



Victorian
Environmental
Assessment
Council

Assessment of early government-accepted LCC recommendations Report

June 2023



Victorian Environmental Assessment Council

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) was established in 2001 under the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*. It provides the State Government of Victoria with independent advice on protection and management of the environment and natural resources of public land.

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Assessment of early government-accepted Land Conservation Council recommendations

Report

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Acknowledgement

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council acknowledges and respects Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
ECC	Environment Conservation Council
GIS	Geographic Information System
LCC	Land Conservation Council
VEAC	Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
VEACRecs25	Spatial dataset depicting public land use decisions of the Victorian government

At a glance

Key messages

- The Land Conservation Council (LCC) provided government with recommendations for public land use across Victoria based on comprehensive scientific review and public consultation from 1971 to 1997 and was succeeded by the Environment Conservation Council (ECC) and VEAC.
- The period covered by this assessment includes some of the LCC's most important and contested land use recommendations to government in an era of changing community perceptions of how public land and its resources should be managed or used.
- The VEACRecs25 dataset used for the assessment is an important tool to assist with transition to a new land use category-based legislative framework by providing an up-to-date record of agreed public land use.
- Three million hectares of public land in Victoria are subject to LCC recommendations from 1973 to 1983 that have not been subsequently reviewed. After exclusion of certain land use categories, around 440,000 hectares were assessed across parts of 14 LCC investigation areas.

Areas for review

VEAC has identified several broad types of public land that would benefit from a more detailed review. These include specific historic public land categories used in early LCC reports, and public land where the recommended use is no longer required or discontinued. The results complement VEAC's recent review of the VEACRecs25 dataset.

Summary

Background

The Victorian government has asked VEAC to assess early land use recommendations of the Land Conservation Council that remain in effect

In September 2022, VEAC was requested by the then Minister for Environment and Climate Action, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, to undertake an assessment of government-accepted Land Conservation Council (LCC) recommendations made between 1973 and 1983 that have not been subsequently reviewed or superseded by more recent government decisions. The assessment excludes certain public land use categories (national and other parks, state forest etc).

Within the remaining assessment area, VEAC has been asked to identify recommendations that require review, and recommendations that have been superseded by government land use decisions. The assessment does not extend to recommending changes in public land use.

Public land categories reflect the decisions about how the land can be used

Public land in Victoria is classified in a way which reflects both the characteristics of the land and decisions successive governments have made about how the land can be used. Community needs and opinions about how public land should be used change over time and governments regularly review their decisions.

Victoria is unique in Australia in using an independent body to review public land and make recommendations to government about its use. The LCC, established in 1971, and its successors (the ECC and VEAC) were established to carry out investigations of public land throughout Victoria and make recommendations to government on the appropriate use of that land.

For more than 50 years this process has been the main method of strategic public land use decision-making in Victoria and has resulted in the allocation of most public land to a category reflecting a specific use or purpose.

The period covered by this assessment includes some of the LCC's most important and contested land use recommendations to government in an era of changing community perceptions of how public land and its resources should be managed or used.

The LCC faced some of its biggest challenges in the period leading up to 1984. One of the most controversial was the Alpine Area Investigation with more than 14,000 submissions to the draft recommendations in 1978. That is still the largest number of submissions to a report of the LCC and its successors.

The VEACRecs25 dataset and public land use recommendations of the LCC form the basis of the information provided in this assessment

VEACRecs25 is a dataset maintained by VEAC that provides a spatial representation of public land use decisions of the Victorian government or Victorian parliament. VEACRecs25 is a key tool for land managers and the community to understand the current purpose for which public land is to be managed. To determine current public land use, a timeline of formal government decisions is necessary to identify the most recent decision.

Formal decisions made through or under legislation include acceptance by government of the public land use recommendations of the LCC, ECC or VEAC, creation of a park or other area through amendment to the *National Parks Act 1975* and Orders in Council reserving land under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

What are the results of the assessment?

About 440,000 hectares of public land across Victoria remain subject to early LCC recommendations across parts of 14 investigation areas

There are some 3 million hectares of Victoria's public land with recommendations still current from 14 early LCC investigations completed from 1973 to 1983. After areas such as national parks and state forests are excluded as required by the terms of reference, the area of the remaining recommendations comprises some 440,000 hectares.

Seven early LCC investigations, with a broad range of land use recommendations from 1977 to 1983, were able to be examined in detail in the time available. Both a statewide analysis and the detailed information were used to address the terms of reference.

There are several groups of recommendations that require review

Recommendations for review can be summarised broadly as follows:

- (a) locations where the recommended use is no longer required or discontinued (i.e. disused or supply exhausted for gravel or stone reserves, softwood production areas that were not cleared and host native vegetation).
- (b) legacy recommendations that do not translate readily to a single current public land use classification (i.e. areas recommended as wildlife reserves may be categorised as either nature reserve or wildlife and game reserve by later government decisions)
- (c) non-specific or broad land recommendations such as 'other reserves and public land' may have a more narrowly defined use when examined
- (d) recommendations for areas to be alienated (such as 'agriculture' or 'land not required for public purposes') that have not been implemented and remain public land
- (e) geographic areas excluded from early investigations that have therefore not been investigated by LCC, ECC or VEAC (such as townships and boroughs, Gippsland Lakes bed).

There are some public land categories remaining from early LCC recommendations that should be reviewed

Some of the public land categories that merit review are:

- softwood plantations, softwood production, school plantations
- gravel reserves, stone reserves
- education areas
- wildlife reserves, Gippsland lakes reserve, lake reserves
- roadside conservation, highway parks
- other reserves and public land
- agriculture or land not required for public purposes.

Why is a review required?

The rationale for review includes:

- (a) the recommendations were not specific or require clarification / investigation to align with the current land use classification system
- (b) the original recommended use is no longer required or has been exhausted (e.g. gravel reserve no longer required)

- (c) in the absence of a specific public land use recommendation, additional investigation is warranted to identify a formal government decision for use or to recommend a use.

Some early government-accepted LCC recommendations have been superseded by more recent government decisions

The terms of reference part (b) requests identification of areas that have been superseded by a subsequent government land use decision. The VEACRecs25 dataset is not structured in a way that easily provides this information for historic records. However, the most recent public land use decisions by government are reflected in the dataset.

An outline of some later government land use decisions is provided for seven early LCC studies assessed in detail in the time available. Some areas have more recent formal government decisions that were made outside an LCC-ECC-VEAC investigation process. These areas include:

- (a) new parks and reserves resulting from forestry planning including the Regional Forest Agreements, Cores and Links HPV agreement, areas set aside as plantations but not used
- (b) government land use decisions as part of one-off processes including areas such as those at Cobboboonee, Goolengook forest, Brataualung Forest Park, new or expanded regional and metropolitan parks
- (c) locality-specific government land use decisions including new Crown land reservations, inclusions under legislation such as additions to schedules of the National Parks Act or Crown Land (Reserves) Act which may include land acquisitions.

Improvements to information will support the government's proposed modernisation of Victoria's public land legislation

The government has committed to modernise Victoria's public land legislation in the *Victorian Government Response to VEAC's Statewide Assessment of Public Land Final Report* (2017). A consultation paper *Renewing Victoria's public land legislation* outlining the proposed legislative reforms was published in 2021 by DELWP.

This assessment assists with the transition to a new land use category-based legislative framework by identifying information that can be improved in the VEACRecs25 dataset. It will help to establish an accurate record of public land use in areas not strategically reviewed for many years. This current assessment concludes that there are certain types of public land that would benefit from a more comprehensive review or investigation.

What actions are required?

VEAC has identified the following broad types of public land that would benefit from a more detailed review or investigation in a targeted work program:

- specific early LCC recommendation categories
- areas with less comprehensive or less detailed information for small parcels of Crown land that are grouped under recommendations for 'other reserves and public land'
- public land in areas such as townships excluded from LCC-ECC-VEAC investigations
- new or previously unidentified areas of Crown land not subject to LCC-ECC-VEAC public land use recommendations.

1. Introduction

In September 2022, the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) was requested by the then Minister for Environment and Climate Action, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, to undertake an assessment of early government-accepted Land Conservation Council (LCC) recommendations.

The assessment supports the current reforms to public land legislation by identifying land use recommendations that require review. This will ensure the proposed transition to public land categories is based on current and appropriate government-accepted recommendations. The revised public land categories were recommended in VEAC's *Statewide Assessment of Public Land Final Report* in 2017.

The request does not extend to recommending changes to public land use. Public consultation was not required.

VEAC maintains information on the public land use decisions of the Victorian government or Parliament, including government-accepted recommendations of VEAC and its predecessors, the Environment Conservation Council (ECC), and the Land Conservation Council (LCC), and subsequent formal government land use decisions. The most current government decision is recorded in VEAC's spatial dataset – VEACRecs25 (see box 1).

For this assessment, the VEACRecs25 dataset and GIS analysis were used to identify early government-accepted LCC recommendations that have not been reviewed and which remain in effect.

This report provides the assessment requested in the Minister's terms of reference.

1.1 Terms of reference

On 5 September 2022, the then Minister for Environment and Climate Action requested VEAC to provide an assessment of early government-accepted LCC recommendations. Appendix 1 provides the full terms of reference.

This request was for an assessment of the status of government-accepted public land use recommendations made by the LCC between 1973 and 1983, including to:

- (a) identify government-accepted public land use recommendations that require review, and
- (b) identify government-accepted public land use recommendations that have been superseded by subsequent government policy decisions.

In accordance with the terms of reference this assessment excludes government-accepted recommendations for national parks, state parks, wilderness parks, regional parks and state forests. This assessment does not make any recommendations for changes in public land use.

1.2 About VEAC

VEAC provides the Victorian government with independent and strategic advice on matters related to the protection and management of the environment and natural resources of public land. VEAC was established under the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001* (the Act). VEAC is a successor organisation to the LCC, established in 1971, and the ECC, which replaced the LCC in 1997.

Victoria is unique in Australia in using an independent body to review public land and make recommendations to government about its use. VEAC carries out investigations and assessments and provides advice at the request of the Minister for Environment. Together, the Act and the terms of reference with each Ministerial request describe how an investigation or assessment must be conducted. This includes the number of reports to be prepared, matters to be taken into account, timeframes and public consultation.

Public land is defined in the Act to include Crown land and land owned by state government public authorities. It excludes private freehold land, land owned by local councils and Commonwealth land.

The Act was substantially amended in 2016 to allow the Minister to request the Council to conduct an assessment or to provide advice in relation to a matter that, in the opinion of the Minister, does not require an investigation, having regard to the matter's limited scale or scope or its technical nature. Assessments do not require formal public consultation unless specified by the Minister in the terms of reference.

This assessment on early LCC recommendations was requested pursuant to section 26B of the Act.

The current five independent members appointed to VEAC are Mellissa Wood (Chairperson), Joanne Duncan, Anna Kilborn, Nicola Ward and Nick Wimbush. A brief biography of each of the current Council members can be found on VEAC's website at veac.vic.gov.au. The Council is supported by a small research and policy team and an administrative secretariat.

Box 1: What is VEACRecs25?

VEACRecs25 is a dataset maintained by VEAC that provides a spatial representation of public land use decisions of the Victorian Government or Victorian Parliament, largely derived from government-accepted recommendations of VEAC and its predecessors (the ECC and the LCC).

The spatial data is based on VicMap Property, Victoria's cadastral map base that provides information about land parcels and property details. Where agreed public land use does not match the current boundary of Crown land parcels, i.e. one parcel has more than one public land use category, these are described as 'split parcels'.

VEACRecs25 currently comprises some 91,000 records covering around 8 million hectares of public land. All records have an associated public land use categorisation (see table 1.1 and figure 1.1).

State government-owned land held in freehold title is also defined as public land in the VEAC Act and documented in many investigations. Land use for these areas largely aligns with the core responsibilities of the relevant department or agency. For example, land owned in freehold title by water authorities is almost always shown as water production reserve for water reservoirs, or utility and services for water or sewerage delivery. Private freehold land, land owned by local councils and Commonwealth land are specifically excluded in VEAC's definition of public land. These areas may be included in the dataset to provide context only.

VEACRecs25 is a key tool to help land managers and the community understand the purpose for which public land is to be managed. It reflects changes made to recommended parks and reserves at the time of formal implementation and by subsequent formal or legal mechanisms.

The VEACRecs25 dataset is available to government users through the Victorian Spatial Data Library and is an information source for DEECA's PLM25 geospatial dataset published in the publicly accessible interactive web mapping application MapshareVic.

Public land use overlays are not shown in VEAC's dataset. In the past VEAC worked closely with DEECA's predecessor organisation to create a GIS layer of land use overlays comprising reference areas, heritage rivers, wilderness zones and remote and natural areas, and natural catchment areas, and this information is maintained by the department. Public land use overlays are defined in legislation and most have not been altered in many years.

1.3 Classifying public land

The origin of public land use decisions and the classification of public land were described in detail in the reports prepared for VEAC's Statewide Assessment of Public Land conducted from 2014 to 2017, and are summarised here for context.

Public land in Victoria is classified in a way which reflects both the characteristics of the land and decisions successive governments have made about how the land can be used. Community needs and opinions about how public land should be used change over time and governments regularly review their decisions.

The LCC and its successors (the ECC and VEAC) were established to investigate and make recommendations to government on the appropriate use of public land. Since the LCC made its first

recommendations to government in 1973 for the use of public land in the South-Western Area District 1, these organisations have systematically and comprehensively examined and made recommendations on the use of most public land across Victoria. More than forty separate regional studies, reviews and statewide or special investigations have resulted in thousands of individual land use recommendations, the vast majority of which have been accepted by government. All the recommendations of the former LCC and ECC are available in a digital archive on VEAC's website (www.veac.vic.gov.au/digital-archive/investigations).

For more than 50 years this process has been the main method of strategic public land use decision-making in Victoria and has resulted in the allocation of most public land to a category reflecting a specific use or purpose. For example, most parks and reserves listed in the schedules to the *National Parks Act 1975* are derived from government-accepted recommendations of the LCC, ECC and VEAC.

However, there are many areas that have not yet been formally reserved or legislated for the agreed land use purpose, or the purpose applied is ambiguous (e.g. reservation for 'public purposes').

In 1971, when the LCC began work most public land was classified as unreserved Crown land, national park, wildlife reserve, road reserve and a small number of 'other' reserves. By 1974, the LCC had adopted the approach of assigning public land units to a system of 23 categories, determined by proposed use or purpose. With each regional study however, new categories were proposed and by 1988 the number of categories had grown to 48. Victoria's current system of public land categories has evolved from a set of simplified public land use categories developed by the LCC from 1988 to 1993.

In the final report for its Statewide Assessment of Public Land Investigation in 2017, VEAC recommended a revised classification of 15 terrestrial and four marine primary categories, and legislation change to incorporate revised public land use categories with their corresponding purposes (see figure 1.1). No change was proposed to public land use overlays. Appendix 2 shows the revised land use categories correlated with land use recommendations used in the past. For reference, appendix 3 also shows the original land use categorisation in a sample of five early LCC investigations and the corresponding current categorisation.

