



Our reference: DOC/16/41823

8 November 2016

Hon. Phil Honeywood
Chairperson
Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
PO Box 500
East Melbourne, VIC 3002

Dear VEAC

Statewide Assessment of Public Land Draft Proposals Paper

Mount Alexander Shire would like to thank VEAC for this opportunity to respond to the Draft Proposals Paper on the Statewide Assessment of Public Land. I was especially pleased that the valuable work of local government in managing public land was recognised by seeking responses directly from the sector.

Public land management has a great impact on our municipal operations, community and economy. Council is an appointed Committee of Management for 70 Crown Land properties, and regularly provides grants to community groups wishing to undertake conservation projects on public land.

Within our municipality we have numerous public land areas; Mount Alexander Regional Park, Fryers Ridge, Kaweka, Muckleford, Bells Swamp, Walmer and Walmer South Nature Conservation Reserves, Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park and Maldon Historic and Cultural Features Reserve. There are also large areas of State Forest, Crown reserves and buildings.

Civic Centre
Cnr Lyttleton and Lloyd Sts
P.O Box 185 Castlemaine VIC 3450
t (03) 5471 1700
e info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au
w www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au
abn 12 966 477 062

Our submission is primarily concerned with **Draft Recommendation 1**, the proposed revision of primary public land use categories.

The largest area of public land within our municipality is the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park (CDNHP). This park was created as a new land category to recognise and protect outstanding historic cultural landscapes. CDNHP has outstanding cultural values, is listed on the National Heritage List and is also listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. It has high natural values with eight vulnerable EVCs, and nine threatened flora and fauna species in a regenerating Box-Ironbark Forest.

The CDNHP also has cultural value for the Dja Dja Wurrung, who now have a Recognition and Settlement Agreement over an area which includes the park. To see indigenous values more widely recognised in land classification categories would be a positive development in the future. I note a move toward this with Draft Recommendation 8, and commend this.

In the meantime, I believe the term Heritage Park is an important means of signifying the difference between the CDNHP and other National Parks. The park was declared in 2002 specifically to protect outstanding relic mining landscapes and sites, and there has been no change in this. In fact the values of the CDNHP now includes an assessment of Outstanding Universal Values which makes it eligible to be assessed for inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage List. For these reasons I believe that the unique classification should remain, and in fact be applied to other areas which are protected for their historic and cultural values.

I recognise there is a tension between the terms natural values and cultural values and that there is a move among landscape professionals to remove what is seen as an arbitrary distinction. However in this instance, the distinction is an important one.

I would also like to clarify that the current unique system of permitted uses for the Heritage Park, such as prospecting and mining, would remain under a new classification of National Park.

Mount Alexander Shire does not have issues with the proposed revision of the Nature Conservation Reserves, Historic and Cultural Features Reserve or the Regional Park. These changes to nomenclature will have no adverse effects and will in fact simplify understanding around reasons for reservation of land.

Draft Recommendation 19 is especially pertinent to the communities of Mount Alexander. There are 28 Committees of Management who volunteer their time and energy to manage public land in the Shire, with little support and almost no oversight. Provision of regional support for our volunteer committees could only be welcomed.

For further information on this submission please feel free to contact Sera-Jane Peters, Heritage Officer, on 5471 1827

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Fuzzard', with a small flourish at the end.

DARREN FUZZARD
Chief Executive Officer