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**SPECIAL**

## Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001

### *Government Response to Environment Conservation Council Box-Ironbark Forests And Woodlands Investigation Final Report*

#### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS ACROSS THE STUDY AREA

##### **R1**

*Government establish a process to evaluate mechanisms and levels of adjustment that may be required, where individuals or local communities are directly and adversely affected as a result of the implementation of recommendations in this report. In particular, it is recommended that timber industries should be treated comparably whether they are inside or outside Regional Forest Agreement areas.*

The Government established a Box-Ironbark Implementation Panel to advise it on community and industry adjustment issues arising from the Environment Conservation Council's (ECC's) Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation Final Report. The Government will be considering the Panel's advice in developing an implementation strategy including the establishment of appropriate structural adjustment arrangements.

##### **R2**

*Government allocate adequate resources for implementation to ensure that the objectives of this report are achieved.*

The Government is committed to the protection of the Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands and will allocate adequate resources to achieve the objectives of the ECC Final Report.

##### **R3**

*Government allocate additional resources to address current public land management needs in Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands, with priority given to pest plant and animal control and regulation of firewood collection.*

The Government recognises the importance of effective public land management in the Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands and will progressively allocate resources to meet priority identified needs for protection and recovery of this precious Victorian landscape and the valuable habitats within it.

##### **R4**

*Government (through NRE, in partnership with Landcare groups, Catchment Management Authorities, and other community groups) continue to provide and improve pest plant and animal control in Box-Ironbark public lands, and fund appropriate research.*

Pest plants and animals are one of the most significant threats to economic productivity and protection of the State's environment. The Government is currently developing a Victorian Pest Management Framework to set a consistent and strategic policy framework for existing and potential pests on both public and private land across the State. The framework is due to be released in early 2002.

The Victorian Pest Management Framework will provide the context for Catchment Management Authorities, in consultation with their local communities, to determine local priorities for action. The Box-Ironbark area includes the North Central, North East and Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authorities. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) will continue to provide to extension, enforcement, and research to support the community effort.

##### **R5**

*NRE, in partnership with the Country Fire Authority and other relevant agencies or groups, continue to provide and improve fire management in Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands.*

Fire management is critical to protecting the public from the dangers of wildfire and environment protection. All public land in Victoria, including national and State parks, nature conservation reserves and state forests are subject to fire prevention and suppression activities in accordance with Fire Protection Plans. The plans provide an integrated approach to fire management across public

land and are prepared in consultation with the community. NRE and Country Fire Authority in partnership will continue to provide high quality fire protection services.

**R6**

***Government (through NRE, in partnership with Landcare groups, Catchment Management Authorities, salinity management groups, and other community groups) continue to provide and improve programs to address salinity and land degradation threats on and to public land and identify priority public land areas for particular landscape-scale action to ameliorate salinity and land degradation.***

Salinity and land degradation are serious threats to Victoria's environment. Existing programs are constantly being reviewed to enhance their effectiveness. NRE, in consultation with the community, has developed a Victorian Salinity Management Framework that aims to reduce the environmental and economic impacts of salinity by 2015.

In addition, the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality outlines an approach to addressing water and quality issues in key catchments across Victoria. The Commonwealth Government has committed \$700 million over seven years to supporting this program. The Victorian Government has committed \$157 million over seven years to match the Commonwealth's Victorian funding component. A number of catchments in the Box-Ironbark region have been designated as priority areas for this funding.

**R7**

***Government continue to encourage protection and restoration of indigenous Box-Ironbark vegetation and planting for indigenous revegetation, plantations, and farm forestry woodlots on private land.***

The Government supports this recommendation, recognising also that a comprehensive and strategic response to vegetation management must address both public and private land. The Government is committed to better conserving the Box-Ironbark ecosystems through protecting what is left and enhancement by encouraging replanting. To this end, in consultation with the community, a statewide Native Vegetation Framework is being developed. The North East, North Central and Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authorities have developed regional vegetation management strategies, which will complement existing programs such as Land for Wildlife and the Bush Tender initiative.

**R8**

***Land managers continue with and further develop adaptive management research and monitoring programs, develop targeted new programs and apply the results where appropriate.***

Adaptive management research and monitoring programs will continue to be developed in accordance with this recommendation.

**R9**

***In relation to the discretion of land managers to allow or disallow certain activities, NRE establish and implement a process such that:***

- (a) relevant stakeholders are consulted prior to proposed changes;***
- (b) reasons are given for making particular changes; and***
- (c) there is a grievance process in place to resolve significant disagreements on the exercise of land managers' discretion; and:***
- (d) where a temporary or holding decision is made with limited or no consultation (see note below), the formal process recommended above is initiated as soon as possible afterwards.<sup>1</sup>***

The Government is committed to open and transparent decision making and keeping stakeholders informed. Decision making that is based on inclusive engagement of stakeholders will be more effective in the longer term and lead to a higher degree of stakeholder ownership of those decisions.

<sup>1</sup> The recommendations of the ECC Final Report include many notes – they are only included in the Government response where the Government intends to vary them. For all other notes please see ECC Final Report.

The Government accepts the recommendation and will implement a grievance process to resolve disputes, which arise in the exercise of land managers' discretion.

**R10**

***Government support and resource measures to increase awareness, appreciation, community education, interpretation and promotion of Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands.***

The Government will continue to provide support and resource measures for educational and marketing programs aimed at increasing community awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands, and clear information about the new parks and reserves and where activities can occur (eg bushwalking, four-wheel driving).

**R11**

***Upon Government approval of ECC recommendations:***

- (a) relevant land be managed in accordance with those recommendations;***
- (b) subsequent implementation of recommendations and land management allow flexibility for minor boundary adjustments; and***
- (c) priorities be determined for expenditure on implementation of the numerous new small reserves referred to above.***

Where the Government approves specific ECC recommendations it is committed to implementing them in as orderly and timely a manner as possible. Given the number and scope of ECC recommendations, some of which will involve legislation and the commitment of significant Government resources, implementation will be undertaken progressively following the Government's formal approval.

The Government also notes that, where no specific changes to existing land use are recommended public land continue to be used in accordance with the uses approved by the Government following the previous Land Conservation Council's final recommendations for the respective study areas which overlap with the ECC Box-Ironbark study area.

**NATURE CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS****R12**

***The Department of Natural Resources and Environment initiate an ecological management strategy to achieve a reserve system that more closely resembles the pre-European forests, with an appropriate balance of juvenile, intermediate and mature trees, and specifies the nature of any ecological thinning, as defined above.***

The Government supports the development of an ecological management strategy to achieve a park and reserve system that more closely resembles the pre-European Box-Ironbark forests, and meets a broader range of the habitat requirements of indigenous flora and fauna.

An ecological management strategy will be developed that will clarify ecological objectives and specify a long-term action plan. The ecological management strategy will apply to the national parks, state parks, most nature conservation reserves and two of the regional parks in the Box-Ironbark area. It will be designed as an ecosystem-wide approach and will involve appropriate investigation, research and trialing of techniques to achieve ecological objectives and involve regular monitoring to assess results and fine tune the approach.

The Government recognises that management to achieve a pre-European forest structure is a long-term program, and issues such as the timing or removal of any forest material (e.g. ecological thinning) will be determined through the ecological management strategy in conjunction with fire protection plans for public land (see R5 above). The Strategy will be driven by ecological objectives and not by commercial or domestic firewood objectives.

**R13**

*The managers of the recommended Broken-Boosey State Park (Recommendation B2) and adjacent nature conservation reserves (Recommendations D58 to D64), together with the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, establish and support a pilot 'Conservation Management Network' to complement public land nature conservation in the Broken-Boosey Creeks system.*

**R14**

*The Goulburn Broken, North Central and North East Catchment Management Authorities, in partnership with appropriate public land managers, investigate and pursue opportunities to establish Conservation Management Networks at suitable locations in their regions.*

**Response to R13 and R14 combined**

The Government supports the concept of a Conservation Management Network to complement nature conservation on public land, that will involve all key stakeholders and extend the protection of biodiversity onto private land in co-operation with landowners. The Network concept encapsulates a whole-of-landscape approach to natural resource management and will provide an opportunity to pilot new forms of land management.

The Government supports a pilot of the Conservation Management Network concept in the Broken-Boosey Creeks system.

**ABORIGINAL INTEREST RECOMMENDATIONS****R15**

*Planning and management relating to traditional interests and uses be based on recognition and respect for the traditional and contemporary relationship of Aboriginal peoples with the land.*

The Government recognises the unique relationship of Victoria's Aboriginal peoples with the State's land and water, and is committed to collaborate with Aboriginal communities as partners to ensure that their interests in land and natural resource management are recognised and respected.

NRE, as the Government agency with primary responsibility for land and resource management will ensure that planning and management in Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands areas will be conducted in a manner that:

- Recognises Victoria's unique Aboriginal culture, society and history;
- Empowers Aboriginal communities to collaborate as partners in resource management;
- Recognises the impact of past policies on the role of Aboriginal people as custodians of the land and waters; and
- Requires priorities and strategies for Aboriginal involvement in land and resource management to be developed and implemented primarily at the local level and agreed with the relevant Aboriginal community organisations.

**R16**

*Prior to implementation of ECC recommendations for parks and reserves, and changes in public land management, Government consult with traditional owners and Aboriginal groups regarding their native title rights and interests.*

The Government is committed to genuine ongoing consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal communities, including native title claimants, regarding their interests in Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands areas. Prior to the implementation of recommendations for parks and reserves, and changes in public land management, the Government will ensure that the provisions of the **Native Title Act 1993 (Cwth)** are implemented within the framework of Government's Native Title policy. The Government will also work with Victorian Aboriginal communities to identify and establish effective processes for continued consultation regarding their native title rights and interests.

**R17**

***Government, in consultation with traditional owners and aboriginal groups, establish mechanisms to improve indigenous participation in land and water management including:***

- *development of principles and protocols to improve the policy and planning processes of public land and water management agencies and the representation and participation of Aboriginal peoples in these processes;*
- *investigation of joint management structures and arrangements between Government and Aboriginal communities with regard to public land, water and resources in the Box-Ironbark study area;*
- *preparation of a strategy to improve the participation of Aboriginal peoples in land, water and resource use decision-making and day-to-day management;*
- *provision of information to assist the facilitation of land and water use agreements between agencies and local Aboriginal communities;*
- *facilitation of surveys and site visits necessary for planning and development purposes; and*
- *development of cross-cultural awareness programs for land, water and natural resources agency staff to improve knowledge and understanding of, and communication with, Aboriginal communities.*

The Government is committed to addressing the dispossession of Aboriginal land and culture by improving the participation of Aboriginal people in the management of land, water and associated natural and cultural resources. It is recognised that this requires the development of more effective relationships between relevant government agencies and Aboriginal communities.

Through consultation with Victoria's Aboriginal communities, NRE has developed the Indigenous Partnership Strategy. This Strategy establishes a set of principles to underpin an improved relationship between NRE and Victoria's Aboriginal communities. The strategy will be implemented through initiatives designed to:

- encourage participation of Aboriginal people in NRE decision making forums;
- develop the capacity and capability of Aboriginal people and organisations to participate in NRE's business activities;
- promote awareness and consideration of Aboriginal cultural heritage as an integral component of land and resource management;
- increase employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people in NRE; and
- improve understanding within NRE and NRE's service providers of the issues that are important to Aboriginal people and their communities, through the development of an Indigenous Cultural Awareness Program.

**R18**

***NRE (including Aboriginal Affairs Victoria), together with Aboriginal groups, review legislation and policies restricting or inhibiting traditional cultural use of public land and waters with a view to removing unnecessary restrictions.***

The Government will work with Victoria's Aboriginal communities to review legislation and policies that may restrict or inhibit traditional cultural use of land and waters with a view to removing unnecessary restrictions.

**R19**

***Government more actively publicise existing notification and consultation processes, required under the Native Title Act 1993 and other relevant legislation such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984, the Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972, and take action where there are breaches of such legislation.***

The Government supports the rights of Aboriginal people to proper process under the **Native Title Act 1993 (Cwth)** and is committed to achieving negotiated, and where appropriate mediated outcomes to native title claims. The Government is also committed to ensuring that proper processes are followed in relation to the Future Act regime, including notification and consultation requirements consistent with the **Native Title Act 1993 (Cwth)**.

The Government is committed to protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria, and will continue to work with relevant stakeholders, including Aboriginal community based 'Inspectors' appointed under the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984**, to increase awareness and compliance with Victoria's Aboriginal heritage legislation.

#### **R20**

***Opportunities for increased employment and training for local Aboriginal people be encouraged in the implementation of any new parks and reserves.***

The Government is committed to increasing employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people in the Victorian Public Sector. As part of this process NRE will:

- identify recruitment and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, incorporating regional strategies, developing a scholarship program and setting targets under the NRE Youth Employment Scheme;
- identify appropriate training and career development opportunities to support Aboriginal employees of NRE and its service providers, including the establishment of an Indigenous Staff Network and mentoring program; and
- create employment opportunities by identifying economic development opportunities for Aboriginal communities, the Regional Cultural Heritage Boards and Community Development Employment programs within Victoria's natural resource industries and NRE regions.

NRE has appointed Regional Indigenous Facilitators in each of the six NRE regions and head office. The facilitators will play an important role in implementing the commitments of the Indigenous Partnership Strategy through strengthening the relationship between NRE and Victoria's Aboriginal communities.

### **NON-INDIGENOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **R21**

***When heritage sites are located on public land, they be assessed, and significant features be protected by public land managers, consistent with relevant state legislation, the Victorian Heritage Strategy 2000-2005, and NRE's cultural heritage guidelines.***

The history of the Box-Ironbark area has left a rich legacy of historic places on public land. The Government is committed to identifying and conserving these places for present and future generations. NRE will continue to ensure protection of historic places through conservation management plans for specific places, through strategies set out in forest and park management plans and through initiatives such as the Cultural Sites Network. These measures are consistent with relevant state legislation (**Heritage Act 1995** and **Planning and Environment Act 1987**), the Victorian Heritage Strategy 2000-2005 and current NRE policies and guidelines.

#### **R22**

***The guidelines for the management of cultural heritage values, developed by NRE and the Commonwealth for East Gippsland, be revised and applied statewide by land managers.***

NRE is currently undertaking preliminary work towards the development of statewide cultural heritage guidelines. This will be an important outcome of the Victorian Heritage Strategy 2000-2005. The guidelines will be developed in consultation with Heritage Victoria. These guidelines will take into account the guidelines developed by NRE and the Commonwealth Government for East Gippsland.

