

# Croskell (Employment)

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## **Native Vegetation Precinct Plan**

September 2024

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This is the Croskell (Employment) Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (NVPP) listed under the Schedule to Clause 52.16 of the Casey Planning Scheme (the Planning Scheme). This NVPP includes the information required under section 10 of the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017) (the Guidelines). The Guidelines state that an NVPP prepared for incorporation into the planning scheme must:

- specify the purpose and objectives of the plan;
- specify the area to which the NVPP applies;
- map and describe the native vegetation that can be removed, destroyed or lopped;
- map and describe the native vegetation to be retained;
- set out the offset requirement, determined in accordance with the Guidelines;
- specify management responsibilities and actions for native vegetation to be retained; and,
- provide an offset statement that includes evidence that an offset that meets offset requirements for the removal of native vegetation is available and explains how it will be secured in accordance with the Guidelines. This statement must also include procedures regarding how the offset will be secured should the offsets be divided amongst multiple properties or parties.

The Guidelines also state that an NVPP must include mechanisms for tracking the removal of native vegetation and corresponding securing of offsets, to ensure that this occurs in accordance with the NVPP.

The removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation in accordance with this NVPP does not require a planning permit provided conditions and requirements specified in this NVPP are met.

If native vegetation is proposed to be removed, destroyed or lopped not in accordance with this NVPP, a planning permit to remove native vegetation is required under Clause 52.16 of the Planning Scheme. In this circumstance, an application for a permit must comply with the application requirements specified in the Guidelines. An application to remove native vegetation not in accordance with the incorporated NVPP must be supported by current site information, as per *Assessor's handbook – applications to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation* (Assessor's handbook) (DELWP 2017a). In this plan the term 'remove native vegetation' includes to destroy and/or to lop native vegetation.

## 1.1 Purpose of the NVPP

The purpose of the Croskell (Employment) PSP NVPP is to:

- Summarise the biodiversity values across the precinct;
- Apply a holistic, landscape wide approach to retention and removal of native vegetation, within the Croskell (Employment) NVPP area as identified on Plan 1;
- Ensure that areas retained for the protection of native vegetation are managed to conserve ecological values in accordance with the *Croskell (Employment) Precinct Structure Plan* (PSP);
- Ensure that the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation and the management of the native vegetation specified to be retained is consistent with conserving the ecological values of these areas and is in accordance with the no net loss objective of the Guidelines;
- Describe the offset requirements for any permitted removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation as identified in this plan; and
- Streamline the planning approvals process through a landscape approach to native vegetation protection and management.

## 1.2 Vegetation protection objectives

The objectives of the Croskell (Employment) PSP NVPP are to:

- Ensure there is no net loss to biodiversity as a result of the approved removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation. This is achieved by applying the three-step approach in accordance with *Clause 12.01-2S Native vegetation management*, *Clause 52.16* and the Guidelines;
- Apply a landscape approach to the management of native vegetation within the NVPP area, in accordance with *Clause 12.01-1S Protection of biodiversity* and *Clause 21.04-3 Biodiversity Conservation and Protection*;
- Manage native vegetation to be retained in accordance with obligations under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*;
- Ensure that areas set aside to protect native vegetation are managed to conserve biodiversity and other values in accordance with the Croskell (Employment) PSP;
- Ensure that the Tree Protection Zones of trees within patches and scattered trees are protected in accordance with the *Australian Standard AS4790-2009*;
- Provide for the long-term preservation of the flora and fauna and associated habitat of environmentally significant areas;
- Manage impacts on protected native vegetation from recreational facilities and infrastructure;
- Retain the majority of indigenous trees within public open space;
- Maximise the ability of native vegetation to persist without human intervention through the use of integrated water management strategies;
- Enhance the environmental and landscape values of the area; and,
- Maintain and enhance the integrity of sites of environmental significance.

## 2 AREA TO WHICH THE NVPP APPLIES

The *Crooksell (Employment) PSP NVPP* applies to land within the NVPP Area shown on **Error! Reference source not found.**

Table 1 identifies the properties included within the area to which this NVPP applies. Property ID numbers in Plan 3 correspond to those listed in Table 1.

