

Agenda

Scheduled Council Meeting

Tuesday 21 February 2023 at 7:30 pm

You are advised that a Meeting of Council has been called by the Chief Executive Officer on Tuesday 21 February 2023 at 7:30 pm for the transaction of the following business.

This meeting will be held in the Community Hall at Whittlesea Community Activity Centre, 57 Laurel Street, Whittlesea and will be [livestreamed via Council's website](#).

C Lloyd
Chief Executive Officer

Administrators

Lydia Wilson Chair of Council

Peita Duncan Administrator

On 19 June 2020 the Acting Minister for Local Government appointed the Panel of Administrators for the City of Whittlesea and appointed Lydia Wilson as Chair of the Panel. The Panel of Administrators comprises of Lydia Wilson and Peita Duncan who will undertake the duties of the Council of the City of Whittlesea until the October 2024 Local Government Election.

Senior Officers

Craig Lloyd Chief Executive Officer

Sarah Renner Director Customer & Corporate Services

Debbie Wood Director Infrastructure & Environment

Anthony Traill Interim Director Community Wellbeing

Debbie Blandford Acting Director Planning & Development

Frank Joyce Executive Manager Strategy & Insights

Janine Morgan Executive Manager Public Affairs

Sarah Rowe Interim Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Order of Business

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Note:

At the Chair of Council's discretion, the meeting may be closed to the public in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The provision which is likely to be relied upon to enable closure is set out in each item. These reports are not available for public distribution.

Question Time:

During the meeting, the Chief Executive Officer will answer questions from residents and ratepayers. Questions are required to be submitted in writing prior to the advertised commencement time of a Scheduled Council Meeting.

Priority will be given to questions or statements that relate to Agenda items and those submitted prior to 12pm on the day of the Council Meeting. Any questions submitted after 12pm on the day may be read if there is sufficient time and otherwise, will be carried over to the next Council Meeting.

A Question Time form can be downloaded from Council's website and copies of the form are available at the meeting. Refer: <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/about-us/council/council-meetings/>

Council will hold public question time for up to 30 minutes at each Scheduled Council Meeting to allow members of the public to present the questions they have submitted to Council.

Council is committed to ensuring that all residents and ratepayers of the municipality may contribute to Council's democratic process and therefore, if you have special requirements, please telephone the Governance Team prior to any Council Meeting on (03) 9217 2170.

1 Opening

1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson will open the meeting and introduce Administrator, Peita Duncan and Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd.

The Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd will introduce members of the Executive Leadership Team:

Director Corporate and Customer Services, Sarah Renner;
Director Infrastructure and Environment, Debbie Wood;
Interim Director Community Wellbeing, Anthony Traill;
Acting Director Planning and Development, Debbie Blandford;
Executive Manager Strategy and Insights, Frank Joyce;
Executive Manager Public Affairs, Janine Morgan; and
Interim Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO, Sarah Rowe.

1.2 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson will read the following statement:

“On behalf of Council, I recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

I would also like to acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging.”

1.3 Diversity Statement

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson will read the following statement:

At the City of Whittlesea we are proud of our diversity and the many cultures, faiths and beliefs that make up our community. We strive to be an inclusive welcoming City that fosters active participation, wellbeing and connection to each other and this land. We commit as a Council to making informed decisions to benefit the people of the City of Whittlesea now and into the future, to support our community’s vision of A Place For All.

1.4 Attendance

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

Recommendation

THAT the following Minutes of the preceding meeting as circulated, be confirmed:

Scheduled Meeting of Council held on 12 December 2022.

4 Public Questions, Petitions and Joint Letters

4.1 Public Question Time

4.2 Petitions

4.2.1 Petition - Request to remove trees on nature strips on Harrison Street, Mernda

A petition has been received from 21 residents requesting Council remove all nature strip trees on Harrison Street, Mernda.

Recommendation

THAT Council note the petition from 21 residents requesting Council remove all nature strip trees and write to the signatories to inform them that:

- 1. The trees along the street were recently assessed and comply with the City of Whittlesea's Street Tree Management Plan;**
- 2. A meeting with the Head Petitioner will be organised with the Director Infrastructure and Environment (or representative) on site, to understand their concerns and any further rationale for their request;**
- 3. An independent Arboricultural assessment will be prepared in relation to residents' concerns, following the site meeting; and**
- 4. A report to Council will be prepared for the 18 April 2023 Council Meeting, advising how the petitioners concerns have been addressed, in consultation with Director Infrastructure and Environment. All signatories to the petition will be advised of Council's decision following the 18 April 2023 Council Meeting.**

4.3 Joint Letters

No Joint Letters

5 Officers' Reports

5.1 Connected Communities

No reports

5.2 Liveable Neighborhoods

5.2.1 Planning Scheme Amendment C245: Heritage Overlay on 90 and 150C (formerly 100) Bindts Road, Wollert - Adoption

Responsible Officer Acting Director Planning & Development

Author Denise Turner, Coordinator Planning Policy & Implementation

In Attendance Julie Paget, Strategic Planner

Attachments

1. C 245 wsea Map - 90 Bindts Rd - as exhibited [5.2.1.1 - 1 page]
2. C 245 wsea Map - 90 Bindts Rd - post exhibition [5.2.1.2 - 1 page]

Purpose

This report provides an update on the outcome of exhibition of Amendment C245 which seeks to apply and amend heritage controls at 90 and 150C (formerly 100) Bindts Road, Wollert.

It is recommended that Council adopt Amendment C245 with the reduced 'post exhibition' curtilage outlined in Attachment 2 and submit the Amendment to the Minister for Planning for approval.

Brief Overview

Amendment C245 seeks to apply the Heritage Overlay (HO) on a permanent basis to a place of local heritage significance (Ewert's Farm) at 90 Bindts Road, Wollert, and to correct an identification error of a heritage place to which the HO already applies (Bindts Farm) at 150C Bindts Road, Wollert.

Amendment C245 was placed on exhibition between 21 January 2021 and 5 March 2021. Two submissions were received which challenged the extent of the curtilage of the proposed HO. One submission was resolved; however, one submission was unresolved.

On 21 November 2022, Council resolved to request a Planning Panel to consider the unresolved submission. Council also resolved that officers continue to negotiate with the submitter to resolve the submission prior to a Panel Hearing and seek the relevant extensions of time to the Amendment and Interim HO controls at 90 Bindts Road, Wollert (HO204), which were due to expire on 21 January 2023.

Council was notified of the extensions being granted by the Minister for Planning on 2 December and 16 December 2022 (gazetted on 22 December 2022) respectively, and the remaining submission was subsequently resolved on 19 December 2022.

This report recommends that Council adopt Amendment C245 with the reduced post exhibition curtilage, as outlined in Attachment 2, and submit the Amendment to the Minister for Planning for approval.

THAT Council:

- 1. Adopt Amendment C245wsea with the reduced post exhibition curtilage, as outlined in Attachment 2;**
- 2. Submit Amendment C245wsea as detailed in 1. above, to the Minister for Planning for approval; and**
- 3. Advise the submitters of Council's decision as outlined in 1 and 2 above.**

Key Information

Background

As part of the Machinery of Government changes following the Victorian Government State Election in November 2022, the planning function of the previous Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has now been moved. As of 1 January 2023, a new department being the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) has been created. This report refers to multiple documents which were created under the previous department of DELWP.

Amendment C245 proposes to apply the Heritage Overlay (HO) to the Ewert's Farm complex at 90 Bindts Road, Wollert, which has been identified as having local heritage significance. It also seeks to correct an identification error of a heritage place to which the HO (HO161) already applies at 150C Bindts Road, (Bindts Farm) Wollert.

The two sites are included in a recently approved Planning Permit Application PLN-37466 for a multi lot subdivision (116 lots including 1 super lot) at 40-150C (formerly 40 -100) Bindts Road, Wollert, in the Quarry Hills Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) area.

Since Amendment C245 was first initiated, lots 100, 130 and 150 – 152 have been consolidated to form 150C Bindts Road, Wollert.

Officers sought interim heritage controls for 90 Bindts Road via Amendment C243 after two requests were received to demolish the dwelling and associated outbuildings.

Amendment C243 Interim HO was approved by the Minister for Planning for 12 months while the permanent controls could be progressed via Amendment C245. The interim controls were extended for 12 months via Amendment C256, and for an additional 12 months via Amendment C263.

Amendment C245 for the permanent HO controls obtained Authorisation from the Minister for Planning on 18 December 2020. The Amendment was subsequently placed on statutory exhibition for approximately six weeks from 21 January 2021 to 5 March 2021. This is discussed further below.

On 21 November 2022, Council resolved to request a Planning Panel to consider the unresolved submission in line with the statutory process. It also resolved that officers continue to negotiate with the submitter to resolve the submission prior to a Panel Hearing, and to seek the relevant extensions of time to the Amendment and Interim HO controls at 90 Bindts Road, Wollert (HO204), which were due to expire on 21 January 2023. The extensions were granted on 2 December and 22 December 2022 respectively.

Site Context

The properties at 90 and 150C Bindts Road are adjacent lots located on the eastern side of Bindts Road, Wollert, within the Quarry Hills Precinct Structure Plan.

Planning Context

Under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, Council as the Planning Authority must give effect to the objectives of planning in Victoria, including: “to conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of...historical or otherwise special cultural value” (section 4(b)).

Council must also undertake local heritage studies to identify places of interest and appropriately apply the HO to places identified as having local (or higher) significance. The application of the HO is the only statutory mechanism for conserving locally significant heritage places.

The following clauses within the Whittlesea Planning Scheme are relevant:

- Clause 15 (Built Environment and Heritage) identifies the Local Planning Policy objective to recognise the role of heritage in “delivering liveable and sustainable cities, towns and neighbourhoods.”
- Clause 15.03-1S (Heritage conservation) compels Local Governments to “Identify, assess and document places of natural and cultural heritage as a basis for their inclusion in the planning scheme.”
- Clause 22.04-2 (Heritage Conservation Policy) identifies the Local Planning Policy objective is “To identify, protect and maintain the integrity and character of Whittlesea’s heritage places.”
- The Quarry Hills PSP identifies ‘potential European heritage sites’ at 90 and 150C Bindts Road and includes heritage requirements and guidelines to minimise impacts of new development on heritage places including dry stone walls.

Amendment C245 and Statutory Exhibition

Amendment C245 seeks to apply a permanent HO under Clause 43.01 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to part of 90 Bindts Road, Wollert known as Ewert’s Farm. The extent of the proposed HO (at exhibition) is shown in Attachment 1.

The Amendment also seeks to amend the Schedule to Clause 43.01 for the existing HO161 at 150C Bindts Road, and to include an updated Statement of Significance to correct an error in identification of the heritage place. HO161 was incorrectly identified as Ewert’s Farm but is now recognised as Bindts Farm.

Application of the HO to 90 Bindts Road will provide permanent heritage protection over the site, and together with the correction to HO161 at 150C Bindts Road, will ensure that any proposals for these sites do not adversely or irreversibly alter their heritage value.

Standard planning permit requirements are set out in Clause 43.01 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme for all places to which the HO applies. This generally requires a permit to subdivide, demolish, construct a building or construct or carry out works within the HO.

The extent of the area affected by the HO is shown on the Planning Scheme map for each place. This is commonly referred to as the ‘curtilage’. A Statement of Significance is provided for each of the sites, which acts as a reference for each heritage place which identifies the site’s contributing features. It is used to inform the Amendment process as well as to guide the assessment of future applications against the heritage criteria identified for the site.

Amendment C245 was exhibited between 21 January 2021 and 5 March 2021. Two submissions were received: one from the Department of Transport (DoT); and one from Urbis on behalf of the landowner of 90 and 150C Bindts Road, Wollert. Both submissions challenged the extent of the curtilage of the proposed HO. The DoT submission was resolved on 19 May 2021 and the landowner submission was resolved on 19 December 2022. The submissions are discussed further below.

Community Consultation and Engagement

Amendment C245 was placed on exhibition for six weeks from 21 January – 5 March 2021.

Letters were sent to the affected property owners and occupiers, the Minister for Planning, and all prescribed Ministers being the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Minister for Agriculture, the Minister for Water and the Minister for Resources, in line with statutory requirements. The letters contained the Amendment notice and information regarding the specific heritage citation reports. A notice was also placed in the Government Gazette, The Age newspaper and on the City of Whittlesea website, and Amendment documentation was made available for viewing at the Council Office.

Two submissions were received in response to the exhibited amendment, and both were in relation to the proposed curtilage (HO204) for 90 Bindts Road:

- **Submission 1** from the DoT opposed the HO being applied to the section of 90 Bindts Road which is affected by a Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO).
- **Submission 2** on behalf of the landowner of 90 and 150C Bindts Road Wollert, opposed the extent of the proposed HO on 90 Bindts Road.

As is common practice in Amendment processes, Council officers contacted all submitters with a view to discussing the detail of submissions and to ascertain whether there was any potential to resolve the issues raised. The DoT submission was resolved on 19 May 2021 and the landowner submission was resolved on 19 December 2022. The submissions are discussed in more detail later in the report.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Liveable neighbourhoods

Our City is well-planned and beautiful, and our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play.

The Amendment meets the objectives of Whittlesea 2040 and the Council Plan. Specifically, the Amendment will achieve its goal and key direction through the recognition, appreciation and protection of places identified as local heritage significance in the municipality.

Considerations

Response to Amendment C245 submissions

Submission 1 from DoT opposed the HO being applied to the section of 90 Bindts Road which is affected by a Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) that has been set aside for the Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 transport corridor which runs along the front of the site, parallel to Bindts Road. A narrow portion of the proposed HO extends into the PAO area to protect the dry-stone wall (DSW) that runs along the southern boundary of the site.

Council sought specialist heritage advice regarding this submission. The heritage advice confirmed that the removal of the section of the HO affected by the PAO would be acceptable on the basis that this section of DSW is of less significance than those which are proximate to the farmhouse, and that the DSW is still afforded protection by Clause 52.33 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, which deals specifically with the conservation of DSW.

Should DoT seek a planning permit to remove the DSW, Clause 52.33 would trigger a requirement to consider relocating sections of DSW rather than simply demolishing it to make way for the road. On this basis, officers recommend the 'exhibited' HO curtilage shown in Attachment 1 be amended to remove the thin section of the HO that is affected by the PAO. On 19 May 2021, DoT agreed to withdraw their submission based on the proposed 'post exhibition' HO curtilage map shown in Attachment 2. It is noted that the removal of this section of the Heritage Overlay over the DSW would not impact on the remainder of the heritage site.

Submission 2 was made on behalf of the landowner of 90 and 150C Bindts Road, Wollert. While acknowledging the heritage significance of the site, they opposed the extent of the proposed HO on 90 Bindts Road. The matters raised in the submission can be summarised as follows:

- The proposed HO204 should be limited to the general area of the farmhouse and outbuildings.
- The HO does not take into consideration the anticipated development envisaged by the Quarry Hills PSP.
- The extent of the proposed HO creates additional complexity in developing the site.
- The HO affects land reserved by a PAO for the future transport corridor.
- The retention of the DSW along the southern boundary would interfere with planned vehicle access which would impact adjoining lots.
- The inclusion of the Statements of Significance as Incorporated Documents is contrary to Planning Practice Note 13, Incorporated and Background Documents.

Further specialist heritage advice was sought to inform consideration of the matters raised in this submission. This advice has recommended that no reduction in the HO204 extent should be applied in response to this submission, notwithstanding the proposed removal of the thin section of the HO affected by the PAO, as agreed in response to Submission 1. The heritage specialist's justification for retaining the curtilage is outlined as follows:

- The proposed HO curtilage is based on the significance of the heritage features outlined in the Statement of Significance. It is important to provide a suitable curtilage around the heritage buildings and features to ensure an appropriate setting for them, and to consider the potential impacts of new development, to ensure their heritage significance is not compromised by future development that may surround it. This will ensure the ultimate development of the site integrates with, and respects, the identified heritage features.
- The proposed HO curtilage has taken into consideration the anticipated development envisaged by the Quarry Hills PSP. The PSP identifies 90 Bindts Road as a potential heritage place and includes a requirement for the subdivision to consider the heritage elements and ensure heritage becomes a prominent feature of the urban structure. It should also be noted that the original curtilage sought for the site through the Interim HO (Amendment C243) originally covered the entire area of the site, to the west of Darebin Creek. Whereas the curtilage proposed for permanent protection through Amendment C245 (at exhibition) is significantly reduced, as shown in Attachment 1, to take into consideration the anticipated development envisaged for the site. The curtilage proposed under C245 therefore strikes an appropriate balance.
- The presence of the HO will not prohibit development; but rather adds a statutory trigger to ensure the significance of heritage features on the site are taken into consideration as part of the planning assessment process. Notwithstanding, additional complexity is not a valid reason against the application or extent of the HO, as Council has an obligation to protect heritage in the municipality.
- The PAO matter has been resolved. Removal of the section of the HO affected by the PAO is acceptable on the basis that this section of DSW is of less significance than the DSW located closest to the farmhouse. Further, DSW are still afforded some protection under Clause 52.33 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.
- The HO over the remaining section of the DSW on the southern boundary of the site is appropriate and does not preclude incursions into the DSW for vehicular access envisaged by the PSP. In such circumstances, it would trigger a requirement to consider relocating some sections of DSW rather than simply demolishing them, but it would not prohibit planned vehicle access to adjoining lots.

- The requirement to include the Statements of Significance as incorporated documents in the Planning Scheme was introduced on 31 July 2018 via Amendment VC148 and is set out in Planning Practice Note 1, the Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes and Clause 43.01-5 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme. This is now considered best practice.

On this basis, Council officers did not support any further reduction to HO204 other than that proposed in Attachment 2 (post exhibition) which removes the thin section of the HO affected by the PAO.

Officers met with Submitter 2 on several occasions to discuss their submission, including the implications of the proposed HO on their planning application which was under active consideration by Council.

While many of the points raised above were acknowledged, their primary concern with the extent of the proposed 'post exhibition' HO204 was the impact on the approval of their then current planning application (notwithstanding the Interim HO already in place) and the additional complexity it creates for future purchasers. They sought for the HO to be limited to the general area of the farmhouse and outbuildings only. Alternatively, they sought further discussion with officers regarding a potential blanket approval for lots affected by the HO. In the meantime, Planning Application PLN-37466 was granted conditional approval at the 16 May 2022 Council meeting.

Firstly, it was considered premature for Council to reduce the HO curtilage proposed by Amendment C245 to reflect the outcomes of the approved planning permit. It is not unusual for planning permits to lapse or change throughout their life. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to modify the proposed HO204 until the permit has been acted upon and the subdivision and subsequent development of the site are complete to ensure the heritage values of the site are protected.

Ultimately, agreement was able to be reached on a preferred approach for a bulk blanket assessment for residential lots affected by the HO, subject to certain design parameters being agreed. Based on the discussions to date and confirmation that Council is willing to continue to negotiate on the particulars of this approval, they were satisfied that their submission was reasonably resolved. On 19 December 2022, the landowner agreed to withdraw their submission.

This is a positive outcome not only from a heritage perspective but also for the substantial time and costs saved by not holding a Planning Panel Hearing.

Recommendation

Noting the resolution and withdrawal of the two submissions, it is recommended that Council adopt Amendment C245 with the reduced post exhibition curtilage, as outlined in Attachment 2, and submit the Amendment to the Minister for Planning for approval.

Financial Implications

Any costs will be covered by the Strategic Futures operational budget for 2022-2023.

Link to Strategic Risk

Not linked to the risks within the Strategic Risk Register

Implementation Strategy**Communication**

The submitters will be notified of Council's resolution.

Critical Dates

Nil

Next Steps

If adopted the Amendment will be submitted to the Minister for Planning for approval.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Conclusion

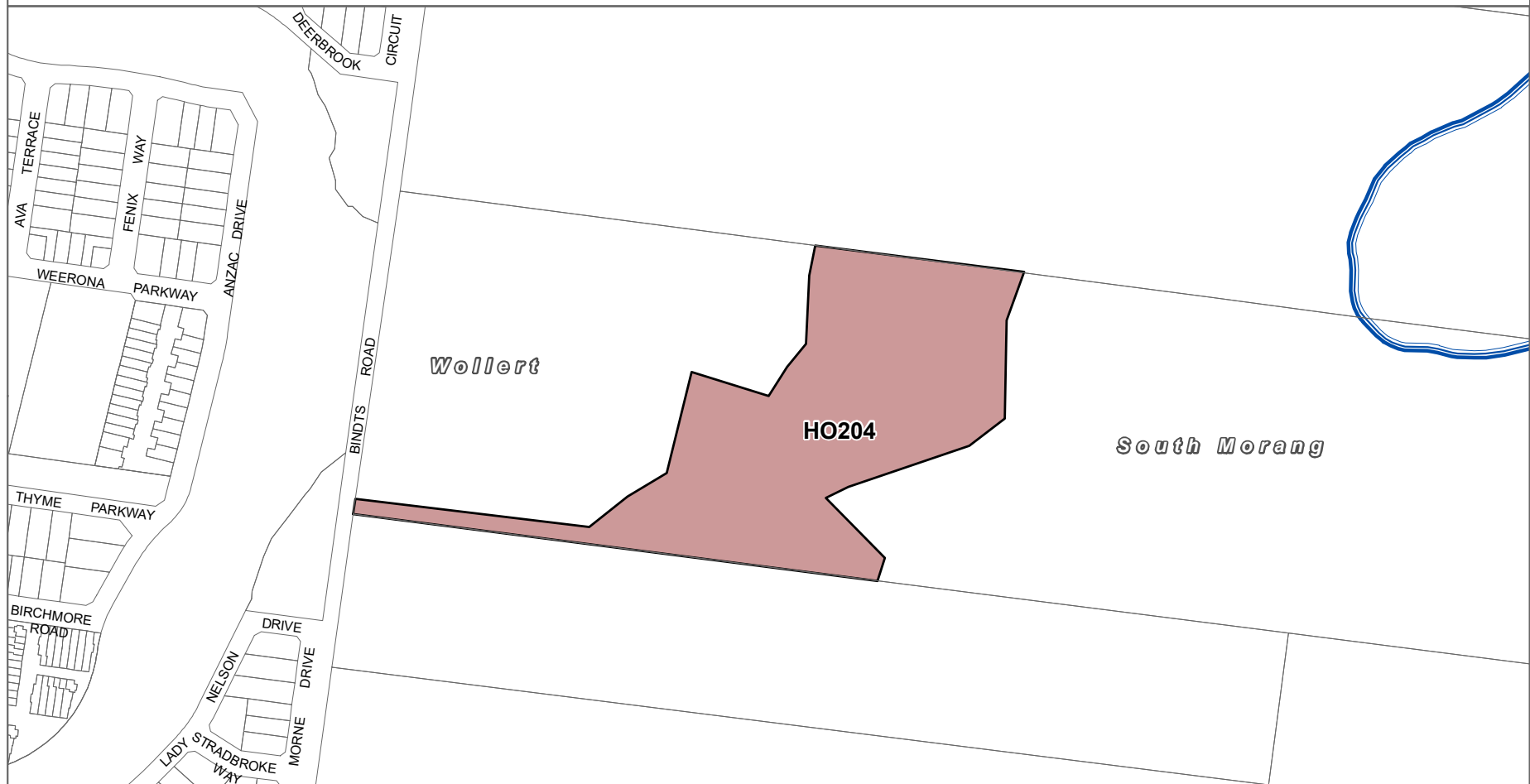
Amendment C245 seeks to apply the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis to Ewert's Farm (HO204) at 90 Bindts Road, Wollert, and to correct an identification error of a heritage place to which the Heritage Overlay already applies (HO161) at 150C Bindts Road, Wollert (Bindts Farm).

Following exhibition of the Amendment, two submissions were received, both of which related to the extent of the curtilage of the Heritage Overlay for HO204.




Both submissions have now been resolved based on the reduced post exhibition curtilage in response to Submission 1, and the bulk heritage assessment approach, subject to design parameters, for development within the Heritage Overlay at 90 and 150C Bindts Road in response to Submission 2.

It is recommended that Council adopt Amendment C245 with the reduced post exhibition curtilage, as outlined in Attachment 2, and submit the Amendment to the Minister for Planning for approval.

WHITTLESEA PLANNING SCHEME - LOCAL PROVISION
AMENDMENT C245wsea



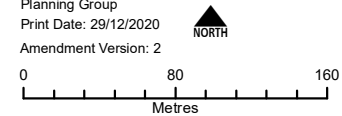
LEGEND

-  HO - Heritage Overlay
-  Local Government Area
-  Urban Growth Boundary

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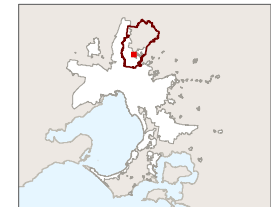
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Planning Group
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 Amendment Version: 2

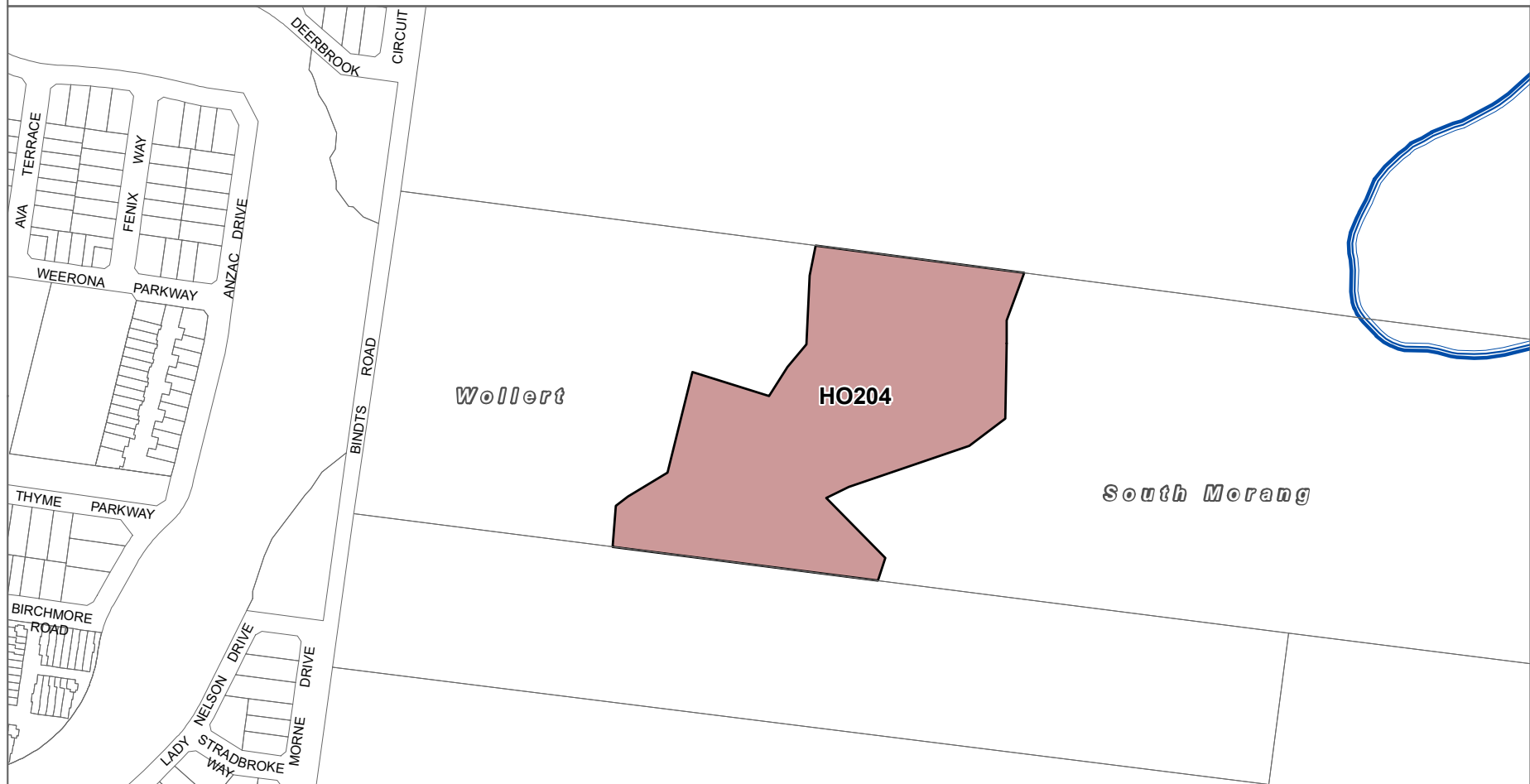


Environment,
 Land, Water
 and Planning

Part of Planning Scheme Map 17HO



WHITTLESEA PLANNING SCHEME - LOCAL PROVISION
AMENDMENT C245wsea



LEGEND

- HO - Heritage Overlay
- Local Government Area
- Urban Growth Boundary

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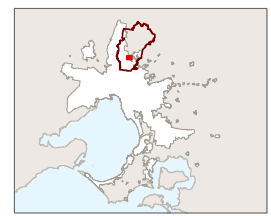
Planning Group
 Print Date: 11/10/2021
 Amendment Version: 4

NORTH

Metres



Part of Planning Scheme Map 17HO



5.3 Strong Local Economy

No reports

5.4 Sustainable Environment

5.4.1 Green Wedge Management Plan 2023 - 2033

Responsible Officer Acting Director Planning & Development

Author Julie Paget, Strategic Planner

In Attendance Julie Paget, Strategic Planner

Attachments

1. Green Wedge Management Plan 2023 - 2033 [5.4.1.1 - 29 pages]
2. Findings from the Green Wedge Management Plan Review Stage 2 Community Engagement 2022 (2) [5.4.1.2 - 50 pages]
3. Green Wedge Vision Objectives and Strategic Directions [5.4.1.3 - 3 pages]
4. Summary of Written Submissions from Stage 2 Engagement for the Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan [5.4.1.4 - 6 pages]

Purpose

This report seeks to update Council on the outcomes of the Stage 2 community engagement on the draft Green Wedge Management Plan held in May – July 2022. It recommends that Council resolve to adopt the new Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033.

Brief Overview

Green Wedges are the rural and non-urban areas of Metropolitan Melbourne, located outside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

In the City of Whittlesea, more than 60% of the municipality is identified as Green Wedge land which is protected from urban development. The Whittlesea Green Wedge supports the environment, economy, culturally significant areas and provides recreational activities for the benefit of the broader community.

It is a State Government requirement that all Councils containing Green Wedge areas must prepare a Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) with a 10-year lifespan. The first Whittlesea GWMP ended in 2021. The new GWMP being proposed for adoption will be the guiding document for managing the Whittlesea Green Wedge until 2033.

Extensive community consultation has helped to guide the development of the new GWMP. There have been two rounds of community engagement, Stage 1 engagement was conducted between May - July 2021 and Stage 2 engagement was conducted between May - July 2022. This is discussed further later in this report.

The proposed new GWMP 2023 – 2033 (**Attachment 1**) has been informed by the outcomes of the Findings from the Green Wedge Management Plan Review Stage 2 Community Engagement 2022 (**Attachment 2**). It reaffirms the community's priority for protecting the environmental and rural landscape character of the Green Wedge; it emphasises the foundational importance to manage soil health for all appropriate rural uses; it provides for safe rural development and encourages sustainable rural and urban interface management.

The new GWMP also envisages a stronger and balanced role for the Whittlesea Green Wedge in supporting a strong local economy through local agri-food activities and the visitor economy. It recognises the strategic opportunities afforded by Whittlesea's unique natural attributes, its proximity to the Melbourne Market and other key infrastructure.

The new GWMP also has a greater focus on the evolving relationship with the Traditional Owners and the wider Aboriginal community living in the City of Whittlesea. The recognition of living cultural 'practice' rather than purely cultural 'heritage' and the input across of all areas of the new GWMP by the Traditional Owners, demonstrates this increasing level of engagement.

Recommendation

THAT Council:

- 1. Adopt the Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033 at Attachment 1.**
- 2. Write to the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Environment to provide a copy of the Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033.**
- 3. Provide a copy of the Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033 to local State Members of Parliament.**
- 4. Make a copy of the Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033 and the Findings from the Green Wedge Management Plan Review Stage 2 Community Engagement 2022 report, at Attachment 1 and 2, publicly available, including on Council's website.**
- 5. Write to the Minister for Planning to request that the Green Wedge and Agricultural Land Review be finalised and implemented as a matter of urgency.**
- 6. Provide a copy of the adopted Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033, at Attachment 1, to the Municipal Association of Victoria and request they advocate for the urgent finalisation and implementation of the Green Wedge and Agricultural Land Review.**

7. Inform the stakeholders who provided a written submission to the Stage 2 community engagement, of Council's decision and how the issues raised have informed the adopted Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033.

Key Information

Background

As part of the Machinery of Government changes following the Victorian Government State Election in November 2022, the planning function of the previous Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has now been moved. As of 1 January 2023, a new department being the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) has been created. This report refers to multiple documents which were created under the previous department.

There are 12 designated Green Wedge areas across 17 municipalities in Metropolitan Melbourne. They are often described as the lungs of Melbourne and provide a diverse range of important services, capabilities and values ranging from environmental conservation, habitat, heritage protection, cultural heritage, rural living, landscape quality, tourism and recreation.

The Green Wedges also contain some of Victoria's most productive agricultural land, key infrastructure, and extractive resources. The State Government requires each Green Wedge Council to develop a GWMP in line with the Planning Practice Note 31 Preparing a Green Wedge Management Plan (DELWP, 2015). The Planning Practice Note sets a 10-year lifespan for each plan.

The Whittlesea Green Wedge is home to productive agricultural land, scenic landscapes, heritage places, cultural heritage, rural living, National Parks, forests, waterways, reservoirs and nationally significant flora and fauna.

The Whittlesea Green Wedge holds a significant proportion of the unimpacted Cultural Heritage with many sacred and special places for the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people and Taungurung people providing the opportunity to celebrate and facilitate enhanced cultural practice.

Across the rural and non-urban areas of the Whittlesea Green Wedge area, there are approximately 1,500 public and private properties and a population of 8,890 people (as at 2020). Approximately 64% of this population live in Whittlesea Township which is also considered to be part of the Green Wedge.

State Government 'Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land' (GWAL) Review Project

The importance of managing Melbourne's Green Wedge areas continues to be reinforced in State Government planning policy with a review currently underway to strengthen green wedge planning provisions and protect agricultural land.

The review, which commenced in 2018, is being undertaken by the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP). Due to COVID 19 restrictions and shifting State Government priorities, the project has been significantly delayed, with the State Election in November 2022 causing even further delay. At this time, it is unknown when the finalisation and implementation of the GWAL Review will occur, or whether it remains a priority for the returning State Government.

The delay has impacted the Whittlesea GWMP project, which was planned to align from a timing perspective with the finalisation of the State Government review. Council officers have been liaising with DELWP on a regular basis and are satisfied that the final GWMP generally aligns with the anticipated outcomes of the GWAL.

DELWP have indicated that the biggest change that could impact the final GWMP are proposed changes to the Planning Practice Note guiding development of GWMPs, which places a greater emphasis and need for engagement with Traditional Owners. Council has engaged with the Traditional Owners which has helped to inform the final GWMP. This is discussed further below.

Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033

The Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033 (**Attachment 1**) has been informed by the outcomes of extensive community consultation with a two-stage community engagement process. The Findings from the Green Wedge Management Plan Review Stage 2 Community Engagement 2022 (**Attachment 2**) outlines the nature and extent of engagement activities undertaken, as well as analysis of the community feedback received. This is discussed further below.

The new GWMP is comprised of the Vision and Objectives falling under each of the four (4) Whittlesea 2040 themes being Sustainable Environment, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Strong Local Economy and Connected Communities, together with a set of Strategic Directions. These are outlined in **Attachment 3**.

The Green Wedge vision outlines the preferred future direction for the Whittlesea Green Wedge and the objectives further articulate what success should look like if the vision is to be achieved.

The Strategic Directions have been informed by the key issues facing the Whittlesea Green Wedge and respond to opportunities identified by community members and other stakeholders as part of the Stage 1 community engagement. The Strategic Directions have been structured to align with the Whittlesea 2040 goals.

Community Consultation and Engagement

There has been extensive community consultation to help guide the development of the GWMP. There have been two rounds of community engagement, with a total of 284 survey responses, 251 people participated through a range of online and face to face activities, and 27 written submissions were received. In addition, over 2,500 people visited Council's engagement platform over the course of the Stage 1 and 2 engagement, to find out about the project. This consultation was undertaken using best practice and yielded a wide range of views and ideas which has informed the final GWMP being presented for adoption. Further details are provided below.

Stage 1: Engagement with Whittlesea Community and Key Stakeholders: May – July 2021

As part of **Stage 1** engagement, a discussion paper titled Shaping the future of your Green Wedge was released and the community was invited to make written submissions. In total, 291 people were engaged including 191 survey responses, 85 community members and stakeholders participated in a diverse range of online and face to face engagement activities and 15 written submissions were received.

Of the 15 written submissions received, eight (8) were from the community and seven (7) were from the following key stakeholders:

- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
- Department of Transport
- Hume City Council
- Melbourne Water
- Environment Protection Authority
- Nillumbik Shire Council
- Darebin Creek Management Committee
- Hanson Heidelberg Cement Group

The Findings from the GWMP Stage 1 Community Engagement 2021 report was reported to Council at the 16 May 2022 Council meeting and was made available on Council's engagement platform. All Stage 1 submitters were encouraged to review the draft GWMP and take part in the Stage 2 engagement.

Stage 2: Engagement with Whittlesea Community and Key Stakeholders: May – July 2022

The **Stage 2** engagement was conducted between May - July 2022. This stage involved an extensive range of online and face to face engagement activities (details provided in Attachment 2, pages 2-6). In total, 271 people were engaged including 93 survey responses, 166 people participated in a range of activities and 12 written submissions were received.

The GWMP 2023-2033 (**Attachment 1**) has been informed by the outcomes of the Findings from the Green Wedge Management Plan Review Stage 2 Community Engagement 2022 (**Attachment 2**).

Of the 12 written submissions received, two (2) were from community members and ten (10) from the following stakeholders:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Nillumbik Shire Council
- Ratio on behalf of Fun Fields
- Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Taungurung Land and Waters Council
- Darebin Creek Management Committee
- Urbis (on behalf of a landowner)
- SIG Group
- Department of Transport
- Melbourne Water

Attachment 4 provides a Summary of the Written Submissions from Stage 2 Engagement on the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan, which outlines the officer response and how any changes have been incorporated into the GWMP. The key issues raised as part of the Stage 2 engagement process are discussed in more detail below.

Consultation with Traditional Owners

A copy of the Green Wedge Discussion Paper was provided, and feedback was sought in Stage 1, from both Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Taungurung Land and Waters Council, both Registered Aboriginal Parties for land in the City of Whittlesea. There was no response received during Stage 1.

Both the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council provided submissions to the Stage 2 engagement process and their feedback has been considered and, where possible, has both improved and informed the final GWMP. This is discussed further below.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Sustainable environment

The GWMP is aligned to each of the goals set out in Whittlesea 2040 and the Community Plan 2021-2025.

During the drafting of the GWMP, Council has also been progressing the development of the Integrated Planning Framework. The Integrated Planning Framework comprises seven (7) Level two (2) strategies, with each strategy expanding on the long-term community vision, Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All and the Community Plan 2021-2025.

The most relevant Level two (2) strategies for the GWMP are: Sustainable Environment, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Strong Local Economy, Connected Communities, and the Reconciliation Action Plan. The Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026 was adopted in February 2022 and the Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-2032 in November 2022. The Liveable Neighbourhoods, Connected Communities Strategies are both under development while a review of the Reconciliation Action Plan is due to commence in 2023.

Officers worked closely with the Economic Development and Sustainable Environment Departments, to ensure the GWMP was aligned to these higher order strategies. A similar approach will be taken for the development of the remaining Level 2 documents.

The GWMP is a ten-year plan. The relevant GWMP Strategic Directions have been incorporated into the adopted Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-2032 and the Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026. As part of the Integrated Planning Framework, each of the Level 2 strategies will be accompanied by an Action Plan to run-in two-year increments. As the Liveable Neighbourhoods and Connected Community Strategies and Reconciliation Action Plan are developed, the relevant GWMP actions will be incorporated into these documents.

As a requirement of the Planning Practice Note 31 Preparing a Green Wedge Management Plan (DELWP, 2015), the GWMP will be reviewed in 2028 (at the 5-year mark) to ensure the GWMP remains relevant and to measure the success of the plan in achieving the agreed Vision and Objectives. This is a separate State Government requirement to the proposed on-going Council Integrated Planning Framework reporting described above, which provides the mechanism to establish a clear monitoring and review process.

Considerations

Key issues identified through Stage 2 engagement

As expected, there were a wide range of views and opinions expressed within the submissions and survey responses received as part of the Stage 2 community and stakeholder engagement.

The list below provides examples of key issues raised and comments made in relation to the draft GWMP:

- Multiple key stakeholder respondents indicated their desire to continue to have long-term engagement on a range of specific issues. The nature of the preferred engagement ranges from direct engagement with City of Whittlesea on specific projects (i.e., Department of Transport in relation to key transport routes) to a much wider regional/multi-municipality approach to common issues by Nillumbik Shire Council. Examples of matters identified which could benefit from such a collaborative approach include:
 - Managing biodiversity and environmental threats such as invasive weeds and fauna.
 - Developing regional trails and other recreational links. For example, to improve links from Whittlesea into the nearby Nillumbik localities of Yarrambat and Plenty.
 - Advocating together to the State Government for reforms to support both green wedges. For example, for planning reforms to better protect green wedges from particular threats and harmful activities.
 - Promoting a regional approach to tourism.
 - Working with the Traditional Owners to better acknowledge and celebrate heritage and share their knowledge of the region to achieve more sustainable land management outcomes.
- Interface issues – there are competing pressures on the interface of the Green Wedge and the urban areas. These pressures are reflected by the different priorities identified by submitters to the plan. For some the need to maintain, and indeed increase, the environmental protection for the Green Wedge is paramount. For others, the desire to allow for greater development is seen as a sensible option. This was particularly noted in relation to the Eden Park area of the Green Wedge. It is worth noting that use and development in the Green Wedge is heavily regulated by the State Government through the Victoria Planning Provisions and many of the development suggestions provided in the submissions would be either limited or prohibited under the existing Planning Scheme provisions.

- The desire to provide tourism opportunities, in particular the use of tiny houses and eco-tourism were raised. Aboriginal focused tourism was also identified as an area that should be considered and given greater encouragement. As noted above, use and development in the Green Wedge is heavily regulated by State Government through the Victoria Planning Provisions, and urban or non-rural uses may be limited or prohibited under the existing provisions.
- The impact of significant transport corridors on the urban/rural interface both in terms of environmental/sustainability issues and efficiency/safety issues (i.e., competing needs of lower speeds for wildlife versus efficient speed for Outer Metropolitan Ring Road and later the Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal (BIFT)).
- The tension between the environmental benefits of retaining and increasing vegetation in the Green Wedge and the corresponding increase in the potential bushfire risk was identified.
- Increased density of the tree canopy – it has been identified that in some locations within the Green Wedge, due to nature of species present, a lower density of vegetation may need to be retained and managed.
- Several submitters raised the known issue of poor soil quality in areas of the Green Wedge and the need for this to be managed effectively.
- A range of issues relating to agriculture were raised:
 - The ‘right to farm’ in relation to the planning permit processes.
 - The need to consider alternative types of farming - i.e., not just broadacre.
 - Specific concerns about the economic viability of ‘traditional’ farming/grazing due to small size of lots.
- Several submitters raised the issue that the GWMP should clearly recognise and support that agriculture is not the sole function of Green Wedge. The draft GWMP was silent on this issue and that clarity needed to be provided.

Both the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council provided submissions to Stage 2 of the engagement.

Some of the feedback included:

- The need for a holistic approach when considering Country as opposed to the western view of considering each aspect of the environment individually.
- The ongoing role of cultural practice to be recognised rather than solely cultural heritage.
- Request for greater support in relation to cultural appropriate tourism and greater recognition of cultural and intellectual property issues (for example in relation to bush foods).
- A request from Taungurung Land and Waters Council to be acknowledged as a Traditional Owner for a small section of land in the north of the City of Whittlesea, along the northern ridges in Kinglake West.

The Stage 2 engagement activities (including the survey) asked the community to provide comment on the proposed Vision and Strategic Directions. The options included: I Love It, I Can Live With It and It Needs Improvement. Respondents were also provided with the opportunity to provide a free form reply at each stage of the survey questions.