#### **R23**

***The historic site management strategy being developed for NRE, by Bendigo Regional College of TAFE, addressing the issues of weeds, fire risk, public safety, rubbish dumping, trail bike damage and vandalism, be completed and applied around Bendigo and to other locations where similar problems exist.***

NRE will continue to encourage tertiary institutions to investigate the management issues relevant to cultural heritage places as part of their curricula. These strategies will form an important input to the development of plans and prescriptions for public land around Bendigo and other locations.

**R24**

***Fossicking for historical objects and relics be discouraged by NRE, other public land managers, and Heritage Victoria.***

Provisions relating to disturbance of historic sites and relics are actively enforced by NRE, other public land managers and Heritage Victoria. Relics and artefacts that are associated with historic features or archaeological deposits should not be dislodged or removed. These are protected under the **Heritage Act 1995**. Prospecting for minerals in areas where there are historical relics and artefacts will be consistent with guidelines for prospecting on public land to be further developed in consultation with the PMAV and other stakeholders.

**MINING RECOMMENDATIONS****R25**

- (a) ***The existing set of public land use categories and their classification under the Mineral Resources Development Act 1990, and existing provisions in the National Parks Act 1975 relating to mining in areas scheduled under that Act, be retained as the appropriate policy and legislative framework for the administration of mining on Box-Ironbark public land (also see notes below):***
- (b) ***reference areas, and national and state parks continue to be exempt from mining and exploration except that, in line with current practice***
- (i) ***for existing or new national and state parks, or land added to existing national or state parks, mining or exploration licences current at the time of Government approval of this recommendation be renewable subject to approval by the Minister for Environment and Conservation and after tabling in Parliament, until they lapse; and***
- (ii) ***mining licences may be granted within the area of such current exploration licences, subject to approval by the Minister for Environment and Conservation and after tabling in Parliament;***
- (c) ***mining be permitted beneath parts of the Greater Bendigo National Park (see A4), the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park (NHP1), and the Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve (D2) which extend to a depth of 100 metres only.***

The Government supports the existing set of public land categories and their classification under the **Mineral Resources Development Act 1990**.

The Government reconfirms its policy, enshrined in legislation, that new exploration and mining is not permitted in national parks, State parks and reference areas. Exploration and mining proposals arising from applications covering the proposed national and state parks, that predate the Government's announcement of in-principle support for the recommendations will be subject to the consent of the Minister for Environment and Conservation pursuant to section 40 of the **National Parks Act 1975**.

The Government supports the establishment of the Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park and parts of the Greater Bendigo National Park to a depth of 100 metres.

**R26**

***All works associated with exploration and mining be situated to minimise impacts on natural, cultural, historic and recreational values, and especially to minimise removal of native vegetation.***

Works associated with exploration and mining will be situated to minimise impacts on natural, cultural, historic and recreational values, and removal of native vegetation will be minimised at all times in accordance with the values of the site in mind.

**R27**

***All exploration licences issued over Box-Ironbark public lands include conditions to effect low impact exploration, in accordance with the principles outlined above. These licence conditions would be additional, rather than substitutes for other conditions specified by the responsible authorities.***

The general principles for mining set out on page 60 of the ECC Final Report are supported. However, more intrusive exploration activities should be assessed individually on their merits, with careful consideration of their impacts.

**R28**

***All mining licences issued over Box-Ironbark public lands include conditions to effect high quality mining and rehabilitation, in accordance with the principles outlined above. These licence conditions would be additional, rather than substitutes for other conditions specified by the responsible authorities.***

The Government supports the general mining principles set out on page 60 of the ECC Final Report. The Government is committed to high standards of environmental management and rehabilitation for all mining operations.

**R29**

***Bonds should be adequate to provide for best practice rehabilitation, relevant departmental costs, and amelioration of any hazardous chemicals resulting from mining or processing, such as arsenic or cyanide.***

The Government is committed to high standards of rehabilitation and sets bonds at levels which ensure that rehabilitation of mine sites is completed in accordance with approved rehabilitation plans.

**R30**

***A review be conducted to ensure that applications for exploration or mining licences subject to the provisions which apply to restricted Crown land or land scheduled under the National Parks Act 1975 are processed in a timely and transparent manner, without reducing the current level of scrutiny afforded by these provisions.***<sup>2</sup>

The Government is committed to a transparent and timely process for dealing with mining matters. NRE will review its current processes for dealing with exploration, mining and extractive applications and ensure an integrated approach across the State and with agencies such as Parks Victoria.

### **WOOD PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**R36<sup>3</sup> (previously R30)**

***Sawlogs be the primary wood product from future timber harvesting in Box-Ironbark state forests, and that value-added kiln drying be encouraged.***

The Government notes that its acceptance of the ECC's other recommendations will significantly reduce firewood harvesting, sleeper cutting and post cutting in the Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands.

The Government actively encourages the development of value adding timber industries and this will be continued as the Government implements the establishment of Box-Ironbark parks and reserves. Sawlogs will be the primary wood product from Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands. However, thinning for firewood and fencing timbers aims to encourage more rapid growth of better-formed trees for future sawlogs and these practices will continue in State forest.

The Government will continue to work with, and assist processors as a matter of statewide policy to encourage conversion of logs into high-value end products, including kiln-dried timbers.

<sup>2</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>3</sup> Typographic anomaly – the ECC Final Report contains two recommendations numbered 30 (one for mining, one for wood products). Recommendation 30 relating to Wood Products on page 73 of the ECC Final Report has been renumbered Recommendation 36 (an unallocated recommendation number). Reference to Recommendation 30 on the top of page 71 in the ECC Report should also be taken to refer to R36).



**R31**

***Sleeper cutting be phased out of Box-Ironbark forests, with the timber used instead for sawlogs (see Recommendation F(i)(ii)).***

Sawlogs and sleepers are cut from similar trees. The ECC's estimate of sawlog sustainable yield indicates that it will not be possible in future to support both the sawlog and sleeper industries.

The six-year phase out of sleeper cutting recommended in F(i)(ii) below will require harvesting of the sawlog resource to continue at almost double the estimated level for 6 years. This may have adverse consequences on future availability of sawlogs. Accordingly, the Government will undertake discussions with sleeper cutters for an earlier cessation of cutting to avoid unsustainable harvesting levels. Adjustment assistance will be available to affected eligible forest workers, in accordance with the recommendation 1 above.

**R32**

***Allocation of coupes in Box-Ironbark state forests solely for commercial or domestic firewood production be progressively reduced in favour of coupes that produce firewood in conjunction with higher value products such as sawlogs and fencing materials.***

All harvesting operations in State forest will be directed towards either improving the condition of stands for future sawlog harvesting, or the selective removal of sawlog trees. Existing firewood-only operations take place in small diameter stands (the trees removed for firewood are less than 40 cm diameter) or as a final stage of earlier harvesting for higher value products. A phase out of firewood only operations will occur as the forest grows, limiting the need for thinning operations, which produce only firewood. This will take many years to implement fully as the forest grows into larger diameter classes.

**R33**

- (a) *establishment of firewood plantations on private land be encouraged;*
- (b) *use of waste from logging operations in wetter forest types be investigated for use for firewood;*
- (c) *controlled thinning of dense coppicing and regrowth in state forests continue to be applied to improve the growth rate of retained larger trees, and to produce firewood in commercial operations;*
- (d) *subject to appropriate research, ecological thinning in parks and reserves, where required for management, be applied to improve the growth rate of retained trees (see note below); and*
- (e) *domestic firewood collection continue to be subject to strict controls to reduce theft of wood and avoid cutting of habitat trees, and that forest managers reduce domestic firewood collection in areas with sensitive biological values*

Firewood is an important resource, essential for many townships and communities in the Box-Ironbark region for heating and cooking.

The Government will shortly release the Victorian Firewood Strategy, which sets out a strategic framework for firewood management in Victoria. A comprehensive firewood plan is being developed for the Box-Ironbark region to ensure consideration of firewood supply into the future. The ECC's recommendations will be further considered in the development of the firewood plan.

**R34**

***Comparable treatment regarding industry structural adjustment should apply for timber industries inside and outside the Box-Ironbark study area and Regional Forest Agreement areas***

The Government is committed to an equitable and fair result for all affected timber industries and workers in the Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands region.

**R35**

***An industry plan be prepared which includes a long-term program to encourage Box-Ironbark plantations for sawlogs on private land.***<sup>4</sup>

The Government will encourage plantations establishment in the Box-Ironbark region both as an alternative source of firewood and to develop a value-added sawlog industry. An updated Private Forestry Strategy, currently in preparation, aims to encourage the development of a range of forest products including value-adding opportunities.

**R36**<sup>5</sup> See Recommendation 30 above.

**APICULTURE RECOMMENDATIONS****R37**

***Apiculture continue in national and state parks, nature conservation reserves, state forest and other reserves, subject to Recommendations R39 and R40 below.***

The Government recognises that a substantial proportion of the State's honey production is derived from public land within the Box-Ironbark area and that apiary should continue subject to Recommendation 38 and 39.

**R38**

***Apiculture continue to be excluded from reference areas and their buffers.***

**R39**

***Subject to the provisions in Recommendation R9, land managers continue to exercise discretion to vary access to areas where:***

- (a) ***significant conflicts occur between beekeeping and other forest uses such as recreation; or***
- (b) ***research indicates the effects of nectar removal by managed bees are likely to have deleterious effects on ecological values; and:***
- (c) ***land managers seek to maintain overall access by providing access to alternative sites where possible.***

The Government recognises that a substantial proportion of the State's honey production is derived from public land within the Box-Ironbark region. It also recognises that at times apiculture may conflict with other public land management objectives. The Government accepts this recommendation.

The Government notes that there are no significant impacts on apiarists arising from the ECC's recommendations and that the Government's response will enhance consultation and transparency in decision making by land managers. Land managers will put in place a clear and transparent process to work together with industry members to determine specific areas within parks, forest or reserves where apiculture can be carried out. A grievance process will also be established.

**R40**

- (a) ***The Department of Natural Resources and Environment in partnership with industry initiate a research program to investigate feral bee population dynamics and methods of removal, and the effects of introduced bees on native flora and flower-visiting fauna;***
- (b) ***an advisory committee be established, including stakeholder participation, to monitor the research and research outcomes; and***
- (c) ***the results of research should determine subsequent management decisions.***

**R41**

- (a) ***The Department of Natural Resources and Environment establish an ecosystem-wide program to reduce feral bee colonies, focussed initially on areas likely to be most deleteriously affected, and with quantitative assessment of the cost-effectiveness of the program; and***

<sup>4</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2 above.

- (b) *a series of long-term reference sites be established across the study area to monitor feral bee abundance.*

**Response to R40 and R41 combined**

The ECC has noted that feral and managed bees are both highly efficient consumers of nectar and pollen, and may compete with native nectar feeding species, including indigenous bees and birds. It has also been noted that feral bees may also compete with native fauna for hollows that are generally scarce in the Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands. NRE will work with industry to pursue how to implement a program to address the feral bee issue.

**RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

**R42**

*Box-Ironbark public lands be available for a range of recreation activities for community enjoyment and appreciation and appropriate to the land use category.*

The characteristic features of Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands make them highly attractive and suitable to a wide range of visitors. The Government will continue to ensure that the Box-Ironbark public lands are available for a variety of recreational uses, appropriate to each land use category.

**R43**

- (a) *Prospecting and gemstone seeking be generally permitted on public land, with the following exceptions:*
- (i) *exclusion from areas where evidence suggests it may adversely affect significant natural, historic or Aboriginal cultural values, as specified in management plans; and*
  - (ii) *exclusion from reference areas and national parks except where specified in the recommended Chiltern-Pilot National Park (A1) and, subject to zoning, in the recommended Greater Bendigo National Park (A4); and*
- (b) *land managers, in consultation with the Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria (PMAV), continue to develop guidelines for prospecting in other land use categories; and*
- (c) *land managers consider making provision for gem seeking at specific sites in the recommended Heathcote-Graytown National Park (A5), Kooyoora State Park (B1) and Warby Range State Park (B3).*

The Government accepts this recommendation. The Government acknowledges that reduction in available area for prospecting is 11%, and generally not from the most prospective areas. It also acknowledges that prospecting and gemstone seeking is a legitimate activity within many areas of public land, subject to restrictions and exclusions from certain sensitive areas. The primary purposes of national and State parks will remain nature conservation.

The Government will undertake further consultation with key stakeholders, including the Prospector and Miners Association of Victoria (PMAV), on extent and location of prospecting (metal detecting) areas and gem seeking sites within the parks listed above as part of the park planning process for these areas.

The Government supports the development of guidelines for prospecting on public land through a consultative process with the PMAV and other stakeholders. The aim will be to finalise a 'code for prospectors and fossickers'. The Government will implement a grievance process to resolve disputes, which arise in the exercise of land managers' discretion.

**R44**

*Prospecting be allowed in state parks specified in Chapter 15, in accordance with the note below.*

The Government accepts the recommendation. It acknowledges that currently prospecting is excluded from reference areas, and in general is excluded from national and state parks other than agreed parks. However, it considers that an exception is warranted in the Box-Ironbark region where there is a current level of recreational use within many areas of public land, including State forest, Regional Parks and within certain existing and proposed State parks.

The extent and location of exclusion zones for prospecting (metal detecting) within State parks where metal detecting is recommended, will be determined through a park planning process, in consultation with the community and the Prospector and Miners Association of Victoria, that acknowledges that the primary management purpose of areas listed under the **National Parks Act 1975**, is the protection of conservation values. The process will consider the significant natural, historic and Aboriginal cultural values, while recognising the need to accommodate prospecting activities through appropriate zoning. The zones will be developed in consultation with representatives of prospectors and other stakeholders. The Government will implement a grievance process to resolve disputes, which arise in the exercise of land managers' discretion.

