

Green Wedges Coalition

**Submission to
Parliamentary Inquiry into
securing the Victorian food
supply**

May 2024



Area of Green Wedges

Over half of the Green Wedges, some 350,000 hectare, is zoned as privately owned land and the major use is farmland.

The total value of agriculture in the Green Wedges is some \$1.2 Billion and accounts for around 10% of the State's total value of agricultural production.

This data is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistic and one study has estimated it could be as much as 25% under reported.

While the data is from 2010/2011 census the State Government is still estimating the same 10% of the State's total for the Green Wedges and is considered to be a reasonable indication of the situation today.

The table in the next slide shows the value of agricultural production by 'Green Wedges' municipalities.



	Municipality	Total production value (\$m)	Top 3 agricultural commodities by value		
			1	2	3
1	Hobsons Bay	NS			
2	Wyndham	85.6	Broccoli (22.9)	Lettuce (14.1)	Poultry (12.4)
3	Melton	8.3	Poultry (5.4)	Other veges (0.5)	Sheep & lambs (0.5)
4	Brimbank	1.2	Capsicums (0.2)	Cattle & calves (0.1)	Nurseries outdoors (0.1)
5	Hume	12.0	Other veges (3.3)	Mushrooms (2.6)	Cereals and grains (0.4)
6	Whittlesea	107.6	Mushrooms (77.8)	Eggs for humans (13.1)	Poultry for meat (7.9)
7	Nilumbik	5.7	Apples (1.4)	Cattle & calves (1.2)	Pears (1.1)
8	Manningham	3.1	Nurseries outdoors (0.6)	Nurseries undercover (0.5)	Apples & peaches (0.4)
9	Yarra Ranges	292.9	Strawberries (73.0)	Nurseries outdoors (63.6)	Apples (42.7)
10	Knox	1.3	Other veges (0.5)	Whole milk (0.5)	
11	Maroondah	NS			
12	Greater Dandenong	24.4	Poultry for meat (11.3)	Cut flowers undercover (4.6)	Eggs for humans (4.0)
13	Kingston	6.1	Eggs for humans (2.0)	Poultry for meat (1.3)	Nurseries outdoors (1.3)
14	Frankston	16.2	Poultry (5.9)	Cut flowers undercover (3.6)	Cultivated turf (1.8)
15	Casey	100.7	Poultry (27.7)	Other vegetables (18.4)	Cut flowers u/cover (10.4)
16	Cardinia	289.6	Poultry (81.1)	Asparagus (59.9)	Whole milk (39.0)
17	Mornington Peninsula	217.6	Poultry (121.3)	Other vegetables (19.3)	Strawberries (12.7)
	TOTAL	1,172.3			

Top 6 ranking of 'Green Wedge' municipalities by value of agricultural production

1. Yarra Ranges Shire	\$292.9 million
2. Cardinia Shire	\$289.6 million
3. Mornington Peninsula Shire	\$217.6 million
4. Whittlesea City	\$107.6 million
5. Casey City	\$100.7 million
6. Wyndham City	\$85.6 million

The State Government's *Planning Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land Action Plan* has as Action 1 to 'Introduce a new planning scheme overlay to protect key irrigated areas in Werribee and Bacchus Marsh'. With Action 2 to develop criteria for the overlay.

This initial focus on Werribee, in the case of the Green Wedges, seems quite at odds with logic as **the figures opposite show 5 municipalities ranking above Werribee (Wyndham City) account for some 84% of the value of agricultural production in the Green Wedges.**

This appears to be a policy that highly distorts the reality on the ground and should be changed to all areas of highly productive horticulture and extensive grazing land.

