

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001

**Assessment of the values of state forests
in the Central Highlands**

Terms of Reference

Pursuant to section 26B of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Minister for Environment hereby requests the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (the Council) to carry out an assessment of the values of state forests in the Central Highlands. The state forest in the Central Highlands are shown on the accompanying map.

The assessment will inform the work of an Eminent Panel for Community Engagement (the Panel) in its provision of advice and recommendations to the Minister for Environment on the future uses of state forest in the Central Highlands.

The purpose of the assessment is to:

- (a) identify the biodiversity, ecological and geological and geomorphological values of the specified area
- (b) identify the cultural heritage, social and economic values of the specified area
- (c) identify the current and likely future threats to those values, including climate change
- (d) identify the typical land use categories commensurate with the identified values
- (e) assess the potential economic implications of proposed land use changes recommended by the Panel and provided to the Council.

This assessment will build upon the Council's *Conservation values of state forests - Assessment report* (2017) by providing a more localised assessment of the values of these areas.

The Council is required to consider the values referred to above at the relevant state, regional and local levels, including their occurrence in existing protected areas and on other public land.

This request is for an assessment and report on the above values. Public consultation and recommendations are not required.

The Council will engage with the Panel regarding the content of the Council's assessment.

The Council must publish its assessment of the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (d) above by 15 December 2023 and submit a report on the completed assessment by one month after the Government publicly releases the Panel's report on Central Highlands state forest.

Attachment 1: State forest in Central Highlands (light green) and Immediate Protection Areas (red lines)

