

ANGAHOOK-OTWAY INVESTIGATION FINAL REPORT

VICTORIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT
COUNCIL



NOVEMBER 2004

WHAT IS VEAC?

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) was established in 2002 (under the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*), replacing the Environment Conservation Council (ECC) as the body providing the State Government with independent advice on strategic public land-use planning. Council members are detailed below:

(Inaugural Chairman) Dr Brian Robinson, AM, FTSE, B.Sc., Ph.D. – see obituary below.

(Current Chairman) Mr Duncan Malcolm – currently Chairman of the Gippsland Coastal Board and Watermark Inc. Duncan has also served as Chairman of the Lakes and Wilderness Tourism Association and of the Irrigation Association of Australia. He is a current board member of the Irrigation Association of Australia and member of the Victorian Coastal Council.

Dr Sarah Ewing, B.Sc. (Hons), M.Sc., Ph.D., Grad.Dip.Ed. – currently a member of the Victorian Catchment Management Council and formerly a deputy member of the Australian Landcare Council, Sarah has many years experience in catchment and natural resource management issues.

Dr David Mercer, BA (Hons), Ph.D., Dip.Ed. – fellow of The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand, David has broad expertise in natural resource management, recreation and tourism and a highly regarded academic background in geography.

Mrs Eda Ritchie, Grad.Dip.Bus. – former member of the Environment Conservation Council, Trust for Nature Board and the Chair of the Western Region Coastal Board and current member of Melbourne University Council and trustee R.E. Ross Trust, Eda also has a farming background.

OBITUARY – DR BRIAN ROBINSON

Council members and staff were greatly saddened at the passing of VEAC's inaugural Chairman, Dr Brian Robinson, on 30 April 2004. Although his period at VEAC was regrettably brief, Brian quickly established effective working relationships, principles and an identity for the new organisation. His leadership and energy will be sorely missed.

Brian Robinson brought to VEAC a wealth of experience across a broad range of environmental issues. He gained his Ph.D in Melbourne in chemical engineering before being employed in the private sector in Britain and Ireland. However, his name will always be associated with Victoria's Environment Protection Authority (EPA) where he worked for over 25 years – the last 15 as Chairman – until he retired in 2002.

His work at the EPA spanned a very broad range of often controversial environmental issues but he is particularly remembered for his commitment to embedding the principles of ecologically sustainable development in government, private sector and community decision making. He was widely known for his commitment to liaising with the full range of stakeholders relevant to any issue – from local communities to interstate and international governments.

Brian's breadth of experience in sustainable development and natural resource management closely matched VEAC's purpose: to provide advice to the Victorian Government on ecologically sustainable management of the environment and natural resources of public land. Rather than wind-down in retirement, he took to the role with energy and enthusiasm. Soon after VEAC was established in July 2002, Brian set the direction for VEAC's Angahook-Otway Investigation. His experience in dealing with complex environmental issues, and consulting with a range of stakeholders, proved valuable in the Otways. He enjoyed the Otways field trips, consultation with local people, and gaining inspiration from the forests and coast.

Brian was very public-spirited and, in addition to VEAC, took on a variety of extra roles flowing from his expertise. However, when the Angahook-Otway Investigation became more demanding, he reduced some of his other roles to allow him to give more attention to VEAC. Even in hospital Brian was keen to see his Council papers and draft chapters, and maintained his lively interest in current affairs, despite the pain of his illness and treatment.

Brian's last legacy to the Victorian people will be VEAC's recommendations for the Otways. Brian and the other Councillors saw a need to simplify the public land use framework and improve the integration and coordination of public land management. While this report draws on the views of many stakeholders and contributors, it very strongly reflects his vision.



VICTORIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT COUNCIL



24 November 2004

The Honourable John Thwaites MP
Minister for the Environment
Parliament House
Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Minister

ANGAHOOK-OTWAY INVESTIGATION

In accordance with the requirements of Section 23 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council is pleased to submit to you the Final Report for the Angahook-Otway Investigation and copies of each submission received in relation to the Investigation.



Duncan Malcolm
Chairman

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MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL

The Otways is one of the most cherished parts of Victoria. It is one of our major tourist regions with attractions ranging from the internationally famous Great Ocean Road, to some of the world's finest beaches. The landscape includes a beautiful hinterland with its waterfalls, magnificent tall forests, ancient rainforest gullies and highly productive agricultural land.

The Victorian Government requested the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) to recommend the boundaries for a single national park in the Otway Ranges and to identify any other public land that should be added to the park and reserve system. VEAC was also required to take into account the environmental, economic and social consequences of recommendations and the effects on any existing or proposed use of the environment and natural resources.

The recommendations in the Draft Proposals Paper published earlier this year were developed after extensive consultation with the community. Since the Draft Paper, there has been further extensive consultation resulting in significant changes to the recommendations in this Final Report. Consultation has revealed many and varied views on how the Otways area should best be managed now and into the future. Reconciling the differing views for the area has been a difficult task and we have sought to cater for these varying demands while protecting the area for current and future generations. The diverse views of the people who live and work in the area are of particular importance and we have endeavoured at every stage to thoroughly consider their views.

We have sought to develop recommendations that reflect the optimum combination of environmental, social and economic objectives for the area now and into the future and to complement other programs, such as the Great Ocean Road Region strategy, that address more general issues.

Our recommendations are intended to balance competing demands and assist in establishing a seamless and integrated management framework over the large areas of public land in the region, which will both protect them and enable further development of benefit to the whole community. We hope that the community will see the recommendations as a key component in planning for a stable and prosperous future in a sustainably managed and well-protected Otways region.

The recommended major new Otway Ranges National Park and the existing marine national parks will form an almost continuously linked stretch of public land and water from the inland plains to the ocean. These highly protected areas will be complemented by a large forest park and smaller areas of public land catering to a range of recreational and other uses, in addition to private land

for residential, farming, and business occupation. The Great Ocean Road and other key roads traversing the region will also be maintained to ensure that the values that have attracted people to the area will be protected into the future.

Council appreciates greatly the assistance the community has given and particularly the hundreds of thoughtful and often detailed written submissions we have received.

Finally we again wish to pay tribute to our inaugural Chairman, Dr Brian Robinson, who sadly passed away early this year. We acknowledge his leadership for much of this Investigation particularly in the crucial early stages when VEAC's vision and draft proposals were developed. The emphasis on integrated management across all public land owes much to the initial vision of Dr Robinson and we would like to think that VEAC's work in the Otways will stand with Brian's long list of other achievements as a cherished legacy for future generations.

