



FoCC



Friends of Canadian Corridor Incorporated

August 7th 2019

FoCC Midlands Highway Upgrade submission

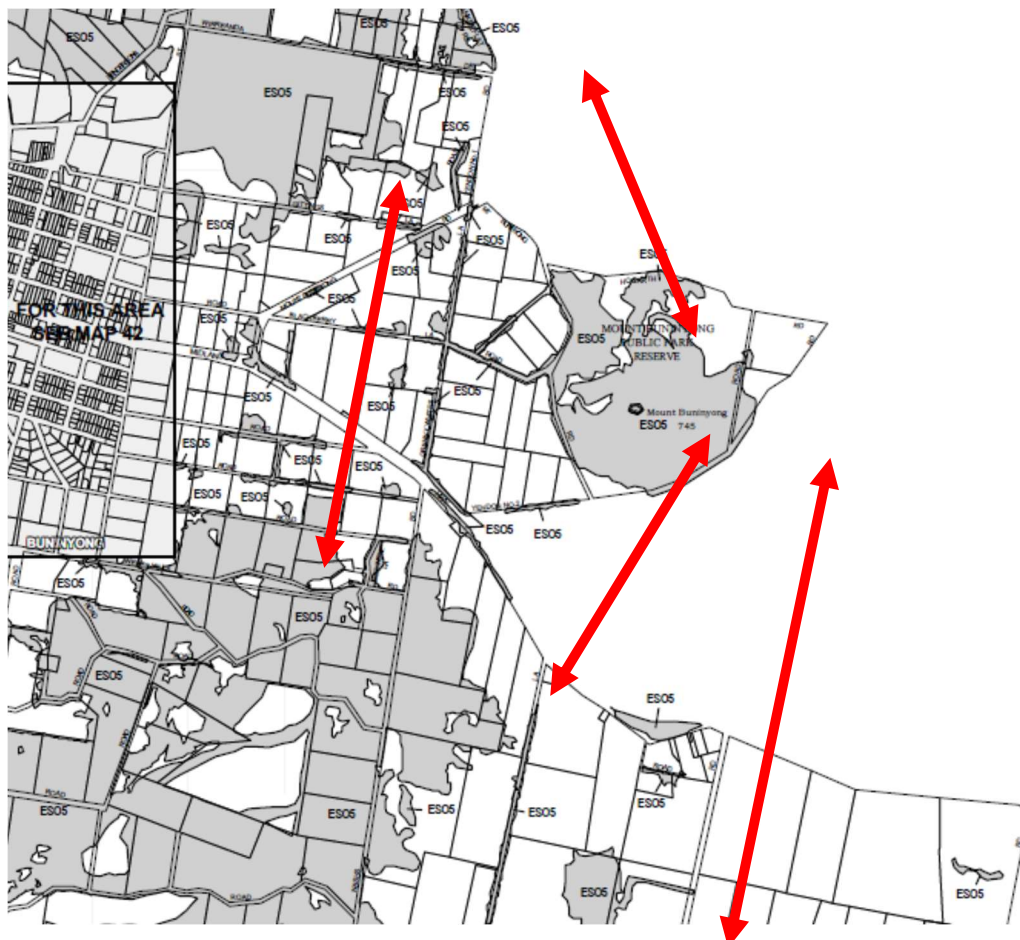
The FoCC requests that Regional Roads Victoria acknowledge the Biolink or Wildlife Corridor crossing on the Midlands Highway by identifying each end of the crossing and providing animal safety engineering between Buninyong and Clarendon as part of its planned upgrade of the highway.

The Biolink or wildlife corridor is identified by:

1. By the Koala Habitat ES05 maps in the Ballarat Planning Scheme Overlay maps
2. By the Midlands Highway Koala Deaths collected by the Australian Koala Foundation
3. By the City of Ballarat Koala Plan of Management (KPM Koala conflict zones)

And the processes that should be applied to the Midlands Highway be similar to the Ballarat Planning Scheme Amendment C173 Woodmans Hill Planning and Environment Panel Report which summarised that when upgrades occur the biolink or wildlife corridor should be addressed

1. The biolink or wildlife corridor effectively begins at the intersection of Mt Buninyong Rd and the Midland Highway and continues through to the end of the Manna Gum section just before Clarendon. Data from the Australian Koala Foundation in the 2000 to 2008 period shows the highway between Mount Buninyong Rd and Pryors Rd as a most dangerous part for Koalas with a second dangerous section being in the Manna Gums just before Clarendon.



