

25. Beckingsale Bushland Reserve

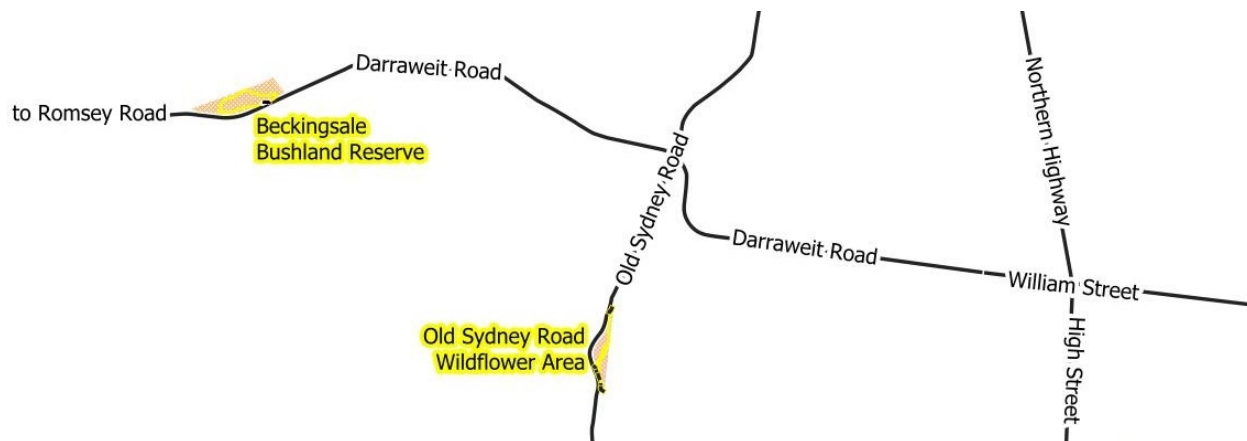


Beckingsale Bushland Reserve (or **Wallan Wallan Bushland Reserve**) is a 5.2 ha pocket of remnant bushland on Darraweit Road, Wallan. The Reserve slopes down to a small creekline with a rich forest with several different species of old and young eucalypts, patches of shrubs and a grassy understorey with many wildflowers. A short walking track loops through the Reserve.

This reserve is on the land of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. We acknowledge their Elders past and present and emerging, and their care of Country over many millennia. We ask that all people respect this ancient heritage and care for the land we now share.

Directions

In Wallan, turn west off the Northern Highway/High Street into William Street/Darraweit Road (at the traffic lights) and continue west out of Wallan and up to Old Sydney Road. Beckingsale Bushland Reserve is on Darraweit Rd 2.2km west of Old Sydney Rd. Turn right into a short dirt track with limited parking. Note that the entrance is hard to see.



Walking Tracks

The Beckingsale Bushland Reserve Walking Trail was a self-guided walk developed by the Upper Maribyrnong Catchment Group (UMCG) and Parks Victoria in 1998. The 700m track is partly overgrown and not all the marker posts can be found. The Trail and brochure may soon be resurrected by UMCG.



The Trail is rough and overgrown and not accessible to all abilities.



The Reserve has no toilets.

Landform and Geology

The hills around Beckingsale Bushland Reserve are *Humevale Siltstone* that formed in deep seas around 440 to 400 million years ago and have gradually eroded to round hills. The creekline in the Reserve meanders northwest into Boyd Creek, which then runs south to Deep Creek. The meanders of these creeks reflect the filling and displacement of the original creeklines by lava flows to the west of the Reserve some time in the past 4 million years.

The creekline contains Spiny Rush indicating high salt levels in the soil and ground water feeding the creek. These soils are deeply eroded, typical of sodic soils. The small creekline at the western end has a 3m deep active erosion head but the incised main creekline has become stabilised with trees and other vegetation, showing what care and time can do to restore the country.

Vegetation

Beckingsale Bushland Reserve has a rich diversity of plant species.



