



# HAINING FARM

DON VALLEY, VICTORIA  
JUNE 2017

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## *A quote about the concept for Haining Farm from the working group - Haining Farm Working Group*

The Haining Farm Working Group has developed three concepts for the future of Haining Farm and is presenting these to the community for comment.

Haining Farm is a 69 Hectare site currently managed by Parks Victoria and leased as a working dairy farm. Haining Farm is located in Don Valley, at the confluence of the Yarra River and the Don River in Launching Place.

### **History of the project and timeline**

In 1974 Sir John T Reid gifted the land known as Haining Farm to the Victorian Conservation trust for the people of Victoria to use for conservation and education. Since that time, it has remained a working dairy farm with many school children visiting the site as part of their curriculum.

In 2013, the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council recommended that the use of the land be changed to provide greater community use and access as well as a greater emphasis on sustainability, including improved protection of riparian areas and restoration of habitat for two of Victoria's threatened species, the helmeted honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's possum. This recommendation was supported by the Victorian Government in 2014.

Parks Victoria together with Greening Australia and Zoos Victoria developed a draft concept for the site in late 2016 with focus on habitat restoration of 50 hectares of floodplain to provide habitat for two of our critically endangered state emblems - the lowland Leadbeater's possum and helmeted

honeyeater. The concept raised concerns in the community particularly in relation to the potential for bushfire risk to increase and that dairy farming would cease at Haining Farm.

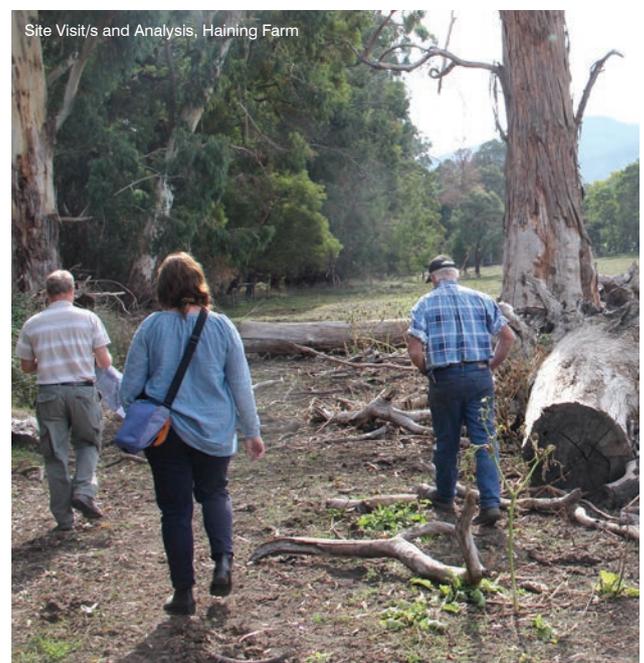
In response to the concerns of the community, Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning committed to better engaging with the community and establishing a community based working group to develop a new plan for the site.

### **Haining Farm Working Group and 3 concepts**

The Haining Farm Working Group has, over the course of 10 workshops, developed two alternative concepts focused on Farming, Conservation, Education and Agri-Tourism at Haining Farm. These concepts are presented alongside a modified version of the initial Parks Victoria and Greening Australia concept for review and input from the community.

### **How to get involved**

We are seeking comments on the draft concepts until Sunday 2 July 2017. Your comments will be reviewed by the Working Group who will use these comments to make a final recommendation to the Victorian Government about how the community want to see the site used in the future.





# PLANING FOR THE FUTURE

*We need a good quote here that will get people excited about the future of Haining - xxx*

## Who are we?

The Haining Farm Working Group (Working Group) is a community based working group that was established in February 2017. The Working Group is made up of seven Don Valley community members, and representatives from, Parks Victoria, DELWP, Yarra Ranges Council, CFA, Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee and Yarra Waterways Group. The Working Group has been supported by independent technical experts, who have provided information about a range of factors that impact the site and influence what the site can be used for.

The Working Group were supported by two independent bushfire experts, Kevin Tolhurst and Justin Leonard who assessed the existing bushfire risk on the site and provided technical expertise about bushfire risk and mitigation measures that could be incorporated into the site to ensure there is no increase in bushfire risk following the development of the site.

