



2018 / 2019

# Victorian Environmental Assessment Council

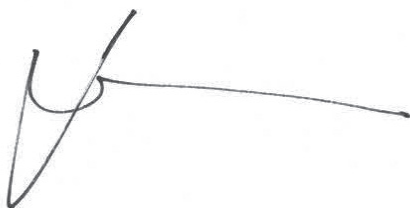
## Annual Report



Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP  
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change  
Parliament House  
East Melbourne 3002

Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of Section 14(1) of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council is pleased to submit to you its seventeenth Annual Report, covering our activities for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Haddow', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Janine Haddow  
Chairperson  
Victorian Environmental Assessment Council  
30 June 2019

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# CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

This year has been a busy and productive one for VEAC with completion of two major projects – the Central West Investigation and the Assessment of the Values of Victoria's Marine Environment – and substantial progress on the technically complex Assessment of Victoria's Coastal Reserves.

In the early part of 2018-19, VEAC sought public comments on the draft proposals paper for the Central West Investigation, releasing the report in August for an extended consultation period of more than 100 days. About 2700 written submissions were received on the report, and Council members and staff met many hundreds of people in face-to-face community drop-in sessions, field trips and meetings. A consultation summary published in April 2019 summarised the engagement activities and outlined the main points VEAC heard from Traditional Owners, local communities and other stakeholders about the draft recommendations for public land in the investigation area. The final report for the investigation was submitted to The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and released publicly in June 2019.

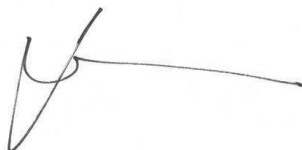
Council is very pleased to have been able to partner with the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (under the terms of their Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the State) in the Aboriginal community engagement component of this investigation. Council values the co-operation and goodwill of the Djandak project team and the representatives of Traditional Owner groups who participated in the investigation.

The Assessment of the Values of Victoria's Marine Environment was finalised and submitted to the Minister in May 2019. The report of the assessment together with a companion atlas and summary is based on evidence from data and analysis, supported by expert judgement and review. It brings together the key issues and sources of information needed to inform development of marine and coastal policy and the strategies and plans to implement that policy. Many organisations and technical experts supported the preparation of the assessment and VEAC appreciates their assistance.

This year we were pleased again to award Bill Borthwick Student Scholarships to two recipients. The scholarships will assist with some of the costs of their PhD research related to public land.

During the year we worked closely with key organisations and interested stakeholders on the Assessment of Victoria's Coastal Reserves, completing technical descriptions and major map products for the assessment, and making progress on a draft report for consultation in early 2019/20.

I would like to acknowledge the support the Council receives from its community reference groups, and from state government departments and agencies, local government, community organisations and members of the public. Thanks also to VEAC's staff, who have worked hard throughout the year with unfailing professionalism and commitment. I want to personally thank my colleagues on the council for their hard work and support throughout the year. In accordance with the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, I am pleased to provide this annual report for the year ended 30 June 2019 to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP.



**Janine Haddow**  
Chairperson

# VICTORIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT COUNCIL

## OUR PURPOSE

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council was established under the **Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act** (the VEAC Act) to provide independent and strategic advice to the Victorian Government on matters relating to the protection and ecologically sustainable management of the environment and natural resources of Victoria's public land (refer to Sections 4 and 5 of the VEAC Act).

## OUR VALUES

Our organisational values reflect our attitude to the public land estate, the community and the environment. The Council:

- seeks to understand and meet community needs from public land
- is committed to excellence and continuous improvement
- values ethical, accountable, transparent and responsible behaviour
- encourages public consultation and input into VEAC's processes.

## OUR FUNCTIONS

The Council:

- carries out investigations and assessments and provides advice as requested by the Minister on matters relating to the protection and ecologically sustainable management of the environment and natural resources of public land
- carries out any other functions that are conferred on the Council by the VEAC Act or any other Act (refer to Section 6 of the VEAC Act).

In carrying out investigations and making recommendations the Council is required to have regard to:

- the principles of ecologically sustainable development
- the need to conserve and protect biological diversity
- the need to conserve and protect any areas, which have ecological, natural, landscape or cultural interest or significance, recreational value or geological or geomorphological significance
- the need to provide for the creation and preservation of a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of parks and reserves within the State of Victoria
- the existence of any international treaty ratified by the Commonwealth of Australia, which is relevant to the investigation
- any agreement at a national, interstate or local government level into which the Government of Victoria has entered, or under which the Government of Victoria has undertaken any obligation in conjunction with the Commonwealth, a state, territory or municipal council, which relates to the subject matter of the investigation
- the potential environmental, social and economic consequences of implementing the proposed recommendations
- any existing or proposed use of the environment or natural resources.

Powers held by the Council include the ability to appoint committees and, with the consent of the relevant Minister, make use of the services of any person employed in the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (refer to Section 7 of the VEAC Act).

