

AURORA

HISTORICAL THEMES AND STORYLINES FOR INTERPRETATION STRATEGY

31 May 2010



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1 PROJECT SUMMARY

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.2 BRIEF

1.2.1 Commissioning process

In December 2009, VicUrban commissioned SHP to develop an Interpretation Strategy for Aurora. The Project Brief states that the key aims of the interpretation strategy are to provide 'a strategic framework for presentation and promotion of cultural and environmental heritage, and in doing so ... build a sense of place unique to Aurora'.¹

1.2.2 Site

Aurora is located 20 kilometres north of the Melbourne Central Business District. It is bounded by Craigieburn East Road to the north, O'Herns road to the south, the Craigieburn Bypass to the west and by a number of private properties to the east.

2 PROPOSED INTERPRETIVE CONTENT – THEMES

2.1 METHODOLOGY

SHP has developed a framework of themes to meet VicUrban's project aims of building a sense of place unique to Aurora. Building a sense of place has the added benefits of creating a sense of community and promoting respect for and pride in a place or site. Following liaison with VicUrban, SHP has also developed this framework of themes with an understanding of the interpretive and design strategies that might be used to present them.

The selected themes represent the different people who have lived at Aurora and events that have left a mark on the land. This ensures that important stories relating to discrete historical time-periods or particular persons are told clearly and effectively.

An over-arching theme, *A changing environment*, integrates the site's history and demonstrates that Aboriginal, European, environmental histories and Aurora's new histories can be addressed simultaneously. This inclusive framework of themes will assist in creating the feeling of identity, place, and community spirit that VicUrban is seeking for Aurora.

Interpretation therefore discusses either (a) individual themes or (b) a combination of themes.

¹ VicUrban, *Heritage interpretation strategy consultant brief*, VicUrban, Docklands, 2009.

2.2 FRAMEWORK OF THEMES

Theme	Sub themes	Storylines
A changing environment	The ancient environment	The natural environment before human habitation of the area (volcanic plains).
	Indigenous environment	How the land has been used and changed by the Wurundjeri people, including use of the stone to make tools and weapons. Use of animals and plants for food, clothing or medicine.
	European influences on the environment	How non-Indigenous people have changed and used the land, including the use of freestone to build drystone walls. The drystone walls on the Aurora site are notable because of their extensive use. How the introduction of exotic plants and animals has affected the natural environment.
	A sustainable future	Modern ideas of sustainability and the environment, especially the role of sustainability and the methods used at Aurora including water saving and energy saving techniques/inventions and innovation in building design. Why sustainability is important.
	Biodiversity and conservation	Native flora and fauna of the area. How they affect the local environment, why they are important. How to look after the area's plants and animals.
Aboriginal people	The Wurundjeri: traditional owners of the land	Creation stories.
	Before contact: Wurundjeri ways of life	Indigenous ways of life in the area before European arrival.
	Contact	Relationships between the Indigenous people and the Europeans.
	The Wurundjeri today	Relationships between Indigenous groups and the land today.
European settlement	Early European settlement	First settlers in the area, relationships between settlers and the government, bushfires (which destroyed evidence of settlement predating 1851).
	A growing community	The effects of the discovery of gold in the north, the railway, land boom and depression on the people in the area. Daily life in the area after nearby towns were established.
	Migration	How migrants arriving in the area have adapted to Australia and the impact they have made on the local area, from the 19th century to the present day.

Theme	Sub themes	Storylines
Agriculture and farming	Domestic life	The roles of men, women and children on the farm. Stories and recollections about farm life.
	Farming technologies and practices	The different farming technologies and practices that have been used from early European settlement until more recent times. These can be contrasted with methods of farming used by Indigenous people and sustainable practices that are used in modern farming today.
	Trials and triumphs	The factors that have caused an increase or decrease in demand for the region's produce, including the gold rush and the railway. The impact of the natural world on farming: flood, fire, drought and disease.
From rural to suburban		The growth of Melbourne and transformation of the Aurora site from farmland to residential area. The new history and stories of the land and its people.

2.3 THEME 1: A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

2.3.1 Rationale

The natural environment at Aurora has evolved over many thousands of years. One of the most dramatic changes occurred after the arrival of Europeans in the 1830s, when the land was adapted for agricultural use. The environment is changing again as VicUrban transforms the area into a suburb.

This theme examines how and why the environment has changed and the initiatives of VicUrban and the Aurora community to conserve native plants and animals and to limit the effects of suburban development through the use of water- and energy-saving technologies.

This theme intersects and unites all other interpretive themes for Aurora.

2.3.2 The ancient environment

Around seven million years ago, molten rock emerged from the earth's crust in this area to form volcanoes. These volcanoes were active in the region for around four million years, with volcanic activity ceasing only 800,000 years ago—over 750,000 years before Aboriginal people are known to have lived in the region. Most volcanic eruptions date from about two million years ago.²

These volcanoes stretched from present day Craigieburn to Wallan, creating a dramatic environment that is almost impossible to imagine today. The town of Epping is actually situated on the base of an extinct volcano.³

The Plenty Valley sits on one of the three largest basalt plains in the world.⁴ Volcanic activity in this region has created an undulating, rocky landscape with basalt stony rises on the highlands and swampy areas on the lowlands. The volcanoes created the stony rises, when lava flowed beneath solidified molten lava on the surface leaving tunnels, which then collapsed, leaving the troughs and ridges we see today.⁵ Deposits of silcrete and black and grey clay beneath the earth are also remnants of this distant volcanic past.

This landscape, rich in loamy soil and free-lying stone, would become the foundation of life for Aboriginal and European people alike many thousands of years later.⁶

² Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p.13.

³ RW Hartley, *Epping rising: an account of the Anglican Church in and around Epping*, St John the Evangelist, Epping, 2009, p.4.

⁴ Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley: an historical perspective', in Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley papers, volume 1, 1995, pp. 29-48, p.31.

⁵ Taryn Debney and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Aurora Estate (Balance of development area at O'Herns Road, Harvest Home Road), Epping North, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2009, p. 16.

⁶ Taryn Debney and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Aurora Estate (Balance of development area at O'Herns Road, Harvest Home Road), Epping North, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2009, p. 16.

2.3.3 Indigenous environment

Volcanic activity had ceased when the Wurundjeri first made this land their home here around 4,000 – 5,000 years ago.⁷ The rich basalt plains were home to grasslands and a grassy woodland, scattered River Red Gums and woody shrubs on stony rises, and native grasses and aquatic vegetation, which surrounded the trees and swamps.⁸ The area would have been boggy and swampy in winter and hot and dry in summer.⁹ The grasslands and nearby swamps and creeks formed an ideal habitat for kangaroos, wallabies, possums, birds, snakes and lizards: Edgars Creek would have been home to fish, yabbies, eels and mussels.

The barren basalt plains provided little protection from the wind, rain and sun, but the stony rises and open plains were replete with food, fish, birds and plants. The Wurundjeri would have used the area's plants, animals and rocks for food, medicines, tools and weapons. They probably also camped on the stony rises in the wetter months or when the low-lying ground became swampy. The Wurundjeri may also have used the area as an overnight stop on their way to larger waterways such as the Merri Creek.¹⁰

2.3.3.1 Connection to Country

The Wurundjeri have a deep, intrinsic relationship to Country. The land provided the people with food, medicine, shelter, tools and clothing. The plants, animals, waterways, rocks and even the earth beneath their feet were all life-sustaining and valuable.

This relationship will be expressed further below in the theme *Use of the environment* and in the subsequent theme *Aboriginal people*.

2.3.3.2 Use of the environment

The Wurundjeri used all the materials on the land and in the rivers and creeks to shape their lives. What we know today as the Plenty and Darebin Valleys offered the Wurundjeri a diverse habitat. The sandstone, silt stone and mud stone in the eastern part of the area gave them material for making tools. The forest that covered the area was home to birds, possums and other animals, which the men hunted while the women gathered eggs, fruit and nuts. In the western part of the area, basalt and silcrete from the volcanic plains made great material for sharp-edged tools.¹¹

Red gums flourished in the woodlands and Yam Daisies in spring. The Plenty Valley was the site of an ancient red gum forest, one of the largest outside the Murray Valley, and the vast grasslands were home to mobs of kangaroos and emus.¹²

⁷ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p. 144. Sites at Aurora are probably 4,000 to 5,000 years old.

⁸ Taryn Debney and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Aurora Estate (Balance of development area at O'Herns Road, Harvest Home Road), Epping North, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2009, pp. 48-9.

⁹ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p. 14.

¹⁰ Debney and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Aurora Estate (Balance of development area at O'Herns Road, Harvest Home Road), Epping North, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2009, pp. 26-7.

¹¹ Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley: an historical perspective', in Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley papers, volume 1, 1995, pp. 29-48, p. 40.

¹² Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley: an historical perspective', in Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley papers, volume 1, 1995, pp. 29-48, p. 31.

Several scar trees dot the region, showing how the Wurundjeri used and shaped the land around them:

I found that the Shire of Whittlesea had a lot of cultural areas, especially around the creeks. And even though a lot of it has been knocked down, cut down, a lot of the treed areas, there are still a lot of stone artefacts scattered around the creeks. And there are still small remnants of the old red gum trees, which possibly may have some Aboriginal scars on them, an Aboriginal scar tree being proof that Aboriginal people had used the bark off the tree ...¹³

Scars on the trees were formed when bark slabs were removed to make shields, shelters and water containers.

The rivers were the lifeblood of the community. Bullrushes along the river banks were edible and had fibres for making string, while straight water reeds made excellent spear shafts.¹⁴

Backed blades and scrapes at the Aboriginal sites were probably used by the Wurundjeri to butcher animals and then for processing the skins, scraping hides and cutting reeds.¹⁵ Girls learnt how to gather rushes from the river and weave them into baskets and nets by moulding them over a rounded stone; how to twist possum hair and roll it across their thighs to produce yarn.¹⁶ Boys learnt how to cut a piece of bark from a tree and shape it into a disc with white clay in the centre, which they then used as a target for light spears.¹⁷

All Wurundjeri women carried a long, fire-hardened digging stick called a 'kannan', which they used to dig up the Murnong (Yam Daisy), a staple food. They made wooden drinking containers (tarnuks) from knotty growths on the trunks and boughs of gum trees and very large containers, known as tarnuk bullitos, in which they placed Banksia blossoms and blossoms from other flowering plants, pounded them into a pulp, and then mixed them with water to make a sweet drink.¹⁸

Eucalyptus gum was collected in season then rolled into balls, wrapped in fibre bags and hung in a tree, since gum dissolved in water was a common remedy for dysentery. Wattle sap was also a valued food and medicine, as were insects such as large ants or swollen grubs.¹⁹ The Wurundjeri baked their meat and roots in holes dug in the ground, which formed ovens. Red gums were a source

¹³ Wurundjeri Cultural Officer Bill Nicholson Jr quoted in Robert Pascoe, *A community portrait: lifetimes in the City of Whittlesea*, City of Whittlesea, Bundoora, 2001, p. 24.

¹⁴ Isabel Ellender, 'The Aboriginal cultural landscapes of the Plenty and Darebin Valleys', in Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley papers, volume 1, 1995, pp. 18-28, p. 20.

¹⁵ Taryn Debney and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Aurora Estate (Balance of development area at O'Herns Road, Harvest Home Road), Epping North, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2009, p.148.

¹⁶ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, p.39.

¹⁷ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, p.39.

¹⁸ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, p.40.

¹⁹ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, p.40.

of boomerangs, known as 'wonguims' to the Wurundjeri. Skilled throwers could bounce the wonguim off the ground.²⁰

The Wurundjeri used possums not only for food, but also for cloaks. They decorated the cloaks with engravings of shapes and images of people and animals such as kangaroos, emus and fish.²¹ Wurundjeri men hunted kangaroo by slowly creeping closer towards the animals while mimicking their calls. As the hunters came within spear-throwing distance they would start shrieking violently to confuse and frighten the kangaroos, which would stop to listen, giving the hunters an opportunity to attack and kill them.²²

The Wurundjeri used the native mulberry to create fire. They would make a notch in a 'flat piece of dry wood' from the mulberry and inserted a drill stick made from one of its young shoots 'which is carefully dried' into the cavity and turned it rapidly, producing dust that eventually catches fire.²³

The way the Wurundjeri used the area's natural resources gradually changed as Europeans began occupying their land.

2.3.3.3 Wurundjeri sites

When Europeans first arrived in Victoria they observed Aboriginal people camping on the banks of waterways such as the Plenty River, Darebin Creek and Merri Creek and hunting at the places now known as Whittlesea, Greensborough and Diamond Creek.²⁴ The Whittlesea area also had a number of sacred sites where the Wurundjeri held ceremonies and conducted business and trade.²⁵

The land at Aurora is not likely to have been a campsite for the Wurundjeri people, but the wide, open plains at Aurora were once littered with basalt and would have provided the people with a valuable hunting ground for kangaroo and wallaby as well as a source of stone for carving weapons and tools. The plants that grew on these plains would also have been used for food and medicine and woven into baskets, nets and ornaments.²⁶

2.3.4 European environment

Europeans made use of the natural environment and shaped the landscape around them. Sometimes their impact on the land was damaging: native plant and animal species became extinct or threatened as their natural habitats were destroyed.

²⁰ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, p.40.

²¹ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, p. 45.

²² Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, pp. 40-43.

²³ AW Howitt, *Native tribes of south-east Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2001, p. 771.

²⁴ Taryn Debney and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Aurora Estate (Balance of development area at O'Herns Road, Harvest Home Road), Epping North, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2009, p. 22.

²⁵ City of Whittlesea 2010, *City of Whittlesea's Indigenous History*, City of Whittlesea, South Morang, Viewed 2 February 2010, <<http://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/content/content.asp?asc=2&chr=c&cnid=1276>>.

²⁶ Taryn Debney and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Aurora Estate (Balance of development area at O'Herns Road, Harvest Home Road), Epping North, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2009, p. 18.

2.3.4.1 Water

Like the camps of the Wurundjeri before them, early settlements in the Epping region clustered near waterways such as Edgars Creek, which was then a much more prolific waterway than it is today.²⁷ All the farms in the area depended on fresh water for survival.

The local farmers needed to cross Edgars Creek to travel into town and sell their produce. To do this, they built fords from bluestone across the creek bed to enable carriages and other vehicles to cross from one side of the creek to the other.

2.3.4.2 Quarrying

Early settlers made use of the stony landscape that the ancient volcanoes had created millions of years earlier. Settlers rebuilding after the disastrous 1851 bushfires began utilising the large amounts of bluestone scattered across the area.²⁸ Some of the basalt on the stony rises at Aurora is marked by small quarry holes, especially on the stony rises near the remains of bluestone buildings such as Old Myee, Creeds Farm, Lehmann's farm and Old Roxborough. Local farmers quarried stone to build houses and outbuildings, tracks and dry stone walls during the 1850s and 1860s and beyond. Biosis Research suggests that the local farmers may have used the quarries near Creeds Farm to mine stone to sell for making cobble stone streets.²⁹

2.3.4.3 Dry stone walls

Dry stone walling was a centuries-old technique used by farmers in European countries, including England, Scotland, Ireland and Germany, to mark the boundaries of their land and enclose paddocks and livestock. European farmers used whatever rock was readily available and built the walls along the contours of the land. These farmers brought their skills and techniques with them when they migrated to Australia. The dry stone walls at Creeds Farm are made from quarried stone, but most of Epping's landowners used the weathered volcanic rock that lay freely on the ground to assemble the walls.³⁰

2.3.4.4 Plants and animals

Europeans introduced many exotic plant and animal species to Epping and the surrounding areas. The Victorian Acclimatisation Society was responsible for introducing a number of European species in the 1860s and 1870s, with the aim of making the strange Australian environment more productive and familiar to the new settlers. Sheep, cattle, chickens and pigs were shipped to Victoria for farming and rabbits, hares and foxes were introduced for hunting.³¹

Epping and Wollert were popular locations for fox hunts in the 1920s and 1930s. The Findon Harriers Hunt Club of Mill Park regularly visited the area:

²⁷ Robert Pascoe, *A community portrait: lifetimes in the City of Whittlesea*, City of Whittlesea, Bundoora, 2001, p. 31.

