



FoCC

Friends of Canadian Corridor Incorporated



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524 Wilson St

Canadian 3350

8 February 2019

Attention: Strategic Planning

strategicplanning@ballarat.vic.gov.au

Dear Lisa and Kimberley,

The FoCC welcomes the opportunity to state our case for the old Commonwealth of Australia Rifle Range to be considered for future community benefits and development opportunities.

The rifle range consists of an east part (lot) and a west part (lot) with Richards St being the boundary between the two parts.

The east lot contains significant biodiversity including koala habitat and waterways as well as heritage structures. With the current unrelenting development pressure on the natural values in the Canadian corridor there is a real opportunity to gain habitat land and actually restore biodiversity and koala habitat.

The west lot is open land and quite suitable for to private developers for industrial or residential housing.

The FoCC believes that the Ballarat East Local Area Plan provides an opportunity to determine the future use of the rifle range land for the mutual benefit of the community, the environment and the lands current owners.

Yours sincerely

Jeff Rootes

Secretary - Friends of Canadian Corridor Incorporated

A proposal for the Rifle Range to become public property

1. History of the Rifle Range and recent developments

The Commonwealth of Australia Canadian Rifle Range was established in 1860 and was continuously used until 2002 when it was disposed of by the Howard Government to Rifle Range Developments Pty Ltd (RRD) for approximately \$120000. At the time it was not zoned



Map 1 Ref 24th February 2016 COB minutes

An application to rezone in 2013

In 2006 the City of Ballarat zoned the Rifle Range as mostly Rural Conservation Zone with the part west of Kline St zoned industrial.

In 2013 RRD made an application for rezoning to Residential 1. This was rejected in 2013 with all the fire, services and associated agencies opposed to any change in the status or any possible development of the rifle range.

City of Ballarat (COB) RECOMMENDATION February 27th 2013

Council resolves to:

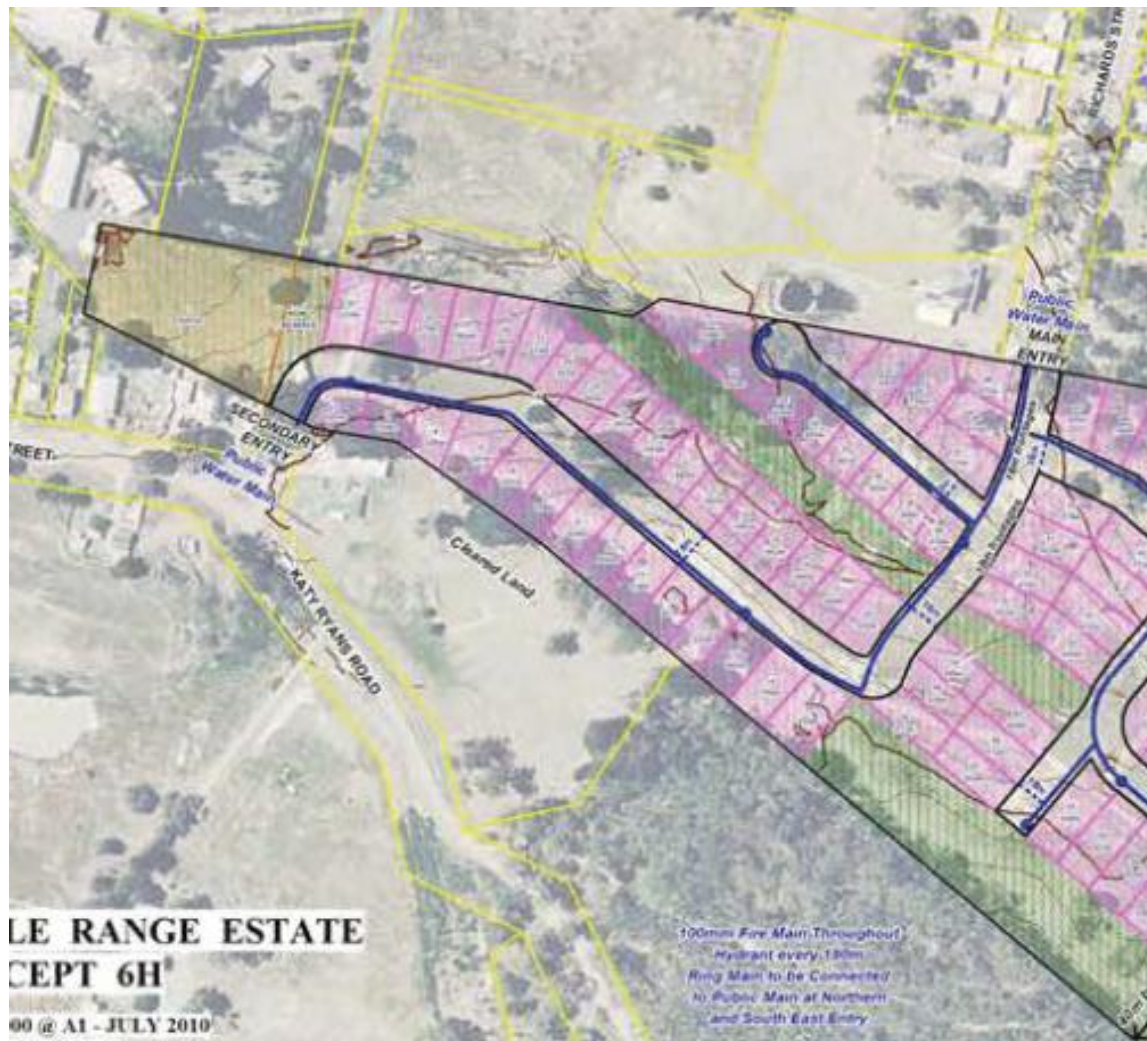
- 1. Acknowledge the risks and constraints that impact any future development of the former Rifle Range site, which encompasses 209A and 211-213 Elsworth Street East, Canadian, along with the responses received from referral authorities.*
- 2. Advise the proponent that due to the risks and constraints identified for the proposed development, including risk from wildfire to life, property and infrastructure; site contamination and lack of strategic justification,*

