

# George Street Reserve

MANAGEMENT PLAN



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# Abstract

George Street Reserve is an important isolated remnant of vegetation located in the urban environment of Sandringham. It is of significance because of the remnant vegetation and habitat contained within the area and the role the reserve plays as an informal barrier between residential and light industrial zones.

Floristically, the Reserve's significance has increased after a wildfire in 1984 assisted the regeneration of a diverse heathland.

Conservation of indigenous vegetation is the prime objective for the area.

It is a popular reserve with an active Friends group.



*The vision of this plan is that George Street Reserve is managed to achieve maximum diversity of indigenous floral species and minimum weed species.*

The woodland vegetation provides a screen between residential areas and light industrial areas, a protective buffer to weeds and other urban pressures between the Heathland vegetation and the urban environment.

Fauna management aims to best achieve the above vision thus enhance areas of habitat for native animals. There is a need to determine what species are present within the Reserve and which of these species are significant to best manage the floral communities in which they occur.



# Background

George Street Reserve is comprised of adjoining pieces of land in Sandringham, approximately 16km from the Melbourne GPO. It is a vegetated block covering 6.25 hectares located on the corner of George and Tulip Streets in Sandringham. Abutting this reserve is Merindah Park, formally known as The Green Belt, which stretches from George Street Reserve to the Sandilands Estate and then on to Holloway Road. The former City of Sandringham purchased the George Street Reserve block in 1924. Merindah Park, comprising several blocks were purchased in 1948 and were acquired for the purposes of providing a green belt—hence the former name—between industries and residences, creating both a physical and visual vegetative buffer. This in turn provides a valuable area of remnant vegetation and habitat.

The vegetation community provides significant structural and floristic components for fauna and as a result, George Street Reserve is considered to contain a high diversity of bird species and a moderate diversity of reptile species. There are significant plant species recorded from this reserve.

The original vegetation of the area consisted of heathy shrubland, non-coastal vegetation of the Bayside area – largely a Green Sheoak (*Allocasurina paradoxa*)/Silky Tea-tree (*Leptospermum myrsinoides*) heath community. Currently an even-aged Coast Tea-tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*) community with scattered Coast wattles (*Acacia sophorae*) and Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus pryoriana*) dominates the area.

Although much of the understorey contains exotic grasses, indigenous species still exist. Species such as Sand-hill Sword sedge (*Lepidosperma concavum*), Flax lilies (*Dianella* spp.), Mat Rush (*Lomandra* spp), Showy Bossiaea (*Bossiaea cinerea*) and Small Grass-trees (*Xanthorrhoea minor*) can be found.

Locally significant colonies of orchid species are also found within George Street Reserve.

There are pockets of indigenous heathland that have regenerated after fire and an active Friends group tends these areas of regeneration.

There have been several fires in the George Street Reserve. A burn in 1976 produced a small area of heathland with relatively low species diversity. This area is situated next to a firebreak on the western side of the reserve and as such is susceptible to weed invasion or “edge effect”. This heath contains at least one heathland species, Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*), that does not occur in the main heathland area that resulted from the 1984 wildfire. It also supports small colonies of terrestrial orchids.

The area burnt by wildfire in 1984 contains a diverse heathland community, following intense handweeding of the burn site. This heathland is high in species abundance and has extended beyond the original burn site suggesting that natural regeneration is occurring. Some species are beginning to senesce, allowing gaps to appear in the vegetation.

## Vegetation Management

### HEATHLAND SPECIES

The vegetation in the Reserve is divided into 3 different communities, a main Heathland area, a Tea-tree woodland and a smaller Heathland area.

The main Heathland area shall be managed for the maximum diversity of indigenous species and a minimum of weeds. Access into the main Heathland should be controlled to reduce degradation of the Heathland vegetation. The smaller Heathland area should be maintained as a low-key Heathland interpretative area.

George Street contains one of the best examples of open heath within Bayside and with a series of ecological burns, it should be possible to re-establish a significant portion of the original vegetation (Cropper 1996).

### TEA-TREE WOODLAND

Comprising Tea-tree and mixed indigenous species, the woodland provides a screening of indigenous vegetation between the residential areas and light industrial areas. This screening plays an important vegetative role as a protective buffer to weeds and other urban pressures between the Heathland vegetation and the urban environment.

