



PART 3 - ACTION PLAN



The success of the *Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan* is dependant upon collaboration between Local Governments, State Government Departments, Federal Government, agencies, organisations and the community. This section represents the core process towards delivering a cohesive Management Plan for the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

In the following pages, eighty two specific actions relate to previously identified sub-themes. These actions are prioritised in the following manner:

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

These actions represent a range of scales. Fine scale initiatives are very specific and achievable at the local level.

Local Government scale actions require coordination led by one department within Council to drive the delivery of initiatives with input from several Council departments.

State Government scale initiatives include common-ground issues experienced across all green wedge areas. They all require high level advocacy in order to make the agenda of state and national governments. The Municipal Association of Victoria and the Interface Council Group are two useful advocates for state-wide green wedge issues.

Tools

The role of Council in implementing the Management Plan has been aligned to the *Whittlesea 2025 – Strategic Community Plan* (City of Whittlesea 2009a). Council can be a provider and do what is needed, or be an advocate that works on behalf of its communities, or be a facilitator that supports the actions of others. The following actions assist delivery of all six directions of the *Community Plan*.

Actions have been divided into five types: communication, advocate, expansion of existing program, new initiative or Whittlesea Planning Scheme change. Council will actively pursue the funding and delivery of these actions over time through a variety of mechanisms.

Actions identified as communication, expansion of existing programs and proposed Whittlesea Planning Scheme change can be delivered from existing Council resources and commitments.

Expansion of existing program actions should be achievable within the current Council resourcing structure, provided these actions are identified in work plans.

Resourcing and Funding

Many recommended actions will require ongoing development and monitoring by the Green Wedge Project Manager, with input from a working group across Council directorates in addition to external agency support.

Three new officer positions are also proposed as a direct result of community consultation, including an Environmental Protection Officer; an Agribusiness Officer and a Heritage Officer.

The Environmental Protection Officer position has already been created by Council and is currently being funded as a 2 year, full time role. It is an action of this Management Plan to secure funding for this position in a permanent capacity.

The purpose of the proposed new Agribusiness Officer position is to support the development of rural businesses inclusive of exploration of innovative and alternative rural land uses.

The Heritage Officer position will be created with the aim of coordinating heritage practices across Council, inclusive of public and private land. Specific projects relating to heritage interpretation and the collection of oral heritage etc will also be within the remit of this position.

Furthermore, Council has recently employed a Tourism Officer, an action that has widespread support from the community.

IMPLEMENTING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN



In addition to the above, Council will seek State government funding, as available through the Green Wedge Implementation Fund. Applications will be made to secure this funding to assist in the roll out of all initiatives.

New initiatives provide a guide for Council to direct resources and a focus for bidding tenders. They represent a focus for Local and State Government, agencies, organisations and the community when applying for various grants and budgeting processes.

Any proposed changes to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme will be considered as part of Council's Planning Scheme review process and placed on public exhibition, creating further opportunity for stakeholder and community input.

The actions referred to as advocacy can be achieved through utilising Council's General Manager Advocacy and mechanisms such as the Interface Council Group, Council's Agricultural subcommittee and lobbying local parliamentary members.

The City of Whittlesea is currently undertaking other strategic projects that may impact or interact with the *Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan*. This includes the Cooper Street West and Quarry Hills interest areas.

Additionally, several key Council documents are due for release in 2010/11. This includes the *Recreation Strategy*, *Environmental Sustainability Strategy*, *Heritage Study and Archaeological Study*. Council officers responsible for these documents have been involved in contributing to the development of this Management Plan to ensure consistency and collaboration.



'Action Plan' Legend

Council Role

Provider	Does what is needed
Facilitator	Works on behalf of its communities
Advocate	Supports the action of others

Lead Council Directorate (Department)

CED	Corporate and Economic Development
EAP	Planning and Development (Established Areas - Strategic Planning)
SP+D	Planning and Development (Strategic Planning and Design)
SustP	Planning and Development (Sustainability Planning)
PS	Planning and Development (Planning Services)
CS	Community Services
IT	Infrastructure and Technology
SF	Sustainable Finance

Action Type

Comm	Communication
Advocate	As per Council role
EEP	Expansion of existing program
NI	New Initiative
WPS	Whittlesea Planning Scheme change

Priority

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

Techniques

This Management Plan aims to synthesise community aspirations with relevant Council studies and strategies to reflect the directions of Victorian Government policies.

