

Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land

Consultation findings summary

The green wedge and peri-urban areas surrounding Melbourne are home to natural features and open spaces, tourist destinations, major infrastructure such as airports and water treatment plants, and some of Victoria's most productive agricultural land.

These areas are under pressure from demand for new residential development and irreversible loss of agriculturally productive and useful land.

Robust planning controls are needed to maintain the benefits of green wedges and manage land use to support the long-term needs of Victorians.

This informed 41 draft options for changes to legislation, state and regional policy, zones, overlays and definitions, and planning guidance. The options were shared through a consultation paper, *Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land*.

More than 1,600 interactions were collected via phone, online community information sessions, workshops, an online map and an official online submission process using two surveys. We also collected feedback and manual submissions via email and mail. 879 submissions were received (survey responses and manual submissions).

Planning for the future together

The Victorian Government undertook an extensive and community engagement program between 2018 – 2021 to ensure feedback from councils, government authorities, organisations, communities and all other stakeholders was considered.

The conversation started with the big picture: what objectives do these planning changes need to achieve? In 2019, over 400 public submissions helped us understand Victorians' priorities around protecting agricultural land.





1,631
Interactions

192
Public Q&As

879
Submissions

87
Project
hotline calls

423
Online map
comments

192
Online
information
session
participants

Victorians care deeply about Melbourne's green wedges and peri-urban land, and each local area is unique.

Hundreds of landowners, farmers, organisations, community groups, councils, peak bodies and authorities took significant time to make detailed contributions to this engagement program.

There are conflicting land uses and stakeholders, with differing values and priorities in these areas, leading to strong views.

Robust and detailed discussions about every policy change and its implications are imperative to balancing each green wedge/peri-urban area's needs.

Across 1,631 pieces of feedback analysed, four top themes emerged.



Urban expansion and planning

Impacts and risks of urban expansion, and divided opinions on strengthening regulations for use of green wedges and peri-urban land.

Land use

Ranging views on the uses of green wedge and peri-urban land, with some supporting diverse uses (for growth, jobs, community facilities) and others supporting the need to protect unique rural and natural environments.



Policy

Need for stronger policies, management plans and their enforcement, and divided opinions on the roles and responsibilities of state and local government.

Environment

Safekeeping the natural environment and water, and considering climate change and environmental impacts on human health and safety.





41

Proposed planning options were finalised in DELWP's consultation paper



11

Targeted online workshops with councils, state government, water managers and catchment management authorities



- 30 councils
- 6 state government departments
- 13 water managers and catchment management authorities
- 1 agricultural sector body



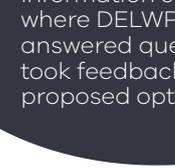
423

Online map comments about what people value or are concerned about in their local area



87

Telephone calls for discussions with the project team about the proposed options and submission process



3

Online community information sessions where DELWP project team answered questions and took feedback about the proposed options



- 192 participants
- 289 questions and comments

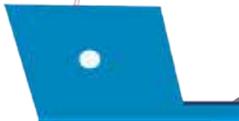


879

Submissions to the short or long survey, or manually by post or mail



- 452 short form survey responses
- 304 long form survey responses
- 123 letters and emails



What we heard

What people value most about Melbourne’s green wedge and peri-urban areas

We asked survey respondents to tell us what they value most about Melbourne’s green wedge and peri-urban areas by ranking their top three values from a list.

