

Victorian Environment Assessment Council
Level 39, 2 Lonsdale St
GPO Box 527
Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Sir/madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Central West Investigation Draft Proposals Paper.

I object strongly to proposals to change so much State Forest to Parks and Conservation reserves, particularly in the Wombat and Pyrenees State Forests.

I object because car rallies are generally not permitted in National Parks, State Parks, Regional Parks and Conservation Reserves.

I enjoy experiencing unique natural features worthy of conservation in parks and promotion to attract tourists. There are many others like me who also want an experience not possible in Parks. The proposals give conservation reserve and park status to more areas than necessary and limits the experiences possible in state forests.

I am a member of the Ballarat Light Car Club based at the Ballarat Airport which has approximately 170 members. Car rallies are a major activity of our car club. I, and my fellow car club members, participate in events as an organiser, control official, service crew, driver, navigator, spectator. When I attend events in rural and regional Victoria I buy food and fuel locally and often stay in a local hotel, motel or camp park before returning home. Car rallies are an existing tourist use threatened by additional park proposals and dubious promised associated increases in tourism.

Many of our rallies have been based out of Avoca requiring both Mt Cole and Pyrenees forests for a single rally of adequate distance. Retaining access to Mt Cole but not Pyrenees will not allow a viable event to occur.

The Wombat forest has been highly valued for rallies for many years due to its dense good quality road network and proximity to Melbourne.

Car rallies are conducted under the very rigid guidelines of the Confederation of Motor Sport and similarly rigid guidelines of Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. That is why car rallies have become a well-established traditional and sustainable use of public land in Victoria.

Car rallies have been conducted for many years in these and other forest areas in full cooperation with local authorities. Roads are officially closed for the duration of a rally for maximum safety and to avoid conflict with other forest users. Events are intentionally spread over time and forests to lessen

their impact and to keep good relations with authorities. We will be forced by these proposals to concentrate our events even more.

We were forced out of many Box-Ironbark forests by park creations, particularly around Wangaratta. Fortunately VEAC retained rally access to the Killawarra Forest portion of the new park. The local car club has demonstrated there that car rallies are highly regulated and compatible with other park uses and values in the Warby Ranges National Park.

If these Parks have to happen, then as you did for Killawarra, at least make provision for car rallies in the Wombat, Pyrenees, Ben Major and Waterloo Forests.

Yours sincerely,

Noel Peers.

BICC. (56)
(Life member)

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