

# MOUNTAIN CATTLEMENS NEWS

Newsletter of the Mountain Cattlemens Association  
of Victoria Incorporated  
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June 2000

## **SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ALPINE GRAZING.**

Did you know?

That the total of the alpine area is approximately 1,360,000 hectares.

The total area of the Alpine National Park is 636,704 hectares approximately.

That 8,600 cattle are licensed to graze within the Park.

That the actual area grazed by cattle since 1998 is less than .9%.

That according to the Chairman of the National Parks Advisory Council this has transformed the Alpine National Park into 'a cattle run'.

That the National Parks Advisory Council, the Victorian National Parks Association and their supporters pretend that the National Park is overrun by cattle grazing, and that cattle grazing is 'degrading the Park'.

**NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTION  
BY JOHN CRIBBES.**

Omeo Branch please note that the Phoenix 4WD Club Bush Can trailer can be made available for the 2001 Get Together and will be delivered and removed from the Get Together site by the Phoenix Club. The ONLY way to get rid of aluminium cans, and support the Flying Doctor Service at the same time.

Thanks John!

**COLD DRINKS IN THE BUSH**  
by John Cribbes, Manager, Phoenix Bush Can Plan.

The Phoenix Bush Can Plan is an initiative of the Victorian Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc. and operates aluminium can collecting bins in bush towns in Eastern Victoria.

If you've never given any thought as to how you take your cold drinks to the bush, spare a moment to read this. There are many people using our natural bushland for recreation and huge numbers of them aren't doing the right thing when it comes to getting rid of their rubbish. No longer can we afford to say burn, bash and bury.

**BRING OUT WHAT YOU TOOK IN!**

## BRING OUT WHAT YOU TOOK IN!

If there was room in your vehicle to take into the bush all the burden of packaging that our manufacturers press upon us, you've got room to bring it back and dispose of it, along with your household rubbish, when you get home. Yes. Take it right back home. All the way home.

## WHAT IF YOU DON'T?

The short answer is that you spoil the bush. Expanding slightly, leaving a mess means that:

- \* The next person along that way has the job of cleaning up after you. If all of us have a 'don't care' attitude we'll never find a decent campsite.
- \* We leave inappropriate habitats for Australian native fauna. In other words, we will break the natural food chain of Australian fauna. It could happen.
- \* When the next downpour happens, your rubbish will be swept into the nearest water. It may be someone's drinking water catchment. It might be yours.
- \* Maybe you'll come this way again. If you do and your camp site is fouled by your mess....?
- \* You'll be leaving an unsightly mess that will be taken as a bad sign by visitors, especially overseas visitors. We want them to know that we care. That we care for our environment.

THE PUBLIC'S LAND IS THE  
PUBLIC'S LAND TO LOOK AFTER.

The Phoenix Bush Can Plan has been collecting aluminium cans for over 12 years now, so we've learned a bit about recycling glass, aluminium and plastic.

One of the hardest things for us is to tell the volunteers who look after the garbage dumps in the high country towns that we can't remove and recycle their glass. It has become a serious problem for them. At the present time, careless recreationists have left, quite literally, thousands of tonnes of glass where it can't be recycled. We don't have the equipment to retrieve it and it is worth only \$50 per tonne, delivered into Morwell. Not enough to cover the fuel cost of the pick up vehicle.

A Phoenix Bush Can Plan trailer, legally loaded, can carry \$24 worth of glass. Overload our trailer? How would you like it coming down the hill from Omeo to Swifts Creek with an overload? How about pulling 5 tonnes of glass (thats about 5,300 stubbies, value \$200) behind your vehicle from Woods Point to Matlock and then down to Warburton. By the time you reach your friendly recycler in Lilydale, what state is your vehicle in?

Glass is a beautiful product and, where it can be collected and recycled, is a marvellous container for any beverage. In the bush, unless YOU undertake to remove it to your home for recycling, it stays there. Its life is about 250 years more than we care to imagine. Smashed, in the bush, it can cause fire and serious injury.

Plastic is becoming a problem in the bush. Do we know the life of plastic? Will it fade away? Where we cannot recycle it, is it really an appropriate use of Planet Earth's limited reserves of fossil fuel? While it can attract a value

of about \$500 per tonne, this is at the dealer's door. Before then it has to be picked up, put into a big sack, crushed down and then the bag has to be strongly sealed to prevent it bursting open. A lot of manpower and resources goes into recycling plastic. Once again, if your preference is for plastic, make sure that it goes home with you and gets into the Kerbside Recycling programme, right where you live.

