundjeri people.

Although there is little specific recorded history for this area, archeological evidence shows how this part of the Merri Creek was used by the Wurundjeri over thousands of years. The escarpments were a lookout for hunting kangaroo and emu on the plains below and people would have manufactured stone tools and spears as they waited. The creek abounded in fish and freshwater mussels. A gum tree has a scar where a shield or bowl (perhaps used in food gathering) was cut out many years ago. The diversity of vegetation communities would have yielded a corresponding diversity of foodstuffs, fibres and medicines. Yam Daisy tubers could be gathered by the women and children from the



Wurundjeri representatives taking part in archeological investigations at Galada Tamboore

grasslands, wattles on the escarpment supplied edible grubs and useful gums. Cumbungi along creeksides have edible shoots. The ongoing importance of this place for today's Wurundjeri people is reflected in its re-naming in 1998. Galada Tamboore means 'creek waterhole' in the language of the Wurundjeri people. The Wurundjeri are active in the management of this important cultural landscape.

Visitors are reminded that it is an offence to remove or disturb Aboriginal artefacts. Please adhere to the law and respect the wishes of Aboriginal people by not removing any found artefacts.

MERRI CREEK



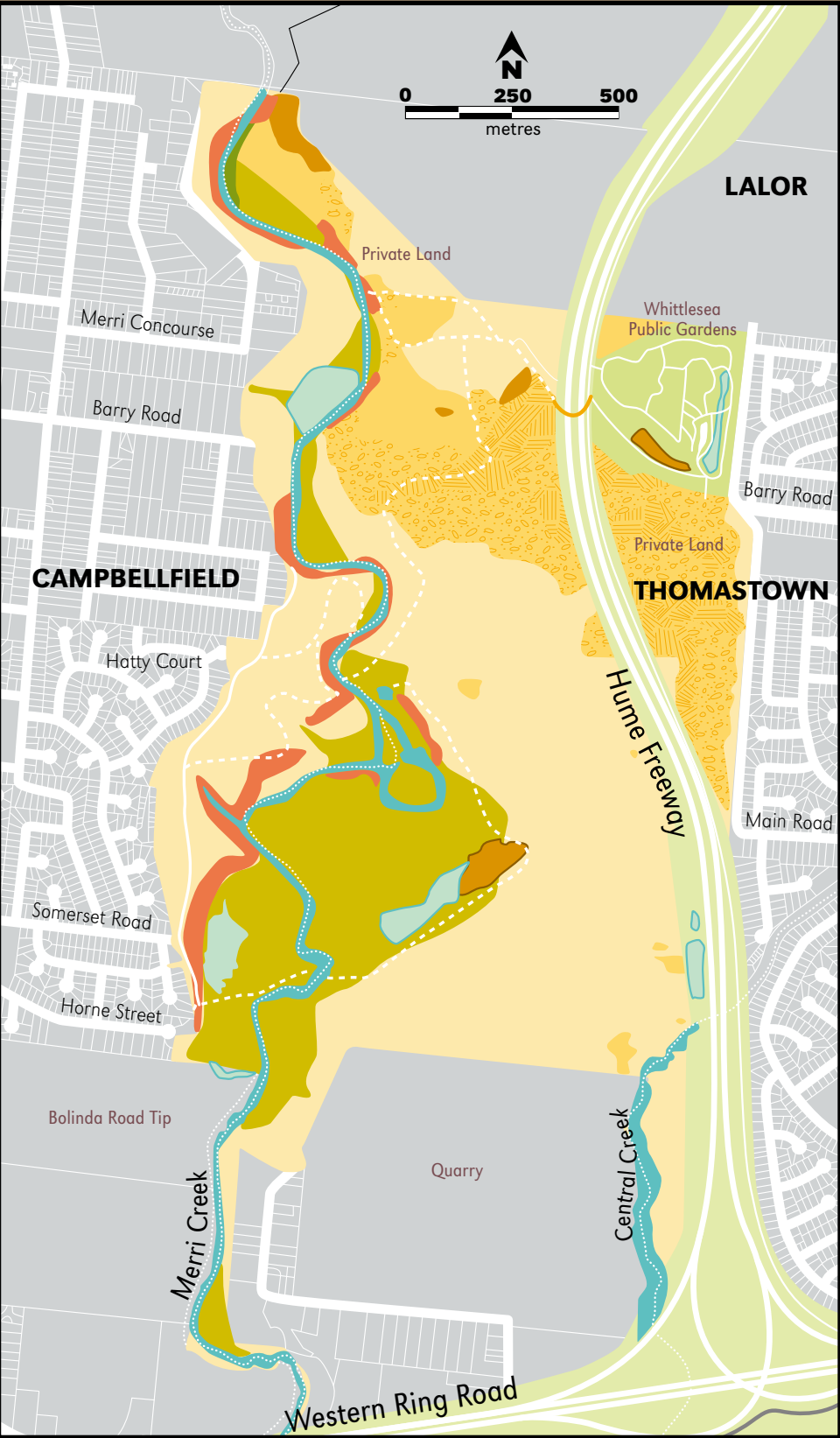
Merri Creek Management Committee

Merri Creek Management Committee Incorporated (MCMC) is an environmental coordination and management agency formed in 1989 to achieve a shared vision for the waterway corridors of the Merri Creek Catchment. Its members include all the municipalities

in the catchment: the Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Whittlesea and Yarra City Councils plus Mitchell Shire Council, the Friends of Merri Creek and the Friends of Wallan Creek. Representatives of these member groups form a Committee of Management which develops policy and guides the activities

of MCMC's approximately 20 staff. The primary purpose of MCMC is to ensure the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, and the ecologically sensitive restoration, development and maintenance of the Merri Creek and tributaries, their corridors and associated ecological communities.

A living reference for Volcanic Plain landscapes



Galada Tamboore is a site of state significance for its geology and geomorphology. It is an excellent area for viewing volcanic features such as 'onion skin' weathering (right). Several places exhibit where basalt rock, originating as molten lava that erupted less than a million years ago, overlies ancient marine sediments over 300 million years old.



