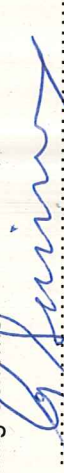


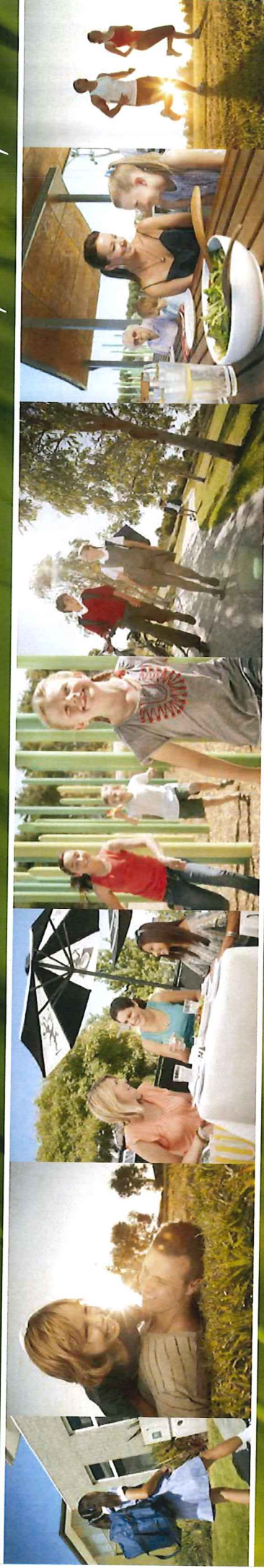
The Mernda Villages West Development Plan was approved by the City of Whittlesea on 19 March 2013, in accordance with Clause 43.04 Schedule 27 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme

13/05/2013



Signature of the Responsible Authority

mernda villages west *development plan*



APRIL 2013

MERENDA VILLAGES

urbis

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1. Introduction

The Mernda Villages West Development Plan (MWVDP) has been prepared by Urbis on behalf of Stockland Pty Ltd, to establish a framework for the future urban development of the Mernda West precinct and allow its seamless integration with the existing Mernda Villages Estate to the east.

The MWVDP has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 27 of the Development Plan Overlay at Clause 43.04 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.

The MWVDP describes how the key features of the precinct are proposed to be integrated within the proposed residential development and how the land will be developed in sequence with surrounding land.

The Mernda Villages estate has developed a market leading reputation for quality residential living surrounded by highly desirable parkland and nature reserves. The integration of significant elements of the natural environment has become a defining feature of the Mernda Village aesthetic, and one which will be seamlessly extended within the Development Plan area.

The MWVDP will facilitate the orderly development of the final stages of the Mernda Villages area, providing an appropriate transition to the Quarry Hills Regional Park to the east.

The key physical elements which have influenced the design response for Mernda Villages West are:

- The revised Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and the introduction of new urban land;
- Its western interface with the Quarry Hills Regional Park (Green Wedge Land);
- Its eastern residential interface with wider Mernda Villages estate;
- The undulating topography and its elevation above the surrounding low level topography;
- The presence of River Red Gums of significant age and size; and
- Its location at the immediate edge of the Urban Growth Boundary.

1.1 LAND TO WHICH DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPLIES

The Development Plan Overlay applies to 33.81 hectares of land as shown on Figure 1. The Development Plan area is bound by the Mernda Villages Estate to the east, Masons Road to the north, Bridge Inn Road to the south, and the UGB to the west. The land forms part of a wider contiguous landholding at:

- 405 Bridge Inn Road; and
- 430 Masons Lane, Mernda.

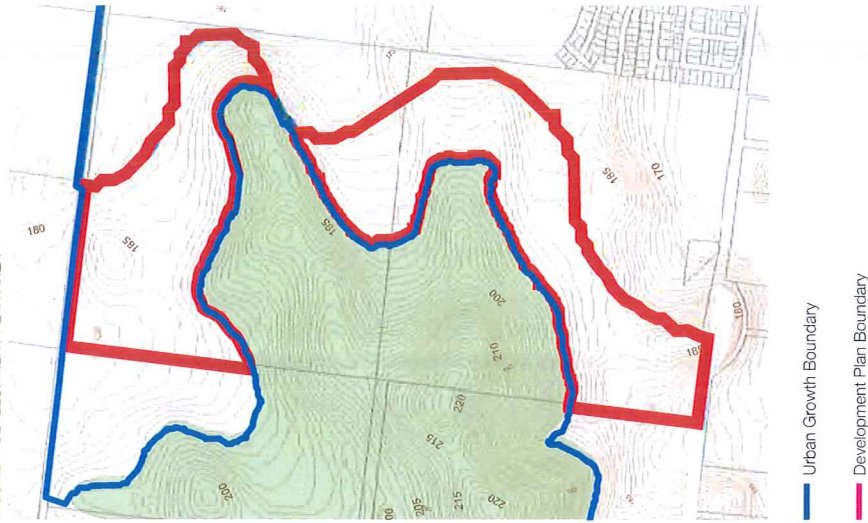
The balance of the land holding contained outside the UGB is to form part of the future Quarry Hills Park which will eventually be owned and controlled by the City of Whittlesea.

1.2 COMPONENTS TO THE MERNDA VILLAGES WEST DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The MWVDP comprises:

- Contextual analysis;
- A Development Plan, Landscape Master Plan and other supporting plans;
- Supporting technical analysis; and
- Assessment of the MWVDP in terms of its compliance with the relevant strategic and statutory frameworks.

FIGURE 1 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA



2. Local Context and Site Description

2.1 METROPOLITAN CONTEXT

The Mernda Village West Precinct is located approximately 25km north of Melbourne Central Business District (CBD) and forms part of the Plenty Valley growth corridor (as shown on Figure 2).

Mernda is located in the City of Whittlesea, located on the northern fringe of the Melbourne metropolitan area; directly interfacing with rural land within the green wedge.

The City of Whittlesea covers an area of approximately 487 square kilometres and is physically one of the largest municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne. Mernda has been planned for significant residential, retail, commercial and community development since 2004 when the Mernda Strategy Plan was approved.

Mernda Villages West represents the final westward expansion of the growth area, having been brought within the Whittlesea Growth Corridor through the recent urban boundary change. Urban development fronts are rapidly approaching the site from the east and the south and will be abutting the subject land in the next 1-2 years.

2.2 LOCAL CONTEXT

The Development Plan area, together with the wider Mernda Villages estate to the east, forms the north-western extent of residential development within the Plenty Corridor.

A site analysis and design response plan has been prepared as part of the Development Plan. The plan detailed at Figure 4 should be read in conjunction with the following:

2.2.1 NORTH

Masons Road forms the northern boundary of the subject land and is the current location of the UGB. Land directly north of the site is zoned Rural Conservation and consists of cleared undulating rural land used for grazing.

2.2.2 WEST

The UGB is located directly to the site's west. Beyond the UGB is Quarry Hills which is zoned Green Wedge. Quarry Hills is considered to be visually significant due to its elevated position in the landscape, offering local views over the surrounding lower-lying landscape.

The Quarry Hills land is proposed to be preserved as a regional parkland asset and will be transferred to Council for open space purposes. Quarry Hills is currently used for grazing and is home to significant vegetation including River Red Gums.

2.2.3 SOUTH

Bridge Inn Road abuts the southern boundary of the Development Plan area. Bridge Inn Road is within a Road Zone Category 2 and will directly service the subject site. Land south of Bridge Inn Road is zoned Residential 1 and will accommodate future residential development. This land is within Precinct 4 of the Mernda Strategy Plan.

2.2.4 EAST:

East of the site is the Mernda Villages estate. Mernda Villages is presently being developed by Stockland and comprises a residential community anchored by a Village Centre. As the subdivision of the existing Mernda Villages estate progresses, residential development will abut the subject land. The existing Mernda Villages estate is within the Residential 1 Zone and is located within Precinct 3 of the Mernda Strategy Plan. An approved Development Plan applies to the estate and responds to Schedule 5 of the Development Plan Overlay.

