



New submission for investigation "Central West Investigation"

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Submission for the investigation "Central West Investigation"Submitted on **21-09-2018**

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Description:

I believe there is a need to keep the current status of much of the State Forests in central western Victoria. There is no need for the creation of additional State or National Parks in this area. The reason these forests are even being considered for Park status is because they have been well managed and can continue to be well managed as State Forest. Australians have become very selfish. Despite being in the top 10 countries in the world for forest to population ratio and having the capacity to manage our forests in a ecologically and sustainable manner, we continue to lock up our forests into conservation reserves. We demand timber products and beautiful woods to furnish our homes but do not consider that many of these products are imported from third world countries with questionable forest practices and poor OHS standards for harvesting and processing. It is time to reverse the attitude that locking up our forests is an appropriate conservation option. Think of the additional carbon footprint we generate by using imported hardwood timber, rather than that on our doorstep. I have seen and worked with the beautiful timber generated by the likes of Pyrenees Timber. Mills like this need more opportunity for resource not less. People building "sustainable" and off-grid homes are opting for timber from these types of mills, knowing that it is a renewable resource, grown locally. The use of bioenergy for heating and hot water at the Beaufort Hospital is also another wonderful example of maximising local resources. I have seen the expansion of the Parks in Victoria with little Government funding to match the expansion. This has led to inadequate maintenance of roads and tracks leading to erosion and significant environmental damage. Eventually access becomes almost impossible to all but those on foot. As well as restricting who can use our forests, it also creates far greater challenges for access for firefighters, leading to greater bushfire damage. I have lived and worked in the bush all my life. I have seen forests regenerate following harvesting and fire. I have watched the changing patterns of our native forests over seasons and over decades. Our forests do need disturbance, whether that be by human or natural causes such as wind and fire, to maintain biodiversity. Increasing the area of forest held within

Victoria's conservation estate is unlikely to generate any significant improvement to biodiversity conservation and will only reduce public use. This restricts the amenity and social enjoyment of Victoria's wonderful forests. Please consider retaining our State forests as they are and maximising the the long term benefit for all Australians by sustainable forest management.

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