

The City of Whittlesea's population has grown at a rapid rate during the past 30 years, more than quadrupling from 27,000 in 1969 to approximately 130,000 in 2007.

The Whittlesea Green Wedge contains approximately 4800 properties and is home to around 7,000 residents. The Whittlesea Township contains around half of the rural population (ABS 2006).

Key goal and directions

The people goal for the Whittlesea Green Wedge is as follows:

GREEN WEDGE GOAL

People: A connected community that respects, values and celebrates its past, present and future.

This section of the Management Plan focuses on the following sub-themes:

PEOPLE Sub-themes

8. Communities and settlements

9. Tourism and recreation

10. Heritage and culture

Each sub-theme describes key features and values, conveys community views, identifies planning controls, guidelines and key programs. Relevant actions are listed in Part 3: Action Plan.

Green Wedge Communities

The Whittlesea Green Wedge contains 7 communities: Eden Park, Humevale, Kinglake West, South Morang (part), Whittlesea, Woodstock and Yan Yean.

Rural communities are clustered around the Whittlesea Township, and the smaller rural settlements in Yan Yean and Humevale. Areas of rural living are evident in Eden Park. Refer back to Map 2 for the location of Green Wedge settlements.

Although the majority of rural Green Wedge land parcels are 20 hectares or greater, a number of small lot subdivisions have been created, often with little understanding historically of local topographical features, land capacity or social infrastructure. This includes:

- In 1851, 640 acres were sub-divided into 1 acre lots to create the historic township of Separation.
- In the land boom of the 1880s, 1,324 lots between 1-4 acres were created in Eden Park. Around 80% of these lots have now been restructured into larger parcels capable of rural living and on-site effluent disposal.
- In 1894, two government initiated village settlements were created north of Whittlesea Township at Bruces Creek and north of Scrubby Creek (41 lots for fruit growing).

- In 1921, 1,000 acres in the Glenvale area was opened for small dairy farms by the Closer Settlement Board
- At the end of World War II, a number of Soldier Settlements were established in the Wollert area
- Humevale also contains areas of small urban type subdivision (City of Whittlesea 2000a)

Community Capacity

One of the City of Whittlesea's most important assets is its people: individuals, family groups, community organisations, school groups, government agencies and authorities, business leaders and the like.

The former Victorian Department for Victorian Communities, now part of the Department of Planning and Community Development, was instrumental in conducting many studies that sought to explore the concepts of social capital, resilience, intra-generational and inter-generational equity.

The community's current and future capacity to value and undertake actions associated with this Management Plan is paramount to achieving the vision, goals and objectives that contribute to a liveable, sustainable Green Wedge.

PEOPLE

- 8. Communities and Settlements
- 9. Tourism and Recreation
- 10. Heritage and Culture



PEOPLE



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8.1 Objective

The objective for this sub-theme is:

Communities and settlements objective

To ensure residents have the opportunity to participate in decisions relating to their community and the liveability of the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

The current and potential capacity of our communities to have meaningful participation opportunities is essential in developing ownership of the values and strategies for the Green Wedge area.

8.2 Features And Values

The Whittlesea Green Wedge community is made up of individuals and organisations, all of which have unique interests and skills. In order to improve the liveability of the Whittlesea Green Wedge, the community needs to be given an opportunity to be involved in achieving Green Wedge goals.

Without local ownership, there is risk of low participation rates, omitting vital local knowledge, poor coordination and lack of commitment. Therefore, it is useful to gain an understanding of the socio-demographic profile of the rural areas of the municipality based on 2006 Census data.

8.2.1 Socio-Demographic Profile

The following information is a summary of the communities within the Whittlesea Green Wedge based on ABS data released in 2006. Since 1996, the majority of population growth in the rural areas has occurred within the Whittlesea Township. By 2021, the population of the Township is expected to stabilise at around 5,000 residents. Currently around half of Whittlesea Township residents are 'new' residents, that is, they have been in their current home for less than five years.

The population of the surrounding rural areas is expected to remain relatively stable at between 3,500 and 3,700 residents. The average number of people per household fell from 3.0 to 2.9 between 1996 and 2006. The proportion of fully owned dwellings fell from 48% to 38% while the proportion of rented dwellings remained stable at around 16%.

Although a substantial proportion of new residents to the area are young families, the Green Wedge population is aging (as is the municipality generally). The proportion of Green Wedge residents beyond traditional retirement age is currently around 11% and is expected to rise to around 16% by 2021. Around 22% of current Green Wedge residents are children (aged less than 15 years). This proportion is expected to fall to around 19% by 2021.

Residents of the City come from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. A high percentage of residents were born in other countries, particularly Macedonia, Italy, and Greece. Demographically, over half come from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The Green Wedge population is far more homogenous. Only 14% of Green Wedge residents were born overseas, which is less than half the proportion for the municipality as a whole. Only 9% normally speak a language other than English at home, compared to almost half the residents within the City. However, almost 1,000 Green Wedge residents are first-generation migrants, with 60% residing in the rural area surrounding Whittlesea Township. There are around 50 Indigenous persons living in the Whittlesea Green Wedge, which is comparable to the overall proportion for the municipality (0.7%).

Although the education level of Green Wedge residents is just below the municipal average, the northern region of the municipality has a significantly lower level of unemployment than the southern areas. The largest employment category is trades. The fastest growing industries of employment are retail, trade and health and community services. The only industry to show a slight statistical significant decline in employment from 1996 to 2006 is agriculture (from 8% to 6% in the rural areas).