Particular attention was paid to any item where “It Needs Improvement” was selected by thirty (30) percent or more of survey respondents. This applied to the Vision, Strategic Direction 1.3, Strategic Direction 2.3 and 2.4. There were several other Strategic Directions in Goals 1 Sustainable Environment and Goal 2 Liveable Neighbourhoods which received close to thirty (30) percent in the engagement report.

In particular, the Vision has been reworked both in relation to the feedback received and with regard to Council’s new Integrated Planning Framework (IPF) approach.

It should be noted that there was wide disparity in the community regarding the following issues:

- Strategic Direction 1.3 Improve the management and protection of biodiversity resulted in forty (40) percent choosing the “I Love It” option and thirty-three (33) percent choosing the “It Needs Improvement” option.
- Strategic Direction 2.3 Provide safe and fit for purpose local road network and support active travel modes. This resulted in thirty-three (33) percent choosing the “I Love It” option and thirty-two (32) percent chose the “It Needs Improvement” option.
- Strategic Direction 2.4 Protect the Green Wedge from further urban encroachment and improve management of the urban and rural interface. This resulted in forty-seven (47) percent choosing the “I Love It” option and thirty-five (35) percent choosing the “It Needs Improvement” option.

Goal 3 - Strong Local Economy received a positive response by the community with the three strategic directions in this goal receiving between forty-four (44) to forty-six (46) percent choosing the “I Love It” option.

Likewise, Goal 4 - Connected Communities has resonated with the community with 3 out of 4 strategic directions receiving between forty-three (43) to forty-eight (48) percent choosing the “I Love It” option.

Discussion

This section discusses some of the key issues identified above.

Regional/Local Government Collaboration

The City of Whittlesea already has extensive links with neighbouring municipalities, which was recognised in the submissions received from Nillumbik Shire Council and Hume City Council, during both stages of the engagement process.

A few examples of the range of collaborative activities being undertaken include:

- the Economic Development Department working with Hume and Nillumbik Councils to host four (4) workshops over March, April, May and June to support the local agribusinesses/agri-food sector.
- the Traffic and Transport Unit's participation in the Northern Regional Trails Strategy which covers trails located within the municipalities of Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Merri-bek, Nillumbik and Whittlesea.
- the Sustainable Environment Department's participation in The Greening the North project as part of the Northern Councils Alliance (NCA). The NCA is a regional network of the seven (7) municipalities located in Melbourne's geographic north consisting of Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Mitchell, Merri-bek, Nillumbik and Whittlesea. The NCA advocates for and delivers projects that positively contribute to the economic, social, health and wellbeing of our residents and businesses.
- the Sustainable Environment Department's participation in the Darebin Creek Management Committee (DCMC). The DCMC consists of seven (7) member organisations comprising the four (4) municipalities that the Darebin Creek flows through, being Banyule, Darebin, Whittlesea and Yarra, La Trobe University, and the community organisations Friends of Darebin Creek and the Darebin Parklands Association. The DCMC has made many achievements in retaining open space and protecting the natural environment along the Darebin Creek Valley.

Further opportunities will be explored for greater regional co-operation in relation to the:

- protection and enhancement of the Green Wedge.
- potential for regional responses for promoting agriculture and local tourism.
- recognition of Aboriginal cultural practice and related tourism opportunities.

Feedback from Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council

Feedback was received from both parties as part of the Stage 2 engagement process which has both informed and improved the final GWMP. It was noted and discussed with both submitters that some issues were beyond the scope of the GWMP and there may be potential to consider these matters within the context of Council's Reconciliation Action Plan which is due to be reviewed in 2023.

Some of the issues raised include:

Greater Recognition of the Traditional Owners within the GWMP

Both parties flagged the desire for greater recognition not just in terms of cultural heritage but that of cultural practice. Several changes have been made to terminology relating to both cultural heritage and cultural practice references in the GWMP.

A request was also made to use Aboriginal names places within the Whittlesea Green Wedge for example in relation to Quarry Hills. The naming of Quarry Hills is being considered through the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland Future Directions Plan, which is reviewing and evaluating the cultural and landscape values of the site, and together with the Traditional Owners and the community will establish a long-term vision.

A park naming process has been undertaken and a proposed name has been recommended from the Cultural Values Study prepared by the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. Following the necessary statutory process, a formal decision on the park name will be brought to Council sometime around April/May 2023. On this basis, it is considered premature to include the proposed new name in the GWMP.

Use of language and reframing of the relationship

Both parties requested a change in the GWMP from using the term settlement to colonisation, as a statement of fact. In addition, the parties asked for truth-telling, in that the land was inhabited and cared for prior to colonisation, and acknowledgment of the harm and suffering experienced by Traditional Owners through the process.

Concerns were also raised regarding their identification as stakeholders rather than rights holders. There is a desire to have a greater input into decisions that may impact Traditional Owners and an overall reframing of the relationship with Council.

The language in the GWMP has been changed to refer to the Traditional Owners as parties to, or partners with Council, rather than stakeholders.

While many issues raised in the submissions have been able to be incorporated into the GWMP, other matters outside the scope of the GWMP may potentially be dealt with as part of the Reconciliation Action Plan review, which is due to occur in 2023.

Aboriginal Tourism and Protection of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property

Both parties indicated their desire to see Council encourage and promote Aboriginal tourism and that there should be specific reference to the education and cultural tours delivered by Traditional Owners in the Whittlesea Green Wedge. Reference to Aboriginal tourism has been included.

In relation to economic activity, there was a request from the Taungurung Land and Waters Council for the agribusiness section of the plan to reference the Victorian Traditional Owner Native Food and Botanicals Strategy 2021 and the need for indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights to be recognised and protected. Reference to this document has been included in the GWMP.

Reference to the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy (2021)

Both parties requested that the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy be referenced within the GWMP, and whilst it is not expected that the Strategy be embedded into the GWMP, there is an expectation that Council is cognisant of its perspectives.

The Strategy was developed by Traditional Owners facilitated by the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations, Parks Victoria and DELWP. The Strategy is the first of its kind in Australia and sets out a framework to systematically enable and empower Victorian Traditional Owners to lead planning and activate cultural knowledge and practices to manage Country. Reference to the Strategy was included in the draft GWMP and is included in the final GWMP.

Acknowledgement of Taungurung People

Following the Taungurung Land and Waters Council request, Council at its meeting on 19 September 2022, endorsed an update to our Governance Rules which embedded the use of a new Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners of both the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and the Taungurung people. This recognises the small section of Taungurung Land and Waters Council area in the north of the City of Whittlesea, along the northern ridges in Kinglake West. This is an important change which ensures appropriate and accurate recognition for all our local Aboriginal communities.

Environmental Concerns

The concerns raised within the submissions in relation to environmental issues have been captured in both GWMP and the Sustainable Environment Strategy. The GWMP has identified Strategic Directions to address these issues which have also been incorporated into the Sustainable Environment Action Plan 2022-2024 which will be the mechanism by which these issues are addressed and managed.

Potential Impact of GWAL - education facilities

As mentioned earlier, the GWAL Review is yet to be finalised by DELWP. One of the submissions (provided by URBIS on behalf of a landowner) specifically identifies the potential use of Green Wedge zoned land for the provision of a secondary school which would be a Section 2 use (planning permit required).

Whilst officers cannot pre-empt the final outcomes of the GWAL, it should be noted that Council's adopted submission to the GWAL consultation made it clear that Council does not support schools in the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

Council's submission (February 2021) addressed this issue stating:

'Council does not support the proposition to 'locate these uses adjacent to the UGB.' Proponents of these uses (schools and place for worship) are looking for cheap, available land by locating them on the edge of the UGB. The existence of such a condition implies that these uses are appropriate in a green wedge/peri-urban context, whereas this would rarely be the case.

Such uses are urban in nature and should be accommodated within the UGB rather than seeking to amend the planning provisions to allow these urban uses in non-urban zones. It is the primary role and purpose of the PSP process and the urban zones to identify all relevant urban uses and plan for them within the UGB.

The Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) are currently in the process of reviewing the Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) Guidelines, and it is through changes to these PSP Guidelines that greater provision/planning for other schools and places of worship should be embedded, rather than a watering down of the fundamental elements of the green wedge planning provisions.'

As noted by DELWP in their GWAL Consultation Paper, schools often require significant areas to support buildings and recreational facilities which has the potential to impact the natural environment or being developed on land which could be used for agricultural purposes. Council fully acknowledges there is increasing demand for land to accommodate private schools for growth area communities and this need is not sufficiently considered as part of the current PSP process. However, we suggest private schools should be accommodated within the UGB, similar to Government schools planned in the PSP areas.

Notwithstanding Council's position on the matter, Council and the GWMP will need to acknowledge any State Government policy or changes to planning provisions, should they occur.

GWAL Outcomes

The GWAL Review was an election commitment from the previous term of the State Government, which has undergone extensive consultation.

The potential outcomes could have far-reaching consequences for the management of Green Wedges and agricultural land. It is important the Review is finalised to help provide clear direction (and potentially additional planning tools) for the management of the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

It is recommended that Council write to the Minister for Planning stating the importance Council places on this review being finalised and the implementation of the associated recommendations being undertaken.

Financial Implications

The cost of developing the GWMP is included within the existing council operating budget.

As detailed above, the actions which arise from the GWMP will be undertaken and completed through the five (5) Level 2 strategies and the associated Level 3 supplementary plans and strategies. Funding for specific actions will be considered as part of the budget process.

Link to Strategic Risk

Community and Stakeholder Engagement - Ineffective stakeholder engagement resulting in compromised community outcomes and/or non-achievement of Council's strategic direction

The detailed engagement plan used to inform and engage with the community (as described above) was prepared in consultation with Council's Community Engagement Team, along with expert consultants. The two-stage engagement program applied best practice in designing and delivering the public engagement activities to maximise stakeholder engagement.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Provide the Minister for Planning, the Minister for the Environment, local State Members of Parliament and the Municipal Association of Victoria with a copy of the adopted GWMP 2023-2033.

All written submitters to the Stage 2 community engagement will be notified of Council's decision, and how the issues raised have informed the final GWMP.

A copy of the adopted GWMP 2023-2033 and the Findings from the Green Wedge Management Plan Review Stage 2 Community Engagement 2022 report will be made publicly available, including on Council's website.

Critical Dates

It is a Council Action Plan annual measure to finalise and implement the new Green Wedge Management Plan in consultation with the community by 30 June 2023.

Next Steps

The Strategic Directions of the GWMP have been reflected in the adopted Sustainable Environment Strategy and Strong Local Economy Strategy and will also be incorporated into the new Level 2 documents currently under development.

For each of the two-year action plans for the Level 2 documents, specific GWMP actions will be identified in order to achieve the GWMP Strategic Directions and priorities of these higher-level documents.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Conclusion

It is a State Government requirement that all Councils containing Green Wedge areas must prepare a Green Wedge Management Plan with a 10-year lifespan.

At the time of preparing the Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033, the State Government's Green Wedge and Agricultural Land Review is still incomplete. It is anticipated that there is likely to be little change required to the Plan should the State Government Review be finalised, which is anticipated to provide for greater environmental protection and increased options to assist with agricultural productivity. These issues have been addressed within the Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033.

There has been substantial community engagement undertaken as part of the development of the Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033. This has ensured that a range of views and ideas have been captured and where appropriate, reflected in the plan.

The new Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033 reaffirms community's priority for protecting the environment and the rural landscape character; it emphasises the foundational importance to manage soil health for all appropriate rural uses; it provides for safe rural development and encourages sustainable rural and urban interface management.

The Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033 also envisages a stronger and balanced role for the Whittlesea Green Wedge in supporting a strong local economy through local food production and processing and the visitor economy. It recognises the strategic opportunities afforded by Whittlesea's unique natural attributes, its proximity to the Melbourne Market and other key infrastructure. It also recognises the importance of celebrating cultural heritage and cultural practice. Importantly it also recognises ways in which Council can continue to foster community engagement and initiatives that support the protection and management of the Green Wedge.

Engagement with Traditional Owner groups as part of the community engagement has been welcomed and where appropriate, their feedback has been incorporated into the Plan.

It is therefore recommended that the new Green Wedge Management Plan 2023–2033 be adopted by Council and a copy provided to the Minister for Planning, the Minister for Environment, local State Members of Parliament and the Municipal Association of Victoria.

Further, it is recommended that Council write to the Minister for Planning to request that the State Government's Green Wedge and Agricultural Land Review be finalised and implemented as a matter of urgency. It is also recommended that the stakeholders who provided a written submission to the Stage 2 community engagement be informed of Council's decision and how the issues have informed the final Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033.



Quarry Hills Lookout - South Morang

Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

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Left page photo: Smoking Ceremony



Executive Summary

Council’s Integrated Planning Framework is comprised of seven key strategies. Each strategy expands on our long-term 20-year community vision, *Whittlesea 2040: A place for all* and our *Community Plan 2021–2025*.

In turn, each of these strategies are underpinned by multiple long-term plans, which provide the detailed analysis and rationale. This *Green Wedge Management Plan* (GWMP) (2023-2033) is one of these plans.

The Whittlesea Green Wedge is a resource for the benefit of all City of Whittlesea residents and visitors. The Green Wedge contains agricultural land, scenic landscapes, heritage places, open space and landscapes to be enjoyed.

There are many complex and competing priorities to be addressed in managing our Green Wedge, particularly at the Green Wedge/urban interface. These issues were clearly identified through the community engagement undertaken as part of the preparation of this *Green Wedge Management Plan*.

Over 550 community members told us about their vision and priorities through various engagement activities.

The *Green Wedge Management Plan* Vision, Objectives and Strategic Directions identified in this plan are derived from background research and the outcomes of the community engagement. The *Green Wedge Management Plan* has also been informed by the Traditional Owners.

The *Green Wedge Management Plan* tackles a range of issues under the Whittlesea 2040 goals; Sustainable Environment, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Strong Local Economy and Connected Communities.

The *Green Wedge Management Plan* reaffirms the communities’ priorities in protecting biodiversity, natural landscapes and rural characters of the Whittlesea Green Wedge. It envisages a stronger and balanced role for the Whittlesea Green Wedge in supporting a strong local economy through local food production and the visitor economy.

While our community hold diverse opinions on how the Green Wedge should be managed, there is common agreement that it should be protected now and into the future.

In this context it is an important key direction of the *Green Wedge Management Plan* that Council continues to partner, engage and empower Traditional Owners and the community in planning and caring for our Green Wedge.



Part 1 Introduction to the Whittlesea Green Wedge

About this document

This *Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP)* has been divided into 4 parts.

Part 1 Introduction to the Green Wedge

This provides some context as to where the GWMP sits within Council's Integrated Planning Framework.

It also provides a snapshot of the Whittlesea Green Wedge including:

- the physical attributes
- the key features of the area
- a community and economic profile

Part 2 Policy Context for the Green Wedge

This outlines the federal, state and local legislative and policy framework within which the GWMP operates.

Part 3 What our Community told us

This provides information on the values, themes for inclusion in the GWMP and opportunities identified by the community and the Traditional Owners.

Part 4 The Plan: Vision, Objectives and Strategic Directions

This outlines the Vision, Objectives and Strategic Directions for the Green Wedge. These have been developed from background research and the outcomes of the community engagement. They are captured under the Whittlesea 2040 goals: Sustainable Environment, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Strong Local Economy and Connected Communities.

While the GWMP tackles issues of biodiversity, landscape, water and heritage separately, it is acknowledged that the Traditional Owner view of Caring for Country represents a more holistic approach managed according to cultural objectives.

Purpose of the GWMP

The Green Wedge is dynamic and constantly evolving. The State Government requires that all Councils¹ containing a Green Wedge area must prepare a GWMP as a framework for the sustainable management and development of the Green Wedge.

The key task of a GWMP is to articulate the type, scale and form of change in the Green Wedge and how those changes will be managed and facilitated.

Planning Practice Note 31, DELWP 2015, states that through the *Whittlesea Planning Scheme*, the GWMP articulate the Strategic Directions for the Green Wedge and should:

- ensure the vision, role and purpose of the Green Wedge is identified
- confirm the Green Wedge zoning and the schedules to these zones
- ensure identified values, environmental assets and resources are appropriately identified and protected in the planning scheme through tools such as planning scheme overlays and local planning policies
- consider the need to provide further guidance in relation to discretionary uses and developments within the Green Wedge through the Local Planning Policy Framework. (*Planning Practice Note 31 DEWLP 2015*).

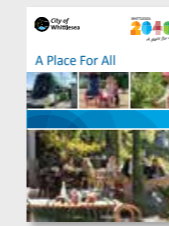
It is important to note that in identifying local directions for the Green Wedge, the GWMP must operate within the existing Victorian legislative and policy framework. For instance, the Whittlesea GWMP does not change things such as the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) or override any other policies, planning or zoning controls set out by the State Government.

The GWMP (2023-2033) proposes a Vision, Objectives and Strategic Directions for the Whittlesea Green Wedge. The Vision outlines the preferred future for the Green Wedge, the Objectives articulate what success looks like on the ground and the Strategic Directions articulate the high-level strategies that will guide Council's journey to achieve the Vision and Objectives.

¹ The Planning and Environment Act 1987 identifies the 17 fringe councils including the City of Whittlesea.

Level 1: Vision

Council's overarching vision



Whittlesea 2040



Community Plan

Integrated Planning Framework

The GWMP (2023-2033) has been developed under Council's new Integrated Planning Framework. The Framework is made up of four levels:

1. Level 1: Vision - Council's overarching Vision Whittlesea 2040: a place for all.
2. Level 2: Strategy - Council's seven key strategies and their action plans.
3. Level 3: Approach - Comprises the long-term plans (of which the GWMP is one) and the detailed analysis and rationale for each key focus area.
4. Level 4: Operations – Operational programs, guidelines and technical documents.

Level 2: Strategy

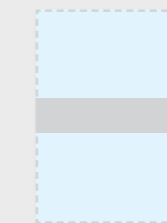
Strategic direction and action plan



Sustainable Environment Strategy



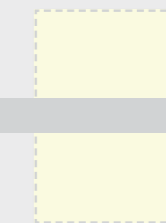
Strong Local Economy



Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy



Connected Communities Strategy

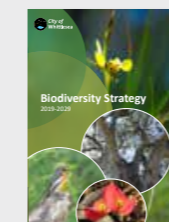


Reconciliation Action Plan

Under development

Level 3: Approach

Long term plans, detailed analysis and detailed rationale



Biodiversity



Water For All



Greening Whittlesea



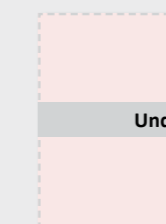
Rethinking Waste



Green Wedge Management Plan



Climate Change



Agri-Food Plan



Destination Plan

Under development

Level 4: Operations

Operational programs, guidelines and technical documents



Processes



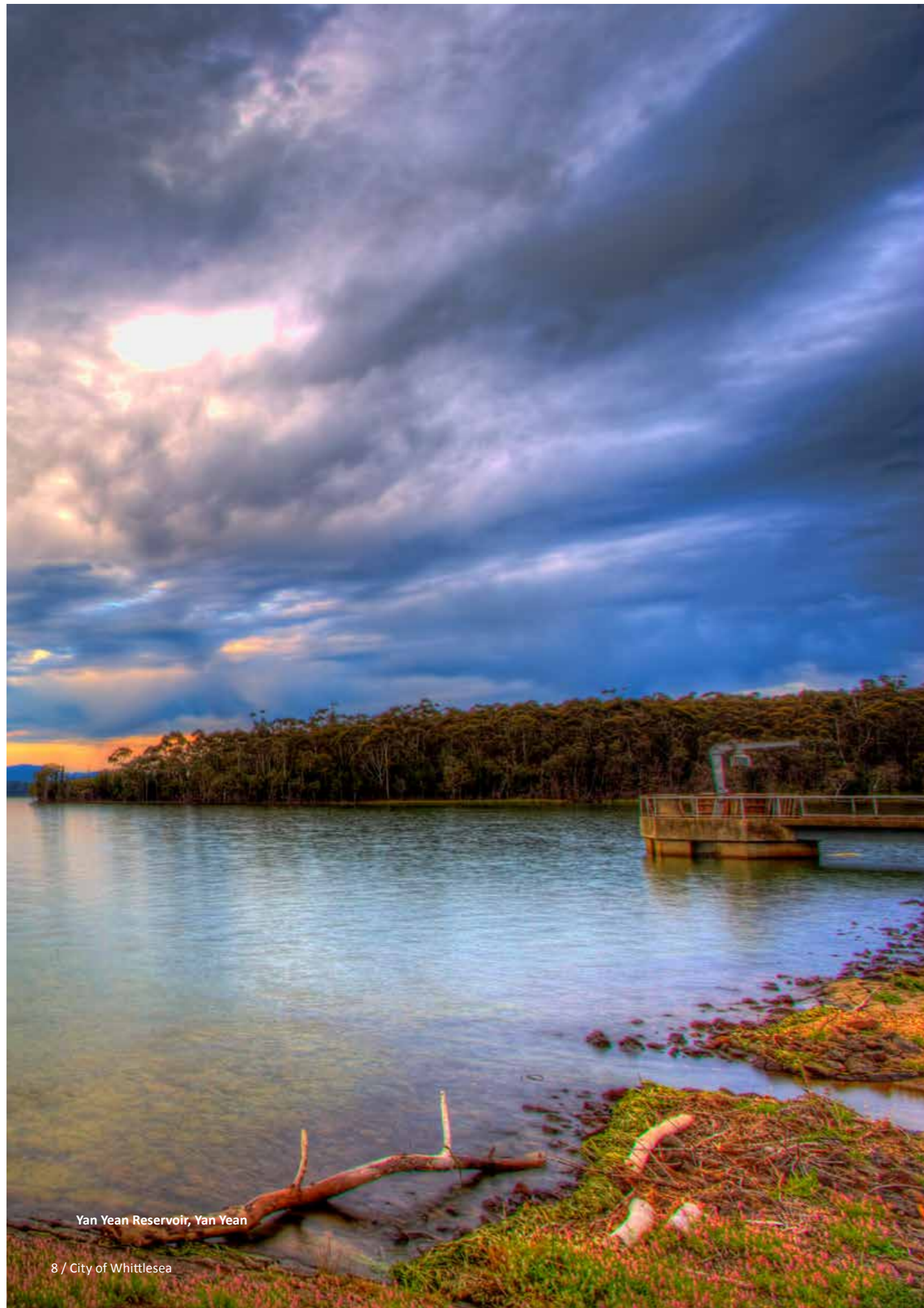
Systems



Professional Development Plans



Environmentally Sustainable Design Guidelines



Yan Yean Reservoir, Yan Yean

What is the Whittlesea Green Wedge?

Over 60% of the City of Whittlesea is rural or non-urban land currently protected from urban development. Officially known as the **'Green Wedge'**, this land is home to productive agricultural land, scenic landscapes, heritage places, rural living, National Parks, forests, waterways, reservoirs and nationally significant flora and fauna.

The Whittlesea Green Wedge is the lungs of the City of Whittlesea and Metropolitan Melbourne, - it's the food bowl that feeds us, - the farms and markets where some of us work or get fresh local fruits and vegetables and open space and landscapes to relax and recharge.

It also holds a significant proportion of the unimpacted Cultural Heritage with many sacred and special places for the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people and the Taungurung people providing the opportunity to celebrate and facilitate enhanced cultural practice.



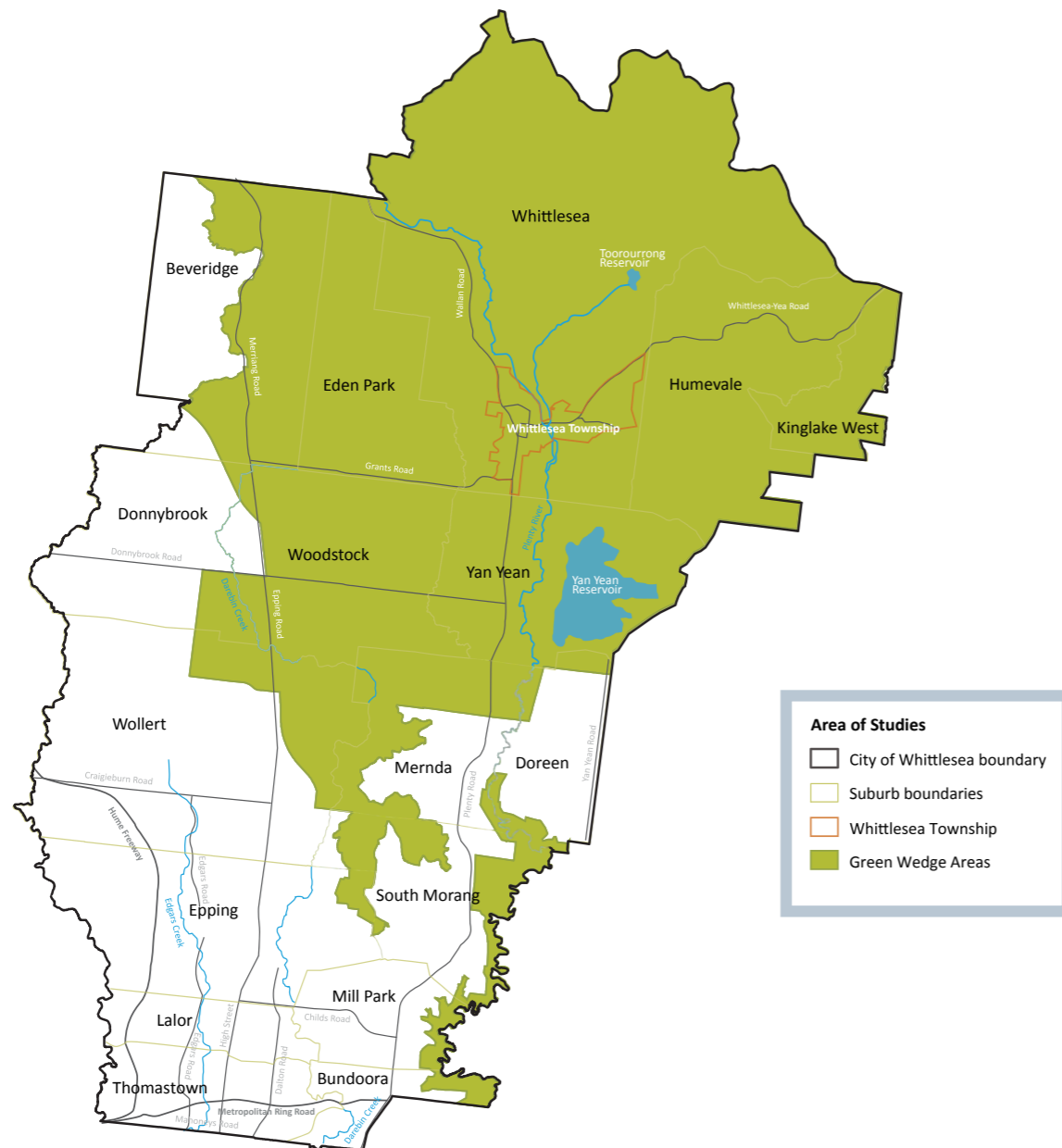
Extent of the Whittlesea Green Wedge

The City of Whittlesea’s Green Wedge consists of the Whittlesea Township and the broader rural area which surrounds it, including Eden Park, Humevale, Kinglake West, South Morang (part), Woodstock, Wollert (part), Donnybrook (part), Beveridge (part), Mernda (part), Doreen (part), Whittlesea (part), and Yan Yean.

The Wurundjeri Willum Clan is the Traditional Owner of the land that now forms the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

The Wurundjeri Willum Clan of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung is part of the Wurundjeri tribe and Woi-Wurrung language group: one of the many language groups that make up the Kulin Nation.

There are also small areas on the northern boundary of the municipality, in Kinglake West (the north facing slopes of the Great Dividing Range) where the Taungurung people are the Traditional Owners.



Map 1. Whittlesea Green Wedge

Key features

The Whittlesea Green Wedge is characterised by its diverse landforms, soil types and land uses. Natural landscapes in the Whittlesea Green Wedge consists mainly of the Highlands being the Southern Fall in the north, Victorian Volcanic Plain in the south, and a small area of Central Victorian Uplands in Quarry Hills.

The following section summarises the key features of the Whittlesea Green Wedge. Significantly, one third of the land is public land used for closed water catchments, national parks and state forests.

Other land uses and characteristics include:

- significant flora and fauna habitats
- agricultural activities
- rural living and small settlements
- recreation and tourism attraction opportunities
- scenic landscapes
- significant Aboriginal and European heritage places
- extractive resources such as sand, clay, gravel and stone.



Biodiversity

The Whittlesea Green Wedge is home to a diverse range of native plants and animals, including native grasslands of National and State significance, River Red Gums, Grassy Eucalypt Woodland, and forested areas such as Kinglake National Park and Mount Disappointment State Forest. Rural areas provide the majority of habitat for native species, and in some cases contain the only remaining vegetation community within the region. Healthy natural environments and the ecosystem services they support are important for the prosperity and liveability for which Melbourne is renowned.



Landscape

Significant landscapes include the flat agricultural landscape of the Plenty Valley, scattered River Red Gums and majestic Plenty Ranges that provide a scenic backdrop to Melbourne. These rural and natural landscapes provide a sense of place whilst contributing to ecological values, supporting tourism and also being culturally significant. The landscape qualities of the Green Wedge are a part of Melbourne’s distinctive character and appeal.



Agriculture

Areas of productive agricultural land support locally grown produce such as olives, wineries, berry farms and cheese products offered for sale at local markets. Although a part time pursuit for many residents, grazing and equestrian activities are also common. Productive agricultural land is a finite resource and plays an important role in contributing to local food supply and making Melbourne a sustainable city. In the Whittlesea Green Wedge, high value is placed on the quality of the rural landscape, contributing an essential liveability element.



Water

The Whittlesea Green Wedge supports the upper and middle catchment areas of the Plenty River, Darebin Creek and Merri Creek. This area contains several closed water supply catchments that contribute to Melbourne’s water supply and is home to the Toorourrong and Yan Yean water storage reservoirs. Waterways, wetlands and floodplains within the municipality provide valuable cultural, environmental, social and economic benefits for residents and visitors alike.



Communities and Settlements

The Green Wedge is highly valued for its liveability with many small rural settlements and areas of rural living. The township of Whittlesea is the most significant, containing more than half of the rural population. Many residents are attracted to the Green Wedge by the rural lifestyle and sense of community.



Aboriginal Culture

Before European colonisation, the Aboriginal people of the Wurundjeri Willam Clan inhabited the area and remain in this area today. A small section of the Taungurung Land and Waters Council area is located in Kinglake West. There are many sites of cultural significance throughout the Green Wedge associated with Aboriginal culture, such as scarred trees, along waterways, stony rises, saddles and ridges. These sites hold special meaning for the Traditional Owners and need to be sustained for the practicing culture of today and future generations.



Historical Heritage

Remnants of early European colonisation are present throughout the Green Wedge including farm homesteads, outbuildings, dry-stone walls and historic hedgerows. The dry-stone walls are linked to historic land use practices, as well as the industry and skills of settlers and landowners. Some walls were built in specific ways such as cultivation paddocks and dry-stone enclosures which may be unique in Victoria.



Tourism and Recreation

The Whittlesea Green Wedge supports a wide range of recreational pursuits, natural attractions and events. Key attractions range from the Country Music Festival to the Whittlesea Agricultural Show. Other attractions include farmers markets, golf courses, leisure recreation, local farm gate products, bushwalking, camping and horse-riding trails. It is also home to various cultural landscapes, education sites or areas of significance for Traditional Owners. All of these attractions and activities deliver important economic, social and environmental benefits to local communities and broader Melbourne.



Extractive Industry

There are two extractive industry operations (quarries) partly located within the Green Wedge. Extractive industries play a fundamental role in supporting Melbourne’s future development and prosperity.



Community and economic profile

This section provides a snapshot of the socio-economic characteristics of the people who live and work in the Whittlesea Green Wedge. It also briefly discusses the food and fibre economy in the City of Whittlesea which is relevant in the Green Wedge context.

Community snapshot

Approximately 3.7% of the City of Whittlesea’s population lives in the Green Wedge. Of those 8,855 people, 64 per cent live in the Whittlesea Township (.id Demographic Profile, 2020).

A comparison of population in 2021 and 2011 shows the following trend:

- slow population growth and an increasingly higher proportion of people living in the Whittlesea Township
- an ageing population overall, with a minor but steady decrease in average household size
- a far more culturally homogenous community compared to the rest of the municipality.

One reverse trend worth noting is the change in the level of education of Green Wedge residents. In 2011, 42% of our Green Wedge residents had some form of qualification², slightly below the municipal average at 46%. By 2016, this had increased to 47% of Green Wedge residents, compared to an overall drop in the municipal average of 39% of residents with some form of qualification.

In comparison with the rest of the municipality, other notable features about our Green Wedge residents include:

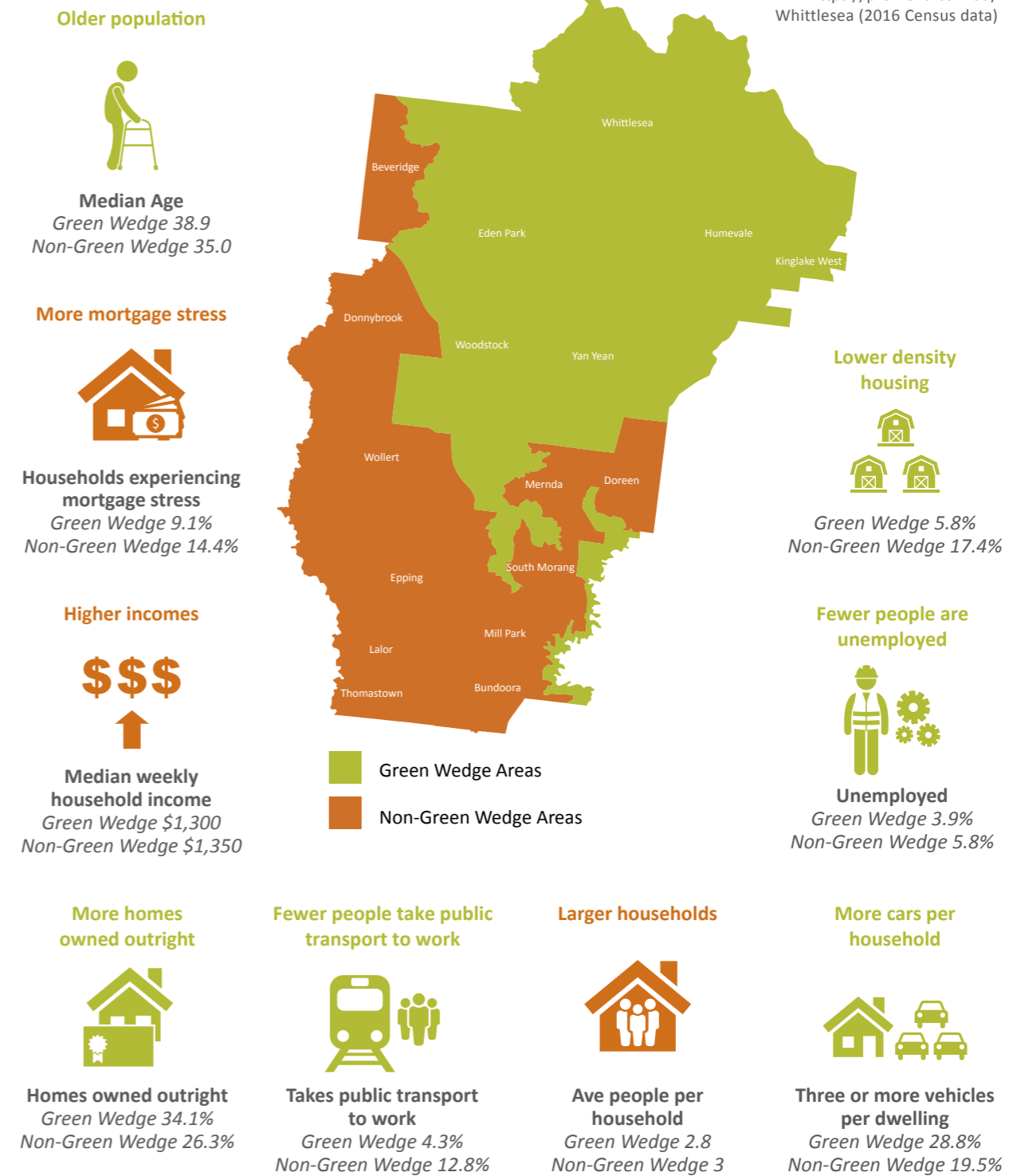
- highest median age and highest volunteering rate
- higher rate of disengaged youth – defined as 15-24-year-olds who are not in employment, looking for work or in full-time study
- considerably higher proportion of Technicians and Trade Workers and a slightly higher proportion of Managers or Professionals
- a notable trend of the 14-25 and 45-59 age cohort moving out of the Green Wedge
- higher and growing proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders population.

It is worth noting that the data above is based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data which was collected before the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic could continue to disrupt the trends observed in the past decade. According to the ABS, in the March 2021 quarter alone, there was a net loss of 11,800 people from capital cities to regional Australia, the largest quarterly net loss on record. Greater Melbourne (including Green Wedges) has a net loss of 8,300 people in the March 2021 quarter, the second largest net loss among capital cities.³

A report commissioned by Council suggests that it is too early to tell how the outward migration from Greater Melbourne to regional areas might have implications for our Green Wedge area (SGS, 2021, *Whittlesea 2040 COVID 19 Impacts Research Report*). Council will need to closely monitor the implication as part of the GWMP implementation.

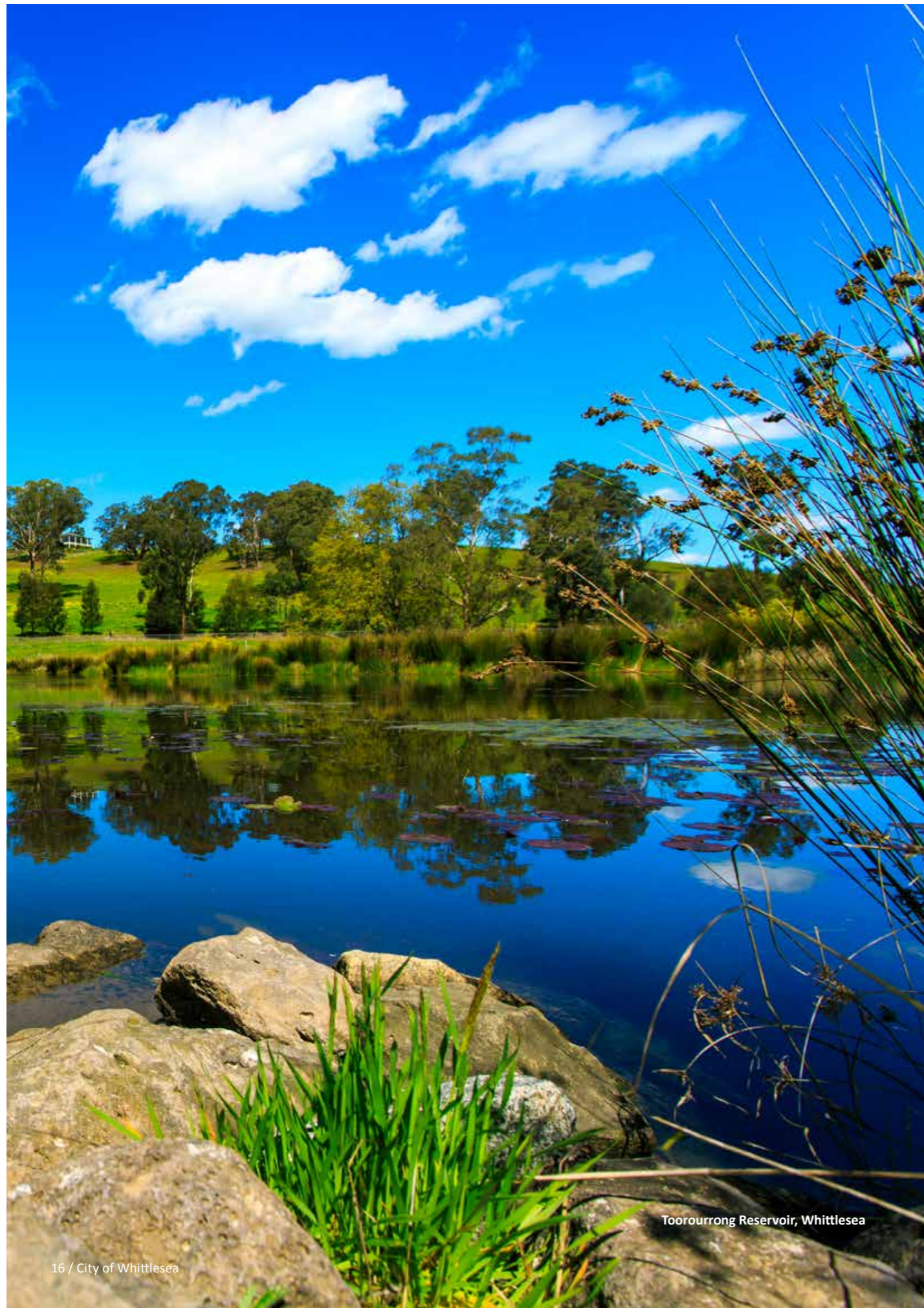
Fig 1. Green Wedge Socio-economic Profile

Source: .id Demographic Profile <https://profile.id.com.au/Whittlesea> (2016 Census data)



² In this case, it refers to Vocational, Diploma or Advanced Diploma, Bachelor or higher degree.

³ Source: ABS, Regional internal migration estimates, provisional, March 2021 (abs.gov.au)



Toorourrong Reservoir, Whittlesea

Local economy

Local food and fibre economy

Food and fibre economy refers to the human-produced or harvested resources used to directly sustain human life and are produced in managed environments such as farms and plantations or harvested from wild stocks.

According to Deloitte Access Economics (2016), the estimated existing economic contribution of food production and manufacturing in Greater Melbourne's Green Wedge and peri urban area is \$2.45 billion per annum to the city's regional economy. In addition, it creates 21,001 full-time equivalent jobs.

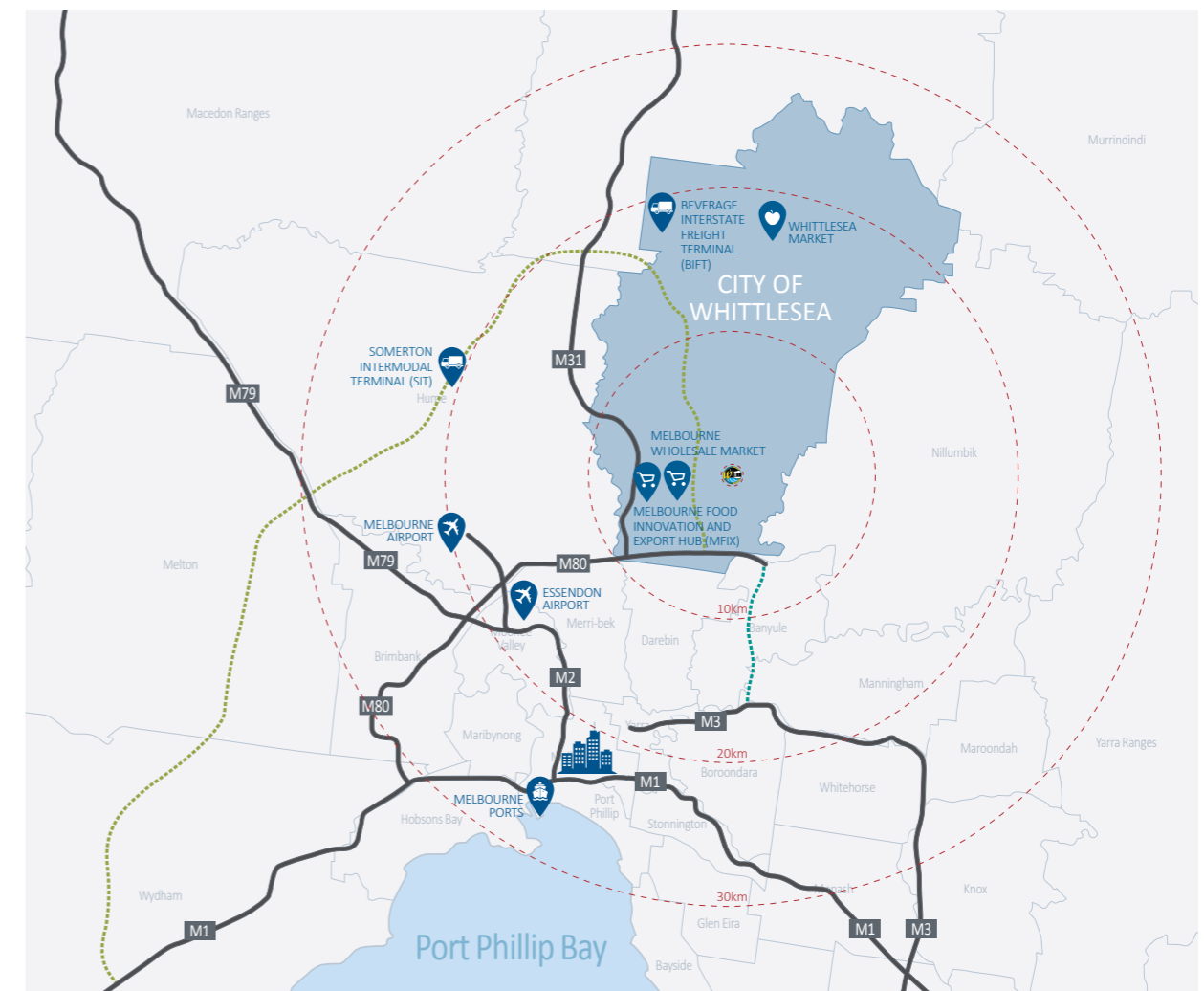
In Victoria, the value of food and fibre exports is projected to increase significantly, reaching a total of \$28 billion by 2030. Melbourne's North is expected to double its output to \$5 billion and create an additional 7,000 jobs in the sector over the next 10 years (North Link, 2020, *Building Communities, Connecting People, Northern Horizons 2020 Evidence Report*).

