

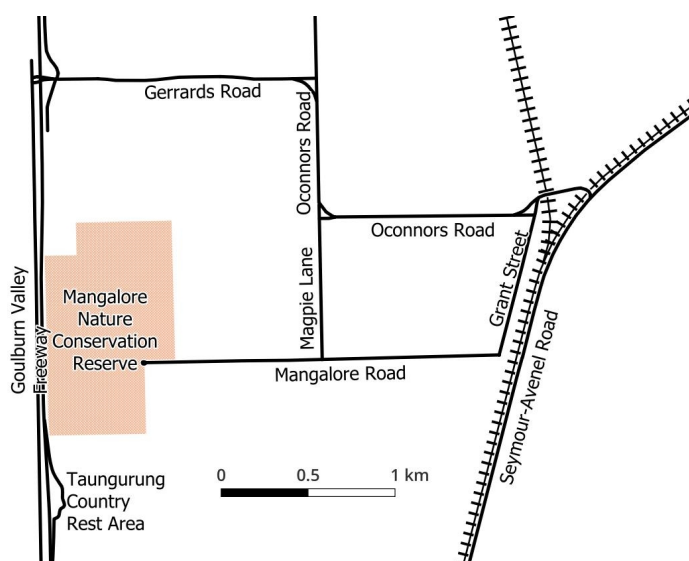
# 1. Mangalore Nature Conservation Reserve



**Mangalore Nature Conservation Reserve** is a rich place for native plants and wildlife. It lies on a gravel rise deposited by ancient mountain rivers. The gravels were mined from 1872 for ballast for the new north-east Railway. The unusual gravel soils and the rises and swales left by mining provide a mosaic of different habitats for mallee-like trees and many orchids, lilies and tiny ground cover plants. Birds from the mountains meet birds from the plains in this remarkable Reserve. The Reserve is at the end of Mangalore Road, or along a walking track from Taungurung Country Rest Stop on the eastern side of the Goulburn Valley Highway. The Reserve is 55 ha.

*This reserve is on the land of the Taungurung 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



**From Seymour:** Turn left off Seymour-Avenel Rd into OConnors Road, Mangalore. After crossing two sets of rails tracks, turn left down Grant Street, then right into Mangalore Road. Continue to the carpark at the west end of the road. There is no signage into the Reserve.

**From Goulburn Valley Freeway:** Turn east into Gerrards Road, then south to OConnors Road. Continue south into Magpie Lane, then right to the west end of Mangalore Road.

**From Taungurung Country Rest Stop on Goulburn Valley Freeway:** From the back of the rest stop, follow a walking track north into the south-west corner of the Reserve. From here, there is no defined route through to the tracks inside the Reserve, but the open scrubby woodland is easy to navigate for those with a sense of direction.

## Walking Tracks

The Reserve has many tracks reflecting its mining history. None are sign-posted and most are closed with mounds. The main tracks marked on the map are currently open and easy to follow. Two loops of these tracks are described.

**Short Loop (1060m):** From the carpark on Mangalore Road, walk south along the boundary with open paddocks. To the east are views of the foothills of the Strathbogie Ranges. The track has older Yellow Box near the boundary and younger trees further up the slope where the land has been mined. At the south-eastern corner of the Reserve are hidden remnants of the old tramway, and the line of trees running southeast marks the old Ballast Line easement to Gravelside. The track then runs NW and N, gently ascending through the mined area. At 630m, the Short Loop continues straight ahead (north) for 420m, then meets the central east-west track down to the carpark.

**Circuit Track (3270m):** follows the short loop for 630m, then branches left (west) onto higher flat ground. Just after meeting the powerline easement (at 1050m), the track turns right (north) through Grey Box Forest. The track follows the western boundary (and the noise of the Freeway), then meanders down the slope passing some open swales created by mining and ending at the northern boundary. The return walk to the carpark follows the bottom of the slope with several large

old Grey Box and Yellow Box trees. To the left of the track is an open grassy woodland looking across to a Red Gum swamp on adjoining private land.



All tracks have rough and uneven sections and surfaces that are hard gravel but may be covered in sticks and stones. They are not designed for all abilities access. However, the main tracks are flat to moderately steep and may be passable with assistance.



Driving through the Reserve is not allowed, to protect the tracks and vegetation and to control illegal dumping and firewood collection.

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The Reserve has no toilets.

## Landform and Geology



Mangalore NCR is on a ridge of river gravels (*White Hills Gravels*) with masses of rounded white quartz gravels. The gravels began as quartz veins exposed by erosion and carried, rounded and sorted in very active braided streams as the mountains in Victoria were uplifted around 65 to 25 million years ago. The gravels finally settled as the energy of streams slowed across the riverine plains. Miners removed the top layers of the soil and gravel over large parts of the Reserve, but mosses and lichens are helping to rebuild the soils.

