

MAKING A SUBMISSION

Written submissions will be received until 5 December 2003. These submissions will be considered in detail by VEAC in developing specific proposals for public land use in the study area for the Draft Proposals Paper, due in April 2004.

The primary purpose of the Discussion Paper is to inform the community about issues and approaches associated with public land use planning for a single National Park in the Otways and to initiate relevant submissions from interested people and organisations.

To assist those making submissions, the paper outlines specific approaches the council expects to consider in developing draft recommendations. Discussion points and key points for consideration are clearly highlighted. While stakeholders should not feel constrained by these discussion points or approaches when writing their submission, VEAC recommends those making submissions focus on:

- The purposes for which land within the study area is used by the stakeholder or the features of the land which are valued by the stakeholder;
- The impact or benefit of an extended National Park or other land use changes to current land uses or land values; and
- Any proposals or approaches VEAC should consider which are not already covered within the Discussion Paper.

The closing date for written submissions on this Discussion Paper is 5 December 2003. Submissions should be directed to:

Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
Level 3, 250 Victoria Parade
East Melbourne Vic 3002

Or via e-mail: veac@dse.vic.gov.au or Fax 9412 5153

For general enquiries VEAC can be contacted on phone 9412 5100 or Toll Free 1800 134 803

NOTE THAT ONLY SUBMISSIONS SENT DIRECTLY TO VEAC CAN BE TREATED AS SUBMISSIONS.

Unless specifically requested otherwise, all submissions to the Council will become public documents. If you wish your submission to be considered confidential, a written request with justification must accompany the submission. If the confidentiality request is not accepted, your submission will be returned to you.

Information contained in submissions may also be stored and used by VEAC or the Department of Sustainability and Environment, for purposes relating to the Angahook-Otway Investigation and subsequent government consideration of matters related to the investigation.

Availability of the Discussion Paper

The Discussion Paper costs \$10 plus postage where applicable (including GST). Copies can be obtained from Department of Sustainability and Environment and Parks Victoria offices in the study area and Colac and Geelong, or from:

DSE INFORMATION CENTRE

8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne Vic. 3002
Telephone: (03) 9637 8325
E-mail: publication.sales@nre.vic.gov.au

INFORMATION VICTORIA

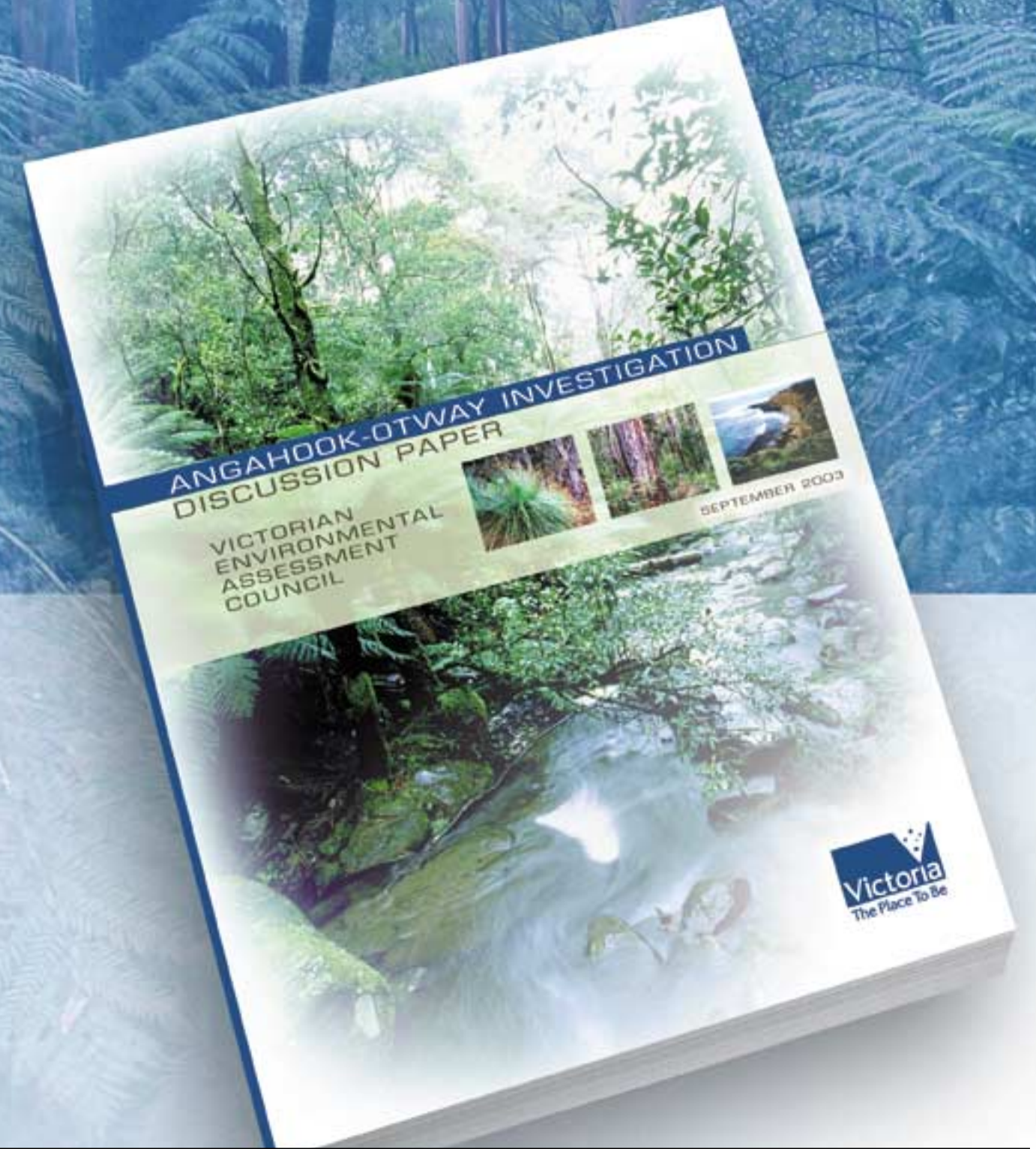
356 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000
E-mail: bookshop@dpc.vic.gov.au
or for phone orders 1300 366 356
(local call charge)

