



Farm to Plate Victorian Peri-Urban Planning Scheme Audit

Event: Protecting and Supporting our
Sustainably Managed Farmland

Presentation 2: The Farm to Plate
Victorian Peri-urban Planning Scheme
Audit and its significance

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Outline

- Introduction
- The Problem
- The Project
- Potential solutions

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Plan-it Rural Pty Ltd:



Annemaree Docking



Linda Martin-Chew

- Support new and existing farmers and landholders to realise their farming and land management ambitions
 - Whole Farm Planning
 - Regulatory support
 - Tree Change Coaching
 - Sustainability and specialists in regenerative agriculture
- Combined 40 years industry experience
 - Cattle, sheep, horses, poultry, dairy, horticulture, viticulture
 - 25 years State and Local Government

Why is peri-urban agriculture important?

- Climate impact on traditional food bowls will be pronounced and increase pressure on food security – highlighting the importance of peri-urban agriculture and short, climate-resilient, supply chains
- The promotion of local food production and processing close to markets can achieve greater economic, environmental and social sustainability, as well as climate resilience.



Hurstbridge Farmgate

Recent impacts – flood, fires, pandemic – have highlighted the vulnerabilities of our traditional supply chains.

Direct marketing opportunities can expand the array of local food and extend local food access.

However, these are not supported by the planning scheme as it stands.



- The changing face of agriculture – innovation, agripreneurs, regenerative agriculture, agroecological production systems, multi-functional agriculture, organic.
- Green Revolution, scaled food production systems are not suited to the peri-urban space and have questionable social licence going forward.



What's the problem?

Forbes, VIC

There are concerns, from the producer perspective, that the land use planning system is not calibrated to support small-scale, niche and stacked enterprises in peri-urban and green wedge areas. Common issues are –

- Regulatory burden not suited to the scale of enterprise,
- Small scale proposals not taken seriously by the regulator,
- Planning scheme administered by non-agricultural professionals,
- Culture of planning department – “why?”, rather than “why not?”
- Neighbour complaints that address the perception of industrial scale developments rather than the reality of the proposal,
- Tourism, Economic Development, Local Food Systems, Climate Resilience - Lack of correlation between strategic vision and planning framework.

The Brief:

Conduct a detailed audit of the local planning schemes of the 26 peri-urban and green wedge Victorian Local Government Areas in order to identify barriers, enablers, gaps and opportunities in these schemes to foster the expansion of sustainable and diversified agriculture and food production.





- The project established benchmarking principles against which to audit the content of Victorian peri-urban planning schemes as they relate to agriculture and agribusiness. The benchmarking principles were adapted from a proven food systems governance framework, the Vermont Farm to Plate Plan, which operates in the United States. The Vermont initiative has linked consumer preference for local foods to successful state-wide economic outcomes and the preservation of agricultural land.

To establish the validity of the benchmarking principles the project also involved:

- a literature review
- review of VCAT decisions,
- compiled farming and agribusiness case studies,
- reviewed contingent government projects and their engagement outcomes.



Victorian Peri-Urban Planning Scheme Audit: Benchmarking principles

- Food production
- Food processing and manufacturing
- Aggregation, distribution and storage
- Nutrient management.



State and regional PPF/rural zones

State Government Defined Peri-Urban Region of Melbourne

Appendix 4: State and regional PPF/rural zones



During the audit period, a review of Victoria's Planning Policy Framework (PPF) was changing the content of planning schemes. Planning schemes are always dynamic. However, the PPF translation is particularly significant because it re-organises the structure of the entire local policy portion of a planning scheme in one amendment.

THE RESULT:
 Planning schemes reflect a low capability to support a sustainable local food system. This is not surprising: Why would planning schemes reflect a local food systems approach in the peri-urban context without leadership for such an approach at state level and advocacy at local government level?

	Planning Policy Framework								Zone Schedules*				
	Clause 11.01-1R Green Wedges - MM	Clause 11.03-3S Peri-Urban Areas	Clause 11.03-5S Distinctive Areas and Landscapes	Clause 14 Natural Resource Management	Clause 14.01-1S Protection of Agricultural Land	Clause 14.01-1R Protection of Agricultural Land - MM	Clause 14.01-2S Sustainable Agricultural Land Use	Clause 17.01-1S Diversified Economy	Clause 35.04 Green Wedge A Zone	Clause 35.05 Green Wedge Zone	Clause 35.06 Rural Conservation Zone	Clause 35.07 Farming Zone	Clause 35.08 Rural Activity Zone
...to support ... and ... by exempting ... to obtain a ... regulation	N/A	✘	✘	N/A	✘	✘	▸	N/A	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
...to facilitate ... produced ... food and ... for the ...	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	▸	✘	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
...to facilitate ... change, peak ...	N/A	N/A	✘	✘	N/A	N/A	▸	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
...to support new ... systems, such as ... uses, by taking ... scale-sensitive ... include farm- ... tourism, and direct ...	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	▸	▸	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
...to respond to the ... developmental ... such as ... and the ... packaging and ...	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✘	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Potential next steps:

Urban agriculture/Peri-urban agriculture:

There is a need to create local food consciousness in both urban and peri-urban areas. For those of us working in the peri-urban area it is perplexing to see regulatory barriers to agriculture there, while Councils actively sponsor food growing in urban areas.

Rural dwellings:

In peri-urban areas, the influx of “lifestylers” reflects a rejection of urban living but food and fibre production (with positive environmental outcomes) needs to be the priority. Newcomers need to be supported to become part of the solution to a productive peri-urban landscape. The planning scheme should support this landscape change, with sufficient enforcement and encouragement to implement that change.

The regulation of on-farm businesses (an international example):

The experience in implementing the Vermont Farm to Plate Plan was that, despite nine years of state support for diversified farm operations, municipal authorities were not regulating these activities in a manner consistent with the intent of the Plan.

Act 143 applies to :

- the storage, preparation and sale of qualifying products (see below), provided that more than half of the sales are from qualifying agricultural products principally produced on the farm; and
- the educational, recreational and social events that feature agricultural practices and/or qualifying agricultural products.

Qualifying agricultural products are wholly:

- an agricultural, horticultural, viticultural or dairy commodity, or maple syrup;
- livestock, or cultured fish or a product thereof;
- a product of poultry, bees, an orchard, or fibre crops;
- a commodity otherwise grown or raised on a farm; or
- a product manufactured on one or more farms.

A farmer, farm resident, or farm lessee may operate an accessory on-farm business in the same location as a “farm” regulated by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFMM) under the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) rule (<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/agritourism-act-143> Agritourism and Act 143).



Thank you!

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