

TERS TO

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Letters should be no more than 300 words. Shorter letters will be preferred. All letters must be signed and the writer's name and address clearly written. (A box number is not sufficient.) Telephone numbers should be provided so that letters can be verified. A letter may be edited for reasons of space or clarity unless the writer specifies that it must be published in full.

Critical time for Australian Alps

from D. Risstrom, alpine project officer, Victorian National Parks Association

The next few weeks will be a critical time for the future of the Australian Alps with consideration by the Victorian Parliament of the Alpine National Parks Bill. After more than 20 years of debate and procrastination the opportunity is finally at hand to complete the chain of national parks and nature reserves covering the alps from Canberra to Mansfield.

The bill, in accordance with Land Conservation Council recommendations, proposes the linking of the Wabonga Plateau State Park, Wonnangatta-Moroka, Bogong and Cobberas Tingaringy national parks to form a continuous chain from north-east Victoria to the ACT. The alps need to be managed with enlightened and consistent planning. This can only be achieved through legislation for a national park.

A heavy responsibility now rests with the Liberal Party to ensure passage of the bill. In recent weeks both the federal and Victorian Liberal parliamentary leaders have publicly recognised that conservation is one of the electorate's major concerns. Support from the Liberal Party for the Alpine National Parks Bill will be clear evidence of a genuine desire to accommodate those concerns and advance the protection of Australia's remarkable natural heritage.

David Risstrom,
Melbourne.