

The Growth Areas Authority is a State Government planning agency, and is mapping native vegetation and fauna in potential growth areas and nearby areas around Melbourne. This will involve some surveys and mapping of properties.

The GAA has engaged contractors to conduct these surveys during late 2009 and 2010. This will provide better information which will improve planning outcomes and an understanding of areas that require protection. Decisions about changes to the growth areas of Melbourne are being considered by the Victorian Government.

### WHAT IS THIS PROJECT ABOUT?

An important mapping project is about to begin on properties throughout this area. It will survey and assess native plants and animals as part of efforts to improve the planning process and promote sustainability.

### WHY IS THIS MAPPING PROJECT REQUIRED?

The information obtained will help the GAA and other government agencies plan these areas by making assessments of native vegetation at a broad hectare level.

In some cases, the mapping information will inform the preparation of plans for the future growth of Melbourne. The data will help in the identification of priorities for protection and enhancement of biodiversity - including potential reserve areas and biodiversity corridors - as well as areas with potential to provide offsets for vegetation lost as a result of urban development.

### WHERE IS THE MAPPING TAKING PLACE?

The contractors will conduct the mapping in growth areas within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and in selected areas in the UGB investigation area. Much of the work will be done in areas that have not previously been extensively surveyed for native vegetation or fauna habitat. Overall the GAA envisages mapping a total of about 9,000 hectares.

### WHO IS MANAGING THE PROJECT AND DOING THE WORK?

The Growth Areas Authority is in charge of the project and has engaged plant and animal ecologists to complete the onsite surveying.

### WHAT IS THE GROWTH AREAS AUTHORITY?

The Growth Areas Authority is an independent statutory body with a broad facilitative role to help create greater certainty, faster decisions and better coordination in planning and development of Melbourne's Growth Areas. The GAA reports directly to the Minister for Planning, The Hon Justin Madden.

# INFORMATION SHEET

## Native Vegetation and Fauna Mapping Project

September 2009

### WHO IS PAYING FOR THIS?

The State Government is funding the work. This will ensure adequate native vegetation and fauna information is available upfront to assist planning.

### HOW WILL THIS IMPACT ME?

Contractors who have been engaged by the GAA will be required to access individual properties in order to do the plant and animal mapping work. Please contact the contractor shown on the letter sent to you to arrange access to your property at a time suitable to you. Usually two or three site visits are needed. It will not be necessary for you to remain on site while assessments are being done if you do not wish to. Data collected will be made available at the completion of the project and when the biodiversity reports for each area have been finalised.

If you do not choose to contact the contractor, you may receive a phone call over coming months from the contractor to make an appointment to visit your property.

### WHAT DOES THE SITE VISIT INVOLVE?

Contractors undertaking site visits will be mapping the native vegetation, including trees, shrubs and native grasses and assessing the condition of that vegetation. They will also identify habitat that may be used by birds and animals such as rocks and tree hollows. In some cases contractors may need access at dawn and dusk for spotlight activities to identify fauna.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T PROVIDE ACCESS TO MY PROPERTY?

Landholders are not obliged to allow contractors onto their land, however your cooperation is sought, as the mapping will bring important public benefits. It will help authorities understand the type and extent of native vegetation much earlier in the planning process, instead of on a more piecemeal basis as has happened in the past. It will help ensure future planning occurs on the basis of good quality information about the natural environment.

### DOES THIS MEAN THE LAND IS EARMARKED FOR DEVELOPMENT SOON?

No, it simply means your property is located within or in the vicinity of one of Melbourne's designated growth areas. Or you may be contacted because your property is in an area thought to have significant biodiversity that is next to the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Natural eco-systems don't stop at municipal or planning boundaries so it may be necessary to look at land outside the UGB in the interest of gaining a more complete understanding of existing native vegetation. The information resulting from this work will be available to landholders, the GAA, State authorities and Councils to assist in any future precinct structure and infrastructure planning in this area.

### HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

Should you wish to discuss the project please contact

**Mr Bill Vasiliadis**

Manager - Native Vegetation and Cultural Heritage

**Phone:** 03 9651 9633

**Email:** bill.vasiliadis@gaa.vic.gov.au.