

## AMENDMENT C87gpla – INVERLEIGH STRUCTURE PLAN

SUBMISSION FORM – The impact on the sustainability and health of small scale intensive agricultural businesses.

I am opposed to elements of Amendment C87 to the Golden Plains Planning Scheme for the following reasons:

Inverleigh has a diverse group of intensive small scale agricultural businesses which, given a situation where there is a lack of diversity in block sizes, are at an increased risk of a decrease in their sustainability and health. Diversity in block sizes is essential to allowing people the country lifestyle choice and encouraging the Council's own position of supporting and promoting productive and sustainable agricultural and rural enterprises (See 3.9 Golden Plains Rural Land Use Strategy). Examples of such businesses are as follows:

- a. Berry Organic in Savage Drive Inverleigh, are a mid-sized family owned and operated 5 acre Berry Organic Farm, producing premium quality Certified Organic Berries. Even though this is considered a non-traditional berry growing location, it has not deterred this family from growing outstanding quality berries. These fruits are renowned for their superior quality and flavour. Excess fruit is made into the Berry Organic range of jams and chutneys which are all certified 100% organic. Certified organic vegetables and other fruits may also be on offer.
- b. Vortex Veggies is a 16 acre certified Australian Demeter Biodynamic family owned and operated market garden since 1997, in Weatherboard Road, Inverleigh. They have consciously remained a manageable size operation so as to remain hands on in all areas of production and to maintain the integrity and quality of their produce. ABC TV's Landline featured this Inverleigh business on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 2019. With rezoning in Weatherboard Road to LRDZ areas after the broiler farm closes in 2020, it will result in most of that Road being surrounded on 3 sides by homes.
- c. Leighgrove Olives is a family owned and operated boutique olive grove, located on a picturesque stretch of the Barwon River. The 4500 tree olive grove is producing extra virgin olive oil of the finest quality. The cool climate conditions with a long, slow ripening period, together with the rich pastoral soils, results in oil of particularly deep, full flavoured characteristics. With more than ten different olive tree varieties originating from Tuscany, Greece and Spain, the range of flavours and styles of oil makes each season's harvest an exciting time at Leighgrove. Some are very fruity, whilst others are quite peppery and robust, each with its own character. In a true boutique way, the family's aim is to offer the finest quality they can achieve in a choice of styles to suit both differing tastes and culinary uses – to compliment all cooking. They are not bound by big supermarket demands for exactly the same taste each year – indeed the annual variations in temperatures, rainfall and quantities of fruit harvested are a welcome addition to the exclusive nature of their oil. The well-documented health benefits obtained by incorporating extra virgin olive oil into your daily diet is reason enough to insist on the best available product. Being a no-cholesterol monounsaturated fat, it contains the 'good fats' which in turn fight the 'bad fats'. The high level of Polyphenols are antioxidants which enhance the activity of the immune system. To ensure the retention of these, these olives are grown in accordance with modern, environmentally responsible practices, harvested at peak condition and processed quickly under modern hygienic conditions. This attention to

quality is what makes the difference to the final product – another reason to look for small, boutique grown oil where the grower knows the trees and the product intimately, and is not constrained by the demands of large-scale mass productions, where uniqueness of product is so often lost. On this same property The Farmgate Olive Shop sell home cure manzanillo or kalamata olives, sicilian olive relish, olive salt and dukkah all made by Leighgrove Olives, as well as soaps, skin creams and moisturisers, French provincial table linen and gifts.

- d. Jennings Honey is a family owned and operated bee keeping business situated on 2.3 acres in Common Road. The Jennings Family have kept bees for the past 25 years. They manage their own apiaries and their bees produce the best quality honey possible from healthy hives. Only the surplus is harvested, so the bees stay healthy. Their honey contains pollen, is 100% pure Australian and is cold extracted and a real hit with locals and visitors to the Inverleigh Lifestyle and Produce Market.
- e. Leigh River Roses is a family owned and operated business on Hopes Plains Road, Inverleigh. Grown in full sun on the fertile Western Plains of Inverleigh, Leigh River Roses grow roses the way nature intended – full of colour and full of scent. They grow a large range of garden roses in every palette, including the highly sought after, David Austin Roses. Their collection has been specifically chosen for their scent, colour and suitability as a cut flower – roses that will delight your senses – and are highly sought after at markets all around Geelong and district.

With the planned increase in population, associated with a blanket approval of 0.4 ha blocks, this will result in a lack of diversity of block size. With new homes and gardens comes the predicted increase in the frequency of use of herbicides and pesticides in people's gardens. The impact of such herbicides and pesticides on biodynamic and organic businesses from prevailing winds, will be detrimental to the health of these businesses. It would take approximately 2 years for these businesses to have their accreditation status restored if testing showed the presence of contaminating herbicides and pesticides. Therefore, overlays need to be put in place regarding the use of non-organic pesticides and herbicides within the areas of planned development.

Diversity in block sizes is essential to allowing people the country lifestyle choice (something that was repeatedly highlighted in the Golden Plains Shire Inverleigh Structure Plan 2017 survey results) and encouraging the Council's own position of supporting and promoting productive and sustainable agricultural and rural enterprises (See 3.9 Golden Plains Rural Land Use Strategy). A blanket 0.4 hectare block size results in no future businesses of these types which is contrary to both documents mentioned above.

<https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/RESULTS%20OF%20THE%20INVERLEIGH%20STRUCTURE%20PLAN%20SURVEY%202017.pdf>