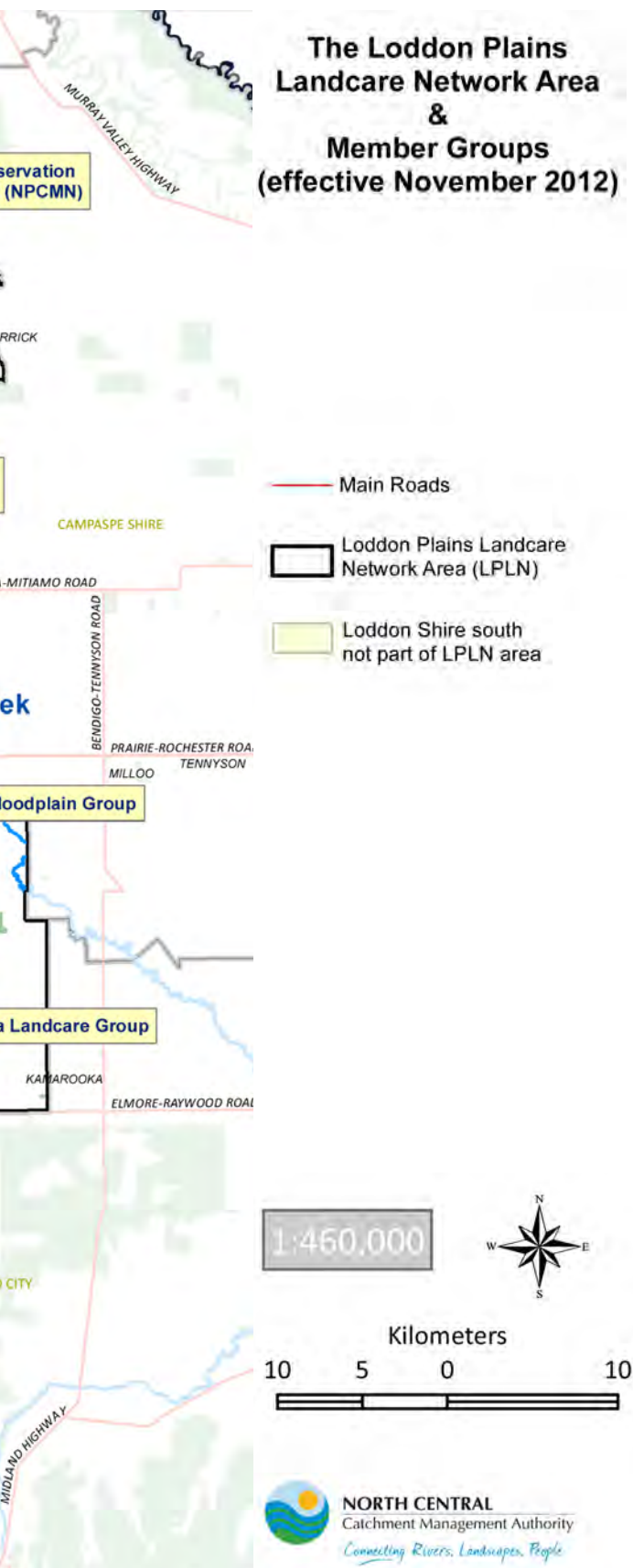


Map 1. The Loddon Plains Landcare Network Area

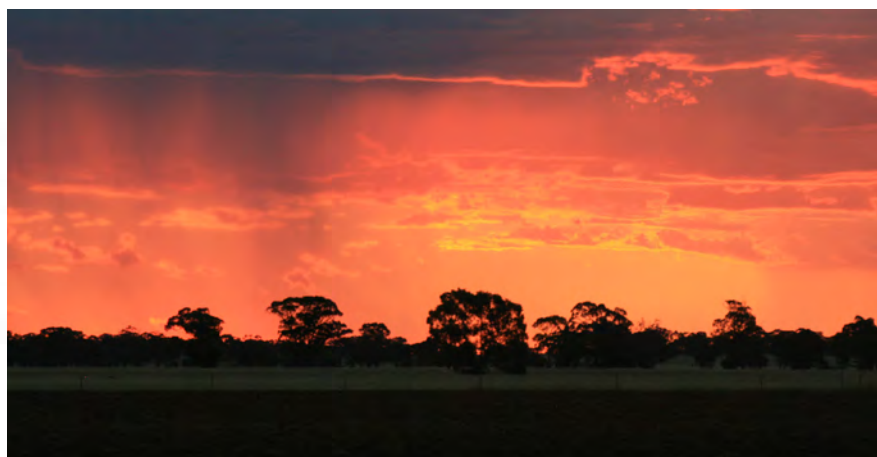


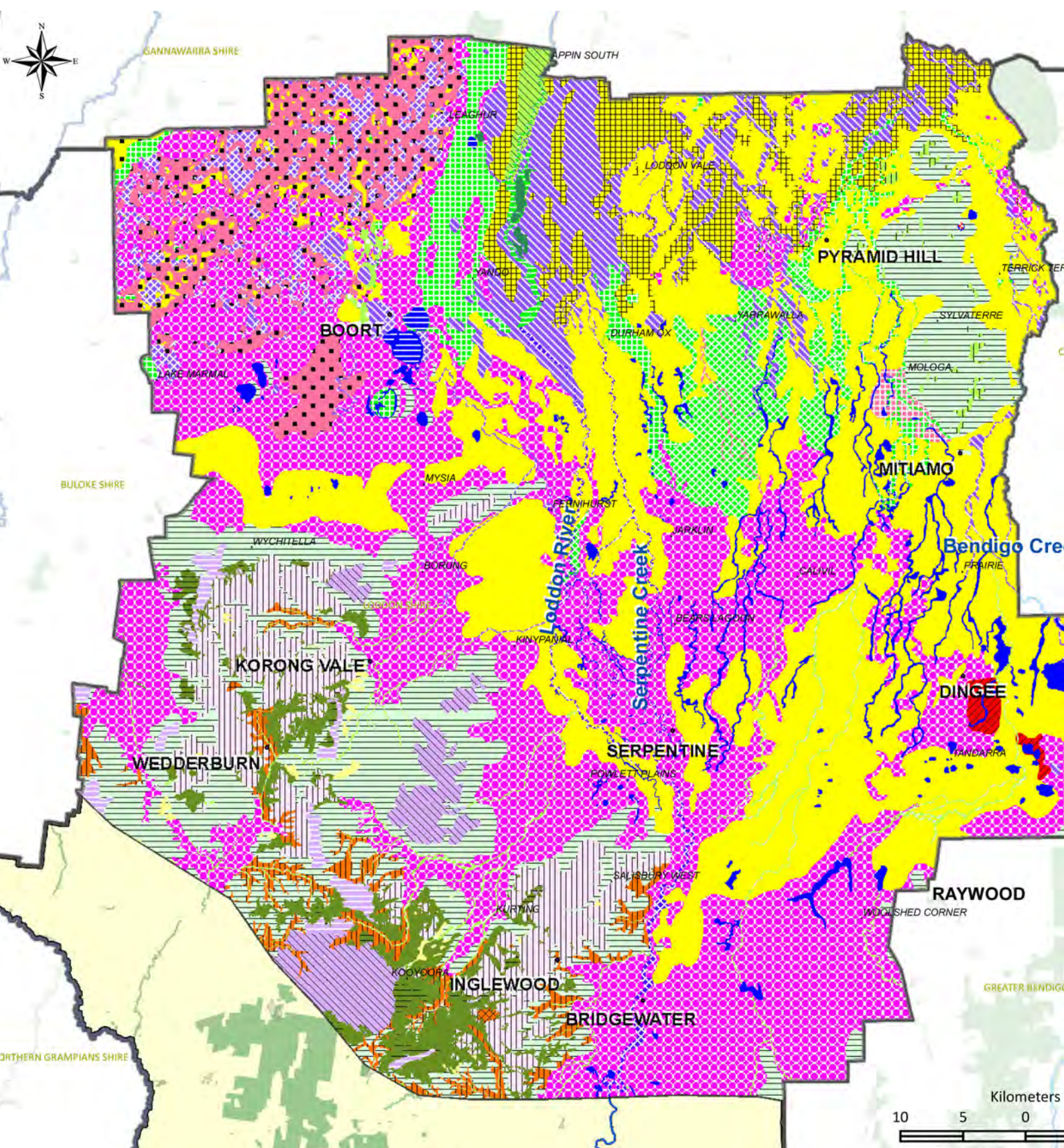
The LPLN area covers approximately 480,000 hectares. It is bordered by the Mid-Loddon foothills in the south, Gannawarra Shire to the north, Buloke Shire to the west, the Campaspe Shire and the City of Greater Bendigo to the east.

Serpentine to:

