

Green Wedge Management Plan Factsheet - Biodiversity

Part of the Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan 2011-2021

Version 5.0, July 2011

Project overview

The Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan (Management Plan) is a ten year framework plan for the sustainable management of the land, biodiversity, water and people living within the non-urban areas of our municipality.

The City of Whittlesea consulted with its communities on their ideas and aspirations for managing the non-urban areas, including Whittlesea Township.

The Management Plan helps achieve Council's long-term Community Plan vision for connecting people, environment and economy.

Green Wedges

Green Wedges are not simply another type of park. The term 'Green Wedge' refers to the non-urban land that surrounds the outward growth of Melbourne.

Green Wedges are active, dynamic, evolving places that support a diversity of land uses. They are kept separate from urban areas by an Urban Growth Boundary put in place by the Victorian Government. This boundary permits urban and industrial land use and development closer to Melbourne. Beyond this, green wedges support agricultural and recreational uses, forests, parks and small communities.

Across Melbourne there are 12 Green Wedges that are located within 17 Local Government Areas. Local Councils are required by the Victorian Government to develop an management plan for their Green Wedge area.

Whittlesea Green Wedge

The Whittlesea Green Wedge contains the communities of Eden Park, Humevale, Kinglake West, Whittlesea Township, Woodstock (Part) and Yan Yean. The Whittlesea Green Wedge is home to approximately 7,000 residents.

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The Whittlesea Green Wedge contains environmental values associated with its hills, gorges, woodlands and grasslands. Green Wedge areas contribute to the local economy through agriculture, tourism and other businesses. The health of people is increased through access to its recreational facilities and parklands. Reminders of the past are reflected in farmland relics, and in heritage associated with the traditional custodians of the area, the Wurundjeri Willam Clan.

Plan Preparation

The City of Whittlesea has experienced significant change since European settlement began in the area during the 1830s. This change has become more rapid since the municipality was designated a growth area by the Victorian Government in the 1990s.

On the urban fringe, our Green Wedge communities are experiencing pressures from urban expansion, changes to agricultural practices, lack of generational support and climate change. Yet there is a real commitment and connection to the land, and each other, and a respect for its links to the past.

The Management Plan reflects Council policies and satisfies the Green Wedge objectives of the Victorian Government. It provides a framework for sustaining our nonurban areas into the future.

The Management Plan

The Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan reflects current land use planning practices, yet goes beyond these to achieve wider ranging sustainable outcomes.

Community Involvement

The Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan has been prepared alongside landholders, community groups, agencies and government departments.

The Management Plan is a reflection of current views and opinions. It strives to highlight what people value and are concerned about, while at the same time suggesting actions aimed at ensuring special characteristics are enhanced and preserved.

Consultation was carried out in three stages during 2008, 2009 and 2010. This included workshops, website links, mail outs, displays in Council's foyer and local newspaper advertisements.

Community involvement focused on three documents:

1. Whittlesea Green Wedge Discussion Paper
2. Whittlesea Green Wedge Community Views Paper
3. Draft Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan

Responses identified features of value, issues of concern and ideas for action. The rural landscape with its mountain backdrops, green open spaces and few rural buildings was identified as the top feature requiring consideration in planning for the future of our Green Wedge areas.

The value attributed to interactions between people and the land reflects a strong sense of place that leads to community and individual wellbeing.

An agency workshop also provided an opportunity for Council, State Government and other organisations to discuss the future sustainable management of the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

You are encouraged to obtain the Community Views Final Report as it details the range of responses received during this project.

The Vision

The Whittlesea community contributed to the development of a vision for the Whittlesea Green Wedge:

The Whittlesea Green Wedge will be an environment where the connection between its people and the land is respected and valued, and where innovative and sustainable land management practices are directed towards the enhancement and protection of productive and natural resources.

This vision recognises the connection and contribution of people to the land, the economy and the environment.

Topics of Interest

The contents of the Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan explore a range of themes. Within each theme there are a total of ten subthemes of local interest.

The goal for each theme is:

- **Land**
Healthy land used sustainably, productively and innovatively.
- **Biodiversity**
Healthy and enduring ecosystems with a variety of habitats and native species.
- **Water**
Sustainable water use and healthy waterways, wetlands and groundwater.
- **People**
A connected community that respects, values and celebrates its past, present and future.

These goals have been adapted from the Regional Catchment Strategy for the Port Phillip and Western Port region.

Separate fact sheets have been developed for each theme providing a summary of each topic. You are encouraged to obtain a copy of the Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan to read in conjunction with the fact sheets.

Actioning the Plan

The success of the Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan relies on Local Government, State Government, Federal Government, agencies, organisations, community groups and residents working together.

The Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan proposes over eighty actions that are grouped according to priority:

- Short term priority (1-3 years)
- Medium term priority (4-7 years)
- Long term priority (8-10+ years)

Actions range from locally achievable initiatives to those that require coordination between residents, many tiers of government and input from multiple agencies.

Council will actively pursue the funding and delivery of these actions over time through a combination of direct funding, officer hours, advocacy and establishing partnerships with businesses, non-government agencies and the community. The community is also encouraged to champion areas of interest within the Management Plan.

Monitoring and Review

This Management Plan is a framework that guides a whole-of-Government approach to the coordination and implementation of sustainable actions within the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

Success can be measured by the number of actions commenced or completed out of the total number of initiatives proposed.

Another progress indicator could include a rural household survey or other data collection to check on the achievement of the vision, goals and objectives associated with the themes of the Green Wedge.

A five year review of the Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan will enable the relevance and the success of the plan in achieving the vision, goals and objectives to be reviewed.

Additionally, it is Council's intention to release a three and seven year report, based on an annual report to Council on the progress of implementation.

Where to get more information

Visit Council's website www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Send an email Green.Wedge@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Speak to a Council Planner

- Call a Council Planner on 9217 2164.
- Call the Strategic Planning Department on 9217 2346.

Documents

1. Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan
2. Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan: Community Views Final Report

Copies of these documents can be found at Council Offices or by calling a Council Planner.