
Honeyeater Bushland Reserve, Junortoun Landscape Development Plan



Honeyeater Bushland Reserve dam - Image: Geoff Day

Prepared for:



Junortoun
Community Action Group Inc.
www.junortoun.vic.au

Prepared by:



kleinlarc@gmail.com

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1. The Honeyeater Bushland Reserve - Context

1.1. The Site

The Honeyeater Bushland Reserve (previously identified on maps as *Strathfieldsaye Gravel Reserve*) is located within Junortoun, around 7.5 km south-east of the Bendigo city centre and within the Goldfields bioregion.

Approximately 17ha in size, it forms part of a larger tract of bushland properties managed by various land managers. The combined area of public, contiguous bushland is approximately 57 ha, with additional, densely vegetated free-hold land and the Knul-doorong Woodland to the north. The latter is held by the City of Greater Bendigo and is protected under a Trust for Nature conservation covenant.



Figure 1: Context Map of the Honeyeater Bushland Reserve - not to scale –
Source: VicPlan (DELWP), July 2020 – supplied by JCAG

Access to the site is via Honeyeater Lane and several bushland tracks that connect the site to the neighbouring reserves.

The site features two distinct landforms and corresponding vegetation types: Regrowth Heathy Dry Forest (EVC 20)/Box Ironbark Forest (EVC 61) on higher ground surrounding the depression of the former gravel pit. The regrowth forest features a relatively weed free and biodiverse understorey layer.

The lower lying former gravel pit area is made up of a mosaic of wetlands, revegetation areas of various ages and bare ground.

The extraction of gravel has exposed Sodic soils and Kaolin clays, which can lead to highly erodible sodic soils that require careful management.

A tall communications (NBN) tower is located within the site.

A dam has been established within the former pit depression providing a constant water source all year round.

The wetland is home to the endangered Bibron's Toadlet (*Pseudophryne bibronii*).

The site lies within 500m of cycling distance to the popular O'Keefe Rail trail and it is proposed that a link to the trail be developed in the future.

1.2. [History and Current Use](#)

Located in Dja Dja Wurrung country, like many other forests in this area, the site underwent significant disturbance during gold-rush times. Most likely covered in mature Dry Heathy or Box Ironbark Forest prior to colonisation, it was presumably used as a source of timber for the growing settlements and gold mining operations. There is almost no remnant vegetation left on the site; the current surrounding forest appears to be regrowth.

Later the site was a designated gravel pit operated by the former Shire of Strathfieldsaye, with the extraction of the gravel material resulting in a depression of approximately 3 – 7 m below surrounding ground. After quarry operations ceased, the open pit was left behind and some putrescible waste was buried.

In 2016, the Junortoun Community Action Group (JCAG) expressed interest in leading the rehabilitation of the site and was subsequently granted a committee of management role by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

Currently the site is used by individuals, family groups and dog walkers for passive recreational uses like walking and nature appreciation; it is also popular for jogging and cycling.

The Junortoun Fire Brigade utilises the dam for training exercises.

The nature of the site makes the location attractive for motorised trail bikes; this use is not permitted due to the danger to other users and the high risk of disturbance and damage to flora and fauna.

1.3. Current Management and Management Objectives

JCAG was appointed as the Committee of Management by DEECA in 2019, after the site was re-gazetted for public purposes.

The *Honeyeater Bushland Management Plan 2021 – 2026* states the following management objectives:

- **“Objective 1: Preserve, protect and rehabilitate the natural environment. “**
- **“Objective 2: Develop the reserve as a place that people enjoy and value.”**

Guided by the above management plan, JCAG has undertaken significant rehabilitation work since 2019; these include major earthworks, creation of wetlands, weed control, extensive revegetation, the installation of nest boxes, improvements to vehicle and pedestrian access, signage and the installation of park furniture. The site has been actively promoted through community engagement events.

JCAG also commissioned the *Honeyeater Bushland Reserve Weed Management Plan March 2025*; this management plan provides valuable guidance for ongoing and effective weed management.

A secure income stream to finance management and works is available to JCAG, for the time being, through lease fees paid by the telecommunication tower company.

1.4. Development Opportunities

Based on the work undertaken so far and encouraged by the increase in visitation as well as the improvement to biodiversity, JCAG is intending to continue rehabilitation and infrastructure improvement works into the future.

Development opportunities can be grouped according to physical and experiential layers within the landscape, each layer influencing the next level of intervention.

