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To veac@dse.vic.gov.au

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Subject Remnant Native Vegetation Investigation

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No:

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Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
Level 6, 8 Nicholson Street
East Melbourne, Victoria 3002

13 February 2009

Dear Council members,

I live on the Frankston border with Mount Eliza and walk regularly and extensively in the Shire's reserves.

I want to address the **use and condition** of these reserves, including Langwarrin, Pines and Sweetwater (not shown on your Frankston map).

I will also comment on the future Frankston Reservoir Reserve.

I believe my "on-the ground" experience will be a valuable addition to your study.

Use of Frankston's Reserves

Most of the problems occurring in our reserves are due to terminology, naming and signage.

The generic 'RESERVE' applies to a football pitch as well as a conservation nature reserve.

Even 'PARK' is used at random. Most users choose to interpret the signs according to their need.

- About 40% of walkers in the Pines are exercising their dogs - off leash.
Dogs can jump into the reserve from some surrounding properties.
Motorbike tracks are always visible.

- Langwarrin allows walkers, cyclists and packs of runners to use the reserve.
The concept of 'shared pathways' has no meaning here. I have been knocked down by a cyclist in the quiet zone where signs do exist.
I am constantly walking off track to avoid cyclists and runners who are often in packs who are not prepared to share. This is not passive recreation.

- Horses are allowed on Langwarrin's perimeter track but some riders choose to enter the reserve

and its quiet zone tracks. (Photos/DNA samples available)

- The jewel in Frankston's crown - George Pentland Botanic Gardens is being used for events and sculpture

activities including altering the landscape. The chance for passive recreation/bird watching/photography

and quiet reflection on the rich botanical species must be protected at all costs. I am constantly asking adults

and children to stay out of the planted areas and to stop climbing the trees. I had to ask the gardner to remove

a dog with its owner.

- Sweetwater is not a nature reserve but a dog and human exercise park.

Entry signs specify dogs on leash - nobody takes any notice. Joggers demand the tracks when they hurl past you.

It's not surprising that we don't see the birds and animals we expect to.

CONCLUSIONS

There is nowhere in Frankston for the community to enjoy passive recreation.

There are numerous sporting areas in every town which must be shared with runners and cyclists.

"Dogs on leash" in a reserve automatically translates as "Dogs off leash".

Dogs on or off leash must be excluded from passive recreation areas.

Bigger and more specific signage must be designed. Rangers must patrol at key exercise times .

The Botanic Gardens and all existing nature reserves must be freed from commercial and 'cultural' creep.

Any future Commercial enterprise must be restricted to the many sporting grounds.

Condition of Frankston's reserves

- Vandalism and graffiti is on-going. Signs are destroyed everywhere to legitimise any activity.

- Internal and external fencing is always inadequate and mostly ignored.

CONCLUSION

I have never seen a Ranger in any Frankston Reserve. Funding must be provided for their visits at peak times.

High wire fencing and lockable gates should be mandatory for any external protection.

Protection for vegetated areas must be more robust.

FRANKSTON RESERVOIR RESERVE

As with Devilbend on the Peninsula, the Shire and State Governments are trying to please everyone and satisfying none.

This is a prime opportunity for Frankston City Council to create a native sanctuary. **Visitors would happily pay to visit such a place.**

The sale or development of any further Public Land must not be considered.

The experiences I have described apply to the few reserves in Mount Eliza, and I suspect anywhere in Victoria.

Yours sincerely

Kate Burnstein