Council Meeting Agenda 27 February 2013 the proposed planning scheme amendment for the former Rifle Range will not be supported.

Around 2015 there are reports that the then COB Strategic Planning Manager undertook discussions with RRD and was prepared to accept a plan with 15 lots on the west end of the Rifle Range.

A plan first developed in 2010 and presented to the COB in 2016 shows how the western end of the Rifle Range may have been developed. Ref: 24th February 2016 COB Minutes

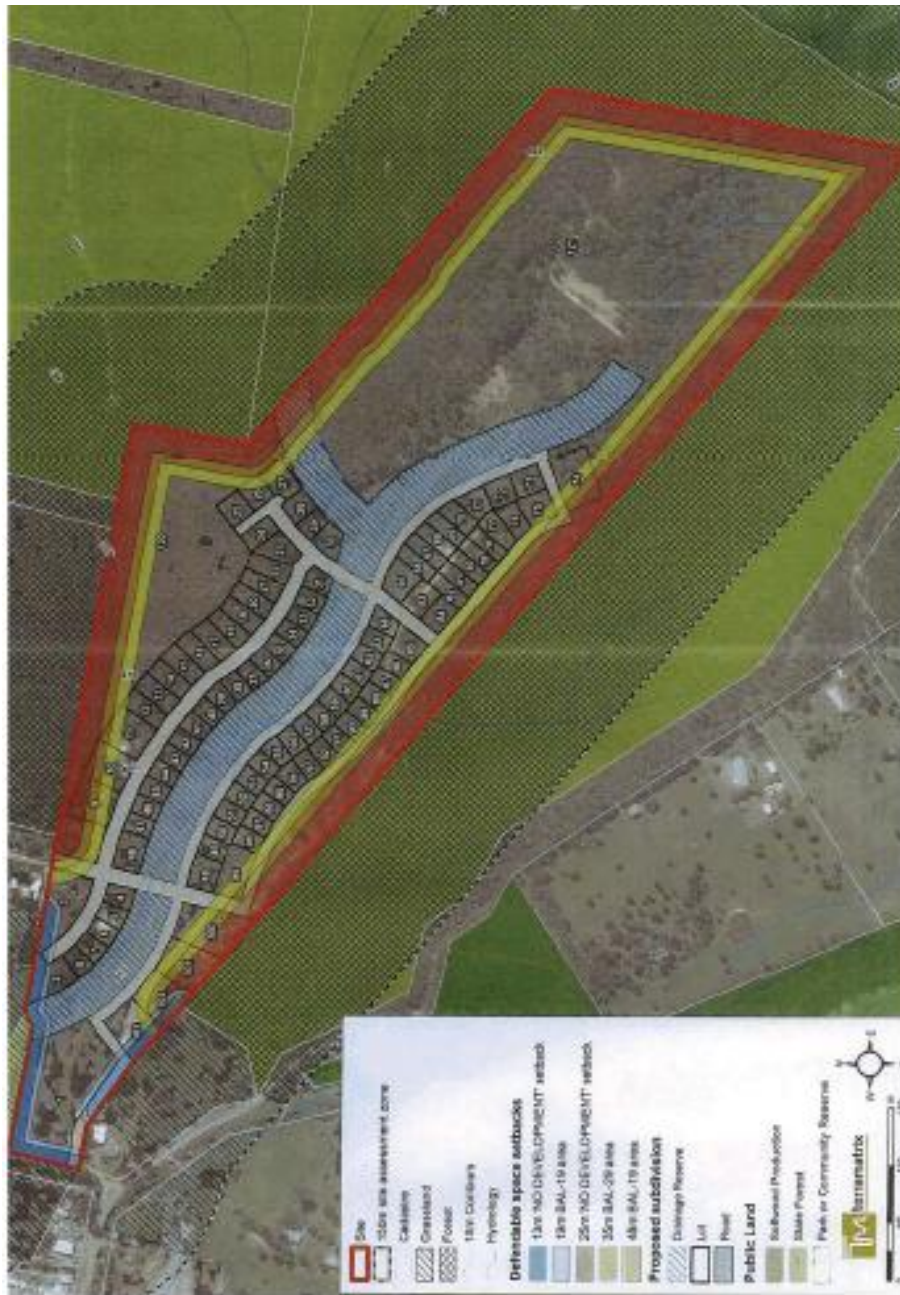
The opportunity to sell of land west of Richards St is still a possibility.



Map 2 Ref 24th February 2016 COB minutes

Application for rezoning 2016

In 24th February 2016 another application for rezoning was made to the COB with a second plan submitted.



Map 3 Ref 24th February 2016 COB minutes

And the application was rejected on the 24th of February 2016:

Council resolves to:

1. Not support the proposed residential rezoning of the former rifle range site at 209A & 211-213 Elsworth Street Canadian, due to the lack of strategic justification, risks and constraints identified for the site, including risk from wildfire to life, property and infrastructure.
2. Advise the applicant of the proposed residential rezoning of the former rifle range site at 209A & 211-213 Elsworth Street Canadian, the amendment request is not supported.

Ref 24th February 2016 COB minutes

2016 – an Application for the rifle range to be considered a “Strategic Investigation Area”

Rifle Range Developments applied to the 2016 C194 Planning Panel to have the Rifle range added as a ‘strategic investigation area’. The application was unsuccessful with the report concluding

“The Panel is not convinced that the Rifle Range site should be listed in Clause 21.02-9 under Further Strategic Work. This does not preclude a further proponent led proposal for the site; however, it would need to address the various site constraints”. Ref: Page 34 Ballarat Planning Scheme Amendment C194 New Local Planning Policy Framework.

DWELP Open House

At the DWELP open house of 2015, part owner Mr Noel Dobbyn in a discussion with Mr Jeff Rootes said he was willing to hand over the eastern end part of the Rifle Range in exchange for the Western half being allowed to go ahead as a subdivision. This offer has been made to a number of people associated with the park.

