

SUBMISSION TO:

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC LAND DEVELOPMENT
PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

In relation to the inquiry into the sale of Public Land and Open Space in Victoria I wish to make the following observations:

Firstly in order to identify ourselves, we live on a 40 acre (16 hectare) block, which is now locked into the eastern edge of the Hume Green Wedge, at the State Governments pleasure. The eastern boundary of Hume Green Wedge is very obscure. It meanders up a very minor road then on through paddocks, which adjoin the rapidly growing suburb of Craigieburn. Our land is one of a group of properties trapped in between this eastern edge of the HGW and Mickleham Road, which runs north and south. Mickleham Road is a logical boundary; it is decisive and easily identified by people in this area.

Having spoken to local landowners, many in this area are like ourselves, and have "stuck it out" here, with the full intention that our land would provide us with a reasonable income for our retirement. (Our family has owned this land for in excess of 50 years).

The Government wants to maintain open spaces within our city and on the fringes, ie the Green Wedge policy, yet they are now considering allowing use of public open spaces for private development.

Surely if land is already owned by the Government it is logical to maintain it as parkland and public space and permit private landowners who live close to the city fringe to subdivide their land in order to satisfy a housing need and provide us with an income.

2..

Question:

What gives the Government the right to develop Crown land at all, but more importantly, when they are preventing us from developing ours?

A case in point in this area is a planned development on the “edge” of the Greenvale Reservoir, this land is (or was) Government owned and used by the Navy for munitions storage. It is rather steep and any resulting seepage will go straight into the Reservoir. This land is currently a “green area” in its own right. Why has it been allowed to change?

Question:

If the government needs land for development – why has it set aside so much land in Green Wedges where development is not permitted?

If the Government wants to maintain space around the perimeter of our city, they should consider purchasing land, at a good and fair price, to develop more Parks, which contain walking tracks, cycling paths, garden etc. This would help ensure that people who live in the highly populated inner suburbs have somewhere within easy commuting distance, to enjoy open areas.

To the north of Melbourne there are significant open areas:
Tullamarine International Airport and surrounding buffer land

Greenvale Reservoir

Woodlands National Park

Deep Creek area between Bulla and Sunbury

3..

Why the need to lock private landowners into a situation in which we have no control? We cannot subdivide, development is going ahead only 1 or 2 kilometres from our property, yet since the introduction of the Green Wedge investors are no longer interested in this area, they have no idea how long this land will sit before it is approved for subdivision, nor do we.

Compensation: This important topic was discussed at recent community meetings held by the City of Hume, on how to best manage the Hume Green Wedge. The overall majority felt emphatically, that if landowners are expected to maintain our land as open space then Council rates should be adjusted to compensate for the fact that we are trapped in a situation which is out of our control.

The State Government should also look at ways to compensate landowners, who are locked into a Green Wedge, at least until the situation is revisited and boundaries relaxed, or some subdivision is allowed, for instance 2 hectare blocks.

Larger block subdivisions would still give the feeling of space and also provide the opportunity for people to live on the city fringe in an open and healthy environment.

Thankyou for the opportunity to present this submission.

Our contact details are:

Don & Elma Butler
700 Craigieburn Rd
Yuroke 3063

Telephone: 9333.1547

27th September 2007