

Response to The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC)

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Support for the establishment of National Parks in Victoria.

I write to express my strong support for the creation of the new National Parks proposed in your draft report; the Wombat, Pyrenees, Wellsford and Mount Cole forests (VEAC, 2018).

I wish to make a few comments about the Wombat State Forest where I have lived since 1992, on the lower perimeter in the Parish of Colbrook. This section of the forest is cut off somewhat from the main forest by a large farm. My property comprises 22.2 hectares of forest adjacent to other forested properties.

I want to comment on why I support Wombat State Forest becoming a National Park.

In the 26 years I have lived there I have noticed a number of changes to the flora and fauna. I am not a scientific expert neither have I logged data; this is my observation.

When I first moved there my forested area was abundant with large mobs of kangaroos of all sizes, echidnas, possums – brush and ringtail, swamp wallabies and koalas. The forest supported many birds – large and small; some were there all the time, others were seasonal, such as the Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoo. The forest floor produced many small orchids and various fungi and mosses.

However over the years, the koalas have gone, the mobs of kangaroos have shrunk to small mobs with few large animals, the flocks of smaller birds are rarely seen, such as the Superb Blue Wren and I have not seen the Black Tailed Yellow Cockatoos for a couple of years. The orchids flower occasionally but nothing like they used to and the plant the 'Naked Lady' is now never seen.

There could be a number of reasons, the climate is drier, there is much more shooting going on during the day and night or the animals have

returned to the larger forest when logging ceased. However the change is noticeable and a negative one, so I welcome any efforts to protect the forest and the flora and fauna. It is why I live here.

My other reason for supporting the establishment of a National Park is to feel safe from shooters when out walking. In years gone by there would be the occasional shot heard at night, I assume to kill a fox. Now shooting can be heard often during the day. This means I don't feel safe to walk in my area; a National Park would allow walkers and cyclists to feel safer.

I wish you well in your efforts to see these parks established and I look forward to that day.

Yours faithfully,
Stephanie Jones