

Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land – The study area

Fact sheet 2

What are green wedges?

Green wedges are areas of land outside the Urban Growth Boundary that support a range of non-urban uses. Melbourne has 12 green wedges spanning 17 municipalities, forming a ring around the city.

The landscapes and uses within each green wedge are unique. Green wedge landscapes vary from the Mornington Peninsula's coastline, to the open basalt plains of the west and the scenic countryside of the Yarra Valley.

What are peri-urban areas?

Peri-urban areas are land beyond the green wedges but within 100km of central Melbourne. These areas are predominantly rural with a range of small and large townships.

What is the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)?

The UGB directs urban growth to areas with appropriate infrastructure and services, and protects the rural landscapes, function and values of Melbourne's green wedges and peri-urban areas from development pressures.

Although the UGB has moved since it was established in 2002, the current UGB was reaffirmed as the outer limit for growth in *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* – Policy 2.1.1. The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* sets out additional protection of the UGB. It requires any proposed alteration to the UGB to be ratified by both Houses of the Parliament of Victoria.

Melbourne's agricultural land

Some of Victoria's most productive agricultural land is in Melbourne's green wedges and peri-urban areas. In 2018, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in these areas contributed \$5.79 billion to the

Victorian economy and provided nearly 16,500 jobs. Some regions within the green wedges and peri-urban areas are important for particular crops and commodities:



The rich, peaty soils of the **Casey Cardinia** region produce almost 90 per cent of Australia's asparagus



The **Werribee Irrigation District** produces 10 per cent of Victoria's vegetables (on only 0.02 per cent of the state's land)



Gippsland produces 32 per cent of Victoria's milk (or 19 per cent of Australia's milk).



The **Yarra Valley** produces approximately 78 per cent of Victoria's strawberries.



The **Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District**, rich with the alluvial soils of the Lerderderg River and Werribee River flats, grows high-value commodities such as orchard fruits.

Melbourne's green wedges and peri-urban areas have many advantages for agriculture. They are close to consumers, labour and good infrastructure, they have quality soils and, potentially, access to high-quality recycled water.

The importance of peri-urban agricultural land will only increase

in future. As the climate changes it will impact where crops are grown. Farming in northern Victoria will be more impacted by hotter and drier conditions than the southern areas. This means as farming becomes harder in other parts of Victoria, we will rely more on agricultural land in the green wedges and peri-urban areas to grow food.

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Why is Melbourne's green wedge and agricultural land important?

Melbourne's green wedge and agricultural land is immensely important to the state's economy, community and environment, and supports diverse land uses and activities:



Environmental and biodiversity features



Recreation opportunities



State-significant infrastructure



Transport and accessibility



Rural landscapes and open space



Tourism



Providing natural resources to support new infrastructure



Water supply and wastewater treatment facilities



Cultural heritage



Sustainable population growth in townships and settlements



Agriculture



Rural living



A strong, dynamic economy

Almost 30 per cent of the study area is public and Commonwealth land, including national parks, reserves and closed water catchments. The area supplies clean drinking water and important ecosystem services, valued open space and recreational opportunities.

The green wedge and peri-urban areas support thriving visitor economies based on natural and rural landscapes, food and wine experiences, recreation and tourism opportunities.

There is a range of different kinds of agriculture, from commercial to hobby farming. Agricultural land on the city's fringe is an important source of fresh food for Melbourne's growing population, as well as other products such as nurseries, flowers and turf.

The study area also supplies sand and stone for Melbourne's infrastructure, housing and development needs. It contains important transport corridors, infrastructure and businesses that need to be buffered from residential and other incompatible land uses, including airports, ports, waste and resource recovery facilities, and water treatment plants.

Protecting the significant features and assets of the green wedges and peri-urban areas is important for ongoing environmental, economic, cultural, and health and wellbeing outcomes.

Improved planning controls can help protect Melbourne's green wedges and agricultural land into the future

Melbourne's green wedges and peri-urban areas are under pressure from competing land uses, population growth and climate change. The Victorian Government will strengthen current planning controls to better protect the long-term future of these important areas and their agricultural land.

Have your say

You are invited to consider the challenges and opportunities raised in the consultation paper and provide feedback on the proposed planning system changes by making a submission.

Submissions can be made online at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/gwal>

For any questions or assistance please contact planning.implementation@delwp.vic.gov.au