

Monday 12 November, 2018

**Re:** Central West Investigation – draft proposals paper submission

To whom it may concern,

As part of a prospecting club (PMAV), I enjoy frequent trips to areas all over Victoria including the areas which fall in the Central West Investigation.

As well as being a PMAV member, I am also a returned serviceman. I along with many other veterans prospect in the central gold fields areas of Victoria as a hobby to keep fit, active and for some of us, to deal with our demons.

I am writing to voice my concerns about the investigation being conducted regarding the impact prospectors, campers, etc have on the environment within Victoria and the possible closure of the forests to the general public for recreation. I strongly oppose the creation of any more national parks, as this will rob us of this activity as prospecting will be banned. It would be devastating to not only my friends and I in the PMAV, but to the townships, caravan parks, businesses, etc that we generate extra revenue for by visiting, staying and spending our money in these small towns.

The majority of prospectors I encounter respect and promote regeneration of the natural environment, remove all rubbish (and other people's as well) and go about our hobby in a sustainable manner in accordance with our Miners Right.

In my experience I see the biggest threat to the flora and fauna in existing parks is not us, but wildfires due to the 'lock and leave' mentality that the green activist groups demand.

I also respect the Dja Dja Wurrung people, but I am also an Australian and I expect the same access as they do.

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) should be replaced by an un-biased body without their direct links to green activist groups. This body should include all representatives of users of public land and waters and report directly to the Environment Minister without bureaucratic and biased interference.

The Government must urgently address the management of real environmental problems such as feral animals, weeds, erosion, illegal rubbish dumping and fire fuel loads, rather than politically motivated exclusion of sustainable industries and recreation in existing parks, not create new ones.

Regards,

John Kerr