



**Brimbank**  
City Council

# **Brimbank Biodiversity Strategy 2012-2022**

April 2012

Environment

## Acknowledgements

Brimbank City Council would like to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge the following community groups who provided feedback during the community consultation period:

The Friends of Maribyrnong Valley

The Friends of Kororoit Creek

The Friends of Iramoo

The Friends of Taylors Creek and

The Albion and Ardeer Community Club.

Council would also like to acknowledge the Federal Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, for their contributions.

## How to read this document

This Biodiversity Strategy is informed by a *Technical Reference Document (Abzeco 2010)* which provides a detailed look at the influences on biodiversity protection and management in the municipality and the technical background and discussion of all the threats, opportunities and actions.

Sections 1 and 2 provide an overview of Brimbank's Biodiversity and the key influences to the protection and management of biodiversity in the municipality. Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 present the four key objectives of Protect Biodiversity, Adaptive Management of Biodiversity, Biodiversity Connectivity and Engage and Promote Biodiversity, highlighting the key threats and listing the opportunities/actions proposed. Section 7 Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan and Reporting, outlines all actions, when they will be delivered, the responsible Council department/s or agency and a reporting schedule.

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## Executive Summary

The Biodiversity Strategy has been developed as part of Brimbank City Council's commitment to protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity within the municipality as identified within the Brimbank Community Plan (2009 - 2030).

### *Vision*

This 10-year Biodiversity Strategy will provide direction on how to protect existing biodiversity and increase the diversity and sustainability of remnant vegetation and fauna habitat across the municipality. This will be achieved by using the best practices available in biodiversity protection, the use of adaptive management techniques and increased connectivity of biodiversity. Concurrently, the community will be encouraged to be aware, active and protective of Brimbank's natural heritage and its place within society.

The Biodiversity Strategy replaces the Brimbank Natural Heritage Strategy (1997) as the key document for conserving and protecting Brimbank's significant natural heritage. Geological significance, however, has not been considered as part of this document.

### *Influences*

The Biodiversity Strategy's policy direction has been guided by the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, and State legislation including the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.

The Brimbank Community Plan identifies the community's expectation for the protection and enhancement of Brimbank's natural areas. The Community Plan commits Council to develop policies, programs and management plans aimed at increasing the biodiversity and conservation value of land within the municipality, and to develop and implement planning policies aimed at protecting and enhancing Brimbank's natural landscapes. The Brimbank Community Plan identifies long-term objectives to deal with the issues of preserving, maintaining and improving biodiversity.

### *Objectives*

The Objectives are to:

- Protect (Protect biodiversity- Section 3)
- Manage (Adaptive management of biodiversity- Section 4)
- Connect (Biodiversity connectivity- Section 5)
- Engage (Engage, and promote biodiversity to, the local community- Section 6)

For each objective, the Biodiversity Strategy identifies the critical threats and opportunities that Brimbank must address in order to achieve the strategy's vision.

The major threats to the biodiversity values of the Brimbank municipality are:

- clearance for development
- encroachment and neighbouring property issues
- absence of or inappropriate management
- fragmentation of remnant vegetation
- public perception and lack of community awareness and engagement.

These threats and resulting damage caused to our local environment need to be addressed to prevent a further reduction in the biodiversity values of the municipality.

### *Opportunities*

The Biodiversity Strategy highlights significant opportunities to increase protection, active management, and biodiversity connectivity and to enhance community awareness and engagement, through:

- planning provisions
- procedures and guidelines
- assessing and benchmarking remnant vegetation
- a Municipal Vegetation Offset Management register
- a Brimbank Biodiversity Connectivity Plan
- engagement and promotion.

### *Implementation*

Implementing and achieving the objectives set out in the Biodiversity Strategy will require a whole-of-Council approach that engages stakeholders and the community while recognising the role of individual Council departments.

### *Actions*

A detailed list of actions (Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan - Section 7.1) to minimise and remove threats and utilise opportunities has been identified to ensure that Council continues to move forward to achieve the vision of this Strategy.

The following are the major priority actions for each objective identified within the Biodiversity Strategy:

#### **Protect Biodiversity**

- Incorporate Environmental Significance Overlays into the Brimbank Planning Scheme, with the revision to accommodate changes to Federal and State legislation.
- Identify and address illegal encroachment and neighbouring property issues directly impacting open space areas in particular conservation assets.
- Continue to build capacity within council operations of general open space monitoring/management/compliance to ensure the protection and maintenance of conservation assets within the municipality.

#### **Adaptive Management of Biodiversity**

- Develop a Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator that classifies the extent and quality of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat areas across the municipality.
- Use the Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator, to measure and map the extent and quality of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat areas across the municipality.
- Develop a Municipal Vegetation Fire Management Plan in accordance with the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

#### **Biodiversity Connectivity**

- Develop a Brimbank Biodiversity Connectivity Plan to implement biolinks across the municipality.
- Implement formal protection of biolinks through the Brimbank Planning Scheme.

#### **Engage and Promote Biodiversity**

- Review and continue to promote Council's annual environment community engagement program offering a diverse range of educational activities and experience based opportunities.
- Develop a Brimbank biodiversity community 'knowledge share' network for 'friends of' groups, conservation volunteers and community members to contribute to the development of the annual environment community engagement program.

## Abbreviations

BCC	Brimbank City Council
DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment
DPI	Department of Primary Industries
PPWCMA	Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act (1999)
FFG Act	Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1998)
CaLP Act	Catchment and Land Protect Act (1994)
VVP	Victorian Volcanic Plains
EVC	Ecological Vegetation Class
FIS	DSE Flora Information System
AW	Atlas of Victorian Wildlife
ESO	Environmental Significance Overlay

# 1 Overview

The Biodiversity Strategy has been developed as part of Brimbank City Council's commitment to protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity within the municipality, as identified within the Brimbank Community Plan (2009 - 2030).