The Crooksell (Employment) precinct is located approximately 40km southeast of Melbourne's central business district within the City of Casey. The precinct encompasses around 317 hectares and is bounded by Thompsons Road to the north, Berwick Cranbourne Road to the east, and Narre Warren Cranbourne Road to the west. The Crooksell (Employment) Precinct is an "infill" precinct that builds on the existing character of the surrounding Cranbourne East and Clyde North community.

The NVPP applies to approximately 45.6 hectares of future residential and employment land located within the City of Casey, approximately 45km from Melbourne's CBD. The remainder of the precinct, which comprises approximately 271.6 hectares, is inside the Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA) and not subject to this NVPP.

The study area is, in general, highly modified from its likely condition pre-European settlement; that being a biodiverse woodland most attributable to Plains Grassy Woodland EVC 55 and/or Heathy Woodland EVC 48. Currently, the understory is highly modified by weeds and grazing to a degree that indigenous understory species are effectively absent, with the exception of a small number of opportunistic colonising species recruiting across areas reserved for the purposes of revegetation along much of the eastern boundary. While much of the remnant canopy has been cleared, canopy trees persist along the eastern boundary amongst areas of revegetation.

Table 1 Land included within the area to which this NVPP applies

Property ID no.	Property Address	Property SPI no.
1	1450 Thompsons Road Cranbourne East 3977	2\PS729806
2	1454 Thompsons Road Cranbourne East 3977	1\LP217543
3	1460 Thompsons Road Cranbourne East 3977	3\PS729806
4	1468 Thompsons Road Cranbourne East 3977	4\PS729806
15	360S Narre Warren Road Cranbourne East 3977	B\PS918158

## 3 NATIVE VEGETATION TO BE REMOVED

### 3.1 Assessment pathway

The assessment pathway for native vegetation that can be removed (including the reason for the assessment pathway) is described in the *Croskell Precinct Structure Plan Biodiversity Assessment Update* (WSP May 2023) and summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 Assessment pathway and reason for the assessment pathway

Assessment pathway	Detailed Assessment Pathway
Extent included past and proposed	1.897 ha
Extent of past removal	N/A
Extent of proposed removal (ha)	1.897 ha
No. large trees proposed to be removed	0
Location category	Location 2  The native vegetation is in an area mapped as an endangered Ecological Vegetation Class (as per the state-wide EVC map). Removal of less than 0.5 hectares of native vegetation in this location will not have a significant impact on any habitat for a rare or threatened species.

### 3.2 Description of native vegetation to be removed.

The following native vegetation can be removed, destroyed or lopped without a planning permit, subject to the requirements and conditions set out in this NVPP:

- Native vegetation described in Table 3 and shown in Plan 3 in this NVPP.
- Native vegetation that does not qualify as a patch of native vegetation or a scattered tree.

For native vegetation that regenerates following approval of this NVPP, and all other native vegetation in the NVPP area that is not identified as 'should be retained' or 'can be removed', advice should be sought from the relevant Responsible Authority as to whether a permit is required for its removal, destruction or lopping.

Habitat zone and tree labels in the tables correspond to those in the plans.

Table 3 Native vegetation to be removed

Habitat zone	Type	BioEVC code	BioEVC conservation status	Large tree(s)	Condition score	Extent (ha)	SBV score	Habitat units	Offset type
4-P	Patch	gipp0053	Endangered	0	0.180	0.001	0.420	0.000	General
5-P	Patch	gipp0048	Least Concern	0	0.110	0.022	0.760	0.003	General
6-P	Patch	gipp0048	Least Concern	0	0.110	0.001	0.760	0.000	General
7-P	Patch	gipp0048	Least Concern	0	0.110	0.001	0.760	0.000	General
8-P	Patch	gipp0048	Least Concern	0	0.110	0.000	0.760	0.000	General
9-P	Patch	gipp0653	Least Concern	0	0.130	0.143	0.336	0.019	General
10-P	Patch	gipp0821	Endangered	0	0.130	0.005	0.210	0.001	General
13-P	DEECA current wetland (ID 71150)	Wet_0000	Endangered	0	0.510	1.489	0.376	0.784	General

Note: SBV Score = Strategic Biodiversity Score

## 4 NATIVE VEGETATION OFFSETS

### 4.1 Offset requirements for native vegetation to be removed

The offset requirements for native vegetation that can be removed are described in the *Croskell Precinct Structure Plan Biodiversity Assessment Update* (WSP May 2023) and summarised in Table 4.

