

A snapshot: Agricultural landscape across the Mornington Peninsula Shire

Fact Sheet series for the
Small Rural Landholder

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The Mornington Peninsula Shire is a composite mixture of urban settlements and rural landscapes. It has a total area of 720km² of which 30% is classified in the urban growth boundary and the remaining 70% designated Green Wedge Zone; a significant landscape zone providing numerous benefits including:

- opportunities for a diverse range of agricultural uses; protection of rural and high amenity landscapes;
- preservation of conservation areas close to where people live;
- protection of renewable and non-renewable resources and natural areas; and
- a network of open accessible spaces for the community.

Agricultural production

The Mornington Peninsula Shire is rich in diversity, scale and production capacity. Favourable climatic conditions, underpinned by a range of fertile soils, contribute to a unique natural landscape that supports a variety of high-quality food and fibre production systems.

Significant industries thrive in the landscape. These include poultry, fruit, vegetable, salad mix, olives, herbs, flowers, honey, vineyards, nurseries, livestock and fibre enterprises; along with an expanding diversity of niche enterprises including truffles, saffron, rare fruits, heritage breeds and wild foods.

The seasonal production diversity is an important risk management strategy for the region. The dynamics of annual production systems buffer impacts of specific climatic events (frost, hail, waterlogging, disease, crop failure); provide full-time employment and ensure secondary and tertiary industries benefit from consistent business (value added, transport, distribution, processing, sales).

Rural land parcel size

Small rural landholdings form an integral part of the landscape; the average size is estimated at 15.5ha. The economic viability of the majority of rural holdings is limited due to size; however, collectively there are significant tracts of highly fertile land needing to be managed for wider sustainable community benefits. Individual

landholders have an important role to play in terms of their collective contribution to 'catchment scale' sustainable land management.

There are also many landholders who do not farm on a commercial scale but have demonstrated their personal and financial capacity to invest in their properties to produce the best product they can. Their capital investment to improve their farms with new fencing and stock handling facilities, pasture improvement, machinery purchases, orchard establishment and use of local contract labour makes a significant contribution to the viability of other local businesses.

Landuse capability

Matching landuse and landscape capability to appropriate agricultural production systems is essential to protect, preserve and enhance the natural resource base. The Shire plays a pivotal role in nurturing a resilient local foodbowl to support regional and urban demands for long term food security.

Local food and fibre production systems **ARE** important economic landuse assets within the Green Wedge Zone. They contribute significant financial and flow-on benefits to the Shire's economy; and investment in private land management contributes to the protection and enhancement of regional amenity.



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COMMON GROUND



Mornington Peninsula Shire is an important peri-urban agricultural zone on the edge of Melbourne. It has the capacity to supply key markets with a consistent supply of high-quality fresh vegetables, fruits, salad mix, meats, wine and value-added condiments. Seasonal diversity, climate, soils and water quality are a risk management strength for agribusiness.

The economic viability of many rural holdings is limited due to size; however, collectively there are significant tracts of highly fertile land that are managed for wider sustainable community benefits. In effect agriculture has a meaningful role within the landscape that benefits the region and beyond in terms of contributions to broader food security.



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For general information contact:

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What can you do?

Does your property qualify for the Mornington Peninsula Agricultural Rate?

Mornington Peninsula Shire offers the Mornington Peninsula Agricultural Rate. Properties must firstly be classified as "farm land" in accordance with the provisions of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*. For information about if your property qualifies as farm land, please contact the Shire on: 5950 1090.

Join the Shire's Small Rural Landholder Network

at agriculture@mornpen.vic.gov.au

This network was established to encourage local rural landholders to actively network amongst themselves; and build technical knowledge and skills to enhance agricultural production systems, critical thinking and on-ground action.

Read the Shire's Agricultural Audit

www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Services_For_You/Business_Support/Business_Programs/Agriculture_Matters

Contact the Shire's Rural Business Officer

on 1300 850 600 to access local knowledge and support for your agribusiness.



Disclaimer: Western Port Catchment Landcare Network (WPCLN)

All effort has been made to give true representation, provide accurate information and apply comprehensive knowledge to this document. However, WPCLN does not guarantee the accuracy nor the conclusions drawn from this information and therefore should not be relied upon solely for decision making purposes.