



Submission to Central West Investigation

Geoffrey Lacey

to:

veac@delwp.vic.gov.au

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From: Geoffrey Lacey

To: "veac@delwp.vic.gov.au" <veac@delwp.vic.gov.au>,

### Support for the draft recommendations

I am familiar with parts of the area of the Investigation through field studies and also from preparation of the following book: Geoff Lacey, *Reading the land* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2008).

In general I support the draft recommendations of the Central West Investigation. I agree that they strengthen recognition of the role of Traditional Owners; they establish a representative system of protected areas; they improve landscape connectivity and the protection of key headwaters.

### Mount Cole Forest area

Recommendations for the extension of Mount Buangor National Park and the establishment of Ben Nevis Nature Reserve are welcome.

However, more of Mount Cole should be protected. The draft recommendations retain more than 70 per cent of Mount Cole State Forest with almost all of the areas open for intensive logging. As the VEAC report notes, there are few large old trees remaining in the Mount Cole State Forest.

Furthermore, the Wimmera River headwaters are left unprotected.

### Wombat Forest

I strongly support the creation the Wombat-Lerderderg National Park and the new regional parks protecting the catchments of the rivers: Loddon, Coliban, Campaspe, Moorabool, Werribee, Lederderg and Maribyrnong.

I visit this area from time to time to study the flora and fauna. The beautiful and rich forests in this area have been damaged by excessive logging and have been threatened by further logging operations and by gold mining.

### Wellsford Forest

I have visited this forest and am impressed by the beauty of a number of large old Ironbarks and Yellow Gums that have somehow survived.

The forest provides important habitat for threatened wildlife: brush-tailed phascogale, diamond firetail, grey-crowned babbler, speckled warbler and swift parrot. It offers excellent examples of recovering forest, and contains native bushland of high conservation significance, linking patches in the north and south.

However, Wellsford really requires a higher level of protection than a regional park and nature reserve.

### Pyrenees Forest

I strongly support the creation the Pyrenees National Park and the Regional Park. This mixed species forest has extensive patches of mature eucalypts. The forest is home to 240 species of native plants and over 100 bird species.

Geoff Lacey

Dr Geoff Lacey