

Flora

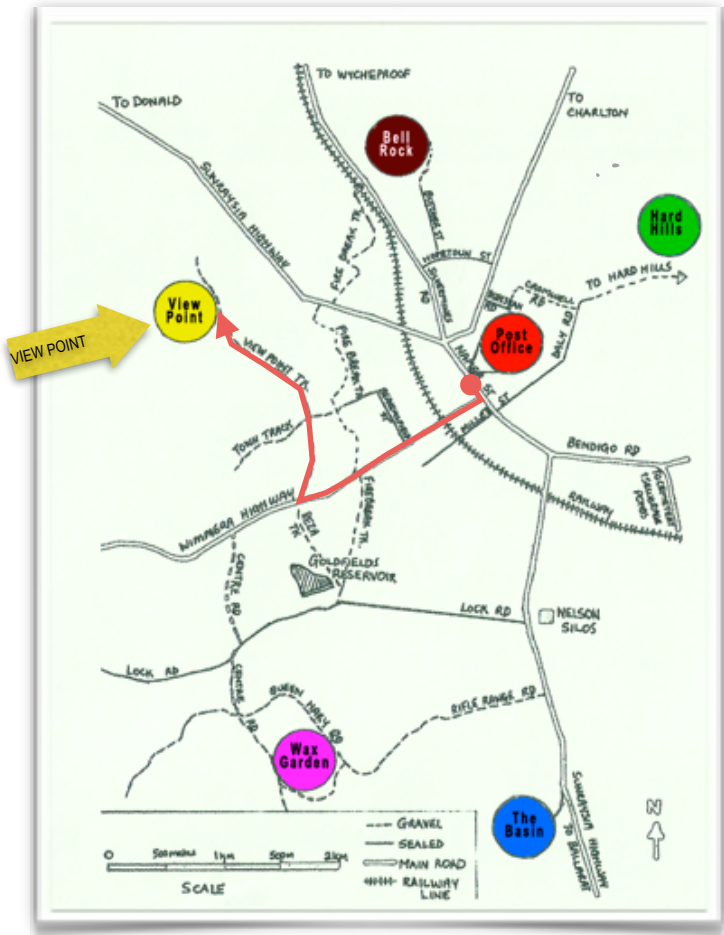
View Point around the Town Track area has a rich and varied understorey. It probably represents the vegetation on many parts of the St Arnaud Range before European settlement. Very similar vegetation is found just south to the Wax Garden and east to the Basin.

<i>Acacia aspera</i>	Rough Wattle	<i>Eucalyptus tricarpa</i>	Red Ironbark
<i>Acacia genistifolia</i>	Spreading Wattle	<i>Glossodia major</i>	Wax-lip Orchid
<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>	Golden Wattle	<i>Gonocarpus tetragynus</i>	Common Raspwort
<i>Acrotriche serrulata</i>	Honey-pots	<i>Hakea decurrens</i>	Silky Hakea
<i>Arthropodium</i> sp	Chocolate Lily	<i>Hibbertia exutiaces</i>	Prickly Guinea-flower
<i>Astroloma humifusum</i>	Cranberry Heath	<i>Hydrocotyle callicarpa</i>	Tiny Pennywort
<i>Austrostipa</i> sp 1.	Spear-grass	<i>Joycea pallida</i>	Silver-top Wallaby-grass
<i>Brunonia australis</i>	Blue Pincushion	<i>Leporella/Pyrorchis</i> sp	Unidentified orchid leaf.
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	Sweet Bursaria	<i>Lissanthe strigosa</i>	Peach Heath
<i>Caladenia caerulea</i>	Blue Fingers	<i>Lomandra</i> sp	Mat-rush
<i>Chamaescilla corymbosa</i>	Blue Squill	<i>Microseris</i> sp.	Yam Daisy
<i>Corunastylis</i> sp. aff. <i>rufa</i>	Midge Orchid	<i>Neurachne alopecuroides</i>	Fox-tail Mulga grass
<i>Crassula sieberiana</i>	Australian Stone-crop	<i>Ozothamnus obcordatus</i>	Grey Everlasting
<i>Daviesia leptophylla</i>	Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea	<i>Pimelea</i> sp	Rice-flower
<i>Daviesia ulicifolia</i> ssp. <i>ruscifolia</i>	Gorse Bitter-pea, broad leaf form	<i>Pterostylis</i> sp. 1.	Greenhood sp. 1
<i>Daviesia ulicifolia</i> ssp. <i>ulicifolia</i>	Gorse Bitter-pea, spiny leaf form	<i>Pterostylis</i> sp. 2.	Greenhood sp. 2
<i>Dianella revoluta</i>	Black-anther Flax-lily	<i>Rytidosperma</i> sp 1.	Wallaby-grass
<i>Dillwynia</i> sp.	Bush-pea	<i>Senecio quadridentatus</i>	Cottony Fireweed
<i>Diuris pardina</i>	Leopard Orchid	<i>Tetradlea ciliata</i>	Pink-bells
<i>Drosera peltata</i> ssp. <i>auriculata</i>	Tall Sundew	<i>Thelymitra</i> sp. 1.	Sun-orchid sp. 1.
<i>Drosera</i> sp	Sundew	<i>Thelymitra</i> sp. 2.	Sun-orchid sp. 2.
<i>Eucalyptus goniocalyx</i>	Long-leaf Box	<i>Wurmbia dioica</i>	Early Nancy
<i>Eucalyptus polyanthemus</i>	Yellow Box	<i>Xanthorrhoea glauca</i> ssp. <i>angustifolia</i>	Grey Grass-tree
		<i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>	Sticky Everlasting