8.3 What the Community is Saying

Consultation was undertaken with residents and community groups through a series of community forums and supplemented by workshops with government departments and agencies with an interest in the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

Despite the range of opinions expressed, a few common threads can be drawn from the feedback received:

- **Residents in our green wedge communities wish to retain the rural atmosphere of towns such as the Whittlesea Township.** They are concerned that residents are not fully aware of relevant planning controls and encourage Council to actively inform residents of rural matters.
- **Residents are often keen to be a part of various community groups**, but the lack of new members is an issue.

Refer to the *Community Views Final Report* for a detailed summary of community responses.

8.4 Issues

The main areas requiring action for the communities of the Whittlesea Green Wedge are:

- Limited understanding between urban and rural lifestyles
- Lack of renewal and rejuvenation of community groups
- Limited access to current information, particularly in relation to land use planning
- Lack of basic services and facilities such as a library, multiuse pathways, and public transport (including length of travel time to usual place of employment)
- Concern that the green wedge will be 'given over' to residential development
- Retention of the rural town atmosphere associated with the Whittlesea Township and surrounding land patterns

This is not an exhaustive list, but rather an overview of the current key areas requiring action.

8.5 Planning Guidelines

Within the context of broader green wedge values, Council should consider its communities in its decision making:

- At every opportunity, provide *participation opportunities* for the community on matters relating to the green wedge. Ownership of the values and strategies for the green wedge area will only result from mutual understanding and respect.
- Promote and encourage *participation* in community activities and groups. Actively target rural based events.

8.6 Incentives And Programs

Council has a range of Community Development Grants open to various community groups within the municipality. Although not primarily focused on rural areas, groups are encouraged to contact the Community Services Directorate for further information.

The Port Phillip and Westernport CMA plays a key role in the coordination and administration of funding for individuals and groups caring for land, water and biodiversity within the Port Phillip and Westernport region. Refer to the following website for further details <http://www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au/funding-grants.aspx>.

8.7 Actions

Refer to Part 3: Action Plan for the full range of actions proposed to sustain the Whittlesea Green Wedge into the future.

In summary, key actions proposed include:

- Promote and further develop community group involvement, capacity and benefits to the Green Wedge community
- Explore opportunities to promote the value of farmers and farming practices to the wider community
- Continue to advocate on behalf of the community for necessary services and facilities in the rural areas, and in particular Whittlesea Township
- Develop 'Rural Information Packs' that summarise pre-purchase planning information and land management tips.





Drystone wall constructed on a rural property in Woodstock



9.1 Objective

The objective for this sub-theme is:

Tourism and recreation objective

To enhance and promote the diverse natural, cultural and landscape values of the Green Wedge for tourism and recreation opportunities.

Existing and proposed public open space and conservation reserves, heritage places, lineal reserves and recreational opportunities will continue to attract visitors from the broader region and will be managed to respect other Green Wedge values.

9.2 Features and Values

Tourism and recreation opportunities within the municipality provide valuable environmental, social and economic benefits for residents and visitors alike.

9.2.1 Tourism

The Whittlesea Green Wedge contains the majority of the City's existing tourism attractions ranging from festivals and events, to markets and attractions.

According to Council's *Tourism Development Strategy*, the municipality attracts approximately 285,000 visitors annually resulting in an annual visitor expenditure of \$14 million (Essential Economics et al. 2002).

Nearly 65% of these visitors are day trippers. The most popular visitor activities are scenic drives, picnicking and bushwalking. The top attractions are:

- Yan Yean Reservoir
- Toorourrong Reservoir
- Funfields (Alpine Toboggan Park)

This information clearly shows the importance of the Whittlesea Green Wedge in providing and supporting tourism within the municipality.

General conclusions from the *City of Whittlesea Tourism Development Strategy* include the need to increase the range of business development opportunities and marketing strategies within the municipality. This includes the need for more and diverse accommodation providers and greater promotion of tourism through regional affiliations.

With the slogan 'come and see Whittlesea - Melbourne's slice of country', the Whittlesea and Plenty Valley Tourism Association is committed to promoting the best the region has to offer. The following is a brief summary of tourist attractions located within the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

Attractions

Whittlesea Country Music Festival: Held over 3 days in February and attracting nationally and internally recognised country music artists; this festival hosts the Victorian Country Music Awards, a street party and 'Twilight with the stars'.

Whittlesea Agricultural Show: Founded in 1859 and held at the Whittlesea showgrounds on the first weekend in November, this event showcases the best in Australian agriculture and is the largest in Victoria after the Royal Melbourne Show.

Donnybrook Farmhouse Cheese:

Traditional family made award winning cheese showcased in the total experience of tastings, sales and cafe facilities.

Just Picked Berries and Fruit: Farm gate sales from the orchard with a juice bar and cafe onsite.

Funfields: Located in Whittlesea Township, Funfields is an outdoor family fun park that features all day rides including the much loved Great Alpine Toboggan Slide.

Markets

Mernda: Located in the stockyards and held every Monday 7am-1pm

Whittlesea Secondary College: Located in the Whittlesea showgrounds this market is held on the third Sunday of the month between 8am-1pm.

Hawkstowe Jazz and Kids Art in the Park: Held on the third Sunday in November and May respectively, these events are held at Hawkstowe Park.

