



Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
ANNUAL REPORT 13/14



Victorian
Environmental
Assessment
Council

www.veac.vic.gov.au



Hon Ryan Smith MP
Minister for 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 thirteenth Annual
Report, covering our activities for the period 1 July 2013
to 30 June 2014.



Chairperson
Victorian Environmental Assessment Council

29 August 2014

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CHAIRPERSON’S FOREWORD

During 2013-2014, the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council completed two major investigations and commenced a new investigation. We were pleased to submit to the Minister the final report on the Yellingbo Investigation in July 2013 and the final report on the Marine Investigation in April 2014. A new Investigation into Historic Places on public land began in March 2014. Also during this year, the government’s response to VEAC’s Investigation into Additional Prospecting Areas in Parks – completed in May 2013 – was tabled. The government’s response to the Yellingbo Investigation was tabled in March 2014. This was a wide-ranging and significant body of work, involving both scientifically rigorous analysis and assessment and comprehensive community consultation. The Council was also delighted to support four recipients with the costs of research relating to public land in the third round of the annual Bill Borthwick Student Scholarships.

The presence of three of Victoria’s fauna and flora emblems – two of them endangered - in the Yellingbo investigation area on Melbourne’s eastern fringe has mobilised both community and government conservation actions over many decades. The challenge for VEAC during the Yellingbo Investigation was to find ways to most effectively assist and strengthen the excellent work currently being carried out. The key element of the final recommendations was the establishment of an overarching conservation area under a new schedule of the National Parks Act to bring together and coordinate existing and future nature conservation activities on public land, thereby maximising the overall effectiveness of the work, increasing its profile and building further support. A coordinating committee was also recommended. The Council is very pleased that the Government has accepted its recommendations for the Yellingbo area.

VEAC’s Marine Investigation has been an opportunity for government and the community to consider how Victoria’s existing 30 marine protected areas are performing in meeting the purposes for which they were established. Two reports were completed during 2013-14. In November 2013 VEAC released a draft proposals paper for public comment and in April 2014 completed its full report on the investigation for submission to the Minister. The final report provided a formal evaluation of performance and management and made 38 recommendations to Government. In its report Council reaffirmed that the primary purpose for which Victoria’s 24 marine national parks and sanctuaries were established was to protect examples of Victoria’s biodiversity in as natural condition as possible, for the

long term. In practical terms this means reducing the manageable threats to natural biodiversity as far as possible. For the six multiple-use areas Council noted that the requirement to accommodate extractive uses, primarily fishing, fundamentally affects the degree to which biodiversity values can be protected.

In February 2014 the Government tabled its response to VEAC’s report on the Investigation into Additional Prospecting Areas in Parks, supporting the recommendations.

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change requested in March 2014 that VEAC carry out a statewide investigation into historic places on public land. Council is delighted to take on this timely work. In June 2014, we commenced a series of field inspections and began public consultation on the investigation by calling for public submissions.

The Council extends its gratitude to our executive officer Joan Phillips and her dedicated staff. We have also appreciated the substantial assistance from state government departments and agencies, local government, community organisations and many interested members of the public. Council could not carry out its responsibilities without the significant input over the past year of the specialist community reference groups for each of our investigations. Special thanks are also extended to the Department of Environment and Primary Industries who provide the administrative services and support for Council to carry out its work. It has been a pleasure to work with my fellow Council members over another challenging and productive twelve month period.



Phil Honeywood
Chairperson

VICTORIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT COUNCIL

OUR PURPOSE

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council was established under the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001* (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, our 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 investigative processes.

OUR FUNCTIONS

The Council:

- carries out investigations that are 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, inter-state 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 and Primary Industries (DEPI) (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. The site also contains links to past investigations and studies conducted by the Environment Conservation Council (ECC) and the Land Conservation Council (LCC).

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP



(L-R) Hon. Phil Honeywood, Mr Ian Harris, Dr Charles Meredith, Mr Ian Munro PSM, Ms Angela Reidy

Members of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council are appointed under the provisions of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*. Current members are Hon. Phil Honeywood (Chairperson), Mr Ian Harris, Dr Charles Meredith, Mr Ian Munro PSM and Ms Angela Reidy. All members were appointed on 5 May 2012 for three years.