2.3 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FEATURES ANALYSIS

2.3.1 LANDSCAPE & TOPOGRAPHY

The Development Plan area and surrounds can be characterised as a typical undulating rural interface landscape located on the volcanic basalt plains of northern Melbourne. Since European settlement, the region was predominantly cleared and utilised for grazing based agriculture.

The Development Plan area generally has a high point towards its centre and slopes down to the north, east and west. Two ridgelines punctuate the area and traverse along an east-west alignment.

2.3.2 HISTORICAL USES

The subject site has had a recent history of agricultural land use predominantly consisting of the grazing of farm stock. Supporting these activities are the usual farm improvements, such as sheds and dams. Family dwellings are also located on the site, with one house fronting Masons Road and another fronting Bridge Inn Road.

2.3.3 VEGETATION

The Development Plan area has generally been cleared of native vegetation as a result of its historical uses. Remaining vegetation generally consists of planted mature exotic species used to form windbreaks. Some remnant River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) are also present within the development plan area.

Teelogic conducted a field inspection of the site in January 2010 and observed that the site contained a total of 328 individual tree and 14 groups of trees. They noted that the dominant indigenous species found was River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) with 44 trees identified. The balance of trees on site were either of indigenous origin or exotic plantings.

2.3.4 EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Development Plan area is well positioned within an established developing growth corridor which has undergone extensive transport planning and well positioned infrastructure.

Locally and regionally the network of existing road infrastructure is well placed to accommodate the proposed additional lots. The surrounding major road infrastructure consists of:

- **Plenty Road** - Primary State Arterial Road managed by VicRoads;
- **Bridge Inn Road** (abutting the site) - Major Road managed by Whittlesea City Council;
- **Bridge Inn Road** (east of intersection with Plenty Road) - Secondary State Arterial Road managed by VicRoads.

Mernda is serviced by three public transport bus routes, consisting of:

- **Bus 562 Humevale via Whittlesea** - Service runs along Plenty Road;
- **Bus 572 Doreen to University Hill** - Services stop along Mernda Village Drive;
- **Bus 562 Humevale to Greensborough via Whittlesea** - Services run along Bridge Inn and Plenty Roads.

Within Mernda Villages the road network consists of local roads with two collector roads being Mernda Village Drive and Galloway Drive. Galloway Drive provides a direct link to the Mernda Villages Activity Centre.

