



MR. C. S. LEATHAM,

TO  
COMMITTEE ENQUIRING INTO  
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PARKS

Speaking as an Australian citizen initially from Bairnsdale, Gippsland Vic. and a constant bush user in the pursuit of fishing, hunting, prospecting, camping, working in and constantly learning more about, I consider myself reasonably qualified to submit my views to the Committee.

In Vic. currently and driven by the desire to attract green votes, the Spade Govt. has recently proclaimed around 105,000 hectares of what was ordinary state forests, as new or added to National Parks - Historic Reserves. These new parks add to large areas already established as parks - reserves etc. ~~and~~ In this process, many areas subject to farming (grazing leases - bee farming) timber harvesting, saw milling, stone extraction, all mining and many prospecting practices, irrigation etc. are now to be discontinued.

The substantial reduction of timber harvesting activities (saw logs) will obviously effect employment in most of this largely rural area which already have ~~an~~ ~~a~~ chronic employment problems.

2 Firewood for both heating and cooking is an issue for many residents in the new parks areas as firewood harvesting is to be phased out under a 5 year plan. Gas and or electricity alternatives will be a very expensive exercise which I believe through stricken and cash strapped Vic. will be unable to fund for many years to come.

Committee would I hope have seen recent govt. policy at work in the Alpine Parks area where cattlemen have been given marching orders because cattle grazing is not seen to be compatible at all with green conservation, ~~and~~ lock up, lock out ideology.

Recreational bush users lose out in National Parks and Reserves as ample evidence proves. 4WD clubs, trail bike riders, horse riders, dog owners, ~~and~~ vehicle based campers, fossickers and even bush walkers who wish to simply roame around off designated walking tracks are either outlawed or severely restricted under new and old Parks management practices. Collection of firewood for campfire cooking or warmth is not allowed from within Parks on the basis that fallen dead trees - limbs are habitat for flora and fauna. Through out the new Box-troobark Parks here in Vic, campers are to source fire-

wood from outside the Park ~~and~~ but are sensibly restricted in the type, size of camp fires. There are of course lawful and sensible requirements regard toileting, taking rubbish home etc.

I wish to add one more worthy item as background and indication of the attitudes of many in Park and crown land management. A very small area of Vic, new Eastmaine National Heritage Park has been used occasionally for Defence Force training purposes. Current Parks managers have conceded that this practice may continue subject to monitoring. This is very generous of D.S.E. - PARKS. I am sure Committee will appreciate the fact that D.S.E. - PARKS - GREEN MOVEMENT realises Australia has to have defence forces otherwise there would be no one to protect Parks would there?

Committee will no doubt consider much well lubricated material which will state that preserving wilderness and bush areas for current and future generations is a great idea which is supported by the majority of Australian citizens, ~~which is true~~ as a large population lives and works in urban areas, understand little of sound con-

servation practices and care less about how massive areas of Australian Parks are to be managed sustainably and funded, it's not surprising to see that support.

I hope Committee will look deeply and ~~at~~ truthfully at the whole Parks issue where ~~perhaps~~ they may find as many country Vics. increasingly do, that more Parks-Reserves does not mean more employment, that eco and other tourism will not fund necessary management-infrastructure costs, that as mining, timber, extractive and farming industries fall over given loss of access for those industries, a future Committee may well ask did the current enquiry report to the Senate in an accurate and informed manner.

As a member of the Prospectors and Miners Assoc. in Vic (represents recreational prospecting and very small scale mining) and as a person who has enjoyed, respected and used crown lands responsibly and sustainably over many years I suggest that Committee accept as fact that on land Parks, Reserves and ordinary State Forests are and will continue to be the source of essentials, (timber, stone, sand, clay, minerals, water, good air, etc. etc. and as such must attract a quality of management, funding, balance and

resourcing such as has never been provided before.

In recognition of past poor attitude and management practises, and considering what we see every fire season, (loss of ~~asset~~ crown land asset, loss of homes, farms, stock, fencing and life) I hope Committee will find that past, and current Parks Reserves preservation rule over, but not protect, or manage competently must cease.

- I submit in summary that,
1. Funding and resources sufficient to properly manage crown lands inclusive of Parks reserves will never be achieved simply because of the vast size of same,
  2. State and Federal Govts. do not have the courage or wisdom to inform the Australian public that apart from a ~~few~~ small number of Parks-Reserves (Kakadoo, Ayis Rock, Barrier Reef, Granpians, Wilsons Promontory) they are economically unsustainable.
  3. Given the ~~devastating~~ devastating fires in Canberra and the Vic. Alps and other areas in recent years, and given that these fires escaped from improperly fire managed crown lands, public support for more parks etc. is declining.

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In the face of proof now that the proposed eco tourism boom in new and old Parks-Reserves will not happen and that traditional stakeholders - other landusers have been and will continue to be discriminated against in favour of green leaning philosophy and so called indigenous peoples issues, country aboriginals will with open hostility reject the undignified smoke screen which National Parks-Reserves have become.

I look forward to publication of the Committee findings and acknowledgement of receipt of this submission.

Regards  
Glyde Sydney  
Latham.