Terrain

The dished topography provides for a variety of habitat and allows for enjoyable views across the site. Notable is the stark difference between the surrounding Heathy Dry Forest/Box Ironbark Forest environments and the wetlands at the centre of the site.

Key opportunities responding to terrain are:

- creating a third wetland or a “chain of ponds”, to utilise run-off for additional riparian vegetation; in turn bolstering the habitat for the endangered Bibron’s toadlet and other water-reliant species
- utilising the three-dimensional nature of the landform to create lookout points.

Biodiversity

Currently the reserve features existing regrowth forest, areas of revegetation of various levels of maturity, as well as recently graded, bare ground. Biodiversity in the reserve can be enhanced by landform, weed and pest animal control, habitat improvement (e.g. retention of dead trees and logs, lifting of rocks and installation of nestboxes) and the reintroduction of a variety of plant species.

Key opportunities for the natural environment are:

- continued weed control in all areas: within the existing regrowth forest, the disturbed areas within the former pit and throughout more recently revegetated areas
- additional revegetation to rehabilitate open, non-vegetated areas. It is important that highly erodible soils are not disturbed.

Reserve Infrastructure

Good infrastructure enables a pleasant visit, accessibility for a broad group of users and emergency access. It aids efficient management. The existing rim walk provides a substantial loop walk and easy access for emergency vehicles.

Key opportunities for improved reserve infrastructure are:

- additional installation of park furniture and associated infrastructure (seats, picnic tables, signage, lookout sites and drinking fountains) in key locations utilising the improved natural amenity
- the development of walking tracks of varying length to cater for a variety of ages and fitness levels of users
- the proximity of the reserve to the popular O’Keefe rail trail (approximately 500m). Further development works in the Honeyeater Bushland Reserve will take into consideration a potential cycling connection to Strathfieldsaye.

Interpretation

Landscapes carry multiple layers of meaning—shaped by history, culture, ecology and the personal stories people attach to them. Thoughtful interpretation can reveal these layers, enriching the visitor experience and fostering a deeper connection to the place. Ideally, this connection encourages visitors to become advocates for the reserve’s rehabilitation.

Interpretation represents a significant opportunity and should be woven into a broader, integrated signage system that spans all signage categories.

The map components of the Landscape Development Plan illustrate the recommended works and proposed measures across all categories in greater detail.

2. The Landscape Development Plan

2.1 Objectives

The Honeyeater Bushland Reserve Landscape Development Plan has been commissioned to outline and guide future development initiatives. Its purpose is to ensure that projects and works progress in a coordinated and strategic manner over time, while allowing for variations that align with the plan depending on available funds.

The main objectives of the plan are to:

- capture and document development ideas
- coordinate works across different timeframes and stakeholders
- support the prioritisation and planning of future works
- provide a basis for funding applications.

The life span of this document is anticipated to be approximately 5 – 8 years.

2.2 Methodology

The preparation of the development plan included the following steps:

- review of the *Junortoun Community Action Group Strategic Plan*, the *Honeyeater Bushland Reserve Management Plan 2021 – 2026* and the *Honeyeater Bushland Reserve Weed Management Plan March 2025*
- extensive site visits including a walk with members of the JCAG development plan subcommittee
- close collaboration with the development plan subcommittee, with input through multiple meetings and reviews
- a public community consultation session inviting comment
- review by the subcommittee and amendments to the final plan.

The map component of the development has been based on a high-resolution image provided by JCAG (credit: Anthony Webster). In addition, publicly available maps and images were used.

2.3 Plan Components

The *Honeyeater Bushland Reserve Landscape Development Plan* comprises

- The Honeyeater Bushland Reserve - Context Report
- Plans 1 – 6

Appendices

- Opinion of Probable Costs and Estimation of Volunteer Time for Infrastructure Development and Regeneration
- Technical Notes
- Consultation Material

2.4 Allied Documents

The following documents provide the strategic context for the *Honeyeater Bushland Reserve Landscape Development Plan*:

- *Junortoun Community Action Group Strategic Plan*
- *Honeyeater Bushland Reserve Management Plan 2021 – 2026*
- *Honeyeater Bushland Reserve Weed Management Plan March 2025*

