

### 3.6.0 E6 Transport corridor and revised grassland reserve design

#### 3.6.1 E6 Corridor Alignment

The current scenario for the E6 transport corridor will see 655 ha of grassland removed. The area was only subject to desktop assessment completed by Brett Lane & Associates Pty Ltd, which estimated the area of significant native vegetation to be cleared and a high conservation value wetland at Deans Marsh/Western Wetland. The report itself notes: *“The current assessment was strictly limited to a desktop study and some threatened species may have been missed due to minimal previous research in some areas”* (p2). The consultants recommend that a broader 2 km search area be undertaken and detailed field assessment undertaken, and this should be done before a final alignment is decided on.

We propose that the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road be realigned to avoid grasslands of high quality. These include sites to the west of Mt Cottrell Road. The current alignment has not been subject to an on-ground ecological assessment, and this needs to be done before any final alignment can be considered.

The E6 corridor should be realigned within the section immediately to the north of Leakes Road. We strongly suggest that it should be moved east along the alignment shown in Figure x below. This would ensure the protection of four known sites of highly significant grassland, also shown in the Figure below. It would also allow for the protection of Deans Marsh and associated wetlands, a site not only of State Significance but also of high community interest.

**Figure 16- Western Wetland to be destroyed by current E6 corridor alignment**



OMR plowing through a site of significance  
(graphic courtesy of Giorgio De Nola/ CSONGrass 2009)

Protect this swamp soon to have OMR  
built through it  
(photo courtesy Colleen Miller taken July 09)

**Recommendation:** That the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road be realigned to avoid high conservation significance grasslands, wetlands and associated ecosystems and a detailed on-ground fauna and flora assessment be undertaken before any final alignment is decided.

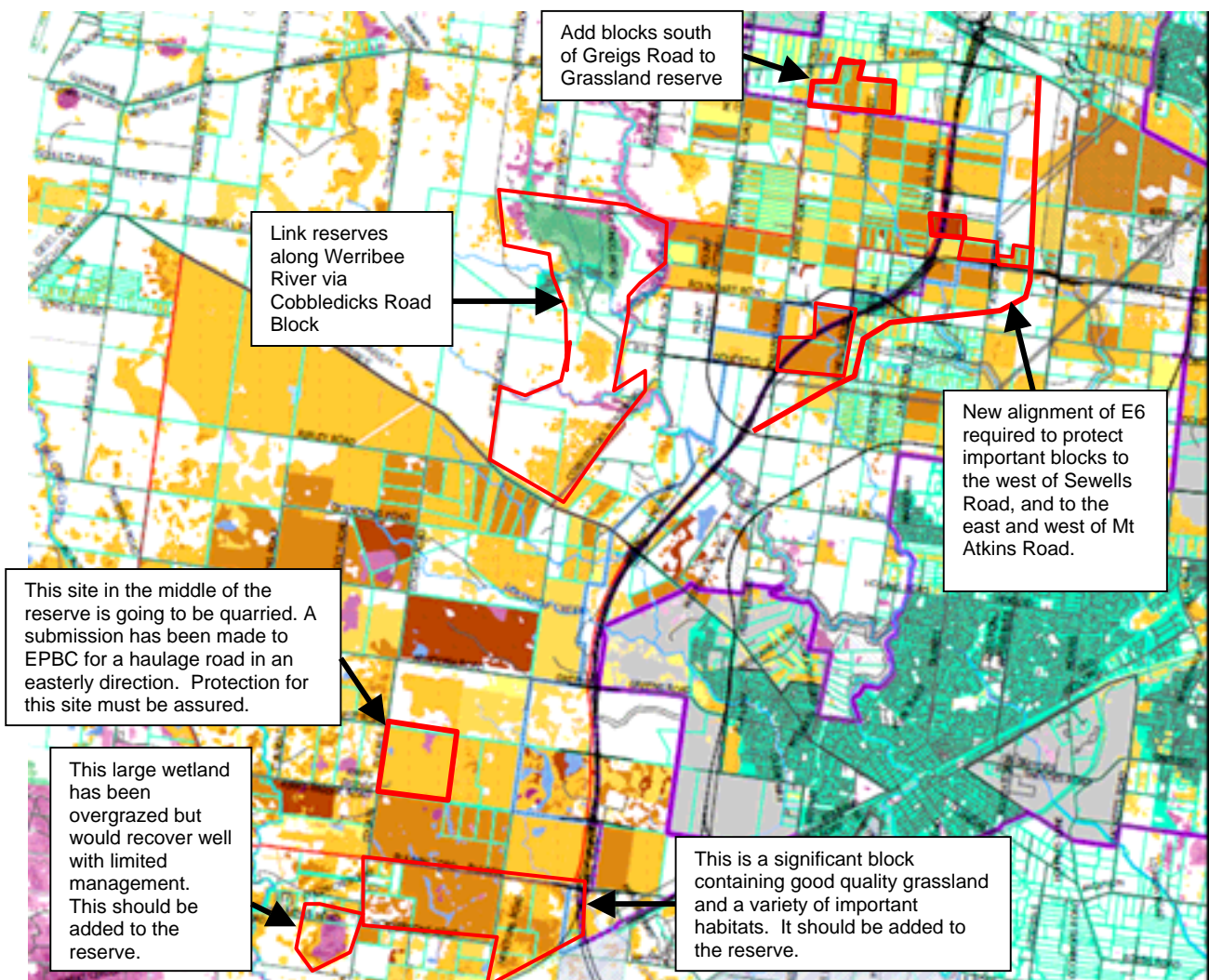
### 3.6.2 Western Grassland Reserves

The Figure below shows high conservation areas which should be added to the reserve system.

**Recommendation:** The proposed Western Grassland reserves should be reconfigured to include:

- Addition of blocks south of Greigs Road to Grassland reserve
- Link the two reserves along Werribee River via Cobbledicks Road Block
- New alignment of E6 to protect important blocks to the west of Sewells Road, and to the east and west of Mt Atkins Road.
- The large wetland to the east of the proposed current areas has been overgrazed but would recover well with limited management. This should be added to the reserve.
- A significant block containing good quality grassland and a variety of important habitats, between the current proposed reserve and Geelong Road, should be added to the reserve.

**Figure 17 - Recommended improvements to Western Grasslands Reserve design.**



#### 3.6.2.1 Ideas for Reserve management structures

- A series of management committees should be established. They should have paid membership and include members who have recognised skills in science and education as well as key community members.

- The Southern Reserve should be divided into four areas and the north into two, with six corresponding committees which would practice adaptive management. Reviews between committees would occur annually.
- Committees would be accountable to Parks Victoria and would work to a Business Plan and Management Plan with pre-determined outcomes and accountabilities.
- Management should have grassland conservation as the highest priority, and not be directed to 'managing an old farm'. These are some of the last areas of native grasslands and this attempt at their conservation should not be squandered.
- Research and learning should be actively encouraged in the reserves and incorporated into the objectives/accountabilities of the business/management plans.
- A dedicated (perhaps shared) specialist grassland management unit be established to manage and monitor grasslands. \