The report is also available on the
VEAC website: www.veac.vic.gov.au

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ANGAHOOK-OTWAY INVESTIGATION DISCUSSION PAPER SUMMARY

VICTORIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT COUNCIL



September 2003

Submissions are invited on the Discussion Paper until **Friday 5 December 2003**.

Details of how to obtain a copy of the full Discussion Paper and how to make a submission are on the back of this brochure.



WHAT IS VEAC?

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) was established in 2002 – under the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001* – to replace the Environment Conservation Council (ECC) as the body providing the State Government with independent advice on strategic public land use planning. VEAC Councillors are appointed by and report directly to the Minister for the Environment. The current five Councillors are Dr Brian Robinson (chair), Dr Sarah Ewing, Mr Duncan Malcolm, Dr David Mercer and Mrs Eda Ritchie. A brief biography of each of the Council members is available at www.veac.vic.gov.au

The Council only makes recommendations related to public land and has no power to make recommendations over private land. The Council, does however, take into account the impact that private land activities may have on adjoining public land, and the impact that recommendations may have on adjoining private land.

THE ANGAHOOK-OTWAY INVESTIGATION

The Minister's request for the Angahook-Otway Investigation was received on 17 February 2003. VEAC then published a Notice of Investigation in statewide and local newspapers on (and shortly after) 22 February. This notice contained the Terms of Reference and information about making submissions on the matters to be considered. The Terms of Reference require VEAC to publish a Discussion Paper and a Draft Proposals Paper, and to submit the Final Report to the Government by 3 September 2004.

The current submission period following the Discussion Paper closes on 5 December 2003. There will be a further submission and consultation period following the release of the Draft Proposals Paper (planned for April 2004).

The Council will then prepare a final report to go to the Minister for the Environment by 3 September 2004. The final report will be made publicly available within seven days of being presented to the Minister.

THE DISCUSSION PAPER – AN OVERVIEW

The Discussion Paper is the first report published in VEAC's Angahook-Otway Investigation. The Paper introduces the Angahook-Otway Investigation and outlines the system of public land use categories in Victoria and describes in detail those in place in the Angahook-Otway study area.

It documents the values, uses and resources of public land in the study area and summarises the views and information contained in over 470 submissions received by VEAC on this investigation to date.

The Paper also discusses some possible approaches to responding to issues associated with public land-use planning in the Otways.