Accommodation

Curson Homestead B&B, Kinglake West
Hiltonvale Homestead B&B, Whittlesea

Heritage

Le Page Homestead @ Hawkstowe Park: Built in the 1850s, this historic homestead and art gallery are open weekends.

Whittlesea Courthouse, Lock-up and Visitor Information Centre: Built in 1864, the restored courthouse is open 7 days, 9-5pm and provides visitor information, art and craft sales and picnic facilities.

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Bear's Castle: Built in 1842, this unique mud structure is located in Yan Yean and is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register for architectural, historical and archaeological significance. Periodically accessible to limited numbers of visitors.

Bakery Café Mernda: Mernda Bakery is a heritage listed bakery boasting a 120 year old wood fired Scotch oven. The café offers good old fashioned breads, cakes and coffee in a Victorian period setting.

9.2.2 Recreation

A range of passive and active recreational opportunities are offered within the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

Parks

Based around natural, landscape and cultural values, a network of parks and reserves play an important role in the provision of open space to rural and urban residents. This includes:

Yan Yean Reservoir Park: Yan Yean Reservoir Park is home to Melbourne's oldest water storage site. Work began on the reservoir in 1853 and visitors can still view the remnant bluestone water channel, Valve House and Caretaker's Cottage. A variety of walking tracks surround the reservoir which link to wetlands and surrounding bushland, proclaimed a permanent reservation for water catchment in 1857. The park has bbq facilities and is open 7 days.

Toorourrong Reservoir Park: Toorourrong Reservoir Park is situated 4 kilometres north-east of Whittlesea Township. The Reservoir was a vital link in Melbourne's water supply when it was constructed in 1885, allowing silt to settle prior to diversion

via granite and bluestone aqueducts to the Yan Yean Reservoir. Today the park offers grassed picnic areas, surrounded by mature European vegetation and containing a rotunda and bbqs. Walking tracks lead to various lookout points. Platypus may be spotted from a special viewing 'hide' at the far end of the dam wall. Usually open 7 days, Toorourrong Reservoir Park has been closed to public access since the 2009 Black Saturday fires.

Plenty Gorge Park: The Plenty Gorge Park includes Hawkstowe Park, Red Gum picnic area, Yellow Gum recreation area, Middle Gorge Park and Yarrambat picnic area. Whittlesea Green Wedge supports the following three areas:

- **Middle Gorge Park:** Located on the edge of the Plenty River, Middle Gorge Park is a compact park which offers views of the Plenty Gorge and its river frontage. Open 24 hours 7 days a week, a wildlife protection fence borders the parklands and adjoining housing estates. New multi-purpose trails are expected to be built in the future to allow access along the edge of the park from Greensborough to Middle Gorge.
- **Hawkstowe Park:** With views of the Plenty River, a backdrop to the wooded Plenty Gorge and an historic homestead surrounded by European vegetation, this Park is the ideal spot for a bbq, bike ride or walk. Le Page Homestead is home to the Plenty Valley Art Inc. gallery. The cottage garden surrounding the homestead is maintained by volunteers of the Mill Park Garden Club.
- **Nioka Bush Park:** A bush camp offering bunkhouse or campsite accommodation. The site is closed during the fire season.

Mount Disappointment State Forest: This State Forest is managed for a wide range of uses including water catchment protection, timber production, recreation and conservation. The Forest has various picnic sites, walking tracks, forest drives and camping opportunities.

Kinglake National Park: Kinglake National Park is the largest national park close to Melbourne. The park contains tall eucalypt forests, fern gullies, rain forests and an extensive network of walking tracks. Lookout points offer scenic views of the City skyline, Port Phillip Bay and the Yarra Valley. The Park lies at the edge of the Great Dividing Ranges and has a good population of lyrebirds. It is open from 9am daily.

