

# Victorian Government Response to

# Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's River Red Gum Forests Investigation **Final Report**



**March 2009**

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# **VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

## **River Red Gum Forests Investigation Final Report (July 2008)**

### ***Acknowledgement of Country and Indigenous Australians***

The government proudly acknowledges Victoria's Traditional Owners in the River Red Gum Forests investigation area and the rich culture and intrinsic connection they have to Country.

It also acknowledges Traditional Owners as having the primary right to 'Care and Speak for Country' and supports land management agencies to work, as a first step, in partnership with Traditional Owners in the management of land and waters on Country.

The government recognises and acknowledges the contribution and interests of other Indigenous people and organisations in the management of land and natural resources.

The government acknowledges that the past injustices and continuing inequalities experienced by Indigenous peoples have limited, and continue to limit, their proper participation in land and natural resource management.

### ***Introduction***

The *River Red Gum Forests Investigation Final Report* (VEAC Report) was released on 25 July 2008. The final report incorporates VEAC's final recommendations, including general recommendations, thematic recommendations and recommendations for public land categories. The report also includes VEAC's response to issues raised in submissions and during community consultation, as well as a section exploring the social, economic and environmental implications of the final recommendations.

The government established an independent Community Engagement Panel to consider VEAC's recommendations focussing in particular on how to achieve the broad goal of protecting stressed river red gum forests while also protecting the social and economic health of affected communities. The government released the *River Red Gum Community Engagement Panel Report* (CEP report) in December 2008.

In accordance with the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, (s25(1)), this response addresses each of the VEAC recommendations, incorporating the CEP report and its accompanying map.

The government recognises the importance of protecting the ancient river red gum forests along the River Murray and its tributaries currently threatened by drought and climate change so that they can be enjoyed by future generations. The red gum forests are highly valued by the community for a range of cultural, recreation and tourism activities as well as for timber.

This government response provides for the protection of the red gum forests, while enhancing recreation and tourism opportunities in the region and protecting the social and economic health of affected communities.

This response reflects the structure of VEAC's Final Report and is divided into three main parts:

- General recommendations
- Thematic recommendations
  - Nature conservation
  - Environmental water
  - Indigenous involvement
  - Recreation and tourism
  - Domestic stock grazing
  - Domestic firewood collection
- Public land use recommendations
  - National parks
  - Regional parks and other parks
  - State forests
  - Nature conservation reserves
  - Historic and cultural features reserves
  - Reference areas and heritage rivers
  - Natural features reserves
  - Water production, drainage and distribution areas
  - Community use areas
  - Services and utilities areas
  - Earth resources and extraction areas
  - Plantations
  - Uncategorized public land.

# General Recommendations

## Implementation

**R1** *Government establishes a project team to implement the approved recommendations and coordinate associated planning and, as part of that process, consult with local government, relevant industries, stakeholder groups and communities.*

A project team has been established to implement the government's response to the VEAC recommendations.

## Implementation resources

**R2** *Government allocates adequate financial and staff resources for implementation of these recommendations and ensure that the objectives of the report and recommendations are achieved.*

The government has committed \$38 million over four years to implement the government's response to the VEAC recommendations. This includes funding for an additional 30 Parks Victoria rangers, and an additional 10 positions to undertake fencing and ecological thinning.

## Resources for ongoing land management

**R3** *Government allocates additional resources in parity with national benchmarks, to address the current and future public land management needs across the region, with priority given to fire protection, pest plant and animal control, track maintenance, on-ground staff presence, and the provision and servicing of recreation and tourist facilities.*

The government has committed \$38 million over four years to implement the government's response to the VEAC recommendations. This includes funding for an additional 30 Parks Victoria rangers, and an additional 10 positions to undertake fencing and ecological thinning. The package, together with existing funding, will cover fire protection, land management, water infrastructure, visitor services and an on-ground presence.

## Assistance

**R4** *Where individuals or local communities are adversely affected as a result of the implementation of recommendations in this report, government establishes a process to evaluate and implement mechanisms and levels of assistance required to minimise those effects.*

The government has committed a \$4.5 million assistance package for timber workers and will provide opportunities for timber workers to participate in a range of active forest management activities, including ecological thinning.

A number of existing government programs are also available to provide assistance to minimise adverse effects associated with the implementation of recommendations in the VEAC report.

**Interim management and minor boundary adjustments**

**R5** *Upon government approval of VEAC recommendations that:*

- (a)** *relevant land be managed in accordance with those recommendations and be consistent with national and international conventions where appropriate; and*
- (b)** *subsequent implementation of recommendations allow flexibility for minor boundary adjustments.*

The government will manage all public land in accordance with relevant legislation and land management obligations. Implementation of some of the responses to the VEAC recommendations will require an appropriate phase-in time. The government recognises the need for flexibility during the implementation phase to allow for minor boundary adjustments.

**Knowledge and information**

**R6** *Land managers base their management on adaptive management practices and address current and future information and knowledge gaps, particularly in relation to climate change trends.*

Adaptive management research and monitoring programs (particularly in relation to climate change trends) will continue to be used and further developed by the government.

**Community engagement and awareness**

**R7** *Government supports measures to increase awareness, appreciation, education and interpretation of River Red Gum forests and associated ecosystems throughout the investigation area, Victoria and nationally.*

**R8** *Government supports community participation through adequate resources for planning processes associated with changes in land use categories and future management arrangements.*

The government is committed to supporting measures to increase awareness, appreciation and education about River Red Gum forests and associated ecosystems in the investigation area, Victoria and nationally.

Community participation is an essential component of all public land planning processes including Forest Management and Park Management Plans.

# Thematic recommendations

## Nature conservation

***Several recommendations to improve nature conservation in the River Red Gum forests and associated ecosystems apply to specific public land use categories and are formally documented later in this report as follows:***

- The reserve system itself is recommended as a series of national parks (recommendations A1–A9), some regional parks (recommendations B4–B7), nature conservation reserves (recommendations D1–D50), reference areas (recommendation F1) and some natural features reserves (recommendations G1–G81).***
- Removal of domestic stock grazing from most public land in the investigation area (recommendation R38)***
- Development of an adaptive management approach based on clearly defined, transparent and scientifically supported ecological objectives (e.g. ecological burning to promote certain fire-dependent ecosystems, ecological thinning and short-term grazing for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control (recommendations A(d) and B(d))***
- Re-establish habitat crucial to a number of species of woodland fauna; a target of retaining an average of at least 50 tonnes per hectare of coarse woody debris in riverine parks and state forests is proposed (recommendation R36)***
- Planning for provision of environmental flows that maintain and improve the health and long-term viability of floodplain-dependent ecosystems (recommendations R13–R14)***

***Specific recommendations for nature conservation not detailed elsewhere are:***

***R9 That ongoing scientific research be conducted into terrestrial floodplain ecology to provide a basis for adaptive management of floodplain watering.***

The necessity for ongoing scientific research into all aspects of floodplain ecology to provide a sound knowledge base for adaptive management is recognised by the government.

***R10 That the conservation status of ecological vegetation classes and flora and fauna be reviewed in light of threats posed by insufficient floodplain watering.***

The conservation status of ecological vegetation classes and flora and fauna will be based on the outcomes of scientific analysis.

***R11 That government protect and restore River Red Gum forests and other vegetation communities on private land, using incentives and market-based mechanisms, particularly where these areas adjoin or link public land blocks and (where opportunities exist) acquire areas in order to consolidate vegetation or wildlife corridors.***

The government is committed to protecting and restoring River Red Gum forests and other vegetation communities on private land, and has already established successful incentive and market-based mechanisms throughout Victoria, such as BushTender and BushBroker programs.

The government will continue to implement its conservation land purchase program that focuses on acquiring areas of high conservation value when they come on the market.

***R12 That voluntary Conservation Management Networks be established by the relevant catchment management authority, in partnership with private landholders, public land managers and other interested parties, at suitable locations.***

***Examples of suitable locations include the Avoca Plains, Lower Goulburn floodplain, areas between the Warby Range and Ovens River forests, Loddon floodplain between Leaghur and Wandella forests and north of Kerang.***

Victoria's Conservation Management Networks successfully involve people working together across local landscapes to actively protect and link remnant vegetation on private land with isolated parcels and larger reserves on public land. The recently released State-wide Strategic Plan for Conservation Management Networks provides the basis for working with interested communities.

## **Environmental water**

***R13 That environmental watering of the floodplains, conducted through the relevant existing or new national and state water programs, include:***  
***(a) identifying appropriate allocations of water to maintain flood-dependent natural assets;***  
***(b) distributing that water in a way that maximises the maintenance of the flood-dependent natural assets, through overbank flows if feasible, otherwise using targeted works;***  
***(c) monitoring so that the sites, requirements and prioritisation of natural values and selection of watering regimes are regularly refined and updated; and***  
***(d) developing a greater public understanding of the natural values, and monitoring and publicly reporting on the delivery of water to sites.***

The government supports this recommendation. The government is committed to effective and efficient delivery and management of environmental water to protect environmental assets. This will be addressed through the Northern Region Sustainable Water Strategy.

***R14 That, more broadly than in recommendation R13 above, an environmental flow strategy be developed with the objective of achieving an integrated and consistent approach to environmental flows across the River Murray area, its Victorian tributaries and the key wetlands of Kerang Lakes, Corop Wetlands, Boort Wetlands and Kanyapella Basin.***

The government supports an integrated approach to the management of environmental flows. The Northern Region Sustainable Water Strategy will explore a range of mechanisms to support this.