**R45**

***Land managers monitor areas favoured by prospectors and gemstone seekers and, subject to the provisions in Recommendation R9, respond appropriately if excessive damage to natural, historic, landscape, or aboriginal cultural values is occurring.***

Prospecting for gold using metal detectors and gemstone seeking are important recreational activities but nevertheless can cause damage to natural and cultural values which may occur through inappropriate activity. Land managers will monitor areas favoured by prospectors and gemstone seekers and if excessive damage is found, will take appropriate action, noting that it is important not to unreasonably impede the land managers' role to undertake day to day management in accordance with the objectives of the area under consideration. The Government will implement a grievance process to resolve disputes, which arise in the exercise of land managers' discretion.

**R46**

***The prospecting community be encouraged to adhere to the PMAV code of practice to promote responsible use of public land.***

The Government supports the development of guidelines for prospecting on public land through a consultative process with the PMAV and other stakeholders. The aim will be to finalise a 'code for prospectors and fossickers'.

**R47**

***Orienteering and rogaining be permitted at the land manager's discretion in all land use categories except:***

- *reference areas;*
- *domestic water storage areas; and*
- *nature conservation or other reserves where sensitive natural features are vulnerable to disturbance.*

The Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands are popular for orienteering and this activity will continue to be allowed, except in reference areas, domestic water storages, nature conservation reserves, areas where sensitive natural features are vulnerable to disturbance and other areas at the land managers discretion. The Government will work with this key stakeholders in implementing this recommendation. The Government will implement a grievance process to resolve disputes, which arise in the exercise of land managers' discretion.

**R48**

***Car rallies be permitted on open tracks formed for the passage of vehicles and at the land manager's discretion in state forests, and subject to specific conditions as to frequency, timing, locations and repair of damage, in west Mt Pilot Range (A1 Chiltern-Pilot National Park) and the Killawarra addition to Warby Range State Park (B3).***

The Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands are popular with car rally enthusiasts who generally avoid areas frequently used by other user groups, and most events are held at night and in state forest. Car rallies will be permitted on open tracks formed for the passage of vehicles at the land manager's discretion, and subject to specific conditions as to frequency, timing, locations, and repair of damage, in state forests, west Pilot Range and the Killawarra addition to the Warby State Park. The Government will implement a grievance process to resolve disputes, which arise in the exercise of land managers' discretion.

**R49**

***Land managers endeavour to provide some dedicated areas for off-road trail bike riding where significant demand exists.***

The Government acknowledges that in some areas, significant demand for off-road trail bike riding may exist. The Government will consider proposals to establish such areas where concerns relating to public liability, environmental impact and safety can be addressed, and the activity can be contained to designated areas. The Government will implement a grievance process to resolve disputes, which arise in the exercise of land managers' discretion.

**R50**

***Trail bike riding be restricted otherwise to open tracks formed for the passage of vehicles as per current practice.***

The Government supports existing arrangements for trail bike riding continuing to occur.

**R51A<sup>6</sup>**

***Land managers develop educational and marketing programs to encourage:***

- (a) increased use of Box-Ironbark public land for recreation; and***
- (b) responsible use of Box-Ironbark public land.***<sup>7</sup>

The long-term viability of the Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands ecosystems is dependent upon careful and appropriate use. The Government recognises that Victoria's Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands provide the community with many recreational opportunities. The Government will continue to support educational and marketing programs relating to the appropriate and responsible recreational use of the Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands.

**TOURISM RECOMMENDATIONS****R51B<sup>8</sup>**

***Tourism Victoria, NRE, Parks Victoria, regional tourism boards and local government develop coordinated programs to increase public land tourism in Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands (also see note below).***

**R52**

***Land managers explore opportunities to work with tourism agencies and associations, to assist tourism promotion in the recommended new parks and reserves, and in state forests.***

**R53**

***The specific strengths of the Box-Ironbark study area, such as gold, flora and fauna, and cultural heritage be highlighted in tourism promotions.***<sup>9</sup>

**Response to R51B, R52 and R53 combined**

The Government recognises the importance of tourism to the health and economic well being of regional Victoria and the key strengths of natural attractions in the Box-Ironbark study area are for its flora and fauna, gold, and cultural heritage. The Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands provide:

- a scenic backdrop to the surrounding towns and other attractions;
- recreation opportunities for the local communities, regional visitors and niche markets with a particular interest (e.g. prospecting)
- another suite of attractions for tourists to visit in regional Victoria.

The Government, through the joint efforts of NRE, Parks Victoria, Tourism Victoria and local government, will ensure the tourism strengths of the region are suitably promoted, including the development of targeted programs to appropriately increase tourism visitation in Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands in the future. The Government will also work to promote tourism development being undertaken through consultation and participation with relevant Aboriginal communities.

<sup>6</sup> R51 (education) on p.85 be changed to R51A. R51 (tourism) on p.89 be changed to R51B.

<sup>7</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>8</sup> R51 (education) on p.85 be changed to R51A. R51 (tourism) on p.89 be changed to R51B.

<sup>9</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**EUCALYPTUS OIL PRODUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS****R54**

- (a) *Eucalyptus oil harvesting be immediately excluded from one currently-available patch of 7 ha near Rushworth and this area be incorporated into Whroo Nature Conservation Reserve (D4), as indicated on Map A; and*
- (b) *within six years of the date of Government approval of these recommendations, eucalyptus oil harvesting be excluded from other specific currently-available areas at Whroo, and near Wedderburn, and Bendigo, and incorporated into Whroo Nature Conservation Reserve (Recommendation D4), Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve (D3), and Greater Bendigo National Park (A4), respectively, as indicated on Map A.*

The eucalyptus oil industry is a distinctive cultural and historical feature of the region. The Government recognises the need to phase-out eucalyptus oil harvesting in a way, which allows the industry time to adjust. An immediate phase out of harvesting in the block near Whroo will be implemented through short term re-scheduling of operations into other areas. The Government will work with key stakeholders to implement a phase-out in all other areas over a six-year period. Assistance for the affected licensees will be developed.

**R55**

*Comparable with the industry structural adjustment support recommended for timber industries affected by these recommendations (see Recommendation R1 in Chapter 3), appropriate assistance be offered to eucalyptus oil producers affected by these recommendations, to assist:*

- (a) *in the termination of harvesting as recommended above; and*
- (b) *with the establishment of plantations for oil production.*

The Government will provide a structural adjustment package that is equitable, treats every case on its merits, and offers appropriate assistance to eucalyptus oil industry workers that is fair and in line with the assistance offered to other forest industry workers.

**R56**

*Sites where eucalyptus oil harvesting has occurred since 1995 inclusive, in state forest at St Arnaud, Wedderburn, Inglewood, West Brenanah, Glenalbyn and Rushworth, be identified, zoned, and used to:*

- (a) *produce eucalyptus oil;*
- (b) *provide opportunities for prospecting; and:*
- (c) *drainage lines and an appropriate buffer strip not be harvested.*

While eucalyptus oil harvesting continues in state forest at St Arnaud, Wedderburn, Inglewood, West Brenanah, Glenalbyn and Rushworth these areas will be zoned to ensure continued access for the industry and will remain accessible for prospectors and other users as appropriate.

Streams and major drainage lines will be protected in accordance with the Victorian Code of Forest Practises and NRE Regional Harvesting Prescriptions. In the long-term, future growth of the industry will be based on plantation resources on private land.

**R57**

*Within the areas previously available for oil production, sites not harvested for eucalyptus oil since 1994 be identified, zoned and used to:*

- (a) *conserve biodiversity, particularly threatened species and species which (in the study area) are dependent on Broombush Mallee EVC;*
- (b) *produce honey;*
- (c) *provide opportunities for prospecting;*
- (d) *provide opportunities for open-space recreation and education; and:*

- (e) *these areas remain or become state forest under the provisions of the Forests Act 1958, and managed by NRE.*

Management of these areas, in particular management for threatened species conservation, will be determined in the development of forest management plans for the region.

#### **R58**

*Where areas are to be retained for eucalyptus oil production in the long term, longer tenure of licences be granted to encourage licensees to invest in eucalyptus oil plantations on freehold land.*

The Government recognises that there are a number of economic and environmental benefits for the region in greater investment in private land eucalyptus oil plantations. NRE is currently exploring a range of measures aimed at recruiting investment in such plantations. Longer tenure of license for existing cutters is one of the options that will be explored.

### **COMMONWEALTH LAND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **P1 LAND USE PROPOSALS**

- (a) *Puckapunyal Military Area, of 41 490 ha, including the Graytown Proof & Experimental Establishment:*
- (i) *continue to be used to provide military training and testing; and*
  - (ii) *maintain 'no go' and 'no impact' zones listed above to conserve and protect communities of indigenous animals and plants, and for military training, as appropriate.*
- (b) *The Department of Defence:*
- (i) *use indigenous species of local provenance where possible when areas are being rehabilitated or otherwise planted;*
  - (ii) *conduct cultural heritage surveys and protect Aboriginal cultural site and places;*
  - (iii) *not permit harvesting of forest products; and*
  - (iv) *exclude grazing from the 'no go' and 'no impact' areas as far as practical.*
- (c) *Longlea (496 ha) be used to:*
- (i) *conserve and protect communities of indigenous animals and plants, and cultural heritage values;*
  - (ii) *provide for military training and special vehicle testing on the existing road network and existing cleared areas;*
- and:*
- (iii) *harvesting of forest products and grazing not be permitted;*
  - (iv) *flora and fauna and cultural heritage surveys be carried out to assist management; and*
  - (v) *when no longer required for military training or vehicle testing purposes, the fence be removed and the firebreak revegetated, and the area be managed as part of the Bendigo Regional Park (C1).*
- (d) *5 ha at Longlea be used as a multi-user depot, if required.*
- (e) *87 ha of Commonwealth land adjoining Longlea (outside the security fence):*
- (i) *be managed and used as a natural features reserve bushland area;*
- but:*
- (ii) *as per (c)(v) above, when Longlea is no longer required for military training or vehicle testing purposes, this area be managed as part of the Bendigo Regional Park (C1).*

**(f) Mangalore (525 ha):**

- (i) continue to be used for Department of Defence purposes; and**
- (ii) be managed to conserve and protect communities of indigenous animals and plants, and cultural heritage values;**

**and:**

- (iii) commercial harvesting of forest products and collection of fallen wood not be permitted, except the minimum required for fire protection around Defence Department facilities;**
- (iv) management strategies be developed to minimise the impact of grazing on natural vegetation; and**
- (v) when no longer required for Defence purposes, the areas with natural vegetation be transferred to the Victorian Government and managed as a nature conservation reserve.<sup>10</sup>**

The Victorian Government will continue to seek co-operative management to protect bio-diversity on the Commonwealth Puckapunyal Military Area.

**NATIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL HERITAGE PARK RECOMMENDATIONS****A NATIONAL PARKS**

*The national parks shown on Map A (numbered A1 to A5)*

**(a) be used to:**

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

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

- (i) apiculture on licensed sites, subject to the outcome of research into the ecological impacts of this industry and park management requirements;**
- (ii) bushwalking, car touring, picnicking and camping;**
- (iii) nature observation, bird watching and visiting historic features;**
- (iv) orienteering and rogaining;**
- (v) horse, mountain and trail bike riding on formed roads only; and**
- (vi) research, subject to permit;**

**(c) in accordance with the ecological management strategy recommended in Recommendation R12 (Chapter 4), dense eucalypt regrowth be thinned to enhance the growth of retained trees;****(d) the following activities not be permitted:**

- (i) harvesting of forest products including eucalyptus oil, grazing by domestic stock, car rallies, hunting and the use or carrying of firearms;**
- (ii) exploration and mining, other than continuation of operations within existing licences, as approved; and**
- (iii) metal detecting, prospecting, gemstone seeking and gold panning;**

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

<sup>10</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.



**(f) they be included on a schedule to the National Parks Act 1975, and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.**<sup>11</sup>

The Government recognises that Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands are significantly under-represented in Victoria's parks and reserves. The Government recognises these national parks, as part of landscapes that have long been important to Indigenous Australians, now protect many of the State's most precious natural and cultural values. It also recognises the vital role they play in maintaining a healthy society.

As such the general recommendations for national parks are supported, meeting the Government's commitment to establishment a box-ironbark parks and reserves system. The Government will introduce legislation to establish three new national parks and additions to two existing national parks under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The areas to be legislated are shown on Map A of the ECC's Final Report. The establishment of these areas will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The Government will prepare an ecological management strategy that will clarify ecological objectives and specify a long-term action plan to achieve a park and reserve system that more closely resembles the pre-European forests. In accordance with R9, the Government will outline a grievance process, which specifies both the consultation mechanisms and the way that specific grievances will be heard.

**A1 CHILTERN-PILOT NATIONAL PARK**

- (a) The Chiltern-Pilot National Park area of 21 943 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks on page 108;**
- (b) gemstone seeking and gold prospecting, with hand tools only, be permitted in a zone extending 100 metres from each bank of, and including, Reedy Creek;**
- (c) the Reedy Creek area be surveyed for Aboriginal sites and places;**
- (d) car rallying be permitted in the Pilot Range west of the Chiltern-Beechworth Road by arrangement with the land manager; and**
- (e) protection of the water and catchments of the Barambogie Reservoir and the creeks which supply water to Springhurst be maintained.**

The Government supports the establishment of the Chiltern-Pilot National Park and will introduce legislation to establish the park under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The area to be legislated is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of the Chiltern-Pilot National Park will protect the most intact Box-Ironbark fauna assemblage in Victoria and important heritage values such as Aboriginal, gold and Kelly Gang sites and relics, thereby contributing significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The extent and location for gem-seeking and gold prospecting along Reedy Creek, and car rallying in the Pilot range west of the Chiltern-Beechworth Road, will be determined through a park planning process, in consultation with the community, that acknowledges the primary purpose of the park for nature conservation. The process will also consider the significant natural, historic or Aboriginal cultural values, and canvas the views of all stakeholders.

**A2 ST ARNAUD RANGE NATIONAL PARK**

- (a) The St Arnaud Range National Park area of 13 526 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks on page 108; and**
- (b) protection of the water and catchments of the Redbank and Teddington Reservoirs be maintained.**

The Government supports the establishment of the St Arnaud Range National Park incorporating Kara Kara State Park, and will introduce legislation to establish the park under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The area to be legislated is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of the St Arnaud Range National Park will protect one of the largest intact areas of Box-Ironbark vegetation and landscapes in Victoria, contributing significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

<sup>11</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**A3 TERRICK TERRICK NATIONAL PARK**

- (a) *The Terrick Terrick National Park area of 3 854 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks on page 108; and*
- (b) *low intensity sheep grazing, where necessary for biodiversity conservation, be permitted at the land manager's discretion.*<sup>12</sup>

The existing Terrick Terrick National Park protects one of the largest, most intact tracts of indigenous northern plains vegetation in Victoria, in particular grassy woodlands and plains grassland vegetation communities, contributing significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The Government supports the extension of the Terrick Terrick National Park and will introduce legislation to add 84 hectares to the park under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The extended park is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The need for low intensity sheep grazing, necessary for biodiversity conservation, is acknowledged.