2017 – Property advertised for sale

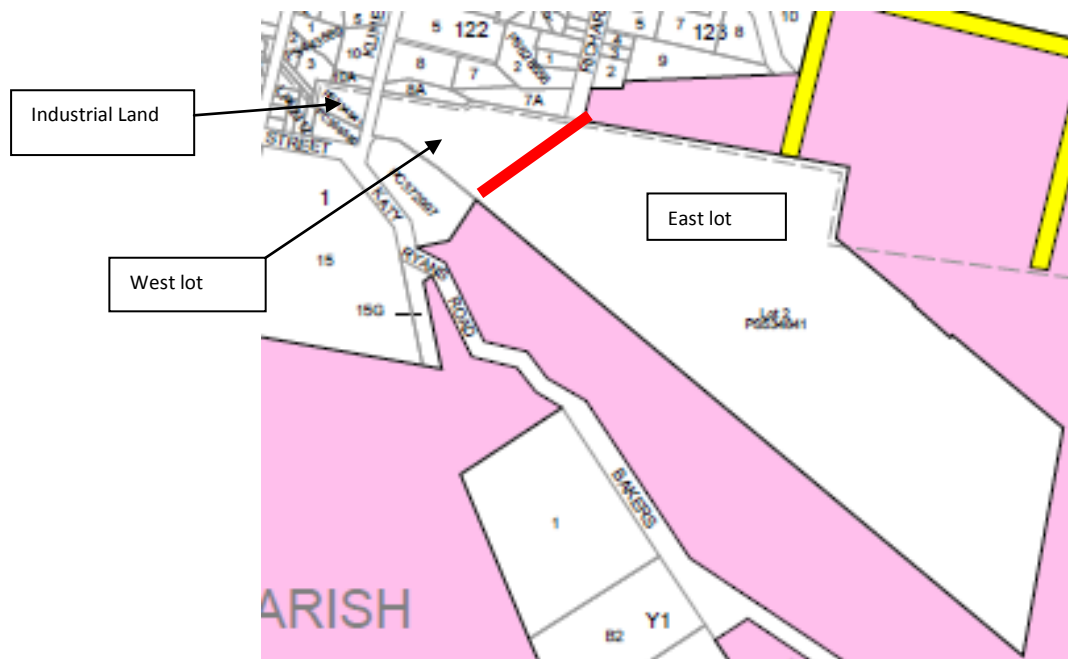
In 2017 the Rifle Range was put up for sale, asking \$2 to \$3 million with Kellermans Real Estate agents of South Yarra.

In 2018 the property was also advertised for sale via Buxton real estate agents.

2. The FoCC Proposal

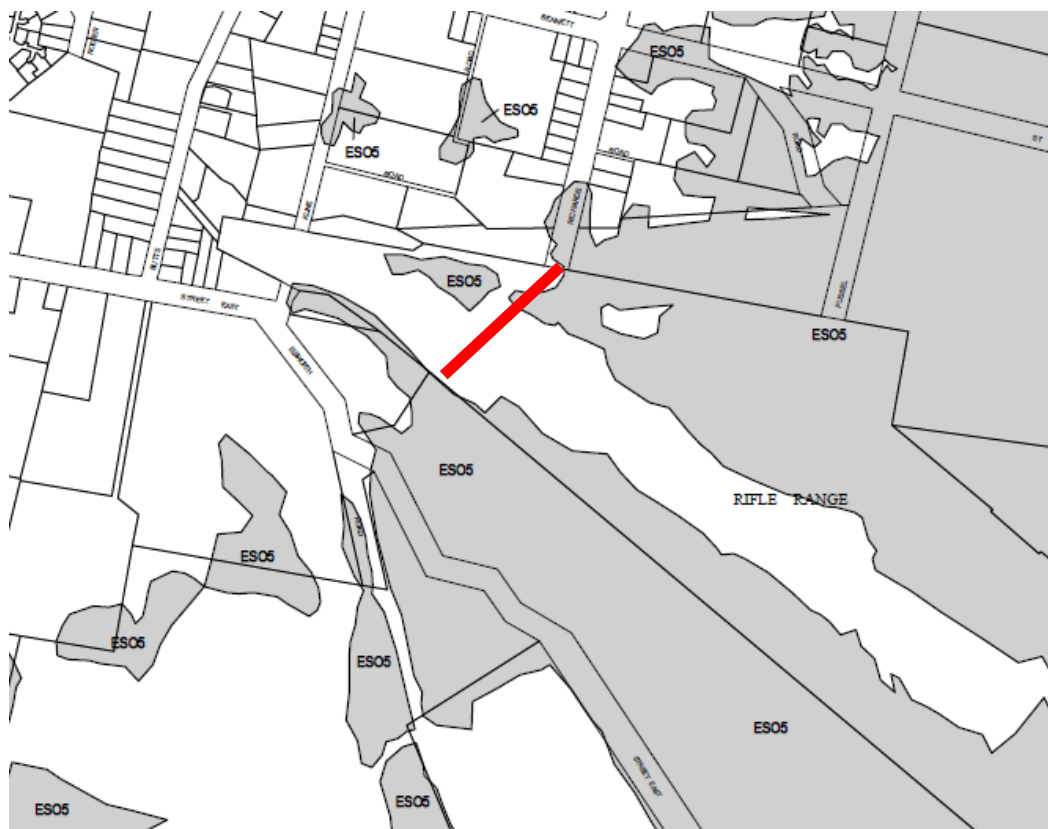
There is an opportunity to consider in detail the Rifle Range as a parcel of land which could be utilised for the public interest.

