29 April 2016

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

Colac Otway Shire Council would like to thank the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) for leading a review of the Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations (the Regulations). We believe that robust regulations are fundamental to appropriately managing Victoria’s native vegetation and see this review as an important opportunity to strengthen the current system.

Council staff have participated in the DELWP facilitated workshops and are pleased to see many of the issues raised have been addressed within the recommendations contained in the Consultation Paper.

The recommendation for strengthening the primary focus of the avoidance principle is one that Council strongly supports. Council also supports recommendation number 24, which provides for consistent Agreements referred to in the exemptions. Council engages DELWP to enact this recommendation, as previous commitments for a review of the Agreement, in 2010 and 2014, are yet to achieve this outcome. Enclosed for your information are copies of previous submissions made by Council as part of these reviews.

It is noted that an increase for DELWP support and status is not addressed in the Consultation Report, specifically the reduction of DELWP’s role from being a ‘determining’ referral authority to a ‘recommending’ authority. Addressing this issue, along with adequate DELWP staff resourcing, imperative for the successful management of native vegetation provisions as well as providing support for Local Government in the application of Regulations and the Agreement.

Council would again like to thank DELWP for the opportunity to provide input into this process and look forward to the recommendations being delivered.
If you have any enquiries concerning this matter, please contact Council’s Environment Coordinator, [Name] on [Contact Details].

Yours faithfully

BRYDON KING
General Manager Development & Community Services