



"sonia ekberg"

12/02/2009 02:24 PM

To <veac@dse.vic.gov.au>

cc

bcc

Subject Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation

Metropolitan Melbourne

Sub:

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No: 52

Dear Sirs,
As an interested individual, I wish to tender the attached submission.
Regards
Sonja Ekberg



Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation.doc

12th February 2009

Dear Sirs

Re: Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation

I am writing to you as a Manningham council area resident, with concerns in 3 areas:

- As a local resident concerned with local environment and amenity value
- As a horse rider concerned with off-road riding trail availability
- As a dog walker.

The first point I would like to bring to your attention is the necessity of considering all public land at the same time in order to maximise connectivity. Your map shows only Crown lands, yet there are significant holdings by Vicroads, local councils, Melbourne Water and other utilities (eg water companies) which can or could form significant corridors of connectivity between Crown land holdings.

It seems to me that use of Crown lands by dog walkers and horse riders in peri-urban areas is unnecessarily restrictive, given the primary objective should be to provide amenity value without significant environmental degradation, yet there are moves afoot within Parks Victoria to increase restrictions without regards to weighting for amenity to urban populations.

Examples:

- Dogs are banned from Crown lands south of the Yarra River, yet some discrete areas surrounded by development would have improved amenity value without threatening indigenous animal populations if dogs were permitted on lead, eg Black Flat Reserve (Warrandyte) and Warrandyte State Park adjoining Johansons Rd and Haslams Track. The Fourth Hill area of Warrandyte State Park, although larger, is also a discrete area which is popular with walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers so again I find it unlikely that allowing dogs on lead would cause any significant additional environmental problems.
- Many fire trails through state park areas are closed to horse riders, yet studies have shown they cause minimal degradation and that fears of introduction of foreign plants species through manure are groundless: birds cause more problems than they do.
Extensive protests have recently been successful in partially reversing some new horse-riding restrictions in the Dandenong Ranges National Park, but that has required an inordinate amount of effort by law-abiding, tax-paying citizens.

- Land owned by Vicroads, reserved for possible future use in ring roads, is currently made available for annual lease, often for horse agistment. However, its care and use is not well monitored, so in some cases has resulted in bare, unattractive land in the middle of otherwise attractive developed areas – eg Hall Road, Warrandyte South.

This land would in many cases be very attractive as part of a network of horse riding trails, enabling horses to be more safely separated from ever-increasing road traffic, especially as Vicroads land often intersects with other public land.

Other Vicroads land stands vacant (eg because it has no water connection so can't be used for agistment) but in good condition as it is regularly slashed by Vicroads contractors. Such land is 'wasted' when it could be incorporated into a multi-use trail network. Example: land reserved for the Northern Arterial Road adjoining Brysons & Gibson Roads in Warrandyte South.

- Land owned/leased by councils and other utilities also often intersects with Crown and Vicroads land, yet current inconsistent leasing practices would make it difficult to coordinate a linked trail network. Example: water pipeline easements through Warrandyte, Park Orchards and Wonga Park.

Melbourne Water has been very successful in developing its multi-user 'corridors of green' around storm-water catchments in my local area (Croydon Hills/Warrandyte South/Ringwood, North) which improves amenity value to all local residents – it would be ideal if their approach could be widened to include all other owners of 'corridor' connections.

Similarly, it would be helpful if councils were required to consider increasing connections to public land when considering planning applications, eg land at the end of Green Ridge in Warrandyte South is currently being developed for residential use – council could have stipulated an access corridor through it to the adjoining Melbourne Water land.

Yours faithfully

Sonja Ekberg