

5.1 MOUNT ARAPILES

Significant Landscape

Character Type 5 The Wimmera Plains

Character Areas 5.4 Mount Arapiles

Mount Arapiles is a prominent sandstone outcrop that rises 320 metres out of the surrounding agricultural plain. It is an impressive feature that is clearly visible from long distances away.

Mount Arapiles forms part of the Mount Arapiles - Tooan State Park.

Notable views within this landscape include:

- Numerous locations from the outcrop of Mt Arapiles and Mitre Rock

Major viewing corridors:

- Wimmera Highway
- Natimuk - Frances Road
- Tooan Mitre Road
- Mount Arapiles Summit Road

Overall Significance Rating: State

A detailed significance assessment is provided over the following pages.

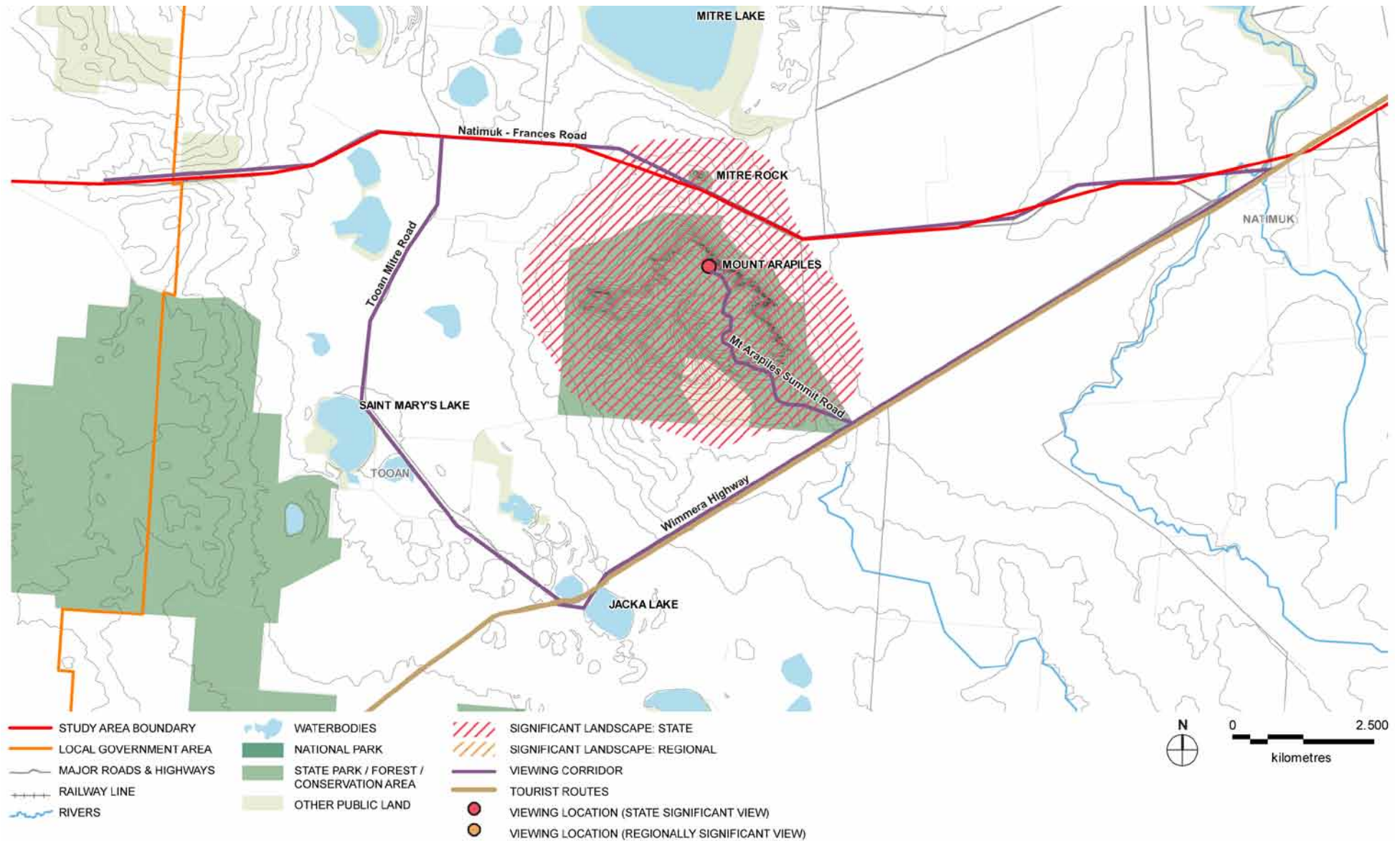


Mount Arapiles silhouette rises from the flat plain



Exposed sandstone faces

Landscape Significance Map



Aesthetic Values

AESTHETIC VALUES				
	Source	Description	Aesthetic Values Rating Considerations (i.e. exemplary, iconic, scarce)	Level of Significance
LANDSCAPE FEATURES	Survey	<p>Mount Arapiles is situated to the west of Horsham within the flat agricultural plains of the Wimmera.</p> <p>The jagged, craggy landform rises dramatically from the surrounding plain to a height of around 320m and is visible for many miles, its distinctive silhouette a striking feature on the horizon.</p>	The distinctive rock formations steeply rising from the surrounding plain make this an iconic landscape feature in the area.	Exceptional (State)
EDGES OR CONTRASTS	Survey	<p>The rock formation contrasts dramatically with the surrounding pastoral landscape due to the distinctive variation between landscape features. The base of Mount Arapiles is tree covered, dark green and textural, gradually blending upwards to the craggy outcrops of red sandstone.</p> <p>The rocks of Arapiles form a visual display of texture, colour and shadow, with pipes, pinnacles and buttresses of rock combining to form an overall craggy and gnarled appearance. Partially cloaked in trees, the rock formation soaks in sunlight, occasionally glowing orange on exposed faces.</p>	Distinctive contrasts between exposed rock faces, dark green textural forests and open grassland are exemplary.	Exceptional (State)
COMPOSITION	Survey	<p>Views are well balanced with an even, low and mostly featureless foreground, a middle-ground of dark green textured forest from which the iconic visual feature of Mount Arapiles rises.</p> <p>During springtime the rock and surrounding plain are covered in wildflowers, adding an array of colour to the viewed landscape. The often saline lakes and wetlands of the Wimmera form the foreground to many views of Mount Arapiles, creating another layer of interest within the composition.</p>	Picture postcard balanced views of Mt Arapiles are available from numerous locations. The formation is an iconic image of Western Victoria.	Exceptional (State)
OVERALL AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE RATING				State

Other Cultural Landscape Values

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE	
Source	Description
Desktop Research	Aboriginal artefact scatters, earth mounds and scarred trees occur throughout the area. There is also evidence of rock art.
