



PART C

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC LAND USE IN METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE

7 PUBLIC LAND IN METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE

Term of reference (a) for the investigation directs VEAC to systematically identify and assess the uses, resources, condition, values and management of public land in metropolitan Melbourne. Public land in the investigation area is described in terms of its extent, uses, resources, values and management in chapter 4 of the discussion paper.

VEAC and its predecessors have developed an evolving set of public land use categories to describe the primary purposes for the use of public land and the range of permitted activities. These categories provide a useful framework for consistent and transparent allocation of public land to specific broad uses. However, applying the established public land use categories to public land in the highly urbanised metropolitan setting has required some reconsideration of the categories, and an additional 'metropolitan park' category has been established (see page 79). Other unique characteristics of the Metropolitan Melbourne investigation area include the relatively greater importance of sub-categories of community use areas such as 'parklands and gardens', and the relatively higher significance of any remaining areas of public land with environmental values in the established residential areas.

Chapter 10 of the discussion paper provided, and sought comment on, draft recommendations relating to the use of public land in the investigation area. These draft recommendations were:

- general recommendations for some categories to confirm existing public land uses across the investigation area and to provide a framework for the management of specific land for which VEAC is recommending changes
- specific recommendations for changes to the land use categories for a small number of sites to enhance the protection of biodiversity, and for the continued management by Melbourne Water of freehold land with high biodiversity values.

This chapter of the final report provides a brief overview of public land in the different categories within the investigation area and public land use recommendations.

There are approximately 89,074 hectares or 890.7 square kilometres of public land in the investigation area. This area has been calculated from detailed GIS mapping. In addition to this area, VEAC estimates that there is a further 73,000 hectares of 'unparcellised' Crown road reserves (historically these Government roads were not ascribed allotments or parcels).

Map A shows public land in the investigation area according to its public land use category. Table 7.1 shows the area, in hectares, of public land within each of the public land use categories. The ownership of this public land is shown on map B and in table 7.2. Maps A and B can be found in the back pocket of this report.

Also included below is a discussion of, and a recommendation concerning, the identification of Aboriginal cultural heritage on public land. This discussion and recommendation apply to all categories of public land.

7.1 : Awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage values

An issue raised during community consultation, particularly in consultation with Indigenous communities, is the importance of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and places on public land, and the identification and ongoing management of these sites. Certain management activities – for example, those associated with planned burning or development of recreation trails – that may impact on Aboriginal heritage sites such as scarred trees or artefact scatters need to be identified and managed appropriately.

It is important that public land managers have access to appropriate information so that they can identify potentially damaging actions. In the absence of clear identification of existing sites and advice on methodologies utilised to carry out works, many sites will be lost and works may be inadvertently undertaken in non-compliance with existing legislation.

Some public land managers, such as Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria, employ Cultural Heritage Advisors to identify any heritage values at risk. DSE employs Cultural Heritage Values Officers to aid in identifying Aboriginal heritage values that may be impacted by activities associated with planned burning or other works programs. The Cultural Heritage Advisors draw upon information from the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register, maintained by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria. If required, Cultural Heritage Advisors, with the Native Title holders, Registered Aboriginal Parties or Traditional Owners of the land, undertake heritage surveys to assess the sites and record any new ones before works are undertaken.

A further point raised in consultation with both the community and public land managers is that previously unrecorded Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are often revealed following bushfires on public land. There was some community concern that these sites would not be identified and added to the records maintained by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria. Some public land managers suggested that, where this is not already occurring, operational staff should undergo cultural heritage training so that they are more aware of the existence of these sites.

RECOMMENDATION

R23 Awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage values

Public land managers undergo, or continue to undergo, cultural heritage training to increase or maintain their awareness of the existence of Aboriginal cultural heritage values on public land.



Above: Woodlands Historic Park contains one of the greatest concentrations of scarred trees in the investigation area.

Table 7.1

Current extent of public land in the investigation area

CATEGORY	AREA (ha)
National parks	10,537
State parks	14,402
Marine national parks and marine sanctuaries	94
Nature conservation reserves	3,567
Trust for Nature protected areas	112
Regional parks	3,872
Metropolitan parks	5,012
State forests	4,030
Natural features reserves	4,858
<i>Natural features reserves (general)</i>	8
<i>Natural and scenic features</i>	61
<i>Bushland areas</i>	896
<i>Streamside areas</i>	124
<i>Stream frontages (including stream beds and banks)</i>	3,189
<i>Wildlife areas and wetlands</i>	580
Coastal reserves	671
Coastal waters reserve	478
Water production areas	8,343
Historic and cultural features reserves	57
Community use areas	7,396
<i>Recreation areas</i>	2,248
<i>Parklands and gardens</i>	1,844
<i>Recreation trails</i>	115
<i>Rifle and shooting ranges</i>	4
<i>Reservoir parks</i>	378
<i>Buildings in public use</i>	2,807
Services and utility areas	24,332
<i>Transport—Roads</i>	6,239
<i>Transport—Railway</i>	2,914
<i>Hospitals, public offices, justice</i>	847
<i>Cemeteries</i>	1,072
<i>Water and sewerage services</i>	11,940
<i>Various other services and utilities areas</i>	1,320
Uncategorised public land	1,313
Total extent of public land in the investigation area excluding estimated Crown road reserves	89,074
<i>Transport—Crown road reserves (estimated)</i>	73,000
Total extent of public land in the investigation area including estimated Crown road reserves	162,074
Total extent of investigation area (all freehold and public land)	562,740
Overlays (areas included in the totals above)	
Reference area (in various categories above)	2,070
Heritage river (in various categories above)	345

Notes:

1. Areas are rounded to the nearest hectare and are mostly derived from GIS analysis.
2. Only portions of a number of larger parks are within the investigation area (e.g. Dandenong Ranges National Park, Kurth Kiln Regional Park, Lerderderg State Park, Kinglake National Park).
3. The estimate of public land allocated to Services and Utilities areas - Transport (road) purposes is described in the table in two ways—firstly, an accurate description of public land parcels allocated to road use and secondly, the less accurate estimate of unparcellised Crown road reserves derived using GIS methods.
4. Three parks are listed as Other parks on Schedule Three of the *National Parks Act 1975*. Lysterfield Park and Woodlands Historic Park are categorised as regional parks, and Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve is categorised as a nature conservation reserve.
5. Changes in area since publication of the discussion paper are largely due to mapping corrections. Some additional areas of public land have been identified since publication of the discussion paper.

Table 7.2

Current public land ownership in the investigation area

PUBLIC LAND OWNER	AREA (ha)
Crown	57,588
Melbourne Water	18,009
VicRoads	5,454
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	2,363
VicTrack	2,323
Western Water	997
Port of Melbourne Corporation	494
South East Water	470
Southern Rural Water	249
Department of Business and Innovation	184
Department of Health: Hospitals	155
Department of Health: Cemeteries	41
Skills Victoria and other adult education services	153
Yarra Valley Water	151
Department of Planning and Community Development	142
Trust for Nature	112
Department of Human Services	60
City West Water	29
Department of Transport	26
Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board	25
Department of Treasury and Finance	21
Country Fire Authority	16
Ambulance Victoria	6
Department of Justice	6
Total extent of public land in the investigation area excluding estimated Crown road reserves	89,074
<i>Crown road reserves (estimated)</i>	<i>73,000</i>
Total extent of public land in the investigation area including estimated Crown road reserves	162,074

Notes:

1. Public land owner total areas include land owned by the Minister for the relevant portfolio and other bodies that are directly administered by the relevant department or Minister such as boards of TAFE.
2. Department of Human Services (Housing and Community Building) developments (with the exception of high-rise apartment buildings) are not shown because of privacy reasons. VicUrban land holdings are not shown because of the generally rapidly changing ownership of this land.
3. Areas of Crown land administered by the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) are included in the table as DTF land.
4. Note that the Department of Industry, Innovation and Regional Development is now shown as the Department of Business and Innovation. Skills Victoria has transferred to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) but has been retained in a separate ownership category reflecting that much of the land is in freehold title held by the council or board of the tertiary institute rather than the Secretary of DEECD. Major Projects Victoria land holdings are included under Department of Business and Innovation.
5. The areas have changed slightly since the publication of the discussion paper, reflecting acquisitions, disposals, new identification of public land and mapping corrections.

7.2 Public land use recommendations

Public land uses can be formalised through legislation, by existing Crown land reservation or by previous government accepted public land use recommendations. For some public land, there may be no legal or formal mechanism in place which identifies the accepted current or future use. Other public land may have obsolete historic reservations or very broad purposes (e.g. public purposes), or may no longer be required for its original purpose.

For this reason VEAC is providing general public land recommendations to confirm existing public land use across the investigation area. For those public land use categories where no change is recommended, and where areas are clearly formalised—namely national and state parks, marine national parks and marine sanctuaries, state forest—no general public land use recommendations are provided.

While a substantial number of Crown land areas in the outer parts of the investigation area are subject to government accepted Land Conservation Council (LCC) recommendations, VEAC's inventory of public land in the investigation area indicates that many of these have not yet been formally reserved for their approved purposes. For example, 27 conservation reserves recommended by the LCC and accepted by government remain as either wholly or partly unreserved Crown land or reserved for a purpose not necessarily consistent with the LCC recommendation (see appendix 2). Although these areas are managed in accordance with the accepted recommendations, it is unlikely that appropriate management regulations apply. As part of the implementation of accepted public land use recommendations, these uses should be formalised by the appropriate reservation of Crown land.

RECOMMENDATION

R24 Resourcing implementation of public land use recommendations

Government allocates resources:

- (a) to implement previously accepted LCC recommendations on Crown land through appropriate reservation
- (b) for areas not subject to accepted LCC recommendations, to formalise current public land use shown on map A of this report (except those areas recommended for a change in use below) through reservation of Crown land as provided for in each public land use general recommendation
- (c) to implement government accepted recommendations for changes to public land use in this report (A1 to E5).

In addition to recommendations confirming current public land use, this section includes recommendations for the following changes to land use to enhance the protection of natural values:

- Additions to Kinglake National Park (recommendation A1)
- Additions to Bunyip State Park (recommendation A2)
- Additions to and change of status for Point Cook Coastal Park (recommendation A3)
- New Bandicoot Corner Bushland Area (recommendation E1)
- New Edithvale Wetland Bushland Area (recommendation E2)
- Addition to existing Seaford Wetland Bushland Area (recommendation E3)
- New Beaumaris Cliffs Geological and Geomorphological Features Area (recommendation E4)
- New Yallock Creek Streamside Area (recommendation E5)

Section 7.4 contains recommendations relating to the continued ownership and management of Melbourne Water's wetlands with high biodiversity values, namely:

- Ryans Swamp and surrounds (recommendation N1),
- Truganina Swamp (recommendation N2)
- Edithvale–Seaford Wetlands (recommendation N3).

Several submissions proposed additional sites be added to national or state parks. These largely focused on the vegetated public land in the area near Cockatoo and Gembrook encompassing Kurth Kiln Regional Park and various stream frontages. Another proposal was to add a section of Yarra Valley Parklands upstream of Fitzsimons Lane, Templestowe to Warrandyte State Park. There were also proposals for changes to the land use categories of a number of areas to improve protection of their natural values. VEAC is making recommendations in relation to two of the smaller areas at Yallock Creek and Beaumaris Cliffs.

In most investigations VEAC publishes a draft proposals paper between the discussion paper and the final report. This provides an opportunity for public consultation on proposed land use changes. For this investigation, the Council did not consider making recommendations on the majority of the additional proposals put forward in submissions and at community meetings because there was no opportunity to test community views in a draft proposals paper after release of the discussion paper. VEAC considers that the process for future investigations should include the publication of draft proposals papers for public comment.

The remainder of this section contains brief descriptions of each public land use category, followed by the general recommendation for the relevant category where appropriate, and any recommendations for changes to land use.

7.2.1 NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS

Victoria's national and state parks comprise the vast majority of the state's protected area system (see chapter 8 of the discussion paper). Set aside primarily to conserve and protect natural ecosystems under provisions of the *National Parks Act 1975*, they also provide for public enjoyment, education and inspiration in natural environments. Many are well recognised and popular tourism areas, often with spectacular landscapes.