Common in the Western Goldfields Gorse Bitter-pea (*Daviesia ulicifolia* ssp. *ruscifolia*)

The Grand Circle Tour



View Point is accessed from the Wimmera Highway, Turn onto View Point Rd , a gravel track which is quite rough. The Grasstree enclosures are at the intersection with Town Track.

St Arnaud Field Nats thank you for taking only photographs and leaving only footprints.

All photos by St AFNC / A Hughes

Please visit our website for more information on the St Arnaud Field Nats :
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view Point
St Arnaud Regional Park



Grey Grasstree- *Xanthorrhoea glauca* ssp. *angustifolia*

sharing our natural heritage

The Grand Circle Tour is a project of
St Arnaud Field Naturalist Club Inc.
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Indigenous Heritage

St AFNC acknowledges the traditional owners of the land-the Dja Dja Wurrung people and their elders, past present and to come. All these areas here are part of Dja Dja Wurrung Country and the plants and animals here were used by them.

The Grey Grasstree probably had many uses for the people. Its flowering spikes provide a sweet nectar; the bases of the young leaves can be sweet, with a nutty flavour and old spikes were used as tinder for making and carrying fire.

The heart of the stem is edible and the dry spikes make light spear shafts. The leaves when cut, ooze a hard water-proof resin used as glue in attaching stone axe heads to their handles and barbs into spears.

(Education Services- Australian National Botanic Gardens, ACT)

Landscape

View Point is the highest part of the St Arnaud Range close to town and affords good views over the town and to the eastern horizon. The vegetation here is Box- Ironbark Woodland, part of the inland slopes of the Great Divide which stretch through Chiltern and up into NSW. Only 17% of this type of woodland remains in Victoria.

The Red Ironbark, Red Box and Red Stringybark make an impressive sight and the floriferous understorey is a delight in Spring. Despite being close to town and subject to a number of human activities, from mining in the early days to marauding goat flocks (a frequently- repeated complaint to the Town Council back in the 1880s), rubbish dumping, and inappropriate fire regimes, this small area of native vegetation has survived.

At the intersection of View Point Rd and Town Track there is a major population of the threatened Grey Grasstree.



Danielle Green, Victorian Parliamentary Secretary visiting the View Point location on behalf of the Victorian Government, hosted by Anne Hughes.

Studies suggest that recruitment and survivorship of the seedlings to a young adult age are in serious decline, indeed both of these stages are absent in some populations of aged individuals.



Bellette (2009) and Curtis (2003) studied this lack of recruitment and suggest that the loss of adults due to both prescribed fire regimes and Phytophthora cinnamomi is causing a serious irreversible decline in the potential for recruitment in many populations. This is due largely to the taxon having no other mechanism for seed storage to ensure success during climatic episodes suitable for reproduction when faced with high adult mortality due to threatening processes.

