

*Also sent by email.*

The Secretary  
Richard Willis  
The Legislative Council Select Committee  
On Public Land Development  
Parliament of Victoria  
Spring Street  
Melbourne 3002

SUBMISSION TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LAND  
DEVELOPMENT

The benefit to the community of public land and the green wedge

We believe the purpose of public land is to be available for the enjoyment of private citizens for recreational purposes.

It is particularly important to encourage the use of this land for sporting purposes. The Australian population is rapidly becoming more sedentary. The government needs to provide public spaces to enable families to spend more time outdoors exercising rather than playing computer games. As the population density increases in suburbs in Melbourne, with policies such as with dual occupancy of properties, parkland will become increasingly important.

Public land is fully available to private citizens to pursue these activities. The green wedge land is privately owned and available only to private citizens. The green wedge land is therefore of limited usefulness to private citizens apart from those who live in the immediate vicinity of the green wedge.

Maintenance of the open spaces is better done by the government than private citizens with limited resources

Private citizens are forced to maintain the green wedge land at their own costs. Governments have greater resources to fund the maintenance of land used for public recreation.

Access to infrastructure

The urban sprawl in Melbourne has resulted in the building of new housing estates in areas with poor facilities. There is limited public transport. Queues of cars clog the freeways from the growth corridors polluting the atmosphere. Petrol has become increasingly expensive and is also forecast to dramatically increase in the future. Young couples with families often purchase properties in these new housing estates. The lack of facilities creates a significant financial burden on young families reliant of their cars to get to work in the city.

The issue of global warming is well documented. The Australia government's target to decrease carbon emission will be increasingly difficult to reach if the government fails to address the trend to release land in areas with limited public transport.

#### Use of prime farm land

Farmers are increasingly concerned about new development in areas in Gippsland, the Plenty Valley and other outer areas, with prime cattle grazing areas being utilized for housing. These housing estates should be places in the green wedge areas, for instance Park Orchards, Warrandyte and Wonga Park where soil is poor quality. Public transport services such as trains and buses are readily available in these areas. The Eastern freeway and the soon to be opened Frankston Bi-pass are available to commuters. These freeways offer a reduced traveling time to the central business district when compared with traffic routes from the growth corridors in areas such as Werribee and Narre Warren.

#### Highrise development is antisocial

The government is considering the building of high-rise developments in the suburbs. These developments are unsuitable for families. There is limited space for children to play. They pose a fire risk. Historically they have a higher crime rate. In countries around the world, such as the UK, high-rises are now not being promoted in the suburbs, only in the cities. Some high rises built in the suburbs in the UK are considered an unsatisfactory social experiment and have been demolished.

#### Availability of green wedge land

Originally land reserved for utilization in times of population growth was classified as the green wedge. Land was withdrawn from the green wedge as required. For instance, approximately 30 years ago East Doncaster was withdrawn from the green wedge for just this purpose. Park Orchards is the next logical choice now the population of Melbourne has expanded. If development had proceeded in this orderly manner, taking and extending the existing infrastructure along with it, we would not have the untidy sprawl that now exists in Melbourne. The political hype that surrounds the green wedge has fettered the development of effective planning policies in Melbourne.


#### Conclusion

Green wedge land is of limited use to the community. Landowners in the green wedge face a significant burden of maintaining the land in the face of ever increasing government regulation.

The release of land in the grow corridors with limited infrastructure has posed a financial burden on new families and a strain on our environment. It has also often reduced the availability of prime farming land. The growth of high-rise developments in the suburbs is not an adequate solution to these problems. This approach has been branded an unsatisfactory social experiment in other countries.

The development of Green Wedge land in Park Orchards, Warrandyte and Wonga Park is logical solution to the issued we have previously outlined.

Yours sincerely,

*Jan B. FOLSS*  


Frederick Olsson and Beverley Olsson  
36 Rainbow Valley Road  
Park Orchards  
Victoria 3114

Ph: 03 9876 1756

We are willing to attend a public hearing to discuss the above.