A website containing general information about the Council's role, operation and current and past investigations is available at [www.veac.vic.gov.au](http://www.veac.vic.gov.au). The site also contains links to past investigations, assessments and studies conducted by the Environment Conservation Council (ECC) and the Land Conservation Council (LCC).

# COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP



(L-R) Ms Janine Haddow, Ms Joanne Duncan, Ms Anna Kilborn, Dr Charles Meredith, Dr Geoffrey Wescott.

Members of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council are appointed under the provisions of the VEAC Act. Members for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 were Ms Janine Haddow (Chairperson), Ms Joanne Duncan, Ms Anna Kilborn, Dr Charles Meredith and Dr Geoffrey Wescott.

## MS JANINE HADDOW (CHAIRPERSON)

Janine Haddow is a strategic planning and stakeholder engagement consultant, she has extensive policy, planning and operational experience in the environment and natural resource management sectors including public land and park management, catchment and coastal management, forestry and biodiversity conservation.

Currently a director of the inaugural Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners Land Management Board, Janine is also a past director of the Mt Buller Alpine Resort Board, North Central Catchment Management Authority and the Victorian Catchment Management Council.

Janine has qualifications in political science, education, landscape architecture and environmental planning and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, the Williamson Community Leadership Program and the Australian New Zealand School of Government Senior Executive Program.

## MS JOANNE DUNCAN

Joanne Duncan was elected to the Legislative Assembly seat of Gisborne in 1999 (later transferring to Macedon in 2002), which she represented until her retirement from politics in 2014.

During her time in Parliament, Joanne was a member of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee (1999 to November 2010 and May 2011 to November 2014).

Joanne Duncan also chaired the stakeholder reference group for the review of the native vegetation permitted clearing regulations.

## MS ANNA KILBORN



Anna Kilborn is an environmental and strategic planner, with over 25 years' experience across Australia in natural resource management, regional infrastructure projects, strategy and policy development. She has previously served on the Regional Development Australia's Gippsland Committee and Planning Panels Victoria, and is currently a non-executive director and deputy chair on the board of South Gippsland Water Corporation.

Anna lives in regional Victoria and is committed to integrated planning and community involvement in planning and decision-making.

## **DR CHARLES MEREDITH**

Charles Meredith is an ecologist and consultant with extensive experience in natural systems and conservation planning. After an early career in wildlife research, Dr Meredith founded the ecological and heritage consulting firm Biosis Research P/L and was CEO there from 1984 until he retired in 2011. During that time, he worked on environmental impact assessments of many major projects, prepared a broad range of natural area management plans, and provided strategic and policy advice on environmental matters to a diverse array of organisations, both public and private.

Dr Meredith has regularly served on committees and advisory boards for NGOs, professional bodies and government and is currently a Trustee of the Trust for Nature. He is an Inaugural Fellow of the Environment Institute of Australia.

## **DR GEOFFREY WESCOTT**

Geoff Wescott has recently retired as Associate Professor at Deakin University where his main teaching and research interests were around the relationship between science and policy, nature and conservation – particularly the role of large scale conservation networks and marine and coastal policy.

Geoff is immediate past President of the Australian Coastal Society and a Director of Zoos Victoria. He has previously been a Deputy Chair of Parks Victoria, a member of the National Oceans Advisory Council and a member of the Victorian Coastal Council. He is a current member of the Advisory Council of the International Land Conservation Network and the IUCN Commission on Parks and Protected Areas – was Chair of Victoria's National Parks Advisory Council for a decade.

He has published over 170 books, chapters, technical reports and popular articles. Geoff was also Chair of the Government's Expert Panel making recommendations on a new Marine and Coastal Act for Victoria. He is now an Honorary Principal Fellow at the University of Melbourne.

## MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change was the responsible Minister for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

## COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The Council met formally 11 times during the 2018-19 financial year.

Council members also attended community drop-in sessions, Community Reference Group meetings, consultation sessions, field inspections and briefings in relation to the Central West Investigation, Assessment of the Values of Victoria's Marine Environment and Assessment of Victoria's Coastal Reserves.

### Council members' attendance at council meetings from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019

NAME	ATTENDANCE (number of meetings)
Janine Haddow	10 of 11
Joanne Duncan	9 of 11
Anna Kilborn	10 of 11
Charles Meredith	11 of 11
Geoffrey Wescott	9 of 11

## ADMINISTRATION

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council office is located on level 39, 2 Lonsdale St, Melbourne, 3000.

<b>Telephone</b>	(03) 9637 9902
<b>Toll Free Number</b>	1800 134 803
<b>Email</b>	veac@delwp.vic.gov.au
<b>Website</b>	www.veac.vic.gov.au
<b>Executive Officer</b>	Ms Joan Phillips

The Executive Officer is responsible for managing the office and staff.

