

Guide letter to the Victorian Environment Minister and Shadow Minister

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you as a someone vitally interested in the conservation of the natural areas of south eastern Australia.

As you know there is a growing awareness in Australia and around the world of the importance of contiguity of conservation areas. In accordance with the goal of achieving greater connectivity and also in recognition of the importance of protecting the natural heritage of the high country and the adjacent forests of south eastern Australia I respectfully urge the Victorian Government to give serious consideration to extending the Alpine National Park westwards to incorporate the Baw Baw National Park and to joining the national parks in East Gippsland into a single national park.

The first proposal which involves extending the Alpine National Park to link up with Baw Baw National Park, thereby closing the single gap which exists in the chain of protected areas extending from west of Canberra to north of Melbourne, resurrects the concepts first advanced by the Australian Conservation Foundation in 1969 and the Victorian National Parks Association in 1974. Unfortunately, consideration of a continuous park was adversely affected from the 1970s by the division of this region into two separate Study Areas for the purpose of the making of land use recommendations by the Land Conservation Council Victoria.

As an initial step the central part of the area linking the alpine areas of the Western Alps region has been included in a National Heritage List nomination the details of which can be inspected as a public notice on the internet. This provides some indication of the intrinsic heritage values of the deep valleys and intervening high areas.

A similar approach has been taken with the proposed East Gippsland Forests National Park which is similar in concept to the South East Forests National Park in New South Wales which was formed from five earlier parks and state forest. These areas have also been nominated for the National Heritage List.

Acted on, these two proposals will significantly enhance the protection of the areas in the proposed 'sea to snow' world heritage nomination which has been under official consideration for many years.

Details of both national parks, including maps of the proposed boundaries can be found on the Colong Foundation for Wilderness website. www.colongwilderness.org.au

I have sent a copy of this letter to the shadow Victorian Environment Minister and have also written to your counterparts in the Commonwealth, New South Wales and ACT Governments requesting their support for these projects through the forum of the Australian Alps Ministerial Council.

Yours sincerely

Signed