

Character Area 4.2
Open Hills & Valleys

4.2 OPEN HILLS & VALLEYS

This Character Area is concentrated the Casterton, Coleraine and Merino regions to the south of the tablelands. It features numerous rolling hills and valleys with a wide, open characteristic and big skies. Even prior to European settlement the soils of this area were more suited to sustaining open grasslands. The open spaciousness of the landscape largely results from this lack of remnant tree cover.

The hills in this area also have a more rounded characteristic than the plateaus to the north, with broad, expansive valleys between them. The land is most commonly used for sheep and cattle grazing, and numerous plantations cloak the hills in some places.

Key Features

- Wide, open landscape with a rolling topography
- Sparsely vegetated, contains mostly open pasture with few mature trees and cleared roadsides
- Where vegetation is prominent, it is concentrated along creek lines and in valleys and low points
- Heavily cleared flat to slightly undulating pastoral land
- Occasional shelterbelt planting
- Distant views to the Grampians Ranges to the east
- Occasional granitic outcrops

Settlements

This Character area contains the outskirts of Casterton and Coleraine, and the rural localities of:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| ▪ Wando Vale | ▪ Paschendale |
| ▪ Konongwootong | ▪ Henty |
| ▪ Wootong Vale | ▪ Merino |
| ▪ Tahara Bridge | ▪ Sandford |



