
Electric Line Clearance Management Plan

2017-2018



The following sections are as per the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2015*.

1. Name, address and telephone number of the responsible person.

Name: Northern Grampians Shire Council
Address: Main Street, Stawell 3380
63-65 Main Street, Stawell 3380
Telephone: (03) 5358 8700
Email address: ngshire@ngshire.vic.gov.au

Name of Chief Executive Officer: Mr Michael Bailey

2. Name, position, address and telephone number of the individual who was responsible for the preparation of the management plan.

Name: Trenton Fithall
Position: Manager Infrastructure
Address: 63-65 Main Street, Stawell 3380
Telephone: (03) 5358 8703 or 0459 027 636
Email Address: trenton.fithall@ngshire.vic.gov.au

3. Name, position, address and telephone number of the persons who are responsible for carrying out the management plan.

Name: John Hunt
Position: Coordinator Parks & Gardens
Address: 63-65 Main Street, Stawell 3380
Telephone: (03) 5358 8700 or 0409 334 898
Email Address: john.hunt@ngshire.vic.gov.au

4. The telephone number of a person who can be contacted in an emergency that requires clearance of an electric line that the responsible person is required to keep clear of trees.

Name: John Hunt
Emergency Telephone Number: (03) 5358 8700 or 0409 334 898.

The After Hours number (03) 53588700 is the 24/7 Control number.

5. The objectives of the management plan

The following are identified as the key objectives of this plan in fulfilling our stated commitment and the duties set out in the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2015* for the Northern Grampians Shire Council (Council) as Responsible Person under the *Electrical Safety Act 1998*.

- Public safety
- Compliance with the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2015* and the current Code of Practice of Electrical Safety For Work On Or Near High Voltage Electrical Apparatus, Victoria 2005, (the “Blue Book”)
- Protection of areas of important vegetation which may be deemed as such on the basis of those areas containing botanically, historically or culturally important vegetation or vegetation of outstanding aesthetic or ecological significance, and/or the habitat of rare or endangered species
- Management of vegetation to maximise the amenity value of Council’s trees
- Community satisfaction with the manner in which the necessary works are carried out
- To provide cost effective solutions to achieve clearance requests
- Provide safer workplace for employees and contractors
- To minimise the possibility of fire starts all staff involved with this programme have Fire Awareness tickets. It should be noted that staff operate in an Urban Low Fire risk situation.

6. The land to which the management plan applies by the inclusion of a map

This plan covers the road reserves in the declared area of Stawell and St Arnaud which are located in the Northern Grampians Shire. See Appendix 1 for plans. The Declared Area map is consistent with the ESV database.

7. The location of areas containing trees which may need to be cut or removed to ensure compliance with the Code and that are:

a. Native

The street trees in the shire are an eclectic mix of natives and exotics which enhance the amenity of the municipality.

b. Listed in planning scheme to be of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance

Council trees are not listed on the planning scheme. Also there are no locations in the shire where vegetation is under an approved exemption.

c. The trees of cultural or environmental significance

A number of trees have been identified as being of historical and aesthetic significant importance to the Council which are in the vicinity of overhead power lines.

A tree of cultural or environmental significance means a tree that is—

- i. included in the Heritage Register within the meaning of the ***Heritage Act 1995***; or
- ii. included in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register established under section 144 of the ***Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006***; or
- iii. flora or a habitat of fauna listed as threatened in accordance with section 10 of the ***Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988***; or

- iv. flora listed in the Threatened Flora List with a conservation status in Victoria of "endangered" or "vulnerable"; or
- v. a habitat of fauna which is—
 1. listed in the Threatened Invertebrate Fauna List with a conservation status in Victoria of "vulnerable", "endangered" or "critically endangered"; or
 2. listed in the Threatened Vertebrate Fauna List with a conservation status in Victoria of "vulnerable", "endangered" or "critically endangered".