Map 1 Source: Ballarat Planning Scheme Overlays.

Map one above shows the Environmental Significance Overlay ESO05 which was developed as part of the City of Ballarat's Koala Plan of Management. This became part of the Ballarat Planning Scheme, as amendment C 137 in March 2010 and effectively shows the location of Koala habitat north and south of the Highway. The connection between the large area ESO5 Koala habitat at the top of the map and Mt Buninyong which has been a local Koala spotting point for years and the ESO5 area south of the highway helps explain why so many Koalas and wildlife have perished and continue to perish on the Highway.

Note: The map above only shows the ESO5 habitat that exists in the City of Ballarat. The red lines that indicate Koala movement across the highway are consistent with local observations. The FoCC's recent Citizen Science Koala spotting program has found Koalas in many different areas around Ballarat particularly east of Buninyong.

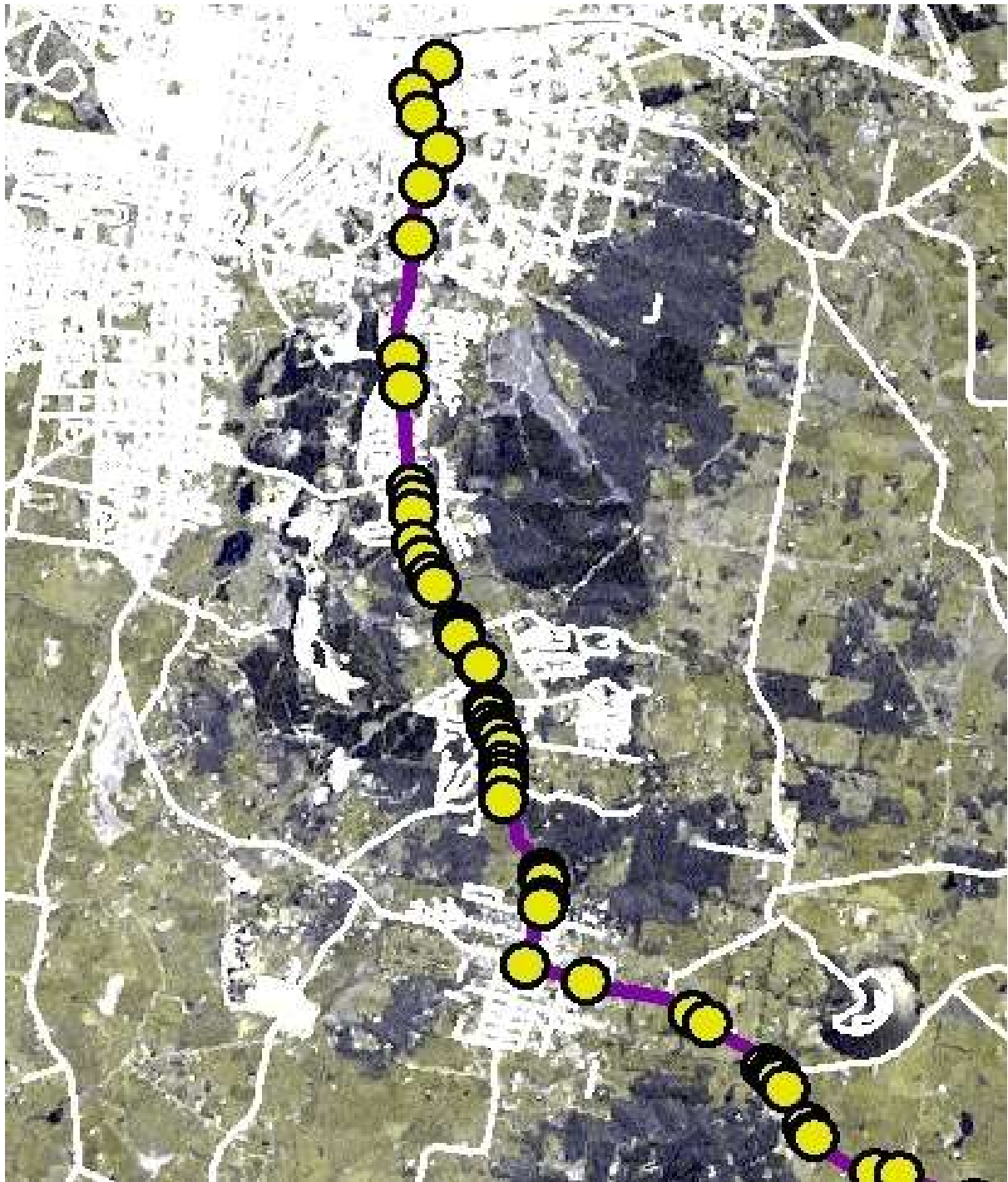
There is no corresponding map available for the adjacent Moorabool Shire.