The FoCC contends that the Rifle Range “East lot” east of the line shown in red on the maps 4 and 5 below connecting the Park boundaries as shown by the purple sections on Map 4, defines the area that should be considered for return to the public realm.



Map 4

Ref LEGL. /15-227 Canadian Regional Park (Woowookarung) Produced by Crown Survey Approval Office of Surveyor General Victoria 2015.



Map 5

Koala Habitat ES05 Vegetation Overlay. Ref: Ballarat Planning Scheme Local Provision City of Ballarat 2009.

C95 Koala Plan

The “Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management” commits the COB to increasing and enhancing Koala habitat. Recent koala counts have shown koalas living in trees adjacent to the Rifle Range. Studies have shown koalas are more likely to inhabit creek lines with higher quality koala friendly vegetation than dry ridge tops. The Lal Lal Drain with its Grassy Valley Forest EVC is one such wetter place and with appropriate revegetation the COB Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management goal to increase koala habitat could be achieved.

Adding the koala habitat of the eastern end of the Rifle Range, weed removal and koala tree planting in the bare sections of the eastern end would give a large boost to the koala habitat within the Canadian Corridor and assist in meeting the Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management goals as well as the Ballarat Planning Scheme’s Koala and Koala Habitat Protection objective “To incorporate the restoration of koala habitat as a component of developments where restoration is identified as required by the Ballarat Koala Habitat Planning Map” (Ref . 22.04 KOALA AND KOALA HABITAT PROTECTION). The addition of the Rifle range koala habitat would be a complimentary fit to the revegetation that is occurring within Woowookarung Regional Park.

Local Waterway restoration: The Lal Lal Drain runs down the centre of the Rifle Range. The Lal Lal Drain is in very poor condition within the Rifle Range and west of Kline St through to Rodier St and is arguably the most damaged waterway in the Canadian Creek system. There is an opportunity to restore the creek with strategic earth works to enhance riparian biodiversity and by planting koala habitat along the creek in accordance with the Koala Plan of 2009. The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) has already

commenced weed removal and will begin habitat restoration of the waterway within Woowookarung Regional Park, east of the Rifle Range during 2019 -21.

Protecting Significant Habitat The eastern end of the Rifle range contains a significant section of Valley Grassy Forest, Ecological Vegetation Class 47 which is quite rare in our locality. This EVC area is connected with an adjacent area on the eastern boundary of the Woowookarung Regional Park and Rifle Range and along Lal drain. The section of the Lal Drain above the EVC area will be enhanced by the above CCMA waterway restoration. Replanting to EVC 47 is envisaged in the CCMA works.

The 2016 Canadian Park (Woowookarung) Natural Values and Habitat Values Assessment made the following recommendations:

1. If any acquisitions for the park are considered, acquiring more land with Valley Grassy Forest should be prioritised as the EVC is vulnerable in the bioregion.
2. Management to protect and enhance the Valley Grassy Forest area in and adjoining the park should be prioritised.
3. Revegetation efforts should use Heathy Dry Forest as a guide except in flat-bottomed alluvial gullies under 500m elevation, where Valley Grassy Forest should be used as a guide. The EVC benchmarks for these EVC's list only typical species for the bioregion, and should be adjusted for the park's suite of species.