The precision of public land mapping has increased as computer systems have evolved. Most of the early LCC recommendation maps were provided at 1:250,000 scale with some detailed information listed for location-specific recommendations in the corresponding report. Unpublished detailed recommendation plans are held by VEAC as paper files. Because of the past mapping limitations, some broad-scale government-accepted recommendations may apply to areas of public land even though these are not depicted on published maps.

1.4 Scope of this assessment

This assessment comprises public land subject to LCC recommendations that has not been reviewed by a range of government processes since 1983 and excludes certain public land. The assessment excludes:

- (a) public land with government-accepted land use recommendations made after 1983 in an LCC, ECC or VEAC investigation,
- (b) land transferred to the Crown since 1983 (new land acquisitions),
- (c) areas of the following public land use categories as they currently exist:
 - national parks, state parks, wilderness parks (as described in National Parks Act schedule 2, 2A, 2B) as recommended or subsequently established under legislation
 - regional parks (including forest park, metropolitan park), conservation parks, coastal parks, other parks included on schedules to the National Parks Act (e.g. marine and coastal parks, national heritage park, marine national parks, marine sanctuaries) as recommended or subsequently established under legislation
 - state forest including areas of LCC recommendations with legacy or obsolete land use categories such as hardwood production and uncommitted land.

The VEACRecs25 dataset and information available in the reports and files of the LCC including public land use recommendations available at VEAC's digital archive form the basis of the data provided in this report. Box 1 describes the VEACRecs25 dataset.

The LCC investigations that fall within the scope of this assessment are listed and discussed in section 2.

Part (a) recommendations that require review

The terms of reference part (a) requests identification of the LCC's recommendations that require review and a rationale for why a review is required. In the time available for the assessment, statewide analysis was completed and additional detailed investigations were undertaken on recommendations remaining unreviewed for seven early LCC studies. From this sample, VEAC has identified broad types of public land that require review rather than a list of specific locations. Work undertaken in parallel for VEAC's *Advice on Public Land Use Information – Improving the VEACRecs25 dataset* (2023) supports the results and identifies specific areas of the dataset that would be improved by targeted review or auditing.

Part (b) recommendations that have been superseded

The terms of reference part (b) requests identification of areas that have been superseded by later government land use decisions that were not part of LCC-ECC-VEAC investigations. While the VEACRecs25 dataset does not support detailed analysis of this information, later land use decisions by government are nevertheless reflected in the categorisation of public land within the dataset. A summary of government decisions after the LCC's recommendations is provided in section 3.3 for the seven early investigations that have been assessed in detail.

As resources permit, to support the current reforms to public land legislation, VEAC will continue to analyse recommendations from the remaining early LCC investigations against part (a) and part (b) following submission of this report to the Minister for Environment. The results will be progressively published on the VEAC website.

1.5 Public land legislation reform

The government committed to modernise Victoria's public land legislation in the *Victorian Government Response to VEAC's Statewide Assessment of Public Land Final Report* (2017). A consultation paper was published by DELWP (now DEECA) in April 2021 seeking feedback on a new Public Land Act and a modernised National Parks Act. Public land use classification followed that recommended by VEAC, other than retaining metropolitan park and forest park as categories rather than as sub-categories of regional park. Nature reserves are currently established in several Acts and the category is proposed to be incorporated into the revised National Parks Act.

The VEACRecs25 dataset provides a spatial representation of public land use decisions and is therefore an important tool that can assist with transition to a new category-based legislation framework.

To assist with translation of previously used or legacy categories to VEAC's recommended revised classification system a table of detailed past, current and proposed categories is provided in appendix 2. Where relevant, the investigation in which the past category was proposed or established is highlighted.

1.6 Structure of this report

This first section introduces the assessment in accordance with the terms of reference. It provides an overview of government decision making on public land use.

Section 2 describes the approach to this assessment and information used to address the terms of reference.

Section 3 summarises the results and findings of the assessment. The results provide an opportunity to improve information necessary for the establishment of an accurate record of public land use decisions to be utilised in the public land legislation reforms.

Figure 1.1 Map of public land use in VEACRecs25 for Victoria

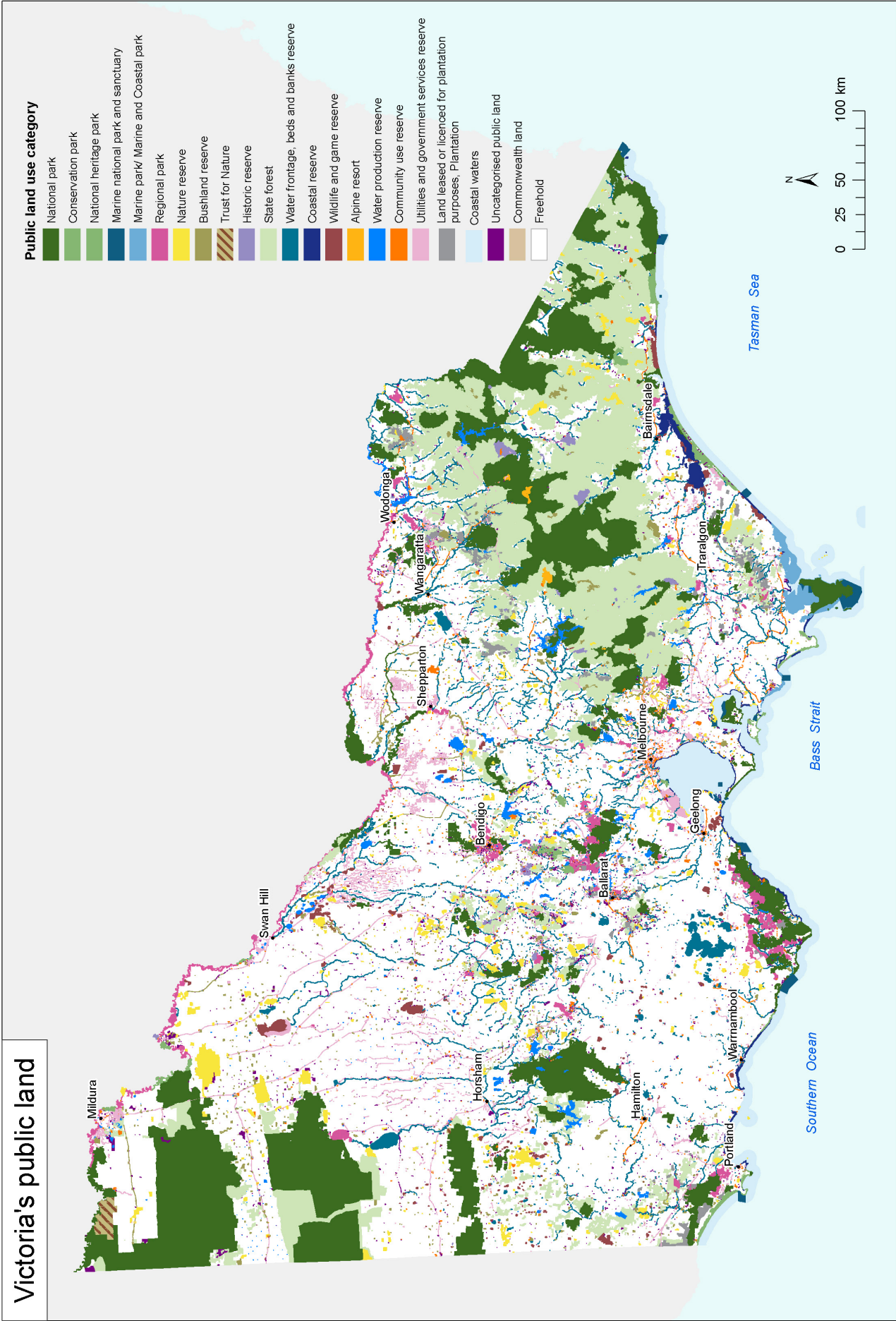


Table 1.1 VEACRecs25 public land use areas (at April 2023)

#	Public land use category ²	Public land area (hectares) ³
1	National park	3,311,023
2	Conservation park	70,937
3	National heritage park	7,532
4	Regional park	131,372
4.1	Forest park	50,851
4.2	Metropolitan park	4,101
5	Nature reserve	271,636
5.1	Trust for Nature land	36,148
6	Bushland reserve	92,728
7	Coastal reserve	61,486
8	Historic reserve	38,737
9	Wildlife and game reserve	90,348
10	State forest	3,099,127
11	Water frontage, beds and banks reserve	193,463
12	Water production reserve	106,227
13	Alpine resort	10,151
14	Community use reserves	46,834
15	Utilities and government services reserves ¹	78,586
16	Marine national park	53,119
17	Marine sanctuary	862
18	Marine park/ marine and coastal park	69,801
19	Coastal waters reserve ¹	13,612
20	Uncategorised public land	35,228
21	Land leased or licensed for plantation purposes, Plantation	138,694
Total		8,012,603

Notes

1. Most of Victoria's government road reserve and seabed is not spatially defined as Crown land parcels in the cadastre. VEACRecs25 does not provide an estimate of those areas.
2. Public land use follows VEAC's classification system recommended in *Statewide Assessment of Public Land Final Report* (2017) and incorporates additional information for categories shown differently in the DELWP's consultation paper *Renewing Victoria's public land legislation* (2021).
3. Public land comprises Crown land and land owned in freehold title by state government agencies and departments.

2. Approach to this assessment

This section discusses the approach and information that have been used to define the assessment areas.

2.1 Early LCC investigations

The LCC systematically assessed the state in 17 study areas or regions, some subdivided into districts (figure 2.1). By 1986 the LCC had assessed all investigation areas at least once and several special or thematic investigations were also undertaken (figure 2.2).

The period covered by this assessment includes some of the LCC's most important and contested land use recommendations to government in an era of changing community perceptions of how public land and its resources should be managed or used.

The LCC faced some of its biggest challenges in the period leading up to 1984 covered by this assessment. One of the most controversial was for the Alpine Area Investigation with more than 14,000 submissions to the draft recommendations in 1978. That is still the largest number of submissions on any report of the LCC and its successors.

In the east Gippsland investigation completed in 1977 the pressures to constrain parks were great and resulted in only areas with relatively low timber values being recommended as parks. However, in the LCC's 1986 review of the East Gippsland Area substantial increases to national parks were recommended resulting in a reduction in areas available for logging by one third.

In the southwest of the state, there was fierce opposition to the LCC's proposed Grampians National Park. Government accepted the LCC's recommendations for a large national park. The park was established in July 1984, although a phase out of logging continued in parts of the park until 1994.

Figure 2.3 shows the overall geographic extent of LCC investigations completed from 1973 to 1983 that have not been reviewed by subsequent regional land use investigations of LCC, ECC or VEAC. These include parts of three large LCC investigations completed in 1983:

- Gippsland Lakes Hinterland Area
- Alpine Area Special Investigation
- South-Western Area District 1 Review.

Several thematic investigations after 1983 apply across large areas of the state (figure 2.2):

- Rivers and Streams special investigation (1987 – 1991)
- Wilderness special investigation (1988 – 1991)
- Historic Places Special Investigation South-Western Victoria special investigation (1995 – 1997).

Recommendations arising from these special investigations occur in both specific and dispersed locations within the earlier regional land use studies. For example, the 1991 Rivers and Stream Special Investigation recommendations for public land water frontages apply statewide, wherever they may be, and supersede earlier LCC recommendations for water frontages across the older investigation areas.

In some locations, subsequent government decisions replace LCC recommendations. An example is the declaration of Cobboboonee National Park and Cobboboonee Forest Park in 2008. These declarations were over areas identified in the 1980s in the LCC's South-Western Area Districts 1 and 2 for hardwood production and uncommitted land. The contemporary equivalent land use category for both is state forest. There are also instances of new Crown land being identified or transferred. These areas do not have a LCC land use recommendation. However, many of these areas have a clear purpose or use and are readily allocated to an appropriate public land use category.