The City of Whittlesea is perfectly located to facilitate growth in food production and manufacturing, given the proximity to Melbourne Wholesale Market in Epping, the proposed Melbourne Food Innovation and Export Hub (MFIH), and the municipality's direct access to Melbourne's extensive transport infrastructure and close proximity to Melbourne's Airport.

Historically, the City of Whittlesea has been a strong, diverse agricultural region servicing Melbourne with a wide array of produce, including meat, milk, wool, grain, fruit, vegetables and eggs. Many influences including the impact of urban development have since changed the extent and overall value and diversity of our agriculture sector.

In 2020/2021, the municipality had an agricultural commodity value at around \$92.2 million with mushrooms being the dominant agricultural commodity. About 58% of the mushrooms (value) produced in Victoria are produced in the City of Whittlesea.

Map 2.



Excluding mushrooms, livestock slaughtering is the predominant agricultural activity with a value of \$5.2 million. Nurseries (including flowers and cut turf) represents a smaller but still significant activity with a value of \$1.6 million. It is possible that the value of this sector may be higher but the supporting data is not available at this time. Hay and wool production each represent just over 3% of the agricultural value. (see Figure 2 2020/2021 Agricultural Production in City of Whittlesea)

The number of people employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing industries in the City of Whittlesea has reduced steadily from 481 people in 1996 to 332 in 2011. However, the number local residents who were employed by the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries in Victoria, increased in 2016 to 514 and then again to 565 in 2021. (*id. community profile, 2023*).

There is a substantial food manufacturing and a growing food retailing sector in the municipality that make up our local food industry. Food product manufacturing is the largest manufacturing sub-sector in the City of Whittlesea. In 2020/2021, the sub-sector was worth \$967.3 million.

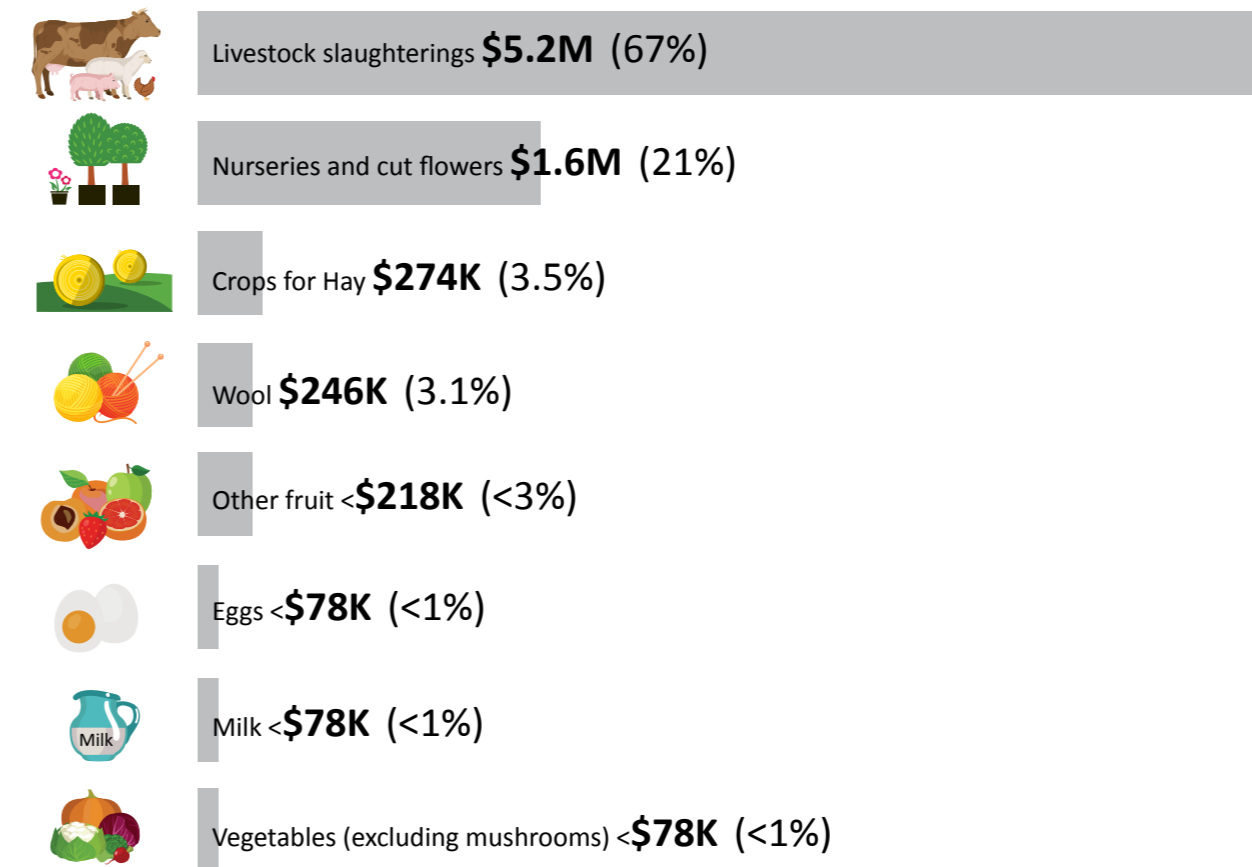
Food Retailing is a growing sector with significant specialisation in our municipality, worth just over \$349.1million (total output) in 2020/2021. The growth is potentially linked to the contribution of local agricultural products in local markets. (*Agri-business Profile, CoW, 2018*)

Council has been actively advocating to Federal government to advance the Melbourne Food Innovation and Export Hub (MFIH) - a 51-hectare site adjacent to the Melbourne Wholesale Market - and develop an international food hub in Melbourne's north. There is a significant opportunity to build upon the existing competitive advantage within the food industry and further support agriculture in the Green Wedge.

Broader local economy

Whilst agriculture is the predominant economic activity in the Whittlesea Green Wedge, a small number of other uses also operate in the Green Wedge. These include Boral and Hanson extractive industries and Funfields Themepark. These non-agricultural uses also contribute to the successful vibrancy of Whittlesea's Green Wedge areas.

Fig 2. 2020/2021 Agricultural Production in CoW (excluding mushroom production)



(Source: Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced in Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics, June 2022)



Part 2 Policy context for the Green Wedge

Legislative framework

Green Wedges are established, planned and protected by the State Government’s legislative and policy framework.

In 2002, the State Government established an UGB around Melbourne to manage outward expansion in a coordinated manner.

It also identified 12 Green Wedges within 17 local government areas (refer to **Map 3. Melbourne’s Green Wedges**) and put in place legislation and policies to protect these valued Green Wedges.

Map 3. Melbourne’s Green Wedges



Table 1 lists the relevant legislation, policy and strategies which are applicable to the Green Wedge.

Table 1

Responsible body	Legislation	Relevant policy and strategy
Federal Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commonwealth’s Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy for Nature 2019-2030
State Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Part 3AA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 Planning Practice Note 31 – Preparing a Green Wedge Management Plan (2015) Water for Victoria (2016) Biodiversity Strategy (2017-2017) Agriculture Victoria Strategy (2017 - 2030) Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy (2022 - 2050) Helping Victoria Grow: Extractive Resources Strategy (2018) State-wide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan (2018) Planning Reforms for Animal Industries (2018) Integrated Water Management Forums Strategic Directions Statements (2018) Regional Tourism Review (2019) Visitor Economy Master Plan (under development) Draft Land Use Framework Plans for Melbourne’s metropolitan regions Planning for Melbourne’s Green Wedges and Agricultural Land Discussion Paper (GWAL) (report under development by DEWLP) Traditional Owner Country Plans Victorian Cultural Landscapes Strategy (2021)
City of Whittlesea	<p>The Whittlesea Planning Scheme contains the following state and regional provisions relevant to Green Wedges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clause 11.01-1R Green Wedges – Metropolitan Melbourne Clause 11.03-3S Peri-urban areas Clause 51.02 Metropolitan Green Wedge Land: Core Planning Provisions <p>The Whittlesea Planning Scheme also contains the following local policies relevant to Whittlesea’s Green Wedge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clause 02.03 Municipal Planning Strategy – Strategic Directions Clause 11.01-1L Green Wedge areas Clause 12.01-1L Protection of biodiversity Clause 14.01-2L Sustainable agricultural land use Clause 15.03-1L Heritage Conservation in Whittlesea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All City of Whittlesea Community Plan 2021-2025 Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-2032 Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026 Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy (under development) Connected Communities Strategy (under development) Reconciliation Action Plan (under review) Greening Whittlesea: City Forest Strategy 2020 – 2040 Whittlesea Water for All - Our Water Strategy 2020 – 2030 Climate Change Plan 2022 - 2032 Biodiversity Strategy 2019 - 2029 Rethinking Waste Plan 2021 - 2030 Green Wedge Management Plan 2023 - 2033 Destination Plan (under development) Agri-Food Plan (under development)

Plan Melbourne - the city's current metropolitan strategy articulates the State Government's future Vision and desired planning outcomes for Melbourne's Green Wedge areas. Importantly, it identifies the State Government's intention to maintain a permanent UGB to strengthen the protection and management of Melbourne's Green Wedges.

Agriculture and environmental considerations are generally the primary focus of Green Wedges, although Plan Melbourne (Outcome 4) (Appendix 2 - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 Desired planning outcomes for Green Wedge and peri-urban areas) provides further detail identifying other appropriate activities for Green Wedge including:

- Provide land for a range of open space functions to meet community needs for active and passive recreation and for protection of the environment
- Facilitate sustainable year-round tourism, and new tourism development (including diverse attractions, accommodation and eating establishments) that maintains the integrity of the natural environment, provides social benefits for communities and visitors and contributes to local economies.

The State Government is undertaking a *Green Wedge Agricultural Land Review (GWAL)* with the intent to further strengthen Green Wedge planning provisions and protect agricultural land. Council has been advocating for relevant changes supporting stronger protection of biodiversity conservation and agricultural land through the GWAL review process. At the time of writing, the GWAL outcomes had not been released by State Government.

Whittlesea Planning Scheme

There are **three rural zones** in the Whittlesea Green Wedge and all of these zones support the use of land for agriculture and biodiversity enhancement. A summary of rural zones in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme is included (refer to **Table 2**).

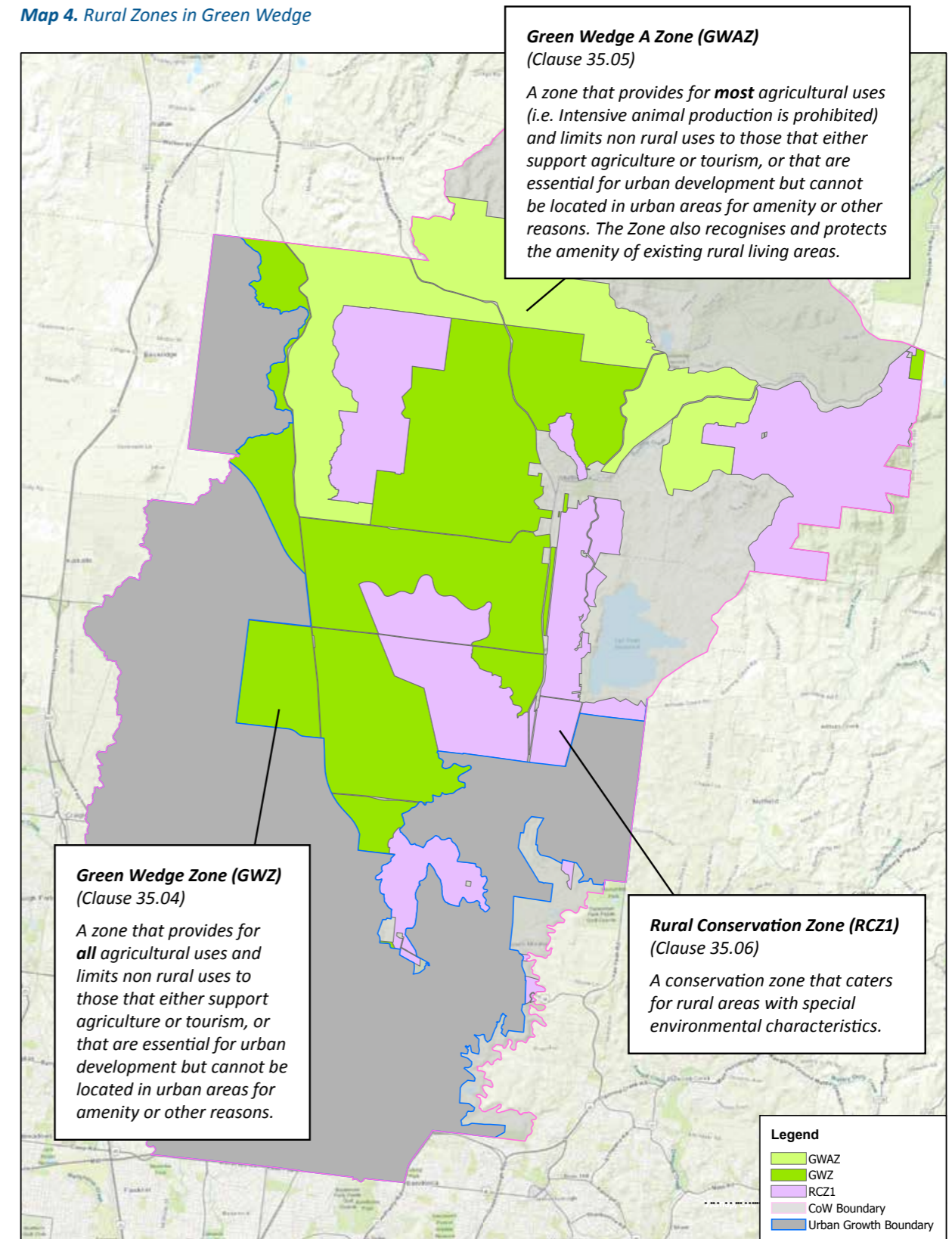
While, agriculture and environmental considerations are generally the primary focus of these zones, there are a range of other appropriate non rural uses that may be permitted, providing they also meet the purpose of Clause 51.02 of the *Whittlesea Planning Scheme*. Clause 51.02 includes:

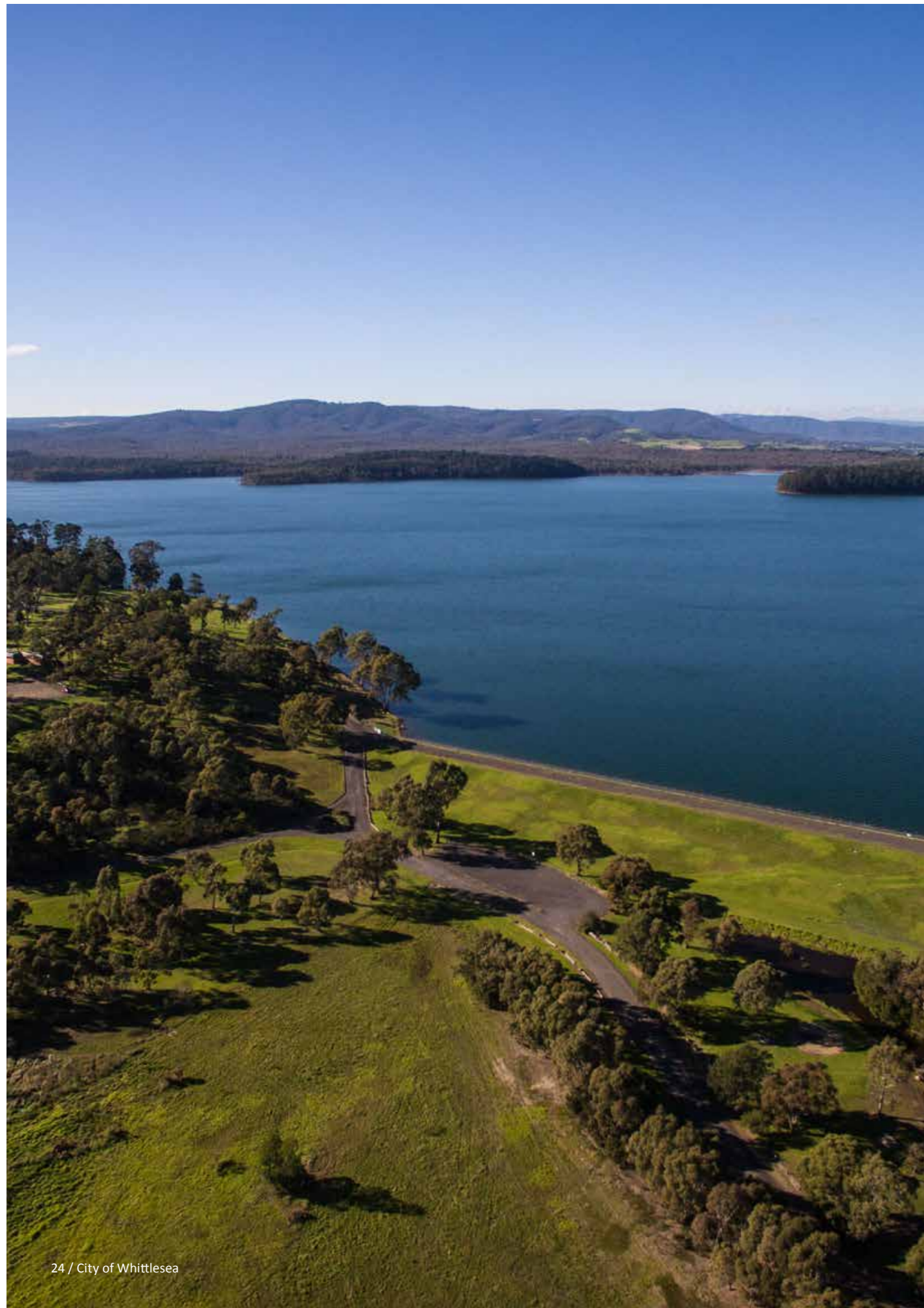
- To protect metropolitan Green Wedge land from uses and development that would diminish its agricultural, environmental, cultural heritage, conservation, landscape natural resource or recreation values
- To protect productive agricultural land from incompatible uses and development
- To ensure that the scale of use is compatible with the non-urban character of metropolitan green wedge land
- To encourage the location of urban activities in urban areas.

Each Green Wedge zone defines the land uses which are permissible, either a Section 1 use where no planning permit is required or as a Section 2 use where a range of conditions must be met. Section 3 uses are prohibited.

In some instances for Section 2 uses, an 'in-conjunction' test may need to be applied. This test states that the use 'must be used in conjunction with Agriculture, Natural systems, Outdoor recreation facility, Rural industry or Winery'.

Map 4. Rural Zones in Green Wedge





Management: a shared responsibility

Managing Whittlesea's Green Wedge is a shared responsibility and involves a wide range of parties including:

- Traditional Owners
- Private landowners, residents and local business owners
- Government departments and authorities, utility and power companies and service agencies such as Department of Transport, Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria who manage significant land holdings, natural features, state assets or local facilities
- Volunteers and community groups including Landcare groups, "Friends of" groups, Country Fire Authority, dedicated community interest groups and sporting groups.

It is important to recognise that Council has different roles and responsibilities (provider, advocate, partner, regulator, and facilitator) in the management of the Green Wedge. Increasingly, the City of Whittlesea also needs to partner with the Federal and State Governments, other local councils, Traditional Owners and organisations who share a common interest in managing the Green Wedge.



Part 3 What our community told us

Community engagement

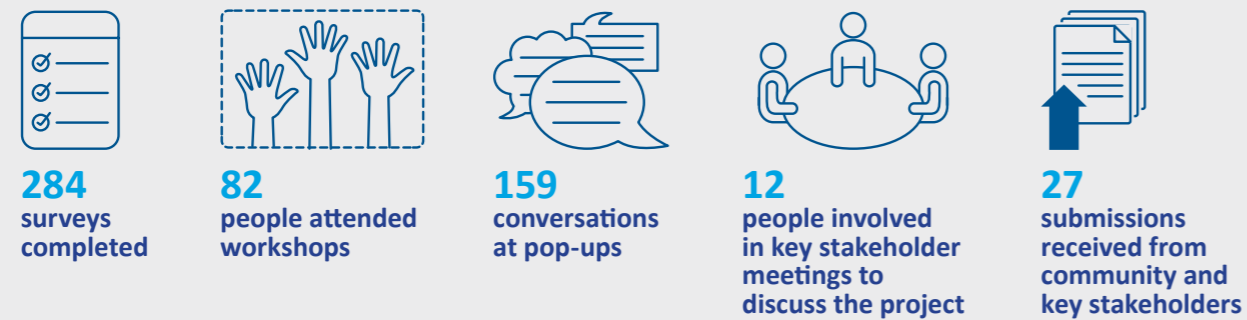
The Whittlesea Green Wedge community includes people who live or work in the Green Wedge, and those who feel strongly connected with Green Wedge for other environmental, social, economic reasons.

In preparing the GWMP, over 550 community members and stakeholders directly participated in a range of engagement activities including meetings, drop-in sessions, face to face or online information sessions, and surveys.

This engagement, used in conjunction with background research undertaken by Council and consultation with other key stakeholders, identified the key issues affecting the Green Wedge and guides the direction of the plan.

The infographic below provides the breakdown of engagement activities undertaken.

Figure 3. Overview of engagement activity participation



Source: Findings from Green Wedge Management Plan Community Engagement Report, CoW 2021
Findings from Green Wedge Management Plan Review Stage 2 Community Engagement, Capire 2022

The conversations were built around the Whittlesea 2040's four goals: Sustainable Environment, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Strong Local Economy, and Connected Community which form key elements of Council's Integrated Planning Framework (which is explained in more detail on page 7).

The main questions Council asked during the engagements included:

- what does the community value the most about the Whittlesea Green Wedge
- what themes the community want to see included the GWMP 2023-2033
- what opportunities exist to help meet these aspirations.



Quotes from our community

'Do not allow re-zoning for housing development or farming development in Eden park- protect the remnant vegetation' Protect the masons road metropolitan boundary.'

'Responsible interaction with the environment to avoid depletion or degradation of natural resources and allow for long-term environmental quality and increased community interactions, improved living standards and manageable growth.'

'Establishing appropriate uses/ development at the interface of the urban growth boundary. There will be a transition from urban to rural properties and therefore guidance on appropriate uses and development in those locations.'

'Greater support for innovative land use for value maximisation. Reduced focus on livestock, more focus on high value sustainable crops. Continue support for local distribution and consumption.'

'Raising awareness that a Green Wedge area serves an important role as the "lungs" of Melbourne and can only do this if there "Green" is protected through maintaining clean waterways and flora and fauna protection.'

'Protecting life is more important than allowing people to live in areas that will put them, their family and those tasked to go and save them from themselves during environmental hazards occurring.'

'Involve community in the solutions, upskill community to gain knowledge that supports economic participation and employment pathways that not only maintain but also activate these spaces in a sustainable way.'

'Improving and protecting our waterways is paramount. Assistance programs for landowners to improve the quality of the natural waterways, assisting with erosion and re vegetation.'

'It is imperative the metropolitan boundary is maintained, and the green wedge is protected. Connecting the community of Eden park with a bus service. Protecting vegetation and rejecting re zoning for development.'

'I would prefer to create tourism and recreation than develop land as it has been done in the past.'

'Green Wedge Education to the residents via different platform. Social media which is free to run and could reach out more people at a lower running cost should be considered.'

'The broader, diverse Whittlesea community needs greater opportunities to connect, engage with and protect the truly green elements of their local area.'

'Cultural heritage mapping to understand key Aboriginal values, Master planning of blue-green networks to build connectivity between the Green Wedge and neighbouring urban areas.'

'Give people the opportunity to reside here.'

'Adding value to the area is essential to attract visitors and income. This relies on well planned and managed spaces that are attractive, integrate the natural environment with the human, and are easily accessible to the community.'

'Work with innovative groups focused on sustainability in agriculture.'



'Having a Green Wedge zone in such close proximity to Melbourne creates significant opportunity for the development of an ecotourism industry that would serve to support employment and raise awareness for the diverse flora and fauna that exists in the area.'

'Stop large unsustainable subdivisions.'



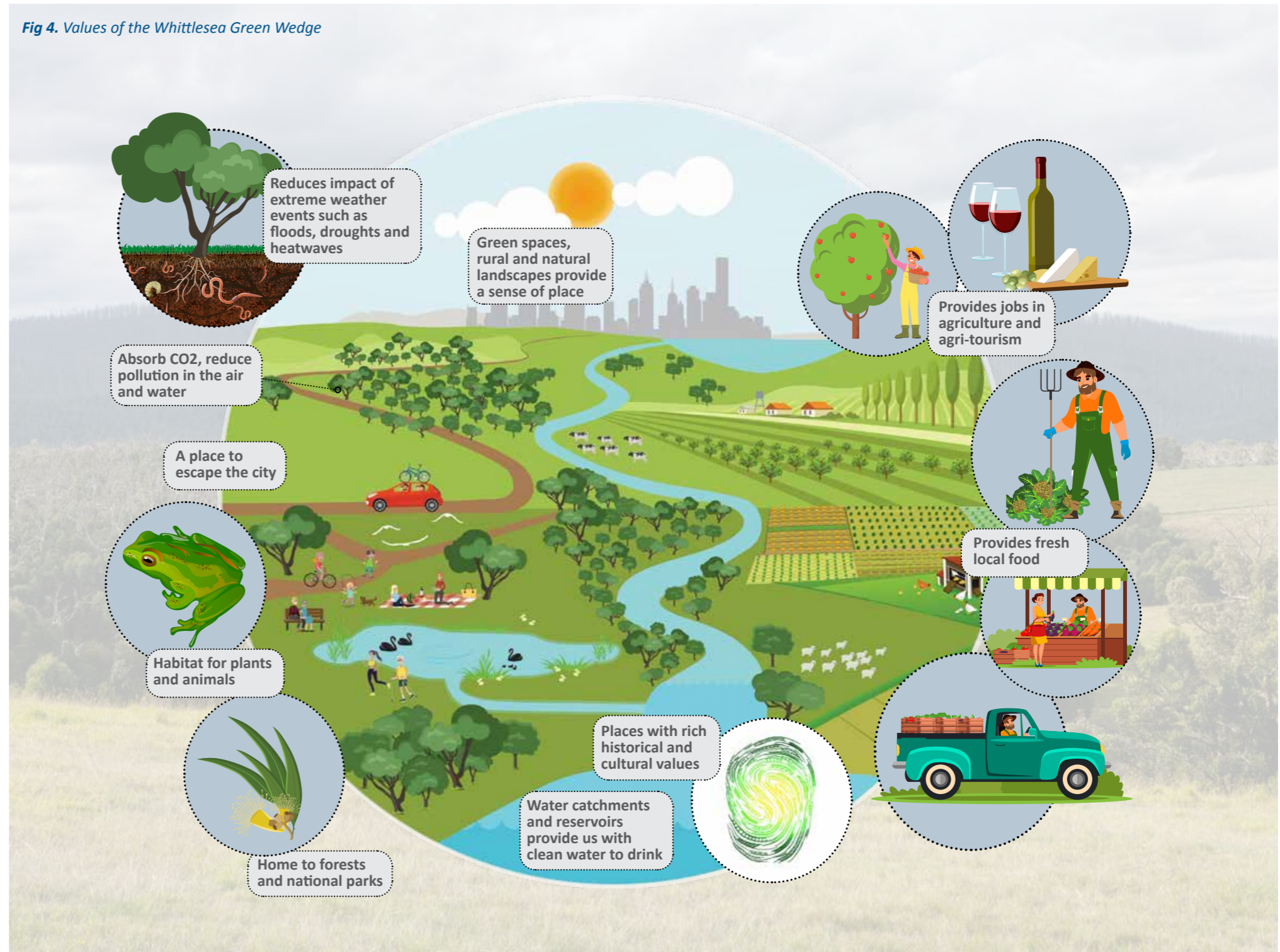
What the community values

Figure 4 illustrates the diverse values of the Green Wedge held by the broader Whittlesea community. Importantly, it highlights that 'environmental values' such as biodiversity and natural landscapes and its associated benefits are most important to the community.

The top 6 values are:

- The positive effects on my wellbeing from enjoying green natural spaces
- The existence of natural landscapes and features like hills, trees, waterways and animals
- The environmental benefits from reduced pollution in the air and water, reduced heat or flood impact from extreme weather events
- Local food produced in the area
- Local jobs in agriculture and related industries
- Cultural and spiritual connection to the land.

Fig 4. Values of the Whittlesea Green Wedge



The Fingerprint image has been created by Mandy Nicholson Wurundjeri artist, it contains traditional Wurundjeri motifs and represents how it is connected to the Earth, just like our fingerprints.



Themes identified

The values helped to identify the key themes that the community thought should be included in the GWMP. These themes include:





- enhance and protect biodiversity
- protect natural assets / resources
- encourage and support innovative and sustainable land management practice
- protect and enhance rural character and landscape
- support farming and food production
- protect and enhance the rich Aboriginal heritage and cultural practices
- protect and enhance post contact heritage, including dry-stone walls
- protect the Green Wedge from urban encroachment
- connect people to natural areas through the provision of walking trails and bicycle paths and other facilities
- educate and provide support to residents and visitors in caring for and respecting the Green Wedge
- more trees.

The community, as a whole, indicated they would like to continue to be involved and learn more about the Green Wedge including how to look after and care for the area.

Opportunities identified

The community was asked to identify the opportunities for the Green Wedge and these collated under the 4 goals of Sustainable Environment, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Strong Local Economy and Connected Communities.

Table 2. Opportunities identified in community engagement

 Sustainable Environment	 Liveable Neighbourhoods	 Strong Local Economy	 Connected Community
<p>Key opportunities identified for creating a Sustainable Environment included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the management and protection of biodiversity • assist landowners, residents and environmental groups to deal with erosion, re-vegetation and weed control and improve the quality of the natural waterways • improve water management in the Green Wedge • partner with field experts to support and provide education in sustainable agriculture and land management practices, soil quality and ecology • protect and plant more trees in the Green Wedge and grow the significant tree registry • work with the State Government to maintain the Urban Growth Boundary. 	<p>Key opportunities identified for creating Liveable Neighbourhoods included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect and enhance the rural landscape • discourage new residential development in areas prone to environmental hazards such as flood, erosion and bushfire • support good management and use of land close to the rural/urban fringe • provide better quality and fit-for-purpose roads • partner with other councils, government, and organisations who share a common interest in managing Green Wedge areas. 	<p>Key opportunities identified for creating a Strong Local Economy included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support local business owners in the agri-food industry that will bring more local jobs and help creating a healthier community • offer greater flexibility for producers in how they use their land to carry out diverse, value adding and innovative farming practices • increase opportunities for people to buy local produce, e.g. by promoting local producers, farm gate sales • explore opportunities for tourism in the rural areas; from agritourism to recreational activities • review Council incentives to better support agribusiness. 	<p>Key opportunities identified for creating a connected community included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and support the diverse needs of our rural community • listen to landowners and residents to benefit from local knowledge for better land management outcomes and improved understandings of local histories • greater focus on protection of places of indigenous significance, and incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into the management of the Green Wedge • upskill the community and provide education on important issues relating to the Green Wedge.

The key opportunities identified within the community engagement have been developed into the Objectives and Strategic Directions used in this GWMP.



Part 4: The Plan: vision, objectives and strategic directions

The following section has been informed by the outcomes of the community engagement process.

Vision

The Whittlesea Green Wedge will be recognised for its enhanced natural environment and celebrated cultural assets, for providing a productive and diversified local economy and ensuring the well-being benefits of this beautiful space are enjoyed by all.

Objectives

The objectives for the Whittlesea Green Wedge have been captured under the four Whittlesea 2040 goals, listed on the next page.



Strategic Directions - Sustainable environment



Key Issues

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the number and variety of living things on the planet. There are many threats to Whittlesea's biodiversity, such as land use changes; habitat fragmentation; weeds, pest animals and pathogens; inappropriate land management; and climate change. It is important that Council continues to work with State Government, landowners, residents, land managers and Traditional Owners to improve the management and protection of biodiversity and natural landscapes across the municipality now and into the future. The future Grassy Eucalypt Woodland (GEW) investigation area as described in the Melbourne Strategic Assessment, remains a significant outstanding matter (see below).

Grassy Eucalypt Woodland conservation

The future Grassy Eucalypt Woodland (GEW) investigation area of the Victorian Volcanic Plain is a Nationally significant ecological community that is listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

In 2009, The Commonwealth Government, under the EPBC Act, approved the extension of Melbourne's UGB, subject to conditions aimed at ensuring that development occurs in a way that protects areas of environmental significance. This includes securing 1200ha of GEW Reserve in the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

The Whittlesea GEW investigation area is covered by an Environment Significant Overlay (ESO). However, to date no land within this reserve has been secured or acquisition processes commenced by the State. Securing the GEW investigation area is important not only for the City of Whittlesea, but also adjoining Councils and the State of Victoria as a whole.

It will:

- protect biodiversity assets and safeguard the landscape qualities for Whittlesea's Green Wedge
- manage the urban-rural interface by introducing a permanent and functional buffer to the urban growth areas.

Soil management

Managing soil health is an emerging issue of national significance (Commonwealth, 2021). In the Whittlesea Green Wedge, high level soil mapping information indicates that the area is likely to contain sodic and dispersive soils that are prone to structural decline (Jacobs 2020). In addition, much of the northern area in our Green Wedge is hilly and susceptible to gully formation resulting from erosion. Any removal of vegetation and ground cover in these areas heightens the risk of gully formation and erosion, especially when the soils are sandy or sodic and prone to structural decline.

The significant environmental and economic impacts of erosion are often site-specific, yet their effects are wide ranging including but not limited to:

- increased erosion potential
- a deterioration in water quality and degradation of aquatic flora and fauna habitat
- failure of civil and private assets (i.e. roads, fences, dams and sheds) due to soil movement
- diminishing areas of productive agricultural land - poor ability to establish vegetative growth leading to a failure to thrive for open spaces, gardens and street trees
- decreased infiltration and holding capacity, and high runoff rates
- potential damage to traditional culture elements.



Tunnel erosion in Whittlesea Green Wedge

Soil salinity has also been identified as a key biophysical threat to our Green Wedge with saline soils recorded across much of the Green Wedge. Saline soils can have a significant impact on biodiversity, farming, water quality and physical condition of rivers and streams. Salinity can also degrade soil structure and cause erosion. It is important that Council seek opportunities to work with all level of governments, including neighbouring Councils to understand and improve soil management across the Green Wedges.

Green Wedge areas are also susceptible to illegal soil and fill dumping, particularly given their proximity to subdivision works within the growth areas making them attractive, cheap dumping locations.

This is partly due to the absence of permit triggers within the planning scheme on land within the Green Wedge and Rural Conservation Zones, unless the works are of a specified nature impacting on saline ground water or changing the rate of flow across title boundaries, or where the land is subject to an overlay that requires a planning permit for earthworks. Erosion management exemptions also create ambiguity and when coupled with the absence of all encapsulating permit requirements for earthworks, Councils are unable to properly regulate the occurrence of land filling and any associated impacts on the environment and the amenity of the surrounding area.

Water management

The Whittlesea Green Wedge contains the critical upper and middle catchments of various metropolitan waterways, including the Plenty River, the Merri Creek, Darebin Creek and a small portion of the Diamond Creek. It is also home to various wetlands and the important water supply catchment of Yan Yean Reservoir and the Toorourrong Reservoir that is linked by channels to the Yan Yean Reservoir. Groundwater held in aquifers also contributes to surface water supplies, interacting and contributing to the flow and health of waterways and wetlands.

Careful management of the upper and middle water catchment in the Whittlesea Green Wedge is crucial to the overall stream and waterway health. There are ongoing threats to the health of rural waterways. In the northern rural area of the Green Wedge, some waterways and their tributaries are flow starved due to the impact of human interventions in the catchment such as farm dams, licenced extractions and weirs and diversions for water supply.

This interwoven relationship between surface and groundwater resources, and how activities on the land affect water health, relies on integrated catchment management to tie together the range of considerations.

Council also recognises the importance of water to the culture and lifestyle of the Traditional Owners.

Council needs to continue work with rural landowners, water agencies and Traditional Owners to improve the ecological condition of the waterways, tributaries, wetlands and the overall water resilience in our Green Wedge. There may also be opportunities to explore alternative water sources given the proximity of agricultural land to the growth areas.

It is important to note that Melbourne Water's *Healthy Waterways Strategy* for the Yarra River catchment identifies an extensive range of objectives for each waterway within the strategy, including Plenty River, Merri Creek and Darebin Creek. There is a strong alignment between Council and Melbourne Water for collaboration in better water management.

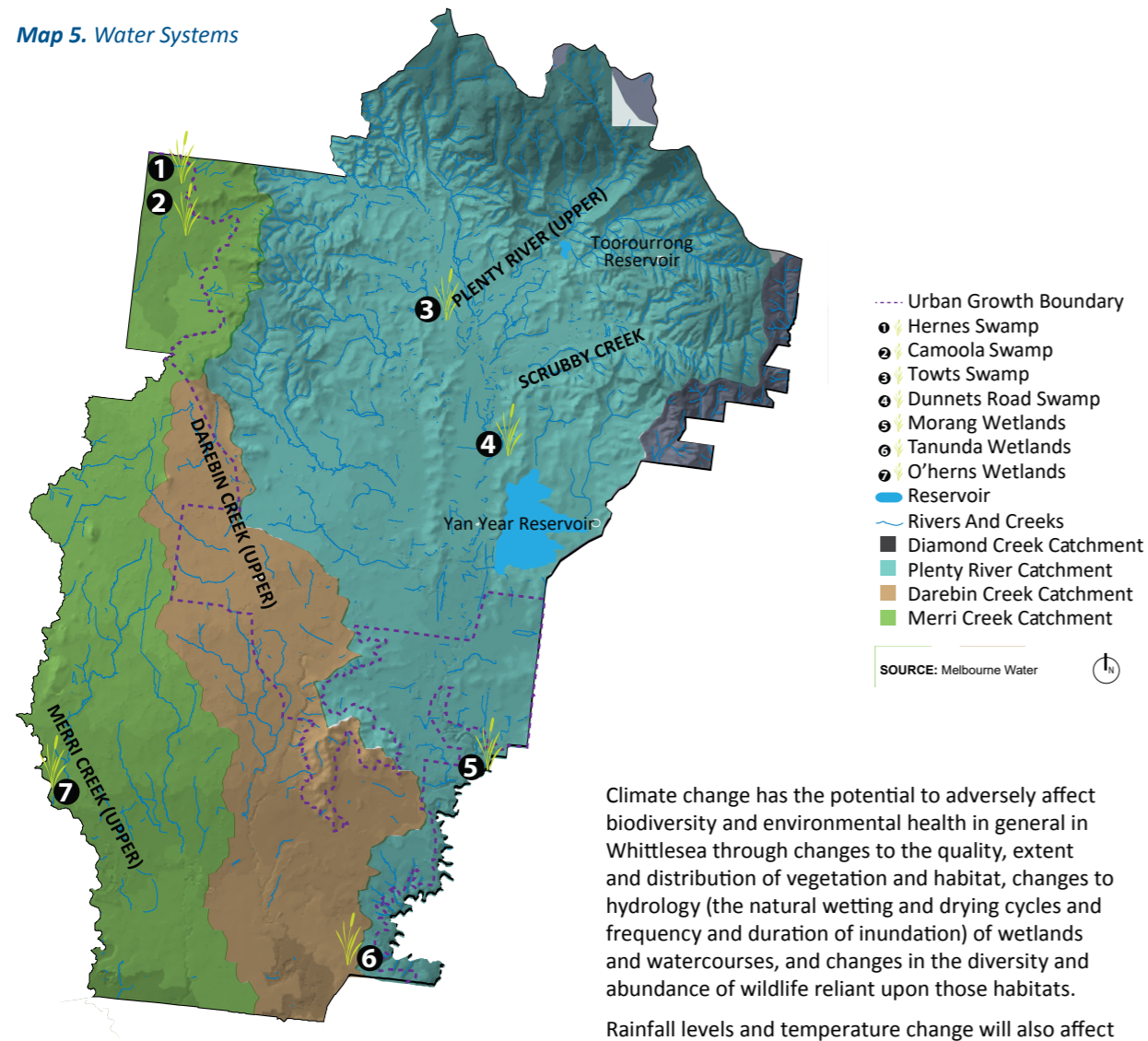
Alternative water for farmers

Water is increasingly becoming a limiting factor for agriculture in the Green Wedge. Council also sees an opportunity in supporting farmers to build alternative water systems that are different to dams which can have detrimental impact on waterways health for multiple reasons.

Alternative water is water supplied by sustainable sources that can be used to help offset the use of fresh surface water and groundwater (such as lakes and aquifers). Alternative water sources include rainwater from your roof, storm water, treated wastewater or greywater. There is an opportunity in supporting farmers to build small alternative water systems that are different to dams.

For instance, capturing rainfall runoff from shed and house rooves can be a reliable, efficient water source that is easily overlooked. On small properties around 8 hectares or less, it is generally more efficient to capture water from a shed roof than to create a dam that will leak, erode and evaporate a lot of water when it is mostly needed. Agriculture Victoria has provided an online 'farm dam calculator' to demonstrate and compare differences.

Map 5. Water Systems



Climate change has the potential to adversely affect biodiversity and environmental health in general in Whittlesea through changes to the quality, extent and distribution of vegetation and habitat, changes to hydrology (the natural wetting and drying cycles and frequency and duration of inundation) of wetlands and watercourses, and changes in the diversity and abundance of wildlife reliant upon those habitats.

Rainfall levels and temperature change will also affect access to water and impact rural production. Increased frequency of extreme weather events such as storms will impact farming through increased erosion, yield reduction and damage to crops, etc.

Trees on public and private land are important green infrastructure providing a range of benefits including improved mental and physical wellbeing, reduced heating and cooling costs, increased property values. They also reduce air pollution, store carbon, slow and filter storm water run-off, and provide habitat for wildlife.

Trees also have a major role to play both in connecting communities within Liveable Neighbourhoods, and in our response to changing climate conditions.

There is potential to capitalise on carbon sequestration opportunities through sustainable farming practice and vegetation cover enhancement.

There is an increased awareness of the community's vulnerability to climate change. Recent flooding, bushfire events and heat waves have brought focus to the increasing impacts of climate change, changing the way land is managed, and future planning for the Green Wedge.