It is also important to note that fire frequency also impacts the survival of seedlings and their ability to reach a flowering age. Seedling establishment of this taxon occurs between fires in long-unburnt vegetation.

History of the Recovery Project

Recovery and Protection of the depleted iconic Grey Grasstree (*Xanthorrhoea glauca* ssp. *angustifolia*) 2015-2016

St Arnaud was settled in the 1850s during the Victorian Goldrush. While some gold was found, more silver and lead were unearthed and mining struggled on until the 1920s. As the township straggled over the hills a round it, the highest point became known as "View Point", a popular picnic spot.



View Point lookout towards St Arnaud Township

On the south slope leading up to View Point, a large colony of Grasstrees was growing although decimated by tracks, rubbish dumping and fires. Grey Grasstrees can attain a height of 4m and live for up to 1000 years. Keen gardeners aspired to have a magnificent specimen in their garden and many were barrowed down the hill to a slow death in the town. Over time, formed roads followed the winding tracks and the colony was cut into four. Being within a stone's throw of the town, the area was frequently burnt for fire protection. Most adult plants were lost during this era and the remaining plants today have been dated from then - that is around 100-150 years old.

In 2010, after the terrible Black Saturday fires of 2009, the area was once again targeted for fuel reduction burns. Surveying the scene after the burns St Arnaud Field Nats decided to seek funding to provide protection for this remnant colony.

At the same time, news came through that our Grasstrees were in fact a threatened and rare species found only on the inland slopes of the Great Dividing Range - the Grey Grasstree- *Xanthorrhoea glauca* ssp. *angustifolia*. Up until this time, it was thought that the species was Austral Grasstree, *X.australis*.

Lovers of Box-Ironbark forests, this species was now found in only small scattered groups and under threat from clearing for agriculture, grazing animals, housing developments, fire, vandals and illegal collection.

In 2014, the Grey Grasstree was listed under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act of 1988 confirming our opinion that this species was special and in need of help.

We got our funding and in 2015, set about fencing the first two colonies - 659m of rabbit, hare, kangaroo and wallaby-proof fencing. on the western side of View Point Rd.

During a monitoring day on our fenced colonies, even more Grasstrees were counted on the east side and we decided to look for funding to fence the 2 remaining colonies. Funding came through in late 2015 through the Victorian Government's Community Volunteer Action Grants and with the help of the locally based Drought Employment

Program crew (DEP) we were able to complete the fences during Summer 2016. This was another 932m of rabbit-proof fencing.

Once the fencing was completed we did a walkthrough and counted 996 Grey Grasstrees but found only 1 juvenile - and it was outside the fence!

Our monitoring survey in 2019 found 17 juveniles- success.

Birds

33 species have been recorded over the last decade including a number of rare and threatened woodland species.

A regular Autumn-Winter visitor is the endangered Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) which migrates from Tasmania to feed on the mainland.

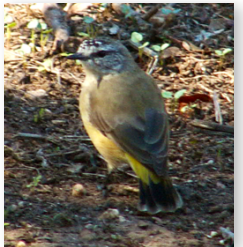
One sighting of the once-frequent but now critically endangered Regent Honey-eater was recorded in the last decade. Also seen in the area is the rare Painted Honeyeater (*Grantiella picta*).

Species marked * are either listed under EPBC Act or FFG Act as threatened, endangered or rare, or are members of the threatened Victorian Temperate Woodland Bird Community.

Australian Magpie	Jacky Winter *
Australian Raven	Mistletoebird
Black-chinned Honeyeater *	Musk Lorikeet
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Rainbow Bee-eater
Brown Treecreeper *	Red Wattlebird
Brown-headed Honeyeater	Rufous Whistler
Buff-rumped Thornbill	Silvereye
Common Bronzewing	Spotted Pardalote
Crested Bellbird *	Striated Pardalote
Crimson Rosella	Varied Sittella
Fuscous Honeyeater	Weebill
Galah	White-eared Honeyeater
Grey Currawong	White-winged Chough
Grey Fantail	Yellow Thornbill
Grey Shrike-thrush	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater



Black-chinned Honeyeater



Yellow-rumped Thornbill