Figure 2.1 LCC investigation areas, districts and reviews

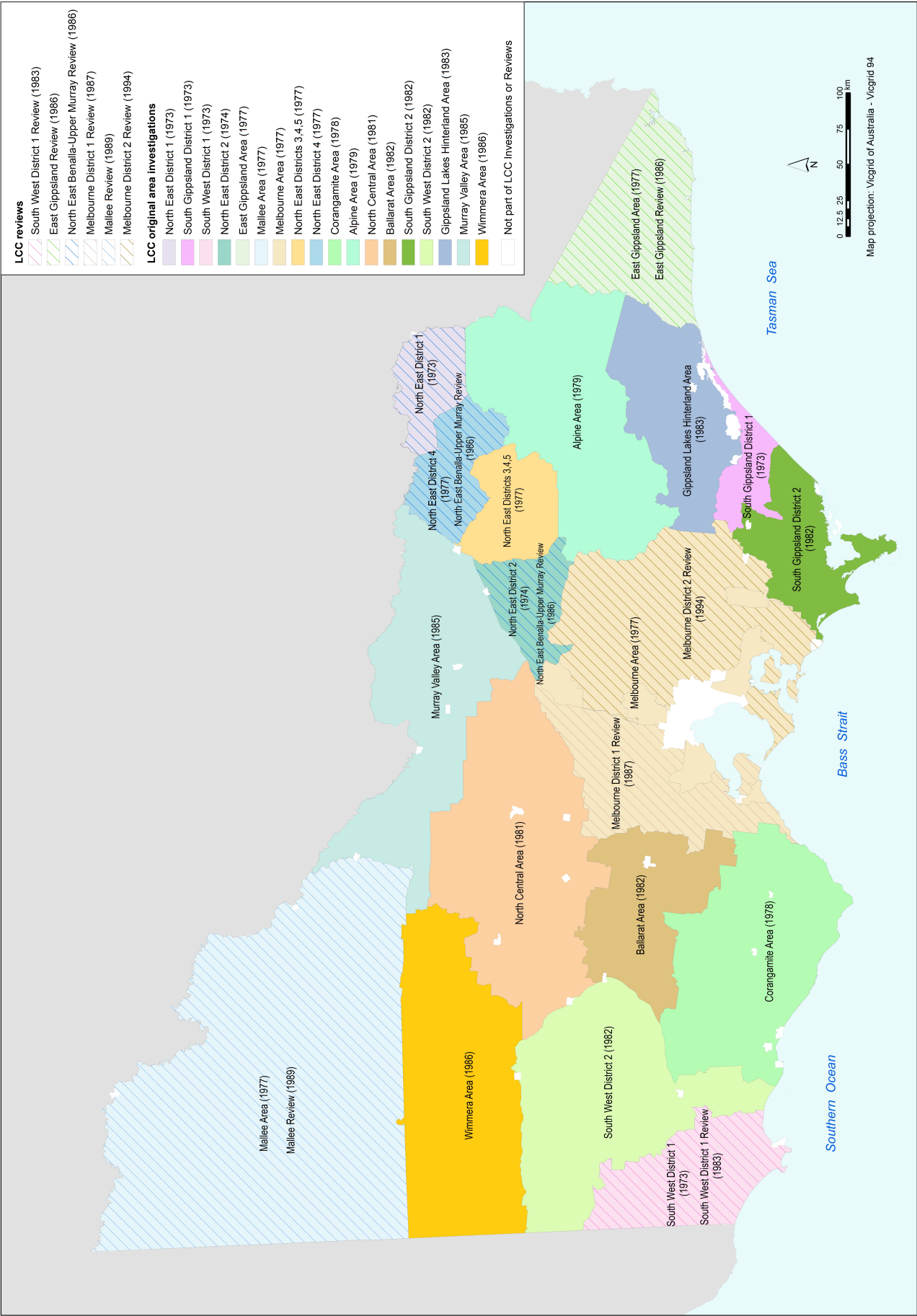
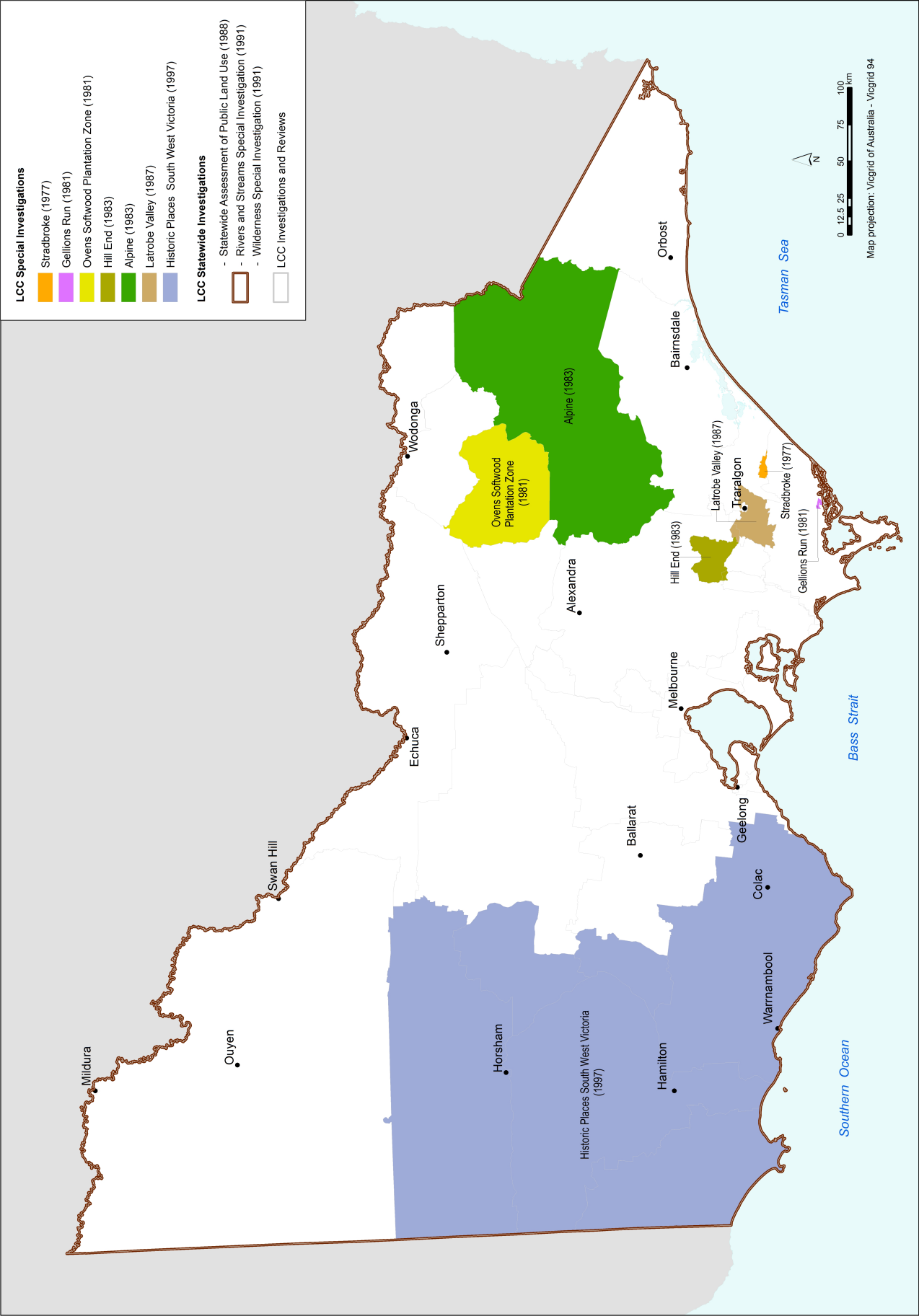


Figure 2.2 LCC special investigations



2.2 Legacy categorisation of public land

In 1971, when the LCC began work most public land was classified as unreserved Crown land, national park, wildlife reserve, road reserve and a small number of 'other' reserves. There have been several changes to the classification of public land since then.

By 1974, the LCC had adopted the approach of assigning public land units to a system of 23 categories, determined by proposed use or purpose. With each regional study however, new categories were proposed and by 1988 the number of categories had grown. The LCC recognised that the 48 categories in use at that time needed to be simplified and proposed a consolidation into 18 broad categories (including uncategorised public land). Revisions to the system were again made over subsequent years and the LCC's last major land use investigation, the Melbourne Area District 2 Review completed in 1994, outlined 19 principal public land use categories with some later additions for uses from outside that investigation area.

VEAC's *Statewide Assessment of Public Land Final Report* (2017) recommended a revision of the classification system to 15 terrestrial and four marine primary categories. It also recommended legislative reform to align Crown land reservation purposes to these land use categories.

Some of the early investigations in this assessment contain land use categories that are no longer in use (e.g. uncommitted land, township land, agriculture, wildlife reserve). Most of these can be translated to the current classification system.

To assist with translation of previously used or legacy categories to VEAC's revised 2017 classification, a table is provided in appendix 2. This is reproduced from VEAC's report on *Advice on Aspects of Public Land Use Information – Improving the VEACRecs25 dataset* (2023).

An example of how some specific early LCC recommendation categories have been translated to the current classification is provided in appendix 3. These examples relate to public land use recommendations from:

- Alpine Area Special Investigation (1983)
- Ballarat Area (1982)
- Corangamite Area (1978)
- South Gippsland Area District 1 (1982)
- South-Western Area District 1 Review (1983).

2.3 Information sources

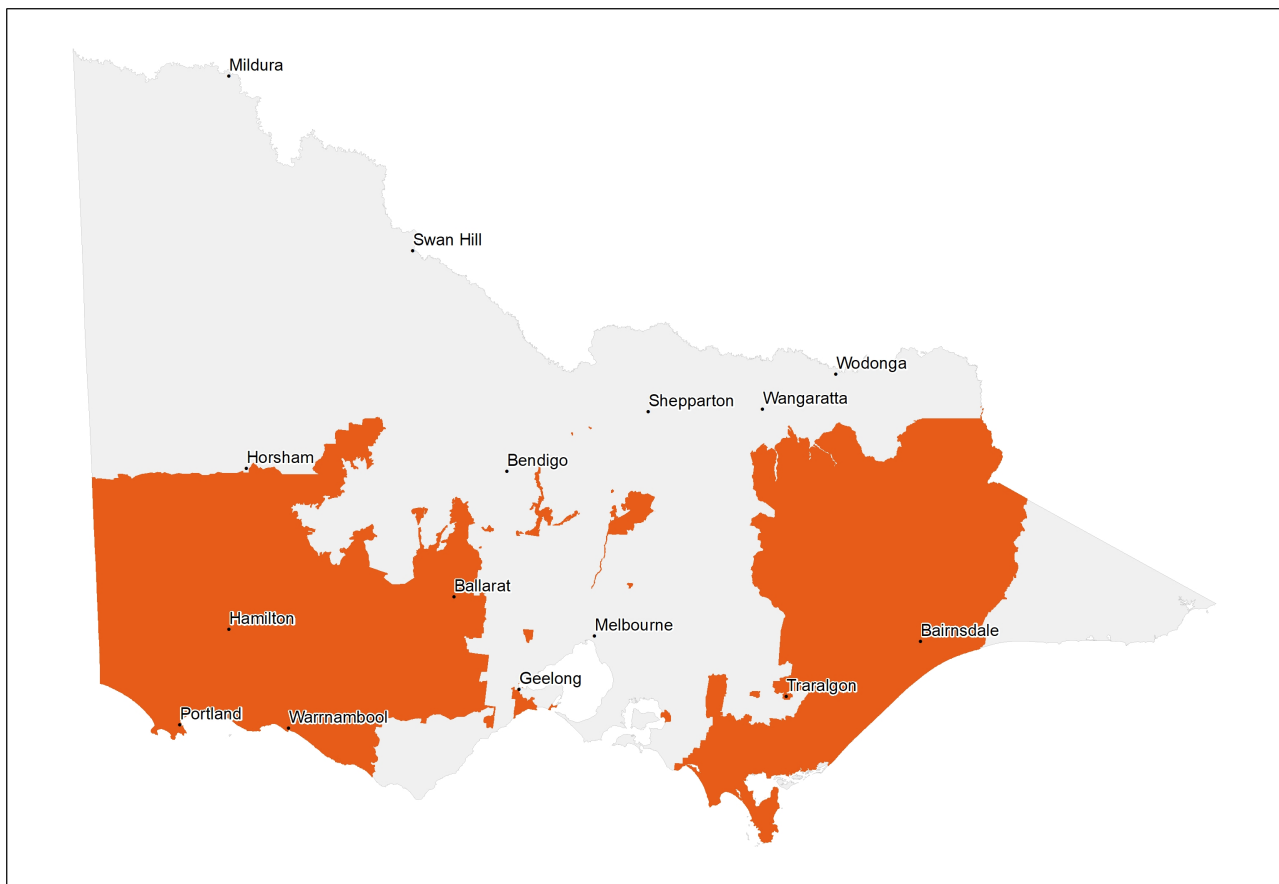
Information has predominantly been sourced from LCC/ECC reports and the VEACRecs25 database.

Original LCC, ECC and VEAC reports are publicly available through the VEAC website, with all published LCC and ECC reports available in the digital archive.

VEACRecs25 is a dataset maintained by VEAC that provides a spatial representation of public land use decisions of the Victorian government or Victorian Parliament (see box 1 for further detail). Using a GIS layer of past LCC-ECC-VEAC investigation areas, the VEACRecs25 dataset can be used to identify public land with government-accepted LCC recommendations still in place from early investigations (1973 to 1983).

There are 14 early LCC investigations that have areas with government-accepted public land use recommendations that have not been later reviewed. A summary of the area is provided in table 2.1 together with the extent of the main public land use categories and those excluded or included in this assessment. Figure 2.3 shows the overall geographic extent of the assessment area.

Figure 2.3 The geographic extent of remaining or unreviewed government-accepted recommendations for LCC investigations from 1973 to 1983



2.4 Information gaps and errors

There are some limitations with the dataset that have become apparent through this assessment, in addition to those data quality issues identified by VEAC in the report on *Advice on Aspects of Public Land Use Information (b) Improving the VEACRecs25 dataset*.

For example, recommendations from statewide thematic reviews (the LCC's *Rivers and Streams Special Investigation Final Report* (1991) for stream frontages; and the ECC's *Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation Final Report* (2000) for coastal reserves) should replace these land uses across the entire area of earlier investigations. In the VEACRecs25 dataset there are instances of these land uses being allocated in error to the older LCC regional studies. Public land in townships not studied by the LCC and areas of new public land may also be recorded as part of the broader investigation area (see section 2.5).

There are also discrepancies in the way recommendations and subsequent government land use decisions are documented that limit this current assessment. While the public land use category is predominantly reported correctly, there are key areas of the dataset that would benefit from a targeted review or audit.

In the time available for this assessment, corrections to gaps and errors in VEACRecs25 dataset was initiated and is underway.

2.5 Areas with no LCC recommendations

Within the early LCC investigations there are some relatively small areas with no government-accepted recommendations (appendix 4). Examples include public land in designated cities, towns or boroughs excluded from LCC studies (e.g. Portland, Port Fairy, Warrnambool, Queenscliffe, Ballarat, Traralgon, Sale) and the beds of the Gippsland Lakes. In the VEACRecs25 dataset these areas are attributed to the broader surrounding investigation area and listed as unassessed (No_rec).

Other government land use decision-making processes, such as reservation or long-term established use, may provide a formal public land use for unassessed areas. Where there is no clear land use identified by another formal decision process, this area is listed as in the VEACRecs25 dataset as uncategorised public land.

There are also no government-accepted recommendations for public land acquired (or identified as public land) after the most recent investigation was completed. Land transferred to the Crown is deemed to have a specific purpose, although this information may be difficult to find. These dispersed locations with no formal public land use recommendation in the VEACRecs25 dataset are excluded from this assessment but cannot be readily identified using the GIS methodology used here.

2.6 Subsequent land use decisions by government

In the examples for Cobboboonee National Park and Cobboboonee Forest Park, the later government decisions are reflected in VEACRecs25 with notes explaining the changes from the recommendations made by the LCC (uncommitted land and hardwood production in this case).

The data structure of VEACRecs25 does not permit analysis of the difference between the LCC's recommended land use and a later government land use decision. Where this information is reported, it has been compiled by comparison of public land use in the LCC's published recommendations maps and VEACRecs25.

Table 2.1 Summary of public land use in unreviewed areas of early LCC investigations

		Area of excluded public land use categories (hectares)						Area of included public land use categories (hectares)									
LCC investigation	Total public land area (hectares) ¹	National, State and Wilderness parks	Regional park, Forest park	State forest	Con-servation park	Other parks/ Marine and coastal park	Trust for Nature (nature reserve)	Alpine resort	Nature reserve	Coastal reserve	Plantation	Historic reserve	Bushland reserve	Wildlife and game reserve	Water production reserve	Other public land ⁴	Assess-ment area (hectares)
South-Western Area District 1 (1973) ²	8.7								8.7								8.7
South Gippsland Area District 1 (1973)	62,656	13,155		7780	17,848				1147	8349	5036		200	3653	7.6	5480	23,873
Melbourne Area (1977)	8036	740	17	1471					403		201		231	3719	47.9	1207	5809
Mallee Area (1977) ³	419															419	419
North Eastern Area Districts 3, 4 & 5 (1977)	261,610	47,421		189,695							20,528	0.2	1871		571	1525	24,494
Corangamite Area (1978)	73,320	5065	7	10	840	35.8	231		5080	1954	5722	5	379	4484	879	48,628	67,131
Stradbroke Area Special Investigation (1977)	6788			3,690					2278		692		128				3098
North Central Area (1981)	4805			157					635		46.8		1202	853	1055	855	4648
South-Western Area District 2 (1982)	336,837	196,639		75,501			306		17,230	181	41.3	0.1	5685	8219	16,951	16,083	64,391
Ballarat Area (1982)	52,913	7365	1914	15,028			122		2514		6928	1103	1002	1335	1846	13,757	28,484
South Gippsland Area District 2 (1982)	151,336	50,839	4703	57,184	4384	877			3867		21,223		1702	2937	124	3494	33,348
South-Western Area District 1 Review (1983)	215,202	60,181	10,899	83,203	10,627		64		6,634	579	22,917	22.7	4960	5010	3934	6171	50,288
Gippsland Lakes Hinterland Area (1983)	490,247	22,972	4243	395,393	1018				15,450	32,547			6743	5085	1936	4860	66,621
Alpine Area Special Investigation (1983)	1,429,434	659,627		702,104				9293	9273		98	22,455	11,639		6735	8210	67,703
TOTAL	3,093,612	1,064,004	21,783	1,531,216	34,717	913	723	9293	64,520	43,610	83,433	23,586	35,742	35,295	34,087	110,689	440,316

Notes:

1. Total area relates to the public land ascribed to the relevant LCC investigation in the VEACRecs25 dataset using GIS analysis. Areas that are new Crown land and have no recommendations are included here in the summary analysis. Areas subject to LCC-ECC-VEAC land use investigations after 1983 are described as 'reviewed'.