This Strategy has been developed to provide a strategic direction towards achieving a protected, well managed and connected landscape with a community that is informed, aware and accepting of Brimbank's natural environment over the next 10 years.

This Strategy will provide a framework to integrate operational management of Brimbank City Council's open space network and engage with the community for a holistic approach to the way Council will achieve the Biodiversity Strategy vision and meet community expectation identified within the Community Plan (2009 - 2030).

The development of four key objectives (Protect Biodiversity, Adaptive Management of Biodiversity, Biodiversity Connectivity and Engage and Promote Biodiversity - Sections 3-6) was guided by current roles and responsibilities of Council, an extensive internal consultation process and the future vision for Brimbank's biodiversity. The internal consultation targeted Council staff who are responsible for implementing identified actions.

Further consultation with the community and other stakeholders provided valuable information, and a number of consistent trends emerged. The community input highlighted people's expectations, presented an opportunity to further improve working relationships, and refined many of the key actions, particularly those in the 'Engage and Promote Biodiversity' section of the Biodiversity Strategy.

The information and knowledge that will be gained through the completion of key actions will guide and influence the operational direction and future maintenance of Brimbank's conservation assets. Achieving the four objectives will require a whole of Council approach that engages stakeholders and the community while recognising the role of individual Council departments.

In Brimbank's current highly urbanised environment, the few remaining natural spaces present extensive opportunities for commuting, recreation, solitude and inspiration. This Biodiversity Strategy seeks to increase the quantity and quality of Brimbank's biodiversity while increasing public access and appreciation of this unique resource. As urbanisation increases across Victoria, well-managed and maintained natural spaces will be a valuable asset to the community, not only offering visually pleasing landscape and amenity plantings but also increasing the quality of habitat for Brimbank's diverse assemblage of indigenous flora and fauna species.

## 1.1 City Profile

The Brimbank municipality is located 11 to 23 kilometres west and north-west of central Melbourne. It is bounded by the City of Hume to the North, the Cities of Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley to the east, the Cities of Hobsons Bay and Wyndham in the south and the Shire of Melton to the West.

Brimbank is made up of five distinct districts – Deer Park, Keilor, St Albans, Sunshine and Sydenham, each of these districts contains a town centre and network of smaller urban villages.

The Brimbank municipality lies within the Victorian Volcanic Plains (VVP) Bioregion which, prior to European settlement, was covered in highly productive grasslands, wetlands and woodlands. The VVP is one of the most depleted bioregions in the country, with natural temperate grasslands of the VVP listed as critically endangered under the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) 1999.

The Brimbank municipality is also characterised by poor shallow soils, strong winds and a low rainfall (relative to the eastern and southern areas of Melbourne).

Brimbank is located within the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (PPWCMA) Region and the Maribyrnong and Werribee river catchments. Waterways within the municipality include Jacksons Creek, the Maribyrnong River, Taylors Creek and Steele Creek to the north. In the southern, central and western areas of the municipality are Jones Creek, Kororoit Creek, Stony Creek and Laverton Creek.

## 1.2 Biodiversity

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 a part (Commonwealth of Australia 1996).

Biodiversity is measured at three main levels:

- Genetic diversity – The variety of genetic information that is contained in all living things and that varies within and between populations of organisms making up a single species or wider groups.
- Species diversity – The variety of species on earth.
- Ecosystem diversity – The variety of the earth's habitats, ecosystems and ecological process.

Biodiversity provides considerable economic and social resources. It forms the basis of our primary production industries such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and also provides aesthetic and recreational resources in the form of wilderness areas, parks and reserves.

The maintenance of biological diversity is much more than just the protection of wildlife and habitats in conservation reserves. It serves to promote sustainable use of biological resources, and an environment rich in biological diversity offers the broadest array of options for sustainable economic activity, nurturing human welfare and adapting to change (Commonwealth of Australia 1996).

## 1.3 Context for Brimbank's Biodiversity

The Brimbank municipality is part of the Victorian Volcanic Plain, which extends from Hamilton in the west to Whittlesea and Rosanna in the east. The VVP consists of "an extensive basaltic plain with numerous volcanic cones and eruption points." The plain is "an extensive flat to undulating basalt plain with stony rises, old lava flows, numerous volcanic cones and old eruption points and is dotted with shallow lakes/wetlands both saline/brackish and freshwater." Australian Natural Resources Atlas (Federal Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities)

The VVP consists of a large number of ecological vegetation classes of various types most of which do not occur in Brimbank. Within the VVP bioregion the grassland community is listed as critically endangered under the federal EPBC Act (Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain) and listed as threatened under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG Act) 1988 (Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland Community).



**Figure 1. Victorian Volcanic Plain Bioregions**



## Landscape Characteristics

Brimbank today is shaped by a series of geological formations, including the underlying sedimentary bedrock of Victoria laid down from 350 to 500 million years ago, examples of which can be seen along the Maribyrnong River. The current Western Basalt Plains is characterised by a vast area of fertile plains dominated by grassland and formed by extensive volcanic activity, mostly from the Upper Cenozoic era (Quaternary) from approximately 6 million years ago to as recently as 7,200 years ago at Mt Napier.

Several types of lava flows occurred, including sheet flows and constricted flows along valleys. Irregular and chaotic stony rises occupy large areas of the plains. Numerous volcanic cones dot the landscape, with scoria cones being the most common, although some basalt cones are present—examples are Round Hill and Mt Derrimut. Organ Pipes National Park and Sydenham Park, located in the north of the Brimbank municipality, have excellent examples of basalt, revealing internal structures and the relationship with older geology.