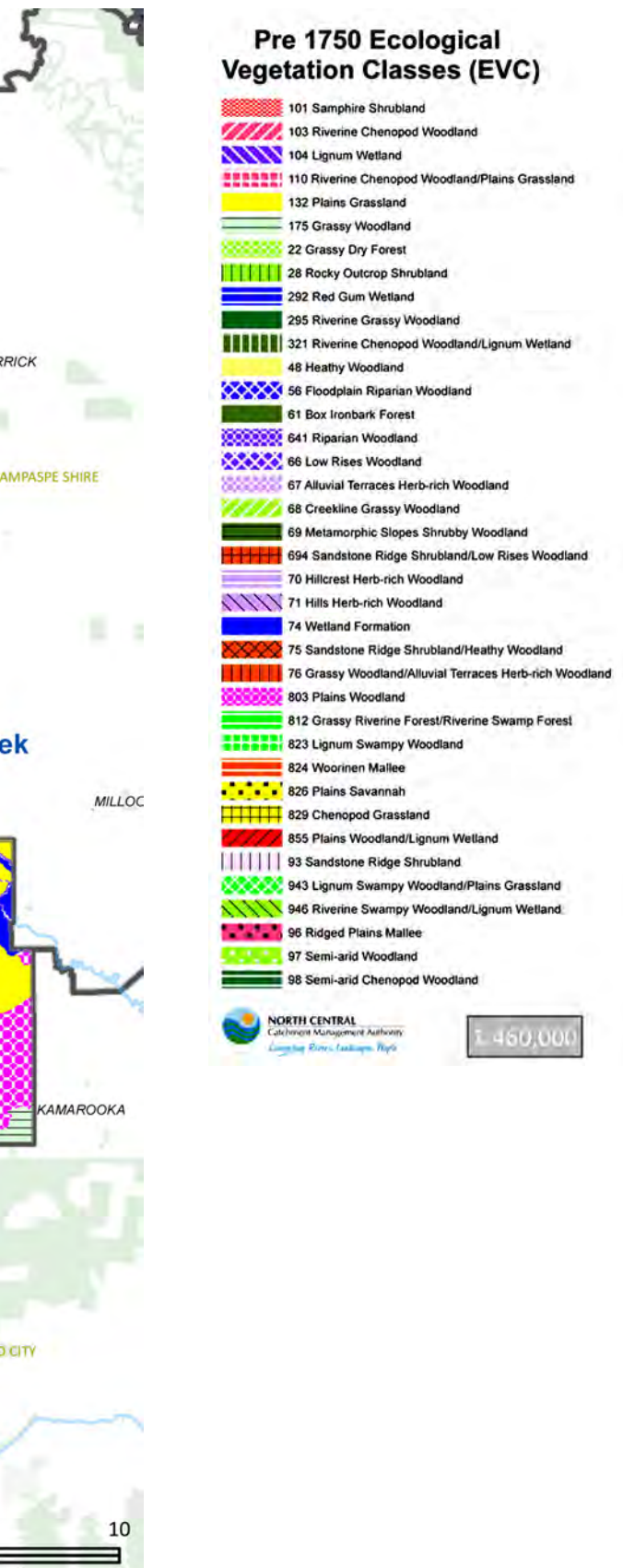
Bendigo 50kms

Melbourne 206km





Map 2. Pre 1750 Ecological Vegetation Classes



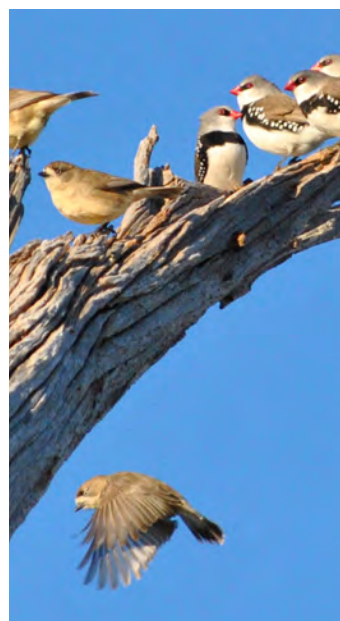
Interpreting this map

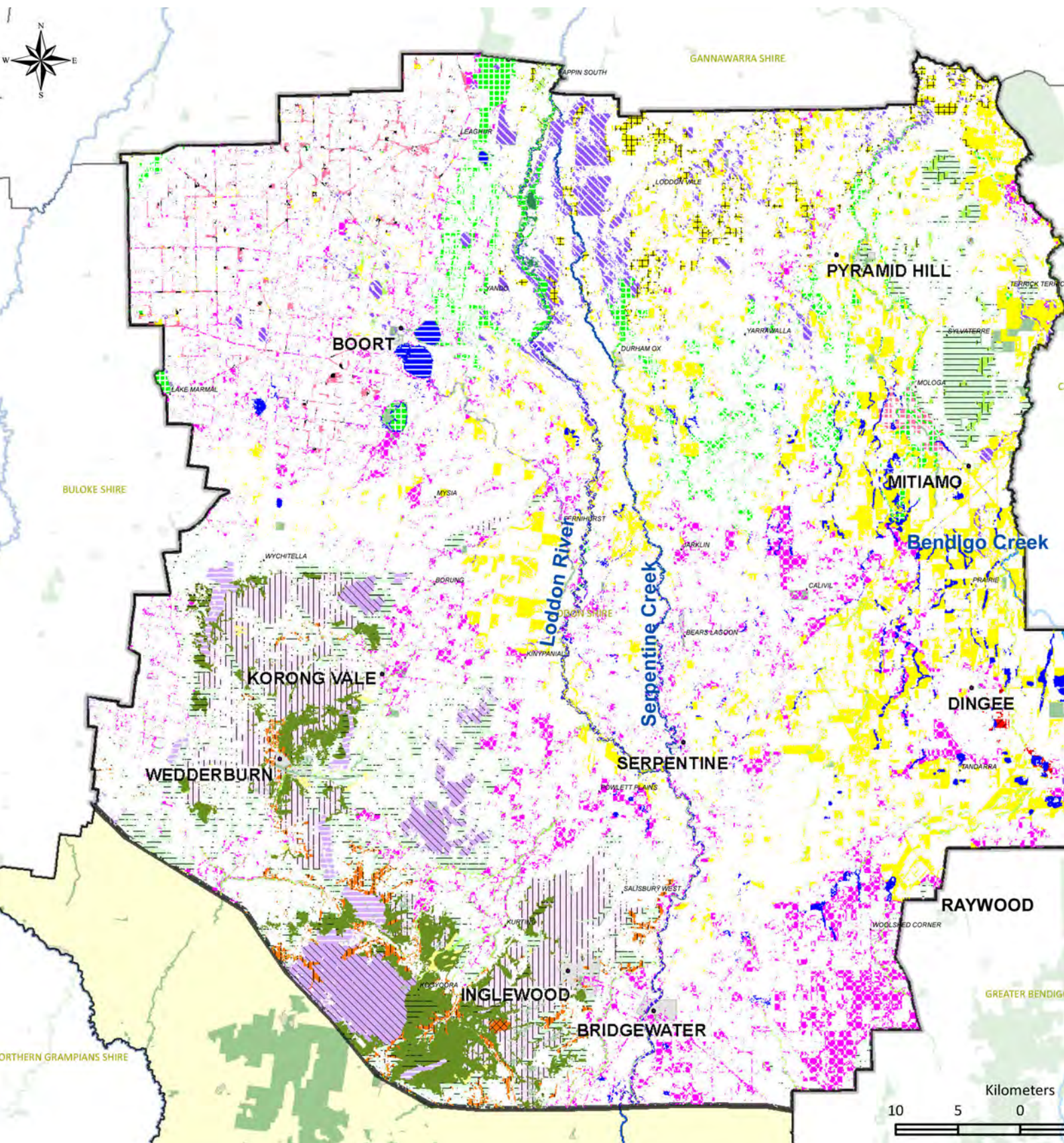
Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) mapping is based upon informed guesswork, using existing remnant vegetation and information about geomorphology, soil types, rainfall, vegetation structure, floristic information, aspect, fire frequency and ecological responses to disturbance to classify vegetation. Local patterns of vegetation have been classified as Ecological Vegetation Classes. This model is a useful interpretation of vegetation cover prior to European settlement but must be used with caution, given its predictive nature. The data is designed for use at a larger scale such as 1:100,000 and as