# INVESTIGATIONS

## CENTRAL WEST INVESTIGATION

On 20 March 2017, VEAC was requested by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change to conduct a Central West Investigation. The investigation covers public land in the vicinity of the Wombat, Wellsford, Mount Cole and Pyrenees Range forests. The request to VEAC followed advertisement by the Minister of the proposed terms of reference in November 2016.

The purpose of the investigation is to:

- a) identify and evaluate the condition, natural and biodiversity values and cultural, social and economic values and the current uses of public land in the specified area; and
- b) make recommendations for the balanced use and appropriate management arrangements to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural values.

The terms of reference for the Central West Investigation are contained in the box on the next page.

### **Activities in 2018-19**

Work continued on the preparation of firstly the draft proposals paper and then the final report in 2018-19.

In October 2018 and May 2019, the Minister granted extensions of time to complete the investigation to 7 June and 14 June 2019 respectively. A final report was submitted to the Minister on 14 June 2019 and publicly released on 21 June 2019.

### **Community engagement**

VEAC members and staff conducted an initial round of five consultation sessions in September 2018, following the release of the Draft Proposals Paper on 31 August 2018. These sessions were held in Avoca, Bendigo, Beaufort, Daylesford and Woodend.

A number of follow-up drop-in sessions, public meetings, field trips or consultation sessions with special interest groups were held throughout October and November 2018.

In 2018-19, the Council engaged with the relevant Traditional Owner entities and other relevant Traditional Owner groups in the investigation area in partnership with the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.

Submissions in response to the Draft Proposals Paper closed on 10 December 2018 with almost 2,700 submissions received in total.

The Community Reference Group for the investigation met three times during 2018-19. The membership of the Community Reference Group can be found on page 15.

A Consultation Summary was published in April 2019.

### **Expenditure**

Expenditure, including salaries and on-costs, for the Central West Investigation for the 2018-19 financial year was \$1,318,501.



## TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pursuant to section 15 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change hereby requests the Council to carry out an investigation into public land in the vicinity of the Wombat, Wellsford, Mount Cole and Pyrenees Range Forests within the area shown on the accompanying map.

The purpose of the Central West Investigation is to:

- (a) identify and evaluate the condition, natural and biodiversity values and cultural, social and economic values and the current uses of public land in the specified area; and
- (b) make recommendations for the balanced use and appropriate management arrangements to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural values.

In addition to the considerations in section 18 of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act, the Council must take into account the following matters:

- (i) relevant State Government policies and strategies, Ministerial statements and reports by the Victorian Auditor-General; and
- (ii) relevant regional programs, strategies and plans.

The Council must also consult with the relevant Traditional Owner Group Entities and any other relevant Traditional Owner groups in the specified area, particularly where the area is subject to an agreement under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*. This includes the area covered by the Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement.

A draft proposals paper and a final report are to be prepared, allowing for two public submission periods during the investigation.

The Council must report on the completed investigation within two years from the commencement date.\*

\*The date for the completion of the investigation was extended to 14 June 2019.

# ASSESSMENTS

## ASSESSMENT OF THE VALUES OF VICTORIA'S MARINE ENVIRONMENT

In March 2018, VEAC was requested by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change to carry out an assessment of the values of Victoria's marine environment.

The Assessment of Values of Victoria's Marine Environment is the third assessment requested pursuant to the new section 26B of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act.

The purpose of the assessment is to:

- (a) identify current environmental, economic, social and cultural values of Victoria's marine environment, including their spatial distribution where relevant
- (b) identify current and likely future threats to these values
- (c) provide independent advice on future patterns, trends and direction related to existing and emerging uses
- (d) determine a process to systematically classify data and an approach to describe social economic values and uses of Victoria's marine waters
- (e) provide an inventory of available knowledge and data on existing values, uses and threats and advise on any significant gaps.

The terms of reference for the Assessment of the Values of Victoria's Marine Environment are contained in the box on the next page.

In March 2019, the Minister granted an extension of time to complete the assessment to 21 May 2019.

The Council submitted a report on the completed assessment to the Minister on 21 May 2019 together with an accompanying atlas and summary document. The report was released publicly on 29 May 2019.

Expenditure, including salaries and on-costs, for the Assessment of the Values of Victoria's Marine Environment for the 2018-19 financial year was \$478,118.

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pursuant to section 26B of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change hereby requests the Council to carry out an assessment of the values of Victoria's marine environment<sup>1</sup>.

The assessment will inform the development of a state-wide marine and coastal strategy and support the development of the proposed Marine Spatial Planning Framework.