The volcanic plains of the Brimbank municipality are broken by the deeply incised valleys of Jacksons Creek and the Maribyrnong River in the north and east, Taylors Creek and Steele Creek show weakly incised valleys in upper reaches which break through into deeply incised valleys as they approach the Maribyrnong River. In the southern, central and western areas of the municipality the plains are broken by the well defined but weakly incised valleys of Jones Creek, Kororoit Creek, Laverton Creek and numerous drainage lines, all of which remain perched on newer volcanic layers.

The soil characteristics of the VVP are mostly heavy brown or red cracking clays with scattered rocky outcrops. Soils are generally shallow and poorly drained, prone to water-logging in winter and becoming extremely dry and hard in summer.

## Aboriginal History

The Wurundjeri people were the custodians of the land in the Port Phillip Bay region, including the current City of Brimbank, for over 40,000 years before European settlement. Evidence of early Aboriginal occupation can be found throughout the municipality. Many places or sites of archaeological, cultural and spiritual significance, including a burial site, have been identified within the Brimbank area.

The Aboriginal people camped along waterways and hunted on the open grassy plains for thousands of years with little adverse effect on flora and fauna species.

The grasslands of Brimbank were probably regularly burnt in a mosaic pattern—this is often referred to as ‘fire-stick’ farming. Regular burning would have limited the extent and impact of wildfires and retained the open nature of the landscape, whilst maintaining the health and vigour of the grasslands and a rich diversity of species.

## European History

The first people to write an account of the Brimbank area were Charles Grimes, Surveyor-General of New South Wales, and his assistant James Fleming. On the 3rd of February 1803, they arrived by boat up the Maribyrnong River and noted:

‘We went up the river until we came to some rocks, could not get the boat over; crossed it at a place the natives had made for catching fish. It was still salt, though a great fall. Went about two miles on the hills [Avondale Heights].’

James recorded in his diary: ‘traced up the N.W branch of the river. Where the land was high it was covered with stones and where a low swamp – from the top of the hills the country on all sides presented an open grassy plain without timber as far as the eye could reach’. The next day the expedition returned downstream and discovered the Yarra River.

The region was one of the first settled for agriculture in what is now Victoria, given the open and fertile nature of the grassy plains, which provided ideal pastoral opportunities. With settlement also came the introduction of exotic plant and animal species which are all still prominent issues today. With settlement the extent of native grassland across the VVP began to decline, with only a few areas persisting by the 1930s (100 years after settlement).

## Recent Decades

The extent of native grasslands, riparian and escarpment vegetation within Brimbank has continued to decline, due to a number of factors including urbanisation and development, invasive plant and animal species and inappropriate management.

In 1997, Council developed a Natural Heritage Strategy which provided a snapshot of native vegetation in Brimbank in the mid 1990s. This identified significant clearance and fragmentation of grassland within the municipality. Since the publication of the Brimbank Natural Heritage Strategy further clearance and fragmentation of native grasslands has occurred, with significant areas cleared for developments including Watergardens Town Centre, Brimbank Gardens Residential Estate and Gilbertson Industrial Estate.

The clearance of native vegetation along riparian zones and escarpments has been much less severe than the loss of grasslands within the municipality. However, the loss of these vegetation types has had a severe impact on water quality and habitat values along waterways. Various management regimes have also resulted in altered perception of the appearance and purpose of waterways within the municipality.

## 1.4 Brimbank Flora and Fauna Values

### Indigenous Flora

The Department of Sustainability and Environment's (DSE) Flora Information System (DSE 2006) has records of 563 indigenous flora species<sup>1</sup> occurring within the Brimbank municipality. Of the 563 indigenous flora species recorded, approximately 47 species have not been recorded since the publication of the Brimbank Natural Heritage Strategy (1997) and are presumed locally extinct for the purposes of this Biodiversity Strategy.

Under the federal EPBC Act the municipality has six species listed. Spiny Rice Flower *Pimelea spinescens* subsp. *spinescens* is listed as critically endangered. Small Golden Moths *Diuris basaltica*, Sunshine Orchid *Diuris fragrantissima*, and Button Wrinklewort *Rutidosia leptorhynchoides* are listed as endangered. Large-headed Fireweed *Senecio macrocarpus* and River Swamp Wallaby Grass *Amphibromus fluitans* are listed as vulnerable. The municipality also supports nine species listed under the Victorian FFG Act including Buloke *Allocasuarina luehmannii*, Large-headed Fireweed *Senecio macrocarpus* and Tough Scurf-pea *Cullen tenax*.



Sunshine Orchid *Diuris fragrantissima*,  
Andrew Garnham 2004.

<sup>1</sup> Indigenous flora species lists are located on the Brimbank City Council website [www.brimbank.vic.gov.au](http://www.brimbank.vic.gov.au)

The Brimbank Natural Heritage Strategy (1997) identified only 316 indigenous species. The increase in identified species over the past 13 years is a direct result of the increase in flora surveys and land management works, rather than an increase in species diversity in the municipality.

The DSE Interactive Mapping (2009) prior to European settlement (pre-1750) tells us that Brimbank once supported eight distinct Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs):

- Aquatic Herbland,
- Escarpment Shrubland,
- Floodplain Riparian Woodland,
- Plains Grassland,
- Plains Grassland/Plains Grassy Woodland Mosaic,
- Riparian Woodland,
- Stream Bank Shrubland,
- and Plains Grassy Wetland (Wetland Formation).



Paramount Grassland 2009.

