

McHarg Ranges



PO Box 35, Tooborac. Vic. 3522.
Ph: 0409496576 email: graniteboulders@gmail.com



Granite Boulders Landscape Guardians

McHarg Ranges

A proposal to Develop a Significant Landscape Overlay. SLO

Thursday, 5 August 2010

To the Mitchell Shire Councillors

A local community effort to recognise the importance of preserving a unique landscape has been the impetus to investigate and develop an overlay that will establish for future generations which was described by the 'McIvor Times' 1912 **“Those rugged and stupendous emences (sic) of the Tooborac Range”**.

Locals 100 years ago recognised the beauty of this area. Transition from a largely rural area to a blend of traditional farming and amenity area has taken place to date, attracting lifestyle residents and many cottage industries thus adding to Victoria's tourist industry. This places a responsibility on us to make sure that proper planning is put in place to ensure that what attracts us is not lost by inappropriate development.

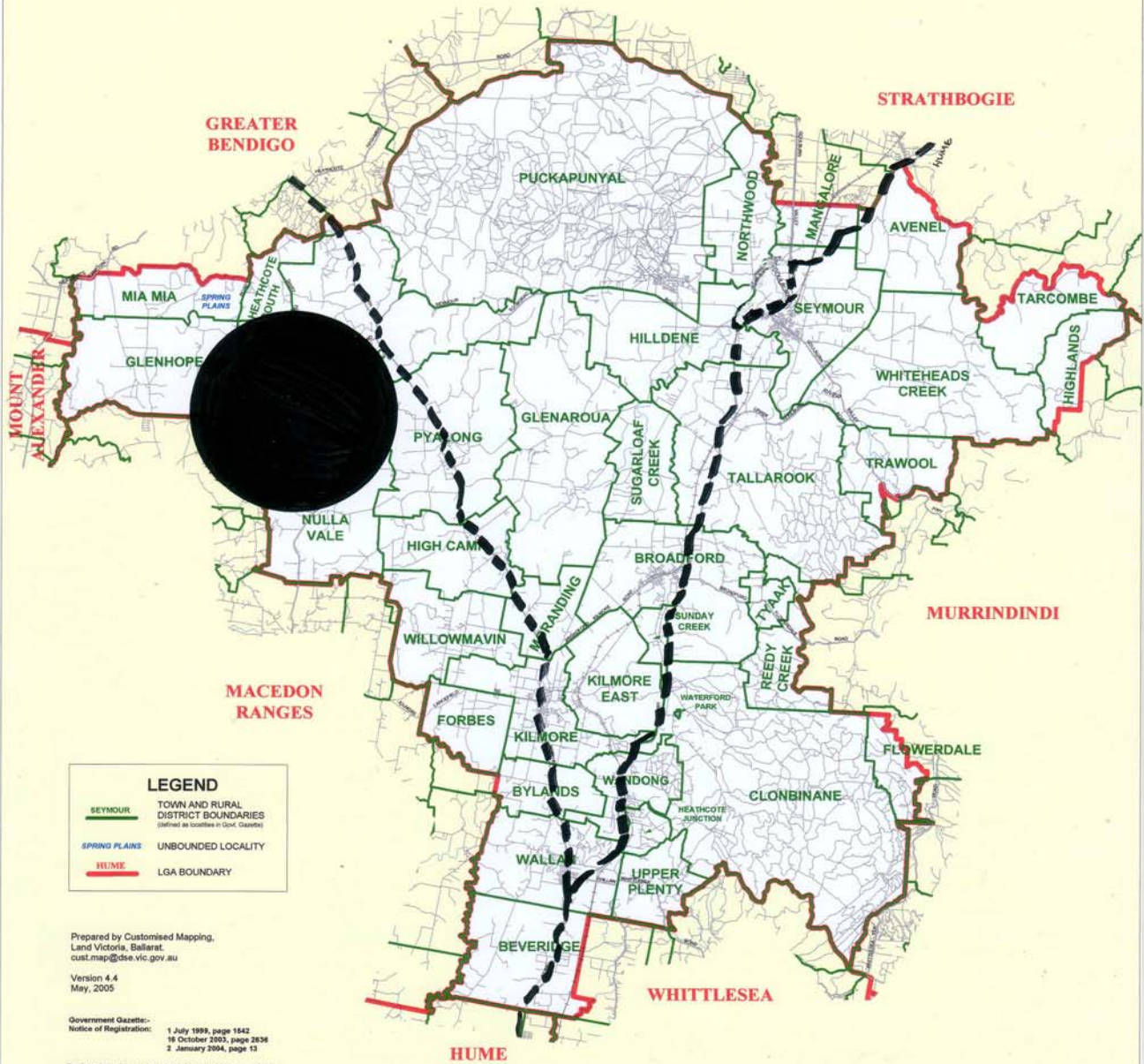
It is these concerns that we ask the Mitchell Shire Council to address and support a proposed detailed and comprehensive study that will be developed into an overlay recognising this unique landscape.



