



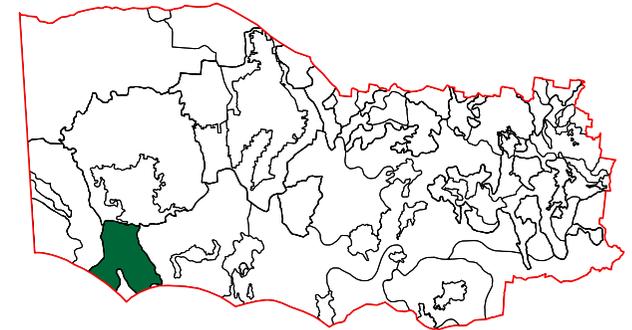
Character Type 7

Vegetated Rises

7 VEGETATED RISES

This Character Type is an interface area that exhibits qualities of the Western Volcanic and Glenelg Plains and the Rolling Tablelands to the north. It is unified by an undulating topography of low hills and river valleys that are for the most part densely vegetated with a combination of plantation forestry and large areas of state and national parks. These are interspersed with cleared pastoral areas that provide views over and across the terrain to hills cloaked by vegetation beyond.

The characteristics of this landscape are driven by alternating patterns of land use with a variety of outlooks and views, and it is this patchwork that unifies it to one Type. There are no distinctive Character Areas, however it merges to the south, extending to Portland and Mount Clay. This southern area is detailed in the Vegetated Rises Character Type within the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment* (DSE, Planisphere, 2006), which are generally separated by the Cobbobonee National Park.