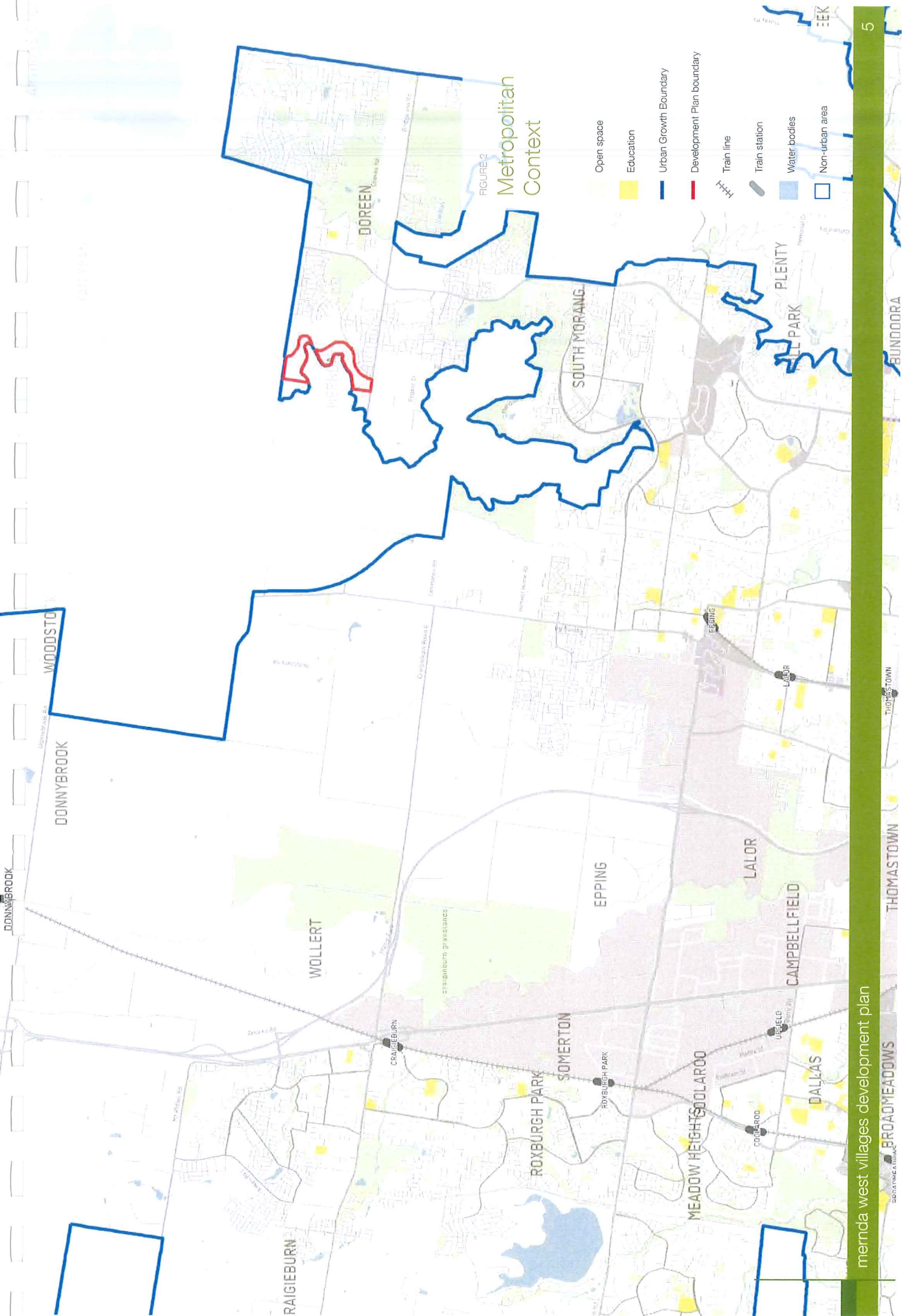
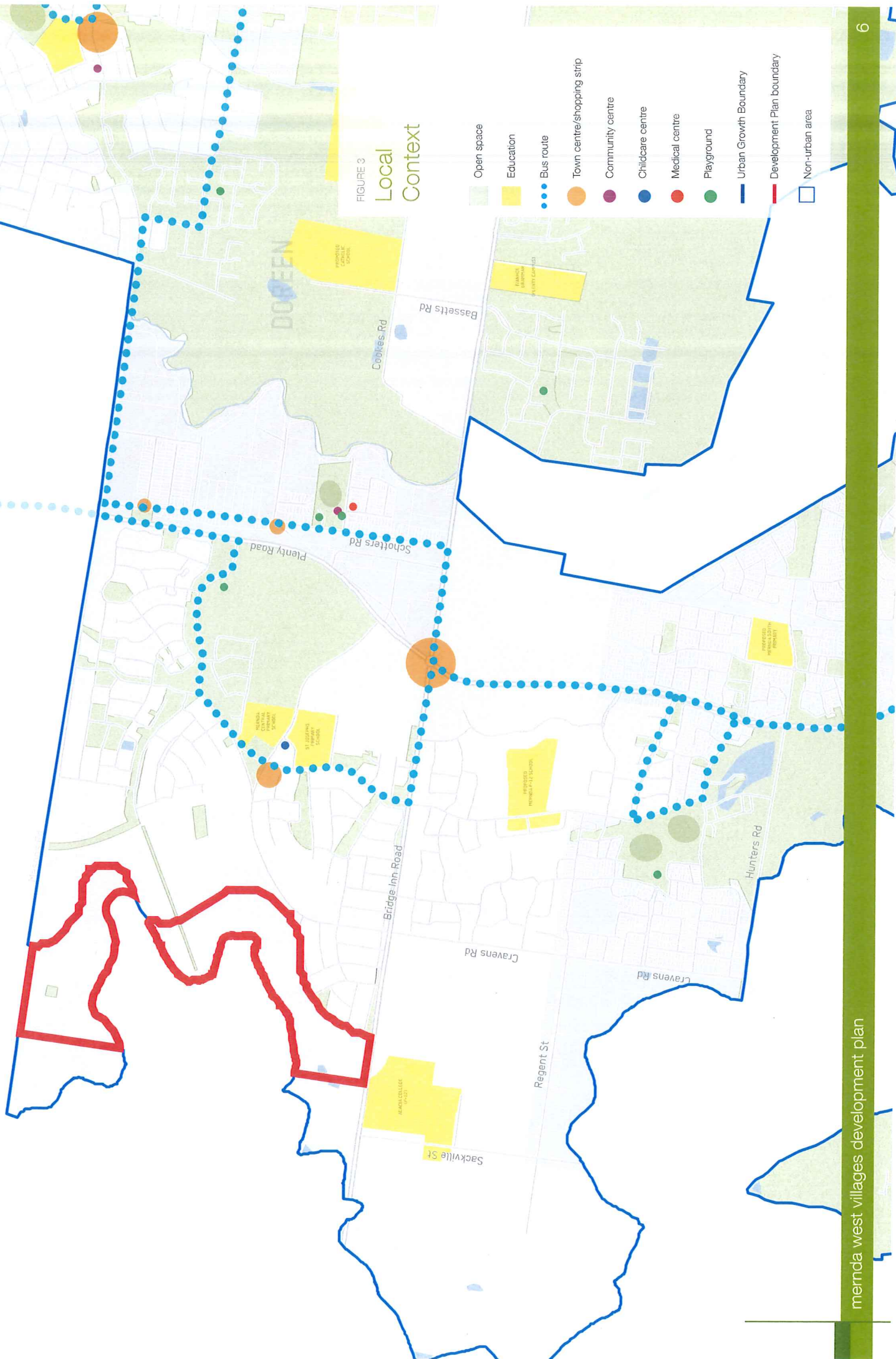
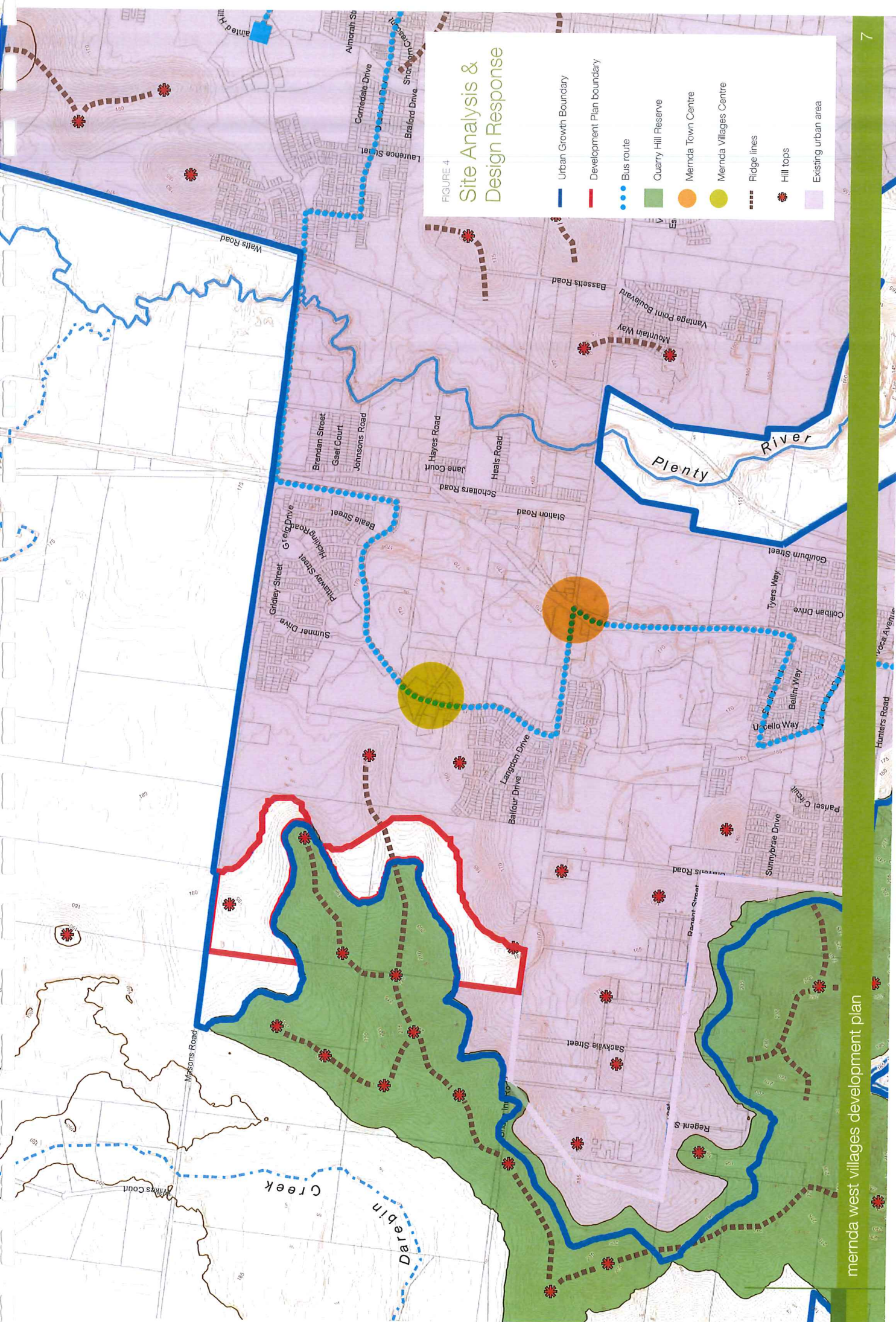


FIGURE 3
Local
Context

- Open space
- Education
- Bus route
- Town centre/shopping strip
- Community centre
- Childcare centre
- Medical centre
- Playground
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Development Plan boundary
- Non-urban area





3. Vision

Stockland is one of Australia's most diversified property groups and a top 50 company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX). Stockland is a national property group with interests in retail, commercial, industrial and residential development throughout Australia.

Stockland is the leading residential developer in Australia, focused on delivering a range of masterplanned and mixed-use communities in growth areas across the country. Stockland have 65,700 lots and projects with a total end value of approximately \$15.9 billion.

Currently Stockland is developing 8 new communities in Melbourne's growth areas and regional Victoria including:

- Eucalypt in Wollert;
- Hawkstowe in South Morang;
- Highlands in Craigieburn;
- Mt Aitken in Craigieburn;
- Allura in Truganina South.
- Eve in Cranbourne North;
- Arbourlea in Cranbourne North.
- Sierra in Cranbourne;
- Selandra Rise in Clyde North; and
- The Point in Point Lonsdale.

3.1 STOCKLAND IN MERNDA

Stockland commenced construction on Mernda Villages in 2005 and since this time have delivered a superior housing environment integrating new homes surrounded by nature and open space.

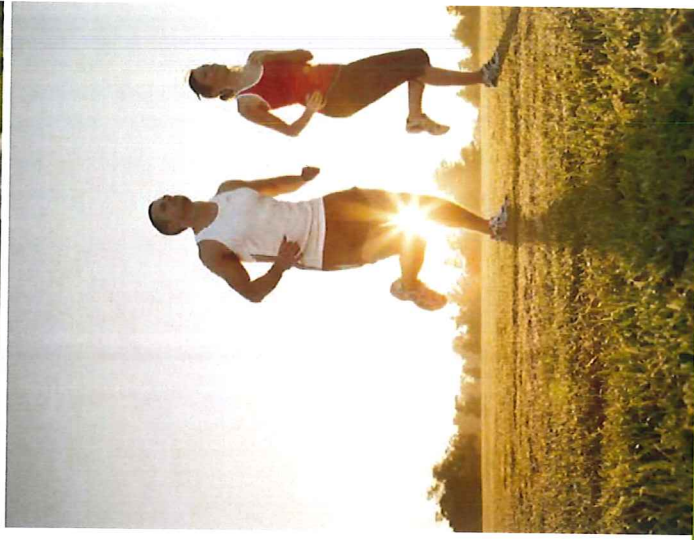
Mernda Villages currently offers 70 hectares of open space and parkland interspersed with majestic 300 year old Red River Gums. The estate incorporates a wide range of community services and facilities including childcare, schools, maternal health services and a Community Activity Centre. These are contained within the Mernda Villages Activity Centre which is located centrally within the estate on Mernda Village Drive. The Mernda Villages Activity Centre will accommodate a full line supermarket and specialty stores, and is due to open in 2012.