National and state parks currently comprise approximately 25,000 hectares or about 28 percent of public land in the investigation area (see appendix 2). Kinglake National Park (approximately 10,095 hectares) and Bunyip State

Park (approximately 13,075 hectares) make up most of this area. Many of these parks are located on Melbourne's outer fringe and extend beyond the investigation area boundary (e.g. Dandenong Ranges National Park, Kinglake National Park, Lerderderg State Park).

VEAC is recommending that approximately 2,650 hectares be added to existing national and state parks to move towards towards nationally agreed targets for a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) reserve system, to consolidate management and to strengthen protection of linkages along vegetated corridors. Other VEAC recommendations will result in a further 1,000 hectares being added to the protected area system, largely through the proposed change of status of Point Cook Coastal Park (see section 7.2.3).

Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) are used as surrogates for ecosystems in assessment of proposed reservation against the nationally agreed criteria for establishing the CAR reserve system. The extent of EVCs in the recommended additions to parks and other conservation reserves is described in appendix 3.

Recommendations for national and state parks are additions to existing parks only and therefore general recommendations for these land use categories are not required.

Kinglake National Park additions

Kinglake National Park comprises a substantial area of vegetated forest on the southern fall of the Great Dividing Range. VEAC is recommending that the Yan Yean Reservoir and surrounds, Sherwin Ranges southern and northern buffers be added to the national park, along with other minor areas of contiguous unused government roads identified since the publication of the discussion paper (see figure 7.1).

The recommended additions substantially increase representation in protected areas of EVCs along the boundary between the Victorian Volcanic Plain and Highlands–Southern Fall bioregions (see appendix 3), including the plains grassy woodland EVC, considered endangered in both bioregions.

The Yan Yean Reservoir and surrounds are located on 2,590 hectares of Crown land and Melbourne Water freehold land near Yan Yean in Melbourne's north-east. The adjoining Sherwin Ranges southern buffer makes up 81 hectares of this area. VEAC is not recommending that the Yan Yean Reservoir Park and water treatment infrastructure be added to the national park.

The Yan Yean Reservoir supplies water to parts of Melbourne. The reservoir and surrounds are a 'closed catchment' and public access is restricted. Current controls on access should continue to protect water quality. The catchment area also contains two reference areas where recreational activities and access (except for authorised scientific research) are not permitted. Threatened flora and fauna have been recorded within the reservoir surrounds.

DSE and Melbourne Water should establish a management agreement for the water supply catchment within the national park to ensure that the land is managed to maintain water quality and protect water resources, as well as conserving biodiversity values.

Sherwin Ranges northern buffer (136 hectares) is a long, narrow site adjoining Kinglake National Park. The inclusion of this area in Kinglake National Park will provide an opportunity to protect an area of high natural values and consolidate public land management.

Some unused and unlicensed government roads are possible further additions to Kinglake National Park. One provides an east-west link between the existing national park and the recommended Yan Yean reservoir area addition. Another abuts the existing area of national park. These areas may have limited natural values on their own but their addition to the park would consolidate management and link areas.

The additions recommended in the discussion paper were largely supported in submissions. Some commented on management issues including the importance of retaining the closed catchment, fire management and the shared management arrangements. DSE noted that some road reserves need to be surveyed and declared, such as Coombs, Ridge and Gingles Roads and private access driveways across the northern Sherwin Ranges buffer area. It was also suggested that the reservoir park be included in the proposed national park addition.

VEAC considers that access to private land and roads survey can be undertaken during implementation of the accepted recommendations. Detailed survey of the new park additions would exclude existing roads and tracks required for access. The Yan Yean Reservoir Park has not been included in the national park to allow for greater flexibility for management of current and potential future recreational uses.

RECOMMENDATION

A1 Additions to Kinglake National Park

- (a) The area of approximately 2,590 hectares, shown hatched on figure 7.1, be added to Kinglake National Park under the *National Parks Act 1975*; and
- (b) a management agreement be established under section 32I of the *National Parks Act 1975* for the area shown on figure 7.1 as Yan Yean Reservoir and surrounds; and
- (c) Melbourne Water continues to manage all infrastructure associated with the Yan Yean Reservoir and water treatment facilities.

Note:

1. Implementation of accepted recommendations should allow flexibility for minor boundary adjustments. Ridge, Gingles and Coombs Roads as well as various other roads including private access roads need to be surveyed, declared and excluded from the national park. VEAC notes the presence of encroachments which should be resolved when legislating the park additions.

Public land use

- National park and state park
- Natural features reserve
 - Stream frontages (including beds and banks)
 - Natural and scenic features area, bushland area, streamside area
- Water production area
- Community use area
 - Parkland and garden
 - Recreation area
 - Building in public use
 - Reservoir park
- Services and utilities area
 - Road, railway
 - Cemeteries
 - Water and sewerage services
- Uncategorised public land

Recommended change in public land use

- Land outside investigation area
- Major road
- Major stream
- Investigation area boundary

Map Labels: Kinglake National Park, Sherwin Ranges northern buffer, Sherwin Ranges southern buffer, Yan Yean Reservoir and surrounds, Yan Yean Reservoir, Yan Yean Reservoir Park, Whittlesea, Coombs Road, Ridge Road, Whittlesea-Yea Road, Yellow Creek, Joeys Creek, Toorourrong Reservoir, Brucers Creek, Ontles Bridge, Spathelemine Road.

Locality map: Shows the location of the study area within Victoria, with labels for Whittlesea, Warrandyte, Melbourne, Werribee, Frankston, Dandenong, and a north arrow and scale bar (0 to 3 km).

Bunyip State Park additions

Bunyip State Park is a substantial area located in the east of the investigation area. Around 53 hectares were recommended as additions to the state park in section 10.2 of the discussion paper, comprising unused government road and unreserved Crown land near Tonimbuk. These areas are described below and shown on figure 7.2.

Most of the recommended addition to the park is made up of approximately 50 hectares of unreserved Crown land near Tonimbuk. This area contains EVCs such as damp heathy woodland and lowland forest. This addition will help to secure protection of the habitat of the helmeted honeyeater *Lichenostomus melanops cassidix*, and consolidate public land management.

Two areas of unused government road abutting Bunyip State Park are recommended for inclusion in the park to consolidate management. One near Tonimbuk was identified in the discussion paper. An additional abutting unused and unlicensed government road located near Gembrook is also a recommended park addition. Both of these areas contain remnant native vegetation.

VEAC is also recommending that 5.2 hectares of Diamond Creek stream frontage that has been identified since publication of the discussion paper be added to the park. This area is well vegetated and there are no grazing licences on this site. The frontage contains remnant native vegetation and the threatened river blackfish *Gadopsis marmoratus* has been recorded in this section of Diamond Creek. The site provides additional habitat for the critically endangered helmeted honeyeater. The surrounding area supports other threatened fauna species such as sooty owl *Tyto tenebricosa*.

The relatively small areas recommended in the discussion paper for addition to Bunyip State Park were generally supported in community consultation. Some submissions proposed that this park and other nearby areas such as Kurth Kiln Regional Park and Yarra State Forest be made into a new large-scale conservation area or national park. Some submissions proposed that grazing under existing licences should not be permitted.

Expansion of the area under the National Parks Act to incorporate all or parts of Kurth Kiln Regional Park and other nearby areas with biodiversity values was not further considered by Council as there is no opportunity for community consultation and, in any case, much of these proposed additions are outside the current investigation area.

Annual grazing licences are currently issued on two of the Crown allotments. VEAC considers that these two licences could continue to be issued to the current licensees, unless voluntarily surrendered. They should not, however, be issued or transferred to new licensees.

RECOMMENDATION

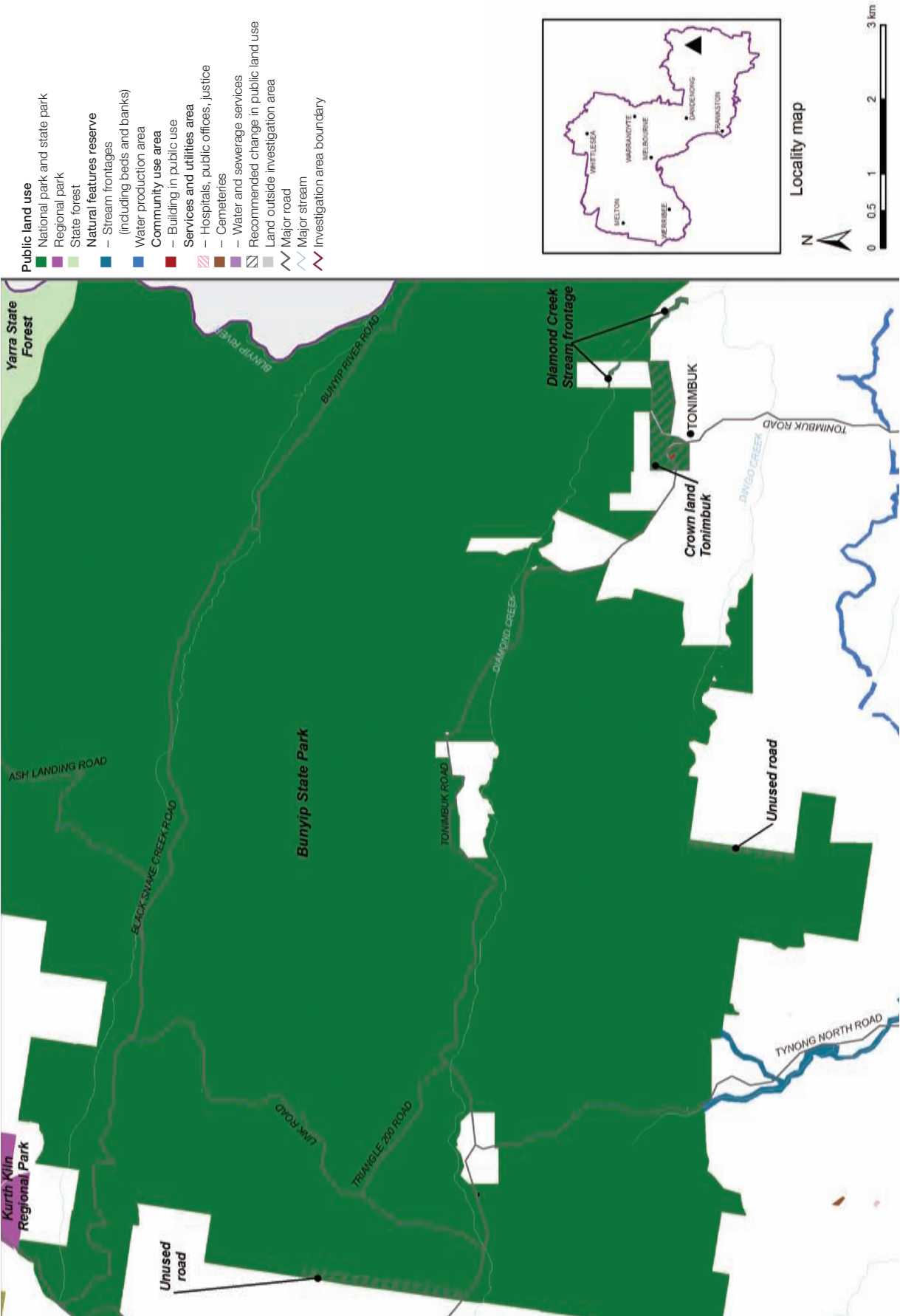
A2 Additions to Bunyip State Park

- (a) The area of approximately 62 hectares, shown hatched in figure 7.2, be added to Bunyip State Park under the *National Parks Act 1975*; and
- (b) grazing licences may be reissued to the current licensees only.

Note:

1. Implementation of accepted recommendations should allow flexibility for minor boundary adjustments.

Figure 7.2
Recommendation A2:
Additions to Bunyip State Park



7.2.2 MARINE NATIONAL PARKS AND SANCTUARIES

Parts of Yaringa Marine National Park (90 hectares of 980 hectares total) in Western Port and Jawbone Marine Sanctuary (4 hectares of 30 hectares) near Williamstown are included in the investigation area. Yaringa Marine National Park is an important portion of the Western Port Ramsar wetland, and one of the least disturbed intertidal mudflats in the region. Jawbone Marine Sanctuary contains one of the largest remnant mangrove communities in Port Phillip Bay.

