Community submission on EPBC Referral 2025/10340 – Cranbourne South

I am writing as a long-term resident of Cranbourne South who cares deeply about this place, its history, and what kind of future we are leaving for the generations that come after us.

I have lived in this area long enough to remember when the Green Wedge felt real, not just symbolic. It was a genuine break between suburbs. Roads were quieter, wildlife was more visible, and there was a clear sense that some land was being protected because once it was gone, it could never be replaced. Over the years, I have watched that boundary slowly erode. Each new development has chipped away at what was meant to be safeguarded.

The proposal for a large-scale place of worship at 1390–1450 Western Port Highway feels like a tipping point.

I want to be very clear that I have no objection to places of worship or cultural institutions. They are an important part of a healthy, diverse society. My concern is not about belief or culture. It is about scale, location, and the long-term consequences of placing an urban-scale development into land that was never intended to carry that level of activity.

What is being proposed is not a small or locally scaled facility. It is a major destination, attracting thousands of visitors every day, with peak attendance of up to 10,500 people, supported by very large buildings, extensive sealed areas and approximately 1,500 car parking spaces. This level of intensity would permanently transform the character of the land and its surrounds.

Once that transformation occurs, there is no going back.

As a long-term resident, what worries me most is not just the immediate construction, but the slow and lasting impacts that follow. Wildlife does not disappear overnight. Habitat becomes fragmented bit by bit. Roads become busier and harder to cross. Lighting stays on into the night. Noise becomes constant. Gradually, animals that once moved through the landscape simply stop appearing.

Species like the Southern Brown Bandicoot do not need to be seen every day for the damage to be real. They rely on connected habitat and safe movement corridors to survive. When those connections are broken, populations decline quietly, out of sight. I have seen this happen before, and I fear we are watching it happen again.

The Green Wedge was meant to protect against exactly this kind of gradual loss. It was supposed to act as a line in the sand, recognising that some land is too important to be consumed by urban-scale development, no matter how well intentioned the proposal may be.

Water is another deep concern. This land drains toward Western Port, an area already under environmental stress. Over many years, residents have seen how

changes to drainage, increased hard surfaces and altered water flows can have lasting consequences. Sealing large areas of land and modifying drainage may be described as manageable in reports, but once groundwater systems and wetlands are disrupted, those impacts are often irreversible.

I am also troubled by the Aboriginal cultural heritage implications. This land sits within an area of known cultural heritage sensitivity, yet a completed Cultural Heritage Management Plan was not in place at the time of referral. As someone who has lived here for a long time, I believe we have a responsibility to treat Aboriginal heritage with respect and care, not as an issue to be resolved later once key decisions are already made. Cultural heritage cannot be replaced or repaired once it is damaged.

What concerns me most is the sense that this proposal asks the community to accept permanent environmental and cultural loss in exchange for a development that could be located in an urban setting designed to accommodate this scale of activity. Once Green Wedge land is treated as interchangeable with urban land, the very idea of the Green Wedge loses meaning.

Environmental laws exist to protect places like this when development pressure becomes overwhelming. They exist to slow things down, to require caution, and to ensure that decisions are made with a full understanding of long-term consequences - not just short-term benefits.

As a long-term resident, I believe this proposal crosses that line. The scale, intensity and permanence of the impacts are simply too great, and too much remains uncertain.

I respectfully ask that the Commonwealth treat EPBC Referral 2025/10340 as a **Controlled Action**, requiring full and rigorous environmental assessment, or refuse it if those impacts cannot be avoided. The Green Wedge is not empty land waiting for development. It is a shared legacy. Once it is gone, it is gone forever.