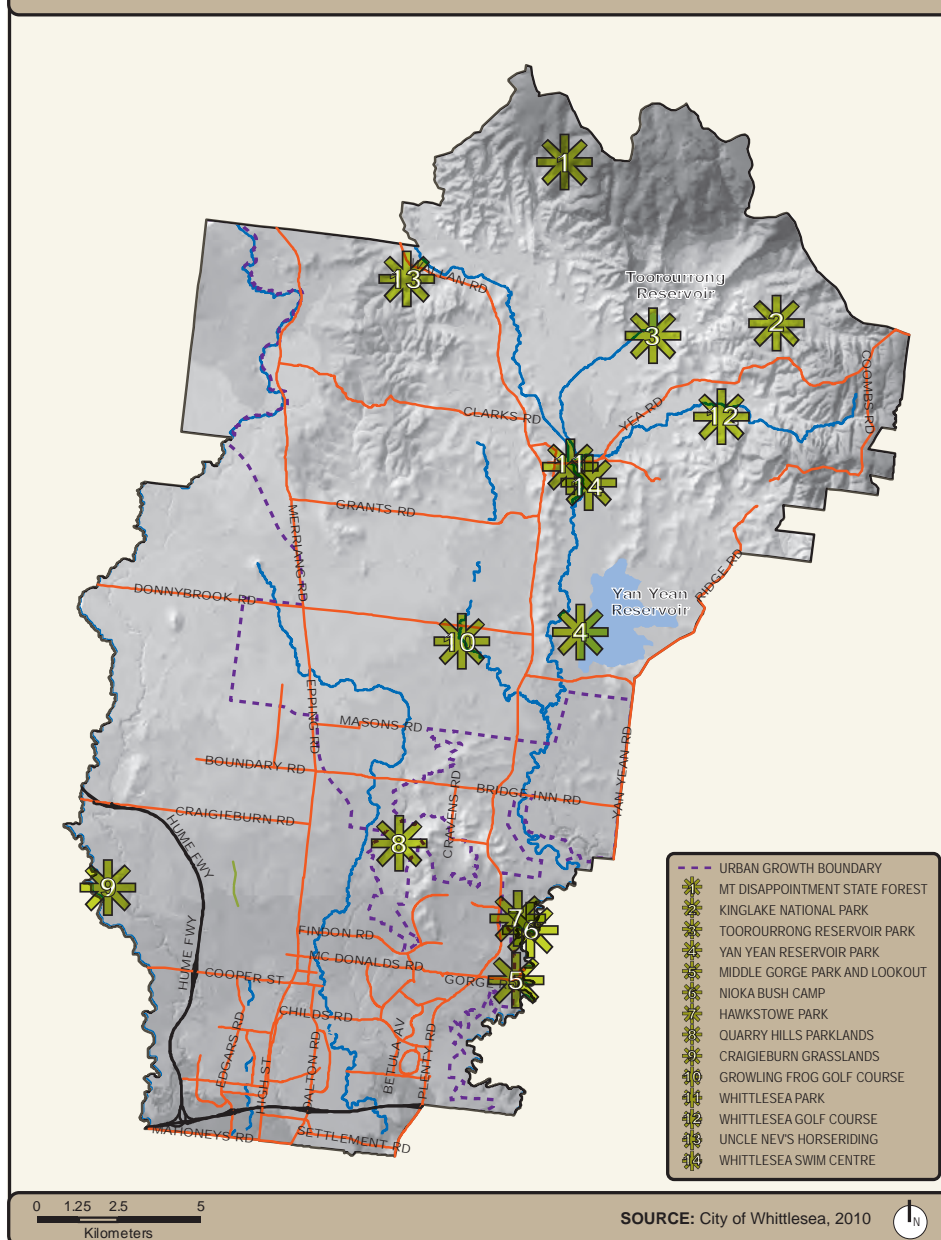
Merri Creek Parklands: A new regional park is being established along a 15 kilometre stretch of the Merri Creek from the Ring Road in Thomastown to Craigieburn East Road in Craigieburn. The parklands will protect significant native grasslands and provide opportunity for recreational activities.

Quarry Hills Regional Parklands: This parkland forms a backdrop to urban development in Melbourne's north, shared pathways and panoramic views. The parkland is proposed to be progressively expanded as discussed earlier in this document.

Whittlesea Township: Whittlesea Township contains various parks and shared pathways throughout the town.



MAP 22 TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND RECREATION FACILITIES



Attractions

Growling Frog Golf Course and Restaurant: Designed by Graham Marsh, this 18 hole golf course has spectacular views of the Great Dividing Range. Facilities include a restaurant, cafe, driving range, pro shop and chipping green. Open 7 days.

Whittlesea Golf Club: One of the most picturesque courses in Melbourne. This 18 hole golf course is set in an undulating, bush setting. Facilities include a pro shop. Open 7 days.

Funfields (formerly Alpine Toboggan Park): Funfields offers outdoor recreation fun, including toboggans, go karts, waterslides, mini golf, electric bumper boats and more. Open from 10am on weekends, public holidays and school holidays.

Uncle Nev's Horseriding: Horse trail riding available 7 days by appointment only.

Refer to Map 22 opposite for the distribution of tourist attractions and recreational facilities in the Whittlesea Green Wedge.



9.3 What the Community is Saying

Consultation was undertaken with residents and community groups through a series of community forums and supplemented by workshops with government departments and agencies with an interest in the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

Despite the range of opinions expressed, a common thread can be drawn from the feedback received:

- ***Our municipality is an untapped tourism and recreation resource.***
There is a need for targeted branding and innovative attractions, such as ecotourism, to attract greater visitor interest.

Refer to the *Community Views Final Report* for a detailed summary of community responses relating to the ten green wedge sub themes.

9.4 Issues

The main areas requiring action to enhance and promote the Green Wedge for recreation and tourism opportunities are:

- Limited branding recognition
- Insufficient tourism opportunities linked to the values of the Whittlesea Green Wedge
- Consider using unused assets, such as railway reservations and water pipelines, for tourism and recreation purposes
- Restricted pedestrian and bicycle connectivity within the municipality
- Lack of equestrian trails
- Limited transport options to support attendance at showcase events and attractions
- Low promotion of the diversity of parks present in the Whittlesea Green Wedge
- Increased local interaction with local recreation facilities

This is not an exhaustive list, but rather an overview of the current key areas.

9.5 Planning Provisions

Many forms of tourism and recreation are supported within the green wedge zones. The objective for tourism within the State Planning Policy Framework is to *encourage tourism development to maximise the employment and long-term economic, social and cultural benefits* (Whittlesea Planning Scheme Clause 17.03-1).

According to Clause 17.03-2, planning authorities should encourage those tourism facilities that are compatible with, and build upon, the assets and qualities of surrounding urban or rural activities and cultural and natural attractions.

The objective for tourism within the Municipal Strategic Statement includes planning for the leisure and recreation needs of existing and future residents (Clause 21.06-11).