Honeyeater Bushland Reserve, Junortoun Landscape Development Plan



PLANS

Cover Sheet

Sheet 1 - Existing Conditions

Sheet 2 - Regeneration Works Areas

Sheet 3 - Proposed Reserve Access & Tracks

Sheet 4 - Proposed Reserve Infrastructure

Sheet 5 - Details

Sheet 6 - Path Network & Signage



drone photography of the site, October 2025
image: Anthony Webster



south-east view of dam - image: Geoff Day

prepared by



kleinlarc@gmail.com

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Status: 24.02.26 - FINAL



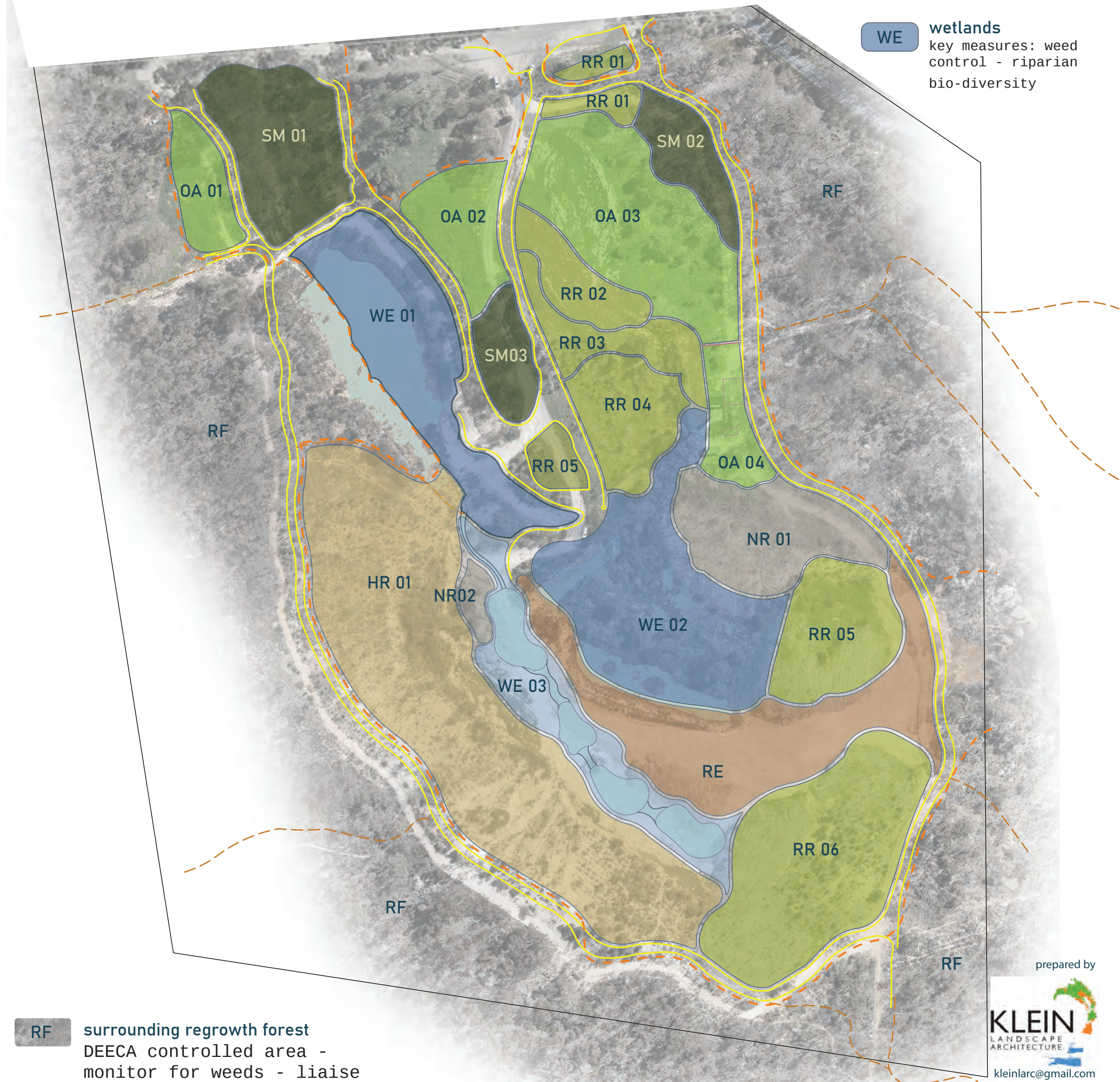
drone photography: Anthony Webster

Honeyeater Bushland Reserve Junortoun Landscape Development Plan

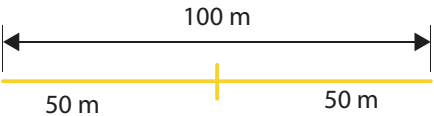


- SM** existing semi-mature regrowth
key measures: weed control - infill planting
- nesting opportunities
- RR** recent revegetation
key measures: weed control - infill planting
- HR** historic revegetation
key measures: erosion control - weed control
- infill planting
- OA** open unplanted areas
key measures: weed control - partial revegetation
- RE** areas of recent earthworks
key measures: weed control - revegetation
- NR** natural regeneration on stony ground
key measures: weed control - elevating some rocks
for improved reptile habitat - placing of logs

- WE** wetlands
key measures: weed control - riparian
bio-diversity



- RF** surrounding regrowth forest
DEECA controlled area -
monitor for weeds - liaise
with DEECA on NRM
activities



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Scale: 1:1,250@A2

drone photography: Anthony Webster

2 - Regeneration Works Areas

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3 - Proposed Reserve Access & Tracks

Honeyeater Bushland Reserve Junortoun Landscape Development Plan



Shelter + Picnic Table

- utilising existing enclosing vegetation
- carefully placed to afford views over dam
- investigate opportunity for second drinking fountain

Future Composting Toilet

- investigate installation of a composting toilet with increased visitation to the reserve

Honeyeater Lane Entry

- install drinking fountain as close as possible to seat near entry; connect to existing water tapping point