The following 'Action Plan' outlines actions proposed over a 10 year period. Each action will require a work plan to be prepared.

While a Lead Council Directorate has been nominated for each action, it is recognised that effective delivery will require coordination between Council Departments, State Government and the community.



THEME Goal	Sub-theme Objective	Community Plan Future Direction	Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan Action	Council Role	Priority
LAND Healthy land used sustainably, productively and innovatively	1. RURAL PRODUCTIVITY To secure and promote the ongoing productive capacity of the Whittlesea Green Wedge for sustainable agriculture and resource utilisation into the future	Future Direction 3: Growing our economy Future Direction 6: Living sustainably	L1 Continue to provide business support and advice to keep farmers on the land. This includes continued networking, promotion and business development opportunities for owners and managers of our agricultural enterprises.	Provider CED EEP	Ongoing
			L2 Employ an Agribusiness Officer , who would demonstrate Council leadership and best practice through the provision of sound business advice (subject to funding).	Provider CED NI	
			L3 Advocate on behalf of the farming community and maintain input into agricultural research and strategies that seek to support farming ventures, including highlighting the true cost of maintaining a rural property.	Advocate	Ongoing
			L4 Explore options for financial support and partnerships to develop a publicity campaign aimed at demonstrating the value of farming communities to the social, economic and environmental health of the municipality and Melbourne as a whole.	Facilitator CED Comm	
			L5 Investigate further options to alter Council's farm rate to better support agribusiness on the urban fringe.	Provider SF EEP	
			L6 – Continue to advocate through the Interface Councils Working Group for reforms to the way rural land is rated within interface areas.	Advocate	
			L7 Set up a pilot program to support the production of local food and consideration of food links through innovative sustainable land use practices, to increase food security within the municipality.	Provider CED NI	
			L8 Investigate any economic development linkages between the relocation of the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market to Epping and the usage of agricultural land in the municipality.	Provider CED NI	
			L9 Update land capability information in support of both new/innovative and traditional rural enterprises.	Facilitator CED NI	
			L10 Establish a local marketing program to promote successful alternative agribusiness operating in the rural areas of the municipality such as olive groves, organic farming, farmhouse cheese, berry farming and Chinese herbs for the complementary herbal medicine market.	Facilitator CED EEP	Ongoing
			L11 Review local planning provisions to identify and evaluate controls relating to agribusiness and the ' right to farm ' in rural areas.	Provider SP+D PS	



THEME Goal	Sub-theme Objective	Community Plan Future Direction	Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan Action	Council Role	Priority
2. RURAL LAND STEWARDSHIP To support and promote the local capacity of communities and individuals to actively manage and sustain the green wedge through informed land stewardship practices	Future Direction 6: Living sustainably	L12 Further develop existing rural education programs to encourage the diversification of sustainable farming methods.	Provider SustP EEP		
		L13 Work in partnership with government departments and agencies to promote and facilitate the uptake of environmental market mechanisms , such as ecoMarkets, to rural residents.	Facilitator SustP Comm		
		L14 Review current sustainable land management programs to better support small rural properties, promote land stewardship practices including the management of pest plants and support property owners required to prepare a Land Management Plan in accordance with the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.	Provider SustP EEP		
		L15 Commit to permanent funding for an Environmental Protection Officer to ensure ongoing compliance with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Whittlesea Planning Scheme • Whittlesea's Pest plant Local Law • Planning permit conditions • Land management plan directives 	Provider SustP NI		
		L16 Develop guidelines on the Land Management Plan process as it relates to planning assessment processes.	Provider PS EEP		
		L17 Further develop a monitoring system that flags Land Management Plans associated with planning permits issued for rural properties. Showcase success stories and follow-up non-complying properties with the offer of assistance and expertise as required.	Facilitator SustP EEP		
		L18 Further develop community knowledge and perception of rural land stewardship through encouragement and support for neighbourhood teams that share knowledge between new and existing landholders.	Facilitator SustP EEP		
		L19 Continue to offer a holistic service that facilitates a coordinated response across Council departments to land use planning applications for the rural areas.	Provider PS EEP	Ongoing	
		L20 Develop further mechanisms to discourage and regulate soil dumping, filling of land and native vegetation removal through education, policy development and enforcement and compliance processes.	Provider SustP WPS		
		L21 Develop a quarterly rural newsletter that focuses on good rural land stewardship practices and showcases success stories.	Provider SustP NI		