2. Australian Koala Foundation Midlands Highway Koala Deaths

The Australian Koala Foundation research data on road deaths on the Midlands Highway and Geelong Rd was collected by Dr Rolf Schagloff author of the City of Ballarat Koala Plan of Management 2006 during 2006 -2008.



Map 1

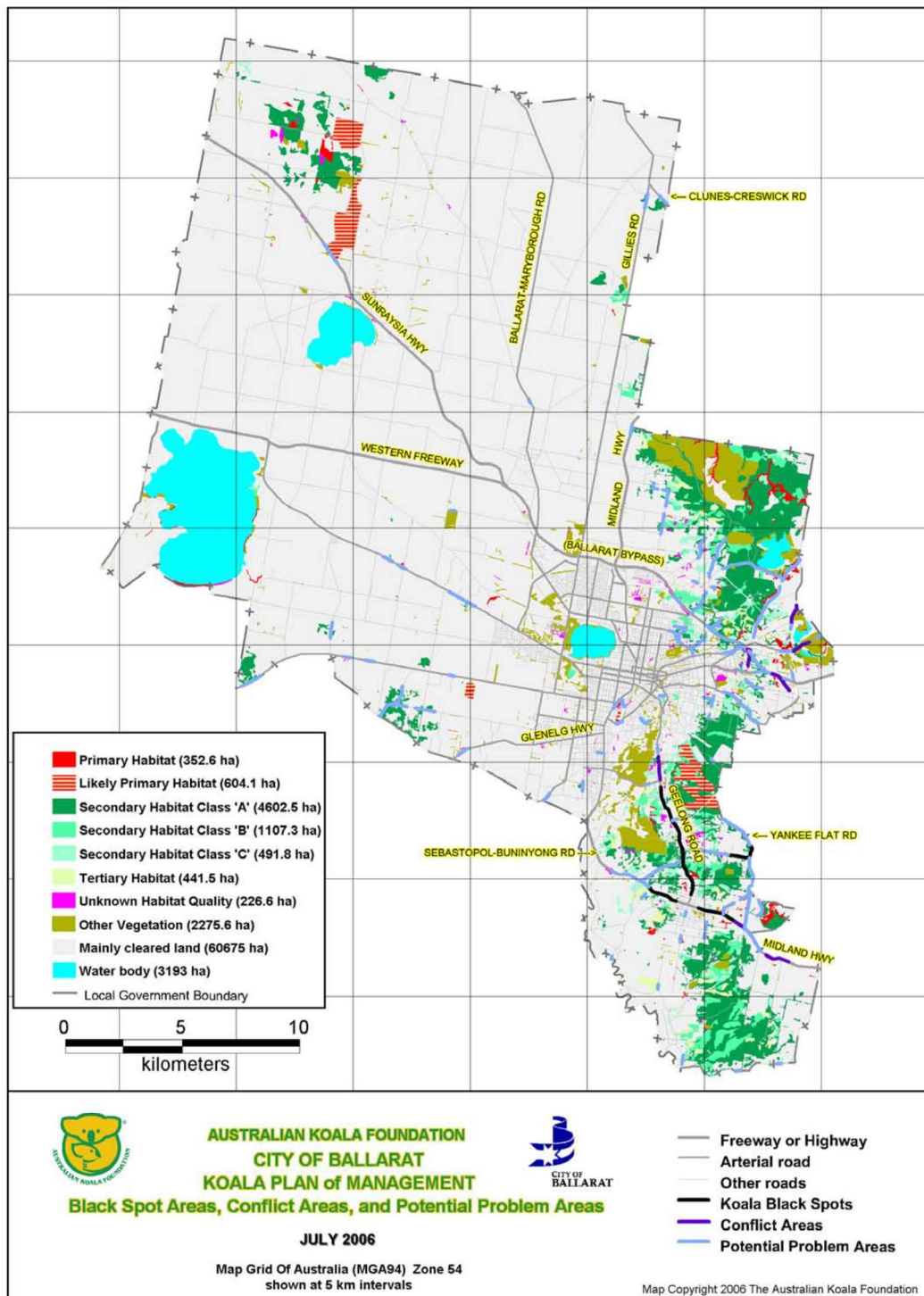


Map 2

Map 1 and Map 2 Geelong Road and Midland Hwy Koala deaths: Source Australian Koala Foundation, presented at FoCC Koala Forum Mt Clear, June 19 2019.

3. City of Ballarat Koala Plan of Management (KPM)

The City of Ballarat Koala Plan of Management contains a map of koala road conflict areas within the City of Ballarat. Vic Roads was active part of the KPM consultation group undertaken prior to the completion of the KPM. Shown on this map below are the road hot spots for Koala deaths taken from the Koala Plan of Management Vol 2 Page 95, authored by Dr Schagloft. In particular are two black spots plus a conflict area on the Midland Highway between Mount Buninyong Road and towards Clarendon on the eastern edge of the City of Ballarat.



3. Reducing wildlife road kill

