



● THE Conservation, Forests and Lands Minister, Mrs Kirner, with Clive Hodge, vice-president of the cattlemen's union.

Lunch diplomacy in high country

JOAN Kirner found an unusual way to defuse protests yesterday when she faced angry cattlemen near Licola, in the Victorian Alps.

The State's Conservation, Forests and Lands Minister invited them to lunch.

Mrs Kirner visited the area to announce Government outlines for the long-awaited Alpine National Park which is expected to open later this year.

The 690,000 ha national park is to be Victoria's largest, and will link with NSW's Kosciusko National Park.

But upon arrival at picturesque Bennison Lookout, above the proposed parklands, she met about 40 placard carrying cattlemen and their families.

In the group were leaders of the Mountain Cattlemen's Associa-

By RUPERT GUINNESS

tion of Victoria which headed last September's cattlemen's march and the recent "Fair-go" farmers' rally into Melbourne.

Victorian cattlemen believe they are being forced off their traditional grazing lands.

After detailing the proposed management plan, Mrs Kirner invited protesters to a barbeque.

Although cattlemen leaders took up the offer, a Cattlemen's Union spokesman said its members would try to block final moves to allow the Alpine Park to go ahead.

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