***R15 That, more broadly than in recommendation R13 above, the improvement of the knowledge base of the forests and wetlands floodplain, hydrology, the river as a system, and in particular the use of models to integrate this information, be given a high priority and be readily available to the community.***

The government is committed to an integrated approach to the management of environmental flows for rivers, floodplains, wetlands and supports the need for a sound knowledge base for management. Modelling tools have been developed through the Sustainable Water Strategies and the Living Murray Initiative. Information from these models will be made available to the community and communicated in the Northern Region Sustainable Water Strategy.

***R16 That sufficient resources be allocated as a matter of highest priority for the development of a detailed long-term environmental water accounting system across the entire investigation area.***

The government recognises that a robust water accounting system is critical to the effective management of water including the accounting of water used under environmental entitlements. Victoria is engaged in a national program for developing a consistent water accounting system for application within regulated river systems (including the investigation area) as part of our obligations under the National Water Initiative.

***R17 That land and water managers consider non-engineering options to mitigate the causes of summer flooding in Barmah forest.***

Determination of the preferred approach to managing the issue of summer flooding of Barmah-Millewa Forest will be made on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis which includes environmental, social and economic outcomes. Both engineering and non-engineering options will remain under consideration.

***R18 That the relevant agencies conduct an audit of existing levee banks and where appropriate remove those levees in disrepair or seek alternative structures to facilitate greater dispersal of flood waters across floodplains; and where this is deemed necessary land and water management agencies undertake an extensive consultation process with private land holders and relevant public land managers.***

The Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy is currently being reviewed and will address issues relating to levee management. Where there is any proposed change to the level of flood protection, there will be consultation with relevant agencies and land holders.

***R19 That where changes to water supply infrastructure occur in the future environmental flows should not be adversely affected and additional costs associated with the provision of environmental flows be borne by the whole community.***

The government supports this recommendation which is consistent with current water savings projects. Costs associated with delivering environmental water flows will be borne by the environmental water manager.

***R20 That where opportunities exist, special area plans and the statutory planning processes be applied to more effectively manage environmental flows for ecological outcomes at the interface between public and private land.***

The government supports the intent of this recommendation and will evaluate the most effective planning tools and other mechanisms to manage environmental flows at the interface between public and private land.

## **Indigenous involvement**

The government commends and supports VEAC specific 'Indigenous Involvement' recommendations. It also acknowledges that Traditional Owners have broader interests in, and aspirations for, all aspects of land and water management that are relevant to all the recommendations contained in the VEAC final report.

The government supports Traditional Owners' involvement in the management of public land. It acknowledges Traditional Owners as having the right to 'Speak for Country' and supports land management agencies to work, as a first step, in partnership with Traditional Owners in the management of land and waters on Country.

The government will continue to consult with relevant Traditional Owners on a range of land management issues including aspects of nature conservation, environmental water, recreation and tourism, domestic stock grazing, domestic firewood collection and public land use recommendations.

It will ensure that the implementation of applicable recommendations is in compliance with relevant cultural heritage and native title legislation and/or agreements.

The government supports recommendations R21, R22, R23, R24, R25, R27, R29(b) & (c) and R30 being implemented through agreements between Traditional Owners and the State, negotiated under existing or future native title policy. Specific responses have been included for recommendations R26, R28 and R29(a).

Some of the River Red Gum Forests investigation area overlaps with the area covered by the North West Nations native title claims. There is ongoing consultation with the claimants through settlement negotiations so that resolution of the claims can be achieved in line with the government's decisions on the VEAC recommendations and claimants' aspirations.

### **Increasing Indigenous community capacity**

***R21 That government provides relevant Aboriginal Traditional Owner Groups with assistance to participate in public land management by establishing a properly resourced program to assist with:***

- (a) a mediated process to facilitate Aboriginal Traditional Owner identification and registration, identification of Country, group internal decision-making and procedures, and engagement with public land managers;***
- (b) administrative support;***
- (c) coordination of consultation requests from government agencies, and preferential selection of appropriately qualified Traditional Owner groups or organisations for contract services for public land and natural resource management projects;***
- (d) targeted training and capacity building exercises;***
- (e) initiatives aimed at retaining traditional knowledge and integrating this knowledge in public land management projects and partnerships on Country;***
- (f) support for relevant Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups wanting to develop a permit regime as described in recommendations R29 and R30 for the traditional hunting, gathering and ceremonial use of Country.***

**Notes:**

- 1. Aboriginal Traditional Owners are defined as those people who are the direct descendants of specific Indigenous groups present prior to European settlement.**
- 2. Indigenous people refer to land and natural resources of an area over which they have a profound cultural and spiritual relationship as their traditional Country.**

The government supports this recommendation being implemented through agreements between Traditional Owners and the State, negotiated under existing or future native title policy.

**Enhancing Aboriginal involvement**

**R22 That:**

- (a) public land planning and management processes and policy acknowledge the unique relationship of Aboriginal people with Country and be based on recognition and respect for the traditional and contemporary relationship of Aboriginal people with the land;**
- (b) prior to implementing VEAC's recommendations for parks and reserves, and changes in public land management, government consult with each relevant Traditional Owner or Aboriginal group regarding their native title rights and interests;**
- (c) government, in consultation with each relevant Traditional Owner Group, establish mechanisms to improve and resource Indigenous participation in public land and water management;**
- (d) opportunities for increased employment and training for local Aboriginal people be resourced and provided in the implementation of parks and reserves in the River Red Gum Forests Investigation area; and**
- (e) cross-cultural awareness training continue to be available for agency staff involved in the implementation of recommendations R21–R30.**

The government supports this recommendation being implemented through agreements between Traditional Owners and the State, negotiated under existing or future native title policy.

**Joint management provisions for national and other parks**

**R23 That the National Parks Act 1975 be amended within five years of acceptance of this recommendation to make provision for a new schedule to be established and for a process where areas on that schedule may be transferred to Aboriginal Traditional Owners as National or other Park Aboriginal Land (inalienable freehold), and**

- (a) that transfer be subject to agreement to enter into a lease for use of the land as a national or other park;**
- (b) for each such park a board of management be established with a majority of members from the relevant Aboriginal Traditional Owner group or groups; and**
- (c) a process be established for nomination and addition of areas to the schedule.**

**Co-management provisions for parks and reserves**

**R24 That the National Parks Act 1975 be amended to make provision for co-management of specific parks with which an Aboriginal group or groups have a traditional association by establishing co-management agreements, and**

**(a) the co-management agreements will be between relevant Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups and government, and**

**(b) the park or reserve be managed by a co-management board consisting of a majority of members from the relevant Aboriginal Traditional Owner group or groups;**

**(c) the co-management board provide for (amongst other obligations):**

**(i) protection of flora and fauna, and other natural values**

**(ii) preservation and protection of Aboriginal sites, features, objects and structures of spiritual or cultural significance within the area**

**(iii) continued enjoyment of the area by the relevant Aboriginal groups for cultural, spiritual and traditional uses**

**(iv) continued enjoyment of the area by members of the public in a manner consistent with the designated public land use category**

**(d) the co-management board prepare a management plan for the park, and**

**(e) the co-management board manage the park on the 'business as usual' basis until the first co-management plan comes into operation.**

#### **Co-management provisions for parks and reserves**

**R25 That the National Parks Act 1975, and other relevant legislation such as the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 be amended to provide for:**

**(a) a process for additional areas with which an Aboriginal group or groups have a traditional association to be added to the areas over which the co-management arrangements outlined in recommendation R24 may apply (including parts of a park or reserve), and**

**(b) other co-management arrangements not necessarily involving a board of management or a board of management with majority Aboriginal Traditional Owners.**

The government supports recommendations R23, R24 and R25 being implemented through agreements between Traditional Owners and the State, negotiated under existing or future native title policy.

#### **Co-management of specific parks**

**(a) R26 That a co-management agreement be entered into between the government and the relevant Traditional Owner group or groups and that the following areas be managed by a co-management board consisting of a majority of Traditional Owner group representatives in accordance with recommendation R24: Nyah–Vinifera Park (recommendation B7)**

**(b) Barmah National Park (recommendation A7).**

#### **Note:**

**1. The establishment of this co-management arrangement for the proposed Barmah National Park is not intended to affect the existing agreements for other areas of public land under the Yorta Yorta Cooperative Management Agreement.**

The government supports the establishment of boards of management for Nyah–Vinifera Park and Barmah National Park comprising a majority of Traditional Owner group representation.

**Aboriginal advisory committees**

**R27** *That provision be made for involvement of Aboriginal people in management of designated areas of public land by:*

- (a) establishing advisory committees (under existing legislation) consisting of Aboriginal Traditional Owner representatives, to provide the land manager with advice on one or more aspects of land management,*
- (b) adequately funding advisory committees to perform their functions and that, if required, legislation be amended to provide for allowances and expenses, and*
- (c) reviewing and changing the specific role of the advisory committees by agreement of the parties.*

The government supports this recommendation being implemented through agreements between Traditional Owners and the State, negotiated under existing or future native title policy.

**Specific Aboriginal advisory committees**

**R28** *That an Aboriginal advisory committee be established as described in recommendation R27 for:*

- (a) west Wallpolla Island area of Murray-Sunset National Park (A1)*
- (b) Hattah–Kulkyne National Park (A2) and Murray-Kulkyne Park (B5)*
- (c) Bumbang Island Historic and Cultural Features Reserve (E2)*
- (d) Gunbower National Park (A4).*

With respect to recommendation 28(a), the government supports continuing Traditional Owners' involvement in land management of West Walpolla Island being implemented through agreements between Traditional Owner groups and the State. The negotiated resolution of the current North West Nations native title claims will determine the government's response to R28(b), (c) and (d).

