3 March 2017

Review of the Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations
Regulatory Strategy and Design
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
PO Box 500
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 8002

Dear Sir/Madam

REVIEW OF THE NATIVE VEGETATION CLEARING REGULATIONS

Thank you for the opportunity for Wellington Shire Council (Council) to comment on the review of the native vegetation clearing regulations.

Several of the proposed initiatives are welcomed including the provision of additional guidance about compiling a permit application, guidance about exemptions and how they are intended to apply, together with guidance regarding assessment and decision making. It is critical that the native vegetation clearing regulations are easy to navigate for ‘first time’ users of the planning system without needing to obtain consultant support.

Council’s view is that changes to the table of exemptions in Clause 52.17-7 should include making the strategic fuel break exemption, under fire protection, available to Councils. Currently this exemption is only available to ‘public authorities’ and because Council is not a public authority under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 it is not available. This requested change would enable Council to conduct critically important fire protection work for high bushfire risk communities in the Wellington Shire.

Council would also like to highlight our ongoing concerns about future monitoring and reporting obligations. While it is initially pleasing to see that monitoring and reporting requirements will be developed in a way that matches need, and is not onerous on organisations, Council would like the opportunity to provide input into the specific development of future monitoring and reporting requirements, to ensure they are appropriately tailored for rural and regional councils.

Should you wish to discuss the attached submission further, please contact Council’s Environmental Planner, on 

Yours sincerely

DAVID MORCOM
Chief Executive Officer
ECM 2172490