

## MP under fire for joining grazing protest

Tuesday, 10 January 2006. 16:00 (AEDT)

ABC RURAL RADIO

The Victorian Government has criticised Liberal MP **Graeme Stoney** for joining his fellow cattlemen in opposing alpine grazing bans.

About 60 cattlemen are droving cattle through the state's eastern Alpine National Park towards Wonnangatta Station to protest against the new laws.

Environment Minister John Thwaites says the state's cattlemen are in mourning for a tradition they have not lost.

He says the Government has not banned cattle grazing altogether, and Liberal MPs should not be joining the cattlemen in breaking the law. "Certainly if Mr Stoney is urging people or inciting people to break the law that wouldn't be appropriate," he said.

"I think it is incumbent on [Opposition Leader] Robert Doyle to certainly ask his Member of Parliament what he's doing and whether he is complying with the law," he said.

Mr Thwaites says Parks Victoria will deal with anyone who breaks the law. "Cattle grazing is continuing now in the high country," he said.

"There cattle [are] able to graze in the state forest, the graziers themselves are able to continue with all their culture and all their history, and they can wear all the clothes and take part in all the activities that they've always done."                      END

