This Management Plan has the capacity to guide a whole-of-Government approach to the coordination and implementation of actions within the Whittlesea Green Wedge.

It was important however to first build a clear understanding of the values, features and issues associated with the Whittlesea Green Wedge before recommending management priorities and techniques aimed at the sustainable protection and management of the Green Wedge.

The benefits of government, businesses and community implementing a successful Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan are four-fold:

- **Healthy land** used sustainably, productively and innovatively
- **Healthy and enduring ecosystems** with a variety of habitats and native species
- **Healthy waterways, wetlands and groundwater** and sustainable water use
- **A connected community** that respects, values and celebrates its past, present and future.

**Progress Indicators**

Performance indicators and targets are useful tools in measuring outcomes associated with this Management Plan.

One measure of successful implementation will be derived directly from the number of actions commenced or completed out of the total number of proposed initiatives.

Another progress indicator could consider the use of a rural household survey or other data sources to ascertain the extent of achievement of the objectives associated with the ten sub-themes.

It is anticipated that Council’s new *Environmental Sustainability Strategy*, due for release in 2011, will act as the indicator platform for a range of environmental policies and plans, including this Management Plan. Indicators, targets and data sources will be nominated for a range of environmental considerations. Achievement of relevant indicators will be addressed in subsequent Management Plans. This plan should be read in conjunction with the strategies, actions and preferred outcomes which will soon be finalised with the Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

**Review**

A process to review the relevancy and to measure the success of the Management Plan over ten years in achieving the agreed vision and objectives should be put in place.

In accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Government, it is proposed to undertake a five year review of the Management Plan. This will enable the relevancy and the success of the plan in achieving the vision and objectives to be reviewed.

Additionally, it is Council’s intention to release a three and seven year report, based on an annual report to Council on the progress of implementation.

This Management Plan has the capacity to guide a whole-of-Government approach to the coordination and implementation of actions within the Whittlesea Green Wedge.
Bioregion: Areas that capture the pattern of ecological characteristics present in the landscape, providing a natural blueprint for recognising and responding to biodiversity values.

Ecological Sustainable Development (ESD): In 1990 the Commonwealth Government suggested the following definition for ESD in Australia as 'using, conserving and enhancing the community’s resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased'.

Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC): A type of native vegetation classification that is described based on a combination of life form, floristic and ecological characteristics. Each EVC has a collection of vegetation communities that occur across a biogeographic range.

decoMarkets: The ecoMarket program is a range of market-based approaches that provide incentives to landlords to manage land and water in ways that conserve and enhance the environment.

Since 2007, the BushBroker program has resulted in 39 trades valued at more than $3 million and the BushTender Program has resulted in agreements with 86 landholders, committing $3.2 million for on-ground works and land use changes.

Ecotourism: Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.

Geotourism: 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.

Green Wedge: The non-urban areas of metropolitan Melbourne located beyond the Urban Growth Boundary. Melbourne has 12 Green Wedge areas: Werribee South, Western Plains South, Western Plains North, Sunbury, Whittlesea, Nillumbik, Manningham, Yarra Valley and Yarra and Dandenong Ranges, Southern Ranges, Westernport, South East and Mornington Peninsula.

Green Wedge Management Plan: A council adopted strategy that identifies a vision, objectives and actions for the sustainable management and development of each green wedge area.

Integrated Catchment Management: A systems approach to the management of natural resources, particularly water resources, within the bounds of a geographical unit based on the catchment area of a river system. ICM recognises the need to integrate all environmental, economic and social issues within a catchment into an overall management philosophy, process and plan.

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. A planning scheme includes:

- **State Planning Policy Framework:** content is set by the Victorian Government and common to all planning schemes. This framework covers statewide policies on issues that require a coordinated response, such as environmental protection.
- **Local Planning Policy Framework:** tailored by each local government, this framework sets out local policies that assist decision making.
- **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.
## Uptake of Council’s Sustainable Land Management Rate Rebate Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>Total number of Green Wedge properties</th>
<th>Total number of eligible properties (10ha+)</th>
<th>Rate Rebate Scheme uptake 2007-2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beveridge</td>
<td>196 properties</td>
<td>47 properties</td>
<td>17 properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donnybrook</td>
<td>75 properties</td>
<td>40 properties</td>
<td>7 properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doreen (part)</td>
<td>13 properties</td>
<td>8 properties</td>
<td>2 properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden Park</td>
<td>835 properties</td>
<td>14 properties</td>
<td>10 properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epping (part)</td>
<td>43 properties</td>
<td>12 properties</td>
<td>4 properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humevale</td>
<td>180 properties</td>
<td>60 properties</td>
<td>15 properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinglake West</td>
<td>51 properties</td>
<td>20 properties</td>
<td>6 properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mernda (part)</td>
<td>65 properties</td>
<td>31 properties</td>
<td>11 properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Morang (part)</td>
<td>42 properties</td>
<td>15 properties</td>
<td>1 property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whittlesea</td>
<td>2313 properties</td>
<td>147 properties</td>
<td>39 properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollert (part)</td>
<td>181 properties</td>
<td>76 properties</td>
<td>34 properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodstock</td>
<td>117 properties</td>
<td>71 properties</td>
<td>33 properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yan Yean</td>
<td>178 properties</td>
<td>45 properties</td>
<td>10 properties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLUS: 1 property in Kalkallo

*Source: City of Whittlesea Sustainability Planning Unit 2009*
The Whittlesea Green Wedge is highly valued for the diverse character and qualities of its rural landscape. The following information is based on the study *Rural Landscape Character Assessment* (Contour Consultants 1999) which identifies four distinct Visual Character Areas (VCA) within the rural areas of the municipality.