**A4 GREATER BENDIGO NATIONAL PARK**

- (a) *The Greater Bendigo National Park area of 16 937 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks on page 108;*
- (b) *the park be reserved in accordance with conventional practice for the recommended Sandhurst Reference Area (G6) and the existing Whipstick and Kamarooka State Parks, and to a depth of 100 metres below the surface elsewhere-including One Tree Hill, Mandurang South, Crusoe-Big Hill, Sandhurst forest and the link between the existing Whipstick and Kamarooka State Parks, (see Note 1 below);*
- (c) *metal detecting (prospecting) be permitted in designated zones defined in a park management plan (see Note 2 below); and*
- (d) *eucalyptus oil harvesting be permitted to continue in areas which have been harvested since 1998 (inclusive) for a period of six years dating from Government acceptance of these recommendations.*<sup>13</sup>

*Note 2: Metal detecting should be permitted other than in designated zones, located to protect significant park values, notably threatened small ground-dwelling animals and plants, which may be damaged as a result of prospecting. These zones should be developed as part of the standard management plan process, in consultation with the PMAV. This variation is not intended to affect current arrangements for metal detecting in existing national parks in the study area or elsewhere in Victoria.*

The Government supports this recommendation. The Government will introduce legislation to establish the park under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The area to be legislation is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of the Greater Bendigo National Park will protect a large number of endangered flora and fauna species, such as the pink-tailed worm lizard and the Whipstick westringia, significant Aboriginal values and historic features associated with gold mining, contributing significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The Government will determine the extent and location of prospecting (metal detecting) areas within the Greater Bendigo National Park through a park planning process that acknowledges the primary purpose of the park for nature conservation. The process will also consider the significant natural, historic or Aboriginal cultural values, and canvas the views of all stakeholders.

The Government notes the recommendation that there may be a requirement for the development of minor infrastructure associated with approved underground mining, notably airshafts and vents, within parks with approved mining tenements and that approvals should not be unreasonably withheld. A streamlined approval process will be developed for dealing with any such proposals.

<sup>12</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>13</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

Following consultation with the ECC, the Government clarified that it was the ECC's intent that metal detecting should only be permitted in this park where zones could be identified that would not impact on the park values, rather than generally permitted in the National Park. Consequently, Note 2 should be reworded to read as follows:

*Metal detecting should be permitted...delete the words... 'other than'...in designated zones, located... delete the word... ~~'to protect'~~ ... add the word... 'away from'....significant park values...*

#### **A5 HEATHCOTE-GRAYTOWN NATIONAL PARK**

*The Heathcote-Graytown National Park area of 12 833 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national parks on page 108.*

The Government supports the establishment of the Heathcote-Graytown National Park and will introduce legislation to establish the park under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The area to be legislated is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of the Heathcote-Graytown National Park will protect large old tree sites, fauna refuges, a large number of threatened flora and fauna species, including the crimson spider orchid, the squirrel glider and the swift parrot, significant heritage values including second world war camps, and Aboriginal sites of significance. This will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

#### **B STATE PARKS**

*The state parks shown on Map A (numbered B1 to B5):*

- (a) *be used to:*
  - (i) *conserve and protect biodiversity and natural processes;*
  - (ii) *protect Aboriginal cultural sites and places;*
  - (iii) *protect significant historic sites and places;*
  - (iv) *provide opportunities for recreation and education associated with the enjoyment and understanding of natural environments and cultural heritage;*  
*and*
  - (v) *protect natural landscapes;*
- (b) *the following activities generally be permitted:*
  - (i) *apiculture on licensed sites, subject to the outcome of research into the ecological impacts of this industry and park management requirements;*
  - (ii) *bushwalking, car touring, picnicking and camping;*
  - (iii) *nature observation, bird watching and visiting historic features;*
  - (iv) *orienteering and rogaining;*
  - (v) *horse, mountain and trail bike riding on formed roads only; and*
  - (vi) *research, subject to permit;*
- (c)
  - (i) *in accordance with the ecological management strategy recommended in Recommendation R12 (Chapter 4), dense eucalypt regrowth be thinned to enhance the growth of retained trees; and*
  - (ii) *except for parks where specifically excluded, metal detecting (prospecting) be permitted outside designated zones defined in park management plans (see Note 2 below);*
- (d) *the following activities not be permitted:*
  - (i) *harvesting of forest products including eucalyptus oil, grazing by domestic stock, hunting and the use or carrying of firearms, car rallies; and*
  - (ii) *exploration and mining, other than continuation of operations within existing licences, as approved;*

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

*and:*

(f) *they be included on a schedule to the National Parks Act 1975, and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.*<sup>14</sup>

*Notes 2: Metal detecting should be permitted other than in designated zones, located to protect significant park values, particularly habitats of threatened small ground-dwelling animals and plants, and significant, sensitive cultural heritage features, which may be damaged as a result of prospecting. These zones should be developed as part of the standard management plan process, in consultation with PMAV. This variation is not intended to affect current arrangements for metal detecting in existing state parks in the study area or elsewhere in Victoria, nor to alter measures for the protection of archaeological relics and sites under the Heritage Act 1995.*

The Government recognises that Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands are significantly under-represented in Victoria's parks and reserves. The Government recognises these state parks, as part of landscapes that have long been important to Indigenous Australians, now protect many of the State's most precious natural and cultural values. It also recognises the vital role they play in maintaining a healthy society.

As such the general recommendations for national parks are supported, meeting the Government's commitment to establishment a box-ironbark parks and reserves system. The Government will introduce legislation to establish 2 new State parks and 3 expanded State Parks under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The areas to be legislated are shown on map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of these areas will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The Government intends that the extent and location of exclusion zones for prospecting (metal detecting) within State parks where metal detecting is recommended, will be determined through a park planning process, in consultation with the community, that acknowledges that the primary management purpose of areas listed under the **National Parks Act 1975**, is the protection of conservation values. The process will consider the significant natural, historic and Aboriginal cultural values, while recognising the need to accommodate prospecting activities through appropriate zoning. The zones will be developed in consultation with representatives of prospectors and other stakeholders.

Following consultation with the ECC, the Government clarifies this recommendation to ensure consistency in respect to metal detecting between B(c)(ii) and Note 2, B(c)(ii) is reworded as follows:

- (ii) *except for parks where specifically excluded, metal detecting (prospecting) be permitted...delete the word...'outside'...add the words...'other than in'... designated zones defined in park management plans (see Note 2 below);*

#### **B1 KOOYOORA STATE PARK**

*The Kooyoora State Park area of 11 646 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state parks on page 129.*

The Government supports the extension of the Kooyoora State Park and will introduce legislation to enlarge the park under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The extended park to be legislated is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The extended Kooyoora State Park will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

#### **B2 BROKEN-BOOSEY STATE PARK**

- (a) *The Broken-Boosey State Park area of 1 009 ha shown on Map A and Map C be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state parks on page 129;*
- (b) *metal detecting not be permitted;*

<sup>14</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

- (c) *low intensity grazing by domestic stock be permitted at the land manager's discretion, where necessary for biodiversity conservation;*
- (d) *dogs generally be permitted in the park, subject to the land manager's discretion; and*
- (e) *the following uses be allowed to continue, through specific agreements where appropriate, at current levels:*
  - (i) *land owners to retain necessary access through the park to their properties;*
  - (ii) *stock movement through the park to be permitted where required to access different parts of a property.*
  - (iii) *continued access to water for domestic and irrigation purposes from the creeks in the park.*
  - (iv) *changes to access for owners or stock, or changes to water access points to be treated on their merits but approval should not be unreasonably withheld.*

The Government supports the establishment of the Broken-Boosey State Park and will introduce legislation to establish the park under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The area to be legislated is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of the Broken-Boosey State Park will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

Government will, through the park planning process, work with landholders, the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, and the Victorian Farmers Federation to resolve issues relating to the extent and location of low intensity grazing, the use of working dogs, access to property, water points and stock movement, and pest plant and animal control. Land managers will investigate opportunities to work with the Victorian Field and Game Association with respect to pest plant and animal control. The park planning process will also consider the significant natural, historic or Aboriginal cultural values, and canvas the views of all stakeholders as part of the planning process.

As noted in R13 above, the Government supports the establishment of a Conservation Management Network for the Broken-Boosey area, which will extend the protection of biodiversity onto private land in consultation with landowners.

### **B3 WARBY RANGE STATE PARK**

- (a) *The Warby Range State Park area of 11 084 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state parks on page 129;*
- (b) *metal detecting not be permitted; and*
- (c) *car rallying be permitted in Killawarra forest, by arrangement with the land manager.*

The Government supports the expansion of the Warby Range State Park and will introduce legislation to establish the park under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The area to be legislated is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The expanded Warby Range State Park will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The extent and location of car rallying in the Killawarra forest component of the Warby Range State Park will be determined through a park planning process, in consultation with the community, that acknowledges the primary purpose of the park for nature conservation. The process will also consider the significant natural, historic or Aboriginal cultural values, and canvas the views of all stakeholders, including the Confederation of Australian Motor Sports.

The six-year phase out of fencing products in the Killawarra Block of the Warby State Park recommended in F(i)(i) below will require harvesting to continue at almost double the estimated level for 6 years. This may have adverse consequences on future availability of fencing products. Accordingly, the Government will undertake discussions with post cutters for an earlier cessation of cutting to avoid unsustainable harvesting levels. This is in line with the approach for sleeper cutters outline in recommendation 31 above.

**B4 REEF HILLS STATE PARK**

- (a) *The Reef Hills State Park area of 2 013 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state parks on page 129; and*
- (b) *should the current use as shooting ranges of any of the three adjacent areas lapse, they be rehabilitated and added to the park.*

The Government supports the establishment of the Reef Hills State Park, incorporating the existing Regional Park, and will introduce legislation to establish the park under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The area to be legislated is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of the Reef Hills State Park will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

**B5 PADDYS RANGES STATE PARK**

*The Paddys Ranges State Park area of 1 954 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state parks on page 129.*

The Government supports the expansion of the Paddys Ranges State Park and will introduce legislation to expand the park under the **National Parks Act 1975**. The expanded park to be legislated is shown on map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of the expanded Paddys Ranges State Park will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

**NHP NATIONAL HERITAGE PARK**

*The national heritage park shown on Map A (numbered NHPI) be used to:*

- (a) (i) *protect the cultural landscapes of the alluvial diggings and quartz mining era and associated settlements, and*
- (a) (ii) *protect individual relics, sites and places of historical significance;*
- (b) *protect Aboriginal cultural sites and places;*
- (c) *conserve and protect biodiversity and natural processes and protect natural landscapes;*
- (d) *provide opportunities for education, recreation and tourism associated with the enjoyment and understanding of cultural heritage and natural environments;*

*the following activities generally be permitted:*

- (e) *bushwalking, car touring, mountain and trail bike riding on formed roads, picnicking and camping;*
- (f) *nature observation, bird watching and visiting historic features;*
- (g) *orienteering and rogaining;*
- (h) *research, subject to permit;*
- (i) *metal detecting (prospecting) in designated zones defined in a park management plan;*
- (j) *apiculture on licensed sites, subject to the outcome of research into the ecological impacts of this industry and park management requirements;*
- (k) *organised car rallies, subject to permit and park management zoning;*

*and:*

- (l) *in accordance with the ecological management strategy recommended in Recommendation R12 (Chapter 4), dense eucalypt regrowth be thinned to enhance the growth of retained trees;*
- (m) (i) *exploration and mining be permitted in accordance with the provisions which apply to land on Schedule 4 of the National Parks Act 1975, and provisions for restricted Crown land under the Mineral Resources Development Act 1990, and*
- (m) (ii) *exploration and mining operations within existing licences, continue as per the conditions of approval for those licences until they lapse;*

(n) *harvesting of timber products and eucalyptus oil, grazing by domestic stock, hunting and the use or carrying of firearms not be permitted;*

*and:*

(o) *the national heritage park be included on Schedule 4 of the National Parks Act 1975, and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment; and*

(p) *national heritage park be added to the Mineral Resources Development Act 1990 as a category of restricted Crown land.*<sup>15</sup>

The Government supports the concept of National Heritage Park as a new public land category, the first of its kind in Australia. National Heritage Parks will primarily protect outstanding cultural landscapes and secondarily natural values. Cultural landscapes are those areas where major cultural themes are best represented by virtue of the number, significance and diversity of sites and relics that they preserve, in surroundings essentially intact from the period they represent. The category is similar to national park for cultural values, with the scope for appropriate recognition and protection of natural and other values of moderate to high significance.

The Government will establish National Heritage Parks under Schedule 4 of the **National Parks Act 1975**, and as restricted Crown land listed under Schedule 3 of the **Mineral Resources Development Act 1990**. Section 40 of the **National Parks Act 1975** may apply on a case by case basis to future national heritage parks but will not apply to the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park (see NHP1 below).

#### **NHP1 CASTLEMAINE DIGGINGS NATIONAL HERITAGE PARK**

(a) *The Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park area of 7 442 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for national heritage park on page 146; and*

(b) *the park be reserved to a depth of 100 metres only below the surface.*<sup>16</sup>

The Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park has a unique array of significant historic sites and landscapes, flora and fauna, walking and driving trails, and will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's cultural and natural heritage. The features of the recommended park complement the attractions that are currently promoted in the district and provide an opportunity for significant growth in the local tourism industry.

The Government is seeking to have the park listed on the Victorian Heritage Register in recognition of its outstanding historic value across a broad area.

The Government supports the establishment of the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park and will establish the park under Schedule 4 of the **National Parks Act 1975**, and amend Schedule 3 of the **Mineral Resources Development Act 1975** to designate the area as restricted Crown Land. Given this designation, the mining consent provisions of Section 40 of the **National Parks Act 1975** will not apply to this park, in line with the ECC recommendation that the park be treated as restricted Crown land. The area to be legislated is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report.