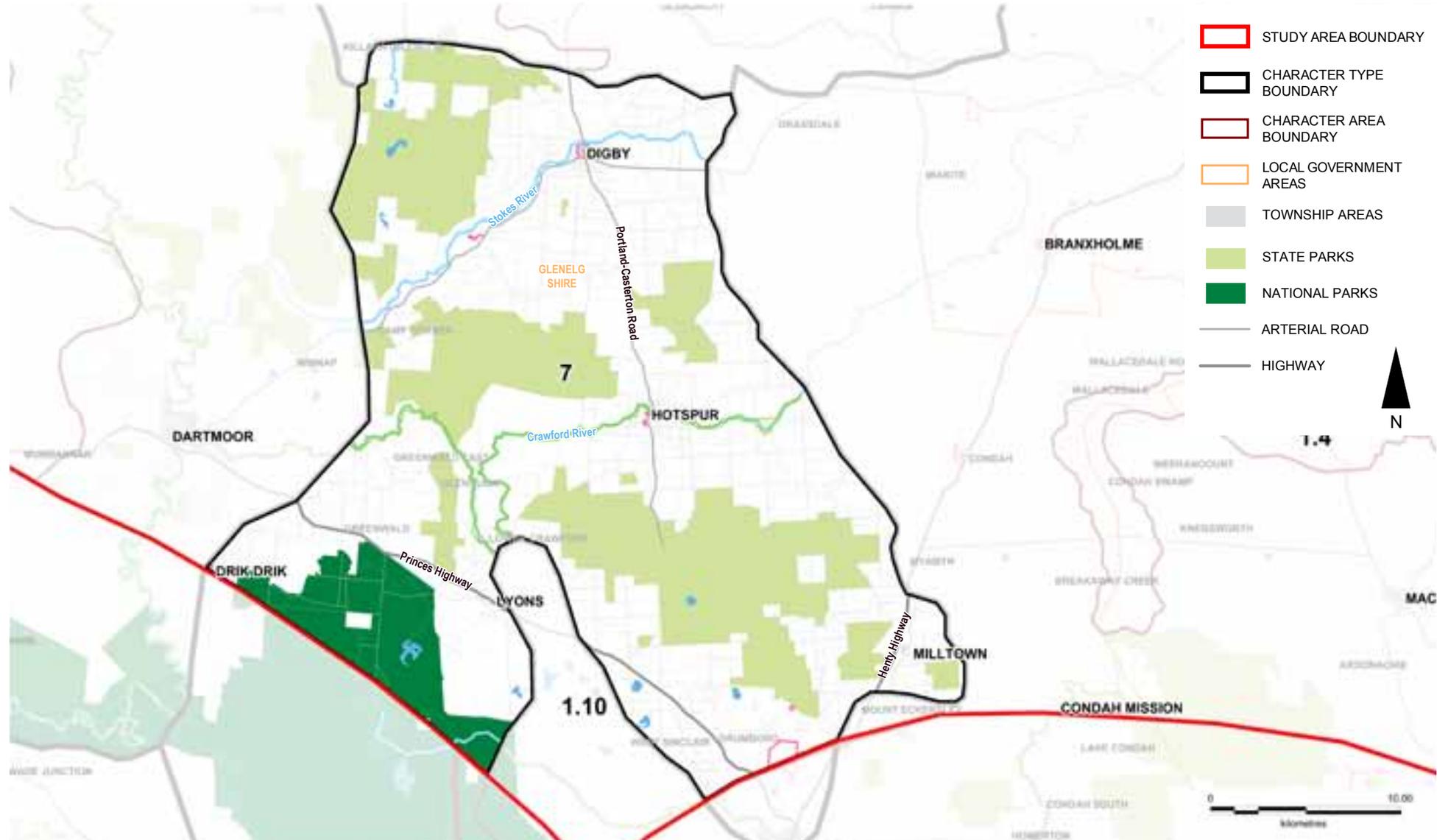


Wide river valleys have shaped the topography (south of Digby)



Rolling topography cloaked in forests and plantations, with occasional cleared areas (south of Digby)

Figure 1 Vegetated Rises Location



Key Features

- Gently rolling topography
- Roads that bend and weave with the terrain
- Large areas of Pine and Blue Gum plantations
- State and National Parks
- Occasional patches of open pastoral land
- River valleys of the Crawford and Stokes Rivers
- Long range views from high points

Settlements

This area is sparsely populated. It contains the townships of:

- Digby
- Hotspur

Landscape Characteristics

Landform

A rolling topography incised by deep and wide river valleys that contrast dramatically with the surrounding plains. The southern edge features the volcanic rises of Red Hill (170m), found in the Cobboboonee south of Lyons, and Mount Eckersley (160m) north of Heywood.

Waterform

The topography of this area is largely dictated by the river valleys of the Crawford (sometimes referred to as “Smokey”) and Stokes rivers and their tributaries. A few swamps occur in low lying areas.

Vegetation

Large tracts of land within this landscape have been used for plantation forestry. There are also large continuous areas of land held in public reserves, including the Hotspur and Annya State Forests, Crawford Regional Park and Cobboboonee National Park to the south. There a number of smaller bushland and wildlife reserves within the state parks and surrounding areas.

Remnants of Grassy Plains Woodland communities are evident in the isolated River Red Gums left standing in areas of cleared pastoral land, and open grasslands are more prevalent in parts to the north.

Indigenous roadside vegetation is tall and dense alongside areas of native forest and in corridors through cleared pastoral areas and the edges of most plantations.

