The Secretary,
Land Conservation Council,
464 St.Kilda Road,
MELBOURNE. 3000.

Dear Sir,

re: Interim Recommendations for the High Country.

I write in support of continued multiple-use areas of our Victorian High Country, including cattle grazing.

My husband doesn't know I am writing this letter, but he has held snow leases for 40 years, and I can assure you there is no way the leases are over-grazed. He is always punctilious about keeping to the number of head recommended by the Soil Conservation Authority, and in fact probably knows far more about how many head a given area will support than the good gentlemen of the S.C.A. How could the government think that any experienced farmer would over-stock his land? That is just cutting off one's nose to spite one's face, and mountain cattlemen are careful men, not fools.

Our area (the Bennison Plains) has been grazed since Malcolm Macfarlane held runs up there in the 1850's, and the cattle have kept the land more open therefore more free for bushwalkers to explore. Baron Ferdinand Von Mueller did far more harm throwing his blackberry seeds around last century than anyone else, and in my 20 years as a mountain cattleman's wife I have personally observed far more damage done to the mountain environment by trail bikes and four-wheel drive vehicles in the last ten years, than the simple cattle pads which always follow the land contour. My husband and his stockmen also provide a public service by constantly repairing his privately owned huts (Howitt and Bryce's), which are used and enjoyed and vandalised by hundreds of people every year.

The mountains are owned by the people of Victoria, and the people of Victoria like and enjoy and learn from the mountain cattle grazing operation. Witness the many newspaper articles, witness the popularity of the "Man from Snowy River" film, witness the booked-out trail rade safaris which so many of my city friends and their young children tell me they have loved. I know it's become a cliché, but the mountain cattle grazing and the Autumn muster really are "living history"; because the men do it in exactly the same way as they did it last century, and I should know because I'm the one who packs the corned beef and the green-tomato pickles into the saddle bags.

Re National Parks; there is no need for these to be enlarged, one can always find a "wilderness" if one wishes. At Mt.Hotham for example where I have skied for 32 years, I can still turn my back on a few thousand skiers, tows et al in SwindRer's Valley, walk four hundred metres over Higginbotham and gaze south to hundreds of peaceful acres. The pygmy possum doesn't seem to mind multiple-use either, as he is still living in or under the U.S.C. Ski Lodge at Hotham with his family for the last 30, years.

Please don't lock up the mountains, please let the people use and enjoy the land that all Victorians own. There is room for everyone.

Yours faithfully,

copies to: Minister for Forests and Conservation,
Minister for Planning

Mountain Cattlemen's Association.