

21.03 ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE VALUES

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This clause provides local content to support Clause 12 (Environmental and Landscape values) of the State Planning Policy Framework.

Specific references to individual suburbs and towns are also included in Clause 21.11 (Local Areas).

21.03-1 Biodiversity

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Wyndham has a large number of threatened and endangered species that are classified as either vulnerable, endangered or depleted. Since European settlement, over 99% of the native vegetation in Wyndham has been altered, degraded or cleared. The four dominant Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC's) in Wyndham are coastal salt marsh; plains grassy woodland; floodplain riparian woodland; and plains grassland. Wyndham also contains a number of biological assets and its native grasslands are considered highly significant.

Wyndham's main waterways are Skeleton Creek, Werribee River, Lollypop Creek, Little River and a small section of Kororoit Creek. Wyndham has important wetlands listed under the Ramsar Convention including the Western Treatment plant lagoons, Point Cook and Cheetham Wetlands. These and other wetlands provide habitat for many birds including internationally protected migratory species, the critically endangered Growling Grass Frog and other flora and fauna species. There are also coastal areas and foreshores with varying environmental significance that require ongoing management and protection.

The *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2013* (BCS) defines how conservation objectives relating to matters of national environmental significance will be achieved within Melbourne's growth corridors. It also evaluates the impact of the State Government's program *Delivering Melbourne's Newest Sustainable Communities* on matters of national environmental significance.

In the Wyndham growth areas, the BCS identifies four Conservation Areas to be reserved for nature conservation. It also identifies land along the Werribee River, Lollypop Creek and Davis Creek to be reserved as habitat corridors for Growling Grass Frog.

The BCS also commits to the development of two nature conservation areas outside the Urban Growth Boundary. The Western Grassland Reserve is one of these areas and 78% of its 15,000 hectares is to be situated within Wyndham.

Key issues

- Protecting and restoring biodiversity and natural habitats.
- Improving the environmental health and protection of waterways and coastlines.
- Ensuring clean water and air, protection from pollutants, access to open spaces and sustainable local ecosystems which all support healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

Objective 1

To protect and improve Wyndham's indigenous flora, fauna and habitat.

Strategies

- 1.1 Protect and manage areas of natural biodiversity value, including the Western Plains Grassland, other grasslands and wetlands, as identified on Map 2. (Conservation Map)
- 1.2 Ensure that biodiversity is maintained or increased.

Objective 2

To improve the environmental health and protection of waterways and coastlines.

Strategies

- 2.1 Protect and enhance waterways and coastal land as identified on Maps 3 and 4 (Conservation Map and the Coastal and Werribee South Precinct Map).
- 2.2 Protect biodiversity within waterways and coastal land.
- 2.3 Enhance existing geomorphology of waterways and coastlines.

21.03-2**Significant environments and landscapes**

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A number of landscape characteristics help define Wyndham including coastal and basalt plains, extensive grasslands, waterways, wetlands, swamps, dry stone walls and windbreaks. These are identified in the *Landscape Context Guidelines 2013* and some of these distinctive landscapes are declining. It is feared that without protection, parts of Wyndham are in danger of losing its identity and becoming a cluster of constant suburbs with no character or reflection on its history. Up until recently, the greatest threat to these features was from the clearing of vegetation for agricultural purposes. An emerging threat is inappropriate development which can disturb landscapes, waterways and native species. Unsuitable design can also limit attractive viewlines which can reduce the experience of living on the volcanic plains.

Key issues

- Protecting and enhancing the distinctive sense of place, cultural identity and landscape within the growth areas of Wyndham.

Objective 3

To safeguard the visual, natural and cultural heritage values of urban and rural landscapes.

Strategies

- 3.1 Identify areas of high biodiversity or landscape value that should be protected from development in accordance with Map 4 (Special Places and Landscapes Map).
- 3.2 Ensure that development plans and structure plans protect and enhance the key landscape features of Wyndham.
- 3.3 Acknowledge the key landscape characteristics of Wyndham in the early stages of planning for urban growth.

21.03-3**Coastal areas**

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The *Wyndham Coastal Scoping Study 2012* analysed the municipal coastline from the mouth of the Werribee River to Skeleton Creek. The study also analysed the Werribee South Intensive Agriculture and Dryland Farming Precincts, Werribee South Township, Wyndham Harbour, RAAF Base Point Cook, Point Cook Coastal Park, the coastal Crown land reserve and the Point Cook Marine Reserve. This area consists of a number of complex environments and activities as was addressed in the *Werribee South Green Wedge Policy and Management Plan 2010*.

Key issues

- Managing urban encroachment and its impacts on environmental values.
- Providing tourism opportunities.
- Linking coastal Crown land dependency with community benefit.
- Managing the needs for coastal infrastructure to protect for climate change and sea level rise.
- Managing economic, environmental and social pressures on the agricultural precincts.
- Considering the quality of water entering Port Phillip Bay and significant wetlands.
- Soil contamination at the RAAF Base Point Cook.

Objective 4

To protect, manage and enhance the identified coastal values of Wyndham

Strategies

- 4.1 Protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity and ecological values and significant landscapes along the coast.
- 4.2 Protect and conserve cultural heritage along the coast.
- 4.3 Support investment in tourism in the Werribee South and Point Cook areas.
- 4.4 Discourage development in areas along the foreshore where there is the potential for coastal acid sulphate soils, storm wave action and rising sea levels.

Objective 5

To protect and enhance the Werribee South coastline for environmental, recreational and tourism purposes.