Climate change

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the first instalment of their sixth assessment report on 9 August 2021, which states that every corner of the planet is already being affected and it could get far worse. Based on our current trajectory, global warming would likely increase to 1.5°C by about 2030 (IPCC, 2021).

In recent decades, the City of Whittlesea has become hotter and drier, a trend which is expected to continue. In comparison to 1986-2005, by the 2050s under a high emissions scenario, the climate future of the City of Whittlesea will experience:

- rising temperatures (increase of maximum temperature up to 2.3°C)
- more frequent, intense, and longer heatwaves (double the number of heatwave days)
- decline in rainfall (up to 14% less cool season rainfall)
- harsher fire weather, longer fire season, and more fire danger days.

Strategic Directions

1.1 Improve the management and protection of biodiversity.

Implementation of *Sustainable Environment Strategy (2022-2032)*

- Seeks to improve the management and protection of biodiversity across the municipality

Implementation of the *Biodiversity Strategy (2019-2029)*

- Continues to build on the many efforts already underway by individuals, community groups, and government
- Aims to develop a coordinated approach that will allow for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment
- Recognises the Traditional Owner approach to biodiversity management

Implementation of the *Climate Change Strategy (2022-2032)*

- Includes a range of actions to build environmental/ecological resilience to the impacts of climate change

1.2 Partner with landowners and land managers to ensure water is managed in an integrated and effective manner in the Green Wedge.

Implement *Whittlesea Water for All (2020 – 2030)*

- Outcomes of this strategy aim to keep our waterways clean and our priority green spaces irrigated
- Aims to improve Council and the community's preparedness for floods and droughts, and water efficiency
- Within the Green Wedge area, the strategy proposes to 'Support local agriculture and improve water management
- Work with Traditional Owners and other partners to create a pathway to embed indigenous values (cultural flows) in the management of the Upper Merri Creek
- Strong alignment between Council's GWMP and the Melbourne Water's *Healthy Waterways Strategy*

1.3 Improve the management of our City Forest that connects people, nature and place.

Implementation of the *Greening Whittlesea - City Forest Strategy (2020-2040)*

In rural areas:

- work with land owners to revegetate rural areas, especially along waterways, taking bushfire considerations into account
- protect existing trees and green cover

1.4 Partner with landowners and other government agencies to improve soil health.

Implementation of *Sustainable Environment Strategy (2022-2032)*

- Managing soil health is an emerging issue of national significance
- Continue to partner with landowners, community groups and Traditional Owners to enhance soil quality via a framework of sustainable land management, and to liaise with various levels of government to manage risk and improve overall soil health
- Explore opportunities to protect and improve soil health, including the prevention of soil dumping

Strategic Directions - Liveable neighbourhoods



Key Issues

Landscape amenity and rural character

There are four main land character areas in our Green Wedge: The Plenty Valley; The Plenty Ranges; The Hills and Western Plains. Each of these landscape character areas contain specific areas of visual significances, natural features and examples of the City’s cultural heritage which all contribute to the establishment of the identity of the City of Whittlesea. In addition, there are key green breaks identified as having particular importance to maintaining the Green Wedge. For instance, the green urban break between Mernda and Whittlesea Township.

Community engagement indicated that in the Whittlesea Green Wedge, a high value is placed on the quality of the rural landscape and landscape amenity which provide valuable environmental, social and economic benefits for residents and visitors alike through its contribution to liveability, sense of place, and delivering quality tourism/recreation experiences.

Local policies in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme already includes strategies to protect landscape amenity and rural land character in the Green Wedge. Yet, further work is required in better supporting Council officers at the policy implementation and enforcement stage to ensure the built form and location of development in the Green Wedge contributes to diverse environments and sense of place.

In particular, further guidance is required to ensure that the development of sheds/outbuildings in Green Wedge is compatible with the purpose of the zones and respond appropriately to their context. Planning data for the past decade indicates that over half of the statutory planning applications are for sheds/ outbuildings. A number of issues have been identified in respect to some of these proposals, including:

- the intensity of the building size and associated uses - some of those sheds are built at a scale larger than those on industrial blocks in designated industrial areas and have multiple cars and trucks entering and leaving sites via dirt roads that were not designed for heavy use
- inappropriate location - some are proposed to be built on structurally unstable sodic soils which create environmental issues such as tunnel erosion.

Rural living and natural hazards

Rural living or rural residential development refers to the occupation of rural land primarily for lifestyle residential purposes rather than for farming.⁵ Across metropolitan Melbourne, there is high demand for rural living and the desire to use Green Wedges and agricultural land for a range of urban activities.

The State Government clearly articulates the following desired planning outcomes to address rural living and natural hazards in *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*:

- manage rural living to prevent negative impacts on agriculture, biodiversity and landscape values
- avoid development in areas that are subject to high risk from bushfire or flooding and inundation so as to minimise potential risk to life, property and the environment.

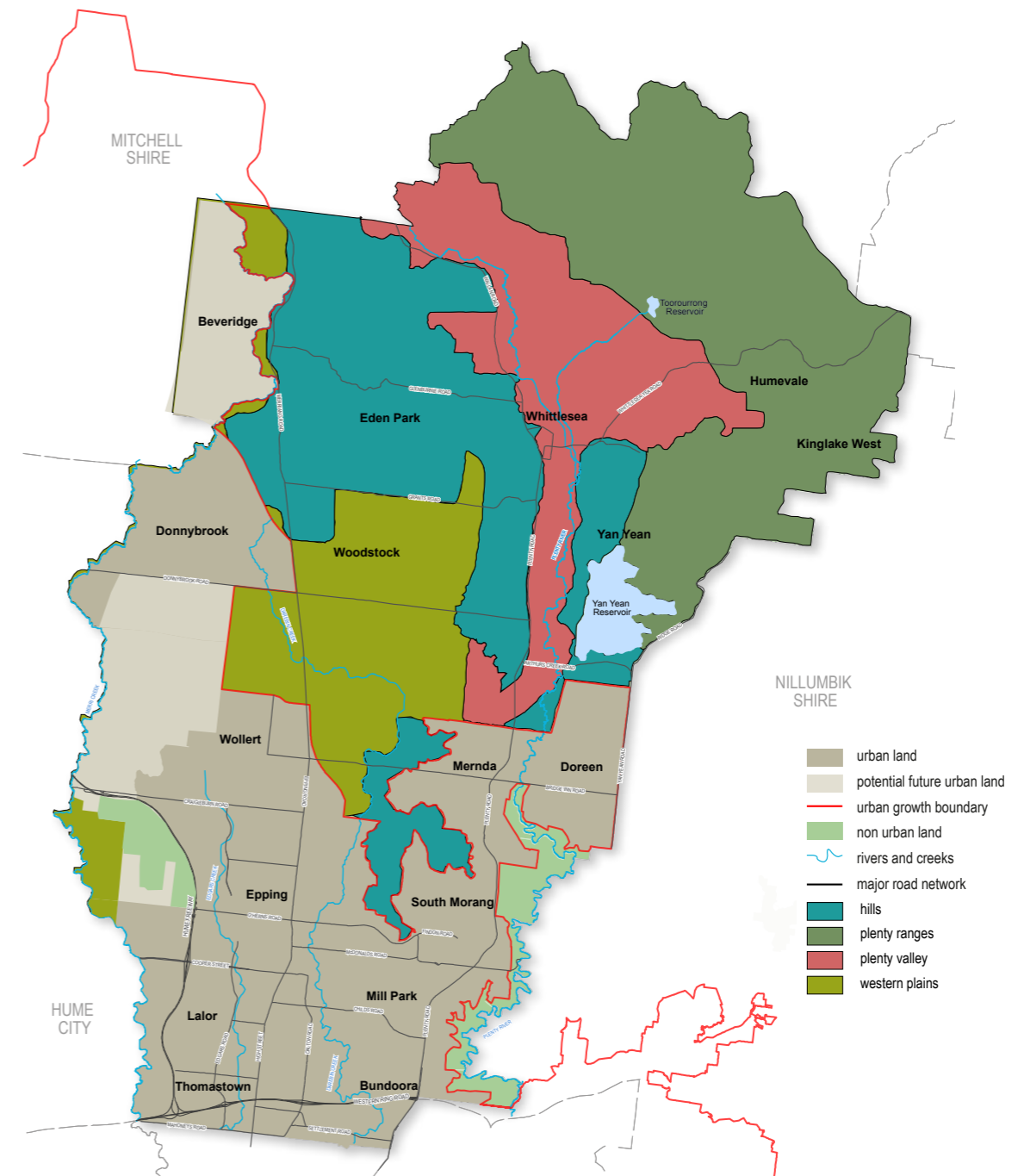
In our Green Wedge, there are several pockets of rural living areas due to historic subdivision. Some of these existing rural living settlements are located in areas subject to environmental risks and hazards such as bushfire, erosion and flooding which can present a risk to the community and the land itself. For example, Eden Park has sodic soils and as a result tunnel erosion is widespread in the area which constrains its ability to accommodate further growth.

To reduce the environmental impacts of development and enhance the amenity of the area, a Restructure Overlay (RO) was introduced into Clause 45.05 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme in the 1980’s to address old and inappropriate subdivisions. The RO seeks to restructure the lots in order to manage the environmental impacts of development and enhance the amenity of the identified area.

Primarily, the RO seeks to reduce the large number of small lots in Eden Park, although it also includes small pockets in Humevale and Whittlesea with lot sizes range from 4000sqm to 8000sqm. The RO also seeks to ensure lots are capable of supporting rural living and on-site effluent disposal. A permit to construct or extend a dwelling or other building in the RO may be granted for all or part of land in a restructure lot area only when the lot is restructured.

⁵ ‘Rural residential development’ refers to land in a rural setting, used and developed for dwellings that are not primarily associated with agriculture. Some agriculture may take place on the land however it will be ancillary to the use for a dwelling. It is likely to be carried on for ‘lifestyle’ reasons and is unlikely to provide a significant source of household income. Planning Practice Note 37 Rural Residential Development (DELWP 2015)

Map 6. Rural land character



The RO remains a valid tool to manage rural living in areas that are subject to high risk from bushfire, erosion and other environmental challenges discussed in previous section.

There is an opportunity for Council to work with the landowners affected by the RO to increase understanding of the purpose of the RO, explore ways to facilitate the restructure of lots and identify ways to mitigate the environmental risks through sustainable land management practices and appropriate land uses.

Transport and accessibility

Poor quality and congested roads, limited cycling and shared trail networks and lack of good public transport are the major transport and accessibility issues identified during the community engagement process.

The provision of safe and fit-for-purpose road network is crucial not only for social and economic reasons but also in emergency management for bushfires, flood, etc.

The above issues can have serious impact on rural community’s health, wellbeing and overall resilience that derives from access to jobs, markets, social networks, key community facilities and amenities within and outside of the Green Wedge. In addition, better transport and accessibility in general mean that the broader communities who live outside the Green Wedge would have greater opportunities to visit, enjoy and protect the Green Wedge.

Within the Green Wedge, roads vary in degree of development from unpaved rural tracks to arterial roads. Roads and associated infrastructure must be developed in such a way that it restricts nonessential vehicle movements, keeps speeds low, provide for horse riding and maintain the rural character of the area.

Routine management of roadsides must also continuously strike a balance between safety and environmental considerations.

Interface management

The Whittlesea Green Wedge has a 93km interface to land used or reserved for different urban uses and which is largely defined by the application of the UGB.

There is ongoing pressure to permit more urban uses to locate in the Green Wedge, which may be inconsistent with the overarching purposes of the zoning. Similarly, the rural/urban interface needs to be carefully managed to ensure that urban development does not have an adverse impact on nearby rural activities.

The interface between the Whittlesea Green Wedge and the diverse urban land uses presents complex issues that require careful management. **Map 7** identifies the interface areas.

The key issues and interface areas impacted are listed below:

Management of environmental, landscape and productive values

- Northern Growth Area - Beveridge
- Northern Growth Area - Donnybrook (between Merri Creek and Merriang Road)
- River Red Gum Woodland Interface - Woodstock

Extractive industry operations

- Masons Road to Craigieburn Road

Conservation management and landscape protection including bushfire risk

- Quarry Hills
- Plenty Gorge Park

Reducing land use conflict

- Northern Growth Area – Mernda, Yan Yean and Doreen

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

- Shire of Nillumbik Interface (Yan Yean Road is designated as a permanent UGB)
- Whittlesea Township

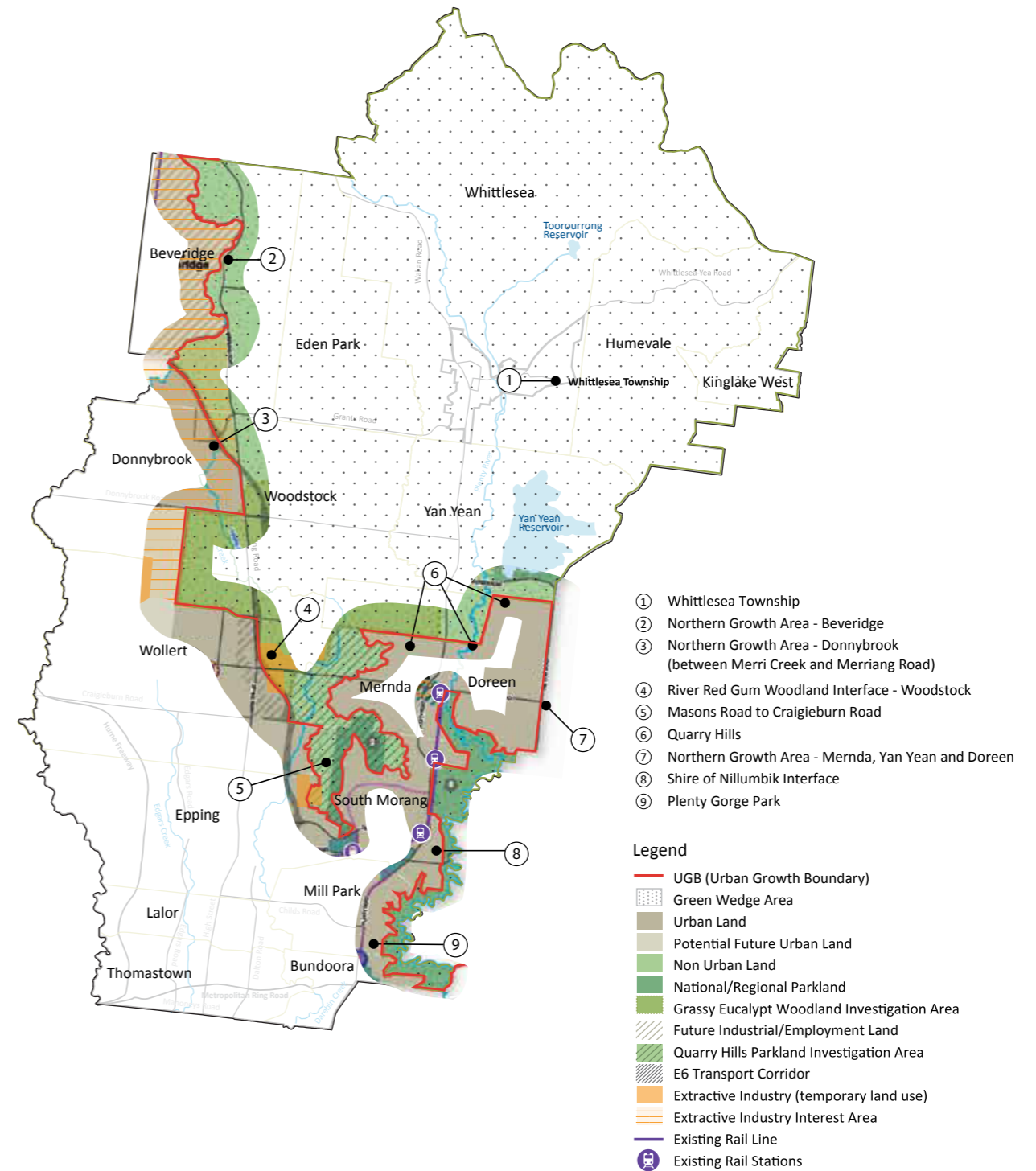
Work has already commenced in relation to the Quarry Hills section of the interface and the Whittlesea Township area.

Quarry Hills

The Quarry Hills comprise a significant elevated landscape which adjoins four urban areas: Mernda, Doreen, South Morang and Epping North.

The UGB forms a 25k boundary to the Quarry Hills. To manage land use pressures and the urban interface surrounding the Quarry Hills, Council has sought to create an enduring boundary to protect the natural quality, topography and amenity of the Quarry Hills. Council has initiated a long-term proposal to bring approximately 1,000ha of this land into public ownership as part of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland. In addition to conservation management and landscape protection the parkland links the three surrounding growth areas. Land outside the UGB that is identified as being within the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland area will need to be managed for its landscape, productive and conservation values under private ownership until such time as the land is transferred and managed for public purposes.

Map 7. Green Wedge interface



Whittlesea Township

Whittlesea Township does not have the benefit of a UGB. Council recently endorsed the Whittlesea Township Plan (2021) - a twenty-year plan that will be used to guide and manage future planning and decision making for the township. The document establishes a long-term vision for the Whittlesea Township and seeks to protect the significant attributes of the township that contribute to its distinctive semi-rural character whilst building upon its opportunities.

A continuing commitment to maintaining the non-urban break between the Township and Mernda, Doreen to the south, protecting the Whittlesea Hills to the west, visually significant landscapes and catchment areas to the east and floodplains to the north and south will limit future development but ensure that the Whittlesea Township retains its unique rural character. Council will continue to work with the State Government to ensure that the rural urban interface is appropriately managed in order to minimise the impact of urban activities on rural activities in the Green Wedge.

Land speculation

Perceived uncertainty over the permanency of the UGB, and the Green Wedge boundary has led to an increasing trend of speculators, in the hope of future rezoning, buying up large parcels of land close to the UGB at a cost that would place land purchases out of reach of many, especially those who may be looking to commence farming in the region. Similarly, there has been continuing pressure for rezoning to support more residential development around the periphery of the Whittlesea Township.

Council's property data indicates that the increase of land value in our Green Wedge has grown considerably over the past 5 years. The median property price is now over \$1 million (per property) compared to \$680k (per property) in 2015. The data also indicates that the rate of value increase was greater for smaller land parcels, a trend observed more broadly in other peri-urban areas (*Parson 2017*). This suggests those smaller blocks are being purchased for lifestyle and aesthetic value rather than agricultural value.

Land speculation has also contributed to land banking which leads to environmental degradation as there is less incentive for owners and occupiers to manage weeds, improve soils or to increase biodiversity values on those properties.

Land speculation is an on-going problem for all Green Wedge municipalities. It is anticipated that the introduction of the State Government's Windfall Tax in July of 2023 will help to reduce land speculation.



Yan Yean Reservoir

Strategic Directions

2.1 Protect non-urban breaks and enhance landscape amenity and rural character.

Implementation of *Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy* (under development)

- Strengthen the planning controls as they relate to landscape amenity and rural character
- Preserve the non-urban breaks for conservation, cultural and recreational purposes
- Ensure development and land use occurring in the rural areas of the municipality respects the visual sensitivity of the landscape
- Rural character should be expressed in the siting, design, built form and landscape treatments

2.2 Discourage new settlement in areas prone to extreme natural hazards.

Implementation of *Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy* (under development) and *Sustainable Environment Strategy* (2022-2032)

- Recognise the impact of climate change and increasing temperatures
- Work with local communities to ensure that they are more resilient to environmental changes
- Avoid further subdivision in locations that are identified as being highly susceptible to natural hazards such as fire and flood

2.3 Provide safe and fit for purpose local road network and support active travel modes.

Implementation of *Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy* (under development)

- Endeavour to provide a safe and efficient local road network that is sensitive to the environment and meets the needs and expectations of our community
- Continue to advocate strongly for improved public transport, including growing the range of community bus services
- Seek better integration and connection between the Strategic Cycling Corridors (SCC) network and the local cycling network to support active travel modes

2.4 Protect the Green Wedge from further urban encroachment and improve management of the urban and rural interface.

Implementation of *Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy* (under development) and *Sustainable Environment Strategy* (2022-2032)

- The interface needs to be managed from both sides to minimise potential conflicts
- Continue to work with the State Government to safeguard the UGB
- Provide support to landowners in sustainable land management
- Create public green space
- Maintain conservation areas as permanent and enduring buffers on the urban side of the UGB

2.5 Direct urban uses towards designated Whittlesea township area and areas within the UGB.

Implementation of *Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy* (under development) and *Whittlesea Township Plan 2021*.

- Protect desired township character
- Further support the township's role in being the social and economic centre of rural communities in the municipality

Strategic Directions - Strong local economy



Key Issues

Agriculture in the Green Wedge

As the city expands, land previously reserved for agriculture has been brought into the UGB and converted into housing and related urban uses. In a global economic system, food and other agricultural production sourced nationally and internationally has substituted for lost local production. During COVID-19, disruption to employment and food supplies has further highlighted the vulnerabilities of the global and national market system.

The importance of access to healthy local food has also been identified as a key issue. The *Towards a Healthy, Sustainable Food System in Whittlesea – Food System Background Report* (CoW, 2015, p24) revealed that access to affordable healthy food is a critical issue for our low and middle-income groups. The effects of the pandemic are expected to further amplify the importance of local food production.

Agriculture in the Whittlesea Green Wedge has the potential for creating more local employment opportunities and enhancing long-term food security. On one hand, there are existing and emerging opportunities for agriculture in our municipality, including:

- proximity to growing urban markets
- location of the Melbourne Wholesale Market in Epping
- access to key transport infrastructure, including the Hume Freeway, Melbourne Airport and the future Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal (BIFT)
- more innovative and flexible planning controls via the State Government GWAL process
- potential for access to other alternative water sources
- the opportunity to work with farmers to explore new and innovative farming techniques which use less water, energy and land to create viable production levels.

There has also been an increase in relation to agri-food opportunities focussing on native foods and botanicals. This knowledge and associated practices have been developed over thousands of generations by Aboriginal people. The *Victorian Traditional Owner Native Food and Botanicals Strategy* (2021) will embed and apply Traditional Owner cultural frameworks in the industry.

Agriculture in the Green Wedge is also facing multiple social, economic and ecological challenges.

The demographic and lifestyle of Green Wedge residents is changing due to a lack of farm succession planning. Also, within the broader community, there is a limited understanding of local agricultural history, existing farming practices and the importance of preserving agriculture in Green Wedge areas. This often leads to competing land uses, incremental land fragmentation and rising land values.

It is difficult for new farmers to gain access to the land for agriculture purposes, not to mention the huge capital costs for those new entrants buying into the sector. For existing operations, it is becoming increasingly difficult for farmers to stay financially viable. 'On farm' costs such as rates, water, labour is rising as well as market pressure from pricing competition due to the increasing dominance of a larger, more intensive farming industry.

In addition, farmers in the Green Wedge and other peri-urban areas often find themselves receiving unequal treatment as opposed to their regional counterparts (e.g. restricted funding opportunities, lack of support from industry bodies and huge capital costs for new farmers buying into the sector due to higher land cost).

Agriculture in the Green Wedge is facing threat from land degradation, natural hazards such as drought and flood, and climate change in general.

Land fragmentation in the Green Wedge

Across the Whittlesea Green Wedge area there are approximately 1,500 properties (excluding Whittlesea Township), with a median size of 6.15ha and an average size of 18.15ha. Most of the private land holdings are in Green Wedge A Zone (GWAZ), Green Wedge Zone (GWZ) and Rural Conversation Zone 1 (RCZ1).

In the GWAZ the minimum subdivision size is either 8ha or 12ha depending on location. A sizable proportion (38%) of lots are smaller than 8ha with the majority (71%) being between 2ha to 10ha.

In the GWZ the minimum subdivision size is 40ha or 80ha depending on location. Only 6% of the lots in this zone are 40ha or larger. The majority (51%) are under 2ha.

In the RCZ1, over 80% of properties are under 40ha - the minimum subdivision lot size. The median lot size in RCZ1 is 8.11ha and the average size 18.94ha. The level of fragmentation is concerning given the conservation and biodiversity focus of this zone. 18% of the RCZ1 properties are in Eden Park.

Whilst it is true that smaller land sizes can still be productive, land fragmentation is a barrier to efficiency and productivity when farmers have to undertake agricultural production across multiple, non-contiguous properties. In the Whittlesea Green Wedge, especially those areas already fragmented with a high concentration of smaller lots, it is crucial for Council to work with State Government to safeguard the minimum lot size and discourage any further subdivision of the remaining large properties. This is essential in order to retain and future proof existing and future agricultural opportunities in the area.

Visitor economy (tourism/recreation/hospitality)

The Whittlesea Green Wedge contains recreation and tourism opportunities such as the Country Music Festival, the Whittlesea Agricultural Show, the Growling Frog and Whittlesea Golf Courses, the Yan Yean and Toorourrong reservoirs and a network of parks including the Quarry Hills Regional Park with exciting further development brought forward by a new Master Plan. There are also Aboriginal tourism opportunities both existing and emerging.

There are opportunities for creating a thriving visitor economy that maintains the integrity of the natural environment, provides social benefits for our local community and contributes to our local economy. Council will seek to make public land available for public access and enjoyment where possible.

The visitor economy opportunities might include agri-tourism, eco-tourism, agri-food and recreation (including trail networks) and hospitality that is attached to natural and rural landscapes, heritage, food and wine experiences, and sustainable farming practices in our Green Wedge. The State Government's *Draft Northern Metro Land Use Framework Plan* (DELWP, 2021) recognise that the Northern Metro Green Wedges including the Whittlesea Green Wedge provide opportunities for local and international tourism in close proximity to Melbourne.

It proposes a State level Strategy – 'Support sustainable tourism and recreation opportunities that complement key Green Wedge values and land uses including biodiversity, open space and trail networks, cultural heritage, agriculture, and scenic rural landscapes'. It is important that Council work with our Green Wedge community to identify prioritised opportunities that speak to our local history and our Green Wedge values.

A new *Destination Plan* and *Agri-Food Plan* are both under development. These plans seek to further advance the agricultural and other visitor economy opportunities, where appropriate, in the Green Wedge.



Image credit: Remi Rauline, 2021, Sharing the Sky: The case for agrivoltaics - Renew, retrieved from <https://renew.org.au/renew-magazine/solar-batteries/sharing-the-sky-the-case-for-agrivoltaics>

Extractive resources

Victoria is growing and demand for extractive resources such as sand, clay, gravel and stone are expected to more than double the 2015 levels by 2050 (DEDJTR 2018). To ensure materials are affordable and accessible now and into the future for affordable housing and infrastructure, it is essential that high quality resources in proximity to markets remain available for extraction. Plan Melbourne and Clause 14.03 1S (Planning Policy Framework) recognise the importance of protecting and carefully planning for these vital resources. The State Government’s ‘*Helping Victoria Grow: Extractive Resources Strategy*’ (2018) and the *Draft Northern Metro Land Use Framework Plan* (DELWP, 2021) has also identified the need to refresh Extractive Industry Interest Areas.

Extractive industry plays a significant role in our municipality in terms of both supply and demand. The City of Whittlesea ranks 7th among Top Twenty Critical Supply LGAs in the State (PWC, 2016, p.44). In 2019/2020, approximately 6.3% of the State’s extractives was produced in the CoW, worth approximately \$61 million in sales. More than half of Victoria’s clay was produced in Whittlesea in the same period (DJPR, 2021) Being one of the fastest growing municipalities, Whittlesea is also considered one of the highest LGA for extractive resource demand.

There are two extractive industry operations (quarries) partly located within the Green Wedge. There is also an Extractive Industry Interest Area identified by the State Government, along the Northern Growth Area interface in Donnybrook and Beveridge (refer to **Map 6**. Green Wedge Interface).

Whilst our communities have diverse opinion about accommodating extractive industry especially future opportunities in the Green Wedge, it is important to note that provision of extractive resources is one of the purposes of Green Wedges. Council will work with the extractive industry and State Government to ensure appropriate buffer management during the operating life and rehabilitation at the end of the temporary use in a way that are suitable to the surrounding landscape character, environment and cultural values, thereby providing a net community benefit. This includes encouraging innovative end land uses that provide for improved community amenity outcomes.

Waste and resource recovery in a circular economy

There have been numerous challenges with waste management and recycling in Victoria. Population growth and increased consumption have put pressure on our resource recovery system. At local level, the City of Whittlesea has recently endorsed a *Rethinking Waste Plan 2021-2030* to help businesses and communities transition to a circular economy where environmental impacts of production and consumptions can be reduced while still enable economic growth through waste avoidance, resource recovery, environmental protection and more productive use of natural resources.

One of the purposes of the Green Wedges is to support provision of waste and resource recovery uses in the circular economy.

The Wollert landfill site in the Whittlesea Green Wedge is identified as a State significant Waste and Resource Recovery Hub serving the metropolitan and neighbouring regions. It is well located on the urban fringe and close to major transport routes.

The State Government’s *Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan 2018* identified potential for the hub to expand resource recovery activities to meet the needs of the surrounding growth areas including establishing a resource recovery centre and pre-sort. It is important that adequate buffers and planning controls are provided around this site to protect the amenity of surrounding communities and prevent establishing incompatible uses that could impact on the functionality of the site over the long term (*Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group, 2016, Waste and Resource Recovery - the Metropolitan Implementation Plan*).

Strategic Directions

3.1 Improve understanding of the value of agriculture in the Green Wedge to provide for appropriate use and development.

Implement the *Strong Local Economy Strategy (2022-2026)*

- Acknowledge that agriculture in the Green Wedge is under threat from pressure to convert land to other uses including housing and smaller non-agricultural uses, leading to land use compatibility issues
- Aims to raise the profile of agriculture in the Green Wedge
- Communicate (in conjunction with State Government) the purpose of the Green Wedge and the importance of protecting land for existing and future agriculture opportunities

3.2 Support local agri-businesses/agri-food and the visitor economy to grow, be sustainable and prepared for climate change.

Implement the *Strong Local Economy Strategy (2022-2026)* and the *Destination Plan* and *Agri-Food Plan* (both under development)

- Continue to work with farmers, business sector, institutions, other Green Wedge Councils, government agencies and community to support sustainable agri-business/agri-food opportunities and the visitor economy via:
 - knowledge sharing
 - incentive
 - partnership
 - advocacy
 - policy direction

3.3 Work with State Government to provide for future infrastructure and green energy needs.

Implement the *Strong Local Economy Strategy (2022-2026)*, *Sustainable Environment Strategy (2022-2032)*, *Climate Change Plan (2022-2032)* and *Rethinking Waste (2021-2030)*

- Work with State Government to protect existing and future opportunities and balance those important functions with other Green Wedge priorities

Strategic Directions - Connected communities



Key Issues

Community knowledge and diverse perceptions

The broader Green Wedge community is diverse in terms of age, needs and cultural background. It consists of not only people who live/work in the Green Wedges, but also those who connect with our Green Wedge via regular visits, cultural and spiritual connection. Naturally, the community's knowledge of the Green Wedge varies, as does the community's level of commitment to different Green Wedge values.

There are still many community members with a limited understanding of the Green Wedge and the benefits it can provide. There is an opportunity to build awareness and further connect our community on the purpose of the Green Wedge, it's importance in terms of employment and supporting a healthy, sustainable community. The community also play an important role in caring for our Green Wedge.

In addition, the review of the GWMP has revealed the diverse and sometimes conflicting perceptions of our community on the value and use of the Whittlesea Green Wedge: on one hand, the majority of the people who participated in the recent community engagement valued the natural environment and requested stronger protection of the Green Wedge from urban development, whilst there are also community members who put more value on rural living and expect similar levels of services and facilities in the Green Wedges to those in the urban areas.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage is an integral part of the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

Caring for Country is a term used to describe the relationship between Traditional Owners and their Country. Caring for Country is more than the physical management of the land, water, plants and animals, but also encompasses looking after all of the values, places, resources, stories, and cultural obligations associated with the area, as well as associated processes of spiritual renewal, connecting with ancestors, food provision and maintaining kin relations (AIATSIS 2011).

The Wurundjeri Willum Clan is the Traditional Owner of the majority of the land in the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

The Wurundjeri Willum Clan of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung is part of the Wurundjeri tribe and Woi Wurrung language group: one of the many language groups that make up the Kulin Nation.

Taungurung Land & Waters Council is the Traditional Owner for several discontinuous sections of land along the north eastern boundary in Kinglake West, where the watercourse drainage systems are to the north from the heights of the Great Dividing Range.

The Whittlesea landscape contains places and artefacts that are important to Traditional Owners because of associations with ceremonies, communities and individuals. All Aboriginal cultural heritage places and artefacts are protected by State legislation. Sites may include artefact scatters, scarred trees, trails and pathways along elevated areas, stone quarries, burials and rock wells.

It is important to note that the *Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy (2021)* sets a framework and pathways to lead the planning and management of Country in line with their cultural obligations to Care for Country. The State Government has committed to working in partnership with Traditional Owners and has committed to a process of reforming the system and process that create barriers to the self determination of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians.

There are existing and emerging opportunities to:

- improve understanding, preservation and the celebration of Aboriginal cultural heritage and practices
- partner with Traditional Owners in land and water management and other Caring for Country practices
- support heritage-based tourism opportunities.

Historical Heritage

The history of European settlement in Whittlesea mirrors closely the development of Victoria as a whole. Agricultural and pastoral activities dominated the early development of the region. Milling, timber, agriculture and dairying were the main economic drivers. 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.

The dry-stone walls reflect the earliest forms of infrastructure linked to historic land use practices, as well as the industry and skills of settlers and landowners. Some were built for specific purposes such as cultivation paddocks and dry-stone enclosures which may be unique in Victoria.

There are existing and emerging opportunities to:

- improve understanding and protection of heritage places, including dry-stone walls
- support heritage-based tourism opportunities.



Strategic Directions

4.1 Understand and support the diverse needs of our rural community for environmental, cultural, social and economic resilience.

Implement the *Connected Communities Strategy* (under development)

- Undertake further work to better understand the diverse needs of our community
- Continue to work and partner with different organisations, in particular to collaborate with neighbouring Councils which also have Green Wedges and government agencies to support our community by improving their access to essential resources, services and critical knowledge
- Rural character should be expressed in the siting, design, built form and landscape treatments

4.2 Better connect the Green Wedge with our communities via communication, placemaking and programs.

Implement the *Connected Communities Strategy* (under development), *Sustainable Environment Strategy* (2022- 2032), *Climate Change Plan* (2022-2032) and *Destination Plan* (under development)

- Empower the community to address climate action
- Amplify environmental stewardship within the community
- Seek to further connect our community with the positive aspects of the Green Wedge via the creation of shared use paths and trails, events, recreation, local food, tourism and environmental programs

4.3 Engage and empower community members on various aspects of caring for and managing the Green Wedge.

Implement the *Connected Communities Strategy* (under development), *Sustainable Environment Strategy* (2022-2032) and *Climate Change Plan* (2022-2032)

- Continue to partner with community members and groups who have already been actively looking after our Green Wedge land
- Provide support for community-led initiatives
- Explore options to further remove the barrier for our rural community to access Council information
- Encourage participation in conversations that will shape the future of our Green Wedge

4.4 Partner with Traditional Owners to celebrate and facilitate enhanced Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung and Taungurung cultural practice, cultural heritage, improve land and water management and other Caring for Country practices in the Green Wedge.

Implement the *Connected Communities Strategy* (under development), *Reconciliation Action Plan* (under development) and *Sustainable Environment Strategy* (2022-2032)

- Partner with Traditional Owners to improve understanding and the preservation and celebration of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage – the places and artifacts that represent the rich indigenous history of this land.
- Explore opportunities for partnerships and education to support a greater understanding of Caring for Country practices to improve land and water management outcomes in the Green Wedge.



Making it happen

The GWMP is developed to guide a whole-of-Council approach to the coordination and implementation of actions within the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

Council is the custodian of this GWMP and its successful delivery requires strong collaboration across the whole organisation. This will be facilitated by Council's Integrated Planning Framework which will drive implementation to deliver the outcomes we strive for and the actions we will deliver for our community.

Monitoring progress

The Strategic Directions of the GWMP have been reflected in the adopted *Sustainable Environment Strategy* and *Strong Local Economy Strategy*. The directions will also be incorporated into the *Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy*, *Connected Communities Strategy* and the *Reconciliation Action Plan* currently under development.

Each of these strategies have an associated Action Plan, generally for a two-year period. Specific GWMP actions will be incorporated into the each of the relevant Action Plans and will be reviewed according to the relevant strategy review schedule.

In accordance with the requirements of the State Government and *Planning Practice Note 31*, a five- year review of the GWMP will be undertaken (2028- 2029). The review will ensure that Vision, Objectives and Strategic Directions remain relevant for delivering impactful outcomes.

Glossary

Aboriginal

Throughout this document, the term 'Aboriginal' is taken to include people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. 'Aboriginal' is used in preference to 'Indigenous', 'First Nations', and 'Koori'

Active recreation

Activities that are engaged in for the purpose of relaxation, health and wellbeing or enjoyment with the primary activity requiring physical exertion, and the primary focus on human activity.

Amenity

A collection of qualities that make spaces attractive for human occupation. The features of an area, street or building, that provide facilities and services that contribute to physical or material comfort and benefit and are valued by users.

Agri-business

The business aspects of agricultural industries. It embraces all the input and support services for farming and food production including finance, taxation, banking and other corporate services; agronomy and other 'on farm' or technical advisory services; input supply including fertiliser, chemical and other consumable inputs; machinery supply and maintenance at all parts of the supply chain; market analysis, marketing advice and trading services.

Agri-food

Encompasses all stages of the food and beverage life-cycle, from the on-farm production of primary commodities, through to manufacturing, retail, consumption and recycling (organics and packaging).

Agri-tourism

Refers to experiences attracting visitors to places where they get to interact with a variety of food and agribusiness elements such as farm gate sales, entertainment or educating the visitors, while generating income for the farm or business owner. In some areas this may involve consuming locally grown products at cafes and restaurants.

Biodiversity

The number and variety of living things on the planet. It is the mix of plants, animals, and other organisms that make up landscapes from deserts to oceans.

Built form

The height, volume and overall shape of a building as well as its surface appearance.

Caring for Country

A term used to describe the different sustainable land management practices and initiatives that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people undertake, and the key role these practices play in continuing culture.

Circular economy

A model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible.

City forest

All the trees and other vegetation and the soil and water that support them. Urban forest is an alternative term. It incorporates vegetation in streets, parks, gardens, plazas, campuses, river and creek embankment, wetlands, railway corridors, community gardens, green walls, balconies, and roofs.

Climate change

Long term change in global or regional climate patterns attributed largely to the increased levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, particularly carbon dioxide, produced by the use of fossil fuels.

Economic inequality

Refers to the disparities in income and wealth among individuals in a society. Economic participation – an individual's engagement in work and/or education, and their access to economic resources that results from such participation.

Economic participation

An individual's engagement in work and/or education, and their access to economic resources that results from such participation.

Food and fibre economy

Food and fibres are the human-produced or harvested resources used to directly sustain human life and are produced in managed environments such as farms and plantations or harvested from wild stocks.

Green economy

Defined as low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. Growth in employment and income are driven by public and private investment into such economic activities, infrastructure and assets that allow reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy and resource efficiency, and prevention of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Green Wedge

Non-urban land that is described in a metropolitan fringe planning scheme as being outside an Urban Growth Boundary.

Green Wedge Management Plan

A Council adopted strategy that identifies a Vision, Objectives and Strategic Direction for the sustainable management and development of each Green Wedge area.

Integrated water management

A collaborative approach to the management of all elements of the water cycle to contribute to water security, public and environmental health, as well as urban amenity.

Land use

The primary purpose for which the land is used or may be developed.

Land fragmentation

In the context of agriculture, land fragmentation occurs when farmland is broken up by other uses over time. In areas affected by land fragmentation, farmers sometimes undertake agricultural production across multiple, non-contiguous properties, which can be a barrier to efficiency and productivity.

Open space

Space open to the sky regardless of its ownership and management arrangements.

Passive recreation

Casual use of open space such as sitting, walking, reading a book, meeting people enjoying the ambience and relaxing.

Visitor economy

The visitor economy is made up of anyone who provides or promotes services to Australia's domestic and international visitors. It includes a diverse set of businesses that span several industry sectors and operate across cities and regional destinations.

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

A line drawn around a metropolitan area, defining the limits to urban growth.

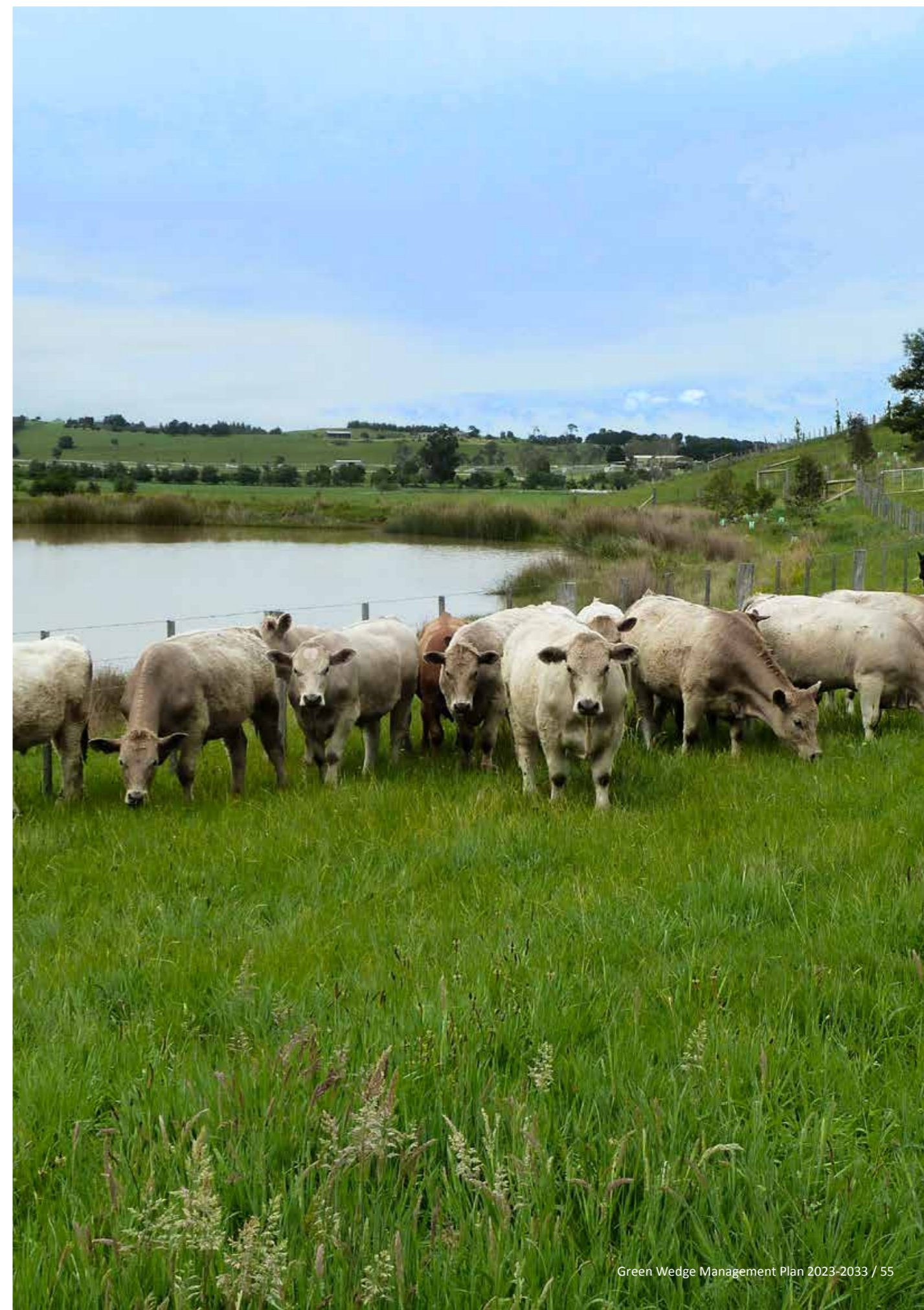
Whittlesea Planning Scheme

A legal document prepared by the City of Whittlesea and approved by the Minister for Planning. A planning scheme includes:

- State Planning Policy set by the State Government and common to all planning schemes.
- Local Planning Policy tailored by each local government.
- Zones and Overlays: provisions that identify where certain uses and development can occur in the municipality, locations of significance such as heritage places, and which land use or development is 'as of right', requires a permit or is prohibited.