The other factors that were considered by the Working Group in the preparation of the concepts for the site include:

- Hydrology of the site.
- Tourism opportunities in the region and at Haining Farm.
- Habitat requirements of the two threatened species.
- Figures associated with the viability of commercial dairy farming.
- Process for establishing a commercial operation on Crown land.
- Funding requirements associated with the different proposals for the site.

Group Shot of  
Working Group

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# PROJECT CRITERIA

*There are many opportunities in the mix for the future of Haining Farm. We are asking you to consider the criteria to develop the best concept for the future -  
Haining Farm Working Group*

The Working Group has developed three concepts that address a range of criteria to reflect the objectives for the future of Haining Farm. All three concepts address the criteria to varying degree and in different ways. The following criteria were used:

## **BUSHFIRE RISK**

The Victorian Government made a commitment to the community that the development of Haining Farm would not increase the bushfire risk to the community. All concepts presented to the community have been modelled using Phoenix bushfire modelling which indicates that they do not increase the bushfire risk to the community.

All plans provide a fire buffer around the entire boundary of the site that could accommodate emergency response vehicles, as well as improved water access points by deepening the existing dams and providing an additional water point in the southeast corner at the Yarra River. The addition of the open woodland along the eastern boundary of the site was modelled as a way to reduce the wind speed and thereby reduce the potential for ember attack to the surrounding community.

## **FARMING & AGRICULTURE**

At a community meeting in December 2016, the community were supportive of maintaining dairy farming on the site. The Working Group has responded to the community by ensuring that all concepts include some form of farming on the site. The farming operation in the concepts considered information provided to the community about the area of land needed to provide a viable commercial operation. Given the small size of Haining for a commercial dairy operation, other forms and scales of farming and agriculture were also considered. The different concepts include options for a large scale commercial tourism operation, a working dairy farm or grazing a small area along the eastern boundary.

## **CONSERVATION**

Haining Farm contains water frontage to both the Don and Yarra Rivers. Due to the long history of the site as a working dairy farm, the majority of the site has been cleared of indigenous vegetation. The redevelopment of the site presents an opportunity to restore some of the natural vegetation to the site to improve water quality and provide habitat for the native fauna that

would have previously been common.

Haining Farm has also been recognised as one of the few sites in public ownership with the potential to restore habitat for two of Victoria's critically endangered species, the helmeted honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's possum. These species are both in danger of extinction and without habitat restoration, these species may be lost from our landscape permanently.

## **EDUCATION**

The community and the Working Group are passionate about continuing the long standing connection Haining Farm has to educating the children of Victoria. Many community members remember the bus loads of children that used to visit the site to learn about farming and conservation. There are many opportunities to continue education on the site, including both passive and active means. Passive education could include self-guided tours through the site with interpretive signage along the pathways and access tracks to tell the story of the site and identify different aspects such as dairy farming and food production, conservation, and the indigenous connection to the site. There are also opportunities for more active education with formal tours for schools, universities and interest groups with a focus on food production, farming, conservation and threatened species protection.

*Access tracks and fuel breaks will provide emergency and management vehicle access around the boundary of the Reserve.*

*- Parks Victoria*

## COMMUNITY ACCESS & RECREATION

Haining Farm is not currently accessible to the public and the Working Group wanted to ensure that the site could be enjoyed by both the local and wider community. There are a range of different recreation opportunities that could be included at the site. From a BBQ and picnic area in the northeast of the site to the internal and boundary track network as well as larger scale opportunities such as a café, restaurant and large-scale tourism operation that could be comparable to the Collingwood Children's Farm.

## TOURISM

The Working Group heard first hand from Yarra Ranges Tourism about the tourism opportunities in the Yarra Valley. There are currently about 6 million day-trippers to the area every year and the development at Haining Farm presented an opportunity to tap into the existing tourism market. Yarra Ranges tourism advised that Haining Farm is surrounded by tourism focussed on food production such as the various wineries, orchards and farm-door dairy sales and connecting people to the environment such as Healesville Sanctuary, National Parks and the Blue Lotus Water Gardens. Yarra Ranges Tourism also advised that Australia's

native fauna, especially threatened species, would be a big drawcard for tourists to the site.

