



Golden Plains Shire Environment Strategy 2011- 2016



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Additional copies of the Golden Plains Shire Environment Strategy 2011-2016 can be found on Council's website at www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au or by calling Councils Customer Service Centre on 5220 7111.

For more information about the Environment Strategy, contact Council's Natural Resources Officer on 5220 7111.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Environment Strategy

This Strategy consists of two parts.

- Part one explores the living environment and relates to aspects of the built world including water, amenity, economic land use and emissions management.
- Part two addresses the natural environment and discusses biodiversity, fire management, pest plants and animals and sustainable agriculture.

1.2. Background Documents

The background documents that informed the development of this Environment Strategy can be obtained on request from the Bannockburn Customer Service Centre or from Council's Website at www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au.

- Golden Plains Environment Survey Data Analysis Report
- Golden Plains Shire Environment Strategy Discussion Paper

1.3. Strategy Development

Golden Plains Shire developed its first Environment Strategy in 2003 and commenced development of this new strategy in 2007. A fundamental component of the development of the new strategy has been community engagement. By using a range of consultative methods, the community was involved in identifying the issues and developing solutions to problems to maximise the likelihood of the strategy addressing the needs and expectations of the Golden Plains Shire community. Community engagement methods included:

- Reference Group – a group of 15 residents from across the shire with a range of interests in natural resource management and sustainability.
- Steering Committee – a group of 13 representatives from a range of government and non-government organisations with involvement in natural resource management and sustainability.
- Environment Questionnaire – distributed to all residents, the questionnaire elicited strong response from the community.
- Community Plans – each of the 20 community plans were referenced to ensure all environmentally related issues identified by local communities throughout the municipality were considered.
- Council Environment Plans – environment strategies from a range of rural and metropolitan municipalities were referenced to scope the range of issues affecting similar municipalities as well as identify issues that may be 'on the horizon'.
- Environment Strategy Discussion Paper – widely distributed and promoted, the Discussion Paper aimed to stimulate discussion around the issues raised in the Environment Questionnaire.
- Draft Environment Strategy – setting Council's proposed directions, the Draft Strategy aimed to promote community discussion and response prior to adoption of the final strategy.

1.4. Aims

The Golden Plains Environment Strategy aims to focus on actions Council can undertake to make a difference locally and in doing so, contribute to addressing sustainability issues on a broader scale. These include:

- Promoting the sustainable use of natural resources (soil, land, water, air)
- Promoting the sustainability of Shire communities
- Advocating on behalf of the community for improved environmental and sustainability outcomes
- Providing leadership in sustainable planning and policy
- Promoting development of sustainable industry, business and agriculture
- Promoting and supporting sustainability initiatives in the community
- Guiding Council participation in Federal and State sustainability initiatives
- Promoting partnerships with other agencies and organisations
- Incorporating sustainability outcomes into Council projects, programs and service delivery
- Improving the sustainability of Council's operations and service delivery

While many of the issues facing Golden Plains Shire have wider and at times global implications, the focus of these aims are to identify actions Council can take to make a difference locally and in doing so, contribute to addressing issues on a broader scale.

1.5. Scope

Community consultation revealed many residents, visitors and landowners expect Council to undertake activities well beyond its area of responsibility and often beyond its capacity. Examples include enforcement of weed control on private land, management of rivers and streams, controls on building design and provision of substantial incentives for behavioural change. Often these activities are the responsibility of other Government departments or statutory bodies.

The Environment Strategy is focused on actions that will allow Council to have a direct and positive impact within the community and on the environment. This includes Council operations, legal responsibilities and issues on which Council can advocate on behalf of the community.

Sustainability - what is it?

Sustainability is a term widely used and abused in today's society. It can be applied to almost every facet of life on earth from local to a global scale and over a wide temporal scale. The term is highly loaded and its interpretation is often skewed by the reader's value set.

In simple terms, sustainability is the capacity to endure and can be applied to the environment, society and the economy.

For the purposes of this strategy, sustainability is used in the context of the Brundtland Commission of the United Nations:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
(United Nations General Assembly 1987)

Some issues or elements of issues fall across circle boundaries. For example; Council has concern about the impacts of climate change but has limited ability to directly and significantly impact on what is a global issue. While Council cannot fix climate change, it may influence State Government policies or programs through lobbying. It can act to control emissions from Council operations and support community climate change initiatives. This concept is depicted in the diagram below.

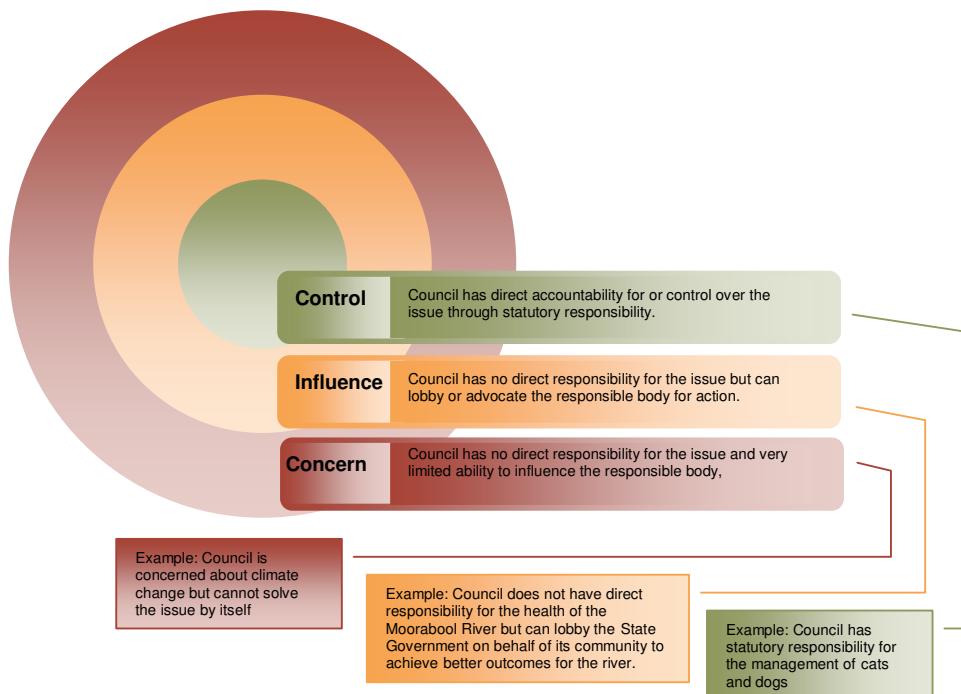


Figure 1: Diagram depicting the concept of the circle of control, influence and concern.

1.6. Legislation

Some 43 acts of State Parliament govern environmental management in Victoria (Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission 2009) in addition to various Acts of the Commonwealth Parliament.

Some forms of legislation such as the Planning and Environment Act (1987) compel Council to undertake certain functions such as the administration of planning laws and regulations. Other laws specify another government department or authority as the administrator of certain laws such as the Water Act (1989). These Acts of Parliament create the framework that compels Council to undertake certain functions, prevents Council from undertaking some activities and in other circumstances provides Council the option to act or not act on particular issues or in certain ways.

1.7. External Plans and Strategies

Various documents, frameworks, strategic plans, guidance papers, policy statements, reports and white papers provide direction for environmental management and sustainability. These lead to legislative change and drive investment in environmental outcomes at all levels of Government. The Golden Plains Environment Strategy cannot exist in isolation from these other documents. It is important that where possible, this strategy aligns with existing State and Federal Government strategies to maximise efficiencies, develop productive partnerships and provide access to funding. External plans and strategies considered in the development of this strategy include:

Federal Government Strategies

- National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biodiversity 1996
- National Water Quality Management Strategy 1994
- National Weeds Strategy 1997

State Government Strategies

- Victorian Biodiversity Strategy 1997 (Currently under review & out for public Submission)
- Victorian State of the Environment Report 2008
- Securing our Natural Future – A White Paper for land and biodiversity at a time of climate change 2009
- Victorian Native Vegetation Framework 2002
- Victorian Pest Management Framework 2002
- Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy 2003-2008
- Central Region Sustainable Water Use Strategy 2006
- Moving Forward (Provincial Statement)
- Victorian Climate Change White Paper

Regional Strategies

- G21 Regional Plan

In addition to the above there are position papers currently under development at State and Federal which will inform the Environment Strategy into the future.