²⁸ JW Payne, *The Plenty: a centenary history of the Whittlesea Shire*, Lowden Publishing, Kilmore, 1975, p.13.

²⁹ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p.81.

³⁰ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, pp. 79-81.

³¹ Yvette Height, 'Introduction of exotic plants and animals', *Gold!*, SBS, viewed 20 April 2010, <<http://www.sbs.com.au/gold/story.php?storyid=130>>.

*The meet of the Findon Harriers yesterday was at the Wayside Hall, Wollert at noon. A cold northerly wind was blowing as the master led the field along the lane to the west and continued throughout the afternoon, in spite of which an excellent day's sport was recorded. Almost immediately after crossing a wall into Roy Batten's back paddock hounds opened on the line of a fox and ran south as far as the Wollert lane, and then south-west across the Summerhill Estate to the eastern boundary of Justin's, from where the vixen continuing her downwind line, crossed the Craigieburn lane into Lynch Park ...*³²

Farmers cleared native grasses and trees such as red gums for farming and planted pasture grasses and cyprus, peppercorn and pine trees around their homesteads and fruit trees in their orchards instead. Cows and sheep ate native plants ferociously and trampled the earth, changing the soil and surface of the land.³³

2.3.4.5 Reactions to the land

The pastoral landscape was an inspiration to some Europeans. Melbourne artists frequented Epping and Wollert to paint the area in the 20th century, including Second World War official war artists Murray Griffin and Charles Bush, Phyl Waterhouse, William Frater and Arnold Shore, who co-founded the only Melbourne artist school to teach modernism when it opened in 1932.³⁴

In the words of one artist:

*I can't really describe the extreme sort of beauty of the landscape at the time (from the 1930s to the 1950s), the wonderful way of life.*³⁵

³² *The Argus*, 10 July 1937.

³³ Tony Dingle, *The Victorians: settling*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, McMahons Point, 1984, p. 37.

³⁴ R Dedman 1988, 'Arnold Joseph Victor Shore', *Australian dictionary of biography: online edition*, Australian National University, Canberra, 2006, viewed 28 April 2010, <<http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110617b.htm>>; Australian War Memorial, *Artist profiles: Murray Griffin, 1903-1992*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 2010, viewed 28 April 2010, <http://www.awm.gov.au/people/artist_profiles/griffin.asp>; David Keys, 'Charles William Bush', *Australian dictionary of biography: online edition*, Australian National University, Canberra, 2006, viewed 28 April 2010, <<http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A170164b.htm>>.

³⁵ John Borrack, quoted in Robert Pascoe, *A community portrait: lifetimes in the City of Whittlesea*, City of Whittlesea, Bundoora, 2001, p. 31.

2.3.5 A sustainable future

Aurora is Victoria's first six-star energy rated sustainable development, making sustainability an important and unique part of life in the suburb.

The way we use and interact with the land has changed substantially since Europeans first settled in Whittlesea. The Australian public is becoming increasingly aware of and interested in sustainability and environmental issues. Many people are now more conscious of the damage they can do with uncensored exploitation of Australia's natural resources and are looking to the ways Indigenous people used the land before contact, as well as new technologies and initiatives, to shape the future.

Key features of Aurora include:

- Recycled water
- Water sensitive urban design
- Parks and nature reserves
- Protected natural habitats
- Energy efficient design
- Insulation
- Four and five star energy rated appliances
- Cross-flow ventilation cooling systems
- Native gardens
- Gas-boosted solar hot water
- Frog ponds.

2.3.6 Biodiversity and conservation

Aurora is home to many native animals, birds, fish, and insects including two endangered species—the growling grass frog and golden sun moth—and significant flora such as the matted flax-lily, arching flax-lily, austral cranesbill, pale-flowered cranesbill and the tough scurf-pea. VicUrban's plans for Aurora include a number of initiatives aimed at conserving native wildlife.

2.3.6.1 Golden Sun Moth

The Golden Sun Moth, *Synemon plana*, is a medium-sized moth that flies during the day and lives in native temperate grasslands and grassy woodlands that have wallaby grass. Once, their habitat would have covered over 2,000,000 hectares of land in south-eastern Australia; now only one per cent remains. This loss of habitat has shrunk the Golden Sun Moth populations dramatically.

The moths can be identified by their distinctive colourings, clubbed antennae and the difference in wing span between male and female moths. Males have a wing span of 3.4 centimetres, dark brown forewings with grey patterns and a bronze or dark brown hindwing with dark brown patterns. Females have a wing span of 3.1 centimetres, dark grey forewings with paler grey scaled patterns and a bright orange hindwing with black dots around the edges.

Adult moths live for only two to five days because they have no useable mouth-parts. They tend to be active during the hottest part of sunny days in breeding season, which falls between mid-October and

early January. They do not fly when the weather is wet, overcast or very windy. Females lay around 100 to 150 eggs in the tillers (shoots) of wallaby grass tussocks and between the tillers and soil during their short adult lives.

The Australian Government's Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts lists the golden sun moth as critically endangered. Today it is known to occur in only 45 sites in Victoria, 48 in New South Wales and 32 in the Australian Capital Territory.

Aurora, which has mostly grassy woodlands and native grasslands, is one of the rare habitats of the Golden Sun Moth. VicUrban's plans for Aurora ensure the new development does not impact upon the habitat of this endangered species.³⁶

2.3.6.2 Growling Grass Frog

The Growling Grass Frog, *Litoria raniformis*, also known by the common names southern bell frog, green and gold frog and the warty swamp frog, is another endangered species that lives at Aurora. It is one of the largest species of frogs in Australia. The females are the largest of the species, reaching up to 104 millimetres in length, but they can be as small as 60 millimetres long. Males are usually between 55 and 65 millimetres long.

Growling Grass Frogs range in colour from olive to emerald green with gold, black, brown or bronze spots. They are known as the 'Growling Grass Frog' because of the distinctive call that adult males make, which is a long growl followed by a few short grunting sounds.

Growling Grass Frogs live among vegetation on or around the edges of warm, still or slow moving ponds, swamps (including ephemeral swamps), streams, farm dams, lagoons and lakes. They can also live on farmland if bodies of water with dense vegetation are nearby, but need permanent sources of fresh water to breed.

In warm weather Growling Grass Frogs are active and can often be seen out of the water, basking in the sun in the vegetation or on rocks or logs. They are also active at night, when they eat and call to one another. In winter they are mostly inactive and hibernate in sheltered areas, often away from water. Growling Grass Frogs eat ground-dwelling insects, small lizards and snakes, fish, tadpoles and other frogs including smaller growling grass frogs. They capture their prey by sitting and waiting for it to come to them.

Growling Grass Frogs, which were once plentiful in Victoria, are now suffering from loss of habitat, lower rainfall and an infectious disease known as chytrid fungus.³⁷ VicUrban has created a new

³⁶ Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, *Synemon plana*—golden sun moth, Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Canberra, 2010, viewed 21 April 2010, <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=25234>.

³⁷ Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, *Litoria raniformis*—growling grass frog, southern bell frog, green and gold frog, warty swamp frog, Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Canberra, 2010, viewed 21 April 2010, <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=1828>; Museum Victoria, *Growling grass frog*, *Litoria raniformis*, Museum Victoria, Carlton, 2010, viewed 21 April 2010, <<http://www.museumvictoria.museum/discoverycentre/infosheets/frogs-of-victoria/growling-grass-frog/>>; Department of Sustainability and Environment, *Growling grass frog*, *Litoria raniformis*, Department of Sustainability and Environment, East

wetlands habitat to help protect Growling Grass Frogs and provide them with a suitable breeding area. Once the Aurora development is completed, 16 Growling Grass Frog habitats close to Edgars Creek will have been established.

2.4 THEME 2: ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

2.4.1 Rationale

Several Aboriginal sites lie within the boundaries of Aurora. This theme looks at the Aboriginal people who are the traditional owners of this land, the Wurundjeri, and examines their daily lives. It also tells some of the stories from the Dreaming and the pre-contact period.

Although this theme touches on the Wurundjeri's relationship with and use of the land, which are highly important aspects of Wurundjeri life, these ideas are covered in more depth in *A changing environment*.

2.4.2 The Wurundjeri: traditional owners of the land

The people of the Kulin Nation have lived in the Port Phillip area for at least 30,000 years.³⁸ Five clans, including the Wurundjeri, form the Woiwurrung language group. At the time of European colonisation in the 1830s, the boundaries of the Wurundjeri's land stretched '*From the junction of the Saltwater and the Yarra Rivers, along the course of the former to Mount Macedon, thence to Mount Baw-Baw, along the Dividing Range, round the sources of the Plenty and Yarra to the Dandenong Mountains, thence by Gardiner's Creek and the Yarra to the starting-point*'.³⁹

The Wurundjeri people were separated into two patrilineal groups: the Wurrundjeri-willam and the Bulug willam. The Wurundjeri-willam clan occupied the land that now comprises Aurora at Epping North and are the traditional owners of the land. Billibellary and his family's land began on the north bank of the Yarra at Yarra Bend and extended along the Merri Creek to the north.⁴⁰ Aurora falls within Billibellary and his family's territory.

2.4.2.1 Creation and the Dreaming

The Wurundjeri have several Dreaming beings: Bunjil (eagle-hawk), Waang (Crow), Myndie (snake) and Thara (small hawk).⁴¹ Of these, Bunjil, the creator, is the most sacred.

Wurundjeri elder Joy Murphy-Wandin describes how '*our place has been created by a very special spiritual being that we know as Bunjil the Eagle ... Bunjil created the land. The mountains, the rivers, the animals, the birds, the trees. All living and natural things*'.⁴² William Thomas, Assistant Protector of Aborigines from 1839 to 49, recorded the story of how Bunjil created human beings:

Punjil [sic] one day cut, with his large knife, two pieces of bark, mixed up a lot of clay, and made two black men, one very black and the other not quite black ... After finishing the two men, Punjil [sic] looked on them, was pleased, and danced round them. He then lay on each of them, blowing into their nostrils, mouth, and navel, and the two men began to move ... The

³⁸ Gary Presland, *Aboriginal Melbourne: the lost land of the Kulin people*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1998, p. 36.

³⁹ AW Howitt, *Native tribes of south-east Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2001, p. 71.

⁴⁰ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, p. 35.

⁴¹ AW Howitt, *Native tribes of south-east Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2001, p. 126.

⁴² Joy Murphy-Wandin, quoted in Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Melbourne, *Yarra healing: towards reconciliation with Indigenous Australians*, Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Melbourne, Melbourne, n.d., viewed 11 March 2010, <<http://www.yarrahealing.catholic.edu.au/stories-voices/index.cfm?loadref=79>>.

*next day Pallian [Bunjil's brother] was in a creek paddling and beating in the water, in which used to indolge. After some time the water got thick like mud, so that he could scarcely move ... He beat harder and harder, and saw near him come up four hands, then two heads, and so on, till breasts, and two human figures complete appeared ... but they could not move; he carried one and then the other to his brother Punjil [sic], who breathed into their nostrils, mouth, and navel ...*⁴³

Mindye is feared by the Wurundjeri. He is shaped like a great snake with a long, thick and powerful body and is both visible and invisible at the same time. Mindye has a large head and two ears and three fangs coming out from its tongue and when it hisses out its fury the earth around is covered with white particles like snow.⁴⁴ Ultimately, Mindye is under the control of Bunjil. According to Wurundjeri accounts, when a tribe committed evil acts Bunjil gave the command and Mindye destroyed the wrong-doers with plague and illness. Mindye inhabited a country called Lill-goner, some distance north-west of Melbourne. Living near a mountain, it drank only from one special creek.⁴⁵

*... Mindi [is] this creature who can sort of seek retribution on Aboriginal people. He knows all black fellas and black fellas know Mindi, but he can't operate unless he sort of gets the nod from Bunjil ...*⁴⁶

2.4.3 Before contact: Wurundjeri ways of life

2.4.3.1 Moieties

*And he says one man and one woman will be of the **eagle** people, or moiety, or blood, or class. One man and one woman would also be of the **crow** class ... So [there after] the eagle man would marry crow woman and have eagle children. The crow man would marry eagle woman and have crow children, so they would then have unrelated children ... and that's how the social system of Aboriginal societies generally worked - in moiety.*⁴⁷

Each member of the Kulin Nation had his or her own moiety: Bunjil (eaglehawk) or Waa (crow). Wurundjeri-willam people were of Waa moiety. Men and women from the Wurundjeri-willam had to marry someone from the Bunjil moiety, which sometimes meant leaving their land to join a distant clan. Wurundjeri men usually had only one wife, but the ngurungaeta often had more.⁴⁸

⁴³ William Thomas, 'Brief account of the Aborigines of Australia Felix', in CE Sayers (Ed), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian pioneers to his Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, Lloyd O'Neil for Curry O'Neil, South Yarra, 1983, pp. 422-23.

⁴⁴ William Thomas, 'Brief account of the Aborigines of Australia Felix', in CE Sayers (Ed), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian pioneers to his Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, Lloyd O'Neil for Curry O'Neil, South Yarra, 1983, p.426. This may be a reference to volcanic activity.

⁴⁵ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, p.75.

⁴⁶ Ian Hunter, oral history, 2004-05, quoted in Aliey Ball, *Wurundjeri dreaming*, Freshwater.net.au, Coburg, 2006, viewed 16 March 2010, <http://www.freshwater.net.au/wurundjeri/melbourne_aboriginal_dreamtime.htm>.

⁴⁷ Ian Hunter, oral history, 2004-05, quoted in Aliey Ball, *Wurundjeri dreaming*, Freshwater.net.au, Coburg, 2006, viewed 16 March 2010, <http://www.freshwater.net.au/wurundjeri/melbourne_aboriginal_dreamtime.htm>.

⁴⁸ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, p. 38.

2.4.3.2 Clan structure

Each tribe was governed by its elders, but they selected a few men to become ngurungaeta, or chief. William Thomas wrote that the chief 'directs all movements, and ... knows well where all the members of the community are'.⁴⁹ A man was chosen to become a ngurungaeta if he was mature, sensible, did no harm to others and 'spoke straight'.⁵⁰ Billibellary was the ngurungaeta of the Wurundjeri-willam clan.

2.4.3.3 Daily life

Wurundjeri-willam people had regular camping spots near creeks and rivers that they used seasonally. When the weather was cold and the banks of the waterways were likely to burst or flood, they travelled into the northern ranges. They built semi-permanent miams, or huts, out of bark to protect themselves from the cool air, rain and wind and moved to different sites occasionally. When the warmer months arrived, food supplies were more plentiful and the Wurundjeri returned to the Melbourne hinterland. Kangaroo were abundant in the warm season and, when a Wurundjeri man killed one, he shared it with the rest of the clan. The Wurundjeri often visited the Bunurong in summer to access the fishing areas in their territory and speared fish at night by wading through shallow water using fire sticks to light their way.⁵¹

William Thomas observed that the local Aboriginal people moved to new camps every one to three days during the warmer months, but they usually walked no more than six miles each day.

