

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council

Remnant Native Vegetation Investigation

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pursuant to section 15 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001* the Minister for Environment and Climate Change hereby requests the Council to carry out an investigation of remnant native vegetation on Crown land and public authority land outside of largely-intact landscapes* across Victoria to identify opportunities for ecological linkages.

The purposes of the investigation are to:

- (a) identify and evaluate the condition, values, resources and uses of these areas of remnant native vegetation and associated fauna outside largely intact landscapes;
- (b) assess these areas for their connectivity and contribution to sustainable landscapes in relation to climate change;
- (c) report on the contribution of these areas of remnant native vegetation to biodiversity conservation, recreation activities, community uses, commercial opportunities, services and utilities in the context of improving connectivity with largely-intact landscapes and freehold land; and
- (d) report on opportunities for management to achieve improved ecological connectivity.

In addition to the considerations specified in Section 18 of the *VEAC Act*, the Council must also take into consideration relevant State Government policies, programs, strategies and Ministerial Statements, and relevant regional programs, strategies and plans.

The Council is required to consult the community in accordance with the *VEAC Act*, to release a Discussion Paper, and to submit a Final Report on the results of its investigation. The Final Report must be submitted by March 2010.

* Largely-Intact landscapes have been defined for the purposes of Net Gain Accounting for the Native Vegetation Management Framework as 'contiguous areas of native vegetation greater than 20,000 ha, with high Landscape Context scores and Site Condition scores that are high (or if scores are not high, this is primarily due to natural or semi-natural disturbances)'.