

Anne Newton

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Submission to the Central West Investigation

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Central West Investigation.

I am the tenant of a property located within the Wombat State Forest approximately 7km from Blackwood. The property is surrounded on three sides by the Wombat State Forest and the remaining boundary, a neighbouring property, is uncleared pristine bush. Most of the property that my husband and I occupy is covered in bush that has not been touched for at least 30 years.

My husband and I have occupied the property for the past 4 years but I have had an association with the area through my family and have been visiting the area for more than 60 years. I have a great emotional attachment to our place in the bush and I value the quietness and the beauty of this unique area. I am involved in the local "Blackwood-Barry's Reef Landcare Group" and my husband and I are attempting to eradicate Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Blue Periwinkle (*Vinca major*), Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*) and other weeds on the property and nearby roadside.

A significant threat to the Wombat State Forest is the presence of trail bikes. The increase in this activity in recent years has resulted in significant erosion in this important water supply catchment area. The current State policy of allowing trail bikes to use designated trails is unfortunately causing significant adverse impacts to the Wombat State Forest. New tracks have been cut, illegally, down the steep hills and parallel to roads in this area. Frequently, unregistered trail bikes are encountered travelling at high speed along the roads through the Wombat State Forest which, although reported, is difficult to police. Trail bikes are also associated with illegal camping that in turn leads to significant dumping of rubbish in the Wombat State Forest. These sites are evident along Paradise Road, Greenhills Road, Binks Road and forestry tracks.

I would like the Wombat State Forest closed to trail bike riding, as has occurred in the nearby Lerderderg State Park.

Yours sincerely

Anne Newton