To us, collecting them for the past 12 years, aluminium cans present a different picture on account of their high recycling value. Fluctuating wildly in the past five years, their recycling value has gone from a high of \$1,400 to a low of \$650 per tonne. Aluminium cans are worth the time and trouble to collect. Our trailers, fully loaded with crushed cans never exceed the weight limitations of our trailers - because few people can crush the cans well enough.

The Phoenix Bush Can Plan is currently receiving around \$1,000 per tonne at the NADRASCA recycling depot in Blissington Street, Springvale. Quoting account NB3330, sacks of used cans can be safely left there (preferably crushed) and the cheque is sent automatically to the Victoria Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc. where it will benefit the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The intent of the message is threefold.

1. To remind everyone that thoughtful bush users - recreation as well as commercial enterprises - practice minimum impact camping and minimum impact visits as much as minimum impact driving. Nothing should be burned, bashed and buried or thrown from the window of a vehicle.

All garbage should be returned to our homes where rubbish and recycling programmes are in place.

2. If you care to segregate and crush your aluminium cans and leave them in one of our collecting bins around the eastern half of Victoria, we'll be very grateful. Otherwise, kindly collect and store them until someone can deliver them to NADRASCA in Springvale.

3. Those of us who have given the bush a value, don't want it taken away from us by vicarious pleasure seekers. We want to keep our existing access. We don't want any nasty little people complaining that we leave rubbish behind us. Take a few shopping/plastic bags with you when you go bush. Bring back your litter. Don't leave an invitation for anyone to point a finger at any of us.

(Signed) John Cribbes, Manager  
Phoenix Bush Can Plan. Dated  
10/4/00.

### **GET TOGETHER 2001.**

Yes! The date has been decided. The Get Together being organised by the Omeo Branch will be held on the weekend of:

13th and 14th January 2001.

The most favoured venue at this stage of the planning is the Victoria River, Junction Plain, Cobungra.

We are hoping to arrange for a helicopter again, and Victoria River would be a good base to fly from. Great views of the snowfields, and the Alpine National Park.

We will keep you posted.

## **GET TOGETHER 2001 PORT.**

**A message from the Marketing Officer.**

At the last Get Together at Bennison Plain the Mountain Cattlemen's Port sold out very quickly, despite the fact that we ordered the same quantity as we have for the last few years. (We invariably have a few bottle left over each year).

Pauline has strongly suggested that, in order to avoid disappointment **ORDERS SHOULD BE PLACED RIGHT NOW FOR SUPPLY IN JANUARY 2000.**

If you wish to take up this offer please send a note with name, address, and quantity to:

Pauline Venn,  
c/- MCAV Inc.  
Post Office Box 814  
ELTHAM VIC 3095.

## **ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION ARE DUE BY THE END OF NEXT MONTH - JULY 2000.**

Annual subscriptions are due next month, but why not pay now? Subscriptions for both full members and for associate members are due and the appropriate form is included with this Newsletter. Please detach the right section and send it off with your cheque, or postal note. It is probably not a good idea to send cash through the mail.

We would appreciate prompt payment of subscriptions this year.

## **BENALLA BYELECTION.**

The by-election for the Legislative Assembly seat of Benalla was held on Saturday the 13th May 2000. The following candidates nominated for the seat:

Ms Denise Allen - Labor  
Mr Bill Hill - Independent  
Ms Janet McKenzie - Aust Greens  
Mr Geoff Rowe - Independent  
Mr Maurie Smith - Independent  
Mr Bill Sykes - National Party  
Mr Alf Thorpe - Aust. Reform Party

The Association wrote to Ms Allen, Mr Hill, Mr Rowe and Mr Sykes to ascertain their policy in respect of cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park. (The other candidates nominated too late to be included in the survey).

"You may know something of the mountain cattlemen of Victoria. These 80 or so families have been grazing cattle in the high country of Victoria during the summer months for over 160 years. Grazing is now very much a managed and controlled use of the high plains. The areas grazed by cattle were considered worthy of National Park status in the 1980's, and the legislation permits grazing within some areas of the Park on a seven year renewable licence basis. The licences were renewed for a second term two years ago. These licence areas have generally been held in the same families for generations.

Mountain cattlemen are proud of their pioneering tradition, and have been recognised for their contribution to Australia's living heritage. There are a number of mountain cattlemen families in the Benalla electorate, and a

significant number of associate members of MCAV who give their support to the mountain cattlemen families.

