

Submission for the investigation "Central West Investigation"

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Information provided by the author:

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Description:

Corrected submission. Please delete the one lodged previously. VEAC will be well-aware of the PMAV's role of representing the interests of prospectors and small-scale miners. We are very concerned by the number of State Forests that seem to be earmarked to become State and National Parks. If these parks are established they become exclusion zones, hundreds of thousands of Victorians will be disadvantaged by not being able to continue with their chosen activities. Simple, traditional activities such as firewood collection, apiary, prospecting, dog walking, horse riding, mining, timber harvesting, four wheel driving, dirt bike riding and hunting will automatically be banned by legislation. Camp will only be allowed in small designated areas and fee's will probably apply. Since the early 1800's the above activities have happily coexisted. It would be wrong to destroy something that, for a long time, has been an integral part of our Heritage and Culture. Additionally, going out into the great outdoors has been proven to be beneficial to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the population. VEAC should have a good hard look at the impact of the State and National Parks created during the Box Ironbark process. Central Victoria was promised jobs in tourism to replace those lost in traditional mining, timber harvesting, eucalyptus distillation etc. We know the jobs didn't happen. Central Victoria, an area that desperately needs employment opportunities, missed out then and will miss out again. Did the green groups care? No. They just moved on to the next campaign to create more parks to create more job losses, again in areas that cannot afford them. The PMAV cares. In reality, Central Victoria can have jobs in both tourism and primary industries. We can see no reason not to, except if these parks are created. The PMAV enthusiastically supports a campaign to promote tourism opportunities for prospecting in this region. Additionally, we support a Government-wide review of barriers to mining development in the goldfields. It is a fact that Central Victoria is considered the best gold prospecting area on earth. It is accessible, weather friendly, people friendly and has produced the biggest gold nuggets anywhere! Yet this is rarely promoted, why is such a natural advantage being considered for closure? I hope VEAC will take time to openly evaluate all aspects of issues raised and make a fair decision that will be of benefit to all Victorians and not just a small, but noisy minority. We would be happy to answer any questions or provide further information as required. Olly Oleszek President of the Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria