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To &lt;veac@dse.vic.gov.au&gt;

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Subject Investigation of Crown land and public authority land in metropolitan Melbourne.

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No: 83

VEAC  
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I understand that VEAC is conducting an investigation into Crown Land, and more particularly public authority land in Metropolitan Melbourne.

VicRoads owns land following Edgars Creek, north of Bell Street (the VicRoads land) with the Moreland City Council boundary. VicRoads has recently sold some of that land, and the future of the remaining land is uncertain.

As a local resident with a young family, who bought a house near the creek and its surrounding parklands, I urge VEAC to take into account the many benefits that open spaces bring to urban areas. The open spaces along Melbourne's creeks, are important for a number of reasons. They allow for public enjoyment in ways not possible in smaller public spaces. Importantly, they provide a place rich in experiences for ours and the many other young children, who live in the area.

I understand that Moreland Council, VicRoads and the State Government are negotiating over the future of the VicRoads land. That negotiation will no doubt come to money. Whilst providing housing for the growing population of Melbourne is important, to provide that housing on what is now public open space would undermine other important objectives of the 2030 strategy when there is simply no need to do so. There continues to be large residential developments in the Coburg area (e.g. Pentridge redevelopment) and with the Kodak land now owned by a developer, there are significant land banks in the area, without the need for residential land on the Edgars Creek.

The VicRoads land forms part of an important environmental corridor. Community groups, the council and other public authorities continue to improve the environmental quality of the land, through tree plantings, weed control and protection of important or vulnerable pockets from people. The sale of any of the land for development would undermine this good work.

Other limitations to the land's suitability for development, such as possible contamination and flood inundation are matters that residential developers will simply take into account in bidding for the subject land. These matters will not of themselves prevent development. From the community's perspective, I hope these limitations to development will reduce the development value of the land, such that the cash from a sale to a developer does not outweigh the social and environmental considerations to any decision about the use of the land.

The Edgars Creek area is one of the few areas, probably the only area in Moreland, where it is possible to walk and relax without being a stone's throw from housing or busy roads. Whilst difficult to put a value on this, the unique size of the area together with its connection to the creek and the continuous green corridor that provides, make the land worthy of keeping public forever.

Regards,