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	3. LANDSCAPE QUALITIES To conserve and enhance the rural and natural landscape character of the Whittlesea Green Wedge	Future Direction 6: Living sustainably	L22 Amend planning provisions to address environmental hazards within the City of Whittlesea as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of a new overlay, the Salinity Management Overlay, to areas of dryland salinity; • Application of a new overlay, the Erosion Management Overlay, to areas of stream, gully and sheet erosion; and • Reassess the boundaries of the existing Wildfire Management Overlay in response to the Government's implementation of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. 	Provider SP+D WPS	
			L23 Further develop community appreciation of the rural landscape through a variety of landscape exploration events .	Provider SustP EEP	
			L24 Investigate partnership arrangements with key groups for the sponsorship of two new annual events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Best Rural Design' for the promotion of residential architectural excellence in a rural setting • 'Best Rural Land Management' for the promotion of best whole property design and management. 	Provider SustP EEP PS SP+D	
			L25 Further develop community appreciation of the rural landscape through the creation of a 'Celebrate the Landscape' event aimed at showcasing and promoting 'ownership' of a range of green wedge values.	Provider SustP NI	
			L26 Amend planning provisions targeted at protection of significant landscapes and significant vistas as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Significant Landscape Overlay is correctly applied to all visually sensitive areas within the Whittlesea Green Wedge; • Develop local policies as part of the Planning Scheme review process to guide development adjacent to visually sensitive hilltops; • As part of the Planning Scheme review process develop a road setback policy for visually significant roadside corridors and include in the Local Planning Policy Framework; and • Implement changes to the LPPF to insure that the design, siting and form of new dwellings and other buildings within green wedge areas are appropriately and sensitively integrated within rural and natural environments. 	Provider SP+D WPS	



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	4. BOUNDARIES AND BUFFERS To ensure that the interface between the Whittlesea Green Wedge and urban and rural communities is clearly defined and planned to reduce conflict	Future Direction 4: Places and spaces to connect people	L27 Investigate innovative land use options which support sustainable land use and management, particularly at the urban rural interface.	Provider SustP NI SP+D	High
			L28 Based on research undertaken on interface land uses, pilot and evaluate alternate land treatments at the peri-urban interface.	Provider SustP NI	Medium
			L29 Undertake a review of the Whittlesea Township Local Structure Plan with an emphasis on defining the township boundary and interface issues between urban and rural areas.	Provider SP+D EAP WPS	High
			L30 Protect significant habitat areas adjoining any Urban Growth Boundary by encouraging and facilitating conservation trusts/covenants, market-based instruments such as ecoMarkets, carbon and/or native vegetation offsets through focussing on programs that provide income for 'farming nature'.	Provider SP+D NI	Medium
	5. EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY To ensure the needs of extractive industries are identified and protected in the context of broader green wedge values.	Future Direction 3: Growing our economy	L31 Review and report on the status of all current extractive industry operations within the Green Wedge.	Provider SP+D EEP	Medium
			L32 Strengthen communication between interactive industry operators and Council, Government Departments and local stakeholders in order to create an environment that allows the open discussion of issues and opportunities such as land management, buffers and threat mitigation.	Facilitator SP+D Comm	Ongoing
		Future Direction: 6 Living sustainably	L33 Advocate to the State Government to review the Extractive Industry Interest Area (EIIA) as it relates to the City Of Whittlesea having regard to recent Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) changes and defined Green Wedge values including native vegetation.	Provider SP+D Comm	Medium
			L34 Assess the practicalities of leaving disused quarries unfilled at the expiry of their licence in order to create a wetland environment.	Facilitator IT NI	Medium