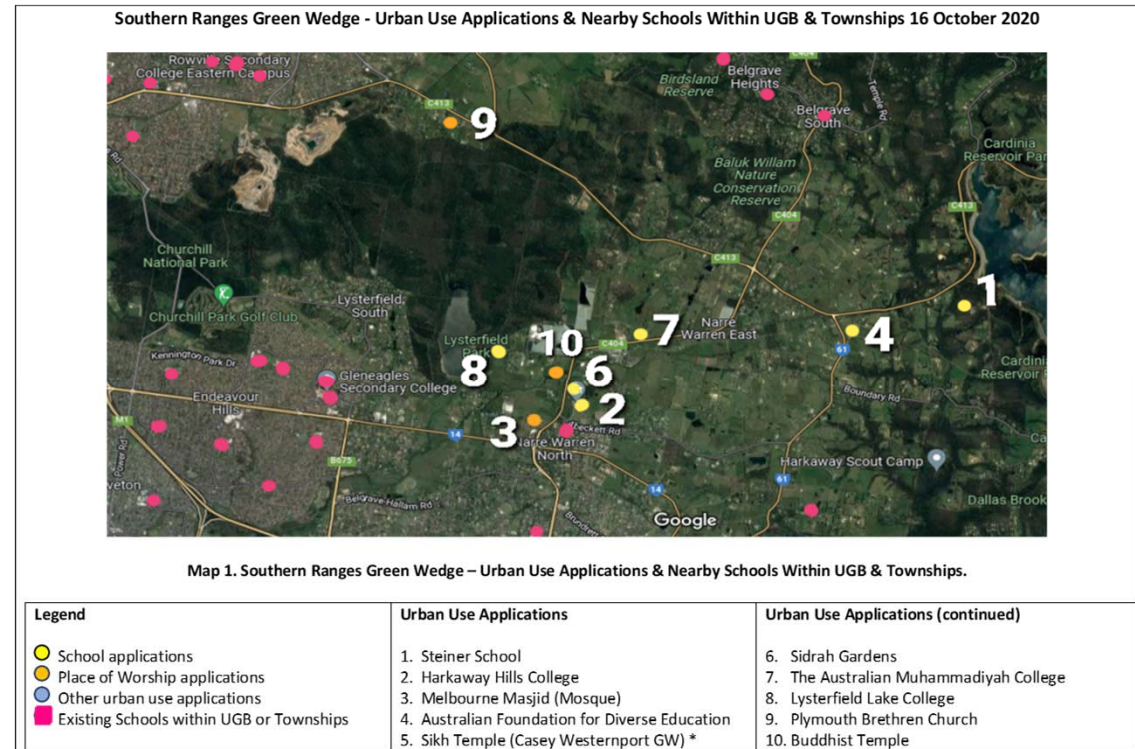
The Green Wedge zones were legislated in 2002 to protect **rural land uses** including the natural environment, agriculture and rural open space.

The major threat to the future of agriculture in the Green Wedges is continued pressure from many forms of **urbanization**

Inappropriate Planning Uses

Major pressures include:

- Large tourism developments
- Applications for schools and places of worship.
- Clean fill dumping on agricultural land
- The failure to apply the ‘in conjunction’ condition of the GWC and RCZ zones designed to protect rural land use
- Loss of agricultural land to industrial development
- Incursion of prohibited commercial use



Recommendations - major immediate priorities

Planning Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land Action Plan

1. The State Government's *Planning Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land Action Plan* change its highly problematic focus on the Werribee Irrigation District (Action 1) to all areas of highly productive horticulture and extensive grazing land.

Clauses 53.22 and 53.23

2. State Government reconsider the application of these clauses as a matter of priority because of inappropriate application of major built development in the Green Wedges and their inappropriate potential for significant impact on protecting agricultural land.

In conjunction test

3. Strengthen the 'in conjunction' test in the **planning controls** to ensure that in Green Wedges rural land use is dominant in area to any built development which must be contained within an envelope of less than 10% of a site or 2000 square metres, whichever is the lesser.
4. Apply the 'in conjunction' test to all proposed uses, including all future proposed tourism developments.

Places of worship and schools

5. In relation to **places of worship**, while prohibition of such an urban use is preferred, place a limit of 250 square metres as it is in urban areas. Any proposed use for **schools** must be subordinate to rural land uses and meet the recommendations 3 and 4 above.

Clean Fill

6. The State Government immediately amend all Green Wedge planning schemes in line with the Hume and Nillumbik schemes to require a permit for earthworks of more than 100 cubic metres and prohibit clean fill applications where landowners are paid to allow developers or their agents to dump clean fill on Green Wedge land.

Recommendations – Future support for agriculture

7. Apply the Urban Growth Boundary as a readily identifiable line that should be the indicator of the boundary between the urban metropolitan regional areas for the purposes of **farm labour market programs and payroll tax**.
8. Reintroduce **Tenement controls** to incentivize amalgamation of lots thereby **reducing fragmentation** and the risk of rural residential development in the future.
9. Create a **Farmland Revolving Trust Fund** to buy land from retiring farmers, apply an agricultural covenant on the land, resell and re-employ the funds to buy more land.
10. Application of a **differential farm rate** to counteract the impact of increased land prices and foster and support farming in the Green Wedges. It should be noted that in the UK *Green Belt* farm land is zero rated i.e. 100% off the General Rate.
11. Increase access to **Class A+ recycled water** by the State Government funding pipes and other infrastructure to make recycled water affordable to farmers to drought proof this essential industry in the context of arable land mass declining year on year, worldwide.

Current photo of 19-23 Horswood Road and the wetland that exists.



Renderings of the proposed PARED – Lysterfield Lake Boys College development within the advertised documents provided.



The proposed winery with accommodation pods and wellness centre. Picture: Nepean Planning Consultants



From paddock to wellness retreat plate

Lucy Callander

A bold plan to transform empty paddocks into a host farm with a wellness centre and restaurant is being considered for the Mornington Peninsula.