We are aware that the Bracks government has made, and continues to make, promises to support rural and regional communities, that it will listen to the voice of rural Victoria, and encourage rural industry. Up to date we have not had any evidence that these promises will be kept. In fact our experience has been to the contrary.

In order for us to notify our members and associate members within the electorate, could you please advise your policy in regard to the continuing of cattle grazing within the Alpine National Park. We propose to canvass the policies of all candidates standing for the Benalla election.

We require your response in writing.

Yours faithfully." etc.

Responses were received in time from the National Party candidate and the Labor Party candidate in order for us to mail out the situation to our members and associate members. Unfortunately in the case of the Independents we canvassed, one did not receive our letter, and the response from the other came too late to be included in the mail out.

The responses of the two major parties were (in part) as follows:

#### LABOR PARTY -

"Thank you for your letter regarding cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park. I have consulted the Minister's office on the current position and she has given serious consideration to the

issue and has *a position of opposition to cattle grazing within National Parks.* (Our emphasis)."

The candidate then went on to say that she wanted to keep 'the conversation alive' on the issue, if she was elected on the 13th May. She then provided a list of four achievements the Bracks government had given rural Victoria.

Pointless really if you hold a grazing run in the Park and it is rendered useless by the government. In other words if you are a licensee who is kicked off your run. It doesn't matter then about the upgrade to country roads, the water tax and various other worthy initiatives.

#### NATIONAL PARTY -

"As I am sure you will know, the National Party has been an ardent supporter of the MCAV for many years. ....In more recent times, the National Party has been on the side of the MCAV in the Caledonia River bushfire issue and has highlighted deficiencies in the review process..... You can be assured that I will be a friend of the association and I will be an advocate of a continuing, well managed grazing regime within the Alpine National Park."

A letter from MCAV was sent to all our members and associate members within the Benalla electorate, enclosing a full copy of the letters from the candidates for both the National Party and the Labor Party.

For those of you within the Benalla electorate, we hope that this exercise helped you in deciding your vote.

We have written to the new Labor member for Benalla asking for an

appointment to see her to discuss the issues which are of concern to us.

**PARLIAMENT HOUSE - MINI EXPO CONDUCTED BY USERS OF PUBLIC LAND.**

On the 2nd May 2000, the Public Land Council of Victoria, of which MCAV is a member, held a Mini-expo at Parliament House from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The expo was attended by all the members of the Public Land Council. The Australian Deer Association, Prospectors & Miners Association, Seafood Industry Victoria, Timber Communities Australia, Victorian Apiarists Association, Victorian Association of Forest Industries, Victorian Association of 4WD Clubs, Victorian Chamber of Mines and the Victorian Farmers Federation.

Each organisation had a small "stand", with photographs and display material appropriate to the organisation. MCAV handed out stickers, the current Voice of the Mountains, an Issues Sheet, and had on display sequential photographs of the Caledonia grazing licence area following the January 1998 fires. President Simon Turner and Secretary Sue Silvers attended.

A good number of politicians took the opportunity to visit the Expo and discuss issues with members of the Public Land Council. MCAV was kept busy talking about grazing in the Alpine National Park, and particularly the situation following the fire and the fact that the government had prohibited the use of the grazing runs. We were also able to talk about the Independent Panel finding and what it meant for us in terms of grazing for the coming season.

We were able to point out to Politicians, Ministers and members of their staffs that, although the decision of the Panel went against the return of grazing for the 1999/2000 season, any decision to prohibit grazing in future seasons would be difficult to justify.

We were also able to discuss the political aspects of prohibiting grazing in the Alpine National Park. We were able to say that the current government policy is to remove cattle grazing. However members held current legal grazing licences. That it was our belief that the motivation for banning cattle last summer had more to do with politics than it did with scientific viewpoints on vegetation regeneration.

We also pointed out that the Panel directed Parks Victoria not to use vast fenced areas to protect mossbeds. That a buffer zone of 10 to 15 metres was sufficient.

We are hopeful that meeting members of all political parties in such an informal and relaxed atmosphere will lead to an ability to conduct friendly and productive discussions in the future. The photographs we were able to show certainly seemed to bring home the point that the regeneration post fire was well on track to being back to pre fire levels.

We were pleased with the amount of interest shown by visitors to our stand, and believe that the Expo was a very worthwhile way to get our point across to members of all political parties.

**FINALLY - FINANCIAL  
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS  
RECEIVE A DISCOUNT AT THE  
GET TOGETHER. GET YOUR  
SUBS POSTED TODAY!!!!**