

What are 'Green Wedges'?

The term 'Green Wedges' refers to the non-urban land that surrounds the outward development of Melbourne. This land is separated from urban areas by the Urban Growth Boundary which was put in place by the Victorian Government in 2002.

Across Melbourne, 12 Green Wedges are located in 17 local government areas. Approximately one third of Melbourne's Green Wedges are public land including national parks, other parks, reserves, and water catchments. As such, they contribute significantly to the open space network and provide opportunities for tourism and recreation.

Land in Cardinia Shire falls into three of Melbourne's Green Wedges (see map on page 2):

- Westernport
- Southern Ranges
- Yarra Valley and Yarra and Dandenong Ranges.

Green Wedge land in Cardinia Shire is in a range of zones including the Green Wedge Zone, Rural Conservation Zone and the Special Use Zone. A number of small townships are within the Green Wedge, such as Emerald, Cardinia and Nar Nar Goon, which are defined by various urban zones appropriate for land uses in rural townships.

The Green Wedge land in Cardinia Shire supports activities such as agricultural, horticultural and recreational uses, parks, and small communities.

The history of Green Wedge land

The Green Wedge concept has been part of Melbourne's planning history for over 40 years. Melbourne's early planning policy sought to protect the natural qualities of non-urban areas by locating development into clearly defined corridors with access to public transport.

In 2002 the term 'Green Wedges' was formally recognised in the metropolitan planning strategy, *Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth*. This strategy introduced the concept of limiting urban expansion using an Urban Growth Boundary, which excludes landscape and conservation areas from urban development.



Why is Green Wedge land important?

The Victorian Government recognises that Melbourne's Green Wedges are important as they provide opportunities for productive agricultural uses, and conservation of biodiversity, water catchments and landscapes.

A large proportion of Cardinia Shire's Green Wedge land has some of the best agricultural soil in Melbourne, providing much of Victoria's asparagus, celery, leeks, herbs, and silver beet. It is important to protect this land due to it being a valuable agricultural asset.

Land within the Green Wedge area has many important purposes including:

- providing land for agricultural use
- recognising and protecting land that has agricultural and environmental values
- encouraging sustainable farming activities and providing opportunity for a variety of productive uses
- protecting, conserving and enhancing the character of open rural and scenic non-urban landscapes.

Council considers the liveability and economic values and the scenic and natural qualities of green wedges to be extremely important. While Green Wedge land may not be actively farmed, it is important to consider the potential use of the land and the character of the area in the future.

Applications in the Green Wedge

As part of Labor's 2014 Victorian Government election platform and its policy *Keeping It Liveable - Labor's Plan for your Community*, a commitment was made to protect Melbourne's Green Wedges and maintain the Urban Growth Boundary.

As part of this commitment, the current Victorian Government has no plans to support the following:

- proposed amendments that seek to expand the Urban Growth Boundary or rezone Green Wedge Land
- applications that seek to increase the subdivision potential of Green Wedge land
- applications that will lead to the development of small inappropriate lots in the Green Wedges.

Council strongly supports the protection of Green Wedge land, which is consistent with policy directions at both a local and state level. To further support this, Council is currently preparing the *Western Port Green Wedge Management Plan*.

Given the position the Victorian Government has taken in relation to the Green Wedge, Council is not in a position to support applications for rezoning or applications that seek to increase the subdivision potential of Green Wedge land.

The process to rezone Green Wedge land and to amend the Urban Growth Boundary is lengthy. The applicant is required to seek approval at a local level from Council then at a state level from the Minister for Planning as well as the Planning Scheme Amendment requiring ratification by both houses of Parliament. Therefore very strong justification is needed.

Western Port Green Wedge Management Plan

In late 2015, Council undertook extensive community consultation on the draft *Western Port Green Wedge Management Plan*. The purpose of this document is to help Council take advantage of opportunities and attend to challenges in the Western Port Green Wedge.

The final management plan is being prepared, taking into consideration feedback from the community, agencies and the Victorian Government.

Cardinia Shire's Green Wedge land



For more information about or to discuss Green Wedge land in Cardinia Shire, contact Council's Strategic Planning Department.

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