**Aboriginal traditional cultural practice**

**R29** *That policies and legislative restrictions inhibiting traditional cultural practice on specified areas of public lands and waters be amended to provide for Aboriginal Traditional Owners to undertake the following activities for personal, domestic and non-commercial communal use on Country:*

- (a) hunting (including using licensed firearms), gathering, collecting, fishing and collecting earth materials,*
- (b) conducting a cultural or spiritual ceremony, including (if required) having exclusive use of specified areas for a specified time, and*
- (c) use of fire as related to (a) and (b) above.*

**Aboriginal traditional cultural practice**

**R30** *That Aboriginal traditional cultural practice may be governed by a permit regime and protocols established by the relevant Aboriginal Traditional Owners for the specific area in partnership with the public land manager.*

**Notes:**

- 1.** *The use of firearms is subject to specific licensing and legal requirements.*
- 2.** *The exclusive use of an area for traditional cultural practice is not to be used as a permanent exclusion zone.*

- 3. The use of fire is subject to regulations and restrictions relating to declared total fire ban days as a matter of public safety and is not intended to include broad scale or 'fire-stick' farming.**
- 4. The above recommendations are not intended to contravene the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 where this applies.**

The government supports traditional cultural practice on specified areas of public land and waters in the development of indigenous land management policy and through agreements between Traditional Owner groups and the State.

The government does not support, in principle, the use of firearms and fire (other than in line with legislation and government policy) by Traditional Owners, due the importance of public safety.

## **Recreation and tourism**

### **Recreation use**

**R31 That public lands in the River Red Gum Forests Investigation area be available for a range of recreation activities for community enjoyment and appreciation appropriate to the land use category.**

The exceptional features of the River Red Gum Forests make them highly attractive and suitable to a wide range of recreational uses for community enjoyment and appreciation, particularly camping. The government will continue to ensure that public land in the River Red Gum Forests investigation area is available for a range of recreational uses.

### **Dispersed camping and camping with dogs**

**R32 That:**

- (a) dispersed camping be provided for in riverine national parks, the Murray River Park, regional parks and state forests as the predominant form of camping (see also general recommendations for these land use categories), and**
- (b) camping with dogs be permitted in the Murray River Park, regional parks and state forests.**

The government supports self select dispersed camping as the predominant form of camping in the riverine national parks, Murray River Park, regional parks and state forests. It supports camping with dogs being permitted in the Murray River Park, regional parks and state forests.

### **Recreation and camping strategy**

**R33 That:**

- (a) a recreation and camping strategy be coordinated, as part of management planning processes for all parks across the investigation area, to show where and how each of the major popular recreational activities can be enjoyed so that overall, there is an appropriate mix of experiences (where permitted in the specific public land use category), including in particular:**

- (i) dispersed camping**
- (ii) camping areas with facilities such as toilets and fireplaces**
- (iii) camping areas with dogs, or areas with dogs on leash only**
- (iv) camping areas with horses**

- (v) camping areas without noise from generators, pump houses or utilities either fixed or temporary**
- (vi) day visitor areas**

- (b) camping be managed to minimise impacts, which may include temporary restriction on some uses in areas of high conservation values,**
- (c) the strategy be coordinated with tourism destination planning, and tourism development and management, undertaken by the tourism bodies,**
- (d) the strategy address waste management in consultation with local government, tourism authorities, tourism providers and user groups.**

The government supports self select dispersed camping and campfires as the predominant camping style but recognises that more intensive management is required for high visitation areas to ensure that build up in camper activity does not cause long term environmental damage to these areas.

#### **Camping on narrow river frontages**

- R34 That the land manager should review the capacity for a range of recreation uses along the Murray, Ovens and Goulburn Rivers where the public land frontage is less than 100 metres wide from the top of the bank and determine whether camping is an appropriate use, and that**
- (a) the review be conducted in consultation with the community as part of the planning for camping specified in recommendation R33, and**
  - (b) if camping is permitted, the land manager specify whether portable chemical toilets are required.**

The government supports self select dispersed camping as the predominant camping style but recognises that more intensive management is required for high visitation areas to ensure that a build up in camper activity does not cause long term environmental damage to these areas.

#### **Solid fuel fire bans**

- R35 That:**
- (a) solid fuel fires and collection of firewood for campfires not be permitted on public land adjoining the Murray, Ovens and Goulburn Rivers within the investigation area during the officially declared high fire danger period, and**
  - (b) solid fuel fires and collection of firewood for campfires be generally permitted outside the high fire danger period in parks and state forest areas adjoining the Murray, Ovens and Goulburn Rivers.**

The government accepts the CEP report recommendation that campfires in the investigation area be permitted year round (except on days of total fire ban), subject to any future changes to legislation or government policy regarding fire. The government will also explore appropriate additional enforcement arrangements.

#### **Firewood strategy for campers**

- R36 That the Department of Sustainability and Environment develop (in the context of management planning) a firewood strategy for campers (outside the solid fuel fire ban period):**
- (a) with a target of retaining at least 50 tonnes per hectare of coarse woody debris across each frontage block, and**

***(b) specifying where wood can be obtained elsewhere on forested public land, as a result of safety works, road clearing, fire protection works or ecological thinning.***

***Note: Campers could also be encouraged to bring wood from home or purchase it from local suppliers prior to entering the park.***

The government recognises the need for campers to access firewood and the need to install permanent fire sites and establish wood lots for campers in high visitation areas.

### **River Murray Strategy**

***R37 That a River Murray Strategy be developed within three years of government acceptance of these recommendations, in consultation with relevant Victorian and New South Wales government agencies and relevant planning bodies to provide a long term framework for the co-operative use of the River Murray and environs on a sustainable basis for recreation, conservation, tourism, commerce and similar uses.***

Existing and future strategies, plans and programs will address relevant land use planning issues in the River Murray Region and the co-operative use of the River Murray and environs on a sustainable basis for recreation, conservation, tourism, commerce and associated similar uses.

### **Domestic stock grazing**

***R38 That cultivation, cropping and domestic stock grazing not be permitted on public land in the investigation area, except:***

***(a) in areas proposed to remain as public land water frontages (G105-G112) and stream beds and banks (G113) grazing may continue for a phase-out period to be completed within five years of government accepting this recommendation; and***

***(b) in areas proposed to remain as unused roads (services and utilities–transport (roads) where an unused road licence is current).***

The government supports the exclusion of cultivation, cropping and stock grazing from public land in the investigation area, except for areas remaining as public land water frontages, stream beds and banks, streamside areas and those areas covered by recommendation R38(b). With respect to the riverine areas, the government supports a voluntary and collaborative approach being undertaken with land holders and natural resource agencies to remove stock grazing from high value river frontages and develop practical solutions for fencing issues.

***R39 That:***

***(a) for public land water frontages, a Riparian Conservation Licence be established where appropriate for adjoining landowners and be subject to agreement to manage these areas as described for natural features reserves general recommendation G and public land water frontages recommendations G105-G112, and***

***(b) the Riparian Conservation Licence be managed by the relevant catchment management authority in consultation with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and***

***(c) the relevant catchment management authority in consultation with other appropriate government agencies establish management plans with individual licensees to achieve the objectives outlined in (a).***

**Notes:**

- 1. Land managers may utilise domestic stock grazing on public land under contract for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control.***
- 2. That the phase-out of grazing on recommended public land water frontages and stream beds and banks be prioritised with incentives to licensees scaled to benefit those participants who install fencing and off-stream water points early in the phase-out period.***
- 3. In general, unused roads should remain in public ownership.***

The government recognises the need to better manage environmental values on public land water frontages. Fencing of high value water frontages will proceed on a voluntary basis in partnership with adjoining land owners.

## **Domestic firewood collection**

**Firewood collection zones in the Murray River Park and Shepparton Regional Park**  
***R40 That:***

- (a) domestic firewood collection not be permitted in the Murray River Park, other than in zones to be identified by the land manager and the community in consultation with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, near Mildura, Robinvale, Boundary Bend, Swan Hill, Barmah, Cobram and Rutherglen***
- (b) domestic firewood collection not be permitted in the Shepparton Regional Park, other than in zones to be identified by the land manager and the community in consultation with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and***
- (c) firewood may only be cut and removed where this action will promote growth of large old trees, improve flora and fauna habitat and assist fire protection strategies.***

The government supports local communities being able to obtain firewood from the River Red Gum Forests investigation area as detailed in the CEP report. This will be considered as part of a strategic and coordinated approach to the delivery of firewood at both a regional and state level, developed in consultation with the community.

### **Improved planning, licensing and monitoring systems for domestic firewood**

***R41 That land managers implement a planning, licensing and monitoring system that will ensure domestic firewood is made available on a sustainable basis to local communities and in particular to concession card holders who rely on wood for cooking, heating and hot water.***

**Notes:**

- 1. The Department of Sustainability and Environment oversees the planning, public consultation and monitoring of firewood demand and supply from state forest at a statewide and regional level. Domestic firewood collection is licensed under provisions of the Forests Act 1968. It is intended that the collection of firewood in the Murray River Park continue to be part of this system, in consultation with the land manager.***
- 2. Domestic firewood collection should be subject to appropriate controls and management systems to ensure protection of biodiversity and reduce theft of wood.***

The government will consider improved planning, licensing and monitoring systems for domestic firewood. The government recognises the importance of domestic firewood for local communities – especially to concession card holders who depend on wood for cooking, heating and hot water. As part of a strategic approach to the delivery of firewood, the government will examine ways to create a more efficient and equitable pricing and distribution system for firewood sourced from public land and ensure that firewood harvesting and collection is undertaken sustainably.