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BIODIVERSITY Healthy and enduring ecosystems with a variety of habitats and native species	6. FLORA, FAUNA and HABITAT To ensure the biodiversity and environmental values of the Whittlesea Green Wedge are identified, protected and enhanced on public and private land	Future Direction 6: Living Sustainably	B1 Determine the most cost and time effective means of collating and managing flora and fauna data for Council. Ensure that data exchange agreements are maintained between the Department of Sustainability and Environment and Council.	Provider SustP EEP	Ongoing
			B2 Investigate the relationship between significant ecosystems and type of land ownership (e.g. parkland, reserve or private landholding). Assess best methods of protection for areas of high conservation significance.	Provider SP+D EEP	
			B3 Continue to advocate for, and contribute to, discussions regarding the creation of a 1,200 hectare Grassy Eucalypt Woodland Reserve within Whittlesea's Green Wedge.	Advocate	
			B4 Distribute educational material to landholders primarily through Council publications and local media regarding the following biodiversity topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological burns - develop community understanding of the necessity of fire to maintain ecosystem health. • Significant ecosystems - highlight the variety and uniqueness of ecological communities, flora and fauna throughout the rural areas. Clearly define Commonwealth and State legislation that prohibits the removal or destruction of significant habitats. • Fencing and grazing management - increase knowledge of the environmental and economic benefits of fencing remnant trees, creating shelter belts and leaving ungrazed areas for habitat purposes on rural properties. • Pest plants - develop landholder knowledge of what constitutes pest plants. Offer a range of options and methods for removal. • Pest Animals - Develop landholder knowledge regarding the management of pest animals. 	Provider SustP Comm	
			B5 In partnership with fire agencies and relevant State Government departments, continue to distribute educational material on ecological burns via local media and direct mail outs to landholders.	Provider CED EEP	Ongoing
			B6 Continue to contribute to discussions with key stakeholders including the State Government and local wildlife groups about habitat corridors , particularly in an urban-rural interface context. This should also be considered at the framework planning stage for future urban land.	Advocate	
			B7 Develop a local planning policy that provides guidance on the benefits of planning for habitat corridors particularly within areas being developed for urban purposes.	Provider SustP WPS SP+D	



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BIODIVERSITY Healthy and enduring ecosystems with a variety of habitats and native species	6. FLORA, FAUNA and HABITAT To ensure the biodiversity and environmental values of the Whittlesea Green Wedge are identified, protected and enhanced on public and private land	Future Direction 6: Living Sustainably	B8 Continue to work with State Government and all relevant agencies to use forward strategic planning to reduce conflict and balance the ecological needs of the kangaroo population with the social, environmental and ecological needs of local residents, particularly the working agricultural community.	Provider SP+D WPS	
			B9 Strengthen planning provisions targeted at the identification, protection and enhancement of biodiversity and environmental values of the Whittlesea Green Wedge as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect all vegetation communities of national, state, regional and local significance with appropriate planning provisions; • Support strengthening planning controls for areas of remnant native vegetation and fauna habitat, in particular, support the inclusion of sites of biodiversity significance, strategic habitat links and buffer areas through the application of the Environmental Significance Overlay; and • Consider applying the Road Closure Overlay to disused rural roads to provide habitat linkages between rural landholdings. 	Provider SP+D SustP NI	
			B10 Develop local planning policy to provide guidance and direction on native vegetation retention and net gain offsets .	Provider SP+D WPS	
			B11 Identify preferred strategic locations for native vegetation offsets within the municipality taking into account ecological significance, land ownership, adjoining land uses, potential for creating habitat corridors and property size.	Provider IT EEP	
			B12 Increase opportunities for community interaction with significant ecosystems such as revegetation activities and value-added activities such as 'breakfast with the birds' or 'frogs on wheels' and seed collection/plant propagation.	Provider SustP EEP	
			B13 Foster coordination between Local and State Government with regard to the development and implementation of state wide management plans and priorities for pest plant and animal control on public private land. Advocate for increased funding to implement strategic priorities relevant to the Whittlesea area.	Advocate	Ongoing
			B14 Expand existing programs that promote the value and significance of ecosystems on Council-owned land through education and interpretive signage.	Provider IT EEP	



