

Submission for the investigation 'Central West Investigation'.

I wish to state that I strongly reject the VEAC proposal to increase the National Parks for the following reasons:-

The bush should be left as is for the use of the people. Under your proposal, the use of the bush would be severely restricted to recreational users of many types. This is the people's birthright and it is a severe imposition on their rights, to consider withdrawing or restricting access of this kind.

In a state with a rapidly-increasing population and moves to decentralise some migrants to country areas, the potential dire consequences of such a proposal should be taken into consideration. In addition, the fact that city residential properties are now out of many people's reach, the bush will have an added attraction for many. Recreational activities are part of the way of life of both country and city people and provide an escape route as well as pleasure, an opportunity to connect with families and friends and just enjoy the great outdoors.

One can only imagine the havoc which could be caused if the public were restricted from these activities; the mental health problems which are already way out of control, would escalate out of all proportion.

From my own point of view, my ancestors arrived in Victoria for the gold rush in the 1850s and 1860s and most of their descendants continued to reside in Central Victoria. Having been born in NSW myself, I took the first opportunity to move to the area where they once lived, purchasing a house and enjoying prospecting and living in the bush surroundings. I, together with most of the other residents of the town where I live, enjoy the freedom of walking in the bush at our convenience.

The potential devastation to life and property from locking up the bush and preventing the removal of firewood, cannot even be imagined. Surely enough lessons have been learnt from past experiences and as we are all aware, the situation is only going to deteriorate, with even higher temperatures being expected.

Jennifer A. Scott