Mr Duncan Malcolm
(Chairman)

Dr David Mercer

Dr Sarah Ewing

Mrs Eda Ritchie





THIS FINAL REPORT

This Final Report is the third report published as part of VEAC's Angahook-Otway Investigation, following the Discussion Paper published in September 2003 and the Draft Proposals Paper published in May 2004. This Report contains VEAC's final recommendations for the Angahook-Otway study area, based on information on the values and uses of public land in the Otways (largely as presented in the Discussion Paper) and information and views in nearly 1900 written submissions received. The recommendations for public land are shown in Map A in the back pocket.

This Report is intended to be as self-contained as possible, providing all the key information directly relevant to the recommendations themselves. Some readers, though, may wish to access the more comprehensive and detailed information contained in the previously published Discussion Paper. Copies of the Discussion Paper are available from the same locations as this Final Report, including the free downloads at the VEAC website www.veac.vic.gov.au

Under the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Minister for the Environment is required to table this Final Report in each House of Parliament within seven sitting days of receiving it. The Government then has up to six months to consider the Report, and table a statement of its response to the Report no later than the next sitting day after that six month period. The response must specify the action (if any) proposed to be taken by the Government with respect to each recommendation, and be made public within seven days.

After the introductory section (chapter 1) there are three major parts to this report:

Part 1 (chapters 2 to 5) provides the recommendations themselves, including general recommendations for the entire study area (chapter 2), and specific recommendations for the establishment of the Otway Ranges National Park (chapter 3), Otway Forest Park (chapter 4) and for other public land (chapter 5).

Part 2 (chapters 6 to 12) discusses the issues raised in the preceding stages of the investigation in the context of their bearing on the recommendations.

Part 3 (chapter 13) analyses the social, economic and environmental implications of the recommendations, including for the key public land uses and values of the Otways.

At the end of the report are a series of appendices containing the following information:

- Appendix 1 presents both a summary of proposals and the VEAC response to main proposals made in submissions to this investigation;
- Appendix 2 lists the scientific names and conservation status of all plant and animal species mentioned in the text;
- Appendix 3 provides a report on the outcome of consultation with Aboriginal communities;
- Appendix 4 is a summary of the environmental, social and economic implications of the recommendations;
- Appendix 5 is a list of submissions received over the entire investigation; and
- Appendix 6 provides a list of members of the Community Reference Group and Government Contact Group for this investigation.

SUMMARY OF FINAL REPORT

The Otways

At the broadest level, the key overall outcome of the recommendations in this Final Report will be a simplified pattern of public land use, managed with a high level of coordination and integration between land-use categories.

This simplification and increased management integration will provide a range of community benefits, including improved understanding of public land and its management; more streamlined access to public land management and planning; more effective conservation of biodiversity, and management of recreation and tourism activity; and more secure water supply protection.

Simplification of public land-use is largely achieved by allocating the majority of public land to two main categories—the Otway Ranges National Park and the Otway Forest Park.

The objective of placing the majority of public land in two units is to provide a framework for improved and cost-effective public land management, with seamless management across the two units ensuring maximum benefits and clarity of responsibilities for all stakeholders.

The **Otway Ranges National Park** covers 102,470 ha, linking the existing Otway National Park, and Angahook-Lorne, Carlisle, and Melba Gully State Parks and many state forest areas and smaller reserves. The recommended national park will provide for biodiversity conservation and a range of exciting opportunities for visitors to the region and encompasses a range of environments, including the majestic mountain forests, spectacular coastal views along the Great Ocean Road and inland waterfalls.

The **Otway Forest Park** encompasses some 39,265 ha and provides for recreation, nature conservation and minor resource utilisation. This new category is similar to the existing state forest and regional park categories, and has been developed in response to the desire for a diverse range of recreation activities in the natural environment of the Otways. Compared to state forest, the forest park category is focussed more strongly on recreational use and protection of natural values, and significantly less strongly on commercial resource utilisation. The forest park category has broad applicability, unlike regional parks which are generally associated with particular towns.

Conservation Reserve System

VEAC's recommendations more than double the total area of permanent conservation reserves from the existing 49,340 ha to 108,542 ha. The total area with the highest level of protection—in national or state parks—will increase from 38,690 ha to 102,470 ha.



The recommended reserve system has been designed to maximise protection of natural values, particularly where protection in reserves is a key conservation requirement. This approach results in much better representation of threatened species sensitive to major habitat disturbance and requiring large contiguous areas of habitat (such as the spot-tailed quoll and masked owl) than is currently the case.

In addition, the new reserve system significantly increases the representation of a number of key vegetation types that are currently poorly protected in permanent reserves: lowland forest, herb-rich foothill forest, and cool temperate rainforest, for example. Old-growth and senescent forests are well represented in the national park.

Outside the permanent conservation reserve system, the Otway Forest Park will also offer protection for natural values. Here, significant values at particular sites—such as waterfalls, historic places, threatened species and poorly represented vegetation types—are to be protected. Furthermore, reduced emphasis on commercial resource utilisation (particularly after the phase-out of logging and woodchipping by 2008) will reduce pressure on natural values.

Finally, the integrated management framework will enhance biodiversity conservation by improving management arrangements which will lead, for instance, to more coordinated control of pest plants and animals on a regional basis.

Recreational Access

The Otways region is an important and popular location for a wide range of recreational pursuits from fishing and four wheel driving, to walking and bird watching. VEAC keenly appreciates the need to ensure that opportunities for such activities are maintained under its recommendations.

A key objective of forest park is the provision of opportunities for recreational pursuits in enjoyable natural settings. Dog walking, dispersed camping and hunting are some of the activities that are specifically catered for within the forest park, along with other active pursuits such as trail and mountain bike riding. Of course, more passive undertakings such as nature study, walking and sightseeing will also be able to take advantage of the considerable natural assets of the forest park.

The recommended national park, while protecting conservation values, also offers facilities and access to key natural assets such as waterfalls and rainforest. Provision of access for many popular recreational pursuits including four wheel driving and bushwalking will continue on the roads and tracks across the Otways. Localised areas within the national park can accommodate activities such as horseriding and dog walking that, more generally, are not compatible with national park values.

Industries and Commercial Uses

In preparing its recommendations, VEAC has endeavoured to minimise the negative effects on industries operating on public land in the Otways. In summary, implications for each industry are as follows:

Tourism: Tourism is the largest industry in the Otways, and VEAC's recommendations will allow this dynamic industry to continue its rapid expansion while ensuring that the natural values on which it depends are protected.

Sawlog and Woodchip Harvesting: Sawlogging and woodchipping will be allowed in the forest park until 2008 when the Government's phase-out of these industries from public land in the Otways will come into effect.