Rolling cleared tableland with deep river valleys



Views to distant Grampians



Plantations are changing the character of the cleared landscape

Figure 1 Open Hills & Valleys Overview

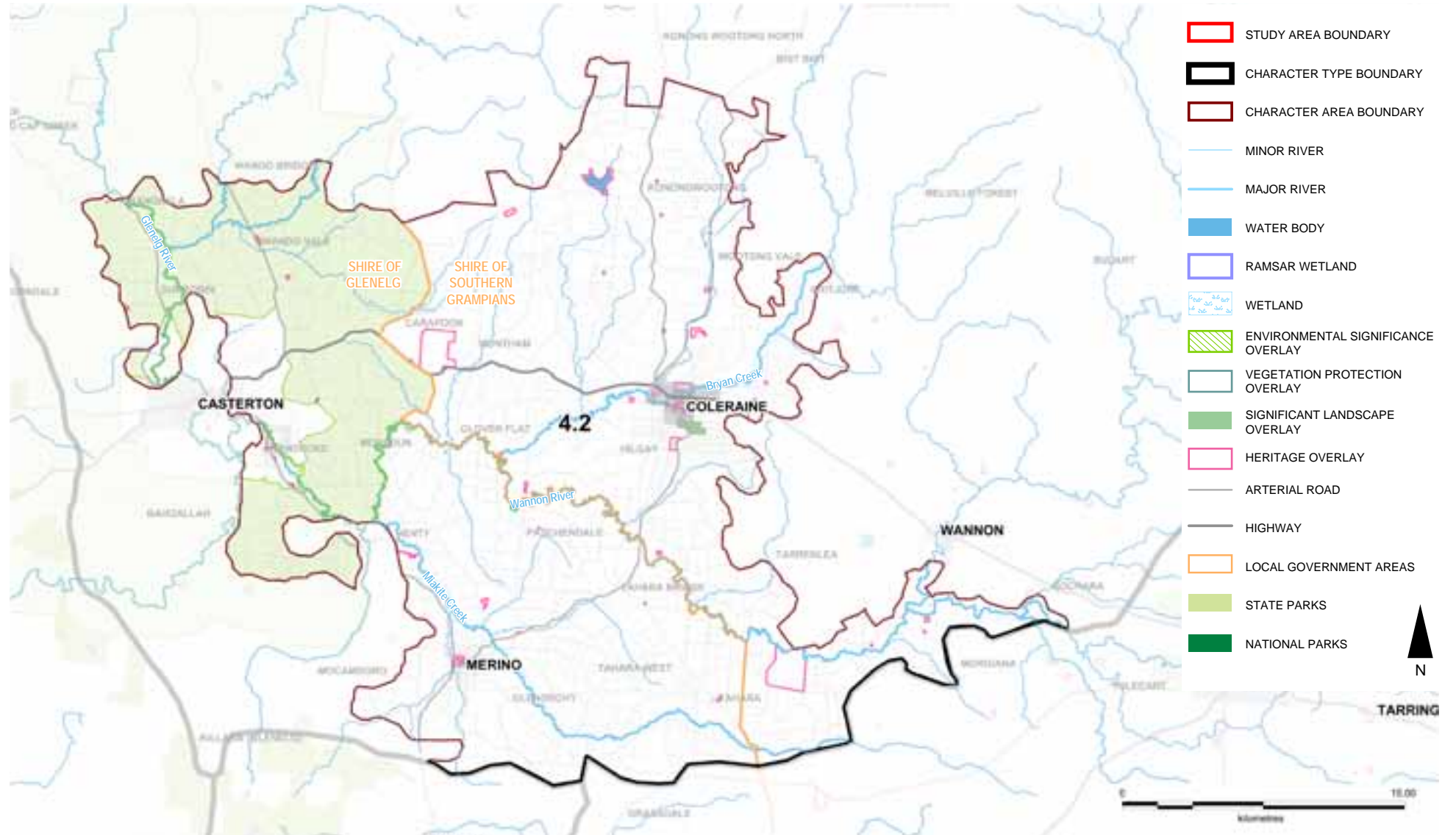


Figure 2 Open Hills & Valleys Landform

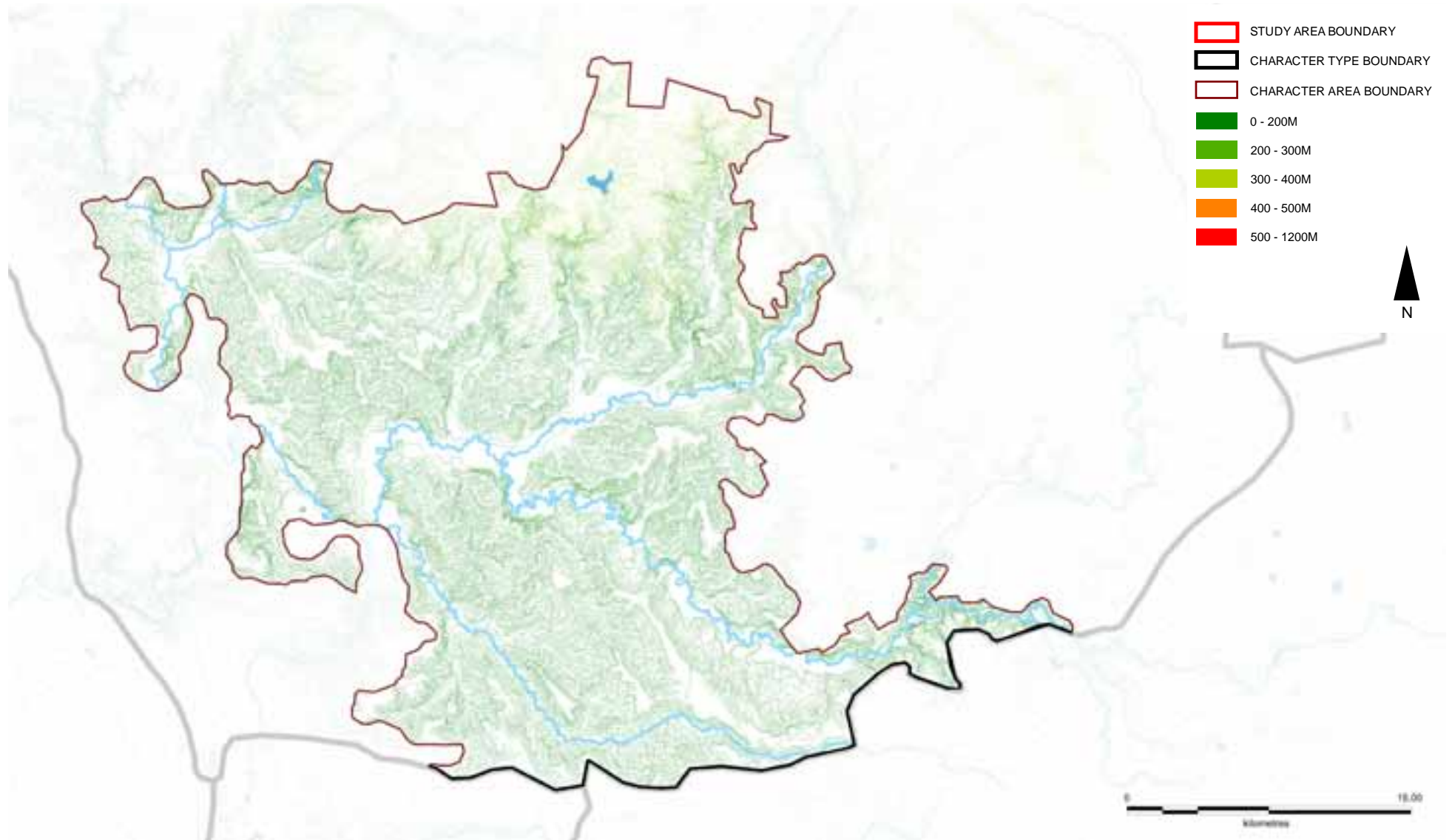
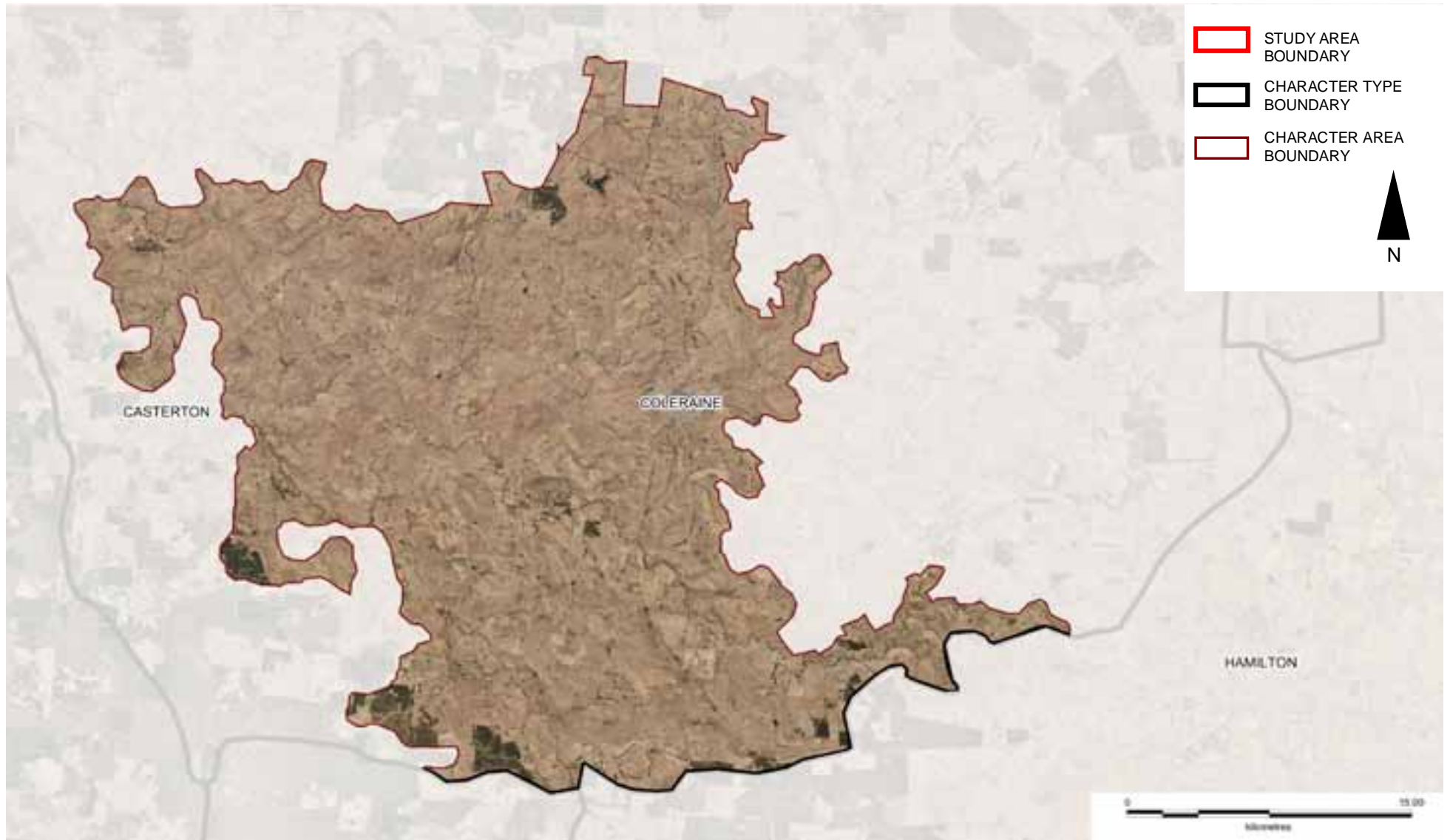