The extent and location of zones for metal detecting (prospecting) within the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park will be determined through a park planning process, in consultation with the community. The process will consider the significant heritage, natural, and Aboriginal cultural values, while recognising the need to accommodate prospecting activities through appropriate zoning. The zones will be developed in consultation with representatives of prospectors and other stakeholders.

The Government notes that the Castlemaine Primary School has a school pine plantation located near Forest Creek at Chewton (within the National Heritage Park) that is due to be harvested shortly, and is of little historical and environmental value currently. Harvesting of this plantation will be permitted on the basis that the site is adequately rehabilitated with Box-Ironbark species consistent with the park values.

<sup>15</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>16</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**REGIONAL PARKS, NATURE CONSERVATION RESERVES, AND HISTORIC AND CULTURAL FEATURES RESERVES RECOMMENDATIONS**

**C REGIONAL PARKS**

*Regional parks shown on Map A (numbered C2 to C7):*

- (a) *be used:*
- (i) *for informal recreation associated with the enjoyment of natural surroundings by large numbers of people;*
  - (ii) *to conserve biodiversity and natural features; and*
  - (iii) *to protect significant historic sites and Aboriginal cultural sites and places;*
- (b) *the following activities generally be permitted*
- (i) *bushwalking, car touring, picnicking and camping;*
  - (ii) *nature observation, bird watching and visiting historic features;*
  - (iii) *orienteeing and rogaining;*
  - (iv) *horse, mountain and trail bike riding on formed roads only;*
  - (v) *research, subject to permit;*
  - (vi) *exploration and mining, subject to the approval of the Minister for Environment and Conservation*
  - (vii) *apiculture on licensed sites, where consistent with the primary uses above and park management requirements;*
  - (viii) *recreational prospecting and gemstone-seeking, where consistent with the primary uses above and park management requirements, but not where they would disturb protected archaeological relics;*
  - (ix) *other recreational activities in accordance with a management plan;*

*and:*

- (c) *timber harvesting, grazing and car rallies not be permitted;*
- (d) *these parks be subject to management plans to protect biodiversity and significant features;*
- (e) *in accordance with the ecological management strategy recommended in Recommendation R12 (Chapter 4), dense eucalypt regrowth be thinned to enhance the growth of retained trees;*
- (f) *unused road reserves be added to adjoining parks where appropriate;*

*and:*

- (g) *regional parks be permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, except where otherwise specified.*<sup>17</sup>

The Government supports the recommendations for regional parks and will implement these progressively over time. Regional parks are located close to urban centres and designed to cater for large numbers of people in natural or semi-natural surroundings. In creating these parks, it is recognised there may be additional areas of public land not considered by the ECC that may be suitable for incorporation into the regional parks. These areas will be investigated in consultation with local government, water authority, and the community.

**C1 BENDIGO REGIONAL PARK**

*The 8 745 ha Bendigo Regional Park shown on Map A:*

- (a) *be used to:*
- (i) *provide opportunities for recreation and education associated with the enjoyment and understanding of natural environments and heritage features;*

<sup>17</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.



- (ii) *provide for appropriate recreation facilities;*
- (iii) *conserve and protect biodiversity and natural features;*
- (iv) *protect significant historic sites and aboriginal cultural sites and places;*
- (b) *generally permit the following activities:*
  - (i) *bushwalking, picnicking and camping;*
  - (ii) *car touring, trail bike riding and horse riding on formed roads;*
  - (iii) *nature observation, bird watching and visiting historic features;*
  - (iv) *orienteering and rogaining;*
  - (v) *other recreational activities in accordance with a management plan;*
  - (vi) *exploration and mining, subject to the approval of the Minister for Environment and Conservation (see Note 1);*
  - (vii) *metal detecting (prospecting), except in designated zones defined in a park management plan;*
  - (viii) *apiculture on traditionally licensed sites, subject to park management requirements;*
  - (ix) *walking dogs on leads; and*
  - (x) *research, subject to permit;*

*and:*

- (c) *in accordance with the ecological management strategy recommended in Recommendation R12 in (Chapter 4), dense eucalypt regrowth be thinned to enhance the growth of retained trees;*
- (d) *harvesting of forest products, grazing by domestic stock, hunting and the use or carrying of firearms, and car rallies not be permitted; and*
- (e) *subject to the 'Aqua 2000' project confirming Crusoe and No. 7 Reservoirs are not required for future water supply purposes, and completion of associated works, these reservoirs and their surrounds be managed as a community recreation and tourism focal point (see Notes 2 & 3).*
- (f) *the park be permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. (see Note 4).<sup>18</sup>*

The Government supports the establishment of the Bendigo Regional Park and will establish the park under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. The Bendigo Regional Park is located close to Bendigo and designed to cater for large numbers of people in natural or semi-natural surroundings. The area to be reserved is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of the Bendigo Regional Park, alongside the Greater Bendigo National Park, will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

#### **C2 ARARAT REGIONAL PARK**

- (a) *The Ararat Regional Park of 3 671 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for regional parks on page 152; and*
- (b) *in accordance with the ecological management strategy recommended in Recommendation R12 in (Chapter 4), dense eucalypt regrowth be thinned to enhance the growth of retained trees.*

The Government supports the establishment of the Ararat Regional Park and will establish the park under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. Ararat Regional Park is located close to Ararat and designed to cater for large numbers of people in natural or semi-natural surroundings. The area to be reserved is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report.

<sup>18</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

The Government is aware of its agreed commitments as outlined in the West Victoria Regional Forest Agreement (RFA). The RFA has designated a portion of the Dunneworthy State Forest a Special Management Zone (SMZ) thus enabling the provision of firewood. The Government will allow firewood removal from certain areas of the Ararat Regional Park, in line with the RFA.

The areas available for firewood collection will be determined by NRE, within the terms of the agreement and protect large old tree sites and threatened species and Ecological Vegetation Classes. Rates of firewood removal will be regulated with the objective of maintaining a sustainable supply of firewood to local communities.

#### **C3 ST ARNAUD REGIONAL PARK**

*The St Arnaud Regional Park of 957 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for regional parks on page 152.*

The Government supports the establishment of the St Arnaud Regional Park and will establish the park under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. St Arnaud Regional Park is located close to St Arnaud and designed to cater for large numbers of people in natural or semi-natural surroundings. The area to be reserved is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report.

#### **C4 MARYBOROUGH REGIONAL PARK**

*The area of 226 ha shown on Map A be added to the Maryborough Regional Park and the 524 ha park be used in accordance with the general recommendations for regional parks on page 152.*

The Government supports the establishment of the Maryborough Regional Park and will establish the park under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. Maryborough Regional Park is located close to Maryborough and designed to cater for large numbers of people in natural or semi-natural surroundings. The area to be reserved is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report.

#### **C5 MT ALEXANDER REGIONAL PARK**

*The 1 240 ha Mt Alexander Regional Park:*

- (a) be used in accordance with the general recommendations for regional parks on page 152; and*
- (b) be managed taking into account new information on EVCs and large old trees.*

The Government supports the continuation of the Mt Alexander Regional Park and will reserve the park under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. Mt Alexander Regional Park is located close to urban centres and designed to cater for large numbers of people in natural or semi-natural surroundings. The area to be retained is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report.

#### **C6 HEPBURN REGIONAL PARK**

*The Hepburn Regional Park of 59 ha (part of the park) be used in accordance with the general recommendations for regional parks on page 152.*

The Government supports the continuation of the Hepburn Regional Park and will reserve the park under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. Hepburn Regional Park is located close to urban centres and designed to cater for large numbers of people in natural or semi-natural surroundings. The area to be retained is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report.

#### **C7 BEECHWORTH REGIONAL PARK**

*The Beechworth Regional Park of 606 ha shown on Map A be managed in accordance with the general recommendations for regional parks on page 152, but retained on Schedule 3 of the National Parks Act 1975.*

The Government supports the retention of the Beechworth Regional Park and, because of its significant historical interest, it will be retained on Schedule 3 of the **National Parks Act 1975**. The area to be retained is shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The Beechworth Regional Park will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's cultural heritage.

**D NATURE CONSERVATION RESERVES**

*Nature conservation reserves shown on Map A (numbered D1 to D68) be used to:*

- (a) conserve and protect species, communities or habitats of indigenous animals and plants;*
- (b) protect Aboriginal cultural sites and places;*
- (c) protect historic features in specific reserves where noted;*
- (d) provide for educational and scientific study if consistent with (a) above, and in ways that minimally affect the area;*
- (e) provide for passive recreation such as nature study and picnicking, and other recreational activities subject to management requirements, where they are consistent with (a) above, or as otherwise specified;*

*and:*

- (f) low impact exploration for minerals, planned to minimise any impacts on biodiversity values, be permitted with the approval of the Minister for Environment and Conservation, except in the area of the existing Deep Lead Flora and Fauna Reserve (see Recommendation D2);*
- (g) mining be subject to Government decision on individual proposals;*
- (h) recreational prospecting and gemstone-seeking be permitted except:*
  - (i) in areas where it may disturb protected archaeological relics or adversely affect significant natural and community heritage values, and*
  - (ii) where specified for particular reserves below;*
- (i) grazing, harvesting of forest products, hunting and the use of firearms not be permitted, except as provided for in defined circumstances in other recommendations;*
- (j) designated site or dispersed camping be permitted in appropriate locations in the larger reserves (for example Wychitella and Waanyarra), where this will not adversely affect the biodiversity values of the reserve;*
- (k) apiculture be permitted except where specified, and subject to:*
  - (i) the outcome of research into the ecological impacts of this industry, and*
  - (ii) management requirements;*
- (l) in accordance with the ecological management strategy recommended in Recommendation R12 (Chapter 4), dense eucalypt regrowth be thinned to enhance the growth of retained trees;*
- (m) unused road reserves be added to adjoining nature conservation reserves where appropriate; and*
- (n) unless otherwise specified, they be permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.*

The general recommendations for nature conservation reserves are supported and the Government will implement the recommendations progressively over time.

**D1 EXISTING NATURE CONSERVATION RESERVES**

*The existing flora and fauna reserves, and flora reserves described below and listed in Appendix 11 be re-designated as nature conservation reserves, and used in accordance with the general recommendations for nature conservation reserves on page 167.*

The Government acknowledges the number of different public land categories can lead to confusion between different land tenures and supports the ECC recommendation that will effect some consolidation.

The Government supports redesignating existing flora and fauna reserves, and flora reserves described and listed by the ECC as nature conservation reserves to be used in accordance with the general recommendations for nature conservation reserves.

**D2 DEEP LEAD NATURE CONSERVATION RESERVE**

- (a) *The Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve area of 1 823 ha shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for nature conservation reserves on page 167;*
- (b) *the nature conservation reserve extend to a depth of 100 metres only below the surface,*
- (c) *surface mining not be permitted (see Note below);*
- (d) *prospecting not be permitted;*
- (e) *the area of the existing Deep Lead Flora and Fauna Reserve, to a depth of 100 metres, remain in Schedule 4 of the National Parks Act 1975; and*
- (f) *new sections of the recommended Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve be reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.*<sup>19</sup>

The Government supports the establishment of the Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve to a depth of 100m. The exceptional number of threatened ground flora, can be adequately protected within a nature conservation reserve limited to 100 metres, where surface mining will not be permitted, and exploration and the associated minor infrastructure of underground mining are subject to the Minister's consent.

The Government supports the recommendations for the existing Deep Lead Flora and Fauna Reserve to remain listed under the **National Parks Act 1975** (Schedule 4) and the new sections to be reserved under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**.

NRE will develop a streamlined approach for dealing with proposals for minor mining infrastructure that may be associated with any future mining proposals beneath this reserve.

**D3 WYCHITELLA NATURE CONSERVATION RESERVE**

- (a) *The 2 830 ha area recommended for addition to the existing Wychitella Flora and Fauna Reserve be used in accordance with the general recommendations for nature conservation reserves on page 167; and reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978;*
- (b) *prospecting continue to be permitted in these recommended additions; and*
- (c) *the existing Wychitella Flora and Fauna Reserve remain reserved as at present.*

The Government supports the establishment of the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve, and will add 2 830 ha to the existing Wychitella Flora and Fauna Reserve under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. The areas to be reserved are shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of this reserve will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

**D4 WHROO NATURE CONSERVATION RESERVE**

*The recommended Whroo Nature Conservation Reserve area of 2 298 ha be reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, and used in accordance with the general recommendations for nature conservation reserves on page 167.*

The Government supports the establishment of the Whroo Nature Conservation Reserve and will establish the reserve under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. The areas to be reserved are shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of the Whroo Nature Conservation Reserve will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

<sup>19</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**D5 –D68 OTHER RECOMMENDED NATURE CONSERVATION RESERVES**

<b>D5 Lonsdale</b>	<b>D21 Lexton</b>	<b>D37 Fryers Ridge</b>	<b>D53 Tamleugh</b>
<b>D6 Illawarra</b>	<b>D22 Bung Bong</b>	<b>D38 Taradale</b>	<b>D54 Shire Dam Swamp</b>
<b>D7 Jallukar</b>	<b>D23 Talbot</b>	<b>D39 Pilchers Bridge</b>	<b>D55 Gowangardie</b>
<b>D8 Morri Morri</b>	<b>D24 Caralulup</b>	<b>D40 Salomon Gully</b>	<b>D56 Caniambo</b>
<b>D9 Joel Joel</b>	<b>D25 Dunach</b>	<b>D41 Jackass Flat</b>	<b>D57 Baddaginnie</b>
<b>D10 Navarre</b>	<b>D26 Timor</b>	<b>D42 Whipstick</b>	<b>D58 Nathalia</b>
<b>D11 Big Tottington</b>	<b>D27 Havelock</b>	<b>D43 Mt Sugarloaf</b>	<b>D59 Nurmurkah</b>
<b>D12 Landsborough Hill</b>	<b>D28 Waanyarra</b>	<b>D44 Axedale</b>	<b>D60 Yabba South</b>
<b>D13 Landsborough</b>	<b>D29 Mt Korong</b>	<b>D45 Crosbie</b>	<b>D61 Wattville</b>
<b>D14 Stoney Creek</b>	<b>D30 Mysia</b>	<b>D46 Spring Plains</b>	<b>D62 Boxwood</b>
<b>D15 Stuart Mill</b>	<b>D31 Bells Swamp</b>	<b>D47 Tooborac</b>	<b>D63 Youarang</b>
<b>D16 Redbank</b>	<b>D32 Leichardt</b>	<b>D48 Springs Creek</b>	<b>D64 Tungamah</b>
<b>D17 Dalyenong</b>	<b>D33 Wilsons Hill</b>	<b>D49 Murchison-Rushworth Disused Railway</b>	<b>D65 Mt Meg</b>
<b>D18 Tunstalls</b>	<b>D34 Shelbourne</b>	<b>D50 Mangalore</b>	<b>D66 Wangaratta Common</b>
<b>D19 Wehla</b>	<b>D35 Muckleford</b>	<b>D51 Arcadia</b>	<b>D67 Cookinburra</b>
<b>D20 Moliagul</b>	<b>D36 Kaweka</b>	<b>D52 Gum Swamp</b>	<b>D68 Fell Timber Creek</b>

*The recommended reserves listed and described above be used in accordance with the general recommendations for nature conservation reserves on page 167.*

The Government supports the recommendations and will establish the above listed Nature Conservation Reserves as described in the ECC Final Report under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. The areas to be reserved are shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of these areas will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The Government notes in respect to D66, the Rural City of Wangaratta has recently contributed to a park planning process for the Wangaratta Common Nature Conservation Reserve, and has an important ongoing role to play in the management of the reserve, in consultation with the reserve managers, particularly with respect to drainage issues.