Orchid habitat within the Heathland should be managed to ensure the survival and proliferation of these colonies. Further research is required to determine the best methods of managing these colonies; some spot planting to maintain the tree canopy may be required.

Regeneration of the Tea-tree screen, with a scattering of indigenous Eucalyptus species will add diversity to the Heathland.

### WEED CONTROL

Weed control within the Heathland is an ongoing issue and weed control within the Sanctuary should be carried out in accordance with Council contract specifications and updated annually during the specification review.

## Fauna Management

In terms of fauna management, further surveys are required within the Reserve to determine what species are present within the Heathland and which of these species are significant. Once identified, management strategies should be established to best manage these species and the communities in which they occur, to enhance areas of habitat for native animals within the Reserve. For example, large logs are important habitat for lizards, insects and other invertebrates and are important for nutrient cycling, therefore are to be retained where possible. Levels of pest species and vermin also need to be determined and the best methods of removal investigated.

## Fire Risk Management

Fire management within George Street Reserve is an ongoing issue. Firebreaks are annually inspected and should be maintained as advised by the MFB. Fine fuel portions of deadfall should be removed and larger branches scattered to reduce fire hazard.

## Ecological Fire Regimes

Appropriate ecological fire regimes should also be conducted where practical and these regimes established with Council contract specifications. Cropper (1996) recommends three controlled burns should be planned at two year intervals for George Street. Due to the significance of the vegetation, it is important that Cropper's recommendations are carried out.

## Litter Management

Litter is an ongoing issue within the Reserve. Again, an education campaign, (including letterboxing of neighbouring properties) may prove successful in reducing litter within the Reserve by raising community awareness, especially the communities within the immediate vicinity of the Reserve.

## Promotion and Awareness

Increased promotion of George Street Reserve, plus all bushland reserves in Bayside, may increase general awareness of the importance of such reserves and eventually result in reduced fencing and greater access to these areas.



Issues that need to be addressed include rubbish dumping, litter, bicycle use and dog walking within the Reserve.

Adjacent residents may also need to be approached regarding the impact of invasive garden species and the dumping of garden refuse. Control of this activity may require patrolling by By-laws officers.

The status of the Reserve should be maintained, with low-key interpretational facilities provided to enhance the enjoyment and level of awareness of the users of the Reserve.

## Dog Management

There are several problems associated with dogs within George Street Reserve. Dog droppings bring excessive nutrients foreign to the heathland community into the Reserve. Excess nutrients can lead to an increase in weed species, which can out-compete the indigenous vegetation.

Dogs running off leash through the Reserve damage delicate regenerating species, such as orchid colonies and those species regenerating after burns.

Dogs running uncontrolled through the Reserve also disturb the seed bank within the soil.

George Street Reserve is designated as a dog 'on-leash' area, as are all Bushland reserves, due to the sensitivity of the site to disturbance by dogs.

# References

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## Further Reading

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# Management

## PRESCRIPTIONS

It is expected that a review of the management plan and expert advice will be conducted every three years.

### High Priority Actions

- 1.1. Maintain a vegetative buffer of tall shrubs to screen the interior Heathland from Tulip Street and George Street to act as a buffer to weeds and visual intrusions.
- 1.2. Maintain the Tea-tree buffer around the burn sites.
- 1.3. Conduct a minimum of 18 working bees within the Reserve.
- 1.4. Survey weeds throughout the Reserve recording areas that have been given control treatments.
- 1.5. Control and eradicate the weeds in the Heathland area. Monitor areas of weed control annually.
- 1.6. Carry out weed control as per specifications overleaf.

### Medium Priority Actions

- 2.1. Develop and implement regenerative burn trials.
- 2.2. Delineate narrow pathways for visitors, monitoring and maintaining existing pathways.
- 2.3. Develop and implement direct seeding trials.
- 2.4. Maintain the seed collection of indigenous species.

- 2.5. Monitor orchid colonies annually.
- 2.6. Implement appropriate vermin control techniques, noting statutory obligations. Monitor the effectiveness of these techniques
- 2.7. Develop interpretive facilities for the Reserve.
- 2.8. Develop and implement landscape plans for the Spring Street site
- 2.9. Regularly remove rubbish and litter from the Reserve
- 2.10. Rezone the Reserve to a conservation-orientated zoning.
- 2.11. Survey fauna within the Reserve and develop comprehensive list. May be carried out in conjunction with Friends of Native Wildlife.