## Vegetation

The geology and mining disturbance have created some interesting plant communities.

The approach along Mangalore Road runs through [Plains Grassy Woodlands](#) with many large Grey Box. Further north, the watercourse feeds into a *Red Gum Swamp* unfortunately just outside the Reserve. The road ends on the eastern slopes of the Reserve. These slopes are classed as [Grassy Woodlands](#), although most of the slopes have been mined, leading to an interesting and unusual mix of bare gravel swales and low old but stunted trees and younger almost mallee-like Yellow Box, often on pedestals of original soils left by the miners. These pedestals are rich with orchids and other ground covers. Large Grey Box and Yellow Box are mostly limited to the less-disturbed north-east slopes.



The centre of the Reserve is a long relatively flat north-south ridge sloping gently to the west. Although classed as [Box-Ironbark Forest](#), a band of mining across the centre of the Reserve is also like Grassy Woodlands described above. Other areas that have not been mined are more like *Grassy Woodlands* with either an open forest canopy of older Grey Box or a dense stand of regenerating Grey Box. Carpets of Chocolate Lilies are common in these woodlands.

Where mining has occurred in this flatter area, hollows and swales created by mining form small ephemeral ponds with a fascinating range of tiny styleworts and trigger plants, woolly-heads, wrinkleworts and more.

140 native plant species have been found in the Reserve to date. Plant lists are in preparation.

## Wildlife

Mangalore attracts a wide range of birds from both the ranges and the plains. More than 150 species have been recorded, including Little Cuckoo-shrike, Crested Shrike-tit, White-browed Babbler and Gilbert's Whistler. Threatened Swift Parrots, Diamond Firetails and Hooded Robins have been seen but not recently, and there are reports of brush stone-curlews in the vicinity.

Several of the locally common species of other vertebrates have been recorded, including possums and gliders, kangaroos and wallabies, Yellow-footed Antechinus and Echidnas, three reptiles and six amphibians (including the endangered Bibron's Toadlet).

## Aboriginal history

The Reserve is on the land of the Taungurung People. We currently have no direct information on how the Aboriginal people lived in this landscape, but we can try to imagine people gathering food along the dry ridges and swamps in different seasons over millennia. There may be scar trees in the Reserve.

## History after colonisation

By 1843, most of the land was taken over by squatters, and later by settlers. In 1872, gravel started to be removed from the area as ballast for the construction of the railway north of Seymour. The Reserve area was known as the Mangalore Ballast Pits, with a tramway running south-east down a gradient to a siding later called Gravelside on the main line. The siding was opened intermittently until it was finally closed in 1938 and the signal box was removed (Keith Turton

1973). The tramway line was labelled Ballast Line in a 1909 army map by John Monash and can still be traced as a line of trees running from the southeast corner of the Reserve. Mangalore Road was labelled Ballast Road in the 1909 map, and mining may have continued using road transport after 1938.

The Reserve was known as a Flora Reserve for many years, then classed as a Nature Conservation Reserve and expanded towards the eastern wetlands following the 2001 ECC/VEAC Box Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation.

## Management

The Reserve is Crown land managed by Parks Victoria. It is included in the [Land Use Activity Agreement](#), a part of the [Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement](#). The northern half of the Reserve is in Strathbogie Shire.

## 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 Mangalore Nature Conservation Reserve is at <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/mangalore-nature-conservation-reserve>. The website contains only general information on visiting reserves (at 30/6/2023). Dogs are not allowed in this Reserve.

Taungurung Land and Water Council at <https://taungurung.com.au/>. Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement at <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/taungurung-recognition-and-settlement-agreement>.

Strathbogie Shire Council: useful information and park rules at

[https://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/images/Tourism/tracksandtrails/Walking\\_Tracks\\_bro\\_Mangalore\\_final\\_SM.pdf](https://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/images/Tourism/tracksandtrails/Walking_Tracks_bro_Mangalore_final_SM.pdf)

Keith Turton. 1973. Six and a half inches from destiny; The first hundred years of the Melbourne-Wodonga Railway 1873-1973. Australian Railway Historical Society, Melbourne.

