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

In summary, key actions proposed include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All Aboriginal cultural heritage places and artefacts are protected by State legislation. Sites may include artefact scatters, scarred trees, shell middens, stone quarries, burials, earthen rings and rock wells.
The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* came into effect on 28 May 2007 in order to recognise, protect and conserve Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria.

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

Refer to Map 24 (opposite) for indicative sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity within the municipality.
10.2.2 European Cultural Heritage
The history of European settlement of the City of Whittlesea mirrors closely the development of Victoria as a whole. Melbourne was located a sufficient distance away to necessitate the development of a series of townships to service local communities at key points along the major transport routes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Refer to the Community Views Final Report for a detailed summary of community responses.
10.4 Issues
The main areas requiring action for the respect, preservation and enhancement of heritage and culture are:

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

This is not an exhaustive list, but rather an overview of the current key areas requiring action.
10.5 Planning Provisions
The Whittlesea Green Wedge contains many places of Aboriginal and European cultural heritage significance. The State Planning Policy Framework supports the conservation of heritage places that have natural, environmental, aesthetic, historic, cultural, scientific or social significance (Whittlesea Planning Scheme Clause 15.03).

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

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

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

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

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

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

10.7 Incentives and Programs
The Port Phillip and Westernport CMA plays a key role in the coordination and administration of funding, inclusive of heritage projects within the Port Phillip and Westernport region. Refer to the following website for further details [http://www.ppwcma.vic.gov.au/funding-grants.aspx](http://www.ppwcma.vic.gov.au/funding-grants.aspx)

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

In summary, key actions proposed include:

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