Stockland is committed to continuing its vision for Mernda as part of the overall Mernda Villages West development.

THE STOCKLAND MERNDA VISION:

A special place to live, a place with real character and interest derived from a series of intimate neighbourhoods and villages linked via a series of linear natural links acting as a backbone to the development...

Each village will be unique, framed around a distinctive natural environment whilst the individual homes link together through a synergy of cohesive elements that create friendly, safe, inviting streetscapes.



4. Development Plan

The Development Plan for Mernda Villages West embraces the principles which have underpinned the development of the wider Mernda Villages Estate, which itself responds to the strategic policy contained within the Mernda Strategy Plan (MSP).

The future urban structure as shown on the Development Plan offers a framework that will deliver:

- A range of residential densities and housing options to respond to the changing household make up of Melbourne's population;
- A strategic recreational link to Quarry Hills Regional Park;
- An integrated extension to the planned neighbourhoods in the adjacent Mernda Villages estate;
- Water Sensitive Urban Design principles;
- Urban design which responds to the existing land form and features of the site;
- A functional layout that provides for convenient accessibility to the surrounding area;
- A highly permeable and pedestrian orientated environment;
- A residential environment with excellent connection to a network of recreational and environmental open space and links to future Activity Centres.

The major strength of the plan is that it provides a balanced design solution that seeks to achieve the key land use and design objectives whilst responding to the topography of the landscape and ensuring liveability.

4.1 OVERARCHING DESIGN PRINCIPLES

In preparing the Development Plan, Stockland has focused on creating a sustainable and diverse residential environment to complement the broader Plenty Valley growth corridor.

The following overarching design principles have been central to the design of the Development Plan:

- Establish a permeable and efficient road network based upon a clear grid pattern, and ensure permeable sightlines for all modes of transport (especially pedestrians and cyclists) are available at all intersections;
- Encourage a multi-modal (vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian) network to gain access to all precincts of the development;
- Integrate the adjoining Mernda Villages development through a highly permeable, network of streets that provide a variety of pedestrian experiences;
- Provision of a visually responsive interface with the adjoining Quarry Hills parkland, allowing for strategic access to the open space from the residential street network;
- Provide for a diversity of density and housing types, which is complemented by an open space network that is to be utilised for informal passive recreation;
- The large areas of remnant native vegetation scattered throughout have been retained where reasonably possible within pocket parks to enhance the landscape quality that is Mernda;
- Land use will focus on environmentally sustainable design initiatives that will be energy efficient and achieve best practice water conservation principles. This level of detail will be explored at the planning permit stage.

The Development Plan area is located at the north-west corner of the growth corridor. As such, most of the surrounding physical and social infrastructure has been planned and provided in order to develop the main part of the Mernda Villages estate. The Mernda Villages West Development Plan area therefore leverages from this infrastructure. The layout of the Development Plan area is dictated by the existing residential subdivision to the east.

A further review of drainage overland flow paths is required at the subsequent subdivision permit stage, which may require alteration to the allotment layout and subdivision design in the north-western corner of the development plan area, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

The residential neighbourhood continues to expand and currently offers a diverse mix of lower density housing. The grid-based design which respects the sites contours and natural features, is a technique continued as part of the proposed layout.

INS - ROAD



FIGURE 5

-  Subject land
 Public open space
 Tree reserve
 Quarry Hill reserve
 Buffer/utility reserve
 Existing approved subdivision in Mernda villages

5. Planning Framework and Considerations

5.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1.1 AMENDMENT VC68

Planning Scheme Amendment VC68 was gazetted on August 2010, and made changes to fringe and growth area municipalities, to expand the urban growth boundary, and reserve land for the Regional Rail Link, Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport corridor and western grassland reserves.

Land considered suitable for development and brought into the expanded growth areas was generally designated Urban Growth Zone; however the subject site was zoned Residential 1, consistent with the existing Mernda Villages located directly to the east.

5.1.2 GROWTH CORRIDOR PLANS

Growth Corridor Plans were required to be prepared for land brought into the UGB as part of Amendment VC68. The Northern Growth Corridor Plan sets the regional strategy for the area and identifies land for jobs, housing, transport networks, open space, town centres and key infrastructure.

The Growth Corridor Plan for the northern region identifies the Development Plan area as being 'residential'. As such, the Development Plan is consistent with the Northern Growth Corridor Plan

5.1.3 MERMDA STRATEGY PLAN

Whilst not applicable to the Development Plan area, the MVWDP has been influenced by the strategic design principles established for Precinct 3 of the MSP. The Development Plan seeks to integrate itself with the adjacent Mernda Villages Development Plan, which responds to the key objectives provided within the MSP.

The Mernda Strategy Plan (MSP) is the primary policy document to guide and inform the preparation of development plans for the Mernda Growth Area. The MSP articulates a vision for the integrated development of communities that will be much more than new residential estates on Melbourne's northern fringe. As well as meeting future housing needs, development in Mernda will foster economic development, environmental preservation and social progress.

The MSP was approved by Council in November 2004 and builds on the foundations of the Plenty Valley Strategic Plan. The individual Precinct Plans within the MSP provide a more detailed and site-specific guidance on land-use and design requirements within each area. The statutory planning framework supports the implementation of the Strategy by requiring a Development Plan to be prepared and approved before development occurs. Development Plans prepared must be generally in accordance with the relevant Precinct Plan.

