



New submission for investigation "Central West Investigation"

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To: veac@dse.vic.gov.au,

Submission for the investigation "Central West Investigation"Submitted on **26-11-2018**

Information provided by the author:

Title: **Mr**First Name: **Dean**Last Name: **Mighell**Organisation: **The Path of the Horse**

Description:

Hello, My name is Dean Mighell and I am a Director and Practitioner at "The Path of the Horse" which is a Registered Charity with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission. We provide equine psychotherapy based support to people and we operate on a property just outside of Trentham which abuts the Wombat State Forest on three sides. The Path of the Horse assists people of all ages and from all walks of life who seek better mental health and well-being. Our work is a powerful, effective and empathetic approach that assists our clients make positive change. We proudly support and work with veterans, emergency service personnel and their families better manage conditions such as PTSD, anxiety and depression. We also work with people who have suffered trauma, addictions, grief often help young people discover coping mechanisms and assist them to understand their feelings and make aware choices. We work with people with Autism too. Horses have an amazing ability to release stress and a truly unique capacity to share their empathy with humans. They never judge, they are completely honest and are our much-loved assistants in the healing process. They are great listeners too. What is really important for us is that we can offer our clients the opportunity to take part in safe activities with the horses that involves walking with a horse or horses in the Wombat State Forest and occasionally, we will ride there too. These experiences are a vital part of our therapeutic work that absolutely helps people find calm again along with a wonderful opportunity to share there themes, feelings and thoughts so that we can help them gain awareness and regain control of their lives. If given the opportunity, I could tell you of some profound therapy work I have done with traumatised veterans and Police deep in the Wombat Forest in the company of some wonderful equine friends but I know this is not the place for that. If the National Park goes ahead we will not be able to access the Wombat SF in the way we have. Yes there will be limited access and a lot more shared use by way of regional park areas but I fear these will become overcrowded with vehicles etc as they too are pushed out of the areas they were once able to access. Please dont underestimate the importance of ordinary people accessing the Wombat SF

in the way we do and the positive mental health aspects that that access provides. We respect the Wombat State Forest as we are in it nearly every day. What we do know is that centuries of reckless timber harvesting and mismanagement has seen much of the Wombat SF in desperate need of thinning and care. The Path of the Horse is committed to safe and sustainable use of the Wombat SF in a way that sees all non commercial users have access as we do now. We would step forward to do take part in assisting this too. Also, given that we also adjoin the Wombat SF on three sides of our property, I am seriously concerned about fire risk associated with preventing access to vehicles, bikes and horses to the fire trails that exist now. Not only are these fire tracks essential to fire prevention, containment and fire fighting, they also provide the best access to the bush that under the National Park proposal by VEAC would be inaccessible. I thank you for the chance to input into this process and I strongly oppose the introduction of a National Park as currently proposed by VEAC. The Wombat State Forest should be for all people as it is now, managed better and cared for more by all involved. Thank you.

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