*In their migratory moves all are employed; children in getting gum, knocking down birds, &c.; women in digging up roots, killing bandicoots, getting grubs, &c., &c. They mostly are at the encampment about an hour before sundown—the women first, who get fire and water, &c., by the time their spouses arrive.*⁵²

The stone quarry at Mount William, near Lancefield, was one of the most important places in the Wurundjeri's territory, since its hard stone made excellent quality axe heads. If neighbouring tribes wanted some of this stone, they sent a messenger to Billibellary offering to trade the stone for other goods, such as possum skin cloaks and spears. Tribes from as far away as present-day South Australia and New South Wales traded goods with the Wurundjeri in return for Mount William stone.⁵³

⁴⁹ William Thomas, 'Brief account of the Aborigines of Australia Felix', in CE Sayers (Ed), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian pioneers to his Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, Lloyd O'Neil for Curry O'Neil, South Yarra, 1983, p. 398.

⁵⁰ AW Howitt, *Native tribes of south-east Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2001, p. 307.

⁵¹ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, pp. 39-40.

⁵² William Thomas, 'Brief account of the Aborigines of Australia Felix', in CE Sayers (Ed), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian pioneers to his Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, Lloyd O'Neil for Curry O'Neil, South Yarra, 1983, p. 399.

⁵³ AW Howitt, *Native tribes of south-east Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2001, p. 311; Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, p. 44.

2.4.3.4 Entertainment

All of the Wurundjeri gathered together every few months for music and dancing.⁵⁴ As William Thomas described:

*They have various kinds, day and night ... the song and words are to the motion of the body, like our country dances and reels.*⁵⁵

The wonguim, or boomerang, was essentially a weapon, but on some nights, wonguims were set alight and thrown into the night sky – a kind of Wurundjeri firework.⁵⁶

The Wurundjeri and their neighbouring tribes enjoyed playing a game called marngrook, the predecessor of Australian Rules Football. The players were divided into two teams. One player kicked a ball (known as the marngrook) made from possum skin and filled with grass into the air and the others would jump as high as they could to catch it. Early European witnesses to the game were impressed by the players' athleticism.⁵⁷

2.4.4 Contact

Wurundjeri life changed irrevocably when Europeans arrived. The first European to make an impact on the people was John Batman. Batman arrived at Port Phillip from Launceston, Van Diemen's Land, in search of pastoral land in 1835. Batman was prepared to meet the local Indigenous people. He brought not only Aboriginal people from Sydney but also a treaty with him so he could communicate with and 'legally' buy 600,000 acres of land from the local native people in return for 'blankets, knives, looking-glasses, tomahawks, beads, scissors, flour, etc'.⁵⁸

John Batman described his first meeting with the Indigenous people of Port Phillip on 6 June 1835:

We walked about eight miles when we fell in the tracks of the natives, and shortly after came up with a family—one chief, his wife, and three children ... We walked about eight miles, when, to our great surprise, we heard several voices calling after us. On looking back we saw eight men all armed with spears, etc. When we stopped they threw aside their weapons and came very friendly up to us ... After some time, and full explanation, I found eight chiefs amongst them, who possessed the whole of the country near Port Phillip. Three brothers, all of the same name, are the principal chiefs ... After a full explanation of what my object was, I purchased two

⁵⁴ William Thomas, 'Brief account of the Aborigines of Australia Felix', in CE Sayers (Ed), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian pioneers to his Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, Lloyd O'Neil for Curry O'Neil, South Yarra, 1983, p. 398.

⁵⁵ William Thomas, 'Brief account of the Aborigines of Australia Felix', in CE Sayers (Ed), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian pioneers to his Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, Lloyd O'Neil for Curry O'Neil, South Yarra, 1983, p. 402.

⁵⁶ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, pp. 40, 43.

⁵⁷ Isabel Ellender and Peter Christiansen, *People of the Merri Merri: the Wurundjeri in colonial days*, Merri Creek Management Committee, East Brunswick, 2001, p. 45.

⁵⁸ John Batman, 'The journal', 10 May – 11 June 1835, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 2010, pp. 62-5, viewed 3 May 2010, <<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/portphillip/0/0/1/flash/pp0016-062-0.shtml>>.

*large tracts of land from them ... The parchment the eight chiefs signed this afternoon, delivering to me some of the soil of each of them, as giving me full possession of the tracts of land.*⁵⁹

One of the three 'principal chiefs' mentioned by Batman was Billibellary, although Batman named him (and the two other chiefs) Jagajaga.

The exact location of the signing of the treaty is unknown, but historians believe that it occurred within the boundaries of the present-day City of Whittlesea, on the banks of Edgars Creek at Thomastown or Darebin Creek at Bundoora or Epping.⁶⁰ Wherever this took place, it clearly concerned Wurundjeri Country as well as land belonging to other tribes. Although land purchase was a foreign concept to the people of the Kulin Nation, they had a ceremony that welcomed strangers and gave them permission to use their land and resources and it is possible that this is how they understood the treaty.⁶¹

Europeans pastoralists began their grab for land at Port Phillip soon after Batman's triumphant return to Van Diemen's Land. Settlers started establishing themselves in the Whittlesea area from the late 1830s. The supply of traditional Aboriginal food sources dried up as the new arrivals cleared bush, scrub and woodland to make way for livestock and introduced crops. Conflict occurred when Europeans prevented the Wurundjeri from camping where they wished and refused to give them food and other resources, which the Aboriginal people expected after centuries of sharing supplies with their kin and neighbouring tribes.⁶² The Europeans introduced exotic diseases to the Wurundjeri, which decimated their population. Some Wurundjeri people worked for local settlers. William Thomas noted that 'the Yarra blacks were engaged with the farmers by the Plenty' in the early 1840s.⁶³

As their interaction with Europeans increased, Aboriginal people began incorporating European materials such as glass and metal into their daily lives. They learnt English words and tasted European food. Alcohol abuse became a problem. Europeans had also given firearms to a number of Wurundjeri people, but this led to fear that the food and land-deprived people might attack their dispossessors.⁶⁴

2.4.4.1 The Aboriginal Protectorate

The British Government established the Aboriginal Protectorate in 1838 with the aims of ensuring the 'protection and civilisation' of the Aboriginal people.⁶⁵ This involved providing Aboriginal people with food, medicine, clothing, education, religious education and defending them when their lives or

⁵⁹ John Batman, 'The journal', 10 May – 11 June 1835, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 2010, pp. 62-5, viewed 3 May 2010, <<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/portphillip/0/0/1/flash/pp0016-062-0.shtml>>.

⁶⁰ Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley – an historical perspective', Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley Papers, 1995, p. 33.

⁶¹ Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians: a history since 1800*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, p. 10.

⁶² Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians: a history since 1800*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, p. 18.

⁶³ William Thomas, 'Brief account of the Aborigines of Australia Felix', in CE Sayers (Ed), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian pioneers to his Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, Lloyd O'Neil for Curry O'Neil, South Yarra, 1983, p. 416.

⁶⁴ Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians: a history since 1800*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, pp. 22-3.

⁶⁵ Public Record Office of Victoria, *Tracking the native police*, Public Record Office of Victoria, North Melbourne, n.d., viewed 27 April 2010, <http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/nativepolice/background_protectorate.html>.

property were under threat.⁶⁶ From 1840 until 1842, Assistant Protector of Aborigines, William Thomas, ran the Aboriginal Protectorate Station at Narre Narre Warren, but Captain Dana moved the station to the banks of Merri Merri Creek in 1842.

Thomas's journals and letters offer a valuable record of this period. He worked closely with the Wurundjeri ngurungaeta, Billibellary.

*Bilbolary [sic] ... stands foremost, and justly so, as ever being the white man's friend—generous, frank, and determined as he was ...*⁶⁷

Most settlers disliked the Protectorate system because it was paid for by the colonial land fund and took up five square miles of land for each Protectorate station. They also accused the Protectors of showing favouritism towards Aborigines when disputes arose. The system was disbanded in 1849 after being deemed a failure.⁶⁸

2.4.4.2 Native Police Corps

Superintendent La Trobe had assigned money to form a Native Police Corps by 1842. The Corps was to be a mounted police force made up of European officers and Aboriginal troopers. William Thomas and Captain Dana visited Billibellary on 17 February 1842 to gain the leader's support for the plan.

*Having received intimation that Government was desirous of forming a native police, I consulted this chief who had often protected my life ... [Billibellary] begged seven days to think. Night after night did this faithful chief address the encampment. True to the day, on the 24th he had the company together, leading the train. After stating the duties, he signed his name first, not, however, before saying, "I am king; I no ride on horseback; I no go out of my country; young men go as you say, not me." Through his influence the native police was first formed.*⁶⁹

Billibellary signed up with the Police Corps, but his service was short-lived. He showed more interest in its ceremonial side rather than being an active member of the Corps. But his influence over other members was instrumental in maintaining good relations between the men.⁷⁰

This good man used often, after the first fortnight, to appeal to me, on being ordered to march up and down for two hours ... I at length brought Captain Dana to consent that he be permitted to be on duty when he pleased; regimentals, gun, &c., were at his disposal. Generally an hour

⁶⁶ Public Record Office of Victoria, *Tracking the native police*, Public Record Office of Victoria, North Melbourne, n.d., viewed 27 April 2010, <http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/nativepolice/background_protectorate.html>.

⁶⁷ William Thomas, 'Brief account of the Aborigines of Australia Felix', in CE Sayers (Ed), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian pioneers to his Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, Lloyd O'Neil for Curry O'Neil, South Yarra, 1983, p. 404.

⁶⁸ Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians: a history since 1800*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, pp. 36-40.

⁶⁹ William Thomas, 'Brief account of the Aborigines of Australia Felix', in CE Sayers (Ed), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian pioneers to his Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, Lloyd O'Neil for Curry O'Neil, South Yarra, 1983, pp. 404-5.

⁷⁰ Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians: a history since 1800*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, pp. 44-5.

*before sundown the chief would dress himself, and take it into his head to march to and fro from his lubra's miam to my tent which invariably was adjacent.*⁷¹

Thomas and other authorities had hoped that the influence of Europeans would encourage the Wurundjeri men in the Native Police Corps to follow Christianity and other European ways. To their disappointment, however, the men continued to follow their own beliefs and traditions.

When Billibellary died on 10 August 1846, his son Simon Wonga, became ngurungaeta of the Wurrundjeri-willam tribe.

2.4.4.3 Reserves

Aboriginal people were placed on reserves (also known as 'Missions' and 'Stations') by the Victorian Colonial Government from 1860 onwards. They initially lived in traditional miams (huts) on the reserves, but gradually the customary forms of shelter were replaced with farm buildings, churches and European-style huts. Aboriginal leaders hoped the reserves would be a place to live and practise their culture without interference, but authorities wanted to 'civilise' the people and teach them Christian ways.⁷²

Simon Wonga and his cousin, ngurungaeta William Barak, selected 4,863 acres of land near Healesville for the Coranderrk reserve and led the Wurundjeri people to their new home in 1863. Very few Wurundjeri people lived on the land in the Whittlesea area after this time.

Although Coranderrk was on Wurundjeri land, it was also home to other people of the Kulin nation: the Woiwurrung, Boonwurrung, Daungwurrung, Djadjawurrung and Wathawurrung. Coranderrk was the most successful of the Aboriginal reserves. Its hops fields were profitable and the station manager, John Green, treated the Aboriginal people with respect. The people managed to preserve some of their traditions at Coranderrk, but others were slowly lost, as Wurundjeri elder Joy Murphy describes:

Certainly my grandmother, right up probably to the day she passed away – and that was actually on Coranderrk - she had this one set of clothes, she'd get dressed up and go in the horse and buggy which my Uncle Frank used to drive – and this is in the very latest days of Coranderrk – come into town 'cos she needed to see her special son Jim – Jarlo, as she called him. And when she got home, she'd take off those clothes. But the first thing that came off were the boots. And then what she did, straight down to the river. Straight down the river. She'd get a bit of sapling, and Uncle Frank would cut her a bit of the branch down and she'd trim her own sapling down and then she'd do spear fishing. And she was still doing, still collecting the reeds

⁷¹ William Thomas, 'Brief account of the Aborigines of Australia Felix', in CE Sayers (Ed), *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian pioneers to his Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, Lloyd O'Neil for Curry O'Neil, South Yarra, 1983, pp. 404-5.

⁷² Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians: a history since 1800*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, pp. 125, 132.

*from the bank to make her baskets. So she was able to do some of the traditional hunting and gathering, but with language, they stopped language altogether.*⁷³

Despite the success of Coranderrk and protests from the Aboriginal people living at the station, the government closed the station in 1924.⁷⁴

2.4.5 The Wurundjeri today

Wurundjeri people today continue their connection to the land in the Whittlesea district, including at Aurora.

The Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation Cultural Heritage Council was formed by Wurundjeri people in 1985. Its roles include raising awareness of Wurundjeri culture and history in the broader community, managing and protecting archaeological sites and those that are culturally significant and representing the interests of Wurundjeri people and their families. The Wurundjeri Land Council and the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages are also working to rediscover elements of Wurundjeri culture, such as language, which became lost as the Victorian and Australian Governments tried to teach Aboriginal people European ways of living.

The Wurundjeri Land Council cares for the land and teaches others in the community to do the same. Whittlesea City Council is committed to reconciliation with Australia's Indigenous people. New residents at Aurora should be taught that the Wurundjeri culture is a living and continuing culture.

⁷³ Aunty Joy Murphy quoted in Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *Mission voices: hear our stories*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Ultimo, n.d., viewed 23 April 2010, <http://www.abc.net.au/missionvoices/coranderrk/voices_of_coranderrk/aunty_joy_murphy/aunty_joy_talks_of_practising_culture/default.htm>.

⁷⁴ Aunty Joy Murphy quoted in Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *Mission voices: hear our stories*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Ultimo, n.d., viewed 23 April 2010, <http://www.abc.net.au/missionvoices/coranderrk/voices_of_coranderrk/aunty_joy_murphy/aunty_joy_talks_of_practising_culture/default.htm>.

2.5 THEME 3: EUROPEAN HERITAGE

2.5.1 Rationale

This theme looks at the experiences that Europeans have had on this land. European settlers began arriving in this area in the mid-1830s and, since that time, many other people have lived on the land or just passed through it. This theme tells their stories.

This section does not focus solely on Aurora for two reasons. Firstly, the land that now comprises Aurora is not specifically discussed in most of the source material; rather, this material discusses localities that Aurora is situated in or near, including Epping, Wollert, Whittlesea and the Plenty Valley. Secondly, the experiences of the people who once lived at present-day Aurora would not have been isolated to the blocks of land that they owned or leased, for they would have visited the surrounding areas to go to church, school, market, the dairy factory, the pub and local festivities and gatherings.

This theme allows stories to be interpreted in a way that enables Aurora's new residents and visitors to relate to the people who once lived there and to make connections with their own lives.