**ECOLOGICAL
VEGETATION CLASSES**
are widely used in Victoria
to categorise different
kinds of vegetation

Benchmarks describing EVCs can be found at the Conservation and Environment page of the Department of Sustainability and Environment's website
<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/index.htm>

Galada Tamboore is a valuable site for learning about vegetation types (EVCs) of the Victorian Volcanic Plain.

EVC 125 Plains Grassy Wetland shallow seasonal wetland. At Galada these are degraded but still very attractive to wildlife after extreme rainfall events.

EVC 654 Creekline Tussock Grassland (modified) a dense tussock grassland was possibly dominant in low lying parts of the reserve. Common Tussock Grass plants suggest its former extent. Severely degraded by grazing.

EVC 132-61 Heavier Soils Plains Grassland treeless vegetation type once prevalent over the site. Kangaroo grass is often dominant and intact examples include a high diversity of wildflowers. Distinctive variations include very rocky areas (indicated by rocky pattern) and zones of poor drainage with shallow depressions called Gilgais (hatched pattern).

Modified grassland derived from EVC 132-61, is dominated by exotic pasture grasses although native grasses and a few wildflowers persist and may be recovering.

EVC 895 Escarpment Shrubland dense shrubby vegetation with Lightwood, Sweet Bursaria and Tree Violet on dry slopes and cliff-faces.

EVC 649 Stony Knoll Shrubland on stone outcrops, a shrubby vegetation with grassy understorey subject to extreme dryness in summer.

EVC 641 Riparian Woodland River Redgums over a Tussock Grass understorey. Forms a *Mosaic* with the following EVCs.

EVC 851 Stream Bank Shrubland dense shrubby vegetation. Typical species include River Red-gum, River Bottlebrush Silver Wattle and Blackwood.

EVC 962 Riparian Wetland aquatic herbaceous vegetation with medium to tall sedges and rushes on the verges of larger streams, ponds and backwaters.

EVC 55-61 Plains Grassy Woodland open woodland on poorly drained, open flats with as species-rich grassy and herbaceous ground layer. Dominated by River Red-gum with Kangaroo and Wallaby Grasses.

Artificial Stony Knoll planting which emulates the structure of EVC 649 was developed in 2002 by Melbourne Water on a buried pile of discarded car bodies.

Artificial wetlands were established in 2000 (Barry Rd) and 2001 (near Horne St) to treat stormwater from industrial land. Ephemeral wetlands were developed in Whittlesea Public Gardens in 1994-5, in 2002 to the east of Merri Creek and along the Hume Freeway in 2004.

Galada Tamboore's changing fortunes

The ancestors of today's Wurundjeri cared for a Redgum fringed creek looping through broad flats, gorges and treeless plains.

