



New submission for investigation "Central West Investigation"

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## Submission for the investigation "Central West Investigation"

Submitted on **24-09-2018**

Information provided by the author:

Title: **Mr**

First Name: **Robert**

Last Name: **Gregory**

Description:

I am a constant user of our public land and particularly within the Central West Investigation area. I travel long distances to enjoy my hobby of detecting which I have been involved in for the last ten years. I have always loved and respected being in the bush, which is a carry over from my times fishing and camping with my father. I and my fellow detecting community do not go out into the bush and do unthinkable harm to it as made out by the green groups. We just enjoy doing our harmless activity. As such, I wish to strongly object to any proposal to close off or restrict myself and my fellow detecting community to such actions.

Furthermore, I also object to the closing down of these areas to the other like minded recreational using public. My reasons are as follows: 1. If the VEAC proposals go ahead we will be excluded from huge tracks of our land, more than 80,000 hectares of public land is at risk of Park status which would be no-go areas for detecting and would also have a detrimental affect on other recreational users. 2. Already the Dja Dja Wurrung Management plan is to exclude detecting from another 13,500 hectares of Goldfields. The recent Draft Management Plan proposes significant changes to the way this area is managed despite

Government assurances that we would not be affected. The Plan also talks about destroying gold rush heritage, reintroduction of the dingo, renaming the parks and even banning photography and painting in some areas. I am questioning why it is necessary to exclude others so the Traditional Land Owners can conduct their agreed activities of camping, hunting and gathering on this land?

3. Your report is not balanced as it does not address the economic and social impact it will have on businesses as a whole and the communities within and surrounding small rural towns. I believe that businesses will be seriously impacted and their viability threatened. My situation is typical of people in our hobby. I have outlaid tens of thousands of dollars to enter my hobby and to continually update equipment. Additional are fuel costs, local caravan park accommodation and food purchases and more frequent vehicle maintenance costs. Myself and together with others will not continue outlaying substantial amounts of dollars if we are banned and forced into detecting in ever reducing postage stamp size areas. Businesses in the small rural towns will be the sufferers. 4. Having read the profiles of your Councillors and after meeting and

speaking to some, I don't believe the Council is impartial and unbiased. I believe they are heavily influenced by environmental issues and have a serious bias against prospecting. An example of this is your member Dr Geoffrey Wescott writing in a newspaper article sometime ago that he thought detecting should be banned from National Parks. Another example is when Councillors were asked why there is no equal number of Community representatives in the decision making, the answer was " they are not qualified". This is a statement that would only be made by people regarding themselves as being superior in some way. Also, the Community Independent Reference Group, independently chaired by Mr Ian Harris, is he not the same person that in the past has been a Councillor of the VEAC? In conclusion, it is clear that community members have not had a fair chance to have been able to be part of the decision making process. It is evident to not only myself but many others that the VEAC is stacked with Environmentalists who have their own agendas and are not impartial. The independence of your council is seriously exposed.

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