

Submission by Friends of Banyule
VEAC Statewide Assessment of Public Lands
22 June 2015

Friends of Banyule submits that public land is an extremely significant resource of major, lasting benefit and incalculable value, to the community and the State.

Its environmental benefits include forest coverage, land stability and rain harvesting environment creation around our water catchments and waterways, helping to protect our rivers and preserve native flora and fauna and wider ecosystems.

We strongly support the proposal for a State Forest National Park to protect these crucial environments and our waterways. We believed logging in these environmentally significant areas should be discontinued as any short term perceived gains would be negated by long term ecological damage.

A moratorium should also be placed on any new licences for coal mining as well as coal seam gas extraction due to potential negative environmental impacts on waterways, air pollution and public health. Proponents of these projects should be required to clean up and re mediate these sites.

Areas of public land along our waterways including in existing urban and new growth areas, should be preserved and enhanced. This includes Green Wedge locations in and around urban areas as well as native grasslands and basaltic plains, subject to development pressures and urban expansion.

Public open space provides recreational and health benefits to communities and the wider public. It also provides cooling mitigation from the heat island effect of urban development and offsets increasing temperatures, as a result of climate change. Green open space and tree canopy is increasingly becoming a key element in urban planning and design, of cities internationally. Melbourne and Victoria are well endowed with green space and tree cover around its waterways and former agricultural land in proximity to urban areas but which we increasingly need to protect as our cities develop.

We should ensure that public open space including former farmland is protected from inappropriate development. Developers who are land banking should be required to preserve sufficient open space on new developments, for preservation of existing environments, provision of public open space, public health and recreational benefits and include mandatory green urban design principles. A financial contribution to infrastructure and the environment should be made. These considerations should be fundamental elements of local as well as state planning schemes.

A strategy for the enhancement and protection of public land in Victoria should be developed to ensure the preservation of this most precious and important public resource for current and future generations. The public and community groups should be strongly involved in this process.

Dennis O'Connell
President

Marion Ware
Vice President

Friends of Banyule PO Box 577 Heidelberg 3084

friendofbanyule@gmail.com
www.friendsofbanyule.org

