

Character Area 5.2

## Cleared Wimmera Catchment

## 5.2 CLEARED WIMMERA CATCHMENT

The Wimmera Basin is a water catchment region that covers around 15% of Victoria. A series of rivers and creeks, and their tributaries flow north from catchments within the Pyrenees and Grampians Ranges to terminate at Lake Hindmarsh and Lake Albacutya to the north of the Study Area.

This Character Area lies between the surrounds of the Grampians and Black Ranges and the northern edge of the Study Area. Its broadest feature is flat to slightly undulating land, which is crossed by a network of creeks and rivers that flow towards the Wimmera Catchment Basin. It is this drainage system that eventually fills the terminal lakes to the north.

The surrounding land has been heavily cleared of native vegetation and predominantly used for broad acre cropping with some grazing. This is a vast landscape with big skies and wide open views. Vegetation remains dense along waterways, in patches within roadside reserves and along fence lines, and very occasionally scattered throughout paddocks.

### Key Features

Waterways and tributaries of the Wimmera Catchment Basin, including Mackenzie River, Burnt Creek and Norton Creek that feed into the Wimmera River

Heavily cleared flat to slightly undulating pastoral land

Proximity to the backdrop of the Grampians and Black Ranges



*Roadsides and paddocks are predominantly heavily cleared of native vegetation*



*Very few mature paddock trees remain*

### Settlements

This Character area contains the southern outskirts of Hamilton and the rural localities of:

- Wonwandah
- Drung
- Bungalally
- Laharum

Figure 1    Cleared Wimmera Catchment Overview



Figure 2 Cleared Wimmera Catchment Landform

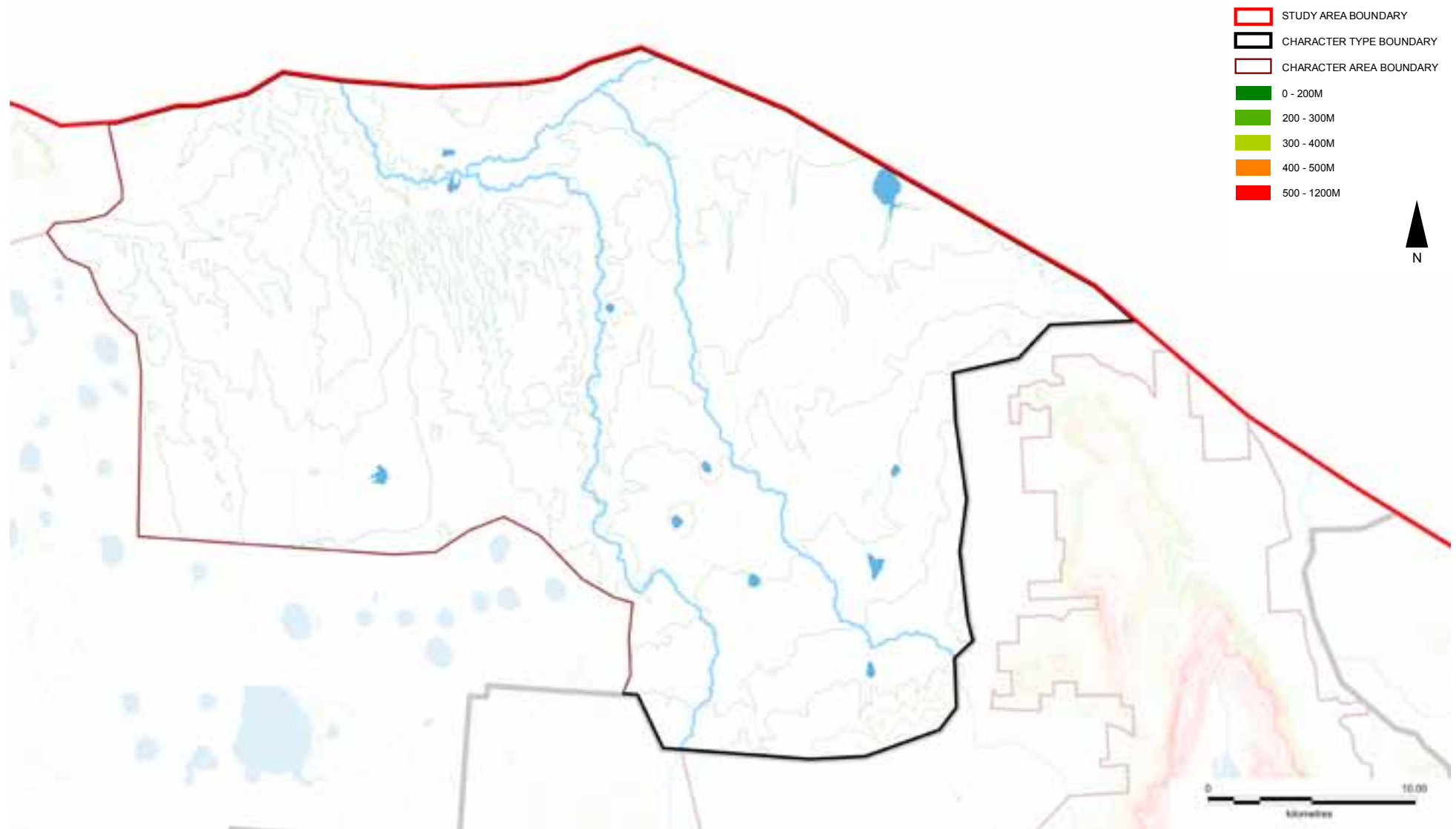




Figure 3 Cleared Wimmera Catchment Aerial



## PATTERN OF VIEWING

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Views across the flat plains are broad, with very little vegetation to block out the big skies and expanses of cropping land. The Grampians and Black Ranges often feature on the horizon.

This landscape can be viewed from high points within the Grampians Ranges where the patched network of fields, creek lines and forest reserves may be appreciated.



*Flat agricultural land with a distant backdrop of the Grampians Ranges*

# LANDSCAPE VALUES

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## Historic

- Scar trees & camp sites are found along the Wimmera River & its tributaries
- Regionally significant very rare Swamp Oaks, south west of Natimuk, identified on the National Trust Register
- Locally significant Mott's Dunnys Hut, Natimuk/ Goroke Road, Natimuk, identified on the National Trust Register
- Locally significant 1858 two storey residence 'Walmer', identified on the National Trust Register

## Environmental/Scientific

- Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park, protected by Horsham SLO2, a small part of which is in this Character Area, it protects views to & from the park
- Natimuk Douglas Wetlands, protected by Horsham ESO2, nominated as a wetland of international significance, consists of more than 30 saline & freshwater lakes which are seasonally visited by substantial numbers of migratory water birds
- Sites of biodiversity significance, protected by Ararat ESO3
- Protected areas on the IUCN list
  - John Smith Memorial Flora Reserve, Category IA (Strict Nature Reserve)
  - Bungalally I48, I49, I50 & I52, Lah-arum & Tyer Bushland Reserves, Category IV (Habitat/Species Management Area)
  - Darragan Swamp, Donald (Dollin) Swamp & Kingcourt Swamp Wildlife Reserve (Hunting), Category VI (Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources)

## Social

- Broadacre cropping & grazing of stock, inextricably linked to the economy of the region & the state
- Local food production
- Wimmera Mallee Water channel & reservoirs & Wimmera System Proclaimed Catchment which supply domestic & stock water to the region, protected by Horsham ESO4 & ESO5

# LANDSCAPE PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT

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## Planning Scheme Policies & Controls

Only the Horsham Planning Scheme applies to this Character Area.

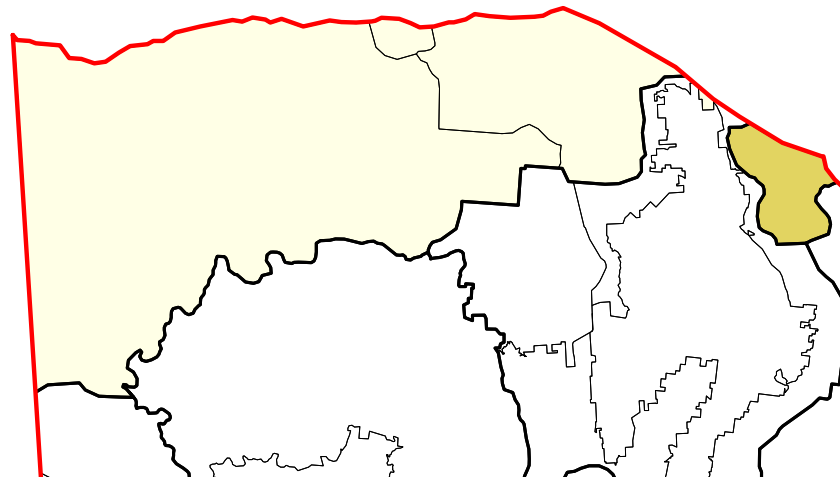
### Key Zones

- FZ
- PCRZ
- RLZ at Vectis South, Noradjuha, Horsham, Laharum

### Key Overlays

- SLO2: Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park
- ESO2: Natimuk Douglas Wetlands
- ESO3: Watercourse Protection
- ESO4: Water Catchment Protection
- ESO5: Channel & Reservoir Protection
- DPO2: Rural Living Development Plan
- WMO / BMO
- LSIO
- DDO1: Rifle Butts Danger Area