Brief biographies of the current Council members follow:

Hon. Phil Honeywood (Chairperson)

Phil Honeywood held the Legislative Assembly seat of Warrandyte from 1988 to 2006. During this time his roles included Chairman of the Melbourne Parks and Waterways Advisory Council, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, Minister for Tertiary Education and Training, Minister assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs, Shadow Minister for Education, Deputy Leader of the State Opposition and Shadow Minister for the Environment. Since retiring from politics, Mr Honeywood has worked in senior management positions in the international education industry. He is currently National Executive Director of the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA), a peak industry body. Current community involvement includes Chairman of Victech (370 degrees), a not for profit Group Training Company, and being a volunteer adviser to the Bannelong Charitable Foundation

Mr Ian Harris

Ian Harris has more than 30 years experience in the planning and management of land for public use and conservation at both state and local government levels, including responsibility for statewide policy development and program implementation for national parks and flora and fauna protection. He has been manager responsible for the City of Melbourne parks, convenor of the National Parks Advisory Council and board member of the Australian and New Zealand Parks Forum. Mr Harris is also a sessional panel member with Planning Panels Victoria.

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. He is Deputy Chair of the EnviroDevelopment Advisory Board, and an Inaugural Fellow of the Environment Institute of Australia.

Mr Ian Munro PSM

Ian Munro is a consultant to the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation and to Regional Development Victoria, a board member of the Metropolitan Planning Authority and a former Deputy Secretary and CEO, Invest Assist in the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development. He has a comprehensive knowledge of government across areas including regional development, infrastructure, technology, the environment, and has chaired or been a member of numerous government expert committees and policy review committees.

Ms Angela Reidy

Angela Reidy has qualifications in civil engineering and business management with more than 25 years work experience in both the public and private sectors. Ms Reidy has been involved in projects and programmes with a range of environmental challenges including works in coastal zones and natural resource management. Much of her work has focused on infrastructure policy, feasibility, procurement and delivery. Ms Reidy is also a member of the Central Coastal Board.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Hon. Ryan Smith MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, was the Minister responsible for administering the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001* from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The Council met formally 11 times during the 2013-2014 financial year.

In addition, in relation to the Yellingbo, Marine and Historic Places investigations, members attended Community Reference Group meetings, field trips and briefings.

Council members' attendance at council meetings from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014

Name	Attendance (number of meetings)
Phil Honeywood	11 of 11
Ian Harris	11 of 11
Charles Meredith	11 of 11
Ian Munro	11 of 11
Angela Reidy	9 of 11

ADMINISTRATION

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council office is located on level 6, 8 Nicholson St, East Melbourne, 3002.

Telephone (03) 9637 9902

Fax (03) 9637 9024

Toll Free Number 1800 134 803 (from landlines)

Email veac@depi.vic.gov.au

Website www.veac.vic.gov.au

Executive Officer Ms Joan Phillips

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

YELLINGBO INVESTIGATION

In August 2011 the Minister for Environment and Climate Change requested VEAC to investigate the biodiversity and ecological values of public land within the Yellingbo Investigation area, identify threats to these values and make recommendations relating to management to conserve and enhance these values. The investigation was completed in the 2013-2014 year.

The Yellingbo investigation area lies east of Melbourne in the Upper Yarra Valley. It is located between the Dandenong Ranges and Yarra Ranges national parks. The towns of Yellingbo, Woori Yallock, Launching Place, Yarra Junction, Hoddles Creek, Cockatoo, Emerald, Monbulk and Seville are within the boundary of the investigation area.

The work program for the 2013-2014 year included:

- submission of the final report to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change on 31 July 2013
- public release of the report on 7 August 2013
- publication of an interactive web map to assist stakeholders and the general public view public land use recommendations for the investigation area
- response to questions related to the final recommendations to assist DEPI with co-ordination of the Government response.

The government response to VEAC's report was tabled in Parliament on 11 March 2014.

The Community Reference Group for the investigation met once in 2013-14. The membership of the Community Reference Group can be found on page 10.

Expenditure, including salaries and on-costs, for the Yellingbo Investigation for the 2013-14 financial year was \$87,873.

The Yellingbo Investigation terms of reference are contained in the following box:

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pursuant to section 15 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change hereby requests the Council to carry out an investigation into public land in the vicinity of the Yellingbo Conservation Reserve¹.