- consider providing dog pickup bags

Fencing

- to be from simple wire strands. No mesh fencing to be used.

Open Grassed Area

- retain unplanted as an open area for gatherings, ball games or similar
- delineate by planted areas

New Picnic Setting near Tower

- complement existing seat with picnic setting to utilise elevated location and good views over the site
- potentially remove some vegetation to allow for engaging viewlines
- provide natural shade through tree planting
- upgrade fence at drop-off to a natural, sympathetic style
- ask NBN to provide an information sign on tower emissions for JCAG to install beside the tower fence

Bird Watching/ Bird Hide

- investigate suitability and appropriate location of a bird hide with BirdLife Australia

Additional Picnic Setting on High Point

- complement existing seat with a picnic setting to utilise the elevated location and good views over the site
- provide path access
- provide natural shade through tree planting
- complement with an interpretation sign

Installation of Picnic Tables

- carefully choose locations to maximise views
- provide a gravel path to some tables to provide accessible picnic spots
- complement with tree planting to the north-west for an inviting feel and afternoon shade

Bird Watching Location

- install seat along existing informal track for bird watching

New Lookout

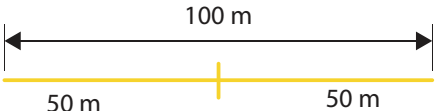
- grade small landing
- utilise rocks to delineate the space and to provide informal seating
- consider installation of a park seat
- grade surrounding areas to divert storm water run-off away from erosion lines, grade diversion banks to prevent further erosion
- revegetate disturbed areas

New Chain of Ponds

- area to be graded to retain storm water in low-lying area
- grade in a natural fashion for a diverse habitat

LEGEND

- existing path
- proposed new path
- existing informal track
- boundary to DEECA controlled area
- existing seat
- view sheds
- PICNIC picnic settings
- welcome sign/map/behavioural signage
- directional distance/time marker
- interpretative signs
- individual trees - tree framework
- drinking fountain
- bird watching
- potential future composting toilet