No general recommendations are provided for the existing marine national parks and marine sanctuaries as no changes are recommended to these areas.

7.2.3 OTHER PARKS

Several areas across Victoria are set aside under Schedule Three of the National Parks Act as 'other parks' for a variety of purposes. Where established primarily for protection of natural or biodiversity values, these parks are considered to be part of the protected area system.

VEAC has categorised Lysterfield (Lake) Park and Woodlands Historic Park as regional parks and the Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve as a nature conservation reserve based on their current land uses and values. VEAC is recommending that a new area, Point Cook Coastal Park, be added to 'other parks' on Schedule Three of the National Parks Act.

Point Cook Coastal Park

The existing Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands, Truganina Wetland Coastal Park and the adjoining section of the Altona Foreshore Reserve make up approximately 960 hectares of Crown land near Point Cook. This area abuts the coastline and Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary. VEAC is recommending that this area be one coastal park (see figure 7.3) under Schedule Three of the National Parks Act. After considering submission comments (see below), VEAC is also recommending that a further 10 hectares of unreserved Crown land, and unused and unlicensed government road be included in the new park.

The proposed park contains a range of threatened EVCs such as coastal saltmarsh, plains grassland, aquatic herbland and coastal alkaline scrub. It provides habitat for endangered flora and supports numerous shorebirds and migratory birds. More than 200 bird species have been recorded. Cheetham Wetlands provides a wintering site for the critically endangered orange-bellied parrot *Neophema*

chrysogaster. It also provides habitat for the endangered striped legless lizard *Delma impar* and vulnerable yellow sedge-skipper butterfly *Hesperilla flavescens flavescens* (commonly known as Altona skipper butterfly). This area is partly within the Port Phillip Bay (western shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site.

The Council considers that including this park on Schedule Three of the National Parks Act will acknowledge and protect the important natural values for future generations, while not impacting on current recreational and community uses of these areas.

Submission comments supported the creation of Point Cook Coastal Park under Schedule Three of the National Parks Act. Some adjoining Crown land areas were proposed as further additions to the park. The largest area contains chaffy saw-sedge *Gahnia filum*, a vital food source for the larvae of the yellow sedge-skipper (or Altona skipper) butterfly. This species has been recorded at the nearby Truganina Swamp.

It is proposed that domestic stock grazing be permitted in the existing cleared areas near the homestead to retain historic values.

VEAC recognises that while dog walking is generally incompatible with some biodiversity values, it is important to provide linkages for recreation trails. Dog walking is currently permitted on a section of the Bay Trail adjoining Cheetham wetlands but is screened to reduce disturbance to birds.

RECOMMENDATION

A3 Point Cook Coastal Park

The area of approximately 961 hectares, shown hatched in figure 7.3:

(a) be used to:

- (i) conserve, protect and re-establish indigenous flora, fauna and natural ecosystems
- (ii) preserve and protect features in the park of archaeological, historical, ecological, scenic, geological or other scientific interest
- (iii) provide opportunities for recreation and education associated with the enjoyment and understanding of natural environments and cultural heritage where consistent with (i) and (ii) above;

(b) specifically protect the following features and values:

- (i) the diverse indigenous flora and fauna associated with the threatened grasslands, saltmarsh and wetlands; and migratory and wader bird species
- (ii) saltmarsh and lagoons comprising Truganina wetlands and Cheetham wetlands between Laverton Creek and Point Cooke (see note 1)
- (iii) indigenous fauna associated with the beach and intertidal environments of the adjoining Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary;

(c) generally permit the following activities:

- (i) bushwalking, nature observation, cultural heritage appreciation, picnicking, recreational fishing
- (ii) bicycle riding on formed roads and tracks
- (iii) research, subject to permit
- (iv) cultural heritage activities in the vicinity of the homestead;

(d) exclude the following activities:

- (i) harvesting of forest products, including firewood collection
- (ii) grazing by domestic stock (see note 2)
- (iii) hunting and use of firearms
- (iv) dog walking except on leash on specified trails
- (iv) off-road motorcycling
- (v) burning solid fuel fires (see note 3);

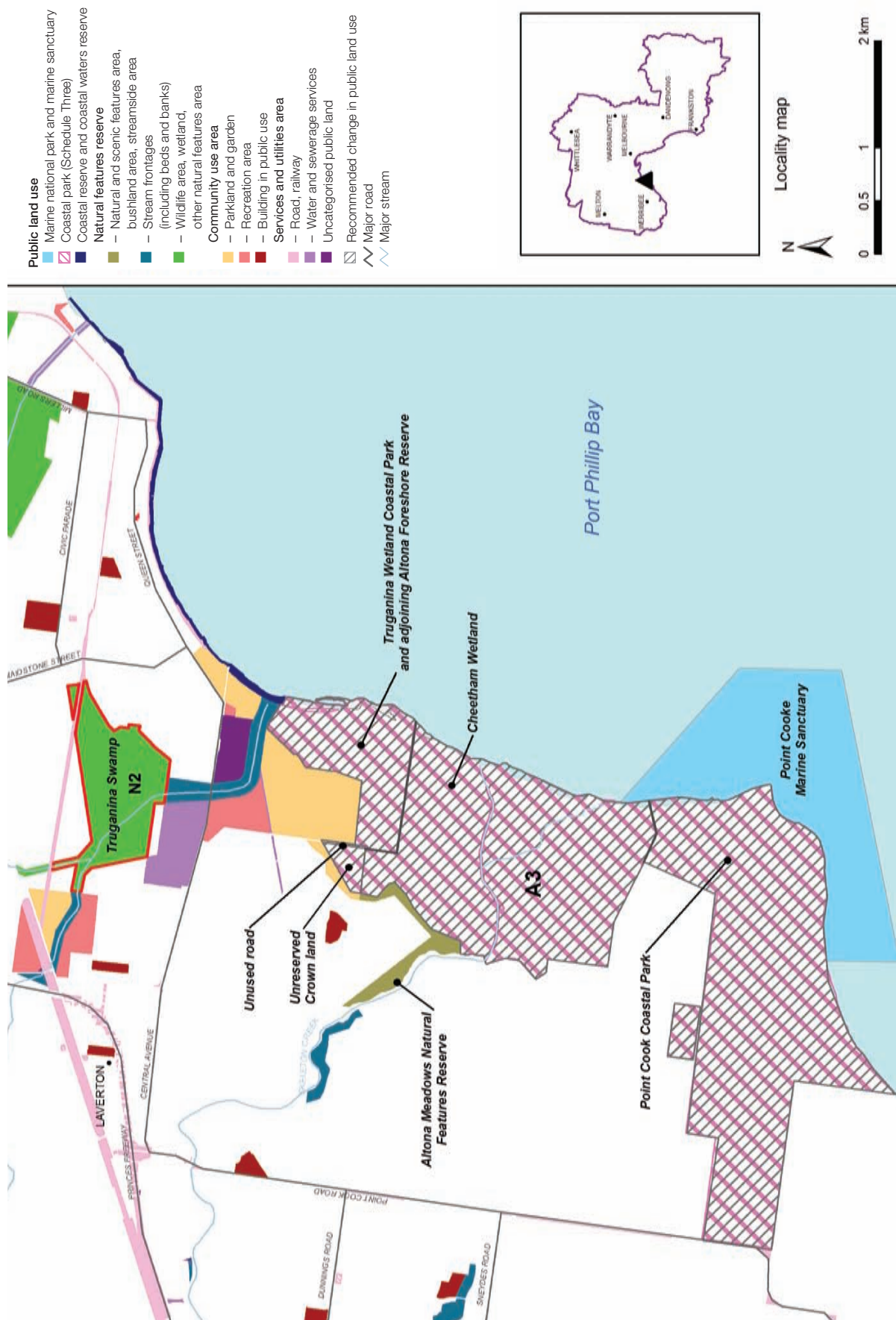
(e) include adjoining unused road reserves, where appropriate; and

(f) be established under Schedule Three of the *National Parks Act 1975*.

Notes:

1. 'Point Cooke' was named after First Mate John M Cooke. The geographic features of the point, marine reserve and subsequent marine sanctuary retain this original spelling. 'Point Cook' is used for the coastal park and township.
2. Grazing may be permitted as part of the maintenance of historic values in the area surrounding the homestead, and for ecological values, where it does not conflict with biodiversity values.
3. Fire may be utilised as a land management tool where compatible with ecological values.

Figure 7.3
Recommendation A3: Point Cook Coastal Park
Recommendation N2: Truganina Swamp



7.2.4 NATURE CONSERVATION RESERVES AND TRUST FOR NATURE PROTECTED AREAS

Nature conservation reserves are on Crown land set aside to conserve rare or threatened species and/or plant communities that have conservation significance or provide valuable habitat. The primary land use is nature conservation, with compatible educational and scientific study and some non-organised recreation depending upon the values of each particular reserve. There are 41 nature conservation reserves in the investigation area comprising some 3,567 hectares (see appendix 2).

VEAC considers that Trust for Nature conservation land held for long-term conservation purposes is part of the protected area system. Trust for Nature owned protected areas are generally managed in a manner consistent with nature conservation reserves, although public access may be more restricted. A total of 112 hectares of Trust for Nature owned public land at six sites meet the criteria for the protected area system.

Several submissions considered that horse riding should be permitted in nature conservation reserves. Some others considered that domestic stock grazing, apiculture, and minerals exploration and extraction should be excluded in these conservation areas. Management planning was considered an important tool for community engagement, planning or communicating recreational uses, and documenting natural values of these sites. Horse riding is not permitted on Trust for Nature land or in nature conservation reserves.

RECOMMENDATION

B General recommendations for nature conservation reserves and Trust for Nature protected areas

Nature conservation reserves and Trust for Nature protected areas, as shown on map A and listed in appendix 2, according to their specific values:

(a) be used to:

- (i) conserve and protect species, communities or habitats of indigenous flora and fauna
- (ii) provide for educational and scientific study, where consistent with (i) above
- (iii) provide for recreation by small numbers of people, where consistent with (i) above
- (iv) identify and protect cultural heritage values, where consistent with (i) above;

(b) generally permit the following activities, where compatible with (a):

- (i) bushwalking, nature observation, heritage appreciation, picnicking
- (ii) car touring, including four wheel driving, on formed roads and tracks
- (iii) for Crown land, apiculture on existing licensed sites, subject to the outcome of scientific research into the ecological impacts of this industry, and management requirements
- (iv) for Crown land, 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;

(c) exclude the following activities:

- (i) grazing of domestic stock (see note 2)
- (ii) harvesting of forest products
- (iii) hunting and use of firearms (see note 3)
- (iv) solid fuel fires at any time of year (see note 4)
- (iv) dog walking (see note 5)
- (v) horse riding;
- (d) include adjoining unused road reserves, where appropriate;
- (e) be permanently reserved, if Crown land is not already appropriately reserved for conservation purposes, under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* (see note 5); or
- (f) continue to be managed in accordance with the above, for Trust for Nature land, and:
 - (i) should these areas no longer be required by Trust For Nature, that the areas be transferred to the Crown, and
 - (ii) be permanently reserved for conservation purposes under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

Notes:

1. The above management objectives and 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. Grazing may be contracted for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control.
3. Hunting and the use of firearms may be authorised as part of a pest animal control program.
4. Fire may be utilised as a land management tool where compatible with ecological values.
5. On-lead dog walking may continue on a small area of The Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve as part of a link to a walking trail, and in accordance with management planning.
6. Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve is to remain on Schedule Three of the *National Parks Act 1975*.
7. Recreational access to Trust for Nature reserves is at the discretion of the land owner.

7.2.5 REGIONAL PARKS

Regional parks provide for informal recreation for large numbers of people in natural or semi-natural surroundings. Minor resource use may be permitted in some regional parks. Recreational objectives are generally given priority over nature conservation objectives in regional parks. More intensively developed recreation areas on public land, such as sportsgrounds, are generally categorised as community use areas and are described later in this chapter.

