

23 April 2019

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning  
8 Nicholson St,  
Melbourne,  
Victoria 3000

Via: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/protecting-melbournes-ag-land>

Dear Sir/Madam

## **PROTECTING MELBOURNE'S STRATEGIC AGRICULTURAL LAND**

The Construction Material Processors Association (CMPA) is dedicated to the representation and service of its Members in the Victorian Earth Resources industry. The CMPA represents a broad spectrum of businesses that extract and process hard rock, gravel, sand, clay, lime, and soil. CMPA members also operate recycling businesses.

CMPA members are typically small to medium sized family and private businesses, local government and utilities. Many are regionally based employers and service local construction, infrastructure and road maintenance needs. The extractives sector is a key pillar within the construction industry underpinning the growth and economic development of Victoria through supply of the construction materials.

In 2017/18, the sector supplied 58 million tonnes of construction materials to the market, at a value of approximately \$948 million. Small to medium quarries account for approximately half of this production.

The CMPA supports the principle of responsible, balanced legislation that is in the best interests of the State of Victoria.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on "Protecting strategic agricultural land in Melbourne's green wedge and peri-urban areas" and to attend a Regional Workshop in Kilmore.

## **Background**

The Government has made commitments to extractive resources through the following:

**Extractive Resources in Victoria: Demand and Supply Study 2015 – 2050.** In 2015, the Victorian Government commissioned a long-range forecast of demand and supply of quarry resources to 2050, to help plan for Victoria's future growth which had a number of key findings such as extractive resources production is anticipated to double by 2050. A further

study was recently completed in 2018; commissioned due to the increased level of major government infrastructure projects and population growth figures that were 40% higher than in the original Study. Preliminary data from this report indicates a substantial decrease in projected supply to 2023 in comparison to the 2015 Study.

**Extractive Resources Strategy “Helping Victoria Grow” 2018 Priority Actions** are listed as:

- Refresh the Extractive Industry Interest Areas to delineate areas of importance to the State and recognise these within the planning system;
- Conduct a pilot Strategic Extractive Resource Area project in partnership with local government;
- Revise short-term supply and demand forecasts, including updated data on infrastructure investment, population growth forecasts and industry survey data;
- Engage early and often with stakeholders on key strategic planning initiatives (e.g. Plan Melbourne, Land Use Framework Plans) to inform these processes about the location and importance of critical extractive resources;
- Build a better understanding of the economic case for securing strategic extractive resources, including by developing a dynamic economic model that assesses the demand and supply of extractive resources on a spatial and temporal basis across the State.

**Joint Ministerial Statement: Extractive Resources “Rock Solid Foundations for Victoria’s Growth” 2018.**

Purpose: The purpose of this Joint Ministerial Statement is to deliver a better approach for land use planning and regulation that will secure the quarries we need to meet our growing needs.

1. Streamline approval processes to expand production;
2. Protect the continuity of supply from existing quarries;
3. Apply the ‘agent of change’ principle to quarries;
4. Provide better guidance to industry and local government;
5. Identify and protect extractive resources of strategic importance;
6. Reduce the environmental impact of quarrying and deliver landscapes for the community.

## **Discussion**

CMPA provisionally supports the protection of strategic agricultural land (SAL) in Melbourne’s green wedge and peri-urban areas. In fact extractive resources face similar issues with respect to competing land uses, particularly urban development and rural living, threatening the extractive industry resulting in the permanent loss of suitable land; distortion of land prices; and potentially creating conflict between quarry operators and residents due to potential dust and noise issues associated with the extractive industry. In fact Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 and accompanying 5 year implementation plan (Plan Melbourne Implementation Actions: Plan Melbourne 2017-2050) reinforces the Victorian Government commitment to protecting the extractive industry (Policy 1.4.2, Action 18) which is on the same page as the commitment to “protect agricultural land and support agricultural production” in Melbourne’s green wedge and peri-urban areas (Policy 1.4.1, Action 17).

Additionally, the SAL is not homogenous in terms of productivity and is very much dependent on soil type/landscape constraints/climate etc as per the "Assessment of Agricultural Land Capability in Melbourne's Green Wedge and Peri-urban Areas" Technical Report 2018. Extractive resources are distributed in pockets throughout Victoria. Some prime resources having been identified as Extractive Industry Interest Areas (EIIA). Extractive resources need to be located close to where they are being used to reduce carbon footprint and transport costs. It should also be noted that the percentage of land occupied by extractive industry operations is extremely small in comparison to agriculture.

The statement in the Technical Report that "*Certain existing land uses that preclude agriculture (e.g. urban areas, extractive industries) have not been considered at this stage.*" is somewhat concerning.

In the Fact Sheet "Protecting strategic agricultural land in Melbourne's green wedge and peri-urban areas" Figure 1: "*The area of this project – outside the urban growth boundary and within 100kms from central Melbourne.*". There are many extractive industry operations within the area highlighted as SAL in Figure 1. These work authorities and EIAs are readily identified on GeoVic (<http://earthresources.vic.gov.au/earth-resources/maps-reports-and-data/geovic>).

## Recommendations

1. That extractive industry operations and buffers be included as a permissible use of strategic agricultural land.
2. That applications for new work authorities/work plan variations be included as a permissible uses of strategic agricultural land.
3. That Extractive Industry Interest Areas are recognised within strategic agricultural land.
4. That strategic extractive resource areas are recognised within strategic agricultural land.

I would be happy to discuss our submission further at your invitation.

Yours sincerely



Dr Elizabeth Gibson  
General Manager