Figure 3 Open Hills & Valleys Aerial



PATTERN OF VIEWING

The heavily cleared nature of this landscape lends itself to long range views that often form continuous corridors. The roads that meander through the topography are mostly rural access roads, and while not heavily travelled they are highly scenic and provide an excellent viewing experience.

The Henty-Paschendale Road that links Casterton and Coleraine to the south is an excellent example of a viewing corridor of this nature, winding to the top of hills and dropping down into valleys.

A lookout point over the town of Casterton demonstrates how the town is nestled into the landscape, encircled by rolling hills and a bend of the Glenelg River.

Just north of Coleraine on the Coleraine-Balmoral Road there are a number of scenic viewing points, one with an interpretive board explaining land improvements as part of a Glenelg Catchment Project.



Broad views north of Coleraine, looking west over the rolling valleys



View from the Henty-Paschendale Road



View from the Henty-Paschendale Road



Lookout above Coleraine shows how the town sits nestled in a valley



Retreat Hummocks Road, Wando Vale



Wando Vale area



Roads meander through the landscape

LANDSCAPE VALUES

Heritage

- Wannon River Rail Bridge (proposed H0199), the longest surviving example of a Victorian Railways timber-beam bridge

Environmental/Scientific

- Coleraine landscape area, a highly visible steep escarpment, a dominant landscape feature of the town, protected by Southern Grampians SLO1
- Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo, found in the north west of the Character Area, endangered species on EPBC Act list, habitats protected by Glenelg ESO3
- Locally significant wetlands & waterways, protected by Glenelg ESO2
- Protected areas on the IUCN list
 - Peter Francis Points Arboretum, Category IA (Strict Nature Reserve), has an extensive collection of Australian native plants, part of Coleraine landscape area
 - Henty Creek Bushland Reserve, Category IV (Habitat/Species Management Area)



LANDSCAPE PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT

Planning Scheme Policies & Controls

This Character Area is subject to the Glenelg and Southern Grampians Planning Schemes.

