



# Victorian Environmental Assessment Council

## MEDIA RELEASE

---

6 September 2007

### Advertisements about VEAC's Draft Proposals contain misleading and false information

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) is concerned that a recent advertising campaign produced by a group representing Goulburn and Murray citizens contains misleading and false information which could cause unnecessary uncertainty for local residents.

The campaign highlights many activities that the group has misinterpreted as being banned or restricted and follows the release of VEAC's River Red Gum Forests Draft Proposals Paper. The paper contains draft proposals for public land use in a 1600 kilometre corridor of land along the River Murray in northern Victoria.

According to VEAC Chairperson, Duncan Malcolm, the advertising campaign contains a number of misleading and incorrect facts about VEAC's draft proposals which need to be clarified as quickly as possible. "We are concerned that people will think the information in this advertising campaign is 100 per cent correct - when it isn't," he said.

"Publishing false information causes unnecessary alarm with local residents. We encourage anyone with an interest in our draft proposals to visit our website and to read the report for themselves," says Mr Malcolm.

VEAC is increasing its communications activities, including one on one consultation with members of the community and a number of additional community information sessions, to ensure that people within the investigation area have the right information about the draft proposals.

VEAC is a statutory organisation that makes recommendations about the use of public land to the State Government. It began the River Red Gums Forest Investigation in 2005 at the request of the Minister for Environment. Written submissions are currently being sought on the draft proposals. After examining submissions VEAC will develop its final report and present it to the Minister in 2008.

Below is a summary of some of the misleading or false information published relating to VEAC's draft proposals.

**FALSE**

**CORRECT**

**CAMPING RESTRICTIONS**

Camping is permitted in National Parks and almost all other categories of public land.

**CAMPFIRES BANNED**

Under VEAC's proposals, solid fuel campfires would be permitted outside the fire danger period except in National Parks and Nature Conservation Reserves. Under VEAC's proposals three quarters of the area of the public land along the River Murray in the Investigation area is not proposed to be a National Park and therefore campfires will be allowed outside the summer period.

**PETS AND DOGS BANNED**

Dogs are allowed on all areas of public land – except for National Parks and Nature Conservation Reserves. Three quarters of the public land fronting the River Murray is still available for dog walking. This includes the Murray River Park stretching from Mildura to Wodonga.

**FAMILY ACTIVITIES RESTRICTED**

The draft proposals provide that most areas of public land will be available for a wide variety of recreational and social activities including camping, fishing, bushwalking, horse riding, picnicking and four wheel driving. Many other areas of public land remain available for recreational activities that include the family dog.

**NATIONAL PARK RESTRICTIONS**

National Parks do restrict dog walking and campfires but allow many other recreational activities such as camping, fishing and bushwalking. Horse riding, trail bike riding and four wheel driving on tracks are also permitted on existing tracks within National Parks.

**HUNTING BANNED**

VEAC's draft proposals recommend a number of areas of wetlands and creek lines be retained for hunting. Hunting is not permitted in National Parks, Nature Conservation Reserves or Regional Parks. Hunting does not just take place on public land but also on private land.

**23 GAME RESERVES CLOSED**

VEAC's draft proposals recommend 22 State Game Reserves (also known as Wildlife Reserves) remain available for hunting, including the high value hunting sites of Cullens Lake and Hird Swamp, as well as state forest and water frontages. Twelve existing wildlife reserves or state game reserves are listed in the draft proposal to become unavailable for hunting as well as some other wetlands in other land categories

**TRACKS CLOSED**

VEAC has made NO recommendations in its draft proposals about closing tracks. All National Parks throughout Victoria retain access tracks.

VERMIN CONTROL BANNED	VEAC has not made any recommendations in its draft proposals about banning vermin control. VEAC strongly supports pest plant and animal control.
BOAT RAMP RESTRICTIONS	VEAC has not made any recommendations about established boat ramps or the number of local ramps to be retained or established in the future.
BEE KEEPING BANNED	VEAC has made NO recommendations restricting bee keeping.
SUSTAINABLE FOREST HARVESTING	VEAC's draft proposals recommend reducing the amount of public land available for harvesting timber from 25,165 hectares to 10,105 hectares. Timber harvesting will still be carried out in parts of Gunbower, Benwell and Guttram forests.
WATER PURCHASING	<p>VEAC has recommended that an overbank flood of around 4000 gegalitres of water at least once every five years is required to maintain the river red gum forests and floodplains along the length of the River Murray. In terms of the Living Murray Initiative, the 4,000 GL over a five year period (or 800 GL a year) represents 300 GL a year on top of the 500 GL a year already promised through this initiative.</p> <p>At NO stage has VEAC speculated on where the water would come from except to say that some of it could be from natural flows.</p>

For factual information about VEAC's River Red Gum Draft Proposals Paper, and to access fact sheets, please visit [www.veac.vic.gov.au](http://www.veac.vic.gov.au).

For more information please contact Lisa Bowman, Communications Manager, VEAC.