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COUNCIL DISCUSSION (AFTER APPROVAL TO GO AHEAD)

BUSINESS — APPROPRIATE FOR

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Fallout over market plan

By Casey Neill

A proposed Bangholme produce market cleared another hurdle but is a long way from the finishing line.

Greater Dandenong councillors approved the DandyFresh development for green wedge-zoned land in Harwood Road at their Monday 26 June council meeting, six votes to two.

But Cr Matthew Kirwan, who voted against the proposal with Cr Loi Truong, lodged a rescission motion that brought the matter back to the Monday 10 July meeting.

He asked councillors to take back their decision and was adamant that the council's own policy said the market was not appropriate in the green wedge.

The proposal included a 5000 square metre sterilisation facility and 8700 square metres of warehousing.

"This is completely disregarding the zoning we've all agreed to," he said.

"This is not rural industry.

"It is a large-scale commercial industrial food enterprise.

"It belongs in an industrial zone."

Only Cr Maria Sampey sided with Cr Kirwan. Crs Youhorn Chea, Sean O'Reilly, Jim Memeti, Heang Tak and Tim Dark voted to stick with the decision to approve the market.

But Defenders of the South East Green Wedge secretary Barry Ross said the group would take the matter to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) in a last-ditch bid to have it blocked.

Dandenong resident Sylvia Mastrogiovanni said shutting down the project would not cost the community the 200 jobs slated.

"It could still be built in the industrial area where it belongs, and the jobs would still be there," she said.

Her husband Charlie told the Journal there was "plenty of land to build this on in Dandenong that's not in the green wedge".

"When the green wedge land is gone it's gone forever," he said.

Cr Sampey's opposition was based on her concerns about the sterilisation process.



DandyFresh CEO Rod Kerley at the Bangholme site in March last year.

"It's dealing with radiation equipment and gamma rays," she said.

She said things could go wrong and it was dangerous.

"I support the facility but it's in the wrong area. "Don't laugh, Cr Dark, it's not a joke," she said in response to Cr Dark's struggles to contain his laughter as Cr Sampey spoke about nuclear waste.

He responded: "There is absolutely no chance DandyFresh will be manufacturing nuclear weapons."

He supported the market.

"By bringing produce closer, we bring down the food miles," he said.

"The food gets from the farm to people's home quicker.

"It's much fresher.

"The area is prime already for development.

"The industrial areas are moving towards the buffer zone."

Cr Sean O'Reilly said "hopefully the decision won't rest on whether modern day food processing is safe or not" in reference to Cr Sampey's objection.

"The primary purpose of this facility is as a market," he said.

"In any market you've got to have storage. "You can call it warehousing and say this application automatically hits the fence.

"We don't want to lose this opportunity to improve the supply chain of fresh local produce in the south-east when we know there's ongoing population growth."

DandyFresh CEO Rod Kerley said the development was appropriate in the green wedge and he was "happy to go to VCAT".

Intrapac Property managing director David Payes said Intrapac was a joint venture partner with some investors on the land and also an investor in DandyFresh.