

A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE PROUD HISTORY OF THE MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA.

The Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria (MCAV) represents a hardy group of people whose families and predecessors have grazed their cattle and maintained the Victorian High Country dating back to 1834.

From Australian settlement to the present, caring for their cattle and custodianship of the land has been a cross generational family undertaking, so their training in the mountains is a lifetime experience. Consequently, the cattlemen are known for their love and knowledge of the bush, for independent action but with the ability to co-operate. They are persistent. They have a profound interest in the past. They respect their elders because of past lessons learned. As the cattlemen went about their difficult business, a unique Australian culture and heritage was gradually developed - without them even knowing!

In the 1960's conservation and political group pressure aimed at removing cattle began to grow. Over the next forty years the cattlemen were involved in a bitter and prolonged public fight to save their leases. That fight was a saga and is a story in itself! The cattlemen's struggle led to an agreement brokered on the floor of State Parliament in 1989 to create an Alpine National Park. In return the cattlemen were granted in legislation, seven year renewable licenses to graze some sections of the new Park.

In 2005 the Labor Government broke that agreement and cancelled all grazing in the Alpine National Park. The Park contained the bulk of the grazing leases so the removal dealt a significant emotional and economic blow to many families. Cattle are still run on some State Forest leases and there are concerns they will be the next to go.

The loss of the Alpine leases led to a drop in MCAV membership but the cattlemen have a large and strong supporter base of financial associate members. These supporters believe in the ideals of the MCAV which over five decades has fought for sensible conservation and fire management and continued access to our public land.

Since 1834, the cattlemen's close connection to the High Country and especially their knowledge as to "how it works" is unparalleled, yet this knowledge is largely ignored by the authorities. No more better example is the 2003, 2006/7 and 2009 bushfires which were predicted and documented for the last forty years by the cattlemen.

The MCAV has presented a submission and many supporting documents to the Royal Commission on the bushfires,

All the documents can be viewed on our website

The taking of the Alpine leases in 2005 means the intimate knowledge of the land, the culture and living Australian heritage of the Mountain Cattlemen is in grave danger of being lost forever.

The MCAV is working to preserve that knowledge and heritage and to have cattle grazing reinstated as a proven management tool to reduce fuel loads. This has to be done while there are still cattlemen around who can explain to the next generation how to do it.