The purpose of the Yellingbo investigation is to:

- a** identify the biodiversity and ecological values in the specified area;
- b** identify the current and likely future threats to these values and opportunities to reduce or remove these threats; and
- c** make recommendations for appropriate management arrangements to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and ecological values.

In addition to the considerations in section 18 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, 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; and
- (iii)** the option of consolidating land status.

A draft proposals paper and a final report are to be prepared, allowing two public submission periods. A separate discussion paper is not to be prepared.

The Council must report on the completed investigation by 25 February 2013. *

¹ For this investigation the area concerned includes multiple separate areas of public land located between (but excluding) Dandenong Ranges National Park, Yarra Ranges National Park, Warburton and Powelltown State Forest, Kurth Kiln Regional Park, Cardinia and Silvan Reservoirs and water production areas within the boundary specified on the attached map of the investigation area. The public land includes the following areas that are accepted government recommendations from the Land Conservation Council Melbourne Area District 2:

- (i) Warramate Hills, Yellingbo and Sassafras Creek Nature Conservation Reserves,
- (ii) natural features reserves including (streams and frontages, Streamside area and Bushland areas); and
- (iii)Hoddles Creek and Haining Farm Education Areas.

* In July 2012 the Minister for Environment and Climate Change approved an extension of the date by which the Council must complete the investigation to 31 July 2013.

MARINE INVESTIGATION

In October 2011 the Minister for Environment and Climate Change requested VEAC to investigate the outcomes of the establishment of Victoria's existing marine protected areas. The investigation covered the 13 marine national parks, 11 marine sanctuaries, and 6 marine parks, marine reserves or marine and coastal parks established under schedules seven, eight and four respectively of the *National Parks Act 1975*. The investigation was completed in the 2013-2014 year.

The Marine Investigation included three public submissions periods with a final report initially required to be provided to the Minister by February 2014. In August 2013, the Minister extended the completion date for the investigation to 30 April 2014.

The final report on the Marine Investigation was submitted to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change on 30 April 2014, and publicly released on 7 May 2014. The work program for the 2013-2014 year also included:

- release of the Draft Proposals Paper for public comment from 27 November 2013 to 3 February 2014
- analysis of the views presented in submissions
- consultation with key relevant management agencies
- a field trip to further examine management issues identified in the investigation
- analysis of management arrangements and issues for the marine protected areas
- evaluation of the performance of the marine protected areas in meeting the purposes for which they were established
- preparation of material for the final report.

VEAC received 177 submissions on the Draft Proposals Paper. These submissions were reviewed by Council to guide development of its final recommendations. VEAC also met with the Community Reference Group for the investigation twice in 2013-14 to brief them on the Draft Proposals Paper and Final Report. The Community Reference Group met twice in 2013-14. The membership of the Community Reference Group can be found on page 10.

The final report contains VEAC's evaluation of the performance and management of Victoria's marine protected areas. It also contains Council's final recommendations to government. VEAC's evaluation was informed by advice provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee for the investigation during 2012-13. It was also informed by nine consultancies commissioned earlier in the investigation. The reports on these consultancies have been placed on the VEAC website alongside the final report as a resource for future management.

Expenditure, including salaries and on-costs, for the Marine Investigation for the 2013-14 financial year was \$454,025.

The Marine Investigation terms of reference are contained in the following box:

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pursuant to section 15 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change requests the Council to carry out an investigation into the outcomes of the establishment of Victoria's existing marine protected areas¹.

The purpose of the marine investigation is to examine and provide assessment of:

- a** the performance and management of existing marine protected areas in meeting the purposes for which they were established, particularly the protection of the natural environment, indigenous flora and fauna and other natural and historic values; and
- b** any ongoing threats or challenges to the effective management of existing marine protected areas, particularly in relation to the biodiversity and ecological outcomes.

In addition to the considerations in section 18 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Council must take into account the following matters:

- (i)** all relevant State Government policies and strategies, Ministerial statements and reports by the Victorian Auditor-General;
- (ii)** all relevant national and international agreements, policies and strategies, including ecosystem-based management approaches; and
- (iii)** relevant regional programs, strategies and plans.

Three public submission periods are to be held and a discussion paper and a draft proposals paper are to be prepared.

The Council must report on the completed investigation by February 2014*.