2. South-Western Area District 1 (1973); A small area recommended for inclusion in Mt Eccles State Park (name formally changed to Budj Bim National Park) was excluded at implementation of the park and is shown as the previous government-accepted LCC recommendation from 1973: C3 The Stones Wildlife Reserve. See discussion in section 3.3 'South-Western Area District 1 assessment'.

3. Mallee Area (1977); Phillips Improvement Purchase Lease was recommended F1 agriculture in 1977 and available for purchase; the lease expired in 2004 without completion of purchase. This area was not identified as public land in the Mallee Area Review Final Report (1989).

4. This total includes areas of public land water frontage which are subject to LCC's Rivers and Streams Special Investigation Final Report (1991) recommendations. That is, some water frontage recommendations are incorrectly reported from the early investigations but are subject to Rivers and Streams Special Investigation Final Report (1991) recommendation E1 public land water frontage. The calculations also include public land in the townships excluded from the early LCC investigations.

Other public land consists of the following land uses: community use reserve, utilities and government services reserve, uncategorised public land, coastal waters reserve, water frontage, beds and banks reserve (including lake reserves). There are some other small areas and discrepancies yet to be investigated.

3. Results and findings

There are 14 early LCC investigations that have some government-accepted recommendations that have not been subsequently reviewed (see table 2.1). In total these early LCC recommendations encompass around 3 million hectares of public land.

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the unreviewed geographic extent for 12 early LCC investigations. There are an additional two investigations with small residual areas not visible at a statewide scale (i.e. South-Western Area District 1 and Mallee Area). Note that the depiction of the unreviewed area includes all land, not specifically the public land described as the assessment area. The geographic area of the LCC investigation reviewed in subsequent studies is also shown for context.

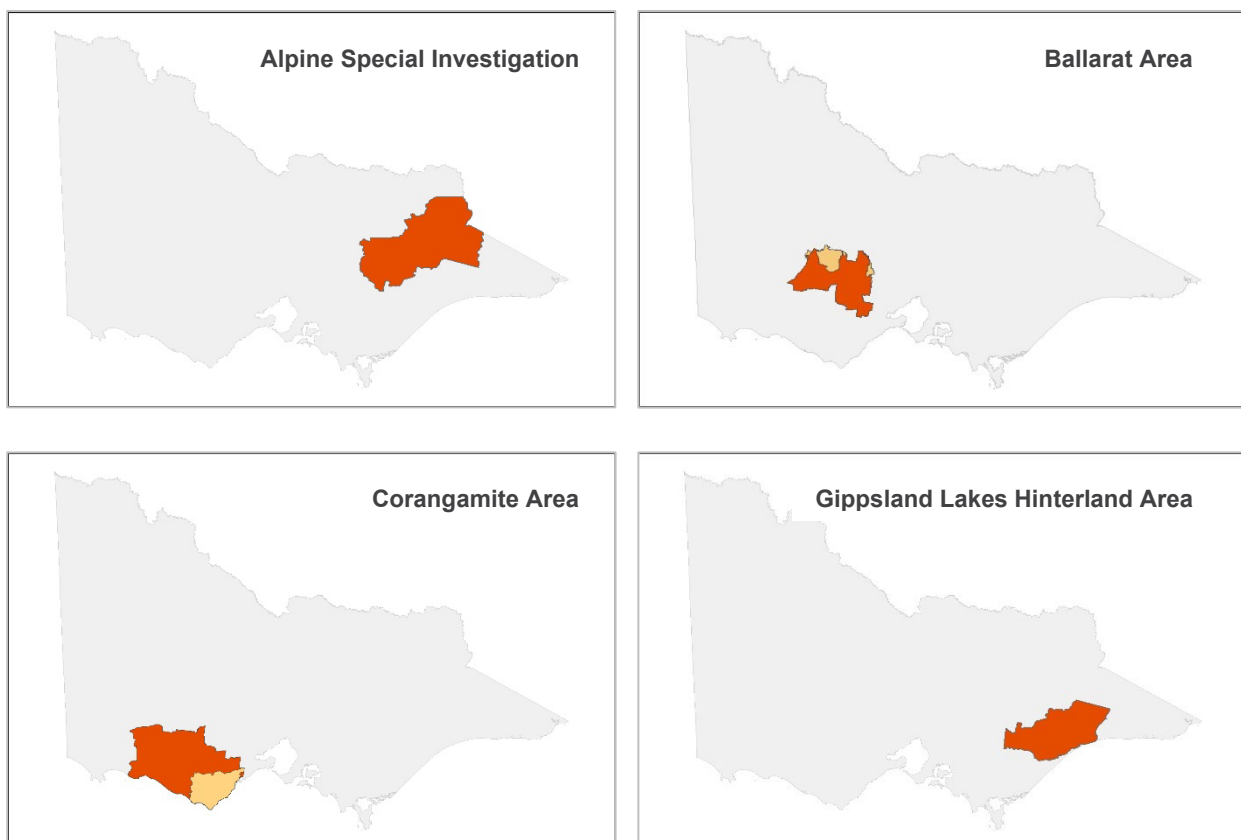
After exclusion of specific public land uses identified in the terms of reference, the remaining assessment area comprises about 440,000 hectares.

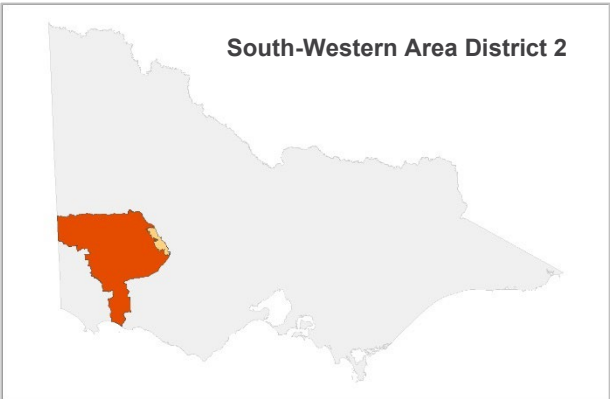
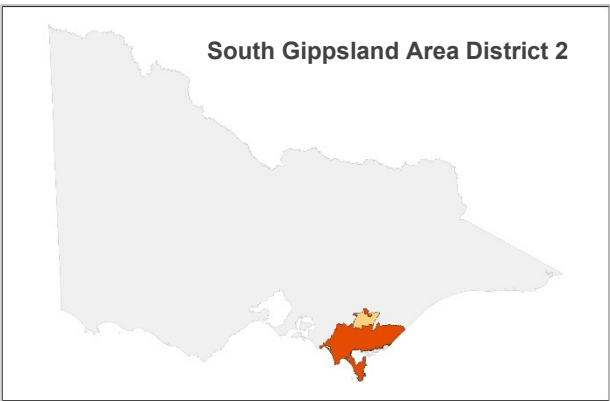
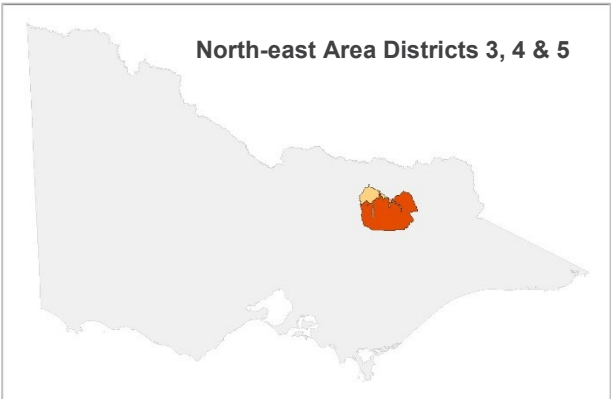
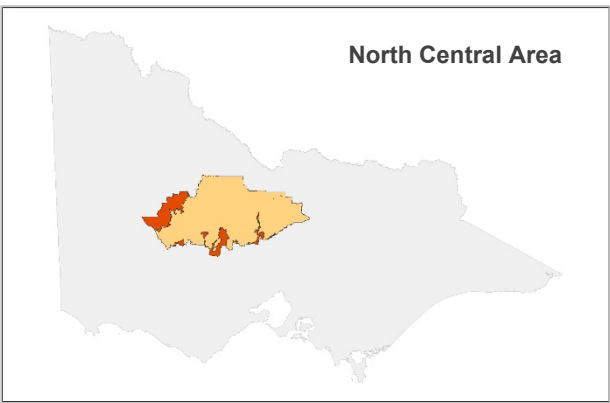
Detailed assessments

In the time available, detailed assessments were undertaken for seven early LCC investigations from the 14 investigations listed in table 2.1. This includes the two investigations that have only small residual areas.

The seven areas selected provide a broad range of public land use recommendations and include LCC investigations completed from 1977 to 1983. These assessments are described in section 3.3. The results from both the overall public land use analysis shown in table 2.1 and the detailed assessments inform discussions in sections 3.1 and 3.2 that address terms of reference part (a) and part (b) respectively.

Figure 3.1 The geographic extent of areas remaining unreviewed for LCC investigations completed from 1973 to 1983 (red). The area later reviewed is also shown for context (pale orange). Note that the unreviewed area shown is not all public land.





3.1 LCC recommendations that require review

The terms of reference part (a) ask for identification of early LCC government-accepted land use recommendations that require review and a rationale for why a review is required. From the detailed assessments of unreviewed recommendations presented in section 3.3 and the broader analysis undertaken, VEAC has identified broad types of public land that would benefit from a review, rather than a list of specific locations. Further detailed analysis may yield additional categories that merit review.

Work undertaken in parallel with this assessment for VEAC's *Advice on Aspects of Public Land Use Information (b) Improving the VEACRecs25 dataset* (2023) supports these results. That report identifies specific types of LCC recommendations that would benefit from targeted review or auditing.

Clarity and spatial resolution of information for past land use decisions

Crown parcel mapping was digitised and became available in geospatial systems from the early 2000s. Modern digital parcel-based mapping of public land use has significantly improved information management and allows more recent investigations to provide land use recommendations at finer resolution.

VEAC holds detailed plans drawn on paper for some specific LCC recommendations. However, most small areas of public land, such as recreation areas or services and utilities, were not systematically identified or listed by the LCC. Retrofitting historic land use recommendations can be problematic, especially for areas reserved for public purposes or unreserved Crown land (e.g. corresponding to recommendations for dispersed areas like 'other reserves and public land' or 'recreation reserves').

For some areas interpretation is required to apply public land use recommendations to the current Crown land parcel base. This means that for public land not shown on published recommendations maps or otherwise reported, a land use recommendation may actually apply.

Land use is generally readily apparent when reservation purpose or long-term use are also assessed. Most public land can be assigned a specific land use category after investigation on a case-by-case basis. There remain some dispersed areas and 'small blocks' that would benefit from a transparent public review process to establish an agreed public land use.

A review of small block areas will provide an opportunity to examine all information in detail and will lead to greater clarity and potentially more specific land use categorisation.

Recommendations that require review

Recommendations for review can be summarised broadly as follows:

- (a) locations where the recommended use is no longer required or discontinued (i.e. disused or supply exhausted for gravel or stone reserves, softwood production areas that were not cleared and host native vegetation)
- (b) legacy recommendations that do not translate readily to a single current public land use classification (i.e. area recommended as wildlife reserves may be categorised as either nature reserve or wildlife and game reserve by later government decisions)
- (c) non-specific or broad land recommendations such as 'other reserves and public land' may have a more narrowly defined use when examined
- (d) recommendations for areas to be alienated ('agriculture' or 'land not required for public purposes') that have not been implemented and remain public land
- (e) geographic areas excluded from early investigations that have not been investigated by LCC, ECC or VEAC (such as townships and boroughs, Gippsland lake beds)

Early government-accepted LCC land use recommendations that merit review are:

- softwood plantations, softwood production, school plantations
- gravel reserves, stone reserves

- education areas
- wildlife reserves, Gippsland lakes reserve, lakes reserves
- roadside conservation, highway parks
- other reserves and public land
- agriculture or land not required for public purposes.

The rationale for review includes:

- (a) the recommendations were not specific or require clarification / investigation to align with the current land use classification system
- (b) the original recommended use is no longer required or has been exhausted (e.g. gravel reserves that are no longer required)
- (c) in the absence of a specific public land use recommendation, additional investigation is warranted to identify a formal government decision for use or recommend a use.

Public consultation may be desirable for some areas that fall within (b) and (c).

3.2 LCC recommendations superseded by government decisions

The terms of reference part (b) requests identification of areas that have been superseded by later government land use decision that are not part of LCC-ECC-VEAC investigations. An outline of later government decisions is included in the detailed assessments presented in section 3.3.

More broadly, areas with more recent formal government decisions outside the LCC-ECC-VEAC investigation process include:

- (a) new parks and reserves resulting from forestry planning including the Regional Forest Agreements, Cores and Links HPV agreement, areas set aside as plantations but not used
- (b) government land use decisions as part of one-off processes including areas such as those at Cobboboonee, Goolengook forest, Brataualung Forest Park, new or expanded regional and metropolitan parks
- (c) locality-specific government land use decisions including new Crown land reservations, inclusions under legislation such as additions to schedules of the *National Parks Act 1975* or *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* and may include land acquisitions.

3.3 Detailed assessment reports

Detailed assessment reports are provided for the area of remaining public land use recommendations from seven early LCC investigations. This includes the small residuals of two investigation areas described in detail below (South-Western Area District 1 and Mallee Area).

Electronic links are provided here to VEAC's digital archive.

