

Geoffrey Young

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Victorian Environmental Assessment Council  
2 Lonsdale Street  
MELBOURNE 3000

Dear Sir/Madam

#### CENTRAL WEST INVESTIGATION

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Central West Investigation by VEAC.

It appears on reading the Investigation that has been ongoing since March 2017 that the draft recommendations have excluded only 3 activities:

- 1 Harvesting of forest products (except in firewood collection zones)
- 2 Grazing by domestic stock
- 3 Recreational hunting and use of firearms

Interestingly I saw nothing in the investigation, or for that matter the many public submissions, that draw attention to recreational hunting and use of firearms as a problem within the currently classified State Park designation.

Certainly such recreational hunting does not represent a threat to endangered flora and fauna. In fact the opposite can be identified with substantial benefit arising from the reduction of pest animals or introduced species such as deer, goats, pigs, fox and rabbits and potentially feral dogs and cats.

It was refreshing to note a number of public submissions from groups not normally aligned with recreational hunting, noting that these pest and introduced species were present in the review areas and required controlling.

I have been a recreational hunter for over 45 years and have witnessed the decline of the natural environment through lack of management of both pest flora and fauna in areas reclassified as National and Regional Parks and thereby restricting legitimate hunting activity.

Nothing in the investigation identified hunting as negatively impairing the "natural and biodiversity values and cultural social and economic values and the current uses public land". It can only be assumed that the exclusion of recreational hunting and use of firearms is seen as part of a "balanced use and appropriate management arrangement" in which case, and in the light of hunting hardly being mentioned within the investigation, I can only conclude that the recommendation has resulted from a poorly informed prejudice and/or a political convenience.

Recent studies have identified that the shooting/hunting activity contributes over a billion dollars to the economy. In addition, through the classification as deer as a game species and the reintroduction of the fox bounty, recreational hunters have been the most successful and humane solution to both introduced species.

It would be a sad outcome if after 2 years of Government investigation the only recreational activity to be excluded was hunting as not only does it impact many thousands of Victorians who have

legally pursued this interest but it will also negatively impact the native species through growth of introduced predators.

PLEASE LEAVE THE STATE PARKS ALONE!

Yours faithfully

Geoff Young