These large parks are generally outside of, but readily accessible from urban areas or major tourist routes. Regional parks vary in their specific values and characteristics, but typically they provide an environment where residents and visitors can enjoy a broader range of activities such as dog walking than are usually allowed in national, state and wilderness parks. There are four regional parks wholly or partly in the Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation area: Kurth Kiln Regional Park, Lysterfield Park, Woodlands Historic Park and Plenty Gorge Parklands.

RECOMMENDATION

C General recommendations for regional parks

Regional parks as shown on map A:

(a) be used to:

- (i) provide for informal recreation for large numbers of people associated with enjoyment of natural or semi-natural surroundings
- (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, landscapes and places, including Aboriginal cultural sites and places;

(b) generally provide for the following activities, according to the specific characteristics of each park:

- (i) bushwalking, nature observation, heritage appreciation, picnicking, recreational fishing, cycling
- (ii) camping
- (iii) dog walking (see note 1)
- (iv) car touring and four wheel driving on formed roads and tracks
- (v) mountain bike and trailbike riding on formed roads and tracks
- (vi) horse riding on formed roads and tracks and overnight camping with horses
- (vii) metal detecting, prospecting, and
- (viii) research, subject to permit;

(c) generally exclude the following activities:

- (i) harvesting of forest products (see note 2)
- (ii) grazing by domestic stock (see note 3)
- (iii) hunting and use of firearms (see note 4), and
- (iv) licensed apiculture (see note 5);

(d) where appropriate, be restored (subject to clearly defined, transparent and scientifically supported ecological objectives) to re-establish ecosystems or to return them to a state more closely resembling their natural condition (see notes 2 and 3);

(e) include unused road reserves adjoining parks, where appropriate;

(f) have a management plan prepared for each park in partnership with key user groups, local authorities and the community; and

(g) be permanently reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* for the purpose of regional park if not already appropriately reserved (see notes 6 and 7).

Notes:

1. Dog walking is permitted on leash in some parks. It is not permitted in Lysterfield Park.
2. Ecological thinning may be permitted where required for ecological management purposes.
3. Grazing may be contracted for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control, and to preserve cultural or historic agricultural landscape values.
4. Hunting and use of firearms may be authorised as part of a pest animal control program.
5. Existing licensed apiculture sites can continue.
6. Implementation of accepted recommendations should allow flexibility for minor boundary adjustments.
7. Lysterfield Park and Woodlands Historic Park are to remain on Schedule 3 of the *National Parks Act 1975*.

7.2.6 METROPOLITAN PARKS

Metropolitan parks were described in chapter 4 of the discussion paper as regional parks in an urban setting. Since then VEAC has further considered the categorisation of metropolitan parks and has decided that they are more usefully treated as a separate land use category, in acknowledgement of the different range of activities in these parks and the generally more modified environment.

While the majority of community comments on regional and metropolitan parks and general land use recommendation C in the discussion paper supported it, many people commented that metropolitan parks have different recreational and economic uses to regional parks outside urban areas. For example, they considered that domestic stock grazing, apiculture and exploration for mining/ extractive industries should not be permitted in metropolitan parks. They also commented that, although activities such as camping, trail-bike riding, horse riding and four wheel driving are generally permitted in larger regional parks they are generally not permitted in metropolitan parks. Some submissions also considered that the protection of remnant native vegetation within regional parks should be promoted above recreational uses. Some corrections were also proposed to the mapping of metropolitan parks.

In recognition of the different character of metropolitan parks compared to regional parks, the range of recreational uses has been amended to provide for some more organised and intensive activities in metropolitan parks. Some resource uses or recreational activities are simply absent or not relevant in an urban setting; for example, camping, four wheel driving, apiculture. Referring to these uses and activities was therefore confusing to the community during consultation on the discussion paper, and Council has decided that specifying these activities as 'excluded' is not necessary.

Metropolitan parks, like regional parks, provide open space for recreation in natural or semi-natural environments; however metropolitan parks may also include areas of highly modified open space. Their landscapes range from areas of bushland to revegetated areas, landscaped areas similar to parklands and gardens, sports ovals and former farmland – potentially within one park. Others contain historic buildings. They provide for a different and often more diverse range of recreational uses. They are usually subject to intensive management planning, often in association with neighbouring local council owned open space and recreation reserves and facilities. Appendix 5 lists regional parks and metropolitan parks in the investigation area.

While some metropolitan parks accommodate sports grounds (e.g. Yarra Bend Park and Police Paddocks Reserve), VEAC has categorised and mapped sportsgrounds that have a clearly defined and limited use (e.g. golf courses) as community use area–recreation area.

Other existing metropolitan parks—Altona Coastal Park, Point Cook Coastal Park and Truganina Wetlands Coastal Park—have a coastal setting. These coastal parks are not currently considered to be protected areas as are some other coastal parks (e.g. Discovery Bay, Cape Liptrap and Cape Conran coastal parks). Note that VEAC is recommending that Point Cook Coastal Park and adjoining areas, including the Truganina Wetlands Coastal Park, be established as a new park under the National Parks Act (see recommendation A3) and be considered part of the protected area system.

RECOMMENDATION

D General recommendations for metropolitan parks

Metropolitan parks as shown on map A and listed in appendix 5:

- (a) be used to:
 - (i) provide for informal recreation for large numbers of people associated with enjoyment of natural or semi-natural surroundings or open space
 - (ii) conserve and protect natural landscapes and scenic values and open space
 - (iii) provide for organised recreation to the extent that is consistent with (i) and (ii) above and according to the specific characteristics of each park
 - (iv) conserve and protect biodiversity to the extent that is consistent with (i) above; and
 - (v) protect significant cultural and historic sites, landscapes and places, including Aboriginal cultural sites and places;
- (b) include unused road reserves adjoining parks, where appropriate;
- (c) have a management plan prepared for each park in partnership with key user groups, local authorities and the community; and
- (d) be permanently reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* for the purpose of metropolitan park if not already appropriately reserved (see note 2).

Notes:

1. Implementation of accepted recommendations should allow flexibility for minor boundary adjustments.
2. This recommendation requires that the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* be amended to create a new provision and schedule for metropolitan parks similar to that of existing section 47B.

7.2.7 STATE FORESTS

Across Victoria, state forests are a major source of timber products on public land, as well as supporting biodiversity and providing for a broad range of recreational activities. These forests are also used for a variety of other purposes such as earth resource extraction, stock grazing and apiculture. State forests in the investigation area are not currently a major source of timbers or firewood, but have been so in the past.

Two forest blocks of the extensive Yarra State Forest are included in the investigation area: the Mt Disappointment Block (1,605 hectares) and the Upper Bunyip Block (around 2,425 hectares). Detail of these areas is provided in chapter 4 of the discussion paper. Timber harvesting and domestic firewood collection will continue to be permitted in Yarra State Forest where designated by DSE.

Several submissions proposed that either one or both of the Yarra State Forest blocks be added to the adjoining national or state park to protect biodiversity values or water catchments. Some submissions listed in detail the natural values recorded in these areas.

State forests provide for intensive recreational and minor resource use, and it is important to retain areas for such uses in close proximity to Melbourne. State forests can reduce pressure on other areas of parks and conservation reserves. These areas are also potentially available for timber harvesting, subject to considerations such as water quality and biodiversity value protection in the Upper Bunyip Block, and post-fire recovery in the Mt Disappointment Block.

No general recommendations are provided for the existing state forest as no changes are recommended for these areas.

7.2.8 NATURAL FEATURES RESERVES

Natural features reserves are areas with a variety of natural values worthy of protection, including scenic areas, bushland areas, lakes, rivers and streams, and geological and geomorphological features areas. This public land use category includes areas of public authority freehold land, particularly along stream frontages and wetlands.

Bushland, scenic and natural features, geological and geomorphological features areas and streamside areas are considered to be protected areas (see appendix 2). Other natural features reserves such as wildlife areas, stream frontages, wetlands and lakes may have permitted uses that are generally incompatible with nature conservation

objectives including grazing, timber harvesting and duck hunting, and may be more intensively used for recreation.

Many of these reserves are relatively small areas of vegetated public land or linear strips along waterways. Some form important habitat links or corridors across the now fragmented landscape. Streamside areas and stream frontages are particularly important for the movement of plants and animals. These areas will be of increasing importance during changing climatic conditions (see section 3.3 and 4.2).

Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands and the Point Cook to Little River coastal wetlands have also been recognised as wetlands of international importance and listed under the Ramsar Convention. The northern coastal area of Western Port is part of the Western Port Ramsar site.

Degradation of streams and wetlands is an important land management issue across the investigation area. Several submissions commented on the importance of natural values and linkages along stream frontages. The improved management of waterways was also an issue with proposals to exclude stock grazing from all waterways, not just streamside area reserves.

Relatively few specific comments were received on the small areas of Crown land proposed as natural features reserves within the Edithvale and Seaford wetlands. Comments received supported the proposal, though few submissions mentioned the Crown land part of the site in isolation from the remaining freehold Melbourne Water land. Public land at Centre Swamp was also proposed as an area for similar conservation measures as it is also part of the former Carrum Carrum Swamp. Other areas identified in submissions with very high natural values, and proposed as new conservation reserves, include the Beaumaris cliffs and Yallock Creek. The first site is recognised as a site of international geological significance and the Yallock Creek area contains threatened EVCs and threatened species in a substantially cleared landscape. VEAC has recommended these areas in part as new natural features reserves (see recommendations E4 and E5).

The importance of waterways across Melbourne for biodiversity and recreational linkages has long been recognised. These values should be retained in the long term. While the areas may not be primarily reserved for nature conservation, they nonetheless retain natural values and make an important contribution to the biodiversity of Melbourne. These areas can be the most biodiverse, biologically productive and ecologically resilient parts of the landscape. Domestic stock grazing on water frontages has had an impact on biodiversity, water quality

and soil condition in some parts of the investigation area. Catchment management authorities, Melbourne Water and some adjoining land owners have undertaken restoration of riparian land through fencing and instillation of stock watering points. Restoration of riparian areas is an important way of enhancing landscape connectivity and building ecosystem resilience. Enhancing and retaining connectivity is a key conservation strategy in the face of climate change (see section 3.3).

Where possible, prevention of loss of natural values is a better and more cost-effective conservation management approach than restoration or rehabilitation. In a broad sense there should be no overall loss of natural values in natural features reserves. Application of the management objectives of the general recommendations for natural features reserves should ensure that natural values are protected while allowing for a broad range of complementary uses.

RECOMMENDATION

E General recommendations for natural features reserves

The natural features reserves as shown on map A, 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 indigenous flora and fauna
- (iii) protect water quality where appropriate
- (iv) protect historic and Aboriginal cultural heritage features, values and sites
- (v) provide opportunities for education and recreation, including hunting where specified (see note 2), at levels consistent with (i) to (iv) above
- (vi) maintain scenic features and the character and quality of the local landscapes
- (vii) preserve features of geological or geomorphological interest;

(b) generally permit the following activities:

- (i) exploration for minerals be permitted, and mining, subject to decisions on particular cases
- (ii) prospecting and apiculture;

(c) exclude the following activities:

- (i) timber harvesting
- (ii) domestic stock grazing in bushland, scenic, geological and geomorphological features and streamside areas (see note 1);

(d) include unused road reserves in adjoining natural features reserves where appropriate ecological or recreational values are identified;

and

(e) be permanently reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* if not already appropriately reserved; or

(f) be managed in accordance with the above if public authority owned land.

Notes:

1. Grazing may be contracted for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control.
2. Existing wildlife areas to continue to be used in accordance with the natural features reserve general recommendations, and for public recreation (including hunting in season as specified by the land manager) and education, where this does not conflict with the primary management objective.

Bandicoot Corner Bushland Area

This 8 hectare site of unreserved Crown land is known locally as Bandicoot Corner because of the presence of the nationally vulnerable southern brown bandicoot *Isodon obesulus obesulus*. It adjoins an undeveloped recreation reserve (figure 7.4). This area contains threatened riparian woodland and swamp scrub vegetation communities of the former Koo-wee-rup Swamp. The endangered growling grass frog *Litoria raniformis* has been recorded in nearby Yallock Creek.