Plains Grassland (Natural Temperate Grasslands VVP) is listed as critically endangered under the federal EPBC Act. All of these EVCs are considered 'Endangered' for this Bioregion under the Victorian FFG Act and present-day mapping suggests Riparian Woodland and Aquatic Herbland may no longer persist within the municipality. A map detailing the extent and coverage of the above mentioned EVCs is located on page 21 of the Brimbank Biodiversity Strategy.

## Exotic Flora

The DSE Flora Information System (2006) has records of over 420 exotic flora species<sup>2</sup> within Brimbank. Approximately 47 of these species are currently listed as declared noxious weeds under the Victorian Catchment and Land Protection Act (CaLP Act). These species pose a serious threat to remaining indigenous flora within the municipality, and their mitigation and/or control of these species is one of the priority actions in this Biodiversity Strategy.

## Indigenous Fauna

The DSE Atlas of Victorian Wildlife (2006) has records of approximately 196 indigenous fauna species<sup>3</sup> within Brimbank. Of these, 121 species have been recorded since 1997 and so are presumed to still inhabit or frequent the municipality.

Despite increased fauna surveys in the municipality approximately 75 species have not been recorded since the publication of the Brimbank Natural Heritage Strategy (1997). These species are presumed locally extinct for the purposes of this Biodiversity Strategy and account for an approximate loss of:

- 30% of amphibian species including the Striped Marsh Frog, Verreaux's Tree Frog and the Victorian Smooth Froglet



Striped Legless Lizard, *Delma impar*.

<sup>2</sup> Exotic flora species lists are located on the Brimbank City Council website [www.brimbank.vic.gov.au](http://www.brimbank.vic.gov.au)

<sup>3</sup> Indigenous fauna species lists are located on the Brimbank City Council website [www.brimbank.vic.gov.au](http://www.brimbank.vic.gov.au)

- 66% of fish species, which comprises the Mountain Galaxias and Spotted Galaxias
- 50% of invertebrate species, which include the Eltham Copper Butterfly
- 54% of mammal species, which include a number of bat species, Water Rat, Short-beaked Echidna and Sugar Glider
- 60% of reptile species including the Bearded Dragon, Stumpy-tailed Lizard, Tree Dragon and White-lipped Snake
- 27% of bird species, which includes a large number of resident and transient waterbirds but also the Fairy Martin, Golden Whistler, Plains Wanderer, and Tawny Frogmouth among others.



Four fauna species recently recorded in Brimbank are listed under the Federal EPBC Act. These are the Golden Sun Moth *Synemon plana*, Striped Legless Lizard *Delma impar*, Growling Grass Frog *Litoria raniformis* and Australian Grayling *Prototroctes maraena*. Fifteen species which have been recorded in Brimbank are listed under the Victorian FFG Act.

It could be said that most native fauna in the municipality is considered locally threatened; the exceptions to this are native animals which have adjusted to an urban environment such as Brush-tailed Possums, Magpies, Cockatoos and Galahs. Records of all native animals living in the natural areas of Brimbank are considered significant. Brimbank's conservation assets and linear corridors are home to such animals as the Swamp Wallaby, Echidna, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Cunningham's Skink, Tiger Snake, Fat-tailed Dunnart and Platypus.

## Exotic Fauna

The DSE Flora Information System (2006) has records of 21 exotic fauna species<sup>4</sup> within Brimbank. Exotic fauna species such as the European Rabbit, Feral Goat and Red Fox are declared pest animals under the Victorian Catchment and Land Protection Act (CaLP Act). These species pose a serious threat to remaining indigenous flora and fauna within the municipality and their mitigation and/or control is one of the priority actions in this Biodiversity Strategy.

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<sup>4</sup> Exotic fauna species lists are located on the Brimbank City Council website [www.brimbank.vic.gov.au](http://www.brimbank.vic.gov.au)

## 2 Influences

### 2.1 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) 1999

The EPBC Act is the Australian Government's central legislation for the protection and management of nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places – defined in the Act as matters of national environmental significance.

Species and vegetation communities listed under the EPBC Act found within the City of Brimbank, both on private and public land, include, but are not limited to, the Natural Temperate Grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plains, *Delma impar* Striped Legless Lizard, and *Pimelea spinescens* Spiny Rice Flower. Any proposed action that is likely to have a significant impact on a listed ecological community or listed flora and fauna species must be referred to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment for approval.

### 2.2 Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG Act) 1988

The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988) is the primary Victorian legislation for the protection and conservation of threatened species and communities and for the management of potentially threatening processes. The Act builds on broader national policy in the conservation of biodiversity. The broad objectives of the Act include ensuring native flora and fauna survive, flourish and maintain in situ of evolutionary potential; managing threatening processes; encouraging the conserving of flora and fauna through cooperative community endeavours; and establishing a regulatory structure for the conservation of flora and fauna in Victoria.

Species listed as threatened under the Victorian FFG Act, as of July 2009, and present within Brimbank include; *Litoria raniformis* Growling Grass Frog, *Cullen tenax* Tough Scurf-pea, *Dianella amoena* Matted Flax-lily, and *Diuris fragrantissima* Sunshine Diuris.

### 2.3 Wildlife Act 1975

The Wildlife Act 1975 is the primary Victorian legislation for the protection and management of wildlife. The operations of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 often need to be considered in conjunction with the provisions and procedures of the Wildlife Act. Some wildlife is protected under both Acts.

The Act requires that people engaged in wildlife research including fauna surveys, salvage or translocation must obtain a permit under the Act to ensure that these activities are undertaken consistently with the appropriate controls.

