



New submission for investigation "Central West Investigation"

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**Submission for the investigation "Central West Investigation"**Submitted on **10-09-2018**

Information provided by the author:

Title: **Mr**First Name: **Frank**Last Name: **Higgins**

Description:

I am forwarding my submission in regard to the of state forest Central West Investigation. I want to express our opposition to the lock down of Victorian state forests to gold prospectors, wood collection, camping, apiarists, horse riders, 4 x 4 clubs and many other bush users. We live on two acres surrounded by crown land in I am forwarding my submission in regard to the of state forest Central West Investigation. I want to express my opposition to the lock down of Victorian state forests to gold prospectors, wood collection, camping, apiarists, horse riders, 4 x 4 clubs and many other bush users. I live on two acres surrounded in by crown land in Bendigo. I rely on wood collection in the Wellsford Forest for heating our home in the winter months. Collecting wood with our family in the fresh air and exercise keeps us healthy. The other benefits is the control and prevention of bushfires. You only have to look at how the forest has regrown out of control following the Black Saturday Bushfires in 2009 in Bendigo. Where I live in Bendigo was part of the bushfires and dense forest regrowth has been a concern so much that I have had to contact DELWP and council about it. I am concerned if state forests become National Parks that regrowth will not be managed properly. All Victorians and communities have benefitted and advanced thanks to gold prospecting in Victoria. The city of Melbourne and country towns such as Bendigo, Ararat Wedderburn Maryborough Daylesford Heathcote that are in the VEAC report have benefitted because of the importance of gold prospecting. You just have to look at the beautiful architecture, roads and other networks in these areas. I am a gold prospector, love camping, horse riding and 4 x 4 driving, and am an apiarist by trade I contribute to the wider communities and connect communities through my use of the state forests. Prospecting is a way of life and a part of our heritage. When I worked as an apiarist I would often work in the Wellsford Forest. Apiarists are struggling now to find suitable areas to put their hives they don't need to have this area locked out also. My parents have property in the Wellsford Forest and I regularly camp and horse ride in the area. Any lock down to state parks by preventing prospectors and other bush users is to deny us of our natural environment, right to work and our heritage. Frank Higgins

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