## CAPITAL EXPENDITURE & MAINTENANCE COSTS

One of the main concerns of the community is the ongoing maintenance of the site and both the local and broader community wanted to ensure that the site was well-managed in the future. The Working Group were determined that any development of the site did not become an eyesore. All concepts will require capital expenditure and ongoing maintenance. Providing a commercial tourism operation on the site may provide an ongoing funding source which could be directed into the maintenance of the site. The provision of a commercial operation on the site may rely on private investment to the site and will be market driven. There are funding sources available for the conservation aspect of the concepts and funding for ongoing maintenance would be subject to Government funding.



PROJECT CRITERIA	CONCEPT 1 - Working farm with conservation	CONCEPT 2 - Commercial agri-tourism operation	CONCEPT 3 - Habitat restoration for threatened species with community access
LANDSIZE	59HA	59HA	59HA
BUSHFIRE RISK	0.6% increase	0.1% decrease	0% increase
CONSERVATION	30.2HA	25.6HA	48HA
FARMING & AGRICULTURE	28.7HA	34.4HA	8.9HA
COMMUNITY ACCESS	9.1HA	13HA	59HA
RECREATION	6.8km	6.2km	7km

# CONCEPT 1 - WORKING FARM WITH CONSERVATION

**0.6%**

*Increase in fire risk*

**30.2** HA

*Conservation*

**120**

*Helmeted Honeyeater's*

**0**

*Lowland Leadbeaters Possum's*

This plan was focussed on accommodating both conservation and farming.

The conservation areas are focussed on the existing waterways with restoration planting along both the Don and Yarra Rivers, as well as any areas which are regularly inundated.

Community access is to be provided in the north east corner of Haining near the existing toilet block and rotunda.

The existing farming precinct and infrastructure would be retained to support the land remaining as a working farm.

An internal track would surround the conservation areas to provide an additional fuel break and act as access for maintenance as well as recreation for the public.

Education should be included on the site and this could be passive through the use of interpretive signage and more active with formal organised tours using the infrastructure on site.



*Farming*  
*Community*  
*Recreation*  
*Conservation*





# CONCEPT 2 - COMMERCIAL AGRI-TOURISM OPERATION

**0.1%**

*Decrease in fire risk*

**25.6** HA

*Conservation*

**100**

*Helmeted Honeyeater's*

**0**

*Lowland Leadbeaters Possum's*

The focus on this plan will be retaining the majority of the site as a productive farm.

This concept aims to take advantage of the existing tourism to the area and improve the local economy by providing jobs for locals.

The existing farming precinct would be transformed into a 4/5 star precinct with a café, restaurant and a commercial operation potentially selling food produced on site.

There is an opportunity to have a Collingwood Children's Farm model including animals, a vineyard and community garden.



*Farming  
Community  
Agri- tourism  
Food Production*



# A quote about the concept for Haining Farm from the working group - Haining Farm Working Group

**34.4** HA  
Farming/ Agriculture

**13** HA  
Public/ Community Access

**6.2** kms  
Walking/ cycling Trails

**59** HA  
Landsize of Haining Farm



# CONCEPT 3 - HABITAT RESTORATION FOR THREATENED SPECIES WITH COMMUNITY ACCESS

**0%**

*Increase in fire risk*

**48**<sup>HA</sup>

*Conservation*

**190**

*Helmeted Honeyeater's*

**85**

*Lowland Leadbeaters Possum's*

Haining Farm presents a prime opportunity for landscape restoration (50+ hectares), increasing the biodiversity and ecological values of the area and providing for wider range of community education opportunities.

Community access is to be provided into the farm building precinct and in the north east corner of Haining near the existing toilet block and rotunda. An internal track network through the conservation areas will provide an additional fuel break and act as access for maintenance as well as recreation for the public.

The focus of this concept is to provide enough habitat for viable populations two of Victoria's critically endangered species, the helmeted honeyeater and lowland Leadbeater's possum.