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WATER Sustainable water use and healthy waterways, wetlands and groundwater	7. WATERWAYS AND CATCHMENTS To protect and improve the environmental health and social and economic values of waterways, wetlands and aquifers	Future Direction 6: Living sustainably	W1 Ensure local provisions are consistent with State legislation through the Planning Scheme Review project.	Provider SP+D NI	
			W2 Reinforce consistency between State and Local Government legislation.	Provider SP+D NI	
			W3 Research current signage at waterways and investigate funding opportunities to install identification signage for all waterways , particularly at the intersection of major roadways and paths. At a minimum, catchment signage should also be installed alongside the Plenty River, Merri Creek and Darebin Creek in prominent positions.	Provider SP+D P&G NI	
			W4 Build upon existing community involvement in waterway health through promotion and support for programs such as WaterWatch and riparian revegetation activities.	Facilitator SustP EEP	
			W5 Strengthen planning provisions targeted at the protection and improvement of the environmental health of waterways as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add new schedules to the Environmental Significance Overlay to protect all major waterbodies; • Revise the extent of the mapping associated with the existing Environmental Significance Overlay schedule 3 to include unprotected waterways; and • Investigate the rezoning of the municipality's two water storage catchments from Public Use Zone to Public Conservation and Resource Zone. 	Provider SP+D WPS	
			W6 Conduct a feasibility study on a ' Top of the Catchment ' event that focuses on the municipality's waterways and catchments.	Provider SustP NI	
			W7 Continue to encourage good water sensitive urban design from new developments abutting reserves and waterways, in order to protect aquatic and biodiversity values.	Facilitator SP+D EEP	Ongoing
			W8 Investigate opportunities to contribute to catchment projects and support partnerships that research the effects of surface and sub-surface water use, particularly due to increased numbers and declining water quality and quantity of local farm dams and bores.	Facilitator SustP NI	



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PEOPLE A connected community that respects, values and celebrates its past, present and future.	8. COMMUNITIES AND SETTLEMENTS To ensure local communities have the opportunity to participate in decisions related to the liveability of the Whittlesea Green Wedge	Future Direction 1: Inclusive and engaged community	P1 Build upon the role of existing local committees and community groups to champion the cause of the Whittlesea Green Wedge. Establish an education program targeted at local committees and community groups.	Facilitator SustP EEP	
		Future Direction 5: Health and wellbeing	P2 Build upon the role of existing local committees and community groups such as MCMC, DCMC, Land Care and the Victorian Farmers' Federation as they champion the cause of the Whittlesea Green Wedge. Establish an education program targeted at local committees and communities groups.	Facilitator SustP EEP	Ongoing
			P3 Create networking opportunities that raise awareness of the issues faced by both rural and urban residents, to promote the value of farmers and farming practices.	Facilitator SP+D SustP NI	
			P4 Continue to distribute information on community organisations and services to encourage networking and increase community capacity, particularly within the rural community.	Facilitator CS EEP	Ongoing
			P5 Develop ' Rural Information Packs ' that can be distributed to potential property purchasers that includes pre-purchase information such as planning checklists, siting and design guidelines, environmental values and land management tips.	Provider SP+D SustP NI	
			P6 Disseminate information to the community on a timely basis regarding Local and State Government plans for the Whittlesea Green Wedge, and create opportunities for community input.	Facilitator SP+D SustP PS Comm	
			P7 Provide diverse housing opportunities, including aged care housing, in areas of existing residential land in the Whittlesea Township, where services and facilities are located.	Provider SP+D EAP EEP	Ongoing
			P8 Ensure Whittlesea Township can continue to accommodate local enterprises, businesses and other facilities which support the Whittlesea Green Wedge.	Facilitator CED NI	



