



PART 2 - THEMES

LAND

1. Rural Productivity and Agribusiness
2. Rural Land Stewardship
3. Landscape Qualities and Rural Design
4. Boundaries and Buffers
5. Extractive Industry



Located on the urban-rural fringe, the City of Whittlesea covers an area of approximately 49,000 hectares with extensive rural areas in the north and primarily urban development in the south. Much is in private ownership; however a significant proportion is public land.

Key goal and directions

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

GREEN WEDGE GOAL

Land: Healthy land used sustainably, productively and innovatively

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

LAND Sub-themes

- | |
|---|
| 1. Rural productivity and agribusiness |
| 2. Rural land stewardship |
| 3. Landscape qualities and rural design |
| 4. Boundaries and buffers |
| 5. Extractive industry |

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

Urban land

The City of Whittlesea is one of five municipalities designated by the Victorian Government as a growth area. The urban areas account for approximately 35% of the municipality. Located primarily in the southern and western areas of the municipality, these areas support new and established communities. The Victorian Government recently announced funding for the extension of the railway from Epping to South Morang, which is now under construction.

During the 2006 census period, the City of Whittlesea was ranked the 3rd fastest growing municipality and had the 5th largest increase in population across Victoria (ABS 2006). Higher density living and development is encouraged around multi-purpose centres such as, but not limited to, Epping Central.

The established areas support businesses in the industrial and commercial sectors. The Cooper Street Employment Precinct in Epping and University Hill in Bundoora are attracting a number of manufacturing and service related industries. In addition, the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market is currently under construction in Epping.

Non-Urban land

The Whittlesea Green Wedge is one of 12 Green Wedge areas surrounding metropolitan Melbourne. The Whittlesea Green Wedge covers approximately 61% of the City of Whittlesea. This includes all land to the north of the UGB, whether in public or private ownership.

The Whittlesea Green Wedge supports the upper catchment areas of the Plenty River, Darebin Creek and Merri Creek, and the water storage catchments of Toorourrong and Yan Yean Reservoirs.

Areas of productive agricultural land support locally grown produce such as olives, wineries, berry farms and cheese products offered for sale at local markets and displayed at the annual Whittlesea Agricultural Show. Grazing and equestrian activities are also common.



The rural population is concentrated around Whittlesea Township, in addition to smaller rural settlements such as Yan Yean, Humevale, Kinglake West and areas of rural living in Eden Park.

Map 4 over the page shows the distribution of farmland property sizes. Excluding Whittlesea Township, the average property size is approximately 20 hectares, with the majority of properties around 0.8 hectares and only 2.9% being greater than 100 hectares (City of Whittlesea GIS Unit 2009). This has changed slightly from an average property size in 2000 of 17 hectares, with a common property size around 5 hectares and approximately 3% of properties being greater than 100 hectares (City of Whittlesea 2000b).

Sites of heritage significance associated with Aboriginal culture, early European settlement and rural activities are scattered throughout the Green Wedge.

Rural areas provide the majority of habitat for native species, although the City of Whittlesea actively seeks to protect remnant River Red Gums in greenfields housing, business and industrial estates.

Significant landscapes associated with the Plenty Ranges and view lines from road corridors in the Plenty Valley contribute to Whittlesea's sense of place.

Stone resources and land fill capacity are provided by quarries. Proximity to expanding urban areas and transportation networks is essential to an effective extractive industry.

The Whittlesea Green Wedge contains recreation and tourism opportunities ranging from the Country Music Festival to the Growling Frog and Whittlesea Golf Courses to a network of parks.

Public land

The City of Whittlesea contains around 22,000 hectares of public land, of which 3,240 hectares is urban and 18,710 hectares is located in the rural areas.

This public land includes Kinglake National Park, Mt. Disappointment State Park, the Toorourrong and Yan Yean closed water catchment areas and the regional parklands associated with Plenty Gorge, Merri Creek and Quarry Hills. Numerous metropolitan parks are also associated with the Green Wedge. This is discussed in more detail in the sub-theme 'Tourism and Recreation'.



Legislative framework

Land use and management within the City of Whittlesea is influenced by a range of legislation. The main areas of interest to this Management Plan are listed briefly as follows:

- Land use and development is controlled by the *Planning and Environmental Act 1987* through the Victorian Planning Provisions and the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, administered by the City of Whittlesea.
- Extractive industry operations within the City of Whittlesea are subject to regulation by the *Resources Industry Legislation Amendment Act 2009* and the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990*. An Environmental Effects Statement may also be required in accordance with the *Environmental Effects Act 1978*.
- Land is protected from contamination by the *Environment Protection Act 1970* with its supporting *State Environment Protection Policies (SEPP)*.
- The preservation of crown land for public purposes and the management, licensing and leasing of crown land reserves, primarily for grazing, is controlled by the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.
- The formation of authorities to manage and protect land and water resources is enabled by the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.

MAP 4 DISTRIBUTION OF FARMLAND BY PROPERTY SIZE

