

Agricultural Capability, Underbank Stud Farm, Bacchus Marsh *for* Private client, May 2014

Underbank Farm comprises 168ha of rural land in the Bacchus Marsh district of which 153ha is intended for residential development. The land is subject to a rezoning proposal.

Most of the property has a rolling to hilly landform and is of low agricultural capability due to the interaction of climate, landform and soil type characteristics. However, there is an area of alluvial floodplains associated with the Werribee River and Korkuperrimul Creek that forms part of the Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District.

Phillips Agribusiness was commissioned to assess the agricultural capability of the land identified as suitable for horticultural use and to consider what impact its removal would have on the viability of the Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District.

The report concluded that the alluvial flats are potentially suited to intensive agriculture by virtue of their topography, soil characteristics and the availability of a water right for irrigation. However, given their current degraded condition and the capital cost of rehabilitation to horticultural standard, the likelihood of this occurring is low.

In converting the land to residential use, the loss to the irrigation district is unlikely to be significant as it has never made any useful contribution to horticultural activity, is relatively isolated from the main growing area and its water supply readily transferable to other horticultural properties.