

Reducing bushfire risk

Dandenong Ranges National Park

2022-2023 planned activities

We work year-round to reduce the risk of bushfires in Dandenong Ranges National Park (DRNP). 2022-2023 bushfire risk reduction activities include planned burning, hazardous and fallen tree removal, fuel break and road network maintenance and vegetation mulching.



Planned burn in DRNP

Planned burning

Planned burning involves lighting controlled fires under mild weather conditions to remove fuels such as grass, leaf litter, twigs, bark and other vegetation that can burn during a bushfire.

The following burns will be carried out between spring 2022 and autumn 2023 if conditions are suitable:

- **Montrose - Mountain View Road**
- **Montrose - Rowdys Track**
- **Mt Dandenong - Doongalla Forest**
- **Sassafras - Caterpillar Trk**
- **Sassafras - Wannawong**

We will also undertake preparation for all of the above planned burns which includes grass slashing and hazardous tree removal.

Sign up for notifications about planned burns about to happen near you at 'Planned Burns Victoria' www.vic.gov.au/plannedburns.

Or call the VicEmergency Hotline on freecall 1800 226 226 or download the Vic Emergency app to see the location of ignited burns.

Fuel breaks

Fuel breaks create a break in vegetation in the landscape. A fuel break alone won't stop a fire but can be very helpful to firefighters by providing access into the forest for vehicles and machinery to respond if a fire occurs. Controlled fires called backburns can also be lit between a fuel break and an approaching bushfire to remove fuel and stop the fire or reduce its intensity.

Along with our annual fuel break grass slashing program, we will also be improving fuel breaks (up to 20 m wide) on **Sheffield Road North** and **Lower View Track in Montrose** and near **Terrys Avenue in Sherbrooke**. This involves removing dead trees, mulching to remove any overgrown vegetation, and repairing any storm damage. Resurfacing work on **Mathias Road** will continue.



Board Track Strategic Fuel Break in Silvan

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Dandenong Ranges National Park 2022/23

The Strategic Fuel Break team will be expanding fuel breaks (over 20 m wide) along **Hilton Road in Ferny Creek, Belview Terrace in Tremont and Wallaby Track in Kalorama**. Hazardous trees are being assessed and treated as part of these works to improve public safety, and also improve firefighter safety during planned burning and firefighting operations.



Hazardous tree removal

Mulching

Mulching is a bushfire management tool used as an alternative to planned burns. This method allows fuels such as shrubs and other mid-storey vegetation to be mechanically broken down, which can help reduce the severity of a bushfire.

We will be mulching a small 1 hectare block along **Trig Track in Kalorama** this season.

Storm Recovery

Since the June 2021 storms, we have been undertaking debris clean-up works. All fire access roads have been reopened and all fuel breaks have been reinstated. Around 35.8 km of walking tracks in DRNP have also been cleared of fallen trees and debris.

As part of the clean-up, around 855 tonnes of timber from the storms is being repurposed within the park. This includes log seats, fencing, and sleepers. Mulched material was sent to Zoos Victoria for use in their enclosures and rootballs are being utilised by Fisheries Victoria as fish habitat.

Some of these works were carried out with the assistance of VicForests who transported the debris to timber processors who produced kiln dried flooring, structural timber, scantling and timber fence palings and commercial firewood.

We are starting to manage fallen and hazardous trees to reduce fire risk within larger areas of DRNP impacted by the storms. Most of the areas will be allowed to decompose naturally. However, within Bushfire Moderation Zones we need to manage fuel loads to help protect communities and assets. This will allow for future planned burning and assist with firefighter access into those areas. Some low intensity planned burning may also be undertaken in these areas to assist with debris removal.

We are also currently working to repair broken infrastructure including at **William Ricketts Sanctuary** and various small bridges on walking tracks. The **1,000 Steps** walking track reopened on 3 October 2022.

Melbourne Water has been working to remove excess debris within Silvan Reservoir catchment to ensure water quality is maintained and to reinstate fire access roads and fuel breaks.



Before and after: Storm damage around Mt Dandenong Primary School was cleared so the school could reopen and to increase fire safety.

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Background information on bushfire risk reduction in the Dandenong Ranges

Bushfires are a natural part of the Australian landscape and cannot be eliminated. However, effective planning and preparation can reduce their negative impacts.

Fire history and our fire modelling tells us serious fires can impact the Dandenong Ranges, threatening people's lives and causing significant damage to property and the environment. There are densely forested areas in the north and west of the ranges, highly populated residential areas among these forests and limited road access.