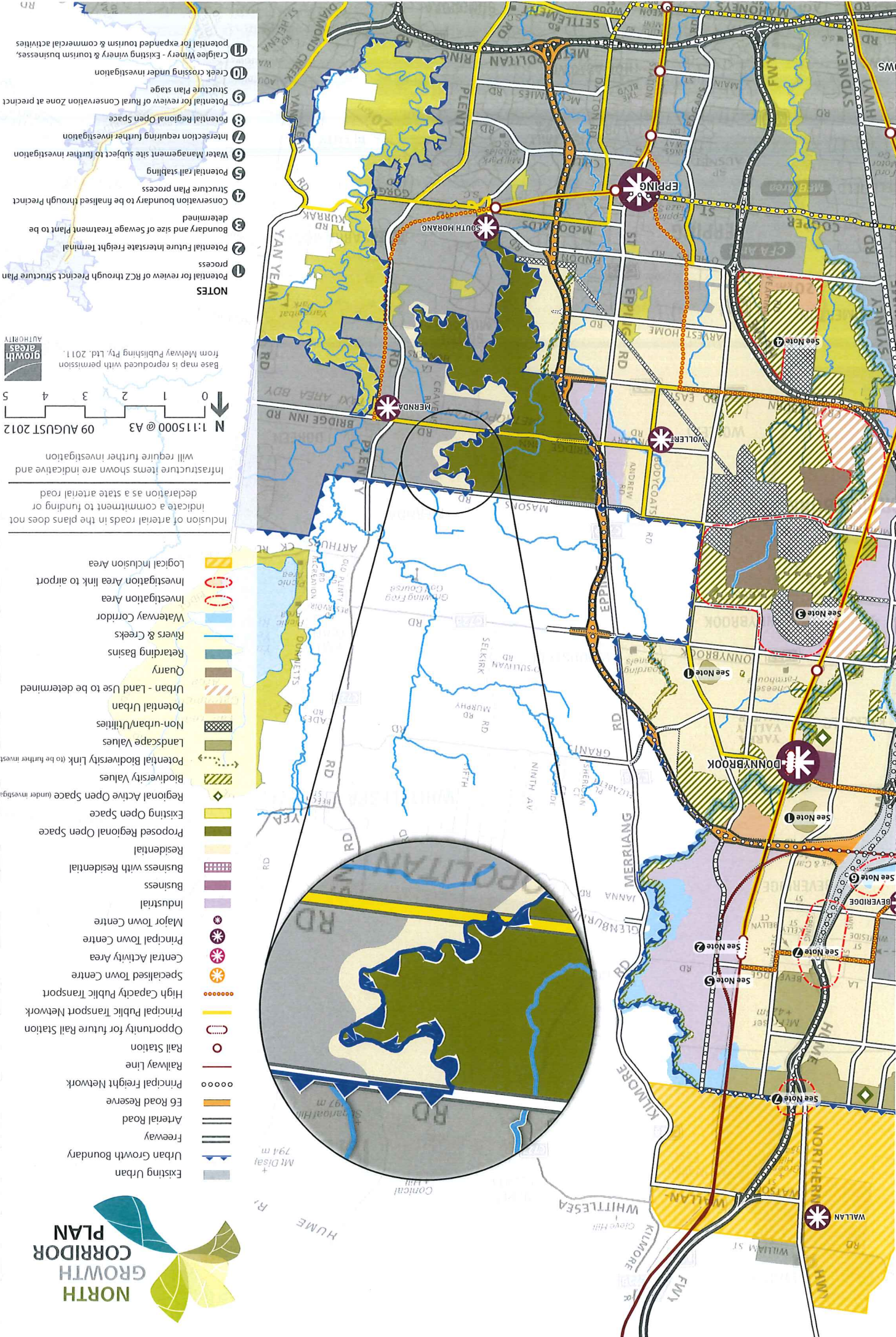
- *This Development Plan prepared on behalf of Stockland is considered to be highly consistent with the policy intent and key design objectives of the MSP, which are outlined below.*
- *To create an interconnected series of attractive neighbourhoods that foster social participation, economic advancement and are capable of adapting to change.*
- *To put in place an efficient, equitable and environmentally sustainable transportation system that reduces car dependence, encourages walking and cycling for local trips.*
- *To protect and enhance environmental character and ecological integrity through a habitat focussed approach to the protection of environmental values and the application of sustainable development.*
- *To facilitate a timely provision of a range of community and recreation facilities to meet the needs of local residents, and promote community health and cohesion.*
- *To provide a mix of lot sizes and housing forms to cater for a broad range of household types. The design of dwellings should be site responsive, energy efficient and contribute to the formation of the local identity.*
- *To establish an integrated open space network that maintains ecological integrity and environmental character as well as offering a wide range of passive and active recreation opportunities for all user groups.*
- *To protect Aboriginal and European heritage sites and to heighten community understanding and appreciation of this heritage through culturally responsive design practices.*
- *To minimise any negative impacts on natural land and aquatic systems by ensuring all development accords with the servicing and drainage strategies devised by Yarra Valley Water and Melbourne Water respectively.*
- *To put in place an equitable funding framework that will ensure the timely provision of infrastructure that is essential to the establishment of a sustainable new community.*

The development will implement the key objectives, design principles and strategic responses of the MSP. This will assist in delivering a sustainable development, a cohesive and integrated community, and protect the environmental features of the land.

5.2 STATE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) seeks to develop the objectives for planning in Victoria to foster appropriate land-use and development through policies and practices that encompass relevant environmental, social and economic factors. Relevant policy provisions from the State Planning Policy Framework include:

- **Clause 11: Settlement** – provides a framework of development that supports the overarching visions and objectives of Melbourne 2030 and Melbourne @ 5 Million.
- **Clause 11.02: Urban Growth** – provides an objective 'To ensure a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, retail, industrial, recreational, institutional and other community uses.'
- **Clause 12.02: Planning for Growth Areas** – provides an objective 'To locate urban growth close to transport corridors and services and provide efficient and effective infrastructure to create benefits for sustainability while protecting primary production, major sources of raw materials and valued environmental areas.'
- **Clause 11.02-4: Sequencing of development** – provides an objective 'To manage the sequence of development in growth areas so that services are available from early in the life of new communities'.
- **Clause 12: Environmental and Landscape Values** – provides a framework of protecting the health of ecological systems and the biodiversity they support and conserve areas with identified environmental and landscape value.
- **Clause 15: Built Environment and Heritage** - This clause aims to ensure that all new developments appropriately respond to their environment. This clause provides objectives about urban design, neighbourhood and subdivision design, design for safety, Aboriginal cultural heritage and sustainable development.
- **Clause 16: Housing** – This clause seeks to provide for housing developments that are efficient in terms of infrastructure provision while meeting the needs of a variety of households and having access to a range of services.
- **Clause 17: Economic Development** – This clause recognises planning's role in the region's economic development by providing land, facilitating decisions and resolving land-use conflicts.
- **Clause 18: Transport** – This clause aims to provide an integrated and sustainable transport system that provides access to social and economic opportunities, facilitates economic prosperity, contributes to environmental sustainability, coordinates reliable movements of people and goods, and is safe.



5. Planning Framework and Considerations

The Development Plan implements the objectives of the State Planning Policy Framework by providing for a well-planned residential subdivision on land that is contained within the Urban Growth Boundary, whilst protecting and responding to natural features on the site.

A key feature of the Development Plan is that it allows for the retention and enhancement of existing significant natural features, such as the River Red Gums and the Quarry Hills regional open space.

The Development Plan will provide for the development of a sustainable and liveable community, through providing a subdivision pattern that allows for housing to be provided with safe and convenient access to services and facilities, by a range of transport options, including walking and cycling.

5.3 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme sets out the local policy direction for land use and development throughout the Municipality. The specific elements of local policy that are of direct relevance to the Development Plans assessment are set out below.

5.3.1 CLAUSE 21.06 – OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The objective of Clause 21.06-1 – Residential Growth Areas – is 'to plan for a diverse series of residential communities that have a unique identity and sense of place, cater to all segments of the housing market and respect and incorporate local environmental and cultural features'.

The objective of Clause 21.06-2 – Managing Urban Growth – is 'to effectively manage urban growth in a manner that maximises beneficial relationships between compatible land uses and which avoids inappropriate incursions into non-urban or environmentally sensitive areas'.

5.3.2 CLAUSE 22.04 SUBDIVISION DESIGN POLICY

This policy applies to the subdivision of land for residential development. The policy basis seeks to ensure appropriate site responsive subdivision design. It is policy that subdivision design incorporates lot diversity, integration of cultural, heritage and natural features of significance, and that movement networks provide for a high degree of accessibility and connectivity.

5.3.3 CLAUSE 22.10 RIVER RED GUM PROTECTION POLICY

This policy applies to the development of the subject land. The policy basis details that existing and future urban areas such as Mill Park, South Morang and Mernda/Doreen contain significant River Red Gum habitat. It is policy that the intrinsic value of River Red Gums be recognised in establishing character and identity in urban and rural areas.

The Development Plan is consistent with the LPPF as it provides for the residential development of land that draws on the natural features of the site and incorporates this into the future development. Further, the development of the land will be managed in a way that effectively integrates it with the existing Mernda Villages estate, and avoids inappropriate incursions into environmentally sensitive areas.

5.4 PLANNING CONTROLS

5.4.1 ZONING

The subject site will be zoned Residential 1 under Clause 32.01 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme and is located within the UGB.

The purpose of the zone is:

To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.

To provide for residential development at a range of densities with a variety of dwellings to meet the housing needs of all households.

To encourage residential development that respects the neighbourhood character.

In appropriate locations, to allow educational, recreational, religious, community and a limited range of other non-residential uses to serve local community needs.

The development of the subject land for residential purposes is consistent with the zoning of the land and its inclusion within the Urban Growth Boundary.

