

Australian COUNTRY PARTY

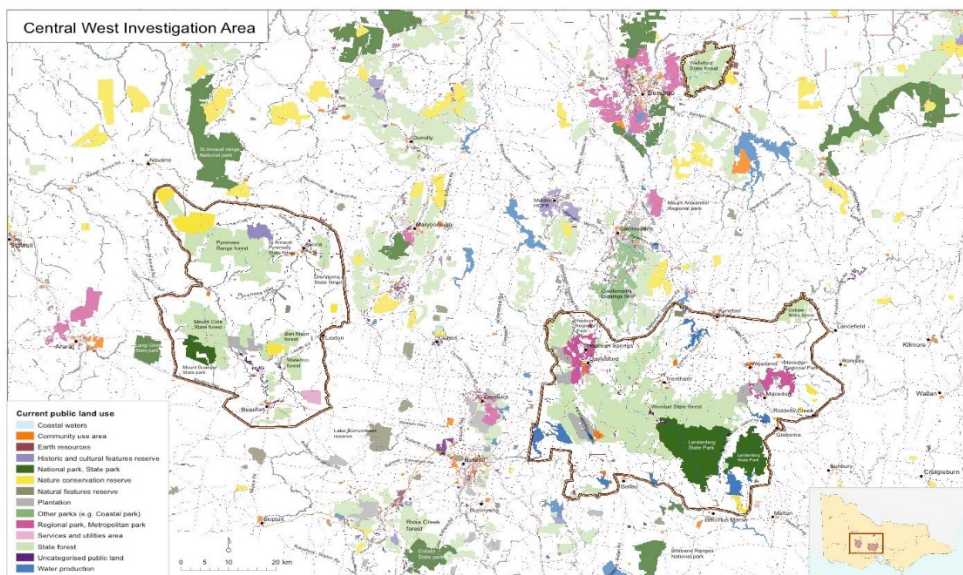
All the public land in three large areas in Central West Victoria totalling about 4800 square kilometres is under threat from being locked up, access severely restricted depending on the outcome of an investigation by VEAC. This includes state forests, stream frontages, unused roads, water production areas and uncategorised public land. The push is to turn these areas in to State Parks.

State Forests are managed by DELWP whilst State Parks are managed by Parks Victoria. Unlike State Forests, State Parks generally do not allow

- **Gold Prospecting**
- **Hunting**
- **Managed Wood Collection**
- **Horse Riding**
- **Free Camping**
- **4WD and Trail Bike Riding**

GOING

The impact on thousands of residents in small communities in the region will be enormous with visitors no longer coming and using their shops and accommodation businesses. There are also many business which rely directly on the responsible gathering of resources on these lands.



Please go to <http://www.veac.vic.gov.au/> and follow the links to make a submission. All you need to do is tell them you want recreational and commercial access and usage rights preserved for all public land in Victoria, and want the current management practices continued.

Australian Country Party

RURAL REGIONAL RECREATIONAL

On 20 March 2017, VEAC was requested by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, to conduct a Central West Investigation. This request was at the behest of The Victorian National Parks Association as it closely follows the aims and recommendations of their *Better Protection for Special Places* report (available here <https://vnpa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Better-Protection-for-Special-Places.pdf>). The VNPA's aim is to campaign for more Parks and greater protection legislation. This legislation focuses on restricting access to lands by people rather than mandating more restoration works, as can be seen in the above report. Their reports are not peer reviewed and rely mostly on data provided by members of their community monitoring programs and other community groups. In 65 years they have only ever published 4 reports which were carried out by experts (<https://vnpa.org.au/about/our-impact>). Whilst some their reports may rely on expertly derived data, their use of this data is not necessarily reviewed by experts.

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) is a state government created body, whose role is to conduct investigations that are requested by the Victorian Government relating to the protection and ecologically sustainable management of the environment and natural resources of public land (<http://www.veac.vic.gov.au/about-us/about-veac>).

The purpose of the Central West Investigation is to:

- (a) identify and evaluate the condition, natural and biodiversity values and cultural, social and economic values and the current uses of public land in the specified area; and
- (b) make recommendations for the balanced use and appropriate management arrangements to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural values.

Public land is defined by VEAC as: parks and reserves, state forests, stream frontages, unused roads, water catchment areas and uncategorised public land.

State Forests and other public land converted to State Parks go under the control of Parks Victoria. There are over **100 parks** or reserves of various sorts managed by Parks Victoria.

Thirteen Parks do not have any free camping available at all. Others generally do have some free camping sites, not always easily accessible. The Parks Victoria Fees and Charges Schedule is 30 pages long. Camping fees are around \$10 per person per day.

Only 9 parks allow dog walking (on Melbourne outskirts).

Only 13 parks allow prospecting.

Only 10 parks allow horse riding, with a permit on designated track/s.

Only 9 parks allow hunting in some areas but with extreme restrictions.

Trail bikes and 4WD are only allowed on formed roads.

In all parks commercial photography and filming attracts a fee of around \$80 per hour .

<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/>

For more information:

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