The purpose of the assessment is to:

- a) identify current environmental, economic, social and cultural values of Victoria's marine environment, including their spatial distribution where relevant
- b) identify current and likely future threats to these values
- c) provide independent advice on future patterns, trends and direction related to existing and emerging uses
- d) determine a process to systematically classify data and an approach to describe social and economic values and uses of Victoria's marine waters
- e) provide an inventory of available knowledge and data on existing values, uses and threats and advise on any significant gaps.

The assessment will encompass all State coastal waters, bays and estuaries (including the Gippsland Lakes), and must have due regard to the interaction of processes and values of the coastal zone.

The Council must take into account the following matters:

- a) relevant agreements under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2016*
- b) relevant Victorian government policies, strategies and reports
- c) relevant national and international agreements, policies and strategies.

VEAC is required to consult with technical and sector experts to gather and confirm source data, and to document any relevant caveats to these data. In addition, as specified in section 26D of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act, the Council must confer with any Department or public authority which may be affected by the provision of the assessment including the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources; and the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

The Council must report on the completed assessment by 29 March 2019.\*

\*The date for completion of the assessment was extended to 21 May 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this assessment, Victoria's marine environment means the following between the outer limit of Victorian coastal waters and the high-water mark of the sea –

- a) the land (whether or not covered by water) to a depth of 200 metres below the surface of that land;
- b) any water covering the land referred to in paragraph (a) from time to time;
- c) the biodiversity associated with the land and water referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b).



# ASSESSMENT OF VICTORIA'S COASTAL RESERVES

In June 2018, VEAC was requested by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP to carry out an assessment of Victoria's coastal reserves.

The purpose of the assessment is to:

- a) review the number and types (reservation status) of coastal reserves in Victoria;
- b) identify reserves with high environmental, cultural heritage, social and economic values and identify values at risk from the impacts of climate change
- c) identify current and emerging uses of the coastal reserves
- d) compile an inventory, including spatial distribution, of values and uses of the coastal reserves.

The terms of reference for the Assessment of Victoria's Coastal Reserves are contained in the box on the next page.

As a first step, the Council is required to publish a definition of coastal reserves to be used in the assessment, including a diagrammatic representation and map of Victoria's coastal reserves. As part of its assessment, VEAC will produce a draft report and seek public comment on it.

The Council must report on the completed assessment by 6 December 2019.

During 2018-19, the coastal reserves assessment team investigated and consulted on a technical definition of coastal reserves. In parallel, a dataset and GIS map of coastal reserves was prepared for the entire state as foundational work to undertake analysis and prepare an inventory of values and uses.

Expenditure, including salaries and on-costs, for the Assessment of Victoria's Coastal Reserves for the 2018-19 financial year was \$250,274.

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pursuant to section 26B of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change hereby requests the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (the Council) to carry out an assessment of Victoria's coastal reserves<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of the assessment is to:

- a) review the number and types (reservation status) of coastal reserves in Victoria;
- b) identify reserves with high environmental, cultural heritage, social and economic values and identify values at risk from the impacts of climate change;
- c) identify current and emerging uses of the coastal reserves; and
- d) compile an inventory, including spatial distribution, of values and uses of the coastal reserves.

As a first step, the Council is required to publish a definition of coastal reserves to be used in the assessment, including a diagrammatic representation and map of Victoria's coastal reserves.

The assessment and associated inventory will assist the Victorian Government's future planning and decision-making for Victoria's coasts.

The Council must take into account relevant agreements under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*.

As part of the assessment, the Council must produce a draft report and seek public comment on it.

The Council must report on the completed assessment by 6 December 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this assessment, Victoria's coastal reserves include any Crown land along Victoria's coast (including the coast of any bay, inlet and estuary and the Gippsland Lakes) that is:

- a) reserved under section 4(1)(ze) of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 for the protection of the coastline or is otherwise reserved under that Act and is landward of low water mark; or
- b) unreserved Crown land under the Land Act 1958 that is landward of low water mark.

For clarity, Victoria's coastal reserves do not include any Crown land described as a park or marine sanctuary in Schedule 2, 2B, 3, 4, 7 or 8 to the *National Parks Act 1975* or any unreserved Crown land from low water mark to the outer limit of Victoria's coastal waters (mostly 3 nautical miles).

# BILL BORTHWICK STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS 2018

The Bill Borthwick Student Scholarships assist with some of the costs of research for students undertaking Honours, Masters or PhD research projects relating to public land in Victoria in the fields of natural sciences, humanities and social sciences, economics or politics. The scholarships were established in March 2011 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the first meeting of the Land Conservation Council (LCC) and to honour the vision of the Hon Bill Borthwick, a central figure in establishing the LCC to advise government on the use of Victoria's public land.

The 2019 scholarships were awarded by VEAC Chairperson, Ms Janine Haddow and Mrs Muffie Borthwick, wife of the late Bill Borthwick. Scholarships totalling \$4,820 were awarded to two recipients.