The ECC have also advised that the Nathalia Nature Conservation Reserve was not intended to include the tennis courts that are part of the Narioka reserve.

**E GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HISTORIC AND CULTURAL FEATURES RESERVES**

*Historic and cultural features reserves shown on Map A (numbered E1-E30) be used:*

- (a) *primarily, to protect places with significant historic values, including remnant historical features such as buildings, structures, relics or other artefacts;*
- (b)
  - (i) *to conserve indigenous flora and fauna, except where incompatible with protecting the above values, and*
  - (ii) *to provide opportunities for recreation and education, where appropriate in the context of present use and management;*

(c) *to provide protection for, where present:*

- (i) *cultural values, including aesthetic and social values, and*
- (ii) *scenic landscape and natural values;*

*and:*

- (d) *low impact exploration for minerals, planned to minimise any impacts on significant cultural heritage values, be permitted with the approval of the Minister for Environment and Conservation (see Note 2);*
- (e) *mining be subject to Government decision on individual proposals (see Note 2);*
- (f) *prospecting and gemstone-seeking be permitted except in areas where they may disturb protected archaeological relics or adversely affect aboriginal cultural values or significant historic features;*
- (g) *timber harvesting not be permitted;*
- (h) *the re-use of buildings, including for community uses, be permitted where appropriate, with any modifications subject to the approval of the land manager;*
- (i) *conservation management plans or conservation and action strategies for the historic and cultural features be prepared by the land manager;*
- (j) *unused road reserves be added to adjoining historic and cultural features reserves where appropriate;*
- (k) *the areas referred to in recommendations E1 to E16 be permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment;*

*and:*

- (l) *the areas referred to in recommendations E17 to E31 be protected through forest management planning and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.*<sup>20</sup>

The Government supports the recommendations for historic and cultural features reserves to protect features that include Aboriginal sites and places, particular cultural landscapes, historic Chinese mining and settlement sites, historic mines and mining sites, structures such as bridges and buildings, and relics of past timber harvesting operations.

The protection of these areas contributes significantly to the protection of the State's cultural heritage.

#### **E1 EXISTING HISTORIC AND CULTURAL FEATURES RESERVES**

*The existing historic and cultural features reserves, historic areas and historic reserves described above and listed in Appendix 11 be used in accordance with the general recommendations for historic and cultural features reserves on page 190.*

The Government supports the recommendation to retain 32 historic and cultural features reserves, historic areas and historic reserves.

The Government also supports redesignating the historic areas and historic reserves as historic and cultural features reserves in acknowledgment that the number of different public land categories can lead to confusion between different land tenures and supports the ECC recommendation, which will effect some consolidation.

<sup>20</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**E2-E16 RECOMMENDED HISTORIC AND CULTURAL FEATURES RESERVES**

<b>E2 Alma Lead Cyanide Works</b>	<b>E10 Victoria Hill</b>
<b>E3 Bristol Hill</b>	<b>E11 Royal George Company</b>
<b>E4 Janevale Monier Bridge</b>	<b>E12 Comet Shaft, KK Shaft and Comet Diggings</b>
<b>E5 Pickpocket Diggings</b>	<b>E13 Johnson's Nos. 1&amp;2 Mines and Golden Age Mine, Garden Gully</b>
<b>E6 South Frederick the Great</b>	<b>E14 Chinese Diggings</b>
<b>E7 Deborah Company</b>	<b>E15 Echuca and Waranga Trust Irrigation Pump &amp; Channel</b>
<b>E8 North Deborah</b>	<b>E16 Days Mill</b>
<b>E9 Central Deborah Tourist Mine</b>	

*The recommended reserves described above be used in accordance with the general recommendations for historic and cultural features reserves on page 190 [see above table].*

The Government supports the establishment of 15 historic and cultural features reserves, as listed above, and will establish them under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. The areas to be reserved are shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The establishment of these areas will contribute significantly to the protection of the State's cultural heritage.

The Government notes that part of the area currently mapped as Comet Shaft, KK Shaft and Comet Diggings Historic and Cultural Features Reserve (E12) is actually a car park licenced to the Bendigo RSL and is therefore reclassified as N1.

**E17-E30 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL FEATURES IN STATE FOREST**

*The areas described above, which have historic and cultural significance, be protected through the NRE forest management planning process.*

The Government supports the protection of historic and cultural features in state forest and will ensure they are appropriately protected through the forest management planning process.

**E31 OTHER HISTORIC SITES IN STATE FOREST**

*The historic sites in state forests listed in Chapter 17 be protected through the forest management planning process or through prescriptions during forest operations.*

The Government supports the protection of historic and cultural features in state forest and will ensure they are appropriately protected either through the forest management planning process or through prescriptions during forest operations.

**STATE FORESTS AND FOREST MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS****F STATE FORESTS**

*The area of 120 950 ha shown as state forest on Map A be used in accordance with the principles and guidelines outlined above, to:*

- (a) *produce hardwood timber, subject to the following:*
- (i) *logs should be directed as far as possible to the highest value-added products,*
  - (ii) *minor products should as far as possible be produced from waste from operations for major products and from thinning operations that remove small diameter stems, and*
  - (iii) *harvesting of timber should proceed in accordance with the Code of Forest Practices for Timber Production and relevant prescriptions;*

- (b) conserve native plants and animals;*
  - (c) supply water and protect catchments and streams;*
  - (d) provide opportunities for open-space recreation and education;*
  - (e) protect historic sites and Aboriginal cultural sites and places;*
  - (f) produce minerals, honey, gravel, sand, road-making materials, eucalyptus oil and other forest products;*
- and:*
- (g) (i) forest management prescriptions applying to Box-Ironbark forests be reviewed at ten year intervals, and*
    - (ii) NRE keep records and conduct regular reviews of compliance with prescriptions, with the outcomes of these reviews made publicly available;*
  - (h) measures to:*
    - (i) implement the principles and guidelines outlined above, and*
    - (ii) make secure provision for the conservation of rare or threatened species, depleted EVCs and other characteristics of the forests that should be retained for biodiversity conservation purposes, be put into effect through zoning in forest management planning or prescriptions, as appropriate;*
  - (i) within a maximum of six years from the date of Government approval of these recommendations*
    - (i) cutting of fencing products cease in the Killawarra forest, or earlier if the cutting cycle is completed sooner;*
    - (ii) cutting of sleepers cease in the Box-Ironbark study area;*
  - (j) firewood-only coupes be reduced over time, in favour of harvesting of firewood in conjunction with higher-value products such as sawlogs and fencing material;*
  - (k) forest stands be managed to increase the relative abundance of large diameter trees in Box-Ironbark forests;*
  - (l) (i) no trees larger than 60 cm diameter be harvested in the current cutting cycle (until 2030), and*
    - (ii) subject to the outcome of periodic reviews of progress with increasing the numbers of large trees for habitat, some harvesting of large trees may take place after 2030;*
  - (m) where they exist (see Note 1), at least:*
    - (i) two trees per hectare in the 50 to 60 cm diameter class, be retained as habitat trees in sawlog operations, and*
    - (ii) two trees per hectare in the 40 to 50 cm diameter class, be retained as habitat trees in sawlog operations;*
  - (n) all individual trees larger than 40 cm diameter be retained in fencing and firewood operations;*
  - (o) at least ten trees per hectare be retained in the 30 to 40 cm diameter class in forest operations, for growing stock and future large trees;*
  - (p) all trees larger than 20 cm diameter with visible hollows be retained as habitat trees, where practicable and consistent with public and operator safety and the attainment of other biodiversity objectives;*
  - (q) research into hollow formation in Box-Ironbark forests be conducted and, if feasible, programs which will increase the density of hollow-bearing trees be implemented;*
  - (r) Box-Ironbark forests be harvested using systems which seek to optimise growth rates on individual stems for both habitat management and wood production objectives, and which maintain stands in an uneven-aged condition;*



- (s) *new information on wildlife ecology or forest structure be taken into account in future forest management strategies;*

*and:*

- (t) *state forests be managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment; and*  
(u) *the special features in state forest areas listed below be protected under Section 50 of the Forests Act 1958 or Section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, or through the implementation of management prescriptions which accord with the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, as appropriate.*<sup>21</sup>

The Government accepts these prescriptions as useful guidelines in securing biodiversity values. The Government is undertaking further work in this area.

However, forests are naturally dynamic and changing, and methods of achieving improved biodiversity will change in the light of experiences and new scientific knowledge. In these circumstances, it is believed that the prescriptions recommended by the ECC should be reviewed from time to time and at least every 10 years to enable their effectiveness to be assessed.

The timber harvesting prescriptions will be considered in conjunction with the forest management plan for the Bendigo Forest Management Area, which will commence in June 2002. Both the plan and detailed prescriptions will be developed in consultation with local communities in the Box-Ironbark region.

#### **F1 ST ARNAUD AND PYRENEES STATE FORESTS**

*The St Arnaud–Pyrenees State Forests of 13 140 ha:*

- (a) *be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state forests on page 217-218;*  
(b) *continue to allow low-impact Department of Defence training, subject to the land manager's discretion; and*  
(c) *the following special features be protected under Section 50 of the Forests Act 1958, Section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, or through the implementation of management prescriptions which accord with the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, as appropriate.*

#### **F2 DUNOLLY–INGLEWOOD STATE FORESTS**

*Dunolly–Inglewood State Forests of 32 400 ha:*

- (a) *be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state forests on page 217-218; and that*  
(b) *the following special features be protected under Section 50 of the Forests Act 1958, Section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, or through the implementation of management prescriptions which accord with the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, as appropriate.*

#### **F3 MARYBOROUGH STATE FORESTS**

*Maryborough State Forests of 15 630 ha:*

- (a) *be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state forests on page 217-218; and that*  
(b) *the following special features be protected under Section 50 of the Forests Act 1958, Section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, or through the implementation of management prescriptions which accord with the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 as appropriate.*

<sup>21</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**F4 BENDIGO–CASTLEMAINE–MALDON STATE FORESTS**

*Bendigo–Castlemaine–Maldon State Forests of 27 000 ha:*

- (a) *be used in accordance with the general recommendations for state forests on page 217-218; and*
- (b) *the following special features be protected under Section 50 of the Forests Act 1958, Section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, or through the implementation of management prescriptions that accord with the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, as appropriate.*

**F5 RUSHWORTH–HEATHCOTE STATE FORESTS**

*The Rushworth–Heathcote State Forests of 23 650 ha be used:*

- (a) *in accordance with the general recommendations for state forests on page 217-218;*
- (b) *for continued low-key Department of Defence training, subject to the land manager's discretion; and*
- (c) *the following special features be protected under Section 50 of the Forests Act 1958, Section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, or through the implementation of management prescriptions that accord with the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, as appropriate.*

**F6 EXISTING STATE FORESTS**

*The state forests of 9 130 ha shown on Map A and listed in Appendix 11, be used:*

- (a) *in accordance with the general recommendations on page 217-218 and*
- (b) *the special features in state forest areas forest listed below be protected under Section 50 of the Forests Act 1958, Section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, or through the implementation of management prescriptions that accord with the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, as appropriate.*

**Response F1 to F6 combined**

State forest will remain an important public land use, providing opportunities for economic uses such as timber production, access for recreation activities not permitted in parks and reserves (for example, hunting and walking of dogs) and an important contribution to the conservation of forest biodiversity, complementing the parks and reserves system.

Defence training is an important use of State forest – a well trained Defence Force is in the interests of all Australians. Military personnel often use State forest for navigation training, bivouacs, rough terrain vehicle training and similar, normally low impact exercises. While the ECC has made specific recommendations about access to State forest for military training in recommendations F1 and F5, access to other State forest areas will continue subject to agreement between NRE and the Commonwealth Department of Defence.

Associated with each of the Recommendations F1 to F6 are a list of specific features to be protected through reservation under the section 50 of the **Forests Act 1958**, section 4 of the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978** or through prescriptions which accord with the **Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988**. NRE will consider the various features identified in the recommendations in developing forest management plans and provide appropriate protection, as necessary. The Government believes that formal reservation under either the **Forests Act 1958** or **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978** would be necessary only in unusual circumstances and that in most cases adequate protection can be provided through prescriptive measures or the establishment of State forest Special Protection Zones.

