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22 June 2015

Victorian Environmental Assessments Council  
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### **State-wide Assessment of Public Land**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the State-wide Assessment of Public Land in relation to Victoria's Public Land Use Categories.

The North East Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is obligated under the CaLP Act 1994 to perform its functions and provide its services in a manner consistent with a number of guiding principles. The following three are the main guiding principles to:

- Facilitate and coordinate the management of catchments in an integrated and sustainable manner;
- Take a sustainable approach by balancing social, economic and environmental outcomes; and
- Plan and make decisions within an integrated catchment management context;

With reference to the North East Regional Catchment Strategy, the region has been categorised as five landscapes or social ecological systems. These have been defined: Urban, Agricultural, Lifestyle, and Forest and Alpine. An important reason why people choose to either live or visit the North East region is to the natural and cultural values as well as the recreational opportunities on offer. With the region being made up of 55% public land, the North East CMA has an interest in how the public land is managed.

The consideration of "social ecological systems" which forms the foundation of the whole of catchment management for the North East reflects contemporary thinking regarding land use and should now be incorporated into future land use categories. Furthermore it is accepted internationally that the IUCN categories have not resulted in achieving the conservation outcome sought and thus a new approach that is based on whole of system thinking and thus the landscape approach we have taken should be considered. This would result in additional categories of land use that would include the emerging PPA (Private Protected Area), IPA (Indigenous Protected Area) and Urban National Park concepts.


With these in mind, the North East CMA would like to highlight areas where the number of Public Land Use Categories may be able to be rationalised by combining different types of public land that are being managed for a similar outcome. The North East CMA is particularly interested in the public land that is currently managed for the conservation of natural or cultural outcomes but allows for recreational activities to be permitted.

The categories "Nature conservation reserve" and "Natural features reserve" could be combined. These reserves are generally small in size with the main outcome being conservation of either the natural values such as a threatened species or communities, or of natural features. Based on the figures provides in the *Fact Sheet: State-wide Assessment of Public Land* (VEAC, 2015) by combining these three categories the new class would cover approximately 643100 ha making it the 5<sup>th</sup> largest public land category and potentially allowing for efficiencies to be gained in the management of this type of public land.

There are a number of categories where the management outcome is conservation but allowing for additional recreational uses that could be rationalised into one category including: Other parks (conservation), Forest park, and Coastal reserve. Whilst the three categories may have different levels of emphasis on the amount of recreational use allowed. As the majorities of these reserves are small, there would be efficiencies gained in managing these types of reserves in a consistent manner whilst having a risk framework in place to ensure the allowed recreational activities were not impacting on the natural values of the sites. The total area of these three categories would be 123900 ha.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this section of the Investigation into the State-wide Assessment of Public Land, and look forward to providing further input into the investigation as it progresses. Please don't hesitate to contact myself or Jane Young on [jane.young@necma.vic.gov.au](mailto:jane.young@necma.vic.gov.au) (02 6043 7612) if you require further information or clarification on this submission.

Yours sincerely



Neil McCarthy

**Chief Executive Officer**