a guide. It should never replace ground truthing. For full details on EVC mapping methodology visit the DSE Native Vegetation websites at www.dse.vic.gov.au (Department of Sustainability and Environment).

There were an estimated 38 native vegetation communities covering the LPLN area prior to European settlement. This is a reflection of the diverse soil types, topography and rainfall variation. The large areas of pink and yellow on this map are Plains Woodland and Plains Grassland EVCs. These EVCs occur on the more fertile soils.

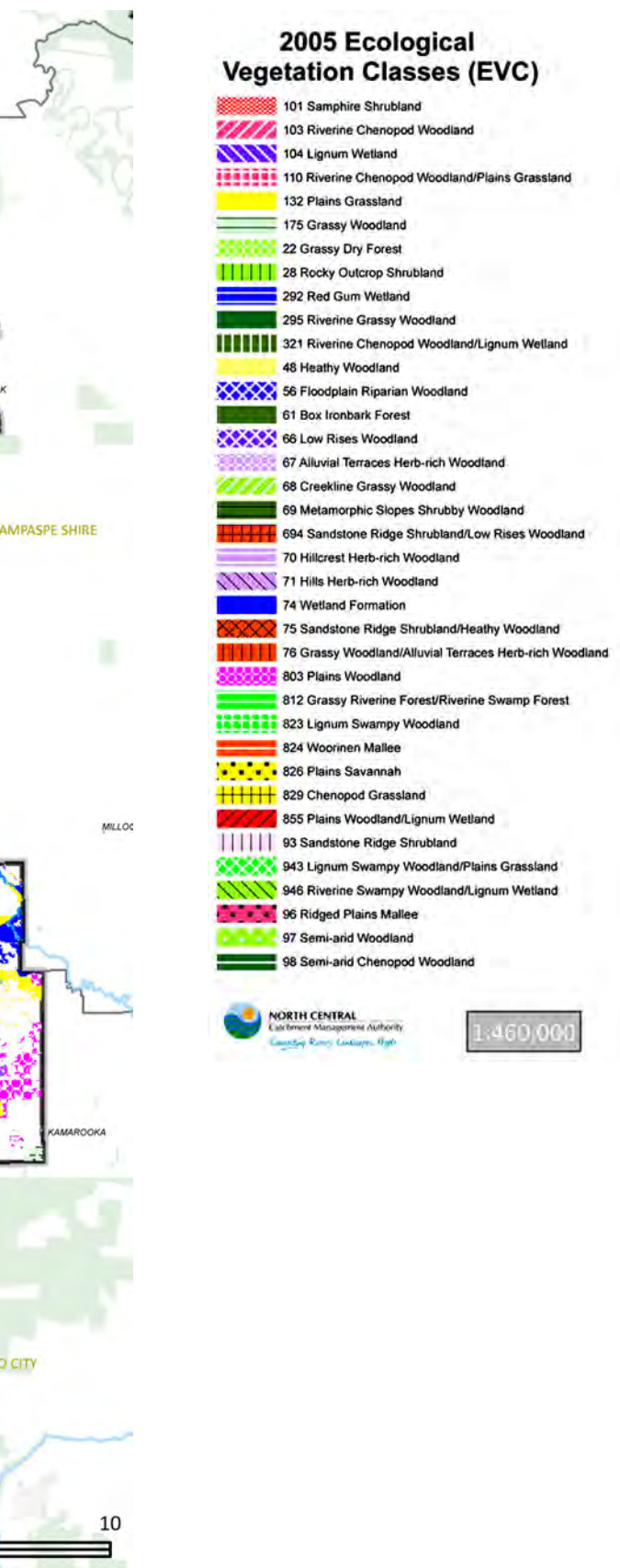
Floodplain and riparian corridor vegetation types predominate in the northern section of the LPLN area, where the largest portion of lakes and wetlands are found. Some EVCs such as the Lignum and saltbush woodlands demonstrate that parts of the floodplain are naturally saline.