#### **Silvicultural thinning of state forest**

**R42** *That land managers give consideration to increasing the area subject to silvicultural thinning programs in Gunbower State Forest (recommendation C3) to enhance the development of sawlogs and produce additional volumes of domestic firewood, and to extend the silvicultural program to additional River Red Gum state forest areas at Benwell and Guttram (see recommendations C1 and C2).*

Land managers recognise that thinning is an important management option to assist in maintaining or improving future forest health and productivity. Thinning is also essential to maximise sawlog and firewood production from the remaining areas of State forest.

#### **Plantations and other sources of firewood and incentives**

**R43** *That:*

**(a)** *the government encourage the establishment of firewood plantations and woodlots on suitable cleared areas on public land and private land and that incentive funding be provided to assist in their development.*

**Note:** *Where areas of cleared public land become available for alternative uses, government could give consideration to establishment of firewood plantations. Areas in this category that could be considered include Beveridge Island, Pental Island and other sites near Robinvale.*

**(b)** *That energy authorities in conjunction with local authorities promote the availability of energy subsidies for gas appliances, solar heating and home insulation and encourage the uptake of alternative energy sources.*

**(c)** *That subject to the results of appropriate research and monitoring, ecological thinning of River Red Gum forests in parks and reserves be applied where required; for example to promote the survival and growth of retained trees, the protection of Moira Grass plains in Barmah National Park, and swamps.*

**Note:** *Production of firewood is not an objective. Where ecological thinning is approved, the operation will produce wood as a by-product which may be used as firewood where this does not conflict with ecological objectives, including the retention of coarse woody debris on the forest floor.*

The government recognises investment in plantations as an important resource of timber products and firewood.

Ecological thinning is supported as a means of improving the ecological health of the forest, reducing competition and enabling the most effective use of water.

**Firewood strategy implementation**

***R44 That government develop a strategic and coordinated approach to delivery of regional firewood requirements, at both a state and regional level, including establishment of a regional committee consisting of the land managers, catchment management authorities, local government, industry and the community, modelled on the successful North East Firewood Strategy Implementation Committee.***

A strategic and coordinated approach to the delivery of firewood at both a regional and state level is under development and aims to achieve a sustainable supply of domestic firewood from public land into the future. This will involve public consultation. The primary objective of the state wide strategy is to develop an efficient and practical pricing and distribution system for both commercial and non-commercial firewood sourced from public land. Regional level initiatives are underway to ensure continuity of firewood supply to local communities.

# Public Land Use Recommendations

The responses to the following public land use recommendations should be read in conjunction with the responses to the General and Thematic recommendations (R1–R44).

## National parks

### General recommendations for national parks

**A** *That national parks shown on Map A (numbered A1 to A9) and described below:*

**(a)** *be used to:*

- (i) conserve and protect biodiversity, natural landscapes and natural processes*
- (ii) protect significant cultural and historic sites and places, including Aboriginal cultural sites and places*
- (iii) provide opportunities for recreation and education associated with the enjoyment and understanding of natural environments and cultural heritage;*

**and that:**

**(b)** *the following activities generally be permitted:*

- (i) bushwalking, nature observation, heritage appreciation, picnicking,*
- (ii) camping (in particular dispersed camping) in accordance with recommendations R32–R33*
- (iii) campfires and collection of wood for campfires, outside the high fire danger period in accordance with recommendations R35–R36*
- (iv) car touring, including four wheel driving, on formed roads and tracks*
- (v) mountain bike and trailbike riding on formed roads and tracks*
- (vi) horseriding on formed roads and tracks*
- (vii) fishing*
- (viii) apiculture at existing licensed sites, subject to the outcome of research into the ecological impacts of this industry, and park management requirements*
- (ix) research, subject to permit;*

**and that:**

**(c)** *the following activities not be permitted:*

- (i) harvesting of forest products*
- (ii) grazing by domestic stock (see note 2 below)*
- (iii) hunting and use of firearms (see note 3 below)*
- (iv) exploration and mining, other than continuation of operations within existing permits and licences, as approved*
- (v) dogwalking and camping with dogs*
- (vi) overnight camping with horses;*

**(d)** *subject to clearly defined, transparent and scientifically supported ecological objectives, park managers may undertake adaptive management to restore ecosystems or to return them to a condition more closely resembling their natural condition (see notes 1, 2 and 3 below);*

**(e)** *unused road reserves be added to adjoining parks where appropriate; and*

**(f)** *the parks be reserved under Schedule Two to the National Parks Act 1975.*

**Notes:**

- 1.** *Ecological thinning may be permitted where required for ecological or management purposes.*
- 2.** *Short-term grazing may be contracted for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control.*

- 3. *Hunting and use of firearms may be authorised as part of a pest animal control program and/or for traditional Aboriginal cultural purposes in accordance with recommendations R29–R30.***
- 4. *Practical access should continue to be provided to existing private land holdings surrounded by the national parks.***
- 5. *Implementation of recommendations and land management should allow flexibility for minor boundary adjustments.***

The government recognises the important role of national parks in protecting many of the State's most precious natural assets and cultural values. Subject to its responses to the general and thematic recommendations, the government supports the general recommendations for national parks. However, as detailed in the CEP report, the government supports overnight camping with horses in identified areas in the new national parks under the strict management control of Parks Victoria.

In line with CEP recommendations, the government supports allowing hunters and hunting groups to assist in the control of pest animals in national parks.

As is the case with regard to other recommendations, the government does not support, in principle, the use of firearms and fire (other than in line with legislation and government policy) by Traditional Owners, due the importance of public safety.

### **Murray–Sunset National Park**

#### ***A1 That:***

- (a) the area of 57,172 hectares shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks***
- (b) an appropriate environmental water regime be established for this national park as outlined in recommendation R13***
- (c) camping (in particular dispersed camping) continue in accordance with recommendation R32–R34***
- (d) campfires and collection of wood for campfires, continue outside the high fire danger period in accordance with recommendations R35–R36***
- (e) acknowledgment of the spiritual importance and cultural heritage values of this park, and in particular west Wallpolla Island, for Traditional Owners be reflected in the management and visitor interpretation of values of this area, and***
- (f) an Aboriginal advisory committee be established in accordance with recommendation R28(a) to facilitate greater Aboriginal community involvement and provide expert advice to the park manager on cultural heritage site management specifically for west Wallpolla Island, and also more generally in land management, planning and works throughout the national park.***

#### ***Notes:***

- 1. The area of the park within the investigation area encompasses two existing reference areas (see recommendation F1). Reference areas are managed in accordance with the Reference Areas Act 1978.***
- 2. Subject to assessment of existing values and uses, areas of Lindsay Point State Forest immediately adjacent to the recommended national park that are outside the investigation area, are suggested as logical additions to the recommended national park.***
- 3. Engineering solutions be adopted to facilitate medium sized floods across Mail Route Road maintaining Lindsay Island floodplain system linkage to the River Murray and other waterways.***

The government supports the additions to the existing Murray-Sunset National Park.

### **Hattah–Kulkyne National Park**

**A2 That:**

- (a) the area of 24,428 hectares shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks, and***
- (b) an appropriate environmental water regime be established for this national park as outlined in recommendation R13.***

The government supports the additions to the existing Hattah-Kulkyne National Park.

### **Leaghur–Koorangie National Park**

**A3 That:**

- (a) the area of 7790 hectares shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks***
- (b) an appropriate environmental water regime be implemented as outlined in recommendation R13***
- (c) speed boating and fishing within parts of Lake Meran (Meering) be permitted, by arrangement with the land manager, and***
- (d) existing water diversion licences be allowed to continue from particular wetlands where no other sources of water are available to adjoining landowners providing the environmental water requirements for these wetlands can be achieved.***

**Note:**

- 1. Certain public land areas now managed by Goulburn–Murray Water are to be incorporated in the park under these recommendations. Goulburn–Murray Water has an ongoing role to operate, maintain and monitor flood retardation and drainage systems within the park.***

The government does not support the recommendation for the new Leaghur-Koorangie National Park, rather it supports the land status detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response, i.e. the VEAC recommended national park will now form:

- an expanded Leaghur State Park
- part of Kerang Regional Park
- Koorangie, Lake Elizabeth, Lake Leaghur and Lake Meran wildlife areas
- Yassom Swamp and Wandella nature conservation reserves
- Mystic Park Bushland Area.

### **Gunbower National Park**

**A4 That:**

- (a) the area of 8892 hectares shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks***
- (b) camping (in particular dispersed camping) continue in accordance with recommendations R32–R34***
- (c) campfires and collection of wood for campfires continue outside the high fire danger period in accordance with recommendations R35–R36, and***
- (d) an appropriate environmental water regime be implemented as outlined in recommendation R13.***

**Note:**

- 1. Goulburn-Murray Water has an ongoing role to operate, maintain and monitor outfall systems within the park.***

The government supports the creation of the Gunbower National Park as detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response. Part of the VEAC recommended national park will now form part of the Gunbower State Forest and part of the VEAC recommended Gunbower State Forest will form part of the national park.