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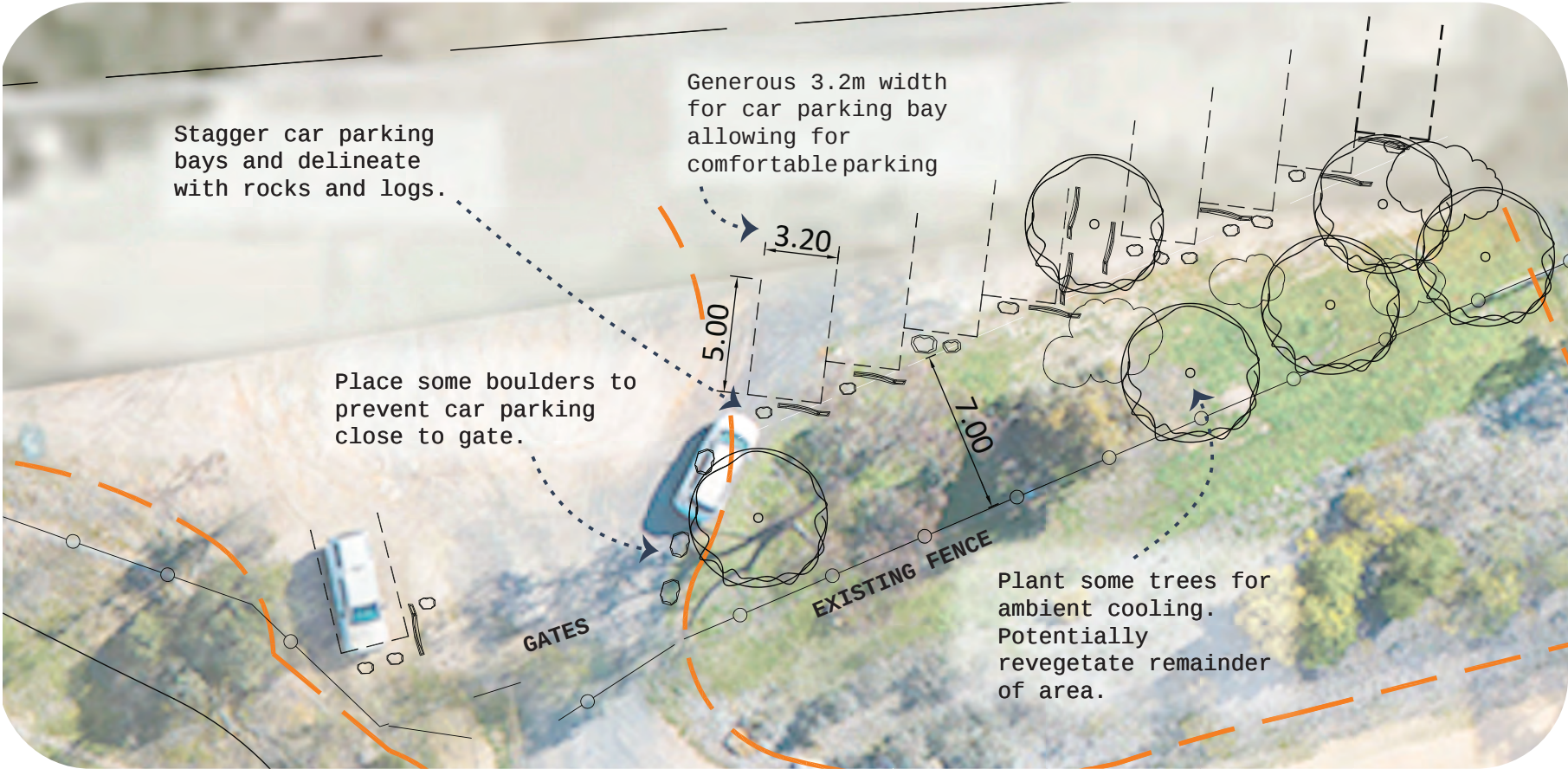
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drone photography: Anthony Webster