From establishment of the Port Phillip colony in the 1830s, the vegetation suffered a cascade of ecological impacts. Most drastic were the exclusion of the Wurundjeri people and their traditional practices and the introduction of livestock grazing. Heavy grazing reduced native grasslands to dust. Weeds, rabbits and foxes arrived as the most sensitive wildflowers and wildlife diminished.

Old ploughlines visible on aerial photos show that cropping was attempted on the plains to the east. These were possibly grain crops which were tried in Melbourne's early years before the

climate was found to be unsuitable. Instead, dairy farming became the major land use until the early 1990's. Drystone walls from the mid-nineteenth century remain.

Some remarkably rich native grasslands survive where rocks protected plants from ploughs, hooves and mouths. Otherwise, native vegetation became restricted to rocky escarpments and creeksides. Pasture grasses dominate the plains although indigenous grasses have re-established in places.

Brown Quail, Kangaroos, Swamp Wallabies and Echidna live here year-round and migratory species such as cuckoos and Rufous Songlarks pass through. In the early 1970s the chorusing of Growling Grass Frogs here was 'deafening', however water pollution is thought to be responsible

for their current rarity. This is an indicator of declining stream health. The construction of the Hume Freeway in 2004 reduced the size and 'connectivity' of Galada Tamboore to other habitat. Illegal use of vehicles is an ongoing cause of degradation.

The ecological role of fires set by Wurundjeri people has been erratically achieved by wildfires and, more recently, by planned ecological burns.

In 1991 restoration work by Merri Creek Management Committee and Friends of Merri Creek began and coordinated efforts with Melbourne Water, Hume and Whittlesea Councils have continued to the present day. Galada Tamboore's inclusion in the Merri Creek Parklands - Marran Baba is a new chapter in this welcome change in fortune for the area's flora and fauna.



HOW TO GET THERE

From Campbellfield
Access from the end of Somerset Road.
Melways Map 7 J7

From Lalor/Thomastown
Footbridge over the Hume Freeway
from the Whittlesea Public Gardens.
Melways Map 8 B4

Trains go to Upfield Station, Coolaroo on the Upfield line and Thomastown Station on the Epping Line.

Bus Numbers 531 and 538 approach the Somerset Road entrance.



MCMC staff use abseiling techniques to remove weeds and re-establish indigenous vegetation on steep cliffs near Hatty Court and Sarah Street, Campbellfield.



GALADA TAMBOORE

Galada Tamboore's place in the wider Merri Creek picture

Galada Tamboore is one of the *Habitat nodes* in a proposed Merri Creek Habitat Corridor Network.

Merri Creek Management Committee has envisioned a habitat corridor network for the whole Merri Creek catchment, with valuable links to habitat corridors in adjacent catchments.

'Habitat nodes' refer to large areas which support breeding populations of indigenous fauna and flora. In many cases, habitat values of nodes and links will need to be improved through restoration and revegetation. The Galada Tamboore node is close to another important node, the native grassland at Bababi Marning (Cooper Street Grassland, Campbellfield).

Protecting animal habitat

The species to be catered for in a Merri habitat corridor network include large, wide-ranging species such as the Eastern Grey Kangaroo, migratory birds that move through the area twice yearly, and species of conservation significance such as the Growling Grass Frog and Golden Sun Moth.



Freeways and industrial developments have increased Galada Tamboore's isolation from other habitat strongholds. Cunningham's Skinks (top) require more consideration to retain connectivity of populations—a key goal of the Habitat Corridor Network.



Black-shouldered Kite

Opportunities to be involved in this site and information about MCMC's other work can be found at
www.mcmc.org.au

Protecting heritage, appealing to people

Parks Victoria has a special responsibility to ensure development of Galada Tamboore as a part of a wider Merri Creek Parklands project (Maran Baba) that needs to cater for increased visitors without jeopardising the special values of Galada Tamboore.

Parks Victoria's planning (2009) proposes:

- Pathways, bridges and visitor facilities.
- Park signage and infrastructure that encourages sensitive visitor behaviour.
- Integrated weed management and vegetation restoration strategies spanning land ownership boundaries.
- Enhancement of existing natural and artificial wetlands.

Particular challenges include:

- Ensuring new infrastructure does not impact on important biological, cultural and geological values.
- Inspiring appreciation and respect for the site's unique values from all visitors.
- Directing visitors away from sensitive areas.
- Deepening the involvement of the culturally and linguistically diverse local community.
- Discouraging vandalism, in particular illegal 4WD and trailbike use in the reserve.