The trees included in this category include:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ● Cato Park | Stawell (Aesthetic) |
| ● Seaby Street | Stawell (Aesthetic) |
| ● Skene Street | Stawell (Aesthetic) |
| ● Queen Mary Gardens | St. Arnaud (Historical/Aesthetic) |

The locations of these trees are marked on declared areas map. See Appendix 1 for plans.

8. The means which the responsible person is required to use to identify a tree specified in clause 7;

- Consult with the Coordinator Parks & Gardens.
- Identification by an arborist.
- Consult the Tree Register (Exponare-Geographic Information System).
- Consult the Northern Grampians Planning Scheme.
- Refer to Council's Exponare mapping system which has an environment significance layer as part of the system.
- Council has two trees registered with the National Trust and they are not impacted on by the electric line clearance programme. There is currently no Flora or Fauna listed as "vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered" in the areas Council currently looks after under this clearance program.
- All cultural and heritage matters relating to trees are controlled by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. All enquiries regarding these matters need to be referred to Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.
- Refer to Council's Exponare mapping system which has layers showing locations of Threatened Flora, Fauna, Invertebrate and Vertebrate as part of the system.

9. The management procedures that the responsible person is required to adopt to ensure compliance with the Code, which must include details of the methods proposed to be adopted for:

a. Managing Trees

- Three inspections and pruning (where required) of all trees within the declared areas of Northern Grampians Shire.
- Council appointed contractor and or Council staff will carry out the inspections and pruning works.
- Coordinator Parks & Gardens will manage and monitor the inspection and pruning works by the contractor or council staff.
- The use of appropriate plant selection for new and replacement plantings as per the Council's *Urban Tree and Nature Strip Management Plan*.
- Work with power supply authority to achieve better outcomes.
- Maps showing the pruning maintenance zones are shown in Appendix 1.

- Council is currently creating an inventory of trees impacted by electric lines throughout the shire.

b. Maintaining the clearance space, required by the code, between electric lines & trees

Council has identified the areas that are required to be line cleared under a three inspections & pruning program. Council will work with its contractor and council staff to ensure that the tree audits and pruning measures are undertaken to maintain compliance with the code. Audits of the contractor and council's staff work will be carried out on a regular basis.

If trees are identified as needing attention to maintain compliance outside the programmed maintenance regime, Council has a customer request management system (MERIT) that can be used to log requests by the community or distribution companies on 5358 8700.

- If the tree is deemed to require urgent attention, action will be undertaken to complete the necessary clearance within 28 days, or
- If the tree is determined not to require urgent attention, action will be undertaken to complete the necessary works within three months.

To determine the level of pruning required to ensure adequate space for regrowth before the next inspection the pruning contractor and or council staff will apply the following method:

Amount Pruned = (Average of annual growth extension since last prune) X (years to next program prune).

10. A description of the measures that must be used to assess the performance of the responsible person under the management plan:

Performance measures for the implementation of the Electric Line Clearance Management Plan are, (in declared areas only)

- Number of pruning request from the distribution company
- Number of pruning requests from the community
- Council measures the performance of the responsible person by successful compliance with the following KPIs:
 - i. Three annual inspections completed by the Coordinator Parks and Gardens.
 - ii. Number of vegetation clearance breaches to the code being kept to a minimum.
 - iii. An audit is completed on the works carried out.
 - iv. All customer requests for pruning are investigated and carried out if necessary.
 - v. All requests from network operator are investigated and carried out if necessary.
 - vi. All pruning and clearing programs are carried out per schedules.
 - vii. All emergency clearances carried out by Council are recorded on Council's "MERIT" electronic system.

The records are kept in Council's customer request management system (MERIT).

11. Details of the audit processes that must be used to determine the responsible person's compliance with the Code;

Council's Coordinator Parks & Gardens conducts random audits of the contractor and or Council's staff performance and pruning works at least three times each year.

The audit assesses if the pruning works are compliant with Council and Australian Standards and the Electric Line Clearing Code of Practice. The audit results are regularly discussed with the contractor and or council staff and the records are stored in council's electronic records management system "InfoXpert" . Any non-compliance issues are discussed with the contractor or council staff and the contractor or council staff are required to provide information on remedial measures to rectify the noncompliance.

