



An open letter to The Andrews Government:

It's time to act for nature in Central Victoria

We write to you about the importance of implementing recommendations for new central west National Parks.

In 2017 the state government requested the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) to undertake an investigation into public land in central Victoria. The areas include the public forests of the Wombat, Wellsford, Mount Cole and Pyrenees Ranges.

The purpose of the investigation was to identify the natural and cultural values, and make balanced recommendations about how to best conserve and enhance them. Following the two-year expert investigation, VEAC recommended large areas of these forests become National or Regional Parks to:

- Provide vital habitat for over 380 rare and threatened animal and plant species
- Store millions of tonnes of carbon, significantly helping our efforts to mitigate climate change
- Create critical water security for farms and communities, by protecting the headwaters of rivers that flow from these forests
- Support rural and regional visitation and nature-based tourism
- Support joint management of new parks with Traditional Owners

It is now four years since the VEAC investigation began and in that time the long list of threatened species in Victoria has increased. The VEAC report was tabled in parliament over 18 months ago, yet the Victorian Government has found time to approve mining exploration leases and logging coupes in sensitive wildlife habitat, while ignoring the recommendations and missing legal requirements to respond. A decision is now 12 months overdue.

Creating new National Parks isn't just about saving wildlife and safeguarding beautiful places. It's about clean air and water, a liveable temperature and people's livelihoods.

These recommendations present an incredible opportunity for the Andrews Government. Communities would have new parks to explore. Wildlife would have security and protection. Instead we're losing valuable time, and some of the most unique and vulnerable nature in our state.

The organisations listed below, representing hundreds of thousands of Victorians, call on the Andrews Government to protect these natural areas of central Victoria and immediately accept and implement the VEAC Central West Investigation recommendations.

ACF Community Bendigo District
Australian Plants Society (Victoria)
Bacchus Marsh Platypus Alliance
Ballarat Environment Network
Bendigo Family Nature Club
Bendigo Field Naturalists Club
Bendigo & District Environment Council
Bendigo Sustainability Group
Biolinks Alliance Inc
Birdlife Australia
BirdLife Castlemaine District Branch
Bush Heritage Australia
Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.
Doctors for the Environment Australia
Environment Victoria

Environmental Justice Australia
Euroa Environment Group
Field Naturalists Club Ballarat
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Box-Iron Bark Forests
Friends of the Brisbane Ranges
Friends of the Canadian Corridor
Friends of Crusoe Reservoir & No. 7 Park
Friends of Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee
Hepburn Wind
Humane Society International Australia
Malmsbury District Landcare
Moorabool Environment Group
The National Trust Australia (Victoria)
Newham & District Landcare Group

Project Platypus
Save our Strathbogie Forest
St Arnaud Field Naturalist Club Inc.
Strathbogie Ranges CMN
Trentham Sustainability Group
The Wilderness Society (Victoria)
WWF Australia
Wellsford Forest Conservation Alliance
Werribee River Association
Wombat Forestcare Inc.
Victorian National Parks Association



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