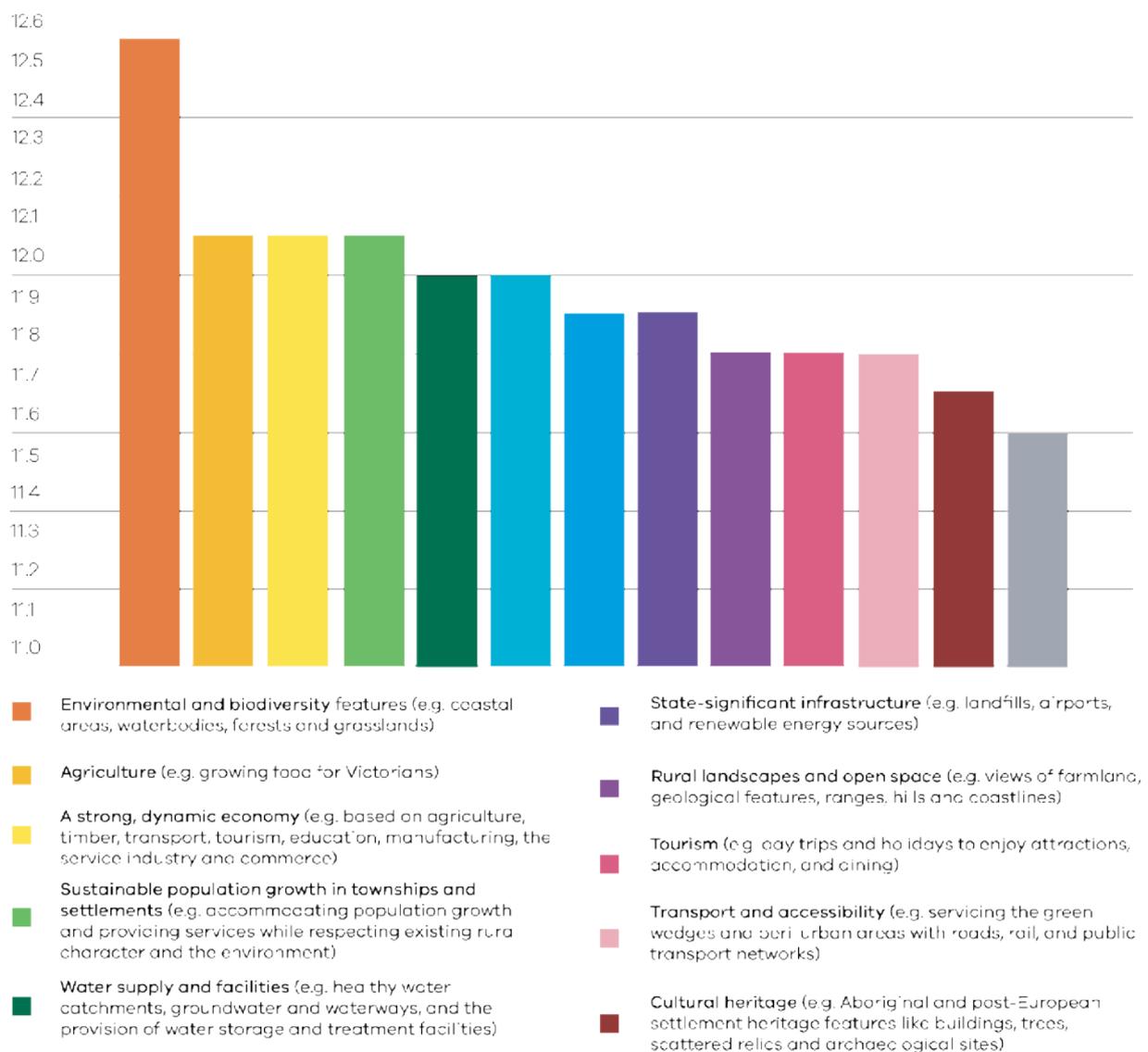


Figure - Survey respondents’ top three values weighted (data source: short and long form survey)

Strengthening the legislative and policy framework



- Need for local policies or management plans (such as Green Wedge Management Plans) for each region to better cater to the needs of each green wedge and peri-urban area
- Importance of protecting and prioritising biodiversity of the green wedges and peri-urban areas - for conservation itself, and for the multitude of benefits it brings residents and visitors
- Clear definition of boundaries (e.g. UGB) to ensure regulations relating to development within these areas is controlled and the original intent of the green wedges is preserved

Supporting agricultural land use



- Clear definition of boundaries (e.g. UGB) to ensure regulations relating to development within these areas is controlled to prevent further loss of rural land
- Opposition to diversification of land uses in the green wedge and peri-urban areas, and decision-making informed by expert advice
- Need for specific policies or management plans (such as Green Wedge Management Plans) for each region to better cater to the needs of each green wedge and peri-urban area; clarity and further detail are required around some proposed operations
- Importance of protecting and prioritising biodiversity of the green wedges and peri-urban areas, including waterways and water sources to ensure access to safe water for farmers and future generations

Managing use of green wedge and peri-urban land



- Clear definition of boundaries to ensure regulations relating to development within these areas is controlled and the range of uses limited
- Limited diversification of land uses in the study area to preserve the character, aesthetic and original intent while supporting the introduction of some new uses and upgrading local infrastructure
- Importance of protecting and prioritising biodiversity of the green wedges and peri-urban areas for the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, and the conservation of the environment that makes these areas unique

Improving the design of development in green wedges



- Strong design guidelines and their enforcement to uphold the protection of the study area, and further clarification on the role of existing design guidelines in local areas
- Limited diversification of land uses in the study area to preserve the character and original intent of the green wedges
- Need for specific policies or management plans (such as Green Wedge Management Plans) for each region to better cater to the needs of each green wedge and peri-urban area



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