The Cardinia Environment Coalition currently manages approximately 2.5 hectares of the recommended area. About 5.5 hectares comprising the eastern part of the recommended bushland area is largely cleared. Revegetation of this area is likely to provide habitat for southern brown bandicoot over time.

The Bandicoot Corner Bushland Area draft recommendation was supported in submissions, with some suggestions that resourcing would be an issue for the revegetation of the cleared area. Information on an existing track across part of the site and the drainage line (Yallock No 4 drain) was provided. The need to exclude these areas from the bushland area is addressed (see recommendation E1).

RECOMMENDATION

E1 Bandicoot Corner Bushland Area

- (a) The area of approximately 8 hectares, shown hatched in figure 7.4, be permanently reserved as a natural features reserve — bushland area and used in accordance with the natural features reserves general recommendations E
- (b) Melbourne Water continue to manage the adjoining Yallock Creek drain for its biodiversity values.

Notes:

1. Should the abutting undeveloped Crown land reserved for public recreation not be required as a sportsground, this area should be added to the bushland area and revegetated.
2. The cleared area is to be revegetated over time to provide additional habitat for southern brown bandicoot.
3. Implementation should provide for survey and establishment of Number Four Drain Road East road reserve.

Public land use

- Natural features reserve
 - Natural and scenic features area, bushland area, streamside area
 - Stream frontages (including beds and banks)
- Community use area
 - Recreation area
 - Building in public use
- Services and utilities area
 - Road, railway
 - Hospitals, public offices, justice
 - Water and sewerage services
 - Other services and utilities area
- Uncategorised public land

Recommended change in public land use

- Major road
- Major stream

Locality map

0 0.25 0.5 1 km

Edithvale–Seaford Wetlands Bushland Areas

The Edithvale and Seaford Wetlands are two freshwater wetlands located in Melbourne's south-east (figures 7.5 and 7.6). The recommendations presented here apply to 5 hectares of Crown land at Edithvale Wetlands (E2) and 5 hectares of Crown land at Seaford Wetlands (E3). Recommendation N3 applies to Melbourne Water freehold land at both sites (see section 7.4).

The Edithvale–Seaford Wetlands are recognised for their high waterbird diversity and numbers and for supporting threatened species under the Ramsar convention. While these wetlands contain limited remnant vegetation, shallow freshwater marshes and reed beds continue to provide important habitat with over 190 bird species recorded including 25 migratory bird species. These sites support populations of endangered Australasian bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus* and more than one percent of the East Asian–Australian flyway population of the migratory sharp-tailed sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*.

The two wetlands, along with Melbourne Water freehold land at Centre Swamp in Chelsea, are the last remains of the drained Carrum Carrum Swamp. Recommendations E2 and E3 for Crown land and N3 for Melbourne Water freehold land apply to the area within the Ramsar wetland boundary. They do not apply to Centre Swamp at Chelsea or the existing Seaford Wetlands Reserve (21 hectares) on reserved Crown land (see figure 7.6).

Relatively few comments were received specifically on the small areas of Crown land proposed as natural features reserves within the Edithvale and Seaford wetlands. Those comments received supported the proposal, though few submissions mentioned the Crown land part of the site in isolation from the remaining freehold Melbourne Water land. Public land at Centre Swamp was also proposed as an area for similar conservation measures as it is also part of the former Carrum Carrum Swamp. City of Frankston-owned land (not considered public land under the VEAC Act) makes up the remainder of the Seaford Wetland.

RECOMMENDATIONS

E2 Edithvale Wetland Bushland Area

That the area of approximately 5 hectares of Crown land, shown hatched on figure 7.5 be used in accordance with natural features reserves general recommendations E.

E3 Addition to Seaford Wetland Bushland Area

That the area of approximately 5 hectares of Crown land at Seaford Wetland, shown hatched on figure 7.6 be added to the existing natural features reserve-bushland area (Seaford Wetland Reserve) and used in accordance with natural features reserves general recommendations E.

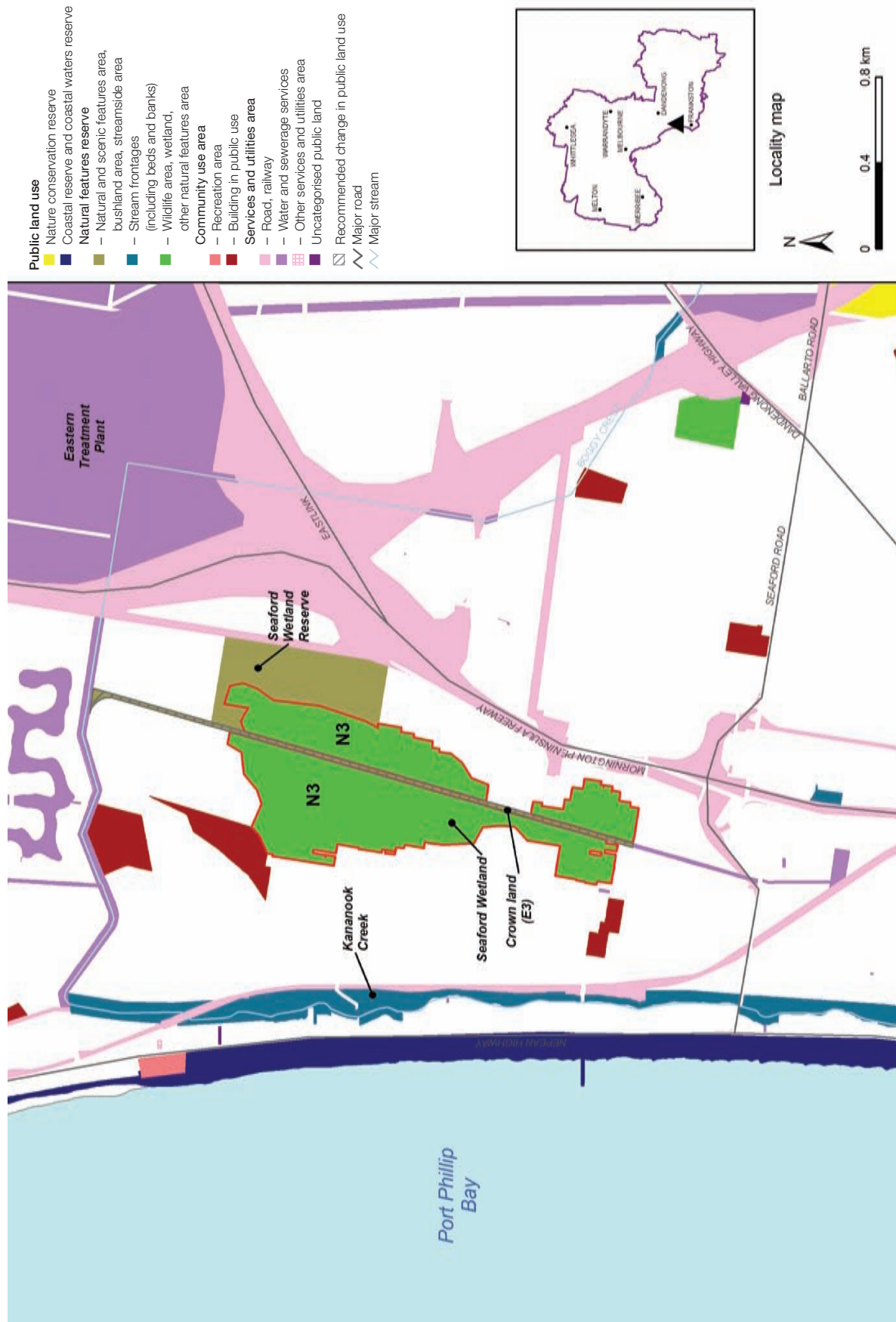
Figure 7.5

Recommendation E2: Edithvale Wetland Bushland Area

Recommendation N3: Edithvale Wetland



Figure 7.6
Recommendation E3: Addition to Seaford Wetland Bushland Area
Recommendation N3: Seaford Wetland



Beaumaris Cliffs Geological and Geomorphological Features Area

Natural features areas containing sites of geological interest or significance may be reserved primarily to protect these features for future education, research and public enjoyment. These places may also have other natural or recreational values including nature conservation, scenic or landscape values.

Beaumaris cliffs is recognised as a site of international geological significance^{68,69} and listed on the Register of the National Estate. This site forms the type locality for a major subdivision of the Late Miocene (Cheltenhamian Stage) and is used as a reference for comparison with other sites throughout Australia and the world. Some submissions proposed that it have greater conservation protection.

Rocks here contain one of the richest and most diverse fossil assemblages in Australia, and the cliff has high scenic value in this part of Port Phillip Bay. The cliff top area contains the vulnerable coastal headland scrub/coast banksia woodland mosaic.

VEAC is recommending a new natural features reserve for the Beaumaris cliffs and surrounds located on approximately 3 hectares of coastal Crown land at Beaumaris in Melbourne's south-east (figure 7.7). The site extends from low water mark at the base of the cliff face to the cliff top area (approximately 20 metres in height) and extends north-south along Beach Road.

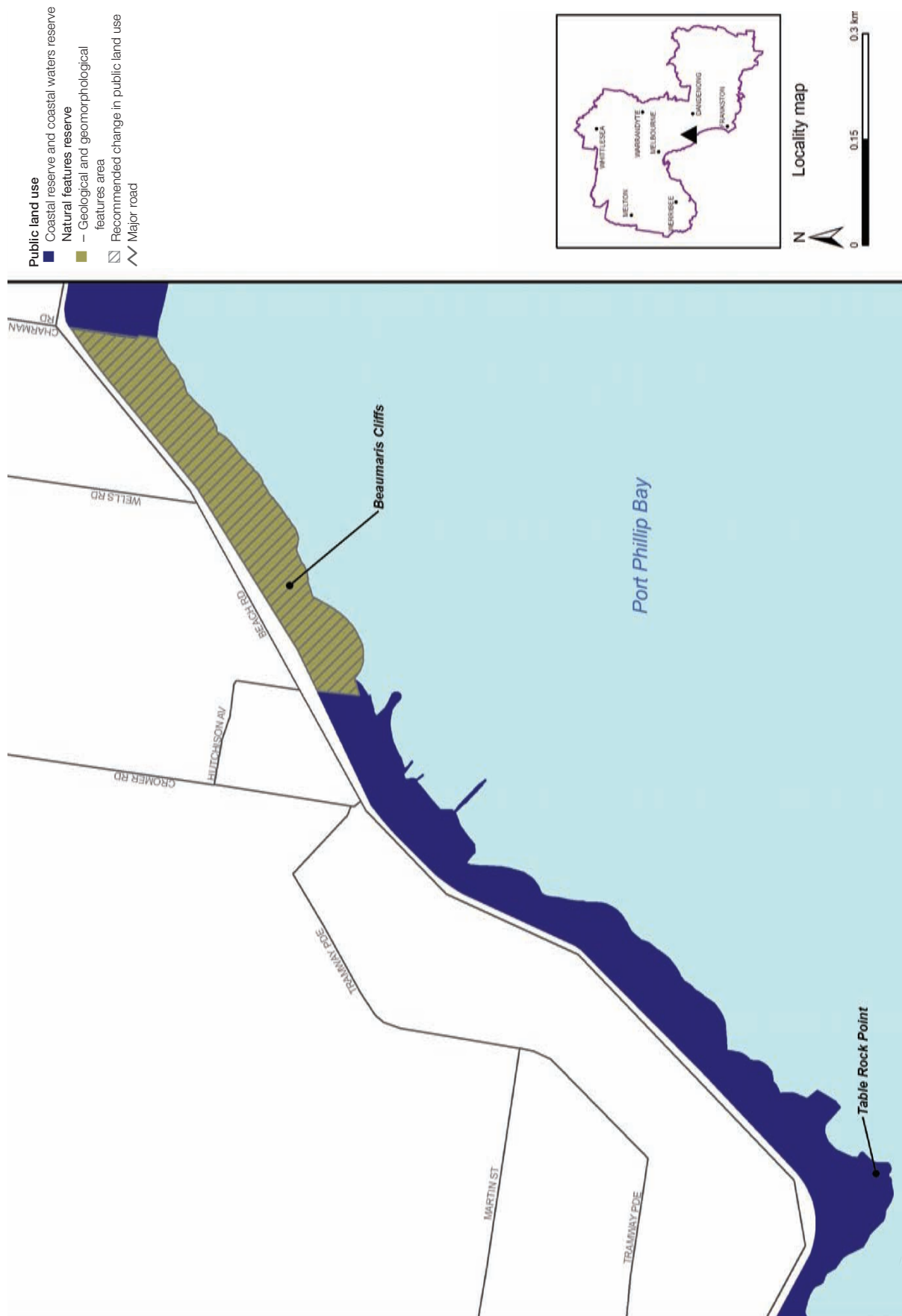
RECOMMENDATION

E4 Beaumaris Cliffs Geological and Geomorphological Features Area

The area of approximately 3 hectares of Crown land, shown hatched on figure 7.7 be used in accordance with natural features reserves general recommendations E.