Character Area 5.3

## Lake Lonsdale & Surrounds

## 5.3 LAKE LONSDALE & SURROUNDS

This region is the eastern-most section of the Wimmera Plain, and is more influenced by the presence of the Grampian Ranges than other Character Areas within this Type. It lies between the northern end of the Grampians Ranges and Stawell, and features agricultural land with a flat to slightly undulating topography, and an ever-present backdrop of the jagged Grampians Ranges on the horizon. There are occasional topographic rises. Lake Lonsdale and the smaller Lake Fyans are scenic man-made waterbodies surrounded by areas of conservation reserve and productive agricultural land.

### Key Features

- Man-made lakes Lonsdale and Fyans are scenic attractions
- Undulating agricultural land with a backdrop of the Grampians Ranges
- Remnant trees (predominantly River Red Gums) scattered throughout paddocks
- Dense vegetation in roadside reserves and along paddock and creek lines.
- Numerous areas of state forest and nature conservation reserves

### Settlements

There are no major settlements within this Character Area, though it contains a number of rural localities including:

- Deep Lead
- Ledcourt
- Illawarra
- Mokepilly



*Remnant vegetation scattered throughout paddocks and along creek lines*



*Flat to undulating agricultural landscape with occasional topographic rises*



*Rounded hills of the Black Range south of Stawell*

Figure 1 Lake Lonsdale & Surrounds Overview



**Figure 2 Lake Lonsdale & Surrounds Landform**

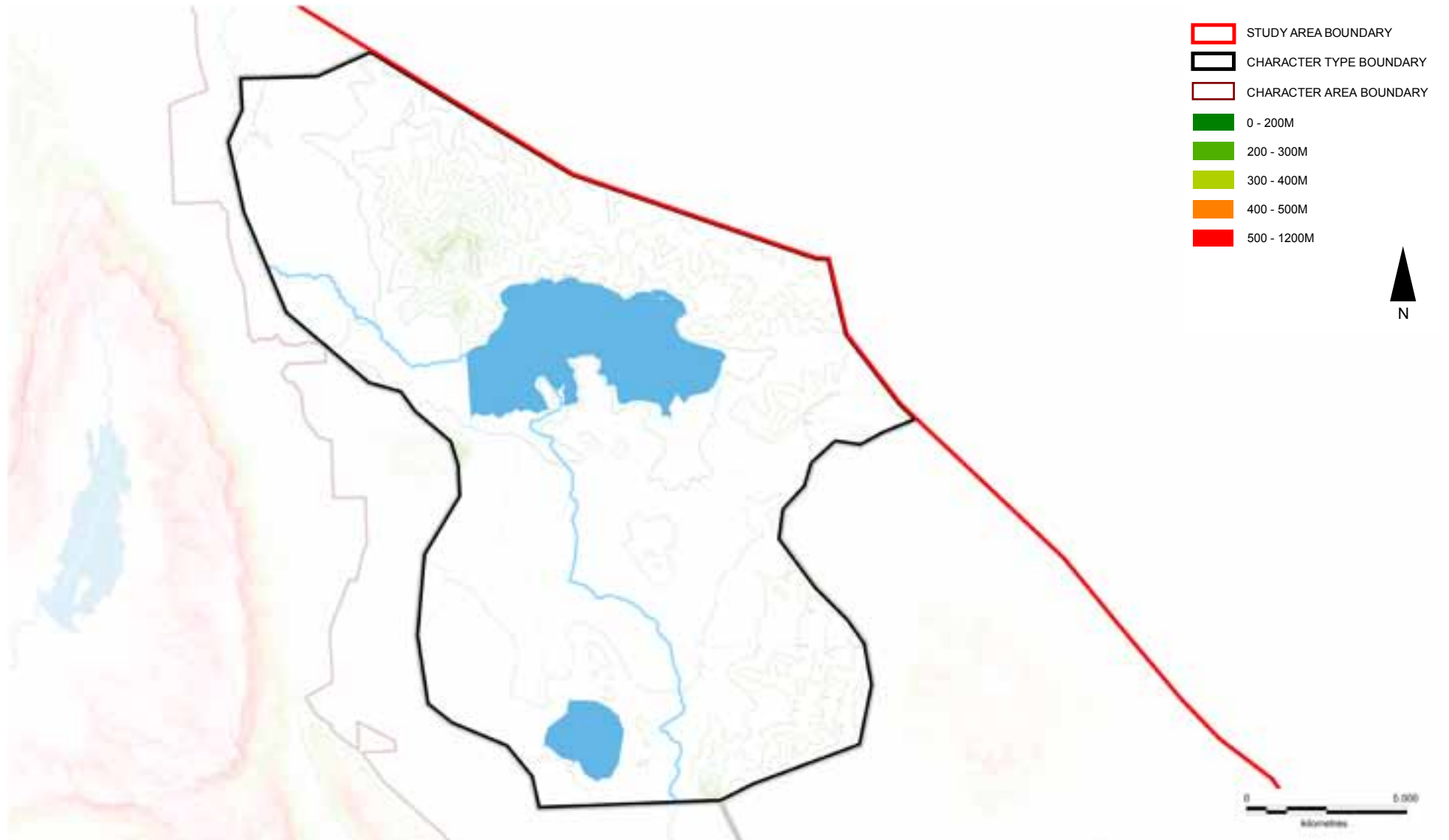
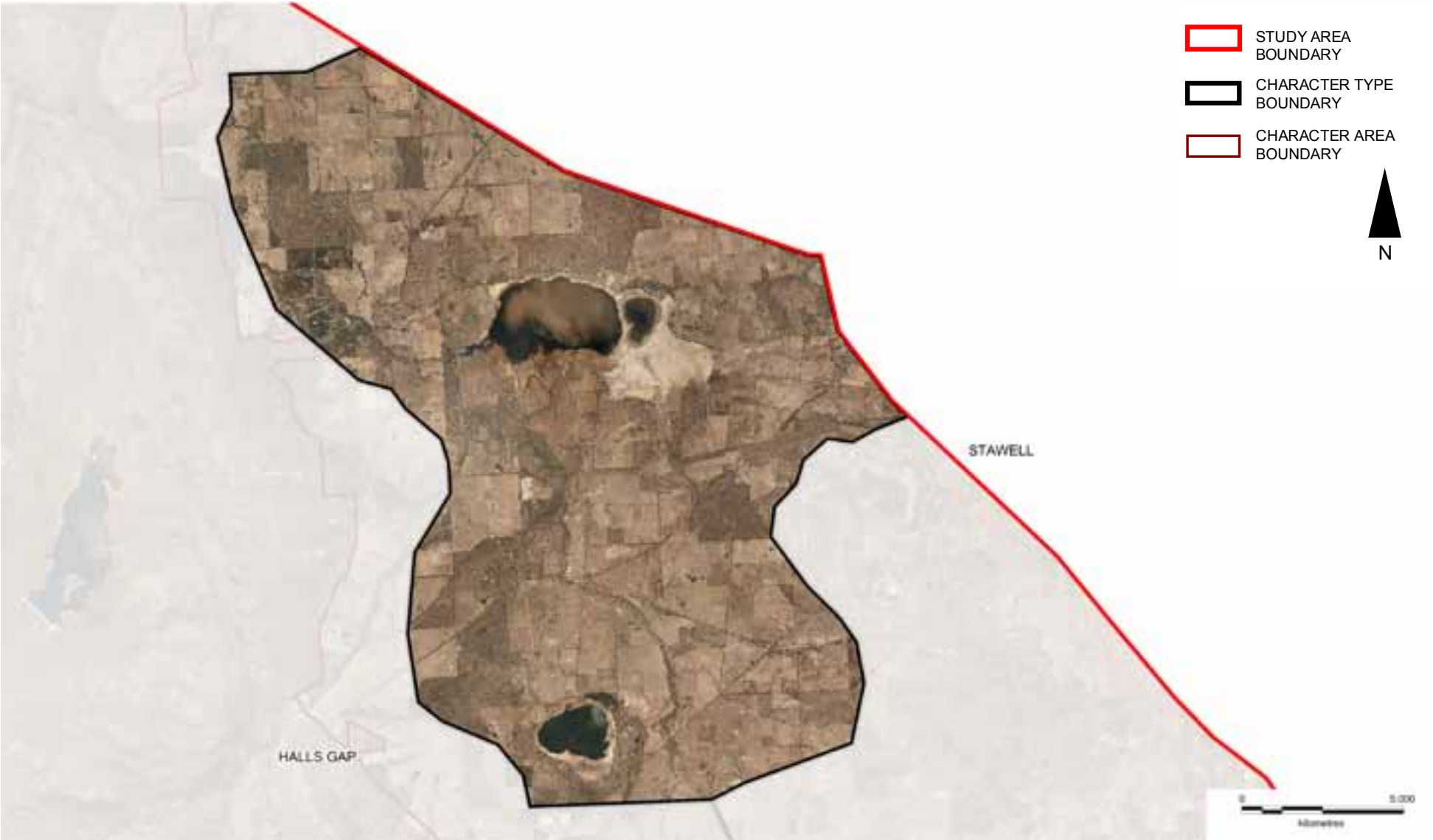