One of the main ways to reduce bushfire risk is to reduce the amount of fuels – fuels are grass, leaf litter, twigs, bark and other vegetation that can burn during a bushfire. We do this through planned burning, grass slashing and mulching.

The frequency and intensity of these risk reduction activities is determined by Fire Management Zones – areas of public land that our modelling and experience tells us are the most effective for reducing risk.

To the northwest of townships within the Dandenong Ranges we have created Asset Protection Zones to ensure the greatest protection to people and property. To keep fuel loads low, we reduce fuels in blocks within these zones every 5 to 7 years by using planned burning and mulching.

To protect Silvan Reservoir that provides much of Melbourne's water supply, and to protect townships such as Silvan and Monbulk, we have created Bushfire Moderation Zones to the north and west of the reservoir. Here we conduct planned burning every 8 to 15 years in blocks within these zones.

Cultural and environmental assessments are carried out for all works to ensure any potential impacts from operations are mitigated or reduced. Databases such as the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas and the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) are used alongside knowledge from local staff and on-site observations.

For information on the location of bushfire risk reduction activities, visit www.ffm.vic.gov.au/jfmp.



Helen track burn preparation works

What you can do to help

Anyone entering parks and forests during the bushfire season needs to understand their risk and plan ahead. Avoid visiting parks and forests on hot, dry, windy days and plan ahead for all situations.

Stay aware of forecast weather conditions. Check the Fire Danger Rating and days of Total Fire Ban at emergency.vic.gov.au, on the VicEmergency smartphone app or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226. No fires may be lit on Total Fire Ban days.

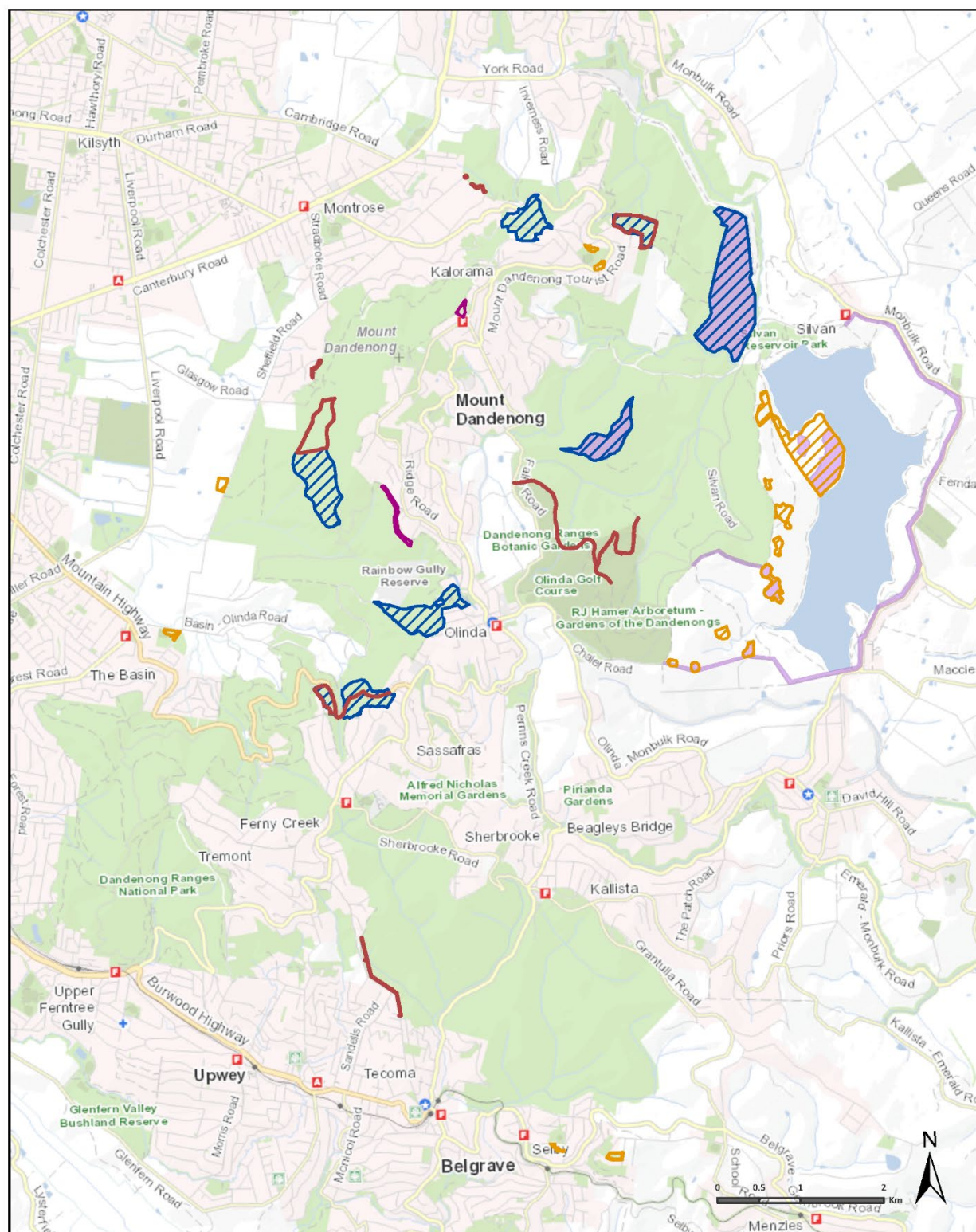
On Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating days DRNP will be closed for public safety. Warnings signs may be erected, but do not expect a personal warning.