Goulburn Broken CMA Revegetation Guide: information on different ecological vegetation communities, plant communities and plants in the Victorian Riverina at

<https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/revegetation/zones/victorian-riverina>

Environment Conservation Council/Victorian Environment Assessment Council Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation—Resources and Issues Report and Final

Recommendation. <https://veac.vic.gov.au/investigations-assessments/previous-investigations/investigation/box-ironbark-forests-woodlands-investigation-ecc-2001>

## Acknowledgements

This Reserve Note was prepared by BEAM Mitchell Environment Group. Thanks to Mitchell Shire Council for their assistance and support. Thanks to Parks Victoria for information on this Reserve.

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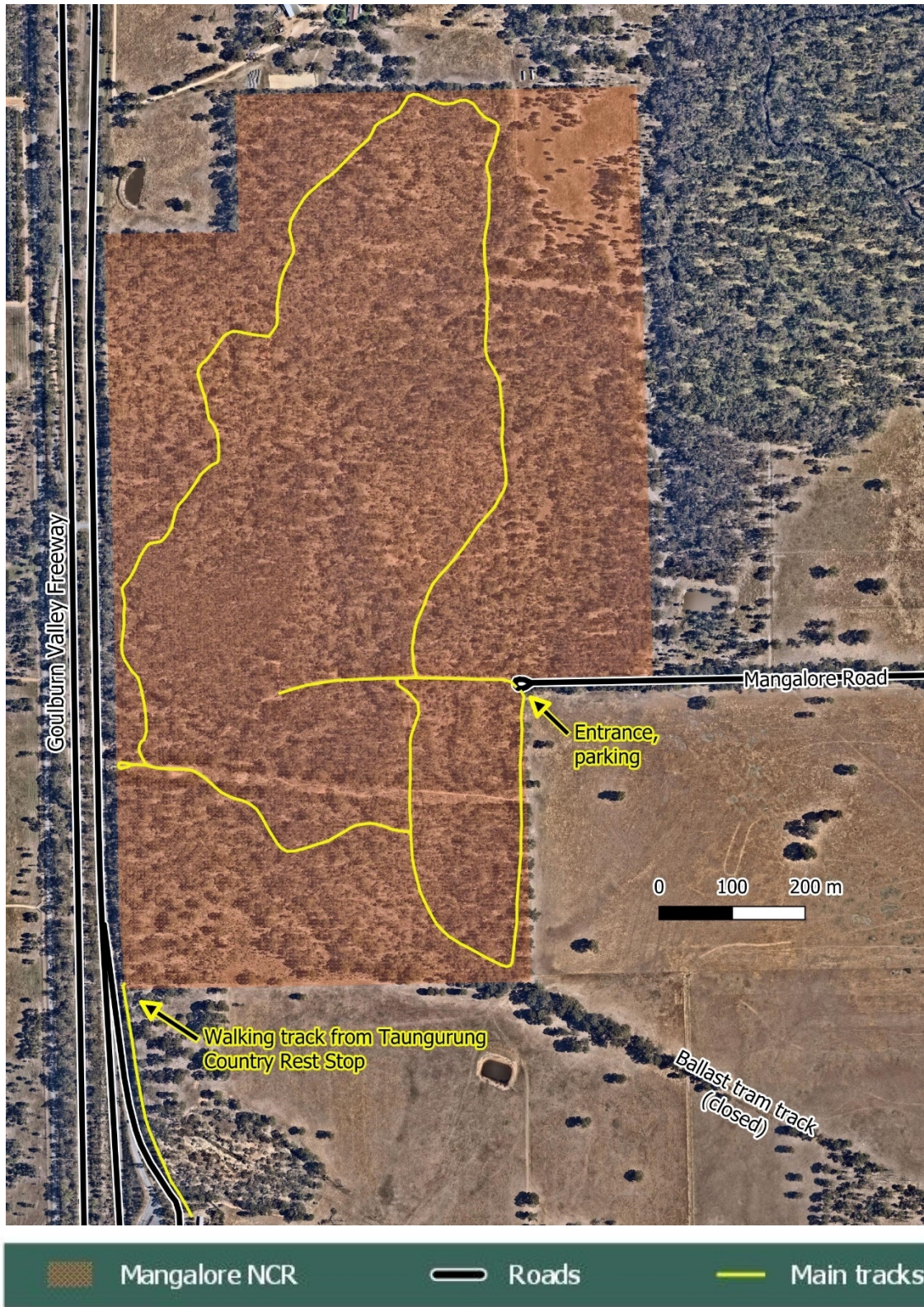
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These notes are a work in progress. If you have any comments or additional information on the nature and ecological history of Mangalore Nature Conservation Reserve, please contact us at

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



# Mangalore Nature Conservation Reserve



**Note:** The map does not include all of the many old tracks in the Reserve. Some of the mapped walking tracks have mounded vehicle barriers and are becoming overgrown and hard to follow.