Figure 7.7

Recommendation E4: Beaumaris Cliffs Geological and Geomorphological Features Area



Yallock Creek Streamside Area

In some places the public land adjoining streams is wider than the typical linear public land stream frontage reserve. Often these areas are suitable sites for visitor use and activities that would not be generally compatible with management of narrow stream frontages. Natural values in these wider riparian areas are important, particularly in substantially cleared landscapes. Such sites provide an important ecological function in fragmented landscapes, enhancing the role of stream frontages as linkages.

Several submissions highlighted the importance of remnant native vegetation for plant and wildlife habitat, particularly along Melbourne's waterways. In particular, an area along Yallock Creek containing mature swampy riparian woodland—an EVC that has been almost entirely removed from the Koo-wee-rup Swamp—was proposed for reservation for conservation purposes.

VEAC is recommending that a new streamside area be reserved along Yallock Creek. This six hectare site of Crown land is located east of the junction of Sybella Avenue and South Gippsland Highway, Koo-wee-rup (see figure 7.8). The site is largely located adjacent to Yallock Creek, but also includes a small area of road reserve providing access from the South Gippsland Highway.

The south-western section of the site is reserved for drainage and water supply purposes, while the area adjoining Yallock Creek is unreserved. Part of the road reserve adjoining the South Gippsland Highway is currently used as an informal recreation and picnic area, while a walking track extends north along the stream frontage.

The vulnerable dwarf galaxias *Galaxiella pusilla* has been recorded in the section of Yallock Creek that passes through the site. The majority of the site contains the endangered swampy riparian woodland EVC in moderate condition. This is a remnant of the once more extensive vegetation found within the former Koo-wee-rup Swamp in the Gippsland Plain bioregion. The understorey vegetation is disturbed, and requires substantial management works to improve its condition.

RECOMMENDATION

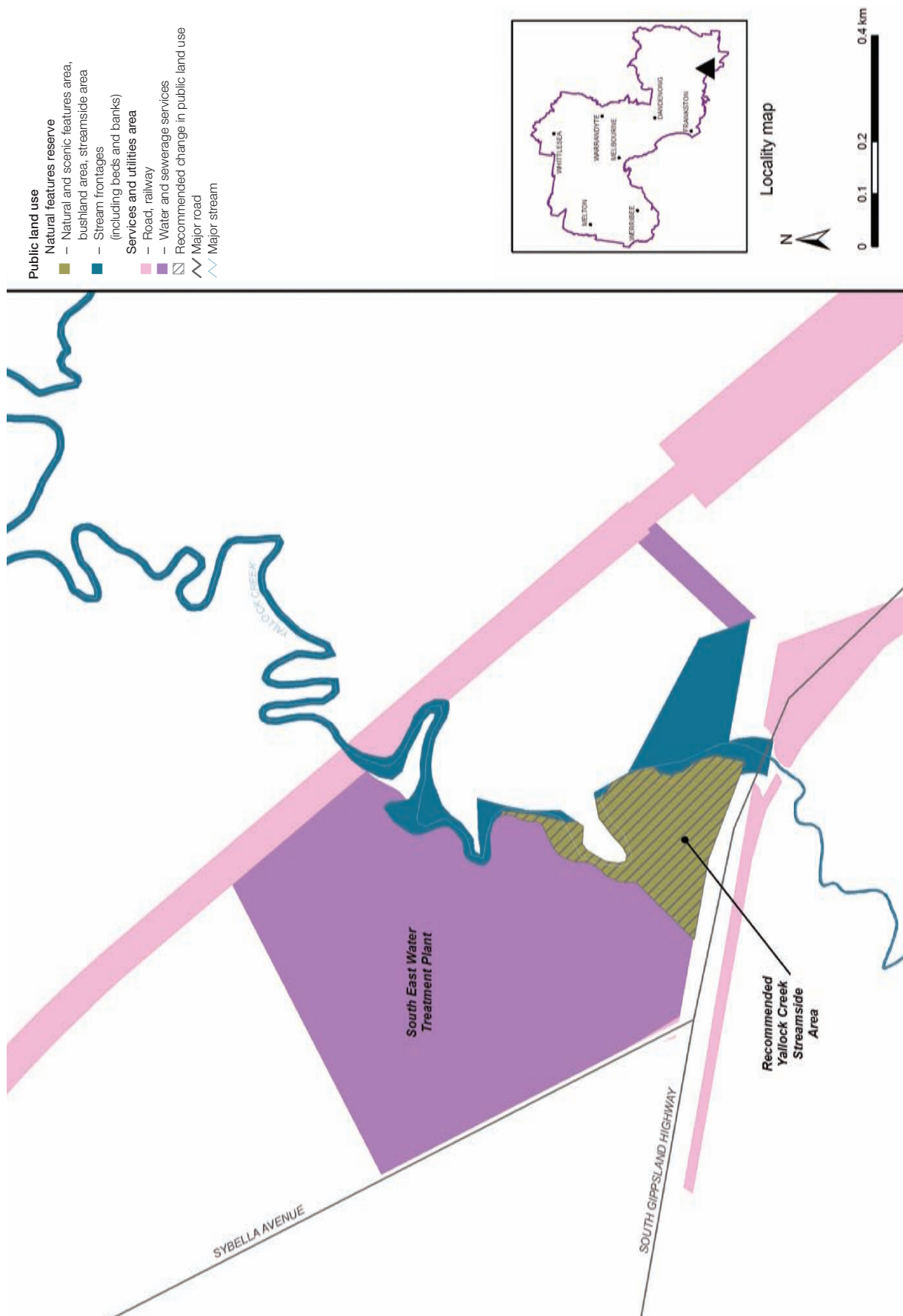
E5 Yallock Creek Streamside Area

The area of approximately 6 hectares of Crown land, shown hatched on figure 7.8 be permanently reserved for conservation purposes and used in accordance with natural features reserves general recommendations E.

Note:

1. This new reserve includes Crown land stream frontage of Yallock Creek on the western bank. Vegetated areas of South East Water freehold land on the western side of Yallock Creek should be added to the reserve if not required for services and utilities purposes.

Figure 7.8
Recommendation E5: Yallock Creek Streamside Area



7.2.9 COASTAL RESERVES

Coastal reserves consist of a usually narrow strip of public land along the coast set aside primarily for public recreation, education and conservation of natural environments. Most of the coastline in the investigation area (94 per cent) is Crown land. Coastal reserves fringing Port Phillip Bay and Western Port are a major recreational resource for many residents of, and visitors to, metropolitan Melbourne.

The coastline faces significant challenges with increasing pressure from development of adjoining land, increasing visitor numbers and threats from climate change. The Victorian Coastal Strategy recognises that development on coastal Crown land gives people access to the coast and should reflect safety, recreation and industry needs, although development is not needed at all locations along the coast. The strategy includes criteria for the use and development of coastal Crown land. Considerations include a need to site the use or development on the coast, ensure public access and facilitate multi-use of sites and existing infrastructure. Limited land resources need to be used for net community and public benefit.³⁰

The Victorian Coastal Strategy also provides a framework to direct development away from sensitive coastal areas and significant landscapes and manage it within existing settlements and urban areas and within activity nodes and recreation nodes. Recreation nodes are located on coastal Crown land outside activity nodes and are identified in Coastal Action Plans and management plans prepared by Regional Coastal Boards and approved under the *Coastal Management Act 1995*.

Several submissions commented on the importance and value to the community of coastal reserves. The impacts of sea level rise were mentioned and the need to undertake appropriate planning and actions to protect coastal land was emphasised. A number of comments suggested that more action needs to be undertaken to protect the coastline and that little is being done currently. The coastal impacts of climate change are explored in section 4.3.

Some submissions proposed areas of high quality coastal remnant native vegetation as new conservation areas in order to protect their biodiversity values. It was also suggested that a coastal conservation public land use category be established. Access to the coast for various recreational activities, including metal detecting, was also promoted.

Several locations along the coast were highlighted as sites with natural values that should be protected in conservation reserves (e.g. Beaumaris cliffs, parts of Kingston foreshore reserve). The importance of the coast as an ecological and recreation link was also recognised.

RECOMMENDATION

F General recommendations for coastal reserves

That coastal reserves shown on map A:

- (a) be used to:
 - (i) provide opportunities for recreation for large numbers of people, and also for recreation related to enjoying and understanding nature
 - (ii) protect and conserve natural coastal landscapes, ecosystems and significant geomorphological, archaeological and historical features for public enjoyment and inspiration and for education and scientific study
 - (iii) ensure the protection and conservation of important indigenous aquatic and terrestrial fauna and flora
 - (iv) ensure the identification and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and places
 - (v) provide opportunities for fishing and facilities for boating, together with the necessary navigational aids, and also to provide for necessary recreational facilities to support beach-related activity;
- (b) include adjoining unused road reserves, where appropriate;
and
- (c) if not already appropriately reserved, be permanently reserved, with the seaward boundary to low water mark, under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

Notes:

1. The above management objectives are those that generally apply to most coastal reserves. Exceptions may apply to specific reserves in special circumstances.
2. The investigation area boundary is the municipal boundaries identified in the terms of reference. The coastal municipal boundary is low water mark as specified under the *Local Government Act 1989* except where amendments have been made (mostly to include piers, harbours and jetties in the municipal area).

7.2.10 COASTAL WATERS RESERVE

The coastal waters reserve public land use category recommended in the Environment Conservation Council's *Marine Coastal and Estuarine Investigation Final Report*, encompasses territorial waters (including the seabed) outside parks or other reserves and extending from the shoreline to 5.5 kilometres offshore.⁷⁰ This land use category has a wide range of objectives. A more detailed description of the investigation area boundary, intertidal zones and public land use along the coastline is provided in chapter 4 of the discussion paper.

In the investigation area coastal waters reserve occurs in some river estuaries and around infrastructure associated with piers, jetties and wharves and generally where the investigation area boundary extends beyond the low water mark (around 480 hectares). Navigational aids and markers are included in services and utilities areas, but are generally too small to see at the scale of VEAC's mapping. Although not formally reserved, management of these areas is consistent with the objectives outlined by the ECC and accepted by government.⁷⁰ General public land use recommendations are not provided for this reason and because a broader statewide framework, including engagement with a range of stakeholders, is considered appropriate.

No comments were specifically made in submissions regarding coastal waters reserve. Some comments were made on the management of natural values in marine environments and marine protected areas more generally. These areas are largely outside the investigation area.

7.2.11 WATER PRODUCTION AREAS

Water production areas land use category includes bulk water storage areas (reservoirs, large water holding basins), diversion weirs, pump intakes and associated buffer areas that obtain their water supply from catchment flows. These areas comprise some 8,340 hectares of public land in the investigation area. The largest water production areas are reservoirs and water catchments at Cardinia, Melton, Djerriwarrah, Yan Yean, Sugarloaf, Toorourrong and Greenvale, with an additional area allocated for potential future reservoir use at Watsons Creek, near Christmas Hills. Informal recreational use associated with these water storages occurs in community use area–reservoir parks (see section 7.2.13).

The importance of water supply and water quality to Melbourne was raised in a few submissions. Other comments related to the provision of these areas for some recreational activities and proposed the general exclusion of resource uses such as timber harvesting and stock grazing. Additional protection for remnant native vegetation in these areas was also proposed.