THEME Goal	Sub-theme Objective	Community Plan Future Direction	Whittlesea Green Action	Council Role	Priority	
			P9 Continue to advocate on behalf of the community to the Victorian Government for funding to support those services and facilities deemed most necessary in the rural areas and in particular Whittlesea Township.	Advocate	Ongoing	
			P10 Develop guidelines for rural infrastructure, such as lighting and road construction, as urban type improvements are not always necessary or appropriate in the rural areas.	Provider IT EEP		
			P11 Utilise planning provisions to increase the liveability of the Whittlesea Green Wedge as follows: • Investigate the best zoning for rural communities such as Eden Park to better reflect current land patterns; and • Rezone any isolated parcels of Green Wedge land to reflect the zoning of surrounding land.	Provider SP+D WPS		
	9. TOURISM and RECREATION To preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the Whittlesea Green Wedge for current and future generations	Future Direction 2: Accessibility in, out and around our city	Future Direction 4: Places and spaces to connect people	P12 Update Council's Tourism Strategy to highlight tourism and recreation opportunities in the green wedge.	Provider CED EEP	
				P13 Develop a 'Welcome to Whittlesea Pack' that highlights tourism opportunities such as boutique agribusinesses, emerging and established tourist destinations.	Facilitator CED Comm	
				P14 Research opportunities for geotourism or 'whole of place' tourism. Focusing on local character rather than generic aspects, this form of tourism incorporates historic structures, living and traditional cultures, landscape, cuisine and arts, as well as local flora and fauna.	Facilitator CED NI	
				P15 In partnership with land owners/managers, investigate partnership opportunities that extend our network of multiuse trails , including opportunities for heritage interpretation. <i>Linking People and Places – Government Strategy for Trail Networks in the Metropolitan Area</i> and <i>The Victorian Trail Strategy</i> will inform the potential location of multi-use trails. Attention should be paid to the disused Mernda-Whittlesea rail track as it provides linkages between rural and urban areas.	Provider CED NI	
				P16 Continue to develop Council's Whittlesea Recreational Strategy in consultation with the community and implement proposed actions.	Provider LS+P Comm	
				P17 Develop a trail network strategy for the Green Wedge area to cater for walkers, bike and horse riders, linking to key destinations including the Whittlesea Township.	Provider CS NI	



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			P18 Research community perceptions of local parks and user needs in order to prioritise funding opportunities for facilities, including signage.	Provider IT NI	
			P19 Advocate on behalf of the community to Parks Victoria regarding increased funding for state managed parks and the potential for creation of new parklands (such as Quarry Hills and around the Merri Creek).	Advocate	
			P20 Investigate the provision of alternative transportation options for attendees of showcase events, such as the Whittlesea Agricultural Show and the Whittlesea Country Music Festival.	Provider CS EEP	
	10. HERITAGE and CULTURE To preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the Whittlesea Green Wedge for current and future generations	Future Direction 4: Places and spaces to connect people	P21 Explore options to promote Council's full range of cultural heritage opportunities at festivals and events.	Facilitator CS EEP	Ongoing
			P22 Enhance community perception of heritage places and cultures through continued promotion of Council's Cultural Heritage Program .	Facilitator CS EEP	
			P23 Explore options for developing interpretive signage at significance heritage places and areas of cultural significance within the municipality.	Provider CS NI	
			P24 Increase networking links with the local indigenous community to ensure understanding and respect for sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity within the municipality.	Facilitator CS Comm	Ongoing
			P25 Explore opportunities to employ a Heritage Officer in order to develop a Heritage Strategy for the holistic management of heritage across Council.	Provider SP+D NI	
			P26 Following the heritage study undertaken during 2009/10, implement findings and apply a Heritage Overlay to all significant places not protected. Any proposed amendment to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme will provide additional opportunity for public submission.	Provider SP+D WPS	
			P27 Demonstrate Council leadership and best practice by investigating the feasibility of developing a Management Plan for all heritage places on Council-owned land.	Provider SP+D NI	
		P28 Advocate on behalf of heritage management to the Victorian Government regarding treatment of cultural heritage on Crown land. Support Heritage Victoria in its role of caring for our public heritage places.	Advocate		