Specific zones within the Whittlesea Planning Scheme relevant to the enhancement and protection of the Whittlesea Green Wedge for recreation and tourism opportunities include:

- *Public Park and Recreation Zone* has the purpose of protecting and conserving areas for public recreation and open space.
- *Public Conservation and Resource Zone* has the purpose of protecting and conserving the natural environment for scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values. These areas are specifically recognised as assisting public education and interpretation of the natural environment in a manner that leads to minimal degradation of the natural environment or natural processes. This zone is applied to the Craigieburn Grasslands, Plenty Gorge Parklands and Kinglake National Park.
- *Public Use Zone* (Schedule 1) protects land set aside for service and utility uses and currently includes the water supply catchment areas associated with Toorourrong and Yan Yean Reservoirs.

Map 23 on the following page provides a summary of the tourism and recreation protection controls afforded by the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.

9.6 Planning Guidelines

Within the context of broader green wedge values, the following provides a guide for Council in its decision making regarding tourism and recreation:

- Where they are not detrimental to other green wedge values, support suitable *tourism activities* within the green wedge area.
- Seek opportunities to create *linkages* through the green wedge, such as bicycle, walking and equestrian trails in order to increase promotional opportunities. Consider off-road trails within appropriate reserves in order to reduce damage to fragile environments caused by unrestrained vehicle usage.
- *Current recreational opportunities*, including a wide diversity of parks, to be promoted. Greater facilities at reserves, in particular, to be encouraged.

9.7 Incentives and Programs

Melbourne Water's 'Go for Green' program is designed to assist golf courses improve their river and creek frontages. Projects may include activities such as weed control, revegetation and fencing. For further information contact Melbourne Water's Partnership Officers on 13 17 22.



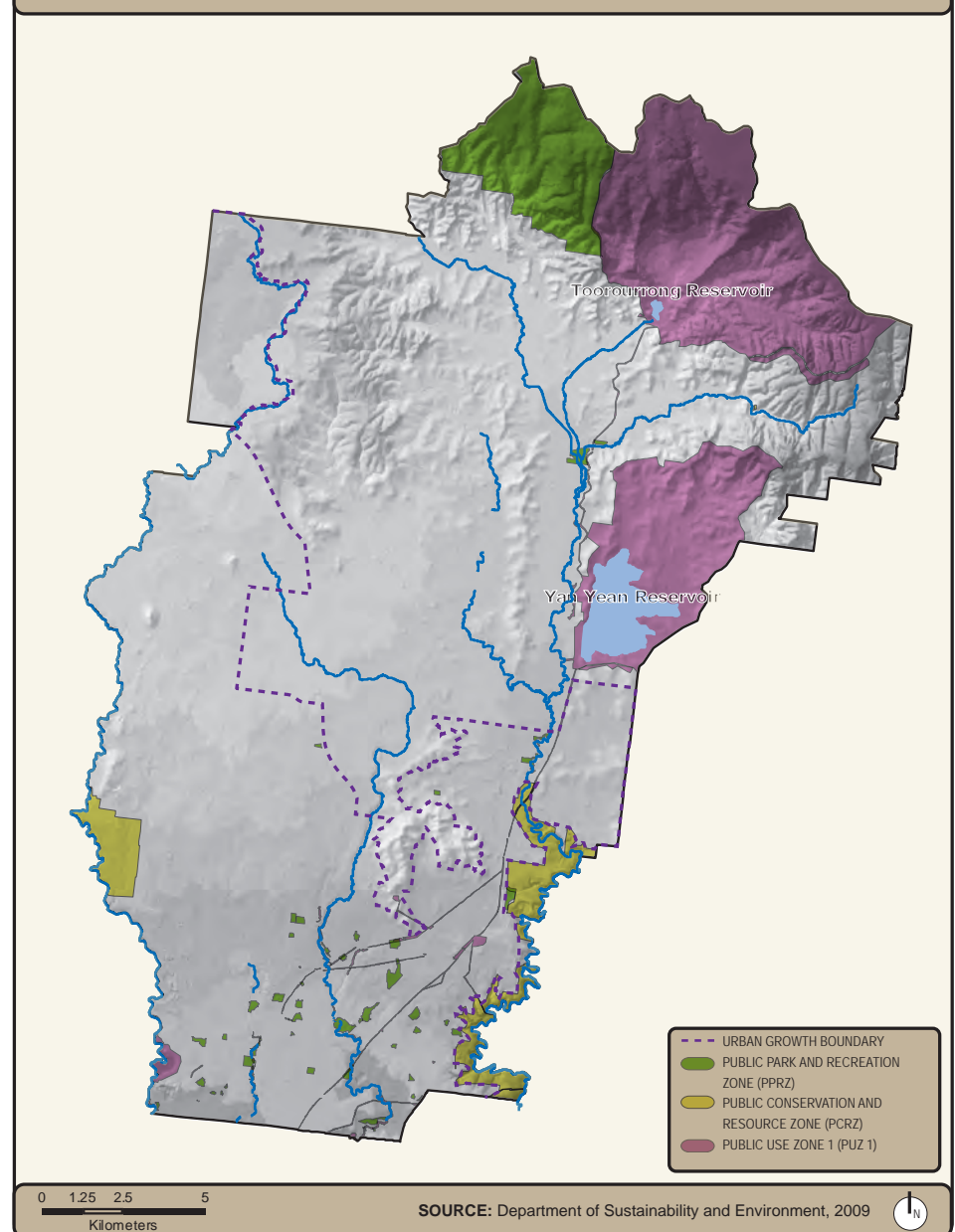
9.8 Actions

Refer to Part 3: Action Plan for the full range of actions proposed to sustain the Whittlesea Green Wedge into the future.