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REPORT



City of Whittlesea

*Findings from the Green Wedge Management Plan Review
Stage 2 Community Engagement 2022*

Engagement Report
Version 2, 16 August 2022

capire

DEFINITIONS

The following lists the key definitions for common terms used in the design and delivery of community engagement as defined by Capire Consulting Group and Whittlesea's *Community Engagement Policy*.

Community

The term community refers to a group of people that has something in common such as identity, behaviours, interests or values. A community often share a sense of place in a given geographical area (e.g., a country, city, town, or neighbourhood) or in virtual space through communication platforms.

For the purposes of this document, the term community encompasses 'stakeholders'.

Stakeholder

The word stakeholder refers to individuals, groups or organisations with a stake or interest in the outcome of a decision. Stakeholders may also have the ability to influence the decision given their role or position.

Engagement

Engagement is defined as a planned process with the purpose of working with communities and stakeholders to inform decisions, share knowledge and strengthen relationships.

ABBREVIATIONS

- **GWMP** Green Wedge Management Plan
- **GWZ** Green Wedge Zone

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1. Introduction

Report purpose

This report presents the key findings of the Stage Two of the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan 2023 – 2033 (GWMP) engagement held between Monday 23 May and Sunday 3 July 2022. The engagement was delivered by the City of Whittlesea (Council) and Capire Consulting Group (Capire).

This report provides a summary of the key engagement findings. All raw data received from this engagement period will be reviewed by City of Whittlesea to consider during the finalisation of the Draft GWMP.

Project background

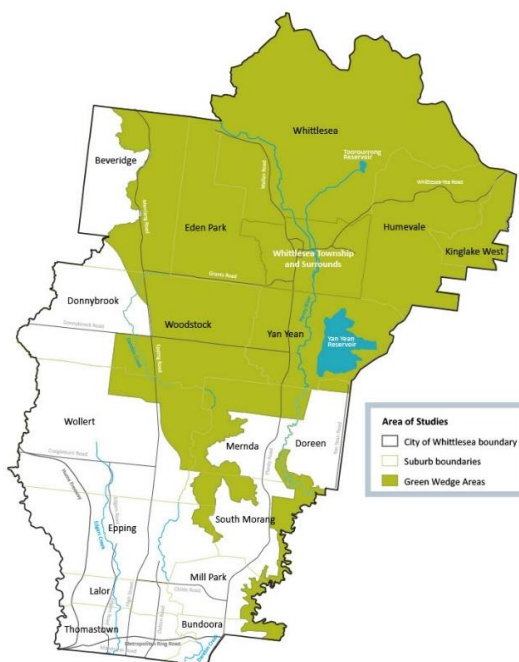
Every council with Green Wedge areas is required to have a ten-year plan to guide how its Green Wedge is managed. The previous Green Wedge Management Plan ended in 2021.

The plan is currently being updated to reflect how the area has evolved and is being enjoyed. The new plan will help identify and clearly communicate priorities in managing the Green Wedge for the next ten years and provide more clarity about the kinds of development or activities that are likely to be supported.

As shown in **Figure 1**, more than 60% of the City of Whittlesea is rural or non-urban land that is protected from urban development.

Almost half of the Green Wedge is public land including the National Parks, forests, and reservoirs. The remaining part is home to agriculture, rural living, places of significant Aboriginal and post contact cultural heritage, recreation, natural resources and much more. The Green Wedge supports the environment, economy, culturally significant areas, and recreational activities in the City of Whittlesea community.

Figure 1 City of Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan area boundary



Scope of engagement

The Stage One engagement centred around the GWMP Discussion Paper, whilst sharing and celebrating the achievements of the previous GWMP 2011-2021. Throughout May, June and July 2021 over 100 participants provided feedback on the Discussion Paper relating to the values, opportunities, and the Vision for the Green Wedge. The Stage One engagement reaffirmed the community's priorities of protecting biodiversity, natural landscapes, and rural character of the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

Stage Two engagement was marked by the release of the Draft GWMP 2023 – 2033, and the launch of the project's Engage webpage on 23 May 2022. Feedback was sought from community and key stakeholders on the draft, and in particular the draft *Vision, Objectives*, and *Strategic Directions*.

The engagement also aimed to raise the profile of the Green Wedge by building community awareness of its benefits to the broader community.

2. Engagement approach

This section details the promotional, communication and engagement tools used to engage on Stage Two of the Draft GWMP. Promotional and other communication material provided information about the project and promoted engagement opportunities, encouraging people to visit the project website for more information.

Promotions and communicational materials

The following activities and materials were used to inform the community and stakeholders about the project.

Table 1 Promotions used for Stage Two engagement

Tool	Description
<i>Engage City of Whittlesea</i> webpage	<p>The dedicated engagement webpage for the City of Whittlesea Draft GWMP Review project was available at: https://engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/green-wedge</p> <p>Between 23 May and 3 July 2022 there were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,534 webpage visits from 1,334 unique visitors • 121 contributions from 117 unique contributors • 40 additional followers subscribed to the webpage during Stage Two, bringing the total to 79 people registered to receive project updates • 167 downloads of the Draft GWMP document • 94 downloads of the summary Vision and Strategic Objectives document • Over half the webpage visitors (60%) were referred from social media.

CITY OF WHITTLESEA, ENGAGEMENT REPORT VERSION 2, AUGUST 2022

Tool	Description		
Email updates	<p>Emails were sent out on Thursday 27 May 2022 to the following community and key stakeholder groups to let them know that the Stage Two engagement had launched, to inform them that the Draft GWMP 2023-2033 was available for public comment and let them know about opportunities to participate, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitters to the Stage One engagement in 2021. • Traditional Owners being the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council. • A mailing list of 250 contacts consisting of key stakeholders and community members who had expressed an interest in the project, either through their involvement in the Stage One engagement, or through signing up to our mailing list at one of our 'pop-up' events or via the 'subscribe' button on the project's Engage webpage. <p>An engagement reminder email was sent on Wednesday June 15, 2022 to the 250 contacts on the mailing list to remind them of the submission and survey closure date and encouraged registration to the upcoming workshops.</p>		
Social media	<p>The Stage Two engagement was promoted across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Linked In, attracting a total of 1,145 engagements, 55 comments, 14 shares, and 76 'likes' out of 78 'reactions'.</p> <p>Social media generated over half (60%) of the visitors to the project's Engage webpage.</p>		
Letters sent via post	<p>A total of 2,791 letters were sent via post on 24 May 2022 to all landowners and occupiers of properties in the Whittlesea Green Wedge (excluding properties in Whittlesea Township), and owners of agribusinesses in the Green Wedge to inform them of the Stage Two engagement and invite feedback.</p>		
Articles and adverts	<p>Articles and advertisements were published across a range of newspapers, newsletters, and radio stations to promote the Draft GWMP and engagement.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>'Local Scoop' article</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2022 <p>'Northern Star Weekly' articles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 22 February 2022 </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>'North Central Review' article</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 24 May 2022 <p>'Community Kalori' advert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2022 <p>Plenty Valley FM Radio</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>'Local Scoop' article</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2022 <p>'Northern Star Weekly' articles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 22 February 2022 	<p>'North Central Review' article</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 24 May 2022 <p>'Community Kalori' advert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2022 <p>Plenty Valley FM Radio</p>
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CITY OF WHITTLESEA, ENGAGEMENT REPORT VERSION 2, AUGUST 2022

Tool	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 19 May 2022 Tuesday 31 May 2022 Tuesday 14 June 2022 <p>'Northern Star Weekly' adverts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> various dates throughout the engagement period
Printed promotions	Printed flyers were offered to visitors to the various engagement and pre-engagement events.

Table 2 Communication materials in Stage Two engagement

Tool	Description
Project overview	A one page overview of the project
Flyers & Posters	The flyers and posters invited the community to participate, and provided key information on how to find out more information and get involved, including a QR code linked to the project's Engage page
Green Wedge Management Plan 2011-2021 Achievements	A one-page information sheet which highlighted some of the key achievements of the previous ten year GWMP.
Green Wedge Map	A simple map showing which parts of the City of Whittlesea are within the Green Wedge
Video	A short 1.5-minute informational video was produced to promote the Stage Two engagement and encourage people to have their say. The video included messages from Council's Chair Administrator Lydia Wilson, and local farmer Judy Clements who both spoke about the importance of the Green Wedge.
Handout document	A three page hand-out which presented the Vision, Objectives and Strategic Directions set out in the Draft GWMP. This was used to guide conversations in the workshops, pop ups, and the meeting with agribusinesses
Stage One Community Engagement Report	A report summarising the findings of the GWMP Stage One community engagement which took place in 2021.

Refer to **Appendix A** to see the above communication materials used throughout the Stage Two engagement.

Figure 2. Example of a social media post from 1 July 2022



Engagement activities

We provided a range of ways for people to find out more about the project and provide their feedback. The following activities were used to provide information and elicit feedback.

Table 3 Engagement activities in Stage Two engagement

Tool	Description
Survey	<p>The survey asked participants about their level of agreement on the Draft GWMP Vision and each of the Strategic Directions. There were also opportunities to provide open-answer responses. The survey also collected feedback on preferences for future engagement activities.</p> <p>See Appendix B for the survey questions.</p>
Workshops	<p>The workshops delivered a presentation to provide context to the Draft GWMP review project, before starting a discussion about participants level of agreement on the Draft GWMP Vision and each of the Strategic Directions. Participants were encouraged to provide feedback on how the Draft GWMP could be improved in the final version. These sessions also conversationally answered participant questions about the Green Wedge.</p> <p>The following workshops were held.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whittlesea Community Activity Centre (in-person session) Saturday 18 June (10:30am – 12pm) • Online video conferencing meeting link Tuesday 21 June (6-8pm)

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Tool	Description								
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The session on Wednesday 15 June was <u>cancelled</u> due to low registration numbers and participants were invited to attend one of the other sessions. 								
Pop-ups	<p>A number of pop up events were held throughout the engagement period, where Council’s Strategic Futures and Community Engagement teams spoke to the community about the project, and provided information on how to get involved.</p> <p>The following pop-ups were held.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Whittlesea Showgrounds Monday 6 June (8am – 1pm)</td> <td>1435 Plenty Road, Mernda Monday 20 June (9am – 1pm)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Westfield Plenty Valley Tuesday 14 June (9am – 1pm)</td> <td>Lalor Library Wednesday 22 June (12pm – 4pm)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mill Park Library Thursday 16 June (10am – 1pm)</td> <td>Pacific Epping Thursday 23 June (9am – 1pm)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Civic Centre grounds Saturday 18 June (9am – 1pm)</td> <td>Barry Road Community Activity Centre Monday 27 June (5pm – 7:30pm)</td> </tr> </table> <p>A pre-engagement pop-up was also held at the Whittlesea Community Festival on Saturday 25 March 2022 to let the community know about the upcoming Stage Two engagement period.</p> <p>See Figure 3 for photos from two pop-up events</p>	Whittlesea Showgrounds Monday 6 June (8am – 1pm)	1435 Plenty Road, Mernda Monday 20 June (9am – 1pm)	Westfield Plenty Valley Tuesday 14 June (9am – 1pm)	Lalor Library Wednesday 22 June (12pm – 4pm)	Mill Park Library Thursday 16 June (10am – 1pm)	Pacific Epping Thursday 23 June (9am – 1pm)	Civic Centre grounds Saturday 18 June (9am – 1pm)	Barry Road Community Activity Centre Monday 27 June (5pm – 7:30pm)
Whittlesea Showgrounds Monday 6 June (8am – 1pm)	1435 Plenty Road, Mernda Monday 20 June (9am – 1pm)								
Westfield Plenty Valley Tuesday 14 June (9am – 1pm)	Lalor Library Wednesday 22 June (12pm – 4pm)								
Mill Park Library Thursday 16 June (10am – 1pm)	Pacific Epping Thursday 23 June (9am – 1pm)								
Civic Centre grounds Saturday 18 June (9am – 1pm)	Barry Road Community Activity Centre Monday 27 June (5pm – 7:30pm)								
Key stakeholder meetings	<p>Meetings were held with key stakeholder groups, as required, to discuss topic specific items.</p> <p>Stakeholder meetings were held with Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Registered Aboriginal Corporation, Taungurung Land and Waters Council, the local agribusiness network, Hanson Australia (Landfill and Quarry) and Funfields Themepark.</p>								
Submissions	<p>Key stakeholders and community members were invited to provide feedback on the Draft GWMP by making a written submission, either via email or post.</p>								

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Figure 3. Photos taken at pop-up events



Participation

Approximately, 259 people participated in the engagement and twelve submissions were received. **Figure 4** provides an overview of the participation through each engagement activity.

Figure 4. Overview of engagement activity participation



¹ This number is approximate.

² Key stakeholders included representatives from: Wurundjeri and Taungurung Registered Aboriginal Parties, several agribusinesses, Funfields Themepark and Hanson Australia (Landfill and Quarry).

Limitations

Participation was maximised during the engagement period by offering multiple online and in-person opportunities in various formats to proactively reach community members as well as promoting engagement opportunities to interested community members.

Although strong efforts were made to maximise participation, all projects have engagement limitations. The below limitations are identified for Stage Two of the GWMP engagement.

- This report provides a summary of the key engagement findings. All raw data received from this engagement period will be reviewed by City of Whittlesea to consider during the finalisation of the Draft GWMP.
- Capire has reported on information documented by participants and interpreted the information to present the views of participants as closely as possible. As a result, there are some participant recommendations or suggestions reflected in the report that are not within the scope of the project or consistent with State policy for the Green Wedges.
- The engagement period included multiple opportunities for participants to contribute. Some people may have taken part in multiple engagement activities, for example some may have completed the survey and also participated in a workshop or made a written submission. Their views may have been captured more than once.
- In some instances, participants did not respond to all survey questions, this meant that some questions received fewer responses than others.
- Similarly, not all questions were asked at all engagement activities, and due to technical difficulties and natural discussions during the online workshop, there are no quantitative results for the Goals from the session.
- People who participated in the engagement self-selected to take part. As such, whilst every effort has been made to gather the views of diverse representation of the community, information in this report does not reflect the views of a statistically representative sample of the population.
- Demographic data was captured through the survey, but not other engagement activities.
- The engagement period occurred during an ongoing global pandemic. Whilst the community was not restricted (i.e., not in lockdown), it may have reduced the 'in person' participation rates across engagement methods including the pop-ups and in-person workshop. This was considered in the engagement planning process and efforts made to minimise the impact through the availability of an online survey and the online workshop.
- Three of the eight pop-up events were not Green Wedge specific but promoted multiple Council projects that were out on engagement at the time.

3. Engagement findings

The following section presents a summary of the data collected through the engagement period. The findings are presented under survey demographics, the draft Green Wedge Vision and the following four Goals:

- Goal 1: Sustainable Environment
- Goal 2: Liveable Neighbourhoods
- Goal 3: Strong Local Economy
- Goal 4: Connected Community

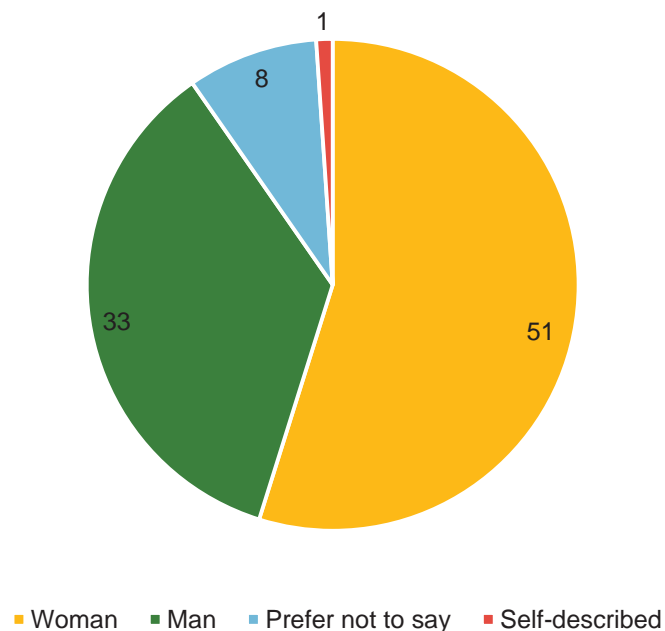
This section captures the feedback provided by community and key stakeholders primarily related to the engagement questions canvassed. However, all feedback and raw data received from this engagement period will be reviewed by the City of Whittlesea for consideration as part of the finalisation of the Draft GWMP.

Survey demographics

GENDER

As shown in **Figure 5**, a total of 51 respondents (55%) identified as a woman whilst 33 (35%) identified as a man, and one respondent self-described.

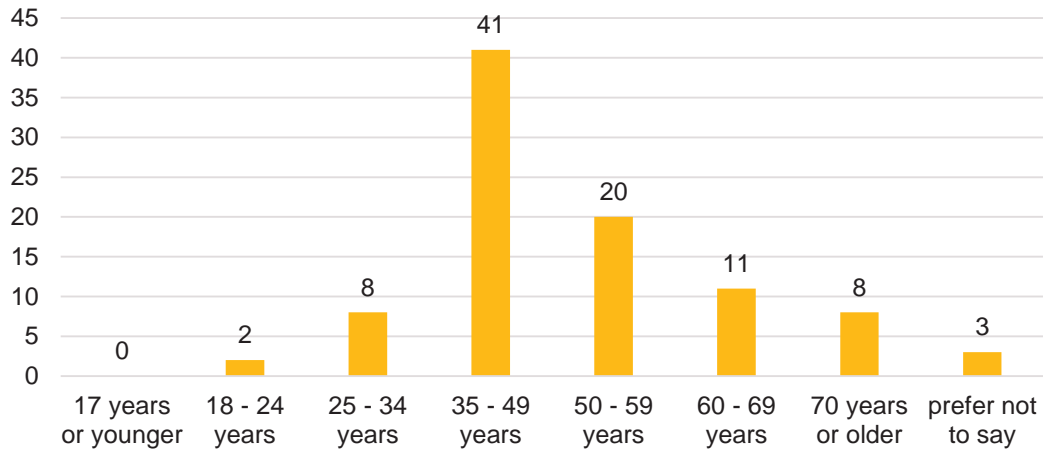
Figure 5. Survey respondents' gender (n=92)



AGE

As shown in **Figure 6** there was an uneven spread of respondents' age groups with 41 respondents (44%) aged between 35 and 49 years of age. There was no respondent 17 years of age or younger.

Figure 6. Survey respondent's age groups (n=93)

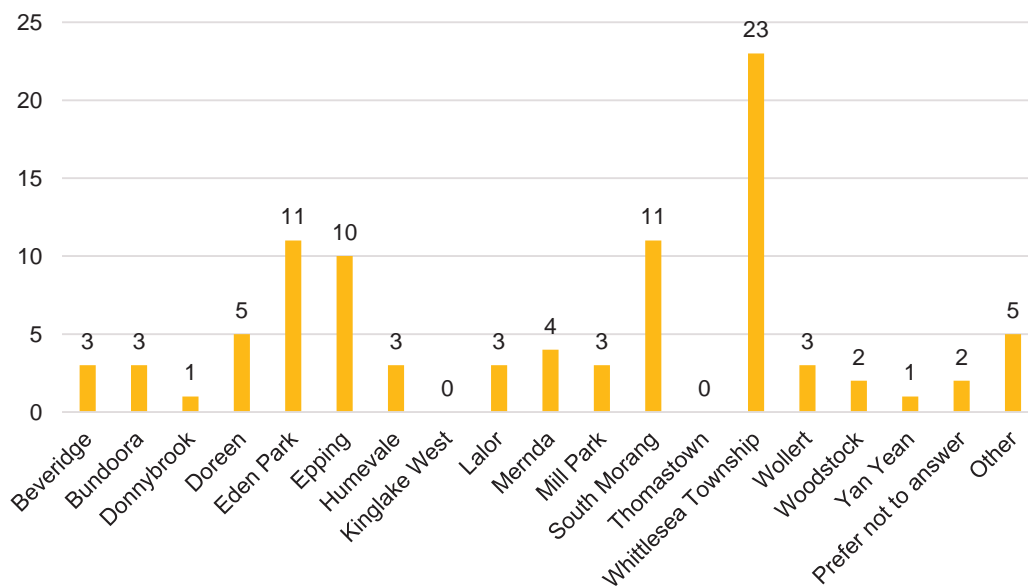


SUBURB

Respondents were asked to indicate which suburb they live in. **Figure 7** displays the result. The top four suburbs were the Whittlesea Township (23 responses, 25%), Eden Park (11, 12%), South Morang (11, 12%), and Epping (10, 11%).

The suburbs of the five respondents who responded 'other' included Glenvale, Melbourne, and Whittlesea (not township).

Figure 7. Survey respondent's suburb (n=93)



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

There were two survey respondents who identified as Aboriginal.

LANGUAGE

Eleven survey respondents³ stated they communicate with a language other than English at home. The languages communicated with included:

- Auslan (1 respondent)
- Chinese (1)
- Filipino (1)
- French (1)
- German (1)
- Greek (2)
- Italian (3)
- Macedonian (1)
- Maltese (2)

Draft Vision

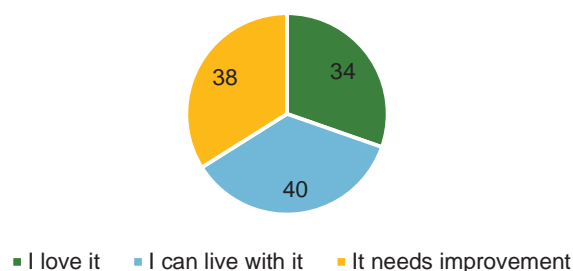
This section summarises feedback relating to the Draft GWMP Vision. Survey respondents, workshop participants and attendees at the Barry Road Community Activity Centre pop-up event were asked if Council have the Draft GWMP Vision right.

As shown in **Table 4** and **Figure 8**, there is a varied response to whether the participants ‘love it’, ‘can live with it’ and think ‘it needs improvement’.

Table 4 Have we got the draft Green Wedge Management Plan Vision right? per activity

Activity	I love it	I can live with it	It needs improvement
Workshops ⁴	7	7	5
Survey	24	33	33
Pop-ups ⁵	3	0	0
Overall	34	40	38

Figure 8. Have we got the draft Green Wedge Management Plan Vision right?



³ One respondent stated they speak three languages other than English

⁴ Results from two workshops.

⁵ Results from one pop-up event.

‘I LOVE IT’

The reasons why respondents chose ‘love it’ included the following.

- It establishes preservation, respect, protection and connection for healthy natural assets and a biodiverse connected ecosystem from urban encroachment and overdevelopment in all directions. This includes the hills, trees, rivers, and heritage including Aboriginal cultural heritage which is why many people live in the area.
- The Vision supports being part of a community who respect and are empowered to take care of the Green Wedge and its wildlife.
- It ensures the provision and support for rural development and economic opportunities in sustainable agriculture.
- The Vision clearly explains the purpose and reasoning for having the Green Wedge.
- It is very inclusive and has been developed through a great level of community consultation.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Suggested improvements to the draft Vision shared by respondents included the following.

Environment and biodiversity protection

- Ensures protection and respect for native flora and fauna that reside in the Green Wedge, however, further consideration for wildlife requirements is required, along with a wildlife management plan.
- Connect the two Green Wedge areas and protect current corridors to provide wildlife corridors.
- Increase the number of native plants and trees in the Green Wedge. This includes planting, supporting landowners to plant and enforcing the inclusion of native plants on new properties.
- Consider the environmental impact and sustainability of the Green Wedge with the Beverage Freight Terminal.
- Provide greater protection against sub-division and the encroachment of housing estates near Whittlesea.
- Provide greater guarantee that Council will not allow any form of development in the Green Wedge.

Development

- Allow landowners in the Green Wedge to build and maintain cottages, cabins, sheds, water tanks, small sustainable homes, and ‘Airbnb’s,’ particularly on land with eroded soil, and to enable farmers to continually maintain farms.
- Re-assess road safety along the Urban Growth Boundary and along Merriang and Epping Road and provide buffers between large acreages and major arterial roads.

Re-zoning

- Rezone the Green Wedge as some landowners are just waiting for appreciation and rezoning.
- Enable small areas of land to be re-zoned from 'GWZ' to 'Low Density Residential Zone' for small scale re-development. Consider the northern edge of the existing residential estate along Wallan and Wildwood Roads.
- Allow small scale lifestyle farms and smaller acreage (including 5 to 10 acres) in the Green Wedge to help ensure people continue to live in the area, care for land and enable lifestyle farming.

Business and development

- Include a greater focus on eco-tourism to enable the Green Wedge to be economically viable and to prevent land degradation.
- Allow landowners to run agri-businesses on their property.
- Allow for increased development and growth in Whittlesea to support a stronger economy and job opportunities.

Other

- The Vision should be more specific so residents can make an informed decision as to support it or not. Include detail and use about specific locations, and how the rural feel of Whittlesea township will be maintained, whilst preventing urban sprawl and attracting visitors/tourists.
- While the Vision refers to cultural heritage, there is no reference to celebrating and facilitating enhanced Traditional Owner cultural practice.

'I like the consideration for the preservation and re-instatement of connected ecosystems and natural biodiversity, and the link to Aboriginal heritage. I also believe it is environmentally vital that urban encroachment is curbed in Melbourne.'

- Survey respondent from Lalor

Goal 1: Sustainable Environment

This section summarises feedback relating to Goal 1: Sustainable Environment.

Survey respondents, and workshop participants were asked if Council have the Sustainable Environment Strategic Directions right.

Table 5 and **Figure 9** display the results. **Table 6** summarises feedback relating to Goal 1.

Table 5 Have we got the Sustainable Environment Strategic Directions right?

	Activity	I love it	I can live with it	It needs improvement
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1.1	Workshop	4	4	0
	Survey	33	28	28
	Overall	37	32	28
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1.2	Workshop	7	0	0
	Survey	29	40	20
	Overall	36	40	20
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1.3	Workshop	0	0	7
	Survey	38	26	24
	Overall	38	26	31
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1.4	Workshop	0	2	5
	Survey	34	38	17
	Overall	34	40	22

Figure 9 Have we got the Sustainable Environment Strategic Directions right?

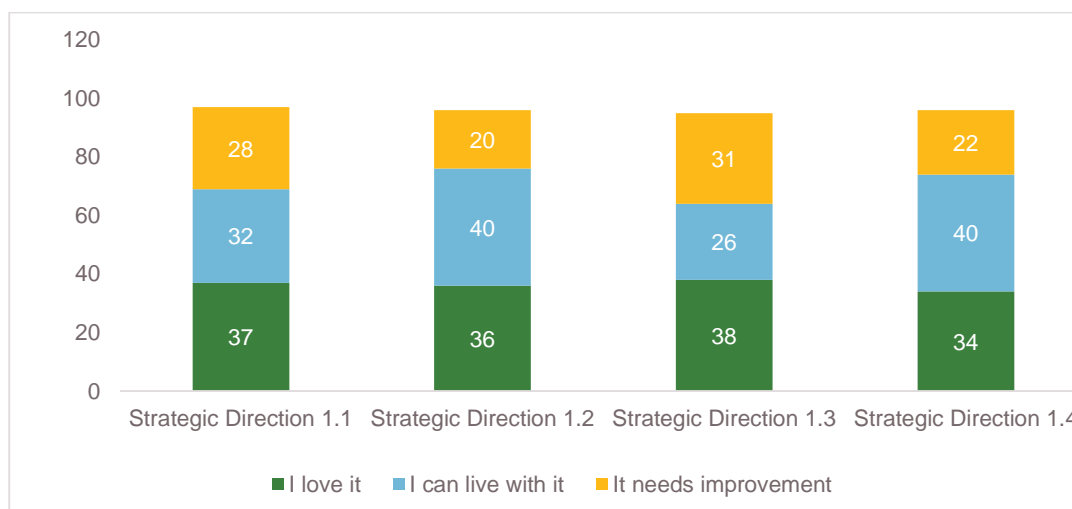


Table 6 Summary of feedback relating to Goal 1: Sustainable Environment

Sustainable Environment Strategic Directions	Positive feedback	Improvements needed
1.1 Improve the management and protection of biodiversity.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This strategic direction needs more explanation, e.g., details on steps to improve management and protect biodiversity. • Improving waterways, protection to flora and fauna, creating buffer zones between main roads, protecting native wildlife and sheep, purchasing land back for Green Wedge and reduce land banking. • <i>‘...there are opportunities to deliver on biodiversity conservation at a broader landscape scale across different land tenures and beyond local government boundaries.’</i> • <i>‘I agree that the Green Wedge needs to be sustainably managed, however this is very open to interpretation when it comes to our flora and fauna. The Objectives offer no reassurance that the protection of our native flora and fauna will be a priority’</i> • <i>‘Traditional Owner approaches to biodiversity management are more appropriately expressed as biocultural diversity in which all elements of Country (physical, cultural, spiritual and human) are fundamentally interconnected. Council will seek opportunities to partner with Traditional Owners towards the biocultural management of Country’</i>
1.2 Partner with landowners and land managers to ensure water is managed in an integrated and effective manner in the Green Wedge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stormwater that passes through properties could be a shared responsibility with Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure mutual respect between landowners when partnering (be practical, not controlling). • Council needs to provide funding to ensure this is managed effectively. • Farmers need to have the <i>right to farm</i> with access to water. • Clarity on how this aligns with Melbourne Water’s role as water supply authority, regional drainage floodplain, and waterway manager and initiatives. • Recognise a Wurundjeri Woi wurrung partnership.
1.3 Ensure our residents and our environment benefit from a diverse, colourful, and healthy City Forest that connects people to people, people to		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details on how Council is proposing to deliver this strategic direction. • Provide an explanation for ‘City Forest’. • Ensure there is accommodation to attract visitors. • Consider local and native wildlife. Responsible hunting of feral pests should be encouraged whilst killing native animals should not be acceptable.

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Sustainable Environment Strategic Directions	Positive feedback	Improvements needed
nature, and people to place.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This may provide opportunity for carbon sequestration.
1.4 Partner with landowners and other government agencies to improve soil health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key issues addressed include soil dumping and sodic soils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise and reward good farming practises e.g., through reduction for the benefit returned to the land. Partner with other Councils to provide information and help on soil health. Partner with landowners to improve land quality such as reducing pesticides and controlling Chilean needle grass. Funding from Council to improve land care. Focus on the eradication of weeds. Improve Council communication with landowners.

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Goal 2: Liveable Neighbourhoods

This section summarises feedback relating to Goal 2: Liveable Neighbourhoods.

Survey respondents, workshop and pop-up participants were asked if Council have the Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategic Directions right.

Table 7 and **Figure 10** display the results. **Table 8** summarises feedback relating to Goal 2.

Table 7 Have we got the Liveable Neighbourhood Strategic Directions, right?

	Activity	I love it	I can live with it	It needs improvement
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2.1	Workshop	6	1	0
	Survey	41	22	27
	Pop-ups ⁶	1	0	0
	Overall	48	23	27
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2.2	Workshop	5	0	2
	Survey	39	26	25
	Pop-ups	1	0	0
	Overall	45	26	27
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2.3	Workshop	2	2	3
	Survey	29	33	28
	Pop-ups	1	0	0
	Overall	32	35	31
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2.4	Workshop	5	3	0
	Survey	40	15	34
	Pop-ups	1	0	0
	Overall	46	18	34
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2.5	Workshop	7	3	0
	Survey	25	43	22
	Pop-ups	1	0	0
	Overall	33	46	22

⁶ Results from one pop-up event. This applied to the remaining Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategic Directions

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Figure 10 Have we got the Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategic Directions right?

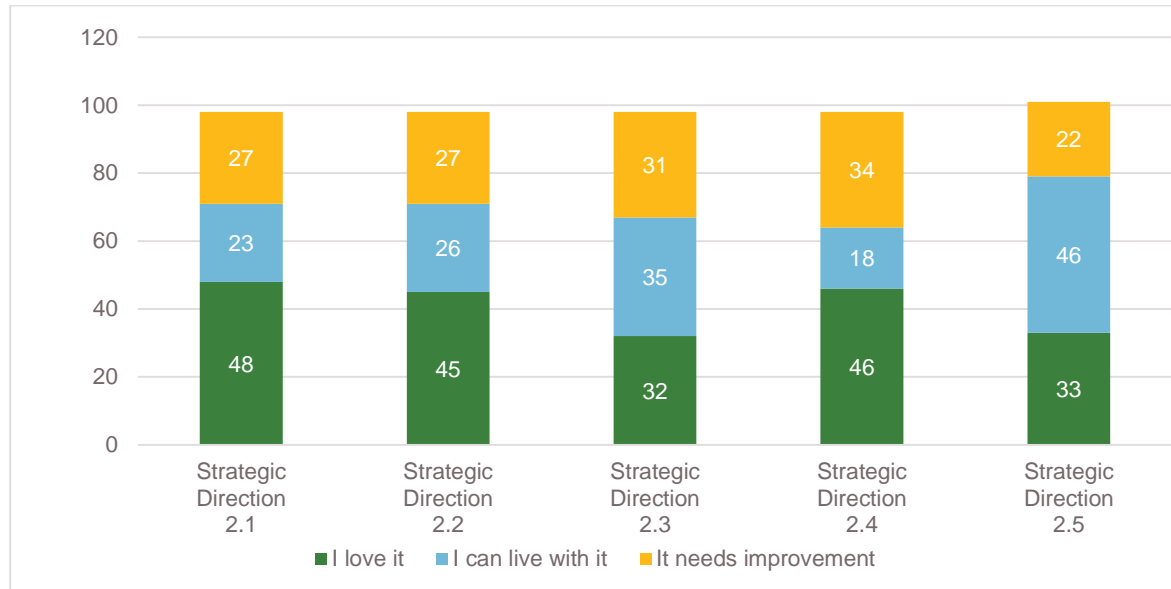


Table 8 Summary of feedback relating to Goal 2 Liveable Neighbourhoods

<u>Liveable Neighbourhoods</u> Strategic Directions	Positive feedback	Improvements needed
2.1 Protect non-urban breaks and enhance landscape amenity and rural character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaks between zones are important to maintain existing uses and to enhance the natural amenity. • Key issues addressed include interface management and urban growth pressures. • <i>'Whittlesea definitely needs to keep its urban-rural direction and not allow more housing estates to encroach on the town and surrounds'</i> (respondent from Whittlesea Township). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Direction is too ambiguous. • Urban breaks should be in areas that aren't currently populated. • Look at land topography prior to subdivision unlike what happened to Capstone Drive, Whittlesea. • Allow subdivision of uneconomic grazing blocks (into at least 5 acres) and require a minimum planting ratio of trees or shrubs per acre. • Include the development of Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Spaces.
2.2 Discourage new settlement in areas prone to extreme natural hazards.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New settlement is necessary as it will allow for improvements to local infrastructure and better connectivity within the area. • Consider building permit requirements, especially in flood prone areas. • If landowners were given greater control, they could reduce risks of natural hazards.
2.3 Provide a safe and fit for purpose local road network and support active travel.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road upgrades are needed including improvements to potholes and street lighting. • Maximise public transport to reduce vehicle traffic. • Design roads around heritage listed trees. • Allow for active travel modes by increasing bike lanes and ensuring they are well lit and safe. • Speed limits should be dropped to address the amount of roadkill such as kangaroos. • A series of key transport corridors are located within or have a strong interface with the Green Wedge. There should be ongoing engagement with the Department of Transport to ensure for continued safe operations.

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Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategic Directions	Positive feedback	Improvements needed
<p>2.4 Protect Green Wedge from further urban encroachment and improve management of the urban and rural interface.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting the Green Wedge from further encroachment should be a high priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage new restrictive residential development to strike the appropriate balance between building footprint and landscape. Stop land being sold on to developers or land bankers. Consider rezoning areas to address this. Provide details on what improved management looks like. <i>'Where possible, encourage housing diversity in the townships to enable ageing in place.'</i>
<p>2.5 Direct urban uses towards designated Whittlesea township area and areas within the Urban Growth Boundary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development must be restricted to areas within the Urban Growth Boundary and designated Whittlesea township existing development. Support for this Strategic Direction and the role of the UGB. Diverse and affordable housing should be located in the UGB and designated rural townships. This feedback also relates to Strategic Direction 2.4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further urban growth should primarily be directed towards more core areas of Whittlesea with sufficient access to sustainable transport, especially suburban rail, shops, and community spaces to reduce traffic and encourage sustainable travel. Many comments urging permission for landowners to be allowed build modest houses and sheds on small acreage. Landowners should be given permission to build modest houses and sheds on small acreage, to meet Council's requirements to look after their land.

Goal 3: Strong Local Economy

This section summarises feedback relating to Goal 3: Strong Local Economy.

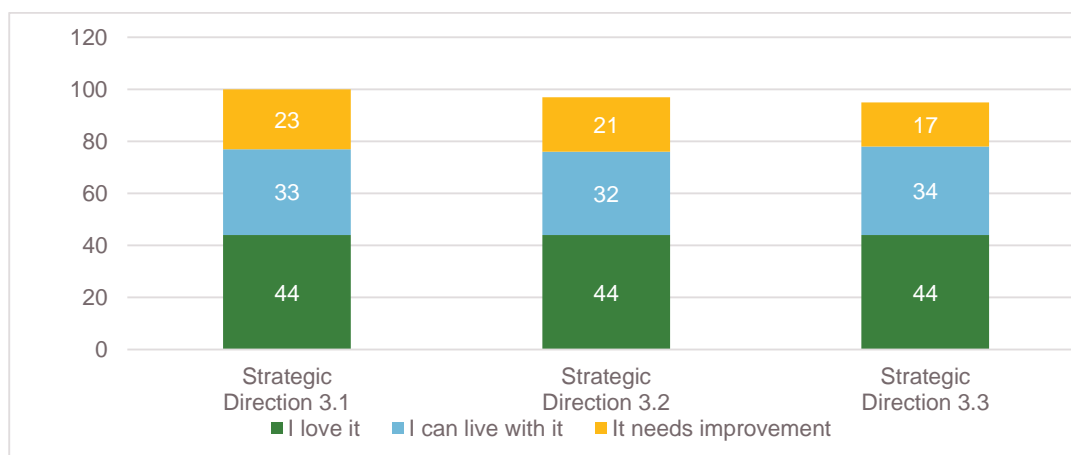
Survey respondents, and workshop participants were asked if Council have the Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategic Directions right.

Table 9 and **Figure 11** display the results. **Table 10** summarises feedback relating to Goal 3.

Table 9 Have we got the Strong Local Economy Strategic Directions, right?

	Activity	I love it	I can live with it	It needs improvement
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3.1	Workshop	8	2	0
	Survey	36	31	23
	Overall	44	33	23
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3.2	Workshop	4	2	2
	Survey	40	30	19
	Overall	44	32	21
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3.3	Workshop	4	3	0
	Survey	41	31	17
	Overall	44	34	17

Figure 11 Have we got the Strong Local Economy Strategic Directions, right?



'Growth of visitor economy needs to not negatively impact the community'

- Survey respondent from Eden Park

Table 10 Summary of feedback relating to Goal 3 Strong Local Economy

Sustainable Development Strategic Directions	Positive feedback	Improvements needed
<p>3.1 Improve understanding of the value of agriculture in the Green Wedge to provide for appropriate use and development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development should be towards renewable energy and environmentally friendly forms of farming or business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding is required to ensure this Direction can be delivered. Good communication between landowners and Council. Ensure the balancing of continued support of extractive industries and waste and resource recovery centres, with other priorities in the Green Wedge. Consider interface management controls to be implemented on a case-by-case basis. Consider non-agricultural uses such as schools and attraction sites within the Green Wedge. Consider rewording to include Cultural elements for biodiversity, natural landscapes and rural characteristics.
<p>3.2 Support local agribusinesses and the visitor economy to grow, be sustainable and prepared for climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for sustainability and climate action. Alignment with Nillumbik Shire Council's Green Wedge Management Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is little visitor economy in the Green Wedge, meaning businesses are not viable. Provide more detail as to how we are preparing for climate change. Ensure there are accredited eco-tourism and agri-tourism operators. <i>'Include support for Wurundjeri Woi wurrung tourism industry.'</i>
<p>3.3 Work with State Government to provide for future infrastructure and green energy needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area should be utilized for energy generation and storage. Communication with the State Government will be helpful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More specific information about work with State Government needs to be provided.

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Goal 4: Connected Community

This section summarises feedback relating to Goal 4: Connected Community.

Survey respondents, workshop participants and pop-up participants were asked if Council have the Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategic Directions right.

Table 11 and **Figure 12** display the results. **Table 12** summarises feedback relating to Goal 4.

Table 11 Have we got the Connected Community Strategic Directions, right?

	Activity	I love it	I can live with it	It needs improvement
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4.1	Workshop	4	1	0
	Survey	37	29	23
	Pop-ups ⁷	1	0	0
	Overall	42	30	23
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4.2	Workshop	5	1	1
	Survey	31	40	17
	Pop-ups	1	0	0
	Overall	37	41	18
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4.3	Workshop	1	1	5
	Survey	40	33	17
	Pop-ups	1	0	0
	Overall	42	34	22
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4.4	Workshop	3	3	1
	Survey	43	33	14
	Pop-ups	1	0	0
	Overall	47	36	15

⁷ Results from one pop-up event. This applies to the remaining Connected Community Strategic Directions

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Figure 12 Have we got the Connected Community Strategic Directions, right?

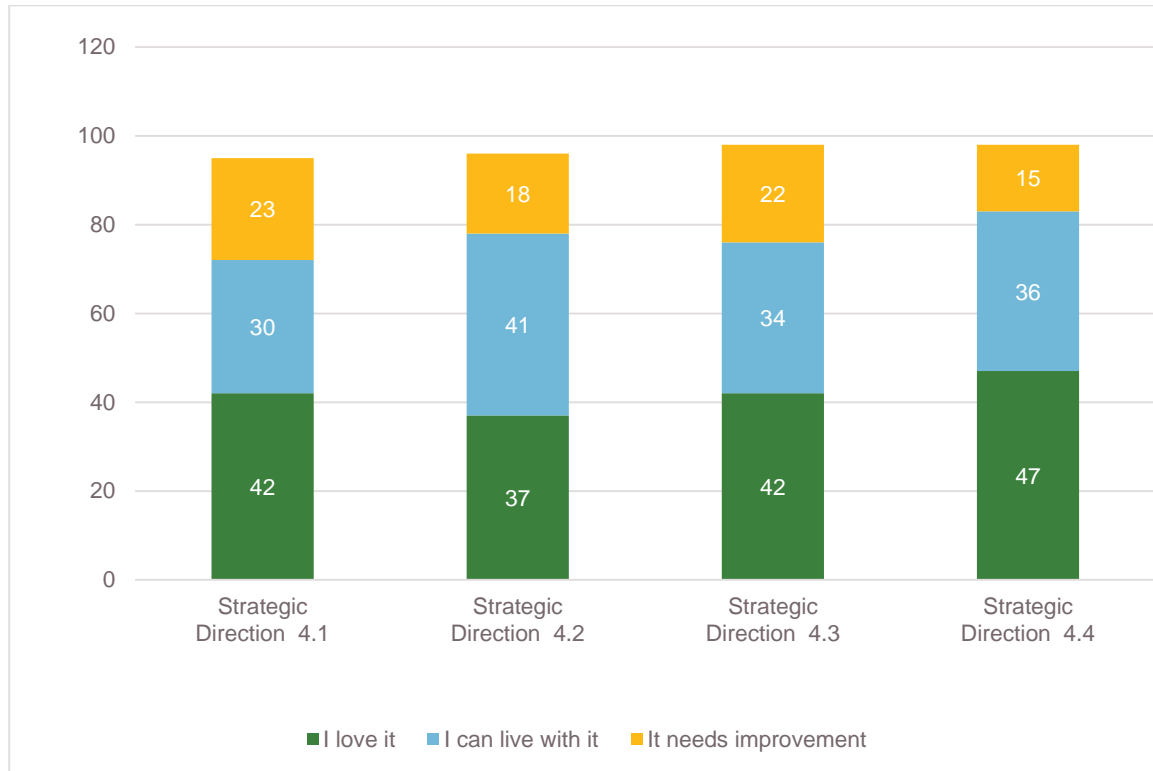


Table 12 Summary of feedback relating to Goal 4 Connected Community

Connected Community Strategic Directions	Positive feedback	Improvements needed
4.1 Understand and support the diverse needs of our rural community for environmental, social and economic resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are opportunities to consult with groups like Landcare. • <i>'I'd love to understand what programs would be on offer'</i> (respondent from Epping) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties within the Green Wedge must be adequately looked after. • Allow Green Wedge landowners to maintain their own land.
4.2 Better connect the Green Wedge with our communities via communication, placemaking and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive response to opportunities for involvement and programs. • Reaffirmation from Melbourne Water regarding interest to collaborate Council through the Northern Trails Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council must better engage with the community, to fully understand their needs. • Include educational sessions. • Respectful relationship between Council, contractors, and members of the community.
4.3 Engage and empower community members on various aspects of caring for and managing Green Wedge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will give community members a chance to get involved, share knowledge, and build community bonds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council should become aware of the extensive historical and practical knowledge of the landscape, environment, and farming practices. • More awareness for opportunities.
4.4 Partner with Traditional Owners to support the protection of aboriginal cultural heritage, improve land and water management and other Caring for Country Practises in the Green Wedge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical to the implementation of knowledge and practices but also to the credibility of the matter. • Combine everyone's knowledge and experience for optimal outcomes. • There is an opportunity for Council to partner with Traditional Owners to improve understanding and management of the area's rich Aboriginal Culture and biocultural values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of detail provided. • <i>'Reword to include "celebrate and facilitate enhanced Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural practice."</i> • Current practises have shown to ignore Traditional Owners land care advice. • No interest in Aboriginal Culture/Heritage. • The GWMP should refer to the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategies as the primary strategic framework outlining pathways towards the cultural management of Country. • Partner with Traditional Owners to <i>improve understanding and management of the area's rich Aboriginal cultural and biocultural values</i>

4. Key feedback from submissions

The following section presents some of the feedback received from the twelve written submissions received through the engagement period.

