

Protecting strategic agricultural land in Melbourne's green wedge and peri-urban areas

Proposed criteria

LAND CAPABILITY	
Naturally fertile land with minimal constraints and highly capable for intensive, soil-based agriculture	<p>Land identified as highly capable for intensive, soil-based agriculture, taking into account the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality soil: soils that are high value due to their year-round and multi-purpose properties. • Niche soil: soils that are particularly good for certain crops and support niche industries. • Suitable terrain and landscapes: land with minimal slope, rock outcrop, and no presence of coastal acid sulfate soils, salinity or other noxious components. • Reliable rainfall: areas with reliable long-term natural rainfall that provides adequate supply for agricultural production. • Low risk of land degradation: Land with very low risk of land degradation such as flooding risk, inundation, land slips and erosion hazard.
WATER ACCESS	
Farmland with access to a secure water supply	Access to irrigation infrastructure: access to existing irrigation infrastructure that provides a reliable water source for agricultural regions. Green wedge and peri-urban irrigated areas include Werribee and Bacchus March irrigation districts.
	High potential for access to alternative water sources: Areas identified through the Metro Melbourne Integrated Water Management Forums as having potential future alternative water access. These include Bunyip Food Belt, Western Irrigation Network, Coldstream, Whittlesea Community Farm
	Access to good quality groundwater: access to a significant source of good quality groundwater. In green wedge and peri-urban areas Groundwater Management Areas that provide a verified source of groundwater resources include....
RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY	
Land that is resilient to the potential impacts of climate change	Climate resilience: Highly versatile agricultural areas suitable for producing a greater range of cropping, horticulture and pasture purposes both currently and under forecast climate scenarios for 2030, 2050 and 2070.
EXISTING LAND USE & INTEGRATION WITH INDUSTRY	
Land that is currently used for intensive agricultural purposes or supports the viability of an agricultural area	Existing intensive higher-value agricultural land use: Areas that currently support intensive soil-based agricultural industries including dairy, horticulture, viticulture and general cropping.
	Post-farm-gate processing and value adding: Areas that support industries with critical links including processing plants and major packing houses.
	Industry clusters: areas where industries have successfully clustered to achieve significant efficiencies.
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS - EXCLUSIONS	
Factors that may prevent land from being classified as Strategic Agricultural Land	Limited size and extent of area: The size and extent of the area identified as potential Strategic Agricultural Land is a scale and size that is unlikely to support sustainable agricultural production.
	Poor Access: locations that are too remote to existing markets, labour and transport, including airports and logistics facilities.
	Land set aside for other purposes or land use values: Land already allocated for another defined use in planning schemes or set aside for conservation purposes. Only Zones with an agricultural purpose are eligible to be included in SAL (i.e. Farming Zone, Rural Activity Zone, Green Wedge Zone, some Special Use Zones (Cardinia), and the Rural Conservation Zone).