

Statement

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Suburban Development



Friday, 31 August, 2018

STATEMENT ON VEAC CENTRAL WEST INVESTIGATION

The Andrews Labor Government thanks VEAC for their work to date on their Central West Investigation and notes the release of their draft recommendations into these areas of public land.

These forests and reserves have been loved over many years for walking, camping, and other recreational pursuits, and under a re-elected Labor Government they'll continue to remain open for future generations to enjoy.

The Labor Government can assure the community that existing well-loved recreational activities will be protected and notes that VEAC themselves recommend that four-wheel driving, trail bike and horse riding, mountain biking, bushwalking and camping should continue – something the Labor Government strongly supports.

We also understand that our goldrush started with intrepid prospectors and we will ensure they continue to have a place on public land through this review.

This means that Victorian families can continue to enjoy them into the future – this is about getting people into the great outdoors, promoting healthy living, securing local jobs and protecting our amazing natural wilderness.

We again thank VEAC for their work and look forward to receiving their final report in March 2019, as we ensure the most appropriate management arrangements to conserve, protect and enhance the natural and cultural values of the Wombat, Wellsford, Mount Cole and Pyrenees Range forests.

The review also gives us a chance to evaluate the condition and biodiversity values of these areas, as well as taking stock of the many current uses of this public land and their economic value.

In the meantime, members of the community can continue to have their say on the VEAC review with the draft recommendations now out for public consultation.

The Government will consider the final report once we receive it in March.