Check the latest conditions at www.parks.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 1963.

For more information about preparing your home and staying safe, please visit: cfa.vic.gov.au/planprepare or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.

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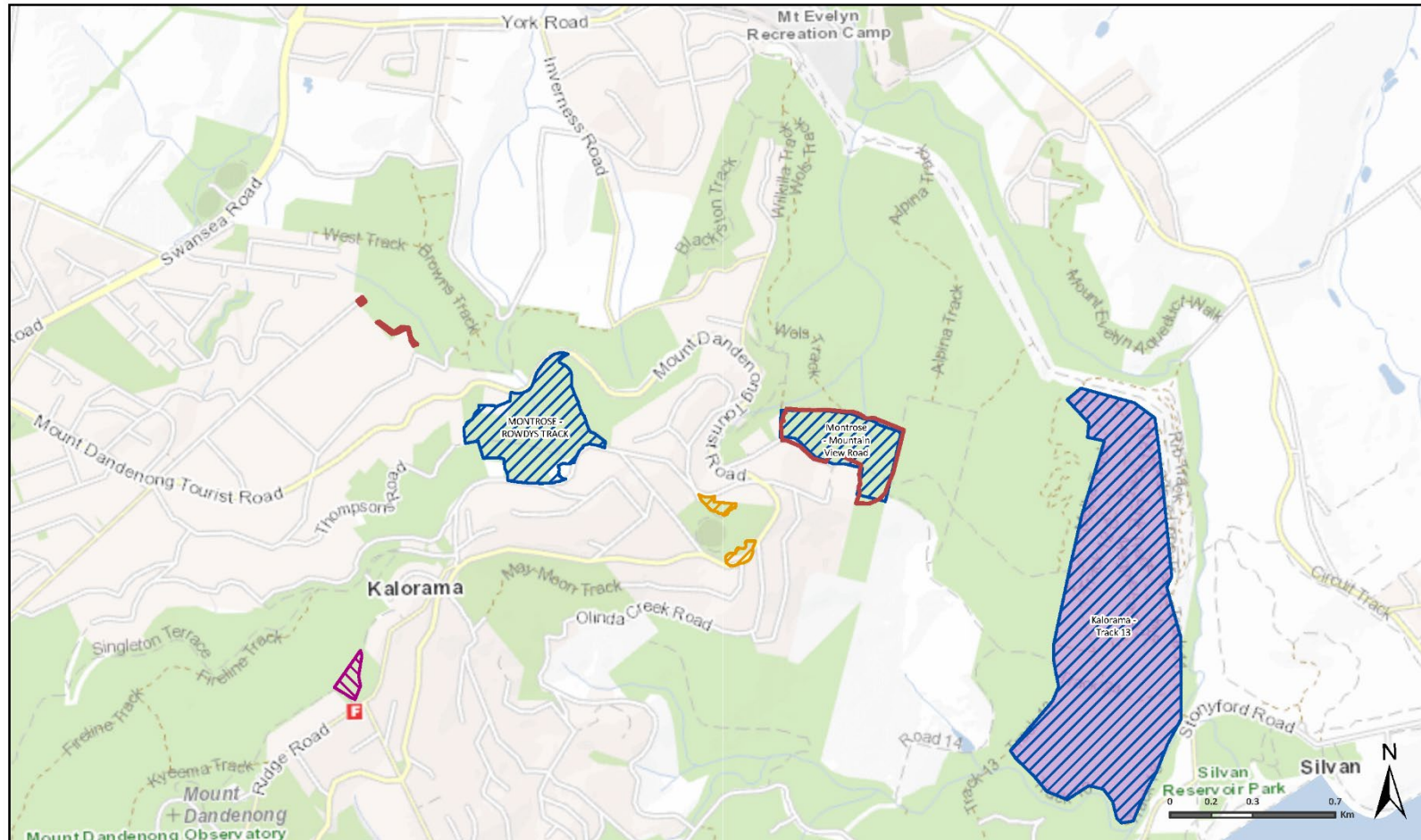
Dandenong Ranges National Park 2022/23




