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20 February 2014

Wonnangatta Valley Research Trial  
Department of Environment and Primary Industries  
PO Box 500  
East Melbourne VIC 3002

**EPBC REFERRAL**  
**Victorian Government**  
**Department of Environment and Primary Industry (DEPI)**  
**Investigation of Bushfire Fuel Management in the Wonnangatta Valley Using**  
**Strategic Grazing of Domestic Livestock (25 November 2013)**

Bushwalking Victoria represents the common interests of over 70 Victorian bushwalking clubs, with in excess of 8,000 members. Bushwalking Victoria also seeks to proactively represent the interests of all recreational walkers in Victoria as well as walkers visiting from interstate and overseas. One of the common interests of our clubs and their members is the conservation of the ecosystems and natural landscapes through which they walk, so that they can enjoy the maximum variety of native flora and fauna and unspoilt scenery and ensure their preservation for future generations.

Bushwalking Victoria is opposed to the proposed action by DEPI Victoria.

The Wonnangatta Valley forms part of the Alpine National Park. We believe that all national parks, and in particular, the alpine areas, should be preserved from the damaging impact of hooved animals.

Many bushwalkers have observed the damage formerly caused by cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park for example, in areas adjacent to Falls Creek. In particular, damage to sphagnum moss beds, creek banks and bog areas, fouling of water through cattle dung, suppression of natural vegetation, erosion and damage to wildflowers were very obvious.

There is already considerable evidence that shows that the intensity and frequency of bushfires is not affected by grazing. Among many other papers, two in particular,

**Better Bushwalking for Victoria**

Bushwalking Victoria Inc. A0002548Y ABN 88 344 633 037  
Promotes bushwalking, engages in activities that add value to the community and proactively represents the interests of all recreational bushwalkers

*Williamson G.J., Murphy B.P., Bowman D.M.J.S. (2013) Cattle grazing does not reduce fire severity in eucalypt forests and woodlands of the Australian Alps. Austral Ecology*

*Williams R.J., Wahren C - H., Bradstock R.A., Muller W.J. (2006) Does alpine grazing reduce blazing? A landscape test of a widely held hypothesis. Austral Ecology 31, 925-936.*

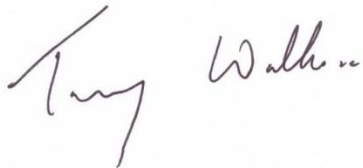
relate specifically to this issue, and both conclude that grazing does not reduce blazing.

The referral states that there has been consultation with environment groups, but fails to state which groups were consulted – nor the views they expressed. This is in contrast to the specific reference to views expressed by the Mountain Cattlemens Association of Victoria.

No clear reason has been given why, if any trial is justified, it needs to be carried out within the Alpine National Park – there are many other areas which could have been chosen. In any case, it is difficult to see how any trial in a limited and specific area such as the Wonnangatta Valley, could be reliably extrapolated to the many and varied ecological environments of the Alpine National park.

For the above reasons, Bushwalking Victoria urges that the proposal be rejected.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Walker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

Tony Walker  
**President**