### **Terrick Terrick National Park**

**A5 That:**

- (a) the area of 3483 hectares shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks***
- (b) existing water diversion licences be allowed to continue where no other sources of water are available to adjoining landowners, and***
- (c) low intensity sheep grazing under contract, where necessary for biodiversity conservation, be permitted at the land manager's discretion.***

**Notes:**

- 1. Some small areas along Bendigo (Mt Hope) Creek have been cropped (legally and illegally) and require restoration to enhance their grassland and woodland ecosystems. Fencing to align with cadastral boundaries is required to prevent further loss of values along this creek.***
- 2. There is currently an agricultural licence over an area of Crown land adjoining Bendigo (Mt Hope) Creek (Parcel number P129443) and this area has been cropped for a number of years. However considering its proximity to native grassland areas (both on public and private land), and a population of the endangered Striated Sun-moth, restoration of a native grassland community on this site is considered desirable. The agricultural licence should be discontinued and no further cropping should occur.***
- 3. Improved fencing for parts of Bendigo (Mt Hope) Creek is required.***
- 4. VEAC is aware that the government has recently reached agreement to purchase approximately 220 hectares of private land in the Parish of Patho for addition to the reserve system. This land, which contains high quality native grasslands, would be an appropriate addition to the Terrick Terrick National Park once transferred to the Crown.***
- 5. The reach of Bendigo (Mt Hope) Creek between parcels P129443 and P129444 has not been parcelised but is public land in the stream beds and banks public land use category and should be included in the recommended national park.***

The government supports the additions to the existing Terrick Terrick National Park.

### **Lower Goulburn River National Park**

**A6 That:**

- (d) the area of 12,154 hectares shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks***
- (a) camping (in particular dispersed camping) continue in accordance with recommendations R32–R34***
- (b) campfires and collection of wood for campfires continue outside the high fire danger period in accordance with recommendations R35–R36***
- (c) an appropriate environmental water regime be implemented as outlined in recommendation R13, and***
- (d) existing water diversion licences be allowed to continue where no other sources of water are available to adjoining landowners.***

**Notes:**

- 1. Certain public land areas now managed by Goulburn–Murray Water are to be incorporated in the park under these recommendations. Goulburn–Murray Water should continue to manage channels and regulators within the Kanyapella Basin section of the park for the purpose of flood mitigation and water transfer and the outfalls and drainage services in other sections of the park.**
- 2. Sections of Kanyapella Basin have been cleared for agricultural purposes. Restoration of these areas using indigenous species matching benchmarks for Ecological Vegetation Classes should be undertaken.**
- 3. The water requirements for Kanyapella Basin and options for achieving an improved water regime in this area are outlined in the Kanyapella Basin Environmental Management Plan.**

The government supports the creation of the Lower Goulburn River National Park as detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response. Part of the VEAC recommended national park will now form the Kanyapella Basin and Loch Garry wildlife areas, and the VEAC recommended Reedy Swamp Wildlife Area will form part of the national park.

**Barmah National Park**

**A7 That:**

- (a) the area of 28,521 hectares shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks**
- (b) camping (in particular dispersed camping) continue in accordance with recommendation R32–R34**
- (c) campfires and collection of wood for campfires continue outside the high fire danger period in accordance with recommendations R35–R36**
- (d) an appropriate environmental water regime be established for this national park as outlined in recommendation R13, and**
- (e) an Indigenous co-management board be established for the national park in accordance with recommendation R26 (b).**

**Notes:**

- 1. Over time the course of the River Murray has altered since the state border was determined. A 43 hectare area of NSW known as 'Native Dog Flora Reserve' (part of Thornley State Forest) is effectively an inlier and contiguous with the Ulupna Island section of Barmah National Park. An agreement should be sought with the NSW Department of Primary Industries to enable DSE or a designated agency to manage Native Dog Flora Reserve as part of the Barmah National Park under existing provisions of Section 19D of the National Parks Act 1975.**
- 2. The park encompasses two existing reference areas (see recommendation F1). Reference areas must be managed in accordance with the Reference Areas Act 1978.**
- 3. VEAC notes that feral horses and pigs have been present in the Barmah forest for several decades. The land manager has responsibility for eliminating and controlling pest plants and animals, and should make a concerted effort to control these animals in the recommended national park.**
- 4. Goulburn–Murray Water has an ongoing role to operate, maintain and monitor outfall and drainage systems within the park.**

The government supports the creation of the Barmah National Park.

**Warby Range–Ovens River National Park**

**A8 That:**

**(a) the area of 15,889 hectares (4367 hectares inside the investigation area and 11,522 outside of the investigation area) shown on Map A as the Warby Range–Ovens River National Park be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks**

**(a) camping (in particular dispersed camping) continue in accordance with recommendations R32–R34**

**(b) campfires and collection of wood for campfires continue outside the high fire danger period in accordance with recommendations R35–R36**

**(b) an appropriate environmental water regime be implemented as outlined in R13, and**

**(c) existing water diversion licences be allowed to continue where no other water sources are available to adjoining landholders.**

**Notes:**

- 1. All campers at Parolas Bend must have a chemical toilet which must be emptied at an approved disposal point such as a caravan park.**
- 2. Car rallying will continue to be permitted in Killawarra forest (currently part of Warby Range State Park), by arrangement with the land manager.**
- 3. VEAC notes that certain areas of public land managed by Goulburn–Murray Water are included in the park.**

The government supports the creation of the Warby–Ovens National Park as detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response. Part of the VEAC recommended national park will now form the Lower Ovens Wildlife Area.

**Mount Buffalo National Park**

**A9 That the area of 22.1 hectares shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks.**

The government supports the additions to the existing Mount Buffalo National Park.

## **Regional parks and other parks**

**General recommendations for regional parks and other parks**

**B That:**

**(a) regional parks and other parks shown on Map A (numbered B1 to B7) and described below be used to:**

- (i) provide for informal recreation associated with enjoyment of natural surroundings by large numbers of people**
- (ii) conserve and protect natural landscapes and scenic values**
- (iii) conserve and protect biodiversity to the extent that is consistent with (i) above, and**
- (iv) protect significant cultural and historic sites and places, including Aboriginal cultural sites and places;**

**(b) the following activities generally be permitted:**

- (i) bushwalking, nature observation, heritage appreciation, picnicking, recreational fishing**
- (ii) camping including dispersed camping in accordance with recommendation R32–R34**
- (iii) dogwalking and camping with dogs (see notes below)**

- (iv) car touring, including four wheel driving, on formed roads and tracks*
- (v) mountain bike and trailbike riding on formed roads and tracks*
- (vi) horseriding on formed roads and tracks and overnight camping with horses*
- (vii) apiculture*
- (viii) metal detecting, prospecting, and*
- (ix) research, subject to permit;*

***(c) the following activities not be permitted:***

- (i) harvesting of forest products, except where domestic firewood collection zones are specifically identified (see recommendations B2, B3 and R40)*
- (ii) grazing by domestic stock*
- (iii) hunting and use of firearms, and*
- (iv) burning solid fuel fires during the high fire danger period;*

***(d) subject to clearly defined, transparent and scientifically supported ecological objectives, park managers may undertake adaptive management to restore ecosystems or to return them to a condition more closely resembling their natural condition (refer chapter two – see also notes 3 and 4 below);***

***(e) unused road reserves be added to adjoining parks where appropriate; and***  
***(f) a management plan be prepared for each park in partnership with key user groups, local authorities and the community.***

***Notes:***

- 1. Dogs must be on a leash in some areas as zoned in management plans.***
- 2. Collection of firewood for campfires is permitted outside the designated high fire danger period.***
- 3. Ecological thinning may be permitted where required for ecological management purposes.***
- 4. Short term grazing may be contracted for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control.***
- 5. Hunting and use of firearms may be allowed as part of a pest animal control program.***
- 6. Implementation of recommendations and land management should allow flexibility for minor boundary adjustments.***

The government recognises that regional parks and other parks primarily provide informal recreation opportunities in natural or semi-natural surroundings but also meet conservation and cultural objectives. Subject to its responses to the general and thematic recommendations, the government supports the general recommendations for regional parks and other parks.

The government also notes that two new parks (B6 and B7) include land that may be subject to current native title claim mediation discussions and intends that the change will not prejudice claimants in these discussions.

**Kerang Regional Park**

***B1 That:***

***(a) the area of 1138 hectares shown on Map A as the Kerang Regional Park be used in accordance with general recommendations B for regional parks and other parks***

***(b) the use of Fosters Swamp as an outfall for tertiary sewage and drainage be permitted in consultation with the land manager, and***

***(c) the area be reserved under section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.***

The government supports the creation of the Kerang Regional Park as detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response. Part of the VEAC recommended regional

park will now form part of the Kerang Wildlife Area, and part of the VEAC recommended Leaghur-Koorangie National Park will form part of the regional park.

### **Shepparton Regional Park**

#### ***B2 That:***

- (a) the area of 2786 hectares shown on Map A as the Shepparton Regional Park be used in accordance with general recommendations B for regional parks and other parks***
- (b) domestic firewood collection generally not be permitted, other than in zones to be designated in accordance with recommendation R40, and***
- (c) the area be reserved under section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.***

The government supports the creation of the Shepparton Regional Park.