Sandstone Ridge Shrubland (Mallee like vegetation) and Box Ironbark are found in the south-western corner of the LPLN area near the foothills. These vegetation communities occur on infertile shallow soil types.





Map 3. 2005 Ecological Vegetation Classes



Interpreting this map

This is a 2005 distribution of remnant vegetation cover and represents a snapshot in time. Cultivation and pasture renovation may have occurred since 2005 and this layer could possibly over-represent true native vegetation cover, particularly in Plains Grassland and Plains Woodland type EVCs. Refer to the data limitations pertaining to the pre-1750 native vegetation dataset (Department of Sustainability and Environment). This map is best interpreted in the context of the pre 1750 EVC map.

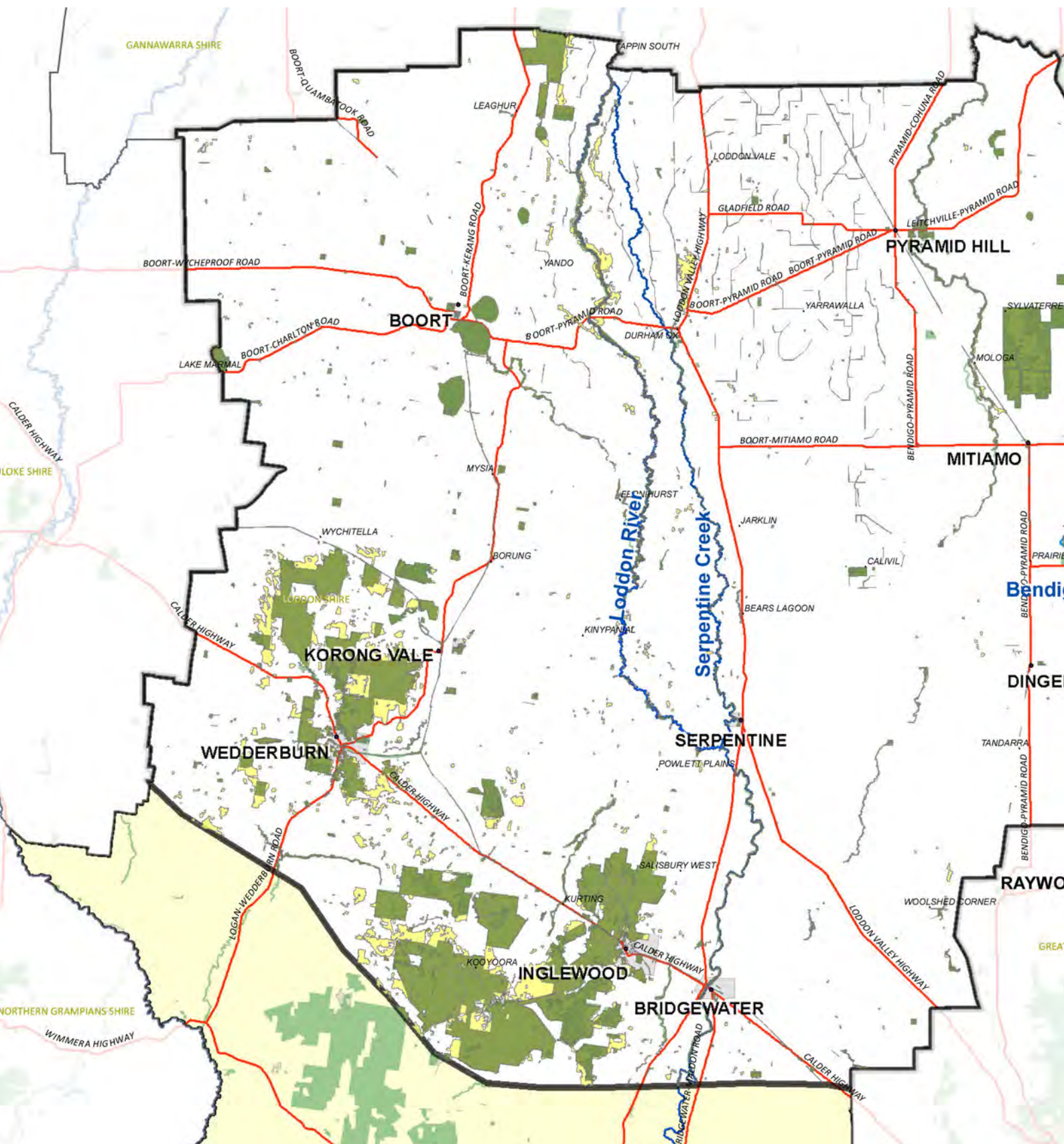
The best representations of native vegetation communities occurring today are largely found in public land reserves, with roadsides being another important source of remnant vegetation. Patterns of land use such as agriculture, gold mining and urban development have depleted some EVCs more than others.