The Council shall ensure that all trees are pruned according to AS 4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees as a minimum standard. They further shall ensure that all contractors and employees hold appropriate certificates for both themselves and their equipment that legally entitles them to undertake the work.

The only external audit is that undertaken by Energy Safe Victoria.

An annual review is carried out by the NGSC Manager Infrastructure of the performance of the Coordinator Parks and Gardens position as part of the annual review process. All audit records are stored Council electronic records management system "InfoXpert".

Disciplinary action and further appropriate training would be carried out to ensure the role and requirements are understood.

In summary the Coordinator Parks and Gardens will carry out an audit a minimum of three times a year on employees and contractors undertaking all works.

12. The qualifications and experience that the responsible person must require of the persons who are to carry out the cutting or removal of trees

The Council requires experience, expertise, quality management, OH & S systems and environmental management systems of its contractors to ensure they comply with the Council's requirement and industry standards.

Council will ensure that all staff and contractors performing hazard inspections around electric lines will have:

- The qualification of National Certificate Level IV in Horticulture and Arboriculture, including the "Assess Trees" module, or an equivalent qualification and/or
- At least three years' field experience in assessing trees.

The Council shall ensure that all trees are pruned according to AS 4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees as a minimum standard. They shall ensure that all contractors and employees hold appropriate certificates for both themselves and their equipment that legally entitles them to undertake the work.

The Council shall ensure that all contractors and staff comply with the safe approach distances contained in the Code of Practice of Electrical Safety For Work On Or Near High Voltage Electrical Apparatus, Victoria 2005, (the "Blue Book").

Council shall ensures that the work on trees is conducted by suitably trained workers, with those workers holding a formal qualification in either arboriculture or horticulture or equivalent relevant experience.

The following certificates appropriate for the individual tasks carried out will be a minimum standard for any workers onsite:

- Electrical Systems Identification and Power line Clearance Distances (NUE-260)
- The "Blue Book"

- National EWP Licence
- Chipper Operations Certificate
- Chainsaw Operations Certificate
- First Aid Level 1
- Basic worksite traffic management

The contractors provide Council with their training matrix and qualifications of all operators annually. The Coordinator Parks and Gardens audits this information at least three times a year. All onsite operators are audited before works commence and this is recorded on the audit checklist. All information is visually checked.

13. Copy of the Electric Line Clearance Plan available to the public.

The Electric Line Clearance Management Plan may be viewed on Council's website www.ngshire.ngshire.vic.gov.au or a copy obtained by contacting Council on 5358 8700 or email ngshire@ngshire.vic.gov.au.

Schedule – Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance

Sch (1) Clearance space for electric lines

Annually three inspections will be carried out in the declared areas by the contractor to ensure that the clearance space is maintained as per the code. In these inspections, trees which are in breach of the Code will be identified & pruned. These inspections should also include the identification of any hazards outside the clearance and regrowth spaces that may require correction.

Council will, as far as practicable, restrict cutting or removal of native trees or trees of cultural or environmental significance to the minimum extent necessary to ensure best practice pruning standards and compliance with the requirements of the code of practice or to make an unsafe situation safe.

Council staff and contractors are required to consider and minimize at all times the impact of any works that they intend to carry out on the surrounding vegetation especially any vegetation that is of cultural, heritage or environmental significance. If of significance all parties affected by the works will be notified.

Sch (2) Hazard Trees

There are a range of factors which may indicate that a tree is a hazard tree. That is, a tree which is likely to fall onto, or come into contact with, an electric line. Some of these factors will be obvious when looking at the tree but many may only be apparent when the tree is assessed by a person with specific expertise and training, such as a suitably qualified arborist, (the arborist is to be qualified to National Certificate Level IV in Horticulture and Arboriculture including the “Access Trees” module, or an equivalent qualification with at least three years field experience).