There is additional detailed and background material related to the investigation in the Appendices and there are large-scale maps showing current land use and the original vegetation types in the area.

Details of how to obtain a copy of the Discussion Paper are on the back cover of this brochure.

COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The Discussion Paper on VEAC's Angahook-Otway Investigation, as its name suggests, is aimed at generating community discussion and feedback regarding the proposed approaches for future land use in the Otways, including the establishment of a new national park.

Written submissions will be considered in detail by VEAC in the preparation of its Draft Proposals Paper which will contain a full set of proposed recommendations.

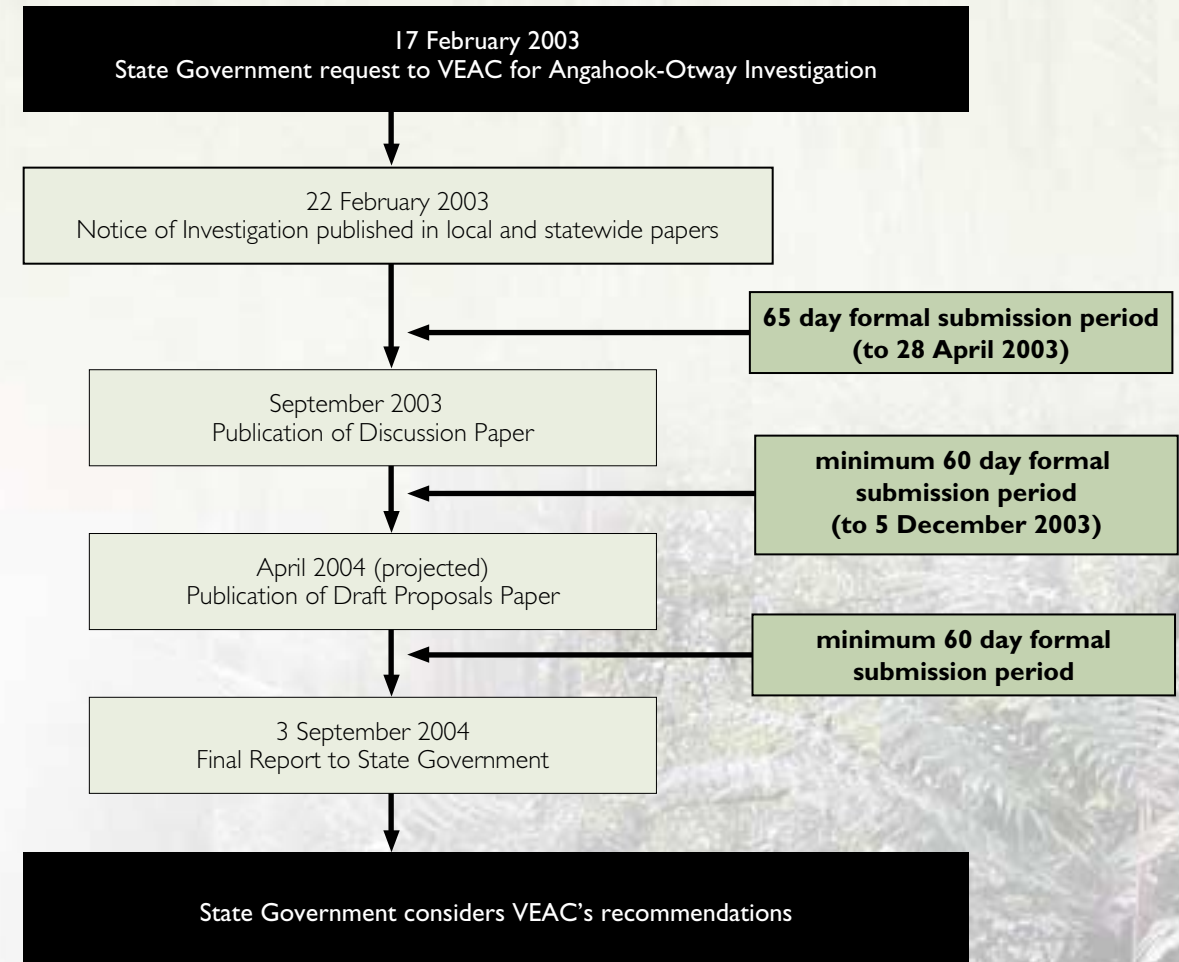
To ensure all community members have a chance to make a submission on the Discussion Paper, VEAC will hold a series of community consultation sessions within the study area from October 2003 to 5 December 2003. These sessions will give the local community,

interest groups and businesses the opportunity to gain further insight into the issues raised in the Discussion Paper and talk with VEAC Councillors and staff.