- [Ballarat Area \(1983\)](#)
- [Corangamite Area \(1978\)](#)
- [South-Western Area District 1 \(1973\)](#) and [District 1 Review \(1983\)](#)
- [South-Western Area District 2 \(1982\)](#)
- [Stradbroke Area Special Investigation \(1977\)](#)

Each assessment report provides the following information:

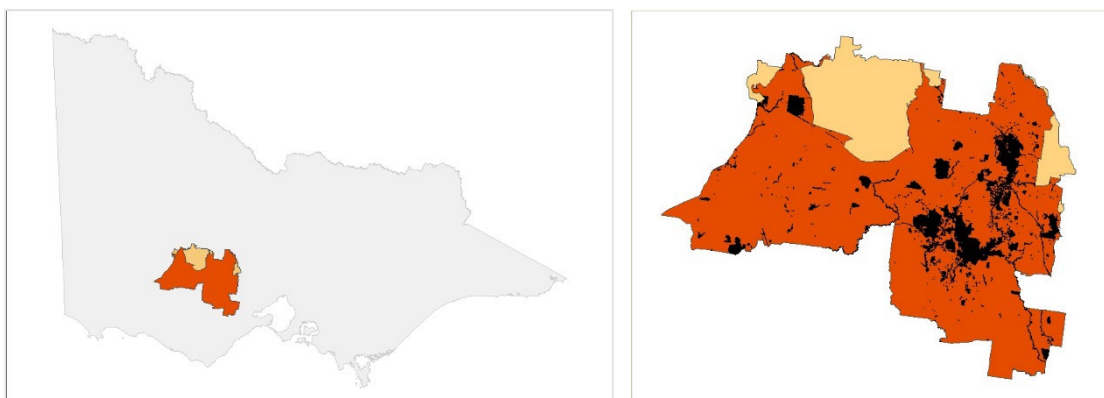
- an overview of the early LCC investigation and the key recommendations
- a summary of the main public land uses and land units in the early LCC investigation area
- the original extent of the LCC investigation area and the current extent of public land in that area
- the area of the early LCC investigation that has not been reviewed by a subsequent LCC-ECC-VEAC investigation (statewide thematic studies are not included at this level of analysis), and the estimated area of public land remaining unreviewed
- the extent of public land use categories excluded from this assessment by the terms of reference and the total extent of public land included in this assessment (see also table 2.1)
- identification of geographic areas that have been superseded by LCC-ECC-VEAC investigations after 1983
- any areas within the broader early investigation boundary that were excluded from past studies (i.e. townships, boroughs excluded from early LCC investigations)
- any broadscale areas that have been superseded by later government land use decisions
- any larger areas identified as requiring review and a rationale.

Small residuals of investigation areas

Table 2.1 shows a small residual area of government-accepted recommendations from two early LCC investigations retained even though these areas were reviewed later by the LCC. The reasons are as follows:

- a small area of South-Western Area District 1 Review (1983) recommendation for areas to be added to Mount Eccles State Park (now Budj Bim National Park) was not implemented by government. The original 1973 LCC recommendation for a wildlife reserve is reflected in a subsequent government decision in 1999 to further classify this area as a nature conservation reserve under the *Wildlife Act 1975*. This area of approximately 9 hectares is shown as part of the 1973 recommendation C3 The Stones Wildlife Reserve.
- an area of 419 hectares was recommended for alienation as an 'improvement purchase lease' (to be used for private agriculture) in the LCC's *Mallee Area Final Report (1977)*. This area was omitted in the subsequent *Mallee Area Review Final Report (1989)* while the lease was in effect. The lease expired but the land was not purchased by a private owner. This area remains Crown land and the recommendation from 1977 applies.

Ballarat Area



The red area represents the geographic extent of this LCC investigation area remaining unreviewed, the black areas are public land, and the pale orange shows parts of the investigation reviewed after 1983.

LCC original investigation area extent (hectares)

Total	826,271 hectares
Public land only	90,201 hectares

Areas of public land reviewed by LCC, ECC or VEAC

Central West Investigation	31,377
Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation	3131
Melbourne Area District 1 Review	60
Rivers and Streams Special Investigation	2720

Remaining unreviewed public land area (hectares)

52,913 hectares

Area of excluded public land use categories (hectares)

National/ State park	7365
Regional park	1914
State forest	15,028
Trust for Nature (nature reserve)	122

Assessment area

28,484 hectares

Overview

This area in western Victoria extends from Ararat to Ballarat and includes Lake Bolac, Beaufort, Skipton and Teesdale near Bannockburn. Landforms vary from flat volcanic plains to high granitic peaks and midlands of the Great Dividing Range.

The Ballarat Area had one of the lowest proportions of public land in an investigation area (~10%) and the recommended parks and reserves outcome was also relatively low (19%) as a proportion of public land.

During the Ballarat investigation the first of several research studies were undertaken into the economics of using private land for pine plantation establishment rather than public land.

The LCC published its final recommendations in April 1982.

Parts of the Ballarat Area were later reviewed in the LCC's Historic Places South-Western Area Special Investigation (1995-1997), Rivers and Streams Special Investigation (1987-1991), the ECC's Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation (1995-2001) and VEAC's Central West Investigation (2017-2019). Some areas of stream frontage in townships with no regional studies (104 hectares) are currently allocated to the Ballarat investigation area as stream frontage, beds and banks.

An overall geographic extent of some 690,000 hectares of the Ballarat Area has not been part of later land use studies by LCC-ECC-VEAC. Within this area there is around 53,000 hectares of public land.

Assessment of recommendations and major land units

Enfield State Park, Langi Ghiran State Park, and Mount Buangor State Park (included in VEAC's Central West Investigation, 2019) were existing state parks at the time of the Ballarat Area investigation.

Large water bodies were originally recommended as lake reserves (4800 hectares), wildlife reserves (1500 hectares), or water production areas (5200 hectares).

One regional park was recommended and established in the investigation area: Ballarat - Creswick Regional Park (1273 ha). The Woowookarung Regional Park (630 ha) on the southern outskirts of Ballarat is not a recommendation of the LCC and is discussed below.

Some large areas recommended as uncommitted land and hardwood production were included in later investigations by ECC or VEAC. Large areas remain unreviewed south of Ballarat near Linton and Smythesdale. Some areas recommended as softwood production have been transferred to timber producers, while other areas were not cleared of native vegetation and are not utilised as plantations.

Areas recommended as Devils Kitchen Geological Reserve (60 ha), four flora reserves, part of Inverleigh Flora and Fauna Reserve (this reserve extends into the adjoining investigation area), and some wildlife reserves are now classified as nature reserves using VEAC's public land use revised classification. Devils Kitchen Geological Reserve was implemented in 1998 for the purpose of 'preservation of an area of ecological significance'. The area recommended as Ben Major Flora Reserve (740 ha) in the Ballarat Investigation was included in VEAC's Central West Investigation and retained as the expanded Ben Major Nature Reserve.

Recommendations for other reserves and public land include around 1386 hectares with large areas at Ballarat Common (509 ha) and Ararat Common (21 ha), Skipton Common, and Rokewood Common. Some areas of these recommendations have been transferred for private use and are no longer public land.

The extensive land disturbance in the Ballarat Area limited the area available for reference areas. Two reference areas covering 170 hectares were recommended for areas within state parks. Buangor Reference Area (70 ha) was included in VEAC's Central West Investigation.

Two education areas were recommended at Jenny Clayton (200 ha) and Union Jack (68 ha). The area at Jenny Clayton was later added to Mount Buangor State Park. Union Jack Reserve was established in 1986 for the purpose of 'conservation of an area of natural interest'.

An area of around 9 hectares was recommended as Lake Bolac Highway Park along the Glenelg Highway adjoining the Lake Bolac Cemetery. A section of Crown frontage to the Hopkins River at the Western Highway southeast of Ararat was recommended for ongoing use as Dobie Highway Park.

Some 40 hectares was recommended for agriculture use, with only a small remnant of around 0.1 hectares remaining as public land.

Areas of superseded recommendations

Woowookarung Regional Park replaces areas recommended for hardwood or softwood production and includes some areas that were in the former Ballarat city, as well as new Crown land without LCC-ECC-VEAC recommendations. The park was established in 2016 and included on the Fifth Schedule of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act. Woowookarung 'place of plenty' is part of the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung Aboriginal people.

Mullawallah Wetlands Nature Conservation Reserve (61 ha) was recommended as other reserves and public forming the Winter Swamp part of Ballarat Common. This area was reserved in 2001 for 'management of wildlife', and subsequently classified as nature conservation reserve in 2010.

An area of 105 hectares at Rokewood Common recommended as 'other reserves and public land - commons' was reserved for 'preservation of species of native plants' in 1997.

Areas not reviewed

In the Ballarat Area investigation the former cities, boroughs or townships of Ararat, Ballarat and Sebastopol were excluded. Subsequent land use recommendations apply to part of Ararat township, but the entire area of Ballarat and Sebastopol (4315 ha) has not been included in a regional land use investigation of LCC-ECC-VEAC. There is some 340 hectares of public land in the former Ararat township, and around 1175 hectares of public land in Ballarat and Sebastopol that has not been reviewed.

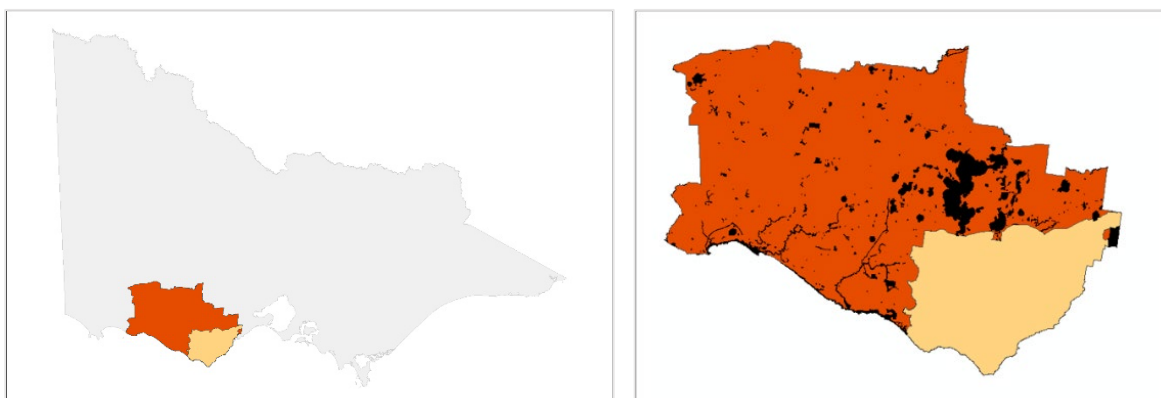
Trust for Nature owns two nature reserves in this investigation area that are not subject to LCC-ECC-VEAC recommendations: Clarkesdale Bird Sanctuary (98 ha) and Linton Nature Reserve (24 ha).

Summary of recommendations that require review

VEAC has identified the following broad types of early LCC recommendations that would benefit from review or assessment, rather than a list of specific locations.

- Legacy or historic public land categories that require clarification to be assigned to a contemporary land use include:
 - wildlife reserves
 - lake reserves
 - highway parks
 - education area
- Areas that may not be required for the recommended use include softwood plantations and school plantations, mineral and stone production reserves (gravel reserves), particularly those areas that were not cleared of native vegetation.
- Public land in the former townships excluded from Ballarat Area that have not been included in subsequent LCC-ECC-VEAC investigations(e.g. Ballarat, Sebastopol, Ararat) and new areas of public land that have no formal land use recommendations.
- Other recommendations that would benefit from review include 'other reserves and public land' including large areas identified as 'commons'. Later government decisions have allocated some of these areas to a specific use. The remaining areas would benefit from review or assessment to determine the most appropriate public land use.

Corangamite Area



The red area represents the geographic extent of this LCC investigation area remaining unreviewed, the black areas are public land, and the pale orange shows parts of the investigation reviewed after 1983.

LCC original investigation area extent (hectares)

Total	1,489,520 hectares
Public land only	221,881 hectares
Areas of public land reviewed by LCC, ECC or VEAC	
Angahook-Otway Investigation	152,605
Historic Places South Western Area Special Investigation	6.6
Rivers and Streams Special Investigation	41
Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation	1596
Remaining unreviewed public land area (hectares)	67,632 hectares
Other areas included (hectares)	
Softwood plantations (inside Angahook-Otway area)	5688
	73,320 hectares
Area of excluded public land use categories (hectares)	
National/ State park	5065
Regional park/ forest park	7
State forest	10
Conservation park	840
Other parks and sanctuaries	35.8
Trust for Nature Land (nature reserve)	231
Assessment area	67,131 hectares

Overview

This area in western Victoria extends along the coast from Port Fairy to Lorne and inland to include Winchelsea, Camperdown and Mortlake. The changeable inland landscape of flat volcanic plains and lakes, rises in the east to the rugged Otway Ranges and scenic coast.

This is the tenth of the 17 study areas to be investigated by the LCC. Final recommendations in September 1978 included Cape Otway and Western Entrance (formerly Port Campbell) national parks (15,500 ha) and Angahook-Lorne and Carlisle state parks (24,000 ha).

Other key recommendations were for a new Bay of Islands Coastal Park, two regional parks (Karwarren and Framlingham), 37 wildlife reserves, 64 lake reserves covering more than 40,000 hectares areas across the plains, and substantial softwood (7900 ha) and hardwood production areas (80,100 ha).

A 'geological monument' was recommended for Tower Hill as well as 'wildlife reserve' at the same location even though this area is in the Borough of Koroit and technically outside the LCC's investigation area. It is one of the most important geological features of the volcanic plain. A scenic coast was recommended from Lorne to Warrnambool to emphasise protection of the excellent natural landscape values.

In December 1979 the Government accepted most recommendations. There were some notable exceptions such as Framlingham forest which was set aside and in 1982 returned to the Aboriginal community. Tower Hill Geological Monument was omitted, and the existing name Port Campbell National Park retained in favour of the recommended name – Western Entrance National Park.

The LCC's Historic Places South-West and Rivers and Streams special investigations, and the ECC's Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation replaced some recommendations from the Corangamite Area investigation.

VEAC's Angahook-Otway Investigation replaced a large area of LCC recommendations in the Otway Ranges, Surf Coast and Colac region but excluded areas of softwood production. Areas of softwood plantation retain Corangamite Area investigation public land use recommendations.

Public land comprises around 6 per cent of the remaining unreviewed Corangamite Area (including softwood production areas).

Assessment of recommendations and major land units

Lake reserves (contemporary equivalent is Stream frontage, beds and banks subcategory lakes) is the most extensive land use in the unreviewed Corangamite Area comprising 44,010 hectares and around 60 percent of public land. The largest of these is Lake Corangamite Reserve (25,260 ha).

Of the 34 recommended wildlife reserves, 23 across 4547 hectares have been specifically made available for hunting (contemporary equivalent land use category is wildlife and game reserve) including Tower Hill (624 ha), Lake Bookar Wildlife Reserve (480 ha), Lake Eyang Wildlife Reserve (130 ha), Lake Gherang Wildlife Reserve (114 ha), and Lake Kennedy Wildlife Reserve (241 ha).

Wildlife reserves now designated as nature (conservation) reserves (2972 ha) include: Deen Maar (Lady Julia Percy Island) Wildlife Reserve (147 ha), Lake Beeac Wildlife Reserve (675 ha), Cobra Killuc Wildlife Reserve (638 ha), Lake Cundare Wildlife Reserve (300 ha), Lake Rosine Wildlife Reserve (176 ha), and Kooraweera Lakes and Swamps Wildlife Reserve (346 ha). The current land use of some areas recommended as wildlife reserves is unclear (e.g. Lake Purrumbete Wildlife Reserve retains an 1881 reservation for 'public purposes').