¹ For this investigation, marine protected areas means the 13 marine national parks, 11 marine sanctuaries, and 6 marine parks, marine reserves or marine and coastal parks established under schedules seven, eight and four respectively of the *National Parks Act 1975*.

* In August 2013 the Minister for Environment and Climate Change approved an extension of the date by which the Council must complete the investigation to 30 April 2014.

INVESTIGATION INTO
HISTORIC PLACES

In March 2014 the Minister for Environment and Climate Change requested VEAC to conduct an investigation into historic places on public land in Victoria. The investigation will look at the overall arrangements for the management of information, the management of places and the opportunities to improve the current arrangements. In addition, the terms of reference specify a particular focus on historic places that are currently difficult to manage.

The investigation includes two submission periods with a draft proposal paper to be prepared and a final report to be provided to the Minister on 31 March 2016. A separate discussion paper is not to be prepared.

A Notice of Investigation was published on 26 June 2014, and advertised in metropolitan daily and major regional newspapers calling for written submissions. An information booklet was prepared and widely distributed to assist the public in making submissions.

Council members and VEAC staff made one field inspection, visiting a range of historic sites on public land and meeting with land managers.

Expenditure, including salaries and on-costs, for the Historic Places Investigation for the 2013-14 financial year was \$227,941.

The terms of reference for the Investigation into Historic Places are contained in the box at right:

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This notice is made pursuant to section 15 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*.

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change hereby requests the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (the Council) to carry out a statewide investigation into historic places¹ on public land in Victoria.

The purpose of the Historic Places Investigation is to:

- (a) review current information and information sources on historic places on public land, including the representation of historical themes;
- (b) examine and provide an assessment of current information, management arrangements for historic places in Victoria and any issues and opportunities related to their future protection, use and sustainability; and
- (c) make recommendations for opportunities to improve management arrangements to conserve, protect and enhance the historic, community and educational values of these places, including the potential for sustainable use and adaptive re-use of historic assets.

In undertaking the investigation, the Council is requested to consider how best to manage and conserve the wide diversity of historic places on public land in the context of available resources, pressures on heritage places and emerging trends in heritage conservation. In particular, the investigation should focus on options for managing historic places that are currently difficult to manage.

In addition to the considerations in section 18 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Council must take into account the following matters:

- (i) relevant State Government legislation, policies and strategies, Ministerial statements and reports by the Victorian Auditor-General;
- (ii) agency databases for historic places assets;
- (iii) relevant regional programs, strategies and plans; and
- (iv) relevant agreements under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* and the *Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987*.

A draft proposals paper and a final report are to be prepared, allowing two public submission periods. A separate discussion paper is not to be prepared.

The Council must report on the completed investigation by 31 March 2016.

¹ For the purposes of this investigation, the term 'historic places' includes historic sites, buildings and associated objects. It does not include places associated with Aboriginal cultural heritage prior to contact with non-Aboriginal people (these are addressed by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*). It may include places relating to the post-contact period such as Aboriginal mission buildings.

BILL BORTHWICK STUDENT
SCHOLARSHIPS 2014

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 creation of the scholarships was announced by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the Hon. Ryan Smith MP, in March 2011 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the first meeting of the Land Conservation Council (LCC). The scholarships honour the vision of the Hon. Bill Borthwick, Victoria's first Minister for Conservation and Deputy Premier from 1981 to 1982, and a central figure in establishing the LCC to advise government on the use of Victoria's public land.

The 2014 scholarships were presented to the recipients by VEAC Chairperson, Hon. Phil Honeywood and Mrs Muffie Borthwick, wife of the late Bill Borthwick, at a function at the Royal Society of Victoria on 1 May 2014.

Scholarships totalling \$8000 were awarded to four recipients.

The recipients for the 2014 scholarships are:

Mr Kasun Ekanayake, Deakin University

"The role of Little Ravens as predators of eggs of other bird species in Victoria"

Kasun's PhD research will provide an understanding of Little Ravens (*Corvus mellori*) as a major egg predator on ground-nesting and burrow-nesting species, where they may have impacts greater than some mammalian predators such as foxes and feral cats. The Little Penguin colony at Phillip Island is severely impacted by predation of eggs by Little Ravens. Kasun's study uses GPS trackers and remote sensor cameras to investigate the Little Ravens behavioural ecology, management, space use and prey responses to the Little Ravens presence in habitat areas. This information will be beneficial for managing impacts on egg predation in conservation areas across Victoria. The scholarship will assist in the purchase of remote sensor cameras.