1.8. Internal Plans and Strategies

Various plans and strategies have been developed within Golden Plains Shire to address specific community issues and improve service delivery. These documents may not have an environmental focus but often contain elements that align with issues identified within this Strategy and include:

- Domestic Wastewater Management Action Plan 2008
- Economic Development Strategy 2006-2012
- Golden Connections Community Transport Plan
- Golden Plains Shire Greenhouse Reduction Strategy 2004
- Municipal Fire Prevention Plan 2009
- Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2002
- Open Space Strategy 2005
- Paths and Trails Strategy 2005.
- Residential Land Supply Study and Future Use Structure Plan
- Roadside Management Plan
- Rural Land Use Strategy
- Securing Water for Industry Plan 2007-2012
- Stormwater Management Plan 2003
- Sustainable Water Use Strategy 2007

Elements within Township Community Plans also align with parts of the Environment Strategy.

1.9. Golden Plains Shire Context

1.9.1. Geography

Golden Plains Shire comprises 2,705 square kilometres and is located between Victoria's two largest regional cities, Geelong and Ballarat, and is within one hour of Melbourne and the surf coast.



1.9.2. Finance and Income Streams

In 2008-2009, Golden Plains Shire operated on a total income of \$23.30 million dollars with one third of this or \$7.77 million generated through rate revenue. Golden Plains Shire is the State's 13th lowest rating Council. The majority of the remaining \$15.53 million dollars is obtained through State and Federal government grants.

The Shire employs 139 full time equivalent staff with a staff to population ratio that is 14% below the state average.

1.9.3. Population and Growth

With 17,500 residents across some 52 communities including 16 townships, Golden Plains Shire is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria having experienced population growth of around 14% between 2001 and 2006. The population is highly decentralised with growth expected to continue to be strong in the coming years and is projected to reach 22000 by 2021.

Because Golden Plains Shire's population is distributed across a wide area in small communities, the majority of residents look to Ballarat and Geelong for schooling, employment and access to goods and services. The majority of land in Golden Plains Shire is in private ownership.

1.9.4. Council Partnerships

Council seeks partnerships with a range of government and non government organisations at the local, regional, State and Federal level. Examples include local Landcare Groups, non government organisations such as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), State authorities such as the Department of Primary Industries as well as Federal departments.

Golden Plains Shire is a member of G21, a regionally based alliance of local Councils and independent community and business organisations with a shared vision for a bright and sustainable future for the Geelong region and contributes to broader regional environmental objectives to advance Golden Plains Shire's environmental projects.

1.9.5. Resident Demographics

The Shire has a comparatively high percentage of families with two or more children and a smaller proportion of older residents than the State average.

Residential development is a strong driver in the development of townships and rural areas with the majority of growth occurring within 35km of Ballarat and Geelong reflecting the desire to live in a semi rural environment with affordable housing within commuting distance of employment opportunities. High reliance on privately owned vehicles for transport is reflective of the dispersed nature of communities throughout the Shire, the need to travel to access services and employment and demonstrated by ownership of more than one car per household being above the state average in Golden Plains Shire. The majority of Golden Plains Shire residents are employed outside the municipality.

1.9.6. Economic Context

Council's Economic Development Strategy 2007-12 aims to grow local business and jobs by improving the elements of economic productivity underpinning performance; labour, land, capital and technological knowledge.

The Shire's Economic Development Strategy does this by providing clear direction and actions in the following areas: water supply and infrastructure; industry co-operation leading to enhanced capability, skills and knowledge; improved co-ordination and promotion of tourism experiences; and the identification and development of land for employment.

The Shire's economy has an Economic Output of \$545M and a Gross Regional Product (GRP) of \$303M. The following sectors make a major contribution to economic output in the Shire:

Agriculture (\$173M), Manufacturing (\$109M), Construction (\$57M), Property and Business Services (\$48M), Retail Trade (\$31M), Wholesale Trade (\$21M) and Government Administration (\$21M), and Education (\$19M).

Agriculture is core to Golden Plains Shire's economy with its importance as a food producer evidenced by 47% of its agricultural produce being exported at a value of \$141M, which is equivalent to 52% of the G21 Region's total value of agricultural exports. Although the Shire's economy is relatively small in comparison to neighbouring municipalities, it adds significantly to the diversification of the industrial, commercial and tourism base of the wider regional economy. Golden Plains Shire's agriculture sector provides 765 jobs in the Shire, which is 33% of all local jobs and contributes \$92m to Gross Regional Product, which is 23% of the G21 region's total for the sector of \$402m.

1.9.7. Environmental Context

Flora

Golden Plains Shire is essentially comprised of two distinct environments or bioregions. The north and eastern areas of the Shire consists of the Central Victoria Uplands and are typified by very old soils that are poor in nutrients and dominated by open eucalypt forests.

The southern portion of the Shire is dominated by the Victorian Volcanic Plains which are comprised of extensive undulating basaltic plains with stony rises, lava flows, volcanic cones and old eruption points interspersed by shallow saline and freshwater lakes. The Victorian Volcanic Plains typically support treeless grasslands and grassy woodlands with scattered eucalypts. Due to their relatively young, nutrient rich soils, the plains have been extensively developed for grazing and cropping which has contributed to the gradual loss of native grasslands. Consequently, the plains grassland communities are amongst the most significant flora in the region and are now listed as nationally endangered. Some of the best examples of these communities are found on roadsides within Golden Plains Shire where their persistence is aided by regular fuel reduction burning.

Major threats to vegetation communities in the Shire include land use change from native pasture to cropping, subdivision for urban growth, illegal clearing, weed invasion, altered fire regimes and ongoing reduction in rainfall.

Fauna

Golden Plains Shire supports some critically endangered species including the Striped Legless Lizard which lives in plains grassland. Koalas are found in areas where their preferred browse trees of Manna Gum and Long Leaf Box occur. Continued removal and fragmentation of habitat is a threat to the ongoing sustainability of many species.

Rivers and Streams

While there are many creeks and streams in Golden Plains Shire, the Moorabool, Leigh and Woady Yaloak rivers comprise the three major river systems flowing through the municipality. The Moorabool River in the east has the dubious reputation as one of the most severely flow stressed waterways in Victoria (CCMA 2009a). The Leigh River flows through the centre of the Shire and is kept artificially flowing as it is an outlet for Ballarat's treated sewerage. Notably, water from the upper Moorabool River is diverted through Ballarat's water supply system, used, treated and released via the Yarrowee River into the Leigh River from where it flows into the Barwon River at Inverleigh. The Woady Yaloak River flows along the western edge of the Shire and feeds Lake Corangamite which is internationally recognised as a Ramsar wetland. In addition to limited flow regimes, many sections of streams and waterways support poor quality streamside zones often with a very high weed burden.

THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

2. WATER

2.1. Issues

- Water supply
- Water conservation
- Water re-use and recycling
- Wastewater management
- Stormwater management

Existing Golden Plains Shire Strategies

- Sustainable Water Use Plan 2007
- Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2008
- Stormwater Management Plan 2003
- Securing Water for Industry Plan 2007-12
- Small Town Sewerage Study

2.2. Objectives

- To secure ongoing water supply for residential, commercial, agricultural and environmental use in Golden Plains Shire
- To increase uptake of water saving initiatives by the community
- To incorporate sustainable water use design into future developments
- To minimise water use by Council operations
- To effectively manage waste water and storm water

2.3. Discussion

While water related issues are of concern to Golden Plains Shire residents, it is also an issue for which Council has a minimal ability to directly address. In the broader sense, most issues relating to supply, conservation, re-use and recycling are managed by the State Government and local water authorities. Therefore, Council's main function in addressing these issues is by advocating to the State Government and the water authorities on behalf of the community.

Council does have greater control over its use of water and this Strategy explores opportunities for Council to conserve water in its day to day operations. Council also has a core responsibility for wastewater management insofar as the use and maintenance of septic tanks throughout the shire is concerned.