The following criteria may be used to assist in identifying a hazard tree:

- The size of the tree suggests that it is likely to come into contact with the electric line, for example because it appears to be encroaching or growing into the line clearance space.
- There is an excessive lean on the tree, or branches’ hanging off the tree and the tree is in proximity to an electric (power) line.
- The size or appearance of the tree suggests it could come into contact with the line including under foreseeable local conditions.

Council does not permit anyone but Council approved contractors or staff to cut or remove trees. Council does not permit any tree to be removed unless it has been assessed by a suitably qualified Arborist, (qualified to National Certificate Level IV in Horticulture and Arboriculture including the “Access Trees” module, or an equivalent qualification with at least three years field experience).

Sch (3) Habitat Trees

There is no recorded habitat trees within the declared areas, however if it is found that a tree contains habitat hollows works will be scheduled for outside of breeding season where practicable. There are no threatened Flora, Fauna, Invertebrate and Vertebrate in Council's declared areas.

If it is impracticable to undertake cutting or removal of a tree outside the breeding season Staff will take appropriate action to relocate the fauna etc. wherever practical.

Sch (4) Notification and consultation

Council will inform people who are all affected by tree pruning or removal for electric line clearance with a notification letter or via the local newspapers.

Council will notify and consult with affected residents where requirements of this plan will change the current pruning practice or require the complete removal of vegetation. Notification will be at least 2 weeks (14 days) and not more than 60 days prior to the commencement of the works.

Sch (5) Urgent cutting or removal

The Council's Coordinator Parks & Gardens will convey to staff on the site of any urgent pruning or clearing to maintain the clearance space between each pruning cycle when notified by Powercor. If any urgent pruning is identified by staff, other than the Coordinator Parks & Gardens or Powercor, the contractor will be notified to conduct pruning works to maintain the clearance space and these works will be recorded in addition to the regular cyclic pruning program. Council will notify the affected persons as soon as practical after the works are completed.

If any urgent pruning is required as a result of a tree falling or damage to a tree requiring urgent pruning to maintain the clearance space, the contractor will be notified to conduct these works immediately in accordance with the Code of Practice. The staff that undertakes urgent work must not remove or prune trees further than one metre from the minimum clearance space around electricity lines.

Council's contractor and or council staff conducts the electrical line clearance pruning three times per year to avoid any rapid regrowth into the required clearance space. The contractor and or council staff take into allowance that some tree species have different regrowth characteristics and prune those species accordingly to avoid regrowth into the clearance space.

Council's contractor and or staff target prunes which direct regrowth away from the clearance space helping to ensure urgent pruning is not required. Shire staff liaises with the contractor to monitor trees that have a history of regrowth into the clearance zone after the pruning cycle and determine if removal and replacement with appropriate species is a viable option taking into consideration recurrent maintenance costs and future aesthetic and amenity value.

If an emergency cutting or removal is carried out the responsible person will notify all affected persons including the occupier of the land on which the tree was located. The notification will also include the actions to be taken to minimise the impact on any significant vegetation that may also be in the vicinity.

All details of emergency cutting or removal will filed in council's electronic records management system by the Coordinator Parks and Gardens (for at least five years).

The details to be kept will include:

- Where and when the cutting or removal was undertaken
- Why the cutting or removal was required
- The last inspection of the section of the electric line where the cutting or removal was required.

Sch (6) Dispute resolution procedure

Internal Dispute Resolution

Council is committed to sound decision making principles to ensure fair and responsible outcomes for the community. If a dispute cannot be resolved by the Manager Infrastructure, it will be escalated to the Director Infrastructure & Environment or the Chief Executive Officer for resolution. If necessary, the Chief Executive Officer may request that an independent external reviewer be appointed to assist in resolving the issue.