In summary, key actions proposed include:

- Investigate opportunities to update Council's Tourism Strategy
- Explore opportunities to further promote tourism opportunities within the Whittlesea Green Wedge to the wider community
- Investigate partnership opportunities to increase the network of existing multiuse trails, focusing on links between rural and urban areas
- Finalise the Whittlesea Recreational Strategy in conjunction with the community and implement proposed actions
- Advocate on behalf of the community for increased funding for state managed parks.

MAP 23 WHITTLESEA PLANNING SCHEME RECREATIONAL ZONING



10.1 Objective

The objective for this sub-theme is:

Heritage and culture objective

To preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the Whittlesea Green Wedge for current and future generations.

Cultural heritage is an integral part of the Whittlesea Green Wedge and is strongly associated with Aboriginal cultural significance and the early European settlement of Victoria.

10.2 Features and Values

The cultural heritage of past and present residents contributes to the identity of the municipality. *The Rural Review* (City of Whittlesea 2000a) includes details of the municipality's European and Aboriginal heritage of which the following is a brief summary.

10.2.1 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Prior to European settlement of the Plenty Valley and the basalt plains, members of the Wurundjeri william clan occupied the region. Part of the Woiwurung language group, the clan's territory stretches from the Maribyrnong River to the Baw Baw plateau, and from the Yarra River to the Great Dividing Range.

Wurundjeri people lived along the Plenty River valley and the Darebin Creek. In the middle of the 19th century, European observers noted that ceremonies were held at Ryder's Swamp, later the location of the Yan Yean Reservoir. The location of remaining tools suggests the Wurundjeri used a series of campsites throughout the area, in particular the rivers and creeks and to a lesser extent along the ridge tops of Quarry Hills.

As European settlement occupied more of the valley and the plains to the west of the Plenty River, some Wurundjeri were moved to the mission at Coranderrk, near Healesville. Others remained in the area, diminishing in numbers and experiencing a reduction in food resources.

Throughout the 20th century and up to the present time, Aboriginal people have continued to live throughout Victoria, often with strong ties to their home country. Aboriginal history is now marked by people's efforts to maintain their collective identity and culture (DPCD 2008b).

An Aboriginal historical place is a location that is important because of its associations with and cultural significance to Aboriginal people—it may not contain any physical remains (DPCD 2008b).

The City of Whittlesea's landscape contains places that are important to Aboriginal people because of associations with events, communities and individuals.

All Aboriginal cultural heritage places and artefacts are protected by State legislation. Sites may include artefact scatters, scarred trees, shell middens, stone quarries, burials, earthen rings and rock wells.

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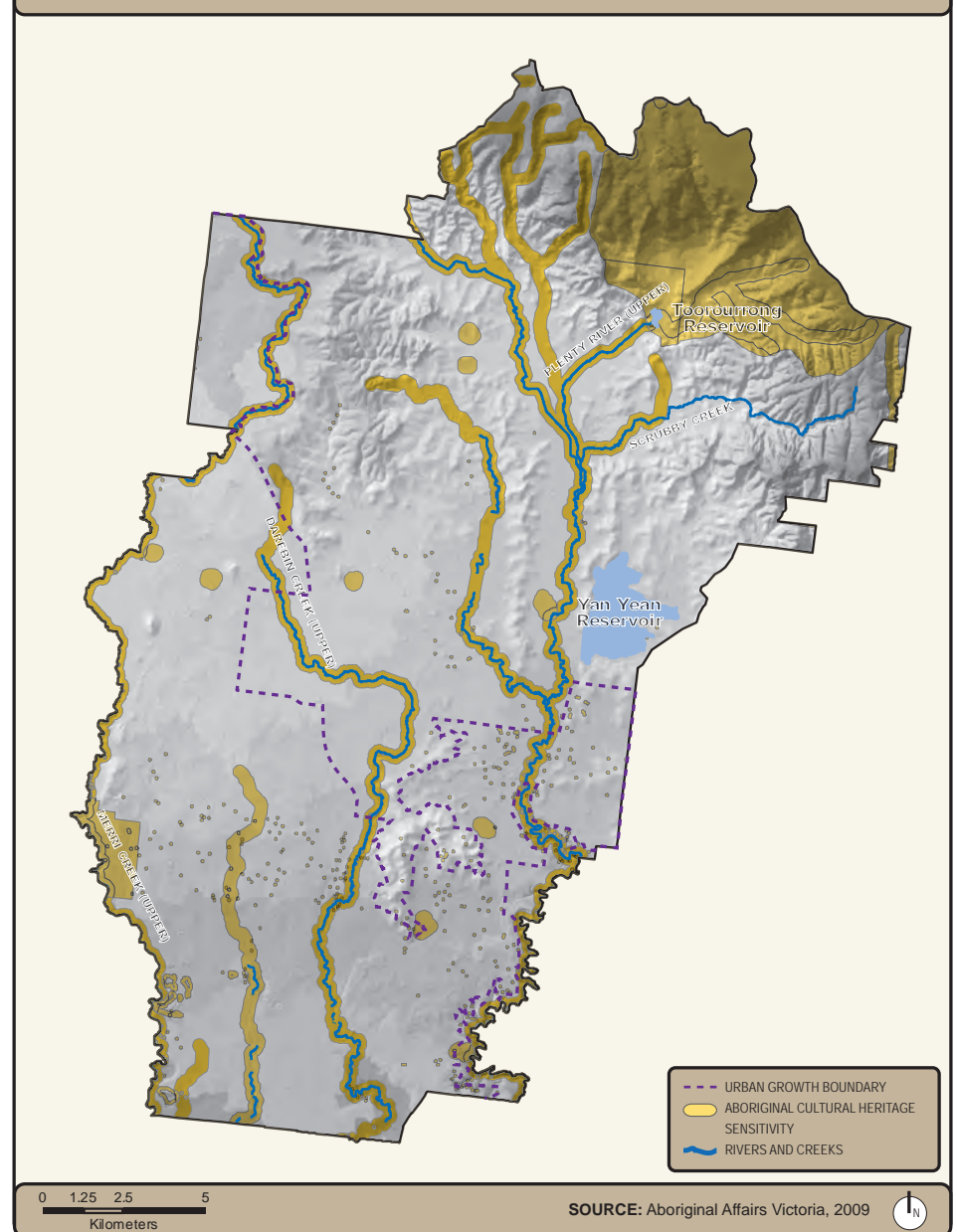