2.5.2 Settlement

The first Europeans to see the Plenty Valley, which Aurora is nestled in, were explorers Hume and Hovell in 1824. Hovell described the western portion of what is now the City of Whittlesea as 'volcanoes which had filled the valleys with lava, metamorphosed to a plain of deep soil dotted with mossy rocks and leaning red gums'.⁷⁵

European settlement in Port Phillip began in 1835, when John Batman sailed across the Tasman Sea in search of new grazing land. Joseph Tice Gellibrand, a member of Batman's party, recorded in his diary soon afterwards:

*We then continued our course about eight miles over fine feeding land and came upon a rapid stream of water flowing, like all the other rivers, from the North to the South. We called this river the River Plenty ...*⁷⁶

John Batman and his party were impressed with the surrounding landscape, with Batman writing:

*We travelled over as good country as I have yet met with, and, if possible, richer land, thinly timbered. The grass was mostly three and four feet high, and as thick as it could be on the ground.*⁷⁷

The Plenty Valley was one of the first parts of Victoria to be settled. Robert Hoddle surveyed the area in 1837 and pastoral squatters began claiming large runs of land to graze sheep and cattle soon after. The first landowners at present-day Epping and Wollert, which was then known as Darebin Creek,

⁷⁵ JW Payne, *The Plenty: a centenary history of the Whittlesea Shire*, Lowden Publishing, Kilmore, 1975, p.3.

⁷⁶ JW Payne, *The Plenty: a centenary history of the Whittlesea Shire*, Lowden Publishing, Kilmore, 1975, p.3.

⁷⁷ John Batman, 'The journal', 10 May – 11 June 1835, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 2010, pp. 62-3, viewed 3 May 2010, <<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/portphillip/0/0/1/flash/pp0016-062-0.shtml>>.

were John Hoskings and Terry Hughes, investors from Sydney. They did not live on or use the land, but leased it out. This was common to most absentee landowners; others engaged managers with shepherds to care for flocks and herds.⁷⁸ The tenants, like most leaseholders in the late 1830s and early 1840s, did little to change the land. Tenants had little incentive to make improvements for the benefit of their landlords, but the early leaseholders also faced displacement by the Colonial Government.⁷⁹ The early pastoral runs were divided into smaller farms during the mid-1840s.⁸⁰

The settlers quickly discovered that, as Batman had observed, the land in the Plenty Valley was fertile and well-suited to farming. Despite this, they faced many troubles. Disease plagued their sheep and cattle; floods and bushfires tore through their properties. Settlers also feared attacks from local Aboriginal people. News of conflicts between Aboriginal people and Europeans in other parts of Port Phillip fostered this fear, but violent incidents in this district appear to have been rare. A more tangible threat to the isolated homesteads came from the Plenty Bushrangers, who attacked and robbed a number of local settlers in 1842:

*The gang on Friday commenced operations wholesale, and having gained a considerable quantity of arms, now presented a formidable appearance; pistols in each belt and a double-barrelled fowling piece to each man, they pursued their course of plunder all along the River Plenty, robbing on that day the stations of Messrs. Serjeantson, Peet, Bond, Langor, Norcote, Fleming, Rider, Bear, and Captain Harrison ...*⁸¹

On a hot and windy day in February 1851, after a long drought, bushfires began to tear through Victoria, bringing devastation to much of Port Phillip, including the Plenty Valley. Most homesteads in the area were timber and burnt quickly. As *The Argus* reported:

*On the Plenty also, an almost inconceivable amount of damage has been done. We mentioned that some ten or twelve farms had been destroyed, but this is very far from approaching the actual destruction caused, since it is said that more than a hundred families have been thrown by the devouring element houseless upon the world.*⁸²

Due to the bushfires, the reluctance of leaseholders to build on the land and the temporary nature of the buildings they did construct, there are few physical remnants of the early settlement period in Whittlesea, including at Aurora.⁸³

⁷⁸ RW Hartley, *Epping rising: an account of the Anglican Church in and around Epping*, St John the Evangelist, Epping, 2009, p.2; JW Payne, *The Plenty: a centenary history of the Whittlesea Shire*, Lowden Publishing, Kilmore, 1975, p.13.

⁷⁹ Parks Victoria Education, *Cultural heritage*, Parks Victoria, Melbourne, 2009, viewed 23 April 2010, <http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/education/pdf/pgp_chv.pdf accessed 23 April 2010>; Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley – an historical perspective', Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley Papers, 1995, p. 35; Tony Dingle, *The Victorians: settling*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, McMahons Point, 1984, pp. 36-7.

⁸⁰ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p. 38.

⁸¹ *Colonial Times*, 17 May 1842.

⁸² *The Argus*, 10 February 1851.

⁸³ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p. 38.

2.5.3 A growing community

In spite of the early challenges, both farming activity and the population of the Whittlesea area grew throughout the 1850s. The gold fever that took hold of Melbourne in this decade was one of the major catalysts for the local population boom.

2.5.3.1 Gold!

The discovery of gold in mid-1851 brought a flock of people to the area—at this time a place of unmade roads and with limited facilities. Thomas Hewitt, a correspondent to *The Argus*, wrote on 26 May 1851:

*... it is most likely that gold may be found in some quantities in the Plenty Ranges, the dip of the rock being exactly like those of the Californian region ...*⁸⁴

After this, *The Argus* carried almost daily reports of the Plenty gold rush. On 9 June 1851 the paper reported that:

*The gold on the Plenty still continues the main staple of conversation: it is alike talked of by the merchant and labourer ... Several samples of the so-called Plenty gold are now shown in town and there are reports on all sides of lucky individuals who have found wealth all in a moment; one man, a licenses hawker, found £17 18s 3d. worth of 'dust' ... In the course of Saturday afternoon and yesterday about 150 to 200 persons are supposed to have departed for the diggings; but many will no doubt soon return to their usual avocations ...*⁸⁵

Unfortunately for the diggers, however, Plenty River 'gold' was actually found to be other minerals—and the 'gold rush' a hoax.⁸⁶ Yet profitable goldfields lay further afield and diggers travelled along roads through the Plenty Valley to reach them. William Howitt described his rough journey as he travelled along the Plenty Road to the Ovens goldfields in 1852:

*This day's journey was the most terrible that we had yet had. It was a country which was all either bog or stones. No sooner were we out of a bog than we were bouncing over these round, great stones, which as hard as iron, protruded from the earth as thick as plums in a pudding ... Mile after mile we bumped along over these horrible stones, two of us holding each a horse, and the third driving; for, besides the stones, which we did all in our power to avert, we had to guard against contact with stumps and with standing trees, between which, frequently, there was barely space to pass. No sooner were we out of the stones, than we were again in bogs that were awful to see ...*⁸⁷

The population boom caused by the gold rush increased demand for the products supplied by farmers in the Whittlesea district. Local profits and land values soared. In 1852 a land salesman named

⁸⁴ Michael Jones, *Nature's Plenty: a history of the City of Whittlesea*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1992, p.39.

⁸⁵ Michael Jones, *Nature's Plenty: a history of the City of Whittlesea*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1992, p.40

⁸⁶ Michael Jones, *Nature's Plenty: a history of the City of Whittlesea*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1992, p.42

⁸⁷ William Howitt in Land, labour and gold, 1855 in Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley – an historical perspective', Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley Papers, 1995, pp.36-39.

'Nimble Ninepence', the well-known developer of the Separation township in the region, advertised land for sale in the Plenty ranges in single acre lots for £3-10 each. Only one year later, thousands of disgruntled miners returned from the goldfields, unhappy at their lack of success. By the end of 1853 there were hundreds of new settlers in the area.⁸⁸

2.5.3.2 Agriculture and development

The Plenty River 'gold rush' had brought many settlers to the region, who, after subsistence beginnings, began producing dairy products, hay, chaff, vegetables, fruit and eggs for sale commercially. Melbourne was the main market, but that was a gruelling trip away on horseback or on foot, over rutted track and swampy ground.⁸⁹ The area became known as the 'Breadbasket of Melbourne' in the first decades of settlement.⁹⁰

The early to mid-1850s were a time of progress in the area. Surveyor Robert Mason gave the name 'Epping' to the district in 1853. Most of the Parish of Wollert had been withheld for sale since it was surveyed in 1838, but was auctioned on 27 January 1853. Within three months its population had swollen to 200 people. A Church of England school opened in the Parish of Wollert on 18 March 1853 to educate local children. The Epping Roads Board was created on 25 July 1854 to improve the roads for the goldfields traffic. The Plenty, Epping and Sydney roads were all considered to be main roads and were reconstructed using money allocated by the Epping Roads Board.⁹¹

Land Selection Acts in the 1860s encouraged more people to buy agricultural property because it made land available to people with little money and gave them the opportunity to pay the money back gradually on the condition that they made improvements to the land.

Many farmers quickly decided that the dairy industry was well suited to the Plenty Valley because of the area's uncertain weather conditions. For, although floods had wiped out crops in the district in the 1860s, cattle could easily be moved to safety. Farmers also became less concerned about drought during this decade following the introduction of irrigation. Even the 1851 bushfires seemed a distant memory.⁹²

In 1865 Epping was described as an 'agricultural district ... dairy farming is extensively carried on'.⁹³ At this time, the scattered settlements in the Plenty Valley were quickly becoming towns. Epping had around 300 residents, two hotels, a Travellers' Home and a coach office. The town held monthly markets offering customers 'a good supply of milch cows, pigs and dairy produce'.⁹⁴ The famous bluestone of the area was used to build many of the public buildings, including St Peter's Catholic

⁸⁸ JW Payne, *The Plenty: a centenary history of the Whittlesea Shire*, Lowden Publishing, Kilmore, 1975, p.13

⁸⁹ Friends of Westgarthtown, *A brief history of Westgarthtown*, Friends of Westgarthtown, Westgarthtown, 2010, viewed 5 April 2010, <www.westgarthtown.org.au/history>.

⁹⁰ Taryn Debney and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Aurora Estate (Balance of development area at O'Herns Road, Harvest Home Road), Epping North, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2009, p.47

⁹¹ RW Hartley, *Epping rising: an account of the Anglican Church in and around Epping*, St John the Evangelist, Epping, 2009, p.2; Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley – an historical perspective', Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley Papers, 1995, p. 39.

⁹² Michael Jones, *Nature's Plenty: a history of the City of Whittlesea*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1992, p. 38.

⁹³ Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley – an historical perspective', Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley Papers, 1995, p.27.

⁹⁴ *The Argus*, 28 July 1860.

Church, the Presbyterian Church, St John's Church of England, the Shire Offices and the Primary School.⁹⁵

2.5.3.3 Railway

The Whittlesea Railway opened in 1889 after over a decade of agitation for a railway line to be extended into the area.⁹⁶ At first, it was proposed that the line service all the existing townships except Epping and Thomastown – and local residents were furious! The railway line proposal was then amended so that the line diverted via Thomastown and Epping to Whittlesea.⁹⁷ But the train was often frustratingly slow. Although a deputation visited the Railway Commissioner in September 1903 to express their concern about the disastrous impact of the poor train service on the Plenty milk industry, little was done to improve the service.⁹⁸

2.5.3.4 Land boom and bust

The Melbourne land boom in the 1880s boosted property prices, but the Whittlesea area profited little from this because most of the land was tied up by landholders who had no desire to sell.

A decade later, the financial outlook was much grimmer. But, as the market crashed and the 1890s Depression set in, Victorians increasingly looked to farming for salvation. Idealists believed that the land could provide a simple village life. The price of produce fell, decreasing local profits, but fortunately local farmers and their families could continue to put food on their tables since they grew most of it themselves.⁹⁹ As Victoria gradually recovered from the Depression, produce prices rose again.

The Whittlesea district continued to develop after the First and Second World War as returned soldiers and migrants began settling in the area.

2.5.4 Migration

Migrants have made an important contribution to the Whittlesea area's development since the days of early settlement. Irish immigrants were the first settlers to Epping, but the area was soon home to people from England, Scotland and Germany.¹⁰⁰ These people brought their cultures, traditions, farming practices and religious beliefs with them. Some of marks they left on the landscape are still visible at Aurora, such as the dry stone walls that divided farms and penned in animals. The dry stone walling technique originated in Europe.

This new landscape and climate was alien to the new arrivals. Some struggled to adjust, while others saw the beauty and fertility of the land. As brothers Leo and John Borrack, descendants of early

⁹⁵ Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley – an historical perspective', Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley Papers, 1995, p.27.

⁹⁶ Michael Jones, *Nature's Plenty: a history of the City of Whittlesea*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1992, p.104.

⁹⁷ Michael Jones, *Nature's Plenty: a history of the City of Whittlesea*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1992, p.106.

⁹⁸ Michael Jones, *Nature's Plenty: a history of the City of Whittlesea*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1992, pp. 109-10.

⁹⁹ Tony Dingle, *The Victorians: settling*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, McMahons Point, 1984, p. 124; Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley – an historical perspective', Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley Papers, 1995, pp. 44-5.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley – an historical perspective', Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley Papers, 1995, p.27.

German settlers the Ziebels, eloquently describe, the settlers to the Whittlesea area were ‘thrown out there onto a rocky plain’:¹⁰¹

*The stone had to be dug ... There was absolutely nothing, very little in the way of trees or anything else in that particular area. And they hoed into the land and they related that indigenous form of architecture, which is absolutely remarkable, because it contains ... a harmonious use of the actual natural materials, the bluestone. So it's a sort of organic architecture, it grows out of the ground.*¹⁰²

Drought and bushfire were unfamiliar problems for many migrants. But those with resilience and determination stayed on the land and made it profitable. A new community is now shaping Aurora and migrant groups are making an important contribution to the area.

¹⁰¹ Robert Pascoe, *A community portrait: lifetimes in the City of Whittlesea*, City of Whittlesea, Bundoora, 2001, p. 31.

¹⁰² Robert Pascoe, *A community portrait: lifetimes in the City of Whittlesea*, City of Whittlesea, Bundoora, 2001, p. 31.

2.6 THEME 4: AGRICULTURE AND FARMING

2.6.1 Rationale

Agriculture and farming is a vital part of the European history of Aurora. Dairy farming, in particular, has been one of the main uses of the land since the 1860s. Farming was laborious during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and would have consumed the daily lives of the men, women and children who did the work. Agriculture and farming is, therefore, a separate theme from *European heritage*, as it allows these important stories about farming and daily life on the land to be explored in more detail at Aurora.

2.6.2 Trials and triumphs

The dairy industry has been the lifeblood of the Whittlesea area for decades. Dairying emerged as the main industry of the Epping area from the 1860s and at this time the area also produced most of the horse fodder for Melbourne.¹⁰³ The Land Selection Acts opened up the region to settlers with limited funds during this decade.

Early dairying was a difficult industry: there was far too much produce in spring and summer and far too little during the winter months. A handful of ambitious farmers tried to ship some of the excess butter to Britain during the 1860s, but it had usually gone bad by the time it arrived. Prices fell when plenty of butter became available.¹⁰⁴

Early farmers had plenty of other problems to contend with. An outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia in 1860 wiped out cattle numbers. The disease was rampant throughout Victoria by 1863 with the agricultural community believing that it started in the Plenty Valley. Natural disasters such as drought, flood and bushfire also challenged the struggling farmers.¹⁰⁵ However, in spite of all this, the dairy farming industry was wonderfully well-suited to the area and the local farms flourished.