These animals rely on very wet forests for survival, and we can create the right flooding conditions to ensure the plants will grow. There is currently funding secured to plant trees and shrubs at Haining Farm through the Federal Government's 20 Million Trees Programme and there is a combined total so far of \$1.2 million for the restoration of Haining Farm.

The stream-side revegetation and the introduction of more natural flows across the site will in turn help improve the water quality in both the Don and the Yarra Rivers. Melbourne Water is assisting in the hydrology of the site to ensure that any changes do not have an impact on the adjoining properties and that any flood risk is managed.



*Conservation  
Community  
Education*

*Recreation*



*'A place where people and threatened species can go wild together'* - Parks Victoria + Greening Australia

**8.9** HA  
Farming/ Agriculture

**59** HA  
Public/ Community Access

**7** kms  
Walking/ cycling Trails

**59** HA  
Landsize of Haining Farm



- LEGEND**
- Site Boundary
  - 20m Fire Buffer Zone
  - i Info/ Farm History + Threatened Species Education Precinct
  - Existing Vegetation
  - Conservation
  - Farming
  - Open Woodland Grazing
  - Wetlands
  - INFORMATION & COMMUNITY FACILITIES
    - Nature Playground
    - Interpretive Walking Trails
    - BBQ/ Shelter
    - Refurbish Existing Toilets
  - Picnics/ Lookouts/ Wildlife hides
  - 5 Interpretive Walking Loops/ Trails
  - Rail trail connection

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# TEAR OFF FEEDBACK FORM

<<Note : To be available as a handout and online via the Engage Victoria website. >>

## Introduction <<on line and on paper forms>>

The Haining Farm Working Group wants has developed three concepts for the future of Haining Farm and is presenting these to the community for comment.

Haining Farm is a 69 Hectare site currently managed by Parks Victoria and leased as a working dairy farm. Haining Farm is located in Don Valley, at the confluence of the Yarra River and the Don River.

Everyone with an interest in Haining Farm is invited to comment on the draft concepts. All comments will be carefully considered in developing a final concept.

To contribute a submission, you can:

- Complete an online submission survey on the Engage Victoria website. **Add link to the online submission form. (Sally to provide)**
- Write a submission. Please fill out the survey questions below and either Email to [Hainingplan@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:Hainingplan@parks.vic.gov.au) or post to Manager Park Planning, Haining Farm Submissions, Parks Victoria, Level 10, 535 Bourke Street Melbourne, VIC 3000

## About You

- Your name \_\_\_\_\_
- Your town of residence \_\_\_\_\_
- Your postcode \_\_\_\_\_
- Your Email address \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you part of an interest group, such as a farmers group, conservation group? **YES NO**
- If yes, what's the name of the group? \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you ever visited Haining Farm (please circle)? **YEARS AGO RECENTLY NEVER**

## About the Plan

1. Please rate the following uses are for Haining Farm.

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Important	Most Important
Conservation				
Farming/ Agriculture				
Education				
Recreation				

Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Thinking about Bushfire Risk and management, which of the 3 concepts do you most like and why?

Concept 01    Concept 02    Concept 03

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3. Thinking about Farming and Agriculture, which of the 3 concepts do you most like and why?

Concept 01    Concept 02    Concept 03

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4. Thinking about Conservation and habitat for threatened species, which of the 3 concepts do you most like and why?

Concept 01    Concept 02    Concept 03

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5. Thinking about Education, which of the 3 concepts do you most like and why?

Concept 01    Concept 02    Concept 03

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6. Thinking about Community Access and Recreation, which of the 3 concepts do you most like and why?

Concept 01    Concept 02    Concept 03

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7. Thinking about Tourism, which of the 3 concepts do you most like and why?

Concept 01    Concept 02    Concept 03

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8. Based on reviewing the criteria for each of the 3 concepts, do you have a preferred concept?

Concept 01    Concept 02    Concept 03    None

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9. What activities would you like to be able to enjoy at Haining Farm?

- Picnic / BBQ
- Walking
- Dog walking
- Horse riding
- Birdwatching/nature observation

10. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

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Surveys must reach us by XX X 2017

Post to :

To register your interest to be kept informed about the progress of the plan, please email your contact details to ?? [hainingfarmplan@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:hainingfarmplan@parks.vic.gov.au)

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