Strategies

- 5.1 Provide for public access to the Werribee South coastline.
- 5.2 Protect private land and the right to farm along the Werribee South coastline.
- 5.3 Manage the interface and minimise conflicts between activity in public areas and activity in adjoining private agricultural and domestic areas.
- 5.4 Ensure development of the Wyndham harbour site is socially and environmentally responsive to the surrounding agricultural environs.
- 5.5 Contain urban development around the Wyndham harbour within the boundaries of the Special Use Zone.

21.03-4

Implementation

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The strategies will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

Application of zones and overlays

The objectives, strategies and policy guidelines in the Planning Scheme are implemented through the application of appropriate zones and overlays.

- Outside PSP areas, apply Environmental Significance Overlay with design guidelines along Werribee River, Skeleton Creek, Lollypop Creek and Little River.
- Apply Schedule 1 to the Design and Development Overlay to maintain the boulevard appearance of the Princes Highway.
- Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay to protect sites, areas and corridors of current and potential future environmental significance.
- Apply Design and Development Overlays to protect major gateways.
- Apply the Heritage Overlay to heritage places and precincts.

Policy Guidelines

The objectives, strategies and policy guidelines in the Planning Scheme will be implemented through the application of the following local planning policy.

- Clause 22.05 (Heritage Conservation Policy) seeks to protect the heritage assets of the community and ensure respectful infill development.

Further strategic work

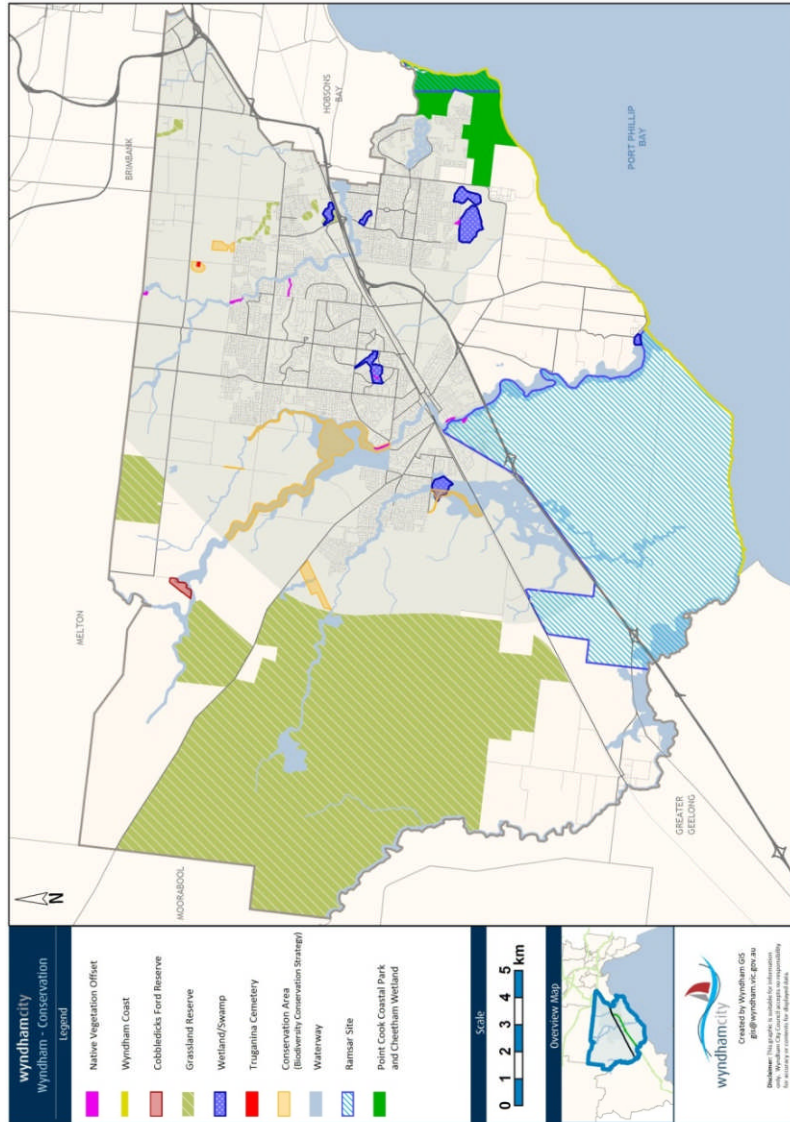
- Review and update the Wyndham Environment Strategy.
- Review the Werribee Plains Vision.
- Develop a Wyndham biodiversity strategy.
- Investigate mechanisms to protect and enhance sites of significance in the Green Wedges including potential vegetation planning controls.
- Investigate the range of land management actions identified in the Werribee South Green Wedge Policy and Management Plan.
- Develop a Management Plan for Wyndham's Section of the Western Plains South Green Wedge.
- Review the Wyndham Coastal Strategy.
- Develop a strategy for climate change mitigation and adaptation, including the impacts of heat stress.
- Encourage Precinct Structure Plans that recognise the key themes and special places identified in the *Landscape Context Guidelines 2013* and the *Wyndham North Heritage Strategy*.
- Implement the *Landscape Context Guidelines 2013*.
- Implement the *Wyndham North Heritage Strategy*.
- Implement the *Werribee South Green Wedge Policy and Management Plan 2010*.
- Identify and protect dry stone walls.
- Create a trail link between Point Cook and Werribee South.

Reference documents

- *Landscape Context Guidelines (2013)*.
- *Werribee South Green Wedge Policy and Management Plan (2010)*.
- *Werribee South Coastal Reserve Management Plan (2002)*.
- *Wyndham Coastal Scoping Study (2012)*.

- *Werribee South Foreshore Master Plan (2006).*
- *Wyndham City Environment and Sustainability Strategy 2011-2015.*

Map 2 – Conservation Map



Map 4 – Coastal and Werribee South Precincts Map