After the railway link between Melbourne and Heidelberg opened, the railway provided a minor land boom and also allowed the dairying industry to expand and service Melbourne. From the 1890s to World War II, Epping North became one of the main dairying districts in Victoria. In 1914 Epping was described as having:

*... flourishing milk and cultivation farms ... The land is highly adapted for dairying and fattening purposes; also, owing to its proximity to the city and the main North-Eastern line, is valuable for stock dealing purposes.*¹⁰⁶

The Whittlesea region had its own Whittlesea Fresh Milk and Produce Supply Company and a new Burnside Dairy at Yan Yean by 1935.¹⁰⁷ The area was instrumental in the establishment of the

¹⁰³ ST Grey, *History of Whittlesea*, unpublished manuscript, 1961, held by the State Library of Victoria, p.12; Friends of Westgarthtown 2010, Westgarthtown, viewed 5 April 2010, <www.westgarthtown.org.au/history>.

¹⁰⁴ Tony Dingle, *The Victorians: settling*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, McMahons Point, 1984, p. 115.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Jones, *Nature's Plenty: a history of the City of Whittlesea*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1992, pp. 36-8.

¹⁰⁶ *The Argus*, 17 January 1914.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Jones, *Nature's Plenty: a history of the City of Whittlesea*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1992, p.258

Australian Milk Board and the installation of the first milking machinery also occurred there.¹⁰⁸ The Pura brand was established in 1934 when German farmer Albert Siebel, who lived at Westgarthtown, bought a dairy in Preston and named it 'Pura Dairy'. Dairy farms in the Plenty Valley area provided much of Pura's milk. By 1964, the Pura Dairy supplied 32% of Melbourne's milk. The Whittlesea district had also become the prime market garden area for Melbourne and an important sheep area at this time.¹⁰⁹ Pura continues today as a member of National Foods Limited.¹¹⁰

2.6.3 Domestic life

Dairy farming was demanding and often difficult for the people who did the work. The early squatters tended to be single men, but the selectors who took up land from the 1860s usually had families. Men, women and children all played a part in keeping a farm running. While men laboured in the fields, their wives would prepare the food, take care of the garden and milk the cows. Children ran errands and helped milk the cows when they became old enough.¹¹¹ Before electricity was introduced to Epping, which occurred as late as 1941 on some farms, cows had to be milked by hand twice a day and chaff was cut by hand.¹¹² Farm life was isolated, particularly before nearby settlements such as Epping became established towns, and accidents and injuries were common.

The Plenty Valley was opened up to returned soldiers after the First World War. Many of them were inexperienced farmers who struggled with agricultural life. One Epping farmer who had been granted 160 acres of land by the Closer Settlement Board in October 1919 found that it was 'too large for him' by August 1924.¹¹³ He applied to the board for permission to sell 60 acres of his land, from which he made a tidy profit.

The Country Women's Association (CWA) was formed in Sydney in 1922 and the Victorian branch began six years later. Its aims were to improve conditions and support women and children in rural areas. Its members were also actively involved in charitable work. Women joined seeking companionship and new skills and branches popped up all around the countryside, including nearby places such as Wollert, which reported increased membership in 1938.¹¹⁴

Some women working on farms in this era felt distanced from women living in cities and suburbs. In response to city women's complaints about the cost of milk in 1939 the Wollert branch of the CWA invited 'housewives to visit local farms for a week, to rise at 5 a.m. every day, as the country women do, and to see just how long and arduous is a day in the life of a dairy farmer's life'.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ Taryn Debney and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Aurora Estate (Balance of development area at O'Herns Road, Harvest Home Road), Epping North, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2009, p.48.

¹⁰⁹ Michael Jones, *Nature's Plenty: a history of the City of Whittlesea*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1992, p.258.

¹¹⁰ National Foods, *Pura*, National Foods, Docklands, n.d., viewed 5 April 2010, <http://www.pura.com.au/about_history.aspx>.

¹¹¹ Tony Dingle, *The Victorians: settling*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, McMahons Point, 1984, pp. 68-70.

¹¹² Sonia Jennings and Mary Sheehan, *Creeds Farm history and description*, Living Histories, p. 2.

¹¹³ *The Argus*, 12 August 1924.

¹¹⁴ Melanie Oppenheimer, *Volunteering: why we can't survive without it*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2008, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ *The Argus*, 18 April 1939.

2.6.4 Farming technologies and practices

Dairy farmers in Victoria at first used traditional practices that had existed for many hundreds of years. It was difficult work that required a great deal of time and labour. Farmers milked the cows in rustic sheds without proper flooring. When the weather was wet, the dirt and the sheep dung became sodden and messy and even the most experienced farmer could usually milk no more than four cows per hour in the conditions.

Butter was made in the dairy, which was usually a sturdier building than the milking shed. The farmer poured milk into pans and allowed it to settle for 36 hours so the cream would rise to the top of the pan. The farmer skimmed the cream off the top of the milk using a flat piece of metal and poured it into a butter churn. The butter churn needed to be cranked for around half an hour to become solid and was then shaped and salted before it could be sold.¹¹⁶

Transport was also expensive and the roads primitive, making it difficult to get milk and butter to market. Without refrigeration, milk could turn bad in as little as half a day in the hot sun.

The industry was rapidly transformed, however, by three important inventions that became available in Australia between the 1870s and 1890s. The first was proper refrigeration. This made the market for produce larger because dairy products could be transported further away without becoming rancid. The next invention was the centrifugal cream separator invented by Swede Gustav de Laval. It extracted cream more quickly than the pan method, keeping the milk fresher and creating better quality butter. As the separators were expensive for dairy farmers to buy, dozens of butter factories were quickly built across Victoria from 1888. Farmers took their milk to the factory to have it separated mechanically.¹¹⁷

The final significant invention to help 19th century dairy farmers was the American Babcock Tester, invented in 1890. The Babcock Tester provided accurate measurements of how much butterfat the milk contained, which had two benefits: it meant that farmers could be paid fairly for the milk they brought to the butter factories and helped them identify which cows produced the best quality milk. The cows could then be bred selectively to improve the farmer's produce.¹¹⁸

Farms in the Plenty Valley kept up with the latest technology and in 1887 market inspector John Taylor advised the Central Board of Health that a farm owned by J Morgan near Epping was a 'model dairy farm'.¹¹⁹

There are 300 cows milked, and the milk is sent to Melbourne twice a day ... The water is drawn out by a Tangye pump to supply the refrigerating plant. The dairy and cheese-making rooms, and tin-can washing places are well and suitably constructed: every can is cleansed out with a jet of steam passed up through a bench, where the men turn them, and they are

¹¹⁶ Tony Dingle, *The Victorians: settling*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, McMahons Point, 1984, pp. 115-6.

¹¹⁷ Tony Dingle, *The Victorians: settling*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, McMahons Point, 1984, p. 116.

¹¹⁸ Tony Dingle, *The Victorians: settling*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, McMahons Point, 1984, p. 116.

¹¹⁹ *The Argus*, 22 December 1887.

*rinsed out with cold water. There are 28 men employed with the milking, 20 additional at present harvesting ... The whole of the establishment is a credit to the proprietor. I feel much pleasure in holding it forth as a model dairy farm, one that should be copied by many.*¹²⁰

Hand-cranked cream separators were introduced to most dairy farms in the early 1900s. They were cheap to buy and easy to operate and owning one meant that dairy farmers no longer needed to make daily trips to the local butter factory, saving a lot of time. Farmers stored the extracted cream on their property until they had made enough to make the journey to the factory worthwhile. Factories across Victoria closed as farmers stopped visiting them frequently.

When electricity was gradually introduced to Epping from the 1920s, it changed dairy farming practices and technologies dramatically.

¹²⁰ *The Argus*, 22 December 1887.

2.7 THEME 5: FROM RURAL TO SUBURBAN

2.7.1 Rationale

Aurora is no longer a rural area, but is rapidly being transformed into a suburb. This theme reflects Aurora's new and recent history, which directly relates to Aurora's new residents and illustrates how they are now a vital part of this place and its stories. It allows for new stories about Aurora and the people who live there to become part of the history and fabric of the site.

2.7.2 A growing population

The population of the Plenty Valley began to boom after the Second World War. Migrants seeking to escape their war-ravaged homelands began arriving in Australia in their thousands and settled all over the country.

As Melbourne's population grew, the fringes of the suburbs were pushed outwards. Suburban development began in the Epping and Whittlesea areas from around 1970.¹²¹ Local communities that had once been mere villages evolved into suburbs. This is happening today at an increasing rate. The population growth has created more demand for housing and Melbourne's population is predicated to rise to nearly eight million in the next 30 years, a 42 per cent increase from 2006.¹²²

2.7.3 Aurora today

Aurora is being built by VicUrban as part of the Victorian Government's response to Melbourne's impending housing crisis. There are currently around 1,050 people living in 389 houses at the development and when the construction is complete Aurora will be home to approximately 25,000 people in 8,000 houses. The Aurora development will give this area a new lease of life and new stories to tell as residents make their lives in it. It will be a place for people to develop friendships, exchange ideas, play together, celebrate together, grow up and grow old. Aurora, the people who live there and those who will live there, have now become an intrinsic part of the history of this land.

¹²¹ Robert Wuchatsch, 'The Plenty Valley – an historical perspective', Lucy Grace Ellem (Ed), *Cultural landscape of the Plenty Valley*, Plenty Valley Papers, 1995, p.27.

¹²² Department of Sustainability and the Environment, *Victoria in future 2008 fact sheet*, Department of Sustainability and the Environment, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne, 2008.

SECTION 2: INTERPRETIVE APPROACHES

3 INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

3.1 WHY INTERPRET?

3.1.1 Making meaning

Interpretation is 'making meaning'. It brings the themes, stories, ideas and feelings about a place to life by making them interesting and relevant to visitors. Good interpretation leads people from the question 'so what?' to an understanding of why historic and natural places are important—and why we should continue to care about them today.

Interpretation can be both cultural (based around the human history of a site) and natural/environmental. Cultural and natural heritage interpretation are often intertwined, as few places in Australia are untouched by human habitation.

The heritage interpretation proposed in the document below is designed to expose visitors to a variety of meanings for different sites at Aurora. Without knowledge of the many layers of history attached to the place, the land in and around Aurora appears to be just paddocks. Understanding the complex relationships between Indigenous and European history, and the importance of sustainability and biodiversity will unlock the secrets of the site.

Interpretation will help to create a 'sense of place' and belonging for both the residential community and visitors to Aurora. This is particularly important since the suburb does not have a clear or tangible narrative for people to 'read'.

3.1.2 New approaches to site interpretation

Extensive research has been undertaken into the nature of visitation to cultural sites and the issues managers of those sites face in attempting to bring history closer to the audience by using imagery, multi-media and other more engaging interpretation than the traditional formats of signage, graphic panels and brochures.¹²³

Until the late 20th century, many heritage site managers were reluctant to engage with the idea of proactive interpretation.¹²⁴ Clearly, no historical recreation or display, no matter how subtle, can possibly bring us close to the lived experience of the people of the time. In fact, the more that this kind of recreated 'authenticity' is attempted, the more the display can become a 21st century artefact. The past is always a foreign country. Yet research has found that multi-sensory interpretation produces longer viewing times, lead to learning and allow greater access to information and that 'live'

¹²³ A. Craig Wight, 'Philosophical and Methodological Praxes in Dark Tourism: Controversy, Contention and the Evolving Paradigm', *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, vol. 12, no.2, p.121.

¹²⁴ Smith, 'Commemoration, Voices and Museums', p.4.

interpretation allows visitors to engage with issues and ideas.¹²⁵ Elements of 'live' interpretation relevant to Aurora include:

- Physical and electronic interactives
- Themed playgrounds and spaces
- Evocative lighting effects
- Motion- or visitor-triggered sound effects
- Soundscapes
- Multimedia
- Touch screens
- Interactive websites
- Wikis
- Smartphone enabled tours.

The advent of technology in the late 20th and 21st centuries has given interpreters many more tools to work with in site-based interpretation in heritage building. Audio trails have provided an extended experience for visitors to historic places since the late 20th century. An excellent example of a site-based audio project is the 'Murmur' project that took place in Canada in the early 2000s. Visitors to historic sites in Toronto were invited to ring a phone number and then listen to a story about the specific site they were visiting. See <http://murmurtoronto.ca> for details.

3.2 AMENDMENTS TO MDG'S PLANS

MDG has proposed a series of trails throughout the site in their plans: 'Aurora Community Trails' (n.d.). Of these, the 'Natural and Cultural Heritage Trail' (n.d.) is relevant to natural and cultural heritage interpretation at Aurora. We suggest amendments as follows:

3.2.1 'Hubs' of interpretation

3.2.1.1 Rationale

The existing trails form a network based around four key themes:

- Cultural heritage interpretation – European
- Cultural heritage interpretation - Aboriginal
- Environmental initiatives/sustainability interpretation
- Natural heritage interpretation.

The theming is drawn from the Biosis report and is generally based on sites, with the exception of the Environmental initiatives/sustainability trail, which is not completely site-based. Visitors under MDG's scheme would understand Aurora as a whole by taking one or more of the themed trails.

¹²⁵ Margaret Woodward, 'Designing the Interpretation Interface', in L Lester and C Ellis (eds.), *Proceedings of Imaging Nature: Media, Environment and Tourism, Cradle Mountain, 27-29 June 2004*, University of Tasmania, Hobart, 2005, p.7, viewed 27 May 2010, <<http://www.utas.edu.au/arts/imaging/woodward.pdf>>.

While this is a useful framework for understanding the suburb, theming can appear fragmented to the visitor and also does not take into account the fact that many sites are multi-layered. For instance, the stony rises were used not only by the Wurundjeri before contact, but also by European farmers for bluestone. Similarly, sites near Edgars Creek have several histories.

Therefore, we propose instead that a series of key experiences ('hubs') is created at several sites throughout Aurora. These sites, such as Lehmann's Farm, will form focal points for understanding the whole area and link together most or all of the themes. The theming at these sites will not be obvious but instead provide a framework for a range of fun, inspiring activities. The emphasis will be on physical and electronic interactives that actively engage residents and visitors with the area and encourage them to find out more about it. Signage will provide supplementary and contextual information but will not be the key interpretive element.

(MDG Plans)- SHP to add graphic

3.2.1.2 Sites

Key sites for the hubs are:

- Lehmanns Farm
- Creeds Farm
- Edgars Creek.

3.2.2 Revision of sites identified by MDG for interpretation

3.2.2.1 European and Aboriginal interpretation

Of the sites the draft 'Natural and Cultural Heritage Trail', those selected by MDG for European heritage interpretation or Aboriginal interpretation have been chosen because of their clear relationship with specific archaeological sites in Biosis Research's 'Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora'.

SHP therefore recommends that interpretation is located at all the locations selected by MDG, with the exception of Seeber's Farm and Doherty's scarred tree as is discussed further in sections 5.1.7 and 5.2.3. SHP has selected alternative sites as replacements.

3.2.2.2 Natural heritage interpretation

MDG's locations here are generic and not necessarily site-based. However, five of the 10 sites suggested for Biodiversity interpretation are located at or near a site with a significant flora or fauna record. One is situated close to Edgars Creek, which is an important feature of the Aurora site and its history. The remaining four sites are less clearly associated with significant environmental features, although they are situated in conservation areas and are relatively nearby European or Aboriginal archaeological sites.

SHP has therefore altered MDG proposed theming for these sites to incorporate Indigenous and/or European interpretation, in order to capture the layered associations of each site.

3.2.2.3 Environmental initiatives/sustainability interpretation

The locations suggested for 'Environmental initiatives/Sustainability interpretation' in MDG's draft 'Natural and Cultural Heritage Trail' are not all clearly associated with sites relating to sustainability. Some occur near native vegetation and most are located within public open spaces.