Other Forest Produce: Large areas of forest park are recommended to remain available for sustainable harvesting of firewood and other forest products, such as tea tree stakes, under licence or permit. Harvesting of these products will not be permitted in the recommended national park and nature conservation reserves, requiring some people to travel further to obtain their produce.

Extraction of Sand, Gravel and Stone: The Otways public lands are an important source for many extractive industry products and no current operations will be adversely affected by the recommendations. Current operations will continue either outside the national park or under provisions of the *National Parks Act 1975*. New licences can be issued in all public land categories (generally subject to approval by the Minister for the Environment) except the national park.

Mining and Exploration: There are no operating mines on public land in the study area, although some public land is subject to exploration licences. It is recommended that these licences be allowed to continue under provisions of the *National Parks Act 1975*, where relevant. New licences can be issued in all public land categories (generally subject to approval by the Minister for the Environment) except the national park and reference areas.

Agriculture: There are around 602 current licences, covering about 2138 ha, for grazing domestic stock on public land in the Otways. Only a small percentage of these licences (seven percent by number or eight percent by area) will be affected by the recommendations—all or part of 39 licences, covering about 196 ha will be cancelled.

Commercial Fishery: Lake Elizabeth and reaches of the lower Aire and Gellibrand Rivers and some adjoining public land are recommended for inclusion in the Otway Ranges National Park, and commercial eel harvesting will be phased out of these areas over a ten-year period (immediately at Lake Elizabeth). Other areas outside the recommended national park and nature conservation reserves and currently available for commercial fishing will remain so.

Apiculture: Beekeeping is a relatively minor industry on public land in the Otways, with only three designated sites. While areas near these sites (in the forest park, in the Alcoa lease area and on freehold land) will be available for apiculture, the sites themselves are within an area recommended for inclusion in the Otway Ranges National Park and, consequently, will be closed.

Great Ocean Road

The Great Ocean Road, and the towns, countryside and spectacular natural environment that it traverses, is a tremendous asset to the local and broader community. The very attractiveness of this asset, however, is placing great pressure on the road itself—traffic at times exceeds the road's capacity and poorly planned development along the road is a significant threat to the region's character and natural environment. It is VEAC's strong view that the general character of the road and the region it traverses should be maintained and, in particular, that protection of the adjoining scenic and natural environment is paramount to protecting the touring experience visitors from around the world come to enjoy.

To this end VEAC is recommending that the Great Ocean Road be restricted to a defined road reserve, that roadside vegetation be managed cooperatively between the managers of the road and of adjoining public land, and that any works outside that road reserve require the consent of the adjoining public land manager. To maintain the existing clarity, workability and consistency of management along its length, it is recommended that the Great Ocean Road continue to be managed primarily by VicRoads and not be included in the Otway Ranges National Park.



Table 1. Summary Table of VEAC Angahook-Otway Recommendations for Each Public Land Category

Category	Existing Area (ha)	Recommended Area (ha)
Major Categories		
National Park	11,755	102,470
Forest Park	-	39,265
Other Public Land		
State Park	26,935	0
Regional Park	665	0
Nature Conservation Reserve	6555	5040
Coastal Reserve	925	710
Natural Features Reserve	7170	2970
Water Production	905	1145
Historic and Cultural Features Reserve	1230	0
Community Use Area	1170	815
State Forest	92,030	0
Plantation (not leased or licensed)	100	0
Earth Resources	445	315
Services and Utilities	575	795
Uncategorised Public Land	3885	815
Land Not Required for Public Purposes	2780	2780
Total Extent of Public Land included in the Investigation	157,125	157,125
Public Land Leased or Licensed for Plantations – not included in the Investigation	5850	5850
Freehold	174,505	174,505
Total Extent of Study Area	337,480	337,480
Overlays (areas included in the totals above)		
Reference Area (in various categories above)	2170	3145
Heritage River (in various categories above)	820	1160

Note: The areas in this table are rounded-off to the nearest five hectares. The areas are mostly derived from GIS mapping and, for the existing areas, may differ from (generally less precise) area statements published elsewhere (in association with the listing of areas in various Acts of Parliament, for example). Road reserves have not been comprehensively mapped—accordingly, the areas given in this table for 'Services and Utilities' and 'Total Extent of Public Land' are underestimated and that for 'Freehold' correspondingly overestimated. Some of the existing areas differ from those in the Discussion Paper, reflecting subsequent corrections to the status attributed to many parcels of land. The variation in total areas of public land, freehold land and extent of the study area arise entirely from corrections to the VEAC database. VEAC has not and will not make any changes to the boundaries of freehold land. Land not required for public purposes is not shown on Map A.

LIST OF CHANGES TO RECOMMENDATIONS SINCE THE DRAFT PROPOSALS PAPER

Notes:

1. Where recommendations for the Draft Proposals Paper are referred to, these are in brackets (e.g. formerly OP1).
2. This is a summary only. Numerous minor changes are not listed and the extent and reasons for changes not always fully described. For details of changes, readers should refer to the relevant chapter of the report.
3. The numerous changes to the general text have not been listed. These respond to and address a large range of issues arising from Council's consultation, and in particular as raised in submissions.

Final Report Recommendation	The Change	The Reason
General Recommendations		
R1 Public land-use (formerly OP1)	Deletion of references to Otways Park.	Responds to concerns and uncertainties expressed about the Otways Park concept and reduces the number of categories. Emphasis on coordinated management, including use of only two major land-use categories, has been retained.
R2 Declared water supply catchments (formerly OP3)	No change.	
R3 Reference areas (formerly OP4)	No change.	
R4 Heritage rivers (formerly OP5)	No change.	
R5 Great Ocean Road and other key roads (formerly OP6 & OP7)	Recommendations for Great Ocean Road and other key roads combined.	Reduces duplication.
R6-R9 Implementation recommendations (new recommendations)	New recommendations that the Government allocates additional resources to implement VEAC's recommendations, to manage public land and provide for assistance to those adversely affected. A new recommendation provides for minor boundary amendments to be made during implementation.	Addresses community concerns about the current level of resources and makes explicit Council's intention for resourcing of its recommendations and assisting those adversely affected. Enables limited flexibility when the park and reserve boundaries are being surveyed for implementation.
R10-R11 Coordinated management planning and advisory committees (formerly part of OP1)	Defines mechanisms for coordinated planning and the use of advisory committees.	Defines an explicit process for coordinated planning and responds to community proposals for greater involvement in on-going public land management and planning decision-making processes.
R12 Enhancing Aboriginal involvement (formerly OP2)	Increases emphasis on steps towards joint management and extends opportunities to cover capacity building, a possible cultural/interpretation centre and traditional use.	Adopts some of the suggestions made by Aboriginal groups as part of VEAC's consultation project.