The *Aboriginal Heritage Act* 2006 came into effect on 28 May 2007 in order to recognise, protect and conserve Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria.

The Act introduced the requirement for an applicant to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan prior to the granting of a planning permit if a high impact activity (e.g. construction of a dam or three or more dwellings) was to occur within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity adjacent to waterways, stony rises or volcanic cones.

Refer to Map 24 (opposite) for indicative sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity within the municipality.

MAP 24 INDICATIVE SITES OF ABORIGINAL CULTURAL SENSITIVITY



10.2.2 European Cultural Heritage

The history of European settlement of the City of Whittlesea mirrors closely the development of Victoria as a whole. Melbourne was located a sufficient distance away to necessitate the development of a series of townships to service local communities at key points along the major transport routes.

Agricultural and pastoral activities dominated the early development of the region. Milling, timber and dairying were the main economic drivers. The relative poor quality of the soil meant little cropping or horticultural activities were developed. However the abundant reserves of local rock were used extensively for construction in the area.

The construction of the Yan Yean Reservoir, the gold rush and railway construction were major events that contributed to the settlement patterns and growth within the region.

Places of heritage significance associated with European settlement within the municipality include rural homesteads, schools, churches, mills, bridges, dry stone walls, aqueducts, reservoirs and their associated land.

In 1991, a study of sites of European heritage significance was carried out titled the Whittlesea Heritage Study (Gould 1991).

The 1991 study sought to establish the location, aspects and level of significance in order to substantiate the importance of a heritage place. Criteria used to determine significance includes the possession of uncommon aspects of Australian cultural or natural history, its importance in exhibiting particular characteristics or associations valued by a community or cultural group, and/or its importance in demonstrating a high degree of technical or creative achievement for the period.

In addition to recommending sites for inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register or the Register of the National Estate, those sites identified A (national or state significance), B (regional or metropolitan significance) and C (local significance) were recommended for inclusion within the Whittlesea Planning Scheme for protection (refer to Map 25 over the page).

Since this study, Council has used the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to apply Heritage Overlay protection to sites of A and B level classification. Of the 83 sites currently under Heritage Overlay protection, 22 are located within the rural areas of the City of Whittlesea.

The City of Whittlesea is currently undertaking a follow-up heritage study and an archaeological study.

10.3 What the Community is Saying

Consultation was undertaken with residents and community groups through a series of community forums and supplemented by workshops with government departments and agencies with an interest in the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

Despite the range of opinions expressed, a common thread can be drawn from the feedback received:

- ***Whittlesea contains places of heritage significance, yet lack of support often means active preservation is often not an option.*** Residents are concerned oral history and significant places are being lost to the passage of time.

Refer to the *Community Views Final Report* for a detailed summary of community responses.



