



New submission for investigation "Central West Investigation"

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From: veac@veac.vic.gov.au

To: veac@dse.vic.gov.au,

Submission for the investigation "Central West Investigation"Submitted on **12-09-2018**

Information provided by the author:

Title: **Mr**First Name: **David**Last Name: **Leviston**

Description:

The impacts of climate change need to be brought into focus, which are the dire effects on vegetation and wildlife, including insects. Locally, I have noticed a distinct decline in the number of insects, a decline in the number of wildflowers (including orchids) and a general decline in vegetation health, including mature trees. There is no doubt, from an ecologist point of view, that warmer temperatures and lack of rain are the drivers of this event. Along with climate change, there is a very unhealthy passion for DELWP FFMV and CFA to burn in the name of public safety. However the overwhelming scientific evidence shows that regular, off-season burning (whether it is called ecological burns or Indigenous burns or fuel reduction burns) is extremely detrimental to all life, be it arboreal, terrestrial, or aquatic and all habitat types. Burning also, as it is shown, actually makes forested areas more volatile and thus less safe for people. The idea of burning has been used as a convenient method for, and instead of, weed control but, in fact, promotes the spread of weeds. DELWP needs to do proper weed control of which I have seen little evidence of. Indeed, I have removed weeds such as prickly pear and bridal veil locally because they need to be removed. Then, of course, there is the rubbish dumping. DELWP needs to increase their staff numbers in doing patrol work and catching illegal dumpers and illegal firewood collectors, both are rampant locally. Firewood collection should only be provided in plantation forests. This way, there are no arguments. Maryborough is well known for its prospecting sites and there is little reason why this should stop except to make prospectors aware of their responsibilities to fill in holes and not disturb vegetation. I believe that VEAC has things fairly balanced but the future and current impacts of climate change need to be placed front and centre.

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