Within these VCAs, ten distinct sub-areas have also been defined based on shared characteristics such as geomorphological features, common viewing corridors and underlying landscape character.

The four VCAs and their sub-areas are listed as follows and identified in Map 10 (opposite and page 40):

- **The Plenty Valley VCA**  
  - Upper Plenty sub-area  
  - Middle Plenty sub-area  
  - Lower Plenty sub-area

- **The Plenty Ranges VCA**

- **The Hills VCA**  
  - Eden Hills sub-area  
  - Whittlesea Hills sub-area  
  - Eastern Hills sub-area  
  - Quarry Hills sub-area

- **The Western Plains VCA**  
  - Northern Plains sub-area  
  - Red Gum sub-area  
  - Southern Plains sub-area

The following tables outline the main values and threats to each VCA. They also identify practical steps that landholders, community groups and Council Officers can take to retain and improve these valued landscapes.
### Plenty Valley Visual Character Area

#### VALUES
- Contains some of the municipality’s best quality agricultural land on the flat alluvial plains associated with the Plenty River
- Several horticultural industries are present
- Contains generally flat to undulating open pastures with significant areas of River Red Gums
- One of the most heavily populated and trafficked areas and as such represents the most commonly experienced rural environments of the municipality
- Landform supports eleven vegetation communities containing the highest diversity of regionally threatened species in the Port Phillip Region
- Over 400 indigenous plant species have been recorded
- Plenty Gorge provides a habitat link for over 150 fauna species within the urban area, including the highest diversity of butterflies recorded in north-east Melbourne. The parklands also provide significant breeding sites for endangered bird and butterfly species (DSE 2005d)
- Contains the middle catchment of the Plenty River and numerous wetlands
- Some roadside vegetation of high conservation value along Grants Road and Donnybrook Road
- Plenty Road forms the major viewing corridor from the urban areas to Whittlesea Township and the surrounding hills and ranges
- Clearly defined non urban break between Mernda and Whittlesea Township
- Heritage elements include exotic hedgerow plantings, early settler’s homesteads, horse studs and remnant gardens
- Recreational sites include Plenty Gorge Parklands, Nioka Bush Camp and Hawkstowe Park
- Sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage associated with waterways
- Contains the Whittlesea Township

#### THREATS
- Lack of riparian vegetation contributes to bank erosion and low water quality especially along Barbers, Scrubby and Bruces Creeks
- Fencing of property boundaries across watercourses creates a potential barrier to wildlife movement
- Removal of native vegetation, including riparian vegetation
- Unmanaged rural land leading to weeds and overall appearance of disrepair
- Historical small subdivision patterns, particularly along Plenty and Wallan Roads, increase pressure on maintaining the non urban break between Mernda and Whittlesea Township
- This area is experiencing the greatest pressure for land use change

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION
- Encourage innovative and alternative forms of agribusiness
- Retain potentially productive rural land for a range of agricultural and related uses
- Strengthen rural compliance to reduce illegal earthworks, dumping, weeds and vegetation removal
- Maintain the Plenty Valley as an open landscape feature between the Mernda growth area and the Whittlesea Township
- Strengthen the Plenty Valley as a strategic habitat link
- Remediate and protect waterways, in particular Scrubby Creek, Barbers Creek and Bruces Creek, from gully, bed and bank erosion
- Fence off watercourses from stock access to protect waterway banks and water quality
- Protect the northern areas of the Plenty River catchment from intensity of development, runoff and erosion
- Major gateway opportunity to the Whittlesea Green Wedge at Plenty Road, Mernda
- Consider the creation a tourism route incorporating various agribusinesses, recreational sites and heritage places
- Ensure the protection of rural character occurs in the design and in the assessment of development proposals
- Discourage siting of dwellings and other structures in visually sensitive areas
**Plenty Valley Visual Character Area**
Containing historic homesteads, hedgerows and pastoral qualities this VCA is surrounded by ranges to the north and the Plenty Gorge to the south. Significant River Red Gum woodlands are located in proximity to farming properties and Whittlesea Township.

**Sub-areas**
- **Upper Plenty**

Figure 1 opposite displays typical section and plan:

- **Middle Plenty**
- **Lower Plenty**

**Communities**
Mernda
Yan Yean
Whittlesea
Humevale

Location of development within and adjacent to road visual corridor subject to preparation of a site analysis, design response and detailed siting and design plans, sections and elevations.

Location of development must be made with consideration of fire proneness, required buffers and geotechnical matters.

Avoid development on ridges and major hill tops.

Preserve existing vegetation including established hedgerows which form part of the established visual character.

Location of development within and adjacent to road visual corridor.

Typical section and plan are indicative only for illustrative purposes.

Consider views from Road corridor and elevated properties in design.

Consider views from to Ranges.

Avoid development on ridges and major hill tops.

Ensure proper layout of access drives to minimise cut/batters.

Reserve views to Ranges.