Figure 3 Lake Lonsdale & Surrounds Aerial





## PATTERN OF VIEWING

The northern side of Lake Lonsdale where camping and recreational activities are focussed has stunning views to the Grampians Ranges across the water. In the evening it is a beautiful spot to observe the sun setting behind the ranges.

The Boroka Lookout in the Grampians Ranges is easily accessible off the Northern Grampians Road. Panoramic views over this Character Area are available from here.

Lake Fyans also offers panoramic views of the ranges across the water.

Grampians Road that connects Stawell and Halls Gap is a highly travelled tourist route and a major viewing corridor.



*View to the Grampians Ranges (shrouded in cloud) across Lake Lonsdale*



*Grampians Ranges form an ever-present backdrop*



*View over this Character Area from the Boroka Lookout in the Grampians Ranges. Lake Lonsdale can be seen on the left hand side of the image, and Lake Fyans in the middle*



# LANDSCAPE VALUES

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## Historic

- Lake Lonsdale
  - originally a swamp and a meeting place for local Aboriginal clans & tribes
  - key part of the Wimmera-Mallee Domestic and Stock Supply System, which facilitated the expansion of agricultural activity throughout the Wimmera region by providing a consistent water supply through open channels though no longer used since the Wimmera-Mallee pipeline became operational
  - completed after a period of drought in 1903
- Lake Fyans, developed in 1913

## Environmental/Scientific

- Attractive farmland, protected by Northern Grampians SLO1, containing mature River Red Gums & other native trees surrounding the Grampians, a nationally significant landscape
- Lake Lonsdale
  - naturally fed by Mount William Creek
  - shallow and prone to high levels of evaporation in summer and during periods of drought.
  - environs are a haven for wildlife with koalas, emus, kangaroos and wallabies and a diverse range of bird species all found in the area
- Wildflower displays

## Social

- Recreation & tourist activities including camping, swimming, fishing & boating on the man-made lakes
- Wimmera-Mallee pipeline now in operation, there is ongoing debate over whether to release water to the catchment or retain it for local recreational values
- Lake Fyans & Lake Lonsdale, protected by Northern Grampians ESO2
  - major water storages within Wimmera Mallee Water Supply System
  - supply of irrigation & domestic water throughout the Wimmera region

# LANDSCAPE PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT

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## Planning Scheme Policies & Controls

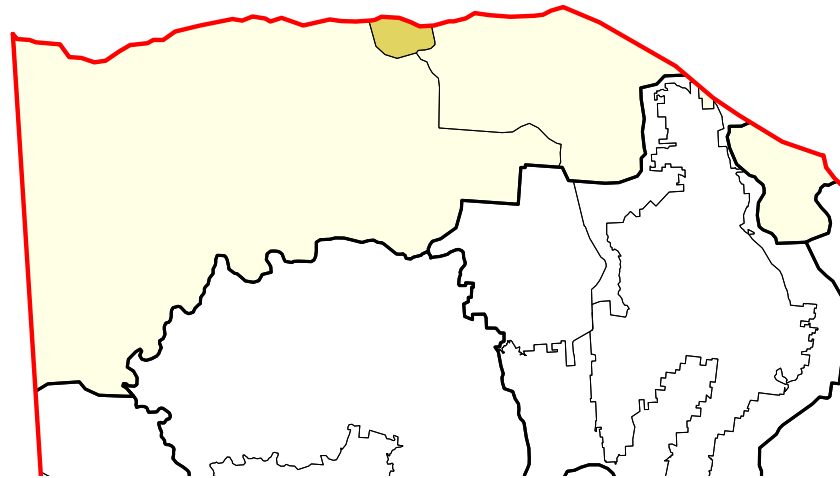
Only the Northern Grampians Planning Scheme applies to this Character Area.