Fourteen locations were recommended as either flora and fauna reserves, or flora reserves (5420 ha). In addition to changes of some wildlife reserves to nature reserves, nearly 350 hectares has been added from other government decisions, notably in 1997 the 300 hectares of Mortlake Common recommended as 'commons and recreation reserves' to a flora reserve.

Seven of the nine recommended reference areas were included in VEAC's Angahook-Otway Investigation and eight have been established under the *Reference Areas Act 1978*. The Framlingham reference area (140 ha) was not established as the land was later transferred.

Some areas recommended as softwood production (7900 ha) have been transferred to private ownership or other uses. Around 5690 hectares remains with an additional 34 hectares retained for school plantations. Note that these areas are geographically within VEAC's Angahook-Otway Investigation area but were excluded from that study in the terms of reference. The Corangamite recommendations apply for these dispersed locations.

Agriculture recommendations extended over 11,700 hectares including in the Heytesbury Land Settlement scheme area (2300 ha was recommended for softwood production). Where this area remained public land, it was generally reviewed in the Angahook-Otway Investigation (2002-2004).

Areas of superseded recommendations

VEAC's Angahook-Otway Investigation replaced a large area with early LCC recommendations in the Otway Ranges to Colac region.

Most areas recommended as 'commons' have been later given a more specific use; Mortlake Common was reserved for 'preservation of species of native plants' in 1997, Darlington Common (53 ha) was reserved in 1982 for 'future restoration and preservation of species of native plants'; part of the recommended Caramut Common was included with the abutting golf course.

All areas recommended as education areas have a new use established by various government land use decisions. Sherbrook River education area (395 ha) is now part of Port Campbell National Park. Areas recommended as Barramunga Creek (135 ha) and Bambra Education areas (217 ha) were included in VEAC's Angahook-Otway Investigation as part of Otway Forest Park.

Framlingham Forest Indigenous Protected Area (1130 hectares) comprises areas recommended as regional park 740 hectares (including Framlingham reference area) and Framlingham forest education area (200 ha).

Areas not reviewed

In the Corangamite Area the former townships, rural cities or boroughs of Camperdown, Colac, Warrnambool, Koroit, and Port Fairy were excluded. Subsequent land use recommendations apply to coastal parts of these townships, resulting from the ECC Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation Final Report (2000) recommendations.

Summary of recommendations that require review

VEAC has identified the following broad types of early LCC recommendations that would benefit from review or assessment, rather than a list of specific locations.

- Legacy or historic public land categories that require clarification to be assigned to a contemporary land use include:
 - wildlife reserves
 - lake reserves
 - highway parks
 - education area.
- Public land in the former townships excluded from Corangamite Area that have not been included in subsequent LCC-ECC-VEAC investigations and new areas of public land that have no formal land use recommendations.
- Areas of broad recommendations such as 'other reserves and public land' would benefit from review. Later government decisions have allocated some of these areas to a specific use. The remaining areas would benefit from review or assessment to determine the best public land use.
- Areas recommended as softwood plantations, roadside conservation, mineral and stone production, agriculture and land exchange that have not been alienated, some areas of which have not been cleared of native vegetation, would benefit from a more widespread review or assessment. Cleared areas may no longer be required in the public land estate.

South-Western Area District 1



The red area represents the geographic extent of this LCC investigation area remaining unreviewed, the black areas are public land, and the pale orange shows parts of the investigation reviewed after 1983.

LCC original investigation area extent (hectares)

Total	738,172 hectares
Public land only	219,362 hectares
Areas of public land reviewed by LCC, ECC or VEAC	
Historic Places South-Western Area Special Investigation	2.4
Rivers and Streams Special Investigation	3608
Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation	550
Remaining unreviewed public land area (hectares)	215,202 hectares
Area of excluded public land use categories (hectares)	
National/ State park	60,181
Regional park, Forest park	10,899
State forest	83,203
Conservation park (coastal park)	10,627
Trust for Nature Land (nature reserve)	63
Assessment area	50,288 hectares

Overview

This region was the first to be reviewed by the LCC some 10 years after the Council's original investigation of this area from 1971 to 1973. As well as recommending land for parks, various other conservation reserves, and hardwood production, the original recommendations allocated substantial areas as uncommitted land; 'land with no primary use'. The Council indicated that as community needs changed, and more information became available, it would be necessary to review the use of this land.

In the 1983 review the final recommendations refer mostly to the land designated as 'land with no primary use' in the 1973 study, although the Council also recommended some other changes, such as the inclusion of the Bailey's Rocks scenic and recreation reserve in Dergholm State Park.

The final recommendations for the review were published in March 1983.

Parts of the South-Western Area District 1 were included in thematic studies: Historic Places South Western Area Special Investigation (1995-1997), Rivers and Streams Special Investigation (1987-1991), and Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Special Investigation (1997-2000).

Most of the investigation area has not been reviewed by LCC-ECC-VEAC investigations and comprises around 215,000 hectares of public land.

Cobboboonee National Park and Cobboboonee Forest Park are areas recommended as 'uncommitted land' and 'hardwood production' in 1983 (contemporary equivalent is state forest) and were established by a separate government process in 2008.

Assessment of recommendations and major land units

This investigation area has four national parks extending over 49,200 hectares: Lower Glenelg, Mt Richmond, Cobboboonee and Budj Bim (part). There are two state parks at Dergholm (10,945 ha) and Cape Nelson (229 ha). These areas were recommended as a coastal park but subsequently retained as a state park on National Parks Act schedule 2B. The remaining areas of parks are Crawford River Regional Park (2270 ha), Discovery Bay Coastal Park (10,627 ha) (equivalent contemporary classification is conservation park), and Cobboboonee Forest Park (8629 ha).

Cobboboonee National Park and Cobboboonee Forest Park comprise areas recommended for hardwood production superseded by a government decision in 2009 to establish these parks under legislation.

Extensive areas were recommended for softwood production (22,917 ha). These recommendations include some areas that have not been planted with softwoods, and extensive areas that have been alienated. There are also areas of Crown land now included here that are used for softwood production and have no LCC recommendations.

The 1983 recommendations identified 16 wildlife reserves; eight areas permit hunting and are now classified as wildlife and game reserves. Four areas were later classified as nature reserve: Bats Ridge, Burgess Swamp, Kaladbro Swamp, Lawrence Rocks located offshore from Point Danger.

Eight flora reserves, one flora and fauna reserves were recommended by the LCC. There are now 15 nature reserves in this investigation area, including those wildlife reserves later reclassified.

The Stones Wildlife Reserve (nature reserve) was recommended for inclusion in Mt Eccles State Park (the name was changed to Budj Bim National Park) in the LCC's 1983 review but around 9 hectares was excluded at implementation of the park. The pre-existing 1973 wildlife reserve recommendation for this area was formalised by reservation in 1979 for 'management of wildlife'. In 1999 this remaining part of the reserve was classified as a nature conservation reserve under the *Wildlife Act 1975*. This is the most recent government decision for land use at this location and the area is classified as a nature reserve.

Four reference areas (4350 ha) were recommended in the LCC's 1973 investigation, and all were retained in the 1983 review. Three are located in Lower Glenelg National Park. Roseneath Reference Area (1752 ha) is within an area recommended as uncommitted land (contemporary equivalent is state forest).

The LCC's 1983 recommendations included 51 bushland reserves (14 existing), and one existing scenic reserve (Hedditch Hill) and one new scenic reserve (Mount Kincaid).

The recommended Tarragal Education Area (141 ha) has not been implemented through reservation and remains unreserved Crown land.

Cape Bridgewater Coastal Reserve (3 ha) was recommended as part of Discovery Bay Coastal Park but this small area was excluded on implementation (see certified plan NP44A/2). Later recommendations for coastal reserve from the statewide ECC's Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Special Investigation apply here and across the area more broadly.

The former Portland township area was excluded from the LCC's investigation area.

Areas of superseded recommendations

Cobboboonee National Park and Cobboboonee Forest Park comprise areas recommended for hardwood production and some areas recommended for softwood plantation that were not cleared. Additions to Budj Bim National Park also consist of areas recommended as hardwood production. The majority of the area recommended for Lake Condah (Tae Rak) wildlife reserve was transferred to the Gunditjmarra Aboriginal community and is part of the Budj Bim national heritage landscape.

Cape Nelson State Park was recommended as part of an expanded Discovery Bay Coastal Park, but a government decision later retained this area as a state park on the National Parks Act schedule 2B.

Areas not reviewed

The former Portland township was excluded from the original 1973 investigation and the 1983 review; the total extent of the township is 3590 hectares, including 584 hectares of public land. Subsequent land use recommendations for coastal reserves and Portland Old General Cemetery Historic Reserve (2.4 ha) apply to part of the township, but the entire area has not been included in a regional land use investigation of LCC-ECC-VEAC.

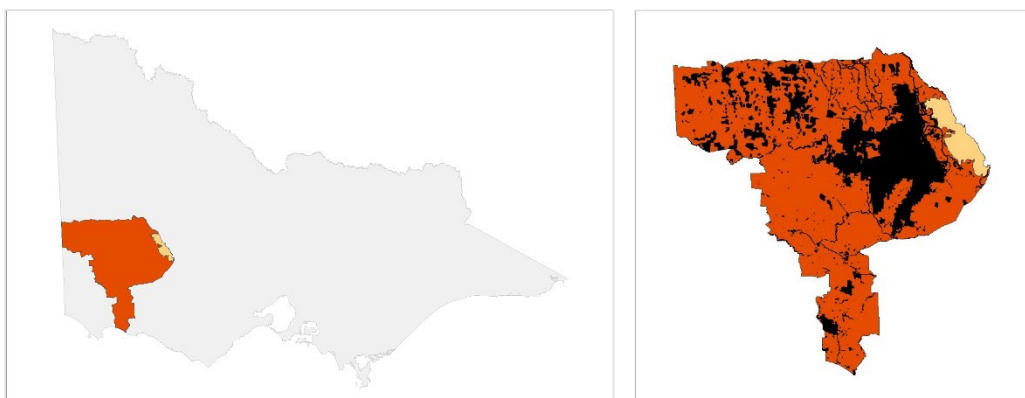
There are several isolated blocks of Crown land not identified at the time of the 1983 review. Around 4500 hectares of Crown land has been added since the LCC's investigation of this area including Convincing Ground Historic Reserve (20 ha), Trust for Nature's Merino Nature Reserve (64 ha), Cape Nelson Lighthouse Reserve (29 ha), softwood plantations (3618 ha) and additions to the national parks (236 ha) and conservation reserves (290 ha).

Summary of recommendations that require review

VEAC has identified the following broad types of early LCC recommendations that would benefit from review or assessment, rather than a list of specific locations.

- Legacy or historic public land categories that require clarification to be assigned to a contemporary land use include:
 - wildlife reserves
 - lake reserves
 - highway parks
 - education areas.
- Some 580 hectares of public land in the former township of Portland excluded from South-Western Area District 1 that has not been included in subsequent LCC-ECC-VEAC investigations and new areas of public land that have no formal land use recommendations. Areas with no public land use recommendations include:
 - Walook Swamp, Fawthrop Lagoon, Graham Husson Fauna Reserve
 - recreation areas: Henty Park, Alexandra Park, Flinders Park, Hanlon Park, Yarraman Park.
- Locations that may no longer be required for the recommended use are: Tarragal Education Area, school plantations, around 1600 hectares recommended for softwood production (some areas have not been cleared of native vegetation), roadside conservation, mineral and stone production, agriculture and land exchange that has not been alienated, and revegetation areas.
- Review of areas recommended as 'other reserves and public land' may identify a narrower land use categorisation based on Crown land reservation purpose or long-term formal use.

South-Western Area District 2



The red area represents the geographic extent of this LCC investigation area remaining unreviewed, the black areas are public land, and the pale orange shows parts of the investigation reviewed after 1983.

LCC original investigation area extent (hectares)

Total	1,586,121 hectares
Public land only	345,738 hectares
Areas of public land reviewed by LCC, ECC or VEAC	
Corangamite Area Investigation (discussed below)	66
Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation	395
Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation	181
Rivers and Streams Special Investigation	8259
Remaining unreviewed public land area (hectares)	336,837 hectares
Area of excluded public land use categories (hectares)	
National/ State park	196,639
State forest	75,501
Trust for Nature (nature reserve)	306
Assessment area	64,391 hectares

Overview

As the name suggests this is the most south-westerly of the 17 LCC investigation areas. District 2 is the eastern part and contains the Grampians and the south-western Wimmera, as well as sections of coastline from Codrington east to Yambuk. Hamilton and Horsham are the main towns in the investigation area; both townships were excluded from the LCC's 1982 final recommendations. Ararat township was also excluded and is on the boundary between this investigation area and Ballarat Area. Parts of Ararat were later reviewed in the ECC's Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation.

Here the focus was on the Grampians and the community was polarised on future land use. Council's final recommendations established the main range as Grampians National Park and the Black Range as a state park. The balance of the public land was retained as state forest.

Other recommendations included state parks at Mount Arapiles-Tooan, Mount Napier, and Mount Eccles (now Budj Bim National Park), Ararat Hills Regional Park (1000 ha) and numerous small conservation, scenic and lake reserves mostly outside the Grampians.

In November 1983 all recommendations were accepted with some modifications to the Grampians National Park boundary and provisions for timber harvesting phase-out, and Ararat Hills Regional Park to exclude a water production area at Picnic Road Reservoir.

This investigation area was not reviewed by the LCC, however some recommendations were replaced by Historic Places South West (1997), Rivers and Streams (1992) and ECC Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands (2001) investigations. Within this area not reviewed there is around 336,800 hectares of public land.

An area southeast of Hamilton at Tabor (Buckleys) Swamp Wildlife Reserve was previously assessed in the LCC's Corangamite Area investigation and, although geographically within South-Western Area District 2, was not considered in the later investigation.

Assessment of recommendations and major land units

This investigation area has two national parks: Grampians National Park extending over 168,202 hectares and the eastern part of Budj Bim National Park (6305 ha). There are three state parks: Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (7458 ha), Mount Napier State Park (2938 ha) and Black Range State Park (11,737 ha).

The area recommended as Ararat Hills Regional Park by the LCC was later included in the ECC's expanded Ararat Regional Park.

Extensive areas were recommended for Grampians State Forest (33,600 ha), hardwood production (30,580 ha) and as uncommitted land (25,095 ha). There were no areas recommended for softwood production.

In the northern part of the investigation area there are many wetlands and water bodies across the Wimmera plains. The LCC's recommendations identified 74 wildlife reserves most of which have been retained for duck hunting and are now classified as wildlife and game reserves, and 23 lake reserves mostly in this area northwest of the Grampians.