### Low Priority Actions

- 3.1. Develop and implement one major vegetation survey of Heathland Area 1 to be carried out within the life of the plan (3 years) to provide data for comparative studies
- 3.2. Assess the habitat requirements of any native animals present and develop and implement programs to manage the habitat/s and populations.

### Zone 41

Annual spray of *Myrisphyllum asparagoides* and all exotic climbing vines including *Tradescantia albiflora*, *Salpichroa origanifolia* and *Delairea odorata*.

### Zone 42

1m wide strip along entire fence line shall be 95% free of all weeds.

### Zone 43 a, b, c, d

Shall be 80% free of weeds.

### Zone 44

Pathways to be clear of vegetation to a height of 1.8m and a width of 1m. Block informal pathways.

### Zone 45

*Leptospermum laevigatum* along western boundary of zone to be pruned back 1m from remnant vegetation. Shall be 50% free of exotic grasses.

### Zone 46

Shall be 50% free of the following weeds mature enough to set seed: *Briza maxima* and *Ehrharta erecta*.

### Zone 47

*Poa sieberana* area to be maintained 95% free of weeds.

### Zone 48

Shall be 95% free of following weeds *Briza maxima*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and *Hypochoeris radicata*.

Shall be 80% free of *Ehrharta erecta*.

### Zone 49

Revegetation beds shall be 80% free of weeds.

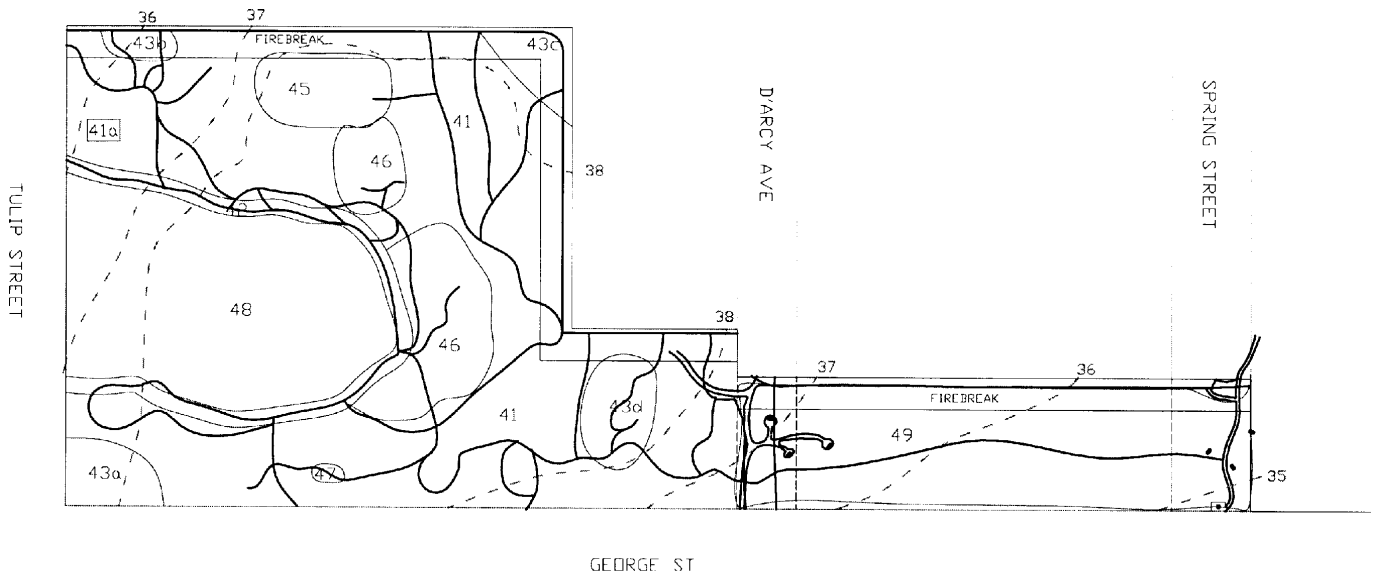
Twice a year spray of exotic climbing vines including *Salpichroa origanifolia* and *Tradescantia albiflora* and *Delairea odorata*.

Annual spray of *Rubus* spp.

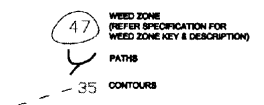
Annual bulb removal of *Rumex sagittatus*.



# Mapped Details



## LEGEND



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