

**No Wombat National Park. Keep it state forest, open and free for all.**

**Fire Danger:** Do the names Ash Wednesday or Black Saturday mean anything to you? They do to me. The Ash Wednesday fires took out a lot of Macedon in 1983. I grew up in Macedon, my parents still live in the same house. They built the house a few years after the fires. Black Saturday took out majority of Kinglake. Bushfires are a huge threat, but also, in some cases, just a part of nature. But if we are locked out of the Wombat State Forest, in a year or so, all of the tracks kept clear by sensible 4wding, bike riding and other recreational activities will be overgrown. Then, if a fire starts in the forest, the CFA will not be able to access the bushland to be able to fight the fires, and these fires, as we have seen from history, can be devastating.

Lives lost, homes lost, people having to start again, when it can be somewhat prevented. I'm not saying it will be perfect, but at least having a chance to try and fight a raging bushfire is better than not being able to, and watching a community perish.

**Health and Wellbeing:** How many people pay for retreats, to get away from the hustle and bustle, into some fresh air, peace and quiet? The forest for me is a free escape. It only costs me the petrol to get there. Going into the Wombat State Forest for 4wding clears my head, relieves my stress, and reminds how nice it is to just be in the moment, soaking in the fresh air.

**Socialising:** This for me is an awesome part of 4wding in the Wombat State Forest. Whether it's just my husband and myself, or all of our friends, we are having a laugh, helping each other through bogs, driving, having a picnic lunch, and generally enjoying ourselves.

**4wding:** Getting together with a few friends, comparing 4wd's, trying tracks, getting muddy and dirty, and generally enjoying ourselves. Maybe you should try it.

**Camping:** Camping mixes a lot of these points into one. We take some tracks out into the Wombat State Forest, have a drive, set up a tent, get a camp fire going. Turn off our devices, have a chat, a drink, and become lost in watching the flames from the fire.

**Hunting:** My husband is a hunter, and I'm about to join him in gaining my gun license and do some shooting. He shoots for enjoyment, but always shooting animals declared as a pest, and a quick kill. The Wombat State Forest already has pests including wild pigs, rabbits, foxes and more. If we are locked out of the Wombat to protect it, all we will be doing is letting the pest animals take over, and destroy what native flora and fauna do exist now.

My husband and I had our engagement party in the Wombat State Forest. It was fantastic. We were able to invite any of our family and friends, we camped overnight, had awesome food, and the only thing left behind to give any indication we were there was the burnt-out campfire. It was wonderful. It was us, just relaxed, out in the forest, enjoying the fresh air.

We want to continue these recreational activities with our children, and show them the history and natural beauty of the Wombat State Forest. Exercise and fresh air are fantastic for children, and getting them involved in things is the best way for them to learn. Have you ever been yabbing? Fishing? I'd like to show my children these things and more, but will only happen if the Wombat State Forest remains as a State Forest, open and free for all to enjoy.

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