2.4. Strategic Approaches

This strategy identifies opportunities for Council to:

- **Advocate** on behalf of the community in relation to water supply, conservation, use and re-use,
- **Promote** opportunities for the community to access and utilise alternative water supplies,
- **Encourage** uptake of water saving initiatives by the community
- **Act** to reduce its reliance on drinking quality water for non-potable purposes,
- **Encourage** new developments to apply sustainable water use design
- **Act** to sustainably manage storm water and waste water

2.5. Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators will be based on potable water consumption data across Council operational uses and community use.

- Record and evaluate potable water use data from a range of Council facilities and uses
- Record and evaluate potable water consumption data from a range of areas within the community.
- Evaluate water consumption data against resident population and Council Equivalent Full Time Staffing levels to ensure figures related to change are relevant and comparable over time.

2.6. Strategic Actions - Water

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
• Advocate for the sustainable use of surface and groundwater resources	Groundwater use	Advocacy	Executive Projects Environment Services Councillors
• Advocate for the development of sustainable town sewerage schemes	Water recycling	Advocacy	Executive Projects Environment Services Planning Councillors
• Advocate for the provision of recycled water from the Bannockburn Wastewater Treatment Plant for environmental, domestic, industrial, recreational and agricultural use	Water recycling	Advocacy	Executive Projects Environment Services Councillors
• Investigate avenues to improve the energy and water sustainability of new and existing housing	Water use	Policy	Executive Projects Planning Building Environment Services
• Seek funding to continue to develop alternative water sources to irrigate parks, ovals and public space	Water recycling	Planning	Recreation Community Projects
• Promote installation of septic systems capable of treating wastewater to a secondary standard suitable for domestic use	Water recycling	Promotion	Environmental Health
• Promote the responsible use of surface and groundwater resources	Groundwater use	Promotion	Executive Projects Environment Services
• Promote water saving initiatives through Council media	Water use	Promotion	Environment Services Executive Projects
• Promote the use of local indigenous plants as low water use plants by using these in Council gardens and streetscapes	Water use Biodiversity	Promotion	Planning Engineering
• Promote 'only rain down the drain' education programs to reduce the volume of litter reaching storm water drains	Stormwater management	Promotion	Community Development Environment Services
• Investigate controls on small dams on small properties (e.g. lifestyle properties)	River health Biodiversity	Policy	Planning Environment Services

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
• Install water tanks into any new or redeveloped Council facilities for on site use	Water use	Operational	Community Projects Recreation
• Install water efficient fittings and appliances when upgrading or building new Council facilities	Water use	Operational	Community Projects Recreation
• Encourage Water Sensitive Urban Design (stormwater traps, retention basins, drainage, litter traps) in new developments	Water use	Policy	Planning Engineering
• Sow low water use grass species when restoring or developing recreational playing surfaces	Water use	Operational	Recreation Engineering

3. AMENITY

3.1. Issues

- Township maintenance
- Unsightly properties
- Dogs and cats
- Litter
- Noise
- Paths and trails
- Open / recreation space
- Air quality

Existing Golden Plains Shire Strategies

- Paths and Trails Strategy
- Open Space Strategy 2005
- Recreation Strategy 2008-12
- Community Development Strategy 2000
- Bannockburn Community Infrastructure Development Plan

3.2. Objectives

- To create a living environment that offers residents an opportunity to enjoy a relaxed, comfortable rural atmosphere
- To increase the level of responsible pet ownership
- To minimise irresponsible use of recreational vehicles on private land
- To reduce the level of litter in public places
- To provide high quality public open space, paths and trails
- To provide well maintained township environs

3.3. Discussion

There are many amenity related issues addressed in this strategy for which Council has a primary responsibility, legislated function and/or capacity to respond.

Council has the legal capacity to respond to issues relating to domestic animals and litter. The frameworks for responding to noise and unsightly properties are more complex and tend to result in protracted resolutions. Nonetheless this Strategy identifies mechanisms to further improve Council's response to these issues.

The Strategy also builds on Council's existing commitment to the development and management of open and recreational space, paths and trails and township maintenance.

3.4. Strategic Approaches

This strategy identifies opportunities for Council to:

- **Act** under legislative authority to respond to dog, cat and litter related issues
- **Act** within its capacity to maintain township amenity
- **Encourage** responsible levels of noise emission and maintenance of unsightly properties
- **Plan** for paths, trails and open space to meet community requirements

3.5. Key Performance Indicators

Key elements identified as being of notable concern to the community that can be reasonably measured have been selected as KPIs.

- Collate data from Council's Customer Request Management System to evaluate changes in
 - Motorbike related complaints
 - Dog noise and dog attack related complaints
 - Builder's litter related complaints
- Dog registrations will also be used as an indicator of the levels of responsible pet ownership.

3.6. Strategic Actions - Amenity

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote neighbourly relationships through development of information sheets on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible pet ownership Recreational vehicle use Unsightly properties Dust, odour, smoke and noise 	Dogs and cats Noise Unsightly properties Air quality	Promotion	Environment Services Environmental Health Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote neighbourly relationships through Council media regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible pet ownership Recreational vehicle use Unsightly properties Dust, odour, smoke and noise 	Dogs and cats Noise Unsightly properties Air quality	Promotion	Environment Services Environmental Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist neighbours to resolve amenity related disputes (e.g. barking dogs, motorbikes, odour, unsightly properties) 	Noise	Operational	Environment Services Environmental Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan that responds to the low levels of pet registration and encourages the containment and control of dogs and cats 	Dogs and cats	Planning	Environment Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of Council owned and managed land to identify and categorise the land asset 	Open and recreational space	Operational	Corporate Services Environment Services Executive Projects Community Development Human Services Community Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categorise Council Open Space according to its primary purpose (Biodiversity Reserve, Recreation Reserve, Council Depot etc) and allocate a principal responsible management position 	Open and recreational space	Operational	Corporate Services Environment Services Executive Projects Community Development Human Services Community Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of leasing and licensing processes for Council owned or managed land 	Open and recreational space	Operational	Environment Services Corporate Services Recreation Engineering

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate a program of naming and sign posting Council's reserves 	Open and recreational space	Education	Executive Projects Recreation Environment Services Works
Council to support Clean Up Australia Day and other community waste reduction activities	Litter	Operational	Engineering
Develop and implement a Council policy on the use of recreational vehicles on private land	Noise	Policy	Environment Services
Develop and implement a Council policy on the management of unsightly properties	Unsightly properties	Policy	Environment Services
Provide access to cat traps for residents and community groups	Dogs and cats	Operational	Environment Services
Monitor building sites to ensure waste management complies with litter laws	Litter	Enforcement	Environment Services
Discourage rubbish dumping at identified hotspots	Litter	Enforcement	Environment Services Engineering
Provide and communicate collection points for mobile phones and small batteries	Litter	Operational	Environment Services
Develop a strategy for roadside litter collection	Litter	Operational	Environment Services Works

4. ECONOMIC LAND USE

4.1. Issues

- Residential development
- Land use change
- Industry and business
- Agriculture

4.2. Objectives

- To establish and maintain sustainable industries, businesses and agriculture
- To increase uptake of sustainable practices by existing industries, businesses and agriculture
- To minimise the environmental impacts of existing industries, businesses and agriculture
- To minimise the environmental impacts of urban growth and development
- To improve land use planning decisions based on land capability

4.3. Discussion

Council has a legislated role in planning and managing for land use change. Golden Plains Shire is continuing to experience significant growth and this is maintaining demand for land for a range of purposes, not the least of which is residential development. Currently 1.4% of the privately owned land in the Shire is occupied by house blocks or lifestyle properties. The majority is held in large, broad acre farm holdings. Fundamentally, the approach to the issues of land use and land use change will revolve around Council's implementation of the Planning Scheme in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Environment Act (1987). Care must be taken to ensure that areas of land with high environmental or agricultural value are not rezoned for inappropriate uses.

Council can best act to encourage sustainable industries, businesses and agriculture through its activities in the Economic Development sphere. Council has limited scope to restrict the development of industries and businesses based on their resource efficiency.