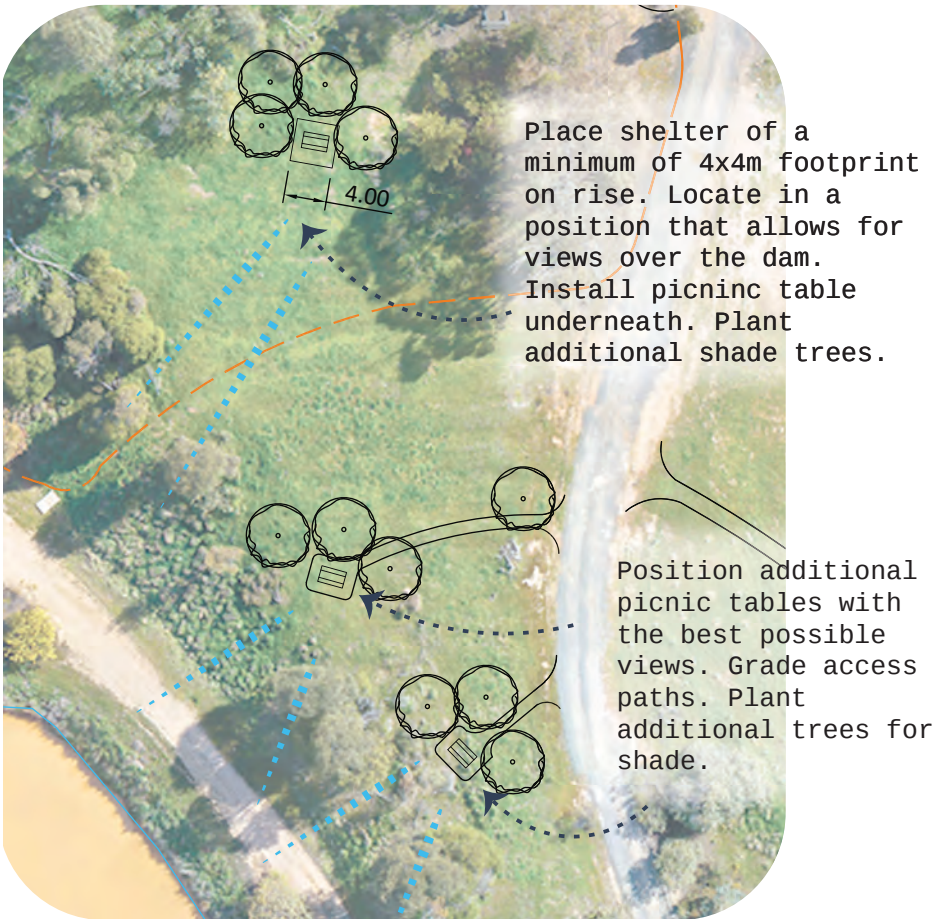
4 - Proposed Reserve Infrastructure

Honeyeater Reserve Junortoun

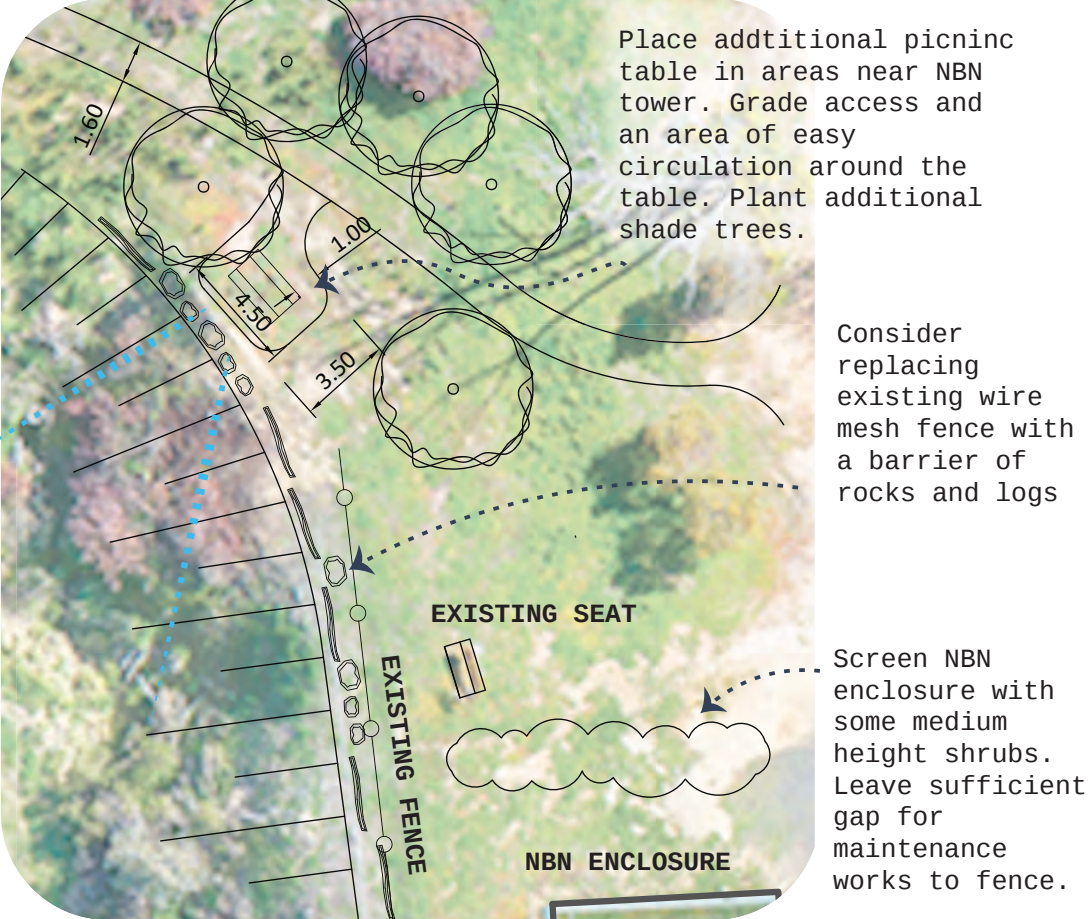
Landscape Development Plan