## Key Zones

- FZ
- PCRZ
- RLZ at Deep Lead / Illawarra, Halls Gap

## Key Overlays

- SLO1: Grampians Environs
- ESO2: Significant Lake Environs
- HO20: Ledcourt Homestead
- HO32: Balance Ledcourt Homestead
- WMO / BMO



Character Area 5.4  
**Mount Arapiles**

## 5.4 MOUNT ARAPILES

Mount Arapiles is a prominent sandstone outcrop that rises 140 metres out of the surrounding agricultural plain. It is situated within the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park which is segmented by the Natimuk-Douglas Depression. The jagged formation originates from a similar land process to the Grampians Ranges, where weathering away of sediments has resulted in rocky outcrops that have since become a haven for flora and fauna habitat. It is a world class destination for rock climbing.

### Key Features

- Craggy, sandstone mountain rising from surrounding flat plains
- Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park
- Dense, remnant vegetation clustered around the base of the formation
- Provides a persistent backdrop to the surrounding area

### Settlements

- Natimuk



*The craggy rock face of Mount Arapiles has made it a world-class rock climbing destination*



*Craggy rock formation rising from the flat plains*



*Agricultural activity in the foreground of Mount Arapiles*

Figure 1 Mount Arapiles Overview



**Figure 2 Mount Arapiles Landform**





Figure 3 Mount Arapiles Aerial



## PATTERN OF VIEWING

Rock climbers go to great lengths to enjoy the views available from high peaks of Mount Arapiles over the surrounding landscape. The lakes and wetlands of the Wimmera Plain are key elements of this view. The saline Mitre Lake is commonly captured in photographs from the climbs.

The outcrop itself rises dramatically from the surrounding plain and provides a consistent backdrop to view from surrounding roads. It is situated in a wedge between the Wimmera Highway and Natimuk-Francis Road, and is highly visible from both of these. Tooan-Mitre Road circles the formation along the western side, and while this road is less travelled there are many scenic opportunities to view Mount Arapiles from across a number of lakes and wetlands.



*Mount Arapiles viewed from Natimuk-Francis Road*



*Views from Mount Arapiles: flat agricultural plain (left) and Mitre Lake and other saline depressions create points of interest in the landscape (right)*



*Lake on Nhill-Harrow Road with backdrop of Mount Arapiles*

# LANDSCAPE VALUES

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## Historic

- Mount Arapiles (Djurite)
  - listed by National Trust as state significant due to its geological form and diversity of flora & fauna
  - Aboriginal occupation sites, identified by DPCD
  - evidence of Aboriginal land use including a scarred tree & art site
  - home to the Djurite Balug clan of the Jardwadjali language group prior to European settlement, archeological remains of this period, including quarry sites, can still be found
  - named after Arapiles Hills near Salamanca, Spain by Major Thomas Mitchell who climbed to the summit on 23 July 1836, near the anniversary of a battle he had fought near Salamanca in Spain
  - area became known for rock climbing after a father & son team in 1963 visited the area after seeing the lesser Mitre Rock in a magazine, only to find the much greater Arapiles towering beside it

## Environmental/Scientific

- Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park, protected by Horsham SLO2
  - includes Mount Arapiles & nearby Mitre Rock, distinctive landscape features visible across wide areas of the municipality
  - the natural features are formed by an outlier of sandstone surrounded by marine & terrestrial sediments over basement rocks of the Paleozoic era
- Nationally significant wetlands
  - Hately's Lake (Swamp)
  - Saint Marys Lake
- Natimuk Douglas Wetlands, protected by Horsham ESO2, nominated as a wetland of international significance, consists of more than 30 saline & freshwater lakes which are seasonally visited by substantial numbers of migratory water birds

## Social

- Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park, an international rock-climbing destination

# LANDSCAPE PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT

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## Planning Scheme Policies & Controls

Only the Horsham Planning Scheme applies to this Character Area.

### Key Policies

- Clause 22.06: Natimuk & Mount Arapiles Area Tourism Policy

### Key Zones

- FZ
- PCRZ

### Key Overlays

- SLO2: Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park
- ESO2: Natimuk Douglas Wetlands
- WMO / BMO
- LSIO