5.4.2 VEGETATION PROTECTION OVERLAY

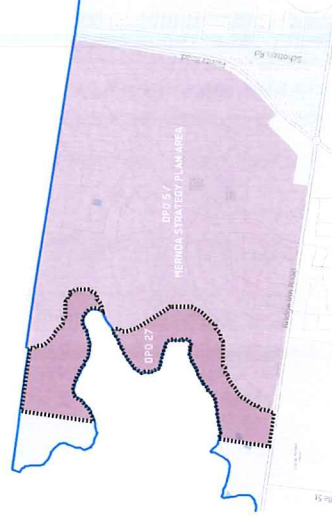
The subject land is affected by Schedule 1 to the Vegetation Protection Overlay – Significant Vegetation (River Red Gum Grassy Woodland). The MVWDP is based on a detailed flora and fauna assessment, which is attached as an appendix to this report. A key objective of the MVWDP is the retention and protection of River Red Gums and other native vegetation worthy of retention.

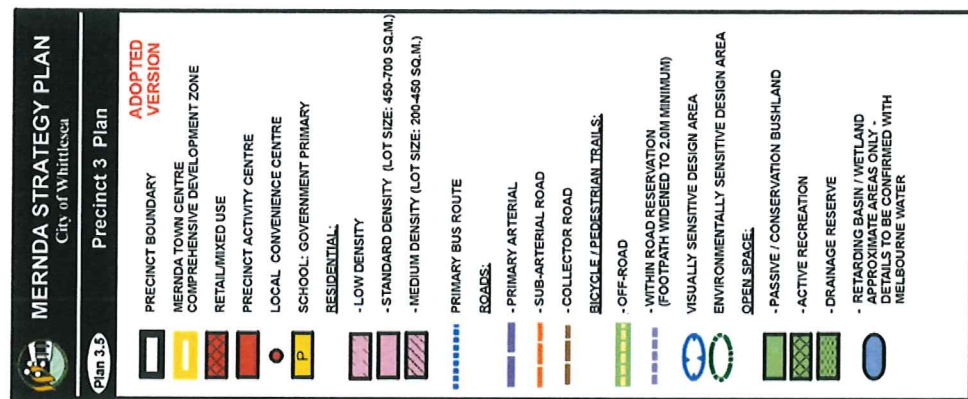
5.4.3 DEVELOPMENT PLAN OVERLAY - SCHEDULE 27 MERNDA VILLAGES WEST DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The MVWDP has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of the Development Plan Overlay Schedule 27, which seeks to ensure that the MVWDP seamlessly integrates the Development Plan area with the land to the east.

Section 6 considers compliance with the detailed requirements of this Overlay.

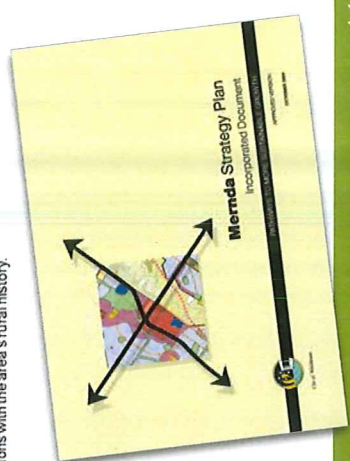
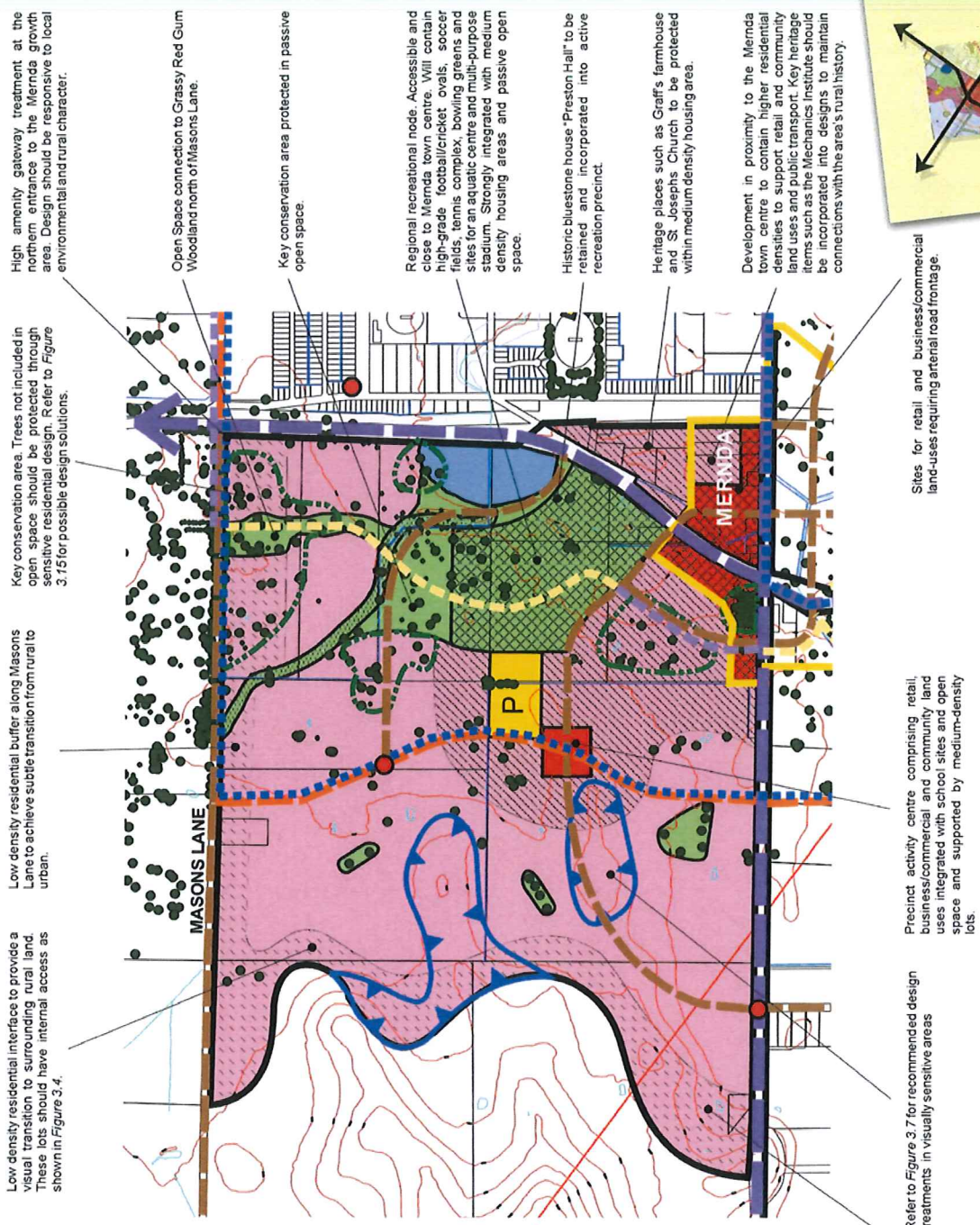
FIGURE 7 DEVELOPMENT PLAN OVERLAY - SCHEDULE 27





Notes:
The land-use and design concepts provided on this plan should be read in conjunction with the key objectives and strategic responses detailed in the Merenda Strategy Plan document. Refinement of Precinct Plans may occur in the preparation of detailed development plans.

Low density residential lots to create an open character near the edge of the plan area. Mirrored by corresponding development on the south side of Bridge Inn Road.