The recipients for the 2019 scholarships are:

## **Mr Darcy Watchorn, Deakin University**

*'Conserving threatened mammals in the face of fire and predation'*

Darcy's PhD research will assess how small ground-dwelling mammals respond post-fire to supplementary refuges (wire tunnels) where cats and foxes are present at 16 sites in the Otways. The cameras will enable data collection that would otherwise not be possible. For example, which species use the shelters and how they respond behaviourally. Darcy's research expects to provide a cost-effective new tool to reduce the threat of invasive predators on a range of threatened small mammals post-fire in many parts of the public estate.

The scholarship will assist in the costs of the purchase of infrared cameras to be placed within artificial shelters.

## **Ms Erlania Erlania, Deakin University**

*'Contributions of seaweed to carbon sequestration?'*

Erlania's research for her PhD seeks to develop biomarkers to quantify seaweed carbon from marine sediment. The project aims to advance understanding of the contributions of seaweeds to 'blue carbon' deposits and facilitate management practices that protect existing sequestered carbon and enhance future bio-sequestration. This information may influence future decision making for Victorian waters and coastal land.

The scholarship will assist with the cost of laboratory work to test the biomarkers.

# COMMITTEES

VEAC is required to establish a Community Reference Group to provide advice in respect of each investigation. Community Reference Groups are not required in respect of assessments or advice unless directed by the Minister or specified in the terms of reference. The Council may also appoint any committees that it considers necessary to assist with conduct of investigations.

## CENTRAL WEST INVESTIGATION COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP

The Central West Investigation Community Reference Group met three times in 2018-19.

NAME *	ORGANISATION
Ian Harris	Chairperson
John Petheram	Bushwalking Victoria (Ballarat Walking Club)
Ann McGregor	Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance Inc.
Wayne Hevey	Four Wheel Drive Victoria
Michelle Wyatt	Macedon Ranges Shire Council
Rita Bentley	Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria
Terry McAliece	Pyrenees Shire Council
Ken Gell	Central Victorian Apiarists Association
Tim Morrissey	Victorian Association of Forest Industries
John Edmonds	Victorian Farmers Federation
Matt Ruchel	Victorian National Parks Association
Wendy Radford	Wellsford Forest Conservation Alliance
Murray Ralph	Wombat ForestCare

\*Membership at 30 June 2019



## CONSULTANCIES

A consultant is a particular type of contractor that is engaged primarily to perform a discrete task for an entity that facilitates decision making through:

- provision of expert analysis and advice; and/or
- development of a written report or other intellectual output.

In 2018-19, there was six consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultant were \$10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2018-19 in relation to these consultancies was \$216,464 (excl. GST).

### Details of individual consultancies (valued at \$10,000 or greater)

CONSULTANT	PURPOSE OF CONSULTANCY	TOTAL APPROVED PROJECT FEE (EXCL. GST)	EXPENDITURE 2018-9 (EXCL. GST)	FUTURE EXPENDITURE (EXCL. GST)
Fathom Pacific Pty Ltd	Biotope classification for marine values assessment	\$25,000	\$25,000	Nil
Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations	Provision of traditional owners marine values review	\$75,800	\$75,800	Nil
Gillespie Economics	Socio economic profile of the Central West investigation area	\$14,000	\$14,000	Nil
Gillespie Economics	Stage 2 Socio economic profile of the Central West investigation area	\$65,000	\$65,000	Nil
Midas Consulting	Input-output modelling of the economic contribution of the timber industry	\$24,000	\$24,000	Nil
Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation	Central West Investigation traditional owner consultancy	\$11,664	\$11,664	Nil

In 2018-19, there were nine consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were less than \$10,000.

## DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

The Chairperson and all members completed Declarations of Private Interests.

Executive Officer, Ms Joan Phillips and Senior Project Manager Mr Paul Peake have also completed declarations.

All returns are confidential.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Council's operating funds were provided as part of recurrent funds appropriated to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

The financial operations of the Council have not been separately audited. Audited statements are incorporated into the overall Financial Statements of DELWP's Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2019. The table below shows expenditure incurred.

There were no significant changes in financial position during the reporting period.

EXPENSES	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Salaries and oncosts	1,406,817	1,123,174	1,129,791	1,049,113	744,707
Operating	955,873	431,045	505,048	272,314	302,852
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,362,689</b>	<b>1,554,219</b>	<b>1,634,839</b>	<b>1,321,427</b>	<b>1,047,559</b>

## WORKFORCE DATA

EMPLOYMENT	2019 (A)			2018 (B)		
Type	Male	Female	Total staff	Male	Female	Total staff
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9 (FTE 8.6)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11 (FTE 10.4)</b>