A report published in 2004 "REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF WILDLIFE ROADKILL" By Zoë Magnus, Lorne K. Kriwoken, Nicholas J. Mooney & Menna E. Jones and published by the Centre for Sustainable Tourism provides a good guide on measures that could reduce koala and wildlife road deaths on the Midland Highway.

The FoCC contends that there are measures identified within this report that can be implemented that could have positive outcomes for the wildlife toll on the Midland Highway. We understand that not every measure in the report will or could work. We do ask that those appropriate measures be taken into account when the design of the upgraded highway is created.

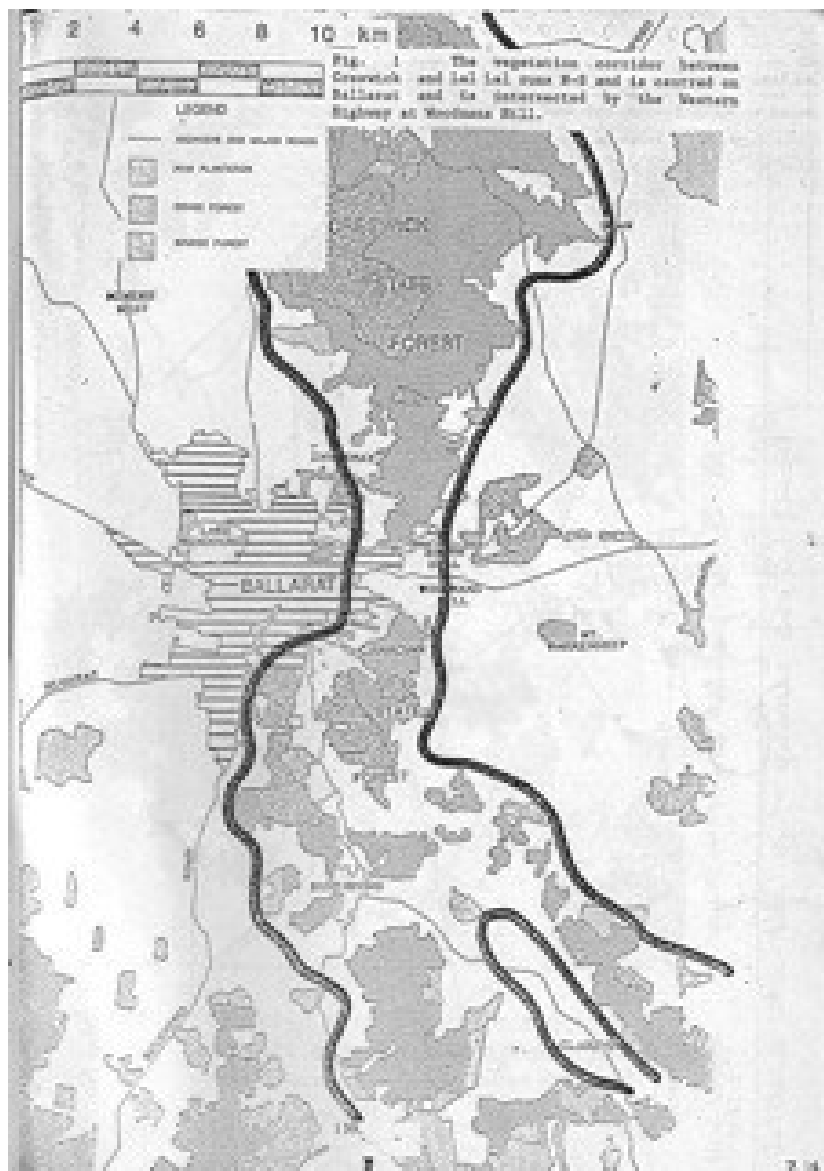
Animal underpasses as well as overhead overpasses, verge fencing and other measures designed to reduce wildlife being trapped on the highway in tight spots and to assist animals avoid potential danger points should be provided as part of the plan. We also ask for appropriate signage to alert drivers to the possibility of wildlife crossing the highway as well as the possibility of night time speed restrictions either advisory or mandatory.