4.4. Strategic Approaches

This strategy identifies opportunities for Council to:

- **Act** in accordance with the law as it relates to the Golden Plains Planning Scheme
- **Promote** State and Federal Government sustainability initiatives for industry, businesses, residents and agriculture
- **Promote** sustainable urban growth and development
- **Encourage** development of sustainable industries, business and agriculture
- **Support** sustainable industries, business and agriculture.

4.5. Key Performance Indicators

The nature of this element of the strategy is such that obtaining or measuring any meaningful data to support a key performance indicator on Economic Land Use is not readily achievable.

Existing Golden Plains Shire Strategies

- Municipal Strategic Statement
- Economic Development Strategy 2006-2012
- Urban Design Frameworks/Township Structure Plans
- Intensive Animal Industries
- South East Land Use Review
- Residential Land Supply Study and Future Structure Plan review

4.6. Strategic Actions – Economic Land Use

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
• Incorporate environmental considerations into the Municipal Strategic Statement	Land use change	Planning	Planning
• Encourage and maintain sustainable industry, business and agriculture	Industry and business Agriculture	Operational	Executive Projects Planning
• Promote local industry and business participation in sustainability programs and adoption of sustainable practices	Industry and business	Promotion	Executive Projects Environment Services
• Develop and distribute a pre-purchase information pack and checklist to assist prospective vendors and purchasers of properties in the Shire	Land use change	Operational	Executive Projects Environment Services
• Incorporate conditions on Planning Permits for subdivisions that require protection of significant biodiversity and degraded land to be repaired (E.g. salinity, erosion, weeds)	Residential development	Policy	Planning Environment Services
• Consider land capability when considering Planning Scheme amendments to protect high value agricultural land and maintain access to earth resources	Land use change	Policy	Planning
• Manage development within and close to native bushland areas to minimise impact on native vegetation and reduce the impact of wildfire	Residential development	Policy	Planning

5. EMISSIONS MANAGEMENT

5.1. Issues

- Council emissions
- Community emissions
- Transport emissions
- Energy emissions
- Waste management

Existing Golden Plains Shire Strategies

Golden Connections Community Transport Plan
Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2009

5.2. Objectives

- To minimise Council's corporate greenhouse gas emissions
- To minimise community greenhouse gas emissions
- To sustainably manage community waste

5.3. Discussion

Emission management is a global issue which requires everyone to contribute towards minimising the effect of emissions on the environment. The primary focus of this Strategy is for Council to reduce its 'carbon footprint' by applying policies and practices that contribute to reducing Council's use of resources and subsequently its emissions output.

Council can assist the community to reduce its carbon footprint through sound planning and promoting sustainability initiatives.

Reductions in waste to landfill through good waste management practices (reduce, reuse, recycle) can lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

5.4. Strategic Approaches

This strategy identifies opportunities for Council to:

- **Act** to minimise its use of non-renewable resources
- **Act** to reduce its emissions output
- **Act** to improve waste management practices to minimise waste impacts
- **Promote** responsible resource use in the community
- **Promote** responsible waste management amongst residents
- **Support** the use and development of alternative sources of energy

5.5. Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators will be based on resource consumption data across Council operational uses and community use.

- Evaluate data on power, fuel and paper consumption at a number of Council premises.
- Evaluate community related power consumption data where it is available,
- Evaluate consumption data against population levels and Council EFT staff to ensure figures related to change are relevant and comparable over time.

5.6. Strategic Actions – Emissions Management

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with other agencies to promote a coordinated approach to carbon emission reduction objectives 	Council emissions	Partnerships	Executive Projects Environment Services Community Development Human Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign up to the Sustainability Accord 	Council emissions	Partnerships	Environment Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the development of Transition Town initiatives within the community 	Community emissions	Promotion	Community Development Environment Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a policy on energy efficient public lighting including support for the MAV 'Greenlight' campaign 	Council emissions	Policy	Engineering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the staff 'Sustainability Team' to guide and drive sustainability initiatives in Council operations 	Council emissions	Operational	Full Management Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote plastic bag free townships with the assistance of local community groups, industry and business 	Waste management	Promotion	Executive Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the development of a 'lighthouse' energy and water efficient subdivision within the Shire 	Community emissions	Advocate	Executive Projects Planning Engineering Councillors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain association with ICLEI and utilise its programs as they become available 	Council emissions	Operational	Environment Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage development of sustainable waste management technologies within the Shire (Biochar , large scale composting) 	Waste management	Promotion	Executive Projects Engineering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage local level energy generation (solar, wind, geothermal) projects 	Energy emissions	Promotion	Executive Projects Community Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the development of reticulated natural gas within the Shire 	Community emissions	Advocate	Executive Projects Councillors

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
• Encourage large scale alternative energy generation projects within the Shire	Energy emissions	Promotion	Executive Projects
• Investigate opportunities to offset fleet greenhouse emissions through Council implemented revegetation programs or existing structures such as Greenfleet	Council emissions	Planning	Engineering Environment Services
• Investigate sourcing a portion of Council's energy needs from accredited green energy sources	Council emissions	Policy	Environment Services Full Management Team
• Advocate for the development of a G21 based Greenhouse Alliance	Community emissions	Advocacy	Environment Services Councillors G21 Environment Pillar
• Investigate incorporation of alternative energy systems to provide a portion of Council's energy requirements	Council emissions	Planning	Community Projects
• Advocate for better financial returns to individuals and businesses that generate energy and contribute to the grid	Community emissions	Lobby	Executive Projects Councillors
• Support and source grants for community emissions reductions initiatives	Community emissions	Promotion	Environment Services Community Development
• Promote energy conservation/emission reduction programs through Council media	Community emissions	Promotion	Environment Services
• Provide information to residents on ways of reducing and off-setting their carbon footprint through Council media	Community emissions	Education	Environment Services
• Maintain Council's policy promoting the use of fuel efficient vehicles for Council's vehicle fleet	Council emissions	Policy	Engineering
• Develop a policy that incorporates fuel efficiency considerations in the purchase of Council plant and equipment	Council emissions	Policy	Engineering
• Install energy efficient fittings and appliances into any new or redeveloped Council facilities	Council emissions	Policy	Community Projects
• Develop and apply a 'Sustainable Design Scorecard' to all Council developments	Council emissions	Policy	Environment Services Community Projects
• Develop a Sustainable Purchasing Policy to guide purchasing decisions	Council emissions	Policy	Full Management Team Corporate Services

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a recording system and annual audit of Council greenhouse gas emissions 	Council emissions	Operational	Environment Services Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage staff to minimise resource consumption, maximise recycling opportunities and develop a resource use audit system to monitor paper, power, fuel and water consumption. 	Council emissions	Operational	Environment Services Finance Organisational Development

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

6. BIODIVERSITY

6.1. Issues

- Rivers and streams
- Wetlands
- Biodiversity
- Wildlife

6.2. Objectives

- To increase the quantity and quality of indigenous native vegetation in Golden Plains Shire
- To protect and enhance biodiversity on Council owned or managed land
- To promote habitat and biodiversity values on freehold land

6.3. Discussion

Council has a varying range of roles and responsibilities related to biodiversity management within the municipality. Council has greatest capacity for managing its operations to minimise damage to biodiversity assets and also to enhance biodiversity assets on land it manages and assist community groups doing likewise on community managed land. This capacity is reduced on land that is either privately owned or managed by another authority. In particular, Council has limited capacity to directly manage wetlands, rivers and streams as these often occur on private land or are managed by other government authorities.

6.4. Strategic Approaches

This strategy identifies opportunities for Council to:

- **Act** to minimise damage to biodiversity as a result of Council operations
- **Act** to enhance biodiversity on Council owned or managed land
- **Act** to minimise impacts on native vegetation through the application of the *Planning and Environment Act (1987)*
- **Support** programs to enhance biodiversity on private land
- **Promote** biodiversity enhancement on private land
- **Advocate** for the protection and enhancement of rivers and streams

6.5. Key Performance Indicators

Improvements to biodiversity can be slow to occur and often difficult to measure. Consequently, the biodiversity KPI will involve the prevention of damage to, or loss of, biodiversity from Council operations.

- Evaluate data from website hits to provide an indicator of the level of use of biodiversity information within the community and subsequent improvement in biodiversity management.
- Conduct an audit process to determine the level of compliance with standard operating procedures for preventing damage to native vegetation from road works and compliance with native vegetation management agreements, policies and regulations.