Seven reference areas (3375 ha) were recommended. Three are located in Grampians National Park, two in state parks, and one in the extensive Jipanger Flora and Fauna Reserve. Bear Reference Area (380 ha) is within an area recommended as Grampians State Forest located to the south of Rocklands Reservoir.

Recommendations were also made for 91 bushland reserves (2985 ha), six scenic reserves (1867 ha), four education areas (1275 ha) and highway parks (180 ha).

Recommendations made for 12 flora reserves, most of which were new, include the large Meereek Flora Reserve (280 ha). A single flora and fauna reserve was recommended for 8290 hectares on the southwestern Wimmera Plains between Edenhope and Horsham. The current Jilpanger Nature Conservation Reserve (12,255 ha) was expanded with inclusion of areas recommended for hardwood production and uncommitted land by the LCC. The nearby Black Waterhole education area (250 ha) was not included in the expanded nature reserve.

Areas of superseded recommendations

Hardwood production and uncommitted land recommendations have been later included in large nature reserves at Jilpanger and Tallageira (3759 ha).

Areas recommended for uncommitted land were later included in Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park. Hardwood production areas were added to in Budj Bim National Park.

The recommended Mt Napier education area (350 ha) was later added to Mount Napier State Park; Potter Creek (400 ha) and Wannon Divide (275 ha) education areas were added to Grampians National Park.

East of the Grampians the ECC's Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation nature conservation reserve recommendations replace the LCC's hardwood production and uncommitted land recommendations at Lonsdale Nature Conservation Reserve, Illawarra Nature Conservation Reserve and Jallukar Nature Conservation Reserve.

Areas not reviewed

Substantial areas have been added to Grampians National Park since the LCC's investigation. Other areas not reviewed by the LCC-ECC-VEAC include Trust for Nature's Pallisters Reserve at Orford (255 ha) and

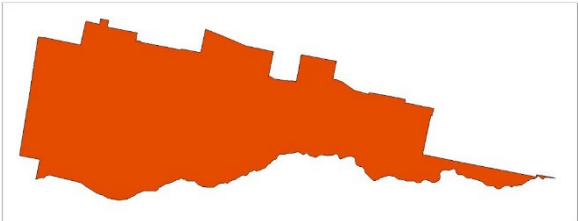
Flora McDonald Reserve at Patyah (51 ha), Yambuk Wetlands Nature Conservation Reserve (77 ha), Red Gum Swamp (Jallumba) Wildlife Reserve (77 ha) and additions to the national parks (236 ha) and conservation reserves (290 ha).

Summary of recommendations that require review

VEAC has identified the following broad types of early LCC recommendations that would benefit from review or assessment, rather than a list of specific locations.

- Legacy or historic public land categories that require clarification to be assigned to a contemporary land use include:
 - wildlife reserves
 - lake reserves
 - highway parks
 - education areas.
- Public land in the former townships excluded from South-Western Area District 2 that have not been included in subsequent LCC-ECC-VEAC investigations and new areas of public land that have no formal land use recommendations.

Stradbroke Area



The red area represents the geographic extent of this LCC investigation area remaining unreviewed.

LCC original investigation area extent (hectares)

Total	6890 hectares
Public land only	6788 hectares
Areas of public land reviewed by LCC, ECC or VEAC	
None	
Remaining unreviewed public land area (hectares)	6788 hectares
Area of excluded public land use categories (hectares)	
State forest	3690
Assessment area	3098 hectares

Overview

In February 1977, the LCC was directed for the first time to conduct a special investigation, to determine whether suitable land exists in the Stradbroke Special Investigation Area for alienation for private forestry (softwood) purposes. The Stradbroke investigation encompasses around 6800 hectares set on the eastern foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges, south of Rosedale and west of Stradbroke. The area is located along the border of the LCC's South Gippsland Area districts 1 and 2.

South Gippsland Area District 1 final recommendations for this area were published in 1973 and recommended most of the Stradbroke Area be uncommitted land allowing for flexible future use, noting the underlying coal resources. The contemporary equivalent land use category is state forest. The boundary between Stradbroke Area and South Gippsland Area District 2 follows Monkey Creek.

The LCC found that most land in the Stradbroke Area had relatively low capability for softwood production. In the final recommendations in November 1977 some 690 hectares adjoining existing private plantations was recommended to be leased for softwood production. The remaining areas were recommended as uncommitted land (3690 ha) to meet future public purposes (notably coal extraction), part as Stradbroke Flora and Fauna Reserve (2280 ha) and the existing Toms Cap Scenic Reserve (125 ha) was retained and expanded.

Assessment of recommendations and major land units

Stradbroke Flora and Fauna Reserve (3450 ha) extends across the Stradbroke Area into both South Gippsland Area districts 1 and 2. The 2280 hectares in Stradbroke Area (within district 1) is Crown land reserved for 'preservation of a species of native plants and animals' in 1993.

Toms Cap Scenic Reserve (125 ha) comprises an area reserved for 'public park' (gazetted in 1927) that existed prior to the LCC's recommendations, and an area that was reserved after the recommendations (gazetted in 1991) also for the purpose of 'public park'.

Recommendations for uncommitted land (3690 ha) form part of Mullungdung State Forest and are excluded from this assessment.

Softwood plantation (692 ha) in the north-eastern section of the investigation area has been extensively used for plantation purposes and remains Crown land.

Areas of superseded recommendations

Areas recommended as uncommitted land are used as state forest. All other areas are currently used for the purposes recommended by the LCC in 1977.

Areas not reviewed

This small investigation area is almost entirely Crown land and has not been reviewed since 1977.

Summary of recommendations that require review

Areas recommended as softwood plantations that have been cleared and may no longer be required in the public land estate should be considered as part of wider review or assessment of areas recommended for softwood production.

The reservation purpose of the land at Toms Cap Scenic Reserve could be more narrowly defined than 'public park' to reflect the importance of the natural values at this location.

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Appendix 1 Terms of reference

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001

Assessment of early government-accepted Land Conservation Council recommendations

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pursuant to section 26B of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Minister for Environment and Climate Action hereby requests the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (the Council) to carry out an assessment of government-accepted public land use recommendations, in relation to particular areas of land, made by the former Land Conservation Council between 1973 and 1983 and which have not been subsequently reviewed. The assessment does not include government-accepted public land use recommendations for national parks, state parks, wilderness parks, regional parks and state forests (including recommendations for areas for hardwood production and uncommitted land).

The purpose of the assessment is to:

- (a) identify government-accepted public land use recommendations that require review
- (b) identify government-accepted public land use recommendations that have been superseded by subsequent government land use decisions.

The assessment supports the current reforms to public land legislation by identifying land use recommendations that require review to ensure the proposed transition to public land management categories, as recommended in the Council's *Statewide Assessment of Public Land Final Report* (2017), is based on current and appropriate government-accepted recommendations for public land use categories.

This request is for an assessment and report on the status of government-accepted public land use category recommendations, including a rationale for why a review is required. It does not extend to recommending changes to public land use, and public consultation is not required.

The Council must report on its assessment of the matters specified in paragraphs (a) and (b) above within nine months from the date of the request.

Appendix 2 Public land use categories – past or legacy categories and new system

Sequence matches the proposed legislation reforms consisting of a revised National Parks Act and a new Public Land Act, and classification and reference numbers reflected in VEAC’s Statewide Assessment of Public Land Investigation Final Report (2017) recommendation R1. * denotes protected area.

Current public land use category	Reference number	Former public land use categories and sub-categories			Notes
VEAC (2017) classification		VEAC/ECC category	Sub-categories system established in LCC’s Melbourne Area District 2 Review and Statewide Assessment	older LCC category	
Revised National Parks Act					
National Park	*1	National park	National park	National park	Implemented as additions to <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> schedule Two. Includes areas identified as staged implementation in the government’s response to VEAC’s Central West Investigation Final Report (2019).
		State park	State park	State park	Implemented as additions to National Parks Act schedule Two B.
		Wilderness park	Wilderness park	Wilderness area	Mallee Area (1977) and Mallee Review (1989) recommendation B1 Big Desert Wilderness Area; Wilderness Special Investigation (1991) recommended 20 wilderness areas. Three were implemented as Wilderness Parks of National Parks Act schedule Two A. The remainder were implemented as Wilderness Zones under schedule 5 of National Parks Act forming land use overlays within national parks.
Conservation park	*2	Coastal park	Coastal park	Coastal park	Recommendations for coastal park implemented as additions to schedule Three of National Parks Act are included (Bay Of Islands, Cape Conran, Cape Liptrap, Discovery Bay, Gippsland Lakes, Point Cook). Coastal parks declared using the <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> are identified as coastal reserves (i.e., Altona Coastal Park, Truganina Coastal Parkland). Marine and coastal parks are scheduled under the National Parks Act and are shown as public land use category Marine park/ marine and coastal park (see reference # 18 below).
		Conservation park			VEAC’s Central West Investigation Final Report (2019) used this revised category description for two new parks: Hepburn and Cobaw conservation parks.
		Nature park			LCC’s Melbourne Area District 2 Review recommendations for Phillip Island State Park were implemented as Nature Park and gazetted under Crown Land (Reserves) Act.
		Other park (National Parks Act Schedule 3 Park)			VEAC’s River Red Gum Forests Investigation recommended four areas be established as Other Park (conservation) on National Parks Act schedule Three. VEAC’s Statewide Assessment of Public Land Investigation identifies the public land use category applicable for parks and reserves listed in National Parks Act schedule Three.
National heritage park	*3	National heritage park			National heritage park category was introduced in ECC’s Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation and included in National Parks Act schedule Four. Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park is the only area with this categorisation.
Nature reserve	*5	Nature conservation reserve (NCR)	Nature conservation reserve		Includes areas identified by government decision-making processes such as inclusion of areas on National Parks Act schedule Three Part 9: Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve, and schedule Nine Part 1 Division 1 comprising five Nature Conservation Areas; Crown Land (Reserves) Act schedule 5 Part 1 lists 27 nature conservation reserves.
			NCR - Wildlife reserve (no hunting)	Wildlife reserve	Includes areas recommended as wildlife reserves and later classified as nature conservations reserves under the <i>Wildlife Act 1975</i> and are not available for hunting. Those wildlife reserves where hunting may be permitted are categorised as Wildlife and Game Reserve (see reference # 9 below).
			NCR - Flora reserve	Flora reserve	
			NCR - Flora and fauna reserve	Flora and fauna reserve	

Current public land use category	Reference number	Former public land use categories and sub-categories			Notes
VEAC (2017) classification		VEAC/ECC category	Sub-categories system established in LCC’s Melbourne Area District 2 Review and Statewide Assessment	older LCC category	
		Natural features reserve (NFR)	NFR - Geological and Geomorphological Features Area	Geological reserve or monument	Recommendations for Caves, Geological reserves, Natural features reserve – sub-category Geological and geomorphological) reserves were previously classified as subcategories of natural features reserve. LCC recommendations for geological monument were not accepted by government (i.e. Melbourne Study recommendation A28 Organ Pipes and Corangamite Area recommendation A8/ C37 Tower Hill). Subsequently the LCC’s Melbourne 1 Review (1987) recommended Organ Pipes National Park be retained (see recommendation A3).
			NFR - Cave	Cave reserve	LCC’s Gippsland Lakes Hinterland Area Final Report (1983) recommended seven cave reserves. Additions have been made to two reserves from land acquisitions.
		Trust for Nature - nature reserve			Includes freehold land owned by Trust for Nature that is intended to be retaining for nature conservation purposes. These areas are identified in VEAC’s Yellingbo Investigation, Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation, River Red Gum Forests Investigation (Neds Corner and several large grassland reserves). This does not include land in the revolving fund operated by Trust For Nature.
Marine national park	*16	Marine national park			Introduced in the ECC’s Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation Final Report (2000)
Marine sanctuary	*17	Marine sanctuary			Introduced in the ECC’s Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation Final Report (2000)
Marine park/ marine and coastal park	*18	Marine and coastal park			Some marine park and marine and coastal park areas established prior to ECC’s Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation remain in place.
				Marine reserve	VEAC’s Marine Investigation Final Report (2014) recommended Wilsons Promontory Marine Reserve be added to the adjoining marine park. This is the only remaining use of the category.
				Marine and wildlife reserve	ECC’s Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation Final Report (2000) recommended these be marine national parks, marine sanctuaries, or marine and coastal parks.
				Marine park	
New Public Land Act					
Regional Park	4	Regional park			Descriptive reserve names included here are Beechworth Historic Park, Lysterfield Park and Steiglitz Historic Park.
			Metropolitan park		VEAC’s Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation identified area managed for ‘Conservation, recreation, leisure and tourism’ as metropolitan park and recommended these as a sub-category of regional park. All were established after the last LCC reviews of the two districts of Melbourne Area. The consultation paper on public land legislation reform <i>Realising the value of Victoria’s public land</i> 2021 (appendix B) has this classification as a full category rather than sub-category of regional park.
				Multi-purpose park	This is an obsolete category originally recommended by the LCC but not accepted by government. There is currently no public land with this classification. The category allowed for resource use (water production, hardwood timber, stone extraction, grazing and hunting) where compatible with the primary objective of recreation and education in natural surroundings.
				Geological monument	This is an obsolete category originally recommended by the LCC but not accepted by government. There is no public land with this classification (e.g. Tower Hill, Organ Pipes were assigned to other land use categories).
		Regional park - Murray River Park			River Murray reserve Areas recommended as River Murray Reserve in LCC studies were mostly recommended as Murray River Park in VEAC’s River Red Gum Forests Investigation. About 1100 hectares remains outside River Red Gum Forests Investigation area upstream of Hume Dam and is shown as a sub-category of natural features reserve and requires review.