Significant areas of Box Ironbark and Sandstone Ridge Mallee remain on the hillier less fertile areas, as they are unsuitable for agriculture. These vegetation communities whilst heavily disturbed during the gold rush, are largely intact today. This is due to their occurrence on infertile shallow soil types, with a large portion protected in public land reserves.

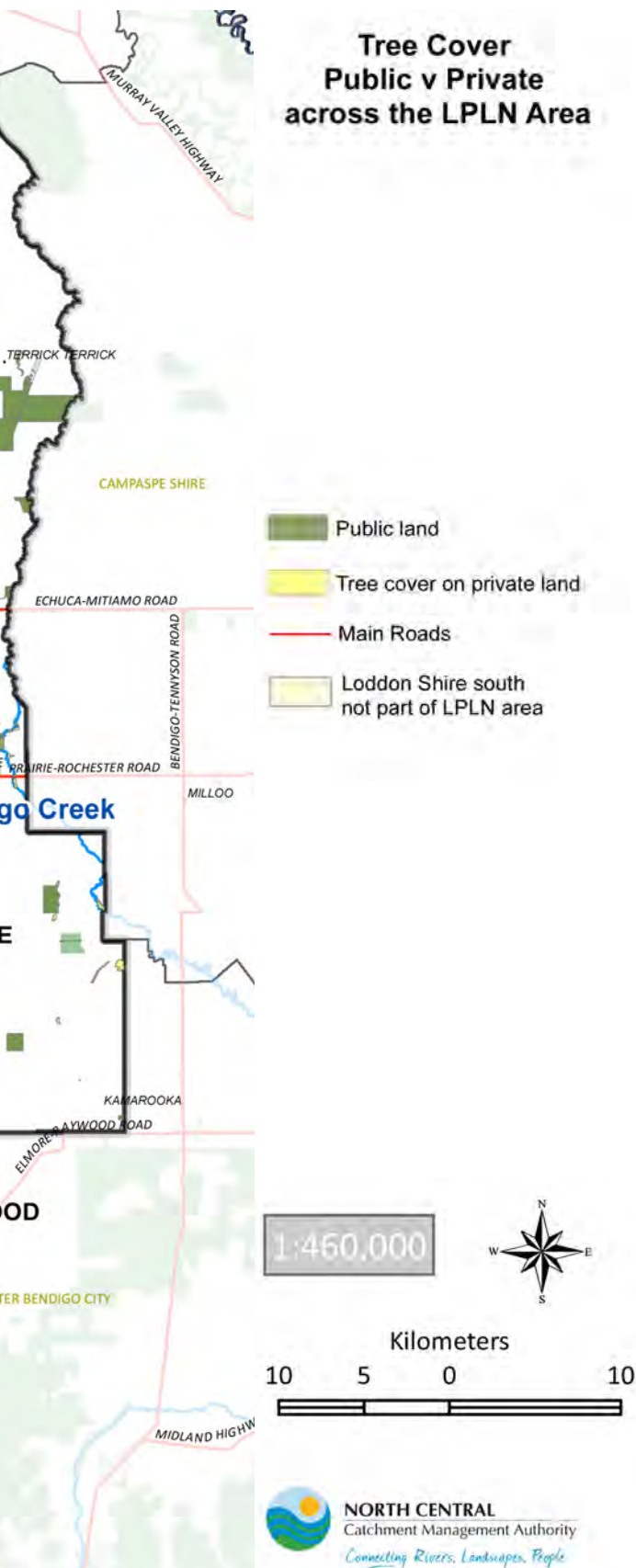
Plains Woodland and Plains Grassland EVCs that occur on fertile soil ideal for agriculture have been mostly cleared for such purposes. Lignum and swampy wetland complexes in the north are well represented in terms of remaining extent.