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MITCHELL SHIRE

TOWN AND RURAL DISTRICT NAMES AND BOUNDARIES



● **McHARG RANGES**

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Unless defined or described otherwise, where the suburb or rural district boundary follows a road, as a general principle the boundary is the centre of the formed road, centre of the median where two carriageways exist or centre of the reserve where there is no formation. Where following a watercourse, as a general principle the boundary is the centreline of the main channel.



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GENIUS LOCI AND VICTORIA'S McHARG RANGES

The beckoning silence is what is enjoyed. The Aboriginal belief is that life is part of one vast unchanging network of relationships that can be traced to the Great Spirit Ancestors of the Dreamtime.

The aboriginal traditional myths and legends give an explanation of the formation of the landscape and the creation of many outstanding geographical features.

Tooborac Township and District a History 1836 – 1936

In September 1912, the "McIvor Times" Tooborac correspondent penned the following paragraph titled "The Heath Hills of Tooborac".

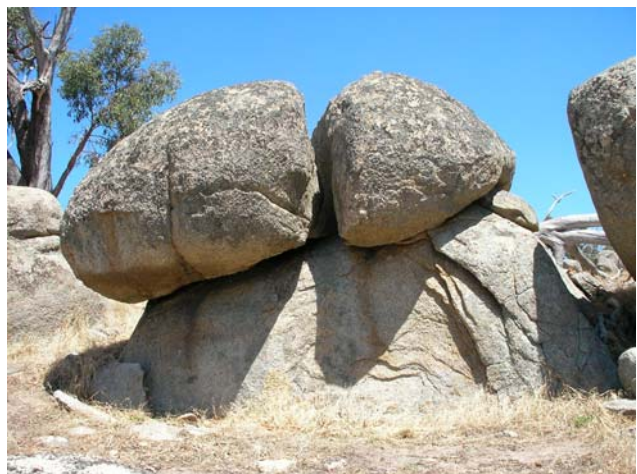
"Situated about 7 miles from Heathcote in a south-easterly direction, is a spot, the scenic beauties of which, at this time of the year stand above all other in a class of their own. Here nature has decked in floods of pink and white, in wonderful yet orderly confusion, the family hills of Tooborac. She has contrasted the product of her mightiest powers – those rugged and stupendous emenences of the Tooborac Range – with her most delicately fashioned artistic handiwork.

Work, which as we gaze upon fills us brimful with feelings of reverence for that Great Soul that lives and works in all things. How many, and how great are the joys of those who happily know this spot and visit it. Let it be made known outside our own locality, this beauty spot, so that others too may visit and enjoy the scenic beauties of the spot which has pleased the Great Creator to make beautiful for our sake."

Shaping by External Forces

The McHarg Ranges through erosion over millions of years causing decomposition of the rock insitu and creating a visual and dramatic example of a feature termed spheroidal or onion weathering. **The results are spectacular natural rock sculptures and highly erosive and unstable granite soils.**

Examples of weathering



McHarg Ranges



THE McHARG RANGES A Unique Visual Statement

George Seddon – Centre for Environmental Studies, University of Melbourne writing in Landscape Australia 1979.

'There is a latter day proverb that anything Xeroxed begins to lose its value. This is the Age of easy copying. I have a similar maxim of my own, that any place that you can get to by jet is unlikely to be very different from the place you just left.' One hundred wind towers on the range, reaching heights of one hundred and ten metres with blades of forty five metres radius would reduce this unique visual landscape by their overwhelming size to just another wind farm that can be seen anywhere in the world.

George Seddon says the geology of an area should be shown 'respect' and 'structures that are out of scale or character should be avoided.'

'Study the landform, and build in sympathy with it.'

Robin Boyd one of Australia's great architects and commentators on the environment expressed his dismay and sadness in his book the Australian ugliness 'Tram, telephone, and electric poles (he would have included wind towers) and the spiders web of overhead wires which are strung to them, are more in evidence in Australia than anywhere. They form a ubiquitous veil across the civic scene, but like the sides of one's nose they never register on the retina. **In the darkness of the cultivated blind spots some of the most painful damage is done to Australia in all innocence as when, with the simple lookouts, and beauty spots.....the blind spot contribution to the Australian Ugliness occurs'.**



Tooborac Baynton Road



Tooborac Lancefield Road



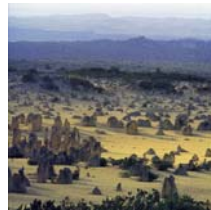
ROCKS SPACE AND VOLUME 'The modus operandi of nature'

The great sculptor Henry Moore was of the opinion 'that the origins of sculpture go back to the moment when man first beheld the spectacle of gigantic stones rising out of the landscape like solitary totems.' The importance to him was of the harsh landscape of Yorkshire with its rocks and moors. Much of Australia's wonderment is the monolithic character of its ancient rock formation whether it is Uluru in central Australia or the Kimberley. The McHarg Ranges are equally spectacular through its various and precarious natural forms and should be compared to the Devil's Marbles (a declared sacred site) in the Northern Territory.

