

3 November 2016

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
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To the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council

Statewide Assessment of Public Land Discussion Paper and Draft Proposals Paper

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) welcomes the opportunity to provide a brief response to the Statewide Assessment of Public Land Discussion Paper and Draft Proposals Paper.

The MAV is the statutory peak body for local government in Victoria. Formed in 1879, we have a long and proud history of representing and advancing the interests of all Victorian councils.

Councils are an integral part of the public land management system including via their roles as Crown land committees of management, as managers of council freehold land, as planning authorities and as representatives of local communities.

The Draft Proposals Paper includes 19 recommendations broadly targeting public land classification, legislative reform, priorities for further assessment or review, improved information and information systems, and support for community-based committees of management.

It is the MAV's understanding, confirmed in recent discussions with a senior VEAC officer, that none of the recommendations will alter or affect who is responsible for managing particular areas of public land. It is important to note that the MAV and councils would oppose the transfer of any additional land management responsibilities to local government without a negotiated agreement that guarantees significant and secure resourcing and support for local government.

The Draft Proposals Paper notes that the proposed changes are also not intended to change the level of protection or the permitted uses on public land. Rather, the draft proposals aim to remove some of the impediments to effective land management confronted by committees of management operating under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act*. The MAV is supportive of this objective.

As noted in The Public Land Consultancy's 'Municipal Council Consultation' report prepared for VEAC, councils consider the current Act to be exceedingly difficult to navigate and operationalise. Councils also report that in the absence of State guidance and support, community-based Crown land committees of management frequently rely on councils for assistance. We therefore welcome recommendations 3(f), 3(h) and 19 which should help simplify committee of management decision making and administration and, importantly, provide much needed State support to community-based committees of management.

Should you have any queries about this matter, please contact Claire Dunn, Environment and Regulatory Services Manager, on (03) 9667 5533.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rob Spence', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rob Spence
Chief Executive Officer