### **Murray River Park**

#### ***B3 That:***

- (a) the area of 34,685 hectares shown on Map A as the Murray River Park be used in accordance with general recommendations B for regional parks and other parks***
- (b) a management plan for the Murray River Park be developed in consultation with the community within three years of the acceptance of this recommendation***
- (c) an appropriate environmental water regime be established for this park as outlined in recommendation R13***
- (d) use of existing and licensed pump and pumpline sites be permitted to continue***
- (e) a streamlined multi-agency approach be developed for dealing with applications for new pump and pumpline sites that provides protection for the environmental, cultural, scenic and recreation values of the River Murray frontage whilst recognising rights of diverters, and locates structures on private land where possible or, failing that, on consolidated frontage sites***
- (f) domestic firewood collection generally not be permitted, other than in zones to be designated by the land manager in consultation with the community around Mildura, Robinvale, Boundary Bend, Swan Hill, Barmah, Cobram and Rutherglen in accordance with recommendation R40***
- (g) broadly, other existing uses in the area of the recommended Murray River Park be permitted at the discretion of the land manager and subject to the management plan***
- (h) the recommended Murray River Park be considered "restricted" Crown land under the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990***
- (i) the park be zoned in order to provide for the range of uses outlined above and be permanently reserved under section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978***
- (j) regulations be developed to be in place as soon as practicable after the park is established, and***
- (k) a coordinated approach to management across the border with New South Wales be developed, including a co-ordinated regulatory regime.***

#### ***Notes:***

- 1. A firewood strategy for campers should be developed in accordance with recommendation R36.***
- 2. Goulburn-Murray Water has an ongoing role to operate, maintain and monitor outfall and drainage systems within the park.***
- 3. Parklands Albury Wodonga manages part of the park near Wodonga.***

The government supports the creation of the Murray River Park as detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response. The Bottle Bend area of the VEAC recommended Kings Billabong Park and most of the VEAC recommended Murrumbidgee Nature Conservation Reserve will now form part of the Murray River Park.

#### **Kings Billabong Park**

**B4 That:**

- (a) the area of 3535 hectares shown on Map A as the Kings Billabong Park be used in accordance with general recommendations B for regional parks and other parks, and***
- (b) the park be established under Schedule Three to the National Parks Act 1975.***

The government supports the creation of Kings Billabong Park as detailed on the map accompanying this response. The Bottle Bend area will be included in the Murray River Park and the existing bushland reserve will be retained as the Mildura Bushland Area.

#### **Murray–Kulkyne Park**

**B5 That:**

- (a) the area of 4604 hectares shown on Map A as the Murray–Kulkyne Park be used in accordance with general recommendation B for regional parks and other parks***
- (b) fencing be undertaken of the Tarpaulin Island Reference Area to prohibit wandering stock from New South Wales entering the site, and***
- (c) the park be established under Schedule Three to the National Parks Act 1975.***

The government supports the additions to the existing Murray-Kulkyne Park.

#### **Gadsen Bend Park**

**B6 That:**

- (a) the area of 1618 hectares shown on Map A as the Gadsen Bend Park be used in accordance with general recommendations B for regional parks and other parks, and***
- (b) the park be established under Schedule Three to the National Parks Act 1975.***

The government supports the creation of the Gadsen Bend Park.

#### **Nyah–Vinifera Park**

**B7 That:**

- (a) the area of 1354 hectares shown on Map A as the Nyah–Vinifera Park be used in accordance with general recommendations B for regional parks and other parks***
- (b) Indigenous co-management arrangements be established in accordance with recommendation R26(a)***
- (c) the area currently licensed for equestrian activities be zoned for this purpose in management planning, and***
- (d) the park be established under Schedule Three to the National Parks Act 1975.***

The government supports the creation of the Nyah-Vinifera Park.

## State forests

### General recommendations for state forests

**C** *That the state forests (numbered C1 to C3) shown on Map A be used to:*  
**(a)** *produce hardwood timber and other forest products, including domestic firewood*  
**(b)** *conserve and protect biodiversity, natural landscapes and natural processes*  
**(c)** *protect significant cultural and historic sites and places, including Aboriginal cultural sites and places*  
**(d)** *provide opportunities for recreation (including hunting) and education*  
**(e)** *provide for flood mitigation;*  
**and that:**  
**(f)** *the following activities be generally permitted:*

- (i)** *bushwalking, nature observation, heritage appreciation, picnicking, recreational fishing*
- (ii)** *camping, in particular dispersed camping and overnight camping with horses*
- (iii)** *dogwalking and camping with dogs*
- (iv)** *hunting*
- (v)** *car touring, including four wheel driving, on formed roads and tracks*
- (vi)** *mountainbike and trailbike riding on formed roads and tracks*
- (vii)** *horseriding on formed roads and tracks*
- (viii)** *apiculture*
- (ix)** *exploration and mining*
- (x)** *research, subject to permit;*

**and that:**

**(g)** *the following activities not be permitted:*

- (i)** *domestic stock grazing*
- (ii)** *solid fuel fires during the high fire danger period*

**and that:**

**(h)** *DSE review the forest management zoning within the state forests of the Mid-Murray Forest Management Area*  
**(i)** *DSE give consideration to increasing silvicultural thinning programs to enhance the development of sawlogs and produce additional volumes of firewood.*

The government recognises the importance of Guttram, Benwell and Gunbower state forests for a range of values including conservation of biodiversity, recreation, timber and firewood for communities. Subject to its responses to the general and thematic recommendations, the government supports the general recommendations for state forests.

### Benwell State Forest

**C1** *That:*

**(a)** *the area of 551 hectares shown on Map A as the Benwell State Forest be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state forests C.*

The government supports the recommendation for Benwell State Forest.

### Guttram State Forest

**C2** *That:*

**(a)** *the area of 1179 hectares shown on Map A as the Guttram State Forest be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state forests C.*

The government supports the recommendation for Guttram State Forest.

**Gunbower State Forest**

**C3 That:**

- (a) the area of 10,563 hectares shown on Map A as the Gunbower State Forest be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state forests C, and**
- (b) areas currently zoned for the protection of colonial waterbird breeding sites under the Mid-Murray Forest Management Plan continue to be managed for this purpose.**

The government supports the recommendation for Gunbower State Forest as detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response. Part of the VEAC recommended Gunbower State Forest will now form part of the Gunbower National Park and part of the VEAC recommended national park will form part of the Gunbower State Forest.

**Nature conservation reserves**

**General recommendations for nature conservation reserves**

**D That the nature conservation reserves shown on Map A (numbered D1 to D50):**

**(a) be used to:**

- (i) conserve and protect species, communities or habitats of indigenous animals and plants**
- (ii) provide for educational and scientific study if consistent with (i) above**
- (iii) provide for recreation by small numbers of people, if consistent with (i) above;**

**and that:**

**(b) the following activities generally be permitted:**

- (i) bushwalking, nature observation, heritage appreciation, picnicking**
- (ii) car touring, including four wheel driving, on formed roads and tracks**
- (iii) apiculture on existing licensed sites, subject to the outcome of scientific research into the ecological impacts of this industry, and management requirements**
- (iv) exploration and mining for minerals and searching for and extraction of stone resources subject to the consent of the Crown land Minister under the relevant legislation;**

**and that:**

**(c) the following activities not be permitted:**

- (i) grazing of domestic stock (see note 1 below)**
- (ii) harvesting of forest products**
- (iii) hunting and use of firearms (see note 2 below)**
- (iv) solid fuel fires at any time of year (see note 7 below)**
- (v) dogwalking (see note 3 below)**
- (vi) horseriding;**

**and that:**

**(d) they be permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 for the purpose of 'preservation of an area of ecological significance'.**

**Notes**

- 1. Grazing contracted for ecological purposes or for short-term management purposes such as targeted weed control may be permitted.**

- 2. Hunting and the use of firearms may be authorised as part of a pest animal control program.**
- 3. Dog walking on lead be permitted in D46 Gemmill Swamp Nature Conservation Reserve.**
- 4. The above management objectives and summary land use recommendations are those that generally apply for the land use category. Exceptions to these may apply to specific reserves in special circumstances.**
- 5. A number of areas containing native grasslands have been planted with non-indigenous trees or shrubs. They have the potential to degrade grassland values and should be removed unless considered important for native fauna habitat.**
- 6. A small but significant area of Buloke-dominated Plains Woodland occurs on the border of the investigation area (Crown Allotment 11B, Section C, Parish of Charlton East, Parcel No. P121341). This was not subject to a recommendation in the Environment Conservation Council's Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation and VEAC considers it warrants reservation as a new nature conservation reserve (the Aristida Nature Conservation Reserve).**
- 7. Solid fuel fires may be permitted outside the high fire danger period at the land manager's discretion and in accordance with recommendations R35-R36 in the large nature conservation reserves at Lambert Island (D1) and Murrumbidgee Junction (D4).**

Subject to its responses to the general and thematic recommendations, the government supports the general recommendations for nature conservation reserves.

#### **Nature conservation reserves**

**D1-D50** *That new and existing nature conservation reserves, indicated on Map A and listed above, be used as such and managed in accordance with general recommendations D.*

The government supports the new and existing nature conservation reserves except as detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response:

- D4: Murrumbidgee Junction NCR – will form part of the Murray River Park, except for the existing Passage Camp Flora Reserve, which will form the Passage Camp Nature Conservation Reserve
- D17 Woolshed Swamp NCR – will form Woolshed Swamp Wildlife Area and Woolshed Swamp Historic and Cultural Features Reserve
- D19 Lake Yando NCR – will form Lake Yando Wildlife Area
- D20 Duck Lake South NCR – will form Duck Lake South Wildlife Area
- D22 Benjeroop-Dartagook NCR – the northern part will form Benjeroop Wildlife Area and the southern part will form a nature conservation reserve
- D24 Plumptions NCR – will form Plumptions Wildlife Area
- D28 Johnson Swamp NCR – will form Johnson Swamp Wildlife Area
- D33 Tang Tang Swamp NCR – will form Tang Tang Wildlife Area
- D34 Thunder Swamp NCR – will form Thunder Swamp Wildlife Area
- D44 Wallenjoe Swamp NCR – will form Wallenjoe Swamp Wildlife Area.

