

# NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA 6 BIRTS HILL/JUMPING CREEK VALLEY

## Vision for the character of Maroondah

Maroondah provides a living environment enjoyed for its variety of housing types and its strong landscape setting of heavily vegetated hills, vales and ridgelines. The residential areas contribute to this setting through public reserves, private gardens and trees, which envelops the City in a 'green blanket'.

The Birts Hill/Jumping Creek Valley Neighbourhood Area comprise two geographically separate but similar residential areas in the north of the municipality.

Birts Hill and Jumping Creek Valley are some of the most bushy and hilly parts of Maroondah. Large blocks contain private bushland contiguous with extensive bushland reserves and in some locations, the street scene is dominated by vegetation. Birts Hill is elevated above Croydon, providing a significant visual backdrop to surrounding suburbs, while Jumping Creek Valley is an important biological resource.

### Community values

The communities of Birts Hill/Jumping Creek Valley Character Area value:

- bush setting and large blocks;
- lack of fences and footpaths; and
- proximity to bush reserves and native flora/fauna.

The communities of Birts Hill/Jumping Creek Valley Character Area aspire to:

- protection of the tree canopy and bushland; and
- tighter controls regarding removal of vegetation.

### Existing character elements

- Topography is hilly with some vistas to distant vegetated hillsides, particularly from the elevated areas on Birts Hill.
- Architectural styles are very mixed modern (post 1990s).
- Dwellings are a mix of single and double storey, with numerous split level houses also occurring.
- Materials are mainly brick with tile roofs, with some variations.
- Setbacks are large, greater than 7m at front and both sides.
- Large blocks, many in excess of 1200m<sup>2</sup>.
- Dominant remnant native bush gardens and frontages that are usually screened from view.
- Streets are winding, corresponding with topography, and have a 'rural' character, without surfaced footpath. Some have swale drains or no edging, but others have formed concrete gutters.

- Street trees are usually irregular, native bushy remnants.
- The informal, rural character of some roads.

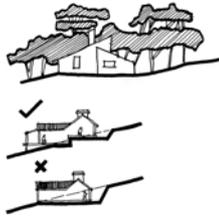
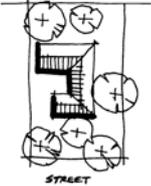
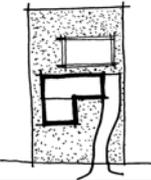
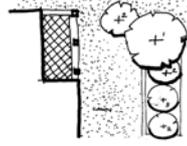
### Preferred future character

The Birts Hill/Jumping Creek Valley Neighbourhood Area will continue as residential areas set in hilly topography with near-continuous indigenous and native tree cover. The mix of architectural styles in the areas will remain, unified by the dense vegetation. Tall indigenous trees and bushy understoreys will dominate the skyline, street scenes and gardens. Many streets will retain an informal, rural character, with heavily vegetated edges contiguous with private gardens and bushland reserves.

### The preferred future character will be achieved by:

- ensuring low scale building forms, tucked into the landscape;
- ensuring all developments are designed with the topography and avoid excessive excavation and removal of vegetation;
- ensuring new developments on hill faces and upper slopes are not highly visible from a distance and maintain a vegetation-dominated backdrop when viewed from within and outside the neighbourhood;
- encouraging the use of materials and colours found naturally in the local area;
- encouraging the use of permeable materials within front setbacks;
- encouraging the planting of indigenous vegetation, including substantial trees; and
- encouraging open frontage treatments, including the use of vegetation instead of front fencing.

## Design guidelines

Objective	Design Response	Avoid
To ensure low scale building forms, tucked into the landscape.	<p>Keep development below the established or future mature tree canopy height.</p> <p>Minimise building footprint and articulate buildings into separate elements.</p>	<p>Buildings that protrude above the tree canopy.</p> <p>Visually dominant, sheer and unarticulated elevations.</p> 
To ensure that all developments are designed with the topography and avoid excessive excavation and removal of vegetation.	<p>New buildings should be innovative and contemporary and designed to respond to the characteristics of the site and locality.</p> <p>Minimise the visual impact and reduce the need for cut and fill by designing buildings to follow the contours and step down the site.</p>	<p>Dwellings with no relationship to the site or wider landscape setting.</p> <p>Excessive cut and fill.</p> 
To ensure that new developments on hill faces and upper slopes are not highly visible from a distance and maintain a vegetation-dominated backdrop when viewed from within and outside the neighbourhood.	<p>Use darker building materials that are less prominent visually, particularly for upper levels and roofs of buildings located on prominent ridges or hill faces.</p> <p>Site buildings to minimise the loss of existing vegetation, including understorey and to provide for the planting of new substantial vegetation.</p>	<p>Light coloured surfaces and highly reflective materials, particularly on roofs.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation, including understorey.</p> <p>Site clearing.</p> 
To encourage the use of materials and colours found naturally in the local area.	Utilise colours, materials and textures that complement those found in the local environment, with consideration as to how the materials will weather over time.	Large areas of 'artificial' colour or highly reflective surfaces.
To encourage the use of permeable materials within front setbacks.	<p>Minimise impervious surfacing in front garden areas.</p> <p>Provide only one vehicular crossover per frontage.</p>	<p>Large areas of impervious materials.</p> <p>Dominance of front boundary setbacks by crossovers, hard surfaced driveways and car parking areas.</p> 
To encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation including substantial trees.	<p>Retain established trees and provide for the planting of new indigenous vegetation, including canopy trees, wherever possible.</p> <p>Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all applications for new dwellings that includes utilisation of appropriate indigenous species.</p>	<p>Loss of canopy trees, particularly indigenous trees.</p> <p>Lack of indigenous vegetation.</p> 
To encourage open frontage treatments, including the use of vegetation instead of front fencing.	Other than in exceptional circumstances provide no front fencing and/or utilise planting at the front boundary.	Front fences, particularly high and/or solid fencing.