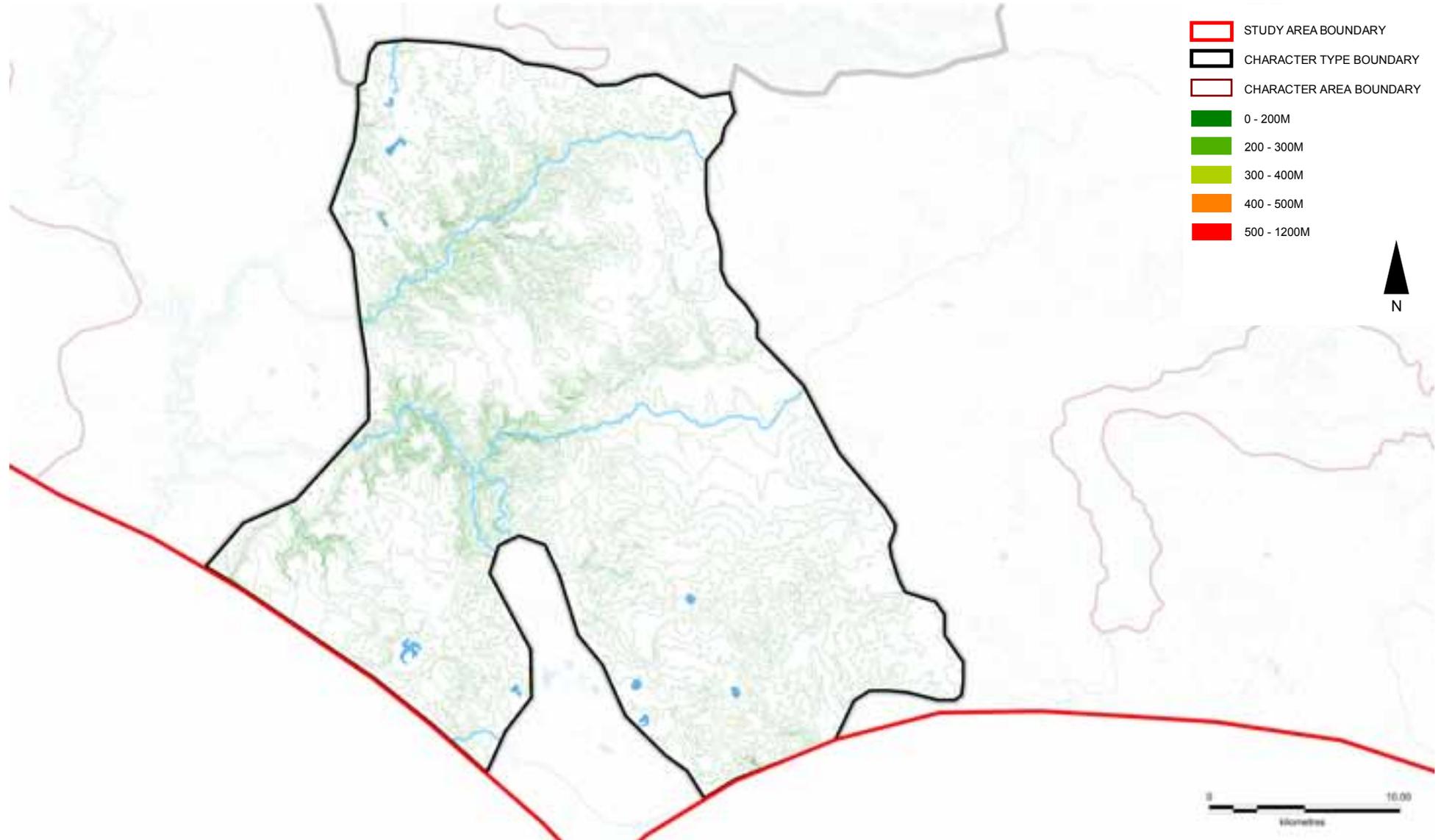
Land Use & Built Form

This landscape is being used primarily for plantation forestry and nature conservation, intermingled with cleared areas for sheep and cattle grazing. These occur predominantly around road corridors and small townships. Built form is minimal. There are occasional small scale sheds and farming infrastructure located close to the roadside, with homesteads set back out of sight into the vegetation. Residential development is largely contained within the boundaries of the small settlements.



Rolling topography cloaked in forests and plantations, with occasional cleared areas (south of Digby)

Figure 2 Vegetated Rises Landform & Waterform



PATTERN OF VIEWING

A varied pattern of viewing is created by the rolling topography. Dense patterns of plantation and forested vegetation channel views down the road corridor, then open out to patches of cleared pastoral land, often with a forested backdrop of plantations or bushland. Long range views to across cleared areas to the to more distant hillsides are available at high points in the topography and along the wide river valleys.

The main viewing corridors in this Character Type are:

- Portland-Casterton Road
- Digby-Dartmoor Road
- Princes Highway

The Princess Highway is an eventual extension of the Great Ocean Road to the south east, and a major tourist route through the area. It traverses large segments of forest through this Character Type. Views are narrowed by tall, native trees with a shrubby understory along the roadside and dense vegetation beyond.

The Portland-Casterton and Digby-Dartmoor Roads connect the townships of Merino, Digby and Hotspur to larger regional towns and major highways. These roads exhibit the varied viewing experience described above.



