

Submission to the Draft Joint Management Plan for the Dja Dja Wurrung Parks.

I write this submission as a proud prospector and owner of a Miners Right issued by the Victorian Government.

My prospecting is conducted in a respectful way in line with the PMAY's Code of Conduct and does not affect the rights of any other park users - including the Aboriginal community.

I strongly object to the substantial loss of another 10,000 hectares of Public land for my prospecting; especially when there is no scientific evidence to support exclusion.

I also object to the proposed bulldozing of the historic diggings in these Parks to 'repair the land'. These old diggings are an important part of our shared history and should be left as they are.

Most prospectors are of a senior age and provide a healthy way to enjoy the outdoors. Because of the remote location and the time consuming nature of the activity, it is often necessary to camp close to that area and use minor tracks for access.

We are active older people, not sitting around waiting on somebody to hand us our next meal. Just imagine how much that saves the Government.

Potential fees for parking, camping and prospecting .

Prospectors collect and dispose of responsibly all junk found. Most carry a rubbish pouch & pick up metallic rubbish and bullets to take home to dispose of, so as not to find again. Minor disturbance of the ground provide a seed bed for propagation of seeds. Substantial amounts of lead (shot/bullets) are collected and disposed of responsibly. No other Green or indigenous group could rid the environment of heavy metals other than this way.

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Echidnas dig up more ground and turn over more rocks than prospectors.

Use of bush tracks helps keep them clear and accessible for fire protection.

Not convinced that the whole of the areas specified as cultural heritage should be restricted, to prospecting.

Places like sacred spaces, landscapes, songlines and men / women only places are intangible and not capable of being desecrated by prospectors. There is nothing there to dig up or remove.

We have to ask, how much of the no go areas to prospectors do **these areas** include.

If an additional area of 10,000 ha is to be restricted to prospecting, is there perhaps an equivalent area currently restricted, that could be released for prospecting to compensate.

Prospectors are not the people who dump car bodies, mattresses and tires in the bush, but we do report them and prospecting clubs have regular bush rubbish collection days.

If prospecting and 4WD access is denied In the proposed areas, I and most other prospectors will no longer have any reason to visit the towns that we have always helped support, by. buying fuel, food, meals and detecting equipment.

We all see on our journeys to and from the goldfields, another business closed! Or with a For Sale sign out the front!

Perhaps we could detail some of them that we use to call in at but, are no longer there.

Caravan parks, Petrol Stations, Pub's, Food shops, even whole towns.

Perhaps we could detail the cost of a typical weekend in the field just to go out into an ever decreasing amount of land and pick up other rubbish and bits of lead. Petrol, Food, cost of equipment, camping & detectors.

I fully support the Dja Dja Wurrung people continuing to enjoy their rights as traditional owners as long as they also respect mine. The current Draft Management Plan does not do this

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Note: Personal Contact details redacted for on-line publishing.