In addition, as detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response, parts of the VEAC recommended Leaghur-Koorangie National Park will now form the Yassom Swamp and Wandella nature conservation reserves.

## Historic and cultural features reserves

### General recommendations for historic and cultural features reserves

**E** *That historic and cultural features reserves, according to their specific characteristics, be used to:*

**(a)** *protect historic and cultural heritage values, features and sites (Aboriginal and non-indigenous)*

**(b)** *provide opportunities for:*

**(i)** *education and passive recreation such as picnicking, walking and, where relevant, fishing, and*

**(ii)** *more intensive recreation such as camping where specified by the land manager and compatible with (a)*

**(c)** *protect areas with remnant natural vegetation or habitat value and that:*

**(d)** *timber harvesting not be permitted*

**(e)** *low impact exploration for minerals be permitted, and mining, subject to consideration of the impact on values in (a) for each application or case*

**(f)** *prospecting and apiculture generally be permitted*

**(g)** *grazing not be permitted, except where required for short periods as a land management tool at the discretion of the land manager, and*

**(h)** *the areas be permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.*

Subject to its responses to the general and thematic recommendations, the government supports the general recommendations for historic and cultural features reserves.

### Existing historic and cultural features reserves

**E1–E10** *That existing historic and cultural features reserves, historic areas or historic reserves indicated on Map A and listed below continue to be used as such and be managed in accordance with general recommendations E:*

**E1** *Psyche Bend, Kings Billabong (11 hectares)*

**E2** *Bumbang Island, Robinvale (570 hectares)*

**E3** *Boort (Old Courthouse) (0.05 hectares)*

**E4** *Kinypanial Creek (40 hectares)*

**E5** *Serpentine Creek Weir (0.04 hectares)*

**E6** *Cohuna (Old Courthouse) (0.1 hectares)*

**E7** *Days Mill, south of Murchison (4 hectares)*

**E8** *Echuca & Waranga Trust Irrigation Pump and Channel, Murchison (17 hectares)*

**E9** *Murchison Police Paddocks (9 hectares)*

**E10** *Happy Valley Creek, Myrtleford (1 hectare)*

#### Notes:

- 1.** *Management of the existing Bumbang Island Historic Area (E2) should be conducted in consultation with an Aboriginal Advisory Committee established as described in recommendation R28.*
- 2.** *Where appropriate, a committee of management may be appointed to manage, or continue to manage, historic and cultural features reserves in accordance with general recommendations E.*

### **New historic and cultural features reserves**

***E11–E13 That the following areas, indicated on Map A be managed in accordance with the general recommendation E:***

***E11 Koondrook (15 hectares)***

***E12 Echuca (115 hectares)***

***E13 Bonegilla (16 hectares)***

#### **Notes:**

- 1. Currently two authorised uses exist in the area recommended as Koondrook Historic and Cultural Features Reserve (reserve for sawmill, and a licence for residence and gardens). VEAC recommends that provision be made for continued use and management of the features on these sites where sympathetic to the reserve purpose. Should these uses no longer be required, the features of historic and cultural value on the site are to be retained and managed in accordance with the reserve purpose.***
- 2. Where appropriate, a committee of management may be appointed to manage historic and cultural features reserves in accordance with general recommendations E. VEAC notes that there are existing committees of management over some of these reserves.***

The government supports the existing and new historic and cultural features reserves. In addition, as detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response, part of the VEAC recommended Woolshed Swamp Nature Conservation Reserve will form the Woolshed Swamp Historic and Cultural Features Reserve.

## **Reference areas and heritage rivers**

### **Reference areas**

***F1 That the following areas, totalling 3721 hectares, shown on Map A, continue to be used as reference areas proclaimed under the Reference Areas Act 1978:***

***(a) Toupnein Creek (1659 hectares)***

***(b) Lake Wallawalla (996 hectares)***

***(c) Tarpaulin Bend (436 hectares)***

***(d) Chalka Creek (329 hectares)***

***(e) Top Island (177 hectares)***

***(f) Top End (124 hectares)***

#### **Notes:**

- 1. VEAC notes that fencing and management actions are required to restrict stock access to Tarpaulin Bend Reference Area from New South Wales.***

The government supports the recommendations for reference areas.

### **Heritage rivers**

***F2 That the following areas, as described on Schedule One of the Heritage Rivers Act 1992 and totalling 20,410 hectares, continue to be used as heritage river areas proclaimed under the Heritage Rivers Act 1992:***

***(a) the Goulburn River Heritage Area (16,660 hectares)***

***(b) the Ovens River Heritage Area (3750 hectares)***

#### **Notes:**

- 1. Some 2650 hectares of the Goulburn Heritage River, outside the investigation area, should be managed in a manner consistent to that area described above.***

The government supports the recommendations for heritage rivers.

## Natural features reserves

### General recommendation for natural features reserves

**G** *That the natural features reserves, according to their specific characteristics: (a) be used to:*

- (i) protect natural features and values*
- (ii) protect and restore areas with remnant vegetation or habitat value and conserve native flora and fauna*
- (iii) protect water quality where appropriate,*
- (iv) provide protection for historic and Aboriginal cultural heritage features, values and sites*
- (v) provide opportunities for education and recreation, including hunting where specified below, at levels consistent with (i) to (iv) above*
- (vi) maintain scenic features and the character and quality of the local landscapes, and*
- (vii) preserve features of geological or geomorphological interest;*

*and that:*

- (b) timber harvesting not be permitted*
- (c) exploration for minerals be permitted, and mining, subject to decisions on particular cases*
- (d) prospecting and apiculture generally be permitted*
- (e) domestic stock grazing not be permitted as specified in general recommendation R38*
- (f) unused road reserves adjoining natural features reserves be added to those reserves where appropriate ecological or recreational values are identified, and*
- (g) they be permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.*

**Notes:**

- 1. The above management objectives and summary land use recommendations are those that generally apply for the land use category. Exceptions to these may apply to specific reserves in special circumstances.*
- 2. Stock grazing contracted for ecological purposes or for short-term management purposes such as targeted weed control may be permitted by the land manager where required.*
- 3. Apiculture sites should be located away from picnic areas, car parks, walking tracks and other focal points for recreation.*
- 4. On-ground management may be assigned or delegated to organisations or institutions other than DSE, such as committees of management, under licence or other arrangement subject to review of management effectiveness.*
- 5. Several natural features reserves have values other than those related to their primary use, that are worthy of specific protection.*

Subject to its responses to the general and thematic recommendations, the government supports the general recommendation for natural features reserves.

### Bushland areas

**G1–G59** *That existing and new bushland reserves, shown on Map A and listed in appendix 8, be used in accordance with the natural features reserves general recommendations G.*

The government supports the existing and new bushland areas except as detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response – i.e. G16 Boort Bushland Area will now form the Boort Wildlife Area and part of the VEAC recommended Kings Billabong Park will form the Mildura Bushland Area. As detailed in the CEP report, hunting will be permitted in G11 Lake Lookout Bushland Area and G12 Sandhill Bushland Area.

**Streamside areas**

**G60–81** *That existing and new streamside areas, shown on Map A and listed in appendix 8, be used in accordance with the natural features reserves general recommendations G, and:*

*(a) where appropriate, be used for more intensive recreation such as camping, at the discretion of the land manager and where this does not conflict with the maintenance of the water quality in the adjacent stream.*

The government supports the recommendations for existing and new streamside areas.

**Wildlife areas**

**G82–G104** *That existing and new wildlife areas, shown on Map A and listed in appendix 8, be used in accordance with the natural features reserve general recommendations G, and:*

*(a) to conserve and protect species, communities or habitats of indigenous animals and plants*

*(b) for public recreation (including hunting in season as specified by the land manager) and education, where this does not conflict with the primary objective, and*

*(c) be reserved under the Wildlife Act 1975 as state game reserves for the purpose of hunting.*

The government supports the recommendations for existing and new wildlife areas and the creation of additional wildlife areas as detailed in the CEP report and shown on the map accompanying this response. The additional wildlife reserves are listed below:

- Benjeroop Wildlife Area
- Boort Wildlife Area
- Duck Lake South Wildlife Area
- Johnson Swamp Wildlife Area
- Kanyapella Basin Wildlife Area
- Kerang Wildlife Area
- Koorangie Wildlife Area
- Lake Elizabeth Wildlife Area
- Lake Leaghur Wildlife Area
- Lake Meran Wildlife Area
- Lake Yando Wildlife Area
- Loch Garry Wildlife Area
- Lower Ovens Wildlife Area
- Plumptions Wildlife Area
- Tang Tang Wildlife Area
- Thunder Swamp Wildlife Area
- Wallenjoe Wildlife Area
- Woolshed Swamp Wildlife Area

**Public land water frontages**

**G105–G112** *That public land water frontages including those to be known as 'river reserves', where not otherwise recommended for a specific use, be used in accordance with the natural features reserves general recommendations G, and to:*

*(a) conserve native flora and fauna as part of an integrated system of habitat networks or corridors*