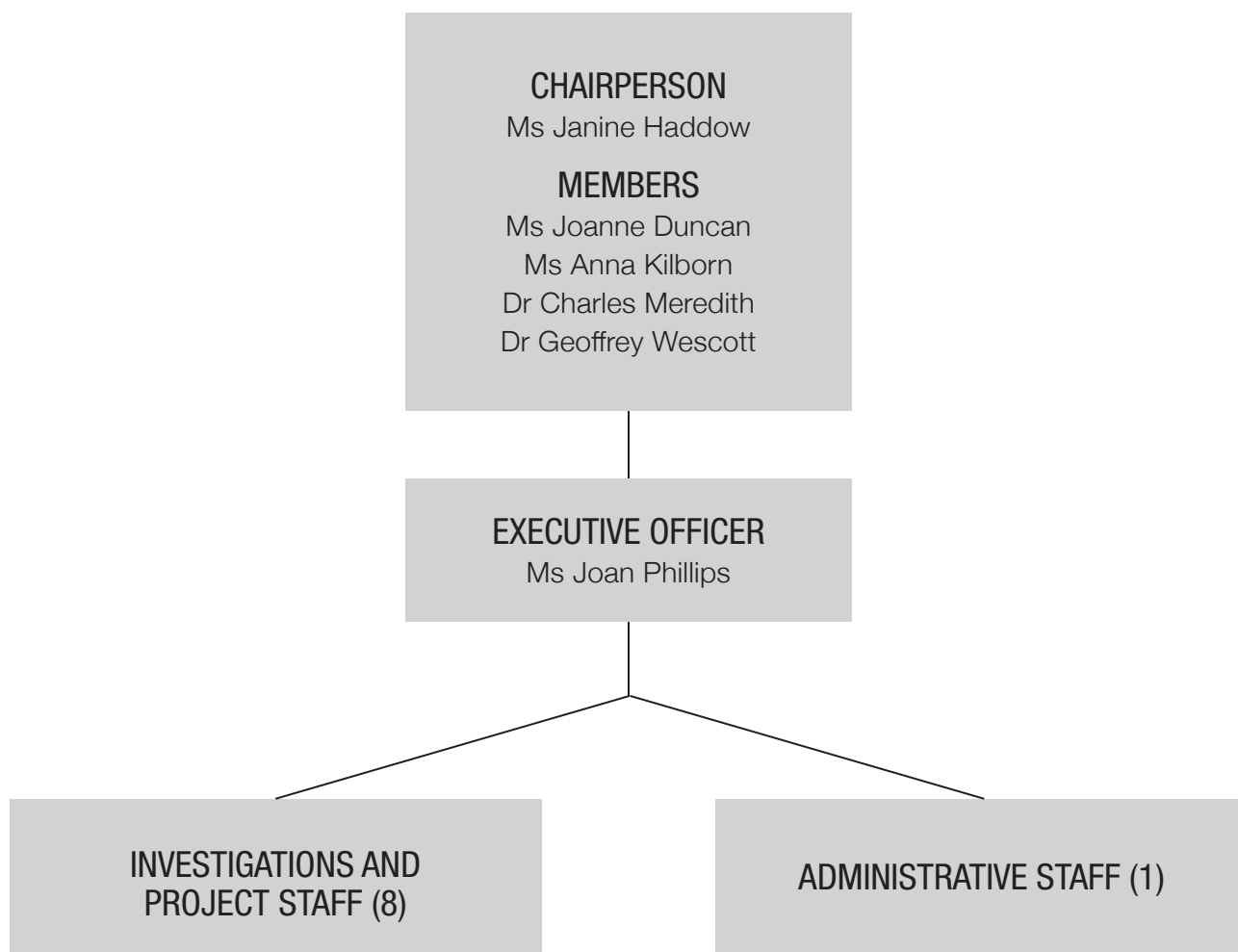
Notes:

(A) relates to payroll and contract staff as at 30 June 2019

(B) relates to payroll and contract staff as at 30 June 2018

Note: VEAC staff are also included in employment statistics for DELWP for 2018-19.

# ORGANISATION CHART



As at 30 June 2019.

## MERIT AND EQUITY

Victorian Public Service merit and equity principles are applied in the appointment and management of staff. VEAC follows the merit and equity principles used by DELWP, in accordance with Government directives and the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

Three primary goals have been assumed by VEAC with regard to people management practices:

- develop and sustain organisational culture in which policies, practices and services are adapted to the needs of the community
- ensure a workplace free from policies and practices that discriminate against staff or potential staff
- ensure that staff have access to a fair, efficient grievance review process to resolve perceived breaches of merit and equity.

## COMPLIANCE

The Council adheres to the principles of the National Competition Policy (NCP) to ensure that any business competition with private entities takes place in an environment where the Council has no unfair competitive advantages.

During the year, the Council did not enter into any contracts to which the *Local Jobs First Act 2003* applied.

In accordance with the reporting directions, the annual report must include a statement about compliance with the building and maintenance provisions of the *Building Act 1993*. The Council makes use of buildings and facilities controlled by DELWP to perform its functions and does not own or control any buildings.