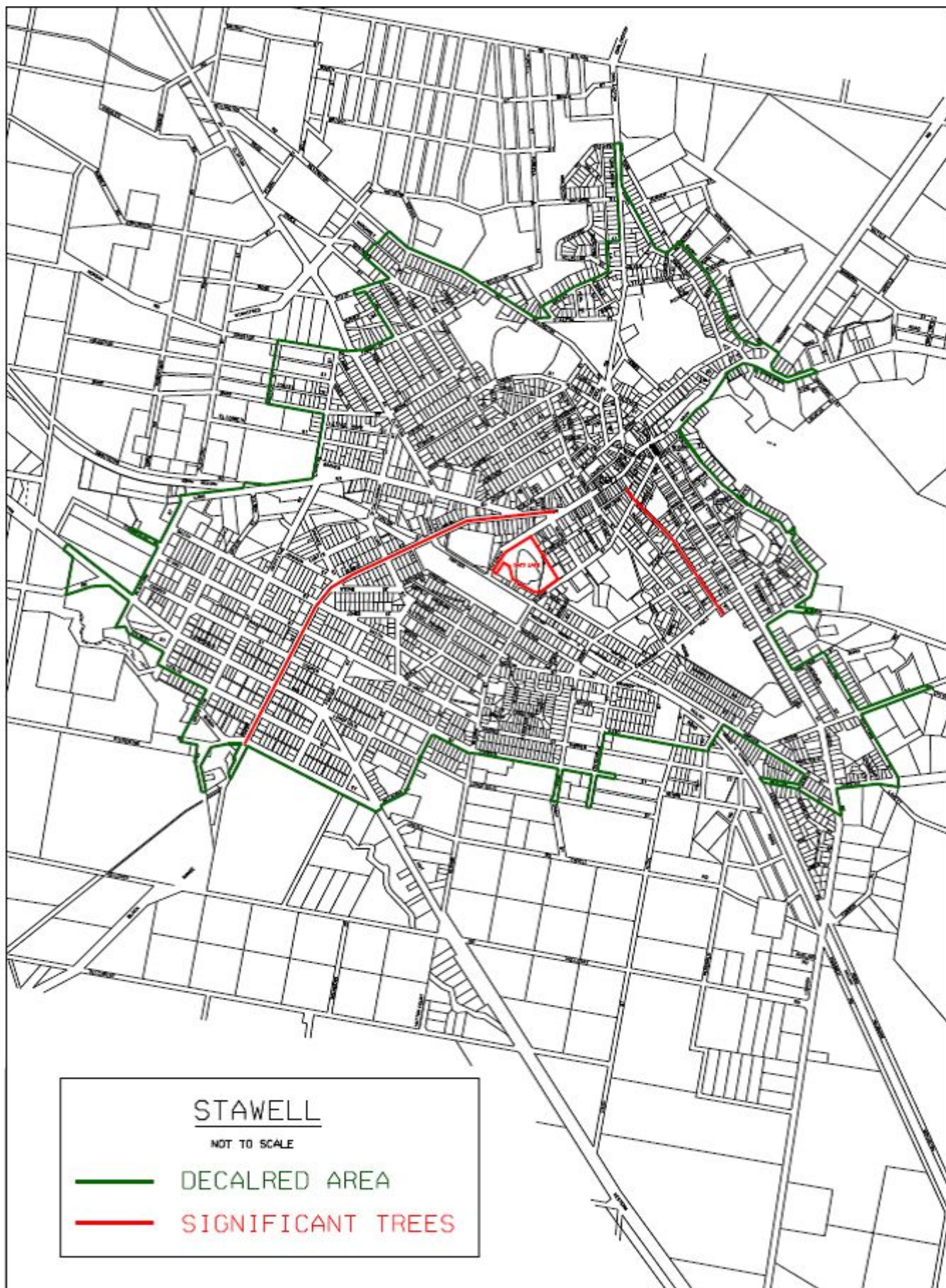
External Dispute Resolution

If the Council's dispute resolution is unsuccessful in resolving the issue, the plaintiff will be referred to the local distribution company or Energy Safe Victoria, whichever is most relevant.