**OTHER PUBLIC LAND USE CATEGORY RECOMMENDATIONS****G1-G13 REFERENCE AREAS**

*G1-G3, G5, G7-G8, and G10-G13 The reference areas listed in Table 18.1 above and shown on Map A continue to be used for scientific reference in accordance with previous recommendations and appropriate management plans.*

**G6 For Sandhurst Reference Area :**

- (a) *the boundaries be adjusted as indicated on Map A, and*
- (b) *this area be proclaimed under the Reference Areas Act 1978 and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.*

**G4, G9 The areas shown on Map A at Kingower (G4) and Reef Hills (G9):**

- (a) *be used to maintain natural ecosystems as a reference to which those concerned with studying land for particular comparative purposes may be permitted to refer, especially when attempting to solve problems arising from the use of land;*
- (b) *be surrounded by a buffer of adjoining public land, and that delineation of the buffer be by joint arrangement between the Reference Areas Advisory Committee and the land manager;*
- (c) *consistent with existing reference areas, activities (such as grazing, exploration for minerals, mining, timber harvesting and apiculture) that conflict with the purposes of a reference area not be permitted, and any such activities in the proposed reference areas cease when these recommendations are adopted; and*
- (d) *they be proclaimed under the Reference Areas Act 1978 and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.*

The Government acknowledges the importance of reference areas in providing representative examples of land systems important to scientific research. It accepts the recommendation for the two new reference areas at Kingower and Reef Hills, the boundary adjustment to the Sandhurst Reference Area and the eleven existing reference areas as shown on Map A of the ECC Final Report. The Government will introduce legislation to give effect to these recommendations.

**H NATURAL FEATURES RESERVES**

*Natural features reserves, according to their specific characteristics, be used to:*

- (a) *protect natural features and values;*
- (b) *provide opportunities for:*
  - (i) *education and passive recreation such as picnicking, walking and where relevant, fishing, and*
  - (ii) *more intensive recreation such as camping where specified;*
- (c) *conserve indigenous flora and fauna;*
- (d) *protect areas with remnant vegetation or habitat value;*
- (e) *provide protection for historic and Aboriginal cultural values and sites;*
- (f) *preserve features of geological or geomorphological interest;*
- (g) *maintain scenic features and the character and quality of the local landscape;*

*and:*

- (h) *commercial timber harvesting not be permitted;*
- (i) *some firewood may be available from thinning for ecological management, subject to research and the approval of the land manager,*
- (j) *exploration for minerals be permitted, and mining, subject to decisions on particular cases;*
- (k) *prospecting and apiculture be generally permitted (see Notes 2 and 3 below);*
- (l) *grazing generally not be permitted, unless required for short periods by the land manager;*
- (m) *unused road reserves adjoining natural features reserves be added to those reserves where appropriate; and*

- (n) *they be permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.*<sup>22</sup>

The Government supports the general recommendations for natural features reserves as described in the ECC Final Report. It is acknowledged that these reserves in the Box-Ironbark region may carry the only local remnants of indigenous vegetation and often have important conservation values that need to be protected.

#### **H1 WILDLIFE AREAS**

*The wildlife areas shown on Map A (numbered H1) and listed in Appendix 11 be used in accordance with the general recommendations for natural features reserves on page 243, and:*

- (a) *primarily to conserve the habitat of native fauna associated with wetlands; and*  
 (b) *for public recreation (including hunting in season as specified by the managers) and education, where this does not conflict with the primary aim*

The Government supports the recommendations for wildlife areas shown on Map A and listed in Appendix 11 of the ECC Final Report, primarily to conserve the habitat of native fauna associated with wetlands and, when not in conflict with this primary aim, for public recreation and education.

#### **H2 PUBLIC LAND WATER FRONTAGES**

*Public land water frontages, where not recommended otherwise for a specific use, be used in accordance with the general recommendations for natural features reserves on page 243, and be used to:*

- (a) *conserve native flora and fauna as part of an integrated system of habitat networks across the State;*  
 (b) *maintain or restore indigenous vegetation;*  
 (c) *protect adjoining land from erosion, and provide for flood passage;*  
 (d) *protect the character and scenic quality of the local landscape;*  
 (e) *provide protection for cultural heritage features and values;*  
 (f) *provide access for recreation (including hunting where appropriate) at levels of use consistent with (a) to (e) above;*

*and:*

- (g) *Catchment Management Authorities, in cooperation with adjoining landholders, implement programs to gradually restore frontages, where public land water frontages are currently licensed for grazing or other purposes, and where stream-bank or frontage vegetation is degraded, frontage vegetation is not regenerating, stream banks are eroding or salt-affected, or to protect natural, cultural, recreational and scenic values or water quality;*  
 (h) *programs to restore frontages be implemented according to local priorities and a practical timetable, with particular emphasis on the Victorian Riverina bioregion (northern plains);*  
 (i) *where frontages adjoin farmland, fencing and off-stream stock watering points be encouraged by appropriate support;*  
 (j) *where stream frontage vegetation is to be restored, particularly in cleared or degraded areas, indigenous trees, shrubs and ground species be planted, where possible using seed of local provenance;*  
 (k) *where appropriate, suitable areas for more intensive recreational use be identified and facilities established;*  
 (l) *where land exchanges are proposed that involve frontage land that is no longer adjacent to rivers, efforts be made to prevent loss of any nature conservation or other values of this land from the public land estate;*

<sup>22</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

- (m) *where a licence has been issued for a public land water frontage, usually for grazing, recreation use by the public for activities such as walking, nature observation or fishing be permitted, while motorised forms of recreation not be permitted;*
  - (n) *licensees be required to provide stiles in any fences erected across their licence area if requested to do so by the land manager;*
  - (o) *no new cultivation of stream frontages for agriculture be permitted, and areas currently cultivated be reviewed by the land manager as part of a systematic assessment of river restoration priorities, with a view to phasing out inappropriate cultivation;*
  - (p) *timber cutting not be permitted;*
  - (q) *sand and gravel extraction may be permitted by the land managers where this is consistent with the above uses, and where necessary for bed and bank stability;*
- and:*
- (r) *public land water frontages be managed by the relevant Catchment Management Authority and NRE, as appropriate.* <sup>23</sup>

The Government supports the general recommendations for public land water frontages. The recommendations of the ECC recognise the importance of riparian land and provide the general direction for the management of riparian zones in the Box-Ironbark.

The Government notes an area north-east of the Fosterville Mine site, marked H2 on Map A of the ECC Final Report is freehold land and not subject to the ECC recommendations.

### **H3 STREAMSIDE BEDS AND BANKS**

*Stream beds and banks, subject to other relevant recommendations, guidelines and statutory requirements, be used in accordance with the general recommendations for natural features reserves on page 243, and be used to:*

- (a) *conserve or restore habitat for native flora and fauna;*
- (b) *provide for appropriate recreational activities and levels of use;*
- (c) *provide for flood passage and drainage requirements of adjacent land;*
- (d) *where necessary, provide for the passage of artificial flows of water stored within the catchment or transferred from other catchments;*
- (e) *maintain streams in a stable condition using environmentally sound techniques; and*
- (f) *where this does not conflict with the above, provide a source of sand and gravel.* <sup>24</sup>

The Government supports the recommendations for stream beds and banks. Stream beds and banks contribute significantly to biodiversity and the diversity of recreational opportunities of the region.

### **H4–H7 STREAMSIDE AREAS**

*All existing streamside areas (H4), and new streamside areas (H5-H7) listed in Appendix 11 and shown on Map A, be used:*

- (a) *in accordance with the general recommendations for natural features reserves on page 243; and*
- (b) *to provide opportunities for more intensive recreation such as camping at the discretion of the land manager if this does not conflict with the maintenance of the water quality in the adjacent stream.*

The Government supports the recommendations for streamside areas shown on Map A and listed in Appendix 11 of the ECC Final Report.

<sup>23</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>24</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**H8–H131 BUSHLAND AREAS**

*Existing bushland reserves (H8), except where recommended for other purposes, and new areas of bushland (H9-H131: listed in Appendix 11), as shown on Map A, be used in accordance with the general recommendations for natural features reserves on page 243.*

The Government supports the recommendations for bushland areas shown on Map A and listed in Appendix 11 of the ECC Final Report.

**H132 NATURAL AND SCENIC FEATURES AREAS**

*Existing natural and scenic features areas as shown on Map A be used in accordance with the general recommendations for natural features reserves on page 243.*

*Existing natural and scenic features areas (see Appendix 11 for locations and areas):*

- *Black Range;*<sup>25</sup>
- *Mt Gowar;*
- *Howell's Hill;*
- *Mt Buckra;*
- *Murchison North;*
- *Mt Ochertyre; and*
- *Barnawartha.*

The Government supports the recommendations for natural and scenic features areas shown on Map A and listed in Appendix 11 of the ECC Final Report.

**H133–136 GEOLOGICAL AND GEOMORPHOLOGICAL FEATURES AREAS**

*The following existing (H133) and new (H134-H136) geological and geomorphological features areas shown on Map A:*

- (a) *be used in accordance with the general recommendations for natural features reserves on page 243; and*
- (b) *educational and scientific study, and recreation, be permitted where they are compatible with protecting the geological and geomorphological features.*

**H133**

*Existing geological and geomorphological features (see Appendix 11 for locations and areas):*<sup>26</sup>

- *Yowang Hill;*
- *Amherst quartz reef;*
- *Coliban Falls;*
- *Permian glacials, Moorabbee shoreline, Lake Eppalock.*

**H134**

*White Hills sediments (15.4 ha); outcrops of Ordovician sediments and Tertiary gravels.*

**H135**

*Barfold Gorge (8 ha); a spectacular gorge in an old valley cut in Ordovician sediments, exposing several newer volcanic flows, with basalt columns, waterfalls, a cave, talus cones and tessellated pavements.*

*Note: Only a small part of this gorge is public land. Management could be delegated.*

**H136**

*Pink Cliffs (36 ha); Pink Cliffs displays a geological 'contact' between Cambrian greenstone rock and adjoining granite, exposed by 19th century gold sluicing. The reserve includes the Pink Cliffs scenic reserve.*

The Government supports the recommendations for geological and geomorphological features areas shown on Map A and listed in Appendix 11 of the ECC Final Report, and will establish the 3 new areas under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**.

<sup>25</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>26</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**H137**

*The following existing highway parks and roadside stops, as shown on Map A, be used in accordance with the general recommendations for natural features reserves on page 243, and to provide opportunities for relaxation for travellers (see Appendix 11 for locations and areas)<sup>27</sup>:*

- *adjacent CA 3 Parish of Runnymede;*
- *Sections 19 & 20, Township of Toolleen;*
- *Casey Weir, CA 19A and adjacent water reserve to the west, Parish of Goorambat; and*
- *CA 7A Sec 1 Parish of Barambogie.*

The Government supports the recommendations for highway parks as shown on Map A and listed in Appendix 11 of the ECC Final Report.

**I WATER PRODUCTION AREAS**

*The water production areas shown on Map A (numbered I1 and I2 and listed below and in Appendix 11); the storage areas, diversion works and associated facilities; protective buffer zones around diversion works and storages where defined in a special area plan or land-use determination; and any other public land considered necessary be used for:*

- (a) *water supply purposes;*
- (b) *other activities permitted by the water supply authority after consultation with NRE and the Environment Protection Authority, as appropriate;*
- (c) *the biodiversity and historic values outlined in the notes below be protected by the relevant managers;*

*and:*

- (d) *unless otherwise securely reserved, these areas be permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 for water supply purposes and be managed by the water supply authority.<sup>28</sup>*

The Government recognises the importance of safe and reliable water production facilities for the State. Accordingly, it supports the recommendation that water production areas be reserved under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978** for water supply purposes and agrees that the most appropriate manager of these areas is the relevant water supply authority. The Government will implement this recommendation progressively over time.

**I3 OTHER MAJOR STORAGES**

- (a) *The following offstream storages providing water supply for irrigation and / or stock and domestic use be used for water supply purposes;*
- (b) *The special features specified below be protected; and*
- (c) *They remain under their existing tenure and control.*
  - *Waranga Basin<sup>29</sup>*
  - *Lake Mokoan*

The Government supports this recommendation and recognises the need to protect indigenous flora and fauna and social and historic community heritage values of Waranga Basin.

**J COMMUNITY USE AREAS**

*The recommended areas J1-J6 below be used for recreation, education or other community purposes and:*

- (d) *appropriate facilities be provided;*
- (e) *where relevant, and where compatible with the above, features of cultural significance, natural surroundings and the local character and quality of the landscape be maintained or restored;*

<sup>27</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>28</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>29</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

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

*and:*

(g) *they be reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, and managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (see Note 3 below); and*

(h) *small areas continue to be used by communities for local recreation and managed by committees of management or NRE as appropriate.*<sup>30</sup>

The Government acknowledges the value and enjoyment that local communities obtain from public land used for recreation, education and other community purposes and has developed a reservation system whereby areas of land are set aside and reserved for various community purposes. There are a significant number of these community use reserves which are located in the Box-Ironbark study area. These reserves will continue to be managed in a manner which is consistent with the primary purposes of the reservation and only uses which are not detrimental to the reserve purpose are permitted on those areas.

Where public land is used for community purposes, which require the provision of facilities, the Government is committed to working with the relevant user groups to ensure that this occurs within the context of the Government's budget priorities.

Given that these areas are used for recreation, education and other community purposes, the Government supports the recommendation that harvesting of forest products, hunting and stone extraction not be permitted on those areas.

The Government notes that many community use areas detailed in the report are already reserved under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. Where areas are used by the community and not currently reserved, these will be considered by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment on an individual basis to determine whether they are appropriate for reservation. Not all areas identified in the report are suitable for reservation. For instance, the Major Mitchell Trail and the Castlemaine–Maldon Diggings Heritage Trails are sign-posted routes crossing various land tenures, including Government roads. Where reservation of areas is appropriate, this will be done progressively over time.

NRE recognises that those best placed to manage community use areas are often the local communities themselves. It has an active policy of encouraging local communities to take responsibility for those areas by appointing local representatives as Committees of Management.

#### **J1 EPPALOCK EDUCATION AREA**

*The Eppalock Education Area be used in accordance with the general recommendations for community use areas on page 252, and to provide opportunities for students of all ages to:*

- (a) *study the nature and functioning of reasonably natural ecosystems in a manner such that the integrity of those ecosystems is maintained as far as is practicable;*
- (b) *compare the ecosystems within the education area with other nearby natural and modified systems;*
- (c) *observe and practise methods of environmental analysis, and the field techniques of the natural sciences; and*
- (d) *conduct simple long-term experiments aimed at giving an understanding of the changes occurring in an area with time.*

The existing Eppalock Education Area provides opportunities for forest education and recreation, in particular for school camps along the shores of the lake. The Government will continue to manage this area of forest in keeping with this recommendation. The Government supports the continued availability of the Eppalock Education Area for educational purposes as outlined by the ECC.

<sup>30</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.



