

07 July 2015

Dear Ms Joan Phillips
Executive Officer
Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
PO Box 500
East Melbourne, Victoria 3002

Email: veac@delwp.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Phillips,

State-wide Assessment of Public Land

I am writing to provide initial comments to contribute to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's State-wide Assessment of Public Land.

This VEAC investigation presents an opportunity to do a stocktake public land across the State, look at improved management structures of isolated patches of public land as well as improve the public's awareness of the purpose of each public land use category.

The VFF does not have any initial concerns with the current categorisation of public land. More important to VFF membership, is that public land is placed in the most relevant category given its specific values and that land management responsibilities and relevant legislation can be publicly assessable. A more transparent and accountable system for categorising public land use types and where land management responsibilities lie would be supported.

The VFF has also received feedback from members that some isolated patches of public land may be more effectively and efficiently managed by adjoining agricultural landowners through sale or long term leasing. Specifically, that there are some small blocks of public land that are neglected in terms of invasive species management, this may be because they are in remote locations and the sites are not well known to the public land manager.

There may be opportunities to achieve better environmental outcomes for small blocks of isolated land particularly in terms of weed and pest control. For example, an old school site that has never been developed but adjoins an agricultural property could be better managed by an adjoining landowner. The block could be leased or sold for agricultural production and the resulting site may be better managed in terms of weed and pest control, reducing the burden on public resources.

If these sites have environmental values they could be sold with covenants to protect the environmental assets of significance.

Farming members have also highlighted the opportunity to consider where floodways could be better managed by the Catchment Management Authorities rather than Parks Victoria.

Noting the Terms of Reference for this review to focus on the categorisation of public land, the VFF believes that this review also presents opportunity to do a stocktake of public land across the

State and consider where sites could be better managed by adjoining landowners. Further, the investigation may help to improve the public's understanding of land use categories and their relevant management frameworks. The VFF is not aware of any significant issues with the current categories used.

Should you have any questions regarding this letter, Emily Waters, VFF Senior Policy Advisor Land Management on 0408 022 518 or ewaters@vff.org.au.

Yours Sincerely

Gerald Leach

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. W. Leach". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "W".

Chair of VFF Land Management Committee