Many artists and photographers are drawn to the McHarg Ranges for inspiration and the source of wonderment would be lost if the landscape was industrialised with wind towers and their accompanying infrastructure. Many cultures like the Japanese or the early Egyptians used stone to reflect tranquility or carved it to give permanence to those they revered or to give monumental character to their beliefs like Stonehenge. The fact that there is a busy road nearby Stonehenge and buildings close to the Great Pyramids illustrates how bad planning can take away some of the spirituality of a man made totem. **The scale of towers dominating the landscape of the ranges would diminish its uniqueness of nature's totems.**



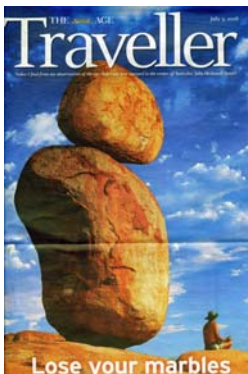
Devil's Marbles NT Age 2008



Nambung Nat Park WA



Northern Australia



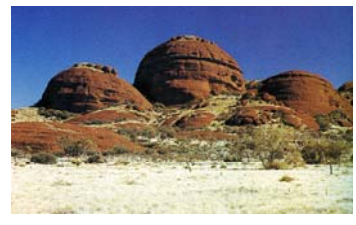
Devil's Marbles NT



North Australia



Chillagoe Cape York



Katatjuta The Olgas NT



Mc Harg Ranges Tooborac



Mc Harg Ranges Tooborac Baynton Road Victoria



THE HISTORY OF TOOBORAC

McHARG RANGES

Tooborac

the most frequent in its residents can pass through and upon to fight fire.

rious outbreaks which have been; in 1889 when burnt in an area bounded ng. This fire was of such ce. In January, 1899, fire along.

active fire swept through Emu Flat and Tooborac [Ivor Times" that the sight e forgotten by those who ee was one mass of glowles of country was burnt". of Tooborac and by even-xt day the wind changed it back along its western leaving a blackened "V" e third day, with another remaining grass between the ich started on a Tuesday, ed.

n recent years started on Creek at the foot of the rough past Pyalong to the ng thousands of acres and dings, and stock.

es many times, the main -ing. Big floods occurred lclvor Creek on the main 170 severe flooding resulted d for seven months. The to Heathcote for the first ds have also occurred in Bridge was washed away)

d with this district, as in they immediately faced a ght periods have occurred 1912-14 period when a a Tooborac correspondent round has the appearance numbers and the lambing ough periods have also

In September, 1912, the "McIvor Times" Tooborac correspondent penned the following paragraph titled "The Heath Hills of Tooborac".

"Situating about 7 miles from Heathcote in a south-easterly direction, is a spot, the scenic beauties of which, at this time of the year stand above all other in a class of their own. Here nature has decked in floods of pink and white, in wonderful yet orderly confusion, the famous hills of Tooborac. She has contrasted the product of her mightiest powers - those rugged and stupendous emences of the Tooborac Range - with her most delicately fashioned artistic handiwork.

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* * * * *
"To give ex-residents an excuse to return to their former haunts, provide opportunity for a round of social functions away from the ordinary, and secure money for the local Mechanic's Institute, 'Back to Tooborac' celebrations were organised for Friday and Saturday, 13th and 14th April." These words are quoted in the McIvor Times in April, 1951. Today, almost twenty years later, a further celebration is to take place during the last weekend in March, 1969.

As in those days, the present band of energetic workers hope to see their efforts crowned by the success of the former "Back to", with the various fixtures being freely patronised by large crowds, with the hope too, that the financial result will once again be, as quoted "beyond the expectations of the most optimistic".

At the former celebration the weekend started off on Friday evening with a concert by district and visiting artists.. A record crowd of approximately 350 people filled the hall. During the evening the returning visitors were welcomed by the President of the Celebrations Committee, Cr. A. R. Hagan, and it was intimated that a visitors book would be in circulation during the festivities.

Next morning the "Back to School" proved a huge success too, although former pupils were disappointed at the absence of Mr. Alf Babbage, a man of average stature but mighty prowess, whose presence to so many of the old timers still spelt a sense of awe and obedience. "Old Cabbage" as he was known affectionately to so many, left an indelible memory on his pupils. However the