6. Compliance with Schedule 27 to the Development Plan Overlay

The Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 27 to the Development Plan Overlay. The Development Plan:

- Provides for an appropriate transition and interface treatment between the Development Plan area and the proposed Quarry Hills Regional Public Open Space to the west. Further, the development plan provides for an appropriate transition between the future residential use and adjacent green wedge land to the west via lot orientation and grid layout.
- Is based upon a site analysis that is informed by the land's natural, cultural and strategic context.
- Is consistent with the strategic context that applies to the future development of the land within the Mernda growth area.
- Provides for residential land use at a range of densities that will allow for diverse housing types to be established.
- Ensures the subject land will be developed in accordance with a logical and efficient staging program that integrates with the existing Mernda Villages development to the east.
- Ensures the development of a landscape strategy that provides for:
 - The protection and retention of River Red Gum trees in open space reserves.
 - A response to the natural topography and sight lines of the site.
 - Visual and physical links between the subject site and open space, and integration with bicycle and pedestrian links.
- Is consistent with findings and recommendations of the Tardis Enterprise Assessment of the Aboriginal and European Cultural Heritage of the land.
- Is consistent with the recommendations of Treellogic with respect to retention and integration of mature trees on the site and implements the key objectives to identify, retain and protect mature trees (in particular the River Red Gums) in appropriate settings.
- Is consistent with the recommendations in the Flora, Fauna and Habitat Assessment undertaken by Biosis and is consistent with the key objective to protect the environmental features of the land.
- Is consistent with the WSUD principles and implementation outlined in the Stormwater Management Strategy report to achieve the objectives and principles in the MSP with respect to WSUD. The application of these principles will result in improved amenity, lower water consumption and a measurable reduction in the pollutant load of run off leaving the land.
- Is consistent with the strategic intent and neighbourhood structure envisaged by the Precinct 3 Plan of the MSP. Further, the Development Plan is consistent with the objectives and principles in the MSP with regard to diversity and housing outcomes, by developing a diverse range of allotment densities and dwelling types for the project.
- Provides for a transport strategy that provides for a high degree of connectivity and permeability. The strategy will include a road hierarchy and indicative road cross-sections.
- Provides a landscape concept plan for all open space areas.
- Recognises the visual, recreational and environmental importance of Quarry Hill with its inclusion as regional open space.
- Makes provision for the integration of telecommunications facilities within the future neighbourhood design.
- Allows for the provision of developer contributions to be agreed between the landholder and Council, and may include cash payments or the provision of works-in-kind.

7. Development Plan Components

The Development Plan is informed by specialist advice and site specific constraints and opportunities. The key individual components of the plan are considered below.

7.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING

The land was recently subject to Amendment VC68, which provided for an expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) around Melbourne's Growth Areas, and designated land for future development.

Prior to VC68, the site was located outside the UGB within the green wedge. Land adjoining the site to the east was approved for development under the MSP and was subject to the Mernda Villages Development Plan (MVDP) which was originally approved in Nov 2004 and has subsequently been updated.

The alignment of the Urban Growth Boundary along the 190m contour responded to submissions made by both Council and Stockland on the preferred location of the UGB. The 190m contour was chosen, as striking a necessary balance between protecting the more sensitive hill top areas and ridgelines from development, whilst facilitating additional development land to accommodate residential growth.

The use of the Development Plan area as residential is consistent with the zoning of the land and the Northern Growth Corridor Plan, both of which nominate the site for residential use.

7.2 LAND USE AND DENSITY

The indicative Land Use and Density Plan illustrates the provision of a range of land uses and densities.

The majority of lots within Mernda West will be standard density, reflective of the predominant density within the existing Mernda Villages estate. Lots adjacent to the proposed Quarry Hills Park to the west, and the rural interface to the north, will be lower density to achieve an appropriate transition from residential to rural land uses.

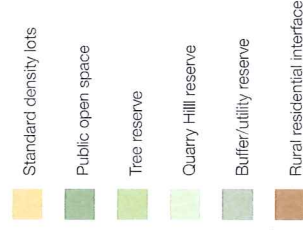
A variety of housing densities are proposed across the Development Plan area, to increase the diversity of dwelling types. Higher density lots are provided in areas that have greater amenity, such as adjacent to open space reserves.

Accordingly, the design outcome of higher density housing will need to achieve a good quality urban design outcome that is responsive to its location. Council may at its discretion consider applications for use and development of land for dwelling densities which vary to those identified on the Plan where it is considered that the proposal has planning merit and does not adversely impact on adjoining and nearby residents to the satisfaction of Council.

The indicative Density Plan provides an illustration of the arrangement of densities on the MVDWP area.



FIGURE 9
Dwelling
Density Plan



7. Development Plan Components

7.3 SLOPING SITES

The proposed development is to be sensitive to the landscape and environmental characteristics of the site, including hillsides and ridgelines. Housing types are to take advantage of the site's topography. Where sloping lots are provided, innovative housing options are encouraged, which limits landscape scarring, and the extent of cut and fill. These may include split-level homes that take advantage of views from the site.

The Development Plan has been designed to address sloping land by applying three key design criteria to delivery of home sites on sloping land. These are:

1. URBAN DESIGN

Actively address the western interface with the Quarry Hills Reserve through a responsive urban design strategy that seeks to align road orientation to contour direction as a means of minimising the extent of costly earthworks to the site. Through extensive consultation with Council, the Development Plan has sought to align key roads to contours to maximise drainage efficiency, and ensure that a range of opportunities are present to implement a range of housing designs that respond to the contours onsite.

2. ONSITE ENGINEERING

A key part of addressing slope will rely on a range of engineering solutions, through the use of cut, batters and retaining systems. These are to be implemented in tandem with urban design principles, to ensure that building envelopes achieve a suitable level of fall to facilitate a range of housing options.

3. BUILT FORM

Built form that actively responds to the existing or engineered slope onsite will be implemented to encourage a range of innovative housing solutions that respond to the specific site characteristics of each lot. Design controls will encourage a range of typologies, and assist in proactively encouraging creative design solutions.

Any permit granted for the residential subdivision of the land, must include a condition requiring the submission of design guidelines that appropriately consider sloping sites (defined by sites with greater than (1:10 fall), to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Refer to Appendix G for indicative treatment options for sloping sites.

7. Development Plan Components

7.4 TRANSPORT

7.4.1 TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

The proposed internal road hierarchy and configuration complements the existing surrounding road network. Capacity exists within the surrounding network to accommodate the additional vehicular movements generated by the Development Plan area.

Cardno Grogan Richards have undertaken traffic analysis to understand the expected impact of the proposed addition of approx 750 lots (generating around 7510 vehicles movement per day).

Within the Mernda Villages community it is expected that Galloway Drive will bear most of the traffic generated from the south-west area of Mernda Villages, while Pearsons Road and Brunton Drive will cater for traffic generated in the north-west. The traffic volumes at the southern ends of Galloway Drive and Pearson Road are estimated to be 6740 vehicles per day (vpd) and 6612 vpd respectively. This means that the function of the road remains within the volume range considered appropriate for a Connector Street Level 2 of between 3,000vpd and 7,000vpd.

Overall, the additional lots will allow the surrounding road network and intersections to continue to operate successfully. Cardno Grogan Richards have concluded that:

- The intersection of Mernda Village Drive and Galloway Drive is considered the most critical internal intersection. A traffic report for the Mernda Villages Neighbourhood Centre was completed in August 2010 and analysed this intersection. It showed minimal queue lengths and delays in the area. Additional volumes generated via lots outside of the (then current) UGB will continue to allow the intersection to operate satisfactorily.
- The roundabouts at Pearson Road with Brunton Drive, Everard Road and Galloway Drive have been considered. The intersection capacity of a one lane roundabout (circulating flow) is approximately 1200 vehicles per hour, with each approach having a capacity approaching 700 vehicles per hour. Given the maximum design volume of each road and the movements generated, all roundabout intersections are expected to operate satisfactorily.

In addition to the vehicular road network, a series of on-street and off-street pedestrian and cycle paths are proposed which extend existing links and provide connections to the Activity Centre and wider surrounding area (see adjacent Figure 10).



FIGURE 10

Pedestrian & Cycle Plan

- Subject land
- Public open space
- Tree reserve
- Quarry Hill reserve
- Buffer/utility reserve
- Pedestrian / Cycle links

7. Development Plan Components

7.5 LANDSCAPE

Stockland has created a unique environment in Mernda Villages blending the urban landscape amongst the natural environment. This approach has created an immediate character where mature trees have been retained in generous areas of interconnecting open space providing residents with valuable usable recreation tracks whilst preserving ecological significant vegetation.