Table 4 Total offset requirements for NVPP area

General offset amount	0.807 general habitat units
Vicinity	Port Phillip Catchment Management Authority (CMA) or Casey City Council
Minimum strategic biodiversity score	0.302
Large trees	0 large trees

\* Species offsets are not applicable to this site.

### 4.2 Offset statement

The individual or organisation wanting to remove, lop or destroy the native vegetation identified for removal as part of the NVPP is responsible for ensuring that the required general and specific offsets have been secured before any permitted clearing starts. The provision of offsets must accord with the conditions and any permit notes specified on any permit granted, and the conditions and permit note in section 6 of this NVPP. The individual or organisation may establish a first party offset or purchase a native vegetation credit from a third party via an offset broker. In both circumstances the offset must be located within the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority area or within Casey City Council municipal boundaries.

A search of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) Native Vegetation Credit on 21 March 2024 identified 16 registered sites with a minimum of 0.836 general habitat units, which combined represented 124.03 general habitat units available in the market at this point in time. This indicates an ample supply of offsets available to accommodate for the removal of native vegetation in the Croskell precinct, and this is unlikely to materially change in the short term.



## 5 NATIVE VEGETATION TO BE RETAINED

### 5.1 Description of native vegetation to be retained

Patches of native vegetation identified for retention is detailed in Table 5 and shown in Plan 3.

The habitat zone in the tables correspond labels in the plans. There are no scattered trees identified for retention.

Native vegetation identified in this NVPP as 'should be retained' has been identified following a strategic approach to retaining native vegetation with greater biodiversity, arboricultural landscape or other value. Any future removal of native vegetation which has been identified as 'should be retained' may undermine the strategic approach adopted for the preparation of this NVPP.

Table 5 Native vegetation to be retained

Habitat zone	Type	BioEVC code	BioEVC conservation status	Large tree(s)	Condition score	Extent	SBV score
1-P	Patch	gipp0055	Endangered	0	0.110	0.192	0.420
2-P	Patch	gipp0055	Endangered	0	0.130	0.006	0.710
3-P	Patch	gipp0055	Endangered	0	0.110	0.018	0.420
11-P	Patch	gipp0055	Endangered	0	0.070	0.004	0.210
12-P	Patch	gipp0055	Endangered	0	0.120	0.014	0.397

## 5.2 Management responsibilities and actions

### 5.2.1 Native vegetation to be retained

Protection (of a tree) refers to an area with twice the canopy diameter of the tree(s) fenced and protected from adverse impacts including grazing, burning and soil disturbance. Fallen timber should be retained, any noxious weeds controlled and any other management steps necessary to ensure adequate natural regeneration or planting can occur in the area.

The owner of the land must continue to meet any existing legal obligations to manage the land, for example the management of noxious weeds and pest animals under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.

The native vegetation shown in Table 5 or elsewhere that are [is] to be retained, should not be removed, with the exception of native vegetation that overlaps with the land required to deliver infrastructure projects identified in the incorporated Croskell (Employment) Development Contributions Plan at detailed design phase. A landscape-wide approach to the retention and removal of native vegetation has been adopted in the preparation of this Native Vegetation Precinct Plan rather than as a site by site approach.

Where native vegetation abuts boundary of NVPP area, the full patch (both inside and outside the MSA) should be retained.

Decisions relating to the removal of patches of native vegetation have been made in a holistic manner taking into account areas of native vegetation which are proposed to be protected. The ad-hoc removal of native vegetation which is identified as to be protected may undermine the holistic and landscape-wide approach adopted in the preparation of this Native Vegetation Precinct Plan.

Native vegetation to be protected as an offset must meet the eligibility requirements and management standards specified in the Guidelines and the Native Vegetation Gain Scoring Manual Version 2, or as updated from time to time.

Where possible, final detailed design at the subdivisional level should aim to further avoid and minimise the loss of the native vegetation that has been previously identified for removal.

