

13 October 2016

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
PO Box 500
8 Nicholson St
East Melbourne Vic 8002

Dear Sir/Madam

Statewide Assessment of Public Land Discussion Paper 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Statewide Assessment of Public Land Discussion Paper 2016.

Bass Coast Shire Council welcomes the Statewide Assessment of Public Land and congratulates the VEAC on a comprehensive and well written document.

Council has a strong focus on the natural environment, sustainable development and growth together with effective governance with key strategic objectives in the *Council Plan 2013-2017* being:

Our unique natural environment is protected, maintained and enhanced for the enjoyment of all.

Our built environment complements our landscape, lifestyle and climate

Our leadership will be achieved through good governance, community engagement and excellence in service delivery.

Council's *Natural Environment Strategy 2016-26* supports protection and enhancement of indigenous vegetation, and recognises that one of our biggest challenges is the loss of biodiversity.

Bass Coast Shire Council has a small amount of native vegetation remaining in the Shire, this includes the Strzelecki-Gippsland Plan cluster which is classified as an under represented EVC. Council are working on a biodiversity biolinks plan to connect the remaining native vegetation in the shire and agree that:

- Linear road and rail reserves have significant biodiversity values and reserves and make a major contribution to ecological connectivity

- Land used primarily for utilities and services often have significant secondary uses, particularly nature conservation and recreation

Council support these points and would like to see greater use of Crown land for ecological connectivity rather than grazing.

A goal from the Victorian Governments *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2036* is to:

Improve the overall extent and condition of native habitats across terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater environments by

- Increasing the number, extent and condition of ecosystems protected under secure conservation tenure, on both public and private land and waters;

One mechanism to achieve this goal would be to return Crown land reserves that are considered of high conservation significance to remnant protection and revegetation.

In closing Council support the proposed improvements to set out a clear approach to achieve the draft recommendations. With regard to the review of appropriate Land Classifications we would request that Local Councils assist in determining the appropriate land classification where that public land is owned by Council.

For further information on this matter please contact Ms Diana Whittington, Coordinator Land and Catchment on 1300 BCOAST (226 278) / (03) 5671 2125 or via email at d.whittington@basscoast.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



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