

VEAC's Draft Proposals for the Central West Investigation are seriously unbalanced. They provide for the desires of one section of the community to the almost total exclusion of those of the remainder of the community. Further, by proposing extensive national parks, they seek to maximise the difficulty of future generations in altering the decisions that are made today concerning the use of this public land. They are at odds with the notion of inter-generational equity, because the idea of the permanence of such parks is deliberately sought by today's greens to try to subvert the opportunity of members of the community in future to reallocate this land for other purposes. Fundamentally, parks provide for land preservation outcomes, and exclude other users of the land. By contrast, uncommitted lands and reserved forests allow for a mixture of land uses, and keep the community's options for the future open.

The Draft Proposals set the objectives of two groups up as "must haves", and would provide only a small residue of the public's land for the requirements of other members of the public. The assumption that reserves must be created in satisfaction of the JANIS criteria, without reference to other users of public land is completely spurious. Likewise, the notion that because a few unelected representatives of the aboriginal community favour the creation of national parks, and that therefore there should be national parks, is completely insupportable.

The forests of the study areas have a long history of use for timber production, mining, recreation, bee keeping and hunting. Significant amounts of public money have been expended on establishing and managing the existing forests on the land with a view to the future production of high quality timber. Whilst the current generation may not value this use of the forests, it would be quite wrong for this use to be excluded from future generations. Likewise, the creation of national parks in particular would exclude the possibility of even exploring for minerals in these areas, let alone mining them. This would clearly be an unwise and unbalanced outcome, made in ignorance of the requirements of future generations.

Finally, with respect to existing uses of the forests, the types of recreationalists that use the forests today are not compatible with the suite of parks proposed, and particularly not with national parks. Trail bikers, mountain bikers, hunters, firewood cutters, prospectors and even people wanting to give their dogs a run in the bush will all have their use of the forest either banned, or severely circumscribed if the proposed parks come about. This is a fundamentally undemocratic outcome.

More than just undemocratic, it would be a usurpation by the urban educated class of the right of the rural people and the lower socio-economic groups of the city to use what is just as much their public land as they would wish. For whilst conservation outcomes can be readily pursued within a matrix of uses in a multiple use forest, there is a suite of popular forest uses that would be largely or completely excluded for the public's land under the Council's Draft Proposals.

It is of note that despite the much greater level of organisation and familiarity with the processes of government of green groups, the levels of support for retention of the *status quo* (or the diminution of existing parks) compared with for the creation of new parks were nearly equal in the initial round of submissions. This suggests that in fact, desire to maintain the *status quo* is likely to be significantly greater in the wider community than the desire for more parks. That the Council's Draft Proposals so heavily favour the creation of parks, and the abandonment of multiple, use is most disappointingly at odds with this expression of community will.

VEAC must completely review the underlying philosophy driving its Draft Proposals. In the interests of fairness, both to the existing community and to future community members, the allocation of public land must be made with a view to multiple uses and the retention of flexibility for future management change.

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