### 5.2.2 Offsetting the Removal or Destruction of Native Vegetation

The following requirements must be met:

- Only the native vegetation which is identified for removal in this incorporated NVPP applying to the land may be removed, lopped or destroyed without a permit.
- Prior to the removal, destruction or lopping of any native vegetation including dead native vegetation within a property (identified by the PSP Property Number in Plan 3) the owner of the land from which the native vegetation is being removed must provide an Offset Plan in accordance with the incorporated Croskell NVPP to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority and have the Offset Plan approved by the responsible authority.
- Applicants removing native vegetation must provide Council with evidence they have secured their offset. This may be on new or existing third party offset areas. Evidence that the required offset has been secured must be provided to the Responsible Authority prior to the removal of the native vegetation.
- Should the landowner choose to offset native vegetation removal on site, prior to subdivision, building and works or the removal, destruction or lopping of any native vegetation they must enter into a legal, on title agreement that provides for the management and ongoing protection of the offset in accordance with the approved Offset Plan, and must include, as appropriate:
  - The on-going land use commitments to manage the offset primarily for protection of the native vegetation values in perpetuity;
  - Specification of the identity of the responsible monitoring authority and the reporting responsibilities of the land owner;
  - Specification of the terms in which the responsible authority can visit and monitor the site; and,
  - Pay the reasonable costs of the preparation, execution and registration of any on-title agreement.
  - Offset management prescriptions shall be detailed in a specific Offset Management Plan that must be approved by the DELWP.

- Offsets must commence before the removal of the native vegetation and implementation must be completed according to the schedule of works in the Offset Plan, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Refer to DELWP's *First Party Offset Guide* (July 2018) for further information.

## 6 CONDITIONS FOR REMOVAL OF NATIVE VEGETATION

The native vegetation identified in **Error! Reference source not found.** and shown in Plan 3 can be removed, destroyed or lopped without a planning permit as allowed under Clause 52.16, subject to the following conditions:

- The removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation must be in accordance with this NVPP. Only the native vegetation which is identified for removal in this NVPP may be removed, destroyed or lopped. Native vegetation which is identified for removal in this NVPP can only be removed if the purpose of its removal is in accordance with the purpose of this NVPP.
- Prior to the removal of any native vegetation, a statement of intention to remove native vegetation must be provided to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. The statement must include:
  - The purpose of the native vegetation removal.
  - Evidence that an offset has been secured. The offset must meet the offset requirements set out in this NVPP and delivered in accordance with the requirements of Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation. Offset evidence can be:
    - A security agreement (signed by both parties) to the required standard for the offset site or sites, including a 10 year offset management plan.
    - An allocated credit extract from the Native Vegetation Credit Register.
    - Other evidence that meets the requirements described in Section 4 of this NVPP.
- Prior to the removal of any native vegetation, or prior to the commencement of works, all native vegetation identified in this NVPP as to be retained must be protected by high visibility fencing, as follows:
  - Fencing around scattered trees and trees within patches of native vegetation must meet the minimum standards for a tree protection zone described in AS 4970-2009 Protection of trees on development sites or succeeding Australian Standard.
  - Fencing around patches of native vegetation must be erected at a minimum distance of 2 metres from the retained native vegetation.
- Except with the written consent of the Responsible Authority, within the native vegetation protection areas:
  - No vehicular or pedestrian access, trenching or soil excavation is to occur;
  - No storage or dumping of tools, equipment or waste is to occur; and
  - No entry and exit pits for underground services are to be constructed.
- Prior to felling of any tree which may be removed, the tree must be examined by a suitably qualified zoologist for the presence of fauna in hollows or external nests. Whenever possible tree removal should not occur during spring and early summer to avoid disturbing active nests. If native fauna species are located, they must be salvaged and relocated to the closest suitable vegetation, in consultation with DEECA and the Responsible Authority.
- All indigenous trees permitted to be removed must be relocated into protected conservation areas within the NVPP or a nearby conservation reserve for inclusion as large logs, in consultation with DTP and the Responsible Authority. These logs must be cut into a minimum of 1.5 metre lengths and placed into the conservation areas under the direction of a suitably qualified ecologist or Council environment officer, with the written consent of the Responsible Authority.
- Any construction stockpiles, fill and machinery associated with construction must be placed at least 30 metres away from areas supporting native vegetation and drainage lines, or to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
- Prior to the removal of vegetation the Responsible Authority and/or DEECA must be given an opportunity to salvage genetic material from flora species for use in nearby Public Reserves.
- All earthworks must be undertaken in a manner that will minimise soil erosion and adhere to *Construction Techniques for Sediment Pollution Control* (EPA, 1991).
- Water run-off must be designed to ensure that native vegetation to be retained is not compromised.