National Trust	The formation was named after Arapiles Hills near Salamanca, Spain by Major Thomas Mitchell who climbed to the summit on 23 July 1836. It is designated to be of State level historic significance.
Desktop Research	Mount Arapiles area became known for rock climbing after a father and son team visited the area in 1963 after seeing the lesser Mitre Rock in a magazine, only to find the much greater Arapiles towering beside it.
HISTORIC / CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE RATING	State

ENVIRONMENTAL / SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE	
Source	Description
National Trust	The citation for Mount Arapiles includes designation of State level significance for its geological form and diversity of flora and fauna.
Horsham Planning Scheme	The Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park is protected by the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO2), which includes Mount Arapiles and the nearby Mitre Rock as distinctive landscape features visible across wide areas of the municipality. It also notes the geological significance of the Mount.
Horsham Planning Scheme	To the west of Mount Arapiles are the Natimuk Douglas wetlands, protected under the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2) and nominated as a wetland of international significance. These consist of more than 30 saline and freshwater lakes which are seasonally visited by substantial numbers of migratory water birds.
ENVIRONMENTAL / SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE RATING	State

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE	
Source	Description
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria	Mount Arapiles (Djurite) is the traditional country of the Djurite Balug clan of the Jardwadjali people to whom it holds social, cultural and spiritual significance. The waterbodies, distinctive natural features and places of ecological value within this area are likely to have high Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity.
Horsham Planning Scheme, Desktop Research	<p>The Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park has significant recreational value as a place for camping, bushwalking and birdwatching, and offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>The 'Mount' is a renowned rock-climbing venue and attracts over 70,000 rock climbers each year. This includes visitors from around Australia and overseas.</p> <p>The attraction of the rock climbing community to the area has assisted in the revival of the nearby town of Natimuk, during a time when many other towns of a similar profile have been experiencing decline.</p>
SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE RATING	State

3.2 NATIMUK - DOUGLAS WETLAND SYSTEM

Significant Landscape

Character Type 5 The Wimmera Plains

Character Area 5.1 Lakes & Wetlands

While there are thousands of lakes and wetlands of varying types and sizes in the Wimmera region, the saline nature of the Natimuk - Douglas Wetland System (or Chain of Ponds) has produced a series of lakes and wetlands that have unique visual and environmental characteristics. Being fed by saline groundwater, they often contain water throughout the year, when many freshwater and temporal wetlands evaporate.