SHP therefore recommends that in some cases the interpretive sites are either re-positioned or that the theme MDG proposed for the sites is broadened to a theme such as 'Using land over time' to allow comparisons between how Indigenous, European and contemporary use of the land.

3.3 OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED INTERPRETIVE MEDIA

Effective interpretation utilises a hierarchy of media to communicate to different audiences. This is the premise on which we have based the interpretive media.

3.3.1 Prints in pathways

At each hub and at key sites, we suggest putting footprints, shoe prints, hoof prints and vehicle prints into the pavement at the key entry/exit points. Particular kinds of prints would relate to particular kinds of sites; e.g. Bare footprint for Indigenous sites; shoe print for European.

These will act as directional markers to the next sites on the trail and also provide a unifying link for the several histories of the site. The 'Print' key is as follows:

Indigenous sites—bare footprint

Natural heritage sites—pawprint, bird print

European sites—hoofprint, shoe print, cartwheel imprint

Sustainability sites—symbol (to be determined).

3.3.2 Extended interpretation at interpretive 'hubs'

We propose that a series of interpretive 'hubs' is created across the site. Interpretation in these areas would be diverse, ranging from heritage-based built form to public art and sculptural signage. They would form key points for understanding particular site-based stories as well as showing how many layers of history can underlie a place. The hubs are also places where VicUrban's key messages can be told.

3.3.3 Signage

Interpretive signage should be designed in a hierarchy and clearly differentiated from wayfinding signage. We suggest the signage uses textures, art and relief graphics wherever possible. Text should be kept to a minimum.

Major signage—textural/sculptural. Located at key points on the trail.

Minor signage—textural/sculptural. Located in between major signs.

3.3.4 Heritage-based built form

This interpretation is made by artisans and follows clear interpretive guidelines. It can use remnant material from the Aurora site and have graphics/text embedded in it or located adjacent to it. We recommend heritage-based built form for all interpretive hubs at Aurora. This would give the sites unity of form and approach and differentiate them from public artworks.

3.3.5 Public art

This is differentiated from heritage-based built form by not being closely directed by an interpretive brief. The expressive nature of public art works complements heritage-based built form, offering visitors and residents two different kinds of approaches to a site. We suggest public art briefs are developed for all interpretive hubs at Aurora.

3.3.6 Smartphone tours

We propose creating a series of Smartphone-based tours enabled by QR codes to go on the themed trails. A brief explanation of Smartphone technology is included below. The tours could contain audio, images and film and explore topics and sites in greater depth than can built form and signage.

3.3.6.1 Smartphone technology

3.3.6.1.1 What is a Smartphone?

There are now exciting developments in Smartphone technology that will allow visitors to create their own experiences at Aurora in an even more multi-sensory way than 'Murmur'. Smartphones are mobile phones offering computer-like functionality, including Internet access. Standard features include an Mp3 player, wireless or 3G Internet, touch screens emails, a QWERTY keyboard, calendars, a camera, video and audio playback and Google-based maps. A key feature of Smartphones is the ability to download Applications (or 'Apps'), such as games, tours and educational programs.

The main Smartphones on the market today are Symbian (Nokia), RIM (Blackberry), Apple OS (iPhone & iPod Touch), Windows Mobile (Microsoft) and Android (Google). Most mobile phones on the market today could be considered Smartphones, although not all have the online infrastructure to support them.

3.3.6.1.2 'Applications' or 'Apps'

An Application (or 'App') is a program similar to a computer program (eg. Word, Excel, Internet Explorer) that is used on a Smartphone to deliver information, content or entertainment. Applications are available for downloading either through the Smartphone's online infrastructure such as Apple's 'App Store', Google's 'Market', or Blackberry's 'App World' or from a computer. Some Applications can be downloaded for free while others require payment, depending entirely on their author or provider.

This means that specific Applications could be created for Aurora to allow visitors to download tailored tours and/or short films, audio files and websites while at the site. This option would be cost effective since visitors would use their own equipment and content would be managed via web access, thereby permitting regular updates.

Visitors without Smartphones could either hire a QR code reader from the Reception and Visitor Orientation Centre or view the site-specific information on a touchscreen terminal, visitor booklet or tour map.

3.3.6.1.3 QR codes

A QR or 'Quick Response' code is a two-dimensional barcode used to store a small amount of information, such as a phone number, short message or a hyperlink (URL). QR codes provide a quick and easy link between the real world and digital content such as web pages, audio/video files or other online interactives.

By scanning Quick Response ('QR') codes on their Smartphones, visitors to FAC's buildings and grounds will be able download site-specific music, stories, 'first person accounts', recreations, films and images. This option will not only extend visitors' experiences of the environment but also create a tailored 'one on one' guided tour, based around each visitor's particular interests.

QR codes on the themed trails could also link to the Aurora community website.

3.3.7 Brochure

A small brochure or booklet with a map and short stories and histories is an important promotional tool for the site.

3.3.8 Website

We recommend that interpretation at Aurora is placed on a community website and that residents are encouraged to upload stories and videos about their lives in the suburb. This could provide another kind of community hub that would complement the historical interpretation.

4 SITES AND ZONES/THEMES: FRAMEWORK

4.1 SHP REVISION OF MDG PLAN

SHP has labelled sites on MDG's 'Natural and Cultural Heritage Trail' as follows:

Trail A, sites A1 to A7:	European heritage
Trail B, sites B1 to B6:	Indigenous heritage
Trail C, sites C1 to C11	Natural/biodiversity
Trail D, sites D1 to D6	Sustainability/environmental initiatives

4.2 CLASSIFICATIONS

4.2.1 Site classifications

Each site is classified from A to C according to the recommended priority for interpretation at Aurora.

A:	Primary interpretation (hub): links closely to <i>Priority A</i> interpretive themes
B:	Secondary interpretation: links closely to one-two <i>Priority A</i> interpretive themes and <i>Priority B</i> themes
C:	Tertiary interpretation: not crucial for interpretation

4.2.2 Interpretive themes

Interpretive themes for each individual site are ranked by priority order from A to C:

Priority A:	The theme is directly associated with the site
Priority B:	There is strong relationship between the theme and site
Priority C:	There is a strong relationship between the theme and Aurora that could be interpreted at this site

5 SITES AND ZONES/THEMES: INTERPRETATION

5.1 EUROPEAN HERITAGE

5.1.1 Site list

Site	Name/description	Classification
A1	Pike's homestead	B
A2	Lynch Park farm	B
A3	Creed's farm	A
A4	'Old Myee' A'hern's farm	B
A5	Lehmann's farm	A
A6	Seeber's farmhouse	N/A
A7	Scaffidi's ford	A

5.1.2 PIKE'S HOMESTEAD (A1)

Classification: B

5.1.2.1 Short history

Although Pike's homestead was demolished many years ago, the Pike name has long been in the Whittlesea district. John Pike was the first leaseholder of the Wollert pastoral run, which was located in and around the land that now comprises Aurora. Just north of Wollert was Pike's Water Holes which were advertised 'as the best grazing area in the parish' in 1914.¹²⁶

The few remnants found at the site include:

- A bluestone depression
- Handmade bricks
- Cobbled area
- A depression under footings of an early house that indicates the presence of a cellar or underground water storage
- Blacksmith forged ironwork
- Timber
- Sheet metal.¹²⁷

5.1.2.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Theme	Sub-theme	Priority
A changing environment	European environment	B
Aboriginal people	Contact	B
European heritage	Settlement	A
	A growing community	B
Agriculture and farming	Trials and triumphs	B

5.1.2.3 Interpretive content

The relationship of this site to the early period of European settlement makes it a particularly suitable place to interpret stories about European settlement and the environment. However, given that Lehmann's Farm is an interpretive hub, we suggest that Pike's Homestead is given secondary interpretation.

5.1.2.4 Proposed interpretive media

- Prints embedded in pavement

¹²⁶ *The Argus*, 17 January 1914; Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, pp. 44, 73-80.

¹²⁷ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p. 79.

- Sculptural work using existing artefacts (if possible) or replicas of existing artefacts. This would differentiate interpretation at Pike's Homestead from that at Creed's Farm and Lehmann's Farm.

5.1.2.5 Signage

1 x Major

5.1.3 LYNCH PARK FARM (A2)

Classification: B

5.1.3.1 Short history

Lynch Park Farm was part of Michael Lynch's property in the 1850s. Michael Lynch was also the original owner of Creed's Farm. Some structures at Lynch Park Farm may date from the early squatting period. In 1937 *The Argus* mentioned the farm in a report about a fox hunt held by the Findon Harriers.¹²⁸ Lynch Park Farm was known as 'Old House' in 1951.

Archaeological remains at the site include:

- Machine-made bricks
- Tin sheeting
- Remnant dry stone walls
- Wooden posts.

5.1.3.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	European environment	A
Aboriginal people	Contact	B
European heritage	Settlement	A
	A growing community	B
Agriculture and farming	Trials and triumphs	C

5.1.3.3 Interpretive content

Lynch Park Farm's connection with early European settlement makes it a good place to interpret some aspects of this period. The fox-hunting story from the 1930s also makes it an ideal site for interpreting how Europeans used, changed and experienced the land, particularly in relationship to the introduction of exotic species to the area. The lack of clear material culture evidence relating to farming makes Lynch Park farm unsuited to interpretation of the 'Agriculture and farming' theme, although this theme could be discussed in more general terms.

5.1.3.4 Proposed interpretive media

- Prints embedded in paving
- Sculptural sign based on site materials and the theme of fox hunting.

¹²⁸ *The Argus*, 10 July 1937.

5.1.3.4 Signage

1 x Major

5.1.4 CREED'S FARM (A3)

Classification: A

5.1.4.1 Short history

Creed's Farm is the most substantial historical structure on the Aurora site.¹²⁹ The house was built in c.1856 on 158 acres of land purchased by Irish immigrant Michael Lynch in 1853. Farmer Michael Creed then occupied the site from 1856 to his death in 1875, when the property passed to his eldest son, John Creed. Patrick Toole of Richmond, a grocer, bought the land in 1878 and then leased it for dairy farming until his death in 1895. The farm had a number of other owners after this. Around 1960, the land was subdivided and Myrtle Carr sold the northern 90 acres, where the extant buildings are located, to Clement and Ida Saunders. All of the land in the southern section was used for dairy farming from the 1860s up until recent times.¹³⁰

The buildings still on the land are believed to have been built while Creed owned the site.

5.1.4.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	European environment	A
Aboriginal people	Contact	B
European heritage	Settlement	B
	A growing community	B
	Migration	A
Agriculture and farming	Trials and triumphs	A
	Domestic life	A
	Farming technologies and practices	A
From rural to suburban		C

5.1.4.3 Interpretive content

Creed's Farm is an excellent place to interpret a number of the themes relevant to the Aurora site, not only because of the Farm's early date but also because of its intactness. The proximity of the farm house to the well, dairy, barn and stockyards indicates patterns of movement and use from the mid to late 19th century. The orchard and cypress, pine and peppercorn trees planted as a windbreak indicate how the settlers managed the land and points to their self-sufficiency and imported cultural practices.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p.73.

¹³⁰ Sonia Jennings and Mary Sheehan, 'Creeds Farm history and description', Living Histories, pp. 1-4. Unfortunately this history does not provide detailed information on the ownership of Creeds Farm after 1895.

¹³¹ Sonia Jennings and Mary Sheehan, *Creeds Farm history and description*, Living Histories, pp. 1-4.

5.1.4.4 Proposed interpretive media

The Roman Catholic Trust now owns the Creed's Farm site. VicUrban has undertaken to partially restore the site. Given the status of the project, and the need to consult closely with the Roman Catholic Trust, we recommend high-level works at this stage, including:

- Prints embedded in paving outside the school perimeter
- Sculptural sign.

For discussion with the Roman Catholic Trust:

- Minor interpretation in playground based on games the Creed children would have played, such as hopscotch
- Kitchen garden for school students that includes some vegetables and fruits that were popular in the 19th century
- A replica wall with nooks and crannies holding models of farm material for children
- Educational activities linked with the history curriculum.

5.1.4.5 Signage

1 x Major; series of minor signs (depending on the outcome of consultation)

5.1.5 'OLD MYEE' A'HERN'S FARM (A4)

Classification: B

5.1.5.1 Short history

'Old Myee' is on the west side of a stony rise that also contains Aboriginal artefacts. The farm site has exotic trees including Cypress pine and a species of rose that dates from the 1880s. It also has evidence of European use of the area's stone, including a dry stone wall and building foundations made of basalt.

Other remnants found at the site include:

- Bluestone depressions where stumps have been removed or supports for fence posts were installed
- Concrete slabs
- Machine-made Northcote bricks
- 19th century green alcohol bottles
- Cement water tank bases
- Modern building debris.

5.1.5.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	Indigenous environment	B
	European environment	A
Aboriginal people	Contact	A
European heritage	Settlement	A
	A growing community	B
	Migration	B
Agriculture and farming	Trials and triumphs	B

5.1.5.3 Interpretive content

The alterations that the European farmers made to Old Myee make it a particularly suitable place to interpret how the settlers both changed and adapted to the environment around them. Old Myee's proximity to an Aboriginal site allows stories relevant to the *A changing environment* theme to be interpreted. Particularly stories about European land use compared with Aboriginal land use and stories about contact between the Wurundjeri and Europeans.

A key element for interpretation is the drystone wall. This could be presented as the top layer in the history of volcanic rocks on the site. By peeling back the layers, visitors could understand how:

- Settlers used volcanic rocks were used to build drystone walls and houses
- Indigenous people used volcanic rocks for tools, eating implements and shelter
- How volcanic rocks were once 'hot rocks' and products of the ancient lavaflow.

5.1.5.4 Proposed interpretive media

- Prints embedded in paving
- Small installation showing how a drystone wall is built. This could be a *physical installation* showing the stages of construction or a *sculptural vertical sign* depicting the stages of construction
- Wurundjeri-based interpretive artwork showing the many uses of volcanic stone in pre-contact life
- Sculptural sign with relief element of lava flow, depicting visually the geological history of the Aurora area.

5.1.5.5 Signage

1 x Major

5.1.6 LEHMANN'S FARM (A5)

Classification: A

5.1.6.1 Short history

Lehmann's farm is a key historical site at Aurora. Remnants of Lehmann's farm are clearly evident on the site today, even though the homestead is now in ruins.

Lehmann's farm was built by German settlers and named Sunrise Farm. The date of construction is unknown. A homestead and a dairy once stood on the property, but are now in ruins. There is no historical evidence about the Lehmann family or the activities that took place on the farm.

Lehmann's farm is a key historical site at Aurora. Although we have little information about the Lehmann family who once lived there, the remnants of the farm clearly evident on the site today provide us with glimpses of how the family lived and how their dairy farm operated.

A line of exotic trees in a rectangular shape is planted around the original homestead. Edgars Creek runs through the site. A dilapidated windmill is on the east side of the creek, together with two corrugated iron sheds and a timber shed, piles of bluestone and brick from demolished buildings, a water pump and cistern or tank. A concrete driveway leads to the lesser preserved of the two slabs and there is a remnant of a modern wall of machine-made bricks next to this. A plough is on the north-west boundary of the building, hand-made and probably dating from the mid to late 19th century.

Two wells are also in the area, on either side of the creek, and there is a quarry on the west bank of the creek.¹³² Traces of early fences also appear.¹³³

Remnants of Lehmann's Farm include:

- Exotic trees
- A windmill on the east side of Edgars creek
- Two corrugated iron sheds
- A timber shed
- Piles of bluestone and brick from demolished buildings
- Water pump
- Cistern or tank
- A concrete driveway
- A modern wall of machine-made bricks next to this
- A hand-made plough that probably dates from the mid to late 19th century
- Two wells

¹³² Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p. 97.