This section provides only a high-level overview of the key feedback contained in these submissions. However, all submissions will be reviewed by the City of Whittlesea for consideration as part of the finalisation of the Draft GWMP.

Overview of feedback in the submissions.

- A City of Whittlesea resident requests the ability to have the *right to farm* including access to water in addition to the ability to build tiny houses and / or dependent persons units.
- A City of Whittlesea resident is concerned about how grazing land fits into the Council's vision.
- A neighbouring Council sees opportunities for further collaboration with City of Whittlesea to protect and enhance Green Wedges. They identified an opportunity to achieve a holistic regional approach to managing Green Wedges and provided detailed recommendations for Goals one to four.
- Submissions from the two Traditional Owner groups in the City of Whittlesea sought for the role of Traditional Owners to be expanded, enhanced and recognised more broadly throughout the final GWMP.
- Submissions from the Traditional Owner groups provided preferred terminology or wording, references to partnerships, references to rights holders and to cultural landscapes.
- A local business asks Council to take account of individual sites, circumstances and contexts when managing the Green Wedge land and that there is clear recognition to the beneficial function of Section 2 uses in the GWMP.
- A regulator noted many of the Goals capture key environmental issues and supports strategic directions and the objectives which align with previous feedback. They acknowledged many specific actions will be outlined in the Implementation Plan.
- An environmental management committee shared detail considerations and recommendations for implementation of multiple strategic directions due to the ecological, environmental, social and cultural values of the Green Wedge, thus ensuring the green wedge is protected long term.
- A submission detailed potential conflicts the Draft GWMP may have with DELWP's 'Green Wedges and Agricultural Land' Consultation Paper regarding non-agricultural uses.
- A developer provided feedback regarding the restrictions around uses of specific land within the Green Wedge.

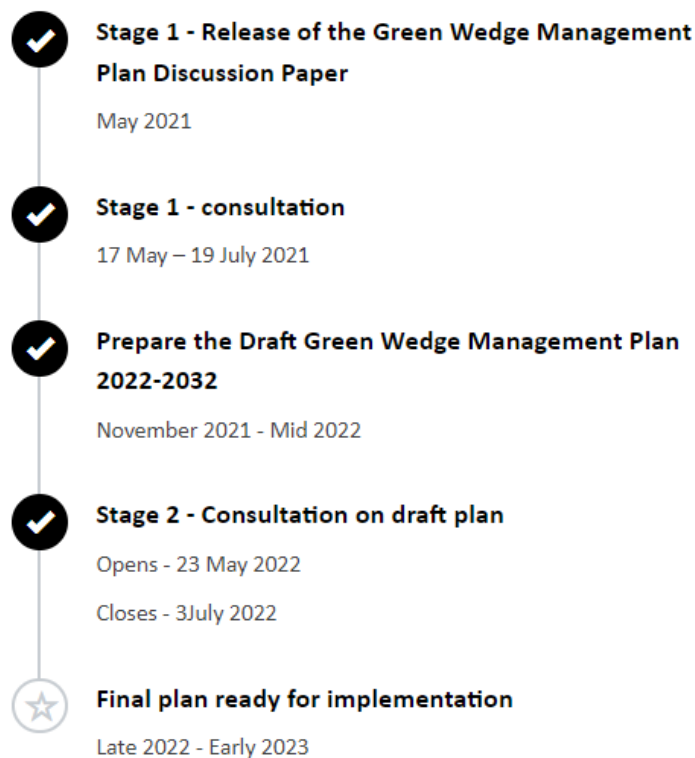
CITY OF WHITTLESEA, ENGAGEMENT REPORT VERSION 2, AUGUST 2022

- A State Agency recommends ongoing engagement between City of Whittlesea and the Agency to ensure alignment with the final GWMP whilst not affecting the planning and delivery of transport corridors.
- A State Agency supports the draft Vision, Objectives and Strategic Directions with many links to existing documents and strategies.

5. Next steps

The next steps will be to review all engagement feedback to inform the finalisation of the GWMP by late 2022 - early 2023. A project timeline is outlined below.

Figure 13. Timeline for GWMP 2023-2033 project



6. Ongoing updates

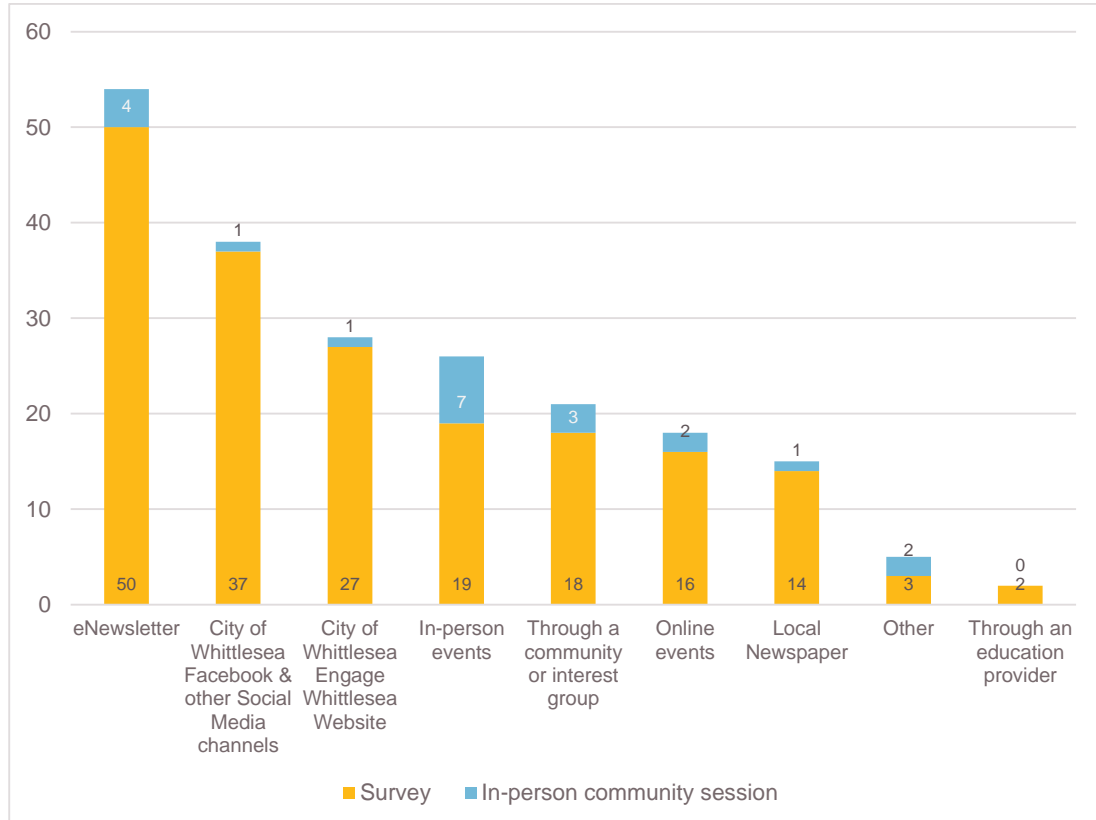
Figure 14 displays survey and in-person workshop participants' preferred ways of keeping up to date with the Green Wedge project and future news. The other methods raised by participants included mail, radio, flyer with rate notices, and via email.

Additionally, in-person workshop participants said they would like to be involved in ongoing future community engagement via the local newspaper, in-person workshops, in-person or online events, and any way that may be required.

The information in-person workshop participants would like to be kept informed about includes the following.

- Updates and progress on the GWMP including future steps, Goals and achievements and any changes from the draft
- Reviewing collated data
- Updates on Council direction
- Updates on any future impacts, such as additional details about what extraction industries are.

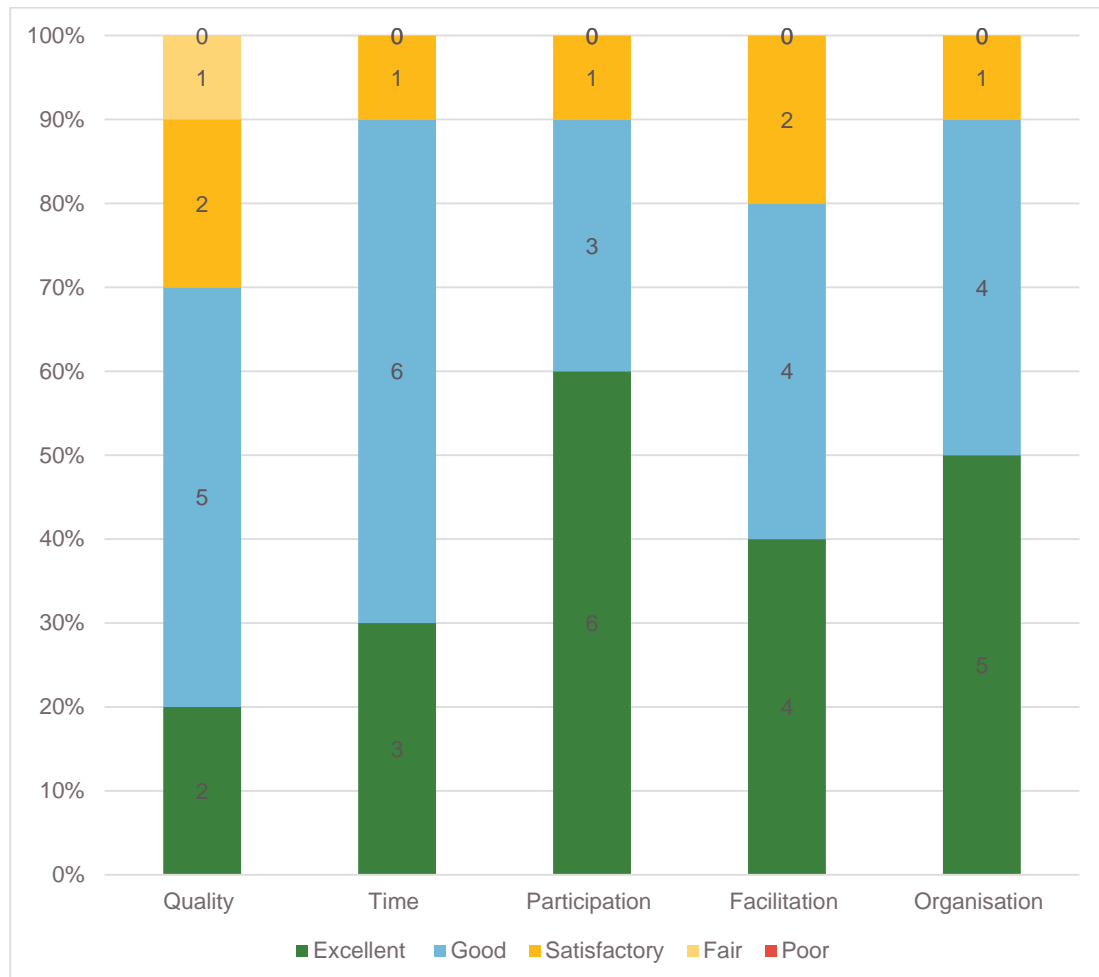
Figure 14. Survey and in-person workshop participants' preferred ways to keep up to date with the Green Wedge project and future news



7. Workshop evaluation

Figure 15 displays the evaluation results from the in-person workshop from the perspective of the participants. See **Appendix C** for the evaluation questions.

Figure 15. Workshop evaluation results (n=10)



'Much appreciated information provided'

'Excellent workshop. I, and others, thought it would be less formal suggest better definition from outset'

- In-person workshop participants

Appendices

Appendix A: Communication Materials

Figure 16. Draft Green Wedge Management Plan



Figure 17. Project Overview



Project Overview

The City of Whittlesea is calling on residents to have their say and help shape the future of our Green Wedge areas by participating in our Stage 2 engagement – by providing feedback on the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan 2022-2032.

The 'Green Wedge' is an area of land protected from urban development under Victorian State Government law. It covers over 60% of the City of Whittlesea municipality – an area more than three times the size of Phillip Island – and preserves the region's rural character and natural landscapes.

Known as the Green Wedge, these areas include our much-loved national parks, forests, reservoirs, significant Aboriginal and European heritage and nationally significant plants and animals as well as farms.

Council is reviewing its 10-year plan for how the area is managed and wants to hear from the community on the draft plan. The development of the new plan comes off the success of the previous plan which was adopted by Council in 2011.

Stage 1 Green Wedge Engagement

In preparing the new Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan 2022–2032, over 100 community members and stakeholders participated in our Stage 1 Community Engagement conducted between May-July 2021.

They told us which aspects of the Green Wedge they value the most:

- The positive effects on wellbeing from enjoying green natural spaces.
- Environmental significance of the area – just the existence of natural landscapes and features like hills, trees, waterways and animals.
- Environmental benefits, including reduced pollution in the air and water, and reduced heat or flood impact from extreme weather.
- Local food produced in the area.
- Local jobs in agriculture and related industries.
- Other values, such as cultural and spiritual connection to the land.

The feedback provided has helped inform the new Draft Green Wedge Management Plan.

Stage 2 Green Wedge Engagement is now open and closes on Sunday 3 July

We'd love to hear your thoughts on the Draft Plan.

For more information or to be kept up to date, visit <https://engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/green-wedge>, email us at Strategic.Planning@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or contact us by phone on 9217 2056.

Figure 18. Flyer



Green Wedge draft plan for review

Council is reviewing its 10-year plan for how the Green Wedge is managed and wants to hear from the community on the draft plan. The 'Green Wedge' is an area of land protected from urban development under Victorian State Government law.

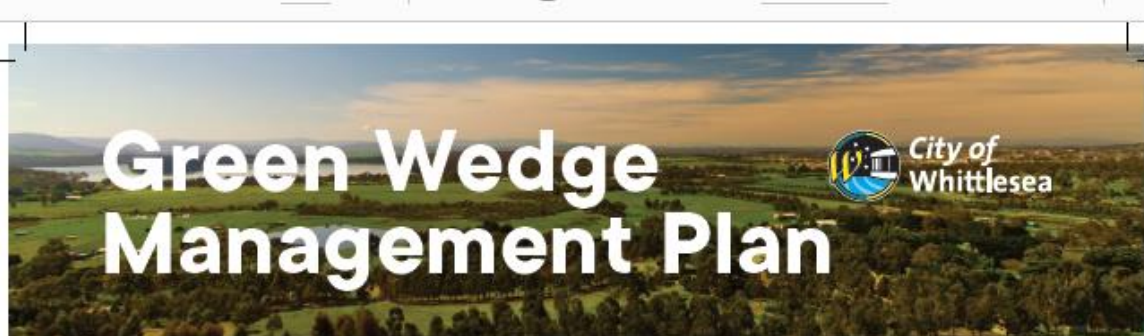
We'd love to hear your thoughts on the draft plan.

For more information or to be kept up to date visit the website www.engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au, email us at Strategic.Planning@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or contact us by phone on 9217 2056.

Green Wedge Consultation is now open and closes on Sunday 3 July. Be sure to visit www.engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au for the most up-to date project information



Figure 19. GWMP 2011 – 2021 Achievements



Green Wedge Management Plan Achievements

In preparing the new *Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan 2022-2032*, over 100 community members told us what aspects of the Green Wedge they value the most:

- The positive effects on wellbeing from enjoying green natural spaces.
- Environmental significance of the area – just the existence of natural landscapes and features like hills, trees, waterways and animals.
- Environmental benefits, including reduced pollution in the air and water, and reduced heat or flood impact from extreme weather.
- Local food produced in the area.
- Local jobs in agriculture and related industries.
- Other values, such as cultural and spiritual connection to the land.

There were 84 actions set out in the *Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan 2011-2021*, and every one of them has now been commenced. Of these actions, 49 have been completed, five are still underway and 30 are ongoing changes to the way we work, including networking with the local Aboriginal community and rural communities, providing business support to help keep farmers on the land, and partnering with community groups to better care for our waterways and environment.

Here are just some of the initiatives already championed under the Green Wedge Management Plan:

- **Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective**, a pilot program to demonstrate innovative sustainable farming practices, increase food security and provide an opportunity for residents to learn about local, sustainable food production.
- **Wayfinding and interpretive signage** for all of Council's 60 conservation reserves to promote the value and significance of ecosystems on Council-owned land.

- **Support for farming**, including agribusiness and the 'right to farm', through a submission to the State Government's Planning for Melbourne's *Green Wedges and Agricultural Land* review project.
- **South Morang Farmers and Makers Market**, held on the third Saturday of each month, which provides an opportunity for local producers to connect with the community and sell their produce locally.
- **Support for tourism in Whittlesea Township**, through the campaigns such as Dinner on Us, Shop Local, Choose Your Own Adventure, Christmas on Church and Winter Weekends, as well as support for the Whittlesea Agricultural Show and Table of Plenty events.
- **Strengthened partnerships with Traditional Owners** to contribute to a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of the relationship between cultural heritage, Traditional Owner knowledge and Aboriginal community health and wellbeing.
- **Advocacy for the proposed Melbourne Food and Innovation Export Hub (MFIH)**, which would support the use of agricultural land in the municipality and provide a meaningful contribution to Victoria's economic growth.
- **Partnerships with community groups** on waterway health, Landcare and rural education to support our community's own initiatives or new initiatives as a result of the Green Wedge Management Plan implementation.

Over the past 10 years, the *Green Wedge Management Plan 2011-2021* has nurtured and protected this land and delivered important outcomes for our community. Now at its completion, the Council and community are celebrating its many successful initiatives ahead of releasing the new draft plan in May-2022.

- The Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective
- Rural education programs to promote sustainable farming
- Improved signage across 60 conservation reserves
- Strengthened partnerships with Traditional Owners
- The South Morang Farmers and Makers Market



Figure 20. Map of Whittlesea's Green Wedge

City of Whittlesea Green Wedge

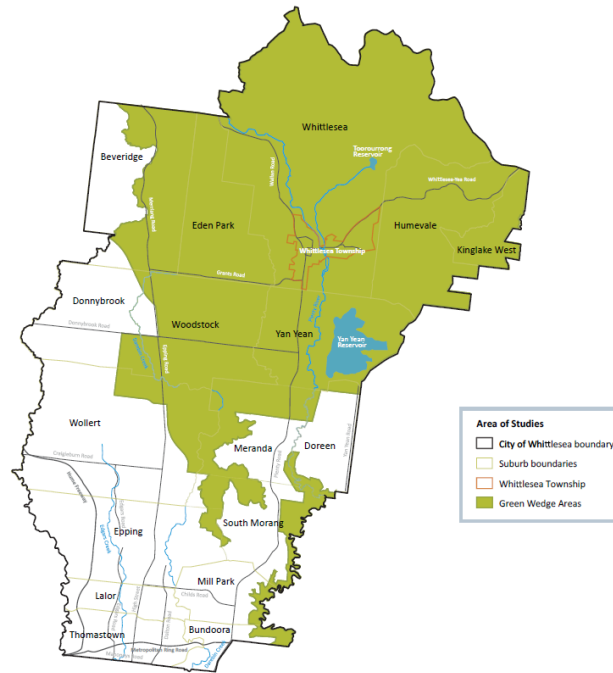


Figure 21. Three page handout: Vision, Objectives, Strategic Directions

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan: Vision, Objectives & Strategic Directions

VISION

Our Green Wedge is part of a connected ecosystem where biodiversity, natural assets and resources are enhanced and protected from urban encroachment.

Our Green Wedge provides for rural land uses and development, and supports economic opportunities in sustainable agriculture and the visitor economy that respect the environmental significance, rural and landscape character of the Green Wedge.

Our Green Wedge protects and promotes its rich Aboriginal and post contact heritage.

Our Green Wedge connects and supports a diverse, resilient and respectful community who are empowered to take care of the land.

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Whittlesea 2040 Goal - Sustainable Environment	
<p>Green Wedge Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Green Wedge’s natural landscapes are valued, healthy and biodiverse. Our Green Wedge is sustainably managed and is resilient to climate change and natural disasters. Our Green Wedge waterways are healthy and clean. Our Green Wedge protects and enhances greening on both council and non-council land. 	<p>Strategic Directions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Improve the management and protection of biodiversity. 1.2 Partner with landowners and land managers to ensure water is managed in an integrated and effective manner in the Green Wedge. 1.3 Ensure our residents and our environment benefit from a diverse, colourful, and healthy City Forest that connects people to people, people to nature, and people to place. 1.4 Partner with landowners and other government agencies to improve soil health.

Whittlesea 2040 Goal - Liveable Neighbourhoods	
<p>Green Wedge Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High value landscape features and significant views² are identified and protected in the Green Wedge. Communities understand the purpose of the Green Wedge zones and are supported to conduct appropriate land use, development and management on the land. Settlement in our Green Wedge is sensitive to the environment and is resilient to climate change and natural disasters. Our Green Wedge enjoys a safe and fit for purpose transport network that meets the needs and expectations of our community. Our Green Wedge has a clearly defined, permanent urban-rural interface that offer high ecological, recreational, agricultural values. 	<p>Strategic Directions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Protect non-urban breaks and enhance landscape amenity and rural character. 2.2 Discourage new settlement in areas prone to extreme natural hazards. 2.3 Provide safe and fit for purpose local road network and support active travel modes. 2.4 Protect the Green Wedge from further urban encroachment and improve management of the urban and rural interface. 2.5 Direct urban uses towards designated Whittlesea township area and areas within the Urban Growth Boundary

Whittlesea 2040 Goal - Strong Local Economy	
<p>Green Wedge Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of agriculture in the Green Wedge is well understood by our community. Our Green Wedge supports activities that enhance agricultural and environmental values and discourages uses that are incompatible with the purposes of the Green Wedge. Local agribusinesses are supported to facilitate ongoing viability and are encouraged to apply sustainable and innovative practices. Our Green Wedge supports a visitor economy that is sustainable and sensitive to the environmental and social impacts. The natural and built assets are recognised in the destination promotion activities. Our Green Wedge supports renewable energy production, protects existing operation and future opportunities for extractive industry and regionally significant waste management assets that are compatible with Green Wedge values. 	<p>Strategic Directions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Improve understanding of the value of agriculture in the Green Wedge to provide for appropriate use and development. 3.2 Support local agribusinesses and the visitor economy to grow, be sustainable and prepared for climate change. 3.3 Work with State Government to provide for future infrastructure and green energy needs.

Whittlesea 2040 Goal - Connected Community	
<p>Green Wedge Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Green Wedge community takes pride in Green Wedge and is empowered with the knowledge and opportunities to look after it. Our Green Wedge community enjoys better accessibility to open space facilities, safe and fit-for-purpose road and public transport infrastructure for greater social and economic resilience. Our Green Wedge enhances, protects and promotes places of cultural significance. Our Green Wedge community and Council, partner with Traditional Owners in various practices that Care for Country. 	<p>Strategic Directions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Understand and support the diverse needs of our rural community for environmental, social and economic resilience. 4.2 Better connect the Green Wedge with our communities via communication, placemaking and programs. 4.3 Engage and empower community members on various aspects of caring for and managing the Green Wedge. 4.4 Partner with Traditional Owners to support the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage, improve land and water management and other Caring for Country practices in the Green Wedge

3

CITY OF WHITTLESEA, ENGAGEMENT REPORT VERSION 2, AUGUST 2022

Figure 22 GWMP Review: Findings from Stage 1 Community Engagement 2021



Appendix B: Survey questions

Closed

About the Green Wedge Management Plan

The Draft Vision, Objectives and Strategic Directions have been informed by what you told us in Stage 1. These are all outlined below and we want to hear from you and check if we got them right.



Next

Open

About the Green Wedge Management Plan

Draft Vision

The Draft Green Wedge Management Plan Vision is that:

VISION

Our Green Wedge is part of a connected ecosystem where biodiversity, natural assets and resources are enhanced and protected from urban encroachment.

Our Green Wedge provides for rural land uses and development, and supports economic opportunities in sustainable agriculture and the visitor economy that respect the environmental significance, rural and landscape character of the Green Wedge.

Our Green Wedge protects and promotes its rich Aboriginal and post contact heritage.

Our Green Wedge connects and supports a diverse, resilient and respectful community who are empowered to take care of the land.

Have we got the Green Wedge Management Plan Vision right?

- I love it
- I can live with it
- It needs improvement

Draft Strategic Directions

The Draft Strategic Directions are themed to

- Sustainable Environment
- Liveable Neighbourhoods
- Strong Local Economy, and
- Connected Community.



Previous **Next**

Open

About the Green Wedge Management Plan

The Green Wedge Objectives for Sustainable Environment are that:

- Our Green Wedge’s natural landscapes are valued, healthy and biodiverse.
- Our Green Wedge is sustainably managed and is resilient to climate change and natural disasters.
- Our Green Wedge waterways are healthy and clean.
- Our Green Wedge protects and enhances greening on both council and non-council land.

To help us achieve these objectives we’ve identified a number of strategic directions. We’d like to get your feedback on whether we have this right.

Have we got Strategic Direction 1.1 to ‘Improve the management and protection of biodiversity’ right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 1.1 below

Have we got Strategic Direction 1.2 to ‘Partner with landowners and land managers to ensure water is managed in an integrated and effective manner in the Green Wedge’ right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 1.2 below

Have we got Strategic Direction 1.3 to 'Ensure our residents and our environment benefit from a diverse, colourful, and healthy City Forest that connects people to people, people to nature, and people to place' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 1.3 below

Have we got Strategic Direction 1.4 to 'Partner with landowners and other Government agencies to improve soil health.' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 1.4 below

[Previous](#) [Next](#)

Open

About the Green Wedge Management Plan

The Green Wedge Objectives for Liveable Neighbourhoods are that:

- High value landscape features and significant views are identified and protected in Green Wedge.
- Communities understand the purpose of the Green Wedge zones and are supported to conduct appropriate land use, development and management on the land.
- Settlement in our Green Wedge is sensitive to the environment and is resilient to climate change and natural disasters.
- Our Green Wedge is supported by a safe and fit for purpose transport network that meets the needs and expectations of our community.
- Our Green Wedge has a clearly defined, permanent urban-rural interface that offer high ecological, recreational, agricultural values.

To help us achieve these objectives we've identified a number of strategic directions. We'd like to get your feedback on whether we have this right.

Have we got Strategic Direction 2.1 to 'Protect non-urban breaks and enhance landscape amenity and rural character' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 2.1 below

Have we got Strategic Direction 2.2 to 'Discourage new settlement in areas prone to extreme natural hazards' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 2.2 below

Have we got Strategic Direction 2.3 to 'Provide safe and fit for purpose local road network and support active travel modes' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 2.3 below

CITY OF WHITTLESEA, ENGAGEMENT REPORT VERSION 2, AUGUST 2022

Have we got Strategic Direction 2.4 to 'Protect Green Wedge from further urban encroachment and improve management of the urban and rural interface' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 2.4 below

Have we got Strategic Direction 2.5 to 'Direct urban uses towards designated Whittlesea township area and areas within the UGB' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 2.5 below

Previous
Next

Open

About the Green Wedge Management Plan

The Green Wedge Objectives for Strong Local Economy are that

- The importance of agriculture in the Green Wedge is well understood by our community.
- Our Green Wedge supports activities that enhance agricultural and environmental values and discourages uses that are incompatible with the purposes of Green Wedge.
- Local agribusinesses are supported to facilitate ongoing viability and are encouraged to apply sustainable and innovative practices.
- Our Green Wedge supports a visitor economy that is sustainable and sensitive to the environmental and social impacts. The natural and built assets are recognised in the destination promotion activities.
- Our Green Wedge supports renewable energy production, protects existing operation and future opportunities of extractive industry and regionally significant waste management assets that is compatible with Green Wedge values.

To help us achieve these objectives we've identified a number of strategic directions. We'd like to get your feedback on whether we have this right.

Have we got Strategic Direction 3.1 to 'Improve understanding of the value of agriculture in the Green Wedge to provide for appropriate use and development' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 3.1 below

CITY OF WHITTLESEA, ENGAGEMENT REPORT VERSION 2, AUGUST 2022

Have we got Strategic Direction 3.2 to 'Support local agribusinesses and the visitor economy to grow, be sustainable and prepared for climate change' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 3.2 below

Have we got Strategic Direction 3.3 to 'Work with State Government to provide for future infrastructure and green energy needs' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 3.3 below

Previous
Next

Open

About the Green Wedge Management Plan

The Green Wedge Objectives for Connected Community are that:

- Our Green Wedge community takes pride in its Green Wedge and is empowered with the knowledge and opportunities to look after it.
- Our Green Wedge community enjoys better accessibility to open space facilities, safe and fit-for-purpose road and public transport infrastructure for greater social and economic resilience.
- Our Green Wedge enhances, protects and promotes places of cultural significance.
- Our Green Wedge community and Council, partner with Traditional Owners in various practices that Care for Country.

To help us achieve these objectives we've identified a number of strategic directions. We'd like to get your feedback on whether we have this right.

Have we got Strategic Direction 4.1 to 'Understand and support the diverse needs of our rural community for environmental, social and economic resilience' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 4.1 below

CITY OF WHITTLESEA, ENGAGEMENT REPORT VERSION 2, AUGUST 2022

Have we got Strategic Direction 4.2 to 'Better connect the Green Wedge with our communities via communication, placemaking and programs' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 4.2 below

Have we got Strategic Direction 4.3 to 'Engage and empower community members on various aspects of caring and managing for the Green Wedge' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 4.3 below

Have we got Strategic Direction 4.4 to 'Partner with Traditional Owners to support the preservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage, improve land and water management and other Caring for Country practices in the Green Wedge' right?

- I love it
- I can live with it / No comment
- It needs improvement

Share your comments on Strategic Direction 4.4 below

[Previous](#) [Next](#)

Open

About the Green Wedge Management Plan

About You

Are you Required

- Woman
- Man
- Prefer not to say
- Self-described (please specify)

Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Required

Do you speak a language other than English at home? Required

- No
- Prefer not to say
- Yes, please specify

What is your age? Required

Which suburb do you live in?

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Open

About the Green Wedge Management Plan

Future Engagement

Please tell us what your preferred ways of keeping up to date with the Green Wedge project and future news are?

Select all that apply

- eNewsletter
- City of Whittlesea Engage Whittlesea Website
- City of Whittlesea Facebook and other Social Media channels
- Local Newspaper
- In-person events
- Online events
- Through a community or interest group
- Through an education provider
- Other (please specify)

Previous

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Appendix C: Workshop Evaluation questions

To evaluate the success of the workshop and to improve future sessions, we invite you to complete this evaluation form.

Please use the following ratings and circle the most appropriate response:

1 = Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Good 5 = Excellent

Quality of information: How well did we describe what we needed to? How well were we in providing relevant information and answering your questions?

1 2 3 4 5

Use of time: How well did we use our time?

1 2 3 4 5

Participation: How well did we do on making sure everyone was involved?

1 2 3 4 5

Facilitation: How well was the workshop managed?

1 2 3 4 5

Organisation: How well was the workshop run?

1 2 3 4 5

Attachment 3: Green Wedge Vision, Objectives and Strategic Directions

Green Wedge Vision	
The Whittlesea Green Wedge will be recognised for its enhanced natural environment and celebrated cultural assets, for providing a productive and diversified local economy and ensuring the well-being benefits of this beautiful space are enjoyed by all.	
Whittlesea 2040 Goal - Sustainable Environment	
Green Wedge Objectives	Strategic Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Green Wedge’s natural landscapes are valued, healthy and biodiverse. • Our Green Wedge is sustainably managed and is resilient to climate change and natural disasters. • Our Green Wedge waterways are healthy and clean. • Our Green Wedge protects and enhances greening on both Council and non-Council land. 	<p>SD 1.1 Improve the management and protection of biodiversity</p> <p>SD 1.2 Partner with landowners and land managers to ensure water is managed in an integrated and effective manner in the Green Wedge</p> <p>SD 1.3 Ensure our residents and our environment benefit from a diverse, colourful, and healthy City Forest that connects people to people, people to nature, and people to place.</p> <p>SD 1.4 Partner with landowners and other government agencies to improve soil health</p>
Whittlesea 2040 Goal - Liveable Neighbourhoods	
Green Wedge Objectives	Strategic Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High value landscape features and significant views, including Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Spaces, are identified, and protected in the Green Wedge. • Communities understand the purpose of the Green Wedge zones and are supported to conduct appropriate land use, development and management on the land. • Settlement in our Green Wedge is sensitive to the environment and is resilient to climate change and natural disasters. 	<p>SD 2.1 Protect non-urban breaks and enhance landscape amenity and rural character</p> <p>SD 2.2 Discourage new settlement in areas prone to extreme natural hazards</p> <p>SD 2.3 Provide safe and fit for purpose local road network and support active travel modes.</p> <p>SD 2.4 Protect the Green Wedge from further urban encroachment and improve management of the urban & rural interface</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Green Wedge enjoys a safe and fit for purpose transport network that meets the needs and expectations of our community. • Our Green Wedge has a clearly defined, permanent urban-rural interface that offer high ecological, recreational, agricultural values. 	<p>SD 2.5 Direct urban uses towards designated Whittlesea township area and areas within the Urban Growth Boundary.</p>
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Whittlesea 2040 Goal- Strong Local Economy

Green Wedge Objectives	Strategic Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of agriculture in the Green Wedge is well understood by our community. • Our Green Wedge supports activities that enhance agricultural and environmental values and discourages uses that are incompatible with the purposes of the Green Wedge. • Local agribusinesses are supported to facilitate ongoing viability and are encouraged to apply sustainable and innovative practices. • Our Green Wedge supports a visitor economy that is sustainable and sensitive to the environmental and social impacts. The natural and built assets are recognised in the destination promotion activities. • Our Green Wedge supports renewable energy production, protects existing operation and future opportunities for extractive industry and regionally significant waste management assets that are compatible with Green Wedge values. 	<p>SD 3.1 Improve understanding of the value of agriculture in the Green Wedge to provide for appropriate use and development.</p> <p>SD 3.2 Support local agribusinesses and the visitor economy to grow, be sustainable and prepared for climate change.</p> <p>SD 3.3 Work with State Government to provide for future infrastructure and green energy needs.</p>

Whittlesea 2040 Goal – Connected Community

Green Wedge Objectives	Strategic Directions
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Green Wedge community takes pride in its Green Wedge and is empowered with the knowledge and opportunities to look after it. • Our Green Wedge community enjoy better accessibility to open space facilities, safe and fit-for-purpose road and public transport infrastructure for greater social and economic resilience. • Our Green Wedge enhances, protects and promotes places of cultural significance. • Our Green Wedge community and Council, partner with Traditional Owners in various practices that Care for Country. 	<p>SD 4.1 Understand and support the diverse needs of our rural community for environmental, social and economic resilience.</p> <p>SD 4.2 Better connect the Green Wedge with our communities via communication, placemaking and programs.</p> <p>SD 4.3 Engage and empower community members on various aspects of caring and managing the Green Wedge.</p> <p>SD 4.4 Partner with Traditional Owners to celebrate and facilitate enhanced Wurundjeri Woiwurrung and Taungurung cultural practice, cultural heritage, improve land and water management and other Caring for Country practices in the Green Wedge.</p>
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Attachment 4: Summary of Written Submissions from Stage 2 Engagement on the Draft Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan

Submitter	Summary of key issues raised	Officer response and recommendations
EPA Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Council continue to partner with landowners, community groups, and various levels of government to manage risk and improve soil health. • Suggestion that Council consider a similar approach to Nillumbik Shire Council who introduced Planning Scheme Amendment C130 and C131 to provide Council with a mechanism to regulate potential impacts of soil dumping on the environment, amenity and human health. • Support the opportunity identified in the <i>Green Wedge Discussion Paper</i> to require sodic and dispersive soil management plans to manage risk and require site specific recommendations for management of sodic soils. • Highlighted the importance of applying the ‘agent of change’ principle, where new land uses encroach on the buffer of existing land uses. • Recommend the GWMP implementation give consideration to the application of the Buffer Area Overlay (BAO) where necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Planning Scheme Amendment to regulate potential impacts from soil dumping will be considered under the Sustainable Environment Strategy (SES) Action Plan to implement the GWMP. • Soil health is identified in the GWMP and SES as a regional issue, and actions to manage it will be considered under the SES Action Plan. • The ‘Agent of change’ principle is reflected in the GWMP and is key to managing the urban-rural interface. • Application of the BAO will be considered where appropriate, to prevent/manage incompatible use and development around existing industry, where they meet the criteria.
Nillumbik Shire Council (NSC)	<p>Highlighted the benefits for Whittlesea and NSC continuing to identify opportunities to collaborate on Green Wedge issues. Including a suggestion that Council investigate the potential for a dedicated Green Wedge forum for a more holistic, regional policy approach to Green Wedge planning, to collaborate and jointly respond to opportunities that deliver more effective outcomes for the Green Wedge. NSC value the opportunity to collaborate in this space, identifying the following areas that would benefit from a collaborative approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Managing biodiversity and environmental threats ○ Developing regional trails and other recreational links such as improving links from Whittlesea into Yarrambat and Plenty ○ Advocate jointly to State Government for Green Wedge reforms ○ Promoting a regional approach to tourism ○ Working with the Traditional Owners (TO) to better acknowledge and celebrate heritage and share their knowledge of the region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Council’s advocacy to the State Government’s Green Wedge and Agricultural Land (GWAL) review for changes that support stronger protection of biodiversity conservation and agricultural land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GWMP recognises the regional nature of Green Wedge issues and importance of partnerships with neighbouring Councils. There are various existing forums and examples of partnership initiatives between Council, NSC and Hume City Council (HCC). Further opportunities will be explored under the relevant Action Plans of the various Council Integrated Planning Framework strategies developed or being developed, that the GWMP will feed into. Potential for a dedicated Green Wedge forum to facilitate collaboration and a more regional approach, will be explored. • Specific examples of collaboration/partnership opportunities such as recreational trails and a regional approach to tourism have also been passed on to the Economic Development department and will be

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the discussion about land fragmentation and the acknowledgement that to retain and future proof existing and future agricultural opportunities, continued advocacy to State Government is required to safeguard minimum lots sizes and discourage further subdivision. Supports the acknowledgement of urban development as the ‘agent of change’ which has the onus to manage its interface with rural areas, and an emphasis on improving management of the urban-rural interface. 	<p>considered as part of the Destination Plan work currently being undertaken.</p>
<p>Ratio on behalf of Funfields</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GWMP should recognise and support that agriculture is not the sole function of Green Wedges. Concerned the GWMP neither explicitly recognises nor supports Funfields or Section 2 uses, noting that such land uses/businesses contribute to the vibrancy of Whittlesea’s Green Wedge areas. Seeking explicit support for Section 2 uses that may be permitted in Green Wedge zones, as per the Planning Policy Framework and to recognise individual circumstances and contexts in managing Green Wedge land. Acknowledge the purpose and intent of the GWMP, although many of the Strategic Directions are not applicable to Funfields. They do not appear to support its business model and context, yet both are acceptable planning outcomes in the Green Wedge, under the Whittlesea Planning Scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While agriculture and biodiversity enhancement are key elements underpinning the rural zones in the Whittlesea Green Wedge, it also supports other appropriate, non-urban, Section 2 uses such as Funfields (a recreation-tourism based business), agri-tourism and extractive industries. This has been made more explicit in the GWMP. Discussion about other appropriate, non-urban Section 2 uses has also been included in the GWMP.
<p>Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung</p>	<p>A detailed submission was received which provided a broad range of comments across all areas of the GWMP. The key themes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instances where either an incorrect or inappropriate reference for Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung had been used. Noting the difference between European and Aboriginal Heritage, request that they be addressed separately, not under the same theme. No recognition of ongoing cultural practice in the GWMP, only cultural heritage. This doesn’t reflect the continuing cultural practices occurring today and opportunities for enhancing cultural practices in the future. Omission of Cultural elements, including the need to create and maintain cultural landscapes. Culture should not be lumped in with “Other Values”. No recognition of the importance of water for Traditional Owners (TO). Current wording suggests Caring for Country is purely for improving environmental values of an area but does not recognise other aspects. Request reference to Traditional Owner Country Plans in the GWMP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All references have been corrected. Aboriginal Heritage and Historical Heritage are now separate sections in the GWMP. Reference to ongoing cultural practice has been included in the GWMP. The importance of water and recognition of the broader scope of Caring for Country have been incorporated. Reference to <i>Traditional Owner Country Plans</i> added. The language has been changed to reflect TO as parties to, or partners with Council, rather than stakeholders. The GWMP is a State Government requirement and must be prepared in accordance with the Planning Practice Note. It is primarily a document that guides the management of land use and development within the Green Wedge. As such, the GWMP is not the correct policy mechanism to explore or direct the other matters

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerns regarding some of the language used to describe the nature of the relationship between TO and Council, such as TO as right’s holders and decision-making in accordance with self-determination procedures. 	<p>raised regarding the nature of the relationship between TO and Council, such as TO as right holders. These matters are best resolved through the Reconciliation Action Plan review which is due to commence in 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend Council invite Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung and TLaWC to be part of Council’s Reconciliation Action Plan review due to commence in 2023, to address these broader matters.
<p>Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLaWC)</p> <p>(Submission was received in two parts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that biodiversity, landscape, water and heritage are identified as separate themes which reflects a Western world view in which these values can be planned for and managed independently. From a TO point of view, this is incorrect framing - Country is only meaningfully managed when managed according to cultural objectives. • Need to reference the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy. • Assert Indigenous cultural and intellectual property (ICIP) rights and interests over native foods and botanicals as expressed in the <i>Victorian Traditional Owner Native Foods and Botanicals Strategy</i> and recommends the GWMP should reference this document. • An emerging area of agribusiness is native foods and botanicals; therefore, it is important to recognise the take and use rights of Taungurung Traditional Owners on Public Land. • TLaWC assert their self-determined rights and interests in Country. There are instances within the <i>Green Wedge Discussion Paper</i> which present an incorrect framing of the relationship between Council and TLaWC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the holistic view held by TO is now acknowledged in the GWMP. • The <i>Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy</i> was referenced in the draft Plan and is referenced in the final GWMP. • The <i>Victorian Traditional Owner Native Food and Botanicals Strategy</i> is now also referenced in the GWMP. • Indigenous ICIP rights and interests over native foods and botanicals is acknowledged in the GWMP. • The language has been changed to reflect TO as parties to, or partners with Council, rather than stakeholders. • The GWMP is a State Government requirement and must be prepared in accordance with the Planning Practice Note. It is primarily a document that guides the management of land use and development within the Green Wedge. As such, the GWMP is not the correct policy mechanism to explore or direct the other matters raised regarding the nature of the relationship between TO and Council, such as TO as right holders. These matters are best resolved through the Reconciliation Action Plan review which is due to commence in 2023. • Recommend Council invite Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung and TLaWC to be part of Council’s Reconciliation Action Plan review due to commence in 2023, to address these broader matters.
<p>Darebin Creek Management Committee</p>	<p>DCMC provided a detailed submission which supports the objectives and strategic directions of the GWMP. Some of the key issues raised include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many issues raised relate to and support the directions of the adopted Sustainable Environment Strategy (Nov 2021) which encompasses the Biodiversity Strategy.