The recommendations below retain the objectives for use published in the discussion paper and note that exceptions may apply in some circumstances. For example, limited informal recreational use may be compatible with some water production areas, at the discretion of the land manager and/or water supply authority.

RECOMMENDATION

G General recommendations for water production areas

Water production areas including 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:

- (a) be used for water supply purposes
- (b) permit other activities by the water supply authority after consultation with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, and other relevant agencies as appropriate
- (c) protect natural and cultural heritage values
- (d) include adjoining unused road reserves, where appropriate; and
- (e) if Crown land which is not already appropriately reserved, be permanently reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* for water supply purposes and be managed by the appropriate water supply authority; or
- (f) if public authority land, be managed in accordance with the above.

Notes:

1. Some large water storage areas not primarily used for domestic water supply are also used for water-based recreation. This recreation may continue except where it results in deteriorating water quality.
2. The LCC recommendation C48⁶⁷ for the Warrandyte-Kinglake Nature conservation link remains in effect to the extent that it is not already implemented. This requires, among other things, that the:
 - (a) conservation link be retained as public land and managed in accordance with the general recommendation for nature conservation reserves; and
 - (b) that, subject to acquisition arrangements being agreed, Melbourne Water land within the link be transferred to DSE if the Watsons Creek reservoir does not proceed or if Melbourne Water decides to dispose of its landholdings.

7.2.12 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL FEATURES RESERVES

Throughout the investigation area there are a range of sites and places associated with Aboriginal history and European exploration, settlement, agriculture, timber production and gold exploration and mining. There are 14 historic and cultural features reserves in the investigation area—see table 4.4 in the discussion paper.

Historic and cultural features reserves are established primarily to protect highly significant historical or archaeological values, including features such as buildings, structures, relics or other artefacts. Historic and cultural heritage places on public land often contribute to overall values in areas other than historic reserves. In some places, a particular historic feature may be a key visitor attraction.

Several submissions commented on the range of recreational uses and values of historic and cultural features reserves—in particular Emerald (Puffing Billy) Railway Reserve. Recreation trails were mentioned several times for inclusion as a permitted use, while exclusion of resource uses (domestic stock grazing, apiculture and exploration for mining/ extractive industries) was highlighted.

Management of remnant native vegetation on these sites was also raised as an important issue with some submissions proposing that areas with intact native vegetation be excised for new conservation reserves. The protection of historic values by limiting re-developments was also promoted.

No new historic and cultural features reserves are recommended; however many of the existing areas do not have formally approved public land use management objectives in place. As with many other areas across Melbourne, the application of a consistent management framework will guide management of public land, including the protection of remnant native vegetation and provision for recreational opportunities where appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

H General recommendations for historic and cultural features reserves

Historic and cultural features reserves as shown on map A, according to their specific characteristics:

- (a) be used to protect historic and cultural heritage values, features and sites (Aboriginal and non-Indigenous)
- (b) provide opportunities for:
 - (i) education and informal recreation such as picnicking, walking and, where relevant, fishing, and
 - (ii) more intensive recreation such as camping, where specified by the land manager, and where compatible with (a)
- (c) protect areas with remnant natural vegetation or habitat value
- (d) exclude timber harvesting
- (e) permit low impact exploration for minerals and mining, subject to consideration of the impact on values in (a) for each application or case
- (f) generally permit prospecting and apiculture, where relevant
- (g) exclude grazing (see note 2)
- (h) include adjoining unused road reserves, where appropriate; and
- (i) if Crown land which is not already appropriately reserved, be permanently reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*; or
- (j) if public authority land, be managed in accordance with the above.

Notes:

1. Where appropriate, a committee of management may be appointed or continue to manage historic and cultural features reserves in accordance with the general recommendations H.
2. Grazing may be contracted for ecological or management purposes such as targeted weed control.
3. Not all sites contain values suitable for recreation or other uses described above.

7.2.13 COMMUNITY USE AREAS

Community use areas are used for education, recreation or other specific community purposes. They comprise 7,396 hectares of public land in the investigation area including recreation areas, parklands and gardens, reservoir parks and buildings in public use, such as schools, libraries and halls. Some of these areas also contain significant natural values. Public land is in high demand to provide for these types of uses.

Each of the sub-categories within the community use area category is described in more detail in chapter 4 of the discussion paper and summarised below. Note that land owned by local councils is not included in VEAC's definition of public land. Local councils may be appointed committee of management over community use areas on Crown land.

Some of the most frequent comments made in submissions were about local parklands and other open space areas. Open space was a strong focus for proposals to retain all public land; particularly former school grounds. Recreation trails was also important to many people.

Some sites identified by VEAC in the discussion paper as community use areas—parklands and gardens were considered by some to be regional parks or metropolitan parklands, while other areas were recognised as having high biodiversity values and were considered to be conservation reserves. Since the release of the discussion paper VEAC has further considered and amended the categorisation of some of these areas.

VEAC also found that some parks do not clearly fit within the parkland and garden or recreation area sub-categories. Given the range of landscapes and activities undertaken in these areas, they sometimes verge on metropolitan parks (see section 7.2.6). In categorising these areas, VEAC recognises that within metropolitan Melbourne there is a spectrum of public land providing for recreational activities, from metropolitan parks through to larger and smaller parklands and gardens and to more modified and developed recreation areas. As for all such systems of categories, there are areas that fall on the margins and it is essentially a question of judgement how these are categorised.

Recreation areas primarily provide for organised sport (e.g. sportsgrounds, swimming pools, tennis courts, bowling greens, golf courses), with secondary non-organised and informal recreational uses. They account for over one quarter of public land categorised as community use areas.

Recreation trails are linear trails for cycling and walking. Note that only land specifically allocated to these trails is included in this category. Often trails are a secondary use of a range of other land tenures.

Parklands and gardens are local community parklands, playgrounds and ornamental gardens, zoological and botanical gardens. Inner Melbourne had some particularly large areas set aside during the initial settlement planning.

Reservoir parks are associated with water storage areas, and often contain recreational facilities for picnicking and walking tracks along the reservoir wall or in nearby bushland. They often provide scenic views of the reservoir and bushland in the surrounding water catchment. Cardinia, Yan Yean, Greenvale, Sugarloaf and Toorourrong reservoir parks are in the investigation area. They are mostly on Melbourne Water freehold land (approximately 380 hectares), but are also on Crown land (approximately 30 hectares). Those parks on Melbourne Water land are leased to, and managed by, Parks Victoria.

Buildings in public use account for over one third of community use areas encompassing 2,807 hectares. The potential for secondary or multiple community uses of these buildings distinguishes them from those that deliver services and utilities functions (e.g. health or justice services).

Buildings in public use also include historic and cultural heritage places on public land that are not historic and cultural features reserves, such as the Royal Exhibition Buildings. Although this land use category does not reflect the historic or cultural values, a range of other mechanisms including listing on heritage registers and planning scheme heritage overlays identify such sites as significant.

RECOMMENDATION

I General recommendations for community use areas

Community use areas, as shown on map A, according to their specific characteristics:

- (a) be used as recreation areas and trails, parklands and gardens, reservoir parks or for education and other community purposes; and
- (b) provide for a broad range of recreational and leisure activities including organised sport, walking, cycling and picnicking
- (c) protect the conservation, scientific, educational and historic values of botanic gardens and ornamental plantations
- (d) provide for education and public enjoyment in schools, public halls, kindergartens, libraries, museums and other similar areas
- (e) provide for appropriate facilities
- (e) maintain or restore features of cultural significance, natural surroundings and the local character and quality of the landscape where relevant, and where compatible with the above
- (f) exclude harvesting of forest products, hunting and 'stone' extraction, as defined in the *Extractive Industries Development Act 1995*
- (g) include adjoining unused road reserves, where appropriate; and
- (h) if Crown land which is not already appropriately reserved, be reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, including reserving open space for a specific open space purpose; or
- (i) if public authority land, be managed in accordance with the above.

Note:

1. Where appropriate, a committee of management may be appointed or continue to manage community use areas in accordance with the general recommendations I.

7.2.14 SERVICES AND UTILITIES AREAS

This category is a broad public land use grouping for purposes such as transport (roads, railway), ports, cemeteries, government buildings, hospitals, public housing, justice services, fire stations, piers and jetties, and water and sewerage treatment facilities. Chapter 4 of the discussion paper provides greater detail of the sub-categories within services and utilities areas.

Relatively few community comments were received on services and utilities areas. Those issues raised were largely in relation to secondary use of this land for recreation and protection of biodiversity values. In particular, the protection of remnant native vegetation was proposed either by changing the primary use or by complementary management. Retaining remnant vegetation at Fawkner Crematorium for a memorial garden rather than clearing for cemetery use was proposed, for example, as an alternative management approach.

Some services and utilities areas have a secondary recreational use, where this is practical and safe. For example, retarding basins are often used for recreation and recreation trails are often constructed along the easement of pipelines or roadsides. The shared use of public authority land is discussed further in section 5.3.2.

Protection of remnant native vegetation on services and utilities areas is the responsibility of the land manager. Detailed vegetation mapping has been undertaken for many areas, and the protection of threatened species and communities is a priority addressed by several planning and legislative mechanisms.

The primary purpose of the land use sub-category Transport—roads and railways is to provide for transport and access. Transport land is an important and substantial proportion of public land across the investigation area. There is a total estimated area of 80,000 hectares of roads (mostly unparcellised government roads). Conservation, recreational use and landscape values are an important secondary uses along these often linear corridors in Melbourne. Monuments and historic markers are often located on road reserves.

Water and sewerage services areas comprise water or sewage pipes, channels, or other infrastructure used to convey water or sewage. This sub-category also includes storages that are part of the reticulation system and storages of water not used for domestic consumption, as well as drainage or flood-protection channels or structures and sewage treatment or disposal. Drainage basins that are diversions for flood waters are also allocated to this services and utilities land use category.

One of the largest areas of public land in the investigation area outside national and state parks is Melbourne Water's Western Treatment Plant, comprising some 6,685 hectares (of a total 11,000 hectares) within the investigation area. The Western Treatment Plant forms part of the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site. Complementary conservation management continues to enhance the protection of bird habitat at this site, reflecting its listing as a Ramsar site and the presence of threatened species. Some areas contain significant remnants of endangered native grasslands and the adjoining coastal reserve provides important habitat for migratory and wading birds.

RECOMMENDATION

J General recommendations for services and utilities areas

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, state or other parks or nature conservation reserves;
- (b) railway lines, roadsides and other service and utility sites be managed to protect natural values including remnant native vegetation and habitat, and Aboriginal cultural heritage values, as far as practical;
- (c) 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.

Notes:

1. While DSE, VicRoads and local councils 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 contain remnant native vegetation. These should be managed to protect this vegetation, as required under relevant legislation, and where it does not interfere with the primary objective of the cemetery.

7.2.15 UNCATEGORISED PUBLIC LAND

Uncategorised public land is a broad category for which no specific public land use is recommended. Land in this category has no clear primary public land use. While most uncategorised public land is likely to be surplus to the requirements of the relevant public land owner, other uncategorised land may have future uses or values identified through more detailed assessment processes or may be held in contingency for meeting future needs.

Many of the areas shown as uncategorised by VEAC are smaller blocks, particularly in and around infrastructure projects such as road corridors, that are now considered surplus, and public land that will be developed for private use in the near future. Other larger areas are future residential developments. The Kew Cottages development site will become private residences, with a small number of public housing sites retained. Public land identified for private residential development is uncategorised in terms of VEAC's public land use categories. Parklands established in these areas will typically be transferred to local councils and therefore are also uncategorised public land.

Many submissions proposed that there be no sale of any public land, as it should be retained to meet future community needs. Others thought that public land should be transferred to local government at no cost for use as public open space. These issues are addressed in greater detail in chapter 6 of this final report and were described in chapter 9 of the discussion paper.