Future conservation projects should revolve around improving the condition of isolated remnants and increasing connectivity to the larger blocks of public land. The LPLN has a foundation of core habitat around which projects can be built.





Map 4. Tree Cover Public v Private across the LPLN Area



Interpreting this map

This dataset, maintained by DSE, was last updated in 1993. Tree cover is defined by woody vegetation >2m in height and with crown foliar cover >10% and mapped down to a minimum of 1 ha. Therefore this layer may under-represent true tree cover, particularly for small stands occurring on private land.

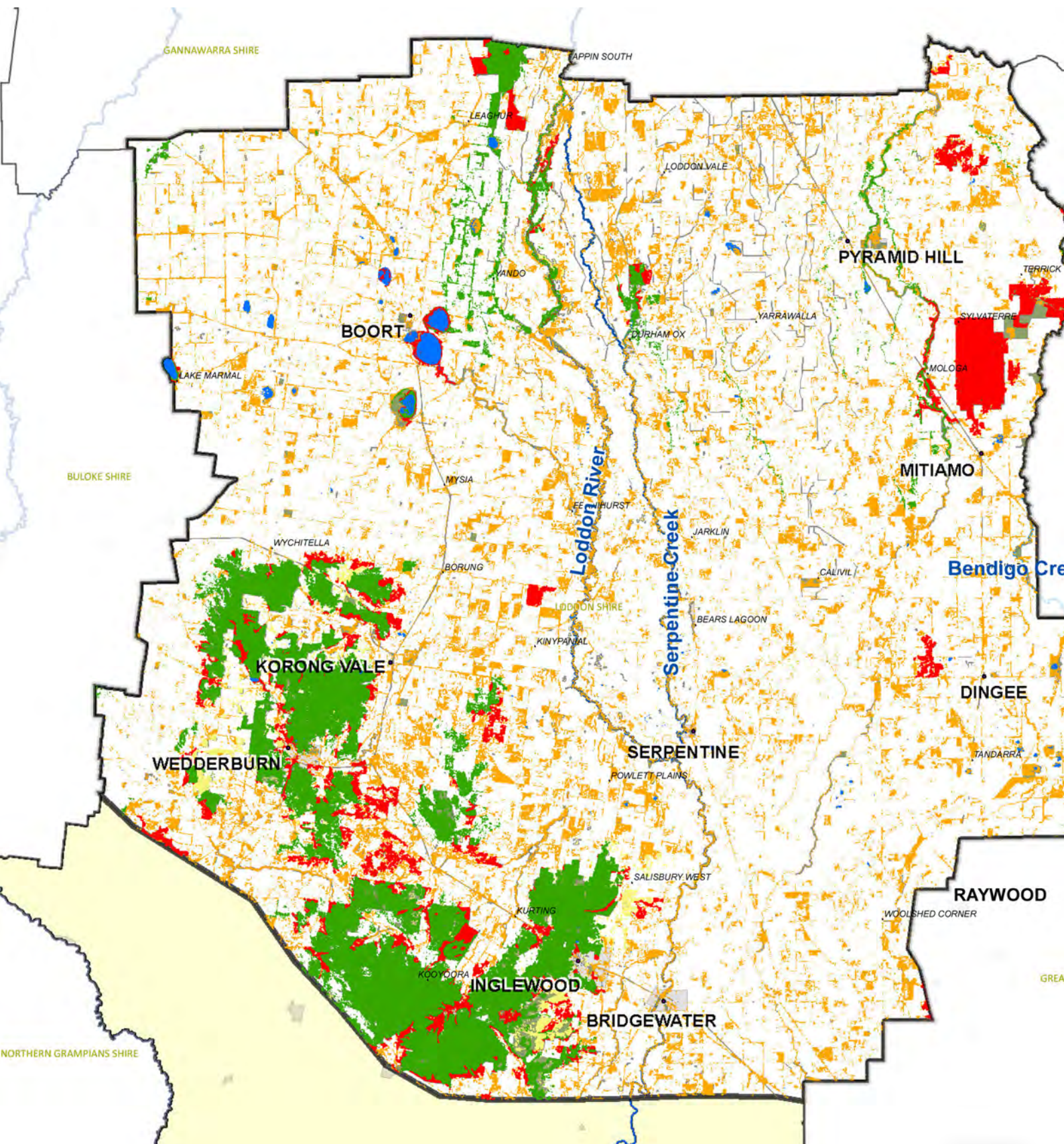
Tree cover per se may not be relevant to many areas of the network area, given the nature of vegetation communities present across much of the LPLN area (such as Plains Grassland), as highlighted by the EVC mapping. However, public land reserves with significant tree cover provide a backbone for biodiversity conservation across the LPLN area. Some of the larger named reserves include:

Kooyoorra State Park, Wedderburn State Forest, Mount Korong Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR), Terrick Terrick National Park, Wychitella NCR, Mt Buckrabanyule, Mt Kerang & Mt Korong, Leaghur State Park, Woolshed Swamp, Lake Reserves surrounding Boort, Reserves near Pyramid Hill and the Yarrowalla NCR.