Mr Thomas Fairman, University of Melbourne

"Random or systematic effects? Determining the roles of fire behaviour, topography and morphology in the survival of large, old-growth obligate seeders after a cataclysmic wildfire"

Thomas's PhD research will add to current understanding about Mountain Ash Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus regnans*), a large old-growth obligate seeder found in South-Eastern Australia, and its survival after extreme fire events. To determine if tree survival is random or systematic, Thomas will examine fire behaviour and landscape effects using spatial analysis, fuel arrays in the field and tree structure. Thomas will also assess the morphology by observing tree level attributes including bark thickness, bark coverage and tree girth to establish if surviving trees are a hybrid of Mountain Ash and Stringybark Eucalyptus which may be more resilient to fire. The scholarship will assist in the costs of fieldwork.

Mrs Lynda Hanlon, University of Melbourne

"The ecological and geomorphological impacts of Sea Wheatgrass on beaches"

Lynda's PhD research seeks to understand the impacts Sea Wheatgrass (*Thinopyrum junceiforme*) as an invasive species has on the geomorphological processes of Victorian beach dunes and the ecological implications. The study will examine the creation of steep fronted incipient dunes caused by Sea Wheatgrass and the impacts on native bird nesting sites. Lynda's research will also provide new information about the interaction between ecological and geomorphological systems. The scholarship will assist in the cost of fieldwork.

Mr Christopher McGrannachan, Monash University

"Functional trait turnover in plant communities as a consequence of multispecies invasions"

Christopher's PhD research will establish the functional consequences of multispecies invasion of native plant communities and landscapes, from the perspective of functional traits such as plant life history and growth form, leaf and stem attributes and regenerative traits. These characteristics determine how plants cope in their local habitat and this research will provide information about changes in native plant community functional traits, including the traits that are altered or lost due to invasive plant species. These traits will be investigated along a gradient from lightly to heavily invaded systems in dry forest and box-ironbark forests in Victoria. Christopher's research will assist management of native plant communities by identifying elements likely to be detrimentally affected by invasive plant species. The scholarship will assist in the cost of fieldwork.

COMMITTEES

VEAC is required to establish a Community Reference Group to provide advice in respect of each investigation. The Council may also appoint any committees that it considers necessary to assist with conduct of investigations. Membership of committees is not restricted to members of the Council.

Yellingbo Investigation
Community Reference Group

There was one meeting of the Yellingbo Investigation Community Reference Group held during 2013-2014.

Name*	Organisation
Mr Don Saunders	Chairperson
Mr Ben Cullen	Trust for Nature
Mr David Finger	Victorian Farmers Federation
Mr Phil Ingamells	Victorian National Parks Association
Aunty Diane Kerr	Wurundjeri Tribe Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Inc.
Mr Jeff Latter	Woori Yallock Creek Park Alliance
Ms Dianne Luc	Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare Group
Ms Sharon Merritt	Country Fire Authority
Mr Euan Moore	Birdlife Australia
Ms Irene Pearey	Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Landcare Network
Ms Mary-Kate Hockey	Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
Mr Marty White	Yarra Ranges Council

*Membership at completion of investigation (31 July 2013)

Marine Investigation
Community Reference Group

The Marine Investigation Community Reference Group met twice during 2013-2014.

Name*	Organisation
Assoc Prof John Sherwood	Chairperson
Mr Simon Branigan	Victorian National Parks Association
Mr Rodney Carter	Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council
Mr Andrew Christie	Bachelor of Aquaculture program, NMIT
Mr Geoff Fisher	VRFish
Dr John Hawkins	Scuba Divers Federation of Victoria
Mr Ray Lewis	Victorian Environment Friends Network
Mr David Lucas	Native Title ServicesVictoria
Ms Kimberley Millers	Australian Marine Sciences Association (Victorian branch)
Ms Renee Vajtauer	Seafood Industry Victoria
Ms Kat Vcekla	Dive Industry of Victoria Association
Mr Andy Warner	Boating Industry Association of Victoria
Mr Jeff Weir	Dolphin Research Institute

*Membership at completion of investigation (30 April 2014)

Marine Investigation Scientific Advisory Committee

Advice was sought out of session from the Scientific Advisory Committee for the Marine Investigation during 2013–2014. The membership of the group at 30 April 2014 was as follows:

Members
Mr Rod Gowans, PSM (Chair)
Dr Alan Butler
Dr Scott Condie
Professor Allan Curtis (from April 2013)
Professor Peter Fairweather
Professor Gregory Jenkins
Professor Michael Keough
Associate Professor Sue Moore (from April 2013)
Dr Mark Norman
Associate Professor Mardie Townsend (from April 2013)
Dr Barry Wilson

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.