### 2.4 Planning and Environment Act 1987

The Victorian Planning Scheme contains provisions to regulate the clearance of native vegetation, including treeless grassland vegetation, on a land holding greater than 0.4 hectares. Except for certain exemptions, a permit is required from the local government authority under clause 52.17 of the Victorian Planning and Environment Act to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation. All planning applications proposing to clear native vegetation must be referred to DSE under the 'native vegetation retention amendment' to the Victorian Planning and Environment Act.

All planning applications received by Brimbank City Council Planning Department proposing the clearance of native vegetation are referred to Council's Environment Department for further investigation and comments.



## 2.5 Victoria's Native Vegetation Management – A Framework for Action 2002

The Framework is the Victorian State Government's strategy to protect, enhance and revegetate Victoria's native vegetation. The framework is implemented through the Planning and Environment Act 1987 under Amendment VC 19 to the Victorian Planning Provisions of July 2003.

The primary objective of the framework is to reverse the trend of the removal and decline of native vegetation across the entire landscape, resulting in a 'Net Gain' in the extent and quality of native vegetation throughout the state. Clause 15.09 and 52.17 of the Victorian Planning Provision, which establishes the goal of 'Net Gain' as an important decision guideline, applies to parcels of land over 0.4 hectares across all Municipalities throughout the state.

The Framework is based on habitat hectares, a site-based measure of quality and quantity of native vegetation that is assessed in the context of the relevant native vegetation type.

Currently, Brimbank City Council receives net gain offsets through the 'Framework' process; the funding provided by this enables higher quality management and enhancement of Brimbank's conservation assets.

## 2.6 Catchment and Land Protection Act (CaLP Act) 1994

The Victorian Catchment and Land Protection Act contains provisions relating to catchment planning, land management, noxious weeds and pest animals. It provides a legislative framework for the management of private and public land and outlines responsibilities of land managers, which include eradicating regionally prohibited weeds, preventing the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds, and preventing the spread of, and as far as possible eradicating, established pest animals.

The CaLP Act also led to the development of the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority's, Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework (2010). The aims and outcomes of the Framework are sought to be met through the Port Phillip and Western Port Invasive Plants and Animals Strategy (2011).

## 2.7 Brimbank Community Plan 2009-2030

The Brimbank Community Plan describes the community's vision and priorities for the next 20 years and establishes a shared basis for joint planning, service delivery and advocacy. Strategic directions include 'Sustainable Environments', 'Urban Design and Infrastructure', 'Community Wellbeing' and 'Council and the Community Working together'. The Community Plan highlights that the community wants to achieve by 2030 'increased conservation and biodiversity values of land', 'cleaner and healthier waterways' and 'community valued natural environments'. The plan documents a four-year action plan and a series of Council commitments in planning and policy development, service delivery and advocacy and community engagement.

## 2.8 Brimbank City Council Plan 2011-2015

The Brimbank City Council Plan contains the strategic objectives that Council will pursue over the next four years and a number of key activities that Council will undertake to achieve these objectives.

Strategic objective 2 under the plan is "Sustainable Environments", whereby Brimbank City Council is 'committed to preserving and maintaining the qualities that are valued in the physical environment (natural and built) for future generations through demonstrating environmental leadership and providing community education, advice, involvement and support'. Specific strategic directions include:

- 2.2. Protecting and enhancing our natural environment: Our activities over the next four years support our longer term goals to develop and maintain natural environments valued by our community; increase the conservation and biodiversity values of land, and create and maintain cleaner and healthier creeks and rivers.

### 3 Protect Biodiversity

The area that makes up Brimbank today has evolved through a series of changes over the past 150 years, with the majority of changes resulting in degradation of the natural environment, including the removal of Aboriginal firestick farming, European settlement and the introduction of grazing and many invasive plant and animal species, and finally clearing for urban development. Since the development of the Brimbank Natural Heritage Strategy in 1997 Brimbank's remnant vegetation cover has continued to decline, primarily through urban development, though with gains in quality occurring within several managed conservation reserves (See Map 2, page 21).



Residential encroachment on Steele Creek

The Brimbank Municipality supports remnant vegetation that is part of the natural temperate grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plains, which was listed as critically endangered in 2008 under the federal EPBC Act. Brimbank also supports EVCs such as Escarpment Shrubland and Floodplain Riparian Woodland, which require a permit in most cases to clear under the Victorian Planning and Environment Act. The Biodiversity Strategy seeks to highlight the responsibility of all landowners, including Council to comply with the regulations of these key pieces of legislation.

The Biodiversity Strategy aims to address the ongoing decline of biodiversity through a series of actions, with the continual development of planning controls for the protection of remnant vegetation as a key priority. This action will:

- provide localised protection for flora and fauna through the Brimbank Planning Scheme
- ensure that Council is undertaking all possible efforts to comply with Federal and State legislation
- offer greater awareness to all landholders and managers of protected flora and fauna in their care.

The implementation of identified actions will enable Council to improve the standard of protection and provide opportunities for the future sustainability of our biodiversity values.



#### 3.1 Threats

The following issues have been highlighted as key threats:

- clearing for development
- encroachment and neighbouring property issues
- lack of, or the inappropriate monitoring /management and compliance of open space.

## 3.2 Opportunities and Actions

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.
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.
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.
4	Investigate and implement the best form of permanent protection of all Council owned conservation assets through the Brimbank Planning Scheme.
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.
6	Continue to build capacity within Council operations of general open space monitoring/management/compliance to ensure the protection and maintenance of conservation assets within the municipality.
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.
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.
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.
10	Review and update Council's 'Dog Off' leash areas policy, to minimise negative impacts on biodiversity.
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.
12	Develop Council specifications for landscaping materials.
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.

