



Environment Victoria submission to VEAC Statewide Assessment of Public Land Draft Proposals Paper

Environment Victoria is the state's peak non-government, not-for-profit environment organisation. We welcome VEAC's assessment of public land and support many of the recommendations to simplify the categorisation of public land and the priorities for further assessment and review. We offer the following specific comments.

Recommendation R1

We support the simplification of an overly complex system. However further improvements could be made to the classification in Table 1 to improve public understanding of the system.

The new 'Recreation Park' category is a concern, as it brings a wide variety of disparate types of parks into a single category. Some of these (especially current Regional parks) have much higher natural values than others, and could better be kept separate or included in 'Nature reserve'.

The remaining category of 'Natural Features reserve' now only contains areas that are protected. These would be better placed in the 'Nature reserve' category.

The terminology 'Water frontage' and 'bed and banks' causes endless confusion in the community – where do these begin and end? Simpler terminology such as 'Streamside Reserve' would be easier to understand.

The classification of Mineral springs as 'Resource reserve' is problematic. It would seem to classify the spring as a resource rather than as a public good or groundwater dependent ecosystem. Mineral springs would be better in the 'Community use reserve' category.

Recommendation R3

We are concerned that recommendations (f) and (h) could effectively allow individuals with a particular agenda to be entrenched in a position of power, and could lead to inappropriate uses becoming established in areas under management. We suggest the current system of 3 year terms be maintained for committees of management, with the option of members being able to nominate for reappointment.

Recommendation R8

We strongly support a legislated 'Aboriginal land' public land overlay.

Recommendation R9

We do not support the first part of the paragraph proposing new legislation, as it invites a rewriting of any or all parts of the National Parks Act with an open-ended time frame. The National Parks Act has stood the test of time well and is NOT in need of major revision. We do support the second part of this paragraph, enabling amendments to the National Parks Act to allow for the re-categorisation of public land.

Recommendations R11 – R15

We support all these recommendations, especially the three investigations listed under R11, and recommendation R12. The impacts of climate change will be felt across all reserved areas, not just coastal reserves, and it is important to test that the current system will continue to be effective in a different future. VEAC might like to recommend that climate change impacts be assessed across all public land categories.

VEAC could also consider recommending the immediate gazettal of the Murray River Park, for which legislation is already in place (Crown Lands (Reserves) Act s47BA).

For further information regarding this submission, please contact:

Juliet Le Feuvre
Healthy Rivers Campaigner
Environment Victoria,
Level 2, 60 Leicester St,
Carlton VIC 3053
Phone: 03 9341 8106 or , email j.lefeuvre@environmentvictoria.org.au

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