Key Zones

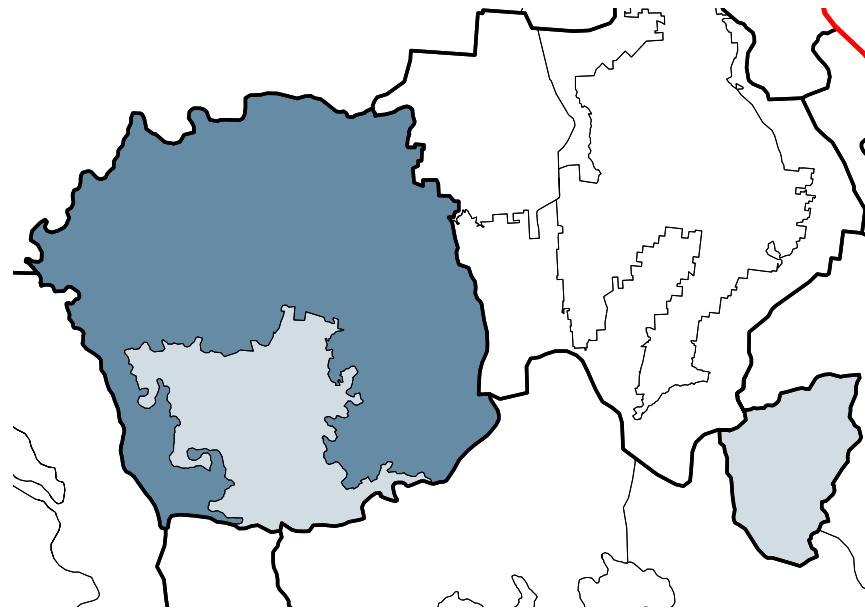
- FZ
- PCRZ

Key Overlays

- Southern Grampians SLO1: Coleraine Landscape Area
- Glenelg ESO2: Significant Wetlands & Waterways
- Glenelg ESO3: Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo Habitat Areas
- Glenelg HO131, HO162
- Southern Grampians HO89, HO90, HO91, HO120, HO121, HO123, HO128, HO129, HO134, HO141, HO117, HO360, HO361, HO362, HO363, HO364, HO486, HO512, HO317, HO518, HO529
- Glenelg WMO / BMO
- Glenelg LSIO
- Glenelg RFO

Proposed Overlays

- Glenelg HO129, HO192, HO197, HO199, HO213, HO229, HO230, HO232, HO241, HO248, HO258, HO259, HO262



Character Area 4.3

Vegetated Tablelands

4.3 VEGETATED TABLELANDS

The large amount of vegetation scattered throughout the landscape sets this Character Area apart from the Open Hills and Valleys (Character Area 4.2) to the south. It encompasses the interface between the surrounding plains, where the topography changes suddenly from a flat to undulating landscape, to the rolling character of the tablelands.

While many paddocks within this Character Area have been heavily cleared for grazing, it is the abundance of remnant and re-established vegetation, including canopy trees, shrubs and long grasses, that forms the dominating characteristic. Vegetation occurs in varying densities in locations such as roadsides and river valleys, as stands or isolated specimens scattered throughout paddocks, and in clumps surrounding buildings.

The mature vegetation assists in blending large plantations of Pine and Blue Gum into the landscape. Some plantations are designed to carefully follow the landscape rather than in configurations that contrast with the landform.

Key Features

- Rolling plateaus incised with deep river valleys
- Prominently vegetated characteristic with dense remnants along roadsides, creek corridors, river valleys and scattered throughout paddocks.
- The Dergholm State Park
- Paddocks cleared for grazing of sheep and cattle, with some cropping
- Exotic and native shelterbelts planted along paddock edges and property lines
- Large plantations of Pine and Blue Gum are common

Settlements

- Harrow
- Balmoral
- Dergholm
- Chetwynd
- Nareen
- Gatum
- Wannon



Roadside vegetation creates a dense canopy



Despite heavy clearing in some areas vegetation remains a dominant characteristic (near Nareen)



Mature vegetation assists with blending plantations (background hill, right hand side) into the landscape