<p>(DCMC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to implement and evaluate the Biodiversity Strategy and caution against a simplistic view of implementing the City Forest Strategy. • To protect the Green Wedge and provide an enduring buffer along the urban fringe it is critical that Council proceeds with the expansion of Quarry Hills Regional Park north along Darebin Creek. • Public land should be made available for public access and enjoyment where this does not conflict with other priorities, which would encourage people to take an interest in its long-term conservation. • Uncertainty over the long-term permanency of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and the Green Wedge boundary, has contributed to current land speculation. This distorts land values and undermines the goals and objectives of the GWMP. • Forming strong community awareness of and familiarity with the Green Wedge is critical to building the social licence to protect and enhance the Green Wedge in the long term. • The Darebin Creek section of Quarry Hills should become a place for: public education about the ecological values and indigenous cultural values, and an opportunity for the community to participate in the ecological restoration of Grassy Woodlands. • Within the Green Wedge DCMC are looking to establish a Friends of Quarry Hills Park as a local community taking care of the creek lands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The planned review of Councils Open Space Strategy will consider providing public access where possible on Council owned Land. • Uncertainty regarding the UGB and land banking is an on-going issue for all Green Wedge Councils. The GWMP and Council’s submission to the GWAL both refer to this issue. • State Government has also sought to address land banking with the introduction of a new tax – the Windfall Tax which will become active as of 01 July 2023. It is anticipated that this new tax should start to reduce the perceived potential development pressure on peri-urban land. • The importance of building community awareness, participation and enhancing education opportunities in regards to the Green Wedge is recognised in the GWMP. • The GWMP recognises the role that other stakeholders such as DCMC and TO have in promoting awareness, understanding and education about the different Green Wedge values.
<p>Urbis on behalf of owner 1185 Merriang Rd Woodstock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submission refers to the potential development of their land holding and seeks changes to the GWMP to identify appropriate locations for schools within the Green Wedge Zone. • Concerned the Draft GWMP was silent on allowing non-agricultural land uses. • Seeking support for non-agricultural land uses (such as schools) that may be permitted in Green Wedge zones, as per the Planning Policy Framework. • Notes and supports two of the options identified in the State Government’s GWAL Consultation Paper which flagged introducing conditions for ‘schools’ such as being adjacent to the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and adjoin or have access to a road in a Road Zone; and are prohibited in a Bushfire Management Overlay. • Suggest that the GWMP should be updated to reflect and be consistent with the GWAL Consultation Paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge that the rural zones in the Whittlesea Green Wedge do support appropriate, ‘non-urban’, Section 2 uses. This has been made more explicit in the GWMP. • The GWAL Consultation Paper flagged a range of potential options for consideration as part of the consultation process, including two relating to ‘schools’. • However, Council’s adopted submission (February 2021) to the GWAL Consultation Paper strongly opposed any changes that would allow ‘schools’ or ‘places of worship’ in the Green Wedge. That such uses are ‘urban’ in nature and should be accommodated within the UGB rather than water down fundamental elements of the planning provisions that seek to protect the Green Wedge. Council’s submission suggested that changes should instead be made to the Victorian Planning Authority’s

		<p>Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) Guidelines to ensure better planning and provision for schools within the UGB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to note that the GWAL outcomes have not been released yet, so it would be premature to assume the outcomes of the consultation or any decision the State Government may take on this issue. • Identifying locations for schools is beyond the scope of the GWMP.
SIG Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submission refers to the potential impact of any interface management controls on their land in the Northern Growth Area, west of Merriang Road, • Concern that if interface management controls are any more restrictive than what is currently in place, there may be insufficient land to allow for the continuation of farming in the future. • It was strongly contended that any proposed interface management controls should be implemented on a case-by-case basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GWMP supports the ‘agent of change’ principle and recognises the need for improved urban /rural interface management to protect existing agricultural and non-urban uses from encroachment. Further, in the Green Wedge context, it recognises that urban development is often the ‘agent of change’ which has the onus to manage its interface with rural areas. • Consultation will be undertaken prior to the introduction of any interface management measures being considered by Council in the future, which would be applied on a case-by-case basis.
Department of Transport (DoT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of key transport corridors (such as the planned E6 corridor) are within or have a strong interface with the Green Wedge. They are essential to the continued safe and efficient operation of the transport network in Melbourne’s Northern Growth Corridor. • Recommends ongoing engagement between the two agencies to ensure any planning scheme amendments or policy changes do not affect the planning and delivery of these transport corridors whilst also aligning with the GWMP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key transport corridors are reflected in the GWMP. • On-going collaboration with DoT will continue as these transport projects are progressed.
Melbourne Water (MW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Strategic Direction SD 1.2, however, recommend it be amended to recognise MW’s role as water supply authority and CMA, in addition to the stated roles as regional drainage and floodplain manager, and waterway manager. • Reaffirmed its interest to collaborate with the Council through the Northern Trails Group to explore opportunities on its land to provide important recreational infrastructure for the community. The creation of shared use paths and trails provide an opportunity for the community to further value the public land spaces and associated waterway environmental features that we manage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GWMP has been updated to reflect MW’s roles and responsibilities. • Suggestions for further collaboration have been provided to the appropriate Council teams. • The GWMP recognises the role of all stakeholders in water management. <i>Whittlesea Water for all – Our Water Strategy (2020-2030)</i> identifies the need to improve our public places along key waterways and to connect walking and cycling pathways from Yan Yean Reservoir to Plenty Gorge.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the MW Healthy Waterways Strategy there is a strong emphasis on connecting the community to waterways and nature, including targets for increased access to waterways in the Whittlesea area by 2028. • Melbourne Water notes that past activation projects on our land have included projects with a food growing and education/training focuses. Similar opportunities could be explored in the Green Wedge area in alignment with the local food economy goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GWMP seeks to connect our community with the positive aspects of the Green Wedge via a range of opportunities including recreation, environmental programs and the availability of local food.
<p>Individual Submitter 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all areas of the Green Wedge are the same. • Major concern is how grazing land fits into Council’s vision. For the most parts, livestock grazing is not a sustainable activity within the municipality on both environmental and economic grounds. • More intensive forms of horticulture are required to offset a human’s carbon imprint. • Higher value agriculture (grazing) requires economies of scale which the relatively small block sizes in the City of Whittlesea do not give. • Propose that the Council allow the subdivision of uneconomic grazing blocks into blocks of at least 5 acres. With a caveat that such blocks require the planting of a minimum ratio of trees/shrubs per acre, the green wedge would increase biodiversity and sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of farming is recognised within the GWMP as is the need to be flexible with regards to the variety of farming methods as farming continues to evolve. • The extent of subdivision permitted is subject to the relevant zone provisions. However, Council’s adopted submission (February 2021) to the GWAL Consultation Paper sought stronger mechanisms to limit subdivision and lifestyle type urban developments in the Green Wedge.
<p>Individual Submitter 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about the gradual loss of Green Wedge which impacts their ability to continue to grow their own food, vegetables and raise animals. • The right to farm is important as it reduces fuel miles and done correctly can have a positive impact on the environment as well as provide food security. The ability to do this is important. • Are against the anti-development proposals in the GWMP, suggesting granny flats for elderly parents or adult children to tackle the housing affordability crisis, are appropriate. • Promoting holiday cottages or tiny homes would benefit the community getting closer to nature and contribute towards the costs of sustainable land management • In regard to hunting, pest control on property is vital • Concerned that the scope of the GWMP is limited, and that input is welcome provided it fits within the agenda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of farming is recognised within the GWMP as is the need to be flexible with regards to the variety of farming methods as farming continues to evolve. • The rural zones in the Whittlesea Green Wedge do support appropriate, ‘non-urban’, Section 2 uses, which has been made more explicit in the GWMP. • Some of the development proposals suggested are contrary to the existing Victoria Planning Provisions which limits certain forms of housing or urban development in the Green Wedge. • Hunting is not mentioned within the GWMP.

5.5 High Performing Organisation

5.5.1 Advocating for Funding and Better Outcomes for Whittlesea Community

Responsible Officer	Interim Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Author	Sarah Rowe, Interim Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
In Attendance	Sarah Rowe, Interim Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Attachments	No attachments

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson and Administrator Peita Duncan to travel interstate along with Council's Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd and members of Council's Executive Leadership Team.

Brief Overview

There is an opportunity for Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson to attend Canberra in conjunction with Council's Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd to meet with Federal Government politicians and senior advisors to advocate for funding and better outcomes for the Whittlesea community.

Additionally, Administrator Peita Duncan has the opportunity to attend the 2023 National General Assembly hosted by the Australian Local Government Association, along with Council's Director Planning and Development Justin O'Meara and Director Customer and Corporate Services, Sarah Renner in Canberra to further advocate for the Whittlesea community.

Council approval is required for any interstate travel by Councillors/Administrators.

Recommendation

THAT Council authorise Chair of Council Lydia Wilson and Administrator Peita Duncan to travel interstate to advocate for funding and better outcomes for the Whittlesea community between the period March to June 2023.

Key Information

Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson has the opportunity to meet with Federal Government politicians and senior advisors, along with the Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd to advocate for funding and better outcomes for the Whittlesea community.

It is intended to discuss the following items:

- The role of Councils in aged care, given that many Councils are opting out of aged care provision, particularly home and community care services;
- The role of Councils during the Voice to Parliament campaign and lead up to the referendum this year;
- Council's six Federal Pre-Budget Submission priorities with Ministers or their Senior Advisors responsible for the following areas:
 - Aboriginal Gathering Place funding
 - Regional Aquatics and Sports Centre funding
 - A permanent headspace mental health service for the North
 - Improved broadband connectivity
 - E6 Freeway business case and construction
 - Social and affordable housing.

Attending the 2023 National General Assembly hosted by the Australian Local Government Association, provides Administrator Duncan, Council's Director Planning and Development, Justin O'Meara and Director Customer and Corporate Services, Sarah Renner to meet with key stakeholders within Federal, State and Local Governments to advocate the priorities of the Whittlesea community.

Additionally, the National General Assembly provides the opportunity for Administrator Duncan to speak to the motions submitted by Council that identify opportunities for new federal programs and policies that will support Council to build stronger local communities.

Council approval is required for any interstate or overseas travel by Councillors/Administrators.

Community Consultation and Engagement

This would enable Administrators and Council to effectively advocate on behalf of the local community and build partnerships with key stakeholders.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

High performing organisation

We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

Considerations

Environmental

Through advocacy and working in partnership with other tiers of Government, there can be positive environmental outcomes for the community.

Social, Cultural and Health

Positive social, cultural and health outcomes can be achieved when advocating for funding that support Council's priority projects.

Economic

Building partnerships with key stakeholders to increase awareness of key economic initiatives can support positive economical outcomes for the community.

Financial Implications

The cost of any conference and travel expenditure is included in the current budget.

Link to Strategic Risk

Strategic Risk *Community and Stakeholder Engagement - Ineffective stakeholder engagement resulting in compromised community outcomes and/or non-achievement of Council's strategic directions.*

Implementation Strategy

Critical Dates

Travel would be arranged to enable effective conversations to inform future Federal and State budgets.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Conclusion

It is recommended to authorise the travel interstate for Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson and Administrator Peita Duncan to meet with Government politicians and senior advisors to advocate for funding and better outcomes for the Whittlesea community.

5.5.2 Quarterly Corporate Performance Report - Q2 ended 31/12/2022

Responsible Officer	Director Customer & Corporate Services
Author	Rahul Shah, Unit Manager Financial Strategy
In Attendance	Aaron Gerrard, Acting Chief Financial Officer

Attachments

1. Corporate Performance Report [5.5.2.1 - 22 pages]
2. 2021-2025 Performance Snapshot A4 Q2 Oct- Dec 2022 [5.5.2.2 - 1 page]
3. Capital Works Grant Status Update Report December 2022 [5.5.2.3 - 2 pages]
4. Reserve December 2022 [5.5.2.4 - 2 pages]

Purpose

That Council notes the Quarterly Corporate Performance Report for the period ended 31 December 2022 (Attachment 1).

Recommendation

THAT Council notes the:

1. **Quarterly Corporate Performance Report for December 2022 (Attachment 1).**
2. **Outcome of the 2022-2023 Quarter 2 Forecast Review.**
3. **Progress made against the key actions included in the Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023 as highlighted in the Quarter 2 Performance Snapshot (Attachment 2).**
4. **Good governance actions over the past quarter.**
5. **Capital Works program performance for the period ended 31 December 2022.**
6. **Status of the infrastructure grants for the period ended 31 December 2022 as outlined in Grants Status Update (Attachment 3).**
7. **Financial performance for the period ended 31 December 2022.**

Brief Overview

Community Plan Action Plan

- 112 of the 125 key actions included in the Community Plan Action Plan for delivery in the 2022-2023 financial year are reported on track.
- Four of the 12 ongoing key actions included in the Community Plan Action Plan 2021-2022 have now been completed.

Good Governance

In addition to conducting regular Council Meetings, Council has updated the Conflict of Interest policy to enhance governance at the City of Whittlesea.

Capital Works

- Council adopted the 2022-23 Capital Works Program on 27 June 2022 with a budget of \$51.67 million. The Capital Works Annual Budget also includes 2021-2022 carry forwards of \$23.87 million, providing a total budget amount of \$75.54 million.
- Year to date Capital Works actual expenditure is \$22.03 million against year to date Annual Budget of \$19.08 million, which is \$2.95 million ahead of budget.
- Forecast estimates expenditure of \$66.2 million against the Annual Budget of \$75.54 million, which is \$9.34 million under the Annual Budget with anticipated projects to be carried forward to 2023-24 of \$9.98 million.

The table below includes a summary of the Capital Works program.

	Capital Works Budget \$'000
Adopted Budget 2022-23	51,670
Additional Carry forwards from 2021-22	23,865
Annual Budget	75,535
Anticipated Carry Forwards 2022-23	9,982
Approved Budget Adjustments Q1	1,808
Proposed Budget Adjustments Q2	(1,166)
End of year forecast at Quarter 2	66,195

Financial Performance

- For the six months ended 31 December 2022, Council recorded an operating surplus of \$124.21 million, which is (\$23.14 million) unfavourable to the year to date budget.
- This surplus is reported based on the Australian Accounting Standards and includes all revenue recognised in the financial period, including gifted assets (non-monetary), developer contributions and grants towards capital works projects. It is important to note that the operating surplus is not a cash surplus; therefore, it does not convert to immediately available cash for Council. Significant amounts of the surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment.

Key Information

Introduction

The Quarterly Performance Report for the period ended 31 December 2022 has been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards. This report is designed to identify major variances against the December year to date budget. The year to date and Adopted Budget referred to in this report reflects the budget approved by Council on 27 June 2022.

The attached report (Attachment 1) includes a comprehensive summary of:

- Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023 to 31 December 2022;
- Good Governance actions to 31 December 2022;
- 2022-2023 Capital Works Program to 31 December 2022; and
- Council's financial performance to 31 December 2022.

To comply with the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), the report includes the following comparisons for the six months ended 31 December 2022:

- Actual and budgeted operating revenues and expenses;
- Actual and budgeted capital revenues and expenses;
- Actual movements in the balance sheet; and
- Actual movements in the cash flow statement.

Community Plan Performance

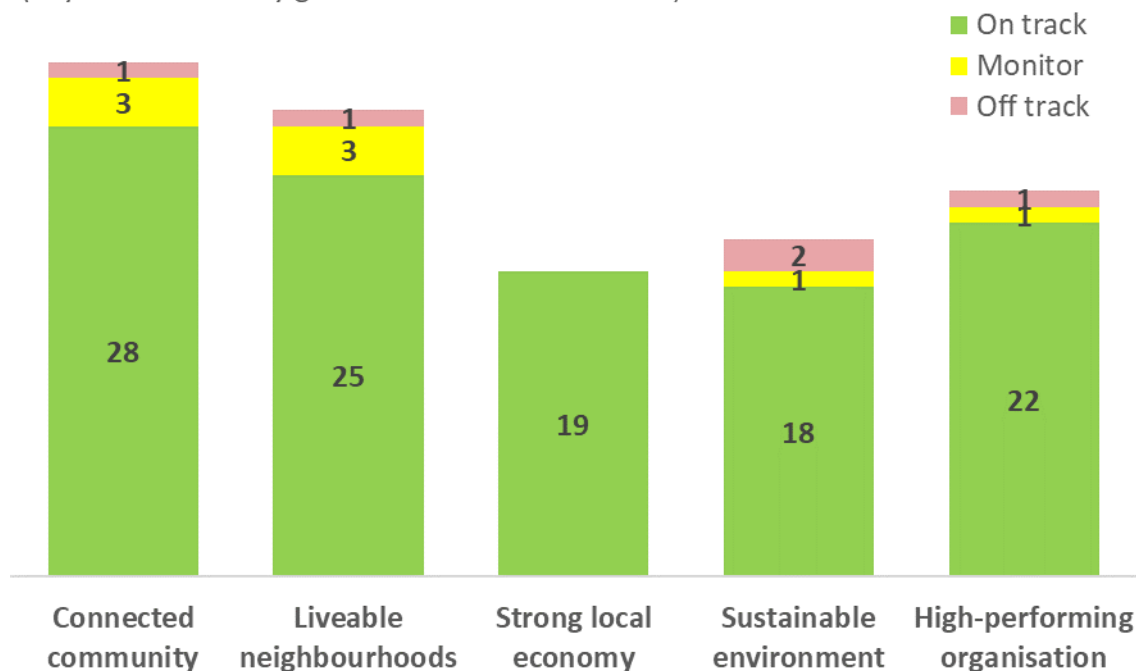
The Community Plan 2021-2025 includes 61 key initiatives. 125 related key actions are included in the Community Plan Action Plan for delivery in the 2022-2023 financial year.

Of the 125 key actions included in the Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023:

- 112 actions are reported as "On Track";
- Eight actions are reported "Monitor"; and
- Five actions are reported "Off Track".

Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023

(Key action status by goal as at 31 December 2022)



These are the key actions currently reported “Off Track” or “Monitor”:

Goal: Connected community	
<u>Key action:</u> Complete the upgrade of the pavilion at HR Uren Reserve in Thomastown	Off Track
<u>Comment:</u> We have encountered very poor soil conditions impacting the in-ground works. We expect works to be completed in late 2023.	
<u>Key action:</u> Develop a Connected Community Strategy to guide how we create a socially cohesive, healthy, safe, and engaged community	Monitor
<u>Comment:</u> We are about to finalise the Background Research Paper and will conduct planning workshops throughout April to June. We are aiming to adopt the final strategy in December 2023, following community consultation.	
<u>Key action:</u> Review the Maternal Child Health service to improve cultural safety for our Aboriginal community.	Monitor
<u>Comment:</u> We are in the process of procuring a consultant to undertake the project in line with the confirmed project brief. We are aiming to have the procurement completed by the end of February 2023.	
<u>Key action:</u> Construct a basketball court, shelter and social gathering spaces and upgrade paths at the western end of Norris Bank Reserve	Monitor
<u>Comment:</u> We have awarded the youth space upgrade construction tender for the western precinct at Norris Bank Reserve. Construction of the landscape works is scheduled to commence February 2023.	

Liveable neighbourhoods	
<p><u>Key action:</u> Continue improvements to Whittlesea Public Gardens which will include a skate park, rock climbing wall, basketball courts, barbecue and shelter area and a car park</p>	Off Track
<p><u>Comment:</u> Car parking and traffic report indicates insufficient parking provision in the current design, a redesign and budget increase is required. Detailed skate park and urban park designs are on hold until budget can be confirmed for the larger car park.</p>	
<p><u>Key action:</u> Upgrade the dog off leash park at Delacombe Park in South Morang</p>	Monitor
<p><u>Comment:</u> We have received good feedback from local residents including at a pop-up engagement session in November. Following consultation we will prepare a design plan which will include improvements to the park surface condition, shelter, drink fountains, seating, garden beds and a quiet dog zone.</p>	
<p><u>Key action:</u> Rehabilitate the conservation reserve in the northern part of Worchester Park in Bundoora</p>	Monitor
<p><u>Comment:</u> We have completed the design phase and are now progressing the tender. Project is anticipated to commence construction in early 2023.</p>	
<p><u>Key action:</u> Commence Quarry Hills Regional Park trail network construction</p>	Monitor
<p><u>Comment:</u> We are nearing design completion of the trails and rest stops and will call for construction tenders subsequently. We expect construction to commence in March 2023.</p>	
Sustainable environment	
<p><u>Key action:</u> Refurbish Janefield Wetlands Boardwalk in Bundoora</p>	Off Track
<p><u>Comment:</u> We are progressing the site investigations for the boardwalk will prepare a design for the upgrade works. Construction works are now scheduled for the 2023/24 financial year.</p>	
<p><u>Key action:</u> Work with Traditional Owners to obtain Aboriginal cultural heritage permits for land management works in conservation reserves</p>	Off Track
<p><u>Comment:</u> We have trialled a delivery format for this project during 2022 and will explore alternative delivery options in early 2023.</p>	
<p><u>Key action:</u> Construct Wilton Vale Wetland Boardwalk in South Morang</p>	Monitor
<p><u>Comment:</u> We expect to commence construction of the new boardwalk in 2023, following the tender process.</p>	
High-performing organisation	
<p><u>Key action:</u> Make it easier for our community to apply for local law permits online such as roadside and footpath trading</p>	Off Track
<p><u>Comment:</u> This project is an ongoing priority and Council will continue to work towards simplifying the local law permits process.</p>	

<p><u>Key action:</u> Develop High-Performing Organisation Strategy to guide effective and efficient use of resources, and good governance at Council</p>	<p>Monitor</p>
<p><u>Comment:</u> We have defined customer experience outcomes and are progressing other high-performance themes as part of the strategy development.</p>	

Of the 12 ongoing key actions included in the Community Plan Action Plan for delivery in the 2021-2022 financial year, four actions have now been completed.

Please refer to:

- Attachment 1 for a performance summary of the Community Plan Action Plan; and
- Attachment 2 for the Quarter 2 Performance Snapshot.

Good Governance

Council is committed to good governance and undertakes actions for continuous improvement throughout the year. Governance processes are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, lawfulness, equality, and inclusiveness. Key achievements this quarter to improving our governance included:

- Council Meetings were undertaken monthly to facilitate Council decision-making, with the December meeting conducted at the Mernda Community Centre;
- At its 1 December 2022 meeting, the Audit and Risk Committee, which consists of two Administrators and four independent members, considered Council’s financial, capital works and Community Plan Action Plan performance, risk management, fraud prevention systems and controls, and compliance with the overarching governance principles; and
- Council's Conflict of Interest Policy was reviewed, updated, and endorsed to ensure transparent, ethical, and lawful decision making.

Capital Program

Council adopted the 2022-2023 Capital Works Program on 27 June 2022 with a budget of \$51.67 million. The Capital Works Annual Budget also includes 2021-22 carry forwards of \$23.87 million, providing a total budget amount of \$75.54 million.

The financial expenditure performance for the Capital Works Program for the period ended 31 December 2022 is detailed below:

	YTD Actual \$'000	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Adopted Budget \$'000	Annual Budget \$'000	Quarter 2 Forecast \$'000
Property	4,710	2,746	(1,964)	3,965	10,027	11,190
Plant and equipment	1,084	1,274	190	5,609	6,383	6,591
Infrastructure	16,238	15,059	(1,178)	42,096	59,125	48,413
	22,032	19,079	(2,953)	51,670	75,535	66,195
Represented by:						
New assets	9,599	9,197	(402)	21,258	32,374	29,921
Asset renewal	7,200	4,904	(2,295)	19,823	25,087	22,115
Asset expansion	165	176	10	250	443	459
Asset upgrade	5,068	4,801	(267)	10,338	17,631	13,700
Total Capital works	22,032	19,079	(2,953)	51,670	75,535	66,195

As at 31 December 2022, capital expenditure of \$22.03 million was \$2.95 million ahead of budget. This is mainly due to road reconstruction works progressing ahead of schedule and the unbudgeted land acquisition of 1781 Donnybrook Road, Woodstock.

The forecast estimates an expenditure of \$66.2 million against the Annual Budget of \$75.54 million, which is \$9.34 million less than the Annual Budget with anticipated projects to be carried forward to 2023-2024 of \$9.98 million.

Carry Forwards

It is anticipated that projects to the value of \$9.98 million will be carried forward to the 2023-2024 financial year due to many projects that have been impacted by disrupting planning, tendering and construction activities. The contractor availability and ongoing supply chain issues in the procurement of materials continue to influence the deliverability of this year's program.

Infrastructure Grants

A summary of recent infrastructure grants outcomes is included in the Capital Grants Status Update December 2022 (Attachment 3). A total of \$9.38 million grant applications have been successful this financial year. Applications to the value of \$9.25 million are awaiting outcomes/announcements, and \$6.9 million of applications have been unsuccessful.

Financial Performance

The Financial Performance Report for the period ended 31 December 2022 includes the following financial statements included in the Corporate Performance Report (Attachment 1):

- Comprehensive Income Statement;
- Balance Sheet;
- Statement of Cash Flows;
- Statement of Capital Works; and
- Summary of Reserves.

	YTD Actual \$'000	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Adopted Budget \$'000	Quarter 2 Forecast \$'000
Operating					
Income	248,714	269,701	(20,987)	386,698	391,094
Expenditure	124,503	122,353	(2,150)	245,390	253,527
Surplus (deficit)	124,210	147,348	(23,138)	141,308	137,568
Capital and other revenue					
Share of other comprehensive income of associate accounted for using the equity method	-	-	-	-	-
Capital non-recurrent grants	(1,298)	(2,637)	1,340	(6,926)	(14,001)
Developer contributions	(34,340)	(45,550)	11,210	(122,789)	(119,284)
Adjusted underlying surplus	88,573	99,161	(10,588)	11,593	4,283

For the six months ended 31 December 2022, Council has recorded an operating surplus of \$124.21 million, which is (\$23.14 million) unfavourable to the year to date budget.

The forecast for the year ending 30 June 2023 is expected to have an operating surplus of \$137.57 million, which is (\$3.74 million) unfavourable to the Adopted Budget. Further detail and analysis on key financial variances are included in Attachment 1 to this report.

This surplus is reported based on the Australian Accounting Standards. It includes all revenue recognised in the financial period, including gifted subdivisional assets (non-monetary), developer contributions and grants towards capital works projects. It is important to note that the operating surplus is not a cash surplus; therefore, it does not convert to immediately available cash for Council. Significant amounts of the surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment.

The operating result is a key figure in assessing Council's financial performance. Although Council is a not-for-profit organisation, it should still generate a surplus to ensure future financial sustainability.

Community Consultation and Engagement

The Community were extensively engaged and consulted in developing the 2022-2023 Community Plan actions and budget.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

High performing organisation

We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

The Corporate Performance Report is a key instrument to monitor and communicate progress against key initiatives and actions for Council, as well as against the capital works program and the budget. It contributes to overall transparency and accountability and enable timely interventions as appropriate. As such, the corporate performance report is an essential tool to manage efficiency and deliver value to the community, contributing to the City of Whittlesea being a high-performing organisation.

Considerations

Environmental

Reporting against the Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023 identifies key progress made from an environmental perspective, for example the key actions under the sustainable environment goal.

Social, Cultural and Health

Reporting against the Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023 identifies key progress made from a social, cultural and health perspective, for example the key actions under the connected community and liveable neighbourhoods goals.

Economic

Reporting against the Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023 identifies key progress made from an economic perspective, for example, the key actions under the strong local economy goal.

Financial Implications

All matters raised in this report, which have financial implications, have been reflected in the Corporate Performance Report for the quarter ended 31 December 2022 (Attachment 1).

Link to Strategic Risk

Strategic Risk *Financial Sustainability - Inability to meet current and future expenditure*

This report provides Council with an oversight of the City of Whittlesea's key financial information and performance obligations to enable monitoring and to ensure City of Whittlesea's financial position is sustainable.

Strategic Risk *Governance - Ineffective governance of Council's operations and activities resulting in either a legislative or policy breach*

This report provides Council with oversight of Council's key corporate and financial information to enable regular monitoring and to ensure that Council's financial position remains sustainable.

Implementation Strategy

This report was provided to the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 16 February 2023.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Conclusion

For the six months ended 31 December 2022, Council's operating surplus was (\$23.14 million) unfavourable to the year to date budget. Council's Capital Works program was \$2.95 million ahead of budget. Of the 125 key actions included in the Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023, 112 actions are reported "On Track".



Quarterly Corporate Performance Report

for the period ended 31 December 2022

A place for all



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Introduction and Key Highlights

Community Plan Action Plan

Of the 125 key actions included in the Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023:

- 112 actions are reported as “On Track”
- Eight actions are reported as “Monitor”
- Five actions are reported “Off Track”.

Of the 12 ongoing key actions included in the Community Plan Action Plan 2021-2022, four have now been completed.

Good Governance

Council is committed to good governance and undertakes actions for continuous improvement throughout the year. Governance processes are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, lawfulness, equality and inclusiveness. Key achievements this quarter to improving our governance included:

- Council Meetings were undertaken monthly to facilitate Council decision-making, with the December meeting conducted at the Mernda Community Centre.
- The Audit and Risk Committee, which consists of two Administrators and four independent members met on 1 December 2022. The December Audit and Risk Committee meeting included monitoring Council’s financial and performance reporting, risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls, and compliance with the overarching governance principles.
- Council's Conflict of Interest Policy was reviewed, updated and endorsed to ensure transparent, ethical and lawful decision making.

Capital Performance

- Council adopted the 2022-23 Capital Works Program on 27 June 2022 with a budget of \$51.67 million. The Capital Works Annual Budget also includes 2021-22 carry forwards of \$23.87 million, providing a total budget amount of \$75.54 million.
- Year to date Capital Works actual expenditure is \$22.03 million against year to date Annual Budget of \$19.08 million, which is \$2.95 million ahead of budget.
- Forecast estimates expenditure of \$66.2 million against the Annual Budget of \$75.54 million, which is \$9.34 million under the Annual Budget with anticipated projects to be carried forward to 2023-24 of \$9.98 million.

The below table includes a summary of the Capital Works program.



	Capital Works Budget \$'000
Adopted Budget 2022-23	51,670
Additional Carry forwards from 2021-22	23,865
Annual Budget	75,535
Anticipated Carry Forwards 2022-23	9,982
Approved Budget Adjustments Q1	1,808
Proposed Budget Adjustments Q2	(1,166)
End of year forecast at Quarter 2	66,195

Financial Performance

- For the six months ended 31 December 2022, Council recorded an operating surplus of \$124.21 million, which is (\$23.14 million) unfavourable to the year to date budget.

	YTD Actual \$'000	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Adopted Budget \$'000	Quarter 2 Forecast \$'000
Operating					
Income	248,714	269,701	(20,987)	386,698	391,094
Expenditure	124,503	122,353	(2,150)	245,390	253,527
Surplus (deficit)	124,210	147,348	(23,138)	141,308	137,568
Capital and other revenue					
Share of other comprehensive income of associate accounted for using the equity method	-	-	-	-	-
Capital non-recurrent grants	(1,298)	(2,637)	1,340	(6,926)	(14,001)
Developer contributions	(34,340)	(45,550)	11,210	(122,789)	(119,284)
Adjusted underlying surplus	88,573	99,161	(10,588)	11,593	4,283

- This surplus is reported based on the Australian Accounting Standards. It includes all revenue recognised in the financial period, including gifted assets (non-monetary), developer contributions and grants towards capital works projects. It is important to note that the operating surplus is not a cash surplus; therefore, it does not convert to immediately available cash for Council. Significant amounts of the surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment.



Community Plan Action Plan

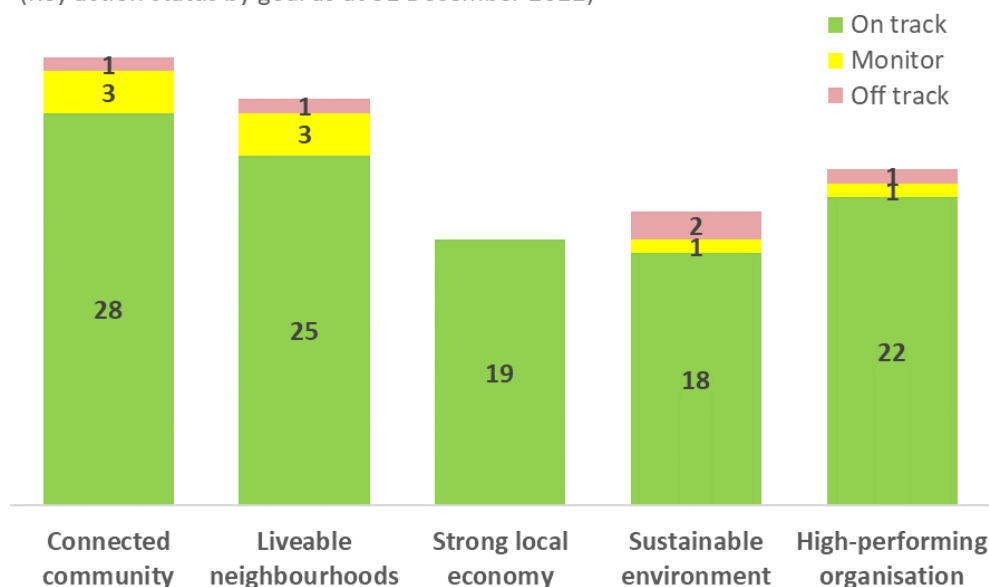
The Community Plan 2021-2025 includes 61 key initiatives. 125 related key actions are included in the Community Plan Action Plan for delivery in the 2022-2023 financial year. This iteration of quarterly reporting is presented by exception only.

Of the 125 key actions included in the Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023:

- 112 actions are reported as “On Track”
- Eight actions are reported “Monitor”
- Five actions are reported “Off Track”.

Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023

(Key action status by goal as at 31 December 2022)



These are the key actions currently reported “Off Track” or “Monitor”:

Goal: Connected community	
<u>Key action:</u> Complete the upgrade of the pavilion at HR Uren Reserve in Thomastown	Off Track
<u>Comment:</u> We have encountered very poor soil conditions impacting the in-ground works. We expect works to be completed in late 2023.	
<u>Key action:</u> Develop a Connected Community Strategy to guide how	Monitor



we create a socially cohesive, healthy, safe and engaged community	
<u>Comment:</u> We are about to finalise the Background Research Paper and will conduct planning workshops throughout April to June. We are aiming to adopt the final strategy in December 2023, following community consultation.	
<u>Key action:</u> Review the Maternal Child Health service to improve cultural safety for our Aboriginal community	Monitor
<u>Comment:</u> We are in the process of procuring a consultant to undertake the project in line with the confirmed project brief. We are aiming to have the procurement completed by the end of February 2023.	
<u>Key action:</u> Construct a basketball court, shelter and social gathering spaces and upgrade paths at the western end of Norris Bank Reserve	Monitor
<u>Comment:</u> We have awarded the youth space upgrade construction tender for the western precinct at Norris Bank Reserve. Construction of the landscape works is scheduled to commence February 2023.	
Liveable neighbourhoods	
<u>Key action:</u> Continue improvements to Whittlesea Public Gardens which will include a skate park, rock climbing wall, basketball courts, barbecue and shelter area and a car park	Off Track
<u>Comment:</u> Car parking and traffic report indicates insufficient parking provision in the current design, a redesign and budget increase is required. Detailed skate park and urban park designs are on hold until budget can be confirmed for the larger car park.	
<u>Key action:</u> Upgrade the dog off leash park at Delacombe Park in South Morang	Monitor
<u>Comment:</u> We have received good feedback from local residents including at a pop-up engagement session in November. Following consultation we will prepare a design plan which will include improvements to the park surface condition, shelter, drink fountains, seating, garden beds and a quiet dog zone.	
<u>Key action:</u> Rehabilitate the conservation reserve in the northern part of Worchester Park in Bundoora	Monitor
<u>Comment:</u> We have completed the design phase and are now progressing the tender. Project is anticipated to commence construction in early 2023.	
<u>Key action:</u> Commence Quarry Hills Regional Park trail network construction	Monitor
<u>Comment:</u> We are nearing design completion of the trails and rest stops, and will	



call for construction tenders subsequently. We expect construction to commence in March 2023.	
Sustainable environment	
<u>Key action:</u> Refurbish Janefield Wetlands Boardwalk in Bundoora	Off Track
<u>Comment:</u> We are progressing the site investigations for the boardwalk will prepare a design for the upgrade works. Construction works are now scheduled for the 2023/24 financial year.	
<u>Key action:</u> Work with Traditional Owners to obtain Aboriginal cultural heritage permits for land management works in conservation reserves	Off Track
<u>Comment:</u> We have trialled a delivery format for this project during 2022 and will explore alternative delivery options in early 2023.	
<u>Key action:</u> Construct Wilton Vale Wetland Boardwalk in South Morang	Monitor
<u>Comment:</u> We expect to commence construction of the new boardwalk in 2023, following the tender process.	
High-performing organisation	
<u>Key action:</u> Make it easier for our community to apply for local law permits online such as roadside and footpath trading	Off Track
<u>Comment:</u> This project is an ongoing priority and Council will continue to work towards simplifying the local law permits process.	
<u>Key action:</u> Develop High-Performing Organisation Strategy to guide effective and efficient use of resources, and good governance at Council	Monitor
<u>Comment:</u> We have defined customer experience outcomes and are progressing other high-performance themes as part of the strategy development.	

Of the 12 ongoing key actions included in the Community Plan Action Plan 2021-2022, four key actions have now been completed:

- Upgrade the Whittlesea Dardi Munwurro facility to support programs for Aboriginal men and young people, and finalise tenure arrangements
- Renew playgrounds and general landscape improvements (2021-2022 program)
- Develop bins in parks policy
- Finalise the City Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.



Capital Performance

Financial Update

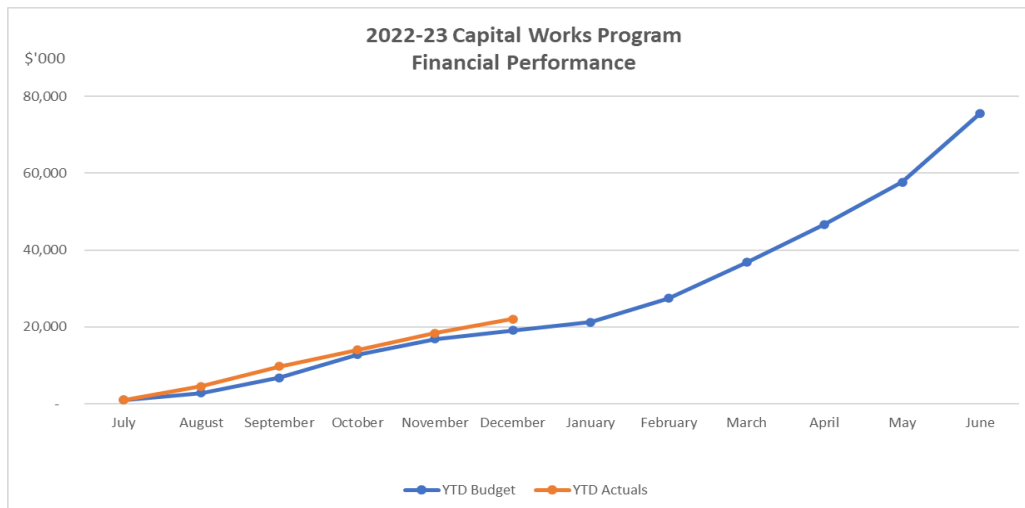
Council adopted the 2022-23 Capital Works Program on 27 June 2022 with a budget of \$51.67 million. The Capital Works Annual Budget also includes 2021-22 carry forwards of \$23.87 million, providing a total budget amount of \$75.54 million.

The financial expenditure performance for the Capital Works Program for the period ended 31 December 2022 is detailed below:

	YTD Actual \$'000	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Adopted Budget \$'000	Annual Budget \$'000	Quarter 2 Forecast \$'000
Property	4,710	2,746	(1,964)	3,965	10,027	11,190
Plant and equipment	1,084	1,274	190	5,609	6,383	6,591
Infrastructure	16,238	15,059	(1,178)	42,096	59,125	48,413
	22,032	19,079	(2,953)	51,670	75,535	66,195
Represented by:						
New assets	9,599	9,197	(402)	21,258	32,374	29,921
Asset renewal	7,200	4,904	(2,295)	19,823	25,087	22,115
Asset expansion	165	176	10	250	443	459
Asset upgrade	5,068	4,801	(267)	10,338	17,631	13,700
Total Capital works	22,032	19,079	(2,953)	51,670	75,535	66,195

As at 31 December 2022, capital expenditure of \$22.03 million was \$2.95 million ahead of budget. This is mainly due to road reconstruction works progressing ahead of schedule and the unbudgeted land acquisition of 1781 Donnybrook Road, Woodstock.

The forecast estimates an expenditure of \$66.2 million against the Annual Budget of \$75.54 million, which is \$9.34 million less than the Annual Budget with anticipated projects to be carried forward to 2023-24 of \$9.98 million.



Carry Forwards

It is anticipated that projects to the value of \$9.98 million will be carried forward to the 2023-24 financial year due to a large number of projects that have been impacted by disrupting planning, tendering and construction activities. The contractor availability and ongoing supply chain issues in the procurement of materials continue to influence the deliverability of this year’s program.

Infrastructure Grants Update

A summary of recent infrastructure grant outcomes is included in the Capital Grants Status Update December 2022 (Attachment 3). A total of \$9.38 million in applications has been successful this year. Applications to the value of \$9.25 million are awaiting outcomes, and \$6.9 million of applications have been unsuccessful.

Financial Performance

Operating Performance

The Financial Performance Report for the period ended 30 September 2022 includes the following financial statements:

- Comprehensive Income Statement;
- Balance Sheet;
- Statement of Cash Flows;
- Statement of Capital Works; and



- Summary of Reserves.

	YTD Actual \$'000	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Adopted Budget \$'000	Quarter 2 Forecast \$'000
Operating					
Income	248,714	269,701	(20,987)	386,698	391,094
Expenditure	124,503	122,353	(2,150)	245,390	253,527
Surplus (deficit)	124,210	147,348	(23,138)	141,308	137,568
Capital and other revenue					
Share of other comprehensive income of associate accounted for using the equity method	-	-	-	-	-
Capital non-recurrent grants	(1,298)	(2,637)	1,340	(6,926)	(14,001)
Developer contributions	(34,340)	(45,550)	11,210	(122,789)	(119,284)
Adjusted underlying surplus	88,573	99,161	(10,588)	11,593	4,283

For the six months ended 31 December 2022, Council recorded an operating surplus of \$124.21 million, which is (\$23.14 million) unfavourable to the year to date budget.

The forecast for the year ending 30 June 2023 is expected to have an operating surplus of \$137.57 million, which is (\$3.74 million) unfavourable to the Adopted Budget.

This surplus is reported based on the Australian Accounting Standards. It includes all revenue recognised in the financial period, including gifted subdivisional assets (non-monetary), developer contributions and grants towards capital works projects. It is important to note that the operating surplus is not a cash surplus; therefore, it does not convert to immediately available cash for Council. Significant amounts of the surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment. The operating result is a key figure in assessing Council's financial performance. Although Council is a not-for-profit organisation, it should still generate a surplus to ensure future financial sustainability.

After eliminating non-recurrent capital grants and other items, the adjusted underlying surplus is \$88.57 million, which is (\$10.59 million) unfavourable to the budget. An underlying surplus is a net surplus for the year adjusted for non-recurrent capital grants and contributions. It is an accepted measure of financial sustainability as it is not impacted by non-recurring or once-off items of revenue and expenses that can often mask the operating results.