Current public land use category	Reference number	Former public land use categories and sub-categories			Notes
VEAC (2017) classification		VEAC/ECC category	Sub-categories system established in LCC’s Melbourne Area District 2 Review and Statewide Assessment	older LCC category	
		Forest park	Forest park		Forest park category was introduced in VEAC’s Angahook-Otway Investigation for the recommended Otway Forest Park. Other locations across the state had used the name as a descriptive term for areas of state forest where timber harvesting was not permitted (e.g. Lake Tyers Forest Park). Cobboboonee Forest Park and Bratatualung Forest Park did not result from VEAC recommendations and are reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act schedule 5 part 7, and the Forest Act respectively. The consultation paper on public land legislation reform <i>Realising the value of Victoria’s public land</i> 2021 (appendix B) has this classification as a full category rather than sub-category of regional park. It is unclear if Bratatualung Forest Park should be included in this categorisation.
Bushland reserve	*6	Natural features reserve (NFR)	NFR - Bushland area	Bushland reserve	Various investigations use the terminology bushland area and bushland reserve.
			NFR - Streamside area	Streamside reserve	
			NFR - Natural and scenic features area	Natural features and scenic reserve	
				Scenic reserve	
Coastal reserve	7	Coastal reserve	Coastal reserve	Coastal reserve	Areas set aside by government process establishing ‘natural features reserves’ listed in Schedule 5 Part 3 of Crown land (Reserves) Act including Tungamah, Yourang, Black Dog Creek, Nathalia, Numurkah, Wattville, Devilbend and Aireys Inlet natural features reserves.
					Includes public land not subject to public land use recommendations and not reserved for another purpose, that is adjacent to the open coast and the coast of bays, coastal lakes, inlets and estuaries foreshore caravan parks, parklands and lighthouses. The ECC’s Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation Final Report (2000) broadly classified coastal reserves into coastal recreation and coastal protection zones, with the zoning recommended to be incorporated in the Victorian Coastal Strategy in accordance with government policy at the time. The recommended zoning has not been established as a land management tool. VEAC documented the extent of coastal reserves statewide (including Gippsland Lakes reserve) in the Assessment of Victoria’s Coastal Reserves Final Report (2019).
				Gippsland lakes reserve	The LCC’s Gippsland Lakes Hinterland Final Recommendations (1983) established the Gippsland Lakes Reserve public land use category in addition to coastal reserve on the open ocean coastline. The contiguous lake beds and shallow water were excluded from the LCC’s study and have not been reviewed. The LCC’s approach focused on integrated management of public land with proposed zoning directing location specific management objectives within the category of Gippsland Lakes Reserve. Subsequent reservation of Crown land in some places has imposed more specific land uses such as wildlife and game reserves (state game reserve), The Lakes National Park, and Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park. VEAC considers the remaining parts of Gippsland Lakes Reserve (largely reserved for ‘public purposes’) to be a foreshore reserve equivalent to coastal reserve. The water bodies and lake beds comprise approximately 35,245 hectares and are not subject to public land use recommendations. This area is mostly reserved for ‘public purposes’ and is also classified as coastal reserve.
Historic reserve	8	Historic and cultural features reserve	Historic and cultural features reserve	Historic area, Historic area and reserve	
				Historic reserve	
Wildlife and game reserve	9	Natural features reserve	NFR - Wildlife area	Wildlife reserve	Wildlife areas where hunting may be permitted are categorised as Wildlife and Game Reserve. Includes wildlife reserves not classified as nature conservations reserves under the Wildlife Act that are available for hunting.

Current public land use category	Reference number	Former public land use categories and sub-categories			Notes
VEAC (2017) classification		VEAC/ECC category	Sub-categories system established in LCC’s Melbourne Area District 2 Review and Statewide Assessment	older LCC category	
				Wildlife management co-operative areas	This is an obsolete category or overlay included in Wildlife chapters in several early LCC investigations. Recent example of how those are treated is VEAC’s River Red Gum Forests Investigation interpretation of Kanyapella Basin WCMA as NFR – Wildlife area.
State forest	10	State forest	State forest		
				Hardwood production	
				Uncommitted land	
				Forest area	
				Eucalyptus oil production	
			State forest – rainforest protection		Zones for protection of specific features within state forest were sometimes also identified in land use mapping.
			State forest – river zones		
Water frontage, bed and banks reserve	11	Natural features reserve	NFR - Stream frontage	Public land water frontage reserve	Generally linear area of land adjacent to a waterway or lake, and bed and banks. Includes natural features reserve sub-categories stream frontage, bed and banks; lake which can be retained as sub-categories. In many instances these areas were reserved in the 19th century for ‘public purposes’.
			NFR- Stream bed and banks		Where a stream forms the boundary between allotments of land, the stream bed comprises a narrow Crown reserve (introduced in the <i>Water Act 1905</i>). In most places a Crown parcel was not drawn in the cadastre, but there are now more detailed updates that show these areas.
			NFR - Lake	Lake reserve	
			NFR - Wetlands		A new sub-category added in VEAC’s Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation to identify public authority owned land forming wetlands (Seaford, Edithvale, Ryans Swamp at Western Treatment Plant (Werribee). This category has not been used elsewhere and applies to Melbourne Water’s wetlands.
Water production reserve	12	Water production	Water distribution, Drainage and distribution	Water production	Water Production chapters in investigations which used the old classification system were sometimes differently titled, with ‘Water supply and regulation’ and/or ‘Distribution’ used. This land use category applies to domestic water towers in townships, where water is transmitted often by channel, and applies where water supply is harvested from a catchment.
			Water supply and regulation		
Alpine resort	13		Alpine resort	Alpine resort	Land in this category has been designated as alpine resort under the <i>Alpine Resorts Act 1983</i>
Community use reserve	14	Community use area	CUA - Education area	Education area	Many early LCC investigations listed these sub-categories of Community use reserve as a category but few comprehensively listed specific locations. More detailed location information for subcategories of community use reserves /areas was provided in the LCC’s Melbourne Area District 2 Review and more recent investigations.
			CUA - Recreation area	Recreation reserve	
			CUA - Recreation trail	Recreation trail	
			CUA - Rifle and other shooting range		
			CUA - Parkland and garden		
			CUA - Reservoir park		
			CUA - Building in public use		
			CUA - Highway park	Highway park	

Current public land use category	Reference number	Former public land use categories and sub-categories		Notes
VEAC (2017) classification		VEAC/ECC category	Sub-categories system established in LCC’s Melbourne Area District 2 Review and Statewide Assessment	older LCC category
			Other reserves and public Land – mineral spring	Mineral spring
				Mineral springs recommendations were initially made in LCC’s Melbourne Area District 1 Review for the area west of Melbourne around Daylesford. Most locations that are not included within other areas of public land were recommended as a sub-category of Community use reserve in VEAC’s Central West Investigation.
Utilities and government services reserve	15			All investigations included scope for government services and earth resources, some of which were specifically identified on recommendations maps or detailed in text.
		Earth resources	Mining site	
			Stone area	Stone reserves, Gravel reserves
			Mineral and stone production – stone reserve	Mineral and stone production
			Coal production	
		Services and utilities area (SUA)		Utilities and survey
		Services and utilities area (SUA)	SUA - Transport (railway)	Utilities and survey – railway land
			SUA - Transport (road)	Utilities and survey – road
			SUA - Roadside conservation	Roadside conservation
			SUA - Port	Utilities and survey – port
			SUA - Electricity and gas	Utilities and survey – energy
				Hydroelectricity production
			Utilities and Survey – communications	Communications survey and navigation
			SUA - Municipal buildings and services	Utilities and survey – municipal services
			SUA - Hospitals public offices and justice	Utilities and survey – government buildings
			SUA - Water and sewerage services	Utilities and survey – water services
			SUA - Cemetery	Utilities and survey – cemeteries
			SUA - Other utility use	Utilities and survey – other
				Agricultural research
Coastal waters reserve	19	Coastal waters reserve		Coastal waters
				The ECC’s Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation Final Report (2000) defines this area as unreserved Crown land from low water mark to the outer limit of Victoria’s coastal waters (mostly 3 nautical miles), often described as the seabed or offshore. Most studies excluded offshore areas below the shoreline for open coasts and major bays and inlets. LCC’s Melbourne Area District 1 Review includes recommendations for coastal waters for Port Phillip Bay and the ocean coast from Portsea back beach to Lorne. Most of this area is not defined by Crown land parcels in the cadastre.

Current public land use category	Reference number	Former public land use categories and sub-categories			Notes
VEAC (2017) classification		VEAC/ECC category	Sub-categories system established in LCC’s Melbourne Area District 2 Review and Statewide Assessment	older LCC category	
Land leased or licenced for plantation, Plantation	20	Plantation	Softwood plantation, Forest plantation	Softwood production	
			School plantation	School plantation	
Uncategorised public land	21	Uncategorised public land		Other reserves and public land	Uncategorised public land (new system) and other reserves and public land (old system) areas may have been subsequently classified, for VEACRecs25 purposes, into specific land use categories where additional information is available on land use.
		Revegetation area		Revegetation area	
				Township land	Township land is not used in VEACRecs25. Township land recommendations are instead categorised into relevant Community use reserves, Utilities and government services reserves, or other categories, as appropriate.
		Land not required for public purposes		Military training	
				Agriculture	

Appendix 3 Early recommendation categories translated to VEAC's categorisation

Alpine Area Special Investigation	Ballarat Area	Corangamite	South Gippsland Area District 1	South- Western Area District 1 Review	VEAC's categorisation
1983	1982	1978	1973	1983	2017
National park		National park		National park	National park
State park	State park	State park	State park	State park	National park
Wilderness area					National park
		Geological monument			N/A
	Regional park			Regional park	Regional park
		Coastal park	Coastal reserve	Coastal park	Conservation park
Reference area	Reference area	Reference area		Reference area	Reference area overlay
	Wildlife reserve	Wildlife reserve	Wildlife	Wildlife reserve	Nature reserve or Wildlife and game reserve
	Flora reserve	Flora reserve		Flora reserve	Nature reserve
Flora and fauna reserve	Flora and fauna reserve	Flora and fauna reserve		Flora and fauna reserve	Nature reserve
Water production	Water production	Water production		Water production	Water production
Hydroelectricity production					Utilities and government services reserve
State forest	Hardwood production	Hardwood production	Hardwood production	Hardwood production	State forest
	Softwood production	Softwood production	Softwood production	Softwood production	Land leased or licenced for plantation, Plantation
		Forest area			State forest
Historic areas	Historic areas and reserves				Historic reserve
		Coastal reserve		Coastal reserve	Coastal reserve
Bushland reserve	Bushland reserve	Bushland reserve		Bushland reserve	Bushland reserve

Alpine Area Special Investigation	Ballarat Area	Corangamite	South Gippsland Area District 1	South-Western Area District 1 Review	VEAC's categorisation
Public land water frontages reserve	Public land water frontages reserve	Public land water frontages reserve		Public land water frontages reserve	Water frontage, bed and banks reserve
Education area	Education area	Education area		Education area	Community use reserve
	School plantation				Land leased or licenced for plantation, Plantation
Lake reserves	Lake reserves	Lake reserves			Water frontage, bed and banks reserve
Streamside reserve	Streamside reserve	Streamside reserve		Streamside reserve	Bushland reserve
Recreation reserve	Recreation reserves	Recreation reserve		Recreation reserve	Community use reserve
Recreation – Alpine resorts					Alpine resorts
	Highway park				Community use reserve
Natural features and scenic reserve	Scenic reserve	Scenic reserve		Scenic reserve	Bushland reserve
	Geological reserve				Nature reserve
Agriculture	Agriculture land	Agriculture; Alienation, research, commons and unused recreation reserves	Agriculture	Agriculture	Uncategorised public land
Township land	Township land	Township land			Various, default is Uncategorised public land
Minerals and stone	Minerals and stone	Minerals and stone		Minerals and stone	Utilities and government services reserve
Utilities and survey	Utilities and survey	Utilities and survey	Waste disposal	Utilities and survey	Utilities and government services reserve

Alpine Area Special Investigation	Ballarat Area	Corangamite	South Gippsland Area District 1	South- Western Area District 1 Review	VEAC's categorisation
	Uncommitted land	Uncommitted land	Uncommitted	Uncommitted	State forest
Other public land	Other reserves and public land	Other reserves and public land	Other recreation and conservation	Other reserves and public land	Uncategorised public land; other specific uses may be identified

Notes

The list of recommendation categories does not include those that have broad scale or management implications for uses such as military or defence force training on public land, management guidelines for unused roads, zones or corridors for specific management of values etc.

VEAC's land use categorisation follows that in *Statewide Assessment of Public Land Investigation Final Report (2017)* recommendation R1.

Appendix 4 Areas, former cities, townships and boroughs that have not been assessed by LCC-ECC-VEAC

Former municipality	Current municipality	Excluded from LCC investigation or review	Total area and extent of public land (hectares)	Any coverage by thematic investigations
Western Victoria				
Portland City	Glenelg	South-Western District 1 and South-Western District 1 Review	3591 (584)	Coastal land (MCE)
Ararat City	Ararat	Ballarat, South-Western District 2	430 (354)	part included in Box Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation
Hamilton City	Southern Grampians	South-Western District 2	2213 (134)	
Horsham City	Horsham	Wimmera, South-Western District 2	2378 (158)	
Port Fairy Borough	Moyne	Corangamite	2350 (167)	Coastal land (MCE)
Koroit Borough	Moyne	Corangamite	2988 (684)	Coastal land (MCE)
Warrnambool City	Warrnambool	Corangamite	3654 (862)	Coastal land (MCE)
Camperdown Town	Corangamite	Corangamite	1632 (279)	
Colac City	Colac-Otway	Corangamite	1100 (34)	
Ballarat City	Ballarat	Ballarat	3541 (1011)	
Sebastopol Borough	Ballarat	Ballarat	831 (165)	
Geelong City	Greater Geelong	Melbourne Area, Melbourne District 1 Review	2469 (370)	Coastal land (MCE)
Queenscliffe Borough	Queenscliffe Borough	Melbourne Area, Melbourne District 1 Review	556 (183)	Coastal land (MCE)
Gippsland				
Moe City	La Trobe	South Gippsland District 2, Latrobe Valley Special Investigation	2507 (264)	
Traralgon City	La Trobe	South Gippsland District 2, Latrobe Valley SI	2028 (89)	
Sale City	Wellington	Gippsland Lakes Hinterland	3012 (688)	
Bairnsdale City	East Gippsland	Gippsland Lakes Hinterland	2964 (604)	

Former municipality	Current municipality	Excluded from LCC investigation or review	Total area and extent of public land (hectares)	Any coverage by thematic investigations
Lake bed of Gippsland Lakes	Wellington, East Gippsland	Gippsland Lakes Hinterland	33,518 (33,518)	
Northern Victoria				
Mildura City	Mildura Rural City	Mallee area, Mallee Review	1264 (8)	part included in River Red Gum Forest Investigation
Swan Hill City	Swan Hill Rural City	Mallee area, Mallee Review	393 (0)	part included in River Red Gum Forest Investigation
Echuca City	Campaspe	Murray Valley	92 (0)	part included in River Red Gum Forest Investigation

Notes

1. The *Land Conservation Council Act 1970* excluded areas from public land use studies based on municipal status; this criteria was not included in the two subsequent Acts establishing the ECC and VEAC. This column shows the status of former cities, towns and boroughs (outside metropolitan Melbourne area) that were excluded from past studies and have not been subsequently assessed by the ECC or VEAC. Note that several municipal areas were restructured during the interval of past studies and the status of recommendations in areas technically excluded at the time of final recommendations was treated variably (recommendations for the former City of South Barwon were accepted in *Melbourne Study Area Final Recommendations* (1977); recommendations for, City of Cranbourne, City of Seymour in *Melbourne Area District 2 Review Final Recommendations* (1994) were not accepted). A government response to accept any of these recommendations is taken to mean that the LCC's recommendations apply.

All municipalities except Queenscliffe were restructured between 1993 and 1995. Municipal boundaries at the time of LCC public land use studies, in most cases, do not reflect the current local government areas across the state.

Thematic land use reviews such as the LCC's Rivers and Streams Special Investigation, Wilderness Special Investigation, Historic Places Special Investigation South-Western Victoria, ECC's Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation (MCE) covered specific types of public land that was within some of the excluded municipalities.