## **J2 RECREATION AREAS**

*Recreation areas be used in accordance with the general recommendations for community use areas on page 252, and be used:*

- (a) for organised sports (team sports, horse-racing, golf etc.) and informal recreation (picnicking, camping, prospecting etc.) as permitted by the land manager;*
- (b) to conserve indigenous vegetation where possible; and*
- (c) for grazing at the discretion of the land manager, in appropriate areas.*<sup>31</sup>

The Government supports the concept that recreation reserves be used for recreation use, consistent with the purposes of the particular reserve. It supports the principle that indigenous vegetation be conserved where possible, given the nature and purposes of the reserve. Likewise, grazing will be permitted at the discretion of the land manager where appropriate for the management of the reserve. The Government notes the following two corrections that the ECC has raised and that need to be made to their Final Report:

- The description of the Albert Roy Recreation Area at Eaglehawk in Appendix 11 of the ECC Final Report is inaccurate.
- The Specimen Hill mini bike track is incorrectly listed in Appendix 11 of the ECC Final Report as J2 (to be deleted) but correctly mapped on Map A of the ECC Final Report as N1.

## **J3 RECREATION TRAILS**

*The recreation trails continue to be used in accordance with the general recommendations for community use areas on page 252, and that suitable new trails for recreation and tourist use be encouraged.*

The Government recognises the value of promoting scenic trails for the enjoyment of locals and visitors to areas of natural, cultural or historic interest. To that end, Land Victoria has been instrumental in developing a program of preserving old railway corridors and reserving them as rail trails under the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978**. These include the O'Keefe Rail Trail at Bendigo and the Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail, which have been identified in the report. In addition, there are the driving trails which have been noted in the report.

The Government supports the ongoing use of these areas for recreation purposes. As new trails are identified and as budget priorities permit, the Government will consider the creation of new recreation trails.

## **J4 ESTABLISHED RIFLE AND OTHER SHOOTING RANGES**

*(a) Existing use of established ranges as a rifle, pistol or clay target range, or for other shooting sports, continue, provided the club remains viable and the operator can ensure safety on the range and in adjoining areas to satisfactory standards; and*

NRE is developing a program of rationalisation of rifle ranges and formalisation of tenure arrangements, addressing issues of risk management, site rehabilitation, safety, viability and appropriateness of land use. The Government cannot support this recommendation, as it commits NRE as land manager to continuing on with existing arrangements which may not be appropriate in all cases.

*(b) where ranges including buffers are closed and they retain remnant Box-Ironbark vegetation, those areas be reserved as parks, nature conservation reserves, natural features reserves or state forest as appropriate.*<sup>32</sup>

The Government supports this recommendation in-principle. When a range is closed, NRE will conduct an assessment of the land to determine the most appropriate future use of that land. Where ranges, including buffers, retain remnant Box-Ironbark vegetation, NRE will undertake an assessment as to whether those areas would most appropriately be reserved as parks, nature conservation reserves, natural features reserves or state forest.

<sup>31</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>32</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**J5 PARKLANDS AND GARDENS**

- (a) *Gardens, community parklands or ornamental gardens on public land be used in accordance with the general recommendations for community use areas on page 252;*
- (b) *the conservation, scientific, educational, and historical values of botanical gardens be protected; and*
- (c) *they be available for public use for passive open space recreation, appreciation and education, as determined by the land manager.*<sup>33</sup>

Gardens, community parklands and ornamental gardens will be used for the purposes for which they are reserved. The Government recognises that part of this will include protecting their values and making them available for passive open space recreation.

**J6 BUILDINGS IN PUBLIC USE**

*Various buildings in public use be used in accordance with the general recommendations for community use areas on page 252, where appropriate, and for schools, public halls, kindergartens, libraries, museums, galleries, war memorials, tourist facilities or other public uses.*<sup>34</sup>

Public buildings will be used for the purposes for which they are reserved. The Government recognises that public buildings can be used for a variety of education, recreation, and other community purposes beyond their primary purpose and will continue to encourage optimum utilisation of facilities through multiple uses.

The Government notes that the Rushworth Courthouse is currently classified as M1 on Map A of the ECC Final Report, but no longer serves as a courthouse and is more appropriately reclassified as J6.

**K PLANTATIONS**

- (a) *There be no extension of softwood plantations on public land in the study area;*
- (b) *at the time of harvest, consideration be given to the economics of establishing hardwood plantations on these areas; and*
- (c) *the plantation managers address the issue of eradication of pine seedlings in adjoining forested areas.*

Although softwood plantations provide a valuable resource for Victoria, it is more appropriate that any new plantations be established on cleared private land. NRE and Parks Victoria will continue to liaise with plantation managers to avoid the spread of plantation species into adjacent native forests and woodlands.

**K1 EXISTING PLANTATIONS**

*The existing plantations shown on Map A continue under present use and management.*

Most existing public land plantations are privately managed under licence from the State Government. Licence conditions provide either for continued use of the land for plantation purposes or for a single harvesting operation followed by rehabilitation and the resumption of management by the State Government. There is no capacity in existing licences to specify the species to be established in future plantation rotations in areas licensed for ongoing use. The Government otherwise supports the recommendation.

**K2 MT ALEXANDER PLANTATION**

*The Mt Alexander plantation, when re-vegetated, be added to the Mt Alexander Regional Park (see C5, Chapter 16).*<sup>35</sup>

Arrangements for the incorporation of the existing Mt Alexander plantation into the Mt Alexander Regional Park have already been established.

<sup>33</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>34</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>35</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**L1 MINING SITES**

- (a) *The mining sites shown on Map A (numbered L1) and listed in Appendix 11 be used for mineral extraction in accordance with the general principles and recommendations in Chapter 7; and*
- (b) *when no longer required for mining, each site be considered uncategoryed public land and assessed for public land values and uses, and where appropriate assigned to another public land use category or made surplus.*

**Note:** Areas undergoing open pit mining, where public land values have been removed, could be sold or exchanged before completion of mining.

The Government supports the recommendation as an appropriate means of managing mining sites during and following mining operations. NRE will also discuss land management arrangements with tenement holders for existing mining licences and leases that relate to the land. Land management will give due consideration to the current plans for mining development but need not be limited by them.

Following consultation with the ECC the intent of recommendation L1 (b) that land may be sold prior to mining being completed the recommendation will read as follows:

- (b) *delete the following words ‘~~when no longer required for mining, each site be considered.....~~’*

Delete the Note: ~~Note:~~

~~Areas undergoing open pit mining, where public land values have been removed, could be sold or exchanged before completion of mining.~~

The ECC have advised that the current list of L1 sites located in Appendix 11 is incomplete and an updated list is provided in Attachment One.

**L2 STONE RESERVES**

- (a) *Stone reserves shown on Map A (numbered L2) continue to be used for the extraction of stone in accordance with the above principles and guidelines;*
- (b) *proposed new extraction sites be located and operated in accordance with the Extractive Industries Development Act 1995 and the above principles and guidelines;*
- (c) *extraction sites preferably be located on already cleared land; and*
- (d) *when no longer required for extraction, each site be considered uncategoryed public land and assessed for public land values and uses, and where appropriate assigned to another public land use category or made surplus.<sup>36</sup>*

The Government supports these recommendations regarding stone reserves.

Public road maintenance works carried out by Local Government Authorities are in many cases heavily dependent on the supply of extractive materials from nearby resources, situated on either freehold or Crown land. The Government is cognisant of these requirements, but proposed new extraction sites will consider all aspects including economic distance to haul extractive material from alternative supplies on both existing freehold and Crown extraction sites within or adjoining their municipalities.

Following completion of stone extraction from a Crown land site, an assessment of public land values will be undertaken, and following appropriate consultation, these areas be considered for re-categorisation, land exchange or disposal.

Following consultation with the ECC to clarify the intent of recommendation L2 (d) that land may be considered for re-categorisation before completion of extraction, that recommendation is varied as follows:

- (d) *delete the following words... ‘~~when no longer required for extraction,~~’ ....each site be considered uncategoryed...*

<sup>36</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**M1 SERVICES AND UTILITIES**

- (a) *Existing reserves and easements used for public services and utilities such as transport, electricity and gas, communications, cemeteries, water and sewerage, continue to be used for those purposes;*
- (b) *new services, or utility sites and easements or lines not be sited in or across reference areas, and wherever possible not be sited in or across national, state, or regional parks or nature conservation reserves;*
- (c) *railway lines and other service and utility sites be managed to protect remnant vegetation and habitat, as far as practical; and*
- (d) *should a public land area or building and site used for service or utility purposes no longer be required for its primary designated use, it be assessed for its natural, recreational and cultural heritage values, and capability for other public uses, as outlined under Recommendation N2.*<sup>37</sup>

The Government supports the continuation of existing arrangements for public services and utilities. The Government is committed to the establishment of a comprehensive, adequate and representative parks and reserves system. New services or utility sites and easements will not be permitted within or across reference areas or, wherever possible, within or across national, State or regional parks or nature conservation reserves.

The Government clarifies the intent of recommendation M1(d) as follows to ensure the Government to be able to sell public land currently in use as utilities and services to a service or utility group while still in use (as its primary designated use).

- (d) *primary designated use,....add the words.... 'or wish to be bought by that service or utility group while in that use,'..... it*

The Government notes that an area located on Map D of the ECC Final Report directly south-west of Eaglehawk (the Eaglehawk Tip), has been purchased by the City of Greater Bendigo since the ECC Final Report was published, is now freehold land and is therefore not subject to the recommendations.

Similarly a section of the Bendigo Aerodrome has been sold since the ECC published its Final Report is now freehold land and is therefore not subject to the recommendations.

**M2 SERVICES AND UTILITIES**

- (a) *Organisations responsible for road reserve management conserve and protect indigenous flora and fauna communities and habitat occurring on roadsides, in accordance with the guidelines above (see Note 1); and*
- (b) *the significant environmental values of the high quality road reserves identified in Appendix 16 be conserved and protected as part of roadside management plans (see Note 2).*<sup>38</sup>

Roadside vegetation is important in the broader context of protecting the State's biodiversity. Roadsides sometimes carry the only remnants of some vegetation types and provide important habitat for threatened species. Roadside vegetation can also provide a guide and a seed source for the restoration of natural vegetation. The Government believes protecting the State's natural heritage is a responsibility not limited to Governments or individual agencies. Organisations and individuals responsible for road reserve management also need to conserve and protect indigenous flora and fauna communities and habitat on roadsides. The significant environmental values of high quality road reserves as identified in Appendix 16 of the ECC Final Report will also be protected as part of roadside management plans.

The Government supports the principle of protecting remnant vegetation and habitat on service and utility sites, where practical given the primary use of the sites.

The Government supports this recommendation. It is consistent with NRE's process of assessing Crown land for its public land values to determine its appropriate use when it is no longer required for its primary purpose.

<sup>37</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>38</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**N1 UNCATEGORISED PUBLIC LAND**

- (a) **Public land other than that:**
- (i) *recommended for specific uses in this report, or*
  - (ii) *subject to previous approved specific land use recommendations, be uncategorised public land;*
- (b) *existing legal use and tenure continue for the time being; and*
- (c) *when Crown land assessments are completed, the land be either:*
- (i) *if 'public land', assigned to an NRE land manager, or included in a 'land bank' and treated as outlined above, or*
  - (ii) *if assessed as surplus, disposed of.* <sup>39</sup>

The Government endorses the intent of this recommendation, which is consistent with the current Crown Land Assessment function delivered by the NRE Crown Land Management section. NRE ensures that the public land values of uncategorised Crown land parcels are evaluated, with appropriate public participation, to determine future land use and management arrangements, including disposal if surplus to government requirements.

The Government clarifies the intent of recommendation N1 (c) (ii) to allow for greater management flexibility in the disposal of land in circumstances where Box-Ironbark values require further protection as follows:

- (ii) *if assessed as surplus, the land be considered for re-categorisation, land exchange, or disposal by sale, with covenant where appropriate'.*

The Government also notes that Specimen Hill mini bike track is incorrectly listed in Appendix 11 of the ECC Final Report as J2 (to be deleted) but correctly mapped on Map A of the ECC Final Report as N1.

**N2 UNCATEGORISED PUBLIC LAND**

*For Crown land subject to existing approved but non-specific land use recommendations as either:*

- *uncategorised public land*
- *services and utilities, or*
- *community use areas (buildings in public use)*

*and which is apparently surplus to requirements;*

*an assessment of public land values be undertaken and, following appropriate consultation, these areas be considered for re-categorisation, land exchange or disposal.*

This recommendation is endorsed. It provides an efficient mechanism for the review of certain land uses recommendations where necessary.

The Government clarifies recommendation N2, to ensure greater management flexibility in the disposal of land in circumstances where Box-Ironbark values require further protection, as follows:

*.....land exchange or disposal...add the words... 'by sale, with covenant where appropriate.'*

**O1 LAND NOT REQUIRED FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES**

- (a) *Land not required for public purposes, as listed in Appendix 11, be considered for alienation or for exchange for freehold land; and*
- (b) *land to be sold be subject to agreements under Section 69 of the Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987, where appropriate.* <sup>40</sup>

This recommendation is endorsed. Investigations will be undertaken for the Crown land parcels identified by the ECC as not required for public purposes to determine options for alienation or exchange for freehold land, subject to the constraints of the **Native Title Act 1993 (Cwth)**. Public land values, including native vegetation values, will be protected where appropriate.

<sup>39</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

<sup>40</sup> See ECC Final Report for notes relevant to this recommendation.

**ATTACHMENT ONE – UPDATED LIST OF L1 EARTH RESOURCES SITES****L Earth resources****L1 Recommendations for mining sites**

<b>Rec. No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Area (ha)</b>
L1	Stawell Gold Mines	Stawell	122
L1	Moonambel	south of Redbank	20
L1	Reef Mining	Tarnagulla	10
L1	Myers Flat	Eaglehawk West	5
L1	Bendigo Gold Associates site	Sparrowhawk Rd, West Bendigo	13
L1	Bendigo Mining NL	Kangaroo Flat [Carshalton] and Eaglehawk [Williams United and New Moon – Ranger areas]	125
L1	Perseverance Corporation	Fosterville	136
L1	Perseverance Corporation	North of Axedale	32
L1	New Holland Mining	Heathcote	70
L1	AGD Mining	Costerfield	75
L1	Perseverance Corporation	Bailieston	47
L1	Perseverance Corporation	East of Nagambie	72

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