Mernda West will continue this character in preserving remnant canopy trees where practicable and continues links to already established areas of open space as well as creating new links to Quarry Hills Regional Park. Stockland will transfer Quarry Hills (all land above the 190m contour) to the City of Whittlesea. This significant tract of land is 40 ha in area and is elevated above the future surrounding residential environment. The park will become a landmark destination offering a mix of recreation activities and environmental preservation.

Residents of Mernda will have appropriate access to a variety of open space which will offer:

- Shared pathways;
- Interconnecting recreational trails;
- BBQ facilities;
- Retention of significant vegetation; and
- The planting of new landscaping.

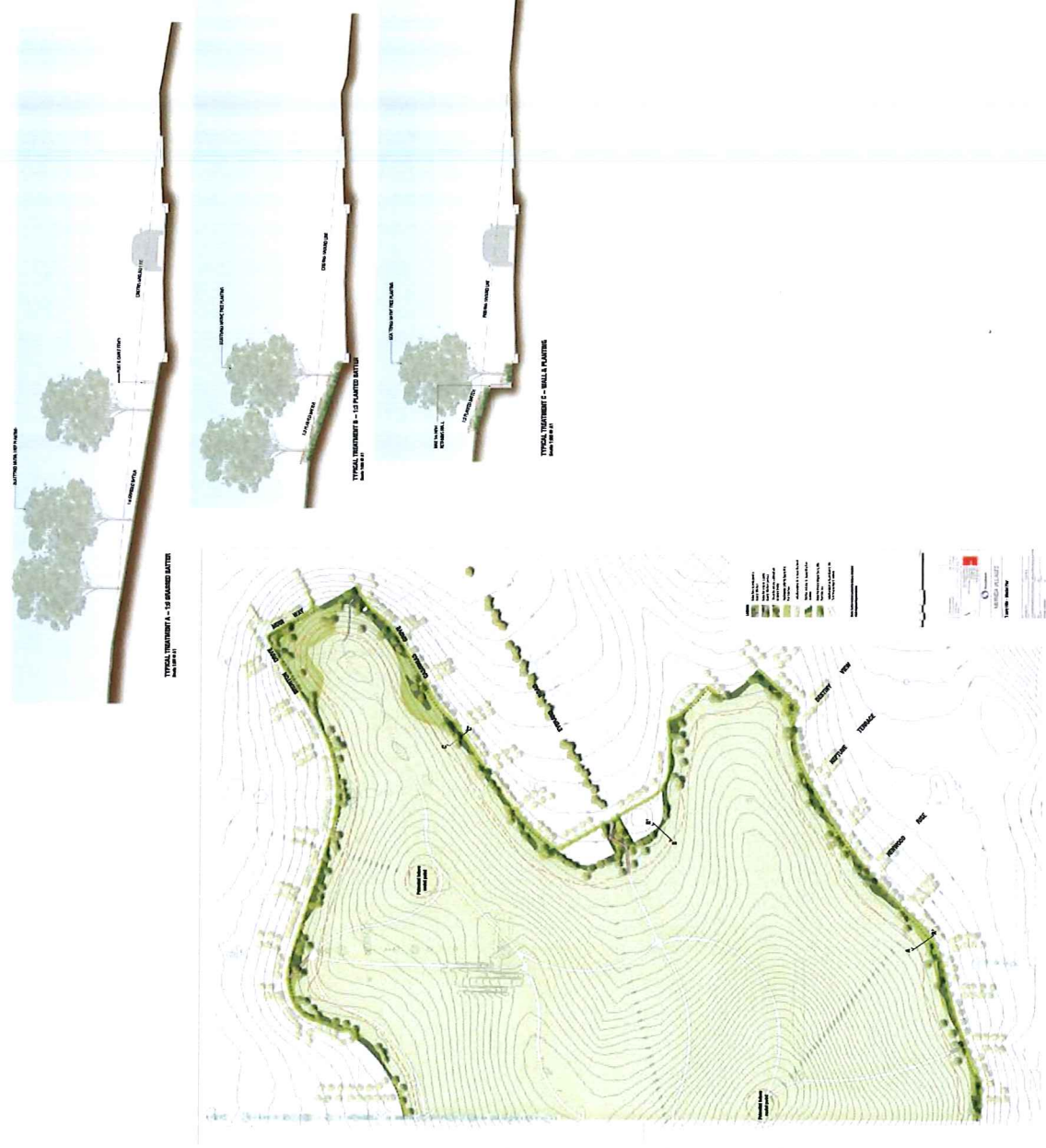
7.5.1 INTERFACE WITH QUARRY HILLS PARKLAND

Quarry Hills is considered to be an important view point due to its elevation in the landscape. Whilst the site is not considered or identified as 'visually sensitive' in the precinct plan, Stockland has recognised the need to protect this vista by designating the land for open space.

The interface with Quarry Hills is to be carefully considered, with appropriate and strategic access points provided from the adjoining street network. Access to Quarry Hills will be convenient from the adjoining street network, and will include ramps and stairs. Vehicle exclusion measures will be used in some parts. The treatment of the batter will vary, depending on the slope. Final treatment of the interface between the Quarry Hills parkland and residential areas will be finalised as part of the Functional Layout Plans of any permit that issues for the stages abutting the Quarry Hills parkland.

Whilst the Development Plan area is generally well served by pocket parks within the existing Mernda Villages area, the north-west of the Development Plan area is not within easy walking distance of an existing or planned reserve. Cognisant of this, Stockland intend to provide a park within the north western part of the Development Plan that will service the area and ensure that future residents have convenient access to open space.

Refer to Appendix H for indicative interface treatment options.



7. Development Plan Components

7.7 CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY

Whilst the site is home to locally and regionally significant flora and fauna, the vast majority of the site has been significantly altered to the extent that much of the original vegetation has been modified or cleared to accommodate the former long term agricultural grazing of the land.

Expert ecological studies conducted by Biosis have found that the site consists of modified remnants from three ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) being Grassy Woodland, Plains Woodland and Plains Grassy Wetland. Of the 328 trees present on the site, there are fourteen (14) scattered trees of significant age and conservation value. These trees consist of thirteen (13) River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camadulensis*) and one (1) Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*). The remainder of the 44 River Red Gum trees are not considered to be of significant age or conservation value, from an ecological viewpoint. Biosis consider the site and the remnant River Red Gums to be part of a larger area of River Red Gum Woodland in the local area and in north-east Melbourne generally and complement the Plenty River Corridor. As these trees are of significant age they offer hollow bearing habitat which support bird and fauna species.

The study has identified suitable habitat for the Nationally Significant Golden Sun Moth (GSM) and Matted Flax Lily. Flora and fauna assessments were undertaken at numerous seasonal times including during the GSM 2010/2011 flight season. These surveys identified that no evidence of either species of significance was discovered.

The study has also identified that River Swamp Wallaby Grass, a species of National Significance, has at least a medium likelihood of occurrence within the site. The impact on this species of National Significance could trigger a controlled action under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act). Biosis recommend that a targeted survey on the wetland is conducted to determine the need for any EPBC Act referral.

The study area contains a total of 0.75 hectares of native (patch) vegetation, comprising 0.06 habitat hectares of Grassy Woodland, 0.06 habitat hectares of Plains Grassy Wetland and 0.05 habitat hectares of Plains Grassy Woodland. The native vegetation on site totals 0.17 habitat hectares and is considered of high conservation significance.

The following locally indigenous canopy trees, being the fourteen (14) scattered trees, are present on site:

- Three Very Large Old Tree
- Seven Large Old Trees
- Three Medium Old Trees
- One Small Tree

The Development Plan seeks to retain remnant trees where practicable and desirable, and offset any losses. This accords with the avoid, minimise and offset principles as enshrined with the Planning Scheme. Offset arrangements would be dealt with as a permit condition on future permits issued.

7.8 INTERFACE WITH BRIDGE INN ROAD

The interface of the Mernda West landholding with Bridge Inn Road will require careful consideration to ensure that the treatment is a safe, high quality outcome. Any remediation works required to the Bridge Inn Road interface, as detailed within the Geotechnical Investigation and Slope Stability Assessment, prepared by Site Geotechnical and forming part of the Appendix, will need to be undertaken at the relevant stage.