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|  Planned Burn (FFMVic) |  Fuel Break and Roding Improvements |
|  Mechanical Fuel Treatment (Mulching) |  Storm Recovery |
|  Planned Burn and/or Mechanical Fuel Treatment (CFA) | |

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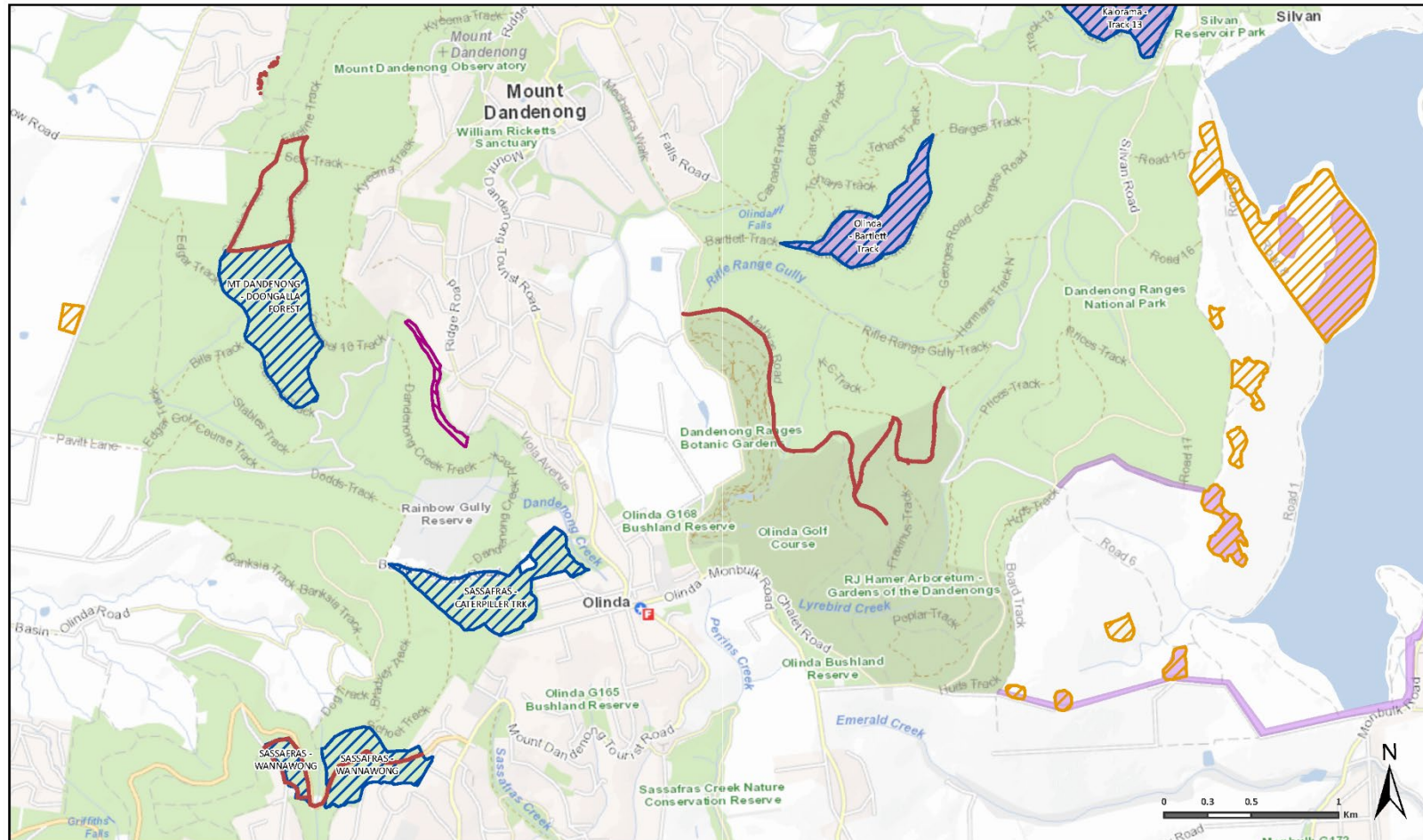
Dandenong Ranges National Park 2022/23