National Parks		
A1 Otway Ranges National Park - text	<p>Addition of an explicit reference to motor bike touring, amended provision for continuation of horseriding, removal of provision for new constructed accommodation, inclusion of process for new utility infrastructure and provision for dogs on a limited number of tracks.</p> <p>Deletion of reference to harvesting of plantations and thinnings, proposed dogwalking area, and special provision for firearms at Barongarook.</p> <p>Phase out commercial eel fishing.</p> <p>Addition of requirement to restore harvested areas and work with neighbours on pest control.</p>	<p>Responds to detailed concerns and suggestions made by recreational groups and others.</p> <p>Where pine removal or tree thinning is required, this is now considered better dealt with as a management issue not as a form of harvesting. Special provision for firearms at Barongarook are no longer required due to changes made to the park boundary.</p> <p>Commercial eel fishing occurs in both the existing Otway National Park and in areas now recommended for inclusion in the Otway Ranges National Park. It is to be phased out as it is incompatible with the management objectives of the park and with the protection of natural values.</p>
A1 Otway Ranges National Park - boundaries (from west to east)	Addition of 9565 ha to the proposed national park. Areas totalling 5300 ha have been excluded and allocated to other land-use categories. A net area increase of 4265 ha.	Details follow.
Extension of Mt Ackland block	Addition of 372 ha to national park (formerly B1 forest park).	Provides protection to a contiguous area of high quality forest identified in submissions and consolidates park boundaries.
Moonlight Head Cemetery	Exclusion of existing cemetery (now H2 service and utility area).	At the time it published its Draft Proposals Paper, VEAC understood that this cemetery was closed for burials. New information clearly indicates that this is not the case and therefore it is retained as a cemetery rather than as an historic feature in the national park.
Kennedys Creek block	Addition of 2354 ha to national park (formerly B1 forest park).	Redresses poor representation of some ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) in the Warrnambool Plain Bioregion in the permanent reserve system.
Tomahawk Creek block	Exclusion of 1612 ha (now C2 Coradjil Nature Conservation Reserve).	Responds to concerns raised about the undesirability of isolated blocks being in the national park, while still providing protection for poorly represented EVCs in this block with little recreation potential.
Gellibrand River escarpment	Exclusion of 1152 ha (now B1 forest park).	Responds to concerns raised about the undesirability of lower value, narrow areas being included in the national park.
Extension to Arkins Creek / Carlisle River block	Addition of 1325 ha to national park (formerly B1 forest park).	Protects undisturbed forest and enhances link between adjoining national park blocks by now including the entire catchment.
Little Aire Falls (VicTree) block	Exclusion of 74 ha (now I2 uncategorised public land).	Facilitates opportunities to develop this well-located but modified block for tourist and educational development.

Northern sector of Barongarook block	Exclusion of 1922 ha (now B1 forest park).	Responds to local requests to allow for multi-use activities currently undertaken in this area and avoids conflict with inlier areas of intensive use and sandmining.
Barwon Downs	Exclusion of 318 ha (now B1 forest park).	Responds to community requests seeking area for horseriding, dogwalking and firewood collection outside the national park.
Callahans Creek weir buffer	Exclusion of 49 ha (now E10 Water Production Area).	Provides for ongoing access to weir infrastructure and adjoining buffer over Barwon Water freehold land.
Middle Spur block	Addition of 905 ha to national park (formerly B1 forest park).	Gives a solid link to an outlier of the park and encompasses additional areas of forest sought for protection.
West Barwon Catchment	Addition of 3906 ha to national park (formerly B1 forest park).	Responds to submissions, protects special values including rainforest, rare and threatened species, and significant historic features, and consolidates quoll habitat and park boundaries.
Storm Point coast	Exclusion of 58 ha of coastal strip west of Marengo (now F1 coastal reserve).	Avoids a long narrow section of national park that abuts farmland.
Skenes Creek block	Addition of 114 ha to national park (formerly B1 forest park).	Encompasses an outlier of remnant forest to provide consistency of management and continuity of habitat.
Part of Kennett and Wye River water frontages	Addition of 18 ha to national park (formerly B1 forest park).	Encompasses adjoining areas of riparian vegetation into the park.
Cumberland River camping ground	Exclusion of 13.6 ha (now part of F2 Lorne–Anglesea coastal reserve).	Responds to request from local foreshore committee to retain area containing caravan park lease.
West Lorne	Addition of 133 ha to national park (formerly B1 forest park).	Protects high quality forests and creates more logical boundaries matching topographic features where possible.
Stony Creek water frontage	Exclusion of 2.5 ha of water frontage east of Lorne (now D19 bushland reserve).	Responds to suggestions that the use and management of this area better fits with bushland reserve status than national park.
Anglesea cliff top heathlands	Addition of 42.3 ha to national park (formerly part F2).	Responds to new information identifying threatened plant species, protects high quality coastal heathland and improves link between park sectors.
Part of Eumeralla Education Area	Addition of 4.9 ha to national park (formerly part G2) and exclusion of 17.5 ha to education area (formerly A1 national park).	Realigns boundaries between the national park and education area to better match geographic features and existing use.
Coastal strip from Wongarra to Carisbrook Falls	Exclusion of 55.4 ha from Wongarra to Carisbrook Falls (now added to F1 coastal reserve).	Avoids a long narrow section of national park that abuts farmland.
Queens Park	Exclusion of 17.6 ha to G4 community use area	Responds to importance of Queens Park and Teddys Lookout to local community, provides for local management and reflects values of the area.
A2 Joint Management Arrangements	Reference to joint management arrangements of water storage buffer areas deleted.	Buffer areas are included within water production areas and not in the national park.