6.6. Strategic Actions - Biodiversity

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
• Conduct a biodiversity audit of Council owned and managed land	Biodiversity	Planning	Environment Services
• Undertake audit of road construction and maintenance activities to ensure they follow the Standard Operating Procedure for protection of native vegetation during and after road works	Biodiversity	Operational	Environment Services Engineering
• Conduct biennial roadside biodiversity management training for outdoor staff and contractors	Biodiversity	Operational	Environment Services Engineering Works
• Advocate for improved flows in the Moorabool River and other waterways in the Shire	Rivers and streams	Advocacy	Executive Projects Councillors
• Conduct detailed biodiversity mapping of Golden Plains Shire roadsides and incorporate into Council's Geographic Information System	Biodiversity	Planning	Environment Services
• Review significant roadside vegetation signage to ensure it accurately reflects on ground occurrence of significant native vegetation	Biodiversity	Planning	Environment Services
• Seek funding to implement actions for biodiversity enhancement on high conservation significance roadsides and properties	Biodiversity	Planning	Environment Services
• Manage grazing on roadsides with High or Very High Conservation Significance to promote biodiversity	Biodiversity	Policy	Environment Services
• Develop Management Plans for Council properties with significant biodiversity values	Biodiversity	Planning	Environment Services
• Undertake early assessment of biodiversity values of Council land investments and developments (roads, buildings, subdivisions, tourism developments, infrastructure upgrades or developments)	Biodiversity	Planning	Executive Projects Planning Environment Services Engineering Community Projects
• Incorporate waterway frontages into Council ownership at time of subdivision	Rivers and streams	Planning	Planning
• Investigate a rate rebate for land subject to a conservation covenant	Biodiversity	Planning	Customer Services & Rates Environment Services

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
• Develop a Geographic Information System based significant tree register derived from the National Trust Tree Register	Biodiversity	Planning	Environment Services Planning
• Develop a Geographic Information System based significant biosite register derived from DSE biosite maps	Biodiversity	Planning	Environment Services
• Provide strategic interpretive signage to promote the biodiversity values of Golden Plains Shire	Biodiversity	Education	Environment Services
• Support existing service providers to conduct public workshops on environmental management	Biodiversity	Partnerships	Environment Services
• Develop and distribute information to new residents to explain the rights, opportunities and obligations that accompany land ownership in Golden Plains Shire (tree removal, weed control, fire prevention)	Biodiversity	Education	Executive Projects Environment Services
• Provide support to schools for events such as National School Tree Day, Arbor Week and World Environment Day	Biodiversity	Partnerships	Environment Services Community Development
• Support local community groups involved in biodiversity enhancement projects	Biodiversity	Partnerships	Environment Services
• Promote biodiversity values and programs such as Land for Wildlife and Trust for Nature through Council media	Biodiversity	Education	Environment Services
• Promote local conservation groups and initiatives through Council media	Biodiversity	Promotion	Environment Services
• Investigate opportunities to establish firewood plantations to provide residents with an alternative to extracting firewood from forests	Biodiversity	Planning	Executive Projects Environment Services
• Promote and encourage participation in conservation incentive schemes implemented by other organisations through Council media	Biodiversity	Promotion	Environment Services
• Establish revegetation guidelines for properties adjoining parks and reserves to minimise the risk of weed invasion	Biodiversity	Education	Environment Services
• Establish a policy on Council's response to illegal clearing of native vegetation	Biodiversity	Policy	Planning Environment Services
• Establish a process for auditing and enforcing planning permits that involved native vegetation removal	Biodiversity	Policy	Planning Environment Services

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
• Investigate an Environmental Significance Overlay for standing and ephemeral wetlands	Wetlands	Planning	Planning Environment Services
• Investigate adoption of a Planning Overlay to protect Koala habitat	Biodiversity	Planning	Planning
• Review and update the Vegetation Protection Overlay in the Golden Plains Planning Scheme	Biodiversity	Planning	Planning Environment Services
• Review and update the Environmental Significance Overlay(s) in the Golden Plains Planning Scheme	Biodiversity	Planning	Planning Environment Services
• Work with other managers of environmentally significant land to enhance biodiversity values	Biodiversity	Partnerships	Environment Services

7. FIRE

7.1. Issues

- Wildfire
- Ecological burning

Existing Golden Plains Shire Strategies

Municipal Emergency Management Plan
Municipal Fire Prevention Plan

7.2. Objectives

- To reduce the impact of wildfire on communities
- To improve the preparedness of communities for wildfire and post fire recovery
- To improve management of native vegetation using fire

7.3. Discussion

Council's fundamental role in wildfire management revolves around planning for wildfire events and contributing to wider efforts to minimise the likelihood and consequence of wildfire. These include meeting legal obligations to have a Municipal Fire Prevention Plan, and includes managing fuel loads and associated fire risk on private land, roadsides and Council managed land. It also includes supporting the CFA to implement fuel reduction burns on strategic firebreak roads and using fire to both reduce fuel loads and enhance biodiversity.

Council is moving towards adopting the Integrated Fire Management Planning model which involves all agencies and authorities with fire management responsibilities and incorporates the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery phases of emergency management.

7.4. Strategic Approaches

This strategy identifies opportunities for Council to:

- **Act** to manage fuel loads on Council owned or managed property
- **Act** to reduce fire hazards on privately owned land
- **Encourage** the use of fire for ecological advantage
- **Support** the use of fire for fuel reduction

7.5. Key Performance Indicators

The ultimate indicator of the success of fire prevention activities is the absence of fire and minimising the impact of fire on communities. However, preparedness is considered an indicator of the level of success attained from the actions in this strategy.

- Evaluate data from website hits to provide an indicator of the level of use of fire related information within the community.
- Evaluate data on the level of community involvement in Community Fireguard and Fire Ready Victoria programs
- Evaluate the level of compliance with Fire Prevention Notices.

7.6. Strategic Actions - Fire

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
• Review Municipal Strategic Firebreaks and their management in consultation with CFA	Wildfire	Planning	Environment Services
• Develop a rolling Roadside Fuel Reduction Burning Plan for Municipal Strategic Fire Breaks	Wildfire	Planning	Environment Services
• Maintain and improve natural ecosystems on Council owned or managed land; including roadsides, through the application of appropriate burning regimes	Ecological burning	Operational	Environment Services Works
• Liaise with DSE, CMA, CFA, neighbouring landholders and research bodies to develop burning regimes to optimise roadside fuel load management and biodiversity outcomes	Ecological burning	Partnerships	Environment Services
• Incorporate fuel reduction burning as part of a biodiversity enhancement program for forest and grassland areas under Council management	Ecological burning	Operational	Environment Services
• Educate residents about fire preparedness and appropriate fuel management in line with CFA guidelines and the Native Vegetation Management Framework	Wildfire	Education	Environment Services
• Develop a Communications Strategy for relaying fire related information to new and existing residents including signage of 'no through roads'.	Wildfire	Education	Environment Services Executive Projects
• Establish a process for auditing and enforcing planning permit applications that have enacted the provisions of the Wildfire Management Overlay	Wildfire	Policy	Planning Environment Services
• Develop strengthened partnerships between Council, DSE and CFA to encourage controlled burning of Council reserves	Ecological burning	Partnerships	Environment Services

8. PEST PLANTS AND ANIMALS

8.1. Issues

- Pest plants
- Pest animals

Existing Golden Plains Shire Strategies

Roadside Weed Management Plan

8.2. Objectives

- To reduce the spread and impact of pest plants and animals on and from Council owned or managed land
- To increase landholder action on pest plants and animals
- To prevent the establishment of new or emerging pest plants on Council land

8.3. Discussion

Pest plants and animals remain a concern to residents in Golden Plains Shire and Council has a sound commitment to managing pest plants and animals on Council properties. Currently, the Minister for Agriculture is conducting a review to determine the legal responsibility for pest plants and animals on roadsides and Council will respond to the Minister's decision when it is made.

