

It would be appreciated if the Senate can record this submission from Horse SA in relation to

**Australia's National Parks, Conservation Areas and Marine Protected Areas
28.04.06**

General Comment

Australia's parks are established for both recreational & cultural values and for the conservation of biodiversity.

Human nature compartmentalizes recreation, cultural and conservation values into separate boxes, and government enforces this perhaps without even realizing.

Each value area, however, is intrical to each other. Each firmly embedded in a complex ecological matrix which forms a functional landscape.

It could be said that the scales of justice have been unevenly balanced for quite some time. Perhaps from ignorance.

Environmental protection is not the sole domain of environment groups. Capacity to contribute positively to biodiversity protection and sustainable land use is not the domain of a few who claim only to have this specialist knowledge.

Social and Australian cultural values, held by both Indigenous and Introduced Peoples seem to be left out far too often (too hard basket?) but unless these are understood, and all management, research, program and funding policies have a compulsory component to consider this, then we are selling our very souls short.

As we have *living* landscapes, we have *living* Australian cultural heritage values in addition to reminders of our past.

Australia's parks are not islands. They are one of the patchwork squares in a quilt of life and are a part of regional landscape management strategies.

The value of the parks are enhanced by ensuring the surrounding land uses are also of good quality, well managed and have complimentary management regimes.

b) resources

A national conscious effort by government agencies to force the balance of scales. At little or no cost is required.

A requirement for all grants to recognise social, cultural and recreational values. For all programs to have a requirement to search for solutions to accommodate these requirements forces a balanced view. Not lip service but measurable outcomes on all projects.

To follow governments own policies of "building capacity in the community" by actively encouraging community groups and organizations whose core business or

constitution does not have biodiversity protection as an organizational aim or objective to apply for grants and to participate in projects as “partners” without having to go through the third degree in relation to integrity. This needs to happen across all types of programs relating to Australia's parks.

In relation to recreational trails – Trails are a Conservation Management Tool. A biodiversity corridor.

c. any threats

Unfortunately this submission opportunity has this typical question, being that it is not balanced with a question which provides submission writers with a question to answer about “opportunities”

This line of thought (which has been fostered by many government documents) is a typical example of weighting the scales unevenly. The question itself is a typical threat to parks.

Further threats are

Marginalizing the broader public who wish to enjoy parks for tourism, recreation, social and cultural values (social includes mental health, physical health, family relationships) through not spending equal funding, higher level thought or requirement to consider these (and validate on ground delivery) This is a failure to “pay it forward” to ensure our migrants and future children understand what the values of the landscape are.

Lack of investment for research into sustainable tourism and recreational activities in a park. Choosing instead to ban or highly regulate activities as an easy short term option.

d) the record of government in the creation of reserves

There needs to be a new kind of park. A greenway. A corridor of landscape value which is also a public route for recreational use. (It can be any shape of land) This can be on land or water. Australia is fostering conflict with broad park use through the lack of looking for answers which are a win -win for all. Greenways can be acquired as part of a planned network to join island blocks of parks, and build our functional landscape.

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