Forest Parks		
B1 Otway Forest Park - text	<p>Addition of specific provision for hunting, more detailed recommendations for minor forest products, and reference to track classification systems.</p> <p>Deletion of reference to recreational fishing on river frontages.</p> <p>Requirement to restore harvested areas.</p>	<p>Responds to detailed concerns and suggestions made by recreational groups and others.</p> <p>Special provision for fishing no longer required as river frontages are no longer in the forest park.</p>
B1 Otway Forest Park - boundaries (from west to east)	Addition of 3425 ha to the forest park. Areas totalling 11,965 ha excluded and allocated to other land-use categories. A net area decrease of 8540 ha.	Details follow.
Kennedys Creek block	Exclusion of 2652 ha (now A1 national park).	As described above (see A1).
Latrobe Bushland Reserve	Exclusion of 298 ha (now D1 bushland reserve).	Responds to requests not to downgrade this block of remnant vegetation from its current bushland reserve status, and reflects its low value for multi-use forest park activities.
Mt Ackland block	Exclusion of 372 ha (now A1 national park).	As described above (see A1).
Gellibrand River escarpment	Addition of 1152 ha (formerly A1 national park).	As described above (see A1).
Arkins Creek / Carlisle River block	Exclusion of 1325 ha (now A1 national park).	As described above (see A1).
Northern sector of Barongarook block	Addition of 1922 ha (formerly A1 national park).	As described above (see A1).
West Barwon Catchment	Exclusion of 3906 ha (now A1 national park).	As described above (see A1).
Barwon Downs	Addition of 318 ha (formerly A1 national park).	As described above (see A1).
Middle Spur block	Exclusion of 905 ha (now A1 national park).	As described above (see A1).
Skenes Creek block	Exclusion of 114 ha (now A1 national park).	As described above (see A1).
Queens Park block	Exclusion of 144 ha (now G4 community use area).	As described above (see A1).
West Lorne	Exclusion of 148 ha (now part A1 national part and part I4 uncommitted public land).	Western part—as described above (see A1). Area closest to Lorne provides an opportunity to rationalise public land boundaries to the west of the township.
North Lorne Parklands	Exclusion of 108 ha (now G4 community use area).	Reflects community concerns and values of the area.
Stream frontages, beds & banks	Exclusion of public land water frontages (now D27 water frontage reserves).	Reflects community concerns and provides for retention of existing licence and management arrangements with the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and the Catchment Management Authority.

Other Public land		
Nature Conservation Reserves		
C1 Jancourt Nature Conservation Reserve	Firewood collection is to be permitted in western sector (which is currently state forest) during five year phase out period. Specific provision made for continuation of horseriding and other recreation in western sector.	Reflects community concerns and provides for traditional recreational pursuits. Phase out allows time for shifting firewood collection to other sources (such as areas of forest park or private wood lots).
C2 Coradjil Nature Conservation Reserve (new recommendation)	New reserve of 1612 ha (formerly part of A1 Otway Ranges National Park).	As described above (see A1).
C3 Bungador Stony Rises Nature Conservation Reserve (formerly C2)	Addition of 1.2 ha (formerly D2 natural features reserve).	Provides an additional area offering increased protection for the greatly depleted stony rises landform and associated vegetation community.
C4 Marengo Nature Conservation Reserve (formerly C3)	Addition of 2.4 ha (formerly D9 natural features reserve).	Responds to new information on floristic values, provides higher level protection and consolidates remnant vegetation at Marengo into the one reserve.
C5 Edna Bowman Nature Conservation Reserve (formerly C4)	No change.	
Natural Features Reserves		
D1 Latrobe Bushland Reserve (new recommendation)	New reserve of 299 ha (formerly B1 forest park).	As described above (see B1).
D2 Coradjil Bushland Reserve (formerly D1)	No change.	
Former D2 Stony Rises (Bungador) Natural Features Reserve	Deleted (now C3 nature conservation reserve).	As described above (see C3).
D3 - D6	No change.	
D7 Gellibrand Bushland Reserve (new recommendation)	Retain existing reserve, with minor additions (formerly B1 forest park).	Responds to requests not to downgrade existing bushland reserves, and reflects its small size, isolated location and low value for multi-use forest park activities.
Former D7 Gellibrand North Bushland Reserve	Deleted (now G6 rail trail).	Consolidates linear sectors of the Old Beechy railway and adjoining road side area into the rail trail.
D8 Yaugher Bushland Reserve (new recommendation)	Retain existing reserve with minor additions (formerly B1 forest park).	Responds to requests not to downgrade existing bushland reserves, and reflects its small size, isolated location and low value for multi-use forest park activities.
D9 Johanna Falls Scenic Reserve (new recommendation)	Retain existing reserve with minor additions (formerly B1 forest park).	Responds to requests not to downgrade existing reserves, and reflects its small size, isolated location and low value for multi-use forest park activities.
Former D9 Marengo Bushland Reserve	Deleted (now C4 nature conservation reserve).	As described above (see C4).
D10 Aire River Wildlife Reserve (formerly D8)	No change.	

D11 Barham Paradise Scenic Reserve (new recommendation)	Retain half of existing reserve with addition.	Responds to requests not to downgrade existing reserves, while reflecting the values and features of the existing reserve and adjoining areas.
D12 Wild Dog Bushland Reserve (new recommendation)	Upgrade to bushland reserve (formerly B1 forest park).	Reflects values of this small isolated block of remnant vegetation.
D13 Wild Dog Creek Streamside Reserve (new recommendation)	Reverts to streamside reserve (formerly B1 forest park).	Responds to requests not to downgrade existing reserves and reflects values.
D14 - D15 (formerly D10 - D11)	No change.	
D16 Yeo Streamside Reserve (formerly D12)	Note added about commemorating the final journey of Gellibrand.	Responds to information provided in submissions.
D17 (formerly D13)	No change.	
D18 Pennyroyal Creek Bushland Reserve (new recommendation)	Reverts to bushland reserve (formerly B1 forest park).	Responds to requests not to downgrade existing reserves and reflects location and values.
D19 Lily Pond Bushland Reserve (new recommendation)	New reserve of 2.6 ha (formerly part A1 national park and F2 coastal reserve).	Responds to new information on existing management and values.
D20 (formerly D14)	No change.	
D21 Retreat Creek Streamside Reserve (new recommendation)	Upgrade to streamside reserve (formerly B1 forest park).	Responds to new information on existing management and values.
D22-24 (formerly D15-D17)	No change.	
D25 Aireys Inlet Bushland Reserve (formerly D18)	Addition of note about its unsuitability as a recreation ground.	Responds to additional information obtained in response to submissions.
D26 Anglesea Bushland Reserve (new recommendation)	Addition of 8.5 ha (formerly part D19 Elizabeth Street Natural Features Reserve and part F2 coastal reserve).	Consolidates two adjoining blocks of remnant bushland and provides formal protection to these currently unreserved blocks.
D27 Water frontages and stream beds and banks (new recommendation - replacing former D20 recommendation)	New text lists individual reserves, recommends restoration and revegetation programs, and recommends the facilitation of recreational use and access including for fishing. Addition of further existing water frontage reserve (formerly part B1 forest park).	Responds to concerns about the condition of many river frontages and reflects programs now in place. Also as described above (see B1).
Water Production Areas		
E1 - E9	No change.	
E10 Callahan Creek Diversion Weir and Buffer	Addition of 49 ha (formerly B1 forest park).	As described above (see B1).
E11- E15	No change.	
Coastal Reserves		
F1 Apollo Bay Coastal Reserve	Minor boundary changes—including addition of existing coastal reserve west of Marengo and between Wongarra and Carisbrook Falls (formerly A1 national park).	As described above (see A1).
F2 Lorne–Anglesea Coastal Reserve	Minor boundary changes, including addition of the Cumberland River Camping Ground (formerly A1 national park) and deletion of Anglesea cliff top heathlands (now A1 national park).	As described above (see A1).

Community Use Areas		
G1- G2 Education areas	Minor boundary changes.	
G3 Recreation reserves	Minor additions, including area licensed by Aireys Inlet Pony Club (formerly H4 service and utilities). Note regarding potential environmental hazards of former tip sites now used for recreation.	Reflects new information about current use of the site but is subject to environmental testing results.
G4 Parklands and gardens	Additions in Lorne, including Queens Park and the North Lorne Parklands (formerly B1 forest park).	As described above (see B1).
G5 Buildings in public use	Minor additions and deletions.	Responds to new information provided in submissions.
G6 Rail trails	Amendment to note identifying importance of historic features. Deletion of former easement purchased by Barwon Water for a pipeline (now H2 services and utilities).	Reflects historic values as well as recreational values. Responds to new information and reflects primary use of land. However, option to construct a rail trail over the pipeline land retained.
G7	No change.	
Other Land-Use categories		
H1 Gherang Gherang Earth Resources Area (formerly H3)	No change.	
Former H1 Gellibrand Stone Reserve	Deletion (now part of G5 community use area and B1 forest park).	Responds to new information that this is a long disused and worked out quarry, consolidates land with the abutting public land block.
Former H2 Gerangamete Stone Reserve	Deletion (now part of B1 forest park).	Reflects the change in status of the surrounding land (now forest park, formerly proposed national park). Existing use is consistent with forest park without need for a separate reserve.
H2 Service and Utility Areas (formerly H4)	Minor additions, including Moonlight Head cemetery (formerly A1 national park), North Lorne Reservoir (formerly B1 forest park) and Barwon Water future pipeline (formerly G6 rail trail).	Also as described above (see A1, G6).
I1-5 Uncategorised Public Land	Minor additions including land at Little Aire Falls (formerly A1 national park) and at west Lorne (formerly B1 forest park). Individual numbering and wording to identify and explain rationale for each.	Also as described above (see A1, B1).

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This Final Report presents the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's (VEAC's) recommendations for its Angahook-Otway Investigation.

The investigation has involved consideration of the appropriate land-use categories to be applied to the public land of the Otways—the first such investigation in the area since the work of VEAC's predecessor body (the Land Conservation Council) in 1978.

VEAC was asked to undertake the investigation by the Victorian Government in accordance with defined Terms of Reference and under the *VEAC Act 2001*.

Terms of Reference

On 8 September 2002 the then Minister for Environment and Conservation requested VEAC to carry out an investigation relating to Angahook-Lorne State Park to determine the potential for designation as a national park. On 17 February 2003, the Minister for the Environment requested that VEAC expand its investigation in line with amended Terms of Reference (see Figure 1). The Terms of Reference detail the specific matters that VEAC must take into consideration, in addition to general matters described in the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*.

The study area of the investigation accompanying the terms of reference is shown in Map 1. It encompasses a total area of 337,480 ha, of which some 157,125 ha is public land that is subject to the recommendations of this investigation.

Figure 1 Terms of Reference for Angahook-Otway Investigation

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001

Pursuant to section 15 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001* (the *VEAC Act*), the Minister for Environment hereby amends the request to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council made by the former Minister for Environment and Conservation concerning the Angahook-Lorne State Park dated 8 September 2002.

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council is now requested to carry out an investigation of the public land landward of low watermark within the Otway Ranges area shown on the accompanying plan [see Map 1].

The purpose of the investigation is to determine the boundaries of:

- (a) a single national park in the Otway Ranges including public land extending from Anglesea to Cape Otway, specifying whether or not the Great Ocean Road should be included in the park; and
- (b) any other public land currently managed as State Forest which would be suitable for addition to existing State Parks or nature conservation reserves, or for inclusion in new conservation reserves once native forest logging ceases in the Otways.

The Council is required to prepare a discussion paper and draft proposals paper and to submit a written report on the results of its investigation by 24 November 2004*.

In addition to the considerations specified in section 18 of the *VEAC Act*, the Council must also take into consideration the following matters:

- Victorian Government's policies with regard to logging and woodchipping in the Otways;
- definition of 'national park' used by the former Land Conservation Council and the former Environment Conservation Council;
- objects of the *National Parks Act* with respect to national parks;
- Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002;
- Victorian Government's Great Ocean Road Region Strategy;
- Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Development Plan;
- Anglesea Heathland Agreement between the Secretary to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Alcoa Australia Limited;
- relevant regional catchment strategies.

*Originally 3 September 2004

Map 1. Plan of Angahook-Otway Study Area accompanying the Terms of Reference for the Investigation

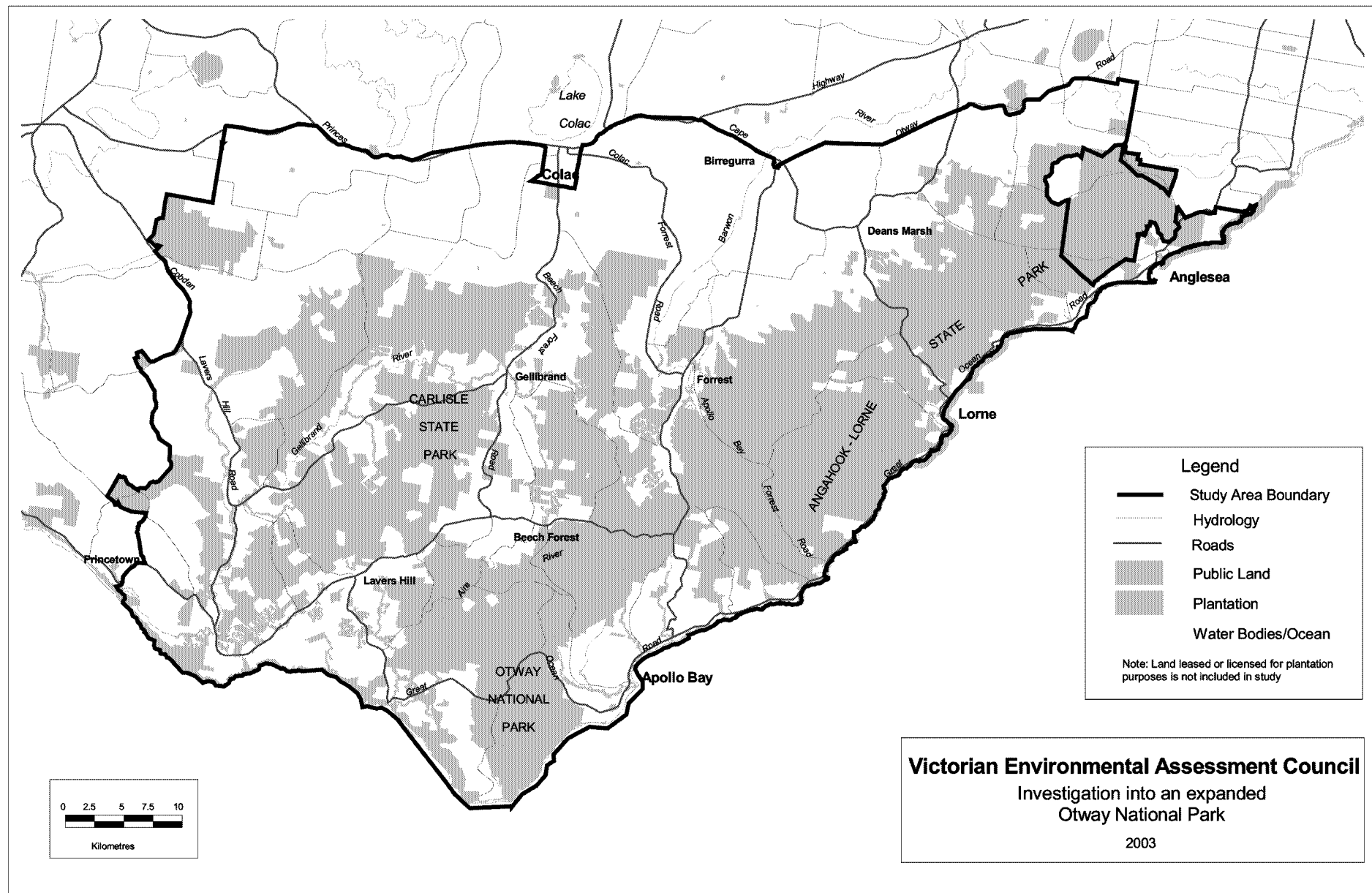
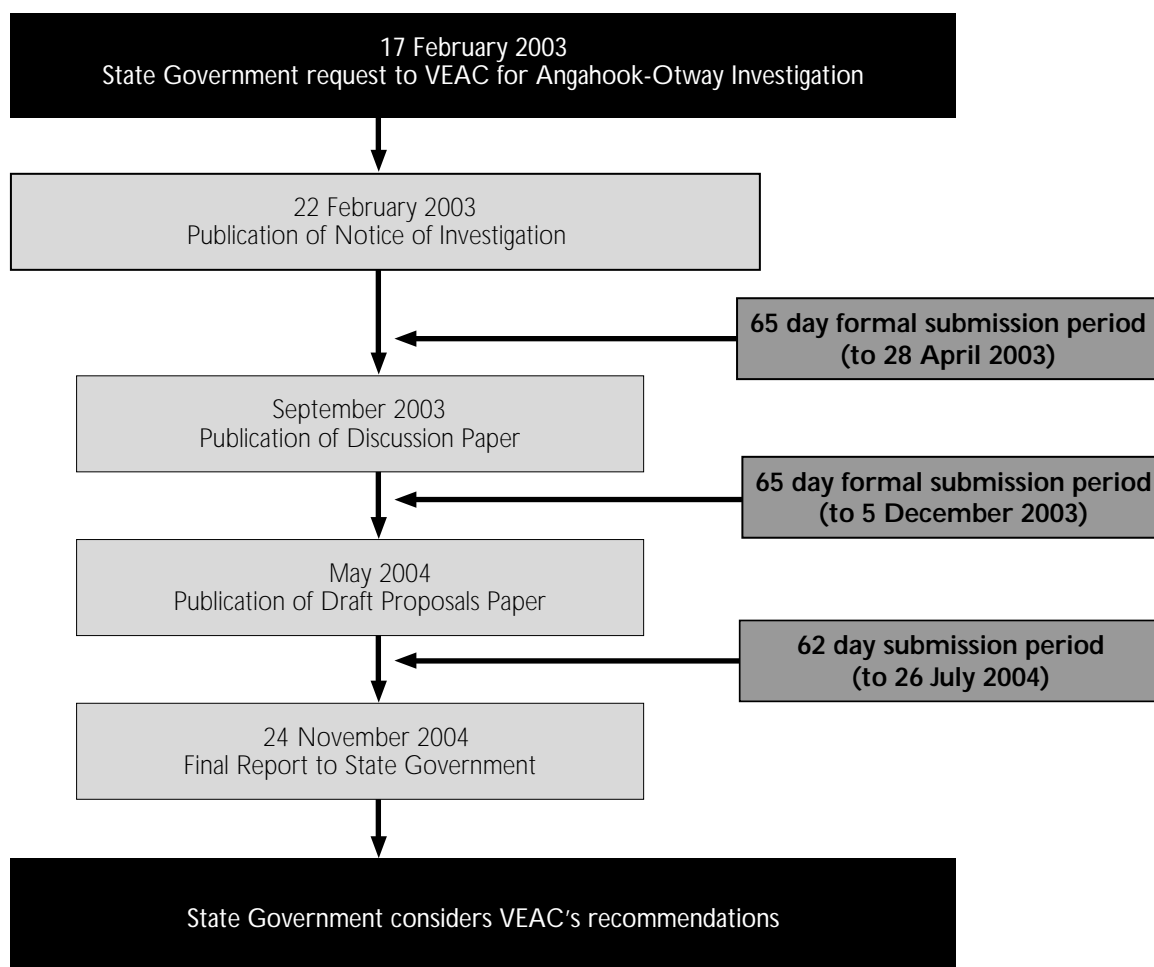


Figure 2 VEAC's Public Consultation Process for the Angahook-Otway Investigation



Investigation Process

The process for the Angahook-Otway Investigation (summarised in Figure 2) is formally specified in the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001* and the Terms of Reference for the investigation. There were four submission periods (each a minimum of 60 days) including an additional period relating to the response to the original terms of reference for the Angahook-Lorne State Park Investigation, which were later amended.

A Notice of Investigation for the Angahook-Otway Investigation was published in statewide daily and weekly newspapers, and local newspapers in or near the investigation area. Some 3000 newsletters were also distributed to publicise the Investigation and encourage submissions.

A Discussion Paper was published in September 2003. At the time of release Council implemented a detailed and thorough communications strategy to foster interest in the investigation and to act as a catalyst for those wishing to make submissions. The strategy involved extensive media advertising, a number of press releases, media interviews and briefings, key stakeholder group and agency briefings, community forums and wide distribution of summary brochures, as well as the Discussion Paper itself.

