

# LEX LOCI'S TRAVELS

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*An irregular one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy*

## Lex disputes the algorithm. At Barrm Birrm in the Macedon Foothills

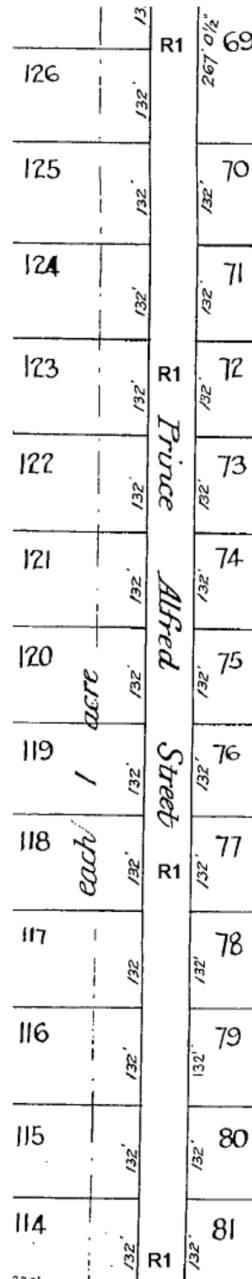


Lex is in the foothills of the Macedon ranges, admiring the Spring wattle blossoms. The folks from the Barrm Birrm Landcare group tell him there are 20 different species of Acacia here, some rare and threatened in Victoria. It's a similar story for the birds and the lizards.

**But what concerns our Lex is that when he checks on-line, he is informed that this is a 'built-up area.' He's standing in it, and it's clearly not. Some Vicmap algorithm apparently needs a bit of tweaking. So Lex investigates further.**

In the ground around him he finds a proliferation of survey pegs. Old wooden pegs, but clear evidence of a subdivision. Yes! Back in 1886 this 118 ha Crown Allotment was granted to one T Weston Esq, who immediately subdivided it into 160 lots, many as small as 0.4 ha. It wasn't until the 1970s that they were sold off – but by then planning rules had rendered them incapable of being developed.

So the hillside remains bushland – although it is carved up into 160 little lots. That is sufficient for some Vicmap algorithm to identify it as a built-up area.



As freehold land, these lots are still bought and sold. You can pay \$40,000 for one, and then go and sit in it, and admire the wattle blossoms, but you can't build on it. Some have been donated to Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

The local Landcare group saw this as less than satisfactory. They consulted with the Wurundjeri Council, and between them they gave the place the name *Barrm Birrm*.

Just down the hillside, Lex sees that another 85-hectare Crown Allotment was purchased by DELWP in 1990. It is once again Crown land, and is known as the Conglomerate Gully Flora Reserve. Why, he wonders, is one block deemed suitable for re-acquisition by the Crown, but another remains a pathetic version of freehold?



**It's a question which leads him to think about fixing the remit of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) – but that's for another time.**

Just now, he's looking at a Cinnamon Wattle – or is it a Ploughshare Wattle, or even a Prickly Moses? ♦

**See you there!  
Lex Loci**