

The Loss of ...

Economic benefits.

Injection of many millions of dollars into, not only Victoria economy but also into the Australian economy, by all Bush Users spending money on equipment, travel and accommodation. Also, by money being spent within these regions.

Health Benefits.

The physical and mental health benefits for people of all ages by just getting out there and enjoying their chosen activities without restriction. Or in some cases, being banned all together. There is a great need for a lot of people, towards their health, to just get away for their everyday working life. It is also a great way of family bonding. This will also help to relieve the ever-increasing strain on our health system.

Economic benefits to Regional Towns.

Many Bush User groups and individuals spend from one day to many weeks in these areas enjoying their chosen activities. By them doing so, they in turn spend money in these regional towns. These same towns, that relies on these groups and individual to survive. This is also helping to keep un-employment down within their regions. If these bush activities are removed or restricted the Bush User "WILL NOT" come back to these towns or those areas again. Most towns are even now suffering for drought and low cost for their produce and high cost of living. Especially in regional Victoria. If this happens, not only will it put a massive strain on these towns but also an increasing number on the un-employment line and hardships on peoples living cost. Not to mention the mental strain of possibly losing their homes, incomes, loss of their jobs. The character of their towns will be lost also by closures of business.

Tourism.

Tourism will not increase because of new National, Conservation, or Regional Parks. The reason being is you are only dividing State Forest into these new named zones. If what you are say is true, "that these areas are going to be good for tourism", well my question is "Where are the Tourist now" Why are they not visiting these regions at present? We are in the bush nearly every day and the only other person we see are fellow bush users enjoying their chosen activities. Just putting a label on something won't change the content. It will have the same sort of environment as a State Forest. Remember your bush user groups are your tourist. Remove or restrict the bush users, you are removing your tourists. In turn remove the economy of the area.

Firewood collecting.

In your draft report you have recommended restrictions to most areas where fire wood collecting was the norm. In doing these recommendations, those areas that you have now chosen for firewood collecting are in a less accessible spots in regions where people will have to travel further to collect their wood. These same areas are smaller in size than the original sites for wood collecting. That in turn will cause more damage to the economy and to the environment. Not to mention that these areas will not be able to sustain and cater for the increase demand, long term. Most people that rely on their firewood collecting cannot afford purchasing firewood at \$150 + per metre or putting in electric or gas heating to their homes to just to keep warm in winter.

Horse Riding.

You have put restrictions on horse riding but you have allowed 4 Wheel Driving and Motor Bike riding in the same areas without restrictions "Why" I think you are mainly using the excuse of seeds being in horse droppings.?? We know that most horse riding is done on formed roads and vehicle track. Hence any horse droppings would have very little chance of taking root. Most weed infestations are caused by other native animals and birds, not just horses that visit these same areas. Are you going to stop these animals from entering these same areas as well? "No" so why stop horse riding in the areas? Some birds flying thousands of kilometres just to visit these areas as well. They too carry seeds within their droppings. Where do you think the spread of Black Berry Bush's come from? "Bird droppings" Not horse droppings. Most other seeds are air born through pollen transfer and wind. Farmers are constantly having the problem with weed infestations in their paddocks not because they are being visited by horses, but by wind, birds and other animals.

Prospecting and Metal Detecting.

This is a very low impact recreational hobby. Not only to the environment, but also to the Flora and Fauna. There has never been any case study evidence to prove otherwise. But prospecting on all fronts and levels has been banned in some areas or restricted to smaller zones under your draft report. "Why" The goldfields and gold are only in certain areas and those areas must be maintained for prospectors to carry out their chosen hobby. The prospector is also an environmentalist by keeping an eye on the bush and how it is treated. Reporting unusual activities and dumping of rubbish. We are also environmentalists by removing many tons of lead shot, tons of scrap metal and other rubbish by working with Parks Victoria in "Clean Up Your Parks Day" The prospector is not only a free asset to the environment but also your free watch dog to these regions. By restricting the prospector, you are restricting the Environment of its keepers.

Hunting.

Hunters and shooters spend many thousands of dollars on their equipment and inject many Millions into the Australian economy. They hunt mostly feral animals that are not only destroying our wild life but also causing havoc to the farmer and the farming communities in general which in turn affects their lively hoods. By removing hunting from all regional parks except State Forests you have put our native animal's lives in danger. Not every hunter belongs to the SSAA or ADA or any other organization. And why should they? Both of these are allowed the go into these regions to do pest control under the control of DELWP or Park Victoria at an exorbitant cost to the tax payer. But hunters that don't belong to any organization will do the same job for free, saving the Tax payer thousands of dollars per year. Hunting has been going on since time began as a recreation and a food source. Our regional areas are being plagued with fox's, wild pigs, wild cats and dogs. And deer that are causing havoc to farmers, their farms, and their live-stock and to our native animals. Turning our State Forests into new Parks will enhance this problem many times over. As hunting will be banned, these feral animals will live under the safety umbrella of these new parks and continue being a problem.

4 Wheel Driving.

4 Wheel Driving, Motor Bike Riding and Trail Bike Riding have been granted access to most park regions under your new proposal plan. And that is great, as they are bush users in their own right. But you have restricted other bush users' groups that have a lesser environmental impact than all of these groups mentioned, put together. I know that the 4 Wheel Drive Association of Victoria obtains money from the Government to keep open isolated areas of track and bush land. But is this the real reason in your draft for them to basically have a free hand?

Logging.

It is well known that most environmentalist wants logging stopped in all parts of Victoria. If this happens this will create such a great problem not only to the region that depend on logging but all so to the State of Victoria. Not to mention higher un-employment in the timber industry and local towns. We do have to obtain timber from somewhere, so why not from our own state forests. This will keep jobs alive, economy alive, towns alive and our timber industry alive. All logging in the State of Victoria are being done in re-growth forests not old growth forests. There has never been old growth logging in this State now for over 80 years. The timber industries have very high strict rules and regulation that they have to follow. These regulations have been brought out by the Victorian Government many years ago. If we stop our timber industry here in Victoria, where will we have to source our timber from? From interstate or overseas were the regulations may be non-existence. It is better to keep the money and jobs in this State, than anywhere else.

My conclusions are:

Even though it sounds like a great idea to have more National, Regional and Conservation Parks, the damage this will cause out-weighs the benefits. The cost to the State's economy and the burden to the Tax payer outweigh the benefits. The State Government is already having enough problems trying to maintain the Parks we have now, without more coming on board. The increased possibility of higher unemployment in regional Victoria and the increase to the Tax payer in supporting them. The health risks that it would cause by restricting or even banning some bush user groups from enjoying their activities. The wild life that would be in jeopardy if hunting was banned. The cost of running more Parks compared to State Forests has never been analysed. There has never been a case study to find out if our existing State and National Park are even delivering what the Government said they would, and at what cost to the Tax payer. We need to look into this first, before bring in more parks. Are we gain or lose tourists, coming to these regions? Until this has been done.....

..... **"I say "No" to more Parks"...**