

## **Scarce agricultural land: the failure of Australian planning law and practice**

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The sprawl and almost uncontrolled growth of Australian cities such as Sydney has starkly confronted spatial planning with the unresolved interplay of competing public and private urbanisation actors with the compelling need to accommodate an increasingly scarce (and valuable) complex of competing agricultural property rights. The growing evident inability of spatial planning to understand the peri-urban interface and the complex situations at this interface requires a deeper grasp of the interaction between property rights and the capacities of spatial planning, than hitherto gained.

Agricultural property rights also comprise an untidy and complex mixture of natural resources encompassing surface and subsurface mineral deposits, aquifers, ambient and impounded surface waters, intensive agribusinesses, rangelands and horticultural activities, amongst others.

This paper proposes that a finer grain approach at the intersection of spatial planning, law, and property rights is now urgently needed, if scarce and conflicted agricultural property rights in the peri-urban milieu can be successfully mediated in the face of almost irresistible urbanisation demands.

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