The Council utilises DELWP's Occupational Health and Safety policies and procedures.

There were no major changes or factors affecting performance.

The Council is committed to the requirements of the Premier's Circular 2006/1, in relation to community inclusiveness, and applies these requirements in its operations where possible.

Government policy requires disclosure of all Government Advertising Expenditure with a total media buy of \$100,000 or greater (exclusive of GST). No Government Advertising Expenditure was incurred by the Council during the reporting period.

During 2018-19, VEAC did not enter into any contracts valued at over \$10 million.

## SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

The Government's aim of improved environmental management is supported by a requirement that Departments disclose their ongoing performance in managing and reducing the environmental impacts of their office-based activities. The Council makes use of DELWP offices and facilities to perform its functions and the reporting requirement of the office is met by DELWP. The Council secretariat participates fully in a range of environmental programs undertaken by DELWP, including:

- separation of reusable, recyclable, compostable and landfill waste
- use of Green Power
- use of flow restricted taps and waterless urinals
- use of recycled paper and use of duplex printing
- environmentally sustainable fitouts
- regular use by staff of public transport, cycling or walking to and from work.

# INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) EXPENDITURE

VEAC falls under the umbrella of DELWP in regards to ICT and providing business enabling ICT services. Please refer to DELWP Annual Report 2018-19.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* gives everyone the right to seek access to documents held by the Council. It is worth contacting the Council in the first instance to find out if you can access the information without making an FOI application.

FOI requests have to be made in writing and requests can be submitted to the Council by email to [veac@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:veac@delwp.vic.gov.au) or in writing to:

Freedom of Information Officer  
Victorian Environmental Assessment Council  
GPO Box 527  
Melbourne Vic 3001

The cost of an FOI application is \$28.90; however, there may be further charges depending on the time it takes to find the documents and photocopy them and the number of pages to be photocopied. Further information is available from the website FOI Online ([www.foi.vic.gov.au](http://www.foi.vic.gov.au)).

## OPERATIONS

For the 12 months ending 30 June 2019, there was one request. The request was from an individual. The request was closed as invalid under section 17 — request terms unclear — on 19 November 2018. Information was provided outside of the FOI process.

There were no requests outstanding as at 30 June 2019.



# PROTECTED DISCLOSURES ACT

The *Protected Disclosures Act 2012* (PD Act) enables people to make disclosures about improper conduct by public officers and public bodies. The Act aims to ensure openness and accountability by encouraging people to make disclosures and protecting them when they do.

## COMPLIANCE WITH THE *PROTECTED DISCLOSURES ACT 2012*

The PD Act was part of a package of integrity reforms introduced by the Victorian Government, which also established the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

The PD Act enables people to make disclosures about improper conduct within the public sector without fear of reprisal. It aims to ensure openness and accountability by encouraging people to make disclosures and protecting them when they do.

## WHAT IS A 'PROTECTED DISCLOSURE'?

A protected disclosure is a complaint of corrupt or improper conduct by a public officer or a public body.

VEAC is a 'public body' for the purposes of the Act.

## WHAT IS 'IMPROPER OR CORRUPT CONDUCT'?

Improper or corrupt conduct involves substantial:

- mismanagement of public resources; or
- risk to public health or safety or the environment; or
- corruption.

The conduct must be criminal in nature or a matter for which an officer could be dismissed.

## HOW DO I MAKE A 'PROTECTED DISCLOSURE'?

You can make a protected disclosure about VEAC or its board members, officers or employees by contacting DELWP or IBAC on the contact details provided below.

Please note that VEAC is not able to receive protected disclosures.

## HOW CAN I ACCESS DELWP'S PROCEDURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF PERSONS FROM DETRIMENTAL ACTION?

DELWP has established procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a protected disclosure about VEAC or its employees. You can access DELWP's procedures on its website at: [www.delwp.vic.gov.au](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au).

## CONTACTS

### Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)

Address: PO Box 500, East Melbourne Vic 3002  
Ph: 1800 903 877  
Website: [www.delwp.vic.gov.au](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au)

### Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria

Address: Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000.  
Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3001  
Internet: [www.ibac.vic.gov.au](http://www.ibac.vic.gov.au)  
Phone: 1300 735 135  
Email: see the website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures.

# INFORMATION PRIVACY ACT

VEAC complies with the ten information privacy principles in place that help to form the *Information Privacy Act 2000*. This includes handling the collection of personal information in a responsible manner. The coordinator of privacy issues for DELWP is:

Manager, Privacy  
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning  
PO Box 500, East Melbourne VIC 3002  
Telephone: (03) 9637 8697

# RISK MANAGEMENT

While VEAC examines the risk of delivery of its particular work functions and objectives on an ongoing basis, it relies on DELWP risk management framework and internal audit of financial and other administrative systems which are used by the VEAC's Secretariat. Please refer to the DELWP annual report for further information.

