



New submission for investigation "Central West Investigation"

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02/09/2018 06:22 PM

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**Submission for the investigation "Central West Investigation"**Submitted on **02-09-2018**

Information provided by the author:

Title: **Mr**First Name: **Joseph**Last Name: **Muscat**

Description:

I emphatically reject any proposal or recommendation by VEAC to convert State Forests and other Crown Land to State Parks, which would have the same status and restrictions as National Parks. Restricting public access and what activities can be undertaken there will have an extremely adverse impact on the towns in these areas, which derive in part their very livelihoods from the visitors to these public owned areas. As a detectorist and member of my local metal detecting club, any changes will restrict the places I can go to, to undertake my chosen hobby in a responsible manner and in accordance with the rules and restrictions imposed on me by my Miner's Right. The vast majority of detectorists act responsibly, leaving little to no disturbance of the land in their wake. Indeed, the greatest threat to these areas is from illegal dumping of rubbish. This is not done by the visitors, but by locals. This must be addressed not by banning or restricting access, but by other means. In addition, people who frequent these areas in pursuit of their recreational activities are in the best position to notify the responsible authorities of illegal dumping, track blockages, and any other illegal activities (drug crops, illegal mining etc.) For me, being a member of my detecting club is not so much about finding gold, but being able to connect with like-minded people, who enjoy one weekend each month camping out in OUR beautiful bush, enjoying the peace and quiet, the wildlife, the congenial exchanges around a campfire at night, and the health benefits of actually getting away from the TV and out of the house, which actually benefits our long-term health. Finding a little bit of gold in the process is just cream on the cake! More people should be encouraged to do this, and to understand that there is a wonderful experience to be had by getting away from the cities. There are so many downsides to converting state forests and other Crown Land to State Parks, and no upsides. There is no upside for the local towns, no upside for the thousands of people who actually choose to get off their backsides and use this PUBLIC LAND in a responsible, sustainable way, no upside for the CFA who may have to battle through blocked tracks to get to a bushfire, and no upside for any government that denies its citizens the right to access THEIR Crown Land. All recommendations from this VEAC report must be rejected by the Victorian Government, as well as the state Opposition. After all, they are

elected by US to act in ways that benefit ALL Victorian citizens, not just the noisy few.

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