



New submission for investigation "Central West Investigation"

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**Submission for the investigation "Central West Investigation"**Submitted on **17-10-2018**

Information provided by the author:

Title: **Mr**First Name: **David**Last Name: **Wallace**Organisation: **Baringhup Trail Riders Inc**

Description:

I am making a submission on behalf of myself and also my horse riding club. I am based in the Castlemaine-Daylesford area and so will be majorly affected by the changes to park's statuses in my area. Our club's activities are not confined to this area, however, and we ride regularly in all other parts of Victoria, and myself personally within SA and NSW. And so I have had a lot of first hand visual experience on the impact of horses within both regional, state and national parks. My observation in National Parks is that where horses are restricted to specific paths and areas, these paths/areas do become eroded and somewhat unsafe under foot for the horses. In other parts where we are not restricted, but can indeed spread out across the natural environment, then the impact is hardly visible. I know I personally will ride most often along small well worn paths that are made by kangaroos and deer. Manure: in the National Parks where we are all travelling on the same trails, there is a higher build up of manure along the trails. In the state parks there is very little evidence of manure left behind. And as yet I am to see any manure sprouting seeds/weeds. Usually the manure is picked apart by local bird/wildlife which extract any viable seeds in the manure. Mental health & wellbeing: it is a wellknown researched outcome that horse riding is extremely beneficial to our health and wellbeing, and as a responsible governing body, I think these outdoor, healthy pursuits should be better promoted and protected. Financial benefits: also a researched fact is that the equine community in general is the highest spending sporting/recreational body. Equestrians spend far more per capita than any other sporting participant. This benefits local communities, businesses, feed suppliers, medical suppliers, etc etc. To restrict participation in various forest areas would certainly impinge on the benefits financially to local communities, and this may be reflected at voting polls into the future. Horses are large animals that have evolved to walk and travel from 30-50miles a day in search of feed. They do not remain in one small area to feed, unless contained. Therefore it is imperative that these animals do have the opportunity for exercise, and not just in a 60mx20m area, but rather in the open forests. This keeps the animals healthy physically and mentally, and helps

reduce reactive behaviours that are caused by confinement and restriction. Thus, less injuries and accidents to riders, and less burden on the medical/hospital community. I do understand the need to have some areas protected, but to restrict use in large areas is un-necessary in my view. Park users in general view these forests with respect and most take care of these wonderful environments. We as users will also advise authorities of problems with weeds, erosion, garbage, and mis-use as we find them. Therefore I feel that this proposal for the Central-West is over-kill, and the forests would continue to benefit from less restrictive use. I think that to lock users out would be detrimental to the overall health of the forests and parks. As a riding club, we would be severely restricted in our ability to function, attract new members, and enjoy the great Australian outdoors, the reason we love to go riding itself. I therefore implore you to have a rethink on your proposals and explore more info, research, and proposals from those who are currently involved in using the parks. David Wallace ATHRA Member HRC AV Member

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