

**Submission re:
Inquiry Into Native Vegetation Laws, Greenhouse Gas Abatement &
Climate Change Measures**

**Attention:
Committee Secretariat**

In 1954 our family purchased this property - 80 acres of land in _____,

The property was subdivided into two equal lots and subsequently 40 acres was transferred to settle a deceased estate.

As residents here for in excess of 55 years we make this submission on the following grounds:

We are now less than 1 kilometre from the Urban Growth Boundary, following the release in June 2009 of the “Delivering Melbourne’s Newest Sustainable Communities – Strategic Impact Assessment Report”

We were surprised to learn that our property may not be considered for rezoning into the UGB due to adjoining areas of “Grassy Eucalypt Woodland”.

We are also advised that part of our property may have an endangered Golden Sun Moth habitat. We believe that inspectors will visit at some time to establish its presence or not.

It is interesting to note that several other places in this area are also considered as suitable habitat. This begs the question how endangered is this species? This property was a free range piggery from the mid 1930’s until the mid 1980’s, we believe that it would be almost impossible for Golden Sun Moths to have established themselves during this period. Free range pigs are wonderful “bulldozers” and the soil here was regularly turned over. Areas have also been sown down for feed over many years.

We attended workshops and information sessions at the time of the release of the previously mentioned Report, and were advised that properties would be inspected individually to confirm or otherwise the presence of the moth. We are still waiting for this to occur.

In relation to the Grassy Eucalypt Woodland: (Part of this is on the section of property owned by us until 2003). During the previous 50 years our family had taken care of the trees and their native inhabitants, unfortunately it now appears that may now be to our detriment.

There is approx. 5 acres of native redgums and we appreciate the need for trees in relation to greenhouse effects in the future, and in fact we believe they are of significant benefit in the overall development of this area. In high-density developments, an area of trees could be developed as a focal point for future residents.

People who now wish to live close to nature, plus have the benefits of city life, would enjoy the balance given by this type of area.

Should this property not be included in the expansion of the UGB, because of the presence of the woodland and the moth – where do we stand? A property similar in size and terrain to ours, but already in the UGB, sold recently for \$6 million. This property is less than 1 kilometre from our boundary fence. Would the Government Compensation be so generous?

The value of our 40 acres has been seriously curtailed since the release of the Strategic Impact Assessment Report. We had received offers of figures 75% less than the sale price of the previously mentioned property, prior to the report. These offers have now dried up due to the uncertain future of the area. We believe the trees should add value, but apparently this will not be the case

As retired pig farmers we are now into our seventies and have looked upon this property as our superannuation. It seems our super payout could be considerably less than hoped for and that we could be dependent on the Australian Government Pension for the rest of our lives.

We rely on tank water; we are in a drought declared area. Our large dam is dry due to minimal run off from what little rain we have received over recent years. It is no longer possible for us to make a living off this property, reasons being recent weather patterns and the restrictions placed on us by local Government laws, and of course our age.

When deciding the importance of Native Vegetation Laws it is also equally important that you seriously consider the future of people who are in a similar position to ours. In our area several long time and now retired farmers are similarly affected.

Serious consideration needs to be given to the method of determining compensation for people in our situation.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Don & Elma Butler