Council has no legal authority or capacity to undertake enforcement activities in relation to pest plants and animals on private land. As a landholder, Council has responsibility is legally required to control declared pest plants and animals that occur on Council owned or managed land.

8.4. Strategic Approaches

This strategy identifies opportunities for Council to:

- **Act** to control declared pest plants and animals on Council land
- **Support** the control of pest plants and animals on private land by providing information to the community
- **Advocate** to State government on behalf of residents for increased pest plant and animal control on Crown land.
- **Advocate** to State government on behalf of residents for increased pest plant and animal enforcement activity on private land.

8.5. Key Performance Indicators

KPIs for pest plants and animals will endeavour to demonstrate the effectiveness of weed spread prevention and weed control activities.

- Compare Roadside Weed Assessment mapping in 2010 with Roadside Weed Assessment mapping in 2015.
- Evaluate annual audits of roadside weed incursion to ascertain the contribution of strategy actions on minimising the introduction of weeds to sites as a result of road works.
- Evaluate the number and nature of weed related complaints received by Council using the Customer Request Management System and a phone logging system.

8.6. Strategic Actions – Pest Plants and Animals

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
• Advocate to the State Government for an increase in pest plant and animal control compliance activities on private land within the Shire	Pest plants Pest animals	Lobby	Environment Services Councillors
• Advocate to the State Government for an increase in pest plant and animal control on Crown Land	Pest plants Pest animals	Lobby	Environment Services Councillors
• Develop a Pest Plant and Animal Management Strategy for land owned or managed by Golden Plains Shire and establish a coordinated implementation program	Pest plants Pest animals	Planning	Environment Services
• Work with DSE and research organisations to develop effective methods of controlling invasive plant species in native grasslands	Pest plants	Partnerships	Environment Services
• Develop a Stack Site Management Standard Operating Procedure	Pest plants	Policy	Engineering Works Environment Services
• Develop a Weed Hygiene Standard Operating Procedure for Council owned and operated plant and equipment	Pest plants	Policy	Engineering Works Environment Services
• Undertake weed mapping program of priority Regionally Controlled, Regionally Prohibited and priority Environmental weeds on roadsides	Pest plants	Planning	Environment Services
• Systematically document land management information on weeds and rabbits and incorporate into Geographic Information System mapping	Pest plants Pest animals	Operational	Environment Services Corporate Services
• Seek funding to implement two part time Land Management Facilitator positions to improve weed control and land management within township and peri-urban boundaries	Pest plants Pest animals	Planning	Environment Services
• Review and renew the Council Weedinfo brochure	Pest plants Pest animals	Education	Environment Services
• Promote pest plant and animal control through Council media	Pest plants Pest animals	Education	Environment Services
• Promote Council Environmental Information Sheets through Council media	Pest plants Pest animals	Education	Environment Services
• Provide new residents with an Environment Services Information Guide	Pest plants Pest animals	Education	Environment Services

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote State Government pest plant and animal control programs (e.g. Weebuster week) through Council media 	Pest plants Pest animals	Promotion	Environment Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the development of a Weed Hygiene Policy for Council contractors 	Pest plants	Policy	Environment Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and apply documentation to all lessees to clarify terms, conditions and expectations associated with managing pest plants and animals while occupying Council properties 	Pest plants Pest animals	Policy	Recreation Corporate Services Environment Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report occurrences of new or emerging weeds (e.g. Mexican Feather Grass) on private land or public land to DPI 	Pest plants	Partnerships	Environment Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to control weeds on Council owned or managed land 	Pest plants	Operational	Environment Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue annual rabbit harbour management on Council owned or managed land 	Pest animals	Operational	Environment Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue annual inspections for pest plants and animals on Council owned or managed land 	Pest plants Pest animals	Operational	Environment Services

9. SUSTAINABLE FARMING

9.1. Issues

- Landcare
- Revegetation
- Sustainable farming
- Salinity and soil health

Existing Golden Plains Shire Strategies

Rural Land Use Strategy

9.2. Objectives

- To encourage greater Landcare membership across the Shire
- To support Landcare programs and projects across the Shire
- To ensure land use decisions take into account salinity and soil health issues
- To manage Council land to minimise the affects of salinity and avoid soil health problems

9.3. Discussion

Farming contributes significantly to Golden Plains Shire's economy and social fabric and accounts for 85% of land use and consequently farming is an essential element of Golden Plains Shire. It is recognised that a strong and vibrant farming community contributes to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Golden Plains Shire.

Council contributes to sustainable farming by advocating for drought assistance, providing infrastructure and supporting Landcare. Other government authorities such as the Department of Primary Industries are more closely aligned with protecting and enhancing farmland by administering salinity and soil health programs, enforcing pest management laws and managing emerging pests.

9.4. Strategic Approaches

This strategy identifies opportunities for Council to:

- **Act** to support Landcare through provision of funding, information and project partnership.
- **Support** the farming community through the provision of information
- **Advocate** for State and Federal support for farming communities
- **Encourage** the establishment of local native vegetation in the landscape

9.5. Key Performance Indicators

The nature of this element of the strategy is such that obtaining or measuring any meaningful data to support a key performance indicator for Sustainable Farming is not readily achievable.

9.6. Strategic Actions – Sustainable Farming

Action	Issue	Action Type	Responsibility
• Advocate on changes to environmental legislation that may affect sustainable farming practices	Sustainable Farming	Lobby	Environment Services Councillors
• Advocate on behalf of local Landcare groups for increased funding for co-ordinators and on ground works	Landcare	Lobby	Environment Services Councillors
• Support the establishment of local Farmers Markets	Sustainable Farming	Partnerships	Executive Projects
• Support local Landcare networks and groups	Landcare	Partnerships	Environment Services Community Development
• Advocate for adequate Federal funding for CPI Indexed Stewardship schemes that would allow adequate compensation to landholders for land lost to environmental improvements	Sustainable Farming	Lobby	Councillors
• Seek opportunities to coordinate works with the Woady Yaloak Catchment Project, Leigh Catchment Group and the Geelong Landcare Network	Landcare	Partnerships	Environment Services
• Seek opportunities and partnerships to provide continued financial support to Landcare	Landcare	Partnerships	Environment Services
• Promote participation in Landcare through Council media	Landcare	Promotion	Environment Services
• Provide annual incentive funding to schools for indigenous revegetation projects as part of National Tree Day	Revegetation	Education	Environment Services
• Promote revegetation with indigenous species through Council media	Revegetation	Operational	Environment Services
• Provide free indigenous seedlings through local nurseries to landholders	Revegetation	Operational	Environment Services

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

10.1. Environment Strategy Steering Committee

The Environment Strategy Steering Committee was established to oversee the process of the development of the Strategy. The Committee consisted of members drawn from a diversity of backgrounds and represented a range of government and non-government organisations.

Cr Jenny Blake	Mayor, Councillor, Golden Plains Shire
Cr Kevin Knight	Councillor, Golden Plains Shire
Cr Helena Kirby	Councillor, Golden Plains Shire – replaced Cr Jenny Jones in 2008
Cr David Cotsell	Councillor, Golden Plains Shire
Cr Jenny Jones	Councillor, Golden Plains Shire – replaced by Cr Helena Kirby in 2008
Ralph Cotter	Sustainable Landscapes, Department of Primary Industries
Keith Hawkins	Batesford/Fyansford/Stonehaven Landcare Group
Craig Whiteford	Senior Manager Biodiversity, Department of Sustainability & Environment
Les Rowe	President, Maude Landcare Group
Michael Rowe	Chairman, Woady Yaloak Catchment Group
Leigh Dennis	Team Leader, Partnerships, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
Jenny Sedgwick	Executive Committee Member, Leigh Catchment Group
Cam Nicholson	Woady Yaloak Project Manager, Woady Yaloak Catchment Group

10.2. Environment Strategy Reference Group

The Environment Strategy Reference Group was established to provide advice to Council and the Steering Committee to ensure the development of the Environment Strategy encompassed all the issues relevant to the Shire.