## 4 Adaptive Management of Biodiversity

Adaptive management helps make the best possible decisions in uncertain or changing situations. It aims to reduce long-term uncertainty by monitoring the results of past decisions and learning from their outcomes. Adaptive management is the key to achieving improved quality and quantity of biodiversity within the Brimbank municipality and ensuring long-term sustainability of species and vegetation communities.

Without adaptive management of conservation assets, impacts from ongoing threats such as climate change and invasive plants and animals would lead to a net loss of biodiversity within Brimbank's conservation reserves.

Implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy will include:

- the development of a Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator that classifies the extent and quality of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat areas across the municipality
- using the Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator, to measure and map the extent and quality of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat areas across the municipality
- the development of a Municipal Vegetation Fire Management Plan in accordance with the Municipal Emergency Management Plan to enable the management of wildfire risk.



Ecological burn at Taylors Creek.

Brimbank's commitment to effective identification, restoration and enhancement of remnant vegetation through adaptive management aims to ultimately increase biodiversity within the municipality. Brimbank will continue to review and identify policies and procedures to ensure that these remain best practice and that they are focused on the biodiversity issues critical to the municipality.

### 4.1 Threats

The following issues have been highlighted as key threats:

- the absence of appropriate grazing regimes
- inappropriate fire regimes
- invasive plants and animals
- inappropriate or poorly resourced public land management practices
- machinery hygiene practices.



Kororoit Creek,  
Isabella Williams Reserve.

## 4.2 Opportunities and Actions

14	Develop a Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator that classifies the extent and quality of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat areas across the municipality.
15	Using the Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator, measure and map the extent and quality of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat areas across the municipality.
16	Using the Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator, develop a conservation asset management and monitoring works program for all conservation assets. These will be informed by Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator, Invasive Plants and Animals Management plan and the Municipal Vegetation Fire Management plan.
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.
18	Develop and periodically update mapping of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat across the municipality.
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.
20	Update waterway operational plans, in partnership, to clearly define current ownership and management responsibilities of Council and relevant State government agencies.
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.
22	Develop a strategic rehabilitation management plan for Sydenham Park, Keilor North.
23	Develop and implement an annual Municipal Vegetation Fire Management plan in accordance with the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.
24	Review and update the information recorded in Council's Significant Tree register to include ecological values.
25	Monitor and evaluate the existing "hollow creation project" at Matthews Hill, Sunshine to determine the possibility of implementation at other suitable locations.
26	Support research opportunities where appropriate, that target improved adaptive management of relevant flora, fauna and vegetation communities.



27	Advocate to the Department of Sustainability and Environment for the research outcomes of the Gilbertsons/Angliss Native Grassland Research Committee.
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.
29	Review and update existing land management 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).
31	Continue environmental works coordination with stakeholders, including Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and neighbouring Councils, to maximise land management outcomes across the municipality.
32	Participate in relevant Regional and/or State Biodiversity working groups such as the proposed LGPro Native Vegetation Special Interest Group.
33	Ongoing monitoring of available and relevant funding opportunities.
34	Review and update Council's Sustainable Land Management Incentive scheme, to increase participation to maximise biodiversity outcomes.

## 5 Biodiversity Connectivity

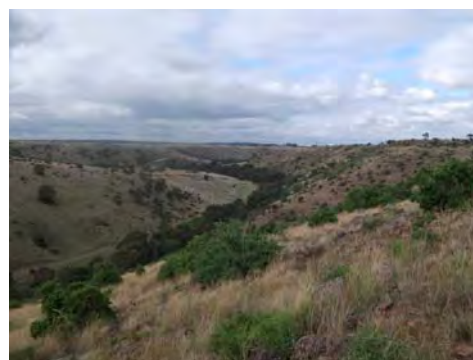
Creating a connected landscape will help the future survival and health of ecological communities and the ongoing protection of threatened flora and fauna species. A connected landscape will also increase the capacity of conservation sites to support flora and fauna through changes such as climate change and increased density and spread of urban development.

Brimbank aims to introduce physical and functional connectivity across the municipality (See Map 3, page 21). The process of physical connectivity involves actually joining areas of land together to provide species with a continuous habitat. Functional connectivity assumes that areas of land will remain physically separate but looks at other ways of creating links between them. Areas capable of supporting physical and functional connectivity will be identified in the development of a Brimbank Biodiversity Connectivity Plan. This plan will require consideration of issues such as land tenure, land use, physical barriers and the ability to implement such a plan. Priority will be given to linking vegetation and to areas under Council or other open space managers' control. Mapping and visual aids on the future potential of the biolinks will be used as a tool to engage the community and land managers to promote biodiversity values across Brimbank.

The opportunities in creating a connected landscape include:

- community involvement in habitat restoration, rehabilitation and creation projects
- increased beautification and a greener municipality
- private landholders/residential properties can form a part of identified biolinks.

Through the implementation of the outlined opportunities, Brimbank will be able to create a well-connected landscape in a highly urbanised environment. This will address the current fragmentation of the natural landscape and see an increased capacity of existing biolinks.



Jackson's Creek Valley corridor.

### 5.1 Threats

The following issues have been highlighted as key threats:

- fragmentation of remnant vegetation
- creation of genetic bottlenecks (inbreeding depression)
- poor public perception of the roles and benefits of biodiversity in an urban environment.