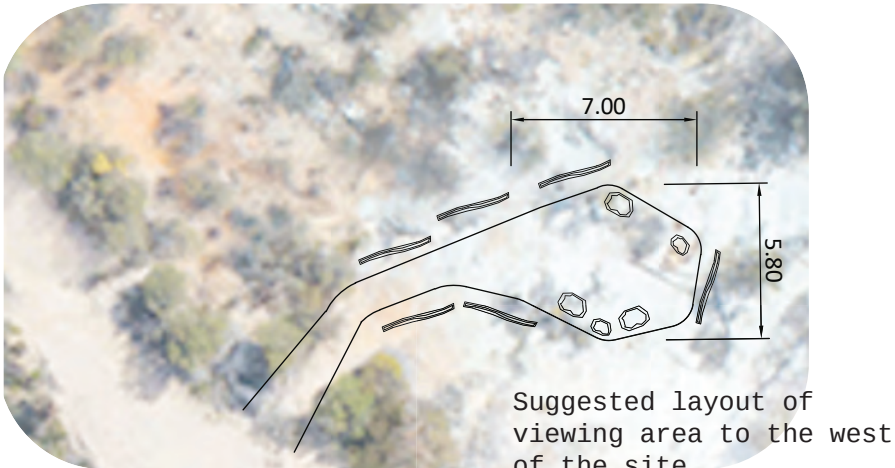
Layout semi-formal car park at main entry gate
scale 1:250



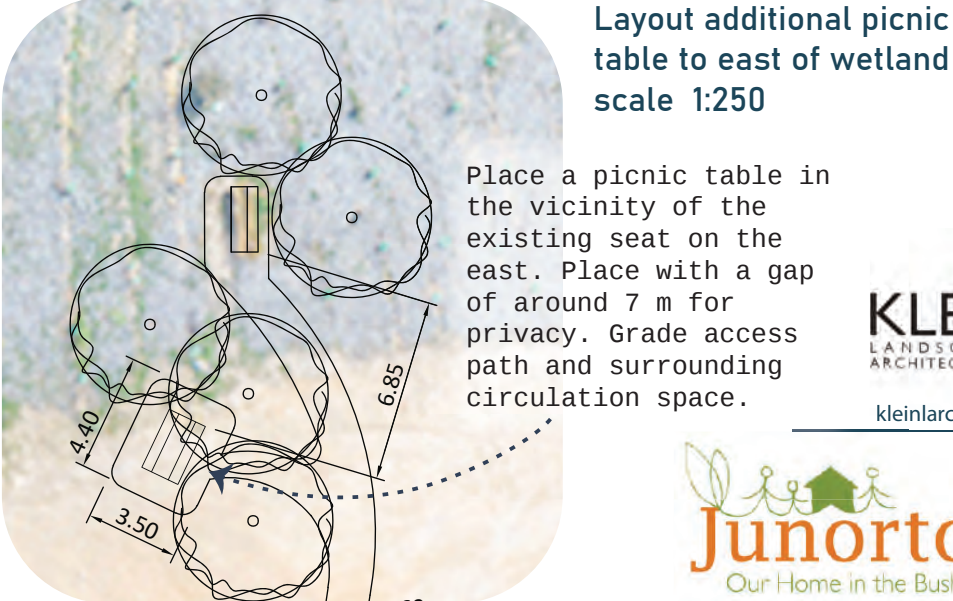
Layout shelter and picnic tables near entry gate
scale 1:500