Reference: Page 14 Canadian Park (Woowookarung) Natural Values and Habitat Values Assessment

Possible visitor centre for Woowookarung Regional Park.

The Rifle Range has access to electricity and sewerage on site near the entrance off Elsworth St. The provision of Woowookarung Regional Park visitor facilities within the area around Richards St could make an excellent accessible visitor hub. A well developed plan could see road access from Elsworth St and Kline connected thru to Richards St as part of the west end development

Linkages

A visitor hub situated in the Rifle Range would allow trail linkages from the hub to be made to the soon to be constructed Dementia Trail and the nearby soon to be constructed "Pick My Project Trail".

Linkages could be from Sovereign Hill via Lal Lal St, the Canadian Creek Trail and Lal Lal drain reserve to the Rifle Range. Other linkages could connect the hub to the soon to be built Dementia Trail, the Pick My Project trail and the proposed Goldfields Track through the Woowookarung Regional Park.

Rifle Range Heritage

The Woowookarung Regional Park locality contains two rifle ranges. The Cremorne Range is situated between York St and Wilson St in the Park and is completely overgrown. The old Commonwealth Rifle Range has much more extensive built features and should be considered for heritage listing. For example the firing bunkers and abutments are intact.

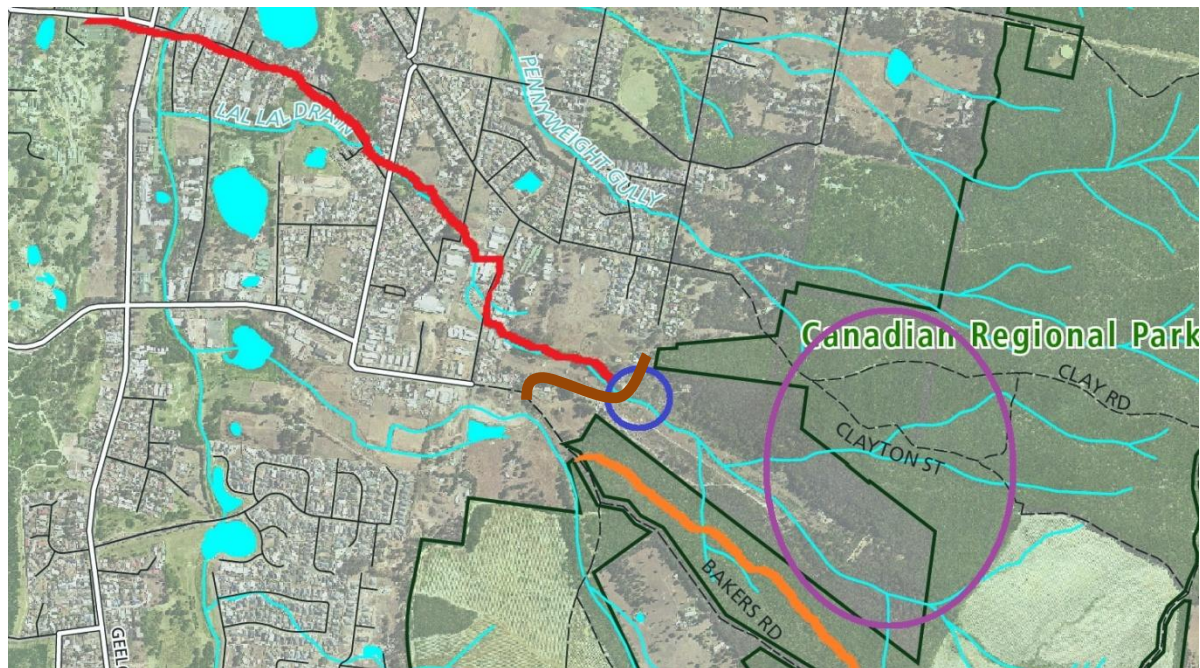


The short range firing bunker.