Geoff Morgan	Inverleigh, Primary Producer, CFA volunteer
Alice Knight	Linton, Primary Producer, Woady Yaloak Catchment Project, CFA volunteer
Peter Moulton	Trust for Nature
Hedley Thomson	Executive Officer - Ballarat Environment Network (BEN)
Peter Stray	Maude, Primary Producer, CFA volunteer
Craig Clutterbuck	Landcare
Reg Abrahams	Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
Kate McEachern	Wingeel, Primary Producer, Landcare
Steve Murphy	Teesdale, Small Business, Author, Conservationist
Heidi Radavics	Ross Creek, Landcare, Conservationist
David Coutts	Linton, Birds Australia, Conservationist
Cameron Steele	Inverleigh, People for a Living Moorabool (PALM), Conservationist
Doug Gadd	Bannockburn, Business, Bannockburn Chamber of Commerce
Lynn Parkinson	Meredith/Wingeel, Primary Producer
Lisa Virgona	Gheringhap, Primary Producer, Youth

11. REFERENCES

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<http://www.ccma.vic.gov.au/news/Mooraboolassessment.html>

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STRATEGY SUMMARY

THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

CONCERN	ISSUES	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES	ACTIONS
WATER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water supply • Water conservation • Water re-use and recycling • Wastewater management • Stormwater management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To secure ongoing water supply for residential, commercial, agricultural and environmental use in Golden Plains Shire • To increase uptake of water saving initiatives by the community • To incorporate sustainable water use design into future developments • To minimise water use by Council operations • To effectively manage waste water and storm water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate on behalf of the community in relation to water supply, conservation, use and re-use, • Promote opportunities for the community to access and utilise alternative water supplies, • Encourage uptake of water saving initiatives by the community • Act to reduce its reliance on drinking quality water for non-potable purposes, • Encourage new developments to apply sustainable water use design • Act to sustainably manage storm water and waste water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the sustainable use of surface and groundwater resources • Advocate for the development of sustainable town sewerage schemes • Advocate for the provision of recycled water from the Bannockburn Wastewater Treatment Plant for environmental, domestic, industrial, recreational and agricultural use • Investigate avenues to improve the energy and water sustainability of new and existing housing • Seek funding to continue to develop alternative water sources to irrigate parks, ovals and public space • Promote installation of septic systems capable of treating wastewater to a secondary standard suitable for domestic use • Promote the responsible use of surface and groundwater resources • Promote water saving initiatives through Council media • Promote the use of local indigenous plants as low water use plants by using these in Council gardens and streetscapes • Promote 'only rain down the drain' education programs to reduce the volume of litter reaching storm water drains • Investigate controls on small dams on small properties (e.g. lifestyle properties) • Install water tanks into any new or redeveloped Council facilities for on site use • Install water efficient fittings and appliances when upgrading or building new Council facilities • Encourage Water Sensitive Urban Design (stormwater traps, retention basins, drainage, litter traps) in all new developments as required • Sow low water use grass species when restoring or developing recreational playing surfaces
CONCERN	ISSUES	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES	ACTIONS
AMENITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Township maintenance • Unsightly properties • Dogs and cats • Litter • Noise • Paths and trails • Open / recreation space • Air quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a living environment that offers residents an opportunity to enjoy a relaxed, comfortable rural atmosphere • To increase the level of responsible pet ownership • To prevent irresponsible use of recreational vehicles on private land • To reduce the level of litter in public places • To provide high quality public open space, paths and trails • To provide well maintained township environs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act under legislative authority to respond to dog, cat and litter related issues • Act within its capacity to maintain township amenity • Encourage responsible levels of noise emission and maintenance of unsightly properties • Plan for paths, trails and open space to meet community requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote neighbourly relationships through development of information sheets on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Responsible pet ownership ◦ Recreational vehicle use ◦ Unsightly properties ◦ Dust, odour, smoke and noise • Promote neighbourly relationships through Council media regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Responsible pet ownership ◦ Recreational vehicle use ◦ Unsightly properties ◦ Dust, odour, smoke and noise • Assist neighbours to resolve amenity related disputes (e.g. barking dogs, motorbikes, odour, unsightly properties) • Develop and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan that responds to the low levels of pet registration and encourages the containment and control of dogs and cats • Conduct a review of Council owned and managed land to identify and categorise the land asset • Categorise Council Open Space according to its primary purpose (Biodiversity Reserve, Recreation Reserve, Council Depot etc) and allocate a principal responsible management position • Conduct a review of leasing and licencing processes for Council owned or managed land • Initiate a program of naming and sign posting Council's reserves • Council to support Clean Up Australia Day and other community waste reduction/collection activities • Develop and implement a Council policy on the use of recreational vehicles on private land • Develop and implement a Council policy on the management of unsightly properties • Provide access to cat traps for residents and community groups • Monitor building sites to ensure waste management complies with litter laws • Discourage rubbish dumping at identified hotspots • Provide and communicate collection points for mobile phones and small batteries • Develop a strategy for roadside litter collection

THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

CONCERN	ISSUES	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES	ACTIONS
ECONOMIC LAND USE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential development • Land use change • Industry and business • Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish and maintain sustainable industries, businesses and agriculture • To increase uptake of sustainable practices by existing industries, businesses and agriculture • To minimise the environmental impacts of existing industries, businesses and agriculture • To minimise the environmental impacts of urban growth and development • To improve land use planning decisions based on land capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act in accordance with the law as it relates to the Golden Plains Planning Scheme • Promote State and Federal Government sustainability initiatives for industry, businesses, residents and agriculture • Promote sustainable urban growth and development • Encourage development of sustainable industries, business and agriculture • Support sustainable industries, business and agriculture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate environmental considerations into the Municipal Strategic Statement • Encourage and maintain sustainable industry, business and agriculture • Promote local industry and business participation in sustainability programs and adoption of sustainable practices • Develop and distribute a pre-purchase information pack and checklist to assist prospective vendors and purchasers of properties in the Shire • Incorporate conditions on Planning Permits for subdivisions that require protection of significant biodiversity and degraded land to be repaired (E.g. salinity, erosion, weeds) • Consider land capability when considering Planning Scheme amendments to protect high value agricultural land and maintain access to earth resources • Manage development within and close to native bushland areas to minimise impact on native vegetation and reduce the impact of wildfire
CONCERN	ISSUES	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES	ACTIONS
EMISSIONS MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council emissions • Community emissions • Transport emissions • Energy emissions • Waste management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To minimise Council's corporate greenhouse gas emissions • To minimise community greenhouse gas emissions • To sustainably manage community waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act to minimise its use of non-renewable resources • Act to reduce its emissions output • Act to improve waste management practices to minimise waste impacts • Promote responsible resource use in the community • Promote responsible waste management amongst residents • Support the use and development of alternative sources of energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with other agencies to promote a coordinated approach to carbon emission reduction objectives • Sign up to the Sustainability Accord • Promote the development of Transition Town initiatives within the community • Develop a policy on energy efficient public lighting including support for the MAV 'Greenlight' campaign • Support the staff 'Sustainability Team' to guide and drive sustainability initiatives in Council operations • Promote plastic bag free townships with the assistance of local community groups, industry and business • Advocate for the development of a 'lighthouse' energy and water efficient subdivision within the Shire • Maintain association with ICLEI and utilise its programs as they become available • Encourage development of sustainable waste management technologies within the Shire (Biochar , large scale composting) • Encourage local level energy generation (solar, wind, geothermal) projects • Advocate for the development of reticulated natural gas within the Shire. • Encourage large scale alternative energy generation projects within the Shire • Investigate opportunities to offset fleet greenhouse emissions through Council implemented revegetation programs or existing structures such as Greenfleet • Investigate sourcing a portion of Council's energy needs from accredited green energy sources • Advocate for the development of a G21 based Greenhouse Alliance • Investigate incorporation of alternative energy systems to provide a proportion of Council's energy requirements • Advocate for better financial returns to individuals and businesses that generate energy and contribute to the grid • Support and source grants for community emissions reductions initiatives • Promote energy conservation/emission reduction programs through Council media • Provide information to residents on ways of reducing and off-setting their carbon footprint through Council media • Maintain Council's policy promoting the use of fuel efficient vehicles for Council's vehicle fleet. • Develop a policy that incorporates fuel efficiency considerations in the purchase of Council plant and equipment • Install energy efficient fittings and appliances into any new or redeveloped Council facilities • Develop and apply a 'Sustainable Design Scorecard' to all Council developments. • Develop a Sustainable Purchasing Policy to guide purchasing decisions • Establish a recording system and annual audit of Council greenhouse gas emissions • Encourage staff to minimise resource consumption, maximise recycling opportunities and develop a resource use audit system to monitor paper, power, fuel and water consumption.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