Figure 1 Vegetated Tablelands Overview

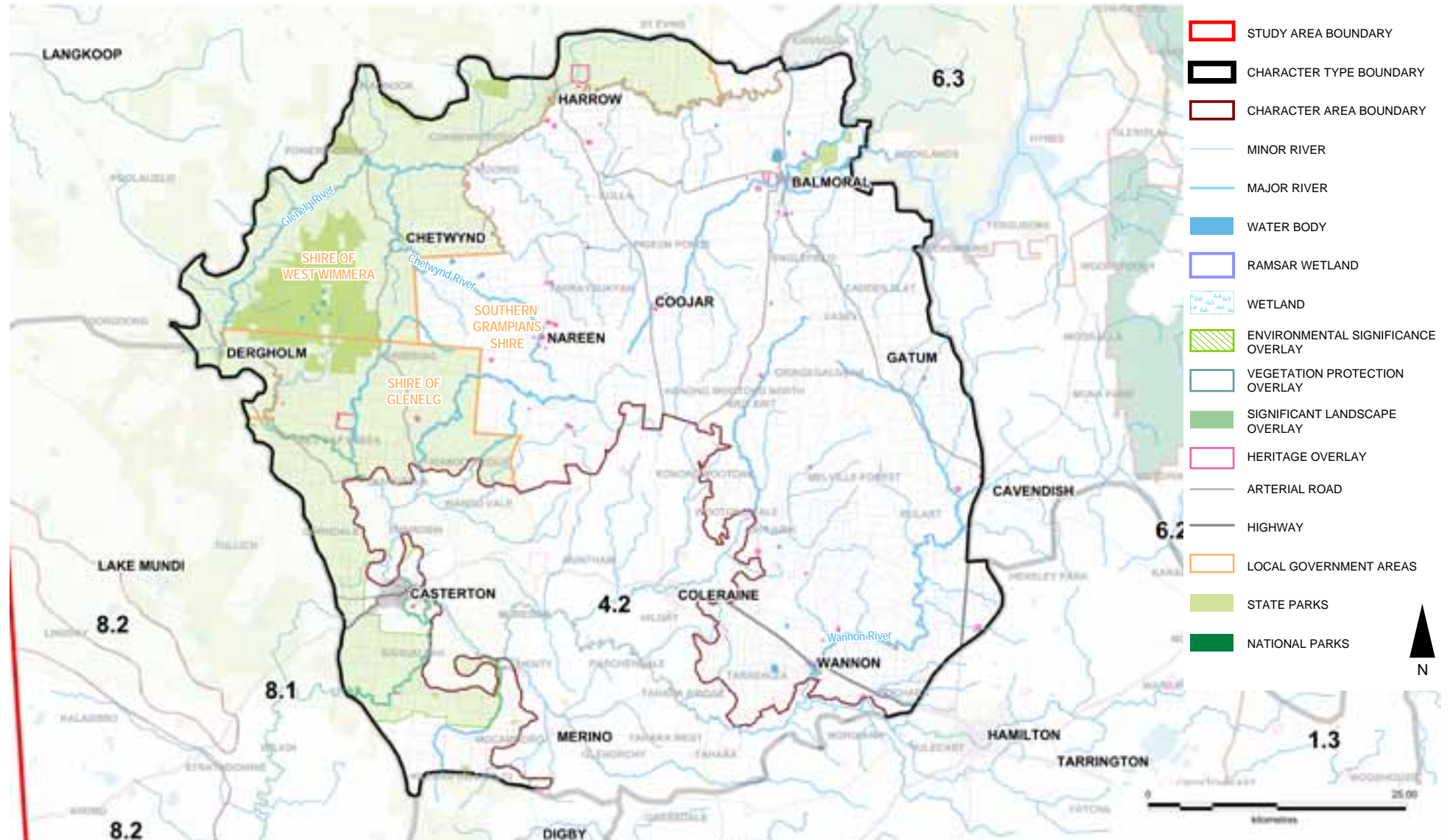


Figure 2 Vegetated Tablelands Landform

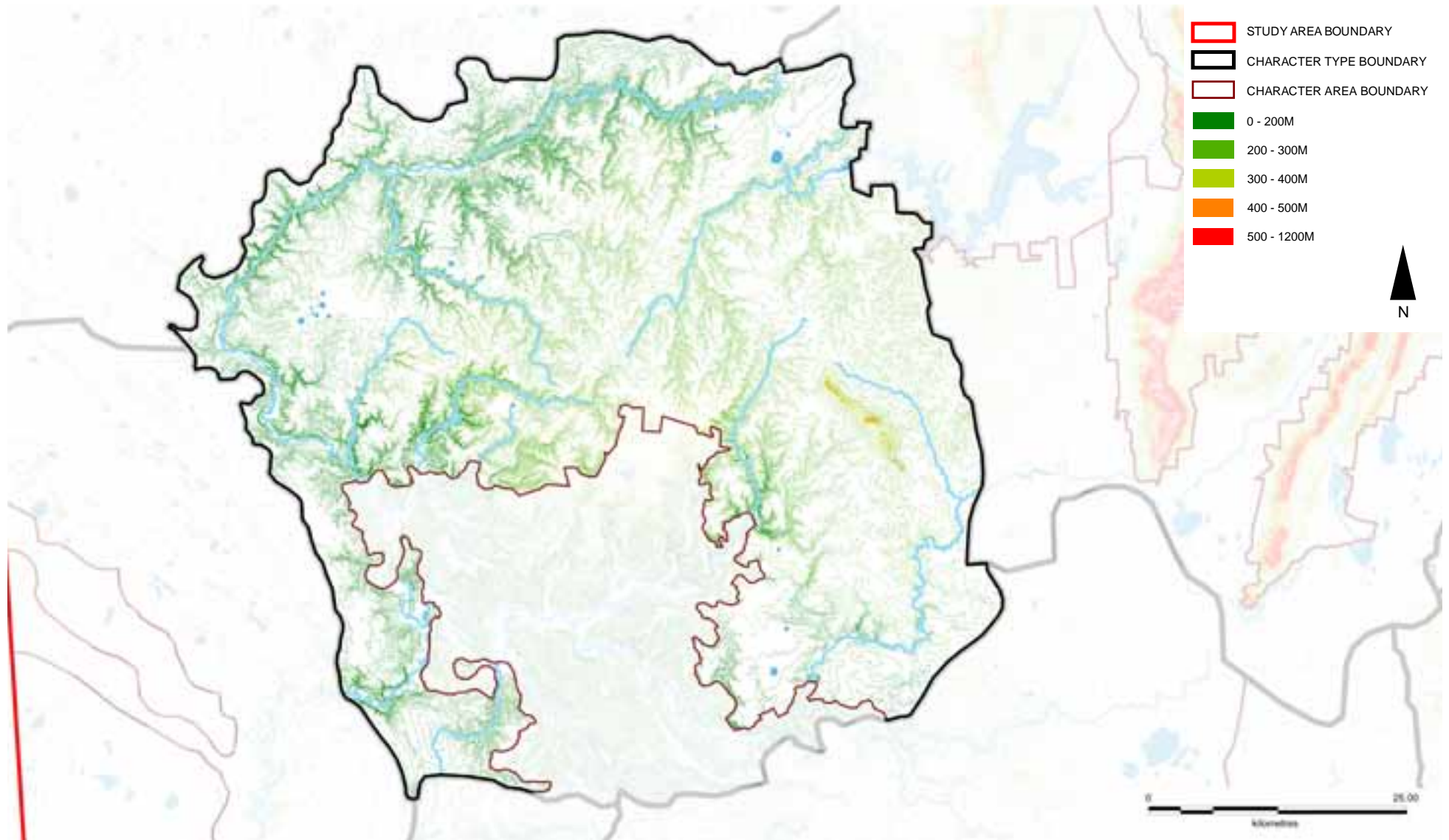


Figure 3 Vegetated Tablelands Aerial



PATTERN OF VIEWING

Roads twist and turn through the valleys and across the plateaus of this rolling topography. Where roadside vegetation is dense it encloses and filters views, only to open out again at high points or areas that have been more heavily cleared.

This alternation creates a highly varied viewing experience, with long range views across the tablelands traversing to more intimate enclosures of the river valleys. Roads that run in an easterly direction often feature long range views across the productive agricultural land with the silhouette of the Grampians Ranges on the horizon.