The dates and venues for the community consultation sessions will be advertised in the local media, and will also be available on www.veac.vic.gov.au

VEAC has also established a Community Reference Group to assist with the Angahook-Otway Investigation. The group is made up of mostly local representatives of organisations with interests in the broad range of activities that relate to public land in the study area. The Group's membership is listed in the Discussion Paper.

VEAC's public consultation process for the Angahook-Otway Investigation



Category	Area (ha)
National Park	11,880
State Park	26,930
Regional Park	665
Nature Conservation Reserve	6570
Coastal Reserve	4100
Natural Features Reserve	7170
Water Production	905
Historic and Cultural Features Reserve	1230
Community Use Area	1170
State Forest	91,020
Plantation	100
Earth Resources	445
Services and Utilities	415
Uncategorised Public Land	3595
Land not required for public purposes	2780
Total Extent of Public Land included in the Investigation	158,975
Public Land Leased or Licensed for Plantations – not included in the Investigation	5715
Freehold	172,810
Total Extent of Study Area	337,500
Overlays (areas included in the totals above)	
Reference Area (in various categories above)	2170
Heritage River (in various categories above)	820
Special Protection Zone (in state forest)	25,410



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pursuant to s.15 of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001 (the VEAC Act), the Minister for Environment has amended the request to VEAC made by the former Minister for Environment and Conservation concerning the Angahook-Lorne State Park dated 8 September 2002.

VEAC is now requested to carry out an investigation of the public land landward of low water mark within the Otway Ranges area shown on the accompanying plan.

The purpose of the investigation is to determine the boundaries of:

- (a) a single national park in the Otway Ranges including public land extending from Anglesea to Cape Otway, specifying whether or not the Great Ocean Road should be included in the park; and
- (b) any other public land currently managed as State Forest which would be suitable for addition to existing State Parks or nature conservation reserves, or for inclusion in new nature conservation reserves once native forest logging ceases in the Otways.

The Council is required to prepare a discussion paper and draft proposals paper and to submit a written report on the results of its investigation by 3 September 2004.

In addition to the considerations specified in section 18 of the VEAC Act, the Council must also take into consideration the following matters:

- Victorian Government's policies with respect to logging and woodchipping in the Otways;
- definition of 'national park' used by the former Land Conservation Council and the former Environment Conservation Council;
- objects of the National Parks Act with respect to national parks;
- Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002;
- Victorian Government's Great Ocean Road Region Strategy;
- Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Development Plan;
- Anglesea Heathland Agreement between the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Alcoa Australia Limited;
- relevant regional catchment strategies.

PUBLIC LAND USE

The study area covers some 337,500 ha, which includes 158,975 ha of public land included in the study. The public lands are classified into the following major land-use categories:

National parks are generally substantial tracts of public land of national significance for their outstanding natural features and diverse land types, primarily set aside to conserve and protect natural ecosystems and provide for public enjoyment, education and inspiration in natural environments. There is currently one national park in the study area, the 11,800 ha Otway National Park.

State parks are generally not as large as national parks, and their natural features are usually less outstanding, but they are an important contributor to Victoria's park system and enjoy a similar level of protection as national parks. Currently there are three state parks in the study area: the Angahook-Lorne State Park (21,230 ha), Carlisle State Park (5630 ha) and Melba Gully State Park (70 ha).

The only **regional park** in the study area, the Kawarren Regional Park (665 ha), allows more intensive use for informal recreation such as picnicking and walking in fairly natural forest surroundings.

Nature conservation reserves (such as flora reserves and flora and fauna reserves) are set aside to conserve rare or threatened species, and significant plant associations or communities although education, scientific study and passive recreation are generally permitted. There are 16 nature conservation reserves in the study area, and two small offshore marine sanctuaries.

Historic and cultural features reserves protect remnant historical features such as buildings, structures, relics or other artefacts. There are seven historic and cultural features reserves in the study area.

There are approximately 80 **natural features reserves** in the study area. They are generally small areas that protect remnant vegetation, habitat and landscape character, and include bushland, wildlife, lake, scenic, streamside, and water frontage reserves.