Layout picnic tables near NBN tower
scale 1:250



Layout landing to south-west
scale 1:500



Layout additional picnic table to east of wetland
scale 1:250

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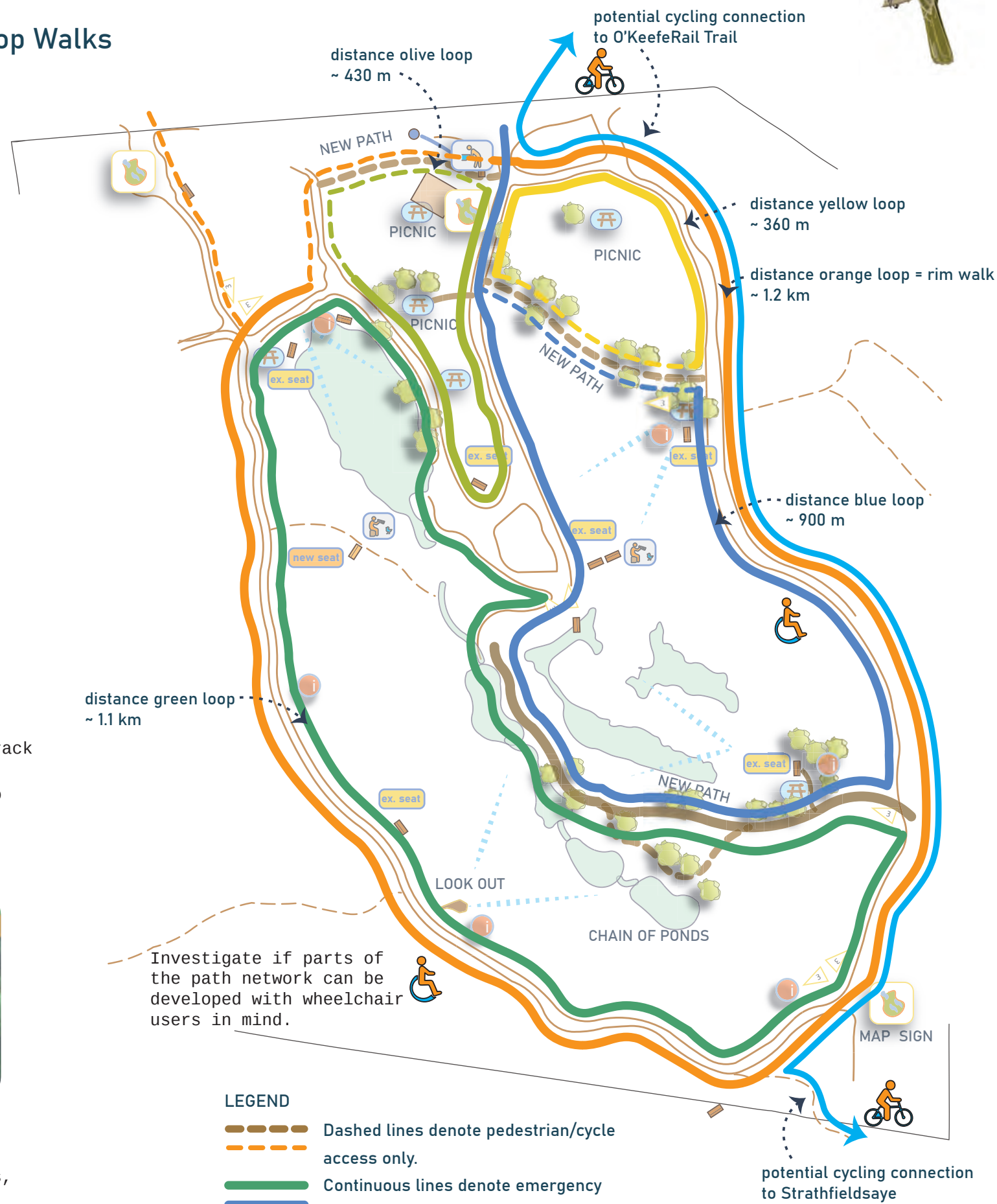
Scale: as shown on A2

drone photography: Anthony Webster

Honeyeater Bushland Reserve Junortoun Landscape Development Plan



Proposed Network of Loop Walks



Signage Examples



example image: Hume and Hovell Track
distance marker with logo,
directional arrow and distance to
destination



example image: Parks Victoria
interpretation sign with graphics,
text, image and logos of
contributing organisations



example image: Kings Park, Perth
welcome/map sign including a
map, graphics, image, text,
behavioural signage and logo



example image: emergency marker
photo credit: emergency.com.au

- LEGEND**
- Dashed lines denote pedestrian/cycle access only.
 - Continuous lines denote emergency vehicle access.
 - welcome sign/map/behavioural signage
 - directional distance/time marker
 - interpretative signs

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not to scale
drone photography: Anthony Webster