The definition of consultancy was updated effective from 1 July 2013. Consequently, disclosure on the 2013-2014 consultancy expenditure cannot be compared with previous year disclosures.

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

Consultant	Purpose	Start date	End date	Total approved project fee (exc. GST)	Expenditure 2013-14 (exc. GST)	Future expenditure (exc. GST)
				\$	\$	\$
Ray Supple	Advice and text on the management of historic places on public land in Victoria-for initial briefings and discussions, preparatory research, advice upon request	May 2014	June 2014	10,000	10,000	0

In 2013-2014, there was one consultancy where the total fees payable to the consultant were \$10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2013-2014 in relation to this consultancy was \$10,000 (exc.GST).

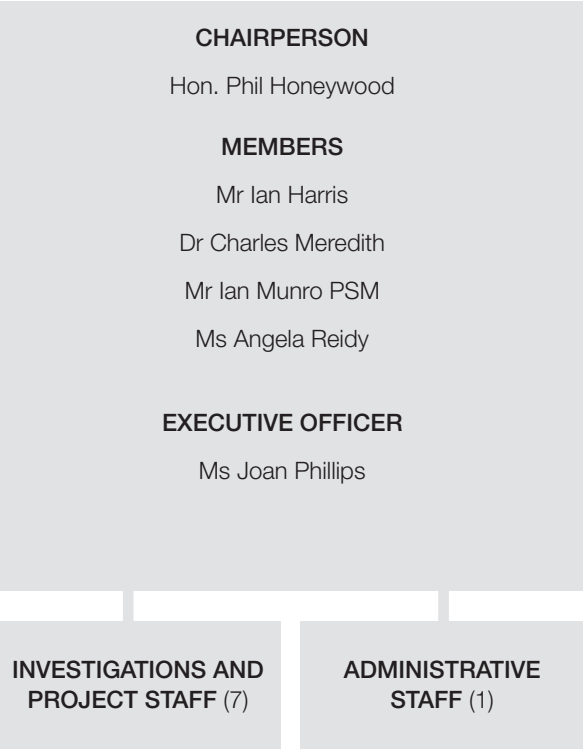
In 2013-2014, there were six consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were less than \$10,000. The total expenditure incurred during 2013-2014 in relation to these consultancies is \$20,210 (exc. GST)

DECLARATIONS OF
PRIVATE INTERESTS

The Chairperson and all members completed Declarations of Private Interests, which were forwarded to the Minister. Executive Officer, Ms Joan Phillips, completed a declaration which has been forwarded to the Minister.

All returns are confidential.

ORGANISATION CHART



As at 30 June 2014

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Council's operating funds were provided as part of recurrent funds appropriated to DEPI.

The financial operations of the Council have not been separately audited. Audited statements are incorporated into the overall Financial Statements of DEPI's Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2014. The table below shows expenditure incurred.

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

Expenses	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Salaries and oncosts	794,435	825,252	914,003	1,171,581	1,084,026
Operating	444,465	514,745	506,972	609,007	566,885
Total	1,238,900	1,340,027	1,420,975	1,780,588	1,650,911

WORKFORCE DATA

Employment	2014 (a)			2013 (b)		
	Male	Female	Total staff	Male	Female	Total Staff
Total	2	7	9	3	6	9

Notes:

a relates to payroll and contract staff as at 30 June 2014

b relates to payroll and contract staff as at 30 June 2013

Note: VEAC staff are also included in employment statistics for DEPI for 2013-2014.

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 DEPI, 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 area 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 *Victorian Industry Participation Policy 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 DEPI to perform its functions and does not own or control any buildings. The Council falls under DEPI in regard to environmental performance impact.