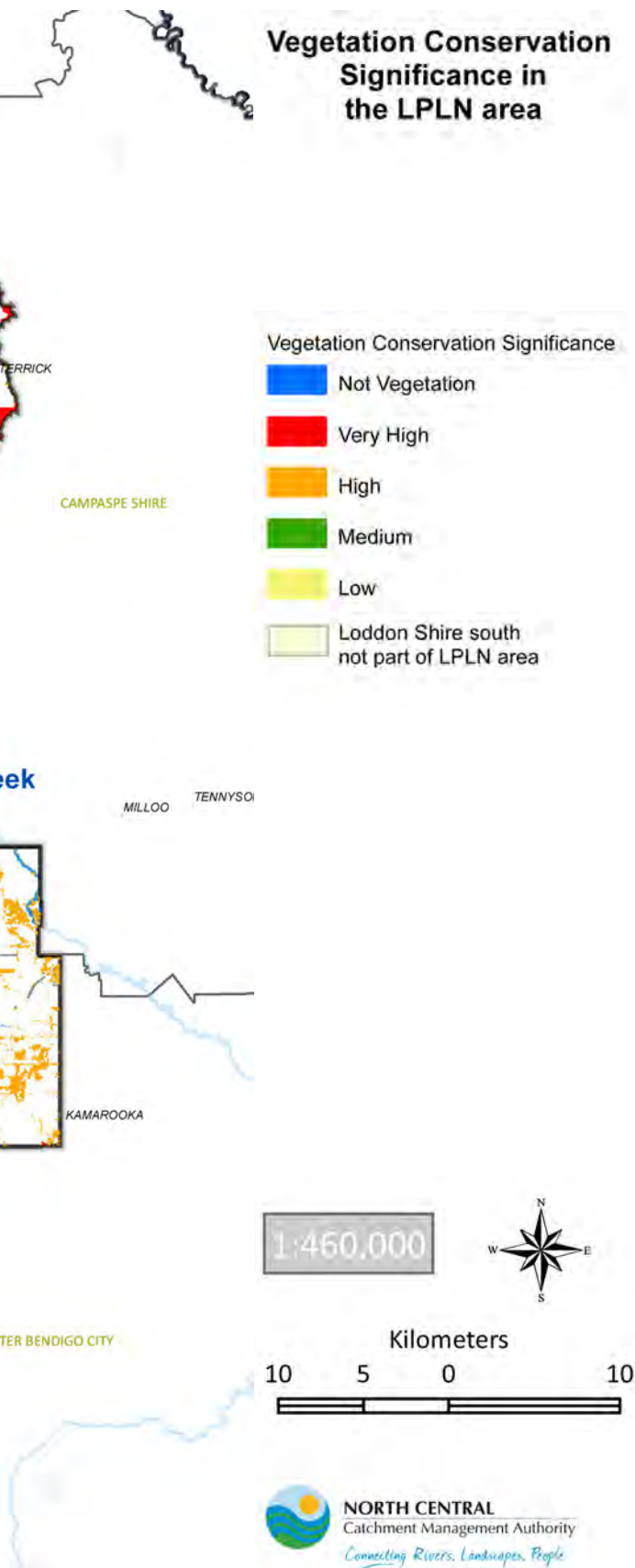
There are many unnamed reserves that also fulfil an important function in providing vegetation corridors for wildlife to move around the landscape. Roadside vegetation and linear corridors fringing alongside the numerous waterways and channels across the LPLN area provide important habitat for wildlife and preservation of threatened flora species too.

Although public land offers the main continuous areas of remnant vegetation and tree cover, they too have been affected by past use. Creek lines are generally badly eroded, with soil loss and understorey alteration. The history of timber cutting and gold mining has produced even aged stands of coppiced eucalyptus regrowth. The Wedderburn CMN has conducted ecological thinning of stands on private and public land in their area to improve vegetation health.





Map 5. Vegetation Conservation Significance in the LPLN Area



Interpreting this map

Some areas of native vegetation and habitat have more value than others. The value of a patch depends on the status of the vegetation type (endangered, vulnerable, depleted), the size, condition and closeness of the patch to other areas of core habitat and on the presence of threatened flora and fauna species. Management can improve the condition or extent of remnants and reduce threats like weeds. Large, well-connected areas of native vegetation tend to have higher conservation significance than small fragmented patches.

However all native vegetation is valuable and often areas of low to moderate conservation significance have high potential for natural regeneration and can therefore provide the backbone for landscape connectivity.

Identifying the remnants of native vegetation with higher conservation significance is the first step towards protection. Some of this work can be done in bulk with EVC mapping but in most cases ground level surveys are needed, particularly for treeless vegetation like grasslands.

Many ecological communities have high conservation status and loss of habitat quality in remnant vegetation is a significant issue. An additional concern is the loss of large old trees, some of which have existed since before European settlement.