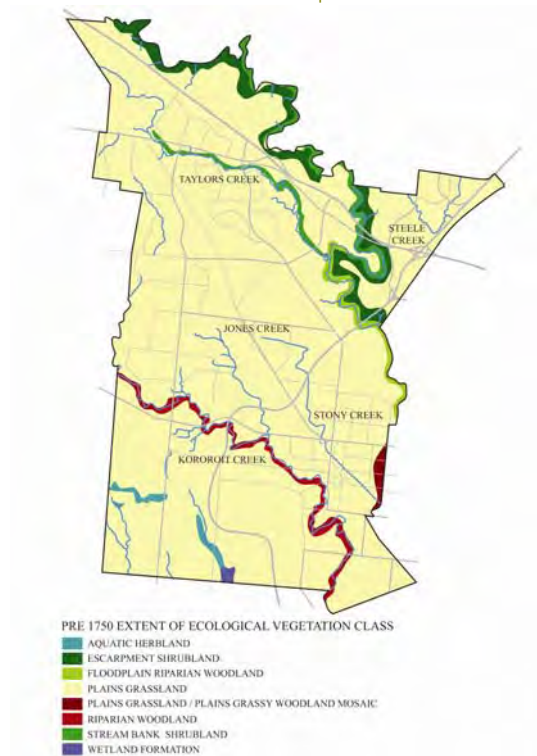
### 5.2 Opportunities and Actions

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.
36	Investigate and implement appropriate protection of biolinks in the Brimbank Planning Scheme.
37	Review and update Council's current Naturestrip Landscaping Guidelines to enable local residents to increase biodiversity values within identified biolinks.

## 5.3 Vegetation Mapping.

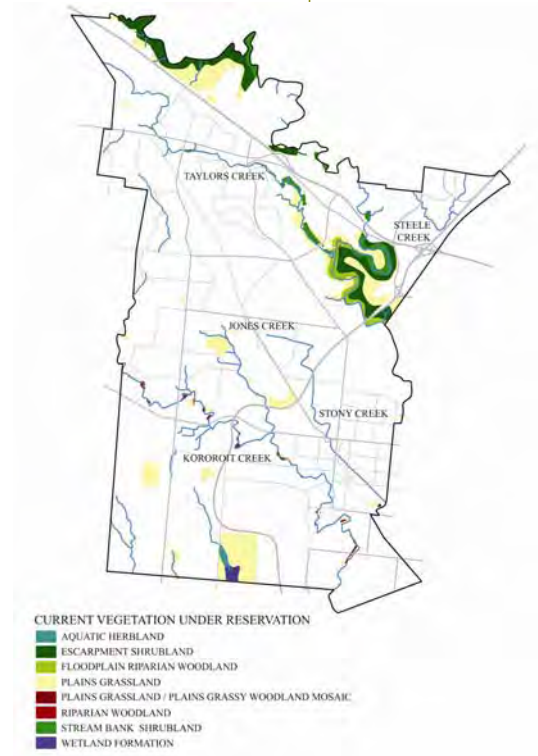
**Map 1: Pre- 1750 Vegetation Mapping**

Source: DSE Interactive Maps



**Map 2: Current Vegetation under Reservation**

Source: DSE Interactive Maps



**Map 3: Proposed Connectivity Mapping.**



### Description of Maps

#### Map 1: Pre 1750's Revegetation Mapping

Pre 1750's Map shows an estimation of the extent of Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) across the municipality, clearly showing that Plains Grassland once dominated the Brimbank landscape.

#### Map 2: Current Vegetation under Reserve Mapping

Current Vegetation under Reservation Map shows the vegetation in the municipality which is in reserves managed by council and other agencies.

#### Map 3: Proposed Connectivity Mapping

The proposed Connectivity Map highlights the identified areas where biolinks exist or with rehabilitation could exist.

Biolinks can be as simple as planting locally indigenous trees and shrubs to allow for greater passage of birds, or as complicated as recreating grassland mosaics for the movement of Striped Legless Lizards.

## 6 Engage and Promote Biodiversity

In order to protect biodiversity it is vital that landscape and biodiversity values are better understood and actively promoted within the community. A community that feels more connected to its natural environment will actively participate in protecting it.



Dry stone walling demonstration day

In order to strengthen and maximise community awareness and connection to biodiversity, the Biodiversity Strategy has identified a series of actions with outcomes such as:

- continue to develop working relationships with the community
- develop a Brimbank biodiversity community 'knowledge share' network
- continue to implement the annual environment community engagement program, including the communications plan
- continue to develop the existing range of Council's primary and secondary school education programs to align with the National Schools Curriculum.

Through the development and implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy, the Brimbank and broader community will be aware of, active in and protective of Brimbank's natural heritage and its place within our society.

### 6.1 Threats

The following issues have been highlighted as key threats:

- negative community perception of natural landscapes
- lack of interpretation signage
- unrestricted access into conservation assets
- community understanding or fears of the management techniques
- a lack of consistent and ongoing communication and planning between Council and Conservation Volunteers or 'Friends' Groups
- misrepresentation of Brimbank's natural landscape characteristics through print and online media.



## 6.2 Opportunities and Actions

38	Review and promote existing annual environment community engagement program offering a diverse range of educational activities and experience based opportunities.
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.
40	Review and update Brimbank Friends Agreements for volunteers to undertake works on Council land.
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.
42	Develop and implement an awareness program for relevant Council departments relating to the management and protection of Brimbank biodiversity values.
43	Develop a Brimbank biodiversity interpretive signage implementation plan.

## 7 Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan and Reporting

The Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan collates all actions which have been identified throughout the document, identifying the responsible Council Departments and the targeted financial year/s for implementation.

An annual assessment of actions and timing will be undertaken to determine if rescheduling is required. This process will take into consideration:

- current status of actions (not commenced, ongoing or completed)
- budgetary requirements (as required)
- relevance of action including legislation or policy changes
- new and emerging technologies
- management techniques and
- changing community needs.

