

NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (VICTORIA)

LYSTERFIELD VALLEY

LISTING STATUS:

Recording: "... those parts of the physical environment, both natural and man-made which contribute to the heritage of Australia, and which should be recorded and whose preservation is encouraged."

LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES:

Lysterfield Valley is located south-west of the Dandenong Ranges, within the Shire of Sherbrooke and the City of Knox. The boundaries follow Napoleon Road, Ferny Creek, Glenfern and Kelletts Road and are contiguous with a section of the boundary of the Recorded Lysterfield Forest area.

OWNERSHIP:

Private, with a small area of public land near Ferny Creek.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

A predominantly cleared area with a few scattered trees. The Valley is narrow and steep at its upper eastern limits and broadens out into a flat, wide, partially enclosed plain at the north-western end. There are outcrops of the underlying granodiorite along some of the ridge lines and the soil is generally sandy loam top-soil with a clay sub-soil.

The land is mainly used for broad scale farming activities, such as grazing, but, recently, some hobby farm development has commenced.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION:

The foothills and plains surrounding the Dandenong Ranges were considered to be valuable farming land and squatters quickly established pastoral runs in these areas. In 1838 the Monbulk (or Monbolloc) run was established by J S Kerr and J S Dobie and covered most of this area. A section of the Corhanwarrabul run, later known as Glenfern, extended from Ferntree Gully to Ferny Creek.

The Lysterfield Valley was first known as "the Flats" until the mid 1870s when William Lyster, one of the first selectors, gave a piece of land as a site for the school. The name "Lysterfield" was adopted at a public meeting

soon after as a compliment to Lyster and because of the need to establish a suitable name for the area.

The swampy land covered by ti-tree along the Monbulk Creek was selected around 1867. When Lyster selected his land he began to drain the swamp in order to set up a dairy farm. Others quickly followed his lead and the swampy areas were soon drained. A little later, in the 1880s, many of the blocks with frontages to Wellington Road were selected. The early farming activities in this area included Lyster's dairy farm, potato growing, pigs, and mixed farming. Wheat and barley were grown in the district during the 1850s and 60s but the appearance of rust in the crops around 1866 resulted in the abandonment of this activity.

Today this Valley is used for various farming activities including dairy farming, market gardening and grazing.

CHARACTER:

Lysterfield Valley is an attractive pastoral landscape which forms part of a "green wedge" between the suburban areas of Rowville and Dandenong North and the urbanised Ferntree Gully-Belgrave ridge of the Dandenongs. For many visitors the Lysterfield Valley forms the major "gateway" to the Dandenongs from the metropolitan area. The excellent views of this landscape from Glenfern Road and Mount Morton highlight its importance as a buffer between urban and rural areas and as a visual transition between the metropolitan suburbia and the elevated and forested slopes of the Dandenongs.

Extensive clearing of native vegetation in the past has exposed the bold hills and steep slopes of the Valley landform particularly in the east.

The major attraction of this landscape is its simplicity of colour, shape and texture in contrast to the forested areas to the south and south-east, the suburban development to the west and the forest residential character of Belgrave.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Lysterfield Valley is of significance due to its attractive landscape character and its importance as a buffer between Metropolitan Melbourne and the Dandenong Ranges.

MANAGEMENT:

Protection of the landscape character of the Lysterfield Valley will require planning policies which aim to:

- i) retain broad scale agricultural land uses throughout the Valley;
- ii) prohibit subdivision into small allotments;
- iii) re-structure recent small subdivisions so that the number, location and size of the allotments do not have an adverse impact on the landscape quality of this Valley;
- iv) restrict the type of land uses so that intensive activities which require a large number of structures, for example dog-boarding kennels, are not permitted.
- v) provide development controls over the siting, design and external finish of new buildings and works so as to minimise their visual impact on this exposed landscape and avoid the creation of a cluttered appearance.

The Trust recommends that every effort be made to maintain this Valley as part of a "green wedge" which would act as a buffer between urban and rural uses.

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R N Phillips and Assoc. Pty Ltd

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