Viewing locations within this landscape include:

- Mount Arapiles lookouts

Major viewing corridors:

- Tooan Mitre Road
- Wimmera Highway
- Clear Lake Sherewoods Dam Road
- Harrow Clear Lake Road
- Wombelano Road
- Mitre Grass Flat Road
- Wyn Wyn Road

Overall Significance Rating: Regional

A detailed significance assessment is provided over the following pages.



Red soils of Saint Mary Lake

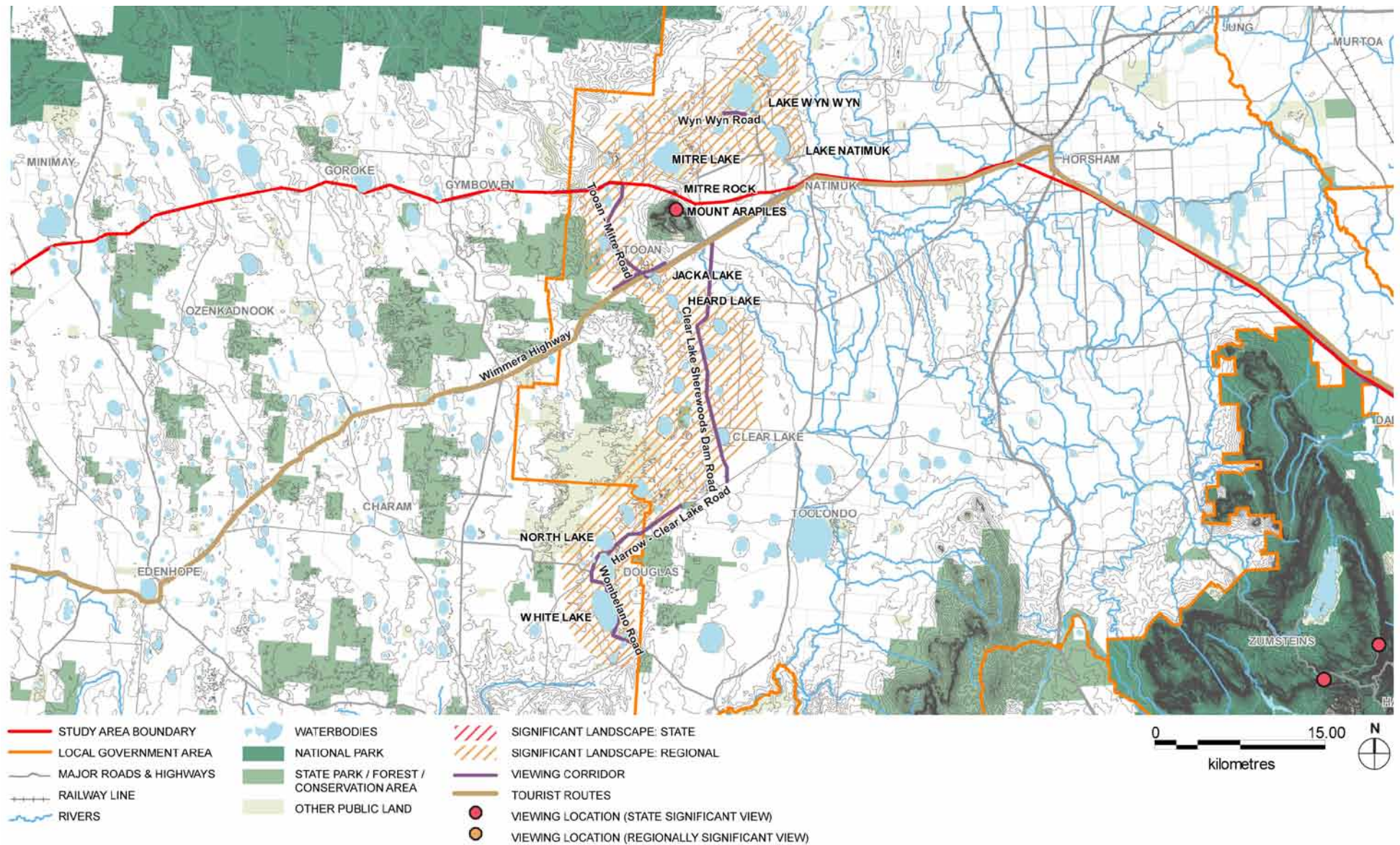


Wetlands provide the setting for other regional landscape features such as Mount Arapiles



Saline pans edged with vegetation stand out from the pastoral landscape.

