



Re: Central West Investigation Draft Proposals
Peter O'Mara to: veac

10/12/2018 07:57 AM

Dear VEAC

I am writing to express my opposition to Wombat State Forest becoming a National or Regional Park.

The recently released VEAC Central West Investigation's key recommendation for the establishment of a Wombat-Lerderderg National Park would be an ecological back-step.

The lack of VEAC investigation into current research, previous local forest undertakings and public discourse around a full suite of environmental and social values is alarming.

Simply changing the land status of the forest isn't going to fix the ecological problems which will be negatively expedited by an uncertain climate future.

As I see it, the Wombat State Forest is a highly degraded forest, needing a cooperative ecological restoration plan to facilitate natural forest structure and species composition.

A cooperative forest management system would involve restoring the forests to their full potential, thereby enhancing the security of all ecological values in a changing climate, including biodiversity.

Such a plan would incorporate previous forest undertakings including many initially implemented in previous local Community Forest Management pilot programs.

The VEAC recommendation creates restricted access for local domestic firewood collection and recreational pursuits such as bushwalking, camping, horse-riding and prospecting.

Any such restriction would be detrimental to our local community involvement, health and activity.

Also the restriction on collection of local firewood would only place unsustainable demands on forests elsewhere.

Contrary to guidelines in VEAC Act 2001, the report fails to clearly identify, evaluate and consider the conditions of the forests on public land in the specified area.

Additionally, the VEAC investigation has only considered very limited aspects of climate change mitigation, and failed to properly assess the role these forests play in carbon storage and sequestration.

I believe the current VEAC recommendation is lacking in scope and ecological foresight and overly simplistic to say the least.

It would seem to me that we have a remarkable opportunity here to create a unique forest management system that would be world leading.

Regards,

Peter O'Mara