Gold Mining heritage mining sites and relics

The Lal Lal Drain linkage could connect Sovereign Hill with the nearest intact gold diggings in Ballarat. Recently the FoCC has produced a heritage mining map of the area and the rifle range shares significant mining heritage sites with adjacent sites within the Woowookarung Regional Park.

These sites include the last remaining horse puddler, water races, dams, sluicing works, adits and shafts and alluvial mine holes.



Red line – Sovereign Hill to Rifle Range via Lal La Drain

Orange line - approximate location of Dementia Trail

Purple circle – location of Heritage mining sites and relics

Blue circle – Possible visitor centre

Brown Line – An internal road connecting the Elsworth St and Kline St junction to Richards St on the north side of the rifle range. Provides access to visitor centre and development lots.

Fire control

Incorporating the east lot of the Rifle Range into the fire management plan for the Woowookarung Regional Park would enable the land to be managed with contemporaneous fire management practices. Currently it is private property with no fuel reduction practiced, extensive fire prone gorse infestations and poor access.

Recreation

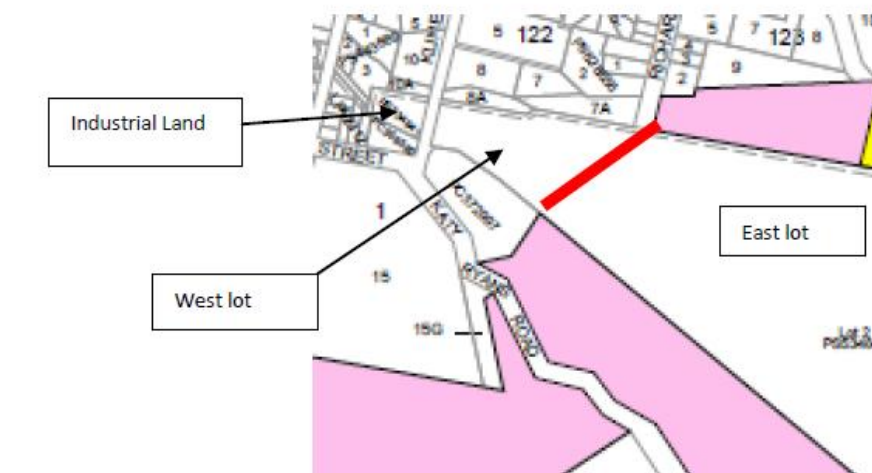
The east lot of the rifle range is a wildflower paradise and contains Grassy Valley Forest EVC. Because it is currently private land, it blocks the extension of walking and cycling trails between the northern and southern parts of the Woowookarung Regional Park.

Inclusion of the Rifle Range's eastern end would open up a larger area for walking and cycling access to the Park and adjacent areas. Local recreational groups such as orienteer's, walkers and cyclists would welcome the additional park space as it would allow better trail and track access on the western side.

The location of the Rifle Range is a finger like intrusion into the continuity of the Woowookarung Regional Park. Adding the eastern end would consolidate the Park, add a visitor entry point, improve the recreational opportunities in the park, and reduce the length of the effective park boundary. It would also reduce fire risk by allowing fuel reduction practices to take place.

West lot of the Rifle Range opportunities:

The land west of the Richards St could be developed for industrial and or housing purposes.



Map 6 (Portion of Map 4)

Industrial Zone: The western end of the Rifle Range is zoned industrial and could be utilised as an extension of the Butt St industrial zone with access via Kline St.

Housing lots Housing lots could be created on the remaining West lot land between Kline St and the Richards St.

Purchase of the Rifle Range

To bring the Rifle Range land into public realm most likely will involve purchasing the land. It would require careful planning consideration with City of Ballarat support to decide where the eastern end land boundary and access roads could be located and appropriate zoning to allow the western end to be disposed of whether for development by the current owner or some other entity.

Possible funding sources require further investigation but could involve partnerships with the following:

- Victorian Renewable Energy Target reverse auction proceeds
- Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
- Leigh Catchment Group
- Australian Koala Foundation
- Bunanyung Landscape Alliance
- DELWP
- City of Ballarat
- Parks Victoria
- Victorian Government
- Bush Heritage
- Philanthropic organisations

Jeff Rootes

On behalf of Friends of Canadian Corridor