The local council has received an application to build a winery with 20

accommodation pods and parking for 100 cars on 11ha in Moorooduc.

The proposal is believed to be the first of its kind for the northern end of the peninsula which has limited tourist accommodation beyond private short stay rentals.

If the plan gets to nod from

Mornington Peninsula Shire, guests would be able to sleep among the vines, sample the wines and unwind in a wellness centre complete with day spa and pool, six treatment rooms, pilates and yoga studios and a dining area.

Only those staying at the Bentons Rd property would

be able to access the wellness centre.

Each accommodation pod would include a bedroom, sitting area, ensuite and a deck.

The proposal includes a two storey house with seven bedrooms and bathrooms and a triple car garage.

According to the plans the

property owner would live in the house to cater for guest needs and run the winery.

Records show the property last sold in 2017 for \$2m to a private company based out of West Footscray.

The application will be considered by the council later this year.

Fears green wedges in danger of being chipped away for urban uses

By Adam Carey

The Age: April 13, 2024 — 5.30am

Few people driving on the highway between Dandenong and Hastings south of Melbourne would find much to catch the eye as the road winds past the town of Pearcedale. Just a bush block with a metal fence around it. But for devotees of Hindu deity Lord Sree Ayyappa Swamy, this vacant lot on a bend on the Westernport Highway has the attributes to be the perfect place to build Australia's first traditional Kerala-style temple.

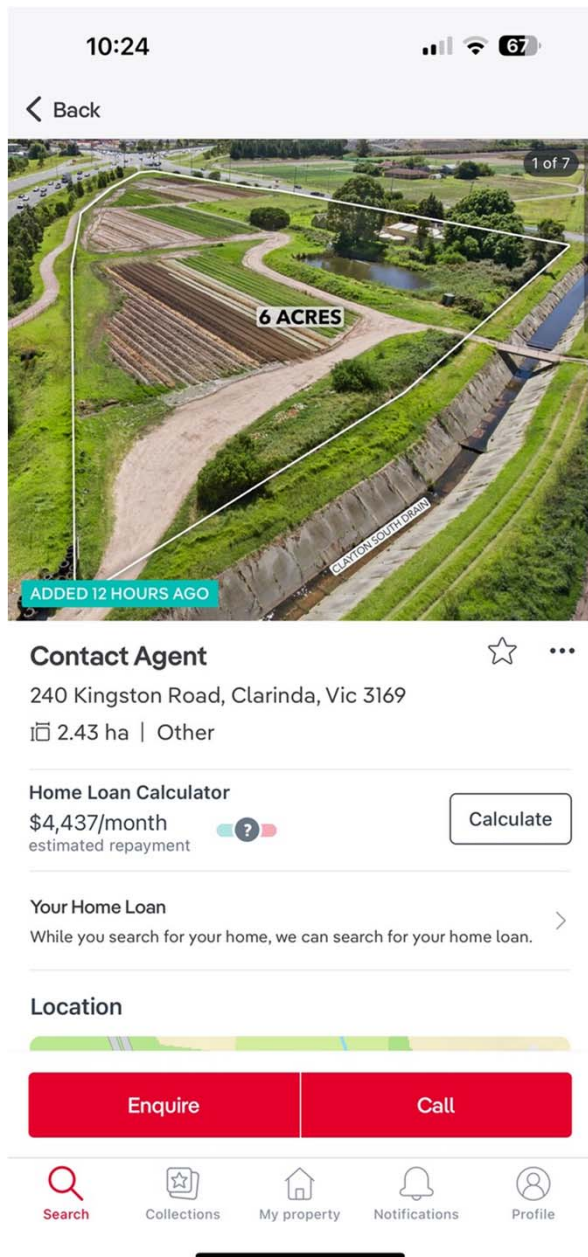
Vijay Senguttuvan is the secretary of non-profit organisation Melbourne Ayyappa Seva Sangam, which wants to build a temple on this nondescript patch of land in a rural part of the Mornington Peninsula.

"The temple is always located in a very peaceful, calming area with a good sense of vibrations," said Senguttuvan. "This is part of our worship and part of our cultural needs, and we want to pass this tradition on to future generations, so that's why we need this temple."

But good vibrations have been hard to find among the locals of Pearcedale, who have joined in fierce opposition to the proposal.



The small bush block on a bend in the highway is the subject of a VCAT dispute between residents and a religious group that seeks to build a temple there. CREDIT: JOE ARMAO



Agent description

Would suit horticultural/agricultural buyer with a **huge land-banking opportunity** with great earning capabilities from **housing**, shedding and market gardening.

Zoning

This area is zoned Green Wedge Zone (Schedule 4) in the Kingston Planning Scheme that supports rural land use.