A Draft Proposals Paper was released in May 2004. The recommendations in this Paper were based on the known values and existing and proposed uses of public land in the Otways as well as information and views received in over 1100 submissions received up to that time. The release of the paper generated a high level of interest in the Investigation as, for the first time, lines on maps were presented for comment. There followed another extensive community consultation program.

The investigation was originally scheduled for completion by 3 September 2004 but with the overwhelming response of 726 submissions following publication of the Draft Proposals Paper, the Minister for the Environment granted VEAC an extension for preparation of the Final Report until 24 November 2004. The extension allowed additional time to thoroughly review the many detailed and wide-ranging issues and different views raised in these submissions.

All those who made submissions at each stage of the investigation were added to a register, which now has approximately 3000 individuals and groups listed. Each of these contacts received mail-outs regarding the progress of the investigation. Copies of this Final Report are available for sale from Information Victoria and at offices of the Department of Sustainability and Environment across the

study area and in Melbourne. A summary brochure is also available from the same locations, and from local Government offices and information centres within and near the investigation area. The Discussion Paper, the Draft Proposals Paper, the Final Report and the related summary brochures can be downloaded from the VEAC website (www.veac.vic.gov.au).

Under the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Minister for the Environment is required to table this Final Report in each House of Parliament within seven sitting days of receiving it. The Government then has up to six months to consider the report, and table a statement of its response to the Report no later than the next sitting day after that six month period. The response must specify the action (if any) proposed to be taken by the Government with respect to each recommendation, and be made public within seven days.

Consultation Mechanisms

Public consultation forms an integral part of VEAC's investigations and includes considering written submissions, meeting interested individuals and groups through regional community forums and working with the Community Reference Group established by Council. VEAC has also consulted with other Government agencies and relevant interest groups.



Submissions

Four submission periods have now been completed. Nearly 1900 submissions have been reviewed over the entire investigation and are listed in Appendix 5. These submissions contained an enormous amount of valuable information and contributed substantially to development of the recommendations in the Final Report.

In summary, 471 submissions were received in response to the Notice of Investigation, including 21 submissions responding to what was then the Angahook-Lorne Investigation.

Some 669 submissions were received in response to the Discussion Paper. These submissions and the proposals in them were considered in detail by VEAC in developing the draft recommendations.

The Draft Proposals Paper contained a full set of draft recommendations and generated a great deal of interest with 726 submissions received. Many submissions were very detailed with over 1000 different proposals being raised.

VEAC greatly appreciates the time and effort that the community has put into preparing submissions. The high level of response, increasing as the investigation proceeded, indicates a substantial level of community interest in the investigation especially from within the Otways region and nearby.

Community Forums

A number of widely advertised community forums were arranged across the region following publication of both the Discussion Paper and Draft Proposals Paper. The forums attracted a range of people, representing a broad cross-section of views. The forums provided an opportunity for people to learn about the investigation and raise relevant issues with Councillors and staff. More than 160 people attended the first series of forums which were held in Anglesea, Apollo Bay, Colac, Lavers Hill, Lorne and Geelong in October 2003. Interest was again strong in the eight forums held in June 2004 following publication of the Draft Proposals Paper and over 170 people attended the meetings that included the additional locations of Warrnambool and Melbourne.

Government Contact Group and Community Reference Group

VEAC established a Government Contact Group and a Community Reference Group for the investigation under sections 12 and 13 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*. The Government Contact Group provides technical expertise and liaison assistance between VEAC and Government agencies. The Community Reference Group includes representatives of groups covering a broad range of interests relevant to the investigation and has met regularly to provide advice and input to Council on relevant issues. See Appendix 6 for membership of both groups.

Consultation Outcomes

Submissions Received

All submissions received by Council are available for public inspection at the VEAC office in Melbourne (confidential submissions excepted). The Colac Otway Shire office in Colac and the Surf Coast Shire office in Torquay will hold copies of submissions from the final consultation period following the Draft Proposals Paper until June 2005.

Changes to Recommendations

A detailed analysis of the main proposals in submissions and Council's response to these proposals is provided in Appendix 1. Many proposals present competing or opposing views and values. VEAC cannot satisfy every need or interest but has considered all proposals and made comment in response to the main issues raised in submissions over the entire investigation.

A list of the main changes between the draft and final recommendations is presented above which describes the rationale and decision-making undertaken by VEAC.

Relationship to other Processes

In undertaking the Angahook-Otway Investigation, VEAC has liaised with authorities managing other related government processes including the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy and the Department of Sustainability and Environment's project on public land tourism in the Otways hinterland.

VEAC has taken into account a range of policies and strategies, including the Victorian Government's logging and woodchipping policies in the Otways, the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002, the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Development Plan, the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy and the Anglesea Heathland Agreement between the Secretary to the former Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Alcoa Australia Limited. A number of relevant regional catchment strategies and various local government planning documents have also been taken into consideration.

External Consultancies

VEAC engaged one external consultancy as part of the Draft Proposals Paper stage of the Investigation. The consultant undertook socio-economic background work and a formal assessment of the implications of Council's draft recommendations.

For preparation of the Final Report, one external consultant facilitated and coordinated a response from representatives of the Indigenous community of the Otways to the Draft Proposals Paper (see Appendix 3). Another assessed the socio-economic impacts of the final recommendations and this report is presented in Appendix 4.

Outline of the Final Report

This Final Report is in three parts.

Part 1 – VEAC's Recommendations

Details Council's recommendations for the Angahook-Otway Investigation.

Part 2 – Issues

Discusses the main issues raised during the consultation program and provides a context to the final recommendations.

Part 3 – Implications

Describes the potential socio-economic and environmental effects of the recommendations.

VEAC's General Approach

In the Angahook-Otway Discussion Paper, VEAC offered the following vision as a reference point for its investigation of public land in the Otways.

The public land of the Otways will become an inspiring example of sustainable and integrated land use and deliver enhanced environmental and socio-economic outcomes. Its core will be a new 'single national park' of magnificent forests and beautiful landscapes, which will permanently protect and conserve the full range of ecosystems and biodiversity in the Otway Ranges. Together with the Great Ocean Road, the park will be a focus for tourists and involve the local and wider community. The role and importance of other areas of natural vegetation for biodiversity, soil and water conservation and local landscape amenity will be recognised, and opportunities provided for recreational pursuits reliant upon, or enhanced by, natural environments. Other services and goods that can only be, or are best sourced, from the public lands of the study area will be provided for in a sustainable manner.

In Council's opinion, many of the general views and specific proposals suggested in submissions were by and large consistent with and/or reflected this vision.

Similarly, the general approach taken by VEAC in responding to the Terms of Reference and the submissions also reflects this vision.