Financial position

	YTD Actual \$'000	Annual Budget \$'000	Audited 2022 \$'000
Financial assets	259,290	247,104	276,562
Restricted funds	156,587	-	168,936
Unrestricted cash and cash equivalents	102,703	247,104	107,626
Intended allocations	105,227	-	104,889
Net Available cash	(2,524)	247,104	2,737

The financial position for the period ended 31 December 2022 shows a cash and investment balance of \$259.29 million compared with \$276.56 million as of 30 June 2022.

The cash and investment balance was utilised to meet restricted cash of \$156.59 million and intended allocations of \$105.23 million at the end of December 2022.

Restricted cash is the amount of cash holdings the Council requires to meet external restrictions such as trust funds and statutory reserves. Cash for intended allocations includes cash held to fund future capital works and project works.



Financial Statements

Comprehensive Income Statement

Comprehensive Income Statement for the period ended 31 December 2022

	YTD Actual \$'000	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Adopted Budget \$'000	Quarter 2 Forecast \$'000
Income					
Rates and charges	188,166	185,116	3,050	187,616	193,440
Statutory fees and fines	7,425	7,485	(60)	15,785	14,669
User fees	3,302	10,288	(6,986)	15,944	9,023
Grants - operating	8,122	14,891	(6,769)	30,028	26,453
Grants - capital	1,298	3,487	(2,190)	8,126	15,201
Contributions - monetary	9,503	8,393	1,110	16,627	17,974
Contributions - non-monetary assets	24,837	37,157	(12,320)	106,162	101,310
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	195	170	25	226	210
Other income	5,866	2,713	3,153	6,184	12,816
Total income	248,714	269,701	(20,987)	386,698	391,094
Expenditure					
Employee benefits	51,419	52,730	1,311	104,905	104,738
Materials and services	40,832	40,030	(802)	80,949	82,454
Depreciation	23,678	21,244	(2,434)	42,490	47,356
Amortisation - intangible assets	-	-	-	130	130
Amortisation - right of use assets	-	-	-	691	691
Bad and doubtful debts	1,020	225	(795)	450	2,500
Borrowing costs	131	100	(31)	200	200
Finance costs - leases	-	-	-	34	34
Other expenses	7,423	8,023	600	15,541	15,423
Total expenditure	124,503	122,353	(2,150)	245,390	253,527
Total comprehensive result	124,210	147,348	(23,138)	141,308	137,568
Share of other comprehensive income of associate accounted for using the equity method	-	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive result	124,210	147,348	(23,138)	141,308	137,568
Less					
Capital grants - non recurrent	(1,298)	(2,637)	1,340	(6,926)	(14,001)
Capital contributions	(34,340)	(45,550)	11,210	(122,789)	(119,284)
Underlying surplus/(deficit)	88,573	99,161	(10,588)	11,593	4,283



Total year to date income is (\$20.99 million) unfavourable to budget, which is primarily due to unfavourable variances in the following:

- (\$12.32 million) unfavourable to budget in non-monetary contributions due to the amount of non-cash assets transferred to Council from developers not being as high as anticipated as a result of delays in reaching practical completion in new subdivisions throughout the municipality
- (\$6.99 million) unfavourable to budget in user fees and charges primarily due to the reclassification of waste service fees into rates and charges and reduction in income received for glass kerbside collection as a result of this financial year being the first year in which a new glass bin was introduced. In addition to this, home and support services fees for aged care are reduced and are in line with service delivery relating to home support programs
- (\$6.77 million) unfavourable to budget in operating grants mainly due to 75% of the Victorian Grant Commission (VGC) grants for 2022-23 were received in 2021-22 and recognised in line with revenue recognition criteria. In addition to this, HACC and CHSP grants are unfavourable to budget and are in line with service delivery relating to home support programs
- (\$2.19 million) unfavourable to budget in capital grants mainly due to delay in receiving the grants for the Local Road Rehabilitation program and Whittlesea Public Gardens Master Plan project. These grants are expected to be received within this financial year.

These variances are offset by the following favourable variances:

- \$1.11 million favourable to budget in monetary contributions as a result of greater than anticipated contributions received from developers
- \$3.05 million favourable to budget in rates and charges primarily due to reclassification of waste service fees from user fees
- \$3.15 million favourable to budget in other income due to higher interest rate on investments received following interest rate increase and workcover reimbursement higher than anticipated.

Total year to date expenditure is (\$2.15 million) unfavourable to budget, which is primarily due to unfavourable variances in the following:

- (\$2.43 million) unfavourable to budget in depreciation as a result of revaluation and significant gifted assets being recognised after the budget was adopted, therefore not factored into the budget for depreciation
- (\$0.8 million) unfavourable to budget in materials and services primarily due to more than expected expenditure relating to facilities management as a result of an increased number of reactive service requests and agency and labour hire being over budget due to the backfill of vacant positions and the requirement to provide responsive services. This is partially offset by underspend within footpath works due to wet weather conditions.
- (\$0.8 million) unfavourable to budget in bad and doubtful debts due to provisions raised against a number of infringement debtors during the year where it has been assessed that there is doubt that payment will be received.



These variances are offset by the following favourable variances:

- \$1.31 million favourable to budget in employee costs due to vacant positions across the organisation not yet filled
- \$0.6 million favourable in other expenses due to savings in water cost for parks as a result of heavy rainfall in recent months and Ziebells Farmhouse contribution expected to be paid later than expected.

The forecast for the year ending 30 June 2022 is expected to have an operating surplus of \$137.57 million, which is (\$3.74 million) unfavourable to the Adopted Budget. Key variances contributing to this unfavourable variance to the budget include:

- (\$6.92 million) unfavourable to budget in user fees primarily due to the reclassification of waste service fees into rates and charges. In addition to this, home and support services fees for aged care are reduced and are in line with service delivery relating to home support programs
- (\$4.87 million) unfavourable to budget in depreciation as a result of revaluations and significant gifted assets being recognised after the budget was adopted, therefore not factored into the depreciation budget
- (\$4.85 million) unfavourable to budget in non-monetary contributions due to a slight downturn in new subdivisions reaching practical completion throughout the municipality
- (\$3.58 million) unfavourable to budget in operating grants mainly due to Victorian Grant Commission (VGC) grant is expected to be less than anticipated as a result of 75% of the VGC grant for 2022-23 being received in 2021-22 and recognised in line with revenue recognition criteria
- (\$2.05 million) unfavourable to budget in bad and doubtful debt due to a higher doubtful debt applied after a review of outstanding debt and an assessment of the probability of collection in line with the accounting standards
- (\$1.51 million) unfavourable to budget in materials and services primarily due to Community Plan Action Plan, Pandemic Recovery Fund items from the 2021-22 financial year being carried over into the current financial year and unbudgeted Epping Animal Welfare facility costs
- (\$1.12 million) unfavourable to budget in statutory fees and fines due to higher than anticipated animal fines withdrawn as a result of an operational process review.

These unfavourable variances are partially offset by the following favourable variances:

- \$1.35 million favourable to budget in monetary contributions as a result of higher than anticipated contributions received from developers
- \$5.82 million favourable to budget in rates income mainly due to the reclassification of Garden Waste Collection income from user fees to rates and charges category
- \$6.63 million favourable to budget in other income primarily due to the higher rate of interest on investments is expected to be received due to the recent rise in interest rate. This is partially offset by a reduction in income revenue including food and beverages sales for PRACC resulting from lower than anticipated ticket and function events



- \$7.08 million favourable to budget in capital grant due to carryover of grants from 2021-22 financial year and additional unbudgeted grants expected to be received for Local Road Resurfacing, Footpath Reconstruction and Synthetic Soccer Pitch replacement program.

Financial Position

Financial Position for the period ended 31 December 2022

	YTD Actual \$'000	2021-22 Actual \$'000
Financial assets		
Cash and cash equivalents		
Cash on hand	4	5
Cash at bank	2,710	1,363
Term deposit	16,576	55,194
Total cash and cash equivalents	19,290	56,562
Other financial assets		
Term deposits	240,000	220,000
Total other financial assets	240,000	220,000
Total financial assets	259,290	276,562
Restricted cash and investments		
Trust funds and deposits	17,139	34,320
Asset development reserves	139,448	134,616
Total restricted cash and investments	156,587	168,936
Total unrestricted cash and cash equivalents	102,703	107,626
Intended allocations		
Cash held to fund Carried forward capital works	-	23,804
Unexpended grants and subsidies	34,206	21,624
Asset replacement reserves	71,021	59,461
Total unrestricted cash and cash equivalents	105,227	104,889



Balance Sheet
as at 31 December 2022

	YTD Actual \$'000	2021-22 Actual \$'000	Net Movement \$'000
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	19,290	56,562	(37,272)
Trade and other receivables	158,235	31,763	126,472
Other financial assets	240,000	220,000	20,000
Inventories	126	126	0
Other assets	3,532	3,645	(113)
Total current assets	421,184	312,096	109,088
Non-current assets			
Investment in associate	3,096	3,096	(0)
Other financial assets	22	22	0
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	4,309,063	4,308,219	844
Intangible assets	650	650	0
Right of use assets	1,308	1,308	(0)
Total non-current assets	4,314,140	4,313,295	845
Total assets	4,735,324	4,625,391	109,932
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	43,668	20,641	23,027
Trust funds and deposits	17,140	34,320	(17,180)
Provisions	19,845	20,722	(877)
Lease liabilities	599	599	(0)
Interest-bearing liabilities	1,192	2,364	(1,172)
Unearned Income	29,161	24,895	4,266
Total current liabilities	111,606	103,541	8,065
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	1,486	1,486	0
Lease liabilities	737	737	(0)
Interest-bearing liabilities	11,640	11,640	0
Total non-current liabilities	13,863	13,863	0
Total liabilities	125,469	117,404	8,065
Net assets	4,609,855	4,507,987	101,867
Equity			
Accumulated surplus	2,903,581	2,818,040	85,542
Reserves	1,706,273	1,689,947	16,326
Total equity	4,609,855	4,507,987	101,867



Cash balance

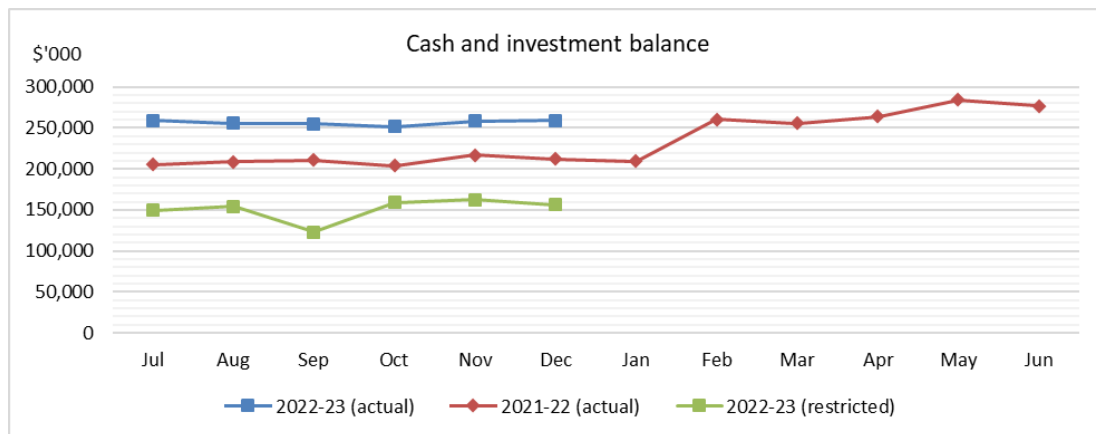
The chart below shows Council’s cash balance year to date for 2022-23 against the cash balance from the 2021-22 and restricted cash. The chart portrays:

- Actual 2022-23 cash balance
- Actual 2021-22 cash balance
- Restricted cash.

Restricted cash includes:

- Trust funds and deposits
- Non-discretionary reserves including developer contributions and subdivision levy (parkland contributions).

The cash and investments balance is currently \$12.19 million favourable to the budgeted year end position. Every opportunity is taken to invest surplus cash to maximise investment returns.



Note: Cash and investments include term deposits with a maturity date exceeding 90 days which are classified as other financial assets in the Balance Sheet.

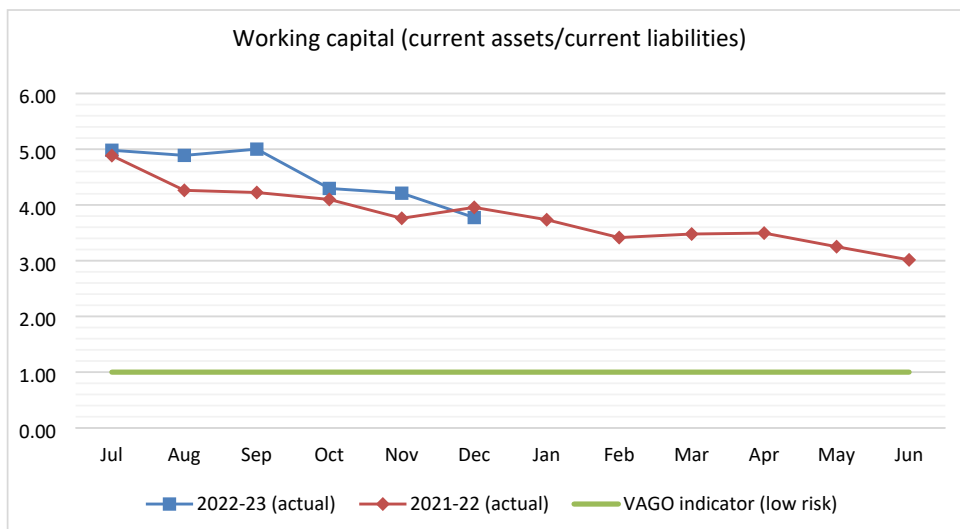


Working capital

The chart portrays:

- Actual 2022-23 working capital
- Actual 2021-22 working capital

Council’s working capital is forecast to remain well above the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office (VAGO) liquidity indicator as shown below.

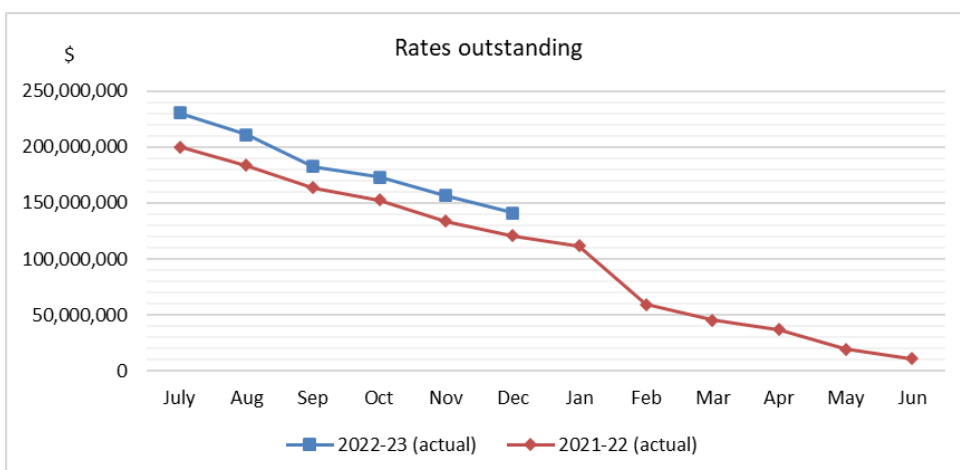
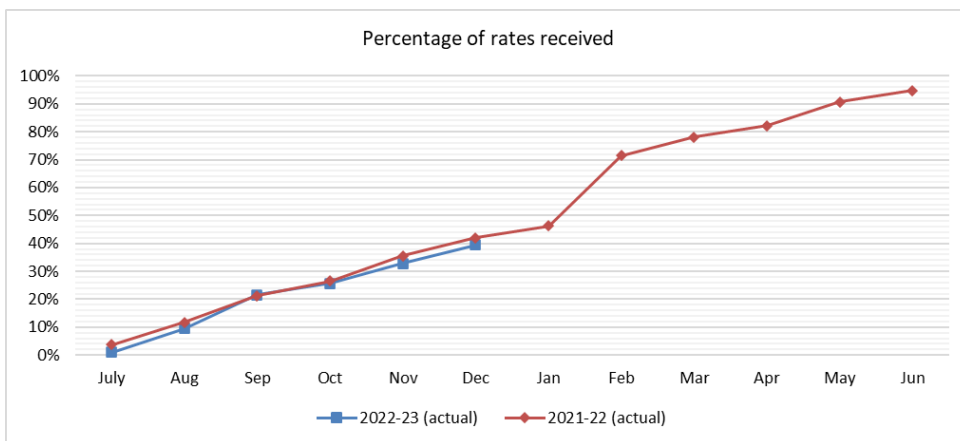




Rates debtors

As at 31 December 2022, \$210.71 million was raised in rates and charges, including supplementary valuations that have been generated by changes to Council’s property base. At 31 December 2022, 39% of the rates raised have been collected compared to the same period of the 2021–22 financial year of 42%.

The following graphs show that current collection trends are slightly lower than the 2021–22 trend.





Cash Flows

Statement of Cash Flows for the period ended 31 December 2022

	2022-23 Inflows / (Outflows) YTD Actual \$'000	2021-22 Inflows / (Outflows) Actual \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities		
Rates	58,061	176,342
Statutory fees and fines	7,262	12,689
User fees	5,682	11,286
Grants - operating	8,122	34,295
Grants - capital	1,298	16,595
Contributions - Monetary	9,503	13,625
Trust funds and deposits taken	(14,577)	1,489
Other receipts	2,134	23,545
Interest received	3,844	4,288
Net GST refund	397	(249)
Payments to employees	(52,296)	(95,016)
Payments to suppliers	(17,527)	(75,626)
Short-term, low value and variable lease payments	(278)	(521)
Trust funds and deposits repaid	(2,603)	(5,230)
Other payments	(3,157)	(14,276)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	5,865	103,236
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments for infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	(22,029)	(54,659)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	195	523
Payments for investments	(20,000)	(140,000)
Loans and advances made	-	-
Redemption of deposits	-	-
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	(41,834)	(194,136)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Finance costs	(131)	(206)
Proceeds from borrowings	-	13,000
Repayment of borrowings	(1,172)	(1,537)
Interest paid - lease liability	-	(30)
Repayment of lease liabilities	(0)	(583)
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	(1,303)	10,644
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(37,272)	(80,256)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	56,562	136,818
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	19,290	56,562



Capital Works

Statement of Capital Works for the period ended 31 December 2022

	YTD Actual \$'000	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Adopted Budget	Annual Budget \$'000	Quarter 2 Forecast \$'000
Property						
Land	1,502	50	(1,452)	200	200	1,702
Building	2,279	2,200	(79)	1,666	7,333	6,284
Building improvements	929	496	(433)	2,099	2,493	3,204
Total Property	4,710	2,746	(1,964)	3,965	10,027	11,190
Plant and equipment						
Plant, machinery & equipment	773	695	(77)	3,725	4,400	4,450
Fixtures, fittings & furniture	121	99	(23)	380	480	638
Computers & telecommunications	190	480	290	1,504	1,504	1,504
Total plant and equipment	1,084	1,274	190	5,609	6,383	6,591
Infrastructure						
Roads	5,794	3,439	(2,355)	15,653	17,519	15,355
Bridges	-	65	65	1,250	1,250	600
Footpaths & cycleways	1,491	1,708	217	3,364	6,070	5,995
Drainage	355	270	(85)	515	761	578
Recreation, leisure & community facilities	481	655	174	2,315	3,859	2,384
Parks, open space & streetscapes	4,475	4,589	114	11,114	19,863	14,890
Carparks	7	10	3	75	165	232
Waste management	2,658	2,540	(118)	3,900	3,900	2,758
Other infrastructure	977	1,784	807	3,910	5,739	5,621
Total infrastructure	16,238	15,059	(1,178)	42,096	59,125	48,413
Total capital works	22,032	19,079	(2,953)	51,670	75,535	66,195
Represented by:						
New assets	9,599	9,197	(402)	21,258	32,374	29,921
Asset renewal	7,200	4,904	(2,295)	19,823	25,087	22,115
Asset expansion	165	176	10	250	443	459
Asset upgrade	5,068	4,801	(267)	10,338	17,631	13,700
Total capital works	22,032	19,079	(2,953)	51,670	75,535	66,195



Reserves

Summary of Reserves as at 31 December 2022

	2021-22		2022-23
	Actual \$'000	Net transfers \$'000	YTD Actual \$'000
Discretionary reserves			
LASF defined benefit plan liability	3,739	-	3,739
Native vegetation offset site maintenance (App. 5)	1,348	160	1,508
Strategic investment reserve (App. 1)	32,414	(6,000)	26,414
Strategic properties reserve (App. 6)	4,819	-	4,819
Synthetic turf replacement reserve	1,880	-	1,880
Technology improvement fund reserve (App. 3)	5,678	-	5,678
Transport Infrastructure reserve	28	-	28
Waste reserve (App. 2)	4,864	-	4,864
Aboriginal Gathering Place	-	6,000	6,000
Strategic Operational Projects	-	2,373	2,373
Regional Aquatic and Sports Reserve	-	10,000	10,000
	54,772	12,533	67,305
Non-discretionary reserves			
Community Infrastructure Levy	9,620	482	10,102
Developers contributions	93,804	935	94,740
Donnybrook Woodstock ICP	7,777	(104)	7,673
Epping Plaza DC	989	15	1,004
Net gain compensation	3,254	(1,457)	1,798
Non standard street lighting contribution	3,528	373	3,901
Parklands contributions (open space)	7,942	1,489	9,431
Planning permits drainage (App. 4)	10,477	1,960	12,437
Plenty Road duplication	67	1	68
Purchase of Lutheran Church and Cemetery	380	-	380
Street tree contributions reserve	686	-	686
Traffic lights construction	783	160	943
	139,309	3,855	143,164
Total Reserves	194,081	16,389	210,470
Reconciliation to balance sheet			
Asset revaluation reserve	1,495,866	(62)	1,495,804
	1,495,866	(62)	1,495,804
	1,689,947	16,326	1,706,273

Community Plan 2021–2025



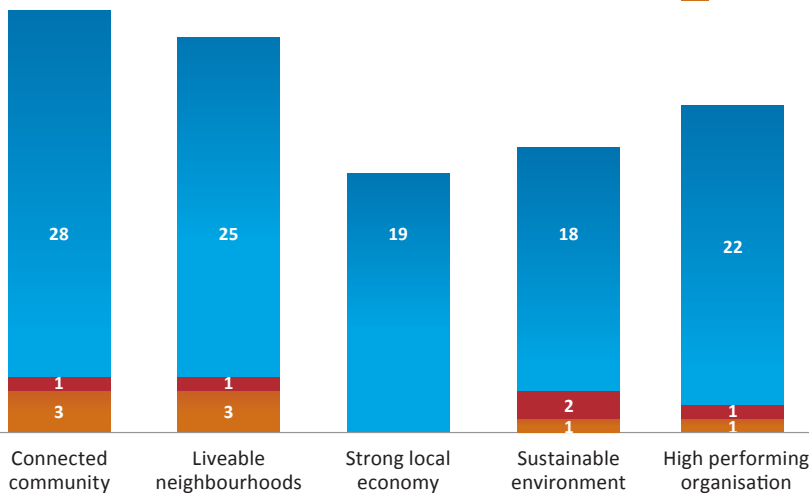
Quarter 2 Performance Snapshot October to December 2022

Key Actions status (as at 31 December 2022)

Community Plan Action Plan 2022–2023
Key Actions by Goal

Key Actions Legend

- On track
- Off track
- Monitored



Highlights

- Commencing a glass recycling kerbside collection to 45,000 households in the City of Whittlesea.
- Developing a Great Workplace for All Plan to attract and retain high quality staff to deliver services to our Community.
- Completing the Mill Park Basketball Stadium upgrade with new change rooms, amenities, multi-purpose space, canteen, reception, first aid, office and storage areas, and a redeveloped forecourt.
- Successful advocacy for funding for the Regional Aquatic Sports Centre (RASC) in Mernda with a State Government commitment of \$20 million to help deliver the project.
- Developing an Investment Attraction Framework to support local business to innovate and thrive.
- Delivering programs and activities for young people to foster inclusion and connection such as 'First steps to employment' in Thomastown, art classes in Lalor, weekly games in the park in Mernda, and a sports program in Epping North.
- With community partners, creating gender equity resources for playgroups, kindergartens and childcare.
- Supporting the local business community in COVID recovery with the "It's all Here" campaign.
- Planting more than 5,600 indigenous trees as part of our Greening Whittlesea – City Forest Strategy.
- Launching the Whittlesea Disability Network Hub, an online connection and collaboration space for people with a disability and their carers.
- Continuing to advocate for social and affordable housing. Local community social and affordable housing organisations have been successful in securing funds from the State Government's Big Build Project.

2022-23 Capital Works Grant Status Update
For period ended 31 December 2022

Applications Successful

Financial Year	Grant ID	Title	Funding Organisation	Project ID	Project Name	Funding Type	Grant Funding Request \$	Council Contribution \$	Other Contribution \$	Total Project Cost \$
22/23	GCW-10137	Roads to Recovery, 2019-2024	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	CW-10788	22-23 Local Road Reconstruction / Rehabilitation	Federal	1,417,408	0	0	1,417,408
22/23	GCW-10203	Local Roads & Community Infrastructure, Phase 3, Implementation of Signage Management Plan	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	CW-10143	Implementation of Signage Management Plan - Various	Federal	150,000	125,000	0	275,000
22/23	GCW-10204	Local Roads & Community Infrastructure, Phase 3, Footpath Reconstruction/Renewal (Plenty Rd & Mosaic)	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	CW-10771	Footpath Reconstruction / Renewal	Federal	500,000	0	0	500,000
22/23	GCW-10205	Local Roads & Community Infrastructure, Phase 3, Local Road Resurfacing Works	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	CW-10783	22-23 Local Road Resurfacing works	Federal	1,000,000	0	0	1,000,000
22/23	GCW-10206	Local Roads & Community Infrastructure, Phase 3, Delacombe Park, South Morang - Dog Off Leash Park Upgrade	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	CW-10857	Delacombe Park, South Morang - Dog Off Leash Park Upgrade	Federal	300,000	0	0	300,000
22/23	GCW-10207	Local Roads & Community Infrastructure, Phase 3, Car Park Rehabilitation (includes Wollert Hall)	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	CW-10930	22-23 Car Park rehabilitation	Federal	150,000	75,000	0	225,000
22/23	GCW-10208	Local Roads & Community Infrastructure, Phase 3, Quarry Hills Drainage Interface	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	CW-10781	Quarry Hills Drainage Interface	Federal	225,000	0	0	225,000
22/23	GCW-10209	Local Roads & Community Infrastructure, Phase 3, PRACC & PRACC North Services Upgrades	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	CW-10775	PRACC and PRACC North Building Services Upgrades	Federal	300,000	0	0	300,000
22/23	GCW-10210	Local Roads & Community Infrastructure, Phase 3, 2022-23 Public Toilet Amenity Plan Implementation	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	CW-10903	22-23 Public Toilet Amenity Plan Implementation	Federal	209,816	300,000	0	509,816
22/23	GCW-10212	2022 World Game Facilities Fund, Harvest Home Recreation Reserve Synthetic Pitch and Lighting	Sport and Recreation Victoria	CW-10887	Harvest Home Road Synthetic Soccer Pitch Replacement	State	500,000	1,700,000	0	2,200,000
22/23	GCW-10214	Growing Suburbs Fund 2022-23, Community Energy Transition Program	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	CW-10137	Energy Efficiency Program - Various	State	250,000	250,000	0	500,000
22/23	GCW-10215	Growing Suburbs Fund 2022-23, Epping Community Services Hub Refurbishment	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	CW-10965	Epping Community Services Hub (ECSH) redevelopment	State	375,000	375,000	0	750,000
22/23	GCW-10216	Growing Suburbs Fund 2022-23, Mill Park Reserve Connecting Shared Trail	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	CW-10698	Streets for people - Study and Implementation of LATM areas 26 and 32 in Mill Park	State	475,000	475,000	0	950,000
22/23	GCW-10217	Growing Suburbs Fund 2022-23, Riverside CAC and Reserve Upgrade	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	CW-10968	Riverside Reserve Upgrade - Stage 2	State	500,000	500,000	0	1,000,000
22/23	GCW-10218	Growing Suburbs Fund 2022-23, Whittlesea Township Park	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	CW-11055	Whittlesea Township Park - connecting community through improved access	State	500,000	500,000	0	1,000,000
22/23	GCW-10220	SRV, 2022 Local Sports Infrastructure Fund, Mill Park Reserve Softball and Baseball Practice nets	Sport and Recreation Victoria	CW-10851	22-23 Sporting Nets (various locations)	State	180,000	120,000	0	300,000
22/23	GCW-10221	SRV, 2022 Local Sports Infrastructure Fund, Master-planning 3 Sites	Sport and Recreation Victoria	CW-10868	22-23 Infrastructure Planning and Feasibility Studies for Future Projects	State	40,000	80,000	0	120,000
22/23	GCW-10224	2022 TAC LG Grant Program, Edgars Creek Trail Upgrade - Main St & Kingsway Drive	Transport Accident Commission	CW-10429	Construct shared path - Edgars Creek Trail - Main Street to Kingsway Drive	State	100,000	200,000	0	300,000
22/23	GCW-10225	2022 Living Local Suburban Grant Program, Alexander Avenue Shops Precinct Upgrade	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	CW-10975	Alexander Avenue Shops and Nick Ascenzo Reserve Precinct Masterplan, Thomastown	State	200,000	870,000	0	1,070,000
22/23	GCW-10226	2022 Living Local Suburban Grant Program, Laurimar CAC Public Amenity Installation	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	CW-10903	22-23 Public Toilet Amenity Plan Implementation	State	200,000	200,000	0	400,000
22/23	GCW-10227	2022 Living Local Suburban Grant Program, Reid Street Park Upgrade	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	CW-11032	Reid Street Park Upgrade, South Morang	State	200,000	200,000	0	400,000
22/23	GCW-10228	2022 Living Local Suburban Grant Program, Tramoo and High Street Shops Revitalisation	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	CW-10976	Tramoo Street x High Street Shops, Lalor	State	200,000	700,000	0	900,000
22/23	GCW-10231	Transfer Station Upgrade Fund, Support for Early Glass Transition	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	CW-11005	Implementation of Glass Bin Service	State	1,410,780	0	0	1,410,780
							9,383,004			

**2022-23 Capital Works Grant Status Update
For period ended 31 December 2022**

Applications Submitted

Grant Financial Year	Grant Number	Title	Funding Organisation	Project ID	Project Name	Funding Type	Grant Funding Request \$	Council Contribution \$	Other Contribution \$	Total Project Cost \$
22/23	GCW-10234	2022 Building Blocks Partnership Grant - Patterson Drive Community Centre	Department of Education and Training	CW-10343	Construct Community Activity Centre - Patterson Drive, Donnybrook	State	3,700,000	4,990,500	2,709,500	11,400,000
22/23	GCW-10235	2022 Building Blocks Partnership Grant - West Wollert Community Centre	Department of Education and Training	CW-10648	Construct community centre - West Wollert	State	5,550,000	0	8,885,178	14,435,178
							9,250,000			

Applications Unsuccessful

Grant Financial Year	Grant Number	Title	Funding Organisation	Project ID	Project Name	Funding Type	Grant Funding Request \$	Council Contribution \$	Other Contribution \$	Total Project Cost \$
22/23	GCW-10211	Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program 2022-23 Bubup Wilam Early Learning Centre Minor Works	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions			State	300,000	0	0	300,000
22/23	GCW-10213	Growing Suburbs Fund 2022-23, Atrium Reserve at Quarry Hills	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	CW-10832	Quarry Hills - Atrium Reserve Entrance Node	State	500,000	500,000	0	1,000,000
22/23	GCW-10219	SRV, 2022 Local Sports Infrastructure Fund, Doreen Dirt Jumps	Sport and Recreation Victoria	CW-10700	BMX Dirt Jumps (Doreen)	State	300,000	200,000	0	500,000
22/23	GCW-10222	Growing Suburbs Fund 2022-23, Aboriginal Gathering Place	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	CW-10471	Aboriginal Gathering Place	State	5,000,000	5,000,000	0	10,000,000
22/23	GCW-10229	Universal Design Grant, Epping Memorial Hall Accessibility Upgrades	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing			State	498,000	0	0	498,000
22/23	GCW-10230	Universal Design Grant, Meadowglen International Athletics Stadium Accessibility Upgrades	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	CW-10921	22-23 Disability Action Plan - Ongoing Program	State	298,000	0	0	298,000
							6,896,000			

City of Whittlesea Financial Performance Report

APPENDIX 1 - STRATEGIC INVESTMENT RESERVE

YEAR	OPENING BALANCE	TRANSFERS		CLOSING BALANCE	COMMENT
		CONTRIBUTION (IN)	ALLOCATION (OUT)		
2017-18	641,354	20,492,048 *	10,773,193	10,360,209	Transfer out funded early repayment of loan parcel
2018-19	10,360,209	8,899,410	3,000,000	16,259,619	Transfer from surplus (17/18) \$8,899,410 Funding for New Works \$2,827,475
2019-20	16,259,619	9,381,151	4,368,287	21,272,483	Transfer from surplus (18/19) \$9,381,151 Funding for Signalisation intersection Ferres Boulevard & Findon Road (PID 2039 \$1,000,000), Reconstruct courts - Dr Harry Jenkins Reserve (PID 0259 \$200,000), Construct Findon Road extension - Williamsons Road to Danaher Drive (PID 1218 \$920,913), Construct Community Activity Centre Edgars Creek (PID 1419 \$641,354), Plant Reserve \$1,606,020
2020-21	21,272,483	11,141,843	-	32,414,326	Transfer from surplus (19/20) \$11,141,843 Transfer from closure of discretionary reserves: Plant Replacement Reserve \$1,703,005, Tip Replacement Reserve \$4,806,229, Aged & Disability Minor Capital Reserve \$322,305
2021-22	32,414,326	-	-	32,414,326	Nil movement
2022-23	32,414,326	-	6,000,000	26,414,326	Transfer to establish Aboriginal Gathering Place Reserve

* Reserve created with transfers from accumulated surplus \$9,292,048.28 and Tip Replacement Reserve \$6,600,000 and Plant Replacement Reserve \$4,600,000

APPENDIX 2 - WASTE RESERVE

YEAR	OPENING BALANCE	TRANSFERS		CLOSING BALANCE	COMMENT
		CONTRIBUTION (IN)	ALLOCATION (OUT)		
2020-21	-	4,864,335 *	-	4,864,335	Transfer from Environmental Reserve
2021-22	4,864,335	-	-	4,864,335	Nil movement
2022-23	4,864,335	-	-	4,864,335	Nil movement

* Transfer from Environmental reserve to form this reserve

APPENDIX 3 - TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT FUND RESERVE

YEAR	OPENING BALANCE	TRANSFERS		CLOSING BALANCE	COMMENT
		CONTRIBUTION (IN)	ALLOCATION (OUT)		
2017-18	4,392,719	1,546,126 *	278,003	5,660,842	
2018-19	5,660,842	1,381,232	1,530,292	5,511,782	Transfer from accumulated surplus \$1,381,232 New Works funding for \$1,530,291
2019-20	5,511,782	950,527	1,598,660	4,863,649	Transfer from accumulated surplus (18/19) \$950,527 and balance of garden waste Funding for IT computer hardware (PID 225 \$232,247), Salesforce implementation (\$1,001,711), Smart Cities program (\$132,000), Enterprise Project Management Office implementation (\$120,702), Internet of Things implementation (\$100,000), Finance System (\$12,000)
2020-21	4,863,649	1,036,201	222,182	5,677,669	Transfer from accumulated surplus \$1,036,201 Enterprise Project Management Office implementation (\$92,968), PC Replacement (\$69,154) and Network Infrastructure (\$69,154)
2021-22	5,677,669	-	-	5,677,669	Nil movement
2022-23	5,677,669	-	-	5,677,669	Nil movement

City of Whittlesea Financial Performance Report

* Transfers from accumulated surplus (2016-17) \$1,500,000 and consolidation of Telemetry Conduit Reserve \$5,540 and Computer Equipment Reserve \$40,586.14.

APPENDIX 4 - PLANNING PERMIT DRAINAGE RESERVE

YEAR	OPENING BALANCE	TRANSFERS		CLOSING BALANCE	COMMENT
		CONTRIBUTION	ALLOCATION		
2017-18	2,127,641	282,285	1,048,959	1,360,968	Funding for Queenscliff Rd drainage (PID 1884) \$1,012,235, Drainage Improvement works (PID 1064) \$36,724
2018-19	1,360,968	287,486	60,000	1,588,454	Funding for Drainage Improvement works (PID 1064) \$60,000
2019-20	1,588,454	202,222	60,000	1,730,676	Funding for Drainage Improvement works (PID 1064) \$60,000
2020-21	1,730,676	8,543,462	250,000	10,024,138	Funding for Drainage Improvement works \$250,000
2021-22	10,024,138	580,658	-	10,604,796	Planning Permit Levy contributions \$286,052
2022-23	10,604,796	1,832,165		12,436,961	Funding for Drainage Improvement works \$1,832,165

APPENDIX 5 - NATIVE VEGETATION OFFSET SITE MAINTENANCE

YEAR	OPENING BALANCE	TRANSFERS		CLOSING BALANCE	COMMENT
		CONTRIBUTION	ALLOCATION		
2017-18	921,367	141,408	290,534	772,242	Funding for Various Native Vegetations \$290,534
2018-19	772,242	985,437	222,704	1,534,975	Funding for Various Native Vegetations \$290,534
2019-20	1,534,975	148,337	442,750	1,240,562	Funding for Various Native Vegetations \$173,199
2020-21	1,240,562	-	-	1,240,562	Nil movement
2021-22	1,240,562	315,655	207,941	1,348,276	Funding for Various Native Vegetations \$107,714
2022-23	1,348,276	160,116		1,508,392	Funding for Various Native Vegetations \$160,116

APPENDIX 6 - STRATEGIC PROPERTIES RESERVE

YEAR	OPENING BALANCE	TRANSFERS		CLOSING BALANCE	COMMENT
		CONTRIBUTION (IN)	ALLOCATION (OUT)		
2017-18	574,234	160,000	-	734,234	Sale of 182 & 214W Greenhills Rd, Bundoora
2018-19	734,234	3,544,149	-	4,278,384	Sale of 30 Brand Drive (net proceeds)
2019-20	4,278,384	513,820	-	4,792,204	Nil movement
2020-21	4,792,204	86,255	-	4,878,458	Bridge Inn Road and Epping Road (net proceeds)
2021-22	4,878,458	-	58,964	4,819,494	Purchase of 135 Williamson Road and 30
2022-23	4,819,494	-	-	4,819,494	

5.5.3 Appointment of Independent Member of CEO Employment Matters Committee

Responsible Officer	Executive Manager Strategy & Insights
Author	Frank Joyce, Executive Manager Strategy & Insights
In Attendance	Frank Joyce, Executive Manager Strategy & Insights
Attachments	No attachments

Purpose

The current independent Chair of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Employment Matters Committee (CEMAC) Margaret Devlin's term expired 31 December 2022. The purpose of this report is for Council to appoint a new Chair of CEMAC for a four-year term commencing 1 March 2023 and ending 28 February 2027.

Recommendation

THAT Council:

- 1. Appoints Christine Mileham as Independent Chair to the City of Whittlesea's CEO Employment Matters Committee commencing 1 March 2023 for a four-year term ending 28 February 2027, in accordance with the terms of reference contained in the CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy;**
- 2. Sets the rates of CEMAC Chair as \$2,500 per formal meeting with this being an all-inclusive rate including work and attendance at any pre meetings, travel, preparatory work, agenda setting, minutes taking/review and benchmarking or reporting required in the role of Chair;**
- 3. Authorises the Executive Manager Strategy and Insights to prepare an appointment letter and confidentiality agreement to confirm the appointment and terms and conditions as outlined in points 1 and 2; and**
- 4. Writes to Margaret Devlin to thank her for her significant service to the CEO Employment Matters Committee and Council over the past 2.5 years.**

Key Information

The CEMAC is an independent advisory committee of Council and its role is to report to Council and provide appropriate advice and recommendations on all contractual matters relating to the position of the CEO including recruitment, performance and remuneration of the CEO. An independent Chair of CEMAC is required under the *CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy 2021*.

Margaret Devlin was appointed as the CEMAC Independent Member and then Independent Chair for the period 7 July 2020 until 31 December 2022. During this time Margaret provided valuable advice and support to CEMAC including: regarding the recruitment and

appointment of the current CEO, Craig Lloyd; establishment of Key Performance Indicators; six monthly and annual performance reviews; and remuneration advice. It is recommended that a letter be sent to Margaret to thank her for her valuable contribution over the past 2.5 years.

In accordance with the CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy, an advertising process was undertaken from 10 November 2022 to 25 November 2022, inviting expressions of interest for the role of Independent Chair to join the CEMAC. 15 applicants submitted written applications of which the vast majority had excellent experience, expertise and capability for the role. A selection panel comprising the Chair of Council, Administrator Duncan and Administrator Eddy reviewed the 15 applications for shortlisting. The Executive Manager Governance and Strategy and Chief People Officer provided administrative support and policy and technical guidance throughout the process. Three applicants were shortlisted, and all were interviewed by the selection panel. All candidates interviewed had strong human resource and performance management experience, along with a sound knowledge of local government issues and extensive experience with similar committees.

Christine Mileham has extensive experience in human resource management, executive recruitment, performance management, policy advice, human resource legislation, facilitation and chairing as well as strong public sector and local government knowledge. Christine is currently appointed as an Independent Member or Chair of a number of equivalent Committees including Greater City of Bendigo, Kingston City Council, Northern Grampians Shire and Moorabool Shire.

Reference checks for Christine Mileham were extremely positive and confirmed the value Christine would add as Chair of CEMAC and the extensive skills and experience she would bring to the position.

It is recommended that Christine Mileham be appointed as Independent Chair to CEMAC from 1 March 2023 for a four-year term ending 28 February 2027, in accordance with the terms of reference contained in the CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy. As part of the appointment, Christine would be required to sign a *confidentiality agreement*. The four-year term is recommended to ensure consistency and a smooth transition to the elected Council in November 2024 and to oversee the period where the current CEO contract expires (October 2025).

It is recommended Council pay an all-inclusive fee of \$2,500 per formal meeting which is inclusive of any pre meetings, travel, preparatory work, agenda setting, minutes taking/review and benchmarking or reporting required in the role of Chair. Benchmarking in the sector confirmed this was an appropriate rate of payment. In the event there was a need to recruit for a CEO, additional fees would be negotiated and agreed with the Independent Chair, to reflect the additional work required in the recruitment, interviewing and appointment of a CEO.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Goal - High Performing Organisation

The CEMAC supports implementation of good governance principles particularly legal, strategic planning, continuous improvement and transparency. CEMAC provides advice to Council to assist with fulfilling its oversight responsibilities for the management and oversight of CEO recruitment, performance and remuneration.

Link to Strategic Risk

Strategic Risk Governance - Ineffective governance of Council's operations and activities resulting in either a legislative or policy breach

CEMAC and appointment of an independent chair is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2020 and the CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Conclusion

There was a high-quality field of candidates for the CEMAC Independent Chair position. Following a thorough recruitment process including shortlisting, interviewing and reference checking, Christine Mileham is the preferred candidate for the position. To support a smooth transition to the newly elected Council in November 2024 and to see out the current CEO contract it is recommended that the position is for a four-year term.

6 Notices of Motion

No Notices of Motion

7 Urgent Business

No Items of Urgent Business

8 Reports from Council Representatives and CEO Update

9 Confidential Business

9.0.0 Close Meeting to the Public

Under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* a meeting considering confidential information may be closed to the public. Pursuant to sections 3(1) and 66(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Recommendation

THAT the Chair of Council recommends that the meeting be closed to the public for the purpose of considering details relating to the following confidential matters in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* as detailed.

9.1 Confidential Connected Communities

No Reports

9.2 Confidential Liveable Neighbourhoods

No Reports

9.3 Confidential Strong Local Economy

No Reports

9.4 Confidential Sustainable Environment

No Reports

9.5 Confidential High Performing Organisation

No Reports

9.6 Confidential Notices of Motion

No Confidential Notices of Motion

12 Closure