

VEAC extends deadline for public to make submissions into Central West Investigation draft recommendations

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) has extended the submission deadline for its Central West Investigation Draft Proposals Paper [from 31 October to Monday 10 December](#) this year, giving members of the public more time to provide a written submission.

The decision to provide extra time comes on the back of VEAC holding a number of well attended public drop-in events throughout the investigation area in which community members requested more time to consider the information supplied and to develop their submissions. “There is a lot of interest in the draft recommendations and we want to provide people with the information and time they need to prepare their submissions so we have extended the submission closing date,” explains VEAC Chair Janine Haddow.

Ms Haddow encourages community members and groups to continue to provide their views in response to VEAC’s draft recommendations which address a range of key issues in the investigation area including Traditional Owner interests, ecosystem representation in protected areas (national parks and conservation reserves), threatened species, recreation, resource uses, headwaters, climate change and landscape connectivity.

“We’ve had a number of submissions already and we encourage people to continue to express their views,” she says. All submissions will be reviewed and analysed and taken into account in preparing VEAC’s final recommendations ahead of VEAC providing a Final Report to the Government in 2019.

VEAC is continuing to meet with interested people within the investigation area and with recreational groups, local government and community organisations. The extended deadline allows more time for these targeted meetings to take place after the school holidays and allow sufficient time after that to prepare submissions, Ms Haddow said.

The release of the draft proposals paper is the second stage in which VEAC invites public input into this investigation which was requested in 2017 by the Hon. Lily D’Ambrosio, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

The Central West Investigation covers public land in the vicinity of the Wombat, Wellsford, Mount Cole and Pyrenees Range forests and the terms of reference are to: identify and evaluate the condition, natural and biodiversity values and cultural, social and economic values and the current uses of public land in the specified area; and make recommendations for the balanced use and appropriate management arrangements to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural values.

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