The following condition must be included on any subdivision permit:

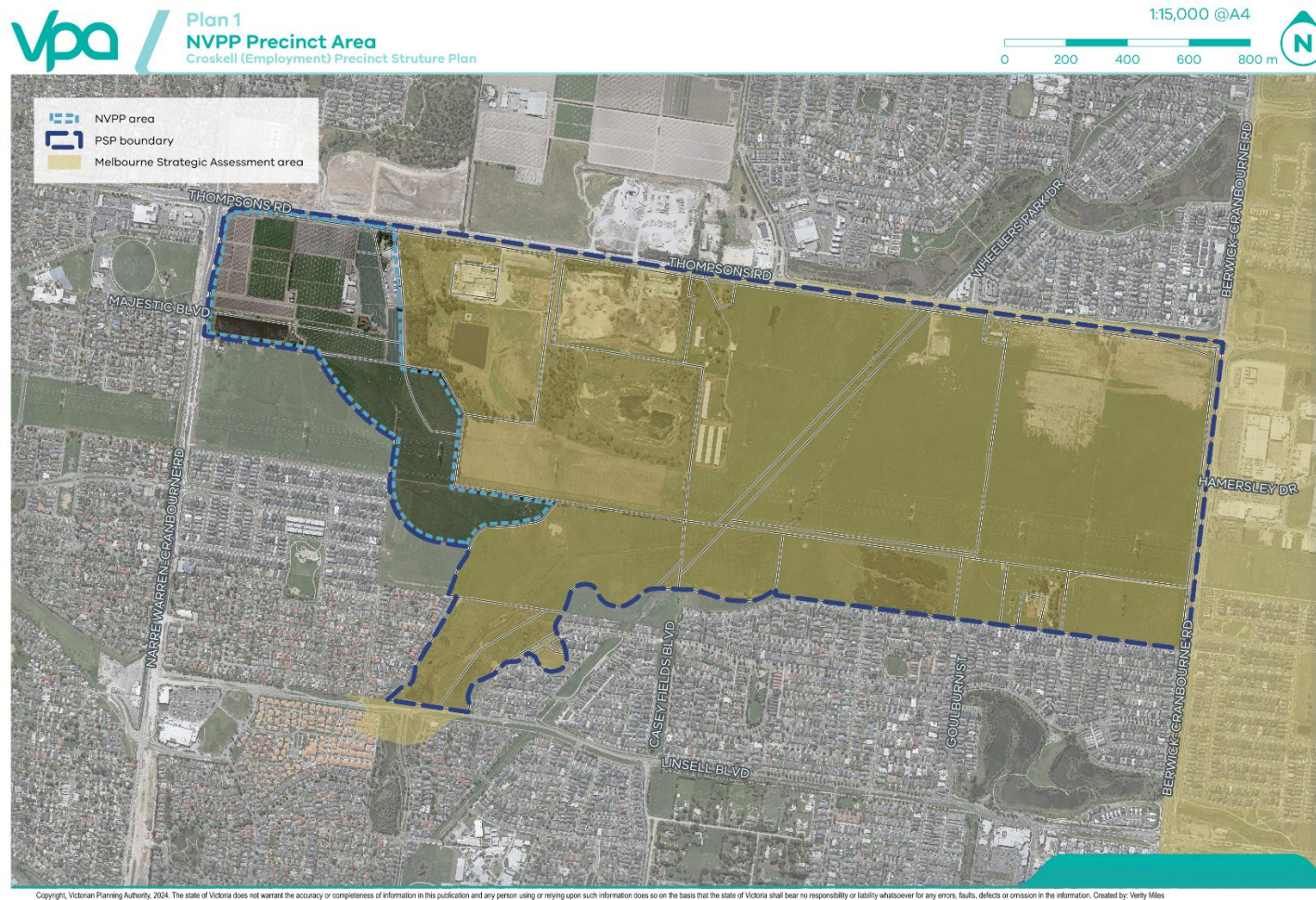
- Prior the beginning of any works authorised by a permit a statement of intention must be provided to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. The statement must include:
  - The purpose of the subdivision.
  - Evidence that an offset has been secured. The offset must meet the offset requirements set out in this NVPP and delivered in accordance with the requirements of Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation. Offset evidence can be:
    - A security agreement (signed by both parties) to the required standard for the offset site or sites, including a 10 year offset management plan.
    - An allocated credit extract from the Native Vegetation Credit Register.