Landscape Significance Map



Aesthetic Values

AESTHETIC VALUES				
	Source	Description	Aesthetic Values (visual) Rating Considerations (i.e. exemplary, iconic, scarce)	Level of Significance
LANDSCAPE FEATURES	Survey	A natural depression has created a distinctive and plentiful series of lakes and wetlands (or chain of ponds), that weaves across the landscape from Natimuk in the north to south of Douglas. These are predominantly fed from groundwater, and contain a mix of saline and fresh water systems. This has resulted in a complex and rare ecological system which is reflected in the visual variety they display. They vary greatly in size - some are minor depressions that subtly texture the landscape, while others form quite significant bodies of water.	The concentration of saline lakes and wetlands in the Natimuk-Douglas Depression is an iconic feature of the Wimmera Region.	High (Regional)
EDGES OR CONTRASTS	Survey	Due to high salt content of many of the lakes, light is reflected off the sheer white surfaces and edges of the lakes which makes them stand out visually from the golden, pastoral paddocks. The edges are often exaggerated by concentrations of vegetation, or sandy shorelines. Where water is abundant, light reflects from the surfaces, and a variety of aquatic plant life is present that contrasts with the surroundings fields of pasture or crops.	The lakes are exemplary for the variety of viewing experiences they generate, and for the way they provide contrast and visual interest in the otherwise predominantly pastoral landscape of the region.	High (Regional)
COMPOSITION	Survey	The lakes and wetlands predominantly sit in the foreground or middle ground of views, and provide the setting for more dominant landscape features such as Mount Arapiles. Depending on the composition of the lake, they produce a variety of textures and colours. This includes dry, white crusty surfaces, reflective and bold bodies of water, and stunning red soils such as those found at Saint Mary Lake. In addition, the lakes are a distinctive feature of the view available from the peaks and summits of Mount Arapiles.	While there are many inland lake and wetland systems in Victoria, particularly in the south-west region, the high variety of colours and textures are a unique feature of the lakes and wetlands of the Natimuk-Douglas Depression. This makes them quite scarce and a stand out feature when placed in a broader context.	High (Regional)
OVERALL AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE RATING				Regional

Other Cultural Landscape Values

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE	
Description	
Desktop Research	Aboriginal artefact scatters, earth mounds and scarred trees occur throughout the area.
SIGNIFICANCE RATING	Regional

ENVIRONMENTAL / SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE	
Source	Description
Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia	A number of the lakes and swamps, including Lake Wyn Wyn, Mitre Lake, White Lake and Bitter Swamp, are listed as nationally significant wetlands.
BirdLife Australia	The wetlands support international bird populations and are a destination for migratory bird species (e.g. Banded Stilts from South East Asia).
Horsham Planning Scheme	The Natimuk Douglas Wetlands are protected under the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2) which aims to preserve the area as a haven for flora and fauna, particularly migratory birds, and to limit the impacts of farming.
SIGNIFICANCE RATING	State (or higher)

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE	
Source	Description
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria	The area is the traditional country of the Jardwadjali people to whom it holds social, cultural and spiritual significance. The waterbodies, distinctive natural features and places of ecological value within this area are likely to have high Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity.
Desktop Research	Upon the arrival of long-distance migratory birds, the wetlands attract large numbers of visitors, including naturalists and photographers.
Desktop Research	The wetlands are strongly connected to the identity of the region. The wetland system is a key element of views from Mount Arapiles, where the sheer white lake beds dot the landscape and create a memorable experience for rock climbers and other visitors.
SIGNIFICANCE RATING	State

OTHER SIGNIFICANCE	
Source	Description
Desktop Research	The visitation attracted by the wetlands has significant economic benefit for the local area.
SIGNIFICANCE RATING	Local