The Council utilises DEPI'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 \$150,000 or greater (exclusive of GST). No Government Advertising Expenditure was incurred by the Council during the reporting period.

During 2013-2014 VEAC did not enter into any contracts valued at over \$10 million.

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.

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@depi.vic.gov.au or in writing to:

Freedom of Information Officer
Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
Level 6
8 Nicholson St
East Melbourne Vic 3002

The cost of an FOI application is \$26.70; 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)

Operations

For the 12 months ending 30 June 2014, there were no valid requests. There were no requests outstanding as at 30 June 2014.

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 DEPI or IBAC on the contact details provided below.

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

How can I access DEPI’s procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action?

DEPI 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 DEPI’s procedures on its website at: www.depi.vic.gov.au

Contacts

Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI)
Jennifer Berensen, Senior Advisor, Privacy & Ombudsman
Department of Environment and Primary Industries

Address: PO Box 500, East Melbourne Vic 3002
Phone: 03 9637 8697
Website: www.depi.vic.gov.au

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

Address: Level 1, North Tower,
459 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3001
Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3000
Internet: 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 DEPI is:

Manager, Privacy

Department of Environment and Primary Industries
PO Box 500, East Melbourne VIC 3002
Telephone: (03) 9637 8697
E-mail: privacy.enquiries@depi.vic.gov.au

RISK MANAGEMENT

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

DISCLOSURE INDEX

The 2013-2014 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.
ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER’S DECLARATION		
SD 4.2(j)	Sign off requirements	2
Charter and purpose		
FRD 22E	Objectives, functions, powers and duties	3
FRD 22E	Manner of establishment and responsible Minister	3, 5
FRD 22E	Nature and range of services provided	6–8
Financial information		
FRD 22E	Operational and budgetary objectives	12
FRD 22E	Summary of the financial results	12
FRD 22E	Major changes or factors affecting performance	N/A
FRD 22E	Subsequent events	N/A
FRD 22E	Significant changes in financial position during the year	N/A
Governance and organisational structure		
FRD 22E & SD2.2(f)	Organisational structure	11
FRD 22E	Occupational health and safety policy	13
FRD 22E	Employment and conduct principles	13
FRD 29 & 22E	Workforce data disclosures	12
FRD 15E	Executive officer disclosures	11
Other information		
FRD 10	Disclosure index	15
FRD 25	Victorian Industry Participation Policy disclosures	13
FRD 22E	Details of consultancies in excess of \$10 000	11
FRD 22E	Details of consultancies under \$10 000	11
FRD 22D	Disclosure of Government Advertising Expenditure	13
FRD12A	Disclosure of major contracts	13
FRD 22E	Application and operation of <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>	13
FRD 22E	Compliance with <i>Building Act 1993</i>	13
FRD 22E	Statement on National Competition Policy	13
FRD 22E	Application and operation of the <i>Protected Disclosures Act 2012</i>	14
FRD 22E	Summary of environmental performance impact	13
FRD 22E	Statement of availability of other information	16
SD 4.5.5	Risk management compliance attestation	14
SD 4.5.5.1	Insurance attestation	N/A
PC 2012/02	Gifts, benefits and hospitality attestation	13
SD 4.2(g)	General information requirements	Entire document
LEGISLATION		
	<i>Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001</i>	3
	<i>Building Act 1993</i>	13
	<i>Financial Management Act 1994</i>	N/A
	<i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>	13
	<i>Protected Disclosures Act 2012</i>	14
	<i>Victorian Industry Participation Policy Act 2003</i>	13
PRINT AND DESIGN		
FRD 30	Standard requirements for the design and print of annual reports	Entire document

STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY OF OTHER INFORMATION

- Overseas travel undertaken including a summary of the objectives and outcomes of each visit – nil
- Assessments and measures undertaken to improve the Occupational Health and Safety of employees #
- Publications produced by the entity about itself, and how these can be obtained *
- A general statement on IR within the entity and details of time lost through industrial accidents and disputes – not applicable
- Major research and development activities undertaken – see Investigations
- Major promotional, public relations and marketing activities undertaken by the entity to develop community awareness of the Council and its services – see Investigations
- 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
- Major external review that were carried out on the Council - nil

See DEPI Annual Report

* This information is held by the Executive Officer and can be made available to Ministers, Members of Parliament and the public on request.