

10.12.18

To Submission for V.E.A.C, Central West Investigation

From, David Stephens ,

Mine Approvals:

The Water and Environment Minister equally and independently with Primary Industries Minister should have final determination on any new or existing mining approvals in new nature reserves, conservation parks, regional parks and bushland reserves, given their established ecological conservation values and the environmental damage inevitable in all mining operations. As a matter of social justice and healthy rural communities, the same Ministerial safety net needs to be extended to towns and farmland, indeed the entire investigation area.

Priority Works and Best Governance:

To minimise bush fire risk, ecological enhancement 40m in at forest edge across all public land use categories would necessarily involve weed management and re-vegetation with less combustible species. The public land manager would then offer the same services 40m into the adjoining property be it private or different public land tenure. As with all re-vegetation a systematic follow-up regime over some years is necessary. With rigorous species identification, mulching weeds and steaming seed banks replacing fire and poison, with smart re-vegetation, this initiative does address multiple issues; well targeted bush fire risk prevention and mitigation, weeds, feral animal habitat, bio diversity, local community amenity and by-product fire wood.

Proceeding with sound risk based assessments and cooperation between land managers this approach would not require further adjustment of public land use categories beyond the current draft recommendations.

This model would be well applied to the re-vegetation beside all streams and rivers from forest edge proceeding downstream. The reduction of exotic species seed source and the dominance of native plants upstream will greatly reduce the effort and costs of stream side re-vegetation.

Integrating Land care Community Fire guard and Drum Muster with these initiatives will focus best land and water management saving public money by coordinating land management bureaucracies and provide targeted measurable outcomes.

Best governance and practice will be greatly enhanced when the recommendations of Victorian Auditor General Organisation reports and Bush Fire Royal Commission process over recent years are implemented across land management in the investigation area, especially open, online risk-based assessments and approvals.

Thank you.