



Julie

13/02/2009 05:23 PM

To veac@dse.vic.gov.au

cc

bcc

Subject VEAC Metropolitan Melbourne Submission

Metropolitan Melbourne

Sub:

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No: 79

Hello,

Unfortunately I don't have time to make a lengthy submission around public land in Melbourne, however I just wanted to raise one issue around the value of public land.

I think it's very important to consider the value of public land as a location for urban agriculture projects.

This submission is made in relation to the 2nd point in the terms of reference:

"assess values of Crown land, and public authority land for areas not committed to a specific use, and report on appropriate future uses relevant to Melbourne's liveability and natural values;"

Public land could be used for urban agriculture in a number of ways. Groups such as CERES leasing the land, Council's running community gardens, individuals leasing land for small plots (especially as urban housing density increases). Urban agriculture on public land might include using the land for growing food, for demonstrating horticultural best practice and training interested individuals, or land for community markets (to sell produce grown).

I believe urban agriculture in community settings (such as on crown land) will increase Melbourne's liveability.

Of course urban agriculture is not appropriate on all parcels of public land, but it would be relevant on some types of land and could be particularly relevant for public land that is far from pristine and has little conservation or recreational value. Small bits of public land in railway corridors, road and creek reservations could be enhanced significantly by encouraging community management of the land in urban agriculture.

Urban agriculture is important for Melbourne in a range of fields, including enhancing food security (especially for those communities experiencing food shortages or 'food insecurity'), enhancing community and social participation, increasing people's connection to nature (this has physical and mental health well being implications as well as implications for people's knowledge and care for the land). Organisations such as CERES and Cultivating Community could provide much more information on these topics.

I would be interested in contributing further on this topic if this is considered useful as your report progresses.

Thankyou

Julie Francis