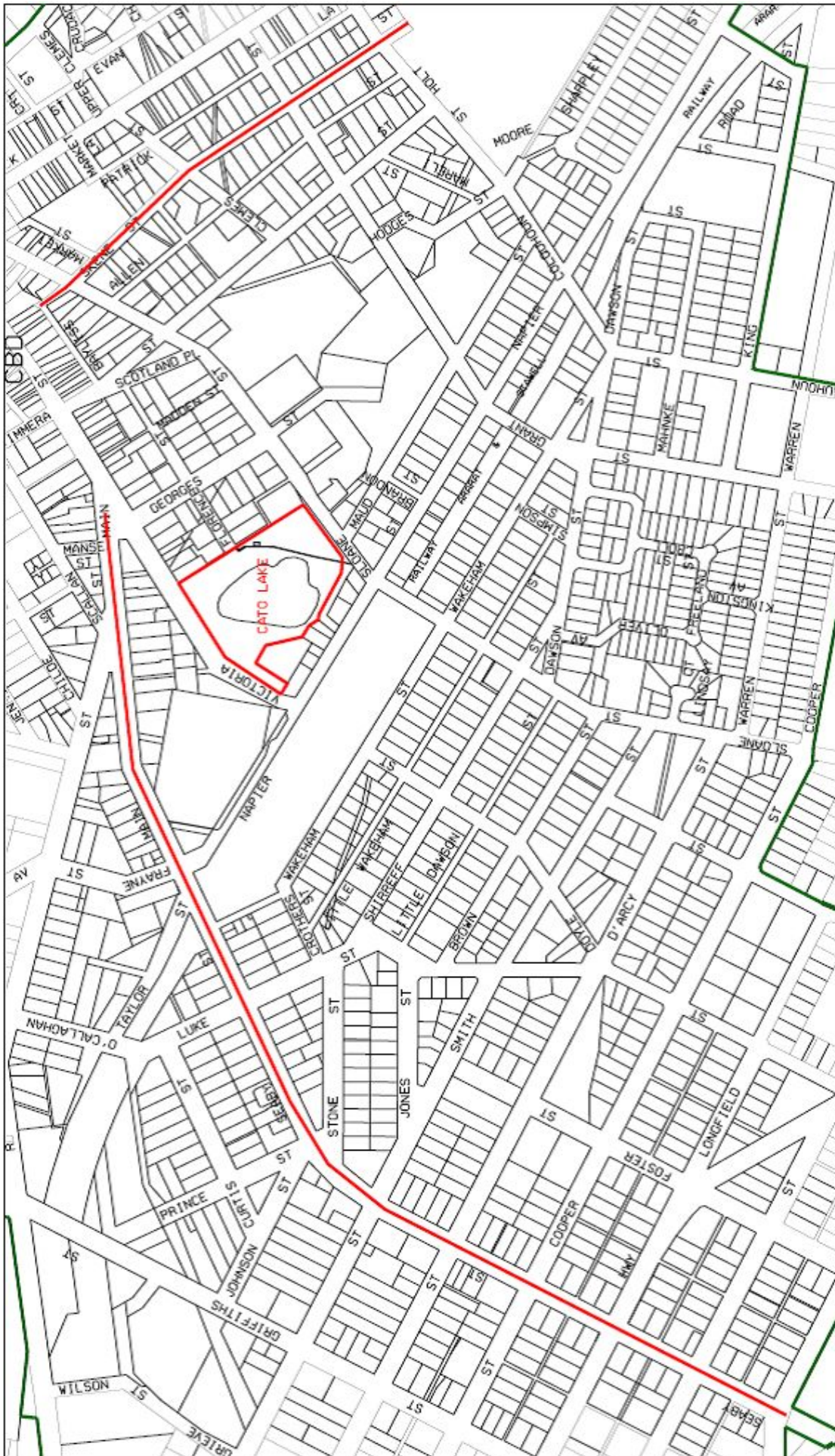
Appendix 1

Maps of Declared Areas

Stawell Declared Areas



Stawell Significant Trees Locations



St Arnaud Declared Areas



St Arnaud Significant Trees Locations