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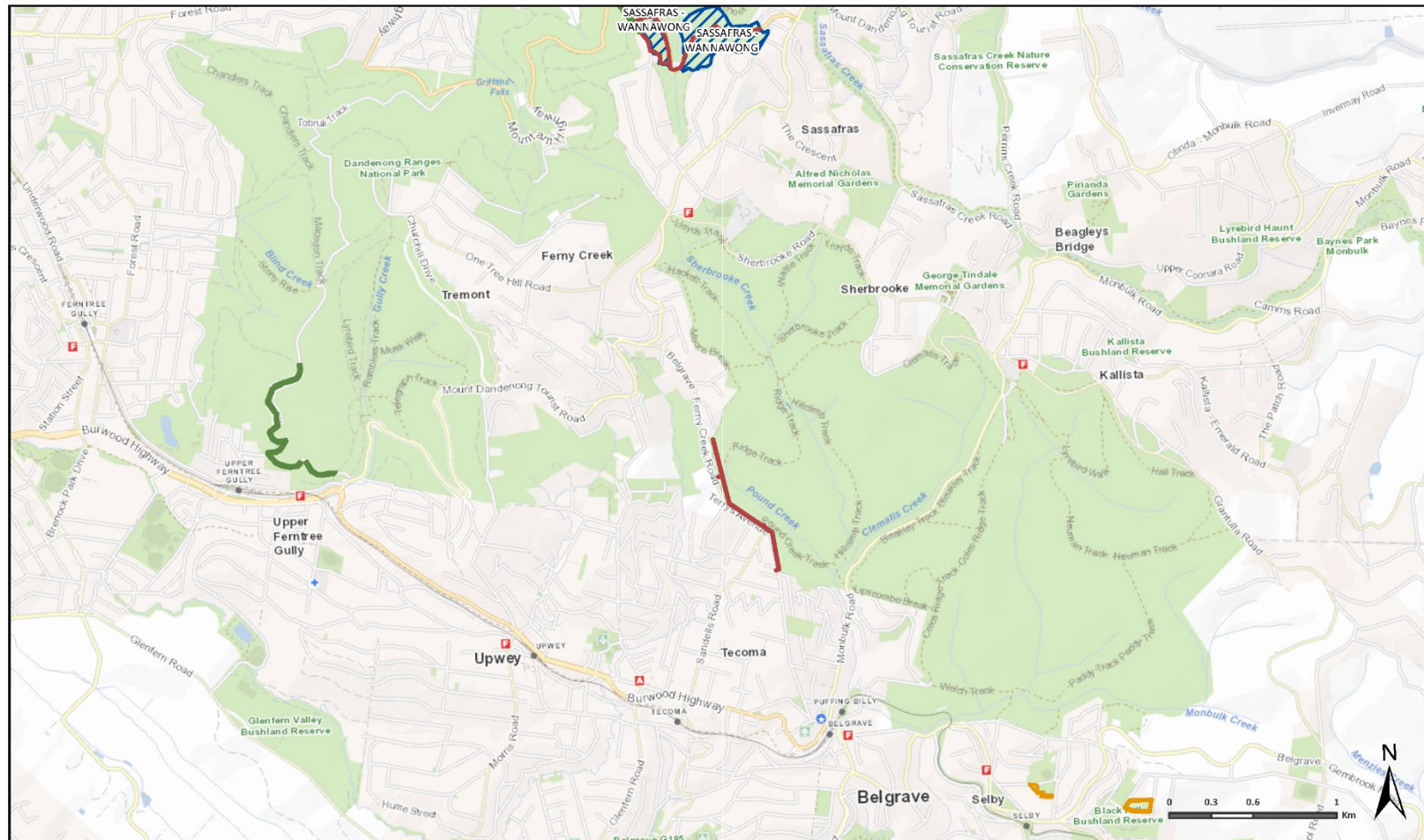
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Dandenong Ranges National Park 2022/23



 Planned Burn (FFMVic)

 Planned Burn and/or Mechanical Fuel Treatment (CFA)

 Strategic Fuel Break

 Burn Preparation, Roding Works and Other Fuel Break Improvements