- (b) protect adjoining land from erosion, and provide for flood passage**
- (c) provide access for recreation (including hunting where appropriate) at levels of use consistent with (a) to (b) above**
- and that:**
- (d) catchment management authorities, in cooperation with adjoining landholders, implement programs to gradually restore frontages on currently grazed, degraded, eroded or salt-affected streambanks, where frontage vegetation is degraded or not regenerating and to protect natural, cultural, recreational and scenic values or water quality**
- (e) programs to restore frontages be implemented according to local priorities and a practical timetable, with particular emphasis on the Victorian Riverina bioregion**
- (f) where frontages adjoin farmland, fencing and offstream stock watering points be encouraged by appropriate support**
- (g) where stream frontage vegetation is to be restored, particularly in cleared or degraded areas, native trees, shrubs and ground species be planted, using stock of local provenance**
- (h) where appropriate, suitable areas for more intensive recreational use be identified and facilities established**
- (i) where land exchanges are recommended that involve frontage land that is no longer adjacent to rivers, efforts be made to prevent loss of any nature conservation or other values of this land from the public land estate**
- (j) no new licences for domestic stock grazing be issued, and that existing licences be systematically reviewed, with a view to completing the phasing out of domestic stock grazing within five years in accordance with recommendation R38**
- (k) where a Riparian Conservation Licence has been issued for a public land water frontage (see recommendation R39), recreation use by the public for activities such as walking, nature observation or fishing be permitted, while motorised forms of recreation not be permitted (except for launching of boats)**
- (l) licensees be required to provide stiles in any fences erected across their licence area if requested to do so by the land manager**
- (m) no new cultivation of stream frontages for agriculture be permitted in accordance with recommendation R38, and areas currently cultivated be revegetated**
- (n) sand and gravel extraction may be permitted by the land managers where this is consistent with the above uses, and where necessary for bed and bank stability, and**
- (o) public land water frontages be managed by the relevant catchment management authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and in accordance with general recommendation R39 for Riparian Conservation Licences where applicable.**

**Note:**

- 1. Short-term grazing may be contracted for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control.**

**Stream beds and banks**

**G113 That stream beds and banks, subject to other relevant recommendations, guidelines and statutory requirements, be used in accordance with the natural features reserves general recommendations G, and to:**

- (a) conserve or restore habitat for native flora and fauna**
- (b) provide for appropriate recreational activities (including hunting where appropriate) at levels of use consistent with (a)**

- (c) provide for flood passage and drainage requirements of adjacent land***
- (d) provide, where necessary, for the passage of artificial flows of water stored within the catchment or transferred from other catchments***
- (e) maintain streams in a stable condition using environmentally sound techniques, and***
- (f) provide a source of sand and gravel where this does not conflict with the above.***

The government recognises the need to better manage environmental values on public land water frontages. Subject to its responses to the general and thematic recommendations, the government supports the intent of the recommendations for public land water frontages and stream beds and banks.

## **Water production, drainage and distribution areas**

### **General recommendations for water production areas**

***H1 That water production areas; storage areas, diversion works and associated facilities; protective buffer zones around diversion works and storages where defined in a special area plan; and any other public land considered necessary, as shown on Map A be used for:***

- (a) water supply purposes***
- (b) other activities permitted by the water supply authority after consultation with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and other agencies, as appropriate***
- (c) the protection of natural and cultural heritage values, and***
- (d) unless otherwise securely reserved, these areas be permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 for water supply purposes and be managed by the water supply authority.***

### **General recommendations for water distribution and drainage areas**

***H2 That water distribution and drainage areas and associated facilities; and any other public land considered necessary, as shown on Map A be used for:***

- (a) storage and distribution of water for irrigation and domestic supply purposes***
- (b) flood mitigation purposes***
- (c) salt drainage or disposal purposes***
- (d) other activities permitted by the water supply authority after consultation with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and other agencies, as appropriate***
- (e) the protection of natural and cultural heritage values, and***
- (f) unless otherwise securely reserved, these areas be permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 for water distribution and drainage purposes and be managed by the water supply authority.***

#### **Note:**

- 1. Several large water storage areas not primarily used for domestic water supply are also used for water-based recreation. This may continue except where it results in deteriorating water quality.***

Subject to its responses to the general and thematic recommendations, the government supports the general recommendations for water production, drainage and distribution areas.

## Community use areas

### General recommendations for community use areas

***I That new and existing community use areas be used for recreation, parks and gardens, buildings for community purposes and education; and***

***(a) appropriate facilities be provided***

***(b) where relevant, and where compatible with the above, features of cultural significance, natural surroundings and the local character and quality of the landscape be maintained or restored***

***(c) harvesting of forest products, hunting and 'stone' extraction, as defined in the Extractive Industries Development Act 1995, not be permitted***

***(d) be reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978,***

#### **Notes:**

- 1. The Pine Grove Recreation Reserve contains significant Plains Grassland values which should be protected.***
- 2. Where appropriate, a committee of management may be appointed or continue to manage community use areas in accordance with the general recommendations I.***

### New or modified community use areas

***I1–17 That new or modified community use areas indicated on Map A and listed below be used as such and managed in accordance with general recommendations I:***

***I1 Lake Cullulleraine Recreation Area (355 hectares)***

***I2 Gadsen Bend Rifle Range Community Use Area (21 hectares)***

***I3 Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum Community Use Area (35 hectares)***

***I4 Spence Bridge Education Area (3.5 hectares)***

***I5 Little Lake Boort Recreation Area (119 hectares)***

***I6 Barmah Forest Community Use Area (22 hectares)***

***I7 Moira Park Community Use Area (5.8 hectares)***

The government supports the intent of the recommendations for community use areas.

## Services and utilities areas

### General recommendations for services and utilities areas

***J That reserves and easements for public services and utilities such as transport, electricity and gas, communications, cemeteries, water and sewerage be used for those purposes, and that***

***(a) new services, or utility sites and easements or lines, not be sited in or across reference areas, and wherever possible not be sited in or across national or other parks or nature conservation reserves***

***(b) railway lines and other service and utility sites be managed to protect natural values including remnant vegetation and habitat, as far as practical***

***(c) organisations responsible for road reserve management conserve and protect indigenous flora and fauna communities and habitat occurring on roadsides, in accordance with the guidelines above and as part of roadside management plans***

***(d) a review be conducted of unused road reserves and those identified as containing significant environmental values be conserved and protected, and***

***(e) should a public land area or building and site used for service or utility purposes no longer be required for its primary designated use, it be assessed for its natural, recreational and cultural heritage values, and capability for other public uses including firewood plantations (recommendation R43).***

**Notes:**

- 1. While DSE, VicRoads and municipalities are commonly responsible for road reserve management, many unused roads are licensed to adjoining landholders. Roads and unused road reserves may not be distinguishable on Map A.***
- 2. There are numerous cemeteries across the investigation area that have remnant natural vegetation. These should be managed to protect this vegetation where it does not interfere with the primary aim of the cemetery.***
- 3. The Pyramid Hill airstrip contains important areas of Plains Grassland EVC which should be managed for conservation purposes in conjunction with the airstrip. If this Crown land is no longer required for airstrip purposes in the future, the land should become a nature conservation reserve.***

The government supports the intent of these recommendations.

## **Earth resources and extraction areas**

### **General recommendations for earth resources and extraction areas**

***K That existing earth resource areas shown on Map A continue to be used for the extraction of stone, sand, salt, gypsum and other mining resource use in accordance with current legislative and regulatory requirements, and the principles and guidelines described above, and that***

- (a) recommended new extraction sites be located and operated in accordance with the current legislation and regulations, and as appropriate the above principles and guidelines***
- (b) extraction sites preferably be located on already cleared land, and***
- (c) when no longer required for extraction, each site be considered uncategorised public land and assessed for public land values and uses, and where appropriate assigned to another public land use category or made surplus.***

### **General recommendations for mining sites**

***K1 That existing mining sites shown on Map A and listed below continue to be used as such and in accordance with general recommendations K:***

- (a) McDonald Road Salt Lake Mining Area (67 hectares)***
- (b) Micks Lake Mining Area (119 hectares)***
- (c) Copi Mining Area (3.8 hectares).***

### **General recommendations for stone reserves**

***K2 That existing stone reserves shown on Map A and listed below continue to be used as such and in accordance with general recommendations K:***

- (a) Hyem Gravel Reserve (0.3 hectares)***
- (a) Milawa Gravel Reserve (0.7 hectares)***
- (b) Boort Gravel Reserve (35 hectares).***

The government supports the general recommendations for earth resource and extraction areas and the recommendations for mining sites and stone reserves.

## Plantations

### **General recommendations for plantations**

***L That existing plantations held under licence and shown on Map A continue under present use and management.***

The government supports the general recommendations for plantations.

## Uncategorised public land

### **General recommendations for uncategorised public land**

***M Public land other than that recommended for specific uses in this report, or subject to previous approved specific land use recommendations:***

***(a) be uncategorised public land***

***(b) existing legal use and tenure continue for the time being***

***(c) when Crown land assessments are completed, the land be either:***

***(i) assigned to a Department of Sustainability and Environment land manager and treated as outlined above if it has public land values (i.e. native forest or native grasslands), or***

***(ii) disposed of if assessed as surplus, and***

***(d) those parcels identified in appendix 8 and shown on Map A be revegetated with native species local to the area or be managed in a way which allows for the natural regeneration of native vegetation.***

The government supports the general recommendations for uncategorised public land. However, recommendation M(d) will be considered in the broader context of the assessment process under recommendation M(c).