State forests are extensive areas of native forests set aside to produce hardwood timber, conserve native plants and animals, supply water and protect catchments and streams. State forests also provide opportunities for recreation and education, protect historic and Aboriginal cultural sites and produce minerals, honey, gravel, sand, road-making materials, and other forest products such as firewood. State forest currently encompasses well over half the public lands in the Angahook-Otway study area.

Coastal reserves provide for informal recreation for large numbers of people as well as protection of natural coastal landscapes, ecosystems, and flora and fauna.

Community use areas include recreation reserves (such as sports grounds), parklands and gardens, public buildings (schools and public halls) and education areas.

Water storage areas, diversion weirs, pump intakes and associated buffer areas – including the West Gellibrand Reservoir and the West Barwon Reservoir – are set aside for **water production**.

Plantations – the great majority of the public lands planted to pine were vested in the Victorian Plantations Corporation and subsequently most were leased to a private company and are not included in the study.

Public land use overlays include reference areas, heritage rivers, and declared water supply catchments.



GREAT OCEAN ROAD REGION STRATEGY

At the same time as the VEAC Investigation there is a parallel process underway to develop a strategy for the area referred to as the Great Ocean Road Region (the area from Torquay in the east to Warrambol in the west and north to the Princes Highway). Development of the Strategy is being coordinated by the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Angahook-Otway region is one of the most geographically diverse in Victoria. Its steep mountain ranges plunge into the sea on one side, and grade into rolling foothills and plains on the other. While the rugged coastal vistas are famously spectacular, further exploration is rewarded with mountain lakes, waterfalls, estuaries, and picturesque mountain and coastal towns. Sites of particular geological significance include fossil sites at Dinosaur Cove and Sentinel Rocks. Vegetation ranges from dark, wet rainforests and towering mountain ash, to grassy woodlands and heathlands with a spectacular richness of wildflowers.

This diversity of landscapes and habitats supports a rich variety of plants and animals with links to the ancient forests of Gondwana, to Tasmania, and to the mountain forests of eastern Victoria. The biodiversity of the region also has its own unique characteristics: it is a stronghold in Victoria for species such as the slender tree-fern, tall astelia (a lily), spot-tail quoll, New Holland mouse, grey goshawk and masked owl. It also supports many species found nowhere else in the world, including Anglesea grevillea, wrinkled buttons (a daisy), and Otway black snail. In total, around 1500 plants and 380 animals have been recorded in the area, including some 120 threatened plants and 44 threatened animal species.

The activities of humans in the Otways have left a wealth of historical associations and features, providing a record of Aboriginal use and agricultural, forest and coastal uses. There are some 250 known Aboriginal archaeological sites in the Otways, and 103 recognised historic places – about a third of which are associated with sawmills and tramways. Other historic places include the Great Ocean Road, Turtons Track and Cape Otway lighthouse.



RESOURCES AND USES

Tourism

The region offers a combination of world class natural and developed tourism attractions with public land providing the basis for many and varied activities.

Tourism plays an important and rapidly growing part in the economies of the region's shires. Over two million people visit the Great Ocean Road annually and the Twelve Apostles (just to the west of the study area) is one of Victoria's most popular tourist attractions.

Timber Production

Currently there is a licence for 27,000 cubic metres per annum of sawlogs, with residual logs also harvested for the production of paper products. The Government has announced that woodchipping and logging in the Otways native forests will be phased out by 2008.

Public land forests also supply specialty timber, firewood, timber for fencing, poles and spars, hobby wood, logs for competitive wood chopping, and tea-tree stakes.

Extractive Industry

The extractive industry produces crushed rock, sand and gravel that are a key source of local roadmaking material. Large stone blocks (dimension stones) are also quarried.

Other Industries

A number of other industries have an interest in the Angahook-Otway public lands – including some licensed grazing by domestic stock, a commercial eel fishery, and mining interests in the form of several exploration licences (but no current mines).

Recreation

The coastline of the study area is one of Victoria's major coastal playgrounds and attracts large numbers of visitors. The forested areas of the hinterland are also increasingly used for recreation. Activities undertaken include: swimming, fishing and other water sports, bushwalking, camping, car touring, four wheel driving, trail and mountain bike riding, horse riding, hunting and nature study.