Report attached as Appendix 1

3, Western Highway Vic Roads Koala and Wildlife crossing work mid 1980's to 1990's

A wildlife crossing was provided under the Western Highway at the intersection of the Old Melbourne Road and the Western Highway. Excellent work was undertaken by Pat Prevett Senior Lecturer in Wildlife Studies at the then Ballarat University College. His work provided evidence of the biolink or wildlife corridor in a report "Koala Corridor" to the City of Ballarat in 1991 which contains a map of Ballarat's east side wildlife corridor.

The FoCC contends that the biolink or wildlife corridor was identified by Vic Roads at that time and in Prevett's report. Prevett's map was created by extensive field work utilising Ballarat University College students at that time. The map shows the Midland Highway clearly in the biolink or wildlife corridor.



Prevett's map 1991.

The full report is attached as Appendix 2

4. Ballarat Planning Scheme Amendment C173 Woodmans Hill Planning and Environment Panel Report

The Ballarat Planning Scheme Amendment C173, Woodmans Hill, dated 1st December 2014 contains significant comment and agreement in reference to the biolink or wildlife corridor across the Western Highway. This document is attached as Appendix 3. The relevant pages are Page 23 to 25.

The evidence of Prevett's report (Appendix 2) and the discussion and the summary in 6.3 "Wildlife Corridor/Biolink" section of the Woodmans Hill Planning and Environment Panel, the first a scientific report and the second a Planning and Environment Panel Report found that the corridor across the Western Highway exists but is ill defined.

The final summary sentence makes the case that when the Western Highway is upgraded, the biolink or wildlife corridors will be an issue for Vic Roads at that point of time. That point of time now exists for the wildlife crossing across the Midlands Highway as Regional Roads Victoria is upgrading the Highway.

The FoCC knows that the Corridor across the Midlands Highway exists and that its position and path can be determined using existing data from the Ballarat Planning Scheme ES05 maps, Koala death data maps and ecologists local knowledge.

Summary

The FoCC asks that the biolink or wildlife corridor:

- Be clearly identified in the plans being drawn up for the Midlands Highway upgrade
- Have habitat trees within that zone be subject to high levels of protection
- Have wildlife safety measures applied where appropriate using knowledge from the Tasmanian "REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF WILDLIFE ROADKILL" report.
- Have appropriate signage which may include night time speed reduction applied to alert drivers to the proximity of wildlife
- Have any offset plantings that may be required as a result of tree removal planted in the biolink or wildlife corridor with appropriate species and spacing. The purpose being to have no net loss of biodiversity in the corridor.

The FoCC looks forward to working through the issues we have raised in a positive and constructive way

Yours sincerely

Jeff Rootes

FoCC Secretary

Attachments

Appendix 1: "REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF WILDLIFE ROADKILL" By Zoë Magnus, Lorne K. Kriwoken, Nicholas J. Mooney & Menna E. Jones and published by the Centre for Sustainable Tourism

Appendix 2: Koala Corridor Report, Prevett 1991

Appendix 3: Ballarat Planning Scheme Amendment C173 Woodmans Hill, Section 6.3 "Wildlife Corridor or Biolink"