Roads that rise and fall with the landscape create a highly varied viewing experience



Views enclosed by vegetation in the Dergholm State Forest

Views framed and viewed through vegetation



Some paddocks are predominantly cleared allowing for more open views



Views across the rolling, semi-cleared landscape

LANDSCAPE VALUES

Historic

- Evidence of Aboriginal land use in the West Wimmera Shire including scarred trees, stone arrangements, mounds, rock shelters, stone engraving sites, middens, rock paintings, surface scatters, fish traps, burial places, stone house sites, quarries & axe grinding places
- Giant Rock, Wootong Vale - plug of altered trachyte of the Jurassic Coleraine Volcanic Group
- Giant Rock Homestead, overlooking a natural landscape feature of a giant rock, identified in Southern Grampians Heritage Study Stage 2
- Hill view off Steep Gully Road, protected by Southern Grampians HO384

Environmental/Scientific

- Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo, found in the north west of the Character Area, endangered species on EPBC Act list, habitats protected by West Wimmera ESO2
- Nigretta Falls Reserve & Wannon Falls Reserve
 - protected areas on the IUCN list, Category III (Natural Monument or Feature)
 - protected by Southern Grampians SLO3 & SLO4 which considers them to be state significant
 - one of earliest beauty spots & tourist destinations in Western District
 - socially significant as recreation reserve
 - long association with picturesque sensibility, dominant aesthetic in colonial Victoria
- Protected areas on the IUCN list
 - Gatum Gatum, Nigretta Falls & Wannon Flora Reserves, Category IA (Strict Nature Reserve)

- Dundas Range Scenic Reserve, Bourkes Bridge & Glenelg River & Wannon River Streamside Reserves, Category III (Natural Monument or Feature)
- Bahgallah, Balmoral, Cavendish, Connewirrecoo I32 & I33, Digby H30, Ganoo Ganoo, Gritjurk, Kadnook I29, I30 & I31, Kout Narin I37, I38 & I39, Mocamboro H29, Telangatuk & Wookurkook Bushland Reserves, Category IV (Habitat/Species Management Area)
- Black Swamp Wildlife Reserve, Balmoral, Category VI (Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources)
- Dergholm State Park
 - protected area on the IUCN list, Category II (National Parks)
 - protected by National Parks Act 1975, Schedule 2B
- Nationally significant Dergholm (Youpayang) Wetlands
- Locally significant wetlands & waterways, protected by West Wimmera ESO1

Social

- Nigretta Falls, small waterfall set in outstanding scenery, a tourist attraction
- Wannon Falls, spectacular 30m vertical precipice of hardened basalt lava which water cascades over into a deep plunge pool, a tourist attraction

LANDSCAPE PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT

Planning Scheme Policies & Controls

This Character Area is subject to the Glenelg, Horsham, Southern Grampians and West Wimmera Planning Schemes.

Key Zones

- FZ
- PCRZ
- RLZ at Chetwynd, Dergholm

Key Overlays

- Southern Grampians SLO3: Nigretta Falls Reserve
- Southern Grampians SLO4: Wannon Falls Reserve
- Glenelg ESO2: Significant Wetlands & Waterways
- Glenelg ESO3: Red-tailed Black Cockatoo Habitat Areas
- West Wimmera ESO1: Significant Wetlands & Waterways
- West Wimmera ESO2: Red-tailed Black Cockatoo Habitat Areas
- HO including
 - Many Homesteads
 - Few cemeteries
 - Southern Grampians HO354 Major Mitchell Monument
 - Southern Grampians HO384 Hill View of Steep Gully Road
 - Glenelg HO130: Bilston's Tree
 - Warrock Station HO132 (also on the Victorian Heritage Register)
- WMO/ BMO

- Horsham, Southern Grampians & West Wimmera LSIO
- Glenelg RFO

Proposed Overlays

- Glenelg HO214, HO235, HO236, HO243, HO255, HO256