¹³³ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p.77.

- A quarry
- Traces of early fences.¹³⁴

5.1.6.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	European environment	A
	A sustainable future	A
European heritage	Settlement	A
	A growing community	B
	Migration	B
Agriculture and farming	Trials and triumphs	A
	Domestic life	A
	Farming technologies and practices	A
From rural to suburban		C

5.1.6.3 Interpretive content

The ruined nature of Lehmann’s Farm is evocative and provides inspiration for interpretation that examines fragmented, disappearing sites. We suggest two main forms of interpretation: disappearing/intangible heritage and a playground based on the theme of ‘farm life’.

Disappearing/intangible heritage

The primary focus of interpretation at Lehmann’s Farm should be on helping visitors and residents understand that this is one of the only places left in the area that visibly tells the story of another time and place—and why these older stories contribute to a ‘sense of place’ in the area. The windmill is one of the few surviving historic structures on the whole of the Aurora site, so we recommend it is retained and stabilised to provide a focal point for this theme of ‘disappearing heritage’ and also to show how European settlers used ‘sustainable’ energy (although this term is anachronistic). The crumbling ruins should also be stabilised where possible or their materials re-used on site in the interpretive forms. Finally, remnant artefacts such as the butter churn found on site could also be used in the playground and site interpretation.

Heritage structures do not need complete restoration or rebuilding; nor do they need prettifying. Sometimes it is ruins that speak to us most eloquently of past lives and people who are now dead. Well-known historic sites such as Hyde Park Barracks make a virtue of the incomplete nature of the surviving structures. There is an opportunity for Lehmann’s Farm to be the same kind of site at Aurora, although obviously at a lesser level. Techniques such as tracing lines in the ground where buildings used to be and ‘filling in the gaps’ for the public visually through signage and archaeological plans could all contribute to make the Lehmann’s Farm site both resonant and elegiac.

¹³⁴ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, pp. 97, 77.

This is intangible heritage—traces of the past that weave underneath ‘ordinary’ landscapes. The volcanic history and Indigenous history are more hidden than Lehmann’s Farm, which is where the challenge of interpretation at Aurora lies.

Farm life

The other challenge with Lehmann’s farm, as with all of the interpretation at Aurora, is to bring the key themes to life in a fun and inspiring way that captures the imagination of both residents and visitors to the site. The remnants of Lehmann’s farm make it an appropriate place to interpret a number of themes and stories, particularly those relevant to dairy farming. At Lehmann’s Farm, visitors will be encouraged to understand how the site functioned as a working farm and then explore themes such as agriculture, sustainability, environmental change and so on.

5.1.6.4 Proposed interpretive media

Themed children’s playground

Theming the proposed playground as ‘Lehmann’s farm’ and designing it as a role-play experience, based around a series of interactives that will put the children in the position of the farmer and his wife, their children, or farmhands. This could involve:

- A large cow/sculptural element that children could climb on and that possibly has moveable parts (tail, ears, udder) and audio that gives it the ability to fart (well, it’s just an idea but little boys would love it...)
- Stylised sculptural cows in a trail leading to the site of the old dairy or shed that play equipment goes on, under or around. The children would then get the idea that the cows are going to the dairy.
- Sandpit that allows several activities:
 - Bailing water activity –we suggest creating an above-ground well using remnant material and filling it with sand. The children could then bail ‘water’ in and out
 - ‘Give the horse water’ activity’ – a drinking trough filled with sand (‘water’) for the horses
 - Planting new ‘crops’ (plastic vegetables etc.) – three-dimensional vegetables/fruit that children can ‘plant’ in the sand. These would be linked on a plastic chain or similar to prevent theft.
- BBQ shelter with digitally-printed glass within window frames depicting illustrations of farm life and the chores required to run a farm.

Heritage-based built form

- A large, flat interpretive and sculptural sign showing three-dimensional stylised models of farm produce from the 19th and 20th centuries and containing some text and graphics. This would form the key interpretive element for the site and explain the history and function of Lehmann’s Farm.
- Interpretive sign near the farmhouse site (as in MDG plan)
- Several other smaller heritage interpretive elements (signs or nodes shaped in a particular way) that link the site with the wider Aurora site and other key themes, covering
 - The Lehmanns and other pioneers to the area

- Agriculture and farming yesterday and today
 - **Links:** sustainability
- Migration in the 19th century
 - **Links:** migration today; new suburb of Aurora
- How the Lehmanns took goods to market
- How they used freestone and other materials to build the farm and fences
 - **Links:** current emphasis on sustainability; Indigenous use of materials
- Environmental change and challenges:
 - The natural environment of the area in the 19th century
 - **Links:** current emphasis on sustainability; Indigenous use of materials
 - **Links:** sustainability, natural environment – this section links with proposed Edgars Creek growling grass frog interactive and Edgars Creek Corridor interpretation
 - How the Lehmanns responded to the challenges of the natural environment; weather patterns in the 19th/20th centuries and today; how the environment has changed
 - **Links:** sustainability, natural environment – this section links with proposed Edgars Creek growling grass frog interactive

Pathways/paving

- Prints embedded in paving
- Pathways across the site tracing the original paving, (e.g. between house/dairy/shed) with paving or other surfaces to show how the Lehmanns would have moved around the area
- Tracings of the footings of the shed and dairy.

Windmill interactive

We suggest retaining and stabilising the old windmill and installing a contemporary wind turbine to provide a ‘then and now’ experience, with an emphasis on ‘making the most of what we had’ in the 19th and 20th centuries and today’s need for renewable energy.

Links to wider site

The outer loop of the park would provide an informative trail about the history of the farm, what has been restored/rebuilt, and how the simple things that were done on the farm could help people today (energy use/windmill, growing own fruit and vegetables, etc).

Our Heritage Interpretation Plan will also include a series of smartphone-enabled trails that use Quick Response (QR) codes to deliver audio-visual experiences at key points on the site. Lehmanns Farm will form part of this electronic trail system.

5.1.6.5 Signage

1 x Major; series of minor signs

5.1.7 SEEBER'S FARM (A6)

Seeber's Farm is currently outside VicUrban land so is not recommended for interpretation.

5.1.8 SCAFFIDI'S FORD (A7)

Classification: A

5.1.8.1 Short history

Scaffidi's Ford was constructed (presumably by a local landowner) from bluestone across Edgars Creek sometime between the late 19th Century and the 1930s, to give people and their vehicles access to both banks of the creek. The ford remains *in situ*.

5.1.8.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment European heritage	European environment	A
	Settlement	A
Agriculture and farming	A growing community	A
	Trials and triumphs	A
	Domestic life	B
	Farming technologies and practices	B

5.1.8.3 Interpretive content

Scaffidi's Ford can be used to tell a number of stories about Aurora's European and agricultural history, but is particularly relevant to interpretation about the farmers' relationship with the land, early forms of transportation and the importance of being able to carry products to market.

5.1.8.4 Proposed interpretive media

- Prints embedded in paving

Interpretation here should be subtle. We suggest creating pavement installations of animal prints, footprints, shoeprints, hoofprints and cartwheels on either side of the creek to symbolise the many people, animals and vehicles that have crossed the creek at this point. The footprint idea is extended to all sites along the interlinked trails, in place of arrows.

5.1.8.5 Signage

1 x Minor

5.2 INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

5.2.1 General context

5.2.1.1 List of sites

This set of sites includes:

Site	Name/description	Classification
B1	VAHR7822-1267: Jenkins IA 2 [isolated artefact found on stony rise], Jenkins SAS 3 and Jenkins SAS 4 [artefact scatter], red gum woodland is present at the site	A/B
B2	Doherty's scarred tree	N/A
B3	VAHR7922-0772: Luppino SAS 1 [Artefact scatter found on stony rise. Artefacts included blades, unutilised flakes and debitage of various materials and quartz cores.]	A/B
B4	VAHR7922-0687: Ceccomancici 2 [Surface artefact scatter and buried material]	A/B
B5	McKay SAS complex [Stony rises surrounded by basalt plains, artefact scatters]	A/B
B6	AAV7822-1411 Shine IA 1 [Buried material on stony rise]	A/B

SHP recommends that the following additional site is interpreted:

Site	Name/description	Classification
B7	Edgar's Creek Indigenous interpretation	A

SHP has classified these sites into three different types in order to make clear and effective recommendations for how they are interpreted:

- Stony rises and artefacts
- Scarred trees
- Edgars Creek.

Since Edgars Creek is both an Indigenous and European site, SHP recommends that it is interpreted in the context of local Aboriginal history at this point. We outline our general recommendations for interpretation of the Edgar's Creek in section 5.2.4.

5.2.1.2 Methodology for Indigenous interpretation

According to Interpretation Australia's *Best Practice Guidelines for Interpreting Indigenous History*, historical interpretation of Indigenous sites and history needs to be developed either by Indigenous groups or through close collaboration between historians, archaeologists and other specialists.¹³⁵ SHP has adopted these Guidelines.

SHP has held initial discussions with the Wurundjeri, who have indicated their willingness to work with VicUrban and/or a consultant to develop Wurundjeri-based storylines for Aurora. The Wurundjeri Tribe Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council has indicated that it is interested in using sculptural forms of interpretation at Aurora, which include work by Wurundjeri artists. The Council has also suggested that Wurundjeri words are incorporated into the interpretation.

Wurundjeri involvement will need to be budgeted into the next stage of the project. We suggest that the Wurundjeri is given this document for comment and response in order to define the kind and number of stories they wish to be told and the appropriate interpretive media for each. This process was outside the Scope of Works for the current Aurora Heritage Interpretation Strategy. However, we have provided an indicative list of stories and interpretive media in this part of the report in order to provide a starting point for discussions in Stage 2.

¹³⁵ IA is currently updating its website. The Best Practice Guidelines were not available for downloading at the time of writing (30 May 2010).

5.2.2 STONY RISES AND ARTEFACTS (B1, B3, B4, B5, B6)

Classification: A/B

5.2.2.1 Short history

The stony rises are remnants of the ancient landscape. The rises were created by volcanoes, which erupted here millions of years ago.

Stony rises would have provided excellent vantage points over the surrounding valleys for Wurundjeri hunters before European arrival. They would have been dry places in winter, when the lowlands became waterlogged and swampy. They were probably also part of a travel route between permanent camps on the Merri and Darebin Creeks and those in the Plenty Valley. Stone artefacts found on these sites show that they were also a source of rock for making tools and weapons as well as a place where the Wurundjeri people made these implements.¹³⁶

Some stony rises at Aurora have small quarry holes, which show that European settlers removed stones to build homesteads, dry stone walls and other farm buildings. Some settlers may also have quarried the stone for sale.

5.2.2.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Theme	Sub-theme	Priority
A changing environment	Ancient environment	A
	Indigenous environment	A
	European environment	B
Aboriginal people	The Wurundjeri: traditional owners of the land	A
	Before contact: Wurundjeri ways of life	A

5.2.2.3 Interpretive content

SHP supports MDG's recommendation that all five stony rises are interpreted and included on the heritage trail because stony rises are a particularly significant feature of the landscape at Aurora and can be used to tell many interesting stories. The fact that five stony rises are extant provides ample opportunity to distribute key stories across the sites and to show their many layers of history.

Indigenous stories should be prioritised at these archaeological sites just as European stories are prioritised at the European archaeological sites. They can also tell stories about the creation of the landscape through volcanic activity. Wurundjeri creation stories should be included in the interpretation.

¹³⁶ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p.14.

Since three of the stony rises are located in areas of Aurora that are currently under development, or awaiting development, SHP cannot yet determine the allocation of storylines across the five sites. However, two sites lie within the area of Aurora that has already developed and need to be used to interpret the highest priority themes: *Indigenous environment* and *The Wurundjeri: traditional owners of the land*.

If members of the Wurundjeri agree, we suggest that stories of the use of the sites and the archaeological remains of camps and shelters are distributed across the five sites, with two stony rises acting as focal points for interpretation. This is an ideal place for the Wurundjeri to interpret the European settlement/colonisation of the land.

Stories could include:

Creation and the Dreaming

Stories of the several Dreaming beings: Bunjil (eagle-hawk), Waang (Crow), Myndie (snake) and Thara (small hawk). One story could be told at each of four stony rises. These stories could be accompanied by sculptures/artwork produced by Indigenous artists.

Daily life

- How the landscape would have looked during pre-settlement times
- Hunting and gathering: how archaeological remnants tell us how the Wurundjeri lived; the tools and weapons that were used to hunt, skin and cook animals, birds and fish
- Use of the basalt by the Wurundjeri (see also Pike's Homestead site).

Seasons

- The seasons of the Wurundjeri
- Changes to use of the Aurora area across the year
- The stony rises as shelters and vantage points
- The Aurora area as a temporary camp.

Entertainment

- Wurundjeri fireworks: throwing a lit wonguim into the night sky
- Corroborees and ceremonies: the intricacies of clan life.

Contact

- 'Blankets, knives, looking-glasses, tomahawks, beads, scissors, flour, etc': The Wurundjeri and the Batman 'treaty'
- Conflict and disease
- The Native Police Corps
- Dispossession: the removal of the Wurundjeri to Coranderrk; the end of the Wurundjeri language.

5.2.2.4 Proposed interpretive media

Interpretive media will be determined in consultation with the Wurundjeri, but could include artworks and sculptures by Wurundjeri artists. Some elements stand out for interpretation in visual or sculptural form:

- The lit wonguim (boomerang) flying across the night sky
- The end of the Wurundjeri language: this could link to the Place Naming Strategy by reinstating Wurundjeri place names at Aurora
- Artefacts as remnants of hunting, gathering and cooking: sculptural installation/public art using remnant or replica artefacts
- Water ribbons, which could be eaten but also, formed the base for spear shafts.

5.2.2.5 Signage

2 x Major for two of the stony rises sites (i.e. one at each sites; minor for the other three)

5.2.3 DOHERTY'S SCARRED TREE (B2)

Classification: N/A

5.2.3.1 Short history

A scar on a tree at the northern boundary of Aurora shows evidence of Wurundjeri use. Bark from the river red gums standing on the creek banks was useful for making canoes, shields and shelter. The river red gum leaves had medicinal value: they could be used in steam baths to cure various sicknesses.¹³⁷

5.2.3.2 Proposed interpretation

The Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council has advised SHP that it does not wish to have public attention drawn to Doherty's scarred tree, since vandalism is a risk and scarred trees cannot usually be repaired once they are vandalised. The Wurundjeri Heritage Council has, however, advised that interpretation about scarred trees in general can be included at Aurora. SHP recommends that a site further downstream of Edgars Creek is selected to interpret how the Wurundjeri would have used plants and animals in the creek and on its banks, including river red gums, in their daily lives.

Themes and sub-themes that are relevant to scarred trees are therefore listed below in the Edgars Creek section.

5.2.3.3 Signage

No sign

¹³⁷ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p. 27.

5.2.4 EDGAR'S CREEK INDIGENOUS INTERPRETATION (B7)

Classification: A

5.2.4.1 Short history

Although the Wurundjeri probably used Edgars Creek less often than larger watercourses such as the Plenty River, the creek would nevertheless have provided a source of fresh water, plants and animals. Plants the Wurundjeri used included tubers of water ribbons, which they ate, and the common reed, which grew on the banks of the creek and provided food and raw material for spear shafts.¹³⁸

European settlers also used Edgars Creek for the same purposes, although the new arrivals undoubtedly used fewer of the plant and animal species than did the Wurundjeri.