The lower slopes and gullies are classed as [Valley Grassy Forest](#) although it also contains species more typical of [Herb-rich Foothill Forest](#). The Reserve has many large old trees including Yellow Box and Candlebark, but also Messmate, Narrow-leaved Peppermint and even some River Red Gum along the creek. The understorey is equally diverse, with Blackwood and Lightwood, Black Wattle, Cherry Ballart, Tree Violets, Sweet Bursaria, the smaller Grey Parrot-pea and Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea – and the ubiquitous Sifton Bush.

The understorey is patchy, but relatively dense for a grassy forest, probably due to a lack of fire or other disturbance. But this still leaves areas of open grassy woodland with a diversity of ground species that makes a rewarding visit in Spring. Kangaroo Grass and Common Tussock-grass are abundant, but leave enough room for Cranberry Heath, Chocolate and Bulbine Lilies, Milkmaids, Scaly Buttons and many more species.

Plant lists are in preparation.

Wildlife



The sedimentary landscape between Wallan and the basalt country around Darraweit Guim has a reasonably good natural tree cover along road reserves and on private land. Tree cover in this area provides a rough measure of the distribution and diversity of plants such as those recorded in the Reserve. The designated high conservation section of Darraweit Road, which adjoins Beckingsale Bushland Reserve, provides an important wildlife corridor linking the Reserve

east to the high conservation sections of Old Sydney Road, Wallan. Large old habitat trees are relatively abundant across this landscape.

This is a landscape that could support a good diversity of native animals. Databases list 11 amphibians, 8 reptiles, more than 90 birds and 8 mammals (including three bats, probably an underestimate). The list has some notable absences suggesting more surveys are needed to

complete the list. The list also includes eight threatened species, probably another underestimate. Most of these species would live in or at least visit the Reserve.

Species lists are in preparation.

Aboriginal history

The Reserve is on the land of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

History after colonisation

The surrounding country was taken over by Europeans with their sheep and cattle from the late 1830s. Until 1981, the Reserve was grazed and the district would have been a source of timber and firewood for Melbourne and local towns. However, the sedimentary country is not highly productive agricultural or arable land which may partly explain the remaining high tree cover, along with more recent changes in the way land close to Melbourne is now being used.

There are several areas in the Reserve with evidence of soil extraction and grading of a fire break.

The Reserve was gazetted on 20 January 1982 under a Land Conservation Council recommendation, due to the remnant vegetation it contains, in particular its diverse understorey. The late Jim Beckingsale, a former adjoining farmer, was instrumental in having the Reserve gazetted. The Upper Maribyrnong Catchment Group (UMCG), with support from Parks Victoria, made submissions in 1998 to change the name from Wallan Wallan Bushland Reserve to Beckingsale Reserve but this has not yet happened.

The group has been very active with fencing, erosion control, signage, weed control and botanical surveys, nest boxes, community wildflower walks and the self-guided walk.

Management

The Reserve is Crown land managed by Parks Victoria. The Upper Maribyrnong Catchment Group has also been involved in caring for the Reserve since the 1990s.

Further information

Parks Victoria: Parks Victoria can be contacted on 13 1963 or go to <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/contact-us>. Website for the Beckingsale Bushland Reserve/Wallan Wallan Bushland Reserve is at <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/wallan-wallan-bushland-reserve>. The website contains only general information on visiting reserves (at 30/6/2023).

John Robinson, "[The value of roadside remnant vegetation](#)", *Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management* magazine, Spring 2020, issue 79.

David Laurie, *Report on Conservation Values of Roadsides within the Shire of Kilmore* (1995).

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Upper Maribyrnong Catchment Group: contact upper.maribyrnong.landcare@gmail.com

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation at <https://www.wurundjeri.com.au>

Acknowledgements

This Reserve Note was prepared by BEAM Mitchell Environment Group, with assistance from Wallan Environment Group, Upper Maribyrnong Catchment Group and Mitchell Shire Council. Information was obtained from a UMCG brochure on the Beckingsale Bushland Reserve Walking Trail (currently out of print).

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These notes are a work in progress. If you have any comments or additional information on the nature and ecological history of Beckingsale Bushland Reserve, please contact us at

<https://www.beam.org.au/contact>.



Beckingsale Bushland Reserve



 Beckingsale Bushland Reserve	 Roads	 Walking Track
 Creeks and gullies	 Entry track	