

6th May 2024

The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos
Minister for Environment
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Outdoor Recreation
E: reception.dimopoulos@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Eminent Panel for Community Engagement
EPCE@delwp.vic.gov.au

RE: Central Highlands state forests

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is a national incorporated association established to consult with government in advocating for real animal welfare by those who keep, breed and care for animals. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

Animal Care Australia DOES NOT SUPPORT the single use of surveys as a means of consultation. It will be inappropriate to claim you have consulted when organisations are not actually able to lodge a written submission. The submission process is limited to this online survey, which itself is limited to 1000 characters. Surveys are misleading and provide for irresponsible statistical analysis.

Animal Care Australia also noted the exclusion of interstate/national-based organisations due to the restricted POSTCODE requirement as this does not provide for an accurate assessment of a wide cross-section of the community, when a national-based organisation may not be located within your state. The lack of remote access to attend the community meetings is also unhelpful.

For the official record, the following are the responses from Animal Care Australia.

Which state forest areas are you interested in? Required

Animal Care Australia’s members ride in all of the forest areas listed.

What best describes how you currently experience this area of the forest?

Please mention specific parts of the Central Highlands state forest area if this is relevant.

This submission is on behalf of trail horse riders and drivers in Victoria who are Members of Animal Care Australia that ride in the Central Highlands state forests.

How often would visit this area of the forest?

Think about the area that you considered as you were describing your forest experience.

Across the spectrum and areas the average for visiting by our members would equate to daily.

What is important to you about the Central Highlands state forest area?

The Panel is looking to understand what is most important to you about the Central Highland state forest area. If you take a look at the map you can see the state forest areas.

Existing easements via freehold land should be kept open, to ensure trails are kept clear and are fire safe. Where this is genuinely not possible, an alternative access route is created nearby from a public road or crown land.

All Central Highlands state forest trails that are suitable for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians be made accessible to horse riders, seven days a week unless there is a valid reason to temporarily close access – such as bad weather).

Age group Required

Prefer not to say – as it varies due to our broad membership base.

Please do not hesitate to make contact if we can assist you further.

Kind regards,

Karri Nadazdy

Karri Nadazdy
Animal Care Australia Horse Representative
E: horses@animalcareaustralia.org.au

About Animal Care Australia

As a nationally recognised animal welfare organisation, Animal Care Australia encourages continued development of animal welfare standards and Codes of Practice for animal husbandry, breeding, training, sale, and sporting exhibitions for a wide range of animal species, including pets, animals used for educational or entertainment purposes or kept for conservation, and in particular native birds, reptiles, and mammals.

Animal Care Australia was founded in early 2018 to establish an organisation run solely by volunteers to lobby for real animal welfare. With extreme animal rights and animal liberationist ideologies influencing government legislation, regulation, and policy at our expense and to the detriment of our animals and pets, it has become necessary to provide government with a balancing voice.

By uniting the broad spectrum of animal groups, collectively we offer an experienced, sensible approach to animal welfare.

By educating our members and the public about the importance of treating animals with kindness and respect for their needs and promoting the humane treatment of animals to improve animal welfare outcomes, Animal Care Australia is in the unique position of lobbying and advocating for all animals within our care.

Animal Care Australia provides priority to the following:

- advocating for stronger welfare outcomes
- advocating to increase education of the public in animal welfare and best care techniques
- educate the public on handling their animals with kindness & respect and the importance of their needs
- educate the public in the differences between animal welfare and animal rights