



Victorian
Farmers
Federation

SUBMISSION

Melbourne's Future Planning Framework

October 2021

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) welcomes the opportunity to submit in response to the Melbourne's Future Planning Framework. The farming community routinely expresses concern that agricultural issues are not being properly considered by the Victorian planning system.

The VFF represents a number of farmers in the outer eastern, western, southern and northern areas of Melbourne, including the important food production regions of Werribee South, Yarra Valley, Mornington Peninsula and Cranbourne/Pakenham. Food production in these areas includes livestock, horticulture, vineyards, poultry and eggs.

Victoria's agricultural production accounts for over \$13 billion of Victoria's economy and over 25 per cent of the State's exports per annum. Victoria's farmers produce high quality food and fibre, produced to high standards of safety, with little taxpayer support, and to some of the strictest environmental and highest animal welfare controls in the world.

For over 4 years VFF has had a well-developed policy position on the changes required to the planning system to support the retention and growth of agriculture in Victoria. Repeated failures to address or consider these matters, in response to consultation or in preparation of documents such as this, reinforce industry belief that there is an urban bias in the planning system that sees farming land as vacant or awaiting an urban use or providing amenity and ecosystem services for towns.

The VFF accepts that farming operates in a regulated space but that there is a need to ensure planning and environmental regulations, which are generally designed for urban scenarios, to not have a perverse or adverse outcome in relation to facilitating the ongoing and productive use of land for production of food and fibre.

The rural suite of zones, including green wedge zones, represented 62.86% of zoned land in Victoria (February 2020). It is time for more than a throw away platitude to be made in respect to this land in Victorian planning policy. It is time for all controls to properly consider how they may impact on zones that provide for Victorians most basic needs.

The VFF is concerned that the draft Melbourne's Future Framework Plan will have unintended negative consequences on agriculture in the four outer metro areas identified. The drafts mention that agriculture needs to continue to be the main use in rural areas. The VFF agrees with the principle, but is looking for detail to ensure this occurs.

For all of the outer Melbourne Future Framework Plan the VFF wants to ensure that:

1. Landscape overlays/controls do not adversely affect agriculture.
2. Land use conflict between agriculture and other uses are minimised and avoided.
3. Engagement occurs with farmers and the agricultural industry.
4. This document supports the growth and adaptation of agriculture.

The VFF has recently made submissions to the Green Wedge and Agricultural Land (G WAL) engagement process, the Distinctive Area and Landscape engagement for the Bellarine Peninsula and the Strategic Agricultural Land engagement process. All these submissions outline the VFF's asks for proper agricultural recognition within the Victoria Planning Provisions, and meaningful consultation with industry and land managers.

PSP guidelines with hard edges to farmland and EES processes that facilitate land access on farm land without consideration of the impact on each farm business are examples where the planning system has not considered the social, economic or environmental impacts on agriculture as the purpose for which the land is zoned.

For agriculture to evolve and adapt industry needs to be consulted to ensure that the policy and emerging technologies that are supported are viable options that do not adversely affect agriculture. The VFF recommends that industry groups and local farming communities be engaged to avoid unintended adverse impacts.

Farming is part of the history and social fabric of Victoria and will continue to be an important part of the local economy and environment. The VFF has made this submission in an effort to ensure farming in Victoria is not impeded by unnecessary or unintended impacts on the local agricultural industry. Unless the agricultural land is rezoned, primary production must not be displaced, or infringed upon, by commercial or residential land uses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission. The VFF remains committed to assisting the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in developing the Future Planning Frameworks and welcomes and encourages industry engagement.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emma Germano".

Emma Germano
President