Scheduled actions will be incorporated into Council's formal reporting processes. This may include briefing relevant Council committees.

Those actions requiring funding will be evaluated through Council's formal yearly budgetary process. External funding sources will also be explored through the development and implementation of actions.

A five year review of the Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan will be undertaken to provide a more in depth analysis to:

- reassess the remaining actions
- consider (if appropriate) reallocating any uncompleted actions
- evaluate the effectiveness of completed actions.



## 7.1 Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan

Action No.	Action	Responsibility (within Council)	Year					
			2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2017/18	2018/2022
Protect Biodiversity								
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.	Strategic Planning	✓					
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.	Strategic Planning, Environment			✓			
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.	City Compliance, Environment		✓				
4	Investigate and implement the best form of permanent protection of all Council owned conservation assets through the Brimbank Planning Scheme.	Strategic Planning, Environment	✓					
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.	Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Continue to build capacity within Council operations of general open space monitoring/management/compliance to ensure the protection and maintenance of conservation assets within the municipality.	City Compliance, Urban Design, Operations Group, Leisure Services, Environment		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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.	Environment, Planning (Strategic and Statutory), Planning Compliance, City Compliance			✓	✓		

Action No.	Action	Responsibility (within Council)	Year					
			2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2017/18	2018/2022
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.	Environment		✓				
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.	Environment, Operations Group, Urban Design	✓					
10	Review and update Council's 'Dog Off' leash areas policy, to minimise negative impacts on biodiversity.	Urban Design, City Compliance Environment			✓	✓		
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.	Environment, Operations Group		✓	✓			
12	Develop Council specifications for landscaping materials.	Environment, Operations Group, Urban Design					✓	
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.	Environment	✓					
<b>Adaptive Management of Biodiversity</b>								
14	Develop a Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator that classifies the extent and quality of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat areas across the municipality.	Environment		✓				
15	Using the Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator, measure and map the extent and quality of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat areas across the municipality.	Environment, Asset Services			✓			
16	Using the Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator, develop a conservation asset management and monitoring works program for all conservation assets. These will be informed by Brimbank Biodiversity Indicator, Invasive Plants and Animals Management plan and the Municipal Vegetation Fire Management plan.	Environment			✓	✓	✓	✓
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.	Environment				✓	✓	✓

## Brimbank Biodiversity Strategy 2012 - 2022

Action No.	Action	Responsibility (within Council)	Year					
			2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2017/18	2018/2022
18	Develop and periodically update mapping of remnant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat across the municipality.	Environment, Asset Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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.	Environment, Statutory Planning	✓					
20	Update waterway operational plans, in partnership, to clearly define current ownership and management responsibilities of Council and relevant State government agencies.	Environment, Operations Group			✓			
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.	Environment, Leisure Services, Operations Group				✓		
22	Develop a strategic rehabilitation management plan for Sydenham Park, Keilor North.	Environment	✓					
23	Develop and implement an annual Municipal Vegetation Fire Management plan in accordance with the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.	Environment, City Compliance	✓					
24	Review and update the information recorded in Council's Significant Tree register to include ecological values.	Environment, Operations Group				✓		
25	Monitor and evaluate the existing "hollow creation project" at Matthews Hill, Sunshine to determine the possibility of implementation at other suitable locations.	Environment, Operations Group, Urban Design					✓	
26	Support research opportunities where appropriate, that target improved adaptive management of relevant flora, fauna and vegetation communities.	Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	Advocate to the Department of Sustainability and Environment for the research outcomes of the Gilbertsons/Angliss Native Grassland Research Committee.	Environment	✓					

Action No.	Action	Responsibility (within Council)	Year					
			2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2017/18	2018/2022
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.	Environment, Asset Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
29	Review and update existing land management agreements with relevant agencies.	Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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).	Environment			✓			
31	Continue environmental works coordination with stakeholders, including Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and neighbouring Councils, to maximise land management outcomes across the municipality.	Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
32	Participate in relevant Regional and/or State Biodiversity working groups such as the proposed LGPro Native Vegetation Special Interest Group.	Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
33	Ongoing monitoring of available and relevant funding opportunities.	Environment, Urban Design	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
34	Review and update Council's Sustainable Land Management Incentive scheme, to increase participation to maximise biodiversity outcomes.	Environment,	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Biodiversity Connectivity</b>								
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.	Environment, Urban Design, Operations Group				✓	✓	✓
36	Investigate and implement appropriate protection of biolinks in the Brimbank Planning Scheme.	Environment, Strategic Planning					✓	✓
37	Review and update Council's current Naturestrip Landscaping Guidelines to enable local residents to increase biodiversity values within identified biolinks.	Environment, Urban Design					✓	✓

Action No.	Action	Responsibility (within Council)	Year					
			2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2017/18	2018/2022
Engage and Promote Biodiversity								
38	Review and promote existing annual environment community engagement program offering a diverse range of educational activities and experience based opportunities.	Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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.	Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
40	Review and update Brimbank Friends Agreements for volunteers to undertake works on Council land.	Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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.	Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
42	Develop and implement an awareness program for relevant Council departments relating to the management and protection of Brimbank biodiversity values.	Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
43	Develop a Brimbank biodiversity interpretive signage implementation plan.	Operations Group, Environment, Urban Design		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## Language link



Arabic	عربي	9209 0131
Croatian	Hrvatski	9209 0132
Greek	Ελληνικά	9209 0133
Italian	Italiano	9209 0134
Macedonian	Македонски	9209 0135
Serbian	Српски	9209 0136
Spanish	Español	9209 0137
Turkish	Türkçe	9209 0138
Vietnamese	Việt-ngữ	9209 0139
All other languages		9209 0140
English		9209 0141

local call costs apply

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