## 7 PLANS

### Plan 1 Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (NVPP) Area



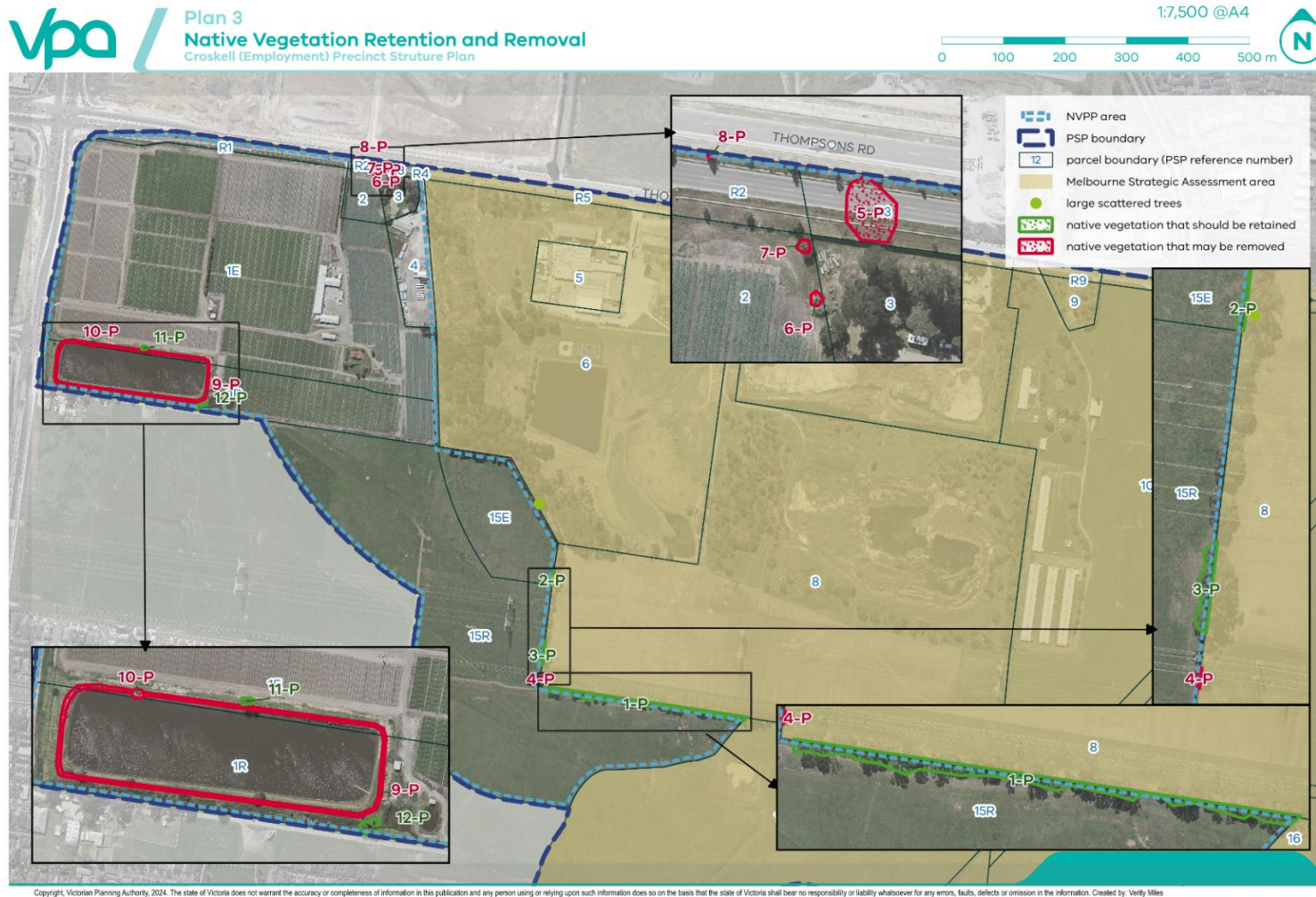


## Plan 2 Existing Conditions





## Plan 3 Native Vegetation Retention and Removal





## Croskell Native Vegetation Precinct Plan

September 2024