# GIFTS, BENEFITS AND HOSPITALITY ATTESTATION

I, Joan Phillips, Executive Officer of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council, certify that:

- my public entity has policies and procedures in place that are consistent with the minimum requirements and accountabilities outlined in the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Framework issued by the Public Sector Standards Commissioner; and
- staff are informed about these gifts, benefits and hospitality policies and procedures.

# COMPLIANCE WITH DATAVIC ACCESS POLICY

Consistent with the Victorian Government's DataVic Access Policy (2012), the Council intends that data tables that it may produce in the future will be available at <http://data.vic.gov.au/> in machine readable format.

# DISCLOSURE INDEX

The 2018-19 Annual Report of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council is prepared in accordance with all relevant Victorian legislation. This index has been prepared to facilitate identification of the Council's compliance with statutory disclosure requirements.

LEGISLATION	REQUIREMENT	PAGE NO
<b>ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER'S DECLARATION</b>		
SD 5.2.3	Declaration in report of operations	Back of title page
<b>CHARTER AND PURPOSE</b>		
FRD 22H	Purpose, functions, powers and duties	4
FRD 22H	Manner of establishment and responsible Minister	4,7
FRD 22H	Nature and range of services provided	8-13

LEGISLATION	REQUIREMENT	PAGE NO
<b>ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER'S DECLARATION</b>		
<b>FINANCIAL INFORMATION</b>		
FRD 22H	Operational and budgetary objectives	17
FRD 22H	Summary of the financial results for the year	17
<b>GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE</b>		
FRD 22H & SD2.2(f)	Organisational structure	18
FRD 22H	Occupational health and safety policy	19
FRD 22H	Employment and conduct principles	18, 22
FRD 29C	Workforce data disclosures	17
<b>OTHER INFORMATION</b>		
FRD 10	Disclosure index	23
FRD 25D	Local Jobs First	19
FRD 22H	Details of consultancies in excess of \$10 000	16
FRD 22H	Details of consultancies under \$10 000	16
FRD 22H	Major changes or factors affecting performance	19
FRD 22H	Disclosure of ICT expenditure	20
FRD 22H	Disclosure of government advertising expenditure	19
FRD12B	Disclosure of major contracts	19
FRD 22H	Application and operation of <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>	20
FRD 22H	Compliance with <i>Building Act 1993</i>	19
FRD 22H	Statement on National Competition Policy	19
FRD 22H	Application and operation of <i>Protected Disclosures Act 2012</i>	21
FRD 24D	Summary of office-based environmental performance impacts	19
FRD 22H	Statement of availability of other information	25
N/A	Risk management compliance attestation	22
N/A	Gifts, benefits and hospitality attestation	22
SD 4.2(g)	General information requirements	Entire document
MRO	Compliance with DataVic Access Policy	22
<b>LEGISLATION</b>		
<i>Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001</i>		4
<i>Building Act 1993</i>		19
<i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>		20
<i>Protected Disclosures Act 2012</i>		21
<i>Local Jobs First Act 2003</i>		19
<i>Disability Act 2006</i>		18
<b>PRINT AND DESIGN</b>		
FRD 30	Standard requirements for the design and print of annual reports	Entire document

## ACRONYMS

FRD – Financial Reporting Directions

SD – Standing Directions

MRO – Model Report of Operations

## STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY OF OTHER INFORMATION

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Direction of the Assistant Treasurer, details in respect to the items listed below have been retained by the Council and are available on request, subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

This information is available on request from:

Joan Phillips  
Executive Officer  
Victorian Environmental Assessment Council  
Phone: 9637 9902  
Email: [veac@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:veac@delwp.vic.gov.au)

- Publications produced by the entity about itself, and how these can be obtained

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION INCLUDED IN ANNUAL REPORT

Details in respect of the following items have been included in this report:

- Major research and development activities undertaken – see Investigations and Assessments
- Major promotional, public relations and marketing activities undertaken to develop community awareness of the Council and its services – see Investigations and Assessments
- A list of major committees sponsored by the entity, the purposes of each committee and the extent to which the purposes have been achieved – see Committees

### INFORMATION THAT IS NOT APPLICABLE TO THE COUNCIL

The following information is not relevant to the Council for the reasons set out below:

- Overseas travel undertaken including a summary of the objectives and outcomes of each visit - Nil
- Details of changes in prices, fees, charges and levies charged - Nil
- Assessments and measures undertaken to improve the Occupational Health and Safety of employees #
- A general statement on IR within the entity and details of time lost through industrial accidents and disputes #
- Major external reviews that were carried out on the Council - Nil

# See DELWP Annual Report 2018-19.

[www.veac.vic.gov.au](http://www.veac.vic.gov.au)