CONCERN	ISSUES	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES	ACTIONS
BIODIVERSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers and streams • Wetlands • Biodiversity • Wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the quantity and quality of native vegetation in Golden Plains Shire • To protect and enhance biodiversity on Council owned or managed land • To promote habitat and biodiversity values on freehold land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act to minimise damage to biodiversity as a result of Council operations • Act to enhance biodiversity on Council owned or managed land • Act to minimise impacts on native vegetation through the application of the <i>Planning and Environment Act (1987)</i> • Support programs to enhance biodiversity on private land • Promote biodiversity enhancement on private land • Advocate for the protection and enhancement of rivers and streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a biodiversity audit of Council owned and managed land • Undertake audit of road construction and maintenance activities to ensure they follow the Standard Operating Procedure for protection of native vegetation during and after road works • Conduct biennial roadside biodiversity management training for outdoor staff and contractors • Advocate for improved flows in the Moorabool River and other waterways in the Shire • Conduct detailed biodiversity mapping of Golden Plains Shire roadsides and incorporate into Council's Geographic Information System • Review significant roadside vegetation signage to ensure it accurately reflects on ground occurrence of significant native vegetation • Seek funding to implement actions for biodiversity enhancement on high conservation significance roadsides and properties • Manage grazing on roadsides with High or Very High Conservation Significance to promote biodiversity • Develop Management Plans for Council properties with significant biodiversity values • Undertake early assessment of biodiversity values of Council land investments and developments (roads, buildings, subdivisions, tourism developments, infrastructure upgrades or developments) • Incorporate waterway frontages into Council ownership at time of subdivision • Investigate a rate rebate for land subject to a conservation covenant • Develop a GIS based significant tree register derived from the National Trust Tree Register • Develop a GIS based significant biosite register derived from DSE biosite maps • Provide strategic interpretive signage to promote the biodiversity values of Golden Plains Shire • Support existing service providers to conduct public workshops on environmental management • Develop and distribute information to new residents to explain the rights, opportunities and obligations that accompany land ownership in Golden Plains Shire (tree removal, weed control, fire prevention) • Provide support to schools for events such as National School Tree Day, Arbor Week and World Environment Day • Support local community groups involved in biodiversity enhancement projects • Promote biodiversity values and programs such as Land for Wildlife and Trust for Nature through Council media • Promote local conservation groups and initiatives through Council media • Investigate opportunities to establish firewood plantations to provide residents with an alternative to extracting firewood from forests • Promote and encourage participation in conservation incentive schemes implemented by other organisations through Council media • Establish revegetation guidelines for properties adjoining parks and reserves to minimise the risk of weed invasion • Establish a policy on Council's response to illegal clearing of native vegetation • Establish a process for auditing and enforcing planning permits that involved native vegetation removal • Investigate an Environmental Significance Overlay for standing and ephemeral wetlands • Investigate adoption of a Planning Overlay to protect Koala habitat • Review and update the Vegetation Protection Overlay in the Golden Plains Planning Scheme • Review and update the Environmental Significance Overlay(s) in the Golden Plains Planning Scheme • Work with other managers of environmentally significant land to enhance biodiversity values
CONCERN	ISSUES	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES	ACTIONS
FIRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildfire • Ecological burning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce the impact of wildfire on communities • To improve the preparedness of communities for wildfire and post fire recovery • To improve management of native vegetation using fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act to manage fuel loads on Council owned or managed property • Act to reduce fire hazards on privately owned land • Encourage the use of fire for ecological advantage • Support the use of fire for fuel reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Municipal Strategic Firebreaks and their management in consultation with CFA • Develop a rolling Roadside Fuel Reduction Burning Plan for Municipal Strategic Fire Breaks • Maintain and improve natural ecosystems on Council owned or managed land; including roadsides, through the application of appropriate burning regimes • Liaise with DSE, CMA, CFA, neighbouring landholders and research bodies to develop burning regimes to optimise roadside fuel load management and biodiversity outcomes • Incorporate fuel reduction burning as part of a biodiversity enhancement program for forest and grassland areas under Council management • Educate residents about fire preparedness and appropriate fuel management in line with CFA guidelines and the Native Vegetation Management Framework • Develop a Communications Strategy for relaying fire related information to new and existing residents including signage of 'no through roads'. • Establish a process for auditing and enforcing planning permit applications that have enacted the provisions of the Wildfire Management Overlay • Develop strengthened partnerships between Council, DSE and CFA to encourage controlled burning of local reserves

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

CONCERN	ISSUES	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES	ACTIONS
PEST PLANTS & ANIMALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pest plants • Pest animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce the spread and impact of pest plants and animals on and from Council owned or managed land • To increase landholder action on pest plants and animals • To prevent the establishment of new or emerging pest plants on Council land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act to control declared pest plants and rabbits on Council land • Support the control of pest plants and animals on private land by providing information to the community • Advocate to State government on behalf of residents for increased pest plant and animal control on Crown land. • Advocate to State government on behalf of residents for increased pest plant and animal enforcement activity on private land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate to the State Government for an increase in pest plant and animal control compliance activities on private land within the Shire • Advocate to the State Government for an increase in pest plant and animal control on Crown Land • Develop a Pest Plant and Animal Management Strategy for land owned or managed by Golden Plains Shire and establish a coordinated implementation program • Work with DSE and research organisations to develop effective methods of controlling invasive plant species in native grasslands • Develop a stack site management Standard Operating Procedure • Develop a Weed Hygiene Standard Operating Procedure for Council owned and operated plant and equipment • Undertake weed mapping program of priority Regionally Controlled, Regionally Prohibited and priority Environmental weeds on roadsides • Systematically document land management information on weeds and rabbits and incorporate in to Geographic Information System mapping • Seek funding to implement two part time Land Management Facilitator positions to improve weed control and land management within township and peri-urban boundaries • Review and renew the Council Weedinfo brochure • Promote pest plant and animal control through Council media • Promote Council Environmental Information Sheets through Council media • Provide new residents with an Environment Services Information Guide • Promote State Government pest plant and animal control programs (e.g. Weedbuster week) through Council media • Investigate the development of a Weed Hygiene Policy for Council contractors • Establish and apply documentation to all lessees to clarify terms, conditions and expectations associated with managing pest plants and animals while occupying Council properties • Report occurrences of new or emerging weeds (e.g. Mexican Feather Grass) on private land or public land to DPI • Continue to control weeds on Council owned or managed land • Continue annual rabbit harbour management on Council owned or managed land • Continue annual inspections for pest plants and animals on Council owned or managed land
SUSTAINABLE FARMING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landcare • Revegetation • Sustainable farming • Salinity and soil health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage greater Landcare membership across the Shire • To support Landcare programs and projects across the Shire • To ensure land use decisions take into account salinity and soil health issues • To manage Council land to minimise the affects of salinity and avoid soil health problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act to support Landcare through provision of funding, information and project partnership. • Support the farming community through the provision of information • Advocate for State and Federal support for farming communities • Encourage the establishment of local native vegetation in the landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate on changes to environmental legislation that may affect sustainable farming practices • Advocate on behalf of local Landcare groups for increased funding for co-ordinators and on ground works • Support the establishment of local Farmers Markets • Support local Landcare networks and groups • Advocate for adequate Federal funding for CPI Indexed Stewardship schemes that would allow adequate compensation to landholders for land lost to environmental improvements • Seek opportunities to coordinate works with the Woady Yaloak Catchment Project, Leigh Catchment Group and the Geelong Landcare Network • Seek opportunities and partnerships to provide continued financial support to Landcare • Promote participation in Landcare through Council media • Provide annual incentive funding to schools for indigenous revegetation projects as part of National Tree Day • Promote revegetation with indigenous species through Council media • Provide free indigenous seedlings through local nurseries to landholders