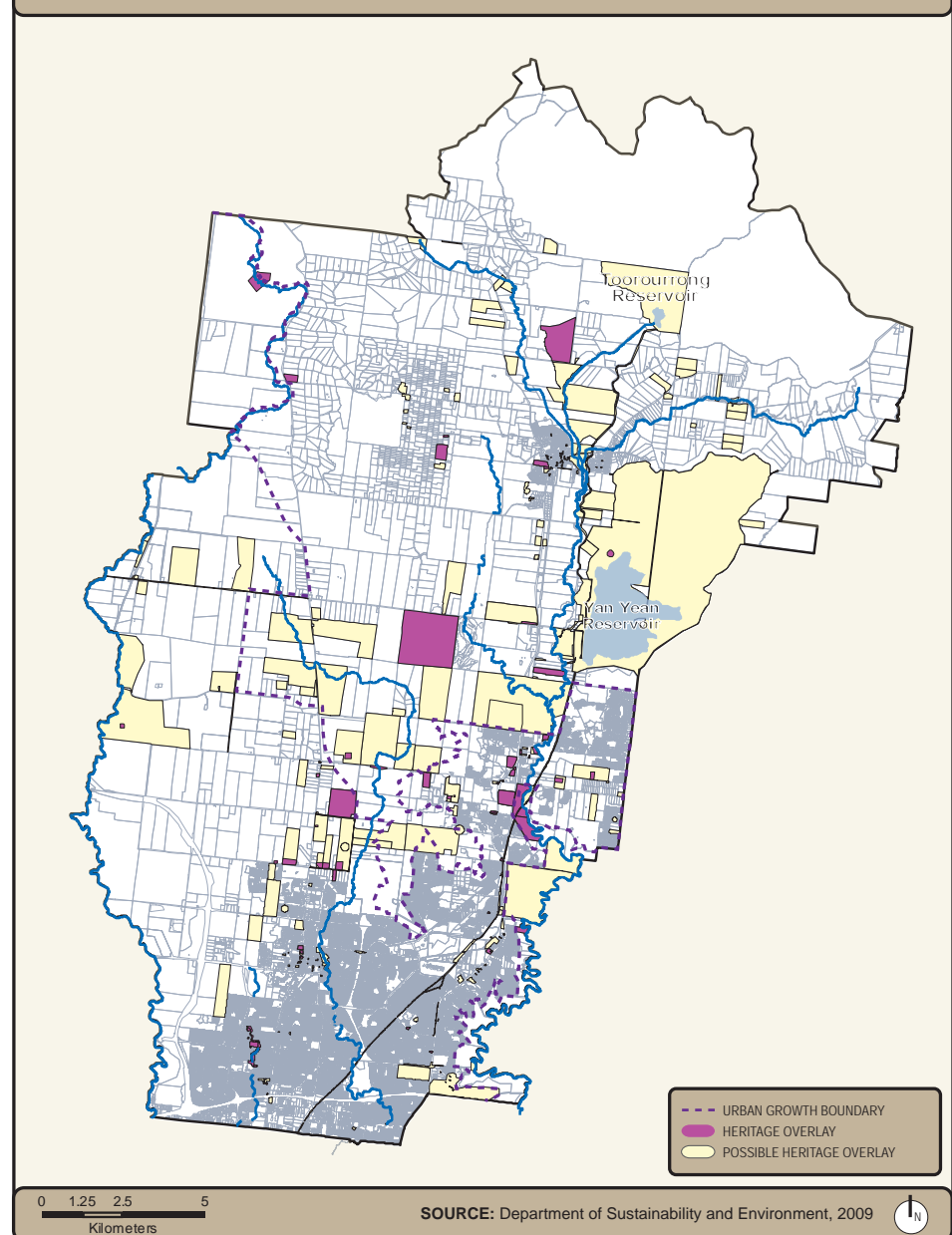
10.4 Issues

The main areas requiring action for the respect, preservation and enhancement of heritage and culture are:

- Limited interaction with traditional landowners restricts understanding and preservation of Aboriginal heritage places
- Lack of knowledge by the community of existing heritage places within the municipality
- Insufficient funding sources to preserve, restore and maintain heritage places
- Lack of heritage based tourism opportunities
- Limited Council leadership is demonstrated by the lack of strategic preservation and enhancement of heritage places on Council-owned land
- Approach the Victorian Government regarding the preservation and enhancement of cultural values on Crown land

This is not an exhaustive list, but rather an overview of the current key areas requiring action.

MAP 25 PROPERTIES CONTAINING HERITAGE PLACES



10.5 Planning Provisions

The Whittlesea Green Wedge contains many places of Aboriginal and European cultural heritage significance. The State Planning Policy Framework supports the conservation of heritage places that have natural, environmental, aesthetic, historic, cultural, scientific or social significance (Whittlesea Planning Scheme Clause 15.03).

Within the Municipal Strategic Statement, the objective for heritage and culture is to *increase the level of protection for and opportunities for incorporation of the City's European and Aboriginal heritage* (Clause 21.06-12).

The specific overlay within the Whittlesea Planning Scheme that is relevant to the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage within the Whittlesea Green Wedge is:

- *Heritage Overlay* (HO) contains controls that identify and limit changes (internally and externally) to places of heritage value. At this stage, the HO is limited to sites of European heritage significance as specific site location detail is a requirement (refer to Map 25 on previous page).

Although not a formal overlay, every municipality has been provided with a mapping layer that indicates sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity. Refer back to Map 24 for the distribution of these areas.

10.6 Planning Guidelines

Within the context of broader green wedge values, the following provides a guide for Council in its decision making regarding heritage places:

- Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri as the *traditional custodians* of the land now known as the City of Whittlesea and values the significance of the Wurundjeri people's history as an integral component of the history of the municipality.
- Development and land use applications for places with *heritage value* should maintain such places wherever possible. Interpretative signage should be used as a last resort, minimum requirement.
- *Incentive schemes* that allow landholders to be 'paid' to preserve heritage places should be investigated.

10.7 Incentives and Programs

The Port Phillip and Westernport CMA plays a key role in the coordination and administration of funding, inclusive of heritage projects within the Port Phillip and Westernport region. Refer to the following website for further details <http://www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au/funding-grants.aspx>

10.8 Actions

Refer to Part 3: Action Plan for the full range of actions proposed to sustain the Whittlesea Green Wedge into the future.

In summary, key actions proposed include:

- Explore opportunities to further promote the full range of Council's cultural heritage events at festivals and events
- Enhance community perception of heritage places and cultures through continued community participation of Council's Cultural Heritage Program
- Continue to increase links with the local indigenous community to increase understanding and respect for Aboriginal sites and culture
- Explore opportunities to employ a Heritage officer in order to lead the development of a holistic Heritage Strategy
- Implement findings of the Heritage Study, focussed on planning protection for significant sites, as part of a planning scheme amendment.

