

ESA Submission to;  
Public consultation on the draft Aspiration and Guiding Principles  
Land Management Strategy – Parks Victoria

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/lms>

### **Comments on guiding principles**

The ESA recommends that biodiversity conservation be explicitly recognised as the primary purpose of the natural reserve estate. Protected areas play a critical role in biodiversity conservation, and must be actively managed to achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity.

The 'passive' setting aside of land in itself can address some threatening processes occurring in that land area, such as habitat loss. In itself, it does not address other threatening processes in that land area such as invasive species. Addressing these kinds of threats – and achieving the greatest positive impact from reserves – requires investment in active management of threats within protected areas. Management of Victoria's reserve estate should complement and enhance management of protected areas through the National Reserve System, and private lands set aside for conservation purposes. A landscape management approach incorporating these lands, and in conjunction with wildlife corridors, has potential to achieve substantial positive outcomes for biodiversity.

Comments in response to specific principles:

(3) Connect with Community: Australia's long-term plan for ecosystem science (2014) identified the importance of empowering the public with knowledge about Australian ecosystems. The reserve estate can play an important role in this, and opportunities should be sought to use the reserve estate as a tool to engage, educate, and inspire the community at large.

(4) Use knowledge and evidence-based management: the ESA strongly supports the role of rigorous science to provide a sound evidence base for decision making.

The ESA recommends that the principles are amended to include a clear statement that the precautionary principle will be applied in cases where there is insufficient current knowledge, and that in these cases targeted research and monitoring activities will be initiated to address knowledge gaps.

The ESA supports the statements in the guiding principles about the importance of Traditional Owner knowledge, and the intent to recognise and integrate this into land management and planning.