Unfortunately the wet and swampy conditions surrounding Edgars Creek means that archaeological sites associated with the Wurundjeri have not been preserved. Interpretation therefore uses the creek as the whole site.

5.2.4.2 Relevant themes and subthemes

Theme	Sub-theme	Priority
A changing environment	Indigenous environment	A
	European environment	B
Aboriginal people	The Wurundjeri: traditional owners of the land	B
	Before contact: Wurundjeri ways of life	A

5.2.4.3 Interpretive content

Interpretation will focus on Edgars Creek as an ecosystem over time. This will enable the many layers of the Creek's history to be explored. Edgars Creek's importance to traditional Wurundjeri ways of life makes it an essential place for interpretation about how local Aboriginal people lived on and used this land, especially its water sources (*Indigenous environment*, *Before contact*: Priority A). As discussed in section 5.2.3, this is also a suitable place to include interpretation about scarred trees.

5.2.4.4 Proposed interpretive media

Indigenous land use boardwalk installation

This would be a timber boardwalk next to Edgar's Creek with Indigenous public art that illustrates weaving patterns and other uses of reeds and animals found in the Creek or on its banks. This installation will utilise Wurundjeri artists and explore the theme of the Creek as a water source and

¹³⁸ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, p. 27.

source of animals and plants that were then used for food, medicine, tools, clothing, weapons and so on.

5.2.4.5 Signage

1 x Major

5.3 NATURAL HERITAGE

5.3.1 General context

5.3.1.1 Sites

There are 11 natural history sites at Aurora. SHP has divided these 11 sites into three categories:

- Conservation areas with significant environmental features
- Conservation areas near Indigenous archaeological sites
- Conservation areas near European archaeological sites.

A few sites fall under more than one of the above categories. In these cases, SHP has placed the site into the category that describes its most relevant or important feature.

Although SHP has developed this categorisation in order to make it easier to determine the interpretive content for each site, the categories will not be apparent to audiences in the interpretation itself.

Site	Site type	Name/description	Classification
C1	Near Indigenous site	Public open space - near significant flora record, also near Indigenous site McKay IA 1 (isolated artefact)	B
C2	Near Indigenous site	Public open space - conservation area near stony rise	C
C3	Near Indigenous site	Public open space - conservation area near stony rise	C
C4	Near Indigenous site	Public open space - conservation area near Doherty's scarred tree	N/A
C5	Near Indigenous site	Public open space - conservation area - matted flax lily, arching flax lily and pale flower cranes bill are present in the area, also near Indigenous sites Mandie 3 SAS and Mandie 4 IA [artefacts found including quartz flakes]	B
C6	Environmental feature	Public open space - next to Edgars Creek	A
C7	Near European site	Public open space - conservation area [remnants of Ziebell's Dairy are nearby, but within private property]	B
C8	Environmental feature	Public open space - conservation area. Also a site of native vegetation and golden sun moths have been recorded in the surrounding area	A

C9	Environmental feature	Public open space - conservation area. Golden sun moths have been recorded in the surrounding area	A
C10	Environmental feature	Public open space - conservation area. Matted flax lily is present in the area	B
C11	Near European site	Public open space - conservation area	B

5.3.2 EDGARS CREEK (C6)

Classification: A

5.3.2.1 Short history

Edgars Creek has been a vital part of this land for many thousands of years. Although the creek is a smaller waterway than nearby rivers, it was an important source of sustenance for Aboriginal people and European settlers. It provided fresh drinking water for the Wurundjeri and European settlers and well as native animals and livestock.

Today, Edgars Creek continues to support the lives of plants and animals. It is often dry in summer, but after periods of heavy rain it can overflow.

5.3.2.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	Indigenous environment	B
	European environment	B
	Biodiversity and conservation	A

5.3.2.3 Interpretive content

Interpretation at site should reflect the '*A changing environment*' theme and examine how Edgars Creek has been a life force and source of sustenance for local people, plants and animals for many thousands of years. The Creek's natural cycles provide a wonderful way to explain how the Wurundjeri needed to adapt to seasonal patterns and can be linked with the stony rises, which were places where the Wurundjeri probably sheltered from the cold in winter. This theme of '*A changing environment*' can be introduced subtly to all relevant sites across the area.

5.3.2.4 Proposed interpretive media

Sculptural signage (possibly with interactive elements) that charts the natural cycles of Edgars Creek during the different seasons and how it was used by plants, animals and people during these cycles.

5.3.2.5 Sign

1 x Major

5.3.3 GOLDEN SUN MOTH HABITATS (C8, C9)

Classification: A

5.3.3.1 Short history

Aurora is one of the few remaining habitats of the critically endangered Golden Sun Moth, *Synemon plana*. The moth is known to occur in only 45 sites in Victoria, 48 in New South Wales and 32 in the Australian Capital Territory.

5.3.3.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	Indigenous environment	B
	European environment	B
	Biodiversity and conservation	A
	A sustainable future	A

5.3.3.3 Interpretive content

These two sites will have interpretation about the Golden Sun Moth. Relevant stories include the life of the moths, how to identify them, why they are important, why they are threatened and how residents can help conserve them. Since these sites are a moderate distance apart, interpretation at both sites should reinforce stories about the importance of conserving the moths without duplicating the content.

5.3.3.4 Proposed interpretive media

Golden Sun Moth installation

Large, sculptural coloured moths in various positions with interpretive signage on the wings of the moths that have landed. This could be either an artisan-based heritage work or commissioned public art.

5.3.3.5 Signs

1 x Major; series of minor signs

5.3.4 SIGNIFICANT FLORA (C10)

Classification: B

5.3.4.1 Short history

The matted flax lily, *Dianella amoena*, which occurs at site C10 is also an endangered species. It usually grows in grassland or grassy woodland and has beautiful, star-shaped blue and yellow flowers in the warmer months.

5.3.4.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	European environment	B
	Biodiversity and conservation	A
	A sustainable future	A

5.3.4.3 Interpretive content

Interpretation will look at Aurora's unique plant life and discuss how flora such as the matted flax lily is an important part of the area's biodiversity. Discussions about how Aboriginal people have used the plants will be reserved for sites that are more clearly associated with Indigenous archaeological sites, but the interpretation at this place could discuss how Europeans cleared the land for farming and how this may have put plant species at risk of extinction.

5.3.4.4 Proposed interpretive media

Small sculptural sign with relief element of the matted flax lily.

5.3.4.5 Signage

1 x minor

5.3.5 SIGNIFICANT FLORA (C1, C5)

Classification: B

5.3.5.1 Site history

These significant flora sites are located near Aboriginal archaeological sites.

5.3.5.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	Indigenous environment	A
	Biodiversity and conservation	A
	A sustainable future	B
Aboriginal people	The Wurundjeri: traditional owners of the land	B
	Before contact: Wurundjeri ways of life	B

5.3.5.3 Interpretive content

The two sites that have significant plant species near an Indigenous archaeological site provide an opportunity to discuss how the Wurundjeri people used the area's natural resources, particularly the plant life.

5.3.5.4 Proposed interpretive media

Signage with relief elements of flora significant to the Wurundjeri.

5.3.5.5 Signage

1 x Major sign; series of minor signs

5.3.6 SITES NEAR STONY RISE (C2, C3)

Classification: C

5.3.6.1 Site history

Sites C2 and C3 are both located near a stony rise where Biosis Research found Aboriginal artefacts.

5.3.6.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	
A changing environment	Ancient environment	B
	Indigenous environment	A
	European environment	B
Aboriginal people	The Wurundjeri: traditional owners of the land	B
	Before contact: Wurundjeri ways of life	B

5.3.6.3 Interpretive content

These sites provide opportunities to interpret various aspects of how the Wurundjeri interacted with the environment. They could also be appropriate places to discuss how stony rises were formed and how different people have used them over time. However, these themes will be covered in the interpretation for the five major stony rises, so we suggest that these two sites have minor signs only.

5.3.6.4 Proposed interpretive media

Minor signs

5.3.6.5 Signage

2 x minor

5.3.7 SITE NEAR DOHERTY'S SCARRED TREE (C4)

Classification: N/A

5.3.7.1 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	Indigenous environment	A
Aboriginal people	The Wurundjeri: traditional owners of the land	B
	Before contact: Wurundjeri ways of life	A

5.3.7.2 Interpretive content

As previously discussed, interpretation at this site should not indicate the location of Doherty's scarred tree. This site is on a small road verge therefore there is only a limited amount of space available for interpretation.

5.3.7.3 Proposed interpretive media

None

5.3.8 SITE NEAR ZIEBELL'S DAIRY (C7)

Classification: B

5.3.8.1 Site history

The Ziebells are a well-known dairy-farming family in Whittlesea shire history and among the earliest German migrants to arrive in Victoria. They settled in Westgarthtown (now known as Thomastown) in 1850 and established a flourishing 102 -acre dairy farm. The early German settlers were regarded for having 'an incredible rapport' with the land. They were highly self-sufficient and particularly made use of the blue stone in the area.

The Ziebells' property at Aurora was owned by Heinrich Ziebell from 1853 to 1904 and was part of a larger complex of buildings.¹³⁹ Resident Sandy Ceccomancini believed that the dairy was built in 1901. Lois Clark worked at the dairy as a young woman, around 40 years ago. At the time she and the other people working on the dairy farm milked 80 cows.¹⁴⁰

5.3.8.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	European environment	A
European heritage	A growing community	B
	Migration	A
Agriculture and farming	Trials and triumphs	A
	Domestic life	B
	Farming technologies and practices	A

5.3.8.3 Interpretive content

The proximity of this conservation area to the remains of Ziebell's dairy makes it a suitable place for interpretation that reflects how Europeans adjusted to and adapted the landscape around them. Stories about how dairy farming affected the land and the impacts of migrants are particularly relevant here.

The Ziebell's dairy archaeological site is technically on private property; therefore interpretation should not clearly indicate the location of the site or encourage Aurora residents or visitors to look for it. Consultation with the property owners will be required.

5.3.8.4 Proposed interpretive media

Signage.

¹³⁹ Robert Pascoe, *A community portrait: lifetimes in the City of Whittlesea*, City of Whittlesea, Bundoora, 2001, pp. 30-1; Heritage Victoria, *Ziebells bluestone dairy & house*, Victorian Heritage Database, Heritage Victoria, Melbourne, 2010, viewed 31 May 2010, <http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/vhd/heritagevic#detail_places;12761>.

¹⁴⁰ Taryn Debney, Jenny Tulloch, Bianca Di Fazio and Gary Vines (Biosis Research), *Cultural Heritage Survey of Aurora, Epping, Victoria*, Biosis Research, Port Melbourne, 2004, pp. 73-4.

5.3.8.5 Signage

1 x Minor sign

5.3.9 SITE NEAR PIKE'S HOMESTEAD (C11)

Classification: B

5.3.9.1 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	European environment	A
European heritage	Settlement	A
	A growing community	B
Agriculture and farming	Trials and triumphs	A
	Domestic life	B
	Farming technologies and practices	B

5.3.9.2 Interpretive content

Since Pike's homestead is connected to the early period of European settlement, this site is a suitable place to discuss what this land would have been like when Europeans first arrived and what difficulties these early settlers had in farming the land. Stories about bushfires, floods and drought could potentially be interpreted.

4.3.9.3 Proposed interpretive media

Sculptural sign with textures or surfaces that appear to have been affected by bushfire, drought and/or flood.

4.3.9.4 Signage

1 x Major sign

5.4 ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

5.4.1 General context

5.4.1.1 Sites

This set of sites includes:

SITE	NAME/DESCRIPTION	CLASSIFICATION
D1	Public open space	TBC
D2	Public open space - the area is considered to be of high regional conservation significance	TBC
D3	Public open space next to Edgars Creek	A
D4	Public open space with stairs and walkways that are designed to protect the native vegetation	B
D5	Public open space next to Edgars Creek	A
D6	Native vegetation	TBC

SHP recommends the following additional site for interpretation:

SITE	NAME/DESCRIPTION	CLASSIFICATION
D7	Aurora Park	C

5.4.1.2 Environmental and sustainability initiatives and sites at Aurora

SHP could not obtain information about three of the sites suggested by MDG for interpretation of the environmental and sustainability initiatives at Aurora (D1, D2 and D6) at the time of writing this report. SHP and VicUrban have developed a list of initiatives at Aurora that must be interpreted somewhere within the development. These are:

- Rain gardens
- Frog ponds
- Water sensitive urban design (including swales)
- Protection of native vegetation
- Energy initiatives
- Recycling

Sites D1-D6 may indeed be suitable places for interpreting these initiatives, but it is also possible that there may be more appropriate places to interpret this content. This will be assessed when more information is provided by MDG, or in the next stage of this project.

5.4.2 EDGARS CREEK (D3, D5)

Classification: A

5.4.2.1 Short history

Water is an important part of sustainable living at Aurora. VicUrban has built six pairs of frog ponds to provide new homes for the endangered Growling Grass Frog. VicUrban has also designed Aurora so water is used efficiently and so storm water does not damage Melbourne's waterways.

5.4.2.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	Biodiversity and conservation	A
	A sustainable future	A

5.4.2.3 Interpretive content

The key storylines that should be interpreted at the frog ponds along Edgars Creek include the life cycle of the Growling Grass Frog, why it is endangered and what VicUrban is doing or has done at Aurora to conserve the frogs. Interpretation along the creek can also touch on other water-based initiatives at Aurora.

5.3.2.4 Proposed interpretive media

SHP recommends that one pair of frog ponds has major, interactive and sculptural interpretation and that the remaining five pairs of ponds have signage.

Growling grass frog sculptures and audio

This is a combination of large and small sculptured frogs with an audio growling frog (hidden) and a themed sculptural sign. The sculptures could be outsourced to a public artist with the aim of making them fun and appealing to children.

The Growling Grass Frog installation can be used as a springboard for discussing issues of biodiversity and conservation.

5.3.2.5 Signage

1 x Major sign; a series of minor signs

5.4.3 NATIVE VEGETATION (D4)

Classification: B

5.4.3.1 Short history

There are a number of places at VicUrban where native vegetation has been preserved.

5.4.3.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	Biodiversity and conservation	A
	A sustainable future	A

5.4.3.3 Interpretive content

Interpretation at these spaces will aim at explaining why the vegetation has been preserved and what makes it important, to encourage Aurora's residents and visitors to respect and care for the areas.

5.4.3.4 Proposed interpretive media

Signage that explains this principle.

5.4.3.5 Signage

1 x Minor

5.4.4 AURORA PARK (D7)

Classification: C

5.4.4.1 Short history

Aurora Park has an undercover recreational space with solar panels on its roof. There are many other energy saving initiatives at Aurora including insulation, four and five star energy rated appliances, solar-boosted hot water systems and cross flow ventilation systems.

5.4.4.2 Relevant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Priority
A changing environment	A sustainable future	A

5.4.4.3 Interpretive content

A sign located in the park already interprets the solar panels in Aurora Park, but this location could be an appropriate place to interpret the other energy saving initiatives at Aurora. If another park/recreation space that uses solar energy is built in the near future, however, interpretation could be placed there instead.

5.4.4.4 Proposed interpretive media

Signage that talks about the initiatives in a fun, child-friendly way, possibly incorporating interactive elements.

5.4.4.5 Signage

1 x Major

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