Hotspur State Forest: enclosed views with a towering canopy



Plantations with sparse roadside vegetation



Connecting roads wind with the topography and display a diversity of views that open and close through native forest, plantations and cleared pastoral areas



Wide views down the Crawford River valley south of Hotspur and the historic Hotspur Bridge

LANDSCAPE VALUES

Landscape values include aesthetic (visual and non-visual), historic, environmental, scientific, social and other values. It is acknowledged that many of the values overlap (i.e. a place or item may have historic and social value), but they are generally only listed once. A range of sources have been used to identify the landscape values of the Vegetated Rises, such as the field survey, existing studies and documentation, and community consultation.

Historic

- State significant Hotspur bridge, oldest surviving example of rural Victorian wrought-iron plate girder road bridge, has high degree of structural integrity, 1870, listed by National Trust
- Cobboboonee Forest, Gorae West to Drik Drik
 - identified in the Glenelg Shire Heritage Study Stage 1

Environmental/Scientific

- Cobboboonee National Park
 - protected area on the IUCN list Category II (National Park)
 - protected by National Parks Act 1975, Schedule 2
- Protected areas on the IUCN list
 - Stokes River Streamside Reserves, Category III (Natural Monument or Feature)
 - Annya, Digby H5, H31 & H32, Drumborg, Hotspur, Lyons H37 & Winyayung Bushland Reserves, Category IV (Habitat/Species Management Area)
 - Lake Crawford & Lake Sinclair Wildlife Reserves (Hunting), Category VI (Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources)

- Locally significant wetlands & waterways, protected by Glenelg ESO2
- Glenelg Ark, DSE project protecting native fauna, particularly Long-nosed Potoroos & Southern Brown Bandicoots, from fox predation on public land

Social

- Agriculture, also valued for economic reasons



Cobboboonee National Park



Plantation forestry is an economic driver for the area



Crawford River



Grazing to the base of trees threatens remnant specimens



CHANGE IN THE LANDSCAPE

Landscape Morphology

This landscape Character Type straddles three bioregions and its underlying geological structure has a number of influences as a result. It shares characteristics with the Glenelg Plain to the west, the Victorian Volcanic Plain to the east and the Tableland area to the north. Fingers of these weave together, forming a distinctive interface area.

The southern part has been formed through volcanic activity and includes the rise of Mount Eckersley, a scoria and tuff ring volcano. Lava flow from this diverted the course of the Crawford River, the valley of which spreads out to join the flat Glenelg Plain. To the north the rolling hills surrounding Digby that were formed by the valley of the Stokes River and its tributaries merge with the cleared, rolling topography of the adjacent Merino Tablelands.

It is believed that over 30,000 years ago Aborigines modified the landscape through hunting and their extensive use of fire. This controlled use of fire changed the appearance of the native bushland, with large areas of forest being replaced by open grasslands.

The Glenelg region was one of the first parts of Victoria to be settled by Europeans, with the Henty family establishing in the area around Portland in the 1830s. The townships of Digby and Hotspur grew from river crossings on the road between the fledgling township of Portland and the new squatter runs opened up by the Henty family during the 1830s and 1840s.

The inland region was opened up for pastoral purposes and gradually native grasses were replaced with exotic pasture species for cropping and grazing, and trees were felled.

Squatters initially took up large runs in the region and a more fine grained pattern of subdivision was introduced with Closer Settlement and Soldier Settlement strategies after the gold rush and World Wars respectively.

The region became the focus of intensive plantation establishment after World War II. This industry remains prolific in the area and has a heavy influence on the appearance of the landscape today.

Sensitivity to Change

This Character Type generally exhibits a low sensitivity to change as the rolling terrain and vegetation provides spaces for development to be nested in the landscape. Views are often blocked by the thick plantations and homesteads are set back from road sides. Areas to the north at the edge of the tablelands that have less vegetation are more prone to visual impact from built form and establishment of plantations, particularly along ridge lines and exposed hill sides (see image top right).

Harvesting of plantation timber has the potential to cause dramatic change to the landscape. It will open up views and cause areas of scarring that contrast sharply with the surrounds.

Anticipated Landscape Change

- Expansion of plantation forestry, including clearing and reestablishment of new trees
- Pine shelterbelts
- Increasing dry land salinity, pest plant and pest animal invasion, soil erosion, stream erosion, coastal

dune erosion, induced waterlogging, water quality deterioration and loss of flora and fauna diversity

- The burning of roadside vegetation as part of fire management measures could alter the appearance of roads and viewing corridors
- Due to the new bushfire management regulations views along fencelines could become more open
- Appearance of paddock network could alter if re-vegetation is set back from fences
- The State Governments planning zones review may lead to an increase in tourism, retail and accommodation uses in rural areas, a potential increase in rural living density and a potential increase in smaller lots and dwellings in the farming zone.



Cleared areas to the north, adjacent to the tablelands (Digby-Glenorchy Road)



Areas of pastoral land surrounded by forest and plantations at the edge of the Crawford River Regional Park



Vegetation assists to blend built form into the landscape

FUTURE CHARACTER DIRECTIONS

Dense vegetation will continue to drive the character of this landscape. Plantation design will respond to the topographical context by following the contours of the landscape and avoiding hard, straight edges that cut across the terrain. Roadside vegetation will be strengthened and maintained in areas with narrow viewing corridors to soften edges and reduce the visual impact of timber harvesting on the landscape.

Indigenous forests will continue to be havens for native flora and fauna, and promoted for their recreational value. Connections between these will be strengthened through protection of roadside vegetation and the establishment of biodiversity corridors. Views to landscape features such as Red Hill (found in the Cobboboonee south of Lyons) and Mount Eckersley, (located north of Heywood) particularly from identified significant viewing locations and road corridors, will be protected.

Opportunities

- Revegetation in areas prone to soil erosion
- Considered approach to plantation design that responds to the topography
- Promotion of agroforestry to diversify land use
- Maintain and strengthen biodiversity linkages between areas of forest
- Encourage land owners to maintain areas of native forest contained on private land
- Design new developments to integrate with the landscape

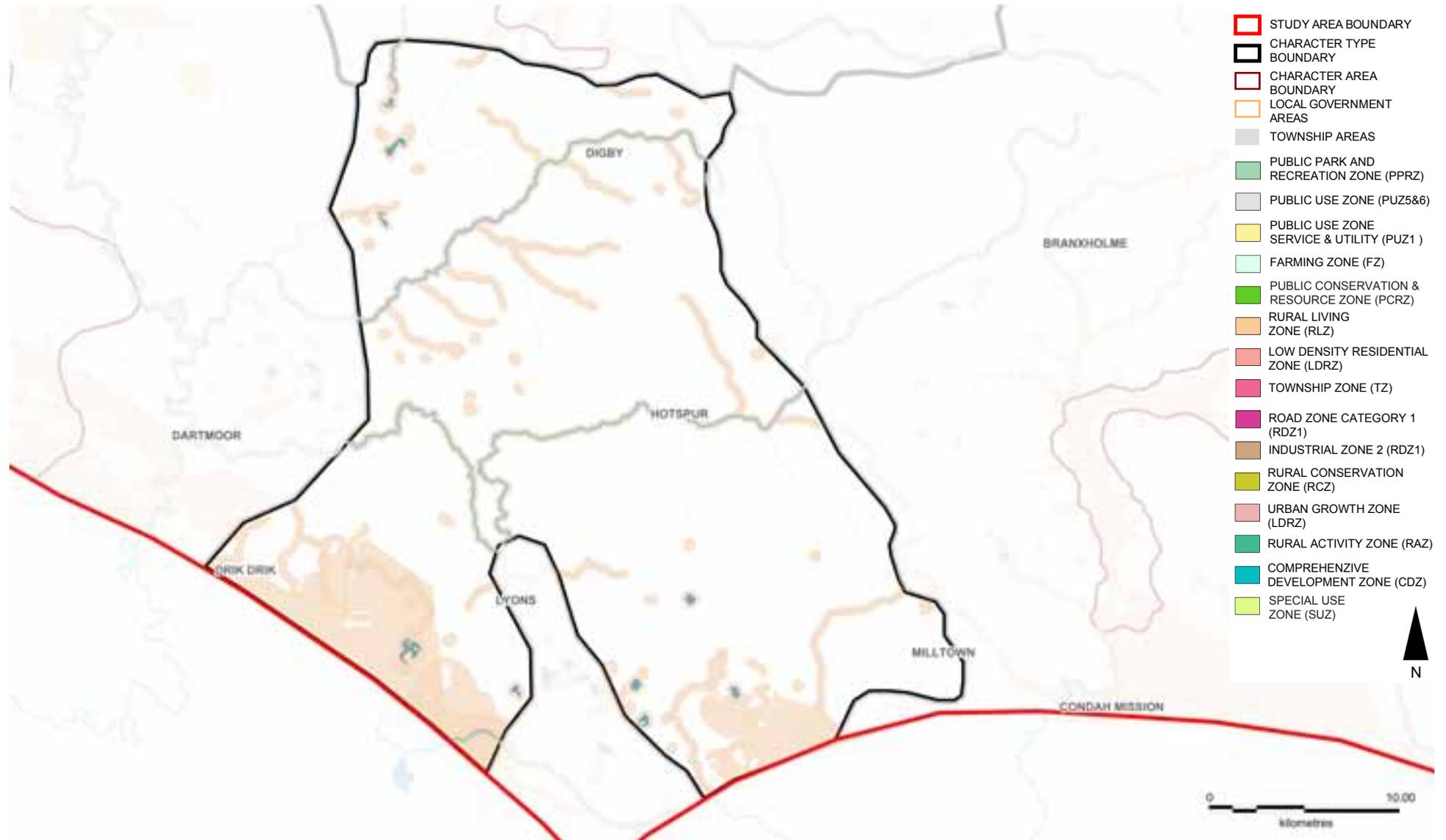
Threats

- Stock grazing to the base of remnant trees, accelerating senescence
- Timber harvesting scarring the landscape
- Erosion of creek lines and gullies impacting on the health of streams and rivers
- Timber plantations that do not respond to the topography and create 'hard lines' in the landscape
- Plantation species competing with endemic vegetation for water and nutrients
- Plantation species spreading into adjacent forested and conservation areas
- Logging activities causing damage to roads and roadside vegetation
- Spread of exotic weeds and pests
- Development that requires removal of large areas of existing vegetation
- Location of large buildings or infrastructure
- Conflict between the burning of roadside vegetation for fire management and the preservation/

enhancement of native vegetation in these roadside areas

- Allowing timber plantations without a permit could threaten significant landscape areas
- New bushfire management regulations may alter the character of the landscape through native vegetation clearance
- Channel modification (reference to rivers, estuaries and floodplains)
- Degradation of riparian vegetation
- Drainage of wetlands
- Uncontrolled stock access
- Sedimentation
- Habitat fragmentation/reduced connectivity
- Significant disturbance events (fire, flood, storms)

Figure 3 Vegetated Rises Cultural Heritage Sensitivity



LANDSCAPE PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT

Planning Scheme Policies & Controls

Only the Glenelg Planning Scheme applies to this Character Type.

Key Zones

- Farming Zone (FZ)
- Public Conservation & Recreation Zone (PCRZ)
- Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)

Key Overlays

- Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)
 - ESO2: Significant Wetlands & Waterways
- Heritage Overlay (HO)
 - HO160: Hotspur Bridge, Hotspur
- Wildlife / Bushfire Management Overlay (WMO / BMO)

Proposed Overlays

- HO206: Rifle Downs, HO208: Drik Drik Avenue of Honour, HO209: Cemetery, HO211: Former Church, HO212: Former School, HO218: Native Police Barracks, HO220: Homestead, HO222: Cemetery, HO223: Former Hotel, HO224: Public Hall, HO225: Memorial Avenue of Honour & Cairn

Landscape Management Objectives

To achieve the future landscape character directions for the Vegetated Rises, the following landscape management objectives are recommended:

- To maintain the varied viewing experience within the Vegetated Rises landscape, including the channelled or framed views available down heavily vegetated road corridors.
 - To retain views to landscape features such as Red Hill and Mount Eckersley, particularly from identified significant viewing locations and road corridors.
 - To maintain the dominance of the heavy vegetated character of the hills and valleys throughout the landscape.
 - To retain existing indigenous vegetation and encourage natural regeneration where possible.
 - To establish biodiversity corridors between areas of native forest, along road corridors and through private property where possible.
 - To encourage the appropriate siting and design of commercial timber plantations throughout the Vegetated Rises landscape.
 - To improve outviews from road corridors and significant viewing locations, where available, by minimizing the visibility of plantations.
- To minimise the visual impact of buildings and structures on the Vegetated Rises landscape.
 - To ensure buildings and structures demonstrate a high standard of design and respond to the character and significance of the surrounding landscape.
 - To incorporate best practice environmental sustainability principles in building siting and design.
 - To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure throughout the Vegetated Rises landscape.

Figure 4 Vegetated Rises Zones

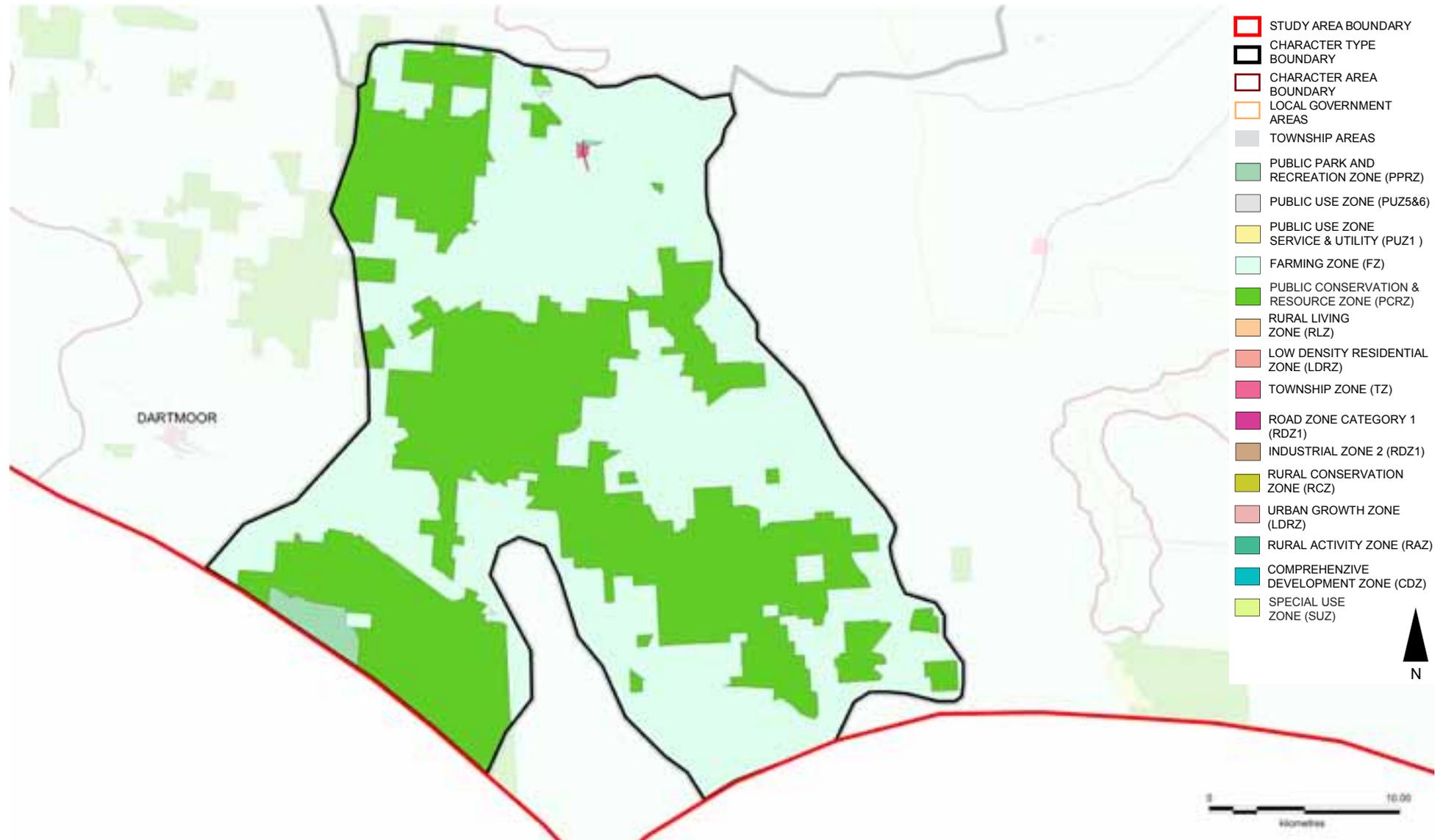


Figure 5 Vegetated Rises Overlays