One of the outcomes of VEAC's deliberations is that there should be a whole of government process for assessing the potential for surplus public land to meet alternative public uses (see recommendation R16). Crown land is already assessed to identify 'public land values'. These public land values are defined as:

*Land values which should be maintained for the benefit of present and future generations because of their environmental, historic, recreation, tourism, natural resource, social or cultural significance (including special significance to Aboriginal communities), or because of some special strategic value (such as access, fire management purposes, reserve linkages, etc).*⁵⁸

A significant proportion of public authority landholdings provide for government services or built infrastructure. These landholdings may also have environmental, recreational, heritage and other values. VEAC recommends that all surplus public land be assessed and retained in public ownership if public land values are present (see recommendation R17).

RECOMMENDATION

K General recommendations for uncategorised public land

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

- (a) be uncategorised public land; and
- (b) existing legal use and tenure continue for the time being
- (c) Crown land be assessed and either:
 - (i) retained and assigned to a Department of Sustainability and Environment land manager if it has public land values, or
 - (ii) disposed of if assessed as having no public land values and as being surplus to current and future community needs; and
- (d) consistent with recommendation R17, surplus public authority land be:
 - (i) assessed for its potential to meet alternative public uses
 - (ii) retained as public land where certain public land values are identified
 - (iii) disposed of if assessed as having no public land values and as being surplus to current and future community needs.

7.3 Public land use overlays

Reference areas and heritage rivers are public land use overlays defined under specific legislation. A brief summary is provided below. Readers are referred to section 4.6 of the discussion paper for more detailed descriptions.

No changes are recommended for the existing overlays in the investigation area, and therefore no general recommendations are provided.

Reference areas

Reference areas are proclaimed under the *Reference Areas Act 1978*. These sites were identified as relatively undisturbed samples of one or more land types and set aside for the comparative study of land. The primary management objective provides for natural processes to continue undisturbed (as far as possible). There are five existing reference areas in the investigation area: three overlay national or state parks (see map A and appendix 2). Two are within the Yan Yean water supply catchment recommended as an addition to Kinglake National Park (see recommendation A1).

The only comment raised during consultation specifically addressing reference areas regarded the exclusion of powerlines. While the provisions of the *Reference Areas Act 1978* do not specifically preclude the installation of powerlines and other utilities, the intent is that these areas be retained in a natural state and infrastructure avoided where possible (see general recommendations J).

Heritage rivers

Heritage rivers are proclaimed under the *Heritage Rivers Act 1992* to protect those river corridors with outstanding values for current and future generations. Part of the Yarra River is designated a heritage river in the investigation area (see map A and appendix 2). The Yarra River Heritage River includes a total of 1,065 hectares with approximately 345 hectares in the investigation area.

Several submissions proposed that the Yarra River Heritage River be extended to include areas closer to Melbourne city. The importance of the Yarra River as a recreational and natural corridor through the city was emphasised and some submissions suggested that the values identified for the upper reaches were also present in the lower section extending to Richmond and/or to the estuary.

For an area to be considered a heritage river, the criteria to be met are scenic, recreational, cultural and ecological values. In the lower reaches, the Yarra River is highly modified and contains artificial channels and islands (e.g. Coode and Herring islands). However, there are some areas with high biodiversity values (particularly fish diversity), and much of the river has a very high recreational use and important cultural values.

One of the key features of a heritage river is that it be retained in a free-flowing condition without additional impoundments. In an urban context—with the forecast for increased flooding events under future climate change scenarios—land managers may require the ability to manipulate the flow of the Yarra River to protect assets in the city. Extension of the heritage river overlay is not recommended at this time.

7.4 Managing public authority land for the protection of biodiversity values

Melbourne Water owns a number of significant wetlands for flood management and other purposes. The three areas of public land discussed below have high biodiversity values and are currently managed by Melbourne Water to protect and enhance these values. Two of these areas are currently within Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance. Recommendations N1 to N3 below ensure the ongoing recognition, retention and management of these wetlands for conservation purposes.

Detailed descriptions of the site values are provided in section 10.2 of the discussion paper and summarised below. Crown land at these sites is described separately in recommendations for natural features reserves (see recommendations E2 and E3).

Relatively few comments were received during public consultation on the Melbourne Water land to be managed for biodiversity conservation. Those comments received supported the draft recommendations. It was queried why Centre Swamp at Chelsea was not included in the draft recommendations. Centre Swamp, like the Edithvale-Seafood Wetlands, is Melbourne Water freehold land and a remnant of the former Carrum Carrum Swamp. It is not part of the Ramsar site.

The draft recommendations in the discussion paper proposed that Melbourne Water consider establishing agreements for the management, use and conservation of these three areas of public land. DSE and Melbourne Water questioned the type of conservation agreement that could be applied to public authority owned land and the benefits of such an agreement given that Schedule 6 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000* outlines general principles for the management of Ramsar wetlands of international importance. After giving this issue further consideration, VEAC has made some changes to the final recommendations below. The reference to conservation agreements has been removed and they now include proposals that Melbourne Water manage these areas in accordance with the general recommendations for natural features reserves.

Ryans Swamp and surrounds, Western Treatment Plant

Ryans Swamp is an intermittent, shallow, freshwater marsh located in the northern part of the Western Treatment Plant at Werribee, which is owned and managed by Melbourne Water (see figure 7.9). A larger block of about 191 hectares surrounding the swamp contains patches of threatened EVCs such as plains sedgy wetland, plains grassy woodland and plains grassland.

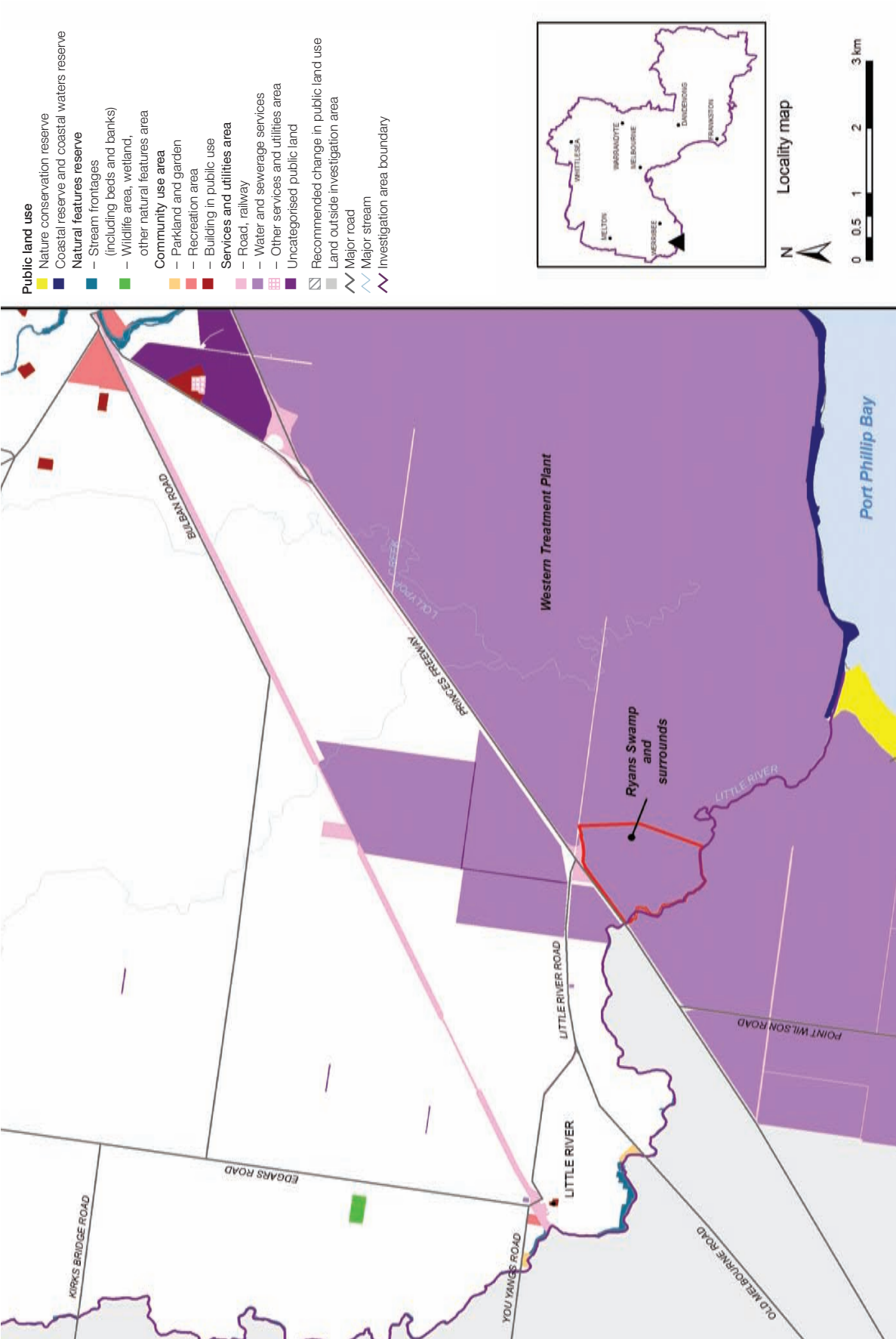
Ryans Swamp is located within the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site. It supports a large population and diversity of waterbird species when flooded, including many rare or threatened species. This area provides habitat for the threatened species growling grass frog and striped legless lizard.

RECOMMENDATION

N1 Ryans Swamp and surrounds

- (a) Melbourne Water continue to use and manage the 191 hectare area containing Ryans Swamp and surrounds, as shown within the red boundary on figure 7.9, to protect and enhance biodiversity values and in accordance with natural features reserves general recommendations E; and
- (b) should Melbourne Water no longer require this area, it be transferred to the Crown and be permanently reserved for conservation purposes under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

Figure 7.9
Recommendation N1: Ryans Swamp and surrounds



Truganina Swamp, Altona

Truganina Swamp is a 100 hectare semi-natural wetland located on Melbourne Water owned land near Altona (see figure 7.3). This area is not within a Ramsar wetland; however, the swamp area contains threatened coastal saltmarsh vegetation, and provides important habitat for migratory and water birds. The vulnerable Lewin's rail *Lewinia pectoralis* was recorded breeding at the section located north of the Williamstown railway line.

Vegetation adjacent to the swamp provides habitat for the yellow sedge-skipper butterfly (also known as Altona skipper butterfly). Sites at Altona such as Truganina Swamp are considered key conservation sites for this species in the investigation area.

RECOMMENDATION

N2 Truganina Swamp

- (a) Melbourne Water continue to use and manage the 100 hectares comprising Truganina Swamp, as shown within the red boundary in figure 7.3, to protect and enhance biodiversity values and in accordance with natural features reserves general recommendations E; and
- (b) should Melbourne Water no longer require this area, it be transferred to the Crown and be permanently reserved for conservation purposes under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

Edithvale–Seaford Wetlands

The Edithvale and Seaford Wetlands are two freshwater wetlands located in Melbourne's south-east. These areas are the last substantial remains of Carrum Carrum Swamp and are recognised as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar convention for both high waterbird diversity and numbers, as well as the presence of threatened species. Over 190 bird species including 25 migratory bird species have been recorded.

VEAC has made recommendations for Melbourne Water freehold land and Crown land within the Ramsar wetland boundary, excluding Centre Swamp at Chelsea (not within the Ramsar site) and land owned by the City of Frankston (not public land under the VEAC Act). Recommendations E2 and E3 apply to Crown land within these areas and are described under natural features reserves in section 7.2.8. The recommended conservation management area comprises approximately 107 hectares at Edithvale Wetlands and 78 hectares at Seaford Wetlands located on Melbourne Water freehold land (see figures 7.5 and 7.6).

VEAC considers that Melbourne Water should continue to manage these areas in accordance with the Australian Ramsar management principles (referred to above) and under the existing Memorandum of Understanding between Melbourne Water, Frankston City Council and DSE established in 2001.

RECOMMENDATION

N3 Edithvale–Seaford Wetlands

- (a) Melbourne Water continue to use and manage Edithvale–Seaford Wetlands, as shown within the red boundary in figures 7.5 and 7.6, to protect and enhance biodiversity values and in accordance with natural features reserves general recommendations E; and